



THE BOY  
WHO FLEW  
TOO  
CLOSE TO  
THE SUN



# THE FALL OF ICARUS

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Icarus and his father Daedalus were trapped by Minos, the king of Crete, in a tall isolated tower surrounded by the ocean. Daedalus was the architect who built the Labyrinth. When Daedalus revealed the mystery of the Labyrinth to Ariadne, King Minos forced Daedalus and his son to stay in the Labyrinth. To escape, Daedalus built wings for himself and his son, Icarus.

The wings were made with feathers and wax, this would help them run their imprisonment. Daedalus tells his son *“If he flew too low, his wings would get wet in the ocean; if he flew too high, the sun would melt the wax and the wings would disintegrate.”* Icarus was a young boy full of youthfulness and excitement.

After some time of flying, he started to ignore his father’s warning and *“flew with the attributes of adolescence”* meaning that he was flying quickly and recklessly without a care in the world. He flew too close to the sun, the wax on his wings started to melt, and he began to fall. Icarus fell into the ocean and drowned.

# BTS

## (BANGTAN SONYEONDAN)

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BTS is a Korean boy band that started in 2013 and is still active today. A lot of their songs have hidden meaning behind them and take inspiration from Greek mythology. My favorite song of theirs is called *Blood Sweat and Tears*, and it takes heavy inspiration from my favorite Greek myth, "The Fall of Icarus" This music video also has other symbolism from various other stories and myths such as; the story of Adam and Eve (the apples), the last supper (they all sit at a table and are presented with apples), fallen angels (at the beginning of the video you can see the painting The Fall of the Rebel Angels, and the book *Demian* (they use the quote "He too was a tempter; he, too, was a link to the second [world], the evil world with which I no longer wanted to have anything to do."





# FLYING

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The myth of Icarus is about a boy who rebelled against his father while flying through the air. In this scene of the music video, Jungkook is seen sitting on a swing. He is laid back as if he is floating or flying. He also has a lollipop in his mouth which I believe symbolizes youth and excitement. This scene can connect back to Icarus flying, with the lollipop in his mouth and his eyes closed; it looks as if he is flying without a care in the world not heeding his father's warning.

# BLACK WINGS

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This is a statue of Icarus they have in the music video. However, he has pitch black wings which symbolize a fallen angel. While the reason for this could be seen as the fact that he fell from the sky, it is because of his actions before he fell. They have multiple different statues throughout the video such as; *Pietà*, *Ares Borghese*, *Venus Accroupie*, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, and many more.





# THE LEAP

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The photo to the left is Kim Taehyung (as Icarus) on the balcony of the isolated tower where they were imprisoned. This tower shows up a few times, but it is always on the balcony. The photo on the far left shows Kim Taehyung jumping off the balcony. Before he jumps he turns to the camera and jumps with excitement and glee. Similarly to Icarus, when he leapt from the tower to escape the labyrinth with Daedalus.



