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# HYYH The Notes

## English Translations

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[TheBTSEffect.com](#)

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This file contains my English translations for the HYYH Notes from Love Yourself HER to Map of the Soul: 7, as well as summaries of the translated Notes found in *HYYH The Notes Book 1*. All notes are listed in chronological order by the date on the Note.

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Any and all errors are my own. A new version of this file will be uploaded if I notice mistakes. New Notes will be added when available.

**Content warning:** contains some sensitive topics, including: suicide/suicidal ideation, abuse, alcohol use, and homicide. References are not overly graphic, but please use caution.

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## Hoseok

30 August YEAR 9

I rubbed my eyes and got up. The hyungs gestured at me to follow them quietly. Honestly, I wanted to sleep some more, but I just listened to the hyungs. I stealthily escaped the room and passed through the hall. My surroundings were pitch-black. I wondered what time it was; other than knowing it was way past bedtime, I didn't have any information. We climbed the stairs and opened the iron gate at the roof. The hyungs were surprised at the creaking sound and stopped in place, and I did too. I looked around at my surroundings.

We huddled together and sat on the roof. "Why did we come up here?" At my question, the eldest hyung answered: "Just wait a bit, Jung Hoseok." It was in that moment. I heard a popping sound, and the northern sky lit up. I closed my eyes in surprise and shrunk back. I also thought I could smell something burning. "Wow!" someone shouted out, and the eldest hyung scolded them to be quiet. I opened my eyes slightly and looked up at the northern sky. There was another bang, and stars appeared in the night sky. "Not stars, fireworks," hyung said.

The fireworks continued to billow up. I laid down on the roof and looked up at the stars, flames, and flowers bursting in the sky. "Jung Hoseok is crying, he's crying!" I heard the hyungs making fun of me. I wiped my eyes with my sleeve. But it was in vain, as I shed more tears.

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## Taehyung

28 February YEAR 10

Someone was crouched down in front of the supermarket. He was an older boy I hadn't seen before. He was playing with Dongyi. He petted him and gave him something that looked like bread. We met eyes for a moment, which startled me, so I looked forward and kept walking. I hid in an alley and looked out from it. "Ugh. Who is that?" I put my hand in my pocket, touching the plastic bag of ham and toast. "Hmph. I had a hard time hiding this from Mom."

"Oh? Taehyung is here. Why are you like that? Didn't you come to play with Dongyi?" I jumped in surprise. It was the shop owner. The guy from earlier lifted his head and looked at me. Ugh, it's because of the shop owner. Since I was caught anyway, I approached the guy. "Who are you?" "Me?" The guy looked at me with an expression like he didn't know what he should say. "Why are you playing with Dongyi?" "Huh?" Again, the guy didn't speak.

That's how I got to talk to him. "My dad said when he makes a lot of money and we move into a big house, I can have a dog. I'm going to take Dongyi to live with me. Hyung, don't you dare be greedy." He nodded his head and said "Sounds good." "Hyung, do you not have money? So you can't raise a dog?" At my words, he looked at me and asked, "Money?" Then he turned his head and answered. "I can't raise a dog." "Try begging your dad. My mom says that dads are weak to begging." Hyung just nodded his head while petting Dongyi. He muttered while doing so. "That's nice." I asked again, "So, who are you? What's your name?" Hyung didn't look at me, but answered, "Me? Kim Seokjin."

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## **Hoseok**

23 July YEAR 10

When I had counted to four, I heard the sound of laughter like an auditory hallucination. In the next moment, the me from my childhood brushed by, holding someone's hands. I quickly turned around to look, but it was just my classmates staring at me. "Hoseok," the teacher called my name. Then I realized where I was. It was math class. I was in the middle of counting the fruits drawn in the textbook. Five, six. I counted again, but as I kept going, my voice shook and my hands began to sweat. The memory from that time emerged frequently.

I don't remember my mom's face from that day well. I only recall her giving me a chocolate bar after I went around the amusement park. "Hoseok, count to ten and then open your eyes." When I finished counting and opened my eyes, my mom wasn't there. I waited and waited, but she didn't return. The last I counted to was nine. I only had to count one more, but my voice wouldn't come out. My ears rang and my surroundings became foggy. My teacher gestured for me to keep going. My friends were staring at me. I couldn't remember my mom's face. It was like my mom would never come to find me, if I counted one more.

With that, I collapsed to the floor.

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## **Taehyung**

29 December YEAR 10

I took off my shoes, threw down my bag, and went into the main room. My dad was really there. I didn't think about how long it had been or where he had come from. I thoughtlessly jumped into my dad's arms. I don't remember well what happened next. Whether the smell of the alcohol was first, whether the cursing was first, whether he slapped my cheek first. I didn't know what was happening. There was the smell of alcohol, heavy breathing, and bad breath. His eyes were bloodshot and his beard was growing in uneven. He slapped my cheek with a large hand. He hit my cheek again asking what I was looking at. Then he lifted me into the air. His bright red eyes were scary, but I was so scared I couldn't cry. That wasn't my dad. No, it was my dad. But, it wasn't. My two feet shook in the air. In the next moment, after hitting my head harshly against the wall, and I fell to the floor. It felt like my head had burst. My field of vision flickered and soon became pitch black. My head was filled with only the sound of my dad's wheezing breath.

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## **Jimin**

6 April YEAR 11

I left through the front gate of the arboretum. As the day passed it had become colder, but I was happy. Even though it was a picnic day, my mom and dad were busy. So at first, I was a little sullen. But I received compliments in the flower drawing competition, and my friends' mothers said "Jimin's quite mature isn't he?" From that time, I thought I was a bit cool.

"Jimin-ah, wait here. I'll come here soon," my teacher said after the picnic was over, but I didn't wait. I had confidence that I could go alone. I held the strap of my bag tightly with both hands and walked maturely. It seemed like everyone was watching me, so I straightened my shoulders more. It was some time before the rain started. My friends, the mothers, and people who would look after me weren't there, and my legs hurt. I covered my head with my bag and crouched under a tree. The rain became stronger bit by bit, and there were no people passing by. In the end, I started to run in the rain. I couldn't see any houses or shops. But the place I arrived at was the back gate of the arboretum. The side door was open, and I could see a storage room inside.

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## **Seokjin**

21 July YEAR 12

Seokjin sits outside the airport in the car with his father's driver. His father was supposed to come see him off before he flies to L.A. Seokjin says he's always been alone because his father was always busy and his mother was indifferent. He says his mother passed away not long ago, and his father told him not to cry. His father decided to send him to his maternal grandmother's house in L.A. Seokjin's father doesn't show up at the airport, so he has to leave alone.

*\*NOTE: This Note is from HYYH The Notes Book 1, so this is just a summary of the content of the Note. The book was published by BigHit and sold on the official shop.*

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## **Jungkook**

30 September YEAR 12

I walked towards the place where people were gathering. What's going on? It's the first time I've seen people crowded in one place that isn't an amusement park or a school. I felt scared by the sound of their loud talking. Someone passing by said, "What is this? How can I live, being scared like this?" I pushed through the gaps in people's legs and went forward. I was scared, but I was also curious.

There was a huge hole. There was a huge hole like that in the ground. It was called a sink hole. I went forward a bit. I wanted to see what was in that hole. It was in the middle of the day, but I couldn't see inside the hole well. On the side where the soil had collapsed, only things like tree roots were protruding out. I went forward another step. "Be careful!" someone shouted from behind. The front of my sneaker went into the hole. As the earth collapsed, my center of gravity faltered. I stepped back in surprise. It was that moment. It looked like something was sharply sparkling inside. That thing was like a light, but also seemed like there was another hole inside that hole.

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## **Namjoon**

21 May YEAR 15

I quietly went up to the front entrance. I grabbed the doorknob and turned it carefully, looking for any signs. I didn't hear anything. I stuck my head in and looked around, but the house was dark. I took one step inside. I called for my mom, but no one answered. I was going to turn the light on, but I looked around again. It was past 9:00pm. There was no way no one was home. I called out again, but there was only silence.

I had come home later than usual. Normally, I'm supposed to help my mom as soon as school ended, but I wanted to play around with my friends for once. So, without contacting anyone, I came home late. But, no one was home. I felt strangely cold and covered my arms with my palms, and I just stood in the dark living room.

Then, the phone suddenly rang. The chill permeated through me. The phone was ringing, but I had a strange feeling that I shouldn't answer it. It was an ominous feeling that if I answered the phone, everything would change, that I wouldn't be able to return to the "me" of now. But the phone kept ringing, and I ended up in front of it. Then, I picked up the receiver.

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## **Yoongi**

25 July YEAR 15

“Yoongi-yah.”\* As soon as I entered the living room, I sat down in front of the piano. I didn’t even have time to wipe my sweat away. I wiped my sticky hands on my t-shirt. My mom spread out the sheet music. I couldn’t see the sheet music well. I blinked. I had spent an hour running under the blazing sun. My heart was pounding, and I couldn’t really hear my breathing. Sweat ran down my back, soaking the small of my back. My fingers spasmed and trembled.

“Min Yoongi.” I came to my senses at the sound of my mom’s voice. “Is it time for you to compose your own music, when you can’t even play Chopin correctly?” Mom said while tapping on the sheet music. What did I play just now? I couldn’t recall it well. “Again, from the top,” Mom said in a low voice. Again. Again. Again. I kept playing the same page. Sweat kept flowing out of my body that hadn’t yet cooled down. My mind was blank, and I felt like I was going to throw up. Maybe it was because of that. I ignored the sheet music, ignored my mom, and put the feelings that were bursting inside of me into my fingers. Mom grabbed my hands, tearing them away from the keyboard and said: “This isn’t the sentiment!”

“Please stop!” I shouted, suddenly jumping out of my seat. Mom stared at me, like she was frozen. “Please stop. I’m asking you to stop.” I spat out any words I could. I jumped up and down in that spot and tore at my hair. Ultimately, I faced the piano, grabbed mom’s trophy, and threw it. One of the keys on the piano broke and bounced off my cheek.

*\*The suffix here is only used when calling the name of someone you’re close to (can be used by parents to children, as it is here). There’s no meaning to the suffix, it just attaches to names when someone is being addressed.*

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## **Namjoon**

21 June YEAR 16

Namjoon works a part-time job hanging up flyers as a middle school student. He rushes around trying to get the flyers up so that his boss won't be angry. He's worried about getting fired. He says his mother quit her job at a restaurant last week, and they really need to pay his father's medical bills as well as the overdue electricity and gas bills.

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## **Yoongi**

19 September YEAR 16

The fire raged scarlet red. The house I lived in until this morning was engulfed in flames. The people who knew me came running and shouting something. The neighbors took short, quick steps. They said the fire truck couldn't come in because they couldn't secure an entrance. I stopped and stood at that place.

The end of summer. It was the start of fall. The sky was blue and the air was dry. What I should think, what I should feel, what I should do, I didn't know any of it. However, I thought "Oh...mom." In the next moment, the house collapsed with a thud. The house engulfed in flames, no, the house that had now become the flames, the roof, the columns, the walls, the room I lived in, collapsed like a house made of sand. I stared at the scene vacantly.

Someone pushed past me. They said the fire truck was coming through. Someone else grabbed me and asked something. That person looked me in the eye and shouted something, but I didn't hear any of it.

"Is there anyone inside?" I vacantly stared at that person. "Is your mom inside?" That person grabbed me by the shoulders and shook. I answered without knowing. "No. No one's inside." "What are you saying?" a neighborhood lady said. "Your mom? Where did your mom go?" "No one's inside." I also don't know what I was saying. Someone pushed sharply past me.

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## **Jimin**

20 August YEAR 17

It was a sunny day. The sky was blue, and the air was cool. I left home with Mom and Dad in the car. Exciting music was playing in the car, and I opened the rear window and stretched out my hand. Yellow ginkgo leaves were pouring down like rain. I moved my hand quickly to try to catch some of the falling ginkgo leaves, but I didn't succeed. As she turned around, Mom said, "Jimin, you'll get hurt like that. If you get hurt and can't go up on stage, what will we do?"

I walked up on stage. Pure white lights poured down on my head. The rhythm reverberated in the ground. I danced amongst countless friends. We surged up together, landed together, turned left again, and faced each other. Both my friends and I were out of breath. Even so, as we faced each other, we smiled. Applause rained down. I went towards the audience and bowed my head. Mom and Dad stood up and clapped. When they saw me, they smiled.

When I opened my eyes, I was looking up at the ceiling in the hospital. I teared up. I knew it was a dream, but I didn't want to wake up. For a bit longer, I wanted to remain amid that applause, underneath those ginkgo leaves, but the morning came without fail, and the dream disappeared.

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## **Jungkook**

11 September YEAR 17

Jungkook remembers his father leaving when he was seven years old. He overheard his father saying he couldn't bear it any longer and that he wanted to leave. His mother asked him not to leave and asked him about Jungkook. As he left, Jungkook's father said, "I'm completely empty, and there's nothing I can do for Jungkook." In the present, Jungkook says he waited ten days for a birthday card, but it never came. He looks at cards from previous years, and his mother scolds him for thinking a card would come. Jungkook says, "I was the world that was too heavy for him to bear—that world that he gave up on. A child who can never be the reason to endure it all. That was me."

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## **Namjoon**

2 May YEAR 18

I entered through the alleyway and saw the pile of furniture and household goods on the street. “Namjoon. What’s going on with that stuff over there?” my father breathed out. I was bringing my father back from the hospital. Even though the bus stop was only a hundred meters from our house, it was tough for my father to walk. I ran home. My mother, who was crouched down by the household goods that lined the wall, saw me and stood up. “Namjoon. What should we do?” My mother said that she had gotten into a fight with the son of the building owner, who had come to get the overdue rent my younger brother didn’t pay.

I accompanied my father to the warehouse behind the neighborhood supermarket. While I moved furniture, my mother organized things like food, drink, and tableware. The things that were in the two-room home piled up layer by layer in the warehouse. There were things we wanted to throw away too, but we’d need money in order to do that. When everything was finished, it was night. The small of my back was burning and I was sweating. My mother gave me chopsticks and told me to eat something, but I couldn’t.

The warehouse was stuffy, so I went outside and sat on the supermarket’s wooden bench. “Namjoon. Where did Namhyun go?” At my mother’s words, I yelled out “How should I know?” Namjoon. Namjoon. Namjoon. It was tiresome. I regretted telling my brother not to be discouraged and to keep on living. Even if we have to bear being in the warehouse for a few days, what should we do after that? I couldn’t think of anything. The supermarket owner put down a can of beer and went inside.

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## **Jimin**

10 December YEAR 18

At my mom's words that we were almost there, I wiped away the fog on the window with my sleeve. Outside the window, I saw a sign that said Songju Jeil Middle School. Mom said there weren't any schools in Moonhyeon I could go to, and she said that I didn't know how much of a relief it was that Songju Jeil Middle School would take me. By repeatedly being hospitalized and discharged, I moved around to various schools. How long will I be able to last at this school? In the midst of those thoughts, we passed the school gate and the schoolyard came into view. Maybe no one was there because of the cold. Mom stopped the car over where the pull-up bar and swings were.

I got out of the car and looked at the pull-up bar. When I look back on when I was younger, there's one memory that I recall especially vividly. A memory of a blue sky and white clouds, like out of a fairy tale, flying at me at a frightening speed. Before the events that occurred at the Flower Arboretum, I liked the playground to an unusual degree. According to mom, I would go out in the morning and play on the playground until evening. My favorite thing was the swing. If you stamped your feet powerfully, it would bring you dizzily close to the sky. Even though it was scary, I liked that dizzy feeling.

I became curious what it would feel like to turn the swing all the way around one day. None of the kids in the neighborhood could have done it. I told my friends to push me with all their might, and because I put in the strength of my whole body, I went higher and higher. The blue sky and white clouds rushed at me. The moment that I went the highest, I became dizzy and fell out of the swing. When I opened my eyes, I was lying in the sand. A handful of sand went in my mouth, and I thought my knee was bleeding, but strangely, it didn't hurt. I was just vexed that I couldn't do one full rotation on the swing.

Like I was privy to someone else's memory, I recalled the image of myself riding on the swing. Was the Park Jimin who rode the swing so zealously growing up in some place that I don't know, with that same appearance and personality? I looked at the swing with those thoughts, but I heard my mom calling to me. I faced the entrance of the school. Songju Jeil Middle School. It was my fifth school.

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## **Seokjin**

2 March YEAR 19

There was a humid smell coming from the principal's office I had followed my father into. Ten days after I returned from America, it was yesterday I heard that I would have to enter school a year behind, due to the difference in school systems. "Please take good care of him." When my father put his hand on my shoulder, I flinched before I knew it. "School is a dangerous place. We need to have regulations." The principal was looking directly at me. Each time the principal spoke, his wrinkled cheeks and the flesh around his mouth shook, and inside his dark lips it was completely dark red. "Don't you think so, Seokjin?" When I hesitated at the sudden question, my father squeezed the hand on my shoulder. His grip was to the extent that my neck muscles throbbed. "I believe that you will do well." The principal persistently kept eye contact, and my father put more strength bit by bit into his grip. I clenched my fist in the midst of pain that felt like my shoulder bone might break. My body trembled and I broke out in a cold sweat. "You certainly have to tell me. Seokjin has to become a good student." The principal looked at me without smiling. "Yes." When I barely squeezed out the answer, the pain disappeared for a moment. I could hear the sound of the principal and my father laughing. I couldn't raise my head. I looked down at my father's brown shoes and the principal's black ones. I didn't know where the light was coming in from, but it glimmered. I was afraid of that glimmer.

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## **Jimin**

12 March YEAR 19

Jimin says he's been transferred to several different schools because he's been in and out of the hospital. The kids at his new school ask him why he's there, when he lives farther away. He doesn't answer them. Jimin goes to the storage classroom that he's supposed to clean as punishment for being late to school. He hears other people in the storage classroom, the other boys he got in trouble with for being late. He starts to turn around, but Taehyung appears and asks if he's going in. He goes in and says there are seven of them. "Nobody asked questions. We just listened to music, read books, danced, and fooled around. It felt as if we'd been hanging out together forever."

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## **Yoongi**

15 March YEAR 19

Today the food was delicious. It wasn't special, just a school meal, so it was a strange thing. I didn't show my emotions. If that came out, it wouldn't suit me. As ever, I was sloppily sitting in a chair and holding my silverware as if it were tiresome. But, today's food was for sure delicious. Taehyung and Jungkook hit the curtains to let sunlight in, switched seats, made a fuss, and the wind from that kicked up dust. Namjoon shouted at them to be quiet even though it's time to eat. As I lifted my spoon I had a thought. How long has it been since I've had a meal with a comfortable heart?

To my knowledge, our family didn't talk at the dinner table. We also didn't say things like how it was delicious, ask to be given more, or that we ate well. For my family, eating was something we had to do to maintain everyday life, nothing more, nothing less. "Min Yoongi. Don't be noisy at the dinner table." I'm not sure when my father said that, and I can't remember now. Only the loud "tak!" sound of silverware being put down on the table remained. He didn't raise his voice or get mad. No, I don't think he even looked at me. Nevertheless, I shut my mouth. I cut off whatever I had been saying and instead stuck a big spoonful of food in my mouth. Then I bit my cheek. A somewhat bloody taste came out. It hurt and I thought tears would come out suddenly. However, I didn't say that I was hurt. I couldn't talk at the dinner table. I chewed the bloody rice against my will.

Someone picked up a side dish from my tray. I grimaced without realizing it, but it wasn't that I minded or that I was annoyed. That's just my general reaction for everything. Hoseok said, "Yoongi is angry. Taehyung, what are you going to do?" and Taehyung exaggerated pretending to be sorry. Words that were just like Hoseok and Taehyung, not even slightly contrary. "It's fine. Eat it all." I spit out the words without realizing it. Then another boisterous conversation came, and bursts of laughter. No one noticed that I had spoken during that meal.

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## **Jungkook**

28 May YEAR 19

“What are your dreams, hyungs?” At my words, they turned to look. “I mean, I ask because I have to write about future hopes.” As I spoke vaguely, Seokjin said “Well...I don’t think I have a dream. If there’s something I want, it’s just to become a good person?” Hyung blurted out his words with embarrassment. Then, Yoongi, who had been lying on the piano bench, said with an uninterested tone “It’s okay if you don’t have dreams. I don’t have dreams. I’ll just become anything.” At Yoongi’s words, everyone burst out laughing.

“I’m going to become a superhero. I’m going to save the world from the villains,” Taehyung said as he stood on a chair and faced the sky with his arms raised in a pose. Hoseok scolded him, telling him to come down quickly lest he hurt himself while acting up. Then he added, “I want to find my mom and live happily. Becoming happy, that’s my dream.” While he said that, he had a very happy-looking smile. “So you’re unhappy right now?” It was Jimin who said that. Hoseok said, “Is that how it is?” while showing a ridiculous expression like he was worrying. Then, he faced Jimin and asked him. “What’s your dream?” “Me?” Jimin blinked like he was flustered and answered, “In kindergarten I wanted to become president, but I don’t really know what I wanted to be after that time.”

Now only Namjoon was left. Hyung, who could feel everyone’s eyes on him, shrugged his shoulders and opened his mouth. “I want to say good words, but I don’t really have a dream either. I wish they’d raise my hourly wage at my part-time job.” I nodded and looked down at my report. The paper about future hopes was divided into students and school parents. What did I want to be? I couldn’t think of anything to write down.

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## Yoongi

12 June YEAR 19

I left school thoughtlessly, but I really didn't have any place to go. The day was hot, I didn't have any money, and I didn't have anything to do. Namjoon was the one who suggested we go to the sea. The younger ones seemed to be excited, I wasn't for or against the idea. "Do you have money?" At my words, Namjoon got them all to empty their pockets. Some coins, some bills, we couldn't go. I think Taehyung said "We can walk." "Please think about it." Namjoon's expression said, and everyone laughed while talking about useless things and pretending to tumble about the street. I wasn't in the mood to respond and lagged behind. The sunlight was hot. Because it was midday, the trees along the street couldn't make shade. Above the road without a sidewalk, cars passed in a cloud of dust.

