

## Sweet Creature

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/27328951) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/27328951>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Mature</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">EXO (Band)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Byun Baekhyun/Park Chanyeol</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Byun Baekhyun</a> , <a href="#">Park Chanyeol</a> , <a href="#">EXO Ensemble</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Religious Imagery &amp; Symbolism</a> , <a href="#">Baekhyun is Lucifer</a> , <a href="#">Chanyeol Has Visual Impairment</a> , <a href="#">Fluff</a> , <a href="#">Angst with a Happy Ending</a> , <a href="#">They're SOFT Soft</a>
Language:	English
Collections:	<a href="#">EXO MONSTERFEST 2020</a>
Stats:	Published: 2020-11-01 Words: 30,636 Chapters: 1/1

# Sweet Creature

by [lordmaydemort](#)

## Summary

There are things Baekhyun can't explain; just like the rules of destiny,  
And how he loves the twitch at the left corner of Chanyeol's lips whenever he smiles.

## Notes

### Self-Prompt

These are the warnings I'm personally giving you:

1. It has a religious theme and there's a chance for some of you to deem it to be blasphemous, and I apologize in advance if you find some things here to be offensive. I did my best to tone it down, but I'm also open to constructive criticisms about this matter.
2. The religious theme isn't completely based on my own understanding and ideas; it's loosely inspired from the TV show Lucifer (it's on Netflix and it's the BEST THING EVER). The title itself was taken from Harry Styles's Sweet Creature, and you may listen to it while reading some parts.
3. Park Chanyeol in this story has visual impairment, and to avoid false interpretations, I didn't dwell too much on the technicality of it. Again, I apologize in advance if you find some things about it to be offensive. I am very much open to constructive criticism regarding this matter.
4. I'd have to warn you that there will be a character death along the way, but please believe that it won't be permanent :) It's a story about the Devil and some angels, after all. Miracles do happen ;-)
5. Basically, happy reading ^^

P.S.

I'm thanking a bunch of people for always giving me support during my writing time (I'll mention their names after reveal). But I'm giving special advanced shout out for my dearest S/C who has been there from the start to finish, who dealt with my endless rants about writing this fic.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## *Prologue*

There are things Baekhyun can't explain.

Like how he first met Chanyeol four years ago.

It was a lazy morning in a cafe he frequented at, and that time he wondered why he was still standing in front of the pick up counter even after ten minutes of waiting for his Iced Americano. Ten minutes. The barista usually would take precisely seven minutes and thirty two seconds to make his order. But it had been ten minutes, the barista was still walking and turning around in the drink station, and he was trying so hard not to burst out flames from his hand and burn the entire place to ashes. Why was he still waiting anyway?

*Why are you taking so long? Baekhyun hisses internally. Should I drag you down with me and put you up for eternal damnation? Making the Lord of Darkness wait too long for his drink sounds atrocious enough to get you-*

“Excuse me?”

*What now?* Baekhyun growled internally, clicking his tongue in utter spite. Who dared to ‘*excuse me*’ him? He spun around and found a guy towering over him, clad in baby blue flannel shirt and washed out jeans. The guy wasn’t even looking at him, he was just staring past him towards the menu board - or was he watching the barista instead? Was he calling the barista?

Then Baekhyun noticed the white cane in the guy’s hand, and it clicked right away in his head. *Oh* . “Yeah?”

“I... I’m sorry in advance, but I might have dropped my wallet around here. I would’ve tried to search for it on my own, but I was afraid I would accidentally bump into someone while at it. Can you... help me?”

His eyes instantly darted over the ground, gaze boring holes through his sunglasses; he found the wallet on the floor right away. It was quite far from where they were standing. How did a wallet even bounce that far? He hummed, uninterested. Where were the *guardian angels* when someone needed them? Useless flock of self-righteous birds.

Then he watched as a small, hesitant smile spread on the guy's lips. "Please?" the guy whispered. There was a weird twitch at the left corner of the smile. There was also a dimple.

And it had felt like someone grabbed his human body's brain and twisted it three hundred and sixty degrees.

"Of course." Baekhyun zoomed onto the ground to pick the wallet up, dusting the cheap looking leather cover. "Damned floor, how could it take your wallet away? Poor wallet. It must've missed you." he carefully took the guy's hand and placed the wallet on his palm. "Here."

The guy let out a stifled laugh. "Thank you. It was entirely my fault, though."

"No. Damned gravity. Pulling everything down. I call bullshit on the design. What was *He* thinking?"

This time, the guy broke into a titter. "I know, right? Would've been cooler if everything floats."

Baekhyun couldn't really comprehend the words because he was busy recalling the smile he just saw moments before. What a beautiful smile, beautiful laugh, beautiful row of teeth. He never saw someone as beautiful and radiant as this human. He couldn't stare into the human's eyes to charm him into exposing himself because the eyes just won't look back at him. Of course they won't; the guy was *blind*. "What are you?" he blurted out, causing an amused frown to appear on the guy's forehead. "I mean - *who* are you?"

"Chanyeol. You?"

Chanyeol? What Chanyeol? Kim Chanyeol the murderer whose soul he was going to devour? Lee Chanyeol the Prime Minister who was going to embezzle a huge sum of money because of his encouragement? “I...” he drifted out. “Baekhyun. I’m Baekhyun.”

“Hi there, Baekhyun. Nice to meet you.”

There was the beautiful smile again. No, the definition of beautiful was too lame, it didn’t do justice to that smile. Baekhyun counted to three and decided if he didn’t feel weird by four, he’d walk out of the cafe immediately. But even after six, he was still suffocating.

And he felt that the only way to continue the conversation was with - “Nice to meet you indeed. Can I buy you a drink?”

The barista ended up making Chanyeol’s drink in sharply five minutes. Baekhyun didn’t even feel murderous at the betrayal; he happily, *happily*, took the drinks and complementary cookies on the tray and skipped away with Chanyeol by his side. He occupied the table right next to the window; his favorite seat in the cafe, because he could see pathetic humans walking on the sidewalk going on with their vain lives while he basked in the sun from above. Chanyeol was comfortably seated right across him, still laughing at the jokes he cracked. Chanyeol even got his humor. Could he be the best thing that the *mean guy* up there ever created?

“Thank you for the drink.” Chanyeol told him somewhere in between their conversation about helper dogs. “It tastes even better because you bought it for me.”

And *boy*, Baekhyun was smitten.

And even until now, Baekhyun can’t explain why that happened. Why he was so caught in Chanyeol’s smile, why he felt like he was seeing something divine when he stumbled upon that guy and didn’t even resent it. But then, some things are better left unexplained, especially when the said explanation is unnecessary, insignificant. Who needs the explanation of why he giggled disgustingly when Chanyeol dissed the obnoxiously loud guy at the table behind him?

There are things Baekhyun can't explain, despite having been roaming around on Earth since the earlier years of its second century.

Almost 6,000 years of existence didn't grant him access to the knowledge of everything. Matter of fact, more knowledge only causes more questions sprouting out of his head. So one day, Baekhyun stopped wondering about everything including himself. Existence is much more enjoyable when you don't use your pretty little brain too much. Not that he technically has a brain, though. Blame the brain of his human body for making him think that it's his only source of life.

Yet still, sometimes, Baekhyun would wonder about the littlest things instead of the big ones. Wondering about big things is so six millennia ago. Wondering about little, random ones is the new trend.

For example, why the sunlight looks so good on Chanyeol's skin.

"Morn'." he hears Chanyeol's deep, hoarse whisper behind him. He's currently resting his head on Chanyeol's chest while facing the middle part of the man's body, fingers tapping on Chanyeol's abdomen as if he's reciting Gymnopedie No. 1 like a pro. He still remembers whispering into Erik Satie's ear when the lad was staring dumbfoundedly at a painting of topless ladies almost two centuries ago; *compose some gloomy piece for the girls, brother*. Who knew one day he'd think of that piano piece while drooling over his lover? Chanyeol's skin is in the tone of the lightly caramelized sugar, in the shade of his favorite wooden table in the foyer, in the texture of the petals of the flowers he's growing at the balcony of his penthouse. And when the sunlight hits it? Glorious goodness of the graceful beauty, the most ethereal thing he had ever witnessed. *Now* he knows what Erik must've felt.

"Did you fart?" he asks, voice muffled. "I heard it."

“Because you’re putting pressure on my stomach.”

“Just my fingers, baby.”

“You know the things you do to my body.”

Ears perking up like a dog in heat, Baekhyun instantly lifts himself up to find Chanyeol’s face. He hums in delight when he feels their bare skin grazing against each other. Delicious. “What kind of things, my beaut?”

Chanyeol reaches up a hand to find him, and he takes it gleefully to lead it to his face; the huge hand can literally engulf half of it. “Morning inspection.” Chanyeol mumbles sheepishly, thumb caressing the area between his eyebrows. “Is your nose still cute?”

“Absolutely, dear sir.”

“Are your lips still soft?”

“I would like a second opinion for that, sir.” Baekhyun almost melts when shades of light pink spreads on the apple of Chanyeol’s cheeks. “May I be daring today and ask you to give me one?”

A wide grin blooms to its fullest. The last time he ever saw that kind of miracle was in Eden when he was still *someone*’s errand boy. “Come closer and I’ll think about it.”

Baekhyun wastes no second to lean in and latch his lips onto Chanyeol’s, accidentally clashing their teeth against each other because they just had to giggle at the same time. Soon enough he gains control as bubbly feeling turns into something more heated; he’s now completely on top of Chanyeol, in his naked glory, trapping the noticeably larger body with his four limbs, their fronts flush against one another except for the part down Chanyeol’s hips

that is still covered by the thick blanket. Tasting Chanyeol has watered down his accumulated experience of drinking Earth's greatest wine. That pathetic excuse of a liquid got nothing on his lover. What's the point of everything else existing if they're not Chanyeol? Shame.

Chanyeol's hands are diligently caressing his sides, gently rubbing up and down until they settle firmly on his hips. Losing one sense strengthened the other, and Chanyeol just happened to have gained more expertise in touching. Blessed be Chanyeol's huge hands and nimble fingers; they've proven themselves to be the master of making the Lord of Darkness scream in pleasure. Baekhyun hums into the kiss when Chanyeol gets his buttocks in full grip, slowly kneading. Can someone come here and do a painting of them like this? He'd like to give it to his old boss as a gift.

They finally part regretfully because he could feel Chanyeol getting overwhelmed. Silly human almost didn't let him go, and now he's panting, and his hot breath is driving him even more insane if it's even possible. "Still soft." Chanyeol murmurs. "Good job."

"Do I get a reward, dear merciful sir?"

He stares dreamily as Chanyeol breaks into a cheery laughter. "What can I possibly give you as a reward?"

*Oh, honey, you yourself is already a reward for my rebellion long ago.* "Another kiss would be nice."

"Why are you so easy to please?" Chanyeol clicks his tongue, already pulling him closer. "So adorable."

Baekhyun doubts Chanyeol would find him adorable if he ever sees his silver hair and his bright, blood red irises, but he pays the thoughts no more heed as he delves into Chanyeol's mouth again. Oh, honey, thick caramel, apple juice, watermelon sugar, this sweet creature is driving him crazy again and again. The way Chanyeol's palm is scorching hot against his bum has got to be the doom of this world. Instinctively, he starts to grind his front on the blanket, right where a slight bulge of Chanyeol's limp member is nested safely. *Wakey wakey, Giant Jr.*



It throws Chanyeol off the tracks. “So eager already?” his lover sing-songs, and it effortlessly sets flame on Baekhyun’s body. Everything is burning and he’s loving it.

“It’s your fault for being so tasty.”

“Tasty? How do I even-” Chanyeol’s breath hitches when he grinds a little harder, partly because his right knee had slipped on the bedsheet, and the small moan that follows after only makes him smirk triumphantly, “how do I even taste...”

Baekhyun pauses a moment to think. There are too many things he can use to describe Chanyeol’s taste, but sadly Chanyeol’s mind is so human he won’t be able to bear with the knowledge. It’s alright. He loves his human and his mind. Matter of fact, Chanyeol’s mind is even higher quality-wise than the rest of his fellow doomed arses. Such a fine work Park Chanyeol is. “Pop rocks?” he hums, lips hovering over Chanyeol’s jaw. “Strawberry?” he presses a kiss on the spot right under Chanyeol’s elephant ear. “Bubblegum.” Then he nuzzles his nose against Chanyeol’s neck, eliciting bubbly laughter from the man. Dear skies. That sounded even more beautiful than that crappy celestial song those sentient birdies always play every dawn.

“You were just saying your favorite flavors.”

“Because *you* are my favorite flavor.”

He rejoices over the satisfied hum Chanyeol lets out. He rejoices even more at the warmth of Chanyeol’s hand that now travels around his waist, rubbing up and down his abdomen. Excitement pools right under Chanyeol’s touch. “You’re going to eat me?” Something about Chanyeol’s deep voice is so dangerous. It always manages to wake every part of him up.

“Welp,” Baekhyun glances down, finding that Chanyeol’s member under the blanket is sharing the excitement, “I think *you* are going to be the one eating *me* instead.”

“Before we eat each other, shall we eat something literally edible first?”

“ *What?* ” Baekhyun gestures at their hardened members despite knowing Chanyeol can’t see him. “You dare to talk about eating when we have *this* situation going on?!”

When he looks up again, Chanyeol is pouting. “I am hungry.”

And all the fire inside him turns into marshmallows.

“Shit, of course. It’s morning. Breakfast. What was I thinking?! Okay, okay, let’s have some pancakes. Or do you want something else?” Baekhyun scrambles to sit up and pulls Chanyeol by the hand to get up as well. “What do you want, love?”

“You.” Chanyeol manages to put the most mischievous smirk Baekhyun has ever seen. “After the egg sandwich, of course.”

“Egg sandwich will be served in twenty minutes, sire.”

Baekhyun takes a moment after hastily putting Chanyeol’s oversized tee on himself to stare at Chanyeol on the bed once again. The sunlight hits him on the right spots, making the view in front of him resemble a renaissance painting - scratch that, those childish strokes have no right to be put up to its standard. He still stares as Chanyeol carefully makes his way off the bed to wear the cotton sweatpants he had tossed at him a minute ago. For someone who has never seen his own body for thirteen years, Chanyeol takes care of his body meticulously by doing almost all of the exercise visually impaired people could do. Thanks to that, Chanyeol had blessed himself with a perfectly toned figure and just enough strength to pin him onto the sheets. *Oh, dear*, the way Chanyeol pins him onto the sheets.

“Stop staring.” Chanyeol hums as he tightens the waist of his pants.

Of course Chanyeol could sense him and know exactly what he’s doing. He just giggles cheerily while turning around to strut towards the kitchen.

He wonders how he could be this smitten for Park Chanyeol, one of the countless humans that *someone he used to know* has bred for over five millenia. But then, wondering is so exhausting, it never brought him any satisfying conclusion, so he changes to wondering about where the bottle of mayonnaise he just bought the day before is.

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There are things Baekhyun can't explain.

“- because I thought, man, I never got the chance to take a selfie with my mortal idol, then she just had to die and enter Hell? Talking about sweet *destiny* . So I went to take a picture with her!”

“And left the gates unguarded which then allowed some new fresh souls to escape and wander around the bridge. *Thanks* , dumbass.”

“Destiny my plump ass.”

Like why he just had to be stuck with this rambunctious Cerberus who walks on Earth in the form of three men to represent its three heads and annoys him monthly as a routine. It's as if there hasn't been another demon who was more competent to be the Gatekeeper of Hell. What does the beast dog do anyway, bark? The heads have only known barking at every soul who would enter the gates; and much to his annoyance, the barking always worked.

“Hm.” one of the boys who prefers the name Jongdae on Earth stares up and down at the one who goes by the name Sehun. “You have a pair of plump ass indeed. Miss the taste, by the way.”

“You know what, you're fucking gross.”

Baekhyun then gestures at Minseok, the only one sane enough in the pack, to lean closer to him. “So I assume no more troubles for now?”

“It’s all been taken care of, My Lord.” Minseok bows at him slightly. “The souls couldn’t get too far anyway. They had to climb to get on the bridge. Some were very persistent.”

“And Sehun’s idol?”

“Ms. Kylie Jenner was surprisingly very cooperative.”

Baekhyun nods, running the tip of his index finger around the rim of the wine glass on the table in front of him. They’re currently in a five star restaurant at the top of one of the most prestigious hotels in Seoul; the boys’ favorite place to dine in. “Is everything ready for the reconciliation statements? I’ve heard that our dear Big Main Boss has been asking.”

“Only a few adjustments and we’ll be all set. Your *Father* , aside from the statements, has been asking about you as well, My Lord.”

He winces in disgust. “Must’ve used the statements to get to me. Manipulative as always.”

Minseok holds in a chuckle. “A little bit too much even for me, My Lord.”

“Boss, can I propose to you about something?” Sehun’s voice steals his attention. The tallest between them points at Jongdae next to him. “I think I’m cutting off a head once we get back at Hell.”

Jongdae *tsk* ed very loudly. “Idiot, you don’t speak for the three of us!” he growls as he narrows his eyes blatantly at Sehun. “But maybe we can make a head lose its nose -”

“Enough.” Baekhyun sighs. And just like that, the boys are back to their poised stance. “I’m trying to have a nice brunch here. Please. Behave if you want more than one set of dessert.”

“Noted, My Lord.”

“The food here is exquisitely - wait for it - *divine* , My Lord.” Sehun goes back to cutting his steak patiently, a cunning smirk on his face after making Jongdae and Minseok snicker. “No wonder why you don’t want to return to your throne any time soon.”

Baekhyun rolls his eyes. “It’s *not* that I don’t want to return.”

"Oh for real, Boss Lord? Has something been chaining you here? Or maybe *someone* ?"

"Here we go again."

"You have been away for one hundred and sixty three days this time, My Lord. The torturer demons have started wondering why their works haven't been evaluated."

"What the," Baekhyun frowns, "they *asked* to be evaluated? Humans here could use some lessons in work ethics from them."

"And we might be able to handle them," Minseok tones his voice down, "but we certainly won't be able to handle your *brother* ."

Ah, correct. The deary dearest eldest child, Michael. Always a nosy goody two shoes. The glorified puppet who thinks he carries the Biggest Guy's words themselves. "What did he do this time?"

"We thought it was just some usual check ups." Jongdae sneers. "Then he started asking us about how you've been doing with your human."

Baekhyun's attention is fully on his underlings now. Michael is interested in Chanyeol?  
"And?"

"And... that was just it?"

Sehun snorts so loud. "Thank you, Jongdae, wonderful, you're always a piece of useless informant. The biggest dumbfuck in every world there is."

"I wasn't the one who fucking left his post to get a fucking selfie with Kylie Jenner!"

He wants to cry out of frustration. "You're my only hope now." He turns at Minseok once more. "Care to add something?"

