

**Lavender Bunny
& Other So Much Mine Tales**

*This is a work of fiction.
None of these events happened.
And more importantly,
no profit is being made in its creation.*

First, a huge thank you to the comms and the readers
who followed these stories as they are written.

I cant even begin to list everyone.
The sheer number of people is overwhelming as is
the support that has been given.

So I just have to say...

Thank you.

Again. Still. You all rock.

Saranghae.... wedspawn

Lavender Bunny & Other So Much Mine Tales

Table of Contents

Lavender Bunny	1
Yoosu Bunny Dribble	173
Hint of Lemon and Kisses	176
In The Dark	185
Cookies and Fire	192
Inked Souls	198
Lemon Ink	207
Crème Brulee	217
Candied Kisses	220
Pearled Ice	225
Stolen Cherry Blossoms	237
A Sparkle of Gold	245
Frozen Shadows	249
A River of Kisses	259

1

Leaning against the rooftop sill, Micky leaned his head back, inhaling the sweetness of spring lingering just out of touch in the night air. The bite of chill slipped past his hoodie, tracking goose bumps over his chest and stomach. Junsu's voice trebled behind him, the tenor trying to show their youngest where a cluster of stars danced along the horizon, lit pearls that Changmin asserted was a plane landing in the distance. Jaejoong's laughter echoed under Yunho's deep chuckle, the taller man sliding his lover into an embrace. Neither heard anything around them, Yoochun was sure of it, Jae's changeably cold face warm under Yunho's rapt attention.

The night was perfect for lovers, crisp and smelling of burgeoning flowers lying beneath the surface of thawing snow. Tall trees provided a laced backdrop for the evening, a ridge of buildings jutting up from Seoul's belly to surround the apartment's rooftop with a trestle of steel and glass. Icicles crackled and snapped from power lines strung through open spaces, the fracturing white spines gleaming with captured rainbows.

Jaejoong and Yunho had no eyes for the beauty in the night, enraptured into the tangle of their emotions. Micky breathed a sigh of relief at their inattentiveness, able to watch the couple court one another openly with soft touches and gentle kisses. They would have little time to enjoy their couple-status, their faces on display with every step they took outside. Yoochun's heart ached for their pain, wondering how the young men would survive in the tumultuous world that would batter at their love.

Worry creased Micky's open face, an emotional tenderness filling his burnt-whiskey eyes. The taint of longing hung along the edges of Yoochun's heart, battered from life's hammering blows. His body's needs were easily slaked, a charming smile tossed into a crowd of women usually peeled at least one out of the pack, but those flirtations and flings left him...wanting more... needing more and finding nothing that filled the void he'd discovered inside of him.

Yoochun's head still turned at the sight of long legs and a short skirt but the willingness to trot after the girl faded, the effort to woo and coax her along paling under the companionship of the men he shared his life with. There wasn't enough... substance, Micky found the word in his head, a meaty piece of thought to chew on. There wasn't enough inside of the banter and giggles. Flirting was a diet of sweets, tooth-achingly numb that left holes in his bones when his stomach rumbled in hunger.

Lavender Bunny

In a life so short, his world tumbled up and then down, turning in on itself...consumed in a fiery sea of change. He'd kept the reasons for his pursuit of stardom deep under a smiling face and a knowing wink, a playful mask over the seriousness of his soul. The loss to his heart ached, faces either dropping off from apathy or clouding under the mists of distance. The little brother he played with seemed a ghost in his memories, the wrought, anguish of his mother's wringing hands sometimes haunting his dreams but Yoochun saw the remnants of pain in Jaejoong's eyes, severed from the anchor of family and left adrift. Yunho weathered the storm battering his soul, sheltered and in turn, sheltering the wild, feral singer at the centre of their group.

Yoochun felt guilty for crying in the embrace of his friend's arms, Jae patient and empathetic, understanding the loneliness that plagued the America-raised Korean. Compared to Jaejoong, his own pain paled in comparison but Jae never turned to Yoochun in pity, instead blossoming open and offering to allow Micky to reside in the warmth of his open heart, a gift the baritone treasured. In turn, Jaejoong held a solid place in Yoochun's heart, filling in the cracked voids left from others tearing away, leaving crumbling shards of broken feelings for Micky to suck on for sustenance. And then, there was the curious agony of Junsu, the crinkling confusion leaving a messy trail of want in his chest.

"Ah, so serious!" Junsu nudged his friend with an elbow, nearly knocking Micky off balance. "Why the long face, Chunnie-ah?"

Junsu's hands were always moving, a punctuation to his talking. Comfortable in his own skin, the young man stretched, fingers gesturing towards the baritone, mimicking a flat line over Yoochun's mouth. Micky smiled despite his heavy thoughts, the lightening of his soul coated by his friend's arrival. Offering Yoochun a lollipop, Junsu unwrapped a cherry sucker, licking the hard candy before lodging it into his right cheek. Taking the offering, Yoochun slowly undid the cellophane, sucking thoughtfully on the treat before answering.

"Just thinking." Yoochun kept his voice down, not wanting to disturb the hyungs. Their world should be allowed to spin just for a few hours more in the nirvana they'd constructed out of paper snowflakes and gossamer kisses. The harsh reality of tucking away their hearts would return in the morning, hard edges and blunted on their souls. "Aren't you supposed to be showing Changmin the stars? That telescope was heavy. Someone should make use of the wounds I earned dragging it up here."

"Ah, our philosopher went downstairs to see if he can find something that depicts constellations. He doesn't like the ones I've shown him." Junsu rested his face on his friend's shoulder, rubbing his cheek on Micky's arm. Waving the lollipop in the air, he gestured wildly towards a smattering of pinpricked lights in the sky. "He doesn't believe that there is a great elephant of the stars."

"I wouldn't believe you either." Micky made a face, wrinkling his nose at Junsu's easy lies. "He's smarter than either of us...probably smarter than the two of us combined. What made you think he would believe you?"

"Who wouldn't believe me?" The tenor batted his long lashes, a perfect mimicry of a helpless maiden from an ancient drama. "I can be cute. Cute can get you far, Yoochun."

Junsu smelled sweet in Yoochun's heart, a spiced kiss against the mint brisk in the air. Running a hand over Junsu's hair, Micky wondered if the heat flooding his face was the result of the touch of the other on his body or the burn of the wind coming up over the rooftop. His hands itched to run over Junsu's face, wanting the feel of the other's soft downy cheek against the cup of his palm.

Those feelings surfaced more often than Micky cared to admit, the flushing tingle of the skin on his belly tightening or the roll of desire at the back of his throat. Watching Jaejoong cuddled against Yunho brought unwelcome thoughts to Yoochun's mind, creeping hooked wonderings along the path of his musings. Swallowing away the thickness of his body's response to Junsu's touch, Micky hooked his arm companionably over his friend's shoulders, willing himself to think of their close friendship...and nothing else.

"Man, it's cold." Junsu rubbed his hands together, using the width of his friend's body to cut the wind from icing into his face. Burying his nose into the crook of Yoochun's neck, the tenor grinned at his friend's yelp of surprise. "What? You're warmer than I am. I need to get the chill off my nose."

"Aish! You're cruel." Yoochun reached around to rub at the spot, closing his palm over Junsu's nose. The heat from his body leached the cold off the singer's face, a loose caress of warmth and comfort. Laughing beneath the mask of Micky's hand, Junsu's breath filled the lines of darkness with his bright smile. Cupping the rolling giggle into his palm, Micky pulled it free of Junsu's face, bringing his fist to his chest to push the sound into his heart. "There, I'll keep that there for when I'm sad."

"Ah, Chunnie-ah, if you need someone to keep your heart free of sadness..." Junsu brushed the edge of Micky's nose with his fingertips, running down over the other's mouth and over the set of his chin. "I'll always be here to do that."

"You and the others." Yoochun agreed with a nod. "Jaejoong is good at doing that too. Different, but just as good."

Junsu gritted at the idea of Jaejoong bringing any emotion to Yoochun's heart, his own clutching hard just at the thought of someone brushing on Yoochun's feelings besides him. Yunho spoke of jealousy, a hot streak of verdant burning through his thoughts but the wildfire of rage flared, dampened by the seductive smile Micky wrapped around Junsu's soul.

Lavender Bunny

It stung. Deep and barbed... that smile latched poisoned nettles into Junsu's desire. It left a kiss of black mist amid the sweetness, a haunting ghost of what could be between them. Junsu tilted his head, pressing the feel of Yoochun along the side of his body. He met Yunho's eyes around Micky's shoulder, the leader's gaze catching the skipping emotions on Junsu's face.

Changmin's triumphant shout echoed in the stairwell, the propped open door funneling his jubilation into the cold night air. Yoochun grinned at their youngest member as he stumbled over the elders' sprawled forms, long legs easily clearing their tangled limbs. Yunho playfully yelled a warning at the youth, covering Jaejoong's head with his palm. Jae yelped, biting at his lover's chest with a nip of sharp teeth, lightly telling Yunho he didn't care to be abused.

"Ah, time to chew on your mistakes." Yoochun lightly pushed Junsu from his shoulder, his hand lingering on the young man's hip, a brush of fingers along the silk of Junsu's exposed back. "Changmin will want to show you the stars."

Walking backwards, a gleeful wicked grin spread over his face, Junsu winked at his roommate and said. "If you let me, Chunnie-ah, I'd show you some stars..."

"Hah!" Yoochun shook his head in mock disgust. "You'd try to convince me that there is a giraffe eating ice cream in the canopy. I don't need any help with my astronomy, Susu. I can find what I need just fine."

Junsu chewed at the corner of his mouth, a rare thoughtfulness edging into his cocky expression. "Maybe you just don't know what you need yet, Yoochun. I can help you with that too."

* * *

"He's driving me insane, Hyuk." Junsu paced across the empty studio floor.

The other singer looked up from his perusal of CDs the other brought in, a bootleg Gackt. EunHyuk stretched his legs out, working his feet into tight circles as he opened the CD case, reading the song list before answering. "Are we talking about Kim Jaejoong or Park Yoochun? Lately, either one of those seems responsible for your ill humour."

"Please, no mentioning Jaejoong." The tenor growled, rounding off his stride and headed back to his oldest friend, the other singer's body reflected in the wall-length mirror. "Jae is all I hear these days. He's driven me insane and now I am on my return trip."

"My name is Jae..." EunHyuk reminded Junsu, adding the CD to the pile he wanted to rip to his music player. "And he shares his music with you. He can't be that bad."

"Hah! Shares his music." Junsu wrinkled his nose, his changeable face softening. "He shares. Everything. And we share back. Sometimes we're even allowed to borrow things that we bought in the first place."

"So we are talking about Jaejoong." The young man picked up the hot tea he'd brought in, removing the plastic lid and blowing at the torrent of steam in his face.

"No." The tenor said with a shake of his head. "We're talking about Yoochun. He's the one that's driving me insane."

Lee Hyuk Jae was familiar with the frantic pacing of his friend's energetic body, the bundled power of his emotions translated into the strides and fierce stops Junsu poured over the wooden floor. Much of the sweat on his friend's brow came from the fury of his emotions, his body leanly carved and conditioned for long battles with itself. It was the emotional terrain that Junsu forged fearlessly through, a rocky landscape he normally found smooth and unhindered by any obstacle. Between them, they'd cut a swath through the pretty offerings in school and in the halls of SM Entertainment. Junsu's frustration amused Hyuk to no end, the agreeable mischief-maker he'd befriended in his youth finally stymied by a reluctant charmer.

Coiled with tension, Junsu's body line was something to admire, EunHyuk's attention fully on his friend's taut legs and back. They'd tangled with one another a few times, the attempts often dissolving into fits of giggles followed by hiccups neither could suppress. Charismatic, Junsu proved to be the perfect companion for the amiable EunHyuk, the boys bonding even tighter as they were taken through the rigorous training that left them both exhausted and begging for surcease.

"Ah, Yoochun." Hyuk nodded as if he knew exactly what Junsu was talking about, although the singer gave up trying to understand his friend's attraction to his band mate. "What has he done now? Or is it what he's not doing?"

"It's..." Junsu stopped short, staring out into the room. He couldn't put his finger on the one thing Yoochun was doing to drive him insane. The subtle hints of his growing attraction didn't seem to sink into the baritone's thoughts nor the overt flirting and touching he'd escalated to. Instead, Yoochun continued along his obtuse, endearing way...always friendly, giving and loving... just out of reach of a kiss or the tantalizing touch of his body against Junsu's.

"It's everything." Junsu sighed, grinding his teeth in frustration.

"Careful." Hyuk exclaimed in joy at a copy of Hyde 666 buried in a stack of loose CDs. Checking the back for scratches, he didn't see the poisonous glare Junsu directed towards him. "Your mother paid a lot of money to ensure you had good teeth. If you ruin them now, she'll liable to beat you and the group will have to find another singer. Wait, never mind...go ahead, grind your teeth. I get tired of being one of thirteen. I could take your place and live with Yoochun."

"Don't even think about it." Junsu appeared suddenly at Hyuk's feet, a dangerous gleam in his eyes. Growling, the singer crouched in front of his friend, tapping Hyuk on the nose to get his attention. "I have enough

Lavender Bunny

problems with him crawling all over Jaejoong. If Yunho does one thing for me in my life, it would be to keep Joongie away from Yoochun long enough for him to miss being touched...and I can..."

"You can take Jaejoong's place?" The other young man leaned forward, unafraid of his friend's posturing display of temper. "What's wrong with just a few kisses and groping in the dark? What are you looking for? Something forever like Yunho and Jaejoong?"

"No, I can't..." Junsu slid down onto the worn floor to sit besides his oldest friend. "I don't want to spend my life chained down to one person. I can't imagine Chunnie would want that either. He's a worse flirt than I am. It's just that I want him so badly. There are nights when I just lay there while he sleeps and it's all I can do not to slide over his body, tasting his mouth."

"So just ask him." Hyuk shrugged, bumping his shoulder against Junsu. "Of course, unless you want all of this teasing to go to waste. He's got to be curious. He's let you ride all over him, Junnie-ah. How much more obvious do you need to be other than telling him you want him?"

"Suppose it goes bad?" Junsu worried at his cuticle, dampening the end of his thumb. "I can't risk it. Not with Yoochun."

"Ah but you could risk it with me?" The other singer balled up his fist and lightly struck his friend, a playful tap just hard enough to push at Junsu's body.

"I told him I didn't know anything about... that kind of thing." Junsu widened his eyes in mock surprise at Hyuk's open-mouthed shock. "It's not as if I'm a wanton whore like you. I just... am more experienced than he is."

"And you led him to believe you know nothing about..." Hyuk hissed his displeasure. "You shouldn't lie to him. Even if he's dense in the head, he's one of your best friends. And the object of your lust. He might be more... approachable if he knew that you had an idea about how things worked between... men."

"I wasn't sure how he felt about... all of that." Junsu waved his hand, dismissing the whole matter. "And then... Jaejoong and Yunho happened, right under our noses. Yoochun was in the middle of it, cooing and petting Jae while Yunho stalked around the edges, snarling at everyone who came near. I thought I was going to lose my head or throw up from the sweetness when they finally did something about it."

"So this ... thing... with Yunho and Jaejoong...it's real then?" The other ventured, the CDs forgotten around him.

"Yes." Junsu nodded. "They... fit into each other. Sometimes rubbing raw but still, together. It's like their souls were soldered together with gold and melted into a single ring. And Yoochun polishes it, just around Jaejoong's side mostly. I think Yunho is still a bit fierce towards him. There was a lot of jealousy from that corner."

"Then you should take advantage of that." Hyuk nodded knowingly. "Yunho is an ally you should court. If anyone has an interest in fostering Yoochun's affections towards someone other than Kim Jaejoong, it would be him."

"That's a good idea." Junsu replied, musing over how the leader could help him peel Jaejoong from Yoochun's side. "Just remember, you can't say anything to anyone about Yunho and Jaejoong. I only told you because well..."

"We're the oldest of friends." Hyuk patted at his best friend's shoulder, looping an arm around Junsu's torso. "Besides, it's not like I'm blind. Everyone can see them and know something is there. You'd have to be an idiot not to see what is between them."

"See, that's what I don't understand." The tenor bit back his exasperation. "Micky comforted Jaejoong during the whole mess and he doesn't see what I want from him?"

"Maybe he only is looking for love, Junnie-ah." The other hugged his friend tight, a voice of reason amid the chaos in Junsu's thoughts. "Perhaps Yoochun doesn't see the lust in your heart because he wants to see something else instead."

"That's not there, Yuki-ah." Junsu sighed heavily, leaning into his friend's warmth. "I don't want forever. It's not for me. I don't need to have the kind of passion that YunJae have. That's...too much of the other in your soul. How can they even breathe without feeling strangled by the other? No, that's not for me."

2

Winter refused to give up its hold on the park, a frigid wind screaming through the tree lined paths and down into the playground area. The nearby glass building glimmered, the washed out sun catching on its icy panes. Long shadows cast down over the grass below, a deserted concrete square sporting snow frosting at its edges, drenched in the building's dark presence. The breeze whistled as it sang through the empty hoops of the basketball court, its high pitched keen longing for summers past.

Jaejoong stood at the window of their shared apartment, the flesh on his skin crawling at the sound of the wind. Rubbing at his biceps, the singer made a face at himself, his reflection bouncing back his growing displeasure at having to trudge through the cold air to the park below.

"Explain to me why we're going to play basketball?" Jae quirked his mouth, disgusted as Yoochun showed no interest in undoing the laces of the shoes he'd just put on. "Neither one of us really even likes sports."

"You don't like sports." Micky corrected. "I like basketball. Besides, who knows when we're going to need those skills? You just don't want to go out into the cold."

"You're right. I don't." Jae sighed, grabbing the thick jacket he'd stolen from Yunho's side of the closet. The heavy fleece still smelled of the other man, masculine and comforting. If the singer was going to go out into the frigid tundra below, he would have Yunho wrapped around him in some manner. "Why aren't you dragging Yunnies with you? Or Junsu? He would love to play with you."

"I'm tired of Junsu playing with me." Yoochun grabbed the ball with one hand, palming its rough surface with his long fingers. "Quit complaining and let's go."

Jaejoong stood for a moment, unsure of his friend's hard features. Breakfast that morning had been a quiet, still affair... the normal bustle and chatter subdued at the far end of the table. Changmin tried engaging Junsu a few times, receiving only non-committal grunts for his efforts before the tenor slid his uneaten food into the garbage and left the room. Yunho watched Junsu's exit with narrowed eyes, his spoon half-filled with oatmeal. Changmin turned his head to ask Yoochun about the tenor but the baritone's tight mouth warned off any questions, Micky's expressive eyes flat with a simmering anger.

The singer was sadly correct in his estimation of the chill outdoors, a cutting bite of ice slicing at his cheekbone as he cautiously moved down the stairs. Moist under his feet, the cement seemed to slide under him, each step warily ventured until he reached the rougher surface of the salted sidewalk. Yoochun stood at the curb, the basketball tucked under his arm. Waiting for Jae, he faced the park, his gaze seeing something other than the frozen tight remains of the winter-seeded grassy knolls.

“Are you alright, Chunnie-ah?” Jaejoong ventured a hand on the crook of his friend’s arm, pulling Yoochun slightly around.

Tears traced silver rivers of pain over Yoochun’s face, catching on the rise of his cheeks and coursing into the set of his lips, his mouth a hard wall against the cries in his throat. Biting the inside of his mouth, Yoochun canted his head down, trying to struggle to keep his anguish in while allowing the words tearing from his heart out. Anger lingered amid the hurt, a burning raw emotion of betrayal and questioning. Micky ached to slam the ball into the glass wall behind them, wanting to smash the panes from their moorings in a great shattering, hoping the shards would pierce his body until the blood poured from the open wounds and he fell white from its lack.

“Chun...” Jae gripped his friend’s shoulder, his fingers digging into Yoochun’s bones. The feral singer pressed in, a slanting beauty holding a sheet of love over the baritone’s heart, wanting to protect him from the raining fire of Micky’s hot tears. “Please, what’s wrong?”

“Junsu...” Micky gulped, tilting his head back to swallow the salt of his own tears. “Damned Junsu...”

* * *

“I lied to him.” The tenor sighed, digging his hands into the pockets of his jeans. “I’ve been lying to him for as long as I’ve known him... and I decided last night that I should tell him the truth.”

Junsu briefly wondered if the duvet covering the hyungs bed was clean enough to lie on. A tentative sniff while Yunho wasn’t looking rewarded him with the fresh scent of apples and mint detergent, leaving only his pain at misleading Yoochun chewing on the insides of his belly. His wild imagination filled in the crevices of his thoughts, long pale limbs hooked over Yunho’s tanned shoulders, fingers tangled into the silken sheets hidden under the bedspread, a crimson pour of heated linens wrinkled with clutched passions.

“Tell him the truth about what?” Yunho frowned at the younger singer, his long legs hooked over the arm of the wingchair they’d dragged in from the other room, a victim sacrificed to Changmin’s expanding need for space. Its brushed velvet nap worn to a tired grey where hands ran over its ancient curves, the once lush hunter green a faded weald hue.

The young man stalked into the elders’ bedroom an hour following his leave of the kitchen, a glower set into a granite hardness on his mouth. Sensual

Lavender Bunny

and fluid, Junsu started to speak several times, Yunho silently waiting for the younger man to spill his troubles. Finally throwing himself on the bed, the tenor hissed out the sourness in his belly, letting the hot air scald his tongue before he finally allowed himself a rumbling growl of irritation.

"We're talking about Yoochun, yes?" Yunho asked, wondering if he'd misunderstood the other.

"Everyone keeps asking me that." Junsu lifted his head up, shoving one of Jaejoong's many feather pillows under his crown. "Yes, Yoochun. Who else would I be talking about?"

"Junsu, I don't know." The leader leaned forward, sliding his feet to the floor. Resting his elbows on his knees, he brought himself close to the younger man. "I need hear a bit more than what you've told me. So far, I know that you've lied to someone...and now I know that someone is our Yoochun. I don't know what this lie is or how terrible it was but he'll forgive you. He's forgiven me for ... things I've said."

"I think it's a bit more ... serious." Junsu gestured, his hands a staccato butterfly beating against unseen glass. "He trusted me, hyung, and I violated that."

"Why don't you start off at the beginning?" Yunho rubbed at his face, his dream of a quiet day spent in lazy relaxation slipping away in front of his eyes.

"When we first... came together...when the five of us were brought together... do you remember how hard it was?" Junsu stumbled over his words. Sitting up, the young man crossed his legs under him, clutching the pillow to his stomach.

"It was... awkward." Yunho nodded. "But none of us knew one another. Not really. We were all very polite. It took some time for us to... relax and grow together."

"Tong Vfang Xien Qi was really my only chance at being...Xiah." The younger man said. "I'd been training for six years and there were times... you know of it, when it looked as if I would never be... anything. And if there is one thing I wanted more than anything else, hyung, it is to be... the best."

"It's what binds us together, Junsu." Yunho replied. "We all want that in our own way. It's what makes us strong."

"It's also something that makes us hide what we are." Nibbling at his upper lip, Junsu debated what to say, lost in a puddle of his conflicted emotions. Considering all that Yunho had gone through over the past few months, Junsu cleared his throat and began to talk. "None of us can risk... want to risk... losing what we've struggled so hard to obtain. You're willing to risk that for Jaejoong... but I'm not willing to sacrifice it because people are idiots."

"I've always known that I was.. different." Junsu shook off Yunho's impending interruption. "Please, let me finish. It's not something that I've ever really

talked about. Not because I'm ashamed of what I want but... it's never really been important. Not until I crossed that door, carrying my suitcase and became Xiah."

"You've just discovered your love for Jaejoong." Yunho murmured a tacit agreement to Junsu's words. "But he's really the first man that you've ever found that you've wanted. Or so I'm guessing."

"You're right." The leader agreed softly. His love for Jaejoong conflicted with the small fondnesses he'd garnered for women over years, those tepid feelings washed away by the tsunami of desire for Jaejoong. "He is...different."

"I think you fell in love with everything about Jaejoong despite his outward... shape." Junsu laughed, a spark of sarcasm in his husky voice. "I was going to say appearance but anyone can see his beauty. Your life would have been so much easier if he'd been a girl."

"I would imagine much of Jaejoong's life would have been for the better if he'd been born a girl." Yunho admitted. "But I love Jaejoong for everything that he is. The wildness in him is... because he's male. Fiercely so despite his beauty. I love that the most about him."

"See, while you've had to discover the... attractiveness of a male form...even one as pretty as Jaejoong." Junsu breathed hard, feeling his secrets pour loose from his soul. "I've always found...either sex...desirable."

"It's never mattered to me. Women... I like them and I love having them around but men too. There's something about them that makes me want them." Junsu shrugged off Yunho's exhalation, the leader leaning back in his chair as he absorbed what the younger man was saying. "I look at Jaejoong and see that perfect cold porcelain face and I know he's beautiful but there's also how I see you, strong and handsome. Masculine and commanding. That speaks to me too. I don't want either of you... but the differences... I appreciate both of you."

"Junsu..." Yunho blew out his cheeks, puffing his breath to clear his mind. "All this time, you've said nothing about...this? I mean.. I don't mean.. I'm not sure what I mean."

"I didn't say anything at first because none of us knew one another." The tenor reached over to touch Yunho's knee. "Then as we grew close, I didn't say anything because I didn't want to alienate any of you. How was I supposed to know that you and Jaejoong would start this... entanglement? I saw how he looked at you and then... boom... everything went to hell between you. Where was the time to stand apart and say... there's something I need to tell the four of you?"

"No, I understand why you... kept quiet." Yunho clasped the other's hand, his eyes sliding from Junsu's face to the nearly white sky outside. "I would have done the same if I were you."

Lavender Bunny

"If you were me, you'd have pulled Jaejoong into bed long before now." Junsu snorted, his smile returned to his face. "Hyung, I thought the stars were going to burn from the sky before the two of you finally finished snarling and circling."

"Ah, don't get too cocky." Yunho warned him, pushing lightly at the other's head. "Seriously, I'm sorry that ... you couldn't tell us before. I understand your reasons but Yoochun... he's your best friend..."

"He's my best friend...Yoochun and Hyukjae, both of them are so important to me." Junsu interjected. "But sometimes I think I'm not his."

"I hurt him because I was selfish and didn't think he would understand. I never gave him that chance.." The tenor pointed out, his hands eloquent as they wove his words around him. "There is so much I admire about Yoochun and one of those things is that he leads with his heart. I know who he is now but and to be honest, in the beginning, I couldn't be sure how he would feel about my... choices."

"He came from America." Yunho said. "Things are different there. More open."

"Not so much different that my desiring another man would make him feel comfortable to share a room with me." Junsu replied. "It's not something that I can admit to a stranger and you all were strangers. Then, it became so important not to give him more pain. Chunnie-ah was already twisting inside because he was alone. It was more important to hold him when he cried. I couldn't shove myself into his pain and say...take care of me, Yoochun. I've taken care of you."

"No, I suppose not." The leader replied.

"So I had to wait... and I think I waited too long." No amount of sighing would ease the tightness in Junsu's chest. The thought of losing Yoochun hurt, probably as much as the anguish he caused Micky by not sharing all of his secrets.

The first time Hyukjae kissed him on the mouth promised a tingling satiation of the growing lust in his young body, the exploratory tongue rough on his soft lips. He'd kissed women, a velvet softness far from the rougher feel of another male. The sensation excited him, the clutch of his abdomen muscles curling from a spreading heat. They'd played at being in love, first heart-wrenching declarations of forever, then a comfortable familiarity of their friendship when their enflamed lust subsided to ashen fond memories. He'd sat with Hyukjae through the years, often sharing confidences and stories of conquest or heartbreak, neither caring if their casual relationships were male or female.

Their innocence was shattered when a stone carved from intense hatred struck their world.

Poisonous, cancerous words filtered through groups of young men, sometimes in jest...other times in bitterness. The pressure of trying to rise to the notice of the entertainment world sharpened predatory fangs among the trainees, explosive situations made volatile as jealousy ripened among groups. Another boy, younger than Junsu and Hyukjae, suddenly collapsed and mysteriously disappeared from the training rotations.

Rumours surfaced, then solidified as whispers grew. The young man openly flirted with another, making his attraction to an older singer known. The resulting ostracization and sweltering pressures shoved the boy into anxiety attacks, a tender heart broken under verbal and emotional beatings.

Junsu and Hyukjae learned from that incident. They would remain silent about their desires, only sharing the information with people they deeply trusted. Junsu felt comfortable sharing his own secret with Yunho, a man he felt understood the pressures of being... attracted to someone of the same gender. Hyukjae agreed, offering his own secrets for Junsu to share if needed.

"So what is the problem between you then?" Yunho asked. "You know that he doesn't care... if he did, then he and Jaejoong wouldn't be as close."

"The problem isn't that I like men." Junsu was surprised to feel a wetness at the edge of his lashes, a single tear threatening to rattle his composure.

Rubbing at the eye with his thumb, Junsu tried to pass the motion off as if he had an itch. Yunho allowed the deception, steadfastly ignoring the moisture and the other's surreptitious swipe. He'd shed enough of his own tears to know that sometimes, those shed in front of another were best left unseen, something Yunho learned in his pursuit of his mercurial lover.

"Then what is it?" Yunho pressed. "We can fix it. The five of us have come too far to let something that none of us care about fester between us."

"The problem is that I lied about it." The tenor glumly whispered. "I led him to believe that I knew nothing about ...wanting another man. Yoochun is one of the most honest people I know. He hates being lied to. Even more, he hates being lied to by someone he trusts. I betrayed that trust every time I left things unsaid between us. I was saying to him that I didn't trust him in return."

"Ah..." Yunho leaned back in his chair, resting the back of his head against its cushioned sweep. "Yoochun is someone who expects back what he gives. I would agree with that."

"Right now..." Junsu fought to swallow the tincture of coppery pain in his mouth, the edges of his teeth aching from gritting his jaw shut. "Yoochun feels as if he gave me everything he was...and I cradled it in my hands and spat on it. That's why he's angry at me. And he has every right... I just wish it didn't hurt as much as it does."

Lavender Bunny

Yunho looked up from the televised soccer match when the two friends came around the foyer wall, Jae pulling himself free of his lover's new jacket. The leader absently patted the couch cushion next to him, his eyes moving back to the screen. Jaejoong debated walking away, unsure if he felt outrage at being summoned to Yunho's side or happy that the young man wanted him at his side.

Tossing the jacket on the ottoman, Jaejoong sauntered into the kitchen, his rolling gait a whispering siren to Yunho's lust.

Digging through the cabinets, Jae took his time looking for something small to eat, worriedly looking up as Junsu followed Yoochun into their bedroom, the soccer game forgotten. Opening a bag of shrimp chips with a tear of his teeth, Jaejoong padded back into the living room, sliding against Yunho's body, tucking himself under the young man's offered arm.

"Did you have a good time playing basketball?" Yunho stole a chip from the bag, crunching the salty fold in half, the rest pinned between his teeth.

"Please...Yunnie-ah." Jae rolled his eyes, chewing at the edge poking out of Yunho's mouth. "You and I both know that I wasn't going to play basketball in the freezing cold. We went outside and ended up talking. We could have done that at the coffee shop. I could have been warm and had a cup of tea."

"Did he tell you what they argued about?" Yunho tread cautiously. Relationships were new to both of them, their rules still undefined on what they shared between them or what they held in confidence for others.

"A little bit." Jaejoong nodded. "Not a lot. I told him it wasn't his secret to give me. And he agreed. Whatever Junsu did to him, Yoochun still loves him. Give them time. They'll get over whatever it is."

* * *

Junsu closed the door behind him, locking the world out with a final click. Yoochun turned, startled then defensive at the sight of the other standing at the end of their beds. His bare feet silent on the carpet, Junsu walked over to his friend, pushing at the baritone's shoulder, shoving a silent Yoochun onto the mattress. Sliding over, Junsu rested his back against the wall, his legs covering Yoochun's hips.

"I'm sorry." Junsu stared down into his friend's tear-ravaged face, the pain of his heart lingering at the surface of his skin. "I'm sorry I lied to you about... things."

"It wasn't things, Junsu." The formality of Yoochun's address stung but Junsu knew he deserved the icy tone, frigid and hard on his heart. "It was about you. You're more than a thing to me."

"I know." The tenor admitted. Micky stared up at him, the hurt in his eyes a jagged edge. "I... was afraid at first. I'll admit to fear. And then, I.. didn't know how to tell you."

"And when we were talking about Yunho and Jaejoong, you pretended as if you didn't know or understand..." Micky said, hot despite the tangle of his fingers in Junsu's. The baritone instinctively reached for his friend, seeking comfort amid the pain he held inside. It was second nature to touch the other, a brush of burnished heat as their skin rubbed or the soft murmur of Junsu's hair against his chin. "You could have told me then that you had sex with another guy. That was the time, Junnie-ah. It would have been then."

"I've not...done that, Chunnie-ah" Junsu lay next to his friend, cradled against Yoochun's side, his hand captured in Yoochun's grasp. Not wanting to break eye contact, Junsu moved in close, his voice a low whisper. "I wasn't lying about that. I've never... gone any further than... touching...kissing. I've never fully had sex with another man. I didn't lie to you about that. I just didn't know how to tell you.. I honestly didn't."

"Yoochun, please." Junsu entreated. "I never wanted to hurt you. I was just... I had to be careful until I knew you better and then, I found I couldn't hurt you... because I knew you would be in so much pain. You trust so openly...and so rarely. You give me your soul every time you touch me and it felt good. I was afraid to lose that."

"You would never lose my love, Susu-ah." Micky reached up, holding Junsu's face in the curve of his palm. The soft intimacy of the diminutive name warmed Junsu's chest. "That's what hurt me more than anything else... that you didn't trust me enough to let me show you that I didn't care. That you could tell me anything.. be anything and I would still be your friend."

Bending over, Junsu imagined the kiss would be one he'd hold inside of his heart for his life. It was supposed to be a small thing, a shared intimacy to seal over the crazing he'd inflicted on Yoochun's soul but then the taste of Yoochun in Junsu's mouth made him realize the sun would burn down to a rock before he would give up that memory.

Sunlight poured over lemon kisses...sugared candy rolled in starlight... or the burst of a cherry blossom's first scent in the wind as it spread its petals to the day... Junsu was sure Micky's mouth held every drop of those tastes and an indescribable saffron richness in his velvety touch.

Shifting, Junsu spilled over Yoochun's prone legs, hands clenched in Micky's shirt. The smoothness of Yoochun's fingers rubbed on Junsu's waist, stretching up over the tenor's ribs. Nearly breathless, Junsu refused to retreat, consuming every drop of the other man until his body ached with the heavy need spreading through his body. When his lungs were about to burst, the singer broke free, reluctantly gasping for air, licking at the lush swell of Yoochun's mouth before taking another breath.

"Please forgive me for hurting you, Chunnie-ah." The tenor heard the breaking plea in his voice, desperate to give anything not to lose the friendship he had. Silently swearing to forsake the mewling lust he felt for

Lavender Bunny

Micky, Junsu sent a prayer to whichever angel gifted wayward souls their deepest wishes. “I never meant it. I promise.”

“There’s nothing to forgive, Susu-ah.” Micky’s hot whisper scorched into Junsu’s open mouth, their lips brushing with the faint movements of their heads. “I love you. Even when I’m angry at you. You’ll never lose that. I’ve given you that to hold forever.”

3

“Changmin!” Junsu barely stopped long enough to shout at the lanky young man walking into the living room. “Can you grab us some water?”

The youngest looked wearily at the pair playing a racing game, the television screen flicking and flowing with asphalt jungles and two sleek, low slung street racers. Junsu crowed at cutting off his friend, Yoochun’s frantic thumb movements sliding over the controller in an attempt to catch up. Neither appeared as tired as they should be, the long day dragging down over the singers when they’d first come in.

They’d been pulled in so many direction over the last few weeks, Changmin wasn’t sure what day it was. The quiet of the dark streets was no help, the late hour a rush of silence filled with the mingled shouts of the two older men. Junsu’s wide grin shoved aside his fatigue, the tenor’s good-natured grumbling a lift to Changmin’s soul. Setting two water bottles on the table, the youngest tucked himself into the corner of the couch, his long legs barely fitting against Junsu’s hips. He was rewarded with a brilliant smile, the older man’s wink a thrilling ribbon into his belly.

“What are the three of you still doing awake?” Yunho stood at the end of the hallway leading to their bedrooms, his hair still damp from his shower. “It’s late. You should be in bed.”

“Yes, father.” Yoochun slid his car around Junsu’s, the back end curving wildly around the corner. Ignoring the other’s shout of outrage, he pressed forward, nearly careening into the back of a bus edging into the traffic. Muttering a small curse, he downshifted, trying to keep Junsu’s approaching car trapped behind the pixilated obstacle.

“Hyung, we’ve got the next few days off.” Changmin spoke for Junsu, the tenor’s attention fully on the game and not on the younger man’s feet sliding under his thigh. “They’re probably excited for it.”

“Why are you awake then, Min?” Yunho cocked his head at their youngest member. “Or did you get enough sleep on the plane?”

“More than enough.” The youngest nodded, the back of his head still aching from the hard cushioning of the airline seat. “I just need to spend some time sitting someplace that isn’t moving and smells like home.”

Yunho’s grunt acknowledged his understanding of wanting to be home. They’d all spend the various plane hops jostled and pushed into interviews and strange rooms. When they finally were able to collapse in their hotel

Lavender Bunny

rooms, they were often maneuvered into bedroom pairings that hinted of keeping Yunho and Jaejoong apart, Yoochun and their road manager often paired with Changmin and the eldest while Yunho and Junsu were left to fend for themselves. Yunho took the assignments with a glowering acceptance where Jaejoong merely shrugged and called him late at night, a clandestine rendezvous of murmured love and suggestive needs.

He was home now. In his own bed. With his lover. If the other three wanted to stay up until dawn broke, rose and fell that was fine with Yunho. Shrugging off the mantle of leadership, Yunho shut off the hallway lights and padded to his bedroom, shutting the world out behind a closed door.

"We're not going to see them the entire time." Changmin leaned his head back on the sofa's arm, wiggling his toes experimentally under Junsu.

The older man bent slightly over, rubbing his elbow along the youngest's shin. "You keep doing that and Yoochun will win."

"Ah, Changmin, my secret weapon!" Yoochun crowed, shouting in glee as Junsu's car slammed into the back of a taxi.

The youngest singer murmured an apology to Junsu, nearly withdrawing from the couch. The elder stopped him, the feel of Junsu's thumb on the ridge of his ankle bone. Stroking at the younger man's calf muscle, Junsu reassured Changmin with a soft smile, shaking his head as Yoochun logged in his win, the letters flying on the screen in a dizzying dance.

"It's alright, dongsae." The tenor said. "Stay. You'll bring me luck in the next race."

"Hah!" Yoochun mocked, taking a sip from a water bottle, offering it to Junsu before stretching out his hands, working the numbness from his fingertips. "Let's see how well you do in this city!"

"Pretty cocky for someone who's only won one game." The young man bumped his friend's shoulder, handing the bottle to Changmin. "We should bet on this."

"Ah, you have a good luck token with you." Yoochun nodded towards Changmin. "I'll need to get one. Wait here."

"You two are such good friends." Changmin heard himself and winced. With the chance to speak with Junsu, alone and in the relative darkness of the dimly lit living room, he'd chosen to bring up Yoochun. Charismatic and jovial Chunnie-ah, the centre of Jaejoong's and Junsu's affections. Fumbling to extract himself from that line of thought, he continued. "You and I are good friends too."

"It's nice to have a little brother, Minnie-ah." Junsu agreed, wondering how long Yoochun would take. "I've not had one before. Even as a twin, I'm the youngest. Hyung is also bigger...and never lets me forget it."

"I ... " Changmin stared at Junsu's handsome face, astonished at the other man's response. A little brother. After all of the machinations he'd arranged to bring the elders together and the sly hints he'd laid out for Junsu's attractions, the tenor still thought of him as a child to be patted on the top of the head and sent to bed while the older boys played. "Junnie-ah..."

"Ah, that's hyung to you, little boy." Yoochun squeezed in between the chair and the end of the couch, his long legs stretching over Junsu's shins before plopping back into the soft cushions. He gripped a familiar floppy eared light orchid hued rabbit in his hand, its uneven button eyes bobbing about as the singer arranged it on the pillows. "There, that's my good luck token."

"Aish, you can't use our son as a good luck token!" Junsu protested.

"You're using YunJae's son as yours." Yoochun playfully pointed out, not seeing the shimmer of rage burning in the depths of Changmin's expression. "Now, Paris is waiting to see your defeat."

The tremors rocking Changmin's emotions stilled under Junsu's hand running long strokes over his leg. Sighing at the touch, he ventured. "Do you mind that I called you Junnie-ah?"

"What?" Junsu frowned at Yoochun's choice of tracks, shaking his head at the spiraling maze, knowing the course would benefit his car while hindering Micky's wider model. "No, of course not, Minnie-ah. You can call me that. I don't mind."

Changmin slept that night dreaming of tender smiles and the feel of the other's hands on his body, refusing to hear the whisper of his soul saying that Junsu's eyes were on Yoochun's face.

* * *

Yoochun didn't fight the yawn stretching from the lower end of his belly to the back of his throat, not covering the exhalation as he scrubbed at his bristle of hair with his right hand. Sleep clung to his eyes in small grains, made larger by the weariness of his body finally seeping down into the marrow of his bones. Shedding the loose cotton pants he wore, Yoochun stretched his arms over his head, cracking the tightness of his neck and popping the bones in his spine. The rattle of popcorn sounds drew Junsu's attention, the other man coming in from the bathroom, wiping his bare chest off with a damp towel.

The other man's trim body was a pleasing sight after the crazy levels of the video game, a stretch of pale skin promising warmth and sweetness. Junsu's attention followed the trail of dusting hair just below the other's belly button. Lacking the power of Yunho's sculpted body, Yoochun's beauty lay in the even breadth of his shoulders and trim waist, masculine with a faint hint of tenderness. Micky's body held the sweetness of his soul in its clear prettiness, comfortable and sensually erotic, a hint of the low rumbling voice that sent shivers into the secret core of Junsu's pleasures.

Lavender Bunny

Junsu's distracted perusal of the other's body was interrupted by Micky's expletive cutting blue into the air. Startled from his staring, the young man stepped forward, alarmed at Yoochun's rubbing of his shin. Junsu tasted the taint of blood on his upper lip, his teeth cutting into the tender flesh where he'd bitten in deep, his eyes running hot lust over the firmness of Yoochun's rear...not realizing the other man had been bending over in pain.

"Chunnie!" Junsu climbed over his bed to reach the other's side. "What happened?"

"I hit the table again." Micky restrained himself from kicking the offending furniture. "It's dangerous. It lies in wait like a rabid cat and pounces when I walk by. It has always hated me."

"Yes, I can see that." Junsu sat down on the edge of the bed, pulling Yoochun's hands away from the bruising spot. "Stop moving. Let me see if you've done some damage."

"It probably plots to kill me in my sleep, stopping only because you are sleeping next to me and it doesn't want any witnesses." Yoochun complained, feeling Junsu's hand on his waist pull him forward.

The other's hot breath on his thigh brought a crawling heat along the inside of his thighs, his groin roiling tight as Junsu's fingers lightly skimmed the red welt along his shin. Leaning his head back, Micky inhaled sharply, trying to pull the cold air from the open window into his lungs, unnerved at his body's reaction.

"You're covered in bruises, Chunnie-ah." Junsu whistled under his breath, spreading his fingers up over a mottled purple stain on Micky's inner thigh. "What did you do here?"

"I don't know. It's probably Changmin's elbows or knees when we dance. I can't seem to dodge him. He follows me around and hits. I think he's growing too fast to get used to his arms and legs." He shrugged, unable to look down. His boxers were offering little protection to the jutting length of his arousal, the need to sit down and hide under the blankets finally making him pull away from Junsu's cautious explorations. Grabbing at the stuffed bunny, Yoochun thrust it at the other, hoping Junsu hadn't noticed his response. "Here, your son is crying for you."

"Why is he my son when he's crying but your son when he's helping you win a race?" Junsu bent forward, sliding up onto the edge of his bed. Taking the rabbit, he played with its buttoned eyes, finding the cracked edge on the right, a familiar snag under his lingering touch. "He smells like you now."

"I bathed." Yoochun protested. "He can't smell."

"It's not a bad smell." Junsu defended his friend, cradling the bunny to his chin. "I like how you smell. It's like wintergreen and oranges. Sometimes I can't drink mint tea without thinking about you."

Yoochun cocked his head, smiling at his friend. Sliding under his sheets, the baritone lay on his side as the other turned off the main light, leaving the table lamp's soft glow to fill the tight space between their beds. A rumble of laughter echoed outside of their bedroom, a light from the hall edging under the door then shutting off as Yunho found his way back into his room. They lay there quiet, listening for the telltale murmurs of the older men settling down for the night, lost in the bemused wondering of what happened when the door across theirs closed for the night.

"They've probably missed each other while we toured." Junsu finally said, his words heavy with longing. He'd been on Yunho's side of the conversations a few times, walking in from a shower or after an interview. Their body language with one another was ripe with innuendo, Yunho's protectiveness surfacing when fans crowded in on the fragile, feral Jaejoong.

It was difficult to watch sometimes, the sidelong glances during radio interviews, cameras poised on their faces. Yunho struggling not to touch Jaejoong when the other man faltered, jostled by a manager into answering a question. Distant and reserved in front of prying eyes, Jaejoong took longer to bloom, coyly seductive behind a masked indifference. Yoochun often filled in the chasms of his friend's quiet, teasing a smile from their main singer, relaxing Jae. Changmin could do little but stand between the couple, his youth making him unsure of give support but knowing he provided needed distance between the two lovers.

As always, Junsu was at Micky's side, a counterpoint to the seriousness at the other end, whispering naughty suggestive pranks into Yoochun's willing ear. Micky lived for those whispers, hearing loving seductive things amid the sarcastic proddings, innocent wide-eyed looks shot back at him when Yoochun turned to glare at Junsu's erotic teasings.

"I'm glad I'm not them." Yoochun wondered if he could lay on his back and hide his hips with the sheets. Pulling at the linens, he willed his body to relax, wanting the aching hardness to subside. Certain his reaction was from weariness and the lack of female attention, Yoochun concentrated on Junsu's pleasant husky voice, hoping the other's rolling accent would lull him into a restful sleep.

His gaze drew towards Junsu, the other man's face illuminated into a sculpture of bone and light from the lamp's glow. Yoochun never tired of seeing the carved beauty, so very different from the exotic features of his best friend. Junsu's haunting eyes followed him in his dreams, serious and focused despite the young singer's cheerful nature. People only saw the surface of Junsu's personality, the bubbling overflow of delight and teasing flirtations. Micky knew of the steady minded focus Junsu held in his heart, a driven determination to make a mark on the world, stronger and stubbornly pushing himself and coaxing the others with a smile into doing just one more take.

Lavender Bunny

Where Yunho led with sheer determination and maturity, Junsu guided with a gentle hand, herding the others in concert to their hyung's wishes. Desire to reach the stars lay in all of their souls but burned brightest in Junsu. Micky's own love of music, a deeply seated talent was now a recognized tool to their success, supported by Junsu's critical ear and soft encouragements, a welcome respite from the frustration Micky felt when a piece of a song fell from his reach.

Over the past few days, there'd been whispers of removing Jaejoong from their midst, a terrifying thought for the homesick Yoochun. Fear became a ravenous scuttle of poisonous insects, skittering long hooked limbs dragging bloated barbed carapaces into Micky's intestines. The members banded tight into one another, becoming a cohesive bloc that refused to be broken. They'd been reassured, comforting words spoken over several hours that the rumours were untrue, jealous non-truths spoken to undermine the group's tightness. Micky retained that feeling of fear, the trembling caustic acid that burned into his mind. He would keep that memory to remind him of the fragility of the family surrounding him, a warm blanket of love and arguments that kept him safe in an unfamiliar homeland.

"Do you want that kind of love, Chunnie?" Junsu turned, resting his head on his hand.

The distance between their beds seemed a canyon, barely crossed with whispers and laughter. Inside, the tenor knew he wanted to crawl over the emptiness and slide against his friend's compact body, hugging his arms around Yoochun's waist as they spoke. In the tenderness still between them, Junsu felt Micky's easy forgiveness, the trust he broke healing under careful ministrations and words.

"I think for me, love means...home." Yoochun breathed a sigh of relief, his length softening with each passing moment. Thinking of how he'd want his life, Micky pondered the possibilities. "I'd want her to be willing to understand that I'm not... busy. That I like a soft, gentle life after a crazy hard day. I don't need someone to cook and clean. I'd want her to be able to see my heart and be... strong for me."

"Ah." Junsu wasn't sure why the stabbing prick of pain dug into his heart but the other's words stung, a faceless woman flitting through Micky's life. "That sounds more like a mistress than a wife. What does this woman look like?"

"Aish." Yoochun reevaluated his thoughts, finding no foundation for his dreams. "I haven't... looked. I guess I never thought about it. A family is such a.. large responsibility. And suppose I end up like... other people and walk away from my family? That's always been one of my fears. That I would leave my children behind because the woman who had them is someone I've begun to hate."

"I don't think that's possible." Junsu whispered, hearing the heartbreak crackling through Yoochun's words. Stepping from his bed, he crouched at

Micky's side, his bare feet a whisper on the soft throw rug. "You are not that man. I can't ever see you throwing someone away because they are connected to someone else. That's not in your heart. Chunnie-ah, look at how much you forgave in me!"

"How could I not?" Yoochun asked, a wonderment in his dark eyes. The tender feelings for Junsu flared in his soul. "The best thing that happened to me this year was your coming back into this bedroom."

"Despite the..." Junsu was reluctant to say lies but that still lay rankled at their peace. Neither spoke of the argument they'd had, a flurry of hard-fisted words thrown blindly before they stewed in hot silence. It whispered away in time, but its dried corpse still lay unburied between them.

"Maybe because of that." Micky turned, facing his friend. Sliding back, he silently made room for Junsu's body, the other crawling up onto the bed and tucking under lifted sheets. Snuggled into the crook of Micky's raised arm, Junsu held the bunny between them, a mute plush chaperon for his lust.

"I think that it gave me... more of you. All of you, really." Yoochun said softly, his fingers tracing the edges of the bunny's ears. "And then when you realized I forgave you, you learned that you could really trust me. Maybe it's something that we both had to have happen."

"I never thought I would feel as much happiness as when you said that you loved me too much to hate me." Junsu whispered, nuzzled into his friend's warmth. "I'm glad you understand how ... hard it was."

"I know." The baritone responded. Micky stroked at the softness of Junsu's cheek, his fingers casting long shadows over the other's hooded eyes. "Now seeing Jaejoong and Yunho, I understand such things better."

"Such things?" Junsu laughed softly. "Love is love, yes. Well, in my case, lust is lust."

"So, only lust?" Yoochun looked at his friend in surprise. "No relationships? Ever?"

"Too hard." Junsu shook his head, purring when Micky's fingers returned to his face, the long strokes easing the tension in his forehead. "Women... they're hard to have relationships with. Always wanting time that you need for other things. And men, you can't love a man like a girlfriend."

"Jaejoong and Yunho..." Yoochun started to say, stopped when Junsu's fingers pressed on his lips.

"They're married." The young man sighed. "Yunho isn't the girlfriend and boyfriend type. It's a full commitment. And Jaejoong probably doesn't realize it or he doesn't know how long forever is. But once he does, he'll fight it a bit then settle into the relationship. People might say that they're wrong and that they will end up in hell because men should not love men but I think that they love down into their souls. That can't be wrong. They could be reborn as two stones on other sides of the world and they would find sea currents to ride

Lavender Bunny

until they rested on the same shore together, nestled in forgotten sands under the warm sun."

"But it's different for most people, Chunnie-ah. That kind of... intensity isn't for everyone. It can't be. Can you imagine the world if our lives were ruled by that kind of fire?" Junsu pointed out. "We would never survive ourselves. Someone love the idea of love but when faced with it, they run. Others think that the shallow feelings they have for another person is love and then spend the rest of their life wondering who is the stranger that they are married to."

"I don't want that kind of love." Yoochun said. "But I think there... are other loves for people. I think I'd have a love that grows, unfolds and digs into the earth instead of reaching to burn into the sky like Jaejoong and Yunho. I want a forest that my heart plays in. Something fresh and sweetly green. A place where butterflies touch my face and leave a powdered kiss of colour on my skin."

"Ah..." Junsu couldn't resist sliding his leg over Yoochun's shin, hooking his ankle over the other's. The touch grounded him, the long feel of Yoochun's thigh on his body a hot comfort. "That is why you're the poet of us. Love for you is a dream you can have. For me, it's an anchor around my neck. I wouldn't be able to be out touring or singing, always worrying or wondering about the person I left at home. What I want for myself won't be sacrificed for someone's love. I know I'm selfish. So it's better not to love and I won't hurt anyone that way."

"Maybe you should fall in love with someone you don't leave at home." Yoochun grinned, playfully tweaking at Junsu's nose. "That way you always have your home with you, Susu."

"I'd say the same for you, Chunnie-ah." Junsu reached behind him and turned off the light, wrapping his body around Yoochun's in the darkness. "Maybe that's the best thing for your wandering heart. Another heart with itchy feet on the path with you."

4

Thunderstorms hugged Seoul's skyline, sheets of pounding rain obscuring the view from the car's windshield. Junsu peered out from behind the driver's head, trying to see the road ahead of them. Winding through the tight traffic, the cab fishtailing as it hit a patch of iced over water. Yoochun grabbed at Junsu's waist, holding the other against him, bracing for another car to sideswipe them.

"Ah, Chunnie-ah." Junsu grinned up at his friend, nearly sideways on Yoochun's lap. The baritone's wide hands spanned his back, warm and strong against the rise of his rear. "Do you think it would be safer if we just got out and walked?"

"I think it would be safer if we got out and swam." Yoochun rapped on the window, risking the danger of the driver turning about.

Micky thought they would be safer for it, hoping that the man would stop someplace that they could jump out. A few quick words slowed the cab down, a gush of water splashing onto the sidewalk as the tires screeched to a halt, failing to get traction on the wet road. The cab jumped against the curb, the frame rattling from the impact. Catching at the handle, Yoochun half-pushed and half-dragged the other singer from the back seat, tossing a handful of bills at the driver through the open passenger window.

Sprinting through the torrential downpour, they ran to an overhang, the dark windows of a closed restaurant offering little comfort other than shelter from the cold, bone-numbing rain. Micky's hair ran iced from the rain, the pull of his jacket sheltering his head with little results. The edges of Junsu's lips were turning blue, his teeth chattering despite the other taking the brunt of the wind. Shivering, the other singer pulled the lapels of his jacket closer about his throat, protecting the muscled column from the chill.

The cab disappeared under a wave of steam, its hot engine hit with a wash of water from another car's tires. Not more than three feet away from the sidewalk, another car jostled into the empty space, striking the cab hard as it hydroplaned when its brakes locked up. Crinkling glass briefly overwhelmed the sound of the rain, falling back into the shush of water and the crackle of thunder. The sky lit up bright with the arcing fingers, lightning tickling and stroking at the clouds.

"We need to get you out of the cold, Susu-ah." Yoochun shrugged out of his jacket, wrapping the warm material around his friend.

Lavender Bunny

"You need your jacket, Chunnie." Junsu's refusal diminished under the rattle of his teeth as he spoke, the warm overcoat beaded with water, runnels peeling from the wool blend and dry beneath.

"Kim Junsu, for once in your life, just listen to me." Yoochun pointed to a door of a small brick building, its discreet sign lit with a run of pale yellow neon. "That coffee shop is open. Let's get something warm to drink and call the others to tell them we might not make it home."

* * *

Jaejoong hung up his cell phone, cocking his head at the other man sitting on the couch. Yunho looked up from his sheet music, still sounding out his part in his throat, a deep hum as he worked through the notes. Frowning, the eldest reached for his tea, nearly tepid from being left on the coffee table. The porcelain mug retained a bit of the heat, the liquid inside dankly green and strong.

"What's wrong, Joongie?" Yunho reached for his lover's wrist, pulling Jaejoong towards him, the sheet music forgotten as it wafted to the floor. Careful not to slosh the contents of his cup, the singer slid around, nestling between his lover's spread legs.

"Yoochun and Junsu had their driver pull over and they got out. Chunnie-ah said that it was too dangerous to let the man drive them. They didn't feel safe." Jaejoong sipped at the cold tea, making a face at its too bitter taste. Scraping his tongue against the rough of his teeth, Jae put the mug down, resting back on Yunho's chest. "They're going to wait out the rain and maybe get some place to stay."

"Where are they?" Yunho frowned. "Did they ever make it to the club?"

"I don't think so." Jae brushed back Yunho's hair, blowing a kiss along the ridge of his earlobe. "He said that he'd call to tell us when they someplace to stay or if they're heading home. I'm glad they got out of the cab."

"Good." Yunho agreed, his fingers hooked into the back of Jae's pants.

The night was nearly around to the crest, their voices rough from the past few weeks of performances and interviews, long hours spent dragging from place to place and then the cold rush of air pressurized from the airplane's interior. Cuddled against him was the man he'd wanted to hold during those hard, lean times of insomnia and thin meals. Jaejoong sighed, wanting the night to last as long as it could, his tongue taking small licks of the skin along Yunho's collarbone.

"Changmin...?" Jaejoong whispered low into the hollow of Yunho's throat. He longed to taste the quiver of skin that moved under his fingers, a skittering reflex to his gentle, probing touch. Falling to the temptation, he licked with the tip of his tongue, moaning with pleasure at the shuddering response he got from Yunho's body splayed beneath him.

“Studying? Asleep?” Yunho’s hands worked through Jaejoong’s hair, fisting at the back of his lover’s head as he pulled Jae up for a kiss. “I don’t care, Joongie-ah. Yoochun is right, If he learns about sex from us, then maybe that isn’t a bad thing. I am tired of hiding. We spent too long hiding these past few months. It about killed me to be so close to you and not being able to touch you. Heaven will be open to us because we’re living through hell now.”

“Yunho...” Falling into the dark seduction of his lover’s voice, Jaejoong filled the space between them with a rising heat, the tit of his head exposing the erotic length of his throat to Yunho’s mouth. He purred at the feel of Yunho’s teeth against his skin, the other singer tasting the delicate vanilla fragrance of the soap they shared.

“We should take this elsewhere... to our room...” Jaejoong began to protest until Yunho’s fingers undid the top button of his jeans, the rivet popping free of its confined space. His lengthening flesh made it difficult to concentrate, his lover’s fingers rubbing against the rough of his jeans stroking Jae nearly to weeping. “Yunnie...”

“I miss this couch.” Yunho grinned, dark and seductive. Jaejoong usually ran him ragged with just the barest skimming of his mouth or the run of his tongue along Yunho’s earlobe. Sliding his fingers down the crevice of Jaejoong’s rear, he tickled at the soft downy ridge dipping from the small of Jae’s back, the tender skin hot under the tip of his index. “I miss you on this couch.”

“Hyung.” Softly, the youngest called from the hallway, tentative steps taken over the hardwood floor. His long shadow cast down into the living room, the lights shining from behind Changmin’s head.

Jaejoong rested his head on Yunho’s chest, the velvet whiskey heat of his desire watered by the ice of Changmin’s inquisitive, plaintive call. Taking one last tiny bite of his lover’s throat, Yunho leaned his head back on the arm of the couch, letting the youth see his face and called out to Changmin to join them. Jae’s throaty growl rolled from the tight frustration in his chest and groin, his fingers struggling to find the button Yunho undid from his jeans. Fumbling, he straightened, barking his knee on the glass table.

“Are you busy?” Changmin stepped fully into the room, standing behind the arm chair.

“No,” Yunho intercepted Jaejoong’s quiet, hidden glare with a fierce pleading look, a muted argument squashed by the need in Changmin’s query. “Come sit down.”

“Actually, I was wondering if... Jaejoong...” The youth trailed his sentence off, biting at the end of his thumb. Worry troubled his face, a confusion of emotions run hard under the solidity of his thoughts. “Can I borrow Jaejoong for a while? I need to ... ask something, hyung.”

Lavender Bunny

"Me?" Jae was taken aback, the youngest's slight nod bringing a pursed pout to his lips. "Sure... okay. I mean, Yunho is ... much better to get advice from but..."

"I think you'll be able to help me...understand a few things." Changmin bowed his head apologetically at the leader. "No offense meant, hyung."

"It's okay." Yunho pushed at the small of Jaejoong's back, helping his lover right himself. "Why don't you two stay here? There's some music I want to listen to and Boo is just a distraction sometimes."

"Sometimes?" Jae lifted his eyebrows, shoving Yunho's shoulders as he slid out from under Jaejoong's body. "If you're nice to me, I'll bring you something from the kitchen."

"Just bring yourself." Yunho allowed himself one last lingering kiss, savouring the spice of Jae's tongue on his own. Claspng Changmin on the shoulder, the leader headed back to the bedrooms, wondering if he had time for a cold shower.

Pulling his legs up, Jae tucked his feet under him, sliding back to rest against a pile of vibrant pillows. Making room for Changmin, he waited until the younger man made himself comfortable. Confusion fought with the need to talk, a flight of raw emotions battling for space in Changmin's troubled eyes.

"What's bothering you, dongsaeng?" The singer leaned forward, pressing a violet cushion into the hollow of his belly, his desire mewling at the loss of Yunho's warmth. "Were we too loud?"

"No, I can barely hear you most of the time." Changmin's face coloured at the memory of the time he'd opened the bathroom door, accidentally left unlocked in Yunho's haste to chase Jaejoong into the shower.

The steam hid most of their nudity but what he could see left little to his imagination, the leader's hands roaming over the soap-slickened pale form of his lover, Jaejoong's head tilted back, his black hair wetly clinging to the high sweep of his cheekbones. The singer's vibrato moan and gentle urgings pushed a tightness into Changmin's face, the rush of reactive desire tingling his nipples tight beneath the oversized t-shirt he preferred to sleep in.

He came to his senses a few seconds later, shocked nearly to speechlessness, shutting the door quietly behind him. Changmin gasped for cold air, running to the kitchen for an ice cube to suck on, hoping the frozen water would quench the unwelcome fire in his groin. He'd been unable to meet either hyungs' eyes for the next few hours, his studies forgotten under the spooling memory of Jae's white teeth sinking into Yunho's tanned shoulder as the other man's hands moved downward, stroking long caresses over unseen parts of Jaejoong's trim body.

"No, you're fine." Changmin wondered if he could somehow put his hands over his burning cheeks, hoping Jaejoong wouldn't mention the flush of red in his face. "It's more... about love."

"Love? Me?" Jaejoong puffed his cheeks, breathing out slowly. "I don't know if I'm someone to ask about love. Your mother...?"

"This is different, hyung." Serious, the youngest's maturity shone in his face. Normally playful with the eldest of their group, he now looked to Jaejoong for advice... unsure of how to proceed with his feelings. "I have a problem and I'm not sure what to do about it."

"I suppose it's less about love...than it is..." Changmin pondered how to phrase his question. The delicate fronds of his affections confused him, a small tingle of desire amid the hard corners of his resolute mine. "I think I've fallen in love but the person I love... doesn't see me."

"Ah..." Jaejoong nodded, his thoughts scrambling for some foothold on sanity. Schooling his chaotic mind, he concentrated on what his nuna shared with him, the depth of Scarlet's words muddled with the fire of Yunho's touch lingering along the inside of his thighs. "What is she like?"

"She isn't a she."

Jaejoong exhaled hard, leaning back to stare at the young man. The pit of his belly dropped from his body, a stone thrown into the void of apprehension. He was assailed with images of Changmin's tender heart, battered from the harsh words and hard fists of hatred striking their youngest. Swallowing his initial response of yelling some sense into Changmin's head, Jaejoong stared hard at the youth, wondering how to sway him from a path Changmin had already set on.

"Changmin..." Jaejoong's eyes widened. "God, you aren't like that because of me, are you? I didn't... do this to you, did I?"

The idea of his father being...right...horrified Jaejoong. Doubts flew into his heart, barbed darts dipped in past poisons and spreading an inky blackness through his blood. It nestled its ugly head into his soul, a tick bloated on bruised flesh and sour bitterness thrown like acid into his face. Yunho's parents joined those voices, unheard condemnations slammed through the tiny punctures they'd left in the leader's heart, his love spilling loose onto uncaring stones.

Had he poisoned the others with his perversions? Jae's stomach burred, the green-sick taste of his bile burning up to scorch his tongue. A whispering qualm became a tsunami, winds carrying sharp pebbles striking his tender, damaged soul. Changmin's confused look merely served to cement the fear lodging in Jaejoong's throat.

"No, Jaejoong... no!" Changmin shook his head, clasping his hands over the other's fingers.

"Changmin, I..." Paling under his mortification, Jae nearly pulled free from the touch, wondering how long before the others would discover he'd spread his predilections into the impressionable young man. "I'm sorry... I never

Lavender Bunny

wanted that for you. Please tell me that you're...wrong... that you just got confused."

"You sound like..." Min stopped from comparing Jaejoong to the Jungs or Kims, knowing his hot words would injure the singer irreparably. "I just have feelings for someone and I'm unsure... if I love them or just... need...want something from them...from him. It has nothing to do with your love for Yunho."

"And it is love, Jaejoong." Changmin insisted, pressing the flat of his hand on his elder's chest, feeling Jae's shuddering heart pound against his breastbone, the panic sending his body into a frenzy. "You do love Yunho. And he loves you. There's nothing wrong with that. I knew that before... you two ever became one. I was taught that. My mother has always held that belief and showed me the truth of that. She is a very loving, caring person who has given me wisdom in following my heart."

"I just... don't want you to..." Jaejoong's mind reeled with the remembrances of smashed in faces and broken bones jutting from slender limbs, blood washed daily from the cement floors of the club he'd worked. He couldn't count how many times Trance served as a makeshift clinic for young men caught unawares by someone seeking sport or the violent release of self-loathing disguised as passion. "You're so young..."

"I am tired of being treated like a child, hyung." Changmin's demeanor changed, the slant of his head tilting back to meet Jaejoong's wide eyes. "You are always kind to me....respectful and I appreciate that. But Yunho hyung believes I'm a little boy and the other two see me as a little brother. But what you all forget is that I'm here besides you... having gone through the same trials and tests. I've earned my place to stand among you... I want to be treated as such."

Jaejoong started forward, his voice low and consoling. "None of us think of you as a little boy..."

"You don't." Changmin agreed. "But the others, I know they do. It's in every thing that they say and do. They don't remember that I am the eldest in my family and that I am used to having those responsibilities. It rankles me when I am shoved behind or left to fade into the background. I have worked hard to be seen as your equal and instead I become something left over or forgotten."

"I want Junsu to see me." Hearing the tenor's name fall from Changmin's lips shocked Jaejoong, a dread creeping into him. Changmin continued, unmindful of the beleaguered groan Jae let out. "I want the world to see me. I didn't join this group to be a postscript note in its success. And it's killing me that I don't have a place among you other than as the little brother...the cute one. I'm not cute, hyung. I am many things but I've never been the darling little boy that my mother would dress up to show off to her friends. I don't expect to be that little boy here now."

"Junsu?" Jaejoong swallowed his shock, trying to form a cohesive thought to share with the youth. "Our Junsu?"

"Jaejoong, is that so.. terrible?" Changmin pressed in.

"He's..." The lead singer stopped himself before he confessed he'd seen Junsu as belonging to Yoochun, the amiable relationship between the two middle singers firm and solid amid the strife that ran rampant in their world. "I don't think he's the one for you."

"Junsu isn't interested in a long relationship." The youngest admitted with a reluctant nod. "But I think he just hasn't... explored what that could mean."

"You're too young for that." Jaejoong grabbed at Changmin's hands before the youth pushed away. "Let me ... please. It's not that you're too immature.. it's that... you're still.. you're not an adult yet. Do you know how much trouble Junsu would get into if he touched you? It's bad enough that..."

"That we're both men?" Min asked, his face hard with a repressed anger. "Do you still think like that, Jaejoong?"

"We have to. All of us. It's not something that we can ignore because we want to, Minnie-ah." Jae replied. "Please, think this through. You might just be attracted to Junsu because we're all in tight quarters and he's..."

"I know." Min agreed, biting back his ire. "I've thought of that. But even if that were true...what difference would it make? I could say the same thing about you and hyung but you know in your soul that's not true. I have to see if it's like that for me."

"Suppose it isn't...final?" Or even something, Jaejoong wondered to himself... Junsu would consider doing.

The youngest member of their group was a child in years despite being more of a man in thought, much more than the others combined. Junsu's flirtations often were automatic, a charismatic tease woven around seductive smiles and coy innuendo. Jae pondered how to break it to Changmin that the attentions he might have received were as easily shared by Junsu as breathing in air. The thought of Min's tender feelings slammed on the shards of reality ached Jaejoong's heart, unsure of how the youngest would take in that knowledge.

"I would have thought all people, you would be the one who would understand that I need to...explore this. To feel something for someone else." Changmin breathed a sigh, exasperated at the elder's reluctance to accept his needs. "Even if Junsu doesn't do anything other than hurt me, I need to do this. Because there's the chance that I'm the one to show him that love is a forever thing. I want what you have, hyung. I think I deserve to try for it."

"I'll look for advice elsewhere, hyung." Changmin briefly hugged Jaejoong to him, clasping the older man then smiling gently, wiping at the worry on Jae's face with the flat of his thumb. "Don't worry about me. I'll be fine."

Lavender Bunny

* * *

Fuchsia. That was the colour that came to Junsu's mind. Followed by magenta and then back to a rose pink, his first thought when the steaming glass tea pot was placed before him. Uncaring of the hue, he poured out the fragrant fruity liquid and inhaled its aroma, letting the heat reach down into his lungs.

A smoky voice breathed a tidbit of a song from behind the stage to the side of their table, husky and longing for a man to ease her pain. Distracted from his tea, Junsu looked up as the black curtains pulled back, a sultry bodied woman slinking onto the boards, her long black hair striking against the pale stretch of her bared shoulders.

Micky followed his friend's stare, whistling under his breath at the woman's beautiful face, a fragile delicate pour of bone and ripe lushness. Her voluptuous body encased in a sea-mist haltered sheath twinkling with tiny rhinestones curving over her waist and breasts, moved in a graceful saunter, a golden anklet peeking out from the tight slit running up to the bottom swell of her hip. It wasn't until the light caught the edge of her face did Micky see the slight swell of a bump along her throat, the barest of shadows stunning his arousal to a meek whimper.

"Susu-ah!" Micky hissed as the singer poured his tea, nearly overfilling the cup. Smiling in thanks at his friend's warning, Junsu went back to listening to the woman standing on stage, her contralto voice dripping low seduction to the people sitting at her feet. "Junnie! I think that's a guy."

Cocking his head, Junsu stared up at the singer, assessing her long, lean body. Subtle hints lent weight to Yoochun's revelations, the breadth of her wrists and the square set of her fingers. Shrugging, Junsu sipped at the tea, savouring the sweet juiciness of its flavour. "Does it matter, Chunnie-ah? The tea is warm, everyone seems to be enjoying themselves and she sings well."

"I didn't think..." Yoochun looked around, unsure what he'd expected a cross-gendered club to look like. "I didn't know..."

The décor was understated, a sleek elegance reflected in the entertainer sashaying through her song. Dim lighting splashed intimate golden glows over each table, quiet and efficient waiters serving the customers with a respectful silence of carefully placed crockery, keeping the rattle of porcelain from interfering with the talent's singing. Several couples sat near them, a few men with their arms around their dates' shoulders, the women now suspect in Yoochun's eyes. He was caught peering closer at a young-faced matron sitting nearby, her beefy faced companion frowning menacingly at the baritone.

"Did she turn you on?" Junsu whispered into Yoochun's ear, sliding the teacup handle into the other's chilled fingers. The tenor moved his chair over, nesting his legs against Yoochun's. The black and white checkered tablecloth hid their legs, Junsu's hand brushing on the rough wallpaper

plastered behind them before resting on the high back of Yoochun's chair. "That's not something to be ashamed of. She's gorgeous. A much better woman than any we've seen in a long time."

"It's just that... she's not real." Yoochun kept his voice low, a shush of shocked surprise fragrant with a sip of the cranberry-orange tea.

"She's as real as any other woman that you might meet, Yoochun." Junsu's easy shrug dismissed the differences. "Regardless of how she was born, she knows what she wants. Isn't that more important in a person than just having them flitter at you saying only what you want to hear?"

"And admit it, Yoochun, you found her attractive until your brain realized that she was a boy." Junsu pointed out. "Would that really matter if she were the one who you found out was the person in that rain forest love nest of yours?"

"Yes..." Chun shook his head loose of the confusion in his thoughts, the stroke of Junsu's fingers along the nape of his neck adding to the mess. "I think if I found the soul I wanted... If I for some reason found myself falling in love with a man, I would think I'd want him to be.. a man. What would be the purpose of...? I don't even know what I'm saying anymore."

"You're funny, Chunnie." Junsu teased, bending closer to kiss his friend on the corner of his quizzical mouth. "If you fell in love with her, wouldn't you want her to be who she felt like she needed to be? And not something that you felt she should be?"

"Did you know that this place was like this?" Yoochun shot his friend a suspicious look, slanted smoldering eyes dark beneath his long lashes. The curl of his hair ran shots of coppery fringe over Junsu's fingers where the other stretched his hand up under Yoochun's skull ridge.

"I didn't but it doesn't bother me." The other replied. "Sometimes it's good to experience new things. So this is something new. Just enjoy it. There's no harm in being here. And answer me, tell me if it's right or wrong to want someone to change for you."

"Wrong." Yoochun said, his eyes trailing back up to the woman's face. He could imagine the sadness in her voice coming from the loss of a lover who discovered her secrets, throwing her self-image into a damaging fire of spewed virulence. Jaejoong sometimes spoke of times when he'd felt the hurt of his parent's rejection, unable to turn away from his desire for men, wishing sometimes that he could if only to feel the comfort of family so deeply ingrained into their culture. Nodding, Yoochun whispered, sliding his hand over Junsu's thigh, clasp the young man's muscle in a firm grip. "It would be wrong of me to want her to change. I wouldn't ask that if I truly loved her. You're right in that, Susu. But you're not talking about love, remember? Love for you isn't forever. You want to just be in lust."

"Sometimes, a little sin is fun, Chunnie-ah." Junsu's breath grew moist, the lick of his tongue on Yoochun's earlobe a tickling sensation along the other's

Lavender Bunny

nerves. Chuckling at Yoochun's mocking surprise at the caress, he leaned back and sipped at his tea, his hand remaining at the base of Yoochun's neck. "Tell me you wouldn't be curious... or at least wanting to know what it was like... to try to be as bad as they say you are."

"You're dangerous to know, Junsu." Yoochun shook his head, feeling the dampness clinging to his scalp. They'd shed their jackets, too warm under the heaters. The sheerness of his shirt was clear from the spreading pools of translucence where the rain soaked him through to his skin. "You sometimes make me want to do things I know I shouldn't. I shouldn't want to know sin this intimately."

"Sometimes?" The other scoffed, sarcastic in his derision. "If only sometimes, then I must be losing my touch."

Yoochun shifted, uncomfortable in his chair. His body responded quickly to Junsu's touch, the sultry tones of an erotic, sexy song blew on the embers of his want, a dislodged and misplaced desire for the other's hands and mouth. He'd spun hard, drawn to Junsu's easy smile, a hapless moth to a flame that burned too bright and uncaring. The ease of his friend's flirting was a familiar taunt, a hard reminder that Yoochun was one of the many caught in the captivating enigma of Junsu's web.

Last night, as the tenor lay against him, asleep and dreaming, Yoochun stared down into Junsu's face, whispering a touch over the other singer's face with just the tip of his finger. He'd traced the man's mouth, gasping a small mewl when the tenor instinctively parting his lips and suckling at the first joint with a noisy hunger. His tongue was hot on Yoochun's palm, licking down along the webbing before retreating back into the moist promise of Junsu's mouth, the tenor turning around and cradling the plush bunny to his chest.

That mouth was so close to his own, Yoochun thought, the kiss of their shared tea leaving a plump clear cranberry drop on Junsu's lower lip. The confusion had set in. A sunburst of want warred with the knowledge that this man... a man... who was his friend and beloved in his heart raked open the lust Yoochun normally felt for a woman. Nothing seemed more fascinating than the touch of Junsu's tongue to that drop, Yoochun wanting to chase the moisture back into the dark warmth he knew was hidden in Junsu's mouth.

Swallowing a mouthful of tea, Yoochun nearly choked when Junsu spoke quietly, a low rumble of a suggestion falling into the barren bowl of Yoochun's mind. The other's hands were moving, never still, either in the air or over the hot length of Yoochun's taut-nerved body.

