

## Betelgeuse

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# Betelgeuse

by [Serena Walken \(SerenaWalken\)](#).

## Summary

There is something strange going on with Beetlejuice's records. What appears to be misplaced files and errors on the horizon turn out to be a danger Juno tried to prepare for. Forced to separate Beetlejuice and Lydia, the two try to contact each other to no avail. Things only get stranger when Beetlejuice disappears for two months with no memory of where he had been. How far will these best friends go to get back with each other? And how far can they go when they are predicted to be the cause of a Neitherworld apocalypse coming?

## Notes

Besides my site, this is the only other place you are going to find this story uncut. I hope you enjoy.

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Setup: Pretty much all cartoon except I did want to keep Juno, the handbooks, and the legal system sort of inside. You'll see why later. Also, there might be some stuff a little screwed up from the cartoon (Like I don't know BJ's exact age) but I try to keep everything the same that I can. Other than that this is your standard Beetlejuice cartoon story. Or wait, is it?

# Chapter 1: Dangerous Friendship

Betelgeuse

Written By: Melanie Ray

Part One: Dangerous Friendship?

////These kind of lines represent past events////

Neitherworld/Outside the Roadhouse

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"That is a strange sight to see," Jacques said as he watched Beetlejuice standing in front of the Roadhouse. Normally, Beetlejuice bothered Jacques, not the other way around. Especially not on that day, he was not in the mood. "Beattlejuice? Are you okay?"

Beetlejuice wasn't quick to answer, he felt too bummed out. "Today's Lyd's eighteenth birthday."

"Well, that is very good," Jacques said with a smile. "Why are you so sad? Why are you not there spending ze whole day with her?"

"Well, it's complicated." Beetlejuice didn't want to go into details about what happened last year.

"Oh, I know." Ginger showed up uninvited. Not that Jacques was invited either. Braindead bonehead. "I bet something embarrassing happened last year."

"Shut up," Beetlejuice warned her, thoughts of revenge already circling in his head.

"Come to think of it, you did come back zat day with your face less whitethanusual." Jacques said. "It was downright pink."

Ginger giggled. "So come on, Beetlejuice. What happened, huh?"

"None of your business you no-talent spider. I'm outta here." Beetlejuice put his hands in his pockets and walked away.

Beetlejuice would never tell them what happened. He didn't like to think of it much himself. It had been really weird.

////On Lyd's 17th Birthday...

Betty Juice, Bertha, Lydia and Prudence had all gathered round a game board. They had been playing games that day, enjoying the birthday cake Delia made when Bertha suddenly came

up with an idea.

"Ooh, we should play truth or dare," Bertha exclaimed.

"Better than these little games," Prudence agreed.

"Truth or Dare?" Lydia thought about it a second. "Well, we haven't played that yet I guess."

"Might be fun," Betty laughed. "Who'll go first?"

"I will," Bertha proclaimed.

"Alright, Truth or Dare."

"Truth."

"Have you ever kissed a boy yet?"

"...no." Bertha frowned. "Alright, your turn, Prudence. Truth or Dare?"

"Truth."

"Have you ever kissed a boy?"

"This is boring. Somebody do dare," Betty complained folding her arms against her chest. The party had no neitherworld fun at all. She was just ignored by them.

Prudence seemed a bit shy about it. "Sort of. It was just for my cousin's birthday party though. Seven minutes in heaven." Prudence shyness faded into a smirky grin when she saw the shocked faces on the others. "Alright Betty, Truth or-"

"Dare," Betty said quickly.

"Ummm..." Prudence couldn't think of much. "Stand on your head."

"Betty." Lydia gave him/her a warning. Betty got the message. She stood on top of her head, but not literally like she wanted to.

"Ooh! Lydia!" Bertha looked over at Lydia. "Can't forget the birthday girl!"

Lydia smiled. "Truth."

"Who's the one guy you would really want to be with?" Bertha giggled.

"Be with?" Lydia frowned. "You mean like date?"

"No." Bertha and Prudence giggled. "Like 'be' with?"

Lydia's mouth dropped open as Bertha and Prudence laughed. "I'm not answering that."

Betty Juice stayed quiet. The girls he used to know had grown up and he'd heard things like that before. After all, they were young women now. Almost out of high school.

"I bet I knew who it would be." Bertha laughed as Lydia became a bright red at her answer. "I bet it'd be Mr. Beetleman."

"The handy dandy handy man." Prudence giggled too. "Oh come on, admit it. You'd pick him."

Betty Juice looked uncomfortable too. "Let's just skip it, she won't answer!"

Lydia couldn't even look anywhere besides the ground she was so embarrassed.

"Come on, Lydia. Haven't you had a crush on him since you were a kid?" Bertha pushed.

"Uhhhh..." Betty was getting too uncomfortable. "I-I have to get going to...somewhere."

Bertha and Prudence just blinked in surprise as Betty Juice quickly ran out of the room. /////

"Damn Truth or Dare." Beetlejuice kicked a rock as headed down the street. They had decided from that little embarrassment that maybe not coming to her next party would be a good idea. In fact, Beetlejuice had completely stopped being Betty from that point on. The 'girls' he had known for so many years had become women, and he did not want to hear or know about the things they talked about anymore.

He was really bummed out, but after her party she'd call for him. She promised. So, he just had to wait until then. 'I can't believe Lyd is really gonna be 18 already.' It was so hard to believe. So many years had gone by, but their friendship was still just as strong.

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Neitherworld/File Bureau

Juno was blowing smoke out of her neck as she was looking through some papers. As a case worker, she always had a thousand and one things she had to get done. She stopped however as she saw someone new enter her office. "What?" she asked gruffly.

"" The ghoul seemed a bit nervous and his hands were trembling. He was called Mit and it was only his first week on the job. This wasn't what he was expecting to find in his first week. "Something has been discovered. Your attention is quickly needed."

Juno put down her papers and accepted Mit's papers. She groaned. "Beetlejuice. What's this regarding?" She took another puff of her cigarette.

"" Mit just pointed at the papers. "It's self explanatory."

Juno brought her full attention to the first paper. Who knew what the ghost was cooking up now?

NAME: BEETLEJUICE

AGE: 21

STATUS: DECEASED

POWER: 6 CENTURIES WORTH

PERSONALITY: PRANKSTER

"I don't see the problem." Juno stared at the basics of the document and the mark of approval. She moved to the second paper that was handed to her. When she saw it, her cigarette fell out of her mouth. "How could this slide by?"

NAME: BETELGEUSE

AGE: 642

STATUS: ALIVE

POWER: NONE

PERSONALITY: PRANKSTER

"Why do we have two files?" Juno yelled angrily. She shook the second sheet wildly. "This makes no sense. This second has a stamp of approval as well?"

"I don't know ma'am. We were just going through our files like always." Mit replied. "We found two sheets on Beetlejuice, both strangely marked approved."

"This is unacceptable." Juno stared at the papers. "How did this slip through the cracks? I want proper documentation started right away!" She picked up the first sheet. "He died when he was 21, I know it. I was his case worker." She groaned. "This second documentation is all wrong."

"It's marked though." Mit reminded her. "According to the papers, he's been classified as dead and alive."

"Why are we finding this just now? Why didn't I hear about this centuries ago?" Juno yelled in frustration.

"Well, our records show he died in 1344 AD. At approximately 12:35." Mit gave her another schedule. "We were shifting through a new record system in 1344 AD at approximately 12:35. Goof ups were made at that time."

"I know that." Juno frowned. "All those goofs were fixed though, quickly. Why was Beetlejuice's never fixed? And why does it bear an official mark?" She took her cigarette and put it out. "Go to him and ask questions. Dont tell him what's going on. I want details." She pulled out a blank piece of paper and started to write some questions. "Make sure you get a legitimate answer for all of these."

Mit took the paper quickly and went on his way. Never had this happened before. Yes, mistakes were made but they were quickly corrected and never approved.

Never.

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### The Living World/Lydia's Room

Lydia rushed back up the stairs and closed the door to her room after she entered it. She grinned as she looked at her old mirror. Now she'd be able to spend her day with her best friend! "Though I know I should be-"

"Lyyydiaaaa! Phone callll!"

Lydia groaned. "Coming, mother." She took off back downstairs and answered the phone. She frowned. "No, I'm not interested." She handed it back to Delia.

Delia pushed the phone back at her. "Oh come on, give him a chance."

"No." Lydia gave her mother the phone and darted back up the stairs. She knew who it had been. Miss Shanon's School for Girls only went so high, and she had started to go to a regular high school some time ago with Bertha and Prudence. The major difference? Guys were finding interest in her.

She didn't go out for cheerleading and she didn't say 'like' all the time. She certainly wasn't as popular as Claire, but for some reason, guys wouldn't seem to get the hint she didn't want to go out. None of them shared her interest in the paranormal, they all just liked her because well...

Lydia Deetz had actually grown up to be an attractive woman. Her bust, her legs, even her black hair seemed to lure guys to her now. If she ever actually tried to look attractive, she'd probably be even more popular than Claire herself. Still, Lydia didn't care. Besides, she was trying to finally see Beetlejuice to celebrate with her!

Lydia entered her room again and closed the door. She stood in front of the mirror. "Though I know I should be weary, still I venture someplace scary. Ghostly haunting I turn loose! Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice!"

"Did someone finally call for me?" Beetlejuice grinned as he showed up from behind Lydia. "Hey, Babes. How's it feel to be 18?"

"Eh. So-so." Lydia smiled. "So, what do you want to do?"

Beetlejuice grinned. "I say we-!"

"Lyyydiaaaa, dooooo-Oooooooooor!"

Lydia groaned again. "Sorry BJ, I gotta see who's at the door."

Beetlejuice watched Lydia walk out of the room. He frowned and took off his ear, setting it on the ground. He had a feeling he knew who it was again.

"Hey, Lydia. It's me, Zack."

"Hello. Can I help you with something?"

"Oh. Well, I was wondering if you'd like to go out to a movie with me sometime."

Beetlejuice growled as he heard the conversation. 'Not again. I swear, these pests are worse than sandworms. Actually, I wouldn't mind feeding one to a sandworm...' He grinned as he heard Lydia's no and heard her coming back up the stairs. He put his ear back on and waited. "So, who was it?" he asked as she came back through the door.

"No one important." Lydia smiled. "Ready to go?"

"Ready." Beetlejuice grinned. Finally, he could spend some time with Lyds. It had felt like forever. It was already past 8:00 P.M. Beetlejuice was always used to spending time with her every day, right after her school. Sometimes, she'd even come to the Neitherworld for the night. The two could never be separated for very long. They had a closeness, a bond, with each other that no one could ever have. They could never spend that long away from each other. They never could.



## Chapter 2: First Met: NA

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Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

Mit appeared in front of the Roadhouse and knocked on Beetlejuice's door. "Mister Juice?"

"Mister?" Beetlejuice answered the door undignified. "My name's not mister. That's my dad." He took a second glance at Mit. "Who are you?"

"I need you to answer three questions," Mit demanded quickly.

"Alright, let's see," Beetlejuice grinned. "Who's the dumbest spider in the world who can't tapdance? Ginger."

"Hey," Ginger yelled at him as she walked by. "That's not nice."

"Who is nice? Not me," Beetlejuice snickered. "Who's the biggest bonehead-"

"That's enough!" Mit interrupted. "I need you to answer these questions." He handed the list to Beetlejuice.

"Oh, that's easy." Beetlejuice said as he stared at the list. "Number one is how a certain person entered the neitherworld. Number two is Y-O-U-R-space-N-A-M-E. Number three is probably just about everybody. There you go."

Mit looked down at the paper. How did he come up with those answers?

1. EXPLAIN IN DETAIL HOW YOU DIED.
2. WHAT IS THE CORRECT WAY TO SPELL YOUR NAME.
3. WHO APPROVED OF YOUR DEATH?

Mit groaned. "Mister Juice. This is important. I need you to answer seriously."

"Seriously," Beetlejuice answered.

"Sir," Mit groaned. "Please. This is very important."

Beetlejuice tilted his head. "Why?"

"I can't say."

"Well, I can't answer."

"I need an answer."

"Well, I need money. Everyone needs something." Beetlejuice held his hand out.

Mit looked at his hand and sighed. He yanked out his wallet and gave Beetlejuice some money.

"Whoa-hoah!" Beetlejuice counted the money. "Hey, this is important, isn't it?"

"Please answer them," Mit said firmly again.

Beetlejuice looked at the list once more. "I don't know how I died. It's usually B-E-E-T-L-E-J-U-I-C-E. Sometimes it shows up on bills and stuff with a different spelling." He shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know what you mean by who approved of my death. I'm always dead. Well, that was easy money."

"Wait." Mit looked at Beetlejuice strangely. "You don't remember how you died?"

Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders. "So?"

"Everyone knows how they died," Mit answered. No matter how much time passed in the Neitherworld, no one ever forgot the tragic day they left the living. "Even if you don't remember, you should have been informed. Didn't Juno tell you how you died?"

Beetlejuice stuck his tongue. "That weirdo? She took like five years before she even got to me." He held his hand out and a copy of The HandBook For the Recently Deceased flew into his hands. "Never bothered reading this thing at first." He threw it at Mit and another book appeared in his hand titled The Handbook For the Not So Recently Deceased. "This one sucked too." He threw it on top of the other book Mit now carried. He kept pulling out handbooks and throwing them at Mit until there was a stack of twenty. "Aha, now this was one I liked." He held his book The Handbook for 1001 ways to find Beetles. "That's a keeper."

Mit couldn't take the uneven weight and fell over on his side, books tumbling down on him. "Ow." Beetlejuice snacked on a beetle while Mit was slowly getting back up.

"Hey BJ? Who's he?" Lydia came to the front door to see who it was.

Beetlejuice grinned and flashed his money at her. "I don't know but I like him. Hey, let's go to the Shocking Mall."

Mit stared at Beetlejuice. Either his death was supposed to be relatively simple to remember, or his case worker should have told him. Then again, Juno wanted that as an answer? He dusted himself off and left the roadhouse in a hurry. This wasn't good.

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Neitherworld/File Bureau...

Mit arrived shortly back at Juno's office. "He said he does not remember his death. He doesn't understand approve, and he seems to be confused about his own name. Juno? Do you know how he died?"

"It was simple," Juno said. "I was told it was simple and I didn't need to show up."

"If it's so simple, then why doesn't he remember?" Mit asked. "And how was he approved if he doesn't even understand what that means?"

Juno picked up the phone to talk to one of her superiors. It would have been easier getting answers from Beetlejuice, but if he actually did not remember, she had no choice.

Mit watched the conversation. Juno kept a straight face but he could hear through the phone how mad her superiors were. After some time there was a pause.

Beetlejuice's files were missing. Juno hung up and stared at the papers again. A missing death recollection, two strange documentations, a missing approver, and missing files. She glared. ". . . I sense foul play."

"With that ghost, what else is new?" Mit groaned.

"Not by his hand. For once," Juno added. "Headquarters is finding any files they can of him." She pointed at Mit. "Was he with anyone suspicious? His friends?"

"Actually, there was a human there," Mit commented. "Alive and well visiting him."

"Visits are permitted with documentation. Still, it won't hurt to check." Juno opened her top drawer and pulled out a file labeled BEETLEJUICE PRANKS. She never remembered anyone she worked with, even if it was just five minutes ago. Except for him. He was always a pain. She looked through the file. Surely his human companion would be in there somewhere. "Lydia Deetz. Look for documentation on Lydia Deetz."

Mit nodded his head and got to work. When he came back, he still didn't look happy. "Lydia Deetz' file." He put it on her desk.

Juno picked up the file and started to read.

NAME: LYDIA DEETZ

STATUS: LIVING

AGE: 18

POWER: NONE

ESCORT: BEETLEJUICE

VISITATION PROBLEMS: NO

FIRST MET: NA

"What is this on their first meeting?" Juno frowned. "Go back to Beetlejuice. Find out how they first met."

Mit groaned. Back and forth, back and forth...

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Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

Mit went to Beetlejuice's place again and saw him floating and laughing with the human. "Excuse me," He interrupted them. "How did you two first meet?"

"Ooh. More money?" Beetlejuice cackled and rubbed his hands together excitedly.

"BJ." Lydia sighed and looked at Mit. "Why do you want to know that?"

"He won't answer, Babe." Beetlejuice brought them both down to the ground. "He just wants answers. And to give me money!"

"Could you please answer for me?" Mit asked Lydia. Hopefully the human would be easier to deal with.

"Sure." Lydia smiled. "Oh, let's see. It's been awhile. I remember meeting him . . ." She was trying to remember. " . . . it was after a school session. I came into my room, and he was waiting there in my mirror. I thought I was dreaming at first."

"How did you find her mirror?" Mit asked in interest.

Beetlejuice scratched his cheek. "I don't know. I just heard her say she needed a friend. I was bored so poof."

"How did you hear her?"

Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders. "Who cares?"

"Why did you not fill this out on your visitation document of Lydia Deetz?" Mit growled at him.

"Docuwhat?" Beetlejuice just looked at him funny. "I never filled out anything."

"Then how was she allowed to come over here," Mit yelled. "Who filled it out?!"

" . . ." Beetlejuice and Lydia just shrugged their shoulders.

"I didn't know about documentation." Lydia looked over at Beetlejuice.

Beetlejuice just waved it off. "Aah, it's some official channel to have visitors come. I wasn't gonna worry about it 'til I got caught."

"You didn't get caught because it was filled out." Mit answered. Bad, bad, bad.

"Who'd want to fill it out for Beetlejuice?" Lydia asked suspiciously.

Mit disappeared very quickly. Bad, bad, bad.

Lydia just watched him disappear a bit worried. "BJ? Why is he so interested in you?"

"Who isn't interested in me? I'm the ghost with the most, Babe!"

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Neitherworld/File Bureau . . .

Mit marched straight over to Juno. "Seriously bad. Beetlejuice did not fill out the visitation documents on her."

"What?" Juno couldn't believe it. She didn't want to believe it. "Call the WDP's."

"The WDP's?" Mit couldn't believe it. "Are you sure it's that-"

"Call the WDP's!" Juno demanded again. "Give them everything we have on Beetlejuice and Lydia Deetz. Go now."

Mit hurried as fast as he could to his own phone. Juno meant business! Whatever was going on, it was big. It was really big. The WDP's were the World Defenders and Protectors. Whether the living world or the neitherworld, they were the watchers of both. They were only bothered by case workers for the biggest of problems.

Juno stared at the files in front of her. "So naïve . . ." To the layman it looked like goofed up file problems with a ghost who had befriended a human. That was it. To her, she saw more . . .

She saw danger . . .

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Living World/Lydia's Bedroom...

The next day...

"Though I know I should be weary, Still I venture someplace scary. Ghostly haunting I turn loose. Beetlegoose, Beetlegoose, Bsetlegoose! What?" Lydia looked confused. "Beetlegoose, Beetlegoose, Beetlegoose!" Lydia felt her throat. "Why can't I gust say Beetlegoose? Beetleg-g-g-goose!" She looked at the mirror. "Do I have a weird cold? Maybe I gust have a weird cold. Gust . . . gust?"

It was quickly becoming apparent to Lydia someone had messed up her voice somehow. But who and why? "Beetlegoose is gonna laugh like crazy once he shows up," Lydia groaned. "Okay...geeraffe?" She still could not say the soft g. "Orange goose? Really, this is becoming gust annoying." She crossed her arms. Beetlejuice better show up soon then. She stared at her mirror for awhile but he hadn't come. "What's going on?"

"Lyyyyyydiiaaaa! Doo-Oooooor!"

Lydia sighed. Maybe when she came back, her weird cold would go away.

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Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

Beetlejuice was waiting for Lydia to call him, but so far, she hadn't. "Probably delayed by some pest at her door again." He had said it out loud thinking no one heard him.

"What pest?" Jacques asked as he came over. He smiled. He had a feeling he knew what Beetlejuice was talking about.

"Nothing." Beetlejuice didn't want to talk about that. Instead, he felt like doing something else.

"Beattlejuuuuuice!!" Jacques whined as he started to run away from him.

Beetlejuice let his tongue flap out in the air as he chased the skeleton. Sure, if he was collared he'd have to stay in that form like before, but who cared? It was ages ago and tormenting Jacques by being a dog was better fun than Jacques tormenting him. When he finally made the skeleton fall to pieces by pulling at him, he laughed and changed back.

With Jacques limping and picking up his fallen bones, Beetlejuice went back to the Roadhouse to wait for Lydia. Maybe he could go peak through her mirror to make sure everything was okay? He was considering it when he went back inside, but just a few seconds later, he heard a knock.

Beetlejuice was staring at the new visitors who greeted him at his opened door. Jacques was also staring at them. Ginger was staring at them. The monster across the street was staring at them. Anyone within seeing distance was staring at them. "Uh." For once, Beetlejuice didn't know what to say. In all his years, he had never seen a WDP, let alone three. Standing at his front door? There they were though, with the emblems upon their jackets. They looked completely human but had a strange aura that was always surrounding them. Oh no, Beetlejuice wouldn't tangle with them. "I swear I didn't do it! I don't know what you heard, but I just pull pranks. I don't do anything dangerous, honest! I-!"

"Quiet," One of them said firmly.

Beetlejuice held his hands up. He didn't know why they were there, but he wouldn't put up a fight. He wouldn't even argue. If he did anything they disapproved of, they'd find his weak spot and use it against him. Whether that was sandworms or Lydia, he didn't want to chance either one.

One of the WDP's took his hand filled with some kind of shiny dust. He went over to Beetlejuice and sprinkled it on him. "There. It's done."

Beetlejuice blinked. He rubbed some of the dust off of himself but a lot had already been absorbed somehow.

Two of the WDP's quickly took off. One stayed though.

Beetlejuice didn't like the look he was receiving. "What?"

The WDP sighed. "I just wanted to say I'm sorry. There's no other choice." He snapped his fingers and he himself was gone.

Beetlejuice didn't like what that last WDP said. Not one bit. He snapped his fingers to go to Lydia's world. He had to figure out what they did.

Only thing is . . . he couldn't?

"Did they steal my juice?" Beetlejuice turned Ginger into a snake. "No, that's fine." He turned her back and quickly disappeared before he could get yelled at.

He tried returning to Lydia's world again. "Nothing?" This wasn't good. Sure, Beetlejuice couldn't run amuck in her world without Lydia setting him free with his name three times, but he could always see her. He could always find a way to see her, even without his juice.

"Living room?" He tried to appear in the living room in a limited form. "School?" He tried to appear before her school in some limited form. "Freaking Grand Canyon?!" He tried to even appear within the Grand Canyon. It was nowhere near Lydia, but it did prove something. "I can't go to her world?" He looked at himself. Surely the WDP's didn't do that? Why would they care to keep him from seeing her? "Great! Fine, it doesn't matter!" He crossed his arms. He disappeared and then reappeared to the entrance door between their worlds. He'd just have to take a different way. " . . ." He tried to open it.

But it wouldn't open?

## Chapter 3: Ouija, Spaghetti and Tragedy

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Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Three: Ouija, Spaghetti and Tragedy

Living World/ Lydia's room...

Several days later...

Lydia stared at her mirror in despair. "Beetlegoo . . . Beetlegoo . . ." She couldn't pronounce his name and he still didn't show up. Surely he would know what kind of weird thing was happening, but why didn't he show up? What was going on?

Day after day Lydia had tried to call for Beetlejuice, but her voice was not cooperating. Getting fed up and worried, Lydia wanted to organize a Séance with Bertha and Prudence. If she couldn't say his name, then she'd just have to make them. She didn't want to let them know, but she was desperate. Why wouldn't Beetlejuice come to her? And why couldn't she say his name? She just had such a bad feeling he was in terrible trouble.

"I can't tell them. It'll freak them out," Lydia groaned. "But, I need to contact Beetlegoose. What if something's wrong?" There must be something she could say. Something that sounded weird but plausible.

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Neitherworld/ File Bureau...

Everybody who cared for their afterlives ducked as they saw 'him' stomping through. What was he actually doing there? No one wanted to stop him, but eventually someone tried to speak up.

"Sir, you cannot come in here," A brave employee said as he stood in front of the menace.

"Hey, You invited me the moment you interfered in my afterlife," the menace yelled as he zapped the poor employee into a harmless flower and continued on his way.

"JUUUUUUNOOOOOO!"

Juno stood firm and stood proudly as she watched her office door get blown to smithereens. "Never were decent at greetings were you, Beetlejuice?"



Beetlejuice looked angry enough to blow his top at her. In fact, he did. A whistle even sounded as his head blew off. "Juno!" He stalked toward her, his nose flaring like a bulls. "Give 'er back!"

Juno did not change her expression. She knew what the maniac was referring too. "I can't. You can no longer go to her world."

"What? Documentation then?" Beetlejuice turned into a gigantic pencil. "I'll fill out whatever ya want."

"It is not documentation," Juno said. "You are forbidden from going to the living world."

"Why?" Beetlejuice whined. He turned into a painter holding a paint palette with every color but one. "Out of the blue?" He started to jump up and down. "It isn't fair. It isn't fair, you can't do this!"

"This was not up to me," Juno reminded him again. "Quit having such a hissy fit."

"Thissssssssss issssn't fair!" Beetlejuice hissed in a fit. He gave Juno an innocent but hurt look. "Well, let's figure out something for her to come to me? Pleeeaaase?" He turned into a striped ice cream sundae. "With a cherry on top?" A cherry plopped down upon him.

"No. You do not understand. You are forbidden to go to the other side because she is there." Juno had to put it bluntly. "You are forbidden from seeing Lydia Deetz ever again."

"What? Hold the phone." Beetlejuice surprisingly didn't turn into a phone. The time for fun and games had passed. "What do ya mean I'm forbidden from seeing her? For how long?"

"I cannot disclose that."

"You better!" Beetlejuice placed his hands on her desk and got in her face so close she could make out his green eyes. "I want to know why you took her away. Why did those WDP's come to my house? I know they had something to do with this!"

Juno sighed. "I understand you've known her for years. I also understand she is very important to you. Nevertheless, you must stay away. For reasons far greater than you know, it's best you end your friendship with the living young woman now."

"No!" Beetlejuice's eyes glowed green. "Give her back or...Or..oR THIS WHOLE BUILDING IS GONNA PAY!" His voice echoed several seconds until all the computers started to go haywire. Wallpaper started climbing down from the ceilings. The floor started to grow multiple legs and started kicking everyone. "Give her back," Beetlejuice demanded. "I'm just getting warmed up." His greenish glowing eyes turned into fire.

Possessive. Beetlejuice was acting even worse than before the human came into his life. "I will call the WDP if you do not calm down," Juno yelled angrily.

"I don't care, I Want Lyds back!" Beetlejuice yelled loudly, his voice echoing around the whole building again.

Every ghou and ghost near that office trembled. They had never felt so much power from one ghost before.

Beetlejuice's original black and white striped clothes came back as he started to levitate. He pointed to Juno's desk and turned it into a cat. "I'm getting really pissed off!" He pointed his finger at Juno threateningly. "Bring Lydia back or the cat's gonna have a new mouse to play with!"

"Stop."

Beetlejuice glared dangerously at the WDP who showed up. "You better bring-Huh-WHOAH?!" Beetlejuice felt himself plummet to the ground.

The WDP held the same kind of shiny dust that he had used on Beetlejuice within a container. He showed it to the angry ghost. "Overuse your power angrily in the Neitherworld and your powers burn out."

Beetlejuice growled at the WDP. "So that's what you put on me?" He snarled. "Why? Why can't I have Lyds? Why?"

"It's dangerous," The WDP said to him. "You've been told this already. You will stay away from Lydia Deetz and the living world until we say so. Until then, you watch yourself. You start causing too much trouble and you are gonna wish you were only dealing with a sandworm."

Beetlejuice grinded his teeth and glared hard at the guy. But, his powers hadn't come back yet fully. Right now he would barely manage a levitation spell. "This isn't over." He stood up in defiance. "I'll find a way to get my Lydia back. Count on it."

Juno and the WDP watched the angry ghost disappear in a fit of rage.

"This does not boast well for us." Juno said as she looked at her new cat that used to be a desk.

-----

Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

A few hours later . . .

"Ah good evening to you-" Ginger walked up to Beetlejuice's opened door. "Beetlejuice?" It was a trick. He was planning to do something bad, Ginger could tell. "Why can't you be nice, Beetlejuice. You're gonna do something mean to Jacques, aren't you?"

Beetlejuice didn't reply. He didn't move. He was sitting cross legged in the middle of his room with his eyes closed. He was being very quiet and contemplative. Which was freaking Ginger out. "Uh? Answer back." Beetlejuice still did not answer. "I don't like that." Ginger started to back up when she ran into Jacques. Literally.

Jacques looked at her in surprise. "What is wrong?"

"Him." Ginger pointed to inside Beetlejuice's room. "He's up to something."

Jacques leaned in and looked at him. "Ah, Beattlejuice. What are you doing?" Beetlejuice still didn't answer. He still didn't move. "Beattlejuice?" Jacques himself was becoming worried. It must be a trick. "Whatever you are planning, it will not work. Quit that. Quit."

"Quit it, Beetlejuice," Ginger added her own scolding.

After a few more minutes of scolding, they finally gave up. Whatever Beetlejuice was planning, he would not be stopped so easily. Little did they know what Beetlejuice was really thinking.

Those guys drive me crazy. What the hell? They get a day from being bugged and they bug me when I need to concentrate? Beetlejuice was yelling at himself. Forget them! I need to concentrate harder. Come on. Come on Lyd. I know you're gonna do it, so come on. Then he started to hear a few voices . . .

'Is anyone there?'

Too low. Not her. Beetlejuice grumbled. He had to wait. Listen and wait. Not one of his best skills, but he had no choice. It was obvious the WDP did something so she couldn't call to him. There was only one other way she could reach him.

I'm looking for Elvis. Elvis?

No. Dammit just another idiot trying to get Elvis. Beetlejuice groaned but had to keep concentrating. Come on, Lyd.

-----

Living World/ Lydia's Room...

Lydia smiled at her friends Bertha and Prudence. Hopefully her cover was good enough.

Prudence didn't look too happy. "You want us to have a séance to call to some dead guy who used to live here? Why?"

"Why not?" Lydia smiled. "It'll be fun."

Bertha groaned. "Your idea of fun has always been a bit weird, Lydia."

"I know, but I've always wanted to do it." Lydia went over to the Ouija board she had set up on a small end table she had. "I can't do it alone though. Please?"

"It's probably bogus," Bertha frowned. "Anyone could move the glass you know."

"I trust you guys. Please? I'll make it up to you?" Lydia begged. She grinned when she heard them both groan. They finally gave in.

"Okay. So how do we this?" Bertha asked. "What was his name?"

Lydia wouldn't even attempt to say it right. Last thing she needed was to have them questioning her already strange motives. After all, it was a lie. Beetlejuice didn't die there. Well, she didn't think so anyhow. She wrote his name down on a piece of paper. 'Just don't say it three times,' she prayed. As nice as it would be to have Beetlejuice back, he would instantly appear before Bertha. After all, she would have been the one to summon him. Then after that, they'd probably go running out of the room, start telling everyone, her family would find out, and it would be a huge disaster.

Bertha looked at the name Lydia wrote down. "Beetlejuice? What kind of name is that?"

"An old name." Lydia just chuckled nervously. "Come on, let's do this. All we have to do is gather around the table and Bertha will call out to him. It shouldn't be that hard."

"After this is over, we should go do something fun then," Prudence replied. In truth, she and Bertha really didn't believe it would work. Besides, it was still daylight. What kind of ghost, if any, would actually be able to come around and move a little looking glass?

Bertha looked at Lydia. She said the tallest person in the group was supposed to be the one to first call out to a spirit using his name. She also said that person wasn't supposed to ever repeat the spirit's name again or tragedy would strike her. Bertha herself had never heard of any of that, but then again no one knew more about the supernaturally weird stuff than Lydia did. "Oh, Beetlejuice!" Bertha began. "If you are here-Whuhooooaaahh?!" They had all been flabbergasted as the looking glass moved so fast around the board, they could barely keep up with it.

Still, Lydia was mentally trying. B.a.b.e.s.r.u.o.k. Lydia smiled. Bingo. Lydia moved the looking glass herself and spelled F.I.N.E.R.U.O.K?

Bertha and Prudence screamed, they couldn't take it.

"I don't want to do this anymore!" Prudence yelled.

"Lydia! Let's quit!" Bertha begged.

Lydia knew she didn't have much time. Revealed or not, hearing Beetlejuice's concern, something was definitely wrong. "I can't say your name anymore. I've had some kind of spell put on me. I can only say Beetlegoose. What can I do?"

Bertha and Prudence looked at Lydia strangely but felt the looking glass move again.

Lydia watched. 'D.O.N.T.G.I.V.E.U.P.I.L.L.F.I.G..R.O.U.T.S..M.E.T.H.I.N.' She just couldn't keep up anymore. That's when she heard his voice deep within her head.

"Don't give up, Babe! I'll figure out something! Hang tight! BJ is on the way!"

Lydia smiled. At least he was okay. She looked up and saw Bertha and Prudence were long gone. She looked back at the Ouija board. Beetlejuice was a really strong ghost, maybe they could talk one on one to figure it out? "Is there anything I can do?"

'K.I.L.L.Y.O.U.R.S.E.L.F.'

"What?" She didn't hear Beetlejuice anymore. The looking glass was moving by itself.

'K.I.L.L.I.W.I.L.L.C.O.M.E.T.O.Y.O.U...'

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Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse.

"What the hell?" Beetlejuice stood up. He had been cut off from talking to her. But he could hear something else talking to her. "Lyds! Babes! Get away from the board now! LYDS!" He was getting extremely worried. What if a demon was trying to connect with her?

"LYYYDYDIIAAA!"

---

Living World/Lydia's Room...

Lydia wasn't raised a fool. Even though she wanted to stay and find Beetlejuice, she needed Bertha and Prudence. She ran out of the room, hoping that was enough. I shouldn't have kept talking when they ran off. She looked at her bedroom door. Normal people didn't always find it easy to connect with ghosts because most times they didn't even want to hear you. Once she connected with Beetlejuice though, his powers channeling through were probably making their conversation as loud as a bullhorn.

After a little while, she went back to the room. The evil presence was gone. She got rid of the looking glass. Sorry Beej. This is just too dangerous. How else am I gonna get to you though? Beetlejuice?

---

Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

Even though he couldn't talk to her, he didn't sense anyone else at her board anymore. Beetlejuice sighed in relief. That was close. Ouija boards are too exposed. He started to feel down though again as he realized what he just said. Too exposed. We can't use them. Then what do we do? He started to growl. "Why'd they even take her? I haven't done anything too bad. They had no right!" He started to stomp out the door. He'd find a way to get back to her, he would. No one would stop him. Not even the WDP's.

Jacques and Ginger watched as they saw an angry Beetlejuice stomp off.

"Ooh la la." Jacques couldn't help but comment. "He does not look well, does he?" He ran after him. "Beattlejuice? What is so wrong?"

"Nothing," Beetlejuice yelled at him. Then, knowing he'd been denying it for too long, he realized they'd figure it out sooner or later. "I can't reach Lyd."

"You can't reach Lydia?" Ginger strolled over to them. "Why?"

"I don't know," Beetlejuice whined, "they just took her away! She can't say my name and I've been completely sealed off from her world." He crossed his arms angrily. "They won't win. I'm gonna see Lydia again, no matter what it takes. I'll find a way. Do you hear?" Beetlejuice yelled out to the sky, hoping in some strange way Lydia could still hear him. After all, it was the neitherworld. "I'm coming for you, Babe. I'll figure something out. I will! Just hold on. Don't forget me." He stared up at the greenish strange neitherworld sky. As he said those words, he started to have strange fears enter into his head that weren't there before. She wouldn't, right? She won't believe I'm just in her imagination, right? Lyds. No way, I can't stay away for long. I'll never let her think that. "Lyds, I'm coming!"

Ginger and Jacques just watched in fascination. They knew Beetlejuice and Lydia were very close. They had assumed Lydia was on vacation again the way Beetlejuice had been moping about before. Both of them felt sad. They liked seeing Lydia come around all the time. As they watched Beetlejuice though, they knew no one was sadder than he. The poor ghost with the most did not have the most anymore. Would he become depressed? Unconsolable? Would he be alright?

"And you two, I'm gonna get you back so bad!" Beetlejuice suddenly turned on Ginger and Jacques. "Do you know how hard it is to concentrate to hear some kind of familiar voice in another world? Huh? You only thought you'd seen my bad side." He pointed angrily at Jacques. "When I'm done with you no amount of Bone Bonds gonna help."

Jacques and Ginger suddenly weren't feeling sorry for Beetlejuice anymore. They were starting to worry about themselves. What were they thinking? Lydia was Beetlejuice's only conscience. Why, the days before he knew her, he raised tons of trouble. Tons! Now with Lydia gone, what would happen? They dreaded the answer.

