

This is a compiled roleplay thread—not at all formatted or edited to suit a normal narrative arrangement, so read with that in mind! Sinae (my character) is in bold. Jaeyoung (my partner's) is normal.

To preface things, there was a flea market event and Sinae bought Jaeyoung a hat she knew he'd like because it was a once in a lifetime buy and he was out of town. It was our way of showing that despite all the issues they're going through (separated; him living in a guest house in the meantime while they decide if separation is enough or they need to escalate to divorce. And what would be best for their daughter Minduelle), they still lowkey care about each other. So he texted her to say thanks, at least.

[Text to: :lion:]

- I don't even need to make a big deal out of the cap you sent. It already is a big deal: it's a ferrari cap!
- thank you.
- for getting it before anyone else would and for giving it to me. I might just owe you.
- any luck finding new flowery tees?

[text to: Jaey]

- ahh you're annoying lol

[deleted: you didn't have to text, i was just]

- but you're welcome

- i wasn't gonna give it to you, you know? but i'm not *that* heartless

- no luck on my end, unfortunately. but i did find a lot of things that weren't on my list :single
tear: did Min show you her new books? she's definitely starting a space phase

[Text to: :lion:]

- 10/10 would have stolen the cap right off your head if you had kept it!
- unplanned flea shopping spree huh...
- and yes! Minnie not only showed me, she gave me a couple she had finished reading already? I'm getting science class withdrawal urges from just seeing them on the table :scared:
- by the way can I still meet her at the house rather than at my current place next weekend?

[text to: Jaey]

- see? you're so annoying tsk

- :laughing tears: I can't say I relate, I don't miss any part of school

[deleted: you don't have to ask to see your daughter, we're not that far gone]

- of course, but...why? is something wrong?

[Text to: :lion:]

- I'm only annoying because I owe you for the cap. You will be reimbursed in full in about a few years, I promise :fingers crossed:
- this place I stay at is not even mine, even if she understands the need for space between you and I
- home is still the house she knows.
- and I can't make waffles here yet so, no can do where I stay. So thank you, I may use some appliances.

[text to: Jaey]

- **a few years hah...just take the nice gift as a gift, Kim Jaeyoung**
- [...]**
- **i get it, i understand**
- **just make a few extra for me, yeah? forget the gift being a gift nonsense, that's the first step to paying me back**

[Text to: :lion:]

- I will stop once you get me another gift, probably.
- deal. A few extra waffles for you. 20 extra waffles for you, no more :wink:
- you're the best, Sinaegae!

[text to: Jaey]

- **don't get too used to gifts, this was a moment of weakness ;;**
- [...]**
- [...]**
- [deleted: should we maybe lay off on the nicknam|]**
- **don't you forget it :steam from nose:**
- **how is the new place, by the way? i never asked how you were adjusting**
- **to the place, i mean**

[Text to: :lion:]

- it was a moment of stronger strength I believe. But alright I will hold it dear at night :)
- oh I won't forget. But when you feel like it, feel free to send that major order you have been typing for so long :chef:
- I am not.
- it's basically a guest house.
- Noises in the night wake me and I go check. For you or Min, either not finding the door where I expect it to be or the wall finds me :laughing:
- I have to find something else before I call the ahjumma who cooks every morning here "Sin-ah".
- can we call?

[text to: Jaey]

[deleted: shit..I'm sorry, Jaey]

[...]

- yeah

- yeah, we can

When he gets the text from Sinae, Jaeyoung dials her number, shaking his head in disbelief, sinking some more into the couch until he lays down. The moment the call is picked on the other side of the line, he speaks calmly, a smile on his lips.

"You know I gave you those details because they make me laugh. And maybe to bug you too." He hums and holds back the part where he misses making her laugh, hearing her voice. He misses his friend. "Do you want more details?" The teasing tone creeps in naturally and Jaeyoung listens out for any noise that could betray where Sinae is and what she maybe doing.

Sinae didn't bother with hellos since they were continuing an ongoing conversation and she merely leaned back in her desk chair, feet propped up by the desk pedal machine she hardly used. She let out light, scoffing laughter in a mix of amusement, disbelief, and relief at his words. "Those things aren't funny to me, Kim Jaeyoung," she reprimanded, though there was a clear flippancy to her tone. Now free from stopping now and then to type, she nestled the phone between her ear and shoulder, reclaiming the knit project she was working on—the occasional click of the needles colliding being drowned by her voice. "I just feel bad instead," she added, before tilting her head in concession that only she could see. "Buuut sure. What else?"

