Writing

"There you are."

Minho stares at the sea as his brother approaches him, stepping carefully through the sand. Felix makes a small noise as he stumbles, giggling when he rights himself and closes the gap between them. "Why'd you disappear?"

Minho sighs as Felix wraps his fingers around his bicep, head turning slightly to glance at his brother. "Ah, I didn't mean to," he answers honestly, casting his eyes back out at the inky darkness of the ocean.

"Are you not having a good time?" Felix asks, tilting to rest his head on Minho's shoulder. "We can go home. Eomma's out with her friends but we can curl up on the couch and watch a movie."

Minho smiles, turning to press a kiss to the soft top of Felix's head. "It's alright, Yongbokkie. I'm sorry. We're here with your friends, let's go back to them."

Felix raises his head, brows stitching together as he purses his lips. "Hyung," he calls softly—tender, like Minho's fragile. He supposes he is, in this moment at least. "You don't have to apologize, not to me. I love you, and I want you to have a good time. If you aren't ready to have a good time, then we go home and we watch sad movies and cry."

Minho's mouth parts with a silent gasp, in awe. His kid brother, his aegi, is so wise now. Where did his sweet little baby go? The hyperactive child who screamed and chased him, who climbed all over Minho and cried when they separated, the freckled preteen who desperately begged for his hyung to come visit. Minho sees the ghost of him in Felix now, but he's all grown up, looking at Minho with sympathy and understanding.

He swallows, shaking his head slightly. "It's okay, aegi. I'm fine, for now at least." Minho wraps his arm around Felix's shoulder. "Come on, introduce me to more of your friends."

Felix stares at him scrutinously for a moment, and then his mouth stretches in a smile. "Come on, Chris is on his way. He barely makes it out anymore, so this is a big deal."

Minho lets himself be dragged through the sand, back toward the big bonfire at the end of the beach. Felix yaps away about this Chris guy. Minho has heard the name before, knows that Felix and Chris have been friends for years—Minho remembers a story about how they met, how Chris had been the lifeguard who rescued Felix after he got caught in a riptide as a teenager. He also remembers the jealousy he'd felt as Felix had gushed about Chris over the phone a few days later, telling Minho how awesome and cool his new friend was. Chris was a few years older than Felix, treating him more like a brother than just a friend. He looked out for Felix, took him under his wing. Minho knew Chris was the friend Felix called to help him move in and out of his uni dorm, the friend who taught him how to drive.

All while Minho was 8,000 kilometers away in Korea.

"Chris!" Felix shouts as they step into the glow of the fire, passing some of the other people gathered in camping chairs and on blankets. Felix tugs Minho a little harder, more enthusiastically, toward the other side of the large fire pit. Someone's all-terrain Jeep is parked in the sand, its back end aimed at the fire and two big coolers propped in the open cargo area. A guy with broad shoulders and an insanely fat ass stands at the edge of the Jeep, arm snaked into a cooler as he pulls out two cans of beer. There's a Chrome Hearts snapback on his head, brim spun around to lay over his neck. He turns when Felix calls out again, and his face is devastatingly beautiful, even before it splits in a dimpled grin.

Minho wants to throw up, all of a sudden. He can't help but feel a little trepidatious about meeting his replacement, yes, but what's worse is that he's gorgeous. Felix lets go of Minho's hand, bounding across the sand to leap at Chris, tossing his arms around the man's neck as he squeals. Chris sets the beers down as he laughs, wrapping his arms around Felix to return the hug with a gentle sway side to side.

"Lix!" he says, in the same accented English that Minho hears his mum and brother speak. "Oi cuz, I haven't seen you in ages!"

Felix laughs, slipping out of Chris' arms as his feet touch the sand again. He steps back far enough to punch Chris' shoulder, hard enough to make him wince. "Whose fault is that, cunt?" Felix shoves his fingers into Chris' stomach, making him grunt. "Got a fancy job and now you're too good to spend any time with me?"

Chris grabs his wrist, pulls Felix closer and wraps his arms around Felix like a vice. "Ah, I'm sorry mate. I swear, I didn't mean to. I'm still struggling with work-life balance."

Felix manages to wriggle free, knocking his hand against Chris' arm again. "Whatever, I'm just messin' with ya. I knew your workaholic ass would disappear." Felix turns then, reaching out for Minho, waving him forward. "Anyway, meet my brother. Hyung, come here."

Minho shuffles forward, flicking his eyes over to Chris. Chris' face lights up in recognition, his mouth opening as he takes a step closer. "Minho? Oh my god, I've heard so many things about you. Lix talks about you all the time!"

Lix.

Minho holds his hand out, reaching for Chris' already extended one. "Nice to meet you," Minho says in English, the words feeling foreign and heavy.

Chris' smile gets impossibly wider as he takes Minho's hand, shaking it. "I didn't know you were coming, Felix didn't tell me. I would have tried to take time off of work."

"It was an impromptu trip," Minho says stiffly, his eyes darting away as he drops Chris' hand. Chris trails off, and when Minho glances up, he sees the look the man sends Felix, brows knit and lips pursed.

"Minho needed to get away from Seoul for a bit," Felix offers, turning to look back at Minho. The smile he sends him is blinding, warming Minho's frigid heart. "So he decided to come visit his favorite little brother."

Minho rolls his eyes, grinning despite himself. "You're my only little brother, Yongbok-ah," he murmurs in Korean, pressing his lips together to fight a laugh when it only makes Felix giggle.

"Exactly! But we both know I'd be your favorite, even if you had six little brothers."

And, well, Minho can't argue with that.

