

the disposition of the universe (and its means)

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the disposition of the universe (and its means)

by [danmuji](#)

Summary

"Hear me out, Jeno." More desperately than before, he says these words as he leans forward, perching his arms to rest his chin on his palm. "I don't know what's happening too, okay? One moment, my life was amazing. The next morning my best friend and my boyfriend thought of me as their enemy. Tell me who wouldn't freak out over that."

"Renjun's your boyfriend?"

"No."

Donghyuck looks at him flatly; until Jeno's eyes widen, telling him he's figured it out. "Yes."

Notes

Prompt #154:

character A wakes up one day and calls out for B, their boyfriend, only to find out later that they're in an alternate universe where they never met each other, and the finer details about their life are all fucked up. now they have to find a way to make it back to their own reality, where the version of themselves that belongs to the other universe is struggling to understand why they woke up in the same bed as someone they've never met before. and did he just call him his boyfriend?

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make way for the teen movie of the year ig 😊🙏

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

Some days it's harder to wake yourself up, especially if your night consists of unplanned parties and loud yelling. Knowing full well you have classes at eight in the morning, and it's the first day of sophomore year. Yet, nothing has changed, and you want to, as one say, live your life to the fullest. As the morning sun gathers its light inside your room, you'll start regretting the impulsiveness of your action.

The recaps from last night's escapades ends with a groan. Donghyuck rolls over the bed, a hand searching for the warmth next to him. He opens one eye as he feels none of that; he's sure Jen0's knocked out like he is. But they both have classes today that they need to attend to.

Donghyuck hums in question when he realizes his boyfriend isn't beside him. That's weird. He's usually the first one to wake up between the two of them. Jen0's always been a hard one to wake up in the morning, he's had to learn that the hard way. They fought for at least a day, but there was nothing else Donghyuck could do. Pouring a bucket of water on Jen0's beautiful sleeping face is the only way to save them from arriving late on their weekend picnics.

He scans the room, looking for Jen0 anywhere near the bed. Donghyuck wonders why the bed seems different; more different than finding Jen0 not on it. It seems smaller. The sheets are a dull purple instead of the fluffy dirty white they bought in the department store. Donghyuck slides up to a sitting position, now fully awake, observing the situation. The room is smaller. Everything in the room seems to be laid out for an individual, and not for two people living together.

Wait.

This isn't their room. This isn't their apartment.

Where is he?

Donghyuck lets out a gasp, tugging the sheets away from his body to see if his clothes are on. They are, thankfully. He didn't end up on someone else's bed, did he? He won't ever do that to Jen0.

Continuing the internal panic, Donghyuck gets out of bed to search for any indication of the dorm owner's identity. He checks the desk placed right in front of the window, his own laptop is there. Switching his vision to the drawer beside the bed, he sees his and Jaemin's photo from their high school graduation. Donghyuck narrows his eyes.

The photo should have consisted of the five of them. Not just him and Jaemin. He supposed it's just his hungover seeing (or not seeing) things he shouldn't have. Opening his closet, he grabs the usual clothes he wears for the start of the academic year. Just a simple baby blue shirt and his jeans. Now that he knows he owns this room, all there's left to figure out is why

he's here and not in the expensive apartment he and his boyfriend plead their parents to rent after graduation.

His classes won't start until an hour from now. Donghyuck gives himself time to recall what happened last night, yet none of them includes a steady and serious conversation over switching apartments to dorms and living alone. He can't remember if they planned it on a whim, even though they know their schedule says they have classes the next day. Jen0 doesn't like doing stuff recklessly neither does Donghyuck. If this is some shit Yangyang or Jaemin pulled out their asses they will totally get hit. Donghyuck huffs, grabbing his backpack beside his desk, and looks outside the window to observe the flocks of students walking on campus. He needs to find his friends.

As expected the more Donghyuck observes this horrible dream, things get more upsetting. Looking at his schedule while he tries to locate where his boyfriend is, and his friends, his wonderful friends. Where could they be and why is Jaemin the only person on his contacts? Where is their group chat? Tons of questions clogged his mind, but his current worry is his schedule.

Donghyuck doesn't get why he has a lecture at three in the afternoon, when he personally asked the dean to move him to Jen0's twelve noon lecture. "It's much more efficient for me, sir. My class before that is until 11:30. Giving me a three pm lecture would mean I have to wait for hours for a two-hour lecture." He gave a speech inside the dean's office a day after the online registration, and Jen0 was beside him the whole time. He really is a sweetheart, backing him with his own arguments. He remembers when they were both in the debate club in high school. Hell was it, it was a fun experience.

Apart from the lecture, he also noticed that he doesn't have classes on Wednesday. Now, normally students would *rejoice* if they found out they can take a break in the middle of the week. But. Donghyuck was able to snatch the Wednesday morning class as far as he could remember. That way, he can have the same class as Jaemin and Yangyang. It was all kinds of fucked up. How is he supposed to attend Biology without his science major best friends? A Liberal Arts major doesn't deserve this kind of treatment.

Donghyuck, while walking along the campus pavements as if his life depended on, groans at his misery. He could tell the universe is making fun of him. He made sure his second year in university would be better than last year. It was time for him to be productive, happy and organized. He started with his schedule. He made sure to log in early that day so he could get the best schedule pattern. Unfortunately for him, it seems like that was all a dream.

Upon frustratingly observing the quad for his group of friends, he successfully spots two of them together. They were laughing amongst themselves. Donghyuck smiles at the view, maybe they could tell him what happened last night. What type of drink Yangyang made him drink to hallucinate this bad.

He paces quickly, making sure to dodge passersby. Donghyuck catches the both of them, "Jeno!" He pants heavily, eyes disappearing from smiling so wide. He gives them a nod before fixing himself. "Any of you folks know what--"

"Why are you talking to us, Donghyuck?" Donghyuck hears Renjun say, words full of spite. The said boy began looking at him with a scowl.

"What? What are you talking about?" Surely, they can see that Donghyuck is utterly confused. But the two just gave him a similar look— it was more from Jeno; Renjun kept on glaring at him as if they didn't both cry over Moana when it came out.

"Hey, uh," Jeno starts, hesitantly. Donghyuck was quick to divert his attention from Renjun to him. His eyes were uncertain on where to look. This made Donghyuck frown. "Donghyuck, right?"

"...right."

"Uh, you're friends with Jaemin?" Jeno flinched at the end of his question when Renjun hissed at him. "Right, but, can you not bother us? You know because--" He paused to side eye Renjun.

Still, no, Donghyuck has no idea what's happening. It's clear that there is something wrong. It worries him why they talk about Jaemin as if he's someone who should not be named. Maybe something *did* happen last night. Maybe it's related to Jaemin and Renjun, and god forbid it ruined their friendship altogether.

Renjun clears his throat to get back his attention, and Donghyuck looks at him attentively. "If you want to ask anything, ask it to, to your friend." He holds Jeno's wrist as he leads them away from Donghyuck. The other stands there, dumbfounded by the interaction.

It occurred to him that Jeno doesn't seem like he knows they've been together for three years. (Since high school, when Jeno sprained his knee during the last gym class of the year. Donghyuck was pretty worried, so while nursing him at the clinic he absentmindedly told him he likes him. It was embarrassing, yet he finds Jeno smiling at the memory whenever they bring it up.) Renjun, on the other hand, seems to be bagging some type of remorse towards him and Jaemin. That's what he should ask the other. Donghyuck pulls out his phone from his front pocket to look at the time.

