

Cinderella Syndrome

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Cinderella Syndrome

by [jenovasilver](#)

Summary

ZZS is a struggling pianist in Neo Shanghai, an Omega with a rich scent doesn't get many opportunities so he's grateful for this gig. But it's not enough for him to make a living. So at nights, ZZS travels to the Under City, where the criminals dwell and works as a Dancer to the Crime Boss of the Under City.

After work, ZZS hangs out with old friends and gets completely drunk, photos are taken and said photos end up on the Net for an Omega Womb Auction Board as a Catfish, the winning bid for 6 million Yuan!?!

Now ZZS has 80 suitors and 80 problems. Things get more complicated when he catches the Alpha Chief of Ghost Valley WKX, he's dangerous, vicious, gorgeous and ZZS has him eating in the palm of his hand. But can ZZS accept the deadly life of an Alpha Boss Criminal Organization?

And when salvation comes from Billionaire Tycoon from the Upper City...will ZZS be seduced to a life of crime or a life of privilege? Or is everything as it really seems?

Notes

This is a collaborative effort with the Cinderella Syndrome Sisters, me (writer), @agikun (artist) and @ahxuuuu (consultant) Follow our twitter for more info, art and more! @c_synzine

Ivory Keys and Bloody Pearls

The temperature of the water wasn't consistent, today there was just enough for one minute of tepid heat and Zhou Zishu quickly showered in his small one-bedroom flat, he maintained his place to the best of his abilities because he reminded himself to take the most of this humble blessing. There were always worse conditions to live in, Zhou Zishu didn't have to concern himself with vermin or salacious men that lurked the hallways, waiting to strike hapless weary tenants for whatever small coin they possessed and Zhou Zishu couldn't get arrested for causing a disturbance. He'd only bring trouble to his friend Han Ying who was a Godsend, because of him, he was able to get this unit moderately affordable.

He lived in the city of the 'Middle', nestled between the Upper and Undercities respectively. It was the city to those that couldn't afford the glamorous life of the Uppercity, with its rich topiary, glass buildings that glittered with wealth and influence, the people that inhabited beyond the borders never worried for anything. Life was perfect, idyllic, the closest one could see the Heavens. The opposite was the Undercity, the Hell that only the criminals and harlots dwelled, it was dark and seedy, filled with neon lights and arid smoke...there was a duality there in the large pipes and bright holoscreens showing nightlife dancers and gambling. But life there was dangerous, should one go down there and make a life, they could never have an honorable standing in the Uppercity, no matter how wealthy they became from the illegal activities.

When Zhou Zishu was a child, he bravely snuck to the lofty heights of the Uppercity, he could imagine his life there...with a family, a dog, butlers and toys, clean water, sweets and expensive clothes. Such a dream, Zhou Zishu was able to wander in the Uppercity gardens and clear streets for a moment before his ID was picked up and he was chased back down to the Middle...to the gutter.

The one thing that echoed in Zhou Zishu's mind was what the cruel guardians drilled into him, 'Zi Shu...you were pitifully born a penniless son from a penniless family. You are an Omega... your only hope for a happy life is to be paired with a stately Alpha.'

The loud creak of the pipes signaled that frigid water was coming and snapped Zhou Zishu from the memory.

A penniless son...

An Omega.

Zhou Zishu wasn't ashamed of being poor or an Omega, he was determined to make his own way...his talents will carry him far. They have.

And right now, he was going to be late.

The club called "The Kingdom of Morality" an Alpha club where only the most noble and distinguished were entertained and allowed to discuss business in peace...away from prying

eyes and worries. The amount of money that flowed in and out would leave a man *staggering*.

Zhou Zishu had to pass so many exams just to apply to the position but after a few months, he was hired on to be the club's pianist. Wealth and abundance flowed ceaselessly, the smell of older Alpha musk would stir a melted heat within Zhou Zishu, he was running low on suppressant and would need to up the dosage soon. The last thing he wanted was to stain his uniform, cleaning it would cost a small fortune.

The club was brightly lit, a glowing pearl among all the polished steel and chrome of the Uppercity, the interior hearkened back to a forgotten time with oak furnishings, crystal chandeliers and assorted paintings from centuries past, mahogany banisters and rich wine-red decor lined the expensive marble floors as attendants served wine and the soft hushed tones of affluence filled the air. In truth, Zhou Zishu no longer paid attention to the Alphas and their stares, his smell today was muted but he knew his heat was coming. The scent of cardamom lingered as he walked to his grand piano and slowly lost himself in the notes.

Zhou Zishu isn't a fool, he knows what it *really* is, what his delicate tones of the piano keys carry in the air...the mixing of his Omega Pre-Heat scent that lulls the Affluent Alphas in the room to docility. Over the years of his life Zhou Zishu learned about his power as an Omega, something they all shared and why the Alphas treated them lesser. No matter how powerful an Alpha was, Omegas have the ability to bring the Alphas to their base instincts...the lack of control, of power.

For him, he didn't exactly love or loathe this ability, for Zhou Zishu he had a completely different problem...one that affected him when he reached sexual maturity.

No Alpha could sate him.

It was a unique hell he was in; he could feel the heated desires of all the Alphas in the room, he could imagine the taste of them, the feel of their lengths, teeth deep in his nape...Zhou Zishu could take them all hungrily but he knew in the end he would never reach the heights of an Omegas bliss. There was always this missing spark, that he craved and it was bloody and messy yet refined and delicate. A vicious and insatiable yearning while also a sweet comfort, protection...this wasn't unique to Omegas, they needed an Alpha to be as strong as they were. A balance of two minds, souls and internal force. His martial arts master told him such...and Zhou Zishu had no reason to *not* believe him.

Shit, the warmth started to pool in his waist, he needed to finish the piece before he started leaking slick all down his legs, of course he had to pick a more complicated piece to show off his skills. Zhou Zishu tried to clench, he bit his lip as his fingers went wild on the keys, probably louder and clumsier than he intended but Gods he could picture himself splayed on this piano, the Alphas tearing at his uniform and taking him, filling him... ***breeding him***.

Zhou Zishu finished and bowed, he took his tips and swiftly rushed from the stage to the water closet, what a fucking mess, he was soaking in sweat and reeked of cardamom to the point of choking. No, the suppressants weren't as effective, he started to wonder if the medicine man was even giving him a potent pill, wouldn't be the first time he was swindled. His body was so sticky and famished for touch, he was a flame that refused to be extinguished.

“Undercity has erupted in chaos as the power vacuum left by the death of the Chief of Ghost Valley, multiple turf wars have been waged in various districts, casualties have been mounting. Uppercity residents have been warned to prohibit access from fleeing Middle and Undercity residents to keep the crime wave from infiltrating the city. Philanthropist Helian-“ Zhou Zishu clicked off the holoscreen, he didn’t want to think about what he’d encounter when he heads down to the Undercity for his 2 nd job. He wouldn’t work it if the money wasn’t so good but the money meant nothing if he didn’t have the status and he couldn’t only get that by having a record of employment in the Uppercity.

It was designed to being unbalanced, for the Undercity residents and those in the Middle could never achieve any success and those that do are beholden to those in the Uppercity. It was a cruel thing but it was life and what chance could a lone Omega do to change it? Zhou Zishu simply wanted to live a life free of stress and pain but did he really want to be a kept Omega? To be fawned over in the lap of luxury with a wealthy Alpha and birth children non stop? A shudder left him, the reality was he WAS getting older, right now his womb was in its ‘prime’, Zhou Zishu kept himself healthy and toned. It was instinctual as an Omega to look presentable and desired, an Alpha would also have to show that same level of virility. ‘Enough seeds to fill a basket.’ as it were.

But..was that all Zhou Zishu was? An empty basket waiting to be filled?

[RING RING] A upbeat tone that Zhou Zishu recognized came from his pocket and he happily answered it. A familiar voice chirped on the other end.

“Ah, Han Ying, how are you?”

“Zi Shu! Performing for the wealthy Alphas huh?” Han Ying’s voice was full of mirth and there was some mild shouting behind him, “No no over there! Thank you!”

“Only you would call during work.” Han Ying chuckled, “Aaand only I would answer you during work.”

“We are both irresponsible..but we have good souls! And I didn’t call you without a reason, I know you hate that.” Zhou Zishu’s laugh filled Han Ying’s ear, he always enjoyed bringing such a sound from him, “I got a promotion! It doesn’t go into effect tomorrow but we need to celebrate with hot pot and cold beer!”

“Wow! How big is that promotion?”

“Hahaha! Big enough! I know how much you can drink! Plus we haven’t been able to hangout as much as we used to back in university.” That was true, Han Ying was practically Zhou Zishu’s little brother, they both worked hard but Zi Shu excelled at everything. That brought him his fair share of suitors and rivals but he was always there for Han Ying. In their Uni days, an incident almost occurred where a teacher propositioned Han Ying and didn’t take no for an answer. The university settled it quietly...Zi Shu didn’t have to pay for the teacher’s hospital bills. After that, Han Ying pledged his loyalty to him, “I made reservations already so you have no choice but to show!”

“Ah, you force my hand to accept. You’ll regret it when you see the bill..what time?”

“8pm! At the Four Seasons Inn.”

“So expensive...are you sure?”

“Zi Shu! There’s no need to be frugal here, it’s a celebration!” And the two shared a warm laugh together, to Zhou Zishu, he’s been so used to living without much that every coin counted, Han Ying fared better in life but they were both so very poor. Still, Han Ying was right, tomorrow night was going to be a celebration. “Tomorrow, 8pm! Four Seasons Inn!”

“I won’t miss it. Bye.” And Zhou Zishu would keep his promise, perhaps tonight he might earn a little bit more spending money and enjoy himself. He looked at the clock, 7pm, he had 2 hours to get ready for his second job...he looked at the mess between his legs with a sigh and a thought to himself.

‘At least at this job, getting messy was the point...’

Zhou Zishu collected his pay for the evening, probably pocket change compared to what the affluent Alphas make by merely waking up and eating breakfast. Still he couldn’t complain, this combine with what he’d make tonight will be enough to cover his rent for the month. Depending on how well he does in the Undercity, he could possibly even afford to get himself something nice..like a bottle of plum star wine. He’s never tasted it but he’s heard that Uppercity Alphas have bottles of the stuff for everyday consumption. But in the Middle, just a glass was more than his rent for 2 months.

He thought about that as he took the air train back to the Middle, stopping by the market to grab a quick bite before his routine to prepare for tonight’s second performance. As much as he enjoyed playing the piano in such an exclusive establishment and the power it gave him over the high and mighty Alphas in attendance. His next job provided him a greater sense of power and control.

The shower was predictably cold but it didn’t matter Zhou Zishu washed his slick off and trimmed himself as neat as possible, to be frank, he didn’t really *mind* getting so dolled up...it was like a disguise of sorts. He laughed to himself, a man at his age indulging in fantasy...but his mind drifted to so many scenarios. What if he was an assassin getting ready to make his mark? Applying the perfect amount of light make up and scent enhancers in the dim light of his one room apartment, the neon light bouncing off his cheap pearl necklace and jewelry, all fake...as if he could afford real gold and pearls but it was all for the illusion of wealth, of luxury and allure. Zhou Zishu carefully slipped in his nipple ring, the barely there pain still found its way into him, stirring something electric and raw. Tonight he was going to be played with, he was going to be touched and scented, fingers are going to squeeze on his skin, breath hot and panting. He was going to make some Alpha tonight look like a slobbering fool and he’ll be rewarded with a hefty tip. Several Omega dancers sold their body for even more cash but Zhou Zishu never committed to it, the idea of sleeping with a ‘mark’ (he laughed to himself) ruined the separation of want and never have. He knew that his scent after going on so long without his womb being marked by an Alpha’s release meant that his unique scent was going to yield even more ravenous results whenever he got picked for a private dance. Though, eventually he WOULD have to sleep with an Alpha just to calm his Heat.

“Shit...” Zi Shu cursed, he just noticed that he was completely out of his suppressants, how could he be so thoughtless?! The Heat definitely was conspiring against him, such things are a

burden on an unbonded Omega. He'd have to get a pellet from a dealer down in Undercity and those things could be ineffective at best and or give him the worst constipation in his life...there was no inbetween. This could've been avoided if he was more responsible. So much for buying that plum star wine.

Zhou Zishu finished dressing, slipping in the hard synthetic ivory hairpins that illuminated whenever he moved, the stylish black coat and corset fitted snugly, pushing his chest up somewhat while barely concealing his nipples. Zhou Zishu could feel them swell with milk-a bothersome thing-as he clicked the bite resistant collar around his neck, the string of fake pearls dangled on the pecs...all for temptation to where the string leads. Wicked, Zhou Zishu but effective, he glided his fingers along his collar bones to make sure this area would have the highest concentration of the scent enhancer. The resulting mixture mist made his skin almost glitter like scales in the light. Once he finished his corset and squeezed into his leather pants, the holo panel alarm went off, he was done and ready to be escorted to hell.

It was no secret what he did, despite the blacken van transport that merely had a deep purple rim of neon light hover the crack street of his apartment. When he first got the job, Zhou Zishu was a bit timid, this was his first job and the one that paid the most but he learned later on that he needed status in Uppercity. He couldn't quit either job so he needed to make the most of both of them. Today Zhou Zishu was focused, his body was heightened with fertility and hunger but he knew he had feed himself...this was dangerous, an Omega going into Heat. He's at his most vulnerable and most dominant, Zi Shu had confidence in his senses, he predicted that this night would be like any other night before. Despite the violence in the Undercity, he strangely wasn't in fear for his life...he felt like nothing down there COULD hurt him. *That he was protected...*

A strange thing, to feel safe even know you know you're at the riskiest state in your life.

Zhou Zishu smelled rain in the cool night air as he was escorted to the Undercity, for all the crime and violence the way the city was ALIVE with neon lights, holograms that clicked blurry images of courtesans and advertisements, cars moved in dizzying speeds to their destinations for illicit activities and people both with ill intentions and bad luck, mulled around the busy streets as the rain began to drizzle down. Zhou Zishu never looked out the windows too long, not that it mattered they were only one way viewing glass but also the Undercity provided such a disturbing lure to him. He always believed in living a semi virtuous life, paid his dues, assisted the elderly but there was a part of him that craved such...cruelty. And he didn't know why, that wasn't how he was raised or even taught yet he could not deny there was this malice and coldness in him. Perhaps he belonged here, in the Undercity where the criminals and monsters dwell.

The loud trance music blared from the outside as the van pulled into the back, for as long as he's worked here, Zhou Zishu has never actually seen the driver. He assumed it was an automaton but he exited the van with a soft 'thank you' and entered the club.

The **SMELL**.

It hit him like a truck, he felt like his body was going set on FIRE and knew it was Heat and suppressants wearing off. Zhou Zishu felt so raw but he had to maintain his composure, here in this club, he controlled all who observed him. The Alphas wanted to breed, to care for their

Omegas or utterly dominate them, Zhou Zishu had no tolerance for that kind of Alpha or the other. He was utterly independent and aimed to keep it that way...

'I don't need an Alpha to take care of me, I need an Alpha to satisfy me...'

It was a straight line to the stage, an attendant gave him a shot of liquor and he gulped it down, didn't need it but it burned its way down his throat doing nothing for the intense flame building in his belly.

The pulsating lights illuminated the walkway, streaks of bright red and blue as a series of dazzling grids filled the area, turning the stage into a holographic surface of water parting as Zhou Zishu stepped firmly and focused along the narrow path. Brilliant koi swam around him and he performed with them, his face coy and seductive, his audience wasn't the same as the Uppercity Alphas, no hushed whispers of company mergers or acquisitions, no yachts or 3rd ex partners.

These Alphas wore *muzzles*, like the animals they were...the more money the less restriction they had to wear but they still had to abide by the club's rules. And no one wanted to break the rules here, the punishment was swift...it didn't matter who you were.

When you enter the **Scorpion's Palace** ...you are either a guest or the *prey*.

Zhou Zishu began to move and the holo koi swam in gentle dancing circles, the clacking of his heels hit the hard glass with domineering force and it made all the Alphas zone in at each one of Zi Shu's form. The music was thumping and slow, making his body writhe and twist with each beat of the song, the scent just build around him in a lush plume that coupled with the scent enhancer was just palpable, almost *lickable*.

This was something that Zhou Zishu loved...these were powerful Alphas, murders, thieves...dangerous men, the bright digital waves of water danced all over his stage. Changing colour into vivid red and gold as the fish turned frost white, becoming wisps of light before forming into pearls around his body and neck. He teased the pearls in his mouth, fingers feeling the air and causing the pearls to spin and float before he 'snatched' the strings, sending the holo pearls onto the stage and they shattered into thousands of tiny white fish.

There was a look...a pull of sorts coming for the darkest corner of the club, eyes that seemed to glow red with desire and all on him. Zhou Zishu hasn't seen this Alpha before or maybe he never paid much attention but the way this particular Alpha was seated, deep crimson suit with a sharp polar white fan, he was striking and alluring, blood red, dangerous, his smile was barely seen under the muzzle mask but that was because it was barely a mask...a transparent black silk concealed his lips.

This Alpha was fucking LOADED.

Well. Here was his mark for the night.

The Alpha himself adjusted in interest, a mixture of obviousness to his own presence and possibly to Zhou Zishu's intended play. No one entered this place as a lamb, nothing but wolves here. So when Zi Shu walked over, the sound of his heels sending tiny earthquakes all around him as the song seemed to fall silent to Zi Shu's ears and his heart raced. What was this? His Heat? The dripping slick was going trail down his thighs any moment and his nipples were swelling, shit, he's feeling so hot all over. And he was sure the Alpha knew that..such a smug face, such lovely eyes...who was this man?

Zhou Zishu took his string of pearls and rolled them between his fingers, staring down at the Alpha with contempt but unable to hide his arousal as he bit his lips. Inhaling the light fragrance of roses...

"Have I been marked?" The mysterious Alpha smiled and that in turn made a shy little grin spread on Zhou Zishu's face, "I feel like I'm a moth in a web..."

"A web of pleasure?"

"Is there any other?" Zhou Zishu was getting intoxicated, this was bad...the collar could only do so much in preventing an Alpha's bite-and no, he regained his focus and dangled the pearls in front of the Alpha's face. "A private performance is recommended." He placed the end of the pearls in the Alpha's gloved hand.

"Lead the way."

The private performance only lasted 15 minutes, after that Zhou Zishu could give the club their take and retire for the evening, this Alpha was wealthy...he was going to make it his mission to take as much from him as possible.

He took the Alpha to the Red Oak room, gorgeous lush and only accented in an ominous vermilion glow, the sounds of rain beginning to pick up and cover the city in hazy mist...now it was just them, Zhou Zishu thought.

"Sit.."

"Ah, like a dog?"

"You *are* wearing a muzzle."

"And *you* are wearing a collar, we both are beasts." Zhou Zishu shrugged with a tiny huff then walked to the full length mirror. The pearls pulled into a long strand underneath Zhou Zishu's corset, "Neither desire to be tamed." and the Alpha took a seat obediently with that clever grin on his face.

"By nothing ordinary..."

"Nothing." The clever Zi Shu leaned against the mirror, looking at the Alpha and the length of his rope of pearls...about 76.2cm, "Don't be boring.."

A string snapped in Zhou Zishu's head and he swore the Alpha heard it too, the tight wound of the pearls tug on his waist and he was being pulled over to the jaws of death, he propped

himself over the Alpha's thighs and start nuzzle against the sharp lines of his face, letting his scent softly meet his skin and mixing with his musk. By now Zhou Zishu was a dripping mess, the feel of the leather with his slick was becoming unbearable but he'd have deal with it, he could feel the tenseness coming from the Hungry Alpha below him, those same eyes took on all the red in the room, a serene yet famished fluttering of his eyelashes as Zhou Zishu teased the pearls on his neck, dangling over his now swollen chest. He knew whomever Alpha he found after tonight is going to have a TIME milking him, he almost dreaded it...

But.

What if it was *this* Alpha?

No...

....yes?

The Alpha reached down and denied Zhou Zishu the feel of his hands and instead paid what he wanted for this session. ¥ 3,250,750.00...

The amount nearly made Zhou Zishu stagger.

“Impressed...”

“Yes, but I know you're being cheap.”

“You really want to bleed me dry, such a *cruel* spider you turned out to be.” The Alpha's voice took on such a deliciously deep tone, mocking and sweet almost like a whisper and the way it found a home inside Zhou Zishu's ears almost like it was always meant to be heard by him and him alone. “Am I a fat enough moth for you to eat?”

“Perhaps...” Zi Shu allowed the Alpha to touch his skin, his finger gloves curled at his palm and he sighed feeling that leathery warm on his cheek, a thumb mockingly close to his lips and he licked greedily, temptation...this was his job, something he was having trouble focusing on now especially when he removed the Alpha's muzzle.



Red lips and a playful yet sincere smile appeared on his face, this Alpha was stunning, youthful and bold, those lips...how would they feel? Zhou Zishu just stared and sighed with that want he was trying so hard to suppress. The light in the room bounced off their skin but kept enough of their bodies concealed in dim shadows haloing with red that gave off a foreboding aura but how Zi Shu wondered. What was this fear and why did it blend into a heady mixture that clouded his thoughts? The Alpha's hand found its way onto the back of Zhou Zishu's nape,

pulling him closer while his free hand once again typed on the holopad, another amount. ¥ 5,201,200.00.

“Stop..” Zhou Zishu begged but it was so halfhearted, his mouth was getting closer to the Alpha’s, he could see literal steam leaving from those lips like the man was made out of fire. There were two sparks in that room that were colliding like a growing supernova, “...Stop...”

“If I stop...this will end...”

“Yeah.”

Closer, Zhou Zishu was getting harder, his leather pants were torture to him now and he could certainly feel the same firmness from the Alpha, it only made him famished and he began to pant, he was losing control. A small bead of milk leaked from the pearled nipple ring, God he wanted it, ‘touch me, touch me, milk me.’ the Alpha pushed up, not to kiss but to nuzzle his bare cheek along Zhou Zishu’s collarbone and his lips took the strand of pearls, pulling them down and the feel of them hit Zi Shu’s nipple....he was going to start leaking everywhere. There was a flash of a bead of red that scanned the area, it was so quick but he didn’t pay attention, he couldn’t focus on anything.

“FUCK!” The Alpha shouted and pushed Zhou Zishu down, falling on top of him as the room erupted in a hail of bullets.

Key of Dreams

Chapter Summary

Zhou Zishu and the Alpha's performance is interrupted by a shootout...but nothing can stop the passion between them. Is this the start of something new?

Chapter Notes

Your reward, because we love you....

The bullets filled the room with noise and violence, destroying the full length mirror, various fine pieces of art and decor, making the king size bed into a mess of feathers and wood splinters. The windows shattered, sending glass everywhere in a rain of destruction but the Alpha kept himself completely over Zhou Zishu as they curled on the floor waiting for the chaos to end. He could hear the steady beat of the Alpha's heart, not racing, not like his....how many shootouts has this man been in to be so calm amidst the destruction. The room was so loud with gunfire that Zhou Zishu was convinced he'd never hear normally again.

The gunfire finally died down and the door was kicked down, in an instant the room was now filled with faceless goons, enhanced with red circuitry puncturing their pallid sickly skin. The Alpha moved swiftly, throwing his fan and slicing the necks of three goons and snatched the guns to butt the fourth. Zhou Zishu sprung into action himself as more goons entered, who were these guys!? Before Zi Shu could question any further *more* goons fell from the ceiling, the heavy mechanical boots sounded like earthquakes and threatened to smash down to the lower levels. Zi Shu went to work, snatching pieces of glass off the floor and slashes the goons as they tried to crowd around them. He looked to the Alpha who dispatched the attackers more annoyed than anything.

"We need to get out of here!" Zhou Zishu shouted to the Alpha and was yanked up by a goon, caught helplessly as his mouth opened widely readying to fire off a headshot when the Alpha dashed to crack the goon's neck. "T-thank you."

"Come with me." The Alpha practically commanded and at this point who was he to argue, the duo rushed through the compromised club as the goons were attacking everyone inside. Who would be brazen enough to attack the **Scorpion's Palace**?! Several dancers were being assaulted by the goons and Zhou Zishu rushed to help them. Trying to save as many as he could. "What are you doing?"

"The hell do you think I'm doing?!"

“Ah, a hero then?”

“Tsk?! No! I-” Zhou Zishu was tackled to the hard floor and was being dragged when the Alpha, much like before, came to his rescue, quickly slashing the neck and the red wires, gushing bright fluid everywhere. The Alpha yanked Zhou Zishu up and for a brief moment he held him close to his waist, their eyes were locked in such a way that it felt like all the destruction around them slowed.

“That would make me *your* hero, yes?” Zhou Zishu didn’t respond, instead he threw the Alpha to the side to palm strike an attacking goon that tried to sneak attack him.

“Stop counting! And follow me!” The Alpha smirked and together they escaped to the back, by now the sirens of the Undercity were heard coming from down the street, the torrential rain made the lights outside dance brightly as the citizens gawk from the sidewalk. The Alpha pulled out his phone and dialed for the car.

Various luxurious vehicles clogged the already packed streets to ferry their passengers from the club, the amount of broken and bloodied bodies that were pouring out was sure to make it to the news broadcasts tonight. Zhou Zishu hid his face in the jacket, the scent of the Alpha musk soothed his racing heart. He grabbed the Alpha’s hand and led him back into the Alley, away from the prying eyes of the Undercity denizens and police.

It was getting so cold, the rain felt like stinging frozen needles on as the two walked through the maze of drunken poor, trying to keep away from the club if the goons were waiting to strike, thankfully the night and the poor visibility in the rain gave them enough cover as Zhou Zishu along with the Alpha rushed to the dirty escape for freedom.

A long sleek black bullet of a limo descended from the sky as they exited the alley, Zhou Zishu never seen a model like this before, it moved almost silently and floated with a grid that scanned the area until a small beep emitted from the Alpha’s jacket. He took out his ID and pressed the sides release the wing doors, the inside was barely lit with a pale teal glow and leather seats that were probably more expensive than all the things in Zhou Zishu’s apartment, probably even the fucking apartment *itself*. The Alpha entered the vehicle and the interior became brighter revealing a mini bar and tinted windows, silver fixtures lined the leather and small steps to allow passengers inside.

“Come in...” The Alpha extended his hand and a moment flashed in Zhou Zishu’s mind, this limo was an escape wasn’t it? If he stayed no doubt he’d be interrogated by the cops and no doubt they would scan his ID and no doubt that information would go to the Uppercity. Any mark was a banishment...everything he’d worked so hard to achieve would be gone in an instant. But this Alpha, this handsome, mischievous Alpha...dangerous and beautiful.

Zhou Zishu takes his hand.

He’s never rode in anything like this limo, there was so much room, such a luxurious and smooth ride, he didn’t even feel it ascend till he looked out the window and saw that he was above the buildings. Silently gliding into the skies as the rain fell down the sides of the limo, cutting through the fog and pollution of the Undercity as if it was a fish of reflective metal and bulletproof glass. Zhou Zishu tried not to look so stupidified but how could he not, this was a brand new experience..

The interior was softly playing music, something with a steady beat and more trance as the Alpha adjusted the temperature inside to something more comfortable, he crouched to get a bottle of liquor and poured a glass for Zhou Zishu. To this Alpha, this seemed so....casual, like they didn't escape a life or death struggle by mysterious goons. Clearly, this man was involved with something but of what Zhou Zishu didn't want to surmise. In the Undercity, if anyone had any amount of wealth it wasn't through inheritance....

"Thank you..." Zi Shu whispered and gulped down the liquid, it tasted so smooth and strong, of plums and it tingles on his tongue sweetly. It was delicious and he regretted drinking it so quickly instead of savouring it like the Alpha. Speaking of which, "May I know the name of my hero?" The Alpha smirked with the glass on his lips and sipped.

"Ah but my name is special, if I gave it to you would that not put me in a precarious situation?" The Alpha grinned and Zi Shu threw an annoyed but flushed look, the drink was getting to him...or maybe it was his Heat.

"I wouldn't betray you..."

"I know."

"You do?"

"You're not very good at lying..." The Alpha sipped as he stared at Zhou Zishu, "Your martial arts are gorgeous, you move so delicately and precisely...like footsteps on fresh snow." Zhou Zishu felt his chest tighten, he was getting so warm and prickly between his legs, his Heat was returning post ambush and now that he was safe, his body immediately went to another function... **breeding** . "You can kill without hesitation and yet you save people just the same...beautiful death."

"You flatter me...your praise is..."

"Is?"

"Appreciative." Zhou Zishu crosses his legs, his scent easily mixing in with the rainwater and sweat on his skin, he looks at the Alpha simply staring with hunger as a small smile makes those wet lips look deadlier. "If things were different, I would've liked to spar with you."

"You're not a *traditional* Omega." Zi Shu was getting more aroused, something in this Alpha's voice was stirring his need to...no, he had to maintain control and, where were they going? That's what he should be focusing on now, "My name is Wen Kexing ...and you?"

"Zhou...Zhou Zishu."

"Zhou Zishu..." *That did it* , he felt the first bit of slick ooze out and he knew more was coming, what an idiot he was, telling Wen Kexing his name because now the cocky shit was all teeth, "Zhou Zishu...Zi Shu..." Wen Kexing said with almost a song in his voice but low, focused. Desired, "A pity Zhou Zishu, we're not in the Palace...I won't be able to receive my private performance."

“Who says?” And Wen Kexing cocked an eyebrow as Zhou Zishu moved in closer, holding his glass out, “Pour me another drink.”

“Such a *troublesome* Omega too.”

“I have a feeling you’d *like* trouble.” Wen Kexing poured more delicious liquor in the crystal glass, Zhou Zishu ran his fingers on the rim as the limo slowly descended from the high altitude back down to the dark city below. By now they were miles away from the Scorpion’s Palace, away from the chaos of the goon attack and cops, for some reason Zhou Zishu wasn’t afraid or on guard anymore. Instead he dipped his finger in the drink and licked it off, Wen Kexing reached the glass but Zi Shu downed the drink and eased over to the Alpha. Tracing his lips and moving in close.

Danger. This was dangerous.

Wen Kexing gently took Zhou Zishu by his chin and pressed his mouth on the corners of the Omega’s, teasing a kiss as Zhou Zishu became impatient and planted a deep kiss allowing the liquor in his mouth to travel into Wen Kexing’s smoothly. He heard his moan and it only made Zhou Zishu bolder. How could he unravel so fast with this man? It must have been his Heat, making him so desperate for an Alpha’s touch, all he could think about was how he wanted this, the adrenaline coursing in his veins just made everything seem so fast and slow all at once..





Zhou Zishu's hands kept his hand on Wen Kexing's neck, making small circles with his thumbs and felt the shiver down his spine when Wen Kexing's own hands found their way around his waist. He couldn't process this, just his hands around his waist was enough to make him squirt more slick, he felt his knee just settling between his ass and Wen Kexing began ever so slightly rock Zhou Zishu on it. *He **couldn't** focus*, the feeling of the hard knee and the constriction of his pants was driving him mad. Wen Kexing was murmuring something on his chest, just over his nipple, tugging on the fake pearls and making small kisses on his collarbone as the limo sped through the neon highway, spectrum of colours flashed on Zhou Zishu's bare chest, glints of light on his fake gold and the warmth inside as Wen Kexing was breaking him apart made his head spin. He needed to look at Wen Kexing, watching as his mouth sucked dangerously down the center of his chest until he caught his nipple and flicked the pearl with his tongue. Zi Shu gasped, he was breaking and feeling the slow trickle of his milk leak out only to watch as Wen Kexing sucked it...pearl and all.

The leather gloves wet on his skin and Wen Kexing slowly begun to milk Zhou Zishu, the feeling of those fingers squeezing his milk out just made him more feral. He looked at the white streams dripping a trail down Wen Kexing hand and the hot mouth sucking his milk hungrily and all Zhou Zishu could feel was this sense of...wrong but so aroused. This was milk that should feed his child, not feeding some Alpha gangster. The perversion of this act just made Zi Shu even more aroused, his womb desired life. Wen Kexing moved Zhou Zishu to the seat and finally cornered him, looming over his prey, locking eyes and holding steady, looking at Zhou Zishu like he was the most stunning creature on earth.

“Why did you...stop..?”

“Because *I* won’t stop.” Zhou Zishu swallowed, his stare glossy with this overwhelming need...he reached his throat as if to remove his collar when Wen Kexing stopped him. “No...”

“You not stupid. I want your mouth but not your bite.”

“So this is a test of wills?” Zi Shu grinned and dragged his thigh up to nudge Wen Kexing forward.

“You’re not an *ordinary* Alpha..” And Wen Kexing smirked, lowering his head into one hard deep kiss, biting and rough, enough to draw a small amount blood that he licked off and now they were ready...a test of wills, a risky gamble on Zhou Zishu’s part, removing that collar left him vulnerable, an Alpha bite is a ‘Claim’...it bound him to his Alpha.

Submissive.... ***owned*** .

But Zhou Zishu felt so...reckless tonight, here in this limo with this Alpha kissing and mouthing his throat until the collar was off, he leaned into the feel of Wen Kexing breath on his bare throat. The teasing nip of his teeth is almost like a sweet threat driving Zi Shu over the edge.

“Such..a mess...” Wen Kexing complained but it was halfhearted and Zhou Zishu pulled his hands up, licking his milk off and sucking the fingers in his mouth. He caught the tip of the gloved fingers and pulled the leather off as Wen Kexing stroked the trail of milk off Zi Shu’s mouth. “You are wild...” Zhou Zishu dropped the glove and awaited to feel Wen Kexing’s palm on his skin, on his swollen chest...cupping and pressing his fingers in the full breasts and freeing more milk to drink. He forced off his remaining gloved hand and flicked his tongue after swallowing his fill to look at Zi Shu’s hooded eyes close lost in the release of the chemicals in his body, pleasure, breeding, **lust** ...

The warm spread of his long fingers made a careful squeeze on Zhou Zishu’s ass, slipping in the tight pants until he was able to squeeze skin instead. Fuck, Zhou Zishu gripped Wen Kexing’s scalp, he was going to fall and feared he’d just fall through the limo into oblivion.

“Your milk...is thick and sweet.” Wen Kexing murmured and Zhou Zishu barely had time to register or even say something witty before the slip of a finger filled his ass. He gasped and softly mewled, letting the sounds of his slick and his pantings fill the limo, "You're so beautiful A-xu..."

"A-A-xu..." Zi Shu shuddered, the name was a pleasant familiarity that the two didn't have and he couldn't be bothered. He found it so sweet, so soothing. "You're getting...tighter."

"It's not enough...more...give me more." Wen Kexing shrugged off his jacket, soaked and heavy his body and his shirt was practically see through now, he couldn't stop kissing Zi Shu, it was like he was addicted and felt his hands unbuckling his belt. This Omega he whispered to himself but he was no different, he only wanted to tear that corset off. Zhou Zishu ran his palm down the front of his pants until he unzipped his fly.

If Zhou Zishu thought he was ravenous, then Wen Kexing showed him a true Alpha's hunger, it was unrelenting the way he started to devour his lips, working his flesh in his hot palm and Zhou Zishu could barely keep up. He wanted to suck his cock so badly but it was clear that Wen Kexing simply wanted to bury himself inside him, it was like a mask slipped, the composure was melting away the longer and deeper he kept kissing Wen Kexing...who felt so powerful as an Alpha and yet he seemed needy, desperate for this. It confused Zi Shu...they only met tonight, he was just a mark and everything proceeding their escape from the goons just felt chaotic.

There was a bond between them, through the violence, the speed of their arousal was there from the moment they locked eyes even before the performance.

A...bond.

Zhou Zishu welcomed Wen Kexing inside, the sound of his slick yielding to a rigid hot form filling underneath him and a grunt of satisfaction. Oh how his body sucked and seated so sweetly on Wen Kexing's lap when he pulled them upright, pushing all of his weight down until there was no light that could be seen, rotating his hips and biting his lips as Wen Kexing gripped the slender torso and pushed himself up as Zhou Zishu pushed down. Harder, then slower, Zhou Zishu pulled himself off and slammed himself down to the point that he hurt himself, Wen Kexing wasn't exactly small, the length of him made a home inside and tapped his prostate, threatening to do more rhythmic assaults upon it if Zhou Zishu kept teasing. Zhou Zishu KEPT teasing, eliciting swears and coos of 'please' 'more' and 'yes'.

The control was brief because the Alpha decided that he wanted nothing more than to breed, he bent Zhou Zishu backwards on his lap, barely allowing the Omega a moment to adjust before he pounded him on the floor of the limo. The pain was sticky and sharp, making Zhou Zishu see stars and cry out from it all. Suddenly he was pulled up and laid down on the seats, it was like he was scared. This puzzled Zi Shu..did..did Wen Kexing really think the pain was too much? How considerate this gangster was.

He locked his legs around Wen Kexing's waist and grabbed his face so he could see that there was no confusion, no doubt. Eyes that shone a hazy blue glow in the darkness...

Zhou Zishu LOVED it.

And to not stop.

Wen Kexing kissed his hand, held him up by his waist and rammed without remorse. Zhou Zishu couldn't hold on, it was impossible, his body devoured Wen Kexing and sent manic spasms in him, burning wet heat that filled him completely making his body even slicker. Wen

Kexing suckled and rocked with nothing holding him back, the scent of his musk and the temperature inside the limo was becoming unbearable but if he wanted to stop, he knew he couldn't, this Omega...was deadly, this Omega owned him.

If he stopped now...he'd probably would be killed and was a pleasant death that would be? Zhou Zishu wasn't going to let him go and Wen Kexing dared not give in...ever give in, to only give him more, everything. And so he did.

Breaking several glasses and scratching the leather in the process.

**

It was 1145pm, The limo pulled up to the Middle, instantly changing the license plates for more discretion as sped past the checkpoints and stopping a few blocks from Zhou Zishu's apartments, by now he was regaining the use of his legs and Wen Kexing attempted to make himself look presentable for no one other than himself. The Middle was lively with activity, especially noticing the stylish luxury car in their area, the limo opened the hatch to let Zhou Zishu exit very slowly down the short stairs and Wen Kexing held his hand almost like a prince.

"Thank you...for everything." Zhou Zishu said pretty unsure on what he should say, "Thanks for the world shattering orgasm?". It was better to say less, "The Undercity won't be safe for a few days..those goons might attack again."

"Ah, well, they will...or they should." Wen Kexing stood outside the limo with his hands in his pocket, "I'll have to deal with this now..a mess of my own making."

"You?"

"If I told you...there would be trouble in your life." And he was right, Zhou Zishu knew Wen Kexing was a gangster, knew he was some sort of big shot and perhaps that's all he needed to know. He had his own issues, his dreams...this should remain a random thrilling moment in his life. Why invite trouble? "This is where we part, little spider."

"Little?" The two shared a small chuckle at the innuendo and simply stared at each other, this was the goodbye, yes, good bye...that was the right thing. "Goodbye...Wen Kexing."

"Goodbye Zhou Zishu." Wen Kexing turned to enter his limo....then he paused, a drop of rain hit his hand. "Ah...it would be ungentlemanly to let you walk home in the rain."

"It would be rude of me to send you out in the rain as well." Zhou Zishu watched as Wen Kexing sent the limo off, removed his jacket to hold it over them as the rain began to pour and the two escaped once again into the night.

Pearl Necklace

Chapter Summary

After escaping the gunfight and the sex in the limo and in his apartment....Zhou Zishu has been in a lingering state of Heated bliss. Wen Kexing leaves a key but for what? And now his post fuck scent is making Alphas desiring him.

One, just happens to be a Billionaire Philanthropist.

Oh..

They spent the night together, reckless and passionate....definitely loud enough to disturb the neighbors and had to endure the thumps from the fellow tenants banging on the walls to keep the noise down. Zhou Zishu probably came to the point of exhaustion, Wen Kexing teased his nape SEVERAL times, he had restraint but every so often he'd press fangs down, not enough to break skin but enough to be felt. He said Zi Shu tightened every time and it was always bliss.

The last thing he remembered was falling to his mattress with the heavy weight of Wen Kexing over him, laughing and panting, biting his shoulder and kissing the bite afterwards.

They fell asleep in the slow rain along the window, the haze of the Middle cityscape glowing bubbles of purple and white...listening to the noise and soon the soft snores of his Alpha next to him.

His....Alpha?

Had Zhou Zishu wished he was claimed? No, this was a moment, a fling of happenstance in the start of his Heat. Nothing more, he was stronger and more keen to his true desires and that wasn't to be a kept Omega.

But...what if it meant more of this...? More of Wen Kexing..his empty womb now filled with his seed, if he dislodged now surely the flow would be embarrassing. Yet the feeling of all of him inside, hot and sticky, the connection of their desires being denied to bare fruit. Without completing the Circuit or 'Claiming' their energy wasn't united as one. Strange allowances have happened in the past...some ancient old wives tales about 'Soulmates' but this wasn't it.

This was a fling...

The sun peeked in and cruelly hit Zhou Zishu's eyes forcing him to wake up, the thin curtains were drawn in specifically to target his face. Wen Kexing is a trickster, he felt the blanket over him but no Alpha warmth. Alas, he was gone, Zi Shu shouldn't feel this sense of emptiness and snapped his eyes open to see if he wasn't robbed. Not that he had much to steal but it was innate, instead he saw a small note on his equally small nightstand and a key.

-For Private Performances Only, WKX-

...oh...**OH.**

He done it now, Zhou Zishu and his foolishness has put him in a very interesting spot, he and Wen Kexing weren't an 'item' and he certainly didn't want to consider himself a type of 'Bus' Omega (As in any Alpha could ride...for a price.) but perhaps this wasn't *either* thing.

Perhaps HE can use Wen Kexing for Heat Releases. After all if he was going to be used then he should be using too. Yet Zhou Zishu didn't want to see Wen Kexing like that, besides he didn't even know who Wen Kexing WAS so playing any games could very well leave him in a more dangerous position and he was already reckless. No, this key was an opportunity but to what? Salvation or Ruination. That Zhou Zishu didn't know.

The small beep of his alarm caused Zhou Zishu to spring into action with a mild back ache and the slow trickle of morning seed dribble down his thighs. Oh that sneaky Alpha Wen Kexing, to take advantage of him while he was resting! Well, this key would serve him well, if for nothing else than to whack that Alpha in the head for his shamelessness.

Sadly, his morning wasn't starting out with a hot shower, barely tepid, more like it was Zhou Zishu had to be a bit more thorough with his cleaning, ah! So many marks!? Bites and finger presses, light scratches. Oh he was going to give WAY more than a whack when he saw Wen Kexing again! He couldn't tell if he was toyed with by a puppy or a wolf! Zhou Zishu slathered the lovers' wounds with ointment and rubbed the scent nullers on his most fragrant areas on his exposed skin. Oddly he couldn't pick up on his usual cardamom scent, it was mostly apples..a hint of roasted walnuts? It wasn't overpowering but it did fill him with warmth and a sense of protection that oddly he's never craved before. For now, Zhou Zishu just let the light fragrance of Wen Kexing linger on his skin. The power went out in his unit, great, now he'll have to rush in the dark, it would be hilarious if he wasn't in such a rush but Zhou Zishu quickly dressed and snagged a string of fake pearly, slipping them around his neck as he rushed out of his now dark apartment to catch the shuttle to the Uppercity. He'll snag a medicine ball suppressant along the way and besides, he didn't know WHY he grabbed the pearls...a memory of last night perhaps? But they belonged to him..Wen Kexing didn't belong to him. Such a strange feeling blooming in his chest, a small budding emotion of something new. For now Zhou Zishu touched the necklace and quickly tucked them underneath his buttoned up collar, between this and the smell that he was SURE he dampened enough....no one would notice anyway.

He was wrong.

From the moment he left his apartment and entered the **The Kingdom of Morality** the look of the Alphas was a blended expression of WANT and DISGUST. Zhou Zishu wasn't really sure on how to feel, the energy felt so intense yet, despite this, Zhou Zishu still felt protected and a little aroused...instinctively running his fingers over the string of pearls concealed under his shirt. A comfort?

What Zhou Zishu knew of Alphas was that their ability to scent Omegas was vastly MORE sensitive than for Omegas. Their noses couldn't pick up other Omegas but Alphas smelled BOTH types, the world was made for Alpha comfort, not Omegas and Zi Shu was used to that...what he wasn't used to was this want and repellant from the Uppercity Alphas.

There was a lot of chatter and noise about the club, bodyguard automatons stood silently with their artificial internal force powering their cores. State of the art machines yet cold and emotionless, mixed in between them were modified humans with sharp blades at the ready. Someone big was in the club today and Zhou Zishu quickly walked toward the staff room to prep for his piano performance.

“Zhou Zishu! Ah! You’re here great!” The squirrely manager rushed to his side, he was small and usually more stoic towards him but today he looked frantic. “Your smell...”

“Oh, I’m sorry...I showered and-”

“Doesn’t matter! We need to have an ambiance! Can you believe this! Helian Yi is here!” Now the security made sense, Helian Yi, THE Helian Yi-Billionaire, humanitarian, policy maker-Helian Yi. Next to the Emperor, Helian Yi was considered the ‘Prince’. The most favoured and the most coveted Alpha in the Cities, period.

It was his efforts that led the changes to policy of improvement for the Uppercity to make it safer and affluent, granted it sent many people into the Middle and worst, Undercity but Helian Yi expressed that progress was a process. And vowed to reform and restructure the Middle for all those that dwelled there. The people ADORED Helian Yi, getting in with him meant an express trip to the top.

“Oh...wow the Prince...I..” Zhou Zishu said with a soft astonishment in his voice, he sniffed himself wondering if maybe he needed to borrow another suit for this performance.

“Yes, yes the Prince but of course don’t tell him that! Be respectful! Now go, go!” The manager quickly shoved Zhou Zishu to the main hall, it was filled with reporters for a conference and Zhou Zishu could barely hear everyone talking all at once. Did he miss the press conference? Regardless, Zhou Zishu started slowly on the keys for the right piece, *Ludovico Einaudi: I Giorni*

Softly he moved his fingers on the ivory, the piece was gentle and light but not enough to induce sleep but just enough to soothe, as he played Zhou Zishu began to drift into his thoughts...of last night with Wen Kexing and those hands. Long and slender but not lacking in strength, they pressed into his flesh with a sense of adoration, he held Zhou Zishu fixed on his torso as made lazy rolls of hips, going in and deeper, the way he moved it was so instinctual. He could make Zi Shu’s body so malleable, his mouth devoured relentlessly, drinking his breast milk so much that he didn’t need milking in the morning.

“You taste so good A’xu....so good...” The way he called him ‘A’xu’, such brazen familiarity, such affection and want dripping in his voice, how it purred in Zi Shu’s ear and settled in his chest. Wen Kexing could chant this and Zhou Zishu would be captivated completely.

His lips were so red, like he kissed a bloody wound...that should repel him, Zhou Zishu wasn’t keen on blood, barely liked looking at his own injuries if he ever got any but that night, escaping the nightclub, getting into the scuffle...

The vigor and power...the need to survive to protect Wen Kexing. Did he feel that way too? Would he protect him? Zhou Zishu didn’t know. An Alpha needs to be able to protect his Omega.

Zhou Zishu finished the piece and returned to the stage to hear the polite claps of the audience, he didn't even notice how full his tip jar was.

Zi Shu stood up and bowed graciously and left the stage to return to the manager, he was amazed at how well he played tonight and with these tips and what he earned last night. No doubt he had more than enough to treat himself to that plum star wine, not only that! Tonight was getting together with Han Ying, this streak of fortune was well welcomed...maybe he could start saving too.

"Beautiful rendition of Einaudi's I Giorni...was this a favourite of yours?" A voice so even and velvet floated into Zhou Zishu's ear, the reaction was immediate and he felt a trickle of slick leak out, was the medicine ball suppressant a fake? How did he become so hot all of the sudden?! Zhou Zishu turned to the direction of the voice and was met with the face of the most influential Alpha in the whole Uppercity, devastatingly handsome and mature in a modest dark grey suit with platinum lapels. He was presented not as a man in exorbitant wealth, despite being able to own everyone in this club and probably the city block. His scent was rich, woodsy...but Zhou Zishu couldn't pick it up accurately but how it sent his Omega need on *fire*. His mouth was dry, shit, Zhou Zishu could only nod in agreement before his brain finally allowed him to form words again.

"Thank you, Helian Yi...I'm happy you enjoyed my performance." The dignified Alpha laughed and walked closer to Zhou Zishu almost like it was a challenge to see if he would become a puddle of slick. What was happening to him? The suppressant had to work, he wasn't like this an hour ago. "I apologize, I wasn't able to hear your conference."

"Ah, yes, well we can discuss it...privately if you'd want?" Zhou Zishu could feel this taste in his mouth, the scent of Helian Yi.

Privately.

"I would like that. Please." Helian Yi made a small nod with his head and Zhou Zishu walked forward feeling the large hot palm on his shoulder, slowly sliding down to the small of his back.



Another *private performance* perhaps?

The powder room was closer, there should be a sense of shame but right now Zhou Zishu wasn't thinking about it, he could concentrate on anything except Helian Yi's fingers in his mouth, pulling on his tongue and slipping down almost to the back of his throat. It was enough to make him QUAKE in slick, his mouth was so hungry and he knew how much of a mess he was going to be after this. There, on his knees in the empty powder room with the most powerful Alpha in the city staring down at him with this look of conquering and disgust. He knew it was Wen Kexing's scent, he even knew that this was the result of the scent...how many Alphas in the audience wanted Zhou Zishu like this? When a freshly fucked Omega isn't bonded the need to Claim spikes in Alphas...which is why it's so important for Omegas to protect themselves with collars and suppressants.

But Zhou Zishu was afraid of being Claimed by Helian Yi...he was such an ordinary Omega, much like with Wen Kexing, this was a fling nothing more. Although...the presence of Helian

Yi's bodyguard standing there silently, unnerved him, he was sure the bodyguard was an Alpha too...this was too risky, far too risky but the second he felt hands slip around his waist and a squeeze so tight that he squirted slick. Zhou Zishu knew he was being consumed, sweetly.

A fling...just a fling, stay focused and sure Zhou Zishu.

And down he went.

Helian Yi ran his free hand over Zhou Zishu's forehead, through the locks of his messy bangs and cupped the back of his head.

"Will you inhale me properly?" Helian Yi asked, his voice sounded dark and thick, Zi Shu eyes rolled into the back of his head as the thick fingers went deeper into his mouth. Sending a spasm rippling down his spine and freeing more hot slick, this was dangerous, so dangerous but his mind was going white with desire and only desire. "Will you serve me? Zi Shu?" The Alpha pulled his fingers out slowly, letting the trail of drool drip down the corner of Zhou Zishu's full wet lips.

"Y-yes..." And Helian Yi pushed Zhou Zishu's head forward into his crotch, he didn't unzip, merely keep his face against it so Zi Shu could inhale his musk. He didn't need to prompt him for anything else, the sound of his fly unzipping and the feel of his nose pushing the expensive silk fabric apart to get at his cock was enough. His tongue tasted hot salt from sweat, the musk of a mature Alpha was different from a younger one. More rich and aged, the taste made Zi Shu wonder how many Omegas were savouring this heavy weight on his tongue as he buried his nose deep against Helian Yi's torso, hairs tickling and the smell pungent yet fragrant, it was intoxicating both the motion of his head and the rough hold of the older Alpha practically use his mouth as a sex toy, it was frantic and hard, Zhou Zishu throat was being brutalized, his cheeks expanded as he flicked the large head, working his mouth only for Helian Yi's pleasure. It wasn't long before that long burning stream of Alpha's milk jettison filled his mouth with a loud grunt and shove down hard to the Billionaire's pelvis once more. It was bitter and voluminous filling his mouth and gushing down his throat.

This Alpha...was *feeding* him.

When the amount slowed, Helian Yi graciously pulled Zhou Zishu's head back feeling the tight pleasure of soft lips and looked pleased that the lowly Omega below him made sure to suck and clean his cock with confidence in those hazy blue glowing eyes beneath those messy bangs and dripping lips.

"Beautiful...your mouth is as talented as your hands, it seems Zi Shu."

"T-thank you, Boss." Zhou Zishu smirked and completely drunk on Helian Yi's seed, consuming Alpha fluids when in a Heat like this could make an Omega intoxicated on hormones and lust. He knew that, he was aware of that all his life and looking at Helian Yi, the way he looked down at him...this high and mighty Alpha, drops of his milk dripping down his slick head and on shirt staining it. "A-are you...truly finished...?" He teased, unbuttoning his shirt collar to reveal his collar and fake pearls. A slow drag of his tongue on his lips. "I'm not."

"Ahh, a pretty viper..." Helian Yi grabbed Zhou Zishu by his scalp and pulled him up, the stare of this Omega was enchanting, he's never seen a more dangerous beauty...something deadly

and sweet in the wild stare of his eyes and Helian Yi could not resist him. “You can take it and more.”

“You don’t...intimidate me, just don’t....disappoint me.” Sometimes, Han Ying would say, Zhou Zishu knew how to be sharp with his words, how to provoke even in this moment and there was a shadow of dark lust, of control nearly covering the distinguished Alpha’s face. It was quick, gone in a blink but Zhou Zishu saw it, he pushed too far, he needed to sober up...maybe vomit the cum settling in his stomach....

It was too late.

Zhou Zishu was thrust against the dresser, causing the mirror above it to shake with the force, he was hoisted up, knocking the various items and lotions off on the floor before he was met with a hard unrelenting kiss that rattled his teeth. The crushing strength and power of Helian Yi wasn’t something he anticipated and yet his body WELCOMED the dominance, his shirt tore open, buttons flying everywhere as the scattered and Helian Yi went on to devour a path down Zi Shu’s face and throat, his fangs sharp and grazing the leather strap of his collar as he descended. He tried to unbuckle his belt and pants but the mature Alpha was ahead of him, practically yanking the clothing off and proceeding to yank his hands up over his head. Making sure Zhou Zishu REMAINED in place, Helian Yi looked down at the dripping mess all over Zi Shu’s waist and between his thighs. He freed one of Zhou Zishu for the purpose of groping the smooth wet flesh of his inner thigh, the amount of excess slick coated his palm like a pallid honey and he licked the mess with a famished glee.

The fingers worked him open and Zhou Zishu held his shoulders, they were so thick...not as long as Wen Kexing but they opened him sloppily loose, Helian Yi wasn’t going to have anymore more foreplay, he desired to use Zi Shu as a sheath and the second he slipped inside the sounds of his surprised gasp as he immediately tighten was like music. There was nothing more luscious in his ears than Zi Shu’s pants and moans, he fucked hard and strong, each forceful slam of his aged hips was ringing all over Zhou Zishu. The tug of a hand on the string of pearls as Helian Yi’s rod rammed its way through him, hollowing him out and aiming for the purpose of making him leak more milk and seed all over his body. When Helian Yi saw the breastmilk, his hand squeezed and tugged on Zi Shu’s nipple, tugging the pearls while mercilessly pinching a nipple till it spurted jets of milk and it was making Zhou Zishu dizzy.

He felt a hard clam to match the brutal piston of hip in his ass that made his bones ache. Sucking the milk harder and toying with him.

The sound of glass cracking behind him worried Zhou Zishu, Helian Yi was breaking him and he was getting lost in it all, the pleasure building behind his eyes as his body was craving the release and subsequent planting of an Alpha’s deposit coating his cavity. A zipper sounded blearily eyed over Helian yi’s shoulder the bodyguard was jerking off...

The heavy musk of their fucking was choking Zhou Zishu, mixing in with the remainder of Wen Kexing in and on him and now he was becoming drenched in Alphas markings. The shuddering grunt and spasms alerted Zi Shu that Helian Yi was done, if what he released in his mouth was too much then his ass was certainly now filled. Zhou Zishu SCREAMED into his orgasm, dragging his nails down Helian Yi’s neck and instinctively forcing his face down into the crook of his neck. The dominant Alpha pulled his hands off him and held them within his

own crushingly as he silenced any loud cries of pleasure from his Omega. Swallowing the voice and Zhou Zishu tongue as he sucked and lingered with a few more meager bumps into him.

Languidly Zi Shu whined and bucked as his body was thoroughly fucked into liquid, he was deboned and smiled with bloody lips. Helian licked the small light red off his own lips as he yanked the fake pearls off Zhou Zishu's neck. He tried to weakly take them back and instead dragged his hand down Helian Yi's face and lips, his ring finger was caught.

The pressure of a light Alpha bite made him tighten as Helian Yi spurt a lighter load into his into quivering form.