Chris leads them over to an empty blanket, a beautiful woven fabric in colors so bright that Minho gets a little distracted when they sit down. He toes his shoes off at the edge, then he runs his fingers over the intricate pattern in the weave. Felix loops him into a conversation, recapturing his attention, but Minho still trails his fingertips along one looping design as they talk.

It reminds him of the rug in his apartment. The same rug he'd stared down at while Yunho had packed up his things, had divided their life together into *Minho's things* and *Yunho's things,* graciously offering to let Minho keep the furniture they'd purchased together—that they'd invested in together. Furniture for their first *home.*

"So, Minho," Chris says, handing him the second beer. "How are you enjoying Australia so far?" It comes out so heavily accented that Minho blinks. *'straya.* Minho rolls it around his mouth, itching to repeat it, to try it on for size.

Instead, he ducks his head. "It's okay. Warmer than I expected."

Chris' eyes crinkle with his smile. "Ah, yeah. It's winter in Korea, right?" Minho nods, and Chris takes a sip of his beer. "I was born there, in Seoul. I haven't been back in ages, though."

Minho processes that.

Felix had been born in Sydney. Their parents were on their first trial separation, and eomma had flown home to visit family. Felix came early, and Minho remembers how often eomma and appa argued about it—Felix's Australian nationality, appa missing the birth, eomma's hesitance to call him.

Not for the first time, Minho wonders if he'd allowed himself to believe he was in love with Yunho because he didn't exactly know what romantic love should look like, having not grown up in its warmth.

"Aren't you going for Christmas?" Felix questions, and Chris makes a face.

"Yeah, nah. My sister's stuck in LA so my mum and dad are going to fly to the States instead. I was able to get my original flight refunded, but," he shrugs, taking another sip from his can. "I dunno, I didn't want to deal with the jetlag for just a couple of days. Didn't seem worth it."

Minho spaces out a little bit as Felix and Chris talk a bit more about Christmas plans. A pretty girl with light brown hair wanders over to hug Chris from behind, introducing herself to Minho as Lily, Chris' cousin. Lily sits with them for a while, until another girl calls out for her and begs her to dance in the warmth of the fire. Lily scrambles up, laughter trailing as she races over to her friend, allowing herself to be led to the center. Minho watches the two girls dance to the music playing low from someone's portable speaker on the far side of the fire, a smile on his face despite himself.

"Do you dance?" Chris asks, bumping his shoulder into Minho's. "We could, if you wanted."

"Ah," Minho's cheeks warm, unrelated to the fire or the effect of the beer. He shakes his head. "No, thank you."

"Come on," Chris pushes. Then he switches tactics. "I would like to dance, would you join me?" he tries, in perfectly pronounced Korean.

Minho can't help the way his mouth drops open, eyes darting down to Chris' mouth when it spreads in a grin. "You... speak Korean?"

"I told you I was born there," Chris laughs, setting his can down in the sand behind them. "My family speaks both languages at home."

Minho glances back up, tracking the way Chris' brows raise expectantly. "Oh, I... yeah, that makes sense."

"You never answered my question, Minho-yah," Chris says, tilting his head forward mischievously. "Will you dance with me?"

"Hyung's a great dancer," Felix chimes in, suddenly paying attention after a brief interlude on his phone, giggling down at the screen. "He's been dancing since he was a kid, right hyung?"

Scowling at his brother, Minho sighs. "I haven't– I haven't danced in a while," he says quietly. Felix has the decency to look apologetic, picking up on the meaning behind Minho's words.

Yunho had been his dance partner for years. Their friendship evolved into something more between dance practices and competitions during their university days. After graduation, they'd taken the leap to move in together, giggling and kissing each other as they'd tumbled through the door after getting their keys.

Now, one of those keys sits on the kitchen counter, burning a hole in the quartz surface that Yunho had liked so much.

"So you might be rusty," Chris shrugs, shifting to his knees, pushing up to his feet. "That's okay. I'm probably rusty, too." He holds his hand out toward Minho, wiggling his fingers imploringly.

Minho glances over at Felix, who smiles encouragingly and nods. “Go, hyung, have some fun with Chris. I’m gonna find Jake.” He shoves himself up before Minho can protest, darting out over the sand toward a group of guys talking closer to the water line.

Minho stares up at Chris, squinting slightly. What’s the harm in a dance? His hand slides into Chris’, chilled by the breeze coming off the waves without the sun present. Chris helps him to his feet, his other hand gripping Minho’s elbow as he stumbles slightly, one foot planting backward in the sand. “Fuckin’ sand,” Minho grumbles under his breath, ignoring the little giggle from Chris.

The music is just some generic pop, probably Dua Lipa or some other western artist that Minho likes well enough but can’t recognize by face. Chris wraps slides their fingers together to walk the three meters into the circle, still pulling Minho along as he turns toward him. Minho makes a face, a near grimace when someone behind him shouts loudly, and Chris releases his hand to step closer, arm extending over Minho’s shoulder to push at someone.

“Oi, mate,” Chris says in English, face drawn tight as he speaks. “Be mindful of who’s around you, yeah?”

The other guy mumbles an apology, and Chris nods his head before turning it toward Minho, a warm smile spreading immediately. He pulls his arm back, sliding his fingers over his head to readjust his hat. Some of his hair sticks out from the edge, choppy little bangs that emphasize Chris’ big beautiful nose.

“Sorry about that,” Chris tells Minho, back to using Korean for Minho’s comfort. It makes him smile at the realization. “Some of these people lose their manners when they drink.”

Minho shakes his head. “It’s okay, Chris,” he says, his hips swaying involuntarily to the music.

“Chan,” Chris says, which makes Minho pause his movements to blink at him. “My name– you can call me Chan, it’s my Korean name. Might be easier for you.”