Minseok shrugs, seemingly genuinely curious as well. "He did just that. We had to separate into three because suddenly Sehun leaped out to chase after a soul, then Jongdae went after him to drag him back. Just in time, Michael came and talked with me about that. Asked me about you and the human. Afterwards he just left."

"Nothing fishy?"

"Well it was already fishy that he personally asked us about that, but nothing that should be acted upon to a certain length, I guess."

His brother being interested in Chanyeol sounds like something that should be acted upon to a certain length, but he can't seem to make sense out of it. He should come up with the most possible theory behind it first - or maybe he should just brush it all off because that's just how nosy Michael is. Baekhyun bites the insides of his cheeks, feeling already beaten up. "Well." he murmurs, taking another sip of his wine.

“Wouldn’t it be wiser if you go back now, Boss Lord?” Sehun steals his focus. “Who knows what your brother will do in the future. Or worse, who knows which one of your other siblings will pay a visit as well.”

“They won’t. No one has been interested in checking up on me except for him.”

“Yeah, I know right? And to think he was the one who literally kicked your butt down to Hell.”

Baekhyun takes his sunglasses off to properly glare at Jongdae, who’s now cowering on his seat. “Perhaps you were right, Sehun,” he murmurs, “you can cut off a head for a successful diet.”

“My Lord, you haven’t technically answered my question.” Minseok pipes in, purposely leaning forward to get in his line of sight.

“Oh dear *Dad*,” Baekhyun narrows his eyes at him, “haven’t I made it pretty obvious that I’ve been avoiding your question?”

“A company needs their CEO, My Lord.”

“Have you been hanging out with a corporate douchebag down there?”

“Yes. Now may I get an actual answer to my question, My Lord?”

Baekhyun lets out a scoff as he takes yet another sip of his wine, emptying the glass. Three pairs of eyes are now staring back at him expectantly. Deciding that he won’t be able to come up with anything that could satisfy them, he lets his gaze fall on his wristwatch. “Oh look at the time.” he mumbles. “Chanyeol should be done soon with his morning shift.”

“There’s still an hour, Boss.”

“I love waiting.”

“You can’t avoid the question forever, My Lord.”

“Oh, I technically *can* . I’m actually in the middle of doing it.” Baekhyun feigns a smile. “Now excuse me, I’ll be on my way to pick Chanyeol up. You three, just... have fun. I don’t know. Do *not* scare anyone.”

“Don’t worry, Boss, we meticulously picked these faces to charm instead of scare these humans.”

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Lunch on Chanyeol’s work days means sitting across from each other at the Subway a few shops away from the hospital where Chanyeol works. Chanyeol likes his sandwich six inches long, the premium roasted chicken package with extra packets of chili sauce. Baekhyun likes watching Chanyeol eat his sandwich neatly; he likes watching Chanyeol do anything.

Stalker? Such a strong and unnecessary accusation. Admirer? Absolutely.

“Can I put the chili sauce for you?” Baekhyun’s already tearing the tip of the wrapper. “That’s the closest thing I can get to seeing blood gushing from someone’s head.”

He finds Chanyeol grimacing, yet still holds the sandwich closer to him. “More reasons for me to believe that you’re a serial killer, babe.”

Baekhyun snickers loudly as he squirts the sauce onto the sandwich. “Good thing you can’t see the room where I stack the bodies in.”



“I’m calling the police on you.”

“Catch me, officer. Handcuff me. *I like it* .”

This time it’s Chanyeol who takes a moment to laugh before resuming to eat.

“How was this morning?” he then proceeds to put both his elbows on the table and rest his chin on his intertwined fingers, getting the best view of the eating Park Chanyeol. “Did anyone mess up with you? Anyone I should stab?”

Chanyeol bursts into laughing again while chewing on his food. “Everyone was nice to me like usual, Baekhyun.”

He’s sure Chanyeol is still talking, but his ears are tuning the following words down because *oh, dear, he said my name* .

“ - and then she told me she would come back next week. I somehow knew she would come round, but I was still surprised nonetheless. I’m so happy that she’s started accepting the help she needs. Weeks of convincing finally got paid fully.”

His lover must be talking about one of his patients whom he had been working extra hard on. Being a psychologist with visual impairment for a little over two years, Chanyeol has been getting tons of patients; they claimed that they felt the safest with him because they didn’t feel judged by their appearance when they faced him. Baekhyun is sure that Chanyeol’s ability to calm people down with his voice and words has been playing a huge part in his success as well.

“How about you?” he finally focuses on his lover when he gets asked instead. “How was your morning? Did you have fun with your associates?”

*More like ass-ociates* . “Jongdae and Sehun were as annoying as usual. Minseok is still the only one I can truly depend on.”

“Are they coming for dinner?”

“Yeap. I think I’m going to have to hide you away so Jongdae and Sehun won’t accidentally kick you while they try to kick each other.”

“No.” Chanyeol pouts, and Baekhyun thinks he’s the most wicked of them all, for Chanyeol surely knows the effect that pout has on him. “They’re so fun. I miss them.”

“They’re the top source of my headache.”

“Yet still, you adore them so much.”

Baekhyun finds himself smiling softly. He hums in agreement while reaching up to wipe the remnants of the sauce on the corner of Chanyeol’s lips with the pad of his thumb. “I adore *you* so much.”

Chanyeol replies to him with a small ‘ *I know* ’ then takes another bite of his sandwich. Chanyeol is blushing, he himself is blushing, what now? Are they really going to sit in silence like two teenagers having their first date? Sounds like a great plan. Staring at Chanyeol is a very fulfilling activity.

“You forgot something today.” Chanyeol then says, piquing his curiosity. The guy raises an eyebrow when he asks what it could be.

“Oh,” Baekhyun feels like melting down when he realizes what it was, “ *oh* .”

“My daily poem.” Chanyeol confirms his thoughts.

“I’m so sorry, handsome, I must’ve been out of my mind. How could I forget? Damned be me. Why did I have to exist in this world if I can’t even make my baby happy...”

Chanyeol giggles cheerily, shoulders rocking along the rhythm, and Baekhyun instantly finds his source of poem for today.

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At night, the trio come to their penthouse as promised. Jongdae loudly announces their arrival with boxes of seasoned fried chicken in his hands, Sehun goes straight into the place and engulfs Chanyeol in a suffocating hug, while Minseok cautiously pats Chanyeol at the back and announces himself. Baekhyun would’ve sent Sehun and Jongdae back into Hell with a flick of his fingers if only Chanyeol wasn’t so happy being crowded by them.

“And she was like, ‘you can’t do this to me, don’t you know who I am?’ and I was like, ‘that is exactly why I’m doing this to you, ma’am’. I could barely hold my laugh back.”

“Sehun, you are a prick, but you’re a brilliant prick.”

“You guys are so cool.”

Now they’re scattered around the coffee table, fried chicken long gone and bellies full. Sehun and Jongdae are keeping Chanyeol occupied with their boisterous laughter and stories about what they found interesting today. Somehow his demon underlings could connect with Chanyeol just fine without exposing their true identities; they managed to make the human believe that they’re his associates, working as the external marketers of his actual real estate business. Baekhyun is always torn between praising them or turning them into gate locks.

It’s when the trio is too engrossed with their talks that he senses Minseok turning to face him. “Should we worry about your brother or not?”

Baekhyun groans in annoyance. “You’re ruining my mood.”

“I’ve been thinking about it all day.” Minseok refills his wine for him. “Something seems suspicious about his presence.”

“He always seems suspicious to us. What’s new?” Baekhyun rolls his eyes. “Don’t bother worrying about him. He’s just him. A nosy bird.”

“A nosy bird who might jeopardize your existence and cost you the exact same thing. This is Archangel Michael we’re talking about.”

“Relax.” he waves his hand nonchalantly at Minseok. “He might have kicked me out of Heaven, but he can’t drag me from here down to Hell. This is not his jurisdiction.”

He knows Minseok is side eyeing him with dozens of judgments, and he chooses to ignore it as always. “What if God has a plan for you, My Lord?”

“Oh, that Ancient Man *always* has a plan for everyone. I won’t feel so special about that.”

“What if it’s a plan that meddles with your interest?”

When Baekhyun turns at Minseok to demand elaboration, he finds the end of the line of Minseok’s sight to be Chanyeol.

The cheerily laughing and happily snacking Chanyeol.

“What are you implying?” he asks Minseok in a low grumble.

Minseok shakes his head a little. “Nothing that I’m certain of for now.”

“Are you saying someone is trying to mess with me through Chanyeol?”

“It’s too early even for an assumption, My Lord.”

“But that’s what you’re thinking about.”

This time, Minseok turns to look at him completely with a soft, meaningful smile resting on his lips. “Don’t worry, My Lord. You’re not *that* important for someone from the Heaven folks to use your favorite human against you.”

Baekhyun sucks in air before huffing begrudgingly. “Just be grateful I can’t suck your eyeballs out of their sockets because Chanyeol is here.”

“Oh, please, My Lord, I’ve had the worst.”

Their attention gets stolen by Chanyeol who’s now laughing even more boisterously with Sehun and Jongdae being in a very similar state. Baekhyun had lost track of the conversation, so he just watches the three have fun while he’s stuck right next to the demon who knows the best way to irk him.

There are things Baekhyun can’t explain, like how three demons from Hell could get along with a human so well like this, or how he feels so protective over Chanyeol even when there is no apparent threat. He can’t explain why he’s having the idea of anyone from the *above* using Chanyeol as the way to annoy him - or worse, to coerce him into something.

All he can say is that he’d very much love it to see Chanyeol being safe, and he’d do anything to make sure of it.

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There are things Baekhyun can't explain, and for some of them, he has found the way to.

"I miss you in the hours that we're apart. Even though I knew I was close to your heart."

Poems. He found that poetic words could express his feelings for Chanyeol better than just endearments and confessions. He also loves feeling creative while reciting the impromptu ones. And oh boy, Chanyeol *loves* listening to them.

"I miss you in the moments that we're together. I miss the softness of your skin under my feather."

Right now, Chanyeol is snuggled on the long couch in the living room, his feet dangling over the armrest due to the seemingly endless length of his legs. Baekhyun is right on top of him, straddling him under with his thighs caging the human's hips in between. Chanyeol's head is resting back, eyes closed, lips stretched in a wide smile. He's definitely enjoying this.

"I might be sure you're always mine, I might see you in the end of every line,"

Chanyeol bites his bottom lip. Baekhyun feels the euphoria slowly creeping up his mortal body.

"But oh, to say I've missed you every morning, has got to be my favorite thing."

His curtain call comes in the form of Chanyeol's cheery giggles and faint handclap. Baekhyun feels triumphant when Chanyeol opens his arms so he can plop onto him, and plop down he does. Chanyeol catches him and gives him a wet smooch on the apple of his cheek after rubbing his lips all over his face to find it. Baekhyun feels like a puppy being rewarded with a year's worth of treats after doing a simple trick.

“That was so cheesy.” Chanyeol sighs dreamily into his neck. “Thank you so much.”

“All the cheese in the world for my baby.” Baekhyun hums against Chanyeol’s ear, gently biting the dangling tip. Chanyeol was blessed with super huge earlobes that only compliment his features. Why is everything about Chanyeol so wonderful? “Does my baby want to do anything time and energy consuming today?”

“Are you talking about the make out session because I thought it’s mandatory for Sundays?”

“Aside from that! Sheesh.” Baekhyun gets up to sit again, catching Chanyeol’s nose in between his knuckles to pinch the bridge gently. “You always succeed in making the Devil blush.”

Chanyeol’s cackles are put on halt the moment Baekhyun’s hands start to slip underneath the thin oversized shirt, fingers drumming on the toned abdomen. “Well I was thinking-” the human’s breath hitches when Baekhyun rolls up the hem of the shirt and caresses the bare skin of his sides, “I... was thinking...”

Baekhyun hums when Chanyeol shudders under his touch. “Thinking about what, baby?”

“Thinking that we could go to the dog park again.” The answer comes jumbled from Chanyeol’s mouth because by now Baekhyun is already spreading his fingers on the expanse of Chanyeol’s chest.

However, Baekhyun stops his ministrations to pinch a nipple in annoyance. Chanyeol yelps in pain. “Are you trying to make yourself sneeze the whole day again?”

“Please?” Chanyeol pouts. “I miss the kids.”

“They’re not even your kids.”

"I wish they are."

"And your wishes would stay as wishes because guess what happens if you keep even just one tiny puppy?"

Chanyeol huffs. "I'd sneeze a lot and die."

"Co- rrect . So. You still want to go there after the drama you pulled off last week?"

Baekhyun still remembers how Chanyeol almost busted his own head sneezing after spending a little over two hours surrounded by various kinds of dog breed. Tough love, Chanyeol said. Good thing Baekhyun adores him too much to have the heart to smack him on the bum.

"Yes." Chanyeol displays this small smile that makes the corners of his lips curl upwards. "I do." And Baekhyun, once again, thinks that Chanyeol is the most notorious being in the universe for pulling that trick on him.

He groans exasperatedly. "Fine. Damn it, fine." he shakes his head. "Guess I'd just have the nearest hospital ready to take you in."

"I'd take the meds properly this time, I swear."

Staring at his fingers on Chanyeol's chest, Baekhyun lets out an exasperated sigh. He controls demons, *not* allergies. Maybe he should ask - or threaten - some of his underlings or even the low level angels to protect Chanyeol today. "Okay. Okay. Now, before we walk ourselves into the sneezing catastrophe," he pauses when Chanyeol bursts out laughing, "shall we continue our good time which was so rudely interrupted by your masochistic wish?"

A dandy smirk spreads on the corner of Chanyeol's lips, and the sight sends a surge of adrenaline rush into Baekhyun's whole system. "Come back here." The human murmurs while catching Baekhyun's wrist in a perfect precision and pulling him down. Of course



Baekhyun surrenders himself beneath the feet of Chanyeol's command, already setting himself on all fours on top of his lover.

"Can I stare at your face for a little longer, dear sire?" Baekhyun hums, lips attached to the tip of Chanyeol's jaw.

"Only if you promise -" Chanyeol pauses to let out a light gasp when Baekhyun purposely shuffles on top of him, causing a momentary friction between their currently expectant parts, "-to kiss me even longer."

Letting out a deep, amused chuckle, Baekhyun playfully bites the jaw he has been so fixated on. "You can't keep making a deal that I can easily do, sire."

It's his turn to gasp when Chanyeol's hands suddenly grip both sides of his hip, squeezing lightly, sending even more adrenaline rush into him. "Just to make sure you can keep up."

Baekhyun sighs in delight when it's finally time to claim Chanyeol's lips. One of many things he still dares to wonder about is how Chanyeol could taste so good no matter how he consumes him.

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Another thing Baekhyun still wonders about is how the sky looks the prettiest in Summer.

Especially when it's sunny; it's blue, with faint streaks of white clouds. For many millennia, staring at the sky made him reminisce the days when he was still metaphorically 'up' there, and despite not being so fond of the events that happened back there, he still missed the celestial music his fellow angel relative Castiel would play around the place. Maybe at some point they all knew that the reason he occasionally ascended to the realm of the mortals, aside from *checking up* on these complicated creatures, was that this realm was the closest point he could get to home. Laying on the grass in the middle of the community park like this gives him a view of the faraway place he once called home.

Then he met a certain human, which made him stay in this realm for four years, and eventually, what he thought of whenever he saw the blue sky changed. Instead of yearning for something he didn't want to miss, he started to think of how vast this realm actually was. And among all of the places he could go to, he chose this one, and his choice made him meet the human. Ever since then, looking at the blue sky reminded him of how lucky he was to be able to meet Park Chanyeol.

And somewhere along the way, sitting on the grass on Sunday noons became a tradition for the both of them.

His eyes were starting to get droopy when suddenly paws zoomed past his face.

“What the-” Baekhyun gets up to sit immediately, finding the perpetrator who had jumped over his head dashing away towards his lover. “Chanyeol! A small little rascal is headed at you and it almost stepped on my face!”

Instead of being avenged, he gets Chanyeol's boisterous instead. “Ow it's here.” The human gathers the puppy straight into his arms once he felt it booping its nose against his torso. “What is it?”

“Disappointment.” Baekhyun spits. “Golden lab.”

Chanyeol swoons instantly over the fact and cradles the pup carefully before bringing it to his face to give it a peck on the forehead. Baekhyun fixes his sunglasses habitually as he keeps watching the human looking so full of joy, being surrounded by at least five dogs. It's so easy to keep Chanyeol happy; just put him in the middle of things he loves.

And it's so easy to keep himself happy; just put him near Chanyeol.

“I wish I can see them.” he hears Chanyeol whispering to himself.

It wouldn't have been possible if only he was a mere mortal, but he's a celestial being, and right now he wishes he's not, because then he wouldn't have to hear the simple yet heart wrenching statement. It's not just dogs that Chanyeol wants to see; the human longs to stare up at the blue skies again. It was never expressed explicitly, but he could sense the disappointment that would sink in whenever Chanyeol realized he couldn't visually enjoy the things he was excited for.

And in times like this, exclusively, Baekhyun wishes he's still an angel, allowing him to ask for some miracles from the Big Guy.

He finds Chanyeol grinning again when the golden lab pup licks his right cheek. Relief fills him at the end of his worry and regret; he decides to just watch Chanyeol being attacked by the pups with their paws and even more lickings. The sight is such a treat for him.

At some point, he looks up at the sky again, finding comfort in the shade of baby blue and strokes of white. Baekhyun stares, and stares, capturing as many details as he can, so if Chanyeol ever asks him to describe the blue sky, he can do it flawlessly.

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“Thank you for being so good to me.”

Baekhyun pauses his hands on Chanyeol's head, having been washing the human's thick locks gently and slowly for a couple of minutes.

The sentence that Chanyeol just uttered brings a wave of nostalgia in him. In their first years together, Chanyeol would repeatedly ask him, ‘ *why are you being so good to me?* ’ The first few times, he took it as decency and an attempt to flatter him. Then he grew tired of the question and started seeing the intention behind it; Chanyeol was skeptical about him. He was hurt by the taciturn accusation, and he had confronted Chanyeol about it, for the Lord of Darkness does *not* lie.

‘ *We can't find answers for everything, Chanyeol, not even I can do that. Sometimes we've got to just accept it for what it seems and what it's worth.* ’

And after that event, Chanyeol changed the question into an expression of gratitude.

Still, the impact is the same. Because as much as Chanyeol doesn't need to ask why, he also doesn't need to thank him for anything.

Yet, one thing Baekhyun had learnt about humans, is that they gain peace when their intentions are acknowledged and appreciated.

