

The bonds that make us

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/24828778) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/24828778>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Monsta X (Band)
Relationships:	Im Changkyun I.M/Lee Jooheon , Im Changkyun I.M/Song Gunhee #GUN , Son Hyunwoo Shownu/Yoo Kihyun , Chae Hyungwon/Lee Minhyuk , Lee Hoseok Wonho/Yoo Kihyun , Im Changkyun I.M & Everyone
Characters:	Im Changkyun I.M , Yoo Kihyun , Lee Minhyuk (Monsta X) , Lee Jooheon , Lee Hoseok Wonho , Son Hyunwoo Shownu , Song Gunhee #GUN , Chae Hyungwon , Nu'Bility Ensemble
Additional Tags:	Past Rape/Non-con , Past Abuse , Non-Traditional Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics , Alpha Lee Jooheon , Alpha Song Gunhee #GUN , Alpha Lee Minhyuk (Monsta X) , Alpha Son Hyunwoo Shownu , Beta Yoo Kihyun , Beta Chae Hyungwon , Omega Im Changkyun I.M
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-06-20 Updated: 2021-07-27 Words: 21,255 Chapters: 7/?

The bonds that make us

by [Soft_Lani](#)

Summary

Changkyun had been through a lot in his life. Moving from country to country, almost debuting with Nu'bility, making it through No Mercy but it put a burden on him. The burden was deep and all he wanted was a hand to reach out and help him. And one day he got that in the form of an Alpha who decided to hold his hand softly.

Notes

This is my first fanfiction in the Monsta X fandom that I made. I will preface this with the fact that there might be spelling and grammar errors. I write and edit everything myself but I'm human and I miss things. If there is anything major please let me know in the comments or via dm. Thank you.

It begins with an apology

If there was one thing Changkyun knew well in this world, it was loneliness. He never let it show on his face to the others, though that the isolation they gave him during No Mercy hurt though because he was used to it. He was used to being alone. The problem with that, though, was that he was an Omega, a hidden one at that. His suppressants blocking his heats and scent blockers, blocking out any pheromones, made him look like a weak scented Beta. The problem with all of this was that Omegas are Pack driven by nature, and the fact that the others formed a pack, almost immediately after No Mercy ended. Changkyun was not a part of that hurt more than any of the loneliness he experienced previously. It hurt just as much as his broken pack bond with Nu'bility that still made him wary about getting close to people.

Maybe it was his fault for being too closed off, but he could not help it. When he joined the show, he was taken by surprise, and the others were hostile towards him, and that, coupled with his wariness, led to him being isolated. He tried reaching out to the others, but his hand was slapped back every time to the point that he just stopped trying. It had only been a couple of months since No Mercy, since the others made a Pack, and he was already at his wits end crying alone in his studio.

He felt so stupid to think that anything he had done up to this point was the right decision and got overwhelmed with the fact that he may never have that warm, comforting feeling of Pack ever again. A knock came at the door, and Changkyun quickly wiped his tears before turning around and opening the door. On the other side was Jooheon, "Hey managers said dance practice was canceled today, and I was wondering if you wanted to work on our setlist?"

"Sure, Hyung." Changkyun shuffled out of the way of the door so that Jooheon could enter the studio. The Alpha sniffed and smelt the scent of tears before taking a proper look at the younger male and seeing what a wreck he was. Dark circles, pale skin that looked unhealthy, tear tracks that ate through his makeup, and red eyes that showed they were recent too.

"Changkyun-ah, are you okay?" The Alpha surprised himself with how soft his own voice sounded at the question. He saw the younger bit his lip and curl into himself, "I'm fine, Hyung."

Changkyun shuffled further into the studio before sitting down and grabbing his notebook, where he kept all his lyrics. Jooheon sat next to him and started booting up the music software while Changkyun scribbled away for a bit, "Hyung?"

"Yes, Changkyun-ah?" Jooheon was happy; the other spoke to him. Ever since No Mercy ended, Jooheon did not know how to approach the other out of guilt. Guilt that he was angry at Changkyun for being on the team even though he knew Gunhee and him did not suit each other's rap style, Jooheon was too dominate compared to his friend and even more guilt that he gave into Hoseok to make a Pack with everyone except for Changkyun.

"I... It's nothing, never mind." Changkyun gripped his pen tighter briefly. The Alpha frowned, "Changkyun-ah, are you sure you're okay?"

“I’m fine, Hyung.” Jooheon could see the other’s shoulders tense at the question and frown even more. Was this his fault? Was he the reason that the younger kept telling the Alpha that he was fine when he wasn’t?

“Changkyun-ah,” Jooheon licked his lips, “I know it might be too late, but I want to say I’m sorry.” Changkyun’s head snapped up to look at Jooheon, and the older wanted to cry at the surprised look he got. “I shouldn’t have been angry at you and ignored you when the team was finalized. That was wrong of me.”

“It’s fine, Hyung I... I understand why you did.” Changkyun looked back down at his notebook, not wanting Jooheon to see the tears that were welling up in his eyes even though he knew the Alpha could probably smell them.

“Even if you understand Changkyun-ah, it doesn’t mean it was right of me to do.” Jooheon placed his hand on the others hand and paused when he felt the other tense at the touch, “I should not have directed that anger to you, and I am sorry. I haven’t been the best Hyung, hell I haven’t even been the best group member, but from now on, I promise I’ll be here for you if you need me, okay?” He slowly rubbed his thumb over Changkyun’s skin, wanting to give some comfort to the younger. “It’s okay if you don’t trust me right away. I deserve that since I abandoned,” Changkyun bit his lip at that word, “you for something that was not your fault, but I’ll be here from now on.”

“But what about the other Hyungs.” The words tumbled out of Changkyun’s mouth. He did not want to get his hopes up.

“They... They don’t know I’m apologizing, and I think they need to apologize for their actions too.” Jooheon kept rubbing his thumb over Changkyun’s hand, and the Omega slowly relaxed at the gesture again, “we all played a part in hurting you not just for leaving you but for making a Pack without you. But be patient with them, Changkyun-ah, okay? They still don’t see the pain their actions have caused, and they might not see it for a while, they’re very stubborn.”

Changkyun nodded, “but you’re saying I can come to you, Hyung?”

“That’s right, Changkyun-ah. I’m here if you need me.” Jooheon watched the younger think before he felt the hand, he was holding shift, and he left the other carefully position his hand so that they were holding hands with their fingers interlaced.

“So, I can hold your hand like this now, Hyung?” The question was so quiet, and Jooheon could smell the other’s apprehension and fear.

“Yeah, you can hold my hand like this whenever you want.” Jooheon watched as the other gave a small smile and started writing in his notebook again, and Jooheon turned back to the computer to work on a few compositions that they had planned for the setlist. There was silence other than the music in the studio, but it was not awkward or tense like the previous weeks, and for the two there, that was enough for now.

After a while, Jooheon got a text from Kihyun that dinner would be ready soon and the Alpha should return to the dorm, Jooheon also noticed that Changkyun did not get the same text as

his phone did not go off. The Alpha furrowed his brows, and his scent leaked with annoyance, which made Changkyun tense at the shift in mood. Jooheon messaged Kihyun that he would be staying at the studio longer and to eat dinner without him and took a deep breath to try and calm himself. After a few moments, he looked at Changkyun, “What do you want to eat, Kyun-ah?”

Jooheon did not expect the younger's reaction of ripping his hand away from the other and curling into himself, “Don't call me that.” Changkyun did not want to be reminded of his broken Pack, and tears started falling from his eyes, which made the Alpha panic.

Jooheon knelt in of Changkyun and placed a hand on his cheek, wiping away the tears with this thumb, “I'm sorry. I didn't know. What would you rather be called?”

Changkyun leaned into Jooheon's hand; it was the first time in a while that someone had touched him with such care, “anything but that Hyung. I don't like being called that.”

Jooheon did not like how defeated Changkyun sound but knew that the other would probably not open to him if he asked. “Okay, how about Kyunnie, and you can call me Heony that way we have nicknames that rhyme. Sound good?” Changkyun nodded and slowly reached up with his hand to hold Jooheon's.

The Alpha did not move to let everything happen at the younger's pace, and Jooheon had a fleeting thought that the younger reminded him of a lot of his Omega friends. He brushed off that thought, though, as the younger did not smell like an Omega.

“Let's eat at the studio today Kyunnie, what do you want to eat?” Jooheon smiled as there were no more tears coming out of Changkyun's eyes.

“Can we get ramen?”

“Yeah, I'll order some right now.” Jooheon stood up and pulled his phone out so he could order food, and Changkyun moved over to the couch. The chair was starting to get uncomfortable, and the day was emotionally exhausting already. With the food ordered, Jooheon turned back to the computer to save his files and close the programs he was using before turning to the couch where he saw that Changkyun had fallen asleep. Not missing an opportunity, he took a picture of the younger since he thought he looked adorable. After he snapped a photo, his phone started ringing, and he saw it was Kihyun calling him. Jooheon left the studio and stood outside the door before answering the phone.

“Why are you staying at the studio, Lee Jooheon it's dinner time.”

Jooheon wanted to growl at that. He only took orders from the Pack Alpha, and that was not Kihyun. Controlling himself with a deep breath, he replied, “Kyunnie and I are eating in the studio. We are going to work some more on some songs to go in our debut album potentially.”

“Kyunnie?”

“Changkyun.” Jooheon almost scoffed, that should have been obvious since the nickname was based off his name. “I’m calling him Kyunnie now. No one else is allowed; that’s my nickname for him.”

“I doubt anyone else is going to give a nickname to that kid. Whatever next time, let me know ahead of time if you are going to skip out on Pack dinners.”

Jooheon bristled at that, “I’ll see you guys when I get home after we’re done here.” He shut the phone cutting off Kihyun’s yell and took deep breaths to try and control his rising anger. He thanked Gunhee and his mother for making sure he had ways to control himself, but at the same time, he wanted to call Kihyun back and go off on him even if it meant pissing off Hyunwoo, his mate, and the Pack Alpha.

The breaths were not working, so he walked down to the vending machines and got a couple of drinks for him and Changkyun and waited outside for their food. The brisk winter air helped him a lot with cooling his temper, and he felt grateful as even with his small interactions with Changkyun today, he noticed the other get extremely tense when the Alpha was careless with his anger and annoyance. It made Jooheon feel horrible as usual when someone had a reaction like that; it was because they were on the receiving end of said anger most of the time. On the other hand, it also made Jooheon curious as to what happened to Changkyun in the past to make that reaction so ingrained in him that even annoyance set it off and not just anger.

When the delivery man got there, Jooheon took the food and went back to the studio to see Changkyun still sleeping on the couch. Placing the ramen on the small coffee table, they had Jooheon gently shook Changkyun’s shoulder to wake him up and was once again surprised by the younger’s reaction.

“I’m up. I’m up. I’m sorry. I’m up.” Changkyun curled into the corner, not seeing Jooheon, and the elder took his hands and softly whispered, “Kyunnie, it’s me, Jooheon. Wherever you are, it’s not real. We are in our studio at Starship.” He slowly repeated his words, just like his therapist had done so many times when he went for anger management until Changkyun’s eyes regained some clarity.

“Sorry, Heony-hyung.” Jooheon’s lips quirked upward at the hyung attached to the nickname he told Changkyun to call him.

“You’re good, Kyunnie. The ramen got here, which is why I woke you up. After you eat, you can go back to sleep, okay?” Changkyun nodded after looking at Jooheon’s face for a bit. The Alpha did not know what the younger was looking for, but he hoped the younger found what he was looking for. The two ate in silence, and when Changkyun started dozing off in his almost done bowl, Jooheon moved the bowl away and took the chopsticks out of the younger’s hand. He maneuvered the half-asleep 19-year-old, so his head was on his lap and started petting his hair to help him fall asleep faster.

“I’m glad you talked to me, Heony-hyung.” Changkyun slurred sleepily. So sleepily, Jooheon was surprised but felt as though Changkyun was his most honest at this moment.

“Yeah, Kyunnie?”

“Yeah, it makes it less lonely here.” Jooheon’s hand paused at those words, but Changkyun was too far gone in sleep to realize. *We royally fucked up. How could we think leaving this kid alone was a good idea at all?* Jooheon sighed deeply as he looked at Changkyun’s face guilt, eating at him as he thought of all the times he turned the kid away. *I’ll make it up to Kyunnie. I swear I’ll make up for leaving you alone.* He resumed petting the younger’s hair lost in thought about what he could do to make it up to the younger. Eventually, he fell asleep without knowing and unknowingly also missed multiple texts and calls from the other members as he put his phone on silent earlier when he was angry at Kihyun.

