

ARDOUR IN AVALANCHE

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This is an EXO fanwork/fanfiction

PRELUDE

A flake of snow in flurry thro' the air
Had landed as a kiss upon my cheek:
A secret message, just for me to share;
To take to heart but never dare to speak
About or presuppose to other eyes
Your open feelings - distant though they are.
And so, upon your lips, my OWN surprise:
A flake of snow returned from me afar.

~Mark R Slaughter~

Nothing. Naught was salubrious anent the gelidness. The numbing cold wind, the icy chandeliers on the fingers of the branches, the never thawing hail, the interminable sleet, and the cataclysmic avalanches, all went by diabolical, foul, vile, appalling, and atrocious even! Look at the snow. Why doesn't it ever end? It seems eternal. The whiteness. The repugnance of the whiteness.

He would do anything to discern some green in this vast, the all-embracing winter woods. But even winter couldn't last forever. Summer will show its face. Not soon and certainly not long enough. Summer never lasts too long. So, yes, he was sulking over the coldness because he was tired of it. All the white. It made him despondent of himself.

"Sehun?" the inviting voice of his mother wasn't so inviting this morning. Her saccharine, fair-spoken face was not something he was ready encounter right now. He wanted to be on his tod, in his solitary so that he could repine over the wretched winter. One could never find peace or love in this avalanche. He never understood why his parents had to move to such a mundane land. A land?! No, a conventional manor in the middle of a bloody immense pine tree forest cannot be tallied as a land. This was a prison.

Sehun didn't move away from the windowpanes as he gathered his mother's footsteps in the room. "I'll be down, mama." he muttered in a lackadaisical monotone, staring out the window, at the protruding trees that were coated, dusted with snow. It mayhap seem prepossessing too many but to someone who had seen the whiteness of the snow and the dead plants for half of his life, it wouldn't seem as amiable, would it? The mountains where avalanches took place as a day-to-day routine were just a couple of miles away from the manor. And when the ice thawed, the trees were completely bare which made everything look even uglier. No, there was no adventure in this place. An adventure sounded too good to be true.

"You seem to be lost in thoughts, sweetheart." he only turned when his mother's slender fingers brushed his burnt sienna hair.

How can he hate white so much when his true self was white?

"I was just thinking, mama. Not lost in it."

"What were you thinking about?" she gave a leer and then a smile. "Snow?"

"Winter."

"Sweetheart. It's safer for you and you know that."

Of course he did. Or else why would he be home-schooled all his life, was never allowed to go out with friends (the guys from the clan who visited sporadically just to meet up with his father) and on that context, he was permitted an outing with his parents every weekend to the town. But it was always cold and no one would be in the right mood to light up the town.

"I'm wise enough to not to fall into traps, mama." he argued subtly.

"That you are. But your heart won't follow the mind."

"It won't, huh?"

"Sehun. We're just taking precautionary measures."

"So that I won't fall in love and mate with anyone who's not a canine Therianthrope."

All she did was smile and shook her head. "You know everything too well."

"Mama. I don't think I want to mate or anything. I want to see the world. Perhaps... have an adventure."

"You will have one, Sehun. I promise you that."

18 was an unfortunate number for Sehun.

"I don't want to mate." he murmured silently.

"It's for your best, Sehun."

"Mrs Oh." Kyungsoo peered into the room with his petite, dainty figure and his forever breathing gentleness. Sehun wasn't sure if his status as a servant boy in the manor caused him to be this humble and quiet as a mouse. Either way, Kyungsoo was a servant who seemed like he might die if he took one blow to his face. "There's a phone call." he said in his timid voice. "They would be here soon, Mrs Oh."

"Thank you, Kyungsoo. See, Sehun. Everything will be fine."

"Who's coming?" tension and delirium rose in Sehun's throat.

"You'll know soon, sweetheart. Just be down, okay?"

"This place looks cool enough." Kai remarked with a shrug and a smirk, riding at the back of the car.

"Very funny, Kai." his mother snorted.

"All that I can see with the power of my vision is snow, mom. That's something different, isn't it?"

"Enough with the ironic sarcasm." his dad snapped. Kai couldn't help but roll his eyes. "We have neighbours. On the other side of the mountains though. I'll just give them a call first."

"Exciting."

"I said tone it down, you rowdy Adlet!"

Kai smirked again. "What makes you think I'm scared of you, dad?"

"Cause I still pay for your food and clothes and house."

"Fair enough." he heaved a sigh. "So, are we goin to the neighbour's first?"

"Yes." his mother replied.

Kai couldn't wait to get his feet... or paws on the snow and have a good run about, sprint until the ice thawed under his paws. The coldness inveigled him. Tempting. Beguiling. Wondrous cold. Not a soul would see him in these thickness of woods. But pity the hibernating fawns that were about to become his preys.

The attractive winter woods stole Kai's attention away for a moment before he realized that his parents were talking about a mate for him. "Mom, dad, I told you, I'll find my own." he crossed. It had been the abiding, round-the-clock topic ever since Kai had turned 18 this year.

"And if you fail to do so in another few months, you're mating with the Therianthrope I point my finger at." his father browbeat.

"Fine fine. As long as I don't get a primate to mate with."

The winter woods got thicker as they went deeper, following the snow wash. Finally, they reached a huge house, a manor maybe and Kai arched his brow. "Who would want a shit big of a house in the middle of nowhere?" he scoffed.

"Kai. Tone."

He got down the car and pulled at his jacket. It would have been warm enough if he was in his Adlet form. God, the temptation to transform right away...

"Hello." the door opened and a woman stepped out. Long brunette, slender but rangy figure, somewhat older than his mother. Instantaneously, Kai knew what she was and his neck strained, face turning grimacing haggard. Weakling. Doesn't stand a chance with an Adlet or a Prime Adlet like his father. A White Docile Lycanthrope. Sissy and the runts of the canine Therianthrope kind. "Please, come in."

"Thank you very much." Kai's mother beamed her best but she was cringing as well, Kai noticed.

"It's a pleasure to meet your Lycan kind." Kai's father extended his hand to the woman.

"Pleasure is all mine. Adlets are the rarest of all. I'm proud to have you at our doorstep."

"We had to move because of my son." everyone stepped into the house and the door was closed. Kai turned to see a short boy, petite and timid, standing behind them at a distance. He seemed nervous. Not a Therianthrope, Kai's senses said. The boy scurried away after some seconds.

"Why?" she chortled.

"Well," Kai's mother spoke up this time. "He's a menace alright."

"A menace?" her eyes bulged out.

"He's been creating too many problems in school, in our place. We thought it would be best if we moved somewhere solitude."

"Oh my. Is he going to school?"

"Graduated." the man replied.

"That seems... wonderful. Please, take a sit. I'll get you some coffee."

Kai took his jacket off to hang it beside the stairs and then noticed someone climbing down them. He glanced up and that was it. He was knocked down. A scowl formed on Kai's face as he took the boy's figure in. Smooth brown hair which would feel like silk in Kai's hands, milky white skin that would reflect every mark, perfect body, slender and sylphlike. The boy was now looking at him, swaying down the steps in a gentle, graceful way. He blinked his eyes at Kai in an addled way, stopping two steps before Kai. Kai clenched his fists as the testosterone kicked in. He wanted to dominate this white wolf. The boy's submission showed in his eyes and Kai wanted to take advantage of it. He wanted him. Him. And he will get him.

Chapter One

Who is this guy? Sehun contemplated, blinking his eyes blankly at the lad and his prosaic, vacant reconnaissance. He was staring rudely at Sehun, occluding his path. The orbs of his eyes were moored on Sehun, the inky irises were darker than a Stygian crypt, he was naturally bronzed which suggested that his skin had never seen the sun. Well, it had been some stretch since Sehun himself had felt the rapture of the balmy, sweet sun and it was enticing to even envisage the rays of the mellow sun.

A corner of the guy's lips quirked down after a stint of stare vying and Sehun's heart skipped a beat. "C-can you.. move?" the words stumbled out of his mouth as if half of the syllables was still hanging on his tongue.

"Who are you?" the lad demanded and Sehun grimaced. His voice was... subdued unlike his mien which appeared to be rough and pugnacious. So bloody pugnacious.

"This is my house." Sehun couldn't raise his voice. His mother and two other strangers were watching him from the living hall with intensity. It was awkward.

"I can see that. You reek of subjugation." he scoffed and Sehun cringed further. Something about this guy was intimidating.

"Kai! Let him pass!" the man hollered but he was still scowling at Sehun. Kai... was that his name?

"Dad." he finally broke the stare and turned to his... father. Sehun's mother had yet to apprise him of who these people were but Sehun ardently hoped that they were not here to confer about the mating affair. Oh please, do not let this Kai be the suitor Sehun's mother was considering. But then again, Sehun knew Kai or any of the guests were a Lycan. He would have sensed if they were.

"I'm really sorry for my son's impertinence." the man said as Sehun dragged his feet to climbed the rest of the two steps down.

"No. Don't worry about it. The younger generation tend to burgeon animosity against one another. My husband and I hated the other kinds of Therianthropes. But that was before we bloomed. I'm sure the rancour would alleviate when they mature." Sehun's mother elaborated and Sehun came to stand by the couch where she was sitting on. He noticed that Kai was still gawking at him like a hawk, sitting on the armrest next to his dad. "This is my son, Sehun."

"I'm sorry. But your... way of speaking. It's very eccentric." the other woman who resembled a motherly role said.

"We've been away from the cultivation of big cities for some while now." she chortled. "We moved here when Sehun was eight. People in the town don't communicate in the latter-day vernacular. Sehun was educated here as well. Home-schooled though."

Kai scoffed rudely.

"Where is your husband, since you've mentioned him?" Kai's father queried with a light smile. The man didn't look past 40 to be forthright. He appeared to be more like a brother to Kai rather than a father.

"He's at work of course. It's a long way to travel to the town."

"I see. Would it be possible for us to meet him someday then?" he smirked.

"We could drop by your place tomorrow evening."

"That would be great." the other woman replied. "We'll be having my nephews over soon. Something tells me you should lock your house tight because they are worse menace than my son." she chuckled.

"God. Is this the city's influence?"

"You could say that. Although we lived in isolated areas, they still went to schools in the city."

"You lived somewhere cold?"

"Very." Kai's father added. "But not as cold as this place. You know how Erqidlets are. They love cold."

Did Sehun just hear Erqidlets? No, that can't be. He must have misheard. These people couldn't be Therianthropes, can they?

"Oh yes, I know that they are descendants of the Inuits."

"And Kai loves hunting. I think this place would offer us much less problems considering his belligerence."

"What do you tend to do over here then?"

"Other than fishing and mountain climbing?" Kai was the one who spoke with a grave and serious asseveration. He glared at Sehun which made Sehun lower his gaze. "I plan on mating with your son."

A wave of perplexing silence streamed between the two families. Sehun was paralyzed from head to toe. What did this guy just divulge? Ever hair on his skin rose as he started to pant, staring at Kai.

"Get up." Kai's father broke the quietude and was about to grab Kai's arm but the latter jolted up and glowered at his father.

"You asked me to choose and I did. I want him."

"You little-"

"No, wait." Sehun's mother stood up, rather halcyon-like. Sehun tensed up.

"Mama-" he started to protest but his mother's lout quieted him down.

"There's nothing wrong in what your son had asked." she said with a sly smile. "In fact, my husband and I are looking for a mate for Sehun. He had just turned 18 last month."

Sehun couldn't stomach his mother's words as he hung his head. Kai's parents exchanged a look.

"I know he's a Docile Lycan but you can trust my words that he will be able to give your son a stalwart heir." Sehun's mother dispelled their doubting looks.

"It's not that." Kai's mother muttered. "We'd be glad to accept your son but we Adlets don't marry our children with Docile Lycans."

Adlets... Adlets.

"Wouldn't your son's age to mate pass if he doesn't find a mate soon?" God, Sehun wished his mother would suddenly go mute. "We need our son to mate and it doesn't really matter if he doesn't get to marry your son."

Kai scoffed again. "Look here, dad. I choose him. It's either him or no one." he spat his father and grabbed his jacket before stomping out the door.

"We... will talk about this soon." the man said and smiled half a smile before hurrying after his son. The wife followed.

Sehun finally breathed. "Mama, are you insane?!"

"Quiet, Sehun. We will not get you to breed with such a potent kind."

"An Adlet, mama! They are vicious, brutal!"

"Also mighty. You will be prosperous."

"No, I will not! I don't want to mate with him. I don't want to mate at all!"

"What makes you think he will let you be? He's an Adlet and had made his choice. We can't fight an Adlet."

"Papa can do something."

"No, Sehun. He would want you to mate with him. Enough of this. I will discuss about this with your father when he returns."

"No, mama. Please."

"Go to your room, Sehun."

An Adlet. Sehun kept repeating in his head. The monstrous Therianthrope that Sehun had learned from various treatises. The eld said that they originated from Labrador and Hudson Bay coasts. They were not the most unassailable of the Therianthropes but were the most remorseless. Some of the genesis conveyed that Adlets or Erqigdlets were cannibals but Sehun's parents confirmed that they were not. The story of how they formed had haunted Sehun for days when he was a young 'un. It went by as a woman called Niviarsiang lived with her father, Savirqong. She was celibate and chaste, refused to be wedded. Thus she was called Uinigumissuitung. But she did marry one day, to a dog called Ijirqang and had ten children; five dogs and five Adlets, half dogs, half men. Savirqong had to hunt in order to feed the ravenous children since Ijirqang didn't hunt. One day, Savirqong brought the children to an island with him and exhorted Ijirqang to come and get meat everyday. So, his daughter, Niviarsiang hung a pair of boots around Ijirqang's neck and urged him to swim ashore. But Savirqong filled the boots with stones instead of giving the dog the meat which caused Ijirqang to drown. Infuriated and angered, Niviarsiang sent her children who were the dogs to masticate and chew off her father's feet and hands in revenge. Savirqong then kicked his daughter overboard when she happened to be in his boat and when she was hanging on the gunwale of the boat, grasping onto her life, Savirqong cut off her fingers, which fell into the ocean and turned into seals and whales. Worried that her father might kill her Adlets, she sent them away, inland and they lived, propagated for millenniums.

And they were vicious.

Sehun was trapped.

Chapter Two

"Get in." his father almost gripped his arm and shoved Kai into their new, not-so-new house but then stopped to consider it which probably wouldn't end well if Kai was infuriated.

Kai hated that his father had to always be the one in command and if mating would get Kai into rank, then he wanted to do it as promptly as he could. But there was no denying that he was motivated now after seeing that hazel-haired boy. Damn it, even thinking about him made Kai's pants tight at the front. Whatever his parents had to say, they should just save the lecture and effort because Kai wasn't going to budge. He wanted the boy and he will get him. By hook or by crook.

The house was well-furnished and it was pretty hot in there, thanks to the thermostat. But it wasn't something that Kai was glad for. He would rather stay out in the cold and rave in the snow than sweat in this heat. Speaking of heat, his knob certainly wasn't helping him.

"What the hell were you think?!" a growl of rage burst out of his father before Kai could even have the chance to criticize the modern, contemporary furniture. Nobody would guess the exterior of this house since the interior was utterly modern, almost futuristic. Unlike that Docile Lycan's house which seemed like they lived in the golden ages. Old. No, not old but antique and rich. Kai's family was wealthy as well but he was sure that the Oh family were rolling in riches.

"Didn't you teach me to always be honest, dad?" Kai retorted with a snort. His father's jaw clenched and Kai was sure that he might get a deserving beating soon enough from his dad.

"Kai, you can't give them hope like this." his mother sounded a little more domestic.

"Give them hope? Mom, I'm doing them a favour. You heard the woman. She needs a mate for her son."

"To strengthen their bloodline."

"And you need an heir. Why? Do you think that their boy is not good enough to breed?"

"Not good enough?" his dad scoffed. "Kai, this is what happens when you focus on Math in school rather than your History!" he rubbed his temples and for a moment, he seemed old. At some time, Kai was convinced that his father never aged. But he was wrong.

"I know what they are, dad. So what? If you're not agreeing, that means he's not good enough, right?"

"You don't understand. Their bloodline is magnificent, I can assure you of that. Even better than ours. Their heritage is royal-like, Kai. They were once Kings and Queens and we were their warriors and guards, no more than that."

Kai blinked at this piece of information. "Guards for those weaklings?"

His father scowled. "She sounded generous but the truth is, she doesn't respect us. We are dogs and they are wolves."

Kai balled his hands into fists. "Well, that's an understatement, dad."

He drew in a long breath and then sighed. "We are winter. They are summer. I don't know for what reason they are hiding here but trust me, if you take that boy and his child, then it's gonna be problematic."

"That's not reason enough to back down." he snapped, even more motivated to ruin that Kingly arse. "So they think of themselves as the patricians with their upper-class accent and dialect?" he flashed his father a ridiculous mocking lout. "Gives us more the reason to show them who the boss is." Kai had never been so angered before. He wanted to punch something so hard. No wonder that lady was all posh and showy, rather arrogant, Kai would say. She must be cleaning her house all and all right now because she had a bunch of dogs in it.

Kings... and warriors? Bullshit.

"Kai, you're not thinking straight. We moved here to lay off the problems. You're basically asking for more right now." said his mother.

"Are you both not listening? Mom, dad, I want him." Kai had no idea how this way working but his body wasn't listening. Some kind of chemical reaction was taking place in him. He was sure of that since he wanted to subjugate that boy so badly. So fucking badly. Maybe this was how Adlets chose mating partners.

His father let out an exasperated sigh. "He has made up his mind." he said. "But, Kai, I have warned you of your social differences. That boy that you seemed to have imprinted on reeks of the ruling upper class. He had been home-schooled. You think by teachers? No. By those the beau monde Lycans. That boy has never seen the world and you want to take advantage of his submissiveness?"

Darn straight.

Kai arched his brow. No one in this century could actually be all 'I have a yen for some provender and vin de table for my evening repast'. And what did his father mean by ruling upper class? Those weaklings sure were narcissistic and delusional.

"Either you get me him through those bloody rituals and shit or I will take him myself, dad." he said firmly.

"Oh god. I didn't think I imprinted this badly on my first mate."

Kai noticed his mother's face go sulky. Of course, which woman would want her husband talking about his first flame? Kai's father hadn't been all proud his first mate either. She was a Berserker but there was nothing he could do since he had imprinted on her. But fortunately for her, Kai's father refused to snatch her child away. So yeah, Kai had a sibling probably on the other side of the world but he was glad that he was born to his Adlet mother and as an Adlet himself, not some stupid wolf-dog hybrid.

"So this is how it works, huh? Imprinting." Kai muttered and turned his back to his parents, scanning the stairs. The forest outside was still tempting but Kai was worried that he might turn up in Sehun's place at the first chance he got.

"No. It's your stubbornness." his father scoffed. "You're such a child, Kai. I'm going to be so embarrassed."

"If you don't want to do it the right way, dad, I always have my other options opened."

"And disgrace me by menacing a royal lineage?"

"Then you know what to do, dad."

"You seriously have no remorse, shame whatsoever do you, son?" his tone had gotten lighter which meant that he had lost in the debate. Kai always won. He didn't care. He wanted to screw that Docile Lycan whether the others liked it or not. But.... when Kai thought about it being his first time, it seemed more sentimental.

"He had found a mate. That's something." his mother supported. "We'll do what we must as parents but for now, you both are going to help me set the house right."

Sehun flumped himself in the corner of his room, near the limpid windows which gave him the crystalline view of the snow and the woods out there. There was no feasible word to describe his worry and fret as his hand trembled with perturbation, right on tenterhooks. Wrapping his arms around his juddering frame to stop it from shaking too much. He was scared.

Mate with an Adlet? And bear his heir? What will become of his unachieved dreams and chimeras? 18 and never had an adventure as the dramatis personae in the books he had read. Thousands of novels he had devoured, all had valiant heroes encountering scads of adventurous escapades and along the way, and they find love. Fall in love.

And here Sehun was, trembling with fear, cudgelling his brain with worry of what might his mother and father would be discussing downstairs. He moved and spent the rest of the evening on his knees, praying.

"Please. Succour me in this hardship. Please."

He was young. And he didn't want to follow his ancestral ways. He wanted more than just being locked up and educated with the history of the Therianthropes. He lusted after the warm rays of sunlight. There was just so much to see and experience in this world.

"Sehun." the somewhat loutish voice of his father called him and Sehun rose to his full height before frowning at the older man.

"Papa."

A short simper formed on his father's face. "Son. We need to talk."

"No, papa. Please. I do not want to mate with an Adlet. Anything but that revolting idea."

"We know what the best is for you, Sehun." his mother said, showing up behind his father.

"Stop saying that. Suiting me up with a monstrous creature is not best for me!"

"You realize that you will wilt if you do not bloom at the right age." the man said in a much calmer way than the wife.

"Papa." he hung his head, conceiving his galvanizing breaths. "Please, papa... I'm... scared of.. him."

"He's not going to eat you, Sehun." his mother snorted. "The most he could do is take a child from you which we wouldn't be needing."

"You want me to breed and give the child away?"

"We don't need an Adlet in the family. We just need you mated with someone potent. And that Kai boy is very influential."

"Mama-"

"No more arguments. It's easy, Sehun. Simple. One ritual and then you will be free to go."

Sehun wanted to fight, argue, and do anything in his power to object. But if mating promised him his freedom, then he wasn't going to expostulate. He had already guessed that much that his parents wanted him to mate as soon as possible before Sehun got carried away. They knew him all too well. He was heavily influenced by the romantic books and would like to find an interdicted love as well that he would want to hold very dear.

"We will visit them tomorrow and don't pull yourself too long." his mother warned. "There will be arrangements to be made if things go right."

The wraps around his neck wasn't warm enough. Even swaddled heavily in wool, Sehun was cold. He was never going to get used to this cold welkin. The night ceiling of azure certainly wasn't attractive either. What must Sehun do to find this winter woods appealing? Mayhap find love in here? An adventure? No, there was nothing in this winter woods.

The door swung open at once when it was knocked on. The mother, Kai's mother, stepped out with a warm smile. "Hey."

"Good evening." Sehun's father greeted.

"Why come on in." Kai's father welcomed with a half crescent grin, motioning his hand to usher them into the house. The wind somewhat suggested that a blizzard might strike tonight. "It's a pleasure to meet you." they introduced each other and shook hands.

"I believe we have a lot to discuss." Kai's mother beamed. "But first, let's have dinner."

"Dinner? I thought were just dropping by for a mug of cocoa." Sehun's father chimed and Sehun wondered why his father was faking his dialect. It seemed awkward. "You didn't need to prepare anything. You must have a lot on your shoulders, moving in."

But the house seemed pretty well set up.

"But a little pot roast won't hurt in this cold condition, right? Besides, we're really bored anyway." a round of giggles went on but Sehun didn't find this amusing or rollicking in any way. "This way."

Sehun's parents handed their coats and jackets to him to hang on the coat hangers as they walked into the house. Sehun couldn't even rejoice being in a house other than his own. Somewhere in these rooms was lurking a very desperate and rude Adlet, ready to pounce on him at any moment now.

He shook his head, shaking off the riotous and asinine thoughts. Just when he was about to hang his own coat there was sudden clutch on his wrist. Sehun gyrated his head sharply and then his back was pinned to the wall behind him before he was even able to intuit that it was Kai who had a hand gripping his wrist and another hand pressed on his chest, skewering Sehun onto the wall.

His heart pounded against Kai's palm as Kai flashed a leering smile. Sehun's mind was working but his body wasn't. "You're sweating, puppy." Kai muttered, almost purred.

"N-no... go.." Sehun stuttered. "Ah..way."

"Not gonna happen." he had his body pinned on Sehun's now, removing the hand out of the way. "Can't wait to ram you down." his lips was too close to Sehun's. Too close. Sehun turned his face away, wanting to scream for help but couldn't.

"You're... sca.. scary."

Kai pulled back and cocked his head. "Scary?"

"Let... m-me.. go."

"Kai! Leave him be!" Kai's father's voice boomed into the room.

Chapter Three

"Chanyeol, I swear to god, I will rip you apart and feed you to the Nargles if you fucking don't ask for directions!"

"Chill, Kris. I know what I'm doin, kay?" he ambled a little further ahead of Kris.

"We've been wandering around for three hours!"

"Calm down, little kitten. Why are you so scared though? You're a Berserker Werewolf for god's sake."

"That doesn't mean I won't catch cold walking around this bloody snow shit at night! Did you have to deny the offer from uncle to come and fetch us"

"Wimp. I wanted to see the place."

"I will kill you if I die from influenza. Of all the things, if flu kills me, dude, you have a battle with me in hell." he shoved Chanyeol aside and strutted forward. "I can't feel my toes."

"Stop whining. I'm sure the house is somewhere around here."

"You're sure huh?" Kris arched his brow. His cheeks were red and lips were unimaginably chapped. "Of course you sodding Adlets have skins of a buffalo. Berserkers are tender, okay."

"Shut up. If you want to ask for directions, we'd have to go all the way back. It's better if we keep moving forward."

Kris groaned and bent down before taking off his shoe and sock on one feet. He touched his toes as Chanyeol caught a sudden whiff. "It's definitely frost-bitten."

"I smell something."

"Oh, sorry. I haven't washed my socks in days."

"No, not that." Chanyeol grimaced. "Smells like... baked pie."

"Dude, you're seriously thinking of food right no- oh I smell it too."

"See. We're close. Hunter's nose." he prodded the tip of his own nose.

Kris scoffed, donning his shoe back. "Please, we know that Berserkers are the real hunters and warriors. Adlets are horny pups running around drooling over meat."

"Kai should have heard that." Chanyeol started trailing the scent.

"Kai. Is nothing but a child. Always whining, complaining, and demanding for things. When is he ever going to grow up?"

"Please, Kris. Everyone knows how grown up Kai is. He knows exactly what he wants and even his father never admits, he knows that Kai is too mature to be held on a leash. I'm not saying this because he's my cousin-"

"He's my cousin too."

"Well, your father is a Berserker. And Kai's like your second cousin or something."

"Whatever. He's still spoiled."

"Look." Chanyeol pointed at his feet. "Car tyre prints."

"Well done, Chanyeol! Now lick them up like the obedient dog you are."

Chanyeol pushed Kris hard and then kept walking. He had no idea why Kris thought that Berserkers were more powerful than Adlets. Well, technically speaking, Kris was part Adlet as well but he leaned more to the Berserkers because his father was a mighty one at that.

"Fuck." Kris breathed when they neared a bloody huge house. "Kai.. lives in there?"

The house seemed like a manor but somewhat livelier. Not the haunted mansion kind. Even at this night, the house was lit up and scintillating. "Did his father get a raise or something?"

Kris walked up to the doorstep and pressed the doorbell. Chanyeol guessed that meat pies were being baked in there. The door opened and small figure stepped into sight. "Hello, little hamster." Kris greeted and the boy's eyes widened but he didn't open his mouth. "Is your mommy and daddy home?"

"Kris, lay off." Chanyeol nudged him aside. "Hi, is this Kai's house?"

The boy shook his head and Chanyeol blinked. "People live around here?" Kris sounded surprised. "Wow. Whatever for? 'Everyday I'm shovelin'." he sang the last part out and then laughed by himself. "Let it snow! Let it snow! I can see my yellow pee glow!" he sang again.

"Are you drunk?! Shut the fuck up." Chanyeol turned to face the boy again who was shocked. Then another smell. This time, it wasn't the pie. It was nowhere close to pie. Wolves... Lycans... Gross. Chanyeol gulped. But the boy before him was completely human which was even grosser. "We... have to go."

"Wait.. that smell." Kris finally picked it up.

"Let's get going. It's nothing." he told the boy. "Just the pies that you're making."

The boy stared at Chanyeol. "My pies." he murmured and Chanyeol barely heard it. "You can't have it."

Both Chanyeol and Kris exchanged glances before Chanyeol replied, "We don't want your pie. Don't worry. We're looking for our uncle's family who had just moved here."

The boy nodded once.

"Do you know where they live?"

"Mountains." the boy answered timidly.

"They live in the mountains?!" Kris screamed. "That's it, bye bye I'm going back to civilization!"

"Past... the mountains." he whispered.

"That's like another... day of walk..."

"You... can stay here. I know who Kai is."

"Really?" Chanyeol exclaimed. "That will be wonderful." he was ready to take a step in but the shorter boy's hand came up to his chest to stop him.

"Garage." he muttered.

"Excuse me?"

"I'm good with anything." Kris cut in. "What's your name by the way?"

"Kyung... soo."

"I'm Kris. This is Chanyeol. It'll be great if you could the adults in the house."

"I am an adult." Kyungsoo blushed.

Chanyeol could tell that Kris was about to scoff. "Aren't there anyone else home who could give us a ride?" asked Chanyeol.

"They went to visit Kai's family."

"Oh?"

"They will be back soon. You can sit in the garage. My pies." he said lazily and turned around before walking into the house, leaving the door opened.

"Docile Lycans eh?" Kris murmured. "The sneaky ones."

"You're not shocked? They don't live in the cold."

"They're gonna piss their pants when they see a Berserker in their house." instead of contemplating, Kris was laughing.

"I'm sorry." Kai's mother returned to the table ere long after passing moment of disappearance. "We're expecting our nephews but they're not here yet." she said with accompanied by a salient frown on her spry face.

He constrained himself to keep his head low at all costs because Kai was seated right across him and even then, Sehun was able to descry his persisting stare. Under the table, Kai constantly kept brushing his feet up Sehun's shin until Sehun pushed the chair a little rearwards.

"How's the food, Sehun?" Kai's magnanimous mother with her overflowing integrity queried.

"It's good, Mrs Kim." he discerned that his own voice was faltering.

"Ow! Dad!" Kai caterwauled out of the sudden, jerking in his seat. "What did you trample my foot for?!"

"Keep your feet to yourself, you imp. Your toes are all over my leg." Kai's father warned and the corners of Kai's lips twitched up.

"Cockblocker." Kai coughed into his fist, swathing the word. Sehun would have convulsed with laughter proviso that he was not so significantly shaking in his shoes.

They were permitted to savour the food finally in some quiet but Sehun was ingurgitating it, tensed with clammy hands. "The boys could stay if you think it's the best idea." said Kai's mom.

"Oh. I think it'll be the best if we allow them to be dismissed." Sehun's father could have just rammed a stake through his heart instead. Sehun just couldn't acquiesce this.

"Let them have some time to get used to each other while we converse about." his mother added fuel to the fire.

"Or they could just listen to what we're talking about." it was Kai's dad who proposed the idea.

"Why, Mr Kim? Have no faith in my son?" she smirked.

"Oh dear. No. It's my boy that I have trust issues with."

"I'll behave, dad." Kai growled at him and perched up from his seat.

"Go along, Sehun." his mother urged and Sehun was close to shaking his head but he didn't wish to embarrass his parents here. Being the obedient lad he was, he stood up. As he trod on the heels of Kai, he could hear the discussion starting with 'the next full moon will be reasonable since it's the peak of their urges'.

Frowning ever so deeply, Sehun followed Kai up the stairs, keeping at least five feet distance between them. How could his parents choose someone as this brutal Adlet to mate with someone so frail and delicate? Sehun can fight if he wanted to. He had transfigured five times in his juvenescence but fighting wasn't in his nature. He was meant to dominate those fighters.

But now, he was going to be dominated by one of them.

Kai leaned on the doorframe of a room with arms crossed at his chest and stared at Sehun. "You should stop being so scared of me."

Sehun looked away instead of replying.

"You know how it works, right?" Kai asked and Sehun lowered his head. "Shall we have a foreplay?" he reached his hand and grabbed Sehun's wrist. Alarmed, Sehun tried to pull his wrist free but that only infuriated Kai. In attempt to retaliate Sehun's effort of disenthraling himself, Kai clutched harder.

"You're.. hurting me." Sehun's eyes brimmed with tears.

And then Kai's hand came up to Sehun's neck, clutching it as well. Sehun went completely still. "Listen to me. I don't care shit about what your status is. But you are mine, do you hear me? I'm the one who's gonna mount your royal ass when you bend it over for me." he released his neck and wrist.

Without delaying even a second, Sehun broke into a sprint, hurrying down the stairs and burst straight out of the front door, running into the wild cold, crying.

"Where's Sehun?" his dad inquired when Kai walked back into the dining room.

He shrugged. "He ran away."

"What the hell did you do, Kai?!"

"I was trying to be romantic, dad."

"Oh lord." Sehun's mother breathed and got off the chair. "He's... really complicated. He thinks every previously seen thing would hurt him."

"We better go look for him." her husband said.

"We're really sorry." she told Kai this time. "He'll get used to you, soon."

"I hope so." Kai muttered nonchalantly.

They greeted each other good night before the two scurried away. Kai turned to his parents who were frowning. "You did do something, didn't you?" his mother asked.

"No, mom. I didn't. In fact, I don't think he's gonna let me do anything to him."

"He will. We've talked about it and the ritual will be held the next full moon."

"That's like in couple more weeks, right?" Kai wanted to grin.

"Yes. Kai, it will be tricky if you keep scaring the poor kid away."

"He'll spread his legs for me. I'm sure."

That earned Kai a hit on the back of his head. His father then twisted his ear. "I'm not gonna tolerate your rudeness anymore, Kai. Even if it's only for short period of time, if you don't treat that boy well, I will hang you like a dead pig, you get me?"

"Ouch yes, dad! Let go!"

Chapter Four

Stirring his stumps apace, panting his lungs out, wearing his the soles of shoes out, Sehun darted through the thickness of the winter woods, not minding even a little of the worsening zephyr of the night which would turn into snow squall soon enough. But he couldn't help it. He couldn't stop the hot tears which turned cold on his cheeks and dried out hell for leather. He was out here without a single outer layer over his flannel shirt. No gloves, which was spawning the numb fingers. He had to go back but no, he won't. He'd rather die in this bloody cold than return. Mayhap he was losing his sense of proportion but he surely didn't want to bear that guy's child. Sod it, he wasn't even going to let that Kai lay a finger on him anymore.

Too cold.

Sehun came to a halt and bent down with his hands on his knees followed by a long heave of gasp. The snow under his feet was dense and rampant. His teeth clattered as his whole frame started convulsing. He was out here. Without his parents. Far from home. At least a short massif afar.

"My dear lord!" a squawk and Sehun went inert. He couldn't really see anything in the dark but at least the moonlight was requisite. "Oh boy, I thought you were some wild beast or something." a woman showed up with a wooden staff in her hand. Sehun squinted to see clearer and was pretty certain that she was a woman but she had a hood over her head. Her front was immensely thick. Her chest and stomach were huge but she wasn't fat. "What are you doing here in the cold, boy?". As she neared, Sehun was cognizant of the fact that she wasn't fat in the front but was carrying a baby, strapped with a thick fur used as a harness to her chest.

Sehun cringed. Her accent seemed so odd. "I'm.. sorry. I should go."

"You're cold." she didn't remove her hood but Sehun could tell that she was young. Probably not older than Sehun. "Are you lost as well?"

The baby against her chest whined. "N-no." Sehun stammered through his clattering teeth.

The woman.. no, girl put her staff down to the snow covered ground and pulled a fur cloak from her back. "Here." she held it out.

Sehun stared at her with perplexity. "It's.. o k-kay. I'm go-going b-back. D-do you liv-live around he-here?"

He could see the girl smile. "I live everywhere." he didn't understand why she wasn't shivering in this brutal cold. "You will have a good life."

"What?"

She dropped the cloak of fur to the ground before picking her staff up. She turned around and started to walk away. "Wait!" Sehun jogged after her, grabbing the cloak. "Ta-take it b-back."

She turned and smiled at him. Sehun could see her face clearly now. She was definitely young. 16 or 17 at most. His eyes dropped to the baby and his stomach clenched. "You will need it." she said.

"Is this... your baby?"

"Yes. He is."

"What is his name?"

She grinned again. "Rei."

"And what name do you go by?" for some odd reason, Sehun felt comfortable with this lass.

"You don't need to know." she brought a hand to Sehun's chest and pressed her palm onto it. "It's been such a long time since I've come across someone as pure as you. Don't ever lose your purity."

"I do not.. comprehend you."

She smiled a full smile again as the baby made a silent noise. The girl started to walk again without accepting the cloak. Sehun stood his ground, no longer shivering and watched the girl walk away into the darkness of the woods.

"Sehun!" this time, he was sure that it was his father who was approaching.

"You've gone completely unhinged, haven't you, Sehun?!" his mother scolded when she had shoved Sehun into the house.

"Mama, I'm sorry." he was definitely. For worrying his parents.

"You run out into the cold after embarrassing us in front of your suitor and then you're bearing a wolverine's cloak! It reeks of a lupine, Sehun! Who did you see?!"

"I told you, mama. It was a girl with a baby. I didn't know what she was."

"How can you not? Did you not smell her scent?!"

"No, I couldn't."

"She could have been dangerous!"

"She was with a baby. How can she be dangerous?"

"This is enough. Leave him." Sehun's father told his wife. "He doesn't know what he's doing."

"For all you know, papa, perhaps you should let me go. Maybe I would learn to know what I'm doing. This is unfair, atrocity! Asking me to mate with an Adlet!"

"Don't raise your voice to your father, Sehun!" his mother shouted. "We know what we're doing."

"Of course you do." he started for the staircase. "You don't care about what I think."

"You will copulate with Kai in another two weeks. Get a grip, Sehun." his father said calmly. "Don't bring our reputation down before the Adlets."

"Papa-"

"Go to your room now."

Kyungsoo walked into the room with a red face. "Kai's... friends are here, sire." he told Sehun's father.

"What?"

"Sehun?" Kyungsoo interrupted Sehun's session of snivelling. Sehun quickly wiped his cheeks with the sleeve of his shirt but there was nought he could do about his reddened eyes.

Kyungsoo walked in bearing a tray of tea of cookies. "Put it there." Sehun murmured.

"Are you okay?"

"No. I am not okay, Kyungsoo." he mumbled tiredly. "I don't think I will ever be okay."

"You know, they are not such bad people. Kai's cousins were here and they were... nice."

"But... Kai." Sehun choked on the name. "Is not. You don't know how he looks at me. He... scares me, Kyungsoo."

"Why don't you try talking to him then?"

"Talk? To an Adlet?"

"Not all Adlets are bad apparently. One of the tall... weird men were really nice and I think they are Adlets."

Sehun started to contemplate, considering it. He looked away, out the window, at the lifeless morning terrain. "I don't have much time."

"No. That you don't." Kyungsoo admitted.

"What would happen that night?"

"You would mate for the first time."

"I know. But what difference would it make?"

"You're the Lycan here." he said quietly. "First time will always be special no?"

"Do you think I might imprint on him after that?"

"Maybe."

"I hope I don't. He doesn't... love me, Kyungsoo. He's coveting my body. And my parents don't understand that."

"Sometimes... I'm glad that I'm not born as one of you."

Sehun smirked at that. "No."

"Why don't you... run away?"

"I can't do that to my parents. I should try talking to him... Kai."

He climbed downstairs. His parents had been pretty irked and rankled for what Sehun had did two nights back but even they should have placated by now.

"Mama--"

"Sehun, we will hear to no more of your--"

"I want to see him."

There was silence and then a small hint of smile on his mother's face. "You.. what?"

"I want to see him, mama. Talk to him."

"Well. That's something." she chimed and turned to her husband. "Can we arrange that, dear?"

"Of course we can. I can drop you off at their house on my way to work in a while. Would it do? I'll fetch you back when I'm off work." he said and Sehun perplexed. He didn't really want to stay that long but he had no other chance.

"Okay."

The day was a little less cold but nevertheless it was still vexatious as ever for Sehun. He had two basis to be here actually. One, to try and talk some sense into that aroused with sexual excitement Kai and two, try and see if he could somehow bump into that girl again whom apparently was a kind of theriomorph according his parents.

"Have fun, son." his father said as if Sehun was going to some school field trip. But there was a warning edge to his father's tone as well which spelled 'don't get to close to an Adlet'. Did that even make sense? Yes it would. Closeness meant love. This must have nothing to do with love.

"Yes, papa." Sehun hesitantly climbed down the car.

"He's here!" he heard a loud voice echoing from the forest. "Hi!" Sehun turned around to see a tall guy running up to him. "I'm Chanyeol. Hi, Mr Oh." he peered into the window and waved at Sehun's father.

"Take care of him, will you?" the father said.

"Will do." Chanyeol saluted and waited until Sehun's father drove away. "You're Sehun, right?" he extended his hand but Sehun wondered why he was shirtless in this cold. "Oh." he apparently noticed Sehun staring at his body. "Was running."

Sehun took his hand and gave it a shy shook. "Nice to meet you."

"Wow..."

"What?"

"You do have a delicate voice. Submissive I see."

Sehun blushed.

"Oh don't blush on my account. Kai must be around. I have to grab a shirt." he flashed a toothy grin and jogged to the house. Sehun frowned, understanding that Kai was outside. He hated the cold and didn't want to stay on the snow for even another minute.

He walked around, passing the trees and stopped when he caught a glimpse of movement. Kai was a few feet away, back turned to Sehun. He was wearing a pair of black pants and nothing more. Just as Chanyeol, he was shirtless as well. Sehun froze as the snow beneath his feet and watched Kai turn around, buckling his belt. He looked up at Sehun and their eyes locked for a moment.

A smirk formed on Kai's lips as he dropped his hands from his belt and started ambling towards Sehun in a cool posture. Sehun averted his eyes as Kai neared him. "Sorry." he apologized.

When Kai didn't reply, he looked up at him. Kai's hands came up to Sehun's waist and the latter went soft as a sponge under his gentle touch. "Stop being so scared of me." Kai said in a very different way than he had said two nights back. No no no. Sehun chanted. This Adlet was luring him, seducing him. Don't fall for that sweet talking. One of Kai's hands moved up to Sehun's chin and he tipped it up. "I can be gentle, just the way you'd like." he whispered.

Sehun jumped back and panted. "I came to say that I don't want you!" he blurted out and for a moment, there was nothing but the sound of Sehun's jagged breath.

And then came Kai's grip onto his wrists before he was slammed up a tree. Sehun would have groaned at the pain if he wasn't so scared by Kai's scowl. But the scowl melted away like snow in the summer. "You will want me." he said sotto voce and leaned in. Every muscle in Sehun was alarmed as Kai's lips brushed just a little on Sehun's upper lip. It wasn't a kiss, not even close but Sehun was paralyzed at how lightly Kai was brushing his lips on his, like a feather. "Not wanting me is not an option." Kai pulled back. "Come inside and have a cup of java, your highness." he scoffed and began to walk away.

Chapter Five

Sehun was basically asking for it showing up in here with no protection at all. At least the previous time his parents were here which gave Kai a reason to hold back but even then it wasn't too much success. And now, out of some courage, Sehun had shown up, singularly. Kai had to admit that he was pretty surprised when his mother said that Sehun will be dropping by this morning but he was right about the part where he guessed that it wasn't for bonding time.

He turned his head around to see if Sehun was following and the latter indeed was but as soon as Kai's eyes fell on him, he averted his gaze which was previously on Kai's back. Kai clenched his fists to control

himself. Real brave this kid was, confessing that he didn't want Kai when Kai had just went for a deserving run in his Adlet form. The snow under his bare feet was suddenly too chill for Kai as he wondered if Sehun had already taken a mate and that was why he was rejecting Kai so persistently.

"Why are you not wearing anything in this cold?" Sehun asked out of the sudden, adding up to Kai's surprises. He stopped and spun around to face Sehun as Sehun came a halt as well, keeping the distance between them.

"I'm not 'not wearing anything'. Kai retorted. "Practically speaking, I am in my pants. For the time being." he smirked.

A blush formed on Sehun's cheeks. "I meant... why are you not cladded in a shirt?" that saccharine quiet, shy voice sent blood straight down to Kai's loin. He was right. Sehun was just asking for it.

"Are you really curious?"

"I just find it to be aberrant to be wandering in this sodding cold without a shirt."

"I was..." Kai trailed off, rubbing the back of his neck and Sehun was staring at him again. "Maybe I should get a shirt on before your eyes burn my whole body."

That caused Sehun to flush even redder as he dropped his head.

"Shit, lord." Kris' voice cooed through the morning atmosphere. "So bloody cold." He held his ground when he noticed Sehun's presence. "Whoa. Who's this handsome?" he smirked, taking little steps to Sehun.

Kai scowled at him and brought a palm to his chest to stop him. "Go fuck yourself, Kris. He's mine."

"Oh." Kris frowned. "Why do you always get the good things?" he shoved Kai aside and strode to Sehun before holding his hand out to him. Kai tried to not to sulk over this petty issue but Sehun was his to touch. "I'm Kris Wu."

Sehun took his hand and smiled. God, Kai hated that smile. "I'm.. Sehun." he said timidly.

"I was at your house the other night."

"I know. My servant boy told me."

"Kyungsoo? Chanyeol has a crush on him, you know."

"What the actual fuck!" Chanyeol's voice boomed into the emptiness. "Dude!"

"Just saying." Kris raised his palms in defence.

Sehun was either blushing or he was just too cold. "I ought to tell him that then. It's not wonted or conventional that Kyungsoo gets an inamorato every day." Sehun said and then giggled a little, watching Chanyeol's flushed face. Kai glowered. Why was Sehun smiling all out of the sudden?! He was scared of Kai but wasn't intimidated a little by the two fools?! And to come to think of it, Kris was a fucking Berserker! Oh god, look at him grinning like a school girl at Kris! What the hell!

"Why, you're not so bad for a Docile Lycan." Kris laughed. "In case if this guy couldn't satisfy you, I'd be more than glad to show you a little fun." he pointed at Kai and that was when Kai started stomping to the house, rather angrily.

"Look out for mountain tigers." Kai called out on purpose and the next thing he knew, Sehun was behind him, following him into the house.

"Oh, hello, Sehun." Kai's mother greeted. "Good morning."

"A very good morning to you too, Mrs Kim." Sehun replied.

"Please, just call me Gina."

"I'm gonna take a shower. Mom, do me a favor and keep those two ducks away from him." Kai said.

Sehun winced as Kai gave him a short stare before heading up the stairs, leaping two stairs in each step.

The visit mainly necessitated Sehun to palaver with Kai regarding the whole mating affair but instead, he was sitting here as the centre of attention with both Kris' and Chanyeol's eyes perennially on him. Sehun brought a viennoiserie to his mouth and took a careful bite. It wasn't like he was suffering from megalomania or delusions of grandeur but he didn't fit in this place or at this table. He wouldn't condemn himself of bigotry but the truth was, Adlets were in lower class in the hierarchy of the wolvern theriomorph but they were still had forebodings about in the Therianthropy as a whole.

"How's the croissant, sweetie?" the mother queried and Sehun swallowed the bolus in his mouth before speaking.

"It's piquant, Gina. Did you make them yourself?" he questioned politely.

"I did. Kai loves them."

"What doesn't Kai love when it comes to food?" Chanyeol scoffed and Sehun wondered if they were really Kai's family since they seemed to pose a strong dislike for Kai. Or was it like those pups that brawl around, playing but not really fighting? Mayhap.

"He has a strong appetite." Kris added to the remark, taking a huge bite of the pastry himself.

"Remember, you'll have to spend the rest of your life cooking for him."

Sehun lowered his gaze, feeling his stomach drop to the pit. "He's not going to marry him, Kris." Chanyeol whispered sharply.

Kris was hushed for a minute before Kai's mother heaved a breath. "I'm sure Sehun doesn't want to marry him anyway. You're not missing much." she said accompanied by a chortle.

Sehun looked at her in amusement. Where his own parents always spoke so highly of him, never pointing out his flaws, Kai's parents seemed to be jovial and nonchalant, invariably alluding to Kai's mischievousness.

"I... need to.. speak with him." Sehun requested courteously.

"Of course. Third room to the left." Gina informed with a smile. Sehun wished that his own mother would smile as her but he knew that wasn't possible considering how rebellious Sehun had been to them lately. He was disappointing them with all of his inconsequential requests.

Sehun stood up and Kris was smirking up at him as Gina went away into the kitchen. "I wonder if Kai would agree to give you to me when he's done with you."

That earned Kris a hard slap on the back of his head from Chanyeol. "Don't mind his half-assed brain, Sehun."

Turning scarlet with embarrassment, Sehun traipsed out of the dining room. He was never going to get used to this house and its modern style. Sehun was allowed to watch Tv every Saturday and on those shows, people lived in this kind of houses. They were normal, mundane people. He walked up the stairs and followed the directions to Kai's room where his mother had said he would be in.

The room's door was unbolted and Sehun took an eyeful of the room's interior before regretting doing it. Kai was wet from top to toe with his hair sticking to his forehead. He was wearing a pair of black slacks but nothing more. Sehun froze as he took in Kai's picture perfect, bronzed body for the second time in the morning. The flat planes of Kai's toned stomach glistened due to the dampness of the water and the waistband of his boxer briefs was peeking out of his pants, lining the waist. He was definitely admirable, Sehun would give him that. But the sight was soon gone when Kai pulled a white t-shirt on and Sehun tried to convince himself that he wasn't disappointed.

"Are you gonna stand there, gawking like that for the whole day?" Kai asked suddenly without looking at Sehun. He turned his back to Sehun and ruffled his wet hair with a towel.

"I wasn't... gawking."

The t-shirt was sticking to Kai's wet back. "I was going to ask why you don't want me."

Sehun took a hesitant step into the room. "I have my reasons."

"What are they?" he turned to face Sehun with a grave expression. Sehun fought the urge to swat Kai's hair out of his eyes.

"It will be considerable if you could understand my plight. Prior to meeting you, I have never even met... an Adlet. I can't.."

"What makes you think you can reason this out with me?"

"Because I'm certain that even you have a heart. You don't think it's preposterous to covet someone who doesn't want you?"

"I imprinted on you. Not my problem and not something I could control." Kai said nonchalantly.

"Please. I'm begging you. Please. There's just so much I want to do in this world."

"You can do them after bending over for me."

"If coitus is what you wish for, it could be with anyone. Why me?"

Kai clenched his jaw and Sehun was forced to lower his gaze. He knew Kai was nearing him now but didn't move. And then came Kai's hand to Sehun's stomach, beneath the shirt. Sehun looked at him in shock and the skin trembled under Kai's fingers. One of the fingers traced Sehun's skin under the navel before the hand snaked around the waist to the small of Sehun's back. Kai was staring at Sehun's lips now, Sehun acknowledged that.

"Yes. I do want to have sex. But for the time being, only with you." Kai murmured.

"Please." Sehun stepped back. "Don't touch me like that." he stomped to the window and opened it to catch some fresh air since the room was starting to get too hot, blistering hot. Kai's hand had left a permanent print on Sehun's back now that he kept feeling the burning sensation.

"Touch you like what?" Kai's voice was close to his ear now that Sehun could feel his breath on his cheek. He gripped the sides of Sehun's waist and Sehun closed his eyes when Kai squeezed them gently. "I can show you a little teaser of how amazing it would feel if you want." his breath was now on the side of Sehun's neck, tickling it.

"No... Aren't you even a little embarrassed to be doing this with someone you don't know at all?" his voice didn't pass a whisper.

"Why do I need to know your background to ram you?"

The cold wind blowing on his face whereas Kai's hot body was pressed against his back. It was all too overwhelming. Sehun too, should imprint soon enough but he surely didn't want to imprint for the sake of mating. "Let me.. go.. please.."

Kai's hand traveled to the front of Sehun and he lightly brushed Sehun's loin over his pants, causing Sehun to stiffen with blood draining from his face. At the back, Kai was pressing his own hips on Sehun's rear and Sehun could feel his obvious phallus, brushing near the cleft of his buttocks. Kai lightly palmed Sehun's crotch and whispered something into Sehun's ear which Sehun didn't catch at all due to all the distractions.

"I can't wait..." he heard Kai say in a higher tone and then felt a kiss on his neck.

He was seducing Sehun and Sehun knew that very well but was unable to react. Kai feasibly knew which button to hit to win and he had won. For the time being.

"Do you know that the only thing I could think about these days was you?" Kai purred, creeping his hand up Sehun's shirt at the front, caressing the ribs straight to the chest. No one had never touched Sehun this way. It was weird but for some reason it was pleasurable. Maybe he was wrong about Kai. Perhaps he wasn't so aggressive since his touches were so gentle now. "And you just show up like this? Do you have any idea how hard you make me?"

Sehun swallowed the lump in his throat. "You... want me... genuinely?" goodness gracious, Kai smelled so good with his musky aftershave.

"All of you. I want you to bear my child."

How romantic did it sound? It all the novels Sehun had read, the characters experienced this kind of romance but he knew this wasn't associated with love. Even then, what if he did do it with Kai? What would change if he gave Kai what he wanted?

Chapter Six

"Two days more. You're looking forward to it?" Chanyeol announced, breaching into Kai's room while he was occupied with the procedure of selecting a good shirt to be worn on the night of his mating or as the elders liked to exaggerate, night of blooming. Plainly said, the night Kai was going to get laid.

"To get into that White Lycan's pants? Totally." Kai smirked and tossed another flannel shirt away.

"He seems like a nice guy, you know."

"Don't be so naive, Chanyeol. If he mates with an Adlet, by that I mean a potent and strong-seeded Therianthrope, that will ensure him stronger breeding in the future. Even if he has to give the first heir to me, his following children will be powerful. You know how it works."

"Yes, I do. But what about the baby though?" he took a seat on the edge of the bed and Kai eyed him. Chanyeol's face was sullen.

"I'll get married."

"But.. what if the other doesn't imprint on the baby?"

"Stop relating yourself to the case, Chanyeol." he flumped on the mattress beside Chanyeol.

"I know how it is to grow up without a mother, Kai. You wouldn't understand because you're the second heir. Like you said, yeah, stronger and mightier or whatever. But I know how it feels to be... the experimental tool, you know. We both know that it's not only Sehun who would have a stronger bond with the second baby but you too, that is if you're having another."

Kai heaved a deep sigh, wanting to slap some sense into Chanyeol. "Chanyeol, I know that your father favors your brother because he's more powerful than you are."

"Not only that. My stepfather is horrible."

"Well both your fathers are nice people, if you ask me. They are being fair. It was good enough your dad decided to take you instead of leaving you with your mother. It's better that you grew up with your father, no?"

Chanyeol was silent for a minute. "What about... your sibling?"

Kai simply shrugged. "I didn't say my dad was fair but he was too young to accept a child. Only very few Therianthropes actually live forever with their first mate, you know. You know that the imprint stuff will be gone once you've fucked the other. Unless if you really love your mate, it's just 'fuck and bye bye'."

"Thus, he married your mother when he got a little older and had the most arrogant asshole for a child."

"And correction. I'm not the second heir. I'm the first heir given that nobody knows where my dad's number one mistake is."

"You're number two, right?"

"Shut up. Help me pick a shirt."

"Aren't you a bit nervous?"

Kai scoffed. "I'm excited, dammit. The last time I teased him a little, he went red like a tomato. Imagine what he's gonna look like that night."

Chanyeol smiled and then looked away. Kai undisputably noticed his faint frown. "Must be nice to imprint on someone."

"Not all the Adlets mate at the age of blooming, Chanyeol."

"My parents never really cared about finding me a mate and I never imprinted on anyone. So now my heir would be a weakling, no? I don't even stand a chance in the Alpha Line because I haven't bloomed."

"That's not your fault. It apparently happens naturally."

"Are you trying to comfort me?"

"I'm trying to console you that your stupidity and idiocy have nothing to do with is." he flashed a smirk. "Besides, Kris is always available. But he's a Berserker. A thick-headed wolf. Not a dog like us. Might be hard to get since he can't be aroused unless you're really capable of doing it."

"Go fuck yourself, Kai."

"Only if you watch, baby."

Chanyeol hurled one of the pillows at Kai. "Kris is dominant. Not my type."

"Not my type either." Kai admitted. "But he's always available." he repeated in a deeper tone.

"I'm not even considering that, okay?"

"Okay. Fine, whatever you say. But he's gonna be so disappointed that even YOU rejected him."

"Shut up."

"Kai?"

"Mom?"

His mother sauntered into the room with a white shirt, hanged and ironed. "It's a special night. You ought to be dressed in the best, son."

Kai arched a brow. "What's the point of a new expensive shirt if it's gonna be crumpled and thrown away?"

A pink blush formed on his mother's cheeks as she hit Kai's arm playfully. "I'm your mother. Not your.. friend. Don't talk so nonchalantly to me."

"Too late for that 'how-to-talk-to-your-parents' lessons mom, isn't it?"

His mother shook her head and shoved the shirt onto Kai's chest. "Make me a good grandson. A cute, fair one, with lots of chubs." she demanded.

"Of course. You must be so excited to become grandma."

She scowled but it was playful. His mother was one of those second heiress with strong breeding ability and she hadn't even mated before Kai's father. But even then, because Kai's father was the strongest leader of the Southern Adlets, he didn't require another bloomed Adlet to mate with.

"You're lucky to get a Docile Lycan, Kai."

"Whatever, mom. I just wanna tup him and you can have the baby or whatever heir that you want, okay?"

She sighed. "He will be your child too, Kai."

"I have no interests whatsoever. You want the heir. I know that I can't succeed dad since he's probably gonna live longer than I want him to so he would need a strong heir to succeed him after he dies. Thus, my child, right?"

"Just like your father. You think too much sometimes." she murmured and started to walk out of the room.

"You talk too much all the time too." Chanyeol added when she was gone.

The shirt and pants were ridiculing him, spread out on the canapé sofa, staring blankly at him with the lack of adornment. It was no longer as recalcitrant anymore. Sehun now had a little desire to cooperate. Why? Curiosity. How would it feel? What would it be like? What would happen next?

It was the full moon tonight and he would admit of his dithering humming and hawing by not getting all dolled up but the truth was, he was just cogitating whether Kai would find everything that was about happen tonight as something beautiful or not. Or if Sehun would find it beautiful at all.

