

Jaehyun is (NOT!) a Common Name

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Kapitel 1: Chapter 1

The first time Younghoon had watched the basketball team's practice had been at the beginning of the summer break. When Chanhee had tried to teach him about some mathematical problems it had started raining, and the gym had been the closest shelter.

The reason why he kept watching the practices every Wednesday, was a student of his age.

He was about the same height as Younghoon, blond and very fit. Whenever he smiled, a cute pair of dimples appeared, being a strong contrast to his toned body.

His name was Jaehyun, but the team usually called him 'Jae'. Without their senior Johnny and another of Jaehyun's friends, Younghoon probably wouldn't know his name until now.

He seemed to be well mannered and very nice, judging by what he had seen so far. The boy was in his grade, but sadly he didn't share any courses with Younghoon.

Even though he only saw him on Wednesdays, Younghoon had developed a small crush on the other boy. All had started with this one moment Jaehyun had looked at him and winked. He even had heard how Jaehyun's friend had whistled behind him.

But Younghoon wasn't the most courageous, so he didn't dare to talk to the other boy. He had only exchanged a few courtesies with him so far. But a whole conversation with him? No, whenever he stood close to him, he froze. His heart felt like it was about to jump out of his chest and a big lump formed in his throat whenever he had a chance to talk to Jaehyun.

But lately he felt a little bit bolder.

He really wanted to talk to him.

He even wanted to ask the other boy out.

But he didn't want to embarrass himself in front of other students, so walking up to Jaehyun just to stumble over his own words while trying to ask him to talk to him in private or even ask him out was not an option.

Thus, it was a blessing to Younghoon that young, sweet, and very talkative Eric Son had transferred to his school.

Juyeon had introduced them when he had become one of the 'buddies' from the school's 'buddy-program' to accustom new students to their new environment.

Thanks to Juyeon and his own open-hearted self, Eric had quickly gotten comfortable

in their shared group of friends. And now he was jogging towards Younghoon.

"Hyung! Hey, how are you?" he beamed at him.

Younghoon smiled back at him. Eric was so cute and always seemed to be in the best mood. Sadly, they usually only met during the basketball team's training or some breaks because their schedules were so different since Eric was a few grades behind of course.

Seeing Eric outside of school wasn't exactly easy because they were either busy learning or Eric met his other friends or Juyeon.

"Hey Eric. I'm fine, thanks. How was your week so far?"

And then Eric started babbling.

And he babbled.

And babbled.

And babbled.

Younghoon listened patiently and nodded along even though there was no ending in sight. He corrected Eric's pronunciation occasionally or corrected him whenever he used words or idioms in the wrong way.

"Your Korean has improved."

"Yeah, right?! All thanks to Juyeonie!"

"Hyung."

"Yes, hyung. Hey, Juyeonie hyung! Hyung! Over here!"

"Hey Younghoon hyung," Juyeon greeted when he arrived.

"Hey little one," Younghoon greeted back.

"Huh, but he's your height!"

"I- it's just a nickname, Youngjae, not necessarily referring to your height."

"Ah..." he grabbed Juyeon's arm and pulled him closer, "Younghoon hyung said my Korean has improved! You're such a great help, hyung. The best I could ever ask for."

Younghoon thought to see Juyeon blush a little at that. Eric was always so blunt, but he was way too cute to care. He was probably the only new student that had taken the buddy-program (a little bit too) seriously since he was still almost glued to Juyeon's side whenever they met.

Younghoon smiled a little and let his eyes wander while the youngest was busy showering Juyeon with compliments. He stopped at Jaehyun, who was talking to another dark-haired member from the team.

"Were you looking at us-"

"Watching."

"Right, were you watching us?" Eric asked, "Or rather someone else again?"

Younghoon's eyes shot back to Eric.

Did Eric know?

"What are you talking about?" Younghoon asked.

"Oh nothing, you seemed to just-" he quickly corrected himself, "You just seemed to be distracted by some-... -one?"

"Something," Juyeon said.

"No, no, I mean 'someone'."

"Oh... You mean...?"

The younger one flashed him his brilliant smile and nodded.

"That again. Sorry, hyung, Youngjae believes that someone from the team caught your attention-"

"He's right," immediately he pressed his lips together.

Stupid Younghoon, stupid.

"I told you!"

Juyeon narrowed his eyebrows. He looked through the gym.

"Who is it?!" Eric asked.

"Pass."

"Younghoon hyung," Juyeon said.

"What's up?"

"Younghoon hyung!"

He sighed. He really had to tempt fate, hadn't he?

"It's Jaehyun," he mumbled.

"Who?" Eric asked.

"Jaehyun. That guy over there."

"Oh~!"

He pointed at the now formed group of other team members. Jaehyun was still talking to the dark-haired boy about the smaller blond boy next to him, judging by their gestures. Then they laughed and the dark-haired ruffled the younger boy's head who looked like he was about to sink in the ground. After that Jaehyun walked away from the others to his friend that sat on the bleachers a few meters away. Johnny hyung joined Jaehyun's friend and even called him.

"Jae-Jae-Jaehyunie-baby, we're bored! Entertain us!", their friend called.

Jaehyun waved and smiled when he walked past Juyeon, Younghoon and Eric.

"Hey there."

"Hey."

Younghoon immediately felt himself blush. He shyly waved back and tried to smile.

"Yo, Juyeon, good shot earlier."

"Thanks."

Juyeon bumped Jaehyun's fist. The older one grinned and walked on.

"I see," Juyeon said, "Hey, are you still alive?"

"Mh..." Younghoon mumbled, "Hm-mh."

"Oh dear. That's kind of embarrassing."

"Oh~ Jaehyun hyung?"

"Mhm," Younagoon agreed to Eric.

He was still staring at Jaehyun talking to his friend that watched the basketball team's practice regularly as well. Juyeon followed Eric's eyes in the meantime.

"No, no, not-"

"I see! I'll help you with Jaehyun hyung!"

Eric turned around to face Younghoon and clapped his hands to get the older boy's attention.

"Youngjae, not him, that's not-"

"Hyung, please, I got this. My eagle eyes notice everything. How about I set you up with him?"

Younghoon cleared his throat, trying to get rid of the lump that had formed in his throat earlier.

"You think you can do that?"

"Sure!"

"No, Young-"

"Relax, Juyeonie hyung! Come on, I bet this'll work. Hyung, there's this bench close to the pool- hey!"

Another team member bumped into Eric when he caught a basketball right in front of Younghoon's face.

"What the fuck, man?! We're taking a break!"

A slim hand caressed his waist immediately.

"Sorry kid. If Younghoon wouldn't sit in the front row I wouldn't have had to push you, to protect his pretty face."

Younghoon rolled his eyes at the other boy's wink. Of course, it had to be Hyunjae. He was one of Juyeon's new friends. Talkative, shameless, and clingy.

"But Younghoon hyung has to sit down here so he can watch-"

"So I can watch you trip over your own feet," he quickly said in the most sarcastic way he could manage right now.

"Yeah, you really looked like an idiot," Juyeon chuckled.

Hyunjae shoved him aside for this comment.

"Shut up you little shit. Mark tripped me."

"Doubt it. Anyone but Mark."

"Shush. Anyway, so that's why you keep staring at me in math class? Because I caught your attention? I'm flattered that you now even come watch me here."

"Isn't that part of what a clown's supposed to do after all? Catch people's attention?"

Hyunjae clicked his tongue and raised an eyebrow.

"Ha-ha-ha. You should invest in some glasses instead of sitting in the danger zone maybe."

"It's none of your business where I sit."

"It is if I'm the one that has to protect the beautiful face of our school's pro swimmer."

"If it's such a burden to you to take care of your surroundings, you should practice your aiming and score for once instead of missing the basket every time you shoot. It's not like it's moving around on the court to make it more difficult."

"Oh dear..." Juyeon sighed.

"Hyung, Hyunjae hyung isn't bad at basketball and you know it-" Eric tried to reconcile.

"Hey, what did I do this time to deserve you bitching around now? It wasn't my fault that Jacob missed."

"Quit complaining about where I sit and I'll-"

"Okaaaay! Whatever! Don't fight! Come on, nothing happened. I think Jacob is waiting for you, hyung," the youngest was almost pleading.

"He can wait. All right, listen, I'm sorry. It's not of my concern where you sit, you're right."

Eric nudged Younghoon in the shoulder.

"It's fine. Sorry and... thanks," he mumbled, but refused to look at Hyunjae.

"So? Who is it that you want to watch shoot some hoops, if not me? Come on, don't be shy, I won't snitch on you. Maybe I can help."

Younghoon took a deep breath. He didn't want to fight with Hyunjae but he didn't want to talk to him either. Why couldn't he leave him alone?

"Who said I was watching someone in particular?"

This time Hyunjae rolled his eyes.

"You know what? I can see, you're in a bad mood, no need to make it so obvious. Sorry for interrupting your gossip. You guys better make it quick. The break is almost over. See you in math, I guess, Younghoon."

Hyunjae sounded a bit sad, maybe disappointed. His enthusiasm was gone, and the slight smile had also disappeared when he turned around with the basketball in his arms and walked back to Jacob. He only shrugged when Jacob probably asked him

something.

Younghoon looked after him until he was far away enough from them so he couldn't hear them anymore. He kind of felt bad about it, but right now he had other problems to solve.

"Hyung, the fuck was that?" Juyeon asked.

"I'm just not in the mood right now. I can apologize to him tomorrow. Okay, Eric, you think you can manage something? Would you do that for me?"

"Yes, I will. Jaehyun hyung's very nice and I'm sure he'll understand."

Younghoon nodded.

"I uh... I wanted to ask him to go to that party with me, you know, the one Jacob told us about. B-But just tell him that I want to talk to him, that would be a great help already."

"I never knew you were this shy," Juyeon said, "But you really should ask him on your own."

"Well, I'm trying," Younghoon said, "It's just that whenever I have a chance to talk to him no proper words come out. I don't know, I just freeze whenever he looks at me."

"Aw, that's sweet," Eric chimed.

Juyeon snorted, but quickly cleared his throat and nodded when he saw Younghoon raise an eyebrow at him.

"I see."

"This is exactly why I don't ask you for help but Eric."

"I don't think he got the memo."

Said boy puffed his cheeks and shoved Juyeon aside.

"Nu-uh, hyung, don't worry, I know exactly what to do! My friends all talk about this bench close to the back door of the gym. It's very nice, close to the garden and very private."

"A super private bench that everybody talks about, are you nuts?"

"Hyung, no! I never see any students there, it's between the garden and the pool somewhere, I only know it's green and has a table attached to it."

"Oh, that one."

"You mean the one where Sangyeon and Jacob got caught making out on Sangyeon hyung's graduation?"

"Yup," Juyeon answered.

"They're a couple?!"

With wide eyes Eric stared at Jacob who was talking to their coach and Hyunjae. The older one probably had heard him yell, because now he was looking at him in confusion. Eric waved. Jacob mirrored it and smiled.

"Yup," Juyeon said again.

"Are you sure this is a good place?"

Eric blinked and turned back to Younghoon.

"Wow, I didn't know... But yes of course! It's very nice. I'll tell him that you want to talk to him aaaand... that you're studying there. Easy. Nothing more, nothing less. No one will notice when he comes to you when the seniors leave. I'll practice with him later, don't worry."

"No, Youngjae, I think he doesn't-"

"It's fine, I got this, Juyeon hyung! Trust me, this is a good place with great timing!"

"No that's not what I mean, I mean the Jaehyun you think he-"

The youngest frowned disappointedly when he interrupted Juyeon. At the same time the coach blew a whistle.

"Hyung, I know who Jaehyun is, trust me, I'm not stupid! I'll see you later, I must practice my shots since the old coach is already mad at me, I can't risk being benched!"

Juyeon failed to hold him back.

"Youngjae! Aaaaand he's gone. Great, oh damn it."

"What are you talking about?" Younghoon asked.

"I just thought he might-"

"Juyeonie, we continue!" Jacob called.

The younger one groaned.

"The-"

"Juyeon! Get your ass over here, or we'll continue without you!"

"Don't be so mean!"

"But Hyunjae's right, Jacob! Get back on the court, Juyeon!" the coach called.

So Younghoon shooed him away, turned him around and slapped his butt.

"We'll talk later. It'll be fine. Work hard, Ju."

"But-"

"Juyeon! You're not irreplaceable!"

"Coach, that's enough, you know he is!" Jacob defended him.

"Go, go, go. Prove them wrong, little one."

"Will do, we'll talk later, I hope. I'm sorry. I'm coming!"

While the basketball team continued practicing, Younghoon took his stuff and left the gym. Once he found said bench, he sat down and pulled out his phone.

After reading the preview of his parent's messages he decided to ignore them for his own sake. Right now, he couldn't bear the stress at home. He was sick of them complaining about each other.

After taking a quick glance at the battery symbol he narrowed his eyebrows. Already at half, yet he hadn't used it after arriving at school, that was ridiculous.

Sighing, he put the phone back into his pocket and took out his literature homework. Even though Eric would tell Jaehyun that Younghoon was busy studying, he didn't even try to look busy at all. Instead, he just looked down at his phone again, this time challenging the battery life with a few videos. He even ignored the group chat conversation with Changmin and Chanhee when they asked about his family.

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Half an hour had passed when it finally happened.

"Hey there, Eric said you wanted to talk to me. He sounded very excited, almost like it was an emergency, so I asked for a quick break. There was no time for me to refresh myself, sorry. I hope that's okay. I tend to sweat a lot."

"Oh, yes, I wanted to ask you if- uhm... hah?" Younghoon's face fell once he looked up.

He blinked.

The guy in front of him grinned and wiped the sweat off his forehead. He wore a purple basketball jersey and fitting shorts, so apparently, he was part of the school's team. The boy looked handsome, too, with a lovely smile, wide eyes, and plump lips.

But the guy in front of Younghoon was not Jaehyun.

He was one of the seniors that played in the same team as Jaehyun did. Younghoon had seen him only a few times and he never even caught his name, so he didn't seem to be part of the usual line-up to him.

That was the guy who was talking to Jaehyun earlier when Younghoon had pointed him out.

He mentally slapped his forehead.

"Oh wait, now I remember you! You're Kim Younghoon, right? From our swimming team! You guys are great, Younghyun's friend Chan told me about you. He seemed very impressed by you. Is it true that you won national competitions when you were still in middle school?"

What on earth did Eric do? This must have been a mistake.

"Uhm, I- yes that's right, but- sorry, I- may I... May I ask for your name?" Younghoon stuttered quietly.

"You ask your friend for me, but you don't even know my name? Wow, uhm... I'm Kim Jaehyun, class three-three. Former captain of the senior basketball team and now I'm the co-captain. On Wednesdays I'm also the second coach of the junior team, as I'm about to graduate soon, and I want to teach kids how to play basketball as a part-time job during my studies. Our new captain is your friend, right? Jacob Bae?"

Younghoon swallowed dryly.

"The juniors'... coach? And your first name... is Jaehyun?"

"Yes? So, why were you looking for me? Can I help you with something? Is it about the basketball team? You wanna join us? Dumping the pool kids already, I see," he flashed him a happy grin, "You have great physics, not gonna lie, bet you'd make a good player. Instead of always watching us you could join us for once, what do you think? I can ask the coach if that's fine with him."

Younghoon really started to regret asking Eric for help. He knew Eric wasn't fluent in his mother tongue yet, so what on earth had made him think it was a good idea when he agreed?

He should have asked Hyunjae for help or Juyeon but they would have probably made fun of him. Gosh, he should have asked Jacob. But Eric had been so passionate about

all this that, with him, Younghoon hadn't felt too embarrassed talking about his crush.

Was this what Juyeon had meant? Did he try to warn Eric about the shared name of two team members? Or had the younger one just misunderstood him?

"N-No, I-"

His senior laughed.

"I'm just kidding! Man, you really seem nervous. Are you okay? You look a little sick, I hope you don't have a fever or something."

Younghoon indeed felt his cheeks heating up. How humiliating. He never considered the chance of two Jaehyun's in the team. That had seemed absurd. That really was ridiculous. Who would have thought of this?

"I'm sorry, no, this is very embarrassing now, I think I made a mistake-" he tried to defend himself with shaky words.

"You- oh!" Jaehyun slapped a hand over his mouth before he kept talking, "Oh my God, sorry kid, but do you have a crush on me or something? Is this why you wanted to meet me here? In a more private place? The kids babbled something about the 'confession bench' or something like that. Hey, don't be shy. It's fine, I don't mind. It's okay if you find it a little awkward to confess to a senior. We've all been there."

"Say again?" Younghoon's eyes widened.

They heard the coach call for Jaehyun near the gym. The elder boy scratched the back of his head. Younghoon was too perplexed to respond properly. What really bothered him was the basketball team's seniors leaving the gym one after another now.

"Uh- I'm sorry, I must leave now, the junior's training usually is an hour longer than the senior's training on Wednesdays, but I'm already taken anyway and- you're really handsome, really cute, I see why my cousin and her friends talk about you so much. They always like the swimmers, but you seem to hold their attention way longer than the others, but- wait wow, oh my God" he shook his head, "I have a girlfriend. I'm very sorry but you'll find someone who'll like you back. We can talk anytime if you need some help, okay? I can be your wingman, yeah?! Okay, great, bye, I really must leave now, or the coach kicks me out!"

He wasn't even done talking when he was already running away.

"What... the fuck?" Younghoon mumbled once the other was gone.

Now his senior, Kim Jaehyun... thought that he had a crush on him, and the younger students even talked about it? How embarrassing could his life become?

He really needed to talk to Eric. The younger one seemed to have misunderstood him.

Thus, he took his phone, but once he opened the messenger it immediately died. Frowning, he turned it back on, but the device seemed not to be in the mood to work properly today.
He sighed.

Well, then he had to talk to Eric once he was home and had recharge his phone. Going back to the gym was not an option, not after this incident. Besides that, coach Bang would probably rip his head off if he was late for practice, especially because the coach didn't know that Younghoon skipped the extra hour of training.

They were expressly asked to start early on Wednesdays because Chan, the coach's son, always got the keys from his father, but because of the basketball team's practice Younghoon skipped said extra hour lately. And now the official training would start in the next five minutes and Younghoon still had to get his bag from his locker, so he quickly shoved his stuff back into his backpack and went to the school building.

On his way he passed by a group of girls looking at him curiously. One of them, that Younghoon knew from his math class, whistled, but another one that he knew from his science class quickly shut her up.

"Jinah, it doesn't look like Younghoon got lucky."

"Never thought he would hit on taken guys," a third girl said.

Great. The first people that had witnessed this conversation. Perfect. Oh, how private this place had been. No wonder Jacob and Sangyeon got caught.

"Never thought you would hit on guys in general," Jinah said, "Quite a brave move. Sorry that he turned you down. I bet there would have been others that wouldn't have done that."

She winked and chuckled.

"He didn't- what are you talking about?" Younghoon tried to defend himself, "He didn't turn me down because I didn't even hit on him, what the fuck?"

"Of course, you didn't."

Sighing annoyedly, he quickly walked past them and tried to ignore any other of their comments on his awkward meeting with Kim Jaehyun.

On his way to his locker, he tried to keep at least a little bit of the confidence he had built up for his planned confession. It worked out well at least until-

"Your training starts now? I thought all the clubs would end at the same time except for the kid's basketball practice and you were just skipping it every Wednesday."

"As if you don't know. What are you still doing here?"