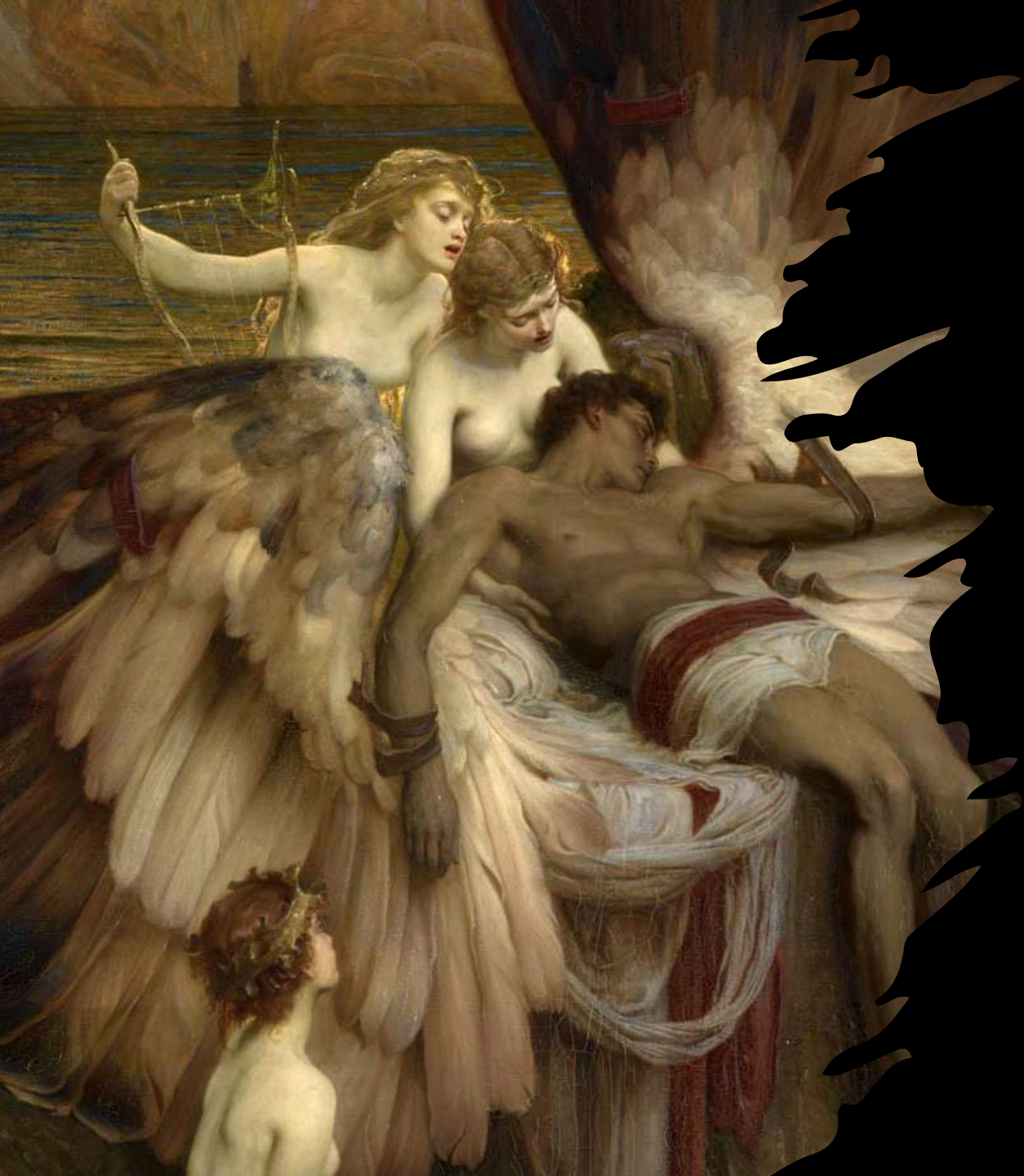
The painting on the bottom is called *Landscape With the Fall of Icarus* painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It is exactly as the painting is titled. It is where Icarus fell. In the bottom right corner you can see the aftermath of his fall into the ocean, struggling to breach the surface and stay afloat. If you look above you can see this painting outside the balcony that Kim Taehyung jumps off-of. It is cropped to only show that background as Icarus (Kim Taehyung and Jeon Jungkook) have not yet fallen.

# MELTING WAX

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Some symbolism for the story of Icarus is out of order in their music video, however, they include candle wax dripping down and Jeon Jungkook (Icarus) catching it on his finger. I didn't include the photo, but Jeon Jungkook puts the wax into his mouth which is interpreted as him knowingly going against Daedalus and flying recklessly. There is a short scene where Kim Namjoon drips wax onto Jeon Jungkook's finger (Icarus). This is what leads me to believe that Kim Namjoon was supposed to play the role of Daedalus, warning Icarus of what would happen to him if he flew too close to the sun or too close to the ocean.





# LAMENT FOR ICARUS

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Before I keep talking about the music video I want to highlight some art around the Icarus myth. This is one of the many paintings that show up in this music video; *The Lament for Icarus*, painted by Herbert Draper. It depicts Icarus dead surrounded by Lamenting Nymphs. This is the aftermath of Icarus flying too close to the sun, as he plummeted down to the ocean where he perished.



