Daylight

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by Kicchin

Summary

Li Lun has always known that poison takes many forms. Some lie hidden in the roots of trees, others bloom in flowers, and some take root in the hearts of mortals. He has watched them seek it in one another, offer it as though it were a gift, and drink from the same cup even when they know it may bring them sorrow. Such peculiar creatures, these mortals, to find something worth holding on to even when it hurts.

Perhaps the mortal heart is the cruelest poison of all. After all, the cruelest poisons are those that make you forget you were ever meant to resist them.

And Li Lun, who has spent so long watching mortals drink, is about to discover what it means to reach for the cup himself.

Notes

Hello!!! If you're reading this it is either you've already read my first work for this fandom--Wildflower and Barely or that you just somehow stumbled and found me. BUT thank you for coming and giving this fic your time regardless whether this the first time you're read my work or not. Thank you and I hope you enjoy.

This story is set on the same universe as my first work Wildflower and Barley, however, you do not necessarily need to read Wildflower and Barley to understand this story as it can be read alone. I hope you guys like this story, until the return of ao3, I will be using this to update this story--I hope you enjoy!!

Let me know your thoughts in the comments!

The Baize Goddess had been troubled recently by a case of a troublesome demon who has taken the lives of farmers in a small village. The village had been living quietly even with occasional visits from small demons passing by every now and then, but with the incidents, the villagers had become wary and fearful of demons, treating all they see as threat. Most demons won't care about such an incident, but Li Lun unfortunately is not like most demons.

"Is she alright?" Li Lun asks as he glances behind Ying Zhao where a small tree demon is sitting and being treated by Zhu Yin.

Ying Zhao is the deity of the Kunlun Mountain, since Li Lun had cultivated sentience and a body, he had known Ying Zhao. He clothed him and sheltered him there in the shrine. Li Lun has no word to describe the things Ying Zhao had done for him except for being *raised*. Most demons don't get raised. They are born and they learn the Wilderness through survival, to learn is to survive because the only time one learns is if they survive, and to keep surviving they must learn. Li Lun would be considered sheltered if compared to others, Ying Zhao stood behind him as he learned the Wilderness. When he makes mistakes, he could be injured but he knew he would not die.

Ying Zhao always finds him.

"She will be," Ying Zhao replies softly before sighing, "It has become like this it seems."

Li Lun knows what Ying Zhao meant by this. Before, the village had hurt a demon or two in a month, and only when said demon had entered their village. Recently, with the troublesome demon still on the loose and no justice, the villagers began to seek out demons themselves, attacking whatever demon they see with whatever they could find, a rock, a stick, a shovel, a rake–or fire.

The poor tree demon behind Ying Zhao was rescued by Zhu Yan that early morning when Zhu Yan had slipped once more out of the mountain to roam around the mortal realm, a bad habit no one could seem to make him break. The tree demon had been injured after being attacked by a group of villagers who had accused her of being a heart-eating demon. She managed to run away and was found.

Li Lun furrows his eyebrows, “Why are we allowing them to do this to us, we–”

“As demons we have powers above mortals, we must not use them recklessly.”

“And allow them to hurt our kinds like this?”

Ying Zhao smile ruefully, “To fight fire with fire, when has it ever resolved anything?”

Li Lun purses his lips. He understands Ying Zhao’s reasoning even if he does not completely agree with it. He knew what mortals were capable of when fear took hold of them and understood why Ying Zhao would not allow demons to retaliate without a thought.

Still, looking at small and helpless demons creature behind him, Li Lun could not help but feel that there is something deeply unjust about being hurt for simply existing.

“Nevermind this,” Ying Zhao pats Li Lun’s shoulder, “Zhu Yan has left again, I fear this time he might meddle with that village. Won’t you help me get him back before he does something that would end him up in front of the Baize Goddess explaining for the fourth time this season.”

Li Lun nods, he had thought about that anyway. Zhu Yan, the closest thing he has to what most people and demons would call *a friend*, is another demon. When he gained consciousness as a Pagoda Tree Demon, Zhu Yan had been Zhu Yan. Most demons tremble in fear when they hear his name but Li Lun had simply known him as himself. An ape demon who acts like Ying Zhao had birthed him personally. Unlike most demons, Li Lun finds Zhu Yan odd, he befriends easily, trusts easily.

“Mn.” Li Lun responds quietly.

Ying Zhao smiles, “Let’s give her some space, why don’t we?”

Li Lun spent the next few hours helping Ying Zhao around before flying back to the mortal realm to find Zhu Yan. Li Lun started with the boating village nearest to the mountain, he walked around for a few hours before concluding the mischievous demon is not anywhere there. Then, he heads to the village where Zhu Yan had found the tree demon he rescued. There's a low chance for him to linger there after seeing how mortals reacted to that small and delicate looking demon, especially with Zhu Yan looking the way he is. Tall and silver hair. Zhu Yan is very obviously a demon and would be easily found out if he dares come to the village.