He has a class with Jaemin in eight minutes.

Donghyuck strides long and brisk, finding the classroom door open when he turns left. He searches for Jaemin amongst the faces of the students, and he finds him sitting at the back. Jaemin waves at him with a smile, one of things Donghyuck really needed at the moment. Another one is answers. He sits down next to his friend, starts talking to Jaemin while waiting for the professor. Even during the discussion, Donghyuck's mind was filled with confusion, the only thing that can fix it is by asking Jaemin.

"What's up with you and Renjun?" Donghyuck mumbles, copying the words written on the board. Unaware of the way Jaemin is glaring at him. "I saw them-- him and Jeno at the quad. I was going to ask them what happened--"

"Hyuck."

Donghyuck hums, turning his head towards Jaemin's direction. His eyes widen when he sees the other giving him a stinky look. "What?"

"What did I tell you about mentioning his name." It was more of a threat than a question by the way Jaemin is currently boring holes on his face.

"Renjun?"

"There you go again!" Jaemin hisses, stomping his foot on the floor. Fortunately for them, their professor is busy attending to a student's question from the front row to care about their little conversation.

"Well, I'm sorry. Can you tell me what happened between the two of you?"

"Do I have to tell you that over and over? I've been saying it since seventh grade!"

Donghyuck sighs, shrugging his shoulders as he goes back to writing down notes. "Maybe I drank too much last night and forgot about--"

"You went out last night?!" Jaemin couldn't help but flail his hands exasperatedly. "You told me you were sleeping early?"

"When did I--"

"Na. Lee. Maybe you could gossip *after* the class?"

The two of them turn to see the rest of the class gaping at them in wonder. Donghyuck nods back before staring at his notebook. "Sorry, Mr. Jung." Jaemin apologizes for them. The professor goes back to his discussion, Jaemin tells Donghyuck they will "continue this conversation later."

(Jeno stretches his limbs delightfully. Buying a bed good for two people with more space for their bodies to stretch is really what they need. The salesperson did a fantastic job persuading them to buy this particular bed. He smiles to himself, turning to his right to hug his boyfriend.

He hears a surprised groan, it makes Jeno's smile bigger. "Morning." He whispers to the person beside him. The other stirs, possibly to look at him. Then Jeno hears a shriek.

Jeno stands up abruptly to inspect what's happening. He stares at Donghyuck whose eyes are shaking as he stares at Jeno. "Hyuck?" He hears squeak as an answer and immediately leans closer to give his boyfriend a peck. But Donghyuck dodges, standing up from the bed, looking horrified.

"Oh my god." Donghyuck finally speaks. Though his words sounded awful instead of relieved. "I slept with you?"

"...yeah?"

"Last night? I slept with you last night? How? I- I said I was sleeping early. I know I told Jaemin..." Jeno stops listening to Donghyuck's rant, watching the other pacing around the room for answers. He looks at his clothes, sighing when he sees he's wearing all of his clothes. Donghyuck stares back at Jeno, then to the mirror next to the tall closet. He mumbles, in what Jeno hears as, "I'm dead meat to Jaemin when he finds out I slept with the enemy's best friend."

It takes Jeno awhile to remember how to move his arms and legs. Eventually standing up to go to where Donghyuck is currently having a breakdown, then he hears the alarm from his phone ring.

8:50 am

"Fuck. We missed our classes, babe!" Jeno groans, but was interrupted by another shriek.

"Babe?!")

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Donghyuck tries to sleep that night; after all the weird things that happened to him today, he still thinks he's dreaming. Either he has to accept that being Jeno's boyfriend for three years, being best friends with Yangyang, Jaemin, and Renjun are all just mere fantasy, or think of

this particular day as one tiring nightmare. He choose the nightmare. Donghyuck wants the night to end so he could yank Yangyang's head before asking him what he made Donghyuck drink to get a nightmare this bad.

He chuckles to himself, turning the light off. Donghyuck goes to sleep, much to no one's surprise, bitterly that night. He misses Jeno's warmth. After all, whenever he gets a bad dream, Jeno is always there to wash it away. His hugs are comforting, and Donghyuck knows he has his boyfriend beside him to give him peace. Sadly, it isn't the case tonight. But he tries.

That wasn't a bad dream, as much as Donghyuck wants to think it was. Jaemin has told him everything he needs to know about his *feud* with Renjun. Explaining how Donghyuck should never, never ever, fraternize with the enemy. "No matter how much you want to kiss Lee Jeno. I don't care." Jaemin obscenely reminds him at lunch in the cafeteria. Donghyuck has to cough to hide the fact that he almost choke on his spaghetti.

Even in this *parallel universe*— he's calling it that for now— Donghyuck wants to kiss Jeno. It's not all wrong but it isn't just kiss—

"Are you listening?" Jaemin raised a brow at him. In this universe, his friend seems more guarded from what he has observed.

Jaemin flinches at the tiniest bump of shoulders with a stranger. He would scan the place first before laughing loudly when the two of them joke around. He's still the clingy, happy-go-lucky guy with a new hair color every two weeks, but more careful. Donghyuck begins to question if it has something to do with Renjun, and their fight in seventh grade. Maybe, considering it held them back from having a normal conversation for six years and counting.

"You've been kinda distant lately, Hyuckie." Jaemin says when Donghyuck didn't answer him. Donghyuck blinks rapidly, "Uh, sorry, Jaem."

"No worries, you tend to that a lot anyway." He munches his toast and gives his juice a few sips. "But it's been two weeks, and I'm getting worried."

Donghyuck wonders how he'll open his current situation to Jaemin. He knows the guy is open for discussions about reincarnation, soulmates, and everything questionable. But he might think Donghyuck's messing with him if he starts saying things like, "Yeah, I think I woke up in another universe where everything good that's happened in my life is completely fucked." So he chose to divert the topic to Jaemin.

"You know," He shrugs, placing his fork down. "I kept thinking about you and Renjun-- Hey, I know you said not to say his name. But he's not freaking Voldemort, please."

Jaemin rolls his eyes, grabs another bite of his food. Donghyuck takes it as a sign to continue.

"Why don't you just tell him it's a misunderstanding?"

Jaemin groans, the corner of his mouth tainted with ketchup and mayo. "Hyuck, we've talked about this. Like, millions of times! He won't listen to me, okay? I know what he *thought* I did ruin so many opportunities for him. But it wasn't me, and he won't believe that." He sighs, defeatedly. Frankly, Donghyuck could see how desperate Jaemin is. He could see how much he wants Renjun to forgive him, but Jaemin doesn't seem to do anything rather than loathe.

When Donghyuck gets back, he'll tell his friends that Renjun and Jaemin shouldn't have a fight bigger than bickering over what movies to watch, because it looks horrid. Renjun is too stubborn, and Jaemin doesn't even try.

After having lunch with Jaemin, his friend has other classes for today, but Donghyuck has a few hours to spare before his next one. The universe really brought him to the one place all the right things he did were cruelly misplaced. He found out most of his classes have big time gaps from one another; this is exactly what he was afraid of which was the reason he got up early for enrollment. Donghyuck from this universe seems like the person he would be if he didn't have Jen0 to motivate him to get up in the morning. He gives him a little push to exert in the things he wants to pursue.