The manor was quiet today just as any other day. There were preparations going around, he was aware of that.

"Why aren't you getting set?" his mother questioned, surging into the room. Sehun didn't answer her and kept staring vacantly at the ensemble. "Here." she took his hand before pressing a small vile that contained a pale yellowish liquid.

"What is this, mama?"

"It's a cajole cologne." she uttered as though Sehun was opined to understand that. He shot her a bewildered look. "Oh god. Just wear it."

"What is it for, mama?"

"It's to lure your partner."

"Is that even necessary then? He seems pretty motivated already."

"It ups the mood, Sehun. Stop being so opinionated and get ready."

Sehun took his time to wash up in the scented rosewater, boggling his mind over the debate whether Kai would like the fragrance of a rose or not. He gave himself a clean shave and set his hair with a parting in the middle, wondering if Kai would take rapture in running his fingers through the silk strands of Sehun's tawny hair. Will Kai's hair be as smooth as well? When he stepped out of the bath, Kyungsoo was awaiting him in the room. Kyungsoo helped Sehun to don on the clothes without speaking a word, which Sehun was thankful for because he had no strength to talk right now. Trepidation took over curiosity. One more hour and the moon will be one giant pearl amidst the black welkin.

The shirt and pants were simple, meant and intended to be taken off easily. Sehun hesitated when Kyungsoo applied some of the cajole cologne under Sehun's jaw but didn't raise an objection. It smelled like a mixture of lavender and rose, Sehun couldn't say for real. And then it emitted the odour of gardenia. Gardenia, such a sweet scent indeed.

"Where... are we..." Sehun trailed off, unable to finish the query.

Kyungsoo offered a lovely smile. "A room is prepared."

Sehun nodded once and the door was knocked on. "Come in."

His mother grinned at him. "They will be here in minutes. Are you ready, sweetheart?" she asked and it was odd that Sehun wasn't frowning. It was like he was anticipating it subtly. "Wait in here until you're asked to come. Kyungsoo, I need you downstairs."

Kyungsoo followed her at once and the door was closed again. Sehun sat on the bed, careful not to wrinkle the clothes. While Sehun's skin smelled of rose, the outer smelled like gardenia. He felt like a walking garden for some reason.

He waited patiently, well not so patiently, but patient enough, in the room for almost an hour, maybe more, he couldn't keep track of time really. The door was finally opened and Kyungsoo stepped in. "You must come." he said and Sehun stood up with shaking hands.

Will it be romantic?

Will Sehun appear to be more than just a mate for Kai?

"Just tell me which room. You don't have to follow." Sehun told Kyungsoo.

"The room next to the closet on the third floor."

Sehun smiled at him in gratitude and started for the room. Every step seemed so heavy as his heart hammered to his chest. There was nothing to be feared. Simple rituals, but it would mean so much to Sehun.

He curled his hand around the brass door knob, chewing on his lower lip. His mother said it was a bad bent to practice, chewing the lips that was. But Sehun was having cold feet which he might die from. He turned the knob and pushed the door open. Kai was in there, looking out the window, back facing Sehun. He turned as soon as the door creaked open and smiled a half smile at Sehun. He had cleaned up neatly as well. The sleeves of his white shirt rolled up to his elbows, the top two buttons undone, hair swept to the side but somehow it still looked amazingly messy. He took some steps to Sehun before stopping. Extending his arm out, Sehun thought that he was going to touch him but Kai reached for the door past Sehun and shut it close.

"You look... smell..." Kai obviously stammered for words as he took Sehun in. An arm snaked around Sehun's waist first. No matter how he tried, Sehun couldn't look at Kai in the eyes. A hand cupped Sehun's jaw and forced him to look up to Kai's face. "You're beautiful."

"S-so are.. you.." Sehun whispered, realizing that he liked Kai embracing him in like this. Kai smirked but he seemed too distracted by something. He searched Sehun's eyes for something that Sehun could figure out either. The hand moved from the jaw, gliding along it to the side of the head. He latched the palm on Sehun's cheek, curling the fingers around the head. Sehun clenched his eyes shut and waited. There it was. The sensation of first kisses. Kai's soft plush lips touched Sehun's in such a gentle way, tender and benign, hot and fervid. Unconsciously, Sehun's hands came up to Kai's shirt at the chest and clutched onto it. Kai's tongue darted out to touch Sehun's lower lip before he broke the kiss to let Sehun catch his breath. Sehun opened his eyes to see Kai examining his face. He curled his hand around Kai's neck and pulled him close before pressing his lips onto Kai's, initiating a passionate and languid kiss between the two fairly heated boys.

Chapter Seven

The eagerness in Kai's body was undoubtedly obvious. His mind was jaded as his eyes were clouded. Something trickled his nose and he was quite certain that it was Sehun's scent. Apart from the appealing look Sehun wore tonight, his scent seemed to lure Kai in like a doe tempting a ravenous wolf. Or in Kai's case, a ravenous dog. But as much as he wanted to rip Sehun's shirt and shove him to the bed, his body became weak with desire. Kai hadn't kissed many people in his life except for several make-out sessions in school but nothing was as good when compared to kissing Sehun. Sehun wasn't a good kisser, that was obvious as well. But simply kissing him made Kai weak on the knees. Sehun flinched a lot whenever Kai's tongue brushed his own and he made no attempt to claim dominance in the kiss which proved his lack of experience.

Soft, tender lips. Warm, delicate body. Kai would say that Sehun resembled a fragile rose petal. God, he even smelled like one. And he was about to get crumpled in Kai's hands. Sehun never opened his eyes throughout the slow but fervid kiss and Kai's hands remained firm on Sehun's jaw and hip. High full moon and Kai wondered if he might reach his brink just by kissing this fragile little thing. Slowly, his hand moved from Sehun's hip to his stomach, brushing his fingers there and unfastened the button at the bottom of Sehun's shirt while sucking his lower lip very, very gently. Lips still latched on Sehun's lower lip, Kai ran the tip of his tongue along it, watching Sehun's eyebrows furrow as he unbuttoned the second button, climbing his way up to Sehun's chest.

Kai seriously had different plans but seeing Sehun this... breakable, it would be more fun to have Sehun submit rather than to fight. Subjugation seemed like a better option than force. He pulled back a little, leaving a thin string of saliva, either his or Sehun's, probably both mixed, attached to their lips. Sehun's eyes fluttered open but he didn't look up at Kai. Kai took care of the rest of the buttons and let the shirt hang loose on Sehun's shoulders. A finger went under Sehun's chin to tip his head up.

"I'm not going to force you." Kai muttered. "But I hope you won't protest." meaning, you have no other option.

Sehun was quiet for a moment before he lightly shook his head. "I won't... protest." he breathed out as a smile formed on Kai's face. Kai pressed his palms on the lowest part of Sehun's stomach before dragging them all the way up to his neck and curled his hands around it before connecting their mouths again. This time, the kiss wasn't so languid as Kai kissed him hungrily and he could feel Sehun's rising heat, signalling his pleasure as well. Sehun fisted his hands around Kai's shirt at the chest and pushed his mouth harder onto Kai's. Kai held the back of Sehun's head, tilting his own head to the side before shoving his tongue into Sehun's mouth. Sehun moaned into Kai's mouth at the uninviting but most definitely sensational feeling when Kai licked the insides of his mouth. Sehun's hair was smooth like silk in Kai's hand, running between the fingers.

The next minute, Kai was busy kissing him and unbuckling Sehun's belt. When he had succeeded, he peeled the shirt off his own body and pulled Sehun closer until their chests were intact. He pulled Sehun's shirt down to take it off as well and let it shed to the floor. Now Sehun's hands were around Kai's neck as Kai's slipped to the side of Sehun's body, trailing down the thin frame of his. Even if Sehun tranfigured, he wouldn't be bigger than the pup size of an Adlet. He was so frail and thin. A little taller than Kai but had nothing but skin and bones. And lots of beauty with his frail framework which looked more boyish rather than manly.

When Kai released the button free on Sehun's pants, a hand cupped Kai's own hand, stopping him from going any further. Sehun drew back from the kiss and then from Kai altogether. For a moment Kai thought that he was withdrawing but Sehun went to turn the lights down before lying down on the bed. Working on his own belt, Kai trod to the bed where Sehun laid motionlessly. It wasn't so dark considering the amount of light the full moon was permitting outside. Besides, it seemed like a fair night since the winds and blizzards had calmed down. A perfect night indeed. He could see Sehun's pale recumbent body and the flat planes of his stomach heaving up and down, showing how nervous the wolf was. Kai mounted him, hovering above him with his hands pressed onto the pillow on either sides of Sehun's head, arms pushed up. He lowered his body just to let Sehun feel how hard he was and was quite surprised to find Sehun's own flesh arching into his. So the boy was turned on nevertheless. He bowed his head to kiss Sehun on the lips again before moving the mouth to Sehun's jawline, neck, leaving glorious red marks behind as a result of sucking his skin. The only sound made by Sehun was his rugged breathing and Kai wanted to make him moan, scream.

Sehun laid supine with no trembling as Kai peppered his chest with wet kisses and finally, a moan escaped his mouth when the tongue touched one of his puckered nipples. Then a hand came up to the back of Kai's head and Sehun entangled his fingers around the hair, making subtle noises to Kai sucking his hard nipples. They had all night and Kai was nowhere near of getting started. These were merely part of the foreplay. By the time he was done, Sehun will be begging for more. Sehun's stomach deflated altogether when Kai started kissing it. He sucked in every breath, tagging Kai's hair, enjoying Kai's lips lingering on his abdomen. One hand held Sehun's hip down as the other worked on unzipping Sehun's pants' fly and button. He lowered the pants just a little to expose Sehun's waistline and spent a good minute kissing along it.

"Wait." Sehun gasped and caught Kai's hands, again halting him from pulling the pants down. Kai pushed Sehun's shoulder to lie him down again and planted a quick kiss on his lips to assure him. "I... ah.." Kai stripped the pants off Sehun's legs and tossed it down to the floor. Sehun whole body went red and Kai could see the colouring of his neck in the fairly dark room. Sehun kept his legs closed, face looking out the window. His arching flesh was probably pinkish red but Kai couldn't tell with the darkness. Kai pulled the legs apart and bowed his head to kiss the insides of Sehun's thighs, dragging his lips all the way down. Sehun whimpered when Kai's tongue touched the skin between his testicles and puckered anus. Kai pushed Sehun's legs up a bit and sucked the skin near the opening. "Ungh.. Kh.. Kai.." he panted. Kai wrapped a hand around Sehun's erection, kissing a little lower and licked Sehun's opening. "Don't.. oh.." breaths came out of him in a jagged way as Kai stroked his length while Kai's tongue lingered around his tight opening.

Straightening up, he kicked off his pants and grabbed the bottle of treacle oil from the bedside table. Satisfied of Sehun trembling under him now, he slicked his fingers with the oil before taking Sehun's hand and dribbled some of the oil onto Sehun's palm. Sehun still panted, staring at Kai in something like confusion. Kai brought Sehun's hand to his own erection where Sehun was desperately avoiding to gaze at. "Touch me." Kai let out and released Sehun's hand. Sehun touched his shaft carefully, applying the oil on it. Kai threw his head back, enjoying the mere touch of Sehun's. He went limp on the bed again when Kai pushed him to lie. He placed himself between Sehun's legs again and kissed Sehun's red lips. While the other was distracted, Kai slipped a finger into his opening. Sehun's eyes widened but didn't make a single noise. He pulled his finger out and pushed it in again, kissing him sloppily, biting his lower lip occasionally. When he impelled another finger in, Sehun moaned down Kai's throat and the moans got louder when Kai's fingers brushed the nerve endings.

"Stop." Sehun gasped.

"Relax." Kai whispered against his lips and kissed his neck, slowly stretching the opening.

"Urgh..."

"It'll get better." He was too tight, Kai had no idea how he was going to fit in there. He had to find the right spot. Sehun gasped loudly one more time and arched into Kai's body, cueing that Kai had found the right spot.

Kai pulled his fingers out, settled his lower body to push into Sehun and when he did, Sehun whimpered, cried and clung onto Kai's neck. Kai pulled out before thrusting in slowly. "Unghh.. please.." Sehun begged but Kai shut him off by smashing their lips together. Sehun kept on moaning into his mouth while kissing him. Kai deliberately thrust in slow and gentle, letting Sehun get used to the sensation until he picked the pace up. Kai's moan proliferated the noise in the room along with Sehun's. He slipped an arm under Sehun's shoulders to hug him close, mouths engaged in passionate kissing, a hand brushed Sehun's hip, sliding in and out of him. It took Sehun four or five thrusts until he started moaning in pleasure. A predator had gotten its claws on its prey.

Sehun kissed Kai desperately with haste, begging Kai to go harder. His nails were piercing through Kai's skin at his back before he wrapped his legs around Kai's waist, locking his ankles on the small of Kai's back. Their pants and moans filled the air in the room as Kai felt himself nearing his climax. But Sehun beat him to it. Hot, sticky seed shot out in white ropes onto Kai's abdomen and Kai kept thrusting until he burst inside Sehun. Sehun let out a loud gasp, eyes bulged out as Kai finished up inside him.

Kai didn't bother to pull out of him as he collapsed onto Sehun's spent body, face pressed onto the collarbone, panting for air. God, it felt so good. The smell of sex and sweat hung in the room as they caught their breaths, tangled in each other's limbs. Sehun started to play with Kai's hair after some while and Kai pulled out of him, falling onto the bed beside him. Sehun shifted to pressed a side of his face on Kai's chest and draped an arm over Kai's waist. That was the last thing Kai knew before they drifted into sleep.

Just as how Sehun had no words to elucidate his trepidation the night before, he was at loss for account of what had come into being last night. It was... beautiful. It had been beautiful for Kai. Rousing in his arms was even more wondrous than what Kai had shown him the preceding night.

The sunbeam glistened directly on Kai's naked, bronzed body and all that Sehun could wonder about was how could he enjoy the sight of Kai more than the mere fact of having sun rays in these scarce mornings. He was sleeping serenely, eyelids skirted long lashes, lips plush as a ripened rose hip, the lips that Sehun had tasted all and all. He brought a hand to converge with Kai's chest. He was breathing calmly, like a baby. A baby... Sehun started to muse on how the baby would look like. Kai had made love to him last night. Love? Could it be? It seemed like it. And Sehun had surrendered of his own accord. Kai appeared to be wanting Sehun in the most genuine ways.

He smiled to himself, reliving the whole act in his mind while fixing his eyes on Kai. And then he bestirred himself, opening his eyelids to see Sehun. "Good... morning." Sehun greeted in a low voice.

Kai simpered and sat up before scrubbing his face. "Good morning." he murmured in a husky voice and smiled back at Sehun. "Last night was..." he considered for a second. "Amazing."

Sehun could feel the blood rising to his cheeks as he lost the words from his vocal cord. Kai watched Sehun a moment before slipping off the bed. He searched for his pants and donned it on as it was Sehun's turn to scan him. "Are.. you.. leaving?" Sehun inquired hoping that Kai would say no.

"Of course. No real reason for me to linger around anymore, right? Besides, I have plenty of things to do at home."

Sehun could almost hear his heart smash to smithereens but he tried to not to exhibit the feelings on his expression. "Will you... visit?"

"Maybe." Kai shrugged, buttoning his shirt. "Hey, look here. We're good, right? I know I was an ass before but we're gonna meet quite often because you will be carrying my child and all. So I don't think we have to make things awkward. Let's just be friends, kay? No hard feelings."

Sehun went completely silent as Kai grinned.

"So. See you around." he waved his hand and strutted for the door before walking out of it.

The first day of spring and Sehun had gotten his heart crushed.

Chapter Eight

"Is it necessary that we be here?" Kris groaned as Sehun's mother let him and Chanyeol into her house.

"It's spring, dude. And I wanna see Kai's post-sex face." Chanyeol hissed sharply into Kris' ear.

"Hold up. I should get my camera ready. This would be epic."

"What are you boys discussing about over here?" Sehun's mother returned with a plastic smile etched on her face.

"Bunnies and flowers in the spring, Mrs Oh." Chanyeol commented.

"It is not exactly spring, Chanyeol. You did see the density of snow out there, didn't you?" she giggled.

"Yes, I know that there's nothing but winter here really but still technically speaking, it's the first day of spring! And I'm celebrating!"

"Excuse his gayness, Mrs Oh." Kris scoffed.

"Now, they should be up in moments. If you wouldn't mind waiting for your cousin to rouse." the woman chimed but for some odd reason, she gave Chanyeol the creeps.

"Not at all." Chanyeol flashed a toothy smile. "As long as you provide us with breakfast."

She shook her head, smiling a little. "Your aunt said that you boys are troublemakers. What's your purpose here?"

"Nothing really. Kai is like our best friend and he moved to a new place. Came by to see how he's doing and surprisingly, he found a mate."

"Shocks." Kris added nonchalantly.

"I see. I hope you have a delightful stay. Go by the kitchen. Kyungsoo will be able to whip you up some breakfast. I have some errands to run." Sehun's mother said and flashed another smile before scurrying away.

"She hates us." Chanyeol muttered.

"Totally." Kris supplied and they both shrugged at each other before making their way to the kitchen. They hadn't been in this part of the house yet since the last time they were here, Kyungsoo made them sit in the garage which wasn't so pleasant. But they could trail the smell of food that was being cooked. "I wonder if Kai is going for round two right now."

"What makes you think that? You know how he is. He doesn't even like using the same shirt twice. You know that he hates recycling and reusing right?"

"So you're saying that he's on the basis of use-and-throw with that smoking hot Lycan?" Kris snorted. "Don't kid me. He's gonna be all head over heels for that boy."

"I'll wager my life on that, Kris. He might go for round two, but he's persistent enough to not to go any further."

They finally found the kitchen and Kris said, "Good then. If they're done for good, I'd love to get to know that boy more."

"He has a name." Chanyeol stopped when he saw Kyungsoo in the kitchen, back facing his way, staring out the window of the kitchen at the thawing snow. The sun was being fair today but the cold was nevertheless overwhelming.

Kyungsoo was a human who Chanyeol couldn't understand. Why would he be trapped in such a place, serving a bunch of Lycans? "Oh! There's your little hamster!" Kris cooed out of the blue.

"MY little hamster?" Chanyeol grimaced as Kyungsoo turned around to face them.

Kris ignored him as he strutted to Kyungsoo. The latter stared at the taller guy with something like curiosity before Kris took hold of Kyungsoo's hand and brought it to his face. Kris brushed his lips on the back of Kyungsoo's hand and Chanyeol went fervid with irritation.

"Has anyone told you that you have pretty big eyes?" Kris told Kyungsoo in such low voice that Chanyeol barely heard it. Kyungsoo looked at Kris blankly and pulled his hand back before walking over to the oven with no expression on his face. This time Chanyeol wondered what could have happened to him that he was being this... miserable. At least that was what Chanyeol thought. "What? You don't talk to me?" Kris leaned his side on the fridge and crossed his arms over his chest, smirking at Kyungsoo.

Chanyeol stepped in. "Hi, Kyungsoo." he greeted, rather awkwardly.

"Good morning." Kyungsoo murmured as quiet as a mouse without looking at him.

"Oh so you talk to him but not to me?" Kris demanded.

Kyungsoo pulled a tray out of the oven and placed them on the stove. He turned to Chanyeol, holding out a freshly baked cookie. "For me?" Chanyeol asked and accepted the hot cookie.

"Well what about me?!" Kris hollered and Kyungsoo grabbed a cookie before turning to Kris and stuffed the chocolate chip cookie into Kris' mouth. "NNNGGH!" Kris mumbled with his mouth full and spat onto his palm.

"I thought I smelled another dog in here." Kai's voice intruded into the kitchen and Chanyeol stopped his laughter to turn around.

"What are you doing here? Sexy time over already?" Chanyeol asked in disbelief but was satisfied that he had been right.

"Yeah. If you're here to make fun, forget about it. Let's go home."

"Wait wait." Kris howled. "How was it?"

"It was sex, Kris. It was good of course."

"But you mated."

"I don't really see what your point is."

"What happened to you imprinting on him?"

"I guess... it's over." Kai simply shrugged.

"He meant nothing to you?" it was Kyungsoo who questioned and he wasn't even looking at Kai as he kept his gaze on the cookie tray.

"Huh?"

"Was it just sex then?"

"I guess so? A really good sex though."

Chanyeol noticed Kyungsoo's face turn red. "Let's get going." he said quickly before the topic could hurt anyone.

All the bruises and smears on his hitherto flawless skin were a constant reminder of what had happened to him the night and the morning after. The night was ineffable and if Sehun had to put it into words, he would express it as painfully pleasurable. The morning however was heinous and merciless. The expression on Kai's face when he said that they should be friends established his insincerity palpably. How deceitful could a being get? Cajole cologne? Sehun would scoff at that if he wasn't so torn. Sehun turned out to be the one who was lured and ensnared into Kai's trap.

He stood before the casting back mirror, peering vacantly at his own backscattering. The reflection showed a different boy with bruise-filled neck, besmirched body, dishevelled hair and the mind-numbing pain. Tears trickled down Sehun's cheeks and mayhap he was reacting disproportionately but he had found his first time romantic and Kai to be the by far most gentle person ever. Hope burned in him as he wondered the preceding night if Kai was to be his adventure. No, that wasn't the case. The only way Sehun could pull through this was by not feeling love for Kai or the child he was going to bear. That was no longer proved to be feasible with Sehun crying over how beautiful everything had been for him.

"Sweetheart? Are you in there?" his mother called outside the bathing room.

Sehun sniffled and cleared his clogged throat before speaking. "Yes, mama."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes, mama."

"Can you come down when you are done?"

"Hm."

"Kai had left."

A sob formed in his throat again and he swallowed it down. "Okay, mama."

"Alright, sweetie." and there was no more from her.

Sehun glanced up at his reflection again. No, this will not do. He had to meet Kai again. See him, touch him, talk to him. It would hurt too much if he let this be this way.

"How are you enduring today, Sehun?" his mother probed Sehun's arm for no rationale at all the sixth day after Sehun's night with Kai.

"I'm still in one form, mama. I'm feeling fine." he said sotto voce and spooned up the mashed potato.

"Kai's parents asked me to express their gratitude for what you're doing and said that they will soon visit you."

Sehun chumbled on the broccoli now, keeping his gaze low. "Mama..."

"Yeah?"

"Are you... okay with giving the baby away?"

"Of course I am. We're doing what is good for you, Sehun. Why would we want to have a dog's baby in the family?"

"It's going to be my baby too." a defensive tone rose.

"No, Sehun. You're a carrier. Nothing more. It'll be the best for you if you do not imprint on the child."

"That's not natural, mama."

"Stop your balderdash, Sehun." her voice went tight. "If you're done with your lunch, go up to your room."

"Mama, I was wondering if I could drop by Kai's house." he blurted out and for two ticks, his mother went inert. "I can do that, right?"

"Well... I don't see why not. But... why?"

"It's prosaic over here." he tried to keep his tone nonchalant. "He said that we should befriend each other to make things less fiddly and intricate."

His mother seemed to be contemplating the request. "He is right. And you ought to hang around him until..." she trailed off and Sehun wondered what she was supposed to say but didn't ask.

"So can I go?"

"Sure. I can send you there and ask your papa to fetch you on his way back."

How cruelly austere was Kai to not even show his head once after the only night they were together? This was beyond question that Sehun was the one who took the initiative to meet him but then again, it was Sehun who was desperate not Kai. Not now at least.

"Hang around Kai, alright, sweetie?" his mother said when they were on their way in the car and Sehun nodded blankly. Of course he would want to hang around Kai. "I called his mother and she said that he would like to see you too."

Something sparked in Sehun as he looked at his mother hopefully. "He... wanted to see me?"

"Yes."

She stopped at the front of the house and Sehun exited the vehicle. "Goodbye, mama."

"Bye, sweetheart." it was odd that his mother was really just leaving him here. This was a first. How can she leave him like this? Unprotected. Amidst Adlets? But then again, no one would harm him here for that he was the carrier of their heir. Why did they even covet for a Docile Lycan's heir though? Was it because Kai had imprinted on him and they had no other way? Probably.

He tucked his hands into the pockets of his overcoat, staring down at the white snow beneath him and then at the ivory snow where the sun rays were shining on. He would enjoy the soupçon of sunbeam but the whiteness of the snow made him queasy. He started for the house but desisted his plod when he heard the ruffling sound of the twigs and snow. He started taking careful steps towards the source of the sound. Out of nowhere, he espied Kai in between the thin boles of the trees.

He was stark naked and Sehun's jaw dropped a little as he gaped at Kai's bare back. He hid himself behind a trunk to watch Kai run a hand through his hair as he turned around. He had seen all of Kai before but seeing him amidst snow and sunlight was something beguiling. He was admiring Kai's body so focusedly that he only realized after some moments that Kai was facing him, looking at him with a languid expression. Neither of them bothered to shy away as their eyes locked.

"Come here." Kai called in a low voice and Sehun found himself walking forward to Kai. As soon as he stopped before Kai, Kai slowly pulled Sehun's coat off and let it drop to the snow ground. He then unbuckled Sehun's belt and Sehun just stared at Kai's lips while he let Kai peel all of his clothes off.

Chapter Nine

Sehun could scarcely feel any brumal he normally would with Kai's heat radiating to his own now undraped body. Kai left the pants on Sehun as the corners of his lips quirked up. Sehun could savvy what Kai's intention was and found his own yearning peaking. He stepped out of his shoes and pulled the socks off before straightening back up. Kai cupped his face on both sides, tipped his head to the side and pressed his lips onto Sehun's.

They dropped to the mass of clothes on the snow beneath them and Kai rolled Sehun to loll supine. No words were exchanged but Sehun could feel the desperation. The slow, languid, painful desperation. Their kiss wasn't hurried and now, Sehun could relive their first night again. Only that they were doing this in the open, on the impenetrable snow, amidst the lonely bare trees. And yet, not a single ounce of shiver passed Sehun's body due to the cold for that matter. Kai's tongue explored all of Sehun's mouth once more and Sehun wondered if kissing anyone would be this spectacular. Kai's body heat was enough to make snow thaw let alone keep Sehun warm. But it wasn't a discussion of warmth since Sehun was practically fervid as the giant jewel in the sky.

"Urrggh." Sehun grunted when Kai's warm hand somehow wrapped itself around his aching phallus. Then his pants were pulled down when Kai broke the kiss momentarily. They were as quiet as the wind otherwise. Sehun's back soon started to feel the coldness through the wet clothes which he was lying on. Kai connected their lips again, placing himself right between Sehun's upright thighs. Seemed like Sehun wasn't the only one who was feeling the burning fervour since Kai appeared to be desperate enough. He pulled back from the kiss and stared into Sehun's eyes as Sehun returned the regard. Kai swiped his thumb gently along Sehun's lower lip, cupping his jaw before spitting into his own palm. He brought the

hand to Sehun's opening and Sehun closed his eyes before he felt both the uninviting sensation in his nether region as the pleasuring lips of Kai's on his own.

The snow didn't seem so repugnant anymore. No, it was beautiful. The whiteness of it, mixed with Kai's heat, all and all was wondrous. Sehun draped his arms over Kai's neck and entangled his fingers in Kai's hair as he kissed him back, moaning silently to the sliding fingers inside him.

It was definitely distinguishable between the first night and now. Sehun was no longer nervous but shy, just as much. He was embarrassed but even in that, he was enjoying the jouissance of it. Sehun ran his fingers through Kai's hair when Kai had disconnected their mouths, once again to stare at his eyes. "Kai..." he breathed and then felt that pain he was both expectating and anticipating. He would never forget how it felt to have Kai push himself into him the first time but now, it felt better. More pleasurable even if it hurt. They kissed passionately as Kai thrust into him in a slow pace. Sehun grabbed a handful of snow, moaning to every thrust before Kai prised Sehun up and seated Sehun on his lap. Sehun kept his arms around Kai's neck as he started to rock on Kai's erection, engaging a new ardent kiss. Their tongues curled as their teeth clattered with Sehun riding Kai, chest colliding occasionally. Kai trailed his tongue down Sehun's neck, peppering the throat with kisses as Sehun rocked himself slower, perceiving that they were both much further from experiencing their climaxes.

"Uh." Kai grunted once as he shot warm seed inside Sehun and Sehun gasped at the feeling before reaching his brink, staining and decorating Kai's abs. He dropped his face onto Kai's shoulder as Kai dropped his onto Sehun's, both catching their breaths, panting and heaving. Kai then fell back to the snow, hauling Sehun down with him. Sehun kept himself on Kai to avoid the contact with the snow but the sweat beads trickling down his back was already cooling down. He pondered how Kai could be this warm... "Huhh." Kai sighed and started to sit up after some while. Sehun rose to his full height, quite wobbly, some of his sensitive body parts throbbing with pain but it wasn't bad. In fact, he liked the feeling. "Here." Kai threw Sehun his shirt and pants before clothing himself up. He picked up a ball of snow and wiped his abdomen with it. Sehun tried to dress up without cringing but didn't prevail.

"Kai-"

"You're coming in, right?"

Sehun nodded shyly.

"Great. Then don't go blabbering about our little fuck cause we're not supposed to fuck." said Kai with a nonchalant shrug which sent a pang direct to Sehun's heart.

"I thought... we were..." his voice didn't rise above a whisper as he kept his head low, unable to meet Kai's gaze.

"We were what?"

Sehun took a moment to answer. "Making.. love."

Kai scoffed almost too quickly which sent another pang to Sehun's heart. "How naive are you really? It's okay if we fuck until you get knocked up, dude. Come on, don't take it to the heart. I told you, we should be on good terms." he began to traipse past Sehun as he clapped a hand on Sehun's shoulder. "Come on in. I'm sure mom's also eager to see you."

Sehun limped a little to follow Kai back to the house in utter silence and deep-dyed mortification. Just at the threshold, Sehun dared to speak again. "What were you doing?"

"Me? Oh. I was just running around." Kai shrugged again.

"In... your true form?"

"Yep."

"Aren't you... cold?"

"No, not really. You know that Erqigdlets are from Inuits, right?"

Sehun nodded shortly. Kai smirked and opened the door. "God, did you like go licking up the whole of snow in the area or what?!" Chanyeol squawked as soon as they stepped in. "Oh... I didn't know we're having guests, though."

"Sehun." Kai's mother showed up with a placid smile etched on her lips.

"Hello, Mrs Kim." Sehun greeted but didn't bow since his body wouldn't permit it.

"How have you been? All healthy? You're gonna be carrying my grandchild so your health is our number one priority now." she held the sides of Sehun's face and pulled it down to plant a kiss on his forehead. "Did you meet this rascal outside?"

"A splendid encounter indeed, mom." Kai remarked. "I'm gonna take a shower and we're going out, right, Chanyeol?"

"Yeah. But Sehun could come along too." Chanyeol suggested.

"He totally should." Kris appeared from another hallway with a simper. "Hey, beauty."

Sehun noticed Kai roll his eyes. "He doesn't need to come anywhere. He's not a family friend, just a carrier. And mom, stop treating him like he's your real son-in-law or something. It's annoying." said Kai before he leapt upstairs, leaving Sehun to frown with misery.

"Ouch." Kris spoke for Sehun's feelings.

"Don't mind him, darling." Kai's mother smiled but Sehun could tell that she was offended by Kai's comment as well. "God, he made you sulk!" she screeched out of the sudden.

"Such a beautiful flower wilting? Permission to shove my boot up your son's ass, aunty?" Kris requested but in a friendly way.

"Don't worry." she told Sehun. "I'll make sure that his father hears of this. Then my husband can have the honor of shoving the boot up Kai's butt. Come on, I'll whip you up some tea."

Sehun, for the first time in days, smiled. He liked the way Kai's father was always jerking Kai around. Maybe one day, Kai will be like his father, both friendly and strict. A righteous man.

Chapter Ten

"Is this... seriously the town?" Chanyeol asked in a surprised tone but Kai wasn't so surprised after all. He had expected just as much.

Kris pulled the cap lower and shivered a little. "And you're planning to stay here for the rest of your life?" he asked Kai.

Kai frowned as he walked along the old, ancient shops. It was a small town. An old, antediluvian small town! A string of bad words formed in his mind but he didn't show his dejection to his two cousins. "What did you expect? Shining lights and fireworks? Sexy blondes traipsing around in bikinis? It's not Fiji. This town isn't called Verglas for no reason, you know." he shot at Kris.

"You think Jack Frost lives here?" Kris scoffed. "Cause I'd like to give him a piece of my fist."

This was exactly why Kai hated hanging out with wolverine theriomorphes. They were whiners and always complaining about the cold. Not all but most of them.

"But look at the bright side." said Chanyeol and Kris clapped a hand on his shoulder.

"There's no bright side to this place."

"It's a peaceful town, Kris. Nobody would suspect a thing. You can be free here."

"Why not court some local and get married as well?"

"That wouldn't be so bad."

"Of course. You're already suiting up to get in the ass of puny human."

Kai noticed Chanyeol ball his hands into fists. "Oh look!" Kai diverted their attention by pointing at a cinema. "They do have a cinema."

"Great. We can bring Sehun next time. The boy doesn't seem to have gone out much." said Kris.

"I agree." Chanyeol added, quickly siding up with Kris on this. "You were kinda rude earlier." he told Kai. Kai simply sighed and slumped his back on a shop's window behind him.

"I wasn't rude. I was annoyed. Everyone thinks that being nice to him or pretending like he's part of the family would make things any better. It's gross. He's not an Adlet thus he doesn't belong here."

"I'm not an Adlet." Kris argued.

"But you could have been if you had chosen the ways. You still have Adlet blood in you. That's a different case. He's a pure Lycan breed. It was bad enough that I had to imprint on him. It's disgusting." that was how he exactly felt. Disgusting. But since he had already done it once, why not again? Besides, Sehun was attractive and Kai couldn't keep it to himself whenever he saw Sehun even if the imprinting was no longer existent.

"You're forgetting that he's sacrificing more when you're standing here, whining like a bitch." Kris was mad now and so was Kai. They stood before each other like hornets, scowling and fisted. "He didn't imprint on you so he had no obligation to let you fuck him."

"Don't act like you know everything. He's fucking parents are renting him, you pathetic fool. You know about Docile Lycans. They want their blood to run in the family. Pure bloods. After the first mate, no one can imprint. So they're making sure that Sehun doesn't imprint in his life!"

"That makes you and his parent's assholes."

Kai stepped forward but Chanyeol stepped in. "Guys. We're supposed to be on an outing. And Kris, can you just shut the fuck up? It's his life."

"Yeah, Kris. It's my life. And it's crystal clear that you want to shag him so badly. Don't worry. Once we're done, you can fuck your cock up his ass any time you want." Kai spat at Kris and some passing civilians shot them a ridiculous stare that Kai snarled at them. They quickly walked away.

"You're sick, man." Kris muttered, shaking his head. "I'm outta here." he turned around to walk away.

"Where are you going?!" Chanyeol screamed after him but Kris just waved once.

"Let go." Kai brushed Chanyeol's hand off his arm. "He's bloody annoying."

"I know. But he had a point though."

"A point? Chanyeol, Sehun is gonna be a carrier to my child. That's all. And I don't understand why any of you would side him when his parents treat us like shit. They don't even want a child of an Adlet. But you know what, they're playing safe. They know how persistent Adlets are and because I wanted their son, they're protecting him. They don't care about his happiness or anything."

"Funny that you mentioned that." Chanyeol's voice went grave. "Kai, wake up. You're going to be a father whether you like it or not."

Kai scoffed. "Look here. My dad wants an heir. Not me. I don't give a damn about the child." he shoved Chanyeol aside and began to walk away.

They were all silent in the car as Kai drove back home. But Kai was enraged. Why would Chanyeol and Kris see him as the bad guy here when Kai was simply doing what most of the Adlets did? He was doing Sehun's family a favour not the other way around. Why were they all on and on about Sehun being the one who was sacrificing? He parked the car in the garage and started walking into the house without waiting for Chanyeol or Kris.

Surprisingly, Sehun was still there, laughing and smiling, sitting in the living room with Kai's parents. Anger turned into something worse in Kai's chest. He stomped to Sehun as Sehun looked up at him. The smile on Sehun's face faded when Kai grabbed his wrist and yanked him up from the couch. "Kai?" his mother called but Kai didn't budge as he hauled Sehun straight to the front door.

"Kai..." Sehun whimpered behind him. "You're... hurting me."

"Shut the fuck up." he opened the door and pushed Sehun out of it. The look on Sehun's face almost made Kai smile in satisfaction.

"What happened?" Sehun's voice was cracking as his eyes brimmed with tears. He rubbed his wrist where Kai had left a trail.

"Nothing happened. Don't fucking show up here like you own this place. I take it back. I don't want to be friends with you. In fact, I don't want anything to do with you."

"Kai..." he seemed both shocked and surprised. "I don't know what I did... but if you want me to apologize-"

"Get out my sight, will you? That's enough for me." it was cold outside but Kai couldn't care less. Kris and Chanyeol were behind him now, watching but they didn't do anything/ A part of Kai wanted them to do something so that he could break their faces with an excuse.

"Okay." Sehun let out and blinked away the tears in his eyes several times before turning around.

"Wait, Sehun." his father's voice came from behind as well. As soon as Kai turned around to see him, his dad's palm struck his face with a brutal force. Kai groaned at the merciless blow, holding his cheek. "I'll drag you out of your bed if you fall asleep before I come back." his father snapped at Kai as Kai let the fact that he was slapped sink in. His father grabbed his coat and car keys before strutting out the house.

"Let it go, Sehun. No point in bawling over my immature son." Mr Kim admonished as the vehicle neared the manor. It only registered to Sehun then that he was undergoing a bad case of sniffles and wiping his cheeks.

"I..." Sehun started to drawl and then trailed off for a minute. "I have feelings too, Mr Kim. It hurts... when he treats me as such. Nobody has ever..." he trailed off for real this time.

"I know. I know what kind of background you're from. And nobody probably has ever insulted you. I think.."

"I will not show my face there again. I'm sorry for causing your inconvenience." he sniffled again.

"No. I'd rather you show up frequently." he scowled. "It's unlikely for me to let Kai have his way every single time. He humiliated me tonight."

Sehun didn't answer to that as he stared out the window. The car soon came to a halt before the manor. "Thank you, Mr Kim."

"Don't worry, Sehun. I'll make sure to punish Kai for you." he simpered and Sehun chuckled sadly.

"Make him eat dirt and quack like a duck at the same time!"

"I'll do that, son." they chortled a little before Sehun climbed down the car. He waved Mr Kim goodbye and lumbered to the door, drowning in misery again. Kai made Sehun look like a whore who was going to carry his child as if he was the who had importuned Kai. This wasn't Sehun's fault. It was his parents' fault. Sehun had begged, supplicated but they didn't acquiesce.

Even if Mr Kim had requested Sehun to come over any time he wished, Sehun kept himself locked in his room for the month, deluging himself in the mass of books. It wasn't odd since he had been this way all his life. But the thing that irked him was the doctor visiting him almost diurnal, around-the-clock.

And today was no contrary. "Hello, Sehun." the female doctor pushed the door open and Sehun sat up on the bed.

"Hi, doctor."

"How long do you plan to stay indoors? You could use some fresh air." she smiled, settling her suitcase on the mantelpiece.

"Time runs fast when I'm in my room, reading novels." he hoped that he would slowly forget everything that had happened between Kai and him but the memories became more salient by the day and sometimes, Sehun would just lie on his bed, staring at the mural on the ceiling, harking back to his first night, reminiscing about Kai's touch. It was painful. He wanted adventure and romance but everything had turned upside-down. He often wondered what Kai would be doing right now. Only once Chanyeol and Kris had visited him to inform of their egress but promised that they would be visiting in another month or two. Sehun conceived that they were nowhere near similar to Kai.

The doctor beamed again and Sehun realized that he wasn't listening to her, lost in his own thoughts. "I come bearing great news for you." she said.

"Really?" Sehun's stomach churned as his face filled with a fit of pique. He could already guess what news that might be.

"Yes."

Sehun looked out the window, sulking. "What is it?" there was no point in pretending to be curious or enlivened.

"You're conceived."

"I see." there was no excitement in his voice. The doctor was a Docile Lycan as well and Sehun couldn't see why she was so optimistic about this.

"Do you want me to tell your mother about this?"

"It doesn't matter. You could do that."

"Alright. Now, I have to lay out some basic rules."

Sehun was unhappy about this news, but he could almost feel Kai's hatred when this news reached his ears.

Chapter Eleven

"The internet line's down again." Kai groaned and slammed the laptop close before shoving it away angrily. He clasped his hands together and pressed the thumbs to his forehead, sighing heavily.

"Kai, what's wrong with you now?" his mother asked in a low voice, careful not to vex Kai any further.

"Everything is wrong, mom!" he jolted up from the chair of the dining table. "I don't like this place, I don't like anything over here! You know that dad's doing this to punish me, right!"

"I don't see why it would be wrong to punish you though."

"What?" Kai grimaced. "He simply forced us to move here so that I won't kill anyone else? No, he's doing this because of his conscience."

His mother practically buried her face into the magazine she was reading. "I don't want to talk about it. You killed that boy and I don't think that it will be safe for you to linger around there."

"He asked for it, mom! He challenged me from a duel. If I don't kill, he will kill me." Kai argued.

"You shouldn't have let it go that far."

"Not my problem that boy can't walk his talk." Kai scoffed.

"He had a family, Kai. He had mated and had agreed to take a child!"

"Still not my problem." he turned to walk away. "If dad thinks that I'm gonna be sticking around this wretched place, he's wrong, okay."

"You can deal with your father if you want." she shrugged him off and sometimes, Kai hated his mother for her nonchalant behaviour. She always sided her husband as if the man had always been righteous. Things had never been this strained between Kai and his father before.

He stomped up to his room to grab some fresh clothes to change into once he would be done running. He needed to clear his head. About a month back, when Kai had erupted before Sehun, his father had somewhat lost his cool too. His father some things he was regretting and Kai had said several things that he was regretting as well. Kai sat on the edge of his bed to reflect on what had happened that night when his father came home after sending Sehun home. Kai hadn't forgiven his father ever since for siding some bitch and Kai's father hadn't forgiven Kai for assuming out that his father must have left a trail of bastards all over the world. Kai had thought about apologizing but he didn't see the point why he should.

This was all his fault, yes. Nobody asked him to imprint on someone that he was deemed to hate. Why was everyone expecting Kai to take responsibilities out of the sudden? Sehun's parents whored him to an Adlet for one night and had a pretty good deal out of it.

Kai scrubbed his face with his palms and groaned. He needed to get out of this place. There was nothing here. The thing was, he never felt bad for killing that boy from the pack. Who cared if he had a bastard or not. He realized that was when his father had started to worry about him. But even then, they had been on friendly terms. Most of the time at least. But as soon as Sehun stepped into the picture, Kai was suddenly the enemy of many. Chanyeol and Kris left without even saying word to him. Yeah, he can take a hint. He was hated because he had treated Sehun badly. But fuck, who was Sehun to him to be treating all nice?! No, this was all Sehun's fault. He was a great actor. Everyone thought that he was innocent but Kai knew how much of a whore he was. And he was willing to give his child away?! Real innocent yeah.

He packed a duffel bag with his clothes in case if the ones he was wearing should get wet from the snow. If only Kai had imprinted on someone he liked...

"Where are you going?" his mother questioned from the living room when Kai opened the front door.

"I think I might go crazy if I stay in this house another minute. I'm going for a run."

"Kai, you are grounded." she frowned.

"Yeah, I'd like to see how much you'd like me transfiguring in the house."

She didn't protest anymore and Kai walked out the door.

He ambled past the bare trees, stomping on the thick snow, getting as far away as he could from the house. He knew that his father wasn't mad about how he treated Sehun but what Kai had said out of anger that night. The thing was, Kai always knew that his father was guilty as charged for not taking responsibilities on his first mate and the child. The sun was fair today but the bloody clouds were just as gloomy as Kai.

"Do you like the berries then?" he heard an intruding voice out of the blue and froze to the snow, going completely still. It was a female's voice and he looked around until his eyes fell on the pale pink hooded figure.

"Who's there?" he asked, taking some steps forward to the woman. She turned around and Kai realized that it wasn't a woman but a girl with a baby on her hip. She didn't bother to pull her hood down as she smiled at Kai. "What are you doing out here in the cold with a baby?" he scowled at her stupidity.

"Picking berries." she chimed and turned to the single branch of the tree before her. She plucked the two red berries from the twigs and stuffed them in a pouch which was hanging on her side.

"Do you live around here?" Kai was curious now. He had been in this place for more than a month but had never seen this girl before.

"You could say that. Oh, baby do you want to taste one?" she brought a berry to the small baby's mouth and the baby ate it before smiling at her.

Kai stared at the baby before he picked up the scent. A wolf. He kept his mouth shut since he had no idea how many of the kind roamed around here. "It's cold. Get some layers for the kid." he said that much and turned to walk away.

"You sound like you could be a good father." she said and Kai came to halt to glare at her. She grinned.

"You're lucky." she kissed the whining baby's head and spun around before swaying away from there. Kai shook his head and started back on his feet.

All wolves were cracked in the head.

Kai was worn out by the time he reached back home when the sun was about to set on the horizon. The

blue-violet ribbons that streaked the sky made him sick to the pit. But the black, expensive Ranger Rover parked on his house's threshold made him want to bury himself in the snow. He cursed under his breath and walked up the veranda.

The door opened before he even reached out for the door knob. "Oh, Kai." Sehun's father wore a plastic smile that Kai wanted to slap off his face.

"Hi." he said bluntly and walked into the house. Sehun was there, sitting on the couch with Kai's mother's hand hovering over his. Kai scowled but Sehun didn't seem to notice since he had his head hung.

"Hello, Kai." Sehun's mother greeted. A cultured woman who was ready to sell her grandchild for the sake of her own bloodline. Kai tipped his head slightly and muttered a 'hello'.

Kai's father wasn't home from work yet. And Kai quickly considered ripping these Lycan's throat out but then let it slip. He had disappointed his parents enough. "We have discussed everything with your mother." said Sehun's father.

"I asked if Sehun could stay with us for the week." Kai's mother cut in boldly and Kai turned to glower at her.

"What!?"

"That wouldn't be a problem." she assured either Sehun or his parents, Kai could decide. Probably both.

"In that case." Sehun's mother smiled before she and her husband walked out of the house.

"What's going on? Why should he stay here?!" Kai hollered at his mother. His mother stood up with a heavy sigh.

"Sehun, don't be afraid of him. Tell him what's happened. I'll be in my room." she scowled at Kai which made Kai cringe. Of course, his mother was also a powerful Adlet. One of the most powerful ones which Kai should fear as well. But she never bragged about her strength. She brushed past Kai and stopped to whisper to him. "He's hurting as well. It's not something he wants to do. I'll starve you if you're harsh to him." and of course, she was Kai's father's wife and she lived up to the title.

Once she was out of sight, Kai's glower passed onto Sehun who was barely even breathing as he kept his gaze low at all times. Kai waited. "Do you have a reason to be lingering around my ass now?" it had been a month since he had seen Sehun and he couldn't help but notice Sehun's hair which had grown approximately an inch longer. The boy was paler than usual but cheeks red as anything Kai had ever seen which contrasted his pale face. He was beautiful and Kai hated him.

Sehun got off the couch but still didn't make eye-contact with Kai. "Kai..." he let out a shaky breath. Shit, Kai cursed mentally, recollecting the night he had spent with Sehun and when he had ruined Sehun in the snow. There was no denying that Kai would gladly make a mess of Sehun again.

"What?" Kai almost clutched at his own knob, feeling it grow.

"I came to know the day before yesterday that I'm.. pregnant."

Well, that was a major turn off then.

Kai stared at Sehun for minutes as Sehun avoided Kai's gaze. Kai let out an exasperated breath when the moment had passed.

"Say.. something." Sehun murmured.

"Congratulations." Kai said nonchalantly and turned to walk up the stairs, leaving Sehun alone. What was he expecting? A heartfelt embrace? Shit, Kai didn't even want to see him anymore.

"Kai." he called again and Kai stopped midway on the stairs. "You... said that.. you want me to bear.. your child. Did you just say that to..."

"Get in your pants? Totally. Have some self respect. If you have any shame at all, get out of here. God, if I were you, I would have probably committed suicide or something."

Sehun looked up at Kai in shock. "Okay." he breathed out and hung his head again. Kai just shook his head and marched up to his room.

Chapter Twelve

"He didn't connote that." Sehun murmured as he ensconced himself back on the couch. There wasn't a point in trying to repine over what Kai had said. In fact, Sehun had expected for him to just as churlish. "He didn't mean to say that." he whispered to himself with one hand hovering his stomach. No point in crying either. People were already pushing him around as they wished not caring a thing for what was Sehun desiderating after. What difference would it make if one more person coerced and bullied him? Deliver the baby and get on with his meaningless life. That was what Sehun had decided upon.

On what basis had his parents tossed Sehun over here? Certainly they weren't thinking that Kai could make Sehun feel any better. But Sehun did have an idea. His doctor had prompted of the factual states of parturiency. Apparently, the baby (Sehun would rather call it a baby than the term fetus, which his mother and doctor were using to call the growing life in him) would have difficulties in surviving due to natural complications. So the doctor's theory had been that the better and stimulating the environment was, then the baby had a better chance of a robust growth. He knew how Therianthropes were as well when it came to family. He wasn't that certain about Adlets, but the wolves liked being around family. And at the present minute, Sehun was carrying a child who was an alien to Sehun's family. The only family the child had was Sehun and Kai. That was the first line of ménage for a baby.

Sehun shook his head, not wanting to think to depth of the baby. At this rate, he was somewhat persuaded that the baby was not going to make it since Sehun's whole life and mind were in turmoil. But nevertheless, he wondered if they would even let Sehun touch his baby.

"Are you boys done talking?" Mrs Kim tore Sehun's attention away from the mind-numbing thoughts. He stood up as she walked over to him but didn't dare say a word, worried that he might lose it and cry. "Where is Kai?" she asked with wide eyes.

Sehun took a gander of the floor and his feet before glancing back up at the woman. She had Kai's eyes, long, wavy hair with red plush lips. She was even more prepossessing than Sehun's mother and to add to that, her refined attitude posed to be far better than Sehun's mother's sophisticated and cultured stances.

"You haven't had any dinner yet, have you?" when Sehun didn't bring himself to answer her question, she went on to query about food which seemed like a better topic at the moment.

"No." he squealed out and hung his head again.

"In that case, cottage cheese with roasted chicken and chick peas?" she beamed from ear to ear and Sehun found it to be by far the most genuine smile he had ever seen.

"Music to my ears, Gina." he muttered with no humour but with a fictile smile.

"This will be your room. Are you okay with it? We weren't really expecting guests." she added a giggle.
"But I hope this would do."

Sehun took a peer into the visitant room and it looked quite comfortable with white beddings and pristine curtains. An ivory rug was unfurled on the floor which resembled the one in Sehun's room. All and all, in seemed comparitively cosy after a fashion. "I am sorry for troubling you, Gina. I wasn't bargaining for my parents to do this." he told the woman with heavy eyes. It had been a long night and he would just like to catch some winks.

She rubbed Sehun's arm up and down. "They wanted a safe surrounding for you."

"What do you mean?"

"Give him some time. Eventually, he will have no other way but the give all his best to protect you and the child throughout the pregnancy."

"What?" Sehun's mind boggled at the vague information.

"It's how it works. He might not feel the same after the child's born but as long as his imprinting carries on with you through your pregnancy, he will have a strong urge to keep you in his safeguarding."

"Are... you sure of that? He doesn't really..." he trailed off.

"The imprinting passes on after the first mating. It lingers but as the child grows in you, it will become more palpable. You'll soon understand. For now, go and have some rest."

Sehun didn't bother to push the confab any futher and picked his bag up before entering the room.

"Thank you, Mrs Kim."

"No problem, sweetheart. I'll be up until Kai's father comes back. So don't mind to bother me if you shall need anything at all."

"I won't." he smiled and she returned the smile before closing the door for Sehun.

Cold.

Sehun sat up on his bed, rousing from his disturbing sleep in the house of the Adlets. His body trembled in cold but the thermostat was high just as the windows were all closed. He slipped off the bed and hurried to the bathroom within the room. Kneeling down on the tiled floor before the toilet, he spewed up into it, coughing with a knotted stomach. His head spun as his throat burned due to the vomit forcing up his gullet. He wanted to cry at the fact that he was in some foreign house with no one to hold him. He had been independent all his life but suddenly, he needed the warmth of someone who can comfort him.

He rose to his feet and rinsed his mouth before brushing his teeth. Upon walking out of the bathroom, he stared vacantly at the bed. Mechanically, he moved to the door. The hallways were dark and everyone must be sleeping. He looked around the floor and his eyes fell on the ajar door of Kai's room. He started pacing hesitantly to the room. Peeping through the unlatched door, he found Kai to be sleeping in his bed, shirtless on the top whereas his lower body was covered by a pair of slacks. The eiderdown was cast on the floor, causing Sehun to wonder if Kai was hot. The next minute, he found himself entering the room. No, he needed this. He needed Kai's warmth for the night. He sat on the edge of the bed and watched Kai's slightly parted lips. He had tasted every part of those lips and yet, they were on the worst terms possible. He climbed into the bed and damn it if Kai was going to bite his jugular off for this! Without thinking anymore, he grappled his arms around Kai's body and hugged him, pressing his face, nuzzling his nose in Kai's hot chest. His own chest burned against Kai's stomach now. To hell with fear. He just wanted to smell Kai's musky aftershave and feel his comfy warmth.

"What the..." Kai's husky voice broke the moment. Sehun didn't pull away. Instead, he buried his face deeper into Kai's chest, hugging him so tight so that Kai won't be able to draw back. "Fuck what are you doing?!"

"I want to sleep with you." Sehun breathed against Kai's chest.

"Get off me!" Kai started to push Sehun away but Sehun only gripped harder.

"You're warm. Please."

"What the fuck? You're seriously not letting me go?!"

"No. Sleep."

Kai grasped Sehun's wrists which were at his back and with one pull, he was able to unlock Sehun's hands. He shifted, knelt up and pushed Sehun to lie on his back before descending upon him, pinning Sehun's wrists to the pillow on either sides of Sehun's head. He sat on Sehun's stomach, staring at him with a grave expression while holding his wrists in place. Sehun froze but he still enjoyed the warmth. "You're asking for it." he let out and bowed his head down before violently crashing his lips onto Sehun's. This time, Sehun tensed up. Kai was doing this for the sake of himself. No, he can't let this happen. Sehun moaned loudly in objection and wriggled under Kai, wanting to free himself. Kai pulled back from the kiss and looked confused.

"Let go of me!" Sehun begged.

"No." he brought Sehun's wrists together to the headboard and pinned them to it with one hand while his other was already pulling down Sehun's pants.

"No! Stop!"

"Scream and gut your little fetus out."

Chapter Thirteen

He wanted Kai's comfort, the snugness from the comfort, not this brutal form of fornication but instead, he was getting manhandled by Kai, dealt with serious force which was starting to bruise his wrists. One on side, it was somewhat alleviating and consoling that Kai still wanted Sehun. But it was just the body. Mrs Kim had said that the imprinting was still lingering but in a different form. Which meant Kai was technically doing this for his own cause and Sehun wasn't going to concur with that.

"Stop, please!" he begged when Kai gripped on his hip, lowering a side of his night pants.

"Shut the fuck up, will you? Why are you acting all chaste now? This is why you're here, right? To get me in your pants again."

"No! I wanted your warmth, heat! Not this! Please."

Kai didn't adhere to that and he knelt up from Sehun's stomach. Just at the moment, Sehun managed to release one of his hands from Kai's grip. Kai started growling and that was when the back of Sehun's fist struck a side of Kai's face, sending the latter off the bed, and straight to the floor. This whole 'looking for warmth' thing had been a wrong idea but Sehun couldn't help it. He would have dealt with it if Kai was to rip his heart out but not this.

He stumbled off the bed and went like a bat out of hell from the room, haring blindly to the first door that he saw was closed. He had hit Kai and he should be dead any minute now for doing that. He was about to pound his fist on the door, inferring that it had to be Kai's parents' bedroom but before he succeeded in alerting them, his wrist was grasped from behind and he was swung around. Kai slammed Sehun's back up the wall beside the neighbouring the door and clasped a hand on Sehun's mouth. He raised a finger to his own lips, scowling at Sehun. Sehun's body went rigid as his eyes bulged out. Kai clenched his jaw and Sehun felt a pressure on his stomach. Kai was clawing into the skin of his abdomen while his eyes remained, glowering at Sehun's face. "Mmh." Sehun moaned when Kai pressed a fist into his stomach, clearly threatening the baby's safety. Sehun must have obviously manifested of his evincing concern for the baby which Kai was using as a tool to threaten him now.

"What did I tell you about the irritating rat infestation in this house?" Kai's father's voice heckled from behind Kai.

"Oh come on!" Kai groaned and released Sehun altogether before he spun around to meet his father. Mr Kim was leaning on the wall with one forearm on the wall, shins crossed and a hand in the pocket of his pyjama pants. Mr Kim arched a brow at his son. Only at that moment it occurred to Sehun of how similar Kai looked to his father, taking so much after him. But his dad had a much more sophisticated, manly features whereas Kai was still a boy.

Behind him stood his wife, arms crossed at her chest, glaring at Kai. They were both on their night outfits. "Well, thank god we haven't slept." Gina snorted angrily.

"You guys are practically jamming my mojo." Kai muttered and then shot Sehun a blatant look.

"One day, I'm gonna cut off someone's wiener." said Kai's father with a poker-face.

"Hope it's not yours or poor mom." Kai retorted with a smirk.

"No. I can assure you that it's not mine because mine's not the one that wanders places it shouldn't."

