his hand

over mine

**(AND HEART)**

**By Cynthia Lau**

A vast green spread out beneath Dokja, his Hands in someone’s that felt too warm. When Dokja turned, he was awestruck by the beauty that stood in front of him.

He only smiled at Dokja, seemingly glowing as the sun settled down behind him.

It was almost like the universe was saying, *his smile would put the sun to shame*.

“Dokja.” The male called out, voice all too intimate and comforting.

“Dokja…”

Dokja woke up, fingers pressing down the snooze button on his phone.

That was how his Monday started. “Well, what a way to wake up.” Dokja mumbled, playing the scene of his smile over and over in his brain. It took Dokja a few minutes, but he managed to find himself in front of the mirror in the next moment.

Dokja brushed his teeth, the image of the smile still haunted him. Not enough to consume all his thoughts, but not enough to be dismissed. It was just there, like the feelings Dokja held for the owner of the smile.

Dokja sighed, rinsing his mouth with water. Dokja could already tell, today was going to be a long day.

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The subway was crowded, Dokja stared grimly. As expected of the rush hour, 8 am. Dokja forced his way into the carriage, gingerly finding a spot to sit.

Much to his *avail*, all the spots were taken.

A bitter feeling filled Dokja, he should be used to this. He should feel nothing, as this is an on-going routine every week. Yet, the annoyance that swept past Dokja landed in large waves.

For a moment, Dokja just wanted to scream. He held it in, because if he did so— he’ll look like a fool. So, Kim Dokja accepted his fate.

His Hand grabbed a Handle, and he waited for the long ride to start.

As the subway rolled on, more people filled the space. Dokja could feel the push, the air becoming stuffier around him. He also felt himself getting further and further away from the door. He bit his lips, constructing a plan of how exactly he would get to the door smoothly.

As the train came to a stop, an abnormal amount of people filtered off the area. Luck is on his side today, Dokja thought. He followed behind the group, suddenly feeling grateful.

No harm, no talking needed to be done. It couldn’t get better, Dokja thought. As he crossed the iron doors, a shoulder brushed past him.

A strong scent filled his nostril, and Dokja tensed up.

No, it wasn’t how strong the scent was— it was how *familiar* the scent was. Dokja’s head snapped back, and in between the crowd, he stood out at once. His head popped up between the others, naturally at a height a head taller than the passengers.

His build was lean, and he had a face that attracted many. He did nothing but simply stood there, and Dokja could spot him in an instant.

What an ironic move, Kim Dokja.

When Dokja came to his scenes, he was gone. Only a remnant of his long coat could be spotted in the far corner.

Dokja casted his glance to the side, and finally moved his feet. Yet, his heart thumped at the encounter back at the station.

Even after so long, his feelings never subsided. They always remained, just like how he had loved so fiercely five years ago.

The only difference was that now, Dokja learnt how to hid and stop the flower from blossoming any further.

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Dokja pressed his thumb onto the screen, his features eased when a robotic voice filled his ear, “signed in, on time!”

Dokja walked through the door, adjusting the files he carried in his arms.

“Ah, Dokja!”

Dokja didn’t like the sound of that, but he turned around with his best smile anyways. “Director Han.”

“you’re here just in time, the development team arrived today, and I’ll like for you to take over for a bit.” Sooyoung muttered, walking past him, hooking her fingers signifying him to follow behind.

Dokja let his shoulders droop in disappointment, but he couldn’t go against a higher up’s order. “What about Sangah?” He asked as he trailed after Sooyoung’s fast pace.

Sooyoung hummed, adjusting her striped jacket. “We ran into a problem with the advertisement team, Sangah’s at the other base trying to fix the problem.” She turned over the first page of the booklet she was holding, “I trust you over the others, so I’m Handing this job to you.” Sooyoung closed the booklet and threw it to Dokja.

Dokja barely managed to catch it.

Sooyoung cleared her throat, stopping in front of a conference door. “you’ll be meeting the game developers, animators, artists and so on. However, the most important would be the game testers, the gamers. They were hired on a large basis, so don’t fuck that up.”

Dokja nodded, flipping through the booklet. He thought his eyes found *his* name somewhere, but he told himself he was just seeing things.

Dokja rushed to close the booklet when Sooyoung nudged the door open.

“Good morning, everyone, had a good sleep?”

Kim Dokja was wrong, he realised.