"I needed my textbook for math and now I'm waiting for you to answer my questions."

Younghoon bit his lips. He really wasn't in the mood for Hyunjae.

It wasn't that he really disliked the other boy, he just... didn't really like him. Usually he had no idea what the other wanted or whether he was making fun of him yet again or not, but as long as Jacob, Juyeon and Eric liked him, he was willing to tolerate his presence in some of the breaks they spent together. He spent most of his time with Chanhee and Changmin anyway.

When they met with Juyeon and the other's during the breaks he usually even tried to avoid contact with Hyunjae. They rarely talked because Younghoon didn't know what to talk about to him anyways. All he knew was that the other boy frequently glanced at him almost shyly, just to come up with any new insolent antics afterwards. To him Hyunjae wasn't a friend but just a friend's friend. An acquaintance.

"We officially start later on Wednesdays because the coach has his second office hour because he's the liaison teacher, but I probably told it Juyeon five times, and you listened at least three times. But yes, I do skip an extra hour of training, that's right. However, the other days of the week I stay late to work on details with Chan and a few other members. Anything I can do for you? If yes, make it quick, because I'm already late."

"Oh wow, what crawled up your ass? I thought out of Juyeonie's friends you were the nicest after Jacob, but today you're really trying to prove me wrong, aren't you?"

Hyunjae leaned against the locker to his left.

"I'm very sorry if I hurt your feelings, but like I said twice, that's none of your business," Younghoon mumbled annoyedly and slammed his locker shut.

He shouldered his gym bag and turned around to leave, but Hyunjae held him back.

"I assume your date with Jaehyun hyung didn't go well? Did he say anything inappropriate, or did he upset you?"

For a second Younghoon stood still.

How did he know about it? Had Eric told him? Had more students witnessed this awful conversation than the girls from earlier?

"Do I have to repeat myself? It's none of your business. Jaehyun hyung wasn't mean or anything, Eric just made a mistake and sent the wrong person. That's it. Now go bug someone else. Please."

Hyunjae followed him down the hall.

"I can help you, if you tell me who you want to confess to."

"No thanks. And no one said anything about confessing."

"You sure? Jaehyun hyung thinks so because when I came out of the shower, he was talking about you and so were the kids. Well, he wasn't gossiping but you know how much people like rumors and how much they love to intentionally misinterpret any kind of information you give to them."

"Let him talk. It wasn't him I wanted to talk to, that's it."

"So, who do you want to talk to?"

"Neither Kim Jaehyun nor you right now."

Hyunjae ran a hand through his damp hair.

"Okay, ouch. I didn't even do anything, and I already apologized for my behavior earlier. I just saw you walk in here and you looked a little upset, so I wanted to check on you. Jinah and her friends are probably just jealous because you didn't ask any of them or—"

"I don't care about Jinah and her friends."

He could almost hear Hyunjae swallow. Then the other boy nodded slowly.

"Figured. Hey, you know- you can talk to me anytime if you want to or if you... need some help. Seriously."

Younghoon had noticed the change in Hyunjae's tone, but he didn't want to think about the other's reasons for his concern.

He was probably just messing with him yet again.

"Thanks, but not now. I can handle this."

Kapitel 2: Chapter 2

Although Younghoon had planned to talk to Eric as soon as possible, he had to wait until he met the younger boy on their first break on Monday. Also, his phone had been in repairs for the last few days and he couldn't pick it up until this morning. It still didn't work properly, but at least it didn't die instantly whenever he opened the messenger anymore.

Now he was sitting on a bench with Chanhee and Changmin, waiting for Eric.

Once the younger one arrived, he was smiling broadly.

"Hey kid," Chanhee greeted Eric and received a quick hug in return.

"Hyung, how was it? Did it work out?" he asked Younghoon excitedly.

"Nothing worked out," he shook his head, "You sent the wrong guy! That's probably in the top five of my most awkward conversations now!"

The youngest's eyes widened.

"What do you mean, hyung?! I told Jaehyun hyung to go to that bench just like we said!"

Younghoon rolled his eyes. He quickly looked around the schoolyard until he spotted Jaehyun.

"Eric, are you blind? Deaf? Or are you just stupid? You see them standing over there?" he pointed to the group of the two Jaehyun's and another younger student that looked pale and tired, "I was talking about the tall blond! Not your coach!"

"That is not blond at all," Chanhee said and shoved another one of Changmin's cookies in his mouth.

He patted Eric's head and gave him a cookie as well while the youngest mumbled the words Younghoon had said. Chanhee whined when Changmin took the sweets from him.

"It is, that's just a different shade," Younghoon dismissed him.

"No, what the fuck, I'm guessing you're either color blind or trying to do something illegal," Chanhee said, mouth full.

"I said 'tall blond', now shut up, Chanhee. Don't they need you in your math club?"

Changmin laughed out loud.

"Wow, rude, hyung."

"I already know why I don't help you with this nonsense. And by the way, we won the-"

"I really appreciate that you're so smart but right now I couldn't care less."

"Wow."

"Blond...? Blond, blond... oh, blond hair! Ooooh! Him! I didn't know his real name was Jaehyun!" Eric suddenly beamed, pointing in the direction of the right Jaehyun.

"Yes! Not the older one with the black hair."

"I see, yeah, okay! Now I got it! Oh my gosh! Woah, is this even allowed?!"

"What?" Younghoon frowned but Eric immediately shook his head.

"Never mind, I get it, hyung!"

The youngest hopped excitedly from one foot to the other.

"All right, can you tell him to meet me on Wednesday?"

"Nope, no clubs on Wednesday because of this teachers' meeting, hyung," Changmin pointed out.

"Besides, you wanted to go to the library the whole week, remember? You promised me last week that you'd study," Chanhee added.

"Right... Can you tell him... How about Friday? There's no practice on Friday and I can still spend some time between books and homework before the party I'll go to starts."

"Okay, I'll tell him later when he's alone."

"Thanks. Don't forget about it."

"I'll do my best!"

Eric grinned at him, but then someone else's laughter caught his attention. He turned around so quickly that Younghoon thought he was going to get whiplash.

"Oh, there's Juyeonie hyung! I'll talk to you later, okay, hyung, or maybe I can text you? I haven't seen him over the weekend," he said.

The older one nodded. Sometimes he thought that Eric might be a little too devoted to Juyeon, but then again he couldn't blame him. Juyeon had put in much effort to help Eric immerse himself in the new school and the youngest was very grateful to have him.

"My phone dies frequently, but we'll see. Last chance, Eric! I'm counting on you!"

Eric had picked up his backpack and was already on his way to Juyeon. He turned around and gave him a thumbs up.

"It's fine, you can trust me! This time I'll get it right, I promise! I'll make it all up to you, you won't regret asking me for help!"

"Remember, the tall one!" he called after him.

"Small one, I got it!"

"Tall!"

"Ah, don't worry, I know exactly what you mean!"

With that Eric turned around and ran towards Juyeon, crashing right into the older boy and hugging him from the side. He started babbling as soon as Juyeon had stopped complaining.

Eric couldn't fuck this up again. Chances were low that he would ask the wrong person again. More than two Jaehyun's on the same team would be very unlikely.

"You're so fucked, hyung. Once he sees Juyeon, his mind is far beyond blank. You should have asked Juyeonie or that guy who transferred here in May, I guess," Changmin chuckled.

"Hyunjae?"

"Who?" Chanhee asked.

"What?" Younghoon looked at Changmin in confusion.

"Him, that guy over there next to Jacob hyung. The blond."

He pointed at Hyunjae, who was standing close to the entrance of the first gym, talking to Jacob and Juyeon.

"Blond? That's not blond- no, wait, fuck, Eric didn't think I was talking about him, did he? He was pointing at the one in the front, wasn't he?! Tell me he was!"

Younghoon's eyes widened when he realized that Hyunjae, Jacob, Juyeon and Eric were basically standing right behind the Jaehyun in question and Kim Jaehyun, only a few meters away.

"I don't know, do you know this guy?"

"That's J-" Chanhee started, but Younghoon cut him off.

He let out an offended sound at that.

"That's Hyunjae, Jacob's and Juyeonie's new friend. He's also new to the basketball team."

"Ah~ yes, I remember. Cobie hyung told me that he took my place when I joined the new dance class before summer break. I haven't had a chance to meet him yet. He's one of the guys from the abolished tennis club I think."

"It's not entirely abol-"

Chanhee shook his head disappointedly when Younghoon once again interrupted him.

"Yeah, he's also been in my math class since this semester. Their teacher is pregnant or something and they had to split the class because there aren't enough teachers available during that period or something, don't know, don't care. I just know that they're looking for new teachers. But Eric can't be that stupid, can he? Please tell me he can't."

Changmin shrugged while Chanhee tried to look busy with his shoelaces.

"Never underestimate Juyeonie's new baby chick, but you're right, he cannot be that stupid and mix up two different names. Juyeonie could be that dumb, but Eric? I don't know, probably yes. His Korean might be better now, but he's still struggling I think. Last week he asked me if I was eating a small witch. I was eating a sandwich, hyung. Well, whatever, that Hyunjae guy looks cute. What's your problem with him?" Changmin asked.

He craned his neck to see Hyunjae properly.

"Handsome guy. His looks can't be the problem. Tall, blond, a gorgeous face with- are those dimples? Nah, they're not, are they? I can't see it properly. But isn't that what you're looking for?"

"Oh fuck off."

The younger one giggled when Younghoon kicked him in the shin.

Hyunjae was hugging Eric and all four of them were laughing. The way he creased his face when he laughed and how he was clinging to Eric did something to Younghoon that he couldn't assign yet.

"I don't have a problem with him," Younghoon muttered.

Chanhee burst out laughing.

"U-huh, sure. You just freaked out when Changmin pointed out that he's blond and got scared Eric will send him to you next, instead of your crush."

"First of all, that's brunet."

"Blond, but okay," the younger one interrupted him this time, "Just a darker shade."

Looking at the color now in proper sunlight he had to admit that it really could be a dark shade of blond. Damn it. He would rip Eric's head off if he sent him Hyunjae.

"Whatever. I- I just don't understand him. He always makes fun of me and-"

"So do we, yet we're friends," Changmin deadpanned.

"He's just- I don't know, weird, rude and I don't know what to talk to him about."

Chanhee chuckled mischievously. He stood up and took his backpack when the bell rang. Changmin followed him.

"He's not rude at all."

"Of course, he is!"

"Hey, why do all of you know him except for me?" Changmin asked.

"I'll introduce you later. Hyung, maybe you're just a little bit too sensitive lately, because his humor isn't too different from yours. Your problem is that you don't know him and at the same you're not even trying to get to know him. And on top of that you don't even give him a chance to get to know you, am I right? Come on, we know you, don't even try to lie to us. It took you two months to talk to Changmin after I brought him along."

Younghoon avoided making eye contact with Chanhee. He couldn't stand the reproving look from the younger one right now. Especially not when he was right about what he had said.

"I don't know what to say when I'm alone with him. And I don't like being alone with him anyway, because it feels weird. I think he doesn't like me anyway-"

Chanhee flicked Younghoon's forehead with his finger.

"Hey!"

"If he doesn't it's because he doesn't know you either! And you don't know what he's thinking, do you? What if he likes you, but you don't notice over all your stupid daydreaming about that other guy? He walks past the pool every day, when Changmin and I wait for you, whenever you guys are still practicing and I bet it's not just because he lives in that direction. Think about it. I'm leaving, break's over and Yoyo hyung from my super exciting math club needs me, hyung."

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry, now stop whining. Have fun. See you later in the library?"

"I don't know yet. It depends on how well Changminie works, but don't skip it if I don't show up. I'm warning you."

Younghoon sighed and nodded. Chanhee was way too strict about their education. Changmin patted his hair.

"You got this, hyung. Bye-bye."

Changmin was already leaving when Chanhee looked at Younghoon, still waiting for an answer. He even tapped his foot.

"I'll do my best."

"Good. Hey, I know there's a lot going on inside your head right now, but please try to focus on the exams."

"I'll try, Chanhee."

"You can call me later, if you feel like talking about your parents."

"Depends on my phone's battery."

"Ah... All right."

"But thank you."

"Anytime, hyung."

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Younghoon sat in the library later that day, trying to work on his homework. He had absolutely no idea what he was doing so he texted Chanhee. Watching videos about the math problems he was trying to solve was too dangerous for his phone's battery.

You / 15:20

>Chanhee ever heard of spline interpolation?<

You / 15:29

>Chanheeeeeee please my battery is low again and I'm stupid :((There are so many numbers and I have no idea what I need them for :(<

Chanhee / 15:36

>Lmao your phone sucks<

>Why spline interpolation, is this even on your syllabus?? But you're lucky because my SUPER COOL MATH CLUB worked on that. But I'm busy rn, sorry hyung...

Changminie's chewing my ears off because of that archery kid and I'm trying to get him to work on our presentation. I could help you later but like late-late later... No one from your math class around? :/<

Younghoon looked around. On the table next to him sat Jacob and Hyunjae. Jacob was equally bad at math and Hyunjae was no option for obvious reasons. Besides, he was resting his head on his crossed arms on the table and seemed to be asleep. Younghoon sighed and texted Chanhee back.

You / 15:37

>Eeeeh... only hyunjae and cobie but cobie would fail math every year without you, too, and hyunjae seems like he never pays attention anyway, sooooo??? <3<3<

Chanhee / 15:41

>Cobie hyung is no option... then go to jae hyung.<
>Jaehyun*<

You / 15:41

>Hyunjae*<

Chanhee / 15:41

>?<
>hah??? Omg<

Chanhee / 15:42

>Well whatever Yoyo hyung always tries to talk him into our club he's really good, he was also in the advanced math class u know, before Ms Kim got pregnant and they split up the course?<

You / 15:42

>That was the advanced course??? Seriously?!<

He looked back at Hyunjae, who was still resting his head on his crossed arms, eyes closed. Younghoon couldn't resist the urge to send Chanhee a photo of the other boy.

Chanhee / 15:43

>Yes lol go ask him he's good at math<

You / 15:43

>[image]<
>Are you kidding me?<

Chanhee / 15:44

>Hahaha cute. And no, wtf? Why do you think Cobie hyung didn't fail his exams when I was busy helping your lazy ass before summer break?<
>I'll come to your house later, like 9 I guess?? Then we can walk my baby Bori and talk<

You / 15:46

>Okay see ya later<

Well.

Shit.

He typed a quick message for Changmin to hurry up because he needed Chanhee's help, but the younger just left him on read.

Okay then. Fidgeting with his pen, he almost stared holes into his homework. All he had to do was get up, walk over to Hyunjae, maybe tap him on the shoulder and ask him for help.

However, his legs didn't move. It was as if his body was operating against his mind. Something he couldn't address was holding him back and when he thought he could just call him, no words left of his mouth.

When he accidentally dropped his pen on the table he picked it back up and then... then he gave himself up to the impulse to throw it.

So Younghoon flicked his pen at Hyunjae. But he miscalculated his strength and the angle and hit Jacob's head instead.

Jacob looked over his shoulder and rubbed the back of his head. He gestured something that probably meant 'Bro, what have I ever done to you?'. Offended, but still too good for this cruel world.

Younghoon immediately began gesturing an apology. He then pointed at Hyunjae who was already watching the scene to his surprise. Wide awake. Embarrassed, he stopped moving, waved Jacob off and stared back at his homework.

Why had he done that? Why couldn't he have walked over like a normal person and said something?

He heard Hyunjae chuckle before he could see it in the corner of his eyes as the blond suddenly got up and walked over to him.

Younghoon felt his heartbeat increase and his cheeks grow warm. Oh, why was he being so awkward around this guy? Hyunjae didn't even do anything, yet Younghoon always felt so weird around him. He couldn't even look the other boy in the eyes properly without feeling weird about the way that he was smiling right now.

He took a deep breath and cleared his throat when Hyunjae sat down next to him. The blond leaned over the table and rested his head in the palm of his hand. He gave Younghoon his pen back.

"Thanks," Younghoon mumbled.

"Anytime. I uh... had a feeling that you really wanted to talk to me for once? Or did you just try to knock me out with that pen but missed?"

Younghoon bit his cheek as he slowly shook his head and faced the other boy.

Hyunjae flashed him a genuine smile.

He froze for a second as he felt himself mentally black out. There was only one word left inside his head.

Cute.

He blinked in confusion.

That was what he thought about it? Now he had a name for it.

He tried to process finding something about Hyunjae cute but failed, causing him to stutter a quick counter question.

"S-Sorry... You uhm... You know Choi Chanhee?"

Now the other boy leaned back and pursed his lips. He raised an eyebrow and nodded.

"I happen to know Chanhee, yes. He's cute, but there are cuter guys around, in my opinion. What about him? You're close, aren't you? Need some help?"

"Wha- no. We're friends, yes, but no. No, he's in the math club and- and he told me about- can you... explain to me how this works? Did- Did you understand it?"

Now it was Hyunjae who blinked in confusion.

"So it's true that Choi Chanhee tutors you in math even though he's a year behind us?" Hyunjae sounded almost impressed, but then he chuckled and Younghoon felt a lump in his throat.

Was he making fun of him again?

Younghoon closed his eyes for a second and took a deep breath. He slammed his book shut.

"Figured it would be a bad idea to ask you-"

"No, no, no, I didn't even say anything against it, come on. I was just impressed- Wait. Give me the- thanks," he carefully took the book and looked inside, "I'll help you. Which problem are you trying to solve?"

One look into Hyunjae's eyes was enough to convince him that he was being honest.

"Two-B from our homework. I have absolutely no idea what to do."

"That's basically the same as the example on the blackboard and it's only for Mrs. Kim's course or for extra credit. Seems like someone wasn't paying attention in class?"

Younghoon clicked his tongue. His eyes followed the slim fingers of the other boy running over the page in the book.

"I... I was distracted."

"Pretty irritable and distractible lately, aren't we? Juyeonie said something like that and... you're not very subtle. What was it that caught your attention? My handsome looks since I sit across from you and you only have eyes for me?" Hyunjae said, not even looking up from the exercise, "Come on, you've been staring since I had to join your class and now you even observe me playing basketball."

"You wish. You're the one that stares shamelessly."

Hyunjae smiled mischievously as if he'd been caught and sucked on his bottom lip before he pulled a straight face again.

"No, no, no, I usually look out the window behind you and dream of my bright future."

What a liar.

The next smile he flashed Younghoon was an overly innocent and very controlled one.

He decided he liked the cute and slightly awkward smile better.

"You're so shameless. But I'm serious, can you help me now or not? It's not just this exercise, I just suck at math, but if you want to mess with me, please don't and just leave. It's just- I don't mean to be rude, it's just that I'm scared of the exams, and I have no idea what I'm doing here. So it would be nice of you not to make fun of me today."

Hyunjae's wannabe poker face fell. He looked almost worried.

"I'm sorry Younghoon, I was joking. I didn't mean to offend you. Let me just get my stuff and check on Jacob. I'll do my best to help you."

And he really did. Younghoon didn't necessarily understand everything on the first try like he did when Chanhee explained the problems to him, but he understood the essence of what Hyunjae tried to explain. Hyunjae took his time with him, explained every detail and was able to answer all of Younghoon's questions.

"Do you think you understand everything now?"

"Yeah, thanks a lot. I didn't know you're such a nerd."

"Okay wow, no, I'm not a nerd."

"A bit, just admit it. Maybe you really should join the math club."