Kai scowled and Sehun wondered if Kai would ever be able to win over his father. "He's mine, isn't he?"

"Well, I don't really remember buying him for you. Step back."

"No." Kai reached out and seized Sehun's wrist, keeping his stare on his father.

"Sehun."

Immediately, Sehun pulled his wrist free before he ran to Mr Kim's side and hid behind the powerfully muscled man. "It's okay, sweetheart." Gina stroked Sehun's hair.

"Go to your room. He's a guest and if I see you crossing your line, I'll be sure to cut it, Kai."

"Oh fuck this shit." Kai started to pace angrily towards his room. "He was the one who started it." he blamed childishly.

"Really?" Mr Kim turned to discern Sehun. Sehun dropped his gaze to his feet. "What happened, Sehun?"

"I..." Sehun let out. "It.. was cold."

"Ah." Gina murmured and she tip-toed to whisper something into her husband's ear. Mr Kim blinked his eyes before he smiled a little. He kissed his wife's temple and faced Kai again.

"So Kai. You're still the bitch here then." he said and Kai balled his hands into fists. "In that case, go and sleep outside while Sehun sleeps in your bed."

Kai froze in place and turned to gape at his dad. "Out.. side? Are you serious?"

"I heard you treat the cold better than you treat people."

"Mr Kim... that's not... necessary." Sehun cut in.

"Shut up, you ass." Kai hissed at Sehun and Sehun lowered his head. Without saying anything more, Kai trampled down the stairs. "Better outside than this house anyway."

"Go and sleep, Sehun." Mr Kim sighed and entered his room.

Gina ushered Sehun into Kai's room and saw to it that he was tucked into Kai's bed. Sehun's whole body went calm. The scent lingered on the bed. The warmth was still there and Sehun felt completely relaxed. He hugged the eiderdown which smelled so much like Kai and let himself drift into sleep. "Good night." he whispered, greeting the baby goodnight.

A loud laugh woke him up and it was utterly annoying. The floorboards of the veranda weren't really comfortable but Kai was at least glad for them. It had been quite cold last night but Kai's ego stood before everything. But the morning was even more annoying. A boot crashed on his thigh and Kai sat up, blinking his blurred eyes. He looked up at the two figures that casted before him.

"Fuck." he cursed, wanting to bury himself there. Chanyeol and Kris were guffawing loudly, holding their bellies, laughing their guts out.

"One month, and you're homeless!" Chanyeol chuckled with watery eyes.

"Who kicked you out?!" Kris howled beside him. Kai shook his head and staggered to stand up.

"Woke up in the faces of the fox." Kai murmured and glanced away. "The fuck are you here for?"

"Guess we arrived on impeccable timing!" Chanyeol laughed before he gave Kai a hug. A car pulled around the snowbank and Kai eyed Chanyeol and Kris. They both shrugged simultaneously.

Kai watched the black maserati ghibli park at the front of the house. "Whoever that is, they're not with us." Kris said before Kai could ask him. Kai descended the steps of the veranda as the car's door opened. A guy, no, boy stepped out, dressed in black coat and black pants. Kai arched his brow at Chanyeol and Kris but they seemed just as stumped as they stared at the stranger.

"Who are you?" Kai asked.

The boy walked up to them in a slow pace, coolly. "Is this Kim Daerin's house?" he inquired.

Kai cocked his eyebrows at the stranger now. "It is but it's just Rin now. I don't remember when he was last called Kim Daerin." Kai told him. "And you are?"

"I'm his son." he said coolly. "Can I see him?"

Kai's feet went numb in the snow and he realized that he was just wearing socks. "Son? Who are you fucking? I'm his son."

"Oh goodness." Kris raised a hand to his mouth to cover it as if in surprise.

"Oh." the boy muttered but there was no disappointment in his expression. "Can I see him then?"

The front door opened. "Kai? Who's that?" his mother questioned and Kai kept scowling at the guy.

"One of dad's bastards." Kai shot at her.

There was silence on the threshold.

"Come in." his mother invited with a expressionless face.

"Mom!" Kai objected.

"Sehun's crying, Kai. Why don't you go and take care of that first?"

"But-"

"Come on in, Luhan."

Kai thought about ripping this boy called Luhan's head off at the spot but he had to walk away. He couldn't stand to see him showing up here from nowhere suddenly claiming to be his father's son. He had

to leave this place before he could condemn something terrible. He hurried into the house and ran up the stairs before bursting into his room. But in there, a far worse scene was taking place.

Sehun was curled up in a ball in a corner of the room, bawling his eyes out, face pale but nose as red as anything that Kai had ever seen. "Kai." he gasped and shot up. Kai stared at him in shock when Sehun ran to him. "T-t-touch him. Feel him." he caught Kai's hand and brought it to his stomach under his shirt. The fuck. Kai pulled his hand back as soon as it brushed Sehun's stomach.

Chapter Fourteen

"What the hell do you want?"

"I... I.." Sehun stammered but he was no longer wailing but surely was sniffling which irritated Kai. He kept his red eyes low as he wiped his cheeks, that too in a graceful way. This stupid rich royal ass even cried with poise.

"I'm in the mood to kill someone and you seem like the perfect scapegoat right now." Kai shoved Sehun to the side and Sehun stumbled, almost tripped over his feet but caught his ground.

"Sorry.. I... Kai?" he was panting. Kai turned to scowl at him.

"Get the fuck out. I need to shower." he turned his back to Sehun, not wanting to see his pathetic face anymore because it was making Kai jittery. He almost wanted to ask why he was crying. Kai forced the focus onto some other matter before he could hint a concern for Sehun.

It made no sense whatsoever. Why would his father's unspoken of son show up out of the blue? Why was he looking for his father? Kai was already on bad terms with his dad and the last thing he needed right now was for his father to compare him to the better option. Fuck, why was he even thinking of this newcomer as a better option? He probably was here for his share of the property and that idea only made Kai angrier. It would be really good for Luhan if he had left the house before Kai went down.

His attention was torn away from the thoughts when he felt a warm hand wrap around his wrist. He turned his head halfway around to glower at Sehun. "Can't you take a hint? I'm fucking not interested in you."

Something was different on Sehun's expression. It took Kai a moment to figure out what was distinct and he realized that Sehun was frowning, almost scowling. It was so odd considering that he had never seen Sehun infuriated or irked before. "You." Sehun breathed out with furrowed eyebrows.

"Me?"

"You threatened him."

"Threatened who?"

"Your baby."

Kai clenched his jaw and pulled his wrist but Sehun's clutch was strong enough just as powerful as his hit last night. Kai still hadn't recovered from the blow to his face. Sehun was a wolf after all. Not a cat. "What are you blabbering about?"

"I had an... ephialtes."

"Who cares? Let go."

"He was... no longer there." the way he breathed the words out tingled the back of Kai's neck for some odd reason. "He left... Because you don't want him."

"Dude, there's something wrong in your head. I have no clue what the fuck you're blabbering about."

Sehun released his wrist and took a step back. "The dream was so lucid. It was... terrible. I was so scared. Please, Kai. Please. I don't mind if you don't take a liking in me but don't hate your child. He's yours."

"So you had a nightmare about the baby dying?"

Sehun remained silent which confirmed the notion.

Kai scoffed. "Seriously, it's totally up to you to keep it inside you. First rule, don't annoy me. Second rule, don't ever touch me again."

Sehun looked up at Kai with powerfully grave eyes. He seemed mad. "And it's passable for you to touch me?"

Kai lurched forward with a fisted hand, provoked and infuriated. But before he could hit Sehun on the face, Chanyeol and Kris showed up. Kris already had a hand on Kai's chest before he shoved Kai back. "Show your non-existent manliness elsewhere." Kris spat.

"Kris, don't start on the first day itself." Chanyeol said. Kai tried to calm down, considering the terms he and Kris was on right now. They hadn't really reconciled after the preceding clash and he certainly wouldn't want to make things worse. "Kai, you should go downstairs. Shit's happening."

"Urgh! Why should I care about any of this?!" Kai growled, throwing his hands up. "Moving here had been a terrible idea! I got a constant dirt stuck on my shoe." he eyed Sehun with disdain. "And now, a bloody bastard shows up out of nowhere. What does he want?!"

"Uh.." it was Kris who spoke. Kai wondered how Kris could go from literally 'berserk' to friendly in a minute. "They just settled for tea and biscuits. I think he was talking about staying here for a week or two."

"The fuck?"

"Exactly. But you gotta admit. He's kinda hot. Never thought you would have a half brother of such good genes."

"Stop hitting on everyone that you bump into, Kris." Chanyeol snorted. It was obvious that they were trying liven up the atmosphere in the room.

"Speaking of hitting on." Kris turned to Sehun and flashed a toothy smile. "I kinda missed you and your pretty face, Sehun."

Kai scoffed. "I do wonder if he had already whored all over you." he muttered and shoved past them all to get out of there but stopped when Kris spoke again.

"And how's junior? Hi, baby. Hi, little tiny baby who has no idea who I am." Kris bent a little and waved at Sehun's stomach. Sehun giggled a little but it wasn't louder than a whisper.

"He can't hear you. He's not more than four days old." Sehun said in a shy voice.

Whore. Kai stomped away. He marched down the stairs, faintly hearing the conversation in the living room.

"How's your mother?" Kai's father asked.

"Dead." Luhan's voice answered. Silence.

"I... am sorry." Kai's dad muttered. Kai stopped himself at the bottom of the stairs and let Luhan stare at him for a moment.

"What does he want?" Kai asked, rather harshly.

"He... he's here to visit, Kai." his mother said.

"Visit? Bullshit."

"Kai." his father snapped and shot him a black look. "Have you said hi?"

"No! And don't think you can force me to be all 'hey bro from another mother'!"

His father heaved a sigh. "Luhan, you have to pardon him."

"Oh. He's a child. I don't really mind." said Luhan and Kai was already searching the room for something he could use to hit Luhan.

"Child?" Kai's mother chortled. Kai seriously hated his mother for her hospitality. "He's going to be a father, Luhan."

Luhan went red instantly. "Oh." his cheeks resembled his embarrassment and Kai pondered what could be the story behind that. Could it be that Luhan didn't mate? Or did he have a kid already? Didn't look like it. Must be the former than the latter. Adlets who didn't have an heir or that hadn't imprinted were a shame to the clan.

"So, Kai. He will be staying as long as he wants." his father concluded in the end.

"Then I will leave." Kai spat, keeping his eyebrows furrowed.

His father stood up. He was all ready for work. "Be my guest."

There was no doubt casted upon the decision to while away the whole day in the room, specifically in bed. Sehun willed to go home, be in the comfort of his own room and beddings. He flipped open a book but didn't have the tenacity to even read a line. Gina had asked if he would like to have something to eat, when he refused, she delivered a tray of food, enough for the day and scurried off. On the face of it, there was a guest in the house. More of the reason why it was better to stay in a cramped room rather than to linger around a house filled with Adlets.

He felt sick to the stomach. The flashes of the gruesome nightmare kept popping behind his eyelids. Sehun pulled the eirderdown close to his chest and hugged it. The lingering images of the ephialtes haunted him. The baby was alive, he kept reminding himself. It was still alive. Not dead, all bloody in the size of a hand, crumbled and scrunched up. The picture had been so vivid. Sehun could still see that extremely small fingers of the baby. It hadn't even developed into a baby yet, but was dead, lying covered in blood in Sehun's hands as he cupped the corpse. And the voice wouldn't leave his head either. "You said you don't want me..." the echo kept reverberating.

It was a terrible day. Sehun just thought that he needed to prove it to the baby that Kai wanted him. A simple dream can change a lot. And Sehun had become more determined. Weak but still resolute.

The day soon turned into night and Sehun still hadn't touched the food. He was very well aware of the fact that he should eat something but he couldn't stomach it. Gina must be quite busy if she hadn't checked up on him all day long after sending him the food.

And then the door dangled open. Sehun sat up otiosely and blinked his eyes at Kai who was standing at the entrance. "Mom asked me to check if you're done eating."

"Is that what you call, 'seeing to the care of your paramour'?" Kris chuckled beside Kai.

"I'm pretty sure that you want to bother Luhan, Kris. He's more of your type."

"Not really. You know what my type is? Submissive, gentle," he was looking undeviatingly at Sehun, smirking a little. "Hazel-haired, pregnant boy."

"Did you even eat?" Kai ignored him as he eyed the brimful tray. Sehun kept mum. He didn't want to talk to Kai. He wanted to go home. No, he wanted to leave this snow, this cold, everything. But can't. "Shit. If you keep doing this, then you're definitely gonna see the fetus die."

Sehun cringed but kept nonchalant about it.

"C'mon, Kai. Don't be an ass like that." Kris said.

"Get out, Wu." Kai shoved Kris out and closed the door before flipping the light switch on. "You're not going to get anything by starving yourself, that's for sure."

Sehun shifted in his bed and looked out the window.

"Fuck, will you just eat so that I can report to my mother?!" Kai shouted.

"You don't care about me or the baby. Why should I eat? You don't want the baby. So you leave."

Kai stared at Sehun like he had been staring since the morning. Sehun had no clue whatsoever of why he was doing that though. Kai plucked the baguette from the tray and wended his way to the bed. Sehun tensed up. Kai jerked the half a loaf of baguette at Sehun's face and Sehun looked up at him. "Eat before I shove it down your throat."

"I'm not going to."

"Look here. I don't get to go down if you're not done eating. And I wanna be off duty to strangle my half brother who is asking if I could loan him my pyjamas. So be a good boy and eat."

"Why did you make love to me, Kai? If you hate me so much?"

Kai clenched his jaw. "The first time, it was an obligation. The second time, I was hot for you and immensely turned on. I would still fuck you freely but why should I like you for it? You're naturally someone I should hate."

"That doesn't reason."

"Shut the fuck up and eat."

Sehun slipped off the bed and stood to his full height before Kai. "No." he stated firmly. "One day, you would want him." he pressed a hand to his stomach. "But he wouldn't want you."

"What?"

"You heard me right the first time."

Kai flinched. "Whatever." but the tone was tight.

"I want to leave. I don't want to be a bother to you. I don't want our child to be a bother to you."

Kai blinked.

"That's what you want, right?"

"Wow." it wasn't Kai because Kai looked too stumped to respond. The door was opened and a stranger was standing at the doorway. "You seriously messed up like this?"

"Get the fuck off before I rip your throat." Kai growled in his direction.

The stranger, which Sehun deduced to be the visitor, raised his palms in defence. "Not my problem to interfere but wait. You don't want the child?" he asked Kai.

"I want to go home." Sehun cut in.

"I can send you home." the guest offered.

"I don't really know you."

"Yeah, Luhan. He doesn't really know you cause even your birth was supposed to be a secret." Kai scoffed.

"I'm kinda curious." the guest said. "How did you fall for this animal's trap?" this time, he was questioning Sehun. "Something as beautiful as you?"

"Fuck off." Kai seemed angry now.

"Can you... help me get home?" Sehun crossed.

"Sure. If you can show me the directions."

Kai grabbed Sehun's wrist out of the sudden and hauled him out of the room, with the baguette on his other hand. He paused briefly to scowl at Luhan. "We both know what you're here for. Don't ever think you can fool us that easily." he snarled at him.

Luhan frowned guilelessly. "I'm not here to fight anyone, Kai."

"Whatever." he tagged Sehun straight down the stairs and then out of the house. It was bloody sodding cold and Sehun was there, standing on the veranda with nothing but a t-shirt and pair of rammies. "Eat." Kai pointed a bit of the baguette at Sehun's mouth.

"No."

"Fuck. What do you want?!"

"I want to go home. Away from you."

"You think being away from me will solve all your problems?"

"You are my only problem."

Kai looked stumped again. "One more retort, and I'll-"

"What? Lock me out here? Do it."

"Fuck this." Kai tossed the baguette onto the snow. "Fine. If you leave, and if you choose to keep the child until it's born, I don't ever want to see you here again."

"Fine by me."

"Don't come whining again."

Sehun wanted Kai to come to him. Full of yearning and guilt. But he kept his face straight. "I won't." how would it feel if Kai was gentle to him in this period of time? Was it as romantic as it is depicted to make love during pregnancy? Would Kai even share some loving words to him? It was just a matter of time. Once the baby was born, Sehun's parents will make sure that he never converged the baby or anything related to Kai ever again.

"Alright. We have a deal. See. It's a lot better if you could act a little matured. Not like some teenage boy who falls in love with the man who fucked him first time."

Sehun wished that wasn't the case. He didn't want to love Kai. But mayhap it was too late. But if Gina was right, Kai would come looking for him and the baby by himself soon enough.

Chapter Fifteen

"Sit down." his father eyed the vacant chair. Kai groaned before taking the seat next to his mother. He had been avoiding having dinner with the family for the past three days for that Luhan was there. In fact, Kai had been using the window and the roof of his room as the passageway to get out and in the room whenever he needed to feel his feet in action. The silent noises of Luhan's voice in the house caused Kai to stay locked in his room for the past three days. He had only got out the room to grab some food to eat in the middle of the night or to transfigure. But he couldn't avoid this nonsensical family dinner this night since his father had been the one to call him down.

Luhan kept his gaze low across the table as Kai kept glaring at him. "Kai." his mother called, stroking the back of Kai's head. "I know this is... hard for you. But Luhan isn't here to threaten us or anything. He needs his father's advice. He's gonna leave after some while anyway."

"This isn't hard for me, mom. Don't think that I'm a 10-year-old who can't handle the situation where his father's other son shows up and steals the show." Kai replied gravely.

"The truth is, you are, son." his father said calmly and heaved a sigh. "Kai, listen. Luhan needs my help and that's why he's here. He doesn't really think of me as his father anyway. So I don't think I'll be bonding with him anytime soon."

"It's true." said Luhan and Kai wanted to desperately punch his face for even uttering a word. "I'm not here to steal your daddy away. So don't worry."

"This is bullshit." Kai spat and stood up. "If you guys think that I can at least pretend to be nice to him, I can't. If that's clear, I'll be in my room until he goes away."

"Am I really such a threat to you? God, I've never even met you before in my life and why would you hate me so much? I didn't ask to be born out of wedlock for our father."

Kai almost took the glass filled to the brim with water and smashed onto Luhan's skull for his 'our father' utterance. "If I'm hating you, then there should be a good reason, don't you think?"

"Enough of this. Kai, if you don't want to treat him as your brother, then at least don't treat him like a foe." his dad said. "The last thing I need is for my sons to clash."

"You know what, dad. I pity mom the most over here. Maybe she should have imprinted on someone other than you and maybe had a bastard as well."

"Kai!" his mother hollered. "That's enough! Go to your room!"

"I was already in my room before this stupid getting-along-with-your-half-bastard-brother conversation came along!" he snapped back and stomped out of the dining hall.

"I wish he would just take care of Sehun for the time being than just being angry all the time." he heard his mother say.

"Can't help it, Gina. It's the last phase of his maturing."

Whatever that meant, Kai didn't bother to inquire and just marched straight up to his room. Upon slamming the door close, he sank back to the warm bed and threw an arm over his eyes. His stomach grumbled but he had no appetite. Had Sehun eaten?

Shit. Kai jolted up to sit and scrubbed his face. Who cared if Sehun had eaten or not?! He had gladly shooed Sehun away that night with the agreement that none of them would bother the other. But was Sehun taking good care of himself, hence the baby? Baby? Shit.

A string of swear words gushed into Kai's mind even at the odd mention of concern for the child. It would have been so much easier if Sehun had been all begging and pleading during their preceding encounter. But no. Sehun seemed to be somewhat standing up for himself and it annoyed Kai. He didn't request but had demanded.

"Urgh." Kai got off the bed and grabbed a fresh shirt before opening the window. A cold gust of wind swept in, sending slight shivers down Kai's body. He stepped onto the roof and shut the window down.

"Told you this is what's he's been doing."

"Shit!" Kai jumped and almost tripped off the roof but firm hand caught his arm. "What the fuck are you two doing?!" he yelled at Chanyeol and Kris who were standing on the roof under the dark ceiling of night.

"Spying on you." Chanyeol replied and released the grip on his arm. "You could just use the front door, you know."

"He wouldn't. Cause he's too scared that he'd bump into Mr Doe Eyes." Kris scoffed. They both looked dressed for an outing, ready with coats and all.

"No. I'm worried that I might rip his head off at the first sight of him." Kai retorted.

"He's not all bad, you know. He's rarely at home. He keeps following your dad to his workplace everyday." Kris smirked a little. "Talk about 'bringing your kids to work days'." he chuckled.

"Are you *trying* to make me feel worse?"

"Yep."

"Kai, it's too boring, okay. Please, save me from this Berserker." said Chanyeol. "Where are off to?"

"The woods." Kai scratched the back of his neck. "I.. was wondering what Sehun was doing." that was proven to be a bad move when Kris and Chanyeol exchanged a weird look before bursting into laughter.

"So! You're finally lovelorn!" Chanyeol guffawed.

"The fuck? That bitch is always whining and stressed. He never thinks about the baby."

"So now you're baby-fied!" Kris added.

"Fuck you."

"Not before dinner, baby."

"Look here. I need that child. He's gonna be the heir and now that Luhan's in the picture, I don't need my dad leaning towards him."

"Oh." Chanyeol's grin faded.

"And here I thought you've finally grown some balls." Kris remarked with a snort.

"He already did. Or else Sehun wouldn't be knocked up." Chanyeol told him with a shrug.

"Go to hell, you useless worms." Kai turned to jump off the roof.

"Wait. We can go and check out."

"Check out? I practically shooed him away. I don't think his parents are very happy about that."

"We can sneak in." Kris suggested. "While we keep a lookout, you can cuddle up with your paramour."

"It is possible." Chanyeol supported.

"I'm sure. Cause you wanna check out that mouse named Kyungsoo as well, don't you? God, I think I'm the only one without a paramour over here. You don't think Luhan's available, do you? He kinda looks like Sehun."

Kai fisted his hands but didn't want to make a big fuss of it. He didn't care about Sehun and let's keep that in mind. "Alright. We'll give a quick probe whether that whiner is alive or not and then leave." Kai decided and Chanyeol quickly nodded.

"What the heck are you doing?!" Kai hissed at Kris who was crouching, trying to lift Kai up the wall. "I can climb myself!"

Kris stood back up. "So what do you want us to do?"

"Stay down here."

Kris eyed Chanyeol. "Let's go catch some mouse, eh?"

Chanyeol rolled his eyes. "We'll meet here again in fifteen minutes." he told Kai.

Kai looked up the pipe that went straight up into a room. He had only a vague idea of where Sehun's room was, so he will have to look for it half blindly. "How about you two keep the parents distracted?" he suggested.

"What? You want us to act like we're paying a visit?"

"Yes. They don't like me. Not you. I think it will be a great idea."

"Great idea indeed. We're like the ultimate useless characters here." Kris snorted. "That woman doesn't like us either."

"Just go and ring the doorbell. I'm gonna climb up. I'll be out in fifteen minutes."

Chanyeol sighed but pulled Kris towards the front of the manor as Kai started to climb the cold pipe. He cursed under his breath all the way he climbed up the pipe, not understanding why he should do all this. Wanting the heir to be safe was partially the reason but even if didn't want to admit it, he wanted to see Sehun healthy. Shit.

He looked down at the ground and gulped. The window was just three feet above. He climbed. The unlatched window evidently showed that the light was switched on which must mean that someone was in there. Shit. Kai opened the window slightly with one hand while the other stayed gripped around the

pipe. His feet was on the ring of the pipe which was used as a leverage. Kai peered into the small hole and realized that it was a bathroom. There was no one in it. He quickly pushed the window all the way up and climbed into the bathroom before slowly closing it behind him.

"Oh my god!" a shriek. Kai spun around to see Sehun hastily wrapping a towel around his waist. Yes! Right room!

"Shh shh shh." Kai quickly lurched forward but Sehun stepped back, still struggling to tie the towel right.

"What are you doing here?!"

"Don't freak out, dammit!"

"Keep your phallus away from me!"

"The fuck. I'm not turned on! I'm here to check on you, that's all. So calm down."

Sehun stared at him. "Check on... me?"

"Dry your hair first. You're gonna catch cold."

"Catch cold?" Sehun grimaced.

Fuck. Kai bit his tongue. Catch cold?! Seriously, Kim Kai?! Could he get anymore pathetic?

"You barge into my bathing room at night and tell me to wipe myself so that I won't catch cold? Are you possessed?"

Chapter Sixteen

"Hi, Mrs Oh."

"Hi, Mrs Oh."

Both Chanyeol and Kris greeted with wide grins on their faces. Sehun's mother smiled viciously. "Hello, boys. Fancy encountering you here." the way she said indicated her despondency in seeing them at her doorstep.

"Oh we were just thinking about dropping by." said Kris.

"Whatever for?"

"It's cold. Aren't you gonna invite us in?"

"Not really, sweeties. Why are you here?"

She was keen on sending them away. Kris glanced over at Chanyeol who shrugged. "Oh Mrs Oh. You're so funny." Kris faked a giggle and shoved past her, striding into the house.

"Sehun's not in the spirit to see anyone." she said in an irritated tone.

"No problem. We're not in the mood to see him either." Chanyeol told and entered the house as well.

"Well then what are you here for?"

One whiff of that mild scent was enough for Chanyeol to know that Kyungsoo was in the room. He looked around, scanning the main hallway before he saw Kyungsoo standing behind the doorway to the living hall, half hiding behind it like some petite little boy, scared of a wild dog. But he wasn't really scared. He was looking at Chanyeol and slowly, he smiled. Butterflies fluttered in Chanyeol's stomach and he quickly turned his gaze.

"Well, Mrs Oh. Is your husband home?" asked Kris.

"No, he is not. Why?"

Kris smirked at Chanyeol and Chanyeol knew that look. "You see, Chanyeol and I have this dispute. You're a really beautiful woman. So beautiful that both of us have this.... problem. We wonder if you could settle it for us."

Sehun's mother was blushing at Kris' compliment. "I knew you boys were going to be more than just an itch. Have a seat in the morning room. Kyungsoo, get some vivers and wine."

"Wait. It's evening." Chanyeol cut in.

"Yes?"

"We should go to the evening room."

Sehun's mother scowled. "Morning room is the living hall."

Kris broke into a laughter and patted on Chanyeol's shoulder. "Leave the impressing part to me, will you?" he whispered as they ambled to the 'morning room'. "Mrs Oh. Do you waltz?"

"Of course I do."

"My. You have to accept a dance with me then."

Another blush on her face. "I do not why I shouldn't."

"Perfect."

Chanyeol looked around for Kyungsoo again but the boy were nowhere to be seen. "Can I use your toilet?" he asked Mrs Oh.

"What for?" she asked sharply with scrutiny in her eyes.

"Uh..." he was stumped at the question. "I need to take a piss?"

With a heavy sigh, she nodded. "Kyungsoo!"

The boy came into sight. "Yes?"

"Show him the lavatory."

Kyungsoo looked up at Chanyeol. "This way."

Awesome! Two birds with one stone. Chanyeol quickly vamoosed behind Kyungsoo. "Hey." he called sotto voce.

"Yes?" Kyungsoo turned around and blinked his eyes like a puppy which made Chanyeol flush.

"How have you been?"

"The same. You?"

"The same."

Kyungsoo nodded and turned to walk. Chanyeol grabbed his arm. "Wait."

"What is it?"

"If you're able to sneak out this Sunday, we can go to the town."

Kyungsoo gasped loudly and Chanyeol jumped back. "What?!"

"Ssh shh. Please. I didn't mean to offend you."

"No no. It's not that. Are you... I can't."

"Why not?"

Kyungsoo searched for Chanyeol's eyes. "Because you're too tall."

"What?"

"Become a little short then we'll see." he walked away.

"How do you suggest I do that?"

Kyungsoo looked back at him and smirked shyly. "This is the lavatory." he pointed at a door and vanished into another hallway.

When he returned to the living room, Kris was whispering something to Sehun's mother and she giggled. As soon as Chanyeol walked in, she straightened up. "How long do you plan to stay? We're expecting a guest."

"Who?" Kris inquired.

As if on cue, the doorbell rang.

"Scratch that." Kai shook his head, unable to believe himself. "How are you?"

Sehun outright grimaced now, his expression ridiculing Kai's question. "I was... showering. And now I'm cold. Does that satisfy your concern of my welfare?"

Kai wanted to slap his own face. "This is awkward." he scratched the back of his neck.

"It is. You, sneaking into my bathing room through the window to 'how are you' me. You're not drunk, are you?"

"Stop mocking me. Did you eat? Have you had your dinner?"

Sehun's eyebrows rose. "Why not ask if the roasted duck was succulent enough while you're at that?"

"Fuck. Since when did you start to sass people around?"

"Since your son keeps on making me vom up after every meal that I have. He's been giving me night sweats and I can't even sleep properly. In the morning, I'm all about spewing and I want to eat pudding."

"Wow. So he's on my team? Go Team Daddy." shit. Why was Kai even thinking about such ludicrous stuff. Sehun cringed.

"This is my bathing room. Can you leniently leave?"

Kai felt like he was slapped for real. This was the first time Sehun had ever asked Kai to get out practically slamming the door at his face. "Sure. Sure." he was confused as he turned to the door.

"Out the window."

"What? Can't I just sneak out through the back door or something?"

"No."

"Fine." Kai nodded. "I'm probably letting you be cause I need that damn baby inside you." he turned for the window and something hard hit the back of his head. He spun around to find the scrubbing brush on the floor and Sehun scowling hard at him.

"I'm not going to let Jae see you."

"Jae? Who the fuck is that?"

Sehun patted his stomach and for some odd reason, Kai found it cute. Shit. He was going loony. "I named him."

"I ain't calling him Jae or gay. If there's anyone who's not gonna be able to touch him, that'll be you."

Sehun let out a shaky breath and closed his eyes. "Get out."

"Whatever. Just don't kill that child."

Sehun shuddered so obviously. "Can you please not say things like that?"

Kai didn't reply to that and opened the window. He stopped when something clenched in him and he was convinced that it wasn't his knob. "You wanted... pudding?" he eyed Sehun again.

Sehun was quiet for a moment before he nodded childishly. "Why? Are you going to get me some?"

"Fuck." he uttered under his breath. "I'll get you pudding." he spat through his gritted teeth.

"You will poison them."

"Then I'll revive you back with true love's first kiss, Snow White."

Sehun pouted. "Go away."

There was a sudden ring of the doorbell and Kai perked up as so did Sehun. "No." he murmured. "Leave. Now." he told Kai.

"Why? Who's here?"

"No one. Leave."

Kai shrugged and climbed out the window. "I'll be here tomorrow morning. Get out of the house at 8 and I'll get you pudding."

Sehun frowned. "How many?"

"As much as you want."

He considered it. "Okay."

Kai waited near the car for almost ten minutes before Chanyeol and Kris finally showed up. "What the hell. I said fifteen minutes!" he hollered at them both.

"First of all, Kris was acting gigolo with that old hag." Chanyeol said. "Second of all, did you know that there's a new guy in the house? He's a wolverine theriomorph."

"So?"

"Apparently, when the baby comes out, as weird as it sounds, Sehun's gonna be his betrothed."

Kai's eyes widened as something churned within him. It took him a moment to digest the information but he remained composed. "So what? I'm gonna get married as well."

"This guy seems.... dangerous, Kai. Bulky. Very powerfully muscled. Kris even said he saw fangs."

Kai eyed Kris. "Are you fucked up in your head?"

Kris shrugged. "I'm gonna have some competition, I guess."

"You're a Berserker. You can easily take another theriomorph. Whatever. I don't care. I want the baby out and that's it. Sehun can go to hell. But first, he wants pudding."

"Huh?" Chanyeol vocalized. "Pudding? You're gonna get him pudding?"

"Wohohoho. Kai and Sehun eating on a tree. P-U-D-D-I-N-G. Romantic." Kris sang and then guffawed.

"Shut the fuck up and get in."

They had to sneak into the house again and Kris seriously would just spend the night out. But it was too cold for his liking. He had never liked the cold and if the cold had a face, he would punch it so hard. They climbed through Kai's room's window again and with no gratitude whatsoever, Kai shoved Kris and Chanyeol out of his room. Well, Kai had a face and Kris was bound to hit it one day.

"Off to bed then?" he asked Chanyeol.

"Yeah. I'm thinking about going around there again tomorrow."

"Awesome. Everyone has a date for tomorrow." for a moment, he recollected the man he had just met at Sehun's house. How can someone as delicate as Sehun be matched up with a brutal animal like that man? Sheez. These people lacked humour.

"Hey, by the way. Do you know how to get shorter?" asked Chanyeol.

"Huh?"

"Forget about it. What were you saying to Mrs Oh?"

"Oh. That lady is a total act up, you know. Few compliments and she was all over me."

"Well, you're still a wolven theriomorph. Of course she's okay with you."

"Bleh."

They parted their ways when Chanyeol started for the stairs. "Want anything?"

"Get me something to drink."

"Kay."

Kris walked over to his room but stopped before the room the guest was staying in. Luhan. He could still hear faint voice emitting from the room's cracked open door. "...no, mom. I know what I'm doing.... this is important." Luhan was whispering through the phone when Kris pushed the door open. He was looking out the window while hanging on the phone. Well, this was interesting. Kris crossed his arms over his chest and leaned his side on the doorframe. "I love you too, mom. I'll call you soon." he ended the call and turned around only to gape at Kris who was smirking at him.

"I thought your mommy died, doe eyes." Kris said in a threatening voice but the smirk remained on his lips.

Chapter Seventeen

The first thing Luhan did after Kris' indiscreet accusation was scowl. And Kris didn't like that. He can be an Adlet or whatever shit but before a Berserker, the unripened Adlet should know its place. He stepped into the room and shut the door behind him.

"Get out." Luhan snapped.

"You're still unseasoned, aren't you?"

The subsequent remark made Luhan flush red with, obviously, rage. "That is none of your business."

"Hm. You look older than Kai. Well, you must be older than Kai. I'd say around my age? And Adlets mate at the age of their maturity. Why haven't you, dear one?" he closed the distance and Luhan didn't bother to retreat as he held his ground. That made Kris angrier. He had some real guts alright. "Kai has this notion that you're here with an ulterior motive. Now, I'm not his best buddy but he's still like a little brother to me. Annoying little brother. So, spill the beans before I break your neck."

Luhan hurled the phone directly at Kris, angrily and it hit Kris' chest hard. "Fuck you! Call my mom if you want! She's my foster mother you dipshit!"

Kris blinked.

"All of you think that I'm here for some reason but did any of you wonder how I would feel about all this?!" Luhan hollered.

"Jesus. Stop screaming."

"My mother died! Now I'm living with her stupid girlfriend who can't wait to push me onto someone! And here I am, watching my father happy with his own family! And you have to waltz in here to make me feel bad?!" his eyes brimmed with tears.

"Shh shh. Please. People are sleeping." Kris begged, holding his palms up.

"Stupid wolf. Get out!"

"Okay okay. Fine." Kris stepped back. "Stop shouting for fuck's sake."

"What's up?" Chanyeol showed up at the doorway when Kris was just about to get the heck out of there. He peered over Kris' shoulder at Luhan. "Did he just... make you cry?" he gasped at him.

Luhan nodded and turned around. Kris found it to be very childish and irritating. "No! How am I supposed to know that he has two mothers?!"

"Had!" Luhan screeched again, facing them.

"Fine fine! You win. I'm sorry. I'll back off."

"Stupid wolf." he murmured and turned to stare out the window while wiping his cheeks.

Kris slammed the door shut and finally breathed. "Well, that was exciting." Chanyeol commented. "Stop bothering kids around."

"Kids? And for your damn information, I wasn't bothering him."

Chanyeol shook his head and walked over to the room that they shared. "Are you being serious about Sehun though?"

"What about him?"

"Do you really like him?" he stopped to ask Kris the question.

"I do. But c'mon! Did you see that guy who claimed to be his betrothed?! He's hotter than summer in July! Well, in Mexico, not here maybe. I'd like to see how Kai wins over that dude."

"I don't think Kai wants to. He wants to get rid of Sehun as soon as he could."

"Do you remember the Blue Bird?"

"The blue bird?"

"The Blue Bird."

"The blue bird?"

"Yeah. The Blue Bird." Kris smirked.

"What the fuck about the blue bird?!"

"Kai's little toy."

"Kai's little toy isn't so little anymore." it was Chanyeol's turn to smirk.

"Chanyeol. You're like ultra gay sometimes. Anyway, he had this toy when he was like... 9, 10-ish. He got bored of the blue bird after two days. He gave it away to his neighbour but the next day itself, he had his claws on the boy's throat, threatening him to give his blue bird back."

"So, you're saying that Kai liked his blue bird but had denial issues?"

"My point exactly. Come on." he draped an arm over Chanyeol's shoulders and ushered him into the room.

"Sehun? How long are you going to take?" the indignation was obvious in his mother's voice when she called after him.

"Anon, mama!" Sehun chimed after her, jumping into his trousers. He hadn't the leisure to neaten his hair as he scampered to the door.

"Sehun." his mother hissed at him with a choleric expression and ran her fingers through his hair. When Sehun jerked back, she withdrew her hand but the cold mien remained. "You are keeping them waiting."

"I'm sorry, mama."

His body shuddered as he trod on the heels of his mother. Two nights ago, when his parents had divulged the information of his sudden affiance to a stranger, Sehun didn't bother to take it seriously. It sounded too nonchalant to be true. Besides, why would his parents fix such an abrupt betrothal out of the blue? But Sehun had seen this coming. By this point, he had gone tired of everything. He wanted to focus on the baby's health and the baby alone. Marrying a stranger couldn't get any worse than having an intercourse with another. But Kai was different. He meant something for Sehun. And the verity that Kai had showed up to inquire about Sehun's welfare made Sehun jumpy on the inside.

He unconsciously rubbed his tummy as he climbed down the undulating staircase and dropped his hand when he realized what he had been doing. It was awkward to be mindful of the fact that he was sustaining another life in him. When he went to sleep at night after reading strings of poems, he felt like the baby would to. Because otherwise, it was as if the baby was constantly awake, stubborn about the food that Sehun consumed, wanting weird things such as the delicate scent of snowdrop. He wondered if Kai would get him more snowdrops for him. It seemed nuts that Kai had agreed to buy Sehun some pudding tomorrow. For Christ's sake, he was going to sneak out of house tomorrow for pudding! The excitement surged through his body. Why would Kai do that though? What was the catch? It didn't matter. Sehun wanted to be happy and he knew only Kai could make him happy for the time being since his own parents offered no concern for the growing baby but they did care a lot for Sehun's health. His mother had even said that she cared less for that 'dog'. The baby wolf-dog that Sehun was carrying. The innocent baby was already loathed by many.

The fragrance of lavender hung heavily in the air as he approached the drawing room, following his mother. He heard some unfamiliar voices tangled together in a peculiar conversation about the piano in the drawing room and 'the two tall boys', whoever that meant. They entered the room and Sehun kept his gaze low. He knew there were three other wolveren theriomorph in the house, his own parents excluded but they weren't Docile Lycans. A stronger scent. A dominant scent.

"Ah. Here he is." a woman cooed and Sehun looked up at the guests. The woman was tall and fairly beautiful. Young but feasibly older than his mother. "My my. I can't believe this is the teeny Sehun I've known." her blonde hair was braided and it reached to her left breast. She was dressed like Kai's mother, but some lots fancier. She approached Sehun and stroked the back of her hand on his cheek. Sehun bowed his head and forced a smile.

"Is Jun going to be back anytime soon? Or shall we get on with the ice-breaking?" a man said. He was definitely older than Sehun's father. When compared to Kai's dad, this man looked flimsy. Gray hair, long face, skinny frame. Whereas Kai's father had a strong-built body, muscular jaw, quite young facial features which doubted his father status.

"He's really sorry but the blizzard caused him to be delayed." Sehun's mother said. Sehun looked at other man who was sitting on the bench of the piano, staring straight at Sehun. "Sehun, I'm not sure if you remember them. But when we were in Lunalin, they were our neighbours."

"Good evening." Sehun greeted. "I do not remember them, mama."

The guy who was sitting on the bench rose to his full height and Sehun realized how huge he was. Huge, as in tall and fit. His body was the definition of perfection but his face was composed and calm. Sehun couldn't take his eyes of the man. He walked over to Sehun in slow strides.

"Well then. Some introduction would do, I suppose." the woman said.

"Let's all sit down." Sehun's mother suggested and everyone obliged. "Should I ask Kyungsoo to make more tea?"

"This is sufficient enough."

"Sehun, these are Mr and Mrs Kang." his mother told Sehun who was sitting timidly beside her.

The young guy was looking at Sehun and Sehun couldn't keep his eyes to himself as well. It was palpable that the man had to be the fixed betrothed of Sehun's. "This is our son. Julien Kang." the older man said, patting on his son's shoulder. Next to him, the old man seemed quite short.

"Julien." the young man said and Sehun blinked his eyes before looking away.

"I'm sure you remember Sehun, Julien." Sehun's mother said with a giggle.

"A little, yes. He was always so shy." Julien was smirking. "I think I was 17 when I saw him plucking all the flowers in our garden and then pretended like he was a cat when I caught him red-handed."

"I did that?" Sehun gasped.

"You must have been three, I suppose." Julien smiled and Sehun couldn't help but blush. That made Julien somewhat 14 years older than Sehun.

"So you know, Sehun. They are not the lowest rank of therianthropes." his mother muttered. She shouldn't have set Sehun up with Kai if she was constantly going to insult him. Sehun felt fervid. He was carrying an Adlet.

"What... are they then?" he asked in a low voice, still feeling Julien's eyes boring into him.

"Loup-garou."

Sehun's eyes widened. They weren't any less violent and ferocious as Adlets.

"Well, I think we'd like to see your portraits, Hara." Julien's mother, Sehun presumed, said.

"Oh of course." she stood up and when Julien started to rise, his mother pushed his shoulder to sit back down.

"Not you."

The elders left the drawing room, leaving Sehun alone with Julien. This time, he caught Julien staring at his stomach and Sehun drew an arm around it, as if he could protect the baby that way. "An Adlet child." said Julien.

"Yes." Sehun answered monotonously.

"Don't worry. I don't support prejudice." he grinned and it felt soothing. "It's just a baby after all."

"I'm sorry. It's not that I... don't want to marry you but... I can't focus on that right now."

"I understand. I left my boyfriend as well. Sucks to suck, huh." he leaned back on the sofa.

"It's not the same."

"I know. I'm just saying that neither of us are given a choice. We keep the bloodline going. We keep our parents' heads up and our children succeed us. That's how it is."

"And... your lover is not a wolverine theriomorph?"

Julien scoffed. "He's not even a therianthrope. A human. So you see how badly it sucks."

"I'm sorry."

"Nah. I'm sorry for myself. I'm sorry for him cause I wasn't able to keep my promise. And now I'm sorry for you. Must be hard on you."

It felt like Julien had to be the only one who understood Sehun's plight. "It had been."

Julien offered a smile in return. "You were kinda small when I last saw you. Cute and chubby. What happened to those chubs?"

"I was never chubby."

"No, you were. Running around in your diaper, hair tied on top."

"What?!"

"You were cute. Now you're kinda..."

Sehun flushed. "I'm not even suitable for you."

"No no. I didn't say that. You're beautiful." he didn't say anymore and Sehun was glad for it because he had blushed enough for one night. He would like the night to be over soon so that he could see Kai again tomorrow and have some goddamn pudding already.

"I swear to god, if he doesn't show up." Kai kept pacing the snow-covered ground restlessly. The morning was mocking him, all ready and bright but he was alone in the woods, waiting for Sehun to appear as promised. At least it was better than staying at home, fighting the urge to bite Luhan's throat off or enduring Kris' bloody loud snore that reverberated all over the house. It was 8.30. "Dammit." he hissed under his breath and kicked the snow, sending them fluttering before he heard that sweet voice.

"Kai!" Sehun's voice echoed past the trees as he came running towards Kai.

"Do you have clay in your skull?!" Kai caught Sehun when Sehun bumped onto him. "Why are you running when your damn pregnant?!"

Sehun pulled back and smiled like a teenage school girl. "You're concerned about me." he poked a finger into Kai's chest.

"Yeah right." Kai scoffed and then eyed Sehun's bare neck. "Stupid goat. Cover your bloody neck next time." he took off his own muffler and wrapped it around Sehun's neck.

"Pudding?"

"What took you so long?"

"Oh. I had to sneak out the back door but... he was there." he kept his voice really low.

"Who was there?"

"He." Sehun's squeaked out.

"Ohhh. Your fiancé?" Kai's throat tightened. He had been thinking about it all night long and he hated himself for that.

Sehun looked at him with bulged eyes. "How did you know?"

"You know what, I don't even care. Let's just get the pudding and we're done."

"Kai?" he called when Kai turned to the car.

"What?!"

"Don't you... want to... feel him?"

"Your fiancé? I think I'll pass. No, thank you."

"No! Baby Jae!"

Kai stopped and bit his lip.

Chapter Eighteen

"You're tricking me into touching you." Kai accused and Sehun's face pulled before he dropped his gaze.

"I just got really exhilarated." he murmured. "Sorry. Wait. Why should I even apologize? If anything, you're the one who should seek for forgiveness." he snapped suddenly and Kai arched his brow.

"Are you pms-ing?"

"Huh?"

"Get in the car before I bury your perky ass in the snow."

It took Sehun a moment to get into the car, rather awkwardly. Kai realized that he was staring at Sehun's butt the whole time and averted his eyes before rounding the car to get into the driver's seat. "Any idea where to get pudding?" he asked Sehun, fastening the seatbelt.

"There is a confectionery in town."

"Alrighty. Put on your seatbelt."

"Oh." Sehun pulled the seatbelt to buckle it, chewing on his lower lip. It was really weird that Kai felt comfortable and nervous at the same time.

"Just so you get this straight, I'm not rooting us to become friends or anything, okay? I heard that miscarriages happen when the parent is stressed. I don't want that to happen."

Sehun looked out the window as Kai pulled the car around and started driving them out of the compound. "Why? I thought you had no concern for Jae."

"I do now." and it had a selfish motive but it didn't matter. Kai needed a secured position and only the child will guarantee him of that. If his father was to become fond of Luhan, he might consider having Luhan's child as the successor and Kai can't have that. "And for god's sake, we're not calling him that!"

Sehun didn't answer to that and kept his gaze at the window.

"Hi!"

"Oh my dear lord!" Kyungsoo screeched when Chanyeol greeted him through the window of the kitchen which was opened in the morning. "What on earth are you doing here?!"

Chanyeol smiled and leaned on the windowpane. "Come out."

"I'm making breakfast."

"Then finish it quick. I found winter berries."

"Berries?" Kyungsoo's eyes widened.

"Berries." he smirked. "I can't wait long in the cold. So don't let me die here, waiting for you to come with me to collect winter berries."

"I like berries." Kyungsoo murmured, looking at his oven mittens.

"Oh well. Too bad you're making breakfast." Chanyeol shrugged and stepped away from the window.

"Wait."

"Yeah?"

"I'll... I'll be quick. Meet me at the back door."

"Great!"

Kyungsoo took more than fifteen minutes to show up but when he did, he was clad in a thin, worn coat which made Chanyeol frown. Kyungsoo's cheeks and nose reddened as soon as he stepped out of the house. "You will freeze at this rate." he took his jacket off and draped it onto Kyungsoo's small frame.

"Now you're gonna freeze." Kyungsoo scowled unnecessarily.

"I'm an Adlet. I like being in the cold. So don't worry. Takes more than whimsy cold to kill me."

"You just said you will die in the cold, waiting for me."

"Oh. Did I? Anyway, this way." he started to walk, leading the way with hands dug into his pants pockets. "How did you end up here?"

"In this family?" Kyungsoo had to hurry to keep up with Chanyeol's long strides.

"Yes."

"I... was..." his teeth started clattering and Chanyeol felt a little guilty of luring him out into the cold.

"Well... my m-moth-ther was Sehun's n-n-nanny. I g-grew up with them."

"And your father?"

Kyungsoo shrugged and Chanyeol didn't bother to urge the topic any further. He reached up and hopped to hit a tree's branch. "Are you a-always-s thiss jumpy?" Kyungsoo asked, shivering.

"Yeah. No. I'm kinda nervous around you. That's why."

"W-why?"

He smirked and stopped to face Kyungsoo. "You're cute, that's why."

If Kyungsoo had blushed, it wasn't palpable since his face was already red due to the cold. Chanyeol rubbed his palms on his shirt before bringing them to Kyungsoo's cheeks. He pressed his warm hands against the cold face. Kyungsoo stared at Chanyeol before stepping back. Chanyeol dropped his hands back to his sides. "You're.. a.. I'm... j-just.." he trailed off.

Chanyeol sighed. "I kinda suck you know. So don't think highly of me."

Kyungsoo glanced away. "Berries." he whispered without looking at the taller.

"Oh. I lied about that."

"What?!"

"But now that I know you like berries, let's go on a berry hunt!"

Kyungsoo started to glower before he punched Chanyeol's stomach with a hard fist and strutted back in the direction of the back of the manor as Chanyeol grunted, hugging his stomach.

"Here." Kai handed Sehun two cups of pudding and a spoon when he got back into the car. Sehun had refused to exit the vehicle since the confectionery owner was a comrade of his father's and Sehun wasn't going to risk anything.

"Thank you. What flavour are these?"

"Strawberry and chocolate."

Sehun nodded and scooped the strawberry pudding. Kai watched the spoon brush Sehun's lips as it made its way into the warm, wet mouth. Crap. Kai gazed away. What the hell was happening to him? "This tastes marvelous. I think Jae loves it."

Kai groaned but didn't remark on that. "How did you sneak out?"

"I... told you. The back door."

"And what about your betrothed?"

"He was just smoking."

"Ah. A chain smoker? Sexy."

Sehun kept mum as he devoured the rest of the pudding. In a minute, both the cups were emptied. "Can you get me more?"

"What?"

He patted his stomach. "I think he wants more."

"Stop using the baby as an excuse. I know you want it."

"Yeah so what?! I want it! I'm a giving you a baby and the least you could do is get me some pudding!"

"Okay okay. Sheesh. Scary pregnant people." Kai got down the car again to buy more of the pudding.

Sehun seemed happy today and it irritated Kai. People like Sehun didn't deserve to be happy. They thought that they owned the Therianthrope world. And the news of Sehun already being betrothed while carrying another man's child disgusted Kai. No. He was right about Sehun and his family in the first place. They were delusional assholes and Sehun was no exception to that. Only Sehun, the whore, would think of bedding some guy while being pregnant with another's baby. Wake up, Kim Kai, Kai reminded himself. This was bullshit and he shouldn't let himself be even a little fond of Sehun. He wanted the baby. Not Sehun.

It was a pity that neither Sehun nor Kai had the leisure to linger around any longer. The stretch passed so quickly and Sehun had no apparent clue of what was the status at home. His mother never really bothered him in the mornings but there were guests in the manor and he wasn't sure if that was ought to reorient certain things. He had a short conversation with Julien in the morning and it turned out that Julien was the chatty type when he was straight out of bed. Sehun wondered what was running in Julien's mind when he found the man to be broody, smoking at the back door early in the morning. Mayhap the boyfriend he had mentioned?

But at the moment, he was with Kai. Not many words were exchanged but Kai had bought him a dozen of pudding and Sehun was solemnly happy about it. Something was changing in Kai and Sehun hoped it would develop.

"Kai." he called when he landed up at the compound of the manor again where Kai had stationed his car somewhat far from the manor itself.

"What?" Kai asked in a raspy tone.

"All I need is for you to love the baby dearly."

"Of course." Kai scoffed. "And then you can bend over the other guy as you wish."

Sehun was stumped at the expression as he gaped at Kai. "What?"

"I was just thinking. I know what happens to me when the baby is born. Do you what would happen to you?"

"What do you mean?"

"You'll become that whore again. And your parents must be the greatest parents in the world, I swear. Whoring you to multiple men out there. Tell me something. Are you gonna let him fuck you while you're still pregnant? God, why is everyone so eager to shag you?"

"Shut up."

Kai turned to shoot him a leering black look as Sehun started to pant, eyebrows furrowed. He needed to retch. His stomach churned as his forehead started forming beads of sweat. "What did you say?"

"I said save it. Shut your sodding gob." anger metastasized through his body. "If I'm a whore, then you're the one who wenched me first."

Kai fisted his hands and Sehun quickly got down the vehicle. Tears trickled down his cheeks as he started for the house. "Bloody bitch." Kai grabbed Sehun's arm and yanked him harshly.

"Let go." Sehun cried, mad at himself for crying before Kai. The emotions were onerous to control and Sehun had no idea why. He was angry, sad, upset, all the same time. "Let go!" he hauled his arm back and

hit Kai's face before breaking into a sprint but it only took his two strides before he rammed into a hard figure.

"Hey, are you okay?" a cold hand touched his chin and Sehun didn't care if he had only knew Julien for few hours as he buried his face into his chest and sobbed hard. Julien's long, firmly muscled arms enveloped Sehun's trembling body. "Do you have a problem with him?" he wasn't talking to Sehun. Sehun clung onto the coat like a child seeking for the protection of his elders. Or maybe the comfort.

"Fuck you all." Kai muttered and then next thing Sehun heard was the sound of the car pulling away from there.

Sehun pulled back and wiped his cheeks with the sleeves of his jacket. "Thank you."

"Is that..."

"Yes." Sehun discerned the question even if Julien didn't complete it.

Julien arched a brow. His hair glowed under the morning sky and Sehun couldn't help but admire his exemplariness. "He's... a boy."

Sehun recognized the comment to be an insult and he wanted to defend Kai. "He's on the verge of maturing just as me."

"Yeah yeah. I can see that. Adlets are complicated." he heaved a sigh. "Well, let's not freeze out here. I was wondering if you read Emily Dickinson."

Sehun instantly perked up. "Of course! Do you?" he couldn't keep the excitement to himself. Julien smirked and grappled an arm around Sehun's waist, rendering him to walk forward.

Julien's chin tickled Sehun's ear when he leaned to whisper. "*It waits upon the lawn. It shows the furthest tree. Upon the furthest slope we know. It almost speaks to me.*"

Sehun would have bounced if he wasn't so miserably right now. "*Then, as horizons step, or noons report away, without the formula of sound, it passes, and we stay.*" he told Julien and smiled faintly. Julien screamed perfection and Sehun pondered how perfect of a human his former lover must have been to have attracted his attention.

"My my. You do know your literature." Julien chortled. "But." he stopped and took Sehun's hands into his own. "Sehun. I know that... you want to be with him. If you permit, I can help."

"What?"

Chapter Nineteen

"Morning, drama queen." Kris slammed his palms on the dining table where Luhan was sitting at, reading the newspaper. Luhan looked up at Kris who was now taking his seat across the table.

"I don't wish to talk to you." Luhan muttered and returned to reading the newspaper.

"Why not?" Kris crossed his legs and leaned over the table, smirking endlessly.

Luhan started to grimace. "Because you're an exaggerating goon."

"Goon? Excuse you." Kris cleared his throat and slumped back in his seat before crossing his arms over his chest. "You kinda overreacted that night. You're the exaggerating goon over here."

"Only because you overreacted. I was demonstrating how it is when you blow things out of proportion."

"Ah."

Kris waited for Luhan's response but received none. He turned to stare at Luhan's face now. The boy had beautiful eyes, that fluttered like a butterfly's wings, lips pink as the petals of a rose bud, cheeks high and the chestnut hair fell, hovering his eyelashes. Kris blinked, snapping out of the nonsensical admiration when Luhan gazed at him.

"Do I have something on my face?" he asked in a raspy tone.

"Yes. Something extremely gorgeous, mind-numbingly beautiful. Oh wait. Those are just your eyes." Kris smirked and Luhan's eyes widened before he went cherry red, dropping his head.

"Who are you?"

"Kris Wu."

"I can see that. Who are you to Kai? I know that the other tall one is his cousin."

"Oh come on, people! Am I seriously that nonexistent?! I'm also his cousin. Second cousin, I think."

"Loafers." Luhan murmured, smiling to himself.

"Hoi. We're not completely useless, okay."

"You're staying here FOC."

"I can say the same about you, sweetheart."

Luhan looked away. "I'm here to see my father."

"I'm here to see my cousin. Well, actually my parents were so eager to toss me away for a month or preferably more than a month so that they can have some peace of mind."

"I can't imagine why." he said it with a mocking smirk and heavy sarcasm.

"Chanyeol and I are just going around, living our short vacation to the most. And you?"

"I'm here to take what's rightfully mine."

"I hope it's not Kai's underwear cause you're being really vague about information." Kris chuckled but Luhan started to scowl. "Plus, he's very possessive about certain things."

"He's... mated."

"Yep. Poor Sehun though. I'm thinking about playing his secret Santa this year to make him feel better."

"Who is that?"

"Santa or Sehun?"

"From what I've gathered, he's a Lycan, right?" Luhan ignored the ludicrous question.

"I'm 75% certain that Santa's not a Lycan. But Sehun, yeah. A really pitiful one at that. Docile Lycans are arrogant. But they're pretty weak and lame. Sehun however reeks of subjugation. That's a pity. I just hope Kai understands him better."

"Kai doesn't look like he likes him at all. How did he even mate with him?"

"You tell me. You're the Adlet over here."

Luhan remained silent as he fiddled with his thumb.

"That's right. You're kinda like Chanyeol. Still a virgin." Kris chortled. "But he has reasons. I wonder what's yours."

"I did mate. That's what you wanted to know right?" Luhan spat and started to get up.

"Wait. If you mated..." Kris rummaged his brain for words. "Didn't you like procreate?"

"No. My..." blood drained from Luhan's face as he spoke. "The baby died during the pregnancy."

Kris' heart pounded in his chest. "I'm... sorry." there was no hint of humour in his tone as he frowned.

"Forget about it." Luhan turned to leave but it was Kai who burst into the dining room with fisted hands and a flushed face.