"Let's find someplace that we can dance together, Chunnie-ah." Junsu met his friend's eyes, a sloe-eyed desire ripened to a seductive crawl through Yoochun's impure thoughts. "I want to show you what it's like to throw everything that people expect of men to the wind. I'll show you how to break

every single rule that your mind tells you should be followed where sin is concerned. Let me teach you how to sin, Chunnie-ah.”

5

Sin.

For most men, it was a word. For Yoochun, it had come alive in the underground club Junsu led him to.

There was no sign outside, nothing to announce to the world that wickedness lay beyond the heavy steel door. Thick stone columns stood guard besides the wide cement stairs leading down to the plain doorway. Yoochun stopped at the top stair, staring down at the wide-bodied man hidden nearly in the shadows, an awning protecting the entrance from the incessant rain. Junsu continued on, reaching the main landing before realizing his friend wasn't with him. A turn of Junsu's head and a quick come hither motion moved Yoochun from his spot, the tenor waiting patiently as the other man joined him.

Once through the door, they stood in a dark foyer, black curtains surrounding banks of bus station lockers, a scantily dressed Filipina passing each of the young men a plastic box. Yoochun stared at the clear container until Junsu hissed at him, telling him to empty his pockets of any electronic devices. Su placed his cell phone, house keys and music player into the box, holding the lid as Yoochun dug for his phone and keys, the small metal square lost in the folds of his jacket.

The woman took the box and locked it in a nearby locker, handing a key dangling from a ball chain to Junsu. Sliding the chain over his neck, he walked forward, allowing the woman to run over his body with a hand scanner. Yoochun glanced curiously at his friend as the woman approached, Junsu holding his arms up in demonstration for the other man. The device beeped as it crossed over his belt buckle, the woman expertly running her fingers along the inside of the metal tab, brushing on the inside with a swift dip of her thumb. Smiling with satisfaction, she parted the curtains and opened the second door, motioning the young men in with a wave of her hand.

Music, loud and industrial, poured from hidden speakers set into the high ceiling. Strings of lights provided most of the illumination to booths and tables surrounding the enormous dance floor, several low stages built at varying heights and groaning under the weight of gyrating bodies barely visible through the dim. A few larger spots diffused the darkness, cerulean hues flashing white as the beat changed, a thick rumbling eroticism poured hot through sensual music.

Junsu appeared to be looking for someone in particular, dragging Yoochun behind him as he walked through the outer circuit of the converted warehouse. Hands clung to the baritone's waist, explorations of his body boldly cupping intimate lengths of his flesh as he was led past groups of people. Micky lost his bearings as he turned, trying to peer into the smiling faces, the lights flowing over beauty and plain alike. After a long journey through the press of hot bodies, Junsu arrived at a large booth, his wide grin white and welcoming the sight of the young man sipping at a shot of whiskey.

"Hey, Junnie-ah!" Hyukjae stood, sliding free of the young woman wrapped around his body. She pouted heavily, the young man's attentions only on the arrival of his friend. Claspings Junsu into a fierce hug, Hyukjae paid no mind to the girl as she leaned back with a huff. "Ah, you brought Yoochun into the den!"

"Did you come alone?" Junsu smiled at the woman and bowed his head, his voice lost under the pulsating music. She smiled back at his courteous gesture, bestowing another on Yoochun as he mimicked his friend's welcome towards her.

"Heechul is here somewhere." The singer waved out to the dance floor, the other member of his group nowhere in sight. "I'm glad you got my text message. Come, sit down."

"Cheryl, can you get us something to drink?" Hyukjae passed the girl a card, whispering into her ear. "I just need a few minutes. I promise, we'll dance after I catch up with my friends."

"Is this the first time you've brought Heechul?" Junsu asked, sliding into the booth and leaving room for Yoochun to sit next to him. The music was muted slightly by the domed overhang jutting above the booth, the sound waves bouncing off of the molded plastic.

"No, we've been before. He's just been wanting to come for a while." The singer leaned over and clasped Yoochun on his arm. "It's good to see you, hyung or should I call you dongsaeng? I never keep up with anyone's birthdays."

"Yoochun...or Micky is fine." The baritone caught sight of two women slithering about each other, arms raised above their heads, serpentine movements involving only themselves, their eyes not moving from each other's faces. "What is this place?"

"It's Sin." Junsu replied with a cocky grin. "One of the few places in Seoul where no one will care what you do and with whom. It's why we had to leave our cell phones. No electronic devices inside. No cameras or anything that will record what goes on behind that door. In here, no one sees anything and you can be as free as you like. It's nice to come to when you're feeling... pressed in."

Lavender Bunny

"Or if you just want to have a good time without having to be... someone the public sees." Hyukjae interjected. "People here come to watch or just to dance... sometimes... do other things but that's... usually not out in the open. Mostly I come here to get away from being...under display. Junsu used to come here a lot when we trained but now that he's a member of the Chosen, we've not seen him."

"Aish!" Junsu ducked his head, slapping his friend on the shoulder. "You're just jealous. I wanted Yoochun to see... what happens when there are no eyes on people. It's not a bad thing, Chunnie-ah. I promise you that."

Cheryl came back with their drinks, her hips swaying as she walked. Smiling at Yoochun's gaped amazement, she reached for his hand, pulling him from his place besides Junsu. Wiggling her fingers at Hyukjae, she took the baritone with her onto the dance floor, Yoochun numbly following the beautiful woman, speechless at the displays of open affection surrounding him.

"I'm surprised you brought him here of all places, Susu-ah." Hyukjae said, taking a sip of his drink and hissing at the harsh burn along his throat. "Yoochun for all of his teasing is fairly... virginal in his worldliness. Aren't you afraid that someone here will see him and snatch him from under your nose?"

"No." Junsu pursed his lips in denial. One of the drinks was a soda, probably provided as a chaser for the whiskey. Sipping at the cola, he plucked an ice cube from the liquid, sucking around its edges. "Yoochun is... I mean I want him but... he's not ready for..."

"He might never be ready." His friend said watching Cheryl pull Yoochun onto one of the platforms, the woman falling into the thumping bass of the music. Yoochun easily responded, his lanky body gyrating in a graceful masculine counterpoint to her dainty slithers. "I think your Chunnie likes women. You don't have a chance."

"It was nice of you to get me a drink." Heechul appeared out of the shadows, curving his body into the booth, hooking his legs over Hyukjae's thighs. Reaching for one of the whiskeys, the singer dug a few ice cubes from another soda, sliding them into the potent liquor. "Why hello, Junsu. So nice of you to come tonight. Were we expecting you or did you just decide to show up?"

"I'm a member here." Junsu reminded the other. "I thought it would be someplace Yoochun might have fun. We've just come back from tour and got a little down time."

"Ah, decided to get him away from your Jaejoong for an evening so the boy can breathe?" Heechul smiled over the rim of his glass. "Or did you just want him away from Jaejoong? It must be hard to compete for anything with him around."

"I'm not the one who loses to Kim Jaejoong, Heechul." Junsu replied, drawing soda through a straw, kicking at Hyukjae's ankle as his friend smirked at him. "Jaejoong and I aren't in competition for anything...or anyone."

Hyukjae kept his mouth closed, choosing instead to watch Yoochun dancing with the woman he'd met at the bar. The baritone's easy face held a handsomeness Hyukjae could appreciate, even though he felt no attraction to the American-reared young man. Winding around the woman's body, Yoochun turned, sliding into a back step, including another woman into the dance, his wide grin flirtatious and at ease. A bouncing hip hop classic changed over into the rotation, the rhythm a bumping grind that begged for a rolling gait. Dipping his shoulders into a deep circle, Yoochun let the music lead his body, the small of his back limbering with each twist of his hips. Heechul also watched silently, downing his drink before whispering into Hyukjae's ear, losing himself into the thick of the crowd in search of a partner.

"I don't think he likes you." Hyukjae said, leaning over to shout in Junsu's ear. The tenor's face split into a wicked grin, his eyes never leaving the swell of Yoochun's rear cupped by his jeans. "In fact, I don't think he likes any of you but Yunho."

"I don't think any of us care." Junsu replied, tilting his head over to be heard but never losing sight of Yoochun. Changing the subject away from the volatile Suju member. "I'm glad he's having fun. He's been a bit down lately. I think he's missing his family."

The sheer joy of dancing took Yoochun's body to the edge of its talents, honed muscles and practiced moves an erotically charged vision to watch. By nature a caring soul, he engaged the women around him, circling and teasing, never overshadowing or pushing. Generous with his smiles and words, they clustered, shimmying closer to the lean-bodied young man. Freed from the constant pressure of having to be 'on' for a camera, Yoochun's natural amicability surfaced, the sly playful side that Junsu adored seeing.

Sweat soaked the fabric of his shirt, clinging to the flat of Yoochun's belly. The beat picked up, and he followed, lost in the sublime pleasure of letting his body go, falling into the music. Yoochun found the staccato undertones with the curve of his hips, fluid and strongly masculine. He pulled along to the pulse of the song, tilting his head back and closing his eyes, arms held out and dropping into a primal sway.

A woman approached, stalking the baritone, her hands skimming the breadth of his shoulders with red lacquered fingernails. Matching the dip of Yoochun's hips, she slid into his body, wending about the trimness of his waist and shimmying over his chest, her short dark hair brushing Yoochun's throat as she danced. Vibrant and sensual, she stood out among the others, sending other females into the shadows as she claimed Micky for her own.

Lavender Bunny

Hyukjae smiled at the annoyance on his friend's face, a mild quirk of narrowed eyes and pursed lips. His own date returned to the table, Hyukjae standing briefly as she slid in, accepting the singer's offer of a still cold soda. Crossing her legs, she leaned into the SuJu member, whispering a suggestion that had him grinning widely. Junsu ignored the exchange, either out of politeness or oblivion, concentrating only on the woman and Micky gyrating on the platform.

When the woman's hands roamed over Yoochun's chest, Junsu leaned partially out of the booth, his head cocked carefully in a display of weak ire. As her fingers found the young man's waistband, sliding down over the sparse trail of soft hair Junsu knew lay under the top button of Yoochun's jeans, Junsu's shoulders tightened and his body became stiff. The singer was out of the booth when the woman's boldness brought her hips roiling up into Yoochun's crotch, her legs sliding between the singer's thighs, hands tangled in Micky's fingers and hair. Yoochun leaned into the woman, his face a few inches away from stealing a kiss, a teasing flirt of his mouth over her lips.

Hyukjae tossed back the last shot of whiskey remaining on the table as Junsu stalked to the dance floor, the SuJu member kissing Cheryl on the neck. Trailing his tongue up to the side of her cheek, he asked. "Do you want to go dance?"

"We'll lose our table." She smiled, fingers hooked into the collar of his shirt.

Holding his hand out to her, Hyukjae helped her exit the booth, conscious of her short skirt. Kissing the end of the wet trail he'd left, he said. "Honey, I don't think anyone's coming back to this table."

Junsu stood at the edge of the dance floor, unsure of how he ended up on the walkway to the platform where Yoochun danced. He was also unsure of why the nibbles of rage in his belly urged him to peel the beautiful woman from Yoochun's body, flinging her free of his friend's lean hips. The one thing that Junsu was certain of was that he needed Yoochun to be seeing only him at the moment, a situation easily remedied. Stepping into the music, the tenor approached his friend, Micky's back turned towards him.

They'd danced before, every day in the sweaty confines of a studio or on stage, working in conjunction with each other's bodies. Junsu knew Yoochun's form nearly as well as he knew his own but nothing prepared him for the electrical shock that reverberated through his body and into his gut when he placed his hand on the small of Micky's back, his fingers sliding down over the baritone's right rear before resting on Yoochun's hip. Micky turned, expecting another woman, his eyes widening at the sight of the tenor's pretty face. Within a moment, the darkness hung around them, fading the rest of the world into nothing.

In the silence of their thoughts, the men danced. Not the carefully placed steps choreographed from the minds of a hard professional nor the offbeat

steps of mocking each other's movements, something they often did when needing to relax. They instead fell into a daring rhythm, driven by the hounding beat of a music without words, heard in the back of their minds and fueling the intense need to touch one another's bodies.

Yoochun's left hand rose, skimming just above the surface of Junsu's face, his thumb brushing on the other man's mouth. He teased at the ridge of Junsu's cheek, letting his touch firm until it pressed against the other's lips, the tip of his thumb sliding into the moistness he knew lay beyond. Junsu danced in closer, rubbing his face on Micky's palm, his hands resting on the baritone's hips, mimicking the sliding movement he'd seen the woman do earlier.

The press of Yoochun's sex on Junsu's thigh aroused the tenor, his stomach clenching and his hips moving in closer, rolling just for a second against the shaft cupped in denim. Micky allowed himself a small moan, unable to keep the desire from escaping his throat. So close in to the other, Junsu heard the sexy sigh, turning to meet Yoochun's eyes and letting his hands drop to the firm trimness of Micky's butt. The baritone curved his body in to match Junsu's rhythm, finally pushing the ball of his thumb past the breach of Junsu's moist mouth.

Unprepared for the entrance, Junsu nearly pushed Yoochun back out, his tongue involuntarily pressing the digit up against the ridge of his teeth. Within a second of realizing what he'd nearly done, Micky nearly pulling his thumb free from the response, Junsu bit down lightly, holding Yoochun there.

He tasted sex in Yoochun's flesh, the complicated personality of the baritone's mind and the openness of his overly emotional heart. Suckling, Junsu let his tongue roam over the small ridges on the ball of Micky's thumb, feeling the striations numb his taste buds, the tingle of Yoochun's short nail digging into the tip and making Junsu want more. Wanting more, Junsu pressed on, swallowing until he felt the bend of Yoochun's hand press on the tilt of his chin, a dark promise of wantonness cloaked in the velvet mewlings Junsu made against the other's skin.

A shoulder bumped hard into Micky, breaking the contact between he and Junsu, sending the other nearly spinning off the platform. Grabbing at the tenor, Yoochun spanned his hands over the other's waist, protecting him from harm as dancers flowed around them, not seeing nor caring beyond the desirous pull of their own partners.

Grabbing Micky's hand, Junsu dragged the baritone from the dance floor, finding a dark corner and pushing the other into the shadows. Leaning in, Junsu cupped his hands around Micky's face, needing a taste of the other's mouth, desperate to see if the sweetness of his hands was matched by the sugared kisses he'd stolen in the past.

Micky responded, sipping delicately at the part of Junsu's mouth, laving at the dipping butterfly of the other's upper lip, his palm cupping Junsu's chin.

Lavender Bunny

Gravel-raked want rumbled a needy growl from Yoochun's throat, his head bowed to take a kiss from the other's offered mouth. He'd kissed before, often evoking pleasure to a woman's core just by his mouth roaming over her tender skin. Yoochun was more than cognizant of where to touch and how to just allow the thrum of desire to skip over his lover's hot flesh, stroking out each tenderness until she hovered at the edge of passion, easily taken over the edge with just another whisper of his fingers or lips.

Junsu was no different in that. Micky was more than pleased to find that the tenor responded to the touch of his mouth and the gentle probing of his tongue. Tilting Junsu's chin up, Micky claimed the other's lips, sucking at the moist flesh, ripening each mons with a pluck of his teeth and then following in with another movement across Junsu's mouth, a rolling sensation building on each lave. His hands explored unfamiliar territory, the velvet hardness of Junsu's stomach became a landscape for his fingers to stroke, the tenor's muscles jumping when Micky found the tenderness of his ribs, following the lines up to lightly skim over the pout of a nipple hidden under Junsu's shirt. The wetness of his thumb hardened Junsu's flesh into a point, a pressing rub circling around the tenor's nipple until Micky heard a pleading moan trapped between their lips.

"I want you." Junsu gasped finally, unable to take any more of the gentle teasing of Yoochun's hands and mouth.

"You confuse me, Susu-ah." Micky admitted, breathing in the scent of the other man, drawing the spicy heat into his mouth. "I've never wanted to do this with another man and now... I can't think of anything else."

"Then why are we still here?" Junsu teased at Micky's mouth with his teeth, a light burring of ridges on the swollen ripeness he found in his journey over Yoochun's face. "Let's find someplace warm and dark that we can... have fun in."

"Because, Junnie-ah..." Yoochun reluctantly pulled free of the singer, cupping his friend's face with one hand and pressing the other back until the air ran cold between them. "I love you too much to just fuck you. I'd want something that lasts if I started something with someone I love as much as I love you. And since you're not looking for a chance at forever, it's doomed before we even step away from this place."

"Because I know, that once I go down into that sweetness your body promises, I don't know if I'd be able to let it go. Even if I know nothing about loving another man, I know that." Yoochun whispered, his smile warm. The shine of tears hovered in his eyes, a spill of emotions threatening to reach the heated flesh of his cheeks and mouth. "Far better we just let this lie than let it break our hearts. Or at least my heart. It's not that I don't want to....try...because I do. I just can't. I think it would hurt too much to let you go...especially when I'd never really had that part of you to begin with."

Six

Junsu winced at Yunho's fingers probing the soft muscles of his side, the ache in his hip flaring with a searing fire. Practice had gone well, relatively well until Junsu stepped right instead of left, slamming full force into Yoochun's immovable chest. He'd limped away, after rubbing at his shoulder, Micky's plaintive query after his health seeming to be just another dig in a long line of double-layered innuendos.

Yoochun shot Jaejoong a confused look, his shoulders lifting in a shrug. The only one seemingly unaffected by the collision was Changmin, the youngest continuing his part of the routine as if nothing happened, stopping only when he realized Yunho wasn't in front of him anymore, the empty space startling considering their leader usually was the first of their number to master the choreography.

The ride back in the van was uncomfortable for Junsu, Micky's careful support of an arm around his waist nearly too much contact for the tenor to bear. In the two weeks since their venture into Sin, Yoochun's presence rubbed Junsu raw, exposing even the tiniest of nerves to the surface where the baritone unknowingly stroked and played with the tenor's sexual awareness.

Everything Yoochun did became suspect, Junsu cursing the other out of one side of his mouth and then praying the small intimacies would never end. He'd confronted Micky once when the baritone slid over to make room for Junsu on the bed, his long legs a warm cocoon for Junsu's chilled thighs. Yoochun pointed out, infuriatingly so, that he'd always gave Junsu comfort and body heat, something he often did with Jaejoong.

"How is it so different, Junnie-ah?" Micky asked, the low, satin-slick rumble of the other's voice a punch to Junsu's trembling groin.

It was different, Junsu thought. It was different because Micky didn't stroke at his best friend's back and behind the breadth of his thighs or when he did, the singer's hands didn't linger just at the dip of Jae's rear, finding the subtly warmer spot that drove another man crazy. No, Junsu was sure that Yoochun was intending to drive him insane or at least make him doubt every thing that came out of Micky's mouth.

That mouth... that mouth of Yoochun had become an obsession. It invoked the most erotic of thoughts in the most inopportune times. Mostly it was when Micky was chewing on his lower lip, serious...deep in thought as he worked out a tune on the piano. Then when he noticed Junsu standing in the doorway, a smile laced with goofy affection. Everything changed on Yoochun's face with that smile. And it dug deep into the back of Junsu's brain, ripping out every thought he might have had in his skull.

Charismatic. Amiable. Playful. A few of the words used to describe Yoochun's face but none hit that quality of flirty affection that resonated up from his soul into his deep brown eyes. It held a starry sky of emotions,

Lavender Bunny

pinpricks of glittering will o' wisps drawing Junsu in. That mouth's wide grin ... the erotic slide of sensuality into a teasing jester filled with mirth... caught Junsu's breath in his throat, its blinding pure joy lifting even the darkest of shadows curtaining a heavy heart.

That mouth... lingered near his own when Yoochun supported his weight, the muscles in his side seizing up as Junsu walked. There was a small beauty spot on the cusp of Yoochun's cheek, a small dark dot begging to be kissed, to be laved until the skin around it was pink with affection, drawing a small nip of flesh between needy teeth until a sliver of a bruise ran under the tiny spot. That was what Junsu found himself staring at as he stumbled from the van, over the short steps to the lobby of their apartment building and what he missed deeply in the shuddering tingle of his stomach when Yoochun deposited him on the couch.

"Stop wiggling around, Susu-ah." Yunho dug his fingers into the other's thigh, spreading a relatively thin layer of Tiger Balm into the strained muscle. "I can't help you get out the knot if you're moving around."

"It hurts, hyung." Junsu complained, biting down on the edge of a pillow. Looking around, he tried to twist his body, wondering if any of the others were nearby. "Where's the rest?"

"Changmin is studying...or just sleeping. Jaejoong and Yoochun are probably in our bedroom. Our Jaejoong got a new CD... well I got a new CD for him." Yunho pressed down on the tangled bundle of flesh on Junsu's hip. "And you're still moving. Do you want help or should I call the trainer to come do this?"

"No." Junsu's sullen reply made Yunho smile. The trainer in question was a well-known sadist for massaging out stubborn knots, seeming thrilled every time he could make one of the boys howl in pain. Resting his chin on his clenched fist, the tenor closed his eyes tight, wishing for the agony to leave his hip.

Footsteps came down the hall, long strides followed by Jaejoong's querulous reply to something Junsu didn't quite catch. Frowning, he tried to twist around to see what the others were doing, earning a light slap across the back of his head from the leader.

"Ah, you look nice, Yoochun." Yunho said, keeping a steady pressure rolling over Junsu's bared hip.

Jaejoong climbed over the arm of the couch, leaning into to give his lover a short kiss before heading into the kitchen, padding gracefully to the cabinets to search for something to snack on. Junsu turned his head, a crease forming between his eyebrows. Grumbling, the tenor frowned, taking in the long lean form of his roommate.

Black was definitely a colour made for Yoochun's body, ebony denim snugged up against his rear and loose down over his legs, pooling just over

the tops of leather boots. Thin black pinstripes ran through dove grey of his button up shirt, the collar pulled up over a square cut black suede jacket Junsu was certain belonged to Jaejoong. The soft leather clung to Yoochun's shoulders, falling straight down to his waist, past the tuck of his shirt and ending at the singer's trim hips.

Junsu's frown grew more intense, seeing Jaejoong's naked feet and torn cotton pants, the drawstring looped into a bow dangling over the singer's crotch. One of Yunho's gym t-shirts, worn and battered from years of use, hung loose on Jae's torso, the hem ripped loose on one side.

"Are you playing dress up, Chunnie-ah?" Junsu tried to keep his voice light, a teasing note in his question. His stomach grumbled, low and squishy when the other shook his head, fixing the loop on his belt.

"No." Yoochun replied, grabbing at his keys then sliding his cell phone into his inner breast pocket. "I'm going on a... out with a friend."

"Anyone we know?" Yunho said right before he nearly found himself tossed to the floor as Junsu turned over, the tenor's feet hitting the floor with a solid thump. "Junsu!"

"Sorry, hyung." Junsu replied, his tone scant in apology. "I..."

The bell rang for the front door, Jaejoong waving Yoochun off as he walked around the short wall to answer the summons. A too familiar voice echoed Jae's warm greeting, Junsu's eyebrows lifting as his friend Hyukjae came around the corner, the other singer bowing a welcome to Yunho and raising a hand in greeting to his best friend.

"Junnie-ah!" Hyukjae nodded. "Good to see you. Yunho... Jaejoong. Nice to see you too."

"Did we make plans, Hyuki-ah?" Junsu asked, looking down at his clothes. Hyukjae was dressed for a night out, sleek in dark chocolate pants and a brown jacket, a splash of red dotting his white shirt. "I thought I..."

"Ah, no... Susu-ah," The SuJu singer reacted to Junsu's confusion with a wide grin. Running a hand through his light brown hair, he motioned to Yoochun with the other. "I'm here for Micky-ah."

"I'll see you all later." Yoochun touched Jae's shoulder as he left, the contact fleeting but comforting. "I have my house keys. I will try not to wake you if I come in late."

* * *

"So, is it a date Yoochun is on with Hyukjae?" Yunho asked, squeezing a length of paste onto his toothbrush. He watched Jaejoong behind him, the other man's reflection cast in the mirror running above the double sink. Jae paused for a second, looking up from his drawstring ties, the bow knotted into a tight puzzle. "Ah, come here, Boo."

Lavender Bunny

Jaejoong padded over, lifting the edge of his shirt over his head and pulling it free from his torso. His warm stomach shivered when Yunho's colder fingers brushed near his navel, his muscles flinching at the chilled touch. Head bowed, Yunho slowly worked the ties loose, tugging patiently at the tangle.

"You didn't answer me, baby." Yunho looked up at his lover through hooded eyes, watching a blush pink over the other's face. "It is, isn't it? A date?"

"Yes." Jaejoong nodded, wanting to pull free from Yunho's intense scrutiny but the other had his fingers clenched into the waistband of his pants, the knotted drawstrings forgotten. "Yunnie-ah, either you help me or let me get that loose. I want to take a shower."

"How does Junsu feel about this?" Yunho asked, freeing his lover's waistband from its tangle. Jaejoong placed a gentle kiss over his lover's mouth, a brief thanks before drawing away to pull the pants off.

"Junsu and Yoochun are... not for each other." Jae turned on the water, holding his hand out briefly in the hopes of hot water. "Junsu just wants... someone warm in his bed and a friend outside of it. Yoochun... he needs something else. Maybe not with Hyukjae or one of the women he's seeing but something. Hyukjae asked him out because... well, he thinks Yoochun is cute. Chunnie-ah said yes because... he's curious."

"And if Hyukjae just wants someone warm in his bed, how does Micky feel about that?" Yunho leaned against the bathroom counter, his toothbrush momentarily forgotten.

"Yoochun doesn't love Lee Hyukjae.. not like he loves Junsu." Jae shrugged, stepping naked into the shower and looking over his shoulder. "If they end up in bed, then it won't matter if they drift apart, yes? Are you coming in or are you going to brush your teeth?"

"I'm going to brush my teeth." Yunho laughed at his lover's pout. "I already took a shower and I think Changmin still needs one. If I get in there with you, he complain about the lack of hot water. I'll wait for you in our bedroom."

Yunho slipped out of the bathroom, wiping his mouth with the end of his towel. Tossing Jaejoong's discarded clothes over his shoulder, he headed to their bedroom, depositing the laundry into the wicker hamper they shared. A trip to the kitchen provided hot water for a pot of tea, the fragrant chai as spiced as his lover's kiss. Scooping enough sugar for himself into a small bowl, Yunho carried a tray back, the teapot's porcelain lid rattling slightly as he walked.

He tried to digest what Jaejoong off-handedly threw out before he stepped under the water stream, the singer's lean torso nearly lost beneath a misty cloud. Yoochun was more than adult enough to take care of himself, Yunho reasoned, but Lee Hyukjae's motivations were suspect. He'd long known the SuJu singer was... experimental in his sexual tastes, something Heechul pointed out a few years ago. Yunho cast it off as information he didn't need

but now with his relationship with Jaejoong hidden behind closed doors, he was becoming more and more aware of the delicate balance many of their peers had to maintain in order to live out their lives.

Their lifestyle, cloistered tight around one another led to intimacies whispered about openly, some pairings a casual flirtation to garner attention. His own coupling with Jaejoong had caught attention of its own, their manager tactfully maneuvering things to separate them when they were in situations where their privacy could be compromised. They left he and Jaejoong alone, not speaking aloud but all parties tacitly agreed that until the time came...if ever that time came... the depth of their relationship would remain hidden.

With Jaejoong still in the shower, Yunho covered the steaming pot with a hand towel, trapping the warmth before it escaped. He was peeling the thin skin from a honey tangerine when Jaejoong's cell phone rang, a melodic echo of one of their songs. Grinning, Yunho ignored it, sucking the juice from his fingers. The cell ceased its summons then another chirrup began, as incessant as a gnat on a hot summer's day.

"Damn, that might be Yoochun." Yunho remembered the baritone was out, quickly grabbing at the cell and flipping it over.

Any warmth from Jaejoong's hot kisses scattered beneath the frigid blooms erupting in Yunho's stomach. He stared down at the number flicking on the outside LED screen, briefly wondering why the phone didn't catch fire as he held it. Anger warred with...something darker roiling in his soul, a bitterness Yunho thought he'd never be able to break from his heart. Flipping the phone open, he thumbed over the answer button, his voice low and deep in his throat.

Answering the call, Yunho wasn't surprised to hear the woman at the other end, familiar and once beloved to his ears. She spoke Jaejoong's voice, a haughty commanding query before he replied, her breath a harsh rattle in her throat when she heard him speak.

"Hello, mother."

* * *

Changmin exited the bathroom in Junsu's room, standing on the threshold of the door with a determined look on his face. Wearing a pair of loose sweats, he nonchalantly toweled the water from his hair, walking over to where Junsu lay on bed, a heating pad shoved partially down his shorts.

The youngest member wondered at where he could sit before finally deciding on Yoochun's bed, the space between the two frames barely enough room to walk through. Junsu looked up at the sound of the box spring giving under the youth's weight, pulling the ear buds from his music player free.

A promise of masculine beauty lay under the young man's face, the potential for strength in the slender body. Junsu smiled up at the youngest,

Lavender Bunny

Changmin's face blushing with the attention. Junsu glanced at the boy, a frank perusal of his tanned chest and tall frame. Nodding, Junsu turned over, wincing at the shooting pain of his hip reminding him that it still bore a grudge.

"Thank you for letting me use your shower." Changmin said, wrapping the towel around his neck. "I saw Yunho follow Jaejoong in and I thought I would never be able to get one."

"I don't envy you for that. I know they try to be considerate but sometimes, I think time just flies out of their heads." Junsu stretched his foot forward, feeling the burn of his muscles giving beneath the motion. "Those hours in the gym are doing good things for you. Pretty soon you'll match Jaejoong."

"Is Yoochun out for the night?" Changmin looked at the clock on the wall, wondering how much time he'd have with Junsu without the other man coming in.

"I don't know." Junsu glanced at his silent cell phone on the night stand. He'd picked it up several times, wondering if he should call Yoochun to see how the night was going then alternating between calling Hyukjae to rant. "I hope not. He had just a long of a day as the rest of us. If Chunnie-ah doesn't get any sleep, then he'll be no good to us tomorrow."

"Hyung..." Changmin grinned at Junsu's laugh. "Sorry, it's habit, sometimes... Junsu-ah, do you need help with your hip? I used to massage my mother's shoulders when they cramped. I can help, maybe?"

"I'll take any help." Junsu breathed a sigh of relief. "It's almost loose but then I try moving just a little bit and it grabs again. Yunho helped a little bit but I think he was more focused on Jaejoong eating cherries than in helping my hip."

"That's a hard thing to watch." Changmin agreed, remembering his own choking fit when he swallowed a pit trying to emulate Jaejoong's seemingly effortless peeling of the cherry meat from its stone. Yunho was a lost cause to it, the singer's mouth burnished red and moist set something off in the leader and Jaejoong often found himself pulled into his lover's lap. "I think sometimes he does that on purpose."

"Oh no..." Junsu moved over to give Changmin room to sit next to him, sliding the heating pad to the side. Laying back down on his stomach, Junsu sighed as he pulled a pillow under his chin. "He really has no idea of how he looks. Yoochun assures me that our Jaejoong is as insecure as rain is wet. I'm not sure how much I believe but...aaaahhhh, that's good."

Changmin's fingers found the tenderness along Junsu's hip bone, following the muscle line to the rise around his rear. He stroked upwards, running his hands up over the other man's waist, wondering if his face was as red as it felt. Junsu's low moan went straight to Min's gut, erotic and calling.

"Aish." Junsu jumped, nearly knocking Changmin off the bed. "Sorry, that... "

"I didn't mean to hurt you." Min shifted, stretching his hands out.

"No.. you didn't." Junsu reassured him. "It just felt like everything in my body came alive when your fingers worked that spot. It was a surprise."

"Here, roll over onto your back. It might make it easier for me to reach." Changmin rubbed his hands together, creating a friction of heat then tugged Junsu's waistband back down over the jut of his hip bone.

With the rise of Junsu's t-shirt, the youngest breathed in at the sight of his crush's golden skin under his finger tips. Circling the spot just below Junsu's abdomen, Min traced the line of muscle cutting down into Junsu's groin, following it back up with a tingling sensation in his chest before he went too far for his heart to handle. Smooth, Junsu was satin under Min's hands, the barest of down rippling on the youngest's palm where the skin darkened slightly to dip under his shorts.

"Min..." Junsu's body reacted, impulsively... erotically... to the young man's exploring touch. Wrapping his fingers around Changmin's wrist, the tenor sat up on one elbow, staring into the pretty boy's awed face. Whispering, Junsu asked, his voice soft and inquisitive. "What are you doing?"

"What I've wanted to do for a while now." Changmin felt the tightness in his chest release, unfurling with a taint of fear and a boldness he wouldn't have given himself credit for. "Nearly as long as I've wanted to do this."

Cinnamon flavoured Junsu's mouth, a remnant of the spicy gel the singer used to brush his teeth. Something else lay under it, a sugar sweetness rolled in a molasses darkness that promised to quench the curdling need in Changmin's belly. He tasted and then dipped his tongue in, savouring the kiss until he nearly ran breathless against Junsu's mouth, begging for the other to respond... to give some hint of a reaction.

Junsu's hand rose, wrapping into the younger man's hair. Holding Changmin close, Junsu explored, softly at first, a gentle inquiry of his mouth on Min's then more insistent, pulling out a shuddering cry from the young man as he deepened his caress. Cupping Changmin's face, Junsu pulled back, leaving just the barest brush of his lips against the youth's, swelling passion filling Min's cheeks with a rosy glow.

"Min... no." Junsu shook his head, pulling back slightly under the young man's weight. "You're... too young. Still young."

"Are you telling me that you felt nothing?" Changmin's hand roamed, feeling the heft of Junsu's passion pressing against the ridge of his fingers. "Are you telling me that I didn't do this to you, Junnie-ah?"

"Minnie-ah. No, you did. And... it... you are... adorable. Special and adorable. Because right now, saying no is probably one of the harder things I've ever had to do in my life." Junsu kissed the end of the youth's nose, then lifted his chin to leave a buss on Changmin's forehead.

Lavender Bunny

"Thank you. That was nice. I needed nice right now but this... I can't jeopardize what we have in the group and I don't want any... entanglements." Junsu whispered, thinking of the forever Yoochun needed for his soul. "Friends... brothers, I love you for that but the rest of it... I can't give you that. I'm not Yunho or Jaejoong. I can't promise you that forever. Don't look to me for that."

"I want more than nice from you, Junsu. And I want whatever you can give me. I don't need anything else. I don't want forever. I want...now." Min whispered, the burn in his face deepening under Junsu's gaze. "I want to ... see what you can give me... what you can do for me... and mostly what I can do for you."

7

“How long have you known you liked guys?” Hyukjae waited until Yoochun took a sip of his water before asking, the mischievous glint in his eye sparkling to a full nova as the baritone nearly spit across the table.

Choking, Yoochun glared up at the other man, taking a napkin from his lap and wiping at the moisture on his chin. Swallowing another mouthful to clear the roughness in his throat, Yoochun said. “That wasn’t fair.”

“Nothing is fair, Chunnie-ah.” The young man pointed out.

Leaning forward in his chair, one arm thrown over the high wooden back, the Suju member studied the singer sitting across of him. In the candlelight intimacy of the restaurant, Hyukjae had to admit the young man had a certain comeliness about him, the dulcet rumble of his low voice rising with an easy chuckle. In repose, Yoochun’s face held an unorthodox handsomeness. In laughter, it stopped the world with its brilliance.

“Can you speak louder? I don’t think the guy at the front heard you.” Micky leaned forward, keeping his voice low.

“No one cares, Yoochun.” Hyukjae shrugged, a nonchalant dismissal of any eavesdroppers. “Or are you saying that to avoid the question?”

They’d walked to the restaurant, talking about shared experiences or what was expected of them as singers for the entertainment group. Their conversation eventually circled back to Junsu, small tidbits of humorous anecdotes neither knew but could see the energetic tenor doing. The words stilled when Yoochun realized he’d once again brought up his best friend, Hyukjae’s sly grin catching him unawares with its knowing subtleness. The door to the restaurant came upon them too quickly, the threshold a hard single step to cross. Entering, Yoochun kept his head down, wondering what other patrons would think of two young men attending a dinner together.

“Answer me, Chunnie-ah.” Hyukjae teased. “Is it just Junsu or do any of the rest of us have a chance?”

“I...” Yoochun tried to find the words he had in his unspoken thoughts. Unnerved by the other’s piercing stare, he looked away, stumbling through the emotions he had in his soul. “Junsu and I... we’re the best of friends.. closer than brothers...”

“Yoochun, you and I both know that Junsu ...” Hyukjae led the conversation along, pouring himself a glass of water. He watched the slice of lemon swirl

Lavender Bunny

in the false current, battered by ice and the flow along the container's sides. "I could be crude about what he wants from you but that's not really necessary. What made you say no? He's your best friend? That didn't stop me from trying with him. Luckily, I don't have that restriction with you."

"Hyukjae..." Yoochun's bashful drop of his eyes made the other man smile.

"I know..." The singer threw his hands up in mock disgust. "I'm sorry. I didn't ask you out with me to tease you about other men..."

"Si-won's handsome." Micky's grin matched Hyukjae's slyness in a familiar echo of the other man's teasing.

"Ouch." Hyukjae mimicked a blow to his chest, lolling his head back against the chair. "Ah, my ego..."

"Your ego is nearly as big as Junsu's." Yoochun replied, fishing the lemon wedge from his water. He shook off the excess drips, bringing the citrus slice up to his mouth. Sucking on the tart, juicy flesh, Micky drew out the tangle of his thoughts, trying to put into words the labyrinth his heart seemed to lost in. "This is too... open of a place, Hyukjae. I don't think I can..."

"Come on then." Hyukjae motioned for the waiter to bring them their check, the remains of their dinner left abandoned on the table. "I know where we should go."

Yoochun laughed when the other singer brought him to an enormous flat rock situated just at the edge of the river winding through the park near their apartment. He'd spent more than a few hours in that spot, lying bare-chested in the sun, Jaejoong's verbal meanderings keeping him entertained while the clouds overhead put on a puppet show of rabbits and majestic angels.

Removing his shoes, Micky tugged his socks off then removed his jacket, settling down on the familiar surface. Winter broke its last hold on the river a few weeks ago, thin sheets of ice floating downstream to crash against the large boulders jutting from the nearby grassy banks.

"Jaejoong and I come here all the time." Yoochun sighed, resting his weight behind him, his palms spread flat.

"Oh, I know." Hyukjae grinned. "We see you sometimes...both of you... Si-won and I...when we're coming home from the studio. It's a welcome sight. Hard to see you clearly unless we head down that path and crane our necks but it's not out of the way."

"You're a wicked person, Hyuki-ah." Yoochun laughed, peering at where the other man was pointing, wondering if Hyukjae was teasing or if he and the other singer really traversed down the winding path to watch them.

"So I keep being told." Hyukjae sighed. "But so far, no one has convinced me of that."

Yoochun breathed in the air, the scents of the city on the wind. They sat for a few minutes, listening to the water flow, the echoes of traffic just beyond the

rise of trees, headlights hidden from view. The sky bristled with buildings, its horizon cluttered with shadowy forms pierced with lit windows.

"I think it's just Junsu." Yoochun finally whispered, barely audible over the rush of the water below. "I used to think that I... was in love with Jaejoong but I think that was mostly loneliness."

"Yunho would be hard to compete with." Hyukjae said, shrugging when the young man looked up in shock. "It's no surprise that they're together, Micky. They are... two halves of a whole. How many other men feed one another as if they are taking food into their own mouths? We all just look the other way and sometimes, some of us kick Yunho mentally. Although I know for a fact more than a one person would like to give Jaejoong a good swift kick too."

"So Junsu..." Hyukjae brought the conversation back to his friend.

He'd seen the tenor's reaction to Yoochun standing in the living room, a glazed look on his face, mouth half open. The playfulness Junsu cloaked himself in fell away under Yoochun's eyes, the soulful expressive musician touching a tender part of Junsu's personality. Junsu's goofiness was a perfected defense to keep others away, a non-serious casualness that spoke of flirtations and disposable affections. Junsu's walls cracked around the edges when Yoochun turned up, a sincere happiness shining through the focused young man that lay beyond the velvet laughing mask Junsu wore.

"Yes, Junsu." Yoochun's melancholy nod nearly broke Hyukjae's heart, the tragic poet waxing soliloquies to a lost love reflected in the singer's doe eyes. "I don't know why I'm telling you this. You're his best friend."

"Ah, I might be his best friend, Chunnie-ah..." Hyukjae said, patting the other man on the shoulder. "But you're the one that I think makes him insane."

"That's a good thing?" Micky glanced at Hyukjae, incredulous at the other's response. "I don't want insane. That kind of love... it rules your life and you always feel as if you're about to break. I want... something that I know I can come home to. I want something ... someone that always feels like home. Junsu feels that way to me. I see him and it's like, no matter where we are... there is...this something... a cornerstone that defines the edges of my world."

"I can tell you write songs." The young man brushed a strand of sunset-hued hair from his eyes. "But Junsu ... he's not one for relationships. I know that."

"So, it's over before I even begin to see... what's there." Yoochun shrugged. He tried not to cry...he swore he wouldn't shed any tears for Junsu but the trickle began, a warm flood of his silent longing. He let the tears flow, hoping the river would carry his sorrow away so he would never have to feel his grief again. The waters churned, frothing white under the pale moonlight. "God, I can't believe he does this to me."

Lavender Bunny

"You never struck me as someone who was ready to ... settle into something, Chunnie." Hyukjae said, tacitly ignoring the other man's emotional display. "Why now?"

"I've never... even really considered another man as a lover. And now, Junsu... someone I love...god, how can I love someone who isn't... a woman?" Yoochun shook off his sorrow, wiping his face clean. "And then there's something inside of me that whispers; What does it matter? As long as he's there and you're... safe in his heart. Why should it matter?"

"He confuses me. I don't know what to do about how I feel or even why I feel like this." Staring at the moisture pooled in his palms, Micky spoke softly, barely audible, his words caught in the light breeze. "Hyukjae, I love women. I love the way they laugh and smell and giggle. There's nothing I love more than when a girl touches my face or just stroke my arm... and then, there's Junsu...and he does that for me. He does that to me. Do you know how confusing that is?"

"Oh yes..." Hyukjae nodded. "Junsu used to do that to me. Still does that to me but I'm not the one that makes him... smile in his eyes. You do that, Yoochun. I watch him and he just... opens up for you."

"But I can't risk my heart on Junsu's reluctance. I've already lost so many people that I've loved... either from distance or ... leaving me." Yoochun murmured, pulling his knees up and wrapping his arms around his shins. "I've been hurt too much before, Hyukjae. And it would kill me if I needed Junsu and his eyes wandered to someone else. He might open up for me now, but I can't hope that I'll be the only one he sees..."

"I think he loves you, Yoochun." Hyukjae replied, hooking his arm over Yoochun's shoulder, holding the other singer tight against his chest. "I think he's in love with you and that scares him. I need my best friend to stop being scared. So either he has to admit that he's fallen in love with you... or he walks away from you before you get hurt."

"I don't know which of those I would want more." Yoochun shook his head, smiling up through his tears at Hyukjae.

"Well, I can tell you one thing...Si-Won and I wouldn't mind if it were the latter." The young man briefly tasted Yoochun's mouth, licking at the pleasurable, erotic taste he found on the singer's lips. "In fact, it would make either of us extremely happy. It would even make both of us happy at the same time if only you would let us."

* * *

Junsu braced his hands against Min's shoulders, lightly guiding the young man away from his mouth. The taste of the young man lingered, fresh and delightful, a promise of handsome masculinity poised just at the brink of unfolding. He wanted more...his body wanted more at least but Junsu stared at the pretty youth offering another taste of heaven, just right within his reach.

"Minnie-ah, are you...?" Changmin jerked his head up, his eyes wide as Jaejoong walked through the door.

The eldest froze, his chest hitched with a caught breath, taking in the young man splayed over Junsu's prone body. Panic raked through Jaejoong's heart, tearing at the fibre of his sanity. Words spilled from his mouth, unbidden and tinted with darkness. Grabbing at the back of Min's pants, Jaejoong yanked the young man off of Junsu's chest. Nearly throwing Min free of the other, Jae rounded on Junsu, his anger livid across the pretty landscape of his face.

"What the hell are you doing, Junsu?" Jaejoong shouted, his voice carrying through the apartment. Changmin pushed free of Yoochun's bed, grabbing at Jae's arm, the eldest's hand fisted in Junsu's shirt. "Leave off, Min. Get out of here."

"No!" Changmin yanked at Junsu's clothes, freeing the other man from Jae's grip. Junsu backed up, ducking his shoulders to avoid Jaejoong's irate tirade. "Jaejoong...hyung! Stop! He wasn't the one who started this. I did."

"You're too young for this, Min. I tried telling you that. Why don't you hear me?" Jaejoong pressed the tenor's shoulders down onto the bed, his anger fully formed. "And Junsu, why do you have to push and pull everyone apart? First, Yoochun and now Changmin?"

"I didn't do anything, Joongie-ah." The tenor defended himself. "I was..."

Min struck Jaejoong on the shoulder, his fist balled tight with rage, mute and vicious in its attack. The blow glanced off of Jae's body, toppling the young man forward. The youngest hit out again, a fierce wildness in his wing, the singer's temple, sending the elder man tumbling into Junsu's torso. Twisting to absorb the singer's impact, Junsu winced at the jostling to his hip, the twinge working into his lower back.

"You don't get to decide for me how I feel, Jaejoong!" The youngest shouted, standing nearly over the tangle of bodies on Junsu's bed. "You don't decide for me what I want or who I want."

"You're not..." The eldest struggled to stand up, yanking his legs free of Junsu's limbs, Grabbing at the edge of the bed, Jaejoong slid free, gaining purchase on the throw rug beneath his feet. "Minnie-ah, you're not even old enough..."

"What? Old enough to leave home and whore myself out to dirty old men for a few won?" Changmin's words flew, a firestorm uncontrolled. It fed on the hurt and rage he bottled up inside of him, his reason peeled from his mind, a discarded rind he'd hoarded until it molded under the decay of his fury. "I'm older than you when you did that, Jaejoong. Or have you forgotten that? Does taking money for it make it better than my kissing Junsu? Should I ask him to buy me something nice? Or should I ask you how much I should charge first before I kiss him again?"

Lavender Bunny

"Maybe you think that because you're the eldest that you should be like your father?" Min ran hoarse, his eyes raw with unshed tears. "Is that who you are now to me? Because I don't need a father...not one like yours."

"I don't need someone to tell me that I'm worthless or that if I want a kiss from Junsu that I'm wicked." He breathed, rattling and hard with grief. Changmin's temper burst, flooding the soft fertile soil of Jaejoong's insecurities, laying a heavy seed of doubt in the eldest's mind. "I didn't get thrown from my family because unlike you, I am loved for who I am. No matter what I choose, Jaejoong, I know that I'll never be tossed out like trash."

"Changmin, that's enough." Yunho's harsh words cut through Changmin's tirade, the leader stepping into the fray with a decisive cutting voice. Silhouetted against the door frame, the young man's wide shoulders dominated the space, his legs carrying him into the room.

Junsu righted himself, cradling Jaejoong's shoulders, careful not to shove the other man out of the way. The singer's face was tight, his control trembling to cascade out from under his anguish. A jut of his chin and the hardening of his amber-flecked eyes gave Yunho pause, the leader poised to touch his lover, fingers trembling to catch the tears that threatened to fall onto Jae's cold, frozen mask.

"Boo..." He crouched at the edge of the bed, Yunho's hands cupping Jae's face, thumbs stroking at the plump succulence of his lower lip. "He's sorry. He didn't mean that, baby. I'm proud of who you are... and what you struggled to survive. None of us here are strong enough to have lived through that."

"He meant it." A silver drop hit the webbing of Yunho's hand, molten with Jae's pain. Nearly pulling free from his lover's grasp, Jaejoong half-heartedly pushed at Yunho's arms, wanting to curl into a dark corner and cry, his soul rent apart from Changmin's razored words. "He meant every word of it... even down to calling me a whore. And the thing is, he's right... I did let men touch me and smiled when they gave me enough money to get a bowl of rice from the restaurant next door. I'm not proud of that, Yunnies-ah. You shouldn't be either."

"Pride is just one of the many things I have for you." Yunho insisted, his grip on the other's face nearly painful to his heart. He wanted nothing more than to bundle the singer into his arms and bury the world behind thick cement walls, the echoes of his mother's voice a stabbing pin to his eardrums.

"I'll take care of him, Yunnies-ah." Junsu's voice pierced Yunho's intense concern, the leader glancing up at Changmin's horrified face. "Joongie-ah, please... let me .. help..."

Jaejoong folded into Junsu's arms, his anger at the young man sublimated by the hurt closing up his throat. Turning his head, Jae held his sobs in, refusing to give in to the wracking emotion welling up from his belly. Yunho's

fists clenched at his sides, his palms itching with the need to strike out at anyone, wanting to defend the broken little boy hidden inside of the wild, stubborn young man he loved.

The stiffness in Jae's shoulders held a whisper of invisible angel wings arched over his slender frame, a defensive and proud stance that refused to give in to the maelstrom around him. Jae's lean body, taut and rigid, drove home Changmin's words, their echo resonating in his mind. The gravity of his outburst lay hanging around them, a black poison he'd injected straight into Jaejoong's beating heart. Short of taking a dagger to the singer's veins, Changmin knew he couldn't have done more damage to Jae if he tried. He reached for Jaejoong, his motion blocked by Yunho's firm body.

"I'm getting you out of here, Changmin." Yunho grabbed at the youngest's elbow, maneuvering him out from between the bed. "Before I break you as thoroughly as you've just broken Jaejoong's heart."

8

"I don't think you have your head on straight, Hyukjae." Yoochun's hearty laugh boomed over the park, ripe with glee. "I don't even know where to begin with..."

"I was teasing, Chun Chun." The other singer winked, pulling himself to his feet and offering Yoochun a hand up. "Come on, let's find someplace with something hot to drink...or something cold to drink that will numb our faces."

"I should get home..." Yoochun replied, getting up. "But honestly, it's nice being out. Even without Junsu. Sure, let's go find some place we can get a beer or something."

"Maybe you should call him and we can all go out." Hyukjae said, walking beside the lanky singer, his pace a leisure stroll. Yoochun's low chuckle made him smile. "Or not."

"Junsu is who I need to get away from." The baritone replied. "Not because... I just need some.. space. And that sounds so... old but I get so tight around him. Every time he moves against me, it's hard to remember that it won't go any further than he wants...no more...no less. I hate that."

"Come on, I'll take you to a club." The singer waved off Yoochun's suspicious glare. "No, just a regular club. I don't think you'd be ready for two trips to Sin so close together. Of course I've got to say, watching you and Junsu dance... it made my night a hell of a lot nicer. It got Cheryl very... friendly."

"Friendly?" Yoochun grunted, stepping onto the sidewalk, his mind wandering back to the memory of Junsu's body pressed on his. "I like friendly."

Yoochun lay awake at night, sometimes cradling the tenor in his arms, hearing Junsu's breath catch as dreams flitted behind his closed eyes. On the nights Junsu lay in his own bed, Yoochun felt empty, his arms too light and his legs too cold, his shin missing Junsu's ankle hooked over his calf muscle. He wanted friendly. He spent a few hours every day needing Junsu's mouth on him, his memory a pale substitute. Yoochun's hands often served to brush against his sex, hidden behind the wall of water in the shower, wondering if Junsu's mouth would be as hot around him as when he dipped his tongue past the other's sensual lips.

Micky didn't hear the seductive moan that escaped from his mouth, a longing fueled by the hot desire Junsu left in his soul. Hyukjae did, and he pursed his lips, sighing at the lost possibility of having Yoochun nestled between him and Si-Won.

"Maybe you should try it his way?" Hyukjae suggested casually, seeing the tenderness bloom in Yoochun's features. "See if you can love how he wants to be loved. Maybe you just need to get him out of your system?"

"Maybe..." Yoochun said. "I just don't know if I could survive it."

"Did you ever think that maybe he wouldn't be able to survive it?" The SuJu singer replied. "I don't want to watch both of you lose out on something that could be a fantastic experience."

"Even if we lose one another in the process?" Yoochun asked, a cock of his head bringing his high cheekbones into the light streaming from a nearby street lamp.

"I'm not stupid, Yoochun." Hyukjae smiled. "You and Junsu, you're going to be together until you're both dead. It won't matter if you're sharing a bed or not... that's just sex. Junsu is your mate... in your soul, Chunnie. Your body is just some sack of water that needs drinking from but your soul... that's what's going to be screaming for Junsu for the rest of your life."

* * *

Junsu stared down at the young man crumbled between the beds, Jaejoong's knees pressed against Yoochun's bed, his back wedged sideways and dimpling Junsu's old comforter. Stars twinkled outside of the window, a light wind coming through an inch-wide span between the opened panes.

Jaejoong refused to weep, biting the inside of his cheek, hoping the pain would distract him. The gentle touch of fingers at the nape of his neck nearly made him jump, his anger a hard coal set afire by Changmin's words then extinguished as Junsu's chin rested on his shoulder. Leaning his head against Jaejoong's temple, Junsu lay on his stomach, listening to the other breathe, a hitch of anguish snagging at the breath in Jae's lungs.

"I didn't...mean that you were...I don't think you're wicked or evil. I don't Junsu... I just lost my..." Jaejoong reached up, cupping his hand over Junsu's cheek. "I don't know what I mean but I'm sorry, Junsu. Please forgive me."

The ribbon of hurt wove through Jae's voice, tremulous and husky. Junsu sighed heavily, his arm moving to cradle Jaejoong's shoulder, pressing the singer against his chest as Junsu turned sideways. He lightly kissed at the bitter dewdrops frosting Jae's lashes, the spill of tears so close to the brink of Jae's control.

"I really didn't do anything to encourage him, Joongie-ah." The familiar nickname eased the swell of brusqueness between them, Junsu's voice a soothing balm over the scrapes over Jae's heart. "I'll admit that I wasn't... all that happy to push him away. Our Changmin is pretty... but..."

Junsu stopped, unsure of what he was trying to say. Something stopped him. Something inside of him that surfaced with Changmin's mouth touched his.

Lavender Bunny

There had been people in the past who he loved... as a friend... and willingly he fell into their arms. Hyukjae was one of the first but scarcely one the last. Changmin would have been a welcome addition to that list of people he liked and then loved... but the stillness of his heart warred with the hardening of his body's sex.

"He's not in love with you, Junsu." Jaejoong said, his heart poured over broken glass, his pain as jagged as his voice. "I didn't want him to make... a mistake. I didn't want you to be that mistake. It would break us apart and I couldn't risk that. I just couldn't, Junsu."

"I look at Changmin and I see..." Jaejoong allowed himself to be pulled up into the Micky's bed, Junsu lying against him, belly to belly. The tenor's hands stroked the unshed tears free from their prison, Jaejoong's sorrow and pain flowing into the whorls of Junsu's palms.

"I'm not mad at you, Joongie-ah. There's nothing to say you're sorry for." Junsu whispered, the heated air between them hot with Jaejoong's.

"I wish Yoochun were here." Jae's fractured husky voice slammed into Junsu's gut.

"Let me be Chunnie-ah for you." The tenor cupped his friend's face, sliding his hands down Jae's neck and cradling the back of his head. "Talk to me, JaeJae-ah. What do you see when you look at Min?"

The eldest lay silent for a minute, nearly long enough for Junsu to wonder if he would ever see the gentleness behind the fierce persona Jae wrapped tight around his personality. The singer's luminous eyes grew distant, a peeling back of the rigid pride he shielded his heart with and the soul Yoochun held dear emerged.

"When I look at Changmin, I see someone I wish I'd grown up being." Jae's words were heavy with the country dialect he'd been raised in. Head dipping down, he rubbed at his bruised cheek, the vanilla scent of his shampoo sweet in Junsu's senses. "I made mistakes and I regret them... I regret them so much, Junsu."

"What kind of mistakes, Joongie?" The young man pulled Jaejoong closer, afraid he would break apart the fragile bond he'd coaxed out from the feral singer if he lost contact. "You've accomplished so much..."

"No, Junnie-ah." Jaejoong shook his head. "Not really. I'm here because I'm pretty and a fairly decent singer but it's not because I'm a good musician like Yoochun or a focused dancer and singer like the three of you are. I'm just someone plastered in front of you because of how I look."

"That's not true, JaeJae." Junsu refuted. "You struggled to get here but you deserve to be the best. That's something we're all committed to. Changmin looks up to you because of how strong you are. He's always looked to you for guidance. Tonight was... Minnie-ah was just... frustrated and hurt. He really didn't mean what he said."

"What he said was true, Junnie-ah." Jaejoong whispered. "What he said about those old men... he was right. And that's why I didn't want him to make those mistakes... I didn't want him to give in to what his body wanted but his heart didn't. I wanted his first time to be with someone who was in love with him. Not just someone who loved him. I wanted that for him."

"Joongie..." Junsu stumbled over what Jaejoong said, his mind racing. "I thought you and Yunho were... each other's first. You had that.. you still have that."

"Yunho was the first one... I wanted to touch me but he wasn't the first one that..." The young man kept his eyes down, his shame flushing his cheeks. Jaejoong steeled himself, forcing his mind to travel into memories he'd left behind him, intimate peelings of his heart laying raw for the other man to pick through. "Changmin is right. I am no better than a cheap whore."

"When I worked at Trance, a lot of the waiters would... take money for favours. They would disappear for a few minutes with a customer, sometimes in the bathroom or in the back alley. But I never... I wanted more for myself. I wanted someone who would... have everything of me." Jaejoong rubbed at his lower lip, his fingers trembling. A shuddering spasm ran through his torso, a disgust welling black from his gut. "I didn't know... Yunho but I knew that... I hoped that someone like him was out there for me. I'd hoped that if I ever found him, I would be able to give him the only thing that I had...me."

"Yunnie-ah has that, Jaejoong." Junsu reassured the singer, stilling at Jae's shake of his head, the black fringe around the young man's pretty face a shivering curtain.

"I came to Yunho...dirty... with someone else's hands on me. Like Changmin said, something got for a few won because I... didn't say no hard enough or... maybe..." The slender young man wrapped his arms around Junsu's waist, resting his cheek on Yoochun's pillow, breathing deep the scent that was uniquely his best friend and the richness of the young tenor holding him.

"I went on a break and a man...one of the regulars... followed me into the back." Jae remembered the dankness of the room, a foul memory stinking of cheap beer and the oily smear of makeup lingering in the air. "I didn't think anything about it because a lot of the men went to the back to talk to the... women. I thought he was just heading to see one of them."

"But he didn't..." Junsu felt a wash of terror, a piercing metallic taste spreading up from his throat and over his gums. "Oh, Joongie..."

"He just wanted to... put his fingers inside of me." Jaejoong's hiccup roiled, a tragic sound in his chest. "I didn't even see him when he came up behind me. I was wearing someone else's pants, borrowed because mine were dirty and they were too loose. It was so easy for him... to wet his fingers and shove them inside of me. That's all he wanted... to have himself inside of me while he rubbed up against the back of my body, holding me against the wall."

Lavender Bunny

"He didn't even stop when I started crying or when I shouted for someone to help me." Jae whispered. "He just kept moving and shoving harder. And no one came, Junnie, no one ever came to help me."

"It hurt so much...and it seemed like it lasted forever but it couldn't have been more than a few minutes and then, he yanked himself free." Junsu tightened his hold on Jaejoong's slender body, wishing he could somehow take the memory of another from the singer's flesh. "I remember thinking... at least he didn't use his...at least I still had that to give someone I loved. I could feel the wetness from his mouth between my legs and the... seed he'd left on the small of my back. Then... it began to hurt more, spreading until I couldn't stop crying. He just stood there when I turned around... I couldn't even stand up anymore, it hurt so much... but he just zipped up his pants and then threw money at my lap."

"JaeJae..." Junsu felt a sorrow bleeding into his anger. "That isn't..."

"I took the money, Junnie-ah." Jae suddenly looked up, his amber brown eyes enormous in his pale face. "It was more than I made in tips for a whole month. He left the room and I sat there, crying... but I took his money...because... I was hungry. I was so tired of being hungry and cold...and alone."

"I've never felt clean, not ever since that." Jaejoong admitted. "Yunnie... he says that I'm being silly but I know better. I came to him... dirty... with someone else's fingers on me. Every time he touches me, I keep thinking... ah, he will need to go wash that man off of his body... because he shouldn't be... dirtied by me...by what I let happen to me. I feel like that man took a part of my soul that belongs only to Yunho and there's no way I can get that back...there's no way I can give him that...and that hurts so much more than what that man did to me."

"I want Changmin to be able to go to someone he is in love with and have no regrets." Jae whispered. "I don't think you're like that man in the club.. I don't. But I know you're not in love with him and I don't want him to regret or resent giving you something that should have been someone else's."

"I want Minnie-ah to know that the first person who touches him is... worships him. Feels him inside and knows that he's touching Changmin's soul." Jaejoong pressed his hands hard against the small of Junsu's back, his tears dried hard on his face. "I want that for you too, Junsu. What you were doing was wrong... not because of what you were doing...but because neither of you feels that way about each other."

"You aren't...dirty, Jaejoong." Junsu insisted, seeing the brittle soul exposed fully under his touch. "I know Yunho treasures you... and everything you've given him. You could have had a thousand lovers and he wouldn't care. And yes, I would want that for Changmin. I shouldn't be the...first one to touch him. But I wasn't going to. I promise."

"I touched him...and yes, I felt like I wanted more because God, Changmin feels so good and tastes so nice" Junsu grinned at Jaejoong's snuffle. "I'm human, Joongie-ah, and I would be dead if I didn't want Min, especially when he touched me like he did. But it didn't feel right. Kissing Changmin was... like if I kissed you. I didn't want Minnie-ah that way. Not like I...I've wanted other people."

"You need a forever, Junsu." Jaejoong replied, the cold air from the window pulling his skin into a ripple over his spine. "And thank you for forgiving me, Junnie-ah."

"Like I said, nothing to forgive, Jae." Junsu nodded. He'd hoped Changmin survived Yunho's temper, the chilled anger in the leader's face terrifying to face. Junsu suffered under the brunt of that anger, more than once but the raging protectiveness that blossomed around a damaged Jaejoong. "But please, listen to me, there isn't a forever for me. That's not going to happen. I have too much to do in my life. I can't... give someone that part of me."

"You need more than sex in your life. Everyone does." Jaejoong sat up, staring down at the younger man. "You need to know how it feels when you're lying in bed, listening to the rain while your...forever.. is whispering into your hair. You can't hear everything he's saying because you're just falling asleep...his voice is like a song.. a lullaby that your heart knows. Sex can't give you that. Nothing can."

"I don't need a soulmate for that, Joongie-ah." Junsu sat up, resting on his elbows. "I have that with Yoochun. I can have sex with anyone... but forever, I have that with the four of you. I'll always be able to have that with Chunnie-ah."

"Susu-ah, you are stupid." Jaejoong pushed at the other, nearly sending Junsu tumbling to the floor. Wiping at his face to clear the last of his sorrow, the singer shook his head, a bemused wonder transforming his face. "God, you and Yoochun are both so fucking stupid. What the hell is that if not love?"

9

Whore was a label Yunho knew all too well. Jaejoong whispered it in the dark, a word hidden among the razors of his mind. The leader heard it break Jae's spirit, a patchwork rag doll of a soul, limbs attached with wide stitches of yarn spun from a young man's tears. The Jaejoong Yunho knew lived in the darkness, unseeing embroidered eyes ravaged from the dirt of uncaring hands, smears of oil and spit left in the crevices of fabric's weave.

That doll was who remained behind with Junsu, carved free from Jae's belly and dripping with the blood of his hard-earned healing. Changmin... the scalpel that hacked the cloth puppet free of its fleshed cradle ... sat sullen and worried on the edge of his bed.

Yunho pulled a chair close, the rolling casters of its feet squeaking on the wooden floor. Rubbing at his tired face, the leader sighed heavy, his breath hot against the mons of his palms. Resigned, the leader clasped his hands on his legs, pulling it until his knees straddled the youngest's limbs.

Keeping his head down, Yunho wasn't sure where to start or even what to say. He'd always thought he would have these kinds of conversations later in life, with his own children. Now, giving his relationship with Jaejoong, he was thinking that if children were going to be a part of any life he had, they would come from someone else's womb, perhaps a little girl so he could avoid these kinds of arguments. The fumbling discussions he'd had with his own father left him with little ground to maneuver on. Yunho's relationship with his mother was more stable to fall upon but now with their unraveling relationship, the leader wasn't sure if anything she said to guide him was worth speaking, soiled with the petty hatred of the lover he'd chosen.

"I'm sorry, hyung." Changmin's voice reverberated with respect, remorse clouding the low tones of his words. His head bowed deep. The pit of his stomach grew demons, armed with pitchforks used to stab at the tender bits of his guts.

He'd argued with his mother before...hit his sisters...even exchanged heated words with the other members but the bilious sting left in his mouth when he'd faced Jaejoong and threw the other's past into his face.... Changmin didn't think he would ever wash out the rotted stagnant green from his tongue. Fouled and fermented, it bubbled back, just enough taste of herbaceous acid that Changmin believed it would flavour everything he said from this point on.

"Sorry." Yunho finally looked up, dark eyes flat with disbelief. The leader couldn't find the edge of his anger. It circled around, a wall built solid from the pain in Jaejoong's eyes. Yet the man-child he was responsible for held as much pain in his face, both perceived and real. Setting aside the image of his lover, Yunho instead concentrated on the singer that stood in front of the group, fierce and fragile both, a dichotomy of personalities melded into one young man.

"I admit Jaejoong probably overstepped a bit." Yunho conceded softly, a snuffle rising from Changmin's unseen face. "There are...reasons for it. Probably reasons you don't know about and really... I'm not going to share with you."

"Why?" The tilt of the youngest's chin came up, still defiant and caustic. "Because I'm too young?"

"Yeah, because you're too young." Yunho admitted. "Because Jaejoong doesn't have secrets... he has wounds. And they bleed every single night when he falls asleep. Because he would sometimes bite down on his own tongue instead of waking up screaming from his nightmares when we all shared a room. Not because he was ashamed... because he is deeply ashamed... but because he didn't want to wake you."

"That's the silliest thing about this, Minnie-ah..." The leader leaned in, careful not to box the young man in but still, needing to be able to touch Changmin's legs, or brush against the other's hands. "Jaejoong has always thought of you instead of himself when he cries."

"You've not seen him spit out mouthfuls of blood while brushing his teeth because his back molars are sharp and he's got shreds of skin hanging from the inside of his cheek." Yunho cocked his head, watching the young man's still face. "Boo cries less now... and I'm hoping that's because I'm there to hold him when faces come at him from the past... but he still wakes up frightened some nights... or fighting. I'm surprised I don't have a black eye some mornings."

"I'm not going to share with you what haunts Jaejoong because those are his nightmares, not mine. He's only ever wanted you have a chance at being able to love someone without worrying about being considered filth because of it. He loves you that much, Min. Too much, I think because he worries himself sick over you."

The leader paused, trying to get his emotions steadied before continuing. "Our Jaejoong wants more for you than what he was ever allowed to have. Even the heartbreak that you feel should be your own and not an echo of something he had to endure. So tell me, Changmin, what now? What do I do with an apology that isn't even mine?"

"What do I tell him, hyung?" Changmin finally spoke, subdued and with a tint of fierceness that made Yunho smile.

Lavender Bunny

"Truth? Tell him what you would tell yourself." Yunho suggested. "The two of you are a lot alike in some ways. You both are fairly quiet unless you know someone well, although Boo does wander in his thoughts more than you do. He's a dreamer where you're more serious but I think that's because that's where Jaejoong lives... in his head."

"That doesn't make much sense, Yunho." Min said.

"I think Joongie-ah spent a lot of time...dreaming that he was in a better place.. or having a better life." Yunho replied. He often let Jaejoong ramble while they lay in bed, just listening to the other's crooked train of thought, a half-heard conversation with his own soul...usually forgetting that there were other ears listening in. "I think Jae used to use his imagination to give himself... family to come home to or friends that loved him without judgment. Sometimes I wonder if Jae thinks he's gone insane and the life he's living is something his cracked mind constructed because he doesn't want to see what's really there."

"I just needed...to see..." The younger man pulled his feet up, sitting cross-legged on the bed. Pushing at the mop of hair in his face, Changmin struggled to form words from the chaos in his mind. "I'm in love with Junsu, hyung."

"Shit." Yunho choked on the word. "You're too..."

"Young?" Changmin lifted his eyebrows, his temper lifting its head, a dragon with a smoldering breath. "I'm old enough to know how I feel and what I want."

"It's not that wanting, Changmin." Yunho said. "It's the doing and whether or not what you feel is real... real for that person."

"How do you know that what you felt for Jaejoong was real?" Min turned the conversation over. "Was it because you fought it? Maybe I'm Jaejoong in this and Junsu is you...fighting and refusing to admit that he feels attracted to me."

"Trust me, Changmin. From what I could see of Junsu, he was quite...attracted to you." Yunho snorted. "I'm not saying sex isn't nice...because it is. But love? Having sex with someone won't make them love you."

"Even if you're good friends, you'll be nothing more than a substitute for his hand... just warmer and moister...and moving. Usually a man has two hands, Changmin, if one becomes too difficult, he always can find another."

Changmin gasped, his face hot with shock. Yunho nodded at the young man's expression, canting his head as the other pulled air back into his body. "If that surprised you, then you're not even close to ready to talk to Jaejoong about how he used to live."

"How do I apologize to hyung when I don't want him to keep poking into my life?" Changmin protested softly. "I'm sorry for what I said...I am... but sometimes Jaejoong is in the middle of something when I want him on the side. I never wanted to hurt him, hyung, I just wanted some... distance from his love."

"You apologize to the hyung that made sure you drank enough liquids when you were sick or called your mother when you needed her but were too proud to do so yourself. Even the hyung who gives you his jacket to put over yours when it's snowing on a photo shoot...and you take it even when you know he hates being cold." Yunho looked thoughtful. "Or maybe even the hyung who puts aside sweet coconut rice for you when we get it in our lunches and you're not there...because it's your favourite and he can give it to you later."

"If you're going to let Jaejoong love you enough to meddle in your life when it's to your advantage, you also have to let him do it when you hate him for it." The leader leaned back in his chair, looking deep into Changmin's face. "You can't have him only half in your life, dongsaeng. I won't let you hurt him like that. He's had enough shit in his life...he doesn't need yours as well."

* * *

"Did you get a hold of that whore?" Jung's voice startled the woman sitting at the window, her tea left forgotten on the table in front of her. "Is he going to leave our son alone?"

"I didn't hear you come in, husband." Mrs. Jung patted at the powder of her makeup, wondering if the shock of hearing Yunho's voice somehow cracked the polish of her face. "The Kim boy didn't answer the phone. Yunho did."

Jung hissed his exasperation, striding to the sideboard to pour himself a cup of oolong, the tea leaves steeping the water nearly black with a smoky bitterness. Sitting at the table, he stared down into the pile of pictures fanned out over the tablecloth, happy male faces wrapped up in their own world.

He knew the whore's every feature, the slender body and delicate skin. Too pretty to ever be called masculine, Kim Jaejoong invoked a strong disgust in Jung's mind, a sourness that pervaded his love for his son. Each passing day that Yunho spent apart from his family distanced his heir from ever returning home, severed from the bloodline that cradled him in his infancy and would have benefited from his success as they entered their zenith. The circle of the Jung family had been broken under the wickedness of the Kim boy and Jung became more determined to break the whore's grip on his son.

Calls to the entertainment company proved fruitless. It was as if a family's needs meant nothing to the machine that Yunho pulled forward, yoked to a lumbering mechanical beast, uncaring and metallic in its response. Their manager refused to listen to reason, even when Jung threatened the

Lavender Bunny

company with the law, assigning responsibility for the debauched lifestyle his son was exposed to in training.

"An adult." Jung snorted derisively. "He's a fool."

"The other boy...this Park Yoochun." Yunho's mother tapped a picture of Micky, his chest bare to the sun as he lay on a rock besides an equally unclothed Jaejoong. "Do you think that he's a ... part of this? That he's responsible for Yunho's..."

They sat nearly shoulder to shoulder in many of the pictures, often leaning into each other or sharing a light kiss. The easy laughter on their faces shone under the bright sunlight, Jaejoong's muscled stomach glistening with sun tan oil. Park Yoochun touched the other often, the photographer capturing nearly every caress with a steady precision. She was certain that the photos taken that afternoon showed more affection between the two immoral young men than most couples ever shared over the course of their entire marriage.

"Did you tell our son that his whore has another lover?" Jung asked suddenly, his teacup halfway to his lips. "Does he know we have these pictures showing Kim's promiscuity?"

"I was surprised to hear his voice." She admitted softly. Nothing hurt more than the echo of her son's coldness in her ears. She missed the smiling, laughing little boy who would toddle after her on fat legs, always running to see what was over a hill or watching with fascination at the birds flying in the sky. Ever since Yunho could see something in the distance, everything became a goal and it was to be gotten at any price. She encouraged that, hoping the determination she nurtured would bring him success.

Now it brought her son ruin, his mind set on loving another man.

She could barely meet her friends' eyes, lying with a smile when they asked after Yunho or marveled at how successful the group had become. They couldn't hear the grit of her teeth when they brought up Kim Jaejoong, the pretty young enigma often seated just within reaching distance of her son's wandering hands.

"I didn't tell him." Yunho's mother shook her head, a fragile frown between her eyes. "I couldn't, Jung. We agreed that we would approach Kim about the other man. If the company won't help us, we need to somehow pry him from Yunho's side but without telling him. Kim will have to leave him on his own. Yunho will not stand infidelity. He would beat that boy to death if he found out."

"I would tell Yunho just to make that happen." Jung swore as he sipped at the hot bitter tea. "I'll see if I can get a hold of Kim myself. I'll show him the photos and tell him to leave our Yunho alone. If he doesn't, then I don't care what happens to Yunho's little singing hobby. I'll give the photos to the media and let SM Entertainment deal with it. I want my son back and I'm not going to let some...filthy deviant take him from his family."

10

The pearl button at Yoochun's collar slipped free of its button hole, his fingers working blindly at the fastening. He searched through his jacket pocket for the half-empty pack of clove cigarettes he placed there earlier, the crinkle of the cellophane a welcome sound after the long evening he'd shared with Hyukjae. A flare of red smoked the tip of the cigarette he'd pulled free, the drag of the spiced smoke soft in his lungs.

Standing on the balcony, the baritone exhaled slowly, looking out into the city around him. From his vantage point, he could just make out the trees around the rock he shared with Jaejoong and the spire of the dance studio building that he shed so many tears and more than a little blood. Bent over the railing, Yoochun contemplated the talk he'd had with the SuJu member, stories told over shots of whiskey while scantily clad women shimmied around thick metal poles.

"It's good to have you home." Junsu's hand pressed on the small of Micky's back, just at where his jeans hit his skin. Sliding under the pulled out tail of Yoochun's black shirt, Junsu felt the other's warmth spread over his palm, a stroking softness curling around the tenor's spirit.

"Are you the only one up?" Micky turned slightly, reluctant to break contact with the other singer. Another drag pushed out through his pursed mouth canted Yoochun into profile, the baritone blowing the smoke away from Junsu's face.

Junsu leaned in against his friend as Yoochun turned, their shoulders touching. Micky's prow through the nightclubs left its scent on him, a tantalizing whiff of longing and satiation mingled with the roughness of the fragrant musk Junsu always associated with his best friend.

"You missed a lot." Junsu nodded, his face strangely quiet.

At Micky's quizzical look, the tenor recounted the evening's events, conveying everything from the shock of Changmin's words to his own chilled terrors when Jaejoong shared a personal pain, Junsu scraping any semblance of seeing Jae as a fragile dreamer. Yoochun remained silent through the telling, his face nearly unreadable until the point that Su reached Jaejoong's secrets. Only then did Micky drop his eyes, a glisten of silver banding down one cheek as a tear ripped itself free from his soul.

"I'm glad he... could share with you." Yoochun cupped Junsu's face, crying openly and without shame.

Lavender Bunny

Junsu envied the other's willingness to bare his soul openly, his emotions right at the surface and unwilling to compromise his feelings for the sake of pride. Susu slid into the crook of Yoochun's arm, his chest against the other's ribs as Micky moved over into the corner of the balcony, keeping the tenor out of the harsh wind whipping up from the open park.

"I don't know what happened between Changmin and Yunho." The tenor confessed, his hands moving to burrow under Yoochun's shirt, spanning his back and stomach. Unconsciously, he ruffled at the soft down below Micky's navel, hooking his other hand into the waistband of the other's black jeans. "Jae didn't speak to Minnie-ah yet, I don't think. I think he just went into his bedroom after he washed his face and stayed there until Yunho joined him."