-----  
Living World/ Deetz' Kitchen...

Lydia was eating leftover spaghetti at the table. No one was home but her. Delia was out shopping and her father was someplace else. It would have been a perfect time to see her dead best friend. She had started to find herself thinking about him again. Maybe that's why she was eating three day old spaghetti. 'We used to dance to this stuff.' She remembered it well. Levitating, listening to music and eating spaghetti. Life couldn't be more perfect.

"There must be something I can do." She rolled her spaghetti up on her fork and stared at it. "Maybe a ghost expert? There's so many scams though, how will I know who to talk to?"

While she was thinking about that, she heard a knock on the door. She got up from the table and walked over to the living room door. She was eighteen now and hadn't been a child in so long. She was too busy missing her best friend to even think about following the simple rules. Peaceful Pines was after all, peaceful. Always had been. Without even thinking to look, she opened the door...

-----  
Living World/Deetz' Living Room...

An hour later...

"Charles," Delia called out happily as she came in through the front door. "I'm home."

"Did you have a good time?" Charles smiled at his wife.

"Why yes," Delia said as she looked around. "Is Lydia in her bedroom again?"

"In her bedroom?" Charles frowned. "I thought you took her shopping?"

"No." Delia began to look worried. "Is she in the back?"

"I've been here half an hour. She's not in the back or anywhere else." Charles was becoming a bit irritated. "It's not like her to up and leave like that."

"I agree," Delia replied. She walked over to the phone and dialed some of her friends numbers. When they said they hadn't seen her, she started to dial any of her peer's parent's numbers she possibly knew.

Prudence parents let her know she had come by earlier. They had said something about a séance and being freaked out. They let Delia know they had to have a talk with her daughter. Delia groaned. Yes, Lydia was a bit weird. When she called up Bertha's house she received the same reply from her parents. Whatever had happened had scared the girls very bad.

Time kept going by though and it was becoming later and later...

Anxious and worried, Delia and Charles went to the police. They were told she probably ran away somewhere. They should come back later in 48 hours to fill out a missing person's report if she did not come back by then. Most likely she would.

...she didn't.

## Chapter 4: Claire and Lydia?

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Beetlejuice? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Beetelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Four: Claire and Lydia?

Neitherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

Beetlejuice grumbled as he went to bed. How was he supposed to stay in contact with Lydia? "This is not fair," he said for the 100 millionth time. How dare anyone keep him from his best friend. He would figure out something one day, he would. He scratched his back through his beetle pajamas and started to climb into his bed. "They can't keep me away from her." He said one more time before he finally started to fall asleep.

Beetlejuice woke up some time later. He mumbled and turned on his bed. Only, his bed was very cold? That strange feeling woke him up. He yawned and looked around. He did a double take as he realized he wasn't in his bed anymore. He stood up in a daze and looked around. His vision seemed blurry for some reason. In fact, he himself felt very weak. "What's . . ." What's going on here? Even his voice felt really scratchy. He stumbled around a few seconds. This is a weird dream . . . He raised his hand to feel his head, just to scratch it in wonder. Instead, he felt his hand being cold? "Huh?" He looked at his hand and saw a strange glove made of metal rings interlocking together. He looked down his arm and realized his whole arm was covered in chain mail. This is a really weird dream! He looked down at himself. He was covered from head to foot in chainmail armor. He even saw something more interesting. There was a sword?

Beetlejuice fumbled for the sword. He turned it around and looked at it. It definitely wasn't modern. He was about to put it back when he saw something very strange. On the hilt of the sword, it had a name. A strange name. "Bedalgeuze?"

"Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse!"

Beetlejuice kept hearing his name being called. It was strange, having his name said over and over. Three times was always magical for Lydia to transport him over, he was used to that. It was constant though, like a chanting of some sort. He started to travel down the strange place he was found in and saw ancient gold steps in front of him. I've gotta lay off the midnight snacks. He started to step up on them one by one.

"Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse! Betelgeuse!"



Beetlejuice still heard his name being chanted over and over again. "Hold your horses!" he yelled at them ahead. His voice still felt scratchy but it was getting better. This is too weird. I need to wake up. He finally reached the top of the stairs and looked around. Everyone chanting for him was gone. Except one.

Beetlejuice watched him come closer to him. He had a strange grin on his face.

"Do something. Anything," the man grinned. "Let me see."

Beetlejuice just looked confused. He scratched his head. What was wrong with him tonight? "That's it. I don't know what Ginger had in the goodies that I stole, but I'm not doing it again." A piece of paper titled Things Never To Do Again appeared out of thin air alongside a pen. Beetlejuice started to write. "No more stealing stuff from Ginger when she isn't looking." As soon as he was done, the paper and pen disappeared.

The man was grinning from ear to ear at Beetlejuice. "Beetlejuice, I am a part of your conscience. I am here to tell you that in order to get Lydia back, you must play nice with the WDP's. They sent her away because of missing information. Find that information, and she'll come back."

"Yeah? Yeah," Beetlejuice grinned. That made sense. Okay, weird dream but there was something good that came out of it. "I'll figure out whatever they want to know," he snorted. "Can't be that hard, right?" Shortly afterwards, he started to feel tired. Tired in his dream, add that to things that didn't make sense. Before he knew it he was already asleep again. Maybe this time he'd dream about something less weird.

-----  
Netherworld/BJ's Roadhouse...

He stretched and yawned as he woke back up. He scratched his back through his beetle pajamas and slowly made his way out of bed. Knowing he couldn't stay in the Roadhouse all day long without Jacques or Ginger bugging him, he got dressed in his usual striped outfit. He started to leave but was distracted by Jacques and Ginger's strange look. "What?"

"Where have you been?" Ginger had to ask.

Beetlejuice snorted. It was morning time and he was getting out of bed obviously. Were they actually trying to be funny?

Neither Ginger nor Jacques looked like they were making any kind of joke.

"Did you go and see your caseworker again?" Jacques asked.

Beetlejuice looked at him strangely. "I already did that, you guys know that." He didn't like the looks they were giving him. "I just went to bed and I woke up."

Ginger and Jacques both shared a strange look before looking back at Beetlejuice.

"You haven't been around for over two months," Ginger informed Beetlejuice. "The mayor has been so happy, he even threw a No More Beetlejuice parade."

"No more me?" Beetlejuice slapped his hand on his forehead. "It's been two months? I've been sleeping for two months." He tried to put everything in perspective. "Oh, Lydia would know what was going on. Ah, I need to reach her!" He looked at Jacques and Ginger one more time. Yep, they weren't faking anything.

As he flew through the streets he could hear tons of groaning from every direction and heard a few grumbled words about him returning in an unwelcoming manner. He wouldn't waste any more time, he had to reach Lydia. "Two months? How could I have been asleep that long? Babe, are you alright?" He yelled in worry. Two months. Was she in trouble? Was she okay?

---

Living World/Deetz' bathroom

"Lydia?" Charles spoke softly as he entered his daughter's room. "Honey?"

"Oh. Dad, I am like way too old to be called Honey," Lydia scoffed. "That should be something my boyfriends call me." Lydia was busy powdering her nose in the bathroom. "This is so not my color, I don't care what Claire says." She set the makeup down. "This is so not working." She picked up the cell phone out of her pink purse and dialed 3. "Oh good, you picked up. Yeah, like anyway, that color Claire gave didn't work at all and I think-"

Charles started to leave the room. Lydia was on the phone now and she would be for awhile. He started to walk down the hall slowly. He thought back to before she ran off. She had been gone for over a month and just showed back up at the door. She kept saying she couldn't remember what happened. Even Delia insisted on a psychiatrist to help. I miss Lydia. His little pumpkin. He missed the Lydia who smiled at him sweetly. He missed the Lydia who never talked back. He missed the girl who loved spiders and creepy things . . . that was his Lydia.

Delia saw her husband coming and gave him a comforting smile. "How are you today, Charles?"

"I can't call her Honey," Charles said softly. "Only her boyfriends should call her that."

Delia could feel the hurt coming from him. It was written all over in his eyes. Ever since Lydia had came back from wherever she had went, she had changed. Completely. Instead of scary spiders and horror films she was into sexy guys and parties. As much as she wanted to say it was a phase she was passing through, it just didn't feel that way.

---

"Yeah, maybe a creamier color." Lydia was still on the cellphone in the bathroom as she was going through her makeup that was scattered all about. "Huh? Oh fer sure, you know I'll be there." Lydia had found a color she was about ready to apply until she heard something on the phone she had to respond to. "Who's gonna be there? Bertha and Prudence, those rejects? How come they are gonna be at the party? Well, if they are going I'm not going. They're weird and geeky, and I totally don't like them anymore. Yeah, you'll tell them no? Fine then, I'll be there. Date? Oh, I'll pick someone. Okay, ciao." Lydia hung up the phone and started to work on her face again. "I am way too white. It's just a freaky white," she said bitterly as she tried to bring some color into her face.

Charles didn't even get a chance to see her as Lydia rushed out of the bathroom and out the door.

"Total party tonight at Claire's! I'll be home whenever I want!" Lydia shouted as she rushed down the stairs without even asking for approval.

"You'll be home by ten!" Delia tried to discipline her, but Lydia was already out the door. She sighed and looked over at her poor husband. "Another party?"

"Why stop her? Why even bother trying to?" Charles put his hands in his pockets miserably. "Whenever we do, she just sneaks out or hates us even more."

"It's a phase," Delia told him encouragingly. "Whatever happened to her, she's just trying to deal with in her own way." She tried to comfort her husband. "Charles? Lydia's going to be okay."

Charles didn't answer. He didn't know what to say.

-----  
Living World/Claire Brewster's House

"Hello?" Lydia scoffed at the boy next to her as she drank her punch. "Hey, I want more punch."

"Sure," The guy smiled at Lydia and started to take off for more punch.

"So like, how's the party?" Claire came by and smiled politely at Lydia.

Lydia smiled back. "Well, like, the beverages could be better, but other than that, it's pretty boss." She glared at her date as he came back with her punch. "Finally, I'm so thirsty. Don't take so long." She grabbed the punch roughly from him and started to drink. "You made sure those losers weren't gonna show up, right?"

"Oh, yeah," Claire replied. "I totally never invited them, but they just called me and said like they demanded to come! My mother answered and uhh! So, yeah, but I'm sure they won't 'cause I called them back and told them off."

"Actually, we are here anyway."

Claire turned around and saw Bertha and Prudence behind her. Bertha had just spoke to her with her arms crossed.

"Uh! Geek alert." Lydia scowled at them. "What do you want?"

"You're just as weird! I mean, you're just like us," Prudence spoke up. "You used to be like us."

"Well, I'm not anymore so just shoo." Lydia waved her hand at them in a shooing manner. "Go back to your doghouses."

"You're mean," Bertha yelled at Lydia. "You used to be so nice! Then, you just quit being friends with us and you're hanging out with Claire and her mean friends!"

"Well, I grew up. Try it." Lydia took her punch and poured it onto Bertha's dress.

Claire and everyone at the party laughed at Bertha's humiliation.

"We just wanted to talk," Prudence protested. "We gave you a break because you'd been missing for a month, and-and something must have happened to you but . . . now we really see you'll never be the same Lydia Deetz again!"

Lydia just shrugged her comment off like it meant nothing.

"Just get out you losers," Claire yelled at them. "No one wants you here!"

Some guys at the party that were wrapped around Claire's finger realized what she wanted. They started to make Bertha and Prudence leave.

"And after all we ever did for you," Bertha started. "We even went through some séance to summon some guy who lived in your house! Ummm . . . Beetlejuice!"

Lydia suddenly became very white even through her makeup. "Don't say that name again, get out!"

"I will say it again," Bertha said angrily. "Beetlejuice!"

Lydia quickly started to run to the door where Bertha was being dragged out.

Bertha was out the door though and she didn't want to continue. She stomped off with Prudence. Forget Lydia! She was gone, long gone!

"Such nerds." Claire frowned as she watched the duo leave.

"Yeah! Like, I can't believe I ever used to be that way," Lydia commented. She looked over at her nameless boyfriend again. "Hello. Like, Steve. More punch, I just spilled mine."

"It's Barry," The nameless boyfriend frowned.

"Whatever, just get me more punch," Lydia grumbled at him.

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## Chapter 5: Must Love What I Hate

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Beetlejuice? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Five: Must Love What I Hate

Neitherworld, Juno's Office . . .

"JUUUUUUNOOOOO!!"

Everyone ducked and covered in the joint while Beetlejuice started to head angrily to Juno's office. This time, she didn't mind to see him.

"You're here?" Juno gave him an odd look as she took another drag off her cigarette. "Where have you been?"

"That's what I want to know," Beetlejuice whined. "You mean, you don't know?"

"We've been looking for you." Juno put out her cigarette in a nearby ashtray. "Every WDP has been looking for you. Didn't you find a way onto the other side?"

"No." Beetlejuice said roughly. "Not yet, but what happened?" He started to growl. "At least tell me, is Lyd okay?"

"I don't know."

"I need to see her now!"

"If she wanted to see you, she would," Juno said to him. "She just has to say your name three times. You know that."

"Haven't you been blocking her?" Beetlejuice yelled in surprise.

"If she is being blocked, a WDP did it," Juno said. "For good reason. Things are not good, Beetlejuice. No one even knows where you've been for two months, including you. The last thing you need to do is involve that innocent living being into your messed up afterlife."

Beetlejuice groaned. "I want to check up on her. Make sure she's not missing any time."

"I will have someone check on her," Juno gave in. "You will not go, someone else will."

"I want to see her," Beetlejuice whined.

"Someone else will go or no one will go," Juno yelled at him. "Now get out. Until your problems start getting some solutions, you are not seeing her."

"Fine," Beetlejuice started to get up out of his chair angrily, "but you can't keep us apart for much longer!"

Juno watched as Beetlejuice stormed out again. It was a good thing he had that dust upon him. Who knew how out of control he would get?

-----  
Living World/Bathroom . . .

Lydia groaned as she went to the bathroom. She had started to yell at her parents when they started laying into her because she'd been gone since one P.M. "I totally need a bath."

Lydia got undressed and started to relax in the bath.

Then, it happened. It did, every once in awhile.

It started with a sniffle. Stop it. I've got to get over everything. Lydia tried to stop, but she couldn't. She cried harder as she realized just how much she must have hurt Bertha and Prudence that night. They had shown up at the party despite the refusal. Quit. Everything's changed now. She sighed and tried to control herself as she let the bath water relax her. It's over now.

Yet, she still had to give in to a couple of nice memories. The memory of Betty Juice and Bertha and Prudence all out camping. The memory of Lydia's party where the party-in-a-can made an appearance. Lydia smiled. "Beetlej-" Her eyes opened wide. Oh, I barely caught myself. She shook her head. She could think about him. She could think about Bertha and Prudence. She could think about spiders and horror films. She could think about her old life, but it was gone now.

Whatever she hated, she had to love. Whatever she loved, she had to hate now. Lydia splashed a bit of water. Everything from her room to her appearance had to have a makeover. No connection to the past her. No connection to the other side. That was the deal.

It was a hard deal to keep. Lydia didn't want to treat her parents bad, or go to parties, or hang out with Claire. She had no choice though. Her other option would be so much worse. She closed her eyes and wiped her tears.

But . . .being the complete opposite of herself wasn't the worst part.

Even if I have to be mean, I've got to cherish these times. These are my last times with them . . . She started to get out of the bath and pulled the plunger out. She watched the water slowly start to drain. She thought about her last outing with her dad as it drained. She thought about Bertha and Prudence as it continued to drain. Down, down the drain the water went. It was a

perfect metaphor for her life. Her family, circling round and round. Bertha and Prudence, slowly draining away. Beetlejuice . . .

She heard the sound of the water completely disappearing out of the tub. It was gone. The water and her old life. She had to enjoy the few precious things she still had before she had to go.

Lydia started to get dressed in her pajamas and went to bed. Seeing that her parents weren't even going to bother yelling more at her tonight, she went by their room. She stared at their door. How much longer would she get to stare at it?

She continued to walk down the hall and into her own bedroom. She gazed out the window that was left open. The breeze was playing with her curtain. It reminded her of when she summoned Beetlejuice. She quickly closed the window. A part of her wished she had never met him. If he had never met her, this never would have happened. Ever. She could still be friends with Bertha and Prudence, she could get along with her parents, she could be her real self!

She started to head toward her bed. At the same time, it wouldn't have been the same though. Beetlejuice never meant for anything bad to happen. Beetlejuice was just . . . Beetlejuice. He was crude, very ill-mannered and lacked proper hygiene but he was a good guy with a good heart. He was her best friend, and even with everything that happened, she'd never forget that. My best friend. She smiled sadly. I miss you, BJ. I wish, I could call to you. I wish everything could just go away.

But it couldn't and it never would. Things had been set in motion and she couldn't just think about a friendship anymore. There was so much more at stake. Lydia sighed and crawled into her bed. She closed her eyes and started to dream. Dream of her childhood. Of first meeting the Ghost with the Most. Of better times . . .

Of better times . . .



## Chapter 6: A New Choice With A New Juice

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Beetlejuice? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

### Chapter Six: A New Choice With A New Juice

Lydia looked at the being in front of her. It was a WDP. She first met them two months ago, shortly after her kidnapping. A kidnapping she didn't remember. They weren't her favorite people in the world, but they were doing their best to keep her safe. They had to. Anything less could cause a Neitherworld apocalypse. She didn't want to believe it at first, but when she thought about all the facts, all the glitches that didn't make sense. She had to accept the fact that it was true. She was never supposed to have met Beetlejuice. Every moment they ever had together never should have happened. "...is it time?" she asked the WDP slowly. He had shown up right in her room. There was no escape, even if she wanted to attempt it.

"Well, Ms. Deetz," The WDP said, "there may be another option. We have found someone. He's been in training to be an assistant WDP for over two hundred years. He has a connection with you though, and he wants to help you."

"Another option?" Lydia felt hope rise within her. "You mean, I might be able to stay with my family?"

"I really encourage you to take the new identity choice we give you, but you are still young," The WDP encouraged her.

"Will I be able to stay with my family with this assistant's help?" Lydia asked. That was all that mattered.

"You will be able to stay with your family. You may also be yourself again," The WDP added.

"Be myself? You mean no more acting like Claire Brewster?" Lydia looked stunned. "You said it was imperative that I completely act like her. Life was on the line."

"THAT was for your benefit," he answered.

"My benefit?" Lydia frowned.

"I'm afraid he might be a teeny bit right about that."

Lydia turned around . . . and her jaw dropped. "Donny?!"

Donny Juice, Beetlejuice's brother, was smiling at her. He was as pristine as he ever had been. "Hello again, Lydia. Here, here is a gift for you."

Lydia looked over at the WDP. "Donny?" She looked over at Donny. "You've been training two hundred years to be a WDP?"

"Why, yes! I love helping others and making them feel good." Donny smiled as he gave his gift to Lydia.

Freaky. Lydia had forgotten how strange Donny was in his red vest and purple tie. He was always the exact opposite of Beetlejuice. Cleanliness, friendliness, he bordered on downright spooky because he was always so nice.

"Although I must say, leaving your personal names and relationships behind does not sound good," Donny said. "That's why I have been training to be an assistant." He smiled at the WDP. "And how are you today, WDP? May I call you Lenny?"

"No," The WDP replied.

"Bobby? Billy? Chris?" Donny sighed. "They never respond to anything but WDP." He brought out another gift. "This is for you."

The WDP groaned but took the gift. "Let's get down to business already." He looked at Lydia and pointed at Donny. "He will be by you. In some way, shape or form twenty four hours a day, seven days a week."

Lydia blinked. "Donny?"

"See what I mean now?" The WDP tried not to smile. "I'd take the new identity if I were you."

-----  
Neitherworld/ File Bureau...

"Juno? We've got it. We know what's going on."

Juno looked up at her assistant. "What?"

Her assistant laid down the files with Beetlejuice and Betelgeuse on it. "They are both him."

"What?!" Juno started to look at the files. "What is this?!"

"Trouble."

Juno watched as a WPD came into the room.

"Technically, he's alive," The WPD informed her.

"Impossible," Juno yelled. "Beetlejuice has been dead for-!"

"He's been apart from his body for over six centuries," The WPD corrected her. "In the evidence we have found, he is clearly not dead."

Juno groaned. "A mess up. Over six century mess up?" She started to light a cigarette. "What happened? Taken from the body before it died?"

"Yes."

"Ugh. I have no choice." She hit a button on her desk. "Call out for Beetlejuice!"

"No, don't," The WDP warned her.

"I have to. It's in the rule book," Juno groaned. "If a soul is taken from a living body, then the body will continue to live. He still has a body, he's technically alive," she growled. "I have no choice, I have to send him back to it."

"But Juno," Her assistant protested, "he's been reborn into the Neitherworld. He's been here far too long. He'll continue to have supernatural powers if we send him back."

"Talk back to me again and you're fired!" Juno threatened her assistant. "I have no choice. It's the rules."

"You will not tell him," The WDP yelled at her. "So say the World Defenders and Protectors! You will not give him his life back. If you do, it could be the death of everyone."

Juno sat back into her chair. "Beetlejuice is wild and he'll cause havoc, But he doesn't kill."

"Not him. His son."

"Son?" Juno frowned. "No way, that could never happen. No one would ever like Beetlejuice that much. He's sloppy. He's crude. He's-"

"Been friends with a girl on Earth since she was twelve, with suspicion on how they first met," The WDP told her. "Tell your assistant to get out. Only you are allowed to hear this."

Juno shooed her assistant out.

"What is said in here, will not leave this room," the WDP told her bluntly. "Beetlejuice did not accidentally slip through the cracks and the relationship with Lydia Deetz was not an accident. They were supposed to be together." He picked out a file he had been hiding and gave it to Juno. "We have found a traitor in our midst."

"In the WDP?" Juno was shocked. She started to look at the file.

"If we had not found out and separated them, most likely more would have happened," The WDP informed her. "Lydia Deetz was chosen as one of the most compatible mates for Beetlejuice."

"Compatible?" Juno frowned. "What would it matter, he thinks he's dead."

"Correct. Death does not give life," The WDP agreed, "but living people do."

"Yes, yes, but souls without bodies can't," Juno added.

"You've been blind, and you still are," The WDP growled at her. "Don't you get it? All they have to do is put his body somewhere near her. He'll awaken in it, confused. He'd go to her, they'd go investigating in the neitherworld and . . .?"

Juno finally picked it up. "...two living beings...having a child in the Neitherworld...the Neitherworld cannot have a living soul born into it! Why, I-it would be-?"

"A soulless hellspawn that would destroy everything," The WDP finished. "And being technically alive could go to the living world."

"It would be no more! It would wipe out everyone!" Juno yelled in shock. "There would be no more living world. Only the Neitherworld."

"Which is why, he can never meet her again. He will not go back," The WDP said firmly.

"Back where?"

Juno and the WDP turned around and saw Beetlejuice.

"Do you have to come every day unannounced?" Juno yelled at him.

"Until you give me back my Lydia, I will!" Beetlejuice started to float and glared at Juno. "Every day for the rest of your afterlife. No matter how long." He annoyed, he heckled, and did anything he could to make Juno's life a living hell. And he would, until she would finally give in and let him go back to Lydia.

Although today she got very testy, very fast.

"Get out," Juno yelled at him.

"Hey! You're the one who called me," Beetlejuice protested. "So whattaya want?"

"Nothing. Leave her be," The WDP said. "Mistake."

Beetlejuice growled at him. It was really their fault. He'd never forgive them. "I'm going to find a way back to her. She's my Lydia." He left in a huff. "You see?" The WDP looked back toward Juno. "They are extremely close for friends. Extremely protective. Beetlejuice even connected with her via a Ouija board she had been at." "I know." "Hold off on sending him back. That's an order from the highest authority."

Juno's hands were tied. Even though it was Beetlejuice, she felt anger rising from within her. The dead should be in the Neitherworld, and the living in the living world. A puff of smoke rose from her neck menacingly. She could do nothing. Yet.

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Back to Lydia's Room/Living World...

"Well." Lydia had to think. "I could be myself again." A real plus. Pretending to be something she wasn't was hard. Being mean to her parents. Lying. Makeup. Rebellious. Dating. Everything. It would all end. "I could stay here where I belong . . ." She looked over to the grinning brother of Beetlejuice. "But I have to be around Donny? Every day?"

"It's not so bad," Donny smiled at her. "Why, I'm very friendly. I can be very neat, and I won't leave any messes behind. I promise, I'll be a good friend that stands by your side."

"...or I could have a new identity?" Lydia sighed. "...alright, I'll take Donny."

"Are you sure?" The WDP asked. "I mean he's . . ."

"I'm very friendly." Donny finished for him. "I promise, I will watch her very carefully."

Lydia smiled. She didn't have to leave after all. She looked over at the WDP again. "And you are sure it's safe to act like myself again? You know, you said last time they'd find me quicker somehow if I acted like my old self. You really drove it into me."

"You had to play the part well. You don't want anyone wondering too much about how a sweet girl got into such a predicament," The WDP reminded her before he disappeared, leaving Lydia and Donny to fend for themselves.

"Oh. Oh no. I have to tell them now." Lydia felt uncomfortable again. If she didn't leave, then she would have to tell them. "They'll question a lot though."

"That's what I'm here for," Donny smiled. "I will help you as much as I can Lydia. I promise."

Lydia sighed. When it came down to it, it wouldn't be that easy. Not that easy. She went ahead and opened her present. "A baby bottle. Thanks, Donny."

"It was 'his'," Donny smiled as he pointed to the bottle. "I think it would be fitting for my brand new nephew."

Lydia couldn't help a small smile as she turned it around in her hands. It had a picture of a beetle on the side. Even though, this was all happening because of him. She still wished more than anything that . . .

"It will be okay." Donny came over and gave her a gentle hug. "Don't you listen to them so much. One day, we'll find a way to let 'him' know." Donny felt a strange shiver come from her. He let go of her. "A bit nervous?"

Lydia gave a sarcastic laugh. "What, me? Just because I'm gonna be a mom at eighteen? Just because I'm bearing the Ghost with the Most's kid? Just because if I get found and kidnapped back to the Neitherworld, when it's born it won't have it's soul and would come back and destroy my world? Oh no, no," She laughed, a bit of a cry in her voice. "No. I'm not nervous at all."

Donny was usually good with words, but this time they weren't so forthcoming. What should he say? Lydia was not ready for something like this. No one really could be. There must be a way to let him know. He should be guarding her, not me.

But the WDP didn't want Beetlejuice in that world at all. No connections. They thought it was much too risky, they needed to keep their distance from each other. He wasn't even allowed to say Beetlejuice's name around her. No one could.

"You know, maybe after it's born," Donny smiled at Lydia. "Then maybe 'he' could be called by you again?"

"They said it'll always be too dangerous," Lydia said.

"Well, I'll push for it." Donny continued to smile. "If they could learn to trust my brother instead of fear him, everything would be alright."

Lydia sighed. "Yeah. I am glad I can stay, but now I have to face some heavy consequences." Lydia strolled over to her desk and laid her head down. "I was a bad girl who went too far Delia." She cleared her throat. "Mother? I have some news I must tell you and father?" Lydia groaned and grabbed her head. "Hey ma, guess what? I got pregnant by some guy. Isn't that great, you're a grandma." She groaned loudly. "How am I going to tell them?" She looked over at Donny. "How are you going to hang around me without being suspicious?"

"I can transform too. I've been briefed about what he has been." Donny continued to smile. He always smiled too much. "Even if I have to be an apple, I'll always be near you."

"Great," Lydia said with not too much enthusiasm. She really was happy she didn't have to leave. She was happy she didn't have to pretend to be someone she wasn't. But now, in return for those freedoms, she had to deal with Donny. "Is there any way it could ever leak? Could he 'accidentally' find out? I mean, this is so big. I don't know how he'd handle it." She placed her chin on the table. "I don't even know how I'm still handling it. But . . ."

"But he deserves to know," Donny finished for her. "I'm sorry but that couldn't happen." Donny's face became very sad. "The WDP will not reveal that you are pregnant. Not even to 'his' caseworker." He sighed. "No one will know. Even I'm supposed to have some kind of cover story if 'he' comes to look for me."

Lydia couldn't help a small smile. Yeah, right. When Donny came to visit BJ, he boarded up his entire house and always hid in something very small.

"I told them I really didn't need one. My brother never comes to visit me." Donny sighed. "I wish he would have visited more often. Oh well. He's my brother, and I love him."

Lydia got up from the desk. Beetlejuice was out of the question, but she still had others to think about. "I need time to think of how to tell my parents. I just...I just need some food I think." She started to leave the room. Lydia looked through the kitchen. She was craving something. Something... "Ice cream? No. Sandwich? No."

"I suppose I should tell you."

Lydia looked behind her and saw Donny hiding as a cookie jar.

"You are carrying 'his' son, and alive or dead, my brother will remain the same," Donny smiled.

"Hmm?" Lydia didn't understand what he was getting at. She opened the refrigerator. "I don't know what I want, but I need something." She pulled out some leftover spaghetti and went to warm it up in the microwave. She looked back over at the Donny cookie jar. "What do you mean he'll remain the same?"

"He's lived too long in the neitherworld. His tastes and his magic are too strong to change," Donny explained.

Lydia started to head to the table with her warmed up spaghetti. "What's so important about that?" She started to eat the spaghetti but still felt unsatisfied. "It's too plain. There's something missing. What am I craving?" She closed her eyes and sighed. "Hmm?" She tasted something crunchy inside her spaghetti. A strange taste. A unique taste, but it was quite delicious. It was also satisfying that craving she had.

Donny watched as Lydia opened her eyes and started to freak out. "A bit too new, Lydia?"

Lydia sat up and just stared. Beetles? There were black beetles all over her spaghetti. And she liked it?

"My brother's neitherworld self is too strong, Lydia. His tastes and his magic, will both be passed down," Donny tried to explain. "You're craving beetles because the baby craves beetles because-"

"It's Beetlejuices," Lydia finished. "Oops?"

"No, Lydia! Be careful," Donny warned her. He transformed back to his usual self to drive the point across. "If you call to him, he'll be sent back straight away and they will give you a new identity instead. No choice."

"I know. It was a slip-up," Lydia apologized. "I haven't done that for so long. I don't know why I did it."

"It's bound to happen," Donny said. "Still, it's important never to say his name. Even I shouldn't say his name. My own brother's name."

Lydia sighed. She looked back at the beetles crawling around on the spaghetti.

Mealtime would never be the same again.

## Chapter 7: Facing Consequences

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Beetjuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Seven: Facing Consequences

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Living World/Staircase...

One week later...

Lydia needed time. Time to explain what was going on to her mom and dad. Time to figure out how to explain what was going on. However, time wasn't on her side. It wouldn't be right to keep it a secret, and it would only get harder to tell them as time went by.

"It's now or never." Donny reminded her as he turned into a vase by the staircase.

"I know." Lydia slowly started to stroll down. She had a closer relationship to her dad than to her stepmother, but telling him first without anyone's support? It would be hard. Lydia knew her parents wouldn't throw her out after learning the truth, but it was still not easy. It was hard to even go down the steps.

When she reached the bottom, Lydia watched Delia fix an arrangement on an end table. She wanted to call out to her, to begin the conversation. But her mouth, it had been too dry. It was just so dry. She tried to swallow to get it working again, but even that seemed to be complicated.

Delia turned and smiled at Lydia. She had gone back to being her bizarre self again. Although Delia had wanted Lydia to act more like a normal teenager, she was so much more thrilled when she saw Lydia starting to take an interest in watching insects again and wearing her usual outfits. The darker colors seemed so much better on her than the constant changing hottest style. In fact it was almost an overnight change, like it was not even a bother to turn her whole life back to what she had grown to hate somehow. However, Lydia was waiting at the bottom of the stairs, with an expression that spoke volumes. She needed to talk about something. "Lydia? You've been watching me for a time. Is something wrong?"

"It's. Yeah." Lydia took a deep breath. "Delia, I...I..." She took one more deep breath. "I messed up really bad."



"Do you mean the 'I care about no one but myself' phase?" Delia asked gently. "Lydia, everyone goes through phases as they are growing up. Your father and I both understand. We are just glad you seem to have found your old self again. Try not to lose her again, hmm?" She let go of the end table. "I never thought I would be so happy to see you playing with your creepy critters. I will never wish that you were ever different again."

"But there were repercussions." Lydia closed her eyes briefly. It was nice to hear that her mother finally understood, and respected, her interests. The things she loved. It was just tragic she didn't know before Lydia would destroy her life. "There were consequences." She gulped once, then gaining her courage practiced her speech. *Say it once, then it's over.* She did it a thousand times in rehearsal with Donny. She could do it. She *had* to do it. "Delia, I was experimenting when I became that w-way. I changed back to my old self o-only after I got...I-I got..." Lydia couldn't say the word. She just placed her hand on her tummy.

Delia covered her mouth. "Lydia? Lydia Deetz, are you . . . pregnant?" Delia was silent with her for a few minutes. Lydia knew it was a great deal to take in. She had always been a decent student. A decent kid that never got into too much trouble. A month of some rough 'phase', but that was the only bump in the road to her family. "Too rough and wild has consequences," she muttered, "even if it was a short time."

"I know. It was wrong," Lydia said softly. "It never should have happened."

"You are positive?" Delia asked as she moved over toward the couch, no doubt needing to sit down. "Are you a hundred percent sure?"

"Yes."

Have you taken a test?"

"I'm positive, mother."

" . . . and the father?"

"Just a one night stand. No one special." Lydia almost choked as she said it, bending her head down in shame. She couldn't say it was Beetlejuice's after all, and she couldn't give just some random name. Lydia rubbed her arm. "I don't know how I'm going to tell dad."

"Well, what's done is done." Delia's voice was staccato, tough. "Grandmother Delia. That does not sound right. Not yet." She tried to smile encouragingly at Lydia, but it didn't fool either one of them. "I don't like what you did. You *should* have known better. I never imagined we would be here. We raised you better than this," Delia said firmly. "But . . . what's done is done and I." Her sigh came out in a long and exhaustive draw. "We will support you, but there are going to be very iron-clad rules around here. I'm sure your father will agree, once he deals with this news." She crossed her arms. "I don't know how poor Charles will deal with it. He is often so sweet and mild-tempered, but during some times in our lives . . . well, he was unrecognizable. I hope he can keep it together, but you just turned eighteen. Not to mention there's not even real father here, just a one night stand."

Unfortunately, they received their answer quicker than they thought as they heard the kitchen door slam shut. Not like a hard day at work shut, but a literal slam it as hard as a person could kind of shut.

"Charles?" Delia pulled herself off the couch and headed toward the kitchen. Lydia followed behind her. "Lydia, I'm afraid he overheard us."

*No. Oh no, this was not how he was supposed to find out!* Lydia shouted at herself. Overhearing it? He at least deserved to hear it from her own mouth. As if the news wasn't bad enough. *Oh, Beetlejuice.* Whenever she thought of that, it always elicited an emotion. Lately it was nothing but aggravation directed at him. It was her relationship with him that caused everything to happen. But, right then, she wasn't thinking of that. She remembered how he didn't just put her in situations. He got her out of them. Wiggling in and out of trouble was his specialty.

There was no wriggling out of this. Her father found out the terrible truth while he walked through the door.

"He must have come back early. Oh this is too much." Delia went outside looking for him. "Charles?!"

"Damn it to hell, he has no number on this thing!"

Delia and Lydia quickly went over to the other side of an old tree. Charles' wallet was on the ground with coins and credit cards scattered about. He had obviously been looking for something in a hurry, carelessly dropping or getting out anything in his path. Delia and Lydia moved closer to him and saw the single card he was holding in his hand.

Mr. Beetleman's card.

Lydia shouldn't have been surprised by the words coming out of her father's mouth. Yet, she couldn't help but open her mouth slightly in awe. Her plain, sweet father, the unassertive man who wouldn't hurt a bug was putting even rappers to shame.

"No address, no forwarding number, nothing!" Charles slammed the card against the tree, finally slowing his rant down. "Still can't reach him. Never could. Doesn't matter now, it's way too late."

"Charles?" Delia looked at him in shock. "Calm down."

"I will *not* calm down! He *never* should have left," Charles yelled as he tore up the card. "Lydia never would have changed if he was still here, and this would not be happening!"

"Dad, quit, okay?" Lydia tried to talk to him. "You just don't understand."

Donny watched sadly as a worm at the top of the tree. "He does not seem to be taking the news well."

Charles didn't even reply to her. He started walking off angrily to his car.

"Charles, don't go! We need to discuss this," Delia yelled out to him. "Where are you going? Charles!"

"To Hillman's," he yelled as he got into his car and drove off.

## Chapter 8: Is It Betelgeuse?

Living World/Lydia's Room...

"I'm sorry. I wish I could help more," Donny said as he sat on her bed next to her while she cried. "Maybe he'll understand better after talking to this Hillman?"