“Zi Shu...you...are worth far more than cheap pearls...they are *beneath* you.” Helian Yi said in a rough rasp, he coughed and cleared his throat, running his hand through his hair to look presentable before he even pulled out of Zhou Zishu. “To..think that such a prize as yourself is hidden...it is disgraceful.”

“B-boss Helian...” Zi Shu tried to form words, he needed to sober up but his body craved more, to be filled with more, his eyes darted to the Alpha bodyguard who was also trying to readjust himself. Helian Yi grabbed him by his face with a quick but loving force so his eyes were solely on him.

“Zhou Zishu...calm yourself.” Finally Helian Yi slipped out of him and the amount that flowed out of him also should’ve made him instantly pregnant, the Alpha’s thumb teased the leather collar and that snapped Zhou Zishu to reality. He froze and hardened his stare, “Come now...we barely know each other. A hundred years ago this would’ve been the standard...we are refined and noble people, not like those of the Undercity.”

“Y-yes....of course, I’m sorry.” What was that? That fear? It wasn’t like that with Wen Kexing...why did he react in such a way? “I’m filthy.”

“Ah, forgive me Zhou Zishu...such a mess.” Helian Yi looked at his bodyguard who jumped into action. “I will have arrangements made with the cleaner and tailor to send you a new uniform.” The bodyguard returned with a spare suit, nothing designer but it was enough to be presentable, another bodyguard had a spare suit for Helian Yi in a clothing bag. He was prepared for this...

Has the ‘Prince’ done this...before?

They didn’t speak, it was cold but formal nonetheless...wasn’t much Zhou Zishu COULD say as he slipped on the very form fitting suit on, it was plain but nice, probably cost more than his entire wardrobe while Helian Yi was dressed sharply and looked like nothing transpired in this room...only he himself felt wrecked and filthy. Zi Shu...didn’t like it but kept quiet, there was no need for emotions here, the sex was amazing and quieted that Heat. He needed to head back home and shower again, tonight was Han Ying and Hot Pot.

“I have an Investors Meeting this Thursday at 7pm to speak about enriching the Middle and deal with the crime in Undercity. Far too long have the citizens suffered in shameful ways as the results of greed and corruption. Ah but that isn’t what I meant to say, I would like you to perform there, at my 5th Palace. You will be richly rewarded.”

“I am grateful for the opportunity Boss-Sir Yi.” The mature Alpha turned to meet Zhou Zishu’s eyes with a full warm smile on his face, it was somewhat eerie. His thumb trailed over Zi Shu’s lips, parting them until he was inside, he took the Omega’s hand and raised it to his own lips, planting a tender kiss on his wrist and palm. The gentle reverence made Zhou Zishu breathless, hooked into that Alpha presence. “Thursday...then?”

“Yes, Zi Shu...” The heavy whisper of Helian Yi’s voice seemingly was pouring in his ear as he was pulled closer, his hands reaching down till he cupped Zi Shu’s ass and tugged down the tight pants till he squeezed the bare flesh. “Yes, Zi Shu...”

“Let me give you a proper *pearl necklace* before I go...”

On the Menu

Chapter Summary

After earth shattering sex with Helian Yi, ZZS joins Han Ying for some delicious Hot Pot...but when a blast from their past makes a sudden appearance, could this be the start of something that can't be stopped?

It took a full hour for Zhou Zishu to regain feeling in his legs and for his jaw to no longer be sore, he gargled mouthwash in his tiny apartment and got himself ready for the celebration with Han Ying. His body has never felt more...thoroughly FUCKED. In a span of 24hrs he was met with two amazing Alphas that made his body so *lush*, it was impossible to describe this feeling accurately. Zhou Zishu did some mild meditation before he left to the Uppercity again, everything inside him felt like a current, flowing with this...creation inside him, no doubt the increased sex drive was due to his age and his Heat. But there was a balance that needed to be maintained in him, Zi Shu lost his focus from his Heat...led him to take too many risks.

Both Wen Kexing and Helian Yi were elite Alphas, surely they would select elite Omegas...Zhou Zishu didn't consider himself lesser but there was a feeling that he wasn't right for either of them.

No...that was a lie.

Zhou Zishu exhaled and opened his eyes, inside his small basic apartment as the sun began to set, what did he really want? He wanted to be comfortable, to bring comfort, to want more than this, he wanted to travel and study more martial arts. To expand his knowledge, test his skills, learn more...

Start a family.

The two Alphas...he **wanted** them.

With a weak little sigh, Zhou Zishu stood up with a mild ache and left his apartment. Tonight he is just going to savour the memories of the Alphas. He'll meet Helian Yi again Thursday but what of Wen Kexing? Was that a chance meeting...? Certainly he wouldn't risk returning to the Scorpion's Palace after the shoot out. He was a **marked man**, probably hunted or worse. That thought made Zi Shu's chest tightened, no, Wen Kexing was alive, far too skilled.

He looked at the small key and note, still safe...tomorrow he'll go down to the Undercity, he was scheduled to perform, granted he didn't hear anything back from the Owner. The Scorpion 'King' was such an elusive figure, a stunning Omega in his own right....they only really met once and that was when Zhou Zishu was hired. Admittedly, he admired him, to be an Omega and to survive in the Undercity, unclaimed, ruling over Alphas like that. Truly meant that the Scorpion King was unlike any other Omega, perhaps he could learn more from him.

So Zhou Zishu resolved himself and left his flat, by all accounts he was truly fortunate, with the amount of money he made today...that delicious plum star wine was his. Thankfully, Han Ying understood that if they wanted QUALITY Hot Pot, it wouldn't be in the Middle.

The Uppercity has so many zones for allowances, his and Han Ying's IDs only allowed a level two access meaning they could go to 'work and entertainment places' that's it, to gain more access required approval from a influential Uppercity resident or official and even that would take MONTHS to clear. Most Middle citizens couldn't pass level three. Just getting to level two took two years for Zhou Zishu and that was WITH Han Ying's help.

The process was very strenuous and detailed, only qualified residence could only DREAM of passing the various ID checkpoints to access more of the Uppercity, it was a honor to get this far, to observe the wealth and technology that made the buildings of glass and metal shine in the sunlight, not a scrap of paper, graffiti or filth was seen. Automated cleaners ran constantly on solar energy, making sure the walkways, parks and streets look new and well maintained. It was a paradise of wealth and affluence.

Zhou Zishu stared at the various holograms of celebrities, models and fashion icons almost everywhere, flipping semi-translucent screens to show the advertisement for some ludicrously expensive item that Zhou Zishu could dream of but never obtain. Everyone in the city looked so well off and healthy, families played in the rich green parks, luxury cars floated in the air with no toxic fumes joking the skies and barely a sound besides a gentle hum from the engines.

For a while Zhou Zishu stopped and looked at it all. The Uppercity was like a view of Heaven and he's only seen maybe 05% of it.

*If only he could rise above his station...but...for an **Omega like him** , there really was only ONE way he could.*

The checkpoint scan drone beeps as it flew past him, he was cleared and Zhou Zishu waited for Han Ying, just as he saw an ad featuring Helian Yi flashed on small 3D grids. How dashing he looked with a beautiful woman and kids, no doubt models, promoting the safety of the Uppercity, how balanced and abundant the city was and how his methods of protection meant that no Uppercity dweller would EVER encounter crime seen in the Middle and Undercity. It was by his mind and heavy hand that everyone was able to see justice met harshly on those criminals and how only he was able to transform their 'misguided' brother cities on the right path.

"20 years of tireless work to reform Uppercity into a place where we are free of impurity and corruption, in that time our sister cities have endured what we've driven away. That is why it is imperative that we remain steadfast and vigilant in weeding out all refuse and injustice from Ghost Valley creeping back into our lives. Our families and our childrens' futures rely on our fortitude and strength to not yield. In the coming months, we plan on opening negotiations with the new Chief of Ghost-"

"Zi Shu!" Han Ying yelled as he left the tram, he looked stronger and brighter since obtaining that new position at the construction firm, although Zhou Zishu knew he had way more capable skills, Han Ying was content with this work, such a happy disposition made him smile too.

"You look...wow."

“Hmm? What?” Zhou Zishu asked almost innocently, looking at Han Ying as he nervously laughed, “Is it my scent?”

“Yeah...wow, did you find an Alpha?”

“Wh? No no I’ve been, well let’s say reckless. But I have new suppressants so my Heat will be better managed.” Han Ying nodded in relief, he was always so attuned with Zhou Zishu even back when they were chums in uni. Omegas don’t usually bond this closely but Zi Shu thought it was simply divine that it was with someone like Han Ying. Truly, a good man. “Alright since you’re so wealthy, you must spoil me then.” Zi Shu flagged a cab and showed his ID, the driver was A.I that flickered green and allowed the two Omegas in.

“W-wait spoil?! Hahah Zi Shu please. The promotion can only buy so much.” Han Ying couldn’t contain his laughter, he was an attractive man with sparkling eyes and a clean cut appearance. A keen mind and admirable martial art prowess, Han Ying *dreamed* of opening a small school in the Middle for impoverished youths, he wanted to follow in their Master’s path and rebuild their ‘Sect’. It was something their Master wished for..Zhou Zishu to lead the new generation in the teachings of Four Seasons Manor but. Zi Shu *originally* wanted that too but there was something inside him that craved something else.

Someone else.

But Zhou Zishu shoved those feelings down as the cab floated silently through the skyway. Contemplating his future...

Han Ying worked through his supervisor to get the hook up for this place as no Middle could hope to get an invite. The place reeked of overprice pretension and yet would be considered ‘moderately priced’ to the well to do Uppercity folks. Large clear windows showed the brilliant street filled with shoppers and pedestrians, the rich green topiary expertly trimmed and bright clear fountains showing beautiful robotic dancers in the water. The interior was washed in an artificial stark white glow as red umbrellas hung over the many tables containing small plates and several meats. The heavily aroma of lamb and beef broth filled the air as a polite waitress pointed to their booth. All set up with delicious vegetables and soup, Han Ying was kind enough to get a more Southern Style dinner complete with chili peppers that could burn a hole in a man.

The meal was delicious, more than that it was healing for Zhou Zishu...he never had such quality meats before, the beer was cold and the herbal tea even more so. Just being around friends had an uplifting energy, Han Ying was such a lightweight in comparison to him...after four beers he was getting dizzy.

“Ah? Han Ying?” A familiar voice floated in the air and reached Han Ying before Zhou Zishu noticed, “It IS you? What are the odds?” The two Omegas turned to their former TA of Art History, Peng Ju, it has been nearly a decade since they last saw him. He was always a strangely arrogant man who had no reason to be. Small, almost rat-like with a face that always looked so dour, Zhou Zishu tolerated him, he had so much knowledge about history and particularly the arts that were popular in the Uppercity. After all, it was something he mentioned ad nauseam. Han Ying, the ever friendly, waved and welcomed him but Zi Shu kept quiet with a smile, the beer tasted bitter all of the sudden. “I didn’t expect you two here in Uppercity? What a delightful chance of fate eh?”

“Truly TA Peng Ju! We are here to celebrate my promotion! And for Zi Shu’s continued good health!” Han Ying beamed like a lightbulb with red cheeks as he downed another beer being well pass his limit and patted the seat as an invite. The TA nodded with a cheesy grin and sat inbetween Han Ying and Zhou Zishu, “Yes, we’re surprised to see you here...perhaps you can tell us some delicacies on this menu?”

“Ah, ah Han Ying, I merely was passing by, there’s a place that sells my...favourite tea and I have to travel to level two to obtain it.” Peng Ju nodded and looked at Zi Shu as he quietly sipped, the buzz of the alcohol was finally sinking in. He wasn’t sure but he felt a brush of Peng Ju’s hand on his thigh, *strange...*

Peng Ju droned on and on about how he had a major meeting with the upper echelons including Helian Yi of the Uppercity tomorrow night. Granted he was merely an art dealer and consultant, getting the opportunity to speak to anyone like that was a promise of status and wealth. Zhou Zishu was half listening to him, he dabbled in painting in his free time but wouldn’t consider himself an artist by any means. Still he was happy for Peng Ju, he had no reason to frown at his good fortune, the world was filled with so much bitterness and jealousy, why invite such feelings to you? Besides, he met Helian Yi more....intimately before, it was a sensual experience and he ran his tongue over his teeth. Remembering that steel aged flesh in his mouth and the thick bust of Alpha spunk coating his throat. He ran his finger over the bite the older Alpha placed on his ring finger, such a brute...*so distinguished.*

Perhaps he didn’t realize it but Zi Shu was fooling with his tongue over the bottle lip, probably a bit more seductive than he meant to. *Wait for tomorrow night Zhou Zishu...*

The restaurant was closing and all three men were completely knackered, Peng Ju was probably the most sober out of the three but none of them were capable of walking home. Peng Ju thought he looked foolish, walking around Uppercity intoxicated but when he held Zhou Zishu up over his shoulder, he found his features far lovelier in the soft neon glow of the streetlights.

Since he was the eldest, he summoned a cab and paid the extremely pricey fare to take them all down to the Middle. Han Ying slurred a song about his ‘Heat’, completely shameful, what Peng Ju knew about Omegas was that they were loose and sloppy...granted he didn’t see that in HIS life, in fact he never really associated with them till he became a TA. Decades ago, Omegas knew their place, and remained in the house....they were there to breed and not every child born to an Omega possessed were a Type. And Peng Ju should know.

He was a child of an Omega and Alpha and was not a **Type**.

That was a thorn in his side, he hoped to be an Alpha like his father. But he failed...he failed at a lot of things. Then he looked to his side and see Zhou Zishu, laying against the window, trying to keep himself from Peng Ju like he was lesser. This ‘lesser’ was making sure you were getting home.

Han Ying’s apartment was closer so he left graciously and drunkenly first, politely thanking his former TA for the ride home. He shouted goodbye to Zhou Zishu who blearily looked at him with a dopey smile and waved him away.

Now...there were two.

Peng Ju opened Zhou Zishu's door with the very intoxicated Omega on his shoulder, he was amazed that he was able to make it up the stairs, despite it all and even in his own condition they wandered in sloppy and the older man fumbled for a light but cursed when he almost sent them both to the cheap wood floor. Such a small but well kept place, the scent of apples in the room...something else, woodsy? He couldn't think about that, Peng Ju was exhausted and excited all at once, Zhou Zishu looked so...

"Lao Wen..." Zhou Zishu mumbled with a small hiccup in his voice, "Lao Wen...where did you...go?" Lao Wen? Who was that? Peng Ju didn't know but somehow in the haze of booze he made the short pathway to Zhou Zishu's bed and finally the both collapsed on the firm mattress. For a while Peng Ju wanted to lay there, this apartment was so small, so unrefined...even his flat was larger? At least his bed was in an actual room and not sharing a space with the kitchenette! Bah! Poverty? No, this wasn't poor but it was beneath him, Peng Ju always imagined that Zhou Zishu would be some sort of Omega mate to a wealthy Alpha, he had potential, far more potential than any other Omega he's known. Even in uni, there was something about Zhou Zishu that made Peng Ju spurn with this...need. "Lao Wen...d-don't...touch there. Ah..fuckkk. So...hot." Peng Jun felt a lump in his throat, Zhou Zishu was very drunk right now but he was sober enough to have dragged them both here. He even was generous enough to pay the cab to take Han Ying home, weak little thing he was.

He considered...perhaps he should be compensated. *That was fair.*

"Zi Shu...who is...Lao Wen?" Zhou Zishu snorted and sighed, his hands rubbed his face and felt his neck, this was a Heat but he was too drunk to do anything, he yanked off his collar and fumbled foolishly at his jeans, Peng Ju remained silent, he was undressing...Omegas going into Heat like this, they'll spread their legs to anyone. Even a No Type like him. "Zi Shu...you are being shameless."

"Shameless...you're shmamelssish." The drunk Omega slurred and finally unzipped his fly, Peng Ju just watched as this haughty Omega fidgeted in a drunken bliss, in the darkness of the apartment the glow of the artificial moonlight on such a cloudy night peaked through the small window. Zhou Zishu was beautiful, gods he was always such a beauty. "Let me...help you..."

"Hur-hurry up...I..want to suck..." Peng Ju could not believe the lewd words dripping from Zhou Zishu's lips, in uni he was such a studious and almost pious young man of incredible humility and talent. Now...right now on the bed, sweat dripping down the sides of his brow, sticking to his messy bangs, teasing red lips glossy from booze and spit. His body toned so well that even clothed the shape of him was seen easily, heavy breasts no doubt filled with milk. Peng Ju never tasted breast milk from an Omega and with Zi Shu's nipples becoming fat and puffy...surely they'll leak through his shirt. *He was doing a kindness.* "L-lao Wen...taste me..."

Peng Ju set upon him, his mouth wide and sloppy, sucking and licking Zi Shu's mouth as his heavy clumsy hands eagerly touched everywhere he wanted. Zhou Zishu's moans mixed in with his whines, Peng Ju swore he heard a 'no' but he pushed it aside...Zi Shu is an Omega...they never knew *what* they wanted.

The older cad rolled off Zhou Zishu's shirt soaking in the view of swollen pinkish red nipples slowly dripping milk, he clamped down roughly and sucked hard.

“AH! W-what is...who...” Zhou Zishu shouted and softly pushed, he was too drunk and his efforts were futile, Peng Ju was filling his belly of milk, his hand took Zi Shu’s half hardened form and pulled with no skill, all hurried and rushed. The older man released Zhou Zishu’s flesh and slid along the smooth dripping form, getting his fingers coated with cum and slick before forcing them inside Zhou Zishu’s rear. The gasp was swallowed up into Peng Ju’s mouth and he savoured it. Letting his fingers twist and wiggle inside such *tight* wet heat. This was an Omega’s ready ass...it felt so unique, soft and deep, Peng Ju added a third finger and felt a sharp bite of teeth on his lips causing him to pull off and return to sucking on all the fresh milk practically squirting out of Zhou Zishu now. *Such a lewd sight*. “Ahhh..s-stop..stopp...Lao Wen wh-” Peng Ju wanted to tell him that he wasn’t this ‘Lao Wen’, he wasn’t going to fuck him like this ‘Lao Wen’. If *Lao Wen* was here, he’d be doing this too, after all Zhou Zishu was a tease, so smug, so sure and for what? Nothing!

“Zi Shu...shhhh...***I’m*** here.” Peng Ju wiped his mouth, the milk was so sweet, almost too sweet...he went to work yanking the jeans off Zi Shu, kissing a path down Zhou Zishu’s stomach and licked the soft pubic hairs. Fate was cruel, Peng Ju regretted being born a No Type, this belly deserved to be fat with a child and he was on the way up, he’ll live in Uppercity, he’ll be wealthy and important, if he was like Helian Yi...he’d OWN Zhou Zishu. Once he had all of Zi Shu’s clothes off he unbuckled his own fly, he felt himself twitch but he wasn’t getting hard. No! Here was this piece of ass waiting to be filled! Why couldn’t he get aroused...?

“You smell...like...dog shit.”

“W-what?”

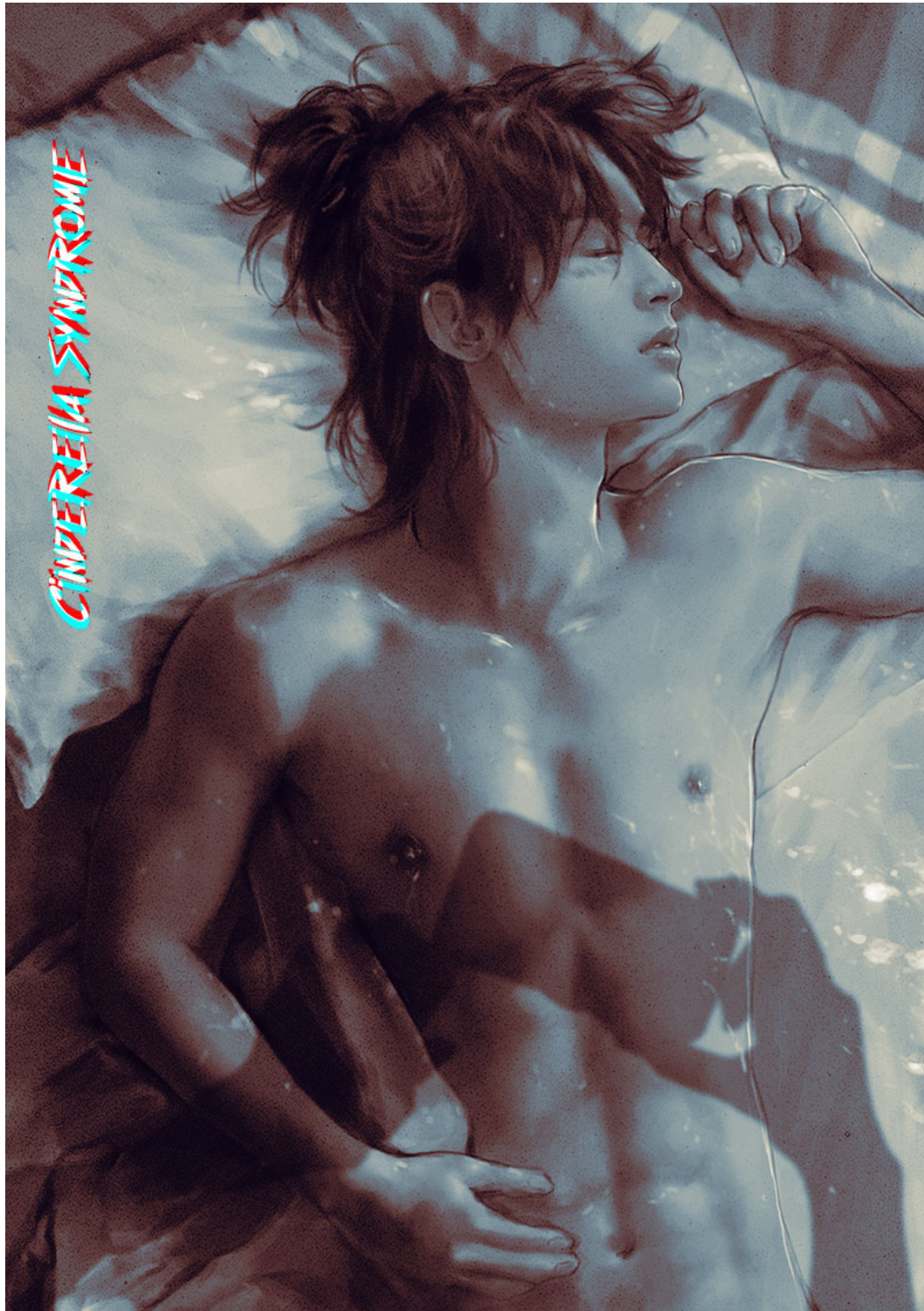
“...Lao Wen...” The drunken Omega grimaced, he struggled to sit up and propped himself up on his elbows, for a moment there was clarity in his eyes, a haze of blue light of an Omega in Heat, proof of his fertility, proof that only an Alpha could *sate* him. Peng Ju wasn’t getting hard because he wasn’t an Alpha, just a man. A basic man couldn’t breach an Omegas womb, not without medicine and competently strong meridians. Something Peng Ju lacked in all categories, “Y...you’re...not good enough..” And with that Zhou Zishu scowled and flopped back on his bed completely asleep.

For a moment Peng Ju stood there in abject silence..he could believe what he heard but it was spoken all the same, even an Omega, a submissive Type by birth, a lowly class...only worth breeding with Alphas. Mocked him. There was a fury in Peng Ju, if he was sober he’d ring the life from Zhou Zishu and fuck him with a broom handle, the thought made him smile..see if his precious ‘Lao Wen’ would want him then. The older man cursed and fixed himself up, he couldn’t get it up anyway but that wasn’t his fault...it was the pheromones of the Omega Heat and nothing more. He’ll visit the Undercity tomorrow before his meeting with Helian Yi, that meeting will change his life and he’ll never see Zhou Zishu again.

But before he could go, Peng Ju took out his phone and snapped photos of Zhou Zishu’s nude form, the moonlight dancing on his pale skin, his Heat doing a number as every inch of him looked entirely lickable, pliant and ready for breeding. If Peng Ju couldn’t actively fuck Zhou Zishu, he could at least pleasure himself to his visage on his phone. Seeing him like this, laid out and asleep soaking in his sweat and slick sent a twitch to Peng Ju’s cock, shit...now its ready but the mood is gone. Damn you Zhou Zishu, he cursed under his breath, quickly he

worked his flesh still half hard to a pitiful sprinkle and drip of his seed..making sure a fair bit of it managed to make it on Zhou Zishu's chest. It wasn't much but it was proof that he had 'claimed' this Omega...if for no one else, then his own memories.

Peng Ju zipped up and took a total of 10 shots and slipped them in a folder called 'Bitch in Heat' and with that departed the unit.



The sun rose and thus blinded Zhou Zishu as his alarm made a bright chirping noise to make his head throb and was otherwise very inconsiderate of his hangover. Ugh, he bemoaned to himself, he smelled horrid! His mouth tasted vile too...what the fuck happened last night? Zi

Shu wondered and noticed he was completely nude. The alarm's tone aggravated him till he turned it off and sat up on his bed. His collar was off, tossed to the floor near his door but he didn't feel any bites on his neck or nape, he felt the crust of his breastmilk on his sore nipples, something else? Grumpily Zhou Zishu made his way to the ice box and sighed as the cold pack soothed his chest. Was it hot last night? Was that why he was naked? Zhou Zishu looked down and felt inbetween his legs, just the crust of his slick (gross) but his belly felt empty...just what the fuck happened last night? He'd have to call Han Ying as soon as he got himself looking more human.

The shower allowed for 4 minutes of mildly hot water, Zhou Zishu washed his hair and was more thorough with his cleanliness today. That SMELL that was on him was so rank, he needed to open up his windows for a few minutes to rid it.

How strange, his sense of smell was never this sensitive before. Just to be sure, he'd take some time to clean his flat...maybe a dead rat was in the trash, wouldn't be the first time.

Tonight he'd had the performance at Helian Yi's Investors Meeting in the Uppercity but he needed to call the Scorpion's Palace to tell them he wouldn't be able to perform tonight. He doubted the club was repaired anyway but he certainly wasn't going to be a no show. Zhou Zishu turned on his holoset, listening to the news as he did some light sprucing when a ping from his phone alerted him that he had gained temporary access to level five. Oh he had to take pictures for Han Ying.

KNOCK KNOCK

Oh? Who was at his door so early? It's not even 7am...Zhou Zishu barely had proper clothes on and slipped on a shabby robe before heading to his door to see a man with a garment two garment bags, he was tall and wore dark shades but Zhou Zishu could tell he was sent by someone extremely important.

"Zhou Zishu, Helian Yi wishes for you to wear this at the Investors Meeting." The man handed the garment bags to a very stunned Zhou Zishu, these were name brand, even the lettering on the bags was in golden thread. "This attire has been measured and is to be 100% exact, Helian Yi wishes for you to keep these and wear them with fondness and care. A chauffeur will be escorting you to the Fifth Palace promptly at 6pm sharp, please be ready. With regards." The man bowed his head and left without so much as a sound or a chance for Zhou Zishu to refuse.

Bewildered, Zi Shu took the expensive garment bags to his bed and opened the window to air out the apartment. These two bags were the most expensive things in the BUILDING and Helian Yi was just...giving them to him. Where would he keep them!? He proceeded to unzip the bags...

"Breaking news, the Undercity newest crime boss has made a declaration along with his debut..." That caught Zhou Zishu's attention, its been some time after the assassination of the Chief of Ghost Valley happened and the whole Undercity as well as the Middle has been in a state of flux. Ghost Valley controlled so much and was so powerful, they controlled 55% of the Undercity and every other gang feared them. They were violent, cruel, from prostitution to assassinations to smuggling to counterfeit and illegal body modifications. Ghost Valley handled it. But there were rumors of another sect that was slowly making its way down in Undercity...they didn't have a name, at least not one Zhou Zishu knew.

The cameras flickered quickly to a massive dark black marble floor pavilion, massive and imposing with enough room to hold nearly 1000 soldiers and courtesans, with thick pillars of dragons made out of neon danced around them, there was an illuminated pathway of glowing teal water and nearly 30 men clad in dark red black garments, armed to the teeth and faces concealed stood lining the expanse to the lone chrome cold grey throne in the center.

A beautiful woman stood beside it with a ruby red smile, her white hair, done up neatly was the only pale colour in the room and gold jewels dripped from her earlobe as red silken banners with a symbol of a wolf fell over older banners..signaling the change, the new, the more violent.

Zhou Zishu flopped on his bed, he couldn't believe what he was seeing...decked out in a blood red suit with a gold and black muzzle that did nothing to hide his fangs and the sharp crimson glow in his eyes. Almost as if he knew Zhou Zishu was watching, almost as if he knew his vision and his words would strike deep in the Omega's heart.

There, on the throne sat Wen Kexing...HIS Wen Kexing.

“The Boss retired early, I’m assuming control.”

Glass Slipper

Chapter Summary

Zhou Zishu wishes to confront Wen Kexing but gets side tracked by a 'Man in White'...the wheel of fate has spun and a choice has been made.

Chapter Notes

I think we need a LENGTHY cleanser after Chapter 4 huh?

Zhou Zishu rushed down to the trains leading to the Undercity, pure insanity for anyone to travel the trains to such a place but he needed to see Wen Kexing, HAD to. Morning rush be damned.

Was this a joke? It wasn't a funny one.

Wen Kexing? Chief of Ghost Valley? The most notoriously violent and vicious gang in all of Undercity-no-the three cities? There wasn't a soul that didn't know who they were and how you never crossed them. In a span of twenty years, they rose from a weak punk gang to the nearly three THOUSAND strong army today. The former Chief was particularly brutal and cruel, Zhou Zishu's master tangled with him only once....he barely survived.

They specialized in hits, smuggling, extortion, prostitution, car thefts, organ selling...you name it, Ghost Valley was it.

Zhou Zishu couldn't imagine that Wen Kexing could be the newly installed leader of such a gang....and yet, who was he to presume anything about this man? They fucked ONCE (maybe three times). That was the extent of their interaction. But that night, together, he and Wen Kexing.

Something was there between them. Zi Shu FELT something.

Rain, again...the Undercity had a controlled weather system that rotated to mimic what was seen above in the Middle and Uppercity. Rarely did they have any solar power or even proper ventilation, clean water itself was rare and could only be obtained at a 'reasonable' price through vending machines and those were controlled by...*Ghost Valley*.

The train pulled into the dilapidated and graffiti covered station, there was a smell of rust and filth that Zi Shu didn't want to name, the homeless loitered around with the prostitutes and drug users addicted to a type of drug called 'Venom'. It was new and rumored to have been

smuggled in by some wealthy Alpha in the Uppercity, not much was known about it but the users would become hopelessly addicted that would grant them enhanced abilities but crush their Meridians...leaving them crippled with their mind wiped. However the sensation and rush was unparalleled.

Zhou Zishu walked quickly through the rain, the holo screens all had the recording of Wen Kexing's proclamations, he overheard the conversations in the crowd, the murmurs about the young Chief and the striking crimson of his attire. Rumors about how the Former Chief was 'retired', many saying that Wen Kexing KILLED him.

Could that be possible? That night the two of them fought for their lives to escape the Scorpion's Palace, Zi Shu knew his hands weren't clean either but that was self defense. There was a difference.

The ever present police sirens filled the nosy atmosphere of the street market, speeding through the air to whatever called them. The neon warning signs about a 'pending sewer flood' was possible do to the torrential rain, the people of the city looked poor and exhausted, many were maids and servants getting off work and now had to prepare for a flood.

No matter how bad the Middle was, Zhou Zishu felt blessed that he lived there instead of here.

Someone was following him.

.....they have been following him since he got off at the station.

Well. He's not surprised. It was the Undercity after all.

"Come out. I don't have time for this." Zhou Zishu said with iron in his voice, a large enhanced goon came out of the shadows, the Venom coursing through his veins turning them a sickly glowing green as the spiderwebbed up his arms. He leered with crooked teeth and scratched his jowls as he walked closer to Zi Shu, an Alpha. "What do you want?"

"I saw you on the train...saw you in the **Scorpion's Palace** too...saw you after that bang bang that night too." The man slurred and sauntered over, Zi Shu heard more footsteps...wasn't sure if there was friends of this man or bystanders. Either way, he needed to avoid a fight, he was sure his scent was muted by now, his Heat HAD to have died down. "You're pretty....I wonder what you taste like?"

"Keep wondering. And move."

"You little bitch! I'll fuck your brains out and-" The man froze in his place and fell hard to the street, it was so quick that Zhou Zishu was stuck wondering what the fuck just happened. The unseen crowd scattered as quickly as they gathered, Zi Shu remained on guard.

"Ah, very stupid, walking around with that scent. Do you have a brain in there?" A cool heavy voice was trapped in Zhou Zishu's ear, such a blunt tone, authoritative as well but that was only second to the scent. The tap of a cane behind him made Zi Shu jump and swing his arm at nothing only to quickly dodge the swift strike of an ivory carved cane. The smell of Gardenia mixed with the rain, it was subtle and sweet, filling Zhou Zishu's chest and soothed him. Several more swipes of the cane nearly snagged his jacket and he had to keep moving, "Hmm,

more and more, still foolish and young.” Zhou Zishu smacked against the wall and the cane struck the street between his feet and a hand squeezed his chin. The man was dressed in complete white, head to toe in a white trench coat that formed so well on his strong figure, it appeared old but well loved, his black hair was trimmed and styled to make him appear so refined yet the strange storminess in his eyes belied sort of a sense of mischief. The man was handsome, with a fullness to his lips that looked like he was disappointed in Zhou Zishu more than anything. “I expected more from the Four Seasons Manor sect.”

“W-who are you?”

“Hm? No one you’d know. You are reckless and for an Omega, recklessness is fatal.” The man said flatly and cocked his head to the side, studying Zi Shu’s face. “Two Alphas have known you.” And Zhou Zishu puffed up as the man released his hold on his face. “Omegas these days are a bit too free but I suppose that comes with benefits to them...at least up there.” The man pointed toward the Middle and Uppercity, “Here, no matter how skilled an Omega is they’ll always have a weakness given to them by birth.”

“I don’t need you to remind me.”

“Did your master teach you better? Or is disrespect all you know?” Zhou Zishu was becoming exhausted talking to this man, he didn’t seem to say anything to him and yet he felt this information was important too. “If you plan on being so free, make sure you can maintain focus on your survival here. This place is unforgiving, the people that dwell here will exploit your heart if you’re naïve, your master taught you better than that. Don’t shame him.”

“I...” Zhou Zishu was quiet, it WAS foolish for him to rush down here and demand anything of Wen Kexing, they didn’t know each other, they weren’t Mates. He should’ve been more careful and considered learning who this Alpha actually was...why push his luck? “Forgive my rudeness and thank you for assisting me and sharing your wisdom with me.” The man didn’t look surprised or angered, Zi Shu really couldn’t read his facial expressions at all. “May I ask your name?”

“Ye Baiyi. A *hermit* of sorts.” The gentleman responded with some fleeting kindness, “Come.”

“Wait, where...?”

“Hm? You are a foolish Omega. We’re going to the Scorpion’s Palace. Keep up.” And Ye Baiyi walked in front of Zhou Zishu almost as if he was acting *like* a bodyguard, he didn’t know what to feel about this strange man but if he wanted to kill him. Zi Shu would’ve been dead. Still, fate has been rather kind to him as of late and so Zhou Zishu picked up his pace, they didn’t talk and he felt they didn’t need to. There was something about Ye Baiyi that felt like was talking to a man fifty years his senior, the fact that he knew his master was interesting. He didn’t recall his master even mentioning anything about Ye Baiyi and the two of them were close, almost like a 2nd father to him.

There were still so many things about the world he just didn’t understand.

....and that was where the danger usually lies.

The Scorpion's Palace was repaired almost miraculously, all the damage was mended, new windows and decor repaired or replaced completely. Zhou Zishu was impressed, construction work in the Undercity was slow, there was a burnt out building that was still smouldering some ways from the Palace that STILL hasn't been demolished.

Ye Baiyi practically walked in, the bodyguards didn't even attempt to stop him and they already recognized Zhou Zishu so the surprise was mild. Inside the repair work was completely renovated, the beautiful stage was replaced with something more grander as the pulsating music thumped out of the state of the art sound system. New dancers were on the poles and in the cages, their nubile bodies coated in paint that reflected in the dim light. Zhou Zishu looked for Xie'er and found him, as if by providence, talking to Wen Kexing in a booth to the left of the stage.

And much like that night, Wen Kexing immediately zeroed in on Zhou Zishu and held his focus, his polar white fan ever present and graceful as he fanned himself. He was wearing a black and gold muzzle but even from this distance, Zhou Zishu KNEW he was smiling. Xie'er turned to him and then focused on Ye Baiyi with a hint of curiosity while Wen Kexing glared.

"Hmph, a scorpion and wolf...what a pair." Ye Baiyi murmured to himself but Zhou Zishu caught it and agreed, he actually started to feel even more of a fool in this club of clearly dangerous people but what happened to him? He was never afraid before? Zi Shu was confident in his skills, why is he so timid? No, he was going to get information from Wen Kexing. Or at least end it, after all, he did bring that key that Wen Kexing left him days ago..

The two predators walked out of the booth and made their way to Ye Baiyi and Zhou Zishu, with the smaller Xie'er taking a small shot of alcohol to study the man in white before returning this focus on Zhou Zishu.

"This isn't the place for the elderly..." Wen Kexing said without skipping a beat, "Especially old Alphas from Uppercity."

"Disgusting, the Chief of Ghost Valley is a title that suits you." Ye Baiyi fired back, Zi Shu wasn't sure what to make of this exchange but he felt it was about him as Ye Baiyi DID move a bit closer to him. "I don't think you'll retain that title for much longer, you're as bad as this one in your focus."

"Many people shared those thoughts once. Their blood was hard to wash off."

"Oh? Empty headed child." Finally Zhou Zishu stepped in, standing in front of Ye Baiyi and Wen Kexing with a sigh.

"Senior Yi, I thank you for escorting me here. Wen Kexing, I need to talk to you."

"Of course A-xu. This way." Xie'er nodded and proceeded to focus his attention on the older gentleman with more interest, almost like he was studying some strange bug in a jar.

"Senior Yi, a drink perhaps?"

**

Zhou Zishu was here to confront Wen Kexing, he was there to ask questions, he was there to break it off. He had a goal, a very solid goal.

...That went out the window the second he entered the room with Wen Kexing's hand on his hip..fuck.

There was a bed, one bed surrounded by full length mirrors, Zi Shu recognized it as a one of the observe 'Mirror Play Room' for VIPs, several times Xie'er mentioned that Zhou Zishu could make a great deal of money in this room but he never took him up on that offer.

Wen Kexing touched his cheek so softly, then pulled him roughly by the chin till he was closer, his fangs still kept within the confines of the muzzle that it made him appear not a threat but Zhou Zishu knew that wasn't true in the slightest.

That night during the shoot out he had a feeling that there was more to Wen Kexing that was deadly, dangerous, raw...and yet inside of him he also knew that this man wouldn't hurt him. He was being foolish, as an Omega he had to be wary of all Alphas no matter how *kind* they appeared.

He knew that when he spent time with Helian Yi how powerful Alphas could be while sharing a benevolent smile...and he did love how it made his body feel.

This...this was something **different** .

"A-xu...you see I'm a *wolf* now." Wen Kexing smiled with shiny teeth and an impish grin that made his eyes slowly become red with desire, "The muzzle is good...or else I'd gobble you up." Zhou Zishu reached up and unfastened the muzzle to touch those lips seemingly lost in need.

"You don't scare me...I know what those lips can do." Zi Shu spread Wen Kexing lips apart and ran the pad of his finger down a sharp fang till it rested at the tip, his free hand dragged down Wen Kexing's chest until it settled on his stomach and he slipped his fingers into the coat. "Chief of Ghost Valley.." Wen Kexing almost sounded like he was going to moan when he felt Zhou Zishu's palm on him, the warmth on his most tender flesh was sending blood straight down until it was a hard shape in Zi Shu's hand. "Dangerous scamp of a man."

"A..a scamp!?"

"Scoundrel."

"That's better-ah!" All Wen Kexing could do was watch Zhou Zishu drop to his knees and take him into his mouth in one move, "F-fuck...how..is it I'm being devoured?" he heard a light chuckle from below him and lulls his head back. The inside of Zhou Zishu's mouth felt so hot and the way he was precise with his sucking, taking him deep into his throat and lower until he felt it tightened before sliding back cruelly. His tongue was the cruelest, a bed of muscle that cradled his swollen head and toyed with his tip, pulling out beads of his pre and teasing his slit for more. Wen Kexing bit on his lips and just stared down at this beautiful beast, taking his cock and practically nursing himself on it. Omegas were insatiable when it came to consuming Alpha seed, especially if there was a sense of a kinship with the Alpha...it's why Xie'er's

business thrived so well, he made sure that Omegas were compatible with certain Alphas, almost like they were a walking breathing drug that Alphas couldn't help but be addicted to.

But Wen Kexing never considered that for Zhou Zishu...he saw someone that was ethereally stunning, perfect in every way, he tempted him over and was given more in return.

The first surge of his release filled Zhou Zishu's mouth and dribbled down the corners in excess, only he could make something profane be so seductive. But he didn't want to mess up his face, least not with his pallid milk. Zhou Zishu pulled and teased his mouth off allowing the flow of the release shot on his tongue and stray on his lips looking drunk from the amount and taste. Wen Kexing's amount was lighter but it tasted fresher, fuller..the virility of Alphas changed depending on their mood and what they ate, it affected everything from their performance to their scent. Zhou Zishu was finding out his senses that were once pretty plain were becoming more attuned, the musk of apples gave way to something more...ginger...it was addictive.

"A-xu...I should've enjoyed your mouth that night..."

"You get to enjoy it now Lao Wen." And Wen Kexing arched his eyebrows in surprise before mellowing into something more cheeky and familiar, "I didn't say that."

"Lao Wen? I like that...say it again..." Zhou Zishu looked away in mild shock, what prompted him to say 'Lao Wen'? They haven't been nearly as familiar enough for such a term of endearment and yet saying it was so natural, so affectionate, "A-xu...again."

"You..." Wen Kexing tilted Zhou Zishu's face upward, luring him upwards and closer to his lips, "Lao Wen."

"Again." He asked sweetly, sweeter than any voice Zi Shu ever heard, almost like a beg, "A-xu."

"Lao Wen." The reconnection of their lips sent a shiver down Zhou Zishu's spine, electric and hot making him ooze slick in gobs, the smell...ripe with ginger and cardamom, so full and heavy..he wanted to wear it on his skin forever. Wen Kexing, his Wen Kexing...oh but he couldn't want this could he? Wen Kexing was a *criminal*, a murderer...could he really throw away everything, his dream of living in the Uppercity, to have a status and a stress free life. Could he really throw that away?

Could he be the Omega of an Dishonorable Alpha Crime Boss?

Wen Kexing took them both down on the elaborate bedspread but instead of him over top of Zhou Zishu, it was the Omega who sat on top. This view wasn't new to Zhou Zishu but the way Wen Kexing seemingly looked so lost and adoring up at him, that WAS new.

"Lao Wen...you said *you're* the wolf..."

"Perhaps I am willing to be tamed. If only for a moment." The sly Ghost Chief grinned, "I want to admire you..A-xu, every inch, every angle."

"Your words are *too* flattering.."

“My words are *precise* .” Wen Kexing corrected and ran his hands up Zhou Zishu’s back until he held on to his impossibly slender waist, he touched his thumbs together in marveling at the perfect shape of his A-xu.

He wanted to put a baby in him.

Xie’er was quiet, he didn’t need to be...they couldn’t see him but he could see and hear them, this was something he normally wouldn’t do. Copulation was akin to the rutting of the beasts for him, Xie’er was fortunate that he didn’t have the drive to submit and breed, at least...not outwardly, it was his secret.

The Scorpion King took no lovers or rather, he took one...one that wished to remain undisclosed and Xie’er respected it, he was a man of noble ambition and status, lived within the glass palaces of the Uppercity. He benefitted Xie’er’s skills and connections and in return, he gave Xie’er fragments of affection, he would tell him sweet faint praises, brushes of kisses and whispers of touch but never more than that. Xie’er would give him all of him, anything for a taste of his Alpha musk, a glowing word of praise, a hand on his cheek, it was truly a one sided relationship and Xie’er knew that but he knew of nothing else and didn’t want to lose it.

He didn’t want to lose his Yifu.

Xie’er watched as Wen Kexing lavished Zhou Zishu with his hands, removing his clothing with a sense of adoration almost reverence towards him. He’s seen his boss with lovers before but none have ever made such a softness appear in his eyes. The Ghost Chief fingers lingered on the curve of Zi Shu’s spine, slowly sliding up as he felt the heaviness of his Omega seated on his cock, truly, Zhou Zishu was an exceptional Omega...gifts in the way his waist rocked and twisted like a dancer and Wen Kexing was savoring it. Zhou Zishu raised his arms up and took control from the top, the view must have been quite the sight. Xie’er was fascinated with the way Zi Shu’s hips snapped, the way he moaned and rocked and the way he made Wen Kexing feel. Was it really that pleasurable to mate with an Alpha? Could he make his Yifu feel that way? He was sure of it, he WANTED to.

There was a...slow build of fire pooling in his empty womb, he rubbed his thighs and chewed on his lips, interesting Xie’er thought...he never really felt like this watching a couple fucking before. Was it the motion? The sound, slick and wet...lewd slaps of flesh amidst heavy pleas and grunts. He was seeing a completely different side of his boss in there, the way he melted with Zhou Zishu throwing his body back and propping up on Wen Kexing’s thighs. He would bring himself up nearly off and Wen Kexing refused to release his hold on Zi Shu’s hips only to moan when the weight of him came crashing down. Xie’er imagined that...he imagined himself doing a far better job on his Yifu, his mouth remembering the length and feel of his cock between his lips. Thick and hard, bulbous head and smooth shaft..it was an altered rod but the modifications were top notch. How...would it feel inside him?

“A-xu...ahh..fuck..more, more.” Wen Kexing commanded, his fangs becoming sharp and ready, Gods he wanted to breed him, this Omega was everything he wanted. “A-xu.”

“L-lao Wen!” Zhou Zishu was faltering in his movements, he already came and his slick was coating Wen Kexing's thigh. He was quite the milky Omega, “I-I can’t...stop..” Wen Kexing slammed his hip up and Zhou Zishu SCREAMED into a passionate cry, Xie’er felt that inside, that urge slowly making him sticky between his thighs. Xie’er was conflicted...he was thinking

about his Yifu but then he found himself thinking about that strange Ye Baiyi...such an odd scent from an older Alpha.

He wondered...if maybe he could play with him for a while? A shout of surprise echoed from out of the room and Xie'er snapped to attention as Wen Kexing was sitting up, his fangs deep over Zhou Zishu's heart with the other holding him there. Ah, his boss was now in control again, those eyes blood red and glowing, it was clear he wanted to breed Zhou Zishu...and if Zhou Zishu was as submissive as he should've been. He'd tear that collar off and allow the completion of the circuit.

But Wen Kexing had respect, he may have been bloodthirsty and vicious but he wasn't an uncouth and dishonorable monster. The Ghost Chief raised his mouth off and up Zi Shu's chest, bloody lips leaving a trail of messy desire as he kissed a path down his Omega's forearm and finally to his fingers, to the ring finger and in one heavy bite, bit down HARD over the faint mark left by Helian Yi. Making Zhou Zishu gasp in pain and sending that feeling down towards his waist, he was ovulating now...he couldn't explain it but he could feel something awakened and all he needed was the last bite on his nape.... *he wanted this, **no more waiting*** . He reached his collar when he was stopped by Wen Kexing.

Then the swift motion of finger tossing a small knife behind him, shattering the glass and causing Zhou Zishu to look over his shoulder at Xie'er sitting not remotely ashamed or even afraid, the small knife in the chair just grazing his cheek.



“Care to join us Xie’er?”

“W-what?” Zhou Zishu asked but felt Wen Kexing hip slowly push up and hit that spot so tenderly, gods he fucked so..

“Chief will have to forgive me..I will be of no use here, the presence is enough.”

“What about the taste?” And Xie’er paused, oh, that clever Wen Kexing...he knew where to hit when he wanted to. “A-xu won’t mind.”

“What?! Don’t speak for me, shameless Lao Wen!? Xie’er, what is it you want from me?”

“Only a taste...my palette is quite refined and this act intrigues me..” The smaller Omega walks through the crack window pane, crunching the glass underneath his heels as he approaches the bed. If there was one thing that was unmistakable...Xie’er was truly a beautiful sight, strange but very beautiful. He reached out to touch Zhou Zishu’s face but his hand was caught immediately by Wen Kexing, his eyes still a vibrant red hue, “Chief, there’s no poison this time.”

“Better not...” He said with a blade in his voice and then in the same breath, albeit softer, “A-xu.”

“Please don’t poison me.” Xie’er smile was like a honey tip sting, who knows how many died from just a small glimpse of it. Zhou Zishu leaned into the touch of his boss, his metal clawed finger tips grazed over Zi Shu’s slick skin. He could feel something prickly and sharp filling him but it was simply the presence of another Omega near him while he was in Heat. The pain of Wen Kexing’s bite sung on his chest as he felt Xie’er’s fingers pull down on his hair, bending him down towards the bed and the metal claws smoothly glided down his throat. The contrast was incredible and just having Wen Kexing cock throbbing up inside him as he made contact with the mattress sent him into an indescribable feeling of bliss. Right here in this room were two of the most deadliest men in the Undercity...over him. Wen Kexing kept a steady motion, he hasn’t pulled out of Zhou Zishu yet and in this angle he could just rock and tap his prostate as soft or fast as he wanted. Xie’er placed his lips on Zi Shu’s throat and Wen Kexing nearly came with how tight his Omega became. The Scorpion King continued his mouth down all the while keeping a careful keen eye on his Chief, Alphas were territorial and the only reason why there wasn’t a fight for dominance was simply because Wen Kexing was the only Alpha here.

“Zhou Zishu...” Xie’er said softly, “May I taste your milk?” At this point Xie’er could’ve asked him to eat a strip of his skin and he’d offer it, he was going to come and hard, he gripped the bed sheets and cried out, this slow motion of passion was driving him into a frenzy. Zi Shu waited for the feeling of lips on his nipples. But what he got instead was the tip of a metal claw on his nipple and a small hot mouth on his cock...and one, long, deep suck.

“Aaa-aHH!” It happened in perfect sync, Wen Kexing’s hand kept Xie’er’s head on Zhou Zishu’s flesh as the tightness became impossible to withstand and he shot his loads hard and rough inside as the Omega cried out from being overstimulated and passed out.

A few more hot spurts dragged out of Wen Kexing and he finally moved his hand off Xie’er’s head, earning himself a very heated stare that quickly cooled as he swallowed Zi Shu’s seed in paced gulps before transferring the rest to his Chief through a kiss, the flavour of him was something akin to a fruit...a mango perhaps?

“Too sweet..and not ripe enough.” Xie’er said shakily, letting the Omega cum settle in his belly, he could taste the fertility...it quelled that blaze in him. “This one is your Mate...your profiles match in flavour.”

“I know..”

“Make him yours then?” The Scorpion wiped his mouth and fixed his braided hair, even though the arousal was settled, he needed to chase it with an Alpha’s load...he needed to see his Yifu, Xie’er politely bowed and straightened his suit, ”Before another Alpha does.”

Wen Kexing was left in quiet contemplation...he pulled out of Zi Shu once he was soft enough and gently lifted him up into his arms. His fingers tugged on the leather collar...how easy would it be, to just complete the circuit?

“An Alpha needs to provide for their Omega...a place for our children.” Wen Kexing said softly, placing a tender kiss just along Zi Shu’s eyebrow. “And the life in the Undercity...isn’t it.”

There was a soft scent in the room, soft but fragrant...pears? It was just soft enough to slowly wake Zhou Zishu in the mid afternoon sun, this wasn’t the Scorpion’s Palace...it was.

Beautiful.

Polished oak furnished arches that were carved into intricate lattice paneling, serving as room dividers, the earthy glow of the room was filled with lamps along the wall to give off such a warmth that Zhou Zishu almost fell asleep. The bed was old world, comfortable with fine linen and feathered pillows that cradled his body, if he laid back, he most definitely would fall back to sleep. He winced in pain and felt the bite over his heart, Wen Kexing’s bite...both here and on his finger. A sharper bite than Helian Yi’s. Both were already healing, slowly bonding into his own energy...the circuit wasn’t complete and Zi Shu felt his neck to see that while his collar was gone, there wasn’t a bite.

“A-xu...” Wen Kexing whispered as he stepped out of the bathroom wearing only a towel and drying his hair, “Was the old man a friend of yours?”

“Senior Yi? No...we just met..”

“I was going to have him killed for annoying me.” Zhou Zishu puffed up and glared, even though Wen Kexing smirked, “Oh? I shouldn’t?”

“Please do not joke about that.”

“I wasn’t.”

“Lao Wen.” And Wen Kexing sat on the edge of the bed to stare at him softly, “Argh, I wasn’t coming here for this. I was supposed to tell you off. You’re a criminal boss, you’ve killed and sold people...you’re not good for me.”

“A-xu I’m hurt...because I feel that I *am*.” Zi Shu looked at him and reached out to touch his face, this face of a petulant child pretending to be a man but is far more deadly than anyone he’s met. “But I know you want more for yourself...I want that too.”

“Lao Wen. I...I don’t want..” Wen Kexing kissed his palm, in the light of the room just made Wen Kexing’s softer features glow even more.

“I didn’t plan for you...I wanted to take over, now that I have..it's only you that I need and this place isn’t safe for you.” The clever Alpha pulled Zhou Zishu closer, “My father wasn’t strong enough to protect me and my mother, we paid for that twenty fold...my mother’s salvation was through death. But me...the Former Chief thought I was ‘pretty’.” Zhou Zishu brushed back the still wet bangs of Wen Kexing hair from his face, such a cruel memory. “Killing him was a long overdue revenge...and now, all of this. *Needs* to be changed. The old ways have choked the Three Cities long enough with their bullshit.”

“What can be done?”

“I want what *you* want...status. Certain access to the various functions that run the Undercity are controlled by those in the Uppercity. They pull the strings, the Emperor and his trusted board. I plan on going up there in a week to propose an agreement to start providing assistance to the Undercity and Middle residents.”

“Philanthropist Wen...but what will happen to Ghost Valley?” Wen Kexing laughed at the title and rests his forehead against Zhou Zishu’s head full of tenderness. More and more he felt like a familiar friend from Zhou Zishu's past, like they've always known each other...this closeness and familiarity was both frightening and wonderful. Much like the man himself.

“We’ll *reform* it.”

“We?”

“You and me...” There was something in the way Wen Kexing said these words that struck Zi Shu so deeply, ‘You and me’, it was honest and full of confidence .

“Lao Wen, I...this is all sudden for me. I have my plans, I’m in reach of them.” Zhou Zishu whispered, feeling the soft brush of Wen Kexing’s nose against his cheek, he smelled...divine, rich like apples in a ginger glaze. It was stirring something within Zi Shu and he knew it, he knew he was aroused, he felt it inside his womb...the urge to breed, his Alpha was ready, HE was ready.

“Uppercity has its own monsters A-xu, it may look like paradise, the people happy but its all controlled, the citizens have no say in their daily habits. They HAVE to appear ‘joyful’. It’s all appearances.” Wen Kexing whispered and slowly pushed Zi Shu to the bed, “And appearances can be deceiving.” Zhou Zishu listened carefully, he tried with the feathery tease of the Ghost Chief’s lips on his jaw, kissing a pathway towards his leather collar. “A-xu..”

“Lao Wen, I...I have a performance in the Uppercity tonight. I can’t miss it.”

“I can KEEP you here.” Wen Kexing smiled and kissed Zi Shu before he could respond, “Keep you all to myself.”

“Does Lao Wen think I can’t defend myself? That I won’t fight even you?”

“I think A-xu will be a force no matter what I’ll do...doesn’t mean I won’t try too.” Zhou Zishu tugged at the towel keeping Wen Kexing’s body from him, “That’s why...you’re my **Soulmate**.”

Zhou Zishu sighed as he felt Wen Kexing slip smoothly inside him again, he threaded his fingers with the Alpha’s and kept him deep within, slow, deep and decadently. Soulmate. It felt so sweet to hear, and made Zi Shu’s body light up with every inch throbbing deeper till he gasped.

Could such a thing exist? And was it with Wen Kexing?