"Aish." Micky moved his hand, keeping the smoke from filtering over to Junsu. "What a mess. I'm sorry I wasn't here to help."

"It might have been good that you were out." Junsu said. "I think if you were here, Joongie-ah wouldn't have come to me and I wouldn't... have seen who he is. I understand now... why you're friends with him and at the same time, I'm glad it's you and not me that has to patch him up."

"Jaejoong doesn't let anyone patch him up." Yoochun corrected with a laugh. "No pity for our Jaejoong or he'll bite the hand that's trying to feed him. He's too used to not having anyone to depend on. Jae isn't going to suddenly roll over and play nice because someone offers to give him a belly rub."

"He lets Yunnie-ah..." Junsu replied.

"I'm sure Yunnie-ah has more than one scratch on his arm from trying when it's a bad time." Micky grinned, wide humour on his handsome face. "I just listen and hold him when he needs to cry. That's sometimes what friends do. Hug and touch. You don't need to do anything. You just have to be there."

"I'm figuring that out." Junsu nodded. He watched the tip of Micky's tongue touch at the end of his cigarette before cupping his mouth around to pull in a draft of smoke. The hot spice smell of the smoke was different from the stale mint of Micky's usual cigarettes, the kreetaks having a very different exotic scent to them. Yoochun was about to turn his head when Junsu's fingers closed on the ridge of his chin, holding the baritone firm.

"I don't want to get smoke in your face." Yoochun pressed away, pushing the smoke out through parted lips, a tight stream caught on the wind. "You don't like smoke, remember?"

"This smells different." Junsu sniffed, the cloves blending nicely with Yoochun's skin. "It's more like something Jaejoong would have."

"He's the one who gave them to me." Micky nodded, moistening his lips with his tongue. "I wanted to quit the others and he said these helped him. They're good...different. It's like being kissed with a mouthful of chai tea."

Junsu thought of himself as someone who could coax anyone into temptation, a flirting smile or the cant of his head but the innocent sexiness of

the young man he snuggled against made him rethink the image he had in his mind. Staring at the flat bow of Micky's mouth, pursed to release a dragon of spiced perfume, Junsu now felt he intimately knew temptation.

"I want to..." The tenor swallowed when Micky's passionate eyes moved, finding Junsu's face. "I want to see what that tastes like."

"You don't smoke, remember?" Yoochun gave a small shake of his head, disbelief in his smile. "Your voice... here, let me try something with you."

"What?" Junsu frowned as Micky moved in close, the other bringing his mouth down over to hover just outside of touching distance from Junsu's. "What are you...?"

"I'm going to do something that Jaejoong showed me." Yoochun whispered, his thumb stroking at the sensitive spot behind Junsu's ear. "It's something called shotgunning. It's supposed to filter the smoke so it's not as harsh. When I blow out, you breathe in and see if you like the taste."

Yoochun's chest rose as he inhaled on his cigarette, holding it in until he leaned into Junsu, their lips barely skimming against one another. Turning his head, he slanted his mouth and exhaled, the moistness of his tongue flickering under the ripeness of Junsu's lower lip.

Junsu couldn't help but close his eyes, taking in the blue-grey smoke wafting from Yoochun's lungs. The numbness struck him first, his tongue going dead and then tingling when the clove scent hit the back of his throat. It was soon overwhelmed by the sin of Yoochun's taste in his mouth, the silvery splash of joy that Junsu knew lived in Micky's body. The kisses they'd stolen from one another over the years lingered in the smoke, coyly dancing amid the mists of Yoochun's breath, spiced hard with lust and peppered with desire.

When their lips finally touched, Junsu couldn't tell who'd moved in first but his hands ached, the fabric of Yoochun's shirt crumpled in his grip. Needing more of the taste promised to him on the smoke, Junsu claimed the torrential flood of Micky's sensuality, pulling the other in until no air was left between their pressed bodies. He left the kiss as chaste as he could, fighting the desire to plunge deeper in... anything to touch at the dark velvet warmth that lay hidden in Yoochun's soul. When they parted, it was from lack of air in their lungs, the shared wisps of smoke dissipating with their panting, Yoochun's hands firm around Junsu's waist.

"We need..." Yoochun's breath was hot and he choked on the gasping need for oxygen in his lungs. "I'm not sure what we need. Either to just do something about what's between us or walk away. But we can't do this anymore, Junsu. Not and survive each other."

"No, we can't..." The tenor agreed. "We can't just do nothing. I just..."

"Can't promise me forever." Yoochun nodded. "I don't know if it's fair to ask you to think of forever. You're right, we're not Jaejoong and Yunho. Maybe we should... try to... become closer... but stay friends. Not... mated... just ..."

Lavender Bunny

"Just lovers." Junsu agreed, barely able to stand the frenetic thumping of his heart in his chest. "I don't want to hurt you, Chunnie-ah. I... love you.. more than a friend ...but I have to know that if you find someone you're falling in love with, you won't let me being in your bed stop you from having that."

"I won't." Yoochun said softly.

Micky couldn't understand why his heart stretched with pain, dusted hard by whipping sands etching an imprint of Junsu's mouth on its tenderness. Junsu's stipulations were reasonable. They both...needed something that the other could give. If he followed Hyukjae's advice, he should be able to explore the desire Junsu raked up in his belly without worry of losing the closeness between them. Then why did Junsu's logical reasoning hurt so damned much? And why did Yoochun find his unshed tears searing his soul?

"I don't know about..." Yoochun struggled to keep eye contact with the other, finally losing under the blush of his ignorance. "About how it is between..."

"I know a bit...and well, there's always Jaejoong to ask." Junsu grinned, licking at the young man's mouth. The wicked heat of his thoughts spread through him, a triumph of wills as Yoochun succumbed to his needs. "We don't have to... this isn't a game for me, Chunnie. I do... love you. It hurts when I see you're in pain and there are times when it's hard not to touch you because you look so damned good."

"Tonight when you left with Hyukjae...that about killed me" The tenor admitted. "I saw you walk out, all dressed in black and all I wanted to do was drag you back to our room..."

"Well, that would have given you a very different evening." Yoochun couldn't help but laugh at the thought of the other three members seeing such a drastic change in their relationship. "Changmin wouldn't have hurt Jaejoong, at least."

"No, but it would have hurt him." Junsu exhaled hard. "Maybe we should...keep this between ourselves for a bit... just until ... Minnie-ah..."

"Feels better." Yoochun agreed. "I get to tell Joongie-ah. I have to be able to talk to Jaejoong about..."

"I know. You talk to Jaejoong about everything." Junsu found that realization no longer stung, evaporated under the tears shed in the intimacy of the bedroom he shared with Yoochun. "I..."

"Talk to Hyukjae." The baritone interjected. "Maybe it was good that we spent time with each other's best friends."

"I think so." Junsu shivered. "Let's get off of the balcony. I'm cold."

"You go in." Yoochun pushed gently at the other man. "I think I'm going to spend some time out here...and then sleep on the couch. I don't know if I'm ready to have you sleeping across of me just yet, Junsu."

"I can sleep out here." The young man was reluctant to separate from Chunnie, his fingers curled over the button of Yoochun's jeans. "I don't want you to give up your bed."

"No, I'll be okay. I can leave the door open and be as cold as I want." Micky slowly unfurled Junsu's hand, kissing the warm palm before releasing the tenor's wrist. "Besides, who is going to keep our son company as he sleeps? I'll need you to do that for me, Susu-ah. Just tell him that I love him and I'll be back tomorrow."

11

Sun ran spots of gold over Jaejoong's bare stomach, the singer's eyes closed as clouds drifted overhead. Besides him, Yoochun stuffed his jacket under his head, offering the back of his skull a cushion against the hardness of the granite slab. After a cold, long winter, Yoochun welcomed the soft heat rising from the stone, hot as Junsu's kisses on his back. He'd spent three nights on the couch, the first to distance himself from the confusion of wanting Junsu wrapped around him, the other two because of the tenor's chest ached with a cold, Junsu falling to a mild cough and insisting Yoochun rest elsewhere and not be kept awake. Micky refused to let Junsu sleep in the living room, telling the other to keep to his bed.

"I'm glad we have today off." Jaejoong murmured, languid and drowsy under the sun. The singer's pale skin glistened with a hint of gold, shimmering beneath the clear porcelain. Jae had taken off his sunglasses, piling up his belongings on his backpack, using it as a pillow. "It's been a rough few days. Junsu should rest more. He's going to make himself sicker."

"He won't." Yoochun replied, letting his eyes drift close. The clouds were dots of cotton against the blue, barely enough of a wisp to cast shadows on their sunning bodies. He'd briefly wondered if he should pour more lotion on the paler singer but Jae started to grumble at being handled and Yoochun knew the last thing he wanted on his day off was a feral, irritated Jaejoong. "Junnie-ah always works too hard when he's sick. We all do, I think."

"Yunho says it's our strength...and our weakness." Jae nodded. "Work until you fall and then one of the others will pick you up and carry you so you can work some more."

"Do you think it's worth it?" Micky asked, contemplating their lives.

"Yes." The singer said, his voice as soft as the clouds overhead. "I've always wanted... to be someone that mattered...even if just for a moment. I'm not going to rest until I have that... done. You all.. have the talent to make a longer and wider mark than I do. There are times when I feel like I'm just riding on the backs of your talent."

"Is that why you think you can't be open about your relationship with Yunho?" Micky turned his head to look at his best friend, Jae's frame loosely graceful on the rock, a content look on his face as he basked in the sun. "Because you think you owe us?"

"I do owe all of you." Jae turned his head, nearly brushing noses with his best friend. Micky stared into the whiskey flecks of Jaejoong's eyes, the young man's mouth swollen from Yunho's early morning kisses. "I wouldn't be here without any of you. You carry me."

"You are silly sometimes, Boo." Yoochun leaned his body over, placing a light kiss on his friend's succulent mouth. Jae's smile beamed through Yoochun's darkness, a lingering cloud over his soul. "Are you and Changmin okay?"

"We haven't talked. Not about that." The singer moved over to rest his head on Yoochun's shoulder, Micky's hand lifting to play with the fringe of Jae's bangs. "We've been so busy... and I don't really know what to say. Did Junsu tell you about..."

"Yes." Yoochun nodded. "He told me about... everything. I'm glad you and he spoke. It's made things... easier. He's jealous of you, or was."

"Of me ?There's nothing to be jealous of." Jae snorted, closing his eyes again to soak in the sun. After a second, Jaejoong's left eye cracked open and he stared over at his friend's face. "There's nothing to be jealous of, right?"

"No." Yoochun grinned, kissing the top of the young man's head. "He's a bit... stupid sometimes."

"I told him that." The singer replied, lolling back into a stretch before sighing with contentment. "Are you and he okay? After everything?"

"We're going to... try to be... lovers." Micky wasn't prepared for Jaejoong to suddenly sit up, the singer twisting to glare down at his friend. Jaejoong slugged Yoochun on the shoulder, the blow rattling the baritone's joint. "What? We've not done anything yet! Nothing's happened!"

"God, the two of you are meant to be together. You're both stupid." Jae settled back down. Yoochun could tell he was in a fit, a mild temper rising and then falling back into the chaos of Jaejoong's thoughts. "When did you decide this? How long have you been sneaking around behind my back?"

"We've not even kissed since the night you and he talked." Yoochun replied, hearing the heavy exasperation in Jae's snort. "He's been sick and I wanted him to get better."

"No wonder you slept on the couch."

"It's not like that." Micky protested around Jae's derisive chuckle. "We're... taking it slowly. Like you and Yunho did. He's... we're not as impetuous as you two. And you and Yunnies took forever."

"I think we took forever because Yunho was afraid he'd hurt me." Jae murmured, running his fingers over his stomach, touching at the golden navel ring Yunho threaded into his piercing that morning. Closing the hoop, the

Lavender Bunny

leader gently suckled at the spot, leaving the wetness behind as a lingering kiss for his lover's morning. "We're.. fine now."

"Oh I can hear how fine you two are sometimes. You have to remember to close the door." Yoochun teased, delighted at seeing Jae's cheek blush pink. "No, we're going to... date first, I think. We need to see how it goes."

"And Minnie-ah?" Jaejoong pressed, tentatively wondering how the youngest would take the burgeoning relationship between Yoochun and Junsu.

"We're going to keep it quiet for now." The baritone said. "Not too long because we don't want him to think that we've lied to him but maybe long enough that he gets over his crush on Junsu. Susu thinks that Min is just... stretching out to see how he fits into the world... and not really in love with him."

"I hope so. Or we're going to have a very big mess on our hands." Jae's phone chirruped at him from his hoodie's pocket, the worn greying fleece newly patched on the chest with a small embroidered skull on a string of roses.

Turning over onto his stomach, Jae looked for his cell, pulling it out and flipping it open. "Hello?"

Yoochun watched the colour drain from his friend's face, all hint of the sun's burnished gold lost under the glacier white of shock as Jaejoong listened to the voice on the other end. The singer's eyes flitted first through fear, a dread sinking down into his stomach, the hint of green coursing over his cheeks. Then the young man's fearless stubborn found its clawing path up to Jae's mouth.

"Fuck you." It was a simple curse, sibilant and hard. The streets of lower Seoul were evident in the melodic sounds of Jae's growling voice, tinting the back country dialect he often fell into when angry. Yoochun sat up, his hand reaching to comfort his friend but Jaejoong shook off the contact before Micky's fingers could close on his shoulder.

"No." Jae said into the phone. "If you think that I am going to hurt Yunho just because you think you can manipulate me, then you're wrong. Anything you throw at me, I'll deal with. I love him. You had your chance to love him and you threw it away. If you want him back, then you talk with him but you leave me out of it."

Yoochun's expression bled to incredulous, Jae's trembling hand reaching for the baritone's jacket. Shaking out the pack of cloves cigarettes, Jaejoong silently motioned to Yoochun permission to steal one, mouthing a thank you at Micky's assenting nod. The squawk of the voice at the other end continued, a rambling solid rant hot and high pitched as the speaker dissolved into screaming.

Jae closed the phone on the call, nearly dropping the cell as he tried to control his shaking. Micky lit a Djarum and passed it over to his friend, taking the phone from Jae's nerveless hands.

"Who was that?" Yoochun asked, worry dripping from his thoughts. The singer inhaled hard, holding in the smoke before releasing it slowly, an aromatic cleansing of his anger held in the wafting threads from his mouth. Jae took another drag, offering the cigarette to Micky who took it, cradling it between his fingers. "Joongie-ah, is everyone okay?"

"They're fine." Jae leaned his head back, looking once more for the sun's warmth to burn off the chill deep inside of him. "That was Yunho's father. He just called me... to threaten me. He wants me to leave Yunho...to leave the group."

"He can't be serious." The baritone said, shocked to the core. The Jungs hadn't made any contact with their son since the night they cast him out. A few phone calls left unanswered on Jae's phone was the only thin thread to the Jung residence, Yunho expressly forbidding Jae from responding to any messages left from the leader's parents. "Yunho is going to be pissed when you tell him."

"I'm not sure I should tell him." Jae ran his hands through his hair, pulling at the black silk in the hopes of working out the buzzing of his thoughts. "But if I don't, then he'll be even angrier. I don't want to deal with an angry Yunho. It takes me days to get him back from that."

"You're going to have to tell him something." Yoochun took a small sip from the Djarum, passing it over to Jaejoong to calm his nerves. "What was his father going to do?"

"I don't know?" Jae exhaled, shrugging. "I never let him finish. I got too mad. Whatever it is, it'll make Yunho mad. Maybe I will tell him... let Mr. Jung deal with his angry son. Better him than me."

* * *

"Hello, Hyukjae." Junsu was waiting for his friend outside of the studio, the SuJu member's radio broadcast just ending. The singer grinned and hugged Junsu in welcome, clasping his hand over his friend's back.

"Ah, it's good to see you, Junnie-ah!" Hyukjae replied. "What brings you here?"

"Park Yoochun." The steel in Junsu's voice made the SuJu singer pause, the hard cant to Junsu's head an ever greater warning signal. "I heard about your... talk."

Hyukjae beamed, shrugging off the conversation he had with Yoochun in an elegant lift of his shoulders. "It was just talk... nothing much more. How are things between the two of you?"

Lavender Bunny

"He told me you offered him a threesome with Si-Won." Junsu found himself hurried along the corridor, Hyukjae's hand clasped firm on his arm. The SuJu member rushed his friend into a small room normally reserved for visitors, the door shut firmly behind them.

"Junnie-ah!" Hyukjae rebuked the rigid-faced singer. "Not so loud. And yes, but it was teasing."

"He told me it was teasing but I know you... there was a sting of truth in there." Junsu paced away, his hands buried in his jeans pockets. "I don't want you to ever proposition Chunnie again. Ever."

"But the two of you are just friends." Hyukjae crossed his arms, slyly assessing the strong set of his friend's shoulder and the tight line of Junsu's back. Junsu turned, the glare on his face freezing Hyukjae in place. "Or you're more than friends now? It's only been a few days.. and you've been sick. How much could your relationship have change? Should I shop for matching rings to give to you at your wedding?"

"He's off-limits, Hyuki-ah." Junsu reiterated. "Yoochun is..."

"What, Junnie?" Hyukjae asked. "What is he? The other day he was out of reach for you because he is someone with a serious heart. Today what's changed??"

"What's changed is that..." Junsu wasn't sure what happened but he knew the when.

He'd been nursing a lingering anger in his heart for nearly three days, his stomach growling at the thought of his best friends kissing. At first, he thought perhaps it was the loss of Hyukjae to Yoochun that had him upset but then as Micky answered the phone one morning and the SuJu member was on the line to ask if Yoochun wanted to join him at a club, Junsu's jealousy overwhelmed him.

A coughing fit, half brought on by Junsu's rage but mostly a successful attempt to keep Yoochun home, closed down any thought of Micky leaving the apartment. Yoochun spent most of the evening plying a bundled Junsu with hot tea and laying next to him on the couch, a soccer game playing on the television. He'd spent the next day rehearsing but thinking of what to do...what to say to the dearest friend he had... only to find that everything Junsu practiced flew out of his mind when he saw Hyukjae come out of the studio door.

"I'm sorry, Hyuki-ah." Junsu sat up on the makeup counter, gripping its edge. The lights ringing the mirrors were off, black-ended bulbs surrounding the singer's lean body. "I just... need to ask you to leave Yoochun alone. I had... everything worked out in my head but.. all I can say is, I'm sorry."

"Why don't you tell me what you wanted to say?" Hyukjae asked gently, straddling his friend's legs and leaning into him. Brushing his mouth over

Junsu's, the SuJu member smiled forgivingly, ruffling at his friend's hair. "Why did you come down here if not to threaten me for fondling Yoochun?"

"You touched Chunnie?" Junsu's flare of anger returned, setting embers alight in his eyes. "Ah, stop teasing. You're going to get your nose broken doing that one day."

"I think you'd only break my nose if it were something more than friendship." The young man said. "You told me on the phone that you were considering becoming lovers... but just remaining friends. If that's the case, then you can't warn anyone off of Yoochun. He's got to have the freedom to come and go as he likes... just as you do."

"I don't want that freedom. I don't want him to have that freedom." Junsu whispered. Looking up at Hyukjae through his eyelashes, Junsu sighed. "I don't know what happened... or why it happened... and I hate that it has happened. But I want him, Hyuki-ah. I don't want anyone else to touch him or have him. He spent the past few days taking care of me and it was like..."

"It felt right." The SuJu singer said. "It felt like he was a part of your body and soul, just outside of your reach but then returning."

"Yes." Junsu nodded. "And it hurt... thinking of you wanting him. I nearly came over to kill you when he told me but I was too weak from coughing. I even thought, not a problem... I can sleep for a little bit and then wake up to kill you. That's how angry I was."

"What are you going to tell him then, Junnie? Are you going to tell him that you've changed your mind and are going to ask for forever?" Hyukjae poked at his friend's stomach. "If you do, he'll think you're playing with him. You keep jumping back and forth between how you feel. You keep jumping and he's going to pull away from you. You'll lose him then."

"No, I don't want that." Junsu agreed. "I'm going to... date him. Love him and hopefully, get him to trust having me around him. I have... to see how we are. I can't tell him that I've changed my mind. I don't know if I have really changed it but I don't want to lose him. I can't."

"I don't know if I'm just confused but... I can tell you that I look at Yoochun and the thought of having him... love someone else. It brought so much damned pain, I couldn't even swallow." The young man touched at the flat of his stomach, remembering the feel of Yoochun's kiss and how it sent butterflies of want through his body.

"It was as if because I couldn't... be as strong ..." Junsu continued. "I know that I'm.. louder than he is. In personality, in... vibrancy but over the last few days, it was like being in the water and having it cradle me."

"That was all Yoochun. He made me feel safe when I was the most vulnerable and then when I felt stronger, he stepped back but I could... feel him there. Just being there made me feel... powerful. Like I had someone else's strength with mine." The tenor recalled the touch of the other's hands

Lavender Bunny

on him, soothing and warm, coaxing the sickness from his body until he felt he could rest. Then waking to find Yoochun still around him, holding the chill of the air at bay. "I always thought that depending on someone would be like being chained to a rock but Micky, he.. makes me float. I could rest and not ... worry about being let down or falling. Every time I floundered, he was there, just holding me up. I can't lose that. Not after feeling just the bit of it that I've had."

"He's mine, Hyukjae." The tenor whispered, in awe as his feelings swelled from his soul to fill him. "Yoochun is mine. And I'm not going to let anyone else have him."

"That, my dearest friend..." Hyukjae sighed, shaking his head as he pulled back to grin at the other. "That sounds like you're in love."

"I think I am then." Junsu replied. "Hyukjae, I think I'm in love with Yoochun. And I'm here to tell you, if you ever come near him again and touch him... I love you. Very much. But I will kill you. And slowly. Because he is... most definitely... mine."

12

Jaejoong's kiss brushed over Yunho's temple, the leader's attention drawn from the music he'd been studying. Black scribbles danced over the page, nonsensical poignancies written in Yunho's hand, images of Jaejoong laid out on their shared bed fresh in his mind. The night pressed the day from the sky, a moon brushing through the scant clouds spread over the Seoul skyline.

"You're back." Yunho reached around, snagging his lover by the waist, dragging him onto the bed where he sat against the headboard. Pulling Jaejoong into his lap, Yunho pushed the sheet music aside. The papers drifted to the floor, the song forgotten under the press of his love against him. "It's good to see you, Boo."

"I hate that nickname." Jaejoong muttered, his voice cross. Yunho heard the burr in it, a rough choking sound under the melodic rumble. "And sadly, I like it when I hear you say it."

"What's bothering you, baby?" Yunho cocked his head, staring up at his lover. The clouds had returned to Jaejoong's eyes, shimmering pain flitting across the amber flecked gaze. "Tell me."

Jae settled into his lover's lap, digging into the pocket of his hoodie. Drawing out his cell phone, he flipped it open and clicked through the list of answered calls. "Your father called today, Yunnies-ah."

"You answered it?" Yunho asked, a frown crossing his forehead. "Why did you answer it? I thought we agreed you wouldn't talk to them."

"That wasn't the problem I had in mind to talk about, Yunnies-ah." Jaejoong turned the cell phone around, a number familiar to the other man displayed on the screen. "We can talk about the why right after you tell me why someone answered a call to your mother. That happened the night I had that fight with Changmin...and I know I didn't talk to your mother that night, Yunho. So... who answered?"

"Shit." Yunho rested back against the headboard of their bed, heaving a weighted sigh. "I was hoping that you wouldn't find out."

"Why?" Jaejoong turned. His expression tightened, the angry passion from his heart flaring to his face. "I thought we were going to be...honest with one another? If you had told me about your mother calling... and you talking to her, I would have been better prepared for when your father called me up today."

Lavender Bunny

"I'm sorry, Joongie." The young man apologized, contrite as he chewed on his lip. He pondered if kissing Jaejoong senseless would wipe the fury set along the other's mouth, forestalling the conversation until he was better prepared for it. "I should have told you but..."

"But?" Jae pursed his lips, waiting. "But what, Yunnie? I love you...and if something happens to you... you need to tell me, please. Like I'm coming to you right now to tell you about your father... who called me. And told me that if I didn't leave you, I'd regret it."

"What?" Yunho's fury hit hard, the wave of his anger riding over him. "He's crossed the line. That bastard! That damned bastard. What did you tell him?"

"I told him to fuck off before he could go any further." Jae said, stroking at his lover's chin, kissing the curve of his jaw. "I don't know what he was talking about and I didn't want to know. I shouldn't have... I shouldn't have risked the others but I just got... pissed. I told him that he should talk to you and not put me in the middle."

"No, you did right." Yunho cupped the back of Jaejoong's head, pulling the young man in tight. Kissing Jae's temple, Yunho moved his mouth slowly down the other's cheek, licking at the dip of a scar on his cheek then finding the plump ridge of Jae's upper lip. With a dip of his tongue, Yunho teased out a small moan from Jaejoong's throat, husky and needful. Taking in a breath, the leader sighed into Jae's mouth. "I'm sorry, Joongie-ah. I really am sorry...for all of it. For not telling you and for my father."

"He seems to think he has something that might convince me to leave you." Jaejoong said, losing himself in the taste of his lover. Closing his eyes, Jaejoong fought to focus on his anger as it slipped away from him, whispering on the sweetness of Yunho's tongue. "I'm a bit scared, Yunnie. I'm not afraid to say that... I don't want to be the reason that our group is..."

"Nothing is going to happen to us... to any of the others." Yunho's anger flared, his rage clamped tight in his belly rather than ride hard over his lover's relative calm. "Give me your phone, Jaejoong."

"What are you going to do, Yunnie-ah?" Jae licked at the edge of his mouth, taking in the last taste of Yunho from his lips. Handing over the cell, Jaejoong slid free of Yunho's lap, resting against the wall with his legs splayed over his lover's thighs.

"Bringing an end to this stupidity." Yunho punched in a number, listening to the chirrup on the other end. "Hello, Mother. No, I'm fine but this isn't really about me. I need you to find a time when we can meet."

"Yes, I know I told you I wasn't going to do that." Yunho waved off Jae's frantic waving, avoiding the other's grasping hands. "I want to know why Father called Jaejoong today... and what you think you can accomplish by threatening him?"

Yunho's face remained cold as his mother spoke, her words lost to the other singer as her voice dropped to a near whisper. The leader pressed his fingertips to Jaejoong's lips, stroking at the fine line of his mouth before answering his mother's query.

"Check your schedule then. It might be a few days because I'm busy. Because we're both busy." The young man said. "I might ask Jaejoong to come with me. He's my lover, Mother. That's not going to change. No matter what either of you do. Get back to me, please. I'll see you then."

Yunho bent to place Jae's phone on the table next to their bed, sliding free from the mattress and closing the bedroom door. Pacing back to the other man, Yunho gripped his lover's hips, moving his protesting body sideways before straddling Jaejoong's body, trapping him on the feather comforter laid over their mattress.

Jae stared up with a petulant pout, his eyes caught on Yunho's handsome face. His shoulders were supported by the bedding, his right arm held fast by their two hands intertwined against Jae's waist. Snagging at Jae's shirt with his teeth, Yunho yanked the hem upward, bending his head down to suck at the ring hidden in the dip of Jae's stomach. The singer tugged at the back of Yunho's head, his fingertips wrapped tight at his lover's hair.

"Don't do that. I'm angry at you, remember?" Jae reminded his lover. "Don't get me sidetracked. We need to talk about..."

"How many times do you want me to say I'm sorry, Jaejoong?" Yunho glanced up from his feast of Jae's stomach. "What do you want me to say to make this... better? To take away your anger?"

"I don't know." The singer hissed, leaning back further into the pillows Yunho dragged him onto. "I don't... know! I'm not good at this.. thing between us. I don't have answers. Hell, I probably endangered all of us with my stupid mouth then you call your parents, when you swore that you wouldn't. I don't like being the reason you have to compromise yourself. I don't want to be the one who brings us all down."

"We made a promise, Boo..." Yunho crawled up Jae's stomach, lingering for a moment at the pierced nub still hidden beneath the cotton fabric, his mouth leaving a wide wet swath over the nipple. He continued up, Jae's dark eyes following his progress until their noses touched. "You and I made a promise...to one another and to the others. I am never going to go back on that promise."

"Do you see these rings, baby?" The leader pulled Jae's hand up, the silver on their hands chiming as the metal circles struck one another. "This is the only promise that matters. I'll break every vow I've ever made to keep this one intact. The rest of it, means nothing. Even the group means nothing compared to you. I've never loved before you. I don't plan on loving anyone else. There is only you."

Lavender Bunny

"There is only you for me, Yunnie-ah." Jae whispered, his body melting under Yunho's insistent kiss. His body ached with desire and the trailing fingers on the inside of his thigh. "Yunnie, I think you've found what to say to me... to make it all better."

* * *

Yoochun emerged from the shower with a towel draped over his head, his mind wandering to the mess Yunho's father had dropped onto Jae's lap. Stepping over a pair of Junsu's shoes, he wasn't prepared for the hand traveling up over the back of his thigh, skimming the bottom of the damp towel he'd wrapped around his waist. Jumping free from the touch with a startled yelp, Micky slammed his shin into the corner of his bed, peeling off a shred of skin on his naked leg.

"Junsu!" Micky grabbed at the towel at his hips, holding it in place as he tumbled onto the bed. The other towel fell to the floor, his hair left disheveled and sticking up from his head. "What are you doing?"

"Just seeing if you had on any underwear." Junsu propped his chin against the rise of his palm. "But then right after I did that... I remembered that you wouldn't have any because you were coming out of the shower."

"That cold seems to have left you stupid." Yoochun grumbled, digging for his clothes. "Let me get dressed...alone."

"I'll close my eyes." The tenor squished his face closed, his grin widening as he slanted just a peek at the other young man.

There was a spot on Yoochun's back that called to Junsu. Just at the breadth of where his hips tucked into the tightness of his spine. Junsu sometimes stared at that stretch of skin, wondering if the sheen on Yoochun's flesh would taste different there than the tenderness of Chunnie's jaw. Junsu intimately knew that aromatic masculinity, having brushed on the other's body and inhaling the sweet promise of sex lingering there.

Junsu gave into his temptation, tucking his hands under his head and watching Yoochun get dressed. The singer's legs were brushed with a fine hair, echoing the trail from his belly button down to the span of skin hidden from Junsu's sight by a pair of black boxers.

"I thought you were supposed to have your eyes closed." Yoochun said, turning to catch Junsu's stare.

"I lied." Junsu shrugged, giving Yoochun a sexy smile. Micky shook his head, exasperated by the other's teasing. "Tell me what got you spun into yourself?"

"Aish." Micky slid on his jeans, working the waistband up over the rise of his rear. One of his oldest pairs, he chose it for its comfort, the worn thin denim on his thighs sliding slick on his skin. "Yunnie's father called JaeJae today. He didn't get a chance to say much before Jaejoong hung up on him. He did

have enough time to say that if Jae didn't break up with Yunho, then he'll pay for it."

"Pffft." Junsu snorted. "I'll give up being Xiah just for the chance to punch that man in the mouth."

"Do you mean that?" Yoochun sat down on the edge of his bed, his shirt dangling from his hands. "It might come to that if Yunho's father does something."

"I mean it." The tenor sat up, his knees brushing on the outside of Yoochun's legs. Rubbing at the nearly white patches on his friend's thighs, Junsu said. "I do mean it, Chunnie. Some things... like friendship...or even, love... is worth everything. We can come back from anything anyone throws at us. We'll make it as the five of us or not at all."

"A few weeks ago, you were saying that you were focused only on...making it." Yoochun dropped his eyes, ashamed at throwing Junsu's words back into his face. "Now..."

"Now is different, Chunnie-ah." Junsu nudged himself forward, working his fingers into Yoochun's. "We said we were going change things, yes? I think that means I have to really stay focused on all five of us as a whole... and well, maybe making sure that you and I never... fall apart again."

"So, this date thing.. we're going on one, yes?" Yoochun asked. "We're free tomorrow. We should do something."

"Agreed." Junsu nodded, feeling the choke of his words in his throat.

"I have to say something first, Chunnie." Junsu stroked at his friend's wrist, feeling the pulse of Yoochun's life just under the pad of his thumb. "When I thought Hyukjae was interested in you... I wanted to take him apart."

"Susu-ah!" Yoochun exclaimed, startled. "He's..."

"He's my oldest friend but you, Chunnie... it's different with you." Junsu admitted slowly. "I told you that. And I told him that. I just wanted to make sure that you understood that I meant it. It's so different with you."

Yoochun brought Junsu's hand up to his mouth, kissing their meshed fingers. The barest touch of his lips held so much of Yoochun's heart, passing the beat of his soul into Junsu's flesh. The tenor clenched his fist tighter, holding the breath of a kiss into his palm, never wanting to let the other go.

"I know it." Yoochun replied. "It's different with you too. I do hold you inside of me, Susu-ah."

"There's no where else I'd rather hold you, Chunnie-ah." Junsu brought his other hand over their clenched fists, pressing his mouth where Yoochun's lips left a moist kiss, taking in their mingled tastes and holding it on his tongue. "No where else, Chunnie. No where else."

13

Stars spun behind Jaejoong's closed eyes, a headache creeping into his temples and digging a knot into the back of his skull. Bending his head forward, he massaged the bridge of his nose, begging the dull pain to leave him alone. A weight settled in behind him, the bed dipping slightly. Hands reached up, burying under his mane of black hair and rubbed gently at the tightness along his scalp.

"Ah..." Jae leaned back, letting the pain wash down his face and out of his body.

The day's practice sucked nearly all of their energy, their public faces fixed firm as they exited the studio and directly into one of the many interviews they'd been scheduled for. With barely enough time to eat, Jaejoong picked through the lunch offerings, nothing packed into the boxes agreeing with his stomach. Shaking off the nausea from lack of sleep, Jae nodded off in the van ride back, curled into a ball on the rear seat. Yunho reached for his lover, any overt comforting forestalled as they approached another location, a sea of red balloons forming a wall against their personal lives.

He'd finally been able to collapse on the bed he shared with Yunho, a sea of pillows to float on while the pressing migraine ebbed back into nothingness. His empty belly roiled at Yunho's mention of food and Yoochun's suggestion for a soothing tea was met with an equally fierce grumbling snarl, Jaejoong shoving his aching head under a soft pillow and ordering the others to leave him alone.

"Let me put some Tiger Balm on your temples, hyung." Changmin's soft entreaty was a shock to Jae. They'd not spoken in the days since their argument, their interactions civil but scarcely the warm teasing relationship they enjoyed. "Please, Joongie-ah. Let me help you."

Jae lay back on his stomach, his head to the side where he could see Changmin through the curtain of his hair, his eyes slitted and wary. Splayed over the bed, the singer's paleness startled Changmin, Jaejoong's hair vividly ebony in contrast to his face. Evidence of the headache ran lines between Jaejoong's brow, the weariness of their day plumping the skin under his worn gaze.

Yunho had cautioned him that the weeks were wearing on the singer, his body delicately shaped by the years of scrambling for food. Changmin always assumed genetics made Jaejoong slighter in body than the rest of them until Yunho's off-hand remark to something Junsu said reminded them

all of Jaejoong's probable malnutrition, the exotic featured singer made leaner for lack of food during the formative years he'd needed it the most.

The scent of chamomile and cloves relaxed Jaejoong's tension. He'd refused Yunho's offer of aspirin, his stomach already too sickly to ingest chemicals but he regretted passing on the medication as the ache spread further down his neck. His eyes drifted closed as Changmin's hands worked carefully over his scalp, easing the pain from his head.

"I...needed to say that I'm sorry, hyung." Min whispered, his voice low. "I am so sorry. I shouldn't have... said those things to you. Even if I was angry...what I said was, unforgivable."

Jaejoong turned over, grabbing at Changmin's hands before the younger man pulled away. Bruises ran dark in the singer's eyes, the stress of their lives tearing at the edges of his patched together soul. Hooking one of his hands around Min's waist, Jaejoong pulled the youngest down next to him, Changmin's chin resting on Jaejoong's shoulder.

"There's nothing to forgive, Minnie-ah." Jaejoong said, breaking the heavy silence that hung down between them. "I pushed too hard and didn't... let you have the time to make your own mistakes. I did do what my father did...in a way... I just didn't you to get hurt."

"I know." Min nodded, his eyes run hot with the threat of tears. "It's been a rough few days without you. I don't want to... it was hard not to be able to touch you or talk to you. I should have said I was sorry...right away."

"I think both of us were too angry to speak clearly." Jae admitted. "I can be stubborn when I'm hurt."

"You can be stubborn a lot of times." Min laughed, a soft chuckle from his throat. "So can I, hyung. The members are book-ended with stubborn, willful children. I'm surprised they haven't locked us up and made us promise to behave."

"That would be fair to Junsu or Yoochun." Jae made a face. "Yunho can be... grumpy sometimes."

"You tease him out of it." Changmin murmured, snuggling into the warmth of his elder. Sighing, he pressed his fingers up onto Jaejoong's cheekbones, working the last of the balm into the tender tissues swollen from stress. Jae's eyes blinked at the strength of the menthol, mutely suffering the sting in exchange for the ebbing of his headache.

"I need to ask you something, Jaejoong." Min tucked his elbows in, resting his head on the pillows near Jae's head. "Something serious and I don't want you to lie to me. I am tired of being told half-truths because I need to be taken care of."

"If I can." Jae admitted. "But if something's not my secret to tell..."

Lavender Bunny

"I don't want you to betray a confidence." Changmin shook his head. "But I think I need to ask you anyway or at least tell me that I'm crazy."

"I can tell you that you're crazy." Jaejoong gave the youngest a watery smile, sleep creeping into his relaxed body. "I can tell you that even before you ask your questions."

"I'm serious, hyung." The younger man exhaled in exasperation. "I need to know if Junsu is in love with Yoochun. I see how he looks at Chunnie and..."

"Ah..." Jae tilted his head back, staring up at the ceiling. "Minnie-ah..."

He'd felt the hiding of Junsu's and Yoochun's relationship was a bad idea after all, the ever perceptive Changmin lurking always at the edges of their burgeoning relationship. Jaejoong saw the direction of their courtship alter after Junsu came down with his illness, Yoochun hovering at the other's side, ensuring their tenor rested and had liquids. A special trip by Yoochun to a cross-town apothecary produced an anise-sugar preserved lemon peel, the sweet tart treat pressed flat and added to a strong black tea. Junsu had fallen in love with the taste of the spiced sugary rind, a sliver of the treat often tucked into a bag somewhere on his person.

"You know, because you reacted like that, I already have my answer." Changmin's face fell, his mouth tight with the suppression of pain. He'd badly wanted Junsu's attentions, the playful flirt a warm presence in his life. The idea of Yoochun sharing the tenor's mouth left a foul taste in Min's soul, a fleck of jealousy stoked into a lingering ember that burned at his gut.

Changmin was ill-prepared for the choking hurt bubbling up from his chest, a sourness carried by the ashen wind of his breaking heart. Bending his head, he pulled slightly away from Jaejoong but he soon found the singer was stronger than he anticipated. Held fast by the eldest's embrace, Changmin allowed himself to be drawn in further, the singer rocking Min as he cried hot, fast tears made hard by a creeping loneliness.

"I hate losing, hyung." Changmin sniffed, his body nearly depleted after a few minutes of near sobbing. He couldn't quite break loose the ache inside of him, a wrapped tight skein of anger mingled with loss. "God, I hate it."

"Truth, Minnie-ah?"

"You're one of the few people who gives it to me." Changmin sniffed again, rubbing his face clear with the end of his sleeve pulled up over his fist.

"I don't really think you're in love with Junsu." Jaejoong said, wiping at the trail of water from Changmin's right eye. "If you were, you would have gone to him and said something. You would have asked him about Yoochun instead of ignoring Chunnie-ah and pretending that nothing was between them when you kissed Junnie-ah. And you wouldn't have come to me to ask something I think you already knew."

"It hurts... hyung." The shattering of his fragile love ached, ripping long shreds from Changmin's heart. What lay beyond ran raw in the fresh air,

exposed and naked to the whispering doubts he had hidden there. "I just wanted... not to be alone."

"Minnie-ah, everyone is alone." Jaejoong nodded, making a face at the youngest. "Sometimes we are alone together."

"You and hyung are..." Min sniffed, searching for the word he knew would describe the relationship between the two eldest members. "You mesh together."

"Sometimes... our hearts are always together as are our souls but not always our minds." The singer admitted slowly. "We fight, dongsaeng. You've seen us fight. And there are times we can't speak for the love holding us tight but that doesn't mean we aren't alone sometimes. It means that you know what lonely means when you can't touch ... or can't speak to the person who you hold in your soul. Being in love teaches you what lonely really is."

"So it hurts then, being in love." Changmin tilted his head to the side, looking for answers in the elder's eyes. At Jaejoong's tentative nod, Min's frown flattened, his anger pressed into the tightness of his lips. "Good. Then I hope Junsu is very much in love with Yoochun so he'll hurt as much as I do right now."

"Ah, Min." Jaejoong was hard-pressed not to laugh at the youngest's petulance. "That's not a good thing to wish on someone."

"Right now, even if it's not true... I want him to hurt." Changmin whispered. "Because he... didn't see me, hyung. Not even for a little while."

"Someone will see you, Changmin." Jaejoong kissed the younger man on the mouth, tasting the innocence hidden behind the other's maturity. "When that someone does, you'll know it. He'll take up your every thought and probably piss you off more than anyone else can. That's how I knew for sure I was in love with Yunho. I've never wanted to murder someone so much in my entire life."

* * *

"Yoochun." Junsu slid his hand onto his friend's shoulder, resting his chin on his fingers. "I spend so much of my time looking for you."

Micky turned from staring out at the city, lost in his own thoughts, his elbows firm on the balcony railing and his fingers cradling a forgotten Djarum. It was not quite dark but the lights around the building were beginning to come up, fallen flat stars held trapped by cement and steel structures. Bumping shoulders with Yoochun, Junsu pulled a small grin from Micky, transforming his sensual masculinity to the goofy tenderness that thrilled even the darkest corners of Junsu's heart.

"I just needed to get some air...or well..." Yoochun motioned with the cloves. "Or at least think about air. What's up?"

Lavender Bunny

"I was thinking, since we do have tomorrow off and I'm much better..." Junsu crept into Yoochun's embrace, slyly slinking under the other's arm.

Cradled in the crook of Yoochun's arm, his back supported by the railing, Junsu slid his slightly chilled hands under Micky's shirt, hoping the other's warmth would leech into his palms. Micky winced at the cold touch but didn't protest, dropping the half-done Djarum into a sand-filled coffee can and working his other arm around the tenor's waist.

"We might want to spend some time... doing something tonight." Junsu continued. "Maybe a movie? Or getting some dinner?"

"Is this counting as our first date?" Yoochun asked. They'd bantered about the idea, forestalled mostly by their filled days and even fuller nights.

"Yes." Junsu nodded firmly. "I think it should. We can maybe... just do something casual. Or do you want a huge dinner thing? A good restaurant?"

"How exactly is this going to work, Junnie-ah?" Micky leaned into the other man, his parted legs bringing his hips into contact with Junsu's, their stomachs rubbing as they stood together. Yoochun felt the bump of Junsu's desire, a hardening coil echoing his own. He vowed not to move, but the prolonged contact merely made staying still a hard agony, a pulling string of tingles running along his sex. "We go out and then come home, strip naked, kiss each other good night and then sleep in our own beds?"

"We can stop and make out someplace." Junsu let his fingers trail up Yoochun's sides, finding the ridge of his ribcage and tracing the lines of bones there. "Maybe take a ride up to skyline and sit watching the stars."

"Then come home, strip naked and fall asleep." Yoochun quirked his mouth to the side. "Maybe we should go out and buy matching pajamas... or move our beds across the room? It'll make it harder to reach one another."

"Why can't you just let things... happen?" Junsu frowned. His seduction plan was proving to have serious holes in it, poked by Yoochun's inquisitive mind. "We don't need to... plot everything out, do we? I can't worry about rushing things or holding them back. That's too... much pressure."

"No, Junnie, we don't need to plot everything out." Yoochun agreed, a twinkle in his dark eyes. "We should set... a time limit on our... chastity. Neither one of us has done this... with another man. We'll have to figure some things out."

"You are possibly the most unromantic person I have ever met." The tenor complained. "What is there to figure out? We go out, we kiss.. maybe grope a little bit and then either come home and fall asleep dead or maybe grope some more. You're driving me crazy. Want you, Junsu...don't want you, Junsu. I don't have a time schedule... I'm not a train, Chunnie."

"Neither am I. But see, I can't even hold you without parts of me getting hard and other parts getting soft. My body can't even figure out what to do where and my brain is saying... to hell with it, do it all." The baritone's hips moved again, his deep voice rumbling down into Junsu's belly as he spoke.

"Because I am beginning to think that you're taking too much control over the... us... that we're trying to make happen. And I think I want a say in something. I don't want to have to figure out which one of us is the train and which one is the station. I think we might need to be both. Try both... sides of things. That's what I want, Junsu."

Junsu cocked his head, his brow furrowed tight as he worked through Yoochun's analogy. "What? Are you asking... what?"

"Do you think that I'm always going to be... the one on the bottom of this? Are you?" Yoochun smiled, pleasant and placid. "That's something I've wondered about, Junnie. We both...want but what do we want? Are you willing to open for me? To sate my needs...as much as I'm willing to pleasure yours? Are you willing to... take me... like I want to take you?"

"I..." Junsu stammered. Many of his musings on Yoochun's body included its warmth pulled tight around him, the soft moistness drawing out his panting releases. The baritone's seductive motions brought their hips closer, brushing into an erotic circling motion. He felt the spasm of his sex between his legs, an all too familiar sensation riding through his stomach muscles. "Chun... I... don't... I haven't thought that far ahead. Not really. I mean, in some ways, yes. But it's... not... real yet."

"See, I do want you, Junsu." The young man took the time to suckle on Junsu's lip, pulling at its rounded edge with a delicate nip of his teeth. "And as I think about it, I find I want... to know all of this...all of us. You had a condition that we aren't... going to constrain ourselves to just each other. I think I need to ask that we... experience both sides of this relationship. Both top and bottom of it."

"Think about that, Junnie-ah. I know you want to hold me... inside of your soul. But will you hold me inside of your body too? Because I will hold you there." Yoochun released the speechless Junsu, stealing another kiss from the tenor's parted lips. "I'll go change my jeans...and probably underwear because being near you makes me... realize how little control I have over my body."

"You figure out where dinner will be and if you want to continue with this... thing that we've half-started. We have to be equals in this, Junnie. Fully equal." Yoochun walked a few steps backwards, standing by the open glass door leading back into the living room, never breaking his connection with the tenor's gaze. "If you don't want to do equal, then we'll go have dinner, come home, strip naked and go to bed like we always do. Then tomorrow, I'll start trying to get over you because being in love with you is making me crazy and I need the crazy to go away."

14

Yunho leaned back into the couch, working the kinks out of his bare toes with a long stretch of his legs. His shoulder popped when he reached up with his arms, rolling his head until his neck cracked. Yoochun smiled at him as he passed, a friendly nod before disappearing into the back of the apartment. Junsu followed Micky a few seconds later, a stunned look on his face.

The tenor stopped short of the hallway, circling back into the main part of the room and collapsing onto the couch next to Yunho. Rubbing his hands through his hair, Junsu left a hedgehog mane sticking up above his temples, frustration clear in his eyes. Yunho debated ignoring the other singer but then sighed, taking up the mantle of leadership again.

"Did you hear any of that?" Junsu asked under his breath, wondering how much their leader knew.

"Junsu, I have just come home, later than the rest of you after doing an interview." Yunho sighed, his head dimpling the sofa cushions. "I've not eaten and I've just found Jaejoong and Changmin tangled around each other in my bed giggling about something. I haven't heard anything except for my stomach grumbling and my cock screaming that seeing Boo and Minnie-ah together was wrong but damned if I didn't want to climb into bed with them. So no, I probably wasn't paying much attention to what you and Chunnie-ah were saying."

"Does Jaejoong ever piss you off?" Junsu slanted a questioning look under his lashes at the other man, hearing Yunho sigh heavily.

"And now, you ask a question you know the answer to. Of course he pisses me off, I'm in love with him. He's supposed to piss me off." Yunho turned his head, staring hard at the tenor. "What's on your mind, Susu-ah?"

"You know about Yoochun and I, yes?" The young man glanced at the other, smiling when Yunho rubbed the weariness on his face. "I can see you do."

"It's hard not to notice the two of you making cow-eyes at each other across the dinner table each night." Yunho replied. "I gave up being blind after I ended up with Jaejoong. He makes things look a lot clearer, if you would believe it. Talk to me, Junsu."

"I don't know what I'm doing with Yoochun." Junsu said, staring at the tremble in his hands.

"Ah, you're going to have to go to someone else for that kind of advice." Yunho shook off the conversation with a wave of his hands. His mind screamed silently at the thought of Junsu and Yoochun tangled into sheets, their bodies melded together. Shaking his head of the vision, he returned to the memory of Jaejoong and Changmin...immediately regretting letting his mind wander there as well. "Ask Jaejoong or see if he'll take you down to his Auntie Scarlet."

"Not that kind of doing, Yunnie-ah." The tenor replied, disgust in his tone. "I know about that. Or at least enough to figure it out. I'm asking for help here."

"Help with what, dongsaeng?" Yunho asked, herding the tired out of his brain to concentrate on what the other was saying. "What is bothering you about Yoochun?"

"He wants to... I'm not sure how to talk about this." Junsu said. "Has Jae ever asked you to...switch positions with you?"

"I thought you had all of that information?" Yunho made a face. At Junsu's exasperated sigh, he continued. "Yes, he sometimes... God, Junnie-ah, this is not something we should talk about. Sometimes he.. sits on my lap."

"Okay." Junsu shook his head, watching the red fill Yunho's face. "I don't mean that he's... still uke. I mean has he ever asked to be..."

"The... let's say ...dominant." Yunho supplied cautiously. "You should be glad that I love you and think of you as a brother or we would never have this conversation. No. I've mentioned it...trying to see how he feels and if he wants to... do that. I don't think he's ready yet. I think he's... afraid for some reason. I'm not that... I'm not enamoured by the idea. I'm not. I don't think he is either. But I worry if he's left... unfulfilled sometimes."

"See, Yoochun doesn't want have that kind of..." Junsu saw the twitch in Yunho's eye, the leader wincing but letting the talk flow over him. "I don't have anyone else to talk to about this, Yunnie-ah. I definitely don't want to talk to Jaejoong about it. Everything that goes into Joongie's ear also goes in Chunnie's."

"So you're saying that Yoochun wants to give love as well as receive?" Yunho picked his words carefully, silently vowing to seek revenge on Jaejoong for falling in love with him and opening him up to conversations that made him uncomfortable. "Do you want... that?"

"I don't know." Junsu admitted. "I never really thought about it. But then the more that I think about it, the more used to I get to the idea."

"Then why are you talking to me about it?" The young man sighed, patting at his empty belly. "Sounds like you know what you want and it's the same as Yoochun. Whatever you do behind closed doors is... yours, Susu-ah. No one can tell you the right or wrong of your relationship."

"For instance, I'm sure the people that know about me and Jaejoong put him as the 'wife' but neither one of us thinks of him like that." Yunho traced out

Lavender Bunny

his thoughts. The idea of a subservient Jae made him grin, the wild-souled and fierce young man was not a demure spouse that agreed with everything he said. "Jae is a man. He's made his own definition of what that is but make no mistake, he's masculine. I'm never left with even the hint that I'm with a girl."

"Where he lies when we have sex doesn't determine who he is. It can't. I'm in love with a man, for all the right and wrongs of that... Jaejoong is male." Yunho jerked his head to the sounds of laughter coming from down the hall, Changmin's burst of words lost under Jae's husky voice asking Yunho if he wanted dinner. "He's my soul... my partner. There isn't a wife there. He's as much of a husband as I can be to him. How we love... that's between us."

"And right now, I am going to remove my very tired body and take care of my lover who I know hasn't eaten yet. How you love... where you love... when you love Yoochun... you two decide that and enjoy it." The leader stood, stepping around the coffee table. "Don't let yourself get shoved into a role just because people can't accept two men together. Be men, Junsu. That's the only advice that I can give you."

* * *

The movie theatre was nearly deserted, a spring downpour keeping people off of the streets. Tucked into an upper balcony, Junsu stretched his legs out, hooking his ankles over the seat in front of him. He'd slid the armrest between their seats up before he sat down, Yoochun following with a large carton of arare they'd purchased. Neither really cared which movie they saw, a small discussion finally leading them to a foreign film dubbed in Korean.

No one else came in besides them, and as the lights fell, Yoochun leaned over and rested his shoulder against Junsu, their heads canted towards one another while the opening sequence played. The chattering of dialogue distracted Yoochun back to the screen, his face turned in profile to the other. Junsu kept his eyes on Yoochun, seeing emotions play over the other's features as the movie's plot unfolded.

Junsu couldn't tell when he saw the first tear well into Yoochun's eye, a dramatic flare of music filling the cinema but he blinked at there was a sheen of silver waiting to fall. Enraptured by the story, Yoochun had leaned forward at some point, resting his shoulder against Junsu's arm, fallen deep into the movie. The tear filled, swelling under the weight of Yoochun's emotions, caught just at the edge of his long lashes.

Yoochun didn't flinch when he felt Junsu's tongue take a tentative lick at the corner of his eye, dabbing away the tear he knew had fallen. Nearly afraid to face the other, Yoochun dropped his gaze from the screen, waiting...anticipating for the next touch.

It came slowly as if Junsu were afraid of startling him, a wary approach to a sulking panther. The heat of Junsu's fingertips on his chin lifted Micky's head

up, a challenge burning there. They'd played at this, a flirtation on the wrong side of serious for so long, neither was sure of what would ensue once they fell into the reality of touching one another. Junsu leaned in first, just brushing his lips against Yoochun's, hoping the initial burst of fire in his belly would die down before it consumed him.

When he tasted Yoochun on his tongue, Junsu knew he was doomed to live in that fire forever.

Hyukjae never reached inside of Junsu with a single touch of his mouth. If he had, the tenor would have remembered that and more than likely would have been prepared for the sensation of passion flooding his mind when Yoochun touched at the seal of their lips with the edge of his tongue. The roughness of Yoochun's hands barely skipped into Junsu's awareness, the baritone sliding his palms along Junsu's waist as he turned to face the tenor. The movie played on, a story forgotten in the storm riding the horizon of the two young men falling hard into the unknown.

Junsu ran his hands up Yoochun's throat, his fingers pressed on the other's jaw line, thumbs stroking at the corners of Micky's mouth. A murmur of desire rumbled along the roof of Yoochun's mouth, trapped between their kiss and filling Junsu's spirit.

Yoochun turned his head, gulping at the taste of the young man he held in his hands. Another sip then dipping his tongue in deeper, feeling the ride of Junsu's teeth on his lips as the other bit lightly, sucking on the nibble before releasing him. Junsu's mouth roamed, finding the corner of Yoochun's mouth, laving at the crest until Micky's surrendering groan moved the other onto his next target, a nip of skin along Yoochun's jaw.

Junsu's hands moved into Micky's hair, then palming the other's chest before sliding to Yoochun's back. The feel of Junsu's jeans slicked Yoochun's palms, the baritone finding the line of stitching at Junsu's hips and tracing it down until he found the bend of the other's legs. Skipping lightly over Junsu's knees, Yoochun trailed the inseam back up, lightly brushing on the rise of Junsu's thighs, a thickening gauge of his growing desire for Micky.

"Thank god no one else is in here." Junsu stole another kiss, a light butterfly of affection from Yoochun's parted lips. "I could... just... do this. Here and now. With you."

"Me too." Yoochun whispered. Resting his forehead against Junsu's, he gasped, at a loss for air. "How the hell did Jaejoong survive this for weeks?"

"Do you think one of us is going to have to sleep on the couch?" Junsu took again, losing the rest of his thought in Yoochun's mouth. Micky answered for him, a murmuring negative hum resonating on their tongues. Gasping, Junsu pulled away, taking deep gulps of cool air to calm his passions. "If we keep doing this..."

Lavender Bunny

The lights flared up, the movie long since given the final gasp of its credits and the sounds of the cleaning crew coming into the theatre pulled the two young men apart. Yoochun felt at the swollen thrush of his mouth, Junsu's teeth leaving a light dimple along his lower lip.

A young woman cheerfully greeted them with a wave, asking if they'd like the movie as Yoochun ducked his head to look for the package of nori rice crackers, forgotten and unopened. Junsu gave a short bow in thanks, nearly stumbling over the other man's legs as they unraveled themselves from the theatre seats.

Their mouths welcomed the soft rush of rain from the night sky, pushing the heat of their bodies back under control. Yoochun turned into an alley, pressing his back against the red brick wall and inhaled deeply. Junsu followed, standing in front of Yoochun, just out of arms' reach. Micky glanced up at the man who would be his lover, his desire warring with common sense.

"How are we going to do this, Junnie?" Yoochun begged, his body still curled around the passion Junsu evoked with a brush of his fingers. "How are we ever going to take this slow enough to satisfy either one of us and still... remain friends?"

"I don't know." Junsu admitted. The rain that fell on his face felt like tears, soft kisses of the heavens weeping at his stupidity in dancing too long around the young man before him. "I don't want to let you go, Chun. I just don't. I lost my mind when I threatened Hyukjae's life just because he thought about taking you from me. And I never ever wanted to be that place... that jealous hot place that I see Yunho sit in but there I am, making a space right next to him and sharpening knives that I just discovered I owned."

"What are you talking about?" Yoochun asked, tilting his head back to swallow some of the sprinkling coolness. His throat seized at the chill, unwilling to wash the taste of Junsu from his body.

"I know I don't want anything to stand between us." Junsu admitted softly, stepping in close to the other man, his hands riding low on Yoochun's hips. They stood nearly level with one another, mouths within easy reach, hands touching as they spoke. The darkness hid them, a pool of light gleaming on the street to catch glimpses of cars as the vehicles splashed through the wet roads.

"I tore apart my guts when I saw Jaejoong on you, hearing him spill out his heart and then all I wanted to do was punch him instead of hold him. How wrong is that, Chunnie-ah? That I would hurt Jaejoong because of how I feel?" Junsu asked. "And turning to Hyuki-ah to tell him something I should have told you... that I feel so much for you and that I want you. I should have been honest with you about that and I wasn't."

"What do you want with us, Junnie-ah?" Yoochun cocked his head, making eye contact with the young man who straddled his thigh. They fit into one

another, a sliding ease neither one of them questioned. "You keep saying one thing and then...saying another. You have me turned around most of the time with what you do and the words that come from your mouth. It's a pretty mouth. I like that mouth. But it confuses me."

"I have to say that I want... everything with you." Junsu said. "I don't want to share you with anyone. I don't know if I ever would be able to watch you walk out of the door on a date with someone else. Seeing you cry in that movie... it hurt and then, it made me happy because I could kiss that tear away and make you smile."

"You could always make me smile, Junnie-ah." Yoochun reminded him. "We're...friends."

"We're more than friends, Park Yoochun." Junsu corrected him. "When we... were separated because of Yunho and Jaejoong's stupidity, I hurt. It hurt me to know that you were sleeping too far away from me. The only thing that I had of you was a lavender bunny and I don't think it can hold any more of my tears. I would wake up and find it soaked and all I could think about was... God, Chunnie-ah... my Yoochun has nothing to hold and soak up his tears. Because I hoped that you shed as many as I did. I pray to God you hurt as much as I did."

"More, Junsu...much more." Yoochun smiled, a beacon of moonlight in Junsu's night. "I cry easier, remember?"

"I don't want that, Yoochun." Junsu swore, bringing himself closer to the other man, their hips running warm against one another. "I never ever want to be the reason you cry. Ever again."

"We're going to make one another cry." Yoochun warned him. "Weeping comes with laughter. It's how you know one from the other. I love you, Junsu. I can't change that and it's never going to be perfect. I think we both know that too."

"I know. Please forgive me for being such an idiot and not saying this sooner." Junsu pressed his mouth on Yoochun's, wanting to feel the brush of the other's body warm on him as he whispered something he never thought he would ever say to another human being. "I love you too, Yoochun...very much."

15

Yoochun lay back in his bed, the covers pulled up over his hips. Listening to the sounds of the shower from the bathroom he shared with Junsu, he drifted on the fatigue of his body, the long day spent singing, interviewing colliding with the tentative exhilaration of the evening's date. His briefs felt too tight on his body, a result more of his mind wandering over to where he imagined could imagine Junsu washing the soap bubbles from his legs.

"What are you thinking about?" Junsu asked, coming into the room. He'd dressed in a pair of boxers before leaving the bathroom, more for his own sanity than any concern about Yoochun's lascivious stares.

"You." Yoochun replied. He turned over onto his side, backing up against the wall. Junsu knelt on the edge of the other's bed, his feet brushing his own bed. The tenor pursed his mouth into a sexy pout, exaggerating Jaejoong's sensuality. "Now you look silly doing that."

"I don't know how he does it and not look silly." Junsu wrinkled his nose, trying to jut out his lower lip. "I just end up looking like a carp searching for food."

"It's because Joongie-ah isn't serious when he does it." Micky said. "He's usually only playing."

"I can't tell you what movie we watched." Junsu admitted, shoving the hair back from his face. The cherubic innocence he affected had been left outside of their apartment, a young man confident in his abilities and the cockiness of a youthful arrogance in his smile.

"Iris." Yoochun traced through a water drop on Junsu's chest, lightly catching the areole with a rake of his nail. "Now I'm going to have to see it again to find out how it ends."

"Aish, Micky." Junsu's breath shortened, the brush of Yoochun's fingers on his side catching him unaware. "Bed, remember? Just sleeping. You made me promise and now... you're doing this to me? At least for two weeks. You touching me.. makes me... crazy and makes me want... more."

"Do you think we're going to last two weeks?" Yoochun murmured, bending forward and ghosting a breath across Junsu's belly. "Just seeing you makes me want to ... see what we can do to each other."

Water drops glistened along the singer's toned stomach, small moist stars on a golden sky. Micky tasted a tiny dewdrop, scented lavender from Junsu's

soap and honeyed from the erotic texture of the young man's skin. Moving his hands down to Junsu's hips, Yoochun fell into sweetness of licking at the constellations beading under the other's navel, a thirst growing in his throat with each suckling spot covered with his mouth.

Having never tasted another man before, Yoochun first gulped at the moisture then as his body grew heavy and thick with desire, he slowed to leisurely explore the offering under his tongue. Junsu's soft moan and the feel of fingers along Micky's scalp encouraged Yoochun to continue, his teeth finding just the hint of a ridge trailing down from Junsu's belly button.

"I want to try this." Micky said, a whispered plea crawling out of his eros-shrouded pride. "Let me... just see how you are."

"God, yes." Junsu responded, his spine arched back in anticipation of Yoochun's mouth.

The first dip of Yoochun's finger threatened to tear the elastic from Junsu's slender waist, the tenor's protesting cry reminding Micky of their pledge. A danger of falling straight into the physical of their relationship threatened the balance of their friendship, both headstrong in their own ways, focused on a goal and sometimes neglecting the velvety comfort of leisure. Junsu remained adamant in securing enough time for their bond to grow, not wanting Yoochun to become a disposable habit, as their other relationships often turned out to be. Yoochun agreed with the reasoning in his mind but the fire coursing over his body had other thoughts of its own.

Spanning Junsu's ribs, Yoochun's lips followed the curve of a muscle down Junsu's side, pulling his attention down to the other's slender hips. Responding warmth promised succor beyond the slack of Junsu's boxers, the fabric slightly strained as his passion for Micky's touch increased. One of Yoochun's hands wandered, dangerously curving over the cusp of Junsu's backside, cupping at the hard muscles dimpled from years of dancing. A trailing kiss along the elastic of the tenor's boxers ground another tight moan from Junsu's chest, the young man swaying as he closed his eyes, letting the sensation of Yoochun's tongue pull him spiraling down into a velvet darkness.

"You taste...so good." Yoochun murmured, his words frosted with Junsu's musk. Micky felt the weeping response of his sex pulsating between his legs, his hip firm on the mattress. He wanted nothing more than to pull Junsu onto the bed, taking the night to explore every inch of flesh the young man was willing to give him but they'd promise... time to one another, a vow Micky was learning to regret.

He remembered the terrorized pain in Jaejoong's eyes on the night that Yunho's angered lust overriding the loving tenderness the leader had shown up to that point. That bruising pain had a familiar home in Jae's eyes, a long time resident hidden behind a hard shell. Junsu's eyes held no such anguish, just the joy of experiencing life with an open and accepting heart.

Lavender Bunny

Yoochun would be damned if he was the first one to leave the stain of doubt and pain on Junsu's soul.

"Chunnie..." Junsu strangled the air in his throat, trying to form his lover's name. The finality of their...bond struck home in that instant. He would never want to give up... the potent eroticism of Yoochun's mouth on him, however...wherever the other might touch... the feel of it was heady and powerful. Junsu wondered if he would have the same control... that maddening seductive purr of touch... Yoochun's body.

An answer that came when Junsu reached forward to touch the soft skin of Yoochun's inner thigh and the young man pushed his hips forward, needing the contact as if their passion was a rain on parched desert sands. The flesh there felt smooth, nearly soft and downy. Junsu imagined kissing there, wondering if the powdery musk of sex lingered so close on the pale stretch of skin or if it held the caramel scent of Yoochun's lips.

Yoochun's fingers found the soft tip of Junsu's sex, its moistness beading just at the pout of its head. Tucked under the silk of his boxers, Junsu gasped at the sliding feel of the material over his body, a cocoon of heat formed as Micky's hand closed over the end. Stroking softly, Yoochun coaxed Junsu's passion with his fingers before touching carefully at the bulb with the edge of his tongue, wetting the fabric with the remnants of water drops stolen from Junsu's stomach and the moistness of his own mouth.

"I can taste... you through..." Yoochun lost words, the first sting of salty-sweet on his tongue.

The flavour of Junsu's body surprised him, sticky wet and pungently firm. Mingled with his own spit, Micky pushed the purloined flavours onto the roof of his mouth, spreading it over onto his tongue. Spice lay there, a heat reminiscent of the clove cigarettes he coveted. There was a hint of sin... more than a spoonful of temptation and an entire universe of love, a gift of stars exploding in the back of his throat as Yoochun reluctantly allowed the taste to flow into his body.

"I need to..." Junsu whispered, bending around Yoochun's shoulders and kissing at the dapple of light freckles barely visible at the base of Micky's spine. Wrapped down over the other's body, Junsu kissed and nipped at the spot, fulfilling the want of tasting.

His teeth raked at the spot, pulling harder and biting firmly into Yoochun's back as the baritone laved through the weave of Junsu's boxers. A bloom of purple formed, unfurling along the ridge of Yoochun's spine with each hard nip of Junsu's teeth. Micky hissed against the flat of Junsu's thigh, his forehead pressed sideways against the curve of the tenor's heat, panting hard before drawing another sip from Junsu's body.

The feel of Yoochun's mouth around the rigid head of Junsu's sex, the sensitive tip rubbed tense from the tingling nerves that bundled and clenched under Micky's lavage. Yoochun found the firm line of a vein pulsing around

Junsu's length, following the path back down to the crux of the tenor's thighs then back again, unhurriedly roaming each inch he found hidden from him. Junsu's hands kneaded the back of Yoochun's neck, guiding him with gentle fingers while Junsu's rough hoarse murmurs rubbing raw desire on Yoochun's soul.

Under Micky's tongue, Junsu lost control of his body, a spasm racking through his muscles. Straightening, Junsu thrust his hips forward, rocking slowly against the brush of Yoochun's mouth, wanting to delve deeper into the hot chamber but prevented by the restrictive material around his hips. Sighing, Junsu gripped at Yoochun's shoulders, digging deep into the muscles stretched taut by Micky's firm grasp.

Cradling the singer in tight against his body, Yoochun gently arranged a replete Junsu onto the bed besides him, slowly stroking circles on the tenor's abdomen as the other leaned into Yoochun's shoulder. Gasping aloud, Junsu breathed a final sigh, the trembling thin pluck of his nerves running a bold copper taint through his body. Junsu hurt with the intense pleasure, nearly weeping as the final spasm of release grabbed at his guts, his hips twitching and aching with the ghost of Yoochun's touch lingering along his body.

"Fuck." Junsu breathed, unable to catch any air into his tortured lungs. He'd not realized the breath in his chest had gone stale, forgotten and trapped under the lure of Yoochun's pleasuring. Now, depleted of oxygen, he gasped, struggling to gain control of the tremors in his limbs, wondering if he would ever be able to see without the criss-cross stars of his spilled desire in his vision.

"You okay, Junnie-ah?" Yoochun's worried look made Junsu grin, the wonderment of sensations still flowing through his loins.

"I'm more than fine, Chunnie-ah." Junsu ached, reaching for Yoochun's waistband then frowning when the other shook his head and clasped his fingers over Junsu's wrist. "Let me. Equal, remember?"

"I lost..." Yoochun grinned, bashful as he snugged up against his lover, exhaustion claiming him. "As soon as I had you on my tongue, my body gave in. You took care of me more than once. I think I owe you more."

"God no." Junsu tangled his arms about Yoochun's waist, his lashes brushing Micky's cheek. "I won't be able to survive more. You touch me again and I don't think I'll have any left in my body but gel. You make me... feel alive and then, it's like I kissed the stars. No, definitely not touching me again tonight."

"Okay." Yoochun gave Junsu a final kiss, taking the other's breath away with the taste of their bodies blended firm and sweet in Micky's mouth. "But we'll just have to start this all over again tomorrow."

Bending over, lightly pulling from Junsu's grasp, Micky bit hard on the rise of Junsu's hip bone, leaving a dark welt forming on the skin. Jumping slightly,

Lavender Bunny

Junsu hissed with the sharp pain, his eyes wide with shock when Yoochun returned to cuddle him tight.

"What was that for?" The tenor rubbed at the spot, the mark of Yoochun's teeth ripening the flesh with a hot burn.

"That's so I remember where I left off...so I can find it tomorrow." Yoochun clasped his hand over Junsu's fingers, guiding the other to the small of his back. An echoing heat ran a swath over the baritone's spine, rises of bruised marks dappling the area. "That's where you left off. I think it's only fair that I mark you so I can remember. Equal... in everything, Junsu. Very much equal."

* * *

A warm spot was all there was of Yunho, Jaejoong's arm reaching for his lover in a slumberous embrace and finding emptiness instead. Six months ago, he would have panicked, his heartbeat racing and foul thoughts of abandonment hooking poisoned claws into his mind but now, Jaejoong sleepily wondered what drew Yunho out of the cozy warmth of their shared bed.

Reaching for the pull of a nightstand lamp, Jaejoong lit a golden glow near their bed. The green tea scent of Yunho's cologne drew him towards one of the feather pillows, his lover's warmth slowly fading from its cotton case. Grabbing the soft pillow, Jae tucked his chin into its comfort, waiting for Yunho to rejoin him.

"Hey Boo." Yunho slipped into the room, shutting the door behind him. Padding to the edge of their bed, the young man climbed in behind Jaejoong, spooning the other after kissing Jae between the shoulder blades. "I didn't mean to wake you. I had to use the bathroom then I thought I'd make sure that Changmin went to bed. I saw a light on under his door."

"It's late." Jae glanced at the analog clock on the wall, the early morning hours barely into the single digits. The night outside was thick with darkness, the city asleep beyond. "Did you send him to sleep?"

"He was passed out on his bed. I marked the book he was reading and turned off his light." Yunho smiled, his face hidden in the wealth of Jaejoong's hair. "I was nearly back to our bed before I realized I'd forgotten to go to the bathroom."

"Our sheets thank you." Jaejoong curved his hands over Yunho's forearms, stroking at the golden hairs lightly covering the other's skin. "Well, me too."

"It's so quiet outside." The leader nested tighter against his lover, listening to the beat of Jaejoong's heart against his own chest.

They'd collapsed into bed that evening, Jaejoong's headache worked loose but leaving him groggy. Yunho's weariness challenged his every step, barely able to stumble into the shower where the hot water pulled fatigue from him

long enough for Yunho to gather food for their dinner. Changmin's help with their meal was welcome, Yunho's cooking skills were poor compared to the rest of the group. Sliced vegetables and meats over purple rice cheered Jaejoong immensely, Yunho's offer of a simple meal rewarded with a long, simmering kiss from the sensual young man he'd fallen in love with. Bed soon followed, the dishes left soaking for the morning, the leader waving Changmin off to his own bed.

"I heard a shower." Yunho said softly, feeling sleep tugging gently at his mind. "The other two are home. No blood on the floor or any punched walls so I'm guessing that things are okay between them."

"Good." Jae whispered. The heat of Yunho's body made him sleepier but the comfort of the other against him made him reluctant to fall back into slumber. "I worried about Chunnie-ah. His heart is so... soft. Junsu sometimes cuts without realizing he's holding a knife."

"There seems to be a lot of pain when someone falls in love." Yunho sighed. "Everything you read or watch says that love is this sparkling happy time when there are roses blooming under your feet. What they don't show is when you are so angry over something stupid like your lover picking the onions out of his food that you spent hours making."

"I did not pick any onions out of my food." Jae sniffed then grinned at Yunho's teeth sinking lightly into the nape of his neck. "You're the one who picks things out. Mushrooms, squash... and mung beans. Who doesn't like mung beans?"

"Sometimes I just don't want them." Yunho defended himself, licking at the spot he'd bitten. "Besides, you love mushrooms. More for you."

A trill of a song played from the night stand, the instrumental behind Jae's section vibrating the cell phone. Grimacing, Jae reached for the phone, handing it over to Yunho. Frowning, the young man took it from his lover, concern on his handsome face. The singer blanched at the calling number, an expression shared by the leader. Yunho's stomach clenched in fear, flipping the cell open as Jae turned over onto his back, his hand resting on Yunho's chest, anticipating bad news.

"Hello?" Yunho answered. "Is everything okay?"

"I'm sorry to call so late." Mrs. Jung's voice was soft, apologetic and blurred from lack of sleep. "I just needed to see how you were doing. I couldn't... I saw you on a broadcast and all I could think was that you looked so... worn. And then, here I call you... so late. I'm sorry, Yunho, I wasn't thinking..."

"It's okay, umma." Yunho reassured his mother. "I was just concerned because it's late. Are you alright?"

The diminutive affection made Jaejoong smile, hearing the love in his boyfriend's voice. Resting his cheek on Yunho's shoulder, he motioned towards the door, asking Yunho if the leader wanted him to leave. Yunho

Lavender Bunny

shook his head, his hand clasped firmly on Jaejoong's hip. Yunho missed what his mother said, the whispering feminine voice hard to hear through the phone speaker.

"I'm sorry, umma." Yunho stroked along Jae's cheek, leaving a kiss on his lover's forehead before continuing. "I didn't hear you."

"I didn't mean to wake you up." Mrs. Jung said. "Or Kim Jaejoong. I'm assuming..."

"No, both of us were up." Yunho steeled himself for a conflict, his body tensing under Jae's touch. The singer leaned in tight, wrapping his arm around Yunho's waist, holding him close.

"I'm not...interrupting anything." Yunho could swear he heard his mother blush through the phone, her hesitant voice nearly a match for his own when he spoke to Junsu that evening. "I... oh..."

"No, I just was checking on the house." The young man replied. "I'm afraid I woke Jaejoong so we were just talking a bit. Did you just call to make sure I was okay? Or for something else?"

"I... wanted to meet with you." She said. "With both of you."

"And Father?"

"No, I didn't tell him...anything." Mrs. Jung answered. "I miss you, Yunnies. I want to see my son. I don't want to have to choose between my son and my husband. I... gave birth to you. I carried you and took care of you when you were... so sick. You depended on me for so long and now, I look around for the young man I raised and he's not there. It... is a painful thing to experience. It is worse than if you died."

"You made that choice, umma." Yunho reminded her softly. "I never closed the door to you. You decided to do that when you wouldn't leave it open wide enough for Jaejoong."

"I know. I was...wrong." His mother's quiet sob broke Yunho's heart. Shutting his eyes against the pain of his mother's anguish, Yunho's soul was lifted by the gentle brush of Jae's lips on his mouth. When he was able to, he met his lover's gaze, thanking whichever heaven decided to allow him to have his very own angel. "I just miss... having you in my life, Yunho. It's too hard."

"What do you want to do, Mother?" Yunho's eyes stung but he refused to allow the tears to fall, yanked free from his sorrow. Jaejoong held his heart now, the gentle fierce soul both a comfort and a shield from the world.

"I want to see you." The woman said, softly. "I'm in Seoul. I told your father... I was coming to see a friend. Are you still a friend, my son?"

