

Let There Be No Light

By Wong Xiu Wei

HEALING DIARY

Case handled by: Froyd

Patient File: Ria

Occupation: GA

Status: Stable Glow, vital signs clear

7th Year of the Celestial Creature

~~This is stupid~~

H:

Today, I fought demons in someone's head.

Throughout my long stint as a resident Guardian Angel (GA), my favorite charge was always one of my first ones. He was a cute little boy with dimples, and eyes that looked at you with unbridled hope. He didn't get a good start in life, that one. One of the sad cases with unknown parents, and he had to go through multiple orphanages due to complications with his 'efnisity'.

Humans. I couldn't understand them sometimes. Cut two and they both bleed red, but if you had a different skin color it may be cause enough for you to end up dead.

But the boy. He was different. He saw color in the black-and-white world he lived in, and he never said a bad word about anything. He would share his measly meal of dried bread with starving pigeons and murmur sweet little nothings like "star" and "squirrel" when he slept. When he cried because the others were bullying him, I would (illegally) try to make him smile by throwing some Conjure tricks. Nothing big, just some sparkles or a rabbit hustle. He would smile then, and seeing him smile with big teary eyes was like seeing the sun break through clouds.

I wanted to shield him from all the nasty things of the mortal world, of the words people would say to outsiders like him, of the evil things bad Humans were capable of. I stayed with him until I saw him adopted into a somewhat decent home at 9 years old, and until I was certain I did what I could to make growing up easier for him.

His name was Javan, and I never forgot him. When things got tough, I'd remind myself that there's this kid who was almost more angelic than I was.

And my job was to protect the good Humans.

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"Curious, very curious," Froyd mused, looking at the statistical report on the Commander's desk.

"Over these last few months, Code Red cases have *tripled*, Froyd. *Tripled*," the Commander said in his big booming voice (they didn't call him the Commander for no reason) while slamming the table. "Dispatch team is working overtime and going crazy trying to tame all the demons, and I need answers."

Angels did not age physically, but stress seemed to have taken a toll on the Commander's appearance. There was a weariness in his eyes, and his Glow wasn't as bright as usual. He operated the team with tough discipline, but

he was still one of the best hearts around. Plus, he was the one who persuaded the Council to promote me (the first and only female!) into GA a long time ago.

"Commander," I said gently. "Froyd and I will look into this the best we can. You can have your wings, rest assured."

"I know, Ria," the Commander said. "You're the highest performing GA of the year. With your experience and Froyd's expertise in all the technical stuff, I hope you two can work something out for me."

"Roger that, Commander," Froyd said, the picture of confidence as usual. "We'll get back to you when we have something substantial."

I chewed the inside of my cheek, thinking about what we were up against.

"Seven to the heavens," the Commander said, raising his thumb and index finger to the air. A gesture of luck. "You may be dismissed."

"Seven to the heavens," we chorused, fingers up, and exited his office.

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"The funny thing is, Humans have it way better now than they did the last few centuries," Froyd said.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

We were walking along the corridor to the Memento room, where we decided to start our little investigation. The Memento room was where the Guardian Angels kept something belonging to their charges as a token of remembrance. They were also a link to your charge, so you could hold on to a piece of their energy in order to transport immediately to where they were should an emergency arise. Guardian Angels often had to look after multiple charges at once.

Especially now.

The Human population was bigger than ever with the longest reported average life expectancy in history. Truth be told, I was a little worn out with work. But then again, everyone was. Angels didn't complain. We all know that the strongest wings fly in the harshest winds.

The doors to the Memento room opened smoothly and we walked into a vast chamber filled with endless floors with endless lockers, each holding something unique. There was a circular light on top of each filled locker

reflecting the status of your charge.

Usually, they were unlit, which was a good thing.

But today, one could easily see several red lights flashing. Froyd and I had to dodge several times to give way to frantic GAs flying out to notify the Dispatch team. The Dispatch team were specialized forces trained to extinguish demons. GAs were more like the front line of protection, the first contact with the human subconscious. We did have some minimal training on handling demons, but Code Red usually indicated severe cases which made it compulsory for GAs to be accompanied by a full Dispatch team. As of now, there was already a backlog of Dispatch cases waiting to be handled. It was quite a disaster, really.