The male sat there in his full glory, his dark coat stood out against all the other colours. He, who sat smacked right in the middle. He, who was clad in all black.

He, who was a head taller than all the others even when he was sitting down.

Then, Dokja felt the strong wave of fear again. His stomach churned, sweat beaded on his forehead. Dokja can’t breathe, can’t grasp the situation.

In the next second, Joonghyuk’s eyebrows furrowed. His Hands moved down to clutch his stomach, seemingly experiencing the pain with him.

“Kim Dokja, are you sick?” Joonghyuk voiced out.

The silent atmosphere wasn’t welcomed at all.

Sooyoung spun around to examine Dokja, disbelief coated her eyes. “You know Yoo Joonghyuk?” She mouthed, fingers coming in alignment with his shoulders.

Dokja shook his head violently, then whirled around only to meet Joonghyuk’s intense stare. Dokja felt a chill run down his spine, rendered of any ability to speak.

Joonghyuk raised an eyebrow, tapping his fingers against the desk. As if he was informing the whole room, *go on, tell everyone what you want to say*.

“Mister Yoo, I believe we aren’t on terms close enough for you to ask me if I’m sick or not. Not when I’ve never met you, up until now.”

*And definitely not on terms close enough for you to yell out my full name*. Dokja left that out though, because he didn’t want to irritate Joonghyuk any further.

If he did, he’ll probably die under Joonghyuk’s arms and also get fired. Which was not a positive case for him, at all.

For a moment, something flashed across Joonghyuk’s face. Something raw, so deep like the ocean. For a moment, Dokja doubted himself. The emotion, something Dokja knew from the bottom of his heart. It was placed on Joonghyuk’s face, and it surprised him.

Yet, the moment Dokja realised, Joonghyuk’s was back to his aloof self again. It was so swift, Dokja was certain that it was all just his mind playing tricks on him.

Dokja gulped, *that was definitely it*.

No one brought it up again as the meeting rolled on, Dokja didn’t bother diving any further into the case. And if someone noticed Joonghyuk’s gaze on Dokja the whole meeting, they didn’t say anything.

When the PowerPoint rolled to an end, Dokja knew he had to move. Gingerly, he pushed himself up from the chair. He ignored everyone’s eyes, including his. With shaky Hands, he dropped a booklet down in front of everyone. He cleared his throat, explaining as he went.

“Hello everyone, I’m Kim Dokja. If you didn’t already know, I’m the second Hand of director Han here. I’m mainly based around the financial area of the team.” Dokja placed down the last booklet in front of Yoo Joonghyuk, taking in a sigh. “However, director Yoo isn’t here at the moment, so I’ll temporarily take her place.”

Dokja paced around, finally standing beside Han Sooyoung. “If you look at the booklet, your name has been assigned and you can find your job details and what you need to do in them. Each and one of the booklets are different, so please be careful to not lose them.” Dokja flipped open his own booklet. “That should be it, I’ll look forward to working with you all until director Yoo gets back.”

Everyone clapped, Dokja nodded timidly and made a leave.

Sooyoung clapped, and all Dokja heard was “alright, that’s the basic!” Before he closed the door behind him. Dokja whipped the sweat on his forehead and took weary steps to his desk. When Dokja placed down the files, he realised he needed a breather. He made his way to the staff room, the scent of coffee clogging his mind.

Dokja dragged his tired body across the carpeted floor, Hand reaching out only to realise the staff room door was opened. Dokja was too tired for this, he sighed. As he was about to push the door open. He heard his name, slipped from the inside.

He paused, checking again. A few words flew past, and he heard his name then. Then, his mind started clearing and he realised the people were talking about him.

Dread piled up, and he can’t breathe. *They’re talking about me, they’re talking about me. I did something didn’t I?*

“Did you see? Dokja was called by Han Sooyoung again.”

“Again? Seriously? What does she even seen in him…”

“Who knows?”

“Hey, don’t you think… He seduced her?”

“Oh… There could be a possibility. He isn’t that bad of a looking man, if I had to admit.”

“Huh, yeah, I guess. Han Sooyoung looks like she’s the type to be attracted to a skinny twig too.”

The heels started clattering across the floor, shared laughter of the females started getting closer.

He needed to back away.

*Leave, step back, leave, leave now Kim Dokja–*

“How good do you think he is?” Laughter rose from behind the door, before Dokja could realise– they straight up bumped into him.

“Dokja– oh, oh I’m so sorry.” The female reached out to wipe at his shirt, he hurled himself away.