But low is not impossible.

And Li Lun also had seen him made impossible to possible.

Li Lun had walked into the village quietly, pretending to be a passerby. He quietly walks the dirt path, glancing quietly and shortly to keep suspicion off of him. People looked at him but they didn't dwell much. As long as he does not say anything, nor does he linger, surely people would not mind him.

Li Lun had gone through half of the village already but to no avail. Zhu Yan is nowhere in sight, he can feel his demonic presence somewhere but sees barely a shadow of him. Li Lun is starting to grow concerned, surely he cannot die, but if he had learned anything from Zhu Yan about mortals, it is the fact that they are persistent *and creative*–two very dangerous things when combined.

The market is the place one should *never* go if you are a demon who looks obviously like one in a town where being suspected as one can get you chased down several *li* with pick axe and rakes. But, Li Lun has to be sure, in the foolish chance Zhu Yan decided to test his luck, he might actually be there.

The market is crowded, well, Zhu Yan would probably call this *busy* but Li Lun is not used to gatherings. To him, more than ten individuals in a street would be a crowd. And the scene before him looks like a proper crowd. Li Lun walks quietly, not in hurry or too slow, his eyes shifts subtly from left to right, pretending to look at the stalls and shops while he searches for the striki–

There! Li Lun almost cannot believe his eyes.

He had expected to find Zhu Yan hiding somewhere, perhaps having already been discovered and chased into an alley by a group of angry villagers. He had even mentally prepared himself for the possibility that he would have to drag the fool back to the mountains by force.

Instead, there he is, sitting at a noodle stall, his braided silver hair making him stand out like a sore thumb, enthusiastically slurping his noodles from a bowl nearly as large as his face.

Li Lun marches there, standing in front of the small table across Zhu Yan.

As Zhu Yan lowers the bowl, he stares up at Li Lun.

Almost as if knowing how much trouble he has caused, Zhu Yan smiles.

“Hello.”

Li Lun does not wait for people to realize that Zhu Yan is a demon, he grabs his arm and tries to pull him off his seat.

“W-Wait, I’m eating you know!” Zhu Yan complains, trying to reason.

“You don’t require—”

“Ah!” A voice interrupts the two. Li Lun turns and sees the shop keeper walking behind the counter. Li Lun braces for an attack but instead the man grins, “Is this a friend of yours?”

Zhu Yan turns and nods, “He is!”

The man looks up at Li Lun's towering height and chuckles, "Is he from the North too?"

Zhu Yan nods, "He is!"

Li Lun looks at Zhu Yan, furrowing his eyebrows. North? What North?

The shop keeper nods.

"So tall!" he exclaims, "I heard people from the North are indeed very tall. *Lao* Meng's son once worked to a province up north and said the people there were indeed unusual-looking and very tall."

Zhu Yan nods enthusiastically making Li Lun stare at him even more. There is no way Zhu Yan knows what this man is talking about. Demons doesn't have the same concept of humans about distance and direction, they know *realms* but North? He doubts Zhu Yan could even point to it if asked.

"Is true that you eat very spicy food up there?" the man asks.

"Extremely spicy!" Zhu Yan nods.

The noodle seller's eyes widen, "Oh, then your friend must try our new specialty, it's made with peppers from another town, my wife says its too much but I know your friend will like it!"

"No." Li Lun says briefly, "We're leaving."

The noodle seller's expression fell, "Oh, is that so–"

“He’s not good in this regions dialect!” Zhu Yan immediately says as he tries to salvage the conversation, “He only knows a few words. He means that he is afraid to trouble you because we are leaving soon.”

The noodle seller’s face lights up again, clapping.

“Oh, no worries! I’ll make them fast. Stay there, I will be back in a few seconds!”

As soon as the noodle seller rushes back to the small kitchen behind the counter, Li Lun turns to Zhu Yan with a firm look.

“You are lying.”

“A little.”

“How is that little?”

Zhu Yan shrugs.

“We’re going back, Ying Zhao is looking for you.” Li Lun insists.

“The shop keeper is back there bothering to make some good noodles for you, and you’re just going to leave?” Zhu Yan says.

Li Lun frowns, “You tricked him.”

“I didn’t! He’s doing it out of the goodness of his heart!”

“Zhu Yan.”

“Come on, at least be polite and eat the man’s noodles!”

“No.”

“But–”

Li Lun pulls Zhu Yan by the elbow again, “Stop being difficult, you know it’s dangerous to be here.”

“It’s not.”

“Because that’s because they haven’t figured you out yet,” Li Lun glares as Zhu Yan pulls away from his hold, he immediately grabs his arm dragging him along with him. “Once they figure out that you’re not like them, you’ll be flayed alive.”