Hyunjae laughed. Younghoon probably watched his face more attentively than ever before.

"Sure, I'd love to waste my time with math if I could do something more interesting."

Younghoon let out a sarcastic snort.

"What would you consider more interesting than Chanhee's awesome math club?"

"Basically... everything? Even basketball is more interesting."

Younghoon frowned. Didn't they have a choice when the tennis club was temporarily closed?

"You don't like basketball? Sounds like something a nerd would say."

"Hey!" he grinned and playfully nudged Younghoon's shoulder, "No, well, it's not that I don't like it, same goes for math. Well science is more fun, but I enjoy both. Basketball is cool and the team is nice, but I'd rather play tennis again. They are still renovating the stupid court and the third gym, though," he yawned mid-sentence, "so I'm stuck with them. Far too many people, most of the time. It's getting late. I think we should leave now. I still have a lot of homework left after all and they'll kick us out soon anyway."

Younghoon looked out of the window. The sun was setting. Around them were only a few students left.

"Oh... oh my God, I'm sorry I kept you from your homework, I didn't know you weren't done yet-"

"It's fine. You can pay me back anytime," he winked.

Younghoon didn't know what to answer. He suddenly felt guilty for keeping Hyunjae away from his own work. With wide eyes he wanted to say something, but no words left his mouth.

"Woah relax, you look like a deer caught in headlights. That was just a joke, don't cry now."

"Can I- Can I do something-"

Hyunjae raised a finger right in front of Younghoon's face.

"No. I mean it. It's fine, now stop freaking out, I'm not an asshole. Let's just leave,

we've done enough."

"I'm really sorry that I bothered you-"

Hyunjae rolled his eyes and laughed.

"You didn't! Jeez, it's alright, Younghoon. I swear. Okay? We're cool."

"Okay... But I feel bad for-"

"I don't care, oh my God!"

Someone shushed them.

"Sorry! Let's go, come on. Don't you dare get your wallet out, you big dummy. It's fine, I promise you. I'm glad that I could help you. I don't need anything in return and- and you can always ask me for help if you need it."

Once they had left the building, Hyunjae stretched out his arms and yawned for a second time. After a few meters he stopped and bowed dramatically.

"It was nice spending some time with you for... well, the first time?" Hyunjae chuckled, "You're more approachable than I thought you were when we first met."

"You're not that bad yourself."

"Thanks I guess? All right, I see you in math. We... we can go to the library again after practice tomorrow if uh... if you'd like to?"

"Sure. You said you were good at science, too, right?"

"I said I like it. But I happen to be good at it too, yes."

"And you said I can ask for your help if needed? Because I may or may not have some issues with it, too and if- if your course is ahead of us like you said, would... would you-"

"I'd love to help you," he interrupted.

Younghoon couldn't help himself but return the warm smile.

"Cool. Thanks."

"Anytime. Okay, yeah, cool, I see you tomorrow. Bye-bye then."

Hyunjae waved and was already turning to leave, but this time Younghoon stopped him. A few hours ago he would have never thought he would be doing this anytime soon. He was even more surprised that he had enjoyed their time in the library.

"Don't you- don't you live in the same direction?"

The other boy turned around and blinked. He came back.

"Huh? No, uh... well yes, usually on Wednesdays and some weekends. My dad lives there, but I actually live with my mom, who lives in the opposite direction, sooo... I have to take the metro every other weekday except Wednesday."

Then why was he always walking past the pool if he only visited his father on Wednesdays? Leaving through the main gate would be much closer to the metro station than walking across half the schoolyard and all the way past the pool.

Was Chanhee right about what he had said? Did Hyunjae... watch the swimming team's practice? There was no other reason for him to go this route but the mere thought of him watching Younghoon and the other members practice seemed ridiculous. He had no reason to because as far as Younghoon knew, no one from the club was very close to Hyunjae. Maybe he should ask Chanhee if there was something he hadn't told him or anything else that he knew that Younghoon didn't know.

But for now Younghoon chose not to think about it. It was already confusing enough to him that he kind of started to like the other.

"Oh, your parents don't live together?" Younghoon asked.

"They are divorced, and my mom and I only came to Seoul a while ago after my sister moved out. That's why I switched here in May."

"I see... I'm sorry about your parents, I didn't know that."

Hyunjae smiled and waved it off.

"Don't be. It's not like I'm shouting it from the rooftops and looking back I'm glad they ended up getting divorced, so it's fine. They used to fight every day and... that really sucks when you're like ten and you're sitting right between them, only with your older sister, who was also just a child back then... So I learned it was better for them to end this shit show of a marriage. Not all couples are made for each other I guess."

Younghoon looked at the ground. He didn't want to think about it, but it was like he could hear his parents yelling at each other right at that moment. He knew how Hyunjae must have felt as a child. To him it was akin to a horror show and he was already seventeen years old, so how bad would it be for an even younger child to hear their parents fight every day?

"Maybe not everyone, yeah..."

"Some sure are, but some others are not. For example, my dad and his fiancée make a great match and my mom is better off without someone. But my parents as a couple? Absolute disaster. At least they didn't terrorize each other after their divorce and... yeah. Sorry, I didn't mean to bore you--"

Younghoon looked up again and tried a quick smile but failed miserably.

"No, no, you weren't. I guess you got lucky then?"

"Yes, I did, compared to some guys I know."

"Hey, uhm... I should apologize by the way. You're right, I am easily irritated lately, it's just... I'm pretty stressed these days. I'm really sorry if I somehow took it out on you."

He didn't know exactly why he couldn't say it out loud, even though he now knew that Hyunjae was a child of divorce. He probably still hoped for his parents to find each other again.

Hyunjae's cute smile turned into an even cuter grin.

"No, no, it's fine, don't worry. I hope understanding math takes some of the pressure off you. Uh- I gotta go now, otherwise I'll miss the metro. See you in math? I mean, you will probably stare at me again, but... don't worry, I'll notice."

Younghoon smiled softly and nodded. For the first time the teasing kind of brightened his mood.

"Sure. Bye and thank you again."

"Quit that, you owe me nothing. Bye!"

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When he entered the house, he could already hear his parents yell at each other. Biting his lip he went to the kitchen, opened the fridge, and took out a bottle of water. His parents kept arguing, and his father said something about how they shouldn't fight in front of Younghoon. They continued, nonetheless. They always did. But he tried not to listen to them anymore.

"Chanhee comes over at nine!" he said loud enough to drown out their argument as he left the kitchen.

Then he called for Bori and climbed the stairs to his room with the little poodle in his arms. Leaning against the door inside of his room, he dropped his backpack next to himself and closed his eyes for a moment. His fingers ran through the soft fur, and he took a deep breath. Once again he found himself hoping that they would find each other again. Luckily he could talk to Chanhee about it later.

But maybe Hyunjae was right.

Maybe some couples didn't make a good match, no matter how hard they tried. And sometimes it seemed to be better to part ways.

But it still hurt.

Kapitel 3: Chapter 3.1

After talking to Chanhee about how surprisingly much Hyunjae had helped him on Monday afternoon, he had also wondered if he had ever seen the other boy watching him practice for the past few weeks.

And apparently, he had.

He had just never thought about it further because he had been convinced that Hyunjae lived in that direction.

Besides, no one said he was specifically watching Younghoon, so maybe he was watching someone else. What if he usually waited outside to pick up someone else from the team? But then again, he thought, why break the habit and spend time in the library with Younghoon? Would he really ditch his friend just to study with Younghoon who he had only recently started talking to? On the other hand, he never saw anyone else from the team with Hyunjae during their breaks or anything. Most of them probably didn't even know him since only four other members were in the same grade as them.

The only possible options were Bang Chan, coach Bang's son, straight as an arrow and already taken. Lee Dongmin, admittedly straight as a circle, but also taken (or at least dating random guys from time to time) as far as Younghoon knew. Dong Sicheng, who knew about five Korean words and was always occupied by this Japanese senior anyway. And Jo Haseul, who was desperately trying to overcome her fear of water with the help of her younger friend Kim Jungeun.

Since Sicheng usually rode his bicycle to and back from school, Chan was in a relationship and judging from what he had learned about Hyunjae, he figured Hyunjae was neither straight nor bisexual, so it was probably either Younghoon... or Dongmin who he watched.

Both options seemed ridiculous, but he didn't know if Hyunjae and Dongmin had any classes together. What if they were friends and Younghoon just didn't know? There was a lot that he didn't know about Hyunjae yet. Hyunjae seemed nice, open-hearted, and sociable and Dongmin was a quite popular guy that everyone liked from the start. Maybe they got along very well and what if Dongmin was currently single? Dongmin was definitely worth a look because he was tall, well built, handsome, a great swimmer and his grades were outstanding, yet he was humble and-

Anyway!

He shouldn't think about it too much as he was probably reading too much into this.

Maybe Hyunjae had just no sense of direction.

Aside from him walking along the pool every day, he had noticed even more details

and characteristics about the other in the last few days when they had met up in the library every afternoon after practice and even during a few breaks. They even went home together on Wednesday. He felt like he was starting to get a better sense for the other boy's humor, and he felt a lot less annoyed with him. In fact, lately he even found most of his jokes funny.

Further he figured he felt kind of impressed by the handsome features of Hyunjae's face, but he would never admit that he liked the other's high cheekbones, the outlines of his jaw or the little mole right on the bridge of his nose. Not to mention that cute smile and his eyes with that sometimes dreamy, sometimes almost hyper focused look that watched Younghoon's face and movements while he worked on a new exercise. Even though he could feel him staring once in a while, he didn't mind it. With each passing day that they met, he even caught himself looking at the other more and more often as well.

They had agreed to meet again later in the library, but for now Younghoon was trying to get rid of the image in his mind of Hyunjae's face being closer to his than he had ever imagined and the two of them huddled together over their textbook.

He tried to focus on Jaehyun, who he was about to meet right now.

Younghoon really hoped it would work this time. He eagerly awaited the other to arrive. The chances of Eric making the same mistake twice were pretty slim. He even felt more confident than the last time he sat here.

But apparently Eric hadn't 'exactly known' who Younghoon meant.

Maybe Younghoon should never play the lottery.

Luck was definitely not on his side.

"Hey, Younghoon hyung! Sorry I'm late! Eric told Sunwoo to text his friend Haknyeon to tell me that you wanted to talk to me about something important, because I got sick on Monday during class when he wanted to tell me in the break as he had said and I had to stay at home for a few days so I couldn't attend practice and now Eric's class was on a field trip yesterday and today and practice was canceled on Wednesday, so I haven't see him all week."

Eric had told Sunwoo to tell Haknyeon that- what?

"I find it a little bit strange, because you could have told Haknyeon directly since I know you are friends too, and Sunwoo is a student at Hanlim- Anyway, I told him to give you my number, but Eric had already told Sunwoo to tell Haknyeon that your phone keeps crashing, so texting you would be risky and now I hurried to come here because Hyunjae hyung said something about meeting you in the library later and then I couldn't have talked to you privately-"

"Oh, for fuck's sake!" yelled Younghoon once he found the right words after a moment of complete bewilderment.

"Er- I beg your pardon?"

The boy in front of him looked much younger than Jaehyun. He wore his dyed blond hair cropped short, concealer painted on his cheeks to cover the tiny bit of acne spreading across his face.

This was the boy who had been standing next to the other two Jaehyuns, when he had pointed out Eric's mistake a few days ago. He had also stood with them in the gym the day he had met Kim Jaehyun.

The "small" blond boy who had looked so pale and tired.

Eric couldn't be that stupid, could he? Was he making fun of him now too?

It was already enough for him that he had overheard some of his classmates talking about him and Kim Jaehyun. Some others had gossiped about Younghoon trying to confess to him and a few others had figured out that he was looking for another guy called Jaehyun. One girl even had had the audacity to ask him yesterday, if she should introduce him to her cousin named Jaehyun.

He really tried to ignore the gossip, but if Eric was mocking him now, too, the younger one had better prepared for the worst.

But then again, he doubted his youngest friend was that evil. Eric was too cute and caring to pull a prank like that. So he figured it had been a mistake again.

"How old are you even?"

"F-Fourteen, hyung."

'Is this even allowed?!'

Wasn't that what Eric had said?

He should have known.

"Ah... wow. Does your name happen to be Jaehyun, too, or are you kidding me?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, it was rude not to introduce myself earlier. I'm Bong Jaehyun, nice to meet you in person. I've heard a lot about you from Haknyeon and Eric. You're a great swimmer, I've watched some of your competitions."

Younghoon shook his head in disbelief.

'I didn't know his real name was Jaehyun!' Eric had said.

He.

Should.

Have.

Known.

"Yeah, well, yes, thank you. It's nice to meet you too, but- I'm sorry Jaehyun, but you're not- You're not the person I expected to meet here."

Jaehyun blinked. Younghoon thought he saw a bit of sadness and disappointment in his eyes. It almost felt as if Jaehyun had confessed to him and now he was the one turning him down.

"Oh... Hak said-"

"I know, I know. I'm really sorry, Jaehyun. It's probably Eric's fault or I guess I didn't make myself clear, when-"

"Did you want to meet Hyunjae hyung? So, it's true that you are dating?"

Younghoon felt his brain short circuited. Eyebrows raised and mouth hanging open he stared at the blond boy. Then he narrowed his eyes and felt his own yell to his bones.

"WHAT?!"

Jaehyun flinched.

"No! What the fuck, who said that?!"

The blond took a quick step back.

"Oh, sorry, some classmates were talking about it earlier. They said you guys spend a lot of time in the library and you go home together, and they probably thought so because he always picks you up after-"

"We've spent the last four days in the library, yes, but that doesn't make us a couple, what the fuck, we're just- friends."

At first it sounded weird to call Hyunjae his friend. But when he thought about it, it felt good to call him that.

"And what makes you think that he picks me up after practice?"

"I just thought it would only make sense because he's always passing by the pool, and my classmates said you seem to be good friends and you watch our practice- Oh. I thought I put two and two together when my classmates told me about it, but I guess I made a mistake because I was convinced that he picks you up! Hyung, I'm so sorry! I've overheard some other people talk about you dating someone and some others said they saw you with Hyunjae hyung recently, so I- sorry..."

"Did that come from your mouth?"

"What exactly?"

"Me dating Hyunjae."

"N-No, I've never said that out loud. My classmates did."

Younghoon sighed. He ran a hand over his face and shook his head. Jaehyun bit his lip, probably preparing to be scolded.

"Listen. You can tell your classmates that I'm not dating him. I am not dating anyone, okay? And that's none of their business anyway."

"Yes. I'm sorry."

"I know. Jaehyun- I- I'm trying to date someone, yes, but neither you nor Hyunjae."

"Oh! Did you want to meet Haknyeon?"

Out of reflex he slapped his hand flat on the table attached to the bank. Jaehyun grimaced as if Younghoon had hit him.

"No, what the fuck! What's wrong with you, Jaehyun?! Stop spreading your dangerous superficial knowledge and think for once! No! No, I-... No..."

The rest of the basketball team exiting the gym caught Younghoon's eye. He looked over Jaehyun's shoulder and clicked his tongue. In the distance he saw the Jaehyun in question leaving through the gate with their senior Johnny and their other friend.

He had missed his chance once again.

"That... that guy was the Jaehyun I was talking about. The one over there, Johnny hyung's friend, the blondish one."

Jaehyun's face lit up again as he turned around and Younghoon felt a little bit better.

"Huh?" Jaehyun almost yelled, "Oh! Jay hyung? Jung- ah, Jung Jaehyun? He was my neighbor when I was a kid! But I thought his name wasn't Jaehyun anymore!"

Younghoon blinked.

Did he get that right?

"His... what?"

"Oh no, Eric must have confused us. His new name is... uh... Yoo... Hyun- Hyeo... no... uh shit, I don't know. He once told me, but I forgot because he told me I can keep calling him Jaehyun and I was too embarrassed to ask again anyway and also I usually call him Jay when I see him. I guess you should stick with Jay or maybe Jaehyun for

now too. I'm sorry, I don't really know, because I only see him during practice and the last time that I had a full conversation with him was when his name was still Jaehyun before we moved away, and I was like... seven years old? I'm sorry."

The blond looked at him pityingly.

"So, he legally changed his name?"

Who changed their name mid-semester and why?!

"Yeah. Jaehyun's his birth name, but apart from me, only Johnny hyung and their close friends still use it regularly. They have known each other for at least ten years or so. He changed it some time ago, in May I think, or at the end of April, but I don't remember why. Some private issues, I guess... Among the team members we usually have to call him Jay, anyway, just like they call me by my English name 'Kevin' to avoid any confusion because we kind of all have the same name. And besides, he doesn't mind that I still call him Jaehyun, too, so you should be safe. It's not like he doesn't listen to that name anymore-"

Younghoon raised his eyebrows.

"You 'all'?" Younghoon interrupted his monologue.

Jaehyun stopped babbling and nodded. The expression on his face reflected his confusion. He started counting on his fingers.

"There's four of us. At least that's what I think. Wait, I guess there's probably at least six of us now that there's more people, uh... wait, the juniors' team now has two, me and, well Jaehyun, but he kind of never shows up, and the seniors... no, they only have three because I'm the fourth because I'm like a rookie in their team on Wednesdays because I'll join them when I'm... whatever. Everyone is confused and nothing makes sense anymore since so many people had to switch courses! Well, I think there's at least four Jaehyun's, yeah."

"Could have called the whole course Jaehyun," Younghoon huffed angrily.

The younger one laughed at that and leaned against the table.

"Yeah... Johnny hyung is such a bastard, because since all this gym dilemma he thinks it's fun to call all the seniors Jaehyun occasionally to confuse everyone when they play practice matches with us juniors, even so often that no one responds anymore when they hear it. They only sometimes respond when he adds their surnames, maybe except for Jung Jaehyun hyung and coach Kim Jaehyun hyung, since he's Jaehyun on the court as well, but fortunately the old coach usually quickly shuts him up."

Jaehyun smiled and nodded. Until Younghoon shook his head once again.

"Are you kidding me?"

"I wish I was!" he tried to defend himself, "A lot of students had to switch to basketball and other sports and some left, because of the renovation of the other gym and the tennis court that had started with the summer break, and some new clubs were formed. That's why we currently share the gym with the seniors every day, too. Usually, we would be separated from them. I started playing basketball in March so I'm fairly new to both teams, too and as I said, I don't see the others from the usual lineup during class, except for like Mark and Kunhang? And... a few guys that were in other courses before. We also quite often split into smaller teams for practice. So maybe you should ask an older member for the names. Maybe you could ask Hyunjae hyung for help? After all, he's closer to the seniors than I am. You shouldn't ask the coach though, because I think he only knows his favorites and the nicknames anyway."

At least... four Jaehyuns?

At least?

Maybe even six?

All of them on the basketball team?

All those names in Korea and everyone decided to name their child Jaehyun?

Well, he had to admit that it was a very nice name but fewer boys to share it wouldn't have hurt anyone.

Also, who came up with that stupid name policy and why on earth was fifty percent of the basketball team named Jaehyun? Did these guys even know anything about each other? This was either a joke or part of the tryouts. More of a joke, he guessed.

Younghoon nodded. Now he realized how much of a mistake it had been to ask Eric. If Bong Jaehyun, who was all fluent in Korean and Jaehyun's ex-neighbor, had no idea about the team, then how was Eric supposed to know? A sudden urge to apologize to Eric crawled up his spine for blaming him all along. He really should have asked Juyeon, Jacob or Hyunjae or he should have just gone and asked Jaehyun himself.

