(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Soda Pop & Your Idol get released.

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It is our pleasure to announce the release of our new talent Jinu's debut song 'Soda Pop'. Now streaming on all platforms!

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"Holy shit you're popping off Jinu!"

Jinu raises an eyebrow in amusement as Zoey shoves her phone into his face for the umpteenth time in the past few hours since Soda Pop had been officially 'launched'. No impromptu street concert this time or anything like that. Instead, it was all above board and as professional as it could get.

Which was good because for obvious reasons Jinu wasn't going to try and use demon charm magic this time around. Not only did he not actually care too much about his own popularity, he also didn't want to prey upon humans in any way, be it through soul sucking or mental fuckery. In the end, he was perfectly happy to sink or swim entirely on his own merits.

"That's nice, Zo."

The youngest hunter pouts mightily at him for that from where she's laying atop Derpy with her phone outstretched in his direction. Given she's

practically upside down right now in order to make it happen, she looks a little ridiculous. But then, what else is new when it comes to Zoey?

“Oh come on, this is a big deal! You’re on track to be more successful than us at this point!”

Wait, what? Jinu straightens up in alarm, frowning severely.

“Excuse me?”

Before he can fully start to panic, Rumi lets out a giggle from his side. She HAD been leaning on him, but his sudden movement dislodges her and makes her sit up as well.

“She’s talking about our debut Jinu, not our current popularity. Basically, your current trajectory looks like you’ll be eclipsing our starting numbers from more than six years ago… especially if releasing Your Idol in a couple weeks from now goes how we expect it to go.”

That… still didn’t sound very good to him.

“I don’t want to eclipse you girls in any way. Maybe we should hold off on Your Idol and let the people grow tired of Soda Pop for a while longer than initially planned?”

Mira lets out a scoff from her part of the couch, where she’s sitting back with Sussie having made a nest of her hair. The relationship between the leggy dancer and the spirit magpie isn’t something Jinu fully understands, but they seem to just ‘get’ each other somehow.

“Nah, there’s no point. This was pretty much always going to happen… you’re a guy, after all.”

Jinu furrows his brow, not quite following the logic. Luckily, Rumi is there to pick up the slack.

“Basically Jinu, we’ve been sort of an anomaly in the scene since we debuted. Most of the time, men in our industry tend to attract bigger audiences then women, especially ever since K-Pop went global. We’ve been bucking that trend for the last six years and some change, but it’s not surprising you’re doing as well as you are. You don’t need to worry about us though; this is your day… and Soda Pop is doing amazing.”

Groaning, Jinu flops back on the couch.

“Its literally a song about eating souls…”

From Derpy, Zoey pipes up.

“Or Oral Sex! Definitely one of those two!”

Jinu grabs a nearby cushion and tosses it, beaning Zoey right in the face before she can even blink. Rumi just laughs while Mira snickers, even as Zoey sputters.

There’s a brief period of silence after that as everyone falls quiet. But Jinu’s curiosity gets the best of him, in the end.

“… Alright, what are they saying?”

He’s expecting it when Zoey squeals in excitement, but he’s not expecting Rumi and Mira to both perk up as well. Jinu watches with narrowed eyes as all three girls exchange looks, seeming to realize something at the same time as one another.

“We’ll take turns, yeah?”

“Sounds good to me!”

“Yeah that works.”

Jinu raises a single brow, only for Rumi to pull away from him entirely so she can turn and face him, sitting cross-legged as she taps away at her phone.

“Okay, here’s a good one. ‘Soda Pop is so catchy and infectious! I can’t stop bobbing my shoulders, please send help!’. Your silly dance move is just as popular as last time, Jinu.”

Snorting in amusement, Jinu shakes his head.

“C’mon, they didn’t really say that.”

But Rumi just turns the phone around to show him and after a moment of squinting at the screen, Jinu is forced to acknowledge that’s exactly what it says.

Zoey goes next, piping up from her Derpy Bed.

“I’ve got one here that’s even better! ‘Please let the rumors about HUNTR/X and Jinu dating be fake! Please, just one chance, I’m begging you!’.”

The maknae giggles and snickers to herself, even as Jinu just rolls his eyes in amusement. He sort of gets it, Zoey has explained the concepts of ‘one chance’ and ‘down bad’ to him already. Still… even if he wasn’t in love with

Rumi and in some sort of mutually beneficial alliance with Mira and Zoey, why did this random stranger think they might have a chance with him?

Meanwhile, Mira lets out an exaggerated, faked yawn from off to the side.

“Boooring, the both of you! Now here’s a great one. ‘Jinu can flip my top any day if you know what I mean!’.”