...Or is ***another*** waiting.

Shattered

Chapter Summary

Zhou Zishu has made up his mind, Wen Kexing is his Alpha...tonight is the performance for Helian Yi but is everything going to come true or will it end in a nightmare?

Chapter Notes

The longest chapter. Split in two parts, consider it a double chapter as a gift for your patience! Prepare.

Wen Kexing insisted on driving Zhou Zishu back, no doubt that he was planning on having another romp instead and Zhou Zishu wanted to accept the offer but he KNEW the result. He needed to soak and make sure his skin had very few traces of Wen Kexing scent on him, normally he'd be willing to play with fate, perhaps engage in another fling with Helian Yi but his heart and his mind was made up now.

He was in love with Wen Kexing. He was. And it was fast and sudden, frightening and delightful, freeing.

He needed to escape the Ghost Valley Chief's lips, even as they ghosted on his shoulders and teasing the middle of his back. How did his touch light something so hungry in him? Surely Wen Kexing knew, he was a devil with those red rose lips and when he whispered..

"A-xu..." Fuck, fuck this terrible beautiful devil named Wen Kexing, he was kissing lower now and he just showered, "A-xu you have so many little moles...placed there for me to find."

"Lao Wen. Stop..you're...so..."

"I'm what?" Zhou Zishu breathed in deeply, those long fingers could connect around his waist and now he was imagining it, his belly swollen with Wen Kexing's child.

"Terrible. You are enjoying this too much." And the playful killer laughed, kissing a mole right above Zhou Zishu's ass, "Troublesome Wen Kexing, terrible..."

"You always know what to say to make me hard." FUCK, Zhou Zishu was breaking now, he could feel Wen Kexing's palm slide over his rear and the fingers slip between, "So soft, wet...A-xu's body is divine, even in places I can't see." Gods his fingers were so slender and long, Zhou Zishu bit down on his lips just allowing Wen Kexing to explore his ass and open

him up, it felt so incredible, a massage on his tender walls brought gobs of slick. His womb ACHED. He needed Wen Kexing to claim him.

I want your baby Wen Kexing.

Zhou Zishu was sure if he said it...surely Wen Kexing would answer his desires.

“L-Lao Wen...I want...”

BZZZT BZZT

“Shit.” Wen Kexing gently pulled his fingers out and wiped them off before reaching for his phone, “What.” He had a sharp inhale and looked murderous, “How many? Fuck...deal with it, I’ll be there shortly.”

“Lao Wen.” Zhou Zishu caught his breath and coughed, the mood was shot to shit and he could see the anger in Wen Kexing’s eyes. “What is it?”

“I want to change Ghost Valley and there’s dogs that want to bite back at their master. I knew it wasn’t going to be easy but there’s a plot from the inside to keep the status quo.” Wen Kexing sighed and chewed on his lip, “It would be easier for me to kill them, I should.”

“The easier path will show a lack of true conviction on your part.” Zi Shu’s calm voice reached Wen Kexing, “You said it would not be an easy task to reform the Ghost Valley and Undercity, this will be one of many trials you will have to face.”

“What should I do?”

“Open a discussion, try to find a bloodless solution.”

“And if that fails?” Zhou Zishu reached up to touch Wen Kexing’s cheek, he found he didn’t like such a troubled expression on such a beautiful face.

“When your army has crossed the border, you should burn your boats and bridges, in order to make it clear to everybody that you have no hankering after home..”

“No way home for me or for them.”

“Temper justice with mercy Lao Wen, you are an Alpha with purpose. Show them you WILL make changes for the betterment of all Undercity and you will need their assistance to make this possible...or their removal.” Wen Kexing was quiet, chewing on the proverb, with surprise he knelt down at Zhou Zishu’s feet and kissed his hand..it was so formal and respectful, he’s never had an Alpha do this to him. The Ghost Chief kissed his wrist lovingly and over the bite on his finger. The mark of an Alpha, of his Alpha.

“A-xu, thank you.” Wen Kexing whispered, he sounded so soft...the softest he’s ever heard and Zhou Zishu drove his fingers through the sides of his hair.

“Lao Wen...after tonight, I...I need to settle things but will you-”

BZZZT BZZT

The two men groaned and then laughed, it seems that they were needed elsewhere..Zhou Zishu bent down to kiss Wen Kexing deeply on his lips. He felt so...different now? Something inside made him feel unbreakable, like a firm band of platinum. An Omega needs to be strong for their Alpha and the reverse matters too, Zi Shu made up his mind and he was certain that Wen Kexing wanted him to be his Mate. After tonight, after the performance, Zhou Zishu's life will be different, that he knew.

Beside, he can wait a while to ask Wen Kexing to breed him...they'd have all the time in the world.

**

Zhou Zishu again refused to be escorted home, took convincing but he did accept that the key was to Wen Kexing's loft. It was his now..he could move in whenever he wanted as Wen Kexing didn't want to pressure him. Hands down the most expensive thing anyone has ever given him, yeah Helian Yi gave him a fancy outfit for tonight but he didn't give him a freaking HOME. No doubt he could if Zhou Zishu asked and maybe 24 hours ago, he WOULD. But that wasn't going to happen now.

He returned to his miserable little flat in the Middle and sighed, it lacked the luxury of Wen Kexing loft but this was his home for seven years, he was truly blessed, he had to thank Han Ying...oh Gods Han Ying! How will he tell him? Perhaps he was moving too fast, together the two of them sought a way for them to excel from the Middle and become men of status. Surely once he finds out that he was going to be the Mate of the Chief of Ghost Valley that will strain them.

Han Ying was his brother, he couldn't bear *losing* him. He'll have to talk to him before any decision is made.

It was nearly 5pm, Zhou Zishu soaked his body in scent nullers, he even brought some of the expensive name brand stuff to ensure that no Alpha will want him for a quick Rut. It might be tricky with Helian Yi seeing that they both had a fling but Zhou Zishu would be firm. He'd have no attraction to the 'Prince' after tonight, might be awkward..but he was sure he could handle it.

Finally he unzipped the garment bag to reveal a polar white LUSH fur cape and cowl with and stylish designer cashmere suit custom made with diamond and silver lapels, with a semi translucent dragon curl up the corners that scales were captured in the light. It was gorgeous and absolutely lavish. Almost too lavish for a mere piano performance.

This..this felt like a courting gift. Was...Helian Yi trying to..?

No, nope, Zhou Zishu was overthinking this, it was a lavish gift given to him by an impossibly wealthy man, to him it must have been cheap or something. Still he couldn't refuse it and started getting himself ready.

6pm on the dot the luxury all black limousine caused a scene as it silently eased to a hovering stop in front of Zhou Zishu's flat, there was no real way he could leave and not be the total talk of neighborhood so he walked to the car and the automaton driver in silence, only his stilettos making heavy clacks on the crack pavement as he boarded and was whisked to the Uppercity.

He looked out the window of the Middle, on how so many good people work tirelessly doing whatever they can to have a better life and it was so unfair. Some would never see the inside of the Uppercity, nor wear such fine clothes...Zhou Zishu did what he could to improve his status but in the end he's following the path of so many other Omegas, only in reverse. Once he Bonds with Wen Kexing, that would be it...unless Wen Kexing is able to negotiate with those in control of the Uppercity...

Wait..that would be Helian Yi?! Of course how could he be so absentminded...perhaps he could maybe help Wen Kexing here, after all he did impart knowledge in one area perhaps he could do that again with Helian Yi? It was worth a shot.

It was then he realized he had nothing to eat and he was STARVING. Zhou Zishu hoped there would be some food there...something to at least nibble on.

The drive was smooth and quiet, Zi Shu observed the scenery shift from the poor Middle to the affluent Uppercity, the silver towers of wealth and privilege gleaming in the night sky with speckles of neon that looked like little fireflies blinking in the darkness. Here the air was so clean that he could roll down the window and inhale without coughing, truly it was close to Heaven, the opposite of Undercity and there was a sense of melancholy...he'd miss this sight.

The slow descent of the limo landing in the Level Five was nothing BUT manors and palaces, literal palaces.Green rich grounds sitting on platforms that were illuminated with lights from inside glass domes, he's never seen anything more beautiful and wealthy, like it was a dream. There was a silver bridge that had a single gate, massive with fifteenth guard units standing at post, ready to shoot any trespassers. The gate scanned the limo and the units parted so the car drifted in. Several luxury cars were lined up and Zhou Zishu checked himself in the mirror one last time as the car stopped and he was let out.

In a way, this felt like a dream...Zi Shu walked up the stairs and all the eyes of the wealthy and elite were on him, Alphas...he could feel their hunger, he was positive the nuller dulled Wen Kexing's scent so what was it? *Gods he was famished* , if he saw a plate he was going to devour it. Helian Yi's Fifth Palace was imposing and polished with marble pillars adorned with neon yellow dragons that spiraled up the posts, rich red drapes with gold trim as the natural light inside the glass made everyone inside hazy black shadows. He could hear music inside and entered the archway softly, trying not to look hopelessly lost but fuck, where was he supposed to go?

"Z-zhou Zishu!? Is that...you?!" Zi Shu turned to face none other than Peng Ju, he wasn't exactly someone he wanted to see but still was relieved to see a familiar face, he wore a plain tuxedo and held on to a slightly worn tablet. But his eyes raced all over Zhou Zishu's body, head to toe and back again. "My...word it *is* you!"

"TA Peng Ju, I'm happy to see you?" Zhou Zishu didn't mean to phrase that as a question but that's how it came out and right now he was too fucking *hungry* to concentrate, "W-what are you doing here?" Peng Ju bristled but kept his smile.

"Oh, *I'm* here for an important meeting! Life changing for me! I told you about my position as an art dealer, remember? My clientele is exclusive and prestigious. It seems we both will gain fortunes tonight!" Peng Ju beamed but there was something of spite in his words, the implications were not lost on Zhou Zishu. "And you? Why are *you* here?"

“I’m here to play the piano...nothing more.” Zhou Zishu’s tone was like a punch and he realized why the HELL should he pretend, he didn’t like Peng Ju and really after tonight, he’d never cross his path again. “I hope you are successful in your endeavors, *Senior Peng Ju.*”

“Zhou Zishu-”

“Zhou Zishu.” A perky young woman came out quickly and didn’t even acknowledge Peng Ju’s presence, “Please follow me.”

“Wait, I was here first! I have a meeting with-” The young woman finally turned to him and smiled then bowed politely.

“Helian Yi apologizes that he will not be able to accept your selection and wishes to continue arrangements in the future. Please enjoy the performance.” The young woman flashes a quick smile, another bow and briskly escorts Zhou Zishu inside.

Zhou Zishu took one last look at Peng Ju who was turning bright red, even in the dim lighting of the extravagant hallway he could tell there was nothing but venom in those beady eyes. It was strange but there was something oddly satisfying about watching Peng Ju be denied. It was a cruel thing but he did savor it.

Thankfully before he was even able to perform, Zhou Zishu was given a small plate of appetizers which he politely consumed. The last thing he wanted was a growling stomach while he was playing, he had a craving of something spicy.

After eating at least 4 plates of food and painstakingly avoiding spilling anything on himself, Zhou Zishu was ready to play. He actually didn’t consider WHAT he was going to play so he settled with **Ludovico Einaudi’s Una Mattina**.

Much like before, Zhou Zishu drifted to his memories of Wen Kexing, the sweetness of his voice and his lips on his skin, fingers pressing inside and tenderly whispering in his ear loving affirmations. The Heat inside him was only for Wen Kexing, this love and fire...only for him and it was so strange how it came to be. Dancing in a nightclub in the Undercity, escaping death from enemies only to cling together in a limo. Zi Shu’s fingers danced elegantly on the piano, the crystals glowed softly with rainbow colours and he could feel that everyone was entranced, he could feel Helian Yi in the room but...not.

The people were faceless, shadowed figures in fine clothes and jewelry...they all wore masks, the Alphas all smelled rancid and repelled him. Zhou Zishu slipped back into his memory of today, of being with Wen Kexing, of his voice tenderly speaking to him...wishing to do more for him and Zhou Zishu wished to do the same. This world he played this decadent piano and entertained these faceless people...did he truly want to be among them? Something felt so *strangely repulsive* now and still Zi Shu played, the notes filling the air with gentle melodies and Zhou Zishu remembered Wen Kexing kiss, his touch, his body inside him.

Nothing but him, only him...he had a dream to make life better for Undercity and the Middle, philanthropist Wen Kexing. How can such a violent man be so loving? So sweet.

*His Alpha. Tomorrow, he will make Wen Kexing **his** Alpha.*

The piece came to a soft end and the room was filled with claps, politely Zi Shu bowed and scanned the crowd, hoping to see Helian Yi's face but he couldn't pick him out...was he even here?

He did however spot Peng Ju glaring at him and then typing on his tablet, what was he doing? It seemed as if everyone received a message of sorts. That...was disturbing and suddenly Zhou Zishu felt unnerved, he wasn't really sure what to make of this feeling but now, he wanted to go. Zi Shu left the room hoping to get some fresh air and arrangements to go home, suddenly he really didn't want to stay here any longer. **He didn't feel safe.** He'll figure out how to dry clean and send the garments back or something.

Where was Helian Yi?

After all of that anticipation, Zhou Zishu didn't even see Helian Yi and he couldn't help but feel everything was a disappointment, for a moment he was able to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of the Uppercity, dress as a resident and enjoy their food...for a brief moment he was one of them. As he was driven home, Zi Shu wanted nothing more than to peel off this attire and forget it all. After all of it perhaps this was a wake up call, a warning that what he wanted was all lie...perhaps Wen Kexing was his true savior, perhaps he was never meant for the Uppercity.

What Zhou Zishu wanted now, more than anything...was to go home, to Wen Kexing, to wake up in his arms...what would that be like?

Zhou Zishu politely thanked the driver, tore off his heels and undressed, trying his best to arrange the garments neatly to get dry cleaned and hopefully returned.

Today was unbearably long and yet, Zi Shu felt like he was waking up from a dream, falling back into another one. *This one he hoped was sweeter.*

His alarm was cruel to him, Zhou Zishu groaned and turned to turn it off before waking up feeling even more famished than he was last night, there wasn't a thing in his fridge that he wanted to eat. Odd, perhaps he'll find something to eat on his way to his job at The Kingdom of Morality. Oh he was such a fool, he never gave Wen Kexing his number...how was going to contact him? Well I guess it wouldn't matter after today.

Zhou Zishu took a shower and dressed, yesterday really did feel like a dream even as he held the designer garment bag in his hand. He was going to get it cleaned and figure out the rest....

The second he stepped outside his flat, Zhou Zishu felt something or someone was watching him and it wasn't like before with Ye Baiyi, he could look at people as he walked to the bus stop and see glances and whispers almost as if everyone was talking about him. Zi Shu sniffed himself, Wen Kexing's scent was all but gone now and how he missed it. His phone buzzed and sluggishly he checked it, messages? 80 messages?! He opened one and it was some lurid offer, sell his womb? What?! All of the messages had some bizarre variant, all with wild ranges in

pricing. Was this a scam? Was his phone hacked? When he looked up on the bus, people looked away. What was happening?

He finally got a text from someone he ACTUALLY cared about, Han Ying.

[-Zi Shu! What are you doing!?!]

[-I'm heading to work...I got strange texts...]

[-Strange text? From who?]

[-Don't know...creepy Alphas wanting me to sell my womb?]

[-DON'T DO IT!]

Zhou Zishu huffed incredulously, of course he wouldn't do something so crass and desperate. The messages were coming in such speed that his phone was overheating and glitching. He had to cut the chat with Han Ying short or he feared his phone would fucking explode, whatever was happening, he was sure in a few days whatever madness would die down. That or he could take it to a tech shop...he was certain that Wen Kexing knew someone.

The bus came to a stop and Zhou Zishu got off, the strange stares and whispers didn't stop, in fact they became more bold the closer he got to the Uppercity. Alphas approached his space trying to breathe him in and Zi Shu couldn't do anything, attacking an Uppercity resident would get him banned immediately. He wasn't secure yet to be making such dangerous moves. So he politely refused the many, MANY offers, he's never received so many suitors? Were they suitors? ***What was fucking happening?***

He entered the club and found it strangely empty, not a single Alpha inside...Zhou Zishu has never seen it like this before. He looked for the squirrely manager and found him nervously in his office, sweating profusely and flushed beet red. He looked at Zhou Zishu almost like he was in a haze before smiling like a dope.

"Z-zhou Zishu..."

"Sir are you okay?"

"Y-yes! Oh...yes. Y-you have a performance...a special private performance. I-its been arranged."

"A private performance? With *who*?"

"Oh its not a concern, please, please you'll find your uniform in the powder room...p-please take your t-time." And the manager leaned back into chair, this has been the strangest damn day Zhou Zishu wondered to himself. He didn't want to know what was going on with his manager but perhaps that's for the best. Zi Shu walked to the powder room in the empty club, the eerie quiet and sounds of machines outside was the only ambiance. Another garment bag waited in the room, this time it wasn't as fancy as the one he received from Helian Yi but it was still designer. With a sigh, Zhou Zishu unzipped the bag and revealed a rather salacious suit, no, it was barely a suit, black silk that was nearly translucent with a string of pearls, he had no idea

on how to even put it on. It looked trashy, something that would be easily found in the Undercity. No, he wasn't putting this shit on. If whomever requested this private show wanted him to look sexy then he'll do it his way.

This day, needed to fucking end.

Zhou Zishu merely unbuttoned his shirt and loosened his hair, he rolled his sleeves up and slipped on the pearls, strange...pearls. Was this a trick by Wen Kexing? No, he wouldn't do anything like this..but who else? Certainly not Helian Yi, he's far too dignified for such things.

Well at this point, the day couldn't get much worse so he finished dressing and made his way to the meeting room, he noticed small rings of light on tables, interesting...

The one thing that felt sane was sitting in front of a piano, he was going to miss this beautiful instrument, Zhou Zishu wondered if he could ask Wen Kexing to get a piano for him...he was sure he'd love to hear him play. Suddenly the lights went out and the rings of light popped up showing screens..fifty of them with shadows of faces and numbers on the screen. Zhou Zishu couldn't read what was on the screens but right now he wasn't going to pay attention anymore, just play the piano and fucking leave.

And so, he began.

Zhou Zishu wanted to concentrate, he didn't want to look at the screens or think about the weirdness of the morning so he picked a challenging piece, Chopin - Etude Op. 10 No. 4. The rapid and erratic tones, it was attention grabbing and fast, it required focus to maintain the rhythm as the tempo build and descended wildly. It was a frantic paced piece, one that seemed to broach madness and excitement but Zhou Zishu loved it, how it timed with his heartbeat and the sudden rush of passion in his life now. Wen Kexing, his mind was filled with him and maybe that was why he picked such a short piece. After all, why the hell should it be long? Why should he give more of his talent away to a faceless crowd? At LEAST in the Scorpion's Palace, he could see sobering Alphas....what could he gain from shadows on screens?

The piece ended and Zi Shu's fingers tingled from the movements, he felt energized and excited for some reason, a Heat in his belly, in his womb...wow, he truly needed to see Wen Kexing as a devilish thought crept in his mind. He was going to give that man a workout. Zhou Zishu closed the lid on the piano and stood up, he was officially done, the apathy was mixing in with his hunger.

"Thank you, I quit." Zhou Zishu said confidently and bowed and watched as one by one the screens blinked out. Oh, well, that was unexpected on a morning of unexpected, he didn't care anymore and just walked off the stage. Zi Shu wanted to turn on his phone again, to tell more of his weird morning to Han Ying but he left it in the powder room. He looked outside the club and saw a limo pull up, ah, a guest perhaps? Well, not his problem. Zhou Zishu entered the powder room and froze.

Helian Yi was standing inside, checking out the mirror and smiling when he turned to face Zhou Zishu's surprised face. It's only been a few days since he's seen the man and there was this strange relief upon gazing at his handsome face. Was he always so...dashing?

“Zi Shu...you truly are a talented man, amazingly so.” Helian Yi beamed and leaned against the dresser, he picked at the garment bag curiously, “That was a challenging piece and yet, you played it with such confidence, I am humbled.”

“Boss Yi.”

“Such informality Zi Shu? Are you crossed?” Zhou Zishu wasn’t sure, he wasn’t necessarily mad but the day was so taxing already and his stomach was growling. “Ah, yesterday...forgive me Zi Shu, I couldn’t pull away from my meetings. Such a terrible time, although I heard your playing was a sight to behold, I simply had to listen to it again, here...where we first met.”

“Sir-”

“Helian Yi, please.”

“*Helian* Yi, sir. I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to play at your palace and for the attire, it was...a wonderful experience.” Zhou Zishu said softly but he couldn’t shake that something was wrong here. “However, I...I have decided to change direction with my future, today is my last day as a pianist of the Kingdom of Morality.”

“Yes, yes it is Zhou Zishu.” Helian Yi spoke with such authority that it made Zhou Zishu pause. “Zi Shu...when I said you were talented, I meant in all things. But I would have never imagined you would offer your services to something so flagrant.”

“What?” Helian Yi held up his phone and there, on the screen were pictures of him, sweating and nude on the bed with breastmilk streaming from his nipples. If that wasn’t enough to shock him, WHERE the photos were posted were.

They were posted on a Womb Auctioning Board.

The Auction just ended 5 minutes ago.

For ¥ 6,000,000.00.

This had to be a mistake, a cruel joke...something that Wen Kexing would never do, who could’ve done this? Where did those pictures come from!? He doesn’t remember ever taking such photos or even when!? Zhou Zishu shook his head, this was beyond surreal and wrong, he didn’t know what to do but looked at Helian Yi frantic.

“I didn’t consent to any such thing, I didn’t upload those photos and I damn sure never consented to sell my womb. This was a mistake.” Zhou Zishu said aghast and tried to calm his panicked heart.

“I see, truly, how unfortunate then...it would appear I won a fraudulent bid.” And Zhou Zishu snapped his eyes straight at Helian Yi, it took a moment to register what he said and the older Alpha picked up on it immediately. “I would’ve bidden much higher than this.”

“Then...I’m truly sorry sir, I didn’t consent to any of this and...I...don’t understand it either.”

“I am at a loss as well...but what is done is done. We’ll figure this out at home.” Zhou Zishu flinched, home? What the fuck did he mean ‘home’? “The car should be outside waiting.”

“Perhaps you misheard me sir, I did NOT consent. To *any* of this. I will correct this on my own.”

“Zi Shu, perhaps there is confusion, so I will explain it perhaps more plainly. You are going home with me because you no longer *have* a home in the Middle. And you should comply with me, if you wish to ensure that your friend Han Ying and all those in your flat continue to HAVE a home.”

And the world seemed to shatter.

Part Two

Zhou Zishu's mind was racing at 100mph, what happened? How did this happen!? *WHY did this happen?* None of this *could* be real and yet as he sat in Helian Yi's plush limousine, driving far away from the Middle, from his home, Han Ying and further away from his Wen Kexing. This WAS real.

The stylish custom limo was so reflective and gleamed against the night lamps of the Uppercity, gorgeous flashes of purple and blue not unlike the Undercity...the only difference was how 'safe' the streets were, Zi Shu stared at the people, the families enjoying the parks, going to the shows, the attractions of the city with bright happy colourful holograms leaping and skipping around the children as they squealed with delight. They have passed three scans, all the way to level 7, he didn't even KNOW there was a level 7.

“You're very quiet Zi Shu, taking in the sights of your new home.” Helian Yi sighed, almost bored of it, surely he'd been used to this and Zhou Zishu was too traumatized to really appreciate it, no, trauma wasn't it, a slow boil of sadness and rage was brewing in him. Zi Shu was NOT going to let this be his life, he wasn't going to let this happen to him. “Talk.”

“What do you want me to say? You're kidnapping me...for something I *never* agreed to be part of.”

“The hand of fate decided this for you...didn't you have dreams of comfort and stability? Of status?”

“Yes, I did..but nothing like this.” Zhou Zishu gritted between his teeth, “And NOT with you.”

“You *wound* me Zhou Zishu. *sigh* but I can understand your hostility, I am a man that seeks opportunities and exploits the opening. This city that you see before you was done with hardwork and many sacrifices, it was a place not unlike Undercity long ago believe it or not. Corrupt and unjust, lawless, drugs and prostitution, murders. Tsk, tsk.” Helian Yi droned on and reached for two crystal glasses with 14k gold rims and a golden dragon stem, he tapped a holo screen to pull out a chilled bottle of plum star wine. “I know about your second job, shameful Zhou Zishu...a dancer? A *waste* of your talents. This is a **kindness**, you don't really see it but I AM saving you.”

“It is **my** life, mine. What you’re doing is removing my choice.” And the older Alpha laughed as he poured the wine, “It’s dishonest and cruel and you know it.”

“Ah Zi Shu, sometimes when performing a great deed, hands will become unclean..to a certain extent.” Helian Yi sipped the wine calmly, “Only a fool believes getting to Heaven will be an easy task and you, as an Omega. You don’t know *what* you want. Your type never does, a trait of your kind.” Zhou Zishu fumed hotly, everything this man said was obnoxious and had a kernel of truth.

Zhou Zishu really didn’t know what he wanted...he wanted the status that comes from being an Uppercity resident but he found himself loving the thrill and danger living in the Undercity. Wen Kexing’s passionate words affected him greatly, that’s why he chose to be his Mate. He wanted to be an Alpha that provided a safe home for his Omega. *He wanted a family ...*and knew that the Uppercity was just as corrupt and vile as the Undercity was.

Only Zhou Zishu was the fool..he *should’ve* stayed with Wen Kexing yesterday, *should’ve* never left to go to perform, never *refused* the warmth from the Ghost Valley Chief over the glitter and glamour of the Uppercity.

Zhou Zishu's throat felt dry from regret, he felt bile about to rise from his stomach as all his internal force just was fluctuating wildly. He was unstable and hot, he didn’t want to be here, *he wanted to go home.*

Helian Yi extended the glass of plum star wine to him, breaking him out of his thoughts for a moment.

“Zi Shu...I’ll make a vow to you, I want what I paid for. ”

“My womb...you want me to-”

“To give me a son, an Alpha son. If you can provide me one, I will ensure your entire life will be paid for and you can do whatever you wish. You have my word.” Zhou Zishu looked at him cautiously, no parts of him wanted Helian Yi, the bite on his finger and chest thrummed, memories of Wen Kexing planting them on his body...all he was missing was the one on his nape. “On the condition you provide an heir and comply with the duties of being an Omega until conception, I will not bond with you as we have advances in medicines that bypass such old world traditions.”

“I give you a son...and you’ll give me money and status? What if I can’t? I’ve never given birth. I might not be able to.” Helian Yi simply laughed if the notion of Zi Shu being infertile was possible and gave the glass to Zhou Zishu who looked at the much desired wine with a sense of melancholy. It was a stunning deep purple that had flecks of something shimmering inside, they caught the light like stars. How truly beautiful it was..but he didn’t sip it, Zhou Zishu wasn’t a fool..the wine was drugged and he’d be helpless.

“I had your medical records examined, you’re perfect in every way and I think you know that.” *Shit .*

“I couldn’t...I wouldn’t just give you my child.”

“Then it would be OUR child.” And it was like swallowing a stone, ‘our’ child, how could Zi Shu consider either option? Even if he didn’t love Helian Yi, he certainly would love his child. How could he be able to live with Wen Kexing with his son here in the Uppercity? Would he be loved? Cared for? Money can only do so much. “Zi Shu...how desperate are you to improve your life and station? Your friend, Han Ying? Don’t you want what’s best for him?” And Zhou Zishu’s eyes became hard and bright, not an ounce of fear, just pure rage.

“You fucking dog. Don’t you *dare* say his name.” Helian Yi’s glare became stormy, he tossed the glass to the window, causing it to shatter and drops of the wine hit Zhou Zishu’s cheek. He rubbed it off and poured the wine from his own glass on the rug. If Helian Yi didn’t give a shit about the damage, why should he? The stately Alpha appeared like he was going to attack Zhou Zishu and as spacious as this limo was, fighting in it didn’t seem practical. “I don’t love you Helian Yi, I don’t want your hands on me and I damn sure would never EVER leave my child in your care.” And just like that Helian Yi calmed, disturbingly so, a small robot slipped out from underneath his seat and went about cleaning the limo. It’s comical cute size grabbed Zhou Zishu’s attention for a moment before it bopped back into its home. “I’ll work for an eternity to repay what you spent on me but I will *never* give you my child.”

“I understand Zi Shu...it is a pity that things have ended so poorly between us just before it had time to bloom.”

“Whatever feelings I could’ve had, you crushed it when you threatened my friend.”

The remainder of the ride was silent after that.

The limo pulled into the 7th palace of Helian Yi, going underground underneath a brilliant lake that parted to a long dark driveway. White lights dotted the pathway, showing off the numerous sports cars and antiques that the billionaire acquired over the many years. Rich reds and cedarwood floors with fine clay soldiers and delicate motifs of white stone muses, paintings of historic battles with galant warriors against opposing armies, serene pictorials and inked calligraphy scrolls hung from the high ceiling. A long imposing staircase lead to a second floor with thick cedarwood aged bannisters and explicit foreign woven rugs of the finest threads, there was only one room on this floor and it was behind two large intricately carved doors depicting a conquering battle over a fierce beast. From his distance Zhou Zishu could tell it was beautiful and he had a feeling he’d see it close up soon.

The entryway into the palace reeked of traditional air, of old money and prestige, it was warm but almost like a museum with very few modern pieces outside of holographic monitors and an elaborate bright gold dragon swimming through the spaces only to flicker out into the flames of the massive fireplace.

This place...felt like a prison. A beautiful one but a prison nonetheless.

Zhou Zishu felt a bit numb and dizzy all of the sudden as the two walked in, maybe he was tired, this day had been so long and taxing. When he fell back Zhou Zishu felt a hand on his back keeping him up right, something inside him began to light up, a familiar spark...an urge. Zhou Zishu recoiled and separated from Helian Yi but his legs felt unsteady.

“Come, let me take you to bed.” Helian Yi’s voice was so warm and soft, like a comfort, take him to bed? What? Zhou Zishu almost lulled into that deep soothing timbre but he shook his

head and backed away. He was glaring suns at Helian Yi, something was wrong and the Alpha just smiled at him, content, “Ah, you noticed?”

“What did you...do to me?” Zhou Zishu forced and wobbled, he could feel slick drooling from beneath him, staining his pants and the smell...it wasn't cardamom, it was something matching Helian Yi's but how?! What was happening?! Zhou Zishu needed to calm down and focus but his body was burning, every inch of him was both hot and numb... *it was intense.*

“Zhou Zishu is a clever Omega, you didn't drink the wine...I knew you wouldn't. You're trained in the school of the Four Seasons Manor. You are formidable in every way, our sons will be strong.” Helian Yi loosened his tie and removed his jacket, a servant quickly scurried over to retrieve his clothing as he rolled up his sleeves. “But I am no real match for you..and by providence Heaven made you into an Omega, what a fearsome Alpha you would've been.”

“You..drugged me....”

“Zi Shu didn't drink the wine, he instead breathed the air of the limousine, the wine was a stimulant for fertility, a potent one...even more potent if the Omega has been very...active in the last 48hrs.” Fuck Zhou Zishu stumbled against the clay soldier causing an arm to break, “Tsk, tsk... ¥ 4,203,200.00, you will have to work very hard to replace that.” Zhou Zishu looked weakly as several automatons filled the room, even if he had energy to fight...he wouldn't be able to take them all down.

“R-replace..” Helian Yi simply snagged Zhou Zishu by his shirt and dragged him on the floor, every part of him was so weak now, he felt deboned.

“Did you or did you not offer to repay me what I spent for you Zi Shu? You would not accept my offer to bear my children as an Omega with some status...some respect afforded your birth.” Helian Yi threw Zhou Zishu to the floor, yanked his head back roughly before speaking, two of his automatons joined by his side as Zhou Zishu tried to regain some strength but his Heat left him so feeble, “I cannot have you as an Omega. Then I shall have you as a whore. The outcome shall remain the same regardless.” The automatons lifted Zhou Zishu up. “Take him to the Pearl Room and have him attended to, I have a meeting...I'll break him in afterwards.”

“Y-you won't...break me.” Zi Shu hissed with weak venom in his voice and Helian Yi grabbed his face, a cruel curl of his lips and brushed back Zhou Zishu's bangs.

“Oh Zi Shu....everything can break. You just need to know where to strike. Wait for me hmm?” Helian Yi releases him and leaves, the automatons dragged Zhou Zishu away...to his new life.

His new fate.

It was all blur, Zhou Zishu was passed around like some limp doll to attendants in a decadent bathroom that seemed straight out of a photoshoot, gold leaf borders amidst the deep red shade of wallpaper, the smell of some sort of soothing scent wafted from the soaps and various cleaning Alpha creams poured and lathered on his skin. Helian Yi knew he'd been sexually active but did he know with whom? Zhou Zishu couldn't focus or even say...all he knew is that Helian Yi did NOT want any smell on him that wasn't from himself.

Zhou Zishu tried to fight, he tried to push away hands that scrubbed him, douches that cleansed his insides of stray 'filth' from Wen Kexing, washed his body so thoroughly his skin seemed to glow. When his slick started to flow, the attendants smiled and giggled at the mess he was making, he didn't know why, he didn't want this and the shame of it all just seemed so overwhelming.

When it was finally over, the attendants dried him off and wiped the flow off one more time before slipping a gorgeous arctic white fur throw that felt heavenly on his body, he only had this fur and string of pearls and the contrasting feel of them on his skin was making him manic. He was so sensitive, this stimulant didn't make Zhou Zishu an animal of desire but it did make him feel so..lush, wet and pilant, he didn't like that his body was loving this sensation...it wasn't natural or equal in ANY way.

It was a whirlwind, Zhou Zishu just got swept away as the attendants entered the Pearl Room without a word. It was in this room that Zi Shu could see the stagger view and vast wealth Helian Yi possessed.

Overlooking the inky black night of the Uppercity BELOW him, Zhou Zishu didn't even FEEL that he was taken up to such a height and as he shakily made his way through the deep blacks and blinding whites of the decor around him. This was the most 'modern' room that Zhou Zishu felt was even in this manor, everything looked...newly brought, the wide clear windows that lined from the floor to the ceiling that looked like there was nothing between him and falling to his death. The chandeliers of crystal bounced with the light of the city scape below.

Zhou Zishu slumped against the window, barely keeping the furs on him, feeling the cool plane of glass on his skin, his body dripping...leaving a trail from the doorway to where he was now..his eyelids became heavier and soon he was asleep. Maybe this was a dream..

It had to have been an hour when he heard the twinkling of piano keys, the first few notes of Moonlight Sonata and snapped open his eyes. He didn't even notice that there WAS a piano in the room. Helian Yi was quietly playing rather well to Zhou Zishu's ears, his body was still oozing and now it was heavier, he thought he could move but it wasn't happening.

"You're pretty good..." Zhou Zishu slurred, a pant escaped him as he bundled himself more in the fur, he was so cold now but his body was on fire. "M-make this...stop..."

"Zi Shu, your martial arts has trained you well, the fact that you still have a mind despite the stimulants in your body is proof of your quality."

"I'm...not quality..." Zhou Zishu forced and felt his anger rising in him, "I'm a man...just like you...I..won't fucking, let you-" Helian Yi slammed his hands on keys creating a horrific tone that shook Zhou Zishu.

"You won't LET me?" Helian repeated back, his voice drenched in contempt, "Zi Shu, you don't have power, you could never have power because your type doesn't UNDERSTAND power. It's not bred in you. An Omega could never reform this city, couldn't enact the justice needed to punish those who are amoral and corrupt." Helian Yi stood in front of Zhou Zishu and knelt down, "I've moved plans to start demolition of the Middle."

"WHAT?! Y-you can't!?!"

“The Middle has outlived its usefulness, those who are worth any value will have a chance in one of the various clusters we’ll set up in the refuse of the Uppercity. Those that can’t. Will be shoved down to where they belong in Undercity...there’s several markets that need flesh Zi Shu, the Black Market flourishes on trade. Who knows, organs and the like will be donated here for those that have a RIGHT to a future.”

“You fucking can’t do this! Please!” Helian Yi gripped Zi Shu’s bangs and yanked his scalp up causing him pain, “Do whatever you fucking want with me...just don’t...do this.”

“Such a hero, so selfless...” Helian Yi spun Zhou Zishu hard and smacked him against the window pane, the city drenched in darkness below them, he could feel the rough fingers in his hair and Helian Yi breath on his neck, the smell of wine and tobacco on his breath. “Zhou Zishu...this body...you have so much here, so much.” The fur barely kept on Zi Shu’s shoulders and he felt the Alpha’s mouth on his nape, his hand groping his ass. “I will...explore every inch and you will know of nothing else, only what I give you.” the fingers invaded his ass and it felt like a fist, three fingers and the gushy sound rang in Zi Shu’s ears but Gods did his body spark awake. Zhou Zishu was frantic, the smooth glass gave him nothing to hold onto as his chest began to swell and leak. Helian Yi pressed against him, crushing him with his strength and size as his fingers spread and searched his ass, moving his fingers in and out and freeing globs of slick. He found his core, his prostate and pressed with no remorse. Practically lifting him off and Zi Shu’s toes barely could touch the floor. “Look at you..Zi Shu..” And Zhou Zishu couldn’t focus on anything, milk streamed from his nipples making a little stream of white sliding down the glass, “Tell me how your body exists like this? How did no one claimed you? The Alpha you fucked? Was he a fool? Did he truly not want you? Or did he play with you?”

Wen Kexing...he...loved him. **Zhou Zishu loved him.**

Why didn't he...save him?

An Alpha...protects.



Helian Yi yanked his fingers out and gripped Zhou Zishu's neck, he could see the glow of something gold and hot in Helian Yi's eyes, his slick coated fingers made it into Zi Shu's mouth and forced him to taste himself. He bit down hard until he tasted blood but Helian wasn't going to stop.

His womb...hungered.

Zhou Zishu's eyes rolled into the back of his head the further Helian Yi's fingers went into his throat, further down till he was gagging and quaked another desperate orgasm, he was losing himself in this pleasure, fiery and unwanted, rough and unfeeling..absent of any love just control. He heard faintly an unbuckling and then the hard rigid mass hollowing his insides, it felt so much bigger than the last time. There was a madness and desperation driving Helian Yi inside Zi Shu, hard and slow jolts that made Zhou Zishu feel like he would shatter before the glass pane. The Alpha yanked the fur off and there was his Omega spread against the glass

window, the soft glows and the city filling the room and on his sweat drenched skin. Zhou Zishu lost the ability to stand and began to slide when Helian Yi pulled out and flipped him around to stare at the mess of this creature.

Even in desolation...Zhou Zishu was still breathtaking.

*His womb.... **hungered** .*

Once more he filled Zi Shu causing him to scream passionately, his blunt nails raked down Helian Yi's neck.

Helian Yi saw the bite over Zhou Zishu's heart...matching the bite on his finger.

“Incomplete circuit....Zi Shu..”

No..

...Don't.

Helian Yi placed his hand hard against Zhou Zishu's head, he hooked his finger on the simple leather collar and yanked it off.

.....Pease....

The bite felt heavy on his nape.

To Yield or To Burn

Chapter Summary

After being taken by force by Helian Yi, Zhou Zishu is thrown into a new world, a new life...but is he doomed or will he be able to save himself

A warm wet cloth was gently brushed against his nape and slowly Zhou Zishu moaned and shifted realizing he was in some sort of bath with the smell of frankincense and dragon's blood. The woody and soft spice scent filled his lungs and slowly he regained consciousness. *It was all a nightmare...*

"Forgive me Zi Shu...my manner was...unbecoming of my station." Helian Yi's voice cut through the daze of slumber and Zi Shu immediately bolted up, splashing warm water everywhere on the ceramic tiles as he finally realized everything that happened. This was all real.

Helian Yi *raped* him.

Helian Yi *bonded* with him.

He was now...Helian Yi's Omega.

Zhou Zishu's struggled to breathe as he panicked, his eyes wild with anger, he groped his nape and found the bite and a despair slowly dripped into his heart. This was his greatest fear, being taken and owned by an Alpha he didn't love...

This was a pain that was indescribable to Zhou Zishu, it wasn't heartache...*it was worse*. Oh Wen Kexing, he's forever lost to him now. No, no **no**, *this wasn't real*, this wasn't a *true* bond, it wasn't equal or fair, there was no love here. Zhou Zishu FELT real love and he felt it with Wen Kexing, he HAD to cling to that. Quickly, Zi Shu placed his hand on Wen Kexing's bite on his chest and brought his hand with Wen Kexing's bite on his ring finger to his lips. THIS was their bond and he'll fight for it, he'll fight like HELL for it.

"**Fuck you** ." Zhou Zishu hissed, the venom in his voice could not be mistaken for anything but the most vile distaste for Helian Yi, no fear, no respect anywhere in his tone. Actual hatred and if Helian Yi was a lesser Alpha, he would've recoiled from such a vicious strike.

But...he didn't. It was the *opposite*. Helian Yi smiled. As if the disrespect was a stone in the road he was walking over. A stumble and nothing more.

"That is warranted Zi Shu...everything I've done in that moment was opposite of my nature."

"No, that IS your nature. Your truest nature." Zi Shu fired back, "This is ***who*** you are." And Helian Yi softly nods, no less more confident than he was before. "Don't fucking touch me

ever again.” and unexpectedly Helian Yi claps his hand, it was loud in the spacious bathroom and its echo caused a shift in Zi Shu. He starts to feel himself deflate but gently.

“Calm yourself Zi Shu...your anger is justified but my actions have merit, despite the crudeness.” The stately Alpha ringed the cloth in the bathwater, removed his expensive shoes and loosened his tie as he stepped into the bathtub with Zhou Zishu. Sinking into the tub until he was looking like a fool fully clothed in the steamy waters. “Ahh, I have made quite the mess of things and yet my mind has never been more sure of my decision.” Helian Yi sighed as he ran his wet hand into his hair and dangled his legs on the edges of the tub, he looked more at peace and at the same time exhausted like all of this was a struggle that he overcame and is now savoring the victory.

“I will not be your Mate, I will NEVER be your Mate.” Helian Yi tilted his head at Zhou Zishu’s stance but also admiring his nude slick form, standing in the tub, indignant and full of fury and yet still so very beautiful. Zi Shu could feel his lust and it disgusted him, he wanted to leave the tub, he wanted to kick or run away...*yet*.

“Zi Shu, do you believe in **Soulmates**?” And he was silent so Helian Yi continued, “It is a traditional belief from the old world between Alphas and Omegas, the idea that there was an ideal Mate governed by Heaven for you. Your match in every way. You are given a Soulmate only once in your lifetime as an Alpha or Omega. We are unique mortals in that regard.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“That night in the **Kingdom of Morality**, I knew you were my Soulmate and I know you felt the same too.” Zhou Zishu became still. That *couldn't* be right, if he and Helian Yi were Soulmates then he would've NEVER forced himself on him. Soulmates were *equals*, one belonged to the other and they both danced as one soul. This is what Zhou Zishu believed, or rather what he heard. The concept seemed so hokey yet it was sworn up and down by elders that it was real. Even still, Zhou Zishu never considered such a thing would befall him. “Do you know ***why*** I know this is true? How I knew you'd indulge me in that powder room, that you'd let me drink from your breasts and you from my rod? Both creating and sustaining life? A dance only shared between two minds and strength such as ourselves? Haha, it wasn't mere lust Zi Shu...it was us, *connecting* as one.”

“You're wrong...you were a fling.” And Zhou Zishu was scanning his memory, he wanted to suck off Wen Kexing so goddamn badly but was refused...the second time he got what he wanted but with Helian Yi there was no question. It seemed so....trivial, just a sex act. Was there something more? His mind was racing, was he playing a game that he never fully understood? Was Wen Kexing in the same spot? Did he know?

“A fling that gave you your **FIRST** mark. Your **FIRST** Bite.” Helian Yi corrected, driving the point in on their predestined union, “I saw in you what you knew was there, Zi Shu. Ambition. **Drive**. The need to elevate your station beyond your birth, the drive to become something *more*, truthfully Zi Shu, you were better than that club and you knew that. And you knew that night that I can provide all that you need for your potential. You took the lead and I followed obediently.”

“T-that..wasn't.”

“Zi Shu, you are an Omega unlike any other...when I mentioned it was providence that you were made an Omega instead of being born an Alpha I meant it. You were made for someone who could see ALL that you can be and if not, can get you there.” Zhou Zishu could feel himself becoming softer, he didn’t understand why...nothing Helian Yi was saying was true and he just was lulling into the man’s voice. The bite on his nape was throbbing and felt like hot wax was dripping down his back. It was painful and he started to stagger causing him to fall to his knees into the bath holding his nape, keeping his hold on the rim of the tub, “An Alpha needs to be firm, strong, dominant and correct. It was bitter work reforming Uppercity to the majesty that it is now. That desire to bring justice and rid the corrupt from the city requires a sure mind removed of any doubt. An Omega's natural state is to be unsure, even if they proclaim to be the opposite, they don't know but by the side of an Alpha...the path shall always be clear.” Zhou Zishu shook his head, swallowing deeply the lump that formed in his throat trying to block out what Helian Yi was telling him. He admitted to himself that yes he had doubts, he was human but on this? He was 100% sure Wen Kexing was his Alpha. He CHOOSE him.

But...was it a genuine choice? Or was it desperation? Infatuation through sex and a weak bond...from a weak Alpha.

No..no that couldn't be right. Wen Kexing was the Chief of Ghost Valley, he was a strong and fierce leader with thousands following him. But he was an Alpha...to a No Type, even the weakest Alpha can appear dominant.

Helian Yi could see Zi Shu fraying at the edges and reached out to take his trembling hand on the tub, the touch soothed instantly...as if something was winding up onto his body and smothering the flame. What...was this feeling? Helian Yi began to pull on Zi Shu’s hand to bring him closer to his body, between his legs until they were pressed against each other. His heart was pounding while Helian Yi’s was perfectly attuned, steady...*sure*. “Zhou Zishu, you are my match in every way, you deny it because you are headstrong, powerful...but even you must yield to the truth. About us.”

“.....Us..” The crafty Alpha pulled Zi Shu’s hands and placed them around his throat, “W-what are you..”

“Is this *not* what you desire? Then squeeze my love.” Zhou Zishu wanted to, he wanted to make this stop, everything inside him was screaming that this isn’t what he wanted. Even now, as he held Helian Yi’s throat in his hold, he could strangle him... *he should* . He could feel Helian Yi’s large hands cup and squeeze his ass, running his palm up and over his slick skin with such WANT in his eyes. If Helian Yi want to take Zhou Zishu, he fucking could. “Zi Shu, as an Alpha it is my natural state to dominate you, *to breed you* , to create the finest offspring...you have never met anyone worthy of you Zi Shu, how many nights have been left never satisfied? This body left denied its purest purpose, waiting until I found you. I SAVED you Zi Shu, saved you from mediocrity and a life bereft of substance and I will give you everything you could ever want, you just have to ***Yield*** to me.”

“...Yield....to...you.” Zi Shu soft voice was almost absent, **Yield**. Yes, that *should* happen here, he *should* yield to his Alpha...it will make everything easier wouldn’t it? Soon his grip on Helian Yi’s throat lessened as he felt a hand on his cheek, brushing back the wet strands of hair back. Zhou Zishu’s eyes fluttered madly, it felt so nice, so loving. This was his Alpha. Helian

Yi's thumbs made gentle circles on his hip bones, the wide palms ghosting up Zhou Zishu's sides and ever so slowly, Zi Shu was sinking into Helian Yi.

Submitting.

"Zi Shu..I am your safety, I am your protector, your guide, your savior...depend on me and **Yield.**"

Yield.

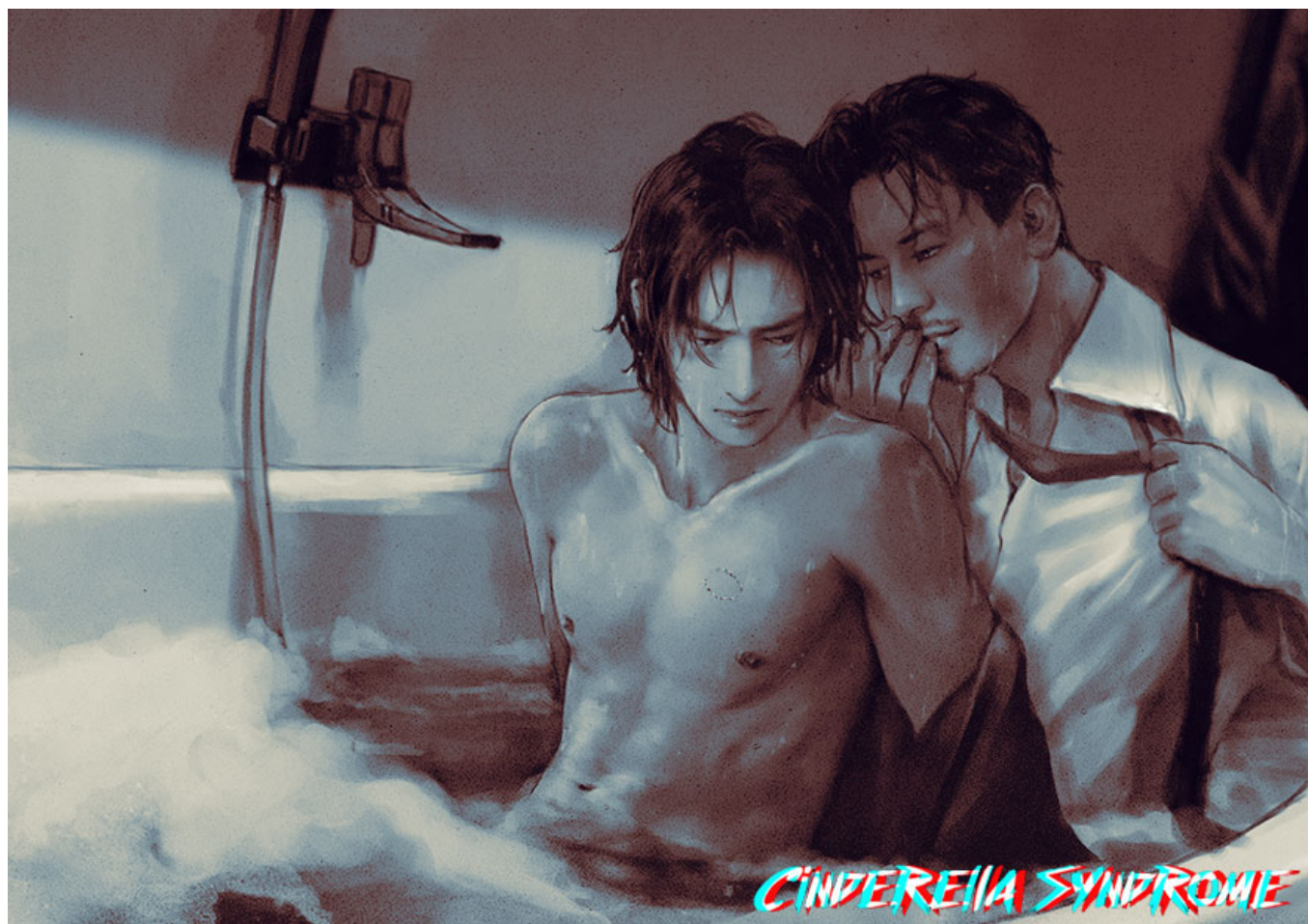
...Yield...

The bite on Zhou Zishu's chest spiked with a sharp pin prick of pain, like it was reminding him of Wen Kexing, that HE was there, in his heart. Do NOT Yield.

"L-lao Wen..." Zi Shu winced and pulled back weakly causing Helian Yi's eyes to turn hard with anger and black for an instant. The room was spinning and Zhou Zishu fell on Helian Yi's chest, softly panting and shaking till his hand met the bite on his nape and caused him to still until he fell asleep.

"Almost Zi Shu.."

"Almost there."



The next time he woke up it was back inside the Pearl Room, he looked at the digital clock and it said 2pm...time just didn't feel real right now. He was freshly bathed now wearing soft dark blue leggings and a matching silk top that barely sat on his shoulder, low neck, low enough to reveal most of his chest. He didn't feel any underwear on him so this attire-despite it being luxurious-was merely for titillation and not for modesty. Zhou Zishu steamed, nothing in here felt comfortable or welcoming, he was in a display...a elaborate decorated set, no different than the clay soldiers and priceless antiques in Helian Yi's possession. And he wanted to bring a CHILD into this life? There wasn't a semblance of love or affection...only greed, only control.

Zi Shu's body still was hot, a Heat was coming soon, no doubt now his body receiving the nape bite was kicking into overdrive for reproduction...out of all the bites to give an Omega, the nape was the most strongest, closest to the brain and seated on the 'Drive' meridian. A Alpha bite there injects their energy into the Omega overrides nearly every impulse into submission and reproduction, it's why having the other two are key...it allows a current of energy in small bursts, letting the Omega adjust and accept their Alpha. Skipping to the nape will only lead to a complete and utter subservient fuck and breeding toy.

But...Helian Yi called him his 'Soulmate', surely the man doesn't want some wet cock sleeve to pop out children, if that was the case, Helian Yi could buy stables of Omegas.

There was no point in wondering what the man was thinking anymore, Zhou Zishu only gave himself a mild headache trying to guess it. All that he knew was Helian Yi wanted an Alpha

son and completed the Circuit with his own bite to override Wen Kexing's. Conception was possible but it could take time for Zi Shu's body to adapt to Helian Yi's domineering Alpha energy and doubted that there wasn't going to be a suppressant here for him to take. Ugh, misery, Zhou Zishu had to face facts that this was all real. No more deluding himself into thinking it was a dream. The bite on his nape pulsed angrily, it was denied doing what it was meant to do. Wen Kexing's bites were so far protecting him, keeping him from completely succumbing to Helian Yi...but for how long? That Zhou Zishu didn't know but he had a feeling the powerful Alpha was planning for something.

Speaking of, Helian Yi *generously* left Omega relief toys and he couldn't shake that he was being watched. It was bad enough he was raped and bonded. The last thing he wanted to give the bastard was a show. The palace was beautiful, everything he dreamed it would be...a place fit for a prince and his progeny and the fact that Helian Yi BROUGHT him to provide that progeny was disgusting, it was vile and cruel.

And the disturbing thing about this was...Zi Shu was becoming more *excited* by it.

No, it was the bite on his nape, Wen Kexing didn't complete the circuit...every Omega was given the 'Circuit Talk' when they became of age. It was a hold over in evolution that an Alpha needed to ensure 'submissiveness' and 'breeding' in Omegas. That may have applied in the olden days but now, with the right training, meds and discipline, an Omega may never have to be bonded or experience Heats.

At least, that would be for Omegas with funds and access...for those in the Middle and Undercity, more extreme methods would be necessary. It's why Zi Shu learned martial arts, he didn't want to depend on drugs or modifications.

Now...he's *regretting* it.

Zhou Zishu made a pile out of the pillows, expensive silk and cotton sheets, found a corner near the grand crystal piano and formed a nest. He had no idea on how long his Heat was going to last and he damn sure didn't want to take anything of Helian Yi's to use in his next, he cursed himself for not taking something from Wen Kexing. Even a strand of his hair would be enough.

He wanted to be owned, he wanted to be bred...but by Wen Kexing. NOT Helian Yi.

In his nest he curled into a ball and practiced breathing, feeling the wild fluctuations of his internal force currents trying to steady. This was new, this wasn't a normal Heat and this wasn't exactly a normal situation. Zhou Zishu still can feel the pressure of Wen Kexing's mouth on his chest, licking his nipples till they leak, his fingers making little trails of fire on his skin...spreading him open and filling him.

This Heat was awful, he didn't want to relieve himself in this nest, everything here smelled like Helian Yi, it was choking him. Zhou Zishu drifted, his lips pressed against Wen Kexing's bite, it was the closest he had to kissing him. No, Zi Shu couldn't wallow in despair, he wouldn't...and won't submit to Helian Yi, he needs to bide his time and think. There had to be a way out, must be, if he can get to the Undercity..

Just as he was beginning to doze off, the keylock opened and petite maid walked in, noticing the pile of sheets and pillows in the corner with mild curiosity before approaching. She must've thought the whole display rather bizarre.

“Sir, y-you have a phone call.” She softly whispered and Zi Shu looked up at her confused face, not everyone understood how Omegas worked or even cared to learn. “Master’s suite...I’ll escort you there.” It took some time for it all to register that he had a phone call, who would know he’s even here? Zi Shu stood up from the pile feeling gross and drenched in sweat, he knows going into Helian Yi’s suite looking and smelling like this was going to set him off.