Then there's Yangyang and Jaemin, no matter how loud and reckless they are, they always do so well with their studies. Who would've thought Yangyang who took a dare and broke the men's restroom in high school, always getting in trouble for his shenanigans, would take Biochem as his major and be amazing at it. "Yeah, I don't know why they make such a fuss over it. It's pretty easy." Yangyang says one time after they finished the first term of freshman year. He talks about his course like it's the weather.

Jaemin, even if he tries to hide it, is pretty damn smart. He had Chemistry with Donghyuck during high school, and as Jaemin says, "Easy peasy cakey easy." Every after an experiment. That's why he chose the same major as Yangyang. It's what led Yangyang to their friend group in the first place.

Then there's Renjun; he's Donghyuck's first ever friend in high school. It goes without saying that he's hurt that Renjun wouldn't even look his way now that he's on *Jaemin's side*. Renjun was the reason he and Jen0 met. Obviously, Donghyuck is eternally grateful for his best friend, for introducing him to the love of his life. He and Jen0 don't usually fight, but Renjun is protective and swore he will "decapitate Jen0 if he ever tries to hurt your feelings, Hyuck!"

Donghyuck laughs to himself as he rereads a verse of the poem his professor told them to write an essay about. He remembers all of his friends and how much they mean to him. Without knowing, a stream of tears pour down his face, a few of those dripping on his notepad. He laughs again, like a maniac, while crying.

"I miss Jeno." He chokes on his words. "I miss my friends." He gets up to drink some water as he continues to cry. Also, he has an hour before his next class.

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Donghyuck wakes up with a new plan— not like there's any plan to begin with, nonetheless, he makes sure this time it'll bring him back to his universe. Wednesdays are free days, which means he has the whole day to start his *mission: get my ass back to my real planet...or whatever is going on. fix it.* Apparently, it's starting to get hopeful as he finishes breakfast. Which is just leftover kimbap from yesterday afternoon, glass of orange juice and a piece of cookies and cream macaron.

Once he's done with that, he goes to check his phone. Looking at the lonely contacts app that only has Jaemin's number. He supposed he shouldn't be upset anymore. Donghyuck has been staying in this fucked up universe for three weeks, he should get over the fact that he has no other friends to talk to except for Jaemin. It is strange, thinking that if the five of them didn't interact weeks before graduation, then they would totally neglect each other once university starts.

He sits up on his chair, fiddling with the phone in his hand. He wonders if Jeno's phone number is the same as the other Jeno, his boyfriend Jeno. So, Donghyuck types in the digits and sends the number a text:

Hey, don't freak out, okay?

Um

So this is Donghyuck? The enemy's bff?

Yikes ok anyway

Jeno, hi. Can we meet later at the cafe? Just the two of us, maybe 3..ish? Thank you thank you

I hope you'll come

Donghyuck cringes as he looks at the string of texts he's sent. He sounded so nervous even when texting. How is he supposed to face Jeno later? Is this even Jeno's number? He chose to pace back and forth in front of his desk, staring intently at the time on his phone. Forty

minutes before the meet up. Donghyuck's phone suddenly vibrates in his hand that he had to take a deep breath to avoid throwing it.

Hey, yeah sure. I'll be there.

I've been meaning to talk to you, too.

Releasing a whine he didn't expect, Donghyuck mentally applauds Jen0 for sounding composed compared to him. Jen0 is like that, Donghyuck's mind flees through all the time Jen0 has helped him with his problems. They weren't any big, but he could recall getting anxious regarding his college entrance exams. Jen0 helps him with his kind words, choosing to stay with Donghyuck until the results are announced. They both got in, though Jen0 celebrated more for Donghyuck than himself.

Sighing once again, Donghyuck pushes the thoughts back to rethink his approach. All he'll do is ask questions about Renjun. It's as easy as Yangyang solving a chemistry formula all by himself.

When he arrives at the café, he spots Jen0 already sitting at the booth farthest to the counter. He spots him quite easily, in Donghyuck defense, he could find Jen0 in any crowd. He's that familiar with the guy. Seeing him this close makes him miss him more. If that makes sense, because everything seems to not make sense at the moment.

"Hey," Donghyuck greets the other with a lazy wave. "Sorry, I'm sorta late."

"No worries, I don't have a class right now." Jen0 smiles that doesn't reach his cheeks. The awkwardness was cue for them to order, and Donghyuck suggested he should pay for it. It's another thing Jen0 wouldn't want him to shoulder all by himself. When they shop together, Jen0 would want them to split the payments. *We'll use it both anyway*, he'll say with a shrug, *might as well split it right? I don't want you to pay by yourself*. Then he'll give Donghyuck a kiss anywhere on his face.

Donghyuck sighs at the memory while waiting for Jen0 to get back. He's only here to talk about their friends, not what they are in another universe. *Man, this will be an experience to tell Jen0 one day*.

The boy gets back with their orders, making Donghyuck's lips turn up a bit. He sees Jen0 ordered the Ice Americano that he loves dearly. "One sugar cube?" He blurts out, even surprising himself.

Jen0 looks at him, giving a confused smile in return. "Yeah, how'd you know?"

"I was guessing, Lee Jen0." Donghyuck shrugs after his lie.

Jeno hides his laugh by clearing his throat, leaning on the back rest to look at Donghyuck directly. "I'm glad you texted me, though how did you get my number? I don't know anyone who knows you."

This made the other male's eyes shake, straightening himself. It's now or never. "Don't freak out."

"Telling me not to freak out before saying words that might freak me out won't make it any better." Jeno says, eyes turning into crescents.

"Okay, well. Listen. I woke up-- How do I say--"

"Hey, it's fine. Take your time."

"Right. As I was saying, my friends and I went to a party the night before classes started. I was tired as shit, but when I woke up I found myself not in my apartment. Long story short, I think I might be in a parallel universe." Donghyuck looks at Jeno expectantly after speaking. The boy looks at him like he's a mathematical problem he cannot decipher even with the help of a scientific calculator.

"Para- Parallel? I'm sorry, are you crazy?!"

"No." Donghyuck sighs deeply, leaning sluggishly on the back of his chair. "I certainly am not, because the friends I went out that night included you and Renjun."

"What?"

"Hear me out, Jeno." More desperately than before, he says these words as he leans forward, perching his arms to rest his chin on his palm. "I don't know what's happening too, okay? One moment, my life was amazing. The next morning my best friend and my boyfriend thought of me as their enemy. Tell me who wouldn't freak out over that."

"Renjun's your boyfriend?"

"No."

Jeno blinks rapidly, trying to understand the situation. Donghyuck looks at him flatly; until Jeno's eyes widen, telling him he's figured it out. "Yes." He answers Jeno's silent thought.

"Really? I don't fully believe you but you seem bothered lately. So, I'll help. Whatever help you'll want from me."

"I just want to know what's up with Jaemin and Renjun. Jaem has told me his side, but I want to know what Renjun feels."

Jeno shrugs, taking a sip of his coffee. "The exam, right? He's told you that." Donghyuck nods. "Has he told you that he said it was a misunderstanding?"

