

Candy Star Worried Girl

*By,
Spoon*

Table of Contents

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Candy Star Worried Girl..... | pg. 1 |
| My Juice Box Heart..... | pg.15 |
| Love Love Honey Babe..... | pg. 89 |

Chapter 1

“*Tae Tae...*”

Midday

A motionless body sat glued to the large couch beneath her, eyes affixed to the bright glowing screen in her lap.

“Taeyeon-ah.” whined the pouting girl crossing the room to her statuesque friend.

Silence

Tiffany huffed reaching over the coffee table to tug the headphone cord dangling from Taeyeon's ears.

“Ah!” Jumped the startled girl returning from her digital oasis. “Fany-ah, what was that for?”

“Ignoring me!” The wavy haired girl cried, her eyebrows furrowing.

“Sorry, I was doing something.”

“Oh?” she leaned forward, bending to view the screen. Taeyeon watched the soft tresses fall over Tiffany's shoulders, cascading around her face. “What?”

Taeyeon shrugged, “Nothing really, just reading.” she closed her laptop and set it on the end table beside her, “What's up?”

“I was wondering,” she brought her attention back to the sitting girl, “have you seen my cellphone? Taeyeon and I are going out in a couple of hours but I can't find it.”

Taeyeon swallowed the lump forming in her throat, tucking a tuft of hair behind her ear, “Where did you see it last?”

“I don't know,” Tiffany crossed her arms over her chest tilting her head to the side, “I had it this morning at breakfast but after that I don't remember...” The dark haired girl's voice trailed off, her gaze falling to the floor. “... I'm meeting him in an hour...” Her voice was just above a whisper, *probably the effect of her intense thinking*, Taeyeon thought.

Maybe he'll think you forgot or that you weren't able to go. A small grin crept onto the shorter girl's face but quickly disappeared as the fidgeting girl in front of her became more upset. She couldn't bear to see Tiffany like this especially over something so trivial.

“Why don't you start getting ready? I'll look for it.”

“Yeah?”

Taeyeon nodded, “go get dressed.”

“Okay!” The once sullen girl reverted to her natural “brighter than gems” self, paying Taeyeon an eye smile before heading to the bathroom

Taeyeon watched the dark haired girl as she left the room; waiting for the sound of the closing door to confirm that she was alone again. A long sighed escaped her lips as she reached for her laptop, “Ah Taeyeon-ah, what are you doing?”

Her voice filled the empty room traveling fast on stilled air
 “I need to know how this ends...”

Chapter 2

“Taeyeon-ah...?”

Her voice played at my ears luring me back to my room where I was laying on my bed staring blankly at the ceiling.

“Hm?” my reply was shorter then i would have liked, but I wasn't sure what to say. That seemed to be happening a lot lately.

“I'm sorry for earlier.” She shut the door behind her, walking towards me, “I didn't mean to yell.” I chuckled, “It's ok, you're normal volume is a 9 so a 10 isn't too bad.”

I didn't want her to worry over something that I'd already put behind me. It was my fault for not helping as I said I would.

“How does it end Taeyeon? How does it end?” I muttered to myself focusing on my computer screen.

“Taeyeon-ah! What are you doing still sitting there? Have you even moved?” A half dry Tiffany stood fuming in the hallway, her fingers buried deep in her hair, “you said you'd help me!”

“Eh?!” I threw my laptop off of my legs at the sound of her startling voice, “oh—I'm sorry Fany—I'll start now, don't worry.”

“Never mind, it's too late now. He probably thinks—.”

“Hey guys,” Jessica rummaged around in her purse as she and Sooyoung entered the apartment. “Fany, you left this in the van earlier, it's been ringing nonstop.” She set the small red device on the kitchen counter.

“Babo, she'd forget her mind if it wasn't attached to her.” The tall girl grinned heading for the fridge. The two shared a laugh, unaware of the scene they entered.

Tiffany shook her head brimming with frustration, “Urgh!” she grabbed her phone and disappeared down the hall towards her room, slamming the door behind her.

The two girls shared a gaze before looking at Taeyeon whose eyes were on her lifeless companion on the floor.

“What's up with her?”

Taeyeon reached for her computer studying the damage she'd inflicted. The underside was chipped and the joint that held the screen to the keyboard had snapped on impact.

“Taeng?” Sooyoung raised her voice glancing over the fridge door.

“Another date?” Jessica took a seat at the counter glancing over her shoulder to the girl on the couch.

“Hm?” Taeyeon met her gaze, “yeah, with Taecyeon.”

“Again? That’s the third time this week!” Sooyoung shot up from behind the metal door, a slice of bread shoved in her mouth.

“Ah,” Jessica studied Taeyeon as the shorter girl tried to turn on her computer, not acknowledging the mumbled rant of the bottomless pit in front of her. “I see,” she turned back to the sight in front of her.

“Ya- Choi Sooyoung, either open it or close it. You’ll break it if you keep doing that.”

“Her mouth or the door?” A set of keys fell on the end table beside the door.

Taeyeon smirked as Yuri took a seat beside her, trying to lighten the mood, “both.”

Chapter 3

“Seriously TaeTae.”

I sat up to meet her gaze, wanting to ease her worried mind. I didn’t care about the yelling. I should have been helping instead of focusing on the vast ocean of fiction plaguing the internet. *Now that my computers dead we won’t have to worry about that anymore.* My thoughts quieted as my eyes began to devour her.

“I’m sorry.” she spoke softly as her hand passed effortlessly through her hair, tucking a stray tuff behind her ear. I guess she was in a hurry to apologize to me because it was still wet from the shower she’d taken. As was her body.

The white towel clung to her delicate figure as she sat down beside me. She clutched at the small knot she’d made near her right shoulder to keep the small towel together. I don’t know what was worse. Having the towel be so small or having the towel be so small.

“Taeyeon?”

“Hm?” my eyes rose to hers. Immediately my face began to burn as I realized my shameless gawking.

I thought she’d caught on too when she sighed and looked to the floor.

“You’ve been doing that a lot lately.”

“What?”

Did she notice? Was it that obvious? I’m always so careful!

“Spacing out,” She answered, “You’re nearly as bad as Jessica.”

“Oh,” I let out a sigh of relief, “I guess I have a lot on my mind recently.”

“But,” her eyes returned to me, “It seems to be only around me.” Tiffany slipped her hands into mine, her eyes pensive, “Did I do something wrong?”

Her hands squeezed mine, I didn’t mind the dampness.

“No Fany, you didn’t do anything. I really do just have a lot on my mind.”

“Like what? You never tell me anything anymore. You just keep it all to yourself and stare at your computer all day... *reading.*”

“I really am reading!”

“What then?” She withdrew her hands, folding them over her chest, “The way you tossed that thing off your lap I would think you were doing anything but!”

It was embarrassing to say but I didn’t want her to think the worst of me.

I muttered an answer that I knew she couldn’t hear.

I was wrong

“Fanfics?”

I nodded timidly, suddenly feeling the need to be anywhere but where I was, even if it meant leaving a poorly clothed Tiffany behind which was beginning to be just as much of a form of torture as I thought it was. With every animated move she made that knot became less and less reliable. If I didn’t calm her down my eyes would be the death of me.

“Of what? Not So Nyuh Shi Dae I hope. I can hear the anti’s now *So Nyuh Shi Dae self-absorbed in self-fan fictions.*”

I didn’t reply, which was more of an answer then I wanted it to be.

“Really Taeyeon?” She perched her hands on her hips.

I nodded again, “it’s not a big deal. They’re just stories.”

She sighed shaking her head. “Ahjumma Taeng spends her month off ignoring her members and reading fanfiction.” Her gaze was on the floor again.

I didn’t know how to respond. Her tone was too ambiguous for me to tell if she was joking or angry.

I studied her face for the answer.

Hurt

“I’m sorry Fany,” I grinned, “you don’t have to worry about it anymore. My computers out of the picture, you know.”

“Hmm?”

“It broke when I dropped it.”

“Oh,” now she was the one who was miles away. I wanted to comment on it to lighten the mood but she spoke again.

“You really shouldn’t read those things. Not when they’re about your own life. Sometimes the way they depict us makes me uncomfortable.”

“You read them too?”

“Sunny showed me one once.” She answered dismissively; her arms folded, “I didn’t finish it.”

“*Sunny reads fanfics? I’m not surprised.*”

“Yeah, she likes strange ones though. A lot of drama...”

“Those are the best ones.”

“... and a lot of...” her face turned pink. I could guess what she meant.

I changed the subject, “what was the one you read like?”

She scoffed gazing at me, “it was about us.”

“Us?” my response was too quick to be normal.

“Yeah,” she nodded, “we were friends turned lovers.” her finger caressed her chin as she recalled the work, “funny huh? I guess we do give them a lot of room to think about it.”

I chuckled nervously, “yeah,” my eyes watched the rise and fall of the knot. It loosened with every breath, causing the towel itself to inch lower, “we are pretty close.”

“Mmm,” her hands went to her lap where she studied them, “it was weird.”

“oh,” I noticed the high level of vagueness in my answer, but didn’t need to cover it up as she began talking again.

“It was too real. The way he described us... he must be a dangerous fan.”

“Dangerous?” *it’s going to fall.*

“Like stalker material.” *you should tell her*

“Oh,” *if I tell her it will interrupt her, that would be rude.*

“It made me wonder.” *yeah, that would be rude, she’ll realize it and fix it*

“About what?”

Tiffany turned her head to face me causing my eyes to race back to hers, “you don’t think about me like that right?”

“Wh—what?”

Her face was painted in an expression I couldn’t read. Her brow showed worry and curiosity while her eyes looked pained and embarrassed.

“The way those stories say? You don’t think of me like that do you?”

“Fany-ah—.”

“I know it’s dumb to ask. it’s just that they make it seem like it could be real.”

“Fany-ah, o—of c-course I don’t!” my face felt red as I rose to my feet, “Jeez, you really *shouldn’t* read those things! Now get dressed, you’re dripping all over my floor.”

Her natural expression returned as she stood up. “Haha, sorry. I know you don’t, I just couldn’t tell if you were listening to me or not. You seemed to be dazing again.” I accepted my eye smile payment making sure to not let my gaze leave hers.

“Ha ha, yeah yeah,” I mocked, ushering her to the door, “I got your point.”

“Okay, so cut back on the fanfics and talk to me sometime. Without you I don’t have anyone to hang out with.”

“You’ve got Taecyeon.”

“Hanging out with him is different than hanging out with you” she opened the door, “Hey, we’re getting ready to watch a movie. It’s supposed to be the scariest movie this season.”

Her eyes were beckoning me for a response. I didn’t really want to be around everyone, as I felt my emotions would catch up with at any moment, but Tiffany’s need to have all nine of us together enjoying a movie just like any other carefree night of our past was more important

than my oncoming emotional breakdown.

“I’ll meet you out there.”

She squealed before leaving me in my doorway

“She’ll be out in a second guys,” she called down the hallway. My gaze rose to the ceiling as I fought to hold back my tears.

Lies, I thought, *all lies*.

Chapter 5

“Taeyeongie...”

On the couch was my body while in the clouds was my mind. I quickly brought my focus to the girl sitting at my side, warming me with her closeness.

“Yeah?”

Tiffany ran her hands up my right arm pulling it close to her chest while wrapping her own arms around it. “Nothing,” she smiled, “just wanted to make sure you were here with me.” I could feel everything. She leaned her head on my shoulder, “I don’t know if I can take all this horror without you here.”

I squeezed the pillow in my lap with my free hand, trying to mask my excitement. The sheerness of her thin pajama shirt was no help in keeping my arm from rubbing against her skin every time she shifted.

“W—we’ll be f—fine Fany-ah.”

Tiffany chuckled her head turning to look at me, “Tae Tae are you scared?”

The sensation was overwhelming but I believe I did well to hide it. If I wasn’t surrounded by people I wouldn’t have minded.

“What?—No.”

Her head returned to my shoulder, “Your stuttering gives you away.”

“Hey you two cut the chatter! I want to start this thing!” To my right Sooyoung shifted from her half sitting, half lying position at the end of the wrap around couch. I couldn’t see her face clearly but from her muffled grunt I could tell she was eating something.

“Sorry,” Tiffany pulled her pink throw over her legs before resting her weight on me.

“And you—your pen scratching is intolerable!”

“Sorry Unnie,” Seohyun sat on the floor, her back to Sooyoung. She was leaning over the coffee table scribbling something on one of the many books that covered the small wooden surface.

“We’re supposed to be relaxing. Stop working!”

“I’m sorry, I can’t I have this paper due in a week.”

“That means you have six other days to work on it.”

Seohyun turned to the girl behind her stricken with horror as if she’d seen the entire movie three times over, “Unnie I can’t procrastinate!”

A soft hand met Seohyun's shoulder, "Seo..."
 The younger girl set her pen down at the sound of Yoona's voice.
 "Ok Unnie."

"Yah! That's all she has to say?"

"Choi Sooyoung—push play!" Yuri nudged the taller girl from behind. Sooyoung huffed doing as she was told. I could only laugh at it all.

I glanced around the room, taking account of all my friends. Hyoyeon was in front of me on the floor to the right of the coffee table her eyes panning between the TV and Sunny's DS who was sharing a blanket with her. Between Hyoyeon and Seohyun, who was on the other side of the table, was Yoona alternating her hands between a bowl of popcorn and a bowl of chips as if it was some type of counterproductive workout routine.

Sooyoung had her own supply of treats at the far end of the couch where she was trying to fend Yuri's hand from her bag of mini chocolate bars. Leaning against Yuri was Jessica whom after seeing the previews was already dead from fright. I dared to look at the girl resting her weight on me, knowing that doing so would cause my mind to wonder. Though as the movie began I couldn't help but do just that.

My thoughts returned to the events that played out in my room with a freshly washed Tiffany earlier that evening.

"You don't think of me like that do you?"

I could feel her unease as her eyes bore into mine. I'd always intended on someday telling her but it was then that I knew for certain that I never could. If just the thought that my liking her in real life was enough to cause her to glare at me this way I knew I could never confess. Our friendship would never recover from that. Eventually it would affect all of us and I couldn't put them thought that. Not or my own selfish needs. It wasn't worth it. I didn't need to give any of them a reason to distance themselves from me. Thought I'd been doing that all week.

I knew what it was but I was still embarrassed. I guess jealousy was a new concept I was going to have to get used to.

Chapter 6

"Tae Tae."

"Hm?"

"I said, are you using that?" Tiffany pointed at the pillow in my nails were digging into.

"Oh no," I let go of the poor object, "No."

She smiled, "Do you mind if I use it?"

I shook my head ready to hand it to her. Instead she just fluffed it a bit before lowering her head to rest in my lap.

Instantly, I knew there was no chance I would be able to focus on the movie no matter how good it was supposed to be.

I studied her, placing my hand gently on her head. She grinned glancing at me in approval. I

knew she didn't mind. She always liked it when I did that.

I wonder how many other people you let get this close to you. My fingers passed easily through her hair.

So beautiful...

She shifted, nuzzling further into me.

A bittersweet feeling entered me. This was beginning to be a usual effect of being around her. I'd be brimming with happiness until thoughts of him being with her entered my mind. I always knew one day it could happen, though I didn't want to believe it. Still it didn't stop the truth. Taecyeon was taking her from me. She had yet to officially announce it to us but I could tell what she felt or him. The way she talked about him. The way she looked at him. It was as if I was staring into a mirror.

I'd be lying if I said that I hadn't dreamed about us being together.

Heh, it's all I ever thought about until he showed up.

Her breathing slowed, turning into a stream of rhythmic sighs. I felt myself smile, wishing that moments like these could last forever.

"That way he can't take anymore of you from me."

My eyes trailed over her lips, the back of my hand caressing her cheek.

"Fany-ah..." My voice was less than a whisper. I knew no one could hear but still I didn't have the courage to continue out loud. *I don't know how far you are in your relationship with him but just know that I said it first.*

My thumb traced her jaw.

I love you Tiffany.

She didn't stir. I don't know why I expected her to. It wasn't like I said it out loud. Maybe I was craving an approval or some type of acknowledgement or my confession. But there was none. After all she wasn't a mind reader.

I love you I repeated. Even if she wasn't wake and it was only in my head it felt good to finally reveal my feelings.

I love you Tiffany but the more I said it

I love you Tiffany the bitter it felt

I love you Tiffany and soon my eyes were burning with tears. I didn't want them to fall but they weren't listening just as she wasn't listening.

I love you Tiffany, why won't you answer me? Why won't you say something? I felt the tiny beads of water roll down my cheeks, taking familiar paths to my chin. I felt no need to wipe them. No one was looking.

"I love you Tiffany."

"Ah—" Her soft gasp startled me, her face twitching, "Did you just spit on me?" she mumbled her eyes still closed.

I quickly passed my hand over my cheeks, wiping away the tears that were disturbing her.

"Haha," I chuckled making my voice as normal as possible, "Sorry Fany-ah—."

"—Shh!" A candy bar connected with my face. I turned to glare at the heap on the end of the

couch but my eyes were caught by that of the zombie behind Yuri who was staring at me. I shared the stare wondering if she was really looking at me or just dazing off as normal. When she shook her head I knew she wasn't.

You're not doing anything wrong Tae; friends touch their friends like this.

I focused on the movie. *She can't possibly be able to see me from here. Not in this darkness.* I glanced at Jessica whose eyes were still on me. I couldn't take the icy stare.

After Tiffany returned to sleep I eased myself from the couch and out of the living room and went to my bed, letting my emotions fall on my pillow until I was consumed by a restless sleep.

Chapter 7

"Taeyeon... you're in love with me?"

"What?"

"You said you were in love with me."

I laughed nervously, unsure of how to fix my situation. I wasn't even sure how I got in this predicament.

"T-Tiffany, I didn't me-mean it like th-that."

"Really?" She crossed her arms, you're stuttering again."

"I—."

"Taeyeon," her voice was low and stern, "we can't do this. We're idols... what would they say?" I didn't know what I was thinking "Would it really matter? I mean aren't our feelings more important?"

That's so selfish, "That's selfish Taeyeon how could you say that?"

"I'm not a saint Tiffany. I don't want to live my life afraid of what the fans might say. You're always so worried about their opinion." *Don't provoke her.*

"That's what you think of me?" the hurt was visible in her eyes, "that I'm obsessed with their opinions?"

"No... I didn't mean it like that."

"Seems like you don't mean a lot of things," Spoke a deep voice from the doorway.

Taeyeon took his keys from his pocket meeting Tiffany in the middle of the room. Now they were both looming over me. I watched him slink his arm around her waist caressing the curve of her hip. It was too much; I turned away.

You can't even look at us can you?" her voice was softer now; I knew that if I looked at her she would be crying.

"..."

"You know, I was talking about the girls earlier."

Still nothing

She sighed, "Ah, so now you've gone mute?"

I could feel the tears. I knew what she was going to say
And I didn't want to hear it

"Taeyeon, Taecyeon's my boyfriend. I care about him... I don't know if we can go on if you can't stand to be around us."

No—if I have to choose between having a little bit of Tiffany in my life or not having her at all the answer is simple

Tiffany

I'll always choose Tiffany

He quickly pulled her closer, startling her, though he didn't seem to notice. His arms connected around her waist pressing her back against his chest.

I can fight through the pain. I can mask it—no one has to know how much it aches. No one has to know how much my heart is crying. My heart churned causing my breath to catch. It seemed as if the organ itself was trying to tear itself from my chest so that it could run far away from this scene.

"Fany-ah... I—I don't have a problem."

She sighed leaning into his hold, "You're stuttering gives you away."

"Wait Tiffany, let me try again! I'll say it—I—I'll say it and I'll mean it! I promise."

"Let's just go," he turned towards the door taking her with him.

Taking my Tiffany with him.

Chapter 8

"Taeyeon-ah..."

I kept my eyes shut not wanting to see her go. The tears were already staining my lap, where her head had rested just hours before.

"Taeyeon-ah..." her voice grew louder.

"Just leave her," Called a sweet voice at my side.

"Yeah, she's probably in a lot of pain." Added a third.

"No, she has to get up. Its past noon and I need to use it now."

What?

I opened my eyes surveying the room.

Tiffany was passing through the living room fiddling with her earrings as Sooyoung stood in the kitchen eating a bowl of cereal while Sunny sat beside me, her face buried in her DS. I looked at my lap curious as to what was warming it.

"Are you finished with it?"

I turned to the girl beside me. "What?"

"My computer, Fany wants to use it."

I stared at the silver laptop cradled in my legs, trying to dispel my confusion.

"Oh," I set it on the table in front of me.

“Jeez, you’re out of it,” Sooyoung shook her head taking her favorite seat on at the end of the couch.

“Oh good!” Tiffany reentered from the hallway and made her way towards me, “you’re awake! You really shouldn’t fall asleep like that. It’s dangerous.”

Asleep? So it was just a dream...

“Yeah and with her legs folded too. She’s going to be in pain later.” The black hole stuffed a spoonful of cereal in her mouth, “guess she won’t want to go shopping huh Fany?”

“Yeah I guess not,” her frown fell on me, “Did you forget? We were supposed to go out today.

I massaged my neck, “Oh... I’m sorry Fany-ah, I’ll get ready now.” I moved to stand. The sound of my bones cracking reverberated through the large room. I winced in pain falling back onto the couch.

How did this happen?! Sunny sighed reaching for her computer, “Ah! It’s so hot!” she glared at me, “That’s the last time I let you borrow my stuff. If I hadn’t been half asleep when you asked me I wouldn’t have said yes.”

“Eh?”

“Ah, your memory is as good as a wet sheet of paper.” Sooyoung rapidly flipped through the channels, “You came barging in last night and woke Sunny to use her laptop. Then this morning we found you sitting on the couch hunched over a blank screen like this,” she made a typing motion with her hands, “Poor Sica nearly fainted after watching that movie last night and seeing you this morning.” She chuckled finally settling on a show, “Her sleeping habits have gotten so bad she asks for things now too.”

Sunny ignored the comment from the human vacuum, pensively staring at her screen, “Hey Fany,” she tilted her head towards the kitchen where the dark haired girl stood rapidly tapping on her phone, “our guy still hasn’t posted.”

“Your guy?” Sooyoung tore her attention from her food.

“Fanfics,” she connected her DS to the computer before facing me, “Fany told me you read them too. Here, I’ve got an awesome one for you to read.”

“Gah, not those things again! They always make me out to be some sort of glutton—as if I eat every second of everyday.”

Three sets of eyes fell on the girl at the end of the couch as she shoved another spoonful of cereal in to her mouth.

“Not now Sunny, she’s has to lie down.” Fany extended her hands to me and helped me off the couch. With shaky legs I clung onto her and let her take me to my room.

“Thanks.”

“Anytime,” she smiled. I could tell something was bothering her.

“Fany-ah.” She helped me onto my bed.

“Hm?”

“I’m sorry I can’t go out with you today.”

“It’s okay, I called... Taecyeon...” Her voice trailed off, or maybe I stopped paying attention.

This is just like my dream; this is how it's supposed to be.

Tiffany's soft hand found mine quickly stopping the onset of depressing thoughts, "We can go out tomorrow if you're not busy."

I smiled at her warmth. Realizing the truth of what I was thinking. "I'm not busy. That would be great."

She clapped her hands together, heading for the door; "Good!" she beamed, "So feel better ok? Don't do too much."

I nodded watching as she walked away; an instance that would surely become routine in my life.

Chapter 9

"This isn't right!" Sunny squealed for the couch. In one hand she held her DS in the other her laptop.

"What's not right?" Tiffany sat beside the rabid bunny, her attention on the TV in front of her.

"My stories—none of them are here!" She showed the familiar screen to the long haired girl beside her.

"It's like my favorites list has been replaced. It says I'm already logged in." Fany studied the screen, pointing at a drop down tab, "here's your favorites list."

Sunny shook her head closing her DS, "But those aren't my favorites. Look," she pointed at the screen, "They're all Taeny fiction."

"What?" Fany, who was about to stand sat back down, her focus on the glowing screen. Sunny shrugged rising to her feet, "Whatever, I'll be back in a second. Hey Sooyoung get ready, Yoona will be here soon."

Sooyoung nodded following the smaller girl out of the room.

Tiffany glanced at the list. Her eyes scanning over all the ridiculous synopsis's involving her and Taeyeon. She passed over the title she knew well.

Waiting; *A tragedy; a broken heart* by TimH.B. It was a story unfinished, a story that unsettled her. The one she'd told Taeyeon of the night before. The one Sunny not-so-patiently waited for updates on.

Tiffany shuddered remembering the words of the familiar tale. Some parts were so well pieced together the mirroring of her life scared her. She'd told Sunny she didn't want to read it when the small girl first introduced it to her months ago, but after glancing over the first chapter she couldn't stop. Refusing to feel uncomfortable so early in the day Tiffany quickly logged off of the website, but then realized she'd been under Sunny's name and not her own. Intent on logging the older girl back in, she clicked on the log in box twice sighing as it showed the familiar list of user names.