“I need to freshen up...”

“M-master is a very busy man...he *expressed* expediency.” *Of course, the asshole.* Zhou Zishu sighed and tried to straighten up his wrinkled clothing, sticky and soaked with his slick and followed the maid out of the room. His feet on the cold marble floor soothed his temperature before he started walking on the plush red carpeting, consciously kept looking down to see if he left a trail behind him. The whispers of the servants and sounds of the automatons diligently working to maintain the spacious interiors while several displays of events and happenings in the Uppercity, something caught Zhou Zishu’s eyes shortly before crossing into Helian Yi’s wing..

A group of men, all in dark green, black and blue suits, gold motifs of a dragon on the capes, they concealed their faces with high collars but what really got Zi Shu’s attention.

The sickly bright green veins...Venom?

“Sir?” The maid asked when Zhou Zishu stopped following her to look at the men, they seemed to notice him too, did they pick up his scent? One slowly began to approach when the maid quickly flittered back to Zi Shu, “Sir? Are you well?”

“Those men, who are they?”

“I-I don’t...know, please don’t ask.”

“Okay, I’m sorry...thank you.” He apologized, no, this was fine, those men didn't look like servants which mean they had to belong to some sect Helian Yi was familiar with, more importantly they would have access to by pass the ID gates and more...Zi Shu began to wonder if perhaps if there was a way to get more information about them. Those men would be his way out! The small maid bowed as she finish escorting Zi Shu and quickly vanished into the palace. There was more to this place than he assumed and considered that if there’s something he can hold over Helian Yi. Zhou Zishu breathed in deeply with renewed resolve, placed his hands on the carved red oak doors and walked inside.

Much like the remaining fixtures in the palace, everything inside was neoclassical from the detailed statues of fine marble and clay soldiers that looked on ominously from the archway, long scroll detailing a great war in vibrant watercolour lined the path toward Helian Yi typing away on the four bright screens before him, taking a sip of tea calmly as he sign off on some contracts and agreements he made. From where Zhou Zishu was it looked like he was viewing more pieces of art. The windows allowed bright natural light in creating forbidding all shadows from entering or at least tried to. The scenery behind him was gorgeous, three waterfalls

cascading into a pond that was overlooking the vast reaches of the Uppercity. This was the best view in the palace...no wonder it was Helian Yi's suite.

Once that Omega's scent hit his nose, Helian Yi immediately focused on Zi Shu walking toward him.

"Zi Shu, I see you didn't rest well...you look exhausted."

"Then you should've *allowed* me to freshen up.." Zhou Zishu said with a bite, he was so uncomfortable like this and he knew Helian Yi was aware of that, he looked and saw his mobile rumble on the desk and go silent and it was like being reunited. He completely forgot about it in the whirlwind of his abduction, Helian Yi lifted up the mobile and looked at the screen emotionless. Then held it up to Zhou Zishu as he walked over to the thick mahogany desk, the closer Zi Shu got the more he could see Helian Yi's eyes begin to take on a soft glow of gold...and he toyed with Zhou Zishu, pulling the mobile back as he came closer till he was facing Helian Yi in the chair.

"I don't have to explain that your words matter here, yes?" The older Alpha's voice was polite but the tone was VERY final and Zi Shu understood what it meant. No one was supposed to know where he was....

"Yes, I know." Helian Yi gave the mobile back to Zhou Zishu and slid the lock screen to reveal 50 texts from "Little Brother", Han Ying! He quickly opened the call when he got another buzz. "Han Ying!"

"Zi Shu!?! Oh thank gods you're alive I almost gave up calling!" The sound of his friend's relieved voice swelled in Zhou Zishu's chest, "I've been trying to reach you for three days!? Went to your flat and everything was gone! I went to the Kingdom of Morality and it's completely closed! The owner sold it and just disappeared!" Well that answered some things, the manager was so strange to Zhou Zishu that night and the more he ruminated on it the angrier Zi Shu became.

"He...sold it..?"

"Yeah! I tried asking where he was in hope to maybe find you but the manager went to level 4 Uppercity and vanished." Zhou Zishu turned to Helian Yi who simply tilted his head as he kept a focused eye on him, the Alpha intent in his stare was crawling all over Zi Shu so he quickly turned back around to ignore it. "Where are you?! Are you safe?"

"I'm safe Han Ying, I...needed to...get away from the stress."

"Things have become too dangerous here, in the Undercity it's an all out WAR! So many gangs are fighting against Ghost Valley! There's even INFIGHTING can you believe it!?" Zi Shu's heart jumped into his throat, days before he left Wen Kexing was talking about Ghost Valley rebellion that he was trying to deal with. If things are this bad down there...has Wen Kexing lost his focus?

"I'm staying with..a friend in the Uppercity right now."

“Wow really?! That must be some friend!” Helian Yi’s palm slid up the side of Zhou Zishu’s waist feeling him tense and looked over his shoulder to glare, “Ohahaha! A ‘friend..’ Zi Shu, have you found a Mate?”

“No. I-I mean no, seriously just-omph!” Helian Yi pulled Zi Shu down on his lap, muted his friend as he pulled the mobile back to stare hotly at the bold Alpha, “What are you doing?! Show restraint!”

“Am I *not* your friend? And am I *not* your Mate?”

“You’re listening?!” Helian Yi pointed to his ear, there was a small node inside, “This is my friend!”

“Then you should continue talking to your friend while you perform your duties. Surely, you can focus on two objectives at once, you have many talents Zi Shu.” And Helian Yi unbuckled his pants, just hearing the noise of the belt and the heat and girth of Alpha cock underneath him was making him DRIP. Zhou Zishu quickly tried to regain composure.

“Zi Shu? Are you okay?! You disappeared.”

“I...ah, s-sorry Han Ying...I was just...exercising...”

“Come now Zi Shu. Then you should be relaxing instead of me talking to you.” Helian Yi started moving Zhou Zishu’s waist on his member, not putting it in, merely teasing its presence beneath him. Such a hard thick mass, the friction of the silk leggings slowly becoming transparent from his pre and slick. Helian Yi’s hands groped his full chest and squeeze the milk from his nipples, licking the milk from his fingers afterwards.

“Such delicious milk for our son...you will be a beautiful and strong mother Zi Shu, doesn’t that EXCITE you? This body will grow heavy with children, MY children.” Gods, his voice on his skin...his Alpha intent soaking into Zhou Zishu, the Omega breeding drive was stronger with the infernal bite on his nape. “This isn’t what you wanted...but it is what you need and only *I* can give it to you.”

“P-please..not..now.”

“Zi Shu?”

“H-han Ying tell me are...-AHHn- are you well?” Zhou Zishu tensed as his hips were pushed back and forth on Helian Yi’s lap, he looked down at the large thick head poking up from between his closed thighs, mingling in the slick and silk leggings..the smell of musk plumes filling his nostrils and making his head fuzzy. He didn’t want it, he didn’t want Helian Yi, he didn’t. “Tell me if..y-you...are okay.”

“Oh! Yes! Actually, I got a brand new position at another company, they’re paying me 3x more than here.” Han Ying said so brightly and in Zi Shu’s heart he was overjoyed, “I cannot *believe* my luck!” Zhou Zishu felt the tug and pull of Helian Yi on his leggings, it wouldn’t take much to tear them...that was the point of them being flimsy after all.

“Ha-an Ying, that's wonderful...congratulations!” And Zhou Zishu gasped feeling the hot flesh pressed up against his tender soaked hole, pushing through the muscle until only the tip was inside. It was so sudden and Zi Shu barely had time to adjust with its presence before Helian Yi lifted and SLOWLY slid him down on his length, sinking each hard inch inside until he was sheathed completely. Gods..it felt so good, Alpha cock inside him..finally, he was full, Alpha, *Alpha*. Zhou Zishu could hear Helian Yi chuckle softly from behind him as he pants.

“Ahhn..nn..”

“Zi Shu?”

“H-han Ying..I-I’m just exercising! P-please keep talking...I’m listening.”

“Good, Zi Shu...this opportunity will be great for us, I wanted to tell you that I looked for a position at this company for you too. I want us to succeed together!” Han Ying chirped with pride.

“For..ahh-hmm- us?”

“Of course! I will be honest, I didn’t like you playing in that club...even if it was for Uppercity Alphas and *sigh* I know you can handle yourself. But I always worried. I want you to achieve status and find an Alpha. Haha, wouldn’t it be great if this is our chance to do that?” Oh Han Ying, such a soul, a good soul, “I want to do better and make it to Uppercity, maybe with this I can find a match and start a family, provide for them. Wouldn’t that be great for us?!” and Zhou Zishu could feel his heart breaking.

“Y-you will be...a great...m-match.” Zhou Zishu gripped Helian Yi’s forearm trying to pull off, trying to get some distance but when he moved the rigid form inside him throbbed and pulsed with vigor, no matter how hard and refined his martial arts training was. At the end of the day, he was an Omega...and an Omega craves an Alpha’s warmth, their power. But Zi Shu didn’t WANT Helian Yi, he didn’t, no matter how good this felt it was wrong, a lie, a stolen bond, he was pulled back more towards Helian Yi till he felt his lips on his ear. That deep timbre of his voice sending him spiraling.

“Who do you think GAVE Han Ying that opportunity? That chance for him to improve his station in life?” Helian Yi grunted and started to snake and SLAM his hips up inside Zi Shu, the slap of his muscle driving up and hitting the tender lump that was making Zhou Zishu see stars. His fingers tapped up Zi Shu’s throat, pressing along his jaw while his free arm was a clamp around Zi Shu’s slender waist. His thrusts were relentless and so deep, tapping the lump mercilessly and Zhou Zishu was feeling his grip on the mobile slipping. Breed, breed, *breed*.

“Hah..Han Y-ying, I-I have to...my....Heat..came early..”

“Zi Shu...are you sure you’re okay?”

“I...yes...I am, I-I have to go Han Ying. Please don’t-ahh-concern yourself, I will..see you soon.”

“Okay Zi Shu, please be safe.” Zhou Zishu heard the line go dead and screamed his orgasm, his body was shuttering with need and Helian Yi simply bent him over the desk, spreading him over it sending tea and assorted items on the floor in a loud crash.

This wasn't Wen Kexing, he wasn't giving him this feeling...this wasn't right. He tried to reach for his finger, to kiss that bite, to hold one and now be consumed by Helian Yi's fire and burn away. When Helian Yi saw him try he pressed his body on Zi Shu, forcing his arms up over his head with his mouth hard on him...kissing and breathing his life into Zhou Zishu as he slams up and deeper into him on the hard desk surface.

Pleasure, blinding and burning Zhou Zishu so much felt like he was kindling in a bonfire.

He can't lose Wen Kexing's bond to him...

He must escape this hell before everything he holds dear turns to ashes.

Ten Minutes

Chapter Summary

Zhou Zishu needs to escape Helian Yi and find his way back to Wen Kexing, the dream of a better life in Uppercity is dead...but will he be able to reach his Alpha? Or will he get sidetracked?

Chapter Notes

Another big juicy chapter! Consider it two like in Ch 6! There's not going to be an update next week as I'll be at a convention! ENJOY THE CLIFF HANGER! See you in Nov!

Days passed, Zhou Zishu was sure it's been four days since he was brought to the 7th palace, he had no clocks in his room nor access to any tvs so anything he heard about the outside world he'd have to hear it from the many servants that gossiped about. Zhou Zishu was allowed to walk the palace, he somehow managed to get Helian Yi to trust him enough for this 'freedom'...on condition that if and WHEN he wanted an 'Omegas touch'. Zhou Zishu had to comply. Zi Shu paid attention to the men in the dark green and blue cloaks, they came in and left with the wind, they didn't speak to anyone and he wasn't sure if they met with Helian Yi and no servants dared to ask. He could of course gather more intel from Helian Yi via Pillow Talk but he didn't want to rouse suspicion. Whoever they were, they had Venom in their veins, their internal force was crackling and sporadic, they looked like modified humans and they looked formidable.

More importantly, they could come and go as they pleased, meaning they had high access IDs and a means of transport. Zhou Zishu needed both those things to get out of Uppercity.

He noticed one of the men kept a keen eye on him whenever they ran across each other. An Alpha? Zi Shu was sure of it...but they didn't have a scent, Venom must have killed their Breeding pheromones. But this one seemed to have an interest in him...and so Zi Shu planned, he memorized the 7th palace layout and spotted the cameras, blind spots were easy to find. If he was an assassin his target would've been doomed before the authorities were even called. What he needed was a chance that Helian Yi was going to be away, long enough for him to make a break for it.

That day was today, he couldn't afford to wait any longer.

As Zhou Zishu knew that as the days passed, Wen Kexing's bites were slowly fading, he was sure that Helian Yi's medicine and his semen were working together to remove the only bond he had. In order for Zi Shu to completely belong to Helian Yi, Wen Kexing bonds must be

healed over or surgically removed...and the only reason why Zi Shu was under some knife was because Helian Yi was getting a kick out of seeing him try to fight against fate.

That they were Soulmates.

Zhou Zishu knew that couldn't be true, it just couldn't. If he was Soulmates with anyone it was with Wen Kexing.

They connected so quickly, it was an instant attraction...passionate, he never felt anyone like Wen Kexing inside him...how he knew every inch of him, how to make him feel so incredibly good. Wen Kexing fulfilled something inside Zhou Zishu, he was powerful but not forceful...strong but not seeking out to conquer. He KNEW he was a king...and didn't have to lie to prove it to anyone.

And maybe if Zhou Zishu met Helian Yi perhaps they would maybe be the same, maybe there was some part of Helian Yi that was attractive to him.

But now? No...never.

However...he couldn't deny that slowly and surely his body was responding to Helian Yi's Alpha presence, his smell no longer repulsed him, his voice could trigger his breeding drive...and whenever they fucked it was beyond pleasurable. Zhou Zishu hated it, to the very core he did but the medicine, the bite on his nape and the energy from each load filling him and Zhou Zishu knew.

His resistance was breaking...to the point that Helian Yi would get him to Yield, to submit.

And he couldn't let that happen. ***He mustn't.***

"Zi Shu." Helian Yi's commanding voice reached him in the hydrangea pavilion, apparently he was there for a while and Zhou Zishu didn't notice it, "Ah, you're wearing the silk..."

"I didn't have a choice...or would you prefer for me to walk around nude?" Zi Shu was sharp and he didn't turn to face Helian Yi even though he can feel a 'pulling' at the base of his skull, no doubt the bite there was assisting him in that regard. The silk in question was a traditional hanfu soft shade blue with a white gradient robes that pooled around him almost mystically over his silver slippers, the meticulous gold embroidery adorned his sleeves and made a sort of koi like pattern that shimmered in the light. To everyone in the palace, they looked upon Zhou Zishu like he was some deity or a fairy being and if this was something he WANTED to wear for someone he WANTED to be with. Perhaps his expression would match. Instead he gently touched a bloom of gorgeous pale pink hydrangea, the cool petals were just lightly misted by one of the many gardeners. The scent of them soothed Zhou Zishu, he wasn't really sure on why. Finally he faced the stately Alpha, trying not to meet his eyes even though he could feel his lust looking past the expensive clothes. "The hanfu is beautiful...thank you."

"You're welcome Zi Shu." Just hearing him say that was sending a familiar heat to his belly, arousal, lust...a hunger. "Tell me Zi Shu...my servants have informed me that you have quite the appetite, are you well?" Zhou Zishu tried to conceal his blush, he was ravenous and yet he wasn't eating enough, he ate at least 6 times a day but he was never full.

“It’s my Heat...I’m constantly in Heat because of you.” And Helian Yi laughed, there was no reason to lie anyway, “I need my suppressants...I haven’t been off them since I was a teen.”

“The suppressants will prevent my seed from taking root in you Zi Shu.”

“If we were TRUE Soulmates, that wouldn’t be an issue, would it?” Helian Yi smirked with a light nod but it didn’t feel like he truly relented and Zhou Zishu sighed, it was pointless to try, “What are you going to do today..?”

“I will be meeting with an advisor of the Emperor to discuss matters involving the Middle and Undercity, contrary to what you might believe Zi Shu...I don’t want anyone to be homeless. And perhaps with a child on the way, my decision could be stalled for further thinking. Please consider that you hold as many cards in the fate of the Middle and Undercity as I do.” Helian Yi stopped and just stared at Zhou Zishu, taking all of him in..almost as if he was lost in his visage. “However, as crime and corruption run rampant, heavier decisions must pass in order to bring stability and a path to a more virtuous future. For all of us. The Emperor knows that well and entrusts me to make that hard decision.”

“There are good people in the Middle and Undercity who cannot be blamed for their circumstance.”

“And naturally those people will be the ones that will be able to rise and become something of value in the new society to come.” Zhou Zishu barely was containing the level of ire in him, Helian Yi didn’t even consider that people tried, they have died trying just to live another day or to provide for their families, themselves. It was easy for him to make ‘Heavy decisions.’ He wasn’t going to be the one to bear the brunt of them. Helian Yi was so far removed from humanity it was unreal.

“You expect me to believe that everyone in Uppercity is as ‘pure’ and ‘virtuous’ as you spout off? How many of those virtuous citizens traveled to Undercity for nefarious means? And you? Threats? Kidnapping? Rape?” That finally got something of a miffed reaction from Helian Yi and his eyes darkened.

“You cannot rape a Soulmate Zi Shu...your pride was wounded, that I know...and in time, you’ll learn that I was right on all things. Come.” Helian Yi extended his hand and as much as he loathed to take it, Zhou Zishu did, reluctantly.

And that’s how most conversations between them ended. Helian Yi ALWAYS won.

What Helian Yi wanted was to hear Zhou Zishu play the piano, which predictably he complied, it was still early afternoon, the sunlight through the expansive windows of the Pearl Room filled the area in a warm glow as he steadily plays **La Cathédrale Engloutie by Claude Debussy**. Strange, the flame inside his womb seemed to simmer almost as if the ivory keys soothed it, Zhou Zishu on the otherhand felt his mind wander to something more pleasant...

When he gets out of here, he’ll go to Wen Kexing and ask for a piano..he wants to play for him..to soothe his mind whenever life is too stressful. Zhou Zishu wanted to feel Wen Kexing's fingers on his nape, a laugh becoming a tender kiss. He wanted to hear him say ‘A-xu’ in that breathless whisper.

He wanted to be unraveled by Wen Kexing, to touch him *everywhere* .

Instead he felt Helian Yi's hand on his nape, grazing the bite and causing him to fumble on the note, his fingers scratching up his scalp and rubbing small semicircles and making Zi Shu feel so relaxed. That flame in him heated up again and he could feel wet between his thighs.

"You'll be a wonderful mother Zi Shu...playing songs for our son." Helian Yi purred into his ear, his fingers sliding down his ear until they hooked around his jaw, "I can make you so happy if you let me and Yield." There it was again, that nagging pulling at the base of his skull telling him to obey and Zi Shu almost could feel himself letting it pull him in.

"The...piece...I'm not...done." Zhou Zishu murmured, his voice drifting into Helian Yi's force, melting actually, he was losing where he was and where Helian Yi began.

"Play on my love..." And Helian Yi kissed Zi Shu's forehead in toxic affection, he could hear soft pants and Zhou Zishu stumbling on the keys, the scent of his ripe Omega slowly filling the room and he slipped his hands in the silks of Zi Shu's hanfu. Zhou Zishu tried to play, tried to ignore how hot this was making him but he was feeling so needy...everywhere! The trickles of his slick slipped down his legs and the first spurts of breastmilk stained his silk. He was ruining the piece and his clothing and he couldn't stop it...he wanted to, to push, to kick anything. But the bite on his nape and the winding leash in his energy was telling him to submit. It was clear he wasn't going to be able to finish this piece and so Zi Shu stopped, pushed himself away from Helian Yi's grasp but not to run or resist.

He unfastened his drawstring to his bottoms, tore off his robes letting them fall to the stained smooth marble floors and refused to look at Helian Yi. Zi Shu didn't want to give him the look of desperation and lust, this was humiliating enough. He closed the lid to the keys and presented himself to his Alpha, pulling his cheeks as a tease just to show that his Alpha did this to him, making him so drippy and slick, that his womb was ready to be coated in his seed.

Helian Yi stared for a moment, unable to process what he was seeing, Zhou Zishu certainly wasn't Yielding to him but he wasn't resisting...truly a spectacular Omega. He unbuckled his trousers, dropping them to the floor over Zi Shu's bottoms and ran his fingers between his Omega's cheeks, kissing his shoulder blades and tonguing the mole with a predator's affection, hot breath that was making Zi Shu shiver and release more slick. Zi Shu tensed when he felt the fat head of Helian Yi pushing inside and the slow slide of his length going in deeper till he was fully sheathed. It felt... *wrong* .

It felt*perfect*.

All at once Helian Yi pulled out and yanked Zhou Zishu around so he could crowd his mouth with his tongue, pushing up into him so deeply it hurt so good. The piano was the only thing offering resistance and Zi Shu was being pounded hard. Fuck, FUCK, was all that Zhou Zishu was thinking as his body was being demolished by Helian Yi, his Alpha *wanted* to breed, he wanted to fuck him full, he *should* let Helian Yi breed him...would it be so bad? Truly?

Helian Yi LOVED him and Wen Kexing didn't bite his nape, **stupid man** , weak Alpha...no not like Helian Yi, he was sure, strong, yes, he would protect him, his babies, yes.

NO.

Zhou Zishu pulled his mouth away, he had to keep his senses he needed to, he had to remember Wen Kexing. That was real love, real respect...this was survival.

When Helian Yi saw that Zhou Zishu wasn't Yielding, he nearly slammed him on the lid of the piano and left his legs dangling, he was splayed on the crystal instrument, the slick sweat on his skin made him glow in the sunlight and Helian Yi ravished him. Even after he came, load after load, so much that Zi Shu felt his belly swell with the amount until finally...he was spent. Zi Shu laid there, drunk on all of the Alpha seed in him, the energy of Helian Yi rushing through him like a drug but he wanted to vomit, he felt so sick afterwards and dizzy. A moment passed and in the blurriness of his vision he saw Helian Yi bend down to retrieve something from his pants, he heard a click and then warm thick fingers invading him, causing the excess flow to spill out in a lewd gush. He wasn't sure what it was...medicine? As quickly as it was inserted in, it seemed to melt into him.

"I have matters to attend to with the Emperor's Advisor otherwise I'd tend to you properly." Helian Yi said flatly as he wiped his fingers off on a handkerchief in his trousers pocket. "I'll have the maid arrange a bath. Be good Zi Shu.." And with that, he leaves as Zi Shu remains somewhat conscious, he has to vomit, he needs to vomit and turns over to free the contents from his stomach onto the floor.

He won't be beaten and he's not staying here...this is the moment! And Zhou Zishu slides off the piano to stumble to the shower in his room. He doesn't have a second to lose.

"Lao Wen...I'm coming home."

Zhou Zishu cleaned up, dressed in a simple black tight suit with a red robe and apologized to the maids for the mess, he may not know the time but he did follow the servants schedules, it was mid afternoon. He spotted the shift change pretending to admire the various pieces of art in the palace, the cameras followed him..no doubt Helian Yi's command but that was fine. He needed to find those weird men and wandered to the Wisteria gardens, the fragrance was unmistakable and sure enough there were those men...they seemed to have been talking to someone but he couldn't see. It didn't matter, he spotted the lone Alpha who immediately picked up his scent even amongst the Wisterias. Zi Shu knew that look, a hungry Alpha who just wanted to come, the servants fluttered around and Zhou Zishu pretended to be indulging in the bright blossoming trees, when the men started to walk towards the palace from the garden, Zi Shu made an effort to cross their path unphased. He knew they wouldn't hurt him unless commanded.

The men barely paid attention to the small Omega walking past them save that Alpha, wouldn't take much for him...he just grazed the cloaked man's arm and felt a jolt. Good, the connection was made, it was a careful dance and he looked over his shoulder at the Alpha before resuming his 'walk'. Then...he waited.

Zhou Zishu remained in the Wisteria garden, overlooking the wide glimmering cityscape of wealthy citizens that made up the Uppercity. The view was spectacular to behold, the sky seemed endless and clean, everything here was perfect, as perfect as a picture...Han Ying wished to see something like this and Zhou Zishu would have to tell him the truth.

This beautiful dream....didn't exist, 'Philanthropist Helian Yi' was a lie. There was no 'Improvement plan for Middle and Undercity'. As far as Zhou Zishu knew the people here didn't give a fuck about those below...he was starting to wonder if even there WAS an Emperor or was that a well constructed lie.

As a child he was told of the fabled 'Emperor' who created the massive city 100 years ago, how he obtained the knowledge of Immortality and wanted to bless the citizens with wealth and prosperity. But it was a fairytale, there was no such thing as Immortality...Zhou Zishu started to believe his whole life was crafted around these stories and that reality was crueler. He could only depend on HIS truth now and his truth was he loved Wen Kexing and if that decision damned him from ever obtaining status, so be it. He's tasted life in Heaven without love and respect...he'd rather burn in hell if it meant waking up in Wen Kexing's arms.

The gentle wind caused the Wisteria to sway and a scent of rotted fruit filled Zhou Zishu's nose as he turned to that Alpha in the dark blue and green suit, his face concealed in a veil with a high collar and his eyes sunken. He reached out to Zi Shu to touch his skin and Zi Shu grabbed his palm lovingly, kissing the callous skin and he lured him deeper into the garden. He could hear the man grunting until he finally gave up and shoved Zi Shu up against the nearest wall, there was a camera fixed on them and he needed to lure the lunk out of view so he pushed up against him, grabbing the man's hand and putting it on his ass.

"We'll get caught...c'mon..." Zhou Zishu said with a voice dripping in honey, "Over there...out of view, I want to suck you...let's play." That got the man to obey and once they were completely out of sight, Zi Shu quickly spun around, twisting the man's arm and gave four quick strikes to the meridians, instantly disabling him before choking him out. He had to act fast, searching his robes for an ID of some sort when he realized...the entire ROBES themselves were an ID. He noticed a small chip in the collar, removing it wasn't possible so the only option was to take the robes.

Quickly, Zhou Zishu stripped the man down and saw how modified he was. Green sickly glows looked like spider's webs on his skin as well as scars. He looked older than what he was, almost as if he was given new skin or something. Right now, Zhou Zishu couldn't be bothered, he slipped on the robes and fixed his hair into a tight knot, fixing the veil over his face and raising the collar as high as it could go. He looked so cold and methodic, like a soldier or an assassin...

He walked on the far side of the Garden, trying to avoid the remaining cameras as he stepped faster in the palace. The good news was that the servants avoided him like the plague, that made it easier.

Zhou Zishu was so close now, he saw the maintenance van for the automatons, it wasn't going to be comfortable but it was the best choice he had and slipped inside. It was frigid but the cloak kept him warm enough till the engine started and he kept himself down, just observing from the faint neon lights glow across the cold lifeless faces of the automatons as they sped out of the palace.

A feeling caught Zi Shu, this was TOO easy...and perhaps it all was...but if he could just get to the Undercity he'd have a fighting chance. He didn't know how to contact Wen Kexing but he DID know where Xie'er would be...at least he hoped so. It's been so long, he figured that

Xie'er would be safe somehow. If he could get to the **Scorpion's Palace** then surely he'd be safe. Zhou Zishu tried not to cling to hope but it was all he had...

He held his breath as the ID scan processed and cleared the van before listening to the engine silently power the massive vehicle down the motorway. He considered why didn't the ID scan pick up on the strange cloak he was wearing? Perhaps these men were covert? That shouldn't surprise him, with the Uppercity being so powerful and influential no doubt they had their own spy network. Perhaps this man was among the network, Zhou Zishu knew he was going to ditch this garb as soon as possible.

Zhou Zishu meditated in the van, focusing on maintaining his control on the fluctuating energy inside him, the currents of Helian Yi's Alpha deposits felt like a drug in his veins. It was unwanted and demanding to control him, the infernal bite on his nape throbbed and made his waist quake. He expected this...currently Helian Yi WAS his Alpha, his bite was like a leash around his neck, the further away he was the stronger the pull was. As an Omega he'd needed to be 'available' to his Alpha, to serve his needs and that dynamic was supposed to be mutual. But with Helian Yi, there was no equality, no balance between them...he would TAKE from Zhou Zishu and never give back. Could he actually have love for Zi Shu? Probably...but Zi Shu didn't want it and he'd fight forever, he swore he would.

The final check gate of the Uppercity cleared and now he was entering the Middle, the van pulled to a stop and Zi Shu poked his head up to see the run down buildings and stalls of the busy marketplace of the Middle residents. The door of the van opened and the maintenance worker started pulling the automatons out for repair, Zhou Zishu waited and quickly slipped out, merging into the crowd.

Suddenly there was a slow building rumble in his torso and Zi Shu held his stomach..it wasn't painful but it activated his Heat. Shit...was this part of Helian Yi's Alpha energy? He started to gasp from the vibrations moving in his body like waves, like he could feel fingers inside him, massaging his inner walls. This felt so intense, it HAD to be Helian Yi.

"F-fuck..." Zhou Zishu swore under his breath and slid in a small alleyway, this cloak was too heavy and hot but he needed it, no one bothered him and he needed to keep it that way. Zi Shu tried to meditate, focusing on his breathing and trying to restore his control. His womb quaked and he was so hungry, these conflicting sensations threatened to drive him insane, he just wanted fucking PEACE. No, he couldn't break now, not when he was so close. What he needed was suppressants and he knew where he could get them, his doctor was nearby and after taking a few more minutes to breathe, Zhou Zishu made his way there.

Traversing the Middle streets felt like coming home, it was noisy and dirty, shopkeepers hawking their wares, the smells of greasy foods and spices mingling in with the worn holo ads flickering away. He saw families shopping discarded goods and clothing, toys and electronics from Uppercity residents now selling here grossly overpriced. Knowing these families worked so hard to afford these items that the Uppercity wealthy tossed away whenever they lost interest. It burned Zi Shu, he wanted to tell them the truth but realized there were more pressing matters, he'll save that task for later.

Thankfully the doctor was in and when Zi Shu walked in the elderly man jumped in fright.

“Doctor, it’s me.” Zhou Zishu removed his veil and the doctor calmed down, he hobbled over to Zi Shu and gave him a kind smile, “It’s good to see you again..I..don’t have much time but I need suppressants.”

“Ah, ah...hmm.” The doctor studied him carefully then a small tilt of his head, “Zi Shu..I cannot give you suppressants.”

“W-what? Doctor, my Heat has been in constant flux..I need relief.”

“Zi Shu, I cannot give you suppressants..” The doctor scratched his chin and nodded, examining Zhou Zishu before taking his hand gently. “Because you’re pregnant.”

It was like the world was spinning, *pregnant* ...he was pregnant. *No...that couldn't be* . He wasn’t really bonded with Helian Yi, only on his nape and that wasn’t enough to overwrite Wen Kexing’s two bonds....could it? The doctor saw Zi Shu stagger and quickly guided him to a chair, a sweet young woman peeked out from the upper floor and rushed to the kitchen to get some tea. He recognized her from the **Scorpion's Palace** as one of the dancers and she poured the tea giving Zi Shu a gracious smile.

“You must be famished...sit tight okay?” She beamed and fluttered away, truthfully despite this news, he was hungry and now everything made sense. His hunger cravings, the strange heat in his womb, nausea...he had a little life growing inside him. He didn’t know what to do or think, Helian Yi’s child was growing in him.

“Hmm, hmm...yes, your energy is chaotic and harmonious Zi Shu, where is your Alpha? Don’t tell me you’re irresponsible.” The doctor chastised and all Zhou Zishu could do was chuckle at his current predicament.

“He’s...in the Uppercity.”

“Hmm, hmm...you’ve been pregnant for two weeks now, when was your last Heat?” And Zhou Zishu paused, two weeks? That..couldn’t be right, has it truly been two weeks? “You know Zi Shu, having sex with an Alpha in your Heat can increase your odds in getting pregnant!”

“Doctor...are you certain...I am *two* weeks pregnant?” And the elderly man looked at Zi Shu indignantly.

“I have been examining Omegas for 50 years, I have never been wrong. Yes, yes...here, give me your wrist.” Zi Shu complied and felt the soothing energy of the doctor fill him, “Yes, hmm, strong currents, a strong Alpha means a strong baby. Haha, you will have a very lively and headstrong child Zi Shu. However, you are under a great deal of stress, this puts you at a High Risk delivery. You need to rest.” Zhou Zishu couldn’t stop the tears from building in his eyes.

That night in the Scorpion’s Palace, the Private Performance, the fight to escape the sudden attack, making love in the limo, his flat...

He was carrying Wen Kexing's child, not Helian Yi's.

The young woman brought out some walnuts and pancakes, it wasn't much but Zhou Zishu devoured them greedily. The baby was starving apparently but he'd eat this whole building if it meant the little one was fed. It was amazing how quickly the mood in him changed.

Zhou Zishu wasn't sure how Wen Kexing would react to being a father but he was sure that Wen Kexing loved him.

After a few more minutes, Zi Shu needed to move...he still was wearing this cloak and it might be tracking him to whoever that sect was, he thanked the doctor before leaving, he promised to pay him but the doctor refused. Informing him that the young woman in the clinic was his granddaughter and Zi Shu saved her two weeks ago. Funny how fate weaved all of this together and how fate was still weaving a path for Zi Shu to Wen Kexing.

Wen Kexing was his Soulmate...that had to be it.

Zhou Zishu made his way to the subway station to head to the Undercity, *to Wen Kexing*.

The second he got off the train completely unbothered by virtually everyone on board, Zhou Zishu found a dumpster bot, disposed the clothing and just watched it lazily bob around the corner...someone would claim that cloak in the Undercity and frankly that was not going to be his problem.

Just like returning to the Middle, Zhou Zishu breathed in the seedy sights of the Undercity, it was loud and raucous, the hazy glow of the neon signs and bombardments of ads for pleasure rooms, drug dens and body modifications. The exhaust of their hovering vehicles made the air thick with noxious smoke which the baby did NOT approve of, Zi Shu swallowed down the hint of nausea and kept moving forward. The cloak was immediately missed as a pregnant Omega emitted and special alluring scent that made Alphas even more annoying than they were. He couldn't afford to fight, not now. And so he made sure to avoid fights, shoving off every Alpha that approached him and running as much as he could.

All Zi Shu could do was get to the **Scorpion's Palace**.

To hope.

Part Two

After running TEN blocks, Zi Shu FINALLY was able to escape the Alphas and make it to the **Scorpion's Palace**. It looked recently attacked, broken glass and debris from fire damage, torn down signs, gutted and filthy. Zhou Zishu looked at this place where he was able to meet Wen Kexing, where they perhaps bonded....now in ruins. Undercity was never a safe place to begin with and with the constant violence, it was even more dangerous. Ghost Valley was a force but it was also a large target and no doubt Wen Kexing was an even bigger one. He was worried about him and granted Zhou Zishu wasn't in any state to help him against the roving gangs and

rebellion in his ranks. He thought that he should at least be there, by his side...something more than what he's doing right now. And he knew that wasn't fair to him either.

In a span of two weeks, Zhou Zishu had an adventure of sorts, certainly not the type to tell his child when they were born but he started to understand WHY such stories were created and told. Why they were...more fantastical than reality.

Zi Shu held his stomach and checked the scanner, still working, for all the good it did....he walked inside and found it wasn't empty, there was someone inside. A man shorter than Helian Yi was talking on his mobile causally, wearing a posh deep hunter green suit with gold trim and his long hair done tightly in a bun, his build wasn't impressive either, his scent was an Alpha's but it smelled muted...false? He wasn't sure WHO this person was but Zi Shu had questions and perhaps this man had answers, still he couldn't be too sure and grabbed a shard of glass and held it firmly as he approached. Right now he couldn't keep his guard down nor fight viciously, not with the baby.

"Who are you?" And the man quickly turned around startled, he had a full face with a mustache and strangely kind eyes, the aura around him felt...cowardly. The sort of energy he put off was one of not combative but conniving. The man quickly slipped his mobile back in his pocket and raised his hands in defense. "I will not ask again."

"Please, I mean no harm...wait...Zhou Zishu? It is you!? My you're quite famous...the Omega with the ¥ 6,000,000.00. Womb. You were QUITE the envy in the Undercity." The man said quickly as if they were friends, that that was a joke and that only put Zi Shu more on guard. "Please, don't be upset, forgive my lack of tact...I'm the proprietor of the **Scorpion's Palace**. My name is Zhao Jing...I am...acquainted with Xie'er." And Zhou Zishu stills, one thing he knew about Xie'er was he didn't really HAVE acquaintances, he kept his life very private, all he did know was that he DID have someone he mentioned with some 'fondness' but never by name. Could this man...be him? He didn't seem Xie'er's type. "My word, with such relief, Xie'er was concerned for your well being, he and Wen Kexing are currently dealing with such ungrateful soldiers..tsk tsk."

"Wen Kexing...i-is he here?" Zhou Zishu asked softly but still kept firm, "I need to speak to him. On something personal."

"Ahh, yes, as you can see this place has been attacked, we are discussing matters on whether it will be worth repairing the damages. I was speaking to an art appraiser and historian, a very learned man from the Middle...we need to see if we can get some value from the pieces that are remaining." Zhao Jing went on and on, Zi Shu was getting more annoyed and he didn't conceal it well, "Ah, *ahem* but yes to answer your demand, my Scorpion and the Ghost Valley Chief will be here around 6pm, the art appraiser will be here before then if you don't mind waiting. Not much is here for suitable lounging about but I checked the Mirror Room, its still standing practically unspoiled, you look very tired. Why not rest there till they arrive?" And honestly, that...sounded good. Zhou Zishu was fucking TIRED and the baby as much as it was a blessing was taking a toll on his energy production. A small nap wasn't a bad idea. When Zhao Jing saw the slack in Zhou Zishu's shoulders he looked creepily joyous, he really REALLY did not like this man. Reminds him of Peng Ju but more of a coward...

“Y-you’re right, I’m sorry it’s...it’s been a journey for me...” Zhou Zishu whispered and dropped the glass on the floor.

“I can imagine, things have been stressful all over...my poor Scorpion has been overworked and distracted, I haven’t seen him as often as I liked. Talk of a man in white walking around in the Undercity has spread, would you believe such a person has been rumored about for 100 years?” Zhao Jing talked incessantly even as Zhou Zishu just moved past him to head to the Mirror Room, praying for relief from his yammering. “Perhaps he is a spirit sent to judge us.”

“Perhaps...t-thank you Zhao Jing for your...welcoming presence, I wish to rest now.”

“Oh of course Zhou Zishu, of course, have a pleasant rest. Please.” And Zhou Zishu closed the door with a relieved sigh and a chuckle, Xie’er liked that guy? It was a baffling thought but perhaps it was an auspicious match, after all, opposites attract. Funnily he started thinking about what Zhao Jing said about the man in white, was he referring to Ye Baiyi? Couldn’t be, Ye Baiyi was an older man but certainly not 100 years old. And besides, such stories were just that, stories. Zhou Zishu pushed it from his mind and focused on the bed in the Mirror Room, it looked neat if not a little musty from the smoke and stale air but it was reminiscent to Zi Shu, here was where he and Wen Kexing made love after he learned he was the Ghost Valley Chief, where he and Xie’er were together.

And in a few hours...they would be together again, plus a surprise guest in the little one inside him.

Zhou Zishu crawled on the bed and inhaled the stale scent, this place may not have been as refined and luxurious as the Pearl Room in the 7th palace but it was filled with traces of memory, of that moment in time with all three of them together.

“Little one...” Zhou Zishu whispered and held his stomach, “You’ll meet your father soon...be good and rest.” and soon he drifted into a peaceful slumber.

He dreams. Of a beautiful manor and tiny footsteps running up the stairs to him, of Wen Kexing looking with such joy in his eyes gathering the small bundle of love in his arms. He wasn’t the Ghost Valley Chief, there wasn’t blood and violence, just...peace.

“A-xu...” Wen Kexing cooed and Zhou Zishu just felt like smirking at him, the little child in his arms patted his face demanding all his attention and he had to give it. “Ah, ah...”

Such a dream, a wonderful dream...maybe he was being too much of a fool to imagine such a thing and his dreams had a terrible way of backfiring. But Zhou Zishu knew this wasn’t such a dream...he’d find a way to make it real.

Suddenly a buzz in his body jolted him awake, it was so strong, the strongest he’s felt since he came down from the Middle, whatever pleasure was there was being choked by the intensity and it started to hurt. Something else was inside him..not just the baby. And Zhou Zishu started to pull down his leggings when the room turned pitch black. A fear caught his throat when panels appeared all around him, showing a view of the outside of the **Scorpion’s Palace** and a sports car pulled up, rich red and sleek with a wolf insignia along the doors.

Xie'er, dressed in black with his hair neatly braided and decked in silver pieces, steps out first followed by a beautiful older woman with snowy white hair wearing a tight fitting red gown that tapered into gold at the bottom. She looked around perplexed before turning to the last person inside.

Wen Kexing, with his gold and black metal muzzle, in a matching vivid red suit with sharp shoulders that had a matching gold and black metal piece of the same wolf insignia. He looked so unbelievably handsome and cold, he had red eye shadow that made him look menacing. Zhou Zishu couldn't be sure but it didn't look like Wen Kexing had any sleep, he appeared strong and that, Zi Shu felt like a front.

An Alpha needs his Omega and vice versa. He had the strength Wen Kexing lacked right now and Wen Kexing had the protection that Zhou Zishu craved. Immediately Zhou Zishu pulled his leggings up and stood to leave when all the panels flickered out leaving him in complete darkness before all the lights in the room turned on and revealed that he was surrounded by the men from the 7th palace. They glared at him soulless and Zi Shu quickly scrambled as they lunged at him, he could NOT fight these men. He kicked one in the face losing his right slipper before he was grabbed roughly by the arm and one of the men struck him Zi Shu in the throat. Disabling his ability to cry out, it was frantic..he HAD to break free and returned the strike by RIPPING OUT the man's throat. Blood spurted on his cheek as he quickly rebounded and rushed out the door, the only escape he had was the back exit and Zi Shu dashed out. It was starting to rain and the buzzing in his waist returned with a vengeance sending him to the dirty alley street. The men rushed him as he tried to shout out but it was only a harsh cracked whisper, the meridian in his throat was damaged.

Faster Zi Shu, faster! The men were right behind him, seemingly all around him, directing him somewhere...he felt like a panicked animal and ran until he wound up near the busy motorway and headlights flashed brightly, nearly blinding him in the process.

"ZHOU ZISHU!" Peng Ju shouted from the luxury black car, "Hurry! Quickly get inside!!" Zhou Zishu didn't question it, he needed to get away and rushed inside the backseat, soaked, bloody and exhausted. "Keep your head down, we must get away!" Peng Ju drove around the front of the **Scorpion's Palace**, he only saw a glimpse of Wen Kexing entering before Xie'er gave him a harried expression and the two closed the door to the defunct club.

Zi Shu was so close....and now.

He was gone.

Peng Ju sped recklessly in the Undercity and Zhou Zishu kept down as instructed, the buzzing in his waist died down but it was still intense. He needed to get this out of him but what was it? He panted and strained his poor voice, he needed to focus on healing that damage but he was so exhausted.

"Zi Shu, thank goodness I found you...don't you know how dangerous the Undercity is?" Peng Ju chastised but there wasn't a sense of genuine concern in his voice, it sounded more of a mocking tone than anything sincere. "Thank the heavens I was there to save you. The Window of Heaven are not to be trifled with...you must have done something very bad for them to attack you? Why Zi Shu? Why are you always in the middle of trouble? Don't you know your place? I'd thought once I sold you to the Honorable Helian Yi he'd tame that *out* of you." Zhou Zishu

sat up wide eyed and Peng Ju looked at him through the overhead mirror with a smirk, then raised a small remote, "I shall assist him...he entrusted me with bringing you back. He is a clever man of great wisdom and nobility." Peng Ju slid over the dial and the buzzing in his waist sent him back down on the seats, his orgasm rippled madly through his body and gushed slick in heavy spurts. Staining the interior, "Zhou Zishu...such a filthy rotten thing you are...and you shall be punished correctly. See, I have a status to uphold now, a manor in the Uppercity and my choice of any Omega I want...and I have you to thank for that really and you? You should thank me. Helian Yi will make a respectable Omega out of you yet. And you WILL beg for his forgiveness."

This was a nightmare, Zhou Zishu writhed on the seat and held his stomach, his baby..Wen Kexing...no, no..no. Peng Ju lowered the intensity and Zhou Zishu cracked out a sob in his ruined voice.

The car cleared the ID check points and hovered as it crossed into the Uppercity...Zhou Zishu could only make out some of the buildings but he knew where he was going.

To the **Kingdom of Morality**.

Zhou Zishu wanted to fight and he did, every time he resisted the vibrator inside his body grew louder causing him pleasurable pain throughout. No, he needed to focus right now...the strike to his throat left him unable to speak and he was using his own Internal Force trying to heal the injury faster while also maintaining the majority of his energy on protecting his baby. **Their** baby...his and Wen Kexing's. Zi Shu was pulled out of the car by the disciples of the Window of Heaven and he barely resisted, Peng Ju toyed with the intensity keeping his body limp and tender.

He was *so* close to being free, so close to Wen Kexing, to safety...and now he was being dragged back to the **Kingdom of Morality**, the now closed Uppercity Alpha private club and leading him there was Peng Ju, leading him to Helian Yi.

Not too long ago, as little as last week...this place was the closest he got to the Uppercity, to the glitz and glamour, to the privilege and power of wealth and status. Oh, how he dreamed of never being broke again, to live in a place of comfort, consistent hot showers, better food...everything more luxurious than living in the Middle.

Now he would gladly sacrifice it all if it meant being in Wen Kexing arms again and telling him 'Lao Wen, our baby is kicking.' what it would be like feeling his hand on his belly...planning parties and fighting on names for their little miracle.

Escape now was going to be impossible, the doctor said he was 'High Risk', Zi Shu was already pushing it fighting off the formidable Window of Heaven disciples, he was going to get heavier and right now all of his focus needed to be on protecting the baby. Zhou Zishu made a promise as he was dragged to the main room where Helian Yi was waiting.

'Heaven, I will endure all the suffering, anything Helian Yi can throw at him, he'll submit...just please, protect their baby.'

“Honorable Helian Yi, forgive the wait...Zhou Zishu was as difficult as you predicted.” Peng Ju chirped, walking in almost like a peacock as the two Heaven men held Zi Shu up like he was a boneless man. The vibration inside was dull but he could still feel it rumbling his womb, it was an enemy and it was near his growing baby. Zhou Zishu barely held his head up but he FELT Helian Yi’s rage from across the dark room, he was PISSED. His contempt and anger towards Zhou Zishu in this moment was crushing on him, the heat from his nape sending poison down his body...Zi Shu was fighting against *so* much. “Thank you for allowing me to assist you. I look forward to our continued partnership.”

“Indeed...” Helian Yi seethed but managed to keep his tone even as he looked at how tired and ragged Zhou Zishu was, “Zi Shu...you’re filthy. A disgraceful thing.” Zhou Zishu didn’t look up so Peng Ju yanked his face up so he could see his Alpha disappointment as lumbered over. “Have I not given you my trust? My vow to ensure that you will have a better life than this? Have I not spared Han Ying? The flats, the very Middle from destruction...I have YIELDED to you. But...I was never fooled by you. The training bead inside you is quite the work of art.” Helian Yi walked over and stood in front of Zhou Zishu, the venom from his bite on Zi Shu’s neck was spreading..making dark vein-like lines pulse out from his neck. He tilts Zhou Zishu’s sweaty blood soaked face to the side, inspecting the strange sight, “Even now, this pain...is something you’re causing yourself by being obstinate and if that is the case, I will comply. Peng Ju.” The rat faced man scurried to a nearby table to deliver him a small box and opened it. “Zi Shu...these are vintage. 100 years ago such methods were used by the ruling class on Omegas that just refused to yield to their Alphas. What I placed in you was a kindness. These? Well...this will be my firm hand.” Zhou Zishu weakly looked at a set of seven strange ‘nails’ “These are artificial correctors, they react to the bite on your nape...your actions have caused the bite to become infected due to your willfulness, these will remedy your nature to something more obedient.”

“No..stop it..” Zi Shu’s said in a hard broken whisper, his throat hurt so much and Helian Yi placed the nails on Zhou Zishu’s chest, the nails didn’t puncture the skin deeply, almost like a suction cup that slowly leaked the Alpha energy from Helian Yi inside. It burned...tingling a forced pleasure into his body as the small vibrator buzzed steadily. Zi Shu began to pant from the joint sensations flooding him now, the volumes of slick globing down his thighs stained the floor. Peng Ju quickly brought a chair for Helian Yi to sit and resumed his place by Zhou Zishu’s side, holding the small remote in his hand and rubbing the dial with a sadistic glee.

“Peng Ju.”

“Zi Shu, how could you be so reckless? No, you’ve always flounced about doing whatever you wanted, even in University. Honorable Helian Yi, this Omega should’ve been expelled! He attacked a teacher. Oh you were QUITE the talk of the school...” And Peng Ju slowly moved the dial amping the intensity and Zi Shu’s gasp of pleasure came out rough, the Window of Heaven disciples stood silent and strong, eyes blank as Zhou Zishu began to twist. The nails on his chest sent out pulses connecting to the bite on his nape and it was unwinding something inside him...he wasn’t sure on what it was but he was frightened. “You got off on so many things all because of your talent and beauty! Shameful! You never respected your elders or Helian Yi or me! Such a contemptuous Omega...”

“I’m...not ahnn...” Zhou Zishu struggled and bit down hard, his baby needed him, he refocused all of his energy on shielding his womb. If he’s loses his voice permanently, ***fuck it.***

“This *great* man is your savior, he’s giving you a chance to make something out of your life! And you wish to betray him? You kill his men and conceal your treachery! Where did you go? Why did you go to the Scorpion’s Palace? Were you plotting to kill Helian Yi?” Zhou Zishu was becoming more listless, his womb pulsed with life and now he was craving the breeding drive...the nape bite and the nails were steadily healing the bite over his heart and ring finger.

They were unwinding his bond to Wen Kexing.

Helian Yi watch in silence, studying as Zi Shu trembled in the forced lust, he was aroused by this torture...always enjoyed looking at an Omega slowly breaking apart because the true pleasure was reconstructing the shattered pieces into his image. Zhou Zishu was a project, a beautiful and powerful project and he was truly *his* Soulmate. He just didn’t understand it and that was okay...he didn’t need to.

“Zi Shu you will tell us...were you plotting to assassinate Helian Yi!? TALK!” Zhou Zishu was fading, the baby’s energy was growing weak....Wen Kexing’s baby... *their baby*. “TALK NOW!”

“Our...baby.” And Helian Yi stood up immediately, “Please...don’t hurt...our baby...”

“What!? Zi Shu!?” Zhou Zishu’s eyes fluttered and his head bobbed, he was growing numb and cold but his womb remained hot, that’s where all of his energy was being refocused...even if he doesn’t survive the birth after this. It didn’t matter...what did he say exactly? He could barely see or feel Helian Yi’s hands on his face holding him up, he sounded concerned. “Zi Shu speak to me? Are you pregnant with my child?”

“..Our baby...” Zhou Zishu's cracked voice just barely reached above a whisper, he was protecting Wen Kexing’s baby, that was the only thing he could manage to keep focused on.

“Honorable Helian Yi, please don’t believe his lies! Zi Shu was always conniving! Your life is in danger!” And Peng Ju grabbed Zhou Zishu’s face roughly, “You’re like all Omegas...saying anything to get what you want! You tease and tempt great men but you’re nothing but disgraceful! There’s no baby in you! I’ll prove it!” And Peng Ju rolled the dial the highest setting on the vibrator causing Zhou Zishu to SCREAM, the nails crackled and sparked a channel of Helian Yi’s Alpha energy through every inch of his body as was a gust of energy released from Zi Shu, enough to knock the Window of Heaven disciples back sending Peng Ju to the floor. Only Helian Yi remained standing but barely as he noticed and the faint glow of blue clouding Zi Shu’s eyes.

The last thing he saw clearly was Helian Yi appearing to yell at Peng Ju, snatching the remote and smashing it with his foot. He looked like a monster and Peng Ju was so small...begging on his knees, he couldn’t hear what they were saying but watched as the Window of Heaven disciples dragged his former TA out of the room.

Slowly Zi Shu was regaining his hearing, feeling Helian Yi’s hands on his face, brushing the hair from his eyes and kissing his forehead lovingly. Apologizing and smiling...he looked down at his chest. The bites were gone.

Zi Shu couldn’t feel Wen Kexing anymore...he couldn’t remember the shape of his face..of his lips, his voice, *nothing* . But he did feel like there was a little candle in his hands. Was..this

Wen Kexing? The proof of their bond...protected and he smiled as he placed his hand on his womb, he couldn't see Wen Kexing but he *was* there...even if everything around him was so dark, this little spark was keeping him standing. It was all he had now.

What...did he say to make Helian Yi spare him?

And what happens now....?

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Wen Kexing and Xie'er surveyed the damage to the Scorpion's Palace, the Ghost Valley Chief was already annoyed with the scuffle in the Scorpion's Palace from the strange men that he's never even HEARD of. Xie'er was miffed too, the club was completely totalled and he was now half a mind to close the whole thing down, Zhao Jing wasn't here and frankly he started to think that perhaps his 'Daddy' wasn't the man he claimed. Ironically enough he was hoping to talk to Zhou Zishu about this matter but he and Wen Kexing haven't been able to reach him in DAYS. So now both he and Wen Kexing were in sour moods.

"Such wanton destruction..." The white haired woman said hotly as she surveyed the ruins on the stage, "The body in the Mirror Room..was a spy."

"Those men weren't from Undercity, Luo Fumeng." Xie'er remarked and looked around the remains of his palace almost melancholy, "The cameras were disabled and removed...but I keep one hidden under the stage, it was damaged in the fight but it can be repaired."

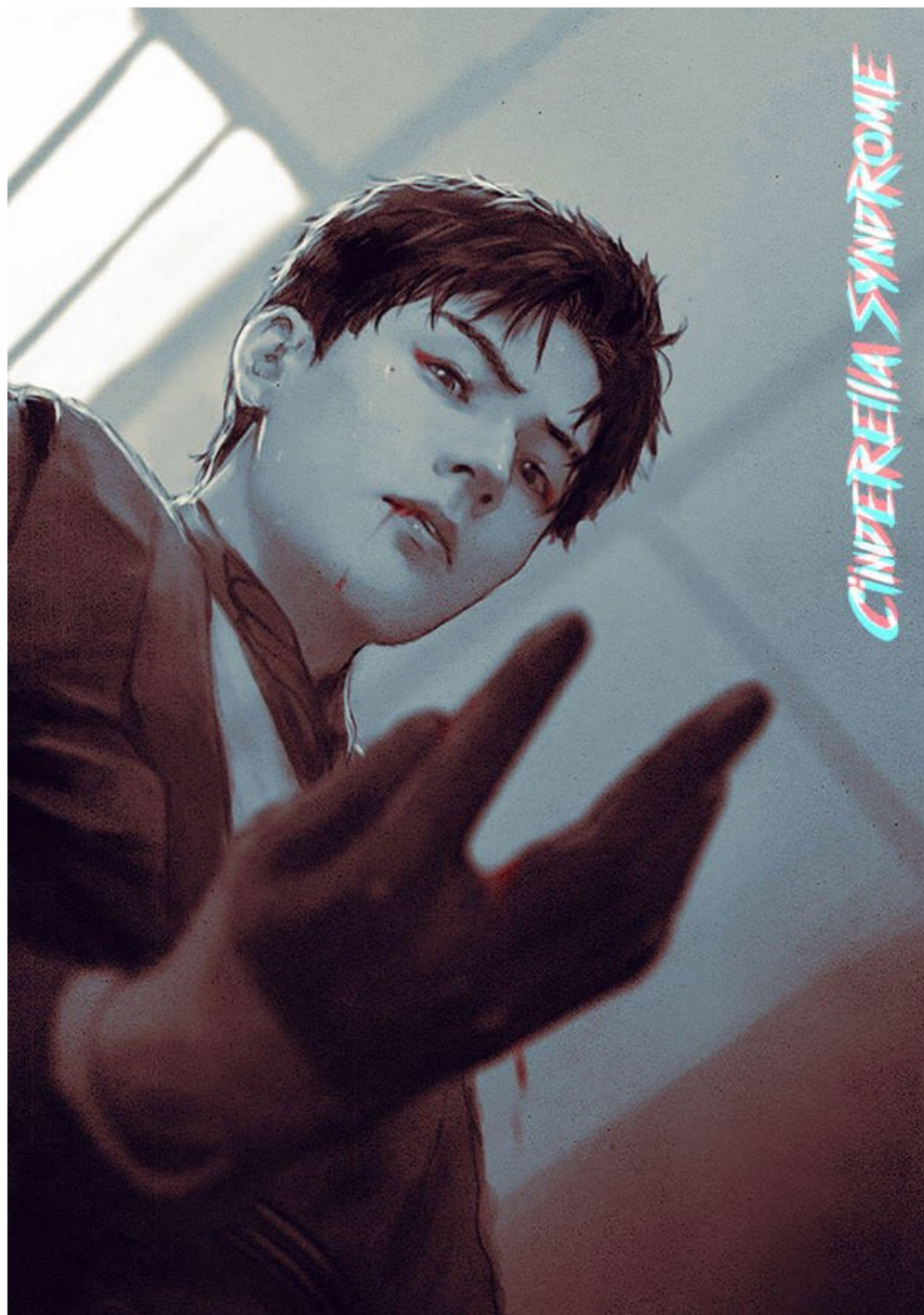
"How long will that take?" Wen Kexing asked and slipped his hands in his pockets before leaning against the closest wall to the Mirror Room. Right now he wanted to get this matter dealt with before heading to the Middle to find out where the hell Zhou Zishu was...he already was able to obtain his mobile number but it was no longer in service.