The lockers were arranged in accordance with the initials of the GA, so Froyd and I navigated ourselves through the complex maze to where my chamber was, like we had done dozens of times.

R for Ria.

I silently sighed with relief when I saw that all my lockers were unlit. I had just finished handling two mild Code Red cases yesterday, and I didn't have the heart for another one. I immediately felt a little guilty for thinking this way. Since young, I had always wanted to become a Guardian Angel. I rebelled against my teachers and parents, who said that my petite frame and singing voice made me suitable to become a Cupid or Choir singer. Honestly, the long white robes and golden little harps made me cringe. I didn't want a mild existence, I wanted to have adventure, thrills, and a career that let me be of direct service to world peace. I trained very hard, took many criticisms and doubt in stride, and emerged top of my cohort.

It's just recently it feels like the world has taken a darker turn and I feel increasingly helpless in the chaos. *What* was the root of all these disturbances, and how can I stop it?

My mind drifted off to Javan. I wonder how he was doing now...

"Ria," Froyd snapped his fingers in front of me, bringing me out of my reverie.

"Pay attention, angel," Froyd said. He scrutinized me up and down, and his expression softened a little as he patted my shoulder.

"I know how you feel right now," Froyd said in a gentler tone. "But this

whole thing really isn't your fault."

Pointing to the giant 'R' initial hanging on the doorway, Froyd snapped his fingers and several glowing letters appeared next to it in mid-air.

IT REALLY ISN'T YOUR FAULT!

I cracked a smile. Froyd never failed to cheer me up.

I snapped my fingers too, erasing the letters and replacing them with my own.

REAL PAIN IN THE BUTT, YOU

Froyd smiled and rolled his eyes.

"We will get to the bottom of this, Ria," Froyd said, putting his hands together. "Let there be Light."

"Let there be Light" was something angels said when comfort was needed, but Froyd chose a terrible moment to say it.

For a second after the words came out from Froyd's lips, there *was* light. A big ugly light in fact, flashing in the corner of the room.

It was black.

I stared at the light above the locker in horror. Red was *bad*, but black?

Apprehension dawned on Froyd's face. He looked just as horrified as I was.

I felt lead in my steps as I walked towards the far end of the room. It was at the very bottom row of the lockers.

It was the boy.

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"Ria!" Froyd yelled, chasing after me. "Don't do it!"

Froyd may be good with his brains, but he was no match for me in terms of agility. I was a good distance in front of him, speeding with all my might.

"You know I don't have a choice," I shouted back, tightly clutching the memento in my hands. "I *need* to!"

I arrived at the Drop, a take-off zone which enabled GAs to cross the

border from where we were to the fifth dimension, where basically the spirit (or consciousness, soul, chakra, whatever you want to call it) operated. In other words, we deal with our charges from inside their own heads. The multiple platforms led to open vortexes not unlike mini black holes. It was the safest way for us to travel, as angels couldn't last very long in the physical dimension.

"Important business of the Commander," I said while showing the guard my GA badge, trying not to appear out of breath.

He's going to wring my wings for this. I thought.

I was hurriedly putting on safety equipment -- energy stabilizers (so I don't dissipate into nothingness), my weapons bag, and a portal halo (which transports you back in emergencies when activated) when Froyd caught up with me.

"Ria, are you out of your *mind*?" Froyd yelled while panting. "It's Code *Black*, as black as the grave you're digging for yourself!"

"Keep it down!" I hissed, looking around to see if anyone heard. "You know that there is no way a Dispatch team will be allocated in time for this emergency."

"I do."

"And you know that the boy is important to me."

"I do."

"I can't let him down," I looked Froyd in the eyes, willing him to see just how *god-damned* set I was on going. "I won't forgive myself if I do nothing."

Froyd stared at me and sighed, knowing that nothing in the world could deter me from doing what I wanted. Even if he physically tried to stop me, I would still be able to overpower him with my superior skills. Also, the guards wouldn't be fast enough to catch me when I'm just one jump away.