"Oh my..." the English words escaped her trembling lips. Tiffany slowly pushed the computer off her lap as if sudden movements would cause the device to lunge out and attack her.

A sudden bout of lightheadedness washed over her as she rose to her feet.

“It’s not possible...”

The shrill ringing of her phone snapped her back into the reality, “Taec?”

“Huh?”

“Jessica?”

“Yeah, I got your text. Taeyeon couldn’t make it right? I’m not surprised after how she was sleeping. I’m on my way to you.”

A low beeping tone exhaled into the room as activity took place on the screen behind her.

She didn’t check to see what it was.

“You shouldn’t have stopped Sooyoung from waking her up.”

“—Jessica, how far are you?”

“About five minutes I guess. Why? What’s wrong—?”

“—I’ll meet you outside,” she grabbed her jacket carelessly leaving her set of keys on the end table beside the door. “I have to talk to you...” she glanced over her shoulder at the silver computer; its droning sounds taunting her, “It’s about Taeyeon.”

Tiffany exited the apartment leaving the glowing box in its place; the drop down menu displaying the three names of its users.

O.G.Mush

Sunscreen09

TimH.B.

My Juice Box Heart

Act II

Chapter 1

Afternoon

Jessica sat across from Tiffany, staring at the girl who was mindlessly stirring the cup of tea in front of her. The short haired girl sipped her coffee, her gaze unwavering.

“You’re sure?”

Tiffany nodded not looking up to meet the older girls stare. She’d been like this ever since they entered the small coffee shop; silent and far-gone.

Jessica reached for her phone, “But you only glanced at it right?”

Her nod was smaller this time.

“So you might be wrong.”

“I—!” her head shot up to belt a reply but slowly dropped back to her drink, “...I guess...”

Jessica slowly pulled her hands into her lap, flipping open the small white device. She found the familiar number with ease.

[<-She knows]

“You have to be smart about these sorts of things, Tiff. You can’t go accusing one of our members about something like this if you’re unsure.”

“I know but...”

[>-What? How? Did she confess?]

“But what?”

[<-No, something about a screen name on Sunny’s computer]

Tiffany stopped stirring her tea, leaving the spoon to travel its own path, “What if it is her?” Her frantic eyes met the girl across from her; hands firmly planted on either side of the table, as if her sanity rested in what the older girls answer would be.

Ignoring the vibration in her lap, Jessica took Tiffany’s hands in her own and waited for the frightened glint in the younger girl’s eyes to subside before continuing. “What if it is? What will you do?”

“Huh?”

“If Taeyeon did write that story you showed me, if she really did say all those things what will you do?”

“I...” she slumped back onto her chair, “I don’t know.”

“Exactly,” She sipped her coffee, masking her satisfaction, “Taeyeon’s not just some random person. She’s your best friend. Unless you’re ready to deal with that situation you shouldn’t say anything. If you bring this up to her you have to listen to what she has to say. You can’t just say what you want and leave her there. We live together you know.” She finished her

coffee, “Besides it’s too farfetched to be true. Think about it—when did you say this Tim guy started writing? Years ago right? Don’t you think we would have noticed? Hiding something from eight other girls would be near impossible! She’d break down or die from stress.”

“Hmm...” Tiffany’s gaze fell to the table; her brow furrowing as she thought hard about what the logical girl had said.

Jumping to conclusions had always been a bad habit for Tiffany, one that she was too good at. Maybe she was just being rash.

“I’ve seen those websites. They have so many users that just one different character or space sends you to a completely different person.”

“That’s true,” when she chose her name she had to go through a whole list of different choices before finding one that wasn’t taken.

Tiffany inhaled deeply, holding her breath as she let her heartbeat settle. She exhaled slowly letting a small smile creep onto her face, “I guess you’re right. I don’t think I would have ever thought about it like that.”

Jessica rolled her eyes, grinning, “Of course you wouldn’t have. You would have done something rash—something you might regret.”

Tiffany sighed, her voice lingering with shame, “Yeah...”

“Good thing you have me,” She pushed Tiffany’s forehead with her index finger, rising to her feet, “Let’s head back. I’m tired.”

“Go without me. I told her I was meeting Taecyeon.”

“Who? You told Taeyeon?”

Tiffany nodded, collecting her things.

“Why? You shouldn’t lie to her.”

“Ah,” The long haired girl groaned, “everyone’s on my back about him since I mentioned we hangout. I just want them to leave me alone.”

“Still,” Jessica flipped open her phone, scrolling through the unread messages.

[->Do you want me to do something about it?]

“You shouldn’t lie to her. It could hurt her.”

[->Unnie?]

“How? Taeyeon doesn’t like him like that.”

[<-No, I’ll take care of it.]

“Who are you texting?” Tiffany leaned towards the shorter girl.

“Hm? Oh, Yuri she’s making crepes.” Jessica calmly closed her phone, slipping it in her purse. *What?*

“Really? Wow, I’ll have to try some when I get home.”

“Try some what?”

“Of the crepes...?”

“Oh, there aren’t any, I translated it wrong. Sorry Fany I’m really tired. I couldn’t sleep last night after watching that trash.”

Tiffany smiled following Jessica out of the café, “Sooyoung wants to watch one with us every

week this month.”

“Pfft—count me out. What time will you be back?” The dark haired girl shrugged, “I don’t know, I’m going to walk around.”

Jessica nodded, waving to the girl as she watched her walk off into the distance before letting her own sad gaze lead her out of the mall.

Chapter 2

I don’t know when I went to sleep but when I awoke the sun was already up and I was still in my clothes from movie night. *I guess I slept through the day.* I got out of bed and headed towards the bathroom to brush my teeth. *I’m supposed to go shopping with Tiffany today.* I crossed the living room to the kitchen, marveling at the quietness in the apartment.

Since our break started it was rare to see us all in the house at the same time. We’d go off visiting our relatives or taking trips together at the start of our break then usually somewhere in the middle we’d one by one run out of steam or money and end up enjoying the rest of our days in the apartment, hanging out with each other. Right now it was still pretty early in our break.

I grabbed the carton of orange juice from the fridge and poured a glass. *So good,* I thought, letting the cool liquid flow easily down my throat, amazed that there was even any left.

“She’s going to find out you know, she’s not stupid.”

I choked, startled by the voice of the girl suddenly at my side, “Eh?!”

“Tiffany,” she answered, ignoring my coughing fit.

“What about her?” My voice was shaky, I could feel the fear rising. I tried my best to mask it; but as stoic girl uttered her next set of words my composure started to crumble.

“She’s going to figure out how you feel about her.”

Oh God

“I—I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

If I talk louder it will be more convincing. I can cover this up, just don’t freak out.

“Taeyeon-ah,” she sighed unfazed by my statement, “please don’t lie to me.”

Maybe it was her stare that cause the tears to start racing down my cheeks. I felt like a child who was about to be scolded by her mom. Shutting my eyes I anticipated the harsh words that would surely come.

But there were none.

Jessica’s arms encircled me, her hand pressing my head onto her shoulder. Moments passed before I quieted enough for her to speak. Though whatever she said I didn’t hear.

“Sica it’s not what you think! I’m not like that—I don’t love Tiffany any different than the way I love everyone else!”

She pushed me back, holding me at arm’s length, “Kim Taeyeon...” her voice trailed.

The tears started again as I fell back onto her.

“I’m sorry Sica, I didn’t mean for it to be like this... I don’t—I didn’t—I—.”

“Shh...” her hand rested on my head patting my hair, “How long?”

“Hm?”

“How long have you felt this way about her?”

“Just a few months...”

I could feel her icy stare boring into me.

There’s no use in lying about it Taeyeon. If you’re going to go down might as well have some dignity.

“For as long as I can remember.”

“I thought so,” she pulled away. I feared the worse letting my body slump against the counter beside me. This was it—all the years of hard work with the girls—with So Nyuh Shi Dae, all the years of hiding, it was all going to be taken from me. Tiffany was going to be taken from me. This was my worst nightmare come true.

Somehow I thought there would be more yelling involved.

“Here,” she handed me a tissue a small smile on her soft face.

I dried my eyes puzzled. *Am I confessing my secret to Sica?*

Yes.

Then why isn’t she freaking out?

“What do you plan to do about it?”

“Huh?”

“Are you going to tell her?”

“I can’t...” I clenched the tear soaked tissue in my fist, “She isn’t... she doesn’t feel that way about me.”

Jessica sighed leaning against the counter, “It’s hard to keep something like this a secret. I’m surprised you managed to for so long.”

“How did you...?” I wanted to ask but I was still afraid to acknowledge that she knew.

“I’ve always known.” She said in a matter of fact tone like she was telling me something as trivial as the time or the weather.

She poured herself a cup of orange juice finishing the carton, “The way you look at her, the way you act—always stealing glances or finding reasons to touch her. It was obvious to me. At first I thought that it was just a phase—that maybe you’d grow out of it but as we grew up you only fell for her more. But now when you’re around her I can’t tell if you’re happy or sad. You always look so pained...” She started to daze but quickly caught herself. I felt there was more to her explanation but I didn’t press. She rested her hand on mine, easing my tension, “I hate seeing you like that, Taeyeon. You don’t have to hide it from me. If you want to talk about it—about any of this, I’ll listen to you.” Jessica chuckled, “you can even wake me up if you have to.”

I studied her looking for confirmation that this wasn’t a joke, that I could actually trust her.

Of course you can, she’s your friend.

“Yeah, she is my friend.”

“Huh?”

I shook my head hugging her once again, this time crying tears of joy rather than fear, “Thank you Jessica. I never thought I’d be able to tell any of you this.” I chuckled, “I’m still kind of shocked.”

She nodded, “I understand.”

“Jessica?”

“Hm?” the short haired girl broke the hold, tossing our cups in the sink.

“Does...” my eyes searched the floor, “Do you think anyone else knows?”

She shrugged, “Just Seohyun from what I gather.”

My breath caught in my throat. *Was I really doing that bad a job at hiding it?*

“Seo—Seohyun?”

“Yeah,” she glanced up from the soapy water, “oh, don’t worry about her, she’s harmless. We both are.” Her focus was back on the dishes.

“How did she—?”

“She came to talk to me one night and figured it out.” Her answer was nonchalant, “That girl’s so smart.” She glanced up at me again studying my confused expression, “Really Taeyeon don’t worry about her. She thinks it’s wonderful. Her exact words were, ‘love is beautiful no matter who it’s between, don’t you think so?’ she’s so mature.”

“Seohyun...?”

She said that?

“Yeah, so don’t be afraid to talk to us. We don’t want to hurt you we just want you to be happy,” her smile was genuine, “We’re always here for you.”

Our conversation ended as the jingling of keys sounded from outside the apartment door. Sooyoung and Yuri entered both with armfuls of multi sized bags.

“Oh, she’s right here, you talk to her.” Sooyoung thrust her phone towards me, “here.”

“Hello,” I took the device.

“Tae Tae! I’m sorry I’m late, I got stuck in traffic.”

I felt myself smile, “That’s alright, Fany-ah.”

“Alright, I’ll be there soon. Have you eaten yet? Are you hungry?”

“No I haven’t, I just woke up.” I answered, clearing my throat.

“You sound weird, are you ok—are you crying?”

“Hm—no, no I’m fine, just a little sore I guess.”

“Oh, ok.” There was a bit of commotion in the background. I watched as Sooyoung started to put away her groceries, “Are you still up for today? We don’t have to go out if you don’t want to.”

“Its fine Tiffany, I want to. I’ll be ready when you get here.”

“Ok...Then I’ll see you in a bit.”

I nodded but then remembered I was on the phone.

“I can’t see through the phone.”

“Haha,” *you know me so well*, “Sorry.”

“Tell Sooyoung I said bye.”

“K.”

I waited for her to hang up before setting the phone on the counter.

“Sooyoung, what is all of this?”

“Beer!” The tall girl held up two cases of foreign alcohol.

Jessica folded her arms over her chest, “And what do you plan on doing with that?”

Sooyoung scoffed shoving the cases under the counter, “I’m legal now. I want to spend my break American style.”

“What does that mean?” The shorter girl smirked.

“Drinking beer and playing video games.”

“I think they do that all over the world not just in America,” Yuri un-bagged a large box. Sooyoung grabbed the package holding it in front of me, “Taengoo look at this!” She pointed at the characters, “P. S. 3!” the animated girl hopped around fascinated by the package. “Sunny’s going to faint when she sees it!”

Jessica cut her eyes at Yuri, “You couldn’t stop her?”

Yuri shrugged unveiling too similarly sized bags, “It couldn’t be helped, she was a woman possessed. Besides, it’s her money.”

Jessica shook her head watching the dark skinned girls actions, “Wha—you got them all?!”

Sooyoung set the box on the counter and danced around Yuri, “Yup! P.S.3, 360, Wii!”

“You can’t afford this.”

“Don’t worry about it eomma, just be happy! It’s okay to splurge every now and then.” She held the Wii out in front of her, her voice dripping with aegyo, “Aren’t you the least bit excited?”

Jessica huffed shaking her head as she walked off down the hall. I headed in the opposite direction to the bathroom, leaving the two kids to play with their toys.

Chapter 3

“Did you hear? Sooyoung bought all the new videogame consoles.”

Tiffany nodded, taking off her sunglasses, “I helped her pay for them.”

“Really?” Taeyeon sat in the booth across from her, reaching for a menu.

“Yeah, she needs something else to do other than sit around and eat. And I figured we could all have fun using them so it was well worth it.”

Taeyeon smiled at the girl in front of her. Something that always felt natural when she was near.

“Good idea Fany-ah.”

“Thanks!” The bright girl beamed, “I bet Sica won’t think so though.”

Taeyeon chuckled remembering how the Ice Princess scolded the two kids at their purchases earlier that day, “No she didn’t. She’ll get over it though.”

Fany giggled folding her arms over her chest, “Was she like this?” She made a fierce gaze, impersonating Jessica.

“Haha!” The shorter girl crackled, “yea, she was just like that!”

Tiffany joined the laughter her hands set on the table, “I’m good aren’t I?”
 “Mmhmm,” Taeyeon nodded, calming down.

Silence

Taeyeon played with the soft object dancing with her fingertips, her eyes on her menu.

“What are you going to get?” asked the girl on the other side of the menu.

Taeyeon shrugged, “I don’t know.” She trailed her fingers down to a smoother surface enjoying the warmth it was emitting, “Maybe some pasta and a salad. Thanks again for introducing me to this place.”

The dancing objects returned, continuing their restless movements, “I thought you might like it. Italian food is kind of my thing these days.”

“May I take your order?” A tall man appeared at their side.

“I’ll have the shrimp Alfredo with a Caesar salad.”

He scribbled in his pad and turned to Tiffany.

“Zuppa Toscana.”

“And to drink?”

“Water,” she answered.

“Tea please,” Taeyeon set her menu on the table. She locked eyes with Tiffany her smile ever present.

Tiffany was wearing a low cut blouse and black pants. Nothing flashy but in Taeyeon’s eyes it was a brilliant ensemble.

“*Fany-ah...*”

“Hm?”

Taeyeon snapped out of her gaze, “What?”

“You said my name.”

“I did?”

“Still dazing off I see.” Tiffany propped her head up on her hand, her eyes studying the table, “Where do you go when you do that?” Taeyeon followed the gaze of the dark haired girl as her voice continued to stir the silence, “What do you think about?”

Two pairs of eyes met two hands playing with each other. Engaged in a game their owners were unaware of.

The older girl felt her face grow warm as Tiffany’s fingers traced the v’s between Taeyeon’s. Her touch was so gentle; so effortless. Taeyeon drew the corner of her lip into her mouth, her heart fluttering with excitement. It was instinct. Her mind had no control over what was happening. Her thoughts were quelled. All she could do was gaze longingly as Tiffany’s hand studied her own, teasing the blushing girl with every soft pass. If she would have looked up she would have seen that the other girl’s expression nearly mirrored her own.

“Ex-excuse me.”

Taeyeon snapped out of her trance, rebooting as she turned to meet the voice.

“You’re food.” The waiter stood holding a large silver tray with a less than amused expression on his face.

“Ah, yes,” she pulled away straightening herself. Tiffany did the same.

He set respective dishes in front of the girls.

“It may be a little cold. I can reheat it for you if you like.”

Tiffany cocked her head to the side, spooning her soup, “Waiter, isn’t this freshly prepared?”

He nodded nervously, “of course, it’s just. I’ve been standing here for quite some time...”

Really?

Fany bowed to the man, “I’m sorry, you could have said something! We wouldn’t have minded.”

I would have.

“I did,” he cleared his throat, “would you like me to reheat your food? Or make you new dishes?”

Fany glanced at Taeyeon before shaking her head, “No it’s fine. I’m sorry we didn’t hear you.”

The man nodded before walking off leaving an awkward air lingering behind.

Tiffany mindlessly stirred her soup trying to piece together words in her head as Taeyeon practiced similar motions with her pasta.

The wavy haired girl was the first to speak, “Tae Tae...” her voice trailed. The shorter girl gave a tentative glance to her friend, “Can I ask you something?”

Taeyeon nodded, blinking rapidly.

“Have you...” Tiffany paused tilting her head to the side. She started again, “have you ever read...” again she stopped, sighing this time.

Taeyeon tapped her finger on the table waiting for Tiffany’s question. *Whatever it is must be pretty difficult to make her stop talking.*

Studying the fidgeting girl across from her, Tiffany shook her head, “Never mind.”

Taeyeon didn’t push the situation. It probably was for the best. After finding out that Jessica and Seohyun knew about her feelings for Tiffany she was conscious of her every action. Afraid that at any moment Tiffany would realize her feelings. She’d been doing so well until now. Inside she was beating herself up for slipping.

If I’m going to keep everyone else from finding out I have to be more careful. I can’t let her find out. I can’t give her a reason to suspect me.

“Taeyeon-ah, stop stirring your pasta, you’re ruining it.”

The smaller girl nodded obeying her friend, finishing her meal in peace.

Chapter 4

“Taeng and Fany are back!” The familiar husky voice reverberated throughout the apartment. Hyoyeon turned her attention back to the TV where a gore filled scene was playing out.

Sunny met the cheerful couple at the door, holding a bag of shrimp crackers firmly in her hand,

“Ah, so you actually have your key tonight, huh? No late night entrances?”

Taeyeon helped Tiffany with her coat before taking off her own and storing them in the closet. “What?”

“This girl,” she motioned towards Tiffany with the bag, “she woke me up at 3am last night after partying with her *friend*.”

“We weren’t partying.” Tiffany scoffed, but Taeyeon didn’t hear it, her mind was preoccupied with deciphering Sunny’s words.

“You stayed out last night with him?”

Tiffany shrugged, “I—.”

“Hey, you guys should come join us!” Yuri waved her hand above her head, beckoning the girls as she tucked her legs under her.

“Okay,” beamed the wavy haired girl following Sunny further into the living room.

Figures such a good day would end like this. A sudden wave of depression washed over Taeyeon feeling all the happiness of the day drain out of her. She sighed, her voice quite, “I think I’m just going to lie down.”

She started for the hallway but immediately was pulled back. Tiffany’s firm grip tugged at the shorter girl. “Please,” her smile was small, “stay.”

Taeyeon would never be able to resist. She let the taller girl lead her to their normal seats on the couch. Taeyeon sat with her back against the arm of the couch; one of her legs extended out and the other dangling from the side. Tiffany formed herself to the smaller girl pressing her back against Taeyeon’s chest as she fished her phone out of her pocket and set it on her thigh. Taeyeon’s eyes scanned the room for any curious gazes. *This is fine Taeyeon, no one will think twice of it.* No one except for the girl sitting at the far end of the couch but she was too preoccupied to notice.

Sooyoung was between the duo and Sunny, who despite the gloomy girl beside her still had a bright disposition.

“What’s wrong with you?” Tiffany rested her weight on the smaller girl behind her.

“She’s hogging the game!” The tall girl took the bag from Sunny, finishing off its contents,

“Look,” she held up a zombie videogame, “I haven’t even opened it yet!”

Taeyeon followed Sooyoung’s glare to the long haired girl focused on the fighting game.

Seohyun’s fingers rapidly tapped a complex combination of buttons sending the opponent flying in the air.

“SUB ZERO WINS” growled the TV.

“Ugh!” a frustrated Yuri tossed the controller on the coffee table, “Seohyun, don’t you know you’re supposed to let your Unnie’s win?”

Seohyun chuckled disbelieving, “*Really?*”

“It’s been like this ever since she got back home.” Sunny explained, nudging the girl who stole her snacks, “looser gives up the controller but we all keep losing to her.”

“I think she’s cheating. I’m not sure how but I know she is,” Sooyoung nodded, her finger tapping her chin.

“Unnie, I would never!” Seohyun protested, choosing another character.

“Someone needs to dethrone her.” Mumbled Hyoyeon grabbing the unclaimed controller.

“Yeah,” added Yuri leaning against the sofa from her position on the floor, “instead of beating the game we just want to defeat her.”

Another bout began. Hyoyeon chose Cat Woman and Seohyun Scorpion. Needless to say, Hyoyeon didn’t have a chance.

“Ridiculous!” Yuri threw her hands up in the air.

“I bet Yoona can beat her,” Hyoyeon huffed, bounding out of the room. She returned with a half awake girl in tow.

“What?—videogames?—Seohyun? That doesn’t make sense.” She plopped down between Sunny and Seohyun on the couch her eyes closing as the controller was placed in her hands.

“That’s what we thought too. But she’s good.”

“Yeah, too good,” Sooyoung was still tapping her chin.

Yoona glanced at Seohyun who was choosing her usual character. The younger girl met her competitors gaze, “choose your character.”

Yoona did so.

Sub Zero vs. Sub Zero

“Ah, smart move Yoona!” cheered Yuri.

Everyone watched the match. Yoona seemed to be just as skilled as Seohyun, that or the younger girl was toying with her. As Seohyun’s health bar came close to half way the room began to cheer but soon the battle was over. The score the same as before

“SUB ZERO WINS.”

Seohyun smiled, “sorry.”

“Yah! That’s it—the sponge memorized all of the moves! Let’s play something else.” Sooyoung fussed crossing her arms over her chest.

“Is this So Nyuh Shi Dae’s dorm or a frat house cause I can’t tell the difference,” eight heads turned to meet the groggy girl standing behind them. “Who’s cooking dinner, and why is the TV so loud? Turn it down some. We’ll get complaints.” She moved closer, “Ack, videogames.”

“Unnie, it’s really fun! You should try it.” Seohyun smiled.

“Yeah, fun for you.” Grumbled the tallest girl.

Yuri waved her hands in front of her face, “Don’t Sica, it’s a trap.”

“Pfft, I wouldn’t dare.” She headed for the kitchen

“Why?” chuckled Hyoyeon, “afraid you’ll lose?”

Without a second thought Sica went to a dozing Yoona and grabbed the controller.

Seohyun started the bout.

Liu Kang vs Sub Zero

Yuri turned to coach the standing girl. “Ok Sica, what you do is—.”

“—LIU KANG WINS”

“wha—wha...” Seohyun leaned back against the sofa, the controller falling from her hand. Her expression the same as everyone else in the room.

“There, now will someone please fix dinner?” Sica left the room just as she’d came, unaware of the effect of her victory.

Seohyun rose to her feet and headed for the kitchen, “I’ll do it.”

Hyoyeon followed her, “I’ll help you.”

Sooyoung sprang into action, collecting the 360 controllers, “looks like we can play this game now!” She held one of the controllers in front of Yuri.

Yuri shook her head, “nah, I think I’m done. I can’t play games like that and eat afterwards.”

Sooyoung studied the case, “come on, it’s not that bad, it’s underwater!”

“Just because it’s underwater doesn’t mean it’s not going to be bad.”

Sooyoung huffed turning to the three bodies on the couch, “what about you guys?”

Sunny shook her head while Tiffany was engulfed in her phone and Taeyeon was staring off into space.

“Taeyeon?”

“Hmm?”

“Wanna play this game with me?”

“Are we actually going to play together or am I going to end up watching you play? Do you have anything that’s two players?”

*

“Roll it! Taeng—roll it! No not that way—look there’s a cow, get the cow!” Tiffany rapidly patted Taeyeon’s arm as she frantically shouted commands.

“Fany-ah I’m trying—.”

“Get the cow-get the cow—it’s running away! Faster! Your time’s running out! Just a few more centimeters left!”

“She’s not going to win, Sooyoung’s is twice that size.”

Sunny’s words didn’t reach Tiffany’s ears. The frenzied girl started yelling something that most of the girls couldn’t understand. Whatever it was made the wavy haired girls eyes sparkle with the yearn for triumph.

“Dinner’s ready!” The other American girl called across the threshold.

“Tae Tae—Tae Tae—Tae Tae!” her light pats were now anything but. The small girl winced with every blow until finally the controller was knocked out of her hand.