"Let's go there." This time too it was Taehyung. Or was it Hoseok? I didn't see it well because I wasn't interested, but it was one of those two. As I walked with my head down preoccupied by the ground, I almost ran into someone and fell down, so I lifted my head. Jimin stood stuck in that spot. The muscles in his face trembled as if he had seen something scary. "Are you okay?" I asked, but it seemed he didn't hear me. Where Jimin was looking stood a sign that said Flower Arboretum 2.2km.

"I don't want to walk." I heard Jungkook's words. Sweat dripped down Jimin's face. He looked terrified and like he was about to collapse. What is it? I felt weird. "Park Jimin," I called, but as expected he didn't move at all. I lifted my head and looked at the sign again.

"Hey, it's hot today, what is it with this arboretum? Let's go to the sea," I said as if uninterested. I don't know what kind of place the Flower Arboretum was, but I don't think we should have gone. I don't know the reason, but there was a strange sense around Jimin. "I said we're short on money," Hoseok answered at my words. "I said let's walk," Taehyung chipped in. "If we walk to the train station, I think we'll manage," Namjoon said. "Instead we'll have to starve for dinner." Jungkook and Taehyung made crying noises and Seokjin laughed. After everyone faced towards the train station again, Jimin began moving again. Walking with his head down and shoulders bent, Jimin was like a very small child. I looked up again at the sign. Flower Arboretum, the five characters (of the name) were gradually receding.

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## **Jungkook**

12 June YEAR 19

All seven of the guys arrive at the train station by the sea and go down to the beach. Jungkook says he's still awkward at expressing his feelings, so he still feels out of place around the others. Hoseok asks if they want to walk to a rock—it's a rock he looked up online, where you stand on top of it and yell out your dream so that it will come true. It's a long walk, so Yoongi declines, saying he doesn't have a dream anyway. Taehyung says he wants to go.

They walk through the blistering heat to get to the rock. Jungkook recalls how he previously asked the others what their dreams were. Seokjin wanted to be a good person, Yoongi said it was okay not to have a dream, Hoseok wanted to be happy, and he can't recall what Namjoon said. He questions why they are walking to this rock when none of them really have dreams to work towards. Yoongi asks him what his dream is, and Jungkook says he never thought about it. Then Jungkook asks what a dream even is, and Yoongi says he guesses it's something you want to achieve. Hoseok reads off the dictionary definitions for "dream" and they talk a bit about those. "That's weird. How can something that you want to achieve most in your life and something that is unlikely to come true both be called a dream?" Yoongi says.

Jungkook looks at his nails, which he had been biting, and notes that he had a habit of hurting himself since he was a child. He remembers slicing his finger on a knife, and how his mother took him to the doctor but didn't take care of him when they got home—she was like that after his father left. Jungkook admits to purposefully pressing his wound in order to feel pain. "It sometimes hurt so much that I was close to tears. But it also helped me feel awake again. Even now, I sometimes feel hollow. Everything seems meaningless and all the energy drains out of me."

They wonder why they can't find the rock, and Jimin finds an article on his phone that says a construction company planned to build a luxury resort there, and they blew the rock up because it blocked the view. They're all a bit let down, but they try to brush it off by saying things like "We didn't have any dreams in the first place" and "It's a luxury for us to dream."

The loud sound of a drill interrupts them as construction resumes. Jungkook asks Yoongi: "Is the world tough for you too?" but Yoongi can't hear him. He tries again: "Do you want to give up on this world too?" Yoongi says something, but Jungkook can't hear him. Then, they all shout out their dreams towards the sea, but they can't hear each other. The drill stops abruptly and they all rush to stop yelling, and the only word Jungkook can make out is "please" from Seokjin. They all laugh and then Seokjin says they should take a photo. They take a photo with the sea as the

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background, and Seokjin later gives it to Jungkook when he asks for it, after writing June 12 on the back. He tells Jungkook his dream will come true.

\*NOTE: This Note is from HYYH The Notes Book 1, so this is just a summary of the content of the Note. The book was published by BigHit and sold on the official shop.

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## Seokjin

25 June YEAR 19

A flowerpot, that I don't know who brought, occupied the space in front of the window in the storage classroom. Among the younger guys, who would bring a flowerpot? I pulled out my cell phone. In the storage classroom that's always dark because there's no electricity, blades of grass could be seen in contrast to the cloudy light that comes through the dirty window. The photo I took with my cell phone didn't come out well. It wasn't just because it was a cell phone. It's something I always think, how pictures can't capture things as a human eye does.

As I approached, I could see the H below the flowerpot. I lifted the flowerpot. The writing "Hoseok's flowerpot" appeared. I chuckled. If you wonder who among the younger guys would bring a flowerpot, it could be no one but Hoseok. After I put the flowerpot down so that it covered everything up to the H, I looked around at my surroundings. I wasn't aware of it until now, but the windowsills were covered with doodles. It wasn't just the windowsills, there were doodles on the walls and the ceiling too. Pass in school, or die. The name of someone's unrequited love. Dates, and countless names that were unreadable now.

This classroom wasn't a storage room from the start. Students came to school here every day, had their classes, and by the end of the day, it would have emptied out. Throughout school vacation, it would be empty, but on the first day of school, students would have noisily crowded in. At that time too, were there students like us who would be late, receive punishments, and skip class? Were there teachers who cruelly inflicted violence, and never-ending tests and homework? And was there someone like me? Someone who talked to the principal about their friends.

In the midst of this, I thought whether my father's name would be here too. This place was my father's alma mater. My father was a person who believed that attending the same high school and college from generation to generation gave dignity to family traditions. As I skimmed over the names with my eyes, I discovered my father's name. Around the middle of the left wall. It was in between several names. Below that, this sentence was written: Everything started here.

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## **Jimin**

30 August YEAR 19

While Hoseok was on the phone, I played around by kicking the dirt floor covered with his shadow. While smiling, his face showed “Park Jimin, you’ve grown a lot.” It took two hours to walk home from school. If you take the bus, it’s not even 30 minutes, if you take only the big roads, it’s 20 minutes. Nevertheless, he always insisted on taking winding alleys, climbing over low slopes, and crossing over the pedestrian overpasses. Last year, I transferred schools after getting out of the hospital. School was far away from home, and I didn’t know anyone. I thought it would be okay. I had already moved schools several times, and since I didn’t know when I’d have to be hospitalized again, I didn’t think it was a big deal.

But, I came to know him. It wasn’t long after the new semester began. As if it were nothing, he came and walked two hours with me. It was a while before I found out that his house wasn’t in the same direction. I couldn’t ask him why. I hoped our shadows walking side by side, walking together under the sunlight for two hours, would continue on for longer, even if just a day.

I kicked his shadow again and ran away again as he was still on the phone. He hung up the phone and started to chase me. The hot sun melted the ice cream, and the sound of cicadas pricked my ears. All of a sudden, I was frightened. How many of these days are left?

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## Taehyung

20 March YEAR 20

I ran and slid in the hallway, making noise. Then I stopped. I could see Namjoon standing in front of our classroom. Our classroom. Without anyone knowing, I called that place our classroom. Me, the hyungs, and Jungkook, our (the seven of us) classroom, I approached with bated breath. I thought of surprising him.

“Principal!” After taking about five steps, I could hear a very urgent voice through the slightly opened classroom window. It sounded like Seokjin. I stopped walking. Was Seokjin talking with the principal right now? In our classroom? Why? Then I heard Yoongi’s name and my name, and I saw Namjoon inhale as if surprised. As if he had become aware of the noise, Seokjin suddenly opened the door. There was a phone in Seokjin’s hand. His surprised and flustered expression was apparent. I couldn’t see Namjoon’s expression. I hid out of sight and observed the scene. As if he were going to provide a justification, Seokjin opened his mouth, but Namjoon raised his hand and said “It’s okay.” Seokjin’s expression said “What does that mean?” “If you’re doing that, you must have a reason.” After saying that, Namjoon moved past Seokjin and entered the classroom. I didn’t believe it. Seokjin had talked to the principal about things Yoongi and I had done over the last few days. He talked about skipping class, jumping the fence, and fighting with other kids. But Namjoon said that that’s okay.

“What are you doing here?” I turned around surprised, it was Hoseok and Jimin. Hoseok pretended to be more surprised and put his arm around my shoulder. In the confusion of the moment, Hoseok dragged me into the classroom. Seokjin and Namjoon turned around while talking. Seokjin got up hastily and left, saying that something urgent came up. I looked carefully at Namjoon’s expression. Namjoon, who had looked at Seokjin leaving, smiled at us as if nothing had happened. In that moment, these thoughts came. If Namjoon had done that, there must be a reason. Hyung knows way more than I do, is way smarter than I am, and more of an adult than I am. And this is our classroom. I went in the classroom with a foolish smile that everyone else teases me for, calling it rectangular. I thought I wouldn’t talk about that conversation I heard to anyone.

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## **Namjoon**

15 May YEAR 20

As we walked across the storage classroom that had become a hideout to us who had nowhere to go, I set a few chairs upright. While I was at it, I lifted up the desks that had fallen over, and I cleaned the dust off with the palm of my hand. The last time makes people sentimental. Today was the last day I'd go to school. We decided to move two weeks ago. Maybe I won't be able to return again. I may not be able to see my friends again.

I folded a piece of paper in half and put it on top of the desk. I held a pencil but because I didn't know what words to leave, time just passed. As I was scribbling pointless words, the lead of the pencil broke. "We have to survive." As the lead broke, there was a scribble scratched on the paper without me knowing, marks of debris left on it. Between the jet-black powder of the graphite and the scribble, there were scattered squalid stories of poverty, parents, younger siblings, and moving.

I crumpled the paper and put it in my pants pocket and stood up. As I pushed the desk, dust rose up. As I was turning back, I blew against the dirty window and left three letters. No greeting would be satisfactory, and even without saying anything, I can convey it all. "Let's see each other again." Rather than a promise, it was a wish.

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## Taehyung

7 June YEAR 20

“You stupid mutt. You couldn’t wait for a moment, like a fool.” I ran around the neighborhood I had come to, but I couldn’t find Dubu. I checked the time, and 20 minutes had passed. How far can a puppy that’s barely two months old go in 20 minutes? I sweated in the hot sun of the early summer. My throat was about to burst from calling out to Dubu, stifled on the inside. I had let go of the leash when briefly checking my cell phone. And when I looked around, Dubu had disappeared. I started to run again. I checked alley after alley, and I looked into open gates. I shouted “Dubu” loudly. Only people passing by looked back at me.

As I ran, I rebuked Dubu for being a dumb puppy. I got mad and said he was like that because he’s a mutt. But, even in that moment, I knew that it wasn’t Dubu’s fault. It was my mistake. I took my eyes off of him. I wasn’t watching him and I let go of the leash. I had an insignificant conversation and snickered, not knowing where Dubu had disappeared to. Did Dubu run away on purpose? As I reached that thought, I stopped without realizing it. It was because Dubu didn’t enjoy being together with me. Living together was only a good thing for me. Maybe to Dubu, it was a separation from his family, nothing more and nothing less.

In the next moment, I heard Dubu barking together with a tapping sound. At first I thought I was hearing things. But I saw Dubu, who wasn’t a hallucination, turn the alley and come running. His barely two-month-old small body came jumping down the sloped road, his ears flying behind him and his mouth wide open. “Dubu,” I cried out loudly, and bent down on my knees, and Dubu jumped towards me. “Where did you go? How did you get here? Did you remember my scent?” The moment the dog was barely in my arms and licked my cheek, I felt a surge of a strange emotion. I guess I’m the only family that Dubu can depend on. I guess I can also be a dependable person to someone. I guess I can be a place to come back to. As if I were stifling, Dubu tried to get away, but I held on even tighter.

\*Dubu is the dog’s name. It means “tofu.”

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## **Yoongi**

25 June YEAR 20

I burst through the door and took out the envelope left in the bottom desk drawer. When I turned it over, a piano key fell out. I flung the half-burnt key into the trashcan and lied down on the bed. I couldn't get over my boiling heart, and my breathing was a wreck. My fingers were already stained with soot.

When the funeral was over, I went alone to the house that had been destroyed by the fire. When I entered my mother's room, I could see the piano burned beyond recognition. I wavered by its side and sat down. The afternoon sun came through the window, and I just sat there as it began to subside. In the last of the light, several of the piano keys rolled around. I wondered what kind of sound would come out if I pressed them. I wondered how many of them my mom's fingers had touched. I put one of them in my pocket and left the room.

Since that time, nearly four years have passed. The house was quiet. It was so quiet I thought I'd go crazy. Since it was after 10pm, my father was asleep, so I had to hold my breath. That was the rule of this house. Enduring this stillness was tough. It's not easy to keep to the decided time, rules, and formats. But more than that, the thing I couldn't bear was that I was still living in this house despite all of that. I received the allowance my father gave me, I ate meals with my father, I listened to his scolding. I could oppose him, go astray, abandon my father whom I get in trouble with and leave home alone, but I didn't have the courage to practice real freedom, not just words.

I suddenly got out of bed. I pulled out the piano key from the trashcan under the desk. When I opened the window, the night air surged in fiercely. The things that happened today were carried by the wind and came in like a slap. I threw that key into the air with all my might. It's been more than ten days since I've been to school. I heard the news that I had been expelled. Now, even if I don't want to, I may be kicked out of this house. I concentrated on listening, but I didn't hear the sound of that key hitting the ground. I wouldn't be able to know what sound that key would make no matter how hard I thought about it. No matter how much time passed, that key would not be able to make a sound again. I won't play the piano again.

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## **Jungkook**

25 June YEAR 20

When I stroked the piano key with my hand, it was covered in dust. As I put strength into my fingertip, a different sound came out than the one he played. It's been more than 10 days since he came to school. Today rumors are going around that he was expelled. Namjoon and Hoseok won't tell me anything, and I couldn't ask because I'm scared of something. That day two weeks ago, when the teacher opened the door to the classroom hideout and entered, it was only me and him here. It was a visiting day for parents. I didn't want to be in the classroom, so I thoughtlessly headed towards the hideout. Hyung didn't turn to look and kept playing the piano, and I placed two desks together, lied down, and closed my eyes pretending to sleep. Hyung and the piano seemed to be different in nature at first, but they were one thing I couldn't even think of separating. When I listen to his piano, for some reason I want to cry.

I turned over when it seemed like I'd cry, the door opened as if it were breaking, and the sound of the piano was cut off. I was slapped on the cheek, backed away, and ultimately fell down. While crouching and enduring verbal abuse, the voice stopped all of a sudden. When I lifted my head, he pushed past the teacher's shoulders and stood in front of me, blocking me. Over his shoulders, I could see the teacher's dumbfounded expression.

I tried pressing the piano key. I mimicked the song he played. Was he really expelled? Would he not return again? He said a few hits and a few blows are common for him. If it weren't for me, would he have not opposed the teacher? If it weren't for me, would he still be here playing the piano?

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## **Seokjin**

17 July YEAR 20

When I came out of the school's front gate, the sound of cicadas came to me. The playground was crowded with laughing kids, playing around and racing against each other. The start of summer vacation, everyone was excited. I walked between them with my head low. I wanted to quickly leave school.

“Hyung.” Because someone's shadow appeared suddenly, I turned my head. It was Hoseok and Jimin. They looked at me with young, mischievous eyes and big, good-natured smiles as always. “Today's the start of break, but you're just going to leave?” Hoseok asked as he pulled on my arm. I said “yes, yes,” saying words without meaning and just turned my head. The event that would happen that day was an accident. It's not something I intended. I didn't think Jungkook and Yoongi would be in the classroom at that time. The principal suspected I was covering for my friends. He said he could tell my father that I'm not a good student. I had to say something. It was because I thought the hideout was empty. However, it happened that Yoongi was expelled from school. No one knew I was involved in it.

“Have a good break! I'll contact you.” As if interpreting something from my expression, Hoseok removed his hand and greeted me more brightly. I didn't answer this time either. There wasn't anything I could say. When I came out of the school gate, I recalled the first day of school. We were late and were punished together for it. So we could laugh. I'm the one who ruined these moments.

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## **Hoseok**

15 September YEAR 20

Jimin's mother crossed the emergency room. While checking the name on the head of the bed and the IV one by one, she removed a blade of grass near Jimin's shoulder with a finger. I approached hesitantly to talk about why Jimin was brought to the emergency room and how he had had a seizure at the bus stop. Like she had just discovered me, Jimin's mother looked at me for a bit like she was trying to guess something. I wavered, not knowing what to do. Jimin's mother said a word of thanks and then turned around.

Jimin's mother faced me again when the doctors and nurses began to move the bed, and I tried to follow. While saying thanks again, Jimin's mother nudged my shoulder. Rather than nudged, touching very slightly and then removing her hand would be the more correct expression. Suddenly, there was a line between Jimin's mother and myself that I couldn't see. That line was clear and firm. It was cold and solid. It was a line I could never cross. I had lived at the orphanage for more than ten years. I could tell that much through my body, my eyes, the air. In the confusion of the moment, while stepping backwards I fell to the floor. Jimin's mother looked down at me with a blank look. She was small and beautiful, but her shadow was huge and cold. That dark shadow cast over me on the emergency room floor. When I lifted my head, Jimin's bed had been moved out of the emergency room and I couldn't see it. After that day, Jimin didn't return to school.

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## **Jimin**

28 September YEAR 20

I had been hospitalized for several days and stopped counting. That's something you do when you want to go out or when you have hopes of leaving. Considering the trees and grass I saw far away outside the window and people's attire, it didn't seem like much time had passed yet. More than one month at most. Sometimes I saw people wearing school uniforms too, but now even that didn't feel that special. Maybe because of the medicine, everything was dull and dim. Even so, today was a special day. If I wrote a journal, it'd be a day I'd surely have to write down. However, I don't write a journal, and I don't want to cause a problem while writing that down. Today I lied for the first time. While looking the doctor in the eyes, I pretended to be melancholy and said: "I don't remember anything."

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## **Jungkook**

30 September YEAR 20

“Jeon Jungkook. You’re not going there often these days, right?” I didn’t answer anything. I just stood while looking at my sneakers. I didn’t answer and got hit on the head with an attendance book. Even so, I didn’t open my mouth. It was the classroom where I was together with the others. After the day where, going around with the others, we discovered that classroom, there hasn’t been a day I didn’t go to it. Maybe they didn’t know. They said they had appointments, or were busy with part-time work, so they didn’t show up. There were times where I didn’t see Yoongi or Seokjin for days. But, not me. I went without missing a day. There were also days where no one came all day. Even so, it was okay. Because it was that place, even if it wasn’t today, or tomorrow, or the day after, it was okay because they would come.

“You’ve learned nothing but bad things while just hanging around.” I got hit again. I stared at them. Again, I was hit. I recalled the image of Yoongi being hit. I clenched my teeth and bared it. I didn’t want to lie that I hadn’t been to that classroom.

Now, I’m standing in front of that classroom again. I thought if I opened the door, they would be there. I thought they’d turn around to ask “Why are you late?” while gathered together playing games. Seokjin and Namjoon would be reading books, Taehyung would be playing a game, Yoongi would be playing the piano. Hoseok and Jimin would be dancing.

However, after opening the door, Hoseok was the only one I saw. He was organizing the items we had left in the classroom. I just stood there, holding on to the door handle. Hyung came up to me and put his arm around my shoulders. Then, he led me outside the room. “Let’s go now.” He closed the classroom door. I realized it then, that those days were gone, and they were never coming again.

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## **Hoseok**

25 February YEAR 21

I danced without taking my eyes off my image in the mirror. There, my feet don't touch the ground, I soared and I was free from all the eyes and standards of the world. Moving my body in time with the music, nothing was important except for having my feelings in my body.

The first time I danced, I was about 12 years old. Perhaps it was at the talent show during the retreat. I was led by my school friends and stood on stage. The thing from that day that I still remember now is the applause, the cheers, and the feeling that I had become myself for the first time. Of course, at that time, I only thought it was enjoyable to move my body with the music. That was euphoria, and after some time, I realized the truth that that euphoria did not come from the applause, but from inside myself.

The me outside of that mirror is tied to many things. I can't lift my feet from the ground more than a few seconds, even if I don't like it I smile, even if I'm sad I smile. Even while I take the medicine that I don't need, I fall down anywhere. So when I dance, I try not to take my eyes off the me in the mirror. The moment I can truly be myself. The moment where I can throw away everything heavy and fly high, the moment when I can have the belief that I can become happy. I try to protect that moment.

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## **Jungkook**

2 May YEAR 21

I raced around Yangji stream in the darkening sunset. I faced the sky that was mixed with pink and purple and felt if I pushed the bike pedal, I'd escape my heavy everyday life. Today too, as soon as I heard mom preparing dinner, I pulled my bike out. I didn't want to bump into anyone, no matter who came. A place where not one person would smile at me, that place was my home. Living together doesn't make you family. Leaving the house doesn't make things different. The hyungs left one by one, and even though we're in the same city, a lot of time had passed without contacting each other. Now, inside my home and outside of it, there was no one who smiled at me.

The sun set and before the moon rose, it became dark at the riverside. While racing on the bike, the riverside scenery also raced by. The path that was turned into a park ended and a place appeared that was full of trash like a junk car, junk motorcycle, and tires. I stood my bike up against a pillar under the bridge and went down to the riverbank. On the opposite side, a group of kids were drinking alcohol and brandishing sticks around a fire, but no one was on this side. People didn't come to a wrecked place like this. Is that the reason why no one comes to me too? In this space that no one comes to, I'm comfortable in the perfect darkness by myself. I thought about how I wished this time wouldn't end.

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## **Seokjin**

9 August YEAR 21

I took photos while going along the sea. The appearance of the coastal neighborhoods changed constantly, but the sea is the same from everywhere. I got out of my car and went down to the seaside. I sat on the white sand and looked at the picture I had taken through the viewfinder. The time they were taken and the place they were taken were different, but every photo was the exact same. The sky and the sea met in the middle.