# THE FALL

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Behind Jeon Jungkook is the previously mentioned painting *Lament for Icarus* where Icarus has fallen to his death and lays dead by the nymphs. This painting shows up every time Jungkook is shown in this room, as a form of foreshadowing that he will get lost in his excitement and ambition. He is no longer on the swing and seems to be floating or falling. The feathers in the air represent the broken wings of Icarus, he no longer has the lollipop that gives off the feeling of innocence and youth. Rather his eyes are closed, and he seems resigned to his fate, falling into the ocean where he will inevitably drown.





# DROWNING

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Once they have made it clear that Icarus (in this case Jeon Jungkook and Kim Taehyung) has fallen, a large splash is made at the beat drop. Signifying when Icarus fell and landed in the ocean. The photo on the bottom is zoomed in on the bottom right portion of the painting *The Landscape With the Fall of Icarus*. *Pietà* is also in this shot, but it has different symbolism in the music video.



# DEATH

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Here we see a sheet pulled over Kim Taehyung. I included this because I thought it looked a bit like a death shroud. Since Kim Taehyung was also portraying Icarus, it made sense that he would have a death shroud. He is covered like this before Icarus dies, so it is a form of foreshadowing of what is to come.





# LOSS OF WINGS

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The death shroud is lifted from Kim Taehyung (Icarus) and on his back are scars where the wings would be. Representing the fallen or loss of innocence, he died of his hubris. Icarus took flying to the extreme, instead of flying with moderation, and he lost his life, which in turn took his makeshift wings. He was also famous for not reaching manhood because he never left boyhood.

# REBIRTH

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This is the same statue of Icarus that was shown earlier in the video. Once Icarus has died in the video, the statue starts to crack and bleed colors. The bleeding is typically used for the symbolism of death and dying, therefore it is fitting for the statue to bleed. However, with the addition of colors, I believe that they represent life. I see this as life bleeding out of Icarus, out of his eyes, and out of his wounds. Showing regret for his youthful rebellion against his father, which is another interpretation of the Fall of Icarus. This is the last of the symbolism in this music video that I see relating directly to the story of Icarus.





# ICARUS INTERLUDE BY ZAYN

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*“Call me Icarus  
I guess I flew too close to the sun  
Myth'll call me legend, and I'ma be one  
In my Yves Saint Laurent”*

*“I've been lying with the liars  
Every night  
Lying 'cause I'm flying  
I've been lying to the liars  
Lying to the liars”*