“No Tae Tae—pause! Yah PAUSE THE GAME!”

“Woah,” Sooyoung did as she was told, a slight look of fear creeping onto her face.

The room went silent save for the heavy breathing of the violent girl.

“Hey you guys, come eat!”

Sooyoung and Sunny headed for the kitchen mumbling amongst themselves.

“Yah...I don’t think we should play that around her anymore...”

Sooyoung nodded, “She would have killed Taeyeon we didn’t stop...”

“Fany-ah,” Taeyeon rubbed the sore spot on her arm.
 “Hm?” the taller girl twisted around to meet the gaze of the girl she was lying against.
 “I can’t move.”
 “Oh.” She sprang to her feet, “sorry about that.”
 “It’s okay.”
 “Yah, Choi Sooyoung,” Tiffany’s eyes connected with the girl taking her seat at the table.
 She ran her thumb under her neck, “We’ll finish this after dinner.”
 “I don’t think so. You guys have been playing long enough. Yoona and I want to watch a movie.”
 The second oldest girl replied.
 No one protested, not wanting to be the new punching bag of the competitive beast sitting at the table.

Chapter 5

After dinner and a fresh change of clothes a number of the girls were surrounded around the TV silently digesting their food. Jessica was in the L of the couch, hunched over a pillow with Yoona and Sunny on either side of her. Seohyun was on the floor dividing her attention between the movie and the row of papers in front of her. Sooyoung, though upset she wasn’t playing her game, was also watching the movie from her spot at the far end of the couch.

Taeyeon was back in the position she’d been before, though this time there was no girl to warm her. She tried to focus on the movie but her mind was elsewhere.

I don’t know why I do this to myself.

The pensive girl sighed, folding her arms over her chest. She tried again to listen to the conversation emitting from the kitchen where the girl in pink shorts was talking on her phone but it was no use. Though she could hear them, she couldn’t make out any of the words; well, not enough to make a full sentence.

She could only imagine who she was talking to. Though she already knew the answer.

Tiffany crossed into the living room, mumbling a few words before ending her call. Taeyeon pretended not to notice the girl standing between her and the TV, though Tiffany’s pajama choice was making it nearly impossible to do so.

“Tae Tae?” the tall girl took her usual position against her friend, “What are we watching.”

“Hm? Oh... it’s a movie.”

The wavy haired girl shifted, shoving her feet under Sunny’s seat cushion, “I know that, what’s it about?”

Crap

“It’s uh—it’s about—” she looked at the screen trying to figure out what she’d been ‘watching’ but all she found was a commercial about bottled water.

“—it’s a romantic fantasy movie.” Jessica finished.

“Oh, ok.” Tiffany nodded, setting her phone on her thigh.

Taeyeon sighed sending a weak smile to the short haired girl. Jessica gave a slight nod before turning her attention back to the TV.

Taeyeon massaged her bruising arm, her eyes fixed on the porcelain skin of Tiffany's legs. She watched as they rubbed against each other causing the cushions to move. Though it was an innocent action she couldn't stop her face from flaring.

*Fany-ah...if only you knew what I was thinking...would you still be this comfortable?
Would we still be this close?*

"Did I do that?" the soft voice of the worried girl broke Taeyeon's thoughts. "What?" she looked at the area where Tiffany's small hand was tentatively touching her skin. "It's alright Fany-ah."

Tiffany shook her head pulling the shorter girls arm around her shoulders. She ran her hands over Taeyeon's forearm, rubbing the discolored skin.

Though it should have hurt more Taeyeon's mind was too busy short circuiting to focus on the pain.

*You're supposed to be acting discreet!
I'm not doing anything, she is.
So stop her!*

Taeyeon scoffed shaking her head. *As if that will ever happen.* She cut her eyes around the room checking to make sure no one was watching. When the results of her survey where satisfactory she exhaled leaning against the arm of the couch. Letting herself enjoy the closeness of the girl resting against her.

*

Hour's passed before the movie was over. Sunny and Yoona had left the room while Sooyoung was in the kitchen reading a strategy guide for one of the games she'd promised to devote her time to tomorrow. Seohyun had long since retired to her room leaving Jessica Taeyeon and Tiffany to enjoy late night TV. Though no one was focused on it. Jessica flipped through the channels one last time before deciding there was nothing on that she liked. She turned to the couple sitting to her right.

Taeyeon was glancing at the girl in her lap who'd shifted once again. Tiffany now lay asleep on her stomach facing the TV with her head on Taeyeon's thigh; her left arm under her head while her right dangled off the edge of the couch. Taeyeon who wasn't particularly comfortable didn't mind at all. For her this was heaven.

Jessica stopped herself from grinning, shaking her head as a sad expression cascaded over her face. "Turn off the TV when you're done."

The blissful girl nodded not taking her eyes off the adorable figure enjoying sleep in her lap. "Oh good, you guys are done with the TV?" Sooyoung appeared at the glowing box and knelt down, fiddling with the collection of systems and video game cases.

“Yah Choi Sooyoung,” Jessica’s voice was hushed, careful not to wake the girl in Taeyeon’s lap, “not now. Play in the morning. It’s late.”

“But I’m not tired!” the tall kid failed to see the sleeping girl.

Tiffany groaned her head turning from side to side. Taeyeon held her breath hoping that her friend wouldn’t come to. She wasn’t ready to return to the real world yet. She wasn’t ready for this moment to end.

“Mmm... Tae Tae-ah...” The slumbering girl stirred, snaking her arms around Taeyeon’s waist, pulling her friend closer before her movements came to a stop. If she’d thought she was in heaven before then she was wrong. Taeyeon rested her hand on the sleeping girl’s head brushing tufts of hair away from her face. This was heaven; *this* was bliss.

She cast her usual wish, hoping that this time unlike all the others someone would hear her and make this moment last forever; sans the tall girl pouting on the floor and the stern girl standing behind the couch with her hands on her hips. Though if someone had heard her they got the answer completely wrong as Tiffany’s cell phone that was now on Taeyeon’s knee started to vibrate.

The words flashed briefly but it was enough to cause the familiar feeling of despair to claim her. [->so you want to get together the day after tomorrow? You were talking to fast Fany haha, I couldn’t understand you!]

What am I thinking?

Was this going to be her life forever? Loving someone whose heart was already taken. Someone who could never feel the same for her?

“I’m so stupid.” She sighed trying to quell the burning sensation building behind her eyes.

Taeyeon shook her head and slowly pulled herself from under the peaceful girl. It was no use living in a fantasy when the reality would never change.

“It’s fine Jessica, she should probably be sleeping in a bed anyway.” She headed for her room not waiting for a reply, hearing the rustles and murmurs of the stirring girl fade behind her.

“...Tae Tae...?”

Chapter 6

Jessica collapsed on her bed letting out a long sign, she didn’t notice the tall girl following behind her.

“Unnie?”

“Eek—! Oh Seohyun. You have to stop doing that.”

“Sorry Unnie.” She sat on the edge of the bed, studying the older girl, “What’s wrong?”

“Taeyeon...I feel so bad for her.” She rolled over onto her back, clutching her pillow to her chest, “She wants to be strong all the time so she keeps everything inside. But that’s not good with something like this. She needs to talk to someone—to us...or one day it might get to be too

much for her.” a pained look flooded her face, “I don’t want to see that happen but I don’t know how to help her.”

“Don’t worry Unnie.” the young girl smiled weakly, “I don’t think Taeyeon would do that. It’s not like her.”

Jessica gazed around the familiar room, “Love does things to a person Seohyun. It can make us do stuff we never thought we would. It’s like war—it changes you; for better or for worse.” She sat up, her back against the headboard, “You should see the way she looks at Tiffany,” she shook her head, another sigh escaping, “She really loves her.”

“I do see it.” Seohyun joined the sigh, leaning back on her hands, “maybe she should just confess.”

“It’s not that simple. Especially when the one you love may not feel the same.” she let her head fall back against the wooden board, “You have to worry about the fans, the people, the members...”

All of it’s a factor when you’re an Idol, you know. So you find yourself asking if it’s all worth it. *Should I take a chance to find out if they love me too or should I stay in the dark loving from afar?* Either answer can equally be as painful. If they do love you then what are you going to do? Hide it from the world? Can you take that...?” she shook her head, eyes closed, “and if they don’t can you take that *either?* Will they rat you out to the public or go on acting as if nothing ever happened...?” Jessica opened her eyes letting them land on the five blades spinning on the ceiling. “Will they abandon you?”

Silence

Jessica was lost in thought while Seohyun looked equally as consumed. Moments passed before either girl spoke. “Do you think Tiffany loves her too?” asked Seohyun also looking to the fan.

“I don’t know how Tiffany feels.” She scoffed, “if you’d asked me a week ago the answer would have been a definite yes but now when I see them together she’s always talking about that guy or bringing him up in some way. I want to believe that Tiffany feels the same—for Taeyeon’s sake, but I don’t think she does.”

Seohyun nodded, “Yeah, I get that feeling too. I was just hoping you saw something I didn’t.”

The younger girl huffed clasping her hands together, “So what are we going to do Unnie?”

“I don’t know. I guess I should go talk to her. She looked pretty distressed.”

“Taeyeon? What will you say to her?”

Jessica shrugged, “I don’t know. I don’t have all the answers Seohyun.” She chuckled, rising to her feet, “Honestly, I don’t know why you ever come to me for advice.”

“That’s simple,” the tall girl went to the door, letting herself out. “When we talk about it, it seems like you speak from experience.”

“It?”

“Love.” The tall girl opened the door, “good night Unnie,” And left the room.

Jessica scoffed shaking her head, “Oh Seohyun, you’re so wrong...”

Jessica exited her room taking the few steps needed to get to Taeyeon's door. She stopped abruptly, startled by the sight.

"What are you doing out here?"

The half-asleep figure stood with one hand on the door knob and the other clutching her pink throw. She swayed back and forth in front of Jessica, breathing lightly into the night.

"Tiffany," the short haired girl started again, "what are you doing out here?"

The reply was slow and caked in sleep, "...Hm?"

Jessica sighed, shaking her head she put her arms around the tall girls' waist turning her around to face the door behind them, "come on, let's get you in bed."

Tiffany's sleep ridden body complied, not making any more sounds. After tucking the girl in and saying goodnight to Seohyun once again she went to the room across the hall.

Chapter 7

"Mmm! Taste this!" Tiffany dipped her spoon in her soup and blew on it before holding it out towards the girl sitting across from her. Taeyeon smiled leaning in for the spoon.

"Mm! You're right."

The wavy haired girl's phone vibrated from the corner of the table.

"You're so sexy, sexy, sexy," it sang. She let it play through the whole chorus before checking to see who it was. Taeyeon wanted to ask but she knew she probably wouldn't like the answer.

"What? It's my default ringtone for everybody. Oh no—is it really that late? Tae Tae are you almost finished?"

Taeyeon nodded glancing at the spoonful of noodles left on her plate.

"Good. Let's hurry. There's a store I want to go to."

"Oh really, which one?"

Taeyeon lay on her bed reviewing the events of the day in her head.

After eating lunch the duo visited a jewelry shop further in the mall, a store that they often frequented together.

Taeyeon stood by a display of silver bracelets while Tiffany browsed a tier of necklaces.

"It's not here!" she pouted heading for another tier.

"What's not here?" Taeyeon shifted glancing around the shop.

"It's not here either!"

She went to the taller girl's side, "What's not here? What are you looking for?"

"Remember last week in the window? The necklace that was on display?" She continued scanning the display units, "I meant to come back for it later that day." She sighed shaking her head, "I should have had them hold it for me."

"Why don't we ask someone? Maybe they have it in the back or maybe they can order one."

Tiffany beamed taking Taeyeon's hand into her own, "That's a good idea!" She led the smaller

girl to the counter where a woman who had not so discreetly been watching them tour the shop was standing.

"Hi, how may I help you?"

"I'm looking for a necklace"...

Tiffany told the woman of the necklace that had been on display last week. Describing it with perfect detail. It was the kind of necklace that would hang down a woman chest, accentuating her collar bones if worn properly. The chain was white gold, made out of small links giving it a wide range of flexibility. From the chain hung a ring also made from white gold. It was the type of piece that was made for engraving which made Taeyeon curious to what Tiffany could possibly want to engrave on it. Though she wouldn't get a chance to know.

The woman returned from the backroom shaking her head, "I'm sorry that was the only one we had of that style; I can show you some similar designs—."

"—Will you ever get it back in? Can I be put on a waiting list?"

The woman glanced at Taeyeon and then back at Tiffany, "No I'm sorry, it was the only one that existed. We don't sell it anymore."

"Oh," Tiffany's eyes fell to the floor. She sighed giving a small smile to the woman, "Thank you for your help, come on Tae Tae."

"Thank you," Taeyeon added following Tiffany out of the store.

"Taeyeon-ah? Are you awake?" Jessica knocked from the other side of the door. The small girl rolled onto her back staring up at the ceiling. "Yeah, come in."

The short haired girl entered the room her eyes surveying its inhabitants. "Where's Yoona?"

"She and Yuri went to Sunny's room to buy clothes," She chuckled, "That girl and online shopping..."

"Ah I see," she folded her arms over her chest, "do you mind if I talk to you?"

Taeyeon shook her head.

Jessica sat at the desk near Taeyeon's bed, "How are you with all of this?"

"With what?"

"Tiffany and Taeyeon."

"I...I'm fine."

"Really? Cause from what I see you look anything but fine." She watched as the girl in front of her shifted uncomfortably, "You don't have to lie to me Taeyeon. I'm here for you."

Taeyeon rolled onto her stomach facing the vacant bed near the wall, "I don't know what you want me to say... I love her but she doesn't feel the same. And even though I know that nothing will

come of it I can't help but wonder what if. ...Am I crazy?"

"No, you're not crazy, you're just in love."

Silence

"Were you ever planning on telling her?"

“I thought about it but the timing never seemed right.”

“It never is,” Jessica leaned back against the chair, “you just have to go for it and see what happens,”

“But what if it all falls apart? What can I do then?”

“You try to move on.”

Taeyeon shook her head, “I don’t think I could ever do that.”

“You’ll never know until you try.” She closed her eyes. Silence threatened to claim them but Jessica’s voice broke the hold, “Can I ask you something?”

The girl gave a slight nod.

“Why write all those things about you two?”

“You read that?”

“Yeah. Tiffany showed it to me.”

Taeyeon scoffed, “Why so you could hate it together?”

“Hm—?”

Taeyeon shook her head, “—nothing, I just wanted a place where I could have her to myself. Without other people taking her away from me or caring about what we were doing.”

“I see... so why not finish it?”

“My laptop broke, remember?”

“Oh yeah, I forgot about that.” She sighed shaking her head, “Taeyeon-ah, I’m not going to say that you should be that Taeyeon, the one from your story; that you should go after her and confess your feelings. But I’m also not going to say that you should stay in this limbo. Either way I’m not going to try to influence you. It’s not my place. Whether you want to throw yourself to the wind and take a chance or stand behind her as she finds love causing your heart to constantly ache is your choice. You have to figure out what is best for you. What you can live with. I just want you to be honest with yourself; I don’t want to see you make the same mistakes I did.”

Taeyeon faced Jessica, her words hitting her, “Sica?”

“—No,” The short haired girl held her hand in front of her face, “we can talk about me some other time. Right now let’s focus on you. You still have a chance to be true to yourself. To realize what you want.”

Jessica... She wanted to ask the stoic girl a number of questions but she knew she wouldn’t get any answers. A weak smile formed on Taeyeon’s face, “I know what I want. Whether I can have her is the question.” The small girl paused before continuing, her words shaky, “What if she doesn’t accept me? What then?”

“I don’t know, I don’t have your answers. But either way something has to give or else people are going to get hurt—you’ll get hurt. You have to make a decision before it’s made for you.”

“What do you mean?”

Jessica shook her head rising to her feet, “I don’t know, I’m tired, I don’t know what I’m saying anymore.” The glassy eyed girl flashed an emotionless smile, heading towards the door, “I’m sorry to keep you awake with my rambles. Just try think about what I said.” Her brow furrowed,

“And don’t push me away. It hurts when you do that. You don’t have to go through this alone. We’re here for you.”

All Taeyeon could do was nod as her friend exited the room. She didn’t have time to be devoured by her thoughts for sleep conquered, her sending her on a journey through another restless night.

Chapter 8

“You lost it again?”

“I thought I had it this morning but now that I think about it I haven’t seen it all day.”

“Well I don’t have it this time.” Jessica glanced at the clock on the wall, “come on, just forget it. The movie’s going to start.”

Tiffany shot a quizzical look at the girl standing across the room, “Are you insane? I can’t leave without my phone!” She continued to overturn the blankets on her bed.

“Why? Who are you expecting a call from?”

“I don’t know, anyone!” she snapped her fingers dropping the comforter she’d violently been shaking, “Maybe it’s in the kitchen!”

Jessica sighed following the frantic girl out of the room, “Tiffany, we were just in there!”

“Hey, what’s going on?” Taeyeon rubbed her eyes shuffling into the living room, her penguin slippers squeaking with each step.

Jessica chuckled at the half sleep girl in her sky blue robe and cloud covered pajama pants, “This one lost her phone again.”

“Oh really? You had it out here last night.” She stopped pouring her bowl of cereal, heading back the way she’d came, “I’ll call it for you.”

“Okay.” Tiffany nodded, ignoring the girl mumbling behind her.

“If I’d thought of that sooner we would be gone by now.”

Taeyeon disappeared into her bedroom and unhooked her phone from its charger. Tiffany now stood across from Jessica who was between the coffee table and the sofa, both waiting for the phone to ring.

“Ready?” Called Taeyeon.

“Yeah!”

“I don’t hear anything—.”

“—Ssh!”

A soft tone seeped through the sofa cushion.

“*Ooh I’m in love, ooh I’ve fallen in love,*” sang Narsha’s voice, the lyrics repeating as Jessica dug it out of the seat. She turned around, panning her eyes between the device in her hand and Tiffany.

“What?” The wavy haired girl tilted her head to the side, confusion flooding her face, “You don’t like the song?”

Jessica didn’t reply. Her face grew pensive as she tried to read the girl before her.

“Jessica why are you staring at me?”

“Ooh, I’m in love, ooh I’ve fallen in love.”

The sweet voice grew louder

“Find it?” Taeyeon bounced back into the room. Tiffany huffed annoyed at the girl spacing in front of her. She snatched the small red device from Jessica’s open hand and shoved it in her pocket. “Yes.” She smiled, “Thanks Tae Tae.”

Taeyeon closed her flip phone slipping it into the pocket of her robe, “Good, I’ll see you when you guys get back then.” She plopped down where Jessica was standing, “These video games really were a good idea Fany-ah.”

*

Jessica sat across from Tiffany at a table in the food court of the mall. Though they’d hurried out of the apartment once Tiffany found her phone, they still missed the movie they wanted to see. So they decided to walk around a bit until the next showing started. The short haired girl fished her phone out of her pocket, nodding to whatever Tiffany was saying. Ever since they’d sat down she’d been running off a mile a minute.

[<- Taeyeon blah blah Taeyeon blah blah]

“Mmhmm.” She grunted.

[>- Unnie! Don’t make fun of her, maybe she really likes him.]

[<- Yeah, I’m sorry. It’s just she’s been talking about him for at least thirty minutes now! It’s unbearable!]

[>- I’m sorry Unnie, is there anything I can do to help?]

[<-No, I’ll handle it]

“Yeah, he says we can go there next week. Isn’t that cool?”

“What—oh yeah.”

“Tomorrow we’re meeting for lunch.”

“Ah,” Jessica sighed, “So you two are dating then?”

The wavy haired girl shook her head exhaling, “No not yet, I think I’m going to ask him though.”

“So soon? You’ve only been seeing him for a couple of weeks.”

“Why not? The sooner the better right?”

“Do whatever makes you happy Fany-ah.”

Tiffany leaned back in her chair repeating Jessica’s words, “Whatever makes me happy...”

Jessica studied the girl who seemed to be thinking intensely about something.

“This is what I want....” Her voice was far-off, lost somewhere Jessica couldn’t go.

The glassy eyed girl thought of the girl at home sitting on the couch eating cereal and playing video games. *That dork*, she grinned at the image before a sad thought entered her mind, *This is going to break her heart*. “Well then, if you’re sure about it that’s all that matters.”

“If I’m sure...?” Tiffany shook her head, her brow furrowing, “Of course I’m sure! Why wouldn’t I be?” She nearly yelled, sitting up to meet Jessica’s eyes.

Jessica shrugged, “Maybe you want someone else?”

“Someone else...?” She returned to her reclined position.

“Yeah, maybe your heart is elsewhere.”

Tiffany huffed, straightening herself up, “I don’t know what you’re talking about Jessica.”

“kay. Can I ask you a question?”

Tiffany nodded slightly an anxious expression drawn on her face.

“When did all this Taecyeon stuff start?”

“What do you mean I’ve always liked him.

“Yeah but until just recently you guys have been more brother-sister than anything else. What changed?”

The pouting girl shrugged, “I... I just realized what a cool guy he was.”

“When?” she persisted.

Tiffany shrugged again, huffing, “I don’t know a couple weeks ago, why?”

Jessica kept her cool opposite the irritated girl, “I know you. It seems this all just came out of nowhere is all.”

“It didn’t—I’ve always felt this way.” She shook her head arms folded over her chest, “I just never told anyone about it.”

“Okay,” Jessica nodded, not saying another word as she turned her attention back to her meal.

Tiffany scoffed before following suite returning to her food as well, her cheeks red and puffed in frustration.

Chapter 9

“What do you guys want to do today?”

Eight girls were strewn around the living room; motionless.

“I don’t know,” Answered Sunny, playing in Yoona’s hair who sat on the floor in front of her.

“Wanna play Wii?”

A wave of mumbles stirred the air, “No, I’m too sore.”

Silence

“Wanna play PS3?”

“You only got shooting games.” the wave quieted again.

“How about 360?”

The small girl grumbled for a third time but was cut off by Yuri who was leaning against Jessica’s arm, “I don’t think she wants to play games.”

Again silence. This had been the course of the painfully boring day. Someone would suggest doing something and the others would complain about it until doing whatever was suggested seemed downright absurd. It seemed as if the only thing the girls would accomplish would be nothing.

“You know what we should do today?” Started the girl staring at the wall beside the TV, “we should switch rooms.”

All heads turned to face Hyoyeon.

“What?”

“Are you casting me away?” Sooyoung batted her eye lashes playfully, clasping her hands together in front of herself, “Am I not good enough for you?”

Hyoyeon, who was sitting beside her nudged the playful jokester, “Come on, it’s just been a while.”

“I agree, it has.” Sunny nodded, tucking her legs under her, “So how should we choose?”

“Rock, Paper Scissors?” Suggested many of the girls.

“Wait Unnie, can we really leave something as big as our roommates to chance?” Seohyun piped.

Hyoyeon pushed back the sleeves of her hoodie, “it’s not chance if you know what you’re doing.”

*

“So that settles it,” Sooyoung studied the chart she’d drawn on the dry erase board, “Jessica & Sunny will be in Jessica’s room, Taeng and Hyo in Taengoo’s room, The two Maknae’s together and Fany, Yuri and I.”

“I wonder if Unnie will mind that we decided for her.” Seohyun stood heading to the kitchen. Sooyoung shrugged, “She should have been here. She left so early this morning I didn’t even know she was gone.” She rose to her feet wiping the board with her hand, “I was talking to the bathroom door for ten minutes waiting for her to get out!”

Sunny chuckled at the tall girl hanging the board near the refrigerator, “Don’t be mad at her because you don’t have the sense to knock.”

Sooyoung grumbled crossing back to the girl. “Enough!” she yelled, yanking her off the couch, “make us lunch.”

*

“I’ve been wanting to get her one since that day, but I don’t know much about them.” Taecyeon sipped from his smoothie, nodding his head, “yeah, I’ll help you. I told you, we can go whenever you want.”

“Really?” The dark haired girl beamed, “how about now?”

He glanced at his drink and then back at her, “Right now?”

“Yeah.”

He shook his head, grinning, “alright Fany, just give me a second.”

“Okay.” She crossed her arms over her chest. She watched him sip his drink intentionally causing an awkward atmosphere.

Taeyeon chuckled pushing the cup away, “Alright, alright, I get it.” He rose to his feet, “I’m ready.”

Tiffany smiled clapping her hands together, “Thanks Oppa!”

*

“Taeyeon...”

“Taeyeon....”

“Unnie?”

“TAEYEON!”

“Ah!” Screamed the startled girl, flinching in her seat. She rubbed her knee having hit it on the table. “What?”

“You were completely spacing out!” Sooyoung yelled her voice still raised, “Sunny was talking to you.”

“Oh,” she turned to look at the girl who was standing on the other side of the table with her hand out stretched, “Hm?”

