How would a Reader survive without his Protagonist?

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How would a Reader survive without his Protagonist?

by yourdeargatsby

Summary

Kim Dokja is back. Stupid as ever, but back.

Yoo Joonghyuk is scared. And clingy. And romantic. And in love.

Featuring, an odd marriage proposal, lots of sleeping it off, background smut, presents, and so so much fluff. (Oh, and YJH in a too tight shirt)

Notes

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See the end of the work for more notes

Kim Dokja's body hurt. As it would turn out, sustaining mortal injuries without a self-resuscitating skill, hurt like fucking hell. Who would have thought?

He wasn't entirely allowed to get out of bed yet, Yoo Joonghyuk and Lee Seolwha's orders. He had spent most of the 12 hours he had since been awake staring outside until the sun went down, and being dazed.

He wouldn't entirely admit it, but the reason he was dazed was because of his protagonist. Was he allowed to call him his? Was that a thing now? I mean yes, Kim Dokja had kissed Yoo Joonghyuk and Yoo Joonghyuk had kissed him back, but did it mean anything?

Besides, Yoo Joonghyuk had Lee Seolwha. Kim Dokja was just a reader. Who was he to get in the way of their relationship?

Nobody else had visited him except for Yoo Joonghyuk when he had woken up, and Lee Seolwha checking up on him while Yoo Joonghyuk watched, glaring, from the background. He clearly didn't like Kim Dokja being that close to his woman, simply put.

[K im Dokj a is a n idi ot]

The fourth wall seemed to be regenerating slowly, after the failed revolutionary incident. The blue boxes appeared slowly, saying that certain functions weren't working quite right, and that it would be slowly regenerating itself. It would go faster if he could feed it stories, but he was on bed-arrest for the time being.

Kim Dokja was bored. It was quiet. So quiet, he could hear his thoughts. He rolled over gently, wincing in pain and flicked on the fan. For some reason, with the noise filling the room, it was even quieter than before. It was a peace Kim Dokja had never felt. Not when he lived with both his parents. Not when he was alone. Not when he was serving his time. Not as an office worker. Not during the scenarios. But he felt it now. He felt the dull pang of happiness, a being in which he could never quite explain. He felt content. He felt like he belonged.

The door opened briefly, letting a faint amount of light in.

“Kim Dokja. Are you awake?” Yoo Joonghyuk’s raspy voice called out. It sounded different than the last time Kim Dokja had seen him, like it was just being used again.

“No. I am soundly asleep.” Kim Dokja replied sarcastically. He grew uneasy as Yoo Joonghyuk didn’t say anything back. He could feel his eyes on him, watching him like a sort of prey. He wasn’t a target to Yoo Joonghyuk (He hoped) but he certainly didn’t want to talk about what had happened when he first woke up.

The floorboards creaked and Yoo Joonghyuk moved from his spot to look over Kim Dokja. He raised his hand, touching his forehead.

“Your fever has gone down.” He said gently.

Kim Dokja stared up into Yoo Joonghyuk’s eyes. They were infinite, and full of longing. A piece of his hair fell into his face, and Kim Dokja wanted to reach up and pull it back so he could continue staring.

Kim Dokja flushed red, and Yoo Joonghyuk removed his hand. He stood up, and walked away.

“Sleep, Kim Dokja.” He said, pausing with his hand on the doorknob. “Please.”

Kim Dokja really wasn’t sure if he was imagining it, as he felt quite drowsy at the moment. He must be, considering how his protagonist would never willingly say “Please.” and especially not to Kim Dokja.

The buzz of the fan grew duller and duller until it was altogether quiet and there was nothing left.

Kim Dokja was not in level 3 of omniscient reader's viewpoint. But the scene in front of him made him wish it was.

"Tell me, you fool. If I continue to regress, will I ever meet you again?" A teary eyed Yoo Joonghyuk said to… Kim Dokja.

The Kim Dokja on the subway, a pair of doors separating the pair of life and death companions, looked much different than the Kim Dokja that Kim Dokja was now. He was being whisked away, the train pulling away from the station.

Kim Dokja, or the subway version, was crying. He had a hand up on subway door, but he didn't move to open it. He didn't answer the question, even as Yoo Joonghyuk started pounding on the doors, trying to break them open.

Kim Dokja, the real version, woke with a start.

Gasping, short, drawn in and out breaths escaped his throat. He couldn't breath, not properly. Sunlight was streaming in from the window, and Yoo Joonghyuk, who had hence been talking to Lee Seolwha rushed over to his side.

He grasped his shoulders harshly, but released his grip quickly.

"Breathe, Kim Dokja. You're okay." He said, fear shaking his voice. Why was he scared? Kim Dokja should be the scared one, considering he may well be dying.

Yoo Joonghyuk waved his hand to dismiss Lee Seolwha out of the room, and she left quietly.

"What's wrong?" Yoo Joonghyuk asked again, when Kim Dokja regained his breath.

"N-nothing. I'm fine, really." Kim Dokja replied.

“Liar. What is it?”

“I said it was nothing. Leave it be, Yoo Joonghyuk.”

“I am not letting go of you until you tell me, Kim Dokja.” Yoo Joonghyuk commanded gruffly, tightening his grip just a little bit.

“It was just a bad dream. That’s all.” He sighed and explained quickly.

Yoo Joonghyuk nodded. He let go of Kim Dokja’s shoulders. Only when he let go did he realize how much Yoo Joonghyuk was shaking.

“Stay here.” He said, as if Kim Dokja was going anywhere. “I’ll bring you something to eat.” He said, leaving the room quickly.

That was… out of character. What had happened when he was gone? Kim Dokja found himself zoning out, staring at the window. The banner was gone. Odd. Why had they taken it down overnight?

Yoo Joonghyuk returned to the room with a bowl full of Murim Dumplings and two cups of tea, on the same platter Kim Dokja had seen when he had woken up.