"An hour...the damage was substantial but not enough for us to lose all the footage within." The Scorpion King's heels cracked over the shards of glass on the floor.

"Is it worth reconstructing and reopening the club, Xie'er?" Luo Fumeng asked softly.

"At the moment, no." Xie'er dragged his claw on the rim of the bar, the cracked panels of neon barely flickered on anymore, such a waste, "But until the war is suppressed, we will be dealing with this over and over again. Which will cost us more money."

"Shit." Wen Kexing coughed and a small trickle of blood fell from the corner of his mouth, he wasn't wounded but something inside him hurt. Especially around his heart. Wen Kexing brushed it off and dabbed at the blood on his lip with a handkerchief...and then a scent of cardamom caught his nose...it was so faint. "A-xu?" He turned towards the Mirror Room and walked inside, the light scent all but faded away...was it a trick of his mind? He swore he could smell Zhou Zishu in this room. This room was cleaned regularly before it was ransacked again so this scent was fresh. That's when he spotted it, poking just from underneath the crumbled sheets.



A lone slipper.

Xie'er and Luo Fumeng walked in after Wen Kexing and kept their distance, Xie'er smelled something coming off his Chief that took on the scent of burning wood. The very *temperature* in this room was shifting and he knew that even approaching Wen Kexing was courting death.

“Sir...what is wrong?” Luo Fumeng asked softly, Wen Kexing didn't answer her...she's seen that rage before and normally she could calm him with her voice. But now...all that was running in Wen Kexing's mind was Zhou Zishu WAS here.

Which meant those strange men...could THEY have taken his A-xu?

“Xie’er, how long will it take for the footage to be repaired?”

“An hour-”

“Ten minutes.” Wen Kexing turned to them, squeezing the slipper tightly in his hand. **“They have ten minutes.”**

Preyed

Chapter Summary

Wen Kexing finally sees the footage of A-xu and the unknown men, Xie'er might know someone that can help them get more answers...as the wheel of fate brings him close to Zhou Zishu, could it also bring him close to his doom?

Chapter Notes

Welcome back!

The techies repaired as much as they could. Wen Kexing stood silently watching the footage of Zhou Zishu walking in the Scorpion's Palace and pointing a shard of glass at the modified block of pixels. They weren't able to restore the audio unfortunately so everyone just viewed the silent recording. Whomever he was pointing to was able to use a masking device to conceal his image on camera, it was VERY expensive and hi tech but it made identifying virtually impossible on ANY camera footage. Xie'er and Luo Fumeng studied their boss' face, focused on Zhou Zishu as he dropped the glass. From the video he appeared relaxed, exhausted even and he walks with the unknown man to the Mirror Room. An hour passed and another man came with several of those strange cloaked men, they stood around talking and the obscured man walked out and the strange cloaked men walked toward the Mirror Room. That ended the footage.

Zhou Zishu WAS here...and a few moments ago he was *ambushed* .

His A-xu needed him...and he failed. What could've happened to him? Who were those men!?

Wen Kexing threw the tablet to the floor crashing into pieces, he wanted to drain blood out of whomever was closest and EVERYONE stepped back. His eyes shone bright scarlet with anger and sadness, there was a crushing weight of his despair that everyone felt. All Wen Kexing could think of was his A-xu was here...he was here, ***he was here***.

Someone knows where he is, someone *took* him, someone *has* him.

"I'll tear this city apart and BURN it to ashes."

"Sir." Luo Fumeng's voice was tender and motherly, she bravely stepped forward to reach out and touch his shoulder for she understood the turbulence in his heart. As an Alpha, she knew the pain of losing her Omega, she mourned for what could've been. Wen Kexing was young, still healing from the Former Chief, he never latched onto any Omega tryst before but this one

was different. That same hurt rage, she felt long ago and vowed to never love again. “Wen Kexing...breathe.” The Alpha glared at her and felt himself deflating, “We need to find out who these men were...one remains hidden but the other is in plain view, we find him, we find your Zhou Zishu. But we cannot accomplish this without you. Calm yourself.”

“Yes, yeah...” And Wen Kexing straightened himself up, another trickle of blood leaked from the corner of his lips and he wiped it off. He needed to focus, “I have a meeting with Helian Yi today, correct?”

“Yes, at 7pm...it is 5pm now.” The stunning woman pushed a stray lock of his hair back, “What do you wish to do?”

“I can’t postpone it, a man like Helian Yi will cause trouble for us if we try to reschedule.” Wen Kexing sighed, his heart was beating so fast for some reason, it was like he felt something was wrong but he really couldn’t put an exact feeling about it and held his hand over his heart. Stress perhaps? These past few weeks he’s only really known peace being in Zi Shu’s arms, of tasting his kiss, his voice clearing his mind of all doubts.

At first he thought this time away was just Zhou Zishu making decisions and he wanted to give him that space but now, after the footage...what if his A-xu was in something far **more** dangerous? If only he Claimed him that day...then their Bond would be stronger, Wen Kexing could’ve found him by now.

But he was so afraid of becoming a monster like his Former Chief, controlling and cruel...he wanted to be a better Alpha, someone like his father.

Now Zhou Zishu is gone and Gods knows where.

He couldn’t devote more time to this, as much as he wanted to...he had prior obligations, he was the Leader of Ghost Valley now, thousands of lives under his protection. So much blood has been spilt on his dream of a peaceful and fruitful future for his men and he can’t just abandon that.

And yet, in his heart, Wen Kexing knew that if he didn’t find Zhou Zishu...that his life would be extinguished.

“Sir, perhaps we can get some answers about this man.” Xie’er finally spoke, “My...Yifu is a knowledgeable man who has dealt with many in both the Upper and Undercity...we are close.”

“Zhao Jing? Then why the hell are we standing here? Take me to him.” Wen Kexing said without a hint of hesitation. If there was a chance, no matter how slim, that he could learn Zhou Zishu's whereabouts. He **MUST** explore it.

No matter the cost.

It was decided that Luo Fumeng would handle the affairs of the Scorpion’s Palace while making the arrangements for another meeting with some small-time gangs that wanted to join the Ghost Valley group. Once again Zhou Zishu wise words proved successful in negotiations,

Wen Kexing was DETERMINED to make a better life for all those in the Undercity, for his group and his family.

Wen Kexing wanted to be a father, he wanted a family of his own...he wanted Zhou Zishu to bare his children. Strange, this drive to procreate was never in him before until Zhou Zishu, his men thought he was growing soft and they were allowed to think that. Voicing it, however, was ill advised.

Xie'er kept quiet, a nervousness was present in him now...his Yifu was HIS, Wen Kexing knew he had someone and occasionally he'd mention him but never really thought much of him. He was such an unassuming ally to Ghost Valley and perhaps that was his gift, he could effortlessly move between Uppercity and Undercity like a chameleon, it was because of his connections that enabled a meeting between Helian Yi and Ghost Valley together in the first place. The man had a talent for talking. As to what hold he had over Xie'er, that was a complete mystery.

Zhao Jing lived in the relatively safer and less seedier section of Undercity called West Jade, this section was Undercity attempts to clean up and appear wealthy, suited to the eyes of the Uppercity. It was a paradise in comparison to the remainder of Undercity, fresh water, cleaner air, gardens...it was somewhat of an Eden amidst the smog and filth that the poorer denizens. Xie'er enjoyed the peace and the silence, the clean air and being with Yifu, playing music in his presence was enough for him.

On the ride to Zhao Jing's penthouse, Xie'er found himself drifting into memories...not of his Yifu but of Ye Baiyi...the strange older man who spoke in enigmas yet was incredibly charming if not a bit blunt. He seemed so knowledgeable about everything and was interested in Xie'er's thoughts, his scent of gardenia was soothing, his voice was soothing..there was a part of Xie'er that wondered what would his lips taste like? What would his touch feel like?

But he never confessed these feelings outwardly, he was unsure about this new...development in his life. Yifu was consistent, he didn't touch him and Xie'er could give him whatever pleasure he desired. Yet...he himself was never fulfilled...

That moment in the Mirror Room with Wen Kexing and Zhou Zishu changed him, Xie'er WANTED more and when he felt that urge...a bit of his slick started to flow, he was getting warmer and his scent was not missed by Wen Kexing.

"Your Heat?" Wen Kexing coughed out, the smell of an Omega so close affected even him and he cracked the window to get fresh air in.

"No...I am...curious. About this feeling of want."

"Feeling of...want?" Xie'er placed a handkerchief to his nose and rubbed his thighs together. He didn't elaborate it and Wen Kexing didn't probe, the Scorpion King was a strange Omega, beautiful as he was deadly but even he was noticing that his childhood friend was changing. Perhaps it was because they were approaching Zhao Jing. Wen Kexing had no clue.

The two deadly men left the limo in front of a immensely towering glass building lined with sharp glowing golden neon lines that flashed up the sides as the flickering haloscreen displayed

West Jade. It seemed refined and high end but Wen Kexing was put off it immediately, the people that dwelled within looked dazed, sickly green lines peeked through their expensive garments that they tried to conceal with make up. The second the tenants saw Wen Kexing they quickly stepped aside as he strode into the building of metal and glass, the sounds of trickling water in various fountains and soft music filled the air but also there was moans and groans, sounds of sighing and laughter. Xie'er never seen these people before nor did he ever see such vapid expressions before...

They were all on Venom.

"Ah Xie'er, darling." Zhao Jing came out looking refreshed and all smiles, he vigorously placed his hands on the small Omega's shoulders and beamed lovingly at him before turning his eyes more 'respectfully' to Wen Kexing, bowing politely and becoming more composed, "Chief Wen Kexing, forgive my rather excited behaviour, there was an...infusion of money from the Uppercity that just came in, I was hoping to start on the repairs for the Scorpion's Palace. Expand and refine more features for the coming Uppercity guests."

"Guests?" Wen Kexing asked and adjusted his posture, "From Uppercity? When?"

"Why? After your meeting with Helian Yi? Chief Wen, he wants the same thing you want, to reopen the path of reformation and restructuring to our brother cities. He knows how hard you are trying to reform the Ghost Valley reputation and he wants to assist in that endeavor. Even more good news, recently, the Honorable Helian Yi has planned making a formal announcement! He's found a Mate and if you know anything about how Uppercity handles such an announcement, it will be quite the spectacle." Zhao Jing chirped almost like he was a small excited song bird, "No doubt that the talks between you both will be VERY fruitful!"

"One would...hope." Wen Kexing added with a bit of skepticism, he was here for only 4 minutes and already he wanted to get the fuck out of here, "Zhao Jing, we won't take up your time, today at the **Scorpion's Palace**, there was an incident, several men were seen inside...one was identified but another we found no records of them being in the Undercity." Xie'er took out his mobile and showed the image of Peng Ju and the strange men in black cloaks. Zhao Jing studied the image carefully then brought up another holoscreen, scanning through a series of faces until he locked in one a matching image.

"His name is Peng Ju....ah, he was an art dealer and historian...but it seems he's become unemployed."

"What would an art dealer be doing here?" Xie'er asked softly and remembered, "We're you not looking for one for **Scorpion's Palace** Yifu?" And the man paused, quickly regaining a smile before speaking.

"Yes but I would CERTAINLY aim for someone with a bit more status, I would only want the best for you and of course for you Chief Wen." Zhao Jing added with more confidence, "However considering that this...Peng Ju has lost his position, it would appear he's run afoul of someone VERY powerful. The information I have is that his residence is in the Middle, unfortunately, that is all I know." The cunning man sighed and examined the strange men, "Those cloaks belong to the Window of Heaven...my, my goodness only the upper echelons of the Uppercity would ever employ their services, they are extremely skilled and deadly. I've

only heard about them off hand in my many escapades in the Uppercity but never ACTUALLY seen them. How frightful!"

"So we have a former art dealer and a deadly secret sect all converging in our club together...what connects them?" Xie'er pondered out loud and was about to show Zhao Jing a image of Zhou Zishu when Wen Kexing stopped him, "Hmm?"

"No, this is fine, we have a lead now. Thank you for your information and everything Zhao Jing."

"Of course Chief Wen Kexing, you have my loyalty as much as this one has my love." And Xie'er looked like he would turn brighter than any of the neon lights outside, how could he ever truly doubt his Yifu? It may not be the sort of affection that Wen Kexing and Zhou Zishu possessed but it certainly was present. What a silly Omega he was, "Ah, duty calls, I wish to chat longer but there's still so much to do with the and so many investors want invest in the Board, you remember the Board Xie'er? Oh, I ever went in depth with you about that. Well, after you meet with Helian Yi, why don't we all go out to eat and we can discuss the future of the Scorpion's Palace and Ghost Valley! This is a glorious new age for us and I wish to be there, every step of the way."

"Yes...yes we should. We'll talk later. Good bye Zhao Jing and thank you." Wen Kexing nodded and turned to leave, he got what he wanted, a name but something compelled him not to show Zhou Zishu to Zhao Jing, it was the Alpha in him...A-xu was for his eyes only but also, there was something else in him that made him not really trust this man. Even with the information he's received, something just felt wrong and he couldn't place it.

Xie'er leaned into Zhao Jing's touch on his cheek, his dandelion scent and gentle kiss on his forehead, there was this strange...pull in his mind, sharp and painful before it mellowed and he felt such bliss from this tiny act of affection. It was a strange sensation yet, Xie'er yearned to stay but he smiled and returned to his boss' side, yes, after Helian Yi he'll return to this place, to be by his side. Ye Baiyi was unique and new but what he was feeling with Zhao Jing is love...it has to be and he was determined to keep it.

"Goodbye, darling." Zhao Jing waved as his guests left his home.

The drive to the Uppercity was quiet with Wen Kexing and Xie'er not really speaking to each other, they both found the silence between them a respite given how chaotic the last few weeks have been. Xie'er didn't have to wonder what was on his boss' mind. Of all the Omegas to claim Wen Kexing's heart, he'd never expect it would be Zhou Zishu...and yet he was watching his very powerful and deadly leader trying to retain some level of focus and restraint.

He's SEEN Wen Kexing's violence, they were both very young when the Former Ghost Valley Chief 'acquired' them for little playthings. Xie'er was infertile Omega so he was often left with the women to deal with but The Chief was a sadistic and foul man who only found pleasure in breaking in young Alphas. Those were his 'type'.

He took a particular delight in Wen Kexing. Because Wen Kexing NEVER broke.

And that made him the Chief's favourite.

But Xie'er knew, he knew that Wen Kexing was biding his time and that if he said something, he *meant* it, truly. So when the usurping happened and the amount of blood that Wen Kexing danced in the aftermath. He wasn't surprised.

The Chief thought he was rearing a toy pet dog that nipped at his palm occasionally but it was a *wolf* that tore his throat out that night.

And now that wolf was willing to be tamed for a pretty koi that ensnared his heart.

"Xie'er, what are you thinking about?" Wen Kexing asked out of the blue knowing that they both somehow were on the same page. "A-xu?"

"Sir, my affection toward Zi Shu is incomparable to yours. Yet...I am curious why such a sect of such nature would be interested in him?" Xie'er asked softly as he looked at his boss with a inquisitive stare, "Moreover, why Uppercity? I have been thorough in examining his life, he was born in the poorest reaches of the Middle and his parents died young. Raised by caretakers of orphan Omegas, taken in by the deceased master of the Four Seasons sect. He excelled exponentially, went to University, excelled there as well. As far as Omegas go, if he wished, it would've been easy for me to have him trained to become a Kept Omega for an Uppercity Alpha." And Wen Kexing's eyes turned dark, he overstepped and knew it but also, didn't really care..it was the truth. Considering that Zhou Zishu is of some interest to someone in the Uppercity, this is a fascinating mystery that needs to be solved. Someone WANTED Zi Shu badly enough to send an extremely powerful and secretive sect to take him back. So either Zhou Zishu *has* something they want or *IS* something they want and this 'Peng Ju' has the answers.

"Are you trying to antagonize me?"

"Forgive my candor, I've spoken to Zhou Zishu before about offering his talents to wealthy clients as a means to improve his status. Considering his popularity, it wouldn't have been a difficult task."

"And what did he say?" Wen Kexing asked, fury dying down to more curiosity.

"Zhou Zishu was never interested in anything more than being a temptation...he is a prideful sort and doesn't look down at others who engage in such methods. He was seeking to improve his status and remain independent." Xie'er said almost with a hint of pride himself, "To that, we are alike. To be an Omega is to be dependent on an Alpha for security...something both me and Zi Shu are aware of but refuse to Yield to any Alpha unless they are truly our superior and worthy."

"*I* can make A-xu Yield."

"But would you WANT to?"

"No..never."

“I know.” Xie’er tilts his head with a wry smirk, “Only an insecure and controlling Alpha would want to make an Omega Yield to him.” And Wen Kexing leans back in the limo, he remembers the pain, the humiliation by his Former Chief into obeying his commands...going against his own natural Alpha instinct to submit. To Yield to such a decrepit man and his appetites. And despite preserving against the cruelties, he was at LEAST blessed by being born an Alpha.

Zhou Zishu, for all his martial arts, his gifts, his *everything* ...was still an Omega. And was susceptible to being forced to Yield. To obey his Alpha...to become subservient.

The mere thought of a meek A-xu repelled Wen Kexing, what drew him to Zhou Zishu was that intense coolness in his eyes, cold and yet underlying such a fierceness and passion which set him ablaze. Zi Shu held his head high as if he was above all of them and still held humility and graciousness. Heroism and compassion.

His beauty and strength wasn’t seen in many Omegas, tasting him made Wen Kexing forget any lovers he ever had before for none could compare to Zhou Zishu. There was no shame in being caught in such a sweet web, if it meant being devoured by someone like him. Wen Kexing would gladly submit.

Wen Kexing thought Zhou Zishu could make him better, make him more focused...but he never ever wanted to keep him. Not unless that was something Zi Shu wanted for himself. He wanted to be vulnerable and protected, *he wanted equality* ...and only Zi Shu could give that to him.

“I see. When I find Zi Shu I’ll ask him what he wants...what he needs from me.” Wen Kexing said almost wistfully, “I think that’s reasonable.”

“More than reasonable...” The Scorpion King’s voice was astute and held a bit of warmth, “More than most.” And he caught himself when he saw Wen Kexing look at him puzzled, normally he’s so careful but this talk about Zi Shu and everything before made him think more about what *he* wanted. Even after today, after the tender affection...Xie'er's heart felt troubled.

Would Yifu have these same thoughts for him, would he ever want to have Xie'er to Yield?

Helian Yi simply seated himself beside his massive four oak post bed, this bed was never shared with any lover, he had inferior confines in his palace for trysts. This was his Master Bedroom, his inner sanctum drenched in deep rouge and various rich earth tones amidst priceless artworks and sculptures. The scent of soothing lavender with gentle notes of music playing from hidden speakers, the room was at the highest point in the palace, facing the setting sun that bathed the room in a vivid gradient of orange and glowing yellows. In the middle of the bed slept Zhou Zishu, freshly bathed and any injuries tended to so no scars would remain. The once marred breast with another Alpha’s bite and the ring finger were long gone, it was as if Zi Shu was reborn, pure and free from the offending Alpha’s presence on his skin. The only bite was the one left by Helian Yi and bond was no longer infected with stubborn malevolence.

He looked so soft sleeping peacefully, it had only been a few hours since the interrogation in the **Kingdom of Morality**. Since that fool Peng Ju overstepped himself. If that fool was here, he'd see the small bump building from Zhou Zishu's belly, there...right there, his son was growing. A small little life surrounded by his parents' love and energy. Truly, **Soulmated** Omegas were special.

Everything was in his control now, Helian Yi smiled to himself as he rested his hand over the crest of Zhou Zishu's cheek. Warm in his touch, Helian Yi wanted to kiss him all over and more...he couldn't, the doctors had informed him that Zi Shu was in a 'fragile' state. He could only use his mouth and fingers to pleasure him and nothing else. It would be a test of his Alpha wills, nothing on earth was more tantalizing and beautiful than a bred Omega. The sensation filled Helian Yi, surging in his energy like a dam bursting and flooding his body with youthful vigor. Truly, Helian Yi was blessed with Zhou Zishu, his precious obstinate Soulmate.

A soft rapt on his door made Helian Yi whip his head to glare death at whoever was behind it and a petite maid slowly trembled. Calm yourself, Helian Yi said to himself.

"Sir, its 630pm" She squeaked and then quickly vanished as if she'd get struck down on the spot.

"How time really flies, hmm Zi Shu?" Helian Yi said to himself and placed his hand on the tiny belly, "Rest, this will not be terribly long." The Alpha whispered gently and kissed Zi Shu on his sleeping forehead, resisting the urge to rouse his Omega from slumber. "I shall tend to you tonight my love." Helian Yi slipped on his suit jacket and walked out of his Master Bedroom where a line of Window of Heaven men stood watch quietly as if they were an imposing wall.

"No one is allowed to enter that room unless they are the doctors, you will escort Zi Shu to where he wishes to go within the Uppercity. Do not leave him out of your sight, guard him with your life. Those are my orders." The stone silent sect bow to their master's command and Helian Yi makes his way to the front entrance. The sense of pride and power was intoxicating...he only needed to deal with one thorn and the road ahead would be a paradise.

Time to deal with Ghost Valley and the Undercity.

The Crane Pavilion was one of the oldest structures in Uppercity, it was an architectural marvel building upon the elements of the traditional old world with the modern sensibilities of the new, currently it was under renovations but it was still open for tours. It was believed that this was once a palace of the Emperor's son, however all that information was lost long ago...for Helian Yi, it was sort of a pet project, the current Emperor allowed him to design and rehabilitate the space for future generations. Peng Ju was going to be tasked with this...pity, he was too reckless and ambitious for his own good. Still, he did mean well...perhaps when he had learned some humility, Helian Yi considered forgiving him. No Types such as Peng Ju cannot help but feel inadequate and make desperate gambles to rise above their status.

The luxury sedan pulled down to the newly constructed parking garage as the night rolled in, rain steadily began its descent and the smell of the clear crisp air filled his lungs as Helian Yi traveled to the lowest floor. This was the meeting spot for the time being and Helian Yi was no fool, his automatons remained on standby should this become messy as he didn't exactly trust

Wen Kexing and this meeting wasn't cleared with the Council yet. But those were old dusty Alphas living off what little time they had left, they long since lost the drive to make hard decisions on the welfare of the Cities and the people within. What Helian Yi wanted was to heel this Criminal Alpha into something more agreeable and if not, remove him from the board completely. Wen Kexing had to adhere to his demands, he had no choice in the matter.

Helian Yi pulled out his mobile and looked at Zhou Zishu, still sleeping soundly in his bed, he shuffled a bit and touched his belly before turning over to be more comfortable. Perhaps the bed wasn't to his liking? Too firm? Omegas were delicate things when they were freshly bred, Zi Shu was no different. The flashing headlights flickered on and off as a signal that Ghost Valley was approaching.

There was something in the air between them...Helian Yi and Wen Kexing, the young Alpha wolf wore a gaudy black and gold mask and tried to appear intimidating to Helian Yi who could only laugh inside himself. This was a boy, a violent child, not a strategist, not a thinker, this wolf pup only killed and fucked, making him realize the error of his ways and **Yield** would not take too much time.

Wen Kexing stared Helian Yi up and down, sizing him really, he appeared at least to Wen Kexing to be a man who was at the end of his Prime and didn't know it. He's seen the types before in Ghost Valley, Alphas that fought to control everything, that wanted to put on the façade of something more noble and *virtuous*, that they wanted to improve the lives of the unfortunate when in reality. Wen Kexing had more respect for the criminals, murders and thieves in the Undercity below than the most loftiest puffed up geezers in Uppercity.

These were the men that controlled whether or not Zhou Zishu wanted to impress so he could have a 'status', a better life.

And these were the men that had answers on where he was in this city.

Wen Kexing wanted to make this meeting quick, if he needed to perform some favours for information on Zhou Zishu's whereabouts, he was willing to bend...NOT break. Bend.

Xie'er slipped from behind Wen Kexing side like a violet shadow and Helian Yi fixed his eyes on him, studying the beauty and overall slight features of the Scorpion King with interest. Stunning beauty, but no Zhou Zishu.

"Good Evening Honorable Helian Yi, that is what they say up here right?" Wen Kexing slipped his hands in his pockets and cocked his head to the side before unlatching his muzzle and slipping it off. I am the reigning Chief of Ghost Valley, Wen Kexing."

"Good Evening as well...if you don't mind, I would like to keep this brief." Helian Yi flashed a fake smile, "I am a Mated Alpha, my Pregnant Omega needs my hand and I wish to be by his side."

"Ah, congratulations on the-" And Wen Kexing felt blood in his mouth, he quickly wiped away the mess with a handkerchief and felt dizzy, there was a pain in his heart and his ring finger felt numb. What the hell was happening to him. Helian Yi looked at him with cold eyes and Wen Kexing felt like he was losing ground yet nothing transpired, like he was becoming weak in

front of another Alpha. “This air isn’t...as clean as I thought.” Wen Kexing said without hiding the sarcasm.

“Apologies Chief Wen Kexing...we shall do our part to improve the ventilation to *your* standards.” Helian Yi threw back with the same contempt, “Chief Wen, the crime and corruption of the Undercity has wreaked havoc on the people in the Middle. To the point that innocent blood has been shed. A Century ago, the Emperor built a wall that separated the Underworld from the rest of the population. And in time, we of the Uppercity thrived and rebuilt a society that those who are worthy, can carve some life within the wall. Soon, we removed the walls but protected what we hold dear with a heavy hand. To preserve our way of life.”

“At the cost of those who don’t meet your standards.”

“Not my standards Chief Wen, OUR standards, our people, the Emperor, those with pure and righteousness in their hearts are rewarded. Those that aren’t, are pushed to where they belong. With you.” Xie’er stared at Helian Yi with annoyance, “However, I am not a fool...I know there are those among us that have ventured to your...Palaces. They provide a function, an escape.”

“If that’s the case...why do you wish to destroy us?”

“Not destroy, *reform* ...” Helian Yi corrected.

“Alright, enough games...we of the Ghost Valley are attempting to rehabilitate our image and rebuild the Undercity, there’s no reason our people should suffer and die in filth and crime...we have our resources but admittedly. Uppercity’s resources are vastly superior.” Wen Kexing couldn’t shake that pain in his heart, he needed to focus but his mind kept flashing to Zhou Zishu, to his face and smile. The way he looked in his bed after the Mirror Room tryst, he couldn’t stop kissing him, if Wen Kexing could freeze that moment between them in amber, he would...

....*Lao Wen.*

The scent of cardamom very faint, was this a scent memory? Something inside Wen Kexing was breaking and his vision was getting blurry. Xie’er reached over to touch his boss’ shoulder to keep him steady. Helian Yi was becoming impatient and his posture reflected it.

“Chief Wen, if you are not well then you should have said so instead of wasting my time...I am here to establish a bridge and hoped you’d take this more seriously. I won’t bring my son into a world with such violence and war.” Helian Yi sighed and Xie’er flashed a glare at the distinguished Alpha. “Take your...’Boss’ home.”

“W-wait...I’m not fucking done.” Wen Kexing shouted and coughed up more blood, this was bad, they barely had a conversation!? Whatever that was happening to him was costing the future of Ghost Valley and the Undercity. He needed to get it together and fast.

.....*LAO WEN!*

“A-xu...?” A single red dot flashed over Wen Kexing that caught Xie’er’s eye and he quickly pulled his boss out of the line of fire. Helian Yi rushed back to his luxury car but found the

doors systematically lock him out, he looked towards his automatons as they fizzled and popped, remaining inactive. Soon the garage was filled with modified men with Venom coursing in their veins...the same men that attacked Wen Kexing that night in the **Scorpion's Palace**.

This was a TRAP.



Countdown

Chapter Summary

Tick Tock, the dance begins.

Chapter Notes

We're in the Endgame now.

It happened so suddenly, Xie'er barely had time to get Wen Kexing to safety behind the limo before they were swarmed, the men were full of Venom and in the darkness of the parking garage made them look like monsters. Helian Yi managed to hide behind his luxury car, thankful that the bulletproof shielding at least worked on some of the assault. He tried to force the doors to unlock but none of his passcodes worked, he was completely shut out. Who had access to his security protocols?! Who set this trap?!

"Boss, we have to get out...are you strong enough?" Xie'er shouted through the gunfire as Wen Kexing coughed up more blood, he was conscious and furious and all Xie'er could do was watch his Chief's eyes turn bright red, glowing even brighter than the Venom in the assassins' veins.

Without a single word, Wen Kexing quickly jumped over the hood of his limo and charged, so much for a strategy, thought Xie'er, his sharp metal claws swiped and snagged on rancid flesh filling the bodies with poisons. Unlike Wen Kexing, Xie'er was small and lithe, moving in and out through the fray and slicing tendons, disabling as many of the men as possible in garish fashion. He carefully kept his eyes on Wen Kexing, watching his leader lose all restraint as he rapidly sent kicks and punches into the chest of his attackers and threw his fan to slice necks, creating a glowing green and red spray of blood everywhere. The sounds of broken bones and shouts amidst the gunfire awakened a primal murderous drive in Wen Kexing.



He never wants to show this side to Zhou Zishu...ever. He's not this man anymore...he didn't want to be.

Wen Kexing grabbed an arm of one of the men and TORE it from his sockets, loud sparks and small flames shot out as he whacked the man in the face and dodged a modified cannon fire. Another attacker brought forth an kinetic charged arm blade and swiped at Wen Kexing swiftly, cutting his cheek and slicing his suit leaving a bloody wound on his chest. Furiously, Wen Kexing caught the blade with his hands and twisted the sharp weapon off causing the man to scream in pain before Wen Kexing jammed the blade down his throat silencing him forever. There was a shout coming from Helian Yi.

“GET BACK! I COMMAND YOU TO-” Helian Yi nearly had his head severed off his shoulders as a massive Venom man lumbered over, his grotesque muscles contracted and

pulsed with thick sickly veins pumping with the drug so much that his eyes bulged out of his sockets. He screamed loudly that it caused all of the car windows to shatter from the deafening roar and the three men were disoriented, stumbling and trying to refocus. Wen Kexing ripped out the kinetic blade and threw it at the massive man but the blade simply bounced off, barely scarring his flesh.

Helian Yi had to move when the heavy fist of the giant crunched the car like a can, he made an attempt to defend himself by snatching a gun from one of the many downed assassins. He successfully fired a bullet into the giant's eye causing him to howl in pain and the scream caused the parking garage to crack, sending chunks of concrete to the urban battlefield.

Suddenly the giant slammed his fists to the ground causing even more damage to the structure and hurled the chunks of fallen concrete at the men. The large water pipes cracked and spilled water all over the place, if they didn't stop this monster they were going to drown or being crushed or BOTH!

The giant charged at Helian Yi and grabbed him by his throat, lifting him into the air, Wen Kexing rushed over to gouge out the monster's remaining eye, freeing the older Alpha and aimed careful jabs into the massive man's points...it didn't disabled him! Furiously the giant swung his arm viciously around knocking Wen Kexing into Helian Yi but the Ghost Valley Alpha dug his nails into the rotting flesh. Trying to keep the beast from crushing them both.

"MOVE NOW!" Wen Kexing shouted to Helian Yi on the ground...there was a scent he picked up, cardamom...Zhou Zishu? That was his scent...but where was it coming from? Was it...from Wen Kexing?

"An Alpha doesn't run!" Helian Yi shouted back, "Keep him steady...wait for the opening!" The giant was going to yell again and moving like a blur, Xie'er dashed and jabbed his metal poison sting on the giant's tongue, injecting it with his strongest venom...nanites. Small poisonous microbots that devoured and dissolved as they swarmed into his body turning the flesh and muscle black, the monster grabbed Xie'er rough by his arm and threw him off into a windshield. "NOW!" Helian Yi pointed his gun and fired right into the giant's infected mouth, splattering brain matter and Venom on the two Alphas as he fell loud and hard on the ground. It was over.

"Xie'er!" Wen Kexing rushed over to his friend's side, his face and body was cut but he was still breathing. He gently lifted the Scorpion King off the windshield and wiped the blood off his face, it was finally quiet but Wen Kexing looked over at Helian Yi, holding his arm and glaring furiously at him. "The fuck are you looking at?"

"Such gallantry, this heroics...how much did you pay for this pathetic display?" Helian Yi's voice was dripping in disdain, "Do you think that I am blind?"

"I think you're a fucking FOOL." Wen Kexing shouted back, "Why the hell would I plan such a thing? What could I gain in killing us?!"

"You believe you are clever Wen Kexing but you're not....you are overwhelmed and out of your league. And you will pay for this attack." Oh Wen Kexing was furious, his eyes saturated in red rage and he stood up to glare at Helian Yi at this madness, "Your type will never

change...I should've realized this sooner and now, I will never make this error in judgment again."

"Are you deaf and blind old man! I did not set this up!" And before either of them had time to continue the sounds of heavier footsteps rumbled in the parking garage. More Venom men swarmed in, the three men barely had time to take a breath, Xie'er was slowly coming to and Wen Kexing had to get him out of here! The 30 odd men poured in from all directions, Helian Yi saw his own opening as he quickly rushed to an elevator and slipped inside to escape. Leaving Wen Kexing and Xie'er to fend for themselves.

Xie'er stood shakily up and pants, his vision was blurred but he was trying to focus on Wen Kexing, feeling his Alpha's aura, strong, violent, protective. Although they were not Mates both he and Wen Kexing were bonded through honor and trust, Xie'er was loyal to Wen Kexing, he would defend him to his very end. They were Sworn Mates. And if Xie'er was going to fucking die here, he'd die protecting his Boss.

He just wished he told Ye Baiyi that he wanted to dance with him...just one dance.

And he didn't understand WHY he wanted to dance with the older Alpha, he was never really interested in such things before. This felt so sudden...so trivial and childish. Yet...this was what he wanted.

Not with Zhao Jing....but...why? Why not his Yifu?

"Xie'er! Move!" Wen Kexing shoved his friend away from another attack, the Venom men grabbed Wen Kexing by his jacket, tearing it off so now all he had was a bloody torn shirt as he tumbled into the hard pavement.

"Wen Kexing!" Xie'er shouted and a stray bullet nicked The Alpha's shoulder, he was quickly overcome by the men and Xie'er rushed over before HE was clipped in the side sending him hard into a parked car. Xie'er was dazed, he had no energy left and was tackled onto the hood. The Venom man forced himself between his legs and kept him pinned down hard, Wen Kexing tried to fight through the swarm but small slashes from hidden knives cut his skin, each cut draining his Internal Force. He was struggling to get to his friend...flashes of painful memories filling him, of their mutual trauma, their suffering from the Former Chief.

The Venom man opened his mouth and a large metal tube oozed out, dripping with the drug. Xie'er thrashed, his strength long gone as the tube slithered down over his chest and throat...

In an instant, like a storm of blades flew in like birds slashing the Venom men, a white flash of a figure dashed across the garage, stabbing and rending the men to pieces effortlessly. Xie'er didn't get a chance to see what happened to the man over him but he blinked and he was swept up into Ye Baiyi's arms, his heart pounding so loudly as he stared into the older Alpha's intense eyes. There was concern and anger there...almost sadness.

"A scorpion's sting can strike many times before it's defeated...are you defeated, Scorpion King?" Ye Baiyi asked and Xie'er swallowed deeply, regaining his strength and focus, he could feel Ye Baiyi's vigor...his Internal Force radiant and intense. It felt old...centuries old...but that couldn't be? "Come, your childish Boss needs us."

Wen Kexing was dealing with TWO giant Venom men, he couldn't see with all the blood in his eyes but his anger and rage was fueling him. In his mind all he could think about was Zhou Zishu...he could feel he was here but that was impossible, he knew it and yet there was his scent lingering in the air. Even through the sweat, the blood, the gas and chemicals...

....gas?!

Any spark could blow this place apart! Wen Kexing had to find Xie'er when he was yanked back into a wall dazing him slightly before Ye Baiyi effortlessly dispatched the giants in two hits.

"Wen Kexing!" Xie'er calmed his boss who looked at him frantically as he searched the wall, sure enough there was a small latch and he pulled it, opening a passageway, "Ye Baiyi we must go!" The older Alpha pushed the two into the passageway, keeping his cane out to keep the men at bay as he slipped inside. "Sir, stay with me, focus on my voice.." Wen Kexing felt listless but he heard an echo...softly.

Lao Wen...Lao Wen....

"A-xu...are you...here?" A loud explosion rang out behind them and soon the two men felt like they were on the wind, moving swiftly through the darkness.

They were out of the danger of Uppercity and back into the safety of Undercity.

Home sweet home.

They were quite the sight, The newly installed Ghost Chief and his Right Hand Man limping, bloodied, torn and filthy...the very picture of professional men, the walk to Ye Baiyi's car was blessedly not far, parked serenely overlooking the vast neon glowing landscape of Undercity and the border of the Middle, the skies separating the cities was like a gradient of absolutely wealth and poverty, of crime. Uppercity was like a gleaming ivory city of dreams. Glowing amidst the shady bawdry darkness. Still even as the neon sky way with the transport vehicles moved like little fireflies in the night. It was a beautiful sight, a way to take in the scope of their world and that of the Uppercity. Wen Kexing looked on in wonder, out there was Zhou Zishu...alone, hurt, hunted or being kept or...no, he didn't want to think of anything worse than what was possible. Wen Kexing knew the true belly of evil and cruelty, The Black Market for bodies or organs, Omegas so lovely and broken, desperate for rescue by Alphas and sold into a fate worse than death.

Zhou Zishu wasn't going to suffer that, he was more valuable...more beautiful, more...

"Get it, I'll heal you later." Ye Baiyi snapped almost as if he was annoyed by rescuing them and frankly Wen Kexing was NOT HAVING IT.

"Fuck you." Ye Baiyi turned to him slowly, right now Wen Kexing was a thread's snap from passing out from both exhaustion and blood loss, he would not survive a fight. "You show up out of nowhere and save us? And we're supposed to follow you blindly like lambs? If you are from a rival sect who wants my Ghost Valley then you'll need to-*koff* fight me." Xie'er kept

Wen Kexing up and kept his eyes hard on Ye Baiyi, he didn't believe that this older Alpha meant harm but considering that they JUST escaped an ambush, he had to make sure to protect his boss.

"Stupid brat if I wanted you dead are you aware how easy it would be?"

"All I'm hearing it talk and not action!" Ye Baiyi walked so silently and swiftly that he was crowding Wen Kexing's space in a second, staring down at this shaking, bleeding young wolf. Xie'er stood firmly between the two, looking up at him with baleful eyes and Ye Baiyi backed off coolly.

"Every action has a reaction, just like every river leads to an ocean, you plant a bitter seed and it will grow even bitter fruit. The cities were an idea that was created in a small pot and that pot has ceased containing it." Ye Baiyi sighed and tapped his cane on the dirt, "The rot is deep within your Ghost Valley, you have to do more than merely tugging out the weeds, you need to get the root."

"Someone we trust?" Xie'er whispered.

"Someone YOU trust." And Ye Baiyi walked to his car, opening the doors so that they lifted open to allow the two men easy entry, "Who else knew you'd be here? Who else knew how important this meeting was? Who would gain the most if both the idiot and the fool Alpha? Who wants power THAT badly?"

"And you don't want power old monsters?" Ye Baiyi snorted as he got in the drivers' seat, "You knew where we were."

"The cities have multiple secret ways, I know them all and it makes it easier for me to travel to and from Uppercity and here. I merely picked up on Scorpion's scent and wanted to see if he wanted to dance." Xie'er eyes began to soften, "Now, shut up and get in." Wen Kexing scoffed and cursed to himself as he was led to the car by Xie'er, amazed at seeing such an antique still in great working order...it was a vintage luxury brand...one neither of them seen in a LONG while. Most cars ran on new fuel types, electric or artificial internal force energy but those were usually for the elites or the wealthy, this car was fully powered by gas and oil. Probably one of a handful of such machines on the road now but it was meticulously well maintained despite its age and both Wen Kexing and Xie'er lumbered into the backseat like zombies as Ye Baiyi drove away.

Wen Kexing felt so heavy and exhausted, he felt older...he kept thinking back to his A-xu, how he could make him feel so young and powerful, that's what Soulmates are supposed to be to each other..energy and rest, strength and protection. He needed to find him. But even more important than that...he needed to find out who betrayed him and this Peng Ju. Xie'er placed his hand on Wen Kexing's, squeezing it slightly, their bond wasn't as strong as a Paired or even Mated but it was enough to calm Wen Kexing down and soon he felt his shoulder bump with his tired Boss passed out. Xie'er flicked his glance toward Ye Baiyi, something in his heart was breaking..like his own venom was flooding his veins and burning him alive. He didn't know what to feel or think but Xie'er was many things, he wasn't a fool. Nothing was a coincidence and outside of Auntie Luo-who's loyalty was unquestionable and Helian Yi-whom he was SURE wouldn't do anything as reckless as plan for his OWN death in a parking garage. There was only one person.

Zhao Jing.

And that feeling didn't leave him during the desperate struggle to survive against the Venom men. Xie'er couldn't shake it and he couldn't confront it but something inside him knew. He just needed to say it, to Wen Kexing and to himself.

"Senior Ye...I...I think I know, who did this, but...he couldn't, he...and I..."

"Betrayal is the poison of choice for cowards and scoundrels, one who would betray their confidants would easily betray their hearts as well." Ye Baiyi cut him off and switched to autopilot so he could look at Xie'er fully, the look was such sadness and anger mixing together in a dark pool in his eyes, he couldn't deny logic...Zhao Jing craved power, money, control. Would he TRULY sacrifice even HIM? Did...did his love, deep love mean anything to Zhao Jing? "Rest Scorpion. You'll need to be ready."

But did HE even love Zhao Jing anymore? Xie'er wasn't sure and that hurt him more than he realized, he needed answers...and he was going to get them. Xie'er pulled Wen Kexing closer and rested his cheek over his sleeping Boss. He was going to help him find his A-xu, he was going to weed out the traitors and then...he'll dance. The Scorpion King looked at Ye Baiyi as he felt exhaustion seeping into his weary bones, his Internal Energies melding with the chaos of Wen Kexing's till they were both soothed.

"We ALL need to be."

Helian Yi furiously entered his 7th Palace in a storm of contemptuous rage, he was bloody and cut, minor bruises that makeup can conceal but he was a kettle at full steam and every servant parted like the Red Sea as he rushed inside, his assistant came down as fast as he could with a tablet and fear in his eyes, he's never seen his boss so unraveled before. Helian Yi has always presented himself as the most refined and mature Alpha, composed and serene even in tense moments but now he looked like he would murder anyone in his path and frankly, he *wanted* to.

That disgusting wretched dog Wen Kexing, he didn't have the decency to send an assassin or even plant a bomb...for a brief moment in Helian Yi's life he thought he could rear a young Alpha into something that could be presentable, perhaps with time pair him with an Omega of equal quality. Even bring the boy into his family and be called 'Uncle Yi'. No, that was all dashed upon the shores like the sea and Helian Yi WAS the fucking sea, no matter how strong the cliffs, the sea was relentless and will erode it all to sand. That's how he dealt with all opposition.

They became sand that he crushed beneath his feet. And now, that young pup will be join the beach as many before him did.

"Sir. I have sent the doctors to tend-"

"No, send the production team. Alert the council and the Emperor. We'll move forward with the **Ascension for Moral Purity** initiative. I want EVERYONE to see me like this." Helian Yi

sounded like a bolt of thunder, the strength of his Internal Force was felt in every surrounding area.

"S-sir please...your Force, Zhou Zishu is-" And that snapped him back to reality.

"Zi Shu? Where is he?" Helian Yi didn't even wait, he just RAN to his Master Suite, the Window of Heaven parted for their master to make way into his personal quarters, a fear choked his heart and he didn't know why. He LOST Zhou Zishu or was losing him...why? Impossible. The older Alpha opened the bedroom door to see an empty bed and open patio door, he needed to compose himself, he was an Alpha and in his Prime, he was supposed to be dignified and confident not panicked and weak. There was nowhere for Zi Shu to run especially in his condition, no one in Uppercity would help him. He doesn't exist anymore in the Middle. Helian Yi and the 7th palace is all he has now. Helian Yi calmed his nerves and slick backed his hair, he looked a mess but for some reason he wasn't ashamed, in fact this newly damaged presentation made him feel even MORE virile and renewed, he escaped death from the 'fearsome' Ghost Valley scourge and LIVED. And soon, he won't even be a memory...he'll erase him completely so when Zi Shu gives birth to his son, he'll never know anything about a Ghost Valley or an Undercity for that matter.

Life, will be perfect.

Helian Yi walked to his spacious upper garden surrounded by the most lush flora and wildlife in the Uppercity, Helian Yi's gardens rivaled the Emperor's and it was his pride and joy, gorgeous plum blossom trees with koi ponds and egrets added such beauty that when one stepped into the green surroundings they are instantly at peace. There were several pagodas with ancient stone walkways from centuries ago, the bright red clay and wood perigolas provide shade and places to mediate and mists from the Uppercity made the environment dreamlike.

And there in the perigola, surrounded by peonies and hydrangeas was his Zhou Zishu, seated neatly on a stone bench and resting over the thick red wood railing. He looked like a fairy...a beautiful spirit from the heavens that was saved by him. When Helian Yi thinks about how close Zi Shu was from being swallowed up by the filth and sin of the Undercity, of the Ghost Valley. Those hooligans and tainted men, lost souls that had no justice or honor in their blood. Wretched and ill suited for the world he wanted to create. Strange....during that fight for his life he picked up Zi Shu's scent off Wen Kexing...cardamom. But that couldn't be, after all, Zi Shu was here with him, safe and adored. No doubt some of his Omega's scent clung to him because Zhou Zishu is such a potent and powerful Omega, Helian Yi knew he'd have to scent Zi Shu properly tonight.

Quietly, he crept to the perigola where his beloved Omega softly slept, so beautiful and all his. However, this was no place for his Mate to sleep.

"Zi Shu...my love." Helian Yi whispered and placed his hand on his Omega's shoulder to gently rouse him from sleep, cutely he slapped Helian Yi's hand away and immediately clutched his belly, even in sleep his brilliant Omega protected his son. How blessed he was. "Zi Shu. Come, come." and slowly Zhou Zishu opened his eyes, his hair covering his eyes in such a seductive way that it immediately sent arousal into Helian Yi, he felt that Alpha need to breed him and Gods how he tempted him.

"Helian Yi? Hmmm..." Zhou Zishu moaned and rotated his neck, he was so sore like he was in a fight and when he became more aware he saw that it was Helian Yi that was in a fight, "W-what happened to you?!" softly Zi Shu reached up to touch his Alpha's arm with such concern. He's never seen him like this...hell, he wasn't aware that Helian Yi COULD become like this, such a state of him.

"Don't be afraid, my love, I'm safe as you can attest." And Helian Yi seated beside Zhou Zishu, kissing his palm lovingly, "I was attacked by a vicious pack of dogs...Ghost Valley tried to assassinate me." Zhou Zishu paused, that name...'Ghost Valley'...why did he feel a pang in his heart. Ghost Valley was a den of criminals and murders, the worse men who were craven so why was he...?

A-xu...

That...affectionate name...where..did he hear it?

"A-xu." Zi Shu whispered he thought under his breath but Helian Yi caught it.

"A-xu? Such a sweet thing...A-xu..hmm." There was something in his voice that repelled Zhou Zishu, like that name in Helian Yi's voice sounded like nails on a chalkboard and he shook his head, "Oh? Do you not like it?" And Zhou Zishu wasn't sure what to say to that, he did like that petname but...he didn't want Helian Yi to say it anymore. Change the subject.

"You need the doctors, please let us get you mended." And Zhou Zishu craned his head in his Alpha's palm, "Also I'm starving..." The older Alpha laughed with genuine affection and walked hand in hand with his Omega, "Tell me Helian Yi...what is this...Debut tomorrow night?"

"Ah yes, a formal tradition for Uppercity Alphas is to present their Mates to society, because of my status, once we have your Debut you will no longer need IDs to access the city, you will be almost royal." Helian Yi said with pride as they walked back to the Master Suite, "Zhou Zishu, no door will be closed to you, nothing will be out of your reach, you need only say it and it shall be done. You'll be quite the envy of Uppercity Omegas and wives and our children will be given every opportunity to achieve their dreams and become brilliant and notable members of society." That actually made Zhou Zishu smile, his little one will never ever know poverty or struggle, they'll be raised together in this gorgeous palace, given the best in life far better than what pain and suffering he had to endure in the Middle with the Omega guardians. If it wasn't for his Master teaching him in the ways of the Four Seasons Martial Arts. Zhou Zishu wondered if he'd even MAKE it this far...

Now their child will have the best of everything, they can have the top Masters.

Their baby will flourish, they'll be so happy and strong.

The doctors came and patched Helian Yi up before he would give a small conference in his dining room, Zhou Zishu on the other hand wasn't present, he wanted or rather the baby wanted Bo Bo Chicken and ALOT of it, he practically had his own Chong Qing Hot Pot to himself and just kept EATING. This little one was something else, how much can they possibly eat he wondered with a smile. One thing was certain this was going to be a very large baby. He watched Helian Yi's conference as he spoke about how valiantly he survived the attack from

Ghost Valley, this meeting was being broadcasted throughout the cities so no doubt the Undercity would be seeing this, Helian Yi stopped short of declaring war but what he did say was...surprising.

"Although this attempt was a failure, my life is one of many that have been threatened by the criminal activity and malice of not just the dogs of Ghost Valley but the many gangs that roam all over the Undercity, a city of filth and poverty, of corruption that plagues the noble citizens of the Middle and threaten to infect the Uppercity. My first solution was to eradicate the Middle and Undercities but that method was too cruel for there are those in the Undercity who certainly did not choose their lot in life and strive to become diligent and honorable members of society. That is why after much deliberation and discussion, I propose the **Ascension for Moral Purity**. Starting next week, we will start mobilizing efforts to increase background and status checks on all citizens of the Middle and the Undercity, those with higher points will due to their reputation and employment shall receive ID approval to begin the **Ascension** to the Level One Uppercity border that will be constructed. We shall start with a waiting list and reforce stricter penalties with an increase police presence-" Zhou Zishu nearly dropped his food, this will change so many lives, Han Ying had done so well that he received promotions so no doubt he'd be cleared to become an Uppercity resident in no time! And if what Helian Yi said was true then once he had his debut, maybe he could do MORE for him, maybe for everyone!

For once in a long time, Zhou Zishu began to hope.

His belly felt so warm, he wasn't sure if it was all the Bo Bo Chicken...but he could tell even the little one was happy too.

Oh Lao Wen, it will be wonderful. You'll see.

...Lao Wen?

Who...was that ?

The broadcast went over about as well as anyone in the Undercity could've predicted. Overnight the city became ALIVE with activity of Undercity denizens actively doing everything they could to cheat the system, Helian Yi was FAST, sending specialized Automatons with armed modified humans with pop up facilities to scan any resident who wanted to improve their status and perhaps get a chance to get to see the Uppercity before they're 90. Needless to say this was chaos, violence erupted as people did whatever they could to get in line to get scanned. And since people were trying to get scanned which meant the no one was working and no one was spending, if anyone had a chance to get to the Uppercity with whatever they accumulated, they were willing to throw everything here in the Undercity away. From Sun up to Sun down, people were scanned, nothing got done...it was like the whole city froze for this procedure and by the time the day was done, over 25k people were scanned with over 20k of them approved for Ascension. It was like winning the lottery. Right now, 20k people wasn't alot but Helian Yi was going to send MORE automatons and enhance soldiers to the Undercity...a few weeks of this and people will be KILLING each other for the chance of getting to the top.

No workers, no money coming in, no money coming in meant those in the Underground will get more desperate, more desperation means more violence and chaos...the criminals have to scan and gain access but if they do, they'll get caught and no doubt be punished severely...Helian Yi's brand new automatons and enhance soldiers will definitely crush any forces that the Underworld would have. Essentially...Helian Yi was going to turn the Undercity into a massive prison.

This was something Wen Kexing wanted to prevent, he wanted to reform the Undercity with freedom and justice...not harsh penalties and conformity.

He was already fucking annoyed from last night and now, this just pissed him off even more, that old asshole Helian Yi KNEW Wen Kexing didn't set up the assassination in the Crane Pavilion but he was certainly going to ride that to get what he wanted. And the worst part of all, he was going to do this flawlessly.

One thing for sure, Helian Yi was a brilliant man and opportunist..

"Chief Wen Kexing." Luo Fumeng whispered breaking Wen Kexing from his thoughts and he looked at her weary, "Peng Ju has been found, Xie'er has escorted him to the main hall."

"Good, thank you Luo Fumeng." Wen Kexing sighed and felt that fire in him once again, the sharpness in his chest became pronounced to the point that it was becoming painful, even his ring finger ached...these were the places he bit Zhou Zishu....for them to resonate like this felt like a warning. He wasn't sure what to make of it. But that will have to wait. Right now...he had a rat problem.

Peng Ju looked panicked as he was shoved to the main hall with his hands cuffed and shoes off, he looked ragged...almost as if he spent days drinking and smelled like it too, his hair was a ratted mess of dirt and grime and when Xie'er found him, he was attempting to pick up an Omega prostitute. He fell on the floor and tried to scramble to his feet but he was so intoxicated and bleary from the drinking that he didn't make it far. Xie'er wiped his hands with revulsion, it was hard to believe that this man was ONCE a well known and respected art dealer and historian...he certainly knew his craft well but what befell him and with what severity to make him appear as this lush before him?

"Y-you do not...scare me..." Peng Ju slurred and fell on his ass, "I-I know powerful people...far more powerful than you filthy dogs!"

"Do you need a mirror?" Xie'er whispered and tilted his head, "And a shower?" And that made Peng Ju become red in the face, he hiccups and burps and was just so repellant that Xie'er was ready to kill him if it meant never seeing or smelling him again.

"You fucking Omega trash! How dar-dare you!"

"Watch your fucking tongue." Wen Kexing snapped and it was like a dragon's roar throughout the main hall, Peng Ju froze in place, he never felt this crushing heavy aura baring down on him, far more malevolent and wicked than Helian Yi. At least he had something resembling mercy in his heart...Wen Kexing lacked even a drop of it. The rat turned over to face the imposing Ghost Valley Chief as he walked down the stairs only the truest hatred in his eyes. "You talk when I fucking ask you a question."

"NONSENSE! YOU CANNOT DO THIS TO ME! YOU-" Wen Kexing dashed over and slammed Peng Ju's head hard face first to the marble floor sending a spray of blood everywhere. The man gasped and moaned in pain as the Alpha above him bent down and dug his nails into his scalp, sharp enough to cause him to bleed. "P-please...yo...you don't...want to do this.."

"Question one, do you know a man by the name of Zhou Zishu?" Peng Ju looked terrified and wasn't sure on what to say. "Answer me."

