

BROKEN GLASS HEARTS

WEDSPAWN

This is a work of pure fiction.

This is not real. In any way shape or form.

fic·tion (n.)

1. a. *An imaginative creation or a pretense that does not represent actuality but has been invented.*

b. *The act of inventing such a creation or pretense.*

2. a. *A literary work whose content is produced by the imagination and is not necessarily based on fact.*

b. *The category of literature comprising works of this kind, including novels and short stories.*

Just so we're all clear :::grins:::

This is a not-for-profit publication.. None of the events depicted here are real and are meant for personal entertainment purposes only.

Readers are advised materials contain Adult Sexual Content and Mature Situations.

Dedication

First off, to my Ree.

Love you, babe.

And once again... to all of you

You know who you are.

Thank you for coming along with me on this journey

Snookies.

Saranghae

ONE

Junsu stood at the door, leaning on the frame. His body was damp, beaded with drops of water from the shower and the wet towel around his waist hung low, outlining the length of his sex under the nearly transparent terrycloth. His bed was occupied, the long lean body of Yoochun's best friend curled up on a pillow and Junsu's heart broke when he saw the dark purple hickey marking Jae's pale neck. Yunho was in Korea — had been for months — and the only person Jaejoong spent time with was Yoochun, the man lying naked next to him.

His eyes burned and the watery film along his lashes turned to hot tears when he blinked.

They fell, hitting his naked chest and warmed the cold water drops lying on his golden skin. With the raging fire burning in his heart, he half expected to see steam to rise.

If he looked closer — if he tortured himself more — he would see the swollen blush of Yoochun's sensual mouth and the tiny indentation of teeth on his lower lip. Jaejoong liked to bite, Chun would laugh sometimes, rubbing at the marks when he saw them in the mirror.

There were times when Junsu wanted to pick up something heavy and smash the mirror to glass ribbons so Yoochun couldn't see Jae on his own mouth.

And there were times when Junsu longed to grab Yoochun and erase any reminder of Jaejoong from Yoochun's lips with a bites of his own.

I try so hard, Junsu thought as he left the room, stumbling to the living area of the apartment they all shared. He didn't think he

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could stand the anguish of lying in Jaejoong's bed, breathing in the older man's erotic scent while Yoochun lay in the singer's arms. *Why doesn't he love me? Why doesn't he touch me like he does Jaejoong?*

"Why does Yoochun go to him when I am all he needs?" He whispered, muffling his sobs with the heel of his hand pushed into his mouth.

He couldn't tell when he'd fallen in love with the tender-hearted romantic. One day they were friends and then in a second, it seemed that Yoochun's casual touch burned away Junsu's reserves, leaving only the ashes of a wall he'd built around his heart.

There was to be no one but his music, no one in his life but his family, Junsu swore. He would have friends, but that was the strongest connection he would have. His brother would be his ultimate love, the one man he shared everything with and would never hurt him. Their relationship — the brotherly bond they forged in their mother's womb — would carry him through life. He would not need someone else in his heart.

He certainly didn't need anyone's body. Lust and sex never touched him. He could pass by the prettiest woman in the world and feel nothing. There was a void in his being, something broken inside of him that wanted for nothing from anyone; not even the touch of another's mouth on his own. The stirrings of passion other men spoke about never rose and his heart lay flat and inert in his chest.

Until the day it skipped when Yoochun smiled at him.

Then Junsu knew he would be lost forever.

The ache started slow, creeping further and further outwards until it filled his entire body. It possessed him, arcing up to a delirious ecstasy when their voices blended onstage. It was bliss, the joining of their song and Junsu couldn't imagine anything purer than Yoochun's voice winding around his, supporting him, thrusting in and out of the spaces he left for the other's powerful rumble.

Yoochun left him breathless when they were standing near one

another.

And broken when Jaejoong stepped in between them.

Finding a pair of cotton drawstring pants in the folded clothes he'd brought in from the laundry room. Sliding them on, he carded his fingers through his hair and stepped outside onto the tiny balcony of their Tokyo apartment. Nearly thirty floors up, he looked out over the city, still amazed at its sheer breadth and the skyscrapers towering over him despite the height of their building.

"This is why I never wanted to love," Junsu murmured. "It's not just my heart that he tears into pieces. It's my soul. How much more can I take of this? How much more pain do I have to hold inside of me until I finally break apart and have nothing more to give him? How much longer do I have to suffer being in love with a man who doesn't even see me as anything more than a friend?"

Forever, his heart whispered, There will never be anyone else in your soul, no one else that you want in your body more than Park Yoochun. He pours himself into you, filling in the places where you are empty. There can only be a forever in loving Yoochun or there will be nothing left to live for.

Arms wrapped around him from behind, a tight familiar embrace Junsu couldn't help but lean into. *Yoochun.*

He smelled of spice and green tea and Junsu inhaled deeply, drawing the other man into his being.

Junsu found aches in his body he never knew he had.

And hollows that begged to be filled.

The sensations frightened him. They overwhelmed his hard-won control and his infamous focus. His world shattered with the brush of Yoochun's fingers on his bare stomach, the other man's nails scratching lightly across his abdominal muscles. His skin twitched then tingled, needing more — an unsure more — as Junsu swallowed hard to prevent his whimper from escaping his mouth.

He tasted blood and wondered if his soul was bleeding with the want of the man cupping him close.

Can I bleed slowly to death? Junsu pleaded with the heavens. Can I crawl on glass until I shred my skin and my bones are broken apart?

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Wouldn't that be easier and less painful than dying inch by inch from the sear of Yoochun's body on mine?

"You're cold, Susu baby," The baritone whispered into Junsu's ear.

Yoochun's breath was hot, tickling the curve of Junsu's neck. A shiver shook him, starting a tremble up from his guts and sinking into his marrow. Junsu closed his eyes, hating himself for the dryness in his mouth and the longing to have Yoochun's tongue brush along his mouth. His body clenched when Yoochun's palm pressed on the skin below his navel, his long fingers tangling in Junsu's drawstrings. Yoochun was still naked, lean, strong and fitting into the curve of Junsu's ripe body.

"What are you doing out here?" Chun rested his chin on Junsu's bare shoulder. His cheek touched the singer's and Junsu instinctively turned, rubbing himself against Yoochun, working the other man's scent into his heated skin. "I woke up and you weren't in bed."

"I..." He couldn't think of a lie. Nothing made sense any more. His mind was too clouded with from the hot fog of Yoochun's touch and when Junsu skimmed his palms over the man's arms, he felt Yoochun shiver and tremble under his hands. "I just wanted some air and to look at the city."

"It's pretty here," Yoochun said. He tilted his chin up, staring up at the deep blue-black sky. "Tokyo is so big. There's so much light that the night can't even turn black. I've only seen the stars near the river. You should come with us sometime."

"Us?" Junsu knew who Yoochun meant. Jaejoong liked rivers, especially long dark ribbons of water where he could watch the clouds reflecting the moonlight. "I don't know. It's been a long time since we've done something together — alone."

"There are a lot of things we can do... alone," Yoochun murmured, rocking Junsu against him for a moment. Stepping back, he pressed his mouth against the other man's throat then let Junsu go. "Come to bed. You need to sleep, baby and I have a hard time sleeping without hearing you next to me."

Junsu swallowed, closing his eyes as Yoochun walked away. Something had changed. Something inside of him broke open and a darkness rose, a deep violet-tinged lust he couldn't shove back inside of its box. He'd felt the stirrings of Yoochun's sex against the cleft of his ass when the other man stood against him, the long heft growing thicker as they spoke until it practically burned through the thin cotton of Junsu's pants.

Running his hand behind him, Junsu's fingers stroked the damp spot on the rise of his ass and he shook uncontrollably when he brought his fingertips to his mouth. The moisture was too sparse to be wet but his fingers ghosted with the inexplicable odor of Yoochun's lust; a musky sweetness he'd only dreamed about. Sliding his index finger into his mouth, Junsu suckled Yoochun from his own skin, wishing he was brave enough to crawl into bed with Yoochun and engulf the man deep into his throat.

"God," Junsu shuddered. "What have I done to deserve this? Why have you forsaken me? Is it because I want him? Because I need him? Is that what this is?"

He stumbled into the living room, blinded by the lust clouding his heart. Finding his cell phone, Junsu sat on the couch and hit a speed dial button. Choking on his words, he took a breath when Yunho answered, grunting into the phone in a half-sleepy voice.

"Hyung," Junsu bit back his cries but the heart-wrenching sob he'd held in too long spilled out and Yunho's querulous entreaty only brought more pain.

"Junsu-ah," The older man whispered. "Don't cry. What's wrong?"

"I need you, Yunnie-ah," His voice broke as he spoke. "I need you to come and seduce Jaejoong. I need you to take him back into your bed so I can have Yoochun. Please, Yunho. If ever you were my brother, do this for me now."

TWO

Yunho listened to Junsu's voice mail again. He'd mumbled something the night before about calling Junsu back when he was more awake but he'd not found the guts to dial the number — not when the subject was Kim Jaejoong. Seoul traffic stalled and Yunho pressed the heel of his hand against the steering wheel, fighting the urge to hit it with his fist.

They'd hurt one another — hateful hurts with words only lovers could sharpen to a razor's edge. God knew he'd whetted his words and stabbed Jaejoong deep enough to make the young man's soul bleed. Gritting his teeth with the memory of their last fight, he fought the traffic to pull to the side of the road and tucked his car into the relative privacy of a side alley.

His hot breath steamed the car's windows, obscuring him in a thin fog. Outside, the light rain dusting the streets grew hard. Large rain drops hit the windshield, splattering outward into frilled rings. Hidden behind the misted windows, Yunho lay his head back, resting against the headrest.

Lord knew he tried to keep things professional with Jaejoong, even when their personal relationship was disintegrating under them like a crumbling cliff face. He'd strayed, letting his mind and body wander towards other things and didn't pay attention to the other men circling the other singer. They'd never done more than playful fondling — countless blowjobs given in the dark of night when Yunho needed satiation and Jaejoong needed to be touched but beyond that, nothing. He'd be the first one to admit he didn't consider Jaejoong to be anything more than a someplace warm to put his lust and a good friend when the lights were on.

As they grew older, Jaejoong's needs grew as he matured and gained self-confidence. In some ways, Yunho wished the country-born singer remained as stupidly naïve as he'd been when they'd first begun singing together.

"I'm the leader — I guide us," Yunho whispered through gritted teeth. "When the fuck did he take that from me? Who the hell does he think he is for even trying?"

He knew when it changed — the moment Jaejoong looked at Yoochun's exhausted body quivering on a hotel bed and none of them would admit they didn't know what city they were in. Jaejoong *expected* things — things Yunho couldn't do or wouldn't commit to.

"We have responsibilities," He told the singer, pushing Jae with both hands when the young man pressed up into his face. "Obligations. We chose to do this. Don't come crying to me if Yoochun's too weak to stand it. We're all tired. We get back up and push forward. It's what we do. It's what we're supposed to do."

"Are you sure you're our leader?" Jaejoong tilted his head, snarling into Yunho's face. "Where are you leading us and for whom? Are you leading us to our best? Or just making us dance to what the company wants because they aren't as hard on you? Is that what you are, Yunho? SM's whore leading us into a dark alley so you can watch as your pimp robs us of our lives?"

It felt good to punch Jaejoong in the mouth. Knocking that cocky, arrogant smirk from the beautiful face that haunted his erotic dreams felt as good as when that mouth was wrapped around his sex and taking Yunho down his throat.

He'd expected Jaejoong to hit him back. The young man was hot-tempered and physical; his world a tactile exploration of sensations and experiences. Yunho was surprised to see Jae wipe the blood from his cut mouth with the back of his hand then spit out red-speckled saliva onto the carpet, nearly hitting Yunho's bare feet.

"Fuck you," He growled. "I'm not going to let them do this to Yoochun anymore. Or Junsu either. If you were any kind of man —

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if you were even fucking human instead of a manipulated puppet — you'd help me get us free of the company instead of sucking their fingers clean when they've just been up your ass. No more, Yunho. I'm not going to do this anymore. Not for you. Not for anyone. I don't love you that much."

"Love?" Yunho sneered. "Who said anything about love?"

"You're right, you didn't," Jae responded, his voice soft and threatening. "I'm wrong. Maybe I do love you too much. All of you. I love you so much I'd rather destroy what we are then let it destroy us."

Talks fell apart after that. They'd grown distant then pulled back together for small events. He'd tried to reach the playful Jaejoong he knew was buried beneath the stoic mask the singer wore in public when they were together but Jae refused to budge, giving him only wistful smiles and the briefest of touches.

He'd been heartbroken when he heard Jaejoong had fallen apart backstage.

Heartbreak turned to anger when the three rose up from the ashes of their pain and bonded together, leaving he and Min out.

"No," Yunho corrected himself, shoving aside the bitterness in his gut. "You chose this. You chose to follow your father. So did Min. You have different wants — different needs. You are going to be someone after this, Yunho. Remember that. What will they have when they are older and their voices are cracked with age? What will they have to fall back on? All they are is right now... I am beyond that. So in Changmin. We have to protect our futures. We have no choice."

Then why — Yunho's mind whispered — why are you dialing Junsu now to tell him you're coming to Japan?



Jaejoong stood at the sink, pulling down his upper lip to scrape off the dark down growing there with a razor. A towel hung low on his hips, barely covering the rise of his ass. He slipped, nearly cutting himself when Yoochun began singing *Balloons* in the shower, the baritone pitching his voice up high and fast until he

sounded like something from a bad anime. Shaking his head, Jaejoong finished up quickly before he laughed again and ended up slitting his throat.

"Hi," Junsu popped his head into the bathroom, waving away hot steam from his face. Jaejoong met his eyes in the mirror, nodding a hello as he spread toothpaste on his brush. "I'm going to that bookstore we found the other day. Do you want me to grab you something while I'm out?"

"No," Jaejoong said, smiling at the younger man's reflection. "Oh wait, maybe some gobo tempura? We can have that in saimin tonight for dinner. There's leftover pork and some shoyu eggs. It'll be nice to have something fishy, no?"

"Sounds good," He replied with a nod. "I'll see you guys later."

Jaejoong scrubbed at his teeth, foaming up around the mouth. He bared his teeth and growled, pretending to be a mad dog. The water cut off in the shower and Yoochun opened the glass door, catching the singer at his mimicking before Jaejoong could rinse off his face.

"You are funny," Yoochun laughed, slapping Jae's ass before he reached for a towel.

"Not as funny as you," Jae scoffed. "You shouldn't sing alto. Or at least let me kick you between the legs before you try it again."

"Oooooooh," He mocked the other man, wiping himself down and stepping out of the shower. "Was that Junsu?"

"Yeah." Jae spit the last of his toothpaste out, rinsing his brush under the faucet. "He's going to do something we won't like."

"How do you know that?" Yoochun asked.

"Because he said he was going to the bookstore," Jaejoong replied, stripping off his towel and reaching for Yoochun. "When was last time Junsu even picked up a book. That, my Yoochun, was a lie and a very bad one too."



The car was waiting for him when Yunho stepped off the plane. A man in a dark suit led him past security and opened the door, allowing the singer to slide into the back seat before anyone noticed

him. Arms hugged him tightly before he could get settled and his stomach fluttered with excitement until he realized it was Junsu.

"It's good to see you, hyung," Junsu whispered, hugging Yunho tighter. "I've missed you."

"You could always come back," He teased then grew serious when Junsu's smile faded. "No, I know. Things have gone too far. We have to wait to see how this settles down. I can wait. How are you?"

The car started and left the airport waiting lane. Junsu contemplated for a moment then said, "It's good. We're doing well... better than we thought we would."

"You look good," Yunho said. He hated to admit it but Junsu looked healthier than he'd ever seen the young man. Always delicate, Junsu's voice was robust and strong, his customary rasp clear of any wheeze. "You sound good."

"I've been writing music," Junsu admitted shyly. "I've never felt like I was good enough but Yoochun and Jaejoong, they're good at it. It's nice to have them help me."

"They're creative," He agreed with a nod. "I'm glad you're feeling well. Tell me about this thing with Yoochun. I didn't fly eight hundred miles to find out you're fine. You should be a wreck. It would make me feel better."

"You're joking, yes?" Junsu gave a nervous laugh which turned into a belly-shaking guffaw at Yunho's nod. "I can't tell sometimes. Yes, Yoochun...ah..."

"Is he... ignoring you, Junsu?" Yunho pressed.

"Hyung," He sighed, sitting back on the seat and crossing his legs. "Lately it's been that I see him and my skin... grows too tight. It's like I can't keep myself inside. Or...I want..."

"You want him inside of you?" Yunho supplied and chuckled at Junsu's fierce blush.

"Aish," The singer hissed and ducked his head. "I can't... It hurts sometimes, hyung. Sometimes I see him laugh with Jaejoong or they touch each other and I ache. I want to shove Jaejoong away — bury him someplace where Yoochun can't find him — just long

enough for me to... do something.. but I don't know what."

"Have they..." Yunho couldn't bring himself to ask what was going through his mind. He didn't want to think of Yoochun's hands fisting the bedsheets as Jaejoong lay between his knees, the young man's sinful mouth making short work of the baritone's passions. "What have they done with one another? Do you know?"

"What difference does that make?" Junsu gaped, the red rising further up his face. "They... I see marks on Jaejoong's body. On his neck. Small bruises that look like teeth marks and they sleep together sometimes as if I'm not in the room. I shouldn't want this, hyung. I know I shouldn't but there is something inside of me — something so dark that I can taste blood when I see Jaejoong's hands on Yoochun's body. Here is someone who helped me — cradled me when I was sick and broken and I want to see him hurt because of jealousy? That's not something a man should want."

"Neither is wanting another man, Junsu," Yunho pointed out. "But here we are, both of us wanting other men. What hell do you think is worse? Wanting him to need you or you wanting Jaejoong dead? Is lust worse than murder? Or will God forgive us for either because our hearts are leading us down a path neither one of us want to take?"

"God will forgive me the murder, hyung," Junsu said, nodding. "I'm more worried about Yoochun not forgiving me for killing his best friend."

Yunho shook his head. "You have it bad. This is probably the worst idea you've ever had."

"And you, hyung?" Junsu cocked his head. "Why are you helping me then?"

"Because like you, Susu-ah," Yunho said, cupping the back of Junsu's head with one hand and pulling him forward. "I'm in lust with someone I shouldn't be and if I don't convince him to come back to me, I'm going to have to kill him so no one else can have him."

"Ah, that's good then," Junsu said. Leaning forward until his forehead touched Yunho's, he grinned wildly. "I just have to wait

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until Jaejoong makes you made enough to kill him and I'll have Yoochun all to myself. That shouldn't take more than a few seconds. This will all be over by dinner."

"And what of your three voices?" Yunho lifted his eyebrows.

"Ah, we can still have three. We'll be YJY then," He laughed at Yunho's shocked look. "What? I'd like to be in the middle for a change."

"Oh, little brother," He laughed despite himself, hugging Junsu close. "You have no idea how much simpler your life would be if you really wanted to be in the middle. So much simpler."

THREE

The knock on the door startled Yunho. Junsu left barely ten minutes ago and they'd talked themselves out. There wasn't anything more either one of them could say. Tightening the strings on his loose cotton pants, Yunho padded out of the bathroom and headed to the door of his hotel suite.

Peering through the fish-eye peephole, Yunho's stomach twisted and his heart shattered on the next beat.

Jaejoong.

He opened the door and his heart bled again, pumping a furious anguish through his body. With only air separating the two of them, Yunho stared at the lean young man who drove him insane.

"Can I come in?" Jaejoong asked. His Korean was formal, distant and cold. A flicker of something hot ran in his dark eyes, devoid of any contacts hiding their honey flecked depths. "Or do you want me to drop to my knees and suck you off in the hallway?"

"God, your mouth. Come in," Yunho stepped aside. Jaejoong brushed against him, their bodies heating up instantly as they touched. Even through Jae's t-shirt, Yunho could feel the other man's warmth and smell the exotic green tea blush of his cologne. "How did you know I was here?"

"Susu-ah," Jaejoong said, cocking his head to one side as he looked around the suite. "He's predictable and the world's worst liar."

"True," He agreed, closing the door. "So you followed him?"

"No, I guessed," Jae replied. "If he was bringing his brother over, he'd have told us. There's no one else I could think of. Besides,

the hotel called to confirm his reservation.”

“That’s pretty bad.” Yunho silently cursed Junsu, wishing the younger man was better at covering his tracks. He walked over to the bar and grabbed two ice cold bottles of ume sake from the fridge, handing one to Jaejoong. “Why did you come then?”

“To see you.” Jaejoong reached out and grasped Yunho’s wrist, stepping into the curve of the man’s arm. “To see *why* you came. Are you here to bring us back home or did you just come to take what you wanted?”

“And what is it you think I want?” Yunho tilted his head down, brushing his cheek against Jae’s soft hair. Their mouths were close, their breaths mingling as they exhaled.

“Me. It’s what you’ve always wanted, even when you were fucking the others, you’ve only wanted me,” Jaejoong whispered and closed his mouth over Yunho’s, tilting his chin up as the man claimed Jae’s lips as his own.



Junsu died a little bit with each passing second and his chest ached with each beat of his heart.

Death came in small touches, lingering fingertips on Junsu’s skin. A bead of sweat falling was as sharp as a knife plunged deep into his heart, especially when Yoochun’s body writhed in a sensual twist around an invisible partner. The burn of want lit the dryness in Junsu’s mouth, searing his tongue and parching his throat. Swallowing did no good. His taste was lacking the salty sweetness of Yoochun’s release; something Junsu only could imagine in the darkest, deepest recesses of his mind.

“There,” Chun panted, bending over to rest his palms on his knees. “It’s hard to believe I can still remember those steps.”

“You practice as if we’re going...” Junsu looked down, unwilling to finish his thought.

“Like we’ll be alright,” Yoochun finished for him.

The baritone picked up a towel and wiped away the moisture on his forehead, tossing the cloth aside when he was done. Padding across the wood floor of their empty dining room, he approached

the other man sitting on the back of the couch. Resting his hands on Junsu's knees, Yoochun parted the singer's legs and nested between them, sliding his stomach up against the other man's body.

"We will be alright, Susu," He whispered, bending over until his breath ghosted over Junsu's ear. "All of us will be alright."

Junsu shivered, aroused by the erotic maleness of Yoochun's warm body fitted snugly between his knees and the promise in the man's husky voice. He choked, caught on the air in his throat when Yoochun's hands roamed up his thighs and then over his hips, the singer's long fingers catching on the waistband of his shorts.

"Will we?" Junsu rasped, lowering his head until his mouth nearly brushed over Yoochun's lips. A flick of his tongue wet the dry skin on his lower lip and he caught a taste of Yoochun when the other man shifted to bring his mouth closer. "Are we... alright? You and I? Sometimes...I feel like I can't breathe because you haven't exhaled yet. I don't know what to do about this, Chunnie-ah."

"About all of what?" Yoochun asked. He wrapped his arm around the young man's waist and slowly slid his index finger past the tight elastic of Junsu's basketball shorts. A brief sensual search of Junsu's body found the young man's cleft and Yoochun rubbed the pad of his finger at the base of Junsu's spine, making lazy eights into the top of the crease.

"This." Trapped on the couch by Yoochun's body, Junsu shifted uncomfortably as his body responded to the other man's masculine scent. The man smelled of musk and a hint of sweet spiced vanilla soap and the tenor couldn't help but fill his lungs with Yoochun, holding it tight in his chest until his lungs pounded for release.

"This?" Yoochun whispered as he caught Junsu's chin in his fingers. "What do you mean when you say this?"

"We... you and I... were so close. Sometimes I thought maybe even closer than..."

"Than Jaejoong and Yunho?" Yoochun filled in the emptiness in Junsu's whisper. "We still are. Do you think I've thrown you aside like hyung did to Joongie-ah? How can you say that? Knowing how much Jaejoong hurts? How can you think that?"

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"Sometimes..." Junsu closed his eyes against the pain crawling up his chest and into his throat. "Sometimes I feel when Yunho stepped away, you moved in to take his place."

"And where is my place?" Yoochun's fingers ghosted over Junsu's throat, running a delicate circle. "Do you wish it was standing by you, Susu-ah? Do you miss having the smell of me on you as we sing?"

"I hate that you're standing on Jaejoong's right side," He admitted, choking on his words. "I hate him standing between us. Sometimes I can't even bear to feel the heat of his body next to mine because he's not you."

"You know why we moved." The other man pulled back, staring into Junsu's tear-stung eyes. "The world has to see us as a three. If we stood as we were, it would hurt the others. It would be as if we didn't need them to find us again. It would be like we could just cut off the right side of our bodies and still be whole. None of us wanted that, especially you."

"I know." Junsu shook his head, remembering the anguish in Jaejoong's cries when they'd stumbled off stage and there were only three people in their customary backstage hug. They weren't whole. The sounds of their lives were changed, empty and echoing where deep rumbles and laughter should be. "It has to be different. I know that. I just... I just need you to be next to me again. At least sometimes. So I can feel you there. My world isn't right without...you."

"I am right here, babe," Yoochun said, smiling the shy smile tugging at Junsu's lips. "I didn't go anywhere. I am always here for you. It's just Jaejoong... he's alone now. Yunho..."

"I know," The other man replied, nodding. "I haven't spoken to Yunho since...then."

"Since we found out Yunho was fucking ...*him*?" Yoochun said. "I could kill them for that. What the hell were they thinking? How could Yunho hurt Joongie-ah that way?"

"They didn't..." Junsu closed his mouth and Yoochun's fingers tightened on his face. The baritone forced the other man to look up,

pulling on Junsu's chin until their eyes met. "I don't think they meant to hurt him."

"What did you know and when, Susu?" Yoochun's voice dropped, a raking deep purr edged with danger. "Did you know it was becoming something more than a good time between them? That Yunho had other plans besides having a few moments of pleasure?"

"No!" He twisted to release himself. "You know I never wanted Jaejoong to be hurt. I thought it would just...go away and I wouldn't have to deal with it. Then everyone found out and things fell apart. Then I..."

Yoochun nodded curtly. "You were hurting."

"I did this to us, Chunnie-ah," He cried, catching his lip between his teeth. "If I'd been stronger or..."

"How strong would you have to have been, Junsu?" He pressed his palms against the other man's cheeks, using his thumbs to wipe at the moisture forming on Junsu's lashes. "They broke Jaejoong and told lies to the world with smiles on their face. They brought my mother and brother to Seoul, hoping that they could use them to keep me in line and you... look how much they took from you? You gave the company everything you had and still they wanted more from us. You would sing yourself mute for smile, pretty little duck. And they knew that. They used that. Just like they used your brother to hold onto you."

"They shouldn't have...not him," Junsu murmured, his old anger surfacing. "Not Junho."

"No, not Junho." Yoochun agreed. His hands drifted up to cup Junsu's hips, skimming his palms over the man's sides. "You couldn't go another day at that pace, Susu. It was killing you. It was killing me to watch you die in front of me. How could I stand by and let them do that to you?"

"So you went to Jaejoong," He whispered. "And he went to hyung, hoping that Yunho would agree to stand with us. But he did, Chunnie. He did!"

"For a few days," The man said, nodding. "Then he chose them

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over us. For whatever reason, babe, they were more important to him that the men he said were his brothers...and Jaejoong. But I am here for you, Susu-ah. Jaejoong and I knew it would be hard. We just didn't know it would be this hard. *I* didn't know it would be this hard. Not for Joongie. I never expected Yunho to..."

Yoochun couldn't finish, keeping Jae's anguish unspoken. Junsu murmured a comfort, laying his palms over Yoochun's hands. "I should have spoken to you before this, Chunnie. I never should have let things get so bad inside of me."

"I'm just... I don't know how I feel."

"Frustrated." Junsu sighed, deflated. Resting his forehead on Yoochun's collarbone, he closed his eyes, wishing away the pain needling up under his skin. "Everything got so complicated so quickly. One moment, we were five and then the next..."

"We were ghosts," Yoochun said. "It's as if we never existed for them."

"And it hurts, Chunnie-ah." He whispered, wishing he were brave enough to let his tongue slip out from between his lips and lick at the salted skin stretched over Yoochun's throat. He only had enough courage in him to voice the fear wrapped around his heart. "And now I feel as if I've lost you as well."

"You've not lost me, Susu-ah."

"Then why don't you..." Junsu couldn't let his eyes drift open. He didn't want to see the raw truth in Yoochun's eyes or the twist of disappointment he'd feel in his heart when Yoochun's smile faltered. "Then why don't you touch me like you touch Jaejoong?"

Yoochun's lips brushed over the pulse point on Junsu's throat and the tenor's heart leapt, pounding harder when the other man fit himself against the curve of Junsu's body. The young man's hands trembled, reaching to find a purchase on the baritone's sleek body. Touching the length of Yoochun's body enflamed his need, stretching his sex out in search of the other's skin.

"Because you're not Jaejoong," Yoochun said softly. "And you never will be. He's my soul, Junsu. I share everything with him because would never use anything against me."

"I would never hurt you," Junsu confessed.

"I know," The man murmured, his voice hoarse and rough. "How could you think I'd toss you aside?"

"Jaejoong..." He stammered, tilting his head back and wondering if the fire burning in his belly would escape and they would both turn to ash from its heat."

"Jaejoong is not here." Yoochun corrected. "Do you want him to be? Do you want him here instead of me?"

"No!" The tenor gritted his teeth. "I don't want him. Not... like..."

"Then Yunho? The other end of our five that used to anchor us then set us adrift like garbage? Is it his mouth you want on you?"

"Are you going to make me beg for this, Yoochun? Are you going to make me beg for you?"

"I should," Yoochun admitted. "But I want something else instead and I should have done something about it a long time ago"

Their mouths finally touched, the briefest of skin against skin then Yoochun moved in closer, capturing Junsu's chin with his other hand. The soft burr of Junsu's downy jaw tickled Yoochun's palm as he drank from Junsu's sweet mouth. Mewling with need, the singer opened up to Yoochun's teasing mouth, parting his lips under the other man's tongue. Chun tasted Junsu lightly, skimming the tips of his teeth then darting in deeper until the tip of his tongue laved at the roof of Junsu's mouth. A flick of his tongue rasped over the striations of the young man's palate, tickling the sensitive skin then he went in deeper, closing his mouth tightly along Junsu's pouting lips until he stole the singer's breath.

Junsu's hands trembled when he tangled his fingers into Yoochun's soft hair. Carding through the black silk around the young man's broad face, he reveled in its luxury, deeply inhaling the citrus scent of Yoochun's shampoo and the musky sweetness of his sweaty body. A dark primal need rose from Junsu's belly and he moaned, pressing against Yoochun's long body until he thought he would break with the wanting of the man's hands on him. The fingers playing at the cleft of his ass moved up and down, stroking

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the skin there until it burned and he instinctively thrust his hips up to meet Yoochun's hand as it came back down. His body knew it needed something sharp and firm inside of it and the grinding of his hips brought a thickness to Yoochun's crux that Junsu suspected would satisfy his longing.

"Yoochun!" Junsu gasped, needing air. "I need to know if...you've done this with..."

"Joongie?" Yoochun bit the soft silky place under Junsu's ear, rolling the tender flesh between his teeth until he could almost feel his canines pierce the milky skin. "Have I done this to Jaejoong?"

Junsu didn't know if he wanted the answer, not really. The enigmatic singer always stood between them, a phantom of sensual masculinity Junsu could never measure up to. Swallowing hard, he said, "Yes. Have you? Done..."

"Aish... Susu."

"I come in sometimes and you both smell like... sex and it feels like my stomach is being torn open. All of the acid in me burns and I can taste the sour in my throat." Junsu gripped Yoochun's shoulders, forcing himself to stare into the other man's soulful eyes. "So I need to know, Yoochun... I need to know if when you're done with me here...when you're done doing all of the things I ache for you to do to me... are you going to go back to Jaejoong and do them to him too?"