"Get outta the way." he shoved Luhan aside, hard and stomped to the sink before drinking straight from the tap.

"What are you pissed off about?" asked Kris.

"What I'm pissed off about? Well, you tell me." Kai snapped at him.

Kris instantly raised his palms in defence. "I swear I didn't touch your porn stuff."

"Fuck you, Wu. I'm talking about that bitch!"

"Which bitch?"

"How many bitches do you know?"

"Quite a handful, you included."

Kai's angered face turned into something uglier. Kris knew he was provoking him but he couldn't help but feel hostile towards Kai. Kai shot Luhan a black look before striding towards him. "You know what. I should just get rid of the things that drive me mad." his hand came up to Luhan's neck before he slammed Luhan onto the wall behind him.

"Whoa whoa whoa!" Kris hollered and jumped between them, sending Kai backwards with one powerful shove. "Get a grip, Kai!" he took hold of Kai's arm before hauling him out of there. "Are you insane?!"

"Just because I do the right thing in an aggressive manner, I appear to be the bad guy!" Kai shouted.
"Tell me, Kris. Does it sound right to be engaged to some guy when you're carrying my child?!"

"Okay, one, I am most definitely not carrying your child. Two, I think you're being too obvious."

"Obvious about what?"

"Kai." Kris placed his hands on both of Kai's shoulders and heaved a sigh. "I think you need a break from all of this. How about you come with us? Me and Chanyeol."

Kai calmed down a little. "Go where?"

"Anywhere fun?"

"Dad's not gonna allow that."

"He will. I think even he knows that you won't do anyone a favour by sticking around. Come on, Kai. You need to chill, man. Luhan needs some time with your dad, then let him. I'm sure everyone's bored of your face anyway."

Kai took a deep breath and slumped against a wall. "I don't want to be the bad guy, you know."

"You're not a bad guy, Kai. You just have an attitude problem. A terrible one."

"Tell me about it. I just dissed a pregnant boy." he sighed.

Kris frowned. "What did you do?"

"I... snapped out on him. Called him names. Insulted him. Shit. Why should I even feel bad about it?! I wasn't wrong!"

"At least you're feeling bad about it. That's a first."

Kai scowled. A lively whistling echoed into the hallway and Chanyeol showed up, hopping and bouncing, face as bright as anything Kris had seen. "Sup, studs?" Chanyeol chimed and whistled again before his eyes fell on the glowering Kai. Gradually, the whistle quieted down. "Did I miss something?"

It was odd that his parents had instantly given their consent when Kai appealed to them with the request of following Kris and Chanyeol for some change of scenery. Maybe the Forests of Jupiter where most of the hunting Therianthropes resided. Kai was missing the place badly but it wasn't the reason for his egress. Kris was right. He needed a break from all this. Something was happening in his body. The mind was constantly blurred with images of Sehun moaning with pleasure when Kai touched him lovingly and crying in sorrow when Kai spat acidic words at him. It was horrible. He needed to get away from this madness. The way his body reacted to every memory of Sehun was extremely weird. It shuddered with jitters and then a wave of guilt would spread through it.

"Why do we have to leave so soon? We just came." Chanyeol whined while he packed his things with Kris as Kai stared out the window of the guest room.

"Think of it as a vacation." said Kris.

"We are already on a vacation."

"You're just refusing to go because of that mouse, right?"

"Shut up." Chanyeol muttered but Kai clearly heard it. It was snowing outside. It shouldn't be a surprising occurrence though. Verglas had just one season. Winter. "Kai?"

Kai turned around to face him but maintained his subtle expression. He hadn't bothered to converse much with anyone in the house and he hadn't even minded the fact that Luhan was bonding too much with his father. All that Kai could think about was that guy whom Sehun had hugged so tight that day. If that was his betrothed, then Kai had no chance at all. Shit, he didn't even want a chance. Or so he thought. On the other hand, he couldn't take his mind off Sehun's red eyes when Kai had insulted him five days back in the car. He was right, that was undeniable. It was disgusting to be thinking about letting someone else touch you when you were pregnant. But Kai could have kept his mouth shut. He claimed to have no concern about Sehun and yet, he had been furious. Sehun wasn't exactly helpless. He was able to get mad at Kai then he could go against his parents. But he wasn't. Which meant that Sehun was allowing this to happen on his own. He must want to get married as soon as he got rid of the baby.

But even so, Kai couldn't stop thinking about how he had hurt him and that had made him upset about every single thing around him. "Have you packed?" Chanyeol questioned. Kai simply nodded, crossing the room before walking out the door.

"Sorry." Luhan quickly apologized when Kai almost bumped into him.

"You should be." Kai muttered but didn't have the spirit to harrass him anymore and walked straight past him to get to his room.

The calm annoyed him because it permitted him the opportunity to wonder more about Sehun. He dropped onto his bed and threw an arm over his eyes. *'you're the one who wenched me...'*

Kai jolted up in his bed, inhaling a sharp breath. If Sehun's parents were able to find him a good suitor in such short notice, Sehun might have just mated with his husband instead of getting tangled in all this. But it was Kai who had complicated things. He was the one who imprinted on him. He was the one who demanded, threatened even to achieve Sehun. Sehun's parents couldn't have refused too since they were well aware of an Adlet's stubbornness. Besides, they were playing safe. In case they couldn't find Sehun the right suitor, it would have been difficult to keep Sehun's fecundity. Thus, they used Kai's virility to secure their son's. Another actuality was that it would be difficult to find celibate Therianthropes who would mate with Sehun since most of the Therianthropes imprinted on whoever except Berserkers, which were out of the question. Sehun was no longer chaste and thus any Therianthrope looking for a partner that had bloomed will take him easily. His parents played it out smart. Now Sehun can't imprint on anyone because imagine Sehun's mother's face if he got knocked up with a human's child and so he will get hitched with the guy his parents want him to end up with.

Kai wondered how much of this truth Sehun had figured out. Probably none. He was too stupid and naive to even suspect that a fire ant would sting him. And that was what Kai liked about him. He liked taking advantage of Sehun's submissive personality.

He had been the one who caused Sehun more troubles.

"Ah!" Kai groaned and shot up from the bed. He had made Sehun feel bad. So he should just apologize and stop feeling guilty about it! Kai grabbed his jacket and quickly hurried down the stairs, ignoring his father who was marching up them.

"Heart, not so heavy as mine, Wending late home, As it passed my window, Whistled itself a tune, A careless snatch, a ballad, A ditty of the street, Yet to my irritated Ear, An Anodyne so sweet, It was as if a Bobolink, Sauntering this way, Carolled, and paused, and carolled, Then bubbled slow away! It was as if a chirping brook, Upon a dusty way, Set bleeding feet to minutes, Without the knowing why! Tomorrow, night will come again, Perhaps, weary and sore, Ah Bugle! By my window, I pray you pass once more."

Sehun couldn't help but smile and look at Julien reciting the poem with utter gratification and pleasure. Not until Julien looked up at him over his glasses had Sehun realized that he was suspiring with a tune of amusement.

"Do I seem like a nerd?" Julien chuckled, tearing his glasses away.

"Not at all. If anything, you are perfect."

"I get that a lot." Julien shrugged and looked out the window right next to the table they were sitting on, analysing the poem collections. "Do you fancy Waldo's works?"

"Ralph Waldo Emerson?"

"Yes." Julien turned to face him.

"I do own his second edition of poem collection." Sehun went to get the book from his colossal shelf of books before returning to the table and took his seat across Julien. *"May be true what I had heard, Earth's a howling wilderness Truculent with fraud and force, Said I, strolling through the pastures, And along the riverside. Caught among the blackberry vines, Feeding on the Ethiops sweet, Pleasant fancies overtook me: I said, "What influence me preferred elect to dreams thus beautiful?" The vines replied, "And didst thou deem. No wisdom to our berries went?"*" he read the two stanzas of 'Berrying'.

"Do you prefer that poem for a particular reason?"

"I like how the beliefs of transcendentalism is encompassed by situating society as a pasture."

"I see." Julien leaned back in his seat, almost going recumbent. "And didst thou deem."

"It means 'No wisdom to our berries went'."

"I know. What does that mean? What are the vines implying?"

Sehun looked down to the book and licked his lips before pursing them.

"The slightest of creature obtains knowledge from nature." Julien answered for him and straightened. Sehun was fascinated by Julien and wasn't a tad bored even after spending five days straight reading

poems and bits and pieces of classic novels. It had helped to take his mind off Kai and his foul remarks. "You learn from the nature, Sehun."

"I do not think the poem was written for my sake."

Julien laughed. "I'm sure not. But it's relatable, no?" he sighed. "How's the baby?"

"He... had been quiet." Sehun had not experienced tremendous amount of vomiting for the past few days but the cravings for pudding lingered. Sehun had been happy and he presumed so was the baby. Julien cracked jokes from time to time and at one point, he even pretended to be feeding the baby some food when he drove the spoon towards Sehun's tummy.

Julien looked out the window again. The white shirt clung onto his muscles tight and fit. The biceps stretched the fabric of the sleeves as his chest cleft was exposed by the two undone buttons at the top. It was mind-boggling to perceive how perfect Julien was.

"Do you... think of him?" Sehun asked sotto voce.

"Hm?" Julien glanced over. "Think of who?"

"Your... lover."

Julien chuckled. "Do you want me to be honest?"

"Yes."

"I do." he let out.

Sehun chewed on his lip before asking another question which seemed quite important. "You must have mated."

Another chuckle. "If that's your way of asking if I already have an heir." he laughed. "No. I mated. But it was with him. I don't think it counts but I never really imprinted on anyone else. It's kinda weird."

"What happened to him?"

"Him? Well..." a long pause. "It didn't work out." that was all Julien said.

"I'm sure there could have been another way."

"He was my best friend from middle school, Sehun. We had been together since I like was 16 and he was 14. It was easier to sneak around my parents when they thought that he's just my friend but..." he trailed off for a moment. "He's human and he can't give an heir. I never cared about it anyway. But my parents did. They got furious when they found out. It wasn't until four years back. I went under Hibernation when... I couldn't find him one day I came back home from work."

"You went under stasis?" Sehun's eyes widened.

"Hibernation." Julien corrected.

"Hibernation." Sehun muttered. "That happens when you transfigure and then sleep, right?"

"Yeah. Four years passed, and I woke up with ye long beard." he laughed.

"Papa had hibernated before. But it was for a year." Sehun had no clue how the body worked during Hibernation of a wolveren theriomorph. But he guessed that all the body systems would be sleeping just as the mind. "Didn't you try to find him?"

"Looked at every nook and crook. He wouldn't have left if he didn't want to. It's not that I don't want to marry you, Sehun. But do you really want to marry me?"

"I... don't. But I don't know how to go against my parents. I've never done that before."

"I know how it is. Lycans tend to follow every single order of their parents'. But he made me break every single of the rules." he smiled to himself. "So, what's your story?"

"I'd rather not converse it."

"I insist. If you want me to get that stubborn Adlet to lean towards you."

"How do you insist on doing that?"

"No man would want another man claiming his child." he smirked.

"What?"

"If you want to keep the baby, you can."

"But my parents-"

"You have my permission."

"Julien-"

"This ought to trigger something in your mate, no?"

"Kai is unreasonably, perversely unyielding. He wouldn't budge. Besides, the baby is promised to be his." a pang was sent to Sehun's heart.

"I'll try to do something before I leave next week." he got on his feet. "Good night, Sehun." he brushed Sehun's hair and cupped his face, leaning over the study desk. Sehun perked up to let Julien give a slight peck on his cheek before the older man exited the bedroom.

Sehun sat there for a moment, replaying the moments he had shared with Julien in this short period of time before he got up to wash up and change into his pyjamas. Climbing into his bed and eiderdown, he grabbed the book from the bedside table and started reading 'Little Dorrit' to the unborn baby.

That was before he heard the blattering noise from the bathing room. His eyes widened but he didn't scream for help. Instead, he got out of the bed and went to check the bathing room. When he opened the door, "Shit!" he heard Kai curse when he stumbled on the toiletries.

"What are you doing here?" Sehun asked, stumped.

Kai stopped his rambling about the 'bloody bottles' and stared at Sehun, frozen. Sehun switched the bathroom light on without entering the room. He despised Kai, he reminded himself but he knew that it was a lie. Kai stepped out of the bathing room and into the bed chamber as Sehun took several steps back. "What do you want?" he whispered, looking at his own feet.

"I..." Kai started but left the syllable hanging as he paced forward.

"I can't speak with you now. Leave." Sehun stepped back.

"I came to apologize."

Apologize? Did Sehun hear it wrong? He looked at Kai in disbelief. "I don't need your insincere apology. You've done enough damage."

Kai caught Sehun's wrist before he could back up any further. "I'm here to apologize sincerely."

"No." Sehun pulled his hand back. "You're a confused person, Kai. I don't want to ever see you again. So please leave."

"I..." Kai stuttered out and then let out a jagged breath. Instead of saying anything more, he brought the back of his hand to Sehun's stomach and pressed it onto it, causing Sehun's breath to catch. "I won't bother you for now. Take care of him." he withdrew his hand and for a moment, Sehun had gone numb by the electric jolt from Kai's touch.

Chapter Twenty

"Are... are you going somewhere?" queried Sehun when Kai began to retreat.

"Yes. I'm not gonna do anyone any good by staying here. I get so mad when I'm around you and I always end up doing things that I regret."

"Wow." Sehun murmured and glanced away.

"No. I don't think I can control it. Everything that you do irritates me. One minute I think that we might get along and the next, I erupt. I'm like so unstable right now."

Sehun conceived why. Unlike Docile Lycans, Adlets had intemperate manners of maturing. But that fact aside, Sehun knew that Kai never liked him anyway. "Good." he said and Kai looked up at him.

"Good?"

"Leave. And if you think I'll forgive you for anything, you're wrong."

"Fuck." Kai spat and palmed his face. "You think I'm expecting you to forgive me? I've done my part and I don't give a shit about what you think." he stopped himself as his hard expression softened. "See. I think I have some bipolar disease."

"Your testosterone levels are in utter disarray. Your maturing." Sehun enlightened Kai.

"What?" Kai expressed a grimace and then scoffed. "You're kidding me, right? So this whole muddle up emotion is an upshot of my adulthood puberty?"

"I'm sure there is more sophisticated way of saying that."

Kai groaned and plodded to the bed before taking his seat on the edge it. "I'm fucked up."

Sehun bit his lip and wended his way to the study desk, leaning his back on it. "You keep pushing me away and then you're always somehow coming back. I don't get it, Kai."

"Trust me, me neither." he sighed. "I spend like five hours convincing myself of how horrible you Lycans are and then I'm like, 'does Sehun eat his vegetables everyday'. Fuck me and my fucked up brain for fucking fuck's sake." he buried his face into his palms.

Sehun's lips parted to gape at Kai. What was he divulging? Was he implying a concern? "... do consume requisite amount of vegetables everyday if that's what's you're worried about."

Kai glanced up with a smirk. "You must think I'm completely pathetic."

"I do. But, Kai. This doesn't have to be this way. You don't have to hate me so much."

"I don't hate you, okay. It's just some kind of natural animosity. I even said that we should be friends and I meant it. But.... I don't know. I just don't like hanging around you as if I'm okay with you."

"Then just tell me what bothers you about me? I've never done anything to irk you, Kai. Not in the least sense. I think it would be great if we both stop acting puerile and start behaving like proper adults."

Kai remained taciturned and stared at Sehun before shaking his head.

"Kai, we don't have to be friends. I know you do not like me. I'd be grateful if you could just smile when we meet. Even if it's not genuine."

Kai's eyes widened but he quickly looked away. "Did you by chance..."

"What?"

"Nothing." he muttered and stood up. His eyes traveled to Sehun's stomach. "You know, mom's already renovating the baby's room. She's super excited."

Sehun's stomach churned weirdly. Time and again people had to remind him that the baby wasn't going to stay with him. "I'm sorry if I overreacted that day."

Kai rubbed the back of his neck, looking at the tapestry. "Well, I did too. Julius Caesar did say that all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players."

Sehun cringed. "It's not Julius Caesar. It's a monologue of *As You Like It*, spoken by Jaques in act two, scene seven. It's by Shakespeare."

"What's the difference? They're both dead. And were so annoying. Blah blah blah."

Sehun cringed again. "Where are you going by the way?"

"Forests of Jupiter most probably. You can celebrate now. Where's your smoking hot betrothed?"

"Kai." Sehun stepped away from the desk. "I don't want to marry him."

"You sure are making tremendous amount of effort correlating to that."

Sehun went scarlet. "You don't want me to get married to him."

Kai swallowed loudly and started to glower. "I don't care."

"No. You got infuriated by that, weren't you? Why?"

"I don't wanna start this again, okay? I made you cry and I wanted to apologize for that. I won't be back for at least a couple of months. So just say that you forgive me so that I won't end up ripping people's heads off."

"Forests of Jupiter?" asked Sehun in lieu.

"Yeah. Tropical forest. Why?"

"Is it sunny there?"

"Somewhat, why?"

Sehun smiled to himself. "I'd like to see that kind of places one day."

Kai flinched and blinked. "O..kay. I'd bring you but we're not exactly on great terms."

"No. I don't really think I have the chance to ever get away from this coldness." but mayhap Julien would bring him away.

Kai rubbed the back of his neck again. "Uh... is there anything you need before I go?"

Sehun flashed a sad smile. "Thank you, Kai."

Kai cringed this time. "What for?"

"No reason." Sehun grinned. "And..." something that he had wanted since forever. "Can you just tell him good night?"

"Tell who?"

"Jae."

Kai licked his lips. "That would be awkward, Sehun. He can't hear me."

"He hears everything, Kai."

Kai took some steps forward but paused before striding straight to Sehun. "How do I do this?" his hands slid down Sehun's arms vacillatingly. He was really doing it and Sehun couldn't believe it. Kai's breath blustered out of his lips like some sweet warm breeze, his heaving chest was close to Sehun's, his musky scent of aftershave suggested that he had just shaved and Sehun wanted to drag his fingers along Kai's jawline. Without being conscious of it, he leaned in and almost kissed a corner of Kai's jaw before he snapped out of it when Kai's hand slipped under his shirt and his cold palm brushed the flat planes of Sehun's stomach where Jae silently resided. Sehun could feel Kai's breath quickening as he looked into

Sehun's eyes. Their gaze locked and Kai's palm remained pressed onto Sehun's stomach. They leaned in together, slowly, hearts racing and thumping, hammering to their chests.

Kai jumped back in a frenzy when the door suddenly flew open. "Stray dogs are loafing everywhere these days." Julien alluded to the situation in the bedroom, closing the door behind him. "Did you seriously think no one would pick up the scent of an Adlet if they passed the room? Besides, is it cultured to sneak into someone's house like this?"

Kai was scowling hard. "Heavy coming from someone so cultured as you who's looking for a way to get into the pants of someone who's conceiving."

Julien still remained composed. He even smirked. "So you know that he's reserved for me. Just wondering what you're doing there, with your hands all over him."

Kai started to stomp towards him and Sehun quickly placed himself between them. "Go home, Kai." he pushed Kai's chest.

"Reserved? Well, I fucked him first, you gooseshit!" Kai hollered at Julien, past Sehun.

"Then too bad you let him slip just after some fucks, sweetheart."

Sehun scowled at Julien and pushed Kai harder. "Leave." he hissed at Kai.

"Between the two of us, whose child do you think Sehun would be glad to have if he was given a chance?" Julien scoffed and Sehun had no clue why he was provoking Kai. "I was a tad late, wasn't I? Tell me, Kai, is it? Do you have a say if I say that I want Sehun to keep the child?"

Kai didn't retaliate. He stepped back instead. He eyed Sehun. "You know what? I don't think I'll be leaving until this son of a bitch is out of the picture. And you." he harshly grabbed Sehun's arm. "You think the cold is that bad?" he said as much, shoved Sehun's arm away and stomped into the bathing room, leaving Sehun to contemplate what he had just admitted.

Julien arched his brow at Sehun. "Why is he going into the bathroom though?"

"Mom. I want to go on a picnic." Kai demanded, slumping in the chair during breakfast the next morning.

His father looked up at him from his journal. "Have you finally gone barking mad?" he asked.

"Please, mom." Kai proceeded his request.

"I thought you're leaving today?" his mother asked, stirring her coffee.

"Oh for Thursday's sake, don't tell me you canceled the plans." his father roared and Kai glowered at him.

"No, dad. Lucky for you, I haven't. My flight's at 10 pm." Kai informed.

"So you guys see, Kai wants to bring us all on a picnic on the jolly old snow before he leaves." Kris commented, entering the dining hall.

"You're not invited by the way."

"I'm never invited to anything. I just invite myself." Kris simpered.

Luhan walked in as well but Kai ignored him. "Dad?" Luhan called his father and Kai just clenched his jaw, grinding his teeth.

"If you're ready, we can go. I can't hear anymore of Kai's mental breakdowns." his dad said and stood up. He ruffled Kai's hair and Kai rudely shoved his hand off.

"Morning, Hello Kitty." Kris greeted, grinning in Luhan's way. Luhan didn't even bother to look at him.

"What's going on now?" his mother asked when Luhan and her husband were out of there.

Kai let out a heavy breath. "I wanna ask Sehun out but he wouldn't come if I asked him."

Both his mother and Kris' eyes bulged out. Kris coughed twice. "I think my ears are clogged. Cause I'm hearing bullshit." he fake picked his ear.

"I think I should stop eating those lavender biscuits cause the side effects include hallucination." Kai's mother commented.

"Stop mocking me, okay." Kai interrupted. "I just wanna pull the words out of Sehun's mouth that he prefers me to that bloody tall white swine."

"Nobody would prefer you to him, Kai." Kris chortled.

"Really? Chanyeol was saying that he's perfect and all." Kai's mother said.

"Yeah. Hold on." Kris fished out his phone and fiddled with it. "There."

"What's that?" Kai asked.

"His IG."

"You found his IG?!"

"Duh. Julienkang underscore Den capital N." he showed the phone's screen to Kai's mother and Kai couldn't help but lean over the table to take a peek but Kris pulled the phone away.

"Oh lord. Kai. Kris is right. Nobody would prefer you to him." his mother gasped.

Kai rolled his eyes. "That's where you're wrong. Sehun said that he doesn't want to marry him. But that asshole thinks he's a Prince Charming."

"Oh my. He is." his mother kept staring at the phone's screen. "He's so fine. Sweet lord. Wow."

"Mom!"

"What?! Look at that nose."

"Stop fangirling over him!" he snatched the phone and scrolled through the account. Except for the displaying picture, it was filled to the brim with pictures of nature and cursive writing craps. Kai wondered if they were poems. "Is DenN his middle name or something?"

"I don't think so." said Kris. "Scroll lower. He tagged almost all of the pictures as 'Dennis O'Neil.'"

"The fuck is that?"

"No idea. The account is private."

Kai tossed the phone onto the table out of vexation. "So, mom. Are you gonna help me or not?"

"I will. Well, I wanna see this Julien Kang." she smiled.

Chapter Twenty-one

"I am one hundred per cent affirmative that bitter gourd is not healthy, Sehun." Julien couldn't help but make a fuss out of Sehun consuming the unpalatable bitter gourd juice.

"It is. Isn't it, Kyungsoo?" Sehun shot at Kyungsoo who was staring into the microwave oven.

"It is very beneficial, Mr Kang." Kyungsoo told Julien, rendering Julien groaning in dismay.

"It looks so gross, though." Julien murmured and leaned against the kitchen counter, crossing his arms over the chest. "I'm kinda getting sick of home."

"Homesick?" asked Kyungsoo.

"No. Literally, sick of staying home. We should go out."

"Where do you suggest?"

"The town?" Sehun passed down an opinion. He needed to procure himself some time away from home as well. It was getting Spartan even if Julien was around to make Sehun's boring tedious life a tad breezy.

"Hm. The town." Julien repeated, eyeing Sehun carefully.

"What about the town?" Mrs Kang entered the kitchen along with Sehun's mother.

"Oh, I was just wondering if I could bring Sehun and Kyungsoo to the town." said Julien.

Both the women exchanged a glance and Mrs Kang smiled. "I don't see why not."

"Uh. Perhaps not now." interrupted Sehun's mother.

"Why not, mama? I'm going with Julien." Sehun told her.

"Yes. But..."

"Let them go. We'll be leaving soon and I think it will be the best if Sehun and Julien get all the time they could." Mrs Kang pressed.

"Alright. In that case, maybe Kyungsoo should go along."

Julien threw Sehun a smirk.

"Julien, we're planning to hold a party in another two days." Sehun's mother informed.

"Really?" Julien raised a brow. "That's kinda sudden."

"It will be the best to let everyone know of your betrothal."

"A party? Mama, I don't think it is necessary." Sehun cut in, feeling somewhat edgy and troubled.

"It is necessary. It will be a small gathering just the night before your planned departure, Julien. Your parents think it will be great."

"I suppose." Julien's face was pulling as well. After what happened last night, Sehun had more the reasons to doubt this marriage. Kai seemed different last night. If there was any chance at all, Sehun would want to see more of that side of Kai's. On the other hand, the way Julien had narrated his past endearment assured Sehun that he was still affectionate towards his first love. He didn't see how their parents thought that this marriage would work. They might be able to produce heirs to the bloodline but in terms of love, Sehun was sure that Julien would never find the proclivity in him.

The doorbell chimed at the front door and Sehun blinked his eyes, retrieving himself from his thoughts. As Kyungsoo hurried to get the door, everyone else trailed behind him.

"You don't want that, do you?" Julien whispered to Sehun as they approached the main hall.

A frown formed on Sehun's face. "I'm not sure." he wasn't sure if he wanted to blazon his marriage to Julien. He wasn't sure if he would be able to give the baby away. He wasn't sure if he could trust Julien. He was most definitely not sure if he would be able to forget Kai and his touch. He was the first man to touch Sehun. And something about Kai always promised Sehun something that he didn't perceive. Adventure? Challenge? Love? But in actuality, Sehun would have a good life if he married Julien and gave the baby away to Kai's family as promised. Kai's mind was muddled and his decisions were chaotic. Sehun couldn't put a single ounce of faith in him.

Speaking of the devil himself, it was Kai who was at the doorstep along with his mother, Chanyeol and Kris. Sehun stuck close to Julien just in case if Kai was back to his old brutal self unlike last night where he had apologized and even attempted to feel their unborn baby.

"Good morning." Gina greeted with her ever so charming smile.

"Hm." Mrs Kang hummed and returned the smile but Sehun's mother remained hostile. "Hi." she held her hand out to shake Gina's. "Pleasure to meet you."

"Pleasure is all mine."

"What brings you here, Gina?" inquired Sehun's mother.

"Let's invite them in first." Mrs Kang moved aside and welcomed them into the house with a broad grin. "My my. Such fine boys your sons are." she laughed.

Gina chuckled and eyed Kai. "This is my son, Kai. Those two are my nephews, Chanyeol and Kris."

"Oh. My apologies."

Kai bowed at Mrs Kang with a plastic smile etched on his face.

"I just heard that there are new Therianthropes in town. Came by to say hi." said Gina.

Mrs Kang chortled like the wind. "This is my son, Julien." she ushered Julien to the front and Kai was already scowling at the taller. Julien bowed to Kai's mother before taking her hand to kiss the back of it. Gina went red.

"I've now come across two of the most beautiful women in the world, I suppose." Julien shot her a compliment, straightening up.

Gina's blush only grew worse as she flashed Kai a smirk. "Motherfucker." Kai only mouthed but Sehun could clearly read his lips as his eyes widened. Luckily, no one else caught Kai's horrible remark. Kai then shot Sehun a hard look at first which made Sehun cringe but the gaze quickly turned languid and Kai even smiled shyly.

Shivers were sent down Sehun's spine when he acknowledged Kai's glance to his stomach.

"I heard this is the so-said betrothed to our handsome Sehun." Gina said. "I must say, Sehun is one lucky person."

"That depends on how good Julien is at- Ow" Kris petered out when Chanyeol slapped the back of his head. "I was gonna say chess! Although, I can tell he should be very good at it." he simpered, eyeing Julien. Julien gave a touché nod, mirroring Kris' smirk.

"How have you been, Sehun?" Gina held Sehun's arms as she asked her concerns.

"I've been well, Gina." Sehun muttered, forcing himself to smile. It felt awkward that he felt so congenial whenever Gina was around. But it was the contrary with Kai. Even now, Kai's subtle stare made Sehun jittery.

"Well, I was wondering if we could steal Sehun away for a moment." she turned to Sehun's mother.

"Away? Where to?" Sehun's mother asked, rather perturbed.

"Just around. There's a loch nearby. We thought we could show Sehun around."

The idea appealed to Sehun. He wondered what could be engaging about a pothole. Especially in this snow-covered land. "It's cold." Sehun's mother said, against Sehun's hankering. "It should be frozen."

"It's spring." Gina laughed. It was obvious that she was the strongest female in the house but Sehun had doubts about Julien's mother as well. She was a Loup-garou but didn't seem to be as tough as Gina. "The loch is a marvellous place that Sehun should see."

"Can I go, mama?" it had to be the first time Sehun had mustered up the courage to ask something that he knew would not get the permission from his parents.

"No. You're going to the town with Julien remember. Don't break your promises just because of petty invitations." his mother lambasted.

"Mrs Oh." Julien crossed. "He could come with me to the town and then I have no objections if he wants to go with them."

"I like this dude." Kris murmured. Chanyeol was looking elsewhere and Sehun gazed at his centre of attention which turned out to be Kyungsoo who was gnawing on his cuticles nervously.

"In that case, why don't we all go to the town and maybe some other time, Sehun could come with us to see the ice chandeliers." said Gina. "I have some things to buy as well."

It was unbelievable that Sehun was actually allowed to go to the town in the presence of Kai and his family. Julien was engaged in a converse with Gina as they walked through the departmental store. People were gawking at Sehun for no apparent reason and it made him skittish and anxious. He wasn't used to having attention to himself and amongst these civilians, he seemed like an alien.

He tried to distract himself by tapping into Chanyeol and Kyungsoo's conversation but they were walking to far back. That was when he felt a palm slip into his own, sliding and caressing gently. Sehun turned to see Kai walking side by side with him. Nonplussed and knocked for six, Sehun gaped at Kai but didn't pull his hand away. Kai's hand was warm, snuggish against Sehun's.

Kai wasn't even looking at Sehun even as his hand remained clasped onto Sehun's. "I think he is more into my mother than you." Kai said sotto voce. "I have a feeling that my dad's not gonna be fond of Julien Kang."

"He's a nice man." Sehun replied. "He... is gentle. And warm."

Kai's hand tightened around Sehun's. "I'm brutal and cold."

"No. You're childish and puerile."

"So you need a man. Not a boy."

"I didn't say that."

Kai withdrew his hand and Sehun felt disappointed. Kai reached out for a shelf and picked a round fluffy, flocculent ball around the size of his palm. It resembled a huge pink cotton ball. Sehun had no idea of the purpose of the soft stuff. "Here." Kai shoved the ball into Sehun's chest.

"What is this for?"

"Cuddle with it. Are you that dumb? It's for... the baby."

"The baby's not going to come out until next year."

"Don't be so annoying. Why wouldn't you come with me to the loch?" Kai scowled. "I'm leaving tonight, you know."

The ball was softer than Sehun had presumed. "I said I'd come."

"Then come with me tonight."

"I can't. My parents won't agree."

"You've snuck out before."

"And it had turned out badly for us." Sehun frowned.

Kai let out an exasperated sigh. "Fine. I promise you. I won't hurt you this time. I just wanna... talk to you."

Sehun lowered his gaze. "I don't know, Kai."

"I'll pick you up at 6."

"No, don't. I'll... meet you at the snow back near your house."

"How?"

"I'll ask Julien to send me."

Kai cocked a brow. "Are you crazy?"

"Do you want to meet me or not?"

"Yes yes."

Sehun nodded and fidgeted with the ball. "I want pudding." he mumbled and turned around to go and see if Julien would buy him some pudding.

"I don't think I wanna go." Kai told Chanyeol when they had reached home. His mother had been on and on about Julien and his perfect northern accent. Apparently according to her, Julien was a 'well-proportioned knockout'. But Kai had different point of view, claiming that Julien looked like a character jumped straight out of a Hallmark card.

"Kai, stop your bullshit!" Kris hollered. "We're leaving so soon for you and you can't cancel our plans out of the sudden!"

"But..." Kai trailed off. Back in the town, he had caught Sehun to be constantly watching, staring at him and Kai himself couldn't take his eyes off Sehun. His mind wandered to the moments they shared on bed AND snow. But that was not all. Every time Kai felt Sehun's eyes on him, his body surged with something weird. For some reason, Kai knew that Julien was no enemy. Julien had some vibes. It was weird that Kai felt gratified that Julien was protective of Sehun. But nevertheless, he didn't like it when Julien draped his arm over Sehun's shoulders or when his hand touched any part of Sehun.

Sehun had bought the pink fuzz ball and Kai was almost jumping on cloud nine because of that. God, he was going insane.

Kai had pushed Sehun away and when Sehun was finally going to find happiness with someone else, he can't poke his nose into the affair. The fact that Kai had done nothing but bring strings of calamity into Sehun's life was slowly dawning onto Kai and the worst part was that it was making him stricken with guilt.

"Fine. Sorry. Momentary unsureness." Kai murmured and started for the stairs. He would apologize completely to Sehun this evening when they meet at the snowbank and end everything between them.

"Kai." Chanyeol called. "Are you okay? You seem sull."

Before Kai could reply the door swung open and Luhan stepped in, chuckling and giggling with Kai's father by his side, an arm hooked onto Luhan's neck. "No, dad. I'm sure you're the one that suck." Luhan guffawed.

"Not exactly, son." his father retorted before ruffling Luhan's hair. They quickly parted when Kai's mother showed up into the living hall.

"Back so soon?" she asked and tip-toed to peck on her husband's lips.

"Was thinking about bringing Luhan to the mountains for a run." the man said and Kai went fervid, burning with rage and disappointment.

"Really, dad?" he scoffed, stepping down the first two steps he had climbed. His father glanced over to him and blinked.

"What's wrong?"

"I'm leaving today and you don't even care shit about that, do you?"

"You're leaving for a vacation. What's there to care about, Kai?"

"Or you're simply getting rid of me so that you can bond with your bastard."

"Stop this, Kai. He's your brother and my son as well. He has every right as you do."

"Fuck this shit." Kai spat as if the words were acidic. "I know. I know you hate me right now. But it's kinda childish that you're pushing me away and showing off your fatherly fucking skills with your new son." his hands were already balled into fists.

"I'm not gonna tolerate your rude comments anymore, Kai!"

"So what? Go to your room, that's what you're gonna say right? Well, I'd have to do it then. Cause I only have one dad. And I depend on him. But you. You have like hundreds of bastards out there, don't you? Too bad I don't have more fathers. Or do I, mom?"

"Kai, that's enough." Luhan cut in. "I know you don't like me. Which is why I don't even cross paths with you. Stop acting like this."

"One more word out of your bloody mouth and I'll put you out of your fucking misery. And dad, you haven't spoken ten words to me all week because you're too busy with this shit?! Aren't you disgusted? Imagine how mom would feel! Another woman's bastard roaming around, claiming the rights to be my father's son! Don't you have any shame?" he shot at Luhan. "You were born out of wedlock. My dad fucked your mother out of lust. And still you dare to show up with your half-assed claim to be the first son?"

"Kai!" his mother finally erupted and shoved Kai back, hard. "You are born out of wedlock! You are the other woman's bastard roaming in my house!" she burst into tears as soon as she spat the words out.

Kai stood there, numb and paralyzed as he stared at his mother, breathlessly. His father rubbed his temples and leaned onto a wall, heaving a sigh. Luhan too, seemed disappointed but nowhere near as shocked as Kai or Kris and Chanyeol.

"Wh-what?" Kai let out when the moment had passed.

His mother wiped her cheeks. "Luhan is my son. Not you, Kai." she wept miserably.

"Gina." Kai's father grabbed her shoulders from behind.

"I'm sorry."

Kai didn't wait to hear anymore as his feet broke into a sprint out of the house with Chanyeol screaming after him.

Nothing made sense and Kai had no idea why he was crying. He was walking in the cold evening. The sky was pitch black dark with zero stars and he guessed it was new moon. But after some minutes, he became numb again. He should have asked for explanation but was worried of what the result would be. He walked for hours with a number of rests against the trees but he didn't go back. He couldn't. He went where his feet was taking him. The night was calm and the air wasn't moving which was a bad thing because Kai's quickening breaths were more audible.

'Luhan is my son. Not you, Kai...'

Kai shook his head. Maybe his mother was angry that she lied. What she wasn't?

He kept on walking past the trees. He could trail back home easily but he wished that he would get lost. He reached the outskirts of trees and only then he realized that he was walking towards the snowbank all this while. A car waited there and Kai squinted at the light when it flickered.

Sehun got down the car before the vehicle drove away. So thoughtful of Julien to make sure that Kai showed up as he waited with Sehun. Kai seriously didn't want to see Sehun right now.

"You're late." Sehun said as Kai plodded to him. He stood his place, watching Kai approach him without a reply. "I thought you weren't coming."

Kai reached him and his arms came around Sehun's waist before he pressed his face onto Sehun's chest, breaking into a sob. "Kai?" Sehun gasped quietly. Kai's knees buckled and he started to drop onto the snow, dragging Sehun down with him. "Kai." he ran his fingers through Kai's hair as Kai cried silently against him, kneeling on the snow.

If Sehun and their unborn child wasn't family, Kai no longer knew what the definition of family was.

entr'acte

Julien pulled the car to the side and turned the lights down. A smile formed on his face. Maybe Sehun and Kai would finally realize how they were both into each other. Kids. He scoffed and lighted a cigarette. He was once them too. Childish, always in denial, stubborn, stuck-up, arrogant. Dennis never liked it when Julien showed off when he won a bet or a friendly match of basketball. But during most of the 'friendly' basketball matches, they'd end up making out sloppily, all sweaty and panting anyway with Dennis pinned to the ground by Julien.

He swiped his phone to unlock it and gained access to the remaining photos of Dennis on it. Smiling to himself, Julien recollected the precious memory that always lingered on his mind. Dennis was an utter nerd in middle school. When he joined the school's basketball team, he was kind of the runt of the team, small and timid. But he caught Julien's attention immediately. Unlike Dennis, Julien was tall, muscular and had the whole school drooling after him even at the age of 16. It was no surprise since he had the great genes of a Loup-garou. But Dennis grew quicker than you could say Jack Robinson. And more beautiful than anyone. Soon, he had his own admirers in school and Julien was one of them. The thing was, Dennis never saw Julien more than just his best friend. Not until Julien started giving him hints though. He was shy and human.

But even then, at the age of 20, in the college that they both had deliberately went together to, he gave up. That was the point when Julien had stopped being just a friend to Dennis and it had been all pleasure and happiness ever since. Until everything became complicated.

At times, Julien found himself thinking about the times when Dennis had been moaning Julien's name and no matter how hard he tried to stay quiet in Julien's bedroom, he never succeeded. Hands clasped, mouths smashed, tongues tangled, bodies arched into one another. Julien will never experience that kind of pleasure ever again because he loved Dennis.

One incident changed their lives. And Julien knew it was the best to let Dennis go. After all, Dennis never loved Julien, because if he had, he would have fought to be with Julien. Instead, he ran away. As far as he could from Julien to keep his life and for some cheap amount of money Julien's parents had offered him.

Julien tossed the phone onto the passenger seat and leaned his head on the headrest. He threw the stub of the cigarette out the window after taking a long drag. Dennis hated Julien's nicotine breath. Julien wanted to see him just once more. Just to ask if he had ever loved him for real. But was scared of the answer he might earn. The incident itself had sent him to Hibernation for four years.

Chapter Twenty-two

He was unbelievably heavy to a fault for someone so skinny. His ponderous weight was slowly pinning on Sehun, pushing him further and further that Sehun's back hurt from trying to retain stability. His knees were going numb as well, buried in the density of the brumal snow.

"Kai?" Sehun emanated in a low voice, stroking the hair at the back of Kai's head as Kai had his face bore into Sehun's right chest. Kai's silent snivelling concerned Sehun but he didn't bother to ask any questions. It felt difficult to watch Kai cry for that he had always been so hard-headed and unsentimental not to mention his indecorous remarks. But now it was incontrovertible that even the hardest-hearted men can be vulnerable. Sehun only wondered what could be the reason for Kai's disintegration. He had been normal just several hours back.

Kai was clutching Sehun's coat near the shoulder blades, arms gripping Sehun's body in place and his sobs had stopped. He was now prevailing to focus on just breathing against Sehun's chest before he shifted and buried his face onto Sehun's shoulder, still declining to pull back and look at Sehun.

"It's going to be okay." Sehun whispered, even if he had no clue of what was going on. Kai let out a jagged breath upon the crook of Sehun's neck as his hand slowly made its way to the other side of the neck. He curled his hand around it and brushed Sehun's hair at the nape of his neck. Sehun's body trembled when he realized how warm Kai was contrasting to the cold snow.

"You don't know that." Kai exhaled, his voice husky and rough. His fingers brushed Sehun's jaw before they caressed his cheek. Kai pulled back at last and withdrew his hand, quickly clambering to his feet and brushed off the snow from his knees. "Come on." he sniffled and wiped his face with the sleeves of his coat. His nose was scarlet red as his eyes, glistening, tired and crimson. It was horrible to see Kai like this.

Kai held his hand out to Sehun and waited for Sehun to take it. Sehun blinked his eyes, accepted his hand and was pulled up to his feet. "I shouldn't have come." he murmured.

Kai suddenly held the sides of Sehun's head, edging close. "No. I'm glad you came."

"You have to leave soon, right?"

"Yes. I'll be leaving for good." Kai's eyes welled up with tears again but he blinked them away, stepping back. "The loch then." he took in a deep breath and eyed Sehun's hand. "Can I... hold your hand?"

Sehun felt childish when he looked at his own hand. "You're asking?"

Kai chuckled humourlessly and rubbed his eyes. "I kinda sound pathetic, don't I?"

Sehun reached out and took Kai's hand into his own, intertwining their fingers. "If you're leaving... will you come back?" by now, Sehung was conversant with the fact that the baby was the prize for Kai's parents. Not Kai. They needed an heir to succeed Kai's father. Kai somehow was out of the picture even if he was the father.

"I don't know." Kai frowned as he started leading Sehung out of the snowbank zone.

Sehung bit his lip. The sensation of having Kai's skin against his own was remarkable but at the same time, confining. Their hands were warming up. "Do you want to tell me... what happened?"

Kai remained taciturn, keeping his eyes straight ahead. It was so dark but Sehung had to just trust him to lead. "I'd tell you. But I don't wanna sound like some whining little kid."

"I'd never think of you that way."

"You're already choosing the better man than me. I'm childish, I know."

"I didn't choose Julien, Kai. And I know this isn't about us."

After a moment of silence, Kai replied, "No it's not. This is about me and my fucked up family."

Sehung blinked. "What about them?"

"I..."

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to."

"I don't think I want to tell this to anyone at all." his grip tightened around Sehung's hand. "Damn it I don't even know if it's all true but the way my mom.... said it..."

"Your mom said what?"

"She said I was..." he trailed off.

Sehung waited as he followed Kai's steps. The winter woods did not seem so vile when Kai was around for some reason.

"She said that I'm not her son." Kai finally muttered and Sehung stopped walking.

"Why would she say that?" Kai was utterly disturbing and rude but Sehung couldn't think of why a mother would say such a thing. For the most part, unequivocally not Gina.

"She..." Kai hung his head. "My father... didn't... say anything. He knew... Of course he knew! I don't even understand why would they do this!" he was bursting into tears again. "She was crying! She said that she was sorry! I don't understand... I wasn't their son... I'm not their son. Luhan knew as well... He lied that his mother had died. Who am I then?! What am I even doing here?! I don't get!"

"Kai, Kai, calm down." Sehung cupped the sides of Kai's face. Kai breathed heavily, eyes closed, hands clinging onto Sehung's wrists. Sehung had never seen anyone in such condition before.

"Luhan is her son."

"Luhan?"

"The guy in my house."

Sehun recalled him the night he had met him. "He's.... Gina's son?"

Kai wiped his cheeks. "That's what she said. I've never... seen her so hysteric like that. I don't know what to do right now. She's my mother, Sehun. And now all out of the sudden she says that I'm not her son? Luhan is her son and where did that come from? Why keep me and not him then? It doesn't make sense."

"Have you thought about imprinting?"

"Huh?"

"Parents imprint too." Sehun considered his words. "I've learnt about it... Kai.. Sometimes they... don't imprint on their child. But sometimes they..."

"No. Stop." Kai held his palm up to create some distance between them. "I don't wanna hear it."

"Kai-"

"You're implying that she imprinted on me! Right?!" he shouted. "No no no no!" he started pacing here and there, scrubbing his face.

"It's the only explanation I can come up with." Sehun muttered sadly.

"No, Sehun! She never imprinted for a mate! My dad was her first mate and she never imprinted on him! If she had imprinted on me, that would mean..."

That would mean Kai was Gina's mating instinct imprinting. Sehun felt sick to his stomach. "No. I have to be wrong then." he quickly amended.

"It makes sense though." he murmured quietly. "First imprinting would be on the mate. It could happen on babies, it's not like something we can control."

"She's your mother, Kai. I don't think she would have ever seen you in such manner."

"No. She wouldn't have. But keeping me close to her would have suppressed the imprinting. Jesus. How can I be so stupid not to know my own mother?"

"It's not your fault. We don't know for sure."

"You know what's annoying about you? You're right all the time." he spat viciously.

Sehun lowered his gaze. "I hope I'm not accurate this time then."

"She didn't imprint on me as a mother. I was never her son. So that wouldn't make sense. Who's my mother? This is all my father's fault. He's the one to be blamed. Mom..." he choked a little. "Gina is the first wife then. My dad mated with her. But he didn't imprint on her. When he did, on some other, I'm the result of it. They just fabricated the whole story of my life." he whispered miserably.

"Kai, let's not jump into conclusion."

"No. I'm right this time." his face went stone-hard. "I was never really needed. I was here the whole time because my mom... Gina had imprinted on me. I don't get why Luhan was sent away... Has he been living with my mother all this while?"

"Stop thinking too much. You should talk to your parents."

"I will. And if all of this is true, I swear to god I'm not going to forgive any of them."

"Do you have to leave?" asked Sehun, lying on the snow in an open ground right next to Kai as they stared into the black awning of the night sky.

"What good I'm gonna do for anyone if I stayed?"

"What about me then?"

"You don't need me. You don't need a bastard like me."

"Kai..."

"Julien is way better in every sense. You'll be happy with him. I caused you nothing but misery all this while." he scoffed and then chortled. "Karma's kicking me hard on the face, huh?"

"Stay. For me. For... our baby."

Kai propped himself up by the help of his elbows and stared at Sehun. "I was right, wasn't I? You are in love with me."

Sehun licked his lips and dropped his gaze.

"Since when?" asked Kai.

"I don't know. I don't... wish to marry Julien."

"And I don't wish to be with you."

"What?"

Kai lied back down. "I need some space."

"I don't comprehend you, Kai. You need me right now."

"No. You're more trouble for me and I don't want to waste my time with you."

"Why are you saying that?"

"Because I'm fucked, okay! Totally screwed! And I can't think about you or the baby right now."

Sehun wasn't that stupid to realize that Kai was trying to push him away so that he would have a better life with Julien. It was written all over Kai's face. Sehun sat up and hugged his knees to his chest. "I'll wait if you need some space."

"No. Get married and be happy. Give up the baby, Sehun. You don't need a bastard's child."

Sehun threw him a glowering look. "I'm keeping him. I'm not giving him to you."

"I'll take him myself."

"No."

"What can you possibly do, Sehun?"

"I'll fight you if I have to. For him."

Kai laughed. "He's going to be mine. My first family. Real family. And you will have your own royal extravagant family."

Sehun's scowl faded. "You are my family." he whispered.

"You want to take the risks, Sehun? Imagine what your parents would say if they knew about my fucked up family? I am not Julien Kang. If I leave my parents... I'm gonna have to strive to live. Are you up for it?"

"I don't care about what they'd say. And I know very well that you are not Julien. I don't love Julien even if he deserves all the love in the world. Too bad that I've fallen for the first man who made me feel like I'm worth it."

Kai clenched his jaw as he watched Sehun's quivering eyes. "Will you wait then?"

"You're still leaving." he sighed.

"I have to. I will do you no good if I stayed. I want to fall in love with you and maybe distance is all I need. I need to get away from this mess."

"I... understand."

Kai smiled faintly but it was so painful. Sehun couldn't even picture what he'd do if he found out that his mother was never really his mother. Or worse, he was kept for the mere reason of imprinting. "I'll be back before he's born." Kai pressed a hand into Sehun's stomach, sitting up, sending a wild shudder down Sehun's body.

"Kai." he hung onto Kai's neck with one hand and the other pressed onto the snow. Their smoky breath collided. "I want you to be here with me."

"No. Nobody really wants me here, Sehun. You'll soon move on. I don't want to hurt you. And I know I will if I stayed."

Sehun understood why Kai wanted to leave. But not now when he was finally growing fond of Sehun and the baby. "You haven't brought me to the loch."

Kai only chuckled before he kissed Sehun's upper lip, eyes shut tight. The kiss was so gentle that Sehun barely felt it. He kissed Kai back, slow and languid, not rushing anything even if they should. Kai's hot wet tongue touched his lower lip, swiping along it as his hand cupped Sehun's face. And the next thing he knew, Kai was unbuttoning Sehun's coat in tearing hurry, kissing him in a faster pace. Sehun didn't care about the snow or whatever that surrounded them when he ripped Kai's coat off, fingers fumbling to work on the belt around Kai's pants. He shoved Kai to lie recumbent on the snow and climbed onto him, sitting on his lower abdomen. Kai pushed himself up and crashed their mouths together, moaning into Sehun's mouth as Sehun unbuckled the clinking buckles of Kai's belt.

And everything stopped when he discerned the taste of salt on his lips. He pulled back to see Kai crying before he lied down with a thump. Sehun slipped off Kai and fell to his side. Kai needed comfort and commiseration right now. Kai, of his own accord, pulled Sehun into an embrace. Sehun's own stomach pressed against Kai's. "He's quiet, isn't he?" Kai murmured and Sehun knew he was still shedding tears.

"Maybe he's devastated for his father."

Kai kissed Sehun's forehead. "You have to understand. I don't wanna drag you into any of this."

"I understand."

Chapter Twenty-three

What should he think? At this worst moment, only Sehun had been there. Sehun. A person whom Kai had hurt a lot. He put Sehun through innumerable sufferings. What was Kai supposed to do? The only people who consoled him were Sehun and his unborn baby. It was weird to cry. But it felt comfortable to cry on Sehun's shoulder. They had connected somehow and Kai knew if he stuck around, he was only going to make things much worse for Sehun. Besides, Kai wasn't even sure of who himself was. Whose son was he?

Julien had been kind enough to send Kai home when he came to pick Sehun up. Kai hadn't uttered a word until he thanked him before getting down the car. He had said his goodbyes to Sehun. It wasn't like he was going away forever. He will come back. And if Sehun hadn't moved on, given that Kai hadn't moved on, he would take them both, the baby and Sehun. But with someone like Julien in the way, it was impossible. But Julien was a better option in every way and only now Kai had to want Sehun?! No, he needed Sehun. He needed someone who can understand how he felt.

Kai walked up to the house, plodding tiredly with puffy eyes and swollen face. The night wasn't going to get any better, he knew.

"Where the hell did you go, Kai?!" Chanyeol hollered, bursting out the front door when Kai stepped onto the veranda. "Gina was going crazy!"

"Really?" Kai scoffed. "Where's she then?" the tone was hard.

Chanyeol closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "You can't just zoom off without hearing any explanation, Kai."

"Did you know then?"

"Of course not! All my life you've been my cousin, my brother."

"Please. Enough of this brother bullshit." Kai muttered and pushed Chanyeol aside before striding into the house.

"Kai." his mother showed up with red eyes. She looked just as devastated as Kai.

"Hey. 'Mom'." Kai mocked.

"Stop this, Kai." his father appeared at his wife's side.

"Yeah. I'll stop everything." he turned for the stairs. "I'll get out of this house. Cause you make me sick."

"You have to listen." Gina said with a tight voice. She was begging, crumpled and miserable.

"I pretty much sorted everything out." Kai faced his parents again. "You gave Luhan away. Why? You're so loving to me. Even when I'm not your son. You don't love me as a mother. You imprinted on me, haven't you?"

Gina went silent as she leaned heavily on her husband.

"How did you-" his father started but Kai snarled at him.

"You seriously didn't think I was that stupid, right? Oh wait. You must have considering how stupid I was to believe that I was your heir."

"Sit down. And we can talk."

"I'm late for my flight."

"Kai, you have to listen. Gina isn't in fault over here. It's not something she could control."

"Really? So I'm right?" he snorted. "Figures."

"I'm sorry, Kai."

"Tell me everything. Now! Why did you send Luhan away? Why can't you just keep him as well?"

"Because Luhan is our first son. Do you know what it takes to be the leader of the Adlets? Power, strength. If I died, he will have to take over. And Luhan's weak. We sent him away because..."

"You... wanted to protect him..." Kai whispered. "So I was just a substitute... A decoy."

"Kai. The threat is great and you know that. The Adlet that you killed. If it was Luhan, he wouldn't survived that duel. More will come. More will threaten the position."

"Who the fuck am I then?"

Gina began to sob again onto her husband's chest.

"I asked who am I! Who's my mother?!" Kai pushed down a vase until it shattered onto the floor and someone restrained him from behind.

"Calm your ass, Kai." Kris hissed into his ear. Kai calmed down but he couldn't help but shoot his parents the dark hostile look.

"Your my younger brother's son." said his father. "My... nephew."

"What?" Kai's whole world spun around him.

His father rubbed his temples and sat down on the couch's armrest. Gina knelt on the floor, still sobbing. "Luhan was three when you were born. My brother died just before you were born. And your mother... she was his first mate. An Adlet as well. An arrogant one. Gina... imprinted on you on first sight. But there's nothing we could do about it. We had to keep you close but your mother refused. She had other plans. She wanted to be with her lover... and she needed her first heir. We knew of Luhan's weak spirit. He would be safe with them, out of the clan's reach. So... we had a truce. We exchanged the Luhan for you. She needed money and a baby boy. I needed my wife to be sane. Gina needed you of all. And we all needed a strong successor. Your son... the child will be as strong as you are."

Kris released Kai. "Yeah you can hit him now." he told Kai and Kai would have done it if he wasn't so tearing shocked.

Everyone was silent for the next couple of minutes.

"Kai, you are my son nonetheless. I will never see you differently. Luhan was raised in a foster family all this while and now finally he wants to return home."

Everything dawned onto Kai. Of course, they wanted to keep their own son safe. And at the same time, Gina had imprinted on Kai which gave them more the reason. Kai had been nothing but a replacement for Luhan so that if the clan wanted to challenge for the position of the leader, they would have to go through Kai. And if they managed to win Kai, it wouldn't matter because Luhan was still alive and was still the heir. So Kai was just the front line of an army. The Plan A. No wonder they had allowed Kai to mate with a Docile Lycan. The baby never really mattered to them. Because Luhan can procreate a true heir, strong with the Adlet bloodline but Kai's son will be nothing but Luhan's heir's bodyguard. Did they think that Kai would appreciate all the favours that they had done to him?

"Kai... we agreed to take your child because... you know how the imprinting works. It ends after the subsequent procreation. Your imprinting on Sehun ended as soon as the baby formed. Gina's imprinting on you might end if YOUR son is born. Let's say for instance, my imprinting on Gina ended when she had conceived Luhan. Do you see why it's vital for our kind to keep procreating? It generates imprinting and puts an end to it as well. When you have an heir, no one else can imprint on you because you have a family now."

"That's why you need my child." Kai let out. "You want to end the imprinting..."

"Yes. It's the only loophole in imprinting if one can't mate with his imprinted partner. That's how you undo it."

That was why they had been so desperate to find Kai a mate before.

"I." Kai pointed his forefinger at his father in a ferocious way even if his eyes were glistening with tears. "will never forgive you for fooling me all my life."

"Kai." Gina cried.

"I'm not mad at you. I'm just mad that.... no one actually wanted me." a tear trickled down Kai's cheek and he quickly wiped it away. "The child will be born. Your imprinting will stop. But see if I even let you

near my child." he spat. "I don't care. I don't care if you die or if you son dies. I'm done over here. And keep away from me if you don't want me telling the clan of your secrets. I'm sure they'd love to rip Luhan's head off before they turn on you. Without me, you're kinda nothing, DAD." he spun around.

"Kai." Kris murmured sadly. Kai doubted that neither Chanyeol nor Kris knew anything about this. But their parents must have. They must have kept all of this as a secret as well for the sake of their first heir. No wonder none of them liked Kai much. Their brother died just few months before Kai was born. His mother was apparently a bitch. And Kai had nothing.

"I can't, Kris. My father isn't my father but my uncle?! My mother? I don't even know where she is!"

"Let's leave. I can't believe my parents never told me this before either." Kris touched Kai's arm.

Chanyeol still waited at the door with watery eyes. "Let's go."

Kai kept his back facing his parents. "Thank you. For making my life one big giant lie, Gina. And Rin." he turned just to face his father who was now, known to be his uncle. "You were jealous of me, weren't you? You envied your brother. Your son didn't turn out to be as me. You're jealous."

Rin scowled but didn't say anything.

That will be the last of Verglas.

"You guys go on. I'll meet you at the airport." Kai told Kris and Chanyeol.

The two of them exchanged a glance but didn't protest as they climbed into the cab. Kai sighed and turned to run towards the manor. He had cried enough. He wasn't going to cry anymore. Not for tonight at least. Gina however was still crying when Kai walked out of the house.