"Yeah, Jaemin said he didn't do it. I believe him, he isn't a shitty person, you know."

"But I saw him inside the classroom before that happened." Jeno recalls, staring blankly at Donghyuck. "When I passed by the room he was talking to someone. I can't remember what they were talking about. All I know is that it's related to the exam."

Donghyuck furrows his eyebrows. "That can't be it. Jaemin has told me countless times, he would never do that to anyone."

Jeno hums, crossing arms on his chest, "I'm not really sure what he was up to. That happened before the two of you became friends. I don't think you'll understand what really happened." He ends with a sigh.

Silence filled the table after what Jeno said. Donghyuck tried to think of questions to ask Jeno further of what's happening with their lives. But he cannot accept how Jaemin probably lied to him about all of this. They stick to finishing their drinks before Jeno tells him they should leave if Donghyuck doesn't have any more questions.

"Hey, Donghyuck." Jeno tells him when they exited the café. "You can talk to me about...all this. I promise I won't tell Renjun." He gives Donghyuck a strained smile.

"Thank you."

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The night that indicates his first month away from his reality, Donghyuck is sitting down in front of his desk, cleaning the stash of papers and notes under and on it. It might be a different universe, but he won't let Donghyuck from this planet fail because he refuses to accept that he's staying here for the time being. The best he could do is help his friends and Donghyuck himself while he's stuck. Donghyuck realizes there are a lot of unimportant papers scattered around the area.

Fishing some of the scratch papers underneath the table, and balling it up to throw on the trash bin. He opens two drawers filled with crumpled and ruined papers with math formulas. Donghyuck chuckles, finding out he isn't much better in math on this planet as he is on his own. He places the papers on the desk to sort them. Keep is on his right, throw on the left.

Embarrassing math formulas: throw, unfinished poems about... Donghyuck smirks to himself as he reads the haphazardly written poem about Jeno. *keep*. He sorts some more from the

second drawer until he stumbles upon a piece of paper that has a *Six Year Friendship Plan* written in red and blue markers at the top. Donghyuck closes the drawer and read through the paper:

note: jaemin didn't mean to hurt renjun's feelings. he was trying to protect him, therefore, i am making this plan to make them friends before we turn twenty two(?)

Donghyuck lets out a confused hum, knowing that his handwriting improved so much after eighteen, but the handwriting on this one feels like it's written by fifteen or sixteen year old him. Donghyuck has no idea about what had been going on, and if only he could contact the real Donghyuck from here maybe he can answer his queries.

- 1. be friends with jaemin! he looks lonely and he doesn't have to be!*
- 2. jeno's next! i hope he's nice. he smiles a lot*
- 3. with the help of jeno (hopefully!) we can talk to renjun! he just moved here i wanna get to know him~*
- 4. they can sort the misunderstandings and be happy!*

ldh 2016 < 3

He swallows thickly once he's read everything opting to place the paper in front of him rather than left or right. Donghyuck had a plan because he wanted everyone to make up. He wants to be friends with all of them and fix whatever fight the two have, because Jaemin looks lonely and he wants to get to know Renjun better. Donghyuck thinks Donghyuck from this world is much like him in other ways. He loves his friends, they mean the world to him. And Donghyuck from here, he would do everything he can to settle what disagreement his peers have.

"I have to do something."

When Donghyuck leaves the room after the professor dismisses them for the day he turns to find Jen0. He's memorized the other's schedule at this point from the time they enrolled. Walking to the building next to his by the glass bridge connecting the two buildings, he began preparing himself for the words he's about to say. Jen0 is not an easy believer of, well, a thing like parallel universes. To see is to believe, as they say. Scientists still couldn't grasp it, yet Donghyuck has managed to get himself into one. Before he even dwells on that fact again, Donghyuck sees Jen0's room, a flock of students exiting at the same time.

"Jen!" He calls for the other. Jen0 spots him just along the steps down the glass bridge.

"What's up?"

"Can we talk? Will you meet Renjun?" Donghyuck looks around them before he raises his eyebrow at Jen0.

Jen0 shakes his head humming as they take a step down the bridge. They stop in front of the railings, afternoon breeze joining them gleefully. "He has classes and a group work later; told me not to wait for him. I'm free right now."

"Great." Donghyuck nods to himself, fingers tapping on the steel. "I found something on Donghyuck's desk last night. It's related to you guys; he had made a plan to bring you all closer."

Jen0 furrows his eyebrows, "What do you think about it?"

"I think it's what caused me to exchange places with him in the first place."

"Expand and explain. Please."

Donghyuck chuckles. "You see," He brings out the piece of paper he found last night from his pocket, unfolds it, and leans closer for Jen0 to see. "it says he wants to make friends with the three of you because he knows Jaemin didn't do it. It's a six-year plan. Only he knows how he found out about it though, I'm willing to help. I want to get us back."

"So, you think this list is the reason. I still don't get it, he could've done it himself."

"It's a six-year plan, Jen0. We're past six years. It's been six years *and* four months. You know, maybe, maybe this is really the reason. And, and if I can't fix this, I'm stuck in here forever. All of the things I see might be the same, but the memories I made, everyone I've encountered won't see me the same way anymore." Donghyuck pants, he hadn't realized he was shaking until Jen0 pats his shoulders. "I'm scared." He looks at him in the eye, eyes stinging but there are no tears.

Jen0 does his best to sound sincere, although everything feels like a fever dream after he's binged a science fiction series. It's confusing, yet seeing Donghyuck this shaken up, different from how snarky he is whenever they pass by each other, "I told you, I'll help you. What do you want us to do? I'm free all day tomorrow."

"I have a class in the morning, but after that I can go." Donghyuck speaks after calming himself down. "We need Yangyang."

"Who?"

"Yangyang, our friend? He's part of our group." Jen0 gives him an incredulous look, Donghyuck paces with his eyes wide, "Oh, god. You don't have Yangyang?!"

"No?"

"I thought he was with you guys! Since he wasn't with us... that's what I thought."

"Well, he isn't. What is his importance in this anyway? We're doing this for Jaemin and Renjun."

Donghyuck stops pacing in his place, holding at Jen0's shoulder. "If he's not here, if the five of us aren't here and complete, then getting Jaemin and Renjun to make up won't get me back. We need him."

Jen0 places his hands on Donghyuck's shoulder, copying him, "Then we find him."

-

The next few days weren't as simple as they thought. As it turns out, Yangyang isn't attending the same university. It makes sense, learning that they only met Yangyang prior to graduation, while the teachers made the students go to a recollection. The five of them were miraculously grouped when the facilitator told them to; the activity was related to their twenties.

"What do you want to do now that you're an adult?" It was the given question on the piece of paper Jen0 was holding.

"I wanna do what I love." Renjun cleanly says to the other four. They nod in return, because who wouldn't wish for that, really.

"But I don't really know what I wanna do." They hear Yangyang say which lead their attention to him. "I have dreams, but nothing seems to be perfect for me."

Jen0 gives a breathy laugh, placing a hand on Yangyang's own. If Donghyuck was the jealous type, he would be, but he knows his boyfriend was just being his caring self. "It doesn't have to be perfect, you know. As long as you're willing to learn it. I'm sure you'll have a great time doing it."

Yangyang smiles, "What will you guys take in college?"

"I love arts, so anything related to that. Maybe, literature? history?" Donghyuck replies first.