His misfortune humor was maybe not the best but her laugh made his day. He gave up even trying to sit and laid his back down on the couch, calves on one of the armrest. He heard the needles and smiled, missing it when he usually did not give the slightest care for her knits. He breathed and kept to himself about her feeling bad.

"Okay it's roast dad time. Well the ahjumma looked at me and was swooning. Earned me a serious pinch of the cheek, the type I never thought I would feel again. She said it's not Sinah-ah but Kyun-ah. I -uh..." he chuckled, his breath short. "I guess I'm on shortname base with that lady aaaaand I may avoid the kitchen in the morning. But it is okay, cozier than a hotel anyway." He concluded and cleared his throat softly, taking his time and listening to her knitting. "Your turn to humor me."

They hadn't talked on the phone much since the split, and, even in the rare cases, it was all business—coordinating Minduelle pickups, drop offs, discussing expense logistics that were too complicated for text. So, Sinae found it strange how comfortable talking like this felt. She listened to his woes, another chuckle escaping against her will at the mental image painted of

the potential next meeting. "Hm...humor you, how?" she asked, smiling despite herself. "I'm afraid I don't have any budding romances with guest house ahjummas to talk about."

He rolled his eyes and inhaled deeply, biting his lips and looking for his next words. He wished to keep talking. Even in the weeks that led to the break up, communication had lessened, because there were more pressing matters to be argued about. "Then tell me about your full blown romance with the seabed, or your recent crushes for seashells... you surely have things to say about this, and I would know nothing if not for you and the nemo movies." And he hopes she catches the bait, he hopes she gets cheered up by weird encounters too, since he can't be the lovely husband and has not been it in forever.

"Ooh-" Sinae found herself interjecting as soon as he mentioned seashells, though she stopped talking long enough to let Jaeyoung finish. As he spoke, her gaze drifted from the purl stitch she'd been trained on to the freshly snagged sea shell sitting among the rest of her knick knacks. "Well, I caught a conch shell today, completely abandoned," she answered, a tinge of excitement in her voice. "It's got the prettiest pearlescent inside, so I think it's possible I might be in love with it. Lucky for me, I don't have to worry about an awkward breakfast."

And there she goes, bare excitement for something most people would hardly check twice, jaeyoung being no exception. But he learnt to be mindful of her interest when she would allow him in. He beams at the description she offers for the conch, his imagination paying no honors to her description. "Love at first sight huh. It's actually the departed creature's loss. Awkward breakfasts with you must be the best." He trails without much thought. What strikes a chord in Sinae's tale is, a rare and pretty abandoned conch, free for the taking, eventually finds a new love and home. He listens to her knitting but even that sound cannot dim the insecurity that embraces him and that he cannot address. So he falls back to his first concern, hastily: "I really did not mean to make you feel bad." For the next part he tugs the pillow from under his head and holds it to his chest, an attempt to add weight onto his chest and maybe keep his words cautious. "You are still the one who knows me best and who I would rather mock myself with. Besides, it was also my decision. And I hope you don't feel bad and that our girl adjusts well. But now I hope I can keep my friend." Making this a question would be too much of a risk but he grants Sinae silence for her side on the issue, pressing the pillow hard, careful to the noises on her end.

Suddenly unsure of how to respond to the first comment, Sinae finds herself nibbling her lower lip while her needles slow to a more distracted canter. But, she was quick to get back into her regular, deft speed as a distraction when the conversation took its more serious turn. The sounds of him shuffling in the background paints little picture of where he is, but it's enough distraction to jolt her back into focus on the conversation at hand. She sighs lightly, a steeling exhale through the nose, before responding once the ball's back in her court, "No, I get it. I just assumed.." She assumed the worst, because she couldn't help but worry about someone she loves. But she also couldn't find it in herself to admit that out loud and slightly shifted gears.

"Even though we're— even though things are different," she started carefully, choosing her next words in the same way. "I still care, y'know? We're friends. Nothing's changed in that aspect and I want you to live comfortably."

Without fail, the needles fending changes rhythm shortly, and he can imagine how perplexed Sinae may be looking. He never had to imagine her facial expressions, he does not remember feeling so far from her in forever.