"You're welcome, baby." has been Baekhyun's default answer ever since he discovered that conclusion. Chanyeol smiles at the endearment, his closed eyelids being almost covered in foams; they're currently sitting in the large sized bathtub with foam covered warm water surrounding them. Baekhyun can't help but feel the strong urge to just squish Chanyeol's face right then and there, especially when Chanyeol is smiling sheepishly like this, his dimples prominent and the apple of his cheeks glowing. Maybe squishing the face is a little bit violent. He goes for a peck on Chanyeol's plump lips instead.

"What was that for?" the startled yet delighted Chanyeol asks.

Baekhyun hums, fingers massaging Chanyeol's head gently. "Being so cute."

The sheepish grin gets even wider, and Baekhyun doesn't stop himself from stealing another peck. He informs Chanyeol that he's going to rinse his hair and reaches out to grab the shower head behind the human. Somehow he expects Chanyeol to seize the chance and wrap his arms around his torso, and that's exactly what Chanyeol does in the next moment, rubbing his nose on his chest.

"What's the rush, love?" Baekhyun slides down right after he turns the shower on. "I ain't going anywhere soon."

"You just smell so sweet." Chanyeol says as he halfheartedly releases him from his arms.

“We literally use the same soap, dear.”

“Ssh I’m trying to be cheesy here.”

Baekhyun snickers. “Being cheesy is my expertise that you can’t touch.” He starts rinsing the foams off Chanyeol’s hair carefully, still doing gentle massaging on the scalp.

“Then what do I do?” Chanyeol sighs, looking both satisfied and dejected. “I want to have an expertise too.”

He giggles in delight, admiring his work on Chanyeol’s head for a moment before placing the shower head back. Chanyeol catches him by the torso again, and this time Baekhyun slides down to land on Chanyeol’s laps instead of the bottom of the tub, their bare skin slippery against each other in the water. He puts both of his arms on Chanyeol’s shoulders, circling around his neck, and gently rests his forehead against the human’s. “Haven’t you known by now?” he says in a half whisper. “Your expertise is being my joy.”

Chanyeol doesn’t react to his words right away. It feels like the human is processing them in his head, contemplating whether to pursue the true meaning behind them or just swallow them in as they are. The next moment, he decides to go with the first option. “What is it about me that brings you joy?”

The answer would’ve come out witty and even almost flirtatious if only he didn’t notice the vivid hesitation and nervousness in the tone that Chanyeol used. Baekhyun leans back to take a good look at his lover’s face; Chanyeol’s eyes are open, and they’re as blank as always, looking almost lifeless behind the flutter of the eyelashes. “Your entire existence.” he answers, hoping his voice sounds firm enough to bring some relief in Chanyeol. “You bring me joy, baby.”

As expected, it’s not enough. “But how?” the question comes in a very small voice, as if Chanyeol himself was afraid to ask.

“Does it matter?” he retracts a hand to cup the side of Chanyeol’s face. The human puts a hand on top of his almost immediately. “What are you thinking of?”

He knows what Chanyeol's thinking of. It's the usual insecurities that would arise in him every time things get quiet and peaceful which allows him to let the reality sink in fully. Chanyeol still thinks Baekhyun is severely odd for wanting to be with him. And in times like this, Baekhyun wishes he knows the perfect way to show Chanyeol how much he means to him. But if there's one thing he ever learnt about humans, it's that they tend to put themselves in the cage they created by their own assumptions and doubts. Thus he always tries to keep the cage's door open so Chanyeol would always know he has the option to walk out of it.

"Some things I don't want to think about." Chanyeol finally answers. "Make them go away, please?"

Chanyeol didn't even have to plead, for his words were Baekhyun's command. Baekhyun dives right away into Chanyeol's lips while his hands grab each of his shoulders to bring him closer, causing ripples on the water around them. Chanyeol's hands are now on his bottom, supporting his weight as they deepen the kiss, as if they're almost desperately looking for something. Maybe they are looking for something indeed, something that can melt the sudden melancholy away, something that can distract Chanyeol from his own thoughts. After all, Baekhyun dedicates himself to the pursuit of Chanyeol's happiness.

He then pulls the human even closer to him, their chests now flush against each other, and starts moving his hip to grind on the human, causing friction between their sensitive parts. Chanyeol moans into his mouth, and Baekhyun takes it as permission to take his move up a notch, making the water around them splash.

Chanyeol releases him with a loud pop, which allows them to catch their breaths. "Ride me?" The human's voice is still as small as previously, but at least it doesn't sound as sad.

Not being bothered to answer, Baekhyun starts working the both of them immediately, guiding Chanyeol's fingers to prep him while he does his part on Chanyeol's now hardened member. A series of stifled moans and languid kisses later, Baekhyun finally sinks down onto Chanyeol, face buried into Chanyeol's neck so he can muffle his moan caused by the sensation of having the warm and pulsating length penetrating him, impaling him fully to his core. He lets his walls familiarize themselves around Chanyeol for a moment before he starts moving up and down, picking the speed up slowly.

Their lips meet again, sloppy kisses adorning each bounce. Chanyeol's hands roam around his back, as if he's scared he would lose him if his hands are not there on his skin. Baekhyun keeps them connected to each other up here and down there.

In a short moment, Baekhyun keeps the entire length inside him to savor the feel, and Chanyeol blurts out something almost inaudibly that catches him off guard.

"I love you."

It was thrown right at him so suddenly that he can't even move or speak right after. Chanyeol rarely uses words to show his affection and feelings, and Baekhyun has never had any problem with it. Thus, having Chanyeol say those words makes him feel even much better than giving the sinners in Hell their rightful punishment. Getting high on a drink or a substance can't even match this; nothing can match the high he gets from hearing Chanyeol say it.

"Oh, deary me," Baekhyun mumbles, the ecstasy kicking in him so fast. He's genuinely speechless, losing the ability to form coherent words even more when he notices the shy yet sweet smile on Chanyeol's face.

Thus, he decides to reply to the confession with a fiery kiss and desperate moves.

Hours after, as he spoons Chanyeol in his arms, his thoughts afloat, he wonders if a being like him really deserves to be loved back by the one he loves - or if being loved back has a price he has to pay.

There are things Baekhyun can't explain well the way he means to. He just can't find the right words to fully express his thoughts; or maybe he just doesn't want to say them out loud so he could avoid the consequences that follow.

One of them is how he feels about his brother, the oh so divine, holier-than-thou Archangel Michael.

Or as what the proud bird wants to be called lately while he goes 'undercover' on Earth, Suho. '*Guardian*' as a name? It's so horrendously lame it has to be written down as one of the fatal sins.

"I see you've been doing great, brother." The 24 carat smile says to him. "You had this glow of merry on your face."

" *Had* ?"

"It disappeared the moment you saw me."

Baekhyun snickers bitterly. "You do know I don't like visits from family members."

When he turns to Suho, the archangel is smiling at him meaningfully. "You said *family* ."

"Oh for Dad's sake, cut the crap." He hisses. "What do you want?"

"What's with the hurry, Luci?" Suho shifts his gaze towards the streets under them; they're currently sitting on the railings of the rooftop of his penthouse. "Let's enjoy the lights first."

"It's *Baekhyun* ."



Suho nods slowly, seemingly brewing something to say that would annoy him effectively. "Baekhyun the Lightbringer. Sounds nice, brother."

Frowning at the archangel, Baekhyun shakes his head in annoyance. "I can never tell whether you're being sarcastic or not."

"I was. So," Suho faces him completely, "how's your human lover?"

"You know his name."

"Chanyeol. How's Chanyeol?"

Baekhyun can't help but let the ice inside him melt down upon the mention of Chanyeol. "He's great." he sighs into the night air. "He's the best." He settles with, because after all, no human words can ever describe the nature of Chanyeol's presence in his existence.

"I am sure he's the cause of this," Suho raises a hand and gestures at his own face, "this constant glow of joy on you."

He nods slowly, not fighting back the smile that's spreading on his face. "I assume that was plausible."

From his peripheral vision, he finds Suho nodding along as well, looking quite amused as he keeps his gaze glued at the lights beneath their feet. "I've never seen you this happy for so long." Suho's voice is almost hushed, as if it's getting carried away by the wind. "The last time I saw you being this content was--"

"When I was still in Silver City. I know." Baekhyun cuts off begrudgingly. "And I'd appreciate it very much if you prevent yourself from bringing up anything from that time."

“... my apologies.” the way Suho mutters it starts to make him feel guilty. “The past is the past. I understand.”

Baekhyun closes his eyes. “Good.”

“May I ask you a question, though?”

“Are you really going to rub the wrong way?”

“Please be kinder to me. I’m just curious.” He senses Suho facing him. “Is Chanyeol really the only reason you’ve been spending time on Earth more than you do in Hell?”

He turns to Suho, unpleasantness starting to brew inside him. “ *Who* exactly is curious?”

The archangel gives him a soft chuckle. “You’re thinking I’m asking you on Father’s behalf, aren’t you?” Suho shakes his head. “It was authentically mine, the question. I do miracles on behalf of Father, not interrogations. *But*,” the archangel raises a hand when Baekhyun leans forward furiously, “this is *not* an interrogation. I’m genuinely curious, brother. In fact, I’m more on the fascinated side in this matter.”

“Fascinated.” Baekhyun frowns.

“And also maybe worried. You do know that whatever you have with the human is not... common, right?”

“And what if it’s not common?” Baekhyun leans back again. “Is it so wrong that I’m having the time of my boring life seeing a human laugh with me after only seeing them scream in agony for so many years?”

Suho presses his lips together into a thin line for a moment. “I guess I have to remind you, in case you’ve forgotten about it after so long; celestial beings and mortals aren’t supposed to

mingle.”

“I told you *not* to bring up anything from *that* time.”

“So you still remember. The last time you mingled with a human, they ended up being doomed, brother.”

‘ *What have you done, Lucifer?* ’

He can’t even think straight for the moment because the rather unappealing memories are flooding right into his head.

‘ *This is all your fault.* ’

“Thus, I am fascinated, indeed, by the way you’re living this carefree life with your human despite having a horrible experience regarding it.”

‘ *You know Father would not let go of this.* ’

“Maybe,” he finds Suho staring back at him, looking as poised as ever, “for the sake of every party involved, it’s time for you to stop playing here and go back to your throne in Hell.”

"Bloody Heaven, so *that* is what this is all about?" Baekhyun turns around and hops off the railings, starting to walk away. “And there I thought you just wanted to see me.”

He’s forced to halt his steps when Suho suddenly descends down onto the floor in front of him; he must’ve missed the sound of his wings flapping. The gigantic, ash grey feathers are spread wide on each of Suho’s sides for a moment before they get hidden again. “I did want to see you. *And* to remind you that you’ve been neglecting the throne for four human years now.”

“Wrong. I paid my visits once every at least three human months, which you would’ve known if only you did your research correctly.”

“Visits, brother. Visits.” Suho shakes his head, daring to look disappointed. “You haven’t been doing real ruling there.”

“Have you ever heard about, you know, *delegation* ? I have the triplets reporting back to me once a month, I’ve also come down for inspections several times. Which you would have known,” Baekhyun scans the archangel with his eyes from the top to the bottom, back and forth, “if only you really kept tabs on me because you *care* .”

Coldness seeps into Suho’s face, and Baekhyun wonders if he had said something that offended the archangel. “I’m here because I do care about you.”

Baekhyun laughs bitterly at the statement. “Funny, brother,” he sighs, “that was what you said when you led the other angels to kick me out of Heaven.”

“ *Lucifer* ,” the archangel growls low, “it’s been six millennia. Maybe you should learn to move on from the, you know, blaming.”

“Blaming? You helped everyone condemn me to be the ward of Hell and be used as the scapegoat by all those sinners for their evil doings. For six thousand human years. *You* try to move on from that.”

“And you know well none of them would’ve happened if only you hadn’t angered Father with your rebellion. For someone who resents being scapegoated, aren’t you being a hypocrite here?”

Baekhyun finds himself losing all the words in his head that he could use as a counter attack.

“I didn’t come here to quarrel with you.” Suho lets out a heavy sigh, looking troubled. “I want to tell you something.”

“Save it.” Baekhyun grumbles, already spinning around on his heels. “I loathe you.”

Loathe is such a strong word for what he feels towards Suho, but he’d also rather hear the screams in Hell than any nonsense the archangel is about to spew. He’s had enough of it tonight.

“It’s about Chanyeol.”

Baekhyun halts his steps again.

*‘ We thought it was just some usual check ups. Then he started asking us about how you’ve been doing with your human. ’*

“Why did you visit the Cerberus triplets?”

Suho seems to be struggling with whatever he’s about to say, and Baekhyun despises every single second that passes by as he waits.

“Your human lover is going to die soon.”

Maybe, this one is not nonsense.

“In a few months.” he hears Suho’s voice behind him, as clear as crystal. “I thought you’d want to know.”

Baekhyun, once again, is stuck on his spot. His head is a wreckage at the moment.

“I talked with the Cerberus trio as a part of the attempt to make up my mind about telling you this. I hope I’m not making a mistake.”

How dare Suho keep talking like this when he can’t even think properly?

“I’m sorry.” is what Suho wraps his visit up with before he spreads his wings again and flies up in the speed of light.

Baekhyun wonders if it all really happened and if he really heard what Suho said correctly; he wonders, because he’s so ready to deny the knowledge he had just gained.

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-5-

There are things Baekhyun can’t explain, and sometimes they get the best of him, wrecking his mind and consuming him from the inside. No amount of time spent can dull him from the anxiousness he gets from his inability to make sense out of something.

And then, he’d turn into a state where he’s too petrified that he straight up dives into denial.

The denial helps him function like usual the next day; he wakes up snuggling up to Chanyeol alias his favorite human, prepares breakfast for the both of them, drives Chanyeol to his workplace and makes a quick stop at the usual cafe to get their coffees along the way, goes for a brunch with a few actual business associates who are handling the transactions of the properties he had marketed the month before, has lunch with Chanyeol, visits his bar to supervise the restocking, and lazes around the lounge while waiting for the time he picks Chanyeol up. It goes on like that for the next few days, granting him the pseudo-peace for his mind.

‘ *Your human lover is going to die soon.* ’

But of course, despite the successful denial, the words just wouldn’t leave his head. It’s there, echoing, bouncing off the walls of his mind. No matter what he does, they would knock at him again and again.

Fortunately, whenever he sees Chanyeol’s smile, his mind chooses to focus on it more for the moment.

“Good morning to the most amazing human being in this realm.” Baekhyun whispers as he nuzzles the tip of his nose against the apple of Chanyeol’s right cheek, earning him a sleepy, lazy smile from the human. As usual, they start their day by entangling their limbs with each other. It doesn’t escalate to something more, but it’s enough to make Baekhyun feel half drunk.

Breakfast today is french toast, and Baekhyun finds amusement in the way he has to struggle feeding Chanyeol because the human just couldn’t stop talking about this particular patient who claimed that his pet beagle pup has helped him feel a lot better than usual. At some point, Chanyeol swiftly slips in his wish of adopting a dog, and Baekhyun decides to shut him up with a kiss right on his lips. It appears to work perfectly, because the next second he’s sitting on Chanyeol’s lap and feeding the human with kisses instead of toast.

He lets the day pass by in a blur when Chanyeol isn’t around. Nothing really matters to him as much as Chanyeol does; somehow, when the human isn’t in his sight, everything looks much duller and, dare he say, *boring* . What’s the use of another chair at his table if Chanyeol isn’t sitting on it? What’s the use of enjoying car rides if Chanyeol isn’t next to him humming to almost every song on the radio? What’s the use of the sunlight if it doesn’t glow on the apple of Chanyeol’s cheek? Everything in this mortal realm is useless if Chanyeol isn’t there.

His own existence in this realm would be useless if Chanyeol isn’t here.

And he keeps the thought in, as if he’s swallowing knives, and goes on with his day, his only motivation is seeing Chanyeol again.

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Death has never been something he spared even a second of his time to ponder about. It's the final vehicle of every living being on Earth, hence the name mortal. All that deserves his concern is where their destination would be, riding the vehicle, for they become his problem if they end up having to spend eternity under his eyes.

Then he found that suddenly, death wasn't a mere vehicle anymore; it's a train, going at an increasing speed, and it's taking Chanyeol away from him.

Of course he's very much painfully aware that death would come for Chanyeol in the future; he's a mortal after all. He just didn't expect for it to come too soon. Not when Chanyeol seems to finally be having the time of his life. Not when Baekhyun has found himself a spot in this place. Not when the light in Chanyeol's eyes has become the only reason he resents his own existence much less than before.

He was drowning too deep in joy and contentment that he couldn't see the very clear ending for the both of them. And it's never a good way to go through something when you already know the harrowing end it has.

But still, Baekhyun tries to overlook everything. He tries to stay in the moment and pretend that he can stretch it as long as he wants to. He tries to keep turning blind eyes on the fact that something is coming, and it's not a good one.

"You're tense." the deep timbre of Chanyeol's voice pulls him out of the tracks.

He resorts into a chuckle as he tightens his arms around Chanyeol, having been spooning him from behind on the couch for at least half an hour. A playlist of acoustic instrumentals has been on just as long. It's almost midnight, and completed with the lights that Baekhyun had set to dim, it's the perfect atmosphere for them to savor each other's presence.

And Baekhyun curses at himself for letting his mind waste the time he should've used on Chanyeol.



“I can never hide from you, hm?” he murmurs into the column of Chanyeol’s neck. Chanyeol smells like him. Or maybe he’s the one who smells like Chanyeol. Maybe at some point they have blended into one.

He feels Chanyeol resting the back of his head on his shoulder, exposing more of his skin for him to steal dozens of pecks from. “No, sir, you can not.” Chanyeol sounds so calm yet so amused.

“I’m fine with it.” Baekhyun smiles to himself. “I don’t want to be far from you anyway.”

“You don’t?”

“I don’t want to be anywhere if you’re not there.”

Chanyeol’s hands bring his thighs even closer to him; they’ve been caging him since the moment they planted themselves on the couch. “Really?”

“If you ever leave me, I’d wish I could just stop existing altogether.”

Because he’s sure Chanyeol would go to Heaven, and since that place is the only place he can never touch, he can never see Chanyeol again. And if he can never see the love of his whole existence ever again, he might just as well cease to be.

“Those were... sweet,” Chanyeol tilts his head a little towards him, an attempt to let Baekhyun know he’s paying full attention at the moment, “but baby, you sounded troubled.”

“I’m not, though.”

He’s not troubled; he is panicking internally and has been screaming inaudibly constantly.

“If you feel like sharing whatever it is that’s currently poking your mind, I’ll be here, as you know. Matter of fact, I’ve been around too much you should’ve been bored with me by now.”

“Nonsense.” Baekhyun lifts his head up back to rest his forehead against the side of the crown of Chanyeol’s head. “I just said that I’d rather not exist than not having you with me.”

Chanyeol’s response to his simple yet heartfelt statement comes in the form of his hand reaching back to cup his cheek, and he closes his eyes as he leans to the touch ever so naturally. He’s so obedient when it comes to Chanyeol. “Babe,” he then hears the human’s low whisper, “I’m not going anywhere anytime soon.”