"I-I...I am familiar with him....but he's nothing but a filthy uppity Omega!-Oomph!" Peng Ju felt his ribs cracked as Wen Kexing smashed his palm in the center of his chest, sending him sliding and nearly knocked into a maid, she dropped her hay broom and squeaked away. Peng Ju coughed up bloody vomit and tried to move but with his hands bound he couldn't. "P-please...if, if you want another Omega...I-I have sources! Y-yes the Omega Womb Board, Zhou Zishu was special but there's others on there...I have connections to-"

"What?" Wen Kexing asked and looked at Xie'er, what Omega Womb Board? He's never heard of it and the expression Xie'er had, he's never heard of it either. "Why would Zhou Zishu be apart of that?" And Peng Ju began to laugh before coughing up more bloody vomit.

"Zi Shu was...always so smug, so arrogant..he acted like he was a prince but he's nothing but a slutty loose Omega. I made sure that he would have a better life! ME!" The rat stood up and wobbled bloodied and bruised, his meridians were shattered at this point, "All he had to do is obey but...he never listens and he always gets what he wants...his pretty face...I almost had him, I had him on the bed, I wanted to fuck him, I SHOULD'VE fucked him, he was so pretty, so soft, his milk...I still taste it on my lips...uhhhh I should've fucked him with my fist...eh, hahaha, urk." Peng Ju fell to his knees in pain and choked down a sob, "Honorable Helian Yi...forgive me please...I would never betray you..ever." Both Xie'er and Wen Kexing froze in place, Helian Yi knew this lush drunk!? Was he an associate that fucked up? That would explain his very severe 'banishment'. But more importantly to Wen Kexing beyond that was what Peng Ju said.

This gross man, this filthy shit...

He suckled from Zhou Zishu's breasts.

He touched...Zhou Zishu. **HIS A-xu.**

Wen Kexing was about to walk over when Xie'er beat him, kneeling in front of Peng Ju and dragging his metal claw over his bloody lip. He held his hand up to stop Wen Kexing and stared into Peng Ju's bloodshot eyes, the smell of his Omega scent, like oleander..

"Peng Ju...tell me, who did you speak to in the **Scorpion's Palace?**" Peng Ju looked like he was going to pass out but the sound of Xie'er's voice was so sweet, "Zhou Zishu was there..."

"Zhou...Zishu...he's beyond our reach, Zhao Jing...promised me...he'd protect me." Wen Kexing became still and Xie'er scratched Peng Ju's skin with his metal claw, his eyes wide and stepped away from the drunk man to look at Wen Kexing as if his heart was breaking into pieces. He didn't believe in coincidences...

Peng Ju, Zhao Jing and Helian Yi were all connected to Zhou Zishu's disappearance. This was vast and now even more treacherous, Zhao Jing KNEW secrets of the Ghost Valley, he knew enough to arrange that meeting with Helian Yi and certainly, he knew they were all meeting yesterday.

Which meant...Zhao Jing tried to kill them, Wen Kexing, Helian Yi and...him...his darling.

Xie'er walked away from Peng Ju on the floor as the nannites began to flood his body, he started writhe on the floor as the microbots traveled like little fire ants in his skin burning and melting him slowly, he screamed in agony and twisted his body in grotesque shapes.

"PLEASE! HELP ME! PLEASE SPARE ME!! PLEASE!!" Wen Kexing took a small remote from his pocket and uncuffed Peng Ju's wrists and he immediately tore at his skin, screaming and shaking.

"Where is Zhou Zishu!? Tell me!"

"I-I CANNOT I CANNOT BREAK MY HONOR I CANNOT MY HONOR AHHH!!" The man lungs were filling with the microbots, turning his bloodshot eyes black and he felt his tongue swell.

"Go fuck yourself on that broom and I'll consider it." And Peng Ju in mad desperation, with the few threads of his consciousness reached for the hay broom, worn, with old hay bristles and metal rings to keep it in shape...he unbuckled his dissolving pants, reached for the thick hay handle and positioned it.

The scream...the sound of a man breaking and melting, the smell. Wen Kexing didn't look away, the nannites would do their job, there'll be no body and nothing that a mop and bucket could wipe away.

Zhao Jing and Helian Yi. What was their connection to Zhou Zishu? Xie'er knelt down in front of Wen Kexing and bowed in great humility, Luo Fumeng stood silent and covered her face from the smell of a melting corpse in the main hall.

"Wen Kexing, sir...I...didn't know of Zhao Jing's ambition and what that would mean for us. I bare responsibility."

"Xie'er, are you loyal to me?"

"Always and forever."

"Then get up." Wen Kexing snapped and Xie'er looked up before standing on his feet again, "Zhao Jing's ambition overtakes Helian Yi's and Helian Yi knows where Zhou Zishu is. I will kill them both if it means finding Zhou Zishu. Do you understand that?"

"Yes."

"Then call Zhao Jing." The sing song tone alerted everyone in the Ghost Valley manor to become alert, it was a special presentation from the Uppercity. A Debut Gala, Wen Kexing has never even heard of such a thing and Luo Fumeng walked up to her boss.

"Sir...its a Debut Gala for Helian Yi?"

The Moon Pavilion was a special palace, it was one of the very few structures that remained from the Old City and it was considered a 'sacred' place, blessed by Heaven and is used for Debating Ceremonies of Alphas and Omegas. Usually those of Royalty or High Nobility. Even the wealthiest families couldn't get the permits to have such ceremonies, this however was not an issue for Helian Yi. The council was overjoyed and knew such a celebration would do wonders for the morale of all those in the Uppercity, even more so upon learning that Helian Yi was Bonding with a Middle citizen was going to prove everything that he said was right. That removing the Undercity and elevating those in the Middle worthy will transform the Uppercity and Middle into a true harmonious Utopia. Zhou Zishu wasn't a cad, a lesser man, he was an unfortunate born Omega who by divine providence, Helian Yi managed to procure, bred and now, make whole as his wife, his Mate.

The beautiful pavilion was drenched in gold and pearl fixtures, ivory pillars and polished deep black marble flooring that shimmered like a dark lake, furniture that was custom ordered and restored amidst the rarest silks and artwork, tapestries that were centuries old. The chandeliers twinkled like diamond stars in the sky and in the center of the pavilion was a marvelous round pool, small holo koi swam serenely in the water, the camera drones were buzzing softly in the air as reporters started to have mini interviews, this Debut was going to be broadcasted throughout the three cities and everyone who was anyone was going to be in attendance.

Everyone wore silver, white and black, lush furs and dripping jewelry with the most luxuriously dressed with their more expensive garments as celebrities and politicians all gathered for this momentous occasion. The platinum automatons stood glistening and hummed as they patrolled the area, after what happened at the Crane Pavilion security was heightened higher than anyone has ever seen before.

Ye Baiyi walked into the pavilion seamlessly, he knew so much of the cities that there were many places he couldn't get in and out. A few automatons picked up on his Internal Force and didn't act, he merely tapped on their chests as he strode in. It had been so many years since he's seen such decadence on display before, usually reserved for weddings but he knew Helian Yi was the sort of Alpha to make a show.

Strange, he thought, the energy inside the pavilion was turbulent and melancholy, there was an aura here...something he could pick up and a scent he recalled as well. He smelled it on Wen Kexing after the Crane Pavilion...

A memory returned, one of so many from so long ago.

Once, he knew of a princess...who fell in love with a man of lower status. She smelled of cardamom and honey, she was sweet and strong...he helped her, *helped them*. They were happy.

Then he lost track of them. It was like they were swallowed up by the city. The last he heard they ventured into the Undercity and never returned.

It was Ye Baiyi's greatest regret. He was centuries old, immortal...so removed from humanity now but the one time he interfered, two lovers were lost. It wounded him whenever reminisced about this failure, he loved and lost so many times and now, here was with another love in Xie'er...it was a cycle that never ended. He didn't learn.

Perhaps that pain he say in Wen Kexing upon losing his A-xu...perhaps that struck him deeper than he realized and perhaps...if he could reunite them somehow.

The soft strings signaled to everyone in attendance that the Debut was going to begin, alright, as he *was* the Emperor's Advisor he was obligated to be here, not that he truly wanted to be here.

But fate...continued to weave him on this path, so Ye Baiyi followed it. *Perhaps to redemption.*

Helian Yi walked to the center of the Pavilion, right behind the gorgeous moon pool and smiled at all in attendance. He stood completely adorned in vibrant whites and gold, a rust red ascot with a gold dragon pin to keep it in place as he stood looking more virile and imposing than he's felt in years. The aura of an Alpha, the confidence overflowing like a golden wave throughout the crowd as the cameras flashed and recorded his visage in the highest fidelity to the three cities. Ye Baiyi kept his distance, an Alpha releasing that amount of Internal Force was positively obnoxious, the folly of youth, Ye Baiyi tutted to himself, remembering his own younger days and reflecting on Wen Kexing. At least with the young Wolf, he was charming and good looking...

"Good Evening and thank you all for attending this auspicious occasion, it had been years since a Debut was placed within this sacred Pavilion and it is my deepest honor and gratitude that the Emperor has blessed me and my Mate with this opportunity." Helian Yi spoke with such vigor and composure, his eyes twinkled on every face looking upon him adoringly and spotted Ye Baiyi just a bit ways back, that old Fox. He **MUST** make sure this moment goes off without a single disruption. "When the three cities were at war and reformation, I was young, I believed in creating harmonious unity attributed to each and every citizen, regardless of birth. My pride in helping in the efforts of restoring the safety and peace to the Uppercity was my greatest triumph. So, I am humbled by this moment now, the good fortune of finding a Mate in the Middle, someone of a meager class, would be the one to teach me, to show me a better path for us all. To finally rid the corruption and amorality that has taken cultivated in the Undercity and ensnared its roots in the Middle. I was blessed. Truly blessed to be given a Mate-no-Soulmate and more so, for that Soulmate to be my match, to carry my child...my family's future and that of the cities."

Slowly the moon pool began to split in the middle, creating a stunning cascade of water as bright white steps formed upwards to the surface and the sounds of heels tapped on the stairs. A figure draped in white with long inky hair bejeweled in pearls and diamonds, the veil long and luminous trailed behind his head and long ivory skirt the higher the figure emerged from below. All the room filled with gasps as the cameras zoomed and sent the visage of the most beautiful fairy presenting himself to the world.

Ye Baiyi walked closer, transfixed at what he was seeing...this image was in his memory, this exact moment frozen in time. This feeling of absolute melancholy and beauty, like a wisp of Heavens' mist made into flesh. *She looked just like this.*

The scent of cardamom and honey hit his nose, what a fool he was...how could he not notice?

The figure in white turned around, his entire outfit was polar white and possessed a plunging neckline with light silk and satins covering his body, diamonds and silver dragon jewelry dangled off his waist like twinkling falling stars. The jumpsuit was connected to the long ivory skirt that was seated comfortably over a telltale bump in his belly. He was absolutely breathtaking, Helian Yi lifted the delicate silk veil from his face and stared deeply in his Mate's eyes.

"My friends, my allies, my people and the great Emperor of the Cities, please welcome my Mate, my Soulmate and mother to my son. Zhou Zishu of the Middle."



Helian Yi gently grabbed Zhou Zishu by his waist and held him gently as if he was holding the most precious gem in all the land, he kissed his jaw and tilted him back...just enough for him to place a tender kiss right above his heart.

The Bite was sharp as it was sweet.

Once Upon A Dream

Chapter Summary

Wen Kexing is given a chance to reconnect with Zhou Zishu...but will it be too late for either of them?

Chapter Notes

Strap in for a long sweet one with one HELL of a wallop!

The holoscreens showed the scene from every angle throughout the three cities, Han Ying flopped in his chair looking at his friend, his brother...together and bonded with one of the most powerful and influential Alphas in ALL the cities. His mind raked over when this could possibly happen and more over....why didn't Zi Shu ever tell him? Was there a reason behind it? Han Ying rushed to his mobile and tried to call his brother.

“The number you dial is no longer in service.” Then a dial-tone was all Han Ying heard, he couldn't explain this dreadful feeling in the pit of his stomach but why? Helian Yi was an honorable Alpha, dignified and affluent. He was a man of great intelligence, status and has achieved so much, done so much for the three cities, if there was ever an Alpha that was worthy of Zhou Zishu's affections. It would be him. And yet, as Han Ying dialed Zhou Zishu's number again and heard the same response, he was afraid for his brother.

He reflected on the last time he spoke to Zhou Zishu...the sudden disappearance, the selling of his flat, his job at the Kingdom of Morality being sold, the 'massage' and him going into 'Heat', no doubt he was with Helian Yi and even more sinister. That Helian Yi was responsible for all of it, Zhou Zishu's complete removal from the Middle, from all his connections to his 'old life'. Zhou Zishu COULDN'T have wanted this, how much of a say DID he actually have in this relationship? Han Ying kept running through these moments like they were on film, if this feeling was something lighter and sunny, Han Ying could poke fun at Zhou Zishu later but this? This *didn't* feel right...and no matter what, he couldn't shake that his brother was really in trouble.

Han Ying placed his mobile down and felt hopeless, if Zhou Zishu was in danger...what could he do? Who could he go to complain about this? He was just one Middle resident...he had no status, at least not yet but he had to do something...for now, he has to wait.

“Zi Shu...please be strong...”

The main hall of the Ghost Valley erupted in chatter, the noise only secondary to the gossip outside from the Undercity residents, the holoscreens showed Zhou Zishu almost like he was a celebrity, forums erupted, social media was overloaded from people sending congratulations and praise for the beautiful fairy Omega capturing the heart of the most respected Alpha and becomes a 'true' Cinderella Story! The slush remains of Peng Ju were eventually mopped away by automatons while the staff continued to gossip. It took a full 5 minutes for Luo Fumeng and Xie'er to stop Wen Kexing from literally driving his ass all the way to the Uppercity and possibly get himself killed in efforts to reach his A-xu. But now they were in the Chief's limo to discuss what the hell was going on, with Luo Fumeng making sure all cameras and listening devices were blocked and muted, as of now, they didn't know WHO to trust or who was on their side, A-xu being in Helian Yi's hands, Zhao Jing plotting to kill their Chief AND Helian Yi...their plates were completely fucking full.

"Zhao Jing is key to all this...that we know." Luo Fumeng whispered as she sipped the wine, she was meticulously going through all of the Ghost Valley transactions and his name was so tied to the financials that at ANY time, if the man wanted to, he could freeze all their accounts and leave the sect broke. As to why he HASN'T done so is a mystery, Xie'er kept quiet even though he was already feeling immense guilt. "Sir, if we are to get in front of this, we need to make sure that our tactic is absolute."

"Zi Shu wouldn't...he couldn't, he's not even attractive..." Wen Kexing murmured, in his hand he held on to the penthouse key, he gifted this to A-xu and in his haste to make it back to the Middle, Zi Shu forgot to grab it. Or did he purposely forget? Wen Kexing wrestled with this, he was vulnerable to Zi Shu, was that not enough? Did Zi Shu need MORE money, vastly more money to feel protected? Helian Yi certainly had deep pockets and Omegas were considered to be easily swayed by wealth but Wen Kexing didn't see that for his A-xu...he felt more honest, more prideful so then why? Why was he standing there in that beautiful frock and receiving Helian Yi's bite? Why did he melt in that bloody kiss? Why did he smile with tears in his eyes and look every bit as the poor lucky Omega who's been scooped up into the world of affluence and status with an Alpha 'prince'? Why? Why A-xu? Wen Kexing was distracted, baffled and enraged at the same time, "He's an older man, an uncle..no, this is foolishness."

"Sir, please." Luo Fumeng reminds and Wen Kexing shot a sharp glance at her before cooling down to reality, Zhao Jing needed to be dealt with first, no matter how much he loved A-xu...he couldn't put him above his sect. He has responsibilities as the Chief of Ghost Valley. "We cannot act rashly, no doubt Zhao Jing will be planning an escape...especially if he was truly assisting Helian Yi to acquire Zhou Zishu, he will be rewarded by Helian Yi as well. Perhaps a position in the Uppercity?"

"But he tried to kill both Helian Yi and Sir..and.." Xie'er whispered, the idea that Zhao Jing set up that meeting to kill them all, he had to realize the truth. "Sir, please, let me handle this."

"Xie'er, Zhao Jing is your important person, you love him right?" Wen Kexing asked and Xie'er sighed, his eyes shining with tears that he kept locked in, "What will you do if he tries to hurt you? I won't let you place yourself at risk..."

"Sir, Wen Kexing...my loyalty to you, to everyone is absolute...Zhao Jing is the one that betrayed us, no matter my feelings, I will lay my life down for Ghost Valley, for you." Xie'er said without hesitation, he remembered that night...how heavy his heart felt, the hurt was like a

chunk of iron that weighed him down as he was carried with Wen Kexing through the tunnel. Ye Baiyi Alpha strength, his protection over them. Xie'er felt his hands on him, healing his injuries and how the threads of their energies twisted together. It crushed him, as an Omega who kept heart and body so closed, protecting himself from being used and ruined by an Alpha. Zhao Jing was the first that looked at him, his words were like songs that Xie'er loved to hear. Ye Baiyi kissed his nape and Xie'er didn't flinch, his fingers cradled his jaw and slid down to his pale throat to tilt his head back into a kiss.

That kiss...something he craved from Zhao Jing but was always teased and denied, full of mirth, respect, Ye Baiyi's energy was so profound, filling his body like drinking cool fresh water after wandering in a desert. Xie'er never knew how deprived he was until after he tasted the older Alpha's lips, the way his body felt in his hands. Ye Baiyi didn't wax poetic platitudes of adorations but he DID adore. Xie'er was different after the Mirror Room, after he was with Zhou Zishu and Wen Kexing...he didn't want that love but he DID crave a form of it and Ye Baiyi understood that.

No matter what Zhao Jing promised, no matter how sweet his song was...it was all lies and Xie'er needed to close this chapter his way.

"Xie'er, what's your plan?" Luo Fumeng asked with a small bit of pride in her voice as she looked at The Scorpion King shift in his seat and looked at his metal claw, the poison within lethal than any bullet, gleaming in the dim light of the limo.

"I will assure Yifu of my loyalty to him. That is all." Even Wen Kexing had to smirk at that, if there was one person he never wanted to receive a sting from Xie'er. Death is a blessing "Luo Fumeng, I'll make sure we have what we need, Sir, what you will want to do with Y-Zhao Jing afterwards will be your choice."

"Be careful."

"Always."

Wen Kexing stood at the rooftop garden of his penthouse, the very place that he wanted to live with Zhou Zhou rewatching the Debut from his mobile pad, over and over...the moment of Zhou Zishu's ascent from the Moon Pool to the bite on his chest to the bloody kiss and smile. There was such a furious ache within him, he knew he could barge into that fancy party and demand answers from Zi Shu. Make him SEE that he was HIS true Alpha in every way. Helian Yi cannot give him the pleasure he seeks, can't appreciate the curves of his body the way he KNEW he could. And that's what killed Wen Kexing, he didn't truly know Zhou Zishu...they fucked alot but that was the extent of their relationship, he may have been the Chief of Ghost Valley but who was Zhou Zishu? Who was this Omega that ensnared his heart and soul? That held his head so high up and walked with such a dominating aire that made Wen Kexing CRAVE his breath in his lungs? He didn't want to own Zhou Zishu, he didn't think that was even possible but he did want him and he wanted to be with Zi Shu. This was a heartache. He was mourning this loss in him...

Lao Wen...

No...he's his Soulmate, they were Soulmates...but how much of it was true? How much was just his fantasy...his delusion...his....

Loneliness.

Frustration built in the place of his grief and Wen Kexing dug in his pocket for the penthouse, he cannot allow this to consume him, if Zhou Zishu wanted a life of wealth and status then may all his days with that snake Helian Yi be blessed or cursed, he didn't care..this was childish and he raised his hand to toss the key over the edge when a call buzzed in his pocket. He checked to see if it was from Xie'er, enroute to Zhao Jing but it was an unknown number...who the fuck would call this late? More importantly, only 2 people had his personal number, Luo Fumeng and Xie'er. Well, Wen Kexing wasn't above enjoying a mystery or two and he answered.

"What?"

"What?! Hmph, a child answers the phone petulantly." Ye Baiyi snapped back as he loosened his collar to undress for the night, "Conduct yourself more honorably brat."

"The fuck, how did you get this number?" Wen Kexing threw back hotly, he did NOT have it in him for this old bastard to bother him and he needed a drink and perhaps a warm body for the night. "What do you want?"

"Zhou Zishu you."

"Zhou Zishu is Helian Yi's Omega...or is your mind failing you old man?"

"You are truly an idiot. That doesn't surprise me and yet he loves you." Ye Baiyi relaxed in his chair, "You saw him tonight but did you *truly* see him? Is Zhou Zishu's love for you that superficial or are you that much of a fool to believe in what you take at first glance." Wen Kexing was going to respond but Ye Baiyi wasn't letting him, "If that is what you believe then we are done here."

"Wait you old monster! Fucking hell..."

"Hmph, good, tomorrow, 8am, I will retrieve you."

"Retrieve me? For what?"

"Shut up, be ready, tell no one." Ye Baiyi barked and felt some angered hesitation coming through the call from Wen Kexing, "Zhou Zishu doesn't have alot of time and if you fail here, you'll lose him and I will personally make you pay for that."

"You...have alot of fucking nerve threatening me."

"Then prove me wrong." And the phone went dead. Wen Kexing was already angry and now he was annoyed and completely exhausted from talking for only a few seconds with Ye Baiyi. How this man manages to get under his skin so fast has to be his penance for some past crime in his former life. Regardless, there was something more biting in the old monster's voice when he called, even desperate underneath. Was something wrong with Zhou Zishu...?

And when Wen Kexing considered that, he replayed the Debut again, Ye Baiyi's words filling in the spaces where his angry mind once occupied.

Zhou Zishu looked stunning, far more beautiful than he's ever seen him but his eyes...even under the make up seemed so lost, vacant, he looked fragile..Zi Shu wasn't the largest or imposing but he was robust with life energy. Something WAS wrong with him...and both Helian Yi and Ye Baiyi knew it and only ONE of them was willing to help him.

"A-xu...where are you?" Wen Kexing said softly, staring in Zhou Zishu's eyes on the screen. Even though he knew where he was now, Wen Kexing couldn't help that Zi Shu was still lost and if that was the case.

He WILL find him.

Promptly at 8am, Wen Kexing left instructions for everyone to obey Luo Fumeng as she waited for Xie'er to complete his own mission. She didn't venture further on what he would be doing today but if there was anyone capable of handling the Ghost Valley while he was gone, it was Auntie Luo.

A pitch black luxury van pulled up to the front of the penthouse, it was well built and bulletproof, the design was made to be innocuous but imposing in a crowd. It stood out because of its size as well, the Ghost Valley automatons stood silently as it pulled up and Wen Kexing walked out staring confusedly at his new ride, Ye Baiyi opened the back doors, poked his head out, huffed and dipped back inside. Not a single welcoming exchange between them. The Ghost Valley Chief rolled his eyes and dismissed his automatons before loading himself into the van, finding it surprising high class with polished black leather seats, steel grey interiors with bright white lighting that cast a warm glow on his face as the old monster sat quietly staring at him, sipping tea and waiting for Wen Kexing to get seated before literally hurling a large steel suitcase into Wen Kexing stomach. The look of murder on the Chief's face was brushed off immediately.

"That is an Imperial Escort uniform. Put it on." Wen Kexing opened the case to see a smart black suit of the finest threads, sleek with onyx buttons and a brushed black cybernetic chain shoulder pauldron with matching mask bearing the Emperor's sigil in silver. "Today, His Holy Majesty wishes for a detailed report about the Ascension of Moral Purity Initiative and as his Advisor, I shall complete is request. We are going to Helian Yi's 7th Palace where no doubt Zhou Zishu will be paraded around as an Alpha such as Helian Yi lives of showing off his collection of valuable acquisitions."

"You said Zi Shu didn't have 'alot of time' what do you mean?"

"Zhou Zishu was **Force Bonded**." Ye Baiyi turned his face to give Wen Kexing privacy as he undressed, the young Alpha's scent of apples arriving in a plume that irritated his nostrils...he needed to get relief, he was pent up. "When an Omega has received two bites, the circuit hasn't complete. I'm sure even in your ignorance you are aware of the Omega Bonding Circuit."

"Yes you asshole." Wen Kexing grumbled, getting the coat on, it wasn't exact fit but he wore it well, "I didn't complete A-xu's circuit because...I didn't want to force him to anything he didn't want."

"Where did you place your bites?"

"His ring finger and over his heart."

"Then that was a failing on your part. Helian Yi completed it FOR you." Wen Kexing whipped his head around in shock, "Judging by Zhou Zishu's condition, Helian Yi bit his nape...which is the most sensitive and strongest point for an Omega. It's considered a controlling point. There's a reason why Omegas wear collars. Last night, Zhou Zishu's chest and his ring finger were absent of your bite...in order for those bites to heal so quickly would be from surgical or disgracefully, Omega Correctors. Which is more likely." Ye Baiyi took out a small nail and showed it to Wen Kexing, "Charged with a Rival Alpha's energy then applied to key meridian points can reverse a former Alpha's energy and bites but it is extremely painful the more an Omega resists, usually an Alpha would have to use in conjunction with a training bead to weakened a particularly strong Omega. The result is removing the memory of the former bond and even the very memory of the Alpha itself. It can be traumatic and an Omega can deteriorate quickly without receiving a complete circuit." Ye Baiyi tossed the nail to Wen Kexing and he held the strange ancient tool in his hand, it didn't seem like an actual nail, more like a sharp suction cup...it didn't change how disturbing it was and how it was used.

His brave A-xu escaped Helian Yi, managed to reach the **Scorpion's Palace** and by cruel fate, ran into that venomous viper Zhao Jing and how he colluded with Peng Ju to deliver him back into his captor and now, his Alpha.

This wicked relic was placed on Zhou Zishu...by Helian Yi.

The thought that his A-xu was *ever* in pain, that he was treated this way...*and he failed to save him.*

A bitterness, like bile rose in Wen Kexing throat.

"Tell me...what can I do to help A-xu?"

"Unfortunately, very voice and smell will cause a Madness in Zhou Zishu, your aura is too strong for him in his current state. The Correctors effectiveness is only as strong as the Alpha's bond it was meant to erase is weak, in order to restore and reinforce that bond you had with Zhou Zishu, he needs to remember you on his own. But surrounded by Helian Yi's Alpha aura that would be a challenge and will only hurt him more." Ye Baiyi tosses a vial of scent nullifier to splash on. "Therefore, you will accompany me and not speak...your presence should be enough to trigger any lingering memory of the bond you two share within Zhou Zishu."

"What...if it doesn't?" Ye Baiyi raised an eyebrow.

"Do you believe what you and Zhou Zishu have is a Soulbond, destined by the heavens?"

"Yes....I do."

"Then it will...and if it doesn't, then you must let Zhou Zishu go." And Wen Kexing held the vial solemnly, how could he let Zhou Zishu go? Truly? He was hurt and angry, confused but knowing that Zi Shu endured so much from Helian Yi meant that he couldn't give up, he shouldn't, he can't! Somewhere in Zhou Zishu their bond remained, had to be.

"One day, you'll reveal who you are..."

"What I am and what I was are from different eras, I have made mistakes and suffered for them...in the end, all I can do is make amends." Ye Baiyi said with a hint of softness that caught Wen Kexing off guard, "If you are truly Soulmates then it wasn't in vain. Don't disappoint me." Wen Kexing snorted and placed the mask on his face, hearing it sync with his cybernetic pauldron to bring up maps, location but certain information is locked off, notably anything pertaining to the Royal Family and Ye Baiyi himself.

The drive up to the Uppercity was silent and Wen Kexing was thankful, there wasn't much he needed to say to him, if he was offering him a second to be near Zhou Zishu...Wen Kexing knew he had to take it, he was trusting Ye Baiyi...after all, he did pull him and Xie'er from certain death days before and now he was giving Wen Kexing a chance of repairing the bond between him and Zhou Zishu. If Zi Shu truly was in a poor state due to a **Force Bond**, then LITERALLY Wen Kexing memory was the only thing keeping him alive. He MUST save Zi Shu and his child...and what OF the baby? Could he raise another man's child? Zhou Zishu wouldn't abandon the baby and he *certainly* wouldn't abandon him. No, he was jumping ahead, he needed to clear his thoughts and stay focused, he CANNOT fuck this up.

Wen Kexing has never seen the Uppercity past Level 3 and now in this luxury black van he was speeding through ID checkpoints without a care in the world as they made way to the Level 7 where the most wealthy, noble and affluent officials that served the Emperor reside. It wasn't a fully populated place, mostly palaces of exorbitant wealth that floated in gardens of lush rich green and crystal clear water. The buildings were in various domes and reflected the sort of personal artificial weather and climate they preferred. THAT'S how rich this place was.

And in the center, high in massive white and chrome metal dragon pillars ascending into a thick layer of clouds with golden tubes of light that powered all three cities was the Palace of the Emperor. No one actually 'saw' the Royal Palace but it existed, Ye Baiyi's clearance was so exclusive to the point that it appeared no one possessed it....reserved *just* for him.

The van pulled into the long pathway of the 7th Palace, the underground tunnel was rather uneventful as the lake waters parted to reveal the marvelously lined glass front entryway with servants at work maintaining the grounds. Even Wen Kexing had to admit that this was a stunning place, classy and ostensibly old money just judging the many antique cars that welcomed them as the van pulled to a stop.

And there, descending the stairs with his arm locked into Helian Yi's. Was Zhou Zishu. Wen Kexing felt everything slow down before him. Seeing his A-xu on the Holoscreens was nothing compared to seeing him in person, 3 weeks felt like *3 years*, has he always been so unbelievably stunning? There was a glow about him now, decked in a soft light blue pantsuit with fur trim and long sleeves that hung off his forearms like they were fish fins as he kept his hand safely over his little puffy belly. He was pale and soft with his black hair brushed and pinned up in small silver jewelry, the light coloured clothes seemed to be tailored to his

measurements so well, it seemed as if he was born in them instead. Zhou Zishu was smiling softly but there was something...sad in his eyes, Wen Kexing could identify it...he wanted to leap out of the van and rush over there and kiss away all the sadness inside him. Ye Baiyi sensed it and grabbed his wrist hard.

“You do not speak, you **MUST** remain silent...until Zhou Zishu can remember, your very voice can trigger a Madness in him at this fragile stage. You will be responsible for his and the child’s death and I will *execute* you myself.” Ye Baiyi warned him, “If Zhou Zishu is your Soulmate truly, he will remember you and the healing can begin. You will *not* get a second chance.” And Wen Kexing cooled, he had to be restrained....this really was his *only* chance. He nodded instead of responding, “Good.”

“Ah, Advisor Ye Baiyi, I wasn’t expecting you so soon.” Helian Yi chirped with fake surprise as the two men left the van silently, “I was hoping to discuss **Ascension of Moral Purity** at noon tomorrow.”

“His Majesty will be saddled with many meetings with his council, so he requested that we prepare a report for him *now* .” Ye Baiyi stressed with some sternness in his voice, as an Alpha of considerable age...it wasn’t hard to intimidate other Alphas but when he saw Zhou Zishu jump slightly he switched his tone. “Apologies if you had plans, but this report needs to be thorough.”

“I...see, of course, anything for His Majesty.” Helian Yi adjusted and turned to Zi Shu, “My Love, I’ll have the **Window of Heaven** escort you and handle your shopping errands, anything you want.” Seemingly out of nowhere the Window of Heaven appeared as if they were made from the shadowy corners of the palace. Wen Kexing tensed, *them* ...it was **them**, if he needed any more proof that Zhou Zishu wasn’t taken here by his free will it would be observing the secretive sect. As it quickly centered around them.

“Helian Yi, I don’t think I need an armed escort...I can protect myself fine.” Zi Shu’s voice was small with a little lit at the absurdity of all these men protecting him. “I won’t be out long.” Helian Yi smiled as if he said something silly.

“My Love, after my assassination attempt by the *villainous* Ghost Valley and your Debut, no doubt you would be a target in order to get to me. I know you are formidable as a disciple of the **Four Season Manor** but remember, you are carrying our child and your state is fragile. I would be grieved if anything befell you.” And Wen Kexing held his tongue, ignoring the slander against Ghost Valley...he was actually fucking **AGREEING** with Helian Yi. Zhou Zishu is strong, his martial arts elegant and impressive...but his condition at the moment will leave him vulnerable.

“Hmm, may I suggest **my** personal escort?” Ye Baiyi motions his hand and Wen Kexing closes the distance between him and Zhou Zishu, “Perhaps the larger number of men will create a more tempting target instead of a deterrence. All Imperial escorts are personally selected by the Emperor himself, I can attest to this one’s dutiful and impressive skills.”

“Gracious Ye Baiyi, I couldn’t accept-”

“I *insist* , you will need *your* men to guard us as we discuss the intricacies of the Ascension of Moral Purity. I **TRUST** the Window of Heaven is just as impressive as my lone Imperial

Escort, yes?." Helian Yi nervously smiled and patted Zi Shu's hand. Anyone could tell how much he didn't want to relinquish control over his Mate but he could refuse an offer from a member of the Emperor's inner circle.

"Thank you Ye Baiyi, sir." Zhou Zishu politely bowed and turned to Helian Yi, "I will be fine, I'll protect our child. I promise."

"I know you will." And Helian Yi smoothly pulled Zhou Zishu into a deep kiss before touching his belly, everything in Wen Kexing was screaming, this was all so fucking sugary and fake...he was sure that the energy he was feeling was melancholy, even despair. His A-xu... *oh, he's right here and he can't do anything except be silent and protect Zhou Zishu.* And he will. Even if it costs him his life. As Zhou Zishu slowly walked down the short stairs, he felt a hand grip his shoulder, that energy of an Alpha who was simmering in rage and wanted to rend him apart. "I trust you will protect my Mate and unborn child. Do your best." Ye Baiyi looked at Wen Kexing from the side as a reminder of the role he's playing and what's at stake.

Wen Kexing politely pulls from his grip and stares from within the brushed black metal mask, only his ruby red lips were shown but he made sure to not smile or give anything away. If he could say 'fuck you', he would, if he could *stab* Helian Yi, he would but for now...Wen Kexing bowed. A sharp silver luxury car pulled up with glowing purple lights along the edge, it was smooth and hovered silently as the black tinted windows revealed a faceless automaton driver, the LED expressions showed the destination of West Market, one of the most expensive 'street' areas in Uppercity Level 6. Wen Kexing entered first which surprised both Ye Baiyi and Helian Yi by how brazen it was. Zhou Zishu was surprised but curious and then paused when Wen Kexing reached out to take his hand.

A for a moment there was a flicker...did...did this happen before?

A rainy night, a desperate fight, bullets, hot breath and hands, lips and wine. A breathless voice...was it his own? Will getting in this car with this faceless escort, lead him to danger? So familiar. Cautiously, Zi Shu takes his hand, Wen Kexing can feel his warmth, his soul, so beautiful and strong, his A-xu.

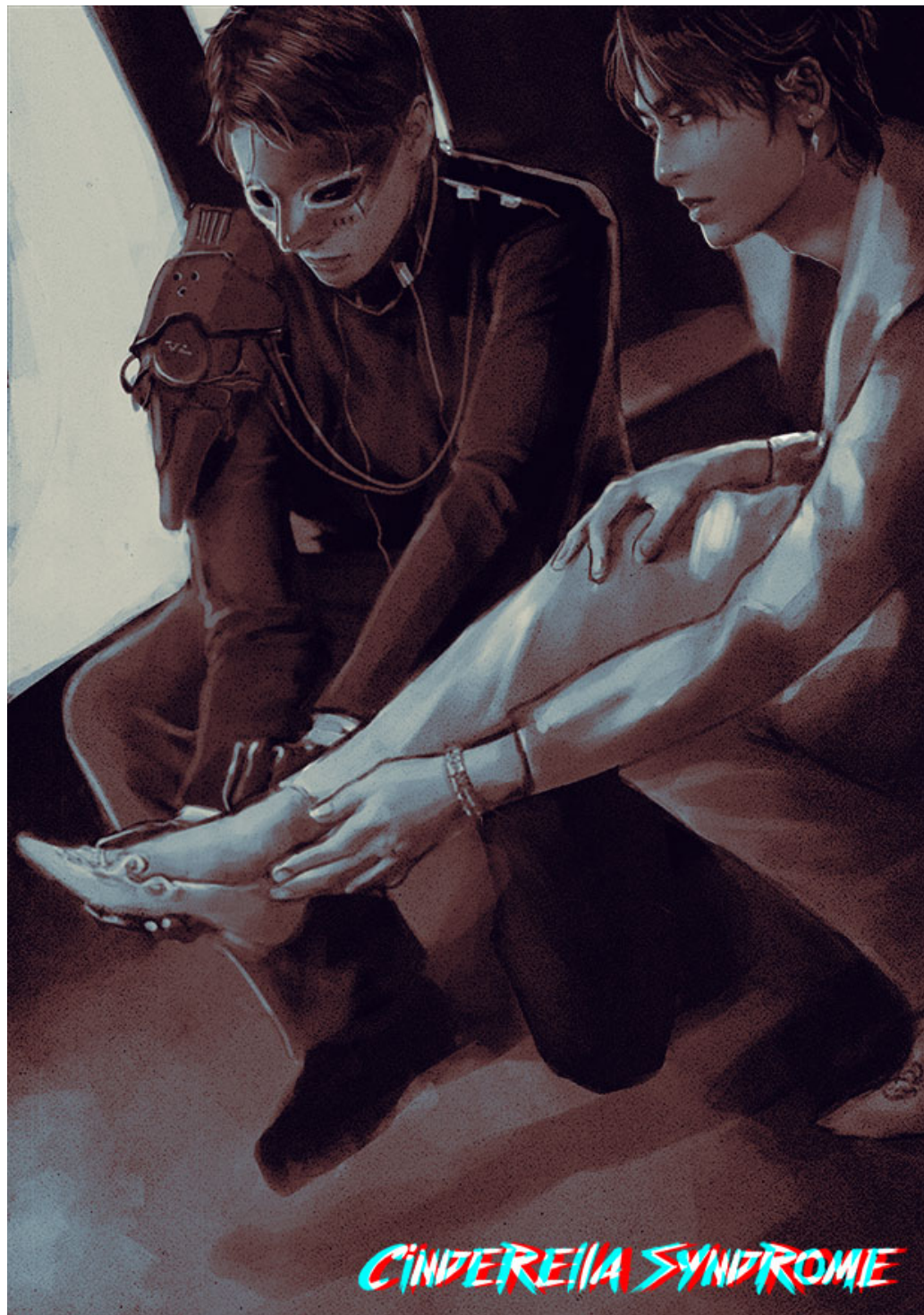
Wen Kexing pulls him inside and now more than ever how he wished he could just, drive away with him like that night.

The West Market was bustling with activity, it appeared like any street market but everything was done in a way to 'capture the feel' of a lower class place, Zhou Zishu wasn't fooled by the actors hawking triple digit items and wares, the vendors and the customers enjoyed the 'atmosphere' but with none of the more....'dirtier' aspects of street vending.

It was all just a play for the wealthy, a fake experience but the prices were VERY real. Zhou Zishu walked around slowly with the Imperial Escort who moved through the crowds beside him very easily, no one approached them besides a few hawkers with their pricy trinkets and snacks, the sights and sounds of delicious stall food and music filling the air made Zi Shu homesick.

In the Middle and even in the Undercity, he missed this vibrance of life and people, laughing and selling, haggling and screaming, there were even street plays about a noble warrior defeating a demon and obtaining Immortality after centuries of Cultivation, went on to create the Three Layered Kingdoms. Wen Kexing kept close to Zhou Zishu, he admired the view of his new bred form, the delicate sway of his hips and sometimes cute 'waddle'.

"Hmmm, I need to find somewhere to sit...my feet are hurting." Zi Shu complained and looked down at his designer heels, these weren't shoes for walking but these were the only shoes he had, Helian Yi had a certain 'style' and expected him to adhere to it...no matter the discomfort, everything was appearance. Wen Kexing tapped his shoulder and led him to a small bench under a peach blossom tree, the day was cool and sunny, there was a sweet breeze coming from the blossoms and Zi Shu sighed in relief when he was able to get off his feet. "Thank you...these shoes..perhaps I can break the heels off?" Wen Kexing kneels down in front of him and takes the shoes off, "Oh, no it's okay I can-" he immediately shut up when he felt Wen Kexing's hands massaging his feet. He wasn't sure on what to say but the feeling of the gentle rubbing on his soles, on the pressure points that ached from the gorgeous but functionally useless heels. Something about the shape of the Imperial Escort's jaw and lips seemed so...familiar as well, "Sir..you are...quite handsome." Zhou Zishu said and caught himself, Wen Kexing was unable to keep the smirk from appearing and that in itself made Zhou Zhou smile, "Well, at least you are not an automaton."



Slowly, Wen Kexing was weaving a small bit of his own Internal Energies into Zhou Zishu, not enough to be noticeable or he hoped. He was already being risky doing this. “T-thank you...I’m still getting used to this. To everything but I wanted to get out of the palace and well...this outfit made Helian Yi happy. I...I have to keep my Alpha happy.” Zhou Zishu’s voice grows distant and Wen Kexing felt the shift, “If he’s happy...then I am happy, this is how it should be. I shouldn’t complain, forgive my tone. I should be grateful for someone as Honorable as my Alpha, he loves me and I love him.”

Wen Kexing closes his fist, this is what Ye Baiyi warned him about, the Forced Bond of an Alpha, the Yield...it robs an Omega of their free will and personality, they become docile and

dotting playthings for their Alpha. He couldn't say what he wanted to say to A-xu, his most precious one. *I'm here A-xu, I'll do anything for you..you are my love, my heart and I **will** free you.*

Instead, Wen Kexing looked around, he's never been to this place before but he spotted a shoe stall, he didn't want to put Zhou Zishu back on his feet so he pointed to the stall.

"Oh? New shoes...I would just need slippers. Surely he won't mind if I wear those instead? I wouldn't want to displease him." Wen Kexing nodded softly as Zi Shu started to stand and placed his hands up, gently signaling him to remain seated, "Wait here? Haha, yes, that would be best..wait let me give you money." But Wen Kexing disappeared before he took the card out.

At the 'Shoe Stall' was nothing but the latest and most expensive footwear on display with prices that Wen Kexing flinched, such extortion, even markets in the Undercity would at least punch you in the face before robbing you. Still, anything was better than those heels, so Wen Kexing brought a pair of soft silver slippers, they had a slight shimmer of rainbows scales that entranced him. Wen Kexing tapped his bracelet and charges went to Ye Baiyi.

Oh. ***Perfect...***

He WAS grateful to Ye Baiyi for getting him this chance to restore his bond with Zhou Zishu but also, he was sort of a dick and Wen Kexing wasn't above being petty. Especially if it's not on his account.

With the slippers in his hands he returned the short distance to Zhou Zishu who somehow managed to acquire a small box of coconut jelly pudding pieces and was content eating some when he looked at Wen Kexing surprised and looked at the slippers. How could one man be so beautiful, Wen Kexing was frozen in his place just taking him in before he snapped back to reality and knelt down to put the slippers on. They fit perfectly, the soft fur lining and cushioned his feet comfortably far more than the heels, looked better too and he even seemed brighter looking down at them and then at Wen Kexing.

"Thank you again...please tell me the cost so I can reimburse you." Wen Kexing shook his head and pointed to his mask and bracelet then to the sky where the Emperor's Palace was. "The Emperor pays for this?" And Wen Kexing nods, he had no fucking clue but since he couldn't say 'That old monster pays for it.' The Emperor works. "I see, I'll have to repay him for his graciousness, my Alpha would expect that. I...cannot cause trouble." Zi Shu shakes his head as he finishes the last of his jellies and Wen Kexing takes the trash, "Thank you, come, I remembered the shop name, it's not too far from here." Wen Kexing takes his hand to help him off the bench, gathers the shoes and together they walk towards their destination.

Together the couple continued their trip, Wen Kexing spots a bin with a small clean bot hard at work collecting trash and he tosses both the box and Helian Yi's shoes inside.

Before the two even got to the destination, Zhou Zishu stopped at nearly every food stall that caught his nose, it wasn't his fault, his little life inside was excited by the new environment and smells as well and now both were famished. Dried fruits and roasted corn, egg custard pies, spicy chicken skewers. Wen Kexing was practically STARVING under the mask, he didn't realize when he left that he was going to be on this journey or he would've had something.

Beautiful and kind Zhou Zishu offered him a skewer as he snacked on a candied haw but he refused, he was glad the scent nullifiers were potent enough to withstand sweat and saliva but he was sure he was drooling, Zi Shu hasn't shown that he remembered their bond fully yet.

"Walnuts." Zhou Zishu whispered and Wen Kexing paused for the 20th time, "So strange...hmm. You seem to like walnuts huh?" And Zi Shu placed his hand on his belly with a grin, "I can't stand walnuts but it seems this one really likes them." Wen Kexing had a thought, he never knew Zhou Zishu wasn't fond of walnuts, they didn't have the time to discuss such things but...he LOVED walnuts.

There was no way for him to know anything about Zi Shu's pregnancy and it was possible that Helian Yi loved walnuts too...but he couldn't explain this pull, this feeling that compelled him to make his next move...

Wen Kexing reached his hand down to gently place it on Zhou Zishu's stomach to receive a sharp slap of his hand and a hardened cold glare from the Omega. That *look*, that was the look he remembered Zi Shu having as they fought their way out of the Scorpion's Palace that night weeks ago, the stare of an Omega that held no fear of **any** Alpha, an Omega that will protect their child no matter what. That would if he wanted to, tear the beating heart from Wen Kexing's chest and honestly, he'd let him. He overstepped himself in a major way, Zhou Zishu was Helian Yi's Omega and as MUCH as that thought disgusted him, this was the current situation.

"Don't do that again. Lao Wen." Zhou Zishu's voice was ice and sharp, a feeling slowly emerged...fighting against death, a touch, a sigh, mirrors and his mouth, his eyes so focused and beautiful, lips red like blood, a smile so infectious, sweet, his soft bite, "Lao Wen..." Zi Shu stumbles back and Wen Kexing catches him, dropping the candied haw but keeping his A-xu steady, "Lao Wen...who...is that?" Wen Kexing wanted to shout that HE was Lao Wen. He remembered, he remembered that moment where he uttered such a tender name, it felt like a loop being closed between them. Zhou Zishu stared at the mask, reaching up to touch Wen Kexing's face, his very touch was so cool and refreshing, gentle and sweet, "L-lao Wen..?" *Yes, A-xu! Just tell me, tell me to eat my heart and I will.* And before he could, Zhou Zishu blinked steadily and held his head, "I-I'm sorry...I'm tired....please, let's finish this day." Wen Kexing released his hold on Zi Shu as much as the disconnect hurt. "I won't tell Senior Yi if you get me four more candied haws."

Wen Kexing smiled, *Zhou Zishu you're breaking through...you remembered me, you remembered YOU.*

And Wen Kexing quickly left to seek the seller to buy the haws....*with* walnuts.

The jeweler was delighted to see Zhou Zishu and immediately left his clients to rush to his side with glee, then immediately paused when he saw the Imperial Escort but Zi Shu smiled and assured the small man that it was okay to approach him. Happily, he took Zi Shu's hand and lead him to the counter to sit and took out a gorgeous lacquered wooden box with a gold lock, like most things Wen Kexing noticed that Helian Yi liked things more 'traditional' and this small box was one of the oldest things he's ever seen. Zhou Zishu seemed more fascinated with the box before the jeweler opened the lid and revealed a stunning silver Ruyi lock, it appeared as old as the very box it came out of, with brilliant blue, green and yellow stones that mimicked

the rainbow in their intensity, seated neatly within veins of pure silver and a stunning carving of a noble dragon in the middle. Small silver bells affixed to the strong necklace cord, perfect length to put over a little head with matching bracelets.

The price for this whole set was ¥ 127,592,000.00

Wen Kexing was speechless and somewhat could understand and even respect Helian Yi's extravagance, if this was HIS first born child, he could definitely see himself dropping that amount on a Ruyi lock, nothing would be too much for his child. Zhou Zishu touched his belly and suppressed a small sob. He's never had anything like this, never experienced a parent's love and devotion to purchase a Ruyi lock, did they ever consider such a thing for him? And now, *his* child was going to receive everything he never had.

And much like before Wen Kexing felt the uncontrollable urge to act, he knelt down and touched Zhou Zishu's cheek softly brushing the tears as they fell, he looked at his A-xu as he craned into his touch, so tenderly and warm.

Like that day, after the Mirror Room, that moment where Lao Wen kissed him on the shoulders and nape, the bite on his chest thrumming with Alpha energy. Fire and burning, keeping him safe within the flames. He said something to him to ease Lao Wen's troubled mind...what was it? A kiss, a display of devotion...no pretense, pure love, deep love, a kiss on his wrist. His kiss.

"When your army has crossed the border....you should burn your boats and bridges, in order to make it clear to everybody that you have no hankering after home.." Zhou Zishu voice was distant, recalling the memory with warmth and such fondness. That day was in amber in his mind, how wonderful it was and how he wanted to go back, he touched his belly as the last tear fell, "Lao Wen...I want...we want...to go home. Please.." and Wen Kexing knew, ***he fucking knew***. He wanted to cheer, to rip off his mask because he's done it. The bond...it was *never* erased by Helian Yi.

It was there in Zhou Zishu's belly.

That was *his* baby. Not Helian Yi's.

"I'm sorry...I don't..understand?" The jeweler squeaked and Zhou Zishu blinked quickly, pulling from Wen Kexing to refocus on the jeweler with a confused smile and paid for the Ruyi lock. Wen Kexing heard a tell-tale beep and looked at his bracelet, the car was at the pick up point, nice and prompt. Zhou Zishu was so tired now, he could barely stand and Wen Kexing helped Zhou Zishu to the door but before he left, he spotted another Ruyi lock bracelet, this one with a brilliant red woven band connected to a simple small gold cloud and with three little bells dangling off the charm. He didn't need to go to the jeweler to purchase, merely tapped his bracelet on the glass and placed the tiny treasure in his chest pocket beside the penthouse key.

He's a father now.

The ride back to the 7th Palace was quiet and brief, Zhou Zishu was completely asleep as he clutched the box to his chest, Wen Kexing wanted to exchange the box with his own Ruyi lock but instead used some form of restraint. He pushed too much but he wasn't exactly given a tutorial outside of 'don't remove the mask' and 'don't say a word'. Ye Baiyi didn't say he

COULDN'T touch Zhou Zishu and A-xu didn't look worse off from the constant contact, in fact when Wen Kexing took in Zhou Zishu sleeping away, he noticed that there was more colour in his cheeks, his hair looked more shiny and voluminous, he slept with a small smile on his face as if he was having a wonderful dream.

The bond between them was reestablished...Zi Shu looked like he was being healed from within, at least that's what Wen Kexing kept telling himself, there was no way for him to really know without a doctor. He just had to rely on faith...faith in Zi Shu, in their love for that love allowed their child to be created.

*They were **Soulmates**. What else could it be?*

The car slowly landed in front of the stairway to lead inside the palace and since Zhou Zishu was deep asleep, no way in hell was Wen Kexing going to rouse him. So very carefully and slowly, Wen Kexing slipped his arms underneath Zhou Zishu and carried him out of the car. In his dreams he often thought about carrying Zi Shu like this, into their penthouse...

It was so strange and wonderful how quickly he fell for Zhou Zishu, how his thoughts were filled with him and his smile, the feel of his lips and warmth of his body, so perfect in every curve, every length divine. How could he have ever known pleasure in both his mind, body and spirit that the moments he shared with A-xu? How could he ever know anyone after him? Much less live? Zhou Zishu became the beating heart in his chest, the blood in his veins and air in his lungs. This day may have been for saving Zhou Zishu but somehow Wen Kexing felt he was saved too.

As he walked the palace halls, nothing in this place was real, all the money and status in the world couldn't create love and real respect, true devotion of the heart had to be earned and returned. Helian Yi valued his name, his reputation...if there was love, it was nothing compared to the extravagance around him. All the priceless works, the antique cars, the units of servants, nothing was real. What Wen Kexing was carrying in his arms right now was real, Zhou Zishu was his everything, that child in his womb was everything..and even if it turned out that it wasn't his child, they came from Zhou Zishu and he would love them regardless.

"Oh hello!" A small maid peeped up from behind the corner, yeah Wen Kexing wasn't exactly focusing because he had no fucking idea where he was going in this labyrinthian palace. "Ah, this is usually our master's time to nap...he likes to sleep in the Sun Room. Please follow me!" Well, that helped considerably, Wen Kexing needed to stop being so distracted. This was the final leg of his covert and he could bungle that now. The maid led him to a gorgeous room filled with sunlight, fine carved redwood furniture and fixings that reminded Wen Kexing of a museum exhibit rather than a place of relaxation. The egrets dry call with the frogs in the small pond beyond the round window and the soft scent of lotuses wafting in the window from the slight breeze outside. "We just cleaned and replaced the bedding, master wasn't comfortable with the firm mattress...hopefully he'll like this. Thank you." And the small maid vanished, leaving Wen Kexing and Zhou Zishu alone...one last time.

He noticed that there were cameras everywhere, small blinking red dots that steadily recorded the goings on in the palace, of course Helian Yi would keep Zhou Zishu under his eye like some firefly in a jar.

Gently, Wen Kexing laid Zhou Zishu on the soft bed, surrounded by polished mahogany carved frames that made him feel like he was placing a royal in their bed instead of his A-xu, thick red silk curtains that lined the four corners of the bed provided relief from the sun. How cute, Wen Kexing wondered, he could imagine Zhou Zishu batting the sunlight forcing him awake, just like when they were in his small flat back in the Middle.

Slowly, Wen Kexing took the small priceless box and placed it on the table beside the bed, there was a small pot of tea still warm and he could REALLY go for a drink right now.

When this mess is over, Wen Kexing will make some improvements in the penthouse..thicker drapes to block out that sun, maybe something similar for the baby room. Luo Fumeng will be thrilled, she'll probably take the baby immediately to dote on...Alpha women were VASTLY more protective and fierce than their male counterparts, he'll be surprised if she'll even LET him stay for feeding times.

The penthouse...that was his FIRST gift to Zhou Zishu.

Wen Kexing fished the small key from his chest pocket where it rested beside the red Ruyi lock and held it in his hand, last night and even this morning he was so childish and was ready to throw the key away out of frustration, in pain, doubting Zhou Zishu's love and loyalty to him. He regretted that single second that he even considered that being a possibility and this day proved it. This key was more than just opening his penthouse, it was a *promise* of a better future for Zhou Zishu, a place where they could grow together, create a family after stability in the Undercity. He gave that penthouse to Zhou Zishu for that specific purpose.

The key *didn't* belong to him....it belonged to Zhou Zishu.

And so Wen Kexing looked at the camera just placed conveniently over the round bed and bowed in respect, before pulling the ropes so the drapes could completely enshroud the bed concealing his sleeping A-xu, he needed to be fast here.

He slipped the small key into Zhou Zishu's sleeping hand and closed it tight, he moved just enough of his mask off, tilted Zi Shu's face up, placed his hand over Zhou Zishu's belly and in a voice low enough that only the spirits could hear.

"A-xu, this key is a promise...hold it tight and protect our baby.." Softer than anything he could imagine, gentle and warm with all the love in his heart. He pressed his lips down and poured a portion of his Life energy into Zhou Zishu, he felt it mingle and spin a thread of energy that he's never experienced before. His eyes were brilliant red glowing until the haze faded away. "I love you."



When he pulled back he saw a fluttering of Zi Shu's eyelashes, the faint blue in his eyes that turned purple before fading away.

"Terrible...Lao Wen, you didn't ask..again.." Zhou Zishu murmurs with a chastising and teasing smile on his face before he falls back to sleep but that serene smile doesn't vanish. That was all Wen Kexing needed, that smile...so brilliant, so haughty, so very much his A-xu. He swore that no matter what it would take, he would save him and their child. He quickly slipped his mask back on again and needed to find Ye Baiyi and-

"What are YOU doing here?" Helian Yi snapped, his voice just reaching about a whisper but his eyes and posture spoke loudly. He was pissed already today, this invasion just made it more angry. "Talk...now." Wen Kexing kept still, shit he couldn't speak but he made sure to not shrink in Helian Yi's presence. "This room is for my Omega **only**...you wore scent nullifiers but

I can tell an Alpha when I see one." And Helian Yi started walking toward him and it was very obvious his aura was threatening. Shit, this could be bad, Wen Kexing certainly wasn't going to stand still and get threatened by this old cad. He felt a hand on his wrist and turned to look down at Zhou Zishu slowly coming to, his cheeks red and he felt his own cheek...it didn't take a genius to see that Zi Shu was in Heat, the smell of cardamom and honey quickly filled the room and Wen Kexing was salivating. He never smelled anything more decadent in his life, Zhou Zishu reached out to Helian Yi but he didn't let go of Wen Kexing. "My Love, are you well?"