"Hillman's a bar, Donny," Lydia said with a harsh choke. She tried to rub the tear out of her eyes. "Dad hardly ever drinks. I didn't even know he could. He's doing it because of me. This, it just tore his heart out. He's so ashamed of it. I don't know why he'd ever speak to me again."

"Your mother is probably right, Lydia. Your father will come around. Give him time." Donny smiled at her. "It'll be okay."

"Yeah? Sure. Sure, life's been fair lately," Lydia mumbled. She buried her head in her pillow deeply, filling it's wet surface with even more tears.

Donny sighed and looked at the ground. Lydia didn't need him, she needed his brother. *Beetlejuice would be able to say something to cheer her up.* He had tried to cheer her up with gifts and giving her compliments and telling her it would be alright.

But what she needed the most, he couldn't give her. She needed to laugh. To smile and be happy.

She needed Beetlejuice.

*Two hundred years.* Donny closed his eyes. *Two hundred years of practice. They won't be happy with me if I do it. She's just sinking away though. I can't make her happy. I think...I think she actually makes me depressed now.*

Well, two hundred years down the drain. But, he'd make her happy. That's what he really wanted, was to make others happy. Especially Lydia. She was family now.

He looked over on the other side of the bed. She had gone to sleep, a few guilty tears on her cheek. *You stay safe, Lydia.* He quietly got up and went over to her closet. He couldn't go to the neitherworld for a straight visit, he'd be caught. He knew she probably had a ouija board somewhere. The WDP had acted like a treacherous demon when they interrupted the duo's message the first time, but from ghost to ghost it would be harder to pick up.

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Neitherworld/BJ'S Roadhouse...

*Beetlejuice?*

"Huh?" Beetlejuice looked around him as he realized he recognized that voice. "No, No, No!" He quickly went to the door and started to board it up. Not him. Not him.

*Beetlejuice? I'm using a living world ouija board. I need to talk to you badly.*

"Living World?" Beetlejuice stared up at the air. "What are you doing there?"

*It's about your friend, Lydia. She's not happy. I don't seem to help much.*

"Help much? You? You're with Lyd?" Beetlejuice jumped up and down in jealousy. "Why are you with Lydia? I should be with her!"

*You're right. I don't have long Beetlejuice, I can't explain. Just tell them that you're alive.*

"...what?" Beetlejuice scratched his head.

*They'll be monitoring this brother. I can't take long. Don't say anything else, just be firm. If you know you're alive, even the WDP can't keep you down.*

"What are you saying?" Beetlejuice whined. "I'm not alive. I've been dead over six centuries."

*I don't have time. If you have to, squeal on me. They know the truth, they have to let you go. If they don't, other 'entities' will get involved. Just remember your real name. B-E-T-E-L-G-E-U-S-E. Now, I've got to go. Good luck brother. And I love you.*

"Ewww, I hate the L word," Beetlejuice grumbled. "Donny? Leaves right in the middle of a conversation." Some leaves went by Beetlejuice's face. "I'm alive?" He started to go outside. *But I'm dead. I've been dead, I've lived here for forever. How can the ghost with the most . . . not be a ghost?* He looked at his hand and took his pinkie on and off. On and off. *I've always had afterlife powers since I can remember. If I was alive, I wouldn't have them.* Beetlejuice shoved his hands in his pockets. *Don't say anything else, just be firm. Ha. That really helps, Donny.* Beetlejuice kicked a rock in the middle of the road. *It would get me back to Lydia though. But if he's wrong, I could get in big trouble. Big Trouble! I-I could be sentenced to the sandworm pit. An eternity of sandworms, no way I couldn't take it!*

But then, a single image popped into his mind. A smiling Lydia.

"Sandworms!" His brain said as it popped the top of his head off.

"But, but Lydia?"

"Sandworms!" His brain yelled again. "Stop and think."

"Oh, who am I kidding? I gotta be with Lyds!" Beetlejuice yelled. He ran faster than his brain, following behind him. He couldn't think about what he was doing, he had to just do it. For Lydia. "You better be right, Donny!"

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Neitherworld/File Bureau...

"JUUNNOOOO!!"

Juno groaned as she put out her cigarette. Every day he came to heckle her. "Not now, I'm busy." Beetlejuice ran into the room anyhow. "Go away. You're just going to wear your magic out again," Juno shouted at him.

"Don't have to." Beetlejuice gave a slight grin. Donny better have been right. He was his brother though and he did care about him. He had run out of options long ago, he had to take the risk, whether his brain liked it or not. "I know I'm alive."

Juno was completely shocked. "How did you find out?!"

Beetlejuice grinned, the bluff had worked. Somehow, Donny had been right. "I know I'm alive, so you can't keep me from the living world. If you do, we'll have 'other' players brought into this life and death game."

Juno slowly sat deeper in her chair. It was over. As long as Beetlejuice didn't know the truth, he couldn't bring any case against them. But if he did know they couldn't keep them there, it was in the rulebook. "It's not a good idea."

"I'll be the judge of that." Beetlejuice turned his outfit into a striped judge's wardrobe. He held a gavel in his hand and slammed it on her desk. "Now that's it, You've got no choice, Ha! I told you I'd get back to her, no matter what, didn't I?"

Juno groaned slowly. "How did you find out?"

Beetlejuice tapped his head. "I don't know. I just know that I know . . . you know?"

Juno glared at Beetlejuice. "It's dangerous. You don't know how dangerous everything really is."

"Well hey then, here's an idea." Beetlejuice smiled at her and then shouted, "Why not just tell me already?!"

Juno rubbed her head. She rubbed it for awhile. What was she supposed to do? The WDP did not want him back. He was not even supposed to know. But if he knew he was alive, he'd have to go back, so should she tell him about the dangers? Would he take it seriously? She leaned back further in her chair. "I need to talk to the WDP. Until then, you know that you don't belong." She brought out his file. "Even I can't keep you here once you know. Now, they are not going to be happy about this."

"Well, I'm not here to please them."

"Listen to me! In no way, shape or form should she visit the Neitherworld ever again!"

"But I'll be alive, I can't take her back." He groaned. "That's right. I won't have any more powers, will I?"

"I can't discuss anything with you," Juno said. "Can you at least be considerate enough until I can speak to a-"

"I'll say it," Beetlejuice grinned. No way was he letting this chance get away from him.

Juno had no choice. If he cried out 'unjust death' it would be out of her hands, and into hands she did not want to deal with. "Fine. But do not touch Lydia Deetz. Ever."

Beetlejuice just touched his own hand. "What do you mean? Like on the hand? Why?"

"No, the hand is fine. Just, don't *overly* touch her." Juno looked at his file. *Maybe I don't have to let him go yet? There is one loophole.* "If you know you're alive, then what is your name?"

Beetlejuice grinned at her as he remembered what Donny said. "B-E-T-E-L-G-E-U-S-E."

"Close," Juno smiled. "That's what it has been translated to. It is even on your file, but what is your original first name?"

"What?" Donny hadn't told Beetlejuice anything about that.

Juno started to put his file away. "The way you were named has changed. What was it before? If you do not know, then you do not go. One of the loopholes, remember?"

"B-E-E-T-L-E-J-U-I-C-E?" Beetlejuice spelled with little hope. That would be too easy.

"No. Enjoy the neitherworld." Juno went back to her papers.

What? Another spelling? There's Juice and there's Geuse. There's no other thing I've been called. "Aah, I'm too close!" He couldn't give up, not now.

"Not close enough. Good day," Juno said gruffly as she went to filling out more paperwork.

Beetlejuice stood up. *All for nothing. Maybe my weird dream was right after all. Maybe I have to remember somehow . . . wait. My dream?* He looked down at his side as he remembered the strange name that was on the sword. Was that it? 'Bedalgeuze? Well, it's close, and it's my last shot. "Hey Juno, I want another guess."

"Take as many as you like," Juno said gruffly. He'd never guess it, it was too old of a name and Beetlejuice wasn't that well educated.

"B-E-D-A-L-G-E-U-Z-E," Beetlejuice spelled out. "Well?"

Juno dropped her pen as her concentration on her paperwork went out the door. She looked

angrily at him. "How did you know?!"

Beetlejuice just snorted at her. "Yeah, right. Like I'm telling you?"

Juno just growled at him. "Do not get physically close to her. Do you understand?"

"Sure, yeah, whatever," Beetlejuice said happily, knowing he won.

"Geez, the thought of you roaming around out there is chilling." Juno couldn't help but shiver as she got out his file. There was nothing else she could do and he knew it.

Beetlejuice rubbed his hands excitedly. *I'll be with Lyds again! But, I'll also be human? No more juicing.*

"No more Ghost with the Most. I'd be the human with . . . a tan? A fan?"

"That's a shame." Juno faked a smile. "Perhaps you'd rather take some time to think about this?"

Beetlejuice pointed at her. He loved fun and games, but this thing had gone too far. "I want the truth. Are you still investigating, or are you planning to never let me see her again. Well?" Juno's face said it all. "Then I'll do it!" Beetlejuice announced.

Juno groaned but she took a large red stamp and hit it hard on his file. When she lifted it the word ALIVE was marked in red. "Fine, but don't think suicide is an option if you change your mind. You'll start out just like everyone else. Haunting for years." Juno glared at Beetlejuice a bit longer. She wanted to let him know just how bad of an idea it was, but she had no choice. WDP or not, her hands were tied. She could not tell him more without their permission, but she couldn't let Beetlejuice stay any longer.

To do so, would result in more than just the loss of her job.

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Living World/Lydia's Room...

Lydia turned around on her back on the bed. She felt her tummy again. *Oh no. It's that strange craving again.*

"Lydia?"

Lydia turned around and saw Donny.

"I'm sorry, I had to. I wanted you to be happy. And my brother. 'Cause I love you two." Donny smiled wide.

Lydia didn't know what he meant by that.



"I borrowed a board you had stashed away. Way in the back." Donny smiled again. "He'll be here real soon."

"He'll? He? Him?" Lydia was suddenly not craving beetles anymore. Her stomach started to feel really nervous. "But . . ."

Telling her parents was one thing. But to tell *him*?

## Chapter 9: Mixed Understanding

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlegeuse. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name. I also have no ownership of Jim Beam. Just trying to cover everything.

Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Nine: Mixed Understanding

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Living World/ Somewhere in Western Europe...

Beetlejuice groaned as he got up. He looked down at himself. "Hey. I've seen this." He looked around himself. "I've been here. This was a dream last time, right?" He looked ahead of him. "If I go out that way, I'll probably get knocked out." Beetlejuice pointed at himself, until he remembered. He was now alive. He couldn't juice.

"But, I did in my dream? If it was a dream." Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders. Why not try? He zapped himself back into his striped outfit. "Hey, hey, I still have my juice after all." He quickly zapped himself into his old Mr. Beetleman's clothes. Whether she was in her room or eating with her family, he wanted to see her now. Being Mr. Beetleman was his best bet. "Yep, not a bit rusty." He shook his overalls slightly and a little creaking was heard. "Oh well, not real rusty."

There was no time to waste. Beetlejuice zapped himself one more time.

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Living World/The Deetz Front Yard...

Beetlejuice felt so much better, more relaxed than he'd been in months. Things were finally back to the way they should have been. He hummed a merry tune while he stuck his hands in his pockets and walked toward the front door. He was about to knock on the door until he saw Charles Deetz pull up in a Taxi. He didn't like the look of Lydia's father stumbling out of the car. *Man. He doesn't look too good.* As much as he wanted to see Lydia, he knew this wasn't a good sign that life at the Deetz' was hunky dory.

"Teenagers . . . should be . . . locked up until there . . ." Charles paused as he saw Beetleman.

"Hey, Mr. Deetz. Is Lydia inside?" Beetlejuice gestured inside. "Been gone awhile."

"Why do you want to see her so badly? *Hahn?*" Charles slurred as he slammed the taxi door. "And now?"

"What do you mean?" Mr. Beetleman asked. "What happened?"

"Mr. Beetleman?"

Beetlejuice turned around to see a smiling Delia running toward him. "Hi there. I'm back on the job, whatever you need fixed."

"That isn't even funny." Charles groaned. "You can't fix everything. You can't fix anything."

"Charles." Delia scolded him a little softer than usual. She took a small whiff of the air. "I know it's tough, but this isn't right. I know you, Charles, this is so not like you."

"Well, it's so not like her. But it's still *here*, isn't it?" Charles yelled. He grabbed her head. "Oh, I've got such a headache."

"Like her? What's not like her?" Mr. Beetleman asked anxiously as he remembered the demon with the ouija board last time. Did she become possessed?

"Everything, Mr. Beetleman. She hasn't been the same since you left," Charles yelled at him. "And you two, what happened? You used to look older." He glared at him with beady eyes. "You look maybe twenty, with a tan. Did you go to a beach somewhere . . . for a *month*?"

"Stop that accusation," Delia insisted. She smiled sweetly at Mr. Beetleman, clearly trying to soften a bad blow. "Lydia's been going through a few difficult 'changes' since you've been gone. It's been hard on the family."

"What kind of changes?" Mr. Beetleman didn't know what was going on, but it was clearly serious. "Is she okay? What happened?"

"She's fine. She's upstairs." Delia smiled at him with a look that oozed coverup. "I'm sure she'll tell you when she's ready."

Hearing that cemented it. Beetlejuice stopped making small talk and headed straight up to Lydia's room. What had happened to her? Was she in an accident? Had his fear of possession come true? "Lyds?!"

Mr. Beetleman opened her bedroom door and saw Donny and Lydia. Just casually sitting on the bed, looking the other way. "Babes?" he called out to her.

Lydia slowly started to turn around.

Beetlejuice didn't sense any evil spirits within her. At least he knew that wasn't the problem. "Yo, Babe." He went over and pulled her off the bed excitedly. "Come on, say something. I've finally made it back to you."

Lydia didn't know how she would react at first. Nice and slow, to make him draw out the questions? Would she feel more bitter towards him in person? Would she feel sad? But as she saw his green jagged toothy grin, so full of happiness, she couldn't help it. For a long time she denied herself to even think about her best friend. But there he was.

"Beetlejuice!"

Beetlejuice was a little startled as she hugged him really hard. "Whoah. You have missed me, huh? Don't worry, I'm not leaving again."

Donny just smiled. "Good luck brother. You take care of her."

"But what are you doing here?" Beetlejuice demanded.

"Lydia knows everything. Give her time. She'll explain it all. Have a good life, and I still love you brother."

Beetlejuice's stomach churned. Did he always have to get mushy like that? As Donny disappeared, Beetlejuice tried to pry Lydia off a bit. She had been hugging him. Hard. "Alright, alright, Babe. Ease up. This body's not what it used to be."

Lydia couldn't ease up though. He was really there. She had needed to see him so much more than even she had realized.

"Lyds? You're really not okay, are you?" Beetlejuice tried to get her to look at him, but she kept avoiding his eyes. "You look like a deer in headlights." He turned his head into a deer's for half a second before changing it back. "What is it?"

She kept hugging him, the pressure not easing. The only change was shutting her eyes tight.

"Lyd. Come on, you've always been able to tell old Beej anything," Beetlejuice insisted. "You've got your parents worried. Like *really* worried. I haven't smelled so much Jim Beam since I met the guy. And when did your dad start doing that? He never seemed the type."

"..."

"What in the world could drive him to that?" Beetlejuice tried prying her off to look at her. "Lyds, will you just tell me already? What's going on around here?"

"I . . . there's . . ." Lydia let go of him and sat back down on the bed. "Oh, I don't feel so good."

Sick? Was that it? "Ya sick?" Beetlejuice asked.

Lydia lied down on the bed, squeezing her pillow for the courage. How could she ever tell him? It was such a large subject to handle.

Beetlejuice stared at her a bit longer. He did feel something different about her, but it wasn't an evil demon. "Lydia?"

Lydia stayed still. She pretended to be asleep. She needed a little time before she figured out how to tell him. Blurt it out, big and bold? Soft and drawn out? She'd never had to give Beetlejuice news that was this big.

Beetlejuice groaned. *I come back and she falls asleep.* He wanted to know what was happening. Mr. Deetz is too out of it. Mrs. Deetz sounded like she wanted to leave it up to Lydia.

There were only two other people out there who probably knew what was wrong. Her only other friends, Bertha and Prudence.

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Bertha's House...

Bertha answered the door, a bit surprised. "Betty Juice? I-I thought you moved away a long time ago?"

"Huh? Oh yeah, we moved back." Betty Juice came in and shut the door for Bertha. "Hey, have you seen Lydia lately? She's acting weird. What's wrong with her?"

"Oh, she's not herself anymore," Bertha answered. She started to walk to the back toward Prudence. "One day she was fine, Betty. Then she was kidnapped for a month, and she wouldn't tell anyone anything about it."

"Not even us," Prudence added.

"Yeah, not even her parents. They got a professional and everything I hear. She claims she doesn't remember. She won't even say if she was kidnapped or ran away."

"So we gave her time."

"Lots of time, but the Lydia we were friends with was long gone." Bertha crossed her arms. "She stopped being all weird and freaky, started wearing makeup, and the next thing we know she was friends with Claire Brewster!"

"Friends with Claire Brewster!" Betty Juice shouted, the very notion of such a thing almost causing her heart to pull out of her chest.

"Yeah. She went psycho," Bertha agreed. "The more we tried to become friends, the meaner she became. The more we tried to give her an icky spider or something, the more she just screamed. Our friend, Lydia Deetz, she's just gone."

Betty Juice growled. *I knew it. There's only one explanation. She had been possessed. Why did it leave then, did it know I was coming back?* "What else did she do?"

"She wore the latest fashions, usually pink," Prudence explained. "She talked just like Claire. Walked just like Claire. And when we went to confront her one time at a party, she told us to go back to our doghouses." She pointed at Bertha. "And she poured her punch on Bertha on purpose."

Betty Juice continued to listen to them. He knew just about everything that had happened now. *How dare something take over Lydia. Once I find this thing . . .* The girls continued to rant to him but he'd got the gist. His next step was figuring out which demon dared to creep into her.

"She's just not right in the head anymore," Prudence sighed.

"Yeah. We'll never be friends with her again. Hey?" Bertha looked over at Betty Juice. "She didn't send *you* here to try and ask for our friendship back, did she? I heard she's putting on a new act like she's gone back to normal again." She put her hands on her hips. "We won't fall for it."

"No, she didn't send me. Thanks for the warning." Betty Juice plastered a fake smile on her face. "I have to go home for supper now, it's getting late. I'll see ya later." Once Betty hit the yard outside, he turned back into Mr. Beetleman. "Possession, and they sent Donny to her? Not me?" He growled as he started to stomp away. "I'd watch her a lot better than him." What kind was it though, and was he the reason it left? It didn't make much sense, but at least he had the important answer.

## Chapter 10: A Secret from Juno

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Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Ten: A Secret from Juno

Neitherworld/File Bureau

"Juno!"

Juno watched as two WDP's came running into her office. She knew what it was about. "He knew he was alive. He even knew his old and modern living name, there was no loophole. I had to send him back."

"He should not be near her!" One of the WDP's yelled angrily.

"Beetlejuice is an out of control prankster," Juno agreed. "But, I've seen enough to know he will not endanger her. That's why you need to go tell him, or give me authorization to do it."

"How did he know his old name?"

"Donny Juice? I knew we shouldn't have trusted him. We should have given her a new identity instead."

"A new identity?" Juno frowned. "Beetlejuice was separated from her. He could do nothing."

"No. No, he must have remembered." The second WDP disagreed with the first, ignoring Juno's response. "He'd need to know his original name, not what it was translated to over the years. Donny didn't know that."

"He should not be near her," The first WDP warned her again. "You should have stopped him somehow."

"I did not have that kind of authorization!" Juno yelled back as she held up two fingers. "Now you've got two choices. Keep him in the dark and see what happens, or tell him why he's been kept separate from her."

"No. Not even you know why he's been kept separate."

"What do you mean?" Juno frowned. "What have you not told me?"

"Lydia Deetz." The first WDP grumbled as he rubbed his nose. "She's already pregnant."

"What?!"

---

Living World/Lydia's Room...

Lydia took a deep breath. "Okay. You can do this, Lydia. Beej is your best friend. H-he needs to know," she said, trying to instill confidence in herself. She watched as Beetlejuice appeared in her room.

"Awake now?" Beetlejuice asked. He had changed back to his old black and white striped suit.

"Yeah." Lydia took a deep breath. "Beej, I have to tell you something. It's really important."

Beetlejuice held his hand up. "It's okay, Babe. I don't blame ya. It's not your fault this happened."

Lydia didn't know how to react. Had Donny told him? Did her parents blurt it out?

"Yeah, you know me. I had to find out." Beetlejuice tried to give her an uplifting smile. "Don't you worry, BJ is back on the job. I'll do a lot better than even Donny could. They should have let me come in the first place." He stuck his nose high in the air. "Just 'cause of a few pranks I pulled in my life, they didn't trust me to deal with it."

"Well, you're not taking it too hard." Strange. Maybe being dead changed the meaning of new life to him? "I figured you would run away screaming. I wanted to."

"Nah, I get it." *And there's no way that thing's getting close to her again. Acted like Claire Brewster? Nasty, nasty demon.*

Beetlejuice was suddenly glad he still had his juice. One tangle between him and that demon if it came back, and it'd go screaming into the night. *No one* messed with Lydia like that. "I'll help you get your life back in order. It may have caused a lot of damage, but hey. I know what happened, and I'll help. So give me a smile, Lyds. It'll be alright."

Lydia noticed his reaction was different than she had expected. It didn't seem quite like denial. *He thinks he knows something. If he talked to Bertha and Prudence, he'd know about the strange behavior.* Did they know she was pregnant yet? *Did he talk to mom and dad or not?* It was clear he didn't quite grasp the truth yet, but at least he wouldn't bother her about it. That would give her some time to warm up to telling him about the whole baby hellspawn apocalypse thing. For now, she could just enjoy his company. Like she used to. "You're one of a kind, BJ."

Beetlejuice turned into three king playing cards all melded into one. "Are you sure not three?"

Lydia chuckled. She laughed a little better than she had in a long while. She couldn't keep up the charade for long. But for now. For just maybe a few hours, she could act like the world was still the same. The same as the last time she saw him.



Beetlejuice turned back into his old self and fiddled around in his pocket for a beetle.

Lydia watched him pop it into his mouth. That thought of normalcy was heading out the window. *I really need one of those.* Asking to have a beetle from Beetlejuice himself though? Donny took care of her cravings in more subtle ways. Knowing she was a bit grossed out to eat them in their live form he usually puréed them in a drink or blended them in mashed potatoes.

Still, she really needed one. Maybe it would be a good way to help break the ice. "BJ, can I have one of those?"

"One of what?" Beetlejuice started to eat another beetle. "What?"

Lydia pointed to the beetle. "Just one?"

*Why does she wanna look at a beetle?* Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders and tossed it at her. "Here ya go."

Lydia closed her eyes. She needed to get used to eating the real thing sooner or later. She doubted Beetlejuice would cater to her like Donny did. Getting him to share his beetles would be difficult enough, and she didn't want to waste lots of time with preparation.

Beetlejuice held one more delectable over his mouth, but he lost his concentration completely as he saw Lydia pop the beetle he had given her into *her* mouth. Being dropped, his own snack quickly ran for the nearest cover it could find.

*She ate a beetle?* Apparently the demons taste didn't leave her. She craved beetles? Well, that wasn't good. He had to start sharing his own beetles? "That was my last one," Beetlejuice whined. "I wonder if I can go back to the neitherworld for more? They're harder to find up here."

"What do you mean?" Lydia asked.

"Oh. I didn't tell you yet? I guess I kind of forgot." Beetlejuice pointed at himself. "See the skin tone change? I'm alive now, Babe. I've still got my juice though, which is weird, but I'm just like you now."

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Neitherworld/File Bureau...

"How could she be? *He was here,*" Juno yelled out of frustration. "It can't be his!"

"The time he was 'missing'. Ring a bell?" The first WDP reminded her. "Our sources believe he was alive for a short time."

"But how? There's not many beings that can grant that order."

"Exactly. Someone high up is in control, remember?" The second WDP said. "Clearly it's more than one creature. Who knows who is on what side?"

Juno sat down firmly in her chair. The men were World Defenders and Protectors. They had the right to keep information from her. But this? "This was rushed because of us. If we had never kept them apart, this would not have happened." She threw some of her files on the ground. "We should have warned them instead. Prepared them, not just take aggressive action. Oh, at least we should have warned the human."

"We did. After the fact."

"Well then." Juno stood back up. "For once, I'm glad I did let him go."

"What do you mean you are glad?" One of the WDP's yelled angrily. "He's an out of control creature. He's alive, he's got power, and the spell cast of his name three times will no longer control him. He's unstoppable."

"Which is why I should have sent him back a *long* time ago." Juno sat back down. If only she'd known the truth from the beginning.

"You're nuts." One of the WDP's looked at the other. "Let's go. We can't control him, but we'll watch him like a hawk. He won't go anywhere *near* the neitherworld with her."

Juno grumbled as she picked up her papers. They didn't understand. Yes, Beetlejuice was a pain, a huge pain. But, she came to realize over time that he did have heart. Every day he heckled her, every day he thought about that girl, every single day he told her he'd never give up his fight to get back to her. For that *one girl*, he thought he would even have to give up his powers to see her.

Juno placed the papers back down on the desk. No, now she was sure she did the right thing. The WDP even held secrets from her. None of them could be fully trusted. No, Beetlejuice should be treated as an ally, not an enemy to the situation. He was the pawn, not the creator, and if anything did go wrong, he'd do whatever he could to make it right again.

After all, he'd never let anything bad happen to his best friend. No matter what.

## Chapter 11: Anger

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Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

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The Living World/Living Room Stairwell...

Mr. Beetleman started to stroll down the steps. First, he'd have to talk to Lydia's dad. He had taken the change in behavior bad. Then, on to her friends. Delia seemed fine, he probably wouldn't have to talk to her. *Is there anyone else?* He tried to think as he walked down. That demon had really messed up her reputation. There was no way he'd let Lyd stay so glum about everything. All she needed was some backup, and she'd be back to her old self. "Hey, Mr. Deetz."

Charles Deetz was sitting in his chair. He didn't look conversational. "Beetleman."

Mr. Beetleman strolled over and took a seat on the chair's arm next to him. "It'll be alright Mr. Deetz. Lydia's back to her old self. Can't you cut her a break?"

"Cut her a break?" Charles held his fingers up in the air, ticking off the offenses. "She ignored me. She ignored Delia. She ignored curfew. She hurt her old friends. She cared more about makeup than humanity. She changed into a selfish and mean person." He pointed to himself. "And I forgave that. I dealt with all of that. Lydia is my little girl, but . . . *this?*"

Mr. Beetleman raised an eyebrow. He had a feeling he was still missing some pieces. "You accepted all that? Then what's with the frown?"

"What?" Charles growled. "Am I supposed to follow professional advice again? Am I just supposed to support her with kind words and let her hurtle through this change. Huh?"

"Well, understanding it happens?" Mr. Beetleman stood up. "She's still a teen, Mr. Deetz. She makes mistakes." Apparently a gigantic one. "Things could always be worse."

Charles just glared at him. "Mistake? Teens make *mistakes?*" He stood up himself. "Why are you so supportive?" He raised his own eyebrow. "Mr. Handy Dandy repair man. How *old* are you?"

Mr. Beetleman blinked. What did his age have to do with anything? "My age?" He couldn't describe exactly the peculiar look he was being given. It was as if Lydia's dad was thinking he was responsible for whatever happened.

"How old are you?" Charles asked firmer. "Why did you disappear, then suddenly reappear the very day we find out this news?"

Mr. Beetleman started to back up. "Mr. Deetz? Get a hold of yourself. This isn't like you at all." He looked over Charles over and over and sensed no demon possessing him. But, the man was acting so bizarre. Too bizarre. Way bizarre. *Babe, what really happened around here? What has she not told me?*

"Charles!" Delia came into the room with her hands waving in the air. "You know very well Mr. Beetleman could never be a part of this. Control yourself."

Charles seemed to be quiet for a minute before he sighed. "You're right, Delia. I'm sorry for losing it, Beetleman. I haven't been myself since this whole tragedy."

"Hey, no problem." Mr. Beetleman smiled. At least the guy was finally calming down.

"I just. I don't know how to take it." Charles started to sit back down. "Do we punish her? Do we support her? What's right and what's wrong?"

"She knows what she did," Delia said softly as she came over to her husband. "Charles, Lydia is taking responsibility for it. She didn't try to hide it, so, she really needs support. Especially from you." She turned and smiled at Mr. Beetleman. "I'm glad to see you're so supportive."

"Completely." Mr. Beetleman pointed to himself. "She just got a little mixed up."

"It was a phase, Charles." Delia said with a sad smile. "This one just left a . . . tangible mark."

Mr. Beetleman looked over at Delia. *Tangible mark? That demon left a mark? What kind of mark?*

Charles slowly nodded at Delia. "I know." He reached for her hand and gently patted it. "I have to be an understanding dad and..." he groaned as he let her hand go. "Grandpa."

"A . . . grandwha?" Mr. Beetleman looked puzzled.

"I know. Grandma Delia is not what I was expecting so soon either," Delia replied to Charles.

*Grandma?!* Mr. Beetleman stayed still. It couldn't be. "Yeah, the baby. Is a surprise?"

"Too young. Lydia is just too young." Charles frowned. "A mother at eighteen?"

" . . . "

"I know, but it will be fine. Lydia's gone back to her old self," Delia smiled. "I know she'll never return to that 'other' self again. And, even though she is young, I'm sure she'll be a good mother."

" . . . "

"That may be." Charles placed his hands on his knees and leaned back even further. "I don't know. I can't deal with this yet." He got up and started to head out.

" . . . "

"Charles, no more drinking," Delia yelled out after him. "You know you're not that used to it."

" . . . "

Charles stopped. He knew Delia was right and he'd already gone over his usual limit of well, one. It was just so *hard* to deal with. His baby was having a baby. He turned and started to head to his room. "I'm going to lie down."

" . . . "

Delia nodded her head at him. She looked over at Mr. Beetleman. He seemed troubled. "Mr. Beetleman?"

Mr. Beetleman did not answer. He walked away from the living room. He continued to walk to the front door and without a word he opened it and went through. He walked down the front steps and went passed the driveway.

He continued to walk down the street. "Babes?" He choked. He just couldn't believe it! "*My Babes?*" Mr. Beetleman snapped his fingers and turned back to his original black and white striped suit. He didn't give a damn if anyone saw him change into his old neitherworld suit.

"My Babes?!" Beetlejuice screamed as he walked down the street. A few windows were starting to crack in other people's houses as he marched along. "That...that...that scum!" He heard someone yell in surprise when their front window busted out. He was getting wet from the nearby fire hydrants, but he still didn't care. His feet melted the asphalt into soft rubber.

He understood now. Why Charles was so upset. Why Lydia was so terrified to tell him anything. While being possessed, she had become pregnant. He was so mad he couldn't even see straight. All he could was the color red in his vision.

He didn't care about people's strange stares. He didn't care about the cats and dogs barking around him. He didn't care about the sound of police sirens. He didn't care about any of that. His friend. His best friend had been manipulated so much, she became pregnant.

Beetlejuice pulled up his sleeves. *I'll make sure Lyd is okay. She and her . . . baby . . . will be fine.* The phrase just didn't sound right. *I'll make sure she's safe and sound, and once I feel*

*confident she is.* "I'll find that demon and make it regret ever laying a hand on her!"

No way. Whether it came back or not, once Lydia was safe and secure, he'd hunt it down if he had to. Even if it meant a trip from the friendliness of the neitherworld into the torment of hell itself. Demon or not, he'd risk his life to make sure it never hurt her again.

Until then though...

Beetlejuice stopped. Now wasn't the time for this. People were getting suspicious of him, and police were getting out of their cars. He had to stay by Lyd's side and make sure she was fine. He snapped his fingers and disappeared. People could believe they saw a powerful ghost if they wanted to.

They practically did.

## Chapter 12: Once Upon A Beetle Bottle

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlegeuse. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Twelve: Once Upon a Beetle Bottle

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The Living World/Lydia's room...

"Yo."

Lydia mumbled something in her sleep.

"Babe."

Lydia slowly opened her eyes and turned around. There he was. Well, the situation wasn't going to solve itself. "Hey, BJ. Sorry, I just get tired sometimes."

"Makes sense." Beetlejuice nodded, being as supportive as he could. He noticed his old baby bottle lying near her nightstand. "Beetle bottle?"

"Gift from Donny," she informed him. "He said it used to be yours."

Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders. "Heh. Well, I guess that's okay. It's not like I use it." He snorted. "Besides, this won't change anything between us. I'll still come see you as often as I can. And, well, I guess the kid can tag along."

Lydia didn't know how to take that. Everything was still new to her, and she wasn't ready to start discussing the actual baby. She didn't even know if it would be a human baby, or what. "Anyhow, how is everyone?"

Beetlejuice clicked his tongue. It was probably a new concept still to her. She didn't want to think about it much more than him. "Jacques is still a bonehead. The Monster Across the Street still owns that annoying Poopsie. Ginger still sucks at tap dancing. Nothing new in the neitherworld."

"Good to hear." Lydia patted her pillow. "It's nice to know others are okay. That their days are still normal and ordinary. Plain and simple."

"But that is boring." Beetlejuice said trying to cheer her up. "Sure, okay. Mommy thing is new, sure, but hey. You're already having one heck of an adventure. Me too, I'm alive. There's a new adventure there. Trust me, Babe, same old same old gets old. We've got new things going on."

"Whatever you say, BJ," Lydia said nonchalantly.

Getting Lydia's dad back to her side would take time. He'd probably come back to Lydia on his own. Beetlejuice needed to work on another pair right now. "Although, I'm sure you'd be better off if you had a couple more supports? Named, I don't know. Bertha and Prudence?"

Lydia shook her head. "No. Not them, I did so much to them. Besides, they're better off without me." She yawned.

"Still tired, huh?" Beetlejuice chuckled. "It's okay." Beetlejuice turned into a light bulb and turned himself on cheerily. "By the time you wake up, things will be looking a little brighter."

"Much brighter if you would just leave."

Beetlejuice immediately turned back and saw who spoke. He saw two WDP's walking toward him. "You."

Lydia could sense the dissonance between the trio. "BJ. Don't do anything, these are good guys."

Beetlejuice crossed his arms and snorted. "Depends on your definition of good. If you mean idiots with no fashion sense or brains, you're right."

"You may have made it back to her, but there's no way you are ever taking her to the neitherworld!" One of the WDP's yelled at him.

Beetlejuice shrugged his shoulders. "Fine."

Lydia shook her head. "BJ would never put me in danger like that."

*Danger?* Beetlejuice frowned. Like he would be taking her anywhere in her condition right now? Trips to the neitherworld wasn't on his agenda, he fought hard just to get back to her world. "I'm kind of alive, don't really need to go there. If I had to, I'd be extra careful."

"Extra careful nothing! You can never take her back," The second WDP shouted.

Lydia held up her finger to her lips. "Quiet. My mom and dad are just downstairs."

"Yeah. Pffftttt." Beetlejuice blew his tongue out at them and then changed to a cowboy suit along with a hat. "So skedaddle you varmints. I'm the hombre who's taking care of Lydia."

Lydia smiled widely at Beetlejuice. It felt so good inside to finally be near her best friend.



"Now, now. Beetlejuice, let's all get along."

Beetlejuice groaned as he saw Donny show up from behind the WDP's. "Not you."

"I've been taking really good care of her," Donny assured him.

"Yes, excellent care." The WDP on the right of Donny replied. "And you will continue doing such care."

Beetlejuice showed his disagreement of that as he turned back to his original self.

"With your help of course," Donny said. "You really did need to see Lydia." He waved cheerily over to her. She was lit up with such happiness again, he could feel it far and wide. He looked over at the WDP's on each of his sides. "Beetlejuice is alive now. There's not much we can do. Besides, I promise I'll never let him take her to the other side."

The WDP's both growled.

The WDP's both pointed at Beetlejuice and said in unison, "We'll be watching you."

Beetlejuice pointed at both of them, turning them into watches. "Well, I'll be 'watching' you too."

Lydia tried to hide her giggle as her and Donny saw the big, bad WDP's turned into big watches. Their faces looked angry. Especially when the second hand hit their nose or eye. It only lasted a few moments though before they turned themselves back to normal.

"Beetlejuice," Donny warned him as he pulled out two presents and handed them to the WDP's. "That's not nice. They just want to protect her too."

The WDP's both looked at the gifts. They were different than the other WDP's that worked with Donny. They had never met him before and didn't quite understand what it was about.

"Sure." Beetlejuice just looked at his nails like a teen girl and pretended to blow on them. "Whatever, Donny."

Lydia didn't exactly know who to side with. The WDP had only meant to protect her, but they had made her keep Beetlejuice away. Now, it looked like things would be fine with him there. Nah, it didn't take long. Lydia got out of bed and stood near Beetlejuice, making her own point clear.