"Always." Yunho promised, his aching soul reaching out for his lover's. The brushing placation of Jae's presence soothed Yunho's pain. "But..."

"I know... I want you to bring Jaejoong with you." She said, a whispering consolation that eased Yunho's bundled anguish. "I should get to know... your... what do I call him?"

"Lover... boyfriend." Yunho grinned at his mother's slight discomfort. Her searching tone for some reason lightened their mood, a wash of humour in his voice. "Sometimes a few other words my mother shouldn't know that I say."

"Your father is often...those words." His mother's smile could be heard, even through the crackle of their phone line. "I am at the hotel. Can you meet me there? Tomorrow some time?"

"Let me check with Jae...if he wants to come and what time." Yunho pressed the mute button, about to ask his lover when Jaejoong pressed his fingertips over the leader's lips.

"I would follow you any where, love." Jae said. "Into the fires of Hell if you needed me. Any time. Any where."

"Thank you, baby. I can't even tell you how much I love you." Yunho sucked lightly on Jae's fingers.

"Get off the phone." Jae nibbled at the column of Yunho's neck. "And you can show me how much."

"Any time, umma." Yunho replied. He listened briefly and agreed to a time, shutting the phone after he said goodbye. Leaning over Jaejoong's prone body to place the cell on the table, Yunho remained lying on his lover's lean frame, covering the young man with his own body. "I do love you, Boo. You make everything in this world... just so much better. I'm glad you're mine. Remember that."

"I do remember that..." Jaejoong's hands wandered, finding the waistband of Yunho's loose cotton pants, undoing the drawstring holding them up. "So long as you remember that you're mine as well. You talk too much, Yunniah. Your mouth should be doing other things. There are spots on my body that miss your tongue. I'll point them out for you."

16

With his headphones on and eyes closed, Junsu lay back on his bed, stretched out for a few hours of lazing around while the others did other things. Rarely alone in the apartment, he reveled in the scant time he could spend alone, something he'd found was a necessity for his well-being. In their old apartment, he'd fled to anywhere quiet, often holing up in the outer alcove of the bathroom for some inner peace. Being alone gave his mind time to wander, often brushing on things that he needed to do or to daydream on what he wanted to be.

The conversation with Junho went well, his older brother listening to his ramblings about Yoochun and offering advice. Despite being more traditional in his ways than Junsu, the young man supported the singer's decision in loving Yoochun, reasoning to his younger brother that life was too short and a man had to make happiness where he could find it.

Their parents, already inured to their younger son's proclivities, would easily welcome the affectionate Yoochun, a good match for the often too serious, private Junsu they knew. Junho left the conversation with soothing words, hoping the best for his brother and wishing Junsu would share more of who he was inside with the world. Only good would come of that, the other said before reminding his brother that he loved him. Thinking back on the call, Junsu smiled, letting the music playing softly in his ears carry him off towards another train of thought.

A hand on his bare toes startled him, the shake jostling Junsu from his musings. Cracking open an eye, he inwardly groaned at the sight of Changmin standing at the end of his bed, the younger member's face set for discussion. Mentally kissing away his quiet morning, Junsu gave the boy a quick smile, sitting up and resigning himself to a lengthy conversation.

Sitting down on Yoochun's mattress, Min waited for Junsu to slide the headphones from his head. "I wanted to say that I'm sorry for... pushing myself on you. I... took some things... wrong and I needed to..."

"Ah, Min." The tenor grasped at the younger man's hands, cupping his palms over Changmin's fingers. "You don't owe me an apology."

"No, I think I do." Changmin's eyes narrowed slightly. Once again the stigma of being the baby in the group reared up, the dismissive pat on his hands indicative of Junsu's mindset. "Let me finish, hyung. Please. Before I get too tired of saying that."

“Jaejoong told me about you and Yoochun.” Min spoke softly, his words chosen carefully. Watching Junsu’s face, the younger man sighed at the look of relief crossing quickly over the other’s features. “I’m not going to take back what I said, Junnie-ah. I can’t say that I don’t feel...something for you because I do.”

“Minnie-ah...” Junsu’s mouth was cut off by Min’s fingers on his lips, sealing the words before they were spoken.

“Nope. I’m talking.” Changmin shook his head. “I’m not a child, Junsu. I wanted to tell you that. No matter what you think about me... I’m not a child. I’m going to make mistakes and I’m going to feel things that I’m going to have to work through, but those will be my mistakes...and my emotions. It doesn’t make me any less than you or the others.”

“I know, Min.” Junsu lightly kissed the other’s fingertips, reaching out to cup the back of the younger man’s head. Changmin’s hair was soft to Junsu’s touch, a delicate kiss of fine silk burnished with gold. “I... didn’t mean to... treat you differently. It’s just that you are... younger. So much of what the four of us do together, you haven’t done or aren’t old enough yet.”

“I am.” Changmin reassured him. “I might not choose to drink soju until I fall down dizzy or throw up...”

“Well, you pass out.” Junsu remarked, reminding the young man with a sly grin.

“Or pass out.” Min slanted a cutting look at his friend. “But that doesn’t mean I should be coddled. I don’t ask for that. I don’t want it. There’s only a couple of years between us. I’m the same age in this group... at a time when you were still in training and wondering if you were ever going to be placed. I deserve that respect for making it here. I am sorry that I have to demand it.”

“No, you shouldn’t have to demand it. We should have given it to you.” Junsu agreed. “It is different dealing with you than the others. You know that, yes?”

“I do.” Changmin said, a rueful smile on his face when Junsu slid over onto Micky’s bed, nestling back until they both sat against the wall.

Junsu brought the disreputable carnival bunny with him, its button eyes sadly mismatched and bobbling. Placing its lavender furred body between his legs, Junsu played with its ears, listening to Changmin’s dulcet tone.

“I don’t want to be different.” Min rested his temple on Junsu’s shoulder.

The touch of the other on his cheek gentled the turbulence in his soul, a rocking swing of emotions in his mind. It hurt to be so near the tenor, to have Junsu’s scent on his hands but not on the tip of his tongue. Regrettably, Changmin tried to set aside his feelings once more, for once, glad for his spot between Yunho and Jaejoong in the group line-up. Distance would be welcome for the time being, until he could gain some control over the pangs of loss he experienced whenever the other man was near.

Lavender Bunny

"Jaejoong told me that... being nearly an adult means having intense feelings about things and that I shouldn't let my emotions flare... that they were like sunspots... burning hotter than I should because I haven't learned to moderate how I feel." Changmin twisted the bunny's ear tip between his fingers, letting the soft feathery plush run over his hand. "It's easier to say that I can't let it happen than it is to actually keep it from happening."

"We all are like that. Or were." Junsu remarked. "I remember being so angry at one of the trainees for taking my shoes. I wanted to kill him...literally kill him and it took me so long to remember that I was being silly. So, I think the worst part about being young is... not knowing how to deal with all of the changes to your heart and soul. Everything is so much brighter or louder and you never know how to... bleed off what you don't need."

"You feel everything at once and fully." Changmin murmured. The tenor nodded, concurring with Min's assessment. "I hate it. I just wish that it would go away or let me just... be like the rest of you."

"It's never going to stop being like that, Minnie-ah." Junsu grimaced at the other's wrinkled nose. "We're... all temperamental. We're artists. I imagine it's worse for people who are solo artists because there's no one around them that understands how hard it is. At least with the five of us, we've become a family... tight and one... not divided because of egos. We take our tempers and our perfections to push towards one goal. That's what makes us stronger."

"You sound like Yunho." The youngest laughed, his smile brilliant with a tint of sadness.

"Ah, now you're just being mean." Junsu lightly punched Changmin's thigh. "If it makes you feel any better, you're the most mature of us. The four of us sometimes act like children and you're always the one that can remind us to behave."

"Only not on camera. Yunho is very much the leader then." Changmin reminded him. "No arguing then."

"No, not then." Junsu agreed. "But just once, wouldn't you like to stick your tongue out at him when he's being very serious. Just to see his face?"

"What?" Changmin sat up, alarmed. "And have Jaejoong poison our food? I'll rather just be the good boy standing there trapped between them while they grab at each other. It makes for good blackmail later when I need something."

"See?" Junsu hooked his arm over Min's head, pulling him down into the mattress, tickling him lightly and laughing at the younger man's squeaks. "That's why you get treated like a bratty younger brother!"

They nearly toppled off the bed, tangled into each others' limbs, Junsu's face nearly beet red with laughter while Min's eyes were blind with tears. Unheard, Jaejoong entered the room, stopping at the doorway to stare at the

two younger men. Sighing, the eldest leaned on the frame, crossing his arms on his chest and waited until their boisterous laughter subsided.

Giving both of the singers a dirty look, Jae teased. "Didn't we already do this? Do I have to get a bucket of cold water?"

"No, umma." Changmin broke free of Junsu's grasp, scrambling over the tenor and past the eldest member, slipping out of Jaejoong's reach. Calling out behind him, Min shouted. "You can save the bucket for Susu-an and Chunnie. They'll be needing it."

Jaejoong smiled at Junsu, holding his hand out for the younger man to grab and helped him to his feet. Brushing off the seat of his pants, Junsu grinned at Jae through the mess of his hair, grabbing at the bunny and placing it firmly on Yoochun's pillow.

"It's good to see him laugh." Junsu said, wrapping the cord around his headphones, his quiet time shattered and reformed with Changmin's giggles.

"It is, Junnie-ah." Jaejoong nodded, his pretty face thoughtful for a long moment. "Nearly as good as it is to hear you laugh as well. Now come on, Yunho made lunch. At least we'll all be happy before Yunho's cooking kill us. I suppose indigestion is better than sorrow."

"Why do you let him cook?" Junsu complained, dragging his feet out of the door and stomping down the hall after Jaejoong. "He's horrible at it. You should have made lunch. You make lunch. The rest of us wash dishes. Everyone lives to see another day."

"He's trying to be... equal." The singer rolled his eyes, shaking his head in mild disgust. "Something I think you said to him. When you're choking on your food, just remember, you spiced the dish first"

"We're going to eat every scrap of food that Yunho has made and smile... so we're equals." Jae pushed the younger man towards the dining area, Changmin already setting the table for their meal. "You should think more with your stomach than your mind, Junsu. So far, your brain hasn't been a good friend. And if we get sick, then it's going to be your only friend."

* * *

"Park Yoochun?" Pulled from reading the menu of a take out place, Yoochun looked around, curious about who would be calling his name on a busy Seoul street.

He'd fled the house after lunch, barely hiding the food on his plate beneath a napkin. Yunho's rice was nearly black on the bottom, the egg mixture he'd poured into the pot sinking straight through the grains and onto the unoiled skillet. All things considered, the smoke easily dissipated once the windows were open but the rotten sickly smell of charred fish turned the others'

Lavender Bunny

appetites, leaving Yoochun with a hunger that he told Junsu he'd sate elsewhere.

An older man, his face worn tight with a sour temple stepped from the crowd of people waiting for their orders. His barrel-chest puffed out the fine cut of his suit, thick black hair greased back from his forehead. His thin lips were pressed tight, a sense of displeasure in the way he walked towards Yoochun, hands swinging near his tense hips.

Yoochun's chin came up, caution tightening his chest as Yunho's father approached. Warily, the singer stepped clear of the ordering window, not wanting to be trapped against the side wall. He couldn't see anything of Yunho in Mr. Jung's face or walk. None of the hidden goofiness Yunho could have when he was in a playful mood and certainly none of the tenderness the leader showed to Jaejoong when he thought none of the others were watching. The disparity of the Jungs' body language was significant, Yunho's stalwart solidity a sharp contrast to the man's extended bitterness towards the world.

"You are Park Yoochun, yes?" Authoritative, Jung spoke as if he was unused to anyone challenging him, his eyes devoid of warmth. "I need to speak with you."

"I'm not very close to Yunho." Yoochun inclined his head in slight respect. "I am afraid that if you need someone to mediate, you should speak to him directly or approach Jaejoong. Perhaps your wife even.."

"I'd prefer to have this discussion someplace private." Jung motioned to where a sleek, black town car waited by the curb. "My wife is visiting with friends. I took the time to come to speak to you directly rather than my son."

Yoochun felt an unease in his belly at the sight of the car, a whispering cautionary tingle at the base of his skull. A wood slat bench sat on a knoll near the side of the park, the singer pointing towards the seating. "We can go over there if you like. It's a nice day. I'd rather be outside."

Jung sat first, not waiting for the young man to become comfortable before handing Yoochun a manila envelope. Curious, Micky opened the tab, shaking out the contents and spreading them onto his lap. He glanced up expectantly at the older man before inspecting the pages, a small smile on his mouth when he was greeted with a photo of a gleeful smile on Jaejoong's face.

It was a rare moment when the joy in Jae's torn soul healed long enough under the brilliance of his child-like laughter. Even rarer for those few seconds to be caught on film. Naked to the waist and the wind blowing at the fringe along his forehead, Jaejoong's hands were gripping at his drawn up knees, dark amber-flecked eyes staring off at something in the distance.

Some photos showed he and Yoochun walking down the winding path through the park's hills while others captured their sharing an orange, licking

at the juices on their hands and even holding the memory of a kiss Jaejoong gave him, stealing a boba pearl from Yoochun's mouth. It was obvious they were taken on different days, clothing and shadows changing from morning to afternoon but the constant was the deep friendship of the two singers, frozen on paper and gel.

"How long have you been fucking my son's catamite?" Jung's words were ice on Micky's heart, a study in hatred tempered through the man's voice. "Does Yunho know that the whore sleeps with both of you or maybe this just some game where he spreads his legs for one or the other, depending on which day? Maybe if you convince that whore to leave my son alone..."

Yoochun's fist suddenly hurt, his clenched fingers pounding with pain. A dry, searing heat cut over his knuckles, the joints swelling from the impact against Jung's face. Micky blinked, finding himself standing over the older man's prone body, Jung's suit smeared with the moist yellow dirt from under the bench's iron legs.

"Get the fuck up." Yoochun's rage spread through him, a wild fire catching on the kindling of his love for his best friend. "Get up so I can hit you again."

"Is this how you treat your elders? Is this how they raise their sons in America?" Jung spat back, his hand slipping out from under him as he attempted to get to his feet. Yoochun held himself back, stepping away from the other man in an attempt to calm himself.

"Kim Jaejoong is the best thing that ever happened to the man you used to call your son." Micky didn't bother keeping his voice down. "Jung Yunho is a better man for having Jaejoong in his life. Yunnies will never want for someone to care for him or wonder if his lover will walk out on him because he does something Jae might not approve of. That kind of love should come from a parent. That is what someone should know before they offer their heart to someone else. It's your shame that Yunho had to get that from Jaejoong."

With the filth pouring from Jung's mouth, Yoochun chose to disregard any concern he might have for appearances, refusing to suffer the arrogance and stupidity of the man he'd hit, despite every teaching drilled into his head about respect. Micky no longer cared if someone spotted him and recognized him as a member of a singing group and he was certain that none of the others, save Jae himself, would care if their group failed because of it. The man lying on the ground lost any right to anything when he spoke of the hyungs he loved as family.

"I'm taking these." Micky grabbed at the photos, shoving them back into the envelope. "Not because I am ashamed of my relationship with Jaejoong but because I am proud of it. I'm glad for these photos because it shows how much I love Jae and how much he loves me. I have been blessed with that because no one loves as fully or openly as Kim Jaejoong."

Lavender Bunny

"If you want the truth, I'm thankful every day that Joongie-ah fell in love with Yunho so your son would know what love really is like." Waving the envelope in front of Jung's face, Yoochun leaned over, his face ugly with anger and spat, hitting the man's cheek with a flare of spittle. "Not the disgusting manipulation you seem to think it means but what it really is. I can only hope that your wife had a lover so none of your blood is in Yunho's veins. I certainly see none of it in his heart."

17

Ice hurt when put on bruised hands. Yoochun discovered that the moment Junsu wrapped the frozen gel pack over his skinned knuckles. He also discovered that blowing on cut open skin stopped the pain but that despite his training as a singer, he couldn't keep it up indefinitely, the burning sear returning as soon as his breath panted to a whisper. Lack of air in his lungs made him dizzy, a situation that wasn't helped by Junsu's warm body sliding over his lap and legs.

"Stop moving." Junsu warned his lover, patting the skin dry around Yoochun's palm, trying to hold the pack in place for a minute then lifting it back up, glad his brother had endured similar traumas. "I can't believe you hit Yunho's father. You might have broke your hand."

"I told you what he said." Yoochun protested, the sting leeching down into his bones. "What else was I going to do?"

Junsu met Yoochun at the door, the tenor gasping aloud at the sight of Yoochun's hand. Dragging the baritone into the living room, he'd left Yoochun alone only long enough to gather first aid supplies to take care of the slices across his lover's knuckles. Bruises already had begun to spread under Yoochun's skin, the joints swelling tightly, making it difficult for the singer to clench his hand. Speckles of blood clotted the cuts nearly close, reopening whenever Yoochun moved his fingers.

Cradling his elbow, Yoochun let Junsu fuss over him, grimacing as Changmin joined them. He balked at sharing the incident with the younger member, the youth insisting as he took the envelope from Yoochun's nerveless fingers. Junsu straddled Yoochun's thighs, holding his lover still as he prodded at the cuts, wiping them clean with an antibiotic swab before

"I'm surprised you knew what a catamite was." Min muttered as he opened the envelope, pulling the photos free.

"Okay, I'll have to admit... I have to look that one up. It didn't sound nice and then he said...whore. So I didn't have to worry about what catamite meant anymore." Yoochun made a face at Junsu's questioning look, shrugging at his lover while Changmin was distracted. "To tell the truth, I stopped hearing what he said after a few seconds. I just... hit. I'm the gentle one, remember? I've never hit anyone like that...not even my brother."

Lavender Bunny

"Well the least you could have done was break his nose." Junsu shook his head, hissing at Yoochun's boldness. "Or blacken his eye. Did you at least do that?"

"He might have a bruise on his cheek." Yoochun thought hard, trying to remember where Mr. Jung had touched on his face. "Or his lip. I don't know, Junnie. I wasn't thinking about where I hit him. I think I was just... so pissed off and then...bam. Next time, I'll aim better... just for you."

"These are nice pictures of you and Jaejoong." Changmin sat on the couch, pulling his bare feet up to rest on the coffee table. "The photographer is really good. I wonder if he knew that what he was doing was for someone who was an asshole. Or if he is one of those sleazes that likes spying on young men."

"Minnie-ah!" Junsu glanced over his shoulder, staring down at the photo. He coveted one of Yoochun, the sun hitting his lover's smile, touching the gold strands in his hair. "Okay, yes, those are nice pictures but Yoochun hit Yunho's father! We don't know how he's going to react to that."

"He called Jaejoong a whore." Yoochun hissed, the ice pack slowly numbing his hand. "I couldn't just let that go then all of a sudden, my hand hurt and I just wanted to hit him again. Harder. And then kick him. Maybe a couple of times. Punching him felt good. I'd do it again."

"He's...old!" Changmin exclaimed, turning one of the photos around, smiling at the expression on Jaejoong's upturned face as rain struck his lightly tanned face. "You're not supposed to hit old people."

"He's not that old." Junsu muttered, dark thoughts clouding his mind. "If you're going to say things like that against one of us, then you have to deal with the rest of the group. You were right to hit him, Chunnie-ah...even if I can't believe you did it."

"It was easy." Yoochun frowned. "And hard. After I was done being mad, all I could do was worry about the rest of you. I'm an idiot. I wasn't thinking about the group... well, I thought about the group but it was mostly... I'm sure they won't mind."

"Do you mind?" Yoochun looked up at his lover, Junsu still bent over his hand.

"No, I don't mind. I'm concerned but we can't let someone try to bully any of us. Yunho will be madder than you were, Chunnie." The other man's eyes flicked briefly over Micky's worried face before straightening, leaning forward to brush a tiny kiss on Yoochun's nose. "Mr. Jung has had enough of a head start. It will take Yunho a little bit of time to get to him and Yunnie-ah might be less pissed off by then."

"Yunho might not want to see some of these." Changmin held up a picture of Jaejoong leaning over Yoochun's stomach, trailing an ice cube over the baritone's bare torso. Jae's erotic features and the sheer bliss on Micky's face told a very different story of their relationship, a moment captured by an

uninformed eye. "And I'm not sure I should either... even if I think I'm old enough."

Junsu frowned at the picture, a barb of jealousy hooking into the bottom of his heart. He tried looking away but Yoochun's fingers on his chin stopped him from turning his head. The baritone leaned forward, sliding his tongue over Junsu's mouth and parting his lips, savouring a long taste of the tenor's moistness. Changmin looked away, a slight pain dusting his dark gaze. Concentrating on the photo in his lap, the youngest bit on his lip, fighting back a tear that threatened to crack through his composure.

"The sad thing is, I'm still hungry. I never got anything to eat." Yoochun grumbled, drawing Junsu's attention back. "But the house doesn't smell any more."

"What are we going to do, hyung?" Min asked, placing the photos on the glass table. "Mr. Jung thinks that Jaejoong is some kind of... I'd say whore but I don't want Chunnie-ah to punch me."

"No, no punching the Min." Junsu moved off of Yoochun's lap, grabbing at the kitchen towel he'd brought with him and tamping the moisture leaking down his lover's arm. "I think we should call Yunho and tell him because he's meeting with his mother."

"Aish." Yoochun winced. "That would be a bad phone call to make right now."

"Do you think she knew that her husband was going to... approached Yoochun?" Changmin asked. The situation worried him, Jaejoong's fragile hold on his happiness too new to withstand a beating. "Is that why she called Yunho? To draw him away?"

"No..." Micky replied, trying to move his fingers as Junsu pulled the ice pack off of his abused hand. "Mr. Jung said his wife was meeting a friend. I think he's cruel enough to be proud he pulled Yunho away from the group. I don't think she has anything to do with what he planned."

"I wonder if he even knows how much pain he's causing Yunho." The youngest sipped at the juice bottle he'd left on the table, the tart passion fruit a splash of liquid sunshine. "Maybe he thinks that what he's doing is for Yunho's own good."

"He might." Junsu said, holding his hand up to cut off Yoochun's protesting cry. "People sometimes do stupid things, Chunnie-ah. Just because you become an adult, that doesn't mean you suddenly have all of the answers. Time doesn't give anyone wisdom. Just wrinkles."

"You only become smarter because your mind learns and your heart grows." Changmin agreed. "My mother says there are ancient people who are as stupid leaving and they were coming into the world."

"Your mother is a very wise woman." Junsu said. Looking over Yoochun's hand, he was satisfied with the slow in the swelling, the redness subsided

Lavender Bunny

down to a rare pink instead of the angry crimson he'd first seen. Slathering on a final coat of antibiotics, Junsu applied plasters to the cuts, kissing Yoochun's knuckles for good luck. "Yunho should still know. It might turn Mrs. Jung to their side. Accusing Jaejoong of... being unfaithful... Yunnies-ah should see her reaction."

"Agreed." Yoochun frowned. "I just don't want JaeJae hurt in this."

"Don't worry, Chunnies." Changmin patted his former rival's thigh. "Yunho is there. He'll be there to catch Jaejoong's heart if it falls."

* * *

Yunho stared up at the hotel's front steps, his mind lingering on the last time he'd walked into its lobby. Then, he came seeking to cement the love he shared with the man standing next to him, a fey and feral Kim Jaejoong. Snow covered the grounds before, hills now teeming with the bright green shoots of grass poking through blankets of rich fertile soil. He'd felt reborn, cleansed of the disgust his parents washed him in when he broke with them. And now he was back to meet with the woman who'd rent his heart.

"We're going to be late, love." Jae touched Yunho's back, urging the young man to mount the stairs. Smiling at Yunho's distracted nod, Jae followed closely, nodding politely to the liveried doorman as they passed. "They replaced the sculpture."

Yunho grinned despite himself. Jaejoong had been entranced by the fluid metal piece depicting the stylized forms of a couple's loving. If he'd been rich, he would have offered to buy the statue for the delight it had given the singer. One day, he'd at least hope to have a pendant designed to resemble the curved but jagged forms, their outstretched bodies arched towards the sky from their joining. It would be something they could wear, a seal of their vow held private despite its openly displayed form.

"I'm not sure I can see her without having anger in my heart." Yunho admitted softly, his arm finding Jae's waist. The elevator alcove was hidden from the lobby's view, a private moment where he could cradle his lover for comfort.

"She's your mother, Yunnies." Jaejoong whispered. The elevator dinged with its impending arrival and the singer kissed the curve of Yunho's neck, biting softly with enough sting to remind the leader that he was loved. "Keep your mind open if you want her to."

His knock on a suite door sounded loud to Yunho's ears, the wood hard against his hand. It felt stubborn, a grit of sandpaper on his thoughts rubbing raw on the tenderness he felt inside. Jaejoong was a familiar warmth on his back, a touch of home and love. The leader stood for an eternity in that moment, marveling at the confidence and faith he had in his love for the other man, Jae's gentle touch on his shoulder when his mother called out moving time once more.

She was as he remembered. That was the thought Yunho had when he saw his mother coming towards him. It was strange to have not seen her in the passing months, although he'd spent longer amounts of time separated from his family... phone calls seemed to be able to stretch his memory towards remembering her face or the lily perfume she preferred. He'd half expected her to have aged... a silly thought since very little time had passed but he did.

His mother reached for him, her hands grasping his. Pulled into her arms, Yunho hugged the woman, tucking her slight form under his chin and holding her, just long enough to feel the tears salt his eyes moist. Leaning back, he detached from her embrace, his fingers closing on Jaejoong's wrist to draw him forward.

"Umma..." Yunho turned from his mother and looked at his lover's beauty, wondering how the woman would see past the porcelain mask Jae wore. The distant look...that untouchable coldness was firmly in place. None of Jaejoong's warm shone from its iced façade. He would give her nothing soft to sink into, protecting his soul from the hard thrusts of knifed words.

"Mrs. Jung." Jaejoong greeted her, rigidly correct in his formal dialect. Her response was muted under a veil of tears that Yunho forced himself not to respond to. He would watch his lover's face for any pain, focusing on the man who'd brought him love despite the chaos of his soul. Yunho knew he owed Jae at least that much.

"Please sit down." She motioned towards the table set for tea, sweet rice cakes glistening on a small platter. "I seem to remember that you don't have a taste for sweets, Jaejoong. Yunnie-ah, he was always a glutton for them."

"He still does." Jae gave her a small smile, a chink appearing in the tight armour around his face. He took a cup of tea from her, gladly accepting a wedge of lemon as he sat.

"Yunho, come sit down." His mother turned, spreading a napkin over her lap and motioning to her son. Yunho took a step forward to join them when his cell phone rang, the incoming chirp of one of the member's call making him pause.

"Let me see which one of them this is." Yunho excused himself, turning away from his mother and Jae to give them privacy. "I'll kill them if they've locked themselves out again."

A corner spot in the foyer afforded him some measure of quiet to answer, the impatience in his voice turning to shock as Yoochun relayed a not-so-chance meeting with his father. Anger soon followed, swallowing Yunho's calm, a disquiet of betrayal lurking in his thoughts. Thanking Micky, he closed the phone and turned, wondering at his mother's motives for drawing them to the hotel to meet.

He was calm. Yunho was surprised to find that in his soul. His mother chattered with Jaejoong, the young man politely nodding at a story being told

Lavender Bunny

about a dog they once owned and Yunho's insistence that its beard be shaved off since it was female. As he came near, Jaejoong's fingers tangled into his, unconsciously strengthening the bond forged between them.

"Umma...did you know that my father is in Seoul?" Yunho remained standing, unwilling yet to bend before his mother. Jae glanced up at him, startled at the news then sneaking a peek at Mrs. Jung's shocked expression.

"No..." She looked away, finding Jae staring at her. "Trust me, I... had no idea. He doesn't know I'm here at the hotel."

"How do I believe you?" Yunho's voice rose, harder than he intended but the news of Yoochun's encounter nearly set him on edge. "Did you know that he was going to show Park Yoochun pictures of he and Jaejoong? Or ask Chunnie-ah if Jae whored himself out to both of us?"

"Yunho!" Jae stood, his hand on his lover's chest, holding Yunho's calm. His mother gasped, gulping at the language coming from her son's mouth. "Those are not your mother's words."

"No, baby. They weren't but I want to know if that's what she thinks." The leader wrapped his arm around Jae's waist, moving him slightly aside so he could see his mother. Her ashen face waxed with horror, leeches of nearly all colour save the spots of pink blush she'd carefully applied that morning.

"Yunnie...love." Jaejoong leaned into his lover, whispering into his ear. "If you enter into a fight with the intent to hurt or dominate, then everyone loses. We both know that. We've learned that. Don't do that to your mother. Give her a chance to explain...or at least tell you that she wasn't a part of this."

"When we fight, we always are committed to compromise." Yunho responded. The love he felt for Jae was a shelter in the storm of his anger, pieced together from the flotsam of the other's soul. "I can't see either of them being committed to love me... or to meet me halfway. They've both already chosen to shed me like I am nothing more than snakeskin they've outgrown. They've hurt you...and hurt Yoochun. How many more of us are they going to be allowed to injure before we stay stop?"

"Is Chunnie-ah okay?" Jae sighed at Yunho's nod.

"He's more angry for you than anything else." Yunho replied. "And his hand hurt from hitting my father's face."

"Mother..." Yunho's return to a formal address chilled the woman's heart. "Tell me you had nothing to do with this."

"I didn't." She whispered, her voice soft and broken. "I had no idea... I knew there were pictures that he thought were...incriminating but I never imagined..."

"We're done here, Joongie-ah." Yunho made to leave, stopped by an immovable Jaejoong, the singer holding fast to Yunho's wrist. "What? I'm not staying here. She knew..."

"She didn't know about what your father was going to do, Yunnie." Jae's eyes pleaded with his lover, wanting nothing more than for Yunho to open his heart to the woman sobbing behind them. "This is your mother, Yunho. It was her voice that sang you your first song. Those are her hands that held yours while you learned how to walk and probably bounced you as you danced for the first time."

"She's given you everything that you've loved. She's given me everything that I love." Jae kissed him, catching the edge of Yunho's lips then wiped at the streak of tears falling over Yunho's cheekbone, his fingers damp from his lover's anguish. "I'm asking you to please, listen to her. Let her have you back...even if it is just for this afternoon."

"You're asking a lot of me, Boo." Yunho touched foreheads with his lover, a gentle familiar brush of skin. "I can't watch as they hurt you."

"I love you, very much." Jaejoong reassured Yunho, cupping his face with steady hands. "But I won't watch you hurt yourself. You miss her in your life and I love you too much to let you have that hole in your heart where your family should be. I would be a poor partner if I let you walk away from her right now...even if it meant that I would have you all to myself. You deserve better than that from me...and from yourself."

18

Micky wasn't sure what to make of the sight of their beds when he entered the room, pushed together and covered with a thick feather top. The enormity of the joined mattresses stunned him into silence, his feet unwilling to cross the threshold. It was a move of barely a foot...the removing of the end table and the sliding of the other bed across but it seemed so... final. And in the opinion of Yoochun's stomach, frighteningly so.

"You ... moved the beds." Yoochun stammered, his eyes slightly wild as he spoke to Junsu standing behind him. Gingerly cradling his hand against his stomach, unsure if the lump in his throat is from fear or desire.

"Jaejoong said..." Junsu placed his hand on the small of Yoochun's back, sliding his body around to stare up at his lover's pale face. "I told him it was too soon but he..."

"No." Yoochun's words trembled, held in the air, poignant and weighted. "I...wow. I can't even..."

"We don't have to do anything, Chunnie." Junsu turned the other man, hands on Yoochun's hips, his fingers clasped behind the other's back. "We've been sleeping together on a bed that's too narrow. That's all. Nothing else."

"No, it's more than that." Yoochun murmured. His arms hugged Junsu's body, locking the other man against him. "It's not just beds, Junnie. And it shouldn't be. I'm okay with it. I think after what happened today, I just got... slammed in the face with how much people hate. And then I come in here and find how much you love. How much Jaejoong loves. I wonder how I got so lucky."

"You'd be luckier if we put aside this stupid two week waiting period." Junsu muttered to himself as Yoochun walked into the bathroom. Junsu prepared for bed, washing his face in the sink set outside of the shower area.

He asked after Micky, wondering if the other needed help getting undressed with his injured hand but Yoochun shouted that he was fine. With the door cracked open wide enough to lure Junsu into the temptation, Junsu stood for a moment staring at his lover through the steam coming from the shower, Micky undoing his jeans and tugging them free of his legs.

Junsu called out after rubbing the water from his skin, hoping he could get his mind off of Yoochun's naked body covered with a fine spray of water drops. "Do you think Jaejoong and Yunho are okay?"

"They're fine." Yoochun responded, stuck his hand into the water spray, testing its warmth. "Boo called me and said that Yunho is going to stay and talk to his mother. They'll be spending the night there probably. It'll be too late to come back home and honestly, they'll both probably be dead tired. Listening to someone apologize can be tiring."

"So she's apologizing?" Junsu picked up the socks he'd tossed on the floor, putting them with the rest of the dirty clothes. "And her husband?"

"Aish, I think he's a lost cause." The answer was muted as Micky stepped into the shower, the hot water muffling his words. Junsu nodded, leaving the other to his washing, knowing Yoochun would make quick work of the soap and return to their bedroom.

Turning away, Junsu paced towards their bed, staring down at the mattresses and wondered if he should have asked before shoving his own wants before Yoochun's. Their blankets covered the beds, solid evidence of their combined lives and lusts.

Junsu shed his clothes, tossing his balled up t-shirt into the open hamper. It landed perfectly, cuddled against a pair of Yoochun's discarded sweats. Turning on the end table lamp, Junsu closed the door to their bedroom and doused the overhead. Placing the tear-matted plush rabbit on the far end of the bed, the tenor waited for the other to come out of the bathroom, grabbing Yoochun's music player and sliding its headphones over his ears.

The shower stopped, mists pouring through the opened door as Yoochun came into the room. He'd pulled on a pair of briefs, dark green fabric hugging his trim waist. A sparse dusting of fine dark hair rolled over the crux of the baritone's thighs, a kissing promise of more hidden beneath. Toweling as much of the water out of his hair, Yoochun ran his fingers over his skull, working the kinks out of his neck and winced, an ache in his knuckles reminding him of Mr. Jung's face.

"You're an idiot." Junsu moved his legs, pulling Yoochun into the bed next to him. Micky crawled over Junsu's stomach, stopping long enough to kiss the other man's chest. Bared to the waist, Junsu bent his head back, closing his eyes and feeling an intense pleasure working into his bones. "I am not going to last two weeks."

"Why did you want to wait two weeks any way?" Yoochun crawled under the sheets, tossing off the edge of the quilt, the slight throbbing of his hand subsiding under the wash of heat along his spine when Junsu slid under the blankets next to him.

"What?" Junsu nearly banged his head against the wall, sitting up abruptly. "I wasn't the one that wanted to wait two weeks. That was you!"

"I never said anything about two weeks." Micky protested. "Never. You said something about it. I agreed because you wanted to."

Lavender Bunny

"I didn't want to." Junsu stretched over Yoochun's belly, trapping the other under him. "I said we might want to wait two weeks. Sometimes I think you hear a different Korean than what I speak."

"You mumble!" Yoochun muttered darkly, hitting the edge of his knuckles on Junsu's leg. Hissing at the slight ripe of pain along his hand, Micky pulled back, blowing at the plasters on his hand. "It was you. I'd never agree to something like that unless you brought it up first. I know myself better. I can't even buy a candy bar and wait until I leave the store before I eat it."

"Did you just compare me to a candy bar?" Junsu kissed at the rough, reddened spots peeking out from under Yoochun's bandage. "I don't know about that..."

"Why not?" His tongue found the hollow of Junsu's throat, Micky tracing at the line of shadow cast from the table lamp. "Sweet... caramel and just long enough to fill my mouth."

Yoochun's fingers slid down into Junsu's briefs, toying at the hard length stretching from the other's groin. Rubbing his thumb on the wetness across the head, Micky kissed Junsu's panting mouth, suckling on the tip of the other's tongue. His fingers gripped at the thrusting sex in his palm, Junsu's hips circling over Yoochun. Guiding Junsu over onto his back, Micky hooked his leg over the other's shin, tugging Junsu's underwear off of his body.

The sheets slithered free of their bodies, Junsu's long torso glistening golden against the fitted cotton below. A spare hour spent on the rooftop lent the kiss of the sun to the tenor's skin, easily burnished under pale spring rays. Pale pink circles pebbled on the tenor's chest, delectable and pouting, offering a sweetness to Yoochun's mouth. Cupping at Junsu's sex, Micky lowered his head, sucking at the points on Junsu's body.

Junsu's hand gripped Yoochun's hair, the wet sleekness leaving a damp trail along his palm. With questing fingers, the tenor hooked into Yoochun's briefs, sliding the elastic down over the young man's trim rear. Grabbing at the other's earlobe, Junsu worried at the softness in his teeth. Tugging at the underwear, Junsu maneuvered them free of Yoochun's body, Micky mewling a soft protest when the young man's shaft slid from his hand.

"Stop wiggling." Micky growled, dark velvet purring in his voice. Roughly pulling Junsu's pants free from under the other's trapped body, Yoochun bent over, sinking his teeth into the rub of hip bone jutting from the other's waist.

"You stop wiggling." Junsu answered with a snarl of his own, playful seduction roiling through his smile. "You're hurt... let me."

"I'm hurt. Not dead." Yoochun grumbled, allowing the other to shove him back onto the mattress. "Why do I let you push me around?"

"Because you spend all of your time being the mommy to our umma." Junsu grinned up at his lover, licking at Yoochun's stomach. "Besides, you were..."

"How the hell are we going to do this?" Junsu stopped suddenly, propping himself up on his elbow. The sheets creased under his weight, the feather top Jaejoong wrestled over their combined mattresses dimpling. "I want to taste you. You want to taste me. How are we going to figure out who is where?"

"I don't know." Yoochun admitted, bending up to kiss the edge of his lover's mouth. "But it's definitely something we should work on."

"You were in charge last time." The tenor pressed his hand on Yoochun's chest. "My turn now."

"We're going to have to keep track?" Yoochun worried how many notebooks they'd have to go through and what would happen if they lost count.

"For right now, just let me... do." Junsu replied. "Okay?"

"Okay but... I get to... do this next." Yoochun nodded, pressing back onto the mattress. He reached for his lover's hand, tangling his own fingers into Junsu's. "We're going to have to get something... maybe an egg timer... or maybe a hat for the bunny to wear. Blue hat my turn, red hat your turn."

"Hats?" Junsu snorted, blowing a raspberry on Yoochun's bare belly. "Why not a shirt? It can say 'Tonight is Daddy Chunnie's turn to be in charge'. We'll switch it every other night for one that has my name on it."

"In charge?" Yoochun's giggle rolled lightly. "That stinks of leadership. We're both going to come in here and find Yunho's name on the shirt and neither one of us getting what we want then."

"Yunnie-ah has his own lover." Junsu growled, sliding up Yoochun's chest and biting at the other's chin. "He doesn't get you too. I won't let him."

"I think that if he had a choice of Jaejoong or me... I'd left waiting forever." Micky said, stroking at Junsu's cheek. "I think I laugh too much for him. It would drive him insane. He likes a serious, pouting Jaejoong he can tease a smile out of. All you have to do to get me laugh is make a silly face. It's like between us...I just keep waiting for either one of us to start laughing or giggling during kissing. They'd consider that very unromantic."

"There's nothing wrong with that. I promise I won't laugh when I look at your cock. I might giggle a bit but laugh, no... not all the way." Junsu couldn't help but laugh at the baritone's grimace, breaking the serious tension in Yoochun's body.

Unable to resist being pulled into the other's mirth, Micky burst into a low giggle, burying his face into Junsu's throat. Falling onto Yoochun's chest, Junsu rested his chin on his lover, listening to the laughter resonating between them.

"Sex... love... doesn't have to be serious, Chunnie-ah." Junsu kissed his lover's chin. "We're not serious people. I think the worst thing that we do is compare ourselves to Jaejoong and Yunho, two people who are rarely goofy

Lavender Bunny

and are always serious together. We're goofy all the time. Nothing wrong with things being silly between us."

"They need to laugh more." Yoochun agreed, nipping Junsu's lips. Shifting his weight, he banged his hand again, rolling a hiss of pain in his throat. "And I need to learn how to punch someone. This hurts too much. Jaejoong used to get into fights all the time and he never said it hurt his hand."

"Do you think we should laugh less?" Junsu asked, his voice soft. He'd spent his entire life focused on one thing...stardom. The breadth of what they'd accomplished so far left him breathless but more importantly, the man under him gave a skip to the beat of his heart. Pushing for his dreams, he'd found the deepest desire he could ever hope to discover.

"I think laughing is good for us." Yoochun allowed himself to be serious, just for a moment, letting his hands wander over Junsu's lean body. "I just don't want you to think that I'm... taking you for granted. Because I don't, Junnie-ah. I am thankful for every minute I get to spend with you."

"Good." Junsu pursued the line of muscle on Yoochun's stomach. "Turn over. I want to... try something."

Yoochun's trust in his lover echoed along Junsu's mind as the other twisted his body to lay on his stomach, his arms burying under a pillow. With his head turned to the side, Yoochun could see Junsu moving out of view, then the bite of Junsu's teeth along his spine. Panting, Yoochun clenched at the pillow from underneath, fingers digging into the case as Junsu's biting began to mark a path downward, kisses intermingled with nibbles along the curve of his rear.

Licking at the bites, Junsu pressed in further, finding the soft roll of skin tucked between Yoochun's spread legs. Micky gasped, nearly lifting clear of the bed, guided back down only by the gentle touch of Junsu's palm on the small of his back. Rubbing at the spot, Junsu stroked Micky back to calmness, excitement prickling goose bumps under the tenor's palm.

There was a spot Junsu wanted to nuzzle, a powdery brush of skin just below the dark pink sac gently moving under Junsu's touch. His teeth brushed carefully over the tender area, Yoochun's shivers increasing with each touch...every lick that Junsu tenderly gave. Sliding up, Junsu's tongue slithered around to the pouting rosette hidden between Yoochun's clenched cheeks.

"Let me, Chunnie." Junsu pleaded, softly stroking at the other's spine. "Trust me, love."

Yoochun forced himself to relax, willing his muscles to unclench and allow his lover to explore his body. The gentle touch of Junsu's tongue on the inner ring of his body made him gasp, spit slickening the way for the tip of Junsu's intrusion. Fingers brushed at his sex, Junsu working up and down Yoochun's trapped shaft. Turning slightly to the side to allow the tenor an easier time,

Yoochun swallowed hard, keeping down the sounds he felt growing in his belly.

“Chunnie, it’s okay. Make all the noise you want.” Junsu whispered, his fingers now wet from a dip in his own mouth, closing once more on Yoochun’s sex. He returned to the pout of Yoochun’s body, licking at the edge until it bloomed for him, opening under the slow coaxing. A dip of his index finger pressed into the heat, a promise of dark wanton pleasure just beneath his touch. Spit wouldn’t be enough to ease his way into his lover, Junsu knew that but it would allow him to press into Yoochun and explore the centre of the other’s joy.

One hand cradled Yoochun’s sex, pulling lightly on the loose skin around the head, a slow draw of his hand to bring Yoochun near the end of excitement. They writhed together, Junsu’s tongue working deep into Yoochun’s body, one hand wandering between the small of his lover’s back to the soft pout of his rear. Hovering near the crest of his climax, Yoochun let his sounds loose, a mewling strong moan released through his clenched teeth.

Hearing the hitch of desire in Yoochun’s voice, Junsu allowed his finger to push deeper in, drawn by the roll of Micky’s hips as the baritone rose to meet the other’s exploring tongue. Pleading with Junsu for more, Micky felt the wave of release begin in the back of his head, crawling with spidery pleasure over his skull. His belly burred tight, stomach muscles clenching with the wash of explosive joy threatening to steal his thoughts from his mind.

“Junnie... Jun...” The short gasp of Yoochun’s breath rolled pleasure over Junsu’s tight body, his groin rubbing against the softness of the sheets welled about his hips. “You’re killing me. Please.”

With a twitch of his sex, Yoochun pushed back on the rise of his want, needing to feel Junsu deep into his body. Junsu complied, easing the length of his index finger past the ring of muscle. Sliding over Yoochun’s hip. Junsu closed his lips over the other’s sex, suckling on the hardened head and licking at the wet salt leaking onto his tongue. Probing carefully, Junsu found the tiny nub of pleasure tucked into Yoochun’s body and stroked carefully, pulling each moaning plea that he could from Yoochun’s writhing body.

Junsu’s own release came hard, a hot spill of seed between his legs a moment before Yoochun filled his mouth with a spill of sweetened salt. Licking at the offering, Junsu struggled to swallow, not wanting to lose anything of Yoochun’s first gift of love. With the feel of his lover’s lips around him, Yoochun gave in fully, his chest hurting from lack of air when he finally was able to breathe again, his soul slowly slipping down into body with a contented purr.

Gasping, Yoochun waited for the blackness to ease from around his vision, the bobble eyed lavender bunny mutely staring down at him from its perch on the pillows. Junsu’s kisses led the tenor up Yoochun’s back, his face nested against the other’s throat. Yoochun turned, wrapping his arms around his

Lavender Bunny

lover's waist, holding Junsu tight against him. Sighing, Junsu leaned into the embrace, tugging the sheets up over their entwined bodies.

"Definitely shirts." Yoochun agreed, grabbing at the bunny lurking near their heads. "And hats. We're shocking our son into muteness. We'll end up paying for therapy at this rate."

"Therapy?" Junsu mumbled, capturing Yoochun's mouth with a ravenous growl. "I fully intend to drive our son insane with our lusty ways."

"Please. After all we've done to raise him to be a good boy?" Yoochun wiggled the bunny in front of Junsu's face, the tenor placing a gentle kiss on the toy's embroidered nose. Placing the rabbit gently on the night stand, its back to the bed, Yoochun flicked off the lamp and worried himself back down into Junsu's arms. "Love you, Junnie-ah. I wanted to tell you that. And I'm very glad you make me laugh."

"Love you too, Chunnie." Junsu shushed his lover's breath with a gentle kiss, holding the air from Yoochun's lungs in his mouth. "I like that you make me laugh too. I think it's as important to us as love is. There's no one else I would rather laugh or love with... than you."

19

Jae is never sure what to think when he stands on the outside of an argument. If he had a choice, there would be very little conflict in his life but the occasion seems to arise nearly every other day as someone steps too close to his soul or the world needs a shield built between himself and its rage.

Yunho's anger, while not directed at him, burned a cold fire...an ice storm driving shards of words into the exposed tender bits it could reach. Mrs. Jung suffered the brunt of the maelstrom, her face frozen in a waxen effigy of her beauty. Mostly Jae's lover raged about the trespasses of his father into his life, Yunho circling the room and talking, gesturing with staccato hands punctuating his remarks.

"My father walks away from me...casts me out and then..." Yunho turned, facing his mother who glanced at Jaejoong, hoping for some sign of support. "He digs around into my life searching for mud to fling in my face? You can't have it both ways, Mother. You can't turn your back on me and then go crying that I'm a poor son. I wasn't the one who turned on my family. I was the one left behind in this hotel. Have you forgotten that?"

The singer remained silent, offering little more than a façade for her to stare at. The Jungs chose to treat their son...their only son... as his own parents treated him. Jae would do nothing to ease their way back into Yunho's life if they sought only to separate them. Mrs. Jung would have to do her own apologizing and possibly serve as a breaker for her husband's machinations.

"I haven't, Yunnie." Mrs. Jung tried to steady her nerves, pouring out another cup of tea. Taking a sip of the oversteeped bitter brew, she struggled not to make a face, the rattle of porcelain loud in the air-conditioned room. "I don't come here with your father. It is just me."

"How can I trust you?" Yunho asked. The young man stared out of the glass panes overlooking the city, his lover reflected in the shimmering curtain of light. Meeting Jae's eyes, Yunho sighed at the reproach he found there, seeing the anguish blooming in the other's gaze. "BooJae..."

"I don't know what to tell you, Yunnie-ah." Jaejoong rested on the arm of a wingchair, pulling his legs up and resting his feet on its seat cushion. "Do you want me to give you permission to love your mother? Or hate her? I came because you wanted me too...and because you said you needed to hear another voice. I want what's best for you. And if that means your mother then I'm saying listen to her. If not, then we walk out of here and go home."

Lavender Bunny

"Neither one of us has anything to be ashamed of." Yunho nodded, his gaze falling back on the buildings in the valley. He could see the stretch of park and follow the line of the river to the apartment that they lived in. "Nor any of the others. I can't believe Father would jeopardize other people merely because he isn't pleased with my choices."

"Not pleased is a mild word for it." Jae interjected. "He hates what he thinks I've made you into. If it weren't for me..."

"If it weren't for you, I wouldn't be where I am in my life." The leader stopped Jaejoong from continuing. "You're as much of a part of my success as any dance step or note that I've sung. Don't forget that, Joongie-ah."

"Your father doesn't hate you, son." Mrs. Jung stood, pressing her weight on her hands to support herself. The anger in her son's face cut deep into her heart, a knife she had a hand in forging. A knot of pain bloomed in her forehead, the headache pulsing across her temples.

"Want me, accept Jaejoong." Yunho returned to Jae's side, nearly within touching distance. The comfortable stance of belonging sang through her son's lean form, honed taut from dancing and vibrating with a suppressed temper.

"I do...accept Jaejoong." Tears spread thin over his mother's face, shed as he would shed them, sparse and heavy with sorrow. "This isn't easy for me, Yunho. There are so many dreams that I had for you that I have to put aside... this...relationship is something I never thought I would have to worry about."

"Worry?" Yunho tilted his head back.

He was unwilling to give in to compromise, despite the touch of Jaejoong's hand between his shoulder blades. With the singer firmly behind him, physically and emotionally, Yunho searched his anger-hardened heart for compassion, knowing his lover would ask him if he'd even once considered forgiving his mother. Taking a deep breath, Yunho damped down his ire.

"Umma." Jaejoong's presence grounded Yunho, a steady dousing of water on his fiery nature. "I never... wanted to hurt you. I've said that before... and I meant it. But I can't... look at Jaejoong and see someone that made me stray from my path."

"This isn't something I just jumped into lightly." Yunho approached his mother, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Do you think I didn't think this through? I was horrified when I looked at Jaejoong and found myself wanting him. It disgusted me..."

"Please don't take offense, Boo." Yunho turned to smile at his lover who waved off the words with a shake of his head and a rueful smirk. "He forgives me for that. And trust me when I tell you, no one could hate harder than I can when I feel like I'm falling into something I can't control."

"Through that entire time when I was fighting off my attraction for Jaejoong, I kept thinking about how steady your love for me was." Mrs. Jung allowed herself to be guided to sit on a chair, Yunho pulling another seat close to her, his hands clasped over hers. "And when I finally said to myself... God, I love him... I still fought. I didn't want to admit that I wanted Jaejoong forever. I thought that if I just... satisfied my needs, I'd be okay."

"But Jae demanded better...and he deserves better. He should be loved and not viewed as someone... disposable for me to just use." Yunho smiled at the memory of his lover's willful admonishments. "I was ashamed that I even thought of that because you taught me better. Never ever sublimate someone. Never make someone feel smaller than yourself and I was so... angry with myself for doing that to him."

"I don't... understand how you could... fall in love with another boy, Yunho." His mother sniffled. "I always thought you would bring home a nice young girl who I could call daughter. Kim Jaejoong..."

"Probably not someone you can call daughter." Yunho admitted wryly. "But he... completes me. He's strong where I'm weak and chaotic when I take myself too seriously. He makes me laugh, umma. Jae dreams bigger than I do and then tells me that nothing is outside of my grasp. I've never had someone dream for me before... not like he does. It's like if I can think something up... a goal... there's no hesitation, just a commitment and an energy to work with me."

"Can you say that Father is your partner that way?" Her son asked, prodding gently. "Are you his?"

"Yunnie-ah..." Jae spoke softly, padding over to the two chairs. Crouching besides his lover, he cocked his head up at Mrs. Jung, cautious and cold-faced despite the warmth in his eyes. "So you want me to leave so you can talk to Yunho alone?"

"No..." She shook her head, grabbing at a napkin to dab at her eyes. "He won't talk to me without you here. He's stubborn... just like his father."

"BooJae, if I ever act like my father... kick me." Yunho rolled his eyes. "And if ever I toss one of our kids out because I don't like his choices, you have permission to beat some sense into me."

"Kids?" Jae cocked an eyebrow, pursing his mouth into a pretty bow. The singer's tone flattened, a small level of surprise running under the hard metal of his words. "Our kids?"

"If we wanted kids. Boo, help me out here." Yunho shrugged, hearing the hiccup of a sigh in his mother's silent crying. "Umma, Jae and I haven't talked about ... everything. We're still... our goals are the group. And supporting one another. We don't even have houses or our own cars. Everything we own can be packed up and moved quickly to another apartment or another

Lavender Bunny

country. I'm a gypsy right now as is Jaejoong. All I have is him and the others."

"When I was ready to tell you about him, I thought... I expected you to need some time but not to be so... violent against me." The young man made a mental note to spend some time coaxing the mercurial singer back off the ledge of panic Jae leapt onto at the mention of children. "I told him... and God you should have heard me reassuring him that you'd at least listen to tell you. I can't tell you how hurt I was when you... neither of you... were willing to even see how I felt."

"I am sorry, Yunnies. I am." His mother grasped at Yunho's wrists, biting at her lip. "I don't agree with what your father wanted to do and I certainly know that he would approach Park Yoochun. It hurt too much to have you... love another man and then I found out how much it hurt to have you gone. I'm willing to... try to accept Jaejoong if it means that we... can..."

"I don't need you to accept me, Mrs. Jung." Jaejoong eased onto the arm of Yunho's chair, working out the kink forming in his thigh. "I never did. Yunho wanted you to but let's face it... I'm not someone a mother will love. My own mother..."

"Joongie..." Yunho turned, his arm around his lover's waist in a tight clench. "No, don't talk like that."

"It's true, Yunnies." Jae hid behind the curtain of dark hair that fell into his face, head bowed so only his lover could see him. "I really don't need your mother to love me. It would be nice but really, no one wants someone else's child. Even if he's someone their son loves... well, maybe especially if he is someone their son loves. Your mother doesn't want you to desire me. I think expecting her to accept me in your life is as much as you should ask her to do."

"I can accept you." Mrs. Jung replied, holding down the soft sobs in her throat. "I know you love him, Jaejoong. I can see that."

"That's good enough for me." Jae shrugged. He kept his porcelain mask firmly in place, not wanting to show a shred of emotion to the woman who could hurt his lover the most. His soul wept with the ache of loneliness, family lost to him when his heart turned to men. He wanted Yunho to avoid that kind of pain, a sadness that etched acid into the most tender of feelings. If he could spare his lover that, then he could live with the chilly distance Mrs. Jung would have of him.

"How about if I go down and get us a room, Yunnies?" Jae slid from the chair, touching Yunho's cheek with a gentle kiss. "You and your mom can talk and when you're ready to go to bed, you won't have to go far."

"Do you mind?" Yunho tipped back in the chair, studying his lover's face.

"No." Jae smiled, wistful at the shine in Yunho's eyes. "Anything for you. Isn't that what someone who loves you should promise? Anything?"

* * *

Morning broke into Yoochun's dreams, his side too warm with the heat of the young man cuddled up against him. Sour breath clung to his tongue, a film brought on from lack of sleep more than anything else. A nudge against his bladder informed Micky he had very little time to get to the bathroom before the sheets would be doused with his waters.

Sliding down the length of the bed, the singer sprinted naked to the bathroom, washing himself in a quick shower and scrubbing at his teeth with mint toothpaste. Wrapping his towel around his hips, he padded out into the main room, finding an empty bed where he left his lover.

Hastily pulling on a pair of jeans and a shirt, Micky wandered out to the living room, stopping at the threshold of the hallway, spotting a bare-chested Junsu laughing with Hyukjae on the couch. Smiling as he walked in, Yoochun quickly tried to find the manila envelope they'd left on the coffee table, a yellow paper rectangle conspicuously missing from the glass surface. Changmin cleared his throat behind Yoochun, handing Junsu bottles of water over the seat back before jerking his head toward the kitchen, summoning Micky to follow him.

"Where did you put them?" Yoochun scrambled through the fridge, looking for something to serve and to ease the hunger clawing in his stomach. The light bulb woefully told a tale of immense loneliness, its sole companions in the spacious confines a variety of juices and pickles. Frowning, Yoochun glanced at his lover, wondering why Junsu was sitting around half-naked and more importantly, asking himself why Hyukjae was there. "What time is it?"

"Nearly ten." Changmin exclaimed as he found a package of shrimp chips, pouring the white crackling squares into a bowl. "Go keep hyung busy so Junsu-ah can go brush his teeth and dress. He didn't want to leave Hyukjae alone."

"You were here." Yoochun frowned.

"I'm who Junsu didn't want to leave Hyukjae alone with." Min made a face, dismissing the older man's concerns over his friend's presence. "Apparently, if he's left a mark on you... like the big purple blotch on your neck... then it's okay."

Yoochun's hand slapped over his neck, shocked at the smirk on the youngest singer's face as Min walked away, offering Hyukjae the bowl of shrimp chips. The SuJu member thanked the young man, letting a glance travel over Changmin's long legs, stopping briefly on the curve of his hips before reaching the smile on Min's face. Junsu frowned, a dark flush on his features. Nudging his best friend, Junsu stood, smiling at Yoochun.

"Can you keep Hyukjae company? I need to talk to Min and take a bath." Junsu grabbed at the youngest's arm, forcibly leading him to the hallway.

Lavender Bunny

"Hey!" Min found himself being pushed out of the living room, a determined Junsu firmly behind him. Calling out, his voice nearly lost around the bend of the wall, Min said to Hyukjae. "Nice to see you again!"

"Susu-ah, if I didn't know better, I'd think he didn't trust me." Hyukjae grinned up at his friend's lover, munching on a chip. Cocking his head, he nodded to Yoochun's hand. "Did something bite you? It looks like you slapped at a mosquito."

Wondering if he should drop his hand or just brave Hyukjae's teasing, Yoochun decided to settle on the opposite of the singer, keeping that part of his body shielded from view. Casually pulling his hair around to cover the spot, Yoochun picked up Junsu's water and sipped, tasting the other man's sweetness on the rim.

"It's good to see you... again." Yoochun smiled, calculating how much Junsu might have had to talk to his best friend. He regretted the sharing agreement he and Junsu made, the ramifications of the pact now sitting across of him with a smirk on his face.

"So..." Hyukjae waited until Yoochun swallowed the mouthful he'd drank, then leaned forward, tapping at the clearly visible purple bruise slanting down Yoochun's collarbone. "When are you and Junsu just going to fuck each other? Or are you afraid he's a praying mantis that's going to bite off and eat your head if you ever actually have sex?"

20

"A praying mantis?" Yoochun choked slightly on the water caught in his throat. "Where do you get this stuff?"

"First thing off the top of my head." Hyukjae shrugged, leaning over to see the mark on Yoochun's throat. "Man, he needs to eat more. He went to bed way too hungry by the looks of you."

"Junsu eats..." Micky stopped short, leaning back on the couch. "You came here to poke at me."

"Oh, I think Junsu should be doing the poking or..." Hyukjae pounded Yoochun's back as another coughing fit rattled the singer's chest. "Ah, Chunnie... you have to stop and breathe once in a while."

"I think I'm going to leave you to Junsu." Micky swigged a mouthful of water, hoping to get the rawness out of his throat. "He can deal with your nonsense. It's too early in the morning for my brain."

"He's going to shower and it's nearly noon... maybe even later." Hyukjae reminded him. "You leave now and I'll go hunting for Changmin to keep me company. And from the look on Junsu's face, I'm guessing that's not something he wants me to do."

"Probably not." Yoochun recalled the lascivious glances Hyukjae gave Min before the youngest was dragged off to the back of the house. "No talking about ... let's just talk."

"Actually, how are you and Junsu doing?" The SuJu member pulled his feet up onto the couch, tucking them under him. "Really. I do get worried about my brother-in-sin."

"Is that how you think about him?" Yoochun asked, mimicking Hyukjae's posture, sliding his body to the side and facing the other singer. "Your brother-in-sin?"

"Mostly..." Hyukjae nodded, his voice softening. "Mostly I want him to be happy. I think that's all brothers really want for each other. You make him... happy, I think. I can see it in his face."

"He's always happy. There's always a smile on his face." Yoochun cocked his head, a dorky grin creasing his mouth. It echoed the joy in Junsu's that Hyukjae saw when he looked at his friend's face. "But we're doing okay. I think."

"Why?" Yoochun asked, startled. "Did he say something?"

Lavender Bunny

"No... no..." The other man waved off Yoochun's alarm. "I was just checking up on you two. I wanted to see how you were doing... together. He told me you were making a go of it. It's nice he found someone... even if it's someone as innocent as you."

"I am not innocent!" Micky scoffed, pushing lightly at Hyukjae's shoulder. "We just are...I wasn't expecting this thing with him."

"No one does, really." Hyukjae replied. "I keep waiting for the day when someone hits me upside the head and then I'll fall too. I was kind of hoping it would be Jaejoong but sadly, I don't think Yunho would share."

"Oh he'd share." Yoochun teased. "His fists. A cricket bat. Maybe a plate or two. But after that, no, I would say that sharing would be over then."

"So if I'm going to poach anyone, it'll have to be Max then." Hyukjae contemplated the lithe youth he'd eyed earlier. There was a simmering wickedness just below the surface of guilelessness, a sulfurous fragment waiting to be ignited with the proper spark. "He's too young though. I'll have to wait a bit."

"Don't let him hear you say that." Yoochun crowed. "He'll be the first one to tell you he's more than old enough to do anything the rest of us can do...or will do. He's no child, our Changmin. Of course, Jaejoong is very protective of him too. You might have difficulties getting to Min behind him and Junsu."

"I was always surprised that you and Jaejoong never..." Hyukjae leaned his head against the couch back, the streaks of crimson in his hair nearly blending with the red fabric. "You two seem really close."

"BooJae and I are..." Yoochun struggled to put into words how he felt about the other singer. Their closeness had come about so quickly, the melting of Jae's ice façade revealing the warm, silliness he shared with Micky nearly every day. "It's like we've always known each other. He's... a part of my soul."

"And Junsu?" The SuJu member pressed lightly. The fondness in Yoochun's voice for the other singer worried him, a warning tingle for Junsu's heart flaring inside of his mind. "He's not?"

"That's a different part of my soul." The baritone stared down at his feet, wondering how he could explain the light he saw every time he touched Junsu. "Susu-ah is... my mate. It's like we're a pair of shoes, matching but facing inwards to each other. You can't wear only one shoe and go anywhere on a rocky path. To walk... to climb a mountain, you'll need both. I can't explain it well."

"No." Hyukjae said, patting his friend's lover on the shoulder. "You did just fine, Chunnie-ah, just fine."

* * *

"Let's talk about the kids thing." Jaejoong purred, staring at Yunho as the other blinked awake. The soft sheets over the leader's body slithered over Yunho's hips, drawn down by Jaejoong's clenched fingers. The singer kissed at a spot on the other's waist, licking at the jut of bone beneath the curve of Yunho's hip.

"Hi. Pee. Have to pee." Yunho yelped at the nip of teeth along the underside of his turgid shaft. "I love you Jae, but let me up."

He scrambled free from the bed, glancing back at the sprawl of young man he left behind him. A corner of the silky gold sheets covered Jae's thigh, the only part of his body hidden from view. Lying on his stomach, Jaejoong stretched his arms out, flexing the line of his shoulders before resting his chin on a clenched fist, his pale skin a shimmer against the bedding.

"Brush your teeth while you're in there." Jae muttered, his dark eyes a smoldered slant at Yunho's retreating back. "So they're clean when I kick them in."

Children. The farthest thing from Jaejoong's mind but obviously must closer to the surface of Yunho's. Jae quirked his mouth, wondering at what point his lover became insane and how he didn't even notice it happening. The rush of water came from the bathroom, a flush of a toilet followed by the stream of a faucet as Yunho scrubbed mint paste over his teeth. When he was done, Yunho climbed onto the bed, sinking his teeth into the rounded globe of Jae's right buttock. The singer twisted slightly at the arrival of his lover, pouting playfully before his face grew serious.

"Kids." The same flat tone Yunho heard last night resurfaced, making him wince. "When did..."

"I was just thinking out loud, Boo." Yunho kissed the space between Jae's shoulder blades, loving the taste of the young man on his mouth. "Rambling. You're not the only one allowed to ramble."

"Most people rambling don't bring up children." Jae remarked, rolling over onto his back and tucking against his lover's side. "They bring up things like... vacations or even things they like to eat. Children...not usually the first thing that rolls off of someone's tongue. And I don't think it's ever something that someone brings up when they're explaining to their estranged mother that they love another man. Kids... two men in love. That's not usually what's connected there."

"I guess it's because... I see my life with you...forever. With everything I ever wanted as I grew old." Yunho stroked at his lover's soft face, tracing the curve of the other's mouth. "I guess that just included children."

"Aish." Jae huffed his breath against Yunho's hand. "I'm no one's wife, Yunho. Don't put me there..."

Lavender Bunny

"No, you're not. I don't think of you as a wife or a man who's more feminine than masculine. I see you as much of a guy as I am, BooJae." Yunho brushed a kiss against Jae's mouth. "And I'm not saying that we're going to live in some house while you cook and I go to work, leaving you to raise the children. That's not our lives, Boo. It could be our lives if we want it but only if we both want it."

"I don't want that to be my life, Yunho. I'm not good at family. I can't even keep my family loving me. How am I supposed to..." Jae's forehead creased. "I don't want to lose you over something like this."

"Jaejoong, you are not going to lose me." The leader growled at his lover, baring his teeth in a mock threat. "We both are so young and neither of us knows where this life we lead is going to take us. We could be living like this for the next twenty years or just the next three. None of us knows. That's not going to change... us. I guess I am looking at when we both are done being... U-Know and Hero and just Kim-Jung Yunho and Jaejoong."

"Kim-Jung?" Jae wrinkled his nose. "You think a lot about these kinds of things. Or are you rambling there too?"

"No, I think about it." Yunho admitted. "I wonder if some day we're going to own a house on the beach or maybe in the mountains and every morning when I wake up, you're there asleep next to me and the most important decision that we have to make that day is what to eat for dinner. I want you to be able to see that future, baby."

"I don't think your heart has accepted that we're going to be doing those things...ten or fifteen years from now. I know you love me and that you've given me every bit of your heart and soul." The young man slipped his arm tightly over his lover's waist, kissing the curve of Jaejoong's shoulder. "And it's not because you think that I'm going to leave you or that we won't last."

"I believe it's because you've spent so much of your life living from moment to moment, thinking about where your next meal is...where you are going to get enough money to have something to wear for auditions or even just where you're going to sleep that night... that you forget how to live for the future." Yunho still could clearly see the street urchin their managers thought had been groomed out of Jaejoong. The leader knew that piece of Jae merely stalked beneath a more polished surface, always on the ready to bare his teeth when threatened. "I want to give you that future, baby. With me in it."

"No matter what future we live in, I won't be a good father, Yunnies." The singer shook his head. "You, I can see you raising children but me?"

"Oh no, baby." Yunho pressed his fingers against Jae's mouth. "We do this forever thing together. And you'll be a great father... your heart is larger. You're a better lover than I am."

Jae's smirk brewed an impish look in his eyes. "Neither one of us knows what we're doing. How can I be a better lover?"

"My body tells me you do fine with the physical love, baby. God help me if ever you know what you're doing. I don't think I could survive it." Yunho's grin grew goofy at Jaejoong's grimace. "I meant... emotionally. You love better than I do. More openly. Freely. You always seem to know the right thing to say or do to make me feel... better or comforted."

"That's because loving you is easy, baby." Jae whispered, purring softly at the touch of Yunho's hand along his belly.

"I'm glad you were there... for me when my mother... I'm glad you were there for me. So we could heal and she... so I can have her back in my life." The leader bent over, kissing at the wink of a shadow hidden in Jaejoong's navel. "I wouldn't have listened to her. I would have taken the pride I'd gotten from my father and thrown her words back into her face. You're the one between us that stops and listens where I will try to shove my way through. If anything, you teach me how to love... better. I want to be a better man for you."

"You're fine the way you are." Jaejoong grumbled at his lover, brushing back the hair on Yunho's forehead when the young man looked up at him from his spot on Jae's stomach. "I love you... no matter how you grow or change. I'll always love you."

"I love you too, Boo." Yunho kissed Jae's chest, licking at the other's breastbone as he slithered along the sheets. "I'm going to hold you to that promise, Jaejoong. No matter what happens, I expect to see you here, right next to me. Always."

* * *

"Weren't you just in love with me yesterday?" Junsu pushed at the youngest member of their group, lightly guiding Changmin towards the back bedroom. "What happened between yesterday and today?"

"What?" Min made a face, rubbing at his arm where Junsu's hand had been. "Before I wasn't good enough and now you're taking me into your bedroom? Yoochun isn't enough for you? And nothing happened... to me. Yoochun! He happened to you and it wasn't just yesterday!"

"Aish, shut up." The tenor whacked Changmin lightly on the head with the end of his towel, pointing him towards the bed. "Go sit down. I want to talk to you about Hyukjae before you get in over your head, Minnie-ah."

"Didn't we already have these kinds of discussions?" Min picked up the forlorn bunny resting on Junsu's pillows, trying to ignore the single sleeping surface that now dominated the side of the wall. Just a tingling ache remained, a burr lost under the irritation of being treated like a child once again. "I'm not..."

Lavender Bunny

"I'm not calling you a kid." Junsu remarked, settling down on the edge of the mattress. "I really did want to talk to you about Hyukjae and maybe even others."

"I don't need a talk, Junnie-ah." Changmin leaned back on his hands, the plush rabbit forgotten. "Remember, unlike the four of you... I read. I know what to expect."

"Reading is different than real life, Min." The tenor said. "And I promised Jaejoong that I'd be careful with you...and your feelings. I think that extends to dealing with men like Hyukjae."

"My feelings are fine." The youth replied. He grinned lightly at Junsu's discomfort. "Are you really worried about Hyukjae? Is your friend that bad?"

"No..." Junsu thought then responded. "Yes. I love Hyuki-ah. He's my best friend, nearly as much of a brother to me as my twin but I know him. He's interested in having fun."

"You seem to think that I want more than that." Changmin asked thoughtfully. He chewed on his lower lip, regarding the older man with a curious stare. "I've watched the four of you and I decided that it's a bad thing to enter into a serious relationship knowing next to nothing about how love or sex works. All it seems to do is tangle things up. Wouldn't you have rather spend your beginning moments with Yoochun just enjoying being with him instead of wondering whose dick is going to go where first?"

"Changmin!" The singer exclaimed. "Ah, Hyukjae is already a bad influence on you!"

"No, hyung." Min shook his head, smiling at the other man's shock. "The four of you have been. I hear your whispers and the wondering if you're doing things right. I'd rather have all that experience and then fall in love. Wouldn't that be more logical?"

"Not everything is logic, Minnie-ah." Junsu sighed, rubbing at his face. "Sometimes, it's... damn it. Look, I spent a lot of time... with Hyukjae... experimenting... learning a few things but honestly, it just felt so different with Yoochun and not just because it was another body."

"It's sweeter. Having those feelings when you're... doing things. It just... feels more right. Everything else is just... physical. And you'll regret... damn it, Min." Junsu sent a silent curse to Yunho, knowing the older man had to have wished this revenge on him. "I just don't think you'd get that from Hyukjae."

"I'm not looking for sweet from Hyukjae... or anyone else for that matter." Changmin said. "It still hurts to see you and Yoochun together. Not a lot but still, enough that it aches a little bit in my heart. I don't want to feel that anymore, Junsu and what I decide to do with that little pain... might be with Hyukjae or might not be."

"Just... God, why Hyukjae?" The tenor winced. As much as he loved his friend, the young man was the definition of a player, walking away from

assignments looking for the next tidbit of sweet to suckle on. "Just... he's not someone to fall in love with, Minnie."

"Hyukjae is really not at the top of my list. Shiwon has already asked me if I wanted to ... do something with him and I'm not... adverse to that. Maybe not tomorrow but soon. After I stop hurting whenever I see you touch him or hear you two laugh." Changmin sighed, patting the older man on the leg. "Shiwon or someone else might be just what I need to heal that. I'm not looking to fall in love, Susu-ah. I'm looking to fall out of it."

21

Placards waved along the avenue, Yoochun's eyes picking out what little Japanese he knew. A deep weariness broke over the singer, dousing what little energy he had left in him after the long flight to Tokyo. Changmin's soft snores behind him threatened to lull Micky to sleep, the youngest falling to the deep exhaustion that plagued most of them through the tour.

A sniffle from Jaejoong next to him was followed by Yunho's concerned murmur, the leader leaning in close to his lover's body, rubbing at the slender singer's shoulder blades in the hopes of easing the aches from Jae's cold. Even Junsu lagged with an uncharacteristic quietude, nearly silent throughout the entire trip to the hotel.

Sliding from the van, Yoochun grabbed at his backpack, slinging it over his shoulder and glancing back to see if he'd left anything behind. Meeting Junsu's eyes, he smiled, ruefully aware that neither of them had more than a moment alone together, their manager herding them from place to place and separating the pairs in different hotel rooms. Yunho cautioned patience when Junsu expressed his displeasure, a muttered darkness that threatened bodily harm. Yoochun understood completely. He sorely missed having Junsu in the same room, within touching distance or even within earshot. Micky found it hard to sleep without Junsu's presence.

The lobby seemed too long to walk through, the weight of his backpack dragging heavily on Micky's shoulders. Junsu nudged his side, the briefest brush of an elbow having to substitute for a hug amid the crowded hotel foyer. It seemed as if an eternity passed before their manager checked them in and secured room keys, life slowly dragging down to a stall.

Yoochun leaned his head back, trying to work the kinks from his neck when he spotted the road manager intercepting Yunho settling Jaejoong onto one of the lobby's many couches. The lead singer's coughing subsided since yesterday although his eyes were still slightly swollen and red. Pulling his legs up, Jaejoong made himself into a small ball of thin bones and muscle, tucking his head against his thighs in an attempt to drown out the noise around him.

Junsu joined the discussion between the manager and Yunho, their faces growing more serious as the leader's voice dropped to a low rumble. A dangerous glint formed in Yunho's stare as the road manager shook his head, trying to argue a point with the singer. Junsu glanced at Micky, giving

the baritone a tight smile and a wink before turning back to listen to Yunho's emphatic words.

Forcibly taking the key cards from the older man's hand, Yunho handed one to Junsu, telling the tenor something too low for Yoochun to hear. Crouching in front of Jaejoong, Yunho gently nudged at his lover's shoulder, murmuring for Jae to follow him up. Cradling Jae's waist, Yunho guided the singer to the elevator, ignoring the hushed admonishments from their frustrated road manager.

"What's going on?" Yoochun asked Junsu when the tenor approached him. Changmin's barely audible mumbling reassured Yoochun that everything was fine, the youngest member nearly fully asleep on the couch besides him. Hooking an arm over the young man's shoulder, Yoochun moved Changmin until the boy rested against him, pillowing Min with his body.

"Yunho just... took control of our room situation." Junsu held up an electronic key, waving it for Yoochun to see. "We're sharing a suite with Changmin but we're in our own bedroom. He's in his own. Yunnie-ah and JaeJae are across the hall."

"And the manager is... okay with this?" Yoochun asked.

"At this point, it doesn't matter to our leader." Junsu hefted Changmin's duffel, slinging its weight over his shoulder. "Yunho's not going to listen to any arguments. He's had enough of being shuffled away from Jaejoong, especially now that hyung is sick. As far as he's concerned, these are our sleeping arrangements for the next five weeks...and damned what anyone else has to say about it. Can you get Minnie-ah to his feet? He's going to start drooling on your leather jacket soon if we don't put him to bed."

* * *

Micky let the hot water pound his back, steam rising up around his chilled body. The shower spray felt delicious on his aching muscles, cramped from long hours spent on a plane or hunched to fit between tight car seats. He'd let his clothes lay where they fell when he disrobed in the bathroom, barely taking the time to let the water heat up before stepping inside of the glass enclosure. Junsu had made some noise about food but Yoochun barely heard a word that came from his boyfriend's mouth, the baritone lured by the promise of a hard scrub and a soft bed.

Crossing the threshold of the suite, they'd both marveled at the sheer expanse of the quarters, Changmin dozing on Yoochun's arm. With Junsu's help, Micky pulled off most of Changmin's clothes, pulling back the covers and helping the young man into bed, tossing a light blanket over his legs before turning the light off behind them. Just recovering from the same cold that felled Jaejoong, Min sighed and immediately drifted further into slumber, welcoming the darkness that embraced him.