Minho flushes, but he doesn’t answer, hiding his shy smile when he turns halfway in time with the beat, picking up the dance rhythm he’d abandoned. Chris laughs at him, but when Minho glances over his shoulder, Chris is shaking his head with a smile on his face—fond, if such a thing could be true so early in their friendship. It makes Minho smile wider, pressing his lips together to hide it as he shuffles his feet in the sand, rocking and swaying along to the music.

He doesn’t pay attention to it as it happens, but eight or so songs later, Chris is pressed to his back in the crowd that has gathered around the fire. They aren’t very close to the flame—still a couple meters away—but between the dancing, Chris’ proximity, and the ambient warmth from the fire—Minho’s sweating.

Turning around to face Chris, Minho blinks in surprise. Chris is just so fucking pretty, his eyes closed, lashes fanned out over his cheeks. His lower lip is caught between his teeth as he swivels

his hips. Minho stops moving entirely, staring at the other man for a few seconds, until he's caught red-handed when Chris finally blinks his eyes open.

One eyebrow raises, the corner of Chris' mouth quirking upward ever so slightly as Minho clears his throat loudly over the music.

"I need a drink," Minho all but shouts, turning to push past a few people. He feels more than hears Chris follow him out of the crowd as they make their way back to the Jeep. Felix isn't at the blanket, so Minho scans their surroundings. "Do you see Lixie-yah?"

Chris' brow scrunches into a near scowl as he looks around. His face smooths out just before he says, "Over there." He lifts an arm to turn Minho by his shoulder, pointing toward the water. "Looks like he's– oh. Well, now he's *kissing* Noah."

Minho's eyes roll involuntarily at the same moment his lip curls away from his teeth. "Yah, Yongbokkie," he mumbles. Chris snorts, placing his hand on Minho's back.

"You wanted a drink, right?" He steps closer to the Jeep. "What are you in the mood for? Alcohol? Tea? Something fizzy?"

Minho waddles behind him, trying to peer into the cooler that Chris holds open. "There's soju in there?" he asks in disbelief, reaching for the bottle. It's plain soju, but there's some other familiar drinks inside the cooler, including a few Pocari Sweats. Minho grabs one of those as well.

"I stopped at Komart on my way here," Chris answers with a shrug. He reaches for a carton of juice, twisting the top off before the cooler closes all the way.

Minho blinks at him again. "This was you?" he asks, gesturing at the coolers with the hand still holding the soju. The Pocari Sweat rests on the hard plastic fender above the back wheel. "You brought all this?"

Chris takes a big swig of his juice—pineapple, from the little image on the front. "Yeah. To make up for my absence lately, I guess." He chuckles, almost a little self-deprecating.

Minho spins the soju bottle at the top, flipping it over to untwist the cap as he turns it right side up. Chris watches him, tracks the bottle in his hands and then up to his mouth when Minho takes a sip. "Don't be so hard on yourself," he says once he's swallowed it down. It's the Good Day brand, so it's not as smooth as his preferred Jinro, but it's a taste of home that Minho hadn't been expecting. "Life happens, Channie."

Chris smiles at him, turning to rest against the side of the Jeep. "You're different than I expected," he says a minute later, after Minho has taken a few more sips of the soju.

"Better or worse?" Minho asks.

Chris shakes his head. "Just different." He looks over at where Felix is still standing with his other friends, no longer attached at the mouth to one of them. A delighted laugh floats over from the

group, and then Felix darts away, being chased by one of the guys. “You know, Felix talks about you all the time. I could never tell what was your real personality and what was just Lix’s genuine happiness and enthusiasm about everything in life.”

Minho bites back a laugh. “Are you saying that I’m not as cheerful as my brother made me out to be?” he asks, unable to hide the amusement in his tone. Chris groans, dropping his face into his free hand, which does succeed in making Minho loose his laughter.

“Aish, I meant– Yah!” Chris nudges at his shoulder when Minho laughs harder. “I meant I didn’t know what to expect. I think maybe I was worried you wouldn’t like me.”

Minho’s laughter dies off, and he chews on his bottom lip as he contemplates his response. “You know, I was nervous to meet you.”

“What?” Chris twists, angling his body toward Minho. “Why me?”

“Because you’re the hyung I couldn’t be.”

Chris balks at him. *“Minho–”*

He waves his hand in the air. “It’s fine. I could have made the effort to be here. Or asked him to go there.” Minho takes a pause, grateful when Chris doesn’t immediately try to dispute his words. “I was always just worried that he wouldn’t need me because he had you.”

At this, Chris sucks his teeth, stepping closer. His hand reaches for Minho’s elbow. “Minho. It’s not– It’s not a competition.”

“I know,” Minho replies quietly.

“Do you? You seem awfully upset about this.”

“My engagement failed.”

Chris straightens, blinking. “What? Min–”

“My fiance, he… he ended things. Last week.” Minho swallows, looks back out toward the water. The next sip of soju burns his throat, burns the tears out of his eyes before they can fully form. “Calmly sat me down and explained that he wasn’t in love with me, no matter how hard he tried. Packed up his clothes and left our apartment without a look back.”

“Oh my god,” Chris sighs, stepping closer, reaching out for Minho tentatively. “That’s horrible, I’m sorry, Minho-yah.”

He lets Chris bundle him up in a hug, despite the way his arms hang limply at his side. He’s always been shit at accepting affection, except from Felix. “I’m sorry, I’m bringing the mood down,” Minho says instead.

"Fuck the mood," Chris replies immediately. "I'm glad you told me. Otherwise, I would have kept flirting with you like an asshole."