“They’re not barbaric like that.”

Li Lun stares at him.

Zhu Yan stares back.

“Alright, *maybe* they do that sometimes.”

Li Lun continues to drag him.

“Come on, won’t you let me finish my meal?”

“No.”

“Li Lun, please?”

Li Lun does not listen.

Before Li Lun could take another step, a sheathe of a sword slides between him and Zhu Yan just as a scent of lavender wafts close. Instinctively, Li Lun pushes Zhu Yan away and steps back to address the threat. He pushes the sheathed blade before putting a safe distance between him and the attacker.

Li Lun’s eyes furrow but his anger quickly turns to confusion when he sees the stranger. The stranger steps in front of Zhu Yan who had stumbled and instead of looking over Li Lun, the man in white and golden robes comes to help Zhu Yan and steady him.

“Are you alright?” the stranger asks Zhu Yan who blinks owlishly in confusion at the man.

A mortal. Li Lun immediately notices. A mortal omega by his scent. He’s dressed better than most villagers and from his stature, Li Lun can sense he is someone important.

Zhu Yan nods mutely, still confused. Zhu Yan looks over at Li Lun causing the mortal man in golden robes to turn to Li Lun as well.

“Do not meddle.” Li Lun simply says.

“Unfortunately, taking someone by force is prohibited.”

“Those rules don’t bind us–”

“The Baize Goddess had made it so.”

Li Lun purses his lips, eyes furrowing, how does this man know about the laws and rules the Baize Goddess had made for demons?

“Who are you?” Li Lun asks.

“Someone you don’t need to know if you just let this *DaRen* go.”

Li Lun does not trust this man, he knows too much about demons and he seems unusually calm to be standing between demons. Li Lun needs to get Zhu Yan out of here, immediately.

Li Lun lunges towards Zhu Yan, at the same time he sees the stranger unsheathes his sword.

Then, he charges towards him.

Then, Zhu Yan suddenly appears before him.

The sword strikes him.

Li Lun’s eyes widen, he grabs Zhu Yan immediately before th other tumbles back. Both of them falls on the ground sitting up.

Li Lun turns towards the stranger, his anger spilling like a dam overflowing. The man stood there eyes on Zhu Yan, wide and almost horrified. But Li Lun does not care for his horrors or thoughts. He had drawn his blade at them, he had tried to kill them. Li Lun ignores the people screaming around them as the air around them fizzles with thick demonic aura.

“Hey,” He hears Zhu Yan calls out.

Li Lun turns to Zhu Yan.

“You’re being dramatic,” Zhu Yan says as he pulls away and sits up on his own, “I’m fine, you know it’s nothi–”

Li Lun stares as Zhu Yan begins coughing up blood.

Zhu Yan stares on the ground where blood from his mouth just stares back at him.

“Oh.”

Li Lun grabs Zhu Yan immediately to look at him, there, he sees a long line across the other’s chest. It’s so red that Li Lun could barely tell if the wound is deep or not.

Why?

Why isn’t it closing fast?

Why is Zhu Yan bleeding?

He had never seen Zhu Yan bleed like this before.

Zhu Yan is a Great Demon, Great Demons can’t be injured by simple mortal weapo—

“Let me see!” Before Li Lun could react the stranger is on them, turning Zhu Yan towards himself.

Li Lun pushes him off, “Get away!”

“I’m trying to help!”

“You tried to kill us!”

“I thought you were about to attack us!”

“You–”

“You are smothering me!”

Li Lun jolts as Zhu Yan yells between them.

Zhu Yan pushes the stranger off of him and placed a hand over his chest. Li Lun watches as Zhu Yan heals himself. It takes a bit more than usual, but he manages eventually.

Zhu Yan takes a deep breathe, “Good heavens,” he says.

“Are you alright, Young Master?” the stranger asks, his expression surprisingly seemed genuinely concerned to Li Lun.

Li Lun immediately grabs Zhu Yan, pulling him behind him as they stand up away from the man. This man, Li Lun thinks, is no ordinary man. He is not just a mortal passing by. He’s…

“Who are you?” Li Lun hisses.

The stranger stands up, looking between the two.

“I-I really didn’t mean for this to happen.”

“Who are you?!” Li Lun’s patience is running thin, his demonic presence growing steady and thicker.

“Li Lun!” Zhu Yan exclaims, “Stop this, the village—”

“I am Zhuo Yixuan,” The stranger says. “I am from the Demon Hunting Bureau, and I believe we are looking for the same thing.”

Demon Hunting Bureau?

Zhuo Yixuan?

Zhuo.

Zhuo.

Li Lun’s eyes widened, his eyes suddenly drawn to the blade in the man’s hand.

Yunguang.

The God Slaying Sword of the Zhuo family.

The Zhuo family from the bloodline of the Demon slaying Deity–Bingyi.

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