Lavender Bunny

The shower door opened behind him and Junsu stepped into the enormous stall, running his hand over the travertine tiles surrounding them. Barely able to skim the opposing walls with his outstretched arms, Micky himself had been amazed at the size of the shower, a collection of fragrant shampoos and soaps lined up on an inset shelf. Junsu's gasp of glee at the sight of the multiple shower heads studding the side wall made Yoochun laugh, the hedonistic singer immediately stepping into the water flow and wrapping his arms about Yoochun's naked body.

"I can't believe we're not going to go anywhere for a while." Junsu sighed, rubbing noses with his lover.

They'd struggled to keep their body contact down to a minimum in public, often straying together during car rides or back stage. It was doubly hard when they were tired, each straining not to seek each other out over the others when looking for support, their weary bodies nearly breaking down under the pressures of their schedule. Now, Junsu thought they would at least have time to reacquaint themselves, a leisurely process hidden from prying eyes.

The two week moratorium on their relationship hadn't entered its third day before management whisked them off to someplace new, closing up the apartment they shared and shuttling them to cities that they struggled to learn its native tongue...or at least enough of it to make people feel welcome. The demands on their persons and time increased tenfold, sleep often taking precedence over time spent talking to one another, heads resting on each others' shoulders providing the pair little to no private time to build their growing relationship.

"So, we're here for... two months?" Yoochun let his hands wander down the familiar terrain of Junsu's back. His fingers created small waterfalls from the spray, the run off coursing down over Junsu's rear and down the back of his thighs. Nodding, the tenor leaned into Yoochun's chest, resting his cheek on Micky's shoulder.

"That's what the manager said." Junsu nodded. With his eyes closed, he was able to focus on the sound of the water and Yoochun's heartbeat rumbling a steady beat in his hear.

He could stand like this for hours, Junsu thought to himself, nested hip to hip with the other singer. Yoochun felt... good. Long stretches of wet skin pressed tight on his own, not just for the hint of arousal that lay beneath every single one of Micky's nonchalant touches but also the comfort of having the other's heat next to his own.

"Here. Stay still." Yoochun reluctantly pulled away, sleep tugging at the corner of his eyes. Soaping the scrub cloth, the young man worked over Junsu's body, taking care with each curve and line until Junsu nearly swooned with the pleasure of the rough scrub over his skin.

"You know, I want to jump you right here and now but I don't think I have the energy." Junsu whimpered as Yoochun turned him around, working the scrub cloth over the small of his back. "I'm going to have to do this for you when you're done."

"Nope." Yoochun disagreed. "When I'm done, you're going to step out of this shower, get dressed and wait for me in a bed that isn't moving or reeking of someone else. Then I'm going to turn the water to icy cold, stand under it and hope that my body remembers it's too tired to do anything tonight."

"Do you have to?" Junsu chuckled, placing his hands on the tiled wall to steady himself. Displayed for his lover, Junsu glanced over his shoulder and smiled, seductive with the knowledge of what he did to Yoochun's control

Yoochun's hands slowed, brushing a stroke of soap bubbles down Junsu's rear. Innately graceful, Junsu flowed when he moved, nearly as liquid as the water they stood under. Yoochun licked at a stream of water that found Junsu's spine, following the ridged dip until he reached the nape of his lover's neck. Sighing, Micky rested against Junsu's back, fatigue working up from his weary muscles and spreading a hated languor through his body. Hard and needy, his sex pressed firm into the crux of Junsu's legs, insistently pushing on the cleft of his rear.

"You better..." Micky stepped away from the other man, switching off the hot water and standing under the stream as it chilled to a nearly icy temperature.

Unable to take his eyes of the smirking singer, Yoochun watched Junsu leave the shower, grabbing a towel to rub the water from his hair. The shower's glass door retained patches of fog, the steam reluctant to give up its hold on the clear panes. With the tip of his index finger, Junsu traced a heart in the misted glass, kissing its empty centre to leave lip prints for Yoochun to see.

"Hurry up." Junsu said, crooking his finger at his lover and pointing towards their bedroom. "I've got plans for you."

* * *

Nearly all of the lights were off when Yoochun entered the bedroom, only the glow of a table lamp illuminating the broad mattress Junsu lay on. Naked, the singer watched his lover from his prone position, one arm hooked up over his head, resting on the soft feather pillows.

Micky allowed the towel to fall from his hips, kicking it free of his feet and left forgotten on the pile carpet. The bed dipped with Yoochun's weight, the baritone slowly crawling up every inch of his lover's body, ghosting his breath over Junsu's bare skin and marveling at the prickles of goose bumps rising in waves over the tanned flesh.

Lavender Bunny

"God, you are... simply gorgeous." Yoochun kissed the flat of Junsu's stomach, tasting the fragrant spice of the soap they both used. "I could just do this...forever."

"I hope not." Junsu pulled Yoochun's hand up to his mouth, sucking on his lover's fingers. "That would mean I never get to taste you."

"Tasting is good." Yoochun murmured, dragging his teeth over Junsu's ribs. "We don't... we've not planned for this, Susu-ah."

"Speak for yourself, baby." Junsu unclenched the hand he'd laid over his head, showing Yoochun the plastic tube of lubricant gel he'd asked Yunho to get for him. The leader blanched when he'd been asked but hurriedly dug through one of his suitcases, palming the tube to the tenor while no one had their eyes on them.

"Damn." Yoochun whistled under his breath. "I suddenly find I have a lot of energy."

"Good, now come over here and find other things." Junsu sat up on his elbows, covering his lover's mouth with his own.

They allowed themselves time to explore, their mouths clinging and sucking where ever either could reach. Torrid kisses barely allowing air between their pressed lips, teeth scoring dimpled lines on each other's throats. Junsu became fascinated with the hard line of Yoochun's collarbone, biting and licking at the ridge until he felt Yoochun's sex respond under the lavation.

Yoochun reacquainted himself with the bends and curves of Junsu's hips, trailing through the sparse hair husked up over the other's sex. He circled Junsu's shaft with the edges of his nails, raking a gasp of needy want from his lover's throat. Micky pulled and tugged at the hardness, wanting the heat of Junsu's body to curl and smoke under his skin.

"How do we want to do this?" Junsu murmured, leaning his head back to pull air into his oxygen-starved lungs. "Because God, I want you in me as much as I want to be in you."

"You choose first." Yoochun growled, bending his head down to lick at the pearl drop of salt forming on the tip of Junsu's shaft. "Truth, I think I...want you...any way you'd let me have you. Or you have me."

Junsu slicked his fingers with a dollop of the lubricant, moving down Yoochun's body and working the edge of the pouting rosette hidden between his clenched rear muscles. Biting at Micky's throat, Junsu spent long minutes coaxing his lover to open for him, asking Yoochun for his trust in bringing him pleasure. Yoochun pushed hard against Junsu's hand, circling around the other's sex with his moist tongue, slicking back the hood of skin pulling back from Junsu's cock.

Yoochun easily swallowed the softness of Junsu's head, relaxing his body as Junsu's fingers pressed in deeper, looking for the spot that tingled inside of him. Biting at the underside of Junsu's sex, Yoochun growled as the other

man shifted on the bed, trying to give his lover room to reach down. Micky hissed at the coldness of the gel, the lubricant's citrus scent as much of an arousal as Junsu's salty sweetness on the back of his throat.

"God... damn it." Junsu's free hand clutched at Yoochun's hair, guiding the pace of his lover's mouth on his body.

Digging deeper, Junsu scissored his fingers apart, pushing and pulling at Micky's tender centre, trying to prepare the other for his entrance. The blood rushed through Junsu's body, pooling at his sex cradled in Yoochun's clenched hand and soft mouth. Micky hummed around his conquest, licking at the hard ridge pressed tight on the ridge of his teeth.

"Junsu, I don't want to wait for this anymore." The raspy husk of Yoochun's voice tickled Junsu's sex, sinking down into the hot liquid pool of desire Junsu felt in his gut. "What the hell do I have to say to you to get you inside of me?"

"How about ... please?" Junsu laughed, a hearty dark chuckle reverberating from his chest.

"How about...fucking... now?" Yoochun snarled, sinking his teeth down into the soft skin under Junsu's belly button.

The gel's chill on Junsu's shaft did little to subdue its hardness, the lubricant running slick as it heated quickly on Junsu's skin. Yoochun spread the gel carefully, coating his lover until Junsu had to pull away or lose control over his body. A moment of fumbling made them laugh, Yoochun turning around and nearly striking Junsu in the chin with his elbow. Nearly breathless from a gasping giggle, Junsu guiding Micky's hips up, pushing the other onto his knees and spreading his fingers over the small of Yoochun's back. Junsu hoped it would be easier for his lover if they were kneeling, canting his hips up and moving forward so they would eventually be chest to back.

"I love you, Chunnie-ah. Let me love you." Junsu bent forward, kissing his lover gently between the shoulders. Gripping his length, Junsu guided himself slowly into the other's heat, taking care to push past the tight ring and then wait, his breath hissing hot between his clenched teeth.

"God...baby. Love you too." Yoochun breathed, his mouth slack and open. Bending his head down, he bent his shoulders back, feeling Junsu's gel-slick hands on his belly. They were too far away for Yoochun's taste, the promised hard length of Junsu's body nearly an impossible barrier for Micky's mind to breach. "Let me..."

"Take your time, baby." Junsu stroked at Yoochun's cock, flaring up the tingle of want in his lover's body. Coaxing the hesitation and fear from Yoochun, Junsu murmured nothings under his breath, reassuring his lover that they could wait forever if that's what it took.

The burn of Junsu pushing into him gripped Yoochun's guts...fear of possession warring with a crawling craving for the other to be inside of him.

Lavender Bunny

Taking a deep breath, Yoochun pressed backwards, pushing Junsu deeper into his tightness. Encased in the other's heat, Junsu held himself as still as he could, letting his lover guide their lovemaking.

Pain disappeared as Yoochun relaxed, allowing Junsu to slide further in. Breaking through the fears he nursed deep in the recesses of his soul, Yoochun shed the tightness holding his body closed for his lover. Working in small circles, Micky slid his hips back, pulling Junsu inside of his warmth.

Junsu's girth pushed against the walls of muscle around Yoochun's rim, stretching his lover apart until Junsu rested tight against the snug of the baritone's rear. Yoochun's panting hisses urged Junsu to move...begging softly for the other man to do something ...anything... to scratch the itch of want spreading through him.

Yoochun gripped Junsu's hands, working their fingers together as Junsu rocked back and forth, catching a rhythm the baritone quickly fell into. The roll of their hips soon matched, muscles honed and trained to work together. Yoochun knew that from that moment on, any time they shared a stage they would be mimicking their love, nested against one another and gyrating, feeling the other's ghostly body either inside or around their cocks.

In sync, they moved together, the pace quickening until Yoochun's nails dug half moons into the back of Junsu's hands. The tenor's body clenched with his release, unable to stop his teeth from sinking into Yoochun's shoulder, biting down hard when Micky tilted his head back. Shoving Junsu deeper inside of him, Yoochun wanted to feel the other as far into his body as he could, holding Junsu's hardness against the tingling bundle of nerves the tenor stroked with each thrust.

Lethargy crept into their bodies nearly the moment Junsu spilled his release deep into Yoochun's guts, his arms wrapped tight around his lover's waist. With one hand cupped to catch Yoochun's seed, Junsu brought the viscous cooling liquid up to his mouth, wanting the taste of Yoochun's body in his throat as he jerked his hips a final time.

Falling forward, Junsu cradled tight against his lover's back, nearly pulling out until Yoochun's mumble of protest stopped him. The increasing softness of his sex nested between Yoochun's cleft, just enough of an intrusion to remind the baritone of his presence. Their breathing slowed, bodies worn down to a loose spill of liquid bones from their lovemaking and the long weeks of being dragged about Asia.

"Thank you." Junsu whispered, satisfied for the moment but still feeling the burning embers of desire wandering about his soul. "Love you, Chunnie-ah. I have... never been so happy in my life...not until I had you in it."

"Love you too, Susu-ah." Yoochun murmured, sliding his hands over his lover's arms, gripping Junsu's hands against his belly. "Next time..."

“Oh next time, Chunnie-ah...” Junsu promised with a saucy cant of his lips, unseen but definitely heard by Yoochun before he drifted into sleep. “Next time, I’m going to be the one in the front. Or on the bottom. Whichever way we end up, it’ll be together.”

22

"Baby... baby... where did our love go?"

Junsu's heart warmed at the sound of Yoochun's whiskey-dark voice, the baritone laying back against the headboard of their bed, his eyes closed as he sang along to the music on his iPod. Yoochun's hair was still unruly from the previous night's sleep, fringes of silk poking up around his head in a bristled coxcomb.

Closing the door behind him, Junsu carried in sacks of food, the heat from bowls of noodles steaming the containers' clear plastic lids. Yoochun's eyes opened, bursts of liquid chocolate spiced with a sensual cinnamon, and they exchanged smiles, visual kisses tinted with a dash of laughter. Sliding the earbuds off, Yoochun made room on the bed for his lover, sniffing at the bags Junsu handed him.

"Ah, these smell so good." Micky pulled one of the lap trays from its place under the end table, opening its legs and carefully organizing the feast between them. "Did you have to go far?"

"No." Junsu picked out a pinch of salted bean sprouts, crunching on the blanched vegetables. "One of the hotel guys told me about a place down the street. I almost missed it because the door was so small and the noren was the only way I even knew it was a restaurant. Very hard to find but it smelled so good once I got inside."

"Are Jae and Min doing better?" Yoochun had the sense to look guilty. "I should have checked on them while you were gone."

"Minnie-ah is half-awake.. and fully grumpy." The tenor replied, digging out a pair of chopsticks from the bag. Splitting the bamboo spears, he rubbed them together in his palms, working off the small splinters before handing the utensils to Yoochun. "Jaejoong is fully awake but half grumpy. Yunho came with me to get him some food."

"Good luck trying to get him to eat some of it." Yoochun frowned, picking through a selection of deep-fried foods. "Is this... carrot?"

"I think it's sweet potatoe." Junsu nibbled at the slice, biting into the orange tuber. "Yep. Sweet potatoe."

"Tempura." Yoochun tried the word out, the R catching on the tip of his tongue. Junsu repeated it, stressing the wrong syllable, making Micky laugh

at their pronunciation. "I sometimes think that I'm never going to master Japanese."

"I'll be happy if I can just catch it and wrestle it to the ground." Junsu muttered, finding a packet of shoyu and tearing it open with his teeth. "Joongie-ah picks it up then slaughters it. I think he does it on purpose so we don't look bad because we're slow learners."

"Pfhhh." The baritone snorted. "He's only learned the swear words well. That's all he learns first. And then, he goes to the staff and says things that are outrageous, telling them that it's something innocent that we've taught him. We then look bad and they all coo over him."

"You'd think he was the youngest in the group, the way he manipulates." Junsu thought on what he said. "Wait, he is the youngest... in his family. He knows how to be the baby. No wonder he's good at it. Yunho is doomed."

"I think it's a fate that Yunnie-ah is more than willing to be destined to live."

The sounds of their eating filled the quiet between them, Junsu chewing at a mouthful of noodles. Staring at Yoochun, the tenor swallowed, setting his food down and asking. "Do you think we're destined? How does someone know that? What does Fate feel like?"

"I crossed halfway around the world for you, Susu-ah." Yoochun smiled, picking a piece of kamaboku off of Junsu's noodles, sliding it into his ready mouth. "If that isn't Fate, then what is?"

"Matsuro?" Junsu consulted their battered dictionary, blinking away the tears that misted in his eyes. He knew that if they fell, wet hearts would form on the yellowing pages, smearing the notes they'd made in the margins. Swallowing the warm feeling Yoochun gave him, he repeated the word. "Is that right?"

"I don't know." Yoochun held his hand out for the book. "Let me see."

Junsu readily gave his lover the thick tome, willing to shed any responsibility on lingual research in order to return to his food. Micky read as he ate, flipping through the pages and thinking. Finding another reference, he mulled over their options.

"I think matsuro is more like... the end... the last of the days?" Micky chewed on the word nearly as much as he chewed on his food. "Shukumei... fate, destiny or predestination... maybe that's better? There's also gouhou but I think that's more... karma, like karmic retribution."

"Shukumei." Junsu nodded, raising his bottled water in salute to his lover. "I suppose then it's also fate that both Jaejoong and Changmin are sick. We're being given a few days off until they get better. The manager caught the cold as well as a few of the others so..."

"Ah, is it bad to feel joy at others' pain?" Yoochun grinned widely, his mind racing with the possibilities. "Where do we begin."

Lavender Bunny

"Are we even going to leave this room?" Junsu's smirk matched the one forming on Yoochun's face as the tenor's hand roamed up his lover's thigh. "Put down the noodles, Chunnie-ah. I think we need to start our vacation."

* * *

Changmin's grumbling turned dark when Yunho came to collect him, the long muscles of his legs and shoulders aching with the vestiges of his illness. Slightly green from lack of sleep and food, the youngest singer stumbled, nearly falling over until Yunho caught at his waist, the leader offering Min his strength.

"Come on, dongsang." Yunho matched Changmin, mutter for mutter, the older man already exasperated at his attempts to get food into Jaejoong. Wrestling the youngest onto the bed next to his dozing lover, Yunho pulled off Changmin's slippers, tossing them aside for the time being.

Jae woke, disoriented by the jostling, waking and wondering if they were still on a plane and blinking at the streams of sunlight flooding over the enormous bed. Working free of the sheets, Jaejoong stumbled to the bathroom, hating the clammy feeling of his clothes against his sweat-beaded skin. Leaving Changmin to fall back to sleep, Yunho followed his lover, stopping only to grab a pair of cotton drawstring pants for Jae to change into.

"I hate you." Jaejoong mewled, his eyes narrowed into slits, the puffiness beneath them painful for Yunho to see. "You should be as sick as I am. I hate you."

"You love me." Yunho reminded him. Turning his back on his recalcitrant boyfriend, Yunho walked over to the whirlpool bath, twisting the knobs until the water turned lukewarm, slightly more chilly than body temperature. "And I'm not sick because I eat. You forget to eat. Hell, most of the time, you forget to drink water. I'm surprised you even are able to walk sometimes."

"Hate you." Jae mumbled again, shuffling towards his lover, his head down as if the weight were too much for him to bear up.

The stuffiness in Jaejoong's face pulled at him, a sharp pressure stabbing against his temples. Even his teeth ached, a sip of cold water bracingly painful against the roof of his mouth. Jae missed breakfast, falling asleep in mid-chew before Yunho could get more than a few tablespoons of rice porridge into his mouth.

Yunho panicked, sticking his fingers into his lover's mouth, making sure that none of the soupy gruel remained to choke Jaejoong in his sleep. The sudden appearance of fingers against his tongue frightened Jae, his mind immediately seizing on old memories, nightmares revisiting with a firm reality on the fears he kept nurtured inside of him.

The leader's fingers still smarted from the hard bite of Jae's teeth, shreds of skin peeled back then sloughing off as Yunho rubbed at his hand, running

the bitten area under cold water. Jaejoong succumbed back into sleep, his mouth adequately defended, feeling no remorse at Yunho's agonized protests.

Revenge on Jaejoong would be sweeter if Yunho knew it wouldn't circle back at him, the leader half-wishing he could shove the singer into an icy cold shower. One look at Jae's face, the young man's beauty a gleaming pale under a coat of misery, changed Yunho's mind.

"Boo, come here." Yunho grabbed at Jaejoong's hands, the singer attempting to retie his pants. "Take these off. You need a shower. You'll feel better after it."

"Stay with me?" Plaintive, Jae's voice cracked, a husky rasp made raw from coughing.

The hoarseness broke Yunho's heart, his hands cupping his lover's face in a gentle caress. He leaned in, inhaling the mint paste Jae used on his teeth, taking a tiny kiss from Jae's succulent mouth. Nodding mutely, Yunho didn't trust himself to say anything, lost in the delicious taste Jaejoong left on his tongue.

Slowly undressing the singer became an agonizing task for the leader, an unimaginable feast destined to be left uneaten, laid out by a starving soul. The past few days of Jae's sickness worried Yunho more than he imagined, his hands trembling with need as he slid the pants from Jaejoong's limbs. Stopping only long enough to kiss the diamond piercing in Jae's navel, Yunho stripped the remainder of his lover's clothes, taking one long look at the man's slender beauty before helping him into the bathtub.

Turning the massaging jets on to low, Yunho climbed in with him, the enormous tub nearly swallowing them both. Leaning back against the sloped side, the leader held his arms out for Jaejoong, the singer sliding into his lover's embrace. Tucking Jae under his chin, Yunho sighed heavily, letting the water wash the tension free from both of their bodies.

"Why did you move Changmin into our bed?" Jaejoong asked, his voice soft against Yunho's chest. With Jae's head down, Yunho couldn't see the expression on his lover's face but he heard nothing more in the singer's tone other than curiosity.

"Because it was getting tiring going back and forth between the bedrooms." Yunho chuckled at Jaejoong's murmur of sympathy. "I also thought that you would be safe from me if Minnie-ah was... well, there. At least for the day. I'll put him back in his room tonight."

"Hah, you did it so you'd be safe from me!" Jaejoong leaned his head back. Stroking at his lover's shaft, the singer quickly pulled Yunho into hardness, the lukewarm water sluicing from his small motions.

Lavender Bunny

“Jaejoong...” Yunho gritted his teeth, his fingers running under Jaejoong’s hair at the older man’s nape. “You’re going to drive me insane. It’s been too long.”

“You don’t think it’s been too long for me too?” Jae slid through the water, straddling Yunho’s lap, facing him.

The brush of the singer’s hips on his crotch made Yunho hiss, his teeth gritted tight, his jaw set too firm for comfort. “Boo...”

“Way too long.” Jaejoong murmured.

Jae coaxed Yunho’s firmness towards the centre of his body, groaning when Yunho’s hands roamed over his waist then finding the dip of his hips. Guiding the singer, Yunho gasped at the first press of tightness around his throbbing head, holding his breath in while Jaejoong took his time.

“Careful, baby.” Yunho whispered, his desire begging to thrust hard and deep into his lover. He held himself back, letting Jaejoong take control of the pace. “We should have used gel...”

“Baby, I’m not going to wait for gel... for Changmin to leave our bed...” Jaejoong slid down another inch, reveling in the tightly released hiss of Yunho’s hot breath, a sirocco catching Jae’s want and tossing it to the sky. “It’s been... too long, Yunnies-ah.”

Yunho prepared himself for an eternity of pleasurable torture, Jae’s angelic face setting the leader’s heart on fire, washing a heat through Yunho’s tense body. The silken feel of Jae’s warmth gloved over Yunho’s shaft, moving a tight velvet down his sex until Jae’s rear nested tight against Yunho’s groin.

Unwilling to move and break the bond, Jaejoong slowly began rocking his hips, tiny revolutions that rippled sensations through his core, spreading into Yunho’s body. Digging his fingers into his lover’s waist, Yunho thrust upward, a leisurely drag of Jae’s tightness over the trembling sensitive shaft.

“God, Boo.”

Yunho knew he wouldn’t last. It had been too long since he’d been buried inside of his lover, having to be satisfied with whispered phone calls erotically bringing him to release in the wee hours of the morning. Unable to hold any longer, he reached between them to stroke at Jaejoong’s turgid sex, Yunho’s fingers finding the long vein running under to Jae’s sac, letting his nails scrape lightly over the burred skin. He found Jae nearly at his own spill, the sac smooth and tucked up into the hollow between his lover’s thighs.

They shared the moment, shaking loose of the tension from their bodies as the lovers broke through the wall of restraint. Their movements increased, frothing water coursing around their joined hips, Jae’s head thrown back and offering his throat for Yunho’s kisses. The pale column enticed the leader, his teeth cutting a path from Jae’s collarbone up to the tender, soft skin under his lover’s jaw.

"Baby...Yunnie-ah..." Jae gasped, convulsing into Yunho's hand. His rosette clenched hard around Yunho, his twitching muscles tensing and releasing his lover's sex, shattering Yunho's control.

Yunho panted, feeling his seed spill first in a torrent then into small kisses of affection into Jae's core. Spanning his hands across Jae's shoulders, he held his lover to him, rocking Jaejoong slowly as they let a languor sink into them.

"I am so in love with you." Jaejoong whispered. "When I'm with you, it's like I can see the stars in the daytime."

"Oh baby, you're the stars..." Yunho breathed into Jaejoong's mouth, leaving an air kiss on his lover's tongue. "Keep that for me, yes?"

"Yes." Jae's seductive smile bled the cold from the singer's face. "Always will. Every single breath I have will be a kiss for you."

The door rattled under a heavy knock, Changmin's voice plaintively breaking their mood. With a rattle on the knob, Min hurried in, hustling past them and into the bathroom alcove, closing the door behind him. A slush of water soon followed, the youngest coming out of the toilet and rubbing at his eyes, slumber still clinging to the edges of his consciousness.

Standing at the edge of the tub, Min stared down at the tangled bodies of his band members, their faces frozen with expressions of shock, a red flush working over Yunho's cheeks. The water churned about them, hiding anything Changmin might have seen but the embarrassment took over Yunho's mouth, stilling any explanation he might have come up with.

"I only have one question." The sleepy member mumbled, his eyes slightly crossed from fatigue. "What the hell are the two of you doing in my bathtub?"

23

Junsu leaned forward, his eyes rapt and shining as he listened to the crowd roar around him. Secluded, the box afforded them privacy but its glass front gave them a view he'd never imagined he would have. Yoochun leaned back in the soft tilting chair, his eyes more focused on his lover than the grassy field below. A cheering chant rose from the crowd, the Japanese nearly lost in the kraken of Yoochun's thoughts, the afternoon sun making him drowsy despite sleeping in that morning.

Micky wasn't sure which side Junsu was cheering for, but baseball was something they...and most of the Japanese populace... could agree on. The time off was a godsend in Yoochun's mind, their bodies and souls needing some distance from the hectic life they lived. Hooking an arm over Junsu's chair, he leaned into his lover's side, taking a nibble on the other's earlobe.

Junsu patted at Yoochun's leg, a distracted show of affection intended mostly to tell the other singer that he was aware of Micky's presence but the game held him enraptured. Yoochun grinned, not taking offense at the half-hearted attempt, knowing his lover viewed sports like he viewed sex, a fully involved exercise requiring all of the body and mind. Picking up the bottle of soda he's snagged from the wet bar, Yoochun sipped at the cool liquid and turned his attention to the crowd.

The booth was a boon for the couple, accessible only to the two of them barring any requests they might make of the staff, either for more food or something else to drink. Glancing back at the spread of delicacies, Yoochun couldn't imagine needing to eat more, wondering if they could somehow pack it all up to take back with them to the hotel.

Another chant started up, drawing Yoochun back to the crowd. As many women were enthusiastic as the men, packs of girls clustered together in seats and giggling, a rousing gaggle of femininity among the more masculine shouts. Junsu's screaming nearly shocked Yoochun the first time, the tenor standing and yelling enthusiastically as one of the runners rounded third base.

"Oh this is fun." Junsu settled back down, stretching his legs out.

A brush of pink dotted Junsu's nose, the sun's rays burnishing his golden skin. An ache through his cheeks was easily rubbed at, his laughter leaving him tired but happy. Leaning sideways, hidden behind the overhang, Junsu touched Yoochun's mouth with his lips, his tongue plying at the other's

moistness and stealing a taste. Sighing again, content and fully satisfied with the day, Junsu reached upwards to work the kinks out of his shoulders.

"I'm glad we're able to do this." Yoochun nodded. "It's just... normal. We don't get to do normal a lot."

"No," Junsu agreed. "And it's nice to just be able to go see a game or walk around. Remind me to get something nice for Changmin and Jaejoong. A thank you present for getting too sick to work."

"We all needed a break." Micky said, hooking his fingers over Junsu's hand, taking the opportunity to touch the young man while he was aware of Yoochun's presence.

"Did you go to a lot of baseball games when you lived in America?" Junsu asked. "You never really talk about what it was like back there."

"Mostly, alone." Yoochun murmured. "None of us spoke English and it was hard to make friends. I spent a lot of time wandering around or making music. And I had my brother. Now I worry about him because he's alone there, and maybe having a hard time because I'm not there."

"But I don't regret coming." Micky's voice softened, his hands gathered up in Junsu's grasp. Ducking his head, the baritone worked out how he felt, never truly wanting to examine how he felt. "For the longest time, I felt like I didn't belong anywhere. In Seoul, sometimes I feel like I'm not Korean enough and back with my family, I wasn't enough of an American. The members are really my touchstone. It's like I have an...identity when I am with all of you. You've become my home, my country and my religion."

"I'm sorry your family is so far away." Junsu rested his cheek on Yoochun's, his lips tasting the tears the other man let fall. "I wish you could see them more often."

"Me too." Yoochun sniffed, breathing hard to get his emotions under control. "I have you...and the others. Jaejoong has always been... a big help. I think it's because he knows what its like to be alone when people are all around you. Different from me but it is the same feeling. We talk about it sometimes. Or we avoid it. We're good at avoiding it, mostly."

"I'm glad that he's there for you." Junsu smiled at Yoochun's askance look, the baritone's dark eyes glistening with wetness. "Okay, I admit, I didn't always like that he was there but really, now I realize that he was the one person you could pour your sorrow into."

"You're someone I pour my laughter into." Yoochun reassured his lover. "Jaejoong washes his soul of my sorrow. My laughter I want you to keep forever."

"That's a very easy thing to do." The tenor chuckled. "We have so much of it."

Lavender Bunny

"You give as much as you take!" Yoochun leaned back, his grin wide over his face. The cheering began again as the home team took the field, dots of blue and white on the green turf. "Stealing mine when you have your own."

"Your laughter tastes better." Junsu sniffed indignantly. "I am a man of discriminating tastes. A laugh... connoisseur. I only choose to collect the best."

"Hah!" Yoochun pushed at the other lightly, his palm making a small slapping sound. "You're a peasant. You take everything and giggle like a drunken monk at a peep show. You don't know what discriminating means."

"Watch the game, infidel." Junsu snorted, returning Yoochun's slap with one of his own. "I'll deal with you later."

* * *

"Jung-san." One of the band's Japanese staff approached Yunho as he carted up boxed lunches to their rooms, the middle-aged man bowing slightly with his head down. Taken aback by the odd courtesy of an elder addressing him so formally, Yunho barely had time to nod in return before the man rose up, offering a brown manila packet for the leader to take.

"The manager said that it is not fan mail but something that was sent from your family. It has been following behind you for a while and has only now caught up. He said that you would want it immediately." The staff member said, giving another bow that brought Yunho down again, the bottom of the bag brushing the carpeted floor. "If you would like, I will help you take the food up for you."

"No, I'm fine." Yunho took the package, the paper crinkling in his hand. Tucking it under his arm, he bowed and thank the staff member profusely, hoping he could escape before any of the other members of their entourage caught up with him.

The smell of the ramen made Yunho's mouth water, the enclosed elevator intensifying the aromas until he nearly broke under the hunger he'd nursed in his belly. Setting the bag down in the hallway, he opened the door to the suite, calling out for Changmin to help him.

Nearly done coughing, Min shuffled toward the older man, his slender body swathed in his favourite pajamas. Housekeeping nearly fell over themselves in providing the youngest freshly washed night clothes, one of the maids overhearing Min's comment that the soft thin flannel made him feel better inside, despite the aches of his body. Since then, the housekeeping staff returned the night clothes whenever they appeared in the laundry, Changmin's effusive delight bringing a beaming smile to the older woman who take care of their suites.

"Ah, are they clean again?" Yunho nodded towards the flannel, leaning over to sniff at the powder fresh clothes. "They spoil you."

"I know." Changmin nodded, his nose slightly red from the tissues he used. "I like staying here. Whenever we come to Japan, they take care of me. I always feel like I am at home. They love me more than you. Maybe not as much as they love Jaejoong but more than you."

"Here, take your noodles, brat." Yunho found the miso ramen Changmin ordered, handing the youngest the container and a selection of pickles. "There's dessert in there too. Something not too sweet because the last thing I want to deal with is you full of sugar."

Changmin wandered off to his own room, cradling the bowl of noodles against his belly. Yunho picked up the bag and went to go find Jaejoong, calling out to his lover as he entered their bedroom suite. The singer padded out of the bathroom, wiping at his face with a wet washcloth, trying to rub the sleep from his eyes. Although still paler than Yunho liked to see him, Jaejoong's smile went a long way in bringing a blush to the leader's cheeks, the memory of the bath they'd shared yesterday still vivid in his mind.

"Feeling better, baby?" Yunho placed their food on a low coffee table, waiting for Jaejoong to make himself comfortable on the couch before handing the singer a steaming bowl. Opening a pair of chopsticks, he rubbed the splinters off, giving Jae the first pair before getting his own.

"Better than last night." Jae murmured, moving his legs to make room for Yunho, tucking his feet under his lover's thigh.

Dipping the ends of his chopsticks into the ramen, Yunho picked out a few bits of fresh shitake and dropped them into Jae's bowl. Yunho watched the singer eat, making sure Jae consumed more than a mouthful of food. The older man picked at his food, drawing out a few noodles and delicately placing them on his tongue, chewing with less enthusiasm than Yunho liked.

"You need to eat more, Boo." The leader selected a chunk of gobo fishcake from Jae's bowl and held it out for the singer to take. Biting at the meaty square, Jaejoong worked it around his mouth, chewing carefully. "We shouldn't have..."

"Are you saying that you didn't want me when we were in the bathtub?" Jae quirked an eyebrow, a dangerous glint forming under his downswep lashes. Yunho pursed his mouth, knowing full well Jaejoong's behaviour bordered on anti-social when he wasn't feeling well.

"Do not put those words on my tongue." Yunho warned the young man he loved, shaking his head. "Don't confuse my love and concern for you with indifference. I'd rather go celibate forever if it means you live one extra day. I'd rather have your heart than your body. Remember that, Kim Jaejoong."

"Humph." With his argument sidelined, Jaejoong went back to his food, muttering of the unfairness of Yunho's comeback.

"Besides," Yunho offered an opening for Jae to save face, offering the singer a piece of egg omelet. "I don't think either one of us could have gone another

Lavender Bunny

day without each other. I thought I was going to explode when you slid across of me to get into the van. I tried thinking of all the ugly dogs I've ever seen to make my dick soften."

"Dogs?" Jae made a face. "You thought about ugly dogs?"

"Farthest thing from you that I could think of." Yunho replied with a shrug, grinning at Jae's slight smile.

"What's the package?" Jae nodded to the manila envelope Yunho left at the end of the coffee table. "Our new schedule?"

"No, the staff said that it's mail that someone from home sent me." Yunho put his food down, nudging Jae with his foot. "Keep eating. I'll open it without your help."

"Pfah." Jaejoong made a face, sticking his tongue out. The food settled into his belly, his guts rebelling at the intrusion. "What is it?"

Yunho carefully slit the envelope open, using a plastic knife to cut through the packing tape sealing it closed. Turning it over, he glanced at the return address, his hands stilling when he finally spotted his mother's handwriting. Shaking out the contents, Yunho froze when he saw the splashes of faces against the beige couch, his lover's face bent close to Yoochun's, his mouth brushing the baritone's lips. The barest hint of a tangerine slice separated them, the space between them nearly blooming into an intimate kiss.

Jaejoong selected one of the photos from the pile, staring down at the image of himself and Yoochun half-dressed and laying out in the sun, their hands touching. A dip of rainwater glistened near Jaejoong's side, the diamond piercing his navel sparkling in newly washed sun. There were more, captured images of sharing intimacies, sometimes reminiscent of laughter while others held the evidence of sorrow, tears running down Jae's face.

"I wish I was always there to wipe your face when you cry." Yunho peeked at the photo Jaejoong held in his hand, the singer's prettiness vividly etched on the photo paper.

"Are these...?" Jae left the question hanging there, unable to form a coherent thought around the lump of shock in his brain.

"The pictures my father had taken?" Yunho forced himself to sound calm, keeping his voice steady. He'd hidden the other images, tucking them away for a time in their lives when the photos wouldn't be associated with blackmail and pain. The friendship between the two men shone from the flat paper, a staunch and steady bond forged across shared anguish. "Yes. I've not seen of these before. I've got some copies of these but not all. I like this one."

Yunho pulled out a photo of Jae looking off into the distance, the river shown in the background. A gentle spray cast up behind the singer, his gaze distracted, his thoughts lost in the maze of his mind. It was a face Yunho saw often but rarely did he have the chance to drink in the view as they rushed

around their life. To him, this was the true essence of Jaejoong, the dreamer carved from alabaster, a delicate looking stone that defied the world with its strength.

"This one." Yunho tapped at the corner, kissing Jae on the side of his mouth, licking at the spot before pulling away. "This is who I fell in love with. My Boo. Sexy and sweet but fierce."

"Why did he..." Jae fought the spread of his tears into his eyes, refusing to give into Yunho's father and his machinations. "How could he look at these pictures and see ugliness? It's our friendship. Mine and Yoochun's. Where is the ugliness in this?"

"Sometimes, it's hard to see when you've pulled a bag over your eyes because you're afraid of the truth." Yunho shrugged. The package rattled, another smaller envelope and sheets of paper falling out. Handing Jae the letter, he worked at the white square envelope, wondering at its thickness. "Read that to me."

"It's from your mother." Jae shook his head. "I shouldn't..."

"Partners until death. Remember, baby?" Yunho said, taking his time with the envelope. He wanted to hear his mother's words in his lover's voice, knowing she hoped reconcile with the singer for Yunho's sake. "Read. Then eat."

"Dear Baby-boy." Jae grinned widely at the affectionate nickname, stopping to glance slyly at his lover. "She calls you her baby-boy."

"I call you much worse." Yunho replied, sitting back against the couch. "And if you tell anyone, I'm going to do not do things to you for a month. Just remember that."

"Ah, always with the threats to withhold sexual favours." Jaejoong snorted. "As if you can go that long too."

"Read, Boo." Yunho winced at the flaw in his plan, sighing at its truth. He had far less control than Jaejoong, the singer's innate erotic nature easily drawing out Yunho's carnal needs.

"I am including something that will make your father's efforts to subvert you useless." Jae cocked his head and continued reading. "I hope that you're doing well and that this letter finds you quickly. I would like to spend time with you and Kim Jaejoong when you are back home. Please let me know when you have time and we can meet for lunch or maybe even shopping."

"There is a new restaurant that I would like to try. Your sister sends her love. I've included a drawing she did for you in school." Jaejoong unfolded the other sheet, showing his lover a crayon rendition of a forest filled with birds. "Our bulletin board is covered with her drawings. I believe she will want to be an artist when she grows up. If you tell her that it is an impractical life, she responds that her brother is often impractical but a great success. She is determined to be what she wants, much like you."

Lavender Bunny

"I wish you the best on this tour. Please kiss Jaejoong for me and tell him thank you." Yunho took a moment to kiss his lover full on the mouth, earning a snort from Jae. The singer returned to the letter, continuing. "I love you and take care. I hope to hear from you soon. Love, Momma."

The inner envelope finally open, Yunho carefully extracted long rectangular sheets of negative film. Drawing his breath in, the leader held the film strips up to the light, seeing the oddly coloured images of his lover and Yoochun through the brown squares.

"I think these are all of them." Yunho smiled, tucking the strips back into the envelope. "My mother must have taken them from where my father had them and sent them to me."

"I told you..." Jae stroked at Yunho's cheek with his fingers, feeling the happiness finally spreading up from Yunho's heart and into his smile. "She loves you. You're her son. Mothers love their sons."

"Jaejoong." Yunho kissed his lover's palm, thinking of the woman who failed to speak when her husband threw out their youngest. The hitching pain of regret grew jagged in his heart, the revelations of Jaejoong's birth and his subsequent placement still too raw to speak of. "She ..."

"No, this is about your mother." Jaejoong shook his head. "And that she loves you. Leave it there, Yunnie."

"Ah, well just so long as you know that you're not alone." Yunho placed his mouth over Jaejoong's lips, sucking at the air past the singer's lips, taking back a kiss. "I'm here. As well as the others. We love you."

"Then that's all I need, love." The singer nodded, cuddling into Yunho's arms.

"Nope." Yunho refuted, picking up Jaejoong's forgotten meal. "You also need food. Eat, so I can spend some time ravaging you. That's a good word. Ravage."

"Just lock the door this time." Jae muttered, sighing as he picked up a mouthful of noodles with chopsticks. "If Changmin walks in on us one more time, I'm just going to tell him to jump into bed with us and get his virginity out of the way then go look for love."

"Boo... The last thing I need is an image of you and Changmin in my mind. I just got rid of the last one." Yunho rolled his eyes. Biting at Jae's shoulder, he went back to his food, finding another piece of offensive mushroom to pawn off on Jaejoong. "Only you, baby. I don't want anyone but you."

24

Dinner shared among the five members often dissolved into a silliness that warmed Yoochun's insides, his heart filling with the sense of family he gained when sitting among others. Even better was a dinner eaten in the privacy of a hotel room suite, casual and without prying eyes. They'd ordered from the noodle shop Junsu found, large bowls of ramen carried up in sealed containers, Yoochun hefting the bags as if he were a kim chee vendor walking the Seoul market.

Satisfied with a full belly, he'd sat back to listen to the others talk, Junsu chattering away about the baseball game and gesturing wildly when he started to describe the crowd. Changmin yawned first, more fatigue than boredom, his eyes nearly closed with the need for sleep. Jae caught the viral motion, cracking his jaw in a wide catlike yawn, teeth bared under his full lips. Laughing, Yunho shooed them out, ordering the youngest off to bed while guiding his lover to the bedroom, Jae's muted protests lost behind a closed door.

Yoochun hooked his arm around his lover's waist, walking with Junsu back to their room. Junsu talked most of the way, jumping from one subject to the next, mostly centering on the food they'd had that evening and the worn out expressions of the other members.

"Changmin looks a little bit better but Jaejoong still looks pale." Yoochun replied, agreeing with Junsu's assessment of the others. "If he's not careful, Yunho's going to be sick too."

"Hah!" Junsu snorted. "Germs will be afraid to attach themselves to Yunho. He's too bossy. They'd never get any rest."

"True." Yoochun smiled

He groaned when Yunho called earlier that day, a wake up call demanding their presence in the hotel's ballroom, the vast expanse serving as an ad hoc studio to practice in. Even Jaejoong and Changmin had been dragged down there, mostly to go through the steps, albeit at a slower pace so as not to abuse their illness. Yoochun's back still ached a bit from the stretching of his muscles, the last remaining effects of numerous plane rides working free from his spine.

"It was only for an hour." Junsu sighed with relief. "And we don't have to do it tomorrow."

"No, that's a good thing." Yoochun agreed. "I want to sleep in."

Lavender Bunny

"Really?" Junsu slid the electronic key through the lock. The door scanner ran green then they heard the subtle click of the door opening. Turning the knob, the tenor stepped in, glancing over his shoulder at his lover. "I was kind of hoping that we'd get very little sleep tonight and maybe just spend tomorrow in bed."

Junsu disappeared down the hallway towards the bathroom, leaving a speechless Yoochun standing in the outer corridor, a wicked smile forming on the baritone's lips. Flipping the do not disturb sign around, informing the maids that the room would need no service in the morning, he followed, closing the door behind him.

* * *

Oil ran slick over Yoochun's fingers, Junsu exhorting him to leave his palm open for just a little while longer, the tenor's hand spreading the gel thickly over his lover's digits. The chill made Yoochun wince. Junsu laughed at Micky's expression, kissing the end of his nose with a dart of his tongue.

"You sure about this, baby?" Yoochun rubbed his fingers together, letting the slickness pull the warmth from his body. The gel heated quickly, a warm slither that he brought down to the length of Junsu's shaft. The hiss from the tenor's mouth made Yoochun's cock jump, an innate wanton response to the promise of Junsu's body around it.

Playing at the tenor's sex, Yoochun traveled downwards, his mouth finding Junsu's to trail kisses across the other man's lips. Sucking at the fullness of Junsu's upper lip, Yoochun tongued at the dip of flesh under the tenor's nose, threatening to stick the tip of his tongue up Junsu's nostrils.

"Don't!" Junsu waved the young man away, a trill of giggles accompanying the batting of his hands at Yoochun's body. "My mother's dog does that. Aish!"

"Heh." Yoochun chuckled, his fingers dipping down to curve over Junsu's sac, rolling the fleshy globes in his palm. Junsu arched his back, moaning with pleasure as Yoochun manipulated his body, stroking the need up from his body to run hot over his skin. Pressing his mouth against Junsu's throat, Yoochun let out a small yip before biting hard on the pulse beating below Junsu's skin.

"Chunnie." Junsu gasped, his hips moving against Yoochun's fingers. He'd wanted Yoochun inside of him for too long, the months stretching out behind him, a long trail of nights he fell asleep with a need he couldn't explain. "I am going to..."

"Going to what, Susu-ah?" Yoochun pressed his fingertips against the circle of muscle under Junsu's sac, roiling his touch until it gaped, expecting the intrusion.

Bending over, Yoochun settled onto his knees, his shoulders pressed up against the spread of Junsu's thighs. With his hands exploring the beauty of his lover's taut body, Yoochun pursed his mouth and blew lightly on the rosette, watching it flex and pour under the hot rush of air. Stroking with gelled fingers at the base of Junsu's sex, Yoochun leaned in, dabbing the tip of his tongue along the crinkled rim, feeling Junsu jerk in response.

"Yoochun!" Junsu gasped, his hands digging into his lover's hair. Micky grinned to himself, whispering against Junsu's thigh that he wanted the tenor to hold onto the sheets and let him explore, wanting to taste every part of the young man who captured his heart.

"I want to do this, Junsu-ah." Micky murmured. "I'm going to have all of you on my tongue."

The first lick was musky, flavoured with the orange soap of their bathroom. A heavy powdery scent of sex clung to Junsu's body, sparse hairs rippling under Micky's panting breath. Yoochun delved further, feeling the tightness against his tongue give way. His fingers made short work of Junsu's shaft, milking a spurt of seed easily from the turgid length, Junsu's body writhing with convulsive spasms, his gasps loud in Yoochun's sensitive ears.

Yoochun continued, ignoring the pleas from Junsu's tortured throat as the tenor rasped with his desires. Circling Junsu's shaft with his hand, Micky slid down to the root, squeezing harder before roughly pulling back up its length, thumbing at the milked pout of the head.

"You're trying to kill me." Junsu complained, wrapping his hands into the loose sheets, the seafoam cotton vivid against his golden skin. "What the hell did I do to you to... God, Chun!"

Yoochun slid his tongue deeper in, laving the entrance to ease his way in. Junsu's tightness thrilled him, an erotic furrow he longed to enter. He moved one of his fingers around to dip down into Junsu's heat, slackening the strain of Junsu's centre.

"Chunnie... I swear." Junsu stifled a scream, pulling one of the pillows over his face and biting down on its plump form.

A high-pitched moan echoed from his throat, the sound broken by the pants of his mewling mouth. The entrance of Yoochun's finger stole the breath from his lungs, a fire burning from his stomach. He'd played at passion before but Yoochun's love ran pleasure down into parts of his body he'd not realized could feel. The curl of Yoochun's finger broke Junsu's moaning, a spark of pearly flames unfurling from his inner being. Junsu's hips flinched, working down onto the digit, wanting more.

Yoochun complied, sliding another gelled finger into his lover, amazed at the heat encasing him. The other man worked around the sheets, trying to remain still but unable to under the onslaught of his lover's ministrations. Junsu heard himself begging, rasping for Yoochun's sex inside of him.

Lavender Bunny

"I'm going to kill you." Junsu grabbed at Yoochun's shoulders, digging his fingers into the other's flesh. "Or you're going to kill me. One of those. I think. Maybe both."

Pressing further in, Yoochun slid his fingers in then pulled slowly out, repeating the action as he kissed at Junsu's hips. Finding the bone rising under Junsu's waist, Yoochun nibbled around the crease, finding the valley of muscle with his lips. Traveling over his lover's body, Yoochun left a trail of kisses, a long wet mark ending with a tiny purple bruise he'd left with his teeth.

"We're not going to die doing this." Yoochun stopped, thinking on what he said. "Okay, maybe we will. But is that really a bad thing?"

"I need you... baby, please." Junsu fell into his begging, floating on the sensations rocking through his body. The feel of Yoochun's fingers inside of him stretched his core apart, Micky discovered the burr nested inside of Junsu's body, stroking at it until Yoochun heard the thrum move through Junsu's frame, shattering the tenor apart under the surge of pleasures.

"I need you too." Yoochun shifted, Junsu feeling his lover's hands on his trim waist. A twist of their bodies brought Junsu onto his stomach, Yoochun sliding a pillow under his lover to cant Junsu's hips, making entrance easier for their love making.

Another splash of gel, this time dribbled down between the tenor's cleft, Yoochun's fingers stroking down over the rosette. Yoochun eased the head of his sex at the other's entrance, running the excess down over his shaft. Remembering the tightness of Junsu around his fingers, Yoochun wanted Junsu's first push of his sex to be pleasurable. He'd felt the twist of Junsu's body beneath him, the young man's teeth gritting as he fought not to swear at Yoochun's teasing.

Junsu was cotton candy spun from stars around Yoochun's cock. That was the only thing he could think of as he pushed in, working his hips into a small circle and hoping the hissing moan from his lover's throat meant Junsu's impatience would hold just for a little while longer.

Yoochun slid in, slowly letting the heat of Junsu's body encase him. There was nothing that could come close to describing the feeling of Junsu, no cheering or applause could come close to the intimacy of his lover's body. Bending forward, Yoochun kissed between Junsu's shoulders. The tenor's hands reached back, his shoulders pressed hard against the mattress and his spine bent to take Yoochun in as deep as he could.

Rocking back and forth, Yoochun crested against the ridge of Junsu's rim, sliding back in until his body lay tight on the rise of Junsu's cheeks. Junsu's hands clenched, loosening then holding again, urging Yoochun in. His pleading became a mewling cry, a rumbling mantra telling Yoochun of his love, of his heart and of simple things they shared. There was nothing in his thoughts other than their bond, nothing on his tongue but Yoochun's name.

Yoochun easily lost himself in the motion of loving the other man, hooking his cock upward until he felt the rush pleasure invade in Junsu's body. Finding the spot again, Yoochun repeated the action, moving hard until all Junsu could think about was the spin of his nerves unfolding under each thrust.

They held hands when Junsu spilled, the pillow case catching the milky fluid. Yoochun murmured a protest into Junsu's ears, asking the other to let go so he could stroke at the other's shaft. Junsu refused, wanting to feel the whole of his lover against his back, needing for the man to be stretched out and the weight of Yoochun's body holding him against the bed.

Crying out, Yoochun pushed in deep, holding himself against the spasm of Junsu's muscled ring. The ripples of Junsu's body along his sex poured outward, encasing his whole body in the pleasure of Junsu's love. Gasping, Yoochun hitched forward, feeling Junsu's feet wrap tight on his ankles. Letting his nails bite down into Junsu's palms, Yoochun let go, splashing hot liquid into Junsu's insides, letting himself fall.

"Chunnie..." Junsu tried to catch his breath, his lungs bled dry and aching. He groaned with displeasure at Yoochun's body sliding free of his warmth, the feeling of emptiness only subdued by the kisses against the back of Junsu's neck. "I want to do this... over and over."

"I do too." Yoochun whispered, turning the other onto his side, cradling his lover against his stomach. Laying there against one another, they let their heartbeats settle, a steady rhythm brought into sync as they breathed. Running his fingers along Junsu's stomach, Yoochun lay sated, his touch a balm on Junsu's soul.

"Okay," The tenor finally spoke, his voice raspy from talking. He'd hoped that no one heard him then decided he didn't care if anyone did. He wouldn't make allowances for his loving Yoochun, damning the world to nothingness if he could spend another moment with his lover.

"Okay what?" Yoochun kissed at Junsu's shoulder, licking at the spot and resting his chin there. The other's sweat tasted sweet, nearly as much so as the seed he spilled, laved clean from Junsu's belly before it dried.

"I now understand why we don't see a lot of Jaejoong and Yunho when they have privacy." Junsu laughed at Yoochun's groaning chuckle. "I mean, I used to wonder... how much sex can those two have? And now, I think we're going to have to at least match it. Maybe beat it."

"You're very competitive." Yoochun shook his head. "Besides, we're... not them. We're ChunSu. Equals, remember? Neither of us takes without the other one giving. Unless of course you're stealing my things, then I just ask for them back."

Junsu's eyes found the bobble-eyed lavender bunny sitting on the end table, its ears flopped over its head. The carnival seemed so long ago, the prize of Yoochun's love won before any game was ever played. He realized that now,

Lavender Bunny

in the glow of their lovemaking, Junsu saw the forever captured in the plastic eyed buttons of a plush rabbit.

"When I grabbed that bunny..." Junsu said softly, bringing Yoochun's hand up to his mouth, kissing at the other's palms. "I wanted to take something that wasn't.. perfect... something like you.. home. And then now, I realize that I love it...and you... not because you aren't perfect but because you are. Perfect in being what I need to love. I'm sorry I didn't see that before, Chunnie. I was so damned blind."

"It's okay, Susu-ah." Yoochun held his lover tight, letting their souls meld together under lights from the city outside. "I never needed to be perfect. I just wanted to be perfect for you. When I first started loving you, I knew that. That I wanted you. I never wanted anyone but you. In my heart. In my life. Always."

"Okay, now, we sound like a bad drama." Junsu laughed, turning around and tangling his legs into Yoochun's. "But yeah, forever baby. Nothing but forever for us. Love you, Yoochun."

"I love you too, Junsu." Yoochun kissed the end of his lover's nose. "And you'd better cherish that damned bunny because we're not having any more kids but him."

25

Sin pulsed with vibrant life, a throbbing beat set around flashing lights and warm bodies. Cutting through the crowd, five young men, faces lit under red and blue strokes working down over the dance floor. A few days since their return to Korea, they were finally free of the rigid schedule their lives were run by, an unbending structure that left little room for privacy much less personal time. Now, looking for a loud place to shed any tension, they gathered as a team... odd family of five... bound by more than song and work.

The baby was the first lost in the crowd, hands running over Changmin's shoulders, an older woman lithely working her way around his lean body. The smile he gave her was one of innocence, his naiveté a shell that he could hide behind if he needed to. While pretty, she left him with not a shred of want for her body, the shrill of her laughter cutting under the heavy bass of the music. Another caught his eye, her rounded face and pretty smile a dose of sweetness amid the spice of overt sexuality. Stepping to the side, Min eased towards the girl, noting the trim backside of a man dancing in front of him before sidling close, his head ducking down to ask about her name.

Jaejoong slithered off into the darker end of the dance platform next, Yunho following close behind. Hidden from view, the feral singer felt more comfortable throwing himself into the numbing pleasure of his body's movements. Even in a restricted club, he needed private, a sole corner to open up into before he could meet Yunho's eyes.

Their leader curved his body near Jaejoong's, their chests brushing once then twice, their hips falling into a rhythm mimicking their nights spent hidden from the world. Watching his lover's face, Yunho bent to kiss the singer's closed eyes, feeling the brush of lashes when Jaejoong, startled, opened his lids to stare at Yunho. Glancing around, the sporadic shadows kept them hidden from view, small snatches of bodies barely skimming their attention. Satisfied of their privacy, Jaejoong moved in closer, his hands skimming over Yunho's waist, pulling the other man towards him.

Lost in one another, neither saw Yoochun's wicked grin or the elbow he gave Junsu before he pointed at the couple. Junsu shouted over the music, trying to be heard but the sound drowned out any words he might have spoken. Needing something cool to drink and wanting to listen to his lover more than dance, Yoochun pointed towards one of the VIP tables and mimicked sipping from a cup, earning a hardy nod from Junsu.

Lavender Bunny

Frosted panes set around the dance floor made conversations possible away from the platforms, Yoochun sighing with relief when they sat down. The meal they shared at a Chinese restaurant sat in his belly, a content feeling that needed to subside a bit before he would chance molding his body around Junsu's. The tenor slid in besides him, nodding to one of the waitresses and motioning for an order.

"Water for me." Yoochun replied when she asked after their drinks. "Do you think we should get something for the others?"

"Probably." Junsu pondered. "Two lemonade soju and two sodas...clear if you have it. If not then two tonics and lime."

"Aish, Minnie-ah is going to complain that he's being treated like a child if you order him that." Micky reminded Junsu. "We promised that when we took him here, he'll be an adult."

"He'll pass out again." Junsu muttered under his breath. "If he does, then you're carrying him to the cab. He's too long for me. Three lemonade soju but keep the two sodas in case he changes his mind."

"You know, not wanting to carry out one of the members after they've had too much to drink is why you get the reputation for being unhelpful." Yoochun teased, hooking his long legs onto the booth cushion. "You won't help us get Jaejoong in the apartment or hide Yunho's murdered body. And now, you say Changmin is too tall to carry. You have no one to blame but yourself when they call you lazy."

"Hey, I would help carry you!" Junsu protested. "And if you killed someone, I would help then."

"Only because if you didn't, I would be mad at you and you'd never get touched again." Yoochun snorted, gesturing towards the dance floor. "And if you even thought about straying, Yunho would be there to lecture you on fidelity."

"Gods, no..." Junsu clutched his chest in mock horror. "Spare me from a Yunho lecture. I'll do anything. Even carry Changmin's limp body from one end of Korea to the next."

"Why are you carrying my body?" Changmin slid into the booth besides Yoochun, his face glistening with a sheen of sweat. "And where are you carrying it?"

"I'm telling Junsu that we won't like him if he keeps being lazy. He still refuses to help us carry dead bodies out of the apartment. What good is he?" Micky handed over one of the lemon soju to Changmin. "Careful with this, I can smell the soju from here."

"I'll sip it. Very slowly. You won't even see it go down." Min hefted the glass in a salute towards the older man. "Thank you for ordering this for me."

"Well, now if you pass out, I'm obligated to carry your stinky tall body to the car so try not to." Junsu commented, sipping at his lemon-lime soda. "So, don't pass out. Or you risk your head getting bumped on the ground when we haul you around."

"I'm probably lighter than Yoochun. Definitely lighter than Jaejoong." Changmin responded. "He's very heavy. Yunho says it's because dreams weigh a lot. I'd agree. Jaejoong carries a lot of dreams."

"Dreams aside, it's all that muscle." Yoochun replied "Oh, and his hard head. That's made of stone."

Yoochun waved for his best friend's attention, the singer stepping off of the dance floor and looking about for the others. Yunho spotted Micky first, tapping Jae on the shoulder and guiding him towards the table, holding the singer's hand tightly. Wending through the crowd, they reached the table, silly star-kissed smiles on their faces.

"Hey, you two didn't hit the floor." Yunho motioned for Junsu to move over, urging the tenor to make room for Jaejoong. Jae grinned at the squeak of the leather seats as his jeans caught on the slick material. Leaning against the leader when he sat down, Jaejoong reached for one of the drinks, sniffing at the soju before taking a sip.

"Wanted to talk a bit." Yoochun bent over the table, lifting his body closer to talk to Yunho. "We might dance later."

"This is good." Changmin took a deeper draught, his cheeks blushed red from the soju. "Can we see if the waitress will get me another?"

"Might want to wait until we finish ours." Yunho slid the soda over to the youngest. "That way she won't have to come over here more than once."

"Ah, good idea." Min nodded, rubbing at the condensation on the glass. "It would be rude to make her go back and forth."

"And he's less likely to get drunk too." Jae whispered into his lover's ear. "I don't want to drag him up those stairs."

"Like we dragged you?" Yunho murmured back, biting at Jae's earlobe.

"Just remember who walked away with the black eye from that." Jae tapped his lover's lips, then kissing Yunho soundly under the absence of light.

"Come on, baby." Yoochun shoved at Changmin's shoulder, pushing the younger man out of the booth.

"Hey! Don't call me baby." Min pushed back, his hands firm on Micky's chest. "Changmin or even Min. But not baby."

"He's talking to me, you idiot." Junsu kicked at the youngest under the table. "Come with us, Minnie-ah. We'll dance... the three of us."

* * *

Lavender Bunny

They were alone on the rooftop, letting the cool air drift down from the hills onto the gravel-speckled tar sheets. Long planters of herbs ran along one side, fragrant blossoms of lemon thyme mingled with the savoury rosemary tang. Yoochun's clove cigarette added a smoky quality to the evening air, a wisp of heavy spice on the wind. Junsu leaned on the cement railing next to his lover, elbows set so he could rest his chin on his hands.

"You should stop smoking." Junsu poked at his lover's side, his index finger stiffened to find the soft ticklish spot Yoochun protected fiercely with an upraised hand.

"I'm trying." Yoochun complained. "This is the first one I've had in weeks. The pack's even gone stale."

Junsu's heavy sigh made Micky roll his eyes, echoing with his own exasperated heaving breath. Stubbing out the nearly full length of the cigarette in an ash can, Yoochun popped a stick of mint gum into his mouth, chewing to release the oils. Nudging the tenor with his shoulder, Yoochun turned his head to stare out at the city around them.

"Did you have fun dragging Changmin up the stairs?" Micky said, struggling to keep the giggle out of his voice.

"No thanks to you and Jaejoong! You two just stood there laughing at Yunnies and me." Junsu balled up his fist and struck Yoochun playfully on the shoulder. "He doesn't even try to walk. It's like trying to carry a giraffe! He grows extra legs!"

"BooJae is much easier to get into the house." Yoochun nodded. "Unless he's mad at you in which case, he'll wake up swinging. He's got good aim even when he's drunk. Thank God he doesn't get drunk often. We're known for being pretty. He'd soon take care of that."

"Yeah, I'm much too pretty for something to happen to my face." Junsu agreed, solemn to Yoochun's wide mocking grin.

Junsu's hand found Yoochun's fingers, intertwining into the baritone's long digits. Touching brows, each pondered the city, finding landmarks amid the skyscrapers, spotting places dear to their hearts. For Yoochun, no place would come close to the nearness of Junsu's presence than on the rooftop they star-gazed from. For Junsu, it was the SM entertainment building where he first saw Yoochun, a gangly goofy-faced singer that made him laugh.

"I love you, you know." Yoochun didn't take his eyes off of the city, catching the twinkle of a carnival wheel rolling in the distance.

"Junsu." The tenor bent over and cupped the other man's mouth, pursing Yoochun's lips. "Not Yunho. Junsu."

"Stupid. You know what I mean." Yoochun's smile spilled dimples over Junsu's fingers, his words a melodic burble.

"I know." Laughing, the tenor let go of his lover's face, kissing Yoochun's lower lip. "I love you too, you know. Or Jaejoong. Or Changmin. Which ever you want to be today. Although you can't be Junsu. I'm busy being Junsu right now."

"Be serious." Yoochun nudged his lover with his bare foot, stroking at Junsu's ankle. "I'm trying to proclaim my undying love for you right now."

"I'll be serious." Junsu turned around, keeping his hand around Yoochun's. With his back against the rooftop wall, he could watch Yoochun's amiable features shift, emotions playing fluidly over his face. With Yoochun, there was no artifice, something Junsu enjoyed immensely. The other man said what he meant and loved as openly as he sang. Junsu couldn't imagine his life without the young man next to him and he didn't want to give that a try...ever.

Yoochun nodded at the stars, picking out the brightest among the canopy overhead. "You see those... two over there? By the crest of the hill?"

"Are you going to say they remind you of us?" Junsu glanced over his shoulder, following the ridgeline until he saw the twinkles Yoochun spoke of.

"No, that's Yunho and Jaejoong. They are fire and circle one another. Light spun from one and fed into the other. For all eternity. Always... burning and needing one another." Yoochun shook his head. "You and I... we're the clouds."

"Clouds?" Junsu asked, tilting his head back and staring at the drapery of mists hanging above the city.

"Always moving, caught on the wind but still, so powerful." Yoochun whispered into Junsu's ear, hot and sensual. "We can make a storm and change the landscape and during the sunny days, people look up at us and see bunnies...lavender bunnies... or dragons... a sweet popcorn of white against the blue."

"You can't separate clouds. You can fly inside of them and see nothing but water drops but they are... something." Yoochun continued. His arm snaked about Junsu's waist, pulling the other in. Straddling the tenor's thighs, Yoochun's hips found the nested hollow of Junsu's body, fitting into his lover as easily as breathing. "You can't capture clouds. It's free. That's how I feel when I'm with you. Like nothing can hold me and I have so much... energy and power to change the world. Loving you... made me a cloud."

"So... I love you, Susu-ah." Yoochun slanted his head to capture a kiss from his lover's mouth, pulling the breath from Junsu's body until the other gasped for air... just enough to fall back into Yoochun's moistness.

The sky gathered above them, a hot breeze pulling up from the hillsides. A splatter of water struck Junsu's forehead, followed by another. Within second they were standing in a thick rain, their clothes clinging to their lean bodies. It

Lavender Bunny

ran cold at first then warm from the heat of their bodies, as if the sky drew strength from the couple standing on the rooftop.

Casting his head back, Yoochun opened his mouth and let the water fill him over, spilling down over his lips. Bending over, he let the rain flow into Junsu's waiting mouth, the sweetness of the skies mingled on their tongues. Lapping at the water, Junsu swallowed, pressing tight against Yoochun until the air between them escaped. Sighing, he held his lover close, never wanting to let go.

"I love you too, Chunnie-ah." Junsu sighed, murmuring against Yoochun's lips. "Until the clouds fall down from the sky. You and me."

"You and me, baby." Yoochun agreed, his voice dark with want. "Until the clouds fall from the sky."

Yoosu Bunny Dribble

Fat raindrops struck the rooftop, the burn of lightning in the air. Yoochun stood at the edge of the wooden platform lined with bobbing marigold plants, floral sunbursts drumming a beat to the tune of the sky. The baritone stood with his head tilted back, mouth parted to swallow the rush of warm water pouring into his open throat. Above him, the clouds crackled with energy, blue kisses against the sky's silvery skin.

Yoochun was unsure of how long he stood there, staring up at the sky but when he'd finally noticed the chill creeping into his marrow, dew starred the streaked ebony of his hair and the skin on his face was nearly frozen stiff.

The tangible taste of freedom filled his mouth then, an addictive miasma that poured into his lungs and belly until he thought he would choke from the headiness of it but knew that he'd only want more. Yoochun discovered the edge of his soul in that moment, among the stars and trees. The ethereal wings of his essence lifting to catch the wind as it ripped through the weald and burned its kiss onto his skin.

Junsu's face tugged at his heart, a memory born of ache and want. He now understood Yunho's frustration at hiding behind the curtain of the group's tightness, any affection shown cast in the light of a close friendship rather than smoldering whispers under shared blankets. Yoochun yearned to cast off the ties that bound him to a lifestyle where his body and voice were his only coin but in that speckled darkness, the truth of his existence resonated... he was a passing interest to Junsu, merely someone to laugh and play with when Su's body needed warmth.

Yoochun knew had nothing other than the comely tight flesh that held his thoughts, Junsu's sensual flirtations an erotic siren call he couldn't ignore. A quick tongue and agile cocky smile would only keep Junsu back until Yoochun's world became a bit more scary and Micky sought out the other's comfort. That frightening event seemed to be a recurring theme lately, body clean of emotional scars from Junsu's healing nature but the feel of the singer on Yoochun inflicted unseen damage. Micky trusted no one easily...and hardly any one fully. Yet it seemed as if even that was changing, because of the quixotic Junsu.

"You're soaked through." Junsu sauntered up behind his friend, licking at the stream of water running down Yoochun's jaw. Sucking on a shock of water-darkened hair, Junsu tasted the singer on the rain, a brush of cream and orange zest. Snuggling up against the line of Yoochun's lean body, Junsu fit

Yosu Bunny Dribble

into the spaces God left for him along the other's muscles, a dip where he curved out.

Sighing, Yoochun reached down to grasp one of Junsu's wrists, bringing the young man's hands up to his mouth. The heavy want of his body drove a languor into his bones, a satiation brought on purely by Junsu's heat sliding against him. The moisture in the air sparkled between their tightly wrapped torsos, an arc of electricity warmed by one another's touch.

"You feel good...against me... like this." Yoochun suckled at the tips of Junsu's fingers, drawing down past the young man's nails, scraping his teeth on the rise of his friend's knuckles. The other man brought out the desire in his blood, Yoochun's want for Junsu's body aching down in his bones. "It's like you brought the sun with you, even though it's raining."

"I'm not one of you girls to sweet talk, Chunnie-ah." Junsu murmured into the breadth of Yoochun's shoulders. "But I'm not complaining. You're too cold out here. Are you trying to get sick so we'll take care of you like we did Changmin?"

"I don't think I could get that sick." Yoochun shook his head at the horror of spending a week in bed. "Maybe Yunho could get sick and we could spend our time in the stairwell. Think he would sacrifice himself for us?"

"Not a chance." Junsu scraped his teeth along the ridge of Yoochun's shoulder blades, rubbing his nose against the wet fabric of Micky's t-shirt. "Turn around. Your mouth's on the wrong side."

Their lips met slowly, soft flesh barely skimming. The rain stilled, trapped between their mouths. Junsu tilted his head, swallowing the water flavoured by their kiss. He wanted to share it, lost in the sheer pleasure of Yoochun's arms sliding down to his waist. Moving his hands over Yoochun's hips, Junsu hooked his fingers into the singer's back pockets, wishing he could slide into the weft of the heavy denim. Micky hummed, a rumbling depth of sound vibrating against Junsu's parted lips, pulling a smile out of his friend's soul.

Another dip of Yoochun's tongue pushed past Junsu's lips, laving at the striated run on the roof of his friend's mouth. The strong pulse on Junsu's neck throbbed under Yoochun's fingers, pouring the sound into the thrum of Micky's soul. They clung to one another, heating the rain pounding their bodies into a rising steam.

"We should find a tent or something..." Yoochun broke away, a reluctant pull from the moist heat consuming him. "Maybe get out of the rain."

"I might have an umbrella somewhere." The young man said, cocking his head in mock contemplation. "We definitely don't want to go downstairs because the others are crawling all over the apartment. Hardly any privacy there."

The smell of Yoochun got to Junsu, creeping past his insatiable hunger and the singer delicately bit Yoochun, pulling a mouthful of flesh between his

teeth just for a nibble without breaking the skin. Sometimes Junsu just liked knowing he could have a piece of Micky's flesh in his mouth, knowing he had the power and the permission to rake his skin or plunge into his mind with a whispering suggestion of pleasure.

The roof grew heavy with promise and moistness and for a long moment, Yoochun wondered if the walls around his passions could stand up to the insistent push of carnal sizzle pouring from Junsu's very skin. An expanse of hard chiseled stomach, visible from the hem of Junsu's shirt to the low slung hips of his jeans, rippled with a glowing golden pattern as Yoochun's fingers brushed over him, the dark sienna outer ring of the dancer's eyes widening to nearly swallow the amber within.

"I swear, sometimes, I think you're not human." Yoochun whispered. Junsu laughed aloud, a spill of glittery laughter sparkling from his throat. The singer rubbed his hands over Yoochun's sides, brushing his fingers along the cup of Yoochun's belly, hearing the beat of his heart pounding against the thin layer of skin that separated Yoochun's flesh from his.

Yoochun discovered, much to his surprise, that he liked the smell of another man...this man...a potent crushed peel of a clove rubbed between his fingers. The scent of musk underlying the sugared spice that seemingly burst from within held an erotic alien flavour to it.

Yoochun knew Junsu was the first man he'd had prolonged erotic contact with. His attraction to Junsu puzzled him, flowering forth from some unknown desire curling up from the depths of his belly. He understood the need and want of Jaejoong for Yunho, a distant melding of contrasting passion. His body betrayed him with those passions when Junsu was near, the pressure of flesh against the walls of his throat or the insistent push of something solid yet giving on the membranes of his body. Taking a deep breath, Yoochun drew the perfume of Junsu into his lungs, savouring the delicate flavour of the young man on his tongue as he watched Junsu's handsome face with hooded eyes.

"I'm as human as you are." Junsu responded, licking at a stray raindrop dangling at the edge of Yoochun's chin. "If you don't believe me...how about if we find someplace we can be alone and you can dig your fingers inside of me to find out?"

Hint of Lemon and Kisses

While Yunho denied his feelings for Jaejoong...

Sweat beaded in the curve of Jaejoong's spine, a drop rolling down past the ripe muscles of his rear, caught finally in the weave of his loose cotton pants. His lungs burned from exertion, each inward breath a stab of heat in the cold of his exhaustion. Although supple and strong, his body's reserves were leeched clean from his bones, long aches making his thighs tremble. Another dance step fumbled earned him a searing look from Yunho, the leader holding eye contact only long enough for the singer to fully know the extent of Yunho's disapproval.

Snarling to himself, Jaejoong's mouth curled around a swearword, held silent on his tongue until it burned the back of his throat. Yunho caught that as well, a slim tight smile on his lean face. Jae cocked his head, pulling his eyes together until they crossed, his face ducked down behind Yoochun's back.

Another stumble, this time Changmin stepping right instead of left, stepping between Yunho's spread legs. Both singers went down hard, Changmin's shin bent at an odd angle under the leader's thighs. A sharp cry of protest raked out of Min's throat, his hands barking on the waxed floor. Yoochun grabbed at Yunho's waistband, hoisting the other man up before his weight rested fully on Changmin's slender legs. Twisting hard, Yunho landed on both of his hands, straddling Changmin's waist.

"Thanks, Chunnie-ah." Changmin breathed a sigh of relief, panting heavily from the tumble. Yunho rested his forehead on the small of Min's back, the youngest member's sweat-soaked shirt leaving a moist circle on the leader's face.

Leaning over to whisper in Yunho's ear, Jaejoong's hot breath scorched the leader's thoughts, his groin thickened with the sound of the singer's voice. His mouth brushed close to Yunho's cheek, his erotic murmur only loud enough for the other to hear. "If you had done things right, that would have been me panting under you."

Straightening, Jaejoong padded off to the locker room, ignoring the blanched look of want on Yunho's face. The leader swallowed hard, wondering if he'd ever get the hardness out of his body. Changmin glanced over his shoulder at his older friend, clearing his throat. The heaviness along Yunho's legs pressed on the youngest's thighs, an insistent push of flesh Changmin couldn't even begin to deal with.

"Hyung," Min bit his lower lip, finding Junsu's twinkling eyes and wide mouth barely containing his exuberant laughter. "If you will excuse me..."

Yoochun pulled Yunho onto his feet, patting at the older singer's shoulders in sympathy. "It's okay, hyung. I stumble over Min all the time. His legs are too long."

Jaejoong didn't give Yunho a backward glance. Yunho watched him until he couldn't see the lithe singer any more.

* * *

While Jaejoong slept across the hall from the one he wanted...

Yoochun shed his sweat, pulling his bare feet free of the fleece pants. Jaejoong closed the door of their room behind him, a towel tucked tight around his hips. The damp terrycloth clung to each ripple of muscle and curve of in his body, the light from the end table lamp turning the wet towel nearly translucent. Jae rubbed at his wet hair with another towel, tamping the excess water from his head. Catching Yoochun staring, the singer cocked his head.

"What's the matter?" Jae's pout turned his angelic face into a sensual landscape, sex poured hot over cool porcelain. "Are you okay?"

"I was just wondering why it's different when I look at Junsu than when I look at you?" Yoochun stared at his best friend, trying to find any heat in his scrutiny.

The other singer was leaner than Junsu whose face still held the kiss of pubescence along his bones. Their mouths both were promises of liquid heaven, Jaejoong's pout sensual compared to Junsu's quixotic smile. Each moved gracefully but Junsu's more masculine suppleness touched into the depth of want in Yoochun's belly. Jaejoong's ease in his own body amazed Yoochun, whose own gangly nature made him very self-conscious of every step he made. Junsu neared that innate comfortable control, the command the young man had on his limbs and torso were beyond Micky's. He often just watched Junsu practice dance moves in the reflection of the bedroom mirror, the other's intense focus making him unaware of Yoochun's perusal.

"That's because you find something in Junsu that you don't find in me." Jaejoong shrugged easily, giving his friend a light smile. "Don't worry, Chunnie-ah. I'm sure you bother him as much as he bothers you. He just doesn't know it yet. It's not like me and Yunho. Junsu doesn't want to throw up every time you go near him."

"I just miss having him here." Yoochun stood, grabbing his towel to take a shower. "The room smells different with you here. It's not a bad thing..."

"Just wrong?" Jaejoong nodded, tugging the towel off of hips, his lean body clotted with small bruises from the beating he'd taken while working on their

Hint of Lemon and Kisses

choreography. "I know what you mean. I can't be there in that room with him. Not with him not wanting me."