Kihyun grumbled under his breath as he and Hyunwoo traveled to the agency. It was past midnight, and both Jooheon and the brat were not home, which made him worried about his Pack member. Hyunwoo had his arm wrapped around the Beta to try and calm him a little bit, but it did not help with Kihyun’s mood one bit, especially since the last conversation he had with Jooheon did not end well with the younger hanging upon him. Reaching the company and entering the warm building after walking in the freezing winter night made Kihyun even more furious, and he quickly grabbed a key from the receptionist for the studio room in case it was locked. When they got to the door, Hyunwoo opened it, and the sight inside shocked both him and Kihyun.

There Jooheon was with the kid’s head resting on his lap, Jooheon’s hand laid on the kid’s neck protectively, and Changkyun’s head was curled to the older rapper’s stomach with one of his hands gripping Jooheon’s shirt. The scene made it look like Jooheon was protecting the kid from the world, which was the total opposite attitude from that past few weeks. Kihyun’s anger grew at the site because Jooheon skipped out on Pack dinner and instead not only ate with the brat but is now sleeping comfortably with someone that was not Pack. At the scent of anger in the air Hyunwoo grabbed Kihyun’s neck to keep him in place, but what they did not expect was for Changkyun to whimpers at the scent of rage and for Jooheon to awaken immediately and glare at them.

His eyes were tired with haze, and Hyunwoo gave him a few seconds to recognize them before speaking. “It’s late, Jooheon-ah.”

“Ah, I didn’t realize I fell asleep, Hyung,” Jooheon answered, carefully watching Kihyun. He did not move his hand from Changkyun’s neck even though he knew Changkyun was awake by his tensed muscles.

“Why did you not pick up the phone earlier?” Kihyun bit out. He was cold and bitter that Jooheon did not come home earlier, so his tone was biting.

“I was busy, Hyung.”

“Too busy to let your Pack know you’re safe?” Kihyun glared.

“Well, clearly, I was also tired and fell asleep, so yeah, I was too busy.” Jooheon snapped but did not move as to give Changkyun some sense of protection and comfort. The smell of distress was rolling off him in waves. Jooheon knew the other two smelt it too, but since they were not doing anything about it, this was the spot that could keep Changkyun the safest.

“Jooheon-ah,” Hyunwoo spoke, and his tone was that of disappointment that made Jooheon want to submit to the other for forgiveness, but he held strong if only for Changkyun. Hyunwoo’s inaction to help the youngest only added to the problem and made him unfit for being a leader in Jooheon’s eyes.

“I had my phone on silent, so even if you did call or message, I would not have heard it. Let me and Kyunnie clean up, and then we’ll leave with you guys.” Jooheon stared at Hyunwoo, challenging him, and it was the first time Kihyun had seen the rapper challenge their leader since the end of No Mercy, which set him on edge. Hyunwoo just sighed, knowing that if he did not budge a little, it would turn ugly, especially since he knew it was his mate that instigated the other Alpha. “You have 10 minutes. Kihyun and I will wait in the lobby for you.”

Hyunwoo pulled Kihyun out of the room before his mate could protest, and Jooheon relaxed when the door closed—looking down at the other rapper, he rubbed his thumb against the Changkyun’s neck to calm him down. “Hey, Kyunnie, it’s alright. You’re safe. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

“Sorry for getting you in trouble, Heony-hyung.”

“I told you I’m here for you from now on. If I get in trouble because of you, it’s worth it, Kyunnie. Don’t apologize, okay?”

Changkyun paused as that little bit of hope that he said he would not hold onto wedged itself in his heart. “I’m not worth getting in trouble for with your Pack.”

“Yes, you are, and I’m the one that gets to decide that.”

Changkyun paused again and turned to look up at Jooheon’s face. The Alpha’s eyes were sincere, so Changkyun just meekly nodded before getting up to start tidying up the studio with Jooheon.

“Why did you let him get away with challenging you, Hyunwoo.” Kihyun sniped, looking at his mate with confusion and anger.

“It was the only way not to fight Kihyun. You should recognize the way he was treating the kid. It’s the same way I treat others if they are a threat to you.” Hyunwoo ran his hand up and down Kihyun’s back. His pressure was firm and constant, with slow even pacing.

“But why would he do that? He liked that cheater just as much as the rest of the Pack not even days ago.” Kihyun leaned into Hyunwoo’s touch.

“Things can change, Kihyun.” Hyunwoo hummed, “it seems to me that Jooheon has let go of his anger and accepted Changkyun-ah.”

“Even so, why would he choose him over Pack?” Kihyun grumbled. His words lost the anger that was held in the earlier, and now it was mostly just sad.

“You could always ask him later. Not tonight though he’ll be too high-strung tonight.”

Hyunwoo knew that his mate was just upset that he had not seen Jooheon all day, and for a relatively new Pack like theirs was that felt like an eternity. He felt it, and he knew the others felt it too but Kihyun more acutely as he viewed all his Pack members as people, he needed to take care of. He watched as the two youngest finally made their appearance in the lobby and took note that Jooheon was holding hands with the other.

No words were exchanged as the four set out to the dorms Hyunwoo and Kihyun, leading with the rappers following. Hyunwoo knew this was Changkyun’s way of trying to stay invisible and Jooheon’s way of protecting the younger non-Pack member from them. It hurt to know that his Pack member did not trust them at that moment, and Hyunwoo forced down the creeping feeling of sadness. He had to be reasonable as a leader and not be led by emotion.

When they reached the dorm, Kihyun and Hyunwoo went to their room to get ready for bed, and Jooheon and Changkyun did the same. Luckily Minhyuk, who they shared a room with, was a deep sleeper, so they were able to get ready for bed with relative ease. “When you get up tomorrow, wake me up too, Kyunnie, okay? I’ll walk you to the studio.” Jooheon ran his hand through Changkyun’s hair wanting to take away the tension the other felt in the dorm. He felt horrible, not realizing how Changkyun felt before now, his mother and sister would be disappointed in him.

“Okay.”

Jooheon smiled at the younger, “Okay, good night Kyunnie.”

“Night Hyung,” Changkyun whispered before climbing to the top bunk and curling up under his blanket. The day felt like a dream already with Jooheon extending his hand to Changkyun this time and defending him against his own Pack. There was no way it was real. When he woke up tomorrow, everything would be back to normal with Jooheon ignoring him. He could not hope for it to be real.

Hoseok woke up to Kihyun and Hyunwoo, entering the room and sat up watching the two get ready for bed, smelling the distress from Kihyun. “What’s wrong, Ki?” His voice low from sleep and his hand reaching out to the Beta. Kihyun moved onto the bed and settled next to Hoseok, holding his hand.

“Jooheon is mad at me.”

Hoseok tilted his head before pulling the Beta closer to him and feeling Hyunwoo settle near them, knowing that Kihyun wanted Hoseok’s comforting words more than his silence at the moment. “Why do you think that?”

“I got mad at him for skipping Pack dinner and not calling us when it got late. He saw me as a threat to the kid.” Hoseok looked at Hyunwoo, and the other Alpha nodded in confirmation. Hoseok pulled Kihyun closer to cuddle the Beta, “I understand you’re angry and sad Jooheon-ah missed Pack time, but Kihyun, you also have to remember he is an Alpha. He may control himself better than me, Hyunwoo, and Minhyuk, but he might have taken that anger as a challenge. We’re still getting used to being a Pack, so we are going to step on each

other's toes sometimes, okay? It's okay for you to be upset, but it's also okay for Jooheon-ah to be upset. You understand, Ki?"

Kihyun felt miserable but nodded. He did understand, but he did not like it. Maybe Hoseok and Hyunwoo were right, and he needed to talk to Jooheon. He hated and loved their Pack bond at that moment. He loved the connection he felt to his Pack, but it was making his emotions go out of balance when he usually was the most stable besides Hyunwoo. Hoseok and Hyunwoo laid down with Kihyun in between them, hoping it would give comfort to the other.

Emotions can be messy

Chapter Notes

Instead of finishing a lab and doing both my finals that are due Sunday, I decided to finish editing and post this instead. I hope you enjoy it!

Changkyun woke up and flopped his hand over his phone to turn off the alarm. Rubbing his eyes, he sat up before stumbling his way down the bunk ladder to the bathroom. He felt more awake as his feet hit the cold tile, and he opened the medicine cabinet and pulled out his mug that hid his medication inside. He grimaced as he swallowed the foul-tasting suppressant and tried washing to taste down with water and the taste of toothpaste as he brushed his teeth. He hopped into the shower and quickly washed up before taking the scent blockers he hid in his shower-caddy out and rubbing them into his scent glands. They were cold and uncomfortable that left his scent glands feeling numb after he rubbed them in.

Getting dressed, he quietly walked through the dorm, where everyone was sleeping back to his room. Looking at Jooheon, he reached out and gently shook the Alpha awake and was surprised when Jooheon smiled at him sleepily, "Morning Kyunnie."

"Morning, Heony-hyung," Changkyun whispered.

"I'll be ready quickly; just wait for me in the living room." Changkyun nodded and left the room so Jooheon could get ready. Sitting on the couch, he fiddled with his phone, flipping between different apps waiting patiently for the Alpha. It did not take long for Jooheon to get ready, and he grabbed Changkyun's hand as they left the dorm. "We have dance practice in the afternoon, but we can hang out in the studio until then."

"Okay, Hyung. But Heony-hyung," Changkyun chewed his lip, not sure how to word what he wanted to say.

"Yeah, Kyunnie?" Jooheon glanced at the younger.

"You should probably head back to the dorm after you drop me off." Changkyun looked down at the ground with his ears turning red, "I'm happy you are walking me, but if you have a new Pack Bond, you should spend time with them; otherwise, it will hurt all of you."

Jooheon was surprised at the advice, "Kyunnie- "

"It's something I read in a book, and I don't want you to hurt yourself. It said that not seeing Pack members at least once a day can have negative effects." Changkyun stuttered out. It was a terrible explanation and maybe said too much, but he did not want to see Jooheon get hurt as he did. His free hand tugged on the end straps of his backpack, and Jooheon could smell the discomfort the other was experiencing.

"Are you sure you'll be fine, Kyunnie." Jooheon could tell the other did not want to speak on the subject anymore, and Jooheon felt like he did not have the right to push Changkyun into talking about anything that would make him uncomfortable. He screwed up, and he knew that it hurt Changkyun more than the younger was willing to show. He just had to be patient and open to the younger, and hopefully, he would earn that trust.

"I'll be fine, Hyung." Changkyun gave a shaky smile. Jooheon nodded and pulled the younger closer to him as they continued their walk in silence. After making sure Changkyun grabbed some food and coffee from the cafeteria, he did not like how skinny the other rapper looked, Jooheon walked back to the dorm and was greeted with the site of Kihyun in the kitchen making breakfast. The Beta turned around, surprised by the sound of the front door opening. "Morning, Hyung." Jooheon's voice was soft, "Do you need help with anything?"

"No, it's fine, Joo-ah." Kihyun did not look at the rapper as he continued preparing the meal. Jooheon sat at their dining table and watched the Beta. "Where were you to be up so early?"

"I dropped Kyunnie off at the studio." Jooheon could see Kihyun's hand pause briefly before the Beta resumed what he was doing. Jooheon wanted to yell at his hyung scream about how unfair he was being but knew he could not do that.

"Is that going to happen more often?" Kihyun did not know how to feel at the moment. He still felt the lingering sadness from Hoseok, the cold indifference from Hyungwon, Minhyuk's mess of anger and sadness, Hyunwoo's sadness. He did not know what he felt in the chaos that was coming through the Pack bond, and Kihyun searched for, he always had to search for the Alpha's emotions like he was detached from the Pack and found Jooheon's anger. It was anger he caused, and Kihyun thought he felt sad, but he did not know if it was his sadness or Hoseok's.

"Yeah." Kihyun hummed at the answer, still trying to figure out how he should respond. Jooheon was angry at him or them; it was hard to tell since Jooheon was always upset through the Bond.

"I'm still angry about last night, Hyung." Jooheon felt he had to talk about this with Kihyun; otherwise, it would just bubble over and hurt both of them. His therapist always said that communicating would help him with some of his issues, not always, but everything was not always when it came to controlling his anger, and that was the worst for Jooheon. The Alpha could see Kihyun hunch down a little, "I know you don't understand what happened last night, but I want you to try to understand my feelings, Hyung."

"How can I understand when it feels like you flipped personalities in a day." Kihyun knew that was anger talking, Jooheon's anger that seeped into his emotions.

"I know it seems like that Hyung, but I've been doing a lot of thinking and working through my feeling the past few weeks. I probably should have talked to you, but I also feel like I shouldn't have to point out where we all fucked up." Jooheon hated the fact that it felt like Kihyun was saying he changed drastically. He didn't; he was still him no matter what was going on between him and Changkyun. "I'm trying to do right by our maknae like I should have done from the beginning."