Yoochun stared at the other man's face, uncertainty clouding his expression. Taking a deep breath, he puffed his cheeks out and threw his head back, thinking of what to say.

"It's complicated, Susu," He started then stilled when Junsu stiffened in his arms. "Listen to me, babe. Stop and listen before you run off."

"I don't think I can..." Junsu's lip beaded with a drop of blood as he bit hard to keep himself from crying. "I want things to go back to how they were. Before all of this happened... even if it killed me, at least it was just my body. I can't take this killing my soul too."

"Do you want me that much, Junsu? That you can't share me with Jaejoong?"

"Yes," He barely let the word free from his tongue when Yoochun sighed. "Is that so wrong, Chunnie-ah? I *miss* you. I miss having you near me. I miss waking up to you snoring and having the windows open so wide that I'm freezing and I have to crawl into your bed to get warm. I miss waking up and finding your arms around me and your nose buried between my shoulder blades. I miss talking to you and finding you smiling only for me. I miss having Yunho here because he would distract Jaejoong and we could be left alone and I miss standing next to you and hearing you sing because it felt like you were singing only for me. I miss that most of all."

"Then I can't do this, Susu-ah," Yoochun stepped away, letting his hands drop to his side. "Because I can't leave Jaejoong alone. Not now. Maybe not ever. You're asking me to choose between you. I can't do that."

"You can!" Junsu gritted his teeth. "Damn it, you can! I'm not asking you to stop being his friend just..."

"Stop being his lover?" The baritone shook his head then raked his fingers through his hair. "I'm all he has left, Junsu. There's no one else in his life he loves. What we do isn't... it's not romance. It's comfort and ... I make him feel alive, Susu-ah. When I touch him, he can forget about the pain he's holding in. After everything that he's done for you, the sacrifices he's made for you and what's happened since he stood up for you, I can't believe you'd want him to suffer like that."

"Suffer? Do you think he's suffering, Yoochun? Do you think he suffers when he has to smell himself on you? Like I have to smell him on you? I don't want Jaejoong. I don't want what he has from you." Junsu stepped forward, torn between punching Yoochun or shaking him. "I don't want your comfort, Chunnie-ah. I want more, remember? I want your love."

"Ah, Junsu..." Yoochun sighed. "You're asking me to be in love with you. I don't know if I can do that."

"Why not?" He asked. The world blurred, watery and stinging then Junsu blinked, letting his tears fall. "What is so wrong with me

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wanting more than what Jaejoong has? For once, I'd like to come first. At least with you."

"Because you knew Yunho was having sex with Dong-Wook and you never said anything," Yoochun spat back. "You knew for months and you never said anything. In the middle of our world falling apart around us, you kept your mouth shut and let my best friend believe Yunho loved him when he was only being used for sex."

"Isn't that what you're doing with him now?"

"No," Yoochun denied. "Now he's consoling me because the man I was in love with tore us all apart. The man I wanted to tell for years that I loved chose to keep quiet when he needed to speak up. I don't know if I can be in love with that man. I love you, Junsu. I love you deeply, babe but I just don't know if I can ever be in love with you again."

FOUR

Changmin nestled down into the enormous floor pillows he'd arranged on his living room floor. Cradling a chilled glass of Tsing Tao, he reached for the e-book reader he'd left on the cushions. A single art deco *torchiere* spread golden light over the young man's lean body. Alone in the apartment, he'd pulled on only a pair of black boxer-briefs after his shower, toweling off his hair and letting it air dry.

The beer quashed any residual heat leftover in his mouth from the *soondubuchigae* he'd eaten for dinner. The bowl of nori-wrapped arare was salty-sweet enough to compliment the Tsing Tao's smooth flavour and the book was interesting enough to keep his attention diverted from the heavy thoughts plaguing him.

Or so he thought.

His cell phone lay on its face, nearly buried under a pillow. He'd spent the last hour staring at it, wondering what possessed him to get involved with the emotional messes littering his life and if there was someone he could call to make it all better. No one came to mind and he'd shoved the phone nearly out of sight, hoping to stop thinking about the men who filled his thoughts.

Jinagabeorin eorin sijeoren pungseon eul tago naraganeun yeppeun kkumdo kkueotji... sang out from under the cushions, startling Min. He yelped when a cold splash of beer hit his bare stomach and icy foam caught on the trail of hair around his navel, liquid filling his belly button and sending shivers down his crotch. Holding the glass up, he flicked off as much of the beer as he could as his cell phone continued its sing-song call.

Answer it. A tiny growling voice echoed in the back of his head.

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Min ignored it and the voice prodded him again. *You KNOW who that is.*

“I don’t want to answer it.” He felt silly arguing with himself, especially when it seemed like the irrational part of his brain always seemed to have the upper hand.

You can’t possibly think I’M the irrational part. If Changmin were honest with himself... and not afraid of admitting to an impending insanity, he’d have sworn the gremlin voice sniffed. *You know you want to answer it. He’s going to keep calling until you do. And one day when the phone doesn’t ring, you’re going to wonder why he stopped calling. Give in. He’s much more persistent and stubborn than you’ll ever be.*

“There are times when I hate myself,” Changmin grumbled, setting down his beer. Inhaling sharply, he steeled himself for the voice on the other side of the line. “Hello?”

“Hello, baby.”

He acted as if nothing happened. As if nothing changed. Like there’d not been a betrayal and hot tears mingled with fierce words.

As if Min’s heart hadn’t been gutted at the sight of his maybe soon-to-be-lover’s hands on Yunho’s hips.

“Are you there?” Se7en asked. Min heard him breathing over the phone, a sigh caught in the back of his throat. “*Kirinza*¹...”

“You don’t get to call me that,” Changmin said, his voice as hard and sharp as the pain lodged in his chest. “Stop calling me.”

“I need to see you.”

“I need to have you dying slowly of a thousand piercings of a shallow needle while being soaked in a vat of salty acid but I don’t see that happening.” Min replied. “I’ll give you what you need right after I get what I need.”

¹ Japanese word for *Camelopardalis*, a large but faint constellation in the northern sky. The constellation was first described by Jakob Bartsch in 1624, but was created earlier by Petrus Plancius. The word *camelopardalis* comes from Latin and it is the Romanization of the Greek “καμηλοπάρδαλις” meaning “giraffe”, from “κάμηλος” (*kamēlos*), “camel” + “πάρδαλις” (*pardalis*), “leopard”, due to its having a long neck like a camel and spots like a leopard. It is located next to the *Cassiopeia* constellation.

“Give me half an hour. I just want to talk to you.” Se7en said. “Just talk.”

It would have been more satisfying to hang on the man if there’d been a tincture of begging in his voice but Se7en’s smooth tone purred instead of plead, as if he had every right to demand some of Changmin’s time. A flick of his finger gave him a dial tone he listened to for a full three seconds before closing his phone. It rang again just like every night when Se7en called and Changmin hung up on him, rolling over to voice mail after a bit. He waited for the phone to ring again. Se7en could be counted on at least three voice mails before he gave up but the phone remained mute.

See, now you’re wondering why he’s not calling back. The gremlin gloated. Pretty soon, he might call every other day and you’ll be left wondering why he isn’t trying harder... or if he ever really wanted you to begin with.

“Fuck you,” Changmin scolded himself. “He should have thought about that before he...”

Fucked Yunho? The same Yunho you’re sharing an apartment with? How is Se7en more to blame than Yunho? Why is Yunho being forgiven but not Dong-Wook?

“Because...” He didn’t have an answer. Yunho came to him, formally contrite with an apology but not an explanation. Changmin swallowed his pride and forgave the man he looked up to as an older brother. Se7en, however, was another matter.

Only because you’d sided with Yunho when the three ran away. The voice crowed. If you’d not forgiven Yunho, you wouldn’t have anyone. Admit it, you accepted Yunho’s apology because you’re a coward and afraid no one else will love you other than the members. Se7en’s only chasing after you because to him, you’re the one that got away. Once you forgive him, he’ll stop chasing you and then where will you be?

Shattered was the only word he could use to describe the feelings inside of him when he’d found out about Se7en and Yunho. Up until then, his anger and rage about the other three took up most of his heart and mind. The intense glut of hurt he’d bottled up inside of him had been washed away with a new torrent of pain,

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one he wasn't certain he'd ever recover from.

A scratching noise stopped Min from replying to the smug tone of his own inner demon. When it grew louder, he frowned, wondering if the neighbour's cat had somehow gotten into their apartment again. Placing the beer bottle on the floor, he got up to investigate.

Another shuffling sound drew him to the apartment's front door and Min stood to watch a bundle of rose petals being shoved under the door. Wrapped tight in folds, the petals sprang open once clear of the door's edge, their pungent fragrance releasing into the small entrance area. From the scattered piles of blood red petals, Min guessed at least five roses had been sacrificed with another packet of petals being worked under the door as he breathing in their fragrance.

"Dong-Wook?" Changmin asked, tentatively calling out to whoever was slaughtering flowers outside of his front door. He couldn't discount a fan. Some went to extremes to show their devotion and he'd been cornered more than once before. "Gods, please let that be Dong-Wook."

"Do you have anyone else that comes to your door to shove roses under it?" Se7en's voice was muffled but Min could still make out his words.

"Maybe." Changmin's stubbornness refused to budge, even under the onslaught of perfume on his senses.

"I have carnations too," The other man called out.

The husky growl of his voice tightened Min's sex and desire rolled in the young man's belly. Shushing himself, Min rolled his eyes at his inner demon cheered Se7en's stuffing a pink carnation under the door to join the pile of rose petals. It cleared the thick wooded plank and exploded into a sweet-smelling confetti.

Stepping over the spread of petals, Min closed his eyes and leaned his forehead against the door. Their battle of wills stretched, nearly six months of back and forth and standing in the middle of a growing massacre of fragrant flowers. The fatigue in his bones expanded, filling him and Changmin slid down the door, dropping

to his knees.

"It hurts too much," He whispered, a small tear running down his cheek and falling free from his face. It struck a crumpled rose petal, beading up on the wrinkled curve. "Why did you have to sleep with Yunho? Why?"

"I'm sorry, *Kirinza*," Se7en said softly, rapping at the door with his knuckles. "Let me in, baby. Let me in to hold you. Let me in to say I'm sorry and kiss away your tears. I can feel you crying and it's killing me. Please, baby, give me a chance to kiss away your tears and I promise, I'll never make you cry again."



Yoochun was lost in his thoughts when Jaejoong came home, barely hearing the front door close with a soft click. The singer shed his shoes by the door and padded barefoot into the living room, settling down on the couch near Yoochun's feet. The baritone's dark eyes were wet, shimmering and soft with pain and Jaejoong sighed heavily.

"What happened?" He asked, rubbing at Yoochun's ankle bone with the flat of his thumb. "Where's Susu-ah?"

"He left after I told him I wasn't in love with him." Yoochun whispered, rubbing at his face with the back of his hand. His eyes smarted, burnt nearly black from the salty tears he'd shed in the hour or so since Junsu shut the door behind him. "God, I'm an idiot."

"Yeah," Jaejoong said, playfully wincing when Yoochun kicked him. "I was just agreeing with you."

"A true friend would deny I was an idiot."

"A true friend doesn't deny you're an idiot but helps you fix what you screwed up," Jaejoong corrected. "Where was he going?"

"I don't know." Yoochun shrugged. "He can barely speak Japanese well enough to order ramen. He gets drunk on half a beer so a bar is out and he won't go to karaoke by himself. What else is there?"

"Yunho," Jaejoong replied, mocking Yoochun's wide eyes with a dramatic gasp. Growing serious, he continued, "Yunho is here. At

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the Four Seasons hotel. The big one down the road. Junsu called him."

"Why?" Yoochun couldn't keep the bitterness from his voice. "Why call for him now? And why would he come after everything he's done?"

"Jealous," Jaejoong said.

"Which one?"

"Both." A helpless shrug was the only answer Jaejoong had for his brother-in-all-but-blood.

"Did you go to see him?" Yoochun hissed at Jaejoong's telling eye-roll. "Of course, what else would you do? Of course you would go see him. He's like a drop of water in your desert. You can't help but go see him."

"Only for a moment," He confessed.

"What happened?"

"I let him kiss me," Jae mumbled, dropping his gaze down to the floor.

"Oh, Joongie-ah," Yoochun sighed. "You were going to walk away from him, remember? Distance, you said. You need to be away from him. No one hurts you like he does, you said — and you went and let him kiss you? Did you kiss him back?"

"Yes," Jaejoong grimaced then held up his hand, showing Yoochun his hand, the skin on his knuckles scraped raw and red. "Then I punched him in the mouth and walked away. I hope to God he chokes to death on one of his front teeth or maybe even his lying tongue."

"Aish..." Yoochun hissed and reached over to grab his friend's hand, inspecting the damage. "We need to get ice on this."

"No, the pain's good because the moment that it stops hurting..." Jae met Yoochun's tear-ravaged gaze with a wavering glance. "I know I'm going to go crawling back to him for more."



The ice burned nearly as much as Jaejoong's punch and not for the first time, Yunho pondered the wisdom of falling in love with the temperamental singer. By the time Junsu knocked on his room

door, he'd already run through two hand towels to stop the bleeding and a glass of warm whiskey to dull the pain.

"Stop taking it off," Junsu ordered, leaned across the couch they were sitting on and slapped Yunho's shoulder. "You've got to keep the ice pack on."

"It's not an ice pack, it's a glacier," Yunho complained, testing his teeth with a prod of his tongue. His right canine jiggled a little bit and he forced himself to leave it alone, hoping the root would firm up once the swelling on his gums went down. "Stop fussing at me."

"Sorry." Junsu's hands fell away and the despair he fought to keep from his face reemerged.

"No, no crying," Yunho ordered. Putting the ice pack down, he leaned his head on the couch back. "Enough crying."

"I'm not crying," Junsu sniffed. "I'm... I need a good swear word."

They'd traded horror stories, brief details of their failed conversations and the remorse that followed. A tall Kirin Ichiban was split between them and Junsu's glass was nearly empty, his cheeks flushed red from the alcohol. Outside the city suffered another drenching, sheets of water falling nearly sideways as the rain came down in a fury. Yunho stared at the darkness outside of the window, wondering how he'd complicated his life into such a tangle.

"Do you think he hates you?" Yunho asked.

"Who? Jaejoong or Yoochun?" He puffed out his cheeks and thought. "I think Yoochun loves me. He said he was in love with me but he didn't want to tell me because it might ruin things."

"Love doesn't ruin things," The man replied.

"Because you and Jaejoong worked out so well," Junsu shot back.

"It's not over yet," Yunho promised.

"Only because both of you aren't dead yet." Yunho glared at Junsu over the wadded up towel. "It's true. Even if one of you dies first, the other will just dig him up or throw himself in the grave

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and beg for us to cover him with dirt. You just don't want to admit it."

"When did you become so cynical?" He cocked his head, hearing a tinge of Changmin in Junsu's words.

"When Yoochun told me he could never love someone like me... someone who betrayed him." He sighed.

"And he doesn't even know all of it," Yunho replied, waving off Junsu's shocked look. "Don't be worried. I didn't say anything to Joongie. I didn't have the chance."

"Did you talk to him at all?" Junsu asked, burping a yeasty bubble.

"No," Yunho replied, bringing the ice-filled towel back up to his face. "Just a kiss then lights out. I woke up with my face hurting, the door wide open and my room empty of pretty, naked Korean singers."

"Yeah, he's been lifting weights. His arms are huge and I wish I had his chest." He looked down at his torso. "Chunnie and I are always the scrawny ones."

"He does that when he's frustrated...work out, I mean," The man said. "Sexually and otherwise."

"Jaejoong's sleeping with Yoochun." Junsu said. Picking up his beer, he drained it and reached for the bottle. Clumsily refilling his glass, Junsu watched the foam crest into a thick head. "He can't be that sexually frustrated."

"Have you seen them..." Yunho motioned with his free hand, vulgarly miming penetration. "Do it all the way."

"They're not that rude." He shook his head. The rain didn't hold his interest like it did Yunho's and after a moment of trying to see past the fog on the window, Junsu grabbed a throw pillow and began picking at its trim. "I sometimes walk into the room and it smells like sex. And I've seen them... kiss and..."

"Have you seen them have sex?" Yunho pressed. "Something more than hands?"

"No," Junsu admitted. "Nothing like that. Sometimes a kiss. And there are times when I think they're...doing something under

the blankets. I think they do things in my room! Like I'm not even sleeping there!"

"Then they're not sleeping together. Not like that." Yunho grunted, a small kernel of satisfaction planted in his heart. "Jaejoong's careless and Yoochun's oblivious. If they were having sex, you'd have walked in on them by now. Think about how many times you caught Jae and I...and I was trying to be discreet."

"If you were that careful," Junsu said, trying to suppress another burp. "You wouldn't have been caught with Se7en and none of this..." He waved his glass in the air, sloshing a few drops on the carpet. "None of this would have happened. The truth is... you're not that careful."

"Careful enough," Yunho replied softly and saluted Junsu with his glass. "No one knew I was having sex with you, Susu-ah so — I think that's careful enough, no?"

FIVE

Changmin returned to the living room to find a barefoot Se7en sprawled on the floor cushions and finishing Min's beer. Tying a loose bow in the drawstrings of his cotton pants, Changmin stood over the other man and shot him a dirty look.

"Really?" He took the empty glass from Se7en's hand. "That was mine."

"I didn't think it was Yunho's. He's in Japan trying to patch things up with his harem," The other man shot back as Min walked away. "If you're getting another beer, bring me one too."

"My mother didn't raise me to be your servant," Changmin growled, bringing two bottles of Tsing Tao back from the kitchen.

"If she had, you wouldn't be giving me a beer," Se7en purred. "You'd be giving me..."

"That's my mother you are talking about," He warned. "Think very carefully before finishing that sentence."

"Fair enough," The other man said. Patting the cushions, Se7en's face grew serious. "Come sit down."

Min's contrary nature rebelled at the thought of obeying the older man's quiet request but he lowered himself onto the pillows, keeping a safe distance from Se7en's wandering fingers.

"You're too far away," Se7en complained.

"No, I'm far away enough," Min corrected. "You wanted to talk so talk."

It's a wonder you've ever been kissed, The gremlin complained. *We are NEVER going to get laid.*

"Talking isn't all I had in mind." Se7en said softly. "But I'll behave."

I would rather you didn't but apparently he's not going to listen to anything I have to say, Min's inner voice grumbled.

"Shut up," Min hissed to himself. "Talk, Shichi, before I change my mind. I want to see how you can explain having sex with Yunho and still think you're going to have a chance with me."



"Do you think they're together?" Yoochun asked, his voice nearly drowned out by the sound of rain coming through the open window. "Junsu and Yunho."

"Probably." Jaejoong climbed over Yoochun's legs and settled into the bed next to his friend. Tucking a pillow into his arms, he cradled it between his knees, hoping the soft comfort would take away the wrenching ache left in his groin from Yunho's kiss. Outside, the night deepened and the soft brush of water against the glass masked the catch of pain in Yoochun's sighs. "I'm sorry, Chun. I wish..."

"We could make it better for each other?" Yoochun murmured when Jaejoong's arms wrapped around him and the singer's bare torso warmed Yoochun's naked back. A dot of cold prodded Yoochun's spine, Jae's stainless steel belly ring a sharp reminder of the other man's fondness for diving into the darkness around him.

They were so different, Yoochun mused as he hugged Jaejoong's strong arms in a tight embrace. Jaejoong was wild, driven by demons and ambitions Yoochun couldn't begin to imagine. For Jae, everything had an edge, something sharp and if he moved too quickly, even a word could cut him and he would bleed.

And there were times when Jaejoong couldn't help but race along the razor's edge, laughingly explaining to Yoochun that the pain was the only thing he knew was real... and everything else around him, including the love they had for him, was nothing but a dream he would soon wake from.

Connected first by circumstance then by an intangible bond between them that defied explanation, Yoochun wondered if he would ever be as strong as his friend... as willing to throw himself into the unknown and risk everything for someone else. It was

Jaejoong that took the first step away from the company that owned them, a treacherous journey he chose not because he needed to be free but because Yoochun asked him to help free Junsu.

Jaejoong would die before admitting he couldn't handle the violence and pain their former company dished out but one crack in Yoochun's psyche over Junsu's failing health and Jaejoong was the dragon rising from the heavens to defend them, even when it meant leaving behind the one person Jaejoong loved more than Yoochun.

As the rain fell, their fears seemed smaller but the sharp prick of their sorrow pierced deeper into their hearts. Sharing nearly all of their secrets, the men let the light storm carry away the world outside, separating themselves from the lives they led beyond their front door.

The singer shifted on the bed, getting more comfortable on the soft mattress but his arms remained around Yoochun's body, cradling the young man close. Resting his chin on Yoochun's shoulder, he skimmed his long fingers up the other man's chest, following the length of Yoochun's collarbone with a gentle tickle.

"He thinks we...are doing things with each other," Yoochun whispered. "And I was so...I let him think that. I left him with that thought so he could feel as jealous as I did when I found out he was keeping Yunho's secrets."

"You're still angry with him," Jae said, his breath a hot kiss on Yoochun's skin. "You should forgive him."

"You haven't forgiven Yunho," Yoochun pointed out.

"No, but Junsu wasn't the one cheating on me," The other man replied. "He was keeping his hyung's secret. I keep telling myself that."

"We... did *this* to ourselves for him." The bitter rawness in Yoochun's words made Jaejoong wince. "We started this whole mess because I was afraid he wouldn't survive much longer. I needed to keep him safe; even when I thought he couldn't love me like I loved him... I needed to keep him safe. And that is how he repaid us, with... *lies*."

"He never lied. He just never spoke the truth."

"It's that kind of reasoning that keeps you going back to Yunho even after he hurts you." The baritone scoffed. "Listen to yourself, Joongie-ah. He is never going to love you where others can see it. You can't want that. You can't hide the rest of your life. Don't you deserve to be loved out in the open?"

"I do," He replied. "And yes, it's stupid to want him to love me. I know that. Yunho is too rigid...too stuck in his conservative ways to love me and every time he looks in my direction, I run to him. It's painful and the dumbest thing I can do but I do it anyway. We all know anything he shows in public isn't because he loves me but because he has no control over his passions. He keeps them too tightly imprisoned behind the brick wall of his face so they fight him, leaking out and spreading when he isn't watching."

"I think he loved you... still loves you," Yoochun said, letting his head drop back against Jae's shoulder. "He keeps circling around you. I don't think he can give you up. After everything he's done to you, he can't leave you be."

"He takes risks for me, Chunnie. You don't see it but he does."

"You risked everything for someone I loved and lost everything you had because of it. Yunho's risked nothing."

"I risked everything for someone I love," Jaejoong reminded Yoochun, tightening his hug until the air was almost squeezed out of Yoochun's body. "Just because I am not in love with you, that doesn't mean I won't do anything I can for you... even if it means having nothing. As long as you are my *soulmate*...my *brother*, I'm richer than anyone else I know."

"You'd be happier if it were Yunho you were hugging right now," Yoochun whispered, shifting and dropping his head forehead. "Instead of me."

"Just like you wish it were Junsu holding you instead of me." Something hot and wet hit Jae's forearm, soon followed by another. Each drop felt like acid on Jaejoong's skin, Yoochun's pain searing him down to his marrow. Bending closer, Jae pressed his lips to the back of Yoochun's head, kissing him with great care. "I wish he were here holding you too."

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Jaejoong said nothing when Yoochun's tears began to fall as hard as the rain outside of their window. He merely began rocking the younger man back and forth when his cries finally broke through the wall of silence he'd built to protect himself from his heartbreak. When the muffled aching noises shattered Jaejoong's own control, the singer bit his lip, tasting blood on his tongue.

"I'm sorry, Chunnie. I'm sorry," Jae murmured, rocking slowly to ease his friend's anguish.

"I hate loving him." Yoochun struggled to get some air and Jaejoong loosened his hold, dropping his hands to rub at the man's belly. "I don't want to love like this. I don't want to love..."

"Like I do?" Jaejoong asked.

"Like you do," He agreed, choking on clot in his throat. "How do you breathe? How can you stand to breathe in all of this pain?"

"I just have to," Jaejoong explained, continuing to form slow circles on Yoochun's stomach, his fingers leaving behind ghostly goosebump trails. "I don't have a choice but you do. If you love him, Chunnie-ah, then forgive him. It's too much to carry inside of you."

"You do." Yoochun put his hand over Jae's, trapping the singer's fingers against his heated skin. "For Yunho."

The bed under them squeaked when Jae moved, shifting his legs to hook his calves around Yoochun's. The baritone squirmed down, giving himself enough room to lay his head on Jae's arm. Turning in his friend's arms, he remained tangled into Jae's long body and stared up into the man's dark, tear-damp eyes.

"I don't want to love him," Jae admitted. "No, I do want to love him but I want him to love me back. Yes, in the open but that will never happen."

"Then why want to love him?"

"I think when we first started... I needed someone to be proud of me," The singer said. "I needed someone who was strong, better than me, to say that I was good enough to be standing next to all of you. Yunnie-ah gave me that."

"He drove you harder than the rest of us," Yoochun reminded

him. "Remember when he made you cry after the show? It was like he thought he was your father; not our leader."

"We'd already..." Jaejoong held his tongue between his teeth, biting on his flesh when Yoochun poked him in the chest with a finger.

"Already what?"

"He kissed me before we went on that night," The singer said. "I told him I was scared, just a little bit and he kissed me. On the mouth and told me to do my best."

"Then he yelled at you?" Chun hissed. "Asshole."

"Yunho was mad because he gave me a kiss and I didn't do my best. I let him down. I should have done better." Jaejoong placed his fingers on Yoochun's mouth before the man could protest. "He'd heard they were going to get rid of me and he was scared. He got angry because he thought I was taking risks."

"You always take risks."

"But right then, I was taking a risk with all of you," Jaejoong said. "That's why he was mad because it wasn't just about me. It was also about you. That's what he taught me. Even if I wasn't the leader, I still was responsible for all of you."

"He hurts you," Yoochun said, rubbing his friend's lower lip with his thumb then carding his fingers into Jae's thick dark hair. "You sound like one of those women who keep going back to a man who beats her. I don't want that for you, Joongie-ah. I want you to... be happy; to be loved."

"It would be easier if we were in love with each other," Jae laughed, a bitter, sour sound. "We could just ignore them."

"And you're the one who wants me to forgive Junsu," Yoochun reminded him.

"I want you to forgive him because something's got to give, Chunnie. We're not going to make it... the three of us, unless we make this thing between us go away."

"Suppose we can't?"

"Then everything I've let Yunho down once more time," Jae admitted. "He was the one who told me we should — at least the

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three of us — needed to get away... needed to be free. Without him holding me during all of this, I wouldn't have been strong enough to walk away from the company. Yunho made that possible, Chunnie-ah."

Yoochun snorted, cupping his friend's face. "Was this before or after he fucked Se7en?"

"I think he did that because..." Jae hissed, gritting his teeth. "I wasn't going to make it, Chunnie. I wasn't... strong enough. I wish I were but I wasn't. I still don't think I am. The company was safe. They told me what to do. Where to be. What to sing. And... there was Yunho. I *missed* him, Chunnie. I still do. It feels like I can't breathe without him near me — like I'm not alive."

"What are you talking about, Joongie?"

"I think Yunho planned for me to find him. He told me to keep the faith, Chunnie. When I found him... there, he told me then to keep the faith. I thought he was telling me not to give up on the five of us. I think... he was saying; don't give up on him," Jaejoong whispered. "I think he knew I wasn't going to make it; that I'd let you down like I let you down before. If I was mad at him, there'd be no going back. I wouldn't go back to... all of that because he wasn't there for me. It wouldn't be worth it. It would be too painful."

Yoochun swallowed, shaking his head in disbelief. "Joongie... I don't think..."

"You know him. Chunnie," Jae said. "You know how he thinks. Everything he does... *everything* is for the five of us. It's who he is. He can't help it. It would be like asking the rain outside not to be wet. I think Yunho was willing to set me aside so we would survive. We were *dying*, Chunnie. Junsu was sick all the time and neither of us were much better."

"What you're saying is... Yunho *chose* to drive us away from him..."

"I'm what he sacrificed so the three of us could be free. I wasn't strong enough to hold us together so he did it for us." Jaejoong used the heel of his hand to wipe away the tears on his face. "I think he chose... the three of us — the five of us over — my love for him."

I just have to get him to admit it.”

“And if he doesn’t?”

“Then I have to keep my faith in him alive,” Jae whispered.
“Until he’s willing to love me again.”

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"That was... years ago," Junsu griped, slapping at Yunho as the man got up. Yunho evaded him easily, stepping wide as he headed to the kitchen. "That doesn't count!"

"It does when no one knows about it," He replied, digging through the hotel's mini-bar for something to drink. "Jaejoong thinks he's the first guy I ever touched. I don't want him to find out otherwise."

"We didn't do much," The younger man wrinkled his nose. "If I'm going to be blamed for something, I want to have at least more fun."

"I wasn't fun?" Twisting the cap off of a cucumber Pepsi, Yunho returned Junsu's grimace. "You didn't complain then."

"I didn't know any better then," He replied, giving his leader a fake winning smile. "Now, it's different."

"Aish, so mean," Yunho said, returning to the couch and cuddling up to Junsu's side.

Yunho's body heat warmed Junsu's belly and the younger man moved, pulling his legs up and leaned closer. Yunho hooked his arm around the singer's shoulders, drawing him in to a loose embrace. If he let his mind wander, Junsu could almost convince himself that he was still a trainee and sensual heat of Yunho's chest and thighs belonged to a snaggle-toothed, fresh-faced, dancer intent on becoming *something* in the music world.

So much had changed since those days, Junsu mused, glancing up at Yunho's lean, masculine profile. They'd been so young, lived so much in a few short years and lost so much in the journey. He couldn't risk losing any more; especially not Yoochun.

"I thought I was in love with you back then," Junsu admitted.

"You just missed your brother," Yunho said. "He was gone and you needed someone. You just thought it was me."

"I used to make up excuses to touch you." The singer said, shaking his head. "I never did that with hyung."

"You never needed to with Junho." Yunho offered Junsu the bottle of light-green soda and the younger man wrinkled his nose in disgust.

"It doesn't change how I thought I felt. I needed you then... to be..."

"You were having a hard time." He moved his hips so Junsu could sprawl over his stomach and legs. Lifting his chin, Yunho felt Junsu settle into a comfortable position, tucking his head against Yunho's throat. "We both were."

The man's heart beat was as recognizable as his own, a quiet steady thump Junsu could feel when he pressed his hand flat on Yunho's chest. A musky spiced cologne now accompanied the unique masculine scent of Yunho's skin but that too was familiar. Junsu first gave Yunho the scent for his birthday years ago and the man wore it still.

"Do you ever wonder..." Junsu fisted his hand in Yunho's shirt, working his fingers into a tight knot. "Do you ever wonder how things would have been if we'd been... more lovers than friends?"

"Sometimes," Yunho admitted then barked a short laugh. "Usually when Joongie pissed me off."

"He's good at that," The singer said, curling his upper lip. "No one makes trouble like Jaejoong."

A few more heartbeats passed then Junsu blinked, his world suddenly watering and hot. Burying his face into Yunho's chest, he fought back the sob inside of him, a well of pain battling to escape. Taking a breath proved to be his undoing and the broken sound slithered out, tangled in Junsu's heaving sigh. Another followed, a hiccup of pain sharpened with tears and regret. Yunho silently lifted his arms and embraced Junsu, holding him tighter when the younger man tried to slide free of the hug.

"Let me," Yunho ordered. "Between us — you can cry."

The older man's eyes drifted, his attention fixed on the wall of darkness just outside of his hotel room window. The rain was no longer a stranger to the room, having settled in to provide a soundtrack for their shared pain. He had his own regrets; shoving Jaejoong away foremost in his mind and hearing the shattered animalistic sounds pouring from their most tender-hearted member, he now regretted the lies he'd arranged to be told to protect the three singers.