"Ah... oh. Oh wow. Hey, uh, was it 'Jae' or the English name 'Jay'?"

"English. He chose 'Jay' when he lived in the US for a while."

So they didn't call him Jae, as a nickname for Jaehyun, but Jay. Younghoon thought he would have to temporarily drop the name Jaehyun from his vocabulary once this was over. He had heard it ridiculously often lately.

"I understand. Kind of. Well... Thank you for your help. I guess. Uhm... would you mind keeping this incident to yourself?"

The younger smiled understandingly.

"My lips are sealed, hyung. I'm so sorry that this is so confusing. If I overhear anyone talking about you again, I'll make them stop."

"Thank you, Jaehyun."

"Anytime. I've probably made it worse before, so I'm the one who needs to apologize. Do you want me to talk to him in private?"

"No, it's fine, thank you. I guess I'll do it on my own. But first I need some time to process the whole... names chaos."

"Thank God because I can't talk to him! I freeze immediately, it's a miracle that I can play on the same team with him once in a while."

"Yeah, same... Why can't you talk to him? I mean, that's bad for your training, isn't it?"

At least he wasn't the only one intimidated by Jung Jaehyun, or Jung Yoo-Whatever.

Jay.

Whatever.

He should stick with Jaehyun for now so as not to confuse himself even more.

"Uhm... because he's super cool? And I totally understand why you have a crush on him. He's so handsome, he's like a twelve while I'm a solid five. I always feel super ugly next to him and so- I don't know, like a little kid!"

"You're not ugly, Jaehyun."

The younger one puffed up his cheeks. Younghoon had to bite his lips to keep himself from grinning. Even though he seemed angry, he really looked adorable like that.

"Of course! I'm fourteen and yet I'm still ugly. All my fourteen-year-old classmates already look so good compared to me and all of them grew during the summer break!"

Younghoon shook his head. First, he doubted that all the fourteen-year-olds were handsome. But second, why did he say such a thing? He wasn't ugly, he was a cute boy. Who had told him he looked ugly? Probably the same people who made up rumors about Younghoon dating someone or confessing to seniors.

"You're cute, Jaehyun. I'm serious, you have handsome features that you'll grow into. Don't worry. Some need more time and that's okay."

"You're one to talk, hyung. You're already tall and you're incredibly handsome and you're only two years older than me. Jay hyung too, Hyunjae hyung and Juyeon hyung as well and Mark Lee too. The whole senior team's tall and handsome except for me. And Eric is a cute tiny tot, but that's okay, he's just thirteen."

"That's nonsense. Give yourself a chance to grow. It'll be fine soon. I mean it, you're

really cute. And if you don't grow, I'll carry you on my shoulders."

Younghoon winked and the younger laughed at that.

"Thank you, hyung. You're very nice."

"Younghoonie! Good to see you!"

They both turned to the distant voice. Younghoon recognized it immediately.

Lee Sangyeon ran across the school yard and waved with a big smile on his face.

"Hey hyung," Younghoon greeted him, hugging the older boy as he arrived, "What are you doing here?"

"Hey. Hey, I'm Lee Sangyeon, who are you?"

"Bong Jaehyun."

"Ah, nice to meet you! I'm here to pick up Jacob. We wanted to grab some ice cream before we go to the party, Hoon. He said you wanted to come too and when I saw you here, I thought you could join us. My treat of course. Do you want some too, Jaehyun?" he asked the blond.

The younger boy quickly shook his head.

"No, uh- thank you very much, m-my mom is probably already waiting for me. Good luck, Younghoon hyung."

"Thanks again for your help, even though I'm more confused than before."

"Understandable. Anytime, hyung, bye-bye!"

"Bye", he smiled after the younger one.

Sangyeon sat down on the bench across from Younghoon. He looked into his eyes, a soft smile on his lips and Younghoon knew immediately what was going to happen next.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

If there was something about Sangyeon that Younghoon loved and cursed at the same time, it was the elder's sixth sense for a friend in trouble. Perhaps emotional intelligence was a criterion for early enrollment and skipping a grade in middle school.

"I- I wanted to go to the party with a guy I have a crush on, but I was too scared to ask him out so I asked Eric for help but there were some misunderstandings and now I've met two other guys with the same name but not the one I wanted."

"Oh ouch. So, a guy named Jaehyun I assume?"

"Yup. From the basketball team. Tall, blond, handsome, you name it. That friend of Johnny hyung, you know?"

"Ah... Ah! I think I remember this guy. Cob said all members your age and older will also be at the party later. Well at least they're invited and as far as I can remember, Johnny hyung would never miss a party. I bet he'll drag him there. So... there's no need to invite him when he's already there, right?"

Younghoon thought about it for a second. Maybe he would have a chance to talk to Jaehyun properly.

"Yeah, you're right, I guess. But there'll also be a lot of people there and ugh..."

"And what about these people? Come on, tell me what's going on."

"When I met the first guy people started talking about it immediately as soon as the conversation was over. One girl even told me about her cousin called Jaehyun and, gosh, they piss me off so much. If I hear some bullshit like this one more time, I'll probably rip my ears off."

As he stood up, Sangyeon ran his fingers through Younghoon's hair.

"Cob's coming. Hey, don't worry, we'll take care of you. Maybe it works out tonight, then they won't have anything to gossip about anymore."

Kapitel 4: Chapter 3.2

As he came down the stairs and Younghoon crashed into his arms, he felt his legs tremble. The taller boy pressed his face into the crook of his neck and wrapped his arms around him tightly.

"H-Hello to you, too?"

Younghoon mumbled something he didn't understand. All he noticed was his lips brushing his skin as he spoke.

"Can... Can- Younghoon, can you repeat that, please?" he asked, trying desperately to ignore the sensation.

Now the swimmer cupped his cheeks and looked him into his eyes. He looked tired and his eyes were all puffy and slightly red.

"Where have you been all night?" he whined.

"I was upstairs with-"

"Dongmin?"

The strong smell of alcohol was almost unbearable. Likewise the other's warm hands caressing his jaw.

"Uh, yeah, for a while, and with a few other guys... How much have you been drinking? It's only half past twelve. I'm worried about you."

"I'm not drunk", Younghoon giggled, "Let's go inside and have some fun, come on."

Jaehyun heard someone whistle.

"Younghoonie, already adding another one to your list? Weren't two in a day enough?"

Younghoon let go of Jaehyun's cheeks and took a step back. There was a huge stain on his shirt. He looked after the senior.

"I don't know what you're talking about, there's no list," Younghoon replied, waving the intruder away.

"What happened to your shirt?"

Younghoon shrugged.

Jaehyun pulled him back by his hand as he turned to go into the living room.

"Hey!"

"Did something happen? What is he talking about?"

The drunk rolled his eyes and gave him an almost annoyed smile. He put an arm around Jaehyun's waist.

"I kinda fell in Jaehyun's lap and spilled my drink on him and his friend because someone pushed me, now let's-"

"But what does he mean by two in one day?"

"I met some other Jaehyun kid on that stupid bench earlier, nothing special. Come on, I want to have some fun!"

Jaehyun narrowed his eyes. This was getting out of hand. When he had arrived at the party, he had overheard some students talking about something like this. Some others had talked about how Younghoon had met yet another boy named Jaehyun on the so-called confession bench around noon. He figured he should keep his ears open in case more people started talking trash about the other boy, so he could perform at least a little bit of damage control.

"You look like you should go home," he mumbled as he followed him across the living room into an adjoining room.

When they arrived, Younghoon let go of his hand and joined Sangyeon on the sofa just to steal his drink and drank it in one go. The older didn't have time to complain as he had to stop Jacob from climbing onto the pool table. He dragged his dead drunk boyfriend back to Younghoon and carefully pushed him into his lap.

Younghoon immediately hugged the basketball team's captain and dandled him like a baby.

"Gosh, I said no more alcohol and please stop shaking him or he'll throw up, Hoon!" He looked around and spotted Jaehyun, "Oh my God! Thank God, Jae, I need your help."

"I can tell."

He suppressed a grin, when Younghoon threw Jacob on the seat next to him only to sit in his lap.

"Where did you find Hoon? He keeps running away! I was looking for him everywhere, but Jacob keeps me busy by trying to strip the whole time!"

"Met him in the hallway. What's up with him? When I met him earlier, he looked like he was about to cry, just waved me off and then disappeared. Two hours later he jumps into my arms and people talk shit about him."

What bothered him even more was that Younghoon had even avoided his eyes and

had backed away from him when he met him earlier.

"I don't really know either, he already acted this weird shortly after we arrived-"

"I'm fine!" exclaimed Younghoon.

"Whatever, well, we arrived, had a drink and some time later I found him totally drunk on the balcony, eyes swollen from crying and looking like this," he gestured to his shirt.

"He said he spilled his drink on this guy he likes," Jaehyun said.

"I see... Jae, can I ask you a favor?"

"No-"

"Please! Do you mind walking him home? He should go to bed."

"Kind of, yes? Like- are you stupid?"

Sangyeon looked at him puzzled for a second.

Jaehyun glared back at him.

Then the older one seemed to understand.

"Oh, that's what they mean!"

"Yes! If I walk him home, it'll only get worse, hyung! It's probably the worst idea to let me leave with Younghoon by my side, after I heard what had happened to him with Bong Jaehyun earlier today. He wasn't even in the library after practice, even though we wanted to meet up."

"I'm not tired anyway," Younghoon huffed annoyedly.

"You are, I can tell. Gosh, you're such a lightweight," Jacob laughed.

"I guess that's on me, sorry. Jacob said Hoon's phone keeps turning off. I bet he would have told you."

Jaehyun sighed and shook his head.

"Oh, no, hyung, I'm not mad. I don't even have his number. I was just wondering."

"Ah... But you know the way to his house, don't you?" Sangyeon asked.

Jaehyun bit his lip.

"I do. I walk past it every week after all."

"I always thought you'd walk this route every day because you watch my team practice," Younghoon giggled.

Did he really have to expose him like this? Besides, how did he know?

"I see," Sangyeon raised a brow.

He glanced at the drunken boy before quickly looking back at Sangyeon as the older began to plead.

"Please, please, please? You're almost sober, unlike me, and Cob's totally wasted, and you know how he gets when he's drunk. I know, I told him I would look after them, but please-"

"Hyung, I'm serious, that's a bad idea! All these guys here are already talking shit-"

"Since when do you care about others' gossip?" Jacob asked.

"Calm down babe, we all care. Hey, Jae, just walk him home and come back, okay? No one will talk about it much if you don't stay there. Just make it quick. Come on, you live on the same street, don't you? I can't leave Cob alone and take the responsibility if someone has to call the police again."

He sighed and rubbed his eyes. How could he say no to Sangyeon when he was the one who would take the blame if one of his friends did something stupid while drunk? He vividly remembered what had happened the last time Sangyeon had lost sight of his dead drunk boyfriend. Jacob was a real disaster drunk.

"Yeah... My dad lives there. Fine, I can accompany him home and then I'll come back later."

"Atta boy! We have a beer pong match to finish! after all"

"Cob's right, you were interrupted last time."

"You're already too drunk to win, but if you insist... Okay, okay, I give up. Younghoon, come on. Let's get you home."

"I can't leave now, Hyunjae, I got stuff to do."

Younghoon tried to look busy while piling some empty cups. However, some of them weren't entirely empty, so the drunk teenager soiled half the coffee table.

Jaehyun sighed, grabbed his arm and pulled him off Jacob's lap.

"Hey!"

Sangyeon raised an eyebrow.

"Hyunjae?"

"Basketball name policy. This team is weird as hell. I don't mind it, because at least half of them call me that off the court as well. Let's go, Younghoon. You're not busy at all and it's way past your bedtime. I'll carry you if I have to, come on."

"Promise?"

He blinked.

Did Younghoon really just say that?

"Be careful, he's super clingy, loud and talkative when drunk and he kinda loses his inhibitions too. That's why we don't want to give him to someone we don't trust," Jacob warned, wagging his index finger while batting his eyelashes.

"Fuck you, Jacob. And you too, Sangyeon hyung. But thanks for trusting me with him, I guess."

"You'd never hurt him, you're one of the most reliable guys I know!" Jacob chimed in.

"How sweet. Come on, Younghoon. Your bed is waiting for you."

"Thank you so much," Sangyeon sighed.

"Have fun with your 'angel'."

"Ha-ha."

"And make sure they stop talking bullshit about Younghoon."

"Of course, I'll do my best."

He doubted that Younghoon could be that bad. But said boy was already trying to prove him wrong by the time they reached the hallway.

"Can't we stay? I'd love to spend some time with you here. You're nice, not like the others."

"You had the chance, but you chose to drink alcohol all by yourself- Can- Can you not-"

Suddenly, Younghoon pulled him closer by his neck and shoved his nose in Jaehyun's hair right behind his ear and took a deep breath.

"You always smell so good."

"Did you just-? Yeah, okay, wow, thanks, but can we go now?"

Younghoon puffed out his cheeks and shook his head. He played with the other boy's hair.

"Why do you want to leave so badly? I want to get to know you better."

"Then why didn't you come to the library today?"

"I was with Jacob and Sangyeon and we ate ice cream. They said I needed distraction and that I looked very confused. And I still am, because your team is bullshit. Not even Eric knows you all."

To Jaehyun's disappointment, Younghoon let go of his hair.

"I see."

"Will you forgive me?" The older pouted.

But then he grabbed his collar.

Maybe – just maybe – Younghoon was an even worse drunk than Jacob had warned him about. And maybe... he was just as bad as Jacob. But in a different way. Ignoring the blush creeping up his neck, he stuttered, "Yes, sure uh- y-you shouldn't-"

Someone chuckled as Younghoon pushed him against the dresser, leaned forward and ran a hand down his chest. Jaehyun felt his knees tremble again. Please, oh please, why did the older boy make him suffer like that.

"Get a room," said the giggling senior, walking past them into the kitchen.

"Fuck... That's none of your business," Jaehyun grumbled, carefully trying to push Younghoon out of the way to get to the front door.

On the one hand he didn't mind gossip at all, but on the other hand he didn't like the way the others talked about Younghoon. So he really tried to shoo the other boy out of the house as unobtrusively as possible. But Younghoon didn't seem to care. The drunk one even whined at Jaehyun's attempt to move him out of the way, continued to pout and suddenly grabbed his waist.

"Don't push me away, I want to talk to you. I never did because you don't like me."

Jaehyun narrowed his eyebrows and stopped for a second.

"What? Younghoon, that's bullshit, of course I like you."

"But a while ago you didn't!"

"Of course, I did. Why do you think that I didn't like you, especially when you were the

one who rejected me or ran away most of the time?"

"I didn't- did I? Chanhee was right about that?"

Younghoon suddenly looked like he was about to cry again.

"So, you didn't like me because I was being mean and now you don't want to spend time with me because I'm-"

"Younghoon, no, no, don't overthink it. This is bullshit, I'm not mad at you, I never was and I never disliked you. May- Maybe sometimes I was sad or disappointed but- we- we can talk on the way home, sounds good? Now put your jacket on, please. I'm serious, I don't want the others to talk even more shit about you than they already do. Don't make a scene now, let's just leave, please."

"I'm not making a scene-"

"Younghoon, I beg you. Everything is fine, I like you, okay? I really like you, so please-"

"Oh~ is my dear Jaejae finally shooting his shot? Figured you're into our pro swimmer considering how many times you've watched the team practices over the summer break."

He heard a girl whistle. She was one from Mrs Kim's math class, a girl he usually got along well with.

"Ha-ha, you're so funny!" he hissed.

"Better go for it. You are aware that a few guys have already been checking him out as well? I mean... I can't blame you, he's a real cutie. But be careful you're probably not the last judging by what I've heard-"

"Hey, I'm warning you! Quit spreading rumors about someone you don't even know."

"Oh come on, I was just telling you what I heard, don't freak out now."

"I don't care. Just stop it. Please."

"Fine, sorry," she rolled her eyes, "You should ask him anyway, Jaejae, instead of stalking him like a creep."

"I don't stalk him. And don't call me that."

He took Younghoon's hand and dragged him out of the house, ignoring the girl's complaints.

"So you really watch us practice? Chanhee was right again? Gosh, Chanhee is a genius."

And Chanhee was a little too observant for his liking.

"I just walk by the pool sometimes and the windows are super big, so- whatever! We leave. Now. Fresh air will do you good."

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But fresh air didn't do Younghoon good at all. He insisted on holding Jaehyun's hand the whole time, babbled about how Jacob was the nicest person he knew and played with Jaehyun's hands and hair whenever he got the chance.

Even though he was drunk it was nice spending some time with him. However, he didn't like it whenever Younghoon mentioned that other Jaehyun he had a crush on.

It was still difficult to figure out who he was talking about as he was pretty bad at describing the boy, and he knew almost nothing about him. So he decided to ignore what Younghoon said about him for now and tried to steer the conversation to other topics until they arrived at Younghoon's house.

Jaehyun leaned him against the window by the door. The taller one mumbled something he didn't understand, like "catch", and suddenly flopped forward.

Jaehyun caught the giggling boy and reflexively fixed him in that position with a knee between Younghoon's legs.

The black-haired boy caught his breath at this and he looked up, straight into Jaehyun's wide eyes.

"Sorry, that wasn't- planned..."

They were so close he could even feel his breath on his face. Younghoon looked down at Jaehyun's lips. He swallowed dryly and wet his lips as he felt a blush creep up his neck under the taller boy's intense gaze.

"Something wrong?" Younghoon whispered.

"No-Nothing. Sorry. Uhm... D-Do you have your keys with you?"

Younghoon nodded and grinned mischievously. He leaned forward and wrapped his arms around Jaehyun's neck, also lowering his hips slightly until he was almost sitting on the other boy's knee. With a soft chuckle, he spoke right into his ear.

"In one of my pockets, but I won't tell you which one."

He really tried to ignore the tiny kiss Younghoon placed under his ear but the small touch sent shivers down his spine.

He wanted to kiss Sangyeon and Jacob for letting him experience this moment of Younghoon's lips being closer to him than he could have ever imagined. At the same time, he wanted to beat them both up for making him suffer so much.

"Cute. Could you please stop messing around with me? I'm not in the mood right now."

"But you're really cute when you're flustered. It's a shame I never noticed."

Payback was such a bitch. That was the infamous Karma that was now getting back to him for always teasing the other boy and not having the guts to ask him out.

Now he had to deal with a drunk and clingy Younghoon, who had only been his friend for four days and had a crush on someone else, instead of one that had been his friend since May and had a crush on him.

"Apparently there seems to be a lot I don't let you notice."

"So I would have noticed how cute you were earlier if you hadn't been hiding it from me?"

"Yup. Seems like I fucked up."

Younghoon snorted.

"No way. Are you blushing?" he giggled, but then smiled tenderly, "Come on, don't be shy, let me flirt with you if you're too shy to flirt with me."

"I'm not shy."

"You are!" Younghoon laughed, "Look at you, I never thought you were the shy type when it gets serious."

"I'm not shy, you're the one who keeps- fuck it. Sorry. Just give me your keys."

Jaehyun first checked Younghoon's jacket before moving on to the front pockets. When he found the keys, the taller boy chuckled.

"Good job, I was just teasing you."

"Yeah, I figured, ha-ha, you're such a mastermind. All right, bedtime."