"I know, JaeJae." Chunnie hugged his friend's naked body, pressing a light kiss on Jaejoong's mouth.

The delicate taste of Jae brushed on Yoochun's tongue, a bitter sweetness stark with pain. He'd once did the same to Junsu, unthinkingly giving an casual intimacy similar to one he shared with Jaejoong but the other singer jerked back from the contact, Junsu's face frozen with intense shock. That look burned Yoochun's shame into his bones but the peach brush of Junsu's tongue on his lips resurfaced in his dreams nearly every night. Bumping foreheads, the friends smiled at one another through the wealth of their hair.

Changmin opened the door to the two friends' bedroom, about to announce to the pair that dinner would be arriving from a restaurant in half an hour. Hastily shutting the door quietly, Changmin leaned against the wall, trying to stop his heart from beating its way out of his chest.

"God," Changmin breathed, his mind racing. "I have got to get Jaejoong back in his own bed before something bad comes from this."

* * *

While Changmin plotted...

"Hyung, do you suppose that Yoochun and Junsu miss sleeping in the same room?" The youngest member turned over in his bed, resting on his stomach.

Resting his chin on a clenched fist, Changmin contemplated his leader's face in the dimmed lights of their shared bedroom. He'd piled pillows onto the edge of his bed, working into a cocoon of comfort. Winter raged outside, the world frozen in place. Snow pattered on the window, frost thunder storms burred on the warmer glass. Changmin followed a drop of ice float over the pane, lodging into a outcropping of snow on the corner sill.

"Why do you say that?" Yunho stretched his arms over his head, turning his head to glance at the younger man.

He'd dozed in the quiet company, letting his mind drift through the memories of the day. Jaejoong's defiant tilt of his chin and the fierce fire burning in the singer's dark eyes haunted Yunho's meanderings, along with the edged rage along his spine at the sight of Yoochun's familiar touching of the mercurial singer. Changmin's question about Yoochun and Junsu wrapped around a delicate tendril of deliberation surfacing in Yunho's mind, the barest hint of a verdant spectre hovering through the longing shadows he struggled to avoid.

"I think Su misses Yoochun." Changmin sounded troubled to Yunho's ears. "I'd hoped that he would be comfortable in here... with us, of course but there are times when I think he opens his eyes in the morning and is shocked to see us here instead of Yoochun."

"That might be." Yunho nodded. Rolling slowly off of his bed, the leader pulled down the thick duvet from his mattress, winding the blanket around his body. Sitting, he bent forward to listen to Changmin, the role of concerned older brother as familiar on his shoulders as the comforter he used to warm himself. "Do you worry about Junsu?"

"I worry that.. he's not happy." Changmin worried at his lower lip, dropping his eyes to stare at the rub between their beds. "Do you ever wonder what makes people happy?"

"Sometimes." Yunho admitted, his face clouding over. "But it doesn't mean that you can do anything about it, Minnie-ah. People have to find their own happiness."

Changmin pondered his leader's words, trying them out in his mind. Having Junsu sleeping in the same room delighted the youngest. His dreams wandered towards the cheerful joyous soul bouncing through his life, charismatic and exuberant. But since coming to sleep under the window, Junsu grew to a shadow of himself, only brightening when Yoochun came into the room. Changmin felt the stabs of pain in his heart when Junsu's smile stretched to sharp brilliance, a happiness not brought on by the youngest. There was too little happiness in the house, tearing small rents in the tight bonds they forged through their struggles. Sacrifices would have to be made, Changmin told himself, and one of the hardest sacrifices would have to be made by him.

"Do you think that kissing makes people happy? Even if it's not the person you love?" The young singer pursed his lips, waiting for Yunho's response.

"That's something odd to ask." Yunho's interested glance held more than a tincture of concern. "What led you there?"

"Because I see Junsu being unhappy here and I think Yoochun is lonely without him." Changmin swallowed, tossing his tender heart onto the fires, hoping that by giving Junsu back to Yoochun, the two eldest members would find themselves in each other. "I saw Yoochun kissing Jaejoong on the mouth the other day..."

"What?" Yunho slid back, brow furrowed with anger. "When?"

"It was innocent, hyung. I see them kiss one another and it feels like brothers, really." Changmin slid onto the floor to sit next to Yunho. "I would bet on it. It just made me wonder if kissing anyone would make someone...forget the pain of wanting someone they can't have. That if a kiss from someone you love in your heart as a brother helps take the agony away from your broken heart."

"Changmin..." The older man released his hot breath slowly between his teeth, feeling the hiss vibrate on his taut lips. "You should just kiss someone because they are there. Yoochun shouldn't have... touched Jaejoong that way. It's not right. Even if Jae's... wrong for wanting..."

Hint of Lemon and Kisses

"Does it matter really, who Jaejoong wants?" Changmin led the conversation back to where he first laid the path stones to tread on. "Would Yoochun's kiss help his heart?"

"Why are you asking this, Changmin?" Yunho's chest ached, a twisting scissor pang. With his throat closing in around his air, the leader found it difficult to speak, his mind conjuring up images of Yoochun's mouth on Jaejoong's birthmark or the young man's fingers caressing the soft down of hair along Jae's nape.

"Because I wonder if a kiss would make my own heart stop from hurting." Saying those words aloud cost Changmin, the secret of his soul bared for the leader to steal. Yunho failed to see the veracity in Changmin's slender face, lost in his own thoughts.

"You're a good older brother, hyung." Changmin whispered, reaching out to touch Yunho's jaw.

Yunho wasn't prepared for the touch of Changmin's mouth on his, a soft press of warmth despite the cold. The youngest canted his head, a delicate boned face with eyes closed against the possibility of rejection. Yunho felt himself allow Changmin's press, opening his mouth slightly to dab the tip of his tongue against the younger man's upper teeth, the ridges roughening Yunho's soft flesh. His sex stirred at the touch, a slight lengthening in response to the brush of lips on his own but as Yunho searched for the betraying fire of Jaejoong's perversity infecting his body, all Yunho could conjure up was the lack of spice in Changmin's mouth.

Cupping the younger man's face between his strong palms, Yunho pulled Changmin in, taking small nips of kisses from the singer's surprised lips. Laving at the smooth skin of Changmin's inner lip, Yunho pushed in, trying to devour the demons chewing on his heart. The younger man moaned under the ravaged kiss, his mouth bruising with the continued onslaught. Clenching at Yunho's shoulders, Changmin gave into the caress, hoping to find some wanton abandon rising inside of him but the ashes of his tears slaked grey rain onto his wishes for Junsu's attention. In taking the first step to push the elders together, Changmin would be turning away from what he himself wanted.

When Yunho pulled away, Changmin's breath hitched low in his chest, his body cold under the leader's touch. None of the thrill in another's hands reached his belly, nothing of the burning ember stoked hot from Junsu's smile. Seeing the confusion on his leader's face, Changmin tried not to smile, pressing his lips tighter together.

"I'm sorry, Changmin. I shouldn't have..." Yunho whispered, wondering what disease of the mind Jaejoong had given him with the want now burning in his blood. The young man sitting next to him deserved much better treatment than what he'd gotten from Yunho's hands and mouth. "That didn't feel right. It wasn't right of me to..."

"I think we both needed to see if..." Changmin searched for the words he could find to explain the shards of his heart that he now held in his hands. "I think we both wanted... hoped that it was just something our bodies needed and not what our hearts desired. It isn't a surprise that there isn't a heat between us, not like you and Jaejoong. I'm more your little brother. He's..."

"I don't want him...not Jaejoong." Yunho resisted with a shake of his head. "It's wrong to want... another man that way. That's not for me."

"Perhaps it's not for me either." Changmin said, touching Yunho's shoulder. "We tried it and didn't like it. And no one else has to know. It's between us. No more apologies, hyung. It was something we both needed to discover...to find out if what we desire is a touch and not the beat of a heart that matches ours."

Nodding, Yunho struggled to get to his feet, tangling his legs in the duvet. With the burn of Changmin's mouth on his own, his heart pulsed with the whisper of adultery and betrayal to a love he refused to claim. Changmin lent Yunho a steadying hand, smiling at Yunho's continued apology, reassuring the elder singer that they both needed to see how they felt and wouldn't life be easier with the knowing?

Agreeing, Yunho offered to get them tea so they could talk more with warm bellies. Changmin kept his tears back, the glittering pain on his lids razors cutting into his skin. Smiling, the ache of his face straining to conceal his feelings, Changmin let his emotions weep down in the depths of his soul only after Yunho left.

"That kiss was for you, Junnie-ah." Changmin sniffed, struggling to maintain his composure. "I gave Yunho my first kiss because you are so unhappy here and the elders...they need each other so badly. Please, when this is all over, forgive me for giving away something that should have been yours."

* * *

While Yunho slept on the couch...

Yoochun stretched out onto the bed next to Jaejoong, his hand loosely trailing over his friend's flat belly. The evening passed slowly, sounds of sports coming from the living room, Junsu and Yunho shouting at the television. Changmin was absent, taking a respite from the noisy apartment in the relative solitude of the tea shop down the street. Jae could make out Yunho's voice amid the chaos of noise. It was a siren call to his heart, adding a small hitch to the steadiness in his chest.

He'd listened to Yunho talking of sin and temptation, hearing the murmuring words as a litany in the labyrinth of his thoughts. Jaejoong couldn't see the ache of want as something to be wary of, he'd often threw himself into his passions. Yunho's touch shivered through his bones, resting there and churning want. A tendril of the young man's scent drove Jaejoong crazy, his

Hint of Lemon and Kisses

tongue itching to lick the drops of water when Yunho stepped out from the shower. The stars lay in that dewy wash.

Jae took a taste a few days, slithering the tip of his tongue along Yunho's collarbone and the universe exploded, unfolding into nebular in his senses. Yunho didn't move, Jaejoong's tongue laying the moisture flat on his skin. Swallowing hard, his throat bobbing with the effort not to shove his hands in Jaejoong's hair and smother the breath from the singer's mouth with his own lips. Tilting his head back, Yunho had prayed under his breath for Jae to either stop or continue, the singer's breath drying the spot. The world turned cold when Jaejoong stepped away, leaving Yunho with the war in his thoughts and body.

Now in the quiet of the bedroom, Jaejoong felt Yoochun's hand but the touch brought none of the fire in his belly that the sight of Yunho gave him. Sighing, Jae touched Micky's hair, lightly scratching at the crown of his friend's head with his short, blunt fingernails. The other singer purred deep in his throat, a satisfied sound that made Jaejoong laugh.

"Ah, you know how to touch me, Joongie-ah." Yoochun laughed at Jae's derisive snort. "Well, you do."

"But not the way you want to be touched." Jae teased. "And certainly not the one to do the touching."

"No." Yoochun looked up at his friend. "But he's back in our bedroom again. And that's better than nearly anything else. Answer me something, Joongie-ah. Do you sit and listen to Yunho breathe? I do sometimes, just lay in the dark and listen to Junsu. Just listening to him sleep. It makes me happy inside. Do you know what I mean?"

"I hide in the hallway, in the dark." Jaejoong admitted softly, reminiscing on the feel of the cold wall against his spine. "I just sit there, and listen to him turning on the couch, sometimes even snoring. He has these little snores once in a while, just a sweet noise. It makes me sloppy in love with him."

"You've fallen hard, Boo." Yoochun laughed, hearing the singer's heart in his words. "I'm falling right next to you. I hope I land as soft as you have."

"Nothing is soft about love." Jae shook his head. "It hurts and scrapes you raw, leaving your wounds open and weeping. Then he kisses to make it all better and the world just stops turning, holding you there in that moment. And you never want time to start again."

* * *

While in the stairwell of their building...

Yunho leaned close into Jaejoong, his fingers tangled in the other's long black hair. Gripping the back of his boyfriend's neck, the leader bent his head to gain better access to Jaejoong's mouth, aggressively parting the singer's lips with a fierce kiss. Reluctant to break free from the embrace, Jae parted

his knees, allowing Yunho to snug up against his groin, standing belly to belly.

The green Exit sign burnished the steel and cement staircase with a verdigris tint, soft white recessed lights splashing warm spots over the pair of lovers. A chill hugged the walls, winter seeking the spiral channel, brushing cold over the metal weave steps. Nearly frigid enough to mist their breaths, Jaejoong and Yunho tucked into one another, the leader wrapping the edges of his jacket around the slender singer's waist. Jae's fingers edged up Yunho's back, tracing the strength beneath the stretch of his lover's skin.

They'd hidden from the world over the past few weeks, secretive glances shared through whispered words. Changmin's illness slowed the progression of their relationship, slivers of time carved from lengthy days. Jaejoong often dropped from exhaustion onto his bed, too tired to do much other than appreciate the sensual masculinity in Yunho's form, usually as the other struggled to have enough energy to sit up and remove his shirt. Trips outside were kept short, dashes through icy air to the relative warmth of the van, Yunho's hand pressed along the small of Jae's back, getting in the barest touch of the singer into his soul.

"I've wanted to do this to you all day." Jae bit down on Yunho's throat, marking his jaw line with a purpled kiss.

Yunho growled, tilting his head back, his Adam's apple working around the dryness Jaejoong's touch always seemed to invoke. The singer had taken to leaving dots of ownership on his lover's body. If they would be apart for hours, Jae would leave a stinging evidence of his possession of Yunho, a mirrored dollop of colour that matched the mark on his own throat.

Yunho left his own markers on the singer, more for a reminder of his love than ownership. Yunho felt a small thrill in the chest when others edged up to the oblivious Jaejoong, hoping for the thinnest shred of affection from the singer. Those with keen eyesight spotted the makeup on Jae's neck or chest, narrowed glances flicking from each member until they finally settled on Yunho's solemn face. It took all of his discipline not to smile cockily, a smirk hovering just below his features. Jaejoong, feral and free, continued along with his animated talking or shy laughter, never realizing another wanted him.

Jae's nimble fingers stroked along Yunho's thigh, barely skimming at the dip under his sex. It was as if the singer knew exactly where Yunho's length rested, never touching the aching tip just the smooth leg it rested on. Moaning, Yunho pushed Jae into the wall, hoping to stop the wandering fingers before they undid him. Pulsating, his groin let Yunho know the power the other singer had over him, a hardness nearly painful stretching his skin taut.

The leader retaliated, stroking at the pierced skin along Jae's belly, thrilled at the hissing response from Jaejoong's sinful mouth. Capturing his lover's lower lip between his teeth, Yunho nibbled on the pout, suckling at the flesh

Hint of Lemon and Kisses

as he pinched at Jae's nipple with his other hand. Rolling the nub between his fingers, Yunho inhaled Jaejoong's erotic groan as it escaped the singer's lungs, filling the leader's soul with its want.

"You don't play fair, Yunnie-ah." Jae accused, his teeth sharp on the inside of his cheek. His uncontrollable moans echoed in the stairwell, probably carrying down to the open door at the bottom of the apartment building.

"You call what you're doing to me fair, Boo? You are going to undo me." Yunho panted, resting his forehead on his lover's collarbone. It took great effort to pull away when every inch of his sex begged to be buried deep into the promised velvet warmth of the young man that stole his every thought. "They're going to wonder where we went for Changmin's soup."

"We have to get back, Yunnie." Jaejoong's hushed whisper echoed in the confines of the stairwell. "It doesn't take this long to get noodles."

"You go on." Yunho sighed, releasing his lover reluctantly. "One of us has to go get soup from downstairs. If I hold onto you any longer, I think Changmin will be an old man before he gets his soup. Just remember one thing, Jaejoong..."

"What?" The street tough was back in the roll of Jae's hips, the set of his shoulders turned back into the strength of his spine. This was a side of his lover Yunho never tired of seeing, the vibrant fire hidden under the beauty of his snow façade. Mingled with Jaejoong's innate shyness, each petal of the singer's chrysanthemum personality held shadows and lights... blooming with unnamed, undiscovered colours when the sun of Jae's smile struck.

"You're mine." Yunho smiled at Jae's narrowed eyes. "As much as I'm yours."

"Sometimes." Jae admitted before turning to leave the stairwell, a laugh in the echoes of his voice. "And sometimes, you are more mine than I'm yours, just because I don't want to be owned. I just let you think that."

In The Dark

Plastic daisies whirled on long wands, pinwheels spinning frantically as a flock of giggling little girls dashed past Junsu's legs, nearly knocking the singer down. A little hand grabbed at the loose fabric of his shirt, ducking behind Su's lanky legs to hide from her friends, a peal of laughter ripening the smile on her delicate face. Junsu smiled down at the child, standing still while she danced around him, a frothy ribbon winding about a breeze. The flight of children dissipated as quickly as it arose, tiny butterflies carrying their twirling gardens with them.

Yoochun gamboled up to his friend's side, offering a paper cup of hot cocoa. The evening turned cold, just the hint of sunlight on the horizon, whispering a farewell to the vibrant orchid pinks it brushed over the sky's temple. The festival raged on around them, a sea of noise and colours bright against the night backdrop of Seoul's skyline. Pursing his lips, Micky suckled off the top layer of whipped cream floating on the hot liquid, smearing a dollop of white on his nose.

"Hold still." Junsu laughed, placing the palm of his hand on Yoochun's stomach. The heat of the baritone's body burned through Su's flesh, warming him to the cold depths of his belly. Tilting his head up, the singer used his thumb to rub of the cream on Yoochun's nose, licking the sweet off of his finger before sipping his cocoa.

Yoochun ducked his head to hide the rise of a blush creeping over his cheeks, watching Junsu continue walking through the crowd. He strained his tongue to wet the spot Junsu's thumb touched, catching a taste of the other singer. The air was sweet with the scent of cotton candy and the bite of icy snow, the wind carrying winter's perfume through the huddled masses of hot bodies swarming through the park. They'd lost Changmin, Yunho and Jaejoong at the candy making stall, the blown sugar artisans creating sculptures of mythical animals around elaborately carved chopsticks. Yunho and Changmin would not resist taking a single lick or two at the candy but Jaejoong's would remain pristine, his dislike of sweets overridden by the snipped and manipulated sugar strands.

"Do you think we should win our son a brother or sister?" Yoochun froze when he heard Junsu's question, nearly tumbling the cocoa from his hands. Smirking, the singer pointed to the stall festooned with bags of stuffed animals, its square platform ringed with people trying to toss coins into stacked dishes. "I don't think we could find one that can match our bunny."

In The Dark

"I don't even know how that rabbit got into the pile. It looked like someone sewed it after a long night of drinking and karaoke." Yoochun laughed at Junsu's pout. "There's nothing wrong with our son. I love him no matter what he looks like or how he turns out."

"What about who he loves?" Junsu slyly looked at Micky through slanted, upturned eyes, watching the baritone's face carefully.

"He's purple." Yoochun shrugged, scratching at his head while juggling the cup. The cold air made his scalp itch under the knitted cap he'd stolen from Jaejoong's jacket, arguing with the lead singer that Jae didn't need the cap as much as Yoochun did...having both a hoodie and Yunho to keep him warm. "I don't think he's going to have much choice in who loves him. Not many people would be attracted to him."

"I think he's beautiful." Junsu wrinkled his nose, giving Yoochun his cup to hold. "Chunnie-ah, stop. You're a mess."

"What?" Yoochun stood perfectly still, grasping both cups and trying not to notice the stares he was getting from a gaggle of women next to them. "My head itches from the cold."

Junsu lifted the beanie, tucking it into the pocket of his jacket. Rubbing his hands together until they were nearly hot from friction, Junsu scratched at his friend's head, running dull fingertips over Yoochun's scalp. Micky half-closed his eyes with pleasure, ducking his head down so Junsu could reach around to the back.

"It's too cold." Micky complained, tilting his head to the side, a low moan seeping from his parted mouth. The unusual chill in the air ate a dryness over his skin.

"We should head home." Junsu rubbed one last time with the pads of his fingers, smiling at Yoochun's disappointed groan when he pulled free of the other's tangle of hair. A quick phone call to Yunho verified the youngest was still with the couple, Jaejoong and Changmin jubilantly shouting at a game they were playing. The eldest of their members yelled of Min's cheating, so loud Junsu pulled the phone away from his ear. "Okay, we'll meet you at home."

* * *

With a full belly, Yoochun stretched out on his bed, flat on his stomach. A soft slush fell from the sky, plastering icy flakes over the edges of the window, washing away the view of the city sky. Jaejoong and Yunho passed by his bedroom, the leader closing their door without taking his eyes off of Jae stripping his shirt from his slender torso. Their dinner had been a loud affair, the food a spicy repast picked up on the way home by the three other members. He'd watched with a quiet envy at Jaejoong's easy theft of Yunho's cucumber kim chee, a stab of chopsticks floating into the flat ceramic dish at the edge of their leader's plate. A mushroom floated its way

from Yunho's plate to Jaejoong's, exchanged for slices of eggplant and bok choy.

Junsu watched Yoochun's face with interest, half listening to Changmin's prattle about the day's events and the success he'd had at winning a stack of foreign music CDs. The series of emotions playing over the sensitive singer's features were curious, more so when Jaejoong sipped from Yunho's spoon and Yoochun's eyes trailed over to Junsu. The wide shock in Yoochun's eyes amused Junsu, nearly as much as the shy smile that crept over Yoochun's wide mouth. Storing the lush warmth of the baritone's face into his memories, Junsu continued to eat, waiting for the right moment to offer the other man a slice of bulgogi with his chopsticks.

A clove of garlic accompanied the meat, the dab of sweet caramelized heat smoothly sliding over Yoochun's flattened tongue. With his lips closing over the wooden utensils, Micky licked at the chopsticks, tasting Junsu's mouth in the moistness left along the tips.

"I'm sorry." Junsu bent over, parting Yoochun's hair with his breath and whispered under the table chatter. "I should have turned them around to feed you. I hope you don't mind the taste of me on your food."

"No, it's... fine." Yoochun caught at the heat in his breath, chewing slowly to prolong the flavours filling his mouth. "We share a lot as it is..."

"True." Junsu nodded with a seemingly innocent wide eyed look then turned back to listen to Changmin, leaving Yoochun to his thoughts.

Micky's mind was troubled and churning, reliving the moment of Junsu's chopsticks sliding over his lips. He'd chased away wondering if the sweetness of the meat was a result of ginger or the kiss of Junsu's mouth on the wood but the idea kept creeping back into his imagination, simmering just below his other thoughts. Concentrating on a song they were practicing, Yoochun worked hard to keep his brain occupied with the rumbling notes of his part, humming under his breath.

The overlaying bridge joined his humming, Junsu's higher pitched voice comfortable against his lower range. Aware that he'd been too lost in his thoughts to notice Junsu coming into the room and closing the door, Micky smiled a hello at his roommate and stopped humming, his body reacting strongly under the protection of his loose sweats. Turning over onto his side, Yoochun made room for the other man to sit down, the singer's slighter weight pressing into the mattress beside him.

"You have no idea how hard it is to reach that sweep." Junsu moved his ankles up onto the bed, curving his body into Micky's side. Folding his arm up under his head, the singer turned his cheek to the pillow, staring up at Yoochun. "I keep reaching and missing it. I slide all over the place until I get it. I've got to stop doing that."

In The Dark

"You'll get it." Yoochun reassured the smaller singer, nestling down into the blankets. "You always do."

"Do you feel like you have to be better than Yunho?" Junsu curved his legs upward. Yoochun parted his knees, enveloping Junsu's limbs with his own. The tenor slid in closer, tucking his elbows up over Micky's ribs. Yoochun's hand hovered until he finally settled on placing his palm on the other's waist,

"No. Why?" Yoochun's belly began burning, hooking a desire into his guts.

"I feel like I have to always be better than Jaejoong. Which is silly because we never sing the same..." Junsu sighed into the warmth of the other's body, his breath a spot of kisses along the hollow of Yoochun's throat. "I'm probably just wanting... more."

"More of what?" Yoochun wanted to touch the other man's face, to feel the dip along his upper lip, wondering if his mouth would taste of the hint of ginger Micky imagined it would.

"I don't know. Maybe because I see him ... in places that I want to be." Junsu's liquid gaze trailed over Yoochun's torso, drinking in the width of the baritone's shoulders. "And we share everything but there are things that he... does that I want to do. If I could just... try harder... reach harder... I might be able to be there."

"He's our lead singer." Yoochun shrugged, his fingers stroking along the ridge of Junsu's hipbone. "And pretty. But you don't have to be jealous of him. You have a lot of fans. Not as much as me, of course."

Junsu grinned at Micky's taunt, slapping at the young man's chest with his open palm. His fingers strayed for a moment longer, running along the hard ridge pebbling under the cotton shirt. He teased the nipple with his nail for just enough time it took for Micky to inhale a sharp breath, dropping his hand between their bodies. Sighing, the singer moved in closer, pushing out the air between them.

"I just want to sometimes be... where he is." Junsu said, tracing a pattern of words on the bed sheets. A loud thump sounded from across the hall, sharp enough to be heard between two closed doors and a span of walls. "Do you ever wonder what they do in there?"

"Yes." Yoochun admitted, closing his eyes against the images flooding his mind. His hands trembled against Junsu's soft skin, his fingers having worked up the other's shirt until the pale landscape was beneath his touch. "But then I have to go brush my teeth or wash my mind out."

"Really?" Junsu worried at his mouth with his teeth, the butterfly curl at the edges of his lips dipping wings into his cheeks. A light shone briefly across the window, fracturing into dapples of white shards across their nearly joined together bodies. "I can imagine what they're doing and it makes me warm inside... or too hot and I need a cold shower."

"Do they bother you?" Yoochun asked. He knew Junsu was experimental in his love, often slanting glances at the sight of a handsome man walking in the park across their apartment or the fullness of a woman's hips as she climbed the stairs. "I didn't think you'd mind their loving one another."

"No, I don't mind them at all. It's nice to see them together...especially after all the raging stew they cooked over these past few months." Rubbing the top of his foot across Yoochun's shin, Junsu's brow furrowed, his mind wandering. "I just ache sometimes, feeling their love in my chest. It hurts to see because you can almost taste it. It's like water falling behind a wall of glass when your throat is parched and dry. I can't touch it but I can smell the moisture, see it splash and if I lick the glass, I can feel its coolness on my tongue, but still, I can't have a mouthful."

"I feel that way sometimes." Yoochun admitted softly. Junsu looked up from his study of the sheets, his eyes a gleaming brandy. "Joongie-ah talks about how much he hates to love Yunho because it tears him apart and folds him into Yunnies until he can't tell where he begins and the other ends. But then he also says he can't live without Yunho... that every time he takes in a breath, he wonders why Yunnies's scent isn't in it. I don't know if I can love like that."

"They fight with themselves as much as each other." Junsu commented. Reaching behind him, the tenor switched the table lamp to low, dousing most of the light from the room. "I think that's just how their love is. I don't think you'd love like that...or need that kind of love."

"What kind of love do you want?" Yoochun huddled in the darkness, feeling the slide of Junsu's body against his. The width of the bed was enough for both of them to lie down comfortably, providing one of them was on their side. Pressed against the wall, Yoochun knew Junsu had more than enough room behind him to move back but the closeness to the other's body raked Micky's throat tight. His hands roamed slowly over the stretch of Junsu's ribs, a languid track of strokes and flats marked with each ridge of bone Micky found under his fingers.

"I think I'd want someone who I could laugh with. Someone who forgives easily and cries even easier." Junsu said, resting his chin against one palm, bringing his face in closer to Micky's. "Someone who understands what my life is like and wants me to succeed. Someone who I can help reach their dreams or even show them support when they think they can't do something."

"You do that for me." Yoochun admitted, a murmur of desire thickening his words. "Every time I think that I can't go on one more day living like we do, you're there to make me laugh. It makes my heart lighter. You're good at that, Junnie, showing someone you like them. You're a good friend."

"I would want to be a good friend to my lover." Junsu said. The sky outside into churned silver smoke as more snow fell beyond the window. "I'd want

In The Dark

him...or her... to feel like he could come to me and I would know when to hold him or when he needed to hear someone say that he was loved. It's what I would want."

"You deserve that." Micky nodded, resting his forehead against Junsu's temple. "I love that you're here for me. I didn't realize how much I would miss you when Yunho drove Jaejoong out of their room."

"I thought you liked having Jaejoong in here with you." The tenor mockingly gasped at his friend, wincing when Yoochun tweaked the thin skin of his navel. "Hey, he's your best friend."

"He's a brother." Yoochun replied. "But he needed Yunnies to come to his senses and to go back into his own room. I love Jaejoong but he needs his boyfriend, even though he might chew on Yunho's nerves. He's easy to share a room with but he's not you. I could feel the difference every time I would sleep. I'd wake up every night wondering when you were coming to bed and why did Jae pass out in your bed, then I'd remember and I would be sad for a bit."

"It got better, didn't it?" The tenor tugged at Yoochun's nose with his teeth, just a little nip before he pulled away, leaving a mint kiss on the underside of Micky's upper lip. "I'm back and the two of them are in there doing God knows what, making lots of strange noises and giggling."

"It did get better." Yoochun agreed, reaching over Junsu's shoulder to turn the table lamp off. "The light is hurting my eyes."

"It's okay. I have your face memorized." The tenor said, tucking his hips into the dip of Micky's thighs. "Can I sleep here tonight? You already have the bed warm and I don't look forward to my cold sheets."

"No, it'll be nice." Yoochun lay his head beside Junsu's, tucking the pillow under his chin. "I can hear you breathing more clearly if you're close by."

"We should do what they did and move our beds together. We would have more room and we could keep the blankets warm. I like the cold air to sleep in but I love having my blankets over me." Junsu drifted a bit, feeling sleep tug at his consciousness. "I feel better hearing you breathe too, Chunnies-ah. It makes me fall asleep better than a rainstorm."

"I love you as much as I love Jaejoong, you know." Yoochun whispered, the top of Junsu's head against his collarbone.

Micky's words were nearly lost in the other's hair, soft and velvet from his recent shower. His body ached from the morning's dance practice and then the long walk around the festival grounds, his muscles eased into slothfulness by a hot shower and his full belly. The feel of Junsu around his legs and against his chest crept into the corners of his mind, inflaming his thoughts despite his tired mind and body. Content, Yoochun allowed the darkness to fold over him, wrapping his arms over Junsu's waist and loosely holding the other man before falling off into a quiet, happy slumber.

“I know, Chunnie-ah.” Junsu sighed, letting sleep take him away. “I think you just need to realize that I’m not your brother but I’m more than willing to let you love me...especially if you let me love you in return.”

Cookies and Fire

Rubbing at his leg, Junsu heard Yoochun struggle to keep a laugh from escaping when Junsu walked into the back of the chair, banging his knee on the wooden slat back. The pitch black of the apartment seemed to bring out the silliness in the taller singer, a smile wreathed over his changeable features. A single candle lit the living space, casting long shadows over familiar objects. Outside of the window, Seoul lay silent and dark, dreaming amid the ice and fog rolling through the streets.

"I can't see." Junsu felt his way back to the couch as Yoochun lit a taper on the end table. "I guess you can curse a single candle in the darkness. It's better to have plenty."

"I couldn't find any more. I think Yunho stole all of the ones out of the cabinet. I only have two more." Yoochun's deep voice rumbled across the thin velvet control Junsu had over his body. Poured cream over chocolate, the baritone purr gave fangs to the butterflies in Junsu's stomach. "Can you make a fire? I worry that the heater is off too."

"Did you check their room?" Junsu warily stepped over to the slate-covered fireplace, the scant candlelight coming from the coffee table.

"I don't want to go digging around in their room." Micky made a face at his roommate. "Would you?"

"No." Junsu agreed, his mind wandering to the possibilities that lay in the couple's drawers. Blushing, he turned his back towards Yoochun, hoping to take his mind off of his lascivious thoughts.

Being around Jaejoong and Yunho stoked the heat between the others, Changmin nearly ignorant of the sensuality between the pair but Junsu was keenly aware of the sly touches as they passed, often boldly erotic in front of cameras. They flaunted their relationship, hiding in plain sight beneath the veil of a close friendship but the knowing glances and secret smiles were noticeable to anyone peering too closely. Junsu envied their closeness, often sneaking looks under his lashes at the beatific couple. For all intents and purposes, Yunho brought the moon down from the stars for Jaejoong, hammering the silver crescent into a pair of rings they shared on their fingers.

Junsu wanted that. He wanted to feel the depth of a passion that filled his soul with the perfume of another's kiss. The lingering strands of desire aroused by Yoochun's closeness wove around his heart, often catching him

unaware when the other's eyes were cast elsewhere. Micky's smile brought a unfurling heat to Junsu's chest, the press of his heart pounding with the sweetness lingering on the other's lips.

Hefting a log into the inner hearth, a plume of ash rising up the slender chimney. Arranging several smaller logs onto the pile, Junsu set fire to kindling and blew gently on the treated wood. The chips caught, spreading the flames slowly through the stack, a warm crimson glow eating at the edges of the logs. Pulling the mesh grate back into place, Junsu picked his way back to the couch, rubbing at his arms from the cold setting in.

"Here." Yoochun held open the thick quilt he'd gotten from the hall closet. Too heavy to sleep with, it provided more than adequate warmth for the chill creeping through the room. "I checked the city notices on my phone. We're not going to have power until maybe late tomorrow afternoon."

"Ah, so late." Junsu tucked his bare feet under Yoochun's legs, letting the young man's fleece pants warm his toes. "Are you tired?"

"No." Yoochun shook his head, pulling Junsu's right foot out from under him. Long fingers eased the cold from the slender singer's toes, Micky working at the arch of Junsu's ankle. Rumbling a contented sigh, Junsu leaned back against the arm of the couch, putting his other foot into Yoochun's lap. The press of the baritone's thumb on the small knot along his heel made Junsu moan with pleasure, the singer arching his back and relaxing his legs. "Do you like that?"

"Yes. I like when you touch me." Junsu licked at the dryness on his lips, wondering if Yoochun heard the desire in his speech. He'd said it, finally, in a darkness they didn't share, Junsu allowed a hint of what he longed for to creep into his voice.

"You feel good on my hands." Yoochun buried his attention to the stretch of skin under his fingers. Junsu's legs ran hot lines over his thighs, pressing hard along the edge of his sex. Swallowing again, Micky traced the line of Junsu's shin, tingling the baritone's already taut nerves. Shifting, Junsu slid closer to Yoochun, hitching his way over the sofa cushions until the curve of his rear rested against Yoochun's thigh muscle.

The quilt covered their laps, hiding their desires beneath the batting and stitched together potpourri of coloured squares. Sighing, Junsu wet his lips again, wondering where all of the moisture in his mouth fled to. The fire crackled as the flames ate slowly into the wood, chewing off small bits into ashen embers. Yoochun stole a glance up at Junsu's face when the singer turned his head to stare into the fire, the yellow-orange flare catching on the edges of his liquid brown eyes. Yoochun's hands stilled, wrapped around Junsu's calf. Enraptured by the passion emerging on Junsu's face, Micky held the moment in his lungs, hoping to hold the echo of the singer's features in his memories forever. Junsu suddenly turned his head, catching Yoochun's eyes on him.

Cookies and Fire

"What are you thinking of, Chunnie?" Junsu leaned forward, his fingers trailing over the larger man's wrists. There was a competent strength in those long fingers, stretched and muscled from playing piano. Junsu traced a thin scar on the webbing on Yoochun's left hand, a childhood mark leftover from a baseball game played in an empty field. He knew the stories of most of Yoochun's minute scars and dappled blemishes, unspooled yarns shared in the whispers over the beds.

"I'm wondering..." Yoochun felt caught on Junsu's gaze, a steel pin through the butterfly of his heart.

"What are you wondering, Park Yoochun?" Junsu moved even closer, nearly sitting on the other man's legs. Their breaths mingled, the cinnamon sugar cookies they'd shared sweetening the air. A crumb dangled on Yoochun's cheek, unseen in the dim light until Junsu drew near.

He'd heard Yunho talk about temptation, often wondering how the leader could say that there would be times in their lives when the world would hold something out to be taken and there was nothing inside of a man that gave him the power to resist. Until that moment, in that small morsel of baked dough, Junsu thought otherwise. But when faced with that single tiny bit of sugared kiss on Yoochun's jaw, Junsu had to admit, Yunho knew what he was talking about.

It was a simple thing to slide into Yoochun's space, their bodies tightened into a woven embrace. Even simpler was the dab of Junsu's tongue over the cookie bit, just the barest skim of the tip against Yoochun's skin. The sugar dissolved on the roof of Junsu's mouth, leaving the citrus burst of Yoochun's scent wafting into the abyss of Junsu's longing. There it took seed and bloomed, hard sharp barbed flowers that left him bleeding and wanting more.

They sat there, a spot of hot wetness on Yoochun's face, drying in their shared breath. Sliding his hand behind Junsu's back, Micky hoisted the other man forward, moving the singer onto his lap and capturing Junsu's lips with his own mouth. Junsu responded in kind, small little sips of Yoochun's wetness before he succumbed to a full drink, filling his throat with Micky's essence.

A star crumbled beneath the light between them, bursts of colours unseen to the naked eye flowing from one soul to the next. Yoochun tasted the night on Junsu's lips, then the brush of velvet from the young man's tongue when Junsu pressed in, working the caress deeper into Yoochun's mouth. Micky's teeth found the plump swell of Junsu's upper lip, plucking the flesh with a ravenous bite before releasing it, finding the dimpled marks of the bitten flesh with his tongue. Around them, the candles smoked under the burning wicks, wax pooling down the pillars, weeping the time away in a slow sobbing drawl.

Junsu shifted in Yoochun's lap, sliding the cleft of his rear against the hardness stiffening along the baritone's thighs. Straddling the other, Junsu rested his knees into the hollowed cushions besides Yoochun's hips, fitting

his body against the other singer. Micky's hands roamed over the small of Junsu's back, savagely pulling the young man in.

Yoochun barely heard the roar of his blood in his ears, lost in the flavour of Junsu in his mouth. A man tasted different, he knew this in his mind before he captured Junsu's taste but the reality was a vastness Yoochun couldn't imagine until his mouth brushed the other's. Junsu's lips were rougher than a woman's, his passion harder beneath Yoochun's stroking touch. The delicateness of Junsu's frame was deceiving, the power in the singer's lean body evident as his legs trapped Yoochun against the couch. A steely strength lay under the loose clothing swaddling the singer's torso, hard muscles under stretched smooth gold.

The casual touch of their bodies during practice or on stage was left burnt into ash in Yoochun's mind, replaced by the hungry consuming fire under his fingertips and across his lap. Junsu's pressing body left no room for thought, his mouth traveling to the curve of Yoochun's jaw, flicking the baritone's earlobe with the tip of his tongue. Canting his head back, Yoochun moaned low in his chest while Junsu explored the tanned column, licking at the swell of his throat.

Junsu's fingers undid the top of Yoochun's shirt buttons, exposing the sleek chest swell beneath the soft cotton cloth. Another temptation lay in the line of bone over Yoochun's collar, a ridge begging for Junsu's teeth marks. Micky's hands clasped at the back of Junsu's head, crushing the young man's hair against his skull, his eyes closed against the obscene ardor stealing into his groin. The singer's tongue darted along the line, a ripe hardness matched by the length of Yoochun's desire cradled in the cleft of Junsu's rear.

Afraid of Junsu's explorations, Yoochun pulled the other up, a firm grip in the singer's hair guiding Junsu back to Yoochun's mouth, Micky falling into the darkness of another kiss. Sin poured from Junsu's tongue, raking apart the shreds of Micky's control. Responsive under Yoochun's tongue, Junsu suckled at the baritone's lips, tasting one and then the other, drawing them into a swollen fullness that warmed with each bite.

Junsu's palms rubbed against Yoochun's chest, finding the curve of muscle dappled plum with hard nubs. Sighing, the singer leaned into Micky's embrace, the baritone's hands stroking at the small of his back, just skimming the elastic of his sweats. Moving forward, Junsu edged Micky's fingers downwards, slowly working the other's touch under the fabric until the tips rested on the rise of his rear. Yoochun murmured, unwilling to draw back from the enticement of Junsu's body, curving his fingers down and gripping the swell tightly against his palms.

Reason surfaced, drowning deep under the wash of want in Yoochun's mind. Gasping for air, the baritone pulled away, slanting his head and resting his temple on the curve of Junsu's shoulder. The singer mewled, a crooning sound hiked into his throat at the loss of the delicate treat he found in

Cookies and Fire

Yoochun's mouth. The lingering cinnamon swirl on his tongue begged for the musky heat of the baritone's lips or the fresh citrus burst on Yoochun's skin.

"Where are you going, Chunnie-ah?" Junsu asked, his voice husky and low, nearly a match for Yoochun's rumbling erotic murmurs. Yoochun's powerful body throbbed under him, promising a fullness his insides ached to feel. They'd shared showers before, quick sluices between shows and the fleshy heft of Yoochun's sex more than lived up to its promise as Junsu rubbed his hips against the other man's groin, reveling in the power his body had over Yoochun's arousal.

"This is... insane, Junnie." Yoochun didn't dare to look up.

Micky knew he would be lost if he met the other's eyes, a caramel pull on his soul. He couldn't find the breath in his lungs anymore, dashed to the iced stone of his fears. Crystalline cobwebs stretched over his desire, crimping into the memory of the battles shared by Jaejoong and Yunho. Yoochun couldn't live with the emotional torment of the couple's relationship, a battlefield of anger and passion, smouldering hot and wrenching joy forged between two stubborn, head-strong souls. His own tender heart wouldn't be able to withstand the heartbreak of an argument with Junsu, it would slaughter the gentleness he nursed in his soul.

"Don't you want this?" Junsu's heart stopped, a piercing steel shaft chilled by the fear of rejection. "I know I want this."

"We've never..." Yoochun failed in his attempts to sway away from the other, finally meeting the other's gaze. Micky felt his heart fall, opening under the singer's warm smile and quixotic face. "God, how the hell am I supposed to think around you? I can't even find words on my tongue. Everything I say tastes like you."

"I don't think that's a bad thing." Junsu smiled, touching at the curve of Yoochun's chin with a gentle kiss. "We've been... thinking about this for a while. Haven't we?"

"Yes." Yoochun's nod came slowly, his concentration fixed on subduing the overwhelming thickening in his body. His throat closed around his tongue, choked tight by desire and unspoken questions. He feared that if he prodded too much at the gift of Junsu in his lap, the other singer would melt away, cotton candy under a hot rain. "I know I have. But this... is this something..."

"How can something that feeds the want inside of us be wrong?" Junsu asked softly, his words trapped against Yoochun's mouth with a kiss. "Aren't you ever curious? Haven't you ever wondered if I could satisfy you more than any woman you've been with? That I could give you something just as... filling in return?"

"That's what I'm afraid of, Junnie-ah." Yoochun admitted, tears glittering in his long lashes. "I'm afraid that I'll want no one else but you and when you're done playing with me, you'll leave me with a broken heart. I'd rather wonder

what it is like to have you than to have had you and feel you slip away from me."

"You have to learn to take chances, Yoochun." Junsu pressed his hands over Yoochun's palms, the baritone still cupping the fullness of Junsu's rear. "Sometimes, you have to trust someone in order to find out what pleasure can bring you...even if it's mingled with pain. Isn't that worth having? Aren't I worth having?"

"More than you know." Micky breathed, the candles flickering in the night air. "I just don't know if I can walk through the fire you ignite inside of me. It burns so hot. There might not be anything left of me afterwards."

"Then that's something you have to think about." Junsu reluctantly slid off of Yoochun's lap, lingering for a long moment in a sensual, final kiss on Micky's wide mouth. Sighing, he resigned himself to a long cold shower before tucking away under the cold, lonely sheets of his bed. "But when you're ready, I'll be waiting to keep you warm and safe. You know where I sleep, and our beds are wide enough to hold both of us."

Inked Souls

Yoochun kept his eyes down, furtive glances at the other passengers of the train. Nearby, a squat, square-bodied Chinese man, adjusted the strap on his dress, turning the fabric sequin-side up. The man's pink wig slipped from his head, his bald pate reflective in the harsh light of the subway car. Tottering on his red leather platform pumps, the man nearly toppled over as he grabbed at the hair piece, his stubby hand clutching a nearby steel pole.

"I can't believe you talked me into doing this." Yoochun whispered under his breath, leaning into his best friend. "I can't believe I talked myself into this. What was I thinking?"

"What?" Jaejoong tugged at the earpiece of his iPod, the metallic refrain of Mr. Newsman pouring from the foam insets.

"Sometimes I should really repeat out loud the crazy ideas that you talk me into." Yoochun hissed. "Or at least wait an hour or two before agreeing to anything you suggest. That's about when I seem to come to my senses."

"You don't have to do this, Chunnie." Jae shrugged, gamine and pretty against the dank grit of Seoul's mass transit system. "I can do it alone."

To Yoochun's eyes, the eldest member of their group changed, growing fiercer as each click of the rail drew them closer to their destination. Now, nearly feral, Jaejoong more resembled the slender, street waif the other SM members whispered about, a past ghost from Jae's soul rising to consume his outer flesh.

"No." Micky moved his legs as the man in the sequined dress moved through the car to get to the door. The clip-clip sound of the man's heels was a sharp staccato under the soft murmur of conversations being spoken around them. "I just can't believe how easily I'm talked into something."

"You said you wanted to do this." Jae's sensual pout drew looks, furtive glances from other men. "For you and Junsu."

"Don't do that. You pout and I'm going to have to punch someone because Yunho isn't here to do it." Yoochun debated striking one of the men sitting at the far end of the car. He didn't care for the sly smirk on man's florid face nor for the worm-like tongue crawling over his thin lips. Fire flared in Yoochun's guts, barbed flames he tamped down when Jaejoong tugged on his shirt sleeve.

"Come on. We're here." Jae slid from the vinyl seat, uncurling his body and stepping towards the door. "And I'm not pouting."

"Sure." Yoochun muttered at Jae's back, descending the stairs and casting one last dark look at the leering man. "And that kkangpae over there is rubbing his crotch because he's itchy."

The street's sounds and smells assailed Yoochun, overwhelming him with its brightness. Crowds teemed around them, chatty streams flowing around the two young men, rocks in a sea of people. There was a mixture of English among the familiar Korean, a haunting reminder of the family Yoochun left halfway around the world. A young girl slid her arm into the crook of a young American's arm, her pretty face turned up towards the thickly muscled service man, his laugh at her attempts to pronounce the saying on his shirt.

"Where are we going?" Micky asked, his long legs struggling to keep up with a fast moving Jaejoong.

"To find a friend of mine." Jae answered mysteriously. "Come on or someone will think you're looking for money to do what you do with Junsu for free."

* * *

The basement's low ceiling was no problem for most of the people gathered there but a few of the taller Caucasians had to duck their heads to avoid hitting the wooden beams running lengthwise for support. A wide-bodied, mean-faced man let them down a flight of cement stairs, his thick hand waving them through after Jaejoong whispered into his ear. The smell of pungent smoke, sweetly herbal compared to the harsh tobacco Yoochun preferred, hung a clotted fog around their heads. They left swirls through the hazy curtain when they walked, Yoochun wrinkling his nose at the heady feeling he got from breathing in the aromatic smoke.

Hisses of pain punctuated streams of ticking noises, a cheerful clatter from pneumatic tapping. A woman lay on her belly over a long table, sheets of paper covering her folded down waistband while a young man bent over the small of her back. He looked up as they passed, thick glasses giving his face an owlish appearance, making the slant of his dark eyes nearly demonic with the bend of the frames. The man returned to his work, dabbing the blood from the woman's punctured skin with a wadded up paper towel.

Yoochun heard Jaejoong's name being called, a boisterous greeting coming from the far side of the basement. A slender woman detached herself from a conversation, nearly barreling into the slender singer, grabbing Jae into a fierce hug. Her dark hair had been bleached out, stained a brilliant purple that complimented the red swath of shadow running a long rectangle over her eyes and cheeks. Nearly geisha pale, she glowed in the spottily lit basement.

"Come on over, Max is ready to do you next." Her fingers made a flirtatious wave at Yoochun, a wide smile crinkling her plain face. The grin transformed

Inked Souls

her ordinary features into a striking, exotic attractiveness, the light in her eyes pulling out the beauty in her soul.

"Let me introduce you." Jaejoong stopped short, kissing her briefly on the cheek. "Park Yoochun, this is Neal Bo-Bae. Bobo, this is Chunnie."

"Nice to meet you." Yoochun bowed then was taken back when the young woman pulled herself free of Jae's loose embrace to hug him. "Ah!"

"She's very friendly." Jae winked, smiling when Bobo danced away, motioning for the young men to follow her. "Her mother works with some of the Americans at the Camp. They're very... affectionate."

"Who's Max?" Yoochun stopped, his feet unable to move forward. A long padded table sat in the corner of the basement, its gleaming pale blue vinyl a harbinger of promised torture and pain. "Shit."

"Nice. You are impressing them with your manners." Jae shook his head. "Come on."

The next few seconds passed in a blur for Yoochun, his hand was shaken and he heard the deep rumbling voice of the bearded middle-aged man who introduced himself as Max but Yoochun's vision was fixed on the flat sea-hued massage table and the chittering of machines in the air.

"Do you want to go first or me?" Jae poked at his friend's ribs. "Chunnie-ah, pay attention!"

"Sorry. I...uh." Yoochun blushed, afraid to appear weak in front of the petite young woman shedding her jacket and tossing the garment on a nearby chair. Her arms were woven tapestries of inked dragons, peonies and phoenix. A white bandage covered a spot on her shoulder, surgical tape peeking out from under her tank top. Swallowing, Yoochun shook his head at his trepidation.

"You don't have to do this if you don't want to, Chunnie-ah." Jaejoong cupped his face, reassuring his friend. "I love you. You're my best friend. I wanted to do this with you because of that. Because you're my brother. But you don't have to if you don't want to. I don't want you to do anything you don't want to do."

"No," Yoochun shook his head, covering Jaejoong's fingers with his own hands, pressing the young man's warmth into his chilled skin. "We're going to do this together, because we're brothers. With each other, for our loves."

"Okay." Jaejoong tugged his shirt from his body, sliding onto the table. "I'll go first and then if you decide it looks like it hurts too much, you can back out."

"Aish." Yoochun muttered to himself, dragging a chair over to sit on, positioning himself near Jaejoong's head when the other singer lay down on his stomach. "I'll look like a coward if I back out now. Did you see her arms? She's got tattoos all over her. I'll look like a big crybaby."

"You are a big crybaby." Jae teased, winking at his friend's playful snarl. "And so am I because I know I'm going to ask you to hold my hand at some point. We can be cowards together."

* * *

"What the hell were you thinking?" Yunho's booming deep voice exploded from the older couple's bedroom.

Anger sharpened Yunho's words, a trailing stream of sound as the leader followed his lover from the bedroom to the living area. Changmin kept his eyes down on his math book, working out a problem much more easily handled than Yunho's anger. The leader's face was nearly beet red with fury, Yunho's fists clenched and at his sides. Jaejoong slammed open the door of the pantry, moving several boxes of food as he searched for something that appealed to his hunger.

"I was thinking that I can do what I want." Jae's words had an edge to them, a dangerous razor sharpness rarely heard in the hyung's tone.

"The piercings are one thing but a tattoo?" Yunho leaned over the counter, unwilling to break from the argument. "How could you do that to yourself? Don't you have any idea how that looks to the people around you? Why do you do these kinds of things?"

"I wonder how they look" Junsu interjected, earning himself a fierce look from Yunho, a searing dark glare from the kitchen. Quailed, Junsu stumbled over his words and reasserted his opinion, conscious of his lover standing next to him. "I can't wait to see it."

"Why do I do these kinds of things?" Jaejoong cut off Yoochun's answer. Furious, the eldest turned around, facing down Yunho. "I do what I like, Jung. No one tells me what to do or what not to do. You're not my father. Don't act like him."

Grabbing his jacket, Jaejoong stalked to the front door, tucking his wallet into the back pocket of his jeans. "There's nothing to eat that I want. I'm going downstairs to the store."

"No." Yunho reached for Jae, his hand closing over the singer's arm. "I'm not done with you yet."

"You're as done as you're going to be." Jae's eyes glittered dangerously. "Unless you're telling me that a tattoo means you're going to stop loving me."

"Why does it always have to come to that?" Yunho raged. "When ever I tell you that I'm angry, you think that I'm going to leave you? Always!"

"Because it's what I'm used to, Yunho." Jae's chin lifted as he drew himself free of his lover's grip. "And because you never talk to me. Just yell and tell me what to do. I love you. I do. But you don't own me. Stop behaving like you do."

Inked Souls

The door slammed behind Jaejoong then opened and closed again as Yunho followed, leaving a tense peace behind. Changmin sighed, rubbing at his face and neck. Leaning back into the softness of the couch, he wondered aloud which one of the two would be sleeping on its cushions that night.

"I really can't wait to see it." Junsu breathed into Yoochun's open mouth, tucking a ghost kiss into his lover's parted lips. "I think it's cool."

"I'm going to see if we have clean sheets and a blanket." Changmin closed his books, tucking his homework into a notebook. "Maybe I'll sleep on the couch so Yunho can sleep in my room. That way when one of them realizes that they're being stupid, they're only a few feet away and won't wake the rest of us up stomping back and forth."

* * *

The door to the bathroom opened while Yoochun let the shower spray hit his back. The lukewarm water soaked into the packing pad placed over his lower back. Junsu shed his clothes and cracked open the glass paned door, lightly touching Yoochun's shoulders. Turning into one another, their arms intertwined, sliding over water-slick torsos and sharing a bright laugh between their lips as they kissed.

Junsu tilted up onto his tiptoes, kissing Yoochun's closed eyelids when the baritone leaned his head back to let the water strike his face. The taste of Micky on his tongue was sweet, the aroma of Yoochun's skin a sugared spice in the back of Junsu's throat.

"Can you take the bandage off?" Junsu asked. The idea of pushing ink beneath skin fascinated him, admiration for Yoochun's courage brushing awe into his voice.

"Max said that I can take the bandage off tonight but it would be a good idea to put a new one on after I put on the antibiotic cream." Yoochun hissed when Junsu picked at the edge of a tape strip. "Just pull it off, Susu. It hurts more the longer it takes."

"You were tattooed by someone named Max?" Junsu snagged the end of tape between his fingers, counting down to one before ripping the cling free from Yoochun's body. "That's funny. The only two members not there were me and Yunho."

"You were there in our hearts." Yoochun said, bracing himself for the tape's removal. "Go ahead. Make it quick."

"Okay." Junsu grinned. "Do you want a piece of wood to chew on while I do this?"

"Shut...Ow!" Yoochun panted through his clenched teeth, feeling the burn of the tape's adhesive as it ripped free from his skin. "Damn that hurts."

"Hold on." Junsu patted his lover's shoulders, reassuring Yoochun before he grabbed another end. "We've got three more to go."

With the tape removed, Junsu carefully lifted the bandage from Yoochun's back, amazed at the reverse lettering left on the pad's absorbent material. The tattoo was slightly raised, reddened around the edges of the inked letters. Pitch black, the tattoo spread in a semi-circle over Yoochun's spine.

"TVfXQ mah-tay?" Junsu dabbed a wet wash cloth around the tattoo, cautiously working the grit from Yoochun's puffy skin.

"Mate." Yoochun pronounced the word first in Korean and then English, his heart skipping a beat as Junsu sounded it back to him, the other's breath hotter than the shower's water on his skin.

"Come on. Let's dry you off and I'll put another bandage on it." Junsu turned off the water, opening the door to grab a thick towel from a nearby hook. "Then you can tell me what it means and why you did it. I promise I won't yell like Yunho."

Remembering their leader's anger, Yoochun muttered. "I don't think mating cats can yell like Yunho."

* * *

The bed was a soft welcome to Yoochun's tired body, his emotions run dry from the rollercoaster journey his heart had taken that day. Stretched out over the sheets, he lay with his head sideways on the pillow, watching Junsu as the tenor tore apart the package of gauze squares, the slight medicinal scent wafting free making Junsu wrinkle his nose.

"So how long do you have to wear a bandage?" Junsu asked, his weight dimpling the bed as he kneeled beside Yoochun's prone body. The cold bite of the cream shocked Chun when Junsu first applied it over the scabbing tattoo. Soon the gentle touch of his lover's fingers over the abused skin soothed his nerves and Yoochun felt himself relax under the stroking.

"Max said that I could go without one after a few hours but the ink coming up out of the skin would stain my clothes." Yoochun replied, watching Junsu's stomach muscles flex as he moved over Yoochun's back. "So I should probably leave one on until all of the excess ink comes up and the tattoo begins to heal."

"I think it's funny that you were tattooed by someone named Max."

"I thought it was funny too." Yoochun said. "I wish you could have been there but I wanted it to be a surprise."

"A surprise, eh?" Junsu bent down, sucking a hot kiss from Yoochun's mouth. "Or were you afraid that if you backed out that I would tease you?"

"Hah!" The other man scoffed. "You couldn't say anything unless you got a tattoo and I didn't."

"Oh no, I'd be too scared to get one." Junsu wiped his fingers on a paper towel, pulling a gauze square from the package and unfolding its ends until it

Inked Souls

became a rectangle large enough to span Yoochun's back. "It looks like it hurts. I can't believe you got one."

"Me neither." Yoochun admitted. "But there was this girl and she had a lot of them. How would it have looked if I backed out of something Jaejoong and this girl could do?"

"Like you had common sense?" Junsu grinned down at his lover's scowl. "Our Joongie is sometimes... too wild for his own good. Stay still. I need to make sure I cover all of this."

Arranging the gauze to his liking, Junsu tore off strips of surgical tape, starting the rips with his teeth. Crisscrossing the clear plastic strips, he fastened the gauze firmly to Yoochun's back before sitting back to admire his handiwork.

"There." Junsu clapped his hands then pumping his fists in the air. "I have been successful with your surgery. You will live a long and prosperous life because of my skill!"

"You are silly." Yoochun turned over, grabbing at Junsu's waist and pulled the other man down on top of him. "Thank you."

Junsu's playfulness softened to a gentle shyness when Yoochun whispered into his ear, words he never tired of hearing. "I love you, Susu-ah."

"I love you too, Chunnie."

They were so comfortable in their affection, loose souls drifting along life and tangling into strong bonds as they worked towards their goals. Rarely apart, Junsu found himself aching for the goofy-faced singer when he realized that the space to his left was empty of Yoochun's presence. As they lay against one another, listening to their hearts settling into a single beat, Junsu relaxed, letting his body adjust into the curve of Yoochun's form.

"Why TVfXQ mate?" Junsu asked, folding his arms over Yoochun's chest and resting his chin on his clenched fists. Staring down into his lover's soulful eyes, Junsu allowed himself one quick kiss then sliding his legs down to straddle Yoochun's waist, his stomach firm against the baritone's hips. "And what did Jaejoong get?"

"Ah, Joongie-ah got TVfXQ soul." Yoochun laughed at the furrow forming between Junsu's eyes.

"Soulmate?" Pursing his mouth, Junsu frowned slightly. "I don't think I like that. Explain."

"We didn't get them to make one word. Not really." Yoochun explained with a hearty laugh, nearly dislodging Junsu from his chest. "It does mean that he and I are soulmates but not lovers."

"Joongie is my best friend and my brother. I love him so much that sometimes it hurts when I think he's in pain." Yoochun said. "But that's not because I love him like I love you. I can't do anything for him when he's in

pain. I can tell him that I understand and that I care about him but I can't... fix it like I can with you. Between us, our love will heal anything that the world might do to us but with Jaejoong, my love can only wrap him up to keep him from the cold but it will never warm him."

"That I understand." Junsu nodded, relief under his comprehension. "So this soulmate is for him?"

"When put together, the soulmate stands for me and Jaejoong. We are two souls that have found comfort with one another. Always together in our hearts" Micky let his hands roam over the rise of his lover's rear, cupping Junsu's body to him. "But when apart, the soul on Jaejoong's shoulders stand for who he's found in the group. And for me, it's what I have found... my mate."

"Eh?" Junsu cocked his head. "Are you getting mushy?"

"No. Aish, listen to me." Yoochun slapped at Junsu's rear, satisfied at getting a small yelp of surprise from the other.

"Joongie-ah was reading something to me and one of the bits in it said; Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength; loving someone deeply gives you courage." His voice barely a whisper in the dim light of their bedroom, Yoochun continued, encouraged by Junsu's silence.

"I thought about that." Yoochun cleared his throat. "Actually I did more than think. It stuck in my brain until every time I looked at you, I thought about that saying."

"I wanted some way of saying to you, my Junsu, that you give me strength and courage. But how could I do that in some way that was between us?" Micky cradled his lover's waist, rocking Junsu gently. "Every time you kiss me, you kiss deep into my soul. My heart feels your kisses and there isn't a part inside of me that doesn't feel you."

"I should have been there." Junsu whispered, his heart touched deep.

"No, I did it without you because knowing you were in my heart gave me the courage to do it." Yoochun explained. "You are my mate. We are partners in our lives. Without you, I'm less of a person. With you, I can do anything that I want to do... that I need to do. And I wanted to carry that with me."

"I chose that spot because that's where you touch me when we make love." Yoochun whispered against Junsu's cheek. "When you are deep inside of me, you place your hands there and rub, urging me that even if there might be pain, there will be more pleasure. When your hands are there, I can be strong enough to work past the discomfort so I can soar with that pleasure you give me."

"You touch me there when I am inside of you, Your palms skim my waist and touch just the outer edges of my back. That's why I had the tattoo go all the way across." Yoochun wiped at the single salted dewdrop tearing up on Junsu's lashes. "Every time you touch me there and I feel you down into my

Inked Souls

soul. I wanted you to see that every time we are close and remember I love you or even if we are surrounded by people, you'll know that your touch is there."

"That's why I got the tattoo." Yoochun let himself breathe again, the rush of cold air in his lungs stinging. "We're mated, Susu-ah. I am your lover. And I wanted how I feel about you to always be under my skin just like you've gotten under my skin."

"Thank you." Junsu whispered, crying softly under the gentle touch of Yoochun's fingers on his face. "I love you, Yoochun. More than you know. Maybe even more now because of the stupid crazy things you do. But do you know something?"

"What?" Yoochun sniffed, his tender heart cracking open under his lover's joyful tears. "Stop that. You know I cry easily."

"There's no way I cannot touch you there when we make love. It's my favourite spot on your body. You're going to have to be the one on top until that heals." Junsu exploded with laughter as Yoochun tossed him over onto the bed, growling at the impudent smirk on Junsu's face. Giggling, the tenor bit at Yoochun's neck, making the other laugh. "And I'm going to really like knowing that it's going to drive you crazy until I can touch you there again."

Lemon Ink

A pair of sleek sunglasses hid the young man's face, protection against the waning, watery sun as he watched the city pour past him through the taxi window. The driver passed an MRT station, turning into the Orchard Road district. If he closed his eyes, Kim Jaejoong could imagine he smelled the scent of nutmeg and pepper in the breeze. Within minutes, despite the traffic, the taxi pulled in front of the hotel's wide outer staircase, its distinctive pinnacle tower a sharp gleaming white.

Keeping his head down, the singer tugged at the collar of his jacket, pulling the lapels up to his jaw line. The multiple flight connections and then a long drive over a heavily traveled causeway ate at his nerves, the driver fearless in his handling of the cab. He'd taken a circuitous route getting to the island, losing himself in the crowds until he was nearly sure that no one saw him as one of five members of a singing group, rather just a slender young man traveling alone.

The lobby was a relief to walk through, the courteous receptionist handing Jaejoong a key and directions to get to the room. Soft classical music lifted the singer as he walked up the sweeping wooden stairs, his shoulder burdened by a simple duffel bag stuffed full of casual clothes.

Sunlight sought the edges of the suite, refusing to give into the encroaching night. The French doors were shut against the sounds of the city, the room's air conditioning beating back the island's incessant humidity. Orchids dappled purple and white spiders against cream walls, the long stretch of mahogany Queen Anne table offering Jae a place to deposit his room key.

Hands closed over Jae's hips, fingers digging into the waistband of his jeans. Leaning his head back, the singer reveled in the feel of the man at his back, despite the simmering anger he'd nursed over his trip. Yunho bit hard into Jaejoong's throat, rolling the tender skin back and forth in the hot moistness of his mouth.

"Stop, Jung Yunho." Jaejoong made an effort to pull free, trapping himself against the table. Turning to face his lover, Jae leaned back on the polished wood, his palms curled over the table's carved edge. "I don't even get a hello?"

"Why stop?" Yunho leaned into Jae's body, his hands spanning the singer's wrists, holding him in place. "Because you said so? Or because you want to talk? I think if I talk right now, I'll start yelling until I'm hoarse and I'd rather get breathless some other way."

"I don't want yelling. Either from you or me." Jaejoong reached up behind his shoulders, trying to rub at the space above his blades.

Moving his fingers to the span of Jaejoong's narrow waist, Yunho slowly roamed upwards under the softness of Jae's shirt until he felt the rough peel of his lover's upper back. He knew without looking that fine specks of black inked skin clung to his palms, remnants of Jaejoong's healing tattoo. Yunho's face went dark, a closed in tightness around his eyes. Jaejoong canted his head away from his lover's cheek, listening to the leader's slow intake of breath and the steady release of his anger between gritted teeth.

"Does it still hurt?" Pulling one hand free, Yunho stared at the thin scrapings of his lover's skin, tender shreds of Jaejoong's pain. "Stand still. Let me do this for you."

"It doesn't hurt." Jae rubbed his shoulders against the hand resting lightly under his shirt. "It itches though... just a bit. It's nearly done. Rub at it, help me scratch."

"I can't believe you did this. I can't believe you and Chunnie did this. You're idiots." Yunho huffed again, although he rubbed at Jaejoong's shoulders. "What the hell were you thinking?"

"Of you. You bring out the idiot in me." Jaejoong pulled away, shrugging the jacket from his shoulders. "And we're not going to yell at each other, remember?"

Tossing the garment onto the couch, the young man poured himself a drink, adding a slice of lemon to fizzing tonic water. Through his down-swept eyelashes, Jaejoong watched Yunho fist his hands to his side, keeping the shards of Jaejoong's broken skin tight on his palms.

"Are you hungry?" Yunho jerked his chin to the dining table set up with room service. "I had them bring in some food for you."

The power of Yunho's body always set a rumbling tightness through Jae's chest. His own body reacted instinctively to the other man's presence, sometimes hardening his nipples and shaft with a painful want. No one could tear at Jae's heart or body like Yunho, the leader's strong face and capable hands tearing down the fragile rice paper walls Jaejoong used to construct his defensive walls. Standing in the puddle of his anger, Yunho's somber face barely hid the passions in his eyes, a flirtation of desire coyly submitting under the aggressive possessiveness the leader tried to keep hidden.

Jaejoong knew he played with fire when he strung Yunho along, plucking at the other's nerves until they nearly snapped from impatience. They'd been fighting silently for nearly two weeks since Yunho first discovered the healing ink stain under Jaejoong's shirt, the leader's shock nearly palatable on his tongue. Yoochun's own tattoo, shown in an attempt for empathy drove Yunho's rage over the edge of reason.

The fight was more welcome than the chilly silences that marked their early fumbblings in finding where they stood with one another. Jaejoong preferred the yelling and screaming to the coldness Yunho could show when he suffered his rage in silence. The one regret Jaejoong had was the toll on the others' peace was significant. Changmin fled first, sequestering himself in the tiny room he'd claimed for his own. Junsu and Yoochun slunk away soon after, retiring to their bedroom where Junsu lifted the other's shirt to marvel at the black grit rising from the healing tattoo. The silence rode after the argument they had in the living room of their apartment, sharp knives of plunged heat aiming for sliced apart hearts.

"Do you even think before you do these things?" Standing near the red couch, Yunho nearly lost the pulp of his voice on the rise of his temper, a jagged glass shard of sound in his throat. "And with Yoochun? You put that out there and do you know what others are going to think? About the two of you?"

"They're going to think what they want to think!" Jaejoong retorted, his own stubborn will flaring to match Yunho's, the fire of phoenix wings in his tone. Usually chaotic and scattered, Jae's focus sometimes frightened the others when it was turned towards them, Yunho often standing firm against the maelstrom. "I don't care if people think he's inside of me every night, making me scream. We both know I can only say your name when I'm losing my body. Sometimes I can't even do that... I just keep crying for more even when I can't take in any more."

"Is that what you want, then?" Yunho moved in close, his stronger features hard and firm. "You want them to think that you and Yoochun are lovers? That you're soulmates?"

"That's not what it means." Jaejoong snarled, pressing back against Yunho, nearly shoulder to shoulder with his lover. "Besides, if I want to put anything on my body, I will. I don't need you to tell me how to think or to act off stage. Don't get it in your head that you own me, Jung Yunho. Just because you have my heart, it doesn't mean you have my life."

After that, the cold winter of their fight settled in, each word shared a drop of ice on the hot skin of their tempers. Nearly seven days passed before Yunho spoke calmly to Jaejoong, the willful singer unwilling to take any peace offered to him. The couch remained empty, a good sign Yoochun thought, although the low rumble of voices from under the hyungs door remained absent. Junsu helped Micky rub lotion into the lower part of his back, taking care not to tickle the baritone when he leaned in to blow on the healing ink, commenting that he hoped Yunho would at least do the same for Jaejoong.

After thirteen days, Yunho fairly ordered Jaejoong's presence on the island...or at least that is how the singer viewed it when the other man told him they would be spending a few days at the hotel, away from prying public eyes and the other members' tender hearts. His pout set in but Yunho's sternness would allow no argument.

With that, Jaejoong found himself alone on a long series of plane hops, hiding his movements and identity. The subterfuge was necessary, Jae knew that. He was the one who chose to keep their relationship behind closed doors and shut windows although the decision did chafe at times, often when he just wanted to turn around and either hug or strangle his lover. Standing just few feet away from Yunho, Jaejoong was revisited by the compulsion to do ... something to the leader, although his hands were unsure if they should wrap around his lover's cock or throat.

"I'm not really hungry." Jaejoong lifted a silver dome covering a plate. Shreds of duck skin glistened, set on a bed of raw shredded green onion. A small basket of bao warmed nearby, pots of hoisin and plum sauce cradled into rounds of hot towels to wash off the sticky repast. The skinless meat lay under another dome, Jaejoong assumed, hopefully deboned and with a heft helping of vegetables. Picking up a piece of skin, Jae crunched his teeth into the caramel coloured flesh, chewing thoughtfully as he stared at his lover.

"Did you have a good flight?" Yunho joined Jaejoong at the table, selecting a piece of the duck and holding it for Jae to bite into. "I was a plane ahead of you. I only got here about an hour before you."

The singer closed his lips around his lover's fingertips, sucking off the pungent grease from between the pressed offering. They stood connected by fingers and the soft moistness of Jaejoong's mouth, silent and brooding on their frayed tempers. A soft rain splattered at the doors' panes, sending the world back behind a misty wash of wet circles.

"You make me madder than anyone else I've ever had in my life, you know that?" Yunho pulled Jaejoong in close, his hand braced against the singer's spine. Jae allowed himself to be brought in against his lover's belly, biting his teeth lightly around Yunho's tips, sliding his tongue over the flat of the other's fingers before letting go. "I love you and you just...enrage me sometimes. And I just have to keep loving you because I can't think of how broken I would be without you."

Yunho's wet fingers teased at the golden ball piercing Jae's navel, rolling the sphere between his thumb and index. A simmering anger lay just under the surface of his thoughts, a pique brought on not by the tattoos Yoochun and Jaejoong now shared but by the meaning behind the ink.

"You're the only person I given myself to...all of me. And you want more. Sometimes it's too much, Yunho. There are thoughts and desires in me that I want to keep to myself for a while." Jaejoong countered, looking straight into his lover's eyes. "You just want everything as soon I have it. Taking, reaching inside of me and taking. You leave me breathless because you steal the air from my lungs and push your own back inside of me. And I love you for that. But some things... have to remain mine until I want to share them."

The leader's hands were restless on Jae's body, finding dips of muscle and bone to play with. Undoing the top button of Jae's jeans, Yunho dipped his

hand down over the elastic of Jae's underwear, biting at the tender skin along his lover's jaw until Jaejoong opened his mouth to take in a sensual kiss.

Teasing, Jaejoong licked at Yunho's questing mouth, dabbing the tip of his tongue over his lover's lower lip. Brooding in their anger, their bed remained cold and stiff, the night broken only by mumbled grunts and Jaejoong's rubbing at the skin on his shoulder blades. To touch the other man was a bittersweet heaven. Jaejoong wanted to cling to his stubbornness but the erotic scent of Yunho's warm skin spread into his chest, filling the hungry desire inside of him.

"I hate when we fight." Jae mumbled, letting himself be led towards the soft bed beyond the main room. Yunho pushed at his lover's shoulders, dropping the other man onto the duvet. Stripping the belt from his waist, the leader dropped the leather strap to the floor, his eyes never leaving Jaejoong's pretty face.

"I think we talk too much, sometimes." Yunho lifted the hem of Jaejoong's shirt, his teeth worrying at the ball of gold he fingered earlier. Murmuring on his lover's belly, Yunho laved at the dip of space on Jae's abdomen. "We just fight so well."

The singer's hips twitched, his head arching back into the mattress at the feel of Yunho's tongue on his delicate skin. His face flushed pink with want, his tongue trying to move the dampness in the back of his throat to his lips. Swallowing hard around the lump in his throat, Jaejoong reached up to tangle his hand in Yunho's hair. Grabbing at his lover's wrist, Yunho pushed Jaejoong's arm back down against the bed.

"Stay there." Yunho looked up into Jae's face, his eyes barely visible over the singer's rolled up shirt. "Let me believe that you're mine to play with...even if it's just for a little while."

Jaejoong's clothes rolled from his body, Yunho easing the singer's jeans from his hips and onto the floor. The shirt followed, a pile of discarded cotton armour against the pile of the room's plush carpet. Ebony strands clung to Jae's pale shoulders, a fringe of jet rubbing soft on the ivory of his skin. Yunho's strong hands pressed against Jaejoong's thighs, pushing the singer's lean legs apart. Mewling at the feel of his lover's breath ghosting over his groin, Jae dug his hands into the bed linens, his hips instinctively raising free from the mattress to display for Yunho.

Yunho licked once at the plum nestled amid the young man's softness, blowing a soft burst of breath over the wetness. With one hand resting on the inside of Jaejoong's thigh, the leader worked himself free of his clothes, alternatively laving at the growing hardness and biting softly into the tender skin where Jae's legs met his pelvis.

"Sometimes I just want to chew through you." Yunho bit down at the hollow along Jae's leg, his cheek brushing against his lover's sex. "Especially when

you make me mad. I keep thinking that if I could just get my mouth around some of you, my anger will be fed and it will go away."

"Yunho..." Jaejoong gasped at Yunho's mouth finding the puckered rosette between his legs, the moist ring clenching from the slight intrusion. Another dab nearly threw Jae's control into the wind, his stomach twisting in response. Unable to stop from moving, the singer bucked when Yunho's fingers teased at his entrance, wet from his lover's hot mouth.

"Do you have any idea of how beautiful you are?" Yunho reached over and ran a finger over the his lover's chest. Jaejoong purred, responding to the gentle warm touch, his nipple formed a tight pink rose peak beneath Yunho's fingertip. "Your mouth holds a honey that is sweeter than any bloom God has created."

Yunho slid up Jae's lithe torso and tipped his face forward, capturing his lover's mouth against his again. The feel of Jae's skin on his felt like a satin wrap on his flesh, and he roamed over his pale, warm body with his supple hands. He found the ball tucked into the small piece of span of flesh above Jae's belly button, the muscles clenching into solid, rounded curves as he moved over them, sliding his limbs between his lovers.

Leaving Jae gasping, Yunho returned to the line of shadow hidden below his lover's belly, nuzzling at the downy skin before moving downward. As he stroked his fingers over Jae's belly, Yunho dipped his head down to taste at the velvet head sliding hard along his lover's legs, seeking a garden of nectar past the slit. The wetness left by his mouth cooled as he moved to the other side of the glans, nibbling the slightly spongy skin at the small rising peaks until the hidden treasure grew moist and smelled of spice. Sliding his hands behind his back, Jaejoong fought to hold onto the sheets, losing himself into Yunho's touch. The leader's hand soon joined his, tangling his fingers in Jae's under the singer's weight.

"I need more air...I need more of something." The growl came from Jae's chest, moist where Yunho drank from his nipples in the same way that he moved over his mouth, a long supple tasting of flesh and inhaling of scent. "I can't... stand to just lie here, Yunnies-ah. You're driving me insane."

"Maybe you should think about how you do this to me then?" Yunho bit into the rise of Jae's hipbone, satisfied he could get the singer to moan under his mouth. "Just looking at you does this to me."

"Shipsheeyo..." Jae's intense growl thickened Yunho's already hard shaft, the head painfully throbbing from being denied his lover's hot core.