"You really want him near you?" One of the WDP's growled. "He is the one who caused all this."

"Hey, I didn't plan on this happening," Beetlejuice protested. It wasn't his fault. They were desperate to figure out what was going on and a Ouija board had seemed like a good idea at the time.

"He's right," Lydia said firmly. "It's not his fault. I want BJ to stay."

"Fine!" One of the WDP's said grumpily. They'd keep their eyes on him though. Donny along or not, they'd keep their eyes on him.

Beetlejuice chuckled slightly as he pointed to one of the presents a WDP was about to open.

"What the-?!" Little letters of the alphabet started to jump out of the gift and started barking and biting at the WDP's ankle.

"I'm sorry," Donny apologized to the attacked WDP. He just groaned at his brother.  
"Beetlejuice."

"What?" Beetlejuice just smiled. "A little revenge never hurt anyone." He snapped his fingers and the r-e-v-e-n-g-e all came in single file over to him. He opened up his suit pocket and they jumped in. "A little revenge in the pocket, never know when that comes in handy."

"You are solucky you are alive," One of the WDP yelled. "Otherwise that would have been a one way trip back to the neitherworld!"

Beetlejuice just chuckled. He knew there was nothing they could do. "Yeah, yeah quit the yappin' already. I'm here and I'm staying here. So, nyah."

"I will come back later to check on you Lydia." Donny smiled as the two angry WDP's disappeared. "I know you'll take good care of her, Beetlejuice. Remember to make sure she eats lots of beetles." He handed Beetlejuice a gift. "There's about a hundred in there for a start. Share and share alike."

Beetlejuice watched as Donny disappeared, and turned back to Lydia. "You've had a bunch of help, haven't you?"

"Yeah," Lydia admitted. "But, I couldn't help missing my 'ghost with the most', the most of all."

"Ghost with the most." Beetlejuice started to think. "Not a ghost anymore though. I've gotta find a new catch phrase."

Lydia chuckled. "That's right, you are alive. Well, I guess you have the rest of your life to figure out that puzzle."

Beetlejuice nodded as he smiled at Lydia. It was nice to see her cheerful face again, but there was still too much to do before he could really relax.

"Lydia?" Delia called through the door.

Beetlejuice turned into Mr. Beetleman quickly before Delia opened the door.

Delia smiled kindly at Lydia. "Lydia? I think we still have more to discuss."

"I'm tired mother," Lydia replied. "This day's been hard enough."

"I know, and rest is important too, I agree," Delia said. "But Lydia . . . about the father?"

"That isn't important," Mr. Beetleman said confidently. "Lydia doesn't need some random one night stander. She's a brave girl, she can do it on her own."

Lydia smiled with relief. Beetlejuice was helping out her story. Maybe Delia would drop it then?

"Mr. Beetleman?" Delia frowned. The handy dandy repairman seemed a bit hot under the collar. She looked over at Lydia. "He does have the right to know."

*Just a one night stand. Just some boy that demon...* Mr. Beetleman tried to control himself. For now. "She'll tell him when she's good and ready."

Lydia looked a bit puzzled at Beetlejuice's expression. Apparently, he wasn't as comfortable with the idea as he was pretending to be. "When I'm ready," Lydia assured her mother.

"Alright." Delia sighed. "I'm here no matter what. Okay?"

"I know." Lydia smiled gently. "Thanks, Mother."

Delia nodded politely at her and Mr. Beetleman. She was so glad he was back. Mr. Beetleman was one of the closest friends Lydia had anymore. And with just his presence, she could see a happy gleam in Lydia's eyes again.

As she started to leave, Lydia sighed. "That won't be a fun conversation to figure out."

*Doesn't need to be a part of it,* Beetlejuice thought as he changed back to his original black and white stripes again. *Whatever kid it was, it doesn't matter. It was a one night thing, he's got no business being here with her.* He tried to stifle his anger and smile back at Lydia. "So, Babe? I'm finally back, those WDP's are off your back for now, so what do you wanna do?"

Lydia just laughed and grabbed his hand. So much pressure was finally off of her. "The Movies. A walk. Anything. I just need to get out." Yeah, with everything that had happened a little R and R with good ol' Beej would be a great thing.

## Chapter 13: Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice

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Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Thirteen: Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice

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"And your social security card." The WDP asked gently as he extended his hand out again.

"..." Lydia looked at her card briefly. Lydia Deetz. She touched the embroidery pattern along it. It was the last of her proof of who she really was. She looked ahead into the fire in front of her. All of her important possessions continued to burn.

Instead of handing it to the WDP she threw it into the fire herself. The flames reflected in her eyes as she watched the last of her life burn away.

She couldn't believe what was happening. "Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice."

The WDP just sighed. She was doing it again. "He can't hear you anymore. I'm sorry but this is just the way it is."

"Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice," Lydia said again.

"You're still in shock," The WDP reminded her. "Listen." The WDP looked around. Names and becoming friendly in their duties were looked down upon. Unbiased completion of tasks was what they did. "If there's anything you really need after this just call for Vernie alright?"

"Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice." Lydia repeated again.

Vernie looked at her sadly. Annoying or not, that guy was a close friend to her. He was no longer there though. He couldn't be, not for her. Still Lydia Deetz would not say anything except his name over and over again.

**Only five hours earlier...**

"B.J.," Lydia laughed as she hit him with a pillow. "You're supposed to be gentle you know."

"What? It wasn't me," B.J. smiled. "And even if it was, what could be softer than a pillow?"

"You better be good, Mr. Beetleman." Lydia warned him. "Dad's gonna come up here if-"

"Lydia?"

Lydia turned as she heard her father's voice through the door.

She felt something hit her and she looked quickly at Mr. Beetleman who was just whistling innocently. Lydia looked at him suspiciously as she answered the door.

"Lydia." Her father smiled. He looked behind her and saw Mr. Beetleman. "Oh, Mr. Beetleman? You're still here?"

"You know me." Mr. Beetleman smiled. "Support."

"Yes." Charles Deetz just looked at him peculiarly. "Support."

"Mr. Beetleman!" Delia came into the room with delight. "Are you staying for dinner?"

"Well I wasn't going to, but since I was invited, okay," Mr. Beetleman grinned.

Lydia just giggled. Sooner or later B.J. would have to do something else since he was alive now. He wouldn't be able to stay the night after all. Her parents would throw a fit if they found out.

The phone rang and Delia took off back down the stairs. Charles stared at Mr. Beetleman a little longer with suspicion and then started to head downstairs.

"B.J., you know you can't stay here forever." Lydia informed him. "Sooner or later, you really will have to find your own place and get a-"

"Ah, ah, don't say it. Don't say the J word." Beetlejuice warned her. "I'm the dude with the 'tude. Work isn't for me."

Lydia just laughed. "The dude with the 'tude? Beej, did you finally come up with a new catch line?"

"Yeah," Beetlejuice admitted. "Not as good as Ghost with the Most, but it'll do."

"Yeah, especially since you're not a ghost." Lydia smiled.

"Oh. Lydia?"

--

**Back to the present...**

"Lydia?" Vernie waved his hand in front of her. She was there but she wasn't there. "You've got to wake up already and accept what's happening. I don't want to go through everything

twice."

"Beetlejuice." Lydia mumbled again. "He needed to leave soon. Dad was getting suspicious of him."

"That doesn't matter now, but at least you're saying other words." The WDP smiled sadly. "Some progress."

"He needed a job. Beetlejuice needed a job." Lydia mumbled again. "Because he wasn't the ghost with the most, he was the dude with the 'tude. That's attitude for short. He wasn't the ghost with the most anymore."

Vernie didn't say anything. He continued to let her mumble to herself.

"Then Delia called to me..."

### **Back to almost five hours earlier...**

"Oh. Lydia?" Mrs. Deetz smiled at her daughter. "There's someone here to see you."

A young man about Lydia's age appeared by the door. "Hey. Long time no see," he said nervously.

Oh no. Lydia recognized him. He had been one of her 'former dates' and if Delia led him all the way up here? *Oh great, she probably thinks he's the one or something!* Well he was a drinker and she and Claire and the 'clique' had to drop him off at his house. He probably didn't remember anything, so he thought he was the one.

"Um. So." The boy couldn't help taking notice of the handy man beside Lydia. He seemed to be looking at him in a strange way. A very strange way, it caused him to lightly shiver.

"Okay. Lydia," Delia began. "I think it's best if you talk to your young friend here."

Lydia groaned and went out the door. "Come on, let's go talk privately."

"Oh. Okay." The young boy looked back nervously at the handy man. He just didn't feel comfortable turning his back on him.

With good reason. At that moment Beetlejuice himself was debating on whether he should snap the kid in two or not. *That's him? That's the thing that . . .* He held his fists together tight. *That scrawny little thing is what...he...*

Even in his own head he couldn't get the words out. After a few minutes, Lydia came back to her room. She saw Beetlejuice practically seething. "Beej? What's up?"

"That's the guy, isn't it?" B.J. growled. "That's the guy that put-" He gestured toward her stomach. "That there."

"Oh." Lydia gulped. "I thought you . . . well, I . . ."

Beetlejuice scoffed. "I'm not dumb, I figured it out a long time ago, Lyd. When we communicated through the Ouija board, a demon got between us and took you over." He said bitterly.

"No, Beej," Lydia confessed. "There was no demon that took me over. I've been myself the whole time."

Beej scratched his head and turned into a train. "Back this train up?" He blew his train whistle. "What are you saying?" He turned into a huge mighty gorilla. "Are you saying someone hurt you?"

"No. No!" Lydia quickly tried to calm him down. "It wasn't like that."

Beej deflated himself and turned back to his Beetleman disguise. "So. You found someone?" He said a little shakily.

"No, it's not like that either," Lydia said again.

"Well?" Beej slapped a dunce cap on his head. "What?!"

Lydia tried to get the words out. No one to fall back on. No situation to confuse him with anymore. "Beej, the reason Donny was involved was because . . . he was . . ."

"Was . . ." Beetlejuice just shook his hands. "Was what?"

"He was relation," Lydia managed to spurt out.

Beetlejuice just blinked and looked at her weirdly. The only way Donny could be related to her future kid was . . . *Had Donny been given a second chance at life as well? Was Donny really-no way Couldn't be, could it? I mean Lyd couldn't stand him anymore than I could, but while I was gone maybe they grew closer?* "Are you saying what I think you're saying?"

"I don't know." Lydia couldn't tell if he got it right yet. He seemed rattled, but she couldn't know for sure until the words were said out loud. He'd confused it, apparently twice. *BJ just doesn't see himself in this picture, no matter how I say it.*

*Well, he's not a demon. He's a good guy, sort of.* Beetlejuice thought to himself. *But I just . . .* "You're thing is Donny's?"

Lydia slapped her face in frustration. "No, Beej', Donny's been dead." The world could slap him with hints all it wanted, she had to flat out tell him, or he'd 'ever see. "I meant-!"

--

**Back to the present...**

"Beetlejuice." Lydia mumbled again. "He couldn't see it. He couldn't think it. I tried to tell him."

Vernie continued to listen. Lydia's mind was close to catching up with what happened.

"I was really close. I just didn't know. I didn't know. He was thinking Donny. He was still that far off. He just, he wasn't putting himself into the mix yet. He couldn't see himself in the puzzle yet. He was alive, but he wasn't thinking about what could happen when you're alive. He wasn't used to being alive. He barely became alive. He just couldn't see himself there yet. He couldn't see himself in the puzzle yet." Lydia drifted off. "We put puzzles together before. In the neitherworld, they'd come together and come to life. We tried to put them together here but they were never as much fun."

"Back up." Vernie tried to lead her. "Less on puzzles, Lydia, stay on track. We need to get going soon." He looked at his watch. "I still need to go back to your friend Claire's to erase this jumble in her mind."

"Claire?" Lydia spoke. "Claire. I went . . . I went to Claire Brewster's house . . . closet . . ."

--

### **Claire's house less than one hour ago...**

"Oh what a soiree!" Claire said with delight as she took her jacket off. It had been a typical night for her, full of boys and teasing people less beautiful than she. Aw, life was good.

She went to put her jacket into the closet when- "Like, oh my gosh. What are you doing here?"

Lydia was sitting down moving back and forth repeatedly. "Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice. Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice."

"What?" Claire looked at her bizarrely. "Have you become psychotic or something? What are you doing in my closet?"

"Had to." Lydia continued to move up and down. "No supernatural. Safe here, safe all around. Laces, pink. Nothing supernatural. Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice."

--

### **Back to the present...**

"I went to Claire's," Lydia said confidently. "I left because something happened." She looked into the fire. "I've been handing everything of mine to you so you could burn it."

Vernie nodded. She was almost back to the present.

"I've called him over and over and Beetlejuice won't come." Lydia looked up and over at



Vernie. "He can't come anymore?"

Vernie nodded.

"And he can't come because he's gone," Lydia admitted. "He's gone."

Vernie nodded again. "Yes. Someone shot through your bedroom window and hit him square through the head. He was dead before he hit the ground."

"He's dead. He's been dead," Lydia said trying to make sense of things. "He was dead most of the time I knew him. Less than a few hours of knowing him alive. He was always a ghost."

"He cannot come, Lydia Deetz," Vernie tried to explain once again. "He will not automatically be allowed to go back to his home in the neitherworld. In fact, I've never seen anyone die twice. I don't know how much he'll even remember about what happened. I don't know that process, it's extremely rare." He looked at her seriously. "Most likely he won't be able to communicate with you for fifty to a hundred years. By that time, you'd most likely have passed on yourself."

"I just, I can't believe it. W-we were just talking beforehand," Lydia said in outrage. "Everything was fine so far. Why didn't Beej sense something?"

"I don't know. Whoever did it must have had the power to not let him sense him." Vernie added. "Or, maybe he knew Beetlejuice was concentrating on you so much at the time, he knew it was the time to strike."

"Beetlejuice can't be gone," Lydia held her hands on her head, squeezing tightly. "You don't know him, a tiny bullet, it can't take him down!"

"Beetlejuice was human." Vernie explained once again. "His head was normal. Sure he could have made it as strong as an anvil with magic, but he didn't know to. It was normal. He was normal. He was alive." He looked at her intently. "I know you don't want to believe it, but you were there yourself." He pulled on her shirt gently. "You still have traces on your clothes."

Lydia looked at the blood still on her clothes.

"At least you left and ran to Claire's," Vernie admitted. "In this situation, it was the best reaction. Your instinct was correct, there may have been a second bullet prepared for you. Now." He held up a card to her. "This is your new identity."

"Donny?" Lydia asked shakily.

"No one knows who shot Beetlejuice," Vernie warned her. "This situation is too dangerous now, plus Donny is only in training. The safest thing you can do is get out and keep yourself safe."

Lydia touched her tummy. "After it's born, why can't I come back?" She looked at Vernie

angrily. "Why do I have to keep up this charade?"

"No matter what happened to Beetlejuice, beings we are unaware of have been pulling strings," Vernie tried to explain to her. "We don't fully know how Beetlejuice came to be alive again the first time around. Depending on the power behind this scheme, it could happen again one day. Just because you can't contact Beetlejuice, doesn't mean no one can reach him. You must be smart about the situation. If you don't, you and your new family could face grave danger one day. This could happen all over again."

"No supernatural stuff ever again," Lydia replied.

"It's for the best." Vernie pointed at her arm which was turning purple. "Even unborn that baby has a vast amount of power. It's already learning." Lydia shook her arm and it went back to normal. "Just to be safe I'll appoint a trustworthy doctor to you. Don't want you turning colors and knocking things off the wall when you deliver," he joked.

Not so much as a smile from her.

With a wave of his hand, Vernie and Lydia both disappeared.

## Chapter 14: No One There

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Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Fourteen: No One There

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When Lydia opened her eyes again she was on a street she had never been on before. In fact, the whole feel of the area was very foreign.

Vernie pointed to the house in front of him. "You are now Kathleen Smith and this is where you live and work." He handed her a stack of stapled papers. "Past, present and virtually every question that may come up should be covered. Study it well."

Lydia took the papers quietly.

Vernie opened the door for her and they went in. He gave her a brief tour and led them to a specially designed nursery room. "Everything is bolted down in here, including the crib. Don't take your kid out of this room for anything until you are absolutely positive he understands not to use his powers. In fact, the more you dissuade him from using them, the less likely he should even remember them. There is a good chance with enough dissuasion, it'll be just a typical little kid."

Lydia looked at the already decorated crib. She closed her eyes and pictured a little spider mobile hanging above it, along with a purple blanket covered in a beetle tapestry. She even imagined the crib being more rustic covered in black and white stripes.

That's what her baby should have had. Instead she opened them back up and saw a blue teddy bear mobile with a blanket of brown teddy bears and yellow half moons on a background of dark blue. The crib was smooth and a light pine color.

Everything about it yelled *wrong*. The whole room screamed that it wasn't right. With the constant blues and teddies everywhere.

"We already did the work for you, less you be tempted to pick something unsuitable," Vernie explained. "From strollers to your swings, everything should be here that you need. Bolted down of course."

Lydia gave him a strange look. If the baby was supposed to spend it's entire life there until it forgot it's powers, what would she need a stroller for?

Vernie read her expression. "Standard. The job duty was to get everything that was standard. You never know, he might learn early. Maybe at 6 months he could go for a stroll."

Lydia kept staring at him more. "You already know it's gonna be a boy?"

"Oh." Vernie snapped his fingers. "Shoot. I wasn't supposed to say that." He looked around the room. "Like you wouldn't have figured it out anyhow. Yes, you're having a boy. Call it intuition on our part."

"Oh." Lydia looked at her tiny bump. She wasn't that far along yet. A lot of the times, she still didn't even feel pregnant. Some sickness yeah but not a sense of actually being pregnant yet. "It's going to be a boy."

"Yes," Vernie agreed. "Your name is Kathleen Smith. You now live here. You came from a well-to-do family which is why you are able to live by yourself in such a nice area." He brought out a bottle that was surrounded with tape. "According to the rules, I cannot allow you to have anything with any sense of the supernatural. I do know you want this though."

Lydia took the bottle and looked at it.

"I covered the outside of it, but I know it will mean a great deal to you," Vernie tried to smile. "Considering it was his."

Lydia held the bottle tightly. Most likely it would be the only thing she was allowed to keep.

"The place has been fully furnished in the other rooms as well," Vernie informed her. "In your kitchen there is a safe in the left pantry stocked with extra cash to help out. The combination is on the table. Everything you will need or want should be inside your house for you."

"But my parents," Lydia protested. "They will look for me, especially when they find-when they find?" She gasped.

"It's already said and done. We took care of you-know-who's mortal remains, but they were quick. They were told the bad news. Their reactions weren't happy but there is nothing we can do about that," Vernie told her. "In fact, I'm afraid they are going to get even more bad news very soon from the authorities about their kidnapped daughter again."

Lydia tried to brace herself.

"They will not look for you if they think you are dead," Vernie told her solidly. "It's for the best. Our WDP will fill in as cops and other positions. No one will suspect a thing when we tell them you were killed along with your best friend, Betty Juice. It will cover both of those mucky tracks."

Lydia's stomach felt very sick for some time but she had tried to hold it back bravely. She

wasn't going to be able to hold it any longer though.

Vernie quickly led her to the bathroom and waited. He still had just a smidge more ground to cover.

Feeling slightly more confident Lydia stumbled out of the bathroom. "I don't think I can do this."

"You don't get a choice," Vernie informed her. "Now there's just a little more I have to tell you, then you are on your own."

"On my own?" Lydia looked around at her new house.

"Yes. Just remember, say my name if you are really having troubles. I mean *really* having troubles," He said a bit tougher. "I'll keep a line open with you for about the first four months." He looked at his watch. His partner should have been there by now. Instead, he had to remember everything. "Claire did a fairly good job on how to act, but ease yourself up a bit until you make friends. Then you can follow their lead."

Lydia nodded, knowing she was back to square one. Now that she was out of shock, she probably wasn't allowed to even say his name again. "What about him? Will he be alright?"

"He'll be fine. He's been dead once before," Vernie reminded her.

"Oh she's just worried because she physically saw his brains splatter."

Vernie frowned at his partner who finally showed. He could be so insensitive at times!

His partner looked at his own watch. "Alright, I'll take over from here." He looked over at Lydia. "Pick your friends carefully. There's a bunch of beetles in the fridge for you to help with your cravings. Once the little squirt comes, mix a bit with your milk. Or continue eating them, but your taste will have gone back to normal. What else." He looked over his notes. "Up the milk and lessen the juice of the beetles as he grows older. Eventually, just have milk."

Lydia looked at the ground. "Beetle juice."

"Juice of the beetles," The unnamed WDP warned her. "Don't say his name. Ever. Even if he could come, he would bring more harm than good. Everyone would sense exactly where you were and everything would be coming after your family. Here and back at your old home."

"We won't be here to guard you anymore. In a completely new location, you are out of harm's way. We'll keep tabs on you, but consider yourself fairly free now," Vernie said. "We'll especially be watching close when the child is coming closer to being born."

"With no thoughts of the supernatural though, and nowhere near any supernatural places of the past or present, it'll be too hard to find you," Vernie's partner added. "Just remember that the more you rebel against the supernatural, the safer you both will be. In fact, it is very

important because you see-"

"It's not important to dwell on it," Vernie warned him. "She knows it by heart. She will do the right thing."

"Well just in case her mind slips on what the right thing is," his partner responded. "If we feel that you are slipping, then we'll make it easy for you by taking away your kid. You'll never see him again. Understood?"

Lydia's mouth dropped. They were supposed to be helping her, not threatening her.

"The boy will never see a beetle in your hand. No spiders, nothing common you'd see in the neitherworld. No ouija boards, nothing spooky whatsoever. Every insect he sees must be on accident, and as soon as you know about it, you will get rid of it."

"But we'll ease up around Halloween," Vernie added. "Since many celebrate and have things outside their house, we know it's impossible to keep him away at that point."

"Still, you should do your best. Meaning you shouldn't celebrate Halloween. We won't be *that* lenient." His partner added. "And of course, if we even so much as hear that ghost's name we'll-"

"She gets the hint," Vernie interrupted again. His partner had scared her sufficiently enough. He pointed at Lydia. "Purple is a color you kind of like, right? Not everything has to be the pink you despise."

Lydia looked down at herself. Her clothes had been changed to a basic purple dress.

"Remember." Vernie's partner said one more time. "By the time you say his name *once*, we'll be here before you finish the third time. And even he can't go everywhere that we can." With that last warning, he disappeared.

Vernie sighed. "Remember we really are here to help you. Just call if-"

"I'll be fine," Lydia said abruptly. "I doubt I will need any of your help, Mr. WDP, sir."

Vernie groaned. Great, because of his partners 'help' she wouldn't even trust them anymore. "I hope you learn to enjoy your new life, Kathleen Smith."

Then, he disappeared.

Lydia looked at her new home. She looked at her new clothes. She thought about everything that happened in the last six hours of her life: Beetlejuice's death. Hiding at Claire's. Destroying her identity. Going to her new home. Learning her new identity. Finding out it was a boy. Finding out that the WDP didn't really trust her.

It was a lot to take in.

She took a moment to breathe in. *B.J. is dead again.*

She took a moment to breathe out. *My parents will think I'm dead.*

She breathed in again. *The WDP will take this baby away if I screw up.*

She breathed out again. *I have no one left to turn to.*

"Is there really no one?" She asked out loud. Nothing answered back but her own slight echo.

She breathed in again. She breathed out again.

Then she fainted.

A few minutes later, she found herself on the hard floor. No one caught her when she fainted. There really was no one. Lydia stared at the bottle ahead of her she had dropped when she had fainted.

Beetlejuice's baby bottle.

There was no more hope left. All that remained of hers was the little bottle up ahead. Her friends, her family, everything had been taken away.

There would never be any happily ever after for her.

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## Chapter 15: Kathleen

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlegeuse. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Fifteen: Kathleen

A resounding knock was heard as a nosy neighbor knocked on the door. "Hello? Miss Smith?"

Kathleen answered the door a bit disheveled. Even her blonde hair was hanging down and a frizzy mess. "What."

"Grumpy, grumpy," the lady teased. "I came by to invite you for a social gathering tomorrow. I daresay we were all upset when you didn't show up for the last one." She peeked a look into the house. "Oh honey, you really need to get a maid. It looks like you've been tossing things all over," she giggled. "Being pregnant is no reason to-?" The door was quickly shut on her. "Ah? Well, I never!"

"Sorry." Kathleen opened it back up. "It was the wind."

"Oh it's quite alright, Katie," The woman exclaimed. "I understand."

"It's Kathleen, Margarette." Kathleen tried to smile politely, but couldn't quite manage it.

"Of course, Kath, I'm sorry." Margarette apologized. "So you'll come then? You haven't been very social for the last week or so hon."

Kathleen laughed politely as she quickly grabbed a spatula that was being thrown at Margarette from the kitchen. She fortunately caught it mid-air.

Unfortunetly Margarette noticed it too. "What are you doing with that spatula?"

Kathleen quickly put it down to her side. "Cooking soon."

Margarette lightly laughed. "Neat magic trick, if you are into that sort of thing."

"Sure." Kathleen went with the flow. "I'll see if I have time. I don't know. I've got so much to do."



"Well, just try and show up at least," Margarette warned her. "You don't want to become a social outcast. Bye."

Kathleen closed the door as Margarette walked off.

"Tough time?"

Kathleen turned around and saw Vernie, the WDP. "What do you want?"

"Why have you started ignoring everyone? You're supposed to be-"

"Yeah, yeah, I know. A social freaking butterfly." She dropped the spatula. But instead of dropping to the floor it hit Vernie square in the head. "Don't blame me. BG sensed I didn't like you. It's not my fault."

"BG?" Vernie smiled as he rubbed his head. "Surprise, surprise. I thought you'd name it BJ."

"Then I would have had you coming down and berating me," Kathleen insisted. "BG's fine. G isn't even in 'his' name. What do you want?" Kathleen asked. "I'm nine months preggy. I feel like crap. I need a nap."

"Hey." Vernie felt the TV remote hit him in the head. "Okay, alright." He rubbed his head. "BG isn't playing nicely with your friends? Is that why you're having troubles?"

"Oh no, I'm sure they won't notice things being launched at them."

"He probably doesn't like the sound of their voices. Or if you don't really like them, it might be making him feel bad so he's aiming at the problems . . ." Vinnie caught the remote being thrown again. "Caught it."

Kathleen watched as Vernie grabbed the VCR remote only to be smacked with a small television behind him. "Don't underestimate him," She lightly smiled.

Vernie surrounded himself in a small barrier. "I can't believe I have to do this."

"Full of violence and trickery as well. Definitely related to my brother."

Kathleen watched Donny barreling toward her from the doorway. "Donny?"

Donny smiled from the somersault he was currently in. "Yes. Some help?"

Vernie dropped his barrier and helped Donny up. "I get a TV thrown at my head and you get barreled into the room in front of Kathleen? Someone's playing favorites."

"Donny?" Kathleen repeated again. "Donny?"

"Don't get excited," Vernie warned her. "Not much has changed. Donny's got an excellent recommendation to help out for a little while, that's all." He pointed at Kathleen. "Everything

stays the same. The same undercover look. The same clothes. Only . . . we need some help." stomach. "With that one's little 'interference'."

Kathleen sighed. For some reason, Donny had done better quality control than the WDP could. Was it because of his relation to BJ? "Well, at least it'll be nice while it lasts."

"Well, if I can prove to them that I can be 'non-spooky' I'll be given a longer stay," Donny said. "Do you think I can be 'non-spooky'?"

"Heh." Kathleen actually gave him a small smile. "Donny, you're the non-spookiest spook there is." She crossed her arms almost in disbelief. Donny could possibly stay? "So who recommended you?"

"That's strictly on a need-to-know basis," Vernie interrupted. "He'll try not to be far so you can continue to be social. It's important you don't become a social outcast again. Staying with the in crowd will hide you the best."

"Yes," Donny agreed. "I can control the little one's shenani-" The carpet was pulled from beneath his feet. "...gans." Donny finished. "I don't think I'm someone's favorite anymore."

"What about later?" Kathleen had to ask. "I am nine months pregnant."

"I am quite qualified for that task too," Donny said. "He will be at his strongest, so I can't control everything. But caring old Uncle Donny will help bring the sweet baby boy into this wonderful world."

"And before you ask," Vernie saw it in her eyes. "No, he doesn't know how 'he' is doing. Our sources say that guy is fine. Just as fine as you remember him, but don't try and question Donny."

"Nope." Donny sighed. "I'm not allowed to see my own brother. Not right now at least."

"And if he gets this gig full time, then not until everyone involved in this passes on," Vernie added.

"Yes, it's kind of sad." Donny looked at Kathleen. "Do you think my brother can stand to be away from me for so long? I hope he doesn't become too sad because I love him so much."

Kathleen couldn't help but smile. She felt a lot happier than she had in months. *At least he's okay. If he's haunting a place, then I bet he's having the time of his life,* she told herself.

Donny dusted himself off. "Uncle Donny doesn't have as much power as 'him' in this state, but I should be able to control my nephew until he becomes older."

"In this state?" Kathleen noticed Donny's appearance. He was a lot less pale.

"He's temporarily human, as long as only we see fit," Vernie added. "Only because having a ghost as an uncle wouldn't quite fit the 'standard' look you're trying to portray for your son."

"Wait." Kathleen frowned. "You can give Donny temporary life but not-?"

"Careful," Vernie warned her. "The 'he' you're thinking of wasted a full second life, there was nothing temporary about it. When he died, he died. Even if we wanted to try and help him, he is in the haunting stage again. That isn't our jurisdiction." He pointed at Donny. "When he is no longer needed, it will be taken away, or if he physically dies again."

"I'll try not to do that." Donny smiled at her. "I will do my best because I love my family, and you all need me."

"But what if you do?" Kathleen asked worried. "Someone shot 'him' and if someone shoots Donny?" She looked at Vernie.

"We shouldn't dwell on that." Vernie tried to change the subject. "What do you think he'll look like?"

"You'll take BG away if something happens," Kathleen said knowingly. She wouldn't play into Vernie's hand. It didn't matter how friendly he acted toward her.

"No." Vernie became stoic. "We'd alleviate the controversy once and for all. It is what we intended to do, but we try not to harm those who do not deserve it. This is a safer and better option."

"Oh, I daresay you would have a bigger heap of trouble if you considered such a thing," Donny added. "Hurting Lydia would make my brother very, well, upset. It would make me sad as well but with my brother, it would...it wouldn't be a good upset."

"She's Kathleen," Vernie corrected him, "and if everything goes well, it'll be fine."

"Fine, but could you just go away? Please? I mean your frustrating me and everything." She started to cry. They could. They could bring him back if they wanted to, they couldn't hide it. "And I just don't want to deal with this stuff right now."

Donny and Vernie both watched as she started to yell and cry at the same time.

Vernie shrugged and whispered to Donny. "Good luck."

Donny watched as Vernie just disappeared. He looked back at Kathleen and smiled.

"Don't smile at me like that," Kathleen cried. "My life is a complete mess right now." She grabbed some of her dyed blonde locks. "Look at me. I'm so messed up. Who am I anymore?" She grabbed her hair. "I can't think straight. This hair needs done again. My natural hair rebels as much as I want to."

Donny continued to try to smile. "...it's not what's on the outside that-"

"Don't give me that," Kathleen yelled. "Yes it is. It's all on the outside." She held her hands

out flirtatiously. "It's in the outside voice where I have to be, like, perfect." She grabbed her hair. "The blonde hair. The blush on the cheeks. The red lipstick. Everything is outside, and that's the only thing that counts." She started to stamp her foot and the tears came unwillingly. "I hate my life. I can't even keep this house under control."

Donny wanted to offer words of sympathy, but he just didn't know what to do. Kathleen was concerned about her looks? Over the whole WDP thing she was dwelling on her looks? "...there are worse things to-

"No there's not, not according to Vernie and the others. I'm supposed to always be perfect on the outside. Who cares what's going on inside?" Kathleen yelled at him angrily. She suddenly became quiet and then cried again. "I'm sorry, I just, I hate myself. And I'm even out of mashed potatoes and I *need* mashed potatoes to eat my beetles in. It doesn't taste right if I don't."

"Okay, okay!" It was a little harder but Donny conjured up some mashed potatoes with beetles in them in a bowl for her. "Th-there?"

Kathleen sniffled and looked at the bowl.

Donny watched as she ate them up. "Better?"

"Much." She looked over at Donny. "Oh. I'm sorry." She tried to hide her tears again. "Sorry Donny, I didn't mean to yell at you. It's just... hard. It's so hard."

"What else do you need?" Donny asked worriedly.

"Nothing. I just have to cry." She sniffled.

Donny just stared at her for awhile.

Kathleen gained control of herself and sighed. "Sorry. I just had a moment. Can you conjure up something else? Like a cherry pop?" Donny smiled and conjured up some cherry pop. "With ice cream?" she added. Donny nodded and added a scoop of ice cream. "and some pickles," Kathleen added. Donny added pickle slices to it.

"No," she frowned. "Who has an ice cream cherry pop with sliced pickles? Dill spears of course."

Donny added two dill spears and took away the slices. "Is that it?"

Kathleen started to eat her treat with delight. "That's great, thanks."

"No, that isn't great." Vernie appeared beside Donny. "You should only use what powers you have to block the kids. Not conjure up treats."

"Sorry. I'm new at this. I promise, no more conjuring." Donny smiled.

Kathleen didn't say anything. She figured a bit of ice cream wouldn't do any harm.

"Kathleen." Vernie frowned. "Don't do that again."

"Donny did it. I requested but he did it," she said quickly, "you can't pin that on me."

"You're lucky you were only dealing with me," Vernie warned. "Not every WDP is that nice." He pointed at the treat. "Now conjure that out of here and don't do that anymore, Donny."

"No," Kathleen growled. "That's more conjuring which is inappropriate, remember? Besides, it's *mine*." She held it tightly. "I do everything you say to do. Everything. No questions asked, and all I want is *one thing*. One thing."

Donny and Vernie both took a step back.

"Okay," Vernie agreed as he whispered to Donny. "She can have that but not anymore because frankly I uh..."

Donny and Vernie both noticed flames coming from Kathleen. Literally.

"Just no more after that." He finished whispering to Donny.

"No more conjuring. I promise." Donny grinned. "Don't worry about us. I'll be safer, I just slipped."

"No more slipping," Vernie warned him as he disappeared.

Donny sighed. So far he wasn't doing such a good job. "I just live up the street." He laughed slightly. Heh, live. "If you need anything, just come by. It's always nice to have friends."

Kathleen finished her treat. "I'm sure I will later but I really need a nap. I'll see ya soon, Donny."

Donny smiled as he started to leave. At least he could still be a little helpful. He was very disheartened about his brother not being able to see her or his unborn child. *Well, he'll at least meet them when they pass on as well.* He thought, trying to think of something comforting.

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## Chapter 16: Unexpected Communication

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Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Sixteen: Unexpected Communication

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The real world...

KNOCK KNOCK

"Hello friend," Donny smiled as he saw Kathleen at his door. "I was wondering when you would come over. I have some yummy cookies all set out right now."

"Later," Kathleen groaned. She watched some of her new friends pass by. She waved to them and spoke to Donny as she grabbed her back. "Donny, come over to my place for a bit."

"I would like to but I'm in a bit of a predicament with my cleaning."

"Donny. My place. *Now*," she commanded through gritted teeth.

"Oh." Donny looked sad. "Why are you being so hostile?"

"Donny, get to the nursery now!"

"Oh, Kathleen!" One of the women from outside came over and touched her belly. "You never get so riled up. Are you in labor? Do you need Monty to drive you to the hospital?" She snapped at her husband. "Honey, get the car ready."

"Oh." Donny hit his head. How could he not see that? "It's okay, we'll go to the nursery."

"It's not close enough," Kathleen tried to lie through the pain. She couldn't go to the hospital, there was no telling what would happen. "Don't worry. I've already called a ride too. I'll be fine."

"Oh, Kathleen's having her baby now?" Another neighbor came out to see her. "Should we head to the hospital? Do you need any help?"

"Oh Katie is having the baby?" Margarette yelled as she came running down the street. "Who is taking her to the hospital?"

In a matter of moments, people were flocking all over Kathleen while she looked angrily at Donny. Why couldn't he move faster? Now she had a rag-tag team of uppity women she had to call 'friends' fawning all over her and her well being.

Donny just smiled like an ass again. "It's okay, all your friends are here to support you. I'm here to support you too because I-"

"You love me, I got it!" Kathleen yelled angrily, trying to hide her pain. If they knew *how close* together everything was, they would surely make her go to a hospital. "Well show me how much you love me and get to my house now!"

Donny whimpered. Kathleen had never been so cold before. She had her moments during her pregnancy, but she practically had reflections of fire in her eyes. BG's powers were multiplying her emotional need for help. "I'm coming," he said weakly.