“I said are you done with that?” Sunny pointed at Taeyeon’s half eaten plate of food. Her face twisted into one of concern, “Are you ok?”

Taeyeon nodded, “So... she left early this morning and she’s still not back yet...?” She spoke to no one in particular.

“Huh?” Sooyoung intercepted Taeyeon’s plate of food dumping the contents she wanted onto her own before handing it to Sunny. “Who? Fany?”

“She said she was going out to lunch with him.” Jessica answered, “There’s no need to worry.” The shorter girl nodded again, the words passing through her. *But its dinner time already...*

After lunch the girls spent the majority of the day cleaning up and switching rooms. It didn’t seem to take long with all the joking and horseplay but by the time they were finished it was late in the evening and Sunny was cooking another meal for the hungry mob “Sunny, may I use your computer?”

“Hm? No—‘never again’ remember? You nearly fried it last time.” Her back was towards the sink. She didn’t notice the grief on Taeyeon’s face. If she had she would have joyously surrendered.

Yuri took the older girls hand, “Why don’t you watch a movie with me?”
“Ok...”

*

The duo exited the large store building; Tiffany carrying a large bag and Taeyeon carrying a much smaller one.

“Shouldn’t this be the other way around?”

“Huh?” he looked up from his phone.

She held the bag out in front of her, “Shouldn’t you be carrying this for me?”

He chuckled, “Why are your arms broken?”

“Oppa!”

“What?” He popped the trunk of the car as they got closer, “it’s not like we’re dating.”

She'd planned on bringing it up at some point during their outing; this was as good a time as ever.

“What if we were?”

“What?” He slipped into the driver seat.

She followed his actions inhaling deeply, “What if we were dating?”

Taeyeon took a long stare at Tiffany, his brow furrowed. The wavy haired girl fidgeted under his gaze but held the eye contact. Taeyeon was the first to look away, chuckling lightly, “You had me going there for a second.”

She cleared her throat, securing the belt over her chest, “I... I wasn’t joking.”

He drove them out of the parking lot, headed for her home, “Why would we do that?”

“Why wouldn’t we? Are you saying you wouldn’t want to date me?”

“Huh—no, it’s not that I wouldn’t I just don’t know why you would want to.”

“There’s nothing wrong with you Oppa.” She watched the scenery rapidly fly by them, “...you’d make a good boyfriend.”

Silence; Tiffany was too impatient to let it linger.

“So you’re not going to give me an answer?”

“Why don’t you give me some time to think it over?”

“Oh, ok.”

Taeyeon grinned, nudging her arm, “You really are a weird girl, you know that?”

“Oppa stop! Watch the road!”

Chapter 10

“Sica Unnie?”

“Mm?”

“What do you think love is?”

Jessica chuckled, keeping her pace, “It’s an intense emotion that causes you to lose your breath when you realize you’ve been affected by it.”

“I see...” Seohyun kept her eyes on the path in front of them, “How do you know when you’re in love?”

The two girls rounded the corner of the familiar park trail that they were jogging. It was usually like this every other day. Seohyun would wake Jessica up a little after dawn and the two would go to the park nearby for a bit of morning cardio. The only difference from this time and the others was that they were talking.

Jessica sighed, “People always say it’s when you can’t stop thinking about them but I don’t think that’s right. I think you know you’re in love when you see them and it feels like time stops. When all you want to do is be in their hold. When just the mention of their name can cause you to be filled with such an intense feel of yearning that it scares you.”

“Ah... have you ever been in love?”

“Why are you asking all these questions?” Jessica’s jog slowed to a walk as she headed for a nearby bench.

“I... I was thinking about Taeyeon.”

“About what she feels for Tiffany?”

Seohyun nodded. She stretched her legs, taking a seat beside the older girl, “Being in love must be a magical feeling. Like soaring through the clouds weightless and unaffected by the world below.”

“Hmm,” exhaled Jessica, “...yeah.”

“I can’t imagine feeling that way and not being able to tell the one you’re in love with how you feel. She must really be struggling inside.”

“You find a way.” The glassy eyed girl replied, her head tilting towards the sky.

“But why put yourself through that? She should just confess.”

“Sometimes it’s just not that easy.”

“Why not? It’s so simple!” Seohyun threw her hands to the sky a pained smile on her face.

“But she might get hurt.” Jessica watched as two pigeons crowded around a few seeds under a tree in front of them.

“Isn’t knowing if she likes you back more important than being scared?”

“Sometimes being scared is safe. You get use to loving them from afar and while you’d love to be with them you know that it’s for the better.”

“But that’s stupid! You should fight for love! As long as you stay true to your love that’s all that matters!” The bright girl beamed.

“What about the people? The public? The members?”

“They could take them on together. As long as they have each other that’s all that matters.”

“Heh,” Jessica shook her head folding her arms over her chest, “you’re too young to understand.”

“I’m not too young!” The tall girl sprang to her feet her eyes sparkling bright, “We should stop trying to make it all complex. Love is simple—it’s when two equals one. If you have a chance at it then you have to go for it! You—!”

“But what if she can’t take it? What if she breaks your heart?” Jessica’s pitch matched that of the girl in front of her.

“—then I’ll deal with it!”

Seohyun gasped clasping her hand over her mouth as she sprinted out of the park, leaving a confused Jessica behind.

“Seo...” her voice trailed as she rose to her feet. Though they’d both tried to disguise it neither one of them had been talking about Taeyeon or Tiffany. In fact their conversation about the couple had been anything but.

Chapter 11

[<-how far are you?]
 [->10-15 maybe]
 [<-k]
 [<-Have you thought about it?]
 [->yeah]
 [<-so...?]
 [->alright, let’s do it]
 [<-really? You’re not messing with me right?]
 [->no. Tiffany Hwang, let’s date.]
 [<-thank you Oppa!]
 [->you’re thanking me for dating you? Haha, such a weird girl]

“We could probably make money off of your texting skills.” Jessica entered the kitchen finding the wavy haired girl sitting on a bar stool at the counter. She wiped the sweat from her brow, “Have you seen Seohyun?”

Tiffany slipped her phone into her purse smiling brightly at the athletic girl. “No, I haven’t. Good morning.”

“Oh, morning. Who were you texting? Was it one of the girls? Can you ask them to bring some orange juice?” she made her way to the fridge.

Tiffany hopped off the stool bouncing to Jessica’s side, “no, it wasn’t the girls. I was texting Taeyeon he on his way here to pick me up. I could tell him to bring you some though, since he is my *boyfriend*.”

Jessica froze, one hand on the handle of the fridge and the other in her hair. She closed her eyes sighing as she slowly shut the door.

“Your boyfriend?”

Tiffany nodded but then realized Jessica’s eyes were closed, “Yup.”

“So you’re really dating him?”

“Yeah.” Her smile started to fade.

“And this is what you want?” The short haired girl faced Tiffany dead on, her deep stare peering into the slightly taller girls eyes.

“Why ... why aren’t you happy for me?”

“Hey you two, going out again?” Taeyeon shuffled into the kitchen, her squeaking pausing as she reached between the duo to steal a couple of the grapes Jessica had set out moments before.

Now it was Tiffany's turn to look dumbfounded. Her jaw went slack as the smaller girl passed by her.

"Tiffany," Jessica started again causing the anxious looking girl to come back from whatever was taunting her, "this is what you want?"

"Fany-ah, Taeyeon tugged at Tiffany's hand and pointed to a high cabinet, "Could you grab a bowl for me? I don't know why that giant puts them up there, I think she does it just to torture me."

Tiffany smiled, nodding at the girl standing at her side, "Sure," she grabbed the bowl and handed it to Taeyeon, "There you go."

"Thanks Fany-ah."

"Oh!" Tiffany snapped her fingers, "I just remembered!" She ducked into her room reappearing moments later with a large bag, "I didn't see you yesterday when I came in." she held the bag out in front of Taeyeon, ignoring the statue staring at her,

"I was going to wrap it for you but I don't know where Yuri and Sooyoung put my stuff."

"That's okay Fany-ah, what is it?" Taeyeon set the bag on the floor unveiling a large box. "I'm sorry I broke your last one. The guy at the store said this was the best model they had in stock. It should last a while as long as it doesn't fall."

"Wow Fany-ah..." she took the girl standing behind her in her arms pressing her body close.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome Taengoo," her eyes locked with the stern girl shaking her head near the refrigerator, "I hope you like it."

Taeyeon pulled back, smiling widely at the girl holding her, "I know I will Fany-ah, because you got it for me."

Tiffany's breath caught in her throat as she pulled the smaller girl close. Her hold was forceful and desperate. As if she was never going to be in Taeyeon's arms again.

As if she was saying

"Goodbye," shook Tiffany's voice. She dug the red vibrating device out of her pocket before turning to brisk out of the door.

The stoic girl wasn't going to let the moment linger. From her experience it was best to deal with things like this quickly so that they didn't have time to manifest.

"Taeyeon," the softness of her own voice surprised her.

"Hm?"

She sat on the floor next to the girl playing with her new laptop. Jessica took a deep breath, "I have to talk to you about Tiffany...and Taeyeon."

*

"Ya!"

"Hm?"

"Did you hear me? I asked if you gave it to her."

“Oh-yeah,” Tiffany nodded, her eyes on the road, “yeah I did.”

“Nice.” Grinned Taeyeon, bobbing his head, “I bet she loved it huh? You looked so cute trying to pick out a computer for her! The way you were bugging the guy at the store about getting the best one I thought he was going to give you a piece of crap out of spite.” He let out a soft chuckle leaning back in the car seat, “So what do you want to do today?”

“...”

“Fany?”

“...”

“Tiffany!”

“Oh...huh?”

*

“You don't have to say anything...” Taeyeon kept her gaze on the laptop; smile ever present, “I could feel it.”

“Tae...”

“The way she held me it didn't... feel the same.” She sighed forcing her smile wider, “so what are you going to do today?”

“Taeyeon-ah...” Jessica sighed, her eyes closed.

“Just going to hang around here?”

“Don't do this.” She shook her head.

“If you go out would you mind bringing back something to eat? We need more than just grapes.” Jessica's hand rested gently on Taeyeon's shoulder, “Don't do this. Don't pretend everything's okay.”

Taeyeon laughed a blank stare cascading her face, “but everything is okay. I really don't feel bad... I... I knew this was going to happen.” She rose to her feet taking her belongings with her. “So it's ok.” She set the machine on her desk before returning to the living room where a concerned Jessica was watching her every move, “you will buy me something, won't you?” She sat on the couch.

“Sure I'll be back in a moment.” She didn't want to leave the girl but maybe that's what Taeyeon wanted. *Maybe she needs to be alone.*

Jessica sighed heading for the door.

“...Sica?”

“Hm? Did you call me?” She quickly spun around, ready to run to the smaller girls side.

“...no,” taeyeon smiled once again, “maybe you're hearing things.”

“Oh,” again she headed for the door.

“Je—Jessica?”

This time she was sure she heard her.

“Yes Taeyeon?”

Her voice travelled soft on stilled air, “Take a while.”

*

“That's what you called me here for?”

“It's.... it's really important,” Tiffany fidgeted with the plastic bag in her lap, “we need vitamins.”

“I agree, but when I asked you what you wanted to do today I expected more than 'go buy orange juice'.” He was more amused than upset.

“I'm sorry Oppa, I just really need to be at home today...”

“It's okay,” Taeyeon sighed shaking his head, “Such a weird girl.”

Chapter 12

“Hey,” Tiffany smiled setting her set of keys on the small table near the door.

Taeyeon didn't look up to greet her. She was somewhere far off trying to make her dreams and reality switch places with each other.

“Where is everyone?” Tiffany came into the living room and stood between the girl and the TV.

Sad eyes met the furrowed brow, “You're really dating him?”

Tiffany nodded, her eyes on Taeyeon's fiddling hands, “yeah, we just started today.”

“I see,” her words were low, just like her gaze. She turned off the TV no one was watching and stood up. Taeyeon inhaled deeply, holding her breath a moment before letting it escape her. A pained smile passed her lips, “I-I'm happy for you.” She put her arms around Tiffany, hugging her gingerly. She wanted to let it linger but it was too awkward. There was no feeling in it; no warmth in her hold.

Taeyeon pulled away heading for her room. There was nothing wrong with going to bed, even if it was still light out.

“Wait!” Tiffany's eyes searched the room, “Don't you want to-watch TV o-or play video games with me?”

Another poor smile. “Maybe some other time Tiffany.... I think I'll just lie down now.”

“But—,” the anxious voice called again, “we could uh...read books to each other. You could fall asleep out here.”

Taeyeon could feel her breath becoming short.

Not here Taeyeon, not in front of her..

She knew this day would come. She knew it would. Still she wished she'd been more prepared. The dark haired girl shook her head afraid that if she spoke her voice would be too weak. Without another word she went to her room and closed the door behind her. She fell onto her bed and waited to hear the sound of the TV blare before letting her dry sobs escape; thinking back to a time when Taeyeon wasn't a household name.

*

A shrill tone chirped from the small night stand near the sleeping forms bed. She reached over, carelessly knocking over an empty glass as she retrieved the device.

[-> ddok ddok.. :)]

The drowsy girl grinned, typing quickly.

[<-Come on, I'm too sleepy to get up]

[-> im sorry! I dont want to disturb you]

[<-babo, you're not! Come in]

Moments passed before the bedroom door creaked open allowing the pink blob to sneak into the room. She paused briefly to pick up the fallen object as she came closer to the resting form. Taeyeon instinctively held up the covers beckoning the wavy haired girl. Tiffany eased into the beddings, her back facing the girl behind her.

Taeyeon smiled at the girl leaning into her, “night Fany-ah.”

“Goodnight TaeTae.”

In the past few months this had become a routine. Every couple of nights Tiffany would come pawing at Taeyeon’s door or text her asking if she could sleep over. Taeyeon would sometimes grumble out a complaint but she didn’t really mind. She would just do that in an attempt to mask her excitement. In truth she cherished each visit deeply with her heart.

“Tae Tae-ah.”

“...”

“Taengoo.”

“...”

“Taeyeon-ah.”

“What?”

“...Are you awake?”

“I am now. Go to sleep Fany, you don't want to wake Yoona do you?”

Tiffany shook her head, eyes closing, “Nope. Goodnight Tae Tae.”

Taeyeon smiled, closing her eyes as well, a warm hand finding her own, “Goodnight Fany-ah.”

Taeyeon lay awake enjoying the warmth of the softness covering her. She nuzzled further into her pillow reveling in the simpleness of the moment.

This is like a dream

She didn't want it to end, but it had to.

“Fany-ah.” Her words quaked the morning air.

Tiffany shifted, causing Taeyeon to sink further into her sheets. “What?”

“It's time to get up.”

The slumbering girl wrapped her arms around the smaller girls’ waist, burying her head in the nook of Taeyeon's neck. “No,” she whined, “I don't want to.”

"You have to—."

"No, it's our first week off! I don't have anything to do today."

"Tiffany get up now, I have to go to the bathroom."

"So go," she shifted, "then come back..."

"I would love to, but you're on top of me."

Chapter 13

"Hm?" Tiffany lifted her head from its comfortable position. Just as Taeyeon said she was lying on top of the smaller girls back covering her with body her own. "Oh!" The drowsy girl rolled off of the girl she'd been blanketing, "—I'm sorry Tae Tae, are you alright?" Taeyeon slipped out of bed, her hands stretched over head, "It's fine Fany-ah," she shuffled to the door, a drunken smile plastered on her face.

Taeyeon left the room, returning moments later with a less stressed disposition. She stood over her bed, taking in the sight of the wavy haired girl that had already fallen back to sleep. "Fany-ah." She breathed, motioning closer. Tiffany was lying on her side facing away from Taeyeon; her slim body curled up around a pillow.

She's on my side again, thought the love struck girl, easing under the covers. She didn't really mind it. Tiffany could take up the entire bed and sleep on her every night if she wanted to "Just as long as you're here that's all that matters—."
The sudden movement from the resting girl startled Taeyeon, causing her to catch her thoughts. Oh God, did i say that out loud? Did she hear me?

Instead of turning around to question Taeyeon as she thought the younger girl would, Tiffany inched closer towards the smaller girl, forming her body to fit into Taeyeon's. With her mind at ease Taeyeon sighed, letting herself lose to the moment.

"So beautiful," crooned the voice of the half-awake girl staring at the sleeping face in her palm. At some point during their early morning slumber Tiffany shifted to face Taeyeon. Now her legs were entangled with the shorter girls while her head was in Taeyeon's open palm. Taeyeon caressed Tiffany's cheek, a motion she'd been practicing since she'd woken up. How long ago that was she didn't know. Time seemed to wither away when she was with Tiffany.

A stray tuft of hair fell over the resting girl's eyes, taunting Taeyeon; begging her to tame it, to gently guide it to its rightful place tucked behind Tiffany's ear. One quick pass is all it would be. One quick chance to let her hand brush against Tiffany's porcelain skin. To hold her head and pretend that it all meant something more. Can I really...? She scoffed at the thought. There was no way she wasn't going to give into temptation.

Unfortunately as Taeyeon lifted her hand to enact the scene she'd dreamt of Tiffany claimed the lock as her own. A glimpse of despair flashed over the shorter girls face but quickly

disappeared when Tiffany's hand came to rest on her arm; her nails gently grazing over the blushing girl's skin.

"I could wake up every morning like this."

"...Then why don't we?"

"Huh?" The small girl gasped, shaken by the voice of the girl she'd thought was sleeping.

The wavy haired girl's eyes burst open, a smile cascading her face, "why don't we? We could spend every day sleeping—think about it, this entire vacation we could hibernate!" She nuzzled her head in Taeyeon's hold, "you're so warm."

Taeyeon was too shocked to speak. Not only was Tiffany agreeing to her ridiculous thoughts but I'm warm? What does she mean by that?

"Taeyeon-ah, are you okay? Your face is so red."

"I—I'm fine!" The flustered girl answered, reluctantly springing to her feet, "C—come on, let's make breakfast." She quickly covered her burning face, exiting the room.

Tiffany had been acting like this for months now. Saying things or doing things that easily sent the smaller girl into frenzy. It's not that they hadn't always been close, it just seemed like recently the occurrences had increased in frequency and also intensity. In the past they would hold hands or sit close to each other just as any other friends would but now instead of just holding hands they'd lace fingers and Tiffany would brush her thumb back and forth over the back of Taeyeon's hand or instead of just sitting together Tiffany would sit as close as possible to Taeyeon and snake her arms around the smaller girls, holding her close.

Still, these situations didn't baffle Taeyeon. It was the ease of them that puzzled her. Everything felt natural. As if it was meant to be. The way their hands always found each other, the way their bodies fit together; it was all so effortless. Before this Taeyeon was sure she would never tell Tiffany how she felt; how she loved her all these years. But as each day passed it became harder to do so.

Even now as she sat at the kitchen table watching Tiffany prepare them each a bowl of cereal she wondered what caused this change and if it could mean what she wanted it to mean; what she'd written about but never gave herself a chance to believe could happen in real life.
That

Maybe she feels it too

Taeyeon shook her head not letting the thoughts develop as she'd done countless times before, "What do you want to do today?"

The taller girl shrugged, shifting her weight from one leg to another, "I don't know, you?"

Taeyeon rested her head on the table, "I want to sleep for a thousand years. It's so quiet."

Tiffany set the bowl beside Taeyeon's head, "I think we're the only ones here."

She went back to the counter where she'd prepared a slice of watermelon for the girl, "here," she said, waiting for Taeyeon's head to lift before she placed it down in front of her. "Thank you." Taeyeon smiled, taking a large bite of the thick cut of fruit. Instantly a pink trail of juice began to drizzle down her chin.

"Taeyeon-ah!" Tiffany cried hurrying to find a napkin for the other girl. She leaned in and

dabbed the corner of Taeyeon's mouth, unaware of the deep shade of red engulfing her friends face.

"I was going to cut it for you, you know." She brandished a knife.

"Oh yeah, that would probably be best."

Tiffany grinned rolling her eyes as she leaned over Taeyeon. With her arms on either side of the sitting girls head she began to skillfully slice the fruit into medium sized chunks. Taeyeon closed her eyes absorbing the moment; trying to immerse herself in everything that was happening; everything that was Tiffany. The feel of her skin as her arms brushed against her cheek, the smell of the dark curls dancing around her face, the soft blow of her breath as she exhaled onto the crown of Taeyeon's head.

"Fany-ah"

"Yes?"

"What? Did you say something?"

Tiffany giggled, turning to grab her own bowl, "no, nothing."

"We should probably get going."

"Yeah...I'm getting up now." Taeyeon sat on the floor eating her cereal at the coffee table while Tiffany lay on the couch behind her staring off into the distance. "Really?" She rolled onto her back extending one arm at her side while the other reached toward the ceiling.

"Yeah, I'm going to get in the shower now."

"When after you finish this bowl? You're gonna waste this one too."

"It's not my fault it turned to mush."

"It turned to mush because you were spacing out." Laughed the wavy haired girl her eyes on the ceiling, "you were staring so hard I thought you were a zombie!"

"I was not—ah, that tickles! What are you doing?"

Tiffany quickly withdrew her hand from the silky hairs she'd mindlessly been playing with.

"Sorry," she sat up, "I'll wash first since you're still eating."

"O—okay." Taeyeon spooned the fruit filled cereal, her gaze returning to the TV.

"This weather is amazing!" Tiffany spun around in front of Taeyeon, her yellow skirt blowing in the gentle breeze. She ran back to the grinning girl and slipped her arm around Taeyeon's, her face equally ecstatic. "Don't you think so?"

Taeyeon nodded breathing heavily. They'd been walking around for what seemed like hours now. And although it was a great day and she was having a wonderful time with Tiffany, the weight of the collection of large bags she was carrying was taxing on her small frame. She glanced at the noticeably smaller bags Tiffany was carrying and wondered once again why she'd offered to tote around the larger ones. Still she didn't seem to mind. As the energetic girls head found it's place in the crook of Taeyeon's neck she knew it was worth it.

“Tae Tae!” She pulled the smaller girl to the window of a jewelry store where an assortment of dazzling treasure was on display. Her eyes fell on an expensive necklace with a simple design. “Isn’t it beautiful?” She breathed, her eyes entranced.

“Yeah it’s gorgeous.” Taeyeon’s eyes fell to Tiffany’s delicate neck, “it would look great on you.” “Huh?” Tiffany gave a quizzical look to Taeyeon before turning back to the window, shaking her head, “it’s perfect.”

Taeyeon shifted as one of the oddly shaped bags she was carrying threatened to fall. “Are you alright? I can carry that—.”

“No I’m fine.” The smaller girl shook her head, repositioning the bags.

Tiffany grinned at the sight of her companion, “Come on let’s get something to eat. There’s this place I want to show you. It’s not too far.”

“Nice isn’t it?” Tiffany glanced over the top of her menu at the girl sitting across from her.

“Mhmm,” Taeyeon nodded browsing over the selection of dishes.

“What’s wrong Taeyeon, you’re so quiet.”

“Nothing’s wrong. Just thinking.” Her eyes scanned the ornate pamphlet. “Everything sounds so delicious. What are you going to get?”

“I’m not sure yet. You?”

“I’m not sure yet either. Would you mind ordering for me? I’m going to run to the washroom.”

“Oh, I’ll just wait for you.”

“No go ahead,” she smiled sliding out of the booth, “I’m excited to see what you choose.”

Taeyeon rounded the corner of the VIP area and watched as the waiter she’d passed on her way went to her table. She waited until Tiffany was engaged in conversation before sneaking out of the restaurant, brisling back the way they’d came.

Tiffany sat patiently waiting for the older girls return. She wasn’t sure how much time had passed but she was sure it was too much. A worried look painted her face as she contemplated again on whether she should go looking for the shorter girl. She fought with herself on the matter. The entire battle played out on her face as a cavalcade of expressions. She came to the decision that if Taeyeon wasn’t back before their food arrived she would start search—

“Taeyeon-ah what happened?” Tiffany rose to her feet, meeting the winded girl half way, “are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Taeyeon patted her stirred hair, smoothing it back to its original position.

“Where were you? You’re cold.” They took their respective seats. Tiffany’s eyes stayed on Taeyeon, studying her disheveled state.

“I—I was outside, um... on the phone.”

“Really?”

The panting girl nodded, her eyes on the glass of water in front of her. "For me?" Tiffany nodded, "I didn't know what you wanted," she stifled a laugh as the girl across from her downed the drink, "so I got you water. I guess that was alright."

"I can't believe its only noon."

"I know, this day is going by so slow." Taeyeon watched as Tiffany sliced the meat on her plate into smaller pieces.

"I think I was supposed to go grocery shopping with Jessica today."

"Oh, want to head back?"

Tiffany shook her head, chewing her food, "No, she's probably already gone." Her smile grew wide, "Besides I'm enjoying myself."

"Me too." Taeyeon took a bite of the Alfredo in front of her, "This is really delicious Fany-ah."