It's been a year since I came to LA after leaving Songju as if I were running away. My mother's parent's house that I spent my childhood in was not unfamiliar or comfortable. After finding a place to be, I hid my feelings and smiled awkwardly. The method of becoming a good person that I learned from my father. That was useful in most circumstances, and it was the same this time.

Since coming here, I haven't taken photos of anyone. There's no special reason. I just didn't want to. Instead, I took photos of the sea. I don't know whether or not it's because I wanted to take photos of things that don't change. Looking back on it, it's funny. It's not that my friends had changed. It's also not that I had changed. I was originally that sort of person, it's just that I was caught hiding it. I didn't bring any photos I had taken from my high school days. The me in those photos is different than the present me. I didn't hide my feelings, and I didn't have any reason to find my place. The awkward smile was the same, but there was something different. At that time, I was genuinely smiling.

I lifted my camera and took a photo of the sea. Because of the cloudy weather, the sea and the sky were the same color. The horizontal line where they met was also blurred. Among the countless photos I've taken of the sea, there isn't one that is the same. The weather was different, the light was different, the wind was different. My view was different, and my heart was different. The photo I took today was also different. The countless photos I took in high school were also the same. Photos incorporate the view and heart of the person who took them. Maybe that's the reason why I couldn't bring any of the photos I took during high school with me. I was afraid to face the me from back then straight on. I was scared I might miss the me from that time. What are they doing? What do they think of me? Wondering if I'd have those thoughts, I put the photos of my friends in a box and closed the lid.

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## **Namjoon**

17 December YEAR 21

Namjoon's family has moved to a rural village. When they moved, they brought very few possessions, only needing a hospital for his father and a place where Namjoon could work without a high school diploma. He works as one of the village's delivery boys, and there was a lot of competition between all the young men in the village looking for part-time work.

Namjoon recounts his competition with a boy he calls "Taehyung" because the boy reminded him of the Taehyung he knew. On a snowy day, Namjoon volunteers to make deliveries up the mountain, which could prove dangerous. He ends up slipping while riding the old motor scooter down the mountain. He falls off and the bike almost doesn't start again. It finally starts and he realizes he's got a cut, but he's only slightly injured. When he gets ready to make the next delivery, "Taehyung" stops him to ask for a favor, but Namjoon's phone rings. His father fell while trying to walk on his own, and his mother asks him to take his father to the hospital. Namjoon, though angry, decides to go back home. He gives "Taehyung" the key to the scooter and takes his father to the hospital.

The next day, Namjoon learns that "Taehyung" had a fatal accident while driving the motor scooter down the mountain. He visits the spot and sees the white outline where his body had been and thinks about how it could have easily been himself instead of "Taehyung." No one in the village really seems affected by "Taehyung"'s death except for his family. Namjoon ends up being the one to do future deliveries in the snow since no one wants to. He overhears someone at the mountain village say that maybe "Taehyung" would have been fine if it hadn't been for the calcium chloride that was scattered on the road—that had probably caused him to slip. Namjoon feels guilty for surviving alone and also feels responsible for the accident, because he had been the one to put the calcium chloride there, to try and prevent himself from having an accident in the snow the next time he made a delivery.

Namjoon takes the bus out of the village and runs away from everything plaguing him. He recalls his father telling him "Go Namjoon, you must survive," when he was helping him back from the hospital once. He tried to ignore it, but he ended up on the bus back to Songju.

*\*NOTE: This Note is from HYYH The Notes Book 1, so this is just a summary of the content of the Note. The book was published by BigHit and sold on the official shop.*

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## **Namjoon**

17 December YEAR 21

The people waiting for the first bus in the cold wind rubbed their hands together. I grasped the strap of my bag tightly and looked down at the dirt. I made an effort not to make eye contact with anyone. A rural village where busses stop only twice a day. I saw the first bus coming in the distance.

I followed behind the people and got on the bus. I didn't look back. When there is something urgent, when it's barely in your hands, when the only thing that remains is escaping, you adhere to these conditions. Don't look back. The moment you look back, your efforts up to this point become bubbles (t/n: are in vain). Looking back. That's doubt, lingering attachment, and fear. If you win against those things, you can finally escape.

The bus took off. I didn't have a plan. I didn't have anything urgent, and I wasn't trying to escape. It was closer to running away blindly. My mother's weary face. My wandering younger sibling. My father's illness. Starting from my family's troubles that got worse as days went by. To my family members who imposed sacrifice and peace, I resigned myself to pretending not to know anything, adapting, and holding myself back. And above anything else, from poverty.

If you ask if poverty is a crime, no one will say it is. But that true? Poverty gnaws at many things. Things that were precious become nothing. Things that could not be given up are given up. It makes one doubt, fearful, and resigned.

In a few hours, the bus will arrive at a familiar bus stop. When I left there a year ago, I left no goodbyes. Now I'm returning there with no forewarning. I recalled my friends' faces. We've all lost touch. What has everyone been doing? Would they welcome me? Would we all be able to gather and laugh together like that time? I couldn't see the scenery outside the window because of the frost. I moved my fingers slowly over the window.

“[We/I] must survive.”

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## **Seokjin**

1 February YEAR 22

The announcement that we were about to land came on. I could still only see foggy clouds outside the window. I looked back on my time in LA. It was good to have the sea there. Other than that, nothing else really came to mind. It seemed like the plane made a big circle, and shortly, the city came into view.

Returning to Songju was an abrupt affair. Via a phone call, my father said, “Come back.” Of course, there would be a reason. My father is not a person who makes moves without reason. But, he didn’t tell me the reason. Since I’ll find out if I go, I didn’t ask. No, maybe me returning to Songju isn’t so sudden. Maybe everything was already decided, and I’m the only one who didn’t know.

“Is that our house?” I heard the voice of the child in the seat in front of me. I looked out the window. “No, our house is across that river,” someone who must have been the father answered. “Home,” I repeated inwardly. It didn’t feel like I was returning home. But that doesn’t mean LA was my home either. LA and Songju. Both of these places were my addresses, but they weren’t home.

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## **Hoseok**

25 February YEAR 22

As my nineteenth birthday passed, my world changed entirely once again. I could no longer be a protected child and stay in the orphanage. I bought a house with money given to me after leaving the system and money I saved doing part-time work. I couldn't even think about being in the area around Two Star Burger. I looked around Songju station, but there was not much difference. In the end, all I could do was go up the sloping road. The rooftop house was at the very inner part of the dead-end road.

I pulled my suitcase up the iron staircase. I had left the orphanage that I stayed at for 12 years, but I didn't have much luggage. I was done by just organizing my few pieces of clothing and sneakers, as well as some small furniture I had purchased from a recycling center.

Still, moving is moving, and when I straightened up my back, it was already night. Even in the February weather, my back was sweating. As I opened the iron door with a creak, the late-winter cold air came rushing in. I went outside and leaned on the guardrail. I looked down at Songju beneath me. I tried to guess where the orphanage was at with just my eyes. Going along the river on the left, and left over the clover-shaped sign I could see. In the neon signs and lights, I couldn't see the orphanage well.

I turned my head and looked at the rooftop house. A small room that was barely a room. A shabby room that would be as hot as a steamer in the summer and in the winter, cold wind would come in through the cracks. But, it was the only place in the world to me. A place where I could be myself. A place where I could have foolish fears or hope for others to laugh at. A place where I can laugh or cry as much as my heart wants. "Let's do well." I yelled this while facing the rooftop house. The highest house in the city, this place that was close to touching the night sky, was mine starting from today.

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## **Hoseok**

2 March YEAR 22

I like being around people. After I left the orphanage and went out on my own, I started working part-time at a fast food restaurant. It was work that required me to see many people, always smile, and always be energetic. I liked that work. Truthfully, in my life there's not much to laugh about or be energetic about. I've surely seen more bad people than good people. Maybe that's why I liked that work even more. Even if I force myself to smile largely and talk with a loud voice and converse pleasantly, I had the illusion that I really felt like that. While smiling big, my feelings became good, and while speaking kindly, I became a kind person. There were also tough days. When I cleaned up the store and returned home, it was difficult to take one step. There were also lots of days with customers who made a scene. Even so, when I had friends, it was easier to endure those things than it is now.

Sometimes when I look at the customers that fill the store, I think of my friends. Seokjin, who transferred to another school without a word; Namjoon, who disappeared one morning; Yoongi, whom I didn't receive contact from after he was expelled; Taehyung, who I didn't know if he was somewhere going through some mishap; and Jimin, who didn't come back to school after I saw him for the last time in the emergency room. I've seen Jungkook wearing his school uniform and going to school multiple times through the window, but for some reason he didn't stop by the store. I thought that those times must be gone now.

At the sound of a customer entering, I welcomed them loudly. Then I turned and looked at the door with a bright, healthy smile.

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## **Taehyung**

29 March YEAR 22

The owner of the gas station spit on the floor and then went away. I was lying curled up on the floor. While I was putting graffiti on the back wall of the gas station, I was caught by the owner and hit while he asked what I was doing to someone else's wall. I rolled on the floor. Getting hit was something I was used to, but it's also something I can't get used to.

I started doing graffiti long ago. I tried spraying a wall with a spray can someone had thrown away. I think it was yellow. I just sprayed it carelessly and looked up. While looking at the distinct yellow paint on the gray wall, I lifted a different spray. For some time, I sprayed my unknown feelings on the wall. I emptied all of the spray cans and stopped my hand. I picked up the can, tossed it, and stepped back. I was breathless, as if I had sprinted.

I didn't know what meaning the colors on the wall had. I didn't know what I had done or why. Just one thing, I could guess that it was my feelings. I had vented my feelings out on the wall. At first, I thought it was unsightly. I also thought it was dirty. It was stupid, useless, and pathetic. I didn't like it. I rubbed the paint that was less dry with the palm of my hand. I wanted to erase it all. Instead of erasing it, I crushed different colors and mashed it into different forms. I leaned against that wall. It wasn't a problem of me not liking it. It also wasn't a problem of it not being beautiful. It was just me.

I coughed when I stood up. The inside of my mouth had burst, and blood splattered on my palm. Then I saw someone's hand pick up the spray can. I followed that hand up and looked at the person's face. It was Namjoon. I smiled. I thought I was seeing an apparition. Hyung extended his hand. I was just looking up. Hyung pulled me up by my hand. That hand was warm.

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## **Yoongi**

7 April YEAR 22

I stopped walking at the sound of a clumsy piano. In the middle of the night at the empty construction site, there was only the sound of the fire someone had lit in the drum container. I knew the song that was being played, but I didn't think much of it. My drunken steps wavered. I closed my eyes and walked more carelessly on purpose. As the heat the fire was emitting got stronger, the sound of the piano, the night air, and my intoxication became fainter.

I opened my eyes to the sudden sound of a horn, and the car narrowly passed by me. In the confusion of intoxication, the glare of the headlights, and the wind from the car, I staggered helplessly. I heard the driver spit out a curse. I stopped walking and intended to curse at them, and I realized that I couldn't hear the noise of the piano. The sound of the fire blazing, the sound of the wind, and the leftover ripples left by the car, I couldn't hear the sound of the piano clearly. I thought it had stopped. Why would it stop? Who was playing the piano?

With a thud, the fire sparks in the drum surged up into the darkness. I stared at its image vacantly for some time. My face flushed in the heat. It was then that I heard the sound of someone's fist hitting the piano keys. I looked back instinctively. For a brief moment, my blood ran wild and my breaths became erratic. My childhood nightmare. It was the same as the sound I heard at that place.

In the next moment, I was running. It wasn't my will, my body turned around on its own and ran towards the instrument store. Somehow it felt like something I had repeated numerous times. I don't know what it was, but I felt like I was forgetting something urgent.

The instrument shop with the broken window. Someone was sitting in front of the piano. Several years had passed, but I could recognize at once who it was. He was crying. I clenched my fist. I didn't want to get involved in anyone's life. I didn't want to console anyone's loneliness. I didn't want to become someone who meant something to anyone. I couldn't be confident that I could protect him. I didn't have confidence that I could be by his side until the end. I didn't want to hurt him. I didn't want to be hurt.

I moved slowly. I thought about turning and going, but without knowing I approached him. Then I pointed out the wrong note. Jungkook turned his head and looked up at me. "Hyung." It was the first time we met after I quit high school.

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## **Seokjin**

11 April YEAR 22

When I opened my eyes, it was April 11<sup>th</sup> again. Sunlight poured in from the opened curtains. When I got up I felt dizzy so I closed my eyes. My surroundings turned crimson, and I recalled Taehyung's image. He stood alone on top of the platform at the sea. It was May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The past and the future, it was something that already happened in the past and could happen in the future. It was a moment when I thought everything had been resolved.

It was about the time the sun started setting that I saw Taehyung climb up the platform. The sky was still blue, but a dark red atmosphere was beginning to spread. I turned my head and saw Taehyung up on the platform. Taehyung reached the top and looked down at us briefly. Then he jumped off. Like a bird, like he had wings, he leapt. Then it seemed as if he stopped in the air for a moment, and I felt like a mirror was breaking, as if the cold wind was pushing in through the open curtains.

And when I opened my eyes, it was April 11<sup>th</sup>.

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## **Seokjin**

11 April YEAR 22

I came to the sea alone. In the viewfinder, the sea was as wide, blue, and open as always. The sunlight that hit and dispersed on the surface, and the wind that blew through the pine tree forest were as they always were too. If there was something different, it was that I was really alone. As I pressed the shutter button, the view in front of me flashed, that day from 2 years and 10 months ago appeared for a moment and disappeared. That day, we sat side by side in front of this sea. We were worn out, we had nothing, we were forlorn, but we were together.

I turned the car around and stepped on the accelerator. I passed the tunnel and the rest stop. I opened the car window when I arrived at the vicinity of the school everyone had attended together. It was a spring night. The air was warm, and cherry blossoms fluttered around the trees that lined the school wall. Leaving the school behind, I passed several intersections, and made several left and right turns. Some distance away, I started to see the light of the gas station Namjoon works at.

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## **Seokjin**

11 April YEAR 22

With a screech, the car barely stopped. I was lost in thought and didn't see the traffic light change. Students in familiar uniforms crossed the crosswalk and gazed at me through the car window. There were also people pointing at me. I made an effort to smile and lower my head.

I knew what I had to do. However, it wasn't something that didn't bring fear. Could I end all of this unhappiness and these wounds? Don't all these failed attempts mean that I definitely won't succeed? Doesn't it mean I should give up? Is happiness just a vain hope for us? Lots of thoughts came and went in my mind.

Without knowing, I reached the intersection where the gas station was, and the image of Namjoon pumping gas came into view. I inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly. Yoongi, Hoseok, Jimin, Taehyung, and Jungkook's faces all came to mind one by one. Then I changed lanes and entered the gas station. I couldn't give up. Even if there's only 1% chance of possibility, I couldn't give up. Through the car window, I saw Namjoon approaching.

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## **Seokjin**

11 April YEAR 22

I opened my eyes again in the pouring sunlight. The images of the container, still burning, and Namjoon, who died, remained behind my eyelids. This time was a failure too. I raised my arm, covering my eyes, and thought. What method remained for me to save Namjoon? I reflected on the situation from September 30. I didn't feel any particular sentiment. I wasn't impatient or scared.

After the first accident at the container village, I've been through countless loops. But I still couldn't figure out why I kept going through loops, or what I should do to resolve it. No, more than that, I couldn't find what the clue was, the 'map of the soul', that would end all of this. The map of the soul. The first time I heard that phrase, I had already failed several times. "Find the map of the soul. It can end all of this." "The map of the soul? What is that?" I pressed for an answer, but an answer didn't come. Instead, these words were left: "A hint will come at a price."

Some distance away, I saw Namjoon's gas station. I slowly turned on my turn signal and changed lanes. I thought of only one thing. If I stop the accident on September 30, the loop will end. I faced only that goal and headed towards it. Even if, in that process, a problem develops, even if someone gets hurt or left out, there's nothing that can be done. If I get stuck on that or intimidated by it, I won't achieve my goal. More important than saving everyone was me surviving and escaping. That was the lesson that repeating countless loops gave me.

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## **Seokjin**

11 April YEAR 22

Seokjin watches from a distance as Hoseok enters Namjoon's container, then Yoongi, Jungkook, Taehyung, and Namjoon. He says someday they'll all be together again, but now is not the time. He turns his car around and leaves.

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## **Yoongi**

11 April YEAR 22

I walked, paying attention to Jungkook who was following me. Containers appeared continuously along the train tracks that stretched out long. It's the fourth container from the back. Hoseok had said he planned to meet Namjoon and Taehyung, additionally he said I should also come. I agreed, but I didn't think I'd really go. I loathed getting involved with other people, and it's a truth that Hoseok knew as well. He probably thought I wouldn't really show up.

When I flung the door open, I could see Hoseok's surprised face. And when he discovered Jungkook, he approached with an expression of mixed emotions in his usual, exaggerated way. I passed by the two of them and faced the interior of the container. "How long has it been?" I could hear the nagging sound of Hoseok trying to embrace an embarrassed Jungkook.

Soon after, Namjoon entered, bringing Taehyung. One side of Taehyung's t-shirt was ripped. When asked how it happened, Namjoon pretended to hit Taehyung. He was late because he had to pick Taehyung up from the police office, because the punk was brought in for doing graffiti. While exaggerating pretending to be sorry and shaking, Taehyung said he ripped his shirt while trying to avoid and runaway from the police.

I sunk down into the corner. Namjoon gave Taehyung a shirt to change into, and Hoseok was taking out some things like hamburgers and drinks. In the middle of it all, Jungkook was standing awkwardly, not knowing what he should do. Looking back, our time in high school was like that too. Somewhere in the storage classroom, Namjoon was teased while trying to reason with Taehyung, Hoseok was busily moving things, and Jungkook hovered around not knowing where his place was.

It had been a long time since we gathered like this. I didn't remember well. What happened to Seokjin and Jimin? I thought something that wasn't like myself. Even though it's a place I've come to for the first time, my heart was strangely at ease.

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## **Namjoon**

11 April YEAR 22

I finished filling the gas and turned around, and something brushed my face and fell down. Because it was unexpected, I stepped backwards and when I looked down, a crumpled bill had fallen at my feet. I bent down instinctively and reached out my hand. The people sitting in the sedan laughed boisterously. I stopped momentarily. Some distance away, Seokjin was watching. I couldn't raise my head. What should I do if I meet eyes with people who ride around in groups in expensive cars, ignoring others and making fun of them? I should oppose it. If their actions are unfair, I should oppose it. It's not a problem of courage, self-respect, or equality. Of course, it's something that should be done.

However, this place was a gas station, and I was a part-time worker. If a customer threw trash, I should clean it up, if they cursed, I should listen, and if they threw money, I should gather it up. My body shook with contempt. I clenched my hand in a fist. My fingernails dug into my skin.

At that time, someone picked up the bill. Then, they gave it to me. The people in the car muttered under their breaths as if they lost interest and left the gas station. I couldn't raise my head even after they left. I didn't have the confidence to meet eyes with Seokjin. My cowardice, my poverty, my circumstances, they weren't things that Seokjin didn't know. Even so, I didn't want to show him so frankly. Hyung stood at the edge of my field of vision and didn't move. He didn't approach and didn't say anything either.

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## **Namjoon**

11 April YEAR 22

I searched around through a few t-shirts, but Taehyung reached from behind and picked a shirt up. It was a t-shirt with the same phrase printed on it as the one I was wearing. With an uneasy smile, Taehyung took off his torn shirt. Under the low light hanging from the trailer box, I momentarily saw his bruised back. Hoseok looked at me with surprised eyes. Taehyung put on my t-shirt and looked at himself in the dirty mirror. He laughed.

“This punk was doing graffiti and running wild, I’m late due to getting him out of the police station.” I pretended to hit Taehyung and he exaggerated pretending to be sorry. Yoongi, sitting in the corner of the trailer, approached Taehyung slowly and smacked him on the shoulder.

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## **Taehyung**

11 April YEAR 22

I drew a line with a can of black spray paint. A thin face, a mouth that forgot how to speak, completely parched hair. The face I had seen in my dreams began to be revealed on the gray wall in crude lines. Now it was time to draw the eyes. I reached my hand out and then took a step back and stood.

In my head, the face was distinct. The eyes were clear enough to give me goosebumps. But I didn't know how I should express it. The eyes only had indifference and coldness left in them, and joy and sadness had become volatile. There were a lot of colors that became crushed into just one color, and the eyes were as if they said more because they didn't say anything. I grabbed the spray can several times, but in the end, I couldn't draw the eyes.

Two years have passed since I last saw Seokjin. I heard that he went to America, but I didn't know anything else. It was also the first time he had appeared in my dreams. There have been some times where I've wondered how he's doing. I recalled the things that happened in our classroom and his conversation with the principal. I had both good memories about him and also things that I didn't understand about him. But, even that moment, he wasn't as cold and withered as he appeared in my dreams.

I looked up again at the face I drew on the wall. It was definitely Seokjin. But it wasn't the person I knew. Why did I suddenly have a dream like that? That dream was ominous and a succession of horrendous scenes. Hyung had watched all of that misery without any expression on his face. I dropped the hand that held the spray can. The coldness from that dream felt like it was grabbing the back of my neck. Far away, I heard the sound of police sirens.

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## **Taehyung**

11 April YEAR 22

Taehyung leaves his home while his father is asleep and walks to Namjoon's container. It's early in the morning, and no one is out yet. He talks about a dream he had, which he says must just be a nightmare. He says in the dream, the container was on fire, and he saw bloodstains and Namjoon lying dead on the floor. Then, he wakes up—it seems it was all dream, and he never left the house. He says his palm hurt suddenly, so he holds it under cold water.