She may have assumed it was his cry for help. But he does not blame her, whenever he expects to be home, to reach to the other side of the bed and find her, he yearns for her blindly. It's a slap every time, but he does not wish to get used to the new arrangement. While it calmed things down, he does not wish to feel at home anywhere else. He lets Sinae get to her point and nods, relieved that they remain friends through this. He thinks it could be enough. "Same here. I want you to live comfortably with Minnie." He spares her the reassurance that he will keep sending the money to their shared bank account, hoping that goes without saying. "And I care. I am literally two streets away, which is still pretty comfortable to get back if you ever need." The words are out fast enough to understand his comfortable is close to home. "Besides with a ferrari cap I can get in your hair at lightspeed probably. You brought this onto yourself." The pillow falls off and he feels like he can sleep a bit better, babysteps into the separation.

Once again, Sinae wants to choose her next words carefully. Because it would be a hit to her stubborn resolve to admit that she struggles with the new arrangement too sometimes. The most recent, but distant, meals shared between them may have been silent, but at least they were far more comfortable than the deafening silence she's left with now whenever Min was away at her grandparents' or a friend's house, like tonight. And there was no denying how much better comforting arms and words were compared to the isolation of waking from a nightmare alone. But this was best for them...Right?

Before she finds the words to respond, he's cracking another joke and she's laughing again.

"My hero~" she chimes. There's a natural beat of silence as she takes a few moments to fix a flaw in the current row of the knit piece and then she remembers she's on a call.

"Did you eat?" she asks, eyes flitting up to the digital clock displaying the late hour after she realizes she, in fact, did not. Another side effect of solitude: forgetting mealtimes when no one else is at stake. She sets aside the WIP, getting up to poke around the kitchen to source ingredients for something quick; to grant her a full range of motion, she sets the phone to speaker and places it on the nearest counter.

Satisfaction settles in his mind at her reaction, if he can be at least the hero that makes her laugh, then he may still bring something to the table, besides trouble. He listens to her, not quite done being with her and hesitant to send them on a topic that may cut the call shorter. The silence at home once Mindeulle would be off to bed had become such a fear for Jaeyoung he feels at complete loss here, on the phone, listening to Sinae's knitting, breathing. She is not getting on his nerves, he could close his eyes and almost feel like he is there with her, doing his

things while aware of her whereabouts. He hums passively at her question, quite like he would have if they actually were in the same room. It's not the full description answer of a real meal like he would give if he had one. He knows she has not eaten, or at least not properly when he hears her getting up, setting the phone, and him in a way, on the counter, which is one fun idea. How long has it been since she took him somewhere, or since he let her take him around, be it a date, some nameless errand or just on the phone. "I eat whenever I see no one around the kitchen. I made an omelette with mushrooms earlier. No leftovers. But I feel like you just might wake my appetite again." As if he were in the same room. He knows each counter door opening sound and tries to guess just what she may be up to cook, that he might figure out. The knitting on the other hand... "What were you knitting?"

It's not until she places the newly adjusted phone on the counter that Sinae realizes how amicable of a call she's having with the person she's supposed to be upset with. Or, rather, the person that's supposed to be upset with her. Now that she thinks about it, while idly poking through the pantry, it may be the longest casual conversation they've had since the onset of their separation. "Huh." The sound she makes is one of acknowledgement and awe—both in involuntary response to that revelation and in purposeful response to his, admittedly, unexpected answer. "Unfortunately for your appetite, I'm not doing anything fancy, too tired," she reveals, finally settling on a packet of ramen and a microwavable sprouted rice bowl. She takes a few moments to grab an aluminum pot and fill it with water, knowing anything further said would just be drowned out by the noise. Once it's set over a flame, she continues, "And if you must know, I'm making a dress," she pauses, eyes briefly drifting to where the project lies abandoned. It's not in the best shape so far, but she's 'trusting the process.' "Or trying to, at least. One I saw online."

Jaeyoung hums, still interested. Because he would still have a not so fancy meal at home than anything else, but of course living the nest is what made it obvious. And still he would not deem it a reason to come back, not after the incessant quarrels of the recent months. He listens to her, trying to browse the web as he normally would if they were catching up in the same room but he cannot think of anything else. The call simply feels like he was missing them so very much and there seems to be no way to really be apart, at least not yet.

"Knitting an adult size dress must take time. I hope it's a short one." It sounded practical in his mind and the implication of his wish became obvious after a few beats. And still he only chuckled to himself and moved on to the next thought.

