

You were dead.

You couldn't feel anything. You couldn't see anything; everything was dark. And you certainly weren't breathing.

But how could you be so painfully aware of your surroundings, if you were dead?

It was as though a light had been switched on. Suddenly you could feel soft fabric on the lower half of your body. Your arms felt heavy, as though they were made of lead. You were hyper aware of the pain spreading throughout your body. And your throat... Dear god, your throat.

Your eyes flew open in panic, but you immediately regretted it. A bright light was being directed at your face, and behind it, was the outline of a man.

TAEMIN?

Did he realize he had failed to slit your throat properly and came to finish the job? No, no. You would not fall victim to his games a second time.

Your entire body protested as you abruptly sat up and began to thrash around. "Get the fuck away from me!" You shrieked, your throat on fire.

"You're safe! You're safe!" The man insisted, and he sounded so earnest that you ceased your unruly movements.

As soon as you got a good look at him, it was evident that he was not the turtleneck loving Lee Taemin.

The man in front of you was slightly taller than Taemin. While Taemin's eyes were always reserved and calculating, you could read this man like an open book. His brow was furrowed in concern, and his full lips were slightly apart, like he was trying to think of something to say to comfort you, but could not find the words.

He held up his hands, like he was surrendering. "I'm not gonna hurt you."

Your heart palpitations slowly ceased, as you took in the rest of his appearance.

His lean frame was cloaked in a white doctor's smock and black jeans. His ash brown hair was parted in the middle, the longer pieces framing the edges of his forehead quite nicely. His kind, brown eyes were brightly reflecting the light that had been shining on your face and when he smiled, the stark whiteness of his teeth contrasted nicely with his honey colored skin.

A breath caught in your recently slit throat. "W-who are you?"

He put his hands down, sensing that your instinct to fight him had vanished. "I'm Jongin, the man that saved your life. And you are?"

Saved your life? You looked at him in awe. You told him your name and he smiled.

"It's good to put a name to the throat--er, I mean face."

"Why am I here?" How had he found you? Was Taemin careless enough to leave you lying on the sidewalk?

"I found you bleeding to death in an alley." Jongin explained gently, as though he didn't want to scare you again.

You couldn't find the words to express the sorrow you felt. Taemin had been playing you this entire time, and all for what? For a fucking turtleneck? You couldn't believe he tried to kill you for a mistake that was so minuscule.

Not only did he try to kill you, but he made sure to get you to fall in love with him first. What kind of sick, cold hearted bastard was he?

"Oh." You uttered, and gingerly put a hand to your throat. You found that it was covered in a thick bandaging.

"Whoever tried killing you was very messy." Jongin chuckled awkwardly, scratching his neck.

Taemin's crime of passion was quite messy. He really did love that turtleneck.

You tried not to let your nasty expression deepen because Jongin did save your life, after all. Instead you began to look around the room, and noticed the things you had failed to see the first time.

Judging from the other two cots next to the one you were lying on and the medical equipment in the room, this was some sort of underground hospital.

"Where am I?" You asked Jongin, who was watching you with a concerned look on his face.

"My hospital." He answered promptly, looking proud. Then his expression fell. "Technically, my basement."

At your stricken expression, he immediately began to clarify, "I have a doctor's license! It's just that I had a tiny falling out with the previous hospital I used to work at, and apparently you can't leave your dogs in the residents' sleeping area, which is totally unfair by the way, because my

dogs get lonely and cry when they can't see me, so I /have/ to bring them to work--"

"It's fine!" He didn't have to explain himself. As far as you were concerned, he was the best doctor in the world. You weren't sure that any other doctor could have saved you from the brink of death the way he had.

Jongin smiled sheepishly. "Sorry."

It was weird how that small word had made you think of Taemin, seeing as he never apologized for anything.

"Thank you for saving me." You said, trying to squeeze as much sincerity as you could into those five words. "I should go."

"Do you have anywhere to go?"

You didn't, you realized. You lived with Taemin, and your parents lived more than five hours away. You couldn't exactly go knocking on Taemin's (technically, it was yours too) door and ask if you could stay until you figured things out. And what would you say to your parents? You couldn't exactly tell them that Taemin attempted to murder you because you had ruined his favorite turtleneck sweater nearly a year ago.

"I don't." You said, your tone deflated.

"You can stay here as long as you like! My babies--my dogs, I mean-- will love you! And we can watch movies, have takeout, have dance offs...." He continued to rattle off different activities, looking more excited by the second, and you could help but be affected by his infectious enthusiasm.

But could you trust him?

/I like it when girls trust me./

Taemin's words rushed back to you, and you couldn't shake them off. How would you know that Jongin wouldn't try to kill you too?

But then why would he go through the trouble of saving you? You argued with yourself back and forth, and came to the conclusion that you'd only stay until you figured out your situation.

That night, you did almost all of the things on Jongin's to do list. His dogs did take an immediate liking to you, he put a movie on, and ordered takeout (only soup for you) and tried to initiate a dance off, but then decided you weren't medically cleared.

You spent days like that, getting to know his quirks and mannerisms. He was a really kind and caring person. He was always ready to help you with even the tiniest of things and absolutely refused to let you clean whenever you insisted on doing it.

You came to realize that you trusted him, despite promising yourself that you would never trust a man again.

You had even told him about the Taemin thing, but you made sure to omit your ex-boyfriend's name and the fact that he tried to commit first degree murder because of a fucking turtleneck. Just thinking about it filled you with distress.

"That motherfucker." Jongin said incredulously. "Don't worry," he said your name, "I'll protect you."

You felt yourself falling for his gentle, playful nature. And if you were reading his body language correctly, he was falling for you too.

"Let's go somewhere." Jongin said a few weeks later. A hospital had officially hired him, and he wanted to celebrate.

"Okay!" You agreed. And after assuring you that the place was nowhere near fancy, you just slipped on one of Jongin's t-shirts and a pair of sweatpants he had gotten you.

"I want it to be a surprise!" Jongin said, and pulled out a blindfold. He pouted at your hesitant expression, and that was the only reason you complied and put it on.

Jongin guided you to the car, and the two of you were off. You began to wonder if he was finally gonna ask you to be his girlfriend. It was the type of cheesy thing he'd do.

After a few minutes, the car stopped and Jongin got off the car and opened your door for you. He walked next to you, making sure you didn't trip or walk off in the wrong direction.

"Where are we going? Can I take off the blindfold?" You finally asked, not being able to handle the suspense any longer.

"Not yet!" Jongin singsonged. "I think we have the whole place to ourselves."

Before you could ask why that was important, Jongin said, "Wait. There's someone there."

"Huh? Who?"

"It's a man... He's walking towards us. And he's wearing a turtleneck, in this weather?" Jongin snorted.

You froze. "Turtleneck?"

"Oh, sorry. I forgot you hated those."

"Jongin, I never told you I hated turtleneck sweaters." You said slowly, and you ripped off the blindfold.

Jongin's once caring and loving look took on a sinisterly and malevolent one. "You wanted to know why we're here, right? I'm returning you to Taemin."

"Jongin, please no--"

"You had said we'd see each other in hell," Taemin came out of nowhere, and he smiled at you prettily. "But I just couldn't wait that long."

Jongin slid his fingers around your throat and Taemin reached out to put a hand over your mouth before you could let out a scream.