"Why didn't you fall in love with me?" Junsu sobbed, his mumbles nearly lost in his crying jags. "Why didn't I fall in love with *you*?"

"It just wasn't... we weren't meant to be, Su-ah," Yunho whispered, rubbing the small of the man's back. "You should have told Yoochun you were in love with him and I...should have told Jaejoong that my world is nothing without him."

"I'm... complaining....and you..." He struggled to pull himself upright but Yunho held him in place. "You never think about yourself first, hyung. He knows you love him. He has to."

"I never told him that I loved...that I love him. I never said those words," Yunho admitted. "Even when we were alone, I thought if I said... if I told him...then everything would change and..."

"You couldn't hide anymore," Junsu whispered. "I never told Yoochun because... I was afraid. I didn't want him to look at me and laugh. I didn't want him to tell me that he loved me but wasn't in love with me."

"He'd never laugh at you," The older man said. "Never."

"We were...safe, Yunho. We were safe where we were. If I spoke..." Junsu bit his lip. "I'm a coward, Yunho. I couldn't take that chance... I couldn't."

"Now, it looks like we have no choice," Yunho murmured, stroking Junsu's hair. "I think you and I need to talk to our... I don't even know what to call them."

"You're going to tell Jaejoong the truth?" Junsu asked. "He'll be

mad. God, Yoochun will hate me more than he does now."

"I think we need to, Susu-ah, but in the morning. Let's sleep here tonight and tomorrow, we can face the day together," Yunho said with a curt nod. "It's time we both tell the men we want that we love them."



"Do you have any idea how stupid this is?" Se7en grumbled, trying to find a comfortable position in his seat. He had to shout to be heard over the roaring engines, a yowling, auditory concussion that made him doubt the plane's ability to stay in the air.

"Shut up." Changmin's growl was nearly as threatening as the plane's. "It's the best we could do. No one expect us to come over on a mail plane. We'll be able to enter the country without people stalking us at the airport."

"You, maybe," The older man shouted to be heard. "They don't stalk me. I'm lucky if a driver comes to pick me up."

"You have a new album coming out soon," Changmin said, nudging Se7en with his foot. "What do you think would happen if everyone found out you were sneaking into Japan with someone from another company?"

"If they saw you in those jeans," Se7en quipped, eyeing Min's torn denims. "They'd say I was a lucky man and give me the address to the nearest love hotel."

Rolling his eyes, Min asked, "Is that *all* you think about?"

"Really? Since you put those on? Yes." He shifted again, realizing the discomfort in his body had nothing to do with the seat and everything to do with the press of his hard sex against the inseam of his jeans. "God, how long is this going to last?"

"The flight? A couple of hours to Tokyo," Changmin replied. "My uncle told me the plane goes slower than a commercial flight. The noise should cut off once we get above the cloud layer."

"When the hell is that?" Se7en's shout echoed in the cramped bulkhead as the engines suddenly dropped in volume and the plane leveled off.

"Now." Min's grin was wide and teasing.

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“Does this flight have food?” The older man rubbed at his face, trying to work the tired out of his eyes. “Actually, I don’t need food. I need something to drink, preferably something strong.”

“Coffee,” Changmin replied, digging out a large thermos from the duffel bag he’d brought onboard. “It’s very strong.”

“You’re going to kill me,” Se7en complained. “I meant strong as in numb my tongue, not kill my taste buds.”

“I should have killed you once I found out you’d lied about sleeping with Yunho,” Min shot back. “What the hell were you thinking?”

“Can you even say hell? You’re Buddhist.” Se7en sniffed at the paper cup of coffee he’d been given. The brew smelled sour and bitter black. Taking a small sip, he choked, his mouth agreeing with his nose’s assessment. “This tastes worse than some American beers I’ve had. How can you drink this?”

“It’s easy,” Min said, sipping at his cup. “After your kisses, anything tastes sweet.”

He took another sip, wincing around the harsh sourness in his mouth. “I take it you’re still mad, then?”

“You ask me that? Now?”

“It seemed like a good time,” Se7en said, waving his hand. “The scenery doesn’t seem to hold much interest.”

They took up the only two bucket seats in relatively roomy jet with steel racks holding bins of international mail filling the space behind them. A few feet away, a closed metal door separated them from the pilots’ cabin and four parachutes were hooked to the front wall, the heavy black back-cases swinging back and forth as the plane moved. Mostly windowless, their sole source of light came from small white bulbs positioned on a track above their heads.

“You are not innocent in this,” Min said, turning slightly so he faced Se7en. While roomier than most airplane seats, the mail plane wasn’t built for long-legged Koreans and his legs barely fit in the drop space. Sitting besides Se7en was his only choice and the other man’s close proximity was playing havoc on his nerves.

Just lean over and kiss him, His inner demon coaxed. The pilots

have a bathroom in their space. It's not like either one of them is going to come back here to check on you.

"You have the strangest expression on your face," Se7en said, studying Min's changing moods. "Is the coffee poisoned?"

"Yes, but I took the antidote before I poured it so I'll be okay," Changmin growled. "You, on the other hand — there is no hope for you."

"Ah, your loving concern rears its ugly head." He tsked at the younger man. "If you were going to poison me, you wouldn't have gone through so much effort to smuggle me into Japan."

"The only reason I'm smuggling you into Japan is so you can clear up the lies you've told to the members," Min snapped back. "After that, you're on your own. Go back to your world of half-truths and maybes. I don't want to be a part of it."

"No?" Se7en put the cup carefully down, lodging it between the seat side and the rack behind him. "Let's see about that."

The older man's cupped Min's face and he jerked his head back, startled. "What are you doing?"

YES! His gremlin exhorted, its shout loud enough to drown out the protests sputtering out of Changmin's brain.

Se7en's lush mouth slid over Changmin's, lightly brushing over the ripe, fullness of the younger man's lower lip. His tongue gently teased at the corners of Min's frown, tasting each dip until the sensations along his mouth made it impossible for Min to keep his lips pressed tightly together. At the first sign of give, Se7en slanted his head and covered Min's mouth in a searching kiss, slowly drawing out a single whimpering moan from Min's trembling throat.

The sound shook him and Se7en wondered how he could have ever given up the taste of the man he now held to him. Min tasted of bitter coffee laced with the sweet undertone of pure sensuality. A few grains of sugar that Min picked up from the edge of his cup were trapped between them and they scraped against Se7en's lips before melting under the dip of his tongue.

"Open for me, baby," The older man coaxed, pressing his

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thumb pads against Min's jaw line. Responsive to the touch, Changmin sighed and Se7en smiled when the other man's lips parted. "There you go. There isn't anything more beautiful than watching you bloom for me."

Their tongues fought, each man searching for something only the other could give and Se7en pressed in, swearing when the armrest between their seats dug into his side. Reaching for Min's hips, he undid the younger man's seat belt and wrapped his hands around Changmin's waist.

"Come here," He growled, his need dark and dangerous between them. "I can't kiss you properly like this."

Numb from the kiss, Changmin allowed himself to be pulled up and onto Se7en's lap, hooking his long legs over the armrest dividing their chairs. The older man's arm supported his back, blocking the hard plastic rest from digging into his muscles but when Min settled back, he could feel the press of Se7en's sex against the crease of his rear.

"You feel me, no?" Se7en stroked Min's face with light brushes of his fingertips. "Just kissing you makes me hard. No, don't squirm, baby. I'm too close as it is. If you move, I'll embarrass myself."

"We shouldn't be..." Changmin murmured, shaking his head to clear his thoughts. "We aren't... I am mad at you."

"Make up sex is the best," Se7en said, peppering small kisses along Min's throat.

"The first sex we have will *not* be make up sex."

"So long at some point in this, we have sex," Se7en whispered. "I'll be satisfied with kissing you breathless for right now."

"You can't kiss away your lies." Min rested his forehead against Se7en's. "There's so much... space between us, Shichi."

"Only because I was stupid enough not to trust you," He said then added. "And dumb enough to let Yunho talk me into doing stupid things."

"Why? What were you thinking?" Changmin leaned back, resting fully on Se7en's supporting arm.

"I take it we are done with the kissing part of this flight, then?" The older singer asked ruefully. Sighing at Min's stubborn pout, he rested back and shifted, adjusting Min's weight until the younger man was no longer pressing down on his unsatisfied shaft. "What was I thinking? I was thinking that Yunho told you or at least you would be patient enough to let me explain."

"I've never been patient," Min noted. "You know that."

"Yeah, I just never fully realized how intolerant and impatient you are." Se7en winced as Min struggled to get off of his lap. "Don't wiggle. You're making me hurt in places I should only feel pleasure. And for once, little dragon, let me talk to you before you stomp off in a tempest."

"May you piss glass shards," Min cursed.

"Is this for the lie or for saying that you're stubborn? I'm beginning to lose track of what kind of pain and punishment you're inflicting upon my karma. I should be writing these down."

"Start with the lie," Changmin ordered, letting Se7en's hands place him gently back on the other man's lap. The singer's fingers were firm on his hips, creeping up every few seconds to stroke at the bare skin between the hem of Min's shirt and his waistband. "And stop that, you're distracting me."

"I should be rewarded for the truth," Se7en said. "And before you pout again, let me finish talking. For once, let me say what I need to say without having to dodge words or objects flying at my head."

"Go ahead," Min growled.

"When Yunho called me and asked me to help him..." The older man put his fingertips on Min's opening mouth. "Shush, my turn."

Shut up, His demon prodded Min's brain. He's trying to talk to you and you keep interrupting.

Mollified, Min nodded. "Continue."

"When Yunho asked me for my help, I told him he was crazy and that Jaejoong would never believe it," Se7en said, caressing Min's back. "How could he all of a sudden be having an affair with

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me? I asked him that and he told me that he'd already planted those seeds into Jae's mind."

"Jaejoong was hurt," Min said, then pressed his lips together when Se7en shot him a hard glance. "Sorry."

"Anyway, I asked Yunho; what are you thinking? Why me?" The older man chuckled. "And he told me not to worry; Jaejoong wouldn't hold it against me because I'm a flirt. That's when I told Yunho I was interested in you... that I'd been seeing you for a bit but we'd not...done anything. I didn't want to lose that and do you know what he told me?"

"Can I speak now?" Min hissed at Se7en's pinch on his hip. "Ouch."

"He told me that you'd understand. That you were his dongsaeng and you'd do anything for him," Se7en laughed. "I guess he never told you about those conversations. Cunning Yunho. In one pretend indiscretion, he severed my relationship with you and pushed the three off to fly on their own. Well done."

"So that's why you kept coming around," Changmin whispered. "To tell me you never slept with Yunho."

"I want to know why he didn't say anything to you." The look on Se7en's face was nearly murderous. "I agreed to his stupid plot because he convinced me you five were miserable and I was someone he could trust. I just didn't know I couldn't trust *him*."

"He tried." Min dropped his gaze to his hands, suddenly finding his fingernails to be of great interest.

"What?" Se7en prodded him in the back. "What did Yunho try?"

"He tried to talk to me about you," Changmin admitted. "I...kind of hold a grudge. After I threw a cup at him to shut him up, he stopped trying. I told him I didn't want to hear anything about you and if he kept it up, I'd find someplace dark and deep to bury both of you in."

"Shit." Se7en exhaled sharply. "If I were him, I'd have believed you. You're scary when you're mad. Like a two year old with a machine gun."

"I'm not that bad," Min protested then winced, remembering the vitriolic words he'd screamed at Yunho. "Okay, maybe I am."

"You are," Se7en agreed. He was about to continue when one of the pilot's voices came over the intercom.

"There is a storm front covering Tokyo so we cannot go any further. I am sorry for the inconvenience, sirs but air traffic control is making us land in Matsue. You will have to get a train or car to travel into Tokyo but it might be difficult as all travel is affected. All flights are being grounded until tomorrow at the earliest, perhaps even the day after. Please secure yourself in your seats. We will be landing in a few minutes," The pilot's voice crackled over the speaker system. *"Again, my apologies."*

The plane banked sharply and the engine noise kicked in, drowning out the lengthy curses Changmin let loose. Se7en winced when the young man's face flushed red and he quickly settled the singer down into his own seat. Scrambling to fasten Min's seat belt, he jerked back when the younger man's hands slapped him away.

Clicking the belt fasteners together, Min growled between gritted teeth. "All I want to do is fix this... *thing* Yunho left for ruin between the five of us. Why is their God against me in this?"

"Maybe God isn't against you in this, Minku. Maybe he's just working for me." Grinning as the plane began its sharp descent, Se7en shot a glance up to the heavens and murmured. "Thank you for giving me more time with him. With your help, I can convince him to forgive me. And maybe then, we can put things to rights."



"This is insane," Yoochun hissed. "I can't believe I let you talk me into this."

"Pfah, what else are we supposed to do? Sit and wait for them like good little wives?" Jaejoong grumbled back. He extracted the plastic hotel room key he'd conned out of the front desk, trying to figure out which way to slide it into the door slot. "The door keeps moving."

"The door keeps moving because we're drunk," Yoochun said. "We should have stopped at two bottles of Junmai Ume Sake. Why did we think we could drink three large bottles?"

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"Because we can take our alcohol," The singer said, hiccupping. His face felt hot and he knew from experience his cheeks would be flushed red. Placing his hand on the door to keep it from moving, he shoved the card into the slot, crowing in delight when a light flashed green. "There! Got it open."

"Suppose they're... doing something..." Yoochun burred, his voice trembling with the threat of tears. "I don't think my heart could take it."

"Don't start crying yet," Jaejoong warned. "We aren't even inside yet. Remember, we agreed to be angry not sad or forgiving. Angry."

"Angry," Chun agreed. "But I don't do angry well."

"Pretend," The singer said, turning the knob slowly to keep the men inside from hearing it open. "You can act. You've been practicing for that drama. Pretend now."

They snuck in or as much as they could considering Yoochun's legs didn't appear to listen to his brain's steering and Jaejoong couldn't seem to stop his giggles, his mouth pursed tightly to keep from bursting out in laughter. Nearly knocking over a lamp in the main room, Jaejoong hissed at his friend when Yoochun yelped.

"Shut up!"

"I hit my shin," Yoochun complained. "The table has sharp corners."

"They're not here in the main room," Jaejoong said, flipping on the main lights. The living area of the suite brightened, turning the windows into mirrors reflecting their inebriated images back at them. "God, do you think they're in bed together?"

"I don't want to know," Yoochun cried, falling down onto the couch. He misjudged its location and tumbled, sprawling out on the floor. "This was a bad idea."

"It's a good idea." Jaejoong refused to accept his friend's dramatic proclamation. "Junsu wouldn't sleep with him, would he?"

"Of course he would!" The baritone murmured from his prone position on the floor. "I drove him into Yunho's arms!"

“You couldn’t drive Junsu into *your* arms and suddenly now, you’re a matchmaker between them?” Jaejoong asked, prodding the man with his foot. “Fine. You lie here and I’ll go find them.”

Jaejoong stumbled to the bedroom doorway, finding the wall with the flat of his hand. The slapping noise of his palm hitting the plaster was loud and he hissed, reproaching himself for the sound. The door lay open and with the light from the living room, he could make out the two men in the king-sized bed in the next room.

His heart stopped, unable to carry his blood any further at the sight of the men cuddled against one another. Yunho’s broad shoulders rested on the leather headboard, and his head was lowered as he bent over Junsu’s reclining form. The younger singer’s face was tilted up towards the older man, his lips swollen and red. Yunho’s mouth ghosted over Junsu’s forehead, an intimate gesture normally reserved for lovers.

Jaejoong’s lungs burned and he forced himself to take in air, searing the ache into his belly with each shaking intake of cold pain. Yunho looked up at the gasping sound and his eyes widened, their dark depths unreadable in the scant shadows lurking around the bed. His arms tightened about Junsu’s shoulders, as if to protect the younger man from Jaejoong’s impending wrath and his nostrils flared with the tilt of his chin, defying Jaejoong with his bold arrogance. Junsu sobbed and buried his face into Yunho’s bare chest, unable to meet Jaejoong’s smoldering glare.

“Why are you here, Joongie-ah?” Yunho asked, his voice tight and cold. Glancing down at Junsu’s trembling body, Yunho’s concern for the younger man was obvious and Jae’s pain grew with each second that passed between them. “Answer me, Jaejoong! Tell me why you’re here and it better not be to cause Junsu any more pain. I won’t allow it. Not even from you.”

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“What am I doing here?” Jaejoong took a step back, nearly tripping over his own feet. “What are you doing *there*?”

“I told you...” Yunho slid out from under Junsu. Bare to the waist, the flush of his anger tightened the muscles in his abdomen and chest as he stalked towards Jaejoong. Reaching for the young man’s shoulder, he growled when Jaejoong evaded him with another step backwards, Jae’s graceless flailing warding off Yunho’s grasping hands.

“No...no...no,” He growled. “You don’t get to...shove at me and tell me I should do what you say. Fine, you want to suck on Junsu’s face, I’ll find someone else to keep my company.”

Yoochun struggled to get to his feet, one ankle still hooked around a coffee table leg. He yelped loudly when Jaejoong wrenched him up, the singer’s strong hands lifting him up by the arms.

“Hey, room’s spinning,” Chunnie winced and closed his eyes. “Can’t see. Still spinning.”

“Here, since we don’t mean anything to each other, let me move on, okay?” Jaejoong gripped Yoochun’s shirt and pulled the man in closer.

The kiss was fierce, as heartfelt and sensual as anything Yoochun ever experienced. Jaejoong’s lips were soft and demanding, a punishing revelry of need and desire packaged in an explosive burst of tastes and sensations. The ume sake they’d drunk earlier heightened the singer’s tangy flavour, a hint of cloves and sweet sex.

Despite the deep ache in his chest for Junsu, Yoochun parted

his lips, letting his friend plunder his mouth with a searching tongue. Jae's hands released his shirt and the young man's fingers cupped Yoochun's face, exploring the baritone's features with searching, feathery strokes. A brush of Jae's touch on his earlobes and Yoochun nearly melted to the ground. The singer seemed driven by pure instinct, finding every erotic spot on Yoochun's face and throat with a questing touch.

Moaning, Yoochun gripped Jaejoong's hips, fighting the urge to grind against the other man's body. The need for release grew stronger, driven to a bubbling heat. He forgot the man he held was his best friend and Yoochun lost himself in the desire of another man's hands on his pleasure-parched body. His balls tightened, curling up into the hollow of his legs and he whimpered into Jaejoong's open mouth, fitting himself snugly into the curve of his friend's lean torso.

"Still think they don't have sex?"

Junsu's pained voice felt like ice water on Yoochun's body. The disgust and hurt in the other man's voice shriveled any ambient heat coursing through his sex. Gasping, the baritone shook himself free of Jaejoong's hands, sliding from his friend's embrace. Still drunk and unsteady, the young man tumbled back. The couch caught him in the calves and he pitched sideways, unable to stop himself from falling to the floor.

"Get off of him," Yunho growled, grabbing Jaejoong's arm and pulling him away from Yoochun. "What are you trying to prove?"

"That I can be as much of an asshole as you are." Jae shoved Yunho back, the slap of his hands hitting Yunho's bare chest loud and jarring in the suite's living room. "You don't give a shit about anyone but yourself! Did you think we wouldn't know you were here with Junsu? We just didn't think you'd be in bed with him!"

"Like you're in bed with Yoochun? He shouted back, towering over Jaejoong.

"Chunnie-ah," Junsu crouched next to the sprawled singer, sliding his arm under his back to lift him up. Concern and remorse creased his forehead, his eyes dark with alarm. Cradling a groaning

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Yoochun to his body, he half-carried, half-dragged the other man to the couch. "God, I'm ... sorry. I know you weren't... Let me help you. Please. I wasn't... I was just angry..."

"It's okay, Susu," He murmured, wincing as he moved. An ache throbbed between his shoulder blades and his ankle throbbed where he'd caught it on the table. Leaning into his friend's supporting arms, he sighed heavily. "Thanks."

"Can you make it to the bedroom?" Junsu bent forward, whispering loudly into the man's ear. It was hard to be heard over the angry shouting of the older two members and Junsu wanted to take a closer look at the purpling he'd seen on Yoochun's side. "You're hurt. You probably need some ice on your back."

"I'm..." Chun winced when he tried to bend forward. "Not fine."

"No," He replied, grinning widely. "You're not."

Their shuffle to the bedroom was uncoordinated at best, hindered mostly by Yoochun's wobbly legs and drunken stupor. Junsu strained to hold the other man up, banging into the door frame as he heaved Yoochun forward. The raucous battle continued unabated, heated words hammered sharp by angry tongues. Junsu closed the door behind him with a kick of his foot and a blessed silence descended on the bedroom, earning him a quiet, contented sigh from Yoochun.

"Come on, the bed's close by." Junsu helped crab-walk Yoochun over, sliding him onto the wide mattress. "There's ice in the container. I had to get some for Yunho's mouth. I'll make another ice pack."

The sheets were smooth and silken under Yoochun's hands and he relaxed, letting the bed cradle his battered body. The room twirled about him and he tried to focus on a centre point in the ceiling but it moved and danced out of his vision, making him ill. Closing his eyes only made things worse so he tried turning onto his side, his battered ribs creaking as his strained muscles ached when he flipped over.

"Hold on," Junsu said, returning to the bed. Putting down the

hand towel he'd filled with ice and bound with a shoelace to make a hasty ice pack, he stopped Yoochun from moving. "Let's get your shirt off first."

"Ouch. Damn. Ouch." Yoochun whimpered loudly as Junsu worked his t-shirt up over his ribs and nearly bit his lip clean through when the other man moved his arm. Burying his face into the bed linens, he took a sharp breath, silently urging Junsu to kill him and put him out of his misery. The fresh clean scent of soap and lemon on the sheets calmed Yoochun and he took another shuddering breath, hoping to overcome the waves of pain running up and down his torso.

"Almost done," Junsu encouraged, hissing at the bruises starting to form on Yoochun's back. "Oh Chunnie, what happened? Did you just do this?"

"I had problems getting out of the cab," Yoochun admitted. "They move, you know. The curbs in Tokyo move. I think the whole city is a mecha-robot. Some day, when we aren't expecting it, it's going to transform and do battle with Godzilla."

"How much have you had to drink?" Junsu eyed the man suspiciously.

"Two... maybe three bottles of sake. Big bottles," Yoochun said, trying to separate his arms to demonstrate but his shirt was lodged over his shoulders and he was caught tight, only able to make a scissoring motion with his hands. "It tasted a little bit like plums. Very good. Much better than the milky soju we had earlier. That was nasty. Jaejoong tasted better."

"I'll bet," Junsu muttered bitterly.

"Bet you taste better than him."

Yoochun's full mouth touched Junsu's lips and the world fell away under an electric storm. The ice pack forgotten, Junsu slithered down the other man's body, pulled in by Yoochun's insistent hands. Their tongues briefly flicked against the other's, a brief taste of heat and want before sliding back away. Hindered by his shirt, Yoochun struggled to free himself from the confining sleeves, torn between needing to feel Junsu on his bare skin and

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unwilling to take his hands from the other man's sides. When Junsu's elbow dug into Yoochun's bruised ribs, he yelped, breaking the kiss off with a gasp.

"Damn it," Junsu swore, sliding free of the bed and working his fingers through his hair. He paced off a stride, turning around and looking down at Yoochun's half-dressed body laid out on the rumpled sheets. "What am I doing?"

"What are you doing over there?" Yoochun murmured, unsuccessfully fighting his t-shirt. "Come here, babe."

The fabric seemed to give when he needed it to be firm and somehow, Yoochun couldn't find the end of one sleeve, his elbow trapped in the seam. Waving his arm about like a Tyrannosaurus Rex, he whimpered for assistance from Junsu, twisting to get himself upright on the bed. Flipping about, he ended up face down on the mattress, his mostly free arm trapped under him and the dinosaur-mimicking appendage flailing about helplessly in the air.

"Some help here," Yoochun mumbled. He successfully turned over and ripped his shirt apart, letting the sides hang from his shoulders. "I think I'm drunk."

"I know you're drunk," Junsu said, taking a step forward then hesitating. A few minutes of Yoochun's mouth on his wiped away any resolution he had made with Yunho to move on and give up on getting the baritone to love him. His lips still burned where the man's lips touched his and his sex pressed up hard on the sweatpants he'd borrowed from Yunho to sleep in. "You thought I was sleeping with Yunho. Just now, remember? Why the sudden change?"

"Not so sudden," Yoochun hiccupped. "And I never thought you were sleeping with him. Jaejoong did. And... the sheets smell too nice. You weren't doing anything like that. You'd never do anything like that."

"Oh?" Junsu crooked an eyebrow. "How do you know? What makes you think you know me so well?"

"Because I've been in love with you since...forever," Yoochun admitted. "I came here tonight to tell you that I love you. And I

forgive you but...can you forgive me?"



"I can't believe this is the only room they had left," Changmin grumbled, swinging his duffel onto the straight-back chair near the window.

"You were at the front desk," Se7en pointed out. "You were the one who got us the room."

The hotel room was cramped and the smell of damp animal rose from the carpet near the bathroom. A sole double bed took up most of the floor space, a heavy, tired-looking duvet spread out over the mattress. Four pillows rested on the wall at the top of the bed, the room lacking a headboard to dress up the frame. The walls, once a golden yellow, were now a rusted tobacco... or so Se7en guessed by the bright square where a painting once hung over the thin dresser. The night manager didn't blink when they'd stumbled in out of the rain, merely handed them the key to the only room he had left and asked if they wanted to rent it by the hour or the day.

"I should have thrown you out of the plane when we almost crashed. Obviously your ego was too much weight for the engines."

"We did not almost crash," The other man corrected. "The tire blew out. We skidded a little bit to the side. Have you always been this dramatic or am I getting a personal showing of your own special, private meltdown?"

"I wanted us to be in Tokyo by now," Min growled, unzipping his bag and digging around its interior. "I said some pretty shitty things to Jaejoong and Yunho about..."

Se7en looked up when Min's voice trailed off. "What kind of things?"

"Shut up," He muttered, frowning heavily. "You don't need to know. Where the hell are my sweatpants? I know I packed some."

"I took them out," Se7en admitted. "They were ugly."

"You don't get to decide what I wear to bed," Min replied, raising his voice.

"If I had my way, I'd make sure you wore nothing to bed."

I like him very much, The gremlin said smugly. We need to keep

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him.

"We are not keeping him," Min complained back.

"Who are you talking to?" Se7en peered over the younger man's shoulder. Min jumped, startled by the singer's sudden appearance by his side.

"No one." Min shushed his inner voice with a stern grumble. "Where's the charger to my phone?"

"Was that the plastic bag? The red one?"

"Yes," Min sighed. "You took that out too?"

"Only to get to the ugly polyester sweatpants. I think I forgot to put it back inside."

"Great, now my phone's dead. I'm stuck in a city I didn't even know existed with a pervert who hates my clothes." Changmin threw his eyes up to the ceiling. "What else can happen?"

The lights dimmed then one by one, the bulbs in the room, burst under a surge of power through the lines. Dimmed by the thick, dense fog, the city view outside their window brightened momentarily then section by section, plunged into a pitch darkness. Somewhere nearby, an emergency generator kicked in, its loud rattling starter whining and protesting before rising into a steady hum. The soft keening noise made Min's back teeth ache and he jumped when the generator's motor screeched loudly, crackling and popping to a loud death then was silent. Se7en protectively stepped closer, his stomach and chest pressing up against Min. The younger man cursed, hating his body's instant delighted reaction to the man's presence against his back.

"Well," The older man drawled. "You *did* ask."

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“What are you doing?” Changmin stiffened, feeling Se7en’s hands on his hips. The other man’s fingers were quick, tracing along the hem of Min’s shirt with a light scrape of his fingernails on Changmin’s skin. “Stop that!”

“Look,” Se7en murmured in the younger man’s ear. “We’re stuck here, in the dark with nothing else to do but talk to one another, sleep or have sex. I know what I’d prefer to do.”

“I’m guessing sleep.” Min said, shoving Se7en back with a sharp jab from his elbow. “It’s very late and you’re old. You need your rest.”

“Ouch,” Se7en gasped, sucking air back into his lungs and rubbing at his ribs. “No, actually I was going to say we could get under the covers and watch the lightning outside. Turn around and look at the sky, Minku. Just turn around.”

Changmin let Se7en grip his shoulders and turn him back towards the window. With the city darkened and still, the storm moved in with a thunderous fury, throwing spears of forked light from the underbellies of rolling clouds. The strikes illuminated the foggy clusters, the heavy canopies crevices and nooks cast in shadow by the bright blue streaks.

“Oh, they look like those flowers... the white ones. *Nogiku*. No, that’s the wrong word; *Shirotaegiku*.” Min struggled to find the phrase he wanted. “The pom pom chrysanthemums. What are they called?”

“I think it is just *kiku*.” Se7en said, drawing Min away from the window. “Sometimes, it’s the simplest things that mean the most, Minku. Don’t go looking for unicorns when there is a beautiful

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horse right in front of you.”

His hands strayed to Min’s waist and the young man stopped him, grabbing Se7en’s fingers.

“Don’t.” He wanted to sound fierce but he trembled under the other man’s touch and the word sounded more like a begging plea than a command.

“I’m not going to do anything, Minku,” Se7en said, gently kissing the curve of Min’s graceful neck. “We don’t have any spare clothes in that magical Poppins bag of yours and you know you can’t sleep in jeans. Trust me, baby.”

Even in the dark, Min could see the sincerity in Se7en’s face and he sighed, relaxing into the man’s embrace.

“I’ll be good, baby. I promise.” He unbuttoned Min’s jeans, sliding them down the young man’s hips, careful not to let the distracted singer fall when Min’s attention was caught by another burst of lightning. Changmin’s shirt followed and Se7en gently pushed him back onto the bed, pulling out the covers and tucking them over Min’s hips. He quickly shed his own clothes, leaving on his boxers and ordered, “Stay there. I’m going to see what the mini-bar has to drink and eat.”

“It’s like fireworks,” Clad only in his briefs, Changmin gasped in awe and pulled a pillow down to tuck under his chin. Laying on his stomach, he stretched out diagonally across the mattress, fitting his tall body as comfortably on the bed as possible. “Flowery fireworks.”

“Move over, giraffe,” Se7en lightly slapped Min’s calf. “The bed’s long enough to hold you.”

“I didn’t check,” Changmin mumbled, then frowned at Se7en’s boldness. His vision adjusted to the darkness and the other man’s features were as saturnine as always. “I’m still pissed off at you. I should make you sleep on the floor.”

“Hardly fair considering I’m paying for the room,” He reminded the young man as he handed him a chilled can. “Here, there wasn’t a great selection but there’s a rare and cold beer.”

Sitting up, Min popped the can open and took a sip, choking

on the acrid burn searing his throat. "What is that? That's not beer."

"Let me see," He tentatively sipped at his drink and gasped, exhaling hard. "Wow, that's strong. I don't think I can feel my mouth but it's not bad once you get past the first sip."

"What is this?" Changmin held the can up close to his face, angling it so its silver lettering caught the light from the clouds. "Oolong tea shochu. I think it says that."

"Mine doesn't taste like tea, more like orange," Se7en offered his can to Min. "Here, we can trade. I know you like oranges."

Changmin traded, ducking his head as he tucked a sheet around his bare legs and hips. "I can't believe you remembered I like oranges."

"I remember everything about you," Se7en said, joining the man on the bed. Wrapping the light blanket from under the duvet around Min's shoulders, he tucked himself up against the younger man's back. The room was growing colder, the lack of power taking out the hotel's heating units and Se7en shivered, dragging the duvet around to wrap around them both.

Pulling a slightly resistant Min against him, he took another drink and murmured, "I know you like to be kissed behind your right ear but not your left but that you like your left earlobe nibbled on."

"Aish, you shouldn't talk about those kinds of things!" Min half-turned and gave Se7en a glaring look. "Mad at you, remember?"