"But I'm not tired!"

He rolled his eyes.

"You're not tired my ass. You're going to bed right now. And please be quiet, your parents are sleeping."

Jaehyun unlocked the front door and pulled Younghoon inside. He helped him take off his shoes and took him upstairs, where his room was as he had said.

"My parents don't know that I drink alcohol at parties," Younghoon suddenly blurted out.

"Then please shut up now, otherwise they'll find out soon enough."

"I don't care what they think. Not anymore."

Younghoon shrugged.

"Don't say that."

"They don't belong together anyway," he said.

Now even more worried by that familiar answer, he raised his eyebrow. Younghoon let go of his hand and entered the room. He took his jacket off and carelessly tossed it next to his desk chair. Jaehyun picked it up and folded it.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Nope."

He followed the tall boy to his bed on which Younghoon let himself fall backwards. Although his task was now done, he was both curious and worried about the other.

"Are you sure? Younghoon?"

"Nope."

Sighing, he turned to the dresser to find a t-shirt and shorts for the drunk boy.

"Oh my God, I was so embarrassed when I fell in Jaehyun's lap," Younghoon whined.

As long as it wasn't his own lap, he didn't want to know exactly whose lap Younghoon had fallen into.

"I can imagine," he mumbled, barely paying attention.

Maybe he would already have an idea who Younghoon was talking about if his ears wouldn't automatically go deaf every time he heard him talk about his crush. Stupid feelings blocked him.

"You think he likes me?"

He looked over his shoulder before handing the taller boy his new comfortable clothes.

"Who? Ugh, you know what? I don't really care. I don't even know which Jaehyun you're talking about. It's not like 'Jaehyun' is an uncommon name and you usually bitch around when I ask you."

Listening to Younghoon daydream about some guy he probably knew didn't exactly feel nice to him. It rather twisted the knife in the wound. He felt a kind of jealousy whenever he overheard Younghoon or other students talking about the older boy's crush on another boy named Jaehyun who wasn't him.

"I'm talking about the hot one, of course."

Jaehyun huffed angrily. How could one be that bad at describing people? Was there even one thing he knew about this other Jaehyun?

"Oh, right, my bad. Bedtime. Now."

"Why are you so mean all of a sudden?"

Now he met the older boy's eyes. He seemed genuinely confused and even a little bit saddened by Jaehyun's behavior.

For a brief moment Jaehyun closed his eyes and took a deep breath before giving the other one an apologetic smile.

"Sorry if I was. I didn't mean to take it out on you, Younghoon. Come here."

Jaehyun now pulled him up and helped him take off his jewelry. While forcing himself to look in a different direction from his crush changing right in front of him, Younghoon donned the clothes he had given him.

"You know, I fell like that," Younghoon grabbed his hands and pulled Jaehyun onto him.

He shrieked as they both landed on the bed, Jaehyun on Younghoon, so close to his face and right between his long legs. Laying on top of the other wasn't exactly something he didn't want, but he usually had a whole different context in mind. Admittedly, sometimes even very, very different, but not the context of his crush demonstrating for him how he fell onto his own crush.

"Nah, maybe it wasn't that bad, but I guess I looked just as stupid," he chuckled, playing with Jaehyun's hair as he whispered the next sentence after staring at him for a moment, "Wow, you really smell good. And you look so handsome tonight."

As soon as his brain was working again, he nodded. He liked the compliments, but he didn't know how to handle them yet. He hoped they would last, though.

"I didn't exactly dress up, but thanks I guess."

"So you're always this handsome and I never really noticed?"

Jaehyun looked at Younghoon's lips and slightly shrugged before meeting his eyes again.

He doubted Younghoon had 'suddenly' noticed that he thought he was handsome, judging by the number of times he caught him staring in math class, or how Younghoon seemed to watch every tiny movement of his face when they met in the library. But it was nice to hear it really spoken out loud for the first time now.

"I guess so? Do you... really think I look good?"

Younghoon bit his lip and nodded. Jaehyun watched him almost hypnotized.

"Mhm... I often watch your face when you're correcting my homework. Dunno, I... kinda have to, you know?" Younghoon murmured.

He looked back into his dreamy eyes.

"Oh... Really?"

He had already noticed it, but it still felt unreal now that he knew it was true.

"Yeah... and you stare at me when I'm working, instead of what I'm writing, and you don't nap like you did when you tutored Cobie."

"That's true."

"Have you been hiding from me tonight?"

Jaehyun shook his head.

"I felt more like you were avoiding me again today," he whispered.

Younghoon almost looked hurt and deeply concerned.

"Never ever!"

"Shush, don't be so loud," he sighed, "You kinda did... I don't know what was up with you tonight either, I didn't even know you met your crush until you told me. You didn't want to talk about whatever was bothering you earlier and just walked past me to chat with Jacob. Well, whatever happened, you were the one who drank some hard liquor all alone on the balcony and came back drunk. Please tell me what's wrong, Younghoon. Did I do or say something to upset you?"

"It wasn't your fault. Couldn't have been such a handsome guy's fault."

Nodding slowly, he sighed.

"If you think so. Thanks again I guess."

Younghoon smiled. He ran a hand through the other's hair.

"Mhm... Can I tell you a secret, Jaejae?"

Jaehyun swallowed dryly.

He really wanted to know what Younghoon wanted to tell him, but he'd rather talk to a sober Younghoon than a drunk one. Well, talking to a drunk Younghoon was still better than not talking to him at all, but he desperately wanted the other boy to remember everything he said to him now.

"Tell me when you're sober again," he mumbled.

When he tried to push himself up, Younghoon pulled him back down.

"Don't chicken out now, Jaejae. Why did this girl call you Jaejae anyway? Is she your girlfriend? Do you like her?"

Younghoon caressed Jaehyun's cheek. He sucked on his bottom lip and waited for an answer. Jaehyun quickly shook his head.

"No, she was in Mrs Kim's math class, too. She's a lot nicer when she's sober. And as a matter of fact, I'm very single and- and the... the guy I like seems to prefer someone else."

"That sucks. I can talk to Dongmin for you if you want me to."

"That guy again? Why would I want to ask him out?" Jaehyun chuckled, "You don't think I have a crush on him, do you?"

"Please tell me you don't-"

"No, what the hell? I like- I like someone else. But I'd love to get up now if you'll let me, because if I stay any longer they-"

"No, no, no. Why don't they want you? Are you even trying to get their attention?"

"I- I guess I'm..." he stayed silent for a second, "not trying, no, you're right. W-Well I've tried but... apparently not hard enough, I think," he clicked his tongue, "Can you please let go of me now?"

Younghoon held him tight, one hand in his neck, the other drawing lines on his back. He even wrapped one leg around Jaehyun's and pouted at him.

"No~ you don't want my secrets, you don't want my cuddles, yet I saw that you wanted to kiss me, so why didn't you? See? If you act like that around your crush, you really aren't trying hard enough."

Younghoon playfully slapped his shoulder.

"Tz. And you play hard to get. Yeah, why should I hide the truth when you'll probably forget about it tomorrow, anyway?" he mumbled, "I guess I wanted to, but I didn't kiss you, because you're fucking drunk. And I don't really think that you would like it if I kissed you when sober, either. Sorry, Younghoon, but I think I should leave now anyway."

"Yes, I think so, too, but first I'd like to talk to you, young man" a woman's voice called out from the door.

"Ouch, fuck" Younghoon whined when Jaehyun jumped off the bed and bowed quickly.

He felt his cheeks burn with embarrassment and even got dizzy for a second. The middle aged woman frowned at them, a small poodle in her arms.

"Sorry-! Good evening Mrs Kim."

"Hey mom, hi Bori," Younghoon smiled, stretching his arms out over his head on the mattress when he saw who was standing in the doorway.

Jaehyun tried to ignore Younghoon's exposed stomach as he pulled his shirt back into place, suppressing a shiver as his hand touched the soft skin.

When he saw the poodle running towards them he thought briefly that he could bid his right foot goodbye, but instead of biting, the dog jumped on the bed.

"Sorry to disappoint you but I'm very, very drunk," Younghoon told his mother.

"As disappointing as I am as a mother, my dear. So? Are you coming, 'Jaejae'?"

"I'm coming. Sorry for-"

"Outside. Come on."

"Hey, don't leave me now," Younghoon said, quickly taking his hand , "I still have to tell you my secret. It has something to do with your cute smile."

He tapped his cheeks and pursed his lips.

Jaehyun looked back and automatically smiled. He lifted Younghoon's legs onto the bed and pulled the covers over him. Then he brushed a strand of hair from the drunk's forehead.

"You can tell me later."

"Are you coming back to cuddle with me?"

He picked up the poodle and placed it on Younghoon's chest. The older boy immediately ran his hands through its fur.

"I- uh... Hold your dog for a while, will you?"

"Until you come back."

"Yeah... Good night, Younghoon."

Jaehyun followed Younghoon's mom outside. She turned the light off and closed the door behind them. In the hallway she turned to face him.

"So? Why don't I just find my underage son drunk in his room, but also with another boy laying on top of him?"

"I'm very sorry, this really was not what it looked like. I don't know what happened, he just pulled me onto himself and refused to let me go. I'm Lee Jaehyun, from his math class and a friend of his friends Jacob Bae and Lee Sangyeon. My father lives on the same street, so they asked me to walk Younghoon home. When I arrived he was already acting weird and wouldn't even speak properly to me and when I saw him again a few hours later he was dead drunk, but I have no idea what happened.

And I know what this probably looked like, but I swear I would never touch your son without his consent. I- I like him a lot, but I would never take advantage of him."

Younghoon's mom nodded.

"You already said that. I watched you for a while, don't worry. Nothing would have happened to my dear son."

Oh.

How.

Embarrassing.

"Oh my God."

"Yes. Whenever he hears something cheesy he cringes, so it was quite entertaining to see how my drunk son was cheesier than his grandma."

Well, he couldn't deny that Younghoon indeed had been a bit cheesy. And he would make sure that Younghoon would never forget it. He could almost hear the other boy complaining about it.

"Jaehyun, I want to be honest with you. I told him earlier that his father and I have finally agreed to get divorced. He knew it would happen sooner or later, but in the

end I think it was my fault that he made a bad decision tonight. Thank you for bringing him home safely. Do you need a lift?"

That must have been the stress Younghoon was talking about. It all made sense now that he behaved so strange, easily irritable and clinging to a possibly unrequited crush.

"Oh, sorry to hear that... Uh and no thanks, my dad lives right down the street, I'm fine- or actually - would you mind driving me back to the party? I told Sangyeon that I would come back and I don't want the others to make up rumors about your son and me. If you know what I mean...?"

"I went to high school as well. Come on."

Jaehyun looked at the door to Younghoon's room. Then he looked Mrs Kim straight in the eyes.

"One more thing before we go."

"What is it?"

"I know it's presumptuous coming from a teenager and I'm not sure if you're aware, but... My parents are also divorced and they talked to me about it every day and for a while we even went to some family therapy sessions and now they handle it very well, all organized and no one sabotages the other one and stuff so I can live comfortably with both... What I'm trying to say is that he probably sits between the two of you and I want you- please don't make it any harder for him than it already is. Just- just talk it out, get divorced if it's really necessary, but never lose sight of your son. I don't know if it's about money or cheating or whatever and I don't really care. I just know that usually it's the kids who lose in this situation. And please- please suck it up and pull yourselves together once it's over. I've seen so many bad examples of divorced people, please don't become one too. Don't make him believe that he has to choose sides or that he's lost either of you, because this feeling is a nightmare you think you can't wake up from."

Mrs Kim listened patiently to what he said and nodded. She took a deep breath.

That's it. He would never be allowed to come back to Younghoon's house ever again.

"Quite shameless to lecture your friend's mother, that's true. But I must thank you for your words. I will speak to my estranged husband about this. To reassure you, this isn't about money or cheating. We just don't get along anymore, we've grown apart. We've tried so many times to find each other again for our son, but it just doesn't work for us. We have often thought and talked about this. It's hard for us to see Younghoon watching us fight every day. That's why we decided to end it. Believe me, this was a tough decision for us too. His father will be moving out soon, but we made sure it wasn't too far away from us."

"And you'll make sure not to-"

"We'll ensure that we don't lose sight of Younghoon's wellbeing, yes. Calm down, I'm well aware of that, even if it does not seem like I am. What are you? The parent-police? Now get in the car, I can't stand rebellious teenagers."

Jaehyun snorted. Younghoon's mother seemed like a good person. She reminded him of his father's fiancée.

"I'm not rebellious, I'm honest."

She sighed, but to Jaehyun's surprise, she laughed softly.

"Are you laughing at me?"

"No, I actually take you very seriously."

He followed her downstairs, out of the house and to the car parked in front of the house.

"How long have you and Younghoon been friends? He never mentioned you."

"Four days already! We spent the last days together in the library."

"I understand. I don't regret that you didn't become friends sooner."

"I do. How can a person like you have such a sweet son?"

"He's his father's son, yet he's very different. Can't believe a divorced couple managed to raise a kid like you," she shot right back.

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean?" Jaehyun grinned.

"Oh nothing. You'll do him good. Where was that party again?"

Kapitel 5: Chapter 4

The next morning after he got blackout drunk, his mother had handed him a small paper sheet with a bunch of numbers scribbled on it. When he had asked who the number belonged to, he couldn't believe his ears.

It belonged to the boy who apparently had brought him home.

'A tall, well-mannered boy with a handsome face and bleached hair,' his mother had said.

Someone Younghoon 'seemed to like' and who 'seemed to like Younghoon too'.

Who 'even would have kissed him if he had been sober'.

A boy named 'Jaehyun'.

But unlike expected, Younghoon didn't feel as warm and fuzzy as he imagined in such a situation. He was too scared to misinterpret this and embarrass himself again. Too scared of anyone making fun of him again.

When he had texted him earlier - on Changmin's command - that he wanted to speak to him in the pool lobby during the first break, he had already had this weird feeling of regret and some kind of betrayal in his stomach.

Maybe even guilt.

If he was feeling so unwell talking to Jaehyun - well, suppose it was Jaehyun - he figured he should keep his crush to himself at least until he knew what the other thought about Friday night.

If he really had wanted to kiss Younghoon he couldn't be too reluctant, could he? But if he was, Younghoon didn't even feel like dating him anymore. He didn't want to bother the other any further after what had happened at the party. But at least he wanted to apologize for the accident.

Also, he would prefer the rumors to die down first before he would give dating another try. And maybe by then his crush would have vanished.

Right now he had entirely different worries anyway, because after handing him Jaehyun's number his mother had apologized to him for ruining his night out with his friends by telling him about his parent's final decision.

Then she and his father had grounded him for the rest of the month for drinking alcohol at parties. Of course they had also banned him from parties until he was of legal age. School, training and boring himself to death at home would be his schedule for the next few weeks.

After that they had talked about the divorce for what had felt like hours. It wasn't that he couldn't understand their decision. He just wasn't ready to accept it yet, and knowing that his father would be moving out today made it even worse. It broke his heart over and over again whenever he thought about it.

So Changmin and Chanhee's attempts to convince him to actually talk to Jaehyun now during the break didn't really help. He just wanted to disappear and never come back to this school.

"Hyung, come on, he's standing right there, and Ten hyung doesn't bite. Just go over there and tell him what you wanted so you can at least get some peace. You'll feel better afterwards and maybe he likes you too and-"

"Then why doesn't he go to the pool lobby like I said?"

Chanhee shrugged.

Now Younghoon wanted to know. He was sick of it. Something in his mind clicked and he moved before he knew it.

"I don't know... Maybe he saw you? Hey, wait, we're coming with you!"

It seemed to Younghoon that Jaehyun wouldn't go talk to him. Did he forget? Or maybe their conversation was important? But the break would be over soon so he decided to go to Jaehyun right now. Chanhee followed him quickly, ignored Changmin's complaints and pulled the other by his hand.

Before he arrived, he took a deep breath, clenched his fists once and swallowed the lump in his throat.

"Hey, Jay?" Younghoon called.

The blond turned with a puzzled look on his face before smiling politely. At least the gym nicknames really seemed to work.

But judging by his face, there was no way Jaehyun had planned to actually come to the pool lobby. A heavy feeling of disappointment spread through his body.

"Hey Younghoon. How are you?"

Younghoon sighed and nodded. He smiled enforcedly and waved at Jaehyun's friend, who smiled back.

Okay, first: Apologize.

"I'm fine, thank you. Sorry to interrupt you, but I... I just wanted to apologize to both of you for what happened at that stupid party. And of course I'll replace your clothes if necessary."

"Ah, no need, it's alright. And don't worry, this dumbass has learned his lesson," Jaehyun's friend beamed.

Next: Choke feelings and thank him with hypocritical innocence to find out if it had been him.

Easier thought than said when you're nervous as hell.

"No, I really am sorry about what happened. And thanks for taking me home afterwards, even though I probably embarrassed all three of us in front of everyone. And uhm- Jay, I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable, when I asked you to- you know..." he mumbled.

Jaehyun frowned. His friend also raised an eyebrow and looked at Jaehyun.

"Huh? What did you do?"

"I don't know either, Ten- uhm... Well, no need to apologize, it wasn't your fault and Ten probably scolded the shit out of this guy, but I didn't walk you home, Younghoon. I mean of course we would have taken you home if you had asked when Ten and I left, but you were still with Jacob at the time. If it wasn't him then I don't know who brought you home, sorry man."

"So I didn't ask you to kiss me?" he blurted out.

He regretted it the moment he said it. Of course he hadn't. He had just said it. The blond wasn't the 'well-mannered, handsome, blond boy' that had brought him home.

All his built-up confidence collapsed like a house of cards in a hurricane as Jaehyun raised his eyebrows and quickly shook his head.

"No, wow, sorry, that wasn't me. I was with Ten all night."

"But earlier- I texted you to come to the pool lobby and you answered," he mumbled nervously.

He felt Chanhee rub his back.

"Impossible, sweetie," Ten said, "This big dummy lost his phone a week ago. Believe us, we didn't see you again after that incident in the kitchen."

"Oh damn, sorry, my mother told me it was your- So this isn't? Any idea whose number that is?" he asked.

He pulled out the small piece of paper and showed it to the other boy. Jaehyun frowned again.

"No, I'm really sorry, I don't know this number, Younghoon."

"All right..."

"Seems like someone's messing with you again or your mom made a mistake," Chanhee said.

"I'm sorry, I must leave now, but maybe we can talk about it later after the clubs are over."

"N-No! No... I'm sorry I bothered you. And-just- just forget what I said. T-There's no need to talk about it later-," he babbled nervously but got cut off by Ten.

"Hey. Don't worry."

"Yeah, we're not mad or anything. Good luck."

"Thanks... Bye then."

"See you."

"Have fun," Ten said after Jaehyun, "May I ask what's going on, sweetie? You seem upset."

Younghoon watched Jaehyun enter the building before he pulled out his phone. A short message asked where he was. It was time to check who owned the phone number.

"Hyung- hey, Ten hyung's talking to- hyung!" Changmin called after him, but he was already running to the pool.

When he entered the building and saw Hyunjae looking at the trophy cabinet he felt his heart break. The door closed behind him and the other smiled brightly.

"Hey. You really like to keep me waiting, don't you-"

"Are you kidding me?" Younghoon asked as he came closer.

He leaned against the sideboard next to the cabinet.

Would Hyunjae really do something like that? Would he really lie to Younghoon for several days and even lie to his mother?