Minho can't help it. He laughs—a full on, belly aching laugh. His body curls over with the force of it, bending nearly in half when Chris' arms fall away. Tears form in the corners of his eyes, squeezed out by how tightly his face scrunches up in mirth. When he thinks the laughter subsides, it picks up again and he falls into the sand onto his ass.

Chris drops down to his knees in front of Minho, a wry grin on his face as Minho's laughter finally dies out.

"Oh my god," Minho sighs, letting his head fall backward against the side of the Jeep with a soft thunk. "You've been flirting with me?"

"For my pride, I'm going to ignore that question," Chris groans, pressing his lips together to hide his smile, and Minho grins up at him, shaking his head slowly.

He sighs, closing his eyes. "I think this is the first time I've laughed since– since it happened."

Chris shifts, so Minho's eyes open just enough to watch as he moves to sit beside Minho, his back pressed against the oversized tire of the Jeep. "Tell me about it," he says softly. "Come on, you clearly need to talk about it," Chris adds when Minho tries to decline the offer.

"It's–" Minho sighs, turning his head to look at Chris. "Have you ever been in love?"

Chris' brow furrows. "Mm, I don't think so. I dated a girl in uni for about a year, a couple of relationships here and there before that, but nothing really serious." He sighs. "I think maybe I could have fallen for my ex-boyfriend, but he moved to Perth for a job."

"Too far?" Minho questions, and Chris barks out a laugh.

"Opposite side of this country, so yeah." Minho's mouth rounds into an O then purses together as Chris makes a noise. "It's alright, it'll happen for me eventually. Tell me about yours, though."

Minho lets his head roll back until it hits the Jeep, staring up at the sky. He can see the stars so clearly here, even with the glow of the bonfire. He finds Orion, tracks a couple of other constellations that he can't remember the names of, mustering the courage to open up to this near-stranger.

Not a stranger, he reminds himself. Felix's best friend.

"Yunho is a few months younger than me, but we met in our first year of uni on the dance team. I had already been a dancer for years, and he was fairly experienced, too. We became unit leaders together, each responsible for a team of eight. The captain of the entire squad praised us and eventually had us enter competitions as a duo as well." Minho rubs at his face. "It was easy to fall into bed together, and after graduation, we started dating for real. We were compatible in so

many ways, both of us relying on each other and alternating who took care of who. It was comfortable."

Chris rests his hand on Minho's knee—a show of support.

Minho continues. "I proposed in April, a couple of weeks after his birthday. It seemed like the right thing to do. I mean, by that point, we'd been officially dating for over three years, we were both 26, we already had a beautiful apartment—marriage seemed like the next step. I should have seen the signs, though." He runs a hand through his hair. "Yunho was… surprised by the proposal. He accepted, but after a couple months when I asked about planning the wedding, he would dodge the question."

"Oh, no," Chris murmurs.

"He– he worked for a production company, advertisers and the like. He got really busy, started coming home later, finding excuses not to be home on days off. Our sex life basically disappeared, and he blamed it on this big project at work. My friends noticed he was missing a lot of events, he was late to my birthday dinner—it was just a lot of little things. So, I confronted him." Minho stops, takes a deep breath. His eyes burn, but he blinks rapidly until the sensation passes.

Chris squeezes his hand around Minho's knee.

"He broke down—said he felt awful, that he should never have accepted the ring. He loved me, but he wasn't *in love* with me."

"Minho," Chris says, voice laced with sympathy. He shifts, moving to pull Minho into a sideways hug. "I'm so sorry."

"I thought we were going to be together forever," Minho whispers. "But he was never in love with me. It was– it was all a lie."

"Shh, it's okay, Minho-yah," Chris soothes, one hand rubbing down Minho's back as the other cradles his head, tucking it into the crease of his neck. The skin there is wet, and Minho has a split second to feel grossed out before he realizes it's coming from *him.* His stupid eyes betrayed him, leaking all of his weakness out to smear against Felix's pretty best friend. Minho tries to push away, but Chris wraps his arms tighter. "It's okay, just let it out, mate," Chris murmurs again, in English.

Minho breaks.

Hazy images of his life over the past six years of his relationship with Yunho flood his mind, plus two years of build up, of shared time together. His chest clenches as he looks back on it with new eyes, under the lens of wisdom—knowing that Yunho hadn't been as invested as he was.

"I thought—hyung, I thought we were having fun," Yunho had whispered up at him from where he'd crumpled to the floor, eyes watery and remorseful. *"I don't– marriage? We're so young, and. God, Minho, I'm* so *sorry."*

His pity party lasts an embarrassingly long time, tucked into Chris' arms like that. Chris doesn't complain once, just rubs his hand up and down Minho's spine steadily. It's nice, Minho thinks, to be held so gently. Chris keeps his other hand on Minho's neck, thumb rubbing soothing circles into the taut muscle there, and eventually the tears subside. He lets himself exhale deeply, slumping further into the comforting warmth of the man below him.

Chris' skin is soft, radiating a gentle heat purely from their proximity instead of a lingering effect of the sun that had set beyond the city hours ago. It lulls Minho into a serene state, his eyes drifting closed as his breathing levels out.

He's vaguely aware of his brother's voice when it floats over.

"Is he okay?" Felix asks quietly, in all English.

"Just exhausted, probably," Chris answers, still rubbing Minho's back. "He told me about Yunho."

"Oh." Felix sighs. "God, that must have been awful for him to relive. I don't think I've even heard everything. I just got a frantic call last week and begged him to fly here."

"I feel awful for him."

"Yeah. He'll be okay though," Felix says, "hyung's always been strong."

There's a moment of silence , and then Chris is speaking again. "What's up with the face, Lix?"