"He's not our maknae." Kihyun bit out, and Changkyun wasn't in his mind. The younger rapper was not Pack. He was not anything other than someone that stole Gunhee's spot on their team, their family. Did he feel like that; Kihyun did not know and, at that moment, did not care about how his words sounded. Maybe that was Minhyuk; he could not figure it out. No one told him that the Bond would fuck with him so badly, and he just wanted to feel like himself for once.

"You may say that Hyung, but he is to me, and that's not going to change." The two did not speak after that, staying silent even as the other members joined them. The others could feel the tension between the two, and it made Minhyuk irritable as he had always been perceptive of the Pack's mood, and he hated the fact that it seemed like Kihyun and Jooheon were fighting. Jooheon frustrated, in general, stood up after he finished eating, "I'm going to the studio, see you at practice."

"what was that about?" Minhyuk looked between Kihyun and Hyunwoo as the front door slammed behind Jooheon.

"Jooheon and I are having a disagreement." Kihyun was terse, and Minhyuk decided to hold his tongue as he smelt the distress coming off of Kihyun. "I'll try and talk to him again before practice." That was Hyungwon coming through, detached, indifferent, logical of knowing that talking will get somewhere that silence would not.

"Fuck." Jooheon ruffled his hair before sighing. He did not understand the other's reasoning for being so mean to Changkyun. He knew his reason, Gunhee was his best friend and the show just had him on edge the entire time that his anger issues just pooled over and he made irrational decisions. He felt so dumb because as much as he loves the feeling of Pack of being close to people, Jooheon knows he rushed into it, and in the process just to get everyone to leave him alone, he hurt someone, and that did not sit well with him. Unlike the rest of the Pack, he interacted with other people in the company because he was the one besides Changkyun producing and writing lyrics for potential songs for their album, and he listened to those people.

He heard their praise for the 19-year-old. He heard them rave about the fact that Changkyun had overcome so much adversity before even entering Starship, whatever challenges those were though he did not know. It made him so curious about the other that he started asking more about him and his relationship with the show. He listened to them tell him over and over again that he won without rigging. That they threw him to the wolves by giving the offer and introducing them the same day, hell K. Will was blunt and told him it was within the same hour. Changkyun shoved into that hellhole of a show, and they ate him alive, leaving him barely living. Jooheon was not stupid. He felt how skinny the kid was, and he suspected why the kid only wore long sleeve shirts, and what was worse is that he played a part in all of that.

Changkyun wrote away in his lyric notebook, finally feeling he had a decent song put together. It wasn't perfect yet and still needed more to the lyrics, but the bare bones were there, and he wanted to show Jooheon when the elder got to the studio. He hoped that Jooheon felt better after staying with his Pack for a little bit. New Pack bonds were natural to get a honeymoon phase and then be thrown into turmoil with all the unsettled emotions that

come with being able to feel others. Changkyun knew that all too well. Pulling his wallet out, he pulled out a picture from behind his ID and stared at it. It was him and Nu'bility when times were better, and their world wasn't crashing around them.

He wondered how the others were doing as they hadn't spoken since they split since they broke one another out of anger and fear. He missed them. Longed for Byunghwa's soothing voice telling him that things would be okay, he wanted to feel Jeongwook's hands run through his hair. The comfort of cuddling close to Jongyeon and get lost in the other's beautiful eyes, and be surrounded by Taehyuk's smell of charcoal and vanilla and home. He did not have a home anymore, Taehyuk was always rash when he gave in to his anger, and he broke their home in that rashness and Changkyun was alone again.

The door behind him opened, and Changkyun shoved the picture back in his wallet and turned around to see Jooheon, but the Alpha smelt sad and irritated, putting Changkyun on edge. "Are you okay, Hyung?" Changkyun did not realize it, but he was trying to make himself seem as small as possible when he asked that. Jooheon felt terrible at the sight of the other trying to hide from him, but he knew that Changkyun would probably be like this to anyone for a while. Jooheon remembers his mom and sister flinching every time his temper flared for years because it reminded them of his father.

Jooheon ran a hand through his hair, "Yeah... Well, not really, but don't worry about it, Kyunnie. Hyung will figure it out soon." Jooheon sat in the seat next to Changkyun and held his hand out. Changkyun smiled, it was small and hesitant, but Jooheon could smell the faint smell of happy emotions, making the Alpha calm down a bit, seeing how happy the other rapper was with just being able to hold his hand. It was weird how at peace he felt with the other despite not being Pack, but at the same time, he was glad to have the quiet, almost adult there to give a comforting silence for when he did not want to talk.

"Hyung, I made some lyrics I wanted to show you." Jooheon hummed as he scooted closer to read the notebook, and when he was still squinting at the words, he let go of Changkyun's hand and threw his arm across the other's shoulder instead to pull him closer to see better. He did not comment on how Changkyun tensed before practically melting into his side as they quietly talked and wrote in the book, making small edits and adding lines where they saw fit.

Hyungwon was observant, and he felt his Pack often forgot that while trying not to let him nap at every opportunity. He knew that Changkyun was isolated, and he left it alone as it was better to go with the flow of the Pack versus fighting over it. He also knew that Jooheon would eventually reach out to the other rapper out of guilt, the Alpha was always soft on people younger than him, and that would lead to the fight Hyungwon wanted to avoid. Still, today at breakfast, he realized it was not possible. Sighing as he knew this was just going to be troublesome for everyone, Jooheon had a strong sense of loyalty and Kihyun was stubborn once he made up his mind, he decided to leave the dorm earlier than usual before practice saying he wanted to get snacks. A lie but a believable one since he liked his snacks.

Getting to the company and heading not to the practice rooms but the studio area, he was greeted by the sight of Jooheon practically curled around Changkyun from the other side of the glass door. The two looked relaxed, and if Hyungwon was honest with himself, it was not only the most comfortable he's seen Changkyun but Jooheon too. The Alpha had been on

edge since Hoseok practically bullied him into joining their Pack and Hyungwon knew that Jooheon was a tad resentful and did not take to the Pack bond nearly as well as the rest of them. They did not connect as easily to the rapper, they couldn't read his moods as well, and sometimes they just could not approach him. Sighing again because he knew everything was now going to be trying, he knocked on the studio door, waited a moment, and then entered.

As he entered, he saw Jooheon turn toward him with his chair and maneuvered it, so Changkyun was behind him. Hyungwon wanted to know what happened between them and Kihyun to warrant this kind of protectiveness from Jooheon. "Joo-ah, I just wanted to let you know that Kihyun will probably be by in a bit to try and talk to you again."

"There's nothing more to talk about with him."

The Beta raised an eyebrow at that before sighing again; he was doing too much of that today and just wanted to take a nap. "For you maybe, but Kihyun might want to say more. I'm guessing the whole reason you're fighting is because of Changkyun-ssi?" The Beta saw the boy tense, "It might make sense to you on why you want to be friends with Changkyun, but Kihyun is dealing with a lot right now, so you'll have to spell it out clearly to him."

"What do you mean dealing with a lot."

"We are still new in our Bond and Kihyun has been getting the brunt of the emotional toll that the Bond has since he not only is Hyunwoo's mate but there is no Omega to balance out the emotional intake he feels. The Bond allows us to feel each other's emotions, but the Pack Alpha's mate feels it more acutely, so most Packs have an Omega take some of the burden as well to balance out the Bond." Hyungwon rubbed his neck, "This would probably make more sense if you grew up around a Pack, so I'll try to explain it later if you want?"

"He's right, Hyung." Jooheon and Hyungwon looked at the rapper as he spoke softly, only looking at his notebook, not wanting to face either of them. "Kihyun-hyung probably is under a lot of stress feeling everyone's emotions that he does probably know how to feel himself. You should talk to him."

Jooheon ran a hand through his hair and looked at Changkyun, who was fiddling with his sweatshirt. "Fine, I'll try to talk to him, and Won-hyung, can you explain more later?"

"Yeah, I will." Hyungwon took that as his cue to leave as the Alpha turned back to Changkyun and curled around the younger again.

"I'm only trying cause you and Won-hyung asked. I'm still mad at Kihyun-hyung." Jooheon grumbled softly, Changkyun said nothing back but leaned further into the older rapper. With their work having been interrupted, they just decided to sit in each other's presence, each trying to make sense of their thoughts.

"Kihyun pacing like this will not have you talk to Jooheon-ah any faster." Hyunwoo watched as his mate paced a few feet from the studio's door. "Just go knock before you enter that way you, he'll feel better about having control of the situation."

Kihyun sighed, "Fine, whatever." Mustering up his courage, what courage all he could feel was Hyunwoo's nervousness, and went up and knocked loudly on the glass purposefully ignoring the way Jooheon had Changkyun sitting in his lap. Jooheon looked at the door and said something to the kid this made the kid stand up and start packing up his backpack, probably to move it to the dance studio. Kihyun opened the door hating the fact he had to wait until Jooheon let him and walked into the cramped studio. "Just wait a moment, Hyung, and we can talk by ourselves."

The wait felt torturous for Kihyun, but he had no choice if he wanted to talk. Jooheon whispered something to the brat and got a nod back before the two of them were finally alone. "You're lucky Won-hyung stopped by to tell me you were coming. I'm still not in the best of moods, Hyung."

Kihyun was not sure if he felt grateful or annoyed at Hyungwon interfering when he told him not too. "I just want to understand Joo-ah. What did we do wrong that you are now suddenly like this?" Kihyun tried to keep his voice steady and calm, but he just felt a wave of annoyance from Minhyuk, and it leaked into his voice.

"It's not sudden, Hyung, I told you." Jooheon's brows furrowed, "I thought a lot about my actions, and I decided that what I was doing was wrong. Hyung, can you honestly say that you think Kyunnie is a cheater?"

Kihyun was taken aback by the question, "Of course how else would he have passed with only two missions under his belt." The words sputtered out of his mouth, fueled by someone else's emotions. Kihyun felt like a puppet with his strings all tangled. He did not want to say that well, he thought it but saying it was not something he planned.

Jooheon sighed, "I thought that too until I started talking to people. Instead of speculating, I asked our sunbaes, and you know what they told me. They surprised the kid. Literally, within one hour, they asked if he wanted a chance to debut and then threw him to us. No warning, no lifeline. They threw him at us for views and had every expectation to fail him, but he proved them wrong. He did not cheat Hyung; he wasn't even supposed to win, but when it came down to it, his rap style fits better with me than Gunhee's." Jooheon made eye-contact with Kihyun, "Give the kid a chance Hyung. He's a good kid, and we fucked him over. We fucked him over hard, and we need to make up for it."

"How can you ask that of me?" He felt sad, was that him or Hoseok? He did not understand what Jooheon wanted. Give the brat a chance at what joining them. No, he did not want that. He did not want anyone else added to their Pack. They were fine. He was fine the way they were. They were not perfect, but they were his Pack.

"Hyung Won-hyung said your emotions were all messed up because of the Pack bond, so I get that maybe this is too much, but can you honestly tell me you don't feel guilty for isolating Kyunnie. He clearly has no family to support him. We knew that the day of the finale when no one showed up to cheer him on, and I know you have a big heart for others. Can you tell me right now, Hyung, that you do not feel a shred of guilt for what I did and what the rest are doing to that kid?"

Kihyun could not answer that, and Jooheon knew that. The Alpha walked past the Beta to exit the room, "I'm not coming to dinner until you accept Kyunnie as our maknae. I'll be there for breakfast only because he asked me to, but I am going to be there for him from now on." The door closed, and Kihyun had never felt so alone in that room. Tears fell down his cheeks, and he curled his arms around himself, trying to hold himself together. He hated the fact that he could not control these emotions.

Jooheon saw Hyunwoo waiting outside the studio, and his temper flared more, "Hyung, you need to start acting like the Alpha instead of letting all of this bullshit go on."

"Jooheon-ah – "

"No, I'm done with this crap. Reality check Hyung! just because you ignore the problem does not mean it's not there. Changkyun and I aren't showing up for dance practice until all of you stop being fucking jerks and man up to your mistakes." Jooheon snapped, and anger could be felt from both Alphas.

"Jooheon-ah, that it no way to speak to me," Hyunwoo growled at Jooheon's blatant disrespect.

"Fuck off, Hyung." Jooheon snarled as he shoved past the other to a cowering Changkyun who watched the exchange from afar. Grabbing Changkyun's hand, he led the other out of the building and to a nearby café while texting on his phone. He got them both coffee and then moved them to a corner where he pulled Changkyun into his lap and just held the stunned rapper.