The ladies all watched in concern as Donny and Kathleen both headed to her house. They began to gossip.

"Wow, Donny isn't the father, is he?"

"No, no, I hear he's the uncle."

"Then who's the father?"

"Probably just a schmuck."

"Yes, her parents probably bailed her out of her desperate situation with money. It's what I've always assumed."

"I would do the same for my kids."

"What, give them money?"

"No, get them as far away from me as possible. Imagine the reputation they'd have to deal with. And oh. Another fatherless child in the neighborhood."

"Well maybe it'll be cute for a bit though."

The ladies continued to yammer on as Donny and Kathleen reached her home and went inside.

The nursery...

"Okay, lie down if you want." Donny smiled at Kathleen.

"Quit smiling!" Kathleen yelled at him. "Smile, smile, smile. I love you, I like you, here's a gift, and smiling more. Knock it off, *now*."

Donny looked surprised again. "O-okay? There is no need to-"

"There is need, you're driving me crazy! With your constant 'I love you's' and 'everything will be alright' crap over and over!"

"It's okay?" Donny smiled weakly.

"Quit it!"

"Okay!" Donny slightly jumped in the air as he saw the fury in Kathleen. *She used to be such a sweet girl.*

Kathleen grabbed her pelvis in pain. It was horrendous. She had never been through so much pain before. "Why do women do this willingly? Make it stop, Donny. Please."

Donny covered his ears as he heard her scream. It was supernaturally way too loud. The cracks that were appearing in the nursery window were proof of that. "You must calm down. You'll break the windows. Remember your Lamaze." He tried to calm her with breathing. "Hee hee hoo."

Kathleen tried to breathe right a couple of times then gave up again. Breathing did nothing from the pain that felt like she was being ripped in half. She pulled herself to the floor. "I'm done with this, just get it out."

Donny got on the floor and looked. "I can't, you aren't ready yet."

"Well make me ready." Her voice was angry, but filled with strained pain too. Her eyes were watering. Why couldn't Donny help her out with anything already. "Please, stop being so slow. Do something."

"I-I don't have that power," Donny said meekly. "I'm sorry."

"Why not just try?" Kathleen felt her body trembling from the pain. "It hurts."

"I can't interfere," Donny assured her. "I never could for anyone, I'm afraid. It's the birthing process, we are not allowed to interfere in the process of new life." He just gave a slight smile. "You are getting closer though."

Kathleen cried as she started to move even more. The back and forth motion on her knees was the only thing that helped the pain even slightly. Beetlejuice would have been able to do something. She rocked harder back and forth before turning around on her back. "Please help? *Please?*"

Donny looked again. It wasn't something he liked to do. This process was for a doctor, not an Uncle. "You are still not ready."

"I need to be, this hurts." Kathleen insisted as she rubbed her head against the floor. Anything. Couldn't someone do something? "I can't take it much longer. Please. Oh, oh. Beetlejuice." She couldn't help it. Right now she was in so much pain, she could barely think. And the only thing she could think of, was the only one who could have possibly made her feel better. Complete.



"It's okay, I know it hurts," Donny tried to comfort her, "but you can't say his name. Remember that. I am here though."

"I don't want you." Kathleen rocked her body to the left, straightening her legs as much as she could. Whatever movement even slightly helped the pain, she would take. "I want my parents here. I want my friend here. I really, I really really want him here. I want B.J. B.J!"

*Babe?*

Kathleen gasped. "Beetlejuice?!"

"No, no," Donny warned her as he saw the WDP suddenly show up. "Kathleen, the WDP are all around you. Do not do it, he could not come anyway."

*Beetlejuice?* Kathleen thought to herself.

*Babe? What's the matter? I can hear you screaming from here.*

*I'm having the baby.*

*Already? Whoah, time flies when you're dead. Well, kind of. I hate stupid lines. Are you okay?*

*No, it hurts.*

*Duh, you're giving birth.*

*B.J!*

*What? Move it along already! I know we have eternity but this is ridiculous!*

*Beej!*

*Breathe. Don't worry, Lyd, it's almost over I bet. How in the world am I hearing you though? You're not on a dumb Ouija board are you?*

"I'm giving birth, I'm not on some damn ouija board!" Kathleen yelled.

Donny and five WDP's looked at her funny. Was she delusional?

*Whoah. Easy on the mouth, babe. Geez, you are in pain. It's alright, just breathe in and out.*

*It hurts so much.*

*I know, but I died twice. Trust me, you're in a better spot than I am.*

"I can't do this, it hurts!"

Just breathe, you'll be okay. Would I steer ya wrong?

Kathleen finally started to listen. "Hee hee hoo. Hee hee hoo." She breathed in and out.

"There you go." Donny patted her leg. "You're getting it now."

*It still really hurts*

*You'll be okay. Humans do that thing every day. Hey, I'm finally getting closer.*

*Beej! I can't call you anymore.*

*Couldn't if you wanted to, Lyd. At least not right now. Maybe not for awhile.*

*B.J...*

*Bugging the heck out of me how we're connecting though. No one else seems to hear you. They keep giving me weird looks.*

*B.J!*

*Breathe again, don't quit. If you're not at a board then how in the heck-*

*B.J., I'm having your baby.*

*. . . huh?*

"It's yours," Kathleen managed to whine through her breathing. Donny and the WDP looked at her strangely but she was far from caring. "Beej, I can't explain right now, but it's yours."

*But I'm dead. You know, and most of the time I've been dead. And, come on, Lyd, you're eighteen. You know how the bird and bees things work. Are you sure you aren't delusional from the pain or something?*

"I tried to explain it before you DieAAAgghed!"

*Oh. Oh yeah, I remember now. You said I was...mine?!*

Kathleen screamed and tried to aim her feet the other way, but the WDP and Donny were starting to hold her in one place now. "Stop it, I need to move. I need to move. Let go of me, I need to move!"

*Okay, breathe. What are you looking at? Stop looking at me. Geese, dead newbies. You know I hate them. So, mine? How is that even possible, Lyd?*

"Beej. I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner," Kathleen whined through the pain. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay, I'm sure he'd understand." Donny tried to be supportive.

*Um . . . yeah, sure. You bet.*

"Yes, it's yours." Kathleen slammed her fist on the floor. She could tell from his tone, he didn't believe her. "It's true. I know you don't believe, but it's true."

"Oh, you're getting very close now." Donny sat on the floor. "You must stop wiggling now and stay still. Push when I tell you, okay?"

*Beej.*

There was no answer.

*Beej?*

*I'm here. Keep breathing.*

*B.J. Do you? Understand?*

*I don't know. Just . . . are you sure?*

"Yes!" Kathleen yelled as she started to push. "Beej, you've gotta come back," Kathleen whimpered. "Please?"

*I . . . the connection to this place could only be . . .*

His voice stopped being heard. Was he starting to believe?

*Boy or girl?*

"Boy." Kathleen whined as she started to push again. "I'm sorry."

*I'll stop it, I promise!*

Kathleen pushed again, the surprise of B.J.'s voice change dulled the pain slightly. It didn't even sound like him, nor did it sound like a question. It was clearly a demand. He was beginning to believe her. *I'm so sorry.*

There was no answer back.

"Beej?" Kathleen yelled as she had to push again.

*They just jacked with the **wrong** ghost. I am running as fast as I can, I won't let it happen, I won't!*

Kathleen heard the growl in his voice. He was taking it even worse than she thought. The baby was coming. The past couldn't be changed.

*Don't worry, I won't let this happen. I'll do whatever it takes. Get out of the way, dead people, I've got to get through now!*

"You're getting closer!" Donny said brightly. "He's almost here!"

"Sorry," Kathleen yelled as she pushed again. "I thought I'd have time to explain. You can't change the past, B.J."

Vernie emerged from the WDP's. "She is delusional. Should we give her something?"

"No, no. Whatever is happening, it seems to be calming her," Donny disagreed. "Besides, she's almost there."

"Beej...it's so painful but..." Kathleen pushed again.

*Next in line please!*

*Well hang on, I'm in the middle of something.*

"I'm sure he's almost here." Donny said a bit more skeptically. He looked around the room. So far, there was no wild magic of any kind. Why was there no magic yet? He felt a strange shiver crawl across his back. Something wasn't right.

"Something's wrong isn't it?" Vernie asked him. "Something should have been happening by now."

"I'm sure everything is fine." Donny tried to continue to smile. "Just taking a bit longer."

Kathleen tried to concentrate but voices of more dead people were being heard over Beetlejuice's. They were all mixed up, too many to identify.

*Next. I said hang on. I don't wanna go yet. Is this line ever gonna end? Am I getting closer? What happens after this? Am I really dead? I can't be dead. Next.*

-----

To Beetlejuice...

"Name sir," The ghoul in front of him demanded.

Beetlejuice moved through as fast as he could. He knew he wouldn't get processed by the decider, but he was going to do something. Lydia was delirious, or really well lied to, one or the other. But birth wasn't what let someone communicate with where he was. There was only one thing that could possibly let them communicate. It took a desperate need to see someone there along with . . . oncoming death.

Lydia was dying. He wasn't going to argue, ask for explanations or anything else once he put two and two together. He refused to let her life end without a fight! She wasn't ready for the neitherworld to be hers yet. She had family and friends. She had a new baby to take care of. "Emergency! Tell me about Lydia Deetz!"

"Lydia Deetz. Let's see..." The provider ran through the list. "Oh yes. She will be in a party of two. Arriving somewhere around the neighborhood of . . . five minutes?"

## Chapter 17: Beetlejuice's Sacrifice

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlegeuse. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Betelgeuse

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Seventeen: Beetlejuice's Sacrifice

---

"Um." Donny looked at his watch. "Keep pushing?"

Kathleen wheezed, out of energy completely. "I can't." There wasn't anything left to give. Her body was so tired.

"Well, looks like this was taken care of without being that messy," One of the WDP smiled. "It's stillborn."

"It's not stillborn, it's just not coming out," Vernie disagreed. "It's supernatural. Maybe it needs assistance."

"Which is illegal, so either way, he isn't coming out." Another WDP took out a gun. "Maybe we should just end her suffering now? She'll be dead soon anyway."

Donny tried not to listen, and wanted to disagree, but even he had not told Kathleen how much she had been bleeding.

---

"Listen ghoul!" Beetlejuice demanded as he grabbed the ghoul. "She isn't dying, you got that? Too young, cancel the appointment. You better save her before I take this up with your supervisor!"

"I don't have that power," The ghoul yelled back, "life or death has no controller."

"Not quite."

Beetlejuice turned around and saw a WDP. "Guys get around everywhere." He groaned, but felt relieved. A WDP could do just about anything. "Go save her and the kid."

"We can't." The WDP shrugged his shoulders. "Only if you do something, Beetlejuice."

"Well, hurry it up. I'll do anything for Lyd."

"Don't get happy. You aren't coming back to life. In fact, you're sacrificing a great deal."

"I don't care," Beetlejuice muttered, "just save them."

"Are you positive?" The WDP assured him. "We just can't do a favor this big without as big a favor in return. You're trying to save two lives. The price is gonna be high."

"Knock it off already and save 'em."

"You are really ready to sacrifice everything?" The WDP asked one more time. "As in your entire time of being Beetlejuice?"

"What?"

"No knowledge of Lydia, no knowledge of magic, no knowledge of even the neitherworld," the WDP grinned wickedly. "Nothing you know now, you will remember. Everything you do not remember now, you will remember."

"What?" Beetlejuice yelled. "Why? No deal!"

"Okay then, she dies." The WDP smiled. "Have a nice afterlife."

"No you don't." Beetlejuice didn't care about the rules anymore, he tried to use his magic.

The WDP had magic of his own though. "Shame, shame." He looked at his watch. "Don't worry, she and your little soulless demon will be here in a matter of minutes."

"Soulless demon?" Beetlejuice raised an eyebrow. "So it is a demons."

"No worse demon than you," the WDP chuckled. "Ooh. Let's hope the woman and your little spawn don't come too early like 'dad' did the first time," he chuckled. "Being brought here just a smidge beforehand could give her the energy she needs to give birth to the hell creature that will destroy everything. Entrance or not, souls still aren't born in here. Guess your little caseworker didn't think of that when she thought a little extra punishment would work on you. Oh yeah, and go ahead and call me Frank if you like," he chuckled. "No need to be formal in such a situation is there?"

"?!" What? "That's not possible. It can't be mine."

"Look, you can't just butt a couple of heads between a miniature powered ghost and a human if your trying to create a beast to turn a world into hell, can you? Don't remember your first dream? Pretty real, wasn't it? And, oh, where did you wake up in your new life?"

Beetlejuice bit his lip. Hard. He didn't have long. There was no way this guy was on the side of justice. He might have the power to save Lydia, but he wouldn't use it. Killing her was in his plans. A baby was in his plans. *Lyd was right*. He didn't get the good explanation she probably had, but he had enough of the basics from someone who was clearly responsible. He also had a good idea from being in the neitherworld what the sacred do's and don'ts were in where he was at now. But, he also had a few minutes. Only a few minutes. "You filed the weird reports on me in the past. You filed the reports for visitation. You got Juno to keep us

apart. You brought me back to life once before I thought I could be. You created what's supposed to be the ultimate death and destruction to everything. You want me to forget who I am, in order to save Lyd." He couldn't think of all the factors he was spouting out. All he could do was watch for reaction. So far, he seemed to be on the ball.

"All but Juno. It would have been easier if she hadn't tried that stupid trick," he smiled. "By the way, you've got about four minutes to make up your mind before your soul mate unleashes the demon that will end everything. Well, give or take another minute probably."

Beetlejuice ignored the strange comment. He rolled up his sleeves. They almost had everything, but they wanted him out of the way. There was only one reason why.

He had potential they wanted too. However, he wasn't that dumb. They weren't getting him into their plans anymore, and they were damn sure not getting Lydia! He rolled up his sleeve.

It was risky. Supernatural birth could mean problems, but his gut instinct didn't believe that. There was a greater chance that this guy was the one interfering in the birth. Nothing was a hundred percent, but his best chance was to get rid of him for good.

"Three and a half minutes. Are you willing to fight and lose everything?" The WDP asked knowing he was getting ready to really try to juice him. "Ask yourself, am I the only one? And if you do something to me, what then? You can't save her, only I can. You shouldn't test me, I might not want to be so helpful anymore. Three minutes."

Only he could save her. It came with a heavy price though, and he knew what it would cost. *Lyd.*

"Did I mention the sheer momentum of being hurled here from the real world while giving birth will probably be enough to push the little demon out alone? All she needs is one second. About only 120 of those or so is left by the way." The WDP said as he brought out the contract and waved it. "Your move."

Beetlejuice held himself steady. *At least I'll have the best reputation in the neitherworld after this.*

"Forty seconds." The WDP held out a pen. "Don't be stupid."

"I'd say go to hell, but it'd sound cliché." Afterlife. Scratch the neitherworld. He grabbed the WDP, hit a large red button on the decider's desk, and before anyone knew what was happening, he threw him in.

-----  
"Mm." Donny rubbed his hands together. There wasn't much time. Lydia wasn't even trying to push anymore. "I think it's time you see Beetlejuice. I don't know what happens to the unborn but, maybe you'll all be happy, haunting a house together?" No, that wasn't supposed to be the ending. So close to defeating everything and being truly happy. Yet, it wasn't close enough. BG's powers couldn't even be felt.

He let his brother down. He let Lydia down. He did all he could. "I will see you in, perhaps, half a century again." He touched her hand. "I'm sorry." He looked toward the WDP's. She would be dead on her own soon. He could feel it. She was becoming closer to the neitherworld every second. "Don't. She won't be long." He would have spoke more, but he felt a strange power coming toward him. Something powerful, but not physical. Was it his brother? "Beetlejuice. Your friend really needs your help." One of the WDP's had lowered his gun to answer his phone. It showed just how pointless the situation had become. "Brother, if you have any power for communication left somehow. Any way at all, she needs you." It was probably for nothing. Beetlejuice was down where no one could reach him, but that burst of searching energy. He had to respond to it. There was nothing left except his good faith. Believe.

"Yo? I came back from the dead for you and the squirt. Nothing?"

Lydia briefly opened her eyes at him. She was too weak to speak. Soon though, she'd be on the other side. A hundred years of haunting or so, and then she could be with her old friend.

"Lyd. You're not done yet," he warned her. "If you are." He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I'll never see again. You see, I won't be going to the neitherworld, or go haunting, ever again."

He wouldn't? "Why?" she asked softly.

"Time for explanations. That'd be a nice luxury for the both of us." He looked toward his watch. "We gotta get this thing out, or I go to hell."

"What?!" Lydia's heart began to beat faster. No. No, Beetlejuice couldn't go there. He never even talked about it. Wasn't there just the neitherworld? She tried to move closer. Not that. "I'd never see you again." Then, she felt more pain again, but a different kind of pain. A familiar pain. A moving kind of pain. She sucked in a breath. No. No, she couldn't be separated from him.

She had no support ever since he left. Vernie tried to help, but she kept getting watched by others too. They threatened her so many times. Some of them even mentioned how perfect it would be if she and the kid died in childbirth. They didn't even have a doctor for her. Not a single doctor.

She was about ready to give up. BG didn't belong in the world, and he'd have a life of misery living like some 'average' kid if he did make it. Never allowed to experience the supernatural. Then with all the pain, the gun discussion, and the end of seeing Beetlejuice. Her strength was just zapped away.

He was there though. Beetlejuice was there. Wasn't he? He was alive again. Somehow? Maybe she was delirious, or maybe he really would go to hell if she didn't give birth to BG. She watched him grab her hand.

"Come on. Come on, Lyd! You don't know what's on the line here." He patted her hand back and forth. "You can do it."



"I . . ." So tired. But hell for Beetlejuice. She couldn't bear never seeing her best friend for an eternity. And, BG. Even if BJ was just a figment of her imagination, she couldn't just let him die. Life was life, even if it was built on a lie. Even if he had the dullest childhood . . . he deserved a childhood. She gritted her teeth and pushed again, yelling as she did.

"Good, good," She finally heard Donny's voice. "Keep going! I know you can do it." She felt her arms tremble, but she took one deep breath and gave it all she had.

"Great, you got it. By the way, I kind of lied. I still have to go to hell, but I had to help you first."

"B.J." Kathleen whimpered.

"Hey, no tears! Things change, Babe, sooner or later we'll meet again. You'll see, I'll figure something out. Now old Beej has gotta go. They're getting pretty antsy here. Hey, quit pushing me!"

"Almost," Donny cheered. "He's almost out."

"I'll miss you B.J. And, I just, I'm sorry," Kathleen yelled as she pushed.

"Quit thinking that. Nothing's your fault, Lyd."

"But I said things like," Kathleen pushed again, "like I wish we had never met. I said awful things to myself." Kathleen pushed again. "I never meant any of it. I never would have changed it for the world!"

"Heh, yeah except this part."

"Beej!" Kathleen cried out once more.

"Take care Lyd and remember. This isn't over yet. I always find a way back."

"There it is!" Donny exclaimed. He ducked in time to miss a mobile that flew by his head. "I can see his head!"

"Beej? Beej!" Kathleen yelled. There was no more answer. No more voices rushing to her head of any kind.

"Here he comes!"

A loud recurring boom of thunder was heard in the sky as Donny finally yanked BG out.

Kathleen sighed as she felt relief and sadness. The pain was finally over but she also knew that was the last time she would ever talk to her dearest friend, at least for a long time. "It's over . . ."

"On the contrary." Donny had cut the chord, cleaned and wrapped BG up for her. "It's just beginning." He smiled as he handed him over to her.

"Well that's that." Vernie smiled. In a puff of smoke, all the WDP disappeared once again. With the child being born in the real world, there was no more reason for them to stick around so close.

Kathleen couldn't help but smile. She could tell from the bit of hair it had that it would have BJ's white hair. He was so tiny. Who knew something that could have destroyed everything could be so tiny?

BG opened his eyes and looked at his mama for the first time.

Kathleen smiled. *He has his eyes!*

Donny looked at BG too. "Awww..."

BG gave his uncle a weird look.

"Kootchie Kootchie Koo." Donny tickled under his chin. "I'm your Uncle Donny."

BG just continued to give his uncle a weird look before he closed his eyes again.

"Look how tiny he is." Kathleen smiled as she held him closer. She had felt a slight bond forming between them while she was pregnant, but it was nothing close to how she felt now. She swayed her newborn back and forth. "I wonder if he'll open his eyes soon again."

"Yes, they were just like mine and my brothers." Donny smiled.

Kathleen stared at the little being in her arms. "Wow. He's..."

"Adorable?" Donny tried to finish. "Precious? Cute?"

BG wiggled around a bit trying to get comfy. He just wasn't feeling comfortable yet.

Until he farted. He stopped wiggling and feeling relief settled down in one spot.

Kathleen laughed. *He's far from any of that! He's just like 'him'.*

-----  
In a flash Betelgeuse felt his essence being ripped away. He opened his eyes in horror and saw nothing. Merely hanging on a rope. "Lydia," he yelled. Somehow, he had gone from the gate of hell to beside Lydia. She had been changed so much on the outside, but he still recognized her. "Yeah, I knew that wouldn't last." He looked out into the darkness. "Well this isn't good. Yo?!"

Then he heard it. The familiar ear bone breaking and shrieking sound of his greatest fear. "Sandworms?!" Beetlejuice climbed up the rope higher. He looked all around for anything else to climb on, any way out. "Anybody! Heeeeeeeelp!"

"Betelgeusssssss..."

Beetlejuice trembled as he heard the eeriest sound. "Eeeeeekkk!!" He screamed as he saw the biggest sandworm he'd ever seen come up from the ground.

"Betelgeusssssssss..."

"Oh no, it's talking." Beetlejuice opened one eye as he looked at it. Right in front of him he saw it's deadly eyes, a boiling yellow with flames of red deep within it's center. "Whuh oah."

"Betelgeusssssssss..."

It was his worst fears come true. A sandworm that talked and had eyes ten times bigger than himself. Who knew how big the rest of his body was hiding in the darkness? "Please don't eat me!"

"Betelgeusssssssss...weeeeeeelcome. I've been waiting for youuuu..."

"Crazy, crazy, this is crazy I'd never want to come here!" Beetlejuice talked to himself. "Oh what was I thinking? This is hell, of course it's going to have the worst thing of the neitheworld." He hugged his rope. "I had to, for Lydia. I had to. Oh, but I gotta get out of here."

"Leaving so ssssssssooon?" The sandworm gave him an evil smile. "You knew what would happen for your action. No, you aren't leaving yet. I've got big plansssss for you."

"Come on, juice out of here. Juice out of here," Beetlejuice whined to himself out loud. No magic came though.

"Not that eassssssy." The sandworm warned him. "You cannot juice here, your magic is under my control."

Beetlejuice climbed higher on the rope. He trembled as he looked down.

The sandworm grinned at him with glowing red eyes. "If you fall, you shall be torn apart for an eternity to come, until I have use for you. There is no starting over. There is no escape. You will be ripped apart, devoured, pass through each of them only to be eaten again."

"Aaahhhhhh!!" Beetlejuice closed his eyes wildly trying to juice. "Get me out of here!"

"Eventually Betelgeusssss." The sandworm hissed. "Until then, keep hanging on for the sssssake of your sssssoul."

Beetlejuice watched as the evil eyes disappeared. "Hang on. I have to keep hanging on?" He looked all around him but there was no other rope. Nothing all around. He was alone in a pit that was who-knew-how-wide with sandworms. Nothing but utter darkness to keep him company. "This is gonna be a long eternity. Help! Lyydiaaaaaa!!"

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## Chapter 18: Benny the Handyman

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Betelgeuse

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Eighteen: Benny the Handyman

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"Not again." Kathleen groaned as she tried to stop the leaking water from the faucet. At the same time, she heard BG crying in his nursery. "Coming! Just a bit!" Kathleen ran over to BG and opened the door.

He just cooed his sweet 3 month old coo and winked.

Kathleen smiled at him. "One second, okay?" She started to run back to the leaking water and realized it was starting to leak at the base of it as well. "Not this again too." She heard BG start crying again and took off to check on him again.

He cried as she held him a few minutes, then she tried to lay him back down.

She ran straight for the water again and saw it was really starting to leak all over the floor. *Oh no!* She heard BG starting to cry at the same time. She ran and brought him in, at the same time trying to hold him and stop the leak. "I've gotta get the water turned off!" She looked at the pool of water on the floor and knew she had to get help right away. BG on the other hand was starting to cry and was squirming all over.

"Looks like you need a handyman."

Kathleen stopped as she saw someone standing at her opened front door. The skin was tanner, the hair was flat-out black, but it looked almost like..."Mr. Beetleman?"

The man scratched his head. "Naw, I'm Benny." He took out a tool from his side and started to walk over to her sink. Kathleen watched as the man that looked similar to Beetlejuice started to fix her sink.

"There ya go." The man took his thumb and flicked it across the bottom of his nose. "That was easy."

Kathleen looked at the leak. *Can't be. Beetlejuice couldn't ever fix anything.*

The man held out his hand. "I just moved in next door." He nodded at BG. "He your little brother?"

That's when it hit Kathleen. This wasn't a man, it was..."You're just a boy."

"And you're just a girl," Benny said. He looked at BG. "Your brother's got some freaky white hair."

"He's not my brother," Kathleen said, still looking at the boy in awe.

"Babysitting?" Benny nodded. "I tried that but kids are out of control." He took one of his tools and twirled it around his finger. "Repairs make more money. Speaking of which, you owe me twenty bucks."

Kathleen looked offended as BG started to cry. "I didn't ask you to fix it."

"Yeah sure, and you would have done what?" Benny asked. "Called a plumber which would have cost a lot more money. Meanwhile, water continues to flood your kitchen. So come on, fork it over."

"Benny!"

Kathleen watched as a new woman she had never met appeared at the door.

"You are meeting our new neighbor for the first time and you ask for money?" The woman griped. "My boy has no shame." She looked over at Kathleen and looked back toward Benny. "She's even your age and pretty and you still ask for money? Incurrible."

Benny just grunted. "Money's money."

His mother corrected him with a look and then smiled toward Kathleen. "Hi, I'm Mrs. Juniper, is your mother here? We just moved in next door."

"Oh." Kathleen shook her hand. "I didn't know they moved out."

"Both houses around you moved out," Mrs. Juniper said. "I didn't know which one to pick really, they were both nice. This is such a beautiful neighborhood, I don't know why anyone would move out of it." She smiled at BG. "Hi there. Where's your mommy?"

Kathleen looked between Benny and his mother. Now she was really in awe. *It couldn't be then. Beetlejuice with a mother? And my age? It didn't make any sense.* "I'm the only one who lives here." She bounced BG. "This is my son, BG."

"Son?" Mrs. Juniper smiled awkwardly. "Oh. Sorry."

"Fine, I get it all the time," Kathleen said as she shared a look with BG. "I better put BG back down for his nap."

"Doesn't look tired to me," Benny said as he looked at BG. "Yo kid. You tired?"

BG just grinned wide at him. A little wider than a three month old should have been able to grin.

"Well, I better try and get him down then." Kathleen started to fidget. BG was still experimenting with magic, and she couldn't let anyone see him do anything. Whether it was someone who looked similar to BJ or not.

"Come on, Benny, let's get going." Benny's mother smiled politely. "Goodbye dear."

"Hey look at his face." Benny started to laugh. "He's got something down below now, I know it." He wriggled his nose. "Whoah, I can smell it too. Wow, how can something that small have such a bad stench. Even I can't do that after a couple burritos."

"Benny, come on," his mother insisted looking at Kathleen a bit distastefully.

"It'd take like five Chimichanga's for me." Benny rubbed BG's head. "Stinker. You stink. Gimme five." He took BG's little hand and made him give him a five. "Five back." He gave BG's hand a little five. BG laughed at the gesture and attention. "See ya then." He waved at BG. He looked over at Kathleen. "See you too. You still owe me twenty bucks."

"Benny," his mother griped, "knock it off." She smiled politely at Kathleen again. "Good luck with the little one."

"Yeah, see ya Kath." Benny followed his mom out but turned back real quick. "If anything else breaks down, I'll fix it, but no more freebies."

Kathleen just blinked as she watched them leave. *He was similar to him.* She looked at BG. *But he didn't remember me and he has a mother. Is it a secret plot, and if so, why didn't the WDP show up?* "I've got to talk to Donny."

-----  
Donny's place...

"You brought him way over here? Did he cause any trouble?" Donny asked as he looked at BG in Kathleen's arms.

"I need to know what happened to... 'him'." Kathleen said carefully.

"Oh, Kathleen, I can't tell you what happened to my brother."

"Donny! Is there any way he could have come back?" Kathleen looked at Donny seriously. "I have a new neighbor who looks and acts a lot like 'him'."

Donny scratched his head. "Well, I'll look into it then. I'll check back with you at your house, okay?"

Kathleen nodded and looked at BG. Best not keep him out for too long.

A few minutes later Donny came over to Kathleen's house.

Donny smiled. "He's a *lot* like him."

"Yeah." Kathleen looked at him, filled with hope.

Donny shrugged his shoulders. "He's a lot like him?"

"He is a lot like him. There's got to be something to that."

"There is. 'His' caseworker gave some recommendations. I don't know all of them, but one of them was supposed to have my brother's descendants to help watch over you two. So you could have a nice friend to help out and connect with." He grinned. "According to Benny, his mother recently landed a great job perfect for her, perfect for a salary, and it was a perfect dream come true. Sounds a bit too perfect, don't you agree?"

Kathleen looked down at BG. "He's a relative."

"A living relative," Donny chuckled. "He didn't seem to want to make friends with me. You could have a friend again though."

"I don't want some relative as a friend." Kathleen looked back down at BG in his teddy bear pajamas he hated so much. "I wanted BJ." She looked at the ground. Green and perfect, just like she had to be. "I wanted it to be BJ."

"Kathleen," Donny sighed. "You know you shouldn't say-"

"What, BJ?" Kathleen grumped. "Whatever. I used to be frightened of what would happen, but every day I push the envelope a bit more and nothing has happened yet."

"Oh." Donny started to whistle.

"They don't even really care anymore, do they? Now that BJ's completely gone and BG's born, there's nothing to worry about to them." She looked at her lacy pink dress. "I bet I could wear black and they wouldn't even care."

"I'm sorry." Donny smiled. "I wanted to tell you, but I wasn't allowed to. They're watching every once in awhile, so don't do anything really rash like change clothes. I suppose a bit more freedom wouldn't hurt though. I'll take the rap if you get caught once too."

"Yippee," Kathleen said sarcastically. "News flash Donny, it doesn't change anything." She looked down at BG. "He still can't keep his magic."

"Too risky for a human being," Donny reminded her. "You will be fine though, especially since you can have a new friend."

"Benny." Kathleen rolled her eyes. "I don't care about BJ's relative. It isn't BJ."

"It's still a friend, someone you are allowed to talk to. Someone who is more like you than your other friends," Donny pointed out.

"No one can replace BJ. *Ever*," Kathleen said firmly.



"Do you replace friends with others?" Donny asked sadly. "You need a friend. He's not a replacement Kathleen, just another friend. Just like me." He smiled. "He's even around your age. Isn't that wonderful?"

Kathleen looked at the stack of dishes that still needed cleaned. She looked back at Donny one more time. "Are you absolutely sure it's not-"

"Family photo's, a mother, a whole past completely different from you." Donny answered her firmly. "It is not him."

"Is he okay?" Kathleen asked worried. She still remembered seeing and hearing him when no one else could when she gave birth to her son. She still didn't know if it was in her head or not. "Is he safely in the neitherworld?" But she wanted it to be in her head badly. As much as she had wanted to see BJ, she'd rather it was just her imagination. Then she wouldn't be worried about his words. About hell. "Just let me know if he's safe?"

"I don't know, but I am sure he is just fine." Donny smiled. "Have faith. He can take care of himself."

Kathleen looked at her sink. "Benny really isn't him."

"This Benny is similar, but he is definitely his own person," Donny replied.

Kathleen nodded giving into the truth. "Donny? Will I ever be able to see him again?"

"One day."

"Before I pass on?"

"Oh." Donny pulled a penny out of his pocket. "Here, a present for you."

Kathleen accepted the penny, getting the hint. Even Donny, the most hopeful, boring and upbeat ghost didn't really believe there was a way to see each other again.

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Two weeks later . . .

"Who's a big boy?" Benny laughed as BG crawled to him. "Look at you, dude." BG gave Benny a high five.

"Suppertime boys." Kathleen smiled as she came out from the kitchen.

Benny grabbed BG and lifted him up high. "Coming."

"I made spaghetti."

"Alright." Benny dug his fork in and started to eat. "This is pretty good."

"Well, thanks Benny. I appreciate you watching BG while I made dinner," Kathleen laughed. "I just can't get anything done when he's ready to crawl away like the wind!"

"Yeah, he is a handful, but I like that." Benny hit BG's little hat playfully. "You gonna go to the movies tonight with us?" BG picked his hat back up to see and chuckled. Kathleen laughed too as she dug into her spaghetti. She swirled it around on her spoon and took a big bite.

"Could you close that Lid?"

"What?" Kathleen's heart skipped a beat as she heard Benny. "You called me, Lyd?"

"Naw, Kath." Benny closed the lid on the spaghetti pot. "I just said to close the lid. It's gonna get cold."

"Oh. Yeah, of course." Kathleen went back to her spaghetti silently. Why did she always have to do that? *I just miss him.* She looked over at Benny. *Although, I seem to be a bit happier with him around.* She smiled at him widely. "Thanks for coming over on short notice and not charging twenty bucks."

At the same time to Beetlejuice...

"994,978 thousand bottles of beer on the wall..." Beetlejuice sang as he continued to hang on for dear life. He didn't even know how much time had already passed.

"Betelgeuusssssss...want to watch ssssssomething?"

Beetlejuice watched as a swirling of orange and yellow started to appear in front of him. "I hope it's the Tongue that Ate Chicago, it's a classic." He watched as the swirls started to change into images. The first thing he made out was a tiny shirt with a happy face. The next thing he made out was a small blue hat, then the baby wearing it. Then he started to make out a silky pink dress with long blonde hair. Familiar hair he'd seen once before. "Lyd? Lydia?! Lydiiaaaa!!" He called out to the image, but she couldn't hear him. Next he started to notice a young boy about Lydia's age standing between the two. "Hey. Who the heck is he?"

To Benny and Kathleen again...

"It's fine, I got dinner instead," Benny smiled at Kathleen. "You sure are a mystery."

"What do you mean?" Kathleen asked as she dished up more spaghetti.

"The way you act around the others," Benny pointed out. "The way you dress all-out in pink. The way you try to present yourself. It's not you at all, how come you hide from everyone but me?"

Back to Beetlejuice...

"Who is this guy?" Beetlejuice growled as he watched Benny. "What's he doing with Lyd, and who's that tiny little guy over there?"

"You know who that issssssss..."

"Oh. Oh yeah." Beetlejuice watched BG start to reach toward the floor for some food that fell. "Got my sense of taste I guess." He half smiled.

Back to Benny and Kathleen again...

"I don't." Kathleen tried to hide her face.

"And now you are hiding from me too." Benny moved BG to his high chair and moved closer over to Kathleen. "Kath? Why do you keep pushing me away? I mean sometimes we have the greatest time, and at other times, you just seem to distance yourself. What's up with that?" he frowned. "Do I remind you of someone?"

"Sometimes," Kathleen admitted. "Sometimes you remind me of my best friend. My best friend in the whole wide world and beyond. I can't say much more than that though."

"Oh, I see." Benny nodded. "Something happened to him."

Back to Beetlejuice...

"Uh, yeah, I died." Beetlejuice raised his eyebrow at Benny. "Who is this guy? Why is he getting so cheery with my Lyd?"

Back to Benny and Kathleen ...

"Pretty much," Kathleen said softly. "I can't ever see him again."

"Sorry," Benny said. "I don't mean to be a painful reminder."

"It's not painful," Kathleen corrected him. "I just miss him a lot. A ton in fact."

Beetlejuice...

"Feelings mutual, Babe. Especially now." Beetlejuice looked below him. Oh what he wouldn't give to be out of there and back again.

Benny and Kathleen again...

"Yeah. Uuuhhh. I'm not good at times like these," Benny admitted. "Shoot, I probably shouldn't have said that out loud."

Kathleen chuckled.

"I reminded you of him again, didn't I? That sucks," Benny added, "because I don't want to get in friend mode with you."

Beetlejuice...

"Whoah, whoah, whoah!" Beetlejuice started to yell at the swirling image. "Back off you, that's my Lyd!"

To Benny and Kathleen again...

"I know." Kathleen looked at the table. "It's hard to be friends with someone who's already a mom."

"Not exactly what I meant. Well, no, oh, I don't know what I mean." Benny looked over at BG. "Well, okay. I mean it's nothing big but . . ."