"Your mad looks a lot like surrendering," Se7en murmured, cradling the man closer. "And besides, I promised I wouldn't take advantage of you."

"You did," Min nodded.

Kissing Changmin soundly on the mouth, Se7en pulled away before the younger man could do anything but sputter. "But, luckily, I never said anything about stopping you from taking advantage of me."



"You're drunk," Junsu stammered, shoving Yoochun away

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quickly. The man grunted and grimaced in pain, much to Junsu's regret. Reaching for the other man, he peeled off the remnants of Yoochun's shirt and grabbed the forgotten ice pack. "I'm sorry. I forgot."

"It's okay," Yoochun panted, exhaling out short breaths to cut the pain. "The more I hurt, the less drunk I get."

"What did you do?" He asked, lightly trailing a long line of purple running sideways on Yoochun's ribs. "It looks like someone beat you."

"I told you. I fell when I got out of the cab and hit the curb." Yoochun twisted away from Junsu's finger, a giggle erupting from his wide mouth. "God, I'm ticklish. Stop that! You know I'm ticklish."

"Changmin once told me that ticklish people are just inhibited."

"That sounds like something our little professor would say," Yoochun agreed. "And he's very ticklish so what does that say about him?"

"That he's lying?" Junsu looked away from Yoochun's kissable lips and focused on holding the ice pack on his friend's torso. "Jaejoong is ticklish and I can't think of anyone less inhibited than him."

"Joongie-ah is very shy," Yoochun countered. "He hates it when people he doesn't know touch him."

"Is that because he's inhibited or because of how life was from...before?" A shadow filled Junsu's dark eyes as he remembered the life their lead singer led on the streets before becoming a star.

"I don't know," The other man admitted. "He doesn't mind us touching him so I guess we'll be the ones who have to keep him hugged and safe."

The resolute look on Yoochun's handsome face made Junsu smile. Of the three of them, Yoochun held their dreams and Jaejoong, surprisingly, held them together. Junsu could only hope he brought something as strong to their three but in his heart, he

felt he contributed chaos to their already complicated lives.

"Susu-ah," Yoochun murmured, jarring Junsu from his thoughts with a hand to the tenor's face. "Why are you looking so sad?"

"I... messed everything up." His breath caught in his chest and a deep pain lodged in his heart. "I don't know what I'm doing anymore. When there was the five of us... everything was so simple... it was just..."

"Easier," Yoochun interjected and cupped the back of Junsu's head when the other man nodded. Tears shimmered on Junsu's lashes and Yoochun bit his lip, drawing the singer down to his naked chest. "It's okay, Junsu. We're going to be okay."

"How are we going to be okay?" Junsu hiccupped and shivered when he realized the makeshift ice pack was trapped between them. Yoochun arched slightly so Junsu could dig it out and laughed when it hit the floor in a bursting shower of ice cubes.

The singer lifted up to pick them up but Yoochun held him tightly. "Leave it. It's water. It'll just melt."

"The hyung-duel will say you peed the floor or something. You know how they are," Junsu laughed. "Don't make me laugh. I am sad."

"That's how I know we'll be okay... that we are okay, Susu-ah," Yoochun said, brushing a kiss over the other man's forehead. "Because I can still make you laugh. As long as you laugh and smile, we'll have light to see our way in all of this darkness."

Junsu swallowed his retort, lost in the warmth of Yoochun's expression. His words left him completely when the other man's mouth descended and stole a kiss.

Chilled from the ice, the fire of Yoochun's mouth caught Junsu by surprise and he gasped, opening his lips for Yoochun to plunder. A lick of the man's tongue against the roof of his mouth set Junsu into a moaning writhe, and he groaned appreciatively when Yoochun's hands found his shoulders and pushed him back onto the bed.

Straddling Junsu's body, Yoochun settled his weight on his

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knees and hands. Letting the length of his body pin Junsu to the mattress, he took his time discovering the pleasures of the other man's mouth, savouring each delicate lap of his tongue on Junsu's parted lips. There were delectable areas of Junsu's body that he longed to explore but he couldn't bring himself to break away from the young man's mouth. The texture of Junsu's tongue on his kept Yoochun coming back for more, needing to plunge and dance his tongue around Junsu's mouth until both were gasping for air.

Taking a breath, Yoochun moved in for another kiss, savouring the small dimple at the corner of Junsu's mouth before nibbling along the bottom full bow with tiny nips of his teeth. Junsu's hands lifted up from the bed, his fingers marked with lines where he'd tightly gripped the sheets around them. Yoochun's shoulders flexed and Junsu moaned when he felt the man's muscles move under his palms. The press of Yoochun's stomach felt good, even better when the friction warmed their skin and when Junsu felt the length of the other man's arousal through their clothes, his own sex twitched and hardened in response.

Moving slowly down Junsu's throat, Yoochun bit at the curve of the man's neck and collarbone. Rolling the meat of his bite between his teeth, Yoochun began to tease Junsu's skin with the flat of his tongue, pausing to flick the tip over the stimulated area until Junsu gasped and begged for release.

"Chunnie, too much," Junsu moaned, unable to bring himself to let go of the man's upper arms. He blinked, focusing on Yoochun's too-close face and blushed, seeing the arousal he'd brought to the other man's eyes. The flesh on Yoochun's shoulders were burned red with long marks, left from Junsu's grasping fingers and Junsu felt his face go hotter when the baritone lifted one knee and nudged Junsu's legs apart. Shifting, Junsu struggled with his desire for a second when Yoochun placed his knee down on the mattress between Junsu's thighs and bent forward, covering Junsu again with the weight of his body.

Yoochun's taste lingered on Junsu's tongue, the other man's masculine tang subtly mingled with the spice of ume sake and

Junsu gulped hard, swallowing the flavour down. A smoky heat began to burn in his belly and he felt the head of his sex swell in his sweatpants, a drop of moisture beading up to soak into the fabric.

“I want to taste you, Susu-ah,” Yoochun whispered.

“The... hyung-duel...” Junsu’s eyes fluttered and he turned his head, worriedly staring at the bedroom door. “They could come in...and...”

“Just a little taste, Susu,” The man pleaded. “Anything else... I’d want to take my time with you. That’s not for here. Not for us.”

Junsu nearly screamed when Yoochun slid down his body and settled his mouth over the small damp spot of his sweats. Nearly jerking up off the mattress, Junsu whimpered when Yoochun pushed him back down with the heel of his hands on his hips and held him there. Unable to squirm away, Junsu gasped again and dug his fingernails into Yoochun’s back when the man’s teeth found the ridge of his sex hidden under his cotton pants.

“Yoochun...Chunnie-ah, please...” Junsu begged. “I can’t...take.”

“You don’t have to take,” Yoochun murmured, licking at the length of Junsu’s erection, the rub of the cloth on the man’s sex setting every nerve to a ripened tingle. “Just let me...give. Hold onto the sheets, Susu-ah. I want to blow more than your mind.”

Junsu dropped his hands to the linens, finding them loose enough to wrap his wrists in. With Yoochun’s incessant weight on his hips, he wriggled uncontrollably as Yoochun’s lips began a slow investigation of his sex. The sweatpants chafed at his erection, burning the tip when he moved. Panting heavily, he signed in relief when Yoochun’s fingers hooked into his waistband and tugged his sweats down just low enough for his erection to spring free.

Already hard and needy, Junsu’s sex pearly when Yoochun gripped him. Curled about slightly, Junsu watched with heavily lidded eyes as Yoochun slid the hood of skin from Junsu’s damp head, the scant roll nearly peeled back with the stiffness of the man’s shaft. Smearing the milky fluid with his thumb, Yoochun brought the drop to his lips, lapping at the salty essence with a dab

of his tongue.

"Chun...not going..." Junsu leaned his head back, his eyes rolling when Yoochun swallowed him. The brief suck of Yoochun's mouth was followed by a dipping plunge toward the man's throat and Junsu felt himself being engulfed. "God... Chun..."

A hum started in Yoochun's throat and the vibrations reverberated up Junsu's shaft and buried down deep into his balls. The sound continued, rippling sensations up and down the man's groin before spreading out to fill his body. When Yoochun's fingers scraped hard nails over Junsu's tight nipples, he lost control and began to empty into Yoochun's mouth. A darkness took him over for a moment then exploded away into a spray of brilliant lights. His balls spiraled up, nearly painfully tight against his body and he gave into the blast, spilling another coil of seed past his lover's lips.

After licking Junsu clean, Yoochun curved his arm around the young man's hips, lifting him up enough to pull his pants up. Sliding both of them up to the top of the bed, the baritone lay Junsu back on the pillows and covered their entwined bodies with the sex-warmed bed linens.

"Sleepy, Chunnie-ah," Junsu murmured, his energy spent and swallowed into Yoochun's mouth. "Love you, *agi*. I always have, you know. I've loved you so much and for so long."

"I know now, Susu-baby," Yoochun gave Junsu a gentle kiss and the tenor smiled, liking the taste of his sex joined with Yoochun's tangy flavour. "Let the hyung-duel find some place else to sleep. This is *our* bed now."



The door closed firmly with a ferocious kick of Junsu's foot and Yunho glared at Jaejoong, shouting at the top of his lungs. "Is this what you want? Huh? Are you happy now? Do you think you caught me cheating on you? How the hell can I cheat on you when I'm not even fucking you?"

"Not like I ever felt you fucking me when you were," Jaejoong screamed back, looking about for something to throw. His eyes caught on a small swoop of metal the hotel's interior designer

placed in the middle of the coffee table as an accent piece. Grabbing at the sculpture, he raised it above his shoulder. "Fucking son of a bitch!"

"Hey!" Yunho looked alarmed and held up his hands in surrender. Dropping his voice down to a whisper, he said, "Listen! The door's closed and I don't think I can hear them any more."

Jaejoong froze, poised in mid-attack and cocked his head, listening keenly. The quiet in the room was soon drowned out by the sound of the thickening storm and the rain coming down outside. Holding his breath, Jae whispered back, "I can't hear them either."

Yunho stepped closer to the bedroom, cautioning Jaejoong back with a hasty wave of his hand. Crossing back to Jaejoong, he took the sculpture from the singer's hand and placed it carefully back on the table. Hooking his fingers into Jae's waistband, he tugged the other man towards the door only to be stopped short when Jae dug his heels in.

"Come on! I think they believed us," Yunho hissed, motioning towards the entrance. "I've got shoes and some clothes in the hall closet."

"I'm not your dog," Jae muttered, stalking away to the door. "Don't pull at me."

"It would be easier if you were my dog," Yunho grumbled to Jaejoong's back. "You'd obey me like you're supposed to."

Jaejoong stood with his arms crossed while Yunho got dressed, averting his eyes when the other man took off his sweats and pulled on his jeans. Tucking his hotel key card into his pocket, Yunho grabbed a jacket out of the closet and held it out to Jaejoong to wear.

"Put this on. It's raining outside. You'll get wet," He said, grabbing another jacket from a hanger. When the first jacket remained in his hand, he turned around and stared at Jaejoong. "Now what?"

"Just because we agreed to help Junsu and Yoochun patch things up," Jaejoong said coldly. "Doesn't mean that we're... okay. You and I... we're not... we're done, Yunho. After everything that's

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happened, I don't think there's anything that can be said to fix it."

"That's what I want to try to do, Joongie-ah," Yunho replied, shoving the jacket over Jaejoong's crossed arms. "Put it on and let's find someplace that's open and private so we can talk. It's the least we can do for each other, baby. After all of this time, aren't we worth at least *one* more conversation? At least *one* more damned chance?"

NINE

Jaejoong seemed oblivious to the storm, walking a few paces ahead of Yunho, empty-eyed and a bleak expression on his pretty face. Other people hurrying by, heads ducked under umbrellas or soaked through newspaper sheaves, caught sight of the icy numbness on Jaejoong's face and then their attention flicked over to Yunho steadfastly following the other man and their expressions changed from curious to sympathetic. Yunho nearly broke when an older woman reached out and touched his shoulder, whispering condolences for their family's loss.

They're right, Yunho thought. It's as if someone died... as if we five died.. and we're all nothing more than ghosts haunting each other's lives. How can I expect Jaejoong to carry this when I can't bear our ghosts' weights myself?

They walked for one mile then five until Yunho was no longer sure where in the city they were. The quiet grounds of the expensive hotel had fallen away to a raucous district of lights, noodle houses and clubs. It became harder to keep the other man in his line of vision so Yunho shortened the distance between them, his attention moving to catch the eye of a man dressed in an older-style polyester suit with wide lapels. The pock-faced man sneered back around his cigarette but continued on his way.

"How long are you going to follow me?" Jaejoong asked. Couched in formal Korean, Yunho felt slapped by the other man's hard tone.

"How long are you going to walk?" He asked in reply, wiping at his face and ignoring the trail of his warm tears intermingled with cold rain water.

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"I don't know."

"Then I don't know either."

Half an hour later and more than a few turns around Tokyo's long blocks, he sighed with relief when Jaejoong stopped in front of a small noodle shop, an awning sheltering the corner from rain. Its many shoji screen window coverings were slid open exposing its brightly lit interior. An older couple working behind the counter, the grey-haired woman lightly scolding her partner when he nearly spilled steaming broth while ladling out a portion of udon into a take out container. He grinned back at her, obviously used to hearing her reproach him every day. Covering the Styrofoam cup with a lid, she packaged it quickly, handing it over to a waiting customer. Bidding the waiting young woman a good night, she bowed deeply and playfully scolded her husband again when his hands reached for her ample waist.

"That could have been us."

"I don't see myself working in a noodle shop when I'm that old," Yunho said, trying to lighten the darkness in Jae's voice. "But if that's what you want."

"I don't know what I want," Jae admitted, stepping under the noren hung over the open door. "I'm not even sure if I want you."

He bowed when the woman greeted him, maternally tsking at the sight of Jae's soaked clothes. Her tsking became a gasp of alarm when Yunho joined Jaejoong inside, her hands fluttering as she hurried them towards the restroom, ordering her husband to bring spare towels from the back for the young men to use to dry off. The older man returned with an armful of cloths and two black t-shirts with the shop's logo on the back.

"Here," She said, shoving them both inside of the tiny bathroom after refusing to hear their polite refusals. "Change and I will see if we can dry your clothes. You will get sick being so cold and wet."

Thanking her with a deep bow, Yunho closed the door behind her when she left. Stripping off his shirt, Yunho wrung it out into the sink, trying to get as much of the rainwater out as possible.

Besides him, Jaejoong shivered and wrapped his arms around his waist, watching the other man with enormous, anguish-stained eyes.

"Take off your shirt, Joongie-ah," Yunho ordered softly. "I don't want you to get sick."

"Did you fuck Se7en?"

The question was as cold as the water squeezing out between Yunho's fingers and the leader winced, frozen in place in pain. Calming himself with a few breaths, he continued to twist the shirt, unfolding it then doubling it again to get a better wringing angle.

"Did you?" Jaejoong pressed, shuddering violently from the cold in his bones and heart. "Answer me, Yunho. Did you?"

"What does it matter if I did, *hyung*?" Yunho matched Jaejoong's hard tone with one as edged as a new razor. "You'd already left me, remember?"



The lightning storm struggled to illuminate the sky, its flashes muted by the torrential rains it flung at the city below. Safe behind a thick pane of glass and buried under heavy covers, Changmin sighed, wishing his body didn't fit so comfortably into Se7en's. His sex was semi-hard from the scent of the other man and every time Se7en shifted against him, his erection stiffened in response, unfurling reluctantly when no further stimulation was forthcoming.

"Relax and watch the light show, Minku," Se7en whispered into his ear and Min's shaft answered with a throbbing *want* that made the younger man suspect that his sex was his gremlin's actual home instead of the back of his head as he always assumed. "Why are you so tense?"

"I don't know," Min snarked, trying to punch at the pillow he'd shoved in front of him to cover his arousal. "Because you're hugging me and I don't want you touching me."

"You don't want me touching you?" Se7en slid back and the space between them grew. The inch felt like a chasm to Min, a chillingly glacial separation that made him hurt in places he'd only known pleasure. Instinctively, he whimpered as if in pain and bent

his shoulders back until he felt Se7en's bare chest on his skin again. Silently, Se7en moved in, tucking Min against him again.

"No gloating," Min growled.

"I didn't say anything."

"I can feel you smiling. Gloating silently! Stop it!"

"I shall think of only sad things, like how lonely my Changmin is without his puppy."

"I am *not* your Changmin."

"Then whose are you?" Se7en asked, moving his hand up to rest on Min's stomach. His abdomen jumped in response, the skin heating up under the man's roving fingertips. "If not mine, then who do you belong to, Minku?"

Changmin turned over onto his back, intending to give Se7en a piece of his mind but his words turned to ash when a stroke of lightning on the sky's belly illuminated the other man's face and he could see the tears in Se7en's dark eyes.

"You're serious," Min whispered, wiping at Se7en's damp lashes with his thumb pad.

"I've always been serious." Se7en grinned despite his tears. "Except when I'm not."

"You can't joke out of this, Dong Wook," Changmin scolded. "Not this. Never this."

Se7en's taste was suddenly in Min's mouth and the younger man realized he'd been the one who moved, pushing the other man back onto the bed and straddling him. Another pillow separated their bodies from touching fully and Min struggled to remove it, yanking it free with an exuberant shout. Flinging it aside, he lowered his head and seared a hot kiss onto Se7en's mouth, emboldened by the feel of Se7en's hard sex under his underwear.

His own shaft was nearly painfully stiff and his hips rolled, needing the stimulation. Se7en whimpered into Min's mouth and his hands finally lifted up to cup Min's ass, squeezing the muscled globes tightly. Shoving one hand between them, Changmin freed Se7en's sex, rubbing at the tip until it wept under his touch.

"Don't tease me like this, Minku." Se7en couldn't stop from

begging. "Don't do me like this...don't touch me like this and then shove me away."

"I'm..." Changmin lifted up, resting on his hands. Se7en took his weight, bearing it up easily with a flex of muscular shoulders. Staring down into the older man's face, Changmin studied him carefully, watching Se7en's expression go from pain to a wondering cautious look.

Choi Dong Wook drove him insane, a type of madness he'd never experienced before and since. There were parts of his heart he'd not known existed then discovered they could be broken by the sight and rumours of Se7en touching another man. Everything he'd stood on as a foundation for who he was shaken when Se7en entered his life and when the older man was around, Min's environment was enveloped in a chaos storm of sensations he couldn't absorb. The noise and sensations were loud and brilliant, too much for the steady, logical, functional world Min liked to live in.

But without him — without Choi Dong Wook — the silence was deafening and the greyness a blinding numbness he couldn't shake off no matter how hard he tried.

"You...bring me lightning," Min whispered, stunned by the truth in his words. "You bring everything I want... to me...even things... that I don't know I want."

"I'll bring you anything you ask for, baby," Se7en reassured him. "All you have to do is ask."

"What I want the most..." Changmin exhaled, "Is you."

Their kiss was tentative, a gentle exploration of insane and darker things. It possessed a sweetness familiar to Min, the burnt caramel feeling of Se7en's tongue on his mouth then a soft flicker against his upper lip, as if asking permission to go deeper.

Parting his lips, Min gave Se7en his silent permission and rode the storm that followed.

Se7en peeled off his own underwear, urging the other man to do the same with soft whispers and hot promises. Lifting his hips, Changmin lifted one knee then the other, kicking his briefs off and

covered Se7en with his body, rubbing against the man's sensual, muscular form.

"You feel so good on me, Minku," Se7en moaned, reaching down between them. "God, I wish we had..."

"Had what?" Changmin arched his back, mewling when Se7en gripped him tightly with firm, experienced fingers. "Ah, Shichi!"

Se7en rolled them over until they lay side by side, cupping Min in his hand. Loosening his fingers, he slid himself into the sleeve he'd made of his palm, using his free hand to grab at Min's wrist. Guiding the younger man's hand over, he bit and nibbled on Min's long neck, murmuring for the other to hold onto both of them as he was doing. When Changmin's trembling fingers touched him, Se7en nearly exploded into the man's hand, rocking his hips slowly to increase the friction.

"This is how you feel to me, baby," Se7en murmured, closing his hand over Min's sex. "So warm... so tight... so good."

Changmin's words became primal mutterings when Se7en pulled away, leaving Min's hand empty. The singer slid down Changmin's body, kissing ridges of bone and muscle until he reached Min's sex, rubbing his lips over its seed moistened head. Grunting, Changmin thrust his hips up when Se7en's lips closed over the tip and the older man began playing with the painfully sensitive slit with a thrust of his tongue.

"Turn around," Min growled, leaning forward to grab at one of Se7en's thighs, pulling the man with all of his strength. "I'm not going to do this without getting a taste of you in my mouth."

"Minku, let me..."

"Turn around!" The younger man ordered, not wanting to listen to another of Se7en's romantic musings. "I want you, Dong Wook. Now."

Changmin nearly lost himself when Se7en shifted and his hips moved into place near Min's head. Scooting further down the bed, the younger man bent his head down, inhaling the sharp musky scent of Se7en's body; reveling in the fresh soap smell and the richness of masculine skin. He knew he should have been terrified

or at least, have trepidations about taking Se7en into his mouth... much less taking Se7en at all but having the other man against him felt right. Changmin knew having the other man inside of him would feel... sublime.

I told you A part of him whispered.

"Shut up," Min countered back. "I'll deal with *you* later."

All thoughts of internal revenge were lost when Se7en's mouth began to suck on Min's head. The older man's tongue caught on the ridge of his glans, tracing the line with a practiced ease. Changmin tried to respond in kind, but found himself drawn instead to the taste of velvet on the roof of his mouth when he eased the head of Se7en's shaft past his lips.

The flavour was surprising, a nearly green tea aromatic with a hint of salt and heat. He played with the skin on Se7en's shaft, moving it up and down the man's length, enjoying the feel of it shifting around the taut muscle and loving the animalistic noises the other man made as he explored. Fisting the base of Se7en's sex, Changmin tentatively slid as much of it past his lips and into his mouth, nearly choking when the head hit the back of his throat. Easing back, he tried again, stopping only when Se7en's hands touched his shoulder.

"It's okay baby," The other man whispered. "You don't need to take it all. Not now. Not there. Just... lay back and relax. You've got a taste of me. Now let me have a taste of you."

Changmin grunted, trying to catch his breath when the older man rolled him onto his back. Se7en's hands were firm, stroking at his hips before sliding between his thighs and parting them. He shifted, lifting his knees and whimpered in his throat when the man lifted one of his legs up, hooking it over his shoulder. Spread apart, Changmin felt vulnerable and open, exposed to Se7en's scrutiny despite the blue-washed dimness engulfing them.

When Se7en's tongue returned to his groin, Min lost all thought of shame and shyness. A bold lick of the man's tongue against his balls and he nearly lost control, shouting so loudly he was sure the people in the next room could hear him. Taking one into his mouth,

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Se7en rolled it around on his tongue before moving to the next, alternating between Min's globes and the base of the younger man's sex. His hand remained on the upper part of Changmin's shaft, rubbing carefully at the head as it leapt about in response to the attentions Se7en paid to Min's sac.

When the ball in Se7en's mouth tightened up and pulled away from his lips, he knew it was nearly time for Min's release. The bucking of the younger man's hips were growing frantic, his sex stabbing up through the hold Se7en had on him. When Se7en lifted his shoulders, Min's legs were parted further and the tug on his balls increased, held taut between Se7en's fingertips.

Damp from sweat and spit, Se7en ran a finger around Min's sac, pausing long enough to flick a fingertip over the other man's entrance. Drawing Min deep into his mouth, he played and teased, pulling back and then plunging back down, keeping the strokes uneven so the younger man couldn't get used to a rhythm. Finally frustrated beyond his control, Changmin placed his hands on Se7en's shoulders and held him in place, rocking his hips to slowly fuck Se7en's mouth.

Se7en smiled around the length of his lover, feeling the satisfaction of breaking through the younger man's infamous self-control and then losing himself in the touch and taste of Min's delectable body. Sliding the tip of his finger around the pucker nearly hidden between Min's ass cheeks, Se7en worked slowly around the tight rim, letting Min decide how much contact he wanted. A downward stroke of Min's hips pulled Se7en nearly off of Min's sex and the younger man cried out, begging his lover to please him.

"Do you want this, Minku?" Se7en asked, simultaneously licking at the seed-moistened head and plunging the barest tip of his finger over the muscled ring of Min's core. "Do you want me here?"

"Yes," Changmin sobbed, clenching Se7en tighter. "God, don't... stop. Need... more."

"I will always give you anything you want, baby," Se7en

replied, wetting his finger in their fluids before easing the tip into Min's heat. "Anything, Minku...especially me."

A long strong stroke of Se7en's tongue proved to be Min's undoing and when the man's skillful and long finger breeched his interior, Changmin felt his mind explode into stars. The rolling sensations filled him, driven further when Se7en touched something inside of him that set his nerves aflame. Shivering, he tried to tamp down the fire but it kept churning inside of him, demanding to be fed.

"Let go, baby," Se7en coaxed. "You asked me for a storm. Let me give it to you."

The kiss of Se7en's lips on his head was enough and he felt himself let go, his muscles tightening in response to the wickedness of his impending climax. It felt to good to be anything but sinful, Min thought as he was hit with the first wave of his release. When the second cataclysmic pounding struck, he decided he would fully embrace any wickedness Se7en had to offer, especially any that including the other man's mouth and hands.

Rocking his finger deep into Min's heat, Se7en swallowed the man's sex, letting the blast of Min's climax hit the roof of his mouth. The young man emptied everything he had into Se7en's throat and still, he wanted more, swallowing each wave as it hit.

They moved together, their bodies riding the tangle of limbs, fingers and mouths until Changmin could no longer think. Boneless and fatigued, he barely murmured a protest when Se7en pulled away, giving a half-hearted no when the other man returned from the bathroom with a wet washcloth to clean them both off. When Se7en joined him in bed, Changmin sleepily wrapped his arms around the other man's waist, hooking a leg over Se7en's legs before snuggling in close.

"Still mad at you," Changmin grumbled under his breath.

"After all that?" Se7en laughed. "What do I have to do to get you to forgive me?"

"I didn't say I didn't forgive you," Min yawned, closing his eyes and drifting off. "I said I was still mad at you. I like being mad

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at you. It keeps my mind off of how much I love you.”

TEN

“What do you want from me, Jaejoong?” Yunho asked, turning around to fully confront his ex as he adjusted his borrowed shirt.

“Right now, to get this thing off of me,” The singer was trying to extract himself from his wet shirt with little success, fighting the garment off. Sighing, Yunho tossed aside his own shirt to help him. Jaejoong tried to step away, warning Yunho off with a muttered grumble but the leader ignored him and hooked his fingers under the shirt’s hem.

“You can’t even stand up,” Yunho barked. Flinching, Jae winced and pulled away, caught short by the pull of Yunho’s fist wrapped up in his shirt “Lean on me. You’re shaking too much.”

The cold finally hit him and Jaejoong shuddered violently, unable to keep his balance. Toppling forward, he was dead weight in Yunho’s arms with barely enough energy to protest Yunho’s manhandling him. They fell backward and the leader curled himself instinctively around Jae’s body, protecting the slender man rather than trying to save himself. His shoulder struck the edge of the sink and he grunted, absorbing the bone-rattling hit.

His arm ached and felt like it was forming a bruise but Yunho did a quick roll of his shoulder to see if he was alright. Satisfied there was no lasting damage, he rolled over and straddled Jaejoong’s quaking hips, nearly tearing the shirt from the other man’s body in an attempt to get Jae warm and dry.

“Mmmm.” Jaejoong tried to speak but his words were too jumbled, a run-together mumble of sounds Yunho couldn’t understand.

“If you’re telling me to go to hell, you’re too late,” Yunho

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snorted back. "Having you underneath me, half naked and too pissed off to want to touch you is certainly my personal idea of hell. Nothing you can come up with can even come close."

A knock on the door stopped Yunho from cradling Jaejoong against him and he swore lightly, reaching for one of the folded towels. Calling out to who he hoped was the woman who'd helped them into the bathroom, Yunho asked for hot tea or water to help warm Jaejoong up.

The door opened and the woman stuck her head in, concern wrinkling her face. "Husband is bringing something. It has to be lukewarm. Too hot and his insides will go into shock."

"Are they ordering food to go?" The older man appeared behind his wife, his balding forehead beaded with sweat. "We have to close soon."

"Hush, husband," The woman scolded. "The little one is sick."

"Shorter," Jae grumbled and his body rocked with another shiver, his lips nearly bright blue from the cold. "Not little. Just... shorter."

"I'm sorry to trouble you," Yunho gave a short bow of his head, unwilling to let go of Jae's shaking torso. The woman handed him a slightly steaming cup of dark tea, her worry increasing with each staggered breath Jaejoong took. "Joongie-ah, sip. Please take a sip."

"Smells bad." Jae turned his head, nearly upending the cup when his chin struck it.

"Your lips are blue and I can barely understand you because your teeth are chattering." The other man scolded. "Are you so stupid and careless of the other members that you're willing to get sick because of your pride? Drink. The. Fucking. Tea, Jaejoong."

"Too hot. It burns," He tried to sit up but ended up more sideways than vertical. "Can't drink that."

"You're too cold inside. That's why it feels too hot," Yunho swore under his breath. "God, what was I thinking? Falling in love with an idiot."

"You never fell in love with me..." Jaejoong accused. His arms trembled with the effort of pushing Yunho and suddenly his back

couldn't support his weight.

His world fuzzed then sharpened again, putting Yunho in focus. The scent of popcorn green tea lingered in his mouth and Jaejoong swallowed, wondering when he'd taken a sip. The room was bright, nearly too bright and he closed his eyes, trying to keep the image of Yunho's strong face in his mind.

"What happened?" Jaejoong heard the words clearly in his mind but his tongue seemed reluctant to cooperate and they came out a jumble of Japanese and country Korean. Swallowing, he tried again.

"Relax, you fainted. Sort of. It made it easier to get some of the tea into you," Yunho said. "When was the last time you ate?"

"Today," Jaejoong tried counting the hours but the numbers rose too high and too quickly. "Maybe yesterday."

"Yesterday from this two in the morning or yesterday from last night?" The other man's words were too confusing for Jaejoong to comprehend so he merely shrugged. A bout of fierce swearing hit his eardrums and the singer winced.

"Too loud," He said, trying to lift his hand up to cover Yunho's mouth but his fingers refused to find the man's lips, trembling over his cheek and chin. The chills hit in square in the gut and he shuddered violently. "Too cold."

"I know, Joongie-ah," Yunho urged him and the cup's rim touched Jaejoong's bottom lip. "Take another drink. We need to get you warm."

"He's still too cold, yes?" Jaejoong heard a woman speak, her voice rough with age and work. It held as much comfort as the tea and he leaned back into the cradle of Yunho's arms, drifting off into a half sleep. "Can he walk? Do we need a doctor?"

"No, no doctor," Jae mumbled, his eyes flickering open in alarm. "We'll get into trouble. I'll get into trouble. I already cause so much trouble..."

"For once, something you've said made sense," Yunho gripped, sliding his arm under Jaejoong's knees. The singer was surprisingly heavy, densely packed with muscle and sinew. His stomach muscles

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ached with the effort then further down, another throb began at the feel of the other man on his body. Ignoring the rush of blood to his groin, he bowed his head to the woman. "Thank you, auntie. I just need to get him someplace warm. There should be a hostel nearby, or something."

"There is a room above the restaurant... out of the door and up some stairs. Very small but it has a futon. He needs to get under warm blankets," The woman said. "Come, you two can sleep there. I will have husband bring up some noodles and hot water for him to soak in. Once he gets warm in his stomach and feet, he'll be better."

"We'll pay you for the room..." Yunho protested when the woman hushed him. "Auntie, it is only fair..."

"It is our son's room. He used to sleep there when going to the school nearby. It's empty now." She opened a side door, holding it open for Yunho to go through. The leader eased out of the portal, shushing Jae when he tried to fight being carried. "The stairs are steep and a bit wet. Do you think you need help carrying him? My husband..."