“it’s, it’s okay.” Dokja wheezed out, making a sharp turn to the left and running for it.

“Jeez, what a weirdo.”

*Weirdo, weirdo, weirdo.* Dokja felt tears surge his eyes, then he felt something overcome him. Almost like comfort, almost like– *like love.* Dokja ignored the feeling, tumbling a little on his feet. He found a laugh rising out of his chest, he’s so pathetic. *So, so pathetic.*

*I’m so close, so close.* Dokja’s eyes shut close in fear, his fingertips only a slight breeze away from the Handle. Then, the feeling is back. It’s stronger this time, hitting in multiple waves. Dokja felt himself shattering, his knees buckled, and his legs twisted.

He stumbled across the floor, falling into a hard crash. Dokja lied on the ground, an arm over his face. His tears ran free, happy that no one used the toilets around this area. Happy that no one would see him like this, like… *Him*.

“Kim Dokja…?”

“Ah, yoo Joonghyuk.”

Kim Dokja stated, no, registered.

The man he had dreamt about for countless years now stood in front of him.

The owner of the smile that haunted him for days without ends.

Yet, his gaze was ice cold. He scanned Dokja, and Dokja could only let him. Dokja had a coffee stain on his new ironed shirt, his tie loose around his neck. His pants look a little worn out, and suddenly Dokja felt self-conscious about his shoes that are a little over two years old.

He felt opened, laid out in front of Joonghyuk. Like a book that had a cover that would bore you to the heavens.

“Kim Dokja.”

His voice vibrated across the air, low and deep. Deep enough to turn the tip of his ears slightly red.

Joonghyuk tilted his head, “you look pretty roughed up.”

Dokja is suddenly reminded of the fight they had before they lost all contact.

Now he was the loser with an unstable office job, and Joonghyuk had his ‘confirmed future’ when he held a place in the gaming industry.

Oh, how the turntables, Dokja thought.

He must be judging, laughing, *taunting* him through his stoic facade.

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They were soulmates, to be exact, *they are soulmates*. Dokja knew Joonghyuk like the back of his palm, and Joonghyuk could say the same about Dokja. They had ignored the advice of society and had loved without a doubt.

To say love was an understatement, they looked at each other like there was no other. It wasn’t hard to tell, not with the way Joonghyuk’s arm would slip across Dokja’s waist unconsciously as they conversed. Or the way Dokja would pull Joonghyuk closer to his side as they progressed through a crowded path.

It was all in the actions, not words.

They were what everyone wanted, yearned for.

Yet, even perfection fell apart.

Joonghyuk up to this day, still didn’t get what he did wrong for Dokja to pulled away from him like that. Especially when Dokja was the one that encouraged him, the one who would press sweet words into him at the crack of dawn.

Dokja left too abruptly, too quick.

Dokja had supported him from the sides when Joonghyuk confessed about wanting to become a professional gamer. His parents were strongly against it, his friends had suggested him to find another job. Yet, only Dokja had smiled and held his Hand.

Dokja snuggled up to him, tucking a strand of his hair behind his ear.

“I believe in whatever you do Joonghyuk, as long as I’m with you.”

Joonghyuk had never felt safer.

Yet, a few months later- they got into a fight. A big one, that left them in ruins. Joonghyuk still clearly remembered what Dokja had howled to him, words that pained him to this day.

“Yoo Joonghyuk, I want a future. Playing games for a living isn’t going to do the job! Are you even confident you’re going to get to the top? With a losers job like that, we’re not going anywhere.”

Dokja’s body shook as he hissed those words out, Joonghyuk desperately wanted to comfort him. Yet the words ‘a losers job’ haunted him like a curse.

“I’m a loser, huh.”

Dokja froze, “that’s not what I meant-”

His response was the sharp slam of their door.

Then, silence approached.

Joonghyuk waited for Dokja to reach out, but he never did. Months passed, and Joonghyuk slowly forgot about it. People said he gave up on waiting and moved on. Yet, the truth was… Joonghyuk had gave up the moment they had their fight.

They never contacted after that, like they were strangers from the beginning.

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“Here.” Joonghyuk muttered, leaning down with his arm stretched out. Joonghyuk had the other arm in his pockets, one knee curved just in the right way. Almost like a prince, his prince in *shining armour*. Dokja shook the childish thought of his head, and accepted Joonghyuk’s Hand.