Beetlejuice...

"No way. Nuh uh." Beetlejuice closed his eyes. "She doesn't like guys. No guys. None. She doesn't like dating, she doesn't like dating . . ." He looked angrily at the guy in the image. "She's got a kid for crying out loud you stupid idiot so get away from her!"

"Jealousssssss?"

"Jealous? No," Beetlejuice answered the eerie voice back. "That's my friend though, he wants my friend, and he can't have her."

"Her friendship is yoursssss, he wantssssssomething elsssseee..."

"Yeah, I know, it's obvious!" Beetlejuice yelled at the image. "Lyd, get the heck away from him." He growled. "I don't like this guy, they shouldn't be friends, and he's trying to get closer and, and . . . I don't like it! I can't stand it! Lyyyyyyd?!"

"Do you know why you can't sssstand it?"

"Boyfriend equals her leaving," Beetlejuice said logically.

"You can't even sssseee her anymore. What differenccccce does it make?"

"Oh, yeah. I don't know." Beetlejuice watched the image swirling. "She looks happy but . . . I don't know." He closed his eyes. "I can't watch this."

"Betelgeusssssss...you aren't that sssstupid. You know why . . ."

Back to Benny and Kathleen ...

Kathleen looked away at her interesting food. "A date?"

"Just one. Nothing major," Benny smiled. "Come on, one simple date just to let loose. Let Donny watch BG for tonight instead."

Beetlejuice...

"The kid is called BG? What kind of name is-What?! He wants to get rid of it for a *date* with her? A date? A freaking date?!" He yelled. "No, no, no, Lyd, don't fall for that," he whined as he watched the pair. "It's official, I hate this guy. I hate this guy, I hate this guy, I hate this guy!"

"Makesssssense. Many do hate him, for you see..."

Beetlejuice listened up close.

"He isssss you."

"...uhhhh...huh?"

"When wassss the lassst time you felt complete? Why did you grow sssso attached to the human girl? What were you looking for? Asssssk yourssself, why was it only two decades ago that you really started making a name for yourssssself in the Neitherworld?"

"..."

"Your soul has been torn, forced to find sssssatisfaction, any way it could."

"...part of me was reincarnated?" Beetlejuice swayed softly as he watched Lydia and the stranger slightly laughing together. And then, it hit him all at once. He knew why he had changed so much. He knew why he just couldn't stop hanging on to the real world. "...that's me."

"Incomplete and unssssatisfied, trying to fill himself." The sandworm came up from the depths and stared into Beetlejuice's eyes.

"But how?" Beetlejuice tried not to concentrate on the terror in front of his eyes. He needed an answer. "I was alive before."

"A mistake on the part of the neitherworld." The sandworm started to grin an evil, toothy smile. "No, even when you were alive, did you feel any different? Any more sssssatisfied?"

"No," Beetlejuice admitted. "No different at all, really."

"Betelgeusssss . . . I have the power to make you whole again."

"Why would you care?" Beetlejuice asked suspiciously.

"The WDP want the neitherworld, not me. I have a placccce to rule."

"You mean...y-y-you're the . . ." Beetlejuice gulped.

"They want to keep you separated, but close, to drive you mad. You've already come to me...they will work on your sssplit sssself ssssoon."

"The World Defense Protectors." Beetlejuice growled. "The kid was already born so I'm missing something, aren't I? Some reincarnated self wouldn't just show up accidentally."

"Yes. Watch, but don't watch the obvious."

The obvious was Lydia and his other self trying to get close to her. He watched the kid a bit in the background, but it wasn't something he wanted to do. It's not like he'd ever even get to

see it. Heck, he just learned the little guy's name.

While he heard Lydia trying to let down Benny easily, he concentrated on BG. Who was sleeping. At an odd angle. "What?"

"Yeah, sure. No because I remind you of him. You can't lie to me," Benny answered back. He gestured to BG. "He's sleeping again? I thought you had him down for a nap earlier."

"He has a special condition. He just needs more rest," she answered back. "Maybe I should get him down for another nap."

"Sleep." That must be it. "Sleep?"

"Sssleeeep letsssss the mind wander, doessssn't it?"

"But does it let . . ." Oh no. "Now I get it. It's those lousy no-good double crossing WDP's!" he yelled. "That's why they watched her. That's why they were there at birth. That's why they didn't bother trying to destroy it right away." They were supposed to look like the good guys, completely. "The less supernatural has been around it, less magic it knows, a small spell . . ."

"Sssoulssss are ssssooooo complicated. Ssssooooo lonely."

"No way." He looked straight at the sandworm. "I'll do anything it takes to make sure this is the only hell."

"That'sssss what I wanted to hear. Go back to where you belong. Go back to your Lydia."

"Those lousy WDP's, I always knew they were scum! They are around my Lydia right now, always watching her." Beetlejuice stared at the image of BG, still sleeping. "No magic at the table, he probably can't even use it anymore. They are making him forget," he said angrily. "No way, I'm gonna get those lousy guys if it's the last thing I do!" They wouldn't bore BG's supernatural soul to death.

"Great. Jussst one thing. You've been separated for sssso long, you will not remember anything about your reincarnated sssssside at firsst."

"Okay, I can deal with that." Beetlejuice looked at the image. "Yikes, that was way too close for the friend area, I have to stop that." He nodded his head. "Yep, yep. We're just friends. We've just always been friends."

"Not interesssssssted in anything more?"

"Nope, friends only. Just friends." Beetlejuice repeated again. "Friends, friends, friends. We're the best of friends, can't mess that up. So when am I going back already?"

The sandworm opened his mouth wide and let out an evil laugh. "Why not now?!"

## Chapter 19: I Think It's Prudence

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Nineteen: I Think It's Prudence

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Sucked. Benny looked over toward Kathleen again. So close, yet so far. Even though he'd only moved in two weeks ago, he was already closer to her than any girl his age. He wasn't exactly a prince charming with the ladies. With Kathleen though, the more he acted like himself, the more she gravitated toward him.

His mom would freak if she even knew he was trying to get her to go out as more than a friend. She'd assume Kathleen was manipulating him into becoming the dad or something. It wasn't like that though. She kept him in the friend zone, no matter what. Even though she seemed to meld with him, at the same time, it was the reason they went so well together that . . . they could probably never be together.

He reminded her of her old friend. He doubted it though, the way she dreamily described him at times. Friends didn't talk about each other that way. Whether it was one way or not, she was definitely in love with the old friend he reminded her of.

At first, it seemed like such a good thing. How easy was it to get close to a girl when another guy did all the work? Well, it wasn't. He could be real good friends with her. He could probably even become a best friend one day, but because of his mannerisms. His personality. He'd never get closer.

Kathleen never looked at other guys. She never got out of the house. She didn't do things that matched the personality that he saw beneath all the fake appearances. He wanted Kathleen, but he was obsessed to find the real her beneath the whole façade.

The timing just felt right though. He was getting in deeper to the friend zone, he had to try and ask her out. Frustrated! Why? Why couldn't he get in closer to her? What did this other guy have that . . . "What?" Beetlejuice looked down at himself. Those were Benny's clothes. Damn. *When a leader of hell wants something done, he's fast.* "Uh, speak of the devil."

"What do you mean?" Lydia asked from across from him. She looked over at BG. "Benny, I think you should go home. BG is really tired."

Beetlejuice glanced toward BG. *So, that's it. Him, I mean.* Decades of being dead didn't properly prepare him for fatherhood. BG was sleeping with his head down in his high chair. He may not have known the first thing about being a dad, but he did know one thing. *Those clothes suck. That high chair's stupid. Is he wearing booties with smiling bunnies on his feet?* He caught himself in time before he changed everything. He was more than ready to zap everything back to the way it should be, but this situation? He didn't know much. He didn't know anything about his other half, Benny, except he was trying to freaking date Lydia. *Not sorry I took over your body.* "How often does the kid sleep?"

"I told you, he has a special condition." Lydia was getting fidgety as she tossed her golden curls back. "Now, please. My answer isn't going to change. I just want to be friends."

"That's perfectly fine with me," Beetlejuice added quickly as he slapped the table. "Let's go for a ride. BG needs fresh air."

"I'm not falling for that," Lydia answered him as she stood up from the table. "Look, I know we're about the same age, but I don't have the freedom others do. I don't want to hurt your feelings. Just go."

Okay, this wasn't going to work. *Heh, good. Benny was miles from taking Lydia away.* He needed a new strategy. *Hang on.* "I think it Prudence you should come for a ride with me."

"You mean prudent?" Lydia looked at him strangely. That wasn't a word Benny seemed like he would say.

"I think it Prudence you should come for a ride with me," Beetlejuice said again, this time with a wink. "I knew you gave Bertha about two months ago." *Come on.*

Lydia covered her mouth. "It can't be."

"If we go for a ride, we can be alone. Right?" Ugh, letting her know it was him and the info he wanted without blowing his cover was tough, but at least she was getting the hint.

"If we go for a ride about . . ." Lydia was thinking. " . . . the next town over has wonderful milkshakes."

They had their eyes on the town. "Great. We'll go in . . . my car or your car?" He watched Lydia reach for BG.

"We always take rides in your car, silly," Lydia said as she almost scrambled for a purse. She pulled out the keys quickly. Beetlejuice stood up behind her, chalantly whistling. One town. He looked over at the sleeping baby. *I need to do this sooner or later. I've picked up kids before. It won't be any different.* He watched the little feet of BG as he picked him up. He caught a look from Lydia, but now wasn't the time to break character. "Let's go for that ride. Um, dude." BG was still sleeping as he headed out the door with Lydia.

When they reached the car, she took BG and strapped him in while 'Benny' took the front seat. She got in on the passenger side, and they took off.



"So." He looked over at her. "Donny."

"Donny is such a good Uncle, isn't he?" Lydia said, playing the game the same way he had been. "Not every Uncle only lives down at the end of the block from their nephew."

Good. Donny was still around. Beetlejuice thought they might have taken him out. As much as he couldn't stand his brother, he was still his brother. His neitherworld brother. The neitherworld was the only life he'd ever known. Used to death or not . . . dying sucked! It was never easy, the process of losing the body. While he drove, he found himself looking at his hands.

This time, he felt different. Was it the complete feeling that the sandworm demon had spoken of?

"We are almost out of town. For the milkshakes," Lydia added. "It'll be closing soon. I hope we make it."

Beetlejuice gave the car more gas. As soon as the leaving the town sign popped up, he felt the biggest hug from Lydia he'd ever felt. She was almost choking him, but he wouldn't tell her to let go in a million years.

"How?!" she asked excitedly.

"Hang on one second." He shook his finger toward her, bringing her old clothes, her black hair, and some much better shoes back to her. "There."

Lydia looked down at herself. Her old spider red cape. She felt it's old, familiar texture. It was something she didn't have in her world, and she'd been glad of it. It was so hard not to start to cry.

Beetlejuice was back, and her heart was leaping at something she had dared not do for months.

Hope.

"Are you here for good, or is this a sort of possession, one-time thing?" she had to ask. *Please tell me you are here to stay forever. Please. You don't know how bad I need you in my life.*

"Ben-ben was my other half," he said as he used his magic to draw a crack down the center of himself. "Turns out that those screwed up papers mixed up my soul too. Paperwork. You know I hate it."

Oh, goodness. It felt so good to hear those kinds of words from him again. "They split your soul in two?"

"Yeah, but I'm back together. A bit. I'll eventually remember the 'Benny' side of me." Not something he felt like looking forward to. However that guy felt wasn't him. "But I'm back for good, and this time, no stupid gun shot is getting me." He gestured to the car. "I put bulletproof siding and windows around this thing as soon as we got out of the town. Nobody gets a drop on me twice."

He was serious. She half expected him to turn into an M and E and have something drop on him, but he didn't. It was too risky for driving. *He's being responsible.* That was a little creepy. He had the power to do that too? She knew BJ had power, he always did, but he couldn't do everything. Had becoming whole made him more powerful?

"Speaking of Ben-Ben, his fashion has to go." Beetlejuice zapped himself into his old black and white striped suit.

Lydia almost sighed. It was nice to see her old friend in his familiar clothes. The closest thing to home she could imagine. Except, he kept zapping himself over and over too. "What's wrong?"

"What the hey?" He scratched his head. "I can't change my age. I can change my hair back, and my outfit, but I can't change this age?" Uh, freaking reincarnation joining rule somewhere. He needed a handbook to . . . well, glance at. Probably not read, but at least look up things that occurred.

Well, at least he looked more like himself, and Lydia was better.

Lydia watched him zap something in the back. When she looked back, it was like a dream. She didn't imagine Beetlejuice would care to give the time of day. But. BG.

The old car seat of moon and teddies had been turned purple with jet black wings on the back of it. The tired and dull happy face blanket had been turned into a neon green blanket with spiders on it. Even the mobile that had been a sun, a moon, and a teddy had been converted into spiders and beetles.

"Wakey-wakey." Beetlejuice zapped the mobile to life. "Hey, look at that. Doesn't that look yummy?"

Hm. Lydia looked back and watched BG wake up. "Why are you waking him up?"

"Hm? Oh, just trying to save the world from going to hell." He wiped his nose with his thumb. "Nothing big at all."

Huh? "What do you mean, Beej?"

"The WDP's are the enemy, but they were there at his birth. Come on, Lyd. Figure it out."

"Wait, a spell?" Lydia looked toward the backseat. "Someone cast a spell on him?"

"The more he sleeps and doesn't learn his magic, the better chance his soul might wander off. Then it can't really be blamed on anyone," he explained. He looked toward the back seat in the rearview mirror. "Hasn't he ever juiced anything?" Besides the white hair, it was hard to see the resemblance to him.

Lydia looked toward the dashboard. She felt so foolish now about listening to the WDP. She didn't know who to trust after the kidnapping, and Donny wanting to join them sealed who she had to trust. "He used to. All the time. He really loved changing his room colors." It was hard to talk about everything out loud. "He had lots of power, but I . . . I forced him to forget.

He still has them, it happens every once in awhile." But how could she go from all the no-no's to yes? She looked back at him. "He tries to do it when I'm not looking."

BJ turned the corner. "I'm the king of trickery, and even I was tricked. Don't take it hard." He zapped a beetle candybar over BG, just out of reach. "Come on. You know you want that. Just get it."

BG reached out his hands, but BJ floated it up higher.

"Please get it," Lydia encouraged him. "Come on. How many times does momma say it's okay?" He may have been almost three months old, but BG's supernatural heritage made him smarter than he looked. If she had worked with him the right way, he might even be talking. But, nothing supernatural. Helping him more would have made him 'unordinary'.

BG just reached out his hands again, still not using his magic. All that teaching wasn't going to be undone in a simple lesson.

"Well, no rest until he shows some kind of juice." BJ conjured up a fish in a frying pan and flipped it with one hand. "No time to waste, different fish to fry." He conjured it away again. "Where's your parents, Babe?"

"Gone. The WDP told them that I was dead." Lydia looked back at BG. It was hard to look at her best friend when she had messed up so bad. "I let them."

"Thought so." BJ pulled over to the side of the road and cracked his knuckles over the wheel. "They'll figure out your gone soon, and your folks and real friends are going to be the first thing they go after." He drummed the wheel. "They need to go to the neitherworld where no one can hurt them. Juno's a pain, but she should be able to get them there for an extended stay."

"The neitherworld? Extended stay?" Lydia looked back at the dashboard. "How are we going to pull that off?"

Beetlejuice conjured up some professional looking glasses on. "I believe the first step is letting them know you are alive, and finally admitting the truth."

Truth. Lydia didn't think she'd ever have to have that awkward conversation. She'd missed her parents for months, and her friends, but . . . "What about BG?"

"The whole truth this time. Heh, that sounds funny coming from me." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a wallet. "Ben-Ben better have money." He looked in it. "Enough for now." He pulled into a nearby motel they were passing. He got out of the car. "You can talk but make it short. They can see the kid and get their oohs and ahhs out." He looked toward her. "Meanwhile, Donny will take them away until it's safe."

"Donny?"

"Beetlejuice." Donny came off from the top of the car. "I politely disagree with everything." He waved at Lydia before talking back to his brother. "I don't understand what you are doing."

Shouldn't you be away? I wasn't supposed to see you for half a decade at least."

"That's a reasonable amount of time split from you," Beetlejuice answered. "You should keep believing that. Might even want to extend it longer."

"Oh, Beetlejuice. You're such a kidder," Donny smiled. "I don't agree with what you're doing."

"A spell was cast on the kid to let his soul wander away while he slept. The less supernatural he becomes, the better the chances it won't come back."

"But? That would have to be someone close."

"Yeah." BJ pointed to the motel. "Me and Lyd got things to talk about. After we're done, you need to zap everyone I bring to the neitherworld. Talk to Juno. She hates me, but she hates being kept out of the loop more."

"But. But." Donny sighed. "We've been the only ones watching over her, so . . .oh, I would have been such a good WDP."

"Yeah, yeah. Come on." BJ motioned with his shoulder.

"But how did you come back, and why are you your relation?" Donny asked.

"Later."

"Do you want me to stay with you and Lydia?"

"No."

"It would be safer."

"No."

"Okay. I love you, brother. I will be waiting right here for you."

"Eww." Beetlejuice tried to get to the motel right away. How was he ever related to Donny? He paid for the motel and went to the room with BG and Lydia. Holding out his arms, he looked one more time at Lydia.

It was time to confront the folks.

## Chapter 20: Strange Feelings

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Beetlejuice? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter Twenty: Strange Feelings

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Lydia held BG in her arms tightly as BJ peeked around a corner tree. He wasn't going to zap away from Lydia for even a second, but he couldn't just juice her parents to them. They'd probably faint, and they didn't have the time to deal with fainting. "Your parents are still up." He pointed to their window light being on. "We don't have much time. We need to get your friends too. Knowing them, they'll take anyone you cared about." He drummed his fingers on the tree. "How do you want to do this, Lyd?"

She didn't have the luxury of thinking. Everything was at stake. "If I show up, they'll ask all kinds of questions. I'll never get a word in."

"I was afraid you'd say that." BJ said looking at himself. "I don't think they'll believe that I'm Mr. Beetleman now that I can't change from this age. Him bothering them in the middle of the night is suspicious enough."

"Every second counts, BJ."

"I know, I know." Okay, there wasn't time for a real good plan. He zapped himself as Mr. Beetleman. It would still work better than his original self. He zapped all three of them inside. Lydia was right outside her parents room with BG. BJ wouldn't risk being that far from her.

"Mr. and Mrs. Deetz," He yelled as loud as he could. "We need to talk about Lydia."

Charles and Delia both turned around. Charles was the most on the ball. "Mr. Beetleman, what are you doing here? Wait." He placed his finger to his mouth. "You're too young."

"Relative to Mr. Beetleman?" Delia asked. "What do you mean you have news about Lydia?"

"We already know about the school honor. We're her parents," Charles said matter-of-factly. "I mean, we were her parents." Delia pressed her hand on his shoulder.

No time. If there was just a little more, this could be nicer. "Lydia's alive. She wants to meet you, but you have to promise you won't faint or drown her in questions or she won't meet you." It was the best way he could think of to get them to cooperate.

"Lydia's alive?!"

"Promise, promise now. The offer isn't on the table long."

"This is a sick joke," Charles yelled. "Lydia is gone."

"If she's alive, yes," Delia shouted instead.

Tough, but that was the best he could get. BJ zapped him, Lydia, BG, Delia and Charles into the motel room again.

"Lyd . . . Lydia?" Her mother fumbled first. She went to hug her right away, asking what happened, where'd she been, and if she'd been hurt. "Is that him?" She rubbed BG's hair. "Pretty hair. What's his name? When was he born? Did you do okay during the birth? Did you record it?"

"I don't have time. I'm sorry." It wasn't fair, but if Lydia didn't hurry it up, there wouldn't be time to save Bertha and Prudence. "I'm okay, mom. Dad." Her dad was still dumbstruck in the corner. "The truth is, I know who the father of BG is. I've known him a long time and so have you. It's not his fault though, he was always just a ghost friend. But this thing happened, and . . . and if you don't go over to the other side, you could be hurt."

"What are you talking about?" Delia asked.

"Well, better get this over with." Mr. Beetleman waved over at her. "Hi." He changed into Betty Juice. "Hello Mrs. Deetz." He zapped into his original black and white striped shirt. "I was a ghost that befriended your daughter. Apparently it was a part of a huge scheme, and now we have a kid together, and we are trying to prevent the end of the world sort of thing." It sounded cold to blurt it all out like that, but it was better than just sending them away with no knowledge at all.

"What the hell is going on here," Charles shouted as Delia fainted.

"I knew that'd happen." BJ looked over at Charles. "We'll have time to talk later, Mr. Deetz. Donny Juice will fill in the rest."

"Donny who? W-what?" Charles looked over at Lydia. "You're alive, and you had Mr. Beetleman's son?" He turned and glared back at BJ. "You rotten bastard, she was just a kid!"

"Dad, no!" Lydia yelled back as he tried to run at BJ. She watched as BJ didn't juice away or even duck. He even let her father smack him against the face.

"I trusted you near my family you son of a bitch!"

BJ finally zapped himself away, then zapped Donny in from outside. "Get them over to the neitherworld, pronto. Explain what you can, and don't let anything happen to them. Be back

in two minutes."

Just like that, they were gone. A short visit with her mom, and BJ getting slapped by her dad. "Why'd you let him do that?"

"Got to get the other two," he answered. "We're cutting it close." He zapped them straight there. Bertha and Prudence were asleep in their beds. When Donny came back, BJ gestured toward them. Donny took them away.

And that was that. There wasn't even a chance to talk to her friends. Everything was so brief, but it had to be.

"The worst part is over," BJ answered. "I won't let anything else happen. Not to anyone. I promise, Babe. The cards they hold are gone now."

There was silence between them a second as BJ checked his wallet. "Ben-Ben didn't have much. Hm." He zapped his wallet. "Wow." He pulled out new money. It felt genuine. "I'm not supposed to be able to do that either." He chuckled. "This living thing ain't half bad. I can break all kinds of rules." Lydia wasn't smiling though, and he knew why. "One day you'll have all the time in the world with them."

"Yeah, but . . . dad slapped you. You let him slap you." She looked at BG. "I'm the one he should have slapped."

"Okay." He zapped the money away and then held his hands out toward her in a staying back motion. "No more of this. It is what it is." He took his hands and gestured toward BG. "It's born. The end. All that's left is to make sure it learns enough magic to keep that spell from working."

It? "He," Lydia said softly. "He's a he. Not an it."

"Well, yeah. He." He rubbed his head. "Dead guys don't really make good dads, Lyd."

It wasn't much simpler for her either. "So it's over."

"Yep. Nobody's going to screw around with me." He knocked on his own head. "Been making this as strong as temper steel too. No one, and I mean no one, is separating us again." He turned into a screw. "No one is going to screw with me and get away with it." He then changed into a bull. "No one's grabbing this bull by the horns."

Lydia chuckled softly. More politely than genuine, and he couldn't blame her.

He turned back to normal. "We'll hunker down for the night. Even if they find us, they won't get close enough to do anything." He meant that. He almost lost her, three times. Once because of Juno, once because he died, and once from her own oncoming death. No more.

Lydia looked around the motel room before she looked down at BG. "Should he go to sleep yet?"

"I can tell when he's sleeping because of the spell," BJ answered her. "He'll be fine." He zapped a black crib into the room with a purple quilt and beetles on it.

Lydia placed him gently in the crib. "Goodnight, BG. Don't worry. Life's going to be . . . fun. Lots of fun. You don't want to leave. Okay?" She was still worried as she tucked him in. Once she turned around though, the situation changed.

"I deserved it. That's why." BJ looked at his hands. "All my life I caused trouble for everybody, Lyd. It's who I am, but I never meant to hurt *you*. I didn't ever want any of this. I just wanted my friend."

"I know." Lydia almost choked. "You still have me, BJ. You're my friend til the end, and past." Yet, she couldn't help her eyes getting watery. "Beetlejuice."

"Hey, hey. It's okay now." He held his hands out to her and she came running towards them. He embraced her just as hard as she did him. "Don't have to turn gooey on me. Today's the first step to fighting this thing and getting your life back to normal." He rubbed her back.

Her presence was always comforting, but there was something different this time. As he held her, he felt a strange stirring he hadn't ever felt before. All he wanted to do was keep holding her.

Lydia knew what it was though. She knew she couldn't stay in the hug for long. Deny it or not, there was a different issue too. One she never even wanted to admit, or even think about, but it would come up.

Benny. Beetlejuice had taken over his reincarnation's life, but it was a joining. His power being stronger was a result of it, but there were . . .

///"How about another movie?" Benny asked as he put BG down for bed. "Tomorrow? Movie's are fun."

"I don't know, Benny," Lydia answered back. "We'll see."

"That's a no. Aren't you even going to reconsider?" Benny came up close to her. Closer than he should have. "One movie wouldn't hurt? Come on, we're young and we only live once. It makes sense, Kath. We're teens, we like movies and stupid celebrities. Let's go with the flow."

Lydia sighed. Not again. *No, not Beetlejuice*. She would go with BJ any time of day or night, anywhere in the world or neitherworld. Stop it, she commanded her heart. This was not BJ. He looked like him, he acted like him, but he was not him. Even thinking they were the same person made her feel like a traitor. "No."

"It's going to be boring tomorrow. Nothing on TV, but alright." Benny shrugged his shoulders and gave her a hug. "Let me know if you change your mind, okay?"

"Uh." Lydia pushed him back slightly. "Not likely."



"Oh. Uh." Benny just chuckled. "Sorry. It's got a mind of it's own." He winked at her. "Social graces don't affect it, it knows what it likes." He waved buy to BG and then to her. "See ya, Kath."

Lydia's cheeks were warm throughout the whole hug. *Definitely not BJ.///*

Lydia pulled away from Beetlejuice's embrace. "We should probably get some sleep." She didn't look toward him. It wasn't his fault, it was Benny's body after all.

"What?" BJ held his hands back out to her. "You sure you don't need more than a five second hug? You held me longer in the car."

Lydia remembered that. She had held him in the car and there was no awkward physical response. He had just taken over Benny's body though. He didn't even realize what had happened. "I'm fine. I think after tonight, I just need some rest."

"Oh." He scratched his head. "It probably has been a hard night for you. For both of us actually." He raised his eyebrow, wondering about the strange sensation he was feeling. "Anyhow, rest it is." He faked a yawn, which evolved into a real yawn. "Guess I'm tired too." He shoved his hands in his pockets. "Which side you want, Babe? Left or right?"

That question made her fidget until she saw him zap another bed in the room. *Of course not sides, this is BJ. BJ, not Benny!* "Right's fine."

"Right you are then."

Huh? Lydia looked back toward BJ. At the beginning of the charade, BJ had used Benny's voice until it had been safe, but then he used his own usual voice. Why did he use Benny's voice again?

"Right." BJ cleared his throat. Great, now he couldn't change his voice. "Aw, what the hell?" He played with his adam's apple, but it was no use. He sounded like Benny now. "First I couldn't change my age, and now my voice?" He groaned. "Reincarnation. You know I hate it."

Benny's voice. One of BJ's catchphrases. It almost brought tears back to her eyes. "BJ, what about Benny? He had a life. He had a mom."

"He's me," is all BJ said. "Besides, Ben-Ben was also your age. High time he left the comfort of a boring cul-de-sac and nagging mom."

How did he know Benny's mom nagged him? *They are becoming one. Awkward.* Benny had liked her more than a friend, but BJ was her best friend. Lydia wouldn't admit it to herself, but she knew something else. Those feelings . . . hadn't exactly been one-sided. *He looked like BJ. He acted like BJ. Just . . . more alive and my age and, no. I can't think about this. Beetlejuice is the dominant one. This'll be fine.*

That's when she realized BJ was staring at her. Oops.

"Ben-Ben never should have existed, so just forget it." BJ spread his arms out in a dismissing manner. "No way am I letting him have this body back and leaving you out there unprotected with a kid. And, if he really was me and knew you, then he'd get it too. Stop feeling guilty." He launched himself on the left bed and stretched his arms out comically. "Let's just get some rest. No telling what tomorrow brings, Babe."

Lydia went over to her side of the bed and looked back at BG. He had an odd smile on his face. He never slept with a smile. *BJ may not make dad of the year, but at least he knows how to make his son smile.*

## Chapter 21: Benny Juice

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlegeuse. I don't own Betelgeuse? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Betelgeuse?

Written By: Melanie Ray

Chapter 21: Benny Juice

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"How?" Vernie looked toward Juno and then toward his partner. "How?"

Juno just looked at the intruders in her office. "He disappeared. He was between the decision pathway, and then I could not find him. For months he'd been gone."

"And you didn't bother letting us know?"

"You specifically said that Lydia Deetz was safe, and you didn't want to know anything else about him." She pointed her cigarette at him. "You said you wished you never even met him. The less you knew, the better."

"Well, things change." Vernie was far from happy as he stared at Juno. "Where are they?"

"They who?"

"You know who," Vernie's partner accused her. "Lydia Deetz, BG Deetz, and Benny Fernake are missing. Along with Delia Deetz, Charles Deetz, and-"

"I am not dealing with you. I have nothing to say to you." She gestured up in the air. "Higher ups say the neitherworld is no longer cooperating with you."

"No longer cooperating?" Vernie raised his eyebrow. "We are the World Defender and Protectors. We work everywhere."

"Not here anymore."

"Why?"

"I am not at liberty to say."

"Something stinks. Something bad." Vernie gestured to Juno. "BG was born. This should have been the end of all of this secret business. At least for Lydia Deetz." He counted on his fingers. "I even had two more days of approval before I was allowed to cancel all the support on her."

"Canceling support?"

"Yes. As long as she wasn't involved with Beetlejuice anymore, there was no concern. There didn't seem to be any concern." Vernie sucked his lip. "Something's wrong." He held his hands out. "Unofficial. Please. Do you have any idea how and where she could have gone?"

"Unofficial." Juno tapped his cigarette into her ash tray. "Why when their friendship was so dangerous, and is still dangerous, would your superiors approve of that? Unless he was not a problem. And how could he not be a problem? Unofficial. What can you say?" She stuck her cigarette in her ash tray. "That's what I thought. The neitherworld is not working with the WDP anymore. Get out."

"I can't question that," Vernie spoke.

"Only the WDP could locate him. Only they would know where he went if he didn't come back to the neitherworld. Something happened. He disappeared. All communication between us stopped. Now, get out."

Knowing they had no choice, Vernie and his partner disappeared.

Juno sighed. A mess. A horrible mess the likes of which the neitherworld had not seen for at least a millennium. Donny Juice had brought down four visitors, all related to Lydia Deetz' incident with a story that was hard to believe.

Beetlejuice had been half reincarnated, and he had joined his 'other' living self. His power had increased, the three times name spell no longer worked, and he was with Lydia Deetz. She had approved life for him, while he was still living. If it hadn't been so secret, she would have been fired on the spot. But anger . . . couldn't factor in considering Donny's words.

There was a spell placed on the baby to take it's soul away. Without knowing how to harness its own magic, it could be done while it was very young. Rip out its soul, and that was the end.

For once, Beetlejuice was actually doing something good. She turned around and looked down the hall at Donny Juice. "Any more news?"

Donny sighed. "No."

"You know where they are?"

". . ." Donny shrugged his shoulders weakly.

"Good. I was making sure you didn't," she smirked.

---

Beetlejuice yawned and looked at his watch 11:00. It felt later than that. He scratched the side of his neck and looked over to the other bed. Lydia was sleeping safely. "Everything will be fine. Don't get jumpy." A soul hadn't been torn apart and brought back into two in who knows

how long, but no need to get hysterical. He hadn't mentioned one thing to Lydia about his own feelings about it because he wanted her to feel better again.

Last time he came to life, he screwed it up. He never thought someone was gunning for him. She and the kid were fine now, and she needed to know that. Everything would be~~~~~!

A ringing sprang into Benny's head as he fell out of bed. "Ow." He rubbed his head on the floor where he landed. "I need to . . . uh?"

*"Babe!"*

*"Yo, Kath."*

*"Don't fall to pieces just for me."*

*"Beattlejuice!"*

*"Benny, what have I told you about getting mittens wet!"*

*"What do you think, Mr. Beetleman?"*

*"You are not charging twenty bucks for that, Benny!"*

Benny grabbed his head. BJ tried to hold his head steady. "Uh . . . did anyone get the name of that bus?" Benny shook his head. "Man, this ringing is driving me crazy." He looked at his finger. "Could this do anything? No, it can't do anything. Of course it can do something, it's my finger." BJ squeezed his head harder. Benny fell on the floor, curling up in a ball.

He had been eating spaghetti with the girl next door, and then he was on a motel room floor. He was trying to piece the events together.

He had lost his way back to Lydia, got shot, something in the . . . hell? He took over Benny.

Something took over him.

". . ." His eyes stopped spinning as he concentrated on the crib ahead of him. "Mom would freak if she knew where I was." He got up and limped over to BG. He was awake in his crib. "Hey, BG, it's Benny." He gestured to himself. "And I'm your dad too." He reached out to touch BG's arm. "You know, I didn't know how to act the first time I met you. Which was tonight. But it wasn't 'cause I remember that stench. That five chimichanga stench." He laughed oddly. "I . . . I can actually fix stuff, instead of break it. Pretty funny, huh? But, not really. No big deal." He looked over toward Lydia. "This just got way complicated."

Benny remembered everything. He remembered the neitherworld, Jacques, Ginger, Juno. He remembered creating Doomie. He remembered playing Betty Juice. He remembered Lydia's awkward birthday party.

Beetlejuice remembered everything. He remembered how his mom nagged him to death. He remembered how his father left him at seven years old. He remembered how mittens looked

after he got wet after Benny did dishes. He remembered the hot girl picture in the pink bikini he had hanging up in his room.

He remembered how he said he didn't care about Ben-Ben's problems.

He realized how offended he was by his own name calling.

"I hate when souls recombine." Benny looked at his hand. "What do I go by?" He shook his head. "Which one came first?" Okay, it wasn't the only strange thing that ever happened in his life. Or his afterlife. A part of him felt like he was Beetlejuice, and then Benny's short lifespan was taking place until he just woke up and realized he was Beetlejuice. Another part felt like Benny was first, only Benny, but then he'd been swamped by memories of long ago. "Ah, figuring this out could give me a headache."

Yeah, it would. Trying to give some kind of timeline feel to himself wasn't possible because he'd been both. "Soul splitting sucks. Don't ever try it, BG."

He held his hand out toward Lydia. "Mondo shit." Lydia was his best friend in the afterlife. He'd been hanging around her since her early teen years. He shared parties, holidays, and even shared friends with her. In his afterlife, she was his life. When they took her away, it ripped everything apart from him.

It wasn't until that moment, that moment that he knew both sides of himself that he really knew *why*. "Ah, crap." He was in love with Lydia Deetz. He'd always been smack dab in a love obsession with her ever since he first set eyes on her. He'd been dead though, she'd been young, century old guys don't mix that way with young girls, and, yeah, that dead thing really got in the way.

When he was Benny, that barrier was gone. They were even the same age group then. He took straight to her the first time he walked by and saw her having trouble with her sink. Even when he found out she somehow had a kid, he still couldn't bring himself from leaving her. In fact, as soon as he'd met BG the first time, it just felt right. He'd babysitted all kinds of brats before BG, but . . . he was different.

And now he knew why. "Soul splitting sucks. There's no way to describe it. Don't even try it." He zapped some formula over BG, just out of grasp. "Come on, you've done this before. I remember just last week you showed me another magic trick."

BG reached for the bottle but still couldn't bring it close. Of course. The spell hadn't started being used against him back then yet. "Let me tell you something about magic, BG." He twirled the bottle in the air several times. "It's a hell of a lot easier than that mushy thing called love." He twirled it right into his mouth. They would have to start with the simplest magic out there. "Feet. Come on, little feet on it." He grabbed the tiny feet that were laying limp and placed them on the bottom of the bottle. "There ya go, more body pressed against it, the better the chances. Now, do something. Impress Benny. BJ." Whatever. "Impress me."

BG held the bottle by his feet and hands and sucked, not doing anything.

"Come on. Look." BJ pointed his finger at the formula, making it change colors. The most simplistic of magic. He stopped changing it colors. BG still wasn't doing anything.

BJ sighed as he looked at his clothes. BG wasn't used to him. He never used magic for him, but he knew Benny. Zapping his own self, he put himself back into his old living clothes, complete with black hair. He looked back over the crib and gestured to himself. "Look, it's Benny underneath. See? Now, come on. Show Benny a cool magic trick. I won't tell your mom."

This time, BG looked at his bottle and changed the liquid inside of it green. His feet fumbled on the bottom of it as he tried to turn it a purple color too, but managed to only make it half purple before back to green.