"Noah,"Felix trails off, hesitating. "He asked me to go home with him."

"Go," Chris encourages. He pulls Minho a little closer. "I can get Minho back to your apartment."

"Really? You don't think he'd be mad for ditching him?"

At this, Minho lifts his head blearily. "Go have fun, Bokkie."

"Hyung!" Felix stumbles closer. "Were you *crying*?"

"Yah!" Minho shoves his hand away before Felix can touch his cheek. "No, you brat. Go have fun with your boy toy and don't worry about hyung." It takes a couple of minutes of coaxing, but eventually Felix leans forward to kiss Minho's cheek sneakily and then darts off toward the group of friends he was with earlier.

Minho turns to Chris, noticing for the first time their position—his knees tucked on either side of Chris, who sits against the Jeep with Minho firmly in his lap.

He clears his throat, attempting to leave Chris' lap now that there are no hands holding him in place, but Chris grabs at his hips to stop him from leaving. "Um–"

"Do you want to get out of here?" Chris suddenly blurts. "There's a place I know that has banging kimchi fried rice."

Minho exhales in relief at the idea of something familiar. "Absolutely, yes." Chris' answering grin is blinding, seared into his eyes even as Minho scrambles to his feet and lets Chris usher him into the passenger seat of the Jeep.

Chris drags the coolers over to the fire, then closes the back gate of the Jeep and climbs into his own seat. "Okay, you ready?"

Minho glances at the side mirror. "What about your coolers?"

"Ah, my buddy's gonna bring them to me tomorrow, no worries." Chris starts the Jeep, putting it in gear to crawl slowly across the sand toward the street.

Fifteen minutes later, Minho is sitting across from Chris at a small Korean restaurant with actual hangul on the menu. Minho has to admit, he does feel better, just seeing the decor and smelling the sesame oil and gochugaru in the air. Chris suggests soondubu jjigae, so they split an order of that plus the kimchi fried rice and a plate of bulgogi.

Mercifully, Chris fills the silence, telling Minho about his job—he's a sound engineer for an event company—and his family.

"I know so much about you because of Felix," Chris says with a wry smile. "It's only fair to tell you about me."

Minho has to admit that he's impressed. Chris is every bit as kind and fun as Felix always said. Plus, he's so handsome, even when his face turns red as he eats, glistening with sweat and embarrassment when he admits, "uh, I'm not the best with spicy food."

"Chan-ah, why did you let me order it so spicy?" Minho chastises, waving the waitress over to order some milk.

"I didn't want to inconvenience you!"

"You're inconveniencing me right now," Minho grumbles, the corner of his mouth lifting as he suppresses the smile that tries to fight its way free when Chris frowns. "It's a good thing you're pretty."

Chris flushes redder than before.

Minho pays at the counter while Chris is in the bathroom, which causes him to whine adorably at Minho when he realizes. "*Yah!* Minho, I'm the hyung!"

“Buy Yongbokkie a meal, then. Consider this my way of saying thank you,” Minho says as they walk out of the restaurant.

“Thanks for what?”

Minho shrugs, letting Chris open the Jeep’s door for him. He climbs up into the seat, turning back to look at Chris when he finally answers, “everything.”

The drive to Felix’s apartment takes another fifteen minutes, and Minho spends most of that time looking at Chris. The streetlights cast a bluish hue over his face through the front window, and Minho finds himself drawn to the shape of Chris’ lips. What would it be like to kiss him? It’s been so long since Minho kissed someone for the first time. Does he even remember how to kiss someone that isn’t Yunho? How to discover what someone likes, to decipher their moans and mewls and gasping breaths as indications of pleasure?

He thinks he’d like to remember.

Chris turns, catches him looking. The flush over his cheeks barely shows in the glow of the red light they are stopped at, but Chris winks at him despite it, and Minho’s mouth stretches in a grin. They share a laugh, a comfortable little giggle that speaks of anticipatory glee. Minho doesn’t know if Chris is quite on the same page yet, so he reaches over to where Chris’ hand rests on the center console and trails one of his fingers over it. Chris’ knuckles are knobbed, fingers thin and long compared to Minho’s own. The touch elicits a soft gasp from Chris, and the hand underneath Minho’s shifts, flipping over. It allows Minho to trail his fingertips along the inside of it, watching Chris’ hand twitch with every drag. He draws a figure eight on the proffered palm, humming as Chris closes his hand to catch Minho’s.

When Minho glances up, Chris’ eyes are on him, dark and intense, for just a split second before he looks away to pull into the apartment complex’s parking lot.

Chris has a key to Felix’s place, looped onto his keychain right beside his own house key and the big fob for the Jeep. It’s pitch black inside when they enter, but Chris finds the light switch easily, and Minho closes the door behind them as they step out of their shoes.

It takes no effort, really, to crowd Chris against the wall to press their mouths together—comical, almost, how all those muscles don’t make it any more difficult to move Chris around to his liking. He goes willingly, as if Chris could never deny Minho anything. He wonders briefly if it’s exclusive to him, to Felix, too, or if all of Chris’ friends have this much power over him.

Chris’ lips are decadently soft, pillowing against Minho’s. He makes a small noise of surprise but melts into the touch, his hands once more finding Minho’s waist. It’s only when Minho’s tongue slips past his lips to beg entrance into Chris’ mouth that he meets resistance.

“Minho, wait–” Chris tries, but Minho swallows it down, stepping closer. Chris moans, lewd and undeniable, before shoving Minho back. *“Minho.* This– you… are you sure? It’s not too soon?”

“Chan-ah,” Minho murmurs against his mouth, “I haven’t had sex in almost six months. No, it’s not too soon.”