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## **Jungkook**

11 April YEAR 22

I walked on the railing on the roof. The building that was in the middle of construction. Darkness rose from the tip of my foot as I stuck it out in the air. Below the railing, the night city spread out dizzily. Neon signs, car horns, and smoky dust whirled in the darkness. For a moment, I staggered due to dizziness. I spread my arms out to keep my balance. Then I thought. It's only one step. One more step, and it would all end. I faced the darkness and tried to tilt my body a bit. The darkness that started at the end of my feet soon consumed my entire body. When I closed my eyes, the dizzy city, the noise, and my fears disappeared. I stopped breathing. Then I leaned slowly. I didn't think of anything. No one came to mind either. I didn't want to leave anything behind. I wouldn't remember anything either. It would just be the end like this.

It was that moment that my phone rang. My mind returned to me like I was waking from a distant dream. My vacant senses also returned to normal in an instant. I took out my cell phone. It was Yoongi.

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## **Jungkook**

11 April YEAR 22

Ultimately, it was according to my wish. I bumped into the thugs I met on the street on purpose and was beat up to my heart's content. I smiled while getting hit, so they called me crazy while hitting me more. I leaned against the shutter door and looked up at the sky. It was already night. Nothing was in the jet-black sky. Some distance away, I could see a bit of grass standing. The wind blew, and it laid down. It was like me. I thought I would cry, but I purposefully smiled.

I closed my eyes, and I could see the image of my stepfather clearing his throat. My stepbrother kicked me and laughed at me. My stepfather's family members looked elsewhere and talked meaninglessly. As if I weren't there, they acted as if my existence were nothing. In front of those people, my mother was intimidated. I got up off the floor, dust rose, and I coughed. The pit of my stomach hurt like I had been stabbed by a knife. I went up to the roof of the construction site. The city of the night stretched out with a horrible color. I climbed on top of the railing and walked, spreading my two arms open. For a moment, my legs shook and I almost lost my balance. I thought how with just one step, I'd die. If I die, it'd all end. No one would be sad if I was gone.

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## **Namjoon**

28 April YEAR 22

I suspected that there was something up with Taehyung from a long time ago. Even though he behaved on the surface like there was nothing, his momentary actions or expressions or his way of speaking implied unknown uneasiness that I didn't know what to do about. He frequently went in and out of the police station, and wounds were visible on his body. He also had nightmares.

The reason I didn't ask what was wrong or press him to confess is because I was waiting for Taehyung to tell me himself. And on the other hand, I doubted whether I had the qualifications to listen to those worries. I pretended to be a hyung, to be an adult, but actually in the moments when my friends had a hard time, I couldn't stand by and protect them. Everyone raises me up for being like an adult, but I'm not really an adult. I could only hesitate and not face the reality in front of my eyes.

Yoongi died. Taehyung had the nightmare today too. He awoke surprised as I grabbed his shoulders and shook, then sat vacantly for a bit. He didn't think to wipe the tears from his eyes, and he muttered some incoherent words. Yoongi died, Jungkook was in an accident, and I was caught up in a fight. He said he often has those dreams and they're so vivid that it seems like the dreams are real, and that it's like he's in a dream now. "Hyung, don't go anywhere." Taehyung's voice shook anxiously.

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## **Taehyung**

30 April YEAR 22

I couldn't move for a moment due to shock. Seokjin was sitting over there in the car. I heard from Namjoon that he had returned, but it was the first time I saw his face directly. He was frowning while looking for something on his cell phone. That itself wasn't strange. It wasn't that his face had changed a lot from before. I myself couldn't explain why I was shocked. Cold. Dry. Empty. No matter what word, it wasn't enough to describe his face. No, none of them were even somewhat alike. It was a spring day, but I suddenly got a chill. Without realizing it, I shivered. The face I saw in my dream was definitely that face.

I turned my head when Jungkook rounded the corner. Jungkook looked around with an urgent expression as he cut across an alleyway and ran. At that, Seokjin opened the car door and got out with irritated gestures. Because I was far away I couldn't hear accurately, but from the shape of his lips it seemed like he muttered "Forget it" while annoyed. He went further away to a motel and at the entrance he dropped something, looking towards the direction Jungkook had run off to.

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## Seokjin

2 May YEAR 22

Seokjin is nervous, saying he's repeated this many times. He thinks about how Yoongi must be drunk now, contemplating reasons to live or die. He wonders how Yoongi sees himself and the world, since he keeps trying to destroy himself. Seokjin wants to save everyone, and says "No one deserves to die, to despair, to be suppressed, and to be despised. On top of that, they were my friends." He thought originally he just needed to put in a lot of effort and figure out who he needed to save and from what.

He says Yoongi is hard, because he changes the time and place of his suicide attempts. He admits he followed Yoongi once for hours, trying to figure him out. "I once heard that hope had wings," Seokjin says. He says it's a little bird with wings, and then talks about how a bird flew into Yoongi's workroom. The bird flew in when Yoongi was standing in the middle of the room with his lighter, after having covered everything in gasoline. Yoongi doesn't go through with his plans, and Seokjin presumes it's because of the bird (which he set food and water out for). Seokjin realizes that he needs to give Yoongi a reason to stop destroying himself. He realizes he needs help, because the person to "share [Yoongi's] scars and desires" isn't himself. He recalls a voice telling him that he can't do this alone. He realizes, when he thinks back to that day at the beach when they looked for the rock, that Jungkook and Yoongi had the same look in their eyes. He sets it up so that Jungkook will go to Yoongi's workroom—it works, as Jungkook goes, despite Yoongi telling him to go away at first. Jungkook goes every day.

Seokjin watches secretly from his car as Jungkook approaches. No one knows he's back except Namjoon. Namjoon told him the others would be excited, but Seokjin wants to wait for the right time, when they're all together. "I had to connect the dots, one string with another, closely observing the others, to get them to save one another without realizing it," Seokjin says.

Jungkook stands outside of Yoongi's workroom, and Seokjin recalls how it must be hard for Jungkook, and that once, Jungkook gave up on Yoongi, and Yoongi tried to kill himself. When Jungkook goes inside the workroom, Seokjin hears a crash and then sees Yoongi come out with a busted lip. He knows Yoongi is heading towards a motel, and wonders if Jungkook saw the photo from the beach that Seokjin previously planted in Yoongi's workroom on the mirror. Jungkook comes out, looking for Yoongi. Seokjin says he has to leave a clue to get Jungkook to find Yoongi, so he leaves a bloody tissue outside the motel. Jungkook goes inside to find Yoongi, and Seokjin hopes it works.

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## **Yoongi**

2 May YEAR 22

The sheet the fire clung to blazed in no time. In the heat that was hard to endure, the presence of everything that was shabby was lost. I could no longer sense things like the sour smell of mold, the unidentifiable moisture, or the damp light. Instead, the thing left was agony. A physical agony like heat. The skin at the tips of my fingers was so hot, it was like it was getting blistered and melting off. Only then did my father's expressionless face and the sound of the music dissipate.

My father and I were different in many ways. My father couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand him. If I had put in effort, would I have been able to persuade him? Probably not. The only things I could do were hide, rebel, and run away. There was a time when I thought my father wasn't what I was trying to break away from. Then, I was overcome with fear like a wall. What in the world did I start running from? What should I do to get away from myself? Everything felt impossible.

It sounded like someone was calling out, but I didn't raise my head. Because of the heat, or because of the agony, I couldn't breathe. I didn't have the strength to move. Even so, I knew. It was Jungkook. He was certainly angry. He would probably be sad for me. I just wanted to sink down. Smoke and heat, agony and fear, I wanted to end everything here. Jungkook yelled something at me again, but I still didn't hear him. My field of vision collapsed. Lastly, I raised my gaze. The last scenery I'd see in the world was the dirty and secluded room, the scarlet flames and the rolling heat, and Jungkook's face.

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## **Yoongi**

2 May YEAR 22

They said it was a scar that would last for a while. They said to give it time and recover, but even so, the scope wasn't broad; only if I steadily received treatment would it get a lot better. On the third day of my hospitalization, when the doctor removed the gauze, the burn marks were revealed. The skin of my left arm was red, almost black. It was my body, but it was like it wasn't my body. It was unfamiliar. The moment I dropped the lighter, I was prepared to accept even more than this. But I'll only carry scars to this small degree. I felt contradictory to myself.

"It'll hurt some." When they started to do the dressing, blood gushed out of the wounds. The blood that soaked the white gauze was just like fire. That day, bright red flames swayed as if they'd swallow me. I intended to suppress it, but a groan came out. The doctor said blood coming out was a good sign. That it was evidence of new skin underneath the dead skin. Even in the midst of pain, I feigned a laugh. Why is something new only possible after death? How would it have been if I had died at that time? Maybe that was the only method for starting over.

I looked down at my arm. Blooded oozed out lightly on the newly wrapped gauze. I had called those bloodstains fire, and the doctor had called them regeneration. Whose words were right?

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## **Jungkook**

2 May YEAR 22

As I looked up, I was in front of Namjoon's container. I opened the door and went in. I gathered the clothes that were laying around and curled up to lie down. A chill descended over me. I felt like I wanted to cry as my whole body started shaking. But tears wouldn't come out.

When I opened the door and entered, Yoongi was standing on the bed. Flames were shooting up around the edge of the sheets. In that moment, unbearable anger and fear filled my whole body. I'm not someone who is good with words. I'm unskilled at expressing my emotions and persuading someone. I was full of tears so a cough came out, and words wouldn't come out even more so. As I dashed into those flames, the only words I managed to spit out were "We all decided we'd go to the sea together!"

"What's wrong? Did you have a bad dream?" Someone shook my shoulders and I opened my eyes. It was Namjoon. I felt a sense of relief. He felt my forehead and said I had a fever. It really felt like that. It was like the inside of my mouth was boiling, but I was so cold I couldn't stand it. I had a splitting headache, and my throat hurt. I barely took the medicine he brought me. "Sleep some more. Let's talk later." I nodded my head. Then I said, "Will I be able to become an adult like you?" Namjoon turned around.

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## Hoseok

10 May YEAR 22

I came to my senses and was walking on the bridge. The sunlight was dazzling and it was difficult to properly open my eyes. “Why did I come here?” I thought, and because of the dizziness my vision was blurry. I thought my knees were giving out, and the horns from cars going along the bridge hit my ears. On one side, I saw the deep black water of Yangji stream.

The aunt from the orphanage was the first person I, as a child who had lost his mother, could lean on. The dawn where I woke up suffering from a fever, my bunk that was empty after sending a friend away on their adoption, the times when I came to in the hospital after a narcoleptic seizure, my entrance ceremony for elementary school, all the way up to my high school graduation, that aunt was by my side.

She developed a disease. The voice in the familiar phone call was a younger friend from the orphanage. I don’t remember how I made it all the way to her house. All I remember is her house and the face I saw through the open window. She burst into laughter while talking with someone. All the talk about being sick, needing surgery, and having no hope seemed like lies. When we nearly made eye contact for a moment, I barely hid myself. I thought I’d burst into tears if I saw her face. I thought I’d spit out words of resentment and ask her if even she’s leaving me and going away. I started walking. I thought someone called out to me, but I didn’t look back.

A large bus kicked up wind and passed by me. “Mom.” I looked at the bus getting further away and muttered. The day I separated from my mom, that day too I rode a bus like that. Will my aunt leave me like my mom did? Will I be deprived of a precious person yet again? I raised my head and the sunlight poured down. Then, the world began to collapse. The sound of tires hitting asphalt and the wind blowing along the river, the many memories I had together with my aunt crumbled in the sunlight. I fell to the ground.

*(T/N: “Aunt” here does not mean a literal aunt, but rather just a woman who works at the orphanage. As a child, it’s a title he could call an older woman acting as a caretaker.)*

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## **Jimin**

11 May YEAR 22

Jimin is in the surgery ward after having been in the psychiatric ward for a long time. He recalls how upset he was when he was first hospitalized at 8 years old, how he cried and pleaded with his mother to take him home. But she didn't come. He was found unconscious at the Flower Arboretum and taken to the hospital, and his parents didn't ask him anything. When he developed seizures, they also didn't ask him anything. They would make Jimin transfer schools each time he got out of the hospital because family reputation mattered to them, and it was not acceptable to have a son with a mental illness. He recalls the day he had a seizure at the bus stop with Hoseok. He ended up here in the hospital and recalled that day at the arboretum when he was a kid. He had another seizure and was sedated. He says his life at the hospital is peaceful, and he was fine with it until he met Hoseok again. He wakes up and finds Hoseok in the patient bed next to his. He avoids Hoseok the entire day, and even sees the other guys from a distance when they come to see Hoseok, but he doesn't go to them. Later that night he talks to Hoseok in their room and confesses that he's been in the psychiatric ward and will soon have to return. He says he might be a dangerous patient. Hoseok just responds that he himself is narcoleptic, and he isn't dangerous, so why would Jimin's seizures be any different?

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## **Hoseok**

12 May YEAR 22

I opened the emergency exit door and ran down the stairs. My heart beat quickly and I thought it would burst. The face that flickered in the hospital corridor was definitely my mom's. The moment I looked back, the elevator doors opened and people crowded out. I frantically shoved through people and went forward, and some distance away I saw my mom go through the emergency exit. I ran down the steps two at a time with a nervous heart. I didn't rest and went down several floors.

Mom! Mom stopped and stood. I took one more step forward. Mom turned around. I started to look at mom's face. It was at that time. As my heel slipped on the edge of the stair, my center of gravity shifted forward. I closed my eyes tightly, thinking I was going to fall flat on my face. Someone grabbed my arm. Thanks to that, I barely kept my balance. When I looked back, Jimin stood there with a surprised face. With no time to say thank you, I turned my head around again.

I could see one woman. Her face was surprised. Beside her, a young boy stared at me with large, surprised eyes. It wasn't my mom. While I stared at the woman's face, I stood wordlessly at the top of the stairs.

I don't remember what words I used to escape that situation. I also didn't ask Jimin how he showed up there. My head was too crowded to be curious about the details. That woman was not my mom. I wasn't sure whether I knew that truth from the start or not. More than 10 years have passed since that day I was left alone at the amusement park. Mom would have aged too, and she'd be different from my memory. Even if I met my mom, I wouldn't recognize her. No, now I hardly remember my mom's face.

I turned around. Jimin was following me without a word. In high school, after we parted in the emergency room, Jimin said he continuously stayed in this hospital. When I asked if he wanted to leave, he didn't know what to do. Maybe Jimin was, like me, trapped by binding memories, unable to send them away or catch them. I faced Jimin and took one step closer.

Jimin. Let's get out of here.

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## **Jimin**

15 May YEAR 22

I opened my eyes and Hoseok was standing there. The familiar ceiling looked down at me in the familiar darkness. When I sat up in surprise, he put his index finger to his mouth. Everyone was asleep, our surroundings quiet. Hyung promptly handed me a t-shirt. Then he gestured outside the hospital room with his chin.

“We all came together.” He said Namjoon was lookout, and Yoongi had grabbed a nurse to waste time. Soon after, Jungkook and Taehyung would meet us at the elevator. At first I couldn’t follow what they were talking about. I was bewildered, and he extended his hand out to me.

The day I left the hospital. I had dreamed of that day. I wanted to leave the hospital and spend time meeting my friends and laughing and chatting together like we did before. But now, I didn’t know. I wondered if it was indeed a good thing to get out of here. Like my parents, who treat me like I’m not being hidden here. The people who whisper that I have a mental illness. Maybe Hoseok thinks like that too. Maybe he thinks, deep down, that I’m a weird guy, or that I’m uncomfortable to hang out with.

“Hurry. There’s no time.” Maybe because of his urging, I could hear the second hand on the clock, moving strangely fast. The sound of footsteps, like an auditory hallucination, drew closer to the hospital room bit by bit. Hyung and I looked at each other at the same time, after looking at the door. Hyung’s hand was still in front of me.

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## **Hoseok**

16 May YEAR 22

Hoseok talks about being his true self at home, and that he never collapses from narcolepsy while he's there. When Jimin left the hospital, he came to Hoseok's house instead of going to his parents. Hoseok wonders why Jimin didn't go home, but didn't want to ask. He also thinks about how he never went out of the burger shop to ask his friends where they were going when he saw them pass by. He wonders where Jungkook was going with his wounds, where Yoongi's workroom was, why Namjoon left school, where Taehyung learned graffiti, and realizes there's a lot he doesn't know about them. Hoseok points out a supermarket near Namjoon's gas station, then points out the clover-shaped sign behind it and says he grew up in the orphanage to the left of that sign. He then admits to Jimin that his narcolepsy is fake. Jimin is surprised, and Hoseok explains that he didn't do it on purpose, just that he "must have ignored that there was a way for me to be OK." Internally, he says he didn't have the "courage to be honest" because that meant admitting he didn't have a mother. He says he didn't ask the others about their problems because he had been lying to them.

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## **Jimin**

16 May YEAR 22

Hoseok's house was up really high. After walking for a while on a main road, winding through a narrow alley, the rooftop room of the last house was his house. As we entered the house that was one room, he boasted that it was the highest peak in the city, where the places we grew up were under our feet. As he said, from the rooftop room, you could see a lot. Not far away, a train station was visible, and the containers that lined the train tracks were also visible. Among those, Namjoon was living in one. If you turned your point of view just a bit from that spot, the school we all attended together appeared.

As I turned my head to find the school, I looked at the opposite side of the city. Following along the foot of the mountains, there was a huge apartment complex lined up. That place was our, no, my parents' house. I ran away from the hospital without saying anything. They probably contacted my parents. Maybe they were looking for me right now. I didn't have the courage to face my parents yet. I came out of the hospital, but I couldn't go home. Even so, I never wanted to go back to the hospital. But I didn't have anywhere to go, and I didn't have any money. Hyung told me, who was standing hesitantly, to follow him, and he led the way. That's how the place we arrived at was here, Hoseok's house.

Raising my eyes, I looked at the apartment complex again. Someday I'd have to go there. I'd have to meet my parents and tell them that I'm not going to the hospital again. I inhaled deeply. Just the thought of that made me feel like I'd have a seizure. Truthfully, I didn't believe I could endure being in a place that wasn't a hospital. I could be taken to the hospital again. I was so scared I couldn't bear it.

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## **Jimin**

19 May YEAR 22

In the end, I had to go to the Flower Arboretum. I now needed to stop lying that I didn't remember what happened there. Hiding in the hospital, having seizures, I needed to stop it all. In order to do that, I had to go there. With that in mind, I came to this bus stop over several days. But I couldn't ride the shuttle bus to the Flower Arboretum.

It was only today after trying three times that Yoongi flopped down next to me. When I asked what he was doing, he said he had nothing to do and he was bored. Then he asked me why I was sitting there. With my head down, I pat the end of my shoes on the ground. I thought about why I was sitting there. It was because I had no courage. I wanted to pretend that I was okay now, pretend that I knew something, pretend that I could jump over this, but truthfully I was afraid. I was afraid of what I'd encounter, afraid whether I could endure it, and afraid of having a seizure.

Yoongi looked carefree. As if there were nothing urgent in the world, he dragged on with useless talk about the weather being good. After listening to that talk, I realized that the weather really was nice. I was so nervous that there wasn't room for me to look around at the other surroundings. The sky was really blue. Sometimes a warm wind blew too. The shuttle bus to Flower Arboretum was coming. The bus stopped and the door opened. The driver stared at me. I asked impulsively.

“Hyung. Would you go with me?”

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## **Seokjin**

20 May YEAR 22

Seokjin watches Taehyung's house, waiting for Hoseok and Taehyung to arrive. He sees them arrive and stop at the alley, Taehyung telling Hoseok he can go home. Hoseok continues to follow him up to the door, where he then leaves as Taehyung goes inside. Seokjin calls Hoseok the moment Taehyung starts to open the door. Seokjin asks Hoseok to call Taehyung, but Hoseok says he just saw him. Seokjin tells him he's planning a trip to the beach for all of them, and wants to know if Taehyung will come. Hoseok says of course he would, but Seokjin presses him to check with Taehyung, and then hangs up quickly. Hoseok is confused, but goes into Taehyung's house through the open door.

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## Hoseok

20 May YEAR 22

I came out of the police station with Taehyung. “Work hard.” I said it powerfully with my head bowed, but that wasn’t how I felt. It wasn’t far from the police station to Taehyung’s house. I wonder if Taehyung would be in and out of the police station this often if he lived far away. Why did Taehyung’s parents settle so close to the police station? The world was quite unfair to such a nice, tender, fool-like guy. I pretended to know nothing and put my arm around Taehyung’s shoulders and asked “Are you hungry?” Taehyung shook his head. “Did the police officers welcome you and buy you food?” I asked again, but Taehyung didn’t answer.

The two of us walked in the sunlight. A cold wind blew in my heart. My heart is like this, but what is he feeling? How much was his heart torn and broken? How much suffering did he have in his heart? While having those thoughts, I looked up at the sky because I couldn’t look at his face. A plane went by the cloudy sunshine. The first time I saw the scars on Taehyung’s back was when I met him at Namjoon’s container hideout. He got a t-shirt, and had an innocent smile on his face, so no one said anything. But a part of my heart collapsed with a thud.

I didn’t have parents. I don’t have memories of my father, and only of my mother up til age 7. When it comes to wounds from family and childhood, even when compared to anyone, others wouldn’t envy me. People say you need to overcome your wounds. You have to accept it and get used to it. You have to reconcile and forgive. They say if you do that, you can live. It wasn’t that I didn’t know and couldn’t do it. It wasn’t that I rejected it because I didn’t like it. Some things are not accomplished by putting in effort. No one told me how. I know that there’s not anyone in this world without scars. But why in the world are wounds this deep necessary? For what are they necessary? Why do these things happen?

“Hyung. I’m okay. I can go alone,” Taehyung said at the fork in the road. “I know, you punk,” I walked in front without paying attention to it. “I said I’m okay. Look. Nothing happened,” Taehyung smiled. I didn’t answer. He couldn’t have been okay. He really wasn’t okay, but it would be unbearable if acknowledged. It was avoidance. It had become a habit. Taehyung pulled his hood up and began to follow me. “You’re really not hungry, right?” I asked when I reached the corridor to Taehyung’s house. Taehyung smiled like a fool as he nodded. I turned around after watching his back as he walked down the corridor. The corridor he walked in and the road I turned on were both narrow and desolate. Both he and I were alone. Suddenly, I was going to look back, but my phone rang.