Jaemin hums and follows, "Yeah, I'll be taking biochemistry. I don't know, it's freaky how much I'm into it."

Jeno said he wants anything related to business because he wants to help his parents with their blooming enterprise of convenience stores. Renjun, on the other hand, will be taking Psychology. Donghyuck had known that for a while since the other won't stop gushing over it.

"I like biochemistry." Yangyang mumbles, foot tapping mindlessly on the floor. "Maybe, I'll take that, too!"

"Yeah! Biochem unite!" Jaemin cheers, bumping shoulders with Yangyang, followed by their whole team's laughter.

Jeno found his old I.D from high school that has the school's number. They don't plan going there unannounced, therefore, they should contact them first before asking questions on where their classmate, Liu Yangyang, is currently enrolled in. The phone rings, and Donghyuck locks eyes with Jeno awaiting for something to pick it up.

Just then, a woman's voice greets them, asking if they need some help.

"Hello, yes, I am Lee Jeno. I was hoping my friend and I could visit there to ask about a classmate of ours."

"Is there something specific you would like to ask, Mr. Lee?"

"Not really, but I want to ask-" Jeno raises both eyebrows to Donghyuck. The other mumbles, "Mr. Qian."

"I want to ask Mr. Qian about it, will he be there?"

"I will request him to greet you when you get here, Mr. Lee."

"Thank you, we will be there tomorrow. After lunch."

"We will be waiting."

The calls end, Jeno sighing deeply, washing all his anxieties away. "Why Mr. Qian?"

"I know he's Yangyang's homeroom teacher. I've asked Jaemin if we ever had a classmate named like him, but he said no. And obviously, you don't know him. The best bet is that, he had the same homeroom teacher here and in mine." Donghyuck explains, bouncing his feet lightly on the floor. Jeno observes him, feeling a bit sorry now that he's seen Donghyuck so stressed on this matter and his studies.

"We'll meet him. Don't worry."

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The conversation with Mr. Qian was brief, it only took a couple of minutes for him to agree on telling them about his student's whereabouts. He was unsure at first, knowing he couldn't reveal a student's record, but Donghyuck had said he needed to contact Yangyang urgently—without revealing the full truth. It may cause more questions than necessary.

"I hope you find what you're looking for." Mr. Qian says as he leads the two to the school gates.

Jeno smiles and nods at him, "We hope so too, sir. Thank you for the help."

"You kids deserve a youth that is worth remembering. Go find your friend." He shoos them jokingly and closes the door to go back to work.

It's getting a bit chilly now that October is around the corner, and it makes Donghyuck weary that he's been in this place for almost two months. The days are going to be shorter, nights will be longer. His thoughts drift off to his friends, to his Jeno. He wonders if it's also the same as it is in here. He wonders if Jeno let's Donghyuck wear the couple scarf they bought last December. It has a weird print, but it's a couple accessory if they both have it.

Their cab stopped in front of an old looking gate, moss covering a few parts of the brick wall. The two of them got out of the cab after paying the driver. They stare at the inside, the big buildings connecting each other. They're made of stones that seem to have weathered. Jeno whistles at the sight.

"This is some rich boarding school, huh."

Donghyuck scoffs, "Tell me about it."

Mr. Qian was more than nice to have contacted Yangyang's boarding school president to tell them prior to the visit. Jeno jokes that this is looking like a real teen mystery novel. Donghyuck is sure they're not that far from a mystery novel, honestly.

"You're looking for Liu Yangyang, is that correct?" A man, assuming he's of high authority here with his black-rimmed glasses and dull clothing, eyes them.

"Yes, that's correct."

"Wait here." He gestures at a bench outside an office.

As they wait for Yangyang, Jeno starts asking him if they should outright tell Yangyang what's happening or not. "I think we should. I don't want to prolong my stay. I feel like he'll understand it." He nods, more to himself.

The entrance doors open, Yangyang peeks in with his brown hair, and Donghyuck wants to hug him in delight. Jeno beside him, feels a tugging motion in his heart as he looks at Yangyang. He feels familiar, someone Jeno has met, or should've met.

"Hey, are you guys looking for me?" Yangyang smiles at them brightly. "I know you guys from high school!" His smile grows wider.

"Yes, Yangyang, it's so nice to see you!" Donghyuck couldn't stop the gladness in his voice as he stared at his good friend wearing his cozy uniform.

After greeting each other, they immediately tell Yangyang the details; from explaining the reason why Donghyuck is not the real Donghyuck of this place, to telling Yangyang the five of them should've been friends before high school graduation. The two studied Yangyang's expression after hearing the explanation.

"We're all supposed to be friends; if it wasn't for the exam mishap then we would be going to the same university and, like, be best friends. Did I hear right?" Yangyang tells them, his eyes unreadable.

"...Yes." Jeno mumbles.

Yangyang smiles at them, soft and sincere. "I believe you." The two let out a sigh they didn't know they're holding. "You wouldn't have come this far to lie to me."

"We would never lie to you." Donghyuck says. "Are you in?"

"For Jaemin and Renjun. And also, for friendship." Yangyang holds his palm downwards. Jeno puts his palm on top of it, and Donghyuck does the same.

"For friendship." They all whisper together. Shouting might get them kicked out, and Yangyang might get a report.

(The weather seems to be getting colder and colder. It's more difficult now that he has no one to cuddle with in times like this. Donghyuck is here, but it's not his Donghyuck. To top it all off, it looks like they have a mission to solve. It's not extravagant, nor is it also easy.

Donghyuck was wise enough to uncover it after the first month of his unannounced stay. "Is there something going on between Jaemin and Renjun?" He had asked Jeno one time during lunch.

He shrugged, "They've been pining over each other for the longest time." As a matter of fact, they do. It's not a secret to the three of them. Jaemin and Renjun probably knew that already as well. They are just too afraid to admit it.

After taking a mouthful of pasta, Jeno looks back at Donghyuck whose face is staring back with a look of disgust. "What?"

"They like each other?"

"Well, yeah. But it's more than that." He straightens himself from his seat to look directly at the other. "We've been friends since high school. I don't know about the Jaemin and Renjun in your place, but in here they're very stubborn."

Scoffing, Donghyuck replies, "Looks like they aren't much different in my place."

"Really?" Jeno raises an eyebrow, "If that's the case, then you understand that Jaemin and Renjun do not want their friendship to be ruined because they have, well, somewhat strong feelings with each other." Jeno further explains that when he talked to Jaemin about why he's so afraid of confessing to Renjun, he said that the five of them, their friendship, is much more precious than his feelings for Renjun.

"But that's not true." Donghyuck interrupts, shaking his head. "They're in love, and it won't change the bond of your friendship."

"Exactly."

As it turns out, getting them to confess to each other is like asking a rock how to talk. They won't budge. Donghyuck, as he said to Jeno, has been awkward with Renjun. He had explained before that there's an ongoing feud between the two in his universe, and he's on Jaemin's side. Though in this universe, he's more of Renjun's best friend.

Jeno, being Jaemin's closest of the four, decided to talk to him. But as always, Jaemin would say the same thing. Even when Jeno insists that it won't, in fact, change their friendship.

"Come on, Jaem. Hyuck and I are together, do you see our friendship going in the wrong way because of it?"