"Would probably get bitten for his efforts," Yunho ruefully admitted. "He's not known for his manners, our Jaejoong."

"I'm very well behaved," Jae sniped back. "You're the fucking asshole."

"I am so glad you're speaking in Japanese," He muttered, mounting the stairs with his burden. "You're going shock the hell out of her."

"I'm pretty sure she'll understand us. Well you at least. I still speak too country for most people to understand me," Jaejoong grumbled when Yunho jostled him too roughly and his sock-covered foot brushed the woman's back as she climbed the stairs in front of them. "Her husband's Korean."

"No," Yunho said, frowning. "Really? Fucking hell." The older woman paused, her foot nearly slipping off of the top stairs and Yunho bowed when their eyes made contact. "Apologies, Auntie. He drives me... insane sometimes."

"Too late." Jae muttered. "You were already there."

"*Aisaika-chan* will be here soon," The woman said, opening the door. "It's not big but it is warm. Are you sure I can't call you a doctor?"

"No, we're fine," Yunho insisted, lugging a struggling Jaejoong through the door. "See? He's feeling better already. It is evident in how disagreeable he is becoming. As soon as he becomes impossible, then I'll know he's perfectly healthy."

"Pay her for the food," Jaejoong's battle to free himself from Yunho's arms was futile and instead he concentrated on removing the man's wallet from his back pocket. "Here I will give her the money."

"If your hands are going to be on my ass..." Yunho whispered into Jae's ear, his sex hot and bothered by the other man's touch. The sound of the woman's lumber foot treads on the stairs emboldened Yunho and he hoisted the young man up higher. "It's not going to so you can give a woman money."

The older woman hadn't been exaggerating. The room was small, barely large enough to hold the futon spread out near an electric brazier. Thick blankets were stored in an open *tansu* and a stack of *zabaton* lay at the head of the thick mattress. A light chill seeped in from outside, pushing in from the slightly open door.

Crouching carefully, Yunho lowered the young man to the fabric mattress, not liking the racking shudders breaking Jaejoong's breathing. He slapped at Jae's hands when the man made a feeble protest at Yunho stripping him naked.

"Hello?" The older man knocked on the semi-open door as Yunho was maneuvering a flailing Jaejoong under the covers. "Ah, that one is a handful."

Carrying a tray of covered noodle bowls, he stepped into the room when Yunho bowed his head in welcome, thanking the man for his kindness. The shop owner answered in Korean, informal and warm towards the young men. Placing the tray on a low shelf built into one side of the room, the older man helped Yunho shake out a blanket and lay it over Jae's shivering body.

"Are you brothers?" He made a great show of tucking the ends under Jaejoong's feet but Yunho caught a curious angle to his phrasing. Before the leader could work out what the man meant, he clarified. "I ask because you fight like family. Usually that means...well, you are both men so... I am guessing brothers."

"*Hyung,*" Yunho ducked his head, blushing hot enough to feel it burn down his spine. "It's not..."

"It is alright, *dongsaeung,*" The man patted Yunho's bent knee, whispering so Jaejoong could not hear them. "My wife drives me crazy with her arguments but my life would be empty without her. I am going to make sure she has not burned down the shop because she doesn't remember which way the gas turns off. You both eat. Don't worry about the bowls. I will come get them in the morning."

"We can pay you for this, *hyung,*" Yunho reached for his wallet only to be stopped by the man's hand clamped on his wrist. "Please. We are putting you out."

"It makes the wife happy knowing she brought in two young men from the rain. She misses our son when he is away." The owner nodded at Jaejoong dozing under the warm covers. "I think he reminds her of our Takeo."

"God help you." He rolled his eyes in sympathy. "Apologies. I'm too forward."

"No," The older man laughed. "You are right. My son is a handful. He takes after his mother."

"Pardon me, *hyung,*" Yunho stood, walking with the man to the door. "Please do not mind me asking but... why did you name your son... something Japanese? Don't you miss home?"

"My home is where my wife is," He replied, grabbing the door frame and stepping carefully onto the wet landing outside. "When I realized I loved her, the world was different... much different than it is now. For me to love a Japanese woman was... shameful in my family's eyes but there was no one else in my heart. I could not go home for many years and still there are people in my family who cannot look at me in the face."

"But," The old man winked at Yunho. "I see her smile when

she scolds me and I know that she is my home.”

His eyes shimmered in the faint light coming from the street lamp nearby and Yunho turned his head to give the man room to maintain his dignity. Ducking his head, the shop owner wiped at his face as if clearing off a stray drop of rain and placed his tear-wet fingers on Yunho’s bare arm.

“Life changes around us. It is like water. Sometimes, *dongsaeng*,” The man said as he squeezed Yunho’s arm. “Sometimes in order to survive, you either get to choose the rock you cling to and sometimes you slam into it. Either way, just hold on. *Tightly. Firmly*. Because it is that rock that will keep you safe and give you shelter.”



“Cold,” Jaejoong muttered, shaking himself awake. The quilt rubbed against his skin and his eyes flew open, shocked to find his sex exposed to the soft cotton coverlet. He was hard, despite the chill in his belly and bones and he shifted under the blankets, letting his eyes adjust to the dim light coming from the shuttered lamp near by.

“Good, you’re up,” Yunho said, drawing back from the one glass window in the room. “I didn’t want to wake you but if I don’t get something warm inside of you...”

Jaejoong swallowed, his face brushed scarlet with the memory of Yunho’s hands on him, the other man’s mouth licking him slowly from tip to root. His balls tightened up into his body and his shaft ached, nearly too painful to stand the blanket’s rub.

“Soup,” Yunho said, catching the flare of heat in Jaejoong’s eyes. Cradling the bowl in his hand, Yunho spooned the rich miso broth up and held it to Jae’s mouth. “Drink it.”

“Suppose I don’t want it?” Jaejoong’s stomach grumbled in response, reminding its owner of its echoing emptiness.

“You’re pissy when you’ve not had enough food,” Yunho reminded the man. “I don’t know how anyone can *forget* to eat. Your belly button must be tired of talking to your spine.”

The soup was steaming and nearly burned Jae’s tongue when

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the spoon touched his lips. Sipping carefully, he jerked back when Yunho leaned forward and blew on the hot liquid, the leader's mouth a mere whisper away from Jae's pursed lips.

"Don't... do that," Jae said shakily. "Where are my clothes? I should..."

"You should drink the soup and get some of the noodles in you," Yunho said, holding up another mouthful after blowing it cooler. "Once you eat enough, I can begin to tell you how much I love you and why you're the rock I should be holding onto for the rest of my life."

ELEVEN

“What did you say?” Jaejoong captured Yunho’s wrist, stopping him from lifting the spoon to the singer’s mouth. When Yunho pushed against Jaejoong’s hand, the singer retaliated, knocking the spoon out of Yunho’s grasp. Putting the bowl aside, the leader growled at the waste.

“I said I needed to tell you how much... and why... I loved you. Still love you,” Yunho said, meeting Jaejoong’s frightened, angry eyes. “I don’t know what we’re going to be to each other. Things right now between us are... complicated, but no matter what happens, I wanted you to know that I love you.”

Jaejoong swallowed, shifting to turn his shoulders and face away from the other man’s piercing eyes. The pain in his chest blossomed, cutting deep into his heart until he couldn’t find the strength to breathe and his eyes burned hot with tears. Gulping in air, he tossed off the blankets and tried to stand, only to find his legs unable to support him.

Yunho caught him neatly, wrapping his arms around Jae’s waist before the other man could hurt himself. The brief struggle for dominance ended quickly and Yunho straddled the man’s legs to pin him to the futon. Panting and angry, Jaejoong stared up at Yunho, his wrists trapped in the man’s hands and pushed into the futon’s soft warmth. Wearing only his briefs and his borrowed shirt, Yunho was a blistering weight on Jaejoong’s hips and thighs and he fought, trying to dislodge the other man only to find himself shoved harder into the mattress.

“You make me insane,” Yunho whispered, leaning forward until he could brush his mouth over Jae’s pale, flushed skin. His

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mouth ached to taste the other man. It had been too long since a sincere sweet kiss passed between them and his lips still felt bruised from the blow Jae landed on his face earlier that evening. "Touching you makes me hurt inside but not touching you... kills me slowly. Not having you, Joongie-ah, murders me... every second I'm away from you is another knife blade into my heart."

Has it been only a few hours since you struck me, baby? Yunho thought, unable to do more than rub his cheek against Jae's jaw and neck, knowing full well the other man's sharp teeth could sink into his tender flesh if Jae really wanted to hurt him. His own tears struck Jae's throat, forming salty coins on his skin.

"Don't..." Jae begged, his voice breaking. "Please... Yunho... don't..."

"The most hateful thing you've said to me tonight was when you said I never loved you." Yunho lifted his head, baring his wet face for Jaejoong to see. "How can you think I never loved you when you can hurt me like no one else?"

Their kiss was tear-stained and bruise-weary, tasting of sweat and need. Yunho pushed down, savagely taking Jaejoong's lips until they parted for him and the other man sighed into Yunho's waiting mouth, his body relaxing under the leader's heavier form. Their tongues swept against the other's, tentatively tasting and withdrawing before returning. Yunho angled his mouth, covering Jae's and drank in deeply, needing to fill his heart with the sheer power of the other man's flavor. Jae lifted his head up, straining to meet Yunho halfway but the leader kept him pinned, moving his torso so his chest pressed Jae's shoulders down to hold him still.

"Mine," Yunho sobbed, catching one of Jaejoong's broken sighs on his tongue. The rush of seared air held all of the man's heartbreak, carried up hot from his lungs. "I didn't want to hurt you, baby... I never wanted that for you but I can't let you go. Not now. Not ever."

Releasing Jae's wrists, he carded his fingers into the man's dark hair, cupping Jae's face in his palms. He took another kiss, playing with Jae's lips and loving the moan he could pull out of the man's

desire. Suddenly Yunho's entire world was the man underneath him and he ached to feel Jae fully under him. Working his shirt off, he grinned when he heard Jaejoong's wordless plea for more when their bodies separated. Tossing the garment aside, he stroked Jae's mouth with his thumb, pleased at the swollen feel they had.

Laying skin against skin, Yunho was tempted... sorely tempted... to continue exploring the man's muscular torso but the small drop of common sense he had remaining threw up a caution flag. Sliding onto the futon next to Jaejoong, he clamped down on his desire for the other man.

"What are you doing to me, Yunnie-ah?" Jaejoong gasped. He needed to pull away from the other man's arm. Jaejoong knew if he lay besides Yunho for much longer, he would lose any resolve he had to distance himself from a life he needed to leave behind. His heart fractured into pieces when he moved an inch away from the long, hot body next to him. Curling up into a ball, trying to protect himself from the pain he knew would fill him, Jaejoong cried, "What the hell am I doing to myself?"

Yunho's fingertips along his spine startled Jae and he twitched with the need to roll away. Catching at Jae's shoulders, the man pulled Jae back, fitting himself into his ex-lover's curved form. "I'm here, Jaejoong. I'm here, baby."

They lay together, Jae's naked body wracked with shivers and sobs and Yunho stroked his sides and belly, comforting the singer with soundless murmurs. The anguish in Jaejoong's animalistic cries tore at Yunho's heart, ripping what control he had remaining into shreds. A deep keening ran under the noises, a mournful, low wail of misery Yunho wished he could scrape from his eardrums before his soul bled out from the pain in Jae's soulful voice.

Working his fingers along Jae's temples, he caressed the young man's skull, rubbing away the tension under his skin. When he moved his hand up, Yunho barely felt the sting of Jaejoong's fingernails digging gouges into the arm clutching Jaejoong's waist. Blood speckled is skin but Yunho closing his eyes tightly with relief, content to know Jae wanted to be held...and that the other man

knew Yunho was the one who cradled him close.

When Jae's heart-wrenching cries subsided to hiccups and shaky, indistinct noises, Yunho snuggled him closer, one arm wrapped around the other man's waist while stroking the tears from Jae's face. The singer turned his face to the blankets, suddenly aware of his nudity and his shame at being unmanned in front of Yunho. Chuckling, the leader rubbed his cheek against Jae's, raking the other man's fine skin with the stubble beginning to show on his face.

"I fucking hate you," Jaejoong said, gulping air to rid himself of the hiccups.

"Yeah, I hate you too," Yunho replied, kissing Jaejoong's temple, getting a mouthful of silken black hair in return.

"You hurt me," He murmured with a voice still edged sharp with pain. "I can't stand it any more. I can't stand you hurting me any longer, Yunho."

"Can you stand a life without me?" Yunho whispered into the cup of Jae's ear, brushing his lips on the soft skin under the other man's jaw. "Because I can tell you that we've been trying that these past few months and it's not working out very well."

"I'm tired of crying," Jae admitted, wishing for a tissue to wipe his nose with. Grabbing a napkin Yunho left within his reach, he wiped at his face, hiccupping painfully. "Fucking hell."

"Keep that up and I'd think *you* were the one sleeping with Choi Dong Wook." Yunho laughed at the murderous look on Jaejoong's face. "I didn't sleep with Se7en, Joongie-ah."

"And Junsu?" Jae shivered then murmured appreciatively when Yunho pulled one of the soft blankets over them, tucking his arm back around Jae's waist to hold him in place. "I can't talk or think when you're like this....when I'm like this. I need to put some clothes on."

"No," Yunho refused, gripping the other man tighter. "You're less likely to run away when you're naked. In fact, I'm thinking that any time I talk to you, I'm going to insist you take your clothes off first. It will give me a fighting chance."

"You don't need a fighting chance," Jae sniffed. "You punch me in the gut by doing stupid, stupid things and letting me catch you doing them. Junsu. Now. Did you fuck him too? After everything we screamed about from before, we agreed that we'd let the two of them alone and then I found you..."

"Comforting someone I consider my brother," Yunho said. "I never thought it would hurt you to find us like that. If I had, I wouldn't have been there with him."

"Comforting? You often comfort friends in bed?"

"Like you do with Yoochun? Junsu told me he finds the two of you wrapped around one another in bed and you've got the nerve to ask me if I'm faithful?" Yunho asked, lightly stabbing Jaejoong in the stomach with his fingers. "Quit squirming. This is the nonsense that keeps us at each other's throats. If we going to go forward... together... we've got to come up with a way to trust... to learn to love even when we're not side by side."

"How can I trust..." Jae started to say then Yunho's hand covered his mouth.

"How can you not trust me?" Yunho asked softly.

"Se7en. Naked. Finding you," He mumbled behind Yunho's fingers.

"I'm sorry for that," He said, wincing when the other man's teeth scraped his palm. "Not one of my best ideas."

"One of your worst," Jae grumbled, trying to get comfortable. The crying jag left him tired and hungry but his sex was more interested in the man holding him than sleep or food. "I don't know if I can...forgive? I don't know...anything. What am I supposed to do with this? With us? We can't see each other openly. The company has made sure of that. So much of what we are is standing on stage with one another and now when I look to the right of me, I don't see you and it makes my heart ache."

"I know, baby," Yunho said.

"I hate you more when I can't see you...next to me...where you're supposed to be," Jae said, biting back his anger as much as he could but the hardness he felt inside escaped. "How am I

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supposed to live without you in the one place that I really feel alive?"



"What do you think they're doing?" Junsu asked, staring up at the ceiling as Yoochun shuffled back from the bathroom. The baritone wiped toothpaste foam from his mouth then joined the smaller man in bed, shoving his cold feet under Junsu's legs. "Aish, you're cold. How did you get so cold walking so little?"

"I stuck my feet in cold tub water. They were too warm. Now they're too cold," Yoochun complained, rumpling Junsu into a ball so he could get warm. The tenor shouted, yelping loudly and tried to get free of the man's arms but Yoochun merely held on, waiting for Junsu's innate laziness to kick in. When the man's struggles subsided, he nestled closer, happy at winning the tussle. "Don't move. Just listen to the rain for a bit. It sounds like the sky is kissing the earth. Can't you hear it?"

Junsu closed his eyes, resting his head back on Yoochun's shoulder and let go of the tension in his muscles. Driven by some inexplicable need for fresh, cold air, the baritone cracked the hotel window a bit and the sound of the storm crept in, chewing apart the silence they'd basked in.

"It sounds like she's protesting," Junsu said after a minute. "Like she's telling him no but she's not moving away. Tempting him to push further... take more than a kiss but he can't... because the stars are watching him."

"The sky is a bad boy?" Yoochun teased, kissing the corner of Junsu's mouth to capture his giggle.

"Probably. I have it on good experience that the world loves bad boys. Even greasy ones," Junsu blew a kiss into his lover's mouth. His mood sobered and the light from the beside lamp cast his soft frown in shadows. "Do you think they're arguing?"

"Yes," Yoochun said then hissed when Junsu's elbow connected with his ribs. "Hey, turn over and face me. Then you can't do that."

"But I can still punch you," Junsu said, brandishing a fist under Yoochun's nose as he flipped over to lie on his side. "Be serious. I'm

worried.”

“Can’t you lie here for a night and be happy that we’re on our way together?”

“No,” Junsu admitted. “Not when I know Yunho is out there running after Jaejoong.”

“You assume Yunho’s doing the running.”

“When isn’t Yunho doing the running?”

Yoochun thought for a second then nodded, conceding the point. “We could call them.”

“How do we know they took their phones? I wouldn’t want to have my phone. I’d know you’d hound me every few minutes with voice mails or texts,” Junsu grumbled, stretching out his legs and hooking on over Yoochun’s calves. “They didn’t even tell us they were leaving.”

“For all we know one killed the other and took the body up to the roof.” Yoochun made a whistling sound, mimicking something falling. “One heave and then he runs away to join a shrine someplace.”

“I don’t think Yunho would murder Jaejoong.”

“You assume Yunho is doing the murdering,” Yoochun countered, laughing when Junsu finally and reluctantly nodded. “No, Jaejoong would do something first. Yunho is too controlled. Everything is thought out and when things don’t go his way, he explodes and pushes. Jaejoong would hit him over the head with something first. Just because it would make him feel better.”

“I worry...” Junsu whispered, tracing the full moon of Yoochun’s nipple with the tip of his finger. “I worry that they won’t find peace between them.”

“Yunho... couldn’t walk away from the company. Jaejoong tried to understand but...” He shrugged, touching Junsu’s forehead with his lips. “Now, they have to find each other again. I only hope that the person they find is the person they’re looking for.”

“Why...did you comfort Jaejoong? I mean,” Junsu stumbled over his words, looking for the right phrase. “Why did you...”

“We didn’t do anything, Susu-ah,” Yoochun said, cupping his

lover's face. "Jaejoong... he held me together when I first came to Seoul. When I had no one, Jaejoong was there to tell me it would be okay. I needed to do that for him, baby. He needed me. He... Yunho shattered him. Shattered his confidence. It took him a long time to really believe someone could actually love him and then all of a sudden when he needed Yunho's arms the most, he wasn't there."

"He's not alone now," Junsu protested, hating the whine edging into his voice. It was hard sharing Yoochun with the other singer and no matter how often Yoochun reassured him, Junsu felt inadequate next to the changeable Jaejoong. "A lot of people love him. Most of the time, even I do."

"He's more alone than ever," Yoochun said. "He gave his *heart* to Yunho. His *soul*. Jaejoong is passionate and giving but it's rare that he lets someone take care of him. I think that's the deepest sign of trust Jae can give. He will let Yunho take care of him...lead him."

"Our hyung hates being told what to do," Junsu agreed. "Professionally, it's different... I know but personally, he'd eat candy for breakfast if he wanted to."

"Jaejoong does what he wants; when he wants to." The baritone hooked his arm around Junsu's shoulders, liking the feel of the man on his chest and thigh. "But see, he gave up control to Yunho. He didn't submit to him; he *trusted* him. He never gave anyone that kind of trust before so I don't know if Jaejoong can trust him ever again."

"But he didn't sleep with Se7en!" Junsu protested. "He says he did it to make sure we had a cleaner break...that it was becoming too painful for us to walk on both sides of... the company was killing us. Even as we tried to walk away, they hurt us. Why didn't he just come with us? Why didn't Min? This never would have happened if they weren't so..."

"Filial? Yunho and Min are very traditional and our dongsaeng made a promise," Yoochun said softly. "He signed a contract and he wants to stick with it. He knows we have a harder time of it but he's bound to... the company is like a father to him."

"Min doesn't have the pressures we do."

"You and I don't have the pressures Jaejoong and Yunho do. We were drinking rat poison believing it was soju and we were still better off than the two of them."

"I know. I know," The other man murmured, resting his chin on Yoochun's bare chest, blowing waves of goosebumps across Chun's pale skin with each breath he exhaled. "I don't know why Jaejoong stood it for as long as he did."

"Because he loved Yunho," Yoochun sighed, holding Junsu tightly. "Still loves Yunho. I watch him sometimes and there's a ghost following him. His face is haunted by it and he turns around sometimes when we walk through an airport, like he's looking for something important he'd left behind."

"You're going to make me cry, Chunnie-ah," Junsu sniffled. "I don't want to think Jaejoong is hurting because I couldn't survive what the company was doing to us."

"He knew what he was doing," Yoochun said. "Even when Yunho made the decision to stay with Min, Jaejoong knew what he was doing and accepted its hardship."

"Do you think...when he's sitting alone...away from us sometimes, that he's thinking of Yunho."

"I know there is some small part of him that is looking for Yunho. Jaejoong is looking for the man he gave his heart to, because he can't quite believe Yunho won't catch up with him eventually; finding him in the middle of the crowd and offering him shelter against the noise and pain." Yoochun closed his eyes, refusing to let his tears fall into Junsu's upturned face. "I just hope that when Yunho finally does catch up to him, he doesn't hand Jaejoong back his heart and walk away. I don't think my brother... my friend... will survive that."

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TWELVE

They walked, silent and somber in the grey morning mist. Their bodies fueled by a few hours of sleep and cold, broth-swollen noodles, the singers left the shop behind before the owners arrived for the day. Leaving behind a thank you note accompanied by a small *omiyage* Yunho purchased while buying underwear and t-shirts for them to change into, they left the place neat as they could.

The leader returned from his early morning venture to find the blankets folded and Jaejoong worrying a knot out of his sneakers. The singer took the change of clothes with him into the bathroom, showering in the tiny stall quickly, leaving Yunho enough hot water to bath in. A small pack slung over Yunho's shoulder held their soiled clothes and they'd set up, not speaking of a destination, wandering as they had the night before.

Except Yunho now walked shoulder to shoulder with the young man he'd once called his lover.

The night's ravages remained on Jaejoong's face, his tear-kissed eyes enormous and fragile. Yunho fought the urge to gather the young man up in his arms, wanting to soothe away the damage he'd done over the past year but the words he needed to say to make it all better escaped him and he continued to walk besides Jaejoong in silence.

There was no talk of going back to the hotel. Neither one of them wanted to return to the scene of the crime. Their duplicitous manipulation of the other two notwithstanding, the room was a fractious reminder of how far they'd fallen away from one another.

The downpour from last night was replaced with a light drizzle although the storm seemed reluctant to give up its hold on the city.

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Around them, the streets were sparsely populated with a few rain-defiant shoppers and a corner kiosk made sluggish business selling chicken satay next to a subway entrance. The scent of meat sizzling on the grill perked up Yunho's appetite and he whispered to Jaejoong to wait for him.

The hoodie-wearing kiosk cook looked up when Yunho approached and her eyes widened, her expression flitting quickly from shock then to concern when she glanced at the man's companion. Surprise won out and she ducked her head, bowing her shoulders when Yunho greeted her.

"Kumo," She murmured then covered her mouth in horror. "Oh... I did not mean to say that!"

"Hello. It is good to meet you," Yunho said. It was effortless, the shifting from his personal persona to the leader mask he often wore. As usual, the formality chafed as if his skin were on too tight but he steeled himself against his negative thoughts. *I should be happy that I'm remembered and thought of,* He scolded himself. *Considering everything that has happened, I should be grateful that she knows me.*

"It is good to see you, *hyung.*" Her attempt at Korean courtesy was admirable amid her Japanese and she blushed when Yunho murmured in appreciation. Her nervousness grew and the woman shuffled her feet behind the cart, her dark eyes flicking to Jaejoong's weary face. "Can I get offer you something to eat?"

Distant and unapproachable, Jaejoong lingered near the subway railing, his fingers combing through his hair. Yunho knew the signs of his exhaustion well and read the man's need for a cigarette to ease his stress. Bowing quickly to the cook, he asked for four portions, determined to get more food into Jaejoong than the mushy noodles they'd both choked down a few hours ago.

"Here you are," She handed over two thick packages of skewers and a clear plastic bag of savoury peanut sauce to dip the chicken in.

They tangled their hands together and argued slightly over payment; the girl insisting she would take nothing and Yunho

asking her to please let him pay for her dreary morning. The man won out, earning him a smile from the young woman who tsked at the thought of him taking up her time.

"I..." He didn't know how to ask her to keep quiet of their outing together. The last thing Yunho wanted was a complication with the company but the young woman nodded knowingly, waving off his discomfort.

"No one will hear from me that you two are together," She whispered. "I am just happy to know that you are still best friends."

Yunho thanked her for her time and signed the back of a placard she had, scrawling his name in Japanese and English as best he could. Calling Jaejoong over, he held up the marker and pointed to the sheet. "Come here. Sign this, Boo."

It was so simple to fall into their habits, Yunho thought as Jaejoong lit up, almost as if seeing the woman for the first time. The charmer emerged from the gloom around Jaejoong and he joined Yunho, talking to the young woman as he signed and drew over the sheet. Stepping slightly back, Yunho watched his ex-lover chatter away, lifting the conversation away from the rain and her work to other things that interested her.

"That's who I fell in love with," He whispered, feeling his heart tumble over itself again. The sinking stickiness was familiar; nearly as uncomfortable as hearing Junsu regal him with a joke but much more welcome. "God, Jaejoong... the last thing in the world I want is to fall *in* love with you again. It's bad enough that I love you. Don't make me want to live inside of you too."



Despite having the curtains pulled open, Changmin was still uncertain about the time, more so when he turned over and found the bed next to him empty and cold. The greyness outside troubled him and the city lay in its pitch nothingness, nearly silent but for the clash of a garbage truck making its rounds across the street. Finding his phone only irritated him, the blank screen a reminder of its left-behind charger. The door opening made him scramble for the sheets, covering his naked body with the linens.

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"Who were you expecting?" Se7en leered, swinging a couple of plastic bags onto the bed. "Hopefully it was me and that's why you're naked."

"I'm naked because you hid my clothes," Min grumbled. He grunted when the other man hit him with one of the bags, dumping its contents in Min's lap.

"Your clothes are right there," He said, pointing to the top of the dresser. "I picked them off of the floor and folded them. Just for you, Minku... well and for me because I almost broke my neck on your pants when I got out of bed."

"Good," Changmin muttered then gasped when Se7en held up a cup carrier with two large cups, steam rising from their vented lids. The smell of coffee enticed him and he salivated. "If you loved me, you'd give me one of those."

"I love you enough to buy it," Se7en said, leaning over to kiss Changmin's parted lips before giving him one of the cups. "You might want to brush your teeth first. You taste like you've been having sex all night. It might ruin your coffee."

The sound of the door slamming behind him felt good. So good that Changmin opened it up and slammed it again, hard enough to rattle the door frame. Standing in the tiny bathroom, he swore and pounded his clenched fist against the wall. The blow shook him, jarring his shoulder and spine.

He felt more than heard Se7en move towards the bathroom and then the touch of the other man's hand on the other side of the door. It was a comfort seeing the dark slice of shadow absorb what little light was coming under the door. Smiling to himself, Changmin turned on the water and scrubbed the sour film from his teeth.

"There's no hot water," Se7en called through the door. "The power is still out. The coffee shop owner's heating up water on a gas stove."

Changmin frowned, wiping at the back of his neck with a damp washcloth. He tried ignoring the flat tapping at the door then sighed when the banging grew louder. "What do you want? You're going to break the door down!"

"Open up."

"You were the reason I slammed the door shut! Why would I want to open it up again."

"Because this is getting heavy and I can't make love to you if I've got a hernia from carrying it." Se7en rapped at the door again. "Now open up."

"It's not my fault your ego is too heavy to..." Changmin jerked the door open and stopped mid-insult.

The older man had stripped down to a pair of sweat pants and a wife-beater, his shoulder and arm muscles bulging as he lugged in an old-fashioned steel tub filled with steaming hot water. Duck-walking around Changmin, he carefully tipped the pan over, dumping the water into the bathtub. A quick twist of a faucet and lukewarm water gushed out of the spigot, mellowing the skin-blistering temperature.

"Here. You first. I'll use the water when you're done," Se7en said, setting the tub down to stir the water together. Long red welts marked his forearms and chest where the steel rested against his skin as he'd carried the tub up to their room and Min bit at his lip, troubled at the blotches on Se7en's body. Turning, he caught Changmin staring. "What?"

"You... didn't have to..." Min reached for Se7en's arm, dabbing at the welt with his washcloth. "You carried that up for me?"

"Well yeah," Se7en said, staring at Changmin with a curious look. "I know how you are about taking a bath in the morning. You hate not feeling clean."

"So you got hot water from where? The coffee shop man?"

"I paid him for the water," Se7en informed him with a sniff. "And I have to take the tub back later on or he'll come looking for me. Or worse. He'll send his wife. She's hideous. Short women. I think she's a troll. She's got a big wart on her face, right next to her nose and I think I saw it sprout an eye and blink at me when I was haggling for the water."

He loves you, Min's gremlin said, sounding awestruck in the echoing confines of Changmin's head.

"You... love me," The younger man whispered, his voice breaking as he spoke.

I just said that. Are you stupid? Are we stupid?

"It took me bringing you hot water for you to finally realize that?" Se7en asked, cupping Min's face and kissing the corner of his mouth. "I should have poured a bathtub worth under your door then instead of buying those damned flowers."

"You can't..." Changmin dropped his gaze, unable to stare too long into the other man's dark eyes. "How are you going to use the water after I'm done with it. It'll be..."

"It'll be fine." He replied, letting his hand drop so Min could step away. "I'll soap up using the tub water then rinse off with the showerhead."

"We could...share?" Changmin studied the tub intently as if it held the answers to the universe.

"Baby, that thing is not big enough for you much less the two of us," Se7en laughed. "Go bathe. I'll go change the sheets. I got new ones from the housekeeper."

"Thank you," He murmured. The whisper stopped Se7en in his tracks and the older man turned at the doorway, cocking his head at his lover.

"What for?"

"For taking care of me," Min sniffed, biting his lip.

He had his back to the door, unable to trust himself to look at Se7en. Emotion welled in his chest, choking him until he could barely breathe. If he saw the tenderness he knew gleamed in Se7en's dark eyes, Min didn't think he could hold back the tears already threatening to unman him. His pride wouldn't stand up if the other man saw him crying like a child at being coddled.

"Taking care of you is one of the pleasures of being in love with you," Se7en replied, leaning forward to brush his lips on Min's soft hair. "Go bathe, Minku. I'll bring your coffee in here so you can drink it while it's hot."

The water on his bare skin seared and Min slowly eased into the tub. Se7en was right in his assessment of the tub's capacity. It

was deep enough to come up to his chest but he had to keep his knees slightly bent to fit his length in. Still, the heat crept slowly into his body and he leaned back, resting his head on a rolled up pillow.

“Don’t fall asleep,” Se7en said, coming back into the bathroom and holding out one of the coffee cups. “I don’t want to have to explain to Yunho how I let you drown in a Matsue hotel.”

“I don’t think I could fit down far enough to drown in this.” Taking the cup, he took a sip and sighed at the rush of caffeine hitting his bloodstream. “And as far as talking to Yunho, nothing that happens between us gets shared with him. If I wanted him in my love life, I’d fuck *him* instead. Understood?”

“Yes, my very bossy Minku,” Se7en laughed. “And thank you.”

“For what?” Min looked over his shoulder, perplexed.