Yoo Joonghyuk set the platter down on Kim Dokja’s upright lap, taking one of the mugs for himself.

“How are you feeling?” He asked. He sat further down on the bed than where Kim Dokja was situated. He wasn’t wearing his normal protagonist outfit, with the infinite space coat and the chest strap that enlarged his bo- Kim Dokja was getting ahead of himself. Regardless. He was wearing a dark grey turtleneck and a pair of black jeans.

Kim Dokja pondered the question. He wanted to reply with a sarcastic ‘Why, do you care?’ but even such an oblivious squid could see how much he did care.

He twisted his torso back and forth quickly, testing it a bit. It didn’t hurt as much as it had the day before.

“Be careful twisting yourself like that.” He said, glaring at Kim Dokja slightly.

“Calm down, you damn sunfish. Considering how much I healed last night, I’ll be fine by tomorrow.” Kim Dokja said, matter of factly. Yoo Joonghyuk frowned, but it was more of a grimace for the emotionally constipated man.

“Kim Dokja. You were asleep for two days.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, lowly, as if afraid of scaring the shorter man.

Kim Dokja was shocked, but not scared. It must have been partially the fourth wall’s doing, to keep him safe from, well, himself.

But it made sense then, at least a small bit more, why Yoo Joonghyuk was shaking. Was he afraid he was going to lose Kim Dokja? He was afraid he was going to lose his biggest source of coins.

[K im Do kj a is st up id!] The fourth wall yelled at him. No he wasn’t. It was a very logical and clear answer, plainly to see.

[Ju st Con fe ss] It said again. Kim Dokja did wonder what would happen if he did. Yoo Joonghyuk would reject him, surely, but if Dokja was in this state, he wouldn’t kill him, right?

“Eat.” Yoo Joonghyuk’s voice called Kim Dokja out of his thoughts by shoving a murim dumpling down his throat. Kim Dokja choked for a moment, cheeks puffed out like a chipmunk. He chewed and swallowed, and Yoo Joonghyuk had picked up another one with the chopsticks, holding it in front of his face before forcing him to eat it again.

Lee Seolwha would surely kill him if she saw how he was treating a patient. But it was rather cute, how he was feeding him. At least it was for Yoo Joonghyuk.

So Kim Dokja ate what Yoo Joonghyuk offered him. It was really good, in his books, which correlated to the fact that Yoo Joonghyuk himself must have cooked it. He didn't really trust any of his other companions to cook.

"Yoo Joonghyuk." Kim Dokja said, not really paying attention to the words coming out of his mouth before they were.

Yoo Joonghyuk looked like a large cat, tilting his head ever so slightly to the side like a cat. It was a trait of Kim Dokja's that he had perhaps unwillingly picked up over time. Kim Dokja's ears turned slightly red at the realization.

"What." Yoo Joonghyuk said. It was said as a statement, but the tone in which he said betrayed his curiosity, so it really came out more of a 'What?' than his normally harsh voice.

Kim Dokja took a deep breath. He held his cup of tea that remained undrunk in his hands.

"I'm in love with you. It wasn't right to keep it from you." He said. He smiled his best, and tried to look pitiful. He wasn't really sorry for loving Joonghyuk. Or for keeping it from him. But Yoo Sangah and Jung Heewon constantly chide him on being more honest to other people.

He had been thinking about this for a while now. Espeically with Lee Seolwha in the picture, hadn't he been holding back Yoo Joonghyuk from pursuing the love of his (3rd) life? He'd been chasing a taken man, a man that would never actually completely love him. or at all.

Yoo Joonghyuk's ears turned slightly red after a while of silence, and his lips turned up.

What?

[One of your exclusive stories, ‘Life and Death Companions’ has been fed!]

[Incarnation ‘Yoo Joonghyuk is now partially immune to Constellation ‘Demon King of Salvation’’s skill ‘The Fourth Wall’!]

WHAT?

The blush on Yoo Joonghyuk’s ears spread to his cheeks, and his small smile seemed to grow even larger with the system notifications.

He hummed lowly, looking down into his mug, before simply saying,

“Good.”

“..huh?” Kim Dokja said, strangling out the noise in confusion. What’s with that face?

“Kim Dokja. How do you feel about a summer wedding?” He asked, placing his mug down and grabbing Kim Dokja’s hands. It was the most expressive Kim Dokja had ever seen Yoo Joonghyuk, at least with happiness. The tears that Yoo Joonghyuk had cried when he had had to kill Kim Dokja were fairly real, as far as Kim Dokja could tell.

Kim Dokja was malfunctioning. All he could splutter out were small ‘Huh?’ and ‘Eh?’s instead of actual sentences.

Yoo Joonghyuk had gone back to frowning at this, confused, but the blush on his cheeks remained as fervent as ever.

He brought his hand up to Kim Dokja’s forehead again, feeling for a fever. Kim Dokja felt his face go even more red at this, swiping and splattering Yoo Joonghyuk’s hand away from

his head.

“What are you doing?” He asked, exclaiming slightly loudly.

“Checking for a fever. You’re not responding well, which is a symptom of illness.” He said, moving his hand back again, but Kim Dokja pinned it down, mostly using most of his regained strength to do so.

“What? No- No- I’m talking about the wedding you just mentioned- What does that mean? Who are you marrying?” Kim Dokja’s thoughts were running miles a minute, not stopping for anyone or anything.

Looking at him clearly, eyes slightly less glossed over now, Yoo Joonghyuk looked like a lost puppy. He looked confused, especially at Kim Dokja’s latest statement.

“You, of course.” He replied in answer to Kim Dokja.

“What? No, that’s not right- this is the part where you reject me and storm out in anger.” Kim Dokja said, more or less talking to himself, rather than Yoo Joonghyuk.

“Why would I do that. Kim Dokja. I am in love with you too.” His slightly upset tone had come back to him, Kim Dokja could recognize.