*It’s as warm as I remembered it to be,* Dokja thought.

Dokja is snapped out of his trance when Joonghyuk pulled him abruptly. “Oh, okay. Wasn’t expecting that, definitely.”

Then, Joonghyuk’s fingers is on his face. His thumb wiped away the remaining tears. It left as soon as it had arrived, causing Dokja to thought that it was him imagining things.

A cough rosed out of Joonghyuk, Dokja’s eyes are still blown wide opened when Joonghyuk Handed him a Handkerchief. “I have some clothes in the room we’re in, if you would like for a change, you can have my clothes.”

Dokja nodded dumbly, Joonghyuk smiled in relief. An emotion Dokja couldn’t describe flushed through Dokja’s body. Almost like… Comfort?

“If you would excuse me now, I have a meeting to get to.”

Joonghyuk brushed past Dokja, Dokja could only stand there dumbly. Later, when he realised– a strawberry like glint coated Dokja’s cheek. He only came to his senses when a bird chirp rang the empty corridor. Dokja made his way down the corner, his body burning.

His hand clutched his chest, the feeling of his palm still lingered.

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*It’s big on me*, Dokja thought. His fingers curl up into a fist, rubbing against the soft materials of the shirt. He’s dressed in a white graphic tee, and it was quite silly of him to pair it up with suit pants but it’s his only option.

There were still people entering the meeting room when Dokja settled into his chair, cheeks still warm. The door to the meeting room finally closed, Dokja turned his attention back to his screen. He clicked away, pretending to work for a while. Yet, his mind was not focused on the words he was typing.

A sudden strong surge of happiness overcame him and Dokja is left speechless and confused. Dokja glanced over to the meeting room, and he wondered if he was the reason for it.

A moment later, Lee Seolhwa and Joonghyuk walked out of the door. Dokja sickly realised *of course it’s her*.

*Of course, it’s lee Seolhwa out of all people.*

Joonghyuk turned to look at him, as if noticing his mood change and Dokja could only look away. Pain exploded in his stomach, as if the flower he had buried were plucking its stem away from the soil. Dokja collected his items, trying to look as calm as he could as he stepped past the two.

*They… Match so well.*

Dokja thought, as he noticed Seolhwa’s arm on Joonghyuk’s.

*They would match so well*

Dokja turned around the corner, tears brimming his eyes.

*They would make a perfect pair, wouldn’t they?*

*And they wouldn’t need to worry about public eyes, like we would.*

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Joonghyuk noticed Dokja first, well… It was hard to when he was sitting there in his full glory (and in his shirt). Joonghyuk talked to Seolhwa for a bit more, before politely excusing himself. “Oh, wait! There’s something else I need to discuss with you.”

Joonghyuk titled his head, mouth opening to reply before he shut them again. His brows furrowed, feeling the shift of emotion in him. Joonghyuk turned around to meet Dokja’s eyes, only to realised Dokja had left his seat and is now walking towards them. Just as Joonghyuk was about to call out to him, Seolhwa’s fingers stopped him. He turned back around to Seolhwa, feeling a little irritated.

When Joonghyuk turned back around, Dokja was nowhere in sight.

Seolhwa’s fingers tugged his arms again, he reluctantly turned back to her and forced up a business smile. “What do you want to discuss about?”

Dokja covered his mouth, standing in the shadows of the corner. The scene echoing over and over in his mind. Dokja should be used to this, but he isn’t. It hit him like yesterday, like Dokja had just started loving him.

It hit him again and again. Like the overwhelming feeling when you’re watching a horror movie. He clutched his face with both his palm, eye shut tightly to avoid the tears from falling. It hurt, it still hurt him now. He’s letting silent screams into the empty hall. For a moment, he lied there against the wall feeling hopeless.

He can’t move a limb, like he’s glued to hiding behind Joonghyuk for the rest of his life. A few minutes passed, yet it felt like a long time. Finally, he dragged his lifeless body away from the scene. The guilt built up in him again, and for once he knew it wasn’t a sensation from him.

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It was a bright, sunny morning. Dokja absolutely hated mornings, with a passion. Dokja sat near the window of the train, letting a million thoughts run his mind. Ranging from, *is he alright?* To *why did she touch him?* And you’ll probably guess by now, they’re about Joonghyuk.

He sighed, digging his face into his Hands. The thing he hated about soulmates were how they could sense each other’s feelings when in a certain diameter of each other. Dokja was lucky enough to have only been able to sense Joonghyuk’s emotions, some soulmates are even able to read each other’s mind.