"Thanks." Her eyes darted around the table before landing on Taeyeon, "I wasn't sure if you—oh you've got some here." She grabbed her napkin and leaned over to Taeyeon, gently wiping away the sauce. Taeyeon froze her heart skipping as the soft material passed her lips. For the second time that day Tiffany was wiping her mouth.

I don't know whether I should be happy or embarrassed.

Tiffany studied the reddening girl in front of her, "what's wrong?" She pulled back resting in her seat. Taeyeon shook her head poorly trying to fend the awkward air rising around them.

"Oh, I'm stuffed!" Taeyeon leaned back in her seat, resting her hands on her stomach.

"Really? I'm still hungry." Tiffany fiddled with her fork, pushing it around her empty plate.

"You finished so quickly."

"I tried to cut it so it seemed like more," she sipped her tea, "didn't help."

"Here" Taeyeon twirled her fork in her noodles, wrapping a good amount on the end, "have mine." She leaned forward, one hand under the other as not to make a mess.

The bright eyed girl smiled slowly, taking the food into her mouth. "Mmm," she moaned closing her eyes, "This is delicious." She licked her lips before leaning forward evermore, her mouth open, "Ah..."

The older girl chuckled, before gathering the remainder of noodles to feed Tiffany.

It was in that moment as she held her fork in front of the girl that her thoughts caught up with her actions.

I'm feeding Tiffany

Her breath caught in her throat and her hands began to quake, unraveling the noodles she'd so neatly wrapped. If she hadn't realized it she would have been fine, but as the sentence repeated itself in her head the once simple act became impossible.

“Tae Tae?” Curious, Fany peeked out of her eye curious as to what was causing the delay, “Taeyeon-ah?”

“Huh?” The shaking girl huffed, her face stricken.

“Can I have it?”

“Oh—uh—.”

Seeing the paling girl’s hesitation Tiffany took Taeyeon’s hand in her own and helped guide the fork into her mouth. Her motions were the same as before; she chewed thoroughly, swallowed and licked her lips afterward, but this time the act seemed to nearly kill Taeyeon.

The loud clank of the fork escaping Taeyeon’s feeble hold and hitting the table brought the stricken girl back from whatever torturous thoughts were beckoning her.

“Tae?” Tiffany tilted her head to the side, her brow furrowing as she dabbed the corners of her mouth with her napkin.

“Uh—come on,” The shorter girl shot to her feet, her face burning, “we should go.”

“I don’t know why she reads these things.”

“Maybe it’s interesting to her. I’m surprised they’re not back yet.”

Tiffany set the thick book down on the end table near the far side of the couch. She grabbed a magazine and took her seat beside Taeyeon. Whatever awkward air followed them out of the restaurant died on the way back to their home. They’d expected to find at least one of the other girls there when they returned, but the apartment was still empty. Not wanting to disturb the valuable quiet atmosphere, they both agreed to engage in an activity that didn’t involve much sound. Namely, reading.

“We don’t have anything else out here that isn’t some type of reference book.” Tiffany yawned making herself comfortable. She came to rest with her head on Taeyeon’s shoulder and her arms under the shorter girls with their fingers entwined, “Jessica keeps all the good ones in her room.”

“Want to get one?”

“I’d rather not get yelled at again.”

“Oh yeah, didn’t you ruin one of her books?”

“It was one spot of ice cream—one spot!” She flailed her arms above her head before bringing them back to Taeyeon with a huff, “it’s not like I didn’t buy her another copy.”

“Mhmm,” Taeyeon flipped through the pages of the magazine.

“When will I live it down?”

Taeyeon chuckled at the frustrated girl, “so what are you going to read?”

“I’ll just look at this with you.”

“Okay,” Taeyeon set the quarterly in her lap. Together they glanced over the pictures and skimmed over articles. Minimal words were shared as the let the day pass around them.

"That's nice."

"Mhmm"

"I like her hair"

"...yeah."

"That dress is pretty."

"..."

"You don't think so?"

"..."

"Fany?"

"..."

Taeyeon glanced at the girl whose head had gone limp on her shoulder. A smile curled on her lips as she studied the sleeping girl, listening intently to the rhythmic stream of breaths escaping her. She let go of the magazine, leaving it to fall where it may. Tucking her legs under, she repositioned herself so that they were both more comfortable. With Tiffany's head on her chest and hands now clutching at the smaller girl's shoulders, Taeyeon closed her eyes embracing the afternoon nap.

Unaware that when she would wake just hours later Tiffany would be gone and a certain name would be the topic of the girls in the house.

Chapter 14

"Where's Taeyeon?"

"Still sleeping." Hyoyeon answered from her seat at the table, "She doesn't look too good."

"Neither does this one," Sooyoung hitched her chin at Tiffany who's head was hung low over her bowl of cereal.

"Did you guys have a fight?" Sunny took her seat at the table.

Tiffany's head slowly rose, "...a fight...?"

"Yeah. Did you guys argue over something?"

The girl in question shook her head, returning to her previous position.

"Movie night tonight?"

Sooyoung shook her head, not taking her eyes off the slumped body beside her, "no, Seohyun is finishing up her paper so we're doing it tomorrow. Don't try to skip out either! I've got a crazy film for us to watch."

"Blood and guts?"

"No...that didn't go over too well last time. This one's just suspenseful."

"Talk about it when I'm not eating," Yuri sighed, "Are you two almost done? We don't want to miss our appointment."

Hyoyeon nodded rising from her chair, "I am."

Sooyoung followed the shorter girl to the front door. Yuri turned to face the duo still at the table, "you sure you guys don't want to come? The people at the salon we're going to really know their stuff."

Sunny shook her head, her face buried in her DS, "fumes."

"Fany?"

"..." she blinked rapidly, focusing in on the girl standing across the table, "huh? Oh, yeah I'm finished." She pushed her bowl toward Yuri waiting for the taller girl to take it away.

"What?" Sunny pulled herself from her device, "are you alright?" She placed the back of her hand on the dazed girls forehead.

"Yeah I'm fine." She rose to her feet heading for her room.

Yuri and Sunny shared a glance before the smaller girl took the untouched bowl in her hands and disposed of its contents.

"Maybe you should drag her out of here."

"Hm," Yuri nodded, massaging her chin.

"Drag who out of here?" Jessica set her keys on the table by the door, closing it behind her.

"Tiffany." Sunny answered, "She seems a little off today."

"Hyoyeon says Taeyeon's the same. She hasn't gotten up yet."

Yuri's phone begun to sing a fast tune. "Yeah, I'm coming down now." She spoke to the device turning for the door, "no they didn't feel like joining," her voice faded into the distance.

"Tae?" Jessica slowly pushed open the bedroom door, "Taeyeon-ah?" she called again. The lump under the thick comforter stirred. "You can't possibly still be sleeping, it's well past noon."

"It's fine, I don't have anything to do today, I'm still tired...."

"Really," the blanket nodded in response, "let me see you."

There was a little bit of movement as Jessica closed the gap between her and the covered girl. She pulled the blankets back revealing the tired form who was still in the same clothes she'd been in the morning before.

"Taeyeon-ah... have you been crying?"

The smaller girl shrugged turning her head towards the vacant bed near the window, "no, I thought I would be too but they won't fall."

"Have you slept?"

Taeyeon shook her head.

"She told you?" She sat down on the edge of the bed, her hand on Taeyeon's bare arm. Taeyeon gave a small nod before flashing a quick smile to Jessica, "It's doesn't feel as bad as I thought it would Sica," her eyes went back to the window, "I don't think it's hit me yet. I don't think my hearts realized that this is it."

Jessica sighed folding her hands in her lap, "You could still tell her. You can still tell her how you feel."

"What good would that do?" the sullen girl's voice was just above a whisper, "she's already gone."

"But what if she's not? What if your words are what she needs to come back?"

Taeyeon scoffed, "They may only push her further away. Then I won't even have her as a friend."

"You'll always be her friend. Trust me."

"How would you know? Have you ever felt this way?"

Jessica smirked her eyes on the ceiling, "yes."

Taeyeon turned her head back to the girl sitting next to her, listening

"Someone confessed to me once. But I was too young to understand it. So I pushed them away. But as we got older and I watched them grow, I knew that I'd made a mistake."

"Did you ever tell them?"

"Yeah..." she nodded tentatively, "she wouldn't accept me... I guess too much time had passed."

The short haired girl let out a wry chuckle, folding her arms over her chest, "I've never told anyone that."

"Jessica..."

"It's ok, this isn't about me. I've made my mistakes and I live with them. I'll never get to know what I could have had but you still have a chance. Just because she's with him doesn't mean she won't listen to you. And even if she doesn't realize it right away if she feels the same for you she will notice it eventually." She scoffed shaking her head, "I told myself I wouldn't try to influence you but it's just too painful to watch you like this." Jessica rose to her feet, "Especially when you *still* won't talk to me." She headed for the door.

"Jessica...?"

"Hm?"

"The girl that you..."

"Yeah?"

"Do I know her?"

Jessica smiled, her eyes far off, "You see her almost every day."

*

After her talk with the wise younger girl, Taeyeon found herself in the living room with her new computer cradled in her lap. She sat typing furiously as the TV droned on about something she wasn't engaged in.

If i can't have her in real life

"At least i can have her in here."

She'd only seen her in passing since yesterday and that was just hours before when she was crossing to the living room. *As Taeyeon exited her own room Seohyun's door flew open.*

"Morning," the girl in tight blue jeans smiled, her gaze on the floor.

"It's afternoon I think..." Taeyeon mumbled, her laptop tucked under her arm.

"Oh..."

“What were you doing in their room?” Taeyeon kept her voice low and her eyes on anything but the girl in front of her.

“Hm? Oh—I was looking for something. Hey,” a spark of hope fluttered in her voice, “want to go out today?”

“...I can't...”

“But,” she inched closer, “we haven't hung out in days...”

Taeyeon sighed, searching the floor, “I'm sorry Fany, I'm busy.”

“With what? Playing on your computer? I didn't get you that so you could ignore me.”

Her eyes rose to meet the fuming girl, “do you want it back?”

Tiffany's face went soft; her voice weak, “what—? No! I just meant—” she sighed, an obvious wave of hurt washing over her, “fine, go ahead, I don't care.” Tiffany turned sulking down the hallway.

*

“Oh good you got a new one!” Sunny appeared from the hallway, plopping down beside Taeyeon, her DS in hand, “it looks sleek Taeyeon, this things pretty high end!” The cheerful girl pulled a second DS out of her pocket.

Taeyeon watched as she set one of the two pink machines on the coffee table.

“What are you doing?” She asked, a curious smile on her face.

“Trading with myself.” She shook her head, “it's not cheating!”

Taeyeon chuckled, “okay.”

“Are you reading fanfics?”

“Uh...yeah.”

“Really? Any good ones?” The smaller girl leaned over Taeyeon's lap trying to view the screen.

Taeyeon quickly closed the window she'd been working on, “No, they're all pretty bad.”

“Oh yeah?” She snapped her fingers, “Let me show you one I started reading recently.”

Sunny pulled the laptop onto her own legs and summoned the familiar page; the page Taeyeon knew quiet well.

“It's called Waiting. Tiffany and I read it together. It's unfinished though. Tiffany—”

“—Hates it. I know, she told me.”

Sunny gave Taeyeon a quizzical look her eyebrow raised, “What? Since when?”

“Huh?”

*

“So what do you want to do today?”

“...”

“Tiffany?”

“Hm?”

“Is something wrong?”

“No...” she repeatedly dipped her fry in ketchup, “why would you ask that?”

Taeyeon sat with his arms folded over his chest; a playful grin on his face. “Your nose is red and you're not looking at me. At least I don't think you are, take those off.” He reached across the table for her sunglasses.

“Oppa stop! I need them!” Her boisterous yell left silence in the fast food restaurant.

“You want to do this some other time?” His face was pensive, studying his girlfriend.

“What—why?”

“You seem like you have a lot on your mind.”

Tiffany shook her head, “I'm fine Tae—Taeyeon.”

“...okay.”

*

“Tiffany loves this fic. She's been reading it for months now.”

“What?” Taeyeon mustered, her heart fluttering.

“Yeah,” Sunny took the remote in her hand, “she's the one who showed it to me.”

“What?”

She eyed the lapsing girl at her side, “What's wrong Taengoo? You look ridiculous.”

“But—but—but—.”

“Jeez, are you broken?” She handed the laptop back to Taeyeon who's tired brain was lost in a sea of questions.

“She said...she said she hated it. She said you showed it to her and she hated it.”

“What?” The occupied girl glanced up from her DS collection, “That's crazy. Why would I read *Taeny* stuff? I only like steamy ones and no offense but I don't want to read about two of my closest friends getting it on.” She shuttered scrunching up her face, “Thankfully this one isn't like that. It's just insanely romantic. A little too mushy at times for me but I think that's why she likes it so much.”

“But she said—she said—.”

“—that she hates it?” She turned her attention to the TV raising the remote, “were those her exact words?”

Were they?

“Wow, there really are a lot of these on lately. Sooyoung wasn't lying,” Sunny's voice faded as Taeyeon's mind drew her into a quiet place where she could sort her thoughts.

*

“I'll take you back.”

“What? Why? It took us hours to get here!” Tiffany flailed her arms at the dashboard.

“It's okay, I'll just turn around.” Taeyeon grinned, calmly pulling onto the shoulder of the long seaside road.

“I’m fine Taeyeon I promise!”

He sighed shaking his head, “why are you lying to yourself?”

*

Taeyeon couldn't answer any of her questions. In fact after receiving Sunny's word her brain shut down leaving her with no choice but to try and rest. It wasn't as hard as she thought it would be, as soon as stretched out on the couch she fell into a shallow but calm sleep.

*

Tiffany stepped into the dark apartment well after sundown; the events of the day leaving a bitter air around her. It seemed as if no one wanted to be around her and it was beginning to weighing on her heart. Though as her eyes focused on the mass lying on the couch she felt that weight disappear.

Without removing her coat she crossed to the sleeping form. A smile crept onto her face as she studied the small frame. Taeyeon had fallen asleep yet again with her laptop on top of her.

Tiffany slowly took the machine and set it on the coffee table, closing it so that the nearly silent hum didn't disturb the resting girl. She then eased into her room, reappearing moments later with her favorite pink throw. She grabbed at the end pillows on the couch probing them in search of the softest one. When she found one she approved of Tiffany knelt beside Taeyeon and carefully lifted her head. She slipped the pillow under Taeyeon's hair and stood to drape the cover over Taeyeon.

She turned on the small lamp in the corner of the room so that Taeyeon wouldn't be disoriented if she got up in the middle of the night. She knew how much she hated that. When she was satisfied with her work, Tiffany went back to the slumbering girls' side and inspected her once more.

Tiffany bent down over Taeyeon and gently pulled back the edge of the throw that was covering Taeyeon's face. She was too immersed to hear the sound of the bathroom door opening or notice the short haired girl standing behind her.

“What are you doing?”

“She doesn't like it when the blankets cover her face,” Tiffany chuckled rising to her feet, “She says it makes her feel like she's being smothered.”

“Tiffany... why are you doing this? It's only going to end with someone getting hurt.”

Tiffany tilted her head to the side, “What are you talking about Jes—.”

“—Come on Tiffany, I'm too tired to play games. Taeyeon, Taeyeon. I don't know why you're treating them this way. You're going to end up breaking someone's heart.”

“If Taeyeon's just my friend why would her heart get broken?”

Jessica didn't show any emotion but she knew she'd slipped up.

Tiffany moved closer to the stoic girl, “Why would she be heartbroken Sica?” Her face remained pensive; confused.

Silence

Jessica studied the girl in front of her. Her once bright inviting eyes were now pleading for Jessica’s words but the glassy eyed girl was not going to divulge any more information. “Say something,” the softness of Tiffany’s voice startled the room. “Please,” the younger girl clenched her trembling fists at her sides, “just say something...” her eyes lowered to the ground; her breath hitching, “anything....”

“Why?” Jessica replied, her voice equally as soft, “What will you do?”

Tiffany looked up, her eyes meeting Jessica’s, “I... I don’t...”

“You don’t know,” she finished with a sigh, “If you don’t know what you want then don’t ask because if you’re not sure someone’s going to get hurt.”

Tiffany glanced at the girl sleeping on the couch.

Her face turned to a frown, eyes darkening, as she steadied her hands backing away, “I know what I’m doing Jessica, don’t worry about it.”

With that she left the room.

Jessica followed moments later pained at the sight she’d left behind; a sniffling Taeyeon with her eyes closed seeping with tears.

Chapter 15

“Good run?”

Jessica set her keys on the counter, sauntering to the fridge, “Yeah. Have either of you seen Seohyun?”

Hyoyeon shrugged standing from her seat at the table to leave.

“No,” Sunny replied, watching the short haired girl pour a glass of orange juice. “She didn’t go with you?”

Jessica shook her head sighing. She noticed the girl curled up on the couch sleeping; just as she was when Jessica left earlier that morning.

She crossed to the motionless form and gave the girl a violent shake. Taeyeon grunted as she stirred, rolling onto her side. “Yah, I told you to go get in your bed. You’ll be sore if you stay out here.”

“I’m fine.” She grumbled her face buried in the plush pillow.

“Taeyeon” Jessica folded her arms over her chest, “I’m not going to tell you again.”

The stubborn girl huffed shifting under the small pink blanket. When she realized the stoic girl wasn’t going to leave she tossed the covers off her body and trudged down the hall.

Another sigh escaped the irritated girl as she shook her head taking the pink throw in her hands, “such a handful.”

Jessica folded the small blanket heading in the opposite direction. She entered the large vacant room checking for any of its three inhabitants before setting the soft cover on Tiffany's bed.

"Thanks—"

"Eek—Tiffany!" She clutched her chest spinning around to meet the sad gaze of the girl idling in the doorway. "You scared me!"

Her voice stayed quiet, "sorry."

Jessica eyed the wavy haired girl whom she'd been engaged in a heated conversation with just hours ago. The tension between them still lingered.

"Have you eaten yet?"

Tiffany shook her head, passing by the short haired girl. She crawled onto her bed, "I'm not really hungry."

"You should eat something."

The wavy haired girl closed her eyes, resting her hand on the folded pink mass, "I'm fine."

"Not you too." Jessica grumbled rolling her eyes. She took Tiffany by the arm and pulled her to her feet. "Come on."

*

Tiffany sat at the kitchen counter staring at the TV in the living room where an intense battle of wits was playing out via Tetris between Sooyoung and Sunny. The short haired girl stood leaning against the counter behind Tiffany, examining the near-motionless figure who was completely unaware of the bowl of hot cereal she'd set out for her. Jessica massaged her neck with one hand as the other searched the pocket of her track pants for her phone. She scrolled to the number she hadn't messaged in days.

[<-Unnie's should be the first to apologize. I'm sorry]

The reply was almost immediate

[>-Don't dwell! I know you were just speaking from your own painful experiences with heartbreak]

Hurt flashed across her face at the truth of the simple statement before turning into a wry smile.

[<-Where are you? These two are going to drive me insane!]

She watched as Tiffany's posture started to fail until finally she was leaning over the counter with her hands weakly supporting her head; her face nearly in her cereal.

"Unnie?"

The jumpy girl gasped at the tall figure suddenly at her side.

My hearts going to give out one of these days.

"Sorry," the tall girl smiled eyeing Tiffany, "what's wrong with her?"

Jessica shrugged, "I don't know, she won't tell me. I think she's mad."

"At you?"

"Yeah for last night. I'll tell you later."

Seohyun nodded rounding the counter to face the despondent girl.

“Unnie, are you alright?”

Tiffany slowly raised her head before brandishing a small smile. “Oh Seohyun...yeah, I'm alright why do you ask?”

“You look ill.”

“I don't feel sick.” Her eyes went back to the TV.

Jessica joined the duo at Tiffany's side, “Then how do you feel?”

“...how do I feel?” She shrugged drawing her hands into her lap, “...I feel...tired...and cold. Like I'm...” she shook her head, “I don't know—what time is it?”

“A little after noon.”

Her voice was far off, “I'm meeting Taecyeon in an hour.”

“You go out with him so much these days!” Sooyoung hopped over the couch and bounced into the kitchen for a quick snack, “what is he—your boyfriend?”

Tiffany nodded sliding off the high stool. “Yeah... I'm going to take a shower.”

Jessica stared at the cooling cereal before sharing a concerned glance with the long haired girl across from her.

“Wow they're really dating? Did you know about this Sica?”

“Yeah,” she took the bowl in her hands disposing of it's contents.

“What about you?” The tall girl turned to Seohyun.

Seohyun nodded.

“Wow,” Sooyoung chugged her drink heading back towards the couch, “Am I the last to know?”

Sunny handed the taller girl her controller, “know what?”

*

“Really?”

“They're dating?”

“Yeah she told me so.”

“I don't believe you.”

“I'm serious! Even Seohyun says so!”

“Seo?”

“It's true.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah, that's what I said.”

Taeyeon sat in her usual spot on the couch desperately trying to drown out the conversation floating around her. Ever since Jessica had coaxed her out of her room under the guise of having a good time with friends she'd been having anything but. The moment she entered the room it seemed as if all anyone wanted to talk about was the absent girl and her new conquest.

“She should be here by now.”

“I texted her,” Yoona slipped her phone back in her pocket, “she's on her way.”

“I wonder what they do together,” Sooyoung tilted her head to the ceiling, lacing her fingers behind her head.

“What do you mean?” Yoona glanced at the text book Seohyun was flipping through.
 “You know, like where does he take her to eat, where do they hang out—stuff like that.”
 “Oh,” Yoona nodded, “I see.”

She knew that they weren't intending to hurt her with their conversation but their idle chat was doing just that. In fact as she sat with her eyes closed and fists clenched tight she realized that this was the worst she'd felt since the day Tiffany told her of her new relationship. After that she expected to fall to pieces but somehow she managed not to.

Taeyeon herself was surprised by how strong she'd been the past few days. She'd shed only a handful of tears, much less than she usually did when reflecting on her situation, “There she is!” Sooyoung curled her leg under her, hunching over her bowl of popcorn. But as the wavy haired girl entered the apartment she knew all of that would change.

“Hey, sorry I'm late, you guys haven't started right?” Tiffany set her keys on the table and hung her coat in the closet.

“No,” Yuri snuck a kernel of popcorn, “we were waiting for you.”

“Thanks, just let me change and I'll be ready.” She flashed a smile before brisking down the hallway.

“She looks much better than she did this morning.”

“He must be a good boyfriend.”

“Good boyfriend?” Taeyeon mumbled, her body shaking.

“Did you say something Unnie?” Yoona turned to face the girl behind her.

Taeyeon didn't reply, afraid that if she did her voice would be too loud or too soft. She locked eyes with the younger girl on the floor shaking her head.

Jessica who was beside Taeyeon gave her leg a squeeze, “I'm sorry about this,” she whispered, “want some water?”

Taeyeon gave a slight nod.

“Okay, I'll get you some water.”

“Sica,” Sooyoung called, “could you start some more popcorn?”

“What? No, you'll ruin your appetite. What will you do when our food arrives?”

“Pfft,” Yuri snuck another kernel, “as if that could happen.”

Tiffany returned to the living room in her trademark pink shorts though they didn't catch Taeyeon's attention. She was lost, somewhere miles away. As the pink girl motioned closer the reality of it all finally started to hit Taeyeon.

This was it, Tiffany and Taeyeon were really together and everyone who mattered knew. There was no use in dreaming anymore, no use in writing about happy endings. They weren't going to come true.

It was never going to happen

There will never be an us

I'll never have her

“Hi Tae,” Tiffany smiled softly at the girl sitting in front of her but it was the last thing Taeyeon needed to see. She was hanging by a thread, dangling over a breakdown.

Taeyeon lowered her head, her eyes shut once again. She could feel them coming, burning behind her eyes. It would only be moments before they fall.

No Tae, not in front of everyone—not in front of her

“What, so now you're going to ignore me?”

She didn't attempt a reply. Her breathing was starting to catch in her throat while the trembling was only getting worse. Any moment now she was going to

“May I sit there?” The wavy girl pointed to the vacant spot at Taeyeon's side.

“Um—” Seohyun turned around, searching for the short haired girl, “Unnie, Sica Unnie is sitting there.”

Jessica looked up from the money she was handing the man at the door. “Uh yeah, Fany-ah.”

Tiffany didn't pay them any mind. She moved closer to the girl her eyes were affixed to, “Taeyeon-ah, can I?”

“There's an entire couch Fany,” Sooyoung crossed to Jessica, helping her with the bags, “just sit somewhere el—”

“I don't want to sit somewhere else I want to sit by Taeyeon!” She yelled, spinning around to face the collection of girls making their way to the table.

Ignoring their shocked expressions, she turned to the girl who was now standing in front of her. Her head still low.

“Taeyeon-ah?” Her brow furrowed. She shook her head, “you're really not going to say anything are you?”