*‘ Your human lover is going to die soon. ’*

The bitterness starts to fill him up like a lethal poison, and Baekhyun wishes he never heard those words. “How are you so sure?”

“Sure of what?”

“Of not going anywhere anytime soon.”

*‘ In a few months. I thought you’d want to know. ’*

“I don’t know.” Chanyeol’s amused chuckle sounds so warm in his ears, yet somehow they only worsen the pain inside him. “I just am.”

It’s painful, so severely painful, how humans could feel such an amount of certainty while their lives are filled with so many variables that constantly change along the way.

And yet, Baekhyun, for once, finds the need to be like them. To be oblivious and hopeful. "I'd trust you." he murmurs into the skin of Chanyeol's neck. "I'd trust you, love."

He wishes he could stay oblivious and hopeful forever, not knowing what he could or should know. He wishes Suho never visited him to inform him of the horrible news. He wishes he's just a mere human being, seeing the world from such a simple point of view.

And he wishes he never wondered about things he couldn't explain.

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-6-

There are things Baekhyun can't explain.

*' Hello there, Lucifer! Didn't see you coming at all. '*

And the heart has been on the top of the chain of mystery.

*' Lucifer, what do you have there with you? '*

And it's sickening to figure out that everything about the damnation of humans started from the moment his heart first learnt about adoring something - or rather *someone* - much more than he should've.

*' Oh, Luci, you really got me! '*

Silly of him to think that all of his memories from the beginning of time would fade altogether, to think that they would ease the weight on his heart by disappearing. Because some of them have been too resistant; it's very likely that they would never leave him be. Even after six millennia, he can still hear his own voice calling for one name with an amount of fondness that he didn't share with other beings than -

*' Adam! '*

*' Lucifer? Hey! '*

His first love just happened to be the first human God ever created.

*' That was hilarious, Luci. Do it again? '*

He doesn't think he would ever find in him the ability to explain why and how his whole being started to yearn for Adam. He couldn't even pinpoint when was the start of that feeling; was it the moment God introduced His new creation called *a human* to him and his siblings? Was it the moment Adam told him that he felt the most comfortable with him - *' you're the only one I can somehow relate to, Luci '* - under that huge apple tree in the middle of the garden? Was it even the moment he watched Adam being gifted a pair?

That feeling was the first of so many things he couldn't explain throughout the time. However, one thing he has always been sure of is that, whether it was palpable or not, the feeling was the start to the doom that awaited him the moment he laid eyes on the first human in the universe.

*' Adam, do you fancy her? '*

*' Of course, Luci, she's my other half. '*

When he learnt that Adam wasn't feeling for him what he felt for him - wasn't *made* to feel that way towards him, he started learning another kind of feeling inside his chest. Unlike the

first one that was more of a tingling, ticklish sensation that was induced with warmth and fondness, this one was like fire, the lick of its tip burning him almost into ashes. He couldn't figure out what exactly he was feeling, although he knew for sure that the celestial citizens of Heaven weren't supposed to feel that way. The place was too pristine to be tainted with something dark like that.

Baekhyun, back then, didn't realize that he was the very first being to experience a heartbreak, even when he didn't have the slightest idea about it yet.

And just like in every point of time in human history, a heartbreak did what it did best; it clouded all of his senses.

*' Why is this tree the only one forbidden, Lucifer? '*

*' Beats me every time, Eve. Look at that shiny apple. Don't you want a taste? '*

Was it her fault for not sensing the bitterness in the tone of his voice, or was it his fault for exploiting her desire out of spite?

*' They are banished from Silver City. They would have to live on Earth until the day they cease to breathe. '*

*' Cease to breathe? '*

*' Father has doomed them to be mortal. '*

Was it his fault for staying back in the shadows of the other trees when Adam and Eve were facing the judgment of their first ever sin? Was it his fault for staying mum when God gave him a pat on the back for helping Him with his so-called experiment on his new creation?

Was it his fault for only freezing on the spot when his first love looked back at him, his eyes filled with so many emotions that he wished he couldn't comprehend?

"It wasn't."

He gets pulled harshly out of his reverie by the voice and the sudden statement. When he focuses on what's in front of him again, he finds a very familiar face staring curiously at him, taking a seat right across him. "You could hear my thoughts?"

"I... could not." the person chuckles. "But since I found you staring at the bread very intensely, I assumed you thought it was a real bread. Which was why I said it wasn't."

Baekhyun proceeds to poke the almost realistic small bread plushie on a plate, resting as a decoration on the desk that belongs to the psychiatrist sitting right before him. "It's so you to have these... useless trinkets. What took you so long, *Kim Jongin*?"

"Sorry, my stomach has been a mess since the morning." Jongin emphasizes by patting his abdomen. "Chances are I drank spoiled milk without knowing."

"Without knowing-" Baekhyun closes his eyes and sighs heavily, knowing well that Jongin is enjoying the sight of him being annoyed. "How did you survive living for three decades like this?"

Jongin laughs freely this time, and Baekhyun doesn't really resent the warmth that spreads in his chest because of the sound unlike the many times before this.

Kim Jongin. The reincarnation of Adam. His face is still as ethereally beautiful as ever, his voice still has the same amount of sweet, and it's insane that things stay like that when Adam has been reborn for so many lifetime since the beginning of existence with different appearances. And Baekhyun always found the way to him, as if he could smell him even from the furthest place. Adam being reborn in South Korea was the very first reason Baekhyun, as Lucifer, chose to roam around here with this face five years ago.

Little did he know that visiting his first love here would lead him to the true love of his whole existence.

“You look rather gloomy today, Mr. Byun.” Jongin’s comment steals his attention.

Baekhyun purses his lips. “Nonsense.” he then murmurs. “I always look charming.”

Jongin, clearly getting his sense of humor, giggles in satisfaction for a moment before settling back to his ‘serious persona’. “You do look charming as always, but you also look like someone just stole your cat. I can see it behind the expensive looking sunglasses, Mr. Byun.”

Frowning, Baekhyun takes the sunglasses off, not caring that he’s revealing his blood red irises for the world to see - there’s only Jongin in the room anyway, and the psychiatrist has seen his eyes for so many times, never asking anything about it despite the vivid curiosity. “And why would one be gloomy over the loss of their cat?”

“That was a metaphor of losing something or someone so dear to you.” A sigh leaves Jongin’s plump lips. “Anyway, I assume that gloomy look on your face is your reason to be here today? It can’t just be because you’re bored like the usual.”

“Why do you assume that?”

“Because you rarely get bored nowadays. Ever since, you know, the arrival of this certain therapist working downstairs.”

Baekhyun narrows his eyes at the way the left corner of Jongin’s lip curls up into a smirk. It was almost three years ago when he introduced Chanyeol to Jongin in a rather spontaneous occasion, which then led to Chanyeol snatching a spot in the luxurious looking hospital that Jongin had been working at for a couple of years. It was also the start of Chanyeol’s friendship with Jongin, and sometimes Baekhyun still thinks that it was the result of the sickening experiment on destiny orchestrated by Father up there. His first and last love hanging out together? Still makes him shiver.

“Right.” He lets a soft smile spread on his lips. “I never got bored anymore ever since I met him.”

“Remember when I told you that you were going to end up hurting yourself and Chanyeol when you introduced him to me? Wild times, really.”

“You initially thought I was just playing around with him. The true evil, you are.”

“Dude, you can’t blame me for being skeptical about you; you took *one* look at Chanyeol and decided he was the love of your life!” Jongin manages to say in between his laugh. “Remember how I told you I was creeped out when you said you didn’t want any other psychiatrist to treat you but me because, as I’d like to quote, ‘*that’s just how destiny works*’?”

Not holding himself back, Baekhyun lets laughter rock his body, his head thrown back along the way. Jongin joins the laughing spree soon enough, being the easily entertained soul that he is. “I’d have to apologize for that. I wasn’t fully aware back then that it wasn’t what humans would normally tell each other.” Baekhyun shakes his head while chuckling. “In hindsight, now I see how baffling I was.”

“It’s alright, really. I respect the way you don’t mask your intentions. Back then I assumed you were simply impulsive, like you had difficulties with assessing what your body was actually telling you through your reactions towards certain happenings, and also zero consideration about the consequences of your acts. But you’ve proven me twice that you stayed with your words. You really never sought another psychiatrist than me, and Chanyeol really ended up being your lover for almost... how long is it now?”

“Almost four years.” he answers proudly.

“Four years. And you’re still so smitten for him like the way you were in the beginning. Chanyeol still looks like he’s so amazed by you.” Jongin leans back on his cushioned seat with a warm smile. “You do keep your words, Mr. Byun.”

Baekhyun shrugs, holding back his prideful smirk. “The Devil *always* keeps his words.”



Jongin narrows his eyes at him playfully; of course, to the humans, all of the celestial references he uses are considered as metaphors. It's just that among all of them, Jongin and Chanyeol have been the only ones *not* probing much about it. "While you do keep your words," Jongin then continues, "you don't have to always keep your worries inside too."

It seems like they're back to talking about the dark clouds hovering above his head, and although he doesn't like a bit of it, he humors Jongin with getting along with the conversation. "I'm not keeping it inside." Baekhyun's gaze falls onto his laps, eyes fixated on the smooth fabric of his trousers. "I just don't know how to elaborate."

He doesn't know how to tell Jongin that Chanyeol is going to literally die soon and that his angel brother was the one who informed him that. It would've been much easier if only Jongin was still a celestial being.

"Okay, at least you're willing to share, you just haven't figured out how to." Jongin leans forward once more on the desk. "May I know what this is about? Or maybe who?"

That, he can tell. "Chanyeol."

He notices the slight change on Jongin's face. "Is something wrong between the both of you?" the psychiatrist asks with his default calm tone.

"Oh no, no, not even the slightest. We're doing great."

"Then, is something wrong *about* Chanyeol?"

Father be damned, this reincarnation of Adam is good. "I suppose."

"Do you think you can tell me what it is exactly?"

Absentmindedly, Baekhyun shakes his head lightly. “I don’t think so.” He really doesn’t think he can ever say anything about the matter out loud even if the one asking him is a celestial being. How can he just *talk* about Chanyeol and death in one sentence? “But I can tell you what I’m feeling about it.”

“Alright. What is it, Mr. Byun?”

It’s difficult for him to admit it, but he’s also assured he can be honest with the human in front of him. “Helpless.” he whispers out. “I feel helpless. Horribly helpless.”

Jongin is already wearing his serious look. “Do you want to elaborate on that?”

“I,” his back hunches, feeling defeated out of sudden, “this is my first time feeling so helpless. Feeling like I’ve lost control on something. Worse, I feel like I just figured out that I’ve never had control over it since the first place.”

Who knew that one day the Prince of Hell himself would break down over the death of one mortal?

“And I don’t like it. I loathe it. Having no control. I’m someone who once bit the arm of the *most important being* in the entire universe, who was supposed to control me. Of course I take no pride in the outcome but... still. Now I’m faced with this, and I just, I don’t know what to do.”

When he looks up, he finds Jongin’s gaze on him gentle and understanding. It could be that Jongin is just doing very amazing at his job as someone who is licensed and paid to assess people’s mental and emotional struggles, but Baekhyun is still thankful for his presence nonetheless. Jongin is the only being he could talk to about things he doesn’t want to bother Chanyeol with, and he’s guaranteed with unbiased opinions.

It’s almost like old times, back in Heaven, when the only one he could freely express his thoughts to was Adam.

“Whatever it is,” Jongin speaks again, “I am sure you’d handle it well.”

He chuckles bitterly. “How so? Because I’m just that cool?”

Jongin frowns at him, a laugh threatening to burst. “Yes you’re cool, but,” the psychiatrist hums, “I’m sure you’d do anything for Chanyeol, to make things right with Chanyeol.”

Bitterness long gone, he feels sadness and hope mixing into one inside him as he stares into Jongin’s eyes. “You really think so?”

“I know so.” Jongin nods, as if to emphasize his statement. “It’s so obvious that you love him deeply.”

“It is? How so?” he frowns, genuinely curious.

What he gets in return is Jongin’s knowing smile. “That’s another topic to discuss in our next appointment. I think Chanyeol is going to finish soon enough.”

True to Jongin’s words, it’s ten minutes before the end of Chanyeol’s shift. Baekhyun raises an eyebrow at the psychiatrist after checking his wristwatch. “Aren’t you just using it as an excuse to shoo me?”

Jongin hums mischievously. “Partly?” he grins. “Kyungsoo is picking me up today.”

Baekhyun knows the name. Doh Kyungsoo. Jongin’s lover of almost a decade already. He always finds it hilarious how Eve was made to be Adam’s other half, and yet her reincarnations never crossed paths with Adam’s. The root of Baekhyun’s heartbreak was him thinking that Adam could never love him back because he was given his soulmate, but in the end, the entire soulmate thing was merely a fraud created by his Father; it was all just the result of an experiment, and he’d always regret realizing it too long after what happened back at home.

Adam simply didn't love him that way. Adam simply loved Eve, just like how Jongin simply loves Kyungsoo instead of Eve's reincarnation who's living in the neighboring city. No tricks, no hidden meanings. Just hearts, being as complicated as ever. If only his understanding of love was much better, the mortal world as they know it would've never happened this way.

But then he wouldn't have met Chanyeol and learnt so much from just one human being. Loving Chanyeol was what helped him see things from a fresh perspective.

In the end, Baekhyun settles with- "Thank you, Jongin."

"What for?"

"Sparing your time."

"But you paid me to." Jongin raises an eyebrow. "And you paid handsomely. I got Kyungsoo a new car because of you, I'd like to say again."

He snorts. "Trivial things."

"Thank *you* , Baekhyun."

"For the car? I didn't buy you that directly-"

"For showing me true love." Jongin gives him a soft smile. "You and Chanyeol, both of you remind me everyday what loving truly is."

Ironic, how Jongin was actually the first being in Heaven who taught him loving. "And what is it?"

He gets an amused giggle as a response. “See you next time, Mr. Byun.”

“... well” he purses his lips for a moment before nodding, “bye for today, Dr. Kim.”

As Baekhyun makes his way to Chanyeol’s office room, his mind floats around, taking him back in time when he spent many years observing Adam’s life on Earth, guilt dripping from his pores. Back then, he was so sure that it was all his fault. And while he was drowning in the waters of mourning, he had thought that maybe he could fix things. Maybe he could bring Adam back to Heaven, maybe if he just begged hard enough to Father, maybe Adam would be spared from the damnation of mortality and all of the disadvantages it carried. Maybe, just maybe, Adam would be able to look at him the way he has always looked at the human.

But the moment he saw Adam gathering Eve in his arms with a gentle, content smile on his face, Baekhyun knew his hopes had vaporized into the thin air.

Back then, it was what had worsened his heartbreak. It had led him to succumb into his rebellious phase; maybe it wasn’t his fault after all, maybe it was all Father’s tricks and games, and maybe it was Father’s fault for showing him what he could have but didn’t.

Now, what he remembers the most isn’t the heartbreak; it’s that content smile on Adam’s face.

And he wonders if he’s scared to lose Chanyeol because he hasn’t loved the human properly; he wonders if what he has inside is the fear of not being able to hug Chanyeol like that when the *time* comes.

There are things Baekhyun can't explain, and for some of them, he wishes he could.

"Where is he?"

"In the ER, already treated. Calm down first, Baekhyun."

Firstly, he wishes he could explain to himself that he can't let his fear get the best of him. Chanyeol is alright. It was just a small accident. Just someone running to him with their bicycle. There's a deep wound on his arm but that's the only wound he got, and it's been wrapped neatly with bandages. No other scratches. Chanyeol is alright, at least physically.

Chanyeol is alright. Chanyeol is still here. Chanyeol hasn't left for eternity. Chanyeol is still here in his reach.

He keeps repeating those words in his head as he stands dumbfounded near the doors to the emergency room; the trip to here was a blur. Getting the news of his lover being admitted to the hospital wasn't the right way to start the day, especially when he's been painfully jumpy about Chanyeol's well being. Maybe it was a bad idea to let Chanyeol out of his sight. Maybe he should start tagging along everywhere Chanyeol goes.

"You said he's alright."

"Yes, he is. The wound has been treated properly."

"Then why," he feels his voice getting caught in his throat, "why is he like that?"

Chanyeol is on the last bed of the row at the corner of the right side of the room, almost looking lifeless if not for the eyes and his left hand balled into a fist while gripping on the thin blanket. Tears are falling down his face despite him not letting out even the slightest sob. Chanyeol looks severely broken, and the sight is starting to break him as well.

Baekhyun turns to Jongin just when the psychiatrist is about to answer him. “The attacks. You know the drill.” Jongin lets out a heavy sigh. “I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have taken him out for a stroll.”

An accident on the streets; of course Chanyeol had panic attacks. Not knowing what to say to Jongin’s apology, Baekhyun decides to just go to where Chanyeol is still resting. The only thing he can think of at the moment is to get to Chanyeol and do anything he could to make him feel alright again.

“Baby,” he whispers once he’s seated right next to the bed, “it’s me.”

Chanyeol doesn’t move much, making the worry in him worsen. But in the end the response comes. “Baekhyun?”

“Yes, Chanyeol, it’s Baekhyun.” He unknowingly smiles at the way Chanyeol recognizes him. “May I hold your hand now, baby?”

To his dismay, Chanyeol shakes his head. “No.” the human croaks out while new droplets of tears roll down his cheeks.

Baekhyun gulps down the gnawing feeling creeping up in him. “Okay.” he sighs. “Do you want to talk about it?”

“No.”

“Alright, baby. Can I stay here with you?”

He was starting to think that Chanyeol would ask him to leave because of the noticeable pause, but then Chanyeol croaks his answer out almost inaudibly. “Yes. Please.”

Smiling to himself, Baekhyun rests both of his arms on the bed to let Chanyeol know that he's there. Minutes start to pass by, and he stays on his seat calmly while watching the frown between Chanyeol's eyebrows cease little by little, feeling relieved because of it. He knows some people are staring at him because of the color of his hair and irises, and as usual, Baekhyun gives no damn; the only opinion that matters is Chanyeol's anyway.

After half an hour, he finally hears Chanyeol's voice, hoarse and much calmer now; "I'm sorry."

Baekhyun shifts on his seat. "For what, baby?"

"Making you worry." the human says in a small voice. "It was my fault. I didn't wait for Jongin. I walked away. Of course I shouldn't have. That cyclist must've been caught off guard. It was my fault."

"Baby, it was already the green light for pedestrians, Jongin was looking at his shoes, that cyclist was zooming into a crowd. It wasn't your fault, Chanyeol. You're the one with a deep wound on your arm."

"It was my fault." Chanyeol nods, obviously to himself. "When something bad happens in the streets it's always my fault."