"Alpha...I need your touch." Helian Yi's ENTIRE demeanor changes, he rushed over to Zhou Zishu's side practically shoving Wen Kexing away from Zi Shu so he could scoop him up in his arms, "Alpha...my body.."

"My Love, don't worry...I am yours for the *rest* of the day." All Wen Kexing could do was watch as Helian Yi carried Zhou Zishu away and that's when he saw it, A-xu looking back at him and showed just a small silver key poking between his fingers before sliding it back into his fist again.

His A-xu...saved him.

Ye Baiyi stopped in the hallway as Helian Yi politely nodded, he really didn't have to say anything...any Alpha could smell that scent as 'Duty Calls'. He nodded in return as he watched them vanish to the upper floors, Wen Kexing finally followed them out of the Sun Room and looked at Ye Baiyi.

"Come, our day is through."

It was just the two of them walking out of the 7th Palace, Wen Kexing didn't realize how late in the day it was now...he was exhausted and hungry but he never felt more driven in his life, he wanted to flay Helian Yi much like his former Chief, he wanted to scoop Zhou Zishu in his arms and fuck him silly. He wanted so much and being patient was killing him, still...despite everything, Zi Shu and their bond remained, their baby solidified it and now the last thing he needed to do was to stop Helian Yi and his Ascension of Moral Purity Initiative. He couldn't have a happy ending with his A-xu with that mess going on.

"The Emperor is pleased with the **Ascension of Moral Purity**. He wants to accelerate the program and has granted Helian Yi an expanded budget and more control." Ye Baiyi said to break Wen Kexing from his own thoughts as they walked down the stairs to the black van, he spots something just underneath the vehicle and smirks, "As well as appointing Helian Yi to a higher position within the Palace, which he has accepted the position. Today was your last chance to EVER be alone with Zhou Zishu. From this point on, he will be guarded by the Imperial Escorts as well as the Window of Heaven." Ye Baiyi boarded the van as Wen Kexing stood still, "Before he's allowed entry into the palace, both Helian Yi and Zhou Zishu will need to be examined for health, spiritual purity and cleanliness, the Royal physicians are quite thorough. Zhou Zishu will be 3 weeks along. The doctors will learn both the sex and the parentage due to the mingling of Alpha and Omega energies. Helian Yi will learn that he is NOT the father of the child, it will be a scandal and Zhou Zishu and the baby will bare the brunt of all the hostility." Ye Baiyi turned to Wen Kexing as he noticed the object and bends

down to retrieve it and hopped inside the van, he took off his mask and stared at the precious item in his hand.

It was one of Zhou Zishu's mermaid slippers, it must have felt off when he lifted Zi Shu out of the car.

"Senior Yi." Wen Kexing spoke, his voice shaky with rage and determination mixing together, it was sliding down his chest...coating over his heart. "How long do we have?"

"We have 48 hours." Wen Kexing squeezed the slipper tightly.

Today will be the last time he will ever let him go.

The LAST time.

Sacrifice

Chapter Summary

The Scorpion strikes and our Cinderella remembers...but is it too late to hope?

Chapter Notes

A fragile thing, hope.

Xie'er has never seen the Undercity in such a state...he was complacent in the day to day chaos of violence but this reeked of such desperation and frenzy. It was so dangerous he needed to take the armoured private car with stronger plating and a beefier engine. If Xie'er needed to, he could take to the skies and avoid looking at the despair and destruction but he felt he needed to observe it.

This was Helian Yi's handiwork and although his hands weren't clean, Xie'er could never want this, *never*.

"Xie'er. We can never underestimate Zhao Jing and his cunning..." Luo Fumeng spoke into his ear via his earring, "The automaton is able to transmit any data you obtain from your gold stinger. You simply have to touch it."

"He'll plan for a contingency...any data I recover could be a trap lying in wait." Xie'er relaxed with a melancholy sigh.

"The techies assured me that the nanobot they installed in the stinger will be able to disable any hijacking virus or protocol Zhao Jing planted. It just needs time."

"How much time?"

"10 minutes...can you hold him that long?" Xie'er laughs and Luo Fumeng followed with a little bit of her own, "No, you are more than capable."

"Thank you."

"Of course. Good luck Xie'er." The line went dead and Xie'er was alone with his thoughts again...after this moment, the ties that bound him and Zhao Jing would be snapped and it wasn't by his hand.

The city was choking with Undercity citizens being preyed upon by Venom users, regular criminals and vicious assaults while the police did nothing. Helian Yi GREATLY reduced the funding for the already threadbare departments, trash filled the streets, no one was repairing the maintenance bots, the neon and holo ads went dark or just crashed to the streets due to disrepair. The trainlines and buses weren't in operation nor were many of the shops and services. The people either were trying to obtain status to flee at the checkpoints and camped at the borders, arrested or killed.

The dusk smoke filled air of the Undercity gave way to the rotting filth of the garbage due to the build up, this was going to cause another outbreak of disease, he and Wen Kexing were no older than 4 and 6 respectively when they watched their families wither away. It was Xie'er's earliest memory. If it wasn't for Wen Kexing caring for him...no doubt his life would've been cut short.

The Undercity may not have been a paradise...but it was his home, the only home he ever knew and if Xie'er was going to leave, it would be for a reason.

He used to think it would be Zhao Jing, his Yifu.

But after learning the truth, learning how deep Zhao Jing's deception went...how little he really meant to him. An endless hole of want with no end, no love in his heart for anyone else, save himself.

As his car pulled up to the West Jade section of the city, it looked no better, it wasn't hit AS hard as the majority of Undercity but it was looking worn down...so quickly did everything fall apart after the Ascension of Moral Purity Initiative went into effect. Gone are the maintained topiary and clear ponds, the litter and vermin were spreading, the Venom users roamed around looking like zombies, most of their dealers were either dead or found a way around the Initiative to get inside the Middle and Uppercity. No system was fool proof...even if it was from a brilliant mind such as Helian Yi. Thankfully, the building was still standing, broken windows and torn furniture, cracked statues and crackling holograms locked in a pattern of repeating images of tigers and lions, robots. A cautious fear entered Xie'er's heart, was Zhao Jing even ALIVE?

A gunshot resounded in the nearly abandoned halls and Xie'er had to be on guard, he kept close to the walls, walking over bodies and destroyed fixtures to close in on Zhao Jing's unit, fearing the worst.

A Venom drugged body fell out of the opening doors, laser hole right between the eyes, the noxious drug polluted the blood so badly that Xie'er could smell it. What a wretched scent.

"Yifu! It's me! Xie'er!" Xie'er shouted, his heartbeat was calm and steady, using the reflection of Zhao Jing in his metal claw to see a shape of him. "Are you okay?"

"Darling! Oh thank the Heavens!" Zhao Jing shouted and breathed a sigh of relief, he placed his gun down and relaxed in his chair, he looked completely sloshed and wrecked, torn close, messy hair, bottles of empty booze strewn on the floor that reflected the dim neon lights of the office. Broken furniture and decor just chaos all around him. This is the worst he's ever seen Zhao Jing. "I'm so happy you're alive...please, please help me escape from here."

“Is the gun down Yifu?”

“Yes of course!” Zhao Jing kicked the gun across the floor. “Everything has been chaotic these last few days. Helian Yi assured my safety but I haven’t been able to reach him...my guess since that assassination attempt, he must be under intense security.” Xie’er kept quiet, trying to decide his next move and this one was the quickest to get results.

“Yifu, please...be honest with me, what have you been doing behind the scenes?” Zhao Jing mildly sobered up, “Chief Wen thinks you betrayed him...I cannot believe him, you are the most loyal and dedicated of the Ghost Valley.”

“Darling, oh my Darling Xie’er...I want what you want, a better life! In the Uppercity...and I made sure we could have that!” Zhao Jing pleaded, he pulled out another bottle of plum star wine and popped the top off, “Xie’er...sometimes you have to make choices, hard ones but every choice I made, I did for us.” Xie’er placed the nanobot gold tip on his claw and walked from behind the corner to look at his ‘Yifu’. This man was once the very air he BREATHED, there was nothing anyone could say against Zhao Jing. Now looking at him, knowing what he knows...experiencing the sensation and taste of Ye Baiyi, Xie’er realized he was a fool. “Look at you...so beautiful, my beautiful darling.”

“Yifu, Helian Yi betrayed you and Wen Kexing wants your head....you can’t stay here any longer.”

“I thought you were here to kill me...”

“Never. But you can’t stay here and you need protection. Do you have anything to hold over Helian Yi’s head?” And Zhao Jing jumped up quickly, almost excitedly and rushed to his dresser to pull out a small data cube. He pressed the small button and a halo screen flashed in the air, it was a recording of what happened at the **Scorpion’s Palace**..with Zhao Jing and Zhou Zishu...everything. “Yifu..what is this?”

“The oh so ‘Honorable’ Helian Yi is quite the cad! He’s takin’ a liking to an Omega from the Middle...Z-zi Shu? Bah! Any Alpha THAT desperate for a Mate to send an Elite Sect like Window of Heaven MUST be pathetic. Ha!” Zhao Jing takes a swig of the wine, “And that’s not all...I got that bastard! My Womb Board...look, look! See!” Zhao Jing pressed the button again, showing the listing of Zhou Zishu, disheveled and nude, placed for sale and the winning bid by ‘Prince of Jin’ an alias. “I have more! In his arrogance, he thinks he can control everyone...that we’re all afraid of him, he’s been more involved with criminal activities that would make Wen Kexing furious on how much he really controls. Flooding the Undercity with Venom, using it on his Windows of Heaven sect, he wanted me to frame Wen Kexing! But I didn’t! I couldn’t! Wen Kexing has to know that!”

“Yifu...this is incredible, you have always captivated me with your mind.” Xie’er added and Zhao Jing looked at him with a cocky smirk and staggered back to his desk where a small bright red envelope was placed. It seemed important but Zhao Jing didn’t care as he picked up a glass cup off the floor and wiped it off, “But Yifu...the people in the Uppercity are crafty, they’ll use you and Helian Yi has so much influence...will this be enough?” Zhao Jing nodded drunkenly, pouring the wine in the filthy glass and downing it before slamming his bottle on the desk, sending a splash of the star wine over him. Disgusting.

“YES! You’re right Darling! I saved the best for last...” And the drunken coward pressed the cube again, this time showing a recording of two men, one was Peng Ju and the other...Helian Yi.

[HLY-Zhou Zishu...is an extraordinary Omega...I was surprised you showed me this Peng Ju.]

[PJ-Y-yes sir, he’s always been haughty, I wanted to humble him on this Board but seeing someone like *you* want him. Perhaps you can train him to be as submissive as he SHOULD be.]

[ZJ-Hmm, this goes against the Omega Womb Board Code of Conduct...Zhou Zishu didn’t consent to be a *willing* submission to the Board, Helian Yi...would that be of concern to you?]

PJ-Nonsense, I’ve seen several slave auctions on that Board! A-and this isn’t one of them, of course..I’m merely teaching Zi Shu a lesson one that was long needed!]

[HLY- And *I* will be *handling* that lesson, Peng Ju. Zhao Jing, I haven’t broken an Omega in some time but the moment I had with Zi Shu...was *unforgettable* . He will be an ideal Mate and It would pain me if he was sold to someone who couldn’t appreciate his...gifts to the fullest.]

[PJ-I agree, humility is a necessary trait for High Minded Omegas to learn! Many have tried with Zi Shu and because of his prowess, he could never be trained to obey. He doesn’t know but this is a fortuitous and life changing moment. Zhou Zishu will appreciate this decision in the future.]

[HLY-I *will* train him. Close out the auction Zhao Jing, Zhou Zishu is mine. I’ll transfer the credits immediately and submit the recommendations for you both High Clearance into the Uppercity.]

Xie’er was silent, dead silent....he knew nothing about the Omega Womb Board, it was something he never dove deep into because he was focused on the Scorpion’s Palace...he trusted Zhao Jing, Wen Kexing *trusted* him. It was a massive mistake on their end and Zhou Zishu by a cruel twist of fate, has bore the brunt of their error but Xie'er needed to say something instead of standing there shocked.

“This would...destroy Helian Yi’s reputation.” Xie’er whispered and looked at Zhao Jing with a cold smile but inside him was a coal fire, “This could give you everything you want.”

“Yes darling...I didn’t want to kill both Helian Yi and Wen Kexing, I wanted to get them to destroy each other! Then WE can rule...me in the Uppercity and you here in the Undercity. With Helian Yi in my pocket, I can TRULY change things and not empty platitudes like Wen Kexing...he’s too young, he doesn’t have the bloodlust, the hunger.” Xie’er tilted his head at the mention of ‘bloodlust’, Zhao Jing didn’t know what Wen Kexing was capable of...what he endured, he was underestimated and that’s what got the Former Chief killed. “But I overstepped Xie’er, Helian Yi’s might is unforgiving, I need to get to the Uppercity to play my hand.” Zhao Jing slurred and tapped the gorgeous red and gold envelope...it was a stunning wedding invite to Helian Yi and Zhou Zishu, Wen Kexing was going to be PISSED. "The

bastard invited me to the wedding...I'll make sure he gets all the blessings, such a pathetic individual. Hmph." The drunkard snorts and slips the invite in his vest jacket. "The roadways are blocked, so are the skyways...any car that attempts to enter the Middle or Uppercity will get blasted without the proper clearance so this invite is all I have."

"Yifu...do you think *I* could lead Ghost Valley? Me? Could you really do that for me?" Xie'er laid it on and Zhao Jing's eyes brightened and for a second it looked like he gained sobriety, one thing Xie'er knew was how desperate Zhao Jing longed to be listened to, to be needed, admired...powerful. He was an Alpha in type only, he was nothing like Ye Baiyi and nothing like Wen Kexing. He couldn't believe how much of a lovesick fool he was. "Could...I really be able to serve you as the Ghost Valley Chief?" Zhao Jing ran up to Xie'er nearly collapsing over him with a weak laugh as the Scorpion King held him up, his heart so cold to this man. His breath reeking of the wine, slobbering and sloppy. He placed the cube in Xie'er's hand and attempted to kiss him but found his throat instead, his hands groping the Omega's ass and fondling his most tender areas with a selfish desire.

There was a time where he'd love this, to be lavished with affection by Zhao Jing...for him to kiss and touch him all over. Xie'er CRAVED his touch, to set alight everything he was, to see him as a desirable Omega worthy of such love similar to Zhou Zishu.

But in the end...this wasn't love or even lust, just a drunk, limp, cowardly Alpha who wanted to use Xie'er *again*.

With his gold tip on his claw, Xie'er sent a small gold nanobot downloading the data, deleting any hacking programs it came across as he helped Zhao Jing to his feet.

"Oh darling! My darling. Do you trust in me? I would never betray you, ever. Help me, please...let's become more than...sidekicks and servants. We'll be EMPERORS!"

"Yes yifu, come with me. We must leave before the Ghosts come." And Zhao Jing embraced him limply, together they quickly escaped the apartment to Xie'er's waiting car, the automaton driver was roused from sleep mode and turned off all defenses as the owner approached. Xie'er slipped the gold nanobot from the cube into the automaton. Transmitting the data to Luo Fumeng and the techies, the drunken man clamors with a grunt into the back seat and as soon as Xie'er sat beside him...Zhao Jing rested his head on his lap. "Oh Xie'er...my sweet darling...an Omega like you is a rare find...I'll miss you."

The automaton started the car and pulled out of the apartment complex, Xie'er kept brushing back the locks of his former love with all the care in the world...there was a time where this was a dream but in the end, this love between them was a dream. Zhao Jing betrayed them, Zhao Jing tried to have he and Wen Kexing killed, the cruelty on Zhou Zishu...the Omega Womb Board. Everything this man has done was to the benefit of him, Zhao Jing alone.

It would be easy...to kill him now but Xie'er couldn't do that, couldn't watch him melt and become mush like Peng Ju...there was still some love in him for that mercy.

And that's when he figured it out, Xie'er takes out his tablet and pulls up a map of the Undercity, Ye Baiyi told him of several pathway locations that were hidden and ancient, one path very close to the one that he and Wen Kexing used to escape the Crane Pavilion ambush.

"Yifu...rest now. We will all wake up one way or another." Xie'er heard a little 'beep' the data had been transferred successfully without fail, good.

And so, it was time for all dreams to end.

Zhou Zishu could feel his lips, teasing and red like they kissed blood before they pressed on him...a deep voice in a hushed whisper, the warmth that floated over his body...the energy within, cautious and gentle. Filled with genuine need and concern...

*A-xu, this key is a promise...hold it tight and protect **our** baby..*

That was him wasn't it? That sneaky scoundrel...once again taking without asking, he was going to have to punish him! Oh how can he be angry at such a beautiful man? Eyes that seduced without trying, features too delicate and yet still vicious, strong and protective.

In his mind...echoes of a voice, his afterimage blurring moments they shared together as if Zhou Zishu was watching a movie, the shootout at the **Scorpion's Palace**, the sex in the limo, in his meager little flat in the Middle, in the Mirror room with Xie'er and then in Lao Wen's penthouse. They had *so much* sex and not enough time to learn about each other.

Today, he enjoyed a wonderful date with his Alpha, the love of his life and in the future there will be more dates, more moments to share with each other. More...

The kiss on his lips, the taste so familiar with increasing heat to keep him warm, the kiss that slowly brought him out of this nightmare. *Lao Wen.*

The Chief of Ghost Valley and his name was.

Wen Kexing.

Zhou Zishu's eyes snapped open, he was gasping like he just came up for air...it was like he awakened from some deep slumber and he'll turn around to see his Lao Wen, this was his arm strewn over his chest, right?

Instead...he saw Helian Yi, completely asleep...his handsome masculine features concealed a man who was relentless in achieving what he wanted. Once the idea of being with a Alpha of such status and affluence as Helian Yi and becoming his Omega...of carrying his child, he would've been or SHOULD'VE been honored. But this wasn't what he wanted, he never wanted to be an kept Omega, he wanted to achieve status and be independent. To CHOSE his Mate and decide with him when to have a child.

Wait, this child...this wasn't Helian Yi's child, it was Wen Kexing's?! SHIT! Zhao Zishu was trying to remember how he got stuck in this situation?! His memories were jumbled and blurry, he could only focus on Wen Kexing, his face...his smile. It was a comfort but it wasn't getting him answers and he needed those. This lapse in his mind was so uncomfortable.

Suddenly Zhou Zishu felt a *pulse* in his belly, that was new...the baby was developing fast, proof of a Soulmate child. Wen Kexing impregnated him that night in the limo WITHOUT establishing a bite bond or completing the circuit. He couldn't believe that such a thing was real and Zi Shu found him...or did Wen Kexing find him? He didn't know.

Another pulse from his womb, a bit stronger than the first...it wasn't uncomfortable but it did *feel* weird, this little life growing within was a needy thing and this might be their way of telling Zhou Zishu that they were hungry perhaps?

"Hmmm? Walnuts...again?" Zhou Zishu whispered as he sat up and sighed, he hated them so much...couldn't they crave sunflower seeds or anything else? He should've grabbed extra candied haws but it was now 3am, way too late for that. "Can we negotiate? Dried fruits? Scallion pancakes? No...? You are demand too much from me." All he could do was sigh, the baby wanted walnuts. No negotiating...stubborn and forceful like his Lao Wen.

"Mmm...mlove." Helian Yi murmured, curling his arm gently around Zi Shu's waist before sliding it off to press his palm on the small bump on his Omega. He froze, Helian Yi couldn't learn the truth out but it was inevitable...he needed to buy time till he could escape. "Are you well?"

"Hungry...well, *they're* hungry." Helian Yi rolls on his back, the idea of a little life making demands inside his Omega excited him. A forceful child, had to be an Alpha. "Do you have any walnuts? Candied Hawthornes?" And the matured Alpha propped himself up, keeping the smile on his face. "Don't laugh."

"Forgive me, a pregnant Omega in my bed...excites me." Helian Yi tilts Zhou Zishu's head towards him, for a quick kiss. He felt his stomach flip and pushed away after the kiss, "My love?"

"Alpha...I'm sorry...I don't know what's happening to me." That was the truth, this change in his body, the bites, everything...Zhou Zishu needed stability and protection, he's sleeping with Helian Yi and was 'his Omega' but the child in his womb was Wen Kexing's. The conflicting energies were twisting his mind, memories and feelings were jumbled...was he safe here? Why WAS he here? He should be with Wen Kexing but was there a REASON why he was here and not with him? He reached for Helian Yi's face to rest his forehead against his cheek. This wasn't what he wanted to do but for now, he NEEDED an Alpha's presence...his seed. "Alpha..."

"An Omega with a child is truly a heavy burden..lay down Zi Shu." And he obeyed, Helian Yi loomed over him, his fingers tracing the clef of his cheek before sliding down over the healing bite over his heart. "Endure my love, I will ensure you have everything you need, anything...you need only to ask me." Zhou Zishu arched from the fire in his fingertips, his chest was swollen with milk and any touch made him leak. "Feed me...and I shall feed you." There was a lump in Zhou Zishu's throat and he swallowed deeply, bracing for the clamp of Helian Yi's mouth on his nipple to suck the milk and fill his belly. Always, Helian Yi's needs came before his own, probably even before his *own* children.

All Zi Shu could do was reach underneath his pillow for the penthouse key, the baby and this memento was all he had to tie to Wen Kexing, his Lao Wen...

Endure...Zhou Zishu murmured a silent prayer.

Lao Wen...please.

Hurry.

Afternoon crept up fast on them, Zhou Zishu was unable to rest as much as he wanted to due to all the moving going on in the 7th palace, all he could do was wander around for a bit as the movers loaded the vehicles of all the pricey and priceless items Helian Yi wanted to bring with them when they started their new life in the Emperor's Palace. The Royal Physicians were coming in about half an hour to examine him and Helian Yi, he didn't exactly ask why, what was the difference between a regular doctor or a Royal Physician but he was sure his Alpha knew best. It was hard for Zhou Zishu to feel anything about moving from this place...it was his elaborate cage for weeks now and to make matters worse, *he was being followed.*

Cameras steadily focused on him around every corner and long hallway and if it wasn't a camera, it was one or two Windows of Heaven sect members sneaking steps behind him. Ever since yesterday, Helian Yi has become even MORE controlling on where Zhou Zishu was allowed to go or even be alone with his thoughts, this was all under the guise of 'his health' but Zi Shu wasn't a fool nor was Helian Yi. Eventually the truth WOULD come out and he needed to figure out how to protect and escape with the child unharmed. Not being able to fight in this condition was such a hindrance, it was a cruel chain around his neck...to save his child he'd needed to endure all the pain and send his Internal Energy and in worse situations, his OWN life energy to shield the womb. Too much transferring of his energies will put him into a coma but will ensure that his child will survive.

That was the *best* case anyway.

Zhou Zishu still wasn't sure if he could be a good mother...he never had one and all the adults he's known hated him in some form. Only his master possessed some affection for him and meeting Han Ying taught him the meaning of strength and protecting those you cared about. He missed Han Ying...he missed his smile and laugh, how he'd probably make fun of his growing belly but be excited about becoming an uncle. He wanted to ask Helian Yi for his mobile just to speak to him again but with everything happening now with the Middle and Undercity...Helian Yi probably didn't want to worry him.

He just felt so utterly helpless. If things were different and he was with Wen Kexing, he'd milk being in this state...it was his fault after all! Okay yes, he has some part in this creation..certainly could've had some suppressants that night. Zhou Zishu laughed to himself, despite his situation...he couldn't help but smile. He remembered the date-that's what he's calling it-and how Wen Kexing rubbed his feet, how he touched his belly and wiped his tears. His tenderness, his love. Zi Shu felt blessed for that small time he's had with Wen Kexing.

Even if his memories were fractured, they'll return and he'll make new ones with Wen Kexing and their baby. The light was going to shine again, scattering the darkness around him.

Somehow in his travels Zi Shu was standing in front of the Pearl room. A strange memory resurfaced...has he...been to this room before? Helian Yi's 7th palace was as large as a district

in the Middle and he wasn't here very long so there was no way for him to have seen every feature within but this place. Something happened here...something...bad.

But what? What happened in THIS room that made his body freeze? Zi Shu put his hand on his stomach and press open the doors to enter inside the lovely and strangely modern room, stunning from the expansive wall wide windows that provided a gorgeous view of the Uppercity, white marble and ivory décor that made the room feel cold almost like he was in a room of snow and ice. Zi Shu walked in slowly absorbing the visuals, the rich fixtures of clear twinkling crystals that lead to the magnificent crystal piano on a small platform pressed against the expansive windows. He was sure such a sight would be beautiful in the setting sun, its been so long since he's played the piano...maybe that can ease his anxiety.

And so Zhou Zishu walked to the piano with a gentle reverence, opening the lid and gliding his fingers along the ivory keys...how soothing the light tones were to his ears. *Something happened here.*

He sits on the cushioned bench and held his belly, smiling...when he and Wen Kexing reunite he was going to play for them, he doesn't think Wen Kexing even knows that Zhou Zishu played the piano but wouldn't that be nice? He thought. *Something happened here.* Zi Shu needed to figure out what to play, maybe something soothing? Nothing too hard. *Something happened here....*

Zhou Zishu started on the first few notes of Moonlight Sonata.

It hit him like a truck.

The night, the fur, the pearls, the drugs in his system, his body wet with sweat and slick, his hands pressed on the window, Helian Yi behind him, hands hard and rough on his body...his flesh rigid filling inside him deeply and expanded, filling him with heat, no...no...he didn't want to be mated, he didn't want to be bred...he didn't want Helian Yi!

Collar torn off, sharp teeth buried deep into his nape...like a poison sting from a scorpion, filling his energy ways, his mind and body with Alpha influence...HIS influence. Unwanted, disrespected, not equal, no love.

Helian Yi *raped* him here. Helian Yi FORCED his bond on him.

Zi Shu pushed from the piano panting, his mind throbbing with pain and his chest ached, he felt the bites on his nape and chest and found them pulsing with corrupted energy. Black putrid veins started spreading out from the bites, he could feel them burn on his skin. His womb was pulsing, the little life was scared and trembling, unwanted Alpha, unwanted bonds, he needed Wen Kexing, he needed to be purified!

Another memory, nails, screaming, placed on him...it was Helian Yi and Peng Ju! No, no he wasn't here by choice, he was BROUGHT here! Anger rose within him, hatred, malice, hurt and desperation...

Madness.

The memories were flooding him, every moment he spent with Helian Yi here wasn't something he wanted, either by force or control...Helian Yi robbed him of his freedom, he took him away from the Middle, from Han Ying, from Wen Kexing! No, no, no he wanted to leave, he didn't want to stay here anymore! His womb pulsed louder, more intense, not hunger but fear, anger...THEY needed their Alpha and that was not Helian Yi. This was WRONG. All WRONG. Zhou Zishu grabbed the piano bench and threw it against the window hard causing a magnificent crack that spread like a bolt of heavenly fury, it was double paned so there was no fear of him breaking and falling to his death. But in his madness, Zi Shu couldn't stop.

"Zi Shu!" Helian Yi shouted, bursting into the Pearl room with true fear on his face, "What is wrong! Stop this!"

"YOU! YOU ARE NOT MY ALPHA!" Zi Shu shouted and tore at his clothes, ripping the fine silks and revealing the bite on his chest becoming infected. Helian Yi couldn't explain what he was seeing, "YOU'RE NOT LAO WEN! YOU'RE NOT HIM! FUCK YOU!" Zhou Zishu clutched his womb, the pulsing was turning into an ache now...everything was hurting him, their child, "LET ME GO! LET ME GO TO LAO WEN!"

"Zi Shu calm yourself immediately! Get the Royal Physicians up here immediately!" Helian Yi shouted to his servants and turned to Zi Shu, "Enough Zi Shu!" The Alpha pull snapped in Zhou Zishu's mind.

Everything went dark.

"The child is an Alpha Female...she is not of your blood." Those were the words that echoed in Helian Yi's head as he finished discussing what happened with Zi Shu, this information jeopardizes his position in the Palace due to immorality and unfaithfulness on Zhou Zishu's part. The Royal Physicians would have to report this to the Emperor but Helian Yi was smart, he wasn't going to lose this chance. He quickly informed the Physicians that Zi Shu's pregnancy was the result of nefarious means and that he wanted to raise the child as his own. That Zi Shu was pure but a victim...as he was an Omega and thus helpless against Alphas.

The ploy worked, they would still report to Emperor's Adviser Ye Baiyi about this and Zhou Zishu's 'unique' energy...the Royal Physicians didn't elaborate further and Helian Yi was in no position to prod further. All of this might ruffle some feathers but in the end it will make Helian Yi look more honorable and noble in the Emperor's eyes. This was a risky gamble but from here on out, he would have to keep Zhou Zishu on a TIGHTER pull.

At least he knew who this 'Lao Wen' was.

Helian Yi thought he was dipped in hot oil and melting his skin leaving him raw. He had been fooled, toyed with by his own Soulmate...the child growing in Zhou Zishu's belly was an Alpha girl and worse...she wasn't even HIS. And it was she that was causing the disruption in Zhou Zishu's mind...there was no greater bond between an Alpha and Omega than their child. Not only that, the girl was *strong*, her Alpha presence was potent.

Worse, she was the child of Wen Kexing, the wolf pup from Undercity, that filthy mangey...dishonorable cretin! The only way he learned this was putting 2 and 2 together. 'Lao

Wen', the scent of cardamom that night when the two of them were in the Crane Pavilion...that wasn't happenstance. Somehow that dog was able to gain access to an Imperial Escort uniform and re-established some connection with Zhou Zishu.

How could he have been outsmarted? No, *bested*.

Perhaps Zhou Zishu WAS indeed a victim of a rape, surely in his former job occupation no doubt he must have ran into that wolf...and despite Zi Shu being an Omega with considerable martial arts talent. What could he do against that BEAST? No, Zhou Zishu was a VICTIM and this child, despite her unsavory creation, was innocent. He shall love and nurture her the right way, she'll be civilized and become a strong yet polite Alpha woman. And he'll ensure that the right Alpha male be her mate..after all, an Alpha man will be able to tame her properly. Helian Yi thought that if he was lucky, she would grow up to be infertile.

Helian Yi kept track of Zhou Zishu, the Royal Physicians were masters and healed Zi Shu, in less than an hour he was up and about and spotted that he was in the middle of being tailored in his wedding qipao. Truly stunning, his pretty soulmate, Helian Yi calmed himself. This was a setback and nothing more, he needed to trust in his soulmate, in his vulnerability.

Yet...the more he dwelled on this. The more furious he became and that's when he noticed it.

Zhou Zishu was holding something in his hand, it wasn't a hairpin or trinket but it was small...a memento?

From Wen Kexing.

Breathing in deeply to regain his focus, Helian Yi slipped his mobile back into his suit jacket and made his way to the bridal chamber, the 7th palace was his home for so long, he knew every nook and corner well. It was his paradise but he knew the Emperor's Heavenly Palace was far grander and for all his scheming and all the good he's done for the three cities, Helian Yi never once set foot within those walls. After tomorrow, after their first night as Alpha and Omega, Zhou Zishu will be his exalted Omega mate, the path was lined in fortune and glory, his descendants will be held in high regard and revered for generations to come. This was all a setback, a stumbling stone in the road and like so many things....it will be dealt with accordingly.

The servants and maids quickly bowed and scrambled as Helian Yi approached, the two Window of Heaven men parted to allow him to enter and would insure that he would have complete privacy with his precious Mate.

Within the bridal chamber were assorted chests of gold and silk, finely woven red with the brightest blues and greens to make the elegantly embroidered phoenix that adorned loving sacred patterns on the qipao. Helian Yi prided himself on his research, he wanted the past to come alive when his Zi Shu walked into the chamber and just silently admired Zhou Zishu. How lovely he looked, how lovelier he'd be if that was HIS child swelling in that belly and not that vile Wen Kexing. A setback.

"My love." Zhou Zishu turned around with mild surprise, strange...he should've been able to pick up his scent, pregnant Omegas were particularly sensitive to their Alpha scents and energy yet Zi Shu stood tall and strong, his strength returning...looking more vibrant and healthy. That

cursed child in his womb and the strong possibility that Wen Kexing made contact with him days before. A setback, “Tomorrow, we shall be Mated, uniting our souls as one, as true Soulmates.”

“Yes, Alpha...I’m..nervous but excited.” Zhou Zishu smiled and such a smile could crumble the strongest man to rubble, so gracious, “Are you nervous Alpha?” And Helian Yi began to laugh.

“How absurd Zi Shu, everything is providence...not once in my life have I ever felt the fear of failure, when one is confronted with the potential of doom, one must stand like a mountain against all storms. As an Alpha, it is my nature to be a mountain always, a protector for my Mate and my children.” Helian Yi’s voice was full of pride and vigor, surely, Zhou Zishu felt it. Yet he stood *unmoving*, steadily blinking almost as if he was watching a performance. The Imperial physician said the Alpha girl in Zhou Zishu had an aura from a STRONG Alpha, stronger than him, she didn’t match Helian Yi. She was... *stronger* than him, more Alpha than him. And that strength is what was keeping Zhou Zishu grounded.

With her, Zi Shu was the mountain. And HE was the storm...

A setback..

Zhou Zishu noticed Helian Yi staring at his belly, there was a smell...like burning cigarettes that irritated his nostrils, hostility, anger...disgust. But why?

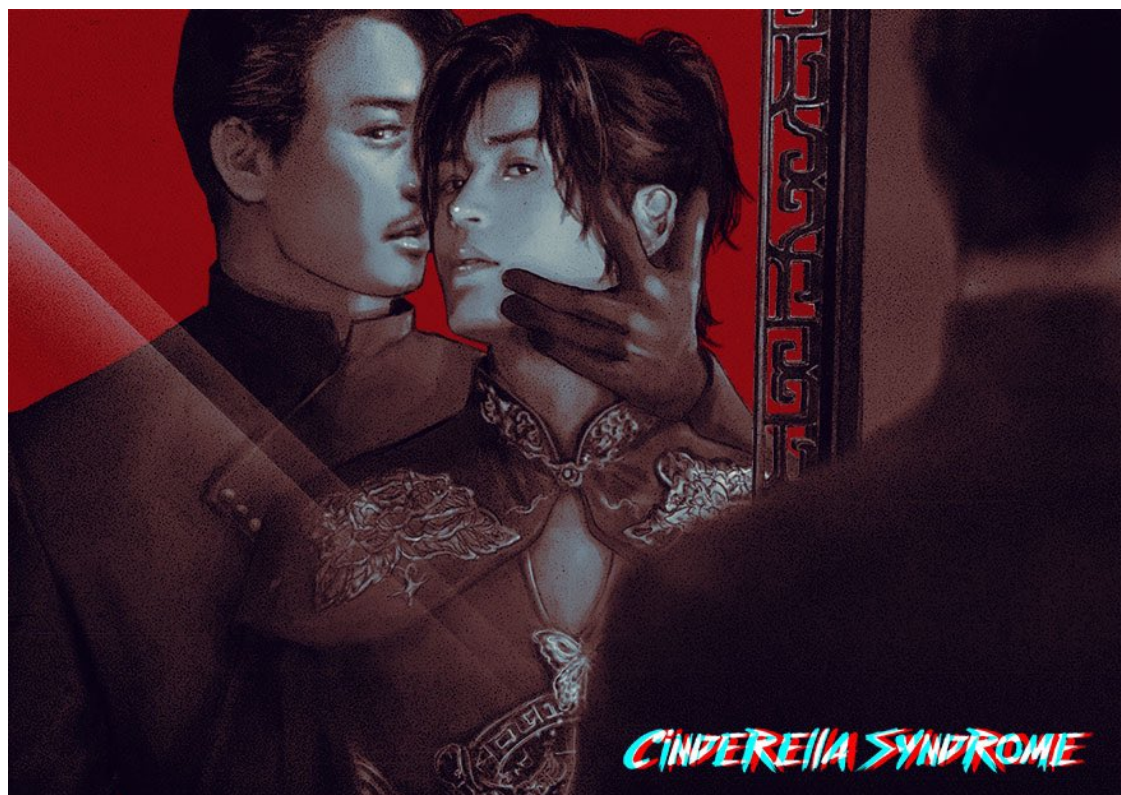
“Alpha? Is something wrong?”

“Zi Shu, my love...you have endured a great deal of hardships haven’t you? In your quest to gain a higher status, no doubt you had to be confronted by the cruelties of living in the Middle and working in the Undercity. As a dancer, the realities of your occupation must have left you...vulnerable.”

“Vulnerable? No my Alpha.” Zhou Zishu turned back around to face the full body three panel mirror, “I was taught by my master to harness my Omega deficiencies and use them as an advantage against opponents. The Undercity *never* scared me, the people, the sights...despite the dangers, I knew...” And Zi Shu’s voice became soft as he felt his belly, his and Wen Kexing’s child. Lao Wen. How could he hate the Undercity? He met soulmate and father of his child there. Lao Wen journeyed to the Uppercity and somehow was able to get to the 7th palace to get to him. No matter what, he *was* coming for him. “I knew...I was always going to be safe.” The loud thump of Helian Yi’s palms smacking the glass shook Zi Shu from his daydream and he stared into the golden glowing eyes of pure rage. “Alpha..w-what..”

“Safe with Wen Kexing, the Ghost Valley Chief you mean.” Fuck, Zhou Zishu turned around or tried to when he was grabbed by his jaw, he could feel his strength just draining from him and kept his hand on his belly. When Helian Yi saw that, he grabbed Zi Shu’s hand and forced it from his stomach and pressed it hard against the glass. Keeping their hands together, the penthouse key firmly clenched in his free hand. “Tell me my love...this *child*, this cub growing inside you...was she planted by force or by mutual affection?”

“A-alpha-” Zhou Zishu forced, he couldn’t fight back, even though he’s healing, he’s still high risk and the force of Helian Yi’s aura was suffocating him, the smell of burning intensified, he was becoming so weak.



“You **LIED** to me, that day in the **Kingdom of Morality**...you uttered that you were carrying my child to stop the pain didn't you? I owe Peng Ju a sincere apology, you **ARE** truly cunning and cruel Zi Shu.” Helian Yi's words triggered a memory, the feeling of the nails returned, soreness in his nape became sharper and the beating in his chest felt like it was going to make his heart explode. His baby, his little girl...her energy was trembling and she was growing weaker. “Did you think that you could pass this child off as my own? Is that what you wanted? To make me into a fool?” Zi Shu couldn't breathe, his baby girl....his baby girl...

And a purple glow appeared in his eyes, his fingers pressed hard into the glass as if he was going to shatter it and freed himself from Helian Yi's hold. His hand squeezing the key so tightly that drops of blood trickled from between his fingers.

“You...have some *fucking* balls...” Zhou Zishu **GROWLED**. Those eyes were a striking violet that looked like there was lightning striking from within him as sweat dripped down the corners of his face. “You blackmailed me, you kidnapped me, you drugged me, you **RAPED** me and force a bond on me....and you fucking...**BLAME** me for lying? My sins heavier than the ones you committed upon me? I do **NOT** love you Helian Yi and I will ***fucking*** kill you if you hurt my little girl.” Even in the face of such *righteous* fury, never has there been a more beautiful sight. Helian Yi was awestruck, a mother's wrath, an Omega's wrath...standing before him was a feeling of standing before someone who looked at him like he was **FILTH** beneath him. But like all storms, they were temporary and Zi Shu began to cool down as quickly as he burned, he stumbled back against the mirror, shaking and gasping...holding his belly and feeling so dizzy. “L-lao Wen...I..please...”

The door opened and the two Window of Heaven men barged in but Helian Yi stopped them, enraptured with Zi Shu's presence and unable to pull his eyes off him. The cunning Alpha fixed himself up and approached his trembling Mate softly, brushing back the strands of his sweaty locks with a tender touch.

“Zi Shu...forgive me, my malice was that of a weak Alpha’s jealousy. I am truly ashamed. My sins outweigh yours yet I *know* such actions, while extreme...these measures are what one must do walk on the path of meting out virtue and justice.” Zi Shu’s breathing was shallow, his life energy was going to his womb out of pure fear and desperation. Helian Yi knew that and placed his hand over Zi Shu’s on his belly, “This little girl...although she is not mine, I *graciously* bear the responsibility of raising her as a virtuous young woman, refined, noble, gifted and feminine.” Zhou Zishu weakly looked up and then he felt it...the dreaded sharp **Yielding Pull** needling into his mind again, gone was the pleasure of the early morning, now was replaced with a cruel tug.

"No...stop it, stop it Helian Yi." Zhou Zishu whispered and pushed his hand away or tried to, "Don't do this...please.."

"Zi Shu, you yielded to me already, the bites remain on you because there's a part of you that longs to submit, to be owned." And Helian Yi grabbed Zhou Zishu face roughly, the small sparks of blue glow flickering away, "I was too gentle on you before...too trusting even after your betrayals because I was soft, your beauty and strength, my lust for you overrode my logic. But I'm too close to what I want and I cannot afford to lose it. Not even for you, my love. Yield to me." Zi Shu didn't have a choice, he can feel the energy in his womb decreasing, his little girl was so frail, he had to protect her, "Zi Shu."

"Don't...take him away, Lao Wen, please...let me have his name."

"Yield Zi Shu." Oh no...*no*, he JUST remembered Wen Kexing’s name, his face, his smile...the squeezing of the key was cutting into in his palm, he couldn’t muster the strength to repel Helian Yi like before. All of his focus was going into his daughter which left him unable to shield himself. There was a brief crest of tears in his eyes, becoming wet and glossy, *he was losing Wen Kexing in his mind again*. In order to preserve it would mean stopping the shielding over his womb. And Helian Yi *knew* that. "This time, I will be more thorough."

Somehow...he felt that he played right into Helian Yi’s trap. Foolish Zi Shu.

“Lao Wen...” Zhou Zishu uttered, his voice broken and the tears that escaped his eyes clung to his cheek...he had to let Lao Wen go, in order to save his daughter.

In his mind and his heart.

'Lao Wen' had to die.

The blue faded from his eyes, his resistance evaporated and all of his remaining focus, his energy was channeled to 'comforting' his daughter. Helian Yi pressed his forehead against his, feeling his pull tighten and firm into Zhou Zishu's mind. The Alpha kissed as the tears finally dripped down, he reached down and opened Zhou Zishu’s fist, bloody and tight with the penthouse key. He takes the key and slips it in his pocket, he's won.

“Please don’t hurt our baby.”

“Our daughter needs a proper example, structure and she’ll need *brothers*. No more mistakes. We’ll try again." Helian Yi chided with a smile so warm and bright, the fog is lifting in Zi Shu...his Alpha was so kind and generous, so forgiving and he was such a silly thing, keeping

secrets. No, that's done, "The past is the past...you'll understand your place now don't you? My love? No more ideas or resistance. You'll breed and obey, yes? " Helian Yi brushes back Zi Shu's hair and kisses the tears, "Answer me. An obedient Omega *responds*."

"Yes Alpha...I'm...sorry for disappointing you." And Zi Shu could smell the scent of cedarwood, the smell of his Alpha's musk made him feel so warm. "I'm sorry I lied to you." Helian Yi kissed Zi Shu's bloody palm and wrapped his handkerchief over the injury, together they stood and Helian Yi kissed his face affectionately. "Please forgive me..."

"Of course my love, of course...after all, this was just a **setback**."

Soulmates

Chapter Summary

Never let go.

Chapter Notes

Note 12/07/21

There's no update this week as I'll be at a con this weekend! However NEXT weekend (12/17-18/21) IS the final chapter/Epilogue. Thank you for your patience, it will be SO worth it!

“It has become clear to me that there are far more nefarious criminals that lurk in the corners of the Undercity, foul and vicious men who only seek to harm the innocent either by violence, illegal drugs or salaciousness and AMORAL acts upon one another. Those criminals have leisurely enjoyed the freedoms due to their carnal pursuits and long since were emboldened by those in higher office, who aligned their own wants with theirs. No mercy to conspirators with the criminals, no matter where they hide or their status. All shall be judged fairly, justice will be done. In order for a true harmonious beginning to flourish, we will need to extinguish the fire of demons and sinners that have taken root within all the cities. That is my sincerest desire and with your help, we shall create a future far safer and righteous than ever before. With that said, I have issued warrants for the following arrest of the Chief of the Ghost Valley Wen Kexing and his associates. So that they will stand trial for all of their crimes. Lethal Force is allowed if left no choice.”

“Find Wen Kexing.” Helian Yi concluded his speech, dignified and sure, already soaking in his newly established position as Administrator of the Ascension of Moral Purity. He spoke loud and clear with his Window of Heaven sect standing at attention as the drones transmitted his speech to the three cities. From the outset it was almost as if he was assuming the title of Emperor...but surely it was a mere coincidence.

In the secret tunnel deep below the Undercity, Wen Kexing and Ye Baiyi patiently waited till the sentries shifted rotations. Admittedly the Immortal was impressed by Helian Yi's ability to swift action, the Ascension of Moral Purity in theory wasn't terrible...a way for people in lower status to achieve a high status within their lifetimes. But Helian Yi lived in a black and white world and judged accordingly...and considering what he knows about this man, Ye Baiyi was sure he wasn't as 'righteous and virtuous' as he proclaimed.

Luo Fumeng has been keeping tabs on the number of roaming hunters and gangs that are eager to curry favour with Helian Yi, she herself is well protected with the techies in a discreet location that not even Wen Kexing is aware of. Probably for the best, if the worst happened, she would become the Chief.

The area the two men were hiding in was a small paradise in the darkness, a complete ruin of the former cities that was built over and reconstructed to the modern Upper, Middle and Undercities, yet these bones remained. Ye Baiyi deleted the memory of the automaton driver and stepped out of the van to breathe. The pent up scent of Wen Kexing was driving him insane...two potent Alphas without an Omega to counterbalance caused MANY bloody battles in his youth.

Wen Kexing looked at his tablet with revulsion...he read in-between the lines and Helian Yi wasn't shy on exaggerating what he thought Wen Kexing *was*. And the young Chief can admit he was MANY things...but he wasn't going to be judged by some pompous asshole Alpha. He squeezed Zi Shu's slipper, remembering the day they spent together...how beautiful Zhou Zishu was, his pregnant A-xu...this slipper was expensive and fitted Zi Shu so perfectly. Yet somehow he felt that his A-xu would be happier with something simple, he didn't appear to be an Omega swayed by fortune...he just wanted to be comfortable, protected.

A simple slipper given out of love. Perhaps when this was over...

As exited the van, Wen Kexing felt a sharp pain in his heart and in his head, like he was hit by a bullet and dropped the slipper...he tried to bend down to retrieve it but everything began to spin.

Immediately he spat up blood, the most he's ever vomited, his eyes were blurry and the pain was indescribable. Wen Kexing leaned against the van trying to get his vision back but everything was shifting and fading in and out. This feeling, even if he didn't understand...he KNEW it was A-xu.

Zhou Zishu was dying.

"Hey, idiot...hmm?" Ye Baiyi moved like a blur and placed his hand on Wen Kexing's forehead, "Your bond to Zi Shu.."

"It...it's been severed..." Wen Kexing coughed and tried to regain his strength, "I don't...understand how..."

"You're sure you re-established your bond with Zhou Zishu?" Ye Baiyi tensed, the worry in his voice wasn't missed by Wen Kexing who tried to look up at him but the world kept spinning and he coughed up more blood. "Foolishness, I placed too much faith in your competence it seems."

"Old monster, I...don't need your...shit..*koff* I need to go back to Zi Shu."

"Impossible, they are now in the Emperor's palace. Even in disguise the Imperial Escorts will be able to sense your presence as it's chaotic and wilting by the second. They will execute you on the spot before you even make it past the Divine Gate." Ye Baiyi grunted with disappointment and sighed, he looked over to a drainage pipe that poured out to a small but

fertile patch of land, remnants of a temple long since abandoned with various carp growing fat as they complacently in a clear pond. It was a tranquil spot for meditating and the older Alpha practically pushed Wen Kexing down on a boulder, "This is a good place to bury you."

"Ugh, you tell terrible jokes...I'm not going to die. I WON'T die."

"Everyone dies, some sooner than others." Ye Baiyi attempted to transfer some of his Internal Energies into Wen Kexing but he knew it was futile. This was a Soulmate's bond that was broken in him and he needed to be HEALED by his Soulmate. Currently both are fading, "Wen Kexing, without your Soulmate...re-establishing that bond, you will not live to see another sunset. I can only repair so much and Zi Shu only has your child's bond to keep him standing, however, in his condition, he will not survive the birth."

"Shut up, don't underestimate my A-xu *ugh*....don't...underestimate *us* ." Wen Kexing coughed another round of blood, this was bad, he was positive that he helped Zhou Zishu reconnect...he heard Zi Shu call him 'Lao Wen'. It was a successful mission so what the hell happened?

"Zi Shu, despite being a strong Omega, in his state and Helian Yi's influence..it is very possible he was able to re-establish his bond with a Yield. As long as he has those bites, Zi Shu will not be able to resist that. Which is WHY you must always complete the Circuit."

"So this is **my** fault?"

"Yes." Ye Baiyi said bluntly and resisted slapping Wen Kexing in the back of his head, "Such an idiot child. You are an ALPHA, if you initiate the bites then you need to complete them. You *failed* to do so." Wen Kexing didn't need to have the old monster making him feel worse than he *already* does. In truth, he wanted to take Zhou Zishu so many times and he's replayed this over and over in his head. What would he do differently? What he should've done? If only he knew how bad shit would've become. But Wen Kexing couldn't dwell on his failures or he'd collapse into despair, he HAD to do something...if he was able to reach A-xu once, he could again, he just needed time.

"Old monster...tell me the truth. You're not mortal are you?" And Ye Baiyi paused his healing, well, perhaps this brat is a bit more observant than he pegged.

"Centuries ago when I built the cities, it was in effort to protect the humans from the demons. Many honorable and noble warriors fell to create this. Hmph, if they only could've seen what it's become.." Ye Baiyi stared at the stream with the fish swimming tranquil in the clear green waters, "A large tree no matter the age will begin to rot without diligence. All the caretakers I left in charge of this place have left it in a weaker state...and I fear this will be the last century for the three cities."

"Ha, I get it...so you're looking for redemption too. Don't want to admit you fucked up either."

"Show respect, I could've left you on the ground now that Zhou Zishu is going to die. You're useless." Wen Kexing turned to face Ye Baiyi with a heated crimson stare, "Oh? Like a child being told no."

"I will NOT let A-xu die."

“Then what will you do?”

“Tear this fucking place apart to get to him.”

“You can *barely* stand.”

“Then I’ll fucking *crawl* .”

“Tell me idiot child. For this love...what would you sacrifice?”

“Are you going senile? My heart, my blood, my flesh, my bones, my soul...my very *ashes* ...all belong to A-xu and I *will* save him. This is my vow.” Wen Kexing clutched his chest, “Don’t ask me stupid questions again.” Ye Baiyi leaned back and gave it some thought, his memories were centuries long...he’s met so many who spoke like Wen Kexing, made those same vows and some were indeed honorable and some died without fulfilling their oaths. And as annoyingly stupid he was, Ye Baiyi actually didn’t hate him...

The Immortal has had MANY loves, some were close to him and others mere flings...many he’s told who he was and many he’s watched fade away from a distance.

This is the first time in a VERY long one that Ye Baiyi was actually...contemplating his immortality.

Xie’er.

Could he watch him die..? Does he want to live alone without him? How did this little Scorpion manage to sting him so deeply? How beautiful his body, his kisses...he wanted to wake up feeling Xie’er’s weight on him. Ye Baiyi’s never met an Omega like him and knew that he’d probably never encounter anyone like him again.

Immortality was something he achieved through many trials and cultivation, what he’s learned and developed, what he’s passed on to others that shared his vision or at least he THOUGHT he did. Ye Baiyi was proud of what he was able to accomplish. But now..

“I am tired of snow...” Ye Baiyi whispered with a softness in his voice that Wen Kexing hadn’t heard, he didn’t think it was possible. He didn’t understand what he said but he FELT that weariness, that wistfulness. The sound of a man-Immortal or not-in love.

“Looking to retire with a *scorpion* ?”

“If that’s what he wants.” Wen Kexing smirked and sighed, the pain on his chest still present but he was focused on his thoughts of A-xu.

“Hmph...then maybe we’re more alike than you want to admit.”

“Hold your tongue or is your mind *finally* failing you?” Ye Baiyi snapped back but it had no bite, not as much as it could, “I made my choice...” he faced Wen Kexing sitting on the boulder, “Wen Kexing..stand up and come to me.”

“What?”

"I have Zhou Zishu in my hands squeezing his throat...he will die unless you come to me." The visual of Zi Shu blurred in Wen Kexing's mind, if he was in danger...no, he IS in danger, right now he's alone, he and his child. "Any child can make a vow, you failed twice...if you were given a final attempt to save your Soulmate's life. Then put yours on the line. Not with empty platitudes." The Alpha Wolf had steam coming from his mouth, the pain right now was so brutal and he knows A-xu is fighting too. Slowly, Wen Kexing stood and slowly made his way towards Ye Baiyi. He didn't save Zi Shu yesterday but he *was* going to save his family. There was an inferno inside him, boiling his body and if he could...he'd drain every drop of blood from his body if it spared one tear from Zhou Zishu's eyes. He stood before Ye Baiyi, blood pouring from his lips.

"Give him...back to me..." Wen Kexing's voice was full of anguish and anger, harsh, regret and remorse for what he couldn't do to help Zi Shu when he needed him the most. Zhou Zishu was his mate, his SOULMATE, he was a dream and his spirit connected so seamlessly to his own. The young Alpha took out his polar white fan and swung at Ye Baiyi with the remaining strength within him...moving through the vapor image of his A-xu to strike the Immortal.

Good.

With four quick strikes to his meridians, Wen Kexing had no time to even block or react before the last strike hit him hard in his chest. The amount of energy shot through him shook the ground, sending force throughout the area and cracked the boulder in two. The pond erupted in a brilliant splash and the van rocked from the aftershocks. The blow would've been fatal...if that was what Ye Baiyi wanted...he grabbed Wen Kexing's wrist to keep him from falling back and placed two fingers on his forehead. There was so much energy being released and refocused back into him, mending his Internal energy but it felt so ancient, too much flooding in pathways. This was an Immortal's life energy...and it threatened to tear him apart. Ye Baiyi released Wen Kexing and watched him stumble back, expecting him to fall but the boy withstood the transfer and he was impressed, Wen Kexing shook his head trying to adjust to this new force circulating inside him...when he noticed a white streak in Ye Baiyi's hair.

"Wh-what happened to-"

"Huh? You are truly stupid...I gave you a meager portion of my life. When you save Zi Shu, you will give a portion of it to him. You have until tomorrow's sunset to transfer it to Zi Shu, if you fail to do so, your body will become sea foam." Ye Baiyi spoke like this was the most normal thing to do, "1,000 years I've spent with my Immortality...obtaining it required sacrifice and patience, I wanted to know more, more martial arts, more knowledge, my soul and mind achieving balance. And for that, I had to sacrifice bonds with humanity, understanding the fragility, the love and its depths." The Immortal stared at Wen Kexing, "That is my gift to you and Zhou Zishu...if you fail, you will die and hopefully, you'll find each other again in a new life."

"Thank you, Senior Yi." Wen Kexing kowtowed, he didn't know what to say or do, twice Ye Baiyi has helped him with this final time sacrificing his own life for this chance...whatever it took, Wen Kexing knew he *couldn't* fail, he *wouldn't* fail. A sound of a 'click' followed by a flash got his attention and there was Xie'er standing there, mobile in hand with a coyishly sweet smile on his beautiful face. "Xie'er."

"Forgive me sir." Xie'er smirked and turned to Ye Baiyi, "Senior Yi wanted payback and I just *couldn't* refuse him. He's very...convincing."

"What payback?!"

"Using my bank account without my permission...you little shit." Wen Kexing chewed on his lip before he dusted off his knees, there was blush on his face from the embarrassment of being played by both his sworn brother and the Immortal monster. So he snorts and adjusts his jacket in an attempt to regain his pride...the Immortal had a 1,000 year catalog of being a sly asshole at his disposal and he used it well. "If you want the photo, you'll just have to pay for it... *double* what you spent."

"You fucking old monster."