“For offering to fuck me.” The man winked and gave him a lascivious grin. “I’m glad I stopped at the drug store and got some other things besides food.”

“Arrogant bastard,” Changmin growled, reaching for a courtesy bar of soap to chuck at the man’s head. He easily dodged the missile, closing the door before it could hit him. The soap bounced off the door, ricocheting back towards the tub.

Torn between wanting to luxuriate in the hot bath and knowing Se7en would be left with scummy cold water if he didn’t hurry, Changmin worked a healthy lather up and washed quickly, giving himself a few minutes to soak the heat up then rinsing off. The hotel’s towels were rough on his skin and he reluctantly tied one around his waist to open the bathroom door.

Then forgot how to breathe at the sight of a dozen or so candle pillars arranged on the flipped over steel tub. The varying heights puzzled Min until he realized Se7en snapped some of the thick wax columns in two, giving them double the amount of light. He was gouging out the wick on the remaining unlit candle, pulling the string out enough to catch on fire. Se7en looked up to notice Min standing a few feet away and smiled, a pure unaffected smile that left the younger man with no doubt the joy in his face was for Min

alone.

"You weren't supposed to be done yet," He said sheepishly, wiping off the curls of wax on his shirt. "I wanted this set up first."

"It's great," Changmin murmured. A few steps took him to Se7en's side and he twisted the man's shirt in his fingers, pulling Se7en closer. Curving his mouth into a moue, he kissed the older man, savouring the taste of coffee on Se7en's mouth. Pulling back when he finally needed a air, he said breathlessly, "It's more than great. *You're* more than great."

"And that inside voice of yours?" Se7en lightly tapped at Min's temple with his index finger. "What does he think about me?"

"Oh, he was on your side a long time ago," Changmin admitted, playfully pushing Se7en in the direction of the bathroom. "Go get cleaned up. What do you need me to do out here?"

"There's food." Se7en rustled through the bags, separating out the edible items from the rest. "It's not great but it's the best they had nearby. No one can cook so people are buying up already cooked things."

"I'll figure it out," Min promised, shooing him off. "Go. Before the water gets too cold."

After pulling on a clean pair of briefs and his sweatpants, Min unpacked the food stuffs, putting a tray of cold mochi to the side for later. He found a smaller brown paper bag among the plastic and opened it, believing he'd found their utensils. When a box of condoms and a squat bottle of body lubricant fell out, he blushed and punched his fist through the paper bag when he tried to shove them back in.

"Shit!" Min dropped to his knees to grab at the condoms. The bottle rolled merrily under the bed, making Min strain to reach it. He lay his cheek on the carpet and spotted the lube in the shadows.

"That's how I like to see my lovers. On their knees and waiting for me," Se7en laughed, avoiding the foot Min kicked out at him.

Straining to reach it, he jumped and smacked his forehead on the bed frame when Se7en slapped his upturned ass. "Ouch! That hurt!"

“What are you doing down there?”

“Looking for...” Min held up the broken paper bag, tossing it onto the bed. Lunging forward, he grabbed at the bottle and came up with it, jumping up onto his feet and triumphant at his victory. “I got it!”

“Yes you do,” Se7en murmured, sliding his hands over Min’s hips. Wearing only a damp towel, Se7en’s stiffening erection pressed into the cleft of Min’s ass when he pushed up against the young man’s back. Kissing a drop of water from Min’s damp shoulder, he asked in a husky, sensual voice, “The question now is; who are you going to use it on? You or me?”



Their Japanese apartment seemed tiny compared to the hotel room they’d just left but to Junsu, it was a warm, welcoming place. A quick look around confirmed Yoochun’s suspicions that the other two had not returned there and the numerous calls they made to Jaejoong’s phone rolled over to voice mail nearly immediately after the first ring. Trying one last time and leaving a message that they’d gone home, sitting on the edge of his bed, Yoochun tossed his cell onto the night stand. It skidded an inch and came to a stop against one of Jaejoong’s discarded beanies.

“Do you think they’re alright?” Junsu asked, emerging from the bathroom off their bedroom with a towel draped over his head. “Do you think we should go looking for them?”

“Considering how big Tokyo is...no,” Yoochun answered as he pulled off his socks, rolling them into a ball before tossing them at Junsu’s head.

“Hey,” He yelped, batting the object away. “No throwing stinky socks.”

“I don’t have clean ones,” Yoochun said, crooking his finger at the other man. His eyes hooded, darkening with need. “Come here, baby.”

Junsu briefly thought of denying him but the desire in his groin grew and his erection strained against the crotch of his jeans. Walking proved to be a bit of a problem, easily solved by undoing

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his pants. The scrape of his zipper made his cock jump and twitch and his ass clenched when he thought of Yoochun's strong, lean hands gripping him.

"Or better yet, strip first." The man leaned back against the wall, tucking a pillow behind his neck. "God, I love to watch you dance."

"I ... don't have any music," Junsu stammered, suddenly embarrassed.

"We've got the rain, baby," Yoochun pointed out. "Ride the storm for me. Show me what you're going to look like when I'm inside of you."

The mere mention of Yoochun's heavy sex piercing his body made Junsu's mouth water and his eyes closed, savouring the imagined sensations. His lover was right. The sound of the rain was a sensual, raspy backdrop of sound for his hips and he found a rhythm in it, experimentally rolling his hips around then up, curving his body into an S before straightening back out. His jeans were stiff, slightly damp from the rain but he worked them off, pulling down one side of his waistband then the next, curling his hips into a lazy figure eight while he held his arms above his head. Scissoring his wrists together, he danced, listening to the primal rush of water against the building's roof tiles. A steady drip dominated the sounds, the strong beat quickening then slowing as if it needed to prolong a pleasurable caress.

Mid-hip swivel, Junsu was jerked forward when one of Yoochun's finger hooked into a belt loops and the man gave one fierce pull. Landing on Yoochun's lap, Junsu tried to right himself, only to find himself pinned to the mattress by Yoochun's strong hands clamped over his wrists. Staring up into the man's desire-flushed face, Junsu gulped, suddenly painfully aware of the dangerous, needful gleam in Yoochun's eyes and the jut of the man's sex rubbing alongside his own erection.

"Forget that dance, baby. I've got another one for you. Keep your hands there! Don't move them," Yoochun growled, furiously stripping Junsu of his jeans. The t-shirt Junsu borrowed from

Yunho's suitcase ripped when Yoochun tugged on its hem and the tenor nearly protested the rough treatment but the look on Yoochun's face stilled his tongue.

Nothing was going to stop Yoochun from having him. Nothing other than a whispered *no* from Junsu himself. For a split second, they both held their breaths, instinctively knowing the moment had come for Junsu to protest Yoochun's possession of him but the tenor sighed, kissing Yoochun's throat with a murmuring surrender.

"Kim Junsu," Yoochun rasped, biting down into Junsu's shoulder. "Once we do this... once I have you... there's not going to be anyone else for you. You know that, right?"

"I know." Junsu's voice was hoarse with need. "I... want this, Yoochun-ah. I want *you*. No one else. Before and ever. Just you.

Swallowing, he cried out when Yoochun's teeth nearly broke through his skin and he lifted his hips, trapped under the other man's weight. Writhing, their hips ground together and all Junsu could think of was Yoochun's sex reaching deep inside of him, satisfying the dark need pulsing through his body.

"Mine, then," Yoochun said, marking Junsu with a roll of his teeth, scoring the man's skin until it ran purple and dark with his possession. "What do you have to say about that, baby?"

The cut of Yoochun's teeth in his skin throbbed, falling into time with the ache in his shaft. The world spun, growing dark around them and Junsu said the only thing he could think of saying.

"Please, Chunnie-ah. *Please.*"

THIRTEEN

It'd been too long since he'd taken his time, Se7en thought. Much too long for his liking, he agreed with himself as he ran the pad of his thumb under the jut of Changmin's lower lip. It looked... succulent, the man decided, tugging lightly on the plump flesh with a pinch of his fingers. It wasn't too much to ask of himself. Just a little patience to savour the young man spread out under him. Time, patience and probably a lot more will power than he possessed but the wait was worth it.

Especially when he knew it was his kiss was responsible for the darkening of Min's eyes and the growling displeasure from the man's chest when he moved slower than Changmin liked.

Se7en could tell little things... intimate things... when he studied Min's mouth. Slightly chapped, Min still forgot to use lip balm and despite vigorous attempts, failed in breaking himself of his habit of chewing on his lower lip. How could he think he could succeed, Se7en murmured to himself, when it was a very delectable, succulent lower lip.

Their bodies — just fit, Se7en decided. Despite Min's lankiness and height, the young man easily slid into the hard planes and angles of Se7en's more muscular form, shadow to light and muscle to sinew. Changmin's dusky golden tan shone against Se7en's paler skin, the younger man's tan lingering from his time in the southern sun. Their hands were similar, long fingered and graceful. Se7en knew the punishing grip those fingers could exact, especially when he teased Min with his full mouth.

His desire breached and Se7en suddenly found himself longing for the sweet-salty taste of Min's sex on his tongue, its velvet soft

head pressed up against the roof of his mouth. Grinning, he trailed his fingers down Min's belly button and played with the tangle of soft hair he found there, intent on following its lead to the shaft below.

"You are staring at me like I'm a piece of candy," Min challenged. Tilting his head on the pillows, he pierced Se7en with a stern look. "Stop it."

"You *are* a piece of candy. *My* candy." Se7en gave in to the temptation and slid around Min's chest, capturing the other man's mouth between his lips. His weight pressed Changmin down into the bed, wrinkling the sheets. One of the pillows fell, pushed aside when Min's arm rose to hug Se7en tighter. Their lips met again, a savage need taking them over and the world slowed to a stop.

All Se7en could hear was Min. Changmin's heavy breathing captured the spaces between the heartbeats Se7en both heard and felt under his hand as he explored the breadth of Min's bare chests. A tweak of his fingers against a nipple brought Min to a sharp gasp, his hips raising up to grind against Se7en's legs. He smiled when Min followed with a needful whimpering when Se7en pinched harder and rolled the nub he'd captured, slanting his mouth over Min's to swallow the other man's sounds.

Another pinch and Min's hands were in Se7en's hair, twisting hard at the strands to pull the older man closer.

They fought for control, each needing more from the other's mouth and body. Changmin's hands roamed, exploring the ridges of muscles along Se7en's back and the curve of his spine. Stroking the younger man's mouth with the tip of his tongue, Se7en urged Min to open up for him.

Then he plunged in deep when the young man parted his full lips for Se7en in surrender.

He took his time with that too, taking delicate sips of Min's mouth and tasting their morning on his tongue. Scented sweet and bitter from the coffee, there was an underlying tang of the young man's body; nearly citrus but mostly an almost chocolate richness that made Se7en's sex stiffen with want.

It was beyond need with Changmin, Se7en decided, cupping the young man's face and covering him with his body. It was a want... a desire; a spark searching for kindling to consume so it could lit the skies up with its flame.

"I've never wanted anyone more than I've wanted you," Se7en whispered into Min's slightly open mouth. He spoke softly, willing his words to find Changmin's furiously beating heart. "And I don't think I can ever want anyone else ever again. I don't think I could ever love anyone like this... like I do you. Never again."

They'd peeled off their clothes, leaving the food forgotten on the dresser and the light of the candles caught the golden sheen of their bodies. Goosebumps chased one another over Min's shoulders and down his arms when Se7en's mouth brushed over his throat then licked down the length of his arm, stopping for a moment to suckle at the tender skin on the inside of Min's wrist.

He'd leave a mark there, Se7en decided, snipping at the flesh with his teeth. Something small that no one would ever imagine was from Min's lover. A rich purple line across the wrist where he'd kissed and suckled delightful, primal noises from his long-legged boyfriend.

The sting of Min's teeth on his shoulder only urged Se7en on, driven to taste and lick at the young man as his lover marbled his skin purple. Shifting, Se7en fit his body against Min's taller, leaner form, feeling the bones and muscles play against the other's. The skin grew slick with sweat and Se7en's sex grew thick with the bitter, bright pain of his arousal. The need for Min tightened his jaw and his hips rolled, moving against the man's shaft. He'd wanted to delay touching Min's sex, needing to hear the young man beg for him... plead for Se7en to touch him... promise anything within his power if only Se7en would slide into him and fill the emptiness.

"I'm going to be the one begging, Minku." Se7en whispered skimming his lips over Min's arm and back to his chest, breaking the man's hold on his shoulder. The spot ached, throbbing with an echoing pain that flared when he moved before being forgotten when Se7en found Min's nipple with his mouth. "You humble me.

With you, I can have no pride... just the fucking want of you."

Min's hands clenched his shoulders and his hips danced beneath Se7en's, their cocks rubbing between them. Razor edged pleasures drove up from the tip of Se7en's sex to his stomach, curling back down to tighten his sac. Changmin slid his legs apart, sliding Se7en in between them until the older man's belly touched Min's hard shaft. Instinct drove him, riding the feeling of the man's body against him until Min felt the rush of his climax hit his face, turning the dim room dark and tight.

"God, Shichi," Min gasped, clutching at his lover's back, raking his fingers under Se7en's shoulder blades. He writhed, trying to satisfy the driving need for his sex to be held tight and stroked. His head grew moist, damp from the seed beginning to leak from his rising orgasm. "I need..."

"I know what you need, my baby," Se7en murmured, stroking Min's sex slowly then clamping his fingers around its base, holding off the young man's release. "Get me the lube, Minku. Let me get you ready for me."

The click of the bottle's lid made Min's stomach clench. With the scent of the oil came the promise of pleasure mingled with the stretch of pain. Se7en leaned forward, taking the bottle from his numb fingers and kissed him, murmuring wordless comforts while he tipped the container over to coat his fingers.

"Lift your knees up, baby," Se7en whispered, sliding his hand down to rest under Min's sac. He rubbed at the man's sex with his other hand, keeping the tension of Min's desire stoked. The young man responded, letting his legs fall further open to let Se7en kneel between them.

Their eyes met, briefly then coming back to one another, emotions roiling too fast and too hard to be caught with a few words. A tightening glimpse of fear in Min's face nearly broke Se7en's heart and he slanted forward, kissing the corner of the younger man's mouth, his hands stilled with an iron-firm patience.

"We don't have to do this, Minku..." Se7en said, whispering against Min's cheek when the younger man sank his teeth into his

own bottom lip. "I don't... need to be inside of you to get pleasure. Just watching you go over the edge is good for me. It's perfect for me. I want to see your face explode with the joy of this, not fold up underneath me."

"I don't..." Changmin whispered, turning his face away and closing his eyes. The warmth of Se7en's body on his comforted him as the rush of air hitting his entrance sent tingles of trepidation along his softening shaft. He longed to move his hips, to increase the feel of Se7en's warm grip on him and forget about anything else but the soft voices inside of him whispered doubts and fears. "I don't want to... hurt. I'm scared of... the pain. Of everything. Of giving you everything that I am and then finding I have nothing left inside of me because you've taken it all."

"That would kill me, Minku. More than a knife you plunged into my chest." He said, leaving butterfly kisses along Min's jaw. "I don't need *this* to live, baby. I need your love much more."

"I don't..." Changmin didn't want to say what came to his mind. He wanted to fall into the sweet, sultry promise of Se7en's mouth and feel the man spread him apart, reaching deep inside of him for that spark of pleasure he knew lay deep in him. The trust and faith in Se7en's eyes stopped him from pushing his fears aside. There was no censure in Se7en's face and the man's body lay against his with a relaxed sensuality that made Min's hands itch to touch him.

"I'm telling you, baby," Se7en said, his voice soft and warm. He moved his hands, resting on Min's thighs. "Anything you want to do or not do, I'm fine with."

"You'd just..." Min shrugged, not trusting himself to let go of Se7en's shoulders. "You'd not... want...?"

"I didn't say I didn't want you," He laughed, kissing the corner of Min's mouth then the tip of his nose. "I'm telling you I love you more than I need to be inside of you. How *you* feel is more important to me than what I *want*. I need your love. Everything else? That's nothing."

"Shichi..." Min started to protest.

“Minku, listen to me. If we were two pebbles on a mountain side, I would beg everyone who passed me to pick me up and put me next to you.” Se7en rested his forehead against Min’s, their lashes nearly tangling when one or the other blinked. “I can’t think of anything I’d want more than to breathe in the air you’ve already warmed.”

Changmin let out the breath he’d not known he’d been holding. Se7en’s soft intake stole Min’s heart as the older man took him in, filling his own lungs and body with Min’s exhale. The artlessness of the act — its intimacy — of it sealed Min’s fate as surely as if he’d fallen into a star to join the universe.

Sliding his hands up to Se7en’s face, Min pressed his palms on his lover’s high cheekbones, holding Se7en’s gaze for a long moment. The exchange continued, the air moving through them as the storm outside began again. Changmin wanted to capture that moment between them, engrave it into his memory until it became the touchstone for his soul in the days to come.

“I want you, Dong Wook,” Changmin said, his voice strong and sweet. “I want you in me. I want to be in you. I want to share these things with you. I trust you to take care of me and I want you to teach me how to take care of you too.”

They moved. Finding one another again as the rain fell softly at first then with a furious pounding. Min reached down, touching the hard length of his lover’s shaft and rubbed his cheek on Se7en’s shoulder, anticipating the moment when his lover touched him. Stroking at Min’s belly. Se7en moved his hand down and cradled the head of Min’s sex in his palm. Rolling the glans with a light touch of his fingers, he drew out a shocked gasp from his young lover’s mouth when he tugged at the slit with a push of his thumb.

“It...” Changmin cried out again when Se7en repeated the caress. The slight pain of the pull mingled with the erotic tingling that followed and Min fought with himself, wanting both less and more. When Se7en’s mouth found his nipple, he couldn’t hold back his cries, thrusting his hips up to fill Se7en’s grip with his tight sex.

There was no mistaking his lover for anything other than a

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man, Min thought in the back recesses of his mind. The calluses on Se7en's palm were from working in the dirt, helping his grandmother plant her garden. The roughness from moving the earth raked over Min's sensitive skin. The ridge of his head caught on Se7en's fingers and Min groaned, working back up the length of Se7en's hand.

The touch of Se7en's oil-slickened fingertip at his opening made Min flinch and Se7en pulled back slowly, only returning when Min complained with a warning bite to his lover's arm.

"Don't tease," He muttered, hooking his leg over Se7en's hip. "You're making me crazy."

"Good," Se7en licked Min's nipple then craned over to nip at the other. "You'll be joining me at the madhouse you've put me in."

The anticipation kept Changmin quivering but the touch of Se7en's probing choked him and he struggled to breathe, forcing himself to relax. The mechanics of what they were going to do — what they should have done a long time ago — were easy enough to understand, Min thought. Enough lubrication and subsequent friction would produce a stimulation of the nerves and increasingly overload the nervous system until his body released its tension. A very clinical process, he assured himself.

*There's more than just nerves and stimulation. His gremlin surfaced. LOOK at his face as he opens you up... as he prepares you for entering you. There's more than tab A and slot B going on there, stupid. It's not what he's doing. It is **how** he is doing it. THAT is love. THAT is caring. THAT is a lover to hold onto until you die.*

Se7en's tongue circled Min's shaft then his lips closed over the head as he entered Min's body, sliding his oiled finger with a careful tilt of his hand. The intrusion felt strange, an oddly erotic pressure that made Min want something more. Se7en reached in deep, brushing on a spot inside of Min's clenched body and the young man felt his world expand, filling with a brief flash of iced heat that swallowed him whole. Unable to do more than breathe as Se7en pulled slightly back, Min whimpered when Se7en plied him with a not-quite-there stroke.

“Relax, baby,” Se7en murmured, rubbing at Min’s hip. “You’re too tense. Just breathe.”

“Breathe?” Changmin muttered to himself, angry and aroused. “Can’t even...”

Se7en touched him again and lightning filled Min’s senses, leaving him gasping and writhing.

“There, baby,” The older man whispered into Min’s ear. “Is that where you want me to be?”

“Yes,” He gasped, pleading as he clenched the sheets with taut fingers. “Shichi...please.”

“Get up on your knees, honey. It’ll feel better for you...so good that way.” Se7en pulled free of Min’s body, helping the young man turn over. “Turn to the wall so I can watch you in the mirror. I want to watch you... I want to see you feel this.”

The bed creaked as Min shakily lifted up, pressing his hands to the mattress to help steady himself. Innately shy, Changmin ducked his head, acutely aware of how exposed he was to the other man as he shifted about. Se7en’s hands supported him, guiding him to where the older man wanted him and Min caught a glimpse of them in the wide mirror over the dresser, their bodies glistening and turgid.

His knees were apart, wrinkling the sheets and the soft bed. Long and lean, his body stretched out in a golden column as Min let himself be arranged before the mirror. Their height difference added to the image, Min’s lean supplication against Se7en’s broader torso tantalized Min’s senses.

When the older man pressed his fingers into Min’s slickened channel, the young man arched and he bent back, his knees sliding apart to give Se7en access. The older man took it, spreading his hand on Min’s chest to push his lover back until Min’s shoulder blades pressed against his chest.

When Changmin dared to look in the mirror, he was astonished and embarrassed by the exotic creature he saw staring back at him.

The tilt of his chin exposed his throat and the flush on his

cheeks chased down his jaw to where Se7en stroked at his throat. His long fingers were thorough, rubbing at erogenous areas that prodded Changmin's sex to rise. The head of his shaft bumped his belly, leaving a faint wet smear below his belly button. Se7en's fingers trailed down the length of his abdomen and rubbed at the moist spot and Changmin swallowed hard, thankful for the support of Se7en's body behind him.

When Se7en lifted his seed-dampened fingers up to his own mouth and licked them clean, Min panted with need and closed his eyes, unable to meet his lover's gaze any longer.

The older man kissed Changmin's shoulders lightly at first then increased the pressure, stopping long enough to suckle at certain spots. Biting gently at Min's collarbone, Se7en once again plied Min's body with oil, spreading him apart. Changmin responded without thinking, letting his body ride the sensations Se7en evoked. No longer able to support himself on his knees, Min fell back fully on his lover, jutting his hips up and splaying his legs. He felt breached and on display for his lover's hungry gaze and when Min dared to open his eyes to glimpse at the mirror in front of him, he saw how wantonly open and ready he was for Se7en's sex.

He writhed and ground down on Se7en's intrusion, clenching at the two fingers buried deep inside of him. Se7en moved his wrist and twisted, sending stars into Min's mind and the younger man bit down on his lip, trying not to cry out. A brush of Se7en's lips on his throat and another delve into his body startled Changmin into a wordless begging moan. He pushed down, forcing Se7en in as deep as he could reach — anything to bring his release to fruition.

"Are you ready for me, baby?" Se7en whispered. "Do you want me inside of you?"

"Yes," Changmin gasped, raising one arm to hook his hand around the back of Se7en's head. The older man's fingers slide free of Min's channel and he hissed, hating the feeling of emptiness Se7en left behind. "I need... God I need so much."

The crinkle of foil and then a pungent stain of latex in the air brought a blush to Min's already hot cheeks. The slurp of more oil

being poured and then the gentle tap of Se7en's sex at his entrance brought Changmin to the realization that the man behind him — the one who cradled and teased him — would soon be his lover.

"Open your eyes for me, Minku," Se7en urged. "Look at us. Watch us. See how good you look when I'm inside of you. See how good you make me feel."

The initial push was hard to absorb, more from Min forgetting to relax. Gripping Se7en's hair and holding him tightly against his back, Changmin urged the other man as he pushed out, " Now, Shichi. I need you inside of me. Now."

Se7en slid in, waiting for the young man to adjust to the push of the thick glans into him. Panting, Mind dropped his chin to his chest, steadying his breathing before nodding for Se7en to continue.

"You tell me when to stop." Se7en canted his hips, sliding another few millimeters into his lover's heat. "I don't want to hurt you."

"I *will* hurt you if you don't continue." His eyes glittered dangerously. Tilting back, he slid Se7en in further, nearly burying his lover in all the way. Changmin moaned and Se7en rested his temple on the man's shoulder, stroking at Min's belly as he fought not to plunge in deeper.

"You unman me, Minku."

"You make me a man, Shichi," Changmin replied, spreading his legs apart and bending forward, digging his ass into Se7en's groin. He smiled at the groans spilling from Se7en's parted lips and he grew heady with the power he had over the older man.

Min jerked up when Se7en's shaft hit the sweet spot in his body on the first thrust and then fell over into the longing spread under his skin as the assault continued. They broke apart then rejoined, the slap-slap of their sweaty bodies drowning out the storm.

"Touch yourself, baby," Se7en ordered. "I want to watch you come in your hand."

Changmin reached down and gripped his sex, sliding his palm up the shaft to roll over his painfully tight head. The vein along the underside of his sex throbbed and jumped, moving his cock about.

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Focusing on the thrust of flesh burrowing deep inside of him, Min fell into a steady rhythm, matching his strokes to Se7en's movements. The push of Se7en's cock into his heat was almost too much to take, especially when the man found the pinpoint of pleasure with each subsequent thrust.

The strikes to his core spiraled out threads of pleasure to wrap around his senses and Min fell back, unable to hold himself up any more. Se7en's arms came up, catching him before he toppled over. Using only his hips, Se7en pounded into his young lover, keeping Min in a tight embrace. When the younger man's eyes fluttered and he tilted his head back in surrender, laying on Se7en's shoulder, the older man knew Min was close. The sight of Changmin's open mouth and tilted pretty face brought Se7en's sac tight up into his body and the rush of hot seed gathering at the base of his shaft warned Se7en he wasn't that far behind his lover.

Increasing the length of his thrusts, he stalled and angled, hitting the spot to release Min from the torture of his orgasm. Changmin clenched around him, trapping Se7en neatly inside of him then the universe swallowed them whole as their climaxes ripped through their joined bodies.

Changmin screamed, clutching Se7en's thigh with one hand as he stroked himself off. The splatter of his seed hit them both, spraying over Min's chest and Se7en's arms. The rush of heat hitting their skin triggered Se7en and he released, plunging hard and fast into Min's channel. His next thrust filled the latex with his hot spill and Min moaned at the feel of heat in his core. Panting, they kept their hips rolling, slowly bringing themselves down from the peak of their sex until Se7en finally lay Min down on the bed, their bodies still joined and tingling from their release.

Catching his breath, Se7en began to slide away from Min when the younger man reached behind him and lay a weary hand on the man's leg.

"Stay," Min whispered. "Please, just for a moment. I'm...not ready to lose you yet. Not yet."

Se7en cradled the younger man close to his chest for a minute

before easing carefully out. Disposing of the latex and hastily washing himself with the faucet's too-cold water, he wet a washcloth and wrung it out before tucking it under his arm to warm up. Rejoining Min on the bed, he gently coaxed the young man to lean over so he could clean him.

"I...can do that," Changmin murmured sleepily. Bracing for the shock of cold he knew was coming, the touch of the body-warmed cloth surprised him. "Is the power back? Do we have hot water again? It's warm."

"No, still now power. I held it against me until the cold was gone," Se7en said, bathing his lover slowly. Folding the cloth, he lay it to rest on the nightstand then cuddled up against Min's lax body. Liquidly graceful, the young man rolled over onto his side to face Se7en, slinging one long leg over the man's hip.

"Thank you," Min whispered, breathing a kiss into Se7en's mouth.

"Not a problem," Se7en grinned back. "Although my armpit feels like someplace a penguin would live in right now."

"No," Min corrected, tracing Se7en's full mouth with his fingertips. "Thank you for loving me. For making love to me. For showing me how good it can be. For showing me how to trust. I...needed you to show me those things, even when I was pushing you away, you knew I needed you... needed this. You make me feel...whole, Shichi. No one else has ever loved me. Not like this. Not ever."

"No one else will *ever* love you like I do, Minku," Se7en said, gently brushing his mouth against Min's open palm. "I couldn't love anyone like I love you because there *is* no one else like you — no one else as beautifully complex and stubborn as my Changmin. You're the world where my heart lives, baby. I can't breathe without you around me. I don't *want* to breathe without you around me."

"Love you, Shichi," Changmin whispered as he placed his hand over Se7en's mouth. "No, don't say it. I don't want to hear you say it just yet."

The singer encircled Min's wrists with his strong fingers and

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gently pulled the man's hand away. "Why? Do you think I don't love you? Do you think I'm just saying it because you've said it?"

"No," Min said, shaking his head. "I know you love me. I just don't think my heart could take it if you said it out loud. I don't think I can fall in love with you any deeper than right now, Shichi. If you tell me that you loved me...I wouldn't be able to go on living, knowing I couldn't live my life in this one moment. This singular one perfect moment where the world is just us."

"I love you, Minku. And if it kills you to hear it... in this now, then we can die here together because I can't live without you." Brushing away the damp hair from Min's temple, Se7en slid a brief kiss over the younger man's bite-bruised lower lip then whispered, "You are my breath, my heartbeat, the fire of my soul and I'd rather die here with you near me than live forever in the cold world without you."

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Laughter joined them. Even in the heat of passion, their mouths were given to as many smiles as kisses. Junsu was shyer. Despite his bold speech, the reality of Yoochun in bed with him struck him dumb, unable to do more than run his hands over the other man's lean body. Darting his tongue along his upper lip, he nearly bit his cheek when Yoochun's fingers began to explore the length of his sex.

"Yoochun-ah." Junsu shifted, unsure if he should close his legs out of shame or daringly spread them and show Yoochun how much he liked the touch. "I'm...not sure what I'm doing."

"Even after all of those times with Yunho?" Yoochun looked up, his dark eyes nearly hidden by the fall of hair from his forehead. "You've never gone this far?"

"You... know about..." Junsu blushed, turning to hide his face. His gut told him to flee. He'd kept Yunho a secret from Yoochun. To have the other man blatantly spill his knowledge nearly drove him from the bed in shame.

"I know," Yoochun said, gripping Junsu's chin and turning his head so he could see the other man's face. He lay a kiss on Junsu's blushing cheek then another at his full lower lip, sliding the tip of his tongue between the man's lips just long enough to taste him. "I've known for a long time."

"And you're... still here?" Junsu stammered. He wasn't sure about the conflicting emotions running through him. He wanted to hit Yoochun, pound him with clenched fists until they both bled from the fight but the other part of him breathed a sigh of relief. The weight of his secret was lifted, the burden no longer dragging

his heart down.

"How could I not be here?" Yoochun stretched out onto Junsu's body, sliding his knees between the other man's legs and resting his elbows on the bed to take his weight. "I love you. Even when you make me mad, I still love you. Can't you feel how much I want you?"

The evidence of Yoochun's want prodded and pushed against Junsu's leg, bringing another red wave to his face. A damp kiss of seed remained on Junsu's thigh when the other man shifted, Yoochun's sex stiffened and tight at the touch of Susu's skin against him.

"You were... angry at me about Jaejoong... about all of this." Junsu reminded him. "About lying to you. I never meant to hurt you. I never meant to..."

"I know, Junsu-ah," Yoochun said, rubbing away the tear running down Junsu's cheek. "I was angry because... it was Jaejoong you hurt. Then I realized something..."

"What?" Junsu sniffled.

"Jaejoong *took* so much from you but you never really resented him for it." A stroke of his fingers along Junsu's belly calmed the flare of anger in the tenor's eyes. "I never looked at things from your perspective but he told me...he showed me how you might feel. I was too selfish about how I felt. I never really stopped to think about how you felt."

"Yunho was... my friend." Junsu's throat closed up and he struggled to talk. "Jaejoong... I don't hate him, Chunnie-ah. I don't. He's my friend... like a brother to me but..."

"We can fight and hate our brothers sometimes, Susu-ah," Yoochun teased. "You and Junho-hyung have a very weird relationship. It's not normal. Brothers are supposed to fight. It's a part of being a brother."

"I didn't want to fight over... Yunho," Junsu admitted. "I didn't even really mind when he became... the centre of Dong Bang Shin Ki instead of me because I knew he... could carry us further than I could but..."

“But?” Yoochun prodded.