“No, you’re not. You love Lee Seolwha.” Kim Dokja said, sure of himself.

Yoo Joonghyuk grabbed him by the collar. Oh. This is where he died. Perhaps his calculations were wrong and Yoo Joonghyuk would kill an injured and slightly sick Kim Dokj-

Yoo Joonghyuk pressed his lips to Kim Dokja’s. It wasn’t as desperately needed as Kim Dokja’s initiated kiss the few days before, but tender. He could feel emotion in it. Yoo

Joonghyuk tasted like ruined dreams and the scent of dark chocolate and a field full of sunflowers.

Kim Dokja leaned into the kiss, dazed now by the taste of Yoo Joonghyuk. He didn't care what Yoo Joonghyuk felt. He didn't care what he himself felt. He did care about the feeling of Yoo Joonghyuk on him and he wanted it to never stop, to never end.

Yoo Joonghyuk pulled back, lips puffy. His eyes were dazed as well, gazing at Kim Dokja in a way that he had seen before but never truly recognized. He was gazing at Kim Dokja in a way that made him feel truly seen, truly recognized. For the first time in his life, Kim Dokja was being looked at with pure, unfiltered and raw love.

Kim Dokja started crying. The streaky tears ran down his face quickly, and he couldn't stop them. Yoo Joonghyuk didn't know how to react, really, just rushing over and trying to hush him down like a baby.

He didn't say anything. He suspected that the only person he had ever had to comfort was Yoo Mia, who was safely tucked away in the rooms away outside where they were, with the rest of the companions.

As he came close to Kim Dokja, the shorter man grabbed him, pulling him into a hug, resting his crying head on his shoulder, clawing at his back. He didn't let go, just sniffled into his shoulder. Yoo Joonghyuk let him cry and claw into him, hugging him back lightly.

His cries grew softer and softer, and his grasp grew less tight, until his form was mostly limp. He had fallen asleep, the fool.

Yoo Joonghyuk rested his form on the bed, covering him up. He didn't have a fever, he must have just been overwhelmed. It was a peacefulness neither was used to, and the star stream said they had a while until the next scenario began.

Kim Dokja looked prettier than Yoo Joonghyuk remembered. He didn't really remember Kim Dokja's face, but it still seemed different. Kim Dokja had always been pretty, this was just an added bonus.

Yoo Joonghyuk changed his tear stained shirt and left the room quietly, leaving his life and death lover to rest.

When Kim Dokja awoke, he was alone. The room was darker now, but not completely dark. He smelled the food before he saw it, looking to the left to see a bowl of warm Samgyetang waiting for him. There was a note beside it, written in Yoo Joonghyuk's desicive scrawl.

"Eat this. Come talk to me when you wake up. Please." The please was written in smaller writing than the rest of the message, like an afterthought rather than a message.

Kim Dokja smiled a little bit at it, before he remembered what happened. Kim Dokja's face went bright red, flipping over to scream into a pillow. How could he be so stupid? Crying himself to sleep at an important moment like that?

He needed to get ahold of himself. The fourth wall didn't seem to be doing much help at blocking this out, perhaps because of Yoo Joonghyuk's newfound immunity? Regardless, it was useless at helping him, so he had to help himself.

[I can not he lp be cau se of Ki m Do Kja]

The fourth wall chided him. He ignored it, as Kim Dokja normally does.

He picked up the spoon and ate the soup slowly. His torso hurt much less than the days before, and he figured he could probably stand up now. Yoo Joonghyuk had also told him to find him, so he figured he was in the clear regardless.

The empty bowl rested on the table next to the stained note, as Kim Dokja pulled back the covers and stood up. He wore fitting pajama pants, and a shirt that was a few sizes too big on him. He recognised the pants as his own, but the shirt he had never seen before. It was a dark navy blue tee, nothing out of the ordinary about it.

He stumbled on his feet for the first few steps, before regaining his balance. The distance to the door wasn't far, and Kim Dokja made it there easily without much difficulty.

Twisting the door to pull it open, Kim Dokja found a plain hallway. There weren't any decorations or much of anything at all, as if this was just a placeholder home. The short hallway led to a living room and combined kitchen. The kitchen side was empty but turning his head he saw Yoo Joonghyuk sleeping on the couch.

He looked uncomfortable, the way he was sleeping on the couch. Kim Dokja grabbed a pillow that had been on the floor and slid in under Yoo Joonghyuk's head, before jogging and grabbing a blanket from the bed he had previously been sleeping on. Had Yoo Joonghyuk been sleeping here the whole time?

Kim Dokja felt guilty.

He had been hogging the only bedroom in the small apartment, using all the blankets and eating all the food. He should at least repay the favour.

He grabbed the too large apron from the hook it rested on, walking into the kitchen. He didn't know how to make much food, but he could make simple things like gimbap.

[It sho uld be fi ne Ki m Do kja th ou ght.]

Ominous. Kim Dokja did not like that. What did he do? Ignored it.

He grabbed the necessary ingredients, and started preparing the Gimbap. He set everything together, putting aside everything and turning his back for one singular moment, and-

something was on fire. The rice was fine, assuredly, but the egg was spilling over the side and the fire had spread up and Yoo Joonghyuk was awake.

Kim Dokja stood there in shock, watching his attempt at a favour repaid go up in flames as Yoo Joonghyuk might have started crying from his beloved kitchen being lit on fire.

“Kim Dokja!” He shouted, grabbing a lid from the counter and extinguishing the mess.

“Ah- Yoo Joonghyuk, I’m so sorry I was just trying to make Gimbap, I really didn’t mean for it to turn out this badly-” He rambled, trying to salvage his life. He would die here, surely.

“Kim Dokja. It’s fine.”

“And really you were sleeping out here and making me food and I thought I could just do something nice for you-” He continued on, not hearing Yoo Joonghyuk.