"No." Jaemin whines, "But you two are different!"

"How so?" Jeno glares, crossing his arms.

"Well, you've been together since high school--"

"Stop giving me that excuse. You know we were already friends before Hyuck and I got together. You were so happy for us— We'll be happy for you and Renjun, too!"

Jaemin groans, jumping on his bed, screaming on his pillow before he looks back at Jeno. "How do you know he likes me back?"

That's Jeno's cue to groan. This feels like a cycle that will never end. He tells Jaemin it's alright, and the little shit gives him reasons not to confess to their friend. Donghyuck updates him on his conversation with Renjun as well. They would meet up with Yangyang to discuss, because the other has a lot of great ideas. Too bad he's always busy.

"You should just lock them in a room." Yangyang says, and maybe, that's one of his lesser good ideas.

"Renjun would break the door."

"Jaemin would break a window."

Yangyang drops his head onto the table, their drinks slightly moving from the impact. Jeno and Donghyuck turn to look at each other, hopelessness seeping in.)

-

Yangyang happened to be available on days that they need him to; it's either that, or he's just skipping class. They could hope it's not the latter, but their friend assures them that his roommate who happens to be his senior in his department is giving him notes.

"What are you taking by the way?" Donghyuck asks when they're waiting for Jeno and Renjun outside the building. They agree to start talking to their friends as soon as possible.

"International studies. I didn't know what to take, but that was the only thing that interested me in the boarding school my dad sent me." He shrugs, not minding it a bit. Donghyuck reminds himself of the day of the recollection.

"Don't you want biochemistry?"

Yangyang looks at him in wonder, "Am I taking that on your planet?" He says with a humorous glint on his voice.

"Yeah, Jaemin said he'll take it, then you said you like it too so maybe it will be nice to take it."

He sees Yangyang smile, "Yeah, I do like biochem, I just didn't know anyone that would take it."

When Donghyuck was about to respond, his eyes trained on the doors, Jeno and Renjun appeared talking amongst themselves. It's a feeling of deja vu when he first approached them, after waking up on the wrong side of the galaxy.

"Hyuck!" Jeno was first to call him, and Donghyuck noticed the crease on Renjun's forehead upon hearing his name. "Hey." Jeno runs up to them with a smile.

Renjun reluctantly follows Jeno, eyes glaring at him, but sees the guy next to him. "Yangyang? What are you doing here?"

"Oh hey, Renjun! Nice to see you again." Yangyang replies ever so jolly.

The other nods slowly, not knowing if he should wait for an answer to his other question. Yangyang didn't though, so he chose to take his attention back to Donghyuck. "Why are you here?"

"Renjun--"

"We think it's time that you should make peace with Jaemin." Jeno interrupts, determined eyes looking directly at his friend. He sees Renjun's face change from confused to angry, and chooses to glare.

"No." The shortest of the four sternly says. Even with his disadvantage in height, his authoritative voice covers. "I won't, I'm not the one who ruined a person's life."

Donghyuck lets out a deep sigh, catching their attention. "Renjun, look, I shouldn't be the one apologizing either, but please talk to Jaemin. You two can sort this out if you talk."

"I said no!" With that, Renjun stomps away, leaving Jeno behind. Yangyang looks at the two beside him, more than miserable.

-

He will never go back.

That's how Donghyuck has been talking to himself lately. He will never go back to his old life. He will never get back to his old self, old habits. He will never get to have the future he's always wanted now that his present is thoroughly and utterly fucked. His bloodshot eyes stare at his laptop monitor, finishing the essay he has to pass for tomorrow. But his mind is still clouded with hopes of going back to his old life. He wonders if the Donghyuck there is treating everyone well, and if he's giving himself good grades.

They've attempted to get Jaemin and Renjun reconcile at least three times this week. One time without Yangyang, as it turned out he's one step away from being dropped in History, so he had to do extra classes. At that thought, Donghyuck feels like laughing rather than sorry. His friends do that a lot back there.

When Jeno was chosen as the representative for the Business Administration Department, instead of cheering for their department representatives, Renjun, Donghyuck, Jaemin and Yangyang, sat with Jeno's blockmates to support him. It spread through their own departments not long after, and being the competitive college students, each of their committee heads decided to give them community service for supporting a different candidate.

They didn't regret it one bit, because Jeno won five out of six awards including the main prize. Donghyuck gave him a bunch of kisses as an extra reward when the pageant ended. He smiles to himself, thinking of those times. All Donghyuck could do is reminisce right now, and probably reminisce forever if they don't succeed in reconciling the two pricks.

To Jeno:

You think we should get them drunk?

From Jeno:

Dumbass

No

To Jeno:

ㄴ_('▽')_ノ

Just a suggestion ya know

Donghyuck chuckles to himself. He knows getting them drunk will create more chaos. He might actually stop thinking he'll be able to go back if that happens.

From Jeno:

How about gather at the café?

Five of us.

Tomorrow Yangyang's free

To Jeno:

WAIT!

We're all free tomorrow afternoon right?!

From Jeno:

Yes!

To Jeno:

Great. I hope this time it works.

Donghyuck locks his phone without waiting for a response, opting to finish this forsaken essay once and for all.

-

The five of them sat there in silence as the café continued to buzz with orders and chattering from nearby patrons. The other customers look so glad, talking to their friends after a morning filled with classes and boring lectures. Some are persistently finishing workloads after classes. As the rest of the place clatter with determination and delight, their table is boiling with irritation and frustration.

Renjun isn't speaking, he's only boring holes into Jaemin's head while the boy has his face downward. He's sitting next to Donghyuck as Jeno sits beside Renjun. Yangyang is situated in a single chair, facing the four of them. He clears his throat, and Renjun makes that a cue to stand up.

"Jun--" Jeno calls for him but the other keeps on walking. Jaemin groans on his seat before he starts following Renjun out of the café.

The three leave as well, worried that if they don't follow them there will be bruised lips and broken ribs (or not, they aren't that violent, honestly).

"Renjun, wait!" They hear Jaemin shout as they round a corner next to a printing shop. The noise caught the attention of a few students in line. "Renjun, let me talk, please." Jaemin desperately calls one more time.

From their place, they noticed Renjun stop. The three of them crossed the street, when the stop light turned red, catching up to the two. "I don't want to hear it." Renjun says, coldly, making them flinch as they walk toward the commotion.

A few passersby glance at them in curiosity, but never long enough to watch. Jeno starts to walk next to Renjun but Donghyuck stops him. "Let's not interrupt."

So, they stand there as Jaemin begins to speak, "It wasn't me!"

"It was you! Would finding you with the crumpled form of my exam have other explanations than you trying to sabotage my grades?!" Renjun's voice wasn't loud, it was normal, but in despair. Donghyuck's chest tightens at the sound of it. Jeno's face downcast as he listens to it all. "What would be the reason behind you ruining my future? You know that exam was important for my overall performance. It wasn't a big deal, if I didn't study hard just to get a perfect mark. I know grades aren't a big deal to you, but because of it I didn't get accepted to my dream school. You know how painful that is?"

Jaemin stares at Renjun, the smaller of the two trembling as he fights the urge to cry. "I told you it wasn't me."

"Keep saying that when I saw you talk about it inside the classroom during break." Jeno interrupts, and Donghyuck is close, so close to punching his beautiful face off.