Right then, Baekhyun figures out that Chanyeol hasn't been talking about the accident today at all.

"It was my fault."

*' He was looking at his phone while crossing the street. Our parents were walking in front of him. '*

"It was my fault."



*‘ And there was this... SUV, a huge one, it was losing control, and it was speeding near the people there. Mom and Dad were hit first, then Chanyeol. They must’ve walked back to get him, or maybe even shield him if they already knew they couldn’t walk away on time. Chanyeol didn’t realize what was happening until they got to him. ’*

*‘ They were thrown away. The impact caused severe internal bleeding on our parents; they didn’t survive. Chanyeol got lucky, but the hit ruined his optic nerves. Permanent visual impairment, they said. ’*

“It was my fault.”

*‘ He still thinks it was his fault. ’*

Chanyeol is crying again.

*‘ I think he would always think it was his fault. ’*

“Baby,” he coaxes gently, carefully putting a hand on the human’s shoulder, “it was not.”

When he thinks Chanyeol has stopped dwelling in his thoughts, the human speaks again, and this time he sounds so, so broken that it’s starting to break his heart too. “When something could’ve been prevented if only you didn’t do what you did,” Chanyeol’s lips tremble, “whose fault it was if not yours?”

*‘ And you know well none of them would’ve happened if only you hadn’t angered Father with your rebellion. ’*

“But you didn’t mean it, baby,” he whispers, voice stuck in his throat, “you didn’t mean it.”

‘ *What have you done, Lucifer?* ’

“You didn’t know what was going to happen.”

‘ *Father has doomed them to be mortal.* ’

“You wouldn’t have done it if only you knew. It wasn’t your fault. It just happened. It just... happened.”

After having those words echo back to him, he then hears Chanyeol’s little voice again. “Baekhyun?”

“Yes, baby?”

“Are you crying?”

The words struck him like lightning; Baekhyun brings his hands up to touch his cheeks. There are tears on them, indeed, and he wipes them off gently and brings the hands down to look at the glistening liquid. “I...” he murmurs, “I suppose?”

The Devil, The Prince of Hell, The Lightbringer, is crying? Sounds metaphysical.

When he looks up at Chanyeol again, the human seems to be holding back a laugh. Are his eyes deceiving him? Is Chanyeol really holding back a laugh? “Baby?”

“I can’t believe it.” Chanyeol’s voice is still hoarse from the flooding emotions, but amusement is now adorning his face. “ *The* Byun Baekhyun is really crying.”

Chanyeol's words only urge more tears to fall down his cheeks. He can't believe this. Never, in the millennia of his existence, has he ever cried. The most that sadness and grief ever did to him was lock him down and shut the doors of his heart and mind. Then this human in front of him gets to witness the very first tears the Lucifer himself ever shed; somehow Chanyeol *sees* him perfectly despite the visual impairment.

The more he thinks about it, the more he knows that Park Chanyeol is more than just a human he just happened to stumble upon at a cafe and fell in love with on the same morning.

"Can I..." he's almost choked up, "can I do more of this for another moment?"

He sees Chanyeol chuckling through his blurry sight. "Of course, Baekhyun." Then his lover reaches out a hand for him. "Of course."

One second, he takes Chanyeol's hand and holds onto it as he lets out the tears. The next moment, he's lying on the small hospital bed, cramped together with his favorite human who's doing an excellent job spooning him while patting his back repeatedly. A nurse comes with a troubled look on her face, probably to tell him off, and ever so naturally, Baekhyun narrows his eyes at her with dripping annoyance. The poor nurse immediately spins on her heels. *You dare to tell the Devil himself to get away from his lover? See you later in one of the chambers down there, sweetie.*

"Thank you, Baekhyun."

"What for, love?"

"For always being there for me." Chanyeol's lips move against his forehead gently. "For always seeing the better side of me."

Baekhyun only buries his head more into the column of Chanyeol's neck. "I should thank you in return, Chanyeol."

“You used my name.”

“I did, didn’t I?”

“I prefer baby or love, please.”

“Then baby,” he pauses a moment to giggle through his clogged nose, “thank you.”

“For...?”

*For always thinking so high of me. For always listening to my words. For always acknowledging me as a being. For always making me feel important. For always making me feel that I matter to you a lot. For always making me see how loved I am. “For being you.”*

Chanyeol sighs heavily, much to the humor. “You’re always so mysterious when I confront you like this. Where’s the Byun Baekhyun who could cite a poem instantly right then and there when I ask him to?”

“That Byun Baekhyun is currently trying not to spill another round of tears because Park Chanyeol is making him so emotional.”

“Well, fair enough.” his human hums against the crown of his head. “I love you like this, too. I love you in any way that you are.”

“Okay. Now prepare yourself, I’m going to cry again.”

“Do that quickly because I think we’re about to get kicked out of here any minute from now.”

“Again, you don’t have to worry too much, okay? He’s back home now, resting on the bed, and I don’t think I’m going to let him go out for, I don’t know, a year?”

Baekhyun smiles to himself when he finds that his words have successfully elicited a soft laugh from the person at the other line of the call. “Make it three years.” the lady says after. “Thank you so much for always looking out for him, Baekhyun.”

“ *Yoor*a ,” he sighs, “don’t keep thanking me for something I was supposed to do anyway.”

“You’re always so charming.” Yoor

a giggles. “Please do call me again once he’s up, okay?”

“Will do so, my lady.”

After a few more humorous exchanges between them, Baekhyun ends the call with a heavy yet content sigh. Assuring Yoor

a that Chanyeol is alright now wasn’t that much of an easy task, but at least he did it anyway; Yoor

a trusts him enough to the point she let Chanyeol stay with him in Seoul while she lives with her little family in Jeju.

Park Yoor

a is easily his second favorite human on Earth, and the beautiful, poised, kind and warm hearted woman shares something with him in common; an immense love for Chanyeol. Of course she was the one who has been there since Chanyeol’s birth as his older sister, but Baekhyun could always feel that Yoor

a’s love for Chanyeol is very close to one of the motherly kind. And frankly, he believes that anyone who loves Chanyeol is his ally, and anyone Chanyeol holds dear is his best friend. Except for the dogs, maybe. The dogs can stay dogs.

He leaves his phone on the coffee table before making his way to the master bedroom of the penthouse, the trip long because of how spacious the place is. An eternity after, he finally arrives right next to the King sized bed and climbs right on, ever so cautiously not to wake the peacefully sleeping human. It’s been almost a day since Chanyeol was discharged from the hospital and the human has been spending most of the time sleeping, much to Baekhyun’s satisfaction and contentment. All that he wished is for his lover to feel great again.

Chanyeol looks so calm and at ease like this; lying on his left, the same side of his face buried on the fluffy pillow, eyelids closed naturally with no frown between his eyebrows. The light of the afternoon sun that pierces through the veil curtain is casting an ethereal glow behind him. Baekhyun carefully puts a hand on the human's arm, his thumb rubbing repeatedly on the fabric of the oversized white tee the human is wearing; Chanyeol's skin is so sweetly warm, it might as well lull him into actually sleeping.

The only thing he can think of the moment is how much he loves this mortal.

Maybe love is a word too strong for this. Or maybe love is an understatement to how he really feels. All he knows is that these feelings for Chanyeol are real and profound; all he knows is that these feelings make him want to give Chanyeol the whole universe if he actually could. At some point in his existence, Chanyeol has become the center of his world. This one particular human with nothing special on him has become the only special being to him.

If he could dare to, he'd say that Chanyeol is the collateral beauty of every misfortune he had gone through in those years.

His thoughts disperse the moment he notices Chanyeol's eyes flutter open.

Obviously, the pair of eyes aren't going to stare back at him, and they would never stare back at anything for the rest of their owner's life. But it doesn't mean Baekhyun can't drown in them, right? It's already a blatant truth that he worships every part of Chanyeol, but he has a particular kind of fondness for the eyes. The dark brown irises, the shape of the eyelids that cover them, he loves each of the details.

When he finds Chanyeol's hand slowly reaching out forward, he figures out that the human must've sensed his presence. The hand lands gently on his hip, the warmth of the huge palm seeping through the thin satin fabric of his robe. He forces himself to stay patient as the fingers graze their way up his side, ghosting on the dip of his waist, inching closer to his rib. Chanyeol's hand then leaps to his arm which is still stretched across the space between them; the fingers then trail along the skin, painstakingly slow, and when it reaches his elbow, the hand grips around it and lifts the arm up to entangle their fingers together. Baekhyun releases a heavy sigh when Chanyeol presses their joined hands against his plump lips.

“I thought you were sleeping.” Chanyeol then hums, voice hoarse from deep slumber.

Baekhyun lets out a soft snort. “No you didn’t.”

“Yeah I didn’t. I knew you were awake the whole time.”

“Creep.”

“You were the one who watched me sleep, *creep* .”

“Didn’t say I wasn’t one.” He doesn’t know which one he’s grinning about; their humorous banter or Chanyeol’s adorable giggle. “I spoke with your sister just now.”

The mirth in Chanyeol’s face dissipates noticeably. “How did she hold up?”

“Not good, but she got through it.”

He doesn’t have to say it out loud for Chanyeol to know that his sister had spent almost half an hour crying because of what happened to him a couple of days ago.

“She said I shouldn’t let you out of home for three years.” Baekhyun tickles Chanyeol’s side with his free hand. “She also wanted you to call her as soon as you woke up.”

“Yeah, sure. I’ll do that. But for now, let’s just,” Chanyeol closes his eyes again, bringing their joined hands to his chest, “let’s just stay like this.”

In his chest is a swirl of something melancholic as he erases the already so short gap between them. He can perfectly smell their shampoo on Chanyeol’s hair and see the few faint blemishes all along the skin of the human’s face. In the end, as expected, he gives up on

holding himself back and steals a gentle peck on the apple of Chanyeol's left cheek, causing a smile to bloom so beautifully on the human's lips. "Sweet." he hums in satisfaction. Chanyeol chuckles shyly in return. "Hey, baby? Can I ask you something very ridiculous?"

Chanyeol scoots even closer, putting their foreheads against each other. "Fire away." he breathes out.

"Let's say you won't have me around ever again starting from tomorrow. And you knew about it all along. What... what would you do?"

He had expected to have Chanyeol frowning at him, to be asked ' *where did such question come from?* ', or maybe to be replied with a humorous yet witty answer. He didn't expect Chanyeol would give him another question in return, and he curses at himself because he should've known it. He should've known better.

"Are you leaving me?"

He curses himself again and again. He should've known better not to ask Chanyeol such a question, not to give Chanyeol such a premise. He had seen the destruction the insecurity had done to the human, and yet he still just can't put it in his nature to shield Chanyeol from every word that the human would find as an indication that he's loved any less.

The thing about Park Chanyeol is that he has this mindset that tells him it's a normalcy not to be loved by anyone. And Baekhyun went through four years of always trying to prove to the human that the mindset is a sickening horror. It wasn't easy to *show* Chanyeol, hence the arguably excessive skinship and fancy words. Baekhyun has been doing everything in his power to make Chanyeol feel loved.

"No, baby, of course not, I would never *ever* leave you." Baekhyun pulls his hand away from Chanyeol's grasp, only so he could cradle the human's face with the said hand. "I apologize for my choice of words, love, that was reckless of me."

"No, no, *I* apologize. My mind hasn't been in the best state. I'm sorry for overthinking."



Baekhyun shakes his head in disagreement despite knowing well Chanyeol can't see it. "I don't deserve the apology, baby."

The human murmurs an almost inaudible ' *still...* '. "But to answer your question," he then says, "I don't know. I don't want to ever think about not having you next to me."

"You don't have to, baby. You would never have to. Because I'm never going anywhere. I'll always be around you." Baekhyun presses his lips against the human's for a short moment. "You can count on me about that. I'll stick around you until you get sick of me."

"Getting sick of you sounds like a very horrifying abomination."

He snorts. "Do tell my Father that when you see Him one day." His stomach then churns when he realizes what he had just implied. "Or not. You're never seeing Him. *Ever* . Never talk to Him."

"Baekhyun," there's warmth and adoration in Chanyeol's soft whisper of his name, and Baekhyun thinks he's starting to get drunk in it, "don't you trust me enough to win your dad's heart?"

"Oh I trust you just fine, love. It's that Ancient Man I'm cynical about. But let's not ruin today with talking about Him. You're all I need."

Silence engulfs them as Chanyeol seems to be dipping into his own thoughts, and Baekhyun is already starting to worry when the human speaks again. "You're the color of the sky when the sun rises and sets."

"Baby?"

“You’re the way the hem of a young lady’s white dress flows along the breeze. You’re the sound of the coffee machine running in the morning when there’s no customer yet in the cafe. You’re the violin part of a mellow song played by an orchestra downtown. You’re the... feeling of looking into your child’s eyes for the very first time.”

Baekhyun is frowning so hard it actually starts to give him a metaphorical headache. “Baby, what were those?”

“Ssh, I have more.” Chanyeol smiles at him in return. “You’re the smell of your mother’s cooking you catch one morning after years of not being home. You’re the way you can bury your hands into the thick fur of your neighbor’s dog. You’re that one song from your favorite singer which has saved you in your dark times. You’re the sound of the rain pitter pattering at midnight as you’re trying to fall asleep.” He sighs when Chanyeol pauses. “Along the years that I’ve worked as a therapist, I sometimes would ask my patients what they found beautiful that day. What they found beautiful lately, or in the morning, or on their way to meet me. I wanted to know.”

“Oh, baby,” he rubs his thumb on Chanyeol’s cheek, “and why did you tell me those?”

“Because I’ve been wanting to describe how beautiful you are. But I couldn’t find the right words, because I don’t think whatever I come up with would be enough. I find you beautiful, Byun Baekhyun. The way you think and express your thoughts, the way you make it clear that I am your top priority, the way you’re always so honest about what you know and what you don’t know. The way you love me... Baekhyun, you’re so beautiful. But I’m afraid I can never describe it properly for you. So I decided to compile people’s descriptions of what they found beautiful and recite them for you.

Because, Byun Baekhyun, you’re everything beautiful in this world.”

Now he doesn’t know what he’s supposed to feel about Chanyeol’s monologue.

“I’m sorry I can’t give you those pretty poems you always gave to me. But in my defense, no words could ever do justice to your beauty.”

All he knows is that the burning feeling in his eyes is back again, and tears are streaming down his face once more. He feels so elated by Chanyeol's breathtaking way of expressing his love for him *and* angry at the same time about how his very first reaction to those words is to doubt them. "Park Chanyeol," he calls out slowly, "you'd run if you ever see me."

Chanyeol raises an eyebrow at him. "Would I?"

"My hair is silver. My eyes are red. If I get to look into your eyes, I'd smell your deepest desire and use it to play you. I'm a monster." His breath hitches the moment realization enters his head; he has said it out loud, that one word he always used to describe himself, and he repeats it with a broken voice this time; "*I'm a monster.*"

The human reaches out a hand, ever so carefully, and touches his face, his thumb finding its way to wipe the tears there. "I've always had a hunch that you're not just an ordinary person. But one thing I'm always going to be sure of is that you're *not* a monster. You were never a monster. Metaphorically speaking, of course. And I'm in no place to judge your appearance. At least you don't have fangs, or else I would've lost my lips long ago."

Even Chanyeol's sense of humour couldn't fix the sour feelings in his chest. "Then what am I? What am I exactly?"

"Someone." Chanyeol nods. "Just someone."

Baekhyun shakes his head. "Is that supposed to be comforting?"

"Baekhyun, being just someone is the best thing in this world." Chanyeol muses. "When you're just someone, you're entitled to do whatever you want. You laugh, you cry, you love, you hate. Being just someone is a very liberating thing. You're just you, Byun Baekhyun. I guess you've never realized that, and I'm sorry that no one was there to tell you that being just you is enough. It wasn't your fault that you were born into a world filled with so many expectations bestowed upon you."

*'It wasn't your fault.'*

At the moment, Baekhyun wonders if somehow, they had ended up being the ones to tell each other the words they have wanted to hear for so long. Maybe there was a reason why they met; maybe their paths crossed each other so they could remind one another that they're more than the selves that they defined with their mistakes. And it's so believable, coming from Chanyeol, because Chanyeol has his share of guilt too. It's so believable when it comes from Chanyeol because the man *knows* .

Finally he finds his laughter again, snorting softly in amusement. "Shouldn't you be telling yourself that as well, love?"

"See? I'm learning more and more with y-"

He cuts Chanyeol's sentence with a sudden kiss, full on the lips, this time putting an amount of pressure. Chanyeol kisses him back immediately as if it's engraved in his nature. His hand slips around Chanyeol's neck to cup the human's nape and bring him even closer, while Chanyeol's own hand travels south, tracing his side with feathery touch until it stops on his hip once more and slides to cup his bottom. There's something about the feeling of having Chanyeol's touch on him separated by the thin fabric of satin, and it's lighting up the flames in him.

Chanyeol mews into his mouth, and he takes it as the cue to pull away to let the human catch his breath. "Deary me," he breathes out, "look at how things have turned out to be."

"I can't," Chanyeol mouths out breathlessly, "look."

Baekhyun almost chokes on his own laugh, only to gasp in shock at the very next second when he feels Chanyeol's hand slides in between his thighs. "Not fair."

"Your fault," Chanyeol starts caressing the inner side of the thighs once he parts them a little to give the hand proper access, "for tasting so sweet today."

*Oh, you sly fox.* "Do I get to be forgiven, sire?"

“Only if you let me feel you.”

The words are igniting the flames inside him, licking his walls and setting them to burn. “Chanyeol,” he lets out a low whisper, “you do me today.”

His favorite human looks confused at first, a slight frown adorning his forehead. Then Chanyeol’s face relaxes as realization seems to hit him. “Are you sure?” The hesitation in his voice is so vivid that it breaks him a little inside.

“I am.” Baekhyun pulls Chanyeol’s hand away from his thighs and laces their fingers together. “I’ll guide you as always.”

The truth is, Chanyeol doesn’t even need that much help to settle himself on all fours on top of him. The human is already starting to work his lips on the expanse of his neck, sucking gently and lapping on the flesh simultaneously as the fingers of his left hand are tangled with his silver locks. But sometimes Chanyeol needs to hear those words of assurance to get the spirit and Baekhyun is always more than willing to give him all the encouragement he wants.

Moaning a little loud at the next moment isn’t a part of encouragement, though. Chanyeol is just *that* good at making him feel good.

“Baby,” he manages to croak out while Chanyeol is still doing wonders on his neck, “touch me.” He sighs in pure pleasure when Chanyeol hums onto his skin, sending vibrations through his entire body. “You said you want to feel me.”

Chanyeol halts his ritual on the neck to place the lips against his ear instead. “May I?”

Baekhyun almost chokes on his own laugh. “Have I told you lately?” he shifts to be the one whispering into his human’s ear this time, hands clawing on his broad shoulder. He can feel Chanyeol giggling; his lover is ticklish there.