“Six mon– God, Minho,” Chris gasps as he pulls back. “I don’t–”

“Hyung, *please,*” Minho practically begs, his hands fisted in the soft cotton of Chris’ shirt. “I want to. I want *you.*”

Chris’ grip on his waist tightens with his groan, head dropping backward to thunk noisily against the door. “Minho,” he hisses when Minho leans forward to press his lips to the jut of his jaw. He feels Chris’ fingers splay wider on his hips but make no real attempt to stop him, so he continues mouthing at the warm skin. Minho drags his teeth over the edge of Chris’ jaw, tongue darting out to lick against the vein in his neck.

“Please?” he murmurs, one of his hands moving to cradle the side of Chris’ head, “I’ll be so good for you. I’ll even let you top.” Minho watches Chris’ brows furrow in confusion, not bothering to hide the teasing smirk of his little joke when Chris’ eyes find his.

Chris moans, lifting his head from the door and seeking Minho’s mouth for a frantic kiss. “I don’t want to hurt you, Minho-yah,” he says when they part.

Minho snorts. “I’ve bottomed before, Channie,” he snarks back. “What, is your dick massive or something?”

“That’s not what I meant,” Chris answers with a put-upon sigh. “I don’t want to do something you aren’t ready for yet.”

“You won’t,” Minho answers, pulling out of Chris’ hold as he steps backward—toward the spare bedroom he’s staying in. “You’ll help me remember what it feels like to be touched, to be wanted.” He takes slow, deliberate steps, still facing Chris.

Chris, who follows him immediately.

Minho’s lips curl as he finally turns, spinning on the ball of his foot to head for his borrowed room, confident that Chris is still hot on his heels.

The bed is still unmade from earlier—he’d taken a nap after his early arrival, and Felix had hurried him first out of bed and then the apartment to go to the bonfire. Minho shoves the covers aside, determined not to defile Felix’s decorative duvet as he slinks down onto the exposed sheets. Chris shuts the door, closing them into the cozy little guest room.

“Come on, Channie,” Minho purrs, laying back into the sheets as Chris approaches. His arms spread out, arching upward to press the back of his palms to the sides of his face as he gives Chris a coy little grin. His eyes flutter closed when Chris’ leg slots between his knees, hands trailing up Minho’s thighs slowly.

“You’re gorgeous,” Chris says, sotto voce. Minho opens his eyes to look up at him where he leans over the bed, his necklace slipping free from his shirt’s neckline to dangle freely. Reaching a hand

up, Minho curls his fingers around the pendant—a stylized cross—and uses it to tug Chris down. Chris yelps in surprise, reacting quickly to catch himself on his elbows and avoid flattening Minho—which is exactly opposite of what Minho wants.

“You won’t break me, hyung,” Minho croons, lifting his head up to curl the other hand around Chris’ nape, pulling their faces together for a searing kiss.

He’s pleasantly surprised, he realizes, that kissing Chris is so natural. There’s no awkwardness, no hesitation between them. The push and pull is balanced—when Minho takes, Chris gives; whatever Minho gives, Chris takes without question. Their clothes peel away easily, and the press of Chris’ fingers against Minho’s rim is just as effortless. With no lube at their disposal—and a reluctance to raid Felix’s room—Chris moves slowly, only adding a finger after he’s drawn back to drop a line of spit into his palm and coats his middle one, coaxing it into Minho gently.

“Remember when I said I won’t break?” Minho reminds him, circling his hips as much as he can, pinned down as he is. Chris’ broad frame covers him almost entirely, despite their imperceptible difference in size, and Minho basks in feeling small, if only briefly.

“Needy,” Chris says, but the smile on his face betrays any irritation in his statement. Minho luxuriates in it, wiggles into the downy cotton sheets, nearly mewling when Chris grazes his prostate. “How do you like it? Do you want to cum first before I fuck you?”

Minho shakes his head. “Inside. Please, want to cum on your cock.”

“Jesus,” Chris mutters, his head falling down to smack into Minho’s chest, the slap of skin loud in the room. Minho is confident in his body, feels great despite the subtle ache in his joints in the mornings from spending over half his life dancing, and he knows he looks good.

But, God.

Chris’ body is unreal. He looks like one of those European statues that Hyunjin studied in university, chiseled from stone under Minho’s fingertips. The muscles clench below velvet skin as Minho trails down to the elastic at Chris’ waist—the only thing separating him from his prize. He bites back a snort at the brand—a fuck-boy brand worldwide that is so at odds with everything else about Chris.

Minho curls his fingers into the elastic, dipping below to graze the warm skin over Chris’ pubic bone. He meets no resistance, which is a pleasant surprise. Minho has never personally cared about body hair one way or another, but he can appreciate the dedication to hygiene rituals that remaining *this* smooth requires.

Chris adds a third finger, pushing in more insistently once Minho brushes over the base of his cock. It’s a bad angle, but when Minho’s fingers finally wrap around the width of him, Chris hisses.

Minho gasps despite himself. Chris is *thick.* His fingers barely touch, let alone overlap. Chris pulses in his hand, groaning into Minho’s sternum. “Minho, *fuck,*” he swears in English, which makes Minho giggle.

“Flip over,” Minho says. “I wanna get my mouth on you.”

“I don’t need–”

Minho shoves Chris’ shoulder. “Fuck you, it’s for me,” he squeezes his hand, sliding up the length of Chris’ dick as much as their position will allow. “I’ve never gotten to suck a cock this fat, first of all.”

Chris nearly chokes, his fingers twitching inside Minho. *“Hnff–”*

“And…” Minho sing-songs, “since we don’t have lube, I can get you nice and wet before you try to stuff this monster inside me.”