Yunho purred as he found the pout in the head of Jae's sex, sliding his tongue into the small recess. Moving lower, he inhaled the honeysuckle scent through his mouth, tasting Jae on his soul before found the other man's weeping salt with his tongue. A delicate sip from Jae's parted flesh, Yunho's tongue stealing a drop of honey drove the singer's hips upwards and he gasped as Yunho's fingers slowly stroked his grasping entrance. Jae

grabbed at the short mane of brandy hair covering his stomach and clenched the silken threads tightly as he murmured a soft, melodic tumbling of words over Yunho's laving, the leader's warm breath cinnamon sweet against his rosy, hard flesh.

A shift of Yunho's weight on the bed rocked Jaejoong on the mattress, the other man's hands lifting Jae's legs up, hooking the singer's knees up over his biceps. Yunho gently kissed him, laving at the velvet folds of his body until Jae found himself wrapped around Yunho's torso, tasting his shoulders with clenched hands. Yunho drank deeply, savouring the taste of his lover in his mouth until Jae started to pant wildly, his hands moving to digging short nails into Yunho's corded thighs.

Letting his mouth roam, the tip of Yunho's tongue eventually wound around one of the tiny pink jewels plump on Jae's chest, sending ripples of ecstatic pleasure through the singer's aching body. Jaejoong shuddered around him, clinging to his shoulders and instinctively biting down on his shoulder and neck, his mouth filling with a full spicy scent as he drew minute drops of blood with his sharp teeth.

The sensation overwhelmed him and he pulled backwards, trying to fight the waves of pleasure that threatened his control, remaining on the edge of desire until Yunho suckled at his flesh, drawing the small tourmaline pebble into his mouth and drinking the honeyed sweat from Jae's body. At that moment, Jaejoong tipped his head back onto the pillows and let the waves overcome him, a tide of pleasure brought to the feral and sensual singer by his lover's mouth.

Supple fingers moved over his temple, parting the curling waves of black silk around Jae's face. With a gentle kiss, Yunho moved his mouth over Jae's lips and brought the taste of their two mingled bodies to his mouth. The sweet taste of nectared spice on Jae's tongue drove another small ripple of desire through Yunho's limbs and he lowered his trembling hands until he found his firm flesh with his fingers, stroking at himself with a deliberate urging.

"I want you." Jaejoong could barely make out his own voice amid Yunho's deep purrs of pleasure.

"You have me." He smiled a sweet grin and kissed him once more, tangling his tongue in his. Moving his hips until they rested against the other's hips, Jaejoong slid his fingers along the length of Yunho's sex before touching the tip of his flesh to his moist body.

"Yes?" Yunho's cocked head held a question and desire. He brought both of his hands up from their journey over his body and cupped Jae's face, searing his mouth to lover's before pulling back to stare down into the porcelain beauty he desired. "I don't know if there's enough.."

"I don't care if you're dry and raw. I need you, Yunnies-ah." Jaejoong's dark eyes glazed over slightly as Yunho lowered his face to suckle at his lover's mouth.

Yunho slowly slid into him, paring Jae's pink flesh with his. The width of the leader's sex filled the space deep within his lover, pushing against the walls of his being, and the heat of his channel moistened and flexed with desire as Yunho moved in further. He could feel the smooth heated flesh between the tingling juncture of his rear, their moistness mingled in with the spiced wine from his mouth. Clasp his hands to his shoulders, the singer hefted a sigh as he lay on his back, his lean body moulding against his hips and the concave curve of his stomach.

"It feels like forever since I've done this," Jaejoong gasped as Yunho began to slowly move, pulling the length of his body against his heightened flesh and pushing back in, threatening to pierce his soul. "Why do we fight?"

"I think I did this last night." Yunho looked down at his flushed face and licked off the small beads of sweat gathering on his brow. "When I slept I dreamed and tasted fire and honey on my mouth and on my body. And we fight because we love each other too much. It hurts and we just want to consume one another. It's not a bad thing, baby. We just can't go for too long without one another. That's something we have to remember."

It stung, the leader's hardness nearly dry except for the moist laving from his mouth on Jae's entrance and the singer braced himself for the pain of being stretched out. He didn't have the patience for the gentle coaxing of a shared heated gel, or the tender pushing of Yunho's fingers into the ridged muscle protecting his body's inner warmth. They'd been apart too long in Jae's mind, their anger erecting a brick wall only tumbled by their frustrated desire and instinctual need to crawl into one another's souls. Jaejoong was more than willing to bear the pain of Yunho's heated shaft, if only to reach the ache crying inside of him.

The pain was sharp until Jaejoong breathed slowly, willing his body to relax and take in his lover's heft. With the head moving slowly into the ring's embrace, Jae tilted his head back, hissing at the length. Yunho paused, stroking at his lover's jaw until Jae murmured encouragements, moving his hips up to envelope Yunho's length.

Yunho began to rock against Jae, watching his face curl in pleasure beneath him. His mouth found the edges of Jae's lips and drank from his warmth, a drowning man finding a glass of heady wine in a parched sun baked desert. The velvet of Jae's body against his, poured nirvana along Yunho's flesh as he fell into rhythm with his movements, Jaejoong tightening on him in an attempt to draw Yunho in further. Responsive to his desires, Yunho slowed and rocked in deeper, touching the core of his lover's nerves and capturing his mouth once more as Jaejoong drove his nails into Yunho's firm shoulders.

The golden glow of the sunlight spread over them as Yunho felt the rise of his orgasm on his flesh, the power of his soul and essence running through him while he brought his lover to the heights of passion. Crying out, he shuddered as his body wracked with the wave of violent pleasure that consumed him, working its way from between his legs and spreading over his torso. His mouth seemed to slowly find each spot of Jaejoong's flesh that tingled with need and his teeth unhurriedly sought to run an erotic edge over the turgid points of Jae's ripe nipples.

The movements of Yunho against Jae brought the a storm rumbling from his inner flesh, slickening the way for his lover as Jae slowly increased the pace of his dance against him, filling his body until he felt that he could fit no more of Yunho inside of him. Another shudder built up inside of Jae and Yunho dipped his head down once more to taste his tongue, lacing his fingers through his lover's as the shudders began to shatter his mind and his cries grew louder, heart wrenching sobs of pleasure brilliant against the night.

Yunho quickened his pace, driving himself deep inside of his lover, and closed his eyes as Jae spasmodically closed around him. Jaejoong felt the hot pant of Yunho's breath on his throat, their breaths mingled into a sweeping aria of desire. The sudden heat wave that touched his body felt as if liquid gold poured from his very soul, filling the space between them with a fine gilding. Jaejoong could hear a throaty urging, a dark purr mingled with a fiery response, their two voices joined in a primal song as he brought his to the edge of oblivion again. His nipples tightened as the brief flick of Yunho's tongue passed over them on his way to his mouth, capturing their cries between their joined lips. His stomach clenched when Yunho's stiff flesh bore deep within his, finding the small part of his body untouched by another, and he lost himself to the darkness that closed in around his, smelling of vanilla and sounding of deep purrs.

Lying there, still within his lover, Yunho cupped his face and kissed Jaejoong deeply, sealing the pact of desire they held between them, oblivious to the world outside that was blind to their storm of pleasure. Pulling free of his lover, Yunho cradled Jae against him, holding the singer's sweaty body in his arms.

The sight of black ink across his lover's blades burned Yunho's belly, his mouth aching to pull the tattoo off of Jaejoong with the edges of sharp teeth. Sighing, the leader forced his anger aside, placing a soft kiss on the nearly healed over inking.

"Do you know why I did that?" Jaejoong asked softly, his face nearly buried in the encroaching darkness of the night. "The tattoo?"

"To piss me off?" Yunho chuckled when Jaejoong sighed. "I'm guessing not."

"Because you bite me there. All the time." Jae said, tangling his hands in his lover's, their fingers spanning Jaejoong's belly. "That's where you find my soul every time we make love. Whenever I'm on my stomach, and you're

about to release into me, you bite me there. I ache for a few moments and then it just throbs into a soft burn, like how I feel when you first push into me. That's why I had the inker put soul there. That's where you bite into my soul and I never want you to let go."

Yunho lay speechless against Jaejoong's trembling body, the flushed heat of his anger searing Yunho as it left his heart. "And the... rest?"

"I put the band's name there because you all are... there in my heart. I wanted something that showed that." Jae whispered, cuddling back against Yunho's chest. "You're always behind me. You protect me and watch my back. With the tattoo there, I remember that."

"You are going to drive me mad, you know that?" Yunho rested his forehead on his lover's back, his heart clutched tight in Jae's soul. "Why did Yoochun get mate then? Other than to drive me jealous."

"You'll have to ask him that." Yunho could hear the smile in Jaejoong's voice. Feeling sleep tug at him, the singer tucked his ankle behind the leader's foot, fitting into the bend of Yunho's body. "But I think first, he'll have to tell Junsu. Not all secrets are mine to share, Yunnie-ah."

"No. I guess not." Yunho took one last sip of his lover's neck before settling against Jaejoong. "Promise me that you'll talk to me before you do something else like this again? I love you but you're fraying my nerves."

"I won't promise you anything, Yunnie." Jaejoong closed his eyes, letting slumber drift him away. "If I did, then you would own all of me and I think that would be bad for us. It's better that I drive you insane. It will keep your life interesting. You already have my love, my heart and my body. You can't have my thoughts. I'm using those to plot your madness. Think on how boring your life would be if I weren't in it to unsettle your nerves."

"You're doing a good job with that then." The leader resigned himself to the chaos that infected his life, tightening his hold on Jae's waist. "Just take care of me when I'm a drooling madman."

"Of course." Jaejoong mumbled, just on the edge of sleep. "Because you drive me just as insane. Give it time, Yunnie-ah, we can go mad together."

"I'll gladly go mad inside of you, baby. I can think of no greater fate I would want to live out." Yunho murmured, keeping the sound of Jaejoong's peaceful in his heart before he drifted off.

Crème Brulee

The sugar crust broke under the tap of Yunho's spoon, a delicate caramel stained glass opening wide under the silver's breeching edge. Snow fell hard outside of the window, a roaring fire licking clean the bark of the thick log he'd placed on the flames just before he sat down. Sprawled on the low bed, Jaejoong watched his lover cross the wooden floor, Yunho's bare feet making a whisper of sound on the polished planks.

The leader's fingers cradled the brown ceramic dish room service thoughtfully left on a warmer, a dome trapping the steam inside. Barely cool enough to handle, Yunho juggled the pleated soufflé dish, its bowl ripe with sweet custard. Breaking the sugared seal allowed the brulee's creamy vanilla scent to escape, reminiscent of the soap he'd used to wash Jaejoong with during their shower.

"It smells like you." The singer whispered, his breath hot on Yunho's naked thigh. Licking at Yunho's stomach, Jae peered up through his mane of hair, eyes coyly seductive with his teasing. "I bet you taste better than it too."

"Ah, behave and sit up." Yunho nudged Jae with his foot. "Let me feed you. I need you to have your strength with you, baby, or you won't last the night with me."

Jaejoong lifted his body up, resting on his elbows and opening his mouth to accept the spoonful of sweet his lover offered up to him. Closing his eyes at the taste, Jae savoured the milky essence of Yunho's kiss embodied in the spongy custard, finding his lover's scent and the smooth ridge of intimate skin mirrored within the vanilla pudding. Swallowing, the singer wanted nothing more than to compare what he just had in his mouth to what he truly longed to place there, the heft of Yunho's sex and their coupled moans of pleasure.

"You look like a satisfied cat, fed plump on cream." Yunho kissed the edges of Jaejoong's mouth, licking at the sugar granules caught on his upper lip. "I see you wearing that face after I am done with you, every night and sometimes in the morning. I like seeing that look there in your eyes...on your mouth. I think I might have to be jealous of this custard for putting it there. I should be the only one that can make you mew like that, Boo."

"I was thinking of you when I ate it." Jaejoong admitted shyly. "So in a way, you did put that look on my face."

Crème Brulee

Setting the custard on the floor, Yunho bent over and captured Jaejoong's face with his cupped hands, taking the breath from the singer's mouth into his own. It seemed like an illogical place for his heart and body to be broken into prisms, a far off tucked away corner of the world where the Earth cupped her breasts and thrust them into the night sky, begging the Universe to suckle from their ripe tips. Yunho swore that he would wake up from the dream of his life and find nothing but ruins and weep until he was mad but the day kept dawning with Jaejoong at his side.

Yunho's lover lay sprawled, naked to the waist as the leader ran his hands along the singer's taut body. Fingertips grown accustomed to the touch of the other man's collarbone, found its mark again... a trail then followed by the expected thrust of a tongue, tasting, laving at the perfect skin stretched over fine bone. Yunho bit, his sharp teeth never finding just a small bit of skin between them. It was as if Yunho could never be sated by the taste of his lover, always wanting more against his tongue, in his mouth, down his throat.

Jaejoong gasped, his throat swelled tight. Pain never felt this good...pleasure never felt this terrifying. With each sweep of fingernails, of his mouth, of the brush of a palm on tortured dermis, Jaejoong trembled...so frightened of the passion within him and of the need within Yunho.

Candle light flickered on the mantle, echoes of flames curving against brick below. The singer's hands shook slightly, a shivering butterfly of need resting its wings along Yunho's jaw. The leader closed his eyes, holding his breath as his lover touched him.

Harp strings were woven into Yunho's spine, a coursing vibrato of sensuality as the ardor rose between them. It licked and teased as easily as he had but moments earlier, running a familiar taunt under Jaejoong's skin. This felt different from the velvety darkness of their shared room, more like tatted lace and suede purring along the ridges of his control.

It was Jaejoong's mouth that reached for a taste, capturing a sliver of pale golden skin between the nip of his teeth. Carefully, he tasted just the press of Yunho's skin in his mouth, rolling it back and forth until the passion rode them both. Love lay strong in the depths of their souls, something that bound them both together amid the tangled confusion of their cloistered lives. That bond flared between them now and Yunho could feel the aching longing Jaejoong tucked away from view, his intense love for the leader blooming open under Yunho's touch.

Their love was so raw, its edges scalloped where the scabs of betrayal and fear had been ripped free. Yunho felt a surge a pride at their bond. They'd worked so hard to come to terms with each other and even had seen the laughing teasing ghosts waft between them but Yunho's overwhelming heartache of needing Jaejoong and nearly losing him to pride almost made the leader weep.

“Love you.” Jaejoong whispered against Yunho’s kiss, nibbling at the other’s mouth.

“Love you as well, Boo.” Yunho replied, tasting his lover on his own tongue.

“Prove it, Yunnies.” The leader narrowed his eyes at Jaejoong’s words. The singer was never one to demand proof of his affection, usually kisses and gentle touches were enough for the feral young man.

“By doing what?” Yunho asked softly, wondering what was going through his lover’s mind.

“Feed me more custard. I think I need to see exactly how much sweeter you are than crème brulee.” Flipping over onto his back, Jaejoong pushed lightly at Yunho’s shoulder, opening his pouted mouth wide. The erotic growl from Jaejoong’s throat thickened Yunho’s need as the singer stroked at the leader’s thigh. “And I think I can only do that if I taste you side by side.”

Candied Kisses

The sound of Junsu's hefty slurp should have warned Yoochun, a slithering noodle flailing about the other's pursed lips. Broth splattered the baritone's face, a bit of green onion sticking to the side of his nose. Crossing his eyes, Yoochun affixed his gaze to the offending piece of vegetation, momentarily unsure if he should burst into laughter or feel outrage over Junsu's manners. Junsu bent close, studying the speck of savory caught against the crease of Yoochun's nose. A thought flitted through his brown eyes, the singer contemplating his friend's face.

A slow lick of Junsu's tongue on Yoochun's cheek took the green onion bit off, leaving a wide swath of a warm wet lave behind. Junsu studied his handiwork, nodding curtly in satisfaction at the stunned grin of Yoochun's smile. Dipping his chopsticks into his dish, the tenor wound another mouthful up to his parted lips, carefully chewing the noodles from the wooden implements.

Sitting on the corner of a busy intersection, the noodle shop boasted a fine view of pedestrians, its upper balcony serving as an intimate dining spot. The other table was empty, its barren two chairs tilted forward against the railing to avoid collecting water in the seats during Seoul's spring rains. Thick with people, the sidewalks bustled with activity, jackets tossed into winter closets with the rising of a warmer sun.

"Isn't Yunho's tongue odd?" Yoochun bent the tip of his tongue under, pressing against his teeth to show Junsu. "I can't do it."

"His tongue is very flexible. I wonder if Jaejoong has any complaints about it." Su acknowledged Yoochun's chuckle with one of his own, chewing around a mouth of noodles. Sliding his shoes off, the tenor lifted his feet, tucking them into Yoochun's lap. "My feet are cold."

"You can leave them there to get warm." One of the baritone's large hands slid down over Junsu's socked foot, finding the other's ankle bone with his index finger. "Your toes are always cold. It probably doesn't help that winter was so harsh this season. I hope it means we'll have a mild summer."

"Not that we'll see any of it." Junsu made a face, thinking of the schedule posted on the board in their music studio. "I wish we could go back to Bora Bora and just relax. Do nothing but sit in the sun and get brown."

"We'll have to wrap Jaejoong in something heavy. He burns too easily."

"It's not as if either one of those two will ever see the sun." Junsu snorted. They'd been woken up by Yunho's deep laughter and the pounding of feet through the hallway as Jaejoong fled from the lover he adored. The couple often spoke in half-conversations, murmured words holding double meanings, a ghostly echo of the passion they shared in their room. "Come on, there's a candy store I want to take you to."

They would have the apartment to themselves that weekend, a rare event that both of them wanted to cherish. With a bagful of candy purchased from a nearby shop, Junsu walked besides Yoochun, his hip bumping the other's side with every few steps. Yoochun grinned, barely able to resist looking through the bag of rented DVDs they'd spent half an hour choosing.

Impatient with the slow elevator, Junsu bounded up the stairwell to their apartment, Yoochun's long legs eating up the distance between the other singer gained with his head start. Gasping, they reached the top landing, Yoochun bending over to catch his breath. Laughing hard, Junsu leaned against the wall, the floor's number painted in large red symbols. A single slender flight of stairs rose up from the landing, providing the members access to the roof where they often star-gazed and ate hot meals, watching the lights of the city around them.

"It's cold in here. I wonder why they spend so much time in here." Junsu puffed a breath of air out of his lungs, trying to see if it would turn to mist in the icy cement stairwell. Yoochun didn't need clarification on who Junsu was speaking of. Jaejoong and Yunho often disappeared for an hour or so, sequestered in the relative intimacy of the stairwell.

"I'm sure they find ways to keep warm." Yoochun nodded towards the smaller stairs. "I've come in here looking for them and that's where they are, cuddled against one another."

Junsu paced over to the tight width of stairs, eyeing them carefully. Setting the bag down, he sat on the third step, arranging his body into what he thought was a careless sprawl. Pouting up at Yoochun, he licked at the corner of his mouth, pulling the back of his hair forward and sighed. "Guess who I am?"

"Aish, you're horrible!" Yoochun crossed to him, slapping at the tenor's shoulder. "Don't tease Joongie-ah."

"Come on, you can be Yunho." Junsu playfully tugged at Yoochun's shirt. "It's colder over here. There's probably a draft coming from outside. No wonder Yunnies are always cuddling JaeJae out here. He'd freeze to death otherwise."

"If I do this, and you tell... I will put ice in your sheets as you sleep." Yoochun warned, shrugging off his jacket. "Because Yunnies would kill us and it would hurt Jaejoong's feelings. Maybe. If he didn't die laughing at us."

Candied Kisses

Junsu crossed his fingers over his heart, his throat closing up at the sight of Yoochun's bared belly as the hem of his t-shirt traveled up. A sprinkling of dark hairs created a whorl below the baritone's navel, a lick of a sensual promise for the delights hidden below the waistband of his jeans. Straddling Junsu's splayed legs, Yoochun positioned his feet on the bottom steps, wondering how Junsu seemed to talk him into the silliest things.

"You have to be more Yunho." Junsu hooked his fingers into Yoochun's jeans, his fingers cold on the singer's stomach. The warmth on Junsu's hands purred a lengthy desire into his chest, the softness of Yoochun's tender skin a hot burn invoking wicked thoughts Junsu would cherish later. Pulling Yoochun forward, Junsu grunted when the singer's chin struck his shoulder, Micky's hands catching on the steps near Junsu's head, struggling not to fall on the slender young man.

"Careful." Yoochun warned, his hips shifting against Junsu's thighs, trying not to crush his friend under his greater weight. "Changmin will never forgive me if I kill you. He'd be stuck singing your parts."

"You're not doing this right." Junsu balled up his fist, lightly striking Yoochun on the jaw. "You're Yunho. Here, I'll be Jaejoong again. So you get inspiration."

Junsu dipped his head down, covering his mouth with his hand, taking a quiet glance up at Yoochun's handsome face. The cant of his chin and dark eyes nearly captured Jaejoong's coyness, the effect ruined by Junsu's wider smile breaking free from his pout. The tenor slid slightly under Yoochun's body, hooking another hand under the soft cotton shirt, spanning the young man's ribs. Stroking gently, Junsu tilted his head back, the scant light of the stairwell running silver threads over his cheekbones.

"Ah, BooJae." Yoochun deepened his voice and then broke into laughter. Trying to compose himself, he rested his forehead on Junsu's chest, inhaling the sugar sweetness of the other's soul into his lungs. "Hey, is this my shirt?"

"Is that you or hyung?" The tenor's eyes narrowed. "And yes, it is your shirt."

"I wore that yesterday. I put it in the wash."

"It was still clean." Junsu rapped Yoochun on the side of his head. "And besides, it smells like you. I thought if I was going to spend the whole weekend with you, I might as well smell like you too."

"I like knowing that you have my scent on you." Yoochun's tone grew serious, a darkening velvet burring his voice. The deepening pitch husked shivers into Junsu's spine. "Is that close enough for you, Junnie-ah? Is that the part of hyung that you want? Or maybe when he touches?"

Yoochun's hand moved from the stairs, his weight shifting to his knees. Running a smoldering touch over Junsu's stomach, Micky slid his hand under his own shirt, exploring the cooled skin below. A fever shook goose bumps over Junsu's flesh, chasing the baritone's fingers in a lustful dance. Rubbing

his thumb under the tenor's chest, Yoochun ghosted a thumb pad over the pebbled plum peak of Junsu's nipple, feeling it tighten under his touch. The resulting hiss from Junsu's parted lips thrilled Yoochun, his teeth nipping at the spot on Junsu's throat where a birthmark would be if he were Jaejoong.

Growling in his throat, Yoochun suckled at the spot, pulling the blood to the surface until Junsu panted and mewled, his voice rough and needy. With his breath shortening in his chest, the tenor's hands roamed over Yoochun's back, clutching at his broad shoulders, silently begging the other to continue.

Yoochun's mouth found its way to Junsu's face, a delicate nip of teeth on the tenor's lips and a heated whisper urged the tenor to open for him. "Let me taste you. Just a little bit. Before we have to return to what we are outside in the world."

Junsu cupped Yoochun's jaw, sliding a sensual kiss over the other's lips. A suckle and then the taste of the musky sweet of Yoochun's mouth flooded the singer with pleasure, his body responding with a sharp twinge of desire in his gut and between his legs. The fire started in his groin licked down the insides of his thighs, stroked from embers to a raging storm as Yoochun's tongue darted and flirted with the roof of Junsu's mouth, running over the striations on the tenor's palate.

Gripping his hands in Yoochun's hair, Junsu sucked the moisture from Yoochun's lower lip, savouring the taste of their combined mouths in the sugared tendrils. Reluctant to let the baritone go, Junsu locked eyes with Yoochun, his lips pressed lightly on Micky's, parted so their air tangled together between them, pouring into their chests and filling the spaces left untouched by the cold.

"I would live inside of you, if I could." Yoochun breathed into Junsu's open mouth, the harsh rasp of his voice softened by the tender look in his eyes. "I don't know how others can do this and be apart."

"Hey!" The startling cold ice of Changmin's shocked voice shook the friends apart, Micky losing his balance and sliding from the steps, banging his knee on the hard floor. The shock of striking the cement's edge with his elbow reverberated into Junsu's nerves, chasing away the delightful erotic tingle of Yoochun's body stretched over his. Changmin stepped into the stairwell, his youthful face conflicted with a horrified amazement and curiosity. "What are the two of you doing?"

"We were pretending to be Jaejoong and Yunho." Junsu blurted out, shrugging helplessly at Yoochun's hot look of condemnation. "I was Jaejoong."

"I saw." Changmin's brow furrowed, his mouth set in displeasure. "Why weren't you Yunho? You're more bossy than Yoochun."

"I pout better." Junsu stood up, brushing off the dust from Yoochun's rear. The baritone jerked away, his face flushed red. The tenor slapped away

Candied Kisses

Yoochun's protesting hands, futile at staving off Junsu's ministrations. "Hold still, Chunnie. You look like you went rolling in a baseball field."

"What are you doing home, dongsaeng?" Yoochun turned suddenly, trying not to let the feel of Junsu's hands on his rear affect him. "You were supposed to be at a seminar for school."

"They cancelled it." Changmin shrugged, spotting the bag of DVDs left abandoned by the door. Digging through the bag, the youngest made sounds of approval at the selection, wandering back towards the apartment nearby. "I was about to order food in. Let me know what you want."

Junsu retrieved the candy, sighing at losing the chance to lick pieces of chocolate until they melted and rubbing the soft sweet over Yoochun's body. Hooking an arm around the baritone's waist, Junsu rested his head on his friend's shoulder, sighing.

"Your Yunho was much better than my Jaejoong." Junsu teased. "It's hard to be sexy and not know it."

"He does that well." Yoochun admitted, swallowing the taste of Junsu's mouth that lingered in his. "You were better than me. You lounged well. If I didn't know better, I would swear that you studied him doing that."

"Ah, if you've seen one cat sprawled in a sunbeam, then you can mimic Jaejoong on the couch." Junsu eased through the doorframe, unwilling to release his hold on the other. "I can tell you one thing we were successful with."

"What's that?" Yoochun slid his hand down, resting the flat of his palm on the small of Junsu's back.

"I think we played Jaejoong and Yunho too well." Junsu remarked, hearing the loud blare of an action movie from the living room. "Just when we were getting comfortable and touching, there was Changmin between us."

"We'll have to play at being ourselves soon." Junsu said, detaching from Yoochun and walking to the kitchen to look at the dinner menu left on the counter. "There is no one standing between us... just air. And that can be taken away with enough heat, Chunnie-ah. I am certain of it."

Pearled Ice

Bitterness crept on bended knees, wrapped tight around Yunho's tongue. A sip of green tea shared hot between chilled lips warmed the leader's belly, tasting of cloves and erotic sugar. In the brisk cold winter air, the pair bundled against one another, shivering against the icy wind. Shards of ice bit through the wind, cutting into Jaejoong's soft skin. The driving snow had a bite in it, a slaving creature hungry for blood, intent on stealing the heat from the couple's breath. Overhead the moon's sliver hung on a crystalline sky, a halo gloaming under cloudy wings.

The streets surrounding them sped about, long strings of cars weaving through the tight curves, red tail lights flashing pink over the decaying snow banks bolstered by the incoming heavy storm. Sleet rang bells of hail onto the cement, making their passage slippery in places, nearly dangerous in others. With the cold winds came an uncertain surge through the city's power grid, entire blocks flickering as the current waned and waxed through the lower rent districts. In the distance, the hills dappled with faux starlight then a burst of darkness plunged the far off towers into the background as the power bled off from the first wall of the storm front.

Jae ducked his head down, cutting down the brusque slice of the wind against his delicate features. The colour had long since drained from his skin, pale ivory bleached to bone under a winter night's kiss. Yunho cradled the Styrofoam cup, the lid's lip pulled back. They walked, silent in the unspoken argument between them, a sourness curdling the pleasure they'd shared earlier.

Yunho's cell phone buzzed, vibrating through his pocket. The leader ignored the call, a hardness in his soul forming against the world. Sharp words divided their walk, carved from harsh tongues. In the wanderings around the district, the pair walked off Yunho's anger, the leader's face tight and closed in. Jaejoong pursed his lips, puffing his cheeks out as he blew his lungs clear of unspoken hot words.

"Do you even know where we're going?" Yunho stopped dead in front of a grocer's store, the doors shuttered tight against the cold. "Damn it, Jaejoong."

Wide iron tangs soldered over a long shaft barred the store's entrance, the windows encased behind metal sheaves rolled down and locked. Shoving his fists into his jacket, Yunho turned and instantly regretted his words. The paleness on Jaejoong's face leached his lover's beauty to a near deathly

Pearled Ice

pallor, a waxen cheeked doll carved from whale bone and breathed to life by whimsy. Unsure of how to mend the schism between them, Yunho stumbled in his thoughts, wondering how to stitch over the wound he'd just placed in Jaejoong's psyche. A moment of contemplation and the leader decided to go with the simplest thing he could do.

"I'm sorry, Jae."

Although he was contrite, the apology clung to his throat and whimpered when Yunho jerked it free into the cold air. Those words held so much power in their saying, the leader's heart splayed open for Jaejoong's fingers to dig in deep and hook into his soul. The consternation in Yunho's words held an apologetic offering not only for what he said but for what he did, the evidence borne stoically on his face.

The cold air did little to bring down the swelling on Yunho's cheek, a dark berry stain of bruised skin and muscle rising under his eye. Another mark, reddened hot by thick knuckles marred the leader's handsome chin, running nearly to the edge of his jaw line and into the curve of his sensual mouth. He bore the pain on his face silently, his own hands aching from pummeling at another's body, the grating sound in his shoulder a reminder of the man's friend pulling Yunho free and slamming him against the wall.

They'd braved the evening, choosing to spend the relative weekend they had free prowling down to someplace no one knew them, a risky adventure the other members warned them against. Yunho nearly forgo the excursion, changing his mind only when he saw the crestfallen edge of Jaejoong's disappointment ripen in the other's eyes. He'd agreed to brave the storm's moving front, getting Jae to agree that they'd only be gone an hour or so, stolen minutes of dancing together in the crush of a darkened club, perhaps even stealing a brazen kiss when the lights dashed down between songs.

Yunho would never have guessed that they would be waylaid before they entered the dance club, pushed off the street by broad-bodied men with narrowed minds. It was a word first, something soiled one of them hung on Jaejoong, a filthy pelt knitted with a profane suggestion for the pretty singer's body. Another call followed then shadows emerged from the dark alley entrance, flat-eyed men circling the slender young Korean. Yunho had stopped to examine the lean lines of a sports car, his attention caught by the shiny red enamel paint poured over sleek metal. It reminded him of his lover, warmed to the touch when stroked properly, cold when left outside in the elements. He'd nearly called Jaejoong back when the first of the men strolled up to the sloe-eyed singer, the tilt of Jae's chin a warning sign to those who knew him.

The men had the look of those who'd fallen from graces, if ever they'd been given any in life. Clothes worn nearly shiny at the hems, torn edges of collars left unmended. Thick coats bundled their barrel chests, rounded bellies tight from too much beer and soju. There was anger in their stances, troubled times balled up in the clenched fists resting at their thick waists. Jaejoong

knew these men...not personally, it had been some time since he'd prowled the back streets of the low-rent district...but who they were inside.

Jaejoong had seen these types of faces, hardened by an astringent resentment and disgust for their own proclivities. Sexual innuendos spilled from their gestures and mouths, barbed tentacles wrapping up into the soft moistness of an unprepared young man, ripping him open for their ravenous feeding. Scarlet warned Jaejoong about men who hid their desires behind rage and harshness. Over the years she'd suffered broken bones of her own from quick fists and rounding kicks, the anger in the rain of blows directed at the attraction these men felt for others of their sex.

It was lonely to love another man, Scarlet often told her young charge. And even more so dangerous for the one who had been fallen for. These types of men wouldn't seal their love with kisses and strokes of warmth. They would take what little pleasure they could get from unwilling bodies, uncaring if the screams ran raw in their lover's throat. Sometimes it even fueled their desires, the man struggling beneath them feeling the rancid pain nesting in their own putrid souls.

The shorter one struck out first, his fat fingers snagging at the fur collar of Jae's coat. The lean singer tugged free, his sneakers sliding over the iced cement. Yunho's attention snapped clear from the car, tuned in on the scrambling limbs of the singer as Jaejoong backpedaled away from the trio. His chin tilted back further, his feet trying to find a solid purchase on the slippery ground.

Another came in fast, his belly peeling back the thick polyester sweater he'd tugged down earlier. Fists flying, he moved quicker than Jae could respond, striking the singer full on the cheek with tight knuckles. The meaty hook slammed into the young man's face, rolling him back. Jae fell, his hands spread out to catch his fall. The third moved in, his foot reeled back to deliver a kick to the singer's ribs. Their voices carried, harsh coarse laughter mingled with suggestions for the sin of Jae's pretty mouth and the tightness of his taut backside.

Yunho's temper filled him in that moment. As the red splash of Jae's blood hit the ice, the leader sprinted over the cement, his rage murderous and hot in his eyes. The world spun slower, hardly turning in the space of Yunho's hot intake of breath and the blow of fists on the third man's throat and chest.

The first man responded with an attack of his own, striking Yunho's chin and jerking his arm back to hit at the young man again. Jaejoong was there, pulling at the excess material of the man's jacket and slamming him into the cold hard ground, his nose breaking beneath the impact. Yunho ducked his head, weaving around the older men until he could get a clear shot at their faces. The man Jae spun to the ground wasn't getting up, low moaning sounds coming from his mouth.

Pearled Ice

The leader jabbed at the taller assailant's face, hooking up into the soft bridge of his nose. His arm jarred from the impact, rattling up to his shoulder joint. Ignoring the creeping pain of his elbow, Yunho struck again, slamming repeatedly into the battered spot. The taller man choked as blood ran down his throat, catching on the phlegm as he tried to swallow. Yunho stepped back, balancing on the balls of his feet, waiting for the man to give him another opening.

Jaejoong kicked at the other, the man's hands closing on the singer's shoulders. Grabbing up at the man's crotch, Jae twisted through the baggy fabric of his opponent's pants. With a keening sound, the man released Jae, swinging at the singer's face. Clenching again, Jae drove his fist into the man's mouth, cutting his knuckles on the uneven edges of his teeth. Yunho reacted when the man he fought off turned, slamming his hand into the tender spot under the man's ear, hoping to rupture something along the hard jaw bone. He felt a tooth give way under the hit, a cracking sound as the root splintered free.

A shout sounded from down the street, followed by a shrill whistle of a police officer calling for the fight to break up. Yunho heard the call for another officer and froze momentarily. Panting hard from the exertion, the leader snagged at his lover's arm, pulling Jaejoong into a steady run. Neither of them would want to explain why they were out walking around in a low-rent district in the middle of an incoming storm, much less what provoked them to get into a fight.

With the blood pounding a steady fast beat in his ears, Yunho dragged a protesting Jae along. He just wanted to get away, not caring where they ended up. The alleys twisted and turned around them, swallowing the pair with a voracious hunger. In the darkness, men clustered together under awnings, sharing cigarettes as they traded small words before falling onto one another. Secreted from the main streets, Yunho found himself among the hidden folds of other men's lives, faces ducking from view when the young men hurriedly walked past.

"Yunnie-ah, you have to slow down." Jaejoong finally stopped, needing to catch his breath.

Yunho's grip on his arm painfully bruising the tender muscle beneath. The first man's hands had been rough, marking Jae's flesh with a fierce possessiveness. The words that were whispered under the howl of the wind burned shame into Jaejoong's cheeks, hot lustful drawling that held no affection, turning the want of the singer's pretty face and lithe body into an obscene desire to hurt until he bled white from pain.

"I don't want to stop here." Yunho glanced around him. Other men looked back from under the cover of shadows, eyeing the too-pretty face of the young man with him. Jaw set firm, Yunho stared back, daring someone to step forward or speak too loudly. The adrenaline raced in his blood and the rage provoked by the first group of men simmered in Yunho's heart.

They'd continued walking, getting further lost in the warren of streets until finally Yunho's heat wore down and he stared at the sweet rise of Jaejoong's shoulders, wondering what he'd done to deserve the singer's heart. He'd purchased the hot tea from a closing kiosk, taking the bitter brew with a heavy dose of honey, forgetting the singer wasn't fond of the sickly sweet taste. A sip and Jaejoong made a face, scraping his tongue on his upper front teeth to rid himself of the treacle feel in his mouth.

"I'm sorry." Yunho repeated, coming to a complete stop. They were lost. Nothing around them looked familiar and Yunho was certain that they'd looped around and ended up farther into the district than Jaejoong had ever been. The singer tilted his head back, puffing his breath out into the cold air, watching the mists rise and dissipate into the wind. Their bodies hurt, beaten from other men and each other's misplaced anger. The evening they'd wanted...they'd desired had been ruined by the reality of their world, a harsh reminder of the boiling acidic minds that stalked around the pair. Together, their hands brushing as they walked, Jaejoong and Yunho trundled through the icy streets silent, an unheard argument lingering between them.

"I heard what that man said and I just..." Yunho shook his head, an icy cold shivering down into his spine. The chill had nothing to do with the winter's kiss on the air and more with the sobering idea that Jaejoong might have been taken from him. Through the piercing hatred of his parents and the hiding behind closed doors, their world tightened until neither one of them could breathe, each struggling to push back the clinging membrane of society's expectations. "I want to protect you against that. Is that wrong?"

"I've heard worse. I don't need protecting from the world, Yunho. Sometimes I can protect myself. I'm on the bottom not because I'm weak but because I love to have you inside of me. Don't forget that." Jae shrugged, closing the distance between them. Yunho cupped his lover's face, smiling when Jae hissed at the feel of cold fingers along the back of his skull. "Aish, your hands are freezing."

"We've been walking in the winter for half an hour now." Yunho reminded him. The wind picked up, carrying a harsh bite in its mouth. "We need to get home."

"There aren't any taxis." Jaejoong looked up and down the street. The wave of sleet cut down the foot traffic, sending people into the warmth of the nearby buildings. Abandoned by potential fares, the circling cabs headed outward into the centre of the city, hoping to ferry recalcitrant passengers caught in the storm. "Come on, Trance isn't far from here. We can ask Scarlet if she minds us sleeping at her place."

"We should get home, Boo." Yunho shook his head at the suggestion.

"We've got nothing happening tomorrow, Yunnies." Jaejoong rested his hands on his lover's fingers burrowed in Jae's dark hair. The warmth of his jacket fur was welcome but would be little comfort. "Besides, the train isn't running

Pearled Ice

because of the cold and there aren't any taxis. We'll freeze to death waiting for a car to get down here."

"We'll be imposing on Scarlet and I won't be able to touch you on her couch...or with the cats watching." Yunho reminded him. "There's a hotel down the block. We can stay there."

* * *

The hotel was a far cry from the luxury suites they'd spent in the first nights of their solidifying relationship. A rat skittered from the edges of the brick outer wall, beaded eyes shiny in the reflection of the street lamp. The clerk didn't blink at Yunho's request for a king-sized bed, long used to the traffic of forbidden couples hiding from their lives in the lower districts. Handing over the key fob, the clerk turned back to studying for his Chinese exam, the squeak of his highlighter following the singers' footsteps up the staircase.

Yunho couldn't resist pinching the rise of Jae's rear as the singer took the stairs by twos. Stairwells were a special place for the, an erotic unexpected haven amid the turmoil of their day. Smiling back at the leader, Jaejoong shook his head at the other's silliness, a warm, wide grin over Yunho's face.

Inside, the room was cleaner and larger than Jaejoong expected, a cheery bright dash of red crimson poppies on the bedspread. A lamp on the night stand provided them with enough light to see, the curtains closing out the brilliant neon signs flickering on the main street. Shrugging off his jacket, Jae peeked into the bathroom, sighing at the large bathtub against the far wall.

"I'm going to go back downstairs. There's a small store in the lobby. We'll need toothbrushes...and other things." Yunho said, wrapping his arms around Jae's waist. "Right now, I don't think you can see anything but the tub."

"I'll be waiting here." Jae cocked his head, kissing the end of Yunho's nose. The outside door shut with a small click and Jaejoong peeled off his clothes, wincing at the traveling pain along his right side. Nude, Jaejoong padded to the bathroom, the swing of his arm sending a sharp twinge up his side. Turning the tub faucets on, Jae twisted to stare at himself in the mirror.

Lifting his arm, Jaejoong peered at his ribs in the mirror's reflection, hissing at the blue-black tracks rising over the spread of his bones. The hot water gushing into the tub was a welcome respite on his sore muscles, the lip of the enameled porcelain cool under the ridge of Jae's skull.

He nearly dozed off in the warmth, only pulling himself free of the water once the cold settled into the liquid. Pulling free from the water, Jae towed himself dry with the rough white terrycloth sheets left hanging on the shower rod, the fabric a brisk rub on his tender skin. Stepping out of the bathroom, he sighed at the sight of a naked Yunho stretched out on the mattress, the sheets pulled down to his hips. Patting the bed, Yunho held the linens up for Jaejoong to slide under.

Jaejoong stood, quietly drinking in the sight of his lover displayed under the held open sheets. Seeing Yunho never failed to take his breath away. Strong faced and masculine, Yunho's chest narrowed into a tight waist, long lean muscles arrowing down to his hips. Even in repose, the leader's tawny body held the promise of power and strength, his breath calm despite the hot fire of want in his eyes. Crawling over the edge of the mattress, Jae took his time sliding the towel from his hips, laving at the line of Yunho's side until he nuzzled at the plum point on his lover's pectoral muscle. Nipping once, Jae kissed the spot and slid into Yunho's arms, finding the sweet spot on his lover's chest where his beating heart resonated in Jaejoong's ear.

"You took long enough. I thought I would have to go in after you." The leader pulled his lover in close, their legs tangling under the cotton sheets. "I called home. Changmin is staying with his mother. Yoochun and Junsu are home playing video games."

"I should call and talk to Chunnie..." Jae reached for his clothes, intent on digging out his cell phone.

"Let them be, BooJae." Yunho pressed his fingers along Jae's wrist. "They're fine. Yoochun will be fine. They'll spend the night together circling one another and wondering which one will take the first step. And then dance away. They won't go anywhere."

"I wish they would." Jaejoong stared down at his phone, pursing his mouth in slight disgust. Yunho traced the swell on Jae's mouth, a mark left by hatred and a clenched fist. Kissing the whorl of Yunho's thumb, Jae murmured softly. "I'm fine, Yunnies-ah. I promise. I've had worse."

"It kills me to hear you say that." Yunho admitted, stroking at the curved pearls of bone along Jaejoong's spine.

"Ah, your ribs." Yunho gasped, pulling the singer slowly towards him. The bruises rose fully to bloom from under the singer's skin, violet chrysanthemums stretched in an ugly spray over the trestle of Jaejoong's ribcage. "I'm going to kill that son of a bitch. I'm going to find him and kill him."

"Trust me, I'll heal." Jaejoong curled against his lover's warm body. The discarded phone nagged at him, a small piece of plastic and metal tying him to friends and lost family. There were uncalled numbers on his contact list, unanswered questions lurking in the strings of denied familial ties. He knew Yunho felt the same way when his phone chimed through, his mother's number flashing on the tiny screen. Those calls went unrequited, a silence in the echoes behind angry words flung at her son.

"How about if you call Chunnie?" Yunho kissed the top of his lover's head. Reluctantly releasing Jaejoong's shoulders, the leader unraveled from Jae's legs. "I'll go take a shower and get some of the sweat off of me."

Pearled Ice

"You'll just get dirty again." Jaejoong teased, his fingers stroking the inside of Yunho's thigh. Laying on his stomach, the singer's lithe body stretched erotic on the coarse sheets, the small of his back tightening down to the rise of his buttocks. Yunho slapped at the temptation of Jae's rear, strolling to the bathroom with a jaunty swagger.

"Oh yeah, I planned on that." Yunho tossed back a grin, whistling under his breath at the sin of Jaejoong's body behind him. "Talk to Chunnie. I'll be back in a few minutes."

The phone chirruped three times before Yoochun's breathless voice answered. "Joongie-ah! I didn't expect to hear from you."

"Am I interrupting something, Chunnie-ah?" Jae rolled over, scratching at the itch crawling over his belly. "If I did, then hang up..."

"No, nothing. Junnie stole my phone." Yoochun leaned back onto the smaller young man, fighting to keep Junsu's hands off of the dial pad. A series of beeps sounded in Jae's ear, Yoochun's laugh beefy and full in the echo of the call. The trapped singer retaliated, writhing under Yoochun's heavier body. Junsu's hands roamed down Yoochun's chest, pulling the other's shirt up and running light fingers along the singer's flat stomach.

"Junnie-ah, stop it." Yoochun hissed, his jeans growing tight with the feel of the other man stretched out under him. Sliding his thighs back, the heavier man trapped Junsu against the couch under him. Junsu shuffled up, giving himself room to breath and bit at Yoochun's bare shoulder. Jerking his arm up away from the smaller man, Yoochun swore lightly, mingled in with laughter. Taking advantage of the shift in Yoochun's weight, Junsu slipped free, shouting he would be back to beat Yoochun after he came back from the bathroom.

"Bring us back some food!" Yoochun shouted at the retreating young man. "Sorry, Joongie. We ate dinner hours ago. I'm hungry."

"It sounds... happy there." Jaejoong winced as he shifted on the bed, the welted marks on his side rubbing on the sheets. "I was wondering if you still had lights. But it sounds like you do."

"They keep going on and off." Yoochun sighed as the electricity drained from the apartment. In the utter blackness of the living room, only the screen of his cell phone provided any illumination. An outraged shout came from down the hall, Junsu opening the door to call for a candle or flashlight. "Junsu cannot piss in the dark. He wants someone to light the way."

"If it's our bathroom he's using, then yes, give him a light." Jaejoong said. Yoochun laughed at Jaejoong's mock horror, "Light him a candle then...or better yet, help him hold himself so he doesn't get the seat wet."

"Goodbye, Joongie, my dearest naughty mouthed friend." Yoochun's laugh boomed. "Best not keep Yunho waiting."

"No, our Yunnies doesn't like waiting." Jaejoong felt the warm tickle of fingers on the back of his leg. A slickness followed, the length of Yunho's tongue licking up the length of the singer's thigh, over the rise of one buttock to suckle on the dip of Jaejoong's spine. "Good bye, Chunnies-ah. Have a good night."

Teeth scored into the softness of Jae's back, mouthfuls of skin plumped from Yunho's suckling. Moaning under the voracious laving, Jaejoong shifted to give his lanky sex room as it grew, his lover's touch hardening his length. The phone fell from Jae's nerveless hands, the connection cut off at Yoochun's end. The wet of Yunho's tongue moved again, finding the darkest bloom of purple on Jae's ribs. Lightly kissing at the man's mark, Yunho sent a blessing for the angelic singer laying under him.

"Yunho, your mouth is hot on me." Jae purred, "I need more of it."

"You'll get more, love." Yunho promised. "Is everything alright with Yoochun and Junsu?"

"Fine." Jae gasped, his writhing stilled by Yunho's strong hand on the small of his back. "There's no light. It went off while I was talking to Chunnies."

"Ah, I'm sure they'll find something to do in the dark." Yunho examined the snowy canvas before him, brushed golden in the stilled light from the night stand lamp. The golden wash of light cast Jae's ribs into shadows, his pale skin brushed with vermilion peonies. Crawling up his lover's body, Yunho kissed between Jaejoong's shoulder blades, nipping harder as he splayed his hands over Jaejoong's hips. "Seeing what they've done to you... it makes me insane."

"Turn off the light." Jaejoong whispered into Yunho's ear when his lover rested his chin on Jae's shoulder.

"No." Yunho responded, his breath hot with lust. "I'm going to make you forget someone else's hands were on you. I want to see your face when you lose control around me. Turn over."

Shifting positions proved difficult, Jaejoong's thickness heavy against his thigh. Yunho's fingers were restless, roaming through the young man's hair and trailing down to the hardened points ripening on Jae's chest. Bending his head, Jae licked at Yunho's collar bone, leaving a wet trail to follow back should he get lost.

"I never get tired of doing this." Jaejoong said, his words husky and smooth. Yunho smelled of soap and the hint of snow, an electric roll of desire shaking Jae's belly. Cupping Yunho's face, the singer kissed at the tiny brown dot above his lover's mouth, the slight mole always a beacon for Jae's tongue. "You always taste so good. You taste like home. You've become home for me, Yunnies-ah."

"I'm never warm inside until I'm with you." Yunho slid his hands under Jaejoong's shoulders, hitching the other's leg up over his hip. "I hate hiding

Pearled Ice

from the world but to be honest, sometimes I'm glad we do. I can keep you to myself. I hate that no one knows that you're mine. But in the dark, behind every door... you're mine. And I want you to remember that."

"I do." Jaejoong slid his hands down from Yunho's face, gripping his lover's shoulders. "I think people do see us. How can they miss it when I lose my breath every time you touch me? You don't think anyone watching us doesn't see that? They'd have to be blind."

"People don't always see what's in front of them." Yunho reminded Jae, finding the edges of his lover's mouth with his lips. "Look how long it took me to see you. Right in front of me. Sexy and needy."

"I'm not needy." Jae said, his protests buried under a kiss. Yunho pressed his fingers along the pout between Jae's legs, teasing the rim with a feathery touch. Jaejoong sighed, pushing his hips up to meet Yunho's hand, sliding the tip of his lover's index finger past the tight ring.

"No? You sound as if you need me. Do you, Jaejoong?" Yunho asked, his smile hidden as he nuzzled Jaejoong's throat. Another bite captured Jae's beauty mark, a merlot kiss Yunho was certain Jae got from a star's kiss as he fell from the sky. "I want you under me. And I like that you need that. Or am I wrong?"

"No." Jae swallowed hard, his skin begging for Yunho's velvet touch. The ache for Yunho's flesh grew, a slithering hot desire that left his mouth raw. "You're not wrong."

"Turn over again. Jaejoong." The simple command brooked no disagreement, Yunho's face sober with lust.

As Jae slowly withdrew his body from Yunho's embrace and slid a pillow under his chest, Yunho grabbed a small packet off of the night table, his teeth tearing the silver pouch open. Slick gel warmed with Yunho's body heat as the leader squeezed the lubricant over his fingers. The singer, first startled by the gentle intrusion of slickness, relaxed under Yunho's familiar touch, forcing his body to accept the breach.

Yunho contemplated the stretch of muscle below the young man's purple patterned skin, rosettes of bruises covering his shoulders and buttocks in bouquet sprays. Working his fingers of the firmness of the singer's ass, Yunho spread Jae's cheeks apart until the rush of air on the hidden orifice flexed it open, a warm satin kiss waiting for the leader's attention. Working free of the tangling sheets, Yunho removed the hard shaft of his cock from the fabric's binding cotton, stroking at the soft spongy tip until it gleamed with a drop of clear juice, salty wine slickening his entrance.

The ring of muscle keeping him from Jae's body opened easily as Yunho pushed the tip of himself against the dusky rose kiss, letting the sensation of invasion spread through the singer's awareness as Jae lifted his hips to accept the man loved. Yunho eased slowly into him, feeling the ring pop over

his head as the singer gasped and squirmed slightly, adjusting to the heft burying deep inside of him.

Leaning forward, pushing the entire length of himself into the ready singer, Yunho began to slowly rock his hips back and forth, rubbing Jaejoong's shoulders and murmuring soft encouragements into his ear. Carefully, the leader reached under the boy's body, finding the soft velvety head of the singer's cock and stroking it, coaxing him along to release as Yunho plunged into him, working back out as his other hand stroked at Jae's shoulder blades.

"I want to die like this." Yunho's husky voice deepened, a whiskey hot desire raking coals from the inferno raging in his heart. "If I could, I would spend forever inside of you."

"I want you there." Jae arched his back, pressing back against Yunho's thrusts. His body ached, a bundle of nerves run with lightning. Gasping with Yunho's insistent pushing, Jaejoong fought his rising release, wanting to prolong the sensation.

Shifting, Yunho worked Jae's leg up under the singer's belly, giving him an easier angle to work deeper into the lithe young man. Jae's moans crept darker, a panting plea for longer strokes lost amid the murmurs of a broken string of love. Yunho's fingers found the softness of Jae's hair, working the dark strands in his grasp. Pulling the singer's head back, the leader sank his mouth into the tender pulse along Jae's neck, worrying at the skin until the pain-mingled pleasure became too much for the singer to bear, Jaejoong crying out loudly under Yunho's unrelenting plunge into the depths of his body.

Surrendering himself to the feel of Yunho inside of him, Jaejoong let his soul drift outwards, lost amid the hard embrace of the leader's body over his own. The feral wildness lurking in his essence growled, crouching in submission to the taking of his core. Rubbing his hips back against Yunho's body, Jae felt a rush of power in his lover's mumbled confession of love, nearly lost under the heaving snarls coming from Yunho's mouth.

"You're mine." Yunho growled, his teeth finding the back of Jaejoong's neck. "My Jaejoong. My soul. My mate."

"Yours. Always yours." Jaejoong agreed. Reaching behind him to hold onto Yunho's thrusting legs, Jae nearly undid the leader's control as the singer pushed him further into Jae's warm sleeved moistness.

"I'll share your heart with the other members...because they're your brothers." Yunho whispered, sucking on Jae's earlobe. "But your soul...that's mine. I love you too much to want to share you. But I love you too much not to let you be free."

The unexpected tenderness coupled with the rising sensation of his body reaching climax overtook Jae as Yunho turned the singer's face to accept the

Pearled Ice

leader's kiss, his body possessing Jae's as he worked the singer into release. Urging the young man to come into his hand, Yunho pushed further, running the length of his body against Jae's until their skin hummed with the combined power of their beings and the rush of heat from the singer's seed spilled outward, their gasping breaths a jagged rush of sound against the soft burble of the snow hitting the windows, unseen beyond the thick curtains and mists rising from the steam vents below.

Allowing himself to explode in the hot silky channel Jae formed around him, Yunho lay on the young man, stretched out and wrapping his arms around Jae's chest. Jaejoong sighed and stretched his legs back out, feeling the press of the bed under him. Laying under Yunho lulled the sleep from his body, coaxing slumber in the safety of his lover's embrace.

"Always mine." Yunho rocked Jae in his embrace, the barest of motions. Finding Yunho's fingers, Jaejoong drew one into his mouth, reliving the heat of his body around his lover's shaft with his tongue. Twitching, Yunho's body responded to the caress, thickening slowly in the buried velvet of Jae's rear. "You're going to drive me crazy, Joongie. Insane with wanting you."

"Then we'll be crazy together." Jaejoong replied, squeezing down around the length of flesh inside of him. The gentle rocking of Yunho's body slowly grew harder, the other's hands running the edge of fingernails on the sensitive nubs on Jaejoong's chest. Mewling in response, Jaejoong sighed, loving the feel of his heat tightening around Yunho's pressing shaft. They would spend hours in the seclusion of a small room, lost in a love only they shared. Despite the echoing emptiness of the world around them, Jaejoong heard the stars singing in Yunho's voice, the night sky draped with jewels just for them.

Jaejoong kissed Yunho's palm, licking off the small pearls of his own seed left on his lover's hand. Yunho groaned at the touch of Jaejoong's tongue, aroused by the erotic picture of the young man suckling himself off of Yunho's flesh. Smiling to himself at the sway he had over Yunho, Jaejoong whispered against his lover's wrist, kissing the blue veins pulsating under the leader's tender skin. "I don't care if we spend forever in here. I need you, Yunnies. I love you. Inside of me. Besides me. Anywhere I can touch you. As long as you're here."

"Good." Yunho kissed at the mark he'd left on Jaejoong's long neck, a biting splash of wine rising under Jae's jaw line. "Because I plan on being here forever. Your body will always have my touch on you. I promise you that, Joongie."

Stolen Cherry Blossoms

Time away from their lives was a fleeting gift, gossamer days measured by each grain of sand that wept from their fingers. Jung Yunho still savoured the freedom in the spray of sea water lingering in his memory, the short ride on the ferry from Japan's Honshu island to Shikoku. They'd chosen the ocean route to shed the bustle of every day life from their minds, longing to exist just for a short time in the now of their world, rather than the long list of commitments and expectant faces.

Standing in the open courtyard of their private bungalow, Yunho knew he'd made the right decision in coming to the mountainous region just at the burst of spring's promise. The private inn he'd found tucked gently into the crevices of the hillsides, its rambling streams nearly bursting from the snowmelt from the upper regions. Frost hugged the air, just a delicate nip against the skin, a snowflake's memory caught in the wind. They'd arrive late in the night, tumbling into a soundless sleep onto the wide heavy futon in the middle of the bedroom, barely stripping off their clothes before nodding off.

He'd woken with Jaejoong wrapped in his arms, the slender singer's face innocent in dreams. Yunho laid there, listening to his lover breathe and feeling the warmth of his soul burnish open under a gentle kiss on the nape of his neck, Jae instinctively turning his beautiful face towards Yunho's mouth. This was a different Jaejoong than what the world saw, devoid of the polished façade they all wore on a day to day basis. His dark hair was unstyled, a black soft fringe around high cheekbones blushed from the heat of their shared covers. Angelic in repose, the singer's mouth still held the hint of mischief and glee he often hid behind a mysterious, cold face, shyness stilling his passionate tongue when unfamiliar people were around.

They'd been promised that no one would disturb their short stay in the mountains, food ordered over an ancient intercom and left in a warm box near the bungalow's door. With luck, they would see no one, only existing in a small pocket of their own for the scant few days they had alone together. Jaejoong's delight at the suggestion of spending time with his lover alone made up for the hoops Yunho had to jump through to get them some time off, the cost of the bungalow well worth every won just for the relaxed look on his sleeping lover's face.

The worry and pressure often proved to be too much for them both, each dealing with their own expectations and then, having to be reluctantly parted under the fierce scrutiny of cameras. The other members tried to ensure they had time alone, sometimes an hour in the afternoon that the couple spent

Stolen Cherry Blossoms

lying together on a couch, talking about nothing more than how they felt and sharing tidbits of their souls.

Yunho had chosen a traditional shoji-enclosed, its expansive single room surrounded by a wide planked patio, a thick overhang protecting the interior from the elements. A winding trail of rock stairs led them up the hillside, the other structures of the small inn hidden from their view. The back of the bungalow opened up to a copse of cherry trees, the blossoms just barely pinking under the faint green shoots popping out from the slumbering branches.

A small stove set into niche heated water to a boil, a blend of orange zest and clove chai tea measured carefully out into a wire strainer. Yunho hoped he eyed the amount properly, he tended to have a heavy hand when making tea, preferring his brews nearly black with flavour. The tea kettle began a whispering shrill, startling Yunho from his reverie. He bolted across the floor, lifting his feet so as not to thunder over the tatami mats and caught at the kettle's hand to remove it from the flame. Turning the burner, he poured the hot water over the strainer, filling a ceramic tea pot. Letting the leaves steep, Yunho placed the tea pot on a tray, arranging bowls of purple grain rice and fish cake around a bowl of fresh strawberries. Walking over to the futon, the leader of Dong Bang Shin Ki gently set the tray down on the low table near the head of the bedding, kneeling down over his lover and softly kissing Jaejoong.

Yunho teased the corner of Jae's mouth, just a nibble on the prominent pout filling the singer's lower lip. With a delicate trace of his tongue tip over the pretty man's philtrum, licking at the ridges until the tickling startled Jaejoong out of his sleep. Tracing the damp spot, Yunho placed the tip of his index finger into the dip under Jae's nose, touching its slight slope.

"My mother told me once that the reason we all have this spot above our mouths is because God sends an angel to each baby and its given all the wisdom of the universe." Yunho touched his lips to the spot, inhaling the sweetness of his lover's skin.

Moving his mouth to Jae's jaw line, ignoring the soft mewl of need from his lover's parted lips, Yunho murmured as he kissed the softness of Jae's throat. "Then, just before the baby is born, the angel touches it right there, between the upper lip and the nose, leaving that mark. And everything that the baby was taught is forgotten, and is his to gain all over again."

"That's the first gift we're given." Yunho lifted his head to stare down into Jae's warm eyes. "We're given innocence and the thirst to regain everything we've lost. I think, in loving you, I've filled that thirst tenfold. I can't think of anything else I would want to have in my heart and soul but you."

"Are you trying to get me to give you my share of breakfast? Your sweet words and hot mouth are after something." Jaejoong slanted a suspicious look at his lover, mouth pursed to one side. A glimmer of a smile danced in

his eyes, tasting Yunho's mood. The leader barked with laughter, his face crinkling with a grin. Easing out from under his lover's arm, Jaejoong kissed the edge of Yunho's nose, rising gracefully. "Let me go to the bathroom. I'll come back and we can spend the day under the covers."

"I was thinking that we could maybe go fishing." Yunho called out after him. Jaejoong stopped in the at the curtained off area of the bungalow, holding back the blue fabric as he turned to stare at the other.

"As in, hooking a fish?" Jaejoong's face furrowed with thought. "How...romantic. Come, Jaejoong my love, let us go to the mountains of Japan and pull slimy fish from the cold, icy rivers. You are strange, Yunnies-ah."

"I thought fishing was a good idea. The water will be cold and you would need someone to warm you up." Yunho muttered to himself, stretching out onto his side.

Reaching over his shoulder, Yunho lifted the tea pot's tiny lid, peering into the glazed porcelain bowl. He'd let the tea steep too long, the liquid nearly ebony and pungent. He would apologize profusely but secretly, the broad shouldered young man thought his lover preferred tea darker now, especially after having to drink pots of stronger brew if he wanted to share a kettle with Yunho.

The futon bounced when Jaejoong raced back over it, the thick padding within the duvet absorbing most of his weight as he burrowed back under the covers. Never one for the cold, the bungalow's chilled air cut through the thin fabric of his t-shirt and scrubs, icing the undersides of his feet. Shoving his cold nose against Yunho's warmer throat, Jaejoong nuzzled in close to get warm, his breath minted from toothpaste. With the scent of his lover's return, Yunho quickly forgot about the darkly brewed tea.

"Wrap one of the blankets around you, Boo." Yunho tucked the covers around his lover's shoulders. "You're going to have to sit up to eat."

"You chew it and then kiss me. I'll feed that way, like a little bird." Jae mockingly held his mouth open, cheeping once to Yunho's amusement. "You're laughing at me. I'm too cold, Yunnies-ah."

"I like it when you're silly." Yunho held a strawberry over Jae's open mouth, wiggling it as a mother bird would a worm for her chicks. The young man's white teeth made quick work of the fruit's tip, spurting juice over Jae's face. Laughing, the singer was about to wipe his mouth clean but Yunho's tongue beat him to it, laving the pink sweet liquid from Jae's downy chin. "It's good to hear you laugh. I miss hearing you sometimes when we're working so hard I can't even tell what day it is."

"I hate having you in a different room." Jaejoong admitted softly, placing the palm of his hand on Yunho's chest, his fingers finding the nub of his lover's nipple with his fingers. The rasp of fabric on the sensitive tip brought a low

Stolen Cherry Blossoms

satisfied rumbling moan from Yunho's throat. "I miss you in our bed. I miss waking up to your legs tangled in mine. I even miss having to fight you for the covers."

"It's too dangerous for us. If management knew this was more than fan service..." Yunho pondered the ramifications to their careers, familiar with Jaejoong's strong insistence that they remain behind closed doors to protect the other members. "We would lose everything. You are the one that reminds me of that. But yes, it's so hard sometimes. I ache for you."

The leader still longed for the day when he could reach out and touch his lover and not worry about how long he could hold the contact. Things between them were escalating, their body language more and more intimate with each passing day. There was going to come a time when the excuse of a close friendship wouldn't be enough, probably on the day that someone groped at Jaejoong for just a moment too long. Jae cautioned him on his jealousy but the urge to pull the singer away from prying hands was too overpowering. Not to mention, there was no ignoring the primal instinct of wanting to claim Jaejoong as his own when another male came too close. He was torn between punching and just grabbing Jae behind him, neither of which would help hide their relationship.

"Your face is so serious." Jaejoong pressed up on Yunho's forehead, smoothing out the lines between his eyes. "No thinking about serious things. There's only supposed to be us for these few days. Don't forget that."

"We have a lot of ghosts walking around this room, elephants that we ignore." Yunho waved at the empty cavernous space around them. "Sometimes I feel like telling the world to go to hell so I can spend entire months just staring at you."

"I'd hope you would do more than stare." The coyness in Jaejoong's sly glance tickled a warmth in Yunho's belly.

"Oh, I want to do so much more than stare." Yunho dipped his head down to capture Jaejoong's mouth, probing and demanding passion from the singer's supple body. They'd spent so many nights with just a wall between them. "Do you know how much it drives me crazy hearing you for just an hour or so on the phone when we're on tour? How hard it is pressing my hand on the wall and wishing I was inside of you while we talk....while I tell you where to put your hands...your fingers?"

"We're going to get caught doing that one night." Jaejoong laughed, his teeth nipping at Yunho's chin. "Yoochun found me... whispering with you over the phone and he just left before I... lost control. I didn't even see him come in."

"How did you find out he walked in? Did you see him standing there?" Yunho pulled back, worry on his face. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"He left the room so I didn't see him. I didn't tell you because he was a bit shy." Jae shook his head. "Not at what we were doing but because it...got

him so bothered he had to go into the shower and... well... then we were done and I had to go to the bathroom. But he forgot to lock the door and I interrupted him...doing what I just finished doing.”

“God, Joongie!” Yunho’s colour rose in sympathy for their younger brother. “It’s good you two are so close. He would have been mortified if it were someone else. Well more so than what he already was.”

“I know.” Jaejoong nodded, his voice a husky thrum of erotic want. “We spent some time talking...laughing about it a bit...after both of us stopped blushing. I never knew I had so much shyness in me until right then. I always thought I was rougher than that but I guess not. You make me innocent again.”

“Don’t tell him I told you.” Jae pleaded, tugging at the collar of Yunho’s shirt. “He would be so embarrassed and he won’t be able to look you in the eye anymore.”

“Ah, well now it makes sense why he jumps every time my phone rings now and you’re not around.” Yunho laughed, kissing Jae quickly. “I won’t say anything. I promise. I don’t want to embarrass Chunnie.”

Outside the wind picked up, a smatter of whispers rushing through the cherry trees. They’d been told the first blush of pink was upon the horizon, a few blooms spreading a fragrant gentle perfume in the air. Jaejoong knew that they would be long gone before the mountain’s crevices were blanketed with the rosy snow of sakura but for the short time that the couple could be sequestered, they might have a chance to walk hand in hand along the private trails around their hidden bungalow, far from prying eyes and knowing glances.

“Help me get your clothes off.” Yunho tugged at the drawstring of Jaejoong’s cotton pants, working the knot free with a practiced twist of his fingers. Sliding his hand around to the back, the leader urged Jae to lift up, pulling the scrubs free of his lover’s legs and tossing them to the bottom of the futon. Their shirts were shed as quickly, Yunho’s sweats easily cast aside during a small succession of kisses that left them both breathless and panting for more.

Yunho felt his breath leave his lungs, their bodies bare against one another under the soft feather duvet, the chill from the early spring wind a forgotten memory on their skin. He could spend hours sliding over Jaejoong’s length, the singer’s hands exploring each crevice and dip of his lover’s body, sometimes driving Yunho mad when Jae insisted on tasting every square inch of skin, insisting Yunho not move until he was done. Jaejoong felt a burst of pride in his heart at the heat he could coax from his boyfriend’s body, Yunho’s words lost under a ramble of erotic moaning when Jae took his time moving on the leader’s shaft, long soft strokes alternating with a gentle rocking of his hips.

The couple made their memories vivid, knowing that the time they could steal away from their public lives was so scant. Kisses in stairwells substituted for

Stolen Cherry Blossoms

long embraces and there were entire minutes where Yunho fought not to groan aloud when Jaejoong stroked at him while a van was driving them to their next appearance, the others sitting a few inches away in the front seats. Their love was a secretive whisper of want and the aching heart-break of being able to hug one another in plain view of others, Yunho's hands longing to wrap fingers in the wealth of Jaejoong's hair.

There were nights spent in the safety of their apartment where they lay together, joined tightly and barely moving, wanting to prolong their lovemaking until their bodies screamed for release, at times, even the barest of touches would bring them to spill, muscles clenching with pleasure and with the pain of being denied. It was those moments that they relived in hushed tones while speaking late into the night on shared phones, each telling the other where they were touching and listening for the harsh pants of breath echo back as they spilled their love into hands that ached for the other's flesh.

Now together, Jaejoong and Yunho were reluctant to part, wanting to live in one another's bodies until time wasted into nothing and their public masks were donned.

"The gel is over there in the bags." Jaejoong looked forlornly at the vast distance separating the futon from where they'd dumped their duffels when they arrived late in the night. "I just don't want to let you go, Yunnies-ah. I waited so long to hold you like this and even going just that short distance is like a lifetime."

"Then we shall improvise." Yunho promised, delving his fingers deep into his mouth and wetting them down past the pads, drawing spit from his body until his palm ran slick the deep red that kept them both alive. Sliding his hand down between Jaejoong's legs, he worked the length of his hand into the soft centre hidden in the singer's flesh and parted it slightly. Rebelling against the invasion, Jaejoong's body eventually gave into the soft probing and opened under Yunho's insistent touch.

Seeing the swell of pain in Jaejoong's eyes, Yunho placed a gentle kiss on his eyelids and murmured against the dark lashes that flicked under his lips. "Give in to me, baby. Relax and let me bring you pleasure."

Feeling the length of Yunho's cock slide up into him, Jaejoong forced himself to drain the tension from his body, remembering the steamy nights shared amid tangled sheets and the panting cries of their bodies awash with clean moonlight. Leaning back, Jaejoong rested his ebony silken head back against Yunho's shoulders and reveled in the hard push of the leader's flange past the tight ring of muscle hidden between his rounded buttocks.

Yunho's hands found the rise of Jaejoong's hips and the black-haired singer clenched the curve of the singer's hipbones, driving him back until the slide of his penis crested past the barrier of Jaejoong's body and into the hot moistness within. Letting the engulfing swath of muscle wash over him,

Yunho let his eyes close against the pleasure filling him and wrapped his arms around Jaejoong's chest, drawing him tighter until their faces were brushing cheek to cheek and their mouths frosted the glass in front of them.

Resting his lover's body against the futon, Yunho drew back and slowly withdrew from the heated pleasure of Jaejoong until the singer moaned in need. His palms flat against the softly padded bedding, Jaejoong rested his cheek against its coolness and felt the rush of a volcanic liquid need drown him as Yunho worked back into his nearly virginal body, giving way beneath the insistent press of the leader's body. Their hearts, broken from being apart too long, began to beat under the driving threading of their bodies' movement...catching a simple rhythm until they fell into the languid strokes of each other's flesh.

Yunho's hard length mingled with the spit from his fingers and the rush of heat against Jaejoong's flesh made him shiver. The headiness of the leader's tongue in his mouth drew the need once more up, Jae's hips moving in slow circles to prolong the tingles of pleasure rocking their bodies. Yunho drank deeply from the proffered kiss, suckling Jaejoong's tongue as his fingers found the areoles tightening on his lover's muscled chest. The leader's hands roamed over Jae's body, seeking out the favourite dapples of skin that brought hushed whimpers into the other's throat, folding the sighs over with a froth of Korean that spoke of velvet and stars scattered above.

Mewling sounds erupted from Jaejoong's throat and echoed back against Yunho's chest as the leader reached over his lover's shoulders and wrapped his long fingers into Jaejoong's, tangling them together as he pounded against the smaller singer's body. Tilting his hips back, Jaejoong rose to meet every thrust, the memories of past couplings spilling from his mind and surrendering beneath the torrid want and release of the complicated tension between them.

The wave of pleasure cut through Jaejoong's walls, slicing apart his heart until his love for the other became too much to hold in, drops of salted sorrow leeching from his body as he began to cry, Yunho rocking him slowly until the singer sobbed out all of the loneliness he held in his soul for too long. Yunho continued to move deep into Jaejoong, reaching in deep until all the other felt was the pleasure of his body and the burgeoning intimacy they shared. Murmuring in Jae's ear, Yunho cast words of love onto the fires of his lover's self-doubts, extinguishing each into a cherry blossom petal to catch on the hot wind of their joining.

Tears stained the singer's face as he hitched a breath into his lungs and spilled forth a wash of seed from his loins, moments before Yunho allowed the heat of his liquid to burrow deep into Jaejoong's replete body. Embracing him fiercely, Yunho swayed his lover softly, letting the softness of his body be cradled in Jaejoong's warmth until the two nearly became one in sensation as the singer's body left a moist imprint against the futon.

Stolen Cherry Blossoms

Reluctantly, Yunho turned and withdrew, keeping Jae's love-softened body tight in his arms. Laying a brushed kiss against Jaejoong's forehead, Yunho sighed and held the scent of the other in his soul, reliving the taste of their young bodies, vibrant and brilliant in repose. "I would stay here forever if I could. Seeing your eyes shimmer... and I see myself reflected there. It's like I exist inside of your very soul as I plunge deep into your body."

"It's strange sometimes, when we are making love and I see my face in your eyes. But then I realize, that's where our souls make love...in our eyes. We're joined there as tightly as our bodies are." Jaejoong's words were languid, deep with sated lust. "Sometimes I wish I would stain them, so you always have me with you. You could blink and see me, no matter where we are, we'll be just there."

"I have you in my heart, Joongie." Yunho rubbed his cheek against Jaejoong's, hearing his lover purr with pleasure. "Every time it beats, I hear you whisper my name. You live there in me. And I can hear me in you."

"I love you so much, baby." Yunho whispered into Jaejoong's throat, feeling the other gulp around words caught on his own tongue. "I can't live without you, Boo."

"I love you too, Yunnies." Jae reached his hand up, stroking at his lover's face and running his finger tips through Yunho's soft hair. "And I promise, you won't have to. I'll always be here with you."

A Sparkle of Gold

Draping sweeps of classical music wove into the room, the speakers hidden behind the thin sheer of silk tapestries of the apartment. The sound, glorious and resonant, caught the Jae's fancy as Yunho cradled a leaded crystal glass of burgundy, its bouquet scented sweet with a hint of fruit and oak. The open expanse of the penthouse gave them a full view of Seoul's skyline, its signature tower flooded with spotlights against the deep cobalt night sky. The reflection of two men shimmered in the thick pane of glass, their relaxed and comfortable bodies draped over a wide, amber suede sectional. Strings of lights draped a curtain of gold over a tall imported blue spruce, silver glass ornaments vying for space along the pine needles. Red crystal beads danced from bough to bough, the tree's sparkling nearly all the light in the apartment save clusters of candles scattered about the main room.

The soft buttery light served to frame both demi-angels, their passions so starkly different yet the commonality of their beauty drawing them together in a bond tighter than either could have imagined. Silken strands of ebony spilled down over the nap, a fragrant crush of sparkling jet framing the strong, pretty face of the group's leader. His lace trimmed shirt lay open, the pale skin of his chest gleaming from the blaze set in the marble fireplace.

Yunho's frilled cuffs clustered a froth of white around his elegantly gesturing hands as he spoke softly to his beloved friend sitting on a scattering of vibrantly patterned pillows, Jaejoong's back resting against the front of the couch with his head resting against the rise of Yunho's bare stomach. They buried themselves into the night's embrace, effectively holding back time despite their rigid schedules.

The apartment's kitchen, separated from the living room by a low bar nearly covered with scented vanilla and cranberry pillar candles, lay burdened with exotic foods, a feast set out by the hotel's staff. With Jae's fingers stroking the leader's thigh, a flamed need kindled in Yunho's intense, soulful eyes. The leader's gaze rippled with the clear beauty of a faceted sienna as he strung his fingers through Jae's burnished golden hair tangling on the light dusting of dark hair curled about Yunho's belly button, the reminder of the sun in the pitch of black of night, a contrast of light on Jae's beautiful face.

The blond singer's mouth parted slightly under the gentle caress, full lips gasping as Yunho's fingertips found the sensitive erotic spot beneath his earlobes. Nearly purring as loudly as a well-fed tomcat, Jaejoong murmured in response to the other's touch, his words a blur of sensual Korean as Yunho pressed the back of his hand against his lover's cheek.

A Sparkle of Gold

A pale cinnamoned gaze washed over Yunho as Jaejoong turned his face upwards me, the passion for his lover running across his cheek marbled golden in the firelight, its red flares filling the valleys of Jae's bare skin with a rush of crimson while the rises rode white with the sparkling candlelight. Yunho smiled, feeling a kernel of satisfaction unfurl in his belly, echoed by the warmth and tightening in his loins as Yunho drank in the sight of the man curled about his thighs. Returning his smile, the pretty singer's face drew upon the glory of a fallen angel rendered sublime from God's benevolent hand.