"Stubborn beast," he muttered under his breath. "You're small in size, but you sure have a big head."

"Well you're big in size and you can't even keep up with your wings," I shot back.

"Shut up," Froyd said, exasperated. "If you don't come back in one piece, I will hate you forever because I allowed you to do this."

"Aaaaand that's why you're my best friend, Froyd," I said. "I knew you

would come around."

The truth was that I was scared.

Code Black? Was I insane for wanting to go alone?

Yes. I probably was.

"You're not going without some additional stuff," Froyd said. "I stopped by the equipment room when I knew I that I couldn't catch up with you."

"What's that?"

"The newest walkie-talkies. These darlings can work even in separate dimensions. They're a prototype," Froyd said, producing a pair of sleek and thin rectangles of metal-like material. There was only one button in the middle.

"Not fully developed," Froyd admitted. "Only one of it is capable of sending and the other of receiving."

"So I can send but not receive, huh?"

"...Yeah. Just double-press the button when you're there, that will make it go on recording mode and I'll be able to hear everything you do."

"Gotcha."

"We can both say our eulogies now," Froyd said. "Even if you come back, the Commander will probably pluck out all our feathers when he finds out."

"Not if I find out some useful information," I said.

Froyd sighed again.

"Go before I regret this, Ria," Froyd said. "I'll be on standby following your portal halo. Tell me anything important through the walkie-talkie. If it works."

I gave Froyd a tight hug and turned around to face the vortex.

"Seven to the heavens," I muttered, conjuring Javan's energy from the memento and using it as an anchor.

And then I jumped.

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Falling through the abyss was a curious feeling -- you felt like you were being deconstructed and reassembled at the same time, like a grotesque

anatomy puzzle.

The vortex was a mass of endless black with tiny multi-colored speckles of light. The fall never failed to remind me how small we really were when pitted against eternity, a floating object amidst a vast nothingness.

And soon enough before I knew it, the fake infinity ended and spat me out from my state of weightlessness. I hit the ground face-first, and my mouth tasted dirt.

“Foul feathers!” I spat, wiping my tongue. Only then I realized that something was wrong. I was sitting on something rather *bony*, and that something was moaning in pain.

Oh. I half-landed on someone. Most likely Javan. I said sorry and hurriedly stood up, before realizing that I must have interrupted something.

A group of snarling imps crowded around me in a circle, brandishing little pikes.

There was an ongoing theory (half-proposed by Froyd) that imps were actually created by interrupting the formation of a new angel. Angels manifest with the collection of good and pure energy, but if that volatile process was disturbed by a demon (our counter opposite), then the imbalance would result in an imp.

This meant that they were essentially little demons, but had some degree of angelic characteristics. In other words, they were (somewhat) adorable little monsters.

I wasn’t worried. Imps were only Grade 0 on the Demonata Scale, and possessed weak negative power. I could take 20 without any weapons. Plus, they were easy to intimidate.

I grimaced at the imps and made a show of shooting sparks out of my hands.

“Do you know who I am?”

The imps jostled each other, unsure what to make of my appearance. One particularly bright one (which said something about how intelligent they were) pointed to my portal halo and muttered something frantically to his companions.

“That’s right, imp,” I said, smiling wickedly. “I’d get going right now if I were you.”

Without a second's hesitation, they dropped their pikes and scampered away hurriedly.

I looked around.

We were at a desolate, dry place with dead trees dotting the horizon.

That wasn't good. The way the surroundings looked usually reflected the mental state of the charge. And this place looked dead and hopeless.

I leaned down and pulled up the person I just unceremoniously toppled over.

I caught my breath as I realized that it was Javan, but it was a rather *grown-up* Javan. I had been remembering him as a little boy for so long that I didn't really prepare myself for the fact that he would look different now. I did some mental arithmetic and realized that he would be around 16 Human years old now.

Javan stood up shakily. He was skinny and tanned, and those big innocent eyes I loved were now regarding me as if I were an enemy. I felt a little hurt, but that was expected.

No problem, I just had to remind him. The subconscious never forgets.