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## Taehyung

20 May YEAR 22

I looked down at my hand. It was stained with blood. Suddenly the strength left my legs. I was about to sink down to the ground, but someone held me from behind. The cloudy sunlight was coming in through the window. My older sister was crying, and Hoseok was standing with no words. The dirty furniture and blankets were as scattered as ever. There was nothing where my father had been standing. I couldn't remember how or when he left the room.

The moment I ran towards my father, that unbearable rage and sadness remained in me. The moment I tried to stab my father, I don't know what was holding me back. I didn't know how to calm my wild heart. Rather than kill my father, I wanted to die. If I could, I wanted to die in that moment. Tears didn't come out. I wanted to cry, wanted to scream, I wanted to kick, break, and destroy it all. I wanted to ruin it, but I didn't know how to do any of it.

“Hyung. I'm sorry. I'm okay, so you can go.” Unlike my wild heart, my voice came out dry. It wasn't like my voice. I him off, though he didn't want to leave, and I looked down at the palm of my hand. Blood was oozing out of the white bandage. Instead of stabbing my father, I hit the floor with the alcohol bottle. When the bottle shattered, the skin of my palm was torn. I closed my eyes, and the world spun around and around. What should I think? What should I do? How should I live? When I came to my senses, I was looking down at Namjoon's phone number. Even in this situation, no, even more because it's this situation, I desperately needed him. I wanted to talk with him. Hyung. I, my father, the father who created me, the father who beat me like a dog every day...I almost killed him. I really almost killed him. No, actually, I did kill him. I killed him countless times. I've killed him more times than I can count in my heart. I want to kill him. I want to die. What I should do now, I don't know anything. I just want to see (Namjoon) now.

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## **Jungkook**

22 May YEAR 22

Jungkook wakes up and is at the beach with the others. They play around, having all met up again after getting Jimin out of the hospital. They recall the first time they went to the beach together, on June 12, years ago. Taehyung asks if the observatory had been there the last time they were there, and Jungkook responds that he doesn't think it was.

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## **Taehyung**

22 May YEAR 22

Taehyung recalls seeing all of this in his dream. He saw them all together at the sea and himself up on the observatory. He remembers looking down at the others and then jumping off. Jungkook noticed Seokjin climbing up the observatory. The others wave at him as he looks like he's taking a photo, but Taehyung just looks at him, remembering that everything was the same in the dream, except that he was up there instead. Taehyung notes that the wound on his hand hurts sometimes, like it does now, and he wonders if it's because it's punishment for all of his wrongdoings.

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## **Namjoon**

22 May YEAR 22

“It’s barely a one-year age gap. No, someone said that. I’m the older one. I know. But he won’t be a kid forever. I’m just saying isn’t it time for him to know a little. I understand. I said I understand. No, I’m not mad. I’m sorry.”

I hung up the phone and looked down at the floor. A tepid sea breeze swept through the pine forest. My chest was stuffy and felt like it was about to burst. Ants lined up and went somewhere on the floor that was a mix of sand and dirt. If someone with a much larger existence than mine in the physical and symbolic sense, would they see where I’m going, why I’m going there, and how it turns out in the end?

It wasn’t that I didn’t love my parents. It wasn’t that I didn’t worry about my younger sibling. If I could, I’d want to disregard it, but I couldn’t help that I am me, so I definitely couldn’t do that. If that were the case, what’s the meaning in this struggling, getting angry, getting frustrated, and wanting to break away?

I could see his back, standing there transfixed like I was. It was Jungkook. Jungkook once said, “I want to become an adult like you.” At that time, I couldn’t say anything. That I’m not that good of an adult, no, that I’m not even an adult. It felt cruel to say that at that time. I couldn’t tell a young friend who could not receive attention, trust, and affection that getting older, getting taller, and living a bit more did not make one an adult. I hoped that Jungkook’s future would be a bit kinder than mine, but I couldn’t promise to help in that process. I approached Jungkook and put my arm around his shoulders. He lifted his eyes and looked at me.

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## **Taehyung**

22 May YEAR 22

It was when I was passing the pine forest that I saw him fall behind to answer the phone. There has been a lot of times like that recently. He goes far away to use his phone so that other people can't hear. I purposefully delayed my steps and hid myself towards the sea. Hyung passed by and couldn't see me. "He's only a year younger than me. No, I don't particularly care. Anyway, it's not something for me to take responsibility for. Please use your judgment."

Something cold went down my spine. It was like everything in the world collapsed suddenly. I felt like I was floating in the deep sea alone. I was fearful and scared. Dismal and insignificant. I got angry. I got angry and couldn't stand it. I wanted to do something bad. I wanted to smash, hit, to become a mess. I was always scared. My dad's blood runs in me too. I thought that I also didn't know whether violence was inherent. I felt like something was going to slip past the firmly wrapped shield and come out.

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## **Seokjin**

22 May YEAR 22

Seokjin thinks about how they finally got here, finally reunited after all the trials and errors. He feels uneasy because he has something to confess and hasn't been able to do it yet. He says that after dinner, he tells the others he needs to say something, but only Taehyung is looking at him. Seokjin recalls how Taehyung had confronted him a few days ago and asked him about his dream. He asked him if he knew what it meant, and Seokjin had denied it. Seokjin doesn't want to tell him the truth, that it's not a dream and that he had in fact killed his father many times. Seokjin finally gets the attention of the others and starts to speak, but Taehyung cuts him off. He asks if Seokjin is talking about the time he ratted them out in high school, or how Yoongi got suspended because of that. Namjoon tries to stop Taehyung, but is unsuccessful. Seokjin apologizes to Yoongi and Taehyung begins to speak again.

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## Taehyung

22 May YEAR 22

“Hyung, is that all? There’s not anything else you’re hiding from us?” The surroundings became quiet at once. Everyone’s gazes turned to me. I glared directly at Seokjin. Hyung looked at me too. In that gaze, there was some exhaustion, awkwardness, and regret. The moment I tried to push once more, someone grabbed my arm and stopped me. I didn’t look back, but I knew. It was Namjoon.

“Hyung, why do you care? When you’re not even my real brother.” I felt Namjoon looking at me. Without turning my head, I shook his arm off. I knew it too. I was pointlessly angry at Namjoon now. I was saying I was angry and really hurt, while repeating hyung’s words from the conversation he had with someone else. Nothing he said was wrong. I’m barely one year younger than him. And I’m not his real younger brother. It’s also true that I should know and take care of my own stuff. But I was hurt. I had nothing to rebut with, so I got madder. I wanted him to understand my feelings like this.

“Taehyung. I’m sorry. Let’s stop talking about this here.” The one who opened his mouth was Seokjin. It was Seokjin who has said “Taehyung-ah,” called my name, and told me he was sorry. Namjoon didn’t say anything. “Stop what? Since we’re talking, let’s talk about it all. Hyung, there’s something you’re hiding from us, right?”

“Let’s go outside and talk.” Namjoon said this while grabbing my arm again. I shook him off again this time, but he put more strength in his hand and tried to pull me outside. As I endured, I said “Let me go. What right do you have to stop me? What do you know? While knowing nothing, hyung, you think he’s a great person don’t you?” It was then. Hyung let go of my arm. I faltered a little at his reaction. No, the reason I faltered wasn’t because of his reaction. The moment he let go of my arm, it seemed like the middle of the ring snapped. It was like everything that supported me cracked and collapsed. Maybe I didn’t want him to let go of my arm until the end. Get mad, pull me outside. Perhaps I wanted him to scold me more, like I’m his real younger brother, like I’m a person that’s too close and important to step away from.

But he let go of my arm. I just laughed. “What’s so important about being together? What are we to each other? In the end, you know we’re all alone.” It was that moment that Seokjin hit me.

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## **Jimin**

22 May YEAR 22

Jimin looks around their lodging, seeing the table, chairs, and dishes scattered around in disarray. Hoseok tells him they should go, and he notes that there were seven of them, but now there were four—him, Hoseok, Yoongi, and Jungkook. They walk past the observatory, and Jimin recognizes it's the place they came to when they first came to the beach together. He starts to ask Jungkook about it, but then sees he's heading off quickly on his own. Hoseok tries to call to him, but Jungkook appears not to hear him. They reach an intersection and Jimin must either go left to get to the train station, or right to take the bus home. He knows he has to go back to his parents someday, and he resolves to do it now. He tells Hoseok he's going home, and turns right.

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## **Jungkook**

22 May YEAR 22

I thought my body was up in the air, but in no time I was on the hard ground. For a moment, I couldn't feel anything. My whole body was heavy so I couldn't open my eyes. I also couldn't swallow or breathe. As my consciousness shattered, my surroundings gradually became faint.

Then, my whole body convulsed at something like a shock. Without knowing it, I opened my eyes at an uncertain pain and thirst. Something glimmered in my field of vision, uncomfortable as if full of sand. I thought it was a light, but it wasn't. It was bright, large, and indistinct. It did not move, and floated in the air. After looking for a while, it gradually took a definite shape. It was the moon.

As if my head was twisted back, the world was upside down. In that world, the moon hung upside down. I tried to cough and breathe, but I couldn't move. Then I got a chill. I was scared. I moved my mouth, but no words would come out. Without closing my eyes, it began to get increasingly darker. In my consciousness that was far away, someone said something. "Even though living is more painful than dying, you still want to live?"

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## **Hoseok**

28 May YEAR 22

We haven't contacted each other since coming back from that sea. There wasn't any particular reason. It seemed like Seokjin and Taehyung had an argument, and on the way back Jungkook went a different way, but those weren't the reasons why we became estranged. So, what's the problem? I didn't contact them first. The fact that there wasn't a particular reason perhaps seemed like a big reason.

When I look back on that day, I always recall the sandstorm that blew in suddenly. Seokjin went up on the platform, Taehyung following after, and we all blocked the sunlight with our hands and looked up at the platform. There was a strange anxiety, like déjà vu of this event. "Hyung. About that sea we went to a while ago. The place with the rocks that granted wishes. Isn't it similar to this place?" At Jimin's words, I looked around for a bit. I think it was the very next moment. When Taehyung and Seokjin swayed like they would fall down off the platform, the sandstorm started. I covered my face with both my arms and closed my eyes tightly. I was scared and anxious about what was happening on the platform, but the thought of opening my eyes in the midst of a raging sandstorm did not cross my mind.

The wind died down, and when I raised my head, I saw that Seokjin was coming down from the platform. I saw Taehyung on the platform, hanging his head. Seokjin, who had now come all the way down from the platform, started the car and left. I took one step towards that direction, but there wasn't anything else I could do.

That night, we also returned to Songju. As Seokjin went home first, we had no accommodations for the night and no transportation to get home. It was Namjoon who first said let's go back. Everyone had a disappointed look in their eyes, but we started walking against our will. We all might have wished Namjoon would have told us to somehow continue our sea trip as planned. But Namjoon said let's go home, and our trip ended like that. The sea trip we had been excitedly waiting for was ruined.

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## **Jimin**

29 May YEAR 22

A thin stream of light fell on the desk. It was light that finally came in through the window with the school's name written on it. In the front of the classroom, the teacher talked away through a microphone, but I hardly heard it. I sat in the farthest row with my head down, struggling to somehow catch the light that slipped through my fingers.

Coming out of the hospital didn't solve anything. Instead, it felt like I was several steps behind where I first started. The reason I looked towards the private academy was due to mom asking me, "Without even a high school diploma, what can you do? Aren't you at least going to go get your GED?", like her words pushed me. I didn't have a reply. There was nothing I wanted to do now, and nothing I could do.

While heading towards the academy, my heart was tight. It was a burden to start studying again, but I was afraid of having to be among unfamiliar people more than anything. If anyone found out about me, what should I do? What should I tell them if they ask me why I didn't graduate high school? I frighteningly recalled times at school that had been pushed to the other side of my memory.

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## **Seokjin**

30 May YEAR 22

There was only one hint given. The map of the soul. It was an unfamiliar phrase that I couldn't even guess at what it was or what I should do. But even then, no matter what, I needed a place to start. I expected that the "map of the soul" would have been that. But, it wasn't. I have been through the loop numerous times investigating the map of the soul, but I didn't grasp anything. Looking back, even when all of this started, it was like that. "Do you believe you can save everyone if you straighten out all the mistakes and errors?" At the time when I nodded at this question, I didn't know much about the things I would experience.

I left the secondhand bookstore, leaving behind the full bookshelves and dust-covered books. As I climbed the stairs and went out into the alley, cherry blossoms were falling. Suddenly, I felt like I had been here before, and I turned around. The basement entrance to the bookstore was dark, so the sign was not very visible. No. Did I confuse this with a different bookstore? In order to search for clues about the map of the soul, I went to countless secondhand bookstores and libraries. I went through all the references and keywords from internet searches, but there was nothing to say. In the midst of this, I don't know if I stopped by this bookstore too. If not, there could also be bookstores similar to this one.

I faced my car, parked at the entrance to the alley. I started the car and put my hand on the steering wheel, but I didn't know where I should go now.

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## **Hoseok**

31 May YEAR 22

As a result of suddenly being out of breath, I reflexively avoided my gaze. I thought it was from dancing for a long while and being short of breath, but that wasn't the case. I thought (she) resembled my mother. No, it wasn't a form of thought or recognition, nor could it be explained or described. I couldn't look directly at the face of my friend whom I've already known for over 10 years. We learned to dance together, failed together, got discouraged and encouraged. We lied down on the floor covered in sweat, played around while throwing towels. As if I had been touched by something I never knew the feeling of, I quickly got up from my seat. I stood against the wall after turning the corner. I tried to calm my breath that wouldn't settle, I heard the sound of "Where are you going Hoseok?" A voice. I didn't know whether or not it was a voice. A voice that calls "Hoseok." Now something I couldn't recall, a voice that takes me back to when I was seven.

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## **Seokjin**

4 June YEAR 22

When entering my father's study, there is one painting that draws attention. A precarious raft on top of bursting waves on the open sea. People abandoned with nothing to eat or drink, no compass, and no hope. People who suck each other's blood and kill out of thirst and hunger, hatred and fear, dread and desire, and through that, kill themselves.

When I was a child, I didn't go into the study because I was scared of this painting. I wondered "Why did father hang up such a terrible painting?" However, as time passed, the painting gradually became part of the study and was not an object of fear or worry.

Instead, a different fear formed. That fear was the room beyond the door inside my father's study. There was nothing special about that door or room. It wasn't locked with a padlock or door lock, and beyond it was just an extension of the study. If you're looking for what's unique, there were a lot of books; bookshelves that were full of books and materials my father had collected since his high school days. That room was called "the interior room."

The "interior room" was where my father organized his thoughts alone, or the place where he'd map out things; no one but my father went in there. There was only one time when I went into the "interior room"; I was young, but I knew. The fact that this wasn't just a study with stacks of books. Books placed in no particular order, boxes and papers that were piled up carelessly, these were only human at first glance. There was no feeling of warmth from the papers, and the paintings and photos weren't filled with any emotion. Just standing in the middle of that room and looking up at the bookcases, I felt a daunting feeling like my entire body would shatter.

I don't remember any uproar for going into that room (I don't know for sure whether there was or not), but I haven't gone into that room since then. I've been up to the door once or twice. However, I looked up for a while and only turned. I couldn't even think of turning the doorknob.

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## **Yoongi**

8 June YEAR 22

I took off the t-shirt again. The me in the mirror absolutely was not like me. The t-shirt with the word “DREAM” written on it was not my type in any way. The red color, the word “dream”, the tight fit, I didn’t like any of it. Since I was annoyed, I took out a cigarette and looked for a lighter. It wasn’t in the pocket of my jeans, and I realized it as I went through my bag. They took it away. They took it out of my hand without any hesitation. Then they threw a lollipop and this t-shirt at me.

I ruffled my hair and got up, but I heard the sound of a text message. In the moment I looked at the three characters of the name on the cellphone screen, my heart fell with a thud as my surroundings became bright. I broke the cigarette in half and checked the message. In the next moment, the me in the mirror was smiling. Wearing a tight-fitting red t-shirt with the word “DREAM” written on it, I smiled as if there were something good.

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## **Namjoon**

12 June YEAR 22

There was the rural village, which hadn't changed even a little. Except for the change in seasons, everything was exactly the same. In order to avoid the riverside shop, I purposefully went around the village and went towards the village rest area. The road was mostly uphill. The sunshine was burning hot and I was sweating. A scooter kicked up dust and overtook us. Taehyung coughed dryly and grumbled out a few words. Some distance away, I could see the curve in the road where the accident happened.

Now, it's a road without any sign left. As if he knew that someone had fallen here, Taehyung crouched down on his knees and looked down at the asphalt. On the bus heading here, I had told Taehyung the story about what had happened here in the winter several years ago. The competition at the riverside restaurant, the snowflakes that had fallen from the overcast sky, "Taehyung's" face that had been scarred, the moment my scooter slipped and how it was like every hair on my body stood on edge. "Taehyung's" accident and death. And how easily that event had been wrapped up and forgotten. There were also things I didn't talk about. Like "Taehyung's" expression as he asked me for a favor, and the fact that I, in every moment that I lived in this rural village, remembered my friend by Taehyung's name.

"Hyung. Let's not die." Looking back, Taehyung was looking up at me with his palm on the asphalt. I looked for something to respond with, but nothing occurred to me. It was like I could see "Taehyung," no, the image of my friend from the village, lying on the white lines under Taehyung's palm. There's no one in the world who can die like that and be okay. One person died, no one took responsibility, and no heartfelt condolences were made. I was the very same.

"Let's go down." At my words, Taehyung stood up. "Where are we going now?" Instead of answering Taehyung's question, I said this. "When we went to the sea a while back, you said you had a favor, right? Tell me about that now. Whatever it is, let's try to resolve it together."

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## Seokjin

13 June YEAR 22

After returning from the sea, we were all alone.

As if we had arranged for it, we did not contact each other. Only through the graffiti left on the street, the brightly lit gas station, and the sound of the piano coming from the shabby building could we guess each other's existence. On each occasion, the after-image of that night was revived like a ghost. How flames seemed to drip bit by bit from Taehyung's eyes. The eyes that looked at me as if hearing an unbelievable story. Namjoon's hands that stopped Taehyung. Me, who couldn't stand it and let fists fly towards Taehyung.

I couldn't find Taehyung after he ran away, and no one was left at the seaside lodging after I returned. A broken drinking glass, bloodstains that had started to congeal, and pieces of crumbling snacks were all that was left of what happened a few hours ago. In that interval of time, one picture had fallen. In that photo with the sea as the background, we were together and smiling.

Today too I passed by that gas station. Someday, the day we meet again will come. A day will come where we smile together like in that picture. A day will come where I will have the courage to face myself. But now, it's not yet time. Today too, like that day, a damp wind blew. In the next moment, as if it were a warning, my phone rang. The photo hung on my mirror shook. Hoseok's name was on the screen.

“Hyung, Jungkook was in a car accident that night.”

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## **Yoongi**

13 June YEAR 22

I recalled Jungkook's words. "Because I like your music, hyung. When I hear you play piano, I cry. Me. I wanted to die multiple times a day. But when I hear you play piano, I want to live. So that's why. I'm telling you that's why. Your music is the same as my heart." While I laid sprawled out and drunk on the floor, I recalled Jungkook's expression as he repeated these words.

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## **Jungkook**

13 June YEAR 22

I had a dream. I was looking into the hospital room from up in the air, and there was a different me lying in the hospital bed. It seemed like the me in the bed was sleeping. I was dreaming something, my closed eyes spasmed, and then I opened my eyes without any warning. At that moment, I met my own eyes.

In the next moment, I was lying in the bed. I dreamed of the night of the accident. The headlights became the moon, and then suddenly turned into green and blue lights like beads. But, I opened my eyes, and some distance away, there was another me in the air. I met the eyes of the me in the air. Our eyes crossed, and our consciousnesses reversed. I repeated being the me in the air and the me in the bed. The pace of the reversal and crossing gradually sped up. I got dizzy and felt vomit rising up.

Then, I woke up yelling. The sheets were soaked with sweat. I couldn't catch my breath and felt sick. Suddenly, I recalled things I had forgotten until that point. Someone's voice. "Living is more painful than dying, are you okay with that?" Mom called for the doctor to check on my condition. The doctor said because I was recovering quickly, there was no need to worry. I had suffered bruises and fractures, but there was little bleeding. The doctor said I was lucky for someone who had been hit by a car. I turned to the doctor and asked, "But who was the person who hit me?"

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## **Jungkook**

13 June YEAR 22

Jungkook's in the hospital and Jimin and Hoseok are there to visit. They tell him he should have called. Jungkook says he's fine, but really, he almost died. He was unconscious for ten days. He isn't sure he can trust his memories, since it's all really jumbled.

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## **Hoseok**

13 June YEAR 22

Hoseok leaves the hospital room because he felt like he was about to cry. He just heard of Jungkook's accident that afternoon, when he was at work. He asked a student about Jungkook, and the student told him he was in an accident and had been absent for twenty days. Hoseok called Jungkook, but he didn't answer, and there were no new messages in the group chat. He wonders if the accident happened the night they all went to the beach. Hoseok sends a message that Jungkook was hurt, but no one reads the message at first. He ends up at the hospital to visit Jungkook with Jimin, and says the other four have not read the message yet. Jimin talks to Jungkook about how he joined the dance crew about two weeks ago. Taehyung calls Hoseok then, sounding as if he had been crying.

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## **Taehyung**

13 June YEAR 22

Crying, Taehyung calls Hoseok to ask how Jungkook is after his shift at the convenience store. Taehyung says he's coming to the hospital, but when he gets there, he hears Namjoon and Seokjin talking. He sits outside in the hallway instead and thinks about how the nightmares of Yoongi dying, Jungkook falling, and Hoseok being in despair had stopped. He thinks they stopped after their time at the beach, but now he had a different nightmare: Seokjin crying, scattered blue flower petals, and someone's blood. He wasn't ready to meet Namjoon or Seokjin yet, so he leaves.