He felt stripped raw in front of Joonghyuk, and he didn’t like that. He leaned his head against the window, closing his eyes to have the last bit of peace before a hectic day breaks out ahead of him.

“Dokja!” Joonghyuk called out and Dokja’s heart dropped to the ground. He hasn’t even entered the building yet! Dokja made quicker steps and ignored Joonghyuk’s calls. He breathed out, muttering *I know this building better than him* over and over in his mind. He took a sharp turn for the elevator and pressed the button hastily.

He can sense Joonghyuk’s voice down the corridor, and Dokja’s eyes flickered to the stairs. He hasn’t used the stairs in a while…

When Joonghyuk finally rushed to the elevators, all he saw was a closing elevator. He breathed out heavily, “ah, I lost him again.”

Dokja lied himself against the surface of the emergency door, holding his breath. He stood in the silent, dark room with a thumping heart.

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Dokja let himself melt into the pillow, hugging it tighter. His eyes are closing, and he can’t wait to enjoy a nap during his precious break time. That was his idea, until a voice pulled him out of his sleepiness.

“Dokja?”

And oh, it’s that voice. Dokja sunk his face deeper into the pillow, evening out his breathing and hoping maybe Joonghyuk will take the hint and leave.

“Dokja, I know you’re awake.”

Dokja wants to break out into a fit of curses, truly. Slowly, Dokja raised his head with a business smile. “Yes, Mister Yoo?”

The so called mister yoo stared down at him, leaning down with one arm. “Why did you run from me this morning?”

Dokja mustered a laugh, “mister yoo, I was just in a rush. Please don’t get so ahead of yourself.”

Joonghyuk nodded, laughing a bit—- as if telling Dokja that he didn’t believe so. “Really?” Joonghyuk raised his eyebrows, leaning closer. And at this moment, Dokja felt his heart jumping back to life again.

Dokja hummed, turning away from the male and focusing his eyesight on his computer screen. Joonghyuk tapped the table surface, leaving a cup of coffee on the table. “Have lunch with me later?”

Dokja took the cup of coffee, whirling around on his chair. “I’m busy, so no thanks.” He stood up swiftly, making a run for the staff room. Joonghyuk watched him with a keen look in his eyes, making no sign to chase up.

“same old Kim Dokja.”

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sound of a heel and boot clicked across the floor, Sooyoung and Dokja walked side by side down the hallway. “You did well today,” Sooyoung mumbled. Dokja nodded in thanks, mustering up a smile.

“I think I did well too.”

Then, they fall into a quiet silence as they made their way back from the other side of the company. At the same time, Dokja also realises something. Dokja *doesn’t* want to see Joonghyuk, that’s what he realised. (Maybe he’s lying to himself, but no one needed to know.) His heart thumped out of his chest every time he turned a corner, wondering if he would see Joonghyuk at the other side.

Much to his luck (or his disdain), Joonghyuk wasn’t there.

Sooyoung raised an eyebrow at his behaviour, “are you looking for someone?”

Dokja shook his head, stammering. “No… More like avoiding.” Dokja mumbled the last few words, making it almost inaudible for Sooyoung.

She furrowed her eyebrows, “what? Could you repeat that?” As she waited for a response, she saw a figure she was familiar with. She perked up, “yoo Joonghyuk! Hello!” She called out, taking fast steps towards the taller male. “What made you come in today? Dokja, say hello.”

Silence greeted her, and when Sooyoung turned around— Dokja was nowhere in sight. She blinked, a thousand thoughts running through her mind. Yet, her thoughts were interrupted when a laugh erupted from behind her. Her confusion gained, turning around just to see *the* yoo Joonghyuk smiling. Suddenly, her world is spinning and all she wanted to say was *what is happening with the world today?*

And oh, poor Sooyoung, she was so lost.

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The next day, Dokja practically tip-toed into the company. He arrived earliest, settling into his new desk. He had requested for a desk move, yet now he was closer to yoo Joonghyuk. He found it annoying, but he couldn’t request for another desk in at least two months’ time. He rubbed his eyebrows, letting out a tired sigh. “I guess I just have to leave and get here early.” He mumbled, typing away at his keyboard.

Then, a laugh rang the quiet room— too striking against the quiet atmosphere. Dokja dipped his head below the walls of his desk, heart thumping out of his chest as he heard the footsteps walk past. Dokja recognised the rhythm too well, the sound too well.