"How is Mindeulle doing, after a month of this new arrangement?" Because he did check every time he came by, but still he hoped to know if his Sinae had noticed a change over time, if they were still heading in the right direction.

The unintended implications of his comment dawn on Gyreongree almost immediately. And she finds herself shaking her head in amusement while ultimately deciding not to poke any fun since she's more focused on reading the instructions on top of the rice bowl.

Naturally, the conversation took another more serious turn—inevitable, but still an adjustment. She supposed she'd have to get used to the whiplash between unintended jokes and more grave topics. "She's better," the haenyeo responded to start, sighing as she leaned against the counter. There was always a bit of a toll on her when it came to Min's handling of the split. And the first few weeks had been a special sort of hell. "I think she's beginning to understand a bit more. She's stopped asking why you can't stay the night, but I can't tell if she gets it or if she's given up asking." By the time she finishes talking, Sinae has somewhat closed in on herself, an arm secured protectively in front of herself while she bit anxiously on the other hand's thumb nail. "I think maybe your trips away might have made the transition into visits a bit easier but.." The comment on his investment endeavors leaves her lips before she knows it, but she's quick to shift focus back to their daughter, "She's mostly just inquisitive..and being really mature about it all. But I don't know whether to rejoice or cry about that." The statement is punctuated by a brief laugh, betraying the frayed nerves she tried to keep back. "Do you..have you noticed anything when you're together?"

If there is one topic none of them could ever take lightly, it's anything in regard to their daughter. Jaeyoung never even had the idea to underline he was being serious and he never questioned Sinae's words about Mindeulle. To him, they were always the best team when it came to their daughter, his favorite team ever. So of course he would do anything for her wellbeing, even if he fails to explain it in a way that will not taint her view on couples, on men. If she got what was going on, he would love for her to tell him as even Jaeyoung does not get what is going wrong. He does not imagine living away for more than a few weeks. But once under the same roof, their unity shatters. He thinks of his little trips, those he still manages to arrange after work when he is not to step in for Mindeulle.

He rubs his face and sighs through it, trying to come up with words to explain how he perceived the girl since the separation. "She is mature about it. She underlines the things that are off without asking about the reasons. As if she knows I would have no answer for those." He huffs, like he is in deep trouble and that is how he actually feels. He needs to make sense of his leaving, of his investments, and quick. "As much as I'd prefer to keep the visits at home, I feel bad for not letting her in the guest house on the pretext that it is temporary." He confesses, speaking to his friend rather than his wife on this detail. "She does not say it but I wonder if it is betrayal I see in her eyes, despite the patience, the weak probes here and there. Or it is all me. But the moment she sees the other place, it will be more than... temporary." He ends his phrase as a question, right between inquiring and asking for confirmation. He is not making that decision on his own and does not see this as a permanent arrangement although he is in no talk to change either.

Jaeyoung's answer was more or less as Sinae'd expected and she almost wished their little girl was the type to scream and cry when she didn't get exactly what she wanted. Because then they'd have a clearer route for where to take things. And she'd have a clearer idea of if following this separation through was worth it in the long run because, despite her stubborn resolve, she did have moments of second guessing.

She sighs deeply and bothers her lower lip once more but pauses when the perceived question floats through the receiver.

Was it temporary? Was this whole rough patch and everything it came with temporary? She wishes she had a definite answer for him, but even she doesn't know. Both the thought of them officially severing ties after so long and the thought of continuing as they were before makes her anxious to the point that she can't stand it. Acting on an impulse, on a primal need to escape that major uncertainty as it's dangled in front of her, she picks up the phone, "Hey, Jaeyoung, I need to go. I'll call—let's talk later." It's an unspoken promise to talk again, more than it is a request and she's poised to hang up when she hesitates for half a moment. "Eat if you're hungry, don't skip meals." In other words, she still cares. And before he can respond—before even she realizes it—she ends the call and is left once again to her silent apartment, save for the bubbling of boiling water and the snores of her lazy dog in another room.

It does not take long for Jaeyoung to regret even voicing his insecurity, even when talking for the friend Sinae. He'd still be better off not knowing what she thinks of it. She is the one to dodge the topic and Jaeyoung feels like he could blurt out an I love you just for this. The urge does not happen so often but it is always when in a dilemma that her saving would move him enough to relay feelings.

"Yep" and the final p pops a little, bursting out quickly but not before the call ends.