“Kim Dokja. I said it’s fine.” Yoo Joonghyuk said again, and Kim Dokja looked up this time, and suddenly Yoo Joonghyuk was right in front of him and his face was red again.

“Ah.. alright. Sorry.” Kim Dokja finished off.

“Fool.” Yoo Joonghyuk said.

Kim Dokja frowned. Yoo Joonghyuk sweeped him up and placed him down on the couch, stealing the apron off him while at it. He looked stunning in it, and it fit him so much better than it had on Kim Dokja.

Kim Dokja’s eyes followed him as he cleaned up the mess Kim Dokja had made of the oven and countertop, using what was salvageable and throwing away the rest. He was skilled in everything he did, cooking included.

“Where are the others?” Kim Dokja blurted out without really thinking. Yoo Joonghyuk didn’t look up at his comment, but he did frown when asked.

“They’re in the building next door. It’s bigger.” He replied, chopping some carrots and sliding them off the cutting board.

“Do they know I’m here?” He asked again.

“Of course they do. They helped save you. Lee Seolwha recommended that you be kept in isolation for a while to rest. Someone had to be your carekeeper, and I volunteered.” Yoo Joonghyuk said. It was a lot of words for the regressor of so few, and without even realizing Kim Dokja’s gaze had drifted to his lips.

His ears turned red. He hummed in response, looking away quickly before he could be caught by the younger.

“What, are you not going to complain about me taking care of you?” Yoo Joonghyuk said, his voice angry with words.

Kim Dokja was confused.

“Huh? No, I’m happy it was you, Joonghyuk-ah.” Kim Dokja said. He was going to add more about how he probably couldn’t put up with any of the other members, but he enjoyed watching Yoo Joonghyuk’s face turn a dark red at his statement.

“Kim Dokja.” Yoo Joonghyuk rumbled, voice lower than before.

Kim Dokja wanted to laugh. The fourth wall seemed to finally be doing it’s job and blocked out how stunts like this had ended in past times, and so Kim Dokja continued in true squid fashion.

“What, Joonghyuk-ah? Everything alright?” He teased again, knowing exactly how the name was making Yoo Joonghyuk react.

“Shut your mouth.” He commanded.

Kim Dokja did laugh this time. He closed his eyes and sing songed his next words. The pillow Yoo Joonghyuk was laid on earlier rested on his lap (Kim Dokja wouldn’t admit it, but he kept it there because it smelled of him) and he rocked back and forth slightly.

“What~ you gonna make me or something?” He said, pushing beyond what Yoo Joonghyuk was willing to give. He heard something be set down, and he opened his eyes to Yoo Joonghyuk shoving him onto his back.

Yoo Joonghyuk pinned him down with one hand, crawling on top of Kim Dokja while at it. He pressed his lips onto the olders, watching as Kim Dokja went crazy in shock. Yoo Joonghyuk released Kim Dokja’s wrists, and the now free hands found their way into Yoo Joonghyuk’s hair. It hadn’t taken very long before Kim Dokja had gotten over his shock and started kissing him back.

Yoo Joonghyuk released his lips for a moment, reveling in how disheleved and perfect Kim Dokja looked.

“Remember, Dokja-ya, you asked for this.” He used the honorific to see if he could get a reaction out of Kim Dokja, although he could feel the embarassment seeping through his veins as he did. He pressed his lips back onto Kim Dokja’s, sliding a hand up the shirt that had originally been his.

Kim Dokja didn’t know how to react except to show Yoo Joonghyuk that he did, in fact want this. He perhaps had, in fact asked for it. Yoo Joonghyuk’s cold hand found it’s way up Kim Dokja’s warm chest, flicking back and forth when he found his nipples.

Kim Dokja moaned against Yoo Joonghyuk, pressing his hips upward. Once his mouth had been opened against the regressor’s, his tongue found it’s way inside of Kim Dokja’s mouth, exploring places it hadn’t been before.

They were engrossed in each other. The ideal couple in love. So in love, and so engrossed in each other, that they didn’t hear the sound of the front door clicking open.

“What the fuck?”

Yoo Joonghyuk fell off the couch. Kim Dokja almost screamed. Han Sooyoung, accompanied by Jung Heewon and Yoo Sangah stood at the front door, staring at the recently pulled apart men, both with puffy lips and undeniable proof of what they had been doing.

“I owe Lee Jihye so much money right now.” Jung Heewon said. Han Sooyoung looked like she was barely keeping in a laugh, and Yoo Sangah, whilst she had already known, looked like she had just seen her father and mother having sex.

“Hasn’t anyone ever told you two to get a room?” Han Sooyoung joked, not even bothering to contain her laughter at that point.

Yoo Joonghyuk scowled.

“We did have a room. Until you barged in here.” He said dramatically. It was really impossible for him to not be dramatic. He was Yoo Joonghyuk. What did you expect?

Yoo Joonghyuk didn’t even looked remotely ashamed of the fact that he had just been caught making out with his enemy turned companion turned friend turned life and death companion turned lover (turned fiancee, in Yoo Joonghyuk’s mind.) .

He simply looked more upset that they couldn’t resume doing it with an audience.

“If this is a bad time, Dokja-ssi, we can always come back later!” Yoo Sangah said, finally speaking up after her face lost some of it’s colour.

The trio carried bags full of what looked like groceries, and Kim Dokja sprang up to help them.

“No, no, it’s fine really.” He said.

He tried to run over to get them, but he was still unsteady on his feet and began to fall face forward, but a muscular arm caught him around his waist.

“Be careful, you fool.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, setting him up straight and grabbing as many bags as he possibly could and setting them down.

He began taking out the foods and Jung Heewon helped him. Kim Dokja fell back onto the couch after an attempt to help which was recieved with a response of a glare from the two.

Han Sooyoung rushed and came and sat in front of Kim Dokja. Yoo Sangah followed her lover.

“So~ Dokja~” She hadn’t even finished her sentence and Kim Dokja was already red from what she was implying. “How long has this been going on?”