"Hey," I said, taking a step forward towards him. "Do you-

TWACK! A startled Javan swung a thick tree branch at my head.

It was a really hard hit. Shock and betrayal registered in my brain, and my limbs went limp.

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It didn't take a very long time for me to come to my senses. I even felt a little embarrassed when I woke up. What kind of GA gets knocked out by their own charge?

I concentrated my energy towards my head, flushing out the force of the blow.

I was tied up on a tree. The *nerve*. One would think the floating halo above the head was a definite sign that screamed *Hello I am an angel!*

Javan was scrutinizing me a small distance away, sitting cross-legged on the ground.

“*Javan*,” I said, trying to keep my voice level. “You have no clue what you’ve just done.”

“I don’t,” Javan agreed, his expression a mystery. “But it was the safest thing to do.”

“I just saved you from a bunch of pike-wielding imps!”

“I know. Thank you for that. But who are you?”

“Only your own personal Guardian Angel,” I said, sighing. “But I suppose you won’t believe me. Cut me down and I’ll prove it to you.”

“How do I know I can trust you?”

“Boy, if I wanted to hurt you I would have pulverized you by now, believe me.”

“Fair point.”

Javan walked towards me warily and with a deft cut, loosened the ropes around my wrists.

I was a little worried. We were in Javan’s subconscious mind, but he seemed to have little to no control of the place.

He was acting like a fugitive in his own head.

I rubbed my sore wrists, and dug into my pockets to take out the memento that he gave me years ago.

It was an *Asabikeshiinh*, one that little Javan had made. It was a crude thing, with twine wrapped around a little rattan circle. Faded colored beads adorned the bottom, brown with age.

“Look, Ria!” little Javan had said excitedly. “The ma’am at the orphanage taught us how to make this today!”

“What is it?” I had asked enthusiastically.

“It’s a dreamcatcher! They say that if you hang it above your bed, it will filter out all the bad things and leave only good things in your head.”

“Why, that’s amazing!” I replied. “You should keep it with you.”

“No, Ria,” sweet little Javan had said. “I want you to have this.”

Mementos were objects that had the strongest memory or emotion

attached to it. So the *Asabikeshiinh* became ours.

I put the *Asabikeshiinh* in Javan's hands. He was looking at it with a weird expression.

After a silence that seemed to last for ages, he finally spoke.

"Your name is...R-Ria?" He asked in a small voice. "I'm so sorry...I forgot. But I don't understand...why did you disappear?"

"Yes," I said with a gentle smile. "I had to, you know. I already over-extended my stay with you back then. Guardian Angels are sent to look after people during their weakest stages, and usually that meant their childhood because they were the most malleable then."

"But I don't remember you leav-"

"Of course," I said. "Our departure comes with a Vanishing Charm. If everyone remembered that they had a Guardian Angel to rely on, nobody would try to grow."

"Oh," Javan said.

"Come," I put a hand on his shoulder gently. "We have a lot to catch up on."

I was grateful that Javan agreed without a hit to the head this time.

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Javan and I sat around the campfire I conjured, a stark contrast against the darkness of our surroundings. I had asked him to fill me in on what happened after I left.

"The lady passed away because of cancer, and the man didn't want me to stay at the home anymore. I got sent to a holding center for kids, but they didn't treat me well," Javan said quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"I was about 14 years old then. They made me do odd jobs, beat me and didn't give me much to eat. They said that it was impossible for an older kid like me to get adopted again, because there was a policy change and I didn't have certified papers or a family member to vouch for me."

I pondered the implications of his words, and my heart constricted painfully,

thinking about what Javan must have gone through.

“So what have you been up to now? How do you survive?”

“I...ran away. I get by on my own on the streets,” Javan said, not looking at me in the eyes. “I steal when I have to.”

I nodded, silent. I didn’t want him to feel like I was judging him, and I understood that sometimes humanity was...complicated.

“It’s okay,” I said reassuringly. “I’m here now.”

“I doubt there’s anything you can do for me at this point, Ria,” Javan said with a steely glint in his eyes that I hadn’t noticed before.