“What made you come so early Seolhwa?”

There it was his assumptions proven right. Dokja curled him into a ball, pushing himself further into his desk as if he wanted himself to melt. He tried to make himself as small as possible, tried to make himself not care as much. But the pain still hurt in a way he couldn’t describe. Like the pain was a normal routine, like a prick to his sides. He let out a shaky breath, realising his throat was *dry.*

suddenly, they go quiet. Just as Dokja peeked up in curiosity, Joonghyuk dropped a lunch box and a thermal cup by his arms. “If you’re unwell, take a rest.” Joonghyuk whispered at a voice only they could hear, before walking off with Seolhwa again. Dokja doesn’t know what they’re discussing, he doesn’t want to know.

Yet, as he stared at the food on his table, there’s this feeling that his body is crumbling. Like the ocean waves that hit a cliff, washing over the rocks over and over until it gives in. He took the cup with hesitant fingers, staring at it before he hears fireworks play in his ears.

A few hours after, the cup and lunch box are empty and washed, left by Joonghyuk’s desk. Dokja sat back down in his seat, wondering just how Joonghyuk still remembered his favourite foods. He could still taste the seaweed soup on his tongue, the pleasant feeling running down his throat. He wondered how a person could move him so much, even after so many years without him.

*Is it the link we have, that bounds us for life?* And Dokja doesn’t know whether it’s his nature speaking, or his heart. Dokja tried to focus his eyes back onto his laptop screen, onto the never-ending data and numbers. Yet, his heart drifted. He found it funny how he is so easily swayed, despite himself thinking he had put up such a strong wall.

Dokja stuffed his face into his arms, resting on the table as his eyes drifted off. Suddenly, a Hand is on his back, massaging away. He gasped out of shock, head snapping back in alert. Joonghyuk’s face came into view, grinning at him. Dokja’s heart slowed to a stop, turning his head back in embarrassment. “Scared you?”

Dokja unconsciously nodded, earning a laugh from the male behind him. He massaged his shoulders gently, pressing on all the right spots and Dokja found himself easing into a peaceful manner again. His shoulders laxed, head rolling against his arms and eyes finally shutting close.

“sleep tight, Dokja.”

When Dokja woke up again, there was nobody around him. A blanket was left in his stead, Joonghyuk’s scent filled his nostrils. Dokja gulped, clutching the blanket closer to himself with a blush coating his cheeks. Dokja pulled the blanket up to his face, closing his eyes and basking himself in the scent that drew him in a comfortable stance.

Dokja realised he had very much missed this smell, of laundry wash and cheddar wood.

There’s this small flicker that rises in hope, which made him think that maybe they could start over. *Not to the old times*, of course. Dokja wouldn’t dare to want for something so bold, but back to friends, to the start. Where a hug be just enough, for him at least.

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The next day, Dokja walked into the office with almost a smile on his face. The behaviour change doesn’t go unnoticed by his co-workers, surprised at the light in his eyes. Many people who have not greeted him before, did so. Dokja bowed back in respect, so happy to think about anything else.

Dokja slides into his seat, replaying the plan over and over in his head. He self-confirmed it was perfect, and even if it failed, he prepared a plan b. Dokja was giddy for some reason, wondering if he should have done this sooner?

*Maybe he shouldn’t have been so stubborn, just maybe.*Dokja doesn’t have too much time to reflect on himself before the glass doors are opening to two figures. Joonghyuk and Seolhwa, Dokja’s eyes almost lit to the fullest when he saw Joonghyuk– only for it to die down again when he saw Seolhwa’s arms in Joonghyuk.

His giddy feeling is instantly overtook by bitterness, laughing at his own stupidity. *Why would you fall for that Dokja?* He doesn’t greet the pair, choosing to settle back into his seat and work on a project he was meant to start last night.

Joonghyuk was halfway through the room when he saw Dokja drop back into his seat, Joonghyuk’s eye furrowed, feeling irritated by his actions. Joonghyuk had been so out reaching for the past few days, so what did Dokja not get? Joonghyuk let out a scoff, choosing to turn around instead and continue walking with Seolhwa.

Seolhwa looked at him with a worried face, “is everything alright?”

Joonghyuk shook his head, face blanked. “Just my pet being petty.” Seolhwa nodded, as if in understanding. Joonghyuk doesn’t think she truly understands though, although he wasn’t the one to comment.