"Yeah of course." He continues to himself, watching the screen of his phone for a moment before he sighs in relief. He reaches aside to rest the phone and grab the cap instead, knowing that he has his friend at the very least and that may just be okay.

And a huge part of their issues/cause of arguments is money. haenyeos/fishmongers don't make much. His insurance job wasn't helping much AND he had this big idea that his passion project of buying and reselling cars would help them but it almost never did. It just put them in more debt more often than not. And it kept him away from home extremely often because he'd go to the Jeju mainland and as far as mainland South Korea to do business. So they were struggling with money, repairs to their house, making sure Min was set, etc.

This was a few days after the texts

From the moment Jaeyoung removed his shoes, he was home, as if he was not living elsewhere. Mindeulle and him slid into their usual banter, as they added pieces to their projects around the house. By midday, all was out in their space, in almost every room or corridor. They call it logic in chaos but Jaeyoung can only admit to himself he is the lucky dad for having a daughter who

perseveres, whenever a solution does not come to him and he flees to do about anything else, letting some phantom part of his brain work on what his lucid brain could not.

Mindeulle has become the resilient one in their duo and he suspects it is something she learnt from her mother. At some point, he froze for a moment, looking at the rain hitting the windows with more strength than needed if the point was to let them know a storm was on the way. His girl held his hand with both of her small ones, knowing just who he was worrying for. "I know she is the best, but I still wish for sunshine, so that she can see the prettiest conches." He replied to the disappointment in Mindeulle's eyes. This was probably his doing, blowing whispers of boundless trust in Sinae's skills ever since Mindeulle could remember. All that to now be the worried one. Pointlessly.

"Speaking of your mother, I promised we'd put the waffle maker to use and that we'd leave her ten or more!"

And like that, he quit trying to order the house after clearing the corridors, a major gesture considering his aversion to cleaning. And so they baked a serious batch of waffle, finishing by the time Jaeyoung supposed Sinae would be back. It didn't distract him from the rain entirely, he always preferred if she were home if it was raining a lot, be it from the sea or the market. He sets up the table for Mindeulle and him to share some waffles as they wait for Sinae to be back, the knowledge of the little messes in the bathroom, Mindeulle's room and the dining area somewhere on his mind, just not as urgent as his worries for Sinae's return.

What started off as an easy drizzle had quickly become a torrential downpour that forced the open air market to close much earlier than usual and sent its vendors on their way to do whatever they pleased with their new abundance of free time. After packing up their stall and ushering the two grannies that worked with her into her truck, along with a couple of others in need of a ride, Sinae had spent the last 20 minutes playing cab driver. "Looks like it'll last a while," Okbun halmonie commented from her place in the passenger seat, voice nearly drowned out by the heavy rain and the sound of the car door slamming as Sinae got back into the truck. As Bongsoon halmonie concurred, joking about how it'd be great for the farms; not so much for the fishermen, the youngest of the three peered out the window to triple check that the most recent drop-off was fully indoors before allowing her gaze to trail up to the darkened sky. "Yeah.." she sighed out, shifting the pickup back into drive and pulling out of the gravel driveway. She made a mental note to call up the captain—maybe they wouldn't go out tomorrow morning.

By the time that she got home, the rain was still going strong. Before she could even utter an "I'm home," Siro had already run up to her, tail wagging full-speed. She took a second to give the dog the affection it demanded before removing her shoes and following the scent of cooked dough and syrup. "Eomma!" Min greeted brightly, clearly hesitant between getting up to hug her mother or continuing to eat. "Hey, baby girl," smiling, Sinae covered the distance to the table, pressing a light kiss to the top of her daughter's head but doing nothing more. She wasn't in the condition for hugs: drenched down to the bone, clothes and hair clinging to her as if

she'd disappear if they didn't. She'd given her umbrella to Okbun and her raincoat to Boongsoon, though neither particularly mattered with how the rain was being blown into an angled shower by the persistent sea breeze. "You two keep eating," she started, gaze shifting from the impressive waffled stack to her husband—grin incredulous as if to say 'I can't believe you actually did it' before she gestured to the hall leading to their—her—room. It was just hers right now. "Gonna change, I'll be back." And, so, she shuffled on—leaving wet footprints in her wake while the dog followed after.