“They just came one day, the demons,” Javan continued. “I could not figure out how to stop them. First it was the small ones, and then it was the big one. I have been running from them ever since.”

I frowned. If this had been going on for a while...why did we only get notified of a *Code Black* now?

Something wasn’t right.

“Wait,” I said, warily. “What did you say? There’s a big one?”

“Not just big, he’s enormous,” Javan said, eyes darting around as if someone would hear. “His said his name was something like...Rashoc?”

Rashoc.

This was a bigger mess than I’ve imagined, I thought. Rashoc was the right-hand demon of Lucifer, the leader of the demonata.

The question was: *Why was he in Javan’s head?* Demons invaded human subconscious all the time...but they usually presented their harvest to those higher up in the echelon. There were too many things that were wrong with this situation. I had a feeling they were part of a bigger picture that I did not understand.

“Javan,” I began, a tingling sense of unease taking over me. “Where is your Heart?”

“Uh,” Javan shifted uncomfortably.

“Rashoc has it. He’s kind of waiting for me to go and open it for him.”

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I drew a large Summoning rune on the dusty ground with a dead tree branch.

"You said Rashoc is just over that little hill over there?" I asked.

"Yes," Javan said. "He's been sending different little troops of imps and demons to come try to bring me to him. It's his idea of fun."

I shook my head, amazed.

"I can't believe you lasted this long with a giant demon in your head," I said.

"Ria, can I be honest with you?"

"Of course you can. What is it?"

"I'm not so sure delivering ourselves to Rashoc is such a good idea..." Javan said slowly.

I threw the tree branch away and put my hands on Javan's shoulders. I kind of resented the fact that I had to tiptoe a bit to reach his shoulders.

"Javan," I said firmly. "Rashoc was able to enter your head only because you kept running away. Fear encourages their presence."

"But I am too weak to do anything."

"And that is precisely where you're wrong. You are the only one who can open up your Heart, Javan, and he knows it. No harm will come to you. But it's up to you to decide what you're going to do with it."

"I don't understand why he wants it."

"Devouring Hearts gives the demonata strength," I said. That bit was true, but I honestly didn't know why Rashoc had chosen Javan out of all people. "Once we're there, just grab your Heart and open it with me. We'll do a Cleanse rune and that will return you the strength you need to vanquish the demons."

Javan looked a little unconvinced, but he gave me a small nod.

"We'll talk about that after we defeat the demons, okay?"

Javan nodded.

"Now," I said, stretching out both my arms. "Stand in the middle of the

rune.”

“We’re gonna summon a Dust Bunny.”

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Dust Bunnies were the giant, harmless creatures in your headspace that ate up any discarded remnants of one’s day-to-day processing. They helped maintain a clear head.

Javan’s Dust Bunny was an 8-foot-tall spotted specimen, and it looked really sad.

“You must have a lot of junk in your head,” I said. “Your Dust Bunny looks a bit ill.”

“Are you sure that thing is *safe*?” Javan pointed at its sharp teeth, which seemed to make it sadder.

“Of course it is! You’re its owner, it definitely won’t hurt you.” I said.

Hesitantly, Javan patted the Dust Bunny. The Dust Bunny leaned into his palm and started purring sadly.

“See,” I said. “It likes you.”

I conjured up a little ball of clean energy and shot it into the Dust Bunny’s mouth.

“What’s that for?”

“Cleansing.”

The Dust Bunny’s eyes took on an eerie glow. With a loud *eeeeeeerkk!*, dust started to shoot out all of its orifices. Javan moved away with a disgusted “*aghh!*” just in time to dodge the one at the posterior.

Within a few seconds, the glow disappeared and the Dust Bunny shook its whole body to get rid of the dust. It emerged fluffier and visibly happier.

I smiled and leaped up to its back, stretching out a hand for Javan.

“Let’s go find Rashoc.”

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“Rash hog!” I yelled after jumping down from the Dust Bunny and sending it on its way. “Come out!”

We were at a little circular clearing surrounded by dead trees. It was obvious that this was where Rashoc would be as there was a big throne made of interwoven wood at the far end.