"What?"

"Are you serious? Not you too, please."

Hyunjae narrowed his eyebrows.

"Something wrong? You look like you're about to cry, did something-"

"Can you please show me your messages?"

The other blinked.

"To make sure you texted me or what? Otherwise I wouldn't be here, would I? Hey, I know I... I should have given you my number personally, but-"

"But making fun of me and lying to my mom was easier? Was it fun?"

The blond raised his eyebrows.

"What?"

"People already think we're dating."

"Ah, yeah about that... I know, they ask me that, too, but I-"

"Was that you too?"

"Younghoon, I'm sorry I thought everything was fine when I brought you home, so what's up now? Can you please make yourself clear?"

"Not you, too, please. Do you have any idea what I have to listen to every day? I'm so sick of it, just tell me what you want. Just tell me what game you're playing and leave me alone."

Hyunjae's eyes widened and he opened his mouth, but no words came out at first.

"Game? You think I'm playing with you?"

"First, I tell Eric to tell Jaehyun to meet me, he sends me Kim Jaehyun and suddenly you show up and ask me about it?"

"Are you serious, Younghoon? I already told you, I wanted to check on you because-"

"We meet in the library every day, and you act like a friend and then I meet Bong Jaehyun who suddenly asks me if you and I are dating? And that everyone thinks you pick me up after training because you run around the pool like a stalker, even though you live in a different direction?"

"Like a stalker?!"

"Yes, do you have any idea how many people asked me about it? People asked me at the party where my boyfriend was-"

"Is that why you suddenly ignored me? You said it wasn't my fault!"

"I didn't ignore you. I was upset about something else and I didn't want to deal with

that shit on top of-

"That shit? You ran away when I arrived, Younghoon! So apparently the thought of dating me would be so fucking bad that you'd rather avoid me again? But once you're drunk enough not to care anymore you fall round my neck? Do you have any idea how I feel?"

The former disappointment turned into anger before Younghoon could do anything about it. He was doing him wrong. He knew it, deep down he knew it. But he couldn't think straight and his hurt feelings reacted faster than his mind.

"How you feel?! Half our grade thinks I'm easy and loose! And now I find out you even brought me home despite knowing about the rumors?!"

And of course his outburst made the other angry.

"Should I have let you go alone? Drunk and all alone, are you kidding me?!"

"You just said you know people think we're dating! What were you even thinking when you brought me home?!"

Hyunjae ran a hand through his hair.

"What I- Maybe a drunk teenager who's reported as missing?! If you really want to blame someone, blame

Sangyeon hyung for worrying about you! Gosh, do you want me to apologize for taking care of your drunk ass now?!"

"No, but for adding fuel to the flames! You knew what would happen! At least you could have just dropped me off and gone straight back afterwards, but no, you had to talk to my mother! Long enough for at least one person to think we hooked up or something!"

"No, no, no, I knew this was a mistake," Hyunjae whispered before raising his voice again, "Younghoon, I never intended to stay that long but you didn't let me go! I even tell people to leave you alone every day!"

"By telling them we're dating or what?!"

Hyunjae bit his lip and shook his head in disbelief.

"No! No what the hell, I never wanted to walk you home in the first place because of this rumor,

Younghoon! Why would I make this up and endanger the friendship I've built with you?!"

"Friendship? That's what you call friendship? Feeding rumors and even lying to my

mother?!"

"It wasn't on purpose! And why should I even lie to your mother?! Nothing happened between us and she knew it!"

"Other students, even seniors, come up to me and lie to me about their names! They tell me they're named Jaehyun, even guys I know who aren't!"

"It wasn't me who fucked this up, Younghoon! People are talking about me as well just because you lack the courage to ask your crush out on your own, you fucking coward! Not only that, no, now I'm the asshole, because you can't make yourself clear and people talk shit about you?! Of course, it would draw a lot of attention when popular, handsome Kim Younghoon finally starts looking for dates! Almost confessing to Kim Jaehyun and calling Bong Jaehyun cute, but always asking about that other Jaehyun that nobody knows, what did you expect?!"

"Apparently not that you would tell even my mother the same bullshit!"

After pulling out the small piece of paper, Hyunjae read it and let out a single laugh.

"She said it's Jaehyun's number. But it's yours. And guess who told her."

"You think I'd lie about my name? You think I played with your feelings and raised your hopes on purpose to... Such nonsense just to make fun of you? I didn't know you still thought so poorly of me."

The black-haired clicked his tongue.

"Come on, I've heard this bullshit from five other guys in the last week! I'm not in the mood for your stupid games!"

Hyunjae crumpled up the sheet and threw it on the floor.

"Are you kidding me, Younghoon?! Why should I- Are you really saying that you don't even know my real name?"

He huffed angrily. Then he fumbled his wallet out of his backpack and threw his student card on the sideboard.

Lee Jaehyun, 1997/09/13

"Surprised?! Well look here, check my ID! It's Lee Jaehyun and on the court it's Hyunjae to avoid any confusion with the other Jaehyuns on the team! Easy, isn't it? The fuck did you think? That I heard you're specifically looking for guys named Jaehyun, and now I'm lying to you like these other guys did? What good would that do me?"

"Jae-... -hyun? And your nickname is... Hyunjae?"

"Yes. You're right, maybe I really shouldn't have called this friendship. Your mom said you're like your dad..." he murmured bitterly, and shook his head. "Well, if your dad is as inattentive as you are and if he jumps to idiotic and unfounded conclusions the way you do... then I can understand how they grew apart and why they're getting divorced."

Younghoon felt himself tear up. Again he felt something shatter inside his heart.

"Say again?"

"You're saying it's my fault people make fun of you even more now just because you had to drown your sorrows in alcohol instead of talking to me about it like I suggested? It's not my fault you're compensating for your parent's divorce by chasing after a guy you don't even know. So don't take it out on me."

And then he left Younghoon alone.

Crying, he leaned on the sideboard for a while. He was so angry, so sad and so disappointed. In Hyunjae, in everything he had said about his parents, but also in himself. He regretted everything he had said, but he was too angry and upset by their argument to really think about it.

When the door opened he immediately looked up and tried to wipe away his tears.

"Hyung, what happened?" Changmin asked.

The younger was accompanied by Chanhee and both sat down by his sides. Chanhee hugged him, while Changmin caressed his hair.

"Hyung, we told Ten hyung about the rumors and gossip and he said he'll take care of it. Changminie said we can trust him."

"Yeah you can. He has so many connections, don't worry."

"Thanks," he whispered.

"So who was it? What happened?" Changmin asked again.

"Remember Hyunjae?" he looked at Chanhee and sniffed, "Or rather Lee Jaehyun?"

"You didn't know? I'm so sorry, hyung, I really thought you'd just use his nickname-"

"It's fine. I never asked. We had a fight and he left. I fucked up."

He rested his head on Chanhee's shoulder. The bell rang.

"I'm so sorry. I hope you can solve this... But hyung, I really don't want to pressure you, but that was the second time. We really have to go to class now."

"Can't I... skip math?"

"It's math? Shit... Doctor Lee, right?"

"Mhm."

"Oh that's good! He loves me! Well, he loved my parents, when they were his students but he knows me," Changmin said.

The younger ones helped him up. Chanhee linked arms with him while Changmin led the way with a confident smile on his face.

Frequently wiping away single tears he watched Changmin knock on the door. The brunet beamed at the teacher and told him that they met Younghoon on their way to class and that they had wanted to guide him there.

Then Chanhee added something weird: "You should take care of your student this time."

Doctor Lee nodded.

"I understand Mister Choi, you and Mister Ji can leave now, thank you very much."

"We have to thank you."

"Yeah. Bye, hyung!"

"Mister Kim, if you're not feeling well, you can go to the nurse, or we'll your parents-"

"I'm fine," he mumbled, rubbing his eyes.

Anything but his parents right now.

Doctor Lee sighed and led Younghoon into the classroom.

"Then please go to your seat, we're correcting the homework. Mister Park, if you focused as much on your studies as you did on your fellow student's personal life, your grades wouldn't disappoint your family every time. Now please everyone, don't laugh and focus on your homework."

Head down, he walked past the teacher across the room. He set his backpack next to his chair before pulling out his homework.

He had already noticed that the other was looking at him with concern. He always noticed him. Usually, he looked back at the other boy at least once, and lately more often, but not just because they sat across from each other, but also because Hyunjae had something on himself that drew Younghoon's attention.

But today he forced himself to glue his eyes to the blackboard, no matter how

intensely Hyunjae stared at him, with his head resting on his folded arms. He didn't understand any of the words his teacher said because he still had too much on his mind, but he refused to let his gaze wander. Even when Hyunjae was admonished for staring at his fellow students instead of paying attention to the class, he didn't look at him.

And when class ended, Younghoon quickly walked past the other boy, ignoring his call.

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Later when the rest of the team had already left, he stayed in the water to swim a few more laps to clear his mind. He didn't want to go home now. Not when his father was packing his things. Not when his family fell apart.

He had apologized to coach Bang for skipping the extra training sessions every Wednesday since the summer vacation. As punishment he would have to keep the locker rooms and the pool area clean for the next two months. He would also have two weeks' detention after the swimming competitions at the end of September.

It could have been worse.

The team was rather tidy, and Chan had done his best to convince his father to keep the detention short. Mainly because 'Lee Jaehyun had told him that other students were already trying to give him a hard time, so at least his team should protect him'.

Also, coach Bang didn't even seem too mad at him. He had allowed him to stay a little longer today. Swimming a few more laps had always helped him collect his thoughts, at least for a while, and plan what to do next.

First, he should apologize to Eric because it had never been his fault. It was Younghoon's fault for never making clear who he was talking about.

Second, he should never doubt his friends again and always ask for their help no matter how uncomfortable or embarrassed it made him feel. He really should have asked Chanhee, Jacob or Juyeon for more information beforehand. That would have made everything a lot easier.

Third, he should apologize to Hyunjae - no, Jaehyun - for accusing him of spreading rumors and lying to his mother, and most importantly for not even knowing his real name. He should also thank him for walking him home and taking care of his drunk ass, because he knew he was a bit of a handful while intoxicated.

Fortunately he wouldn't have to wait too long to get a chance to apologize to Jaehyun since he was already in the stands. With his backpack on his lap, he had

watched Younghoon train two hours longer after the rest had left.

They hadn't talked to each other or anything. Jaehyun had only watched him properly for the first time. No more through the windows when he passed.

When Younghoon climbed out of the water and sat on the edge of the pool, he already heard the blond's footsteps. He took a few deep breaths and pulled out the earplugs his parents had given him to keep the water out of his ears.

Jaehyun squatted down next to him and handed him a towel and his phone. When their eyes met, Jaehyun was the first to look away. He swallowed visibly and bit his lip.

"It rang eight times and I- prob-probably half of South Korea has texted you," he mumbled.

Younghoon just nodded and dried his hands before seeing who had called him.

It had been both of his parents. The messages came mainly from his father asking if he would see him later. His mother had also asked where he was. He only replied that he was still in school before he could hear Jaehyun softly clear his throat, but Younghoon didn't give him a chance to speak first.

Looking up into Jaehyun's sad eyes, he felt tears welling up again before he asked the burning question that had been on his mind since they first spoke about it.

"Isn't it hard to see your parents separated?"

The blond raised an eyebrow before he looked across the room and shrugged.

"Of course, it is. At the beginning it was worse, but now I know that it was good for my parents. They used to fight every day before they got divorced and I couldn't really handle it then. Now that they are divorced, they are calmer and it's easier for me. I really hope that your parents will find peace and that they can take care of you equally. And I... And I want you to know that you can always come to me if you want to talk or even just need some company or a shoulder to cry on and not one to... make you cry," he whispered in the end.

Younghoon shook his head.

"It wasn't just because of you. I- I mean of course I was mad and... disappointed. Even in myself, for not being able to treat you well and for being so dumb and... but... what's worse is..."

Nervously, he looked around and grabbed his phone. He couldn't say it. The lump in his throat grew with every single thought of his parents. Pressing his lips together he took a deep breath as he tried to open the messenger app. But when the phone switched off again, he groaned angrily and dropped it on the wet tile floor. He buried his face in his hands and tried not to cry again, wincing when he felt a warm hand on his cold shoulder.

"It's okay. I guess it's because of your parents?"

Younghoon nodded and let out a loud sob. Jaehyun wrapped his arms around him and pulled him into a comforting hug as the tears started to fall. One of his warm hands ran up and down Younghoon's back, the other buried in his wet hair.

Jaehyun held him close until he regained his composure to answer him.

"My- My dad... is moving out today."

"Oh no... I'm so sorry, Younghoon."

Crying his eyes out in Jaehyun's embrace and listening to his words of comfort had a surprisingly calming effect on Younghoon. Soon he stopped sobbing and took a last deeper breath as he gently pushed the blond away from him.

"One day everything will be fine, I promise. I'll help you whenever I can, if you... if you still want it."

He nodded and wiped away the last tears. Knowing that Jaehyun was able to relate to what he was feeling gave him some security back.

But he still had to apologize, although the other seemed to have already forgiven him. However, he wanted to let him speak first as he had previously interrupted him.

"Care to tell me what you're still doing here, creep?"

Carefully, he nudged his shoulder and brushed a strand of hair from the blond's forehead. Jaehyun smiled and laughed softly.

"Stalking you, of course."

Now Younghoon smiled too.

"Sorry for that-"

"It's okay, I forgive you. I didn't see you leave with the rest of your team so I figured you were still here and I'm glad you're still willing to talk to me. I wanted to apologize for what I said earlier. I... I was mean, and you didn't deserve it. None of this misery. I'm really sorry that I hurt your feelings and even offended you."

„No, I was wrong, it's my fault. I'm sorry for what I said. For accusing you of lying, making fun of me and spreading rumors. I misunderstood and didn't take the time to think about it. The last few weeks have really stressed me out and now I took it out on you. I'm so sorry I didn't trust you and didn't even care about you enough to ask for your real name."

When the blond smiled broadly, he immediately felt better.

"It's okay, I'm not really mad, but I understand if you still are."

"I'm not mad."

"You are."

"No seriously. I have no right to be mad at you."

"Yet you are. Hey, that's normal, it's okay. Yeah, you hurt my pride a bit, but I really thought I screwed up when I said- you know... what I said. I'm sorry. I really am."

"I know."

"Really?"

"Yes. Stop saying it."

"But you're still mad at me. That's fine, really."

Younghoon rolled his eyes. He felt bad for being mad, even if it was just a little.

"Maybe a little, yes."

Jaehyun nodded.

"Okay, I guess I can handle tha-ah!"

Younghoon chuckled as he emerged from the cold pool water and watched the other cough and gasp. He ran a hand through Jaehyun's now wet hair and gently wiped his closed eyes with his thumbs as the other was able to breathe again. Once he was sure Jaehyun stood properly in the shallower water, he let go of him.

"Oh~ looking good, a little wet, even better than I imagined."

Jaehyun splashed water directly on Younghoon's face.

"Hey!"

The black-haired boy grinned and covered his face. When their eyes met, he immediately burst out laughing at the half-hearted pout.

"What the hell, Younghoon?!" Jaehyun laughed.

He paid close attention to the blond's facial movements and felt his own features soften. It was as if the bad feelings disappeared as he watched the other laugh.

"I'm sorry for being mad and-"

"I forgive you. We're cool. Promise."

"Okay. Thank you."

Younghoon caught himself eyeing the other up and immediately felt his cheeks flush.

"Huh... Being soaked really suits you," he murmured.

"You don't look too bad either. Maybe I should join your team to see you like this more often."

"So that's why you watch us practice? You really watch me?"

He could see in Jaehyun's expressive eyes that he had hit the mark.

Blushing deeply, Jaehyun stuttered, "Y-You remember she snitched on me?"

"Oh... no, Chanhee told me and afterwards I thought about it and remembered seeing you, but thanks for confirming that you only have eyes for me," Younghoon laughed and winked playfully.

Jaehyun smirked.

"And not Dongmin, huh? You seemed scared I might fancy him, you know?" he said cockily.

"Ah... oh. I- I told you?"

He felt his heart beating a little faster.

"Yeah..." Jaehyun chuckled, "But why the fuck would I watch him? How did you come up with it?"

"He's totally worth it! I mean he's tall, handsome, very nice and a good swimmer-" Younghoon tried to defend himself.

Jaehyun smiled and rolled his eyes before splashing some water on the other.

"So are you, numbnuts. I watch you and not him. Deal with it."

"That uh... flatters me to be honest. And yeah, some other students have pointed this out as well. I don't remember what happened after my embarrassing incident. Sorry."

"That's a shame."

"Yeah... I wish I could have forgotten that too."

"I can imagine. But you were really cute, all drunk, tired and clingy."

"You think so?"

"Of course. You always are."

"Tired and clingy?" Younghoon chuckled.

"I don't know, maybe. Not with me, at least not yet, but... I always think you're cute."

"Oh..."

Jaehyun ran his hand through Younghoon's wet hair. The blond smiled softly. Younghoon felt overwhelmed for a second, but in an oddly good way.

Not knowing how else to hide his embarrassment, he grabbed Jaehyun's shoulders and dunked him under the water.

Jaehyun coughed and splashed water at Younghoon again in response.

"What the fuck!" he laughed, "That wasn't cute at all!"

"Sorry, oh my God!"

When Younghoon turned to swim away, Jaehyun quickly grabbed him and climbed onto his back. He tried to dunk him too, but Younghoon wasn't a former national swimming champion for nothing, as he just dove and took Jaehyun down with him.

He even held Jaehyun's legs to prevent the blond from pushing himself off Younghoon's back.

"You know what, no! No! I'm not a fan of drowning, you won!" Jaehyun complained and coughed heavily when they resurfaced.

This time, Younghoon climbed onto the other's back as he tried to escape to the ladder.

"Boo!" he chuckled and rested his head on the other one's shoulder.

He rubbed his chest to calm him down and hummed innocently.

"I dare you. Don't try me."

"Or what? You're gonna drown because I can hold my breath longer than you? Is that a threat?"

Now he wrapped his arms around Younghoon's legs.

"Possibly. And it would be a heartbreaking scene for everyone. You'd miss me once I'm gone, I know it."

"Ah, maybe a little, yes. But I think there are some kickboards around here, so we could at least reenact that scene from Titanic beforehand."

"Fuck off," Jaehyun laughed.

"You could be Rose if you wanted, but I think Jack would suit you. How about an audition?"

"What?"

The black-haired boy hugged him tightly and pretended to duck Jaehyun again.

"Younghoon!"

Jaehyun spat out some water. Younghoon laughed brightly. He tightened his hug.

"I'm just kidding, don't have a heart attack. Come on, you deserve it for every time you made fun of me."

"Oh yeah? You've messed with me often enough, don't you think? Now it should be my turn again."

"For real? I don't remember messing with you. What have I done? Tell me please."

Near the ladder they both let go. Jaehyun turned to him and shrugged.

"Nothing special, you were just playing with my feelings. The usual."

Younghoon pouted sarcastically.

"Naw, sorry about that. How bad was it?"

"You really don't remember?"

"Nope."

Staring into his eyes seriously, Jaehyun nodded. Then he raised his eyebrows.

"Guess which pocket I have my key in, haha, is it in the back pocket?" Jaehyun deadpanned.

"Oh no."