“30 minutes.” He said, plainly. He wasn’t counting his brief crying fit or his deluded kiss when he first awoke.

Yoo Sangah and Han Sooyoung looked shocked.

“Really? Awfully touchy for thirty minutes.” Han Sooyoung said again. They both knew he was lying.

Everyone in this room except for Jung Heewon could read his emotions like a book. For the most part. Kim Dokja wasn’t actually good at much except being a reader and making people believe that he wasn’t batshit crazy. He was, but they didn’t know that. (Yet.)

Kim Dokja didn’t bother with a reply this time. She didn’t deserve it.

“Enough of that, Sooyoung-ah. How are you feeling, Dokja-ssi?” Yoo Sangah said with concern.

“Much better now. I slept most of the last 3 days, and it doesn’t hurt to move as much.” Kim Dokja said happily, like a young child exclaiming their test results, except it was Kim Dokja recovering from another attempt to kill himself to save everyone else.

“Oh that sucks. I know a great way to avoid that next time.” Han Sooyoung said. “Maybe DON’T KILL YOURSELF FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME?” She said, vein piercing her forehead as Yoo Sangah smiled lightly and placed her hand on her back to try and calm her down.

Kim Dokja laughed, bringing up a finger to his chin, pondering it as if deep in thought.

“No.” He said with a big smile. He watched as Yoo Sangah frowned a little, and Han Sooyoung simply downright scowled.

“Kim Dokja.” Yoo Joonghyuk said from across the room. Tilting his head to look at the man, he found his least favourite (most) version of YJH. A murderous one. He wasn’t sure what skill he had activated right now, the system notifications seemed to be off, but he was glaring with so much power Kim Dokja debated whether or not he could make a run for it in this state.

“A joke! A joke! I was joking, calm down!” He exclaimed, shrinking back as Yoo Joonghyuk stalked his was over to him.

Kim Dokja shirked away, thinking he might be stabbed, but just yelped in surpise as Yoo Joonghyuk picked him up by the collar of his shirt and dragged him to the bedroom.

He waved a sad goodbye with his hand at his companions, pretending to wipe a tear from his face. Han Sooyoung and Jung Heewon were laughing so hard they were crying, and poor Yoo Sangah was doing her best to not laugh at him. Lovely Yoo Sangah trying to protect his dignity while her lover and friend laughed their asses off at him.

Yoo Joonghyuk kicked open the door for no particular reason other than to be dramatic, dropped Kim Dokja on the bed, turned around, and left. Kim Dokja frowned. Now he was alone. He normally liked being alone, but he hadn't been alone much at all since he had woken up the first few times, and now felt lonely. It was an odd sort of domestiscim, and Kim Dokja enjoyed it wholly.

His mind strayed back to what Yoo Joonghyuk had said earlier, with nothing better to do.

'Kim Dokja. How would you feel about a summer wedding?' Kim Dokja's face turned slightly pink at remembering, especially when he was reminded of his fit afterwards. He liked the thought of marrying Yoo Joonghyuk. He'd been lying, when he said he wasn't attracted to him before. He had been in love with the man for about half of his life, for all sakes considered.

He would marry Yoo Joonghyuk even if this was a normal society. He would do it for love. Yoo Joonghyuk would do it for tax benefits.

But he wouldn't regret it. If that was a proposal, his answer was yes. Shin Yoosung would be happy to hear it. Lee Gilyeong would be less happy, but he already knew that Kim Dokja's chance with Yoo Sangah was so far below sea level that it didn't even exist rationally.

He supposed Lee Jihye was right, with her words back in the theater dungeon. In a way, of course. He and Yoo Joonghyuk were companions, separated by life and death. They'd live to see the end of the scenarios. Together.

"..im Dokja." A voice called out from somewhere that Kim Dokja was not.

"Kim Dokja!" It sounded again, calling Kim Dokja out from the abyss of his thoughts.

“Huh?” Kim Dokja replied. Nobody would ever guess that this was the mastermind behind the reason the Seoul dome still exists.

“I sent them home. They said the others were worried about you.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, falling into a small arm chair in the corner of the room, looking entirely too relaxed for the Yoo Joonghyuk of TWOS.

Kim Dokja processed his sentence, translating it with the non existent skill he was sure he had called ‘Joonghyuk translator’ until he recieved the words, ‘Theyre gone now. I’m worried about how you’re doing.”

“I’m alright.” He said. Yoo Joonghyuk hummed in repliance. “I think I would prefer winter.” He said, the words falling from the tip of his tongue, a thought meant to remain unspoken.

“What?” Yoo Joonghyuk said, looking up a bit from his relaxed position on the chair, confused now.

Kim Dokja’s face went red. He felt like a stuttering mess. What had he even been thinking?

“You uh, asked how I felt about a summer wedding? I prefer… winter. Normally. Summer is too hot.”

He didn’t look Yoo Joonghyuk in the eye. He couldn’t. He felt so hot, like the sun was exploding on him and he couldnt stop it.

“You- you heard me.” He said, coughing slightly and covering his mouth with his hand.

“I did.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, and Kim Dokja could practically feel Yoo Joonghyuk smiling at him.

“Has Lee Seolwha cleared me to leave yet?” He asked, changing the topic as the embarassment starting setitng in.

“If I say no, will you stay here longer?” Yoo Joonghyuk said, in response.

Oh, how badly Kim Dokja wanted to reply with a witty and slightly sarcastic comeback, but all he could really do was gape at Yoo Joonghyuk, staring in slight and red faced shock at the other. Had Yoo Joonghyuk always been this bold.

[Level 2 Omnscient Reader’s viewpoint activated!]

Kim Dokja didn’t mean to activate his skill. He really didn’t.

‘Has Kim Dokja always been this pretty? I want to keep him here. The thought of other people’s eyes on him makes me angry.’