"Every time the sun rises, I am amazed that it can even show its face when it should be hiding in shame for daring to challenge your beauty." Yunho whispered, leaning slightly forward to brush the shell of Jaejoong's ear with his sultry voice. Fine brandy poured over blood red velvet splashed from Yunho's mouth as his lips found the blond's forehead, laving the tip of his tongue over the rise of bone curled over the dark eyes of his lover. Yunho's hands boldly roamed over Jaejoong's back, tracing the black letters of ink under the singer's skin.

"You are silly, my lover.." The handsome blond responded, his naked torso constricting in pleasure at the other's touch, bundles of tight muscles tightening and unclenching as he fought the wave of erotic desire undulating through him. The black denim of his jeans visibly strained beneath the rush of his flesh as Jaejoong's body responded immediately to the hush of Yunho's words. "And if you continue to do that, I'm going to spill my love for you right now.."

Where Yunho arranged his world to frame his beauty, Jaejoong gathered small pieces of the world to comfort his tortured soul. The large nearly body length pillows beneath him were a kaleidoscope of patterns, leaning more towards jewel tones and India-inspired prints that cradled the body with their lush soft fabrics. The smattering of low couches were upholstered in a yielding honeyed suede, overstuffed and forgiving to the curves of our bodies, leaving an imprint of a hip or a leg before returning to its plump softness. Wood paneling lay below the wainscoting, the opulent sienna-stained oak complementing the cream wallpaper above the elaborately carved chair rail. The penthouse served as their home when they could get away, a discrete hideaway provided from one of Scarlet's lovers. Although they spent countless hours with one another, they longed to be alone and relished each crossing of their private threshold, gifting the lovers a newly discovered treasure or a delightfully shared secret.

"I have a present for you, Yunnies." Jaejoong's shyness emerged, his body lifting from the broad cushions as he reached for a box he'd hidden around the corner of the couch. He'd chosen a matte dark green wrapping, hoping to hide the gift in the shadows lest Yunho's sharp eyes spot it before Jae worked up the nerve to give it to him.

Yunho pursed his mouth and frowned lightly. They'd both agreed that gifts would wait until they were with all of the members, but the leader knew Jaejoong often flaunted his independence by ignoring any rules set on him. The often talkative singer grew bashful when he was uncertain, an innate coyness filling his pretty features. Yunho delighted in drawing out the singer's charismatic personality from behind the introverted curtain Jae pulled over himself, Jaejoong's protective coldness melting away under the warmth of Yunho's smile and intimate touches.

Taking the wrapped box, Yunho debated telling Jaejoong he would wait to open it but the anticipation in Jae's face broke down the leader's firm resolve. Jae's fingers trembled as he released the gift, the flocked wrapping bearing the imprint of his hands. Its gold bow wobbled with the movement, a cheery dollop of light against the hunter green paper.

The paper shredded as easily as air beneath Yunho's fingertips. He'd always loved presents although surprises were never something he enjoyed. Yunho liked his life to have as much structure as possible but this was different. Jaejoong's wild feral ways brought flames to the papier-mâché walls of control the leader constructed around his life. Structure was now something he compromised under the chaotic whims of his lover, a whirlwind erotic dance amid the fragile walls of Yunho's carefully plotted out days.

The square box was filled with tissue paper and Yunho parted the folds looking for the prize beneath. Jaejoong had taken time with the wrapping, lovingly wrapping the gift into a nested cushion. Tucked amid the glittery gold tissue, a forlorn feline rag doll peered up at Yunho, its black button eyes wide and childish in its face, nearly the size of his head and patterned with a crazy quilt of fabrics that were rich in texture. Its body was cobbled together from pieces of cloth and as Yunho lifted the liger clear of his golden prison, the leader could see the rough stitching along its limbs as they flopped around Yunho's hands. Velvets and silks tiled in a harlequin of stripes and burnished gold colours, its buttons catching a runnel of light as Yunho turned the liger up to run a finger along his soft tan muzzle. Small feet splayed out and the leader ruffled the tassel of black and honey yarn that gave the handmade liger a cresting mane.

"I made him." Jaejoong's whisper was barely audible over the crackling of the wood in the fireplace and Yunho turned a teary gaze to Jae's stunning face. "He is not perfect...and I thought, that of anyone, he could be loved by you even though he is not perfect."

Wrapping his arms about Jaejoong's neck, Yunho clung tightly to the blond, Jaejoong feeling Yunho's hands in his hair, smoothly away the fringe from his brow as Yunho placed another kiss on the singer's temples. Tasting Jaejoong with his mouth, Yunho whispered into Jae's breath as they rubbed noses, Yunho cradling his lover tightly. "I love him all the more because he is not perfect. Because he is a part of both of us. Because he was made by

A Sparkle of Gold

your hands and for my heart. How could I not love him as much as I love you?"

"I love you too, Yunnie-ah." Jaejoong's smile transformed his face, a deep love shining in his dark eyes. "I love you as much as you love me. Happy Christmas, my Yunho."

"Happy Christmas, my Jaejoong." Yunho captured his lover's mouth with his own, savouring the kiss in the depths of his heart. "I thank God every day for the chance to even have your touch on my heart. You are truly the greatest gift that I've even received. Thank you for loving me. And letting me love you in return."

Frozen Shadows

They are far from their home. Outside of the haven that they have carved for themselves in Seoul. Jaejoong turned over, laying on his back to stare up at the unfamiliar ceiling. The succession of hotel rooms and hurried meals were taking a toll on his slender body, hours spent pounding new dance routines into his memory, his throat raw from singing the same notes over and over until he nearly wept from exhaustion.

Finally able to collapse after a long day of moving from radio station to personal appearances then finally to a television show where they fought to master simple phrases in three different languages, each fluid song translated into slow intonations, phonetic numbing expressions that Jaejoong wept at the thought of mastering. Yunho struggled beside him, the other three also working their tongues around unfamiliar sounds, their comprehension sometimes fading under the sheer brunt of lingual difficulties.

As the remainder of the afternoon passed under Jaejoong's sleepy eyes, closed against the washed over sun hidden behind the drawn curtains, the world moved about around him. Yoochun stopped before he left their shared room, tucking the edge of a sheet around Jae's bare shoulders. Goose bumps ranged over the singer's chilled skin, his body temperature low from lack of sleep. Brushing a kiss over his friend's temple, Yoochun wished Jaejoong a peaceful evening, seeing the strain on the singer's features under the mask of slumber.

Hidden in the upper reaches of the hotel's high towers, the suites were expensive, glass-enrobed cages, cold faceless stretches of fabrics and woods, glazed over with the plastic smell of discomfort. Undefined aromas caught in the cloistered air, unfamiliar body scents lingering where others touched, paring off any calm Jaejoong might have found in the days of their stay. He knew he was a creature of habits, long inured to making a nest of where he lived. It was his only constant, a den of pillows and the softness of worn clothes, a hermit amid the transitory movement around him. It was too lonely of an existence for a person with a lifeline of family and friends. For a discarded boy-child like Jaejoong, it was heartbreaking agony shaved down with steel razors of denial as he reassured himself that he needed no one to make him whole and strong.

An unspoken truth remained on the flat of his tongue, he missed Yunho in the middle of the night, although he wouldn't dream of giving the leader the satisfaction of knowing that. Yunho's ego was big enough as it was, it didn't need feeding to make it fatter. Yet Jaejoong ached with need, not just for the

Frozen Shadows

release of his sex. He had his own fingers and hands for that. Rather, it was the gentle possessiveness of the other man that he missed, the cradling of the taller body on his, words whispered in his ear to tell him that he would be protected.

Fierce in his stubbornness and contrary nature, Jaejoong still longed to rest in the warmth of someone else's soul. Yunho gave him that, the chance to just let the world go by without having to be wary and on guard. His lover's heart was a treasure but the safety of sanctuary was a priceless gift Jae cherished.

Management knew of his coupling with Yunho, ensuring that they roomed apart during trips outside of South Korea. It rankled Jaejoong's pride, having to bow down to someone else's demands. But the hesitant looks in the others' eyes reminded the feral young man that he had obligations to the close-knit family of five bonded on this journey through Asia...however hard it was to swallow his bitter ire at the thought of hiding his love for Yunho.

Yoochun's clothes lay on the floor between their beds, a casual discard that branded the room as theirs. Jaejoong couldn't even tell what city they were in, the buildings now a blur in his mind, the rush of airports speeding past his sight, long hops and then longer drives to places where nothing was familiar but the four faces near him. He found the comfort of home in their voices, laughter and shared intimacies, a balm on his troubled soul.

Soft bedding felt warm on Jae's naked body, the velvet cotton smooth on his aching thighs. The waning sunlight outside promised little warmth, barely a ray of yellow touching the undersides of grey storm clouds. It would be morning before he had to be somewhere, their manager noticing the sullen pout and furrowed tightness of his features when they'd finally been able to pull free from the last of the interviews and decided it would be far better to let the singer decompress than unravel in front of a camera.

Jae needed time to centre, his mind starting to wander under the pressure of being clustered tight under control. The others found it easier to play into the banter of interviews, Yunho a master at assuming the leadership role, solemn and guiding the other members in their answers. Jaejoong mostly felt tired, worn down and used dry, wanting only to curl into the softness of a pillow that smelled of green tea and kisses, the linens damp from the tears he shed for Yunho's touch.

Everything was stolen now, a glance... a brushing skim of fingers along his back. Even the clasp of the leader's hand over his thigh was painful, a reminder that this would be the only hug he would get that day, lost amid the shuffle of words and practice. Kisses became the taste of spit on a water bottle, shared between them, sometimes even tasting of Yoochun or Junsu, Yunho conscious of trying to downplay their intimacy. Jaejoong heard the murmurs of want riding in Yunho's voice, small pearls dropped in velvet for him to find. Most days it made him want the leader more, his belly cramping from the desire. Other days, the torment became too much and Jae nearly

wished he'd never fallen in love with the other man, spending time so close to an untouchable need nearly broke him with each passing second.

He'd never felt anyplace was home. There were too many threads pulling at the hooks embedded in his soul for that. The bottoms of his feet itched with the need to see the world, to have it in his hands but the reality of the expanse was nearly too much for the empty-souled child he'd been. No words of comfort stroked at his mind, no hands pressed between his shoulder blades to take the chill of rejection from his body. Only when he'd settled into the group and fought for his place did Jaejoong discover a niche to place his heart into, its broken pieces littering the ground like dried rose petals caught in an icy storm.

Yunho... the bane of his heart... now the saviour of his soul knocked on the open door, his broad shoulders canted to slip into the room. Jaejoong smiled, sliding over onto the bed to make room for his lover, reaching out with one hand to greet the other man. Slipping his shoes off of his feet, Yunho slid under the sheets, opening his arms for Jaejoong to cuddle close.

"I thought you went with the others." Jae wrinkled his nose at his own mouth. Shaking his head as Yunho bent in to kiss him, Jaejoong closed his lips tight. "Let me..."

"Boo, you are so strange sometimes." Yunho released Jaejoong's waist, watching the singer pad to the bathroom, his rear pert and clenching as he walked.

Leaning back into the warm pillows, Yunho breathed in Jae's scent, citrus and musky, a sweet tang of chai on his heart. The sound of water rushed from the open door to the bathroom, Jae's electric toothbrush a quiet counter hum below the gurgling comfort. A flush of the toilet and Jae's cursing at hitting his foot on the edge of the pedestal sink made Yunho smile widely, shaking his head at the singer's rush to get back to bed. Coming back to the main room, Jaejoong tied off the drawstrings of his sweats, tugging the hems free of his ankles as he prowled over the mattress towards Yunho's mouth.

"Why did you get dressed?" Yunho suckled on Jae's lower lip, pulling the plumpness into his mouth. Biting down softly, the leader growled in pleasure at making Jae's moan rise hot in the air, the singer mewling as he slid on top of his lover's sprawled body.

"I didn't want to make things too easy for you." Jae hummed at the feel of Yunho's teeth raking down over his jaw, finding the softness of his throat and biting into the angel kiss of his birthmark. "How did you get out of the interviews?"

"The same way you did." Yunho whispered. "I think our manager decided it would be best if we have time alone before we chewed through Changmin to get to one another."

Frozen Shadows

The singer arched his back when Yunho's hand strayed down to his ribs, the leader's short nails raking along the ridges of his bones. Jaejoong's throat worked around the nonsensical erotic moans crawling up from his belly. Over the past few weeks, Yunho learned to pull dark sensual sounds from his lover's core, liquid sex made vocal. Each stroke of a finger along stretches of skin leavened the bond between them, Jae's mouth panting open when Yunho denied his reciprocation.

"Turn over, lover." Yunho slid his palm under Jaejoong's back, cupping at the small of his spine and lifting. The cotton fabric of Jae's pants caught on the ridges of his hipbones as he turned, pulling taut along the rise of his rear. Licking at the intoxicating plump globe, Yunho tongued at a spot on his lover's hip, moistening the area until it ran translucent over Jae's skin.

Jaejoong's back always took Yunho's breath away. The long expanse of muscles stretched across delicate shoulders, arrowing down to the slender tuck of his hips, caught Yunho's imagination. He'd stared at the spot between Jae's shoulder blades during their talks with television personalities and radio dee-jays. Secreted behind layers of clothing, Yunho knew a spot that would make Jaejoong shiver if lips were pressed there and teeth were dragged across that bit of spine. The leader's palms itched to span over his lover's backside, running warm fingers over the ridged dimples and soft skin.

Yunho studiously avoided that enticement, concentrating solely on the bare shoulders pressed onto the sea of foam green sheets. Jaejoong's head was turned away from Yunho, the singer's eyes closed, lashes fluttering a brushing kiss on his cheekbones. The trust in his body shone under the relaxed looseness of his limbs, Jae's arms folded under the pillow, hiding the clench of his hands in the loose sheets.

"There should be wings here." Yunho couldn't resist bending over, hitching up onto his haunches. Moistening the tip of his tongue in the well of saliva in his mouth, the young man faintly skimmed at the ridge of Jae's shoulder blades. His breath dried the line of silver paling Jaejoong's tender skin, chasing a tremble through his vertebrae. "Every time I undress you, I keep expecting there to be just the hint of down and then a splash of feathers erupting to engulf me."

The light cotton pants hugging Jae's hips were easily slid free of the young man's legs, Yunho's impatience nearly tearing the fabric from Jaejoong's primed body. Yunho rubbed his cheek on the rise of Jaejoong's naked backside, his bottom teeth barely digging into the tender flesh. He'd grown too used to having the singer just within reach, a seductive flame under the covers of their shared bed. It hurt to be apart from Jaejoong, the other man's wild nature exhilarating and exasperating... a ride Yunho sorely missed. Laving at a spot Yunho knew from experience to be ticklish, he finished his brief exploration with a kiss then returned to where he'd left off.

With another kiss, slow and lingering over the dip in the middle of Jae's back. Yunho spoke, a hushed reverence for the exotic gift under his hands. "And

then, I wonder sometimes if when you fell from heaven, you caught your wings on a cloud and they tore... because when I look deep in your eyes, I see a pain that pierces through you and I want to wash it away with kisses.”

“You do.” Jaejoong’s breath whispered sweetly into the pillow. The prone singer felt the ache burrowed deep into his soul, weeping wounds left by harsh words and cutting, stinging blows to his heart. He’d struggled to find his way through the world, stumbling and crying alone in the darkness until Yunho shed the storm battering at his spirit. “Yunnie...”

“Sshhh, baby.” Yunho tasted again, pulling Jae’s silken ebony hair from his neck. The delicate down there begged to be matted down with spit, much like the curve of black strands over Jae’s ear but Yunho left those spaces be, concentrating instead on the pale whiteness of the singer’s lower back.

He’d come prepared, ordering a few things from room service before he knocked on Jae’s door. A small handled bag was easily hid by the door until Jaejoong went into the bathroom, the young singer’s habits nearly predictable upon waking. Yunho retrieved the bag, hoping he’d not waited too long. Dipping his hand down, Yunho slid a zippered plastic bag open, pulling an ice cube free from the melting slush inside.

Yunho held the large chunk over Jae’s back, pressing his hand down on the singer’s rear when the first drop hit, a splash of winter on warm ivory. Hissing in surprise, Jae’s eyes flew open, enormous and shocked at the cold. A murmur of protest was quickly subdued under a hot kiss, Yunho’s tongue stilling Jae’s astonished words. Leaving the ice aloft, Yunho prepared for another small jerk of Jaejoong’s body, a pleased groan rippling from his chest when the singer responded again, pressing hard up against Yunho’s palm.

“Move your knees apart for me.” There was no demand in Yunho’s voice, the barest dusting of a request. Ordering the obstinate young Korean often did nothing more than make Jaejoong dig in his heels, even if it was something he wanted to do. After so many years of fighting and scraping to get what he wanted, Jaejoong often proved to be difficult to coerce, much to the frustration of their management. Usually amiable and tractable, Jae invariably refused to budge on the smallest of things, choosing to exert his independence at the most inopportune times. Aware of his lover’s chaotic nature, Yunho learned to coax Jae along, earning his deep trust. That was key, Yunho discovered... when Jae gave his trust fully, he would do anything for the person he loved. And that faith now rested wholly in Yunho’s hands.

Jaejoong adjusted his body, his eyes closing once more. With his breathing steady, he rested, waiting for Yunho’s mouth and hands to resume their inquisitive journey. More water, ice cold and burning on his tender skin, left Jaejoong chilled before the drops were sucked clean from his body by Yunho’s hot mouth. A frosty edge trailed down on one rear cheek, smeared warm from Yunho’s tracing long tongue. Nearly unable to contain the

Frozen Shadows

hardness pressing up on his thigh, Jae shifted to ease the ache, his breath catching hard in his throat with every splash of water.

Watching the chunk of ice slowly melt over his lover's body, Yunho rubbed at Jae's scapula, wondering if God knew what He'd tossed down at Yunho's feet. The sky rarely held enough sunlight in it to compare to Jaejoong, in Yunho's mind, colours dulled until he'd seen them through his lover's wondering eyes. A curious blend of naiveté and strength, Jaejoong's chaos thrilled the leader's heart, the singer's brilliant smile touching at the darkest recesses of shadows lurking in Yunho's soul.

Jaejoong lost his breath in the moment Yunho slid the ice cube between his cheeks, working the cold frozen water into the depths of his body. Nearly rolling free from Yunho's hands, Jae panted hard, biting down into the pillow to remain still. The cold was nearly unimaginable, working into the nerves of his system and running iced steam into his body. More shocking was Yunho's tongue licking at the drops pooling down onto his sex, the shaft half hidden by his thigh.

He'd just grown used to the press of oil into him, the slippery feel of Yunho's fingers and then the rush of being spread apart by his lover's questing body. The harsh cold of ice inside of him shuddered apart Jaejoong's control, his lips peeled back around his panting moans. Despite the chill, the heat of his body reacted tightly to the press of the cube on the tenderness inside of him, pulling Jaejoong's muscles tight and unforgiving when Yunho's fingertip pressed lightly on the rim.

The familiar click of a gel bottle warmed Jaejoong's belly, his body responding innately to the slithering of oil down between his clenched buttocks. Letting the lubricant acclimate to Jaejoong's body, Yunho slid his tongue around the remaining drops of water before the sheets soaked through. His fingers rolled in the gel, warming slightly against the singer's heat.

"Yunnie... please." Jaejoong lifted his hips away from the mattress, hands wrapped tightly into the corners of the pillow, his teeth marks dimpling the fine fabric. It had been too long since they'd shared a bed, most of their frantic couplings spent in the shadows of tight backstage alcoves or a quick slide of their hands over each other's sex, hoping to bring some pleasure to taste on their tongues. Begging, Jaejoong panted hard, unable to keep his hips from rolling up to meet Yunho's hand.

He'd never grow used to the flash of desire and ache Yunho's hands brought to his body. Jaejoong was sure he would break apart if he ever did. The callus on Yunho's index finger always rode on the inside of the muscled ring, feeling out the rosette like a bee sipping on the nectar of a bloom. Easing in, Yunho took his time, marking the desire on Jaejoong's expressive face. Losing himself in the sheer rush of his tingling nerves, Jae abandoned himself to Yunho's pleasures.

"Need to touch you..." Jae moaned aloud. Yunho pressed further in, reaching up into his lover's warmth, past the cold chill of the ice sliver resting inside of Jae's hot velvet core. The singer's hands moved away from the pillow, stopping only when Yunho's inquest stilled, and the leader whispered against the oiled moistness of Jae's rear.

"Let me do this for you, Joongie." Yunho said. "I want to watch you want... to watch you desire. There's nothing more beautiful than to you see spread apart for me... unless it's you begging for me to be inside of you."

"There are times, Boo..." Yunho worked another finger into Jae, slowly sliding both tips just past the rim until Jaejoong's pants grew to near sobs, his chest convulsing with the effort to remain pressed on the bed. "There are times when I just want to bite into you, ripping you open until I have everything of you in my hands. That's how it is when you're like this, right now. I feel like I have you...all of you... just at the edge of returning to the stars."

"You writhe and it's like the moon weeps under your skin." Yunho smiled, hearing the soft moaning pleads of Jaejoong's wantonness peeling back the reserved mask the singer wore. Lying bare underneath Yunho was the true Jaejoong, wild and primal, a sensuality uncontained by the presence of others and shown only to the lover who could coax it free.

"Yunho, I need you. Inside of me." Jae growled, unable to hold himself in any longer. Each press inside of him made the singer want the heat of his lover plunged deep inside of him. Twisting, Jae bit down on Yunho's shoulder, purpling the rise of his arm. "Wanting you."

The other man waited a breath longer until the rising crescendo of Jaejoong's heart raced a pitched beat along his veins, pushing all other thoughts aside but the want of Yunho's flesh in him. Kissing at the spread of flesh along Jae's shoulder blades, Yunho eased the tip of his shaft to the pressing ring between Jae's cheeks, feeling his lover tense despite the craving inside of him.

"I won't hurt you, baby." Yunho whispered. Jaejoong always assured him the press of pain was small compared to the sheer glut of pleasure he experienced but the initial push on Jae's body and the aching twist of teeth on the singer's pout brought a hurt to Yunho's heart. The leader took his time whenever he touched his lover, working Jaejoong into a fevered ardor before falling into Jae's heat. Still, the stretching of Jae around him warned Yunho to be careful, a tender heed to Jae's seemingly delicate body.

Yunho eased slowly forward, his hands placed on Jaejoong's hips. Bending forward, the leader worked his legs around his lover's, wrapping his arms around Jae's chest and holding the singer close. Rocking forward, Yunho pressed in, sliding out with a tilt of his hips before pushing back further in, letting the oil slide the passage open for him.

Jaejoong's eyes closed tight, feeling the bare nerves of his body run brittle from sensation. The edge of his body's ring pulsed, trying to shove at

Frozen Shadows

Yunho's shaft to force him back out. Reminding himself to relax, Jaejoong pushed outward with his core, welcoming his lover into his warmth. The oil's slickness eased the progression, Yunho filling him nearly to bursting with his heavy sex.

They lay there, coupled in the waned light of the day, the evening dusk having fallen from the sky's hands. Not wanting to move, Jaejoong reveled in the feel of Yunho's weight on his body, the press of muscle and bone against his own. It cost the singer so much to lay his heart into the leader's hands, hoping that there would be enough of it to be pieced together once Yunho shattered it against the cold, hard unfeeling of his hatred.

Jaejoong still found himself wondering when he would awaken from the dream of having Yunho turn and smile, holding the light of the universe in his eyes when he looked at Jaejoong. After the years of crying until his soul ached and lay flaccid from abuse, it now sang with the sheer joy of another's touch, dancing through the storms of his life with the assurance that there would always be shelter from the pounding rain of doubt on his soul.

"You are so hot around me." Yunho murmured, tasting small bits of Jae's skin in little nips...first his neck then his shoulders as the singer rose up from the bed to meet Yunho's muscled chest. Wrapping his lean arms about Jaejoong, Yunho began to rock into him, never completely withdrawing from his savoury moistness. "This is how we were meant to be... together...for eternity. You have to remember that, Joongie. You have to never forget how this feels."

"I won't. I can't." Jae admitted, nearly sobbing at the pleasure raking up from his body.

Every long strong pass of Yunho's hardness inside of him rubbed the bundle of nerves hidden there, a tangle of lightning stroked across Jae's being. Smiling in satisfaction, Yunho crept one hand around Jae's hips to encircle his sex, working along its length as Jaejoong pulsated around him. Thrusting forward, he let the knob of his flesh work around the small nodule deep within his lover's body, hitting the pressure point with each fervent plunge.

Yunho ran his other hand along Jae's heated torso, feeling each ridge of his ribs carefully before reaching up to pluck at the ripeness of Jae's nipples. The tips of Yunho's fingers expertly found the turgid rose tips that peaked Jae's lean chest, their need aching tightly into nubs. Stretching upwards, Yunho ran the tip of his tongue along the down of his lover's exposed neck, tasting the salty spice of his body in the back of his throat as he laved at Jae. A soft moan broke through the sounds of the night outside, skittering crickets singing the night to ripeness as Yunho's hands began to move once more, traveling downwards until he held Jae's hips tight, his torso moving hard as he pounded at the centre of Jae's passion.

Yunho held himself slowly as he worked further into Jae, feeling each ripple of flesh give way beneath his movements and the soft mewling noises in

Jaejoong's throat urging him forward. The sweetness of his lover against and around him gave Yunho strength as Jae pressed up, placing his hands the bed to lift his abdomen and started to rock his hips. The softness of Jae's rear resting against the hollow of Yunho's hips made the leader smile and his fingers ran along the length of his lover's thighs, finding the erotic points Jae's lower back before working once more through the curls at his loins, stoking at the hard sex there.

Thrusting his hips up, Yunho met every one of Jae's lunges, reveling in the ardor on his flushed face and running his kisses between Jae's shoulder blades when the singer leaned forward. His teeth pulled on the winged edges, drawing the flesh up from the bone and further into Yunho's mouth. Nipping and sucking, he felt Jae's spasms begin once more and Yunho closed his arousal-darkened eyes as his own released ripped from him.

Feeling his seed gush into Jae's tight velvet, Yunho entangled his fingers with Jae's, wrapping them tight into each other as their bodies gave way to their pleasure, the heat between them growing as the moonlight broke through the shadowed canopy.

Running silver over golden flesh, Jaejoong savoured the panting of his lover against his body and his own wetness still around Yunho as they lay holding each other close. Laying a soft kiss on Jae's lean shoulder, Yunho ran his lips up over his neck before turning Jaejoong's head to capturing his mouth once more. Driving his tongue deep past Jae's teeth, Yunho forced his lover to give the leader his soul, holding him tightly until Jae released himself again, pulled over the edge of his release solely from the small twistings of Yunho's hips and the seductive passion of his mouth on Jae's swollen lips.

"I wish I could tell you how much I love you, Joongie-ah." Yunho slid free of his lover's body, pulling Jae in close. They rolled in the scent of their sex, heady musk spiced bitter by the secretiveness of their love. "I don't think that word's been invented yet, Boo."

"You're silly sometimes, Yunnies." Jaejoong sighed, turning to rest his back on his lover's chest. Yunho's arms folded about him, one hand resting on Jae's flat stomach. They could see the world turning outside of the hotel room window, hidden by the sheer curtains. Below, the landscape shone in lace beads of lights, strung along silvery threads of traffic and buildings turned diamond under the rising moon.

"I regret that you lost your family because of me..." Jaejoong's words were cut off by Yunho's hard kiss, the leader finding the edge of Jae's mouth with his own.

"None of that, Jaejoong." Yunho held Jae's chin, nibbling at his lover's jaw before returning to the softness of Jaejoong's earlobe, worrying at the small metal ring running cold through Jae's warm flesh. "I have no regrets over losing something that wasn't real. My parents are the ones who have to learn

Frozen Shadows

how to love. You've given me that. You taught me how to love, Boo. I love you. Believe me in that."

"I know, Yunnies. I believe you." Jae said, soft and tender in his lover's embrace. "I love you too and I will always be here for you."

"Jaejoong, I promise you..." Yunho kissed the back of his lover's head, finding Jae's fingers and holding his hand tightly. Pressing their joined hands over Jae's heart, Yunho whispered love into Jaejoong's soul. "I promise you that one day, the whole world will know that we are meant for one another. Not just the shadows that are chased out by the day but every single face that turns to bask in your beauty will see the happiness I see in you when you smile at me. And God, you break me apart with that smile, it hurts to be so loved."

Jaejoong tossed aside the last of his doubts, his will tempered strong under the fire of Yunho's convictions. "I can wait for that day forever, as long as I find you in the shadows, waiting for me."

"You can trust me for that, baby." His heart burst open under the touch of Jae's love, unconditional and generous, a faith untouched by censure. Yunho ached at the thought of a day when the air no longer tasted of Jae's kisses, their lives leached white from age. The leader was determined to hold the other's soul in his heart until they burned in the sky as one, starlight fending off the darkness in an eternal dance.

Yunho suckled on Jae's earlobe, tasting at the earring they often shared between them. Jae's hand rose, cupping the back of Yunho's head, capturing his lover's kiss against the stained glass of his healing soul. Sated, Yunho breathed a whispered vow, his words spilling over the cracks of Jaejoong's shattered self.

"I will always love you, Jaejoong." Yunho promised. "However you will have me. We are forever. Until the stars are burnt black, we will be one."

A River of Kisses

A touch of a tongue along the f of his tattoo woke Jaejoong up, the slither of a familiar mouth on his heated skin. Sleep hovered, a warm blanket over his soul, reluctant to release the young man into the dawning morning. Silken sheets poured from his hips, tugged free by an insistent hand. Another kiss, longer and lingering, pressed into the nape of Jaejoong's neck, trailing around to touch at the singer's jaw.

"Afternoon, Boo." Yunho whispered, biting lightly on his lover's earlobe.

"Why are you waking me up?" Jaejoong grumbled, the tilt of his hips rubbing loosely over Yunho's waist. The tease of his body ran hot over Yunho's nerves, a firestorm worked free from Yunho's guts, spilling out between them. "We have time off and you're waking me up."

"You woke me up this morning. I think it's fair I wake you up in the afternoon." Yunho tucked his body against his lover's, fitting into the curves of Jae's hips. "Or don't you remember chewing me awake?"

"I didn't chew. Okay, maybe a little nip once in a while... but no chewing." Jae murmured, biting down into the pillow he'd tucked under his chin. Yunho's teeth were sharp, his knowledge of Jae's body intimate and sensual. Blood rushed into Jae's sex, thickening at Yunho's touch. A lean finger traced over Jae's spine, dragging over each bump of bone, listening for Jae's hissing pleas to begin.

"Stop that." Jaejoong rolled away, hooking his fingers into Yunho's hair. "I'm sleepy. Go bother the others."

"Somehow I think if I went in and bothered the others the way I want to bother you..." Yunho grabbed at Jae's hip, holding the singer against the sheets. "Do you really want me to cuddle up against Yoochun the way I cuddle against you?"

"I'd kill you." Jaejoong muttered, dark and promising. "I'd kill you slowly. Maybe not even kill you. Maybe just torture you forever until you whimper and cry like a baby."

"Ah, you're mean when you don't get enough sleep." Yunho slapped Jaejoong's naked ass.

"If someone sees..." Jae whispered, sleep washing from his mind. Their manager tried to ignore the shared room, the looks over the dining room table and even the overt touches when the two young men shared the couch

A River of Kisses

but Jaejoong was cautious not to let others see them. The group's success... so vital for the others... was threatened whenever their affection became too obvious. And with each passing day, they both struggled to hide behind placid faces and bland smiles.

Hidden behind doors, their love smoldered, turned hot with furtive glances and the brushing of hands against each others' hips. Any touch would do. Anything at all would quench Jae's thirst for Yunho, the sidelong glances tucked under the lights glaring down upon them. The whispers rose when it appeared their love faded, harsh curved knives that jabbed down into Jae's belly, slicing him open with each false smile.

Yunho told him time and time again to ignore the whispers, reaching often behind the others' bodies to touch Jae, still hidden behind the mask of respectability. The leader of their group stiffened his resolve and saved his warmth for the tangled mess of love and chaos he loved, a hard ride that brought him to the highest of heavens and the harshest of hells.

"Our manager is gone." Yunho breathed into Jae's open lips, tucking a kiss against the roof of the other's mouth. "He knows, Jaejoong. He knows that we're lovers and he doesn't really care."

"Besides, I think he's half in love with you himself. Just like Changmin's mom." The leader whispered against Jae's forehead. The singer's eyes closed at the touch, wanting to cup his lover's face and drink from Yunho's mouth until they both drowned. "Go get dressed. We're going out. There's some place I want to take you."

"Are the others going with us?" Jae pulled the sheets up around his hips, turning over onto his back, feeling the wetness from Yunho's mouth catch at the linens.

"No." The leader tossed a pair of jeans at his lover. "Get dressed, baby. I've got places to take you."

* * *

The air nipped at their faces, a chilling bite blooming a rose blush across Jaejoong's bare face. Fisting his hands into his jacket, the young man ducked his head down, his sidelong glance on the lookout for the clusters of fans that seemed to follow the group no matter where they went.

Adulation was wearing at times, smiles forced across their faces until Jaejoong nearly wept with the pain from the ache in his cheeks. It was a blessed hell they'd asked for and his heart often swelled at the beatific faces that greeted him when Jae met with fans but in the darkness of the night, a gloomy veil settled over the singer, as morose and grey as his soul.

Their schedules wore him down to his bones, Jaejoong's fleeting energy stolen with each breath he shared with the world. Yunho saw the weariness

in the plump ridges under his lover's eyes, the burnt cinnamon of Jae's faded gaze hidden behind a wash of plastic green.

Yunho's hand found Jae's, their fingers tangling amid the shadows in the alley. Tokyo streamed around them, their identities left behind in the apartment they shared with the others. Lights played chase across tall buildings, catching onto the ponds of billboards before flowing off again, rippling streams over cars coursing along tight streets below. A woman called to them, cajoling for a game of pachinko in the parlour beyond. Yunho heard the jingling happy sounds of silver balls striking the stoppers. The echoing burble reminded him of Jaejoong's laughter, a pleasure he'd not heard in too long.

"Laugh for me, Boo." Yunho whispered into his lover's ear, nipping at the ring piercing Jae's daith.

The smallest drop of silver fell from Jaejoong's throat, a splash of cool white on the heat of the lights. Yunho captured that sound, holding it to his heart until he spotted where he wanted to go. It was a beacon amid the clamor, drawing the pair there.

"Where are we going, Yunnie-ah?" Jaejoong lapsed into Korean, his words a lilt of the country dialect Yunho had come to love.

"We're just going... to go be...who we are, Boo." Yunho hailed a taxi, lifting his arm up to draw the cab to the curb. Sliding in besides his lover, Yunho leaned forward to give the driver directions, an address unknown to the singer. The cab jostled Jaejoong across the seat, nearly tumbling him into Yunho's lap.

"I like this driver." Yunho chuckled, pressing a kiss onto Jaejoong's forehead, the singer righting himself with an angry mutter. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Jaejoong grumbled, rubbing his elbow where it struck the seat belt clasp. "Roll the window down a bit. I'm going to get carsick."

The window came down, low enough to let the wind from the city streets pour into the back of the cab. Jaejoong leaned against Yunho's shoulder, watching the buildings pass them in a blur of steel and glass. They caught snippets of conversations in the wind, words muddled through a language they struggled to understand. Red lights stopped their progress for little moments, pulling faces from the crowds, laughter tangling with solemn stares before the cab started its journey again.

"We've come so far, haven't we?" Jaejoong rested his head against Yunho's shoulder, feeling the strength of the other man's soul.

They'd fought to gain trust between them, Jae's past curdling any faith he might have in someone else while Yunho's aggressive nature demanded nearly everything from the mercurial singer. Yunho's possessiveness often

A River of Kisses

won out over the need to keep their love hidden, the leader unwilling to leave Jaejoong unsheltered in a world bent on scraping the singer raw and open.

"We have, Boo." Yunho hooked his arm around his lover's shoulders, long fingers playing in Jae's hair.

The driver kept his eyes on the road, casting furtive glances at the rear view mirror to watch the affection between the two young men sitting behind him. Yunho caught the man's gaze, staring at the reflected attention until the driver turned aside, shamed into looking away from the intimacy between Yunho and Jaejoong.

"I hate not being able to touch you in public." Jaejoong's whisper came hot with a tint of anger. Yunho smiled at Jaejoong's admission. Between them, Yunho's hands sought the singer in front of prying eyes, Jaejoong easily falling into his lover's embrace before realizing the crowds around them, pulling away reluctantly ...or more dangerously, staying within the reach of his lover's touch, daring anyone to point out their affectionate closeness.

"Chunnie is a good friend to you." Yunho teased, poking at the tender friendship his lover had with Yoochun. "You touch him a lot."

"Ah!" Jae's fist lightly punched Yunho's stomach, a brief burst of surprise in the leader's woof of air. "Chunnie-ah is..."

"A friend. Your best friend... your closest friend." Yunho filled in, his smile knowing and tender. "I have no jealousy of Yoochun...well, okay... a little bit but that's normal."

"You're my best friend." Jaejoong whispered as Yunho's fingers brushed over his shoulder blades, touching on the tattoo beneath his shirt. "You're my soul. You're what I found in Dong Bang Shin Ki just as Yoochun found his mate. Chunnie-ah is my brother but you're... my everything."

Yunho's kiss began softly, just at the edges of Jaejoong's mouth. It spread deeper when Yunho's thumbs pressed at the juncture of his lover's jaw, urging the other man to open wider for him. The top of Jae's palate became Yunho's need, then the softness of Jae's lips, Yunho's tongue touching and probing at the tenderness of his lover's moistness.

"Sir, we're here." The cabbie cleared his throat again, hoping to draw off Yunho's attention.

Staring down into Jae's upraised face, Yunho reluctantly pulled away, digging money from his pocket and handing it through the glass window partition. Opening the door, he stepped clear of the cab, holding his hand out for Jaejoong.

The glass buildings grew tall around them, a forest of mirrored surfaces shining with reflected light. A scent, familiar and blue, hovered in the air, a promise of renewal and dreams. Jaejoong walked carefully behind his lover, their hands often grazing and shoulders nearly always touching as Yunho led them into a hotel lobby, people moving about hurriedly, ignoring the two

young men approaching the registration desk. A murmured word with the receptionist provided Yunho with a plastic keycard and directions to a bank of elevators.

"What are we doing here?" Jaejoong frowned, his eyes turned upwards as he watched the floor indicators fly by on the lift screen.

"I thought it would be nice if we had some... privacy." Yunho replied as the elevator dinged, reaching the top floor. Opening up into a wide foyer, the hallway boasted two doors, set at opposite ends of the corridor. The leader stepped free of the lift car, wrapping his fingers around Jae's wrist. "Come on."

The scent of water did not prepare Jaejoong for the sight of the river flowing outside of the hotel suite, a long stretch of liquid dappled with the reflected lights of Tokyo's skyline. Rounded arcs of a bridge dazzled Jae's eyes, sweeping gentle half-circles spotted with blues and greens. The stars were absent in the night sky, drawn away by the glare of Tokyo's evening light show but the sparkles along the buildings and streets more than made up for the lack, draping entire constellations over skyscrapers and winding over long avenues, pearled gemstones laced over slender ridges.

"That's the Sumida river." Yunho came up behind Jaejoong, wrapping his arms about the singer's slender waist. "I can't give you the Han...not here in Japan but I can at least give you the Sumida and for a few days, this will be our home."

"You planned this?" Jae tilted his head back, finding his lover's eyes on him. "You..."

"I had some of our clothes sent here." Yunho kissed the corner of Jae's eye, licking at the lashes within reach. "Providing that we're even going to be wearing clothes while we're here. My guess is, we're not. But just in case, there is some."

"Can I see the river from the bed?" Jaejoong loosely broke from Yunho's grasp, hooking his fingers into his lover's waistband.

"Yes." Yunho grinned, falling into step behind the singer's long stride.

"Good." Jae's tongue found the corner of his own mouth, a delicious entreaty for Yunho's kiss. "I'm going to start vacationing there. I want you... where I can see the river... and taste you at the same time."

* * *

Jaejoong listened to the rain strike the glass panes of their suite, the river below lost behind the mists. A forlorn ship bell rang through the late morning air, a lowing moan warning off small vessels coming around the bend in the waterway. His shoulder blade ached where Yunho's teeth bit hard into his flesh, pulling and nipping as they rocked into one another, Jae's hands curved around the soft pillow, his face buried into the silken cotton case in

A River of Kisses

the hopes that it would somehow muffle the screaming that rasped from his mouth.

Running the back of his hand over his lips, Jaejoong felt a brief sting from the puffiness, ravaged from Yunho's endless caresses, their faces parting then joining again, each thrust of their bodies bringing them close enough to kiss. Naked, the singer let the breeze from the open window flow over his torso and down between his legs, his arms splayed out on either side of his body.

Jae knew they would have to return to their crazy world soon but for now, he could laze about and let the sky roll past him through the window. A few days of peace with Yunho gifted him with more calm in his heart than any river he'd ever seen, the closeness of their bodies and souls as pacific as a calm lake.

Tilting his head back, Jaejoong watched Yunho come into the bedroom, his long-legged swagger hinting of a seductive arrogance that drew Jae's eyes downward. The younger man quirked a cocky smile at his lover, setting down a couple of bags, their contents as smelling as tantalizing Yunho's body coming out of the warm rain. Bending down, Yunho stopped at the edge of the bed, drinking in the sight of his lover's naked body.

"God, you're nice to come home to." Yunho inhaled Jae's exhaled breath, catching the heat of his lover's soul against the roof of his mouth. Their lips were a tangled heat, nearly brushing, held apart by a whisper of space throbbing with need.

"Are you planning on kissing me or are you just going to stand there?" Jaejoong blinked, his lashes touching light burrs on Yunho's cheeks. Yunho debated staying just outside of Jae's reach, letting the heat of their bodies rise until lightning broke between them but the erotic slant of the singer's mouth proved too arousing to resist.

They touched, lightly at first, just enough of a skimming stroke to feel the heat of their mouths against their lips. Jae yearned for more, pressing in at the dip of Yunho's mouth, finding the ridge of his lover's chin with tiny butterfly kisses then touching at the sienna dot above Yunho's upper lip.

The leader allowed his hand to glide above the downy column of Jae's neck, the tips of his fingers unerringly finding the faint birthmark under Jae's chin, Yunho's palm easily curving to fit around Jaejoong's jaw. Yunho felt his lover swallow, holding Jae's delicate bone in the cup of his hand until it passed, Jae's desire fighting with the swell of emotion in the singer's throat.

"You taste good." Jaejoong sighed, his body warmed to a blushing red under Yunho's stroking hands. "Like you stood outside in the rain and held your mouth open, swallowing the sky."

"I missed you." Yunho admitted, sliding around his lover's prone form and pulling Jaejoong into his lap. Cradling the other man, Yunho explored the familiar, exotic terrain, fascinated by the taut muscles running lean in Jae's

thighs and stomach. "I knew if I tasted the rain, it would hold you in it. It was like kissing a mirror of you... a twin that's been faded by time. But it held me long enough until I could come back... and find you here, waiting for me."

"So I should be jealous of a storm?" Jae teased, his arms lazy around Yunho's waist.

"No," Yunho replied, resting his forehead against his lover's temple. "It brought me home to you."

Shifting, the singer nested against the crux of Yunho's lap, his rear fitting into the ridge of his lover's hip bone. They'd sat this way in the dark, too many times to count... sometimes on the rooftop of their home in Seoul where the stars could be seen on a pitch black night... sometimes in the tight corner of their shared bedroom in Japan, the nighttime sounds echoing against the tall buildings rising up around them. Regardless of their surroundings, they still fit into one another, a jigsaw of souls and bodies, sliced apart from a single heart.

"I could stay like this forever." Yunho nibbled on Jae's shoulder, bringing up a small red welt. Kissing the mark with a sigh of satisfaction, he wondered how long it would stay and who would see it before it disappeared beyond the snowy porcelain of Jaejoong's skin.

"We have to go be Hero and U-Know in a few days." Jaejoong reminded him, tugging at the collar of Yunho's shirt. "And why am I naked and you're still dressed?"

"Because I got dressed and you've not worn clothes for nearly twelve hours." The leader reminded him, pouring Jaejoong back onto the mattress. Standing, the young man kicked off his shoes then reached for the sacks he'd left on the table. "Here, open these up. I brought us lunch."

The noodles were familiar as was the fermented soy beans that Jaejoong had a particular love for. Jae's hands stilled as he watched Yunho strip free of his damp clothing, the dancer's strong body rippling with grace as he stepped out of his jeans. The pink band of his underwear was ripe for Jaejoong's fingers, the elastic easily plucked with a fast pinch.

"Aren't you supposed to be unpacking our food?" Yunho growled, hooking his thumbs into the band of his briefs, his head cocked to one side as he stared at his lover.

"I started." Jae shrugged, holding up portions of steaming food for Yunho to see. "You just became more interesting."

Yunho's shirt fell on the floor, the flat of his stomach well within reach of Jae's questing fingers. Licking his index finger, Jaejoong tipped the wet digit into Yunho's navel, making the leader flinch at the touch. Lunging forward, Yunho was about to tackle Jae onto the mattress but the singer warned him off, hastily holding up the containers of liquid and noodles steaming through vented lids.

A River of Kisses

"I'll be getting you back for that later." Yunho promised darkly, his lips finding Jaejoong's earlobes, a sharp nip tweaking around the singer's earring. "Just remember that when you can't stop screaming my name."

"Like I ever stop screaming your name." Jae muttered. "You scream mine just as loud, don't forget."

"Every time I swallow, I have your name in my breath." The young man kissed Jae on the cheek, tucking his legs underneath him as he sat down. Taking off the cover of one of the containers, he stirred at the natto inside, working the strands loose. Yunho poked at the delicacy with a wooden spork, holding up a bit for his lover to taste. A dollop of karashi added flavour to the treat, the strings of fermented beans a sticky trail from the paper container to Jae's waiting mouth. Chewing, the singer nodded at the mild flavour of the soybeans, reveling in the spiced mustard accent.

"That's good." Jaejoong licked at a thread on his lower lip, his tongue dabbing at the string. Laughing at the other's efforts, Yunho reached forward, moistening his thumb and rubbed at the natto strand, sucking off the remnants of Jae's mouth from his fingers with a noisy slurp.

"It is good." Yunho winked. "But I'm not sure if I'm tasting the natto or you. Let me try again."

Yunho stole another kiss, sucking the breath from Jaejoong's mouth. Cradling the back of Jae's head, Yunho pulled his lover closer, wanting to consume as much of the singer as he could. The lunch lay forgotten, one of the container nearly toppled as Jae's foot struck its side. Tumbling into the sheets, Jae pulled Yunho down with him, licking at the strength of his lover's neck and shoulder.

"Need you." Jaejoong whispered, laving at the ticklish spot under Yunho's chin. Laughing, Yunho jerked back, trying to break loose of his lover's searching tongue. "Stop moving."

"Stop tickling." Yunho rolled over, trapping Jae underneath him. "Need you too, Boo. Need you very badly."

* * *

Breathless, Yoochun rolled free of Junsu's body, his chest heaving with hard pants. Hair damp over his forehead, the baritone drew as much air as he could into his lungs, his hands tightly fisted into the sheets on the bed he shared with the other man. Junsu fought feebly against Yoochun's legs, pushing weakly at the other's body until he dissolved into laughter.

"You're too heavy." Junsu gasped, wondering if he could reach the other's shoulder with his teeth. Craning his neck, he brushed Yoochun's skin but not enough to get a good grip on the other's flesh. "Move up a bit."

"So you can bite me?" Yoochun guffawed, keeping the lavender plush bunny out of Junsu's reach. The tenor reached out again, his arm a bit too short to

reach the rabbit. "Oh no. I'm not letting you up until you promise not to bite me."

"I'm not promising anything." Junsu twisted, nearly loose from Yoochun's torso. "You are....too...heavy."

The afternoon air clung moisture to the outside of their bedroom window, beads of dew running clotted streams down the glass pane. Sparsely leafed trees swayed in the waning sun, nearly ready to bud, heralding the end of a long winter season. They'd already seen signs of life in the pecking of a bird along the branches, its beak weaving soft twigs into the beginnings of a nest, preparing for the task of raising fledglings. The breeze coming through the open window was sweetly cool, just a hint of a chill in its bite.

Oblivious to the pastoral view outside of their window, Junsu found he was able to reach Yoochun's shoulder, his teeth a white flash on his lover's body. The skimming sharpness poked Yoochun's attention then the grip of his skin between Junsu's clenched teeth made him gasp, a brush of purpling already beginning under Junsu's ravening bite.

"Let go." Yoochun let his fingers wander, his free hand stroking at the inside of Junsu's legs. The tenor's gasping reply was all he needed, the other's mouth releasing Yoochun's shoulder. "Ah, thank you."

"Give me back our son." Junsu dove to the side, grabbing at the bunny. "You're a bad father."

"What?" Yoochun released the plush rabbit, its fur matted with the baritone's spit. "I'm a good father... well as good as ...it's a rabbit!"

"It's our rabbit." Junsu tucked the toy under his arm, laying back under the weight of Yoochun's body. "You shouldn't have... bit into it when you..."

"I thought it was the pillow!" Yoochun protested. "How was I supposed to know that you shoved him under sheets? What kind of father shoves their kid under the sheets? And doesn't warn the other before he pounces on him? It's your fault his ass is wet."

"Always be aware of the bunny!" Junsu bopped Yoochun on the nose with the plush toy. "You're still too heavy."

"Sorry..." Yoochun kissed Junsu on the neck before rolling aside. His long legs were still wrapped around Junsu's, unwilling to break the bond between them. "Well, I'm not really sorry. Lying on top of you is as much fun as lying underneath you."

"Aish, our son's ears!" Junsu grinned, leaning his head back against his lover's shoulders. Sighing, he stretched, feeling his muscles protest with a soft ache, a reminder of the hours spent wrapped around Yoochun. "I thought Yunho and Jaejoong would never leave."

"You act like they lingered outside of our door for a week." Yoochun played with the edges of the sheet, comforted by their combined scents. Junsu's

A River of Kisses

mint toothpaste lingered in his mouth, a dash of freshness on his tongue. "I dragged you in here as soon as Yunho left. We forget to eat for the few couple of hours."

"Letch." Junsu complained lightly. Despite the small ache in his back and the stickiness along his body, Junsu smiled. "Of course I didn't mind. It was a nice couple of hours."

"Nice?" The baritone exclaimed, mock disgust colouring his words. Indignant, Yoochun snorted, tilting his chin up. "I have to work harder next time if all I got is nice."

"Better than nice." Junsu corrected. "Fantastic. Left me breathless that is, before you bit our son."

"And as soon as you caught your breath, you thought of Yunho and Jaejoong. See what I have to compete with? YunJae. And a lavender bunny." Yoochun stared up at the ceiling, smiling. "They were getting too...frazzled. I was beginning to worry about them. When that dancer touched Jaejoong's crotch the other day, I thought Yunho was going to rip him apart."

"Frazzled. Good word. It even sounds like them." The tenor agreed. "They need time to... be alone. I don't understand it but they do. You and I... we can be who we are no matter who is around us. They need... to be just wrapped up in themselves. I wonder if that's a good thing sometimes. Is it healthy to be like that?"

"It's good for them." Yoochun said. "It's easier for us to be alone when we're surrounded by people. Neither one of us are... on display like they are. I wouldn't want to be either Yunho or Jaejoong. Everyone staring and poking at everything we do. I much rather like being behind them."

"I'd rather be behind you." Junsu sat up, licking at the tattoo along Yoochun's back. "Mate. Forever friend and lover. Mine."

"Now you sound like Yunnie-ah." Yoochun laughed, turning to grab at the bunny and placing it on the night stand by their bed. "Mine, mine and mine. No one else. No one look... mine!"

"Yunho taught me a few things about jealousy and possessiveness." Junsu nodded, his arm reaching around Yoochun's waist. "He told me about how my body would burn and how hard it would be to ignore Jaejoong draping over your body. And he was right. My stomach twitches every time I see the two of you together, wrapped tight and whispering but I know that you're just sharing secrets... and that you'll always come back to me.. because you're mine."

"And you're mine as well." Yoochun bent forward, capturing Junsu's lower lip with his teeth, a gentle nip before sucking the plumpness into his moist mouth. "There's no where else I would rather be. No one else I'd rather be with."

"Think Min would mind if he didn't see us this evening?" Junsu asked, cupping Yoochun's face in his hands. Staring at the other man's features, he found loyalty and love in the goofy smile he adored. His thumb pads traced over Yoochun's strong chin, trailing along his lover's cheek until he rounded the beauty spot under Yoochun's right cheekbone.

"Min's off with his... new friend." Yoochun licked under Junsu's chin, finding the sweet saltiness of his lover spreading over his tongue. "I doubt he even remembers where he lives right now."

"Are we ever going to meet this new friend?" Junsu rubbed his lover's nose with his index finger, a sly smile forming when Yoochun wrinkled his brow. "I think Minnie-ah is afraid we'll tear him apart. Joongie-ah has already said that no one is good enough for our Changmin. I think that frightened him."

"I'd be more afraid of Yunho than Jaejoong." Micky replied, sucking on Junsu's fingertip. Reciting the credo Yunho used to threaten the last person who came sniffing around their youngest, Yoochun said, "Break Min's heart, we break your legs. Five as one."

"Five as one." Junsu agreed, fitting against Yoochun's body. "So, how long until we get the hyungs back?"

"A day or so." Yoochun reached for the bunny, turning it firmly around to face the wall. Turning onto his side, Micky bent to kiss Junsu's shoulder, the baritone's hand wandering down the other's side. "Come closer. That rabbit shouldn't be the only thing in this room with wet teeth marks on its ass."

* * *

Changmin stood at the door of the coffee shop, unsure if he should go inside and wait or linger outside, making it appear as if he were more detached than he felt. Nerves ran hot along his back and thighs, a tingling sensation he couldn't shake. Nervously, the singer adjusted the lapel of his jacket, wondering for the umpteenth time if he'd made a mistake in dressing in jeans and a leather coat. Changmin looked down at the shirt he wore, borrowed out of Jaejoong's dresser, a brash declaration of allegiance to a revolutionary idea that Changmin wondered if the singer even understood.

"Hello, babe." His voice invoked comfort and eroticism, a dark velvet purr that made Min's spine shiver in response. He stood close, a musky cologne lightly touching Min's senses, its rich scent redolent and promising.

"Hi." Changmin could have kicked himself, hearing his stale sounding greeting in his own ears. He wished for Jaejoong's skill with language or Yunho's ease with speaking to other people. In his stuttering Japanese, Changmin felt doubly foolish when he spoke, his tongue numb with want and the ache of this man.

"Your Japanese is improving." His laugh brought a blush to Min's face, the young man ducking down to hide his embarrassment.

A River of Kisses

"You can tell that from my saying hello?" Min cocked his head, a sloe eyed beauty silhouetted against the water-washed sun falling across the horizon behind him.

"I watched you on television yesterday morning."

"You watched me?" Changmin winced, biting down on the inside of his lip.

"Of course I watched you, babe." He looked away, nearly breaking Changmin's heart. "We should go someplace quieter. Where we can talk."

"Just talk?" Min's bravado, also borrowed from Jaejoong, surfaced.. a thread of steel in the quiet weald of his soul. He'd seen his hyung maneuver Yunho into admitting his affection, a carefully placed word laid like a bear trap for an unsuspecting foot.

"We can do more than talk..." With the lightest of grazes, his fingers found Min's mouth, tracing the young man's sensual pout. "You can practice your Japanese...I can practice other things."

"I think you do well enough with those other things." Changmin replied, his eyes casting about into the crowd. No one knew him here, people wandering about on their own errands. Min's attention drifted back to the face of the man who drew him in every time they spoke, tender and handsome... ruthless at times... always evocative.

Changmin stepped away from the doors, knowing the other would follow a step behind. A hand, strong and callused, lightly touched Min's back, tracing at the soft down under the t-shirt. Changmin swallowed hard, remembering the last time they'd met, nearly losing themselves in the consumption of a single kiss, tongues moist and hungry for one another's flesh.

"We'll get around to talking." Another touch, promising to reach down into Changmin's soul and open up every corner of his heart. The barest of kisses floated over the young man's temple, hot and spiced with a pledge to help Changmin soar. "We do talk...sometimes."

"Sometimes." Changmin agreed softly. "Mostly. That's what I like best about you... that we can... talk."

"That's what you like the best?" He turned, capturing Changmin against a hard wall, a shadowy niche providing them with a discreet shelter.

He lingered, taking his time exploring the sweetness of the young man he pressed into. A dulcet moan reached up from Min's belly, blooming with each stroke of the other's tongue against his lips, urging the young man to give into the intensity of their caresses. Closing his eyes tight, Changmin fell into the seduction, wanting to trust the man who held him fast... needing to find a foothold in the soul that enraptured his own.

"I was wrong." Changmin whispered when he could finally speak, breathless and wanting more. "That... is what I like best."

"That's only the beginning of it, babe." His laugh was a splash of whiskey on sunlight, erotically addictive and warm in Changmin's belly. "I've got a lot of things I want to show you... want to do to you...want to do with you. That is...if you want me to."

"I want." Min raised his eyes, finding the other's gaze with a steadiness he barely felt. "I very much want you to."

* * *

Yunho grazed his tongue over Jae's back, tasting and licking every inch of his lover's skin. The singer lay quiet, biting at the corner of a pillow, trying to fight back the mewls climbing out of his throat. His stomach clenched in response to Yunho's touch, feathering erotic sensations Jae allowed to flow over his body. Pleasure lay in every gasping twitch of his nerves, curling a semi-sweet ribbon over his thighs and into the stem of his brain. Tendrils exploded into bursts of sparks behind Jae's closed eyes, the scent of Yunho's body filling his mind.

"You smell like... spring and... lemon grass." Jae purred, unable to stay silent when Yunho kissed his way up Jaejoong's back, leaving a trail of wet smudges along the dip of the singer's spine. Sighing, Jae twisted his shoulders around, keeping his hips flat on the bed. Looking up into his lover's warm eyes, Jae craned to suckle at Yunho's lower lip, wanting to swallow some taste of the other man into his soul.

"You slice me apart sometimes." Yunho admitted, rolling Jaejoong over the rest of the way, flattening the singer underneath him. Covering Jae with his body, Yunho stretched his arms up, capturing Jae's wrists in his long fingers and guiding the singer's arms up over the pillow.

"What do you mean?" Jae released the tension in his shoulders, allowing himself to be held down against the bed.

Yunho's need for control manifested in small ways, often intimate possessive motions that were easy to give into, falling away when Jae needed to lead, their desires a pair of hummingbirds flying an aerial ballet through their souls. After pressing a gentle kiss along Jae's exposed throat, Yunho rested his chin on his lover's chest, meeting Jae's inquisitive gaze. Thinking for a moment, Yunho tried to find the words to express himself, searching deep inside of his mind until he formed a picture he could draw in his lover's thoughts.

"I'm different when I'm around you....when I'm inside of you, things change.. get brighter... deeper." Yunho whispered. "Through everything that we've struggled through, even when we fight, I turn around and all I can do is search for your face amid the crowd or feel my attention wander until I hear your voice. You once told me that loving someone means handing them your heart and now, I understand exactly what you mean."

"When you're angry at me..." Yunho started.

A River of Kisses

"You're angry at me much more than I'm angry at you." Jaejoong reminded him, pursing his lips in a growl.

"Shut up for a moment." Yunho sucked on his lover's mouth, silencing Jae with a sloppy kiss. "Let me talk this out."

"When you're angry at me," Yunho ignored Jae's knowing smile, continuing on. "I want to do anything to make you... happy or just to make you start talking to me again. And even though I know you can't hold a grudge for long, that hour or so is agony. It's like I made a knife out of my own pain, sharpened it and handed it to you to stab into my heart. Nothing hurts as much as your anger. Nothing can make me cry as hard as when you're in pain. I didn't understand that when we first...began this. Now, I understand it fully."

"Why are you telling me this now?" Jae shifted, lowering his arms down over his lover's shoulders as Yunho released his wrists. "Did I hurt you? I'm sorry..."

"No, you didn't hurt me, Boo." Yunho shook his head, fending off Jae's worry. "I needed to tell you this now because I wanted to share how I felt. In the years that we've been together, I always felt like you ... knew... how to love and I was following around behind you, picking up scraps and bits without really understanding what was going on. I knew I loved you... and I could feel how much you made me feel but I couldn't understand it."

"Coming here to Japan, it felt like I was just taking a piece of my home with me." The leader said softly. "I wasn't worried about anything because you were coming with me. It made me realize that you and I are... knitted together. It's not just sex or even a romance... it's my life and you're woven into every bit of my world."

"Things might be different once we're not living in each other's pockets." Jaejoong warned. "You and I... we can't get away from one another. It might be different if we ever become soloists."

"Can you see me doing anything without you nearby?" Yunho laughed, a taint of bitter in his sweet voice. "I can't even go visit my parents without calling you every few hours to see how you are. I can't live without knowing that you breathe. You cough and my lungs ache. I know you feel the same way."

"I do." Jaejoong admitted, ducking his head down, shy under the other's intense scrutiny. "I just didn't want you to feel as if I... clung too much or too hard."

"No, Boo." The leader replied. "You're fine. If anything, I wish sometimes you'd touch me more in public but I know you're.. frightened of how it would affect the others. And I'm okay with that. But one day, we're not going to hide this anymore. I guess I need to know if you're okay with that. Can you be with me one day... out in the open?"

"Yes." The singer responded, the whisper of agreement flaming the embers in his eyes. "I can do that. For you, Yunnie-ah, I can do that."

"Love you, Boo." Yunho reached under his lover's hips, sliding one of the pillows under the small of Jaejoong's back. "And I want to love you. Never want to stop loving you. Ever."

Bending over, he kissed at the soft spot under Jae's chin, working his way over to one of the singer's collarbones, leaving a red trail of tiny bites behind him. Reaching under with his fingers, Yunho stroked at Jae's heat, feeling the slickness there and pressing in a single fingertip, watching with great satisfaction as the other man arched his back, a slow hiss escaping his open mouth.

"Yunnie..." Jaejoong gasped, the tight heat of his body closing in over Yunho's intrusion. "Slow... please.. slow."

"I want to take my time, baby." Yunho grappled for the tube he'd abandoned on the sheets, squeezing out a dollop of warming gel. Another hiss and then a sweet moaning plea slithered from Jae's open mouth. "I want you to feel all of me... feel how much I want you and how much I love you."

He moved slowly into his lover, letting Jae's body adjust around him, a lingering seductive journey into a velvet heat Yunho loved to fall into. Yunho's hand reached up to grip Jae's heel, the dancer's sensitive fingers stroking at the long tendons of his lover's ankle, ringing around the bump of bone he found there. Careful of Jae's healed knee, Yunho cradled the singer's legs in his hands, working the man's calves up until they firmly rested on his shoulders.

Rocking his hips, Jae met Yunho's easing flesh, rolling with the undulating curve of his lover's body. Yunho's muscles clenched tight, his rear flexing and holding as he plunged deeper into Jaejoong, drawing out Jae's moans into long keening mewls. Jae reached for his lover's shoulders, wanting to push the other man deeper, until Yunho met the column of bones in his back, his need for Yunho breaking Jae open with the need for his lover's body.

"Never stop, Yunnie." Jae thrust, running his hands through Yunho's dark hair. He ached inside, wanting only Yunho. With Yunho, he was never alone.

There'd been many times when the rain hit the windows of Scarlet's apartment, the tap-tap-tap of a torrent dancing over the tin roof while he lay on the couch, his heart crying silently in its loneliness. Jaejoong wept in the dark until his eyes were swollen shut, salt crusted over his long lashes, every tear gilded silver with a wish for someone to look at him with love, to hold him in their hearts despite his flaws. He'd searched faces, looking for the soul with his name inscribed upon it. Then when a dark-eyed, masculine dancer walked into his life, Jaejoong found the other half of his essence embodied in Yunho's strength.

A River of Kisses

"Never stop loving me... please." Jae whispered, hot in Yunho's ear. Thunder called out to him, a rolling boom across the sky. Dragons lay in the clouds, screaming as they mated, echoing Yunho's growls against Jaejoong's neck.

"I won't, Boo." Yunho slowed, drawing himself out then easing into Jae, fitting his hips against the curve in Jae's body. "I can't. Any more than I could stop breathing. My heart is yours even when it stops beating...only yours, baby."

* * *

Yoochun stretched his legs out, hooking his feet around Junsu's ankle, the couch in their apartment chosen for its width and vibrant red hue. The spill of water-drenched sunlight from a picture window lent a buttery warmth to the room, touching on the soft bamboo wall paint. Junsu's attention was fixed on the large screen television dominating the room, his eyes following the curving vista of a video game, the digital roar of car engines interspersed with the singer's shouts as he careened his race car to the side.

They lay in opposite directions of the couch, one of Junsu's legs propped up on a couch cushion, his torso twisting as he urged his car forward, his arms gesticulating wildly as he shouted at the screen. Yoochun's boneless sprawl pulled at Junsu's interest, his eyes wavering for a moment on the stretch of Yoochun's stomach peeking out from under his shirt hem.

Lightly tanned from a few days spent basking in the sun, Yoochun's skin glowed, a beacon enticing Junsu from his game. A game siren screamed for the tenor's attention, Junsu's race car dangerously close to kissing the side of a building as his fingers allowed the vehicle to drift across the screen. The sun hit Yoochun's face, casting fringed shadows onto his cheeks, the singer's long lashes a straight line of soot over his dark sienna eyes. When Yoochun blinked, Junsu felt the world grew darker, the brilliance of Chunnie's soul hidden from view for a split second.

Working his arms up over his head, Yoochun worked a cramp from his back, his sweats sliding down his slender hips, catching on a jut of bone. A dusting of silky smooth hair crept down from around Yoochun's belly button, traversing down into a line over his underbelly and down past the drawn waistband of his pants. Familiar with the terrain, Junsu instinctively sought out the three minute beauty spots on the stretch of skin over Yoochun's right hip.

Junsu knew the taste of those three dots, a constellation on his lover's skin that held nearly all of the sweetness of Yoochun's soul. His tongue grew dry, thirsty for that sugared musk and Junsu swallowed hard, shoving the lingering need from his thoughts.

Yoochun continued to stare out the window, watching the world go by, oblivious of Junsu's surreptitious perusal. Junsu fought to keep his mind on the game, his gaze floating back to those damned three spots, the brown specks too dry for his liking. After Junsu slammed his car into a wall for the

third time, he tossed the controller to the side and jumped across Yoochun's body, gnawing at the other's neck with a fierce giggle.

"Hey! Hey!" Yoochun nearly toppled from the couch, startled by Junsu's attack. "What the hell?"

"You were driving me insane." Junsu complained. "You know how hard it is to play a video game while you're posing on the couch?"

"I wasn't posing!" Yoochun shoved at Junsu's shoulders, trying to pin the other to the couch. Junsu's wiry body slithered across the fabric, his toned body nearly impossible to contain. Junsu hooked one leg over Yoochun's hip, twisting and scissoring until he trapped the other man in a tight grip.

"Hah!" Junsu exulted, slamming his hands down on the arm of the couch and bent over Yoochun's torso, lowering his face until he nearly touched Yoochun's mouth with a firm pout. "I win. Kiss me."

Yoochun squinted at his lover, grimacing while turning his head away, playfully refusing to capitulate Junsu's demands. "No, I won't be held hostage by..."

"Hostage?!" Junsu interrupted, biting at Yoochun's throat. "You're mine. You're like... a war trophy! Hah! Spoils! Kiss me! Your warlord demands it."

"Warlord?" Yoochun turned and laughed at Junsu's silly grimace, the young man trying to mimic a samurai mask they'd seen at a museum. "You're too short to be a warlord! Here... take your kiss. Your legs are cutting off the circulation in my butt."

Yoochun let his hands roam up from Junsu's waist, sliding his fingers over the other man's chest, stroking at the hardening points on Junsu's pectorals. Slanting his head, Yoochun delved into his lover's taste, drawing on Junsu's lips until the other man gasped into Yoochun's mouth. Their tongues tangled, warred then surrendered under the onslaught, turning tender as they laved at the sweetness they found in one another.

Junsu mourned the shortness of his lover's hair, unable to do anything more than scrape at the soft locks that were growing out. Running through the shorn silk, Junsu laughed into Yoochun's mouth, hearing the echo of his joy against the other's soft palate.

"You make me happy, Chunnie." Junsu whispered, licking at the edges of Yoochun's mouth, taking his time to explore the other's lips with his own. "I love that you make me laugh."

"Junnie-ah, you laugh at everything." Yoochun kissed Junsu's chest, feeling the throb of life under the other's skin. "You're easy to make laugh, even at the smallest things."

"You make me laugh harder then." The tenor insisted, touching Yoochun's mouth with his fingertips. "Any time there is anger in the world, I think about you and it goes away. You're my rain. You wash everything clean."

A River of Kisses

"That's me, Chunnie-soap." Stretching, the young man braced his hands on Junsu's hips, holding the singer firm against him. "I'm glad you're with me, Susu-ah. I'm glad you love me."

"I'm glad you love me too." Tender, Junsu's voice washed through Yoochun's soul, gentle and healing the burrs in his soul. "We're good together, Chunnie-ah. I like how we fit into each other... our bodies and our hearts."

"We do fit together." Yoochun agreed, rubbing his cheek against Junsu's face. Knitted together, their bodies grew warmer, heating the sparse air between them. "I like how we fit."

"You want to go fit together in our bedroom?" Junsu waggled his eyebrows, a playful seducer with a glint in his eye. Eliciting a giggle out of Yoochun, the tenor growled lightheartedly. "You think that's funny?"

"I do." Yoochun nodded, his cheeks plump and pink. "I was thinking we could just fit together right here. The others are out and how often do we get to..."

"Ah, I made a promise to our leader." Junsu lifted his body free of Yoochun, swinging his legs down off the sofa and holding his hands out to his lover. "I promised that we would never ever make love on the living room furniture. He promised that he and Jae would do the same."

"Considerate." Yoochun debated the issue in his mind, taking Junsu's hand and letting the tenor lift him up. "I suppose I love Jaejoong but not enough to..."

"Aish, don't say it." Junsu wiped at his ears, trying to keep the thought of Yunho and Jaejoong from lodging in his mind. "I don't want that in my brain. I don't want to see Yunnie-ah and BooJae doing that. Only you and me. We're going to have to make love on this couch just to get that out of my brain!"

"Come on, Susu-ah." Yoochun tugged at his lover, sliding an arm around Junsu's waist. "I won't let that stick. I've got ways to make sure that everything but me is going to slither right out."

"Well, I hope it stays in there for a little bit. Maybe even a long while." Junsu teased, his voice husky and dark with desire. "Otherwise, it wouldn't be much fun."

* * *

"Have you told the others about me?"

Changmin froze in mid-pour, nearly overflowing his glass with water. Sitting back on the couch, the young man mulled the question, wondering what he should tell the man who muddled his thought. His mind had long been his strength but the man sitting next to him, legs splayed apart in wait for Changmin's lean body to settle into its V, drove nearly all of Min's common sense from his brain. A misty veil hung over their hushed whispers, as if they spoke too loud, not wanting the world to overhear them as they talked about how they felt and what they saw.

Now faced with the reality of the outside world, Changmin wanted nothing more than to bury himself into his friend's body and keep himself safe from any prying eyes or probing questions. Min felt selfish, not wanting to share the man with the others. Shame embedded in his heart, Min's guilt over hiding his burgeoning affair from the other members but everything was too...new and thrilling, a delicate sweet experience that Changmin feared would burst like a soap bubble if pressed too hard.

"Babe, did you hear me?" He reached for Min's shoulder, a warm hand closing over the young man's slighter frame.

"I heard you. And I..." Min set his glass down, sliding cautiously over the buttery brown leather sofa and settling between his friend's spread legs. Facing the other man, Changmin placed his palms on the other's thighs, crossing his legs. "I guess I don't know what to say to them. How do I tell them that... we're..."

"That I'm spending long hours seducing you?" That brought a burning blush to Changmin's serious features, his eyes crinkling as he ducked his head, trying to maintain some sense of composure in the face of the brazen overture.

The man's thumb, broad and rough, ran over the flat of Min's chin, curving up around the younger man's jaw until he reached the soft downy skin under Min's ear. Resting the young man's face in his wide palm, the man searched for doubt in Min's eyes, seeing the youthful exuberance and enormous intelligence that drew him to Shim Changmin but none of the shadowy hedging he'd once seen in Kim Jaejoong's eyes when he looked at them.

"Do you think they would object to me... seducing you?" He laughed at the rising pink in Min's cheeks. "Ah, you think they will."

"No." Changmin shook his head. The word seduction touched at some part of him that wanted the danger of being lured into a relationship, falling into love with someone wholly inappropriate although by all things considered, the other man had done nothing untoward. "Maybe. I don't know. You've been... nice to me. Safe.

"Then I must be doing something wrong if you think that I'm safe." He muttered, hooking his hands on either side of Min's hips, dragging the younger man into him. Changmin landed hard, barely eliciting a response when he struck the other man's chest.

It was different kissing someone as inexperienced as Changmin but he found the young man to be a delightful refreshing change in his life. The world, so faded and worn from years of being seen through hardened eyes, suddenly became newer and brighter, a serious Min patiently unveiling the mysteries of the universe through thoughtful observations.

He'd been first pulled in by the quiet thinker of the group, a playful adult hidden behind a youthful mask. The weeks he'd spent coaxing Changmin to

A River of Kisses

trust him, always apart from the other members lest they edge him away as they'd done others who'd been interested in their youngest. Now, he'd followed them to Japan, circling around the young man, hoping that Changmin would see their relationship as something more than a passing affection.

His mouth found Changmin's, easing the younger man even closer until Min rested against him, the singer's leanness comfortable between his legs. Floating a kiss across Min's lips, he stroked the young man's back, reveling in the silky dust of hair he found there. Another lick of his tongue opened a part in Min's lips, allowing him to slide past and touch at the sweetness within. The man heard a dark, hoarse moan, realizing the guttural sound came from his own chest but the need for the young singer laying against him grew, threatening to steal all reason from him.

"You make it... hard for me to think." Changmin protested, pulling slightly away in an effort to clear his head. His heart pounded at his chest, threatening to break free from his ribcage and leap into the other's hands, begging to be taken. There were parts of his body that he didn't even realize were sensitive until the other touched him. Places he couldn't even imagine, like the back of his neck or under his chin.

"I can make it harder to think." He licked at the young man's temple, touching a shiver through Changmin's body. The singer's smile lifted the flat ridge of his upper lip, creasing his cheeks with a faint dimple. "Let me see how much harder it can be."

The innuendo was fierce, a direct shot of electricity to Changmin's centre, a promise of hot mouths and hotter kisses, long minutes spent exploring toned bodies and fingers touching places that no one has ever been. The other man suckled at Changmin's lower lip, hands roaming freely over the length of the singer's body until each inch of his skin sang under the other man's touch.

Gasping, Changmin clenched his hands into the other man's shirt, wrinkling the fabric between his closed fingers. His eyes fluttered, shutting against the immense pleasure flooding Min's senses. He wanted to fall into this delectable passion, letting it consume him whole. Kissing the man under him was like swimming in warm ocean water, the coral reefs below titillating and beautiful but holding more than a hint of danger. Long fingers under his shirt made him gasp as they stroked at his sides, finding the ridges of Min's rib cage with a practiced ease.

"So, babe..." He licked at Changmin's throat, working down the column until he got to Min's collar, pulling at the fabric until he found a swath of skin left untouched. His teeth marked a small welt into the virgin flesh, leaving a purple oval blemish that promised to stretch into a darker starburst. "We still are dancing around my original question or rather, the reason you haven't told them about me. Are you ashamed of what they would say?"

"No. Not that." Min leaned his head back, wondering how he'd gotten in so deep... and discovering he didn't care if he fell even deeper under the other man's thrall. "I guess... I'm afraid that they would want me... to give you up. And I don't... I'm not ready to do that."

"Do you think I would let you?" His eyes flashed dangerously, fierce longing fueled by an intense need for the younger man splayed over him. "Do you think I would just let you walk away from me without a word?"

"No." Changmin shook his head, shaken down to his bones at the passion in the other man's handsome face. Pushing at the other's dark hair, he licked his own mouth, finding his parched lips stuck together and bruised from the other's kisses. "I think that's what I'm more afraid of. I don't want the others to... get between us... especially since I don't think you're going to just let me go."

"You're right, baby." He nodded, wrapping his arms around the younger man's waist. "I'm not going to be satisfied until I have you screaming my name in the middle of the night because you miss me that much. Even then, I think I'll want more. The other members of Dong Bang Shin Ki are going to have to deal with that. Because I'm not letting anyone tell me that I can't seduce or love you. Not even the other four men in your life."