They enter the office together, Joonghyuk closing the door behind him, not even sparring Dokja a glance.

Dokja fought back tears as the scene played out in front of him, *he didn’t even look at me.* Dokja doesn’t think about it anymore, suddenly too tired and too worn out. He clicked into his phone, only to open to the app he had been scrolling on yesterday for the plan. His heart pulled for a bit, and Dokja realised it hurt.

It hurt really bad, for your closing wound to be pulled opened and not treated. There’s some sort of underlying hopelessness, that maybe Dokja was just fated for this. To not be loved, to not be enough.

Dokja dug his head into his arms, letting out streams of tears as he thought about countless situations of the ‘perfect pair’ that had been rumouring around the workplace. Dokja wished it was them instead, he wished Joonghyuk was happy with him instead.

But Dokja doesn’t think any further, because he was used to not letting himself do so.

Dokja spent the next few days watching their interactions, realising that the voices about *them* in the office has gotten louder. Words like, *they look so good together,* or something like *did you see the look they gave each other?* Dokja wanted to say he didn’t, but again maybe he was just bitter.

He had to admit, it was exciting in some sort of way. Like a drama acting out in front of him, if you took away the fact the male lead was quite in fact his soulmate. It was like a roller coaster of emotions, watching their interactions and how they somehow talked more and more…

Until Dokja’s heart clenched whenever they passed by, to which Joonghyuk didn’t even turned back to.

Dokja thought Joonghyuk was selfish.

*(But maybe, he’s the more selfish one.)*

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Dokja stared at the device in his phone, Hands tumbling over the screen. After a while, he finally pressed the send button. He let out a sigh, as if a weight was pulled off him. A text read ‘*anyone up to Hang?*’ hung up in the group chat, responds were received almost immediately. Dokja smiled, glad to have his friends.

An hour later, they found themselves sitting around a round table. Soju bottle littered the table, dishes of half-eaten food laid upon them. Sooyoung said something that made the whole group laugh, including Dokja who let out a small wheeze. Sangha furrowed her eyebrows, turning to the male who’s been down for a while.

“what’s up Dokja?”

Her question made everyone look up, including Sooyoung who was halfway through eating her noodles. Sooyoung placed her chopsticks down, her eyes clearing. “Why is our squid sad?” A question that honestly did contrast with her serious face.

Sangah laughed, “who knows, maybe because of boss?”

Sooyoung rolled her eyes, “I’m not that mean of a boss.” In which Sangah threw a sceptical look to, but they don’t continue that conversation any further. They turned their focus back onto the male in between them, he only drooped his head more.

“I… I don’t know. This thing has just been eating me up, like a bug. I don’t want it to bother me, but it does.” Dokja muttered, both females frozen as they haven’t expected something serious out of Dokja.

Sooyoung looked at Dokja, her voice and face softening. “Tell us more?”

Dokja nodded numbly, “it’s… It’s uhm about someone. You could say we have history, but it ended badly. And, and I guess I just never gotten over him. I thought I did, but when he came barging into my life again, I was proven wrong.” Dokja took a pause to inhale in new air, “it’s like he took a shovel and unburied the sprout I’ve left hidden and covered for all these years.”

Dokja’s fingers were trembling around the shot cup by now, Sangah reached out to pat his back. The females shared a look, both having a feeling who it was. Sangah spoke up first, “that’s not your fault Dokja, feelings are the most complicated things in the world. Sometimes they’re light and beautiful, sometimes they’re rotten, hateful. We can’t control that, we can only accept it.”

Dokja doesn’t respond, and only took another shot. In the meantime, Sooyoung secretly picked up her phone and started pressing around with it. Sangah threw a questioned look at her, to which Sooyoung smirked and winked as a response. On her screen, the contact name read yoo Joonghyuk.

(Yoo Joonghyuk’s screen lit up, and his brow furrowed).

*Xxx restaurant, xxx street, come if you want to know the truth. Unknown user.*

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Dokja sighed at his screen, chugging down another shot of soju. “Hate love, hate boys.” Dokja muttered, and he’s staring at his already passed out friends. He has been drinking for a while now, and he wondered how he’s still tipsy. “Maybe it's the pent up anger.” He noted.

*Great, not even halfway in and he’s already a mess.* With a strained groan, he dropped his head onto the table. It created a motion, shaking the dishes and cups on its surface.

“Dokja?”