Jaeyoung jolted but neither Sinae nor Mindeulle noticed, thankfully. His instinct was to stand and greet his wife, maybe help her get rid of the soaked clothes. But this time he remembered his place and watched as the dog went straight to her instead. He tilted his head and beamed, relieved to see her home. His "Hey" was covered by the upbeat greeting Sinae received from their girl and he wouldn't have it any other way. Getting to witness such a moment had become a privilege. He used to never give it much thought but how he missed this. He nodded at her invitation and made a playful face at his daughter, challenging her to eat before he would snack on her plate.

They were about done and the stack really was for Sinae anyway. Mindeulle hurried to finish her plate and ran to the bedroom so as to give a proper welcome to her mother and Jaeyoung did not even try to stop her. He proceeded to clear the table of their two plates and a few ingredients laying around. Listening to what was going on in the next room, he refrained from joining them, suddenly feeling slightly out of place. At least one of the works in progress was in the dining room, and so he kneeled there, with the intention to put some order though he ended up tinkering with it instead.

"How was your day? It got so very rainy, what an awful time to be outside." He commented, now that his hands were busy, modifying a homemade drone for the sake of it. "We stayed in all day." he trailed, listening out for Sinae.

As she made the short trip from the common area to the privacy of the bedroom, Sinae silently noted how the mess in the apartment was significantly smaller than it'd be on other days like this. It wasn't totally to her taste, but she couldn't expect that much and appreciated the light weight off her shoulders.

Behind closed doors, the fishmonger made quick work of switching out of her sopping wet clothes, hanging them on the rack to dry and grabbing a towel for her hair to combat the cold she knew would follow. She only had a few precious moments to herself from there—moments to simultaneously decompress and overthink—before Mindeulle came in, nearly tripping over Siro. The pensive expression that always came with her worries quickly shifted to a warm smile as she inquired about their daughter's day.

Jaeyoung's voice carried in soon after the little girl's long-winded answer about all the fun the two shared. Rather than answering right away, she got up to finally leave the bedroom, since

she wasn't too keen on speaking through a wall. Min followed, but turned into her own room—keen on solitary play now that she'd had a fill of both parents for a little while. Wanting more head scratches, Siro followed.

"Very awful," Sinae concurred as she crossed the living room, arms crossed tightly over her chest to preserve some of the warmth her cardigan afforded. "But it wasn't a terrible day, considering it all. The hal—" She was cut off by a drop of water skating past her eyelash and looked up to find the last rainy season's "temporary" fix, spackling paste, worn away and another drip preparing to fall. With a tired sigh, she changed course to go around the kitchen counter and grab a large bowl to place under the damaged ceiling. "We really need to get that fixed, officially," she said, emphasizing the last part while sinking onto the seat across from her husband. She wasn't too keen on talking money right now, but these things had a way of making themselves paramount. "What was the price estimate from last year? D'you remember?"

Jaeyoung was used to the delay in her replies. If they were nearly comfortable and nearly required on the phone, they used to ignite his passive aggressiveness when he lived in this house. Now he simply could not just walk all the way to the bedroom, her bedroom, and make a fuss. But he was not comfortable either with how long it took her to reply to something that simple.

When she finally came in and halted, his eyes went up like hers, spotting the leak as well. He could not tell if it was new or if it simply added to the list of repairs around the house. He had lost track of those, and of how annoyed Sinae was any time the leaks were mentioned. He huffed at the word 'Officially', eyes flickering down to her face then back at the leak as he got up and approached the new bowl. He could take his sweet time too, before replying. So he did, only to offer the most nonchalant shrug. "Whatever estimation it was last year, the leaks probably worsened by now and the price shall only rise in consequence."

Jaeyoung could have stopped there. He could have mentioned the progress he made in his business venture but he was annoyed her only concern was for everything but them, anything but him. He stepped to the opposite side of the table to face Sinae and before he knew it, he had a cold smile plastered on his face. "But that is what happens to anything temporarily fixed: the cost will only be higher in the end." Like a little know-it-all, he was pretty certain she would get his double speak, his concern mostly about the non-official break up rather than the leaks. He does not even try to remember a price or to figure out a solution for the new leak, but he definitely has the energy to tackle their nameless separation.

While Sinae's pause had been completely innocuous, there was no denying the intent behind her husband's. Prodding her inner cheek with her tongue, she swallowed her annoyance and waited for an answer to the equally well-intended question...only for that to be just as irritating.

So much for the other day.

Maybe she would have stayed on the phone longer and savored it if she knew this was what would come so quickly after.