"Yes, and let me show you how embarrassingly I fell on my crush by pulling you onto me and not letting go of you despite my mom is watching," he mocked him, "And oh, no please, Jaejae, please stay here and cuddle with me so I can make you forget once again that I have a crush on someone who isn't you, even though I just kind of dared you to kiss me."

So his mother had been right about that Younghoon telling Jaehyun to kiss him. But it hadn't happened because 'that well-mannered kid wanted him to be sober once he could bring himself to do it'.

And now he really called him cute and wished Younghoon was closer to him.

So it was true that... Jaehyun had a thing for Younghoon? If that was real, then he couldn't deny that he was flattered. Judging by his warm cheeks and his increased heart rate, he probably felt a little more than that.

Was it because they'd been spending some time in the library lately? Did they really get close? That must have been the reason why he had been so angry with him earlier. He had been disappointed in his new friend.

To be honest, two weeks ago he would have never thought that... kissing Jaehyun would ever be an option for him. He would have declared anyone crazy who said something like that. But now it was different.

"Are you coming back to cuddle with me, Jaejae?"

Well, apparently yes: It seemed like they had become friends in the past few days. And also that Younghoon kind of 'seemed to like him', as his mother had said. He had to admit that he was curious about the other boy.

"Lord, have mercy," Younghoon whined and sank into the water.

Jaehyun pulled him up.

"Don't you dare run away now."

"I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable."

"It's fine, you didn't. Well maybe a little in some moments, but I'm willing to forgive you."

Younghoon shook his head.

"I mean it. I don't really know what I did, but I was probably a burden to you and I'm very sorry for that."

Jaehyun touched his cheek briefly.

"You're not a burden, Younghoon, not at all."

"But now people are talking about you too, and it's all my fault-"

"I don't really care about their gossip, I was just mad at you when I said that," Jaehyun interrupted him, "What's important to me is- I... I'm glad if I can spend some time with you. That's... all I've wanted since I met you. No matter what rumors people will

spread."

When he heard that from Jaehyun, his heart warmed. Probably nobody had ever paid him such a compliment.

"Thanks."

Younghoon smiled softly at the other, who immediately smiled back. But then Jaehyun's gaze seemed to drift down to Younghoon's lips.

When he saw the other one swallow, he knew what was going to happen next. And somehow he was willing to let it happen. His eyes automatically fluttered shut as Jaehyun leaned in.

He could feel his hot breath on his wet face and his hand on his cheek.

He could feel the cold tip of Jaehyun's nose on his.

Then he felt a pair of soft lips kiss him and after a moment's hesitation, Younghoon kissed him back and his heart skipped a beat.

"S-Sorry, I should have asked and that was way too early and- we- I-I mean if you don't-" Jaehyun stammered once their kiss ended.

"Jaehyun."

"Yes?"

"It's... okay. Just let me... let me think."

"Take your time. But Younghoon?"

"Mhm...?"

"You know when I first heard you liked a guy named Jaehyun, I... hoped for a second you'd be talking about me. And when I called you a coward for not asking your crush out, I wasn't fair, because... because I'm-"

And when Younghoon's mind suddenly stopped racing and he brushed a finger over Jaehyun's lips to silence him, he heard the familiar creak of the door.

Younghoon turned his head to face the intruder. He froze when he saw coach Bang coming towards them.

He could hear Jaehyun clicking his tongue. Startled, he looked the coach in the eyes, but didn't let go of Jaehyun's shirt, which he had grabbed unnoticed.

"Younghoon, your mother called and she asked where you were. I know I allowed you to stay a while longer, but your extra practice ended an hour ago too, and I'd like to

close the gates now. Especially since you obviously don't practice anymore. You two should go home now, you probably have a lot of homework."

"S-Sorry I forgot the time, it won't happen again. I swear I've been practicing for the past two hours."

"I know, Chan told me- young man, are you in your school uniform?" he now asked Jaehyun.

"Uh- yes? T-The water was too cold for my liking. Anyway, how's Chanie doing?"

The coach sighed.

"He's fine, but he's still struggling with chem- No, no, what the hell, get out of the pool right now, both of you. And give your friend some dry clothes, Younghoon. I'll give you five minutes to get dressed and leave. Move and don't get caught. I can't risk one of my best being expelled before the competitions and I don't want Chan to be mad at me for ratting on his friends again."

Younghoon nodded.

"Well, then don't snitch on us-"

"Shush!" Younghoon quickly turned Jaehyun around and pushed him towards the ladder.

"Go. Go, go, go, I have spare clothes in my locker in the dressing room. Don't try him or he'll cry about it for the next month," he whispered.

Without thinking, he grabbed Jaehyun's hand and pulled him into the dressing room as soon as they got out of the water. He closed the door behind them.

"Take your clothes off, I-"

"I'd rather take my time with you, but if you insist... Five minutes is a little too short to waste, indeed."

He looked over his shoulder and raised an eyebrow in confusion.

Jaehyun was already unbuckling his belt and taking off his shirt. Once he understood the shameless innuendo, Younghoon's face blushed deeply.

"Wha- oh my God! Why are you like that?!"

He turned quickly and ripped open his personal locker. The other boy laughed but immediately complained when Younghoon threw one of his towels in his face.

Later, on their way to the gate, he stubbornly denied the blond's playful accusation that he had watched him change.

But he had to admit that Jaehyun looked pretty good under his school uniform.

Kapitel 6: Chapter 5

By the end of the week he had apologized to Eric.

The younger hadn't been aware of all that had happened, so he had accepted the apology with ease, even apologizing for being partly to blame. Eric had also suggested several times to make it up to him, but Younghoon had turned down his offer.

Therefore he had mixed feelings about Eric's text message saying he should "wait for a surprise" at that stupid bench. Of course, a small part of him still hoped the "Jay"-Jaehyun would show up. On the other hand, he didn't think he was ready to talk to him again. He'd rather wait a little longer. Maybe a lot.

Besides, he still wasn't sure how he felt about Lee Jaehyun. Of course he liked him and they had spent the last few days together on breaks, but he still had no idea what the nature of these feelings was.

Knowing that Jaehyun liked him - probably a lot, otherwise he wouldn't have kissed him - even kept him up at night. He was thinking of him more than ever, wasn't even ashamed to stare at him in class anymore and he had even been waiting for him to watch his team practice on Wednesday.

And sometimes when he saw him and Jaehyun was quiet for a second, he remembered the feeling of the other's lips on his own. But whenever he looked at him in these moments, he could tell Jaehyun was thinking the same.

When suddenly two hands grabbed his shoulders and ripped him out of his thoughts, he shrieked and immediately covered his mouth in embarrassment.

By now he knew that laughter behind him very well.

"Asshole," he sighed wearily.

He leaned back against the rest and watched as Jaehyun walked around the bench and leaned on the table.

"I'm pleased to see you too. You know you could have just texted me if you really wanted to meet me now that you have my number? Are you ready to confess now? Come on, I already know that you like me. Half the school already thinks so. Take advantage of this spot once and for all."

The blond inspected his nails before looking at Younghoon expectantly.

"So? Come on, maybe I'll give you a chance, who knows?"

Younghoon was speechless. He looked back at Jaehyun, who now had a smug smile

plastered on his face. When he opened his mouth, no words came out. He shook his head in disbelief and ran his hand over his face.

Had Eric told him Younghoon wanted to see him? But the younger had said-

"I- Fuck this. No fucking way! I'll snap Eric's goddamn neck! If this little shit thinks, it's funny to-"

"Wait, no, no, no, what did he do? Come on, tell me. Easy my ass, now stop playing hard to get for a second and don't be so dramatic, no other Jaehyun seems to want you anyway."

"Fuck you! You know exactly what he did! He told the wrong person three times to come and meet me here! Now everyone's talking and making fun of me just because his Korean sucks and he doesn't know his own basketball team!"

Jaehyun laughed as Younghoon furiously narrowed his eyebrows.

"Calm down. Don't be so harsh on him, he only made that mistake twice. I'm here of my own accord just so you know. He has nothing to do with this now, it was my idea. He told me you apologized and my stupid ass thought it would be fun to plot this with Eric. I'm sorry."

"So you're just here to mock me now, aren't you?"

"Maybe a little, yes, but seriously, I'm sorry. There's actually a reason behind this. I wanted to talk to you. I... I don't want others to mock you because that's my job. You know, it's kind of a shame you never really wanted to talk to me because I- I don't know, I thought we could be good friends when I first met you, and now we're really getting there and I'm really happy about that."

No matter how much he liked Jaehyun by now, he still had this stupid crush remain. So it didn't surprise him much when he almost automatically spotted Jay among a few of his teammates exiting the gym behind Jaehyun.

"Last week, I know you were drunk but you were so sweet to me", Jaehyun continued, but Younghoon felt his ears go deaf the moment Jay walked over to Ten, grabbed his waist and kissed him square on the lips.

The last glimmer of hope shattered in his heart.

It hit him like a truck.

If he only had known that Jay and Ten were a couple, then he wouldn't have had to make a mockery out of himself.

Of course, he wouldn't have tried asking Jay out if he had only known.

If he had asked the others.

"And when you kissed me back in the pool I thought maybe you like me as much as I like- dude. Hey. I'm trying to pour my heart out to you and- are you even listening? Younghoon?"

Jaehyun snapped his fingers in front of Younghoon's face, but he couldn't stop staring at the couple. His mouth twisted and soon he was pressing his lips into a thin line. His eyes automatically watered.

Jaehyun looked over his shoulder to find the cause of Younghoon's misery. He probably discovered the root of all evil when Johnny pointed it out by yelling across the schoolyard.

"Hey, Jung Jaehyun, hands off Ten's ass, we're running late! Taeyongie's Sangyeopsal is waiting for us, you ungrateful brat!"

"Jung... Jaehyun?"

Jaehyun turned back to him and Younghoon nodded, still trying to hold back his tears.

"No way. You must be kidding me! The whole time you were talking about Jung Yoonoh?!"

So his name was Yoonoh? Maybe he should tell Bong Jaehyun when he sees him again.

"You knew his name wasn't Jaehyun anymore?" Younghoon asked in between shaky breaths.

"I- oh no. Why didn't I think of Yoonoh!"

When Jaehyun suddenly started to laugh, Younghoon couldn't hold back anymore and uttered a first loud sob. The other immediately sat down next to him and pulled him in a tight hug that Younghoon couldn't escape no matter how hard he tried at first.

"Hey, no, Younghoon, please, don't you dare cry now. Come on, it's just Yoonoh, that's just a stupid crush, that's not worth your tears- I mean- Jung Yoonoh, seriously? Gosh if I had known, I'm so sorry," he tried his best to stop laughing, "The week after I came here, he changed his name but I didn't care because I just met him, you know? And I thought Johnny called half the team Jaehyun for fun, oh my god. So that explains why nobody listens to him."

"Shut up," Younghoon whined.

Jaehyun rubbed his back and let go, but leaned over the table to shield him from nosy students. The younger one narrowed his eyes and suppressed his smile.

"Tall, blond, handsome face – God, now I understand. Wait, you didn't know Ten and Yoonoh were dating?"

Younghoon shook his head. The blond fumbled a tissue out of his bag and wiped away the streaming tears.

"How was I supposed to? I only saw them on Wednesdays and they don't make it obvious do they?" he sniveled.

"Ten watches every practice on Wednesdays-"

"So did I!"

"Right... right, they aren't very obvious. Maybe apart from the nicknames Ten comes up with all the time. You're right. I'm sorry Younghoon. Well, I could have told you sooner if you had answered my question in the hallway. Or the library-"

"Can you shut up for a second?" Younghoon sobbed and hid his face in his hands.

He leaned his elbows on the table and covered his eyes with his hands. He heard Jaehyun sigh and felt his hand run through his hair. It didn't really help him collect his thoughts, but at least it felt comforting.

"Hey. Why are you crying now?" he asked softly, "I know this may have gone wrong now, but it's not the end of the world."

Younghoon mumbled something he couldn't even understand himself.

"Can you repeat that-"

"Because my life fucking sucks!" Younghoon yelled.

Yoonoh dating Ten was something he could have swallowed. Worse was everything that had happened after this stupid incident with Kim Jaehyun a few weeks ago. His biggest problem was that it could have been avoided. All of it. If only he had opened up to his friends and asked for their help. If only he had said directly who he meant.

"No, Younghoon, it doesn't. Don't say that. Everything will be fine, I promise. I know Yoonoh is cool, but... he's not even that cool. His rebounds are great though. And he's also a very reliable teammate and he's so nice- B-But he's probably super boring when he's at home, like- okay, he's funny once you get to know him, but he's like a wine aunt, except he's not allowed to drink wine yet! I mean Johnny hyung always makes fun of his lame behavior at parties, and you saw for yourself how boring he was-"

"I said shut up!"

Jaehyun indeed kept quiet. But only for a minute before he spoke again.

"Hey... hey, Younghoon. Can you please stop crying now? I hate seeing you so sad. Ugh, come on, I know it's hard to see him with someone else, but it's not like he's the last man alive. He's cool, sometimes funny and handsome and stuff - fuck, he is, but- I mean there are plenty of Jaehyuns out there, who- ouch!"

Younghoon slapped his chest. He buried his face in his hands again and sniffed, but he felt the tears stop. He couldn't stop the chuckle that bubbled up his chest.

'Plenty of Jaehyuns', he made it sound even more ridiculous than it already was.

"Fuck you, Hyunjae."

"No, come on, say it. You know by now that's not my name. How come you didn't even know that, by the way? Was- no way, Eric introduced us!" he took a deep scandalized breath, "Okay, whatever, now don't be ashamed to say my name just because another Jaehyun fucked up and defiled our reputation."

"Alright," Younghoon took a deep but shaky breath to calm his voice, "Sorry, it just slipped out."

"It's fine."

"Fuck you, Jaehyun."

The blond nodded.

"There we go. Feels better, doesn't it? To tell at least one of us we suck?"

Jaehyun gently tugged Younghoon's hair. A big smile spread across his face as he heard Younghoon's soft laughter.

"I guess not all of you suck."

The dark-haired boy now rested his head on Jaehyun's shoulder, who hesitantly put an arm around his waist. He could hear him swallow and felt him tense up as he snuggled closer to him. It reminded him of how nervous the other had been in the pool.

"Kim Jaehyun has offered to be my wingman and Bong Jaehyun is a sweet kid. And about that weird Lee Jaehyun guy in my math class..."

Jaehyun squeezed his side, making Younghoon laugh out loud. Their eyes met and they smiled at each other. And again he remembered this warm feeling when he saw the affection in the other's eyes.

"Thank you for taking care of me Jaehyun, even though I wasn't the nicest person at first. And thanks for not making fun of me for once and taking me home last weekend."

He brushed a strand of hair from Younghoon's forehead before the older boy leaned back against the rest.

"Anytime."

"You know that feeling of... waking up or rather the beginning of recovery? Like when the fog clears?"

At least it was one less source of stress in his life now. Soon he could probably focus on other and more important things again. Or even people.

"Sort of. Hey... I wanted to ask you this without all the tears, but now I'm wondering if you'd feel better with some ice cream or coffee on the way home. Both maybe? My treat of course. I don't like seeing you so down."

"Ice cream? You and me?" Younghoon rubbed his hand over his eyes and wiped away the last stray tears.

He sniffled and sat up, meeting Jaehyun's eyes. They sparkled mischievously. The other shrugged and nodded as he pressed his lips into a thin line.

"Well, if you're asking me desperately like this already with tears in your eyes, I could never say no, can- ah!" Younghoon pinched his chest, hitting a more sensitive area.

"You're so shameless."

"Ouch, that hurt! Can you please not aim for my nipple next time?!"

Younghoon smiled innocently and snuggled up to Jaehyun again. This time he wrapped his arm around Younghoon's waist more confidently. He even stroked his side before holding him tightly.

"Nah, that would only be half the fun."

"Oh boy, I knew it. You peeped on me. Why else would you know exactly where my nipples are?"

"That again? I know it may be disappointing for you as the mere thought seems to turn you on, but I didn't peep on you."

Jaehyun huffed half-offended. He pulled Younghoon a little closer.

"Anyway, about the date you asked for."

"You know I'm still grounded?"

Jaehyun shrugged before clearing his throat, skillfully ignoring the other's argument.

"I was thinking of showing you my favorite coffee shop. It's close to the metro station near the main gate."

"My mom was already outraged on Monday and I really don't want to see her like this again."

"Well, that wasn't a 'no'. Besides, your mom might not like rebellious teenagers, but she does like me. She even said I'll do you good, so I bet she won't mind if I take you home one more time. I'll even buy you ice cream or coffee, how could that be bad?"

He had - sort of - done it. He had asked Younghoon out. Well, more or less, but he had invited him to have ice cream with him. That was better than nothing. A classic date. Easy. Now at least one of them wasn't a coward anymore.

But Younghoon wasn't satisfied. He wanted him to make it clear what he wanted. Not that he didn't already know, but he wanted him to say it out loud. There was still something he hadn't fully caught because of Yoonoh and Ten after all.

"Don't celebrate just yet. Why did you come to me today? Come on, tell me, you coward. You remember what other students say about this place, don't you? You should take advantage of it and try a little harder."

"Be-Because Eric told me," he mumbled.

"To mock me, yeah. Because that's your job, I remember, now tell me the truth. Come on, you can do better than me."

"No, no, I- yeah a little bit I guess, but I don't want other people to make fun of you because", he took a deep breath, "Because I like you. And by I like you, I mean that I-I... I like you a lot, you know? And honestly, I don't want it to be a rumor anymore, that we're... dating. I really thought you would know by now, but now you seem to be even more clueless than I had already thought. Unless you just don't want to know, then that would be very embarrassing now..."

Younghoon couldn't help himself but smile. His smile turned into a grin and soon he was laughing. He sat up again, took Jaehyun's hand into his own and began to play with his fingers.

"You? Like me? I mean- you like me? Are you really trying to say you have a crush on me? You came here to confess to me, right here where I tried to confess to another Jaehyun? You're not exactly the proud type."

Jaehyun clicked his tongue and his face flushed. Shortly thereafter he began to stutter. He looked down at their hands.

Younghoon bit his lip to hide his mischievous smile.

"Okay, wow, that- wow. Fuck you, Younghoon. You really think I have a crush on you? Are you delusional? I've never heard such nonsense and... I refuse to admit it when you mess with me like that."

"Poor you, this is just some well-deserved payback. You told my mom you have a crush on me, so I already knew. And you wanted to kiss me in the pool, you even did."

The other snorted.

"Oh please, I didn't kiss you."

"You did."

"You call that a kiss? Your standards must be low, man, we've barely touched."

"But we have! Anyway! That's why you asked me out now!"

"I didn't ask, you asked me!"

"Excuse me?! I didn't ask, you just put those words in my mouth!" Younghoon laughed and dropped his hand.

"Yeah, you're probably not wrong there, but... I only wanted to give you the chance to ask at least one Jaehyun out. A real one even."

He brushed a thumb over Younghoon's damp cheek.

"Very thoughtful of you."

"I know."

Jaehyun joined Younghoon's laughter.

"I think one in four isn't even the worst rate. And maybe... Maybe you should give it a shot? I mean I'm tall, blond, funny, devilishly handsome, uh - I play basketball! You're totally into that, aren't you?"

Younghoon nodded ironically.

"Oh right, yeah, I'm totally into basketball players."

Jaehyun now stood up and excitedly pointed at Younghoon. Or maybe he was driven by adrenaline, but Younghoon didn't really care. The blond boy was way too cute at the moment to seriously question his behavior.