"One color change. Both feet. One object." BJ grabbed his forehead. The WDP really messed up BG. Lydia's boy. His babysitting ticket . . . his son. "My . . . he can't even . . ." Man, they would regret the day they messed with him. "Good job, BG. You'll get there, man."

Still, BG was the easy one. He looked back toward Lydia. Best friend. His best friend for so many years. He was helping her get everything back to normal. Helping her to get back to her parents and her friends once it was safe. Then, they could just be friends again. He could zap her family and friend's minds clear of him again if he wanted to, he had enough power now.

He could do just about anything. Except . . . "Friend. Best friend. Best friend for years. Years and years." He looked at his hands. "She likes BJ, as a friend. A friend." He held his hands tightly. "I can do this. I have to do this." Forever. At least for now. Forever. At least for now. Always friends.

Yeah, right. He remembered the words he'd been told. Soul mate. Soul. Mate. "Lydia." Even demons from hell knew what he couldn't understand. He shrugged his shoulders. "Doesn't matter."

She had rejected him, but it was only because he reminded her of himself. Ha, ha. *Talk about irony.* Or maybe it wasn't. Maybe she was perfect for him, but maybe it wasn't two ways. *I was sure before that Benny had no chance.* Oh, why did he even have to care so much? It wasn't like she had a boyfriend anyhow. *I can't mess up years of friendship. Not to mention she's known me for years as just a funny dead guy.* No, no he couldn't destroy that bond, for what? Maybe some . . . he looked at the crib pathetically. This didn't even matter in the grand scheme of things. The only thing that was important was teaching BG magic and making sure Lydia was safe. That was it.

He'd tackle the rest later, right now he knew what Lydia needed. Her best friend. Nothing but her best friend. "Give Benny a high five, dude." He took BG's hand and slapped it against his own. "Look." He zapped himself back to his old black and white striped outfit. "I'm kind of new to this thing, so don't blame me. And, um, if I don't get so close to you as fast, it's not 'cause you did anything wrong, Bud." He gulped. "I don't want Lydia to think more of me as Benny than BJ right now. Your mom doesn't need that confusion. So, let's just call me BJ. Okay?"

BG looked over at him from his green milk. And burped.

BJ burped back at him and gave him a thumbs up. Good, it was a deal.



## Chapter 22: Deals with Devils Never Turn Out Well

Disclaimer: I do not own Beetlejuice or related characters, he belongs to Tim Burton. I do not own Beetlejuice. I don't own Beetlejuice? I don't own any of the weird spellings for his name.

Beetlejuice?

Written By: Melanie Ray

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"Baaaaaabe?"

Lydia lazily opened her eye. She smiled when she saw Beetlejuice's smile. It had some beetles that were already slowly getting shoved in his teeth again. Looks like he already had breakfast.

Didn't matter if he had pearly white or beetle teeth to her. It was a wonderful way to wake up. Back to her old friend. Safe and sound. "Morning, BJ."

"Mornin'. Come on, you gotta get up." He shoved one of his hands in his old striped jacket pockets, and with the other, zapped her back to standing. "We need to get BG learning magic so he'll be safe, and then we can get your life back to normal." He blew on his fingernails and rubbed them against his suit. "And ol Beej' already found a way."

He did? "How?"

"By introducing him to something he can't resist screwing up." He gestured over to BG and zapped some pink balloons with happy faces on it. "I never could resist messing with those birthday clowns." He snorted and rolled back on his heels. "All we gotta do is crash a birthday party in progress."

Scuzzo the clown rolled through her mind. "Healthy competition." Would that get her son to use his magic? Either way, it was something to try. She strolled over to his crib, wanting to ask him about seeing a magician or a clown at a party. Yet, when she picked him up, she was too startled.

BG always needed multiple diaper changes at night. Lydia felt so relaxed, that her body just kind of conked out last night. She expected some supreme soakage, but he was completely dry.

She looked over toward Beetlejuice. He didn't know anything about diaper changes. For awhile, he thought babysitting was actually sitting on babies. Even if he did, why would he? *Benny was comfortable with babysitting.* Beetlejuice just seemed like Beetlejuice though.

"What's up with that look?" Beetlejuice said, almost looking offended. He crossed his arms. "Alright, alright, so I may have given him some live beetles to eat this morning. A beetle a day keeps the soul stealers away. It's got to get used to paranormal stuff."

Huh. Beetlejuice called BG 'it' again. Then, he wouldn't be that comfortable with BG yet to change his diaper. "Um, Beej?"

"Yeah, Lyd?"

"About BG." She held him in her arms, noticing some beetle parts in his mouth where it looked like new teeth were forming. Wow. He could grow teeth already? He had a line of tiny teeth in the middle, with only a few in the back missing. He must have used magic to bring those in. Or maybe it was natural for him? He wasn't supposed to be like other babies.

Just then, she heard a phone ring next to her. It was floating in mid-air. She picked up the receiver.

"Hey, just checking in on whether you were coming back to this conversation," it said to her. She looked over at Beetlejuice who was holding his own phone.

Oh. She hung the phone back up. "Sorry, I got distracted. He's got teeth."

"Big whoop." BJ shrugged. "So what did you want to say already? We've got a busy day."

"BG." Lydia bounced him up and down gently. "You really need to not call him an it."

"It is an 'it'." Beetlejuice gestured toward BG. "And 'it' shouldn't exist in the first place."

*Okay, keep it together.* Beetlejuice wasn't going to instantly be okay with the concept of fatherhood. She knew that. "Well, BG exists, so if you call him BG or him, it would probably be better."

Beetlejuice held his hands out in a stopping motion. "Whoah. I agreed to help him, and get your life back on track." He put his hands back in his pockets. "Not to be a dad or something." He rolled his eyes. "After this is all over, you can keep it like a pet I guess, or I can drop it off in the neitherworld. It'll be fine."

Lydia's mouth dropped. Did he just tell her he could drop her child off in the neitherworld? "Don't you dare!" She held BG closer to her.

"Hey, I said you could keep it."

She had not seen BJ in so long. All she dreamed about was hanging out with her friend again, but-but- . . . how was she supposed to keep it together with him acting like that? "His name is BG! He's our son, how could you be so cruel about it?" Oh. She had meant to say her son. Less involvement, but . . . it was true. It was his too.

Beetlejuice took a step back. "Gee." He rubbed his chin. "I . . . well, I just never wanted anything like this. I don't like all that responsibility. Why anyone wanted one is a mystery to me in the first place." He sighed. "But, I know it's sort of, kind of . . . my fault it exists." He

blew out harder. "He exists," he corrected himself. "I guess when it's all done and you go back home, things are still . . . not gonna be the same, huh?"

"Yeah." Lydia had to admit that much. She couldn't just run off to go have fun, and she definitely couldn't take him into the neitheworld. Beetlejuice might be able to make her family and friends forget, but then how would she have had BG? How would she explain that? "It wouldn't be."

"But it'll still be fun," Beetlejuice promised as he picked at his ear. "I can pull fun out of just about anywhere."

And just like that, Lydia found herself chuckling like her old self. "You never change, BJ." She placed BG back in his crib. "Okay, how are we going to find a birthday party?"

"Already got info." When Lydia turned around, Beetlejuice had turned into a striped raccoon. He held files in his hand. "Sleep's overrated, so I dropped into some local schools and did some digging." He laughed. "I'd love to see their expression when they watch their security cameras. Getting burgled by a raccoon." He turned back to normal. "We'll snoop around the addresses here and there. Once people start arriving, we can sneak in and scope it out."

"You never cease to amaze me, BJ." She stole a moment to look out the window. *It's almost there. I'm almost free of all this. It's obvious Beetlejuice will never be comfortable with BG as a son, but maybe as he grows, maybe he can think of him as a friend?*

"Come on, let's go." BJ looked like he was going to grab the diaper bag, but he turned to look toward her. "Car's out there."

Hm. Well, maybe he subconsciously had some memories of Benny? "I need to grab the diapers real quick." She went over to the diaper bag and slung it over her shoulder as she carried BG to the car. Beetlejuice was already waiting inside.

-----  
"For he's a jolly good fellow . . ."

"That's not the birthday song," BJ complained. Modern day birthday parties weren't half as imaginative. They'd hit four birthday parties from one school, and so far, none of them includes clowns or magicians. In fact, they all kept taking place outside of the house.

Invitation wasn't needed when they could watch things in public places. He didn't even have to use any magic. At this rate, he might have to be the competition. It wasn't something he wanted to do though, it was hard enough getting used to the idea of fatherhood. Putting the thought of 'competition' into BG's head wouldn't help.

Heck, if they had found someone, they both could have pulled pranks against one person at the same time. Bonding experience or something. "This isn't working. Doesn't anyone use anything for parties anymore?"

Lydia thought it might be too good to be true. "They just don't seem to be as popular. Maybe we'll have better luck in the next one?"

"Eh." He zapped some cake in front of Lydia. "Might as well steal a piece."

"BJ, they hadn't even cut in the cake yet." Lydia looked at the cake in front of her. Great, just great.

"How did you already get cake?"

Lydia knew that question was coming. She saw a girl about her age next to her. "Oh." She chuckled. "Hello."

"I got it for her. This birthday party sucks so far," BJ said unabashedly. "Think party, think fun. I have funner days visiting my hairdresser."

The girl laughed. "That's funny." She gestured toward BJ. "You're really funny."

"Yeah, well, twenty bucks then."

She laughed again, but BJ was holding his hand out. She slapped his hand instead. "You're cool. Hey, would you rather come join my friend's party? It's kind of dead in this outlet."

"Are there clowns or magicians?" Lydia asked.

"Uh." The girl looked over at Lydia, like she completely forgot she existed. "I don't know if there's room for your little brother."

"That 'little brother' is both of our 'little problem'," BJ answered back.

"Oh, you are his sister?" the girl asked.

Sister would be a nice cover story, but she didn't like the way she was looking at BJ. If she knew his true form, she'd be running away. BJ still looked like Benny though, and he wasn't terribly . . . not cute. Not that she would tell him that.

If he had his gnarled green teeth, that girl wouldn't be hitting on him. If his hair were messed up and out of control in its usual fashion, she wouldn't be hitting on him. If BJ looked like BG and not Benny, it'd be easier.

"Oh, hey, wait. I think I've heard of you." The girl pointed at BJ. "You're BennyFernake, aren't you? I heard you do just about anything for twenty bucks."

"Not quite." BJ had stopped paying attention. "I'd actually pay you twenty to just go away."

Pay her twenty to go away? Lydia couldn't help a small smirk as the offended girl took off. Yet, it was kind of weird. He really did do just about anything for money.

"This end's deader than I am." BJ groaned. "I mean as dead as I used to be." He smacked his head square on the table, but then came back up grabbing his nose. "Ow!" He rubbed his

nose. "Stupid humanity."

They were only one town over from their original too. "She recognized you."

"Yeah. Looks like it's really time to hit the open road before Benny ends up in trouble." He looked at his young body again. "This is downright embarrassing. I'm at least 600 years old, and I have to be in this little body. They'd be laughing their butts off in the neitherworld." He put his hands up and started to squince. "Ew, I really don't want to see that!"

BG laughed. Not his typical usual laugh though. It was harder. Grittier. Almost like . . . "BJ, did you make him do that?"

"Nah, I wish." BJ looked down at BG. Teeth growing. A guffaw like he used to make before he was stuck in Benny's voice. "He sounded more like me."

"Yeah. I'm sorry," Lydia said, knowing he missed his true voice. She missed it too. Although, BG was changing quickly. Maybe he was close enough to the paranormal now?

BJ seemed to have the same thought. He juiced BG's bottle in his mouth and BG slurped it up. "Come on, change colors. You got my voice, you're getting teeth and you're eating whole beetles. What's the problem?"

BG seemed to . . . stare at him. He took a few puckers on his bottle, each with a distinguishable pause.

That was weird. That wasn't normal. At all. Lydia watched BG just as close as BJ did. Besides some magic in the beginning, BG was pretty close to normal. That, however, that overexaggerated, almost comical look.

Even people around them started to notice the strange kid.

"Well. Physical supernatural traits too." BJ peered closer to him. "I'd say nothing's really gonna mess with you anytime soon you little faker."

"Faker?" Lydia looked toward BJ. He stole the bottle from BG's mouth, tossed it up in the air, and hurled it at him! "BG!"

But, BG caught it, and shoved it in his own mouth.

"Not." BJ looked out the corner of his eye. "Not good."

"Not good?" Lydia questioned until BJ grabbed BG from her and her hand. He rushed them back outside. Lydia didn't know what was going on, but she followed his lead. She strapped BG in and strapped herself in just before BJ took off.

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"Um. BJ?" They had been driving for a whole five minutes and Beetlejuice hadn't said anything. "BJ, what's wrong?"

"Faker." BJ glared in the backseat. "Too much like me." His hand hit his head. "Okay, not my fault. It's not. I mean, I was . . . *I was human around BG, I couldn't sense paranormal stuff.* He didn't want to say that to her though. "I'm not real used to the kid, I just became human. So good ol Beej' was a little off." He didn't speak a couple of minutes.

"BJ," Lydia urged him again. "What's wrong?"

"Faker. Good faker. Great faker." No doubt the kid had his genes.

"Faking not knowing magic?"

"No, but faking everything else." BJ flipped his visor to look toward the backseat.

BG looked at BJ back with slitted eyes before he stuck his tongue out and hit him with his bottle. Straight shot. In the back of the head. Halfway through the toss, the cap was unscrewed too.

Lydia's jaw just dropped. "Did BG just do that?" She looked at BJ covered in milk from head to toe.

BJ zapped himself clean and then looked toward Lydia. "He's understood every word we've been saying," BJ revealed. "He's smarter than he looks. I knew it didn't make sense something with my genes would be that typical of a human." He stared in the visor again. "Growing teeth just in time to eat real beetles during breakfast. I should have seen it."

"Well." Lydia actually smiled and looked in the backseat. "You understand me?"

BG reached his hands out innocently toward her.

"How advanced is he? Can he talk yet?" Lydia asked. Right now, nothing would surprise her.

"Doubt it. He doesn't have enough. Which is why this is getting dangerous, Lyd." He looked at the steering wheel. "Were the WDP going to eventually let you go? Did they ever say that?"

"No. I mean, not that anyone told me." That didn't make any sense. Why was BJ asking about that now? "Why?"

"Because he's too weak." BJ felt a rattle hit the back of his head.

"BG," Lydia scolded him. "Stop hitting him."

"Gooooo," BG cooed.

"Like it or not, it's true." BJ didn't seem to care about being belted by the rattle. "Look at him, Lyd. He can understand. He can grow teeth. He's developed, everything except talking yet."

"Okay?" Lydia still didn't get it. That should make it easier. We can tell him that he can use his magic."

"He's known, Lyd. He's heard every word. Don't you get it?" He pointed his thumb to the back seat. "Magic is the first thing to develop. The next things come afterward." He sighed. "With lessons, he might be able to do more. At this point, the best he can do is change colors and make things fly. His raw juice, this is it."

His raw juice? Complete? Lydia didn't know what that meant. "You mean, we can't teach him to protect himself?"

"No, I mean no one should be wanting his soul." He kept his eyes on BG. "As powerful as I am, I was . . . fractured."

Benny. "Then what does that mean, BJ?" He still didn't want to respond. "BJ?"

"It means he'll never be strong enough to take over anything if his soul is lost. The WDP surely would have known that after he was born." Beetlejuice said it, but it didn't have that ring of a happy ending.

"Well." Lydia looked back toward BG who was sucking on one of his toys. "That should be a great thing, but you're not going to say that, are you?" He went quiet again. "BJ?"

"I have to talk to Donny."

"BJ."

"I have to talk to Donny."

That was all he would say. Lydia crossed her arms. He wasn't going to spill one more word, and the way he was acting was making her jittery. She couldn't bear to lose him again. "Don't leave."

"I have to talk to Donny."

"Don't leave, BJ." She said it again, hoping for something different. "No matter what. I've lost everything, I don't want to lose you too."

This time, he paused. "Lyd." He stole a glance at her and then back on the road. "What if you got everyone back? You could be yourself. Raise BG however you want. Have everyone you know and loved back in your life."

"I . . . I don't like the way you're talking." He could get her everything back, but she would lose him? "You're my best friend, Beej'."

"Just answer."

"I don't want to answer that." Lydia looked out the window. A decision. Her family for him? Why did it matter anymore? He said himself BG was too weak, what did it matter?

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"Brother." Donny smiled as he tried to steal a hug. "How is the family?"

Beetlejuice didn't hug back. "Were the WDP gonna give her up?"

"Why?" Donny asked. "Because of BG's lower level? I don't know. The WDP is cautious and very thorough. I think there was something, but I didn't want to get Lydia's hopes up just to hurt her again."

"I knew it!" Beetlejuice shoved his hands into his suit pockets. He did everything he could to get back to Lydia. He risked losing his juice for humanity. He put his soul back together for her. "It's too dangerous to keep my Lyd."

He wanted to spend the rest of eternity with Lyd, there was nothing better in the world. The price though, it would be her. He was selfish. There was probably no one in the neitherworld or living world more selfish than him.

But, she'd have to lose too much. He couldn't ask it of her. "I need options, Donny."

"Options?" Donny didn't get it yet. "The WDP doesn't work with the neitherworld anymore. You disappeared, and I didn't tell Juno where you were." He rubbed his hands together nervously. "I think she knew though." He spread his arms out. "Brother, you have family and all the love in the world. What's so dangerous about that?"

"Donny!" He grabbed his brother roughly. "It wasn't the WDP!"

"What? But I thought-?"

"BG is weak because I wasn't whole." Beetlejuice patted himself. "I'm whole now, and I'm only whole because of being sent to hell."

". . . Ooh." Donny was getting it now. "You think you were duped into hell?"

"Yep."

You weren't dangerous at all."

"Nope."

"You were split up. There would have been nothing."

"Yep."

"But now . . . oh dear." Donny hit his own cheek lightly. "Oh, Brother. I-I'm sorry. If you watched your back though, then-"

"It's a risk. Hell . . . is tricky." Beetlejuice raised an eyebrow at him. "Look how far they got already."

"Oh. Well, I suppose Lydia could undergo an operation-"

"And ruin the rest of her life? She's nineteen." He looked toward the ground. "There . . . there might, you know . . ."



"Be someone else in her future. She is young." Donny sighed. "So are you, Benny."

"Shut up," BJ warned him. "Before I dunk your head down a basketball court."

"Ah, that's the same thing you said when I first met you as Benny," Donny smiled.

"Shut up and give me options," BJ answered letting him go. "Is the only thing left to leave? Even if I do, I'm whole. I'll have to kill myself, and then I'll never see her again. Not in her lifetime." He started to do some math in her head. Yeah, it would be a real long time.

"I know, but this is important." Even Donny stopped with the lovely words of encouragement. "If you're right, Brother. They managed to do it once before. Plus, you know . . . Benny actually did have a crush on her."

"So?"

" . . . like uh . . ." Donny coughed. "Like you too. He was you, so it made sense."

Beetlejuice rubbed his neck. Confrontation. "Shut up."

Donny just smiled. "Well? There is one option I can think of, but I don't know if you'll take it."

Beetlejuice listened. Anything. At this rate, anything. He was on his way to resolving himself to not seeing Lydia until after she passed herself.

"You could give me your juice?"

"What?"

"We're family. I can hold it for you," Donny smiled again. "Then, you can be Benny. Lydia will be safe and sound, and you'll get to stay."

That was selfish, but not as selfish. "Human without juice. Even whole, I wouldn't be any danger." Except for one thing. "Eventually, my juice will slowly return. You can't keep it from me forever. You're too weak, Donny. My juice is way more than you know." It was a temporary fix.

"In the meantime, you could talk to Lydia about the options?" Donny suggested. "She could decide for herself."

"But my juice makes me, well, me," Beetlejuice reminded him. "Without juice, and this fractured soul mending . . ."

"There is a good chance at times you bounce back and forth between memories," Donny confirmed. "But you will mend. Only slower."

Lydia waited by the car anxiously. Donny and Beetlejuice had been talking for some time. When Beetlejuice came back, he sat in the front seat, pulled a pair of keys from the visor and started the car.

That was strange. Beetlejuice usually used his juice to drive. Why bother with subtleties?

"Goodbye, Brother! Goodbye, Lydia! Goodbye, BG!" Donny said. As he waved his hand, sparks flew out. "Oops." He shook his hand. "Uh, it'll be fine."

"Yeah, right." BJ looked toward Lydia. "Alright, Lyd. It looks like I don't have to leave after all! But, uh . . ." He gestured to the keys in the ignition. "I don't have anymore juice."

"No more juice? Why?"

"I can explain." Donny zapped in the back seat with BG. "You see, I have my brother's juice. It's a lot to control, but I can handle it."

"Supposedly," BJ remarked as he sighed. "Well, things tend to happen with deals with devils."

"Wait." Lydia gestured to the back seat where Donny was now playing with BG's little feet. "Why does Donny have your juice?"

BJ rubbed his chin. "Seemed like a good idea?"

Not buying it.

"He wanted to see what a thousand times his own juice felt like?"

Not buying it.

"There was no chance in a billion years we could have had a kid powerful enough to lose it's soul, until my soul was mended, which means now Donny's holding it so I'm not powerful anymore?"

Lydia raised her eyebrow. "Could you run that by me again?"

"A deal with the devil never turns out well," Donny spoke.

"It wasn't the devil, just a creative little demon," Beetlejuice corrected him. "At least I think so. Makes sense. Good way to move up the chain."

"Just, hang on," Lydia demanded. "What's going on?"

"Oh, a lot," Donny sighed and then smiled. "We can talk it out over a lovely cup of tea when we get home."

## Chapter 23: It's Lydia's Decision

Tea. Lydia looked at the tea in front of her. It felt like her whole life was just one big farce. Having her best friend's kid, losing her family and friends, losing her best friend forever, gaining everything back, and now what?

Having tea with Donny and Beetlejuice. Well, not quite. Beetlejuice wasn't drinking anything. Lydia didn't want to start the conversation, but Donny was oddly quiet. "Can someone please talk to me already?"

"Yes, I believe some conversation would be help-" Donny stopped mid-sentence as his pinky had a spurt of spark come from it and hit the table, singing it. "Oh, I just bought that."

Beetlejuice just hit his own face and rubbed his hand down it. "This isn't going to work long."

Lydia took a deep breath. "Listen." She looked at the two quiet guys in front of her. "I." She ticked her fingers off one by one. "Lost the ability to speak my G's. I was impregnated with what I thought was a ghost's son. I lost my family. I lost my friends. I lost the ability to be me." She pointed toward herself. "And BG never had the opportunity to be himself. So, please. Please, for one time, give me some good news!" She looked toward BJ. "Be straight. Please, I can't take any more of this. Is this all over? Am I losing you all over again?"

Aw. BJ looked toward the table. Lydia had gone through as much misery as him. Even though she went through child birth, he went through hell. Kind of a tie breaker there. He did kind of surprise her last night by taking over . . . uhh . . . "Okay, Babe, the truth is you're fine. We're fine." He tapped his foot. "We've been fine, until everyone else made it not fine."

"No more riddles!" Lydia exploded as she grabbed her head. "No more riddles. No more guessing. Just tell me. Do you get to stay?"

Yeah, that wasn't an easy answer. "It's . . . " He scratched his neck. "Okay, no more riddles. Yes, I physically will be here." He tried to smile. "Just not a hundred percent until you make some decisions."

"Make some decisions?"

"Yes, and when you decide what path you want to take, then you can go back to your old life too." Donny smiled at her. "It will be a happy day for everyone. Depending on your decision."

"My decision?" Lydia looked at each of them. Nothing had ever been her decision so far. "What are my decisions?"

"Before we get to that, I've got to tell you something. It's not gonna make you happy."

"If you can stay, then I'll deal with it," Lydia insisted. "What?"

"You never had to have BG or go through any of this. It was all pointless."

Lydia blinked. "What?"

This. This wasn't easy to tell her. Lydia had been hurt beyond measure already, and BJ had to hurt her one more time. "After I tell you this, you'll know everything, Lyd. No more secrets. The rest is up to you, however you want to go about it." Okay. He beat his tongue at the top of his mouth, feeling his throat go dry.

Donny was silent. The more he spoke and interacted the harder it was to contain the juice. This was all up to him. "We were separated because a kid between us had the power to basically make a second hell."

"Yes."

"It happened anyway."

"Yes."

"The WDP made you leave your whole old life behind and raise BG with nothing supernatural around him."

"Yes."

"Okay. Um, none of it mattered. They were just the steps to trick us to where we are now. The only thing that went wrong is BG's too big of a whimp." BJ caught the beetle bottle that was thrown at him from BG but didn't complain back to him. It wasn't the time. He had to do this and crush Lydia so she could move on.

Her shining eyes, filled with wonder. That smile that made him happier than a bathtub of beetles. It was about to go away. "I was never dangerous until I joined with Benny."

"Until you joined with Benny?"

"The neitherworld can't join split souls easily. When I was alive before, that was a whole new body. Benny was part of my soul, kept away from the neitherworld's knowledge of it. The neitherworld didn't bring me back to this body." He sighed. "I got it when I was in hell. I got it because I agreed to take it back. I didn't think, and I didn't know, and I didn't care!" He slammed his hand on the table. "All that mattered was getting back to you. I saw you and Benny eating spaghetti and . . . and I wanted to join my soul to come back."

Donny tried to help, sensing the conversation was getting heavy to hold. "But he couldn't do that until he was in hell, and he was tricked into sending a WDP there, which would normally send him to hell. But, the WDP he sent there, was just a ruse. However, my brother had no way of knowing that, he thought he was being punished. The neitherworld didn't send him though, only assumed he was missing."

Lydia scratched her head. "What's this mean?"

"Well. Um." Donny grabbed a napkin and a pen. "I know. Just, if I can keep the sparks from burning this."

BJ and Donny Juice both looked at what Donny was writing while Lydia watched. After Donny was done, he scooted it toward her. "This was . . . hell's plans?"

Lydia took the napkin, reading the front and the back

And it all made sense.

Original Plan:

1. Get Beetlejuice cursed
2. Find a way to get Beetlejuice into Hell
3. Entice Beetlejuice to join with Benny to remove curse.
4. Have the complete Beetlejuice have a baby with Lydia
5. Take over

Askewed Plan: (BJ Note: That's Donny's word for what happened since the first plan didn't work.)

1. Bring Beetlejuice to life in a temporary body.
2. Get Lydia impregnated as a decoy.
3. WDP's over interference encourages Beetlejuice to come to life with some provided help from neitherworld.
4. Kill him.
5. Ruse him into hell, and make neitherworld think WDP was behind it. Break ties between WDP and neitherworld.
6. Show Beetlejuice his split soul, and make him join.
7. Let them think everything is over, and the rest will fall into place.

Lydia swallowed. The whole time. BG. The WDP. Her. "Nothing mattered." She let her head droop, and it was hard to hold back the tears. The whole time, it was nothing but the incentive to make Beetlejuice accept his place with Benny. "Nothing mattered at all."

BG never had to be born. None of it had to ever happen.

"Beetlejuice is now dangerous," Donny spoke first. He tried to reach out to comfort her, but it wasn't his place. He could feel BJ's eyes on him. "Like Beetlejuice said though, BG was even weaker than hell had planned. Without that little fault, we wouldn't have figured it out. Anyhow, good news is I am holding my brother's juice. That means you are absolutely safe."

He looked toward Beetlejuice who still wasn't talking. "But, um, without juice Beetlejuice can't always be here. Him and Benny, he is most likely going to be cycling between the two before they meld together well like before. Um . . . more tea?"

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"Donny, just get out already! She got the gist!" He watched Donny get up and scamper off. He would have zapped him out as soon as Lydia got the note. It explained it already, did he really have to just keep going? He had to explain the rest of it. He wasn't leaving that up to him.

With his brother finally gone, BJ scooted over and placed his hand on Lydia's back. "Donny can only hold it for so long." The conversation wasn't going to move forward smoothly though. Lydia had kept her head bowed down so low, no one saw her crying.

He barely had time to prepare himself as she launched her arms around his neck. She didn't say anything, just cried. Could he blame her? He rubbed her back affectionately. All that misery, for her, only as a decoy. Her crying also triggered BG to start to cry.

She was in no condition to help BG, she needed comfort herself. He had no juice anymore to make BG stop his shenanigans. Oh, he already missed his juice, but then again. He might be giving it up for good. He shifted his weight to support Lydia, but to also reach and rub BG's hand. "Settle down, your mom's going to be okay. Life just sucks sometimes. You'll learn all about that when you grow up."

After a few more minutes of constant crying from both of them, it was harder to keep it together. BJ didn't want to do anything but burst into his own tears, but he couldn't do that. He had to be the strong one for them.

Lydia settled down long enough to back up from him. "Okay," she said shakily. "Now what?"

"Donny can't hold my juice for long," he informed her. "I am going to cycle between three phases." He rubbed his ear lightly. "I remember being Benny and BJ, Lyd. I've remembered since last night. I just didn't want to make you feel awkward, 'cause . . . human teens are kind of . . . anxious at times." He skipped dwelling on that subject. "The other times, I won't remember anything about my second life, or I won't remember the neitherworld. Eventually, I'll become myself again, full time. I don't know how long that will be."

"Okay." She was still keeping it together. "Then when Donny can't hold your juice anymore?"

"It's up to you," BJ answered. "There's only three choices left." He held three fingers up and ticked the first one off. "Donny will have to get rid of my juice, which means no more juice ever again." He ticked his next finger off. "I can sign some contracts to make sure no one can bring me back to the living world in any way, shape, or form until you pass." He ticked his last finger off. "The third isn't an option, but Donny's going to bring it up. We . . . could make sure kids aren't an option by having some kind of surgery."

"Surgery."

"It's for life," BJ warned her. "It's for the rest of your life, Lyd."

"I don't want any more kids," Lydia answered.

"Now. You're nineteen. You still have so much more of your life ahead of you." BJ crossed his arms. "What if . . . you find someone?" Ouch. Not something he wanted to think of, but it was always possible.

"I don't want to lose you, and you shouldn't have to give up your juice. I know you without your juice, Beej'," Lydia insisted. "You love your juice."

"Yeah, and you don't want to know what it's gonna take," he said darkly. "This won't be some normal surgery from a normal living hospital. It could be dangerous for us."

"How dangerous?"

"I didn't even bother finding out the details. That's how dangerous."

"Well, I want to know."

"For what? If something happened to you, I'm not the only one who'd be lost, Babe. If something happened to me, you'll never see me until you pass yourself." He gestured to BG. "If both of us are lost, that little guy is going down to an unclaimed department in the neitherworld. Right next to luggage. I'm not kidding."

Lydia looked over toward BG. Beetlejuice hadn't shown much concern before for him. He had just admitted though that he remembered being Benny. "The dry diaper."

"Like he could ever go a full night? Yeah, right."

Yep, he was both. Strange, but at the same time, not really. Benny and Beetlejuice had always been kind of close to the same. "You remember your time as Benny? All of it?"

"It's more than that. I am him. I'm Beej', and well, I'm me. I can remember every time my annoying mom yelled at me for some dumb thing." He groaned. "Not to mention the yelling she'll give me for the time I've been gone now." He rolled his eyes. "Man, if only I could have juiced her for just a second. A small taste of her own medicine. You know how good I am at fixing things? I could have been rolling in dough if she didn't keep me from making money." He shrugged his shoulders. "Moms'll be mom's though. Better than my dad."

Benny had never actually talked to her about his father. "That bad?"

"Yeah, he was a real schmuk. Left the day my mom told him she was pregnant. What a deadbeat." He gestured to himself. "You know, I've been dead, but even I have no way of topping how dead of a deadbeat he was." He looked toward BG. "Kids aren't the coolest thing in the world." He caught the rattle being flung at him. "Heh, but they aren't the worst. Even wimpy ones, they're still good as entertainment."

"Yeah." She looked over toward BG. "He shouldn't have ever been born."

"Yeah, and um, the things we've been saying haven't exactly been helping him." BJ got up, took the rattle and took it over to BG. "Don't worry, we wouldn't get rid of you. You won't find yourself at the neitherworld claim department."

BG still wasn't smiling.

"Yo, I am only half the solution over here," BJ said when he gestured to Lydia.

Lydia came over to BG. "Sorry. I was overwhelmed, but, that doesn't change anything." That's right. "I'm still your mom, and I love you. I always will, no matter what."

"Don't say that last-too late."

BG grinned wide.

"He can still learn a lot more magic as he grows up," BJ warned Lydia. "You just basically gave him permission to get away with anything. Not smart. I don't even have anything to keep him under control now."

"Yeah, but it's fine." Lydia finally smiled again. "We still have his Uncle Donny, don't we?" Beetlejuice groaned. "You love your Uncle Donny, don't you?"

BG groaned and crossed his arms.

"Agreed! Lyd, I go out of my way to get rid of him!"

"We need someone if we lose your juice." If it was the option. She was still upset that she went through so much for absolutely nothing, but, she did admit. At least the choice was hers. BJ looked like he'd be okay with BG in his life. She didn't have to uproot herself right away, and soon, she'd have her family back again. It was almost all over, once she made her decision. "Benny?"

"Yeah?"

He answered, just as quick as he would with BJ. "What about Benny's missing time?"

"The brain'll just fill in whatever. I won't suddenly just go ballistic with amnesia or something." BJ rubbed his eye. "Lack of sleep as a human is hard, especially without the boost of juice." He yawned and stretched his arms. BG yawned and stretched his arms too.

Oh. Yeah. BG always imitated Benny. "I guess you better get some rest then, Beej. Benny. What do you want to be called?"

"Anything but Ben-Ben. Gaw, I can't believe I burned myself with that one." He looked toward his finger. "You know, at least without juice I can't accidentally set myself on fire."

Lydia couldn't help herself as she laughed. It felt good. "Get some rest, Beej."

"Yeah. Uh." He was about to leave, but he looked like he wanted to say something. "I'm uh, gonna cycle between memories. I just want to say . . . you know, that Benny . . . if anything . . .



. "

"Don't worry," Lydia assured him. "I know you're my best friend, BJ. Nothing you as Benny will do will change that."

"Well." He seemed to have gotten stuck in thought. "Eh. I'll uh, I'll see you." He turned and walked out the door. "See ya tonight, Babe."

## Chapter 24: Three, Two, Huh?

Awkward, Lydia thought as she held BG in her arms. Beetlejuice had been Benny off and on over the week, but the change between who he was seemed to change somewhere between six and forty-two hours. It wasn't easy to make time to hang out with Benny or BJ, considering she never knew which one would be there.

They worked out a small system of 3,2, and huh so far. When she said something Beetlejuice didn't understand, he'd hold up a 2. When he understood everything fine, he'd hold up a 3, signaling he was Benny and BJ.

And he usually just said 'huh?' if he was Benny and didn't understand. Well, Lydia had talked with BJ/Benny on the phone earlier, asking him to go to the movies. Beetlejuice insisted she liven up her decision time by having some fun too. Good ol' Beej. He never made sense.

The only problem is, he was Benny when he arrived at the theatres. Pure, one hundred percent Benny with no memory of his neitherworld afterlife. It usually wasn't so bad. Benny was fine, but she had a terrible feeling when he walked up to her, pushing a comb through his white hair, things wouldn't be smooth.

Benny never cared about his hair too awful much. It didn't get as wild as BJ's, but he didn't pull out a comb to take care of it. Error number one. "Hey, Benny." Lydia waved slightly, trying to be nice.

However, it was as she feared. "Kath." He shoved his comb in his pocket. "Yeah, uh, my hair went white again. Funny, huh?" He tried to smooth his hair down. "Keeps standing up too. Sorry about that, didn't want to embarrass you on the first date." He snorted softly. "Was waiting for the second. So! What did you want to see?"

Okay. "Uh, date?" Unfortunately, Beetlejuice had been absolutely right about the mind plugging what it wanted to for the different three forms. Apparently, Benny's plugged in her phone call to BJ as a date for him.

"Yeah. Saturday night, 7:00, show." He chuckled. "Come on, don't tease."

Before Lydia could try and say something, a few guys about their ages came up toward him.

"Benny," one of them said softly as they looked toward Lydia. "That's the Kathleen girl, isn't it?"

"Yo. Don't start." Benny was practically glaring at them. He wrapped his arm around Lydia. "Just beat it."

Lydia didn't know what to make of the tension.

"Yeah, yeah. Just don't get too attached to that girl," one of them said. "Of course, I hear she's easy for a good time."

Oh. *Duh. Of course.* Lydia looked toward BG. *Because I have him, I'm 'easy', and not to be trusted.* For just a little while, hanging around BJ more often, she had felt more normal again. Even enough to go out for a night of fun. But, she forgot. She was Kathleen Smith, a nineteen-year-old with, not only a baby, but a strange amount of money and a nice house for someone so young. Most of them had assumed her parents had given her a good amount of money to leave them be or something. That's what she thought, until another new piece was heard.