"It wasn't me," Jaemin points out for the umpteenth time. "I saw the other kids looking at the test papers in Miss Ahn's desk, so I told them not to continue with whatever they're planning."

"What?"

"Yes, Renjun, I was asking him to stop making fun of you. I know you just moved in from another country. Of course those losers would make you an outcast. I didn't want that." He breathes out the last sentence, staring intently at the boy across him. "Renjun, I would never ruin anyone's hard work."

"Why did I find you holding my exam?"

"I saw it in the trash, right before the bell rang. When the class found me, I was trying to save your paper. I didn't--"

"You're lying!"

Jaemin whines, his self-esteem burning down, "No, no I will never. Not when the only thing I want is to be your friend."

Yangyang gasps beside them, he's been silently watching the confrontation, "It's happening." He whispers to Donghyuck. It must be, considering that Renjun's walking closer to Jaemin.

A palm comes in contact with Jaemin's cheeks, their eyes widened in shock. Without much thinking, three of them run closer to the two. "I deserve that." Jaemin smiles sadly when Donghyuck and Yangyang stand on either side of him.

"Why did you do that?" Jeno asks Renjun desperately, eyes going back and forth between Jaemin and Renjun.

There's no anger in Renjun's eyes anymore when Donghyuck looked at him. Instead, there's hurt, there's a piece that still doubts the things Jaemin has said, but he seems to be considering it, too. They stood there, the five of them, in the middle of the street packed with people. Across the university, in this sunny afternoon. There are students and employees passing by the tableau of five people asking their friends to make amends to each other.

"We should take this elsewhere. People are looking." Renjun finally speaks, his voice anything but mad. It's better than how it sounded like a few minutes ago — it's progress.

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("This. This is our last shot. We need them to fucking confess." Jeno grumbles in his seat on their couch. Yangyang and Donghyuck are ordering pizza and chicken at the moment as they wait for Renjun and Jaemin to arrive. They resort to a movie night, like the usual during Saturday night. This time, though, they are set to make their friends' love life as cliché as a god damn romantic comedy.

As Donghyuck said to them a day before, they have to make the two do everything together. The first part of the plan was to convince the two to shop for chips and other snacks, they'll be watching at least four movies and chicken and pizza won't be enough. It's a simple thing to start their plan with.

"It better." Donghyuck huffs right before someone answers his call. Yangyang is thanking the shop already which means he's already done ordering.

A few more minutes went by before Jaemin and Renjun arrive. They were talking and laughing with each other when Jaemin opens the door to Jeno and Donghyuck's apartment. "Here are your snacks, dimwits." Renjun calls on them, placing three paper bags on the dinner table.

"Thanks mom and dad." Yangyang snickers, running towards the table to grab a couple of chips to put into a bowl, without noticing Jaemin's ears turning pink. Renjun isn't any better, he stood there frozen like a statue before he whipped his head back and flick Yangyang's head.

Jeno sees Donghyuck making a puking face and he laughs. "They're so obvious, please just confess." He mumbles beside Jeno.

When the first movie starts, the second act continues, and in all of Yangyang's stupid ideas they try it this time. Nothing much just, Donghyuck and Jeno flirting with each other. They don't kiss, though, as Jeno promised he cannot kiss him if he's not the real Donghyuck. They cuddle, and do all sorts of couple things beside the two just to make them uncomfortable.

Normally, they're just as touchy, but this time, Yangyang is squeezing Jaemin and Renjun next to him, so there weren't any complaints. They were too busy blushing at their proximity. Renjun turns to glare at Yangyang in return.

The next one was unplanned, but Renjun stood up to get more chips, automatically, Donghyuck commanded Jaemin to get him a drink. "Get it yourself." Jaemin tells him, but Donghyuck whines while he cuddles Jeno.

Rolling his eyes, Jaemin stands up to get himself and Donghyuck a drink. The three watch as Jaemin and Renjun stand with their backs turned to them. Nothing happened. Renjun was dumping the chips on the empty bowl, Jaemin waited for him, never mind the bottle of sprite getting warmer in his hands.

The first movie ends, naturally, they start with the next one. But Renjun sighs, getting the remote control from Jeno. "I know what you guys are doing." He admits to them, his eyes trained on the blue screen.

"Hm? I'm not doing anything?" Jaemin says next to him. The smaller shakes his head, "Not you. Them." He nods his head over to the three; Yangyang has his hand stuffed inside a pringles can, Jeno and Donghyuck are blinking at them with their limbs attached.

"What exactly are they doing besides being themselves?" Jaemin asks again, oblivious with the situation.

Renjun has had enough and stood up, crossing the coffee table to turn off the television. Yangyang protested but was silenced when Renjun glared at him. "You know what, if you're so desperate, then I'll say it. But don't blame me if this ruins our friendship in the future!"

Jaemin's breath hitched, "Uh-oh. I think I know what this is." He stares, wide eyed at Renjun from where he's seated. The hand with chips hanging awkwardly in front of his face.

"So I'm in love Jaemin. What else is there? Do you want me to say how much he brightens up my day? Yeah?" He paused, staring at Donghyuck. "Do you want me to say how much I missed him when I visited my parents last summer. Even video calls aren't enough?" He's looking at Jeno now. "Or do you want me to admit that I get jealous of you two being publicly in love, and the way you get to say I love you every second?" His eyes bore holes on Yangyang's face. The poor boy mumbled, "I don't like anyone though." But was ignored when Jaemin stood up.

"You're in love with me?"

Jeno groans, "Yes he is, oh my god I have been telling you--"

"Jeno, shut up!" Donghyuck stuffs Jeno's mouth with popcorn.

"Yeah, but, like, I don't wanna ruin our friendship." Renjun tells him, shyly scratching his neck.

"I don't, too, but." Jaemin walks around the table to stand next to Renjun. Suddenly, this is far better than the next movie they were supposed to watch. Too cliché, too cheesy for Jen0, but it's a true story. Nothing's better than the real life romance of his friends finally getting together. He hopes. "We won't ruin it. I promise. I just wanna be with you, like be your boyfriend. I'm sick of Jen0 and Donghyuck being the only couple here."

Renjun laughs as he nods, they don't know when they have gotten so close but, "Me too." Jaemin smiles, pulling Renjun closer for a quick kiss.

"Boo!" Yangyang throws a lonely pringle once the two pull back.)

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Elsewhere happens to be Donghyuck's stuffy dorm room. It's currently in a state of *out-of-control* with bundles of crumpled paper loitering his floor. He's been busy writing and writing for essays and reports every night. Renjun sits on Donghyuck's desk chair quietly while Jaemin sits on the bed. The three are awkwardly leaning on the wall across the bed. Again, it's a small room. Donghyuck always wondered how other students live in a dorm room.

"Can you tell me why they did it? Those kids who ruined my exam. Why my exam of all things?" Renjun starts, eyes downcast.

"As I told you, they want to make fun of you. Because you're a new kid. But, I just think they found your exam paper right when they were looking at the teacher's desk." Jaemin shrugs, he's staring directly at Renjun. "I'm sorry I couldn't stop them. I told them to, but when I left, they still did it anyway."

"You didn't have to."

"Hm?"

"You weren't obligated to stop them." Renjun expands. "You didn't know me."