Chris doesn’t attempt to argue again. Instead, he slowly pulls his hand free from between Minho’s thighs, standing upright to assist Minho in shoving off his boxer briefs. Minho watches with covetous eyes as Chris’ cock is revealed. He’s curved slightly to Minho’s left, the shaft a pretty pink over several visible veins, with a ruddy red head already dripping in anticipation.

Minho’s mouth waters.

Chris’ underwear has barely hit the floor before Minho leans forward to grab hold of him again, dipping down to wrap his mouth around the head as his fingers grip the base. Chris stutters out his name, music to his ears as two syllables become three, four, *five.*

“Hah, Minh-*oh,* oh, ah– *fuck,”* Chris pants, one of his hands threading into Minho’s hair. Minho hums back, angling so he can look up under his lashes at Chris, a move he knows makes men weak. The Lee Minho signature—making himself look sweet and innocent before he blows their mind.

Well. He hasn’t done that in years at this point, but he’s starting to remember that it’s possible.

Minho bobs his head, holding Chris’ gaze until the tip of his cock touches the back of his throat. It chokes off his air, and Minho’s blood thrums in his veins. He hasn’t had to deep throat like this in ages, since his ex was average in girth, if not just a little on the long side. Minho can’t help the way his eyes roll backward, involuntary and immediate, at the sudden intrusion as he forces himself down farther, filling his throat with the fat head of Chris’ massive dick.

“Holy shi–” Chris cuts himself off, biting into his free hand as Minho attempts to swallow. Then the hand in his hair is tugging, painfully hard, yanking Minho off of Chris entirely. He gasps for air, surprised at the sudden speed at which he can inhale through his still-open mouth, and promptly chokes, spluttering the excess saliva as he coughs.

“What the fuck, hyung?” he rasps, staring up at a red-faced Chris.

“I was– Minho, *what?* How–” Chris shakes his head, a shrill laugh escaping him before he exhales forcefully. “I almost nutted like… immediately.”

Minho smirks in realization. “Oh, I’ve still got it.” He laughs when Chris glares at him, but the laugh is cut off when Chris lets go of his hair to reach for his thighs. Minho yelps as he’s tossed deeper onto the bed, landing in the center of it as Chris climbs on top of him.

“Is it a Lee family trait to be absolute brats?” Chris asks as he settles onto his elbows, slotting perfectly between Minho’s thighs.

“Yes, actually,” Minho sniffs back, nose held high. “You should meet our older brother, Minhyuk.”

Chris dips his head down to bite at the skin over Minho’s shoulder. “No thanks, two Lees are enough for me.”

Minho giggles, winding his arms up around Chris’ neck. He puckers his lips beseechingly, and Chris obliges, kissing him sweetly. Minho thinks he could get used to this, sighing as he melts into the sheets once more.

Unprompted, Chris reaches for Minho’s thigh, hitching it up over his own hip as he blindly guides his cock to Minho’s ass. Without removing his mouth from Minho’s, Chris manages to notch right against his rim, and then he pauses, rubbing over the skin of Minho’s thigh.

“Please, hyung,” Minho whispers into his mouth, playing with the hair tickling his nape under the brim of the hat. *Why is Chris still wearing it?* He shakes his head, refocusing. “Come on, Channie, make me feel good.”

Chris pushes in slowly, breaching Minho at a torturous pace. Minho’s head bows back, baring his neck as he’s stretched by the width of Chris’ fat cock. Suddenly, he understands why Hyunjin is a size queen—Minho feels like he’s being broken apart and made anew, molded to fit Chris into the deepest part of himself.

Chris seems to fare no better, a staccato of groaning moans against Minho’s throat as he makes himself fit, spearing into Minho at an agonizingly cautious pace. It feels like it takes him an hour to bottom out, but then his hips meet Minho’s ass and Chris pauses, letting out a sharp exhale.

“What the fuck,” Chris mumbles, using one hand to reposition his hat on his sweaty forehead. Minho pets a hand over his head absentmindedly, still focused on how he feels split open, cleaved apart.

“Mmm,” he answers intelligently, eyes fluttering shut as he basks in the way his body rearranges and reorients itself. “Good, s’good, hyung.”

Chris huffs against the damp skin of his throat. Minho is sweating too, something he doesn’t often do. Probably from the exertion, the effort his body is making to adapt. “Yeah?” Chris asks gently, pressing his lips under Minho’s jaw. “Is that all it takes to shut you up? Just gotta feed you my cock and you’ll curl up like the cat that got the cream?”

Minho moans, his own dick twitching where it’s trapped against Chris’ stomach. Truthfully, he’d forgotten about it until this very moment, but Chris shifts to drag his mouth down Minho’s throat, and Minho feels his cock rut against the ridges of Chris’ abs. *“Fuck,”* he mewls.

Chris laughs breathlessly, nipping at Minho's skin with his teeth. "Yeah? My little kitten, hmm?"

And really—that *shouldn't* work for Minho. But it *does,* his eyes rolling back as his hips buck involuntarily. Chris laughs again, a soft little giggle that charms Minho more than it should as he opens his eyes to find Chris above him, face scrunched up with joy. "Channie," Minho moans, swiveling his hips, gasping when it makes Chris' cock press deliciously against his prostate. "Hyung. Come on, fuck me. Please?"

Chris slowly pulls his hips back, and a hollow ache follows. Before Minho can focus on it, Chris pistons back in firmly, punching a moan right out of his chest. Chris does it again, every thrust eliciting a verbal reaction from Minho that surprises him—he's always been relatively quiet during sex.