“But I really wanted to punch his pretty face in when he took you away from me. He already had Yunho. Couldn’t he just leave you to me? Does he have to take up so much of your heart when I couldn’t even get you to admit you loved me?” Releasing the last bit of secret he held inside of him, Junsu finally relaxed, exhaling hard. “God it feels good to say that. It really does.”

“Do you still want to punch him?”

“No,” Junsu said. “What I really want is you.”

“You have me,” Yoochun replied, kissing Junsu lightly. “You always have. You always will.”

Junsu returned Yoochun’s kiss, taking his time with the other man’s mouth until they were both left gasping for air. Soft murmurs of pleasure grew louder as Yoochun toyed with Susu’s sex, spreading the milky drip at its head around the crown. Junsu reached for Yoochun only to have his hand pushed away.

“I want to taste you before I come inside of you, Susu.” He slide down the other man’s body, running his hands down his ribs and settling on his hips, resting his thumbs on the jut of bone he found there. “Lie back and let me have you. All of you, baby.”

Junsu closed his eyes, unable to believe the weight on his body was Yoochun’s. He ran his hands over the man’s shoulders, feeling the familiar ridges of muscles and sinew under his fingers. He knew the man’s body nearly as well as he knew his own. His tongue longed to know the taste of the feather tattoo on the man’s leg, having already kissed the spot in the middle of the night while Yoochun slept, then falling back into his own bed when Yoochun stirred.

His handsome, sometimes silly, grin touched Junsu’s dreams more often than he cared to admit and when Yoochun called his name, his heart hitched a beat, falling deeper and deeper in love with the young man he wanted to call his own. Despite the feel of Yoochun in his arms, Junsu wondered if he were dreaming and something... a noise from outside or perhaps even the ringing of his phone would jerk him out of his fantasy and he’d be left aching and

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crying from the loss.

"You're thinking too hard," Yoochun whispered, rubbing his cheek along Junsu's collarbone. He liked the feel of the man's silky skin on his face and indulged himself in the intimate luxury. "I can hear you thinking."

"You... can't." Yoochun's teeth bit into the bone along his shoulder and he twisted, unsure if he really wanted to break away or simply let the man devour him. "You can't hear someone think...It's not..."

"You, I can hear think," Yoochun said softly. "Just like I can feel you sing. I know when you've been in the room and left right before I got there because my skin tightens, knowing my soul can't be far away."

"I feel... you too," Junsu murmured, stroking at the other man's temple with the back of his hand. "I... need you, Yoochun. I never thought I'd need anyone else but my brother or my parents but now it's you I look for in my heart... it's you first in my mind when I wake up and the one who follows me into my dreams when I fall asleep."

"Good." He touched noses with Junsu, nipping at the end of the man's nose with his sharp teeth. "Because chasing you in my dreams is one of my favourite things to do. Now, shut up and let me finish what I started."

Sliding down the young man's body, Yoochun dipped his head down and licked at Junsu's sex. He parted the slit of the man's crown, working at the tender sensitive area until Junsu's hips bucked and writhed uncontrollably. Holding the man's hips firmly in his hands, Yoochun swallowed the length of his lover, working at the head with the back of his tongue.

The lotion he'd found in the bathroom was within reach but Yoochun held off on coating his fingers until it seemed as if Junsu couldn't take much more of his ministrations. The salty leak of his seed filled the cup of Yoochun's tongue and the baritone swallowed, humming around Junsu's sex.

"Chun...Oh god," Junsu exclaimed, twisting the bed's linens

around his wrists. The vibrations from Yoochun's throats burrowed directly to his sac, priming his balls for release. When Yoochun's fingers touched the crease of his entrance, he spread his legs further, moaning in anticipation when Yoochun uncapped the bottle and dribbled lotion into his hand.

Closing his palm to warm the cold fluid, Chun sucked hard on Junsu's head then took a side of his lover's sac into his mouth, rolling the ball around with his tongue before letting it fall from his lips then taking the other in. The heavy sac churned and twisted as Yoochun played with it, curling up tightly when he lay the tip of his tongue at the crinkled skin at Junsu's entrance.

"Don't... God, Chunnie. Not there," Junsu gasped, trying to twist away from his lover. "That's..."

"Did it hurt?" Yoochun asked, stroking at Junsu's shaft, spreading the lotion from his palm over the stiff length. When Junsu whimpered and shook his head, the man smiled and locked eyes with his lover. "Then let me explore you. I want to see what you taste like...everywhere."

"Yoochun-ah," Junsu protested then his body stiffened, shocked at the press of Yoochun's fingers at his entrance. "Please... don't... I..."

"I like being able to make you speechless, Susu-ah," Yoochun smiled before taking Junsu's crown into his mouth and suckling it tight against his teeth.

Drawing back, he started a steady pull on the man's sex, working into a rhythm Junsu matched with his thrusting hips. Slicking his fingers with the dribble of lotion coursing down Junsu's groin, Yoochun teased and tested the man's entrance, dipping the tip of his finger in then drawing back out. The tenor mewled then growled at the other man's retreat.

"Want me here, baby?" Yoochun teased the pout, running his fingernail around the sensitive flesh. A slick drip of lotion trembled on the man's entrance and Yoochun eased his finger in, twisting it up to fill Junsu's heat.

The tenor moaned and clenched down on Yoochun's intruding

finger. His body locked up against it, rejecting the invasion then he took a deep breath, forcing himself to relax and push out, opening the way for Yoochun's explorations.

"You feel like satin, baby," Yoochun murmured, working his finger into slow circles, catching the ridge of Junsu's entrance then delving in deeper. "You're so hot. I can't wait to have you around me, baby. I can't wait to feel you catch me and hold me there."

"I don't..." Junsu tried to speak but couldn't find the words in his brain to explain how he felt about Yoochun's entering him and the soft pressure of the man's hand against his sac, cupping him up with each thrust of his hand. Another finger joined the first and Junsu's mind broke, unable to take the pleasure coursing through him. A familiar crumbling of emotions started in his belly and his cock wept a milky tear, then another before Yoochun leaned over to lick him clean.

The feel of the man's rough tongue on his head burst thought Junsu's control and he cried out, surprised at the sheer power of the orgasm screaming from his balls. His shaft jumped and twisted, sheathed in the warmth of Yoochun's mouth as the other man worked his fingers into Junsu's body. The brush of a fingertip against the sensitive nodule in his core shattered the darkness gathering in the front of him and Junsu fell into the crackling energy overtaking him.

A sharp pleasure spike hit, slamming into his brain then lifting for a second before striking over and over as he let loose strands of seed, soaking his stomach and Yoochun's arm. Trembling, Junsu tried to push Yoochun away when the other man bent forward to lick him clean but his hands were too unsteady to do more than slap at the other man's shoulders. With a grunting push, Yoochun bent over and ran his tongue along Junsu's belly, twisting his fingers up to stroke at the rosette of nerves in Junsu's channel.

"I need you, baby," Yoochun whispered as he laved the young man's tender, pale skin. "Can I? Have you?"

Junsu wondered if he had the wind in him to speak and he stuttered, trying to draw in enough air to do more than moan in

increasing pleasure at Yoochun's skillful fingers. A nod seemed to be enough encouragement and his groaning mewls appeared to arouse Yoochun's shaft to a heavy thickness. He reached for the man's sex but Yoochun slid further away.

"If you touch me, Susu-ah," He said. "I'm going to come. Just watching you covering us nearly made me lose it."

"I..." Junsu gulped. He wasn't sure what to say... not at this point of their lovemaking. Yoochun pulled free of his body and he ached, wanting the man to touch him there again. Still, the turgid length of flesh between Yoochun's legs gave him pause. "Is...that going to fit?"

"Pretty sure," Yoochun laughed, kissing Junsu fully, leaving him breathless. "I have to ask you something, baby."

"Okay." Junsu blinked when Yoochun held up a foil square, its sides dimpled with a circle. Focusing on the package, he found himself blushing, despite just having Yoochun's fingers deep inside of him and begging the other man for more. "That's..."

"I'm asking you... do I need this?" Yoochun's dark eyes were solemnly sober, so different from the passionate dreamer or sultry clown he often was with Junsu. "I... know I am safe and I think you are too but if you feel like you need to wait...because you aren't sure about me just yet, I'll understand. Okay? I'm not asking you if you're clean. I'm asking you to know for sure that you trust me this much to go without it."

"No," Junsu swallowed then shook his head. "I mean, I trust you, Chunnie. There's never been... never will be anyone but you."

"Same here, baby."

The kiss they shared was sweet, tentative as if they were touching for the first time. Junsu wrapped his arms around Yoochun's neck, holding the man close. Not breaking their kiss, Yoochun hooked Junsu's legs over his shoulders, carefully pushing up the man's hips until he could slide a pillow under him. Nested into the soft cushion and splayed open for Yoochun's touch, Junsu trembled, shaking at the thought of what was coming next.

"Breathe, Susu," Yoochun whispered, his lips brushing Junsu's.

“Trust me to stop. Trust me to do anything you want me to do to you. I only want to make you happy.”

He clutched the man’s shoulders, arching his back when Yoochun fitted the head of his sex to Junsu’s entrance and pushed gently in. Forcing his body open, Junsu panted in short, hot breaths as his lover delved in. The pop of Yoochun’s head fitting past the ring on his core broke Junsu’s hold on his nerves and he sobbed, relieved at the lack of pressure on his body.

“Do you want...”

“No, no,” Junsu nearly cried out, not wanting the man to pull free from his body. “Just give me a little bit,. Please... I need this, Chunnie. God I need this so much but it...”

“It hurts a bit. I know. I’m sorry, baby.” Yoochun rubbed at Junsu’s thighs and began leaving a trail of kisses over the man’s chest. Tonguing one of Junsu’s nipples made the man twitch under him and the stiffness in Junsu’s body gave way to a gentle rocking of the man’s hips.

“Now, *agi*,” Junsu urged, rolling his hips up to meet Yoochun’s gentle rocking. “Please... now. Please.”

Thrusting up, Yoochun took long stroked, filling his lover’s heat with his sex. The air grew thick with musk and whispers, Junsu softly crying out when Yoochun found the spot inside of him to send his senses tingling. Gripping Junsu’s thighs, Yoochun dug his fingers in and arched his back when Junsu responded with a rake of his nails over Yoochun’s arms and shoulders. The sting of air on his flesh warned Yoochun the other man opened him up but he was past the point of caring. Junsu’s muscles closed over him, pulling him in deeper and he angled up, striking the sweet spot inside of his lover with a steady beat.

Their murmurs grew to a heady grunting and Yoochun let go of Junsu’s legs, resting his weight on his hands near Junsu’s shoulders. A drop of sweat fell from his brow, striking Junsu’s mouth and the baritone groaned in frustration when the man licked at the salty water. With his hair damp with the effort of plunging in and out of Junsu’s hot embrace.

“So close, Susu,” Yoochun panted, feeling the strain of his climax pooling up from his groin. He slowed his pace, wanting to prolong the sensation of being inside of his lover but Junsu’s writhing drove him insane, the twisting hot give and take of Junsu’s body increasing the pressure on his impending climax. “Touch yourself, baby. Come for me. Make me feel you come when I’m inside of you.”

Junsu’s fingers shook as he took hold of himself and stroked, unable to find a good rhythm until Yoochun bent over and kissed him, taking possession of Junsu’s mouth with firm, demanding lips. His hair fell forward, brushing Junsu’s face, leaving streaks in the sheen of sweat on the man’s cheeks. Curtained by Yoochun’s long hair, Junsu felt his world fold in, tightening until only the two of them existed in the space where their breaths mingled.

Yoochun’s thrusts became languid, slowly burning through Junsu’s tightly held control. Each rub of the man’s shaft inside of his body sparked a trail of tingling pleasures through his nerves until Junsu could no longer take a breath without the feel of Yoochun’s sex overpowering him. The slightest movement carried his orgasm closer and despite the slower pace of his hips, Yoochun knew his lover was close when Junsu began trembling uncontrollably around him. Yoochun picked up his pace, rocking forward and trapping Junsu’s sex between them, the singer’s knuckles brushing his stomach.

“Look at me, baby,” Yoochun ordered, meeting Junsu’s gaze when the singer’s eyes fluttered open. Staring down into the young man’s flecked brown eyes, he parted his lips and swallowed Junsu’s cries when the singer came again, jerking spurts of hot liquid coating their bellies. Yoochun thrust once more than again, bracing himself for what was about to hit.

Tucked deep inside of Junsu’s body, he let himself go, filling his lover to the brim with his spill. Unable to stop, he continued to rock, needing the prickles of raspy pleasure rake over his sex and travel up his spine until they emerged from his open mouth, guttural pleas for Junsu’s love and the need to be cherished by the

man who held him.

They lay tangled around one another, smelling of sex and the vanilla from the lotion, their breaths staggered and uneven. Junsu kept his arms tight around Yoochun's torso, refusing to let the man go when the other man tried to break away.

"Don't run, Yoochun," Junsu begged. "Please, not now. Not when I have you here."

"I love you, Susu. I do." He gulped, his chest heaving as he struggled to breathe.

"I love you too, Yoochun-ah," Junsu gasped, holding his lover to him. A hot splash of liquid hit his shoulder and he bit his lip, feeling Yoochun's sobs rattle through him. "Don't cry, Chunnie. I love you. I will always love you. I'm here."

"I can't lose you, Junsu-ah," Overwhelmed, Yoochun buried his face into Junsu's neck, rocking the man in his arms as he slipped damp and flaccid from his body. "I think now... that we... that you know how much I love you, I'm going to lose you like I've lost everyone else."

"It's too much, Susu. This... us...it's so much. I don't know how to...feel," Yoochun hiccupped, smiling around his tears. "I've never had a lover. I never ever expected anyone to love me, you know? I just... it's so much. I think I love you too much."

"You can never love me too much, Chunnie-ah." Junsu kissed the corners of Yoochun's upturned eyes, whispering softly into his lover's tears. "Just like I can never love you too much. No one else can make me feel like you do. We were just meant to be. Here. Together. Always. It can never, ever be too much."

FIFTEEN

"Do you think they're talking?" Junsu stared up at the ceiling, watching the shadows dance along the molding.

They'd shoved their beds together, giggling like little boys with the thrill of their intimacy. Fitting the beds into the corner, Yoochun had locked down the frames' wheels so the large sleeping area wouldn't move, telling Junsu to test it out. The tenor flung himself on the bed, landing on his stomach then rolling over, satisfactorily getting his body to bounce on the mattress a few times from the effort.

Grabbing the pillows off of the floor, Yoochun caught himself staring through their open bedroom door and into Jaejoong's room across the hall. With the curtains drawn shut and the skies beyond a deep dove grey, the room drowned in its silence.

Jaejoong is alone. Yoochun stood, his eyes burning with tears. *He chose us. Chose to save me and Junsu over everything else. It's not fair that he's alone.*

"What are you thinking about, Chunnie-ah?" Junsu flipped over onto his stomach and rested his chin on his folded hands. He followed Yoochun's gaze and his spirits dropped slightly. "I worry about them too. Yunho is miserable without Jaejoong."

"Yunho shouldn't have lied to him," Yoochun said, tossing the pillows onto the bed before closing the door. He told himself it was to give them privacy in case the other two members came home but in the depths of his heart, he needed to close himself off to the anguish he knew haunted the room across the hall.

"Yunho..." Junsu bit back his words before he angrily defended his leader. "Yunho hurts too. He lied to... help us. He

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thought that he was doing the right thing.”

“What do they say? Road to hell is paved with good intentions?”

“I never know what they meant by that.” He shrugged and tucked a pillow under his chin, watching his lover fold the blankets they’d kicked to the floor.

There was a soft ache to his body, pleasantly painful when he shifted and Junsu smiled a little as it felt as if Yoochun was still in him when he moved. He’d wanted more... even telling Yoochun so but the other man shook his head, saying they should go slowly so neither one of them hurt too much.

“There’s time for us,” Yoochun said as he maneuvered the mattresses back onto the frame. “We will have all the time between sunrises, sunsets and midnights to explore what we like. No need to rush in. Better to enjoy than regret.”

Junsu agreed, murmuring his assent but secretly felt he could have used a little more enjoyment and dealt with the regrets if and when they came.

“And do I think they’re talking?” Yoochun climbed onto the bed next to Junsu, stretching out next to his lover’s body. “I hope so. I’d like them to but can they...fix this?”

“I don’t know,” Junsu admitted. “But shouldn’t love... their love... make everything okay?”

“Love is a glue, Susu-ah,” Yoochun turned so their noses were nearly touching and he cuddled closer, fitting his side against Junsu’s prone form. “Not a miracle.”

“It should...be magical,” Junsu sighed. “They should have magic.”

“Then they’ll have to make it themselves,” He said, kissing the corner of Junsu’s mouth then licking the small beauty spot over his lip. “No one can love without having to work for it. Yunho and Jaejoong... they just have to work harder than the rest of us.”

“That’s not...fair.” Junsu sighed, threading his fingers through Yoochun’s long hair. “It’s... They deserve more.”

“They do, baby,” Yoochun agreed, sliding his mouth over

Junsu's for a kiss. "They really do."



"I can't believe we still don't have electricity." Changmin peered out of the window, watching the storm eat away the sunlight.

"I can." Se7en reached over and tugged at Min's waistband, nearly yanking the boxers from his lean hips.

"This is one of the biggest coastal cities." He let himself be pulled back to the bed, falling onto the mattress with a soft bounce. "It should have a wide infrastructure..."

"I can't believe you know words like infrastructure," He teased, rolling over Min and trapping him against the bed. "What other in-words do you know?"

"You have a filthy mind." He grinned up at the other man, his heart lightened despite being trapped in the storm's wake. "I think I like that about you."

"Is that all you like?" Se7en shifted, resting his knees on either side of Min's legs until his hips ground into the man's crotch. "Because if it is, then I've got some work to do."

The wince was slight but it was enough to pull Se7en back. Changmin grabbed at his lover's hips, holding him firmly before he could slip away.

"Don't go," Min whispered. "Please. I'm just tender. You probably are too."

"I'm made of sterner stuff, giraffe." Se7en grinned, kissing Min on the lips with a resounding pop. His mood turned serious and he cupped Min's cheek. "I don't ever want you to feel like you have to... give it up to me to get me to stay. Okay?"

"Understood."

"Okay." Another kiss made Se7en moan and Min joined him, humming against the man's mouth. He shifted, seemingly uneasy and Min pushed himself up, resting on one elbow.

"What?" Min poked. Se7en winced when the young man found his ticklish spot then yelped as Min's finger jabbed again. "Tell me. What haven't you told me?"

“Well, it’s about Jaejoong...”



A corner street vendor had a black hoodie Jaejoong approved of and Yunho dug out his wallet to pay for it and a beanie he could shove down over his brow. The tightly packed line of kiosks were mostly filled with knock-offs and pirated copies of music and movies. Yunho wasn’t certain how he felt about seeing his own music alongside of the three’s efforts.

No, He thought. I know exactly how it feels. Like someone I still love kissing someone else in front of me.

Shaking out as much of the rain as he could, Yunho pulled the grey knit cap and followed the other man down the stairs to a subway station. The silence between them was tight, a tender thing fragily binding them together. The metal stairs clanged as they took the steps in twos and the station entrance opened up to a long dim expanse of white tile and benches running the length of the wall. Thick cement columns were spaced out evenly through the space and Jaejoong stalked past the pillars, heading to one of the seating areas set as far from the entrance as possible.

Yunho hurried to catch up, clasping his hand on his head when a train rushed into the station, its brakes screaming as the segmented vehicle slid to a stop. Small waves of people exited, hurriedly pouring up to the surface but the station soon emptied, leaving Jaejoong and Yunho with a squat older man sitting near the stairs and seemingly counting the cracks in the tiles on the wall.

“Damn thing.” Jaejoong kicked at one of the vending machines tucked into the corner, dislodging a tall cup stuck in the chute. Rattling into place, the machine clasped the paper cup and began to fill it to the brim with hot black coffee. Stabbing a few buttons, Jae added creamer and liquid sweetener to the mix, removing the full cup from behind the machine’s plastic shield. Handing the coffee to Yunho, he fed the machine again, fist poised over the chute in case it needed additional coaxing.

Yunho sipped thankfully at the coffee, feeling the heat seep down into his bones. The satay they’d eaten no longer occupied his

stomach and the bittersweet brew gurgled in the emptiness it found there. Going through his wallet, Yunho found enough money to purchase a large packet of chocolate-dipped Pocky. Tearing open the top of the bag, he sat down next to Jaejoong, holding it towards the singer.

“Do you want some?”

Taking out a single biscuit, Jae began to nibble off the chocolate, concentrating on drinking his coffee. Another train screamed through the station, passing by them without stopping. The old man at the other end of the station didn’t look up from his counting, continuing to mumble to himself as the lights dimmed from the train’s passing.

“You and I,” Yunho said, dipping a cookie into his coffee. “We need to talk.”

“I know.” Jae looked down at his hands, picking at a nail with a pinch of his fingers. “I just don’t want to.”

“What are we going to do? About us, I mean.” The lights near the back of the station weren’t as bright as near the entrance and they were mostly hidden, situated behind one of the large columns. Yunho was thankful for the privacy, more so since Jaejoong’s hood had fallen down and the young man’s pretty face was exposed for anyone to see. Despite the satay worker spotting him, he had no doubts it would be Jaejoong’s beauty that would attract attention.

“Is there an us?” Jae asked, turning on the bench so he faced Yunho. Leaning back against the corner, the white tile framed him, a splash of light catching his face as he drew his knees up to cross his legs. “Tell me, Yunho, is there an us?”

“I want there to be,” He admitted, turning the cup in his hands. “I... feel empty without you. Even if I can’t have you near me, knowing that you’re mine... makes me whole inside.”

“And things like... Se7en?” Jae prodded, nudging Yunho’s leg with his foot. “And Junsu?”

“Nothing happened with Junsu or Dong-Wook.”

“Not now, no.” He pursed his mouth, making a moue and stared up at the ceiling. “What about from before? You and

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Junsu..."

"Fuck," Yunho bit down on his cheek, nearly crushing his cup. "That...How the hell?"

"Yoochun found out about it," Jae said, pulling his foot back when Yunho reached for it. "You don't lie to me but you don't tell me the truth. What's worse? You tell me."

"Junsu and I... nothing happened then. Nothing happened now," He growled, trying to keep his temper in check. "There's never been anyone but you. Hell, Jaejoong, there not been anyone after you!"

Jaejoong dropped his gaze, staring at Yunho with dark, unreadable eyes. The full mouth Yunho loved to kiss twisted, pain curling his lips as he said, "But see, Yunho-ah, I can't say that. Because there's been someone else since you."

SIXTEEN

Hot coffee splashed over the white tiles, a steamy wave of creamy brown hitting the wall and Jaejoong's face. The young man jerked away, pulling his knees up to protect himself when Yunho grabbed him by the arms, wrenching him forward. The empty cup flew, hitting the floor before rolling up against a nearby column.

Jaejoong's fists came up but Yunho held him tight, blocking him with his elbows. Jae jerked his head back, nearly hitting the wall but the pulled back hood of his jacket cushioned him against the hard tile. Pissed, he cried out and kicked out at Yunho's legs and stomach with his feet and knees but Yunho wouldn't let him go. The leader grunted but absorbed the blows, ignoring the outraged shouts.

Further down, the older man looked up at the fracas but returned to his counting, ignoring the young men at the other end of the station. Another train passed, dimming the lights nearly to pitch and the screaming sounds of the rails drowned out anything either one of them might have said.

Yunho stood, dragging Jaejoong up to his feet, keeping him pinned against the wall. The leader lifted him up, raising Jae up until he dangled a few inches off of the floor. His muscles bulging with the effort of holding up his ex-lover, Yunho's body taut with his fury and he leaned in closer to Jae's face, digging his fingers into the singer's arms.

"Who the fuck is it?" Yunho's breath was hot on Jae's face, scented with rage and coffee. "Who the fuck did you let touch you?"

It didn't matter to Yunho that they'd been apart. In his heart... in his mind, they'd never been separated and the thought of another man's hands on Jaejoong's body infuriated him. The station faded around them. Nothing existed in that moment but the shaken young man he held pinned and the cracks in his heart as the pain seeped up from his belly and into his soul.

The anger in Jae's face steadied Yunho but the pain in his eyes broke the leader apart. He caught the sob in his throat before it could escape and rested his forehead against Jaejoong's heaving chest. Sliding the young man to the floor, Yunho kept his grip on Jae's arms, unsure if he could trust himself — or Jaejoong — if he let go.

"Just tell me... please," Yunho begged, his face buried in the crook of Jae's neck and shoulder. "Kim Hyun Joong? Dong-Wook? One of your Japanese friends? God, Jaejoong... what you do to me. Just tell me who it is."

"I don't know." Yunho went stiff with shock when Jaejoong touched the hair at his temple that poked out of the beanie. "I don't know who he was, Yunho. I wish it weren't true but it is."



"What about Jaejoong?" Changmin sat up, nearly throwing Se7en off of the bed. "Did... you do something with him?"

"I didn't," Se7en protested, sliding back over the bed to cuddle up against his lover's taut form. Stroking at Min's shoulder, he ducked his head to catch Min's eye. "I promise. I didn't do anything with him."

"Then what?"

"Someone else did," Se7en said, his eyes softening at the memory. "I don't know who. Not really."

"What do you mean, not really?" Min's eyebrows knitted together, his temper rising as quickly as the storm outside of their room. "What do you mean you don't know who?"

"I mean I don't know who was with him," He admitted. "But I know he's afraid that Yunho won't touch him now."

"How do you know this?" The bed swayed slightly as

Changmin pushed Se7en's shoulder. "What the hell is Jaejoong hiding?"

"I know this because I was coming out of one of the clubs near Itaewon and I found him in the alleyway." Se7en grabbed Min's wrist before the young man could push him again. "Listen to me, Minku. He was... something... *someone* happened to him. He was bleeding... badly enough that I wanted to take him to the hospital but he refused. He didn't want to... he didn't want the others... all of you to find out about it. He didn't want what happened to affect you. But I can tell you, Minku, it affected him. It affected him very badly."



"What happened?" Yunho sat down next to Jaejoong, handing him a fresh cup of steaming coffee.

He didn't trust himself to touch the singer trembling next to him but after a moment, he couldn't hold back and gathered Jaejoong into his arms, turning to support himself on the wall. The singer resisted slightly but eventually slid back into the curve of Yunho's torso, his legs pulled up against his chest. Holding the cup with both hands, he stared down into the coffee as if it held all the answers to the universe.

"God, this life we lead. It's insane. We're insane. Normal people don't live like this. Normal people don't love like this." Yunho buried his face into the man's hair, inhaling the sweet-bitter scent of the soap they'd used at the noodle shop. Only a few hours past and their teasing camaraderie seemed a distant memory. "Talk to me, Joongie-ah. Tell me the truth. All of it."

"I tried." Jaejoong's voice trembled, breaking apart as he spoke.

"Tried what, baby?" Yunho tightened his hold on Jae's body, rocking the man slightly. The subway faded again, becoming an ocean of white tile and murmured Japanese announcements over the station speakers.

"I tried to get the company to take us back or... at least, work with us," Jaejoong admitted. Reaching down to set the coffee cup down on the floor, he sighed then buried his face into his hands.

His tears hit when Yunho's hands stroked his arms and when the man's lips touched his neck, Jaejoong let go and began to cry in earnest, letting his sorrow break loose. Yunho caught him up, turning him until the singer was cradled in his lap.

The anguish hit Jaejoong in waves, starting and stopping his hiccupping sobs as he tried to gain some control over himself. Murmuring, Yunho held him, stroking at his hair and rubbing at his back until the pain receded enough for Jaejoong to speak.

"I contacted..." Jaejoong shook his head, still shaky. "I didn't tell anyone what I was doing. I thought maybe if I could talk to someone. Make them listen to me. Let us... be together again. It's breaking me apart, Yunho-ah. I look to the left of me and all I see is Yoochun. I want to tell him, step back into place. Get back to where you belong. I can't see Yunho. But then he moves...and you're not there and my heart... it just breaks. I can't do... I'm not strong enough, Yunho. I'm not."

"You're one of the strongest people I know, baby," Yunho reassured him. "What happened? Who do I have to kill?"

"You can't... kill anyone," Jae said, shaking his head. Cradled in Yunho's lap, the darkness inside of him faded, leaving only the man's warmth in his soul. "Then who would take care of Min?"

"Min?" Yunho snorted. "Min is the last person I worry about. Who would take care of *you*?"

They grew silent, both keenly aware Yunho was not there when Jaejoong needed him to be. Biting back his temper, Yunho wrapped Jae up tightly in his arms, pressing his cheek against Jae's face.

"I should have been there, Joongie," Yunho whispered, his tears mingling with Jae's on the man's soft skin. "I should have... stopped...I still should do...something!"

"What can you do, Yunho?" Jae asked, wiping at his face where he could reach. "I went there to that club. The manager, not ours...not yours... the head one, he told me to meet him in Itaewon, near one of the restaurants."

"Joongie," Yunho hissed, his anguish turning to anger. "You know he's..."

“Powerful,” Jaejoong interjected. “Influential.”

“A pervert,” Yunho snapped back then instantly regretted his choice of words. “Not like... Joongie, you know I don’t mean...us. I mean...”

“He likes younger ones, remember?” Jaejoong shifted and looked up into Yunho’s eyes. “I...avoided him when we first started...when I was a trainee. Maybe it was because of that he didn’t... he didn’t want to help us?”

“What did he do, baby?” The anger returned with a healthy dose of fear and Yunho felt his stomach clench up as Jae turned his face away from Yunho’s gaze. Gripping the man’s chin in his palm, he turned Jae’s head until he could see the man’s expression. “Tell me what he did to you, Joongie-ah.”

“He didn’t do anything,” Jaejoong shook off Yunho’s fingers but leaned in closer against the man’s shoulder. “I showed up and there were... other men there. Some of them were older but others were... more like me. I think one was about Min’s age. He boasted that he could get me there, Yunho. He boasted to his friends that I was there because of him. So powerful, he said. He was so powerful he could make me crawl to him like a beaten dog.”

“He uses people, that one,” Yunho said. “You knew that. Why did you go?”

“Because he promised he could help me. That he would help us. I had to take that chance.”

Yunho thought of the stories he’d heard about the man they were talking about. The whispers of his behaviour were ugly, traumatic tales of abuse and sexual harassment and Yunho shuddered at the thought of Jaejoong spending any time with him.

“What did he do, Jaejoong?”

“There was something in what I was given to drink.” His shrug was nonchalant but his eyes were steeped in pain. “When I woke up, I was in another room and... another man, someone I didn’t know was on top of me...trying to get in me. It hurt and I moved, hurting myself but I didn’t care. I wanted to get away from him. I wasn’t going to let him take... steal what is yours.”

"Joongie-ah," Yunho trailed off. "That's... God baby."

"I kicked him in the balls, bit him too I think." Jae grinned despite his anguish. "I gave as good as I got. He probably won't be using his dick over the next few years."

"I'm sure you did, baby." He kissed Jae's temple. "Did you...get away? How?"

"I grabbed someone's pants. I don't know whose. But there were a lot of other men there, doing things in the next room." He grew serious, sobering at the memory of that night. "I ran. And I hit anyone who tried to stop me. I turned the corner and then through a door and I was outside. I didn't have any money. Hell, I didn't even have my phone and the... blood... it was soaking through the cotton."

"How... baby, you..." Yunho wished he'd been there. At least in the beginning so he could have skinned everyone in that room.

"Se7en found me," Jaejoong said, looking away from his ex-lover's probing eyes. "And helped me get away from there."

"So he knew? About all of this?" Yunho's rage returned and he gritted his teeth at the secrets his friend kept from him.

"I told him... I asked him not to tell you." He reached for the cup, sipping at the cooling coffee before offering it to Yunho to drink. The leader shook his head in refusal and motioned for Jaejoong to continue.

"Why?"