Dokja tilted his head when his name was mentioned, *oh come on*. “Not you again.” Dokja whined, “why is it always you?”

Joonghyuk furrowed his eyebrows, his pride hurt a bit— weren’t he and Dokja getting along just fine? He huffed, “I’ll call the rest of my friends to pick up your friends, but let's get you home first.” Joonghyuk is a bit skeptical at Dokja’s sudden quietness, but he picked the male up by the arm anyway. “you’re light.”

Dokja remained still in his hold, and Joonghyuk almost wondered if he’s dead. “Kim Dokja?”

Dokja lifted his head at the call, flushed cheeks shoved up in his vision. Joonghyuk almost dropped him, his fingers tightening around the male’s waist. “don’t stare.”

Dokja cussed, “you’re so goddamn bossy you know that?” Dokja poked his arm harshly. “Coming back into my life, now you’re even haunting my dream huh?” Dokja slurred, “just like before, why can’t you stop? You’ve caused too much pain.”

Joonghyuk continued to drag the male home, the two making stupid steps under the night lamps.

“Joonghyuk, if you could just fuck off, please.”

“Shut up, you drunk bastard.”

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Dokja doesn’t know how he got here, *he wanted to know too,* actually. He realised he’s kissing Joonghyuk, he’s half conscious and he could only recognise the latter by his perfume that he always wore. There’s something unguarded in the way Joonghyuk held him, soft and yet also firm. He relished in the way so, feeling like he had *won* something. *In reality, he probably didn’t.*

His heart beat with anticipation when Joonghyuk drew himself closer, Hands slipping across his waist and seeking until their chests are touching. Dokja stared into Joonghyuk’s eyes, suddenly feeling nothing and everything at once. He thought he could hear the sound the sound of crashing waves for a moment, like the calmness that followed next.

Dokja doesn’t know whether he’s just so happy, or if it was just *love in the air*. There was something sweet that hung in the air, something that made Dokja felt high. As their lips drew closer once again, the world around them seemed to fade into oblivion. Their lips finally sealed at last, stealing each other’s breath as an intimate bond exploded against them.

Dokja’s Hands climbed from Joonghyuk’s back to his hair, and Dokja had half to mind to tug. Dokja doesn’t, instead he let his fingers traced through the soft strands as he lost himself into the warmth of Joonghyuk’s lips. They stay like that for the next two hours, sharing soft kisses here and there as they drifted off into a quiet silence.

Dokja is too tired to ask why, Joonghyuk’s comforting embrace drawing him to sleep. Dokja knew sleeping was the last thing to do, because he had questions that needed to be answered. “Joonghyuk.” He called out, uncertain and vulnerable.

“Yeah?” Joonghyuk replied, and Dokja finally settled in the fact Joonghyuk’s *here,* with him.

“Why?” Dokja continued, to which Joonghyuk made a confused sound at.

“what do you mean why?”

“why am I here? Why did you kiss me?” Dokja asked, finally looking at him in the eye.

Confusion lit in Joonghyuk’s eyes, “you’re here because Sooyoung texted me, I picked you up and decided to stop here because my house was closer. For the second question…” Joonghyuk’s fingers found Dokja’s, linking them together. “I wanted to, Dokja.”

His answer was short, it was simple, yet it caused fireworks to blow off in Dokja’s head. Wanted to, hid a lot of meanings. Like, *I wanted you, I missed you, and everything about you.* Joonghyuk laughed, sensing the change of emotions in Dokja.

‘no Dokja, I don’t have anything with Seolhwa. You’ve always been the one, even after you said those words to me.” Joonghyuk said it playfully, a smile climbing to his face as he admired Dokja.

Yet, his words are what made Dokja’s stomach churn. “I’m sorry…” Dokja whispered out, “I’m sorry for being stubborn, for hurting you and waiting for you to do the first advances instead.”

Joonghyuk drew Dokja into a hug, pressing Dokja’s head into his chest, he hushed the smaller male, “it’s alright Dokja, you’re fine. We can talk about this tomorrow morning, we have time.”

And oh, Joonghyuk is still the same as ever.

Dokja nodded, closing his eyes. “Alright,”

And so, they drifted off into a quiet silence, their heart finally connected once again. Unknown to them, as they fell into deep sleep, a red string mended itself between them again… The moon light filtered through the blinds, basking them in a glow that shone.

Their love found itself to meet again, even without the help of ‘fate’.

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