He didn't have much time. He can't leave without saying goodbye to someone very important. He reached the manor within minutes from the main road and climbed up the pipe. Few grunts and stunts, Kai was in the bathroom. He wondered if Sehun deliberately kept the window unlocked these days. He pushed the bathroom door open and peered out. Sehun was in his bed and all the lights were out. Kai crept to the bedside and knelt down. He slowly pulled the comforter down enough to exposed Sehun's clothed stomach. Kai glanced over at Sehun who was still sleeping serenely and smiled for a second. Sehun deserved so many things but Kai wasn't one of them. But even then, Kai wasn't going to let go of him altogether. He had decided that if Sehun was still in love with him, then he will come back to him. He pushed Sehun's night shirt up and leaned over. He lightly brushed his lips on the flat planes of Sehun's stomach before quickly pulling back. The pink fuzz ball was hugged by one of Sehun's arms.

"Wait for daddy, okay?" Kai whispered to the stomach and kissed it one more time before hurrying away. He needed to leave. He needed to find some peace, some space to clear his mind. Some answers. Some redemption. He had killed before and he didn't want that sin to befall on someone he loved. And most of all, he wanted his parents to suffer at his loss.

"Sehun, you have a letter." Kyungsoo announced effervescently, opening the doors to the bedchamber.

"Do I?!" the enthusiasm in Sehun's voice was impossible to be stowed away as he gamboled from his chair at the study desk. The baby bump was making it beyond the bounds of prospect to even run. Seven months was a big deal and Julien was visiting tomorrow. Sehun had had enough of his room and the oodles of books around him. He needed some entertainment and if Julien was going to arrive, he could promise Sehun a lot of it. Sehun missed him. But five months passed quite quickly.

All that held the attention of Sehun over the past five months was Julien's letters.

"Is it from him?" Sehun inquired and Kyungsoo nodded.

Sehun snatched the letter from Kyungsoo and tore it open.

'Dear love,

How have you been? Still craving for the sun? How's the beautiful, silent little creature in your stomach? Disturbing you? I'll show him a piece of me if he's bullying you. I, on the other hand, think of you all too much. I want to be with you soon. In these circumstances, it had been impossible. But I know that I will see you soon. You, the baby, and I promise, I will bring the sun to you if I could. But why would I do that when I can keep you warm myself? Sounds more promising, doesn't it? I think of the times I spent with you... nothing compared to that. Not even this great big river that I'm sitting by. Is it time that I fall in love with you?

*With love,
KJ'*

Sehun grinned at the letter and then at Kyungsoo. "To love, from love." he shook his head, smiling. "He's coming tomorrow."

"I know, Sehun. Looks like you've finally got into the mood of marrying him."

"What are you talking about?" Sehun blushed. "But is it wrong if I want to?"

"No. Not all."

Well, Sehun didn't think so either. In all these months, only Julien had bothered to keep Sehun's spirits up. Kai left and his parents didn't give a concern about Sehun anymore. Julien sent letters almost every week and just reading them made Sehun's heart flutter. Mayhap Sehun should not hold onto hopes anymore. Kai was gone and he wasn't coming back. No matter how much Sehun wanted Kai to be there for him and their child. He wasn't here and that was the actuality.

Sehun waited on his bed, rubbing his tummy, patting it as if he was soothing the baby, smiling to himself. "I hope he comes back to see you, little one." he whispered and that was when the door was knocked. Sehun jumped off the bed and neatened his hair before getting the door. The sight of Julien smiling down at him reminded Sehun of how good things like him can make his life better.

Sehun threw himself onto Julien and hugged him. "I've missed you."

"Boy, I've missed you too." Julien laughed and tore Sehun off him. "How are you?" the tone was formal unlike in his letters.

"I'm good. Well, not really. Just got a baby in my tum." he pressed his palm onto his stomach. "Did you just arrive?"

"Yes. And the first thing your mama does is drive me straight to your room." he chuckled, shaking his head. "I mistook your mother's profession."

Sehun punched Julien's hard stomach lightly and grinned sheepishly before holding the taller close again. "Come in."

"Have you even stepped out of the house at all?" Julien closed the door behind him as Sehun took his seat on the edge of his bed. The pink fuzz ball lied between the pillows and the fact that Sehun slept hugging it every night pained him. He missed Kai but heavily doubted that Kai was missing him. He tore his gaze away from the pink ball and watched Julien go through the mass of books on the shelf.

"I do. Once every weekend when papa's not busy. He buys me pudding. I got some new books."

"Hm." Julien made that 'not bad' face and shot Sehun a smirk. "How's junior?"

"He's troublesome." the past few months had been the worst but every time Jae made Sehun spew, he became a step closer to Sehun, clinging onto his heart with his innocence and purity.

Sehun had expected Julien to be more emotional but Julien seemed more interested in the books instead. "I can hear my parents talking about another party downstairs." Julien laughed.

Sehun recalled the preceding party and it had gone horribly wrong. He had run to his room and locked himself up at the first sight of newcomers and guests. Julien called the party off instantly and had spent the whole night cuddling and tucking Sehun into sleep. Sehun had been so scared. Scared for his baby and himself. And Kai wasn't here to protect them. No one was here to protect them. The paranoia became worse by the day.

"Julien?" Sehun called.

"Yeah?"

"How long are you staying this time?"

"Not so long. I... have some things to do."

"Oh."

"What is this?" he pointed at the coffer beneath the shelf.

"Uh... those are your letters. I treasure them." Sehun admitted, flushing red.

Julien raised a brow. "My letters?"

"Yes." Sehun bit his lip, wondering why Julien was giving him such a look.

"I never sent you any letters, though."

Sehun blinked at him. "What do you mean?"

Julien shrugged.

Sehun got off the bed. "You always wrote me about the sun you were in. About the nature. And..." he let out the part where the heartfelt confessions lied.

"Sun? Nature? I was in Siberia looking for... someone for the past three months."

"What?"

Chapter Twenty-four

"This will be marvellous for the theme of the wedding, don't you think?" Julien's loquacious mother raised aloft a piece of decorated white fabric with gold motif. Sehun looked out the window, slouching on the couch. Considerably two more months and the baby will be born but no one in this house had the little sense in the least perception to even welcome the baby. Of course, he would be forced to hand the baby over to Kai's parents the minute he was born and Sehun's parents will ensure of that. And the next minute, not in the most literal sense, Sehun would have to plight pledge his troth to Julien. Why won't anyone give a rap about what Sehun wanted? But Sehun himself didn't know what he wanted anymore. He had thought that Julien was besotted with him, sending him innumerable love letters every fortnight but that hadn't been the case. Julien was still seeing Sehun as a friend, a brother perhaps and he would help if Sehun asked. But Sehun couldn't bring himself to ask something that would have grave concomitants. He wanted this wedding to stop. He wanted to keep the baby. But Sehun, being the helpless, feeble protégé who relied on his family because he had no idea of how to survive the outside world.

"You're sulking." Julien's whisper piloted Sehun's attention back to the cacophonous war of words in the drawing room where both the mothers were picking out the drapes for the wedding ceremony on the other side of the room. Julien took Sehun's hand into his own and offered a faint smile. "Chill out. They're just mothers, doing what they know best. Being hysterical about colour concordance."

Sehun smiled and hung his head. "This is... all just too much." he pressed his other free hand to his slightly grown baby knob. "None of them bother of his prerequisites. I wish mama and papa would just try to ask about him or at least talk about him once. It's like he's non-existent to them." he said in a low voice.

Julien gave his hand a gentle squeeze. "Sehun, if you want to keep the child-"

"No. Kai needs him more than I do." he murmured.

"Hm. Then you could just run away with him. You said that the last time you guys met, he had changed."

"I don't even know where he is. But why, Mr Julien Kang?" Sehun smirked. "Are you trying to get rid of me?"

"Dear lord." Julien snickered. "I don't wanna get on the bad side of a pregnant hormonal teenage boy."

"I'm not hormonal."

"I saw you sneaking into the kitchen last night. You drank some orange juice and then mixed raisins into an ice-cream tub along with some tomato ketchup. You even ate it, didn't you? Before you threw the other half of it and rubbed your tummy. Then you ran up to your room like someone was chasing you."

Sehun flushed with embarrassment. This kind of situations took place at nights when he couldn't sleep when the baby made it impossible to even catch a wink. "You're right. I'm hormonal." he had run up to his room to immediately hug the pink fuzz ball that Kai had insisted he should buy but he didn't mention it to Julien since it would only cause his dignity to go down the drain.

Julien laughed. "You were kinda cute actually. Running around in your pyjamas."

"Never speak of this again."

"You have my word."

They smiled at each other and Sehun glanced out the window again. Would Jae transfigure into a baby Adlet slash wolf? Would he be crawling around on the snow? Would Sehun be able to witness any of it? "Julien?"

"Yeah?"

"Can we talk about something later?"

Julien cocked a brow but nodded.

"Now, Sehun. Have you decided on which suit you want to wear for the Rescript Party?" asked his mother across the room.

Sehun sat up straight. "I can't fit into the shirts, mama."

His mother scowled. "Well, we'll need to hide that nuisance then." nuisance... the baby.

"I don't really think that will be necessary." Julien interrupted.

"Of course it will. We don't need the guests speculating about a child who has nothing to with us."

Julien stood up. "He's the parent, isn't he?" he jerked his hand towards Sehun. "Then it has everything to with him thus us. I don't really care about what people think."

"No, you don't, Julien." his mother cut in, leaving whatever that she had been occupied with. "But you will not disappoint me for another time. You've already humiliated your father and I once." she spat and Julien stood there, staring at her.

A moment of perplexing silence passed.

"And thus you make me pay for my sins." Julien said through his gritted teeth. "Here's a wakeup call, mom. I'm a grown man. Do not misconstrue my respect for you as subjugation cause you know that I can be as bad as I want." he strutted out of there with long, angry strides.

His mother dropped onto the piano bench with Sehun's mother gaping at the situation. "He's... got quite a temper." Sehun's mother muttered.

"You've no idea. I should go and talk to him." she sighed and rose. "I'm sorry about that."

"No worries. We're all family." when Julien's mother was out of the room, Sehun's mother turned to him. "Sehun, I don't want you to make a scene at this party like the previous time. Kai's parents will be there as well and I don't want you hovering them."

"They're invited?" Sehun asked in surprise.

"Yes. It will be problematic if we don't invite them. The last thing I need is any problem with them. You're here to settle with Julien and we will remain as friends with Kai and his parents, understand?"

"Understood." Kai's parents didn't mean Kai. "Are there going to be many people?"

"Maybe. Depends on how many from Julien's side. We should have done this quicker. Then we would have been able to deal with the galling pest."

Sehun shot up. "Pest?" the voice tightened and his mother threw him a glare. "He's a baby. My baby. Give that some consideration, mama." Sehun returned the glare.

"Where did that come from?"

"What?"

"You're brave now, aren't you? Demanding me? Go to your room, Sehun. And don't show your face until the party."

Sehun clenched his jaw but didn't retort as he scooted out of there, just as mad as Julien.

"Did you hear her?!" Sehun shouted, dropping onto his bed. But, that had been the first time Sehun had ever stood up to his mother. "Pest..." he murmured. "You're not a pest. I am certain that you must be so beautiful. You're going to break a lot of hearts." he giggled, patting his bulged tummy.

He sat up and glanced over at the trinket box that contained all those letters which Sehun read myriad times. He had shown Julien one of them and Julien confirmed that it wasn't his handwriting, also adding that he signed his letters as 'Julien. K' not 'KJ'. Who on this sodding world was sending Sehun these love letters then? There was not a single person other than Julien who carried the initials K and J. Who could feel so much for Sehun? Knew so much about him?

Sehun blinked his eyes in confusion. It was a shitty handwriting. Could have been Kai. But Kai was never poetic and nor was he expressive. Besides, his initials weren't KJ. And to come to think of how romantic the letters were, every time sealed with fragrant flowers that Sehun collected as potpourri now.

"Ugh." he lied back on the bed. He had worse things to think of rather than brooding over some anonymous person who seemed to have known so much about Sehun. Could it be that cousin of Kai's who never took anything seriously? Was he pulling a trick on Sehun? Sehun was thinking too far. Some

noon nap would surely do him some good. And that was when the baby kicked his stomach. "Jae!" Sehun whined and rolled on his bed, groaning at how tormenting his baby was.

"Why are you sweating?" Julien hissed into Sehun's ear when he leaned in while buttoning Sehun's coat for him.

"So many people." Sehun muttered back nervously, staring down at the crowd in the main hall. "The baby..."

"No one's going to do anything to the baby. I'll kick their arses if they get near, okay?" Julien assured Sehun with a smile.

"Okay."

"I didn't want to do this either. But doing this would shut our parents' mouths for the next half a year."

Sehun grinned a little and hooked his arm around Julien's. Julien had cleaned up nice and neat and the grey suit did his broad shoulders, fit frame justice. His hair was gelled up and his aftershave was something to drool for. Beside him, Sehun was sure to look like an undernourished pygmy.

The hall was decorated quite extravagantly and Sehun suspected that it was Julien's mother's doing. All the people's eyes were on Sehun and Julien as they climbed down the stairs. Most of them were awed, making homogeneous noises but a part of them stared like hawks watching a prey scamper away. Covetousness. Sehun quickly picked up the envying expression on their faces but he wanted to laugh. They probably didn't know a teeny bit of how messed up his and Julien's lives were.

Sehun didn't recognize any of them but the whole house now reeked of wolverine scents which he failed to distinguish. His scent detection sense was thriving and developing quite quickly. And among them, he got a whiff of Adlet's scent as well. He tightened the grip around Julien's arm when one of the guests neared him. "You'll be fine." Julien reassured him.

"I never thought you'd grow to be such a wonderful, beautiful little thing." an old woman said and Sehun forced a smile. "If I had, I would have talked to your mother about an alliance with my grandson."

People, stop hooking me up with everyone! Sehun wanted to scream but suppressed his vexation.

"Too bad he's mine now, Mrs Lara." said Julien, pulling Sehun closer to his side by his waist.

"You both do make quite a fine couple. Make a lot of beautiful babies. Our community needs more heirs."

Sehun blushed. If he did end up getting married to Julien, he wasn't sure if he could even give Julien any child. After the woman, another couple came forth to congratulate them. Followed by a few others.

"See, it isn't so bad, is it?" Julien's mother said when she showed up. "Don't be nervous, child." she stroked Sehun's hair at the back of his head before hurrying to entertain the guests. Sehun's parents were talking to some of the guests and it took Sehun some effort to find out that they were Kai's family. Gina, her husband and Luhan. Sehun averted his eyes.

All of the guests looked fairly loaded, considering their fancy coats and evening gowns. Even the way they consumed the champagne seemed royal. Julien finally was able to pull Sehun to a much comfortable corner while waiting for more guests to come and offer their well wishes.

"What is it that you wanted to tell me yesterday?" Julien asked.

"Hm? Oh.. where were you yesterday?"

"I hope that is not what you wanted to talk about cause I might sound like a child if I said that I was destroying trees and peeing on them to mark my territories because I was mad."

Sehun chuckled, unable to contain the mental image. "Wait. You did transfigure first right?"

"Of course. Because it will be uncivilized for a six-foot-tall man to piss around."

Another roar of laughter and this time Julien joined Sehun. "Luckily for you, that's not what I wish to talk about although it sounds equally interesting to know that you mark territories."

"Tell me about it." Julien sighed. "So, what is it?"

"Julien." Sehun stepped closer so that he could keep his voice low. "I want to wait." he whispered.

Julien looked down for a moment and then glanced at Sehun. "Let's just talk about this in your room later."

Sehun nodded but he was itching to tell Julien that he wanted to wait for Kai. With some blind hopes of course. No one knew how Kai felt about Sehun now. Had he even grown to love Sehun a bit? Or did only decline?

"We'd have to dance, you know?" Julien said.

"I'm going to trample your feet." Sehun frowned.

"Then I'll take it like a man."

The door opened just when Julien went out of sight to get some drinks for them and when Sehun reached out to grab a titbit from Kyungsoo because apparently the olive on it was so appetizing and Sehun never even liked olive before this. More guests, awesome. But the scent that he and the rest of the people caught stopped all actions as everyone stared at the invaders.

Sehun's heart either stopped beating or it had jumped out of him. Either way, he had stopped breathing as he gawped at Kai. Sharp, neat, incredibly handsome, clad in all-and-all black suit and shirt with Kris and Chanyeol by his side. He looked like he had been washed, shiny and smart with the suit fitting to his body like a glove. "Hope we're not too late." Kris said and the guests just went back to whatever they were doing before except the hosts and Kai's family who were gaping at Kai.

The door closed and Kai walked in, strutting proud and chin held high. A smirk on his face only made him look devilishly handsome. He straightened his coat, striding straight to Sehun but stopped when Sehun's parents blocked his path.

"I thought you were out of town." said Sehun's father.

"Not technically since I'm in town now." Kai scoffed.

"But we're just crashing your party, Mr and Mrs Oh." Chanyeol commented.

"You're not even invited."

"We invite ourselves." Kris said with a mocking nod.

"You're not gonna cause any turbulence, are you?" Kai asked Sehun's parents. "I bet no one over here knows about the little Adlet nudger. Should I let them know?"

Sehun's father clenched his jaw. "Make yourself at home." he spat and moved aside.

"Thank you." Kai grinned in victory and was about to move before his own family stepped in.

"Kai." Kai's father called.

"I'm not here for you." Kai shoved past him.

"However, how have you been, doe eyes?" Kris smirked seductively at Luhan who quickly walked away from him.

Kyungsoo opened the door when the doorbell rang again. Kai stepped before Sehun and Sehun was still gaping at Kai. It was unreal. He knew he would see Kai sooner or later but the fact that Kai was right before him now was chimerical.

"Kai." Sehun gasped silently, unable to take his eyes off Kai's face. He wanted to throw himself onto Kai, kiss him, hug him, never let him go but he had to hear Kai's side of the story first.

"Hey, Sehun." Kai smiled. He looked like a changed man. He was a changed man! His hairstyle, the clean-shaved jaw, his luminous bronzed skin and god, can Kai rock a suit! "Can we go somewhere private for a moment?"

"Ehem." Julien cleared his throat beside Sehun.

"Oh." Kai's eyebrows furrowed but in a playful way. "Brought a gift for you. Dennis." he turned and held his arm out, turning half way around. Chanyeol was escorting a stranger. A man Sehun had never encountered before. But Julien at Sehun's side was frozen, paralyzed even. Dennis stopped his strides as well when he caught Julien's presence.

"What nonsense is this?" Dennis hissed at Chanyeol and turned on his heels, quickly hurrying out of there.

"Whoa. What was that about?" Kai asked Julien. "What did you do that he's so scared of you? Thought you guys were friends." he smirked as if there was a hidden agenda behind that smirk.

"No." Julien set the glasses down on the mantelpiece and almost sprinted out of the house, after the stranger.

"Who was that?" Sehun inquired.

"I'll tell you everything." Kai's face turned serious again. "But first, I need a moment with you."

Sehun eyed his parents who were attending some other guests. Kris was conversing with Kai's family who were not taking their eyes off Kai himself. And Chanyeol was trailing behind Kyungsoo like some puppy. Who was this Dennis and why was Julien so shocked upon his arrival? He looked up at Kai and then crept for the stairs. "Come with me." he whispered to Kai.

Quietly, he marched up the steps to his room with Kai falling behind him. But as soon as they were in the room, Kai closed and locked the door behind him. "You realize that everyone knew you were climbing up the stairs, right?" he asked Sehun but Sehun didn't even give it time to think when he pounced onto Kai and hugged him as tight as he could. He hadn't thought that he was missing Kai this much.

Kai too stopped moving for a moment and hugged Sehun back and they stood there in each other's embrace for more than a couple of minutes. Gradually, Sehun broke down into tears and silently wept on Kai's shoulder. "I didn't... think you'd come back for me."

"Why wouldn't I?" Kai whispered against Sehun's hair. "I told you in the letters that I would."

Sehun pulled back and blinked vacantly. "Letters?"

"I know. Very cheesy but I know you dig that kind of shit."

"You sent them?!"

"Who else would send you things like that?"

Sehun stepped back and rubbed his forehead. "You sent them..." all this while, Sehun had been lovelorn over Kai. "But... KJ.."

"Kim Jongin. My name."

Sehun looked up. "I thought your name is Kim Kai."

"Kai's like a pet name and I use that on my documents sometimes. But Jongin is my birth name and I didn't want your parents to tear the letters away because they were from me. Wait, you didn't know those letters were mine?"

"You never gave any hint! And I didn't even know your real name!"

"So did you read those letters then?" Kai asked, wide-eyed.

"Yes... but I thought they were..."

"What?"

"Nothing." he advanced closer. "Kai... you wrote all that?" he asked in a whisper.

Kai stared at the floor and bit his lip. "I couldn't stop thinking about you, Sehun. Or the baby. Yes, I did find a lot of things about myself. But... I wanted you to know that I was thinking about you as well. The past five months has been an eye-opener. I went around, seen things, found people. No one, nothing compared to how mesmerized I was by you when I first saw you." he closed the distance between him and Sehun. "I've made all of mistakes and now I'm paying for them. I realized that if I don't return now, I might lose you forever."

"Yes. You would have." Sehun's eyes welled up with tears again as he grappled his arms around Kai's neck and pressed their foreheads together.

"I want you. I want you and our baby." his hand brushed Sehun's tummy and right that second, the baby moved, kicking Sehun's stomach and Sehun jumped back as Kai's eyes bulged out. "What was that?"

Sehun smiled. "Nothing." he clung onto Kai's coat's collar and leaned to kiss Kai's mouth but Kai beat him to it, tilting his head and smashing their lips together. Oh how Sehun had missed this. His whole body trembled, shivering with pleasure as he kissed Kai with every might he had, hanging heavily onto Kai's neck, kissing him deeply. Kai easily hoisted Sehun up, still lips and tongues connected, and carried him to the bed. As soon as Sehun was settled on it, their clothes began to come off with fumbling desperate hands peeling off the irritating amount of clothes. Sehun palmed Kai's phallus over the fabric of the pants and earned a zealous moan from Kai. Kai hovered above Sehun, tongue working its way into Sehun's mouth as his hands began to yank Sehun's pants down. Sehun pulled Kai until he fell to the side and edged closer, pressing their chests almost together.

Kai broke the kiss and smirked. "What?" Sehun asked breathlessly, with his shirt still hanging on his arms.

"This." Kai pointed at Sehun's stomach. "Is going to be a problem."

"I can't do anything about it." Sehun grabbed Kai's neck and hauled him close to crash his lips onto Kai's. Jae kicked again when Kai's abdomen touched Sehun's. "He's active today." Sehun mumbled into the kiss.

"So. Have you found a boyfriend, yet?" Kris questioned Luhan, smiling sheepishly. Luhan rolled his eyes.

"We're cousins, you know." he told Kris.

"So what? I'd do Chanyeol or Kai anytime." he winked and Luhan shook his head. "Or. Are you making up excuses cause you're worried that you might fall for me?"

"You're out of your mind."

"No. What I am is an incredibly hot masterpiece who happens to be single and am desperate to mingle. With you." he ran his fingers through his hair. "I'm also credited for being a beast in bed." he whispered, purring into Luhan's ear.

"Should I ask Chanyeol to certify that?"

"Go ahead."

Sehun's mother suddenly showed up at the bottom of the stairs where Kris was obviously flirting with Luhan. He blocked her path, knowing very well of what Kai and Sehun were up to in the room. "Move." Mrs Oh snapped.

"Been a while, Mrs Oh." Kris turned his flirtation to the woman. Mrs Oh's eyes widened and she looked away momentarily. "By the way, did I tell you how gorgeous you are?"

Luhan scoffed. "You. Are unbelievable." he told Kris and stomped away.

"Call me, sweetie."

"Move, Kris. I need to get Sehun. He's with Kai, isn't he?" said Mrs Oh.

"Hm. What I'd rather do is." he leaned into her ear. "Get some drink with you and compliment on how beautiful you are."

He could hear Sehun's mother swallowing. Kris held his arm out and she took it. Easy as pie. "Oh. Give me a minute." he told the woman and pecked on her cheek, handing her his champagne glass and hurried to Chanyeol who was frowning, standing alone by the mantelpiece. "What's the status?" he whispered.

Chanyeol heaved a sigh. "He's mad at me for leaving without saying anything." he wasn't looking at Kris as he spoke. Kris glanced over the direction of his attention and found Kyungsoo wiping the floor where some drink had spilled.

"I'm not asking about Cinderella. What happened with that Dennis and Julien? Is it the same Dennis?"

"Yeah. Dennis got so mad and he left."

"Everyone's mad tonight. But Dennis is just a bitch. Asshole. Arrogant bastard."

"I agree one hundred per cent. Julien seems like a nice guy. Maybe we shouldn't have brought Dennis over."

"Kai's idea, not mine. Well, good luck with Soonderella." Kris shot Luhan a look who was with his parents. "I've got my eyes on Mr Deer."

"Luhan's our cousin, okay."

"I have an incest fetish." Kris slapped Chanyeol's butt which made the latter jerk forward. "Besides, he broke Kai. Now I'm gonna break his heart. It's a party, Yeol! Loosen up. Let's have some fun." he slapped Chanyeol's crotch now that caused Chanyeol to groan as he bent forward.

Just when Kris was about to join Mrs Oh once again the doors burst open and everything that happened next, was in a blurred hurry. Men started barging in, stomping in as they wished. Adlets, Kris quickly recognized. But what the heck were they doing, shoving people.

"Knew we'd find you over here." one of the most muscular ones said, approaching Rin and Gina. Kris scowled moved, instinctively to protect his family and so did Chanyeol. "We're not here to cause any problem." the weird dude in black leather jacket announced. "Let's have a talk outside, Rin."

"What's going on?" Sehun's father asked, exasperated. "This is a private property. You can't trespass!"

"Translation: who the fuck are you?" Kris asked the man and his followers.

"Just some really pissed off Adlets you don't wanna mess with." he growled.

"And now you're pissing off a Berserker. Do you wanna handle the consequences?"

"Look here. We need him." he pointed at Luhan. "We just found a terrible secret, Rin. And now, you're gonna deal with it."

"Go get Kai." Gina muttered to Kris.

What on earth made Gina think that Kai would help Luhan in this?

Chapter Twenty-five

entr'acte

"Dennis!" Julien screamed, jogging after Dennis who was hurrying to get the hell out of here. His heart was hammering to his chest, head was pounding wildly, legs were going weak. "Stop!" he grabbed Dennis' arm and Dennis spun around before his fist struck Julien's cheek. His face didn't hurt as much as his heart did. After all these years, this was how Dennis greet him?

"Don't touch me! Let go!" Dennis spat and pulled his arm free.

"Wait, okay!" Julien caught Dennis' collar and yanked it. "Where the hell were you all this while?!"

Dennis lunged his fist again but this time, Julien dodged it and grabbed his wrist instead. "I never even wanted to see your face in the first place! Kai said that it was his friend's party! I'm guessing that if you're his friend, then all of you are fucking wolves in there, right?! Kai too..."

Julien gripped the wrist tighter before shoving Dennis to slam him on a tree and pinned him on it by his own weight as their chests collided. "I'm seeing you after so many years and this is what you're curious about?" the voice was breaking and Julien hated it. His eyes welled with tears, jumping from Dennis' angry eyes to his quivering lips. "I've missed you, Dennis. You don't know how I've searched for you." Julien paused when a tear trickled down his cheek as he felt Dennis' heart thump against his own.

"I've never missed you, Julien. So stop acting like this freaky ex-boyfriend, okay." he tried to pull his wrists free but failed when Julien only gripped harder.

"You're lying. I know that my parents asked you to leave. They made you leave."

"Yes. But there was a huge part of me that left for my own good. Too many problems and I can't afford that drama. You're not worth it."

Julien pulled back, releasing Dennis and stared at him in shock. He could almost hear his heart that was only beating for Dennis shatter into a million shards. "Not worth it?" he exhaled, panting a little.

"Don't whine like a kid, Julien. You should move on." Dennis spat mercilessly.

Julien gasped for air and palmed his forehead, unable to believe Dennis' nonchalance. "Four years, Dennis. I lost four years of my life because I couldn't even think about living without you after spending most of my life with you."

"Jesus Christ." Dennis scoffed. "We had a good school life, some badass basketball matches, and awesome discussions and fuck yes, great sex! But I can't commit my whole existence to you and your wolf nonsense. It's good enough that I'm keeping your secret, right? So don't push me. I seriously can't deal with ex-boyfriend drama okay. I don't know about you but I real in an actual practical world. I have a

boyfriend now and you seriously can't show up to make my life as shitty as it was! And Kai... fuck I can't believe I hung out with one of yours."

"He's not one of mine." Julien said through his gritted teeth. "In fact, he somewhat is related to me when I get married to Sehun."

Dennis' face changed and Julien took the whole of it. "So you're the one who's getting married."

"Yes."

"Good luck with that then. Finally you found yourself another whore."

"Sorry. But I never pegged you for a whore. That is. Before all this shebang." he spat expressionlessly and spun around. He began to strut away, leaving Dennis. Dennis. The heartbreaker. Julien scoffed and then wiped his eyes, heading back to the manor.

"What?" Sehun whispered when Kai paused all of his movements and stared at Sehun, fingers still grappling Sehun's pants but no longer venturing to pull them down.

"I'd rather just watch your face all night." Kai murmured and grazed the tips of their noses together.

The sensation of pins and needles surged through Sehun's body. He wanted this to last forever. The night outside was, for once, calm, tantalizing and nowhere near as warm as Kai's touch. "What do we do, Kai?" he breathed, wrapping his arms around Kai's body and nuzzled his nose in a crook of Kai's neck. Their bare chests were pressed as Kai's fingers skimmed Sehun's cheek.

"I don't know."

"What happened to you?" Sehun had to ask. Kai hadn't changed precipitately since all the letters he had sent suggested that his feelings for Sehun flourished gingerly, little by little. "Where were you?"

Kai heaved a deep breath. "I was in the south. Kris, Chanyeol and I were around the Mellow Lands."

"Mellow Lands?"

"Yeah. As cute as it sounds, it is filled with most of the clans of Adlets."

"What did you do there?"

"Looking for a girl."

"Did you find her?"

"Sehun, I say that I was looking for a girl, you should slap my face and ask me who she is."

"So did you find her?"

"You don't know many things." he shifted but only to let Sehun lie in more agreeable position. Sehun now laid his head on Kai's chest. All of this seemed like a dream. A sublime fantasy that Sehun didn't want to stir away from. Kai was here. He was benign. Just as how he had been the night when he had cried for the first time before Sehun. "My father... is not my father."

Sehun raised his head to look at Kai's face. "What?"

Kai closed his eyes momentarily and emitted a long, deep audible breath of his heavy heart. "I don't want to waste my time talking about things that I no longer care about. Sehun." he propped himself up with the aid of his elbows and brushed a lock of hair from Sehun's forehead. "I wanna talk about you. I wanna talk about us. Not having a real family made me realize that..." he trailed off.

"Kai?"

Kai blinked his eyes and looked away. "I won't... can't fall in love with anyone else. I fell in love with you the first time I laid my eyes on you. But me being me... I couldn't accept you. I didn't want to accept you. It took me this long and a string of heartaches to realize that I was in love with you. I am in love with you. My pride and conceit mean nothing now." he scoffed at the end. "Yes. I didn't want to end up with a Docile Lycan when the other Adlets settled with strong Therianthropes. I was blind. I was arrogant. I needed a slap to my face to realize that I didn't have much of a choice. But... I finally know what it would be like for," he caressed Sehun's stomach, eyeballing it intently. "Him if he didn't have a good family. He doesn't need to deal with secrets as I did."

Sehun smiled and ran his hand through Kai's hair. "No one's born bad, Kai. I knew that you weren't that monster you appeared to be."

"I am, Sehun. I... did terrible things without thinking about the consequences. I didn't care about anything or anyone except myself. I even... killed someone in a duel without bothering to care about his family. He had a family and I..."

"It wasn't something you could have helped."

"No. But I could have just given up the position that was never actually meant to be mine. Or my child's." his tone turned resentful as a scowl formed on his face. "The point is, I've been a terrible person and now, I want redemption. An absolution. I want to rectify my mistakes."

Sehun bowed his head and kissed Kai's forehead. "Am I a mistake then?"

"Depends on which context. But if you are a mistake then you probably have to be the one mistake that I'm not going to regret."

Sehun bit his lip, smiling down at him. "Considering the awful things you've been through, I think I can forgive you."

"Good. Cause if you don't, I'll probably kill myself."

Sehun drew back and frowned. Kai was completely changed. He was no longer that indecisive, ambivalent teenager on the verge of adulthood. He was mature. He didn't only look mature and full-fledged but spoke as one too. The transformation was as plain as a pikestaff. Finally phase of blooming; able to govern one's emotions right. He was no longer confused. This made Sehun wonder how much he, himself had transformed and did anyone else notice? Sehun had stopped whining about being locked up or going into the outside world. He had begun to concentrate more on matters at hand.

"Dennis." Kai said suddenly. "I found him in the town of Lux Aestiva."

"Who is he?"

"Oh, you didn't know?"

"No. But Julien seems to recognize him."

Kai grinned. "This ought to be interesting then. He's Julien's old flame. I was pretty sure that was the guy that I'd seen on Julien's social network profile. So I approached him and to corroborate everything, his name was Dennis. Dennis O'Neil and in short, Dennis Oh. Five months.." he sighed. "He became a good friend. Not quite actually. He's kinda bitchy for a poor, striving thing. I guess that's why I like him. Then he told me about his 'ex-boyfriend' who broke his heart and he was apparently called Julien. Voila! Julien's out of the picture and now, you're all mine."

"Wait, what-" before Sehun could ask any further, the door was knocked on. Kai scowled at the closed door and then threw Sehun a smirk.

"Run away with me."

"What?"

Kai faltered off the bed and buckled his belt before picking the shirt up from the floor. Sehun began to button his shirt as well. "It's just Kris." Kai muttered and stomped to the door, shirt still unbuttoned, hanging on his shoulders. Sehun got off the bed just in time when the door was opened. "What?"

"You're needed downstairs." Kris said with an annoyed expression.

"Why?" Kai hissed. "Can't you buy more time?"

"Sorry, but I don't plan these plot twists, dude."

Kai froze for a moment before he eyed Sehun sideways. He fastened the buttons of his shirt and hurried downstairs. Sehun quickly followed but Kris grabbed his arm. "Fatty, don't go." he said.

Sehun pulled his arm free and scowled at him. "You once called me beautiful."

"Yeah. Now you're fat. Stay upstairs and for once, I'm saying this for your own good."

Sehun realized that he wasn't wearing his coat. He returned to the room to grab his coat to hide his little baby bump and then zoomed past Kris, leaping down the steps.

Kai's hair was still messy and Sehun conjectured that so was his. People stared at Kai whose steps were taken in a slow pace. The party had obviously come to an end. In the middle of the hall, several men stood, dressed informally in leather.

"How did you find us here?" asked Kai's father. Or was he not? Kai hadn't elaborated on that yet.

A man from the strange group snorted. "That's not the right question. Now, I'll ask the right one. Who is he?" he jerked his chin at Luhan who was frowning.

"That is none of your business."

"Oh. He's not your blood, eh? What I know is that he reeks of your sturdy scent."

Rin scowled. "Leave before things get ugly."

"Rin, you are our leader. But it's selfish that you want to reign forever."

"This is my son." he gestured his hand to Kai who was standing behind the group. Sehun remained only a few steps after Kai.

"Funny. His scent is much milder than this one over here." the stranger said.

"Not my problem if your nose has defects."

"Look here. Enough performance. We're here to talk to you. Nothing more. He's your first son and that's all that matters."

"Can you prove it?"

"Can you prove that he's not your son?"

"HE is my son!" Rin eyed Kai. Luhan was frowning deeper now.

"Either you accept a duel with my son or we will kill him. It shouldn't matter much since he's not your heir, right?"

"No." said another voice and it surprised Rin that it was Kai's. Rin shot him a black look. "No. I'm not his son. He is lying. And his real son doesn't have an heir. He can't carry a child. He's sterile so if I were you, I'd see to it that he's killed." Kai smirked at Rin with a cocky expression.

"Kai..." Gina let out, disappointed.

"And see if I care shit about what happens to your 'son'." Kai turned around and seized Sehun's wrist before heading straight for the door, hauling Sehun with him.

"Kai, what are you doing?!" Sehun hollered once they were on the veranda of the manor. He quickly wrapped his arms around his own body and shivered at the sudden cold gale.

Kai wiped his face. His eyes were red and his expression were no longer that arrogant mien that Sehun had seen in the house just seconds ago. "They're using me." his voice broke. "I won't let him die but they need a lesson."

"Kai." Sehun embraced Kai and stayed that way for a minute. "They are your family."

"No. You are my family, Sehun." he whispered and took Sehun's face into his hands. "If I get myself involved..."

Sehun didn't want to hear any further and just pressed a side of his face onto Kai's chest. "Help Luhan. And then let's get out of here."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes. Any corner of the world. I'll go with you."

Chapter Twenty-six

"This is promising." Julien remarked with a mocking yet tired scoff, walking up to Kai and Sehun who were still warm in each other's embrace before they pulled apart. Julien's face was red as his eyes and Kai almost sympathized his state. That vulnerable and depressed look on Julien's resembled the broken Kai few months ago. He climbed up the steps and let out a puff of visible breath.

"Julien? Were you crying?" asked Sehun, a little surprised. But Kai wasn't as taken aback. He knew Dennis wanted nothing to do with Julien. But still, something told Kai that Julien hadn't moved on.

"I don't know, Sehun." Julien sighed and blinked the freshly forming tears.

"You don't look like you're in your best spirits." Kai commented, pulling Sehun closer by his waist.

"Yeah. My one true love just practically slapped my face with a fucking rotten ham. Let's not forget the fact that I spent, no wasted more than five years searching for him. But now I know that he never wanted to be found." he let out a short laughter that stung Kai's heart but didn't respond.

"Julien." Sehun, in his best intention, advanced to Julien and hugged him. Julien buried his face into Sehun's hair and wrapped his arms around Sehun's body. Kai cleared his throat.

"He's still thinking about you." said Kai and Julien threw him an odd, confused look. Sehun pulled back to shoot Kai the same look. "He's definitely acting it out."

"No, you-" Julien was cut off when the door swung open and a stampede of men gushed out, flooding the veranda. The biggest and eldest man in the party gave Kai a stink eye as he passed. Rin and his family was escorted out as well. Rin was wearing a crestfallen expression and Luhan looked scared whereas Gina with her overflowing motherly instincts, was crying.

"And whatever you uncivilized dogs are disagreeing with, keep that out of my house!" Sehun's father hollered and shot Sehun a glaring look. "What do you think you're doing, Sehun?! Get inside!"

Kai turned to see Sehun. The conflicted look on Sehun's face was depressing. "Go." Kai mouthed and Sehun hesitated for a moment but then Julien whispered something into Sehun's ear and he went inside. His father slammed the door shut at once.

"Rin, I'm not even joking. You know what will happen if you try to help your son flee, don't you?" said the big man. Julien came to stand by Kai's side. "No one will accept his heir as the leader. So it will be better for everyone if he withdraws with honour. But your pride will hurt wouldn't it? You should have known that you are always watched. The moment you had an unknown Adlet visitor, we knew that it was your 'long lost' son that you've claimed before. First mate's son, eh? Doesn't matter, he's still your only heir."

"So bravado of you to pick on the runt." Kris snorted at the man. "What makes you think we won't protect him?"

"You and what army?"

Kris scowled and clenched his jaw. "I'm a Berserker and I'm pretty sure you don't wanna get on the bad side of a Berserker."

"You're not part of our clan, so we don't need a decorum or a duel to kill you. You interfere with the Adlet affairs, that's reason enough to kill you. Your mother will be so disappointed."

Kris lurched forward but Rin caught his arm. "This is all my fault. There's nothing much to do. I'll step down from the position. It's all yours." said Rin.

"Oh you know that's not how it works, Rin. You step down from the position when you're dead. That's how burdening the post is."

"I am well aware of the rules, Saron." Rin glowered. "But we don't have to do this. We can have peace."

"Killing your son would mean that your bloodline will never have the chance to rule after you. That's how it works. My son has the power to challenge your son for a duel to win the leadership. You're selfish, Rin. A bad leader who chooses family over duties. You even left Mellow Lands because you were too afraid that people would start questioning of how your son could be this strong when Gina's whole family had failed to procreate strong heirs. This son." he pointed at Kai. "Killed his challenger so easily. You knew that if you stayed, you will be discovered. But you have been discovered, Rin."

Again. They left their home not for Kai's safety as they had claimed but to keep the suspicion at bay. "He's my son, Saron." Rin turned to beg now. "I know that I can't fight the whole clan but you must certainly understand fatherhood."

This Saron gave Rin a pathetic look. "Time for your sovereignty to end, Rin." of course, no wise man would let such an opportunity to slip away. Seeing that Rin's heir was a weak one, anyone would take advantage of that. Status meant everything to the Adlets in Mellow Lands. But not Kai. Not anymore though. Family. Family meant everything. And he was yet to have a real one. "We'll have the duel here. I'm sorry but there's too much at stake for me to lose. If your son flees, I suppose we will have to take your head for treason. And you will be stamped as a coward."

The group left after some seconds and everyone remained on the veranda. "Now what?" Luhan asked, voice tight and eyes quivering. "I never should have come back."

"No, you shouldn't have." Gina murmured, expressionlessly but her eyes were glistening.

"I won't let you die. You will run. Leave." said Rin.

"No, dad. What happens to you then?"

"I've lived long enough. They'll kill me for betraying and breaking the rules but it doesn't matter."

"And what, dad? You will be named a coward. Father of a man who can't even succeed him. Who can't give him an heir?"

"You are my heir, Luhan. No one is going to help us. I can't interfere even if I'm the leader. I lead the pack but I don't make the rules. I was supposed to make sure that everyone abides them. But you are more important to me. I don't bother about my pride."

"A suicide mission. Charming." Kai commented with a snort.

"You don't even get to speak, Kai. After all we've done for you, after all the love we shared for you, you refuse to protect your family. You ungrateful child."

"I wasn't a child. You raised me to be a watchdog. You fed me, pet me and ask me to protect you. But it's forbidden for me to bite when you step on my tail?" Kai spat through his gritted teeth. So now you know of my worth. But I don't care anymore. I don't want to care about this family or you. I have a family now. One that loves me."

"So you'll just stand by and watch us crumble because we were wrong to you."

"No. No matter what, I can't watch you die because for all that I know, you are my father and she is my mother. I'll challenge Saron's son."

"What?"

"I've done it before. A duel I mean. You want him dead, I'll do it. Not for leadership but for a fight." just like how Kai had been into a duel the last time. "If he's dead, he can longer challenge Luhan."

"And you're sure you'll win?" Chanyeol asked.

"Well, I have a better chance than.. that." he gestured his hand sourly at Luhan. "I will do this. Under one condition. I covet no position, you should know that since it will be very easy for me to have Luhan dead and then challenge Saron's son. I have an heir as well. I'll be the ultimate winner if I wanted it. But no. I don't any of this. I want your word. Promise me that you'll help me and Sehun to walk away from this mess. I know that killing Saron's son would bring me terrible consequences. And thus, I need you to promise me that you will protect my child no matter what."

"Kai... he's my grandson too." Rin said.

"No. I no longer believe a word you say so promise me."

"I promise."

"Should they find out that I have an heir, you'll must do everything to help."

"Yes. Okay."

Kai knew what he was facing against. If he won another duel that would automatically create his image as a potential leader. Which meant his son would be just as strong as him, enough to challenge the whole clan. They will see it as a threat and would want to destroy it. Kai guessed that he was still alive because no one thought that Gina's child could be a strong one since her whole ancestral descendants were weak-blooded.

"Why can't I challenge him?" asked Chanyeol. "Kai, you're going to be a father."

"Or we could just kill the dude in his sleep." Kris suggested.

"We're not going to do anything half assed." Kai hissed. "Chanyeol, you can't even kill a cockroach so shush." but he wouldn't deny that Chanyeol was potential as well. Only that he had yet to find something as beautiful as Kai did and Kai was not going to take that away from him. Kai was the one who was tangled in this shitty family.

"You'll win." Rin breathed out. "You never fail."

"Just know one thing. I'm not doing this for you. I wanna end our relationship for good and if this is what it takes for me to pay you back, then fine. Tell Soran of this new plan. And if he doesn't agree to the terms, tell him then I will kill his son in his sleep."

Rin wiped his face and walked down the steps as Gina followed, not uttering a single word. "I need to talk to you." Kris told Luhan and hauled him off the veranda as well.

"Wish I could help you, Kai." Chanyeol said, pressing his palm onto Kai's shoulder.

"There's nothing much to do when you're challenged or challenge someone. No one should help anyone." Kai sighed. "I've done it before. Don't worry. Family comes first and I don't want to owe Rin and Gina anything. They did raise me. And if Luhan's security is what they want, I'll give them that."

Chanyeol let out a heavy breath and walked away, shaking his head. All of them seemed so sure that Kai would not lose.

"You Adlets are insane and even more fucked up than humans." Kai completely forgot that Julien was even there. He turned to see Julien lighting up a cigarette.

"Humans as in Dennis?"

"As in annoying little heartbreakers." he dragged a breath and puffed out a cloud of smoke. "How serious is this duel anyway?"

"One-of-us-dies kind of serious."

"And I suppose that's not going to be you since you so bravely volunteered."

Kai lowered his gaze. "Julien."

"What?"

"Sehun is the most delicate being I have ever come across. And now he's carrying something way more delicate and precious to me. Please. Don't... leave... them." Kai's voice broke as his eyes welled up with tears.

"What are you saying?"

"It's a fight between ferocious maddened Adlets. It could go both ways. I have like fifty per cent chances of being the dead one in the fight. The truth is... they have been my family and no matter how I try... I can't watch either one of them being harmed. But Sehun... he deserves happiness. And if I don't make it, please, don't leave him alone."

Julien dropped his cigarette as he stared at Kai. A moment of silence passed between them before Julien stepped forward. "You are by far the most selfish dick I have ever met. You bring Dennis here so that I will leave Sehun and now you want me to take care of Sehun if you don't make it back? You hear me." he prodded a finger into Kai's chest. "I will not take care of Sehun. He's not my responsibility. So you... live. Fight, live and come back, you get me? Come and get your child and Sehun. And if you die, I swear, I'll find you in hell to shove my shoe up your ass."

Kai smiled and scoffed. "Did I ever mention to you of how much I hate you?"

"You're a kid. Your thoughts don't matter much to me anyway." he flashed a brief smirk before strutting to the door. He turned and faced Kai momentarily. "Kai, seriously though. I will never be you. So make the right choice. The family who apparently seems to have betrayed you or Sehun and your child who are waiting for you." he said as much and walked into the manor.

"What were you doing with him, Sehun?" the tone of his mother's voice was undeniably hostile. He was locked up in his room after all the shebang and until all the guests had left. God knew what was going on with Kai at this ungodly hour of the night.

"Mama, I wasn't doing anything." he defended himself.

"You are getting married to Julien and this is how you embarrass us in front of all those people and for crying out loud, Julien's parents?!"

Sehun hung his head. "Maybe I don't want to care about people anymore, mama."

"What did you say?"

"I love Kai. And I am carrying HIS child whether you like it or not. Mama... he loves me too."

"Nonsense! What has he told you, Sehun?!"

"He didn't tell me anything! I want to be with him over my own will! I don't want to marry Julien and we both know that Julien deserves a lot better. I want to be with Kai, mama." that was when his mother's slender hand struck his cheek and the blow almost sent Sehun's ear ringing.

"You insolent boy! You'll do well to listen to me. You will marry Julien and if you have contrary plans, leave this house at once. Now!" she spun around and stomped out of there, leaving Sehun to cry, kneeling on the floor of his room, devastated and confused. But the next minute itself, Sehun began to pack his trunk. Kai would know what to do. He would accept Sehun and if he had solved the problems with Luhan, then they could just leave.

But very less had he known of how complicated things actually were and that Kai will be put into a much more conflicted situation if Sehun appealed for Kai to take him away because Kai was in that position to give up his own life for Sehun but saving his family was also important.

Chapter Twenty-seven

"Going somewhere?" Sehun was stopped in his tracks when he was confounded by the sudden question. It was almost dawn and it shocked him to find someone up at this hour in the house. He turned around to see Julien leaning his side on a wall, arms crossed over his chest. He was scowling. "It's bloody cold out there and this is your smartest idea to waltz out?"

"Julien..." Sehun murmured, somewhat feeling like he was being nagged. "I.. have to go.."

"Go where? For Christ's sake, your pregnant and you want to wander out in the cold?!"

"Nobody really cares if I'm pregnant or not. You all treat me like I'm kind of puppet and you are the ones holding my strings! I've had enough of people chivvying me and badgering me what I should do or whom I should be with!"

"Have I ever badgered you?!" Julien tore himself away from the wall and advanced to Sehun. "I have my own problems, Sehun. In fact, all of us have our own problems. You think I'm not tired of people rejecting me? Downright, I am! First Dennis... then my parents... now you. I'm so sick of being rejected."

"Julien." Sehun's tone subdued. "It's not that I'm rejecting you... but..."

"You just love someone else. I get you, Sehun. If we did get married, I don't see how it will ever work out." he sighed. "But it doesn't mean that I don't care about you. You leaving the house now won't do anyone any good."

"I don't want to stay here anymore. I can't wait. I'll go crazy... I'm so distressed, Julien." he panted. "All this affliction is driving me mad! My parents don't really care what I want. They keep seeing me as their prize. I'm nothing but a carrier of their bloodline."

"Sehun." Julien grabbed Sehun's arms and looked daggers into Sehun's eyes. "Kai needs some time. Don't make things harder for him is what I'm trying to say."

"What do you mean?"

"Let him take care of his problems with his family. Then, I, myself will bring you over to him, okay?"

"Is everything all right?"

"Yes. He just needs to sort things out. He said he'll come and get you as soon as he could. Besides, you don't know where he is right now."

Sehun frowned and eyed the packed trunk. "He needs time."

"Yes."

"I can't stay in this house, Julien. Not after what my mother said."

Julien let out a heavy sigh. "Fine. I'll stick around until Kai comes for you, okay?"

"You'll do that?"

"Yes. And besides, I have yet to pay Dennis what he deserves."

Sehun saw a different kind of light on Julien's face. It almost intimidated Sehun. "What do you plan to do?"

"I've said it before. I can be bad if I wanted." he smiled faintly and kissed Sehun's forehead. "Go back to your room. Junior needs rest and please. Don't stress yourself."

"You are completely insane!" Kris hollered as they burst into the lodgings they had rented for the week. "We should just rip those assholes apart and get you out of town!"

"No, Kris." Kai muttered and sat down on the bed. "If we do that, we'll have the whole of Adlets against us. I'll be an outcast and I'll have to hide forever. Three of us can't take on hundreds of Adlets, okay. Besides, I'm doing this to get dad out of trouble. And when I leave town with Sehun, I want to live peacefully with him. He deserves a better life, don't you think? A proper duel is the only way."

"How can you guarantee that others won't challenge Luhan after you're gone?" asked Chanyeol, taking his seat beside Kai.

"That's up to them then. I promised to help dad once and that's it. But the best way to save Luhan right now is to get him knocked up. Rules say that a conceived carrier can't fight."

"Yeah. There's one tiny bit of problem with that." Kris said. "He can't keep a child or produce one."

"He mated with an Adlet. Maybe he can't keep an Adlet's child." Kai shrugged and Kris arched his brow. "You wanna save him, Kris? Knock him up."

"Dude!"

"Just try and see what happens. That ought to keep him alive for some months and I guess that will be enough. After that, killing him wouldn't make much difference since he would have an heir and voila, Rin now will have a successor. Nobody would challenge Rin's family until the child grows up to claim the position. And if I'm right, you wouldn't let your child to be an Adlet anyway. So a Berserker has no place in the Adlet community and thus, nobody needs to challenge your child if he doesn't even qualify. Moreover, there's a chance that it might be a girl. So, yeah."

"Who will be the leader then?" Chanyeol questioned.

"Anyone that's second-in-line."

"Whoa whoa whoa! Stop this! I don't do kids and mates, remember?!" Kris shouted. "What is this?! You're planning my family over here, Kai!"

"I care very less for Luhan even if he's our cousin. But he's innocent. I can't save him. But you can, Kris."

Kris frowned and turned his face away. "Rin wouldn't agree for Luhan to mate with a Berserker."

"Rin doesn't have another option. I can only buy you guys time. If I manage to kill Saron's son, then it will keep the other arrogant Adlets at bay for some while."

"And if you don't manage?"

"I guess it gets a lot more complicated. But I sincerely hope that I don't die."

"This is insane."

"I've dueled before. With one of the strongest and cockiest. So don't worry."

The door opened out of the blue and Dennis stepped in. He eyed Kai for a brief second before hurrying to his luggage that lied on the floor. "Where are you going?" asked Chanyeol.

"I want nothing to do with you pathetic wolf bullshit." Dennis murmured, opening his luggage.

"We're dogs technically."

"You lied to me!" he shot at Kai. "Why did you even bring me here?!"

"I didn't lie to you." Kai stood up. "But you, however are a master of lies. Your boyfriend is 'a vicious monster' huh?"

Dennis' face flushed with frustration. "You don't know how much he has made me suffer."

"Funny. Cause I thought he's the one who's still hopelessly looking for his bitchy unworthy boyfriend."

Dennis started to pant furiously. "I'm leaving."

"Leave. Like a coward."

He stopped and stared at Kai.

"Julien deserves much better anyway." Kai muttered and shoved past Dennis to the bathroom.

Even if Saron initially refused for a cross duel, he had no option but to agree in the end when Rin apparently had convinced him that with Kai in the picture, there was no way for his son to kill Luhan. Now everyone was seeing Kai as a major threat when all that Kai wanted was to clear his debt to his family and run away with Sehun.

Kai had his doubts as well. He had managed to win a duel before but that was when he was brutal and cold and selfish. Now, it was palpable that he gone soft.

"What are we doing here, by the way?" Chanyeol asked in a whisper as they walked through the winter woods after several hours of training. The duel was tonight and Kai was getting more and more nervous. What if he didn't make it?

"I should see Sehun."

"Kai." Chanyeol stopped and seized Kai's arm. "You're saying goodbye, aren't you?"

"No. I'm going to say sorry in case I couldn't take him away."

"Kai, I know that your family is important. But... don't you think it's about time you move on and live with Sehun?"

"Too late to change anything, Chanyeol."

He walked up to the veranda and rang the doorbell. It took some moments before Sehun's mother got the door. "Kai." she let out, frowning.

"I need to see Sehun."

"He's sleeping."

"It doesn't matter. I just need to see him." he began to enter the house but Mrs Oh blocked his path.

"I don't think that would be a good idea. He's getting married, Kai. I know that you are the father of the child and we have promised to give you the child. So stop creating a scene and leave. Don't drag Sehun into your conflicts."

"Wow. He just wants to see Sehun." Chanyeol said, annoyed. "And I'm sure Sehun wouldn't mind waking up from his sleep just for a minute."

"Look here. He's the only child I have. And he will listen to me. I already told him that if he wanted you, he could leave. Otherwise he'll have to do what I say. And as you see, he's still here. Don't confuse him any further and leave."

"Kai?" Sehun's voice emitted in a surprised tone from inside the house. Kai glanced over his mother's shoulder and saw Sehun running towards the door. He zoomed past his mother and threw himself onto Kai. "God, I thought you've left again." he hugged Kai's around the neck, pressing his chin onto Kai's shoulder. Kai's own arms enveloped Sehun's body, enjoying every bit of the stomach touching his own.

"Sehun, you come back here right now!" his mother shouted. Sehun pulled back and turned his head to look at his mother.

"No." he spat at her and faced Kai again.

"Sehun..." Kai brushed a lock of hair out of Sehun's eyes. "I need to talk to you."

"Of course." he took Sehun's hand and led him away from the veranda.

"Sehun!" Mrs Oh hollered but Chanyeol stepped before her with arms crossed over his chest.

"Sorry, Mrs Oh. But we need to talk about Kyungsoo." he said.

Kai escorted Sehun as far away as he could from the manor and peeled off his jacket before draping it over Sehun's shoulders. "Are you cold?"

Sehun shook his head, still smiling. "It's eight months today." he brought Kai's hand to touch his stomach. "Where were you for a whole week?"

Kai stared at his stomach as if he could almost see that tiny baby and looked up at Sehun's face. "I was... taking care of things."

"Good. Did everything turn out well?"

"Sehun... I haven't really solved anything and if I don't help, Luhan will die or.. my dad... Rin will die."

Sehun frowned. "You're not done yet? How long... will it take?"

"I don't know." honestly, Kai didn't know even if the fight was tonight.

"Kai." Sehun curled his fingers around the back of Kai's neck. "I can't stay in this house anymore. I don't know what I did but no one except Julien ever talks to me. They keep... seeing me like I'm some kind of... dirt. Like... I mean nothing.. Last night, my parents were talking about wanting a baby girl. And they weren't talking about Jae. It's like they don't even want this baby to exist. Please.. Please bring me away."

"Sehun... I can't. Not now."

"Then when?! How long do I have to endure this?!" tears started to trickle down Sehun's cheeks. "I'm miserable, Kai." he sniffled. "If you do not plan to ever go away with me or take me away from this hell hole, don't give me hopes!"

"Sehun!" he grabbed the sides of Sehun's face. "Stop being so stressed!"

"Then help me." Sehun wept.

And that was enough for Kai to break into tears as well. He hugged Sehun close to his chest and kissed the top of Sehun's head. "Okay, Sehun... Okay." he whispered. "Tonight. We'll run away tonight."