"Heony-hyung?" Changkyun hesitantly put his arms around the other rapper as the elder's face smushed against Changkyun's chest. The Alpha could feel the other trembling in his embrace and knew it was because of his anger.

"Just let me calm done, Changkyun. Sorry." The words were muffled and did little to calm down Changkyun's nerves, but he still whispered a soft, "Okay, Hyung."

Changkyun started running his hand through Jooheon's hair, just like he used to do with Taehyuk when he was angry, and he could feel and smell the anger from the other slowly dissipate. Changkyun tried his hardest to ignore the stares of the employees and some other patrons of the café. An angry Alpha was always a spectacle for people. Jooheon moved back and slowly maneuvered Changkyun so that he was sitting in a way that allowed Jooheon to rest his head on Changkyun's shoulder and wrapped his arms around the younger's torso.

"Sorry, Kyunnie. I tried to hold my temper, but it was too much. How can I try to understand Hyung if he's not willing to listen to me? I'm just so frustrated and tired that they never listen; they never take action when it's needed. I just want them to listen to me for once. It's like all the skill that I showed before; all the respect I had is now gone down the drain."

Changkyun placed his hands on Jooheon's and leaned back into the Alpha's chest. "It's okay, Hyung, as long as you tried."

"I told Kihyun-hyung that I was only going to see them at breakfast." Jooheon took a deep breath, "I didn't want to be a part of their Pack. I was so tired, and I was pissed that Gunhee

was not with me. I was just hating and hating, and it all got too much. Hoseok came to me over and over again with the idea of Pack, and I just gave in not thinking about anything other than to shut him up." Jooheon's grip around Changkyun's waist tightened, and the older rapper paused, trying to think of how to say what he wanted to say.

Changkyun was taken aback by the sudden confession but stayed quiet, "I think that my resentment from them initiating the Bond when I wasn't thinking straight has just fucked me up and I don't know how to fix it. I just want it to be like before where we all talked to each other, and no one was petty and angry all the time." Jooheon tilted his head to rest against Changkyun's. He was tired; all the anger he had just sitting inside of him was just draining, but he did not know how to stop. He did not know if he could ever stop being angry.

"Hyung, there might not be anything to fix." Jooheon took a sharp breath at those words and Changkyun was glad that the other could not see his bitter smile, "When you get hurt by your Pack there sometimes isn't anything you can do to fix it no matter what you do or how hard you try."

"Kyunnie..."

"You asked me earlier about that book I read Heony-hyung. I lied; it wasn't a book."

"I know, well, I figured." Jooheon's arms tightened as Changkyun's scent turned sad. "You don't have to tell me anything if you don't want to."

"I don't want to," Changkyun admitted softly, "but it is something you need to hear Heony-hyung." Changkyun closed his eyes, remembering his old Pack's faces. The bright smiles they all had when they made their Bond, the feeling of belonging, feeling everyone even when they were not there that comforted him on lonely nights in the studio. Their sadness at their dreams being ripped away. The hot anger and then the nothingness that came after.

"I had a Pack once, and when I was with them, something happened to me, and we couldn't fix it because it wasn't something to be fixed. But they kept trying, and it ended up hurting all of us, so the Alpha ripped the Bond apart, not giving a damn about the consequences." Changkyun's voice was somber. His deep tone conveying a hurt that Jooheon did not understand, could not understand as he never had a Pack before now. All he could do was listen to what the younger had to say and try to comfort him.

"That's why I wanted you to talk to them. I was hoping that it wasn't like me. The things that happen don't have to be fixed, but you can move on from them as a Pack. All of you can learn and grow from these mistakes, so you don't end up like my old Pack." Jooheon turned Changkyun, so they were looking at each other.

"Hey, I'll still try, okay? I'll try for you, but I'm with you all the way as well." Jooheon rested his forehead on Changkyun's, "I told you I'm here for you. You're stuck with me now. I know I don't understand all of what happened to you, but I'll try. It's just really hard because I just can't stop my anger, but if you want me to try, I'll try just they have to try too. We're a package deal now, okay?" The Alpha's eyes stared into Changkyun's, and Changkyun could see the truth behind his words. It was a start, trying was enough for now.

"Okay, Hyung, okay." Changkyun closed his eyes, just taking in the warm feeling he got from the Alpha. A feeling that he had not felt in so long, at least not embracing it, hope. The warmth of hope of a family that he always longed for. Jooheon made him feel that warmth, and it scared him a little how easily he fit with the Alpha, but it was so comforting at the same time.

Anger perpetuates change

Chapter Notes

The next chapter will take longer to write out compared to this one. I had a lot of things happen recently in my personal life and as much as writing is my escape it does not bring me much joy at the moment. Thank you in advance for your understanding and I hope you all know that your love for my work has helped me a lot as it has brought me a bit of joy during everything that has been going on behind the scenes.

“Hongshik-hyung, we’re going to have to cancel dance practice.” Hyunwoo was on the phone with their manager while also trying to console a crying Kihyun. He was mad and worried, but he had to keep it together. Kihyun was crying, and he did not know how the group was going to react with finding out that Jooheon walked out with the youngest.

“What happened?” Hyunwoo could practically feel the seething from their manager. They had already had to cancel practice yesterday due to an emergency meeting that Hyunwoo had to attend, and they really could not afford to skip another one as the choreography to trespass was hard, and they were still reworking the No Exit choreography as well.

“Jooheon-ah took Changkyun-ssi and left the building.”

There was a pause that made Hyunwoo nervous, **“What happened, Hyunwoo?”** Hyunwoo could hear the growl from their Beta manager, and it made the Alpha feel terrible as their manager does a lot for them, and here they were arguing and impeding the company’s and their manager’s efforts.

“Jooheon and Kihyun got into an argument.” Hyunwoo probably should explain more, but Kihyun was still sobbing, and he just did not know what to do to console his mate.

“I don’t think that’s all that happened. Fine, practice is canceled today, but you need to come in tomorrow and explain to me what has been going on when I’m not there.”

“Yes, sir.” Hyunwoo flinched, then closed the phone and turned his full attention to his crying mate. Nosing his scent gland and trying to stay calm for the Beta so that way, Kihyun had some sort of anchor. It was the first time in a long while that Hyunwoo had to deal with a distressed Kihyun, and it broke his heart, thinking he might have been part of the problem on why Kihyun was like this. This was not something that just happened this was built up sadness that was being released, and Hyunwoo felt like the worst mate that he did not notice it before, wait didn’t Kihyun try to talk to him a while ago? Was he really that incompetent that he did not realize that his mate did try to tell him something was wrong?

Once Kihyun calmed down a bit, they moved to the practice rooms where the rest of the members were when Hyungwon saw that Changkyun and Jooheon were not with them and the scent of tears in the air he was immediately put on edge. “What did you say to Jooheon-ah?” His tone was sharp, but he had always been soft for the young Alpha as he was the only one in their Pack that was younger than him. Jooheon helped him when Minhyuk was ready to abandon him for the sake of debut, and he was also the one who helped repair his relationship with his best friend.

Kihyun looked taken aback by his question, “I- “Anger from Hyungwon came through the Bond, and Kihyun felt like he was being choked by it.

“I specifically left early so that Jooheon could keep his temper in check around you, so what did you do to piss him off?” The room froze at Hyunwoo, growling at the enraged Beta. For once, Hyungwon did not feel the pressure of submitting in his rage, “Don’t be getting angry at me Hyung when you’ve done nothing to help this situation. Whatever, I’m leaving because clearly, we aren’t going to be doing anything today.”

“Hyungwon.” Hoseok was the one that barked out his name harshly, and Hyungwon looked at his usually soft hyung and decided that he was going to ignore him and continued out the door. Hoseok was always weak when it came to Kihyun and Hyunwoo, and it usually was endearing to see the three protect each other but not today. Today he was pissed at the fact that despite him trying to do something for the Pack; it just crumbled anyways. It was the first time he did not go with the flow of the Pack but thinking about how relaxed Jooheon, just like the Jooheon before No Mercy, was this morning he decided he did not mind.

He had no regrets walking out of that building, but it did hurt as he felt the sadness, the hurt though their Pack Bond. He did not want to hurt his Pack, but his Pack was hurting one of its members, and Hyungwon just wanted it to stop. Finding Jooheon and Changkyun was easy as he knew the Alpha would not want to go far, and a warm drink helped to calm his bouts of rage. It was something Gunhee told Hyungwon in passing, but the dancer never forgot that bit of information.

Much like he saw them earlier, Jooheon was practically making the younger rapper become one with him, and Hyungwon’s lips twitched up at the sight. It usually took hours for Jooheon to calm down, and that was with Gunhee fielding the anger, but with Changkyun, it was already gone. Jooheon looked up and saw Hyungwon and just watched. The Beta felt like he was being picked apart with every step he took towards the rap duo, and maybe he was. The Pack had chipped away at Jooheon and shunned Changkyun, so it made sense that the Alpha watched him see if he too would hurt the duo.

“Joo-ah, you should call Hongshik-hyung.” The Beta could see the surprise in the Alpha’s face, Jooheon had never been good at concealing his emotions. He probably expected Hyungwon to scold him, to tell him to go back to the company, to just deal with the Pack and talk. Hyungwon knew that none of that would work, Jooheon was too defensive right now without even realizing it. Changkyun brought out a protective instinct in the Alpha that made Hyungwon envious just a little bit since Minhyuk had never been like that with him. “What is happening between you and Kihyun is something larger than I thought it was, so Hongshik-hyung should know.”

“I... I don’t know where to begin explaining to him Hyung.” Jooheon looked so lost, and it almost broke Hyungwon’s heart. He should have been stronger and pushed the issue of bonding at a later date harder; he regrets that now. His whole being felt like a mess as he felt the mix of anger and distress permeating the Bond between all of them, but he was going to be stronger now. He had to be more reliable if he wanted to help Jooheon and Changkyun, to help their Pack become whole.

“Just call him and have him meet us here when he gets the chance so that way there is no rush, okay? I don’t think he has too much going on at the company today.” Hyungwon looked at the Alpha; sadly, it was not going to be an easy or short conversation, “and maybe call Gunhee too? He might be able to help.” That threw Jooheon off as he wanted to call Gunhee but did not know if he should, and hearing from Hyungwon to do it made him feel a little better. The Beta knew if anyone could help Jooheon, it was Gunhee. Hyungwon stood up to not only refill the duos coffee but to order one for himself as well. They were going to be here for a while, and Hyungwon still had to think of how to apologize to Changkyun.

Jooheon had already called Hongshik and messaged Gunhee by the time Hyungwon returned to the table with their coffee in tow, and the three sat in silence. Hyungwon because he was not sure how to word his apology to the youngest, Jooheon, because he knew he messed up. Still, he did not know how he was going to explain everything to his best friend and then to their manager and Changkyun because it was no longer just him and Jooheon, and he felt uncomfortable around the Beta. Hyungwon never did anything to him personally, but he also never helped him just observing him and the others on the side. It scared him how quiet and observant the Beta was. It was like Hyungwon could see everything, and Changkyun hated that he felt so exposed when all he wanted to do was hide all his secrets and forget they exist.

Gunhee arrived within the hour rushing into the coffee shop and looking around until he spotted the trio in the corner. His nerves were fired as Jooheon’s text-only told him to meet him there, and Gunhee honestly thought something terrible happened to his friend. Changkyun stiffened a bit, but Jooheon whispered something in his ear that made him relax, all Hyungwon could hear was the soothing tone the older rapper rarely used. “Joo, you need to word your texts better. I thought someone was dying.” The humor in Gunhee’s voice did nothing to hide his worried gaze at his friend. He saw how exhausted Jooheon looked, dark circles that seemed to sink deep in his skin, the paleness tat was surprising as he used to be slightly tan before, and just his defeated posture. The kid did not look much better in the rapper’s embrace. He looked a lot thinner than Gunhee remembered him being, and that alone made him worry as Changkyun could not have afforded to lose more weight thinking back to the worried glances the stylists would always send the youngest’s way.

“Sorry, Gun, a lot has happened in the last day,” Jooheon mumbled, and Changkyun offered a comforting squeeze on one of Jooheon’s hands that were wrapped around his waist. “I... I should have called you earlier, but there was too much going on that I forgot.”

“I think I get that,” Gunhee took in the gesture with a quirked eyebrow but said nothing. It was good that the rapper duo was relying on each other as it seemed like they needed it, but it was not enough. That was for sure. Gunhee had not seen Jooheon initiate the level of skinship he was showing to anyone that was not his mother, sister, or Gunhee in years. “So, what’s up?”

“I let my anger get to me and fucked up really bad.”

Gunhee sat down in the chair across from the duo, “It can’t be as bad as the time we blew up the chemistry lab at school.” Gunhee joked, wanting to get Jooheon to laugh, brighten his mood, anything to stop the scent of sadness leaking out of his friend.