The flurry of deactivate! deactivate! Thoughts in Kim Dokja’s head the flew through were too fast for any normal incarnation to count, a thousand a millisecond.

“I miss the rest of my company.” Kim Dokja said back, hoping to make Yoo Joonghyuk stop with the fast and romantic (and slightly possesive, but the fourth wall doesn’t kink shame) thoughts.

“I missed you.” Yoo Joonghyuk said with a completely straight face, ears slightly tinged red, as if he hadn’t simply said the most romantic thing the regressor Yoo Joonghyuk had ever said. Kim Dokja even wondered if he was even this romantic to Lee Seolwha. Was this even romance?

Kim Dokja had been reading too many of Jang Hayoung’s BL Dark romances. Lines from… Haunting Adam? flashed through his his mind and if it was even possible, his face became redder.

Yoo Joonghyuk frowned. His got up out of the chair, using his thumb to pull away Kim Dokja's bangs and feel his forehead.

"Your company?" He asked, touching Kim Dokja in a way that felt slightly more than a 'checking for a fever' touch.

"Kim Dokja's company. Like I told you. Our nebula." He said, smiling as sweet as he could up at the regressor.

Yoo Joonghyuk flinched, cheeks flushing and he turned away, covering his mouth with his hand, using a fake cough as an excuse to do it.

"Lee Seolwha said that you could visit them tommorow." He said. "There's a break from the scenarios that lasts until the new year, so you are not to do any strenous activity for a month, at least." Yoo Joonghyuk said, returning to his normal stoic personality, though it may be Kim Dokja's hopeful imagination, but he could detect the smallest hint of concerned boyfriend in there. Kim Dokja smiled.

"What's the date?" Kim Dokja asked.

"December 22nd." It was September when Dokja had died. Time must have worked differently in the 73rd demon realm.

That also meant he had 3 days to get presents for christmas for his companions. It would be even more difficult if he wasn't allowed to leave. Kim Dokja, had a better idea.

[Dokkaebi Communication]

Kim Dokja : Bihyung. Are you there?

Bihyung : Ah, yes. Why are you talking with me? I had system notifications turned off on your companions request.

Kim Dokja : Never mind that. Can you open the Dokkaebi Bag for me?

Bihyung : T-T. Okay.

Bihyung : Rest up, Kim Dokja. We're all worried about you.

Kim Dokja smiled as the last message came in and the Dokkaebi bag opened up.

He searched up some basic items, like the 'Ultimate Good Alignment's Crimson Mercy' for Jung Heewon, and 'The Last Savior's untouched redemption' for Lee Hyunsung. He grabbed some quick other items for his friends with the coins that he could see were piling in as he bought gifts.

Pushing the items off the bed he had bought, he looked up two last items.

Simple Squid wrapping paper, a trademark of Kim Dokja at that point. He may as well play into it.

Typing out one last keywords, remembering them from Yoo Joonghyuks 26th round. The 'Twin Circlets of Animation and Quietus.'

Kim Dokja smiled as they fell into his hands, placing them quietly in his pocket and slipping out of the bed to wrap the rest of his stuff.

When Kim Dokja emerged from the room more than an hour or so later, the door clicking shut behind him, the heavenly smell of Japchae filled the air as he walked.

He felt alive, and just filled with the plain contentment of life.

Yoo Joonghyuk was in the kitchen, humming quietly as he cooked. It was out of place, for the protangonist of TWSA, and domestic looked good on him. Although, Dokja personally thought everything looked good on him.

“Yoo Joonghyuk.” Kim Dokja said, pulling out one of the island chairs and slouching, while staring at Yoo Joonghyuk.

“Kim Dokja.” He said, replying just as Yoo Joonghyuk as ever. “You don’t need to call me my full name, Kim Dokja.”

“Eh? What do you mean?” Kim Dokja said, looking up lazily with his blue-grey eyes.

“You don’t need to call me Yoo Joonghyuk, all the time. You can call me Joonghyuk-ah. Like you, ah, did earlier.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, trailing off slightly at the end of his sentence.

Kim Dokja smiled. He loved Yoo Joonghyuk of TWSA. He loved the stupid and cold protangonist, who lost too much and lingered too long. But he also loved the Yoo Joonghyuk of this round. The Yoo Joonghyuk that he knew better than any other Yoo Joonghyuk, of any round.

His Yoo Joonghyuk, the domestic fool, his companion.

He loved Yoo Joonghyuk. His Joonghyuk-ah.

“Joonghyuk-ah. Then will you call me Dokja-ya?” He said, smiling. Yoo Joonghyuk looked over from where he was washing dishes. To an outsider, or really, anyone that wasn’t Kim Dokja, Yoo Joonghyuk looked appalled at the mere idea of this. But to Yoo Joonghyuk number 1 and only fangirl, Yoo Joonghyuk was clearly just embarrassed by it.

Kim Dokja, still smiling reached up and pulled his cheek up and down, motioning talking.

“Dokja-ya, I love youuu” He said, in a crude imitation of Yoo Joonghyuk’s voice, watching as the man’s eyes razed over Kim Dokja’s face.

Yoo Joonghyuk turned his eyes back to the sink, flicking off the water. Two bowls of hot Japchae sat to the side, but as Yoo Joonghyuk wiped off his hands silently, they were as good as forgotten.

He circled around the counter, towering over Kim Dokja’s sitting figure.

“Dokja-ya. I love you.” He said, voice low and slightly sultry.

He kissed Kim Dokja spiderman style, watching as the older closed his eyes and kissed back. Spinning his chair around and grasping hands arms and neck at anything the other could grab.

Dokja pulled away as quickly as he kissed back.

“Joonghyuk-ah.” He asked, waiting for a response from the now grumpy man. He grunted in reponse, wanting to go back to kissing him. “What are we?” He asked.

Yoo Joonghyuk raised an eyebrow.