Rumi goes bright red even as Jinu rolls his eyes and huffs. Seriously?

“Oh and then they followed up with ‘I mean I want to sit on his perfectly symmetrical face, to be clear!’.”

“Mira!”

Mira just cackles as Rumi groans and covers her face with her palms. Jinu just sits there, shaking his head slowly in disbelief. He almost wants to call Mira a liar, but at this point he’s lost his ability to doubt the depravity of humans.

“People really will just say anything these days, won’t they?”

“Yeah, they’re all so much more confident behind their anonymity. Makes it a lot easier for them to let go of their inhibitions.”

Taking that in, Jinu hesitates briefly.

“Okay but… they’ll be hating on it soon enough, right? That was part of the plan. They can’t just love it universally, can they?”

They couldn’t love him universally, he doesn’t say. But even if he doesn’t say it, Rumi still sighs and scoots back over to lean into his side.

“It wouldn’t be such a bad thing if they did, Jinu. But you don’t need to worry. No matter how good the numbers, no matter how many fans you get, there will always be haters. Always.”

Mira grunts from across the room.

“Yeah, I’m already seeing them start to trickle in honestly. All the stuff we talked about, it’s already showing up. People talking about how ‘generic’ the song is, or how they expected something more unique from a Sunlight Entertainment Idol. Yada, yada, yada.”

She shrugs before continuing on while staring down at her phone’s screen.

“They’re getting put on blast for now, but I bet you anything that there will be more of them by tomorrow and even more the day after that, and so on and so forth. The plan is still going great.”

Funnily enough, that makes Jinu feel better, knowing that not everyone was buying into the hype. After all, Soda Pop was originally a song meant to hurt HUNTR/X. The idea of it doing so good again, even in different circumstances and a completely new context… Jinu didn’t fully know how to feel about it all.

“I just don’t want to overshadow you girls. I’d rather quit at just Soda Pop then allow that to happen. I could be a, what did you call it… a ‘one hit wonder’ maybe.”

There’s a pause as they all exchange looks… and then the next thing Jinu knows, he’s being hugged from all sides as Zoey and Mira leave Derpy and Sussie behind to come join him and Rumi on the couch. He flushes a little bit at the comforting contact.

“Only you would turn success into some kind of crisis.”

“It’s Imposter Syndrome, perfectly normal thing to experience.”

“It’ll be alright, Jinu. You don’t need to worry about overshadowing us, we just won the Idol Awards and Golden is still topping the charts with no signs of slowing down. Just… just be happy for yourself, okay?”

Sighing, Jinu slowly nods and lets himself relax under the cuddle pile he finds himself the center of. Right. Happy. He could do happy. After all, Rumi was probably right, there was no shot of him *really* overshadowing them at this point, right?

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It is our pleasure to announce the release of Jinu’s second song ‘Your Idol’. Now streaming on all platforms!

326k Replies | 1.4m Reposts| 7.6m Likes | 50m Impressions

The penthouse is quiet as they all just sort of sit there, a bit shellshocked. Jinu most of all, truth be told. Everything had gone according to plan, mostly. The past two weeks had been interesting to watch, because events had ultimately gone just as the girls said they would.

He’d done a few interviews here and there, answering questions to the best of his abilities. And he’d even done a couple of variety shows, though since he was a solo artist, those were with HUNTR/X at his side to look after their hoobae or ‘junior’.

Ultimately though, there had eventually been a change of sorts online. People loved Soda Pop for the first week of course, and those who decried it were few and far inbetween. But by the time the second week dawned, it was like someone had flipped a switch. All of the sudden, there was this… discontentment among listeners that seemed to almost explode into the mainstream.

As silly as it might sound, Jinu had been rather pleased to read the comments deriding Soda Pop for being ‘shallow’ and ‘too generic’ and ‘beneath Sunlight Entertainment’s standards’. The more people he saw online claiming that he didn’t hold a candle to HUNTR/X, the happier he became.

Rumi and her girls, not so much. They didn’t appreciate people ‘shit-talking’ him as Zoey put it. Not one bit. Apparently, they even had ‘alt accounts’ that they were using to defend him since they weren’t allowed to use their official accounts in such a way.

In the end though, they couldn’t be too angry because they’d anticipated the haters coming out of the woodworks. It was all part of the plan.

… And then they dropped Your Idol this morning. And now, several hours later…

“So… they like it.”

Zoey’s words split the silence, causing Mira to snort in amusement.

“You think? Can’t blame them, can we? That music video is some of the best shit we’ve ever produced. And Jinu makes that ancient grim reaper shit look *good*.”