“I joined a Pack bond when I didn’t want to Gun, and I let them leave Kyunnie out of it.”

“What?” Gunhee felt like ice was poured over him. That was not what he was expecting at all. He and Jooheon were always hesitant about the idea of joining a Pack and to leave someone out, someone you lived with that did not sound like Jooheon at all. Jooheon was the kindest person he knew, and he always admired his friend for his caring heart.

“Joo-ah was coerced into the Pack bond he and I share with the others while he was still emotional after you departed from the dorm. Hoseok constantly pressured him about it until he agreed, and I did nothing to stop him. I’m sorry, Gunhee-ah.” Hyungwon explained, he could at least do this much for a mess as a story this was going to be.

“Joo...” Gunhee did not know what to say to that. He thought that Joo would have handled his departure better; the Alpha didn’t even tell him anything about this when they had met up during the past couple of months. He hid everything so well and just powered through it like when they were kids.

“It was stupid, I know, but they kept asking me over and over and over again, and I missed you, and I was just so angry that I wanted something stable. Maybe not stable but just something. I just wanted something...” Jooheon moved his face so his eyes were closed and one Changkyun’s shoulder. Tears were coming out, not sad tears, but angry tears as it felt like a dam on his emotions were being released. Changkyun tensed as his scent turned bitter in rage but relaxed as Jooheon made no move from his position. “I just wanted something normal, but it didn’t help. I was still pissed and let things get to me and just did fuck all hurting Kyunnie in the process.”

“Joo, not all of that is your fault.” Changkyun watched Gunhee closely as he spoke those words carefully. Changkyun was curious about the older rapper since they did not talk much during No Mercy. Gunhee knew full well that his friend probably messed things up on purpose, but not everything was his fault, “having a bond forced on you even when you think you agreed to it at first fucks you up. Remember Jihyun and how he started being super aggressive and territorial for no reason?”

“Yeah.”

“He had a bond forced on to him. He broke it a while later and was talking to me about it. He said that he thought he agreed with taking the Bond and joining the Pack he did, but he then realized that he just agreed because he wanted to be close to those people, so he did not feel lonely.”

“You think that’s what is happening to me?”

“It could be, but I’m not an expert on Bonds, and I don’t think any of us here at the moment are either.” Gunhee paused what he was going to say next as he saw Changkyun flinch. Maybe the kid did know something, but he saw Jooheon pull the kid impossible closer that Gunhee thought it was better not to ask.

“I just want to stop being told what I should be feeling.”

Gunhee looked confused at that, and Hyungwon took that as his opportunity to step in again, “The Pack has not been and is currently still not the most welcoming to Changkyun. There is still a lot of resentment that has never been addressed, and through the Bond, we’ve all been feeling the other emotions and don’t quite know how to filter everything. Kihyun has had it to worst, and you know how Hoseok and Hyunwoo are if Kihyun doesn’t like something or well someone. It doesn’t help that there are some personal factors as well that just feed the negative emotions in the Bond from all of us. But it’s not just the Bond; it’s also how we are all expected to act. Hyunwoo just silently lets it all happen because it still has not sunk in that he is out the leader. I have just been a bystander on purpose, never interfering with the hazing the others have been doing to Changkyun. I thought it would be easier for me since well, Minhyuk...” Hyungwon trailed off at Gunhee’s glare.

“What the fuck. You’re telling me that you guys have been bullying him.” Gunhee seethed, and Changkyun shrunk into Jooheon as much as he could. People in the shop were starting to get antsy at the sudden burst of anger that came from Gunhee, and the nosier people were craning their heads to look at the quartet. The bubble of emotions their group had was entertaining to all those people, but none dared get close enough to evens drop since there were two agitated Alphas.

“Yes.” Hyungwon’s answer was just one word, but it had so much weight to it. For Changkyun, it was solidification in his feelings of isolation, and he hated that it hurt him even to hear the confirmation. He hated that these people he met that were practically strangers affected him so much because he was lonely, and all he wanted was to belong somewhere.

“You guys are fucked up. Like seriously fucked in the head to think to do any of that was okay. Fuck, Joo, you and the kid are staying with me from now on fuck what Starship is going to say.” Gunhee growled out.

“I had Jooheon-ah call Hongshik over to talk with him. As much as I would loathe Jooheon to be away with how the Pack Bond is settling, I think it would be best to remove them since the situation has changed for the worse. Kihyun had a full meltdown for one and, well, Joo-ah and I both challenged Hyunwoo’s authority. We still have to see them though because of the Bond, but maybe only at the company as I don’t think it would be good for us to stay at the dorm.” Hyungwon felt so sad and hurt, saying that. The Pack was supposed to be the safest place for any of them, and here he was running from it.

“You got balls for a Beta Stringbean.” Hyungwon smiled at the nickname; he had not heard it in so long that it was comforting to hear. As much as he loved Minhyuk, being as he was his oldest friend, he loved the Gunhee and Jooheon more as they got to know him instead of ignoring him like most people did when they found out he was a Beta. “So, what’s the actual plan other than explain this shit to Hongshik-hyung, who is probably going to flip his shit.”

“Tell Hyung and get these two somewhere safer than the dorms was my plan. I had not thought about much further than that.” The truth felt bitter on Hyungwon’s tongue because what more could they do with still having to work together.

“Why are you doing this for us, Hyung?” Changkyun’s question was softly worded, but the look he gave Hyungwon spoke volumes of his almost naive curiosity.

“Because you’ve helped Joo-ah in a day than I have the past few months.” The answer was simple, and it was simply the reason. Hyungwon only wanted Jooheon to be happy, and if that meant he had to live without him in his Pack, as much as he knew it was going to hurt, then it was worth it. Besides being in an idol group, it was not required to be in the same Pack. TVXQ was famous for having two packs before they split, Super Junior had three that the world knew of it was speculated a lot that they had more, 2 PM had two, hell 2ne1 didn’t have any as all the women wanted to be lone wolves. If that was what Hyungwon needed to push for to make Jooheon happy, then he would it would hurt like hell, but it would be worth it to have Jooheon smile again.

The conversation just died at that, but none of them seemed to mind as they waited for the last person to arrive. Hyungwon refilled their coffees again and ordered one for Gunhee as well. Jooheon’s phone buzzed, and he looked at it before sighing, “Hyung can’t come tonight he said that something came up at the company. I’m going to ask if we could stay at Gunhee’s tonight.” Jooheon muttered, typing out his reply.

“I can’t stay there tonight, Hyung I have medication at the dorm that I need,” Changkyun spoke. He had almost forgotten about his medication during their conversation earlier. He could not miss a single day of suppressants. It was dumb, but he started taking them as a measure of protection for himself after Boston. He really did not want anyone other than the company knowing that he was an Omega. Even his profile on the fan page did not have his second gender making many fans angry as they wanted to know what it was.

“I can grab it and a few clothes for you.” Hyungwon offered, even though he snapped earlier, it was probably better for him to go back versus Jooheon and Changkyun.

Changkyun looked nervous. He didn’t want anyone to know that he was on suppressants and that he was an Omega. “It’s fine, Hyung I can get them.”

“Can Won-hyung at least go with you. I’d feel better if you didn’t go alone.” Jooheon knew that something could happen either way, but since Changkyun was the center of the argument that he had with Kihyun, he did not want the younger to be alone at the dorms.

“If Hyung is okay with that.” Changkyun looked at the Beta questioning him, and Hyungwon answered in confirmation. They waited a bit longer and got confirmation from Hongshik they could stay with Gunhee but also that he wanted to see all of them at 8 AM to talk. The four got up and left Changkyun with Jooheon holding each other’s hand and Gunhee quietly talking with Hyungwon, more like Gunhee scolding Hyungwon quietly now that the other two were lost in their own world.

When they reached the dorms, Changkyun followed Hyungwon into the elevator to get to their floor. “I’m sorry, you know.”

Changkyun looked at Hyungwon, “I’m sorry for just letting them hurt you and doing nothing about it. I thought things would be easier that way by doing so. I hurt Jooheon-ah, and I hurt you.”

“It’s okay, Hyung.”

“Just don’t forgive me Changkyun-ah, can you promise me that.”

“I promise Hyung.” Changkyun thought the request was weird, but if it made Hyungwon feel better, than he was okay with agreeing to it. Opening the door to the dorm made Changkyun tense and nauseous, with all the anger and sadness rolling through the air.

“Let me go first, Changkyun. If they notice me first, you can go grab your things quickly, okay?” Changkyun nodded, and Hyungwon noted he looked very pale compared to just moments before. Entering the living room, he saw the three Alphas and the Beta that made up the rest of his Pack. They turned their eyes to him, and thankfully those eyes stayed there as Changkyun quietly shuffled, his head down and shoulder hunched, past Hyungwon. Hyungwon felt his throat constrict as he just took in all the emotions from the Pack Bond.

“I’m letting you know that me, Jooheon-ah, and Changkyun-ah are staying with Gunhee-ah tonight. We already gained permission from Hongshik-hyung.” Hyungwon felt nervous, but he kept his voice steady. It would not be good to show any weakness, any fault, he had to do this for the betterment of the Pack.

“Can’t we just talk this out, Wonnie,” Minhyuk asked. He did not know what was going on other than Jooheon and Kihyun were fighting, and Hyungwon was walking out on the Pack to be with Jooheon.

Hyungwon’s gaze went over to Hyunwoo before back to Minhyuk, “Not right now, Minhyuk. Jooheon-ah needs me to be there for him, and he’s very hurt and angry right now. We might not be back for a couple of days in terms of staying the night, but we will be here for breakfast, and if we are not, we will see you at the company.” Hyungwon hated that he had to say no to Minhyuk. All he wanted to do was to crawl into the Alpha’s arms and just sleep there, but there were sacrifices he had to make.

“Can’t you guys just stay here still.” Minhyuk’s annoyance leaked into his scent. He just did not understand what was going on only that ever since yesterday the Bond had been filled with all sorts of negative emotions, and now Hyungwon was leaving them.

“No. This was my decision to give Jooheon-ah time away from the Pack. He needs to think right now, without wanting to fight people constantly. He needs space, which is something we have not given him recently.” Minhyuk’s brows furrowed, and Hoseok was suspiciously quiet as he looked at Hyungwon. Changkyun shuffled back behind Hyungwon, and the older could see the youngest had a bag, probably full of things not just for himself but Hyungwon and Jooheon as well. “We just stopped by to grab somethings for us and inform you of our whereabouts...” Hyungwon placed himself between Changkyun and the others as they quickly left the apartment, not giving the other Pack members time to respond. Hyungwon’s chest felt tight as waves of sadness cascaded down his side of the Bond. He wasn’t going to

lie and say leaving them like this did not hurt, but it was time for him to be the better man in all of this.

Changkyun's posture did not relax until Jooheon took the bag and held the youngest's hand. The two started speaking quietly to each other, and Gunhee and Hyungwon could tell it was Jooheon trying to comfort the other. Looking at the two of them and Changkyun's interaction Hyungwon almost wondered if they were soulmates with how well they clicked in such a short period of time, but then again, he and Minhyuk were the same way. He knew Minhyuk could tell there was more going on, but he also knew Minhyuk had a temper as violent as Jooheon's with a mean streak that would put any evil maknae in the industry to shame.

"Sorry, Hyung, it was just too much in there." Changkyun looked at the ground, squeezing Jooheon's hand. He wanted to whine and be coddled by the Alpha as his nerves were just shot, having walked into that room. The anger from the Alphas almost suffocated him as it reminded him too much of America, of his parents.

"It's okay, Kyunnie. Hyung doesn't mind." And Jooheon did not mind the fact that the younger was relying on him for comfort. As secretive as Changkyun was, it was crack in his shell, and Jooheon would be content with this small crack until Changkyun was ready to break a little more for Jooheon to see. "How about when we get to Gunhee's place, you, me, him, and Hyungwon all have a cuddle pile."

"I'm not sure if I want that." Jooheon looked so expectant but have a cuddle pile means multiple people would be touching him, and the thought of that made him nervous. He never even had a cuddle pile with Nu'bility, and they were Pack. "Everything has just been a lot."

"It's okay for you to say no, Kyunnie."

Changkyun's felt like his stomach was in his throat at those words. It wasn't okay at all. He was an Omega he should be listening to Alphas and Betas because he was beneath them, he should agree because it was an Alpha who suggested it. Changkyun couldn't say anything in response just moved closer to Jooheon as they walked to Gunhee's place. Having a choice was just too much for him right now. He had not had a choice in a long time.