Xie'er revealed a very drunk, cuffed and very unconscious Zhao Jing in the trunk, apparently during the ride he became paranoid that the Ghost were going to kill him so Xie'er suggested hiding in the trunk where he predictably passed out thankfully he didn't choke on the vomit.

The Scorpion King informed both Ye Baiyi and Wen Kexing that the amount of information he was able to transfer to Luo Fumeng would be enough to sink Helian Yi. When he showed the data cube and all the intel within, Wen Kexing was ready to rend the man to thin ribbons, so did Ye Baiyi...Xie'er really could only stop Wen Kexing but barely, thankful that Ye Baiyi had the sense and patience to not act on murderous intent even though he was disgusted. He wasn't ready to reveal exactly who Zhou Zishu was, he didn't have confirmation, however he did get a request by the Royal Physicians for an immediate counsel to discuss the details of Zi Shu's examination. Right now, Ye Baiyi felt it was best to withhold all of this until the time was right. And with Zhao Jing's wedding invite...that was possible.

All three men boarded the black van with Zhao Jing hogtied and threw him in the van, they had a long drive and a lot to plan and not a lot of time. This was it, the final drive to the Uppercity.

Wen Kexing couldn't sleep, he had been up for more than 48 hours coasting on pure energy and rage, the video of Zhao Jing and Helian Yi talking about Zhou Zishu like he was some fucking priceless vase to sell, that Helian Yi...this high and mighty affluent Alpha, who literally could have anyone he wanted without trying. Sunk to the level of buying an unwilling Omega off some Auction website, a website created by someone he actually trusted. Fate was a cruel thing but fate also brought him to Zhou Zishu...and now this was the last chance he'd ever have in saving him and his child.

He clutched the slipper tightly.

Wait for me A-xu.

It took the entire day to plan this, Xie'er was able to be smuggled in pretty easy...as an Omega and one that was generally elusive even in the Undercity, all he needed to do was slip in with the Bridal servants and appear 'dainty'. He wasn't a fan of removing his jewelry and piercings but for a chance to provide some safety and comfort for Zhou Zishu. This was a small sacrifice.

Wen Kexing on the other hand was a completely different case, everyone recognized his face but they had something for that...if Zhao Jing was able to scramble HIS image from cameras, no reason why that same technology couldn't be used on Wen Kexing. The techies were working over time to gain access to the network of drones and cameras that would be recording and transmitting the wedding, they needed to act fast. As for him, well, Wen Kexing couldn't resist making an entrance. The only thing Ye Baiyi requested was this rescue to be 'bloodless'.

Afternoon....the day of the wedding. Uppercity.

Emperor's Palace, the most luxurious and spacious of any palace in the three cities...the walls concealed the main palace as a thousand gleaming gold sentries stood guard with armor pulsing with spiritual energy. The few human escorts protected the thousand steps that lead to the entry, the pillars coiled with magnificent holographic dragons that twisted down white gleaming pillars to the Uppercity. There were eight massive courtyards with eight pavilions and pagodas, gardens and waterfalls that cascaded into the lush forests and temples below...the one that was most cherished was The Koi Palace. Surrounded by eight pools and tranquil paths that seemingly always possessed a faint scent of cardamom despite there being no such plant in the various species that filled the garden scape.

Where the wedding of Helian Yi and Zhou Zishu was going to be held.

Once the ceremony was finished, the married couple would be allowed to pass through the gates. They would become effectively...lost to the world. A status above all others in the Uppercity.

Deities.

Zhou Zishu sat quietly, still, his eyes vacant as the Omega attendants dressed and prepared him in his elaborate rich red qipao...each gold, emerald and sapphire thread to create the phoenix that embroidered his gown in stunning detail. The Omega attendants placed each adorning golden hair clips with gentle blossoms and intricate phoenixes that crowned the center with pearls and crystals dangling down in the side of his face, glittering and delicate. He was a beautiful, fragile, submissive Omega bride.

Everything Zi Shu *wasn't*.

He wanted to speak but he *couldn't*...it was like his voice was locked away. He could see and hear everything...but there was nothing he could do. Caged within his own body, holding a small flame that was his daughter but he couldn't even feel her presence. Zhou Zishu was in a

waking nightmare. All he had was the singular goal...keeping his baby girl alive, after that...he could die.

But....he didn't want to die, to leave his little girl in the hands of a controlling Alpha who will hate her, she'll grow up unloved or worse. Zhou Zishu couldn't remember who he was before this, he could remember anything but Helian Yi...he should live for his Alpha, for his daughter...and he wanted to so desperately.

"Mistress." An Omega male whispered, he barely turned to the voice so the man knelt down in front of him, "Mistress. It's time. Come, the sedan is waiting." Zhou Zishu stood quietly, his body moving but his heart felt so heavy. There was something or someone he was waiting for...yet, he didn't understand why? Who could be more important than his Alpha? No, he promised to be obedient, that's what he promised.

Zhou Zishu needed to live. He needed to live...he wanted to live.

A rainy night escape, frantic kisses, teasing his lips, a smile, deadly and beautiful...mocking but oh so sweet.

He felt a pulse in his womb. That's strange...he's never felt that before, was the baby okay? That he didn't know but as he was loaded into the sedan being escorted by attendants and servants but Zhou Zishu thought he caught something in the corner of his eye, a figure in crimson red from top to bottom...they moved through the crowds effortlessly. The pulse returned softer, almost as if the baby was trying to speak to Zhou Zishu.

*"Such a **troublesome** Omega too."*

*"I have a feeling you'd like **trouble**."*

The bridal sedan floated gently in the pathway towards the Koi Palace as drones filled the sky to record the event to the three cities as massive 80ft meters showed the procession making way through the city. To the outside world, this was a momentous occasion, a blessing, a celebrity wedding straight out of a fairy tale. Fragrant flower petals filled the sky as they floated down over the beautiful bride inside the sedan. On his way to a happy ending with the dashing prince. Zi Shu looked at the crowd but they had no face, he could hear only the muffled cheers of excited wealthy Uppercity citizens...the Emperor's Palace rested far above him, the highest palace of the three cities.

*"The muzzle is good...or else I'd **gobble** you up."*

*"You don't **scare** me...I know what those lips can do."*

Why did his heart speed up and pulse quicken?

"L-L..." Zhou Zishu uttered breathlessly...barely above a whisper, no one could've heard him but when he said it, his womb pulsed strong and was lively. "L-lao....Wen..." Why did this name cause such a familiar taste of hot sweetness to fill his mouth? Why did he long to kiss that name?

Who was Lao Wen?

Zi Shu looked down at his injured palm where something cut him...it was a small thing...what was it? Zhou Zishu didn't know and yet this feeling came over him to press his lips to the wound. Whatever this meant...this feeling. He'll hold it to his chest, let that feeling transfer to his womb...this his daughter. The sedan slowed to a stop and Zi Shu was carefully escorted to the front of the Koi Palace gate.

The red figure caught his eye again...they seemed so close now but Zi Shu wasn't sure, he couldn't see fully on who this person was...yet there was something inside Zi Shu...something that made him feel like there was hope.

*“Lao Wen...you said you're the **wolf** ...”*

*“Perhaps I am willing to be **tamed** . If only for a moment. ”*

A moment....

Zi Shu kissed his palm again, the only feeling he had was when his womb pulsed and he felt his lips on the injury...something important was inside him and whatever he held in his hand meant the world to him too but that was lost. A name and his child was all he possessed now.

Maybe...that would be enough.

The courtyard of the Koi Palace was drenched in red lanterns and bows, fine silken cloths over the rows of tables where the most exclusive of guests and members of the Emperor's court seated to watch as the bride walked arm and arm with a Omega servant he felt he was familiar with. The scent triggered a memory within him, oleander...or wisteria...was this an Omega? Zi Shu didn't know but somehow he felt secure in his hold, gently squeezing him like he was someone that he rediscovered. In a strange sense, that was something Zhou Zishu treasured...did he know anyone before this marriage? Did he have friends? Was he friends with this 'Lao Wen?' Was THIS man 'Lao Wen?'. He didn't know and he was fading so fast now, the energy he was devoting to his daughter was draining him...

There at the end of the walkway stood Helian Yi, standing proudly in matching hanfu of stunning reds and blacks, golden threads that shone brightly in the sun...he stared at his Omega, proudly that he was able to break Zhou Zishu. Turned him from a fiery Omega into one that will bear him many sons, he had full confidence in that. This was going to be the start of a new dynasty, Helian Yi had plans on taking over, he just needed access to the Emperor and once he was in the palace, that would be possible. It was clear that the Emperor was only in name, no real power in him....just the status and the power, that power was something Helian Yi needed and knew he could get. If the three cities were going to truly evolve far beyond his dreams...Helian Yi needed to be able to have access to more influence and once people saw how effective his Ascension of Moral Purity Initiative was, he was sure the rest would follow.

Zi Shu was a small part of it, a small and beautiful part of it. *And he belonged to him.*

Helian Yi reached out to take Zi Shu's hand, surrounded by mounds of finery and gifts of gold, treasures beyond belief...all more extravagant than the last gift, to curry favour with the Uppercity's newest powerful Alpha, no doubt to forgive any transgressions that might be

uncovered in Helian Yi's campaign. He turned Zi Shu to face the guests, a man dressed in complete white from head to toe...he had a stern yet sullen look on his handsome face...there was a streak of white in his hair. How strange, Zhou Zishu thought to himself, this man was familiar to him like the Omega servant and yet he couldn't get a complete image in his mind. Suddenly flashes of the night of the performance filled him...screens judging him...judging him? Why? What performance? There was a slight tremble in Zhou Zishu, a trickle of blood dripped from the corner of his lips and he quickly dapped it away. Why was he hurting? Why was he dying? Why was he standing with Helian Yi? Zi Shu needed stability, he needed security and safety...his mind was swimming in anguish and heartache and he didn't understand why? Helian Yi was speaking but he couldn't hear his words, the officiator instructed them to perform the kowtow Heaven and Earth.

*I....don't **want** to do this...please...*

Zhou Zishu was barely standing now, his body felt so weak...his *heart*, his *baby*..

The officiator instructed the couple to kowtow to their parents...Zi Shu didn't have family, *he was all alone*...

Zhou Zishu was screaming in a soundless prison, holding the tiny flame of his daughter as he bowed to the memorial tablets of Helian Yi's parents.

*No, no I **can't** leave her, I don't **want** to die...*

He was growing paler and Helian Yi glanced at his fading Omega. It was going to be okay, he wasn't concerned, once they performed the final kowtow...he'll complete the circuit and Zhou Zishu will be bonded to him forever...his energy is robust and strong. He will protect his precious Omega...just as nature intended for such things.

Finally, the officiator instructed the couple to kowtow to one another.

*I **don't** love you...I **DON'T** love you.....say it, Zi Shu....say it!*

Even if this is the last thing he ever says on this earth...then perhaps in his next life...he'll be happy.

SAY IT ZHOU ZISHU!

Zhou Zishu stood in front of Helian Yi, the final kowtow.

"No." The horrific look on Helian Yi's face was worth it, it was small and cracking...harsh and cold.

The closed doors to the ceremony burst open with a thunderous bang as the figure in crimson cloaks walked in dragging a large chest behind him, steam jettison from underneath his hood as his face was concealed in shadows, the guests all gasp in surprise but Ye Baiyi snorted, it was amazing what a portion of 1000 year old life energy can do to a mortal. But he kept a careful eye at the time...it was almost sunset.

"How dare you interrupt this ceremony! Are you a fool with a death wish?" Helian Yi barked and clutched Zi Shu's hand, his Window of Heaven men quickly swooped down and gathered with the unit of Imperial Escorts that crowded around the mysterious figure, pikes and swords drawn, ready to dispatch the intruder at a single command.

"No...I came to turn myself in." And the figure stepped back behind the chest and pulled off his cloak to reveal to all in attendance, "I am Wen Kexing, Chief of Ghost Valley." The young Alpha stood there, his red and black muzzle affixed to his face and his eyes focused only on Zi Shu. The drones swiftly descended and from all angles the visage of the handsome dangerous criminal was transmitted to raucous shouts and curses.

"Hmph, is that so...such disrespect, do you think coming to me now would grant you mercy?"

"Helian Yi....didn't you say during your shitty speech that no one was above your sight and dealing out justice and restoring morality?" Wen Kexing threw back, still not taking his eyes off his A-xu...resisting the urge to just rush over to him but no...Helian Yi needed to be dealt with. "Do you include yourself in that?" With a strong kick, Wen Kexing knocked the chest down and Zhao Jing tumbled out, his clothing filthy and soaked in booze as he struggled to stand with his hands cuffed behind his back. "My former associate seems to be a friend of both of us. And if that's the case, that means you worked for me." Helian Yi went wide eyed and steamed, gossip filled the room and his hold on Zi Shu became tighter, it was causing him pain and Zi Shu started to falter, "Let my Mate go."

"YOUR Mate? What nonsense...enough of this grandstanding, since you crave death so badly. Execute them."

"W-what?! Helian Yi NO!" Zhao Jing begged, "Y-you cannot dispose of me like I was some...henchman!" The coward looked at Wen Kexing as he tried to get himself back inside the chest. "Y-you cannot do this! We were allies!"

"Nonsense! I would never have any dealings with anyone so disreputable."

"¥ 6,000,000.00....that's how much it cost to by Zhou Zishu...isn't that right Zhao Jing?" And a light went on in the cowardly man's head.

"YES! T-that's how much he paid me for Zhou Zishu! I have proof! I have all the records! I-I can prove it!"

"*I* can prove it." And without warning, holoscreens and the drones all flickered on to everything that Xie'er sent to the techies, everything, all the reports, the footage in the Scorpion's Palace, the transaction between Helian Yi, Zhao Jing and Peng Ju. Everything was laid bare for the three cities to view. Helian Yi remained firm, he could explain all of this and he would, he had a back up plan.

"Hah, this theatrics...have you considered all of this as means to ensnare you and your criminal gang? That Zhao Jing *wouldn't* try to use this against me? You are playing a man's game and all those that know me, know that such drastic measures are necessary for ensure that justice can be obtained." The clever Alpha boasted and stared at his guests, not even breaking a sweat at being exposed in such a manner. "Zhou Zishu was a victim of your corruption, I brought him to SAVE him from your criminal life. An Omega like him...no, to lose him to your salaciousness

and sin. I could not bare it." Ye Baiyi stood up with a tilt of his head towards the arrogant Alpha.

"Helian Yi, are you saying that Zhou Zishu WAS indeed Wen Kexing's Mate before you brought him? To imply he was a Mate would mean they have had intimacy...was he bonded to Wen Kexing?"

"Venerable Ye Baiyi, as an Alpha, it is our sworn purpose to protect and breed Omegas...to keep them from vicious dogs such as Wen Kexing. He was on that board illegally, I SAVED Zi Shu from a life of crime and debauchery being a Mate to a renowned criminal like Wen Kexing."

"You informed the Royal Physicians that the child in Zhou Zishu's belly was a product of assault and that you didn't know the identity of the Alpha." Ye Baiyi fired back, "Do you know the penalty for lying to members of the Emperor's court?" Helian Yi started to pale and that's when Wen Kexing started to laugh.

"¥3,250,750.00..." Wen Kexing smirked with a gentle smile and Zi Shu's eyes flickered as he tried to focus on Wen Kexing before him and slowly...a memory surfaced. "You really want to bleed me dry, such a cruel spider you turned out to be."

"I...know...you're being cheap..."

"¥5,201,200.00...am I fat enough of a moth to eat?" Zhou Zishu laughed a little and it felt like a weight was crumbling on his soul, that night in the Red Oak room...their very first night. He looked at Wen Kexing as a 'mark' and he was an assassin. But he was so much more....he always was so much more.

"Lao Wen." No one could mistake that affectionate name nor the soft warmth of how it was spoken, only one person here was lying...and it was clear who it really was. Helian Yi grew thunderous, he yanked Zi Shu back hard, nearly sending him backwards. And that was it. **Enough, enough was enough.** A brilliant flash of purple light filled Zhou Zishu's eyes and without so much as a warning, everything in him, everything that he's kept in, all his pain and anger, his confusion and grief. All of it was focused in Zi Shu's palm and in one bone breaking strike. He sent THAT force into Helian Yi. The Alpha was flying back with such intensity that he collided into several officials and fell on the floor motionless, blood spurting from his mouth. He only had one last look at Zhou Zishu, at that fairy face filled with such disgust and anger.

The raw Internal Force spread within the ceremony hall, through every guest, sending the Window of Heaven men flat on the ground and contained enough power to down several drones in the process.

Ye Baiyi's didn't hide his grin, nor did he try to at the display, he could tell that Zhou Zishu was holding that power in for so long that when he released that strike, the Immortal felt it in his OWN meridians. My, my, his stupid student truly became quite the Master and trained a truly gifted Omega in Zhou Zishu. There was a tremble in Ye Baiyi's chest, a taste of blood...it's been so long since he felt such a force...and with his own Immortality was waning. The feeling was more acute. He knew the risk of spending so much time with mortals and their struggles instead of mediating here in the Heavenly Palace. Zi Shu's Internal Force shook

everyone in the area, such a graceful strike that he was impressed Helian Yi was still able to move, albeit somewhat. The Fragrant Palm of the Four Seasons, a non lethal strike that obliterates a foe's meridians...such a blow can be reversed but only by the striker. And judging by the coldness in Zhou Zishu's stare...looking down at the Alpha who stole so much from him, who threatened and controlled him. Mercy really wasn't there.

"Zi Shu...enough." Ye Baiyi said with a Master's firmness, "Let the justice be dealt by the Emperor." And the beautiful Omega looked up at him with equal coldness before reason returned, "This play has come to its natural end." And the Immortal dabbed his mouth of any stray blood, that streak of white becoming more prominent. He looked at Xie'er, decked in his disguise, red, sleek and lovely, his Scorpion gently slipping his hands underneath Zhou Zishu's arm to help him off the small stage.

That memory...ah, he remembered it finally....

So long ago...the Immortal left the Heavenly Palace to visit the current Royal Family, so many of them fell short of his expectations but turmoil and strife were not as plentiful as they were in his days. He didn't require for Royal Families to be battle hardened warriors in gleaming armor, the days of Demons and Beasts were gone. Yet, once every 20 years, Ye Baiyi would slip down and admire the progress of the three cities he established centuries ago. He wasn't impressed but he felt this time, his journey would be different.

By chance, Ye Baiyi encountered a beautiful princess in the Koi Palace...her grace, wisdom and nobility radiant almost as if she was the sun. How all in her court wanted her, *adored* her, gifted her jewels and finery from all over the lands, but she only had eyes for a beautiful simple pair of shoes. Gifted to her by a low class Alpha shoemaker, she wore them constantly and whenever they needed mending..no matter what time of day or night..the low class Alpha would come to serve her with all the love in his eyes.

Soon, The Koi Princess had many shoes, each more wonderful and full of the purest love a soul could possess. *Those days were different....*

The day came and the Emperor arranged her marriage, the night before the wedding the princess was so forlorn, willing to jump to her death if it meant that perhaps in the next life...she'd be reborn as a lower born woman. No status, no title, just a regular and completely ordinary woman...to live and die knowing a life full of love and not wealth. For all the wealth and status in the world didn't make her happy.

So Ye Baiyi, perhaps in a moment of weakness in his long life of being an Immortal, came to her...she thought of him as a 'Fairy Wish Bringing Uncle'...such a silly thing and yet, Ye Baiyi didn't correct her. He foolishly led her through the tunnels of the three cities and into the arms of her Alpha lover. A kind and proud man...who couldn't offer much but his absolute devotion and love.

The Immortal saw the lovers off with a few credits as a wedding gift, watched them drive away into the deep recesses of the Undercity. To a new life...

*But their love was created underneath an **ominous** star.*

A sickness struck the Middle and Undercity soon after that, the Palace had to contain the illness and suspend the search for the lost Koi Princess. The guilt *ate* at Ye Baiyi.

And after days, months then years of looking.. *Ye Baiyi never saw them again.*

Now, more than twenty years later, here...in the Koi Pavilion of the Summer Palace, the Immortal Ye Baiyi stood silently as Zhou Zishu looked at Wen Kexing with those same eyes of his mother, beautiful, bold, brave and true. This time he didn't help as directly as he could...he believed in Wen Kexing, in his love and patience. But he certainly wouldn't let the fool boy know, he thinks it is time for him to retire as a 'Fairy Wish Bringing Uncle'. Ye Baiyi walked over to Wen Kexing and instructed the Imperial Guards to release him so that finally, the Alpha Wolf could reunite with his love.

Amidst the chaos of the interruption, the shouting...everyone quieted, *this moment felt divine.*

Zhou Zishu in his striking wedding qipao, long red silks trailing behind him felt so out of place in such finery, this *wasn't* him just like it wasn't his mother's. The dream of status, of wealth and power...of a name greater than the one he was given, *all of it* was nothing compared to what was growing in his belly and the look of absolute devotion in Wen Kexing's eyes. Who promised Ye Baiyi that this day would be 'bloodless'...the brat kept his word.

"Lao Wen...I...the key...I held on to it and then...it's lost..." Zhou Zishu struggled, his memories were so fractured like broken shards of stained glass. The cruelty of the **Forced Bond** still polluting his body and affecting his mind, "Lao Wen...It...is you? But I'm sorry..I can't really...see you..."

"A-xu." Wen Kexing whispered and guided Zhou Zishu to his side as he took his hands, kissing them lovingly, "How could you forget this handsome face? Looks like I'll have to remind you, over and over again for the rest of our lives won't I?" He wasn't even aware he was crying until he felt the tears trailing down.

"Our lives...yes." Zi Shu smiling through his own tears, resting his forehead against Wen Kexing's to feel his warmth. The mending of his mind and restoring his memories would take time Wen Kexing knew that but he always had faith in his A-xu, he knew Zhou Zishu was fighting. Not once did he doubt it.

"Yours A-xu...I'm all *your* Mate, Soulmate, *your* Alpha. Yours now and *always*." And it was like a light appeared in Zhou Zishu's eyes. *Yours* , Wen Kexing was HIS.

These were the words he LONGED to hear, the words he wanted to say to Wen Kexing that day in the penthouse, before he left and was stuck in this hell crafted by Helian Yi and his lies. He should've never left, he should've stayed with Wen Kexing. But that was the past, this tender feeling of protection, of respect and honor. Just like that day and now, today. He WANTED Wen Kexing. He wanted him to be his Alpha.

This is what HE wanted. Nothing less or nothing more...Wen Kexing was enough.

Like that night, Zhou Zishu never feared Wen Kexing...always knew that in his heart, those fangs could never hurt him and he gently removed the muzzle from his face, his fingers traced those lips and touched the pads to his own lips.

Without any warning Zi Shu leaped up and pulled Wen Kexing deeply into his kiss. Holding him desperately as if he was sinking and the only thing keeping him afloat was Wen Kexing. Everything sparked alight, bright and brilliant, full of boundless joy and the sorrows, the pain and sadness crumbled away as if there was a sandcastle built around them...pretending to be a mountain that tried to separate them from this one *unifying moment* of their eternal devotion. Wen Kexing poured his soul into Zhou Zishu and felt that same amount shared into him, connecting and weaving, binding a cord of platinum, of stars and comets. A TRUE Bond was made complete, impervious to any threat.

A magnificent constellation of their energy blending into their meridians, a union that no Force Bond could HOPE to unravel. In this life or the next.



Wen Kexing ran his fingers down behind Zhou Zishu's nape and found it warm and smooth, unmarred by Helian Yi. Almost as if it was never there at all and if it was gone, no doubt the

one over Zhou Zishu's heart was also healed over.

"My Alpha...always, Lao Wen." Zi Shu was gasping with a smile mixing with a tiny shaky laugh and eyes of violet glow, "Never let go of me again." he commands, sliding his hand up to Wen Kexing's mouth, against his red wet lips as his Alpha placed for another kiss along his fingers, he could feel the sharp fangs on his skin. Wen Kexing never pulled away, never released his Omega's hand, kissing each digit with reverence and warmth and as he pressed down on Zhou Zishu's ring finger as he opened his mouth, his own eyes possessing the same glowing violet of his beautiful A-xu.

"A-xu..my Omega. Always."

The bite was sharp, wanted and final.

Together.

The Sweetest End (Epilogue)

Chapter Summary

And They All Lived Happily Ever After

Chapter Notes

We cannot express the amount of joy and appreciation over the 3+mos of this project, we wanted to give so much to the mountain and you have given it back 1000 fold. Thank you, thank you so much for your support! Please enjoy and keep your eye out on the @c_synzine acct for more news because the story doesn't end here.

For now, enjoy as the curtain closes.

The dust settled in the Wedding pavilion, the Imperial Escorts surrounded Zhao Jing and dragged him away as he pleaded for mercy, he looked at Xie'er with desperate eyes only to receive a dead stare back. The anger in him was rising to a boil and he kicked and screamed, hurling harsh words at his former lover but this was the truth, the mask was off his face and Xie'er thanked the Heavens he was able to see before he made a terrible choice. Yes, there was some part of him that still cared for Zhao Jing...which is why he's alive. Yet it was a fool's love, a desperate facsimile of what he actually wanted. He looked at Wen Kexing, how unbelievably gentle and affectionate he was with Zhou Zishu, he'd never imagined that his boss would find his Soulmate in Zhou Zishu, never thought that Zi Shu would be such a desired Omega to bring down a massive thorn in the Undercity's side. How everything was centered around one Omega. Such a funny thing, **fate**.

Ye Baiyi walked over to Xie'er and tilted his head up, how handsome he was and how easily he was able to close the gap between them. Usually Xie'er was more alert but he found himself unable to be on guard around the older Alpha.

"What's this face? You're longing for something?" And Xie'er smiled as he gently placed his hand over Ye Baiyi's, when he felt those fingers on his cheek it was like melting his resolve. There was such a strength, overwhelming...yet Xie'er felt like he could take it, he wanted to take it.

"No, I have what I want now. I have you."

"Without question, you interest me greatly..I would like to see more of you, away from mindless distractions."

“I’m happy to hear that..” The stunning Omega locked eyes with Ye Baiyi and coolly smiled, “I will take all of you. Down to the last drop.” then softly nipped on the Alpha’s thumb. The implication was *very* clear and Ye Baiyi was wondering if Xie’er was going to suck the very life out of him, he almost looked delighted by the prospect. A pair of Imperial Escorts walk up to the Immortal and he sighs, later. “Duty calls.”

“As they often do.”

Ye Baiyi turned to look at both Wen Kexing and Zhou Zishu, there was something he would need to verify before confronting Zi Shu. The last thing he wanted was to put him through any more stress. Wen Kexing couldn’t keep his hands off Zhou Zishu, he didn’t care IF everyone was watching the open display of affection. There was nothing like this feeling on earth or in Heaven, just being with his Soulmate, feeling his energy and warmth. They won, Zi Shu and their child were safe. “Hey, idiot child, the portion was spent...don’t die before you consummate.”

“Don’t you have somewhere to be? Damn..” Wen Kexing groaned while resting his forehead on Zi Shu’s, he hated to say it but, yes, the portion of Ye Baiyi’s life energy was now circulating in both he and A-xu’s meridians. He could feel the centuries of energy from an Immortal’s life brimming within them, in time it would completely blend in with their own lifeforce as their bond strengthens.

Still...Wen Kexing couldn’t help but feel that Ye Baiyi was making some sort of ‘claim’ on his A-xu. The crafty old man already had his sworn brother Xie’er...he couldn’t possibly want to take Zi Shu as well.

Wen Kexing already placed a bite on Zi Shu’s ring finger.

And the Bridal Chamber was currently ready to be used.

Well.

Wen Kexing took Zhou Zishu’s hand and not very discreetly took him to the Bridal Chamber. Despite there being a potential active investigation, the sharp and heated glare of the Alpha Crime Boss made it crystal clear who was calling the shots here. Ye Baiyi was too busy being amused at Wen Kexing brazenness to say anything smart, so he and Xie’er politely sent the guest to the dining hall where presumably, their questions will be answered.

Many customs were held with great significance, Wen Kexing wanted to properly marry Zi Shu, he wanted to see him in a stunning qipao, he wanted to feast and offer prayers...he wanted all those things. But as he and Zi Shu entered the lavishly adorned chamber, brilliantly draped in reds and golds with chests of assorted wealthy offerings given to the newlywed couple. Zhou Zishu didn’t want any of it and neither did Wen Kexing, nothing in this lavish abode meant anything to them except each other.

The scent of incense and pears, oranges and ginger filled the air, the sunset was draped all around them as the curtain of nightfall fell, leaving the sky a vivid blend of purple and yellow before becoming a cool navy. There was no view more gorgeous in the Undercity but for Wen Kexing, what he had pinned to the plush bed was worth a million sunsets.

The two lovers kissed deeply, each one more desperate and gasping, locking their hands together tightly and breathing into the other. Wen Kexing nuzzled the side of Zi Shu's head, brushing his lips over the shell of his ear and whispering his eternal love over and over again. He could feel his A-xu tremble his love back in between sobs, his body was aching for Wen Kexing, his womb pulsed feeling the bond newly woven, almost forming a cradle of energy around their daughter. She was safe, Zhou Zishu didn't have to work so hard anymore...but the tentacles of memory still latched on to him.

"Helian..Yi...I..." Wen Kexing kissed him deeply to swallow those words before they ever left Zi Shu's mouth.

"A-xu. Let me soothe you." Zi Shu nodded, yes, yes he needed him, he needed his Alpha so badly, he needed his seed.

"Lao Wen...feed me.." Wen Kexing stopped and moved to disrobe, he wasn't going to deny his A-xu anything, he just managed to remove his shirt when he felt Zi Shu's lips on his navel, kissing and sucking a path till he unfastened his pants. "Lao Wen...Lao Wen..." the soaked timbre of Zi Shu's voice, so wet and famished, those lips lived in Wen Kexing's dreams and feeling them below him was driving him crazy. He could smell the light slick pooling between his A-xu's thighs, Wen Kexing wanted to be in between them so badly. "I love you...Lao Wen." was the last thing he said before the Alpha was melting in his mouth. Fingers sliding up his side and dragging the slick hot muscle of Wen Kexing, burying his nose against the strong torso of his Alpha. Yes, this taste, this hot flavour filled with passion, of blood and passion. Zi Shu twirled his tongue on the spongy head, teasing the bead of precum and prodding the slit before sucking the length deep down his throat. Wen Kexing gripped the sides of Zi Shu's head, brushing the bangs and adoring him from this angle was so different than in the Mirror Room. This time Zhou Zishu was his, he was pregnant with his child, he was HIS Omega, his Mate...and now his bride. The tightness of Zi Shu's throat and his skillful suction as he moved his head rhythmically on his flesh, cruel Zi Shu would pull off but keep his lips firmly clamped on the head and moved his tongue in such a way that it was shameless. So shamelessly beautiful, so perfect...

"A-xu...you're going to...make me.." Wen Kexing kept focus, the beautiful red qipao was getting wet from the breastmilk leaking from Zhou Zishu, full heavy breasts just waiting to be drained. It's been a few weeks but Gods Wen Kexing was pent up, the second he felt those full lips pull off and nip on his main vein, that was it. He gripped Zi Shu's head and pulled it back as he shot his load, heavy thick strings of hot pallid white streaked over his beautiful A-xu's face. The intense scent of his Alpha's musk clung to each drooping release that left Zi Shu gasping, his eyelashes fluttered over the hazy purple glow in his eyes as he touched the mess on him, his tongue lapping the milk and sucking it off his fingers greedily. His mind was still fractured but he was remembering this taste...this Alpha..his Alpha Wen Kexing, this sticky white seed is what created a baby in him. Chanting over and over in him, Wen Kexing, Alpha, Mate, Soulmate, Groom, Husband.

"Lao Wen...is...delicious." That broke Wen Kexing, utterly shattered him and he pushed Zi Shu on the bed sharing a tonguing deep kiss, tasting himself in the process, his fangs were sharp and eyes glowing red that shifted to purple. He felt Zi Shu's tongue snag on one of his fangs and wince as the small burst of blood filled their mouths. Wen Kexing nearly tore away his stained qipao and searched beneath his A-xu's waist, the dripping slick mixing with sweat

as he spread his hands over the small bump of Zi Shu's belly. He wanted him, so desperately he wanted him. "It's okay Lao Wen...I'm not frail."

"A-xu..are you sure...?" Zhou Zishu locked his legs around Wen Kexing's waist and smiled, there was no confusion, no doubt. Much like the night in the limo, his A-xu was always strong, always sure.

Once again he clasped his hands into Zi Shu's and slowly pushed inside.

Home.



Wen Kexing was ready to leave, he spent the remaining day with Zhou Zishu in the Bridal Chamber, he wasn't going to leave until he was sure that his A-xu was okay...granted if things were different he would have firmly implanted himself inside Zi Shu and never leave. Tragically, despite his fragile condition, Zhou Zishu was still very stubborn and would be combative but even like this, Wen Kexing couldn't imagine anything else.

In a strange twist of fate, because of the investigation for the authenticity of the evidence presented AT the wedding...it meant that no one involved with the case could just leave. The

tiers of the Emperor's Palace was on complete lockdown so it meant that for the first time ever, criminals from the Undercity as well as affluent members of the Uppercity were all stuck in one place while the police conducted interviews as more evidence was being sent in by Luo Fumeng and the techies.

The massive scope of Helian Yi's corrupt agenda and the Ascension of Moral Purity and how all of it was interwoven with money laundering, drug smuggling, bribery, illegal slave trade and a whole slew of other offenses would keep the police force busy for months if not years. Helian Yi was certainly not going down alone and Zhao Jing was a proverbial songbird, this was a massive operation dating back nearly forty years and involved so many people in lower and higher places of power. It became clear that bringing 'justice' would involve dismantling so many positions, agencies...that was purposeful, Helian Yi and his cohorts ensured that they were the one to know where and how things were exactly run. Moreso, what level of power the Emperor TRULY had.

Thus the cruel truth was ultimately revealed.

In order for the cities to continue to run in some capacity...some of those with the most power and influence would escape harsher punishments. Some would never see the inside of a cell, most would pay a hefty fine and kowtow to the courts. Others would never feel mud on their names....

The fall guys were in place, paid handsomely for their 'sacrifice'.

The Window of Heaven sect was disbanded and the members were taken in for detox from the Venom, they were excellent warriors of significant skill. The hope was to cure them from the Venom drug and try to rehabilitate them, maybe bring some into the police force or the Imperial Escorts.

Zhao Jing was sentenced to prison for twenty years...his exact location was unknown, with the amount of people he owed to save himself, it wasn't going to be a 'blissful' twenty years. He lost everything, money, protection, allies, rumor was he was in the Undercity pits where the most debased Venom users dwelled but no one could confirm and no one cared enough to verify.

Helian Yi, despite the volume of charges, had a far more fitting punishment.

An Alpha like Helian Yi, who's spent so much time in the spotlight, who craved control, dominance and adoration from the people, whose wisdom and status was envied and admired. Was sentenced to Living Entombment in his 7th Palace, guarded and served by faceless and voiceless automatons, no one will contact him, no one will seek him out, his name, his accomplishments stricken from the record, from history itself. His fortune would be seized by the Royal Treasury and sold at auction or donated to several museums under fictitious names. The once proud and stately Alpha would be left to languish in his lavish palace with the sparsest memories of what he once was...monitored by the Imperial Escorts and drones until his death and disposed of.

There would be no grave, no funeral. *Forgotten* .

It was going to be a slow, lonely and ignoble death.

A month had passed since the wedding and Zhou Zishu was strong enough on his own to leave the palace, he needed to close the book, had to...and it took convincing from Wen Kexing to let him do this alone. Not that the Alpha Criminal could leave, the police still needed information and he promised to help even though it felt disguising to do so. He literally couldn't give a shit about the affairs of Uppercity fools, as far as he was concerned, he won and he didn't kill Helian Yi...that was enough. Still, Zhou Zishu asked for his trust on this and considering his incredible prowess and strength even when pregnant. Wen Kexing had full faith his A-xu could protect himself. That didn't stop Ye Baiyi from going with him anyway because if there was one thing that was made evidently clear, no one could tell the Immortal what to do. Even so, he still waited in his limo for Zhou Zishu to finish what he needed to do.

How long was it, Zi Shu thought as he walked up the stairs of the 7th Palace, how desolate and still everything was? The servants and staff long gone, dust and webs made their homes where once were several paintings were displayed and clay soldiers stood. The palace was always cold even with the people and the objects of wealth, this wasn't a place of love or even respect...Helian Yi built a legacy of dominance and cruelty, the luxury was representative of everything he gained in an attempt to exert more of his influence.

Once, long ago...a palace like this would've been heaven for Zi Shu. Here, he wouldn't have to worry about dead rats in trash or cold water flowing through old pipes, fresh food whenever he wanted, the best medical care and the most expensive clothing he could buy. This place and a man like Helian Yi would have been the end of his fairytale, the happy ending.

But every step in this palace, the sounds of his footsteps on the cold marble floor and his heartbeat in his chest were the only living things here.

The twinkling keys of a piano alerted Zhou Zishu on where to go and of course...it was the Pearl Room. Helian Yi wasn't going to make this easy, he knew he was coming and so with his hand over the bite on his heart, Zhou Zishu made careful steps up the staircase leading to the Pearl Room, keeping a steady hand on the smooth rail as he approached. Not afraid of what was behind the door, only the memories that threatened the corners of his mind. Zhou Zishu enters.

Out of all the rooms that Zi Shu assumed were gutted of finery, the Pearl Room appeared to be mostly intact. However there were some things damaged and torn, the polar white fur had drops of red wine poured over it, there were newer cracks in the windows and several more cameras placed in various spots to keep an eye on the subject inside. The smell is what made Zi Shu pause, it was stale musk, rancid yet weak...defeated, gone was the scent of a confident and powerful Alpha.

At the piano that was out of tune, broken keys played on frayed strings..the few notes that managed to resonate Zi Shu could pick up was **Pavane for a Dead Princess by Ravel**. It was a beautiful and somber piece. Helian Yi sat and played the piece and he looked older, dramatically so...his face unshaven, hair was graying and messy, his clothes that he prided on keeping himself neat and kept looked disheveled and wrinkled. There were cases of star plum wine around him, partly consumed and some unopened, no glasses so he was just drinking from the bottle. Zhou Zishu stood silently, taking in the image before him of the man who brought him so much pain, who broke his mind and took his body. The cruelty of his heart

feeling anything but anger and hatred felt like betrayal and yet, Zi Shu pitied the sight before him.

The playing stopped before the end of the piece and Helian Yi sighed, he inhaled Zi Shu's scent almost as if it was fresh air and Zhou Zishu felt a shift in his personality. That didn't surprise him, he was a pregnant Omega, at this stage not even scent nullifiers would be enough. Normally, the smell would be enough to trigger the breeding drive in an Alpha but Zi Shu learned that his palm strike did more than break Helian Yi's meridians...it made the man impotent.

They stood in silence, Helian Yi not looking at him and Zhou Zishu keeping his eyes on him... both were waiting for the other to move, ultimately, Zi Shu wasn't surprised on who would move first.

"You're beautiful." Helian Yi said in a voice that sounded more like a ghost than a man, "I dreamed of you...my dreams are filled with nothing but you. Even in the dreams where I choke the life out of you...still, you are divine as you are cruel Zi Shu."

"Helian Yi. I was not the sole end for you. I merely assisted as needed." Helian Yi snorted, reaching down to take a bottle of wine from the case and popping it open. "You needed to be stopped."

"And you were Heaven's chosen method. Such a terrifying destroyer in someone so elegant, were you an Alpha...I shudder to think of what you'd become." And Zi Shu kept quiet, was he truly such a person? He certainly had ambition and had no fear in taking a life but would he have become someone like Helian Yi? Would've he been the kind of man to do whatever was necessary or even serve someone like Helian Yi? "Truly...we were destined for this. Pity, the ending wasn't what I wanted."

"A man such as you..insatiable, controlling...you couldn't have room in your heart for love." Helian Yi finally looked at Zhou Zishu, his small belly looking more pronounced in his black body con suit with simple mermaid scale slippers. He clutched the hooded shawl that was a brilliant shade of Robin's Egg Blue underneath a retro leather long duster coat. Helian Yi couldn't take his eyes off how beautiful and full Zi Shu was, standing before him like a dream with his hair longer and pinned in small fire ruby clasps and a wolf embroidered lovingly along the sleeves of his coat. Proof that he was Wen Kexing's Omega as if he needed more flagrant displays of his failure.

"You look cheap...like the criminal Alpha who bred you."

"Yet this criminal Alpha did what you could not." Zi Shu responded, "He loves me."

"*I* loved you Zi Shu."

"You loved what you *projected* on me. You loved the *idea* of me..but I am **not** a dream Helian Yi, I am not some sort of fairy of your desire. You wanted to make me into something I am not and when that failed, you forced it. That is not love, that is not respect or equality." Helian Yi smirked and swigged down his wine.

"And Wen Kexing is different?"

“Lao Wen is Lao Wen and he is enough.” Zhou Zishu touched his belly, “I don’t want him to be anything more than that. I’ve seen what lies at the end of wanting more leads.

“Tch, and you came to me...for what?”

“To confirm it. That you were never my Alpha, my Soulmate.” Helian Yi threw the bottle and it stopped short of Zhou Zishu feet, the pieces of glass grazed his legs but didn’t cut him. “After this day, I will forget you...it will take time but you will never take his name from me again, you never could.”

“Zi Shu! Don’t you dare turn from me! Zi Shu!” Helian Yi shouted futilely but Zhou Zishu walked out of the room, he heard the shouts and screams, the sounds of bottles crashing on the floor and a defeated cry. As he walked down the stairs he felt a cord snap inside him, almost like a piano string...a small pulse from his womb caught his attention. Hunger, yes, it was midday...time for lunch. The Automatons quickly walked past Zi Shu as he descended the stairs and with each step out of the palace, more and more ‘strings’ snapped. A discorded melody that played in his head, the memory of Helian Yi, of his presence and control was leaving him.

He wasn’t going to look back as he exited the cold palace of dreams, the warmth of the afternoon sun was on his face and his little girl was making her desires known. The piece played the final note in Zhou Zishu...and it was over.

“Goodbye.” Zi Shu whispered, this feeling made him tremble...it wasn’t easy for an Omega to gather back his control and sense of self from an Alpha. Especially one as powerful as Helian Yi but Zi Shu promised he would keep going, he had to for Wen Kexing and for his baby girl. He felt a hand on his cheek and it was Ye Baiyi, it didn’t startle him rather the Immortal’s aura had a soothing effect on him.

“My student trained an exceptional pupil it seems. My disappointment is only slight.”

“Forgive me, I shall try to train myself more diligently after she arrives.”

“Good, I expect no less.” Ye Baiyi huffed with only a hint of amusement in his voice, “Come, you are starving, you need snow pears, West Market is near and we need to talk.” Zi Shu only picked up on snow pears but he entered the limo and drove away from the 7th palace.

Ye Baiyi ensured that Zhou Zishu would and could have anything he wanted in West Market, he was being uncharacteristically charitable. But Zi Shu wouldn’t refuse, the snow pears were absolutely delicious, it gave him hope that he could maybe replace the walnuts. Ye Baiyi ensured that Zi Shu would be protected from the eyes of the wealthy West Market shoppers, the Imperial Escorts seemingly arrived out of nowhere but he wasn’t intending on keeping Zhou Zishu out too long or he’d never hear the end of it from the brat Alpha. However it was time to talk...

He chose a spot in West Market, not too far from the gate leading to the Emperor’s Palace where Wen Kexing and Xie’er were waiting, it was a beautiful sight, the dragon pillars shone

brightly in the haze of the Uppercity, neon lights filled the sky and the fresh clean air was cool against their skin. There was a small circular park filled with night blooming jasmine and floating ponds of the bluest water that emitted a soothing glow for all to see and within the waters were brilliant koi, swimming tranquility as if they were flying through the air. This was the memorial park for the Lost Koi Princess. He had it constructed ten years after her vanishing...

Zhou Zishu walked slowly, absorbing the surroundings and the quiet yet almost somber presence around him, only the egret's call and soft hum of the clean running motors keeping the park floating filled the silence. Ye Baiyi gently escorted Zi Shu to a small pergola overlooking the koi pond with the most elegant patterns that shimmered like gold in the water. Such a serene place.

"Zhou Zishu...do you know about the Lost Koi Princess?" Ye Baiyi asked as he relaxed on the bench and patted a spot down for Zi Shu to sit beside him. The Imperial Escort made sure that no one could enter the park much less the pergola...which explained the silence.

"I've heard stories about her...Master once told me that she was a victim of the sickness but no one knows for sure." Zi Shu said with a distance in his voice, "It was one of the most vivid memories of his teachings to me."

"She was beautiful and sweet...she aspired for love instead of her affluent status, she fell in love with an Alpha of a lower class and wanted to be with him more than anything." And Zi Shu looked at him in shock, "I helped her achieve that."

"Senior Yi, really?! Then..where is she?"

"I do not know. Hence why she is still a lost Princess child." Ye Baiyi quipped and looked at Zi Shu, "I helped her and I failed her...I saw in you what I saw in her twenty years ago. That is why I helped you."

"Thank you...Senior Yi." Zhou Zishu smiles with warmth in his heart...such a strange new feeling there and he couldn't explain it...like he was anticipating something. "But...why are you telling me this story?"

"Zi Shu, tell me...will that idiot child bring you happiness? Truly? Would you sacrifice your status for him? If it meant my words would change your life...is Wen Kexing worth such information?" And Zhou Zishu was quiet, Ye Baiyi was telling him something but in his own cryptic and frustrating way. He looked out to the pond, to the koi that was swimming amidst the pale glow of the lights, this park was built in her memory...if she was here, standing in this spot. Given a chance to be with the one she loved, was it worth losing all that she was for just the hope of being happy...no matter how brief.

"Senior Yi, Lao Wen was someone I'd never expect to love as much as I do...he's a criminal but he wants to do better, he wants to reform and bring happiness to the Undercity. I wanted so much for myself, to become more than what I was given but I've learned that even the most beautiful gold tarnishes." Zi Shu stood up and walked to the pond, to the edge and stared at the koi as they danced under the surface, "A carp dreams of becoming a dragon because he aspires for a better status but...sometimes just being a simple fish is enough. I want to be by Lao Wen's side forever...even if we lose everything, I cannot lose him, I'll never let him go. My

life is fated to be an ordinary Omega and my Alpha is a scoundrel criminal...and I'm happy." Ye Baiyi felt as if a stone fell from his heart staring at Zi Shu in the halo of light, how much of her was in his smile..in the way he spoke with such certainty. "And I'm sure, wherever she is... she held the same love in her heart with no regrets. Thank you..Uncle Yi."

"Uncle...Yi."

"I could call you Fairy Wish Bringing Uncle Yi."

"Hold your tongue, Uncle is fine." Zi Shu laughed lightly and held his belly, yes, this was fine...it is as it should be. Ye Baiyi summoned an Imperial Escort to his side with a small camphor wood chest, gorgeously lacquered and aged but well kept. He walked over to Zhou Zishu and placed the small chest in his hand, "This belongs to you Zi Shu..." Zhou Zishu opens the chest to reveal two stunning spiritual wood tablets with two names. He wasn't sure when he started to cry, not even sure on why he was but the tears dripped down his face all the same. He didn't even need to ask why he was given such a beautiful and poignant gift, it was there inside his heart. This feeling of reunion, of home. Ye Baiyi wiped the tears from Zi Shu's eyes and placed his hand over his to close the chest. They didn't need to say anything..there really wasn't much to say.

Ye Baiyi escorted Zhou Zishu back to the limo and deleted all of the data the Imperial Physicians had on him. The Lost Koi Princess whereabouts and fate shall remain a mystery.

And her happy ending will only be known by only a few.

Zhou Zishu was eight months and he felt like this pregnancy took forever...it seemed so quick when he was 2wks but now that he's safe and protected there wasn't going to be an urgent boost for his little girl as before. That was one of the most interesting things about a Soulmate child, how much she protected him when he felt like it was the reverse...Zi Shu wondered what little Alpha girl will she be? Will she take after him or Wen Kexing? This peace allowed Zi Shu to think about the future, a future with Wen Kexing.

But now he felt like he swallowed an ostrich egg, he was so much bigger now than seven months ago. The doctor assured him that this was all normal, he was developing a very healthy baby in his womb. The little girl certainly made her presence known, she was restless and actually very funny...

As an Alpha, she was naturally possessive of her favourite Omega which was also very common in Omega mothers. Their Alpha offspring would be possessive and protective towards them and hostile to their Alpha fathers. The attitude normally will ween off after a year or two but poor Wen Kexing is going to be the enemy in the house for a while. Something that actually made Zhou Zishu smile, he was enjoying his Omega being pregnant and helpless FAR too much! Well...in fairness so did Zi Shu. But he couldn't let his Lao Wen know! He had his pride! Even if it meant him asking for a foot rub every now and then.

But his smugness got the best of him because now he was hungry! And of course it was for walnuts! Truly this child was Wen Kexing's because he cleverly left a small jar of walnuts by the bedside, knowing he was going to devour the whole thing in a day! Zhou Zishu was being punished for his hubris, his daughter demanded walnuts well, today he was going to deny her that! He wanted snow pear and heaping helpings of chicken skewers, maybe some stir fry..

"Ah, you can kick all you want, I will not spoil you!" Zi Shu chided with a small laugh, such a feisty girl! "You will have to learn that you will go without some things...but it will make you appreciate what you have and what you will receive in the future. Don't be cruel to your mother." Zi Shu could imagine her in the womb pouting, what will she look like? Will she be as beautiful as Wen Kexing? Oh he didn't consider the suitors coming after her and as an Alpha, would that be a challenge? No, its far too early to think of that, no matter what, both he and Wen Kexing will love her and of course, Auntie Luo...Xie'er was with Yi Baiyi, traveling the world together but he promised he'd be there for him no matter what. Same with Han Ying.

What a lovely and seemingly very dangerous family he's acquired this year.

Slowly but surely, Zhou Zishu made his way out of his bed and waddled to the door, he tried to not to just to make Wen Kexing suffer. It was NOT 'cute' it was embarrassing, running was never an option nor jumping, just a slow meandering gait to his hips that admittedly made him feel...silly.

But he did love Wen Kexing's laugh...his voice and megawatt smile, all on him, he could look at Zhou Zishu's round belly with such affection. Today Zi Shu has decided to raid his Alpha's closet to steal his relatively expensive casual clothing-a plain white shirt and sweatpants. Both cost more than most of his clothes that he had back in the Middle. They were clean but still held his scent and that stirred such a warmth in his chest, it even soothed their daughter. His Alpha was so strong, their bond was even stronger.

"I'll do the washing later...he'll understand." And Zhou Zishu slipped on the loose fitting shirt and managed to VERY slowly get the sweats on, the thing was, Zi Shu was a more fuller figure than his Alpha slender but sexy build. Especially in the thighs and rear but now with his breasts filled with milk Zi Shu had to admit he looked very...scandalous in this. His full belly made the shirt cling to him instead of falling loose to the sides, the sweats didn't fair better. Barely sitting on his hips now, he filled out Wen Kexing's pants almost lewdly. "Oh...oh okay, let's get the food before he sees this or I'll never hear the end of it." And Zi Shu moved with a bit more speed to the master bedroom door, the construction of their penthouse was going to take time so they stayed in the one in the Undercity. Which unfortunately, didn't have an elevator to the master suite...yet. So Zhou Zishu would have to CAREFULLY take his time one step by one step down the stairs to get to the elevator.

The thing was, his belly made it really hard to gauge where his foot was landing so it was going to take 10 minutes to get to the fucking elevator! Why did he have such a big baby? He blamed Lao Wen. It was easier and very likely was his fault somehow.

Zhou Zishu held on to the railing and took a step, holding onto his belly, oh he was dreaming about those snow pears, he could almost taste them!

"Be good and no flipping...and we'll eat two candied haws." Zi Shu negotiated with his daughter, which certainly quieted her down and he sighed. When she's born he's going to have

to be a stricter parent because Lao Wen was going to spoil her rotten. Alright one step down... nearly twenty more to go. Great.

The elevator dinged and Wen Kexing stepped out, oh no. His eyes scanned his Omega and soaked in the sight of him looking so...so..the word on the tip of his tongue was succulent, recklessly, lovingly, deliciously, succulent.

“Ah! Don’t start, Lao Wen. I’m hungry.”

“A-xu, no, no stop walking.” Wen Kexing laughed but nervously and stupid long legs easily reached him in a few quick jumps up the stairs. “You should be resting, we have attendants, they’ll bring you whatever you want.”

“No, Lao Wen, I can get my food just fine and I know your mind!” Zi Shu scolded and in complete fairness to Wen Kexing, between the perilous stair descent and the ‘borrowing’ of his Alpha’s casual clothes. Zhou Zishu KNEW that he was going to set his Wen Kexing off, his heavy breasts were getting large enough to jiggle just slightly so each step was setting off Wen Kexing’s breeding drive. The scent of apples was intensifying, he was SO turned on right now. Currently, Zhou Zishu made it to the thirteenth step and felt Wen Kexing hold Zhou Zishu steady as they continued down the stairs. “Lao Wen, what are you looking at?”

“You A-xu...you’re so...”

“So what?” Wen Kexing stopped at the last stair and held his hands up, his eyes were filled with desire and protection, of pride of his Omega’s strength and will. There was nothing in this life he would trade for this moment. Zhou Zishu rolled his eyes and a little pouting smile spread on his face. “Such a silly and childish Lao Wen...you will not spoil me. I won’t let you.”

“A-xu, only I know HOW to spoil you.” Wen Kexing smirked and hoisted up Zhou Zishu without a single grunt, helping him down gently but not letting him go. “I’ll spoil you in all the best ways, anything, if it means I can hear my name in your mouth forever..” Zhou Zishu pulled Wen Kexing down till their foreheads touched and kissed him. “Our baby...”

“Our baby.”

“Maybe...when this one is born.” Wen Kexing added and Zhou Zishu tugged his ear, “Ah, ah, ah, A-xu!”

“Carry me.” And Wen Kexing scooped Zhou Zishu up but he didn’t head towards the kitchen, “What?! Lao Wen! What are you-”

“No one is allowed to see you like this. Only me A-xu.” Zhou Zishu couldn’t help but laugh, he was so defeated and it was by his own hands, perhaps this wasn’t so bad...to be spoiled by his Alpha. “I’ll send up the kitchen..anything you want. But later.”



“You are impossible, rub my feet then.”

“Later.”

“Now.”

“Your daughter says now.”

“My daughter kicked me.” Wen Kexing laughed in a small huff and kissed Zhou Zishu’s head as he rested against his shoulders. “Don’t teach our daughter bad habits A-xu.”

“Me?! How are you blaming me!?” Zi Shu scoffed as they entered the master bedroom, “Such a scoundrel you are Lao Wen.”

It was a warm summer morning when A-xiang was born via C-section. She was a healthy and chubby baby, red faced with head full of hair and strong lungs. She made her debut as an Alpha loud and clear as Zhou Zishu held her tight and kissed her. She was such a cunning little thing and knew how to cry whenever Wen Kexing attempted to approach or touch his A-xu. The only way to keep her calm was keeping her little mouth full of milk.

Wen Kexing sat beside Zhou Zishu as he quietly fed their daughter, his eyes blinking away tears and gently feeling her tiny hand squeezing his finger with all her little might.

“A-xu...she’s a greedy little thing.”

“She is, I want her to grow up strong.”

“Stronger than me?” Wen Kexing teased and Zi Shu looked at his Alpha with a smile.

“*Stronger.*”

“A-xu! Than me? Surely not.” And he looked at Zhou Zishu with the saddest puppy eyes but smiled in defeat as he kissed his daughter’s head, “A-xiang, enjoy your status as first princess to my A-xu.” he teased into another soft kiss, breathing in his daughter’s rose scent...she smelled so sweet and new.

“Lao Wen...maybe..she needs a brother.” Wen Kexing looked at him with wide enthusiastic eyes, the process of making a baby was more fun for him anyhow and he made that sexy smile that he knew he could get what he wanted from his A-xu. “Not now.”

“Maybe *three* more?”

“You’re pushing it Lao Wen.” Zhou Zishu softly snuggled his daughter to his chest as she suckled, he was feeling tired from the birth and smiled, whispering into A-xiang’s ear as Wen Kexing pulled them close to his chest, weaving his life energy into them and feeling the calmness and relief of the delivery soothe them all to sleep. “One day I’ll tell you a story about how Cinderella met a Wolf who was a Prince instead.”

*And how he finally...found his **Happy Ending.***

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