He continued, visage donning that expression that made her blood boil on even a good day. His double meaning didn't go unnoticed and she would love to discuss things. Later. When the roof wasn't in danger of collapsing with the next big rainstorm. Irritation rising, she resisted the urge to tell him to stop being an ass; instead shifting focus back to the issue at hand. The leak. The leak that was already expensive last year—hence them putting it off in the name of 'saving up' first. But a few weeks became months became a year.

With a sarcastic gasp and widened eyes, as if surprised by the revelation, she responded, "Wah, really? I had /no/ idea money worked like that!" Then she clicked her tongue, expression dropping as she re-crossed her arms so she wouldn't smack him upside the head for being an idiot. "Can you /please/ find out? Or- no- better yet, just give me the phone number so I can, since you clearly have an issue with it."

Crazy how by just being under the same roof, the instinct to bark first kicked in effortlessly. But Jaeyoung could not let go. It was not even about the leak, it was about the blame being pushed around in his, about the tone and theatricals of the exchange. And how Sinae was just his match for it. She gasps and pulls the surprise card.

He has a special liking for whenever she would cross her arms, but still go ballistic with words. A love-hate special liking. He could throw the reverse surprise card again but what interests him more is the fact that she would need him for a number. Anyone could find a contractor's number, let alone on this forsaken spot in the sea. He considers she is just about as reluctant as he is to actually plan, budget and execute and while it may be the perfect reflection of his shortcomings, he does not wish to put his energy into being the reasonable one.

"I did not especially hide the notes from the contractor's first visit. Nor did I leave with it. In fact I had to leave behind all things that were important to me like I did not care at all." And right there, he cannot find any sadistic amusement in the argument. Not when he thinks of how much he somewhat lost his home to avoid fights when it feels rain had this one ordered.

No matter the seemingly painless term they picked to explain why he should live elsewhere, Jaeyoung, is alone out there, hears whispers of divorce, under gazes studying a man the world assumes willing to abandon wife and child to live in a bed and breakfast. He simply needs no blame for the leak, for the separation or for the rain. To think he spent most of the day worried for her return in perfect health and gets a slap of that healthy spite. He goes to the one drawer he'd put all things he would save for later and pulling it, he could admit he had many things

saved for later. Enough for no one to wish to even take a look. But he remembers writing details on a green notebook, saving the page by folding it and sliding it in there. He cannot see it at first glimpse but finds some other note he wished he had with him just two weeks ago, pertaining to one of his cars. That's the final blow and he decides no: this is not fair. He closes the drawer.

"I have a problem with all of this. But you know what, I don't think I should get all the blame because this awkward separation is not rainproof." He says getting to his things around the dining room, just trying to collect a bit of the mess he can fit into his backpack. "I can find it online, anyone can, at all times by the way." He zips his bag close and pauses, looking at his probably soon to be ex wife. "It's always such a surprise to me but it ends like this almost every time we meet." The observation does not need the conclusion. Or at least, he does not feel ready to not ever see Sinae ever again.

All she wanted was some help. Some help with an issue they'd tackled together before, but this was a stark reminder of how she'd have to start taking on everything on her own if things proceeded as they seemed to be projected to. God, she didn't even want to think about how she'd make the money to do so. His words cut like a knife, having her once again question the guilt that catalyzed this whole fiasco.

'I heard he's always traveling because he has a family he's actually happy with'

'Ha! Who wouldn't? I'm not entirely convinced the girl is his, that Kim Sinae probably has all nine tails'

'He's better off with a nice girl'

He's better off. He's better off. He's better off.

The poorly hushed gossip of the older ladies that still had some sort of vendetta against her was always on a constant loop in her head. The new gossip of the last few weeks wasn't much better, but at least he'd be free from it. Free from her. And yet, here he was, acting like she was throwing him to the streets, like she was forbidding him from seeing their daughter and cutting him off from absolutely everything he'd ever had—never considering the fact that /she/ might be a part of that everything. Because she's the inconvenience: the one that roped him into a domestic partnership when they were barely adults, instead of just handling it herself. She always has been the problem. The conflicting agendas were doing her head in. And wounded dogs lash out—

"Nobody is blaming you! I'm just trying to—" She didn't even have the mind to dignify his last comment, too blinded by rage at the situation. At how little things seemed to set them off. At how she could barely afford regular bills with how inconsistent catches and sales were. At how she'd always been too insecure to just ask if he was happy, not just with their situation, but

with her. "No, you know what? Fuck you! I'll find it online, I'll call myself, I'll pay for it myself. I'll pay for everything myself. You can spend all of your money on your little cars and Min, yeah?" Her words came out with little thought in rapidfire succession, barely able to be contained in her heightened state of emotion.