Gunhee's place was not too far from their dorm as it was also owned by Starship, so the walk was not long. Gunhee immediately got to work, pulling out blankets and pillows that his mother had sent him and setting up a pseudo nest in the living room. He only had one bedroom, and he was not sure if Changkyun would be comfortable staying there with everyone, so this was the next best option. Seeing Jooheon and Changkyun interact made his heart swell with the fact that Jooheon was being accepted by someone other than him but worry about the kid. He was 19 and already looked like he had been to hell and back twice over, and Gunhee knew it wasn't just the show that did that. Something else happened to the kid, and Gunhee did not like to think about what that might be.

Jooheon herded Changkyun to the sofa where he felt better now that he was in familiar territory. With Gunhee, he wasn't on edge even though he was also an Alpha. Maybe it was because they grew up together, but they always treated each other as equals, partners. Hyungwon took sat near the duo leaning up against the couch in-between Changkyun's legs

that were in between Jooheon's legs as the Alpha forced the younger to be smushed to his front.

Changkyun did not know what to do, and he looked at Gunhee, who only tilted his head at the scene, smiling, then going back to arranging the blankets and pillows. Jooheon turned the TV on to a drama, and the four soon got lost in the cheesy plot as it was something to take their mind of everything that had been happening. Changkyun was the first to fall asleep, and Jooheon moved him so that he was in the pile of blankets and pillows to be more comfortable, he also took a picture because the maknae looked adorable and made it a point to ignore Gunhee's stare as he did. Hyungwon moved so that he was now laying on the vacant couch, and Jooheon and Gunhee leaned against each other on the floor in front with Jooheon sitting close to Changkyun.

Soon the Alphas could hear Hyungwon's soft snores, and they relaxed a bit more knowing that the other two felt safe enough there to fall asleep quickly. They did not know when they fell asleep, but they did lean on one another, just like when they were younger.

everything is complicated

Chapter Notes

Heyo just a quick little update. My life is still kinda shit but I'm picking up the pieces slowly. Writing really has not been on my mind even though I have been reading a bunch because it's been really rough. I'll be honest I haven't even started thinking about the next chapter for this story so it might be an even longer wait for the next update. Thank you to everyone for all the support for this story. It really helped me these past few weeks more so than I can truly put into words. Hope all of you are having an amazing day/night and staying safe! <3

Kihyun could not sleep. Everything was just too loud all the anger, sadness, hurt, distress; they all blended and became a weight on his chest, and he couldn't sleep. Hoseok and Hyunwoo were sleeping peacefully next to him, not able to feel the hurricane of emotions that were in the Pack Bond, and Kihyun felt resentment was that his emotion it was, yes, resentment to the fact that they did not grasp what he was feeling. Moving carefully out of bed and scoffing how the two did not even twitch at that but just move closer to each other, he went to the kitchen to make some tea. Tea always helped, tea was normal, tea was warm.

Going through the motions of preparing tea was something he was grateful for. It was his time of peace when all the emotions just faded away, and it was just him and water and tea leaves. It was the only time the torrential waves of emotions just stopped, and he could finally breathe and think. He screwed up big time. He just could not control himself, and he messed up. Looking at the water as it poured out of the kettle into his teapot and swirling the tea leaves around, he laughed a little as it reminded him of his emotions. His no one else's. The emotions he wanted to feel throughout this whole mess of the past two days. No, that was a lie. Everything became a mess after No Mercy ended maybe even before. Waiting patiently for the tea to steep and sat looking at the teapot, his hands ready to pour when the appropriate time passed, like clockwork, like normalcy.

Jooheon was right; he was guilty. So guilty, he buried his emotions behind the others and did not know how to stop. He hid them so far down that only when he made tea could he remember how to feel, and he hated it. He hated how easily controlled he was. Why could he not be strong and be better? He poured the tea into the teacup filling it almost to the top, almost to the tipping point just like he was at.

Jooheon was right to be angry at him, Hyungwon had every right to walk out on them, Changkyun... Changkyun should hate them, and yet instead, he was scared, and that scared the Beta more than hate. He did that. He made the youngest afraid of their Pack. He hurt the youngest, and no one stopped him. And that that scared Kihyun even more. No-one stopped his pettiness and hazing, and that made him feel sick. How could he trust his mate and his love to help him when they just let him run amok uncontrolled, untamed hurting people. Why

did they not do anything? Kihyun sipped the tea, feeling the hot liquid scald his tongue, and he did not care. He deserved this pain.

For once, he could feel Jooheon's emotions without trying, was it really Jooheon that was blocking or did he do that too, and all it was was hurt and anger and sadness. Kihyun did that to his Packmate. To someone, he wanted to take care of and protect. He was worthless as the Pack leader's mate when he was the one hurting his Pack. Kihyun snapped out of his head when he felt a hand cover his and saw it was Minhyuk; the Alpha was always more perceptive of his friend's moods more so than Kihyun's mate and lover. "Why are you crying, Ki?"

Kihyun touched his face and felt hot liquid; he was crying since when? "I'm an idiot, Minhyuk?" Kihyun's voice cracked, and Minhyuk hated how tired his friend looked, how defeated he looked.

"What's going on, Ki? Within a day, the Pack is fighting, and no one is telling me anything." Minhyuk poured Kihyun another cup of tea. Tea had always helped Kihyun explain his feelings, and there had been many a night during No Mercy that Minhyuk had poured tea for Kihyun.

"I made Joo-ah mad. I said some really stupid things, and now he's mad, and Hyungwon is mad because when I tried to fix it, I made it worse." Kihyun was at fault. He knew that. A bitter feeling settled in him that was him no one else; that was his emotion.

"Did you mean to make Joo-ah mad?" Minhyuk's voice was soft and neutral. His usual judgment gone as this was Kihyun, who was harder on himself than anyone he knew. All of this was probably eating the Beta up more than he let on, and what was worse, Minhyuk knew that Kihyun had not been okay for a while. He knew his friend was repressing everything, which made him more hostile than usual, but Minhyuk was a selfish person and let it happen to get moments like this one with Kihyun.

"No, never. It's.... It's been hard to filter out all the emotions. Sometimes I just feel everyone or someone more strongly, and it controls me. I did it to myself, though. When we became Pack, I let myself be consumed by the emotions, but..." Minhyuk hummed as he poured another cup. "I so tired, Minhyuk. I just want to feel like me again. Which is stupid I did this to myself, and now I just want to take it all back." Kihyun drank some more, not caring that the tea now numbed his burnt and swollen tongue.

"Why did you not tell anyone sooner?"

"I told Hyunwoo, but..." Minhyuk hummed in understanding. The Alpha himself was frustrated at Hyunwoo's lack of authority, but to see how much it was hurting his friend hurt him more. Minhyuk may be selfish, but he treasured Kihyun and the friendship, differently that his friendship with Hyungwon, he had with him. Knowing that the other's mate was not helping made Minhyuk frustrated. "Do I need to step in, Ki?" Minhyuk would do anything for his friend, even challenge Hyunwoo's position. He knows that Hyungwon would back him up too if he were there; even if Hyungwon were angry at the other Beta, he would still help out. It's what Minhyuk loved the most about Hyungwon, he was so caring, but he lacked the motivation to do anything most of the time.

“No, nothing good would come of that.” Kihyun, a bitter smile, wormed its way onto Kihyun’s face knowing precisely what would happen if Minhyuk challenged Hyunwoo. Hoseok would step in, and Kihyun would be forced to choose, and Kihyun was a coward and did not want to choose. He loved Hoseok and Hyunwoo too much, and the rift it would cause would be worse than what was happening now. Minhyuk hummed again, and Kihyun was grateful. On any other day, Minhyuk was loud and constantly trying to make people laugh, but when it was just them, he was quiet and thoughtful, and it made Kihyun so appreciative that he had him for a friend. “Can I sleep with you tonight?”

“Of course, Ki.” Minhyuk cleaned the dishes and let Kihyun follow him into his bed afterward. The Alpha held the Beta close and did not fall asleep until he felt Kihyun finally be lulled into unconsciousness. Minhyuk knew he needed to talk to Hyungwon tomorrow; all of this was getting out of hand, and something needed to be done.

Waking up, Changkyun felt warm and relaxed, and that scared him. His eyes snapped open, and he bolted up looking around where he was and saw Jooheon, Gunhee, and Hyungwon and breathed a little too quickly for him to feel anything as his chest got tighter and his vision blurry. He could hear a voice and see something move in front of him, and then he felt something over his eyes, and it was too much. He pushed away from whatever it was and kept moving, why was breathing so hard, until his back hit something, it was flat maybe a wall? He put his head between his knees, make yourself small, that’s what he learned early in life, and tried breathing again. It was better, maybe. He took another breath and remembered Byunghwa telling him to count to eight before releasing it then trying again. He only made it to three.

He tried again, five.

Again, seven.

Another breath, five again. Keep going.

Changkyun finally made it to eight, and his vision slowly returned so that was just his tears finally falling, he saw two socked feet in front of him and looked up. It was Jooheon. Jooheon looking at him with patience and worry, and Changkyun whined because he did not mean to burden his hyung.

Jooheon scooted closer to the panicked teen slowly until Changkyun allowed him to pull him into his arms. “It’s okay, Kyunnie, you’re safe. Hyung is here. Hyung will protect you.” Changkyun just cried into Jooheon’s chest.

When Gunhee woke up, he was not expecting Changkyun to be going through a panic attack, but who would. He looked down at his hand and felt awful. He tried helping in the same way he would calm down Jooheon’s sister or mother when they got their attacks, covering their eyes helped them as it blocked out part of the world, and it only made it worse for Changkyun. He felt Hyungwon’s hand on his shoulder, “You did what you could, Gun-ah, we just don’t know what calms him down yet.” Gunhee could only nod at that, but it still did not make him feel any less guilty. With shaky legs, he got up to distract himself by getting ready for the day and making breakfast as Jooheon calmed down the youngest. Hyungwon decided

it would be best to take a shower first as Gunhee busied himself in the kitchen, and Jooheon was preoccupied with the maknae.

When Changkyun stopped crying, Jooheon pulled back a little bit to be able to see the younger's face, "Do you want to talk about it?"

"No." Changkyun's voice was shaky, and he was scared that Jooheon would make him talk. He had already told the Alpha too much about himself; he did not want to share anymore. It was better that way, that way, when Jooheon got tired of Changkyun, it would hurt less. He wanted it to hurt less because he already knew it was going to kill another part of him with how kind the other rapper has been to him.

"Okay," Jooheon smiled softly, it was shaky and small trying to convince himself it was okay more so than Changkyun, he could wait forever if he had to. No, he had to wait forever because Changkyun was hurt, and he was apart of that pain. Of course, the younger still did not trust him with everything. It had only been a couple of days, and everyone was entitled to their secrets. "How about once Hyungwon is done in the shower you go, and I'll help Gunhee make breakfast, okay?"

"You still have to eat breakfast at the dorm." Changkyun was looking down, and Jooheon backed off a little since the younger tensed up again. Jooheon did not want to crowd, and Changkyun was just tired. Panic attacks always made him exhausted, and he just wanted room to breathe for a bit.

"I will. Hyungwon and I still have time to get there I just want to make sure you eat something first." He grabbed Changkyun's hand, holding it softly, "I keep my promises, Kyunnie. Ask Gunhee he'll tell you that too. I have never ever broken a promise that I can't keep, and I promised you I'd try." Changkyun nodded, and Jooheon slowly got him to stand up and herd him to the bathroom to wash up and get ready for the day since Hyungwon was already done.

The three were cramped in Gunhee's kitchen, but they made it work preparing a small breakfast for the four of them. Changkyun emerged in Jooheon's hoodie, and some sweat pants and Jooheon thought he looked adorable, "Sorry, Hyung, I grabbed the wrong hoodie last night. I thought it was mine." Changkyun fiddled with the ends of the sleeves looking down, but the three could see the blush reaching his ears.

"It's okay, Kyunnie; I don't mind." Jooheon grinned widely, and Gunhee looked at his friend questioningly. Even when Jooheon dated, he never let others wear his clothes, always saying that privilege was for the person who was his mate. Then again Jooheon might want Changkyun for his mate and just not know it, Gunhee himself would not mind someone as cute as Changkyun to call theirs' to be honest. Changkyun nodded, still feeling slightly bad that he grabbed the wrong set of clothes, but he really did not want to argue with anyone. Breakfast was a quiet affair, and soon the boys were off to the company.

Jooheon got Changkyun set up in the recording studio, and Gunhee decided to join the 19-year-old so that way the other could get used to his presence as that morning Jooheon had quietly promised him to talk to him more. Gunhee was concerned as he knew that Jooheon's anger issues were terrible, and with everything that has been happening, he was not sure how

stable the other Alpha was at the moment. They both said their goodbyes to the Beta and Alpha and got to work on writing lyrics and for Changkyun the beginning of production on a couple of songs. It was not comfortable for either of them Gunhee because he was not sure how to make the 19-year-old comfortable and Changkyun did not know what would set the Alpha off.