Javan's Heart was there too. Hearts were the essence of one's soul and they came in all sorts of shapes and colors. When the headspace becomes infested by demons, the Heart becomes enclosed in a unique cage as a form of self-protection. Enclosed Hearts could only be opened by the charges, and demons usually played dirty in order to persuade the charges to hand it over to them.

Javan's Heart was one of the purest, brightest things I have seen -- and it was, to my shock, enclosed in a very solid, unforgiving metal-like cage. It pulsed gently with a bright red glow, looking oddly fragile.

Suddenly, all of Rashoc's 6-feet-worth of ugliness materialized on the throne.

"I have been expecting ye," Rashoc croaked in a deep voice.

"That line...seems oddly familiar somehow," Javan whispered.

"Rash hog!" I said. "You have some explaining to do."

Rashoc laughed a deep, guttural laugh.

"If it isn't Ria, the *best* Guardian Angel of the year," Rashoc spat out those words with malice. "I bet you don't know anything about what we're up to, because you have walked right into my trap."

I stiffened, looking around. If we went head-to-head, I would be about equal to Rashoc's ability. But if there were more than one...

Not wanting to wait to find out what Rashoc meant by "trap", I pushed Javan to the direction of his Heart and flew upwards until I was eye-level with Rashoc.

"Chew on this!" I yelled, shooting an energy ball to his torso.

He deflected the ball easily, but of course, that was what I wanted him to do. The original ball divided into two, taking him from each side.

Oof! Rashoc rolled out from his throne.

"ENOUGH!" Rashoc said. "My *syaitan* brethren, do it now!"

At the sound of his command, all the dead trees morphed into an assortment of demonata: imps, devils, and changelings marched out and surrounded me in a tight circle. They seemed to be conjuring some sort of spell, humming and chanting an alien tune that made my insides curl up. It sounded despicable.

Despite my resistance, an invisible force hoisted me up into the air and held me tight with my extremities outstretched. I couldn't move.

I gasped as I realized that it was.

Dark magic. Very illegal dark magic.

"Rashoc, what is the meaning of this?" I asked, incredulously. Demons *were* bad energy beings, but they needed to exist alongside angels in order for there to be a harmonious balance. Anything was fair game as long as they obeyed the Ancient Pact, which prohibited any form of tampering with another energy being's core using dark magic. And it was illegal for a good reason -- there was an uncontrollable amount of bloodshed and chaos before the days of the Ancient Pact, and it had almost caused the whole 5th dimension to collapse.

"That's right," Rashoc grinned, showing all of his fangs. "We're going to obliterate the *Ancient Pact*, and your Heart has the honor of being the first angel Heart we will harvest!"

"You -- must -- be -- out -- of -- your -- mind!" I sputtered, struggling against the force that held me prisoner. "The rest are going to find out, and you will be in trouble!"

"Do I look like I care, you feathered imbecile? By the time I devour your Heart, I'll be too powerful for them to handle!"

Dang it, I thought. He was right.

Angel Hearts had much more substance compared to a Human one. GAs had to undergo stringent training, so we had an energy core that was much more condensed and powerful than the average angel.

"Thanks to the spies I sent out, I already knew that Javan had a *particularly* pure heart and that you, one of the best Guardian Angels, had a soft spot for him," Rashoc said.

"You could say that it was a lovely coincidence. I wouldn't be strong

enough to forcefully extract *your* Heart myself, Ria. But with the consumption of a pure human Heart plus the ones I have been receiving from my *syaitan*, and a binding circle to weaken you, however...”

I shivered. So it was not only a trap, but a trap meant specifically for *me*.

I looked around to see where Javan was, but I couldn’t see him.

“Should I show you what this binding spell is capable of?” Rashoc said, and clicked his talons.

With an increasingly louder and faster incantation, the circle of demons around me drew tighter. I could feel the force seep into me, intruding my core and sapping my energy. It hurt like nothing else I had experienced before, and it took all my willpower not to give in to it.

Rashoc laughed.

“You’re *strong*, Ria, I’ll give you that,” he said. “The couple of tryouts before you all got sucked into nothingness in seconds.”