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## **Namjoon**

13 June YEAR 22

Namjoon says he arrived at Jungkook's hospital room in the middle of the night. He says Jungkook should have asked why the others fought that night, why they left, and why they didn't come back. Namjoon says he's the same because he didn't tell Jungkook why he left without saying anything and he didn't ask Seokjin what problem he had with Taehyung. He goes back to his container, which he hasn't been back to since they went to the beach. He wonders if he's avoiding Taehyung and thinks maybe he is because Taehyung is emotionally exhausting to confront. He thinks that if Taehyung and Seokjin hadn't fought, if he himself had stayed with the others, or if anyone had gone with Jungkook, then he wouldn't have gotten into an accident.

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## Yoongi

15 June YEAR 22

I couldn't perceive anything except the pounding music in my head. How much I drank, where this place is, what I was in the middle of doing. I didn't want to know, and it wasn't important. It was night time when I staggered outside. I swayed and walked. Whether it was a passerby, a newsstand, a wall, I carelessly bumped into them. I didn't care. I just wanted to forget everything.

Jimin's voice still stood out. "Hyung. Jungkook..." The next thing I remember is climbing the hospital stairs like crazy. The hospital corridor was abnormally long and dark. People wearing patient gowns passed by. My heart was pounding. Everyone's faces were so pale and without any expression. They were all like dead people. The sound of my breathing faltered violently in my head.

Beyond a slightly opened door, Jungkook was lying down. Without my knowledge, my head turned sharply. I couldn't look. At that moment, I suddenly heard the sound of a piano, fire, the sound of a building collapsing. I covered my head and dropped. They said "it's because of you." "If only it weren't for you." My mother's voice, no, my voice, no, someone's voice. Those words tormented me countless times. I wanted to believe it wasn't so. But Jungkook was lying there. On the corridor where patients with faces like dead people were coming and going, Jungkook was lying there. I absolutely could not go in. I couldn't confirm it. As I stood up, my legs wobbled. I came out, but tears fell. It was laughable. I couldn't remember the last time I cried.

As I crossed the crosswalk someone snatched my arm and I turned around sharply. Who was it? No, I don't care. No matter who it was, it's the same. Don't come near me. Go. Please leave me alone. I don't want to hurt you. I don't want to be hurt either. So please, don't come near me.

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## Yoongi

15 June YEAR 22

Yoongi wakes up after a dream. He had been staying up all night to work on music. In the dream, he roamed around in fog, following a whistling sound. He arrived at the garden of an apartment complex and found the half-burnt piano key. As he reaches for it, his dream shifts and he's standing in his workroom, watching himself and Jungkook play the piano. Then, he's walking home with Hoseok from the beach with the piano key in his pocket. The dream is disjointed. Yoongi says it's hard to work on music and he's not used to working with a partner. He talks about the woman who is his music partner; he says she took his lighter and gave him a lollipop instead, nags him, and shows up whenever she wants, but her performance and critiques are impressive. They practiced together the previous night and she told him they were meeting at the hospital the next morning. Yoongi never agreed to it, but he was supposed to answer her call. He previously turned off all notifications for all chat apps. Yoongi worked through the night. He checks his phone, and she hasn't called yet. Then, Jimin calls him. He suddenly remembers another scene from his dream, where the house was on fire and his mom was saying "If I hadn't had you... If you hadn't been born..." Next, he's on his way to the hospital. He sees Jungkook through a crack in the door. He recalls how Jimin had just told him how Jungkook almost died that night they came back from the beach. Yoongi is suddenly overwhelmed by images and sounds like the fire in the drum at the construction site, his mom's unlit room, the piano sounds, and imagining Jungkook lying on the ground after his accident. He starts to spiral and think how Jungkook would have been fine if Yoongi had ignored him when he was at the music shop playing the piano, or if Yoongi had died in the fire. He's overwhelmed with the sounds he hears and runs down the hallway. He leaves the hospital.

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## **Namjoon**

15 June YEAR 22

I looked down at the child who was eating ramen quickly. Was he around eight, no, ten years old? Even while cramming in warm noodles, he turned his head occasionally and looked at me. I asked his name and he replied “It’s Woo-chang, Song Woo-chang.” Before that, when ramen soup splashed on his t-shirt that was clearly stained, he rubbed at it with his fingers and muttered that his grandmother would scold him again.

The first time I saw Woo-chang was about two months ago. I had returned from the gas station and Woo-chang was standing in front of the container that was behind mine. At that time, I thought he had been looking for a shortcut out of Songju station and entered this place. The container area was not a place for a child to live. But, about two weeks later, I saw him kicking around a worn-out soccer ball alone in the vacant lot next to the containers. After that, I ran into Woo-chang a few times. He was always walking around alone until late at night, wearing the same t-shirt, pants, and sneakers. With just a glance, it was obvious there was no adult to care for him. There was nothing I could do for him. Even taking care of myself was beyond my ability. I always went by, pretending not to know Woo-chang.

Today, when my work ended at the gas station and I returned to the container village, it was a bit past 11 PM. As I searched in my pocket for my key, I could see a crouching shadow. It was Woo-chang. As always, if I switched off my concern it would stop. It would be over if I found my key, opened the door to my container, boiled and ate ramen alone, and tried to sleep. But today, I couldn’t do that. I didn’t want to do that.

I looked up at the sky. It had been cloudy all day. Even in the night sky, heavy gray clouds hung. You couldn’t see any starlight. All of a sudden, I got hungry. If I remembered correctly, I only had one pack of ramen left inside my container. I hadn’t procured any and wouldn’t have the power to procure any in the future. Those were my circumstances. I looked down at the key I had taken out of my pocket. I recalled the scenery I looked back on as I left the rural village. I thought about the phrase I had written on the bus window.

I walked towards Woo-chang.

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## **Jungkook**

15 June YEAR 22

Jungkook wakes from a dream of the traffic accident. He gets up and uses his crutches for the first time. He sits on a bench and opens his sketchbook. The doctor comes over and tells him how it was a miracle he survived and recovered. A girl that Jungkook met yesterday comes over and asks him questions as he's trying to draw what he saw in his dream. Then, he hears a familiar song that he thought he heard Yoongi play before. He goes over to the stage and sees a lighter hanging on the guitar with the initials Y.K.

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## Yoongi

23 June YEAR 22

I opened my phone when I discovered the chatroom notification. In no time, it had become dark outside the window. It wasn't easy to gather all of the music I had scribbled up to this point. Randomly, I collected and classified the ones that survived the process of burning and the melodies inside my memory. To my surprise, most of them were made during high school in the storage classroom. Looking back, I don't think I worked a lot on music back then. The me of that time, no, the me of any time period, I has always run away from music.

I opened the chatroom and many conversations were carrying on. Unexpectedly, the one who made the chatroom was Jimin, and the conversation started in the middle like it had been going on prior to me being invited. Taehyung asked everyone, "Do you know what the map of the soul is?" Hoseok answered a bit after that: "What is that?" Taehyung answered: "Hyung. If I knew what it was, would I have asked?" "Right. By why are you talking about that?" After that conversation went on for a while, Jimin explained the whole story. While going to the hospital, he had seen Seokjin by chance. Seokjin said he was looking for something called the map of the soul.

A while later, Namjoon appeared. "Seokjin also asked me if I knew what 'map of the soul' was, and at that time, he said this. 'The map of the soul is the method for ending all of this.'" For a while, the conversation did not continue. Maybe everyone was lost in thought. What is this thing that Seokjin says he must end? Everyone was guessing at why Seokjin had become strange. Would Seokjin get better if he found the map of the soul? What in the world was it, and where would it be found?

After a while, the conversation that continued was this. "You didn't call Jungkook to this chatroom?" Jimin answered, "I thought about it. But Jungkook is still hurt, right?" Jimin talked vaguely as if he didn't have any confidence. Suddenly, I wondered why Jimin was at the hospital. How did it feel to visit a hospital after he spent a long time trapped in one? I again opened the chatroom that I had closed. "Right. You did well. Let's let Jungkook rest a bit more."

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## **Taehyung**

25 June YEAR 22

I slowed down purposefully and concentrated on listening to the small footsteps running behind me. Today was the third time I bumped into them at the convenience store. If anything was different today, it was them running out as soon as they saw me. Then, they stood in a small vacant lot at the back of the convenience store, and when I appeared, they hid again. They appeared to have hidden, but their shadow stretched out long in front of the vacant lot. I laughed. When I walked, pretending not to see them, they started to follow me.

I entered a narrow alleyway. In this neighborhood, this was the sole place that streetlights weren't broken. The alleyway was long, and the streetlight was positioned about halfway. When a light source is in the front, a shadow forms behind you. So now my shadow was cast long behind me. Perhaps it would reach the feet of the person who was following me while holding their breath. As soon as I reached the foot of the streetlight, my shadow was hidden underneath me. I started walking a bit faster. As I moved beyond the streetlight, my shadow started to overtake me. Not long after, a shadow that wasn't mine appeared on the dusty cement road. When I stopped walking, the other person also stopped. The two shadows that differed in height stopped and stood side by side.

"I'm going to wait until you come here," I said. The shadow jumped, surprised. They held their breath as if they weren't there. "I can see it all." I pointed to the shadow. Shortly, the sound of deliberate steps started to come closer. I laughed.

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## **Namjoon**

30 June YEAR 22

I watched with a sense of wonder as my hand pressed the open button of its own will. It was this moment. It was a moment I felt like I had repeated countless times, but it was definitely the first time. The elevator door which had been about to close opened again as more people came in. My eyes found a person who had their hair tied with a yellow rubber band. It wasn't that I had pushed the button knowing that person was there, but I thought that that person was there. I went back step by step. I reached the cold wall of the elevator and as I lifted my head, I could see a yellow rubber band.

A person's back tells a lot. I only understood some of it at that time. Some things can only be guessed at vaguely, and others are left not understood at the end. I thought only when you can read everything from the back can you say that you know a person for the first time. If so, wouldn't there be a person who can read everything from my back? As I looked up, our gazes met in the mirror. I avoided my eyes in an instant. This happened often. When I lifted my head again, the only thing I could see in the mirror was my face. I couldn't see my appearance from behind.

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## **Jimin**

3 July YEAR 22

Ultimately, I sprawled out on the floor. The music cut off and all at once, my surroundings became quiet. I couldn't hear anything above the sound of my breath and the sound of my heart racing. I took out my phone and played the video of the choreography I had learned that day. In the video, Hoseok's movements were smooth and precise. I knew that was due to lots of time and sweat, the result of practice, and I knew it was greed to me. But because comprehension and wishes are different things, I repeatedly sighed. I abruptly got up again. I imitated the turn again, but my steps were again messed up. At the part where we have to match movements and switch positions, I kept making mistakes. I intended to check it tomorrow, but until then I wanted to somehow try to do it properly. Rather than playful compliments of "you're pretty good," I wanted to be acknowledged as an equal and serious partner to Hoseok, someone who could match his breaths.

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## **Jimin**

3 July YEAR 22

Jimin says Hoseok has been in a bad mood since they visited Jungkook. He talks about joining Just Dance after they came back from the beach, and how Hoseok brought a friend from the orphanage. Jimin says, “she was the only person who could make him laugh when he was in that mood.” Jimin practices alone in the studio. He used to dance, but it was hard to keep up with it due to his hospital stays. He wants to dance like Hoseok. He thinks back on how he went to his parents’ house the day he left the beach. He went inside, and no one came to greet him. He told his parents, who were watching TV, that he wasn’t going back to the hospital. His mother asks where he had been, and he says he was with his friends. His father tells him to wash up and go to bed, and that they’ll figure out what to do with him later. Jimin resolves that night to find out what he wants to commit himself to, and that he will become good at it. Back in the present at the studio, Jimin keeps practicing, wanting to be an “equal” rather than “not bad.”

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## **Hoseok**

4 July YEAR 22

I went out into the hallway during first aid. Even though it was night time, there were quite a lot of people in the hospital hallway. Water dripped down from my hair soaked with rain and sweat. While I was brushing off my hair, I dropped her bag. Various things fell out. Coins rolled, a pen and a towel all scattered about. In the midst of it all was an e-ticket for a plane. As I picked it up, I glanced at it.

Then, the doctor called to me. He said it was a minor concussion and nothing to worry about, and she came out after. “Are you okay?” She said she had a slight headache and tried to take the bag from me. When she saw the e-ticket sticking out, she looked at my face. I pretended to know nothing while switching the bag to my other shoulder and urging her to go. When we came out the front door, it was still raining. We stood side by side at the door.

“Hoseok,” she said. She looked as if there was something she wanted to say. “Wait a moment, I’ll go buy an umbrella.” I ran blindly out into the rain. There was a convenience store. I knew she had entered an audition for a foreign dance team a while ago. Her having the plane ticket meant that she got in. I didn’t want to hear what she had to say. I didn’t have the confidence to congratulate her.

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## **Jimin**

4 July YEAR 22

When I came to my senses, I was washing my arm to the point of peeling off skin. My hands were trembling, and my breath was fluctuating. Blood was running down my arm. The eyes in the mirror were bloodshot. What happened a moment ago emerged in fragments.

For a moment, my concentration became messy. I was dancing with an older girl from the dance club, our positions tangled and we crashed into each other. I tumbled haphazardly onto the rough floor and blood came out of my arm. At that moment, something that happened at the arboretum emerged. I thought I had overcome it. But it wasn't so. I should run away. I had to wash it off. I had to disregard it. In the mirror, I was still the 8-year-old kid who ran away in the rain. It suddenly came to my mind. The older girl had fallen too.

There wasn't anyone in the practice room. Beyond the slightly opened door, it rained furiously. I saw Hoseok running. He was completely exposed to the rain. I took off with an umbrella. I ran. In the end, I stopped.

There wasn't anything I could do. All I could do was fall down and hurt others, right, I'd shake at my pain and abandon them. I was running too late, all I could do was stop. I turned around and walked. With each step, rain water splashed on my sneakers. Car headlights passed by. It wasn't okay. No, it was okay. I wasn't hurt. This much isn't a wound. I'm really okay.

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## **Hoseok**

7 July YEAR 22

Hoseok recalls carrying the girl to the hospital while she was unconscious. He slightly injured his ankle while carrying her, but he didn't think much of it. When he returned to the dance studio, Jimin was waiting for him to see how the girl was. Hoseok didn't worry about his ankle and just put a pain relief patch on it, but it ended up swelling. He needed to be on it all day at work and during dance practice, so it didn't heal well. While at the hospital with the girl, he accidentally dropped her bag and saw a plane ticket inside, meaning she must have gotten the spot she auditioned for on the international dance team.

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## **Taehyung**

10 July YEAR 22

Taehyung is running through his neighborhood, evading the police. He recalls that he picked up the spray cans again because of one girl. He met her at the convenience store while she tried to steal food. He empathized with her, saying that he knows what it feels like when you don't belong anywhere and are afraid you're responsible for everything bad in your life. He says they saw each other sometimes after that, but they never did anything special. He showed her how to spray graffiti. He recalls that he hasn't been in touch with Namjoon since he saw him at the hospital, but he did go by his container a few days ago, while walking around outside to get away from his dad's drunken temper. He says he wanted to go in, but he couldn't do it. The police catch up to Taehyung, and he's in a dead-end street. He ends up surrendering, coming out with his hands up.

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## **Namjoon**

13 July YEAR 22

I leaned my head against the bus window. From the library to the gas station. The street I come and go on daily, the scenery I'm so familiar with I'm sick of passes by. Will the day come where I break away from this scenery? It felt impossible to judge tomorrow or expect anything.

A woman with her hair tied in a yellow rubber band sat in front of me. As if she sighed, her shoulders lifted up and down. She leaned her head on the window. For a month already, she studied at the same library and took a bus from the same stop as me. Though we hadn't spoken even one word to each other, we watched the same scenery, lived in the same time, and sighed the same. In my pocket, there was still a hair band.

The woman always got off three stops before I did. Each time I saw her get off the bus, I wondered if she was going to hand out the flyers again. What would she have to experience? What kind of things would she have to put up with? How often would she feel that tomorrow won't come, a sense of desolation that it wasn't there from the beginning? I thought those things.

The bus stop the woman would have to get off at started getting closer. Someone pressed the stop button, and soon the passengers got up from their seats. However, the woman was not sandwiched between them. She was just leaning her head against the window, sitting down. It looked like she fell asleep. Should I go and wake her? I was conflicted for a moment. The bus reached the stop. The woman remained the same. People got off the bus. The doors closed, and the bus took off.

The woman did not wake up as we passed three bus stops. I was conflicted again as I approached the exit. It was clear no one else would pay any mind towards the woman if I got off the bus. She would be far away from where she gets off before she wakes up, and I didn't know how much more tired she would be today due to it.

I left the bus stop and began walking towards the gas station. The bus took off, and I didn't look back. I left a hair tie on the woman's bag, but that was all. That was neither the beginning nor the end. It wasn't anything from the start, and there was no reason for it to be. So, I thought "it's really nothing."

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## Seokjin

14 July YEAR 22

Seokjin meets Namjoon for drinks after Namjoon's shift at the gas station. Namjoon had called him, but he doesn't say anything at first. He says nothing's wrong, just that his life never changes, and he can't do anything for anyone, so he can't meet with Taehyung or visit Jungkook again. Later, after a few drinks, Seokjin asks Namjoon why he defended him when Taehyung called him out at the beach. Namjoon instead asks why Seokjin did what he did in high school. Seokjin blames the alcohol for why he confided his secrets, telling Namjoon that he'd never felt "the warmth of a family" and struggled with his mother's death, his childhood in LA at his maternal grandparents' house, and his father's coldness when he came back. Namjoon says that he's heard Seokjin's story now, but the others are still waiting to hear it. Seokjin leaves and wanders around a bit. He wonders if anyone would believe him if he told them the truth, including Namjoon. He sees graffiti and thinks about how he saw Taehyung the other day from afar, as he worked in the convenience store. He wonders how he can reconcile with Taehyung and notes that the future looks bleak.

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## **Hoseok**

16 July YEAR 22

Hoseok ends up in the hospital to get a cast on his ankle, and Jungkook comes to see him. Jungkook mentions that he's due for a check-up next week and he can go home if everything is well. Hoseok decides to throw him a party, like they did for Jimin. As Hoseok leaves, Jungkook asks him if Seokjin ever talks about "that night" and if he has ever said anything about seeing him. Hoseok isn't sure what he's talking about. Jungkook asks Hoseok if he thinks of himself as a good person, and Hoseok contemplates that as he leaves.

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## **Jungkook**

16 July YEAR 22

Standing by the window with my earphones in, I gradually sang along with the song. It's already been a week. I can now sing it even without looking at the lyrics. With one earphone pulled out so I could hear my own voice, I practiced. They said they liked the lyrics because they were pretty, but I scratched my head because the lyrics were embarrassing. Through the large window, the July sun shined fully. The wind blew, and the green leaves sparkled while shaking slightly. Every time, the feel of the sunlight that fell on my face changed. I closed my eyes. I sang while I watched the yellow, crimson, and blue colors spread across the inside of my eyes. Whether because of the lyrics, or because of the sunlight, something billowed inside my heart while I experienced an itching, prickling sensation.

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## Taehyung

17 July YEAR 22

I had a splitting pain in my side. I was dripping with sweat. The train tracks, the empty lot behind the convenience store, under the overpass, no matter where, she wasn't there. I ran to the bus stop, but as expected, I didn't see her. The people at the bus stop looked at me strangely. What happened? We didn't have a plan to meet, but it was strange. She always appeared suddenly out of nowhere and followed me. Even when I'd say it's bothersome, it was no good. But even in the places we went together, she wasn't there.

As I approached the familiar wall, I stopped walking. It was the graffiti we drew together. It was also the first one she drew. There was a huge X mark drawn over top. It was her. I didn't see it, but I knew. Why? I didn't have an answer. Instead, there were several afterimages overlaid on the wall.

The image of her laughing at me as I laid on the train tracks and hurt my head. The image of her helping me up when I fell, while helping her run away. Her angry face when I ate the bread I took. Her expression that clouded over when we passed family photos hanging outside a studio. Her gaze that followed the students passing by without knowing. While spraying this wall together, I said, "When it's hard, don't complain about it alone. Tell me." The X mark was drawn over all those memories. It's like it was saying those were all fake. It's like it was saying those were all lies. Without me realizing it, I clenched my fist. Why? As expected, I didn't have an answer. I turned around and walked. I was alone again. Both me, and her.

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## **Namjoon**

18 July YEAR 22

I looked up at the building. Lights were on here and there. Maybe because it was near City Hall, there were lots of signs for accounting and law offices. On the fifth floor, all the lights were on. Over the past few weeks, Taehyung and I have gone up Songju's tall buildings. We don't even know what we're looking for. The only clue we had was Taehyung's dream. In his dream, there's canned coffee and a four-leaf clover. With those two clues, we went up and down buildings all night. On some days, it rained. At first, we investigated the buildings while holding an umbrella, but soon, we were just caught in the rain. Because of that, we were also caught up in a quarrel. While going up the stairs of a building completely soaked, we were mistaken for juvenile delinquents and kicked out. There were times where the iron doors to the roof were locked, and we couldn't check anything from the windows on the landing.

I looked up at the building again. I wondered whether this was the thing we had to find in the end. There was a familiar name written on the window. National Assemblyman Kim Changjoon's office. "Who is that?" Taehyung asked. "You don't know?" I asked, looking back at him. Taehyung looked at me with gentle, innocent eyes as if he knew nothing. There are times where I felt at a loss because of Taehyung. Things Taehyung didn't know made me question "How can you not know this?" Things I was too scared to look into, Taehyung looked into without hesitation. When no one reached out their hand, Taehyung would hold on resolutely and not let go. "It's Seokjin's father," I answered.

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## **Jimin**

18 July YEAR 22

I filled my time by wandering around the convenience store. The back of Songju Jeil Middle School. In the past, I snuck out of school by going over this wall and waited for the hyungs at the park across from the convenience store. I looked around. There wasn't much that was different about this neighborhood I hadn't been to for a long time. I recalled that Yoongi and Jungkook's homes were in this area. I looked around, and I saw something that looked like graffiti in the alleyway on the right. It looked like something Taehyung drew. I moved my steps in that direction.