Kihyun felt like shit waking up His eyes felt crusty from the crying he did, the emotions from everyone were rampaging, and he just wanted to sleep the day away even though he knew that was not possible. He wiggled his way out of Minhyuk's embrace to go shower and change. Once that was done, he started cooking breakfast. All three Alphas in the house were still asleep, but the Beta and Alpha that were not home were awake. Kihyun knew that because their emotions were much more apparent and he almost cried at the fact that he did not have to search for Jooheon's feelings again, maybe it really was him that was blocking those emotions. He buried himself in those emotions again; he wanted to stop, he did want to stop, but habits were hard to kill, especially those that harm you.

He slowly made breakfast, trying to make Jooheon's and Hyungwon's favorite foods. It was not a bribe, maybe it was, but he wanted to do something for his Pack members to show he cared. Even if it was hard for him to care about what they wanted him to care about, he still loved them; they were his Pack. A flood of emotions rushed through the Bond, and he knew Hoseok was awake. His love was always so emotional wearing his heart on his sleeve, but through the Bond, it was easy for Kihyun to drown in those emotions. He felt Hoseok's arms wrap around his waist, "You left bed last night, Ki." Kihyun loved Hoseok's voice in the morning; it was deep with sleep still and sent shivers down his spine still even though they had been together almost as long as he and Hyunwoo had been together.

"I had a lot on my mind last night." Kihyun's voice was soft and smaller than he wanted it to be.

"Did talking to Minhyuk help?" Hoseok knew that nights where Kihyun could not sleep, he usually talked to the other Alpha and slept with him, and Hyungwon when the Beta was at the dorm.

"Not really. It did, but it's hard to change." Kihyun leaned back and closed his eyes, letting him just soak up the comfort that Hoseok was sending through the Bond. That comfort was tainted by sadness, but it was better than the anger that usually swarmed the Bond.

Hoseok kissed Kihyun's scent gland on his neck softly, "If you need me to help you know, I'm here."

"There's a lot that needs help in our Pack Hyung." Hoseok could tell Kihyun was lost in thought again, always staying inside his head recently, and let his lover continue making breakfast. Sitting at the table, he just watched the Beta make breakfast and realized he had not done that in a while. Humming as he watched Kihyun finish up breakfast and start plating, he promised himself to wake up earlier so he and Kihyun could have moments like this more often.

The front door opened, and Hoseok could see it was Hyungwon and Jooheon, no Changkyun insight, and Hoseok did not know if he felt relieved or angry about that. The person that was

ripping their Pack apart was not there, but he was also not there for Hoseok to talk to. Having Kihyun breakdown completely and Hyungwon challenging both him and Hyungwon made him curious about the youngest. Still, Pack came first, and that maknae was starting to become a threat to his Pack's stability. "Morning, Hyungwon-ah, Jooheon-ah."

"Morning, Hyung." Jooheon was more abrupt than usual, and Hoseok could smell the discomfort and simmering anger coming off the other Alpha.

"Morning Hoseok-hyung." Hyungwon never failed to be polite when he was angry. He was one of the few people that the angrier he got, the more polite and distant he became but all he could smell off of Hyungwon was sadness.

"Min-ah is still sleeping if you want to wake him up." Hoseok directed that comment at Hyungwon, and the Beta took the hint and went to go wake up his friend. A sigh left Hoseok, and Kihyun tensed at that, "Joo-ah, can we speak later today?"

Hoseok heard Jooheon scoff, but he decided to let it go. It was better not to start a fight in the morning, "Yeah. I have a meeting with Hongshik-hyung at 8 am, but I'm free in the afternoon. Mad Clown-hyung doesn't have practice for Kyunnie and me until 5 pm."

"Let's meet for lunch, then okay?" Jooheon nodded, and Hoseok did not want to push anymore, so he left to get ready for the day. The tension in the kitchen was still high, but Jooheon and Kihyun did not talk. They exchanged no words, Jooheon because he got pissed every time he thought of what Kihyun said about Changkyun and Kihyun felt that anger just decided to be the coward he was and just let it be inside him. He could feel Jooheon's the clearest since the Bond had been created, and he was incredibly selfish in the fact that he did not care the Alpha was angry at him as long as he could keep feeling him there in the Pack Bond.

getting help is hard

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait! Lots of things happened irl between now and then but in that time I also got a Beta! They are wonderful and patient and honestly deserve tons of cookies! Hope you guys enjoy this chapter. It's kinda a setup chapter but has some important things I want to cover for Changkyun and Gunhee :)

Changkyun felt like he was stuck in a sauna. He could feel Gunhee look at him occasionally, and it made his skin crawl and sweat form on his hands. He knew that he had no reason to fear the Alpha; never once had he tried to make Changkyun feel uncomfortable. Not when they were filming, not yesterday when everything fell apart, not even this morning when Changkyun was panicking at being in an unfamiliar place that just smelt of Alpha. Still, Changkyun could not help the creeping tension in his shoulders, the tightness he felt slowly gnawing at his throat, the sweat rolling down the back of his neck like ice. It was too much, all happening too fast.

Two days. Two days and Chengkyun's already unstable world fell apart, and the reason for it was himself. No matter what Jooheon said, he knew that he was the reason their Pack was having problems. He was the outsider, the instigator, even though he tried staying out of the way. Pack Bonds were precarious, fragile, and vulnerable when they're new. It was why the company gave them time to practice and grow into idols and settle the Bond. The Bond he did not share. His being there did not help the already temperamental Pack, and he knew it, but he still wanted to be included, even if just from the outskirts. He did not want to admit it, but he was jealous that the Pack Bond everyone else shared had already lasted longer than he had with Nu'Bility.

All he wanted was to make music, and it felt like he was continually punished for trying to make his dream a reality. First America, then Nu'Bility, and now this. It was obvious what the underlying factor for all these events was: Him. He was the reason that everything was going wrong. It was all his fault. The Omega glanced over at the Alpha, who was hunched over reading a notebook.

It should have been Gunhee in his spot. Changkyun should have known, with his shredded heart, that he would not be welcomed anywhere, and it should have been him that was eliminated, not Gunhee. Gunhee would have fit into the Pack Bond the others had created: they all liked each other, got along with each other, knew each other. There was already a bond of friendship that Changkyun did not have the luxury of even forming until now. Until Jooheon reached out with his hand and let Changkyun cling to him. Even with that feeble hope, that small relationship between him and the Alpha, he still felt like he did not belong.

It scared him that he had gotten so close, so attached to Jooheon. The older rapper just clicked with him in a way no one had before, and it made Changkyun terrified that Jooheon would be the last straw. If Jooheon started hating him again, Changkyun would be genuinely broken. The Alpha didn't know that he held the last of Changkyun's hope in his hands. Changkyun would never admit that to him, or anyone.

The Omega knew, though, that the rapper was like him. Striving for this seemingly impossible dream of being an idol, and Changkyun knew he had to do something about it. Hopefully, something could save Jooheon's career, as early as it was for the group. There was still time before the manager's meeting, but Changkyun steeled his heart, knowing the manager had already arrived to start the day's work. "Hyung, I'm going to get a snack. I'll be back in a little bit." Changkyun's voice broke the heavy silence in the room, and Gunhee nodded.

Leaving the room, the air around him still felt tight and muggy. He stumbled into an empty room and tried calming down. Tears poured down his face, and he tried frantically to scrub them away. Why did Jooheon have to be nice to him? Why did everything have to change? He may have hated the group's treatment before, but this was worse. He created a conflict in their newly formed Pack, and Changkyun hated that it was all his fault.

Changkyun breathed out slowly and then breathed in deeply. No, he had to talk to Hongshik about this. It was getting to be too much, and Hongshik would understand Changkyun's decision. Breathing in and out again deeply, Changkyun wiped away the last of his tears. It would be fine; it had to be fine.

The older rapper was unsure whether he should follow the Beta around, considering it was clear that the younger was uncomfortable with him. Well, uncomfortable was an understatement, as it was more akin to the fear he remembered in Jooheon's mother and sister's face when Jooheon's father was brought up by accident. The door shut, and Gunhee felt weird, like something was about to happen, something to make this crazy week even worse. He was probably just riled up from yesterday though. He huffed and leaned back on the couch, a little too fast though, as he hit his head on the wall behind him. Pitching himself forward, he groaned as his hands covered the spot where he felt the most pain. At least no one was around to see that moment; a breathy chuckle escaped Gunhee's mouth as he just soaked in how normal the small space felt for the first time that day. It was so dumb, but it made Gunhee feel better, that even though everything felt off, there were still everyday things.

Changkyun played with the hem of Jooheon's hoodie as he waited for the elevator to arrive at the management floor. It was only a few seconds, but it seemed like since he left the studio that time had started to drag. The ding of the elevator made him flinch, and his strides were lethargic as he exited. All the courage he had previously seemed to be sapped from his body, but he knew what he had to do, as he clenched his trembling hands and shoved them into the hoodie's pocket. Changkyun kept his head ducked down as he maneuvered through the

cubicles to their manager. Hongshik glanced at Changkyun and rattled off an excuse to whoever was on the phone with him.

“Changkyun-ah, are you okay?” Hongshik kept his voice low and soft. He always used that tone with Changkyun, and it never failed to give some comfort to the Omega. Hongshik was one of three people in the company that knew his status and history, well, an edited version of it. Changkyun never wanted to tell his full story to anyone, even though becoming an idol risked it being exposed to the public anyway. He liked his privacy, and there were just some parts of his life no one needed to know.

“I know Jooheon-hyung called you yesterday to talk, but... but I think it’s just best if I leave the group Hyung.” The words felt heavy, and honestly, Changkyun felt like he was choking on them. Hongshik pulled a chair from an empty desk and had Changkyun sit down. Changkyun did not even notice his legs were shaking until he all but collapsed in the chair. But despite the apprehension that filled his veins, he was happy he could get those words out. They were a weight that settled around him, but it was not a shackle, just a consequence of a defeat that he was used to.

“I need you to tell me what’s going on, Changkyun. I got a call from both Jooheon-ah and Hyunwoo-ah, and I need to talk to them both, but I have a feeling neither of them is going to tell me everything.” Hongshik was frustrated, but he tried to stay as calm as possible for the Omega in front of him. He knew Changkyun would not shy away from him in anger as he was not an Alpha, but Hongshik thought of Changkyun as one of his children. The boy had come to the company small and scared but determined to make his dream a reality, even though his life had fallen to pieces.

“It started two days ago, Hyung...” Changkyun trailed off before swallowing deeply and spilling what had happened the past two days. It was so similar to the talk they had long ago when Changkyun applied to the agency, and they were questioning why he was on suppressants. The Beta did not interrupt him and just let Changkyun talk through the events.

There was no judgment, and it reminded Changkyun that even though he felt alone, Hongshik was there for him and had been there since the beginning. Hongshik was his rock in the stormy sea that was his life, and he forgot because Changkyun was too caught up in what he was going through. He forgot that he had someone that would be there for him.

“Changkyun-ah, I know you don’t want to hear this, but you are staying in the group.”

“But- “

“You earned your place, Changkyun-ah. Remember, 50% of the votes were from the audience, which means you were able to touch people’s hearts in the shortest amount of time compared to some of the other boys. You earned your spot on that team and if you are not a part of it, we are not debuting the group. The seven of you make the team whole, not the six of them, and not Gunhee either.”

Hongshik carefully grasped the Omega’s hands and rubbed his thumb over Changkyun’s knuckles. “We’ve put this off for a while because of the show, but I think it’s time that we tried therapy.” Changkyun looked at Hongshik with wide eyes, and the fear from

Changkyun's scent spiked harshly, causing a few heads to turn in the office. "I will be there with you, but the situation is not getting any better, Changkyun. It won't just be you; the whole group will be encouraged to go. If what you say is true, their Pack Bond is in a more fragile state than we realized."

Changkyun looked down at their connected hands, his shoulders slumped down, one of his legs started bouncing. His scent soured further, and he gripped Hongshik's hands tightly. "Okay." The affirmation was quiet, weak, and almost inaudible.

Hongshik's heart went out to the Omega. Changkyun had been through so much, and the Beta just wanted to see the younger get better, but he was not going to at the rate things were going. Yes, he found a comrade in Jooheon, but how long would that sustain the Omega? When no one even knew his status to help him when the suppressants would stop working? That was the fear that he had that Changkyun's suppressants would fail, and his heat would trigger around the Alphas of the group. It's not that Alphas were not taught how to resist their urges, but it would catch all of them by surprise, which made the situation dangerous for Changkyun.