“I’m yours, baby.”

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-8-

There are things Baekhyun can’t explain.

There are fewer things that are so obscure, they would make him stop thinking and descend into a soundless pit where he watches everything in mute. It’s like when humans watch a very disturbing movie and they turn the volume off.

There are even fewer things that horrify him to his core, and they would force him to stay frozen on where he stands, unable to move, unable to do anything at all.

“I’m sorry, brother.”

Is this his punishment for always talking about death in disdain? Is this Father’s way of giving him as much as a scold for his indifference towards death? Is this Father’s way to make him see that death is more than just the carriage that delivers him souls to torture?

Is this everyone’s way to make him see that death happens to you by taking your beloved away?

“I’ve told Azrael everything about you and your human. He was the one who suggested that I be here as well.”

It’s insane, so horrifyingly insane. His attempt in keeping Chanyeol safe by making him stay home for almost three months really was in vain after all. Chanyeol fell onto the floor and hit

the back of his head along the way. The human bled to death. Really? Of all ways to die, he just had to with this one?

It's insane, how fragile humans are. Their feelings, their bodies, even their lives.

"He lost his balance while having a panic attack. He was knocked out unconscious after the hit, and he never woke up again. I think he didn't even get to feel the pain."

Baekhyun watches as Chanyeol's soul slowly leaves the body, guided by Azrael, the Angel of Death himself. He feels a prickle in his chest when he sees Chanyeol's eyes moving to focus on Azrael. Chanyeol can see, but all he can see now is the Angel of Death in front of him, just like what every soul does when they are about to be taken to the bridge that would lead him either up or down.

Baekhyun watches as Chanyeol nods to something Azrael says. The soul of his human can only see and hear the angel.

"Luci. Lucifer. *Lucifer*."

Then he gasps when Azrael turns around and catches his gaze. They're separated by the spacious dining room, but he can actually see the pity in his brother's eyes.

"Baekhyun!"

At the mention of the name, he finally turns to his side, finding Suho looking at him with a worried face.

"Baekhyun." Suho calls again. "Are you alright?"

*You still ask?!* He wants to strangle Suho so much, but he decides to go for what's actually pressing at the moment. Limbs numb, mind foggy, Baekhyun walks towards the kitchen.

“Chanyeol?” he croaks out.

What a fool. Of course Chanyeol doesn’t hear him.

“Azrael,” he then turns to his brother, who’s still staring at him with his melancholic looking eyes, “*Lay*, can I talk to him?”

Azrael - or Lay, as the nickname the angel likes to be called with - shakes his head slowly. “You can’t, brother. You know it very well.”

“Lay, please, just for once. I know you can allow it. I know you can perform a miracle for it.”

“Lu,” Lay heaves out, “we only do miracles that Father allow-”

“*Why* ?! Why do you always do only what Father allows you to?!”

“Lucifer, watch your words.” Once again, Suho arrives by his side, his presence always unwelcome. “Don’t act as if you know nothing about what angels do just because you’re not one anymore.”

“Lay, *please*, I’m... I’m begging you, please let me talk to him!”

As if to emphasize the impossibility, Lay stands in front of Chanyeol’s soul, blocking his sight. “It’s not within my authority to decide about, Lu.” Says the angel solemnly. “I am sorry. Truly.”

Baekhyun curls his fingers up into fists, trembling as panic, anger and distress hammer on his mind in a loud, erratic rhythm. “Chanyeol,” still he calls out for his lover; Chanyeol is still so close to him, and yet at the same time he’s already far gone.



Chanyeol can finally see after seven years, and yet Baekhyun stays as invisible as ever to him.

Now he's sure it's a punishment.

“Chanyeol!” his voice rises along with the panic when Chanyeol follows suit as Lay starts to move away. “Chanyeol!”

No one last turn. No hesitation in their steps. No one last dramatic pause to give him the chance to reach out. Just like that, Chanyeol disappears.

The only thing left is the body, sitting lifelessly on the kitchen floor.

“I’m sorry, brother.”

Even Suho decides to leave him alone as he bears the responsibility to deal with the only thing that gives him horror.

He’s now all by himself, with the empty shell of Chanyeol.

And so he walks over the kitchen and sits down on the floor, right in front of the body. He doesn’t touch the cold fingers, doesn’t do anything else except taking his phone out to dial the paramedics. He explains the situation as properly as he could. Once they have assured him that help is on the way, he throws the phone away. Now his gaze is stuck on the pale skin of the face of what used to belong to his lover; just this morning, he had kissed those cheeks.

Then he cries.

No sobs. No tremble of the shoulder. No rocking back and forth.

He just cries,

and cries,

and cries,

wondering if he really has just lost everything.

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**-9.1-**

There are things Baekhyun can't explain.

Like why he can't get drunk.

He has witnessed, for centuries, the service alcohol does for humans who are drowning in the well of hopelessness and desperation. The pathetic liquid provides artificial escape from any kind of worry that devours the mind. The stronger the alcohol, the worse the damage, the more promising the escape seems. He has succeeded several times in urging souls towards the path of damnation with its help.

Now it's him who wants to go down that path, and yet the alcohol bails on him.

He really needs its ability to blur everything out to forget some things even just for the night. Some things like the cold, lifeless face he had cradled in his hands just a few days before. Some things like the grief in Yoora's eyes as she led the funeral, bowing back to the people

who paid respect. Some things like the words that Yoora didn't tell him yet he could hear just fine; *'you said you'll keep him safe.'*

Why can't he get drunk?

Is it because he never really had a human body to begin with? Is it because of his celestic nature? Or is it another trick his Father controls him with?

Humans have always been advised to turn to the aid of a being that is much higher than themselves in times of trouble. But for beings like him, once they reach rock bottom, who could they turn to?

"Sir?" he turns his head slightly towards the source of the familiar voice that belongs to his bar's long-time bartender. "Are you okay?"

Scoffing instantly because of the sentiment, Baekhyun stares at the bottle in his hand, wrapped by his slender fingers that always make him think of the way they used to graze on a certain human's skin. "What does okay even mean?" he mumbles to the bottle.

Judging from the short silence that follows after, he knows that the bartender is regretting ever asking that. "Sir...?"

"What does 'okay' look like? Fuck," Baekhyun sighs rather too heavily, "how do you even know what 'okay' is?"

Chanyeol always said he was okay. But he lived his days suppressing the ghosts of his past, and in bad days they took over him. Chanyeol always smiled so brightly at him and laughed so cheerily with him. But he always said he was still trying to be truly happy. So Baekhyun has zero idea about what the state of 'okay' is supposed to be, to look like.

"It's alright." He then breathes out before taking another gulp of his drink. It feels like swallowing sand. "Thank you for the courtesy."

Four bottles after, Baekhyun finally gets tired of gulping down. He concludes that this place won't give him the catharsis he sought for and gets off the stool. Walking away from the bar counter, he finds himself slipping through the tight, ever changing spaces in between mortals, feeling like the wind blowing aimlessly. This setting is for humans who want to pretend that they belong at least here, and as much as that concept suits him, he still feels so out of place.

After all, he never belonged to a place; he belonged to someone, and now that someone is too far from his reach, leaving him floating around.

Baekhyun gets on the elevator, pressing the button to the penthouse at the top of the building out of habit and stands still as the doors close. The polished surface of the metal reflects his face; he feels a strong urge to burn the entire building down when he looks at his slightly messy silver hair and tired looking red irises in the reflection. He seems pathetic indeed.

How he wishes he had lost a cat instead of the love of his existence.

---

Baekhyun feels like time has slowed down on Earth.

One of the things he dreaded while being in Hell was how the concept of time is stretched too far it became almost nonexistent. There's still no exact way of telling how slower things go down there, but Baekhyun had done his own little experiment; he left a watch in Minseok's possession and asked the demon to record how many times the hands struck twelve, then came back for it after two month, finding that he watch had been running for almost six hundred years. Maybe, after all, Suho's annoyance upon his 'short vacations' on Earth is valid.

Wandering around on Earth has become a routine of escaping the painstakingly long hours. Staying on Earth because of Chanyeol had become a pure bliss. It was as if he had found the way to speed time up, and although he considered it to be a bonus to being with his beloved, he still took great pleasure from it.

Now that Chanyeol is not around, even the time on Earth has become much, much slower.

He doesn't really bother to check the watch and phone. He's been spending most of his days and nights looming over the grand piano in the middle of the living room, feeling pathetic in his briefs and silk robe, fingers sloppily hovering over and pressing on the ivory and ebony keys. All he could come up with are the songs with the gloomiest melodies, the most heart wrenching transitions, while he willingly drowns in the memories of playing much happier tunes with Chanyeol sitting by his side on the bench.

In times like this, he can clearly see how unfitting he is in this place. There's no Chanyeol. There's no meaning of him being here anymore, and yet he dreads going back to where he supposedly belongs. He doesn't fit anywhere if Chanyeol is not there. He's just a creep, wondering what the *hell* he's doing here.

In times like this, he regrets existing.

"Have you considered showering?"

The somber notes come to an abrupt halt as his mind gets pulled away harshly by a familiar voice. Exasperation prickling the walls of his throat, Baekhyun forces his head to look up, finding Jongin standing not too far from him. The psychiatrist is leaning against one of the pillars that separate the living room and the dining room. "Why are you here?"

"Checking up on you."

"Why?"

"Because you might be in a situation where you need my help."

He needs help. He really does. He needs a hand in pulling himself out of the dark pit he had created for himself before he could spiral down even further and end up on the bottom with no will to climb up again. But not even Jongin, whose profession is literally talking people

down, could help him. No one would ever be able to give him answers to the questions lingering at the tip of his venomous tongue.

No one would ever be able to give him an answer that doesn't exist.

*‘ Why did my love have to leave me this way? ’*

“I need help.” He mumbles, eyes hazy over the keys. “It’s not the kind you can give me.”

“It’s alright. I can just stay here and annoy you until you tell me to piss off.”

Baekhyun snorts because of the short lived humor. “I can’t tell the only person who’s willing to help me to piss off.”

Somehow, the sound of Jongin’s amused chuckle soothes him a little. “Then do resume your playing. I’ll be on the couch.”

“Well, pardon the... dark vibes.”

“It’s okay. I’m prepared to cry.” He hears Jongin plopping down on the cushion. “And I might love Radiohead’s Creep a little bit too much.”

His fingers then continue the work they were originally doing before the sudden interruption. The play is sloppy again, but at least this time he doesn’t press too hard when the notes change, saving his one and only spectator from having their ear drums broken by the harsh echo.

He plays, and plays, until his fingers hurt and his back is hunched, his damned soul weeping over the loss of the only being that ever mattered to him.

If he needed six thousand years to completely move on from his first love, then he can't tell if he's ever getting out of this.

---

It doesn't take him more than a few months to return to how he was before Chanyeol.

He despises mortals. He despises dogs more. He wastes his nights in the club, slithering around the beings that he hates, having drinks that don't do the magic on him. He could see the disappointment in Jongin's eyes whenever they meet, and he pretends he couldn't because then all of the hatred inside him would be directed towards himself. He doesn't think he could possibly hate himself more than he already does.

Sometimes he'd accidentally glance at the mirrors in the elevator and think that maybe, just maybe, he's now even worse than the way he was before Chanyeol.

He finds listening to Minseok, Jongdae and Sehun giving him reports to be severely overwhelming. Being reminded of who he really is and what he's supposed to do only makes the bitterness inside him worse. He lets his eyes wander around the room of the restaurant, knowing well others won't be able to see it past the sunglasses.

Others except Minseok, of course.

"Do we still have your attention, My Lord?" the only sane one between the trio asks, sounding genuinely worried. Funny. Demons don't have soul. Only wit and the nature to torture.

Sehun leans forward with a deep frown between his thick eyebrows. "You look shitty, Boss."

There's a scandalized look on Jongdae's face, but the demon only keeps it to himself, gaze bouncing back and forth between everyone around the table.

Before Minseok could chide, Baekhyun breaks the sudden tension with a loud, heavy sigh. “No need to remind me.” he shakes his head, his hand reaching out for the tall glass of red wine on the table. He narrows his eyes at the liquid. Drinking is becoming more and more pointless.

He didn’t expect to bring silence between them, to see the Cerberus triplets exchanging wary stares with each other. It’s getting even funnier. Are his eyes deceiving him or do the demons in front of him really look like they’re acknowledging his agony?

“My Lord, have you considered residing back on your throne?” It’s Jongdae who breaks the pause. “Maybe it’s time for you to go back.”

Now *that* was the kind of question that irks him. He takes the sunglasses off and shoots his gaze at Jongdae who spontaneously cowers on his seat. “Why so?”

*Say it. Tell me I should go back because I have no reason to stay here anymore. Say it to my face.*

“For obvious reasons, My Lord.” Minseok takes the baton. “We just thought it would be natural for you to come back to Hell permanently now that...”

“That Ch-” he gulps down the sudden nauseousness, “that Chanyeol is not here anymore?”

“Exactly, My Lord.”

Something boils inside him. Something poisonous, something that’s set in flames. Baekhyun stands up abruptly from his seat, knocking the chair backwards in the process, his fingers gripping on the edge of the table because he really feels like he’s about to lose his footing. It’s already been three months on Earth and he’s still like this? He wonders if he really can get past this year.



“I have nowhere I’m supposed to be.” He whispers through gritted teeth. “I don’t belong anywhere.”

He doesn’t wait for the trio to respond to his low outburst; he drags himself away from the table, from the restaurant, from the prying and curious eyes. There’s no running away from the pain, but at least he can pretend it’s not there from time to time.

*‘ If you pay no heed to my words, then you don’t belong here, son. ’*

*‘ You led the humans to their sins. Now you stay down there and guide them through repentance, from the first to the last of their kind. ’*

He never belonged anywhere. He was told that he didn’t belong to the place he was created in, the place he could actually call home, the place which he could never enter until the end of time. The place he’s supposed to take care of has always been more of a punishment room for him.

It was so foolish of him to think that he could belong here on Earth. It was so foolish of him to think that he could have a long time with his beloved.

Now his beloved is gone, and he’s a stranger to this universe.

After driving without actually knowing where he was heading, he finds himself parking at the lot of a very familiar place; it’s the community park he used to visit with Chanyeol. For long minutes he just stares at the almost empty park through his hazy eyes, his thoughts incoherent and loud. It isn’t supposed to be like this. He’s not supposed to be like this, to have so many thoughts and emotions inside him. Maybe this is the price he has to pay for gaining his own ability to think; maybe this is a part of his punishment for going against the nature of being his Father’s puppet. Having these thoughts and emotions and *feelings* as a celestial being only makes it a thousand times worse.

He gets out of the car before he could suffocate himself.

There's the spot that he always occupied with Chanyeol. He sits down on the short grass and lies down, arms spread at his sides, eyes staring up at the blue, cloudish sky. Chanyeol is up there. Chanyeol must be up there. In the only place he could never touch.

It's nearing Winter soon. What a shame. Chanyeol loved the cold seasons. They better give him snow up there.

He better be so, so happy up there.

*Cry*. He grits his teeth. *Cry, Lucifer. For fuck's sake, just cry.*

No tears. No sobs. He can't seem to cry anymore. He wonders how he's supposed to let this grief out if he can't cry.

Maybe he'd live with this for another six thousand years.

---

Something comes in the middle of Winter.

"Isn't the next visit supposed to be in two months?"

He watches as both Jongdae and Sehun fidget on their spot, obviously giving Minseok the burden to explain the reason for their uncalled appearance. They're currently standing in the area between the elevator and his front door. "There's something you ought to know, My Lord."

Baekhyun closes his eyes in utter annoyance for a moment before opening them again. "What is it that you need to tell me?"

“Not me, not *us* , My Lord.” Minseok casts his gaze downwards and steps aside in rhythm with the others, revealing another presence in the lobby.

When he recognizes Lay, everything in him turns numb.

“Hello, brother.” Lay lets out in a small voice, sounding hesitant and, if he’s not mistaken, *afraid* . “It’s been so long. I mean, well, it’s been only months here on Earth since the last time you saw me, but it’s been a few hundred years since the last time I saw you. Still so fascinating, how time works, right? And there I thought -”

“ *Azrael* ,” Baekhyun grumbles, “cut to the chase.”

Lay gulps down, looking vividly nervous, and Baekhyun finally senses that something is definitely wrong. “So, you see, Chanyeol.”

Something awakens inside him. “What about him?”

“I mean, well, it’s not like I have to report to you who goes to Heaven or Hell, I mean, why should I? Your only job is to torment humans with their deepest regret in life for as long as you could until they accept their faults and feel the most sincere remorse. You don’t care about who goes up, right?”

“What, about, *Chanyeol* ?”

“Your triplets told me I should tell you this, and well, at first I couldn’t see why I should comply with their request. I mean, for Father’s sake, I’m *the* Angel of Death, why would I listen to a three headed dog -”

“Sir Azrael,” Minseok’s voice is low and daunting, “tell him now, *please* .”

He watches as Lay glances at Minseok for a moment before getting back to him. Shuddering, the angel clears his throat.

“Park Chanyeol is in Hell.”

---

-9.2-

There are things Baekhyun can't explain.

“Park Chanyeol is in Hell.”

Like how he could only blink back at his angel brother after receiving such news.

*Park Chanyeol is in Hell.*

He then glances at the Cerberus trio who are still keeping their heads down.

*Park Chanyeol is in Hell.*

At last, he looks at Lay again, who's wandering his eyes towards anywhere else other than him.

*Park Chanyeol -*

“- is in Hell?” he asks calmly.

Lay glances at him before avoiding his stare again. “Yes.”

“The Park Chanyeol that I know?”

“Yes. *Your* Park Chanyeol.”

“So he’s not in Heaven?”

“No, he’s not.”

“Oh.” Baekhyun nods slowly. “He’s been in Hell since the day he died here?”

Lay glances at Minseok again, seemingly trying to ask the demon what is actually going on here, before turning to him again. “Yes. He’s been in Hell. For... approximately... almost a millennia down there.”

Baekhyun nods, and nods. He lets the thunder inside him brew even stronger than before. There’s a burning sensation running down his back, wrapping around his whole body, and he lets the burn turn him -

“And no one thought to *tell me ??*”

- into the form he was cursed with.

The authentic appearance of the Devil himself.

“Lu, take it easy...”

He peeks into the mirror on one of the walls of the foyer, dreading what he sees; dark red burn scars all over his skin, a pair of burnt wings, and a pair of red blood irises that loathe and judge him more than anyone else does. This form was what he was rewarded with for being the first resident of Hell. They always forgot that before he started torturing sinners, he was the very first one who got tortured.

“Brother, I ask you to -”

“Shut your damned mouth or I’ll drag you down and keep you there forever, *Azrael* .”

Lay instantly takes a few steps backwards. “You can’t possibly do that, Lucifer.”