“...”

Tiffany sighed, opening her mouth to speak again, “I—!” The faint sound of sniffing met her ears. It was then that she noticed

“Tae Tae?” She tilted her head, trying to get a better look at the weeping girl's face. Her voice fell soft as she raised her hand to lift Taeyeon's chin, “are you c—?”

—No!” Taeyeon screamed, backing away. She threw her head into her palms and fled to her room, slamming the door behind her.

Silence.

“Can you hand me that?” Hyoyeon pointed to the side dish container Sunny was holding in mid pass.

“...”

“Please?”

Sunny scoffed setting the dish on the table, “I can't believe you! At a time like this all you care about is eating?!”

“Yeah,” Sooyoung stared at the detached girl in bewilderment, “even I'm not that calloused, can't you see what's happening?”

“Of course I can see it.” Hyoyeon reached across the table and grabbed the container.

Sunny propped her hands on her hips, “...well?”

Hyoyeon dished the food out onto her plate not returning the stern gazes of the two girls waiting for her answer, “It's none of my business.”

“How can you say that?” The annoyed Sunny threw her hands into the air. Sooyoung shook her head equally upset, “You’re so—!”

“—leave her alone you two...” Jessica’s head hung low as she stole a glance of the girl still dishing food on her plate, “I’ll check on her—.”

Chapter 16

Taeyeon leaned over her desk, her wretched sobs shattering the tranquility of the room. She feverously rubbed at her eyes, trying to clear her vision so that she could see it. The silver trim of the slim rectangular black box glistened in the dim light.

“I’m so stupid.” She took the box into her feeble grasp, sitting down on her bed.

“So stupid.”

She thought back to that day when she purchased the expensive item. She remembered how happy she’d felt brisking back to the jewelry store while Tiffany waited at their restaurant; the joy that filled her as she told the saleswoman what she wanted engraved on the piece. Back then she had it all figured out.

Sometime that week, after picking up the necklace when the engraving was complete, she was going to give it to Tiffany. She wouldn’t make a grand gesture nor do anything elaborate. No; her plan was simple. One night after spending the day with the wavy haired girl she was going to invite her into her room and ask her to sleep over. After she was sure that Tiffany wasn’t awake Taeyeon was going to reach around the younger girl’s delicate neck to connect the flawless chain. Then she’d tuck the pendant in Tiffany’s shirt so that she wouldn’t notice it until she found it. All the while Taeyeon planned to be somewhere close by waiting; ready to confess.

That dream use to be her favorite. She loved it so much that she would sometimes act out the motions of lying beside Tiffany and putting the necklace on the slumbering girl; Tiffany’s role played via her pillow. Now that dream only made her cry harder. She hiccupped, trying to catch her breath as her status worsened.

“I’m such an idiot!” Her claims were shrill, drenched in embarrassment, “how can I be such a fool?!” The black box connected with the wall near her roommate’s bed with so much force that the impact caused the necklace to fly out and land in a location unknown. Taeyeon didn’t check where it fell. She was in no condition to move or care.

Her stomach ached from the involuntary lurching her body did with each wail. Her lungs burned from all of her violent heaves. Her head was pounding from the constant stream of tears staining her face. She collapsed on her side staring at the spot where the box hit the wall. Taeyeon wrapped her arms around herself trying to control her howling groans.

She felt so pathetic for crying over Tiffany. She always knew it would be this way. Even with her dream and the necklace, after Taeyeon entered the picture she knew she didn’t have a chance. She was wrong for Tiffany and he was right. She thought that she could be happy for her friend and just continue loving her from afar but today proved that was impossible.

Every time she saw Tiffany it was a constant reminder of what her heart couldn't have. She couldn't look at the girl without thinking about all the things that the new couple did together. If he might have hugged her, where he might have touched her, if they kissed.

With these thoughts haunting her she knew she wouldn't be able to go on. How would she act when the break was over? How could she sit through recordings or practices with Tiffany near if her heart was still pining for her? Yearning to be loved?

There was only one way to fix it. To stop it from ruining everyone who hadn't asked to be involved. She'd known from the moment he came into the picture. She had to give up on Tiffany.

It's for the best, she assured herself, her shaky moans growing louder. You can't let everyone suffer because you want something that's impossible for you to have.

“But I...I..”

Don't be stupid Taeyeon. You've let this fairy tale go on long enough. You have to be realistic. She doesn't love you. She doesn't feel the same. She never will. And you can't make her. You'll never make her happy like he makes her happy.

You'll never be him.

“But... she's supposed to be mine...” her tears streamed in frenzy, “why are you doing this to me? Don't you know how I feel? Don't you know how much I love you?” She clutched at her shattering heart, “... don't... don't you care?” Taeyeon sniffled trying to steady her jagged breaths, “...Ti-Tiffany... why-why... d—don't you c-care about me?” Her voice rose until it was just a high pitched whine.

There weren't any words after that. Just grunts and screams of frustration.

Even with her eyes closed the tears still escaped but she didn't care anymore. Without Tiffany

Warmth engulfed her.

Without Tiffany...

She was going to have to get used to it before she could try to move on. For now she would just cry over the loss of the girl she wished was her lover and mourn the death of her failing heart.

“Shh... it's okay...

shh...”

*

“Do you think they're alright?” Yoona sat on her bed rubbing her arms, her worries nagging her.

“I'm sure they'll work it out.” Seohyun finished with her hair and set the brush on her dresser.

“Seo?” Yoona's eyes searched the floor.

“Mm?” She eased into her bed, facing the other girl.

“I don't like it when Unnie's fight.”

“Me neither.”

Yoona rose to her feet, “can...” she inched closer towards the younger girl's bed, “can I—?”

She didn't have to ask, “Of course Unnie.”

Yoona gave a weak smile, slipping under the covers next to her friend. Seohyun reached over her and cut off the light before resting on her side.

“Goodnight Seo.” Her eyes came to a close.

“Goodnight Unnie.”

Seohyun studied the girl before her, watching the shallow rise and fall of her body.

She had to do it.

“Yoona?”

“Mm?” Yoona rolled over to face the girl behind her, her eyes ever-closed.

“I... I don't want to end up like them.”

“...Hm? Like who?”

“...Unnies...” her heartbeat was fast; faster than it usually was when she was this close to the older girl.

“What do you mean?”

The thumping was in her ears now, drowning out all sounds around her.

“Seo?”

She stopped thinking about it.

With a deep breath she let the words go, “I love you Unnie.”

Yoona grinned, her eyes still closed as sleep claimed her, “I love you too Seo.”

*

Seohyun lay awake in the twilight staring at the girl in front of her as she had been for hours. She hadn't slept at all, too drunk off of her timid confession.

She finally said it. She finally told her and Yoona felt the same. She knew she did. The way they were together. The way Yoona treated her—she had to be in love with her too.

Seohyun brushed her hand over Yoona's cheek. A motion she'd wanted to do for some time now. She cupped her hand over Yoona's face inching closer to taste the lips that had tempted her for so long she couldn't remember when it began.

Her trembling lips met the delicate flesh in a gentle caress. Instantly she was surprised by the softness. Never had she thought it would feel this way. Her body was warm with rapture while her heart was throbbing with excitement. The fluttering in her stomach was so intense she thought she was going to faint. But she wasn't going to break the kiss. This passionate engagement was too fragile to let go.

Her hand disappeared in Yoona's hair as she pulled herself closer. As if on cue Yoona's mouth parted, deepening the chaste kiss. They played at each other, lost in their heated embrace. It was as if their bodies had minds of their own.

Yoona draped her arm around Seohyun's side pulling her closer. The younger girl exhaled, complying without hesitation. She could do this forever; taste Yoona forever
Her Yoona

She let a tender moan escape her, falling deeper into her love. It was in that moan that the older girl realized what was happening. What she was doing and letting Seohyun do to her.

Yoona's eyes burst open. She pushed herself off of the younger girl, her breath in pants, “Juhyun—wh-what are you—?”

“Am I doing it wrong?” The long haired girl's brow furrowed, worried of any novice mistakes she might have made, “I'm sorry Unnie, I don't have much experience—.”

“You—you kissed me?” she backed away from the girl trembling as she rose to her feet. “Why... why would you do that?”

Seohyun sat up, not understanding what was causing the shuddering girl to go pale, “because I love you.”

Yoona's eyes grew wide. She shook her head, her mouth hanging open.

“Is it too soon for kissing?” She scooted to the edge of the bed.

Yoona didn't respond.

Seohyun stood, “then what about hugging?” She stepped towards the shorter girl her arms lifted at her sides. Yoona gasped backing away until she fell on her bed.

The smile slowly began to fade from Seohyun's face, fear taking its place, “Oh no..” it finally hit her as she stood in front of the terrified girl, “you... you didn't...” her knees went weak as she dropped to the floor, “you didn't mean it that way...”

Yoona's was still without words. She traced her lips where Seohyun lingered.

“What have I done?” Her voice was less than a whisper.

Silence

“It's...it's okay.” Yoona's voice was equally as quiet, “you're just...” she slowly came to her feet, “just-just sleep it off, yesterday was weird,” she stuck to the wall aimed for the door, “just s-sleep it off... you'll feel better—.”

Seohyun watched the girl making obvious distance between them, her face a mixture of fear and anxiety, “where are you going? You don't have to go.”

Yoona crossed her arms over her chest her eyes bouncing around the room, “I just remembered I have to...I um...I...”

Seohyun shook her head pulling her legs to her chest. She understood, she didn't need a lie.

The sound of the door opening and closing ended their painful conversation. Seohyun clambered onto her bed. With misty eyes she brought the covers over her head and turned to her pillow muffling her sobs before they could breach the air.

Chapter 17

"When do you leave?" Jessica calmly sipped her morning tea from her seat at the end of the table.

"Tonight." Yoona replied.

"But you already visited your parents!" Cried Sooyoung, stealing strawberries from Sunny's plate.

"I just," she fidgeted with her hands, "I really miss them."

"We understand," Yuri smiled nudging the homesick girl at her side, "I think we were just all hoping to spend these last days off together."

"Yeah," she nodded.

"Why won't you take me with you?!" Sooyoung tugged at the younger girls arm, earning a laugh from her victim

"It's only for a couple of days!" Yoona pushed the playful girl off of her.

"I don't care," she slumped back onto her chair, "I'd do anything to get away."

Jessica grinned, mumbling, "maybe you could afford to if you hadn't spent everything on videogames and beer."

"How was that stuff by the way?" Yuri chuckled cleaning her area.

The tall girl shuddered, "Bleck!"

Jessica laughed standing, "has anyone seen Maknae?" She refilled her mug, "she should be up by now."

"She left earlier this morning." Sunny held her cup towards Jessica.

"Really?" She refilled the shorter girls cup, "for where?"

"She didn't say. She had a lot of books though so maybe the library."

"Ah," she took her seat.

"Has anyone checked on Taeyeon Unnie?" Yoona piped, changing the subject.

"No need."

The five girls turned to the girl standing behind them in the hallway.

Silence

"What?" She grinned her eyebrow raised.

"How are you feeling?" Jessica took another sip of the warm liquid.

Taeyeon shrugged sitting at the counter, "Alright I guess."

"Hungry?"

Another shrug, "I guess."

"I'll make you something."

She shook her head sliding off of the seat, "You're eating, I'll do it."

"You sure?"

The shorter girl gave a wry smile, "yeah."

Sunny shifted in her seat, "Taengoo, Yoona's leaving to visit her parents tonight."

“Oh really? But it's almost our last week.”

“Yeah,” Yoona's eyes fell to her plate, “I just need to get away, “ she gave a false chuckle, “again.”

“Good morning.”

“Morning Fany,” Yuri smiled heading for the washroom.

Tiffany laced her fingers behind her back crossing to the kitchen, “morning Tae Tae.”

Taeyeon showed no reaction. Her focus on her cooking.

“What are you making?” She peeked over the shorter girls shoulder, “I'm starved.” still no reply.

“Taeyeon-ah,” Jessica huffed staring at the girl who was causing the playful atmosphere to flee.

“Yeah?”

“Tiffany's talking to you.”

“Mm,” she nodded, diligently flipping her eggs.

“It's alright.” Tiffany forced a smile, her mood diminished, “I'll have cereal.” She reached into the high cabinet, “what are you guys talking about?”

“Yoona,” Sooyoung replied.

She poured her cereal and sat down at the table pulling out the empty chair beside her “oh yeah? What about her?”

“Leaving to visit her parents.”

“Wow again? Well at least they're close so it won't be so expensive.”

“Yeah,” Yoona nodded, “so what are you guys doing today?”

“Video games.” Sooyoung pumped her fist in the air, “I plan to spend every moment of the rest of my vacation in front of the TV.” She massaged her chin. “Maybe I should stock up on junk food.”

Sunny scoffed, “how do you plan to get that pass Maknae?”

“Yeah,” Tiffany grinned, “You know she'll just throw it away.”

“Why don't you let me worry about that?”

“Yuri and I are going grocery shopping today you're welcome to come—.”

“Here!” Tiffany smiled pointing at the vacant seat beside her.

Jessica glanced over her shoulder at Taeyeon who had just finished plating her food. She continued to the couch and sat down.

“What are you doing today Fany Unnie?”

“Mm?” Tiffany kept her eyes on the girl who hadn't bothered to look at her once since she walked in, “oh... nothing much, I was thinking of staying in.”

“No date?”

She watched as Taeyeon turned on the TV, “Hm? Oh, yeah...”

“Must be exciting.”

“What? Oh, yeah...”

*

“You shouldn't do this you know.” Jessica stood in front of the girl on the couch. “What?” Her eyes remained on the TV. “Ignore her.” She grabbed the remote and turned off the babbling screen, “It's not going to fix anything.”

Taeyeon glanced around the room, “where is everyone?”

Jessica shrugged, “you've been sitting here for a while—don't change the subject.”

The sullen girl sighed, her voice low, “I have to Sica. If I see her... If I talk to her...” she leaned back onto the couch, “I'll lose it... then everyone will know.”

Jessica sat down beside the girl wrapping her arms around the girl's shoulders. Taeyeon shook her head, “I don't think I could handle that—everyone knowing.”

“You can still tell her you know. You can be the Taeyeon from your story.”

The small girl scoffed, “no I can't Sica, it's over. Everything is.” She unclenched her fists, “I don't want to talk about this anymore.”

Jessica sighed loosening her hold, “okay.”

Taeyeon folded her hands in her lap, “thanks for being there last night.”

“What do you mean?”

She watched them fiddle with each other; it wasn't the same, “for... holding me and stuff...”

“Huh? I—”

“Sica, I gave Yuri a list. She said she'll get everything for me.”

Sooyoung bent down in front of her systems putting in one of her favorite games, “hey Taeyeon watch me play this game.”

“What is it?”

Jessica met Yuri at the door, “see you two later.”

“Bye.”

“Bye,” Sooyoung tossed the case at Taeyeon, “Silent Hill.”

*

Tiffany sat on the couch staring blankly at the TV across from her. Sooyoung glanced over her shoulder at the girl before switching games for the third time in a row. She placed the controller in Tiffany's lap and took a seat on the floor in front of the distant girl. Bright colors and sweet sounds filled the room.

Tiffany sighed laying down, “Not today Sooyoung. I don't feel much like playing.” She set the controller on the floor beside the tall girl.

“But it's your favorite game.” She handed it back.

Tiffany closed her eyes turning away from the hurt kid, “only when Taeyeon plays it.” She sighed again quickly turning back to Sooyoung, “she'll be back soon?”

Sooyoung shrugged, “I guess, I mean I only asked her to get some soda. Shouldn't take forever.”

On cue the front door opened. Tiffany sprang to her feet, “Hey Taeyeon!” She met the girl in the kitchen.

Taeyeon set two plastic bags on the brown table, “It's on the table Sooyoung.” She headed for

her room not bothering to take off her coat. Tiffany's smile started to fade as she watched the shorter girl slip by her with not even so much as a glance. She spun around, gingerly following, "Tae Tae?"

Taeyeon paused. She loved that nickname. She loved it even more when Tiffany
No

Taeyeon shook her head she wasn't going to think about her.

No Tiffany

She stepped in her room, calmly shutting the door behind her.

*

Tiffany sat across from Taeyeon, the cool evening breeze blowing through her. She glanced around the VIP area of the elegant restaurant before setting her eyes on the tense figure again, "I'm sorry."

He scoffed, arms folded over his chest, "you said that already."

"It's true. It won't happen again."

"Oh really?"

"Yes!" She cried.

"You can't be sure."

Tiffany huffed clasping her hands to keep them from flailing, "If I say I'm sure then I'm sure Taeyeon."

He pushed his peas around his plate, his face softening, "why are we doing this to ourselves?"

"What?" She tilted her head to the side.

"Putting ourselves through this? Ever since we started dating all we've done is argue."

"Come on," her eyes fell to her own untouched meal, "it's not that bad."

"It is Tiffany." He sighed setting his fork down, "we have to stop."

"You're breaking up with me?"

"Yes," he nodded, "I can't play this game with you. It's ridiculous."

"It's not a game... I really want to date you."

"Oh yeah?" He re-crossed his arms, "why?"

"Because..." her voice trailed.

Taeyeon scoffed shaking his head, "you can't even think of a reason."

"..."

"You know, at first I thought 'oh, she's just doing this for fun-to mess with me- she can't possibly be this blind' but then I realized you were. Heh... you're so in love you can't even see you're in love." He searched her face, "but that's not even the sad part. Even as I'm saying this you still don't know what I'm talking about. I mean do you even know how many times you slipped today?" He flagged a waiter.

“What's that got to do with anything?” She huffed again, her cheeks puffing, “and it was an accident I get confused sometimes! I said I was sorry.”

He paid the man and rose to his feet, “you have to listen to your heart Fany-ah.”

“...”

“Is this really what it says you need to do?”

“...”

“Silent treatment?”

She kept her head turned away and her expression hard. Determined to not let her emotions show.

“Come on, I'll take you home.”

*

“Are those Sooyoung's?”

“Yeah, she didn't like the flavor so she said I could have them.” Sunny extended the bag of chips towards Jessica, “you want some?”

Jessica shook her head, repositioning herself on her bed, “I just brushed.”

“Mm,” Sunny nodded her attention back on her computer, “she bought six bags.”

“That list was ridiculous.”

“I'm surprised Seohyun hasn't tossed it all yet.”

“I haven't seen her all day.”

“She came in but then left out again.” The small girl shrugged, “it's probably just school stuff.”

“Mm.”

“Speaking of Maknae what was with Yoong this morning?”

“Huh?” Jessica passively looked up from her book.

“Anytime someone mentioned Seohyun she'd get weird. Do you think they had a fight?”

“Maknaes? Fight?” Jessica shook her head, “never.”

“Hm..” Sunny gave a pensive stare before nodding in agreement, “yeah, you're right.”

A soft knock seeped through the door, “Sunny?”

“Come in.”

Tiffany shuffled into the bedroom her gaze low, “hey.”

“What's up Fany-ah?”

Her soft sniffle went unnoticed by the two girls, “nothing really.” She lifted her head, “do you mind if I use your—oh you're on it.”

“What?” Sunny glanced at her lap, “oh you want to use my computer? Sure, here.”

Tiffany smiled weakly, “thanks.” She passed Jessica whose eyes were glued to the thick manuscript in her hands.

Sunny held the machine out in front of her, “are you ok?”

“Hm? Yeah,” she forced a better smile, “just one of those days you know.” She headed back toward the door, “I really just need a good read right now.”

Sunny sat up her face full of concern, “But Fany-ah it's gone.”

“What?”

“Waiting. It doesn't exist anymore.”

“Wh—what do you mean?” Her voice grew loud.

“It's been pulled from the site. I've been checking it since I got home.”

“But why?”

Sunny shrugged, “why are you yelling?”

“I'm not yelling!”

“Yah! People are sleeping!” Jessica glanced up from her book, “Fany?”

Tiffany stood trembling in the middle of the room, pulling the computer to her chest.

The two girls shared a glance before both easing out of their beds to meet her.

The sniffling girl handed the computer back to her friend unable to meet her gaze.

“Tiffany its ok,” the shorter girl smiled, “it's just a story.”

Tiffany mumbled word Sunny couldn't understand.

“Huh?”

“Tiffany?” Jessica rested her hand on the upset girls shoulder. The distraught girl backed away shaking her head. She wrapped her arms around her waist and walked out the door.

“Should we—?”

“—no,” Jessica shook her head, returning to her book, “it's better if we let her sleep.”

*

“Yah,” the groggy girl in active wear nudged the sleeping form, “yah, Maknae what are you doing out here?”

“Hm?” Seohyun's eyes fluttered open. She took off her headphones, “oh, I'm just studying.” She yawned extending her arms above her head.

“Looks more like sleeping.” The short haired girl grinned, “Why out here and not in your bed?” The younger girl set the textbook she was holding on the coffee table, “I didn't want to disturb Yoona when I came in last night..”

Jessica chuckled stretching, “haven't you been in your room? Yoona's not here. She left for her parents last night. Which reminds me, where were you yesterday? I didn't see you at all.”

“I went to some stores,” she rose to her feet. “Yoona left?”

“Yeah, she'll be back in a few days though.” She zipped the jacket of her track suit, “Are you skipping our jog?”

“Hm? Oh! I forgot, sorry Unnie I'll get changed.”

“Okay. Don't worry about a shower,” she called at the girl heading to her room, “you'll just sweat through it anyway.”

Jessica continued with her warm up routine, thoroughly readying her body for their trek. She glanced at the clock overhanging the TV.

Fifteen minutes

“She probably went back to sleep.” She shook her head turning toward the hall.

“Maknae?” She pushed the door open letting the early morning light bleed into the dark room, “It's alright if you're too tired to—.”

Startled, Seohyun looked to the girl from her position on the floor, fighting to breathe through her broken sobs. She grasped at her hair, “I’m sorry Unnie! I—I—I—!”

Jessica ran to the girl kneeling on the floor and wrapped her arms around her, “shh...” she crooned stroking her hair, “you don’t have to apologize to me.”

Chapter 18

Jessica sat the counter, slowly stirring the steaming cup of tea in front of her. She sighed, propping her head up by her hand as her mind reviewed the events from the past few days. After calming Seohyun down the heartbroken girl confessed everything to Jessica; how she told Yoona that she loved her, how she kissed her, how she left.

“I don’t know how it started. I just know that when I realized what was happening I was already too deep to stop. I had to tell her. But she...”

“Shh... you don’t have to tell me.” She brushed her thumb under the weeping girls eye, wiping her tears, “I’m sorry I didn’t notice it Seohyun.”

“It’s okay. You were trying to help Taeyeon Unnie.”

“That doesn’t matter. You could have told me. I’ll always have time for you Seohyun. I want to help anyway I can. If there’s any way that I can fix your problems I’ll do it.”

Seohyun remained silent.

“I’m always here for you.”

“But Unnie...?”

“Hm?”

Seohyun shook her head, “...nothing.”

Jessica gazed at the clock above the TV, an action she’d been doing for hours now. Today was the day Yoona was coming home and she needed to talk to her.

I can’t have everyone in this house heartbroken. She sighed again sipping the cooling liquid as her mind returned to Seohyun.

“Love is wonderful no matter who it’s between don’t you think so?”

Jessica chuckled amused by her realization, “she wasn’t talking about them.”

Speaking of them

“Where are you off to?”

Taeyeon crossed from the living room to the front door, slipping her coat over her arms, “out,” her eyes scanned the kitchen, “for some food.”

“Ah,” the short haired girl folded her arms over her chest catching on to her not so discreet friends actions, “she’s not here.”

Taeyeon cleared her throat, “who?” She mumbled.

Jessica scoffed, shaking her head, “she went out with Soo and Yuri.”

“Heh,” she grabbed her keys, a hint of relief flashing on her face, “Sooyoung got off the couch?”

“Yeah she said something about point cards or whatever. I don’t know, she was talking pretty

fast.” She countered Taeyeon's obvious attempt to change subjects, “so you deleted your story?”
Silence

Taeyeon hesitated before giving a slight nod.

“Why?”

Another pause, “...I couldn't give myself a happy ending. Not when the reality is so...” she shook her head grabbing her keys, “anyway, it was either that or kill myself off.” She opened the door with a wry smile, “I'm not that crazy.”

*

Seohyun eased into the small bed, her small frog plushie held close to her chest, “Thank you Unnie for letting me do this.”

Jessica scooted over giving the tall girl as much room as possible, “You thanked me last night.” She waited for Seohyun to settle before turning off the light, “What will you do when she gets back? Do you want me to switch rooms with you?”

The younger girl shook her head, “I'll be fine by then. If she wants me to switch then I will, but otherwise I'm okay how we are.” She pulled the comforter over her head, “I just can't be in there right now. It reminds me too much of her leaving.”

Jessica rested her hand on Seohyun's head, “okay. Whatever you want.” She closed her eyes, “goodnight Seohyun.”