"I won't just let them do whatever they want, Renjun."

Renjun stays silent, nodding weakly. Donghyuck stares at the scene of Jaemin's distressed expression— like he's been asking for forgiveness so many times, and he had. Of Renjun's

trip down a depressive memory lane, where his dreams were crushed because of one paper. Kids who have no idea how far their jokes can go.

"High school is shit, man." Yangyang scoffs, though, it's more like a deep breath. "I can't believe they ruined you like this."

Renjun turns to laugh sadly. "I know right? Assholes." He looks at Jaemin whose eyes never left him. "I'm sorry for accusing you of something you didn't do."

"It's okay, you were hurt. I get it." For the first time since Donghyuck had been sent here to fix things between the two. For the first time in years that Jeno had been friends with Renjun. For Yangyang who had known the story of the two from his classmates back in high school. Jaemin and Renjun smiled at each other. "We can start over."

-

Starting over isn't as hard as they thought. Right after the two apologized to each other—Jaemin for hurting Renjun's feelings, Renjun for assuming wrongly— they grabbed dinner together. They didn't notice the sun had already set when they're busy sorting problems inside Donghyuck's room.

After dinner, Renjun and Jaemin, seemingly like good friends unlike their whole aura that afternoon, stayed together. They asked if they could go to the café, just the two of them. That left Jeno and Donghyuck into sending Yangyang to the bus stop on their own. "See you tomorrow!" Yangyang waves down at them once he's seated inside.

"No, you have classes tomorrow! Don't skip!" Jeno warns him, teasingly. Yangyang pouts back, laughing when the two look at him in disgust.

When Yangyang's bus took off, they walked towards the university dorms' direction. They stay silent as they walk, only when they stopped in front of the lobby that Jeno speaks, "So, you must be going back, huh?"

Donghyuck smirks, "You won't miss me, will you?" He pats Jeno's arm jokingly. "Don't worry, Jen. I'll be back here tomorrow, like a new person."

Jeno laughs at the thought, "Yeah, I know you will. I just want to thank you for letting them make peace with each other."

"Not just me. You, me, Yangyang. The three of us, we helped our friends solve their problems. That's what friends do." Donghyuck shrugs, opening the glass door. "See you around, Jeno-yah!" Jeno waves back as Donghyuck enters the elevator.

-

It seems like he slept well that night, the smile on his face as he goes into a deep slumber indicates as much. Donghyuck felt that the bed had gotten comfier than the last two months of his stay. When he awakens, he squints his eyes to gauge his surroundings. The closet, it's taller than what he's grown, there's a long mirror beside it. The flooring is in a lighter shade and—

The more Donghyuck examines the place, the more he becomes excited. Testing the waters, he pats the right side of the bed. It's wider, and—

"Hyuck--" Someone mumbles his name beside him. Never have Donghyuck turned so fast, so early in the morning. "Hey, are you okay?"

"Jeno?" Donghyuck pushes himself up to lean on the headboard. Looking down at Jeno, scrutinizing him. "Is it you? Like the love of my life? The air I breathe? The apple of my eye?"

The other guy chuckles, patting Donghyuck's thigh under the blanket. "Is it you, my Duckie, my only sunshine?"

Without any warning, Donghyuck jumps on top of Jeno, tackling his boyfriend with cuddles. He laughs, they both laugh. Whether it's about the cheesy little words Donghyuck said, or the whole catastrophe of switching lives with another person from another universe. They don't care, for now.

"I missed you, baby." Jeno says, words muffled by Donghyuck's clothes. He thinks he's worn other Donghyuck's clothes, and left his over his dorm. "Other Donghyuck freaked out when I called him babe. Said I was the enemy's best friend." Jeno continues to laugh at the memory.

"Did he elaborate on that?"

Jeno shakes his head, hair going messier as he moves. "Just how I'm Renjun's friend, and he's Jaemin's. I don't get it. He'd said it so vaguely, I can't remember much. Why?"

Donghyuck leans back, staring at Jeno with a pout, "It was a nightmare, Jen. I swear!" He kicks the blankets covering Jeno while he whines. "I'll tell you later. Oh my god, I think I'm having whiplash because of it."

Jeno raised a brow at him, "Or you're just hungry. Come on. Let's call them for breakfast!"

"Oh, I've missed them! Oh my god!" Donghyuck squeals, like it's his first time to be free after years of torment. It's like those two months, he wasn't allowed to be happy. And now, he

can finally be himself again. He can finally be with Jeno again. "What was other me's mission anyway?"

"Renjun and Jaemin to admit their feelings." Jeno hears Donghyuck groan, he's looking at himself in the long mirror. The older walked towards him, encircling his arms on his boyfriend's waist. "Pretty hard to be honest, but Yangyang's stupid cliché plan actually worked."

Donghyuck smiles at them through the mirror, knowing somewhere in another universe, the two of them are hopefully living without any more worry. No more stubborn friends who can't get their past behind them, only friends who'll have your back. A lover who loves them back.

-

(Jeno wakes up that morning, knowing that Donghyuck is back to the real one from this planet. A crazy two months it has been, even the first time Donghyuck had contacted him, he didn't know it would end up like this. The other guy is a good company, though knowing that he will now be faced with the, well, original one. Jeno's nerves are all over the place.

This Donghyuck wouldn't be different from the other, right? Same face, same feature, same everything. Maybe the Donghyuck he's talked to was an evolved version of Donghyuck?

"Dammit, Jeno, he's not a pokémon." He curses to himself as he makes his turn to the said guy's dorm building. He wants to ask Donghyuck for breakfast, that's assuming he hasn't had his yet.

When he arrives in front of the younger's dorm, no one on the floor is pacing outside. It's already 7am, so it's either they went out early or they don't have classes. Donghyuck is free this morning. He's meddling, he noticed.

Jeno stops fidgeting to knock on the door. He hears footsteps, slow and tired ones, until the door hinges unlocked. Donghyuck stands there, wearing a green sweater that he's never seen before. As far as he could remember, Donghyuck was wearing a cream colored sweatshirt last night.

"Hey,"

"Jeno?" Donghyuck says, groggily. Eyes squinting from the brightness of the hallway.

"Are you Donghyuck?" Jeno gives his stupid question a try. He hears a scoff.

"Who else would I be, stupid." He states, rather than ask. Then he looks at Jeno up and down, suddenly the boy seems shy. Wearing sweatpants and long sleeves are acceptable breakfast attire, right? It's not anything formal. "What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Well, since you're back to your real world--"

"You knew about the swap?"

Jeno looks at him, surprised. "Yeah, uh, the other Donghyuck kinda asked me for help." Donghyuck's eyes widened a bit. "Renjun and Jaemin are okay now. And we have a new friend, Yangyang."

Donghyuck's smile grew wider and wider as Jeno spoke, before he knew it, the shorter is giving him a hug. "Thank you for helping them. Thank you."

"Uh, no problem. You kinda did all of the work, though..." He pats him in the back. "So, uh, I wanna ask if you wanna go for breakfast?"

Donghyuck leans back to study his face, Jeno feels his face heating up for...reasons— like Donghyuck's pretty face. "I like that! I'm kinda hungry too."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah!")

End Notes

give kudos if you enjoyed it! i'll be waiting for your comments and reactions below haha



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