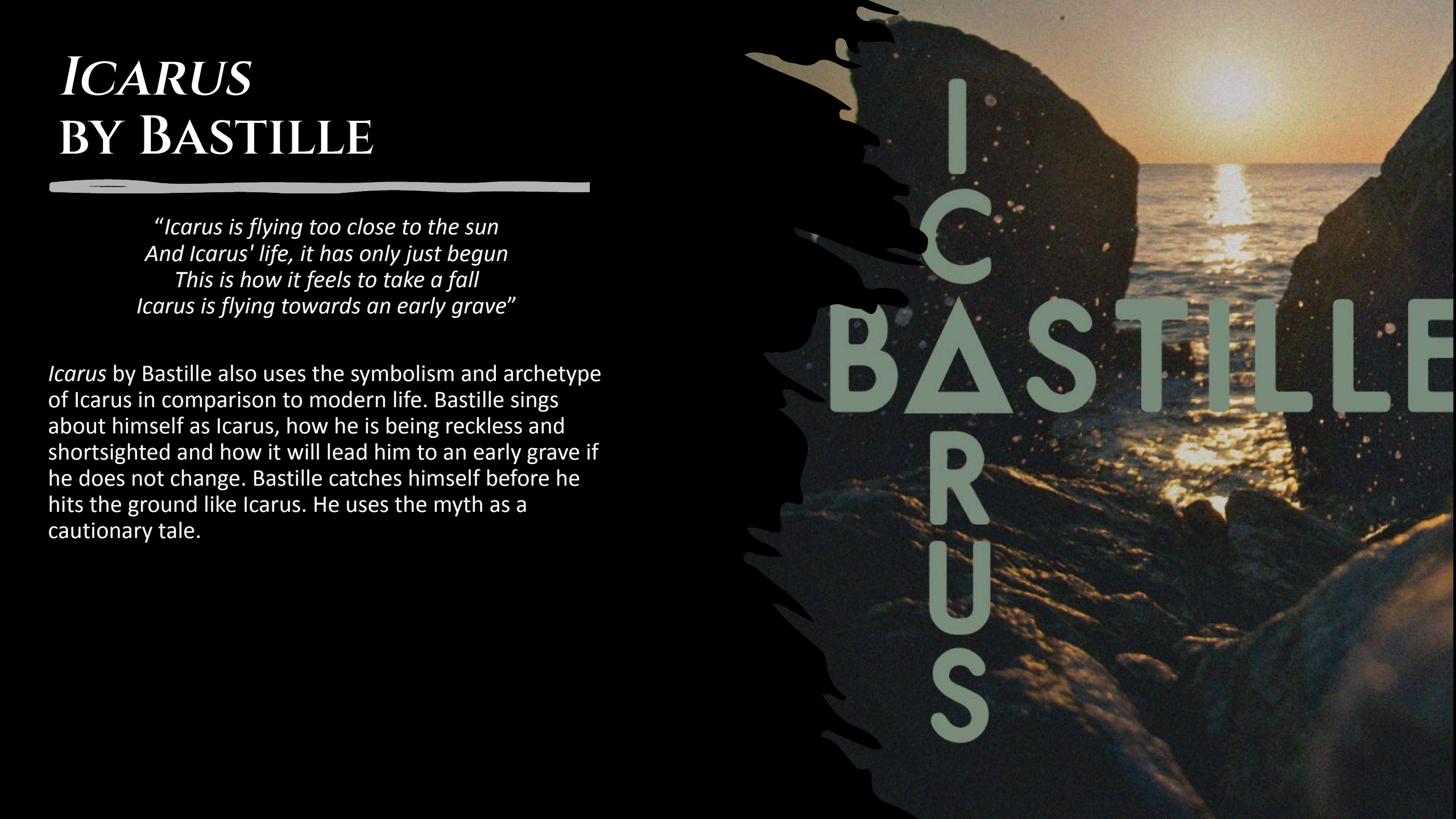
This song is an example of Icarus being used by another artist. Zayn uses the tale of Icarus to portray himself as the greatest. His song shows blissful ignorance, singing about how he won't stop until he gets what he wants. Instead of a warning or telling the story of Icarus, Zayn ignores the second half of the myth and only sings about how far he can go, in other words how close he can fly to the sun without falling.

# *ICARUS* *BY BASTILLE*

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*"Icarus is flying too close to the sun  
And Icarus' life, it has only just begun  
This is how it feels to take a fall  
Icarus is flying towards an early grave"*

*Icarus* by Bastille also uses the symbolism and archetype of Icarus in comparison to modern life. Bastille sings about himself as Icarus, how he is being reckless and shortsighted and how it will lead him to an early grave if he does not change. Bastille catches himself before he hits the ground like Icarus. He uses the myth as a cautionary tale.



ICARUS  
BASTILLE

# “THEY FLEW TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN”

The myth of Icarus is still relevant in today's society. It can be interpreted in different ways, but to me, it is about a boy who got caught up in his excitement and pride. This is why we have the saying “they flew too close to the sun,” meaning they got caught up in what they were trying to achieve and lost sight of what they wanted. They defied their limitations, which caused them to come crashing down. Being too ambitious can lead to your downfall, or phrased differently; living in moderation rather than extremes. There are multiple ways his story and the saying, “they flew too close to the sun” are used and interpreted. The Fall of Icarus has many meanings and lessons attached to it, and it can be seen in a lot of pop culture today.





Icarus: the boy who flew too close to the sun, leaving behind a legacy of adolescence, self-sabotage, youthful rebellion, and taking things to the extreme. It continues to be referenced whether it's used as a cautionary tale, to describe someone with arrogance, or with reverence. The tale of Icarus is perhaps one of the most well-known myths in many modern cultures.

# Works cited

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