Angry, frustrated tears pricked at the corners of her eyes as she found herself going back to his last statement, finally, "And you can visit Min without worrying about me, since it always 'ends like this.'" And, God, did she wish it didn't. She wished he wouldn't run away from this fight like he clearly was about to, like he often did. She wished he'd just stay and force her to say the words she couldn't get herself to say so easily because her parents never said it—even after they'd almost lost her to the blue depths. She felt her anxiety spiking at her own words, at the prospect of the further separation that would only lead to officially cutting ties, "Just pick your days and I'll stay out."

All he thinks about is how Sinae and Sinae alone feels about him, his business ventures, his parenting, his handling of their couple issues. So when suddenly it's "nobody" blaming him, all he wonders is if anyone would be blaming her instead. At least he does not have to worry about his own parents, trying to meddle and bother his wife. Gladly he did not (and still does not) wish to loop them in on the separation. Still he would bet his new favorite ferrari cap they would whack him for running out of his family home.

He probably stirred this verbal aggression, it might hurt more later than it stings right on the spot but he cannot help the disbelief when her point seems to all revolve around money. They always shared expenses, he always chipped in without a question for the house. Now sure, his cars were not discussed and he saw no issue about that but he felt how it crystallized a few disagreements. He did have a few regrets about how his discretion on the car purchases raised a wall between them, how it might have been the moment when Sinae would not come down from the previous argument, when it simply kept adding up.

But this was downright insulting. He frowned, letting his intent to harm get from passive to ballistic. By the time she stated they would stop seeing each other at all, he could not care less to see her, if it meant to avoid her temper, that raged harder than the storm outside.

"Hey, what the hell." He was pissed, but he spat his words in what resembled scream whispers. "I always help paying, that has never been an issue. Don't you even think of bringing my cars into this, it's a whole other subject." He is not done, he squints, looking for a follow up dart to throw at her.

For some time after the purchases, he perceived her growing hostility for the cars as jealousy and instead of detailing his plans to her, reassuring, Jaeyoung gradually boiled to even need to give any explanation, especially as his investments were mocked by the neighbors or friends he had mentioned them to. He feels like he might blow up, and instantly he needs out. "Trust me to work around your schedule, as usual." His tone is just very much underlining the last part. He is

pretty sure what she is unhappy about is his not following her said schedule, buying stuff on his own and telling her later. He only said the last sentence to affirm he would step in for Min whenever she would be busy and not around. "Since I'm already overlapping, tell Min I wish her good night." With that he grabs his bag, opens the door and closes it without a look back, not bothering to ask for an umbrella. He feels terrible for not wishing Sinae a goodnight, especially when he has to walk by the cars he has kept around the house. Because at the end of the day, his business is not doing well and he can't even say his family is doing any better. Still he stomps away, carrying a storm of his own in his mind.

There was a festival/fair event set a couple of weeks later. we had plans for them to run into each other there and end up apologizing for that fight since they'd both had so long to reflect. (and the "journals" activity check function in the rp had something to do with that, since i had Sinae's as if she was looking back at her childhood/adolescent journal and one of the entries was from meeting him for the first time & how she felt they had so much in common, including their fear of the water, etc. etc.) SO they apologize, go on to have another one of their "good" days where they're really civil and actually enjoying each other's company, because the fair was actually one of their first dates way back when and it brings up memories

But they would keep avoiding each other for some time after that because the truth is still there: they're still separated, they still have major issues and differences that need to be resolved. But, more weeks pass and their daughter gets swept out to sea during a storm. (This was all happening during typhoon season.) Sinae was supposed to jump in to save her because, despite her fears about the water and drowning, Jaeyoung had an even worse fear of water and wasn't a strong swimmer like her. And their mutual panic over the situation would really put things into perspective with the whole idea of "can't lose our daughter but I was also terrified of losing you" leading to them agreeing to go to counseling together to figure out their issues. Because they really do love each other, it's hard not to after 10+ years together, but the resentment of jumping into a marriage so quickly and so young was getting in the way of that.

Of course, my partner disappeared on me. Which is sad :(i really vibed with them :(