"I was ashamed." He shrugged. "I didn't think... you'd want to touch me ever again. Not after that. Not after doing that."

"You didn't do that," Yunho protested. "That...this thing that happened to you... you didn't cause it. You didn't ask for that."

"No, I didn't," Jae agreed. "But I couldn't go to you...not with that man's touch on me. Not with his... seed on me. How could I go to you with that on me?"

"Same way as you come to me with anything else," Yunho whispered, kissing the young man's ear. "I'm not saying I'm perfect but I will always be here for you. Be the one you can come to. Come with. I love you, Kim Jaejoong. Nothing will change that. *Nothing.*"

“Yours, Yunho,” Jaejoong murmured, unsure and unsteady. “I’m yours, if you still want me.”

“Want you, baby?” Yunho turned Jae’s face and gently brushed his mouth the young man’s tear-swollen eyes before capturing his full lips in a deep kiss.

It was sweet, bitter-salty only from their tears and then sweet again, their mouths lingering on one another’s and their tongues tasting the exotic flavours they’d long missed. Sighing into Yunho’s mouth, Jaejoong turned to face him, hooking his legs over the man’s thighs until their stomachs met and Jaejoong could wrap his arms around the man’s neck.

“Do you? Want me?” Jae whispered, fear fluttering in his gut. The answer would either make him soar or fall apart. He no longer cared, anything to stop the numbness icing over his heart.

“Without you, I might as well be dead. Nothing else in this life... this world matters without you.” His smile was tender and bright, despite the flickering of the station’s overhead lights. “I don’t just want you. I need you to live.”

SEVENTEEN

Considering how far they'd come up in the world, the tiny traditional Japanese inn would have been considered a fall from grace by most people. To Yunho and Jaejoong, the ryokan with its segregated private rooms and wooden construction was a comfort, an oasis in the bustle of Tokyo's heart.

The woman at the desk barely blinked when they'd asked for one room and she nodded pleasantly when Yunho asked for something private. The room they'd been given was spacious by inn standards, nearly large enough to hold three double futon and with sliding shoji windows that opened up to look down on a courtyard garden below. The soft scent of lemon oil permeated the room, its antique wooden paneling glistening from devoted care. A silkscreen print dominated one wall of the room, an oddly painted portrait of ancient Japan and two women. Yunho studied it as he took off the slippers the house provided for use in its halls.

Then slammed his head against the door frame when he realized the women were in flagrante delicto, the folds of their illustrated kimono artistically arranged to conceal most of their bodies but leaving other areas deftly exposed.

"This is a love hotel?" Yunho rubbed his temple, feeling a small bump rising near his hairline.

"It's out of the rain and warm. Does it matter if it is?" Jae briefly looked over his shoulder at the man before returning his attention to the water-soaked courtyard a story below them. "They're known to be discreet. If anyone recognizes us, no one will say anything."

"You, they'd recognize. I think I'm safe." The bitterness in

Yunho's voice was jarring, an odd inflection in the normally confident man's tone. He shut the door behind him, closing their corner room off to the rest of the hotel.

"We both made choices," Jaejoong pointed out.

"I couldn't..." Yunho sighed and stared up at the ceiling, trying to get a hold of his emotions. "I have a filial duty... you know that."

"I know." His voice was a soft whisper, barely audible over the rain. "Duty. You are always the dutiful son."

It was an old argument between them, one Yunho didn't want to continue but Jaejoong refused to let it go. He came up behind the singer, the tatami flooring rough on his bare feet. When he put his hands on Jae's shoulders, the young man stiffened at his touch then relaxed before leaning back against Yunho's chest.

"I know," Jae exhaled, tilting his head back until he touched Yunho's shoulder. "Your family. The company. You owe them your... allegiance."

"I owe you too," Yunho said, kissing the length of Jae's neck. "I don't forget you."

"But you can't choose me over them," He reminded the other man. Lifting his fingers to Yunho's mouth, Jae stopped the other man's protests. "I don't expect you to. We're...Korean."

Jaejoong was sophisticated enough to know he made no sense to someone outside of their culture or region. As distanced as he was from being traditionally Korean, he knew in his gut Yunho could not be separated from what he thought was his duty. Following his father's wishes — and ultimately the company's — was his duty; even if he loved Jaejoong with all of his heart, he couldn't turn his back on his ingrained traditions.

If he did, he would not be the Yunho Jaejoong loved.

He shivered when Yunho reached for the hem of his shirt and shuddered when the man's fingers ghosted around his ribs and stomach before pulling the hoodie slowly from his body. Lifting his arms, Jaejoong remained still while Yunho tugged the sleeves from his hands then tossed the garment to the floor.

The man's lips touched the skin between his shoulder blades,

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the tip of his tongue tracing the gothic black letters Jaejoong tattooed there years ago in an act of defiance of his staid culture.

I don't care what other people think! Jaejoong screamed at Yunho when he'd come back to the members' apartment, fully inked and proud of the pain he'd etched into his skin. *I've earned the right to wear this name. No one is going to take this away from me. Not now. Not ever.*

At the time, Yunho didn't understand. If he were honest with himself, he'd admit he still didn't understand all of it but that was typical of anything to do with Jaejoong. He'd been worried about how others would react to the tattoo and how people would shun Jaejoong because of it. His family, their fans and most importantly, the management.

If he were really honest — Yunho whispered in the middle of the night in the darkness where no one else could hear him — he would admit he was worried about how Jaejoong's choices would reflect on him as well.

The managers weren't pleased about Jae's choices and he defied them still, despite once agreeing to remove piercings he'd been told would damage their image.

Fuck them, Jaejoong pushed back, angry when Yunho grabbed him in an attempt to make the young singer listen to him. *As soon as they're done with us, they're going to toss us aside. The only chance of us surviving... of making it.. is if people love us... if people respect us. How do you think I'm going to get respect from other people when I don't respect myself? When I don't respect myself enough to **be** myself?*

At the time, Yunho thought the tattoo — and Yoochun's as well — would be the end of them. Instead, he discovered Jaejoong, even at his most distracted, was far more insightful to how the world worked than Yunho gave him credit for.

The wings were beautiful. Stark and simplistic and most definitely Jaejoong. Of the ink he'd shoved under his skin, Yunho loved his wings the most and took care to cover each with a rain of butterfly kisses. When the other man tried to face him, Yunho stopped him by gripping his hips to keep from turning.

“Stay there. I’m not done cherishing you yet.”

The quickening of Jae’s spine was another spot Yunho loved to taste and he took his time, crouching down to lave at the roman numerals there. He traced each line, swallowing the secrets Jaejoong put there. Their first real kiss, the first time they’d had sex — Yunho thought as he skimmed his fingers over the letters — and the first time he’d told Jaejoong he loved him.

Hidden for all the world to see.

Reaching forward, he cupped the man’s hardening sex, feeling Jaejoong’s length in his palm. He missed the squirming excitement Jae had when being made love to, especially now when the melancholy dug its claws in deep and the singer couldn’t seem to shake himself free, Yunho’s mouth and hands opened up an escape for the man’s troubled soul.

“Yun-ah,” Jae murmured, resting his palms on the wall to steady himself. “Please...”

He didn’t say anything as he stood up and reached over the man’s shoulder to slide the window shut. Wrapping his fingers in Jae’s, he led the man over to the wide futon mattress set against the wall, the painted ladies staring off into the distance, their expressions an mixture of excitement and bliss.

“I didn’t...” Yunho stopped, looking slightly panicked. “I should have stopped...”

“They will have those things here,” Jae said, climbing onto the bed and laying back against the pillows. “Another good reason to come to a place like this.”

“An excellent reason to come to a place like this,” Yunho agreed. “Especially if you’re here with me.”

Laid out on the bed and half naked, Jaejoong stretched his arms up over his head before reaching slowly down to pop the top button of his jeans. Standing at the edge of the futon, Yunho stared down at the man he loved and walked away from, wondering if he would ever be free of the addiction he seemed to have for the singer and even if he could be, would he want to? Yunho shed his shirt and cast it aside, keeping his eyes on the lanky

young man on the bed. He knew this man's body... more than he knew his own.

Crawling up the bed, Yunho placed his knees on either side of Jaejoong's thighs, effectively trapping the man. Bending his head down, he licked at the tiny scars mottling Jae's ribs, remnants of a young clumsy boy falling on a bottle. He moved over, taking his time to savour the salty sweetness of his lover's skin, teasing at the piece of skin around the man's navel where a belly stud nested. He played with the ball there, rolling it over his tongue and against his teeth, all the time sliding his hand up and down Jaejoong's crotch.

"Yunho," Jaejoong moaned, fisting his hands into his lover's hair. He tried reaching for the man's shoulders but Yunho pushed him away.

"No, let me. It's been too long since I've tasted you. Lie back, baby, and just hold on."

It was torture to not take the man into his mouth but Yunho forced himself to continue. Denying his base urges, he instead explored Jaejoong's torso, pressing his lips to each ridge of muscle along the man's stomach. The centre line of Jae's body took him up to the man's dipped in breast bone, Jae's chest heaving with the effort of keeping still under Yunho's exploring mouth.

His hips lifted, fitting his sex into Yunho's grasp and the man tightened his grip around Jae, rubbing at the rough denim until he could feel the leak of Jae's want through the fabric. His mouth closed over Jaejoong's right nipple, flicking his tongue on the nub before catching it between the jut of his teeth. The point responded, tightening up as Yunho wet it and suckled, rubbing at the nipple tip with his tongue. He caught it against the rough edge of his front teeth, working its line into the slight space between bite.

Jaejoong groaned, crying out his lover's name in a murmuring fall of words and desire. Unable to deny himself, he stroked at Yunho's shoulders, grasping the man's back with a fevered want. His nails scraped at Yunho's skin, marking the man with long red furrows. The cool air hit Yunho's exposed flesh and he hissed, increasing the pressure he had on Jaejoong's nipple until the singer

released him.

"You already are under my skin, baby," Yunho whispered around Jae's tortured nipple. "No need to try to crawl under there."

"I can't... this is too much, Yunnie-ah." Jaejoong bit his lower lip and threw his head back, his mouth falling open. Sweat glistened on his neck and shoulders, a drop beading down his chest only to be captured by Yunho's tongue.

"Do you want me, BooJae?" Yunho asked, kissing up Jae's chest and licking at the rosé-splash mark under his jaw. He played with the popped button, letting his knuckled brush against the soft skin of Jae's underbelly. The faint tickle of hair he felt on his fingers excited him, catching Jae's musky sweet scent of on his skin.

Yunho turned his attention to Jae's other nipple, taking as much time teasing and torturing it as he had its twin. Suckled until it grew painfully hard, the nipple reddened and peaked and Jaejoong cried out, grasping at Yunho's head, unsure if he should pull the man from his chest or hold him there.

"Wait here, baby," Yunho mumbled, pulling free of Jae's nipple with a moist pop. "Let's find out what this place has to offer us."

The small stacked boxes set next to the bed held what Yunho needed and he grabbed a bottle of lubricant. Tossing it onto the bed, he stopped short and carefully selected a square foil packet. Crawling back over the bed, he lay next to Jae's glistening body and kissed the man's shoulder.

"Do we need this?" Yunho asked, hating the words he felt he was forced to say. "I... want you to feel safe. I..."

"I... haven't..." Jaejoong whispered, a flush spreading over his cheeks. "He didn't... at least I don't think so but I ... had them test me. Just in case."

"Tell me that he..." Yunho cupped the back of Jae's head, leaning into kiss his lover's mouth with a tenderness forged deep in his heart. "Tell me he didn't hurt you... in any way, baby."

"No, I'm... I've been tested twice. Both times came back clean." Jae's eyes were troubled and his lower lip twisted between his teeth. "But I'd understand if..."

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Yunho flicked the packet away, not watching to see where it landed. "No, I... trust you. Implicitly."

Yunho rose and reached for Jaejoong, his eyes never leaving the man's face. The man's fingers found Jae's zipper and gripped the tab, inching it down over the fullness beneath it. Trapped against Jae's body, his sex pearled and snuck out of the top of his underwear. Sliding his hands around to the back of Jae's jeans, he tugged and lifted the man up, drawing the pants off his legs.

He took a moment to stare down at his now nude lover, drinking in the sight of Jae's long body laid out before him. He knew each inch, every scrape and scar the man bore and his dreams often were filled the scent of the man's skin and the sound of his laughter. Splayed open and raw, Jaejoong was everything Yunho never envisioned but found a nirvana in anyway.

He lacked imagination, Yunho decided, and Jaejoong was his door to dreams untold.

Jaejoong took the bottle of oil from Yunho's hand, unsnapping its lid and releasing the sweet scent of almond into the room's air. While his lover watched, crouched and achingly hard as Jaejoong coated his own fingers. Lifting up onto his knees, he bent forward until their shoulders almost touched. Arching back, he slid the tip of his fingers into himself, running the oil around his entrance as Yunho watched/

Captivated and aroused at his lover prepared himself for their time together, Yunho took the bottle from Jaejoong and eased his arm around the man's torso, lowering Jae to the bed. His fingers slid free and he moaned, missing the pressure but needing Yunho more.

"Let me finish, baby," Yunho said, breathing into Jaejoong's mouth before he kissed him. "Or maybe I should say, let me get you started."

It took Yunho longer than he liked to get his pants off, struggling to free his feet from the legs of his jeans. Throwing the offending garment aside, he pounced on Jaejoong, rolling the man over until Jae straddled his hips. Running his thumb over the slit of Jae's sex, Yunho spread the dampness he found there around the

crown then licked the pad clean, swallowing Jae's seed.

"I love you," Yunho whispered, reaching up to cup Jae's face. "Through everything, I have loved you."

"I know," Jae replied, bending forward to kiss his lover, covering the man's hands with his own. "I love you too."

Straightening, Jaejoong reached behind him, grasping Yunho firmly in his oil slick fingers. Concern knitted Yunho's eyebrows together and he reached for the bottle, opening its lid. His sex nudged at Jae's opening and the young man reached under his lover, touching Jae's hand.

"Wait, baby," Yunho murmured. "I want to make sure you're ready. It's been so long... for both of us, yes?"

Jae's trembling pout and wide eyes told Yunho all he needed to know. The young singer was barely holding in his tears, feeling for the first time the deep trust his lover had for him. Nodding, he leaned forward and coated his fingers.

"Cover mine too," Yunho softly ordered. "Let me... share you."

Running his hand over Yunho's long fingers to spread the oil between them, Jaejoong ducked his head down, the fall of his hair drowning most of his face in shadow. Reaching up to brush his thumb over his lover's delectable mouth, Yunho smiled when the man bit lightly at the invading finger before sucking the pad into his warm mouth.

He pushed two fingers into Jae's heat, gasping when the velvet tightness closed in around him. Murmuring softly for Jaejoong to join him, Yunho held his breath as his lover slid his middle finger into himself, pressing Yunho's intrusive thrust aside. The stretch made Jaejoong arch his back and the motion drove Yunho's fingers in deeper, skimming at the sensitive spot hidden inside of the young singer.

Unable to stop himself, Jae began to rock his hips, straining to find that explosive spot again. Yunho pushed upwards, burying himself up to his palm and craned his fingers back, enjoying the shocked expression on Jae's face when he found the seat of the man's pleasure.

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A thin leak of seed splashed on Yunho's stomach. Feeling the hot sticky liquid hit him made Yunho harder and he twisted his fingers around, tangling Jae's into his as he reached for the spot again. He felt the pressure of Jae's body relax and he opened for Yunho, his core flowering and grasping at Yunho's fingers.

"Yunho," Jaejoong mewled, grinding his hips down to meet his lover's intrusion. "I need you. Please. I need you inside of me. Can't think..."

"Get on your knees, baby." Yunho said, sliding his fingers from Jae's heat. A quick wipe of his fingers on a tissue and he gripped Jae's hips to maneuver his lover off of him. "On your knees and lift up. I'm going to take you now... show you who you belong to."

"Me," Jaejoong muttered defiantly but complied, resting his weight on his knees and spreading his legs apart. The position made him vulnerable, more so when Yunho pushed him lightly on his shoulders to lean him forward. His sex twitched, dancing across his belly to leave a trail of glistening spill on his skin. The feel of Yunho's head at his entrance sent shivers up his spine and he allowed himself to be splayed out by his lover's hand. Murmuring barely loud enough for Yunho to hear, he amended, "Yours."

The first push ground the pressure outward and Jaejoong gasped. Reaching behind himself to grip Yunho's side, he trembled and breathed hard, adjusting to the girth of Yunho's sex. Panting, he forced himself to relax around Yunho's crown and pushed back, engulfing the head fully with a fluid roll of his hips.

Yunho's gasp joined his and they both forced themselves to hold still, each enlivened by the feel of the other. Jaejoong's hot passage enveloped him, tightening as the man's entrance closed in over him. When Jaejoong bent further forward, still resting his weight on his shins and knees, Yunho almost came when the man's grip around him tightened.

"Go easy, baby or this is going to end before it even gets started." Yunho exhaled and relaxed the tension in his shoulders.

Glancing down was a big mistake, Yunho decided when he saw himself poised at the core of his lover's body. Jaejoong was

stretched to accept him, his body taut but willing, needy in the small grinding of his hips. Moaning, he cautioned himself to slow down, give his lover time then Jaejoong moved and Yunho lost his mind.

Reaching under his lover's belly, he stroked at Jae's shaft before palming his sac, rolling the heavy weight of his lover in his hand. Inching forward, he slowly penetrated his the man's heat, urged on Jae's primal growls and mewls. His lover's body tugged as he pulled back then gave way again when Yunho finally thrust all of himself into Jae.

"Yunho-ah," Jaejoong gasped, his body stiffening in Yunho's one armed embrace. Barely able to breathe, he leaned his head back onto Yunho's shoulder, giving his lover access to his sex. Emboldened by Jaejoong's surrender, Yunho gripped the man's shaft and worked up and down its length, using the spill of seed from Jae's crown to ease the friction.

"Should I keep doing this, Boo?" Yunho turned his head, whispering into Jae's ear.

The other man's mouth was slack, his beautiful face erotically sublime as the sensations of his body being penetrated rolled over him. As Yunho's hand moved, Jae's hips twisted and lurched in response. He tried to keep still but Yunho pressed further in, rubbing his groin against the cleft of his lover's cheeks so Jaejoong could feel the crackle of Yunho's hair on his ass and the weight of Yunho's balls brushing against his own.

"Please, Yunho," Jaejoong begged, panting. His hands fought to find purchase, finally closing over the firmness of Yunho's thighs. He dug his fingers in, holding onto his lover when Yunho shifted his weight, driving up against the pleasure cluster in Jae's heat. The begging turned to wordless whimpers and moaning, shifting to heavy deep panting when Yunho began to jerk his hips back then plunge deep into his lover's passage.

"Mine." It was a simple word but carried more weight than Yunho wanted it to sometimes. Unable to get the angle he wanted from his lover's body, he pushed the man forward with his own

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weight, toppling Jae over.

Jaejoong hit the bed with his shoulders. Unable to use his hands to stop their fall, he rested solely on his chest with his ass splayed open and up for his lover to take. Gripping Jae's hip with one hand and fisting the young man's hair with the other, Yunho rocked hard, pulling out nearly all the way before thrusting back in, increasing the depth of each thrust as Jaejoong begged for more underneath him.

"Touch yourself, baby," Yunho ordered, shoving up into his lover again and waiting a second before pulling back out. He felt Jaejoong jerk around him, feeling the young man warp his hand around his own sex. The movements of Jae's hips were too shallow and Yunho pulled slightly on the handful of hair he possessed, growling in pleasure when Jae tightened around him. "Pull on yourself, Boo. I want to feel you come when I do. Hell, I want you to make me come when you do."

They moved, finding each other with each thrusting plunge. Jae worked his length, spreading the moisture leaking from his head down his shaft. Cupping his balls, he closed his eyes and screamed at the feel of Yunho's teeth clamping down on the skin between his shoulder blades. The sting almost brought him over, the heat of his balls roiling up and grabbing at his stomach. Yunho bit again, taking a mouthful of flesh and skin as he drove his hard, thick length into Jae's willing body.

A tilt of Yunho's hip undid him and Jae's world went black, the room's soft light receding under the sensations of Yunho's onslaught. The sounds of their bodies joining excited him further, the gentle slush of oil and sweat providing a harmony to their mewling cries and animalistic moans. The stinging pain of Yunho's hand in his hair drove him wild and he worked harder to pierce himself on Yunho's sex. The feel of Yunho's mouth on him again warned Jae and he braced himself for the throbbing bite of Yunho's teeth. His lover held on to his skin and hair, letting go of his hip to reach under Jaejoong, covering Jae's hand with his.

They worked at bringing Jae to a peak and Yunho shouted,

hoarse and rough when the ripples of Jae's climax rolled around his sex. Unable to do more than blindly force himself in and out of Jae's tight core, Yunho held onto Jaejoong and rode him, driving the young man down into the futon.

"Mine, Jaejoong," Yunho growled, feeling the first hit of Jaejoong's leave the cup of their hands. "Say it. Tell me. Remind me."

"Yours, *agi*. Yours," Jaejoong screamed, going stiff in Yunho's grip. His orgasm hit and he gave way to it, falling into the stars that rose to fill him. The brightness of his climax ran electric over his teeth and across his face, skittering down his belly and out of the slit in his sex. He shot once and again then the power of Yunho's own release hit him, the hot fill of the man's seed reaching up into his guts.

"I'm yours too, baby," Yunho whispered.

He let go of Jae's hair and cupped his chin, turning the man's face so he could capture Jae's full mouth. Sliding his tongue against Jae's, he mimicked his thrusts, stroking the roof of Jae's mouth. Suckling hard and twisting his hand around Jae's sex, Yunho came again, pushing up to fill his lover. The rush of hot liquid around his sex only made him release again, and he jammed himself in deeper, wanting to feel his spill reach every part of his lover he could have.

"Mine," Jaejoong murmured, falling forward slightly as his muscles released and lethargy took him.

Yunho went with him, cradling his lover while he rolled them over onto their sides. Reluctantly, his sex withdrew from the man's hot grip and Yunho used another tissue to wipe Jaejoong clean. Slightly refreshed, the singer wiggled back until he was spooned against his lover's chest. Wrapping his arms around Jae's waist, Yunho pulled him even closer, burying his face into the softness of Jae's hair.

"This doesn't change anything, you know," Jaejoong rasped, his voice hoarse from shouting. "We're still... on separate paths. We still can't be together...and it hurts, Yunho. It hurts deep inside of me... it's that much pain."

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“I know, baby,” Yunho lifted one hand to stroke Jaejoong’s hair, playing with the sweat-tangled silk. “But you’re wrong. This changes everything.”

“How? How can it change anything when we both know we can’t...be out in the open. We’ve *never* been able to be open about... but now?”

“We’ve always had separate paths, Boo,” Yunho said, softly reassuring Jaejoong with a light kiss to his neck. “We just never know where our journeys are going to take us. It doesn’t mean that we can’t walk next to each other. It doesn’t mean that we can’t love one another. If I have to take down every star in the heavens so I have a piece of shadow we can hide in and kiss, I will. I love you that much, baby. I love you enough to plunge the world into darkness so I can have you in some small way. Shouldn’t that be enough for us? Shouldn’t that be enough for anyone?”

EIGHTEEN

Yoochun smiled when he saw Yunho walk into their Japanese apartment. Carrying an armload of packages, the young man looked around for someplace to drop them and spotted Yoochun grinning at him over the kitchen counter.

"What?" Yunho slung the bags onto the counter separating the kitchen from the living area. An onion fell out, skittering over the marble only to be caught by Yoochun.

"Are you cooking?"

"No, Jaejoong is." Yunho righted the fallen bag.

"Does he know that?"

"He should," The older man dug a piece of umeboshi out of a package and popped the salty treat into his mouth. "He's the one who picked out the groceries. I just carried the bags."

"Some things never change." Yoochun grabbed the groceries and began to put things away, barely glancing up when Jaejoong walked past them, heading to the back of the apartment. "Is he okay?"

Yunho shrugged and sucked on the candy.

"Are you okay? Both of you?" Yoochun asked, straightening up to stare Yunho down. "Do I have to kill you?"

"That would be more threatening if you weren't wearing a pink t-shirt with Hello Kitty on it." Yunho pointed to the offending garment, wiggling his finger at the man. "Or maybe work at getting some arm muscles. You're scrawnier than my sister."

The door to the apartment slammed open, rattling against the wall. A shadow stalked past them, long-legged and resolute. Changmin glanced around him as he walked, his eyes briefly

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touching on the faces around him before continuing down the hallway. Yunho watched their youngest go by, turning his attention back to Yoochun only when Min rounded the L and disappeared from sight.

"Huh." Yoochun grunted, craning his neck. "He didn't even ask why you were here."

"He sees me all the time," Yunho said, shrugging. "Probably doesn't even realize I shouldn't be. You know how he is."

"Distracted." Se7en stood at the end of the foyer, slipping off his shoes. "Focused on one thing and everything else can go to hell."

"And where there is shit," Yoochun intoned, "The smell is soon to follow."

"Did you just call Changmin shit?" The leader's hackles rose and he squared his shoulders, cocking his eyebrow.

"If you were going to call anyone a little shit, wouldn't it be him?" Yoochun asked. Yunho considered it, then nodded, making Se7en laugh. "What are you doing here, Dong-Wook? And why did you bring Min with you?"

Yunho popped another piece of umeboshi in his mouth, tucking it into his cheek with his tongue. "Why is Min here? I thought we agreed you'd stall him."

"I stalled him as long as I could. There was a goddamn hurricane and *that* couldn't stall him. You expected me to?" Se7en rustled through the groceries, looking for something to snack on. Finding an apple, he bit into the fruit, sucking at the juices running over his thumb. "He found someone with a courier jet who likes your music. A few bars of some song and we had seats over to Tokyo."

"Did he know you stalled him?" Yunho frowned, trying to remember if the apple was something Jaejoong needed to cook with.

"No, we had a blackout. I... um... used it to my advantage."

"I don't want to hear things like that," Yunho said, shaking his head at Yoochun as the man leaned over the counter. "You don't

either.”

“No, I kind of do,” Yoochun disagreed. “Besides, you’re not the boss of me anymore, remember?”

The sting hung between them, the young man’s words driving nettles into Yunho’s pride. He tilted his chin up, debating what to say when Se7en stepped in.

“Hey, does that matter anymore?” He asked, hooking an arm over Yunho’s shoulders. “We’re all here. And everyone’s okay. Isn’t that all that matters?”

Yoochun and Yunho looked at one another then replied in unison, “No.”

“Don’t bother,” Junsu said, coming into the main room. “Nothing binds those two together like an argument. Although usually it’s over Jaejoong.”

“Everything is over Jaejoong,” Se7en shrugged. “I’m not even a part of this incestuous orgy you have going on between the five of you and I know that.”

“Remind me to yank out your tongue,” Yunho pointed to Se7en. Lightly pushing Junsu towards the living room, he flopped onto the couch and put his feet up on a low table. Looking around, he tsked at the pile of gaming equipment near the television console and was about to reach for a phone lying near him when Yoochun stopped him, grabbing it first.

“Are you still mad about what’s between me and Jaejoong?” Yunho looked up, his face unreadable and placid. “That’s his phone...or one of them, anyway. Any reason I shouldn’t be looking at it? Naked pictures? Bad karaoke videos?”

“It’s my phone,” Yoochun said, dangling the phone in front of Yunho’s face. “He gave it to me. And yes, I do have naked pictures on it. Mostly of your mother.”

Se7en caught Yunho before the man could make it over the coffee table, hooking one arm around the man’s stomach. Junsu grabbed his lover, yanking him back before he could get hit, the singer’s mouth gaping open at Yoochun’s brazenness. Footsteps pounded down the hallway and Jaejoong emerged, followed closely

by Changmin. Crossing the room quickly, Jae shot Se7en a curious look before shoving at Yunho's shoulder.

"Stop it." Jae cocked his head at his best friend as Yoochun opened his mouth. "You too. Both of you stop it."

Yunho gritted his teeth, wanting to point out Yoochun's initial volley but shut his mouth and sat back down. Taking a deep breath, he hooked his feet back up onto the table and glared at the baritone standing across the room.

"So you all knew they didn't fuck each other?" Min broke the tension with a hammer strike of anger. "And no one thought to tell me?"

"Well, not all of us knew everything," Junsu admitted, guiding Yoochun to the couch set across of Yunho and sitting before pulling his lover down with him. "We all figured it out."

"Why?" Min paced, circling around Jaejoong and nearly slamming into Se7en straddling the arm of the couch. "Why all of this? Why the hell did you put us through this?"

"Because we couldn't let each other go," Yunho said softly and the room stilled.

Everything around them was familiar. The scents and the sounds of their bodies from the slight rasp of Junsu's breathing to the whistling tone of Min's exhale as he stared up at the ceiling to come to grips with what was being laid out in front of him.

"We... answer to different things," Jaejoong continued for his lover. "All of us are different... we can't all follow each other's paths. Not now."

"Then when?" Min asked, his eyes bright and angry. "How could you leave?"

"How could you stay?" Yoochun countered, biting his lip to avoid being the first one to shed a tear. "You chose the company over us."

"You chose each other over us," Yunho replied.

Se7en shifted, uncomfortable as the room grew dank with unspoken words. "Maybe I should just..."

"Stay," Jaejoong said. "No more misunderstandings between

all of us. And no more heartbreak.”

“I can’t stand on stage without you,” Changmin growled, tension filling his long body. “How the hell am I supposed to do that? How the hell am I supposed to be good enough?”

“Because you were good enough before you were a part of us.” Yoochun stroked at Junsu’s back, calming the man. “You were chosen because you *are* good enough. You just don’t give yourself the credit you deserve.”

“They say you three carried us,” Yunho said, quiet and forceful. He met Jaejoong’s eyes, cutting the man off before he could protest. “No use arguing over it. It’s what everyone says. The voices have left Dong Bang Shin Ki. How are they going to go on with just those two?”

“Then they are assholes and don’t know you... don’t know Min,” Jae spat, drawing himself up. “We may have argued over why either of us should stay or go but there’s one thing I am not hearing from any of you; that each of us deserve to be considered the best.”

“You think that there should be two groups,” Se7en mused. “Fuck... Jaejoong...”

“I do.” Jae nodded. “For now. Even as we work out our contracts and deal with... fidelities, we are. And we should be. We need to show everyone who says we are failures without the company that we can shine without them. Just like Yunho and Changmin need to show everyone why they stood up with us to begin with; because they’d earned that right. Because they are good enough to stand on their own.”

“And when we become five again?” Yoochun nodded to Yunho. “We come back as equals. Together. No one can take that from us.”

“No one would dare try.” Junsu leaned forward, reaching for Yunho’s hand and gripping it tightly.

“For now, we wait then?” Min asked, rounding the table to grab an ottoman to sit on. Se7en moved in closer, resting his hands on his lover’s shoulders.

“Don’t wait,” Jae said. “Succeed. And when we are five, no one

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will able to stop us.”

“Shit,” Se7en chuckled, drawing all five pairs of eyes to him. “The world barely survived the five of you the first time. God help it the second time you hit it.”

“There are no Gods but us, right?” Yoochun teased, nudging Junsu. “Rising from the East.”

“Yes, none but us,” Yunho said, standing slowly. He went about the room, giving the others a brief hug before stopping in front of Jaejoong. Wrapping his arms around the man’s slender waist, he drew Jae close. “I’ll stand with you, Boo. Always to your left. Even if it might seem I’m not there, I will be. Okay?”

“Okay,” Jae ducked his head, shy in front of the others watching them closely. “We’re still five then? No matter what?”

“Two plus three,” Yunho whispered, touching his lover’s forehead with his own. He bend his head, intent on stealing a kiss before deciding the kiss was his anyway. With the taste of his lover in his mouth, he stared into Jae’s eyes, inhaling Jaejoong’s next breath and holding in its sweetness. “No matter how they try to divide us, two plus three is five and we will always be...five. Always.”