“Oh, have you forgotten?” he chuckles cynically. “I was the one who rebelled against Father. What makes you think I can’t mess with you?”

“Lucifer, you’re missing the whole point here. What are you even being so angry about? A mere mortal being doomed in Hell?”

“That mortal was *my lover* !”

“So what if he was your lover?” Lay shakes his head. “You do know that they keep themselves in Hell, right? They’re the ones locking themselves in there, you just do the tormenting part. It’s not my fault that Park Chanyeol walked there on his own -”

“You could’ve -” he steps even closer towards his angel brother, “ *told me* !”

As the response to the sudden proximity, Lay spreads his own wings, filling his sight with light brown feathers. “And I’m telling you again, I don’t report to you!”

“Azrael, you idiotic fool, I wasn’t asking you to report to me! I was -” Baekhyun reaches out both of his hands to grab on Lay’s shoulders, “you know - you’ve *seen* how much he means to me! I need to know!”

*‘ I’m still in the hospital. Don’t worry! ’*

“I need to know everything that happens to him! I need to know... I need to know...”

*‘ Yes, I’m with Jongin. Don’t miss me too much, Baekhyun. This is not healthy for you. ’*

“I need to know... or else I’ll lose my mind, Lay, I swear... I can never function without knowing he’s alright...”

*‘ I don’t know yet if I’m okay now. But I’ve got you, and with that fact alone I’m sure I’ll be alright. ’*

“He’s my everything, Lay. He’s my everything.” Baekhyun doesn’t know when exactly did his legs give up, all he knows is that he’s now on both of his knees on the floor with Lay being on his eye level. “I’m so confused here without him. I don’t know who I am anymore without him. Can’t you - can’t you *see* ?”

He’s Lucifer, the Prince of Hell, the mighty Devil, and severely broken. Can’t everyone see?

“I can.” He hears Lay’s soft, cautious voice. “I can, brother. I apologize. I see the matter now.”

Park Chanyeol was the only thing that gave meaning to his damned existence. *Can’t everyone see?*

“He meant so much to you, I’ve been well aware of that. Our dear brother Michael often mentioned about you and that human; he was so amazed that what you had turned out to be more than just infatuation. I just didn’t expect it to be so... deep. Forgive me.” Lay takes a hold of his hands. “Now, Lu, since I trust your judgment the most about who is guilty and who is not, I ask you, is Park Chanyeol *not* supposed to be in Hell?”

Desperately, Baekhyun shakes his head to emphasize his point. “He wasn’t perfect, I acknowledge that, but he was never a sinner. He was one of the most compassionate people I’ve ever stumbled upon, Lay, and you know compassion is the key to everything. He was not a sinner.”

“But he’s down there, brother. He wouldn’t be there if he wasn’t guilty for anything.”

In that moment, his mind stops weeping pathetically and starts working. What could possibly be the reason for Chanyeol being in Hell? What is binding him there? The human has never done anything evil on his own accord, that much Baekhyun can attest for.

The only possibility left is that Chanyeol claimed himself to be guilty of something that was not even his doing. Baekhyun has seen so many humans holding themselves captive with their own assumptions, and that kind of imprisonment is the hardest to walk away willingly from.

If that’s the case, then Baekhyun has an idea.

*‘ - he would always think it was his fault. ’*

He gets up from the floor.

“My Lord?”

“Brother?”



He looks at them one by one while he assures himself that this is the right thing to do. “I know the way to get Chanyeol to Heaven.”

He should try. This is the least he could do for his beloved.

“I’m coming back to Hell.”

---

Hell has been dark since the first time he was thrown into it.

It’s the exact opposite of Heaven; this place is dominated by black instead of white, decorated with asymmetrical rocks instead of lush green leaves of the trees and the colorful petals of the flowers, lit dimly by self illuminating matter that’s scattered around the seemingly endless dark sky instead of the artificial sun and moon that resemble the ones around Earth. This place was originally built as a dumpster for his Father’s less appealing creations, ones that didn’t cut it to the storefront.

He realized he was one of the defects once he woke up alone on the cold floor here, having been burnt by the fire he himself had set up back in Heaven, his friends having turned their back on him. Even after he was given the soulless demons to accompany and serve him, he never found comfort in their presence. At least they let him keep his three headed dog Cerberus who then was given demon forms for each of its heads and became the guard of the gates of Hell.

This place was never a home for him. Coming back here means walking back into his cage.

Still in his devil form, he walks along the main road, chin up high as the demons at both his sides bow down at him and then hiss at another presence behind him. He glances back and finds Lay smiling amusedly at them while the Cerberus trio are still in their nervous state behind the angel.

Surrounding them are doors that lead to chambers of torture, occupied by the sinners. Each of the chambers adjusts to the sinner's biggest guilt that got them into here with the demons transforming into the people that were present in the sinner's memory of the guilt; after all, having your own thoughts used against you is the worst torture there is.

Knowing that Chanyeol is in one of those chambers has been making him feel so sick.

"This way, My Lord." Minseok takes the liberty to lead him to the door of the Chamber his beloved is stuck in. The demons of lower rank are ushered away as he stands in front of the rusty door; it's always unlocked, and yet one has to go through great torment before they could walk out on their own. He takes a deep, deep breath, chest rising along, and exhales in one go. A habit he gained from Earth.

How is he going to face Chanyeol? Is he going to appear in front of him as Lucifer, the Devil? Or is he going to appear as Byun Baekhyun even though there's a huge chance Chanyeol would not recognize him in any possible way?

He decides to go with the latter, turning back into his human form. He hopes his silver hair and red blood irises won't scare Chanyeol. Not that he thinks Chanyeol would even notice what's quite odd on him in the middle of facing his torture.

His gaze trails off the door, wandering until it lands on his angel brother. Lay is looking as calm as always while his observant eyes do the work. "Do you want us to come with you?" Lay asks with a gentle voice.

Pondering for a short moment, he ends up shaking his head slowly. "I have to go in all by myself."

"Are you sure of what you're going to do?"

"No." he croaks out. "But I have to try."

There's a tight smile on Lay's face, and he can feel that it's a sign of something bad. "You know it's against the nature of this place for you to help the guilty reach their epiphany, right? You're supposed to be tormenting them instead of easing their guilt."

"But Chanyeol is not guilty."

"And yet he walked here willingly." He watches as Lay shifts his gaze towards the door. "I doubt Father or anyone up there at home would let this slide."

"I'll stay."

He only realizes the weight of his own words when Lay turns back at him with a curious look on his face.

"He goes to Heaven, I stay in Hell. I won't leave my seat ever again."

"Offering to do what you're supposed to do as an exchange for a favor is not really appealing, Lucifer."

"Then what else do you want me to do?" He balls his fists to keep his hands from trembling. "This is your chance to make me look like a fool. I'd do anything to get Chanyeol to Heaven."

Much to his surprise, a strike of hurt flashes in Lay's eyes, so vivid for him to see. "I see that you think of me so low."

Does he? Has his six millennia old resentment been clouding the way he sees the universe and everyone in it? For so long, he had always felt that no one was on his side, no one was willing to see from his point of view - until Chanyeol happened.

Maybe the thick resentment had blurred his memories of his dear brother Azrael standing between him and Michael, trying to talk their eldest brother down about banishing him to Hell.

“I would never do that to you, Lu.” Lay offers him a gentle smile. “Have you forgotten that you’re my favorite brother?”

Baekhyun looks down over his feet. He doesn’t like the bitterness of the guilt that rises up his throat.

“I was just reminding you that there might be consequences. I’d try to help in any way I could.” Lay then steps back, as if to give him more space. “Do what you must do, *Baekhyun*.”

The tender mention of his mortal name makes him look up at his angel brother, who then nods at him in encouragement. Maybe he was never really alone, after all. Maybe he just refused to see that someone was still there for him, even way long before Chanyeol came around.

With a determined mind, he walks into the chamber.

---

They’re in the middle of the street.

From the sidewalk, he sees Chanyeol standing on the crosswalk with other two people which he figures out to be his parents - or the projection of them, as what the loop provides. Chanyeol is still standing when the parents are walking to the other side of the road. Then a car comes speeding into the scene, and the parents turn around to Chanyeol, and the three of them get thrown meters away.

In real life, Chanyeol immediately lost consciousness the moment his whole body hit the asphalt.

In this Hell loop, Chanyeol witnesses as life seeps out of his parents' faces.

This is the huge guilt that Chanyeol carried while walking himself here. *This* is the guilt that has put Chanyeol here. And the human has been stuck in this loop of seeing his parents die in front of him for almost a thousand years.

Chanyeol would always think he was responsible for their death.

He approaches the tall figure slowly, his mind going haywire thinking about what to say to his beloved. He's not exactly sure how to get Chanyeol out of his own thoughts. Will the human even listen to him?

When he arrives right behind the human, all he could do is freeze. He hasn't seen his beloved for months and after the last time he saw him, Baekhyun has imprinted in his mind that he'd never see him again until the end of time. Now that he's looking at the familiar back, at the familiar hunch of the shoulders, at the familiar height that always got him staring up, he's not sure about what to do. If he wants this to work, he can't let the humane emotions take over him. He has to do this properly. He has to make this work.

"Chanyeol?" he finally croaks out.

As if it's in slow motion, he watches as Chanyeol turns around, bewilderment so painfully apparent on his face. What catches Baekhyun off guard is the way Chanyeol's eyes notice him. Chanyeol can finally see. Chanyeol finally sees him.

"Who are you?"

But of course Chanyeol doesn't recognize him.

“What is happening?” Chanyeol’s voice quavers with fear. “What is this?”

Chanyeol probably hasn’t realized that he’s stuck in a Hell loop. He stays still patiently while the human looks around in helplessness, his legs busy shifting on the artificial asphalt. Soon enough, the projection of his parents appears again in front of him, and the human freezes on his spot once more.

The same car comes in, and that’s when Baekhyun decides to walk up to the human again. “Chanyeol!” he calls with a much louder voice, loud enough to get the human look back at him. With a flick of his fingers, everything stops moving, leaving only the two of them looking at each other.

“What...” the human lets out a shaky whisper, “what is this?”

The words get jumbled in Baekhyun’s head. What could he possibly tell Chanyeol? He doesn’t want to make things worse by making Chanyeol think that he’s in Hell and that he deserves to be. “What do you think this is?”

Chanyeol glances around once more, eyes wary. “A nightmare.”

Just like that, something comes into Baekhyun’s mind like a life changing discovery. “Yes. You’re right, Chanyeol.” He nods as he walks forward, getting closer to the human. “It’s a very, *very* bad nightmare. And you have to get out of it to wake up.”

It seems like the human is in the middle of processing the information and is having a hard time doing it. “How?” Chanyeol looks up at him again. “How do I get out?”

Baekhyun, despite the urgency of doing what he’s supposed to, takes his sweet time to look at Chanyeol’s face properly. The concept of time has been broken for him and it has made a few months feel like eternity, which means it feels like he hasn’t seen Chanyeol for that long. He wishes to erase the fear and mourn on his beloved’s face, to see the face smile again at him, but in order to do that, he has to get a grip of himself and guide the human out of this misery.

Thus, carefully, he says; “By stopping blaming yourself.”

*‘ It was my fault. ’*

A slight frown of confusion appears on Chanyeol’s forehead.

“What happened to you and your parents wasn’t your fault, Park Chanyeol.”

*‘ When something bad happens in the streets it’s always my fault. ’*

Then anger starts to light up in the human’s eyes. “Do you even know what happened?” Chanyeol says with a restrained voice.

He does, of course. Yoora has told him once, and that was enough to imprint the story in his mind. But maybe the sole survivor of the accident himself has a distorted view on it, and that’s where the guilt resides and flourishes. “Can you tell me?”

Chanyeol never talked about it with him. He never asked. He always made sure that Chanyeol didn’t feel the need to explain anything from his past. And maybe that was never the right thing to do; maybe they should’ve talked about it.

“They came back for me.” Chanyeol’s voice gets even more shaky, trembling with the long suppressed emotions inside him. “We were crossing the street, I was looking at my phone, I didn’t even know there was this crazy person driving his car towards us. And my parents, instead of running away, they came back for me. They should’ve ran away to the sidewalk but they -” the human turns around to look at the projection of his parents, “they... they came back for me.”

Now that Chanyeol finally sees him, he can look directly into Chanyeol’s eyes, allowing him to gain access to Chanyeol’s deepest desire.

“They came back for me.” The human repeats, this time in a barely audible whisper. “They shouldn’t have. They shouldn’t have. Why did they? They shouldn’t have.”

It’s to punish himself as severe as he could for his parents’ death.

It now seems so clear to him. The way Chanyeol never even for once mourned over the loss of his vision. The way Chanyeol never complained about the mistreatments he received from unsympathetic people he stumbled upon along the years. The way Chanyeol never took the initiative to call Yoora first despite obviously missing her. The way Chanyeol never warmed up to the possibility of getting an eye donor. The way Chanyeol always seemed to assure him that it was fine to leave him, to drop him and go on with someone ‘better’.

Chanyeol has been punishing himself by depriving himself of happiness, thinking it was what he deserved for letting that tragedy happen to his family.

“It should’ve been me.” He witnesses the human slowly fall on his knees, shoulders rocking along the sobs, looking so small from the back like this. “It should’ve been me...”

It doesn’t work that way. Through patterns and consequences of life, everyone has their own designated time of death. Everything was set in motion since the moment everyone was born, thus cancelling the theory that ‘ *this wouldn’t have happened if only I didn’t do what I did* ’.

But is it a better option to tell Chanyeol that his parents’ death was technically just a part of the happenings in his life?

He takes slow steps until he stops in front of Chanyeol, getting down on one knee to catch the human’s eyes. The dark brown irises are as beautiful as ever, even behind the pooling tears, and he still gets elated by how they can stare back at him now. “But you said it yourself.”

The beautiful eyes shift around, as if they’re scanning him properly. “What?”



“You didn’t know a car was coming.” Baekhyun tries to comfort the human with a small smile. “You wouldn’t have looked at your phone if you knew a car was coming. You wouldn’t have even crossed the street in that moment if you knew. But you didn’t know, did you?”

There’s denial in the pair of beautiful eyes, so vivid that it breaks him inside. “Still doesn’t explain why it wasn’t my fault.”

Baekhyun gathers himself to speak again, trying so hard not to say the endearment he had used for the human in front of him for years. “Chanyeol, when something could’ve been prevented if only you didn’t do what you did, of course... naturally, you’d have the guilt for it. But it doesn’t directly mean that you *are* guilty for it, moreover if you didn’t even know what was going to happen after.”

*‘ I didn’t know Father was waiting for them to make one single mistake so He could banish them to Earth! ’*

*‘ I didn’t know there was even a plan to create mortal beings! ’*

“It’s not your fault if something beyond your control happens.”

*‘ They can’t be just an experiment to You, Father. ’*

*‘ I’m bringing them back here! ’*

“It’s not your fault that you just... can’t fix what you want to fix... even when it’s not your responsibility to...”

Now he sees the irony.

So vivid in the words that he had just cited to Chanyeol, the very same words that he always wanted to hear from someone, anyone.

He's no better at this, at seeing what actually matters, what actually the problem is. There's no point in seeing what actually matters if he can't live up to the realization. But if he still can't get himself out of the Hell loop that he had created for himself six millennia ago, then at least he should get Chanyeol out of his.

"What..." he looks up to the human again when he hears the deep voice again, not realizing he had been casting his gaze down the whole time he did his monologue, "what do I do now?"

Strangely, a wide smile blooms on Baekhyun's lips while he welcomes Chanyeol into his arms; he's now kneeling on both knees on the ground, preparing himself to gather his beloved in. "You let go." He says almost hushedly. "You let go of the thing that you were never meant to carry."

Chanyeol looks at him as if he's been spewing nonsense. The human shakes his head, a deep frown sitting between his eyebrows. The beautiful eyes wander around until they settle on the ground. Of course. Baekhyun didn't expect it to be easy to assure Chanyeol. He himself is still stuck with the same thing for six thousand years; he doesn't have high hopes for the human.

"I don't know... how to do that." Chanyeol finally speaks again. "I can't see how it wasn't my fault. I was there. I could've just looked up while crossing the street. I could've just pulled them back. Or I could've just -" the human shakes his head once more, "I could've just jumped in front of them."

Baekhyun lets his arms fall back at his sides. "Chanyeol," he catches the human's attention, "what is it that you desire the most?"

He lets the human contemplate about the answer for a moment, witnessing silent tears roll down again on the cheeks he used to cup with his hands. Does Chanyeol desire to be free from his guilt the most as Baekhyun himself does?

“To not feel guilty anymore.”

Oh, dear Father, they *are* soulmates.

“Then don’t you think, in the last years of your life, you’ve done enough to redeem yourself?”

“What have I even done?”

“Live through permanent misfortune.” He chuckles lightly when the human goes silent. “You never, even just for once, complained about your situation. You lived your days with all of those struggles thinking you deserved all of them. You never got angry at anything or anyone because you didn’t think you had the right to. Park Chanyeol, you paid the price above the expected amount. You paid more than enough.”

*You paid more than enough.*

He wonders if someone is ever going to tell him that.

“There are things we can’t explain. There are things we can’t fix. But what matters is that we tried to make things better, we tried to repent. And you did all of that. You did all of that, Park Chanyeol. Now *please* ,” he reaches out a hand for the human to take, “let there be light at the end of your tunnel. Let go.”

*I’ll walk with you out of this long tunnel, baby.*

Much to his relief, Chanyeol takes his hand despite the vivid hesitation on his face. “Should I believe you?” the human murmurs. “I don’t even know who you are.”

“Deary me.” He can’t help but giggle in adoration. “Do you need to? This is just a nightmare, after all.”

“Are you...” the human looks at him, eyes cautious and curious at the same time, “are you me?”

Baekhyun holds in the strong urge to just cup Chanyeol’s face with both hands and squish the adorably confused face. He then ponders for a moment about what the human just said. Bizarrely, it sounded right. “Maybe I am you.” he nods unknowingly in the process. “Maybe I’ve always been you.”

Maybe they were meant to meet so they could *see* themselves in each other.

“Then, thank you.” the human’s words stun him out of sudden. “Thank you for helping me get out of this nightmare.”

He’s too caught in the suddenly rushing emotions to reply right away. Baekhyun lets himself get lost in the entirety of Chanyeol’s presence in front of him for a few sweet seconds, letting snippets of their memories play in his head. Chanyeol always thanked him for the most random things as if he knew he couldn’t repay Baekhyun in any way, and Baekhyun had learnt to just accept the gratitude instead of assuring the human he didn’t need to do it.

But now Chanyeol is thanking whom he thinks to be another version of himself, and Baekhyun feels so proud of what he sees. Chanyeol accepted the help. Chanyeol chose the option to be free.