“Now,” Rashoc said. “Where’s the boy? You have been having fun giving me a merry chase, but it’s time for you to die.”

Pheeeewit! A loud whistle sounded from nowhere.

Rashoc and I both turned to see what it was, but unlike me, he never found out.

“Wha-OHH!”

The massive 8-foot-tall Dust Bunny collided into his body, throwing him a good distance away from the circle of immobile demons.

“That’s my Dusty!” Javan said, riding on his Dust Bunny and fist-pumping the air.

“Ria!” Javan shouted. Atop the Dust Bunny, he was almost at the same level as I was. “You have done so much for me. It’s time I do something for you too.”

With a click, Javan opened the cage and held out his Heart.

Then, he jumped towards me.

“NOOOOO!” I yelled, realizing what he was trying to do, but it was too late.

Javan and his Heart took over my spot in the circle, and bright light shone out from it.

"I didn't want to give them my Heart, Ria," Javan yelled. "But now I can destroy them, save you, and set myself free."

"Javan!" I sputtered, weak and struggling to get up from the ground.

"I don't have to run away anymore," Javan said, and I could see that he was crying but *smiling*.

It was at this moment that Rashoc returned. When he realized what had just happened, he looked as horrified as a demon could get.

I wish I had a camera then. I would have taken a picture of him and framed it.

The world of Javan's subconscious started to crumble as the Heart started to fade in the circle. Trees uprooted themselves, the sand blew up in hurricanes, and rocks dislodged themselves and started flying around.

The demonata who were not part of the circle were flying, too. *Towards* Javan. And I watched amazed as I saw them disappearing through the *Asabikeshiinh*.

I limped towards the Dust Bunny who was sprawled one side on the ground and activated my portal halo which formed a shield wide enough for us both. The teleportation function would need a couple of seconds before it could form a vortex big enough for me to pass through.

The Dust Bunny would perish as Javan's subconscious disappeared, but I figured that at least it could have a peaceful last few moments.

"You've been good," I said gently, patting the Dust Bunny, who once again looked very sad.

Rashoc was the last to go through. Crawling, screaming and kicking, he tried to resist until he got sucked into the circle.

"This is NOT the end!" Rashoc yelled, and soon enough, he disappeared. "You don't know what the boy is capable of!"

As the Dust Bunny slowly started to disintegrate into...dust, I let myself be pulled away into the abyss as I watched Javan's subconscious world completely shatter and fade.

Tears of shock streamed down my face. What was Rashoc talking about?

I descended through the abyss, the quietness of nothing ringing loud in my ears. This was the first case in which I failed to save my charge.

“Ria,” A familiar voice said. Said. *Javan?*

I spun my head back rapidly. And there he was, untattered, looking a little surprised himself.

“That was terrifying. I wasn’t sure if that would work,” Javan said, grinning.

“But your Heart was destroyed! How did you survive?” I exclaimed.

Javan pulled out the Memento I gave him from the inside of his pocket.

“I transferred it here, right before the explosion,” he said slowly. Sure enough, the *Asabikeshiinh* pulsed with a gentle red light. “Honestly, I don’t really know how I did it.” My eyes widened, trying to process the sight before me. Javan’s achievement was remarkable, but he seemed to understand it as little as I did. He looked sheepish, even. Such abilities were unheard of!

I gave my head a slight shake, and grinned. Things were definitely going to get interesting.

“Come with me,” I said, extending one hand out to Javan while fumbling with my portal halo in the other. “We’re going to figure it out!”

Javan smiled and took my hand.

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Froyd ran with the urgency of a frantic rabbit, heading towards the back of the Library. He had just heard everything that had transpired, and it did not make any *sense*. What bothered him was that he, a certified genius, did not comprehend the possibility of such abilities even existing. Something about the Ancient Pact was nagging at the back of his head, and so he needed to consult the Book.

With clammy palms, he flipped the worn pages of the Book which was displayed on a golden stand.

Page 666. The Ancient Pact.

Eyes darting back and forth, Froyd’s brain scrambled to take in all the information that he thought he knew by heart.

"*Goddamn*," He whispered, hands shaky.

"Javan is *Lucifer*."