I stopped in front of the drawing without realizing it. It was scrawled in rough black lines, someone's face that had no warmth. I wondered who it was, but I knew. The person who owned that face. It was Seokjin. The moment that I thought of Seokjin, another person's face overlapped with it. Looking more closely, the face didn't resemble him at all. But, those two people's faces looked the same. Those two people had the same eyes. Soulless eyes. It was then that I knew. I knew who I should find.

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## **Namjoon**

20 July YEAR 22

I flipped through the ads in the magazine and raised my head. On the other side of the table in the window seat sat a different face for several days. The heavy book, large bag, and white paper cup were the same, but it wasn't her. I lowered my gaze down to the magazine again. I had been looking at the same page for more than an hour. In my repeated thoughts, the letters were barely visible. Why am I sitting here? The answer did not occur to me. In the midst of people who were absorbed in something, I was only lethargically fumbling through a magazine. I was impatient that I should start something. It's also true that things don't work out like this.

I returned the magazine and entered through the bookcases. On the bookcases that were lined up taller than me, books were stacked up. The wind that blew through the open window caused the smell of books and dust to rise into the air. I recalled my high school days. The time when my friends and I hung out in the storage classroom. The books I read at that time also had this smell. Did the "present me" grow up from the "me of that time" even just a bit? I couldn't readily affirm that. Maybe everything that's mine stopped at that time. I moved to the bookcase on the opposite side. Then I picked up the book that I studied at that time. I had to start again. One by one, starting from everything that I gave up on back then.

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## Taehyung

23 July YEAR 22

We proceeded to the middle of the classroom. Old desks and chairs and rolled up placards appeared under the flashlights of our cell phones. The classroom that no one was coming in and out of was even more worn out. I looked around. I wondered what had happened here. Some distance away, Jimin crouched in front of the wall, and Yoongi was perched on the piano bench. Namjoon wrote something on the window with his finger.

“It’s like high school. Being at school like this in the middle of the night,” Namjoon said after a while. “Like high school—I disagree,” Yoongi said, chuckling. “Why is the world like this? This world, we didn’t make it. When we were born, it was already like this. But why were we thrown into this world to survive without any means?” Namjoon said.

“Oh—look at this,” Jimin said then, getting up. “Seokjin’s father’s name is here.” We went to where Jimin was pointing. There were the names of several people among the wall packed with scribbles. Everyone’s flashlights skimmed over the names. While pointing to a different name, Jimin said, “It’s the guy from the mental hospital. I don’t know the other names, though.” Yoongi pointed to yet a different name. “Choi Gyuhoo. This is the person who disappeared, right?” Namjoon read the sentence written beneath the names: “Everything started here.”

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## **Hoseok**

24 July YEAR 22

“Seokjin, can’t you talk to your father? You know, don’t you? What that place means to me. The orphanage is a home to me. And the kids who live there—if the orphanage goes away, they’ll have to be scattered around. They can do redevelopment while leaving out the orphanage.” I spilled out these words without any explanation as I entered the container. Everyone looked at me with surprise in their eyes. Seokjin—the only person who had no change in his expression. Even though I almost cried while talking, he looked at me as if it were nothing.

“It’s all already been decided. There’s nothing I can do.” His words came to me slowly, one by one. Those words, one by one, showed me how certain the line between Seokjin and I was. Seokjin belonged to the world of decision-making, and I belonged to a world where I couldn’t even protest a decision. I thought of Seokjin as a friend, but it occurred to me that in the real world, the friendship between us was not established.

I got a bit angrier at him. I yelled at him, asking how he could be like that and begged him to help. But, even at that time, I knew. That those were just words. There was nothing I could do. So the words I said and my anger weren’t towards him; they were towards myself. They were towards me, who couldn’t do anything and whose existence was nothing.

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## **Jimin**

24 July YEAR 22

I arrived in the vicinity of the container a little before the agreed upon time. It's the place where we'd celebrate Jungkook's discharge from the hospital, but that's not all. There was something I wanted to say to Seokjin. I thought I had important things to say to him, but I also felt like he wouldn't like it. Instead of going inside the container, I walked for a bit while following the train tracks. A train went by, and the wind blew violently. The platform filled with people and then became empty again. In the meantime, the agreed upon time passed. I turned around and took in a deep breath.

There was no one inside the container. Only the hot summer air pushed out as if it had been waiting. I was the first to arrive, even though I was ten minutes late. Where was everyone? Did some situation suddenly arise? Were they on their way? I turned on the electric fan and looked around inside. I hadn't seen Namjoon in a long time, and his still and calm container didn't suit a word like "party." I found a piece of paper in the desk drawer and with a pen wrote "Congrats on your discharge, Jungkook" letter by letter in large print and attached it to the container wall. That alone didn't make the feeling of it being shabby go away, but it was better than doing nothing.

Ten more minutes passed after I checked in the chatroom to make sure everyone was coming. The container vibrated when trains passed by outside the open door. While looking at the thumping world, I recalled the time I opened the hospital door and ran away. Would I have been able to open that door and come out if it weren't for the hyungs, Taehyung, and Jungkook? Just because a door is there and it's open doesn't mean everyone can go out. Maybe Seokjin is trapped somewhere like that too? Would he not be waiting for someone to knock at the door? I wasn't sure about anything. I also didn't know if it would really be helpful. But the pieces we've found after fumbling around become small hints... when my thoughts had reached that point, the container door opened suddenly. Then, Yoongi stepped in.

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## **Jimin**

24 July YEAR 22

Jimin is sitting in the container with Taehyung and Jungkook. He says Seokjin hadn't showed up even though he said he would, Namjoon couldn't come until after his shift, Hoseok had to leave for work, and no one could get a hold of Yoongi. Jimin says they've been this way since getting back from the sea. He thinks that maybe it's inevitable, since they all have their own problems now. No one reaches out to anyone else or keeps up with how the others are doing. Jimin is focused on proving to his parents and himself that he's okay. Jungkook gets up to leave, and Jimin goes towards the bus stop as Taehyung and Jungkook go in the opposite direction.

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## **Seokjin**

24 July YEAR 22

Seokjin goes into a conference room with his father and others. There's a presentation pulled up titled "Masterplan for Redevelopment of Downtown Songju." He knows Jungkook's discharge party must have started, and he was going to call the others, but his father began to speak. In the car on the way there, his father had asked him if he still hung out with his "so-called friends." Seokjin realizes it's not a real question, but rather an attempt to belittle them and suggest that Seokjin should cut ties. His father tells him to learn as much as he can because he'll be spending a lot of time there, and he'll soon "grow into an adult worth his salt." He tells him not to waste his time on nothing and says he speaks "from experience."

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## **Taehyung**

24 July YEAR 22

Taehyung rushes up to his house where there are police cars parked outside. His sister says it's not bad, no one was hurt. The cops check everything out and then leave. Taehyung thinks about how he dreamed about killing his dad a lot, and how he almost stabbed him once in reality. He says from then, he started to sympathize with his dad, even though he didn't want to. One of the cops had told him that they should thank the lady who called the cops, because she must be worried about them.

Taehyung asks his sister if she keeps in touch with their mother. She says she doesn't know an address or phone number; she only knows the general area she lives in. Taehyung says he wants to ask her why she left and why she appeared again.

Taehyung starts walking even though it's midnight. He notices Jungkook following him and tells him to go away, but Jungkook keeps following him. Taehyung stops on an overpass and Jungkook tells him they've been walking for an hour. He asks Taehyung where they're going and Taehyung responds he needs to tell his mother something. Taehyung begins to wonder if he's really going to do this, since he doesn't know where she lives and his rage has now subsided.

When they reach a more populated area, they sit outside a convenience store with ramen. Taehyung goes inside to buy drinks and comes back to Jungkook staring at a man in a khaki overcoat eating Taehyung's noodles. Taehyung is surprised and also scared. The man has dirty gray hair and a scraggly beard. A troublemaker comes out of the shop and shoves the man while another trips him. This causes him to push the table, knocking over Jungkook's ramen and splashing him with the broth. Taehyung shouts at the men that they should apologize for making the mess. They sneer at him and he lunges at them. They fight, and Jungkook steps in to stop it, but he gets pulled in too. When they hear sirens, they all scatter.

Jungkook follows Taehyung, and a passing car's mirror brushes up against Jungkook. He sinks to the ground. Taehyung says they should go back, especially since Jungkook's leg appears to be hurt. He helps him walk somewhere to watch the sun rise as they wait for the buses to start running. While they wait, Taehyung tells Jungkook that he followed his mother the night she left them. His father had beaten his mother, his sister, and Taehyung really badly. That night, she left and Taehyung followed her for a long time. Taehyung admits he doesn't know why he came this far this time. Jungkook tells him he's sorry, and Taehyung fusses that he has nothing to be sorry for. Taehyung says he is the one who should be sorry for making him come all this way. He tells Jungkook he's a good person and it's not his fault. They get on the bus and head home.

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Taehyung thinks about how his mother had stopped walking and stood still, so he could have caught up to her if he wanted. He could have cried or thrown a tantrum, but instead, he just turned around and went home alone. Jungkook points out the man from before, and they see him walking alone.

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## **Taehyung**

24 July YEAR 22

I wondered how long I had sat there. I saw someone come out into the third-floor corridor. It was quite far away, so I didn't see their face, but it looked like a thin, middle-aged woman. The woman put both of her arms on the railing in the corridor and looked down towards the playground. Then she lit a cigarette. The light from the lighter twinkled and then disappeared. Cigarette smoke spread out through the blue dawn air.

Without moving at all, I looked up at her. As the sun was about to rise, the area was bright and hazy. The woman still had her arms on the railing and was looking out, burning through one cigarette and lighting another.

I wondered whether that person could see me too. Since it was far away, she wouldn't see my face, and I wondered what she would think, seeing someone sitting on the playground swings at dawn. I supported the swing with both my hands and legs to prevent it from creaking. The cigarette light repeatedly died down, then grew larger. The sun was rising. Under the bright rising light, the woman smoked her last cigarette. Then, she turned around and disappeared inside. I counted the doors one by one, starting from the left side of the corridor. 304, 305, 306. So, that's the door to my mom's home.

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## **Jungkook**

24 July YEAR 22

“Congrats on your discharge, Jungkook” was written on the wall of the container, but it wasn’t that atmosphere. The air inside the narrow container was swelling like it would burst with an unknown tension. Looking back, it’s always been like that nowadays.

Seokjin went outside for a brief moment. Taehyung hurried to follow him, and the others exchanged looks and followed. Taehyung said something, but it didn’t look like Seokjin was listening. I watched from behind the others as Seokjin got into his car.

The car backed up slightly and turned to the side. The light from the container skimmed over the body of the car. For a moment I saw traces of an accident on the bumper which were then buried in the dark. The strange thing was that I didn’t feel anything while looking at that. Even if you get confirmation for something you already knew and stand in front of a hard truth you can touch with your hand, you may feel complicated feelings or feel shocked, but in reality it’s not like that.

Seokjin’s car that disappeared in the darkness overlapped with the headlights that approached me that night. The feeling of my body floating, the moment when I couldn’t breathe or swallow, the fear of spasms throughout my whole body. The cold of losing consciousness that I couldn’t bear. The shadow of death. The marks of the accident on the car bumper that I saw in that moment.

I went inside the container. While looking up at Jimin’s handwriting that said “Congrats on your discharge, Jungkook,” I sat down in a chair. Suddenly my leg that was hurt in that accident was sore. The others didn’t think much about coming inside. They were having a discussion about something I didn’t know.

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## **Hoseok**

25 July YEAR 22

Hoseok runs into Yoongi as he leaves the hospital. Hoseok had been scolded by the doctor, who told him he may hurt his ankle permanently if he doesn't take better care of it. Hoseok sees Yoongi drunk and staggering at a crosswalk. He says Yoongi doesn't recognize him as he goes past. Hoseok remembers how he went to Yoongi's workroom two days after he visited Jungkook in the hospital because he couldn't get a hold of Yoongi. He knocked and kicked the door, but no one answered. Hoseok talks about how he's known Yoongi since middle school, so he understands what he went through with his mother's death. Hoseok had tried to be a good friend to him, but now he realizes that Yoongi doesn't care about any of them, not even Jungkook, because he didn't show up to the hospital. Hoseok looks back at Yoongi and sees him lying on the ground in front of a vendor's cart. He goes over to yell at Yoongi, asking him when he's going to stop behaving like this, and whether he thinks he's the only one hurting. He asks him why he didn't go to see Jungkook. After he finishes his rant, he tells him "It's time to stop running away. If you're going to run away again, don't ever come back." He walks off, though he thinks he hears Yoongi call out to him. Hoseok decides not to blame himself for things that go wrong any longer; he resolves not to live like that anymore.

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## **Yoongi**

25 July YEAR 22

Yoongi wakes up in the middle of the night somewhere outside where it's raining. He recalls what Hoseok told him about never coming back if he's going to run away again. He thinks about how he doesn't remember what happened after leaving the hospital, just that he was staggering around for who knows how long. Then, he saw Hoseok, and he thought maybe Hoseok could help him understand his own confusion and fear, even though he couldn't understand it himself. He says that instead, Hoseok pretended not to see him and looked away. Yoongi recalls Hoseok asking him if he knew what he meant to Jungkook, and Yoongi says of course he does. He reasons that may be why he couldn't go in to see Jungkook, because he's worried he'd hurt him, since everyone close to him gets hurt. Yoongi looks at the mountain trail before him and decides to go deeper into the forest. Due to the cold and fatigue, Yoongi thinks he might be destined to die on that mountain trail. He contemplates how it may be for the better, since he'd hurt others and ignored them. He thinks about death a lot. Then, he hears a piano melody. He says it's the melody he was working on and that it was missing something. He tried to walk closer to it, still wondering what difference it would make if he could finish that piece. After walking around for hours, Yoongi stops and says the melody combines in his head with the composition he had been working on. He says it's a combination of many emotions. He recalls playing the melody for Jungkook, who told him it was nice. He also recalls other various memories and says that his piano was always beside him during happy moments. Even though the happiness always went away, those memories were true. Yoongi decides that he wants to complete the piece, mainly just because he wanted to express his emotions, pain, and fear in the music. He realizes he didn't wander deep into the woods and is now back where he started.

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## **Jungkook**

26 July YEAR 22

I secretly plucked flowers from the hospital's flower bed. Because a smile came out frequently, I kept my head lowered. The mid-summer sunshine was dazzling. I knocked on the hospital room door, but there was no answer. I knocked again and opened the door slightly. Inside the room was chilly. And no one was there. There was only a very quiet darkness.

I turned and came out of the hospital room. Feeling weary and stuffy, I pushed my wheelchair across the corridor where I met her. At a sudden appearance, I was barely able to stop; there stood a girl with her hair tied back. After coming out of the hospital, I could see that bench. I remember sitting there together with her and listening to music and drawing. And on that rooftop, we shared strawberry milk. There were still wild flowers in my hand, but now there was no one to give them to.

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## **Jungkook**

26 July YEAR 22

When I looked back, the hospital was quite far away. The wildflowers left behind, the bench, and the window I looked at the river at together with her were no longer visible. Looking back, she gave me space to breathe during that stuffy hospital life. When we sat on the hospital bench together in the late afternoon and talked about this and that, the sun went down in no time. I talked about playing around at the hideout, about the trip to the sea, and even about walking to the train station. She talked about every nook and cranny of the hospital. About from which window you could see the river, which staircase you could go up to secretly enter the roof. There wasn't anything she didn't know about the hospital.

Her hospital room was empty. Whether she had been discharged, or moved to a different room. I asked the nurses, but I couldn't find out anything. For some reason, a part of my heart was empty. I turned and started walking again. I could see the school far away. Come to think of it, most of the stories I told her were about the hyungs, and I had started most of what I said with "the hyungs." To the me who was always alone, they had become friends, family, and teachers. All my stories were inside their stories, and I only existed in my connections with them.

However, from some point in time, I had these thoughts. Maybe a day would come when they won't be by my side. One day I'll look for them, but they won't be there and they won't let me know the reason. No, more than that, I don't know if something more severe would happen.

I recalled that night. The night when the large moon was floating in the sky, the upside down world, the light of the headlights coming into my vision that had been turned around, the form of the car that passed me and disappeared, the red light of the taillights, the sound of the engine that had become familiar for some reason. I didn't want to make useless speculations. However, that moment repeatedly came to mind.

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## **Jungkook**

26 July YEAR 22

When I came to my senses, I was at the bus stop. I looked back on how far I had walked, but I already couldn't see the hospital. I waited for the bus and got on it. It was a bus headed to that place. It wasn't that I planned it, but perhaps I knew it in my heart. I had to go to that place again. I had to confirm the meaning of what happened at that place. While I looked at the summer weather that went by the window, I thought about it. Can I trust the hyungs?

When I got off, the bus departed right away. A cloud of dust rose. I walked slowly up to the scene of the accident. I recalled that night. The image of the huge moon hanging in the sky, the world turned upside down, the light of the headlights that came into my turned around vision, the image of the car that passed by me and disappeared, and the red of the tail lights. The sound of the engine that was somehow familiar.

I laid down on the asphalt, like that day. I twisted my head and looked up at the sky. The day was becoming dark, but I couldn't see the moon. It was a tranquil road, but if a car were to come, if it didn't see me, another accident could occur. While thinking about that, I asked myself once again. "If I can't trust the hyungs, who should I trust?"

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## **Jimin**

28 July YEAR 22

Again today, I was left in the practice room alone. It was past 12 and the public transit has already cut off. Actually, I waited for the transit to stop running. Because then I could really use the practice room completely alone. When we all practice together, my eyes only go towards my deficiencies. So I was restless. I was also scared. But still, I wanted to achieve it somehow. So, every night I stayed alone.

As days passed by, it was interesting that my scared heart disappeared. The only thing that remained was the truth that dancing was fun. I went on for a long time believing that the small, weak, and lowly me that I created in my head was the real me. While dancing, I thought ceaselessly about the weight of my body, the length of my arm, the speed and strength that I could make. The me who danced was not small or weak. My dancing skills honestly increased as much as I practiced. The movements that at first were rattled became connected after I repeated them many times. I was growing. It was only the amount of a fingernail, but even so, I was growing. I also realized that I was quite a talkative person. I felt like, when I danced, I was pouring out the stories I couldn't say, or didn't say. While starting to dance, I also began to like myself for the first time.

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## **Jimin**

28 July YEAR 22

Jimin goes looking for Hoseok because it's been four days since he came to dance practice. He checks the restaurant, but the workers say he's on sick leave for about three weeks. Jimin rushes to Hoseok's house, but he's not there, so he sends a message to the group chat. Hoseok doesn't respond.

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## **Yoongi**

28 July YEAR 22

Yoongi suffers from chills and sickness for two days after returning from the mountain trail. He doesn't remember much. He goes to get an IV and tries to eat, but can't. He sees Jimin's message to Hoseok in the chat and notes that no one responds. Yoongi recalls how Hoseok had yelled at him the other day and says that it's not the first time Hoseok got angry at him. He feels that he let him down, and he says that even though Hoseok would get angry at them, he never went silent. Yoongi says Hoseok always made it so he could come back when he went astray, but this time it seemed like he'd never do so again.

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## **Yoongi**

29 July YEAR 22

What is the reason for that melody repeatedly coming up after losing a person to perform it together with on guitar? I laid buried in the sofa and looked at the piano sitting there. After I was expelled from school, I threw away my mother's piano key. The sole item I took from the house that collapsed in the fire, I threw the half-burnt key away with all my might through the apartment window. I thought that was the end of it. I decided not to touch a piano again.

It was dawn of the next day when I ran down the stairs because I couldn't wait for the elevator. I thought I had just fallen asleep, but the sun was already rising. Suddenly, the events of last night came to me. There was nothing in the flowerbed below the window. The security guard said the trash truck had come by not long ago. That's how I lost my mother's piano key.

After that day, I gave up on music countless times. Now, I don't do it. I won't return again. Music is nothing. But even when I ran away, I knew. That in the end I'd lose my footing, like that time I ran down the stairs, and I'd start music again. For me, music was that sort of target. In music, I was in pain, but I was also that much free. It was confusing but clear at the same time. Fear and self-confidence, hope and despair, I felt like I was living in all those conflicting emotions.

Suddenly, I wanted to play the piano. In that, I wanted to meet the me who only pretended to be strong, but who was actually really afraid and a coward. I wanted to curse and be sarcastic, hurt, hit, break, pull in and embrace, and cry. And I didn't want to run away. I wanted to complete the melody that had been made for the piano and guitar. I thought I could do it this time.

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## **Hoseok**

31 July YEAR 22

My first impression of Hagok was that it was similar to Songju, but a little livelier. I walked sluggishly behind the people quickly leaving the platform. It wasn't like me to move slowly. But I moved so slowly that I was disturbing the flow of people. I acted like a person who resolved not to do anything like Jung Hoseok. I wasn't concerned for the people around me and moved as I pleased. I ate spicy foods that I don't normally eat, and I didn't say thanks for the meal when paying the check. When there was no one around, I also spit on the street.

While looking at a map on the internet, I arrived at the shop that would be opened. It was on the first floor of a shopping building near a high school. There was a stationary store and a 24-hour kimbap shop beside it. It was funny how similar it was to the Two Star Burger place in Songju. I bumped into someone passing by as I looked around, thinking about where I should find a house if I were to move here. "Sor—" I cut myself off. I strained my eyes and looked at the person with reproach. "Look where you're walking," I said. The Jung Hoseok of Hagok was a 24-hour do-as-he-pleased ruffian, jerk, idiot.

I held that illusion for about five seconds. "Hoseok-hyung, right?" It was a face I knew.