A sudden rustling noise caused Kai to pull back and instantly, he caught the whiff of another Adlet in presence. A man stepped out of the trees with a scared expression. Kai had seen him with Saron that night. He was one of the followers. "You. You're the one who challenged Saron's child, right?" the man asked and Kai was suddenly so alarmed that he was torn between stepping away from Sehun and holding him closer. These new Adlets who had come for Luhan were now walking the winter woods and it only maddened Kai. These Adlets had once been his family but now they were nothing but hostile adversaries.

"What do you want?" Kai snarled at him.

"You have an heir..." he breathed out, shocked and eyeing Sehun. Tremor surged through Kai's body. "Well... that ought to be fun if you're the one to win the duel." he took few steps forward to Sehun.

Kai put himself between them and automatically his hand came up to clutch the man's neck. "Fuck off." he hissed through his gritted teeth and shoved the man back.

"I'll just let Saron know about this new information, I've found out." he said after coughing a little.

"Doesn't matter. I'll kill you all if you even lay a finger on him."

"Oh. You don't get to call the shots over here." he retreated, smirking at Kai.

Kai's hands trembled but he kept his face straight. When the Adlet was out of sight, Kai hastily turned to Sehun. "You have to get out of here."

"What's going on?" Sehun asked, his voice quavering.

"Stay inside no matter what. Don't leave your house."

"Kai, but you said-"

"They weren't supposed to find out about you. They'll use you as a leverage now." he caught Sehun's wrist and hauled him back towards the manor.

"Kai, stop!" Sehun pulled his hand back and held his ground. "What are you talking about?!"

If Saron knew, then he would use Sehun to blackmail Kai into backing down and withdrawing from the fight. But Kai can't tell Sehun about it. "Just trust me, and come with me, Sehun." he reached out to grab Sehun's hand again but Sehun pulled it away.

"I am not going to stay here anymore, Kai!"

"You don't get-" he froze when he heard that howling sound with the ground slightly quaking. The snow stirred from ahead and Kai's whole body went limp. Two Adlets were darting towards him, vicious and bestial. Another two trailed them, racing like mad dogs and all four of them rounded Kai and Sehun. When Kai helplessly grabbed hold of Sehun's hand, it was shaking. "Don't be afraid." he whispered to Sehun who was gaping at the growling Adlets.

"What's going on?" Sehun muttered, clinging onto Kai's arm. Kai swallowed the lump in his throat and turned to see a group of men, including the one that had just ran off. It was unbelievable that all these Adlets were hanging around this place rather than near where Luhan was. Which must mean that they were stalking Kai.

"Hm." Saron hummed. "By looking at how the boy clings onto you, I reckon this is your heir-carrier?"

"You're a fucking coward." Kai spat at him. "Tell your son to face me one-on-one, you pathetic fool." his hand tightened around Sehun's.

"Now, you know that we wouldn't harm you. You're family, Kai. And you're a potential one. Why don't you just withdraw the challenge and leave for good?"

"Or what?"

"I'm sure you wouldn't want your unborn child harmed, I'm sure."

"And I'm sure you'd want to keep your life as well."

"Let's not do something that all of us would regret, Kai. Take care of your own business and we'll leave both of you alone."

"You touch him and I'll make sure that your head is no longer attached to your body."

Saron shook his head. "You're a tough one, aren't you? Fancy yourself some trouble, eh?" he then bowed his head at one of the Adlets that were surrounding them. And before Kai could even comprehend what was happening, Sehun was pounced on by the beast, screaming and crying in pain, dropped to the ground.

"Sehun!" Kai shrieked and before he knew it, he was arching over the ground as well, bones breaking and skin stretching. The pain he had experienced thousands of times but now, he was transfiguring with anger which made the pain mild. Sehun's cries rang in his ears as did the sound of his breaking bones. The fabric of his clothes was ripping apart and within the next minute, he was on his paws, breathing a furious as any beast walking the earth. His feet galloped to the one that was hovering over Sehun and throwing his whole weight onto the Adlet that had attacked Sehun before biting its neck and pulling his head apart. He placed himself near Sehun who had curled up into a ball, crying in pain and snarled at the remaining Adlets, protecting Sehun. But he knew it wouldn't be enough.

"Don't hurt him! Just get the Lycan!" ordered Saron. Another Adlet lurched forward at breakneck speed and Kai's Adlet form went tense with anger.

And as if the silver lining behind his dark cloud, before Kai could counter attack the opponent, a grey colossal wolf jumped over Kai and Sehun, pouncing straight onto the opposing Adlet. It was bloody to watch a wolf scratch and rip the head of the Adlet's but Kai was glad. Saron looked shocked and he quickly ordered his men and then remaining two Adlets to retreat. The grey Loup-garou sided Kai and snarled savagely at them, bordering Sehun as well.

"This isn't over, Kai." Saron hissed and sprinted away with his five other followers.

Kai turned to Sehun and settled down beside him. Sehun was sobbing, holding his stomach but when he saw Kai's Adlet face, his crying subdued but he still wept. Kai caressed Sehun's cheek with his own furry cheek and whined sadly. Julien, still in his wolf form, was whining as well before he leapt over back towards the manor.

Kai rose to his hind feet and lifted Sehun up from the ground. Julien showed up again, in his human form and in a pair of pants. "Kai!" he yelled and held his arms out. "He needs to be taken to a hospital."

Kai quickly placed Sehun in Julien's arms and watched Julien with concerned eyes.

"I'll take care of him." Julien promised and turned around, jogging away. Kai turned on his heels to find Saron. He'll finish what he had started.

Julien had no idea why he was pacing the hospital, feeling like he might just die rather than wait for Kai like this. Sehun had been screaming in the car throughout the ride to the hospital and Julien had never experienced such a stressful situation before. All the nurses were staring at him, walking all over the hospital in frustration.

He scrubbed his face, wondering if Kai would ever make it before Sehun delivers. He didn't want to be here when Kai should be the one who was with Sehun.

"Julien!" Kai's voice boomed into the hallway as he jogged up to Julien. "How is he?!" he asked, gasping for air.

"I don't know. He was crying a lot. He's been in there for half an hour now. I don't know." Julien hated how his scared and nervous he was.

Kai wiped his face and covered his mouth momentarily, resembling Julien's fear. "Those assholes. I will kill every single one of the-"

The door of the surgery opened and a surgeon stepped out. "Are you related to the patient?" he asked. "We are." answered Julien.

"How is he?" Kai asked impatiently.

"He's alright. But the baby..." the doctor trailed off.

Kai grabbed the doctor's neck and snarled at him before Julien shoved him away. "Kai, control yourself dammit!"

The doctor seemed taken aback as he rubbed his neck.

"What happened, doctor?" Julien inquired in a fake calm voice.

"The baby's lungs haven't developed properly. He's having a hard time breathing. We'll see what we can do."

Julien expected Kai to rip the doctor's throat off but instead, Kai sunk onto a chair, face wilted. "He's going to be fine, right?"

The doctor frowned. "We can't promise anything."

"I need to see the baby." Kai muttered, keeping his gaze low.

"And you are?"

"The baby's father." said Julien since Kai seemed too flustered to explain anything.

"Okay but you can only see him for a minute."

Julien heaved in a deep breath as the doctor asked them to wait for a moment. After some minutes, a nurse came by and escorted them to a room but didn't allow them to enter it. "There he is." she pointed through the glass windows of the room. Julien peered in first and saw a baby in a cot, surrounded by medicos.

"No.." he heard Kai whisper. The baby's chest was heaving up and down in such a fast pace. He was suffocating, unable to breath, choking and it was a terrible sight to see. Julien's eyes welled up with tears as did Kai's.

Kai moved away from the doors. "Where are you going?" Julien inquired.

"Rin and Gina are the reason for this." he was crying but his tone stayed hard. "I'm gonna make them pay." he strutted away from there without even looking back.

Chapter Twenty-eight

He was scared. Angry. Mad. On the verge of going hysterical. No matter how terrible a man might be or how affront his actions might be, the sight of seeing his own new-born child suffering to keep its breath would drive him over the extremity. The winter wasn't as infuriating as the tears in Kai's eyes. He had wanted to hold his child in his arms and see the baby smile. Not suffocate and on the brink of death. He couldn't take the image of the baby's whole body trembling, chest heaving unbelievably fast, crying and begging for help because he couldn't breathe.

Kai swung his leg and stomped on the door, kicking it open as the anger only surged faster within him. He strode in without thinking for a second and advanced to Luhan who was sitting on the couch, leaning over the coffee table. "Kai?" Luhan looked up at him and the next second, Kai's hands grasped Luhan's collar, hauled him off the couch and slammed him on a wall, hard and merciless. His fingers curled

around Luhan's neck and started to choke the air out of his throat. "Kai." Luhan croaked, eyes glistening with tears.

"Kai!" Rin's voice boomed into the living hall and Kai felt a strong grip on his shoulder at the back. He twisted Luhan around and now stepped behind Luhan to face Rin, hand still gripping Luhan's neck. "What on earth do you think you're doing?!" Rin shouted and Gina came in running before stopping with bulged eyes.

"I will kill him." Kai snarled, tightening his grip around Luhan's neck.

"Don't do anything, Kai. Whatever it is, let's talk." Rin said calmly.

"No. It's either me or the pack. He's gonna die either way."

"Kai." Gina let out, frowning sadly at him.

"I'm withdrawing from the challenge." Kai asked ruthlessly. "In order to protect this one piece of shit everyone gets into trouble? You wanna put your neck on the line for your son, Rin, fine. But I realize my mistake now. No matter what happens, I'm the one who's going to suffer the most. I almost lost Sehun today for you! I saw my baby suffocating and fuck shit, he was so small! So... small.." Kai lowered his watery eyes. "How does it feel now? You're gonna lose your son and I swear to God, if anything happens to the child, I will make sure that I will take my revenge in the worst way possible."

"Kai, what happened?" Rin asked with concern now.

"Saron ambushed us." Kai spat through his gritted teeth. "Sehun is in the hospital and the baby..." he trailed off.

"Are they okay?"

"Like hell you care." Kai shoved Luhan away.

"Kai, don't you dare say that I don't care about them!"

"Yeah right. You still asked me to challenge Saron's son even when you knew that Sehun needs me. You all are selfish people. I don't want anything to with you anymore. You." he pointed an accusing finger at Rin. "Are the main cause of all this! All my life, I thought you are an honourable man, someone that I respected so much. But you're a coward and self-centred. Family comes first, above all. I learned that from you so now it's my turn to turn my back on you. If any of you ever even try so much to interfere with my life or Sehun's, I'm not gonna tolerate it anymore. We're done, Rin. I'm done with you. I tried to make things right but I'm sorry. I have to be there for my son."

"Go." Luhan said. "I'm sorry for causing a lot of problems. What happens to me is no longer anyone's concern. I came here to have my family back. That includes you too, Kai." he turned around and walked out of the room.

"I believe so much in you, Kai. You are my son whether you want that or not." said Rin. "Every father has its pride and you are mine. Even if you're my brother's son. Go now. Sehun needs you."

Kai retreated with a heavy heart and turned for the door.

"And Kai." Rin called but Kai kept his back facing him. "I'm sorry."

By the time Kai returned to the hospital, Chanyeol and Kris had joined Julien in the waiting room. "Kai." Chanyeol gasped and shot up from his seat before hugging Kai. "I'm sorry. I should have been there."

"It's not your fault." Kai pulled back and sunk down in a seat. He felt Kris' hand on his shoulder and it was no more comforting than hoping for his child to survive.

"How are you gonna fight tonight?" Kris asked in a low voice.

"Fight? Are you insane?!" Chanyeol yelled. "We'll help Luhan but let's leave Kai out of this."

"Do you see how fucked up your community is?" Julien spat angrily. "Do you still want this, Kai? Leave. Take my advice and leave this fucking town."

"I can't let Luhan die." Kris muttered.

"And I can't let Rin die assuming that he will definitely help Luhan to flee." Kai murmured and took in a deep breath. "They attacked us. And I'll get my revenge by attacking them back."

A moment of silence passed among them before Kris said, "Count me in."

"No." Julien opposed. "Don't you get this, Kai? When Sehun wakes up, he's going to be devastated and all you can think about getting revenge? This will never end if you do that."

"What do you suggest I do?" Kai shot at him.

"Leave, for crying out loud! You want revenge, I can get you your revenge. But rather thinking like a caveman, try outsmarting them. They are in the quarters of wolveren theriomorphs. And they almost killed one. It's only a matter of time until Sehun's parents find out and believe me, when they do, they're gonna round up the whole of Lycans and destroy your Adlet friends for good. So don't act hastily. I'll help you rid them. Sehun is someone dear to me as well. That Adlet pack has no chance with a hundred of Lycans and Loup-garous. We can make them retreat."

Kai considered it for a minute and then nodded. "Are you sure the Lycans would help?"

"They all hate Adlets. And knowing that Sehun was hurt by them, they'll be glad to help."

"Okay."

Julien nodded once and pulled his phone out of his pocket. "I'll let Sehun's parents know then." he stepped out of the room.

"Kai?" Chanyeol called. "Aren't you going to ask about the baby?"

"How's Sehun?" Kai asked, expressionlessly.

"Still unconscious." Kris answered. "The baby however..." he gulped. "It was terrible to see him like that."

"Just imagine how he's suffering right now." Kai scoffed and then let out a humourless laugh. And then he started breaking into tears, covering his face with his palms.

"Who's Oh Sehun's husband over here?" someone asked, entering the waiting room and Kai looked up to see a nurse standing at the doorway.

"What's wrong?" Kai jolted up from his chair.

"He's up. You can go and see him but just the husband though." the nurse smiled. "This way." she led Kai out of the room.

"How is he?" Kai queried impatiently.

"He's fine." the nurse added an assuring grin to that. "A little sedated and he keeps asking about the baby. I suggest you don't tell him." she gave Kai the knowing eye.

Kai nodded. "And the baby?"

The nurse heaved a sigh. "We're trying our level best. This is a local hospital. And there's nothing much that we could do. But we'll try."

"No. Tell me the worst possible outcome."

"I don't think-

"Tell me."

She let out a breath. "He's... it's a baby boy by the way. He is... under life support. Without supplementary oxygen, he won't be able to breathe. If his lungs doesn't adapt within the next 36 hours, then..." she trailed off with a shrug. "I'm really sorry. It's a premature baby."

Kai wiped his face with his palms. "Don't tell Sehun."

"I won't. But if he keeps asking, then the doctors would tell him." she pushed a door open and ushered Kai inside.

Sehun lied on the bed, pale with terribly chapped lips, eyes closed and the fatigue was crystal clear by the way he was breathing. Kai hurried to his side and took Sehun's hand into his own. Sehun was suffering all this because of Kai. If only Kai hadn't imprinted on him.

The ache in Kai's chest now proved of his feelings for Sehun and Julien was right. Sehun would be devastated. He already asked Kai to bring him away and Kai said no to save his own family. And now, nothing seemed as important as Sehun.

"Kai?" Sehun breathed out, fluttering his eyes open.

"Hey." Kai smiled and bowed his head to kiss Sehun's forehead. "You're gonna be death of me someday for scaring me like that. I'm an old man to be scared like that, you know."

"Sorry, grandpa." Sehun's voice only came out as a whisper. "The baby?"

"He's... beautiful." Kai brushed Sehun's hair.

"Where is he then? I want to see him."

"He's... premature, Sehun. So they're keeping him under surveillance."

"Oh." Sehun blinked his eyes. "When will I be able to see him then?"

"As soon as you recover."

"Does he look like you or me?" he grinned.

Kai hadn't really got a good look of the baby but he knew better than to say that the baby looked like him. "You."

Sehun let out a shaky laughter.

"Sehun." Kai sat on the edge of the bed. "We're getting out of town as soon as you're fine."

"Why?"

"Because it's not safe anymore."

"Why did they attack us?"

"I think it's a talk for another day. You need to rest."

Sehun didn't fight Kai on this even if he looked like he wanted to. He needed the rest and if only Sehun could transfigure right now, he will be healed immediately. But given the circumstances, that wasn't possible.

Kai left the room when Sehun was asleep again before he went to request to see the baby. The doctors were sceptical about it but in the end, they understood Kai's plight and allowed him into the quarantine room where the baby lied, heavily poked with IV lines and some tube running along his nostrils. His body was so tiny that Kai could fit him just right in his two palms. Kai knelt on the cot's side and watched the baby struggle in breathing as he slept. "Jae." Kai whispered and brought a finger to touch the baby's small hand. The deflating stomach made Kai's eyes sting with tears. He brushed his finger on the tiny palm of the baby's hand and slowly felt the baby wrap its hand around Kai's finger. That moment, Kai's heart skipped a beat or two. "I promise." Kai let the tears spill. "I will be a good father. The father that I never had. So don't give up on me, little wolf." Jae will be a wolf, not an Adlet.

The monitor started making some loud 'beep' noise and Kai stared at it in horror. The baby's hand tightened around his finger as he started panting, gasping for air. The baby's stomach deflated and rose in at breakneck speed. "You need to get out." a nurse pulled Kai's arm to get him up. Doctors gushed into the ward and Kai was forced out of there. He stared blankly at the closed doors.

When Sehun's parents had arrived in the hospital, things really went out of hand. They were furious just by seeing Sehun's sleeping form and by looking at how they strode out of there, it was bound to be a war

between Adlets and Lycans. But all they cared about was Sehun and none of them bothered to even ask what of the baby.

"Here." Julien held out a cup of coffee at Kai. Kai shook his head and heard Julien sigh as he took his seat beside Kai.

"It's been hours and the doctors are not saying anything about the baby." Kai whispered.

"Would you rather they say something?"

Kai shot him a look and then hung his head. "I needed that baby as nothing but an heir before. He must hate me for that."

"Funny how you of all people accuse an innocent few-hour-old baby of such things. Have some faith. He still has an Adlet's stubborn blood in him. He's surely not gonna give up."

"I hope not."

"Kai." Julien held out a pink ball. The pink fuzz ball. "Sehun loves this for some reason and I wonder if you had some kind of welcome gift for your child."

Kai took the furry ball and probed it. "Or departing gift."

"Very highly optimistic of you." Julien arched his brow.

"Mr Kim Kai." the doctor showed up with a wide grin on his face and Kai rose to his full height. "Good news. The baby is fine."

"Fine as in fine for now?"

"No. His lungs has adapted to the outside atmosphere. Or he just miraculously seemed to have built his lungs. Strong indeed. So now go and be happy." the doctor patted Kai's arm and strutted away as Kai still stood there gaping.

"See. Sometimes hoping can help." said Julien beside Kai.

"Hoping is what I've been doing all day long, Julien." Kai began to smile as his lips stretched as wide as they could. "I need your help."

"Anything at all."

"Help me get out town. I have to leave."

"I will. But for tonight, like the doctor said, go and be happy."

Kai ran to the room Sehun was admitted in and burst into it, only to see Sehun cradling the baby in his arms. "Sehun." Kai gasped and Sehun looked up at him with a smile. Kai vamoosed to him and caught the sides of his face before pulling it up and kissed him. As desperate as Kai was, he broke the kiss after a chaste one. He glanced down at the sleeping baby and bowed his head to kiss the forehead of the baby.

"Jae, Kai." Sehun whispered.

"Kim Jae, you scared the crap out us all." he shook his head and kissed the baby's head again.

"You lied. He looks like you." he faked a pout on his lips but the playful expression faded as he stared at the baby. "He's so small." when Sehun said that, his eyes were red, laced with tears. "I'm sorry." he squealed with guilt.

"It's not your fault. He'll grow." Kai placed the soft fuzz ball on Sehun's side. "Can I.. carry him?"

Chapter Twenty-nine

The burning air in his lungs were nothing less than a compliment to the lightness of his body. The faster his feet moved, the more they wanted. The warm soil under the paws was nothing compared to the warm atmosphere that made Sehun alive. The sun, the summer sky, the shining rays of sunlight through the thick canopies of the forest promised so much and zooming through them, with Kai tagging behind was all that Sehun could ask for. His wolf form wasn't as weak as Sehun himself and probably that was why Sehun was keen on transfiguring often these days. To be the deserving partner for Kai. Not that Kai was demanding anything.

His fur had gotten a little ivory under the sun but otherwise, it was as white as snow and he knew Kai would be able to find him anywhere in this tropical forest since his fur was contrasting and besides, Sehun was too gauche to keep his paws silent. Didn't really matter. He wanted Kai to find him anyway.

Sehun darted faster, putting his hind and front legs to speed, jolting through the forest, leaping over the protruding roots of trees. The ground beneath started quaking and Sehun had not bargained for Kai to trail him this quick. The dark brown form of the Adlet Kai was, the snarling noise, the razor-sharp teeth and claws. He was completely of the contrary kind of Sehun. Sehun ceased his speed and arched to the ground, bones re-joining and repositioning, teeth and claws drawing back in followed by other changes regrouping and Sehun was back to his human form, on two feet.

He began jogging to bundle of clothes on the forest's floor but failed to reach it when his wrist was grasped and yanked until his bare chest collided onto Kai's. Kai gripped on Sehun's waist, smirking and burning with desire. "You're getting better, little wolf." he muttered, cocking his head to the side and leaned in.

"Kai, not now." Sehun went scarlet, tinting a blush and began to push Kai away. When he pulled back, Kai only hauled him and pushed Sehun to the ground. He descended upon Sehun, pushing Sehun's shoulder to render him supine. Sehun dragged his palms from Kai's abs to his chest as Kai brushed their lips together. Sehun's tongue promptly touched Kai's when Kai forced his lips to be parted. "You're going to be late for work." Sehun whispered, breaking the kiss momentarily.

"Then I'll have to improvise and be quicker." Kai smashed his mouth onto Sehun's again, this time not being so moderate about it. Sehun's lips were tender and chafed due to Kai's merciless yet passionate kiss. Kai dragged his lips down the side of Sehun's neck and Sehun let out a shaky breath when Kai sucked a spot. The stubble along Kai's jaw prickled the sensitive skin of Sehun's neck. His hand soon travelled all the way down Sehun's torso, caressing every inch of it before the fingers made themselves useful as he sucked and nipped on Sehun's lower lip. Sehun sprawled his legs apart to let Kai in, moaning and biting Kai's lip in both pleasure and unconformity.

He couldn't help but mewl when Kai began to thrust. Kai loved it when Sehun moaned his name, out loud and clear but more than anything, Sehun loved giving Kai the pleasure. After all, Kai was his and Sehun was Kai's. They had gone against everyone and both of their families to be together and Sehun was happy. He knew Kai was too.

"That was fun." Kai kissed Sehun's temple as they made their way back to their cabin-house in the middle of the forest with Kai's arm draped over Sehun's shoulders. This home was anything that Sehun could ask for. It was beguiling in every aspect and the beauty of the home that he and Kai had built for themselves was even more stunning than the rose vines that covered the outside walls of the cabin. Flowers bloomed everywhere and during the night, fireflies would light up the whole world for them. "We should do it more often."

"Why do you like doing it outdoors so much?" Sehun reached up and pecked on Kai's cheek.

"Because you are so beautiful when you're with nature."

"Very poetic."

"I've been hanging around you. What do you expect?"

Sehun opened the door and stepped in before heading straight to the baby's room. The baby was surprisingly awake and was sitting up in his cot, playing with his pink fuzz ball. "You're up early."

Jae looked up and started smiling wide at Sehun. He held his arms out, wanting to be carried but when he noticed Kai walking in, he quickly turned to reach his arms to Kai, asking Kai to lift him up. "Oh there's my little chunky!" he pulled Jae out of the cot and Jae giggled when Kai kissed his cheek. He pushed Kai's face away and when Kai kissed his chubby cheek again, the baby hissed angrily and pointed a scolding finger at Kai.

"Moo." he warned Kai.

"Translation, please." Kai told Sehun.

"He's telling you to shave your bloody face. It hurts."

"Oh. I'll do that." Kai grinned at Jae. Of course he would do that. He would do anything for Jae, even when it wasn't as trivial. Jae then stuck his arms out to Sehun. Kai handed the baby over. "I'll get ready for work."

Having an 8-month-old baby was as difficult as it was and to worsen the situation, Jae was one moody baby with his temperamental behaviour. He had managed to form a love-hate relationship with Kai as soon as he had started crawling. But nevertheless, the innocence of a baby never died and Jae wouldn't go to sleep without Kai at night.

"I'll be back early." Kai said, sitting on the couch, bent over to tie his shoelaces as Jae sat on the other end of the couch, fidgeting with his action figure while waiting for his milk to arrive.

"What's for dinner then?"

"I was thinking we should go out."

"To the town?"

"Yeah." Kai looked up at Sehun and beamed. "I think Jae would like some change of scenery."

Jae perked up and stared at Kai for a second when his name was mentioned but quickly went back to playing with his toy. "Okay." Sehun returned the grin as he poured the hot milk into the feeding bottle.

Jae looked up at Kai and started crawling over the couch to reach Kai. When he did, he sat quietly beside Kai and played with his toy. Sometimes, Jae simply yearned for Kai's warmth and Sehun knew how it felt exactly. But sometimes, Jae simply wanted Kai's attention. He dropped the toy to the floor, quite deliberately and shot Kai a look. Kai picked it up and handed it back before resuming to tying his shoelace. Sehun smirked and shook his head when Jae stared at the toy in disappointment. He put the action figure aside and placed his tiny palm on Kai's thigh. "Moo?" he puffed out.

"Be ready around six?" Kai shot to Sehun.

"All right."

Jae frowned and slumped back on the couch. He brought his forefinger to his nose and started picking it. He pulled the finger out after a couple of seconds and slowly, very slowly, brought it to Kai's thigh. He wiped his finger on Kai's pants, looking eagerly at Kai's face. "What is he doing?" Kai asked, finally noticing Jae.

"Seeking your attention."

"Are you, baby?" Kai carried the baby and held him hanging as Jae giggled in satisfaction of drawing his father's attention. "You were so small and look at you now, fatter than Sehun when he was preggers. See, daddy shaved." he pressed his lips onto Jae's cheek and Jae hugged Kai's neck, whining and giggling happily.

But as soon as Sehun brought the milk bottle over, Jae went on a berserk, moving wild and bestial to get away from Kai. When Kai let him go Jae crawled as fast as he could to the other end of the couch and reached one arm up to Sehun. "Ngu ngu!" he demanded his milk bottle.

"He'll choose milk over me. Why am I not surprised?" Kai muttered and cupped Sehun's jaw before kissing his mouth and vamoosed out of there.

This town was nothing like Verglas. People were everywhere and they were always so lively. The summer evening was promising to many as its sky streaked with beautiful violet ribbons. "Don't speak to people like that." Kai told the baby which he was carrying on one arm, settled on the hip. "They will eat you."

"Don't be so paranoid about your son, Kai." Sehun said.

"Also, don't ever give your precious little heart to any of the naughty boys." he continued lecturing Jae as they strolled through the town. "I will rip their heads off if you even bring one home."

"Kai!"

Jae watched Kai's face intently as if he understood what Kai was saying while he held the beef jerky in his hand, taking little bites of it. He mewled and made a coughing noise, the babyish gesture to suggest that he will comply. Some of the passer-by smiled at them, commenting on what a wonderful family they were. Sehun wanted this. All of this. Holding hands with Kai while having the most precious irreplaceable thing in their lives.

"You can't do that. It's his choice." Sehun defended.

"Yes." Kai kissed the baby's cheek. "But I'll still rip off their heads if they try to snatch you away from me."

Jae yawned and smacked his lips before his eyes widening. "Poo poo poo!" he pointed eagerly at something across the street. He started bouncing in Kai's arm as he kept pointing.

Sehun followed the direction of his stuck-out finger and spotted what had caught Jae's attention. It was a puppy, sleeping on a corner of a shop lot. "What is it?" Kai inquired.

"Give me a second." Sehun leapt over to other side of the street and approached the brown-furred puppy. He lifted it up and the puppy stirred from its sleep. "It's okay, little one."

"Pooh." Jae croaked out when Kai came up to Sehun's side. He held his hand out and stroked the puppy's head.

"No." Kai protested instantly.

"Why not? He's homeless." Sehun argued.

The small puppy sniffed Jae's face and Jae froze in shock. But he quickly snapped out it and whined happily before hugging the puppy. "Poopy!" he chimed.

"Urgh." Kai groaned, rolling his eyes. "Fine."

Jae gave the puppy his beef jerky and the dog quickly devoured the piece. "Muu!" Jae screamed in happiness and hugged the puppy again.

"Look at the irony. Wolf wants a pet pup." Kai scoffed.

"I have a pet pup." Sehun smirked and kissed Kai's lips.

Sehun kept stroking the puppy's fur in the car as Jae played violently with his toys in the backseat. "Urf." the puppy barked quietly when Sehun examined his injured paw.

"Woof!" Jae imitated the puppy immediately.

"If that dog steals my baby's attention, I swear-"

"Kai, one day he's going to go on his own way. Stop being so protective."

"Don't scare me, Sehun." Kai gripped the steering wheel. "I can't... really live without either of you."

Sehun smiled and looked back at Jae who was throwing his toy around. The toy soon hit the window and Jae gasped, eyes bulged out before picking the toy up and hugged it. "Sehun." Kai called suddenly in a tight voice. He pulled the car over before their house and Sehun noticed the other car standing there, lights lit up. "Stay inside." Kai got down the car and the door of the foreign car opened as well.

The figure that stepped out was very familiar and it took Sehun some moments to realize that it was Kris. He exited the vehicle and approached Kai who was hugging Kris now. "It had been a long time." Kris said when he pulled back from Kai. "Sehun!" he then hurried to Sehun to give him a hug but stopped when he saw the puppy in Sehun's arms. "Wow. Ironic."

"That's what I thought." Kai snickered. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, I hate to disturb you guys but I tend to kick your butt for leaving without saying a single word."

"There was no point in saying goodbyes, Kris. The last thing I need is a bunch of Adlets trailing behind me."

Kris lowered his gaze. "Kai..." he started slow. "It's about Rin."

"Whatever you've got to say about him, save it."

"He's... dead."

Sehun's heart dropped to the stomach. His ears started ringing. "Are you kidding me, Kris?" Kai snorted.

"Do you think I'd be kidding about something like this? Gina is devastated and whether you like it or not, you have been their son for 18 years. She needs you by her side right now."

Kai stumbled back and started panting with a dead scared face. "He's dead?" he breathed out.

"We're holding the funeral tomorrow. I just thought that you should know. He was your father after all."

"No." Kai started pacing back and forth, hand on his forehead. "How? What happened?"

"Were you really not expecting this? He tried stalling for as long as he could but the Adlets no longer cared about Luhan. You don't know what happened after you left. But we can talk about that later."

"The Adlets... killed him?"

"They have a new leader and I don't know much. You don't have to come, Kai. But Gina has no one right now."

Kai eyed Sehun desperately. His eyes were red even under the moonlight, Sehun could see them. "We'll be there for the funeral." Sehun said.

Chapter Thirty

"Kai?" Sehun brushed Kai's arm but Kai couldn't respond. His family looked up to him and Kai couldn't bring himself to cry before Sehun or Jae. But his heart was only becoming heavier by the minute at the news of his father's death. If only Kai had been there... If only he had...

"I'm okay. Just pack." Kai murmured and tossed in some shirts into the luggage. He was expecting something unfortunate to happen sooner or later but he thought he had the strength to face it. He was

wrong. All the moments he had with Rin flashed before his eyes, polluting his mind with guilt and sorrow. He should have helped Rin. Instead, he left Rin to stand alone for himself. Kai was wrong. He was still selfish even everything. He cared for his happiness and now Rin was dead. Gina was alone. Kai dropped onto the bed and covered his face in his palms.

"Kai." Sehun grabbed both of his wrists, kneeling before Kai on the floor. "I'm so sorry but... please don't be like this."

Kai pulled his hands away from his face and heaved in a deep breath. "It's either Luhan or Rin. I didn't think Rin would risk Luhan's life but... he didn't try to force me or even ask when I said that I won't help."

"Kai-"

Kai held the sides of Sehun's face and Sehun leaned into the touch. "Maybe if I had helped..."

"You can't blame yourself, Kai." Sehun frowned.

"No. I could have won the duel but I was egoistic. I... wanted revenge for they did to you."

Sehun laid his head onto Kai's knee and Kai ran his fingers through Sehun's hair. "What if you didn't win?" he whispered.

"He... was my father, Sehun... He never said otherwise. He never said that I wasn't his son. He... never said that he wasn't my father. I was mad for all the lies and how they used me... But he said that he was proud of me."

"I'm so sorry." Sehun took his seat next to Kai and pulled him into an embrace. "I'm sorry you have to lose so many people in your life."

Kai kissed Sehun's cheek and buried his face into Sehun's shoulder. "Gina will never forgive me."

"She will. It was never your fault."

"It is." he tightened his arms around Sehun's waist. There was something that was so comforting about Sehun and Sehun, too seemed vulnerable these days.

Kris had said that Rin was hunted down for not bringing Luhan back within the given time. But he wasn't sure if that was the case because he was convinced that Luhan would come back if he had known that his father would be killed. Something must have happened and since Kris had just gotten back in town, he had no idea of what.

"I have to prepare Jae's things." Sehun pulled back and Kai nodded. "Kai." Sehun brushed his cheek with his thumb, cupping the side of his face. "Cry if you have to. Don't hold it in."

Kai scoffed. "It's Jae's first long ride and it's his grandfather's funeral."

Sehun stroked the back of Kai's head and smiled sadly before getting off the bed, leaving Kai alone in the room. Kai wiped his face with his bare palms and sighed. Maybe it was the lies that Rin had said that was keeping Kai from breaking down. He lied down on the bed and reminisced the moments with Rin. Dad. He had taught Kai how to take his baby steps. He had been there to catch Kai before he could fall. He was a strong man who Kai always depended on. He had been there when Kai first transfigured and all through the pain, Rin was by his side. Yes, he had used Kai but did it mean that Rin never loved Kai?

"Kai?" Sehun re-entered the room with Jae in his arms who was crying loudly, wailing and throwing a tantrum. "He won't stop crying."

Kai let out a breath and stood up. "Give him here." he took Jae from Sehun and cradled the baby. One day, Jae would also have to go through this very sorrow and Kai would hate to see his little boy cry. "I'll put him to sleep. You pack."

Sehun nodded and exited the room.

Jae kept wailing, clutching onto Kai's collar until Kai lied down and placed the baby on his chest. He started patting the baby's back and slowly, Jae's cries subdued. "I will always be there for you. I promise." he whispered. "And when I'm not, that's probably because I'm dead." he kissed the top of Jae's head and Jae had completely calmed down. Kai even suspected that he had fallen asleep.

Did Rin put Kai into sleep when he cried? Kai's eyes stung with tears but he didn't let them fall.

"This is really annoying." Kai lifting the dog bag that the puppy had been in as they unloaded the car.

"Chupu!" Jae shouted as Sehun carried him out of the car, reaching his arms to the puppy. "Chupupupu Chupu!" he begged Kai to hand the dog over.

"We're calling him Chupu now?" Kai eyed Sehun with a grimace.

"It's his puppy. He gets to call him whatever he wants."

Kai rolled his eyes and stretched one of his arm. He will face this. He will face all the accusation that was bound to fall on him. Kai glanced at the house ahead. Jae shivered as his chubby cheeks quavered and he tightly hugged Sehun's neck due to the cold. Kai had put Verglas behind his back but being back here made him think about the beginning. About Sehun. About how he had rejected Jae at first. They never should have come here in the first place.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Sehun asked.

Kai took in a deep breath. "Better to face your demons than run away forever. It had been my fault in some way and I owe Gina an apology."

"Urf!" the puppy barked and Jae perked up.

"Woof!" he imitated the puppy.

"You're not a dog." Kai shot at Jae and kissed the baby's forehead.

"Partly, he is." Sehun replied and took Kai's hand. "It doesn't matter, Kai. Whatever your father did, he was still your father. You relied on him. And it is only fair for you to mourn him."

"I will." Kai muttered and started for the house before Jae could catch cold or something.

The house was quite empty for a funeral. The emptiness only made Kai's heart sink to his stomach. Gina was sitting by a closed casket, face pale and eyes tired. Chanyeol and Kris were sitting on the couch. Luhan was nowhere to be seen. He seriously wasn't there for his own father's own funeral.

"Mom." Kai called and Gina turned slowly to look at him and Sehun but turned her head away without saying anything.

"Kai." Chanyeol shot up from his seat and hurried to Kai. "I'm sorry." he was about to hug Kai but the puppy barked.

"Oof!" Jae barked after the puppy.

"Shh." Sehun shushed the baby and Gina finally looked up at Jae. She rose to her feet and dragged them to Sehun. She stared at the baby for a moment and Jae returned her stare. The baby then held his arms out to Gina, asking her to carry him. Gina seemed taken aback but she accepted the baby.

"I'm really sorry, mom." Kai finally broke into tears and hugged Gina. "I'm.. so sorry." he sniffled and gasped for air.

"It has nothing to do with you, Kai." Gina stroked his hair. Kai pulled back to see Gina's faint smile. She lifted Jae higher and grinned at him.

"Eh." Jae whined, beaming brightly.

"He's... so beautiful."

"The pack... no one came?" Kai questioned.

"He was a traitor. A coward they said. The clan has a new leader, Kai. They do as he says." she glanced over at Jae and kissed his cheek. "I'm glad you finally came home. I was scared that I will never get to see him but you have to leave. Now."

"Mom-"

"Kai, mourn your dad and leave. Those Adlets don't need to know that you're here."

"Why are those Adlets still here?"

"Because a huge number of them were hunted down by the Lycans and Loup-garous."

"What?"

"After you left, Saron and his whole party, including his son was killed." her voice tightened. "I'm guessing the Lycans felt threatened after what happened to Sehun. His parents went berserk. And now, the new leader had ordered to hunt Rin for his treachery and betrayal against his own kind."

"Where's Luhan?"

"We forced him to leave. They were so mad and negotiation was no longer feasible. They'd kill Luhan, me, you, Sehun and even your baby. They don't need to know you're here. Thank you for coming. But leave."

"Mom, I'm not gonna leave you."

"You already did once. Even if they choose to not to cross you, they will harm your child and Sehun since his kind had destroyed many of ours."

"They started it, mom! It's only fair if we fight back!"

"You can't afford to fight back!" Gina shouted at him. Jae shuddered and broke into a wail, reaching back to Sehun. Sehun took him back and stepped out of the house for a moment. "You chose to go on your own way! You think Rin and I didn't care about you?! We gave you everything you asked for because we loved you. That includes Sehun! And we love Luhan more than you? You were strong, Kai! Luhan needed help. You could survive and he couldn't. I imprinted on you and what makes you think I could stop loving you? You might not be my biological son but I love you as much as I love Luhan. The imprinting stopped. But I can't forget about you, Kai. You were only a baby when we took you in. You wouldn't remember how much both you and Luhan brought us. Rin loved you. He let you go because that was what you wanted. He wanted to protect Luhan and he thought you could help him with that. Yes, everything we did was to save Luhan but you were supposed to be his protector, not a replacement. But it's done. There's nothing we could do about it and you, go and take care of your child."

"Gina, if what you're saying is true then the Adlets would come for you next." Chanyeol said.

"No." Kris spoke for the first time, wearing a pondering expression and stood up. "They would have done it much sooner." he said, thinking about something.

"You've got something to suggest, Kris?" Kai asked.

"They knew that Kai would come if Gina was alone. After all, they'd expect that."

Everything dawned to Kai then. "You think this is some sort of scheme?"

"Could be. Or why would leave Gina for a better day?"

Kai let out an exasperated breath. "This will keep on going. Unless we hit them first this time. Who is this leader?"

"You don't know him." said Gina. "But he hated Rin. And everything that happened gave him the exact reason for the whole clan to against us. He allied with a Lycan and let his foster son bear a child with one of them."

"But Rin's dead." Chanyeol added. "Can't they just get on with their lives now?"

"No." Kai replied. "If he planned to lure me here, then he wants to destroy Rin's whole family. Where is Luhan?"

"We sent him away. He demanded on staying and refused to go at first but it wasn't going to help anyone." Gina answered.

"Then I suppose he'll use one of us as a leverage to get Luhan back so that he can kill all of us."

"He can kill me for all he wants. You need to stay safe. Leave, Kai."

"I'm not leaving you. Not again. If they want a fight, we'll give them a fight. I hold all the rights to challenge the leader."

"No, Kai! The damage is done. You have a family now."

"Kai." Sehun suddenly called with a terrified expression on his face as he patted Jae's back. "You've got company."

Kai eyed Kris and headed to the door. He crooked an arm around Sehun's waist and stepped onto the veranda. His face wilted when he saw the group of men crowding the front of the house. "Kai, isn't it?" a man said, stepping to the front. "I'm Yoon."

"I'm guessing you're the leader?"

"Yes."

"In that case, I'd like you to leave before I kill you mercilessly because it's a fight for another day. I'm mourning my dad."

"Oh. I thought he was never your dad." Yoon advanced closer. "My pack did kill Rin. In fact it was your pack as well. Rin didn't fight exactly which made it all... less fun. Betrayal runs in your blood, huh? Tell you what. You fight, you win and you live. But chances aren't so fat for you." his eyes darted to Sehun and Jae. "I'll kill the little one first perhaps."

"I will kill you and your fucking pack for even threatening my child." Kai growled.

"Oooh. I like your spirit. You all are gonna die by the end of tomorrow anyway. And out of all of you, the Lycan suffers the worst death."

Kai lurched forward but Sehun caught his arm. "What makes you think I won't fight?" Sehun snarled at him.

"I'd like to see you try." he smirked. "Tik-tok. Run while you still can but we'll hunt you down anyway." he retreated along with his twenty-ish followers.

"Kris." Kai immediately turned to him. "I need help."

"I'll talk to dad. He's on his way." Kris assured him.

"See if you could get your hands on Julien as well. Loup-garous might be helpful."

Kris nodded and zoomed out of the house. "Chanyeol, they're not gonna harm you as long as you don't interfere." Kai said, turning to Chanyeol.

"I'm not leaving like a coward. This is my chance to prove to my dad that I'm not worthless."

"Everyone has daddy issues, huh." Kai almost scoffed. "Can you send Sehun's parents a message then?"

"Of course."

"Tell them we're not gonna fight. I need to talk to Yoon and I don't think he would consider it if we don't have an army."

"You're going to challenge him?" Sehun asked. Jae was asleep on his shoulder.

"Yes. And you will do as your parents say and get as far away as you can."

"No. I'm fighting if it comes down to that."

"I hope it doesn't but it did, you're not going to fight, Sehun."

"Why? You don't think I can?"

"It's not that. What about Jae then?"

Sehun went silent for a moment before he said, "We're partners, Kai. We help each other."

"This is all wrong." Gina panted. "Rin tried to avoid all of this."

"And it was all my fault." Kai admitted. "I'll fix this. One way or another."

"And if you couldn't? Are you even thinking about that child?"

Kai didn't reply as he faced Sehun again. "I promised to keep him safe. There has to be a way."

"There is." a familiar voice entered the conversation. Kai glanced over at the girl standing on the snow, before the veranda. She smiled under the shade of her hood. "That baby is never meant to be with you. He will only be harmed if he remained with you."

Kai recognized her only after some moments. The girl with the baby. "Who are you and what are you suggesting? What do you know?"

"What I know is that I can take that baby and provide him protection."

"Bullshit."

"You're putting his life on the line. Do you think you have much choice? You can try and take him away from here but the Adlets will find him just like how they will find your first heir, Luhan."

"Who are you?" Kai stepped down the stairs.

"You don't know me but I know you very well, Kim Jongin."

"You're nothing but a girl. And you think you can save us all?"

"I never said I can save you. No one can escape hundreds of bloodthirsty Adlets. But I can keep your baby safe."

"Get lost before I do something that I'm gonna regret."

"Oh. You? Regret?" she chuckled. "My offer will be open. When you're ready to accept that that baby will be hunted down, you'll know where to find me." she started to walk away and Kai clenched his fists.

Sehun looked dreadful, gaping at the absence of the girl. "Don't believe her shit. She looks like some weird creepy voodoo witch or something." Kai told him.

"She's a Loup-garou." Gina corrected him, gaping just as Sehun. "She was the mate of the Adlet you killed in your duel, Kai."

"What?"

Gina shook her head and stumbled back in.

"You killed her mate in your duel.." Sehun repeated in a breath. "She has a child, Kai."

"Sehun... I didn't know."

Sehun turned around and stomped away from Kai.

The impediment of this situation was great. There was no way of getting out of it unless if they fought and won. And they had very less time to reach a resolution. Jae's safety was important and if that girl could provide him that safety, then Sehun wouldn't hesitate a minute to hand him over. But Kai was skeptical. No matter how Sehun contemplated, this would come to a tragic war and he didn't want Jae caught up in it.

"Sorry, little one." Sehun whispered, standing before the mirror, touching his stomach. Tears spilled into the sink of the bathing room. Maybe this child will never get to see the world. But this was no time to think about a baby that wasn't even born. Jae needed protection and Sehun needed to help Kai. And if Kai knew about the second pregnancy, he would never in a thousand years let Sehun get involved in this.

He stepped out of the bathroom and found Jae on the bed, on his fours, sucking in his lower lip, facing against the puppy as the puppy was ready to attack him. "Chupooo!" Jae screamed and the puppy charged and pounced on him. Jae fell back and started giggling viciously as the puppy licked his face. "Moo moo!"

"I thought I taught him to be a predator. Not a cow." Kai's sudden whisper from behind made Sehun jump.

"Kai, we need to talk."

"No. Sending him away with a freaky stranger is out of the question."

"Maybe she knows what to do."

"Maybe she's trying to get her revenge on me. And I'm not a fool to hand her what she wants exactly."

"No, Kai. Think about it. If we keep Jae over here, he's going to be harmed. If we send him away, he will still be harmed. The only way to keep him safe is by keeping him close and protected."

"Why would you even trust that girl?"

"Because she had lost everything, Kai! I'm not ready to lose my everything yet. Please."

"Sehun, I can't give him away."

Sehun groaned and watched Jae. The baby was sitting on the bed with a poker-face but he was concentrating on something. Oh right. He was either peeing or soiling himself. When he was done, Jae looked up at Sehun and grinned wide. Sehun wondered if their second child would look like him.

"Kuku." Jae puffed out and crawled to sit on the pillow. The puppy followed suit and settled before the baby, wagging its tail.

"I can't lose him, Sehun." Kai breathed and sat on the edge of the bed.

"And neither can I." Sehun settled on Kai's lap and locked his arms around Kai's neck. "But if nothing happens... we can get him back."

"What if something does happen and Yoon or anyone doesn't agree for a duel? And if I win, I need to be the leader, Sehun."

Sehun brushed his lips on Kai's forehead. Jae crawled over to Kai and pressed his palms on Kai's thigh. Kai lifted the baby up and placed him on Sehun's lap. "We have to let him go, Kai."

Kai stroked Jae's head and pressed his lips onto the baby's hand. "I did promise to always protect you."

Chapter Thirty-one

He will never have the chance to thank Rin for every good thing that he had done for Kai. Even now, standing by the casket with one hand brushing the lid of it, Kai was guilt-stricken for not being there for him. He had failed his father and now he was about to fail his son as well. But if he didn't end this now, it will keep on going for who knew how many years. He couldn't let Gina die in vain either. The door opened and Chanyeol stepped in along with Sehun's parents.

"Mr Oh-" Kai was cut off when Sehun's mother's hand struck his face hard.

"Look at what you've done! You've corrupted my son's mind and now he's in danger because of you!" she spat angrily.

"This is no time for us to dally, Mrs Oh." said Chanyeol. "We have until dawn to prepare ourselves."

"You think the Lycans would help?!" she scoffed. "Why should we even bother anymore since Sehun is one big traitor to his own kind!"

"He has a family." Kai replied. "You would do the same for your family or am I misinformed? Yes, he did elope with me but are you forgetting that if he stayed, he would have to lose his child? And you of all people know how to value a child since you've been so protective of Sehun. He needs your help."

"Then hand him over. We can bring him to safety." Sehun's father cut in.

"If you can convince him, I have no objection."

"What makes you think he will listen to us?"

"Exactly." Kai almost groaned at how adamant Sehun was in this. He wanted to be there for Kai this time. He wanted to fight for his child as well. "He's not listening to anyone. And I doubt that the Adlets would

let him be even if you try to keep him safe. It's out of hand. All that we could do right now is defend ourselves. And we'll need all the help we can get. You don't want to help, fine. I'll die trying. I'm not gonna let those bastards harm Sehun or my child."

Both of Sehun's parents exchanged a glance. "You know how to bargain." said Mr Oh. "What's the plan? We'll see if we could persuade the Lycans to fight."

"I hope it doesn't go to that. I need to talk to the leader of the Adlets and in order for him to even listen, I need a big shebang. I'll challenge the leader and then it falls to me and him. But... if I don't survive this, promise me you'll protect Sehun no matter what."

Mrs Oh took in a deep audible breath. "He's our son. We will protect him. But why would you even challenge the leader if you think you might not survive?"

"It's better than waging a war between Lycans and Adlets."

"In that sense, Kai. Where do you stand?" her tone was accusing. Kai lowered his gaze. He was going against his own kind just like how Rin had. For family.

"Help us. Please."

Sehun's parents eyed each other for a second and then zoomed out of the house.

"You're challenging a head-strong leader, Kai." Chanyeol said with a grimace. "If you don't win-

"Jae will be safe and Sehun will be saved." Kai said that much and strode up the stairs. In his room stood Sehun, leaned against a wall, staring blankly at pure nothing will a naked baby crawled all over the room, giggling, also at pure nothing. Jae was crawling here and then without a single piece of cloth on him as the puppy slept in a corner. He crawled over to the dog and reached a hand out to touch the puppy's head.

"Oof?" he called quietly and when the puppy didn't budge, he crawled away to his toy on the floor. He sat beside it and pick it up before Sehun walked over to him to lift him from the ground. Jae accidentally dropped the toy when Sehun carried him which caused the toy to shatter into two pieces and the baby's eyes bulged out in shock at his ruined toy on the floor. Sehun ignored Jae's precious toy and just laid the baby on the bed before donning the diaper on him. Jae wriggled stubbornly and tried to get away from Sehun, probably to get his broken toy but Sehun didn't seem like he cared. He was breaking down and it was obvious to see. He clothed Jae through all that wildness and once Jae was in his pyjamas jumpsuit, Sehun lowered him to the floor. "Weh!" Jae screamed and crawled anxiously to his toy and picked the two fragments up. He probed the bits with confused eyes and when he couldn't sort it out, he crawled over to Sehun's feet and placed the toy before Sehun. "Nyu nyu." he asked Sehun, looking up at him.

Sehun sat down on the edge of the bed and covered his face with his palms as Jae waited for him to fix his toy. Jae edged closer and touched Sehun's foot to get his attention but received none. He went back to his toy and clasped his hands around the pieces before he began to cry. "Moo moo moo..." he wept, holding his toy to his chest.

"Sehun, what are you doing? He's crying." Kai barged into the room and finally lifted the baby off the floor to comfort him.

Jae held his toy out to Kai's face and cried louder. "I'm never going to hear him laugh again, Kai." Sehun whispered.

Kai eyed Sehun with dejection in his eyes and settled Jae on the bed before taking the toy away from his hands. "I'll fix it, okay?" Kai kissed the baby's fist and its knuckles. He sat on the bed before taking Jae into his arms and cradled him. He picked the pink fuzz ball from the bedside table and handed it to Jae. The baby's weeping ceased as he probed the ball and he hugged it. "Have you fed him?"

Sehun didn't answer and Kai let out a sigh.

"Say what you want to say, Sehun."

"I don't care what happens to me but I want Jae safe."

"You think I don't want that? But giving him away to some stranger-"

"Will at least give him a chance!"

Jae shuddered in Kai's arms as he shot Sehun a scared, terrified look. He brought the fuzz ball to his mouth and sucked on the fur as he stared at Sehun's vexed expression. "I want both of you to be safe, Sehun."

"I don't care, Kai! There is nothing more important than securing Jae first!" Sehun shouted. "Those Adlets will hunt him down! And I don't think we will be alive to save him then!"

"Sehun!"

Jae grabbed Kai's collar and mewled. "Uuung. Nyu nyu." he whined as if he was about to cry and buried his face into Kai's chest, clinging onto the collar.

Kai let out an exasperated breath and calmed himself. "What do you suggest, Sehun?"

"Have you not been listening? We're dealing with packs of vicious monsters, Kai! And I don't need Jae around to experience it."

"Fine. Fine. If you think it's the best to give our baby away, let's do that."

Sehun blinked his eyes and stared at Kai. "And please. Don't ask me to leave you."

"I won't." that was not Kai's place to tell Sehun what he should do anymore. Jae climbed down Kai and crawled slowly to Sehun. He climbed into Sehun's lap and sat in it, looking up at Sehun's face. He pressed his small hands into Sehun's tummy and grinned.

"Poopu. Nu nu." he told Sehun, smiling from ear to ear. Sehun quickly pulled the baby's hands away from his stomach. Jae then hugged Sehun's stomach, pressing his face into it. "Nana chu."

"Come here you." Kai hauled the baby back and slammed him onto the bed. Jae started giggling loudly when Kai blew on his tummy. He started kicking Kai's chest, clutching and pulling Kai's hair, whining and laughing excitedly. "Ooh you have ticklish tummy? Tummy tickles?"

"Moomi tickoh!" Jae shouted and giggled again.

Sehun suddenly ran his fingers through Kai's hair and Kai looked up at him. He was crying. Kai smiled and pulled him to lie down. They settled Jae between them but Jae crawled to sleep on Sehun's stomach instead. Sehun patted his back to put him into sleep as he stared into Kai's eyes and Kai returned the

stare. He nuzzled his nose in the crook of Kai's neck and the tears in Kai's eyes began to roll down the corners of his eyes as well.

Kai will avenge Rin's death and pay for his mistakes. After all, what was happening to Sehun and Jae was entirely Kai's fault no matter how Kai saw it.

Sehun adjusted the hat on the sleeping baby and pulled the mittens right before kissing the forehead of the baby. He then passed Jae carefully to Kai. "I'll come and get you okay?" Kai whispered and kissed Jae's chubby cheek.

Sehun opened the front door. Kai looked out and the night seemed miserable. Jae's lips were scarlet red and his eyelashes were so long. He was such a beautiful baby who was about to break a lot of hearts. Kai took the baby's hand and kissed it over the mitten.

"I thought you'd might choose the right choice." the girl showed up as if she knew exactly what was going on in the house. A child was standing beside her, holding her hand. The baby looked 14 months tops, maybe twice as old as Jae. Kai had seen the baby before but he was so small before.

"Here." Sehun's voice was breaking as he handed her the baby's bag which was filled with all the necessities.

"I think I've raised a baby longer than you have." she smirked and refused to take the bag.

"You have to at least..." Sehun held out the bank card and several documents that entitled Jae enough of fortune.

"I came for the baby." she seemed offended and once again, refused.

"You will take care of him, won't you?" Kai climbed down the steps.

"How does it feel to lose your family, Kai?"

"I'm sorry."

"I hope you are." she held out her arms. Sehun was panting as he broke into tears beside Kai. Kai kissed the baby's forehead and handed him over. The girl smiled at sleeping Jae. "Aren't you pretty handsome one?" she crouched down to her own baby. "Meet Jae, Rei."

Kai couldn't recall telling her Jae's name but he didn't find it surprising. The other child reached his tiny arm to Jae and poked his cheek. Rei turned his face away from Jae and squatted to play with the snow beneath since it was apparently more interesting than the sleeping baby.

"Promise me you'll look after him." Kai demanded the girl.

"I'm helping over here. The baby doesn't deserve all this even if you did. You're a good father. And I promise you. I hope you will live at least for him."

Kai nodded and took a step back as his heart ached to watch his child. His eyes darted to Rei who was still clasping and releasing his hand around the snow. He crouched down to the baby and Rei looked up at him. "He's really precious. Take care of him for me until I come back, will you?" Kai pointed up at Jae.

Rei looked scared and he hurried to hide behind his mother's skirt. "Good luck, Kai." the girl said and began to walk away while smiling at Jae.

Kai's paranoia kicked in. He gasped for air, trying to control himself. Jae would be harmed if he stayed or if Kai sent him away from here. The only way was to hide him where the Adlets would least expect.

Sehun embraced Kai and sobbed.

"This is all?" Kai's heart sunk when only thirteen Lycans showed up.

"They already have had enough problem with the Adlets." said Mr Oh.

"These Adlets are terrorizing your territory! Nobody else cared?!"

"The Adlets want revenge and if you're gone, all problems will be solved."

"So you're saying that I should just surrender myself and drag my whole family with me? You're forgetting that they're aiming for Sehun!"

Kris burst into the house, panting. "Kai, you have to..." he trailed off, gasping for air. Kai shoved past the Lycans and walked through the door only to witness Adlets growling and surrounding the house but they weren't attacking.

"This is problem." said Kris' father who had just showed up. "You have a handful of Docile Lycans, two Berserkers and a pinch of Adlets."

Kai frowned at the rounding Adlets. There was no way to escape now. He walked back into the house. "We don't have time." he told the Lycans. "You will protect your family and I want to protect mine. Help me."

"We'll help you." said a conceited Lycan with his arrogant tone. "But if it gets ugly, you're on your own."

Kai nodded and shot a look to Sehun who was expressionless, red-eyed and almost as dead as a corpse. Chanyeol placed his hand on Kai's shoulder. "I'll fight if it comes down to that." he said with a faint smile.

"Let's rip us some Adlet heads today." Kris joined in and clapped his hand on Kai's other shoulder. "We're with you. Don't worry."