"Changkyun-ah." The younger made no indication that he was listening. "I'm glad you had the courage to come to me. It was hard for you, wasn't it?" Hongshik felt the younger's hands shake a bit and squeezed them in reassurance, "It's going to be a bit difficult for a while, but I know that you're strong enough to get through it. Can you trust Hyung on this?"

Changkyun nodded his head. Millions of thoughts were racing through his mind. Did he make the right choice? Was this going to do anything? Would it help, or would it just be useless? He wanted to believe Hongshik, but years of promises being broken made it hard for him to believe the words coming out of the manager's mouth. He breathed deeply, taking in the Beta's scent of petrichor, trying to calm himself as best he could.

It was at times like this he wished Taehyuk had not shred their Bond apart. He needed his family. He needed Nu'Bility. He needed them even though they didn't need him. He took a final breath of Hongshik's scent, letting the petrichor wash over him. He still felt like an idiot for forgetting that Starship had staff that were willing to be there for him. They took him in at his lowest and let him prove himself, it was just hard. Hard to remember after years of being alone and abandoned. They still had some time before the meeting, yet Changkyun went back to the studio where Jooheon and Hyungwon were expecting him.

forgiveness is a privilege

Chapter Notes

A fair bit of liberties taken about the musical growth Gunhee had in this chapter but we all know that he's a softie. Not sure when the next chapter will be out but hope you enjoy this one. Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask, and hope your days/nights are fantastic.

Hyungwon opened the door to Minhyuk's room and was greeted by the sight of the Alpha spread over his plushies that were piled on the bed. A sigh broke past his lips as he looked at his best friend. He slapped his hand over Minhyuk's back, "Wake up, loser."

Minhyuk growled lowly, and Hyungwon rolled his eyes. "I don't have the patience today. Hyung, wake up, so I don't have to deal with the others alone." Minhyuk tugged Hyungwon down, and the Beta allowed himself to be dragged into the bed. "Why do you care so much?" Minhyuk adjusted to lie on his side facing Hyungwon. He curled his arm around the Beta, trapping Hyungwon between him and the bed. It had been weird, not having Hyungwon there with him last night, and he wanted to make up for the lost time with his Packmate.

"Hyung, the Pack is falling apart; why don't you care?" Hyungwon's brow furrowed, and he shoved his arm between their chests to get some space between them. He looked into the Alpha's eyes, challenging the other. It was not uncommon for the Beta to challenge the Alphas of the group--Hyungwon was very selective about submitting depending on his mood, and he would challenge them for Jooheon's sake. Jooheon was attached to the small Beta, so by extension, Hyungwon would fight for him too.

He did not like it. The disrespect of Pack members was something that grated Hyungwon's nerves now that he had opened his eyes. Jooheon was the youngest, excluding Changkyun, and while the others do baby Jooheon it does not mean they respect him. They treat him like a child, instead of like someone who went through the same experience as them. They did not fully recognize him as a Packmate, not as they should. Out of all of them, Jooheon should be the most respected, as he was the only one the company was one hundred percent confident on. If their group failed, there was no doubt that the company would just rebrand and re-debut Jooheon as a solo artist.

"I do care, but it seems to me that you care less about your Packmates and more about the kid," Minhyuk growled out the words, and Hyungwon tensed, growling back in defiance at Minhyuk. He was not some scared pup for Minhyuk to push around.

“Cause Jooheon cares about him, and as you said, Hyung, he’s just a kid.” Hyungwon’s thoughts drifted to the panic attack Changkyun had earlier. He tried to control himself, if only because he knew Minhyuk was petty and would use anything to attack Changkyun, mostly since the Alpha was best friends with Kihyun. “He’s a kid who’s scared and lonely, and honestly, we should have been better co-workers at minimum.” Hyungwon could smell the anger rolling off Minhyuk in waves.

This conversation was getting nowhere, not that Hyungwon was expecting it to. He sometimes wonders how they could even repair their Pack, with everyone acting like children that had just gotten their favorite toy taken away. However, Hyungwon was just as guilty as well. At least he was trying to fix the animosity.

Getting up from the bed, his shoulders hunched a little. He was not angry, just tired. It was all so tiring, trying to talk to someone who just... would not listen. “I know you and Ki-hyung are close, but try to understand where the kid is coming from. I don’t want us to fight anymore; I’m tired of it.”

“We’re not fighting.”

Hyungwon scoffed. “You can’t be serious, Minhyuk-hyung.” For the first time in a while, Minhyuk smelled anger in Hyungwon’s scent. It burned his nose fiercely, and he tried not to flinch from the Beta’s unamused stare. “I never thought you could ever stoop to the intelligence of a worm Hyung, but you continue to amaze me with the imbecilic words that decided to leave your mouth today.”

Minhyuk watched as Hyungwon left, stunned at the venom that Hyungwon had spoken his words with. None of their Pack had ever seen, let alone smelled Hyungwon this angry before. Not when the show was announced, not when Changkyun was added to the program, not even when Minhyuk started bullying Changkyun. It was something new, but not new in the right direction for their Pack. It was just another thread loose in their increasingly fragile bond.

Gunhee was getting nervous; it had been some time since Changkyun had left. He started to pace back and forth in the studio. Everything was probably fine, right? The kid said he was just getting a snack, so maybe there was a line at the café on the first floor. Yeah, that must be it. He had to trust the kid, even though all he wanted was just to hide him away. Gunhee wanted to make up for all the chaos that was No Mercy and more. He had been a total ass on the show. Well, worse than that honestly. He had been an entitled fucker who thought that he was the only one that could be partnered with his best friend.

It was not the kid’s fault he had been thrown to the wolves at the end of filming, but they had all taken it as a personal slight to their skill. A nail in the coffin of their pride, since they had also lost Minkyun the same day. They were entitled, naïve, and god, they were fools for

believing that a survival show would not be emotionally grueling. As Gunhee worked harder to debut solo he started to realize that.

He had been overconfident, arrogant from the praise that came with being a contestant and Jooheon's friend. That had not meant he was a good rapper, or even that he would fit in a group, or more importantly, fit with Jooheon. He should have realized from the first pair battle that he was never going to debut with Jooheon. They only kept him because there was no one better until Changkyun came along. Seeing how everything was now after the show, after weeks of not seeing anyone from the group, he also knew now that he had been the only one besides maybe Jooheon that saw that though. That he just did not fit with their musical style that was being cultivated by the company.

Hyungwon was going against the group because it was affecting Jooheon, not because he cared for Changkyun, at least not yet. Gunhee was sure the small Beta would have the older one wrapped around his finger in no time. There was just something about the youngest that screamed he needed to be protected. It made the more primal part of his secondary gender come out, to the point where he had to control himself more than usual.

There was always something that made him want to protect the other, but he was lost and confused during the competition. All he cared about was winning, and now that he had the opportunity to step back, he realized how stupid he had been, but it left him even more confused. Changkyun brought out instincts in him that he had only felt towards Omegas. The need to protect, to hide, to provide comfort.

He had never been endeared to Betas in that aspect of his life and it was frustrating. It felt unnatural for him, but he also knew it was better to just accept it and move on. He needed to provide a space for Changkyun to be safe in, not get caught up in himself like he had in No Mercy. Once they had the young Beta settled could Gunhee think about himself and his feelings that seemed to be blossoming for the Beta.

The door opened and Changkyun walked in, smelling salty with slightly red eyes. Gunhee wanted to ask him what was wrong but stopped himself. Changkyun barely trusted being in the same room as the Alpha and he did not want to push his luck. It was not like with Jooheon where the Beta just clicked with the other Alpha. No Gunhee had to approach this gently. "Changkyun-ah, want to listen to this track I made?" Gunhee's smile felt awkward and his stomach felt tight. That was a neutral topic, and it gave both of them space, space the Beta needed from what Gunhee could tell.

Changkyun nodded after a moment. It was strange to see how soft the older rapper was with him. It was different than it was with Jooheon and he did not know how to feel about it. With Jooheon it was easy, natural, there was a gravity about the Alpha that made Changkyun feel safe and at home. He had only felt that way around Nu'Bility before, and it scared him to think he was unknowingly opening himself up to be hurt and abandoned again. Gunhee, on the other hand, was weird to be around.

Changkyun still felt guilty over winning the rapper position over him and no matter what anyone said he would probably always feel that way. He came in late and stole Gunhee's position, and he was constantly reminded of that by the other members. But Gunhee also was

never one to bother him. He left him alone on the show and even now he was giving him space after what happened that morning.

It was new and weird. To be given space without having to ask for it. Not that he ever did ask, as he was always the one intruding. To have the time to think through his feelings and thoughts about the chaos that he always felt around him was odd. However, with the events of the past couple of days, did he really think things through? His talk with Hongshik proved that he had not. There were still things that he needed to consider, and it was all getting to be a lot. He sat down next to Gunhee and put on the headphones that were on the desk. Music was always his escape, and he chose to get lost in Gunhee's track.

The song Gunhee created was soft. It was different from the harsh, strong sounds he had heard when the Alpha had performed on No Mercy, and it was a nice contrast. From having an old-school rapper vibe to a more RnB sound, it showed the range Gunhee had better than the show ever did. It amazed Changkyun how much the rapper had grown in such a short amount of time, while it felt like he was still where he started. Stuck in a moment that repeated on forever, because his past never left him and he was not sure who he would be if he let it go. "It's really good, is it going on your debut track?"

"No, I'm probably going to sell it since it doesn't feel like my style. Was just trying out something new. It will probably be a while before I can even debut since the company will want to stagger new artists anyways. I'm glad you like it though; I haven't shown it to anyone else yet. I'm a little nervous with it being outside my usual genre." The Alpha smiled and Changkyun shuffled a bit further away with his chair. It was not because the Alpha's smile scared him, but more of the fact that it reminded him so much of Taehyuk's when he talked about their debut. They were interrupted by the studio door slamming open. Both Changkyun and Gunhee flinched at the noise.

Hyungwon stalked into the room, a scowl painted his face and his gait one that reminded Changkyun of Hongshik's when he found out Changkyun was being bullied, determined strides that made him look even taller and broader than he already was. Changkyun shrunk into his chair from the rage permeating from the elder, it smelt like the room was going to be overtaken with the smell of burnt candy instead of the Beta's normally sweet caramel scent.

The Beta noticed the distress of the younger and took a deep breath trying to calm his scent, but a simmer of frustration still leaked through. "Sorry, Changkyun-ah." The words were mumbled like an afterthought, but it was a kindness that Hyungwon had not shown before.

"What happened? I thought you guys would be fine for a couple of hours." Gunhee's brows were furrowed and he angled his body to be in between Changkyun and Hyungwon. The younger Beta looked so small curled up in the chair.

"We are fine. I'm just mad I didn't notice all this bullshit before." Hyungwon snorted. It was not the full truth, but he did not want to air any more dirty laundry than he had to. Kihyun and he may not get along and fight a lot, but that does not mean he should have ignored him as much as he did Changkyun. And there was no excuse for him to ignore Minhyuk's petty bullying.

That was solely on him and it made him infuriated at himself. He should have had the balls to do something sooner because at the end of the day Changkyun is at least a co-worker. Hyungwon should have drawn the line for the Pack since they were unwilling to be at the very least respectful to the smaller Beta.

Gunhee frowned and his shoulders hunched. “Okay, where’s Joo-ah?” It was weird that the other Alpha was not here, considering how attached he had gotten to Changkyun in the short period of time they had.

“He went to the meeting room ahead of us. He thought it would be better if he had some space to calm down.” Hyungwon probably should have done the same thing, but he wanted to be near Changkyun. He meant every word that he said to Changkyun before, but he now wanted to protect the younger from Minhyuk. The Alpha was unpredictable and since Hyungwon was not looking for forgiveness from Changkyun he had no qualms going against Minhyuk. The Alpha would soon learn why the other trainees were scared of Hyungwon.

Authors Note

Sorry again for not having a real update but in September my grandfather died. I do have the chapter somewhat written but I only felt like I could start writing again recently. 2021 was kinda shitty in the fact that I had 2 family deaths practically back to back. But I hope that all of you are having a better year than me. I'm trying to set a goal of having the next chapter out before December but I'm also not trying to push myself. I am going to give you guys a little bit of a spoiler by putting in a small insert of the next chapter. keep in mind though that my beta totally has not gone over it yet so it might change when they get their hands on it.

Hyungwon was the safest choice because he needed space. He needed to be alone and not smothered. He was feeling encapsulated by Jooheon's kindness, and it was making him nervous for when Jooheon realizes that he is just a burden and useless just like Nu'bility realized.

Sorry, again I love all of you and hope you are doing well and staying safe and healthy!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!