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## **Yoongi**

2 August YEAR 22

I sent the music file to Seokjin and then laid down. While I was going through the sheet music I brought from the storage classroom, I saw something written in the margins. “We can smile if we’re together.” It wasn’t my handwriting. I recalled something from some time ago. It was a day full of fog. I happened to cross the schoolyard with Seokjin. It was awkward between us. I stuffed my hands in my pockets and purposefully walked slowly. I wanted him to go first, but he didn’t. Instead, he awkwardly tried to have a conversation, and it made me feel even more uneasy. I asked without even realizing it: “When was the last time you sincerely smiled?” He didn’t answer. I didn’t ask anymore either.

We can smile if we’re together. Maybe this sentence was the answer to my question. I wasn’t certain that Seokjin had written it. It wasn’t necessary for me to know. The melody written on the sheet music was childish. It was barely two years ago, and the music from back then was half-baked and aggressive. It was neither smooth nor beautiful. When I think back on high school, I only think of staggering around drunk, but I don’t think there were only days like that. I began to revise my music from that time, staying up all night. I attached this name to it: We can smile if we’re together.

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## **Seokjin**

3 August YEAR 22

I opened the door to the storage classroom and went inside. It was a midsummer night, the air that hadn't cooled was mixed with the smell of mold and dust. Several scenes crossed my mind momentarily. The image of the principal's shoes shining. Namjoon's expression as he stood outside the door. The last day where I disregarded Hoseok and returned alone. Suddenly my head hurt and I got a chill. A complex emotion, that could be called annoyance and fear, surged in like pain. The signal I felt in my body and my heart was clear. I had to get out of here.

Taehyung became aware of my expression and grabbed my arm. "Hyung, just try a little more. Try to remember what happened here." I shook off Taehyung's hand and turned around. I had already been going around for several hours in the sweltering heat. I was beyond exhausted. My other friends looked at me with expressions that showed they didn't know what they should say. Memories. The memories Taehyung spoke of were meaningless stories to me. The things I did, the things that happened to me. The story of what we had done together. It could have been like that. I think it was like that. But memory isn't comprehending or understanding. It's not something you comprehend through experience. It's something that has to be rooted deeply inside your heart, mind, and soul. But the only memories I have here are of bad things. They were things that distressed me and made me want to run away.

A quarrel arose between me, who was trying to go back, and Taehyung, who was trying to stop me. But both of us were fatigued. The acts of hitting, avoiding, and blocking were like being in a viscous, hot liquid, where things were sluggish and heavy. Mine and Taehyung's feet were briefly tangled. I felt my shoulder hit the wall, and in the next moment I lost my balance and staggered.

At first, I didn't know what happened. I couldn't open my eyes or breathe due to the thick dust. I coughed without a break. Are you okay? At someone's words, I realized I had fallen down onto the floor. When I stood up, I noticed the thing I thought was a wall had collapsed. Beyond that wall, there was quite a spacious expanse. For a moment, nothing moved. "Oh my God. How many hours did we spend here?" someone said. I couldn't have imagined that this sort of place would be beyond the wall. But what is that? As the dust settled, I could see one cabinet in the center of the empty space.

Namjoon opened the cabinet door. I took one step closer. In there, there was one notebook. Namjoon picked up the notebook and opened to the first page. My breath stopped for a moment. On the first page of the old notebook, a name that I could not have expected was written. It was my father's name. Namjoon was going to turn another page, but I snatched it away. Namjoon looked at me in surprise, but I wasn't concerned. I turned the page. I went through the pages like the notebook would crumble between my fingers.

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The notebook written in my father's handwriting was a journal of my father and his friends' experiences in high school. It wasn't daily stories. Months were skipped over, and there were pages that couldn't be read in their entirety due to something like bloodstains. Even so, I knew. That my father experienced the same thing as me. Like me, he committed mistakes and errors, and he ran and ran in order to make up for them.

A record of failures was what was written in my father's notebook. In the end, father gave up and failed. He forgot, turned away, and avoided. He betrayed his friends. On the last page written in the journal, only jet-black ink smudges were left. The smudges permeated through the next page which had nothing on it, and on the next page, and up until the last page. The stains spoke of my father's mistakes.

I didn't know how much time had passed and all my senses have dimmed. The wind blowing through the window became cold, so it seemed like the darkest hour of the day. I think it was just before the sun would rise. My friends, like Namjoon, were scattered here and there, asleep on the floor. I raised my head and looked up at the wall. I've seen my father's name written somewhere here. This sentence was below it: Everything started here.

The moment I intended to fold shut the notebook, I felt something tap at my fingertips. On top of the ink stains, dim writings were visible. From outside the window, I began to feel a cloudy energy. The sun was about to rise. However, night had not yet ended. It was a time that was neither night nor dawn. In the jet-black stains, as darkness tangled with hazy light, writings appeared faintly between the lines.

The notebook contained more than just recorded memories. Above the letters, in the margins and blank spaces, the things my father forgot and the things he didn't want to remember remained. The color had dissolved, but the marks remained pressed in like typeface, my father's countless experiences and fears beneath my fingers. Despair that seemed like it could not be conquered swirled together with weak hope. The map of my father's distorted soul remained on the notebook.

When I closed the notebook, tears flowed. I sat like that for a while and when I raised my head, my friends were still sleeping. I looked at them one by one. Perhaps we had to come back to this place. This is where everything started for us. I knew the meaning of the things we did together and the happiness of the laughs we shared together. The first of the wrongs I committed, the first mistake that I could not acknowledge with my mouth was once again left as a wound.

I had the thought that all of this was not a coincidence. This was a place that I had to finally arrive at. The mistakes and errors I committed during that time. Through those, I discovered the meaning of the agony and torment I experienced. At last, I could take the first steps to finding the map of my soul.

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## **Seokjin**

3 August YEAR 22

All of a sudden, it looked like the scenes in the photos on the floor were moving. I thought I heard the sound of Hoseok and Jimin laughing, and Jungkook turned around and looked at me. In the next moment, the sound of Yoongi's piano flowed out. Namjoon and Taehyung ran on the beach while laughing. All of those moments rose up into the air from the photographs, like a video. The music flowed, laughter burst out, and the sunlight poured down. As the moments overlapped with other moments, and videos with videos, it seemed like things I didn't know were being released from my mind. Those things spread through my blood vessels, through every nook and cranny of my body. As something that had been blocking my mind collapsed, memories poured out like bursting fireworks. Once the memories were released, my mind swirled to the point I couldn't regain my senses. The entire room sparkled with memories. Sad, lonely, painful, and joyous memories whirled around. Looking at that, it felt unbelievable. How could I have forgotten all these moments? Then, I discovered it. Something in my pocket was emitting light.

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## **Jungkook**

3 August YEAR 22

“Why aren’t you killing them?” The sound of someone crying out urgently brought me out of my thoughts. There was a shooting game on the screen. Through the headphones, a team member shouted, “The enemy is here!” I grabbed the mouse at once. I shot the gun like a crazy person. The characters who were shot fell down in rapid succession like deflated dolls. I moved the mouse and looked at the map. A train track cut across the middle of the map. Large containers were placed here and there next to the train track. It looked just like the container village at Songju station.

I changed my weapon. It was a machine gun that could fire a barrage. In the distance, the enemy appeared, wearing a black bandana. I aimed my gun, and for a moment, I thought they looked like someone I knew. The enemy was knocked out in one blow. I continuously shot at the enemies that appeared, without thinking twice. Without realizing it, I thought about the hyungs. I chuckled. Come to think of it, they resembled the hyungs. I went forward, overpowering each one. As soon as I saw someone come out of the container, I shot. I looked down at the character who had collapsed on the floor. I was thinking it looked like Namjoon when someone shot me in the shoulder. I moved my view with the mouse and looked at the enemy holding the gun. It was Seokjin. In a flash, animosity boiled up in me.

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## **Namjoon**

7 August YEAR 22

Namjoon goes back to his container home and turns the light on. He pulls down a flier that says there will be redevelopment. He notes that they always say that, but then the redevelopment never happens. After he visited Jungkook in the hospital, he's been coming back to the container every night instead of staying in the small room at the gas station. He says no one else had come to the container, and that everyone must part ways at some point. He wonders if it was just their time to part. But regardless, Namjoon wants to keep the light on so that in case any of the other guys still want there to be an "us," they'll know they can come there.

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## Taehyung

11 August YEAR 22

Turning around, I discovered small writing under the X. Someone scratched a small sentence into the wall: "It's not your fault." It was her. It's not something I saw directly, and even though I didn't know what her handwriting looked like, I knew it was her. It was like a final greeting. It said, I didn't leave because of you. The many things that have happened to you are not because you're a bad person. So it was like it was saying "don't blame yourself, don't be tormented, be brave."

As I got a hold of myself, I was soon in front of the house. Through the door, I could hear my sister scream. All of a sudden I opened the door and went in. Familiar scenery stretched out. I fended off my father. I grabbed his arm and looked straight at his face. It was like my father was surprised at first, but he soon swung his fist. I was knocked out multiple times. The sound of my sister's crying got louder. My jaw hurt. A rusty iron smell came from inside my mouth. Even so, I didn't give up. I clung onto my father's waist. My father shouted with an angry voice. He poured ruthless blows on my back and shoulders, but I grabbed on to father more tightly.

It wasn't that it wasn't painful. It also wasn't that I wasn't afraid. But if I were to let go, the same day would repeat. I wanted make it different. I wanted to change it.

No. I'm different than my father. I'll protect our family.

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## Taehyung

11 August YEAR 22

Taehyung comes out of the convenience store after his shift and sees the wall where the girl had drawn her first graffiti. He says he hadn't seen her since he gave himself up to the police when they were both in the alleyway. He recalls the day he went to find his mother and how it felt like he was giving up on something he shouldn't give up on. Taehyung notices writing scratched under the X that reads "It's not your fault." Taehyung believes it's the girl's writing, and that it means not to blame himself, because he's not the reason she left, or the reason that bad things have happened. He keeps repeating that phrase to himself. He arrives in front of his house and hears his father's heavy breathing and alcohol bottles moving around. Repeating the phrase to himself again, he goes inside.

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## **Hoseok**

12 August YEAR 22

Hoseok arrives back in Songju. He thinks about how he left Songju three weeks ago because he couldn't work or dance. At that time, he had checked his phone and saw no messages from the other guys. He decided he didn't want to contact them first, because he always contacted them first. He assumes Yoongi won't even remember what he said to him. He doesn't regret it because he believes Yoongi needs to stop pitying himself. On a whim, he packs a bag and takes a train out of Songju.

He ends up in a larger city and gets a room at a guesthouse. He wanders around the first two days, and on the third day he ends up at a place where dancers are rehearsing. He watches a man dance and feels many emotions from his performance. A staff member asks him to leave because outsiders aren't allowed in rehearsals, so he goes back to the guesthouse and thinks about how different a live performance is from a YouTube video. He receives Jimin's message. He decides he doesn't want to respond and notes that people read the message, but no one else sent a message either, so the group chat becomes quiet.

Hoseok watches the rehearsal the next day secretly, and then he comes back for the performance the next day. He notes that the man he saw at rehearsal didn't perform. Later, Hoseok helps the staff out as they move stage equipment onto the train. The staff member recognizes him and sits next to him, revealing that the man Hoseok saw is their artistic director. The director used to be a dancer, but he was injured and struggled a lot because of it. He couldn't perform on stage, but he came back as a choreographer and director. Hoseok ends up tagging along with the group when his bag is mistakenly taken with their luggage. He ends up going to three other cities with them. Eventually, he gets to talk to the director, who finds out Hoseok is also a dancer. Hoseok recounts how he got into dancing when he was twelve and his friends had dragged him up on stage. He thinks about how dancing has given him the moments where he could be his true self and be happy and free.

The dancer tells him that you have to hit your lowest low before you can find your driving force, and once you find that, hold on to it and don't let it go. Hoseok thinks a lot about those words. The team invites Hoseok to join their staff, and Hoseok thinks about it, noting that he feels like he belongs, and maybe he could even audition to join as a dancer at some point. But in the end, he turns them down and says he has to go back to Songju to get his cast off. He considers that he hasn't hit his own psychological low point yet, but maybe Yoongi had the day that Hoseok turned away from him. He thinks about how he abandoned him when he was suffering. He sends Yoongi a private message to ask if he's okay. Yoongi responds with a music file. Hoseok listens to it and says how its mix of emotions is beautiful and definitely resembles Yoongi. He asks the

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title, and Yoongi asks when he's coming back. Hoseok returns to Songju and sends a message to the group chat asking them how they are and telling them he's back. He says his ankle isn't the only thing that healed.

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## **Jimin**

12 August YEAR 22

I hugged the trembling child version of myself. I could feel the clammy body and rapidly beating heart. I stuttered and said, “Wait just a bit. When you grow up a bit, you’ll meet nice friends. While you’re with your friends, you’ll become a better person. It can get better then. So have strength for just a bit, just a little bit longer.” I finished speaking and held myself tighter. Tears came out. I couldn’t suppress it and cried like that.

I wondered how much time had passed. I opened my eyes and the child version of myself disappeared. I got up, rubbing my eyes, and looked up at the sky. The midday sky was clear and cloudless, and the surroundings were quiet. Some distance away, I saw the exit of the Flower Arboretum. There was no trace of rain anywhere.

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## **Hoseok**

13 August YEAR 22

Hoseok returns to the dance studio and watches the others dance, hoping he can dance again someday. The girl sits next to him and asks where he had been. He asks her if he's told her about his mom, even though he knows he has many times. She listens anyway and Hoseok says his mom must be living well somewhere, so he can be okay never seeing her again as long as they are both happy. He tells her he thought she looked like his mom, but she doesn't. She's confused, but he just asks her when she's leaving the country, then corrects himself to congratulate her. She apologizes for not telling him, and he says they should meet again someday as famous dancers.

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## **Hoseok**

13 August YEAR 22

Jimin and that kid were standing in the middle of the practice room. The stillness of the five-second pause while they held their starting positions felt endlessly long. When music trickled out of the speakers, the both of them started the first movement. It was a choreography that myself and that kid had practiced not long ago. I sat down on the floor of the practice room and observed them.

It was actually really difficult for me when I found out I wouldn't be able to dance for a while due to my ankle. It was frustrating to have to watch someone who wasn't me dancing. But I realized it while helping Jimin practice and, as a result, watching him mature. That me not being able to dance directly was not a big problem. If I can continue dancing in some way, I can be happy.

When I practice with Jimin, I can't move past even a small mistake. Jimin subtly misses his timing or does his movements smaller than I expected. Every time, I stop the music and check the movements one by one. However, sitting on the floor of the practice room sort of like part of the audience while focusing and watching them, Jimin's dance looked different. Rather than seeing each individual step, I could see the larger things. The things I thought of as only mistakes when we practiced now approached differently. The small mistakes, rather than inexperience, worked in a distinct way. He was definitely different from me, but Jimin had timing and expressions that were his alone. With that itself, Jimin shined and moved hearts with his dance.

The music ended. Jimin's dance also ended. I could see Jimin's face shining with excitement and joy. Beside him stood that kid. Not long from now, she'll leave to go abroad. Suddenly, our eyes met. I raised my thumb, and she laughed loudly. It was strange. There was nothing about her that resembled my mom. I don't remember my mom's face well, but why did I think she resembled her? Suddenly, there was pain somewhere in my heart. My ankle that wasn't fully better yet was sore.

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## Seokjin

15 August YEAR 22

Seokjin says he sees the girl for the first time at the railroad the day he saw Jungkook in the hospital. He notes that Jungkook had been tense around him for some reason. Their group chat had been quiet except for Hoseok's message about not keeping in contact any longer. Seokjin thinks it's directed towards Yoongi but can't help but feel it is meant for him too. He wonders what he did wrong and if he was really alone after all. The girl crosses the railroad and drops her diary. Seokjin says it contained her wishlist, and one of the things was smeraldo flowers. She had written an excerpt from Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving* with a clipping of the smeraldo flower. Seokjin does as many things on her wishlist as he can, for a month. He ends up looking for smeraldo flowers and finding them at a small shop. The girl doesn't know he has her diary, and though he tried to admit it to her a few times, he never could. He worried she would leave him like his friends did if she knew of his wrongdoings. He wanted to make her happy and felt like a better person when he did. He wants to get the smeraldo flowers because they mean "the truth untold." He requests the smeraldo flowers by August 30 since there is a firework display that day. He plans to tell her that he loves her while giving her the flowers under the night sky.

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## **Seokjin**

15 August YEAR 22

After escaping the blocked intersection and starting to accelerate, I stopped suddenly without knowing. The car behind me sounded their horn and passed nervously, and I think someone spat out a curse, but I couldn't hear it well in the noise of the city. I saw a small florist on the corner of the right-hand alley. It wasn't that I saw the store and stopped suddenly. Rather, it felt as if I had discovered the shop after stopping suddenly.

The owner, organizing documents on one side of the flower shop that was under internal construction, approached me and I didn't have any big expectations. I had already been to a few flower shops, but not even the florists were aware of that flower's existence. They only showed me flowers of a similar color. But I wasn't looking for something similar. It had to be only that flower. When the owner heard the name of the flower, he looked at me for a bit. The flower shop wasn't officially open yet, but they could do deliveries. While saying so, he asked, "Why do you have to have that flower?"

I thought about it as I turned the door handle and went back into the street. The reason why I need that flower. There was only one. Because I want to make someone happy. Because I want to make someone smile. Because I want to show a good side of myself. Because I want to become a good person.

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## **Namjoon**

25 August YEAR 22

I tumbled down on the floor of the container. Inside the container, a structure made of steel, I couldn't open my eyes because of the heat. I looked around at my surroundings, frowning. It was ten minutes ago that I left after saying "I'll go buy ramen, wait here." I heard a coughing sound, and when I turned, Woo-chang was crouched down inside. I soaked a blanket with bottled water and wrapped it around his body. Pointing out the door, I said, "We have to run over there. Woo-chang, you can do it right?" Outside the door, crimson flames were soaring. I clutched Woo-chang's hand. "We'll run on three. One, two..." At that moment, something fell in front of the door. It seemed like the pile of materials next to the container had collapsed in the fire. Flames sprang from the dust. Woo-chang and I stepped back in surprise. In an instant, the exit was blocked.

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## **Taehyung**

29 August YEAR 22

Taehyung says Hoseok suggested they all watch the fireworks together. They all agreed and said they missed him in their group chat. Hoseok said in a playful tone that they should have realized how important he was sooner. Seokjin agreed to come to the fireworks after his appointment, and Taehyung is reminded of a dream he had where a woman is killed in an accident while Seokjin watches. Taehyung's dream ended with the fireworks, but he dismisses it. He realizes how the container is always lit now, as he sometimes walks to it when he can't sleep or when he's having problems with his father. He doesn't go in because he doesn't know what to say, but he realizes it's a signal for them to come when they want.

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## **Yoongi**

30 August YEAR 22

Yoongi shows up at Namjoon's container, noting he saw Taehyung walking as he rode the bus and Jimin standing outside the container. He assumes the others are coming. He says he completed the piece he showed Hoseok, making a few changes and titling it "Hope." The title doesn't match the contents, as Yoongi says it contains his fear, cowardice, and inferiority. It contains everything he tried to run away from. He says he can't think of anything else to call it that would do it justice.

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## **Jungkook**

30 August YEAR 22

Jungkook arrives early to the railroad tracks, where Namjoon's container is located. He sees Jimin come up, followed by Yoongi and then Hoseok. He's excited to meet them but notes that mixed feelings overtake his excitement, and he can't stop thinking about the accident. It'll be the first time they've seen each other in a while. The first fireworks explode in the night sky.

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## **Seokjin**

30 August YEAR 22

Who can remember the moment when love starts? Who can predict the moment when love will end? What is the meaning of the human inability to recognize these moments? And for what reason was I given the ability to undo everything?

The car stopped suddenly, the headlights shined, it crashed and bounced, then she fell. In those uproarious moments, I only stood there defenseless. I didn't hear anything, and I couldn't feel anything. It was summer, but the wind seemed cold. There was the sound of something tumbling down the road. Then, there was the smell of flowers. At that time, a sense of reality returned to me. The bouquet of smeraldo flowers fell from my hand. The girl was in the middle of the street some distance away. Blood oozed out between the strands of her hair. Dark red blood flowed down the street. I thought, "What if I could turn back time?"

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## **Seokjin**

30 August YEAR 22

Seokjin waits for his smeraldo delivery, which is late. The driver drops off the bouquet, and the girl hasn't arrived yet. Seokjin realizes the card he asked for is missing, so he calls the driver who says he can make a U-turn and come right back. The girl appears across the street.

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## **Seokjin**

30 August YEAR 22

Seokjin watches as the delivery truck, which had made a U-turn, hits the girl. He stands there and notices that he drops the smeraldo bouquet. He watches as the girl bleeds on the pavement as the first fireworks burst into the sky. He notes that he hears a mirror crack.

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## **Seokjin**

30 August YEAR 22

She looked at the diary that was thought to be lost, and she seemed flustered. The movies she liked, the places she wanted to go, the flowers she liked, and the dreams she had for the future appeared each time a page turned. There was also the things that I had done for that girl. The words “I’m sorry” didn’t come out well. The red diary lay between us like a traffic light at an intersection.

I wanted to make her happy. I wanted to make her smile. I wanted to be a good person. I thought it would turn out like that if I followed the words written in the diary. But, it wasn’t like that. The more I tried to become someone different, the more I became afraid. Won’t the image of the real me be discovered? Wouldn’t she be disappointed and leave me? I desperately concealed myself, and turned my head away from myself. However, like I can’t put a period on a sentence that has lost its subject, I lost the real me and lingered, not being able to advance.

I know now. My shortcomings, mistakes, and failures are part of me. No matter how cruel and agonizing, only after I’m honest with myself can I step forward. I got up from my seat, and she didn’t hold on to me.

I came out onto the street and took my hat off. As I swept my hair up, the times where I had exerted myself trying to be someone different escaped through my fingers. I turned my head and locked eyes with the me reflected in the glass window. The pale face, ashen lips, and thin shoulders. I looked infinitely shabby. I laughed. The me in the glass window laughed along.

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