Rumi, staring at her phone, slowly nods.

“Yeah… I mean, yes. This was… all of this was intended. Totally.”

Mira snickers, Zoey giggles. Jinu just sighs.

“Maybe we should take the song down? It seems much too popular.”

All three girls look at him like he’s grown a second head.

“Take it- Jinu, no! Don’t be silly, there’s no taking it down anymore.”

“Yeah, this cat is thoroughly out of the bag at this point.”

“You’ve got a serious inferiority complex, don’t you buddy?”

Rumi and Zoey shoot Mira looks at that last comment, but Mira just shrugs, unrepentant as she gives Jinu a wicked smirk.

“Congratulations, you broke the internet Jinu.”

He would have blanched at that if Zoey hadn’t already explained what ‘breaking the internet’ was to him the other day. As it is though, even in the correct context, this was the last thing Jinu had wanted to happen.

“… Jinu…”

Suddenly, Rumi’s hand is on his cheek, gently turning his head so he’s facing her. Looking into his eyes, Rumi offers a soft smile.

“I’m really, really proud of you. This is amazing, do you hear me? You are amazing. Your music comes from the heart and even if they don’t know where you’ve been or what you’ve survived, people can feel it all the same. They can feel your soul calling out to them and resonating with them. And that’s beautiful.”

Jinu grimaces. On the one hand, he appreciates Rumi’s words. On the other hand…

“What if Your Idol surpasses Golden on those charts you girls are always talking about? I don’t want my success to come at your expense…”

There’s a pause and then Rumi lets out a light laugh as she glances back at her phone.

“With these numbers? And it’s not even been a full day yet? It’ll definitely surpass Golden in a week or two.”

“Yeah, no doubt.”

“Yep, for sure.”

Jinu wilts as Mira and Zoey both agree with Rumi’s consensus. Only for Rumi to chuckle.

“And that’s okay, Jinu. It won’t be forever, the charts are constantly going up and down. Just because Your Idol beats out Golden for a time, or maybe even permanently… it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t mean that your success is coming at our expense. We’re still HUNTR/X. We’re still making and putting out music. Jinu, it’s not a competition, at least not for us and you. Our songs, our voices, our art… it’s all about bringing people together. About bringing out the best in them by showing them the best of ourselves.”

Rumi places her free hand in Jinu's.

"Your Idol might be dark and raw, but it exposes the excesses of the industry in a way no one has ever really done before. It deserves this success, especially if it means not every idol trainee has to suffer like those in the past did. Your music might cause real change Jinu, and that's something you should be proud of."

Jinu sucks in a breath… and then lets it out, along with all of his fears. If Rumi is saying it, it must be true. He just has to keep telling himself that until he finally properly believes it. For now though, he forces a smile onto his face and raises an eyebrow.

"So then… what are they saying online about Your Idol?"

Just like with Soda Pop, the girls all exchange looks with one another. However, unlike with Soda Pop they don't start reading out comments to him. Instead, almost in unison, they shake their heads.

"Nope. Best not."

"Yeah, um, the public reaction is actually a LOT more horny than Soda Pop was."

"Lots of women (and men) talking about how they want to get down on their knees for you too."

Rumi groans and covers her face with her hands as Zoey and Mira definitely say more than she would have preferred them to. Jinu just grins, more amused by her reaction than he is bemused by the 'fan response'.

After all, they're all just people on the internet, it's not like he actually has to ever meet them face to face or anything…

Ding!

Suddenly, the elevator arrives up at the penthouse and Jinu blinks as he, along with the girls, all turn to see Bobby stepping off of it with his eyes glued to his phone.

"Jinu! Girls! These numbers are incredible! And they helped me finalize something I've been working on since we released Soda Pop too!"

Jinu raises an eyebrow, even as Bobby finally looks up with a big wide grin on his face.

"Three days from now, Jinu is having his first fan signing!"

… Oh. Oh dear.

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A/N: So my original intention for this chapter was to do a 'Social Media' chapter where it was stylized to look like a bunch of different users reacting and chatting about each song. I've read a couple of EXTREMELY entertaining 'Social Media' fics in the KPDH fandom so far and thought it'd be fun to try and do one myself.

And then I tried it and quickly realized just how much more work writing in a social media style is compared to just writing a normal scene/chapter. On top of that, I could not even begin to be bothered figuring out how to make the formatting work across NINE different posting mediums.

So yeah, this is what it came to instead, I hope people still enjoy it lol.

Shoot me a Comment or Like over on the Patreon or drop a message in the Discord if you're enjoying the story! Knowing you guys are liking this (and also what you're liking in particular) makes it all the more fun for me!