“You are my life and death companion. Kim Dokja. Till death do us part?” He phrased the last part more as a question, although he already knew the answer.

Of course, Kim Dokja replied by shoving him onto the couch and kissing him again. The fourth wall would love to tell you what happened next, but they need to keep it pg-13.

Kim Dokja did not make it to meet his companions on the 23rd. He didn't make it many places except the shower, the kitchen to eat a forgotten bowl of Japchae, and the bedroom.

The morning of Christmas eve, he woke up against the suprisingly warm chest of his rival turned friend turned companion turned lover turned fiancee turned fiancee-companion. He didn't feel much of a particular need to get up until the sun began streaming through the curtains, lighting on the muscles of the tanned.

Yoo Joonghyuk began stirring at around 9am, which was late for the early riser. The shorter man nestled into his arms as he began to try and rise up, preventing him rather successfully for a mostly incapcitated for majority of the past week.

"Nooo," Kim Dokja whined into Yoo Joonghyuk's large pecs. "Stay a few more hours." He said as Yoo Joonghyuk slipped out of his arms and pulled on clothes from the chest of drawers next to him.

"Dokja. It's Christmas eve. Your companions were expecting you yesterday. It's time to get up." He pulled on a black sweater as Kim Dokja sat up in the bed. His body was decorated like an amateur Van Gogh piece, and Yoo Joonghyuk might have a talent for painting.

Kim Dokja rubbed his eyes blearily and yawned, and Yoo Joonghyuk might never find anyone as beautiful ever again.

His eyes cleared, Kim Dokja looked Yoo Joonghyuk's figure up and down. A black sweater. Grey pants. and his normal belt. Kim Dokja frowned.

"No."

Yoo Joonghyuk frowned.

"No what?" He said, staring at his lover.

“Yoo Joonghyuk, out of everyone I’ve ever met, you have the least christmas spirit. Take off your shirt.” Kim Dokja commanded.

Yoo Joonghyuk, flushed, grumbled, but took his shirt off anyway.

“Do you own any Christmas sweaters?” Kim Dokja asked.

“Maybe?” Yoo Joonghyuk deadpanned.

Kim Dokja stood up, as clothed as the day he was born, and started rifling through Yoo Joonghyuk’s drawings.

“Dokja. Put some clothes on, you fool.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, red in the face, tossing some clothes at his lover.

Kim Dokja said something unintelligable, before putting on a pair of boxers and a pair of Yoo Joonghyuk’s smaller pants.

There, at the back of the bottom drawer, was a green and red sweater. It was ugly. And in Kim Dokja’s eyes, it was perfect. Grinning from side to side, he pulled it out, and handed it to him.

“Here.” He said, holding it out to Yoo Joonghyuk.

“I’m not wearing that.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, unhappy at even the prospect.

“Yoo Joonghyuk. In 120 hours you kissed me, proposed to me, and fucked me. While it was all completely consensual, you could just wear the damn sweatshirt.” He said, all in one breath, without taking a break or stopping smiling.

Yoo Joonghyuk put the sweatshirt on.

It was too tight. Not by much, but you could see, just about, all of Yoo Joonghyuk's well defined muscles through it. Kim Dokja was perfectly happy with this scenario. He grabbed his own sweatshirt, one he hadn't worn in a good long while. Probably before his office days, a bit after school.

It was suprisingly complimentary to Yoo Joonghyuk's shirt.

Kim Dokja grabbed his gifts from the corner of the room, and Yoo Joonghyuk as well. He grabbed his white coat, unstained of any blood it may have been a week ago, and he made his way to the front door, opening it and breathing in the outside world of the outskirts of Seoul in a very long time.

Snowflakes fell on Kim Dokja's black hair, and Yoo Joonghyuk joined his side. He was wearing his black coat, and as they stood side by side it felt comforting.

They stood there for a while, before Kim Dokja turned to Yoo Joonghyuk.

"Hey, Joonghyuk-ah?" He said, his absurdly long lashes turning to the taller.

Yoo Joonghyuk won at life.

Yoo Joonghyuk hummed in response, replling his urge to kiss Kim Dokja.

"I have absolutely no idea where we're going."

He stared at Yoo Joonghyuk with as much honesty and earnesty as ever, and Yoo Joonghyuk laughed.

It was the first time in a long time that he had laughed, and Kim Dokja stared in shock. Yoo Joonghyuk had dimples, as it turned out.

He coughed, and pulled Kim Dokja down the steps, and over to the building next door. He took a step back and let Kim Dokja knock on the door. It was opened quickly, and a collage of voices engulfed him.

“Ahjussi!”

“Mister!”

“Dokja-ssi!”

It looked like a scene from a long time ago, but it was happy, and so it was good to reenact.

Somehow, Yoo Joonghyuk got pulled inside. Dokja was sat on the couch, surronded by Lee Hyunsung on one side, Yoo Sangah on the other, with Lee Jihye, Lee Gilyeong, Shin Yoosong and Han Sooyoung.

Nobody wanted to leave Dokja’s side, as Yoo Joonghyuk felt the same, but it was too crowded in there for Yoo Joonghyuk. He turned and walked across the small house to the kitchen. There were a few things made already on the counters, but Yoo Joonghyuk wasn’t going to touch a single one of them.

He started pulling things out of the cabinets and drawers, placing things one place or another before he had a decent set up. He could hear a commotion in the other room, but he didn’t feel like joining quite then.

Steps made their way towards him, and the short figure of Han Sooyoung made her way into the kitchen, joining Yoo Joonghyuk.

“Nice shirt, Joonghyukie” She said with a smirk.

Yoo Joonghyuk did not answer her.

He continued cooking up some dishes, and ignored her less than delightful presence.

“Fine. Ignore me then.”

Yoo Joonghyuk glared at her half-heartedly.

“I think they’d enjoy it if you were in there with them too.” She continued, not caring about Yoo Joonghyuk’s slights towards to making her leave.

“They’re alright without me. Where are Gong Pildu and Lee Seolwha?” He asked.

“Fine. Dokja and Lee Jihye would enjoy it if you were in there. Gong Pildu is off with his family and Lee Seolwha was called in somewhere to deal with something. Didn’t provide details.” She explained, taking a grape off a board of assembled cheeses and crackers.

Yoo Joonghyuk grunted in way of response.

She picked up another small bundle of grapes tossing them into her mouth like a game, and Yoo Joonghyuk took the bag away.

“You’re coming over tommorow, yeah?” She asked, reaching for the bag that was no longer there, frowning when her hand met only air.

“Dokja plans to, at least.”

“Joonghyuk, you’ve been glued to his side since you found him. If he’s coming over you will be too.”

Yoo Joonghyuk paused. She had a point, and he really didn’t like the fact that she had a point. He continued cooking, placing a few dishes in the fridge.

He grabbed the platter and made his way past Han Sooyoung. Walking into the same crowded living room as before, he slid the platter onto the table in the middle of the room.

“Dokja. Let me know when you’re ready to go.” He said quietly. He looked over quickly to Shin Yoosung, thinking of Yoo Mia.

“I need to go pick up Yoo Mia.” He said quickly, moving to grab his coat.

Kim Dokja was not happy about this. Kim Dokja had maybe been offered one or two cups of Soju, and wasn’t entirely sober, but enough to know that he couldn’t have breakdown right there.

“Noo don’t go.” He said, and Yoo Joonghyuk’s eyes switched over to the empty bottle of Soju next to him. He wasn’t always the brightest, but he could connect the dots.

“You’re drunk.” He said, completely montone. It had been longer than either of the lovers had realized, the sun setting. Lee Jihye had her head in Yoo Sangah’s lap, and Lee Hyunsung was rambling to Jung Heewon who was listening intently. It didn’t seem anyone was paying much attention to Yoo Joonghyuk and Kim Dokja at that particular moment.

Yoo Joonghyuk picked Kim Dokja up from the couch, the shorter man clinging to him like a young child.

“I’m tired, Joonghyukie.” He said, resting his head on Yoo Joonghyuk’s shoulder. He knew he shouldn’t have particularily had any alchohol, but the conversations were entertaining and he hadn’t seen his companions in a while.

“We’re going home.” Yoo Joonghyuk said, but Jung Heewon had fallen asleep, and the only people really paying attention were Yoo Sangah and Han Sooyoung. Yoo Sangah nodded, and Han Sooyoung leaned in to kiss her, and that was their cue to leave.

Kim Dokja made a sad grab for his coat, watching it slip out of his hands quickly. Yoo Joonghyuk caught it, placing it on his shoulders.

He carried him the short walk home, opening the door quietly. Kim Dokja was quiet, sleeping on his shoulder. He made the journey to his bedroom, moving to place Kim Dokja on the bed. His hands slip off his body, but they catch, and they don’t let go as Yoo Joonghyuk moves to leave.

“Don’t go..” Kim Dokja muttered in his sleep, and he was suprisingly strong for an injured and asleep man.

Yoo Joonghyuk was too tired for any of this. He hadn’t gotten good sleep in a long while now, and he didn’t feel like fighting back.

So he stayed. In his arms. And it felt as right as it ever had been.

On the morning of Christmas, Kim Dokja woke to an empty bed. A glance at the digital clock showed it was 7:30 am, which was way too early. His skills must have been working at least somewhat, seeing as he didn’t have a raging headache, but his eyes flickered to the drawer where he had stashed his gift for Yoo Joonghyuk, and he got out of bed.

He hadn’t changed out of his clothes from yesterday, and he smelled lightly of alchohol and clean paper. He yawned, walking across the hall to the bathroom. Yoo Joonghyuk wasn’t home. He was probably off running errands. Kim Dokja trusted him.

He stripped quickly, ignoring the blush that flushed over him when he saw the marks that still littered his body, but he slipped into the shower nontheless, and washed quickly.

Drying off, brushing his teeth and getting dressed, he grabbed the rings as the sound of a door click was heard from outside. He wasn't dressed in anything special, just a dark blue festive sweater and some white jeans he had found.

Yoo Joonghyuk didn't announce anything as he walked in. Kim Dokja walked in from down the hallway to see the taller man, who looked relatively pleased for his normal demeanor.

"Morning, Joonghyuk-ah." He said with his normal bright and slightly shitty behavior.

"Good Morning, Dokja."

It was 8:10, and the sun was briefly rising through the small windows of the apartment.

"I have a gift for you. It's for christmas." Kim Dokja said, he wasn't really sure how to go about doing this.

"Hm? I have one for you too. But it's for later." Yoo Joonghyuk said, staring at Kim Dokja with the sort of love that only he had.

Kim Dokja pulled the small boxes out of his pocket, and handed one to Yoo Joonghyuk, motioning for him to open it. Large scarred hands roamed the small gift, pulling at the white wrapping paper to revel a velvet box.

Yoo Joonghyuk's curiosity was peaked at this pointed, and he pulled it open to find a gold ring with white flowers decorating it. It was inately beautiful, and reminded him every inch of Kim Dokja.

“Here.” Kim Dokja said, voice sweet with happiness, reaching out to place the ring on his finger. Yoo Joonghyuk’s eyes drifted hand, where a matching band, encircled with black branches rested on his ring finger.

“It’s a bit backwards now, but Yoo Joonghyuk, will you marry me?” Kim Dokja asked, with all the hope in the world.

“Of course.” Yoo Joonghyuk replied, placing his hand over Dokja’s entwining them.

“Merry Christmas, you sunfish.”

“Merry Christmas, fool.”

Snow fell on Seoul that day, and it wouldn’t be the last time the white fell on the black. And it wouldn’t be the last time Black fell for white.

Happy Holidays, my dearest readers.

End Notes

Comments and Kudos Appreciated!

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