"I knew it! That's exactly why I started it, of course. Well at least until they're done with the renovation, but ball sports are ball sports. And last but not least", he paused dramatically, "my name's Jaehyun. See? I have everything you like. All you're obviously looking for in a guy and all you gotta do is agree to go out with me. Open your eyes Younghoon, your ideal boyfriend is literally right in front of you."

Younghoon chuckled and followed him. He shouldered his backpack.

"Okay, now you're the one who sounds desperate."

"Maybe I've been a little desperate lately, yes. A tipsy little birdie told me I wasn't trying hard enough for their liking, so I hope I've made myself clear now."

"I guess I'll never drink alcohol again in my life. I'll let you off the hook and go have coffee with you if that makes you feel any better."

Jaehyun bowed dramatically.

"How gracious you are."

"Just shooting my shot I guess. I should probably just take any Jaehyun I can get, and you're the first one I didn't even have to chase."

"Now you got it."

"Since you know what I - obviously - like in men, will you tell me what you like so I get a chance to make fun of you for once too?"

"Me? Oh, nothing special," Jaehyun shrugged and walked past Younghoon, "There's just this one cute guy in his swim trunks. Really, nothing special."

The older boy snorted with laughter.

"I knew this was the reason why you watch me practice. Perv."

Jaehyun sighed.

"Ah yes, I figured that would happen. You were a lot nicer when you were drunk. Suddenly I regret falling for you."

"Oh please."

"I bet you tripped me."

"Of course I did. I can't miss my chance to catch a Jaehyun, can I?"

When Younghoon passed him, Jaehyun suddenly grabbed his hand and pulled him back. Surprised, he turned around and blinked at the blond, who stared at the floor for a second before meeting his eyes.

"Younghoon, I... I guess when I said some people aren't made for each other... I forgot to say people can still try to make it work, you know? I mean... fuck fate, right? And if it doesn't seem to work out, you should always try to fix it first. Like your parents tried. Of course, sometimes there's no hope and it's better to part ways, but that doesn't always have to be the case. I'm sorry if I sounded too pessimistic. When you see an opportunity, you should embrace it and... and do your best to make it work before you surrender, okay?"

"And that's what you're trying to do now."

"Kind of, yes? And I-"

"You want me to give you a chance. I've got the memo, dude," Younghoon chuckled before giving Jaehyun a serious look, "I don't want to get your hopes up too high, but I'll try it and give you a chance. I want to spend more time with you, get to know you better and... and I'll go out with you if I think it feels like a good idea. Sounds good?"

Jaehyun clapped his hands once excitedly and spun in a circle before looking happily at Younghoon.

"Better than I imagined! I promise you I won't disappoint you! Gosh, it's so much easier once it's said and done, oh my god, I'll make you fall for me so hard."

"Cute," Younghoon mumbled.

"By the way, what's your secret?"

"Secret? You mean my secret to my devilishly handsome looks?" he mocked Jaehyun.

The blond nudged him with his elbow and led him to the main gate.

"Ha-ha! So funny. Don't be mean c'mon you said it has to do with my cute smile."

Younghoon blinked repeatedly as Jaehyun tapped his cheeks in an overly cute way.

"Oh. That secret. That- did I say that?"

"You said it has to do with my cute smile, yes."

It was indeed one of the cutest smiles Younghoon had ever seen, but he never intended to tell Jaehyun. Well at least not in the near future, but today seemed like a good day for at least a little confession.

"When was it?"

"Ah... When you were drunk. The fresh air really knocked you out, didn't it?"

"Yeah, when I said I didn't remember anything, I meant it... I see," Younghoon sighed, laughing awkwardly, "Hyun- Jaehyun, I'm sorry, but I must disappoint you because the secret has already been told."

He scratched the back of his head. The other looked puzzled.

"Huh? You mean- oh... My smile... is cute? You really think so?"

"It was supposed to stay a secret, but yes, I do think that your smile is cute."

Jaehyun gave him what was probably the most charming smile he could offer.

"Wow... Well, yours isn't that bad either. But I have one more question."

"Your interrogation isn't over yet?"

"Nope. Why did you think that I didn't like you? It's not because I tease you a lot, is it?"

Younghoon shrugged.

"I don't know... I mean we didn't have the best start, did we? And you always seemed serious about what you said to me. I really thought you didn't like me and were making fun of me."

The younger nodded. They stopped at an intersection in front of a café when the traffic light turned red. Jaehyun carefully took Younghoon's hand.

"I see. Sorry for that. I am serious, but... with you, you know? I'm serious about my feelings for you. I didn't know you were so sensitive to all I said. And I have to admit that I didn't find you the most approachable person at first, you know?"

Younghoon felt Jaehyun tense for a second as he squeezed his hand.

Cute.

"Yeah, Chanhee says that a lot too. I'm sorry I never gave you a real chance to get to know me."

"It's fine. I never wanted you to dislike me or make you think I didn't like you. Now that I know why you're so stressed out and what you're going through, I can't blame you. I should rather apologize for teasing you on top of that. I'm just glad you're taking it a lot better than me, when my parents... you know."

"I... yes. It'll be alright."

"You can always talk to me about it."

"Will do."

"I'm serious. You can always talk to me about anything. And you should expect a lot more teasing now that you know I'm not trying to hurt you."

"As long as you can handle me."

"Oh please, nothing easier than that. Come on, what can I get you, handsome?"

Later, on the way to Younghoon's home, each with a cup of coffee in hand, Younghoon brought up the night of the party. Or more precisely, what his mother had told him.

"I admit that I thought about kissing you after this party. But! You can't deny that you wanted to kiss me in the pool too!"

"I- What?! Are YOU delusional?" Younghoon laughed sheepishly, "Why would I want to kiss you? I tried to confess to someone else for about three weeks, remember?"

Maybe yes. Maybe he had wished for it a little. But admit it to Jaehyun? No way. At least... not now.

Bickering with Jaehyun was too much fun to back out just yet.

"But now you know me and you said I look good when I'm soaked. You said I'm cute, handsome and you even peeped on me! No way you didn't want to kiss me!"

"I didn't!"

"You think I'm hot and you wanted to kiss me, just admit you wanted a foretaste of what's to come!"

"Tz. You- You-"

Jaehyun stopped on the sidewalk in front of Younghoon's home and grabbed his hand. He turned him around to face him and cupped his cheek.

Younghoon blushed as Jaehyun leaned in. But unlike expected, he just patted his cheek and pinched it.

"I'm just kidding. Why kiss me back if you didn't mean to, huh? But no need to admit it, I already know who you're really into."

"Then why are you backing out now?"

Younghoon thought he should pat himself on the back for his bold question.

He was indeed curious about the taste of the other boy's lips, no matter how badly he felt like running away from the slightly awkward feeling right now.

Jaehyun looked into his eyes. Younghoon suppressed a smug smile. He could watch the blond boy's face flush before Jaehyun made an overly indignant sound.

"Younghoon! No kisses on a first date, what the hell?!"

Turning the tables every now and then was fun, so he didn't even think about stopping. He could massage the other's ego some other time.

"Didn't know you were such a coward."

Jaehyun clicked his tongue and opened his mouth to say something, but no words came out. He then quickly covered Younghoon's mouth with his hand, leaned forward and pressed a gentle kiss on the back of his hand. This admittedly caught him off guard, and the other noticed and cackled.

"But you think I'm a coward. Of course, Younghoon. Of course. I'll wait until you're ready for me."

Younghoon snorted at that. He couldn't let his guard down. He shouldn't let Jaehyun off the hook so easily now that he had him for once.

"Only a coward would kiss his own hand instead of his crush's lips."

"Oh come on, your mom's watching us. I can't just kiss you in front of my future mother-in-law."

Younghoon shook his head.

"A little quick, aren't you? Anyway, you wanted a chance, I gave it to you, and you missed it. Again. Congrats, now I know why you don't want to continue playing basketball when you're so bad at scoring."

The way Jaehyun lost his composure was a very satisfying sight, with his eyes all widened and his mouth hanging open.

"What?! No! No, Younghoon, you did not just say that! Give me another chance, you're playing unfair!"

"Nope, now I'm not doing it anymore. Time's up. Game over. Not my problem if you don't try harder."

"But Younghoon!"

"Are you two done now?!"

"Oof, Mrs Kim, is that really necessary?! This is important!"

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With the first falling leaves, the rumors died down. He didn't know what Ten had done but whatever it was, it had worked. A few teasing comments here and there, but

nothing he couldn't handle. Now Younghoon could sit on the infamous bench without people gossiping about him or anyone.

Enjoying the quiet, he patiently waited for Jaehyun to come out of the newly renovated gym. He should be done changing now.

Earlier when he had tried to text him where he was waiting for him, his phone had died, although it had since been repaired several times. So he had asked for Eric's help, who had been waiting outside for Juyeon, to tell Jae where he was.

The younger had beamed and waved him goodbye and for a second Younghoon had seen his life flash before his eyes.

But no.

No.

He could trust Eric.

The youngest knew that Younghoon and Jaehyun had become much closer lately. He knew that Younghoon often called Jaehyun 'Jae' or 'Jaejae' and he was aware that they were somehow exclusive.

At least, that's what Younghoon had thought.

"Hey Younghoon? Eric said you wanted to talk to me?"

But of course it had been a bad idea to ask Eric again.

Yoonoh raised an eyebrow when Younghoon didn't answer at first. Then the black-haired just smiled apologetically. His face stayed cool, his heart didn't jump out of his chest, and he didn't even get the lump in his throat when he saw Yoonoh right in front of him anymore.

"I don't mean to be rude, but Ten's already waiting-"

Younghoon shook his head slightly.

"Right, sorry", he chuckled, "I'm really sorry Yoonoh, but that's just a misunderstanding. I told Eric to send me Lee Jaehyun, but I just said Jae. He probably just mixed up your nicknames. The poor kid is still not comfortable with his native language and the names you use on the court, but no wonder with such a stupid policy."

"Ah~ Jaehyun, I see. It's good to see you together. You're a good match, if you allow me. And uh... you should know that he talks about you all the time, even before you got together. Not in a bad way! But, uh," he chuckled, "He really likes you a lot. It's a miracle Jacob's ears haven't fallen off yet."

Younghoon smiled fondly. He didn't mind that people still thought he and Jaehyun were dating. The other had done his best to keep this rumor alive and eventually make Younghoon fall seriously in love with him. Now all they only had to do was make it official.

"Yeah, I know he does. He helped me a lot and he's a really sweet and caring guy. I feel like he's balancing me, you know?"

"Yeah, I do the same for Ten, but don't worry, I can tell he's a lot worse than you could ever be."

They both laughed.

"By the way, Yoonoh? Now that you're here, could you do me a favor and tell him I want to thank him?"

"Sure, what did he do?"

"I don't actually know exactly, but... I think he'll know what I mean."

"Okay, will do. And after that I'll make sure we introduce our team to Eric again before he officially joins us next year. We should practice more often with the junior team and Johnny should really stop calling me Jaehyun during practice. Most of the time the kids don't really get a chance to get to know us. Well then, I'm sorry if I bothered you," Yoonoh smiled apologetically.

"Don't be. It was my fault after all. Next time I should make myself clear."

"It's fine, don't worry. Oh, good news, I see the Jae in question!" Yoonoh exclaimed.

Younghoon turned and saw Jaehyun near the pool, watching them. Younghoon waved and gestured for him to come over. Yoonoh also waved and called for him.

When Jaehyun arrived, he greeted them.

"You shouldn't keep him waiting too often."

"Oh, you have no idea how many times he's kept me waiting already. Hey handsome."

This time, Younghoon's heart rate increased and he began to feel warm and fuzzy. This feeling wasn't entirely new anymore, but it felt like it was getting more and more intense lately. The blond waved with his smartphone in his hand and Younghoon couldn't hold back his smile.

"Hey."

"I guess Eric should spend more time with us than just Juyeon. One day I'll strangle this kid. And you don't seem to have gotten my text saying I'll pick you up at the pool?"

"Exactly. I'll probably need a new battery. Or... a new phone."

"Well, it seems like Eric's still a bit confused about our team," Yoonoh laughed, "Alright, if you don't need anything, I'll leave you both alone. See you around?"

Younghoon nodded.

"Sure. Goodbye, Yoonoh."

"Bye you two, have a nice evening. Your style has really improved, by the way. Are you still sure you want to switch back to tennis, Jaehyun?"

"Yeah, maybe it's better for team communication too," Jaehyun grinned and Yoonoh nodded, "See you tomorrow, bye."

"Too bad, but I guess you're right. Bye then!"

Yoonoh left them and walked over to his boyfriend who was waiting for him at the gate.

Jaehyun cleared his throat as Yoonoh seemed to be glued to his boyfriend's lips. He tapped his toes and looked at Younghoon curiously.

"So? What did Yoonoh want from you? You laughed a lot, but since he's almost devouring Ten, I'm guessing he wasn't exactly hitting on you, was he?"

Younghoon raised an eyebrow. He still loved the sight of Jaehyun losing his composure. As he shrugged and looked back at Yoonoh and Ten leaving the school grounds, he heard Jaehyun take a deep breath. Saying goodbye to Yoonoh out loud had felt like the last step.

Now he could finally concentrate fully on the real Jaehyun. No more ninety-nine percent. He was head over heels in love with the other. In love with the slightly jealous moron who snapped his fingers right in Younghoon's face because he thought he wasn't listening.

"Hoon. I mean it. Please say he wasn't, I don't really stand a chance against him."

"No, actually, there's this other guy that drew my attention. Ah, I guess I didn't catch his name. I think it was something common."

He could almost feel Jaehyun furrow his eyebrows and stare at him.

"Which guy?"

He looked up at Jaehyun, who was growing impatient with every passing second.

"Tall, quite fit."

"Oh, really?"

"Mhm, with a really handsome face", Younghoon stood up and shouldered his backpack, "and a charming smile and... oh there he is!"

Jaehyun turned around so quickly that Younghoon thought the other was going to get whiplash. He even turned a little further to find the imaginary rival.

"The fuck, Younghoon, there's-"

Younghoon quickly leaned in to press a kiss to the blond's lips as he turned back to face him.

"Are you blind? He's right in front of me. And he should bleach his roots again."

The other blinked as Younghoon twirled a strand of Jaehyun's damp hair between his fingers. When he laughed, Jaehyun pursed his lips in a pout and slapped his shoulder.

"Bitch."

He pulled Jaehyun into a tight hug and rubbed his back. The younger whined half-heartedly, but quickly fell silent when Younghoon kissed his cheek. Younghoon could see the other's face flush. He couldn't resist the urge to plant a second kiss on the other side.

As if he didn't know, he found Jaehyun's beanie in the younger boy's hoodie's pocket.

"Relax, it's been very quiet lately, no one's hitting on me anymore, except for your desperate ass. Eric just messed up again, nothing new. This Jay isn't that Jae and not every Jaehyun is a real Jaehyun, you know? The usual."

"Explains a lot. You really should tell him to stop looking for other Jaehyuns", he joked, "or I might get jealous."

"Sure. You already are."

"Of Yoonoh?" he snorted, "No fucking way."

"Of course not. You looked like you're about to cry."

He pulled the beanie over Jaehyun's eyes. Then he pinched his cheek when the other boy failed to hide his smile.

"Gosh, you're so cute... But yeah, he can stop now, especially since I've already found the right one. It's no longer necessary."

Jaehyun fixed his hat.

"Oh? You found him?"

"Okay, okay, he ran after me. But maybe I'll keep him, who knows?"

The younger one raised an eyebrow as the older boy bit his lip.

"We finally agree that you like me back?" he joked.

Younghoon now loosely grabbed Jaehyun's shirt and leaned against him. Their faces were so close that he could almost feel the other one's breath on his lips. He sucked on his bottom lip as he saw Jaehyun lick over his own lips while staring down at Younghoon's.

He thought about their last kind-of-a-date a few days ago, when Jaehyun had walked him home afterwards and kissed him almost senseless in front of the door. He really wanted to feel the sensation again that had sent shivers down his spine, no matter how much fun Jaehyun would make of him for blushing alone at the thought of making out with him.

"Well, if that Jaehyun thinks I look cute in my swimming trunks?" he murmured.

Jaehyun immediately locked eyes with Younghoon.

"Gross. You perv."

Younghoon sighed dramatically and smiled regretfully. He let himself fall forward into the blond's arms.

"I- yeah, okay, I'll admit defeat. I surrender. My bad. Wow."

When he looked up, Jaehyun beamed at him. There was still a touch of pink on his cheeks.

"You're lucky because you're the cutest swimmer I could ever imagine."

"Then I can really tell Eric to stop sending me other Jaehyuns I guess."

"You better!" Jaehyun laughed.

He grabbed Younghoon's waist as the other one wrapped his arms properly around his neck.

Younghoon brushed his thumb over Jaehyun's cheek. He paused before leaning all the way in.

"Be my boyfriend?"

Jaehyun cocked his head.

"But I thought we're already dating, or was that just rumors?"

Younghoon grinned and leaned in to seal the other's lips with his own. As Jaehyun pulled him closer, he hoped for a second they wouldn't get caught like Jacob and Sangyeon.

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"Are you going to visit your dad today?"

Younghoon handed Jaehyun his ordered coffee and received a kiss on the cheek in return before Jaehyun wrapped his arm around his waist and left the coffee shop with him.

"Yup. Or... I don't know, maybe I'll take my boyfriend home first and... invite myself over. We'll see."

"Oh? Sounds like you have any plans?"

"I don't know, maybe I'll squabble with his mom, then I'll cuddle with my beloved Bori and then... I'll probably crush him in some of his favorite video games."

Younghoon rolled his eyes in amusement.

"Yeah, you wish."

Then Jaehyun leaned in with a confident smile on his face.

"I'll make it up to you, don't worry. I won't disappoint you- oh, wait, look at that!"

Younghoon only saw the hood that Jaehyun was pulling at first, but then he saw the young boy's face.

"Hey!" Eric complained.

The blond pushed him back into the arms of a slightly confused but gleefully laughing Juyeon.

"You, my dear, should learn who your friends are once and for all!"

"Did you mix it up again?" Juyeon asked.

"What?! No! Hyung, you said Jay!"

"I said Jae! Pronunciation!" Younghoon scolded, "Well- Jae, as in my Jae, Jaejae, Lee Jaehyun, your Hyunjae hyung! Goddammit, Eric! It can't be that difficult! I know that too, and I'm not even a member of your team!"

Eric laughed out loud and bowed deeply.

"Oh! Hyung, oh my god, I'm so sorry! I really misunderstood you the whole time, oh my god! Why didn't you just tell me that you wanted to talk to Hyunjae hyung the whole time- ah!"

Younghoon rolled his eyes and pulled the younger one into a headlock.

"You know what? Until you're fluent I won't ask you for any more favors to avoid these incidents. Deal?"

He ruffled his hair.

"Yes, deal, please, oh my god, deal! I'm really sorry, I hope you can forgive me."

He let go of him and nudged his shoulder.

"I do. For now. Now be a good boy and leave us alone. How can Juyeon even handle you?"

"I can't-"

"He's often very exhausted, but he loves me a lot because I'm cute, so he doesn't complain, right hyung?" the youngest beamed.

"How can a person be so shameless?" Jaehyun huffed.

"You're one to talk. All right, we have a date. See you tomorrow."