“Goodnight Unnie.”

In moments a stream of light snores would fill the room. Followed by muffled cries and concerned sighs from the girl beside her.

*

“Unnie,” giggled a familiar voice, “why are you sleeping out here?”

Jessica's eyes fluttered open. Yoona was standing near the fridge with a bag in her hand and one slung over her shoulder. “Hm? Oh, I was waiting for you.”

“Oh yeah?” Yoona tilted her head, “what for?”

She eased off the stool and put her mug in the sink, “I want to talk to you.”

“About what?”

She ran the dish water, “why don't you put your bags away first.”

“Um...okay...”

“What's wrong?” Jessica glanced up from her soapy mess.

“Hm?” Yoona watched as the older girl rinsed the cup, “nothing.”

Jessica put the dish away realizing what was causing the younger girls hesitation, “she's not in there if that's what you're worried about.”

Yoona gasped chuckling nervously as she brisked down the hall, “why would I be worried about that?”

Jessica followed her into the bedroom, “It's okay Yoona. Actually, this is what I wanted to talk to you about.” She went to the girl who stood frozen near her bed, “Seohyun told me what happened.”

Yoona's fingers traced her lips, "she did?" She lowered herself onto her bed, "Wh—why would she...?"

Jessica shook her head, "she needed someone to talk to. Have you thought about how you're going to deal with it?"

"..."

"I understand taking a little bit of time to think about it but you can't avoid her forever."

"..." she remained frozen.

"You have to tell her what you feel whether you can return her love or not."

"But isn't it better if I don't say anything?" Pleaded her innocent eyes.

"It's easier but it's not better. Trust me." She sat down on Seohyun's bed, facing Yoona, "You can't let the confusion linger like that. I know she's trying to be strong but it's tearing her up inside." She ran her hand lazily over the soft sheets, "she's been sleeping with me because it's too hard for her to be in here alone knowing that you left because of her."

"But she's alright?"

Jessica waited before deciding to neglect mentioning how Seohyun cried herself to sleep every night.

There's no reason to make her feel worse

"She'd be better if you talked to her."

Yoona's eyes searched the floor, "I don't... I don't think I can be around her. Is that bad? I'm just so... I don't know what to do." She shook her head, "am I a bad person?"

Jessica sighed, "No, you're not a bad person Yoona. Just think about what you want and tell her. No matter what your answer is you have to tell her."

The tall girl sighed her hands falling to her sides, "we're so young... how can she possibly know what she wants?"

Jessica crossed her arms over her chest, instantly she was reminded of a similar conversation from long ago. This time she was defending, "Just because she's young doesn't mean she doesn't know."

Yoona's voice softened her head ever-shaking, "I can't tell her. It will only hurt her more."

"That's not a good decision."

"Oh, so now I give bad advice?"

Jessica gasped at the sarcastic voice behind her. She rose to her feet as Hyoyeon ambled in and set Yoona's large suitcase on the floor.

"Are you eavesdropping?" She glared.

"Pfft," Hyoyeon scoffed, "maybe you should close the door next time you want to have a conversation on how to break hearts."

"What?" Jessica was flabbergasted, "I just want them to be happy."

"Happy? How? By confessing everything? And what then?" She folded her arms over her chest, pony tail flowing behind her, "It won't last. Someone will always get hurt."

"Hyo I—." She stepped to the shorter girl but Hyoyeon backed away.

"—Let me tell you a story Yoona," she began, her eyes boring into Jessica's, "it's about two little

girls.”

She didn't wait for Yoona's response before continuing. The younger girl sat still on her bed confused by the older girl's exchange.

“Once upon a time there was a little girl who loved to dance. Everyday she'd get on the bus by herself and go to practice. She loved practice because she could be free and have fun. The instructors loved her and praised her but the students weren't so nice. She didn't have any friends...” her eyes briefly fell to the floor before returning to the short haired girl, “that was, until she met a princess.

The princess was amazing. She moved like a real ballerina and had a voice better than all the angels combined. The little girl was scared at first but over time she and the princess became really close friends. They would spend every moment with each other, going to movies, playing in the park...” she smiled at the memory, “The little girl was more than happy. She finally had someone to talk to, someone to ride to practice with—someone to take the loneliness away. But even though she was happier than she'd ever been it wasn't enough. She wanted more. She'd felt it the moment she saw the princess and spending time with her just made her believe it more. She'd fallen in love.

She knew what her feelings meant and she was sure the princess felt the same. So one night while waiting for the bus the little girl told her everything. She confessed how she felt and sealed everything with a kiss... but the princess... she didn't feel the same...” her eyes narrowed, “she told the little girl that she was confused. That she was too young to know what she really wanted. She told her that she never should have confessed...” her voice went soft, “when the bus came and I got on, she didn't get on with me...” before changing back to normal, “the girl and the princess were never really together after that.”

Silence

Hyoyeon ran her eyes over Jessica one last time before letting out a burdened sigh, “Love...” she walked to the door, her hand resting on its frame, “... the happiness... it doesn't last. One day she'll abandon you.” Her footsteps faded down the hall.

Silence

“Sica Unnie?”

She broke from her trance facing the girl on the bed, “hm?”

Yoona's brow furrowed, “Are you alright?”

“I'm fine,” she gave a genuine smile, “why do you ask?”

“...You're crying.”

“What?”

Her fingertips lightly grazed her cheeks. She stared at the moisture on her hands baffled by their silent arrival. “It's movie night tonight...” she turned for the door her gaze as far off as her mind, “think about what I said...” Jessica walked off down the hall without a destination.

“We’re back!” Sooyoung called to the pensive girl sitting at the counter. She watched as Sooyoung plopped down on the couch and picked up her controller, continuing her paused game. Tiffany entered and headed for her room while Sunny and Yuri met Jessica in the kitchen.

“I didn’t know you were with them.” Jessica sipped her tea smiling at the shorter girl.

“Yeah, we were in the same area.” Sunny grabbed a cup of yogurt and sat beside Jessica.

“How was she today?”

Sunny shrugged shaking her head, “same as yesterday and the day before.” She sighed dipping her spoon, “she hasn’t said a word.”

“I’m worried about her,” Yuri’s brow furrowed, “we go back next week... is she going to be alright?”

“She wasn’t locked in her room today,” Jessica grinned trying to ease the worried girls mind, “that’s got to be a step in the right direction, right?”

“Yeah I guess.” The dark skinned girl glanced at the clock above the TV, “is Taeyeon Unnie here?”

“She left earlier.”

“Did you tell her about movie night?” Asked Sunny vigorously stirring her snack.

“No, I forgot. I’ll message her though.”

“Kay, Yuri will you help me with lunch?”

The taller girl nodded following Sunny to the stove.

*

[>Hey, movie night tonight]

[<-when?]

[>in a few, Sunny’s making lunch now so about an hour or so]

[<-K]

...

[>how are you?]

[<-im fine. Ill see you then]

...

[K 😊]

Taeyeon sighed slipping her phone back in her pocket, her head returning to its resting place in the palm of her hand.

“Would you like me to wait for Tiffany-ssi or would you like to order for her?”

“Hm?” She glanced up at the familiar man standing beside her table, “oh no, it’s just me today.”

“Oh,” a faint look of surprise flashed on his face before he regained his composure, “would you like the usual or something new?”

She thought briefly before deciding.

*

“If she’s not back in twenty we’re starting without her.” Sooyoung held the remote firmly in her hand, glancing at the clock.

“Do you think she forgot?” Yuri asked turning to Jessica who was beside her on the couch.

“Unnie wouldn't forget.” Seohyun replied, her eyes scanning the papers in front of her.

“Maybe something happened to her.” Mumbled the fretful girl.

“Unnie!” The young girl cried, “don't say that!”

“It's okay Seo,” Yoona instinctively reached out for Seohyun's shoulder from her seat on the couch behind her, “Taeyeon Unnie will be here any moment now.” She caught herself moments before her hand landed on its usual resting place and went to the kitchen where Sunny was washing dishes.

“What time did you tell her Sica?” Sunny called across the room.

“I told her an hour.”

“But that was three hours ago. It's almost dark now!”

Jessica ignored the rants from the girl sitting on the other side of Yuri and turned her attention to Tiffany who was lying down at the far end of the couch, her face buried in a pillow. “How are you Fany-ah?”

“...”

“Did you eat today?”

“...”

“Fany?”

“I think she's asleep,” Hyoyeon mumbled sitting beside Seohyun on the floor.

The short haired girl gave a curt nod, turning to the TV.

“Five more minutes.” Sooyoung folded her arms over her chest, “I'll wait for five more minutes.”

*

“You don't mind?”

“Not at all Fany-ah,” Taeyeon eased into her bed; eyes focused on the girl under the covers. Tiffany returned the gaze.

They lay facing each other for some time before the sound of giggles filled the room.

“What?” Taeyeon asked starting to laugh herself.

“Nothing,” Tiffany rested her head on Taeyeon's chest pulling the shorter girls arm around her shoulders, “I'm just really happy.” She played with the smaller girl's hand.

Not more than me, Taeyeon sighed, her stomach fluttering.

“I can hear your heart.”

“Oh?” Her face went red.

Tiffany giggled again, “It's beating faster.”

Try to be less obvious idiot

“Tae Tae?”

“Hm?”

“Can... can I... can I talk to you?”

She gave a weak chuckle, “Of course, I'm right here. What is it?”

Silence

“Fany?”

“...”

“*Tiffany?*”

“*Never mind, it's nothing.*” She let go of Taeyeon's hand and slipped her arm around the smaller girl's waist. “*Goodnight Tae Tae.*”

Taeyeon settled into her hold, “*Goodnight Fany-ah.*”

“Excuse me.”

It was so real she couldn't remember if it was a memory or a dream

“Excuse me.”

But that was the case with most of her time spent with Tiffany.

“Excuse me, Taeyeon-ssi,” a slight nudge came from her side. Taeyeon lifted her head from the table. Surveying her surroundings.

“We're closing now. Would you like me to wrap this up for you?” She glanced at the table, her mind still in a daze. In front of her was a plate of pasta and across from her a bowl of soup and a cup of tea.”

She liked that better than the steak

“Or I could have our cook fix you a new plate.” Continued the waiter.

“No,” she shook her head glancing at her phone. It was well past two, “I'm fine thank you.” She bowed slipping out of the booth, “I'm sorry for my display.”

*

“...Unnie.”

“...”

“Unnie wake *up!*”

“Hm...?”

Seohyun violently shook the hibernating girl hidden under the mass of blankets, “please Sica Unnie!”

“Huh—wha-what is it? What's wrong?”

“Tiffany Unnie, she's standing in the kitchen. She won't talk-she won't move—I don't think she's even blinked it's just like—! It's just like the movie—!”

“Ssh, calm down,” she rolled out of bed, “go to sleep- no more scary movies for you.”

The shaken girl nodded crawling into the bed as Jessica exited the room leaving the door cracked behind her.

She stumbled down the hall running her hand against the wall for guidance. As Seohyun said Tiffany was standing at the counter in the dark with her back to Jessica, moving her hand up and down to cut the fruits in front of her.

“What are you doing, it's three in the morning!” Jessica crossed her arms, a harsh scowl on her face.

She didn't stir.

“You nearly scared Seohyun to death!”

She didn't move, just continued her precise motions.

“Tiffany?” Jessica took tentative steps towards the static figure.

“Hey...” her voice softened, “I didn't mean to yell.”

She didn't notice the silent sobs until she was standing beside the slightly taller girl. Jessica put her hand on Tiffany's. With ease she took the knife from her weak grasp.

Tiffany kept her eyes on the plate of fruit her voice painfully soft, “She won't talk to me.” She pushed the plate away, leaning over the counter top, “I...” her hand clutched at her chest, “It hurts so bad Jessica. I don't think I can do this... I... my heart...” Jessica rested her hand on Tiffany's cheek, wiping the storm of tears, “just be honest with yourself.”

“You always say that but what does it mean?” Her sad eyes met Jessica's, “what does it mean, Sica?”

“It means ask yourself what you want.”

“What I want...? What I want is for her to look at me again... to smile at me, to let me sit beside her and rest my head on her shoulder...”

Sometimes she'll let me come in her room and just lay beside her. She'll pretend to be sleeping but I know she's awake.” Her eyes closed as her voice started to break, “but I'd give all that up if she'd just talk to me... if she'd say my name when she thinks I'm not listening... I want her to call me Fany-ah—to call me anything—I just want her to speak to me... I—I... I want Tae Tae...”

*

Taeyeon set her keys on the table by the door and crossed to the couch. After sleeping at the restaurant she wasn't really tired and saw no reason to wake Hyoyeon with her late night entrance.

I'll play some videogames tonight and sleep in the morning, that way—

“Do you have any idea how late it is?” Tiffany stood from her position on the couch, “you leave here and don't bother to tell anyone where you're going or when you're coming back?” Her voice was hushed and weak, “do you know how worried I was?” She continued, wrapping her arms around herself, “how scared?”

Taeyeon fought the urge to comfort the girl in front of her, knowing that if she did she wouldn't be able to keep up her tough facade. She kept her eyes low.

“Even now you won't talk to me?” Tiffany collapsed back onto the sofa, “even now...” she buried her face in her hands trying to stifle her sobs, “why are you doing this? What did I do?” “...”

“Can't you at least look at me?”

“...” Taeyeon clenched her fists at her sides.

“Please?” Her voice was desperate, “please, just look at me.”

As the sounds of Tiffany's cries grew louder Taeyeon knew she wouldn't be able to hold out any longer. She couldn't be the one to make Tiffany cry. She didn't deserve it.

It's not like she's doing this on purpose. She doesn't know how I feel.

Taeyeon sighed as she went to the weeping girls side.

“Don't cry Fany-ah,” she wrapped her arms around the sniffling girl's shoulders pulling her close, “don't cry.”

Tiffany's hands clutched at Taeyeon, shaking as they held the smaller girl in a dire embrace. Slowly her tears started to subside. This was what she needed; what they both had been longing for.

For a moment Taeyeon forgot why she was denying herself the girl who could bring her to ease. There seemed to be no reason worthy of not having this.

“I'm so sorry Taeyeon. I never meant for everything to get so far out of hand. I just thought that if I could convince everyone that I was dating him my heart would...” she shook her head, “but it only made it worse,” she whispered her eyes starting to water again, “I wish I never read that story. Maybe then none of this would have happened—maybe then you'd still like me...”

Tiffany

She couldn't torture her anymore. Hurting Tiffany was like hurting herself, “Fany—.”

“Taeyeon,” the tall girl pulled away; her voice frantic, “I-I have to tell you something... will you listen?”

Taeyeon nodded as the fidgeting girl wrapped her arms around herself.

“I... I'm...”

I'm in love with you.”

Chapter 20

Tiffany's gaze fell on the TV across from them. “I started noticing it a couple of months ago when I started reading that story.” She wiped her tears, her voice unwavering. She was sure of her words, “At first it scared me. I'd never thought someone could describe what I was feeling in such detail and yet here it was, my heart on the internet for all the world to see.

The more I read the more I loved it. Everything I wanted to say, everything I wanted to do it was there. I showed it to Sunny, but she didn't feel it the way I did. That's when I knew it was meant for me.

I started waiting for each chapter; wanting to know what new adventure or sweet moment we were going to have. I don't know when but at some point I lost myself. I'd find myself hugging you longer or sitting closer...” she gave a brief smile, “I'd find any reason to be around you... I ... I started to believe it was real. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I realized what I was doing. That's when I started this mess.”

*

“Mm Tae Tae...” Tiffany nuzzled further into the girl she was lying on top of. Her hold tightened as Taeyeon's did the same.

We should spend every day like this Tae Tae. She drew invisible circles on the smaller girl's shoulder. In this moment everything was perfect. Everything was

"I think it's broken."

"Definitely."

"It's not broken—don't say that! I love this thing."

Tiffany groaned, reluctantly easing herself out of the sleeping girls hold. She checked the clock before scanning the room for the noisy gang. Sooyoung, Yuri and Sunny were gathered in the kitchen circled around a small white TV on the counter.

"You could have just bought one, you didn't have to bring it from your house." Sunny sat at the counter glancing up from her DS to watch Sooyoung tinker with the machine.

"It wouldn't be the same. My dad got me this." The TV crackled before settling, "How is it?" She asked Yuri who was in front of the TV.

"Good," the dark skinned girl nodded.

Sooyoung clapped her hands, "Woo! See? I told you it wasn't broken."

"Hey, would you guys mind keeping it down," Tiffany glanced over her shoulder at the sleeping girl, a grin forming on her face, "Tae Tae's sleeping." She went to the fridge.

"Fany-ah, look at what I got! Sooyoung smiled, pointing to the white box, "now we can watch TV while we eat!"

"It's nice." She nodded pulling out a loaf of bread.

Sooyoung sat down on the other side of the counter facing Sunny. "What are you doing?" She took the remote in her hand.

"Hm? Oh, making sandwiches for Taeyeon and me."

"Make me one too!" She flipped through the channels.

"You just ate in the car," Yuri sighed, "which reminds me, where were you earlier?" She looked to Fany, "Sica wanted you to go to the market with her."

"Taeyeon and I went out."

"Did you leave your phone? We tried calling."

"No," she shook her head, "sometimes I like to turn it off when I'm with— I mean, when I go out." Yuri didn't seem to catch her slip, "oh, well we all went instead."

"Where is Sica now?"

"We took two vans. She's on her way."

"Could you settle on a channel please? I'm going to get a headache." Grumbled Sunny.

"You're not even watching it!" She set the remote on the counter. "Besides they're all soaps anyway." Sooyoung sighed resting her head in her palm as she watched an emotional wedding play out on TV, "I can't wait until someone comes and swoops me away."

"Don't think about it so much, maybe then it will happen."

"Sometimes it's all I can think about." She slumped in her chair.

"Really? I never think about it." Yuri poured herself a glass of water.

"Same," Sunny added.

"What about you Fany?" Sooyoung's eyes glazed as she thought about the man that would one day whisk her away, "Do you ever think about what your boyfriend will be like?" You could practically see the hearts in her eyes.

“Why would I need a boyfriend when I have Tae—,” her eyes went wide as she dropped the knife she'd been using to perfectly sculpt Taeyeon's sandwich. She'd been focusing so hard on her food that she hadn't thought about her reply. The sound of the house phone ringing brought her back from the trance she was falling into, “cyeon.”

“Who?” Sunny asked, hopping off the stool to answer the phone.

“Taecyeon—I said Taecyeon.”

“What? Since when?” The taller girl tore her eyes away from the screen.

The girl in question shrugged her eyes searching the floor, “we hang out.”

“Yeah but—.”

“Seo! Are you ready?!—oh, Unnie's Sica wants you to help her with the groceries.”

Yoona bounced into the kitchen, setting two bags near the TV. “The pink monsters awake!” She threw her hands in the air, “This morning I saw her sleeping on top of Taeyeon. She looked like she was tackling her!” She giggled, “Have you guys seen Seohyun?”

“Here I am.” Seohyun appeared from the hallway.

“Good, are you ready to go?”

Seohyun nodded heading for the door.

“Where's your coat?”

“Do I need one?” Seohyun followed the shorter girl.

Yoona went to the closet, “It's windy out. Here,” she helped Seohyun into her coat, taking the younger girl's hand into her own when she was done, “there, now you're ready.”

“Where are you two going?” Sooyoung called.

Yoona shrugged, “I leave for my parent's tomorrow so were going to walk around,” she opened the door, “seriously, someone should help Sica Unnie.”

“I'll go!” Tiffany piped her head swirling. She grabbed her jacket and joined the duo heading for the door.

*

“I couldn't think of a way to fix it; Yoona's comments—my slipping up. I knew if I continued to be so close to you they were going to figure it out; you might have figured it out. I panicked. It was either stop hanging around you or tell everything. I couldn't do either one,” she dropped her head into her hands muffling her words, “I thought that if I dated Taecyeon then I could be as close to you as I wanted and no one would suspect anything, but then you started avoiding me and...and...”

Tiffany lifted her head revealing the streams of tears pouring from her pleading eyes, “I—I know you don't feel the same. I know you don't love me but..” she sniffled her breach catching, “but *please* don't abandon me! Don't hate me, my heart can't take it,” her voice wavered between desperate and delicate, “Before that night, I didn't think I could take just being your friend but now I know I can. I promise!” Her head fell back into her hands, “I'd rather be your friend than not have you at all.”

“Wh...” Taeyeon's brain rebooted after having crashed from Tiffany's confession, “why do you keep saying that?”

“Huh?” She gingerly raised her head, afraid of Taeyeon's word.

“Tiffany,” she reached for the sobbing girl's hand, “I love you.”

Her brow furrowed, “What?”

“I've always loved you.” The word flowed easily out of her mouth.

“But...” she shook her head, “but you said—you said you didn't feel that way.”

“When—?”

Tiffany turned her head to face me causing my eyes to race back to hers, “you don't think about me like that right?”

“Wh—what?”

Her face painted in an expression I couldn't read. Her brow showed worry and curiosity while her eyes looked pained and embarrassed.

“The way those stories say? You don't think of me like that do you?”

“Fany-ah—.”

Was that it?

Was that what she was talking about?

But she looked so distraught. A gasp escaped her as thoughts started to surge through her head.

What if she'd had it all wrong? What if Tiffany was worried because she was curious for Taeyeon's answer? What if she was pained because she was afraid of what Taeyeon might say; what if she had been embarrassed to ask?

“Tiffany,” her hand cupped the crying girl's cheek, wiping her tears, “I love you.”

“I.” Tiffany opened her mouth to speak but exhaled instead; falling into Taeyeon's arms. There was no reason to doubt her words.

Her body relaxed as she rested her head in the crook of the older girl's neck; eyes closing, “I love you Tae Tae.” She could say it a thousand times and never get tired of it. Taeyeon smile, her stomach fluttering at Tiffany's soft words. Her eyes came to a close as she leaned back on the arm of the couch pulling Tiffany with her.

In moments Tiffany's breathing steadied into a stream of soft pants. She had no intentions of waking her. Nothing else could compare. This was heaven
This was bliss.

Epilogue

Taeyeon lay in bed smiling at the slumbering form beside her. Ever since their confessions a few days ago they'd resumed their nightly routine of sleeping together. Everyone in the apartment noticed the change in atmosphere at the return of bubbly Tiffany and dorky Taeyeon and though some were curious as to what had caused the feud and sudden makeup no one cared to ask. Some were afraid, some already knew and some didn't care.

Taeyeon reached into the pocket of her pajama pants and pulled out a small object. She stared at the item that had been warmed by her body. It had to be around two a.m. she could tell

because she'd been counting the moments since Tiffany fell asleep, waiting for her girlfriend to settle into a deep slumber.

My girlfriend her smile widened. Just being able to say it to herself was a dream come true. And now a second one was going to become reality.

Taeyeon took each end of the glistening metal in her hands and slowly leaned forward, wrapping the fragile chain around Tiffany's delicate neck. Once clasped, she ran her fingers down the length of the chain until they met the small ring in the middle. She tucked the band in Tiffany's shirt, not expecting the wavy haired girls hand to meet hers as she was pulling away.

"What are you doing?" Tiffany smiled her eyes peeking open.

"You're awake?"

She gave a small nod, yawning, "Mmhmm, enjoying you stare at me." She moved closer, "I love it when you do that."

She placed Taeyeon's hand under her head and rested her cheek in the quiet girls palm, "can't sleep?" She asked, her hand tracing the links under her shirt, "what is this?"

Taeyeon watched as Tiffany pulled the chain from under her clothes, fear suddenly reading on her face.

What if it's too soon for gifts? It's only been three days.

Three amazing day, she smiled.

"Oh TaeTae is this... is this..?" She rose to her feet and went to the mirror hanging over Taeyeon's desk.

Taeyeon nodded pleased at the astonished look on Tiffany's face. "I thought I'd lost it."

Taeyeon crawled on the floor near Hyoyeon's bed, scouring the area for the lost object. She hadn't thought much about it since that night when she'd tossed it across the room but now she needed it.

"Where is it?" She huffed, "it should be around here!"

"So Tiffany huh?"

"Huh—Ow!" Taeyeon jumped hitting her head on Hyoyeon's night stand. She hurried to her feet, straightening her clothes as the taller girl came closer.

"Hey Hyoyeon, I thought you were out." Her voice trailed as she did her best to look inconspicuous.

Hyoyeon ignored Taeyeon's mumbles, pulling the necklace from the drawer of the nightstand, "the box was broken."

Silence.

"It really is beautiful." She held the necklace for Taeyeon to grab, "Are you going to take it?"

"Hyo...I..." she remained frozen, "...I can explain."

"You don't have to." She scoffed, "I know that look."

She took Taeyeon's hand in her own and placed the necklace in her palm. "I'm glad that you two worked out whatever was between you."

Hyoyeon walked to the door, her footsteps dragging, "you should give this to her now," she

paused in the doorway, "you don't want to let too much time pass."