"Fine, Benny, do what you wish," one of the guys uttered. "Just don't let her sugar daddy find out."

*Sugar daddy?* Honestly, she didn't think people could think worse of her! So now, some thought it was her parents putting her up, but others thought . . . others thought . . .

"That's it," Benny yelled at them, grabbing the first nearest guy. "Stop talking about Kath that way." He pulled his fist back. "You know I'm not joking!"

A fist fight? Lydia looked toward the ground, remembering that other thing about Benny. He wasn't violent around her, but he could be. He knew his way around a fight. *Because he doesn't have juice, he's reduced to it.*

All her decisions came crashing back down on her again. Her family and friends were in the neitherworld still, because she wouldn't make that decision. Beetlejuice was stuck between forms without his juice, because she wouldn't make that decision.

"Don't pick on Thomas," one of the other guys warned him. "We're just helping you see straight. She's pretty but she's got a whole lot of baggage. We just think maybe someone's getting tired of that baggage, and she's fishing around for a new daddy!"

Benny didn't even respond as he let go of Thomas, but punched the other one in the gut.

Lydia tried to hide her face, feeling guilt wind up in her. *Is that what BJ would become if I took away his juice, just for us to be near each other?* She didn't fear Benny, but that kind of life wasn't going to lead to positive things.

Benny grabbed her hand quickly, and Lydia held BG tightly as the moviegoers yelled at them. Would they get arrested for being involved in a fight in a public place?

"Sorry, Kath. That was a bad first date," Benny said as he dusted himself off and stopped running after a few blocks. "Sorry about those guys. They just don't understand stuff."

"They were . . . trying to warn you though," Lydia said softly. "Were those your enemies that you just did that to?" She already knew the answer, but she wanted to see what he said.

Nothing. "Screw 'em."

"They were your friends, weren't they?"

"Not anymore, not if they don't accept this." Benny turned toward her and touched one of her hands holding BG. "Kath, I . . . you know, I didn't plan on feeling this way with ya," he said gently. "I planned on making some money off of you, and maybe getting a free movie and some meals in here and there. But." His voice was strained. "I don't care if you have a kid, or who the dad is, or if that other guy you used to talk about like me is what you really wanted or not or something or whatever or I don't care!" He put both his hands on hers. "We were meant to be. When I'm away from you . . . it's so hard to bear. I can't explain it."

Well, Benny was BJ. Of course, she knew that feeling. She felt it all the time. "Um." Lydia swallowed. "Benny? How often do you fight?"

"Well." He shrugged his shoulders. "Does it matter?"

"We kind of had to throw ourselves out of a movie theatre, Benny." She looked down toward BG. "I'm not looking to make you into a dad or anything, but you know, I really shouldn't-"

"What, just 'cause of a small scuffle?" Benny groaned. "Come on, that was nothing. I couldn't just let them get away with talking about you like that. What kind of boyfriend would I be to let that happen?" He pounded one fist into another. "I'd never hurt you or BG, and I don't hurt people who don't mess with me. But . . . I tend to have a personality that pisses people off. Hell, I'd get beat up all the time if I didn't fight back, Lyd." He blinked. "Lyd?"

Uh oh. What a time. *This is awkward enough right now! Please be just BJ, please be just BJ.* "Number?"

BJ backed away slowly. "He doesn't . . . he's just getting confused between best friends forever and other things."

Yep, number three. Lydia watched as BJ was shaking his hand. "I bet that hurts."

"Forget it." BJ stopped shaking his hand. "Guess we can't see a show. Probably had lousy shows, but this town doesn't have much. No mini-golf, no bowling, no nothing. Maybe we could grab a pizza?"

"BG."

"BG what?"

"How attached are you to him?"

That was a weird answer. *Ooh, my freaking Benny side! I don't get to hold the whole picture when I'm just him, but I know that question's not good. It's got to be because of that fight.* "What do you mean how attached, Lyd?"

She adjusted BG with one hand and rubbed her mouth gently with her other hand before holding BG tighter. "As Benny, you're more used to him. As BJ, you kind of stay away from him. When you're balanced, you're more like . . . not hating him."

What was she getting at?

"Do you want to hold him at all?"

"Uh, yeah I can. No big deal."

"No, I don't mean 'can'. Do you *want* to hold your child, BJ?"

*His* child. Lydia never said it like that. "Do I *want* to hold him? Not really."

"Yeah." Lydia pulled BG closer back to her. "I mean, he's not bad. You're okay with him, but, I mean . . . it's not like you're that close to him."

Okay, what? "Why are you even pulling up this daddy *stuff*?" he had to ask. This didn't make any sense.

"Are you his friend or father?" Lydia held BG's pacifier tightly, probably to make sure he didn't launch it at him. "Do you think you'll ever see him more as something than a friend?"

"I don't like what you're saying. Why are you asking this, Babe?"

"Just answer."

"I don't know!" BJ whined. "He's, friend, I guess! I don't know, he's a baby!"

"Yeah." Her voice was soft, but sounded cautious. "He would be a friend. He wouldn't even be a best friend, so it's not like . . . well, you told me yourself. You really haven't bonded with him, so . . ."

Where were all the pauses coming from?

"Beej. I made a decision." Lydia looked straight at him. "You need to stay in the neitherworld, forever."

Neitherworld. Neitherworld? "What?"

"Without your juice, you'll have to stand up for yourself like Benny," Lydia said. "I don't want that for you."

"Lyd? You want me . . . gone?"

"All of the decisions were hard."

"No it's not!" Beetlejuice rubbed his face. "I'll get rid of my juice!"

"To be human, with no magic?"

"I already was as Benny."

"And he fights. And, I love your personality BJ, but it doesn't make for a good future here in my time. You're blunt, but you don't back down. Fighting won't get you anywhere good in the living world, and without juice, that's what you will do."

Damn it. Damn it. Damn it! "Babe, just stop! Think about it for a second?"

"I mean." She was clearly trying to hide her eyes welling up by looking downward. "The only real thing bad about it is BG. But, you said it yourself. He's just maybe a friend, if even. If I separate us all now, he won't even know you probably. And, you won't super miss him."

That was it. That was it, that's why she was asking all those stupid questions about fatherhood. BJ grabbed his head. "No, I'd miss my kid way too much to live with myself."

"Too late," she whispered. "It's not your fault, BJ. I don't blame you. In fact, this helps make it a little easier."

"Easier? You're throwing me out to the neitherworld, forever!" BJ yelled at her. "For what? So I keep my juice, so I don't get into fights? Are you out of your mind?!"

"You can't just think short term, BJ. As Benny, what are you going to be in the future if you keep this up?"

Okay. Damn. "I promise I won't fight."

"How can you say that? What if someone says something like they did in the movies? Would you just ignore it and walk it off?"

Heck no he wouldn't do that! "Sure." She read through his lie though.

"You don't want surgery to be an option. I can't let you part with your juice, just for me. It's wrong and it's selfish, BJ."

"Be a little selfish," he insisted. "Lyd, I want to stay. Take the juice, just *take* it."

"And I'd move back with my family, with BG, and you'd be here with your mom?"

"Of course not. I don't need a mom, I barely visit mine in the neitherworld."

"So you'd leave, and find a place near my family? How? How would you afford it?" Lydia asked. "I don't think mom and dad would be keen to let you stay."

*Not more logic. Not now.* "I'd figure it out." His voice was getting strained. He felt himself losing the battle with Lydia. She wasn't choosing it to get away from him. She was choosing it for him, because everything she said was right. He couldn't stay near her easily. He'd have no choice but to find a way to work just to rent something and eat to survive in the world if he left his mom.

The world he left when he was alive, it was different centuries ago. Much different. As it stood now, he put no emphasis in college or really his learning. His grades were low. He hadn't thought much of the future as even Benny, but with a . . . family? "That's a horrible decision, Lyd. Just tell me if you're trying to get rid of me. If I'm being too *annoying* for you in your new perfect life, just come out and say it."

"Get my family and friends. Get your juice back. It's time I went home, BJ. It's time you go home too." He watched her try to swallow. "We had a fun time. We were really the best of friends, Beej'. You're irreplaceable, but we're just . . . we're just friends. Friends come and go, and . . . I guess this is . . . where you go." She could barely manage to say the words.

And there's no way Beetlejuice could manage the actions to do what she said. "No way, forget it." He crossed his arms stubbornly. "Make me. I'll keep everyone down there for centuries if I have to. You're my only real friend, Lyd, and I won't lose you for anything."

"You said the decision was mine."

"Well, you made the wrong one."

"Can I get a word in?"

Lydia and BJ both looked to their left and saw a WDP standing with a little . . . scrawny . . . demon.

"Vernie," Lydia remarked.

"Yeah, of course. Throw me away, but you learned a WDP's real name."

"It's not like that."

"Then what is it like?"

"Ahem?" Vernie held up the demon toward them and dangled it. "The source of your problem has been found."

"So no decision needed?" BJ asked, still staring at the scrawny demon. That? *That* was the cause of all his grief?

"Not quite. The neitherworld and hell news spreads fast," Vernie said. "A neitherworld reporter overheard Donny and Juno talking. Tricky things, get as small as bugs to get dishes on news. Now *everyone* knows what they have to do to be the ones to create a new hell now. We went from just one to many knowing. One demon is horrid, but the press is so much worse. It never turns out well. So, no, it's far from over."

"Then . . ."

"Don't do it, Lydia Deetz." BJ said her full name. He meant it, she better not. She couldn't! Not to them. All those years. All those memories. Without Lydia . . . it didn't matter whether he was in hell or not. Anywhere without her was hell.

"Donny knows where my family and friends are at, Vernie. Get them back." She couldn't look at him as she said it. "Make sure Beetlejuice never comes back to the living world somehow."

No. No. No. "Don't." Beetlejuice gritted his teeth at the WDP as he tried to grab his arm. "Don't touch me, *Vernie*, if you know what's good for you." He grabbed the little demon roughly by its devilish horns. "Lydia." But, he knew it was of no use. She wasn't going to

change her mind. She didn't even give it a second thought for the request to the WDP. He gripped the little thing's horns even harder. "You'll regret getting rid of this ghost with the most." Gaw, he could barely get it out. No, he couldn't break down.

It was her decision. If he had juice, like before, he could do what he needed to. He could zap himself a life right next to her. But . . . without juice. *I'd figured it out, Lyd. This isn't going to make me happy. Don't you get that?*

All that time. All that energy to try to get back to her. "Lydia!" He tried desperately one more time. But, more WDP's came back and it was over.

It was over.

After he was gone, Lydia did her best not to crumble. "Friend. My best friend. I'm sorry." She tried to stay positive. "He would ruin his life. He was Benny *and* him, and in this world? It's not for him. It's never been for him. Even as Benny . . ." He had such strong feelings. Almost as strong as hers. Maybe. *Not again, and not now.*

She looked down at BG. He looked so much like him. Maybe with his help, she'd one day learn to accept the decision she had to make? "Y . . . y-you're going to meet your grandparents soon. A-aren't you happy?"

BG kept his eyes closed, only opening them a little, to have them droop again.

"You'll be good. Y-you'll grow up strong." She began to walk away. "We'll be fine. You've spend most of your life away from him, so, it'll be okay. And he really never thought much of you anyway." As she heard BG's cries, she suddenly remembered.

He understood *everything* he heard. His comprehension skills. She looked down at him. He *knew* she sent his father away. "I'm sorry." Her tears were welling up. "You don't understand this, you just don't." She continued to walk. "Surgeries weren't an option. He had to go, or I had to take away what made him, *him*. It wasn't fair or right. It would be so selfish of me, just to have him here as a friend." She held him closer. "He did like you, I'm sorry I said that. I'm just . . ."

BG cooed quietly, but said nothing else.



## Chapter 25: No More Pretending

Vernie went back to check on the Roadhouse again, but he doubted Beetlejuice was gone. He didn't even bother knocking, just looking in the window. The WDP's had a similar spell cast on him so he couldn't leave, but it probably wasn't necessary. He was following Lydia's wishes.

He wasn't the greatest guy who ever lived. There were plenty of people Vernie felt more compassion for, but for some reason. Ah, he couldn't shake it. As annoying as it had been, he couldn't help feeling . . . something . . .

For the little demon tortured by him daily. Out of hell, that thing had no chance against BJ. Taking his full juice back, he made sure that little tricky devil got everything he deserved. He demanded the roadhouse be cleaned from top to bottom, just to make it dirty again. He used it as a footstool. He punted it. He even caught him using it as a chair.

He was putting every ounce of his frustration into the little vermin. Okay, it was from hell. Yes, it was trying to take everything over, which is why they agreed to let him have the little thing for now. It helped keep him in control again, to have something to push his frustrations out on. Plus, no one had to babysit it while they went through legal procedures.

But honestly, that little demon was no different than any other hell demon that had somehow gained information he shouldn't have. Speaking of which, maybe today was the day he should take it back to hell to be dealt with by its creator. The papers were all in order now, it's just no one really wanted to mess with BJ right now.

He was bad when he was up in everyone's faces, but when he stayed away . . . stayed away, and was only seen in the dark confines of his home. It felt eerie.

He sighed and knocked on the door. As expected, the little demon answered it. "You ready to go back?"

"No!" It shouted. "Just let me stay here and get pummeled by Beetlejuice," He chuckled. "Just desserts?"

Yeah, of course it would say that. Beetlejuice couldn't dish the kind of punishment that things boss would do.

"It'll never have enough."

Yes, that was that eerie feeling. Vernie looked around the corner. No lights were on at all. Only one open window, so that the WDP could look in on him, and he wouldn't have to answer the door. He wasn't looking Vernie in the face, he was just a dark silhouette by a wall. "It's time to send it back, Beetlejuice."

"You said it once. Don't say it twice. Oh yeah, I forgot. Doesn't matter." At another time, Vernie knew he'd probably say that statement with happiness. Instead, he just continued to

stare at the ground. A beetle ran across his foot, and he didn't even flinch to get it. "You decide about it yet?"

Ah, Benny's part of the soul. The split reincarnation. "He wouldn't retain any memories, and he would stay far away from Lydia Deetz."

Beetlejuice didn't answer.

"The neitherworld doesn't believe you should fracture yourself again. You could rebutt against it though, it is your right considering you are still technically alive."

"Nah."

Yeah, Vernie had a feeling he would say that. The fight in Beetlejuice, it wasn't as strong as it used to be. "You could punish him for a hundred years, and it still won't do what his master would do in hell for him."

"Hm. Can I get photos?" The words portrayed a joke, but they were just words with no substance. No emotion was put into it.

"W-wait!" the little demon jumped up and down. "I'm not ready yet. Background checking, yeah. Missing culprits. The WDP ruse guy, you said you never found him. Too many strings!"

"You're still involved. We don't have to wait to deal with you."

"B-but what if I told you how I knew about the whole thing? Extension?"

Ah. The demon was finally willing to talk.

"Who. Cares." Beetlejuice finally turned his head. Chilling. His eyes actually glowed green in darkness.

"I do," Vernie said as he looked at the demon. The more information he had about how this little demon got that info, the better the chances he wouldn't slip through the system. Overturning another world into hell wasn't light, but he'd seen some big stuff others wouldn't believe had slipped through the cracks.

"Okay, well, my boss has his device that allows him to see into possible futures. It's how he decides who to mess with and curse. I was there when Beetlejuice died." The demon gestured toward the former ghost with the most. "At that time, I saw three possible futures pass through the seer." He twiddled his thumbs. "No one's supposed to gaze at it, but I saw the third option. I knew no one would have ever expected it. After that, just a few missing errors here and there. Then, I just waited."

"What were those futures?"

"I don't care." Beetlejuice sunk deeper onto the floor, flinging some trash toward a window. "Just take the little imp."

"Not yet. I want to know." Vernie stared at the little demon. "What futures?"

"One was the outcome everyone knows now," the little demon said. "The other two were Beetlejuice reincarnated as Benny Fernake, and one where Beetlejuice was never reincarnated."

"Details. What about Benny Fernake?"

"When he was 16, his mother moved to Lydia Deetz' town. They got married at 20 and had a safe child that would do me no good at 23."

Huh. Beetlejuice still ended up with Lydia. "The second?"

"Don't I get a say in my own place?" Beetlejuice covered his ears. "I don't want to hear this. Just take it and get out."

"The second?" Vernie insisted. He was getting really curious now.

"When Lydia walked home one night at the age of 20, she was violently attacked and killed. The act was so gruesome to her mind that she refused to enter into anywhere. It happens though, so the neitherworld did what it always does. She was placed in a small limbo dimension to spend eternity as a lifeless meaningless soul. The only other one there was Beetlejuice who had become too much for the neitherworld, but not enough for hell."

Whoah. Vernie looked toward Beetlejuice who lifted his head. Even he had become interested.

The demon was almost smiling. "They found their instant connection and their love was so strong, they both pulled each other out of the darkness of that void. See? I'm helpful! I could give away all my master's secrets if you just don't take me to it!"

"Twenty?" That wouldn't happen still, would it? Probably not. The circumstances were probably completely different now. Still. This demon was dropping some . . . interesting facts. "Well. It seems in all three instances, you ended up with Lydia Deetz, Mister Beetlejuice. In every one, it was more than a friend."

"Shut up."

"Just an observation." Vernie grabbed the demon's hand. "We'll see what happens."

"Where at?" Beetlejuice finally stood up and moved from the corner. His glowing green eyes were softening as he approached into the light.

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"Restrain him more!"

"We are putting all we can into it! We need back up!"

Vernie watched, but neither he nor Donny really wanted to gang up on Beetlejuice. For one, he was currently unstable. For two, the town Lydia had her tragic end in, had been the exact same name of the town she lived in now. For three, she turned twenty not long ago at all.

As hurt as he had been by her loss, he was hell-bent to get back to her. With not only his juice intact, his adrenaline was beyond scope. As strong as the WDP were, they were physically *trying* to restrain him.

"Get his brother to hold his juice again!"

Donny drummed his fingers together, looking at Vernie. Vernie wasn't moving either. It shouldn't be this way. He couldn't restrain his brother. He should have been with Lydia. He should have been with his son. He was . . . he didn't deserve it. Yes. Yes, he had to do it. He looked back at Vernie

"Maybe we should figure out something else," Vernie interrupted. "If the information was true-"

"Really, trust a demon? The demon clearly did this on purpose," one of the WDP holding Beetlejuice said.

Vernie sighed. "There are some questions that need answered, but until then, there is a chance Lydia Deetz is in danger." He looked over toward Donny. Beetlejuice may not get along with his brother well, but Donny cared deeply for him. And even though Donny was an incredibly so 'nice it was beyond annoying' guy, he was going to do something few in the neitherworld would do. Something that was not only illegal, but risky. If he went through with it. If.

He had talked about it before. For some time, actually. It started with more 'what if' questions, but Vernie could tell. It was coming.

"She could be in trouble!" Beetlejuice yelled at his brother. He was stuck on his knees with the WDP practically on his back. But no matter what, they couldn't keep it up forever. He wouldn't give up. He refused to give up.

"I think you should stop that."

Right on cue. Vernie looked back toward Donny. He knew his partner would play dirty to get the upper hand. If he was going to do it . . .

Beetlejuice stopped his struggling as he saw BG's fragile head being held by the WDP. He wasn't just holding him. He could snap his neck. End BG's life force, before he even spent a year in the living world.

"That's better. This kid isn't a threat anymore, but you are. If it has to be sacrificed to make you behave, you can bet we'll do it," Vernie's partner threatened him. "At any time."

"Take him back to Lyd. Now," Beetlejuice said. "I'll quit, just take him back."

"Ooh?" Vernie's partner actually chuckled slightly. "It looks like the big bad former ghost with the most has more of a soft spot for his blood than he let on. If you are good, then we'll

see. In the meantime, it's our job to watch over Lydia Deetz if anything bad is going to happen."

Donny slowly looked toward Vernie. This was it. He hadn't done it so many times when he should have. Vernie was a good enough friend that he knew he wouldn't interrupt. But, this was it. Now or never. "Can I see, BG?"

"Donny is his Uncle," Vernie covered for him. "I think Beetlejuice will cooperate better if he knows his son is in safer hands. Not someone who's ready to break his neck."

Vernie's partner didn't seem to care as he trotted over and gave Donny his nephew. "Here."

"Okay." Donny held BG tightly, looking toward BJ. This was it. "This is for your own good, Brother." He moved closer toward him. "He's part of the family. Have you touched him much?"

Beetlejuice watched almost every move his brother made. He didn't understand what Donny was doing, but he knew his brother better than those WDP's. Donny would never even hurt a fly, but he was acting strange. *Okay. Stay calm. He must have some kind of plan. BG's safer with him than anyone else in this room. Besides me. And Lydia's not an option. Although, if they stole him from her. She'd be crushed. Stay calm. Stay calm. Donny, you better have a miracle up your sleeve!*

"He can bond with it as much as he wants when it's passed on," another WDP disagreed with the action. "Keep him away."

Before they could stop him though, Donny aimed to run at his brother, having all three of them touch at the same time. One second. Just one.

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Beetlejuice found himself being pushed backwards, but in his arms, he felt something. He looked down and saw BG.

"Restrain Beetlejuice!"

"That was stupid," A WDP pointed his finger at Beetlejuice. "Keep BG away from him."

What? Beetlejuice looked down at himself. He wore his brother's geeky outfit, not his. He glanced toward the WDP, Vernie, who seemed to be watching him carefully too.

"He knows the consequences. We do not risk the innocent to do our job, unless it warrants it. His mother will be worried." Vernie almost seemed to wink at him. "Donny, go take him back home."

Beetlejuice looked toward him and then back to 'himself.' The Beetlejuice being restrained on the ground. He just tried to hide a smile. *Donny.*

That was risky! Donny switched body forms with him. As a ghost, that was hard enough, but they were technically both alive. He could have killed his living body in that exchange. Not

only that, they couldn't switch back without the same risk. Donny wasn't just holding Beetlejuice's juice anymore. It was his, and vice versa.

"Fine!" Donny tried to match Beetlejuice's gritty voice. "Just take it back already!" He tried to make a strained growl. "Just take it. Now."

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"BG!" Lydia cried out, searching from room to room. No, it wasn't possible. Why would they take him now? She had just left long enough to get him some food, and then, when she turned around. Gone. She wanted to believe it was his own magic, and looked all around, but it was clear by now. Someone took him. But why? What harm could he do? "BG!"

"I-It's okay, Lydia."

Lydia felt her heart's dangerous rush still as she moved toward the figure holding him. "BG!" She grabbed him from Donny. "You took him?"

"Protection."

Donny was oddly quiet after that word. He'd never hurt BG, so she had to believe him. Lydia snuggled so close with him. "It's okay. I won't lose you, I won't ever lose you." She kissed him on the top of his head. "I've already lost so much, I can't lose you too." She looked back toward Donny. Something was odd about him. "Thank you, for whatever you had to do this time." He didn't respond, just watched her.

She took a deep breath and held him so close. In the meantime, Donny looked around her home.

"A little . . . dark in here."

"Humans don't always need light." Lydia just rocked BG.

"It's . . . this dark at my brother's too."

"Don't." Lydia squinted her eyes and turned. "Don't tell me about him."

"Not curious about how he's been?"

"Donny, we've been through this!" she shouted at him. "As long as he's safe. That's it." She shook her head. "He'll get over me."

"I don't think he will." Donny made a strange sound with his mouth as he sucked on his lip. "I think . . . you're his best friend. Bestest friend ever. Bestest bestest." He scratched. "Actually, the bestest friend in the world that would give up just about anything. So, maybe . . ." He stared at her strangely. "I think he may have even really . . . kind of . . . loved you."

"Don't . . ." She trailed off. When he tried to embrace her though, she moved away. "Just, go now Donny. Please, just, don't let anyone hurt any of my family. Especially *him*."

"I saw the demon that caused everything."

"So?" Couldn't he leave already? She was ready to just move back through her motions. Move back into her dark corners. She only came out to see her son which she tried to give light too. She fed him, bathed him, and took care of him. She was only going through the motions though, giving him what was necessary. Doing what was necessary. After that scare, she'd keep him even closer than before.

No one would take him. Nothing would happen to him. He was the only part of Beetlejuice she had left.

"The little scrawny demon guy. He said he knew because he saw the futures. In each future, uh . . . you were more than just best friends."

Why was he saying this? "And?"

"And . . . maybe uh . . . you're feeling more than a loss of friendship?"

Why would he even ask it? Why?! "Donny." Gaw. She tried to hide her face. "Why are you being so cruel? You already know how I feel! I've broken down and told you I don't know how many times how I felt!" She gestured out the door. "Just get out!"

"Tell me one more time."

Why? Why was he doing that? Did he think it was going to help heal her?

"He'd give up his juice. He would have found a way to make it work."

"It wouldn't have been the best. He . . . he doesn't deserve to just live a life trying to find a way to stay beside me. That's not a life."

"He thinks differently. Right now, he's living completely in the dark. He doesn't even know what to live for. Life or afterlife. Just, even existing in any form." Donny shuffled his feet. "You can tell, to him. It's a waste. Juice doesn't make him happy, it's you."

"I made my decision," Lydia reminded him as she wiped a tear away. "He'll always be inside my heart, forever. But, because I'm . . . I'm just a friend, I can't be in his the same way." She stepped backward. "He's centuries old, but he acts like he's young. He's ancient, but always new. Disgusting and creepy, but so funny." She let out a small chuckle. "He's unique and . . . there will never be another one like him in the world. And I can't let his uniqueness just *die*."

"Yeah, for a friend. It's a lot to ask." Donny looked to the right of her, then down toward BG. "But, you know, h-he did an awful lot. So, I think . . . actually, I know." He took a deep breath. "Risking years of friendship for something more, it wouldn't be easy. But, I think, maybe you can be both?" He tried to give her his usual smile, but it didn't quite look right on him. "Why can't it be both?"

Lydia just adjusted BG, trying to figure out what he was saying.

BG spit out his pacifier. "Oh for gosh sake, he's pops!"

"What?" Both of them looked at BG.

BG put the pacifier back in his mouth, but his words couldn't be erased.

"He talked. Little stinker."

"What?" Lydia just stared at Donny. "Wait, what?"

Donny snapped his fingers, and Beetlejuice appeared in his old black and white outfit, with his longer white hair. He should have known the kid would give him away.

Lydia took a quick step back, her heart pounding hard in her ears. Donny was him. Donny was *him*? And-and she told him everything? But, how? He was supposed to be unable to come back. She pushed him away. *Not harder, I don't want to push even harder.*

Beetlejuice adjusted his tie before he spoke. "Calm down, Babe. I'm no danger anymore." He stuffed his hands in his suit. "I understand why you did what you did, but I wasn't happy down there." He looked toward her. Straight at her. "Come here." He held his arms out wide.

Why? Lydia actually felt nervous near her best friend. For the first time, there was something different between them. But, she listened to him. She trusted him. As he wrapped his arms around her this time, he whispered something new in her ear. Something that changed everything forever. "Even dead, you've always been inside my heart too."

Then, it was gone. The need to keep saying best friend. The need to break the hug and switch to friendly laughter. The pretending it was nothing more, vanished as he gently kissed her.



## Chapter 26: Happy Life, Brother!

"But I wanna!" BG groaned as he strained to go up. The neitherworld was so different than the usual world, he wanted to fly around and explore it more, but his dad kept a hold of him on the top of his shoulders.

"For the last time, not going to happen," his dad warned him again. As BG tried to climb onto his head, he was pulled back onto the shoulders. "No way, my head is not a trampoline to bounce away on."

"BG."

BG heard his mother's warning. He scratched his head. Freaking annoying. Every time they visited the neitherworld, he never got to roam around. They'd visit some old stupid friends of his mom's, and his dad would pull some cruel jokes on the same people. Actually, heh, his dad's stunts were pretty cool.

But he never got to explore anywhere else, his mom and dad never let him go. Just cause he was one, seriously? So annoying. He'd be two soon, shouldn't it count for something? As he watched where they were headed next though, he really tried to bolt. "No, I don't wanna! He's gonna smother me!"

"I know it's tough, but it's like medication when you're sick," Beetlejuice explained. "We gotta do it."

No. Ugh. "Uncle Donny's annoying," he grumbled, laying his head on his dad's hair. Whenever they came down, they always had to see him. It was such a pain! His dad was just as annoyed with his loving spirit as he was, but he always managed to bottle it up. And every time he asked, he always got the same excuse of 'why'. Still, he'd do it again anyhow. He was a kid, and it was his job to at least reach half annoyance with grownups. "But whyyyyyyyyyy?"

"Because without your Uncle, I wouldn't be here with you and your mom," his dad answered predictably. "You also wouldn't have half the juice you got."

BG blew air out of his mouth, showing his discontent with the same answer again. "Why?" he asked predictably.

"He could have died," his mom warned him.

"He'd been dead before. Like dad was dead for years before he was back alive," BG pointed out once again.

"Do we always have to have this conversation?" his dad said, annoyed. Good, job well done. "Your Uncle used you as a balancer, but if anything went wrong, he would have died. That would have been a good hundred years of haunting before coming back to his afterlife. It's

also illegal, so he was punished. So, we're nice enough to try and visit." His dad gritted his teeth. "Just take the medication, son."

"It doesn't help that you call the visit medication," his mother warned his father. "Can't we ever have a less strained visit with Donny without you two acting like it's super hard?"

Eh. His mom was annoyed too. Not too bad, but that was boring. BG put his hands on his dad's hair and pointed at the sky. "How come the neitherworld sky is green? How come the living world sky is blue? Why are the roads all twisted in the neitherworld? Why are they dumb and straight in the real world? Why does grandpa look like Frankenstein? Why does my other grandpa look like him in the mornings?"

"Why is it I'm buying you a beetle bar after this visit?" his father asked. "Remind me again, I'm forgetting."

Ooh, a beetle bar! "Never mind, every question will be answered in due time, love you mom and dad, can we get it before we go, I promise to be good, I prrrroooooooooomise!"

"After the medication. I mean, visit," his dad corrected himself.

"Yooohooo! There's my lovely brother and his family!" Donny waved to them from behind a white line. A chain kept him attached to a ball nearly ten times his own size. If it had been Beetlejuice, even more security would be needed, but with Donny, the strain was less. "Nephew! Sister!"

"Donny." Lydia hugged him lightly, backing away for the rest of the family.

*For a beetle bar. For a beetle bar. I can't get those back home.* As his dad ducked down, BG took the brunt of it all.

"Oh, Betelgeuse." Donny reached for him and held him close. "You are quite sprite for a one year old. Just a few months ago, you couldn't even talk. How are you doing? How are you enjoying life? Oh, I love you so much." He gave him another hug.

Ah, his Uncle used his whole name. Annoying. At first, BG was just fine, but then his mom said he was supposed to be named after his dad. He was used to BG though, so they went with Betelgeuse. Close enough to his dad, but he still preferred BG. Besides, talk about hard to see who was talking about who. (Although it was fun to use it to annoy the right people sometimes.)

"So, how's prison doing?" Beetlejuice said, making light conversation. Him and Donny never really hit it off, even during childhood. But, Donny did so much for him. Without him, BJ would be behind those bars with more than a couple WDP watching over him. They'd have to because he'd never give up on Lydia. He *couldn't*. He had no idea who could have hurt her or when. After all those years of doing his best to ignore Donny, he *owed* him. Every time they came down to the neitherworld, they had to visit.

Donny's actions would leave him in that state for at least a few more months before he'd be granted permission to get out. In the meantime though, everyone would be watching his actions with any girl. He was the dangerous one now. Even though Donny didn't use much of Beetlejuice's old juice, everyone knew he was one of the most powerful spooks in the neitherworld.

He couldn't be in the WDP anymore. He couldn't go out and roam around, trying to do good anymore. He was contained. Still, he was actually happier there because he had visitors. Them.

Yeah, he was still hard to take, but him and Lyd would have both been miserable. BG would have had a pretty miserable life too. Beetlejuice looked over at Lydia. He did the honorable thing and married her in her world, but it wasn't really necessary. He didn't need some promise between them in front of everyone to stay loyal.

He'd withstand hell for her if he had to. Marriage was small time, but it pleased her family. After them being separated, and years of lying about who he was, he kind of owed them too. So yeah, marriage. It also looked good to have that on paper when her belly became a little bigger again.

Yep. They waited until after the marriage before announcing Lydia was pregnant again. But hey! Things happen, and it was pretty intense after they discussed their feelings, and when they had their own little place and time alone . . . eh, things happened. A lot.

They lived back in Lydia's original town, in a replica of the Roadhouse a few blocks down the road from her parents. Lydia had her friends back after they grew a deeper understanding of the neitherworld and what happened. She visited her parents daily, and her mom tended to come over more than her dad. Chuck was still a bit of a fraidy cat. You'd think having him as a son-in-law would've helped out things.

As for 'Benny', that wasn't real fun. It took time in the neitherworld, a lot of juice, and a lot of tears were shed by his mom, but he owed her an explanation too. She lived only a few blocks away too now. His skill as Benny were great enough to land him a simple repairman job, but most of his stuff and salary was furnished by the WDP.

Because deceived or not, the neitherworld legal system said . . . they owed *him*. Amazing what the right lawyer could do with some outrageous cases.

"Brother." Having his fill of holding his nephew, Donny gave Beetlejuice a hug. "How is the family?"

"Eh," Beetlejuice tried not to move out of the hug. "Growing by one."

"Oh, so good to hear." Donny hugged him tighter. "I love you, Brother. I'm so excited your life is so happy. I can't wait to meet the new family member when they come." He laughed and let go of his brother. "Lydia. You're a glowing mother."

"Hey, Donny. How you doing?" Lydia asked. "Are they bringing you out yet?"

"Soon," Donny smiled at her. "I have to sign some papers, and there will be some WDP watching me for the rest of my life, but it's worth it. My family's happy. Especially my brother." He grinned extra big at Beetlejuice. "So good to see you so happy."

"Yep."

"And visiting all the time."

"Yep."

"And sending me lots of pictures. Let me know when the new one arrives. Don't forget to tell our neitherworld mom and dad. You know they worry about you terribly. Did you tell them about the new one soon?"

"Yep." Beetlejuice looked toward BG.

"I feel wet," BG said. "Oh, I mean. Waaaah!" He cried. "I feel weeeet!"

"Oh, it looks like we really got to take care of him. Diaper rash is bad, know what I mean? Gotta get going." Beetlejuice took a step back and picked up BG.

"Bye, Donny. We'll see you soon," Lydia thanked him before they bolted out.

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"Thank goodness." Beetlejuice closed the nursery door lightly. "You take care of the last strings, and we'll be free."

Lydia didn't say anything about his choice of words, but she gave him a look that said she didn't like it. She headed back downstairs, to her own folks. After one heated confrontation on both sides, her family came to terms with her marriage and life with a used-to-be-ghost. Her father was the hardest, considering how little he liked the supernatural, and how protective he was of her.

It didn't help that Donny chose the most unsupernatural place in the world to stick them in the neitherworld. At his mothers. His mom was even cleaner than most living people. He never would have seen even a single bug there. Although, her father still wasn't a hundred percent behind it, he accepted it. Had to accept it more likely, but, it . . . it was working itself out. "BG's down for his nap now."

"Oh, yes, I suppose it's getting late. It's just that it's hard to get Charles to get over here sometimes," her mother said. Her father was staring at a spider on the floor. "He's a little uncomfortable here."

"It's fine," Lydia insisted. "Oh, sorry about that dad. That's a pretty big spider." Usually Beetlejuice was here when her parents visited, so that nothing otherworldly bugged them too much. To make it feel more like home for him, a lot of things were pulled from the neitherworld to their property. Nothing that would actually hurt her or BG but well . . . "Beej? Could you take care of this growing problem?"

Beetlejuice trotted down the stairs and saw a spider with deadly fangs, ready to take out Charles foot. Whoops. He snapped his fingers. "Sorry, Chuck. BG leaves his playthings out sometimes."

"N-n-no, it's f-f-fine," Lydia's father said as he rushed over to his daughter and gave her a hug. "Y-you have a good day. We'll see you again soon. Why not come over to the house for supper one night instead with your family? Where it's safer?"

"Yeah, dad, I'll come there," Lydia insisted as she waved at her family as they left out the door. When they were off the sidewalk, she knew what would happen next.

"Finally!" BJ whooshed the door closed with a gust of wind and locked it. "Neitherworld. Your friends. Your family. I thought we'd never get some time together today."

"Well, we have time now," Lydia said. "Movie?"

"No." He grabbed her hand and headed upstairs.

"Pizza?" She teased him.

"No," he insisted again as he grabbed the door handle to their room.

"Beetle collecting?" She teased him one more time before she felt herself being pulled into their own room. As the door closed, an opened letter off an endtable fell to the ground, along with a photo halfway sticking out of it. It was a picture of a young teen girl having an incredible time with a ghost. On the paper was a small note, written in its corner.

Happy Life, Brother! I hope everything is exactly what you dreamed.

Donny Juice.

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