“You did all of that by yourself.” Baekhyun manages to speak through the thrill. “I only told you the things you always thought about deep inside you.”

He gets his reply in the form of a hug.

It was Chanyeol who pulled him in, immediately wrapping his arms around him as soon as they touched. Baekhyun instinctively hugs back and buries his face in the chest that he had missed too much. It feels right. It feels so right, so fitting. The thought of never getting this again almost drove him insane.

“But seriously,” he hears Chanyeol’s voice so close to his ear, “who are you supposed to be? Have I seen you from somewhere?”

His chuckles get muffled against the fabric of Chanyeol’s shirt. “It’s not important, but,” he sighs contentedly, “we’ve met.”

“When? Where?”

“Some time ago, somewhere.”

“How was it when we met?”

He momentarily thinks back to that morning when he picked up a cheap looking wallet that belonged to a blind guy waiting behind him in the line at the cafe. “Quite ordinary, I’d say.”

That ordinary morning changed his entire existence.

“I don’t think so. It must’ve been so special that I couldn’t forget you. I even brought you to my subconscious state.”

Now Baekhyun finds it amusing. Chanyeol never knew how he looked until now; the human welcomed him into his life based solely on his voice and words. If Chanyeol was never blind, if Chanyeol saw him that morning, would have things been different?

Whether ordinary or special, Baekhyun would always be grateful for that one random encounter.

“Can I really leave this nightmare?”

Baekhyun nods slowly, grazing his forehead against the human's shirt. "Of course you can."

"Just like that? Right now?"

"Just like that. But," he slightly tightens his hold on the human, "maybe in a minute or two."

This is the last time he's ever going to hold Chanyeol, and he'd like to bask in the human's scent as much as possible to last him that amount of time.

"You're not me, aren't you."

He snorts, trying not to let the bubbling emotion inside him spill. "No. Not quite."

"The way you're hugging me. The way your voice sounds so familiar. Who are you? What are we?"

What are they? Star-crossed lovers, absolutely.

"Who I am is not that important, but," Baekhyun leans away to take a good look on Chanyeol, "we're something that allows me to at least kiss you on the cheek."

There are hues of pink spreading across Chanyeol's cheeks right away. "Kiss me on the cheek?" the human almost stammered.

"May I?"

When Chanyeol gives him a subtle, confused nod, Baekhyun doesn't waste any more second and straightens his back right away to reach up and land his lips on the apple of Chanyeol's left cheek, the kiss gentle and full. When he retracts himself, he sees Chanyeol gazing at him with an unreadable look in his eyes.

Now, all he needs to do is tell Chanyeol that one word he didn't get to say last time.

"Goodbye." he lets out with a smile. "Goodbye, Park Chanyeol."

And let Chanyeol know the only thing that matters the most.

"You are loved. You are so loved."

Although he didn't really expect to cause more tears to roll down the human's face.

"Thank you." Chanyeol croaks out.

At last, he brings up a hand and gently touches the human's eyelids to close them. Once his hand leaves the face, Chanyeol falls limp forward, straight into his arms once more. Baekhyun welcomes his beloved again and wraps his arms around the figure, holding the human tight. Just in time, he sees Lay coming in with his wings spread out.

"I love you." He whispers into the ear that couldn't hear him anymore.

And instead of having Lay take Chanyeol away from him like before, this time it's him who hands the human to his brother.

"You did well." Lay nods at him.

“Take care of him. I’m asking you a favor. Please look out for him.”

“Brother, it’s *Heaven* we’re talking about.” Lay laughs softly. “But maybe I’ll hang around him often to honor you.”

Baekhyun reaches out a hand to touch Chanyeol’s cheek for a fleeting moment. “Thank you.”

“So, see you in another Hell millennia?”

For the residents of Heaven, it would be just a few days.

Not knowing what to say, he just shrugs at his angel brother. It makes Lay laugh again, and somehow, he doesn’t resent it, or any of what’s happening right now.

This is, strangely, the closure he needed. Him, personally sending his beloved away to Heaven, watching with his own eyes as the human is being carried up by an angel. Him, choosing to reside in Hell for indefinite time by his own will.

He wonders if he’s going to be okay soon. He wonders if he’s finally going to know what ‘okay’ feels like.

A bittersweet smile spreads on his lips.

There are things Baekhyun can’t explain and don’t feel the need to.



Just like how he finds immense beauty in the way the city lights twenty stories beneath his feet look like the replica of the stars in the night sky above him. Seoul is such a busy city, bustling in each hour that passes by, thus there'll always be light around the place no matter how late it is. This view was one of the reasons he chose this penthouse years ago.

Just like how he finds comfort in the presence of his angel brother Suho, who's now sitting next to him on the railing, keeping the much appreciated silence while he basks in the view under them as well. It was quite hilarious how Suho spent a whole minute assuring him that he dropped by just to check on him and there's no bad news lurking around this time. He and Lay have been taking turns in visiting him; somehow they gained points in the eyes of the Cerberus trio and granted themselves easy access to Hell. He never thought Sehun would click with Suho well.

Just like how he misses Chanyeol severely, but it's not the kind of missing that claws on his heart and crushes its already broken pieces. It's the kind of missing that encourages him to recall their happy days and loving nights. The kind of missing that reminds him of Chanyeol's antics, which then would make him snort or chuckle out of sudden. The kind of missing that somehow comforts him because it proves that he still has a heart. The kind of missing that he can bear.

He can't really explain them, but he also doesn't feel the need to. He's fine like this. He can go through time like this.

"He's doing alright up there."

Suho's voice makes him turn to his side to give his attention to him. His angel brother is already staring back. "So was what Lay told me." Baekhyun dangles his feet. "But you do know you don't have to keep reporting to me about him, right?"

"If I don't tell you, you'd ask."

"No I won't."

“Yes you would.”

“No I won’t!”

“You totally would.”

Baekhyun looks up over the ink black sky. “Dear Father, please hold my fists back from punching my own brother.”

“You’re praying to Father now? What a progress.”

“I still can’t tell whether you’re being sarcastic or not.”

Maybe it’s the night breeze that makes the atmosphere around them so light and comfortable. Suho is gently laughing next to him, and he’s smiling to himself. It feels good, it really does, but in moments like this, he wishes he had shared such a good moment with the only one that mattered to him. “I was just teasing you, brother.” He hears Suho again.

He doesn’t comment on that, but he gives his brother a stifled laugh to show that he acknowledged it. It’s nice to sit together without malicious thoughts and being suspicious of each other.

“I’ve been meaning to ask you about something.”

Considering the cautiousness that underlies the tone, Baekhyun could actually feel that it won’t be a simple question. “What is it?”

And judging by the pause that Suho takes, he knows it won’t be a simple conversation.

“Why didn’t you just let Chanyeol stay in Hell?”

The question, as expected, halts him from thinking about anything else.

“If he had stayed in Hell, you could’ve been able to see him anytime you want. You could even keep him after he has served his time. Why didn’t you keep him? Don’t you miss him?”

Slowly, he shifts his head so he can look at Suho again. He doesn’t answer right away, for his mind is currently sorting out the words he’s going to say. One thing that matters is that there was no unfavorable intention in Suho’s question; his angel brother looks curious and, if he can say, worried.

“Let me tell you a thing about Chanyeol.” He then starts when he’s sure of himself. “I believe you’ve learnt from Lay about what put Chanyeol in Hell in the first place.”

“I was well informed. He thought he caused his parents’ death and punished himself for it.”

“Correct, dear brother. When he was still alive, he never, even for once, expressed any complaint about his state. It was as if he thought he deserved to lose sight permanently. He even refused to get a donor for his eyes. He thought of it as the punishment he deserved, and he lived through it.” Baekhyun then chuckles. “Unlike someone who needed six thousand years to willingly accept everything and stop fussing about it.”

Suho snorts lightly, nodding in agreement afterwards.

“But then one morning, when we were... fooling around on the couch, he started saying some random things out of the blue.”

*‘ You’re the color of the sky when the sun rises and sets. ’*

“They were so random, I was really confused for a moment. I asked him what they were, he only kept going with whatever he was doing.”

*‘ You’re the way the hem of a young lady’s white dress flows along the breeze. You’re the sound of the coffee machine running in the morning when there’s no customer yet in the cafe. You’re the violin part of a mellow song played by an orchestra downtown. You’re the... feeling of looking into your child’s eyes for the very first time. ’*

“Then finally, he told me that those were what his patients told him whenever he would ask them what they found beautiful lately, or on their way to meet him. He wanted to know all of them.”

*‘ You’re the smell of your mother’s cooking you catch one morning after years of not being home. You’re the way you can bury your hands into the thick fur of your neighbor’s dog. You’re that one song from your favorite singer which has saved you in your dark times. You’re the sound of the rain pitter pattering at midnight as you’re trying to fall asleep. ’*

“And when I asked him why he told me those, he answered that he wanted to tell me I was beautiful, and he wanted to describe the beauty through things. But his words were limited because he couldn’t describe the beauty he couldn’t *see* .” Baekhyun takes one short moment to gather his thoughts again. “So he recalled his patient’s description of beautiful things and described me with them.”

*‘ Because, Byun Baekhyun, you’re everything beautiful in this world. ’*

“He said I was beautiful.” He smiles widely, ignoring the bitterness in it. “He said I was *beautiful* . Can you believe it?”

“What a charmer.” Is Suho’s first response. “But what does it have to do with...?”

Baekhyun looks down over his hands. “It made me realize one thing.” He closes his eyes, trying to recall the way Chanyeol looked that day. “He asked his patients that question over the years because he, too, wanted to *see* beautiful things. He wanted to see. Even if he acted like he didn’t want it, like he didn’t deserve it, he still wanted to see. And I’ll be damned if

the first thing he saw after so many years of darkness was the Hell loop he created for himself. I'll be damned if what he got to see was centuries, thousands of years of torture instead of beautiful things."

Suho is silent for a while, seemingly trying to comprehend his explanation. "That was why you were so adamant to get him to Heaven as soon as possible."

"Yep." Baekhyun reopens his eyes to the night sky once more. "So he'd see only beautiful things."

"Even at the cost of not being able to see him until the end of time."

He nods slightly. "Even at that cost."

There's another silence between them, and Baekhyun really isn't holding it against Suho for being speechless. He can't explain properly why he did what he did, and he knows his brother isn't looking for an explanation either.

"You see, brother," he speaks again, "for six thousand years, I've always thought I was wronged. The entire universe was against me. I thought I was sent to Hell because no one at home wanted me anymore. I thought everyone despised me just because I asked the right question. And I thought it was my fault that Adam and Eve were banished to Earth. For so many years, I hated everyone and, mostly, myself.

But I found an epiphany when I persuaded Chanyeol to get out of the Hell loop. Sometimes we think we're always the ones setting things in motion. But truthfully, most of the time, we're just one of the variables. We were never really right, and we were never really wrong. We just... find ourselves in a certain situation and have to go through it. So if we were to think about it over and over again, nothing was ever our fault, as much as nothing we did was ever right. What even is it that determines something is for the better or worse?"

He feels a hand resting on his shoulder. "That was a wonderful thought, brother." Suho's voice is gentle and warm. "Everything is much more than just right or wrong. All the things in the universe are connected by causes and effects. It's all a part of existence. It's just that

we're granted with conscience and feelings, and it's never a simple thing for us to let things happen without seeing it through the eyes of our hearts. For humans, that's what determines which place they would spend their eternity in once they're done with their mortality. It all comes from the inside."

Baekhyun pats Suho's hand assuringly, nodding repeatedly at the words. "I still feel bitter about everything, I admit." He heaves. "But at least the memories don't hurt me as much as before now. I'm not angry anymore. I'm now just... sad. That what happened had to happen."

"I have to say, I didn't like the way things happened." Suho leans in to whisper. "Father really could've done a better job in handing you Hell. He really made it seem like it was damnation for you." The angel sits back again. "But then, you did what you did, and things just happened to go that way. You really said to Father's face that you would destroy Earth and his project on humans because, wait, what was it again, '*there's nothing worse than idiots running around not knowing they're mere puppets to a celestial tyrant*'? The way I still remember that clearly."

"I know, sheesh, that's what I've been telling you for the last thirty minutes." Baekhyun rolls his eyes in feigned annoyance. "I'm saying that I know it now, and I'm on my way to deal with everything."

Suho laughs carefreely this time. "Oh, dear." The angel pats his back again as he calms down. "Father would be very pleased about this, Lucifer."

He doesn't really find comfort in that statement, because it's not what he's after. He's more than good with finally being at peace with himself after many millenia. "But if you were to be honest with me," he glances at his brother, "was it that wrong for me to fall in love with Adam?"

As what he unexpectedly expected, Suho gives him a meaningful smile. "As I said earlier, everything is much more than just right or wrong."

"Oh for Father's sake," Baekhyun clicks his tongue in distaste, "you're always either sarcastic or vague. This is why I hate you."

“I love you too, brother. Hey, look, our relationship has improved a lot!” Suho nudges him at the arm with his elbow. “And I’m glad that you’ve been doing well with yourself, Luci.”

Baekhyun narrows his eyes at his angel brother for a moment before snorting in amusement. “Yeah,” he exhales, “surprisingly, I’ve been doing well.”

“Although I see you’re still working at the part of moving on.”

“I *am* moving on. What are you saying?”

“Luci, really?” Suho gestures around. “If you’re really moving on, then why are we here? Why are we sitting on the rooftop of the building where your and Chanyeol’s penthouse is?”

His brother is right. So much for moving on. At least he’s not in the bedroom he used to share with Chanyeol. “I’m just missing some things.”

“Some things, hm.”

“A *lot* of things.” Baekhyun shakes his head. “Relax, brother. You know that nothing of this is real anyway.”

With a wave of his hand, the scenery around them slowly fades away, revealing a dark room with stone walls and a huge window that overlooks Hell. He’s in his own chamber.

Suho pats his back again; it seems like his brother is quite obsessed with the gesture now. Maybe it’s the only gesture the angel is brave to do to show his support. “I have faith that you’ll get better soon enough, brother.”

Baekhyun can’t help but snort. Old habits die hard anyway. “Faith.” He repeats the word. “Still overrated to me.”

“You’ll get there one day.” Suho muses. “And if I may remind you, Father does miracles.”

He frowns at his brother. “And what does that mean?”

Suho shrugs despite looking almost mischievous. “Anyway, I’m visiting Earth after this. You want anything from there?”

He doesn’t. The only thing he likes on Earth is now in Heaven. “Nothing in particular.” Baekhyun then thinks for a moment when he suddenly recalls something. “But if it won’t be a bother, maybe a cup of good Iced Americano from that Kamong cafe?”

“A beverage?”

“Yeah.” Baekhyun smiles sheepishly. “It never tastes the same no matter how many times I conjure it here.”

He wonders if the real version of the beverage would give him much more comfort than its projection did.

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### *Epilogue*

There are things Baekhyun can’t explain.

And after six millenia, he had come to an understanding that some of them never needed any explanation after all.



Maybe some things are meant to be left the way they are, without any elaboration, without the need to be dissected. Some things are beyond even the highest level of comprehension, not because of it being too metaphysical to be understood, but because the one who sought the truth wouldn't be able to deal with what they found. Just like how some flowers aren't meant to be plucked, some curious things aren't meant to be unpacked.

And lately, Baekhyun has made peace with that fact.

It took him almost a century of Earth time to visit the place again despite not actually being forbidden to. Everything is different and bizarre now, and Baekhyun thinks it's for the better that he almost couldn't recognize his surroundings.

But like what the sappy theory of fate and destiny would encourage, there's always one thing that stays the same, and that thing just happened to be the one thing he holds dear.

The community park on the small hill is still there, the grass still as green as ever. Some day a century ago, he sat there on the ground with his beloved next to him, both of them being attacked by puppies that could barely walk properly, laughter ringing from the pair of lips that he cherished so much. It's a relief that the memory is still vivid enough in his mind to be recalled; lately he feared the memories were slipping away from him, hence the visit to Earth after a hundred years.

He lies down on the grass with his hands crossed behind his head to cushion it. The sky always looks the same from here, always so prettily blue in the middle of Summer, always so close yet so far from his reach. He remembers staring up in melancholy while he thought of the days when he was still living in the Silver City, when the only thing he worried about was Adam liking his brothers more than him. Then there was a time when the meaning of the blue sky changed after he met a certain human who ended up being the love of his existence, the time when they would sit on this spot admiring the clouds and being sniffed by pups, talking about random things that always felt so important between them.

Now, all he feels while looking at the blue sky is constant longing. And everyday he *prays* that he would never forget what and who he longs for.

Drowsiness starts to engulf him inch by inch, the heat of the sunlight finally doing its magic on his eyes. He puts up a hand to hover above his face; there's a tinge of red outlining his fingers, the sunlight causing the glow, and he shortly thinks of those moments when another pair of hands was there for him to intertwine with, when a face was there for him to caress.

The Devil never thought it was possible to miss someone this much.

He's lazily wiggling his fingers when suddenly something blocks the sunlight from reaching him. Or rather *someone*. If it was many years ago, the fiery soul in him would've blasted the person off in an instant for pissing him off. This time, however, he only frowns in confusion and retracts his hand.

Who he finds towering above him is a very familiar face.

One that he had missed very, very, *very* much.

Everything else be damned, for he never thought the 'miracle' Suho once mentioned to him would be in the form of Father allowing a reincarnation - which only ever happened to the one and only first human.

The person is staring down back at him, round eyes curious and in wonder. He sees recognition and hesitation swirling in the pair of beautiful orbs. Baekhyun had dreamed a lot about this moment, about what he would do when the odds are in his favor and this moment happens, but he just can't bring himself to do anything now that it's here. He just stays frozen on his spot, letting the person observe him.

There are things Baekhyun can't explain, like the art of coincidence. Who even thought they would meet again like this, without having to try to find each other?

The sunlight is still shining brightly behind the person's head, creating some kind of halo around him, and Baekhyun totally, definitely agrees with the sentiment.

There are things Baekhyun can't explain, like love. The entirety of it, in its most honest state. But just like how some things never needed any explanation after all, love only needs to be cherished instead. And cherishing the love he had for his favorite human had given him some kind of peace that he needed to get through all those decades. Today, it has finally been paid off.

“So I was right.” Chanyeol’s voice is still as warm as ever. “You’re beautiful.”

There are things Baekhyun can't explain; just like the rules of destiny,

And how he loves the twitch at the left corner of Chanyeol’s lips whenever he smiles.

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- *Amen* -

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## End Notes

Sometimes, things happen beyond our control. Sometimes it costs our happiness, sometimes it costs other's happiness and we'd see it as our fault. It's so easy to fall into the pit of self blame and guilt. As I'd like to quote from this fic; "It's not your fault if something beyond your control happens." and "It wasn't your fault that you were born into a world filled with so many expectations bestowed upon you."

Let's learn how to let go together :)

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