Time?

Something in the way she said it; that far off look, it mirrored Jessica's from that night.

"She wouldn't accept me... I guess too much time had passed."

"Jessica..." Taeyeon exhaled her mind drifting.

Hyoyeon remained still, "what about her?"

"You..." she motioned towards Hyoyeon, "and her?"

"Stop." She shook her head, "just stop." Before Taeyeon could respond she walked out the door leaving the shorter girl alone with her questions.

Taeyeon pulled herself out of her thoughts, deciding it was best to keep the part about Jessica and Hyoyeon to herself.

"But when did you...?" Tiffany ran her fingers over the necklace, toying with the ring as she admired its refelction.

"Earlier in the month. That day we went shopping." Taeyeon sat up to face Tiffany, "It came a couple days later."

"I knew you weren't on your phone." She playfully tapped her lover on the shoulder.

Her voice was meek, "I was going to give this to you and confess."

"Really?" The wavy haired girl sat beside Taeyeon, "When?"

The smaller girl shrugged, "when it felt right."

"What were you going to say?"

Taeyeon shrugged again, her face growing red, "I don't know. Whatever came to me."

"Ah," Tiffany nodded smiling brightly, "alright, do it."

Her face flushed brighter, "do what?"

"You know," she took Taeyeon's hands into her own, her voice sweet, "confess to me."

"Uh," Taeyeon involuntarily scratched her head, her eyes searching the room.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing it's just..."

"What Tae Tae?"

Stall! Stall!

"You," she pulled her hands into her lap, "you don't want to?"

The hurt in her voice made Taeyeon cringe. "No it's not that! It's just...Didn't we already do this part? Wouldn't it be weird if I did it again? Besides, Hyoyeon's might hear..."

Tiffany glanced to the bed near the wall where Hyoyeon was sound asleep. She turned to face her girlfriend again, raising her hand to the smaller girls cheek.

She let out a soft giggle as she ran her thumb over the fair skin, "you're embarrassed aren't you?"

"No..." Taeyeon mumbled.

She giggled again, "it's okay Tae Tae, I won't force you." Tiffany laid down her back to the shorter girl, "do it whenever you're comfortable." She patted the bed behind her. Taeyeon took the hint and stretched out beside the wavy haired girl, her eyes fixed on the ceiling.

In time Tiffany's sounds of sleep filled the air, joining with Hyoyeon's.

Taeyeon sighed rolling over to face the girl beside her. She studied the sleeping form as she'd done so many times before. She poked at Tiffany's shoulder.

"Fany-ah?" She whispered, gently scratching at Tiffany's back.

When the sleeping girl didn't respond she rolled over and resumed her staring contest with the ceiling.

"I..." her timid voice broke the silence, "I love how you tilt your head to the side when you're confused and how you furrow your brow when you're thinking. I love it when you lean on me or touch me in anyway. I love the way you smile at me when I walk in the door. Somehow you always seem to be there when I come home," she chuckled at the thought, "I like to think that you're waiting just for me, though I know you're not..." she sighed continuing, "I love the way you hold me when we're sleeping and the way your hands always seem to find mine. I wish I could just say this to you. It should be easier now, right? But still every time you look at me I..." she shook her head her eyes falling on the resting girl, "I love you Tiffany Hwang." She sighed, a shiver cascading over her body, "ack, I'm not good at this." Silence.

"You're perfect at it," Tiffany sniffled rolling over. Her teary orbs met Taeyeon's stunned eyes as she rested her hand on Taeyeon's cheek once again.

"Do you ever sleep?"

Tiffany chuckled, "I told you, I love it when you stare at me." She smiled, "I didn't realize you noticed so much about me."

Taeyeon nodded, her gaze soft.

"You know," she closed her eyes, "I was waiting for you... just like in your story."

"How did you...?"

She grabbed the necklace, "the inscription," her bright eyes fluttered open, "it truly is beautiful, Taeyeon-ah."

"I wasn't sure if you'd think it was cheesy."

"Not at all," she ran her finger over the ring, "it makes me want to cry."

"Don't," Taeyeon dried Tiffany's misting eyes, her hand lingering on the younger girls' cheek, "It's true you know, you are my heart beat—Tiffany is my heart beat."

The wavy haired girl sighed, her eyes glazing in the dim light.

A shy silence passed over them as they stared at one another. Tiffany smiled, watching Taeyeon's gaze pan back and forth between her eyes and her lips. Their thoughts mirrored one another. She closed her eyes and leaned in, waiting for the shy girl to do the same.

Taeyeon's breaths grew labored as she laid holding Tiffany's head in her hands. This was it; their first kiss. The stirring in her stomach intensified as she inched closer to the Tiffany's bright pink lips.

Their noses brushed against one another as their mouths connected. Instantly flurries in the shorter girls' stomach exploded, sending a surge of warmth over her shaking body. Feeling the smaller girl tremble Tiffany gently wrapped her arms around Taeyeon's waist. She'd waited

years for this moment and even though she'd played out this fantasy countless times before, she never anticipated that it would feel this ethereal.

She pulled Taeyeon closer until her body was pressed against the smaller girls. She could feel the warmth emanating from Taeyeon's skin as their stomachs met. Tiffany ran her hand along Taeyeon's side, parting her lips in hopes that she would do the same. Without hesitation Taeyeon complied.

Taeyeon let out a feeble moan as their tongues met, greeting each other with a number of graceful passes. Her hand fell into the sea of dark curls as she tried her best to pull Tiffany further into her. Their hungry kisses deepened into a passionate frenzy.

Tiffany's legs snaked over Taeyeon's. Even though she was running out of air she refused to be the first to pull away. This was all she could ever think about when she was near Taeyeon and now it was happening. Her heart beat faster, threatening to burst as it did every time she thought about what she was doing, where she was and who she was holding.

Their embrace came to an end when the sound of Hyoyeon's rustling sheets tainted the passion stained air. Taeyeon pulled away first holding what was left of her breath as she waiting for the stirring to settle. The lovers exhaled at the same time staring deeply into each other's eyes. "That..." The shorter girl panted staring up at the ceiling, "that was...that was..." "I...know," the girl beside her huffed, their strained breaths sounding in rhythm. She turned to Taeyeon her hand lazily trailing over the older girl's forehead, "you're sweating..."

"Really?" She passed her hand over her face feeling the dampness, "I'll be right back." Taeyeon untangled her legs from Tiffany's and crossed to the door, her steps that of a drunk. "Could you get me a glass of water?"

"Of course." She slowly opened the door and quietly tiptoed into the hall, but stopped in her tracks at the sight of the two girls sitting on the couch, engaged in a hushed conversation.

"I thought she was letting you sleep in there."

"It was an inconvenience so I left."

Yoona fidgeted with her hands, her gaze low, "you should come back to our room. It's different without someone else there."

Seohyun spoke calm and composed, "If you need someone else I could ask one of the Unnies to switch."

"I don't need someone else, I need you—in there—in the room."

Silence

The older girl sighed, rubbing her arm, "I don't know what to do Seo," she wrapped her arms around herself, "I don't want things to change but I don't know if I can give you what you want..."

"I never asked you for anything." Her voice stayed the same.

"Your eyes say it all."

Silence

"Seohyun?"

The long haired girl turned to Yoona, her words sure, "I'll wait for you."

“But what if—.”

“—Then I'll have my answer.” She leaned on the arm of the couch, “goodnight Unnie.”

Yoona stood up her hand outstretched to Seohyun, “Come on, I'm not letting you stay out here.”

Taeyeon didn't stay to see if Seohyun joined Yoona. She snuck back in her room unnoticed and softly shut the door behind her.

“Where's the water?” Tiffany watched as Taeyeon came to her.

“Hm? Oh—I forgot,” she turned back to the door, “give me a second, I'll go back out.”

“You don't have to.” She smiled rolling over, “Come back to bed, Tae Tae.”

Love Love Honey Babe

Act III

Prologue

“We’ve been driving forever! Why couldn’t we just fly there?” Sooyoung pouted, turning to the window of the large white van the girls were packed into. Beside the driver was an assistant, behind them sat Sooyoung, Sunny and Yuri in the first row, Jessica, Hyoyeon and Yoona in the second row and finally Seohyun Tiffany and Taeyeon in the back. “It’s been six hours already!” She continued, crossing her arms over her chest.

Sunny shrugged, her fingers rapidly tapping at the pink device in her hands, “maybe they can’t navigate through all of that.” She hitched her chin at the window where a cluster of thick white clouds were merging overhead.

“Ah, it doesn’t look that bad!”

“You guys should get some sleep,” Jessica yawned, her hands stretched out in front of her. She shifted, covering herself further with the blanket she was under, “I heard that the PD wants us to run through the script as soon as we get there.”

“I thought you were sleeping,” Mumbled Hyoyeon, watching the girl to her left scoot further towards the window.

“I am.”

*

“Fany-ah,” Taeyeon whispered to the girl resting on her shoulder.

“Hm?” Tiffany sighed, nuzzling her head deeper into the soft nook.

“I think we’re almost there.” She tucked a tuft of hair behind Tiffany’s ear, causing the drowsy girl to smile, “Look there.”

Tiffany turned to the window where Taeyeon was pointing. Her eyes met a group of tall lavish buildings, “wow, do you think we’re staying there—oh, look at all the snow!”

“Hm, this must be one of those fancy ski resorts.”

“Oh, like Aspen?”

“Like what?”

Tiffany giggled, shaking her head as the large van came to a halt, “never mind.”

“Who would want to make a commercial in this weather?” Grumbled a grave voice from the front row.

Sunny leaned past Yuri to look out the window of the sliding door, “I don’t know but it could be fun. We might get to go skiing!” She grinned swinging the large door open, “wouldn’t that be fun?”

A woman dressed in a thick down jacket met the girls as they started to exit the van. She touched her hand to her earpiece nodding rapidly, “Mmhmm, mmhmm, yes sir they’ve just arrived,” She pushed her glasses back on her nose before beckoning the girls to her, mouthing ‘follow me’ as she continued to nod to the person on the other end of the radio. Tiffany pulled at Taeyeon, ushering he past the last two girls on the bus. Sunny stuck her DS in the pocket of her hoodie, focusing her attention on the woman leading them through a snow covered path towards the tall building.

Taeyeon slipped her arm around Tiffany’s waist, trying to warm the girl shivering at her side.

“I told them to clean this mess,” hissed the middle aged woman kicking at the snow, “we have important guest this week, would you like us to have an accident? No? Good, then get a team out here to clear the path!”

The woman cleared her throat and glanced over her shoulder at the girls,” Welcome So Nyuh Shi Dae to our hotel. My name is Lyn I am one of the many full time managers here. Should you need anything I urge you to ask for me.” Lyn turned around, smiling brightly as she walked backwards in front of them, “Don’t worry about your luggage,” A group of men dressed in similar black coats whisked by them to the van, “it will be taken care of.” Her smile persisted despite the cold wind whipping across her face, “I apologize for our haste and hope that in spite

of your busy schedule you enjoy your stay at our grand hotel.” Two doormen bowed, pulling the large glass double doors apart for the girls to enter.

“Excuse me Lyn-ssi?”

“Yes Sunny-ssi?”

Sunny grinned at the woman who knew her name, “I saw ski lifts on our way here, are they in operation?”

“Yes, much of the mountain is open for skiing, snowboarding and other recreational activities. I hope you have a chance to experience our slopes while you’re here.” The woman waved her hand above her head. Two men instantly appeared at her side. They bowed to the girls before locking their arms behind their backs like soldiers, “The director is ready for you. These two will escort you to the set.” Her brow furrowed as her finger tapped wildly at the air, “forgive me,” she glanced to Taeyeon, “but are we missing someone?”

*

“Mmm,” Jessica nuzzled deeper into her pillow, covering her head with her blanket. Despite being cramped in a van, this was some of the best sleep she’d had in years. Everyone always teased her for oversleeping or being a pain to wake but they didn’t understand that it didn’t matter how long she slept it was all wasted time if it was all restless. Every night her mind would keep her awake well past the time that she’d closed her eyes. It had been like that for so long that she didn’t know what to blame it on anymore.

Today was different though. Today she was at ease and her mind was tame. All that ran through it was how could she keep her feet warm and why her pillow was so firm. She rolled over and scooted closer to the back of the seat. She buried her face in the soft material enjoying it’s constant warmth. A troubled breath played at her ear, drawing her out of her comfortable nap. She started to shift again but stopped when the softness below her tensed again. Another thought entered her head. It was more of a realization than anything else.

I didn’t bring a pillow.

Jessica tilted her head. Her squinting eyes met the expressionless pair of the girl whose lap she was in. Instantly she sprang from her position, nearly hitting Hyoyeon’s head with her own as she inched back to her side of the van. Her words were calm unlike her racing heart, “Sorry.”

“It’s okay.” The somber girl mumbled, her eyes slowly moving from her lap to meet Jessica’s. The brown haired girl glanced to the window, “where are we?” she peered into the vast whiteness surrounding them.

“At our hotel I think.” Her voice remained low and controlled; gaze unwavering. Hyoyeon watched as Jessica ran her hands over her long hair. It had grown much in the passing months. The dazed girl turned to the seat behind her, “is everyone already inside?”

The dark haired girl nodded, “yes.”

She snapped her head back to the girl beside her, slightly irritated at how calm she was behaving, “why didn’t you wake me?”

The quiet girl shrugged, closing her eyes.

Jessica moaned in frustration, rising to her feet. She knew this act; it was completely routine to her by now. They never spoke much to each other. In order to keep the other members from feeling the awkward air between them they would try to be civilized and not break into fights. However when they were alone Hyoyeon had no reason to behave so nicely to Jessica. Instead of faking a conversation she wouldn't even bother. She'd just put on her headphones and wait until the older girl left the room to breathe again.

In fact both girls were amused by how long their conversation had gone on today. Jessica smiled inside; a contrast to her outward disposition. Even though Hyoyeon hated her they could still do something other than argue.

Sunny's bright face met the brunette as she reached for the handle of the van.

"What are you two doing? Everyone's waiting!"

"Sorry she—." She shook her head, there was no reason to blame the younger girl, she didn't want to be the one to turn the rare moment sour, "I wouldn't wake up."

Sunny shook her head, her hands perched on her hips, "well come on, it's cold out here!" she rubbed her arms turning towards the building, "I think it's getting worse."

Chapter 1

"You have to stop moving so much, you'll ruin it!" Tiffany slipped her arm out from under her pink throw. She patted the top of Taeyeon's elaborate hair style. Her attempts to preserve its structure proved useless as the shorter girl hopped from one foot to the other, "I can't help it! I'm freezing!"

"Here," Tiffany wrapped her arms around the shorter girl, engulfing her with the pink blanket, "better?"

Taeyeon smiled sinking into her girlfriend's warmth, "much."

They watched Sooyoung and Yuri play in the snow a few feet away from them, smiling and laughing merrily for the cameras. The commercial was being shot in one of the hotels large courtyards. The set was strewn with numerous props all used to convey a winter wonderland. The concept for their ad had been explained briefly during their ride and once more in detail after they arrived. The girls were to play and dance in the snow until Tiffany gets hungry and dreams of chicken. Then Taeyeon would come out of her dreams and deliver it. Originally Seohyun was supposed to be the delivery girl but after the director saw how close the two older girls were he switched their roles. After the commercial they were scheduled to have a photo shoot for the new calendar they were promoting with the chicken. All together their business in the hotel was estimated to last four days. Three if everything went well.

"You can wait inside if it's too much for you." Tiffany rested her head on Taeyeon's shoulder, closing her eyes.

"And leave you out here?" She shook her head, "Besides, I want to watch you."

“Are you sure? I don’t want you to get sick.”

The shorter girl slipped her hand into Tiffany’s, “I’m sure.”

Silence

“Ah, who can play on an empty stomach? *What do you want?* Hmm....” The wavy haired girl muttered, going over her lines. Taeyeon squeezed the pensive girl’s hand sensing her unease, “you’ll be fine.”

Tiffany nodded, catching the gaze of a woman waving at her from across the large area, “I think they’re calling for me.” She unwrapped herself from Taeyeon and started towards the older woman.

“Do well!” Taeyeon grinned.

Tiffany glanced over her shoulder and gave an eye smile, “Don’t catch a cold!”

Taeyeon nodded feeling her face grow warm. Tiffany always seemed to bring this reaction out of her. She’d never really given herself a chance to notice it before they were together because she didn’t want to get her hopes up for something that might not have been true, but as their relationship grew she started to take note of all the small acts of affection that Tiffany showered her with.

Taeyeon loved them all.

Whether it be Tiffany fixing breakfast for Taeyeon in the morning, even when she didn’t have time to eat herself or Tiffany leaving a light on in the living room so that Taeyeon could find her way to her bedroom at night, Taeyeon cherished it. One of her favorite memories was of one of Tiffany’s small acts. It was perhaps one of the simplest things she could have ever done but to this day it still made Taeyeon’s heart swoon. That memory she would keep to herself and never let anyone else know. Somehow doing so made it that much more special.

The grinning girl laughed, tightening her hold on the pink throw as she quelled her thoughts. Sooyoung and Yuri passed by Tiffany ambling up the snow covered path towards Taeyeon.

“Hey, you guys looked good,” she cheered, suppressing her love drunk giggles.

The duo breezed by her unable to focus on anything other than their frozen forms as they barreled through the large glass doors.

*

“Th—th—this is re-dic-c-u-lous!” Sooyoung stuttered through chattering teeth. She sat at the table, wrapping her arms around her shivering body. Yoona draped a thick blanket over the taller girls shoulders before setting a cup of hot chocolate down on the table in front of her. She passed through the room, her own chill long gone. She’d been the first to go. “It looks like it’s getting worse.” She gave the same attention to Yuri who’d taken a seat on the couch across from Sooyoung. “It hasn’t stopped snowing at all.”

“I read the forecast earlier. It’s not supposed to get any better for a couple of days.”

“Days?!” Sooyoung slammed the empty cup on the table. Not out of anger but because she couldn’t control her stiff muscles, “We’re going to work in that?”

Jessica shrugged grabbing the cup. She refilled it for the younger girl and set it in front of her

again, “Maybe they’ll reschedule if it gets worse.” She looked to Seohyun whose eyes were on her cell phone, “how bad did the forecast say?”

The young girl shook her head, “Stay indoors. I think it may be a blizzard.”
 “The sky’s so dark now...” Yoona mumbled, glancing out the window beside the glass door to the sky. Jessica followed her gaze, eyes briefly passing over Hyoyeon who was on the couch beside Yuri; her headphones in her ears with her eyes closed, before settling on the ominous sky. The group of white clouds from earlier were now one. The massive sheet of vapors spread so far she couldn’t see an end in the distance. The brunette shook her head sighing; this week wasn’t going to be as easy as she’d hoped.

A bouncing Taeyeon pulled the distraught girl from her thoughts. She watched as the older girl hopped from one foot to the other in an attempt to stay warm. For a moment she thought about dragging the shivering girl inside but saw no need when Tiffany ran to the small girl and pulled her inside of the large room herself. They took seats near one another at the end of the square table. Yoona set two cups in front of them while Jessica poured. “What’s going on out there?” she asked, adding a few marshmallows to each cup.

“How come they get marshmallows and I don’t?” The tall kid pouted, wiping her chocolate mustache.

“You keep drinking it before I have a chance to give you any.” Jessica turned her attention back to the two new popsicles.

Tiffany gently brushed her hand over Taeyeon’s hair riding it off as much snow as possible, “they told us to come back inside.”

A soft knock rapped at the thick white door from the opposite side of the room. “Excuse me, So Nyuh Shi Dae?” called a small muffled voice, “I’ve been told to escort you to the lobby.”

*

The girls were greeted by Lyn as they entered the lobby. She stood behind a large marble counter, her clothes elegant in contrast to the large winter attire she’d previously been wearing. She glanced at the computer beside her that the younger girl by her side was typing on before meeting the gazes of the bewildered group of girls. The middle aged woman pushed her glasses back on her nose, smiling as they came to her.

“So Nyuh Shi Dae,” she panned over the group, “I regret to inform you that due to severe weather conditions the filming for your commercial has been postponed. We have been told to keep everyone inside until further notice.” She paused, “I have confirmed all of the logistics with your managers already but it would be improper of me to not tell you in person. In lieu of these hang-ups, we here at our hotel have moved all of your luggage to our Deluxe Suite.” The young clerk beside Lyn gasped at the mention of the suite. This went unnoticed by the older woman, “we are having—*what*?” her eyes darkened, “Well, is he here?—hold on.” She touched her hand to her clear ear piece, “I apologize for my rudeness,” she glanced around the lobby for her bellhops but there were none. Lyn sighed resting her hand on the younger girl’s shoulder, “escort them to the suite, will you? Nine keys.” The girl blinked rapidly before nodding. Lyn turned back to the girls across the counter, “She will take you to your room. Enjoy your stay.”

*

“Would you like an autograph?”

Ever since they entered the elevator the young girl had been stealing glances at the group of girls; particularly Sooyoung. The silent girl shook her head at Sooyoung’s words.

“No paper?”

The girl lowered her gaze speaking her first words since they’d met, “Forgive me, I’m not allowed.”

“Really?” The tall girl stuck her hands in her pockets, “How about a picture then?”

The nameless girl cut her eyes to the shiny dome in the corner of the elevator before lowering her head again, “I’m not allowed.”

“Really? That’s crazy!”

“Sooyoung,” Sunny called catching sight of the security camera, “We don’t want to get her in trouble.”

“Yeah,” Jessica shifted from one leg to the other, “I don’t think they’re allowed to talk.”

“Oh,” Sooyoung nodded, tucking her short hair behind her ear, “can you tell me how much longer this ride is?”

The girl raised her head nodding curtly, “about three more minutes. The Deluxe Suite is at the top of the building. To date only two paying guest have been able to afford staying in it.”

*

A collective signs of awe escaped the group of girls as they entered the luxurious hotel room.

“You’ll find your belonging in your room. Enjoy your stay.” The girl smiled with a bow as the doors closed in front of her.

“Wow!” Yuri gasped walking further into the apartment like room. She had been impressed when the elevator opened directly into the room. The true magnificence of the room was nearly over whelming. Sunny brushed by her stepping into the living room area. A TV whose width stretched wider than she was tall hung on the flawless white wall to her left. She grinned at the collection of navy blue couches arching around a low glass coffee table. With a small jump she landed on top of the soft surface, pulling an end pillow to her chest, “Sooyoung, look at this TV!”

“Hm?” The taller girl called from the kitchen diagonally across from the voice beckoning her, she shoved her head back into the large stainless steel refrigerator, “one second, this things fully stocked!” she scooped an unknown number of treats into her arms.

“Hey,” Jessica rested her hand on the frenzied girls arms, “pace yourself, we might be here for a while.”

“Sica!” Yuri hopped up and down in front of a spiraling set of ascending white stairs, “Look there’s stairs.”

“Yeah!” called Yoona from midway up the stairs. She ran back and forth up the stair case, “They light up before you step on them!—Watch!” she reversed and traversed up and down the stairs,

giggling as the steps illuminated under her. Jessica muttered to herself as she left the area upset by the careless display.

“Unnie, be careful!” Seohyun stood at the top of the stairs watching the kidlike girl’s dangerous display.

“How does it know?! Watch me Unnie!” she grinned at Yuri, unaware of Seohyun’s cautious words. She moved to reverse again but missed her footing. She didn’t have time to realize she was falling before firm arms were holding her close.

“You have to be more careful!” The younger girl cried her lips accidentally brushing against the tip of the older girl’s ear.

“Uh,” Yoona pulled herself away heading back down the stairs, “I—I’m going to go find my room.”

“Hm,” Sooyoung nodded, savoring the pastries she was chewing, “that’s a good idea. Probably first come first serve, huh?”

Yoona nodded pulling the taller girl with her, “Yeah, Let’s go.”

She secured the foods in her arms, “Alright, alright, slow down!”

*

“Which bed do you want?” Yoona found her suitcase on the floor between the two king sized beds.

“Are you okay with me being here,” Seohyun stood close to the bedroom door her eyes on her clasped hands, “with you?”

The long haired girl frowned, rushing to the door. She closed it softly and stood in front of Seohyun, “I’m sorry I kicked you out of the bedroom. I just I...” she shook her head searching the ground, “I won’t do that here.” Her hands rested on Seohyun’s slumped shoulders, “I promised.” She smiled.

Seohyun returned the smile, her posture straightening, “this place is fancy isn’t it Unnie?” Yoona went back to her side of the room and began to unpack, nodding. She glanced across the room to the balcony on the other side of the large sliding door, “It would be great if we could actually go outside though. Did you see that pool downstairs? The kitchen opens right to it.” “I’m sure we’ll manage.”

*

“If I’d known we’d be here for so long I would have packed more.”

“I think we all would,” Taeyeon collapsed on the large bed, sinking into the