"And you're not alone." that familiar voice still jumped Kai and he spun around at breakneck speed to see Luhan entering the house.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Kai gasped. Everything that Rin had done was for Luhan and now he was here to walk straight into his death?!

"You are my brother. Whether you like it or not." Luhan said, edging closer.

"Are you stupid?! You were given a choice and a lot of us are suffering for it! You just blew it all away?! Who even told you to come?!"

"I did." Gina crossed. "When one of my sons is suffering, I expect the other to help."

Kai shook his head. "He'll get himself killed."

"Right now, you need all the hands you can get, Kai." Kris said. "He's not strong. But he still can help."

Kai licked his lips. "We're not gonna fight. I am. But if it doesn't work, you guys have to protect yourselves."

Kai was doing this for Gina, Luhan and Sehun, and of course, himself. There was a high chance this might not work but it was better than surrendering to Yoon.

"He's here." Kris' father announced and Kai took in a deep breath. Sehun joined Kai's side and they walked out of the house with the others trailing after them.

"My my. I expected you to have the slightest attempt in escaping." said Yoon with an evil smirk. "Of course, I had the Adlets bordering the compound. A lot of people have been coming in but none was trying to go out. I commend you for your pride and bravery, Kai."

"Enough talk, Yoon." Kai spat. More Adlets showed up and Kai's heart hammered to his chest. He realized that he was scared. Scared for Sehun, scared for Gina. There were at least forty Adlets. Some in their human form. "I challenge you to a duel."

Yoon arched his brow and stared before he broke into a laughter. "Are you kidding me? You're challenging me?"

"Yes. And as an Adlet, you have to oblige and accept. I'm sure you're aware of the rules."

Yoon clicked his tongue. "You are no longer part of our community, Kai. Therefore, one-on-one duel is futile for you. It's you against the whole of Adlets over here."

Kai's face pulled. "I'd have to rip your head off through a colossal fight then?"

"It'll be futile as well, considering your tiny army. Where's your son, Kai? I was excited to watch that little Adlet being ripped into pieces for his grandfather and father's mistakes."

"You will never find him." Kai smirked now, knowing that Yoon hadn't found that Jae was sent away.

Yoon's eyebrows furrowed as he scowled. "Where is he?"

"You won't live to know anyway."

"Hm. I'll find him. But for now. Let's kill you, your little lover over here." he cocked his head to the side and stared at Sehun before he started to grin again. "And the little nudger in him."

Kai threw Yoon a confused look. "You're a mad dog, Yoon."

"The one who gets the Docile Lycan and shreds his stomach will get a reward." he told the Adlets. And as for you, Kai. You're not gonna win. Not with that army."

"Well, how about you add thirty-four Loup-garous to that calculation?" Julien's voice boomed in the emptiness of air as he merged from the trees along with plenty of followers, all powerfully-built, all transfigured into white-greyish wolves. He came to stand beside Kai. Kai almost jumped in happiness when the Loup-garous joined them "Sorry, I'm a little fashionably late."

Yoon's expression was priceless at that moment when he looked intimidated. "Don't the Loup-garous have their own business to mind?" his voice was tight as the Adlets began to snarl at the grey massive wolves.

"We look after our family. That's what families do. And if you threaten my family, I will make sure you regret your whole existence." Julien spat at him. "Final chance to fuck off. Or there's gonna a lot of Adlet blood spilled today."

Yoon was clenching his jaw, infuriated and maddened. "Good call. Duel it is."

Kai's heart sunk again but he didn't refuse because he knew it was safer to end everything right now. "You'll lose with dignity, won't you?" Kai asked Yoon.

"Of course. Won't be so 'alive' if I lost. But however, if I win, then all you have to do is hand the Docile Lycan over." he jerked his chin at Sehun. "The baby inside him is so tempting."

Kai turned his head sharply to Sehun and gaped at him. "Sehun?"

Sehun was scowling at Yoon and didn't bother to look at Kai.

"You're... pregnant?" Kai breathed out.

The hut was too small and the babies were too big for it. Freya stared at Jae crying, and crawling everywhere to get away from the hut. He knew that this wasn't his home and his parents were not here. "Paaa!" Jae screamed, crawling to a corner and sat down to bawl his eyeballs out.

Rei stared at him, annoyed and resumed to play with the broken twigs. Freya smiled. Two different worlds, Rei and Jae had been in.

"Chupu..." Jae cried, sitting in his corner. Freya fetched the feeding bottle and knelt down before Jae.

"Now now. Your father will be back. Until then, be a good boy and drink this."

Rei stood up and walked wobbly to Jae. He knelt down and placed his twigs on Jae's laps before walking away from him.

Jae stopped his cries to probe the twigs. They were just wooden sticks but they had meant so much to Rei since they had been his only toys. But Freya knew that Jae would have had the luxurious life of a baby with hundreds of toys and would have never strove for food. "Nyu nyu?" Jae held a twig up to Freya and looked confused with watery eyes and wet cheeks.

Rei went back to his usual spot in the hut and sucked his thumb, watching the whining baby, probably thinking about how annoying the baby was. It made Freya grin. She picked Jae up and settled him on her lap before bringing the feeding bottle to his mouth. Rei quickly got on his fours and crawled fast to his mother. "Mewk." he told Freya, pointing at the feeding bottle.

"Let's feed Jae first, okay?"

Rei blinked his eyes and stared at Jae. He then gave up his milk and sat down in front of his mother and Jae, letting Jae have the first round of milk.

It was unbelievable of how fast Jae actually was drinking the milk. He must be a greedy one. No wonder he was so chunky compared to Rei who was all skin and bones. Jae was staring at Rei as well and he began to scowl at Rei after some point. He let go of the bottle and reached his hand out to Rei. "Oof!" Jae clawed Rei right in the face. By the time Freya pulled him back, Rei had gotten onto his feet and he walked as far away as he could from Jae.

Chapter Thirty-two

"Why didn't you tell me?" Kai's voice didn't surpass a whisper due to his clenching heart. Sehun was caught in the middle of all this right now and there was no way of getting out of it.

Sehun didn't reply as he slowly lowered his head. "This just gets more complicated by one hundred per cent." Kris' father groaned.

"Oh, dad, you have no idea." said Kris with a sigh.

Kai began to contemplate the situation quickly. What would Rin do under the circumstances? Family would come first rather than honour. "You ready to duel then, Yoon?" Kai shot at him.

Yoon raised a black brow. "I will kill him in the most grotesque way, Kai."

"I'd like to see you try. But first, I'm going to take your head."

Yoon was definitely intimidated. He must know that even if Kai lost, the Loup-garous and Lycans will defend Sehun. "All of you are betrayers."

Kai groaned. "Oh come on, Yoon. What are you, all mouth but no trousers? Look at your leader!" he scoffed in a mocking tone, announcing loud and clear. "A coward who can't fight one-on-one. He didn't get to this post after beating Rin. He got here because Rin's dead. He'll risk your lives to get rid off the people who can threaten his position but wouldn't risk his own." Kai stretched his arms to boast off the people and wolves on his side. "If you want to try, you will die tonight. And you are my brothers and sisters. I won't risk anyone's life over here. Leadership is not about being ahead of the clan. It's about looking after it. Rin was remorseful but not once will he regret trying to save his family. He would have fought for it and so will I."

Julien stepped forward. "I'd follow him if I were you rather than this piece of chicken."

Kai threw him with grateful look and Julien nodded once.

Yoon was enraged now as he clenched his fists and advanced to Kai. The Loup-garous began to growl, readying themselves. "Look here, Yoon. We don't need to do this. But if you still would, I have proven to be a better leader than you will ever be because it is in my blood." Kai turned to the surrounding Adlets. "I could be your natural leader. I can make peace with Lycans and Loup-garous. It's not betrayal but simply is logical reasoning. I know better than to pursuit this outrageous war. So either with me or against me?"

The monstrous eyes of the Adlets were obviously pondering. They were no longer in their ready-to-attack posture but had gone recumbent. "You think can take away what I've earned?!" Yoon shouted at Kai, mad as a hornet when the Adlets retreated, a gesture of letting Kai have his way. They knew better too than to stride straight into a trap. And a wise leader was always better than a hasty leader.

"Yoon, I have no intention of taking away your leadership. All that I'm trying to prove here is that I 'can'. So don't provoke me. Take your Adlets and leave Verglas for good."

"And if you have any idea of returning or harming Kai and his family, you will deal directly with me and trust me, us Loup-garous have some mean temper." said Julien.

Yoon's expression could have scared crows off and the way his body trembled with rage was sickening to see. "They won't return or harm my family." Kris' father added. "Or they'll have to deal with my Berserker friends as well. Capiche, Señor?"

For a moment, Yoon was scowling at the Adlets who had let him down and then he glanced over at Kai. Gradually, Yoon began to laugh, cackling like a mad cow which annoyed Kai so much. Maybe he should just rip that asshole's head off but the thought of Sehun being forced into anything far more worse frightened him. For now, Kai had to play safe. Another baby... another life just like Jae...

"You are all fools. You think I'm so afraid?" Yoon called out. "You are so stupid to underestimate me. I don't go down without a fight, Kai. And let's see who wins in the end now that I've known your weak point."

Everything that happened next was like the deuce, at scorching speed. Yoon lurched forward and took a leap, transfiguring mid-air and before Kai could even perceive what was about to happen, Yoon's Adlet form pounced onto the first line of Loup-garous and the surprise element caught the wolves off-guard. Kai leapt after Yoon while transfiguring but with two vaults, Yoon reached Sehun. When Kai had his claws on Yoon's back, Yoon had already pounced on Sehun. The sanguinary scene before Kai's eyes was gory as Sehun's blood coloured the snow all around his unconscious body. Kai shoved Yoon to the ground in ferocious anger but Yoon retaliated. The grey wolves covered for Kai while the Lycans took care of Sehun. The Adlets did not interfere as they stood their ground.

The brawl was deadly with Yoon trying to counter-attack the Loup-garous and Kai, clawing and ripping the heads of the wolves. Just when he was defending himself from Chanyeol who had gone bestial, Kai lunged on him, sinking his fangs straight into the back of Yoon's neck and heard Yoon whine a little before Kai snapped the neck, digging his claws into Yoon's stomach and gutted him. He then threw Yoon's gutted body off to Kris who had transfigured into a colossal Berserker, twice as big as Kai. He caught Yoon and slammed him to the ground before stomping hard on Yoon's chest, breaking the ribcages. Blood splattered everywhere and Kai tore the head off the body before spitting the neck onto the snow.

He turned around to glare and snarl at the other Adlets but they did nothing in return except howl before they scurried off. Sehun's blood was still fresh and it stung Kai's nose but Sehun was nowhere to be seen outside. He was brought into the house and Kai's heart raced, worried to death of what was happening to

him. The Loup-garous came to stand by Kai's sides along with the two Berserkers as Kai stared at the opened door of the house that allowed the cries to emit through it.

The morning sun poured its rays through the windows and Freya couldn't help but smile. Jae was crying again, wailing as loud as he could, repeating 'moo' as a whining carillon. He had slept very less previous night and his sobs had kept Rei up as well.

"Mooo... moo." Jae wailed, sitting in his corner of the hut, tagging his clothes desperately. But he kept Rei's twigs close and also had refused to give them back.

Freya bent down and lifted Jae from the floor. "There, there." she dragged a finger along Jae's wet cheek. "Time to go home."

Jae clutched onto Freya's blouse and sniffled with pauses. "M-moo." the baby let out. "Chupu... nyu nyu?" he motioned his chubby hand, asking Freya.

"Say goodbye to Rei, will you?" she brought Jae to her own son who was hitting the floorboards, sitting on them. At odd times Rei found entertainment in just slapping the floor since there wasn't anything else in this hut for him to be psyched about. Freya lowered Jae to Rei's side and Jae hissed at the other baby, crawling back to Freya's feet and hugged her legs, staring at Rei.

Rei gave him one look and went back to hitting the floor. "Nunu." Rei mumbled, shaking his head.

Jae looked up at Freya, still hugging her shins. He pointed his forefinger at Rei. "Kupu nana chu." he complained.

Freya took him into her arms and kissed his cheek. "Be friends, okay? Rei doesn't have many friends."

"Wei."

"Rei."

"Wei wei." Jae looked away now, no longer interested.

"Let's bring you back."

Chapter Thirty-three

The affliction was agonizing as it lingered all over Sehun's body. The pain wasn't excruciating but the residual malaise was discomforting. He'd rather have a downright pain than this subdued irritation.

"Sehun?" the concerned tone finally had Sehun forcing his eyelids open and he blinked, trying to clear the blurred vision. His back was sore but it was his neck that stung annoyingly. "Hey."

His hand was being squeezed and Sehun let out a breath before pushing his head up to get a better view of Kai. Jae was there, held up by Kai's arm, staring at Sehun as he clung onto Kai's collar. Sehun closed his eyes, dropping his head back on the pillow, emitting a long, deep audible breath. He must be dreaming.

"Jae, wait-" Kai gasped and Sehun flashed his eyes open, realizing that he wasn't dreaming after all.

"Ooh ah!" Jae scolded Kai when his father tried to hold him back and got onto the bed before crawling to Sehun. "Pa-puh?" he reached his hand out and clasped his hand slowly around the sleeve of Sehun's shirt.

"No way." Sehun breathed out and propped himself up a little too hastily that his neck pricked. He was about to sweep Jae into his arms but a pressure on his shoulder forced him to lie back down.

"You're not well, Sehun. Lie down."

Jae giggled, grinning wide and hugged Sehun, pressing a side of his face on Sehun's chest. "Moo chupu." he pointed his finger at the puppy who was waiting diligently on the bedside.

"Come here, Jae."

"No, leave him." Sehun opposed when Kai was about to get his hands on the baby. "I'm not... dreaming, am I? Cause I still feel pain."

Kai smirked. "No. You're not dreaming. Although it will be great if you'd dream of me more often."

Jae straightened up and crawled away before returning with his fuzz ball. "Ku nyu nyu." he placed the ball on Sehun's chest and sucked his own fist as he watched Sehun's face.

Sehun smiled and draped an arm over the ball. "Eh ehe!" Jae chimed in happiness and crawled to Kai before reaching his arms to him. Kai lifted him up.

"How..." Sehun exhaled.

"She returned Jae as soon as everything was taken care of." Kai replied and stroked Sehun's cheek with the back of his fingers.

"Everything was taken care of?"

Kai brushed away a lock of hair from Sehun's forehead. "I thought the worst might happen to you... I couldn't have... survived that, Sehun." his eyes glistened as he spoke. "I was the reason you had to go through all that."

To be wholly honest, Sehun couldn't even remember what had happened. The last fragment of memory was when Yoon and Kai had a dispute. "What did I go through?" Sehun's throat went dry as his heart hammered to his chest. "No... Kai... The baby..."

"No no. The baby's fine." Kai grinned. "He's fine... or she.. Yoon didn't get you right."

Sehun could almost cry right now. "You mean..."

"Yeah. Jae's gonna have a baby brother." Kai leaned down and kissed Sehun's forehead. "You should have told me but I don't wanna talk about it anymore."

The puppy began to howl and Jae started moving his arms, dancing to the howling noise. Kai gripped the baby tighter in his arm and when the puppy howled louder, Jae outright danced, bouncing hard, swaying his arms wild. "Pah." he puffed out at Kai and kissed his cheek, either by accident or deliberately.

"When did he come back?" Sehun inquired.

"This morning. I was about to send a search party to get him but the girl handed him over. And this little beast actually scratched Rei's face."

"Rei? The baby?"

"Yeah." Kai was suddenly lost in his thoughts for a minute. "We... I killed Yoon."

Sehun didn't expect anything less. "What about the other Adlets?"

"They are leaving but they... asked me this morning to take the leader's position."

"Are you going to?"

Kai simpered. "No. I have one in my arm and one on the way. I want to be a good father."

"If that's what keeping you-"

"No, Sehun. What I meant was-"

"He doesn't want to leave your sexy ass." Kris intruded into the room with his crude remark. "Or put it into danger again."

"Thanks, Kris."

Kris flashed a smirk. "Dad's gonna have a talk with the Adlets' elders about everything that had happened. So don't worry."

"Yeah. Your dad's one convincing person, alright."

"Hey, I can have daddy issues too. After all, that's like the legacy of our family." Kris took his seat on the edge of the bed. "Luhan... asked if he could see you."

"What are you, his mailman?"

"Kai." Sehun cut in. "Yes, of course."

Kris grinned. "Told you, you should have hooked up with me. You wouldn't be in this state."

"Or hooked up with me cause you and Jae would probably be living in a mansion in Dubai if you had married me." Julien commented as he strode in with Jae's feeding bottle filled with milk.

"Are you trying to make me feel bad? Cause I'm not offended at all." Kai retorted.

"There's no one for me if not you, Kai." Sehun caressed Kai's cheek and along the jawline.

Jae went violent for a second, wriggling and whining loudly, screaming as he struggled like an animal to get away from Kai. Only after a moment did Sehun realize that the baby had spotted the milk bottle in Julien's hand.

"Doobie!" Jae shouted at Julien, holding his hand out to grab the bottle.

"By the way, do you know that he started calling me Doobie for some reason?" Julien asked and handed Jae the bottle.

Jae snatched the bottle and climbed off Kai before crawling to Sehun. He pressed his free hand onto Sehun's stomach, ready to climb up it but Kai's voice stopped him. "No, Jae. Don't hurt him."

"No, Kai. It's okay."

"Does he do that a lot? Lie on Sehun's stomach while drinking milk like some wild animal?" Julien scoffed when Jae got onto Sehun's stomach and settled his head on Sehun's chest before angrily sucking the milk out of the bottle.

"Yes, apparently, Doobie." Kai shot at him.

Sehun stroked Jae's head as he began to imagine about the unborn baby's gender. "The Adlets won't come back, Sehun." Julien assured him. "You had pretty bad wounds. Recover first and then we can talk about sex protection."

Sehun flushed scarlet red. "How about we both talk about protection while demonstrating it, huh?" Kris asked Julien with a cocked brow and smirk on his lips. Julien rolled his eyes.

"Where's Chanyeol?" Kai diverted the topic.

"Convincing the little mouse to follow him back to Mellow Lands."

Jae drank most of the milk but didn't finish it. He got down Sehun and held the bottle down to his puppy who stared at it. "Chupu."

"Stop kidding me, Jae." Kai groaned and stuffed the nipple of the bottle back into Jae's mouth.

"What now?" asked Sehun.

"Kai-Sehun, Jae-Chupu, Kris-Luhan, Chanyeol-Kyungsoo and Doobie live happily ever after. Poor Doobie, forever alone." Kris snorted.

"Get up." Julien grabbed hold of Kris' arm and yanked him up. "Let's calm your desperate rear, shall we?"

"Oooh. Sassy."

Julien rolled his eyes once again and tagged Kris out of there.

"Nu, Doobie!" Jae called after Julien and Julien stopped to see Jae holding the empty bottle.

Julien grinned, shaking his head and walked back to the baby to accept the bottle before he retreated from the room along with a really smug Kris.

"We're going back." Kai brushed his lips on Sehun's forehead and then kissed Jae's cheek.

"What about... Gina? The Adlets?"

"I think everything's under control for the time being. So I don't wanna think much about it. For now, I want you to get well and then.." he slid his hand on Sehun's stomach, eyeing it intently. "I want..." he breathed, pressing his palm lightly on the abdomen. "everything..."

"Miah!" Jae scolded Kai and shoved his hand off Sehun's stomach. Kai stared at him in shock and blinked his eyes.

"What was that?"

Sehun let out a short laugh which stung his neck. "Someone's going to be a protective brother."

Jae sucked his bottom lip and crawled to Kai. He knelt up, stretching his arms wide. "Pah."

"You scold me and then you want me to cuddle you. Mood-swinger." Kai complained but carried Jae.

"Chupu?" he pointed down at the puppy.

"No way I'm cuddling him."

"You okay?" Kris clasped his hand on Julien's bare shoulder from behind.

Julien turned his head around and smiled before taking another drag of the cigarette. "Last night was fun."

"Totally worth it." Kris smirked and took his seat beside Julien on the bed. "You don't look so happy about it though."

"No, no. You were... amazing. It's just that... Kai and Sehun... and their baby. They are..."

"One big bugging jolly-good happy family?"

Julien snickered. "Yeah."

Kris ogled Julien's naked body, smiling to himself. "You're jealous."

"Not exactly. I envy their lives but... there's more to it than just jealousy. I want such a life."

"Funny. Cause most of us want your life."

Julien dragged on the cigarette and puffed out a cloud of grey smoke. "I want the best for Sehun. But I never wanted anything for myself except..."

"Dennis." Kris finished it for him.

Julien didn't reply as he drew on his cigarette.

"Julien, you've been a good friend and fuck, a hell of a partner in bed. I'd wish you all the best in life, you know. Learn to let go of the things that's not worth it."

Julien heaved a sigh. "You're probably right. But I've tried, trust me. I can't imprint on a human but I loved him. Truly."

"Which is exactly why you shouldn't fall in love. And." Kris stood up, picking his shirt up from the floor. "I'm always available for you." he ran his fingers through Julien's hair and pulled it to arch Julien's head backwards and kissed his mouth upside down.

Julien smirked and shook his head. "You're really something. I hope Luhan doesn't lose you."

"Oh, I'll make sure of that. That bastard keeps playing hard to get." but to be honest, Kris wanted Luhan so badly. Not to sleep with him but he wanted to get to know him better. He could see that Luhan wasn't as bad as some of them claimed him to be.

Kris buttoned his shirt up and gave Julien one last peck on his cheek before striding out of the room. His dad would probably freak out if he found out about Kris' little one-night-stand with Julien but then again, the whole house must have known by now since they weren't so quiet last night.

He closed the door and turned around only to be jumped by Luhan's presence. "Jesus Christ!" he yelled.

Luhan crossed his arms over his chest. "You are by far the shittiest shit I've ever come across in my life." he spat.

"Oh really? Where have you been for almost year, huh?"

"Like you care." Luhan scoffed.

"Well, you might be surprised, but I do care."

Luhan stared at him. "Well, newsflash. I don't want a first-rate playboy slash arrogant horny bastard to even care about me."

"Well." Kris neared Luhan. "This first-rate playboy slash arrogant horny bastard has got a big time crush on you."

"I.. I.. uh.." Luhan shoved Kris at his chest and practically hurried away from there.

Chapter Thirty-four

"How are you feeling today?"

"Kai, I told you, I'm fine!" Sehun almost shouted at Kai so early in the morning. Kai cocked his brows and raised his palms in defence or acceptance, taking a step back.

"I sure as hell don't wanna mess with you right now."

"Do you have any idea how hard it is to spew up with a bandage on your neck?! And your baby keeps making me throw up since 6 am!"

Kai blinked his eyes. "Am I the sole reason for this?" he jerked his hand at Sehun's stomach.

"Get out!" Sehun hurled a shirt that he was packing at Kai.

"Jesus. Just be ready before noon."

"Don't boss around."

Kai shook his head, truly intimidated by Sehun's mood swings and retreated from the room. He should get the puppy settled as well. It had been a long time since Kai had had a peaceful dinner with Gina. And last night, he had the opportunity to talk things through with her. Although Kai tried his best to convince her to come along, she refused. Luhan would be staying with her from now on and Kai knew better than to push her any further. She did have years of time to make up to Luhan.

"Where's that stupid dog?" he muttered to himself, climbing down the stairs. He almost got tripped by the bloody puppy last night when it chased Jae around the room. Kai seriously couldn't understand Jae. Why must he join forces with a dog to pick on his father? The baby actually screamed 'oof oof' in exasperation when Kai almost threw the puppy out and then he hugged Kai's feet, begging to let go of his pup. Kai wasn't even considering it but Julien had snatched the puppy away before returning it to Jae. Since then, Julien had become Jae's saviour.

And the sight of seeing Jae playing on Julien's lap annoyed Kai in a weird way. The baby had his hands on Julien's pendant around the neck as they lounged on the couch. Jae looked quite tiny in Julien's arms. "Ooo." Jae cooed, eyeballing the pendant in his palm. He glanced over at the smirking Julien. "Kupu nana chu." he let go of the pendant and hugged Julien's neck happily. "Dhoobie!"

"Why can't you just get your own baby or something? Do you always have to steal my show?" Kai whined as he took his seat on the other couch. Julien laughed actually.

"Not my fault that I was born charming."

Jae pulled back and pointed his finger at the cookie on the coffee table, eyeing Kai. "Ah?" he asked, opening his mouth wide.

Before Kai could fetch him a cookie, Julien passed Jae one. "He was asking for permission." Kai told him, scowling.

"You're so fucking childish, you know." Julien snickered as Jae held the cookie with both hands and took a careful baby bite of the cookie. "What time are you leaving?"

"In a while. Just need Kris and Chanyeol to be back and we'll be off."

Jae danced while eating the cookie. "You heard that, munchkin? They're gonna take you away now." Julien told the baby. Jae looked up at him and kissed his Doobie's cheek with stained mouth. Julien grinned to himself, lowering his gaze.

Kai heaved a sigh. "I have to find that bloody dog. Look after him." he pulled himself off the couch.

"Pooh pah!" Jae called and held out the remaining cookie. Kai accepted and tossed it into his mouth as he headed for the kitchen.

"Stop following me!" Luhan screeched when Kris relentlessly trailed him.

"No." Kris laughed, still pacing behind Luhan as they approached the house. It was a fine morning indeed.

Luhan turned around with his scowling face and shoved Kris back at his chest. "I swear, stop following me!"

"I'm not following you, you're walking ahead of me."

"Oh really?"

"Yes, really. Unless." Kris edged closer and put a hand on Luhan's hip. "You want me to follow you."

Luhan swatted off the hand. "You are really annoying in case you haven't figured it out."

"And you exactly know what turns me on."

Luhan turned crimson red as he glowered. "But I'm nothing like that tall motherfucker."

Kris burst into a roaring laughter. "What the hell!" he guffawed. "Julien will be so offended."

Luhan crossed his arms over the chest. "You're a tall motherfucker too."

Kris stopped his laugh and raised a brow at Luhan. "I'm gonna rape you someday."

Luhan groaned and spun around, walking away as fast as he could from Kris.

Upon reaching the house, Kai and Sehun were already loading the car as Kyungsoo leaned onto Chanyeol, clinging onto his arm. Julien was carrying Jae and Gina had the dog in her arms.

"Psst." Kris crept up Kyungsoo's side. "Did he finally got his D in you?"

Kyungsoo elbowed Kris right in the guts, causing him to bend forward, groaning. "That's none of your concern." Kyungsoo murmured, expressionless as usual.

"What?" asked Chanyeol. Kyungsoo shook his head and tip-toed to kiss Chanyeol on his lips.

"How did this even happen?" Kris inquired, truly curious.

"I just happen to be the cheesiest shit alive and luckily, Kyungsoo digs that." Chanyeol shrugged. "We're leaving too after Kai and Sehun."

"Wait, you're going with him?" Kris shot at Kyungsoo. "Based on what terms?! He could be a paedophile for all that you care!"

Kyungsoo lurched forward with that 'Imma cut your head off and feed it to my cow' face. Chanyeol held him back. "Not everyone is as stupid as you, Kris."

Kris scoffed. "Stupid? Guess who got to tap Prince Charming over there." he smirked and Chanyeol's eyes bulged out.

"Are you fucking kidding me? You.... uh... Julien?" he whispered sharply.

"Well, he did first and then it was my turn. Give-and-take policy is the best policy." Kris winked and turned to walk away only to find Luhan scowling at him behind. "Shit."

Luhan just stomped to stand by Gina with a pout on his face. Kai snatched the puppy from Gina and shoved it into the car before turning to Gina herself. "Mom... I'm really sorry for-"

"That's enough, Kai. Take care of yourself and your family." she smiled and cupped Kai's face before kissing his forehead. Sehun looked moody but he still managed to send blood to Kris' loins. Shit, he never got to get a taste of Sehun. Dammit. "Come home whenever you want."

"I will."

Sehun hugged Gina as well and muttered something to her. When Kai turned to Julien, things got awkward. No one expected Kai and Julien to be friends but here they were, staring weirdly at each other while Jae played with Julien's hair. "Oof." Jae puffed at Julien and then giggled.

"He's really precious." Julien said. "Don't make him cry."

"Or Doobie will beat the shit out you guys." Kris added and earned a scowl from most of them.

"Dhoobie!" Jae yelped excitedly and hugged Julien's neck.

"I can never thank you enough for everything that you did." Kai told Julien.

"Funny. You've never thanked me before." Kris snorted. "Cut this bromance short and just hug each other already."

"Kris." Kai spat through his gritted teeth and then took in a deep breath. "I couldn't thank you enough either. You too, Chanyeol."

Kris blinked his eyes and smiled genuinely. "Have a safe trip."

Kai pulled Jae away from Julien while Jae was still clinging onto Julien's neck. The baby started crying instantly when he was forced to let go of Julien. "Dooobie!" he wept, reaching his arms out to Julien. Kai quickly gave the baby back to Julien and Jae quieted down.

"You can keep him if you want." said Kai and Sehun threw him a glowering look. "Come on, Jae. Chupu's waiting for you." he tore the baby away from Julien again and Jae began to cry once more.

Julien took the neck chain off and slipped it over Jae's head. "I'll visit." he kissed Jae's hand and smiled. Jae was still crying but when Sehun took him from Kai, he calmed down.

Everyone took turns to kiss Jae goodbye and when it was Kris turn, Jae pushed Kris' face away. "Fine. I'll kiss your mommy instead." Kris puckered his lips to kiss Sehun but Sehun's glare stopped him. "Fine." he stepped back. "You'll want me one day."

"Chu chu go! Oorf!" Jae scolded Kris, pointing an accusing finger at him. Kris stuck his tongue out at the baby.

"Julien." Sehun approached him.

"No need to thank me or apologize." Julien told him and brushed his lips on Sehun's forehead. "Be happy."

"I hope you'll find your happiness too."

"And Luhan." Kai turned to him. "We're family nonetheless. I'm sorry to have hurt you."

"Same here." Luhan replied and then grinned.

Kai ushered Sehun and Jae to get into the car. "I could be that happiness, you know." Kris whispered into Julien's ear and saw Julien roll his eyes. Everyone waved one last time before Kai drove away from there. Luhan was still pouting as he followed Gina into the house.

"Were you born this horny?" asked Julien when he noticed Kris ogling Luhan's ass.

Kris draped his arms over Julien's shoulders and smirked, face-to-face. "Look who's talking. Are we forgetting about how you rimmed me?"

Julien swatted the arms off his shoulders and shook his head. "By the way. I got to Luhan way before you did. Oh. You didn't even get to him yet, have you?" it was Julien's turn to smirk.

"The fuck?!"

"Why do you think he's avoiding me altogether?" Julien shrugged and strutted away as Kris gaped at him. Oh, it's on.

Kris scowled. He wasn't mad at Julien for what he had divulged for the right reason. He was angry that Julien was winning. "Hey!" Kris called Julien just when Julien was about to enter the house. Julien raised a 'what' brow. "Tonight. ? Dinner?"

Julien scoffed and let out a short laugh, walking back into the house.

Kris grinned and shot a look to Kyungsoo and Chanyeol who were making out. "Jesus Christ, get a room." he groaned at the kissing couple.

"She's so beautiful." Sehun muttered, leaning onto Kai's shoulder as they sat on the floor, watching their beautiful children on the couch. Kai glanced over at Sehun and kissed his temple before his cheek and then turned Sehun by his chin to face him and pressed his lips onto Sehun's.

"Just like you." he breathed against Sehun's lips. He could never thank Sehun enough for giving him such beautiful kids. Sehun smiled and kissed Kai's mouth before resuming watching the babies. "But why is he doing this to us?!" Kai shouted in irritation at Jae who was arranging his plushies all around the small sleeping baby.

Sehun giggled. "Let him. He's experimenting."

"Well, he could at least let me touch my daughter!"

Jae looked up at his screaming, ranting father and scowled before hooking his arms around his baby sister. He hissed bestially at Kai, warning him to not to wake his sister up. Kai groaned. He can never touch Lia when Jae was awake since Jae lingered around Lia at all times when he was up. If Kai did, then Jae would begin to throw tantrums, shouting and crying and wailing which then would make Lia cry since she was just three-weeks-old.

But it was undeniable that Kai found it cute and adorable. Jae already gave all of his toys to Lia and not to mention, the dog as well. Even now, he wasn't allowing Kai or Sehun to sit by Lia when he was playing with her. She wasn't even awake!

He picked his milk bottle up and arranged it between the plushies. "Lee lee." he murmured and sat there to stare at his sister. That was what he did all day long.

"He's going to give her boyfriends a hard time." Sehun chuckled and kissed Kai's jaw.

"Well, guess what. I'm gonna give HIS boyfriends a fucking hell of a time."

Jae looked up again and this time, he grinned at Kai.

Final Chapter

"It's so hot." Kyungsoo, as always, was overly obsessed with the dry weather as he stared out the window of the apartment. Chanyeol dropped his bag and snaked his around Kyungsoo's waist from behind, humming a little at the side of Kyungsoo's neck.

"In a foul mood again?" he purred into Kyungsoo's ear.

"No. But... It's so hot." Kyungsoo murmured, raising a hand to brush Chanyeol's cheek. The gold wedding band around his finger stung Chanyeol's cheek. Chanyeol kissed his palm and then his cheek.

"It's summer. What do you expect?"

It had been almost a year since Kyungsoo left Verglas with Chanyeol but he still couldn't tear himself from the cold ambience. He turned around and hooked his arms around Chanyeol's body before hugging him, burying his face into Chanyeol's chest. "How was work?"

"Boring. As usual." he kissed the top of Kyungsoo's head.

"Missed me?" he looked up at Chanyeol with a sheepish grin.

"Uhm. Depends on what context." Chanyeol slipped his hand to Kyungsoo's butt and squeezed it.

Kyungsoo giggled and reached up to kiss a corner of his husband's mouth. "How can you love me this much, Chanyeol?"

"Why not? Why out of the sudden?"

"No one had ever loved me like you do."

Chanyeol shifted to lean his back on the window and pulled Kyungsoo to lean on him. "No one had ever loved me like you do, too."

"You don't talk to your father anymore because of me."

"It's worth it."

"Really?"

"I promise." he brushed his lips on Kyungsoo's forehead. His father was utterly disappointed when Chanyeol brought Kyungsoo home with him but Chanyeol no longer cared. He had always been a disappointment. The least he could do right now was do something that he liked. "Why don't you just turn the AC temp down if it's too hot?"

"How do I do that?"

"You're kidding me, right?" he raised a brow.

Kyungsoo shook his head. "On second thought, leave that be." he began to unbutton Chanyeol's shirt. "I have a suggestion for dinner."

"Wow." he snickered. "I'm gonna like it then."

Well, Julien would never admit that he was in Mellow Lands for a reason any other than visiting some place that he hadn't been to but there it was. The place was warm, too warm for Julien's liking. But apparently, the other civilians seemed to be in a jolly mood as they ogled Julien's choice of summer clothing. Maybe it was too appealing but once in a while, he could get used to this attention he was getting. The town was filled with Adlets with a sprinkle of humans. Julien's unbuttoned white shirt swayed along with the motion of the hot wind and through his black shades, he saw every single one of the women and some men eyeing him and his exposed body in the speck of amusement. A scantily dressed Loup-garou in the town of Adlets must be entertaining. It made Julien smirk. It wasn't just him anyway who was dressed in an undone shirt, a pair of faded blue jeans that sagged to the hipbones revealing the V of his torso, and a pair of black shades. But he wouldn't deny that he caught most of the attention.

Since when had he become this much of an attention seeker? He could laugh at his pathetic, deluded self. A couple of girls giggled as they passed Julien and Julien glanced over his sunglasses to give them a flirtatious smirk which made the ladies gape at him for a minute.

Despite all this entertainment, his throat ached for some cold liquid to quench its thirst. Starbucks was the first signboard which struck Julien and he crossed the road to get to the restaurant. It was by far the most unorthodox Starbucks ever with old people scattered everywhere.

Julien took his shades off as he approached the counter. The waiter boy was squinting at Julien in a shy way which was even more amusing to Julien. "Hi." Julien greeted with a smile that was bound to make the boy flush and it did.

"H-heloo." he squealed, keeping his gaze low. "What do you want to have?"

"Um. Java Chip Cream Frappuccino, please."

"Okay."

"I seriously thought that you were the Green Tea Cream type." a familiar cocky tone of voice made Julien's lips stretch into a full grin. He half turned to see Kris simpering at him. Julien leaned an elbow on the counter and shook his head in delight.

"Was expecting to bump into you sooner or later."

Kris' hair was messy as if he had just gotten out of bed. Maybe he had since his shirt was buttoned half-assedly. His eyes travelled down Julien's torso, biting his lip. "What are you doing here, mate?"

"Might ask you the same question."

"Oh come on. You know I live here. Dropping by Starbucks to get some coffee can't come off as a shock to you, can it?"

Julien shrugged. "Alone? That's kinda surprising."

"Yeah." Kris placed his order as well before facing Julien again. "I got kicked out of the house once again."

Julien broke into a laughter. "Seriously?! Why do you keep pissing Luhan off then?"

"Piss him off? I kinda groped his butt while he was asleep and he got mad about that." he threw his hands up to gesticulate his exasperation. They grabbed their drinks and made their way to a table after Julien had given the waiter boy a wink.

"Still on with that love-hate relationship, huh?"

"You have no fucking idea." Kris groaned. "It's kinda interesting though. He knows how to keep me interested."

"He's head over heels for you. Take my word for it."

"I know." he grinned to himself. "He likes playing hard to get. One fucking year of living together and he still doesn't let me touch him except on fucking Sundays." he kept stirring the straw in his Iced Shaken Zen Lemon Tea but wasn't even taking a sip of it. He suddenly threw Julien a black, sharp look. "Can't you fucking button up your goddamn shirt?"

"You're horny, aren't you?"

Kris eyebrows rose. "Try being kicked straight out of bed when you're bloody turned on by some perky ass."

Julien chuckled again and stood from his seat before grabbing Kris' arm to haul him up. "Come on."

"Where?"

He led Kris to the toilet and shoved him into a stall before locking it up. "Well, what are friends for?" he smashed his lips onto Kris' and god, did Kris know how to kiss! He kissed like some bloody porn star pro. He never hesitated when they kissed since there were no strings attached. Kris gave all he had and it was obvious to see that he wanted this. Julien held onto Kris' hips as Kris shoved his tongue into Julien's mouth, curling it around Julien's. One of his hands was cupping the back of Julien's head while the other caressed its way up Julien's abs, to his chest. And for all the marbles, the dry humping was the best part. Their groins rammed onto one another with their hips grinding as fast as they could while their mouths were engaged in a passionate, sloppy kiss. Kris at one point caught Julien's bottom lip between his teeth and nipped it before sucking the tender lip whereas Julien focused on unbuckling Kris' belt around his waist while clutching his own erection over the jeans.

It was happening fast. Faster than all of Julien's encounter with Kris previously. Within seconds, Kris hand was wrapped around Julien's aching length as Julien's was fisted around Kris demanding erection. Kris lowered the wet kisses to Julien's chin and jawline as they stroked each other hard. By the second, Kris was slipping down the wall due to his weakening knees and Julien had to lift him, hoisting him completely. Kris had his back on the wall which held him up, legs wrapped around Julien's waist as he pressed his thumb on the slit of Julien's member. "Fuck." Kris let out and Julien wouldn't deny how much he loved it when Kris' cocky attitude was torn apart little by little. Julien applied more pressure into the strokes before Kris went utterly berserk for real. His moans probably could have emitted out of the toilet and Julien to begin to groan when he was close. "Don't fucking stop." Kris moaned before crashing his lips onto Julien for a greedy kiss.

"Not planning to until you come, baby." Julien breathed against Kris' lips. The slicking pre-come on Kris' slit was tempting to be licked off but Julien held himself. By the next second, Kris burst into ropes of white seed, decorating Julien's abs as his face wrinkled in pleasure and ecstasy but he didn't stop stroking Julien as Julien was full on thrusting into Kris' hand. "Jesus Christ." Julien grunted and finally released his

load all over Kris' hand. Their lips and tongues initiated another languid kiss filled with pants and saliva as Julien let Kris down to stand again.

"Wow." Kris gasped once they were done. "That was..."

"Amazing." Julien finished it for him, pressing their foreheads together, panting heavily.

They pulled their pants up before exiting the stall to clean themselves up. Kris kept eyeing Julien with his smirk while washing his hands. "What?" Julien asked.

"You know, I used to have this dirty fantasy about you when I first saw you."

"When did you first see me?"

Kris chuckled. "See. I knew that you would never even notice me."

"But I did eventually." he gave a crooked smile. "Well, yeah. I didn't until you started openly asking for it."

Another snicker from Kris. "Well, buddy. I still couldn't believe we are doing this for the.... 13th time."

"Why on earth would you keep count of that?"

Kris shrugged. "I've never slept with someone that I'm not serious about more than once."

Julien scoffed, shaking his head. "Believe me. You're the only one I've slept with other than... Dennis." he choked on the word. "But guess what. I'm done moping. So now I'm gonna live my life to the fullest, banging anyone that I like, doing whatever the shit I want. I'm done playing the nice boy bit."

"That's the bit I liked most about you." Kris pressed his palms onto Julien's chest. "And you're a terrible liar. Dennis Oh works in that Orange Cafe right across the street."

Julien swallowed.

"Good luck with winning his heart all over again." Kris held a side of Julien's face and kissed his cheek on the other side. "Anyways, when you need someone to get it off with, you know how to call me."

"Luhan's not gonna be so happy about it, is he?"

"He did 'almost' slept with you way before I did. So."

Julien laughed. "You're nothing like him, I promise. And besides, Luhan was drunk when he wanted me to do him."

"Hm. It ain't so charming talking about my boyfriend with my fuck buddy. In case if you don't want to find Dennis, and if I broke up with Luhan, do I have a chance?"

"Definitely not. You're too demanding and dominating for my taste."

"I could say the same thing about you, motherfucker." Kris pecked on Julien's lips and flashed a naughty smile before walking away from him.

Julien smiled to himself and when he went back to the table, Kris was nowhere to be seen. "Orange Cafe." he muttered and left his Frappuccino there as he headed out of the restaurant.

The cafe was older than Starbucks and Julien blinked his eyes at the exterior of the cafe. It was antique. He pushed the glass door open and a bell chimed. "Welcome-" Dennis started to say but when he looked up at the customer, his face went blank. The cafe was empty except for the two of them.

"Dennis." Julien let out, heart racing a thousand miles per second. Only Dennis could do this to him.

Dennis dropped the tray that he was holding and stared at him. A string of memories flashed before Julien. They had been friends, taking care of each other with a bond as strong as a family's. They were brothers. And when they got older, they had been lovers. But now, they were strangers. It hurt.

Julien lowered his gaze. "Why do you keep doing this, Julien?" Dennis asked in a tone that was so tight that he might be crying in seconds. Julien glanced up at him.

"Why do I keep coming back?"

"Why can't you just leave me alone?" his eyes indeed were glistening with tears.

"I'm not going to leave until I get proper reason to do so." he advanced to Dennis and surprisingly Dennis held his ground, staring pathetically at Julien.

"You think you could understand?"

"This is not about empathizing, Den. You don't get that there's no substitute for you, do you?"

"Why me?!" he shouted. "Why do you have to torture me of all the others?!"

"Because I loved you! And I still do love you."

Dennis scowled now, even if he was about to cry. He had this weird way taking out his anger. "Leave, Julien."

"Tell me why. Why you left? And I'll leave."

"I told you before that I was tired of all your wolf bullshit. I will never be good enough for you."

"Is that what you think? Just because my parents told you so? I wouldn't have given my words to you if I didn't mean them! You know me, Dennis! If anything, I honour my word. And I promised to forever love you the night we made love for the first time, the night I finally opened up completely to you!"

"Shut up!" Dennis turned his back to Julien and was covering his face in his palms.

"I'm not even saying this for the sake of saying it. We did it when I was sixteen and I swear, even then I loved you with everything I had. Yes, I'm rich, respected in the community and have shitload of money. Not to mention about being a hybrid. But I gave my heart to you knowing everything about you. You did the same. It had been my mistake that I told my parents about us but you know why I did that. They were forcing me to find a mate and I can't even imagine giving my heart to anyone other than you."

"Stop, Julien. Please leave." he sniffled.

"Fine." Julien sighed. "Fine, Den. I'll do that. Just answer me this one question and I'll go. Did you really love me or was it just a part of being infatuated?"

Dennis faced Julien with red eyes. "I left because I wanted you to be with someone who can't stand up to your level. I didn't even accept the money your parents gave! I left, Julien! Only because I knew that after one point, you will begin to wonder about having your own heir and having a partner who can share things that I can't with you!"

"Dennis..."

"But not once have I ever doubted your love for me!"

"I-I didn't mean-"

Dennis lurched forward and for a moment Julien thought he was going to be thwacked in the face but Dennis only threw himself onto Julien and hugged him as if to never let go of him. "You don't know how much I miss you, Julien." Dennis whispered, sobbing silently in the crook of Julien's neck. "I wish I was something like you... maybe then..."

"No." Julien missed his scent. The sweet fragrance of Dennis'. The heat, warmth outside could never be compared to how hot Dennis made Julien.

"Don't leave me, Julien." he wept, pressing his body tight against Julien's.

"Not ever again, Den." he pulled Dennis back to look at his face but Dennis wasn't making eye contact. Julien kissed his forehead as a tear trickled down his own cheek.

"Lee lee nu likey." Jae told Sehun when Sehun was about to feed his daughter some mashed potatoes.

"You don't know that, Jae." Sehun muttered and cradled the whining baby in his arm.

Kai sat on the other couch, staring angrily at Jae. How could the boy be so possessive?! It wasn't even protective anymore. Jae was downright possessive just as how he was possessed over his toys. The dog, Chupu was the only one on Kai's side now. Kai stroked the full-grown dog's head that was seated on the floor beside Kai.

Lia coughed when Sehun fed her a spoonful of mashed potatoes. Jae knelt up and shoved the spoon away. "Eh!" he shouted at Sehun for making his sister feel uncomfortable. Most babies would be mad at the attention their younger siblings might get but not Jae. He demanded that all of the attention was on Lia. Sehun shot Kai a pleading look and Kai shrugged.

"I'd help. But he would cry if I even come near my own daughter!" he deliberately yelled at Jae.

Jae looked over in his father's way and grinned before getting off the couch. He walked to Kai and climbed Kai's lap with struggle. "Jae loo pa." he mumbled and hugged Kai.

"Love." Kai corrected him.

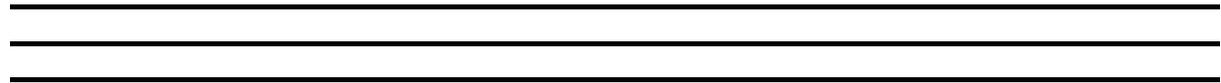
"Can you bring him out or something so that I can try and feed Lia?" Sehun asked.

Kai heaved a sigh even if he would be happy to do so. More than Jae or anything else in this world, Kai was possessive over both of his children. He stood up with Jae in his arm and carried him out of the house. Jae bounced in Kai's arm and pulled viciously at Kai's shirt, smiling wide. Even with the thickness of the trees and leaves, it was undeniably hot. Jae kissed Kai's cheek with wet mouth, leaving a trace of baby saliva on the cheek.

"Ooh ooh!" Jae grunted and bounced until Kai let him down. He walked like a drunkard, chasing a butterfly, hands held out. "Come ee!" he called the butterfly but when he failed to catch it, he turned to Kai with a sad face.

Kai crouched down, knelt on one knee and stretched his arms. Jae ran to his father and hugged him hungrily. "I love you." he pecked on Jae's chubby cheek.

"Jae loo pa." Jae kissed him back.



Prologue for bonus chapters

Lia was scowling like some deadly witch, only hundred times prettier. Jae loved it when he managed to irritate the shit out his sister but right now, it wasn't just about annoying her. He was irritated as well as he glowered at her prom date.

"I thought you were dating Kira last week." Jae said, not even bothering to invite the boy in.

"Uh.." he rubbed the back of his neck. "She's just like a roll call, you know. If you know what I mean."

Jae laughed and then suddenly stopped. "No, I don't."

"Will you stop it?!" Lia hissed at him from behind. Jae gave her a side-eye. She was gorgeous in her turquoise dress with her wavy hair wore long. No wonder she had so many admirers in school which irked Jae to a level that he wanted to bash all the boys in the school blue and black. Or maybe, he'll just let his father take care of it.

"Look here, man. I'm just here to take Lia to prom."

"Uh huh." Jae raised a brow, still not allowing Lia to walk out the door. "Why don't you just go stag tonight?"

"Dude!"

"Jae!" Lia snapped.

"I'm sure you don't want me to rip off your boyfriend's throat, Magnolia." Jae smirked.

"Well, Lia. See you at school then." the boy spat and turned around before leaving the place.

"Papa!!" Lia screamed and stomped towards their parents' room. Sehun opened the door and stared at his daughter. "Jae just shooed my date away!" she complained and Sehun shot Jae a look.

"Why?" he asked.

"Why? He's like worst playboy in school, papa." said Jae.

"Is he, Lia?"

"No!" she protested. "He's not even my boyfriend, not that he ever will be now but how am I supposed to show up at the prom now?!" she gestured her gown.

"Well then, your brother will have to take you."

"What?!" Jae opposed. He wasn't even planning to go to prom this year.

"Get a suit on and bring your sister since you drove her date away."

"No way!"

"Kai."

"Do as he says, Jae." Kai said from inside the room, causing Jae to frown further.

Sehun didn't say anything more as he closed the door. Lia turned to Jae with a smirk. "You don't wanna go because your crush didn't ask you to go with him, isn't it?" she said and Jae began to flush.

"Shut up."

Lia laughed. "Oh, my brother. You're so cute when you're denying."

"I'm not denying anything."

"Next time you drive my potential boyfriends away, I'll tell pa about your little crush, okay?"

"You wouldn't dare."

"Oh yes, I would. But for now, since we both have the permission to leave house..." her smirked expanded into a full smile. "How about we pay a visit to the night club?"

"Hm." Jae eyed the closed bedroom's door. "Let me get our fake IDs."

As a punishment for sneaking into a night club, Kai and Sehun threw Jae and Lia off to a bloody stupid, fucking cold place to visit their grandmother for the holidays. Jae almost cried at the harsh punishment they had received for a harmless action that was based purely on curiosity. It had been Lia's idea and Jae had always been there to break the arm of the guy that even dared to touch her in the night club but when Kai had figured out where they had been, he went on full rampage at nagging Jae about being responsible. It wasn't like they didn't know how to protect themselves. Jae was a hybrid who could turn into a wolf but had the strength of an Adlet. And so was Lia. But apparently being sixteen and seventeen was not enough to throw a card on the table.

"Life is so unfair." Lia whined as they unloaded the cab before Jae paid the fare. "Look at the house." she said with a pout.

"God, it's so cold." Jae pulled at his coat and carried all of their luggage including Lia's. "What do you think grandma would do?"

"Hug? Kiss? I hope she's not the creepy kind."

"Papa said she's kinda cool."

Lia shrugged as they walked to the veranda. Jae kicked the snow beneath his shoes in exasperation. Just like Sehun, he hated the cold. "Jesus, Jae. Look at your face." Lia laughed. "You're red."

"I know. I have snow intolerance."

A sudden ruffling sound brought both Lia and Jae to a halt. They turned simultaneously to see what had made the noise and found a boy merging from the woods with an axe in his hand. Lia gasped and stumbled back.

"Shit calm down, I'm not an axe maniac." said the stranger. Jae blinked his eyes at him. He was dressed in black from top to toe, shirt tucked into his pants with boots and all. He didn't look like an axe maniac but like some seriously hot lumberjack. His black hair was spiked up and his face was shaved to the cleanest. He wasn't even wearing any extra layers. He was way taller than Jae but only look somewhat older.

"Who the fuck are you scaring us like that?!" Lia shot at him.

The boy chuckled. "I live around here. Saw the taxi." he had a very strange accent as well. "Wasn't expecting to see a cute girl around." he smirked and Jae's protectiveness kicked in. The boy eyed Lia from top to toe. "Name?"

Lia was already blushing. "Lia."

The boy bit his lower lip, still flirting openly with Lia. "Rei."

Lia grinned and lowered her head. Jae wanted to scoff and roll his eyes but he was too annoyed by this boy. "Visiting the old woman?" Rei asked.

"Our grandmother lives here." said Lia.

The boy's face went completely pale that Jae thought it might have happened in a split second. Rei was clenching his jaw now, as hard he clenched the axe. He turned around abruptly and began to stomp away.

"Hey!" Lia called after him but he didn't budge. "Wow. Sexy and rude. Wonder if I'd see him again..."

Jae frowned at the back of the boy. He seemed familiar but Jae had never even seen him before.

BONUS CHAPTER 1

"Don't you get bored living here all by yourself?" Jae questioned his grandmother over lunch the next day. He found it ludicrous for an old woman to live out here in this ridiculous cold all by herself. Then again, she didn't look so old at all. She probably would pass for a 40-year-old if not for her grey-streaked hair.

She smiled. "Not really. There's TV and internet."

Lia's eyes widened. "Wow, granny. You're so cool." she chuckled.

"But... doesn't uncle Luhan drop by?" Jae asked. He wouldn't peg Luhan for someone that would neglect his own mother. His own father had visited Gina time and again but for some reason, he never brought or allowed Jae and Lia to pay her a visit in their prime time of blooming. But Sehun did explain that there were lots of Lycans around here would be a threat for them. Since Jae and Lia could transfigure into full form now, they must have been granted some access to freedom. But nightclub was out of the question.

"Why do I need uncle Luhan?" Gina smirked. "I'm a single lady who's full on power to mingle."

They guffawed, forgetting their table manners for a second. "You're so funny, grandma."

"I know, sweetie. Besides, I love this place. There's a lot of fun here."

"Granny." Lia whispered. "Pa sent us here as a punishment."

"Your pa doesn't know how to punish his kids well then. As long as you are here, you have all the freedom to roam the area." she grinned.

"Really?! But what's there to see other than snow and snow?"

"Miracles happen in here."

Jae laughed. "Grandma, we're not 10-year-olds."

"I didn't say you were. But 17 is the right age to fall in love, no?"

Jae gulped. "I'm gonna tell papa that you're teaching us the wrong stuffs."

His grandmother outright laughed. "Ask your father then. He knows that I'm not wrong."

"Jae has a crush anyway, granny." Lia said and Jae almost smashed the broccoli on her face.

"Oh my, is that so?"

"No!" Jae quickly protested.

"Yes, granny! He's a football player in our school!" she was cut off when Jae clasped a hand over her mouth and yanked her up from her seat.

"We're gonna take a walk in this miraculous place." he tagged Lia out of the dining room. "Will you shut up about my crush, Magnolia?!" he hissed upon releasing her. Lia smirked. "God, he doesn't even know that I exist." he pulled on the jacket and tossed Lia hers.

"Who said so? He knows you exist. In fact, he thinks you're so creepy that you keep staring at him." she snickered.

"If you weren't so cute, I might strangle you."

"Aw. You love me."

Jae rolled his eyes and stepped out of the house. A bloody cold wave of wind hit his face, sending shivers down his spine. He buttoned up the jacket and traipsed towards the trees. "I wonder how many people live around here. We did see some houses on the way. Especially that big one."

"I think that's papa's mommy's house."

"Oh. The one that hates us." he snorted.

"No. They hate you. Don't generalize."

"I was a cute baby. You were an average. If they weren't smitten by me, they surely wouldn't have liked you either."

"Delusional ass." she kicked Jae's butt and the brother giggled. "You were a vegetable before you transfigured, okay?"

"Okay okay. I agree." they went deeper into the winter woods and if the cold had a face, Jae would have given it a fucking roundhouse kick. "All these trees look the same."

"Don't stereotype, racist." Lia smacked the back of Jae's head before Jae hooked an arm over his sister's neck to crush it.

They both stopped when they saw that figure leaning against a tree, arms crossed over his chest. He was dressed in the same black shirt, sleeves rolled up to his elbows, black skin-tight jeans, and black boots. And the black messy bust-cut hair. He was glowering at Lia and Jae.

"What a big happy family you are." Rei scoffed and looked away in despise. Jae fisted his hands.

"We don't even know who you are, okay? Can you stop being so threatened?"

"Threatened? By what? That?" he jerked his chin at Jae.

Jae looked at himself before scowling at Rei. "What's wrong with me?"

Rei scoffed and sucked his lower lip, this time, eyeing Lia from top to toe. "Did you have to be that bastard's daughter?!" he groaned in exasperation.

"Excuse me?" Lia asked, annoyed. She might be pretty and all but she can also turn deadly even to someone she liked.

"Wait. Are you the poncey's kid or the barbarian's?"

Jae was burning right now. "Who the fuck is asking?" he spat at Rei.

"I'm guessing the barbarian's." Rei sighed. "Too bad. I seriously wanted to screw your sister."

That was it. Before Jae could do anything, it was Lia who had lunged forward to plant her fist into Rei's cheek. Jae stepped back and burst out laughing. "Does it feel good to be thwacked by a chick, Rei Rei?"

Rei didn't even hold his abused cheek as he stared at him. "Too bad. Tough luck cause I don't wanna be screwed by an ass like you." Lia spat at him.

"Leave him be, Lia. He probably has daddy issues."

And then things got out of hand. Rei's hands came up to Jae's collars instead. The air was knocked out of Jae's lungs when Rei slammed him up a tree, snarling and growling.

"Rei." a woman's voice paused Rei's violence momentarily but he kept snarling at Jae the way that made blood pound in Jae's ears. "Let him go, son." Jae looked over Rei's shoulder and spotted a woman, walking in their direction.

Rei cursed in some alien language that sounded like Spanish and released Jae's collars, taking two steps back. "I don't even have a father, asshole. Thanks to who?!" Rei spat and turned to the woman. "Mama.."

She was frowning. Lia came to stand by Jae. "Don't bother them." she told Rei before facing Jae and smiled. "Would you like to have some tea?"

Jae shook his head. "He will kill me if I do." he jerked his chin at Rei who kept his back turned to Jae.

The woman chuckled. "Rei? He even shared his milk with you, Jae."

Lia gasped. "What milk?! How did I not know this?!" she shot at her brother.

Rei didn't say anything as he strutted away. "Come on." the woman held Jae's arm and ushered him in the opposite direction of where Rei had gone.

BONUS CHAPTER 2

"Why is he so pissed off?" Jae asked the woman as he followed her. "Why did I even do? I think he was about to choke the air out of my throat." he gulped.

The woman chortled. "I do not think so."

Jae laughed on purpose and then suddenly stopped. "Yeah, I do think so." he said seriously. "It's like... he thinks he has rights on me. Rights to grab my collar." he scowled at the thought. Nobody had ever attacked him like that. Well, Kai had but Jae didn't think that giving tummy tickles until he was 13

counted as an attack but yes, Kai had been violating Jae's privacy for years. It didn't stop at tummy tickles, alright. Kai just barged into Jae's room at odd hours at night to make sure that he was snug in his bed. He even hoarded all of Jae's thrown away stuff for whatever reason, Jae did not know. Sometimes it made Lia laugh but otherwise, she was full on jealousy mode. Jae had no clue why she would envy the stupid attention he was getting from his father. Just last week Kai particularly made sure that all of Jae's socks were clean. It was really annoying. But Jae was already missing his father right now. If he had been here, that stupid dumbass Rei wouldn't have dared to even lay a finger on Jae.

"Maybe he does." said the woman with a sly smile.

"Uh.. no." Jae almost sassed her. "Is he your son? He called you 'mama'."

"Yes, I am. My name is Freya in case you don't remember."

Don't remember? Jae had never even seen this woman before. Lia tugged his arm to whisper into his ear. "Why on earth are we following a stranger?"

Jae shrugged. "I'm bored?"

"Jae, she might be some creepo."

"Oh come on, Lia. This is not a Hansel and Gretel retell. I can assure you of that."

Freya guffawed, shaking her head. "This is my house." she motioned her hand at the hut before them.

"You call that a house?" Lia snorted. "Told you."

"Lia, if you're so scared of being baked in an oven, you can leave." Jae told her.

"Fine. Don't call for me if you need help." she scowled at her brother and stomped away from there. Jae let out a heavy sigh and turned to Freya. He was curious. He wanted to know why this Rei person, provided that Jae didn't know him at all, was so furious at Jae and Lia. He was apparently a neighbour. Then why was he so hostile towards them?

"What did you mean when you said that he shared his milk?" Jae inquired as he ducked through the doorway and entered the extremely small hut. There was just one bed which looked too small for Rei. "Just one bed?"

"Rei sleeps on the floor." Freya grinned and shed her coat before making her way to what Jae discerned as the kitchen. It didn't look like much but then again the whole house didn't look like much. "Do you like sugar in your tea? Oh, sit down."

Jae arched a brow. "Where?"

"Anywhere you like."

Jae considered the bed but took his seat on the floor in a corner instead. Freya was snickering silently. "What?"

"Nothing."

"So. Is it just you two?"

"Hm. Although it's always just me. Rei rarely spends his time at home."

"I can imagine why." he murmured, glancing around the hut. There was one rack, one bed and a table but no chairs. "No offense. But why are you living like this?"

"Redemption."

"What?"

Freya offered Jae a mug of hot tea. He accepted it and waited for a response as Freya leaned against a wall. "You probably don't remember anything, Jae."

Jae blinked. "I definitely don't remember telling you my name..."

"I just knew you since you were a baby."

"What?"

Freya flashed a lopsided smile. "Let's just say I'm a friend of your parents'."

"Oh... really?"

"More or less. Anyway, yes, you knew Rei. Well, neither of you would remember each other since Rei was just one year and several months old and you were around, I don't know, seven months?"

"Oh." Jae looked away. "So why does he hate me then?"

"Well, last time you both were together, you're the one who hated him. You even scratched his face. And you didn't let him have his milk."

"Did I?" his eyes widened.

"Rei doesn't hate you."

"Well, that's stupid. I was a baby. How can he hate me for not letting him have his milk?"

Freya laughed for a moment. "My point is, he doesn't hate you. So stop fighting."

"I'm not fighting," he frowned. "He's hitting on my sister and that annoys me, that's all. He didn't have to go all rampage about that."

Freya smiled a full smile before crouching down to the rack. She rummaged through a box and drew out something that looked like twigs. She walked back to Jae and held them down. "Here."

"Sorry. But my dad told me to not accept random sticks from strangers."

"Your dad sure has plenty to say. But you used to play with these."

"Me?" Jae pointed at himself. "With these?" that sounded ridiculous. Why would sticks even appeal to him when he had thousands of toys?

Freya placed them on the floor and retreated. "They're Rei's."

Jae wanted to laugh. Of all the sticks, this is the kind of stick someone as hot and sexy as Rei would play? Jae shuddered. Why did he even find Rei to be hot and sexy?! He stared at the twigs. There was a sentiment to the sticks, he could almost feel that. They looked very old and sentimental. He looked up at Freya who was now glancing out the window.

He grabbed the five twigs and began to stand. "I should get going." he hid the twigs behind his back.

"So soon?"

"Lia might just call the whole town if I don't return quick."

"All right. Just drop by whenever you want." she grinned.

Jae nodded and instantly exited the hut. He looked around for his sister but she was nowhere to be seen, so he kept walking. Fuck, he had just stolen Rei's toys...

"You think you're so... rugged sexy, do you?" Lia's voice suddenly reached Jae's ears and he took the diversion to find her. He wasn't sure if he was angry or disappointed when he saw Lia pinned to a tree by Rei's weight on her body. "You're just corny and deluded."

No, she was lying. It was obvious that she was completely smitten by the boy. Scowling, Jae stomped towards them.

"You like it like that, don't you?" Rei purred, edging closer until their foreheads brushed. Lia looked so small compared to that fucking muscular form of Rei's. "I wonder if your father would like it when I steal you away from him."

Jae stopped his treads and gaped at Rei's back. Lia's eyes darted to Jae and she shoved Rei away before hurrying to Jae's side. Rei leaned his back on the tree that he had Lia pressed against and crossed his arms over his chest, smirking. "Can you go home?" Jae asked Lia in a low voice.

"Why?"

"Just go." he whispered.

"Oh.. kay." she murmured and hesitantly walked back towards the house.

"You have something to say to me?" Rei asked rudely.

"Look here. I don't know what your problem is that you're giving us that attitude but if you can't be friends, fuck off. And obviously you're wrong in the head. You have an intention, don't you? Stay away from my sister."

Rei scowled at Jae for almost a minute and it was tormenting. He finally pulled himself away from the tree and advanced to Jae. Jae's heart hammered to his chest as he kept his gaze low. "You're right. I do have an intention. But maybe it has nothing to do with your sister at all."

Jae looked up at him and bit his lip. The way this boy was looking at Jae was bad news. "What... do you mean?" he hated the fact that his voice broke. Why was Rei staring at him like that? His eyes were black as his hair. He had perfect jawline, a muscular feature indeed. The nose was sharp and unbelievably perfect. The thick eyebrows, pale skin, broad shoulders, all added up to his masculinity. And if Jae had calculated right, Rei was just one year older than him. But god, Jae can never reach that perfection.

Not until Rei spoke again did Jae realize that he was staring at Rei's plush lips. Kissable lips. "Like what you see, Jae Jae?" Jae's eyes wandered down to Rei's neck and the bared chest cleft due to the two buttons at the top that had become undone. God, wasn't he cold?

"Huh?" Jae looked up at Rei's eyes and then regretted doing it. Rei had notorious eyes. Like dangerous eyes. "Sorry... I don't think we should talk again." he began to walk away but the sudden grip on his wrist made him freeze. Rei's hand was bloody cold. What kind of feeling was this? Luckily, before Jae could embarrass himself, Rei released the wrist.

"I beg to differ. Sorry I was acting bitchy. I was mad... about other things." Rei said. "Maybe... we could.. Meet up tomorrow?"

Wow. That was escalating quickly. "Meet up?" Jae raised a brow in disbelief.

"Yeah. I can show you around this place if you want."

"Sure you're not planning to sacrifice me to the rain god by slitting my throat?"

Rei smirked. Goddamnit. Jae had never seen such a beautiful smile before. Fuck, what was going on with him?! "Not yet."

"We'll see. Your mom is nice. But you kinda creep me out."

"I don't..." Rei rubbed the back of his neck. "Mingle much around people."

"Hm." Jae swallowed the lump in his throat. Fuck, he was sexy as Lia had claimed. "I'll see."

"Okay." Rei stepped back. Why did Rei's sudden friendliness seem so bogus? Even his smile was fake.

"Okay." Jae turned around.

"And Jae?"

He faced Rei again. "What?"

Rei held out a hand, palm facing up. Jae stared at it. "Give me back my twigs."

Jae flushed in shame and dug his back pocket. "I was just.. uh.."

Rei took back his sticks and smiled a plastic smile. He was planning something and it was obvious. He was going to feed Jae to the crocodiles. That was for sure. But it didn't matter. Jae was going to take his chances. "Mama said that you liked my toys."

"I didn't... like them." Jae choked.

Rei burst out laughing. "If you like my stick so much, meet me here at noon tomorrow."

He wended his way from Jae, leaving Jae to blush from top to toe.

BONUS CHAPTER 3

"Why are you smiling?" Lia asked and Jae jolted to sit up on the bed. It was really dark in the room and Lia could actually see Jae smiling?

"How do you know I'm smiling?"

Lia snorted in shifted in her bed to face Jae. "You do that baby whimper sound when you're giggling to yourself."

Jae blinked in the darkness and raised a hand to his mouth. "You're lying."

"No, I'm not." she sat up. "So tell me. Why are you grinning like that? You've been doing it for like an hour since we came to bed now."

"I'm not grinning and I certainly don't baby-whimper!" how insulting.

"Oh come on. Did that shmexy small town boy say something?"

"Screw you, Lia. Shut up and go to sleep."

"He's really something, you know. He made us both think about him sleeplessly." she groaned. "Real charmer, don't you think?"

"Oh God. He wasn't flirting with me. He said that he was stupid and he'd like to show me around the place tomorrow."

"Did he?!" even in the dark, Jae knew Lia was wide-eyed and possibly disappointed.

"He didn't ask you, huh? Butthurt much?"

"Oh my god, that son of a gun."

"I don't trust him, Lia. But... there's something about him... I just suddenly felt it, you know. He is attractive but I just can't stop thinking about him now..."

Lia gasped and the lights were flicked on. Jae squinted at her. "Jae."

"What?"

"You didn't."

"Didn't what?"

"Did you imprint on him?"

"The hell? No! What? I don't even know how that shit works."

"Pa's gonna kill him now."

"Stop rambling and go to sleep, Lia. He's a neighbour and he's gonna be around all the while we stay here so I'm just being polite."

"Okay okay. If you say so. So... he's your boy and I should lay off?"

Jae groaned and lied down before pulling the comforter over his head. Lia was insane. Imprint? No. Jae was just smitten. Not supernaturally attracted or anything.

He grinned under the comforter. Maybe he can be friends with Rei.

"Where are you off to now, young man?" his grandmother questioned when Jae hastily stuffed the potatoes into his mouth and stood up from his seat.

"Oh. He has a date, granny." Lia giggled and Jae shot her a black look. "No, I'm kidding. Anyway, granny. I was wondering if you could show me old photo albums." well, she was Jae's favourite person after all and of course she would cover for her brother.

He hurried out of the house after donning some extra layers, worried that he might be late to meet up with Rei. Cursing under his breath due to the cold, Jae strutted into the woods. Why was he even doing this? He was excited to meet Rei and why? Lia's words from last night rang in his ears.

He came to what he thought to be the spot from yesterday, where Rei had asked him to meet him. Smiling to himself, Jae sat down, slumping against a tree. And then he waited. And waited. And waited.

The darkening sky suggested that it could be around 4 in the evening. Jae's frown grew deeper. Rei had lied. Why did he lie? Jae had been waiting in the cold for almost three hours, drawing on the snow and waiting for him. Was he doing this to make fun of Jae? To see how desperate Jae was? Well, Jae had been desperate and now he was leaving.

He was leaving angrily. If he ever saw Rei again, he will be sure to tell him that they were not going to be friends. Disappointed and upset, Jae went back home.

"I don't wanna play this anymore, Jae." Lia whined, pushing the Scrabble board away. "Why can't we go out and do something?"

"Because I said no." Jae studied the board to look for a chance to form a word.

"You're not the boss of me."

"No. But I'm older than you and pa put me in charge. So no."

"Why? You refused to talk about what happened that day with Rei and you've locked yourself up in the house for three days. Why? Did something go wrong? Or did Rei hurt your baby feelings?"

"Can you not talk about him?" Jae scowled. "He's no one to us, okay? We met him like three times and that's all."

"But still, you have a major crush on him, don't you?"

Jae shot up from the couch. "He likes you, okay? He's fooling me around." he stomped away with Lia calling after him. This was the first time anyone had done this to Jae. Maybe he was spoiled who got everything that he wanted but rejection was a stranger to him.

Spending the rest of the evening in bed, Jae was finally over the humiliation of waiting for someone like a stupid squid. He took a deep breath and sat up. The moon was bright tonight when he looked at it through the window. Lia was already asleep in her bed but why couldn't Jae sleep? Rei said that he didn't have a father and had asked whose fault had it been? What did he mean? Did Kai and Sehun really know Rei's mother? Then why did Gina demand that Jae and Lia shall talk to no one in the area? And to top it all, had Rei really shared his milk?!

Jae banged his head on the window and scowled at nothing. Then there was 'clink' on the window. Startled, Jae looked down the glass. Rei was standing there, smiling up. The sudden butterflies in Jae's stomach was brutal. Jae started to smile down at him and then realized he should keep his thoughts straight. Rei was bad news.

But that didn't stop Jae from sneaking out of the house after seeing Rei waving his hand, asking Jae to come down. He closed the front door as quietly as he could and tip-toed over the veranda to avoid it from creaking. "Hi." Rei grinned when Jae approached him. He should punch him. Scold him. Jae did not like people who ignored him. He was used to getting all the attention.

Instead of breaking Rei's skull open, Jae grinned from ear to ear and shamelessly flirted. "Hi." he almost giggled when he saw Rei bit his smiling lip. God, where had all his pride gone?

"Sorry about that day." Rei said, rubbing the back of his neck. "I had to go hunting."

"That's alright. I couldn't make it either. Lia was sick." the lie rolled off his tongue.

"I have to hunt again tomorrow. So I just thought maybe you'd like to see this place at night for a change."

"It's cold."

"The mighty Kim Jae scared of little frost?" he arched a playful brow. Man, he could be charming if he wanted to be. Otherwise, a pain in the neck.

"You even know my surname." Jae grinned and followed his footsteps, heading towards the woods.

"Kim Ven Jae. And Kim Magnolia. I know it pretty well." he shrugged, flashing a smug smile which sent shivers down Jae's spine.

"How though? It seems like you and your mother know a lot about my family but I didn't even know you guys existed. Pa never talked about you."

Rei let out a short, humourless laugh. "Of course he wouldn't. Well, we're not worth talking about, maybe?"

"That's absurd." Jae muttered. "Why are you being so nice to me suddenly?"

"Because I wanna kidnap you and sell you to the people in China."

"You're lying." Jae frowned.

Rei laughed in return. "You'll sell for a good price though."

"Why?"

"Well, look at you. Sharp nose, big eyes, definitely prettier than your sister. Don't tell her that. Actually, you're prettier than anything I've seen."

They walked in silence for a moment. It was weird. It wasn't as cold as in the morning or was it just Jae who was burning just by walking side by side with Rei?

"How many pretty people have you seen?" Jae asked in a low voice.

Rei chuckled. "Can we focus on looking around the place? Hey." Rei held Jae's hand. Oh god. Jae wanted to inhale all of Rei's scent suddenly. "There's a loch nearby. Wanna check it out?"

"Hm mh." Jae nodded. Of course he'd want to check it out.

Rei released the hand and led the way. "So. What do you do?"

Other than staring at your ass right now? "I'm still studying. Graduating next year."

"Hm."

The path got a little rocky even with the snow covering it. "What do you?" Jae inquired.

"Hunt for life, fuck for entertainment."

"What?"

"I'm kidding. There aren't really much to fuck about in this place, is there?" he turned his head halfway to flash Jae a smirk. Jae tried focusing on his steps instead of Rei's rear.

"What do you shift into?"

"Both my parents are Adlets. So, yeah."

"You're an Adlet? Oh. I'm a Docile Lycan. Hybrid actually. Uh." Jae almost tripped himself over a rock.

"Careful, it's a little jagged." Rei warned, reaching his hand out to Jae. Jae gulped and shook his head, declining the offer to hold hands. Rei shrugged and kept walking ahead. "Hybrid, huh. That makes your sister like 50 per cent sexier."

"Are you really interested in her?"

Rei didn't answer. Jae didn't push the question any further since he knew he would be disappointed with half of the probability of the answer he might get. He kept his eyes on Rei's back instead. He really had good broad shoulders. "Shit." he hissed when his foot tripped over something and he lurched forward before he bumped hard onto the back he was ogling. Rei stumbled as well and Jae almost lost tumbled to the ground if Rei hadn't caught his wrist.

"Oh come on, you did that on purpose." Rei guffawed as if it was amusing.

Jae pulled his wrist back and cleared his throat, straightening his coat. "No, I did not."

Rei laughed another round before he said, "We're here anyway."

They climbed down the steep ground and reached the loch. Jae's jaw dropped as he stared at the beguiling frozen lake before him. They were standing on the shore that was covered with snow and the lake shimmered, half reflecting the stars on its ceiling. "Wow." Jae breathed out, gaping at the iced, vast lake. Branches of trees arched towards the lake and crystal ice chandeliers chimed when the wind blew. "This is... beautiful..."

He suddenly felt two hands, each on one side of his waist. Rei's breath was a silent lullaby behind Jae's ear. "I know." he whispered and Jae's breath caught.

"How? A lake..."

"This place has its history." Rei spoke as his breath travelled down the side of Jae's neck. Goose fleshed, Jae froze as the water before him. "Verglas wasn't always cold." he purred, brushing his lips all the way up Jae's neck. Jae closed his eyes and sucked in a breath when Rei pressed their cheeks together, pushing Jae's head to be inclined. Rei's hands dropped to Jae's hips now. "Come on. There's something else too." when he pulled back, Jae realized how hot Rei was, literally. His back was burning simply from the heat Rei radiated.

He turned and followed the smirking Rei. It felt like a wolf luring its prey but Jae wasn't going to be sceptical right now. He was brought to an abrupt halt when a lightning passed the suddenly starless sky followed by a thunder. "Is it going to rain?" he asked Rei who was scowling at the sky.

"Yes. Blizzard and storm maybe."

"Shouldn't we go home?"

"Unless you wanna get stuck in the blizzard halfway home."

"Well-"

"Come on." instead of leading them back home, Rei hurried to a corner of the loch. They reached a cavern and Jae hesitated to step into it. The wind was getting brutal by the second. "Come in." Rei's voice echoed from the inside of the cavern.

"Mm uh." Jae refused. "It's too dark."

"Are you kidding me? You said you're a hybrid."

"Yeah. But Chupu was always there when it was this dark."

"What's a chupu?"

"My dog."

Silence.

"You have a dog? When you yourself-"

"I know, I know. I get that a lot."

"Oh come on, Jae." Rei grabbed his hand and hauled Jae into the cavern. Jae quickly looked around in the pitch black cavern to probe if there was any bat in it. "Sit. We're probably gonna be here for a while."

"Where do I sit? It's so dark. And dirty."

"Spoiled."

"Excuse me?"

The weather got worse outside. It started pouring out of the blue. Rei was right. They wouldn't have made it back home in time. Jae tip-toed in the dark to see if there was a spot to sit and then he heard a noise louder than the storm outside. He jumped and turned to see an orange swipe. Rei was trying to ignite sticks. "Don't worry. I spend a lot of time in here. There's a blanket over there. Not sure if it's warm though."

"Ew. I'm not gonna touch your stinky blanket." Jae grimaced.

Finally, Rei managed to light up the fire and Jae hurried to it to get himself warm. Rei stared at him. "You're seriously that rich pampered kid, aren't you?"

"I don't know, okay?" he crouched down beside Rei and held out his palms. "My father always made sure that I was warm enough. That my milk was warm enough. My socks had to be warm too."

"Wow."

Rei stood up and did something noisy in a corner while Jae helped himself with the heat from the fire. After a moment, Rei walked to the mouth of the cavern and held out something. He returned with wooden mugs that was filled with water. "What's that?"

"Bottoms up." he held out a mug.

"No, thanks."

Rei placed Jae's mug on the ground and drank up his bit before flumping down beside Jae. "You're shivering."

"I know. Keep your limbs away from me."

Rei laughed and raised his palms in defence. "Hey, I'm not planning to share my heat with you, don't worry."

Jae scowled and eyed the water. It was rainwater. Must be clean and he was thirsty. He eyed Rei who was staring vacantly at the ceiling of the cavern. He picked up the mug and closed his eyes before drinking the whole of it. He quickly placed the mug back down. Rei was smirking at him as he shook his head. "What happened to your father?"

Rei's face went blank suddenly. He looked away, biting his lower lip. The light from the fire lit Rei's face up like some sexy Greek god. Jae found himself blushing as the front of his pants tightened. He needed to do something and Rei unbuttoning his shirt was definitely not helping! He undid the top three buttons, just enough to expose the bloody sternum of his. How was Jae supposed to release it in here? Panting silently, Jae averted his eyes. "He died." Rei answered after a while.

"Oh. So you and your mother have been living alone for some while now?"

Rei scoffed. "I've never even seen my father before."

Jae was supposed to be focusing on the topic but he was more concentrated on the toned chest of Rei's. The urge to feel it, preferably with his tongue. God, what was happening to him? "Me too." Jae blabbered.

"What?" Rei sniggered.

"Huh?" Jae looked up at Rei's face. "Oh. I mean I've never seen your father either." fuck, this wasn't going right. Within minutes, Rei was going to find out about Jae's growing knob.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah yeah. Where's your blanket? I should sleep until the storm passes." he rose to his feet and found the dirty blanket nearby a wall of the cavern. He stopped when his head went heavy. Blinking his eyes, he tried to clear the blurring vision but it only got worse. He bent down and grabbed the stinky blanket before dropping on his butt.

"Hey, you okay?" Rei had his hands on Jae's arms and Jae looked up at him in a daze. Everything was spinning around him and he was still hard. With droopy eyes, he whimpered and clutched his crotch. "You need to lie down."

"No." Jae shoved the blanket aside and hung onto Rei's neck.

"Jae-"

"No. Please." he panted. His head was jaded and hazed. His hands slipped down Rei's chest and began to fumble on the remaining fastened buttons.

Rei caught his wrists. "Jae."

"Fuck." Jae breathed and shook his head. He looked up at Rei's face again. It was incredibly close to his own. If he just leaned in, he could actually kiss Rei's lips. Only after some while, he realized that his hands

were tugging Rei's shirt. It was getting colder and they were staring at each other's lips. Rei's breath on Jae's lips was utterly distracting.

Rei pulled Jae to sit on his lap and Jae helplessly clung onto Rei, chests smashed together and their groins grazing cruelly. Jae could just grind on Rei right now but his head was spinning too hard to even move a hand. While his fingers tangled themselves in Rei's hair at the back of his head, Rei's was working on Jae's pants' button. He wanted this. He wanted Rei. He wanted every inch of himself to sweat for Rei. Rei's cold hand slid into the back of Jae's pants, right into the boxers. Their lips were brushing just slightly and Jae vaguely knew that his breath was rapid. One of Rei's fingers was pushed through the cleft of Jae's butt before it lightly brushed the hole. "Uh.." Jae gasped, pressing his forehead onto Rei's, eyes shut tight.

"Do you... want me to..." Rei whispered, pressing the tip of the finger just lightly against the opening.

Jae only nodded in a daze. Rei pulled his hand out of the pants and licked the tip of two fingers. Jae wanted Rei to kiss him but just by looking at his lips could make him come. The saliva-slicked fingers circled the ring of muscles on the opening, making Jae cringe in utter pleasure. Rei was teasing him, just giving him little brushes of their lips as his fingertips only pushed the slightest of his hole.

Rei gently pushed Jae to lie down and the latter obliged. The next thing Jae knew, Rei was ripping the clothes off his body.

BONUS CHAPTER 4

For once, it wasn't cold here. Not literally, but Jae had other things to concentrate on right about now. Such as Rei, who was sleeping so serenely by his side. The cavern allowed plenty of morning light in, just about the right amount for Jae to study every inch of Rei's sculpture-like body. Rei's arm served as a pillow for Jae to rest his head on but he was sure that he had been practically lying on top of Rei all night long ever since he discerned the dirtiness of the cavern floor. He had gradually slipped to Rei's side to let the man have some decent sleep. Jae's feet were cold since the blanket only covered both of their waists. Giggling silently, Jae brushed his forefinger along Rei's jaw, careful not to wake him up. He had long eyelashes and when he was sleeping, his breath was so even and calm. He didn't even snore! The veil of black hair covered Rei's forehead which was something new to see. Rei always had his hair spiked up. Jae lightly moved the locks of hair from Rei's forehead and leaned in before brushing his lips on the always frowning forehead. When Rei shifted a little, Jae drew back and grinned to himself. He dragged his finger down Rei's neck, feeling his powerful, protruding Adam's apple. The tip of the finger lightly grazed the collarbone before lowering down to the scars on Rei's body. Jae wondered how his body was covered with so many scars and yet, he was so bloody hot. No. He wasn't asking the right question. What could have caused these scars?

He slid his fingertips along the scar on Rei's abs. Oh, the eagerness to kiss it. But he didn't want to wake Rei just yet. And there was another scar, a long one just at the V of his torso. Jae just brushed it lightly, wanting to go further down and into the blanket but let out a sigh instead. Rei was so beautiful and somehow hurt.

He shifted again and this time Rei retrieved his arm, forcing Jae to lunge onto his chest. Even better. Jae pressed a side of his face on the heaving chest of Rei's, snuggling the top of his head under Rei's chin. Rei draped an arm over Jae's body as he continued to sleep. The storm had stopped hours ago. But Jae's heart kept pounding every second since the moment Rei had started touching him. The details were a blur. But the lingering touches and kisses convinced Jae that it had been beautiful and sensational. If he had imprinted on Rei, he'd just have to deal with it. But he knew that mating would end the imprinting. Then why was he still so whipped by Rei and his delicious sweet scent?

His whole body was aching and was a constant sore. But the feeling... that was remarkable. He liked the pain that Rei had inflicted. Soft, sweet, gentle pain that lingered endlessly. He had just let a guy of whom he knew no specifics about to make love to him. And had loved every bit and piece of it. If Jae recollected it right, Rei had been very rough last night, demanding all of Jae. When he thrust in, Jae couldn't possibly forget how it had felt. Painful, burning and wanting more. And the first time Rei kissed him... Just right before he came inside Jae and Jae came all over Rei, he had given Jae what he wanted the most. Jae was sure that Rei's back was scratched and abused by his nails. Oh and the way Rei had endlessly moaned Jae's name... Not to mention Jae begging more and more for it.

What kind of punishment was this, pa? Jae wanted to laugh and then it hit him. Rei was going to have it tough with Kai now. Whatever. His father would just have to deal with the fact that Jae had found a small-town boy as a lover and was not going to let go of him. Wow. Kim Jae was totally whipped.

Giggling a little, Jae kissed Rei's chest. He reached out for Rei's hand and brought it to his lips. His palm was extremely rough when Jae's lips touched it. And the same hand had clutched Jae's body, hard enough that those parts were bruised now.

Rei stirred. Jae brought his head up to look at Rei who had his eyes droopily opened. "Hey." Jae let out with a smile.

Rei only blinked, staring at the ceiling of the cavern before he sat up and groaned, burying his head in his palms. "What time is it?" his voice was unbelievably husky and sexy which made Jae all springy.

"I don't know. Morning?"

Rei grunted before he faced Jae. He didn't say anything. He was just staring vacantly. Jae's smile faltered as he dropped his gaze. "You should go home." Rei said after several seconds and began to stand. He quickly grabbed his crumpled pants from the ground and started to dress himself up. Jae averted his eyes, biting his lip. It hurt. Rei had already abused his lips the whole night and now they were throbbing.

"Are you going home as well?" he asked in a squeaky voice.

Rei didn't answer. Jae reached out for his own pants, holding the blanket close to his stomach and stood up to pull them on. Rei was already buttoning his shirt without looking at Jae.

"When can we meet then?" Jae tried again.

Rei kept his focus on buttoning his shirt. "When we meet."

"Oh." Jae zipped up his pants and waited for Rei to say more. When he didn't, Jae said, "Did you... I mean... was it.." blood rushed to his face. "Did you like it?"

"Fucking you?" Rei asked without looking at Jae as he picked up pulled on one of his boots. "Yeah, I guess."

Jae's stomach churned with the air knocked out of his lungs. "Uh... no. I mean..."

Rei just grabbed hold of his knife and turned his back to Jae. "Bye, Jae."

"Wait. Rei. I-"

"Please. Don't think last night would mean anything to me." he said that much and zoomed out of the cavern.

What the hell.

Jae pulled on his clothes and hurried out of there, trailing Rei's footsteps. "Wait!" he grabbed Rei's arm and turned him around to face him. "You can't say that. I.. I did... Rei.. you-"

"Look here. Go home. We had sex and that's all. Don't make this a big deal."

"Just sex..."

"And you're the one who wanted it. Looked like I didn't have to spike the water after all. You seemed pretty desperate on your own." he scoffed and shoved Jae back before striding off.

Stumped and taken aback, Jae stood there like a statue, unable to even breathe right. His eyes stung with tears as he panted, a hand clasped over his mouth. He crouched down before gripping his hair. How could Rei do this? This was absurd. That was so cheap of him. Why would he want to do anything like that? Was he just horny that he had to drug Jae to sleep with him? Rei was right, though. Jae might have done it willingly. But the damage was done and Jae wanted Rei. One way or another. He wasn't going to let Rei go off the hook like that.

He stood up to head back home this instant and call the biggest gangster he had known his entire life. He clearly remembered how Kai had threatened a small boy to bite his head off when the boy had touched Jae's cotton candy when he was around 10 years old. And he was sure that Rei deserved a good bashing in the face right now.

BONUS CHAPTER 5

"Where the hell have you been all night?!"

"Huh?" Jae turned his head around, hand gripping his phone. Lia strode into the room and smacked the back of her brother's head. "Ow! Lia!"

"I knew it! I knew that you were with that rowdy!"

"Who?" Jae rubbed his abused skull with furrowed eyebrows. This had been his fault. He had followed Rei on his own. Rei had not forced him to go with him but Jae had happily followed him. Rei did not say anything about having feelings for Jae, and Jae forced his feelings onto Rei. And Rei was right. Jae would have done it with or without the spiked drink. God, it shouldn't even be a big deal. Sleeping with someone these days was as common as ordering a pizza but why did it hurt so much? What was Jae hoping for? For Rei to take responsibility?

"Jae!"

Jae looked up at Lia who was standing by the bedside. "Uh?"

"Were you even listening?"

He shook his head and moved his gaze back to the phone screen that he had been staring on for minutes, brooding over whether to call his father or not. Something told him that Kai meeting Rei would not end well. Oh god, Jae get a grip! How can he think about the welfare of a guy that used him?! Another thwack on the side of his head made Jae to howl in pain as he glowered at his sister. "What do you want?!"

"Do you have any idea how I struggled to explain to granny that you went to pick winter berries?!"

"I'm sorry." he muttered and slouched further.

"Hey.." Lia's tone softened as she ran a hand through Jae's hair. "Are you okay?"

"No." he heaved a sigh. "I want to go home."

"Why? Your date didn't go well?"

"It went spectacular." Jae murmured, rolling his eyes. "Now I just wanna go home and drink papa's hot chocolate and lie on pa's lap."

"With Chupy and your pink fuzz ball?" she mocked with a scoff.

"It's *Chupu* and yes!"

"Whatever. I'd like to go home too. But I'm finally bonding with granny. Why don't you just call pa and ask him if you could come home."

Jae scowled. It wasn't that simple. Kai would ask why he suddenly wanted to come home and Jae would start crying and Kai would show up here within hours and Rei will die in his hands. Jae apparently loved Rei like he loved Chupu to let Rei die like that. "I'm having inner conflicts."

"Oh god." Lia snatched his phone and before Jae could retrieve it, she ran to the corner of the room. "Pa!" she screeched over the phone just when Jae reached her.

'You put that phone down!' Jae mouthed angrily.

Lia giggled. "Hey, pa.... hm hm. I miss you.... No, it's still evening.... How's papa?... No! Don't let him touch my laptop!..."

Jae almost ripped the phone away but Lia's nails digging into his chest prevented him from doing so. 'Lia, please.'

"Granny's fine... Jae's right here, pa.... Hahaha, yes. Uh.. Oh he's doing great! He found a boyfriend! A country, small-town boyfriend."

Jae's breath stopped.

"And I think something happened. He's moping and sulking." Lia kept talking as blood drained from Jae's face. "Pa? Hello? Still there?" Lia shrugged at Jae. "Oh. Now he wants to come home."

Jae finally tore the phone away and ended the call. "Fuck, Lia! What the hell?! You don't even know if something had happened!"

"Oh, you're my brother, okay? I know you. You never sulk unless something had disappointed you. Like when your toys go missing or when papa scolds you. Or in this case, your little boyfriend did something to upset you."

"He's not my boyfriend!"

"Yeah, that's why you spend an entire night and morning with him? You reek of pure Adlet for godsake." Before Jae could retort, his phone buzzed. "Pa just texted me..."

'Pack ur things!'

Jae frowned reading the message. Another buzz.

'Dont expect me to spare your lil small town bf!'

And another.

'U will tell me his name n address dis instant!'

And another.

'U're just a baby!'

"I'm not a baby!" Jae shouted at the phone's screen and switched the phone off.

"Who wants some rice pudding?" their grandmother peered into the room with her cooing voice and Cheshire grin.

"Me!" Lia exclaimed and winked at Jae before hurrying out of the room.

"What are you doing outside, dear? It's too cold." his grandma said when she stepped out on the veranda where Jae was sitting on. The sky was darkening along with Jae's mood. "I heard your parents are coming. Are you leaving with them?"

"I don't know, grandma." he glanced up at her and forced a smile. "Pa could be a pain sometimes with his over-protectiveness."

She laughed. "Your father? I can't imagine. He used to be the most carefree, lackadaisical boy I've ever known. You changed him altogether."

"I did, huh."

"Sehun and Kai had been on the verge of losing their lives for yours. Well, that's a story for another day."

Jae blinked his eyes. "What? Tell me."

"Hm. It's a little scary."

"I insist."

"Okay." she leaned on the railings of the veranda. "You must promise to never tell anyone that I told you of this."

Jae crossed his heart. "Promise."

She took a deep breath and started narrating. When she was done, Jae was left with tears in his eyes and he felt like his breath was knocked out his lungs. "Now you see how wonderful of a gift you had been for them. And for us. I'm sure you know Julien."

"Uncle Kris' secret boyfriend?"

His grandma's eyes bulged out. "Uh.. I'm not so sure about that. But when you were a baby, you used to be so close to him."

"I still am, grandma. I was just kidding."

"Well, he fought for you too. All of them did."

Jae looked away and gasped for air. "My father was such a jerk."

His grandmother outright chuckled. "That he was. But he was a young boy. He grew up to be a great gentleman."

"I always thought that it was papa who pushed pa around like the big boss. It had been the other way around. And I was premature?! Why didn't anyone tell me of this?!"

"You were a premature baby?" a new voice broke into the conversation and Jae turned his head to see Rei grimacing at him, standing just few feet before the house. "That's just... wonderful." he said stoically.

Jae jolted up and stared at him with wide-eyes. "What do you want?" he asked sourly.

Rei rubbed the back of his neck and eyed Jae's grandmother. "Hello, ma'am."

The old woman kept eyeballing Rei as if he was an alien. "You... you're.." she stammered. "Aren't you-"

"Yes." Rei smiled.

Jae's gaze bounced from his grandmother to Rei. "You guys know each other?" he asked the woman.

"A little." Rei answered instead. Jae threw him a black look.

"What do you want now?"

"I.. wanted to talk to you."

"What's there to talk about?"

"About this morning."

"I thought you never wanted to even see me again."

Rei's eyes kept quivering. His fringe covered his forehead and his hands were balled into fists. His broad shoulders were stiff and once again, Jae couldn't help but admire all of him. "Do you want to hear me out or not?"

"I think my cupcakes are burning." Jae's grandmother said and excused herself. Once the front door was closed, Jae stepped down the veranda.

"What do you have to say?"

Rei pointed at the house. "She's baking cupcakes?"

"I.. what?! What the heck do you want?!"

Rei's eyebrows furrowed. "I wanted to apologize for acting like a fucktard in the morning!"

Jae froze to the ground as he stared vacantly at Rei. "You're... sorry?"

"I'm not like that. I.. just.. wanted to make you feel bad."

"You spiked my drink! And then you... did all sorts of bad things to me! Although, yes, you did let me sleep on you because of the dirty ground but you were still an ass! What have I ever done to you?! Why would you do such a thing?!"

"Because... urgh! I don't need to explain anything to you." he started to turn around to leave but Jae hurried to him and grabbed his arm.

"You can't just leave without explaining anything!"

Rei spun around and clutched the back of Jae's neck before smashing his lips onto Jae's. His lips throbbed at the sudden impact but Jesus Christ, was Rei actually kissing him?! The kiss was so rough and sloppy and unbelievably quick. When Rei pulled back, Jae was left breathless with his lips drenched in Rei's saliva. "You did imprint on me, didn't you?"

Before Jae could bring himself to respond, an intruding beam of light caught his attention followed by the zoom of a vehicle. His stomach dropped to the pit when he discerned his father's car. It pulled over just at the front of the house and the car's door was snapped open.

"Is he the one?!" Kai hollered, slamming the door shut as he marched towards Jae with fisted hands.

"Who the hell is this?" Rei asked.

"Get inside, Jae!" his father shot at him. Jae was still unable to turn a hair as he stared at his father's angry pace of stride. Kai's hard expression said it all. As soon as he reached Rei, his hands came up to clutch Rei's collars.

"Pa!" Jae shrieked and shoved his father back, jumping between him and Rei. He pointed his forefinger out at Kai with a scowl etched on his face. "My Rei! You don't touch him!" he scolded his forever handsome father. "He's mine." he spat with a pout on his face. From the distance, he could see Sehun laughing silently, sitting on the hood of the car.

"Your... what?" Kai breathed out with a surprised look on his face.

Jae reached his hand back and held Rei's wrist. "My Rei." he murmured almost childishly.

"Ah. This is your father." Rei snorted behind him. "Nice to meet you... dad." he snickered.

"Rei..." Kai's voice only came out as a whisper and his hard expression softened. "Rei. You're.. Freya's son?"

Rei was smirking. "Gonna fight me now? Because I'm gonna steal your precious baby from you."

Jae lost his hope. Kai was going to bludgeon Rei's face.

Kai arched his brow before he turned around to give Sehun a look. Sehun shrugged.

BONUS CHAPTER 6 (2nd last)

It was definitely unbelievable that Rei was still alive but Jae was having an even harder time believing that his father was doing nothing but stare at them. It was like Kai could burn their souls just by looking daggers at them. Jae stealthily stepped back to stand by Rei who hadn't even given the chance to explain why he was apologizing for being an ass to Jae. Jae shivered a little and Rei side-eyed him. He draped an arm around Jae only to have Kai growl at him.

"Hands off, boy." he pointed at the snaking arm and Rei deliberately slid the arm around Jae's waist now, pulling him close. "Urgh. You're really asking for it." he grunted and stomped forward but Sehun held Kai back.

"Maybe we should just sit down and talk like normal people." Sehun sighed.

"Yes. Yes, papa. Maybe we should." Jae agreed.

"Why? Too scared that I might scare your boyfriend away?" Kai hissed at him.

"No, you will chew off my boyfriend's head!"

Kai grimaced and crossed his arms over his chest. "You, take your hand off before I rip that arm off your body." he jerked his chin at Rei.

"You will not do that." Jae snapped and clung onto Rei's shirt.

"Are you arguing with me right now for a boy you don't even know?"

"Who said I don't know him? I met his mother. I went to his house. He had even given me his milk and twigs."

Kai eyes bulged out and Sehun burst into laughter beside him, leaning heavily onto Kai. "What the actual-"

"No, not like that." Rei cut in and scowled at Jae.

"He just said you have him your twig." Kai snarled at him.

"And milk." Sehun pointed out.

"Do you find this funny?!" Kai snapped at Sehun.

Rei heaved a sigh. "Hey, I think you should just talk to your parents. I'll come by tomorrow."

"No, you certainly will not."

"Yes, he will." Jae crossed with a scowl and turned to face Rei. "I'm sorry. But my father is little... nutty."

"I heard you!"

"I don't know what you actually wanted to say but apparently you'll have to be alive to do so. So leave. I'll meet you at the loch tomorrow." Jae said in a low voice. Rei threw Kai a black look and scoffed.

"He won't kill me." Rei whispered back and brushed his lips daringly on Jae's lips. When he pulled back, Jae felt a light-headed. Was this even happening? Or was Rei fooling with him again.

"That's it." Kai hollered and was about to reach Rei before Jae hugged Rei.

"Go away, pa."

Kai groaned loudly and kicked a cluster of snow beneath him. He murmured a bunch of swear words as he marched up to the house. "I swear if Lia..." that was the last thing Jae heard from his father before Kai disappeared into the house.

"Hi." Sehun greeted Rei with a smile. Jae released Rei and hugged Sehun instead. "I see that Kai's scheme of teaching you a lesson backfired."

"Papa, I really like Rei. We can't be together if pa kills him!"

"Hello." Rei bowed at Sehun. "I heard a lot about you from my mother."

"All good things, I hope."

"Mostly." Rei snickered. Wow, what a wonderful sound it was...

"How's your mother?"

"She's doing good." he rubbed the back of his neck and cleared his throat. "I just wanted to piss him off. I didn't mean to cause you any trouble."

"Do you have a death wish? Cause I'd like you to explain everything before you die in my father's hands." Jae spat at Rei.

"Calm down. He's an old fool. He can't hurt me."

Jae shoved Rei back at his chest and glowered as hard as he could. "Don't you dare say things like that about my father. He's better-looking than you are!"

Rei scoffed and laughed. "You're such a daddy's boy, aren't you?"

Jae kept scowling. "What's your deal, really? Why are you so keen on being an ass?"

"Because I don't like your father! Doesn't mean I don't like you."

Jae was stumped for a moment. "Have you even met my father before?"

Rei and Sehun exchanged a dubious glance which irritated Jae. "Maybe it's pointless to talk about it now." Sehun said calmly. "Rei, why don't you go home? I'll talk to Kai."

"No, I'm sorry. But I do like Jae. I think... I imprinted on him too."

"Well, what a blunt way to say it." Jae scoffed. "I imprinted on him..." he mocked Rei. "Oh yeah, and his father is an old fool!"

"I thought you just said that you like me."

"That was before you said my father was an old fool."

Rei genuinely seemed taken aback. "I wanna be with you. But it's either me or your father. You pick."

Jae blinked his eyes in bewilderment. "What?"

"Rei, you can't do that to someone whom you claim to like." Sehun snapped at Rei.

"Me or him?" Rei ignored Sehun as he kept his eyes on Jae.

Jae's eyebrows furrowed. "You didn't raise me for 17 years. You weren't there to lift me up when I fell down and broke my teeth. You didn't feed me milk every single night before tucking me into sleep. You didn't let me sleep on your chest when I had nightmares. What the fuck are you thinking?"

Rei clenched his jaw and nodded once before spinning around before he broke into a sprint into the woods. Jae's eyes clouded with tears. Why would Rei even think that he would leave his whole family for him?

Sehun's arm came around Jae. "Come on. Let's go in and talk some sense into your father's thick skull."

"Why are you even supporting that boy?!" Kai shrieked at Sehun, pacing the room relentlessly.

"I'm not supporting him but I'm just saying that maybe he really does like Jae." Sehun wasn't even making sense.

"I heard him, Sehun. I just heard him asking Jae to choose between me and him!"

"And Jae just slammed into his face clearly of how much he loves his father. The least you could do is talk to that boy so that our son can be happy!"

Kai froze to the ground for a moment before flumping on the windowsill. He heaved in a heavy sigh and wiped his face with his bare palms. "He's just after revenge. You saw how boldly he said that he's going to take Jae from us."

"And yet, he had not told Jae of what you did to his father." Sehun stood before Kai, running a hand through Kai's hair. "He hates you. Not Jae. Somehow things happened and now they want to be together. If you could just explain to Rei about what happened, maybe he will forgive you."

Kai hooked his arms around Sehun and pulled him close before burying his face into Sehun's stomach, hugging his waist. "And then what? What if Jae still wants him and Rei doesn't forgive me?"

"Don't you think Jae knows what's good for him?"

Kai pulled back and scowled at Sehun. "He can't even wash his underpants!"

Sehun grinned and tousled Kai's hair before kissing his forehead. "Give Rei a chance. For me. Will you?"

Kai grunted and exhaled an exasperated breath. "Can you ask Jae to come and talk to me?"

"He's not talking to you." Sehun frowned. "He keeps saying that you're a bad potato."

Kai stood up and pecked on Sehun's lips before walking past him, making his way to the room Jae was in. He knocked on the door and Lia opened it. "Why, pa?!" she screamed. "I thought you'd help him!" she crossed her arms over her chest.

Kai cupped the top of Lia's head and shoved her away.

"Ouch!"

"Out. And make sure you delete all the boys' numbers in your contact before I hunt down every one of them." he pointed his forefinger at Lia with a threatening look. A pout formed on Lia's lips before she marched out of the room, grumbling loudly. Jae was lying on the bed with his face buried in the pillow. "Jae."

"Go away." Jae's voice was muffled by the pillow.

Kai scratched his head, grinding his teeth. "Come on, talk to me."

"I'm not talking you. Bad potato!"

Kai recalled the first time Jae called him a bad potato. That was when Kai had broken Jae's Batman figurine, of course not on purpose. Jae was three years old back then and he was so chunky. He had his finger stuck out like he always did when scolding Kai and threw a huge tantrum before he walked to a corner to cradle his broken toy. Kai still remembered how frantically he had run to the store that late night to get Jae some new toys.

He sat down on the edge of the bed and stroked the back of his son's head. Jae didn't move. "Do you really like him that much?"

Jae nodded awkwardly with his face in the pillow.

Kai sighed. "Should I apologize to him and give him my blessings?"

He nodded again.

"Fine. Tell me about the way to his house."

Jae jolted up immediately with a massive grin on his face.

"Freya." Kai gasped when the door of the little hut was opened.

Freya eyed Sehun and Kai lazily as if she was already expecting them to show up. "Well, good afternoon." she flashed a toothy smile. "It has been some while."

"How are you?" Sehun inquired.

"Still kicking, aren't I? Would you like come in?"

"Uhm." Kai hummed. "Is your son home?"

"He's still sleeping. Are you looking for him?" she smirked.

"Not really. But..."

Sehun took a deep breath. "I know this is kind of abrupt but Jae-"

"I know." Freya stopped him. "I know everything. Rei tells me everything."

"Well, now that's a son!" Kai shot at Sehun and the latter rolled his eyes. "Great. So we can skip the prologue. Now, I want your son to marry Jae."

Freya's eyes widened. "What?"

Sehun nudged Kai's chest with his elbow and Kai groaned. "And I need to apologize."

"You already did. Years ago."

"Yes, but your son is still holding a grudge against me. I'd like to tell him that he has my full blessings if he truly wants and loves Jae."

"I'm sorry, but this IS kinda abrupt. You... want my son... a boy who has nothing... to marry your spoiled rich son?"

"See. I told you Jae is spoiled." Sehun shot at Kai.

"He's pampered. Doesn't mean he's spoiled." Kai retorted. "And yes."

"I need to talk to you." Rei said, suddenly showing behind his mother, shirtless with messy hair and a sleepy face.

Kai was scowling again and Sehun pinched a side of his waist which made Kai wince a little. He forced a smile. "Sure... son."

Rei nodded with a stoic expression and pushed past his mother to step out of the hut. "I wanna know about my father." he said sotto voce to Kai.

Kai sighed and finally, his hostility towards Rei faded. "Anything you wanna know. He was my friend."

"Was he?" Rei arched a brow.

"He was. Before he turned greedy and selfish and ugly! He was such a bloody motherfu-" Kai stopped himself when Sehun slapped the back of his head. "Sorry. Well, he was a great guy." he let out.

"Jae respects you so much. He thinks that you're a great father." Rei said under his breath. "I won't ruin it for him. He's a good person. Innocent."

And you spoiled that innocence. Kai thought, but didn't say anything.

"Can we go somewhere to talk about it?" Rei asked and Kai nodded.

FINAL BONUS CHAPTER

"I was thinking." Kai's arms wrapped themselves around Sehun's waist as he crept up Sehun from behind. "Wanna make new babies?"

"Kai, I'm whipping up a meal for the babies that we already have." Sehun plunged his elbow into Kai's ribs.

"Maybe Lia and Jae want some cute little siblings." Kai purred up Sehun's neck before kissing a corner of Sehun's cheek.

"Maybe it's just you who's horny in the hot and sunny noon."

"Could be. Would that mean that you're gonna drop everything and come to the bedroom now?"

"Lia is already masticating her toys in hunger. Do you want her to chew up the whole house?"

Kai heaved a sigh and released Sehun. "She has two teeth and is already biting everything that she manages to get into her mouth."

"I must say that she takes after you."

"Haha. Very funny. Where's Jae?"

"He's playing outside."

"Alone?"

"No, with Chupu."

"Are you kidding me? You let a dog look after him?"

"Kai, you and I both know that Jae's dog is better at keeping him safe than you are."

"Do not compare me to a dog."

Sehun flashed a sly smile, shaking his head. "Oh the irony."

Kai scoffed but before he could retort, he heard a Lia whining from the living room. When he hurried to check on her, Jae was running shakily into the house with one his palms held up high. "Pah pah pah!" he yelped out, running as fast as he could to Kai but since he was just a baby, his longest leap didn't pass a step of Lia's crawl. Kai crouched down to catch Jae before he could trip and fall and that would earn Kai lots of nagging from yours truly, Sehun. "Poo chu." Jae mewled, pulling back. The baby was panting, sweating heavily. He held out his palm and Kai noticed the scratch on it. It could have been just a thorn's scratch but Kai's heart clenched as soon as he discerned the little blood oozing out of the injury.

"God." he picked Jae up and settled him on the couch while Lia watched from where she was seating, sucking on her pacifier.

Jae began to say blabber things that Kai couldn't comprehend.

"Sehun!" Kai knelt before the baby and took Jae's injured palm into his hand. Jae's hand was so tiny and how can a bloody thorn hurt him like this?! Jae wasn't even crying but Kai thought he might embarrass himself by weeping because of such a trivial issue.

"What is it?" Sehun entered the living room and gasped. "What happened?"

Jae looked up at Sehun and giggled. "Jae. Booboo." the baby huffed out and pointed at his palm.

"I'll get him to the doctor." said Kai anxiously.

"Are you mad? Just apply some antiseptic and a band aid."

"No. He's hurt, Sehun." Kai scowled at him.

Sehun shook his head, sighing loudly. "Does he look like he's in pain?"

Kai stared at Jae's palm while Sehun scurried away to grab some first aid. "Does it hurt?" Kai asked Jae. "Booboo." Jae repeated and threw Lia a glance. When his sister spat her pacifier out to giggle at him, Jae's eyes began to glimmer with tears as his lower lip jutted out into a pout. "Lee lee." he pointed at her, complaining to his father about his sister laughing at him. "Kooki."

"Sehun! He wants a cookie!"

"Stop overreacting, Kai." Sehun shoved the first aid kit onto Kai's shoulder.

"You get him a cookie or..."

"Or what?" Sehun challenged.

"Or I will."

Laughing a little, Sehun pecked on top of Jae's head and began to walk away. "Sometimes, I wonder who the baby is and who the father is over here."

"What are your intentions towards him?" Kai questioned Rei as they walked through the winter woods with the sun blazing bright, quite unusually. "What were your intentions at least?"

Rei licked his lips. "To be honest, I wanted revenge. Does that seem too unfair considering that I grew up without a father because of you?"

Kai heaved a breath as his strides turned to plods. "That doesn't answer the question."

Rei stopped on his track and stared down at his feet. "I wanted revenge." he murmured. "At first I just thought that if I take away something that's dear to you, it will be enough. But that's probably not gonna work seeming that both Jae and his sister have a great deal of love and respect for you."

"They would. Because they know how much it will pain me to see them cry."

Rei peered at Kai with something like uncertainty. "How would I know? I never had a father's love."

"It's because of me, I know. Can I be blunt? I didn't know that your father had a family. But even if I had known, I still would have killed him. It was a duel. One of us would have to die. And the person I was back then was too adamant and insanely stupid to let his own life be sacrificed for the sake of a whole family. Everyone makes mistakes. I know that killing your father is unredeemable but I'd like to make it up to you. Family is everything, Rei. Let me give you the family you lost."

Rei looked away as soon as his eyes reddened.

"But, Rei. I can promise you that I'm no longer that person. I'm not trying to justify that what I did was right. But any man in my shoes would have done the same thing. Although I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't have killed your father given that I was this sane back then. You know what changed me? Whole lot of heartache. And through all those heartaches, Sehun was the only one who gave me a purpose to strive and fight. He gave me everything. Including Jae. And now Jae wants you. And I never denied anything that he wanted."

"I don't know what to do. I don't think I can forgive you but I don't think I can stay away from Jae either. I just wanted to play him but everything turned upside down when I realized that he imprinted on me."

"HE WHAT?!"

Rei stared at him and Kai quickly cleared his throat. "Yeah. And so did I. On him."

"What a marvellous news." Kai said through his gritted teeth, forcing a smile.

"Don't worry. The imprint is over." Rei smirked.

"What? How? That would mean you..." Kai trailed off when it hit him. "You little scum-" he began to clutch Rei's collar as Rei broke into a guffaw.

"So you didn't take the hint when Jae confessed that I gave him my stick and milk?" he laughed out and Kai shoved him back hard. "Oh, he loved them, Mr Kim." Rei chuckled, staggering back.

"You son of a.." Kai stopped himself and sucked in a sharp breath. "You will come and talk to Jae, do you understand?"

"I have a condition. I want Jae to stay with me."

"Here?"

"Here."

"Fine."

"Fine? Just like that?" Rei seemed disappointed. Kai smirked and shoved past him.

"I'll just shift my whole residence back here." he shrugged. "Not gonna let you off the hook that easily, Rei Rei."

"What did you talk about?" Sehun only asked once they were back on the veranda of Kai's mother's house.

"This and that. Hey, I know how much you hate the cold and this place. But.." Kai rubbed the back of his neck.

"What?"

"Can we just stay here with mom for some while?"

Sehun grinned much to Kai's surprise. "Things you do and ask me to do for Jae." he straightened Kai's coat, clinging onto it before kissing his lips.

"Besides, the education here in Verglas is kinda good. No night clubs and shit. Maybe it will be good for the kids."

Sehun snickered and stroked Kai's cheek. "Make sure you let Jae know about how much you love him."

"I'm sure he knows. I can't help it, Sehun. From the minute I saw him struggling to breathe in that hospital ward until now, he had been my whole life."

"I know." Sehun brushed his lips on Kai's once more, smiling up at him. "Makes me kind of jealous sometimes."

"Oh come on. I told you that we should make more love and get more pumped to be more active!"

"God." Sehun pulled away and opened the door.

"Papa!" Jae jolted up from the couch and hurried to them. "So?"

"Hope you like the cold." Sehun said bluntly.

Kai recalled how Jae had reacted to his first snow back at home. He ran around, with his baby beanie on, Lia by his side, both trying to catch the falling snow with their mouths. "Shinoh! Shinoh!" Jae used to shriek, cheeks red, lips plush and scarlet.

"Oh my god, thank you, pa!" Jae pounced onto his father to give him a bear hug. "Thanks." he muttered sotto voce after drawing back a little. Kai smiled. "Did you tell Rei that you love him? Did you bring the twigs that I ask you?"

"Don't! Push me!" Kai spat out and marched upstairs.

"Great. Now I know that my daddy plays cupid.." Lia chimed and Kai stopped on the middle of the stairs.

"Don't you even think about."

"What are you doing?" Sehun asked as he approached Kai who was staring out the window.

"Look at them." Kai muttered, wrapping an arm around Sehun when Sehun sat on his lap. Kai was watching Jae, Rei and Lia who were outside, playing around Chupu. Sehun rested his hand on Kai's shoulder as he peered at Rei throwing Lia's thin frame onto his shoulder before Lia wriggled trying to free herself but failed. Jae was laughing with his dog jumping around him. Finally when Lia screamed, Jae's expression hardened before he hurled a snowball at Rei's back. 'Let her go!' Sehun saw him mouth with an angry scowl on his face. Rei lowered her down and picked Jae up instead.

"They look happy. I hope you are too." Sehun said in a low voice near Kai's cheek. Kai turned his head and grinned at him. Their lips were almost brushing as their breaths grazed.

"I am." Kai let their lips meet in a chaste kiss. "Now. How about we join them and show them who the boss is?"

"Kai, grow up, please."