Is this what he's been missing? Sex so sensational that he feels torn asunder? Chris sets a steady pace, firm but gentle, cradling Minho's shoulders as he continues to mouth at Minho's neck. He's going to look *wrecked* tomorrow, sure to be covered in mottled marks from Chris' wandering mouth.

Minho's thigh slips off of Chris' hip, so Chris pauses, readjusting his knees, tucking them up to bracket Minho's hips, and then he sits up. His arms slip under Minho's knees for his hands to curl around the tops of Minho's thighs, pulling him onto his cock with a rough thrust.

Minho shouts. Chris flexes back, then does it again, pulling Minho down as he plows forward. Minho sees stars, grateful Felix isn't home to overhear them as he cries out, all but screaming Chris' name.

"Chris, fuck! Oh– Chan-ah, *god."* Minho's babbling, he knows this, but he can't stop himself. His eyes have rolled back, hands scrabbling on the sheets as he gasps. "Channie, *hyung,* I'm–"

It happens so suddenly. Chris slams into him with a moan of his own, choking out Minho's name, and then Minho is cumming. His vision tunnels, fading from black to white and then technicolor within his own eyelids, and his breath catches in his chest. His poor, neglected dick empties in a pathetic and shaky explosion of white along his own abdomen, dripping down to pool in his belly button from the arch of his back off of the bed.

Chris fucks him through it, although marginally slower. Minho sinks back to the sheets, blinking his eyes open to look up at him, noting the concerned tilt to Chris' brows, so he smiles, feeble as it is.

"Do you want me to stop?" Chris asks. Sweet, sweet Chris.

Minho shakes his head. "It's okay, hyung," he purrs, rolling his hips up and clenching on purpose. Chris' face tightens, twitching as his eyes roll slightly. "Use me, Channie. Come on, fill me up."

"Fuck," Chris hisses, fingers splaying wider as he grips Minho's thighs tighter, picking up the pace as he chases his own pleasure. Minho moans with him, sensitive from his orgasm, but he clenches in time with Chris' thrusts, squeezing him tight whenever their skin slaps together

loudly. It only takes a few more minutes—Minho is thoroughly impressed by Chris' stamina—before Chris falters, hips stuttering as he groans and slams into Minho one final time.

Minho reaches up at the same time Chris starts to slump forward, and he guides him down to rest on top of Minho's chest. Chris' face tucks into Minho's sweaty neck, and he briefly acknowledges the sensory overload he's sure to feel any minute, but for now, Minho allows it. He trails his hands down Chris' back, feeling how he starts to regulate his breathing and let his heart rate settle.

"Wow," is what Chris breaks the silence with several minutes later.

Minho laughs softly, nodding. "Yeah."

"How long are you here again?" Chris asks, and this time Minho's answering laugh is loud. "I could go for another round of that. Or two," Chris tacks on.

"Right now?" Minho teases, clenching his ass around Chris' softening length inside of him. It's still obscenely large—or he's just been thoroughly ruined.

"Fuck you," Chris says with a groan, moving his arm to press a palm to the mattress, as if to get up, so Minho wraps both of his arms and his legs around him to prevent it. Chris collapses back against him with a grunt.

"Stay," he whispers, nuzzling it into the side of Chris' cheek, rubbing his nose along the smooth skin until it bumps into Chris' ear. "Please?"

Chris sighs, and then Minho feels soft lips press to his jaw. "Yeah, kitten. Of course."

xx

Template

Tags:

- ➢ Pairing[s]
  - M x M, MinChan
- ➢ Rating
  - Explicit
- ➢ Additional Tags
  - Alternate Universe, POV Lee Minho | Lee Know, Lee Felix & Lee Minho | Lee Know are siblings, Lee Felix & Bang Chan are best friends, Past Jeong Yunho/Lee Minho | Lee Know, Lee Minho | Lee Know is a Mess, Bang Chan is a good hyung (Stray Kids), Brother's Best Friend, ~~Light Dom/sub, Dom/sub Undertones, Soft Dom Bang Chan (Stray Kids), Praise Kink, Oral Sex, Anal Sex, Spit as Lube~~

Title [Chase Atlantic, Phases]:

- Falling Apart
- **Swim in the Dark**
- Calling My Name

AO3 Summary:

"I'm sorry, I'm bringing the mood down," Minho says instead.

"*Fuck* the mood," Chris replies immediately. "I'm glad you told me. Otherwise, I would have kept flirting with you like an asshole."

Minho can't help it. He laughs—a full on, belly aching laugh. Chris drops down to his knees in front of Minho, a wry grin on his face as Minho's laughter finally dies out.

"Oh my god," Minho sighs, letting his head fall backward against the side of the Jeep with a soft thunk. "You've been flirting with me?"

AO3 Headers & Footers

Beginning:
Happy birthday to my favorite fellow minchanlixer, Zel. If you aren't familiar with them or their writing, you're missing out. I've had the privilege of beta reading for some of their works, and you'll be in for a treat if you check them out. Zel, you are so, *so* special to me and I'm so glad Dennie introduced us. I love you!

This one-shot was born out of a desire to write more minchan, and then I found out about Zel's birthday, so I moved my plans around so I could get something done for them. It was meant to be a little summer fling fic, and I imagine it still will be, with things continuing off-screen. It's up to

you whether or not they stay together. I don't love ambiguous endings normally, but I figured it's better in this case to leave it to the reader.

Sorry for making Minho sad. Not sorry for getting him laid.

Thank you to Rox/bangverse for beta editing for me.

Title from Chase Atlantic, Phases

END:
Thank you for reading. Comments are always appreciated!

Find me on Twitter

Chapter Intro/Moodboard:

