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Chapter 1

I walked out of class- an annoyed look on my face as always. I've been taking this Korean class ever since I started my study abroad program-five months- and it was like I learned nothing. I shook my head. Only four more months, I thought, convincing myself the class was worth my time.

"Hey, Brienne," my professor called my name.

I paused right outside the doorway, looking over my shoulder.

"Come here," my professor said.

I rolled my eyes slightly before sauntering to the professor.

"Tomorrow," my professor began, shuffling papers, "I'm not going to be here because my kid has been sick for a while and I need to take him to the doctor. Do you want to reschedule your private tutoring, or do you mind doing it with a substitute?"

I shrugged, not really caring, "I can do it with the sub."

The professor gave me a thumbs up and a big smile, "great- same time, same place." She leaned on her desk, reaching for her bag, but instead knocked over her stack of papers. "Dang it," she cursed, picking them up.

I squatted low to the ground, gathering the lost papers. I walked around the room grabbing the stray papers. These things are everywhere. I picked up the last paper and waddled back to my professor, handing her the papers before looking down at my watch. Shoot! I cursed in my head. I can't miss my bus! I hurried to the door and waved bye to my professor.

"Brainne," my professor called again.

I halted at the door frame in annoyance, "yeah?"

"The tutor's name is Shin Hoseok."

I nodded vigorously and hurried out of the classroom, running up the stairs and through the doubled doors when boom! "Ouch!" I shouted at the top of your lungs.

I gripped the door and then hunched over, grasping my foot. I stubbed my toe on that stupid door- again. I shook my head and limped through the hall. My big toe ached like crazy. That's the third time this month, I thought shaking my head. Now limping through the front door, I sucked in a quick breath, steadying myself. The bus was at the bus stop, people loading in.

I started doing a half hop, half limp toward the bus, "wait, wait!"

The bus' doors closed, and a dark grey cloud spilled groggily from the exhaust as it drove away.

“Wait,” I called, chasing it until it disappeared around the bend.

I coughed, choking on the stinky fumes before dropping my head in defeat. I never missed my bus before. I rolled my eyes in exasperation. First time for everything, I guess. I pulled my phone from my jacket pocket and checked when the next bus was coming. 45 minutes?? You’ve got to be kidding. With a heavy sigh, plopped down on the bench at the bus stop. Through the traffic of the passing cars, I noticed a tiny ramen shop at the end of the block.

I guess I can burn 45 minutes there. I walked slowly to the ramen shop- my toe feeling only a little better. The salty aroma of noodles hit me. I inhaled deeply and let out a satisfied sigh at the scent. I walked up to the counter and squinted at the menu. It was hard to read because the letters were so small.

The barista spoke in Korean, “what would you like?”

I grinded my teeth hard- deep in thought- making sure my Korean was spot on. “Can I get a bowl of ramen with-” I paused. Dang it- how do you say chicken again? I thought hard in agony. I can’t believe I forgot how to say chicken! I squinted at the board trying to read it, speaking Korean, “ch- chick -”

Suddenly a voice interrupted you, “chicken?”

“Yeah, that’s it!” I said, not looking over my shoulder to see who it was, “thank you.”

“Your order number 3193,” said the cashier, handing me my ticket.

I took the ticket and stood near the pickup counter, leaning against the wall to give my foot a little shake. It felt better already. That’s when I saw him. I looked up and saw him. Standing right near me. The man who said chicken. My eyes nearly popped out of my head and rolled away at the sight of him. His pale skin was almost flawless, not a single blemish or freckle in sight, and his slender eyes complimented his slim yet soft nose. His lips were the perfect size, a slight blush. His jaw line was perfectly rigged, like it could cut right through me. And- I sighed- his muscles rippled through his snug fitting shirt. It was like I could feel them already. I huffed out a soft sigh at his beauty but, on the inside- I was screaming. Why didn’t I say anything more? Thank you? That’s all? I thought, kicking myself for not looking at him earlier.

Then his eyes darted towards me, meeting my gaze. He smiled softly. I looked away quickly, staring at the ceiling instead, my face growing warm with embarrassment. He caught me staring at him- really Brianne? I blushed hard as he took a spot next to me, waiting for his bowl of ramen.

“Order 3193.”

I hurried to the counter- practically running.

“Order 1094,” said the barista as I reached the counter.

I grasped my bowl, turning to run and- there he was. That beautiful Korean man. I stared up at him- my mouth gapping slightly.

He smiled at me and grabbed his bowl of ramen. He looked around the café and then at me, “would you like to sit with me?”

Marry me please, I thought. “Uh...” I didn’t know how to respond. I mean- of course I wanted to sit with him and have his children, but his beauty had taken my words. “I- uh,” I stammered. “I-” my words caught in my throat. I was totally choking.

He looked down at his feet awkwardly, looking slightly defeated. “Um, it’s okay,” he said, “I have to get somewhere anyway.” He flashed a sweet smile at me and walked towards the door, his bowl in hand.

No! Do something Brianne, I thought, before he gets away! I stretched out a hand and mumbled, “He- hey,” he didn’t hear me. “Wait-” I mumbled a little louder, “wait.” The door closed and he was gone.

“3194,” called the barista.

A girl walked past you and grabbed her bowl, “you really blew it.” She said, passing you.

I dragged my feet as I walked out of the ramen shop and onto my bus. I took a seat and gripped my to-go bowl. I don’t even like ramen that much. After a bumpy journey, the bus stopped on hill, letting me off at my stop. I made my way back to my studio apartment, tossing my key on the counter and plopping down into my couch. Taking out my phone, I dialed a number and put it on speaker.

“Hello?” said Kiheon, one of my good friends.

“I blew it!” I cried into the phone. “There was the hottest guy in the ramen shop today and he asked if I wanted to sit with him and I just mumbled! I blew it!”

“I’m sure it wasn’t that bad,” said Kiheon, trying her best to comfort me.

“I mumbled ‘wait, wait’ as he was walking away.” I said, “it was definitely that bad.”

“Oh...” Kiheon said, “that does sound bad. Listen just sleep it off. I’m sure you’ll feel better in the morning.”

I sighed, “yeah, you’re right. Thanks- G’night Kiheony.” I hung up the phone sighed. She was right. I just needed to sleep it off. I hurried through my nightly routine and rolled into bed. Ahh. Nothing like laying a in bed after a long day at lectures. My mind wandered through my day as slowly drifted to sleep. I almost forgot about that man when boom! His face appeared- his beautiful, beautiful face. I sighed loudly. I’ve never seen anyone with such a beautiful and symmetrical face. If I see him again- I won’t be awkward. I held up my hand and made a tight fist, I swear.

Chapter 2

I sat with my head hanging in the palm of my hands in despondency. I tried studying my Korean in the library but all I could do was think about that guy I saw yesterday. I will never see him again, I inevitably concluded, sighing hopelessly. Just forget about him so you can study. I scolded myself. Another ten minutes went by. I read the same page for a third time. This is hopeless, I thought with a heavy sigh.

I looked at my watch. Time for tutoring. I hated tutoring a little less than the lecture. But- I won't even be tutored by my teacher- I thought, rolling my eyes in frustration. I'll never learn anything this way. I stomped out of the library and through the hallway. I speculated about my tutor. Maybe an old Korean teacher- or a really cute Korean guy. I sighed again- but no one will ever be as cute as you- I thought, thinking about the guy from yesterday.

I walked through the door, freezing at what I saw. There he was. The tutor. My mouth gaped. It's the man from the ramen shop. I tensed. Not moving a single muscle- but on the inside, I was screaming. I held my breath, forgetting to breathe or blink for a moment.

"Anyounghaseyo," said the man, giving a respectful bow to me.

"Ahh," I mumbled again. Pull it together, Brianne. I yelled at myself. "Anyounghaseyo," I said, bowing to him. I looked up at him. We locked eyes before his darted away- his face blushing.

He spoke in clear English, "you are the woman from the ramen shop," he said.

I felt my face grow warm with embarrassment, "yeah we don't need to relive that," I said.

He laughed a little. "Je ireumeun Hoseok innida," he introduced himself.

I smiled a little, Hoseok, I repeated his name in my head. "Je ireumeun Brianne innida"

"Not bad," he said, nodding his head in approval. He pulled a packet from the counter top and walked it to me.

I froze again. He is walking near me, I thought- screaming internally again. What do I do? He handed me the paper. I looked at it, staring at it before looking up at him.

"Uh," he said, "you can take this paper."

"Uhm," I mumbled. I took the paper slowly. Be careful not to scare him off, I told myself, staring at him with wide eyes.

Hoseok said, "are you okay?"

I blinked hard. Be normal, Brianne, be normal, I pleaded with myself. I took a breath, "yeah definitely," I could feel my heart pounding in my chest like a drum.

Hoseok smiled. "So," he began, "your professor told me you need work on your pronunciation." He took a seat and gestured for me to sit across from him.

I stalked to the chair and took the seat, looking at him carefully.

“Read through this entire packet,” he said, “I’ll stop you to address the proper pronunciation.”

I stared into his eyes, not hearing a single thing he was saying. His eyes slanted just perfectly towards his nose and his soft pink lips looked even sweeter as he talked.

“Brianne... Brianne?” He snapped me from my thoughts.

I blinked rapidly, “uh, right- sorry,” I said, nervous beads of sweat collecting on my back. I picked up the paper and began reading. Some time went by and he only stopped me a few times. Not bad, I guess.

He stopped me again. I finally made it to the fourth page, even though I’ve sat here for at least an 30 minutes.

“yeoboseyo,” he said, pooching his lips into a fine ‘O’ shape.

I tried to mimic him, “yeoboseyo.”

He shook his head. He reached over and put his hand on my face- his thumb on the right cheek and index and middle finger on the left cheek. He squeezed his fingers together, forcing my lips to make the ‘O’ shape. “yeoboseyo,” he said.

“yeoboseyo,” I repeated.

He smiled, his eyes glittering like the stars. “Very good,” he said. He leaned in and pressed his lips against mine, kissing me.

I shut my eyes, taking in the fiery passion. They were just as soft as they looked and they tasted delicious.

“Brianne?” Hoseok said, his eyebrows furrowed in confusion, “what are you doing?”

I looked at him. His hands were back at his sides, yet my lips stuck out, leaning towards him for a kiss. I stood up quickly and grabbed my papers. “Uh... I have to go,” I said hurrying out of the room. I could feel the dampness of my shirt from the nervous sweats. An imaginary kiss? My cheeks burned in total humiliation. I ran into the girls’ bathroom and leaned on the counter. I hung my head, groaning in agony. “How could I do that?”

I stared at myself in the mirror. I can’t go back out there. I’ll have to live in this bathroom. Drink toilet water and use paper towels for a blanket. I shook my head at my silly thinking. That’s impossible, I told myself. Splashing water on my, I took a deep breath and gave myself a sure nod. It wasn’t that bad right? I stood at the door of the bathroom and poked my head out, peeping around. Coast is clear. I slowly stepped out and shut the door behind me, tip-toeing- as if walking on feathers. Please don’t let him see I begged.

“Brianne,” called a voice.

I froze. Oh no. With a shaky breath, I slowly turned to see who called my name. *Oh no*, I thought at the sight. It's him. Hot tutor Hoseok. He approached me with a quick step, waving me down. He looked so good in his slacks and button up. Too good, actually.

"Are you okay?" he asked as he approached me. "You had me worried, running off like that." He stood in front of me- maybe a foot away. He stared, waiting for me to answer him.

I just stared at him. First at his dark and enchanting eyes then- at his adorably wide ears. It was too much. It was all too much.

"Listen," he said, sticking his hands in his pockets and shifting his weight to one leg, "I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable-"

Run away! I screamed in my head. I took off, cutting him off. I ran to the door, as if a bear were chasing me and- *Bang!* I hit my foot on the door, stubbing my same toe again. I grasped my toe, hopping on one foot as a grimace found its way on my face. I glanced at Hoseok who looked totally bewildered.

"Are you okay?" he asked, walking towards me with a helpful hand.

I stood up straight and pushed through the door, looking over my shoulder at him one more time. He looked so confused. I ran faster, or at least as fast as I could limp- nervous sweats covering my body. I sprinted to the bus stop and hid in the shadow of the waiting area.

"Oh gosh," I covered my face with my hands and huffed.

His beauty, I shook my head, it's so overwhelming. And he is just so... nice. With a sigh, I shook my head at myself. Everytime I'm within a foot of him I just- I lose it! I was so angry with myself. That was undoubtedly the most embarrassing moment of my life.

"If I could just not be weird for five minutes," I said to myself, as the bus pulled up.

After a brief journey, I found my way back to my apartment and flopped into my bed in defeat. I lied there, staring at the ceiling, I'll just give up. Pack my bags and move back home. No one will ever know what happened and I can just forget this whole thing. I don't need to finish my degree anyway. I wrapped myself in my blanket, trying to hide from the shame. I don't know if I can sleep this one off.

The morning came up quick and I found myself dragging my feet to class, as I did every day, squeezing past everyone in the room and taking my seat at the very end of the row. I haven't seen Hoseok all day. Thank God.

"So, class," the professor said, as the last student stumbled in late, "the camping trip is coming up next month," she said.

Ugh- I hate camping. I forgot this was on the syllabus.

"This is a mandatory field trip and will count towards your final grade. We will be studying the Korean wilderness and history."

Someone raised their hand, “what does this have to do with learning Korean?”

“History is a vital to understanding the Korean language,” the professor said, wagging her finger in assurance. There is a sheet here that tells you what to bring.” She said pointing at a stack of papers, “pick one up before you leave today. We’ll be staying in two cabins, girls in one and boys in the other.” She tapped her chin, thinking if she needed to say anything else.

I rolled my eyes exasperatedly. Great, now I *have* to go camping? I shook my head. Worst Korean class ever. At least there’s cabins and not tents

“Everyone turn to page 102 in your book,” the professor began.

I dropped my face into the hands and screamed internally, will the torture ever end?

Chapter 3

I dragged my suitcase and my feet to the bus. We were taking the bus to the airport and then a plane to Hallyeohaesang National Park. About a month passed since I saw Hoseok. In fact, I almost forgot what he looked like. I was trying to put that day behind me anyway. I grumbled under my breath as I struggled to push my suitcase in compartment at the bottom of the bus. I hobbled onto the bus and immediately took the seat second to the front next to my friend Misoo. I didn't look around at the other bus occupants.

"Anyoung," said Misoo.

"Anyoung," I said tiredly. It was early in the morning and the sun was just beginning to rise.

"Ready for some camping?" She said with her usual cheery disposition.

I rested my head onto the seat in front of me, "not really."

Misoo took out her book and cracked it open, "you just need a nap."

"Brianne," said a voice.

My eyes fluttered open, looking up groggily, "where am I?"

"You're getting off the bus," said the professor, "everyone else is already making their way into the airport."

I looked over at Misoo. Her book was over her face as she snoozed away.

"Misoo," said the professor.

Misoo jerked awake, her book falling to the ground. The professor walked off the bus and grabbed her suitcase, walking into the airport. I scooted off the cushion and waddled off the bus to my bag- stiff. Misoo grabbed her suitcase and rolled it to the door. I followed closely behind. We got our boarding passes, went through security check, and finally arrived at our gate. I dropped into the chair with a dramatic sigh. What a trip. And it was only half over. We sat with our class but at least half were missing.

"Brianne, Misoo," my professor said, walking over to us, "some people went to grab something to eat since no meal comes on the plane ride, you two might think to do the same."

Misoo nodded and waved me on, "let's go."

We left our things with the others and headed to a coffee shop that was nearby.

I approached the counter, "Uhm- can I please have a medium lemonade and a ham, egg, and cheese sandwich." I said to the cashier.

The cashier pressed some buttons on the Cash register, "8,623 won."

I handed the cashier the money and walked away.

“Hey,” said the cashier, waving her hand, “your change.”

“Oh- right,” I hurried back and took the change with an awkward wave. “See you on the streets,” I said with a nod before walking to the pickup counter.

Mi-Su ordered an extra-large coffee and an order of hash browns. It took only a few minutes for our food to be ready. We got our food, taking a seat in the back to chow down.

“This plant,” Misoo said pointing at the picture on her phone, “is also poisonous. Don’t touch it.” She warned, wagging her finger.

The sound of the intercom came on in the background, “Flight 795 now boarding all sections at gate G23.”

Flight 795. Isn’t that ours?

“Look,” said Misoo, interrupting my thoughts.

I rolled my eyes then squinted hard at the photo. She was showing me pictures of common poisonous plants, but they all looked the same to me- green and leafy. I sipped on the last of my lemonade. “Are you done now?”

Misoo glared at me, “this is important,” she said sternly. She straightened her round glasses, “there are a lot of dangerous things in the forest.” Strands of her dark brown hair hung at the sides of her face, coming loose from her bun.

“I’m not a child,” I said, tossing my hand up. “I think I’ll be fine.”

Misoo tucked her phone into her fanny pack, ignoring me. “I packed baby wipes, hand sanitizer, band-aids, bug spray, tissues, hand lotion, trail mix.” she paused and looked at me, zipping her bag, “and of course, Benadryl.” She patted her handy dandy pack with a satisfied smile.

The intercom came on again, “final call for Flight 795 at gate G23.”

Misoo looked at me with wide eyes, “that’s our flight!” She jumped up, making her chair skid backwards. “Hurry,” she waved her arm vigorously as she hurried to our gate.

Leaving my trash on my table, I chased after Misoo, cursing my comfy yet slow shoes for making it difficult. I caught up to her, choking on my breath. She grabbed her carry-on where our professor waited, impatiently tapping her foot.

“Nice of you all to show up,” she said, picking up her carry on and showing the staff her passport and boarding pass. She disappeared in the tunnel, her carryon rolling next to her.

Misoo and I did the same, rushing through the tunnel to find our seats on the plane- in the back and right next to the bathrooms. As we walked to our seats, I swore I saw someone whose hair looked just like Hot Tutor Hoseok but the man had his face down on his pillow, so I really couldn’t tell. The seats were large and comfortable but didn’t have much leg room. I settled into the seat and turned on the tiny screen in front me, scrolling through the movie options. Old Boy,

Train to Busan, nothing I haven't seen. I put my earbuds in and closed my eyes, thinking about the person I passed earlier. What is it was Hot tutor Hoseok? Nah, no way. I told myself. I would die if he was here. Besides, why would he be here anyway?

My body bounced as the plane hit turbulence, jolting me awake. The captain said something in Korean- nothing I could understand. The plane flight was only two hours long, but it I was on the plane for hours. I couldn't even fall asleep without being woken up. I unlocked my phone screen to pick the next song- I Need U by BTS. Suddenly, a bob from the turbulence made my phone jump from my hand. Really? I said in my head in annoyance. I reached down to pick my phone up, shimmying my fingers forward as far they would go with a grunted. They wouldn't reach. I stuck my foot under the seat in front of me and pointed my toes, tapping around to feel for my phone.

Dang it! I still couldn't reach it. I slipped halfway out of my seat and pushed my foot as far as it would go, my back against the bottom of the seat. I tapped around my foot to find where my phone was, my arms sticking up awkwardly in the small space. I closed my eyes and groaned louder in frustration when I still couldn't reach it.

"Brienne?" A voice interrupted my mission.

I opened my and my heartbeat shot into my throat at the sight. No... Hot tutor Hoseok- I thought in dismay and awe. He's here. My mouth gapped open at him. His messy brown hair gently brushed his eyelids, tickling his eyebrows when he blinked. His brown eyes stared at me, his pale pink lips perched in confusion.

"Uhm," he smiled awkwardly at me, probably wondering why I was in that funny position but still trying to be nice.

"Oh- um," I exclaimed, sitting up in the chair as fast as I could. "I uh," I pointed to where my phone was, "dropped my phone."

"Oh," he bent down to pick up my phone, his hair sweeping down with him. He grabbed the phone and held it out for me to take.

I looked at him, then at the phone, then back at him.

He smiled at me.

Oh goodness. I felt my body shudder at his smile. His white teeth accented his soft, pale face perfectly. My mind began racing, what do I do? I need to run. My eyes darted around. There was no were to go. I can't escape- wait- maybe there is a parachute somewhere. No, no, that would never work- I'd never stick the landing. Oh gosh, what do I do.

"Take the phone," a voice said.

"What," I mumbled.

Suddenly, my friend Misoo jabbed me with a hard elbow, "take the phone," she said sternly.

“oh,” I mumbled, “uh.” I reached out for the phone. Hot tutor Hoseok’s fingers brushed mine as he relinquished it to my grasp. “Thank you.”

Hoseok smiled kindly at me, “you’re welcome.” He nodded towards the bathroom, “if you’ll excuse me.” He sauntered away to the bathroom, one hand coolly in his pocket.

“What’s with you?” asked Misoo,

I slumped my head onto the chair in front of me and sighed loudly, my cheeks burning with embarrassment. “So many things,” I said.

Misoo closed her eyes and went back to sleep. My thoughts churned in my head, like a whirlpool. He is so good-looking. Why am I so awkward around him? Why is he so nice to me? He’ll be there the whole week? Oh no, this is not good. Then, the motivation suddenly hit me. I’m going to talk to him. What? I shook my head at the thought. No, that’s a terrible idea. The thought stayed there, shaking me. Maybe I should? With a nervous huff, I gave myself a small nod. Yeah, I’m gonna talk to him. With perfect timing, the bathroom door slid open and Hot Tutor Hoseok stepped out, passing my seat.

“Hi,” I exclaimed.

Hoseok turned to me, one eyebrow lifted in confusion. He smiled slightly and did a curt bow, “Anyounghaseyo.”

“Uh,” I stammered, “I didn’t know you were going to be on this trip.”

He tossed his hands up, “last minute arrangements. They needed another staff member there and I’m pretty good at camping.”

I melted at his words, they came from his throat like honey. “That’s really wonderful.”

“I’m glad you think so,” he said. Another thump from the turbulence interrupted their conversation. “I guess I should be heading back to my seat. See you later,” he said with a smile before making his way to his seat.

Maybe I can do this after all. I smiled at myself, good job, Brianne, I thought, baby steps.

Chapter 4

The plane shuddered as its wheels brushed the ground, spooking me slightly. I groaned in relief when the seat belt light turned off, jumping out of my seat to grab my overhead bag and swinging it over my shoulder. I had enough of this cramped airplane. Misoo and I waited for the people in front of us to go before taking up the back of the line, shuffling out the plane and onto the ramp. The moist air bellowed under me when I crossed the threshold, making me immediately sweat. Oh goodness, I thought with dread. It's hotter than I thought it would be.

The professor counted heads of the group as we gathered near the restrooms. I placed my bag on the ground before taking hoodies off and wrapping it around my waist. The professor nodded, satisfied with the ground count, before leading the group to arrivals. I glanced over my shoulder. Hoseok was bent over, fixing his shoelace, muscles rippling through his shirt. He looked so beautiful, dropped on one knee, his hair gently brushing his forehead. A sharp elbow snapped me from my lustful thoughts.

"Take a picture it will last longer," said Misoo, following the teacher who was already halfway down the hall.

I glanced over my shoulder before hustling to catch up to the group. Hoseok following behind me, opening his mouth to speak. Oh no, he's going to talk to me. I picked up my pace when I saw him smile at me, waving a hand. I'm not ready to talk to him yet. I have to build up to it. I glanced over my shoulder again. He was still right there. I started jogging. He can't talk to me not now. I'll mess up!

"Uh, Brianna?" Hoseok said, waving a hand at me.

Oh goodness. He's talking. Now I was running. I can't talk yet. I can't. I sped past the group, a hollering wind following me. I kept running. I already started so I can't stop now. I ran past a few restaurants and a help desk until I saw arrivals. I jetted through the sliding doors and into the shortest line I saw. Panting hard, I showed the airport agent my boarding pass and passport, walking through metal detector before hurrying to baggage claim, taking a few deep breaths to steady myself. He must be gone now, I thought, dabbing my forehead with the back of my hand, wiping away the cool drops of sweat.

"Brianna!"

Dread gripped me, gluing me to the floor. I froze when I heard his voice. A warm hand touched my shoulder, turning me around. It was him.

"I-" he paused, "you didn't hear me calling you?"

"Uh," I fumbled over my words, "I mean- yeah but, no."

Confusion grew on his face as I spoke gibberish. "You left your bag." He held up my tiny backpack.

I shuffled my shoulders. "Oh," I said, finally realizing my bag wasn't *on* my shoulders. "Uh," I mumbled as he put the bag in my hand.

He rubbed the back of his neck, “is everything okay with you? I mean-” he said awkwardly, “you just act strange around me sometimes. Do I make you uncomfortable?”

“No, no,” I said quickly. He makes me uncomfortable- but in a good way. “I’m just,” I paused, “kind of awkward sometimes.”

Hoseok chuckled, relief washing over him. “Oh okay,” he nodded, “I understand. I just wanted to be sure.”

I smiled awkwardly at him, glancing down at my toes.

“I know this trip is supposed to be for fun but maybe we can do some tutoring since our last lesson got cut short.”

I sucked in a breath, “yeah.” I practically choked on the word. Just the two of us? Alone? In the woods? My heart rushed at the thought.

“Brienne,” Misoo’s voice interrupted the conversation. She waved, pointing to my suitcase she already had in her possession.

“Uh, I guess,” I mumbled

“I’ll see you on the bus,” Hoseok with a smile, before grabbing his suitcase off the conveyor belt. His muscled rippled through his thin cotton shirt, hardly putting in any effort to pick up the heavy bag.

Ugh. I groaned, watching him walk pass Misoo. His butt fit perfectly in his jeans, squeezing each cheek as he moved. Dragging my feet, I walked with Misoo, following everyone to the rental vans. *Why am I so awkward?* I couldn’t stand myself sometimes.

The professor split the group with her hands, “this group to van one, this group to van two, and this group to van three.”

My eyes darted. Of course- Hoseok was in my group. Okay- that’s fine, I thought as everyone threw their luggage into the Mercedes Sprinter vans. I just have to avoid sitting next to him. I followed behind Misoo as we piled into the van. We took the second row, those behind me filling in the first. The last empty seat was next to me and the last person- Hoseok.

I sucked in a breath as he stepped in. “Misoo,” I whispered, “switch seats with me.”

“Huh?” Confusion scribbled on her face. “Why?”

“Just switch,” I said, frantic sweats gathering on my forehead.

“No, I like the window seat.”

“Misoo,” my frantic words faded to mumbles as Hoseok plopped down next to me.

“Is this seat taken?” he joked with me.

“With your butt cheeks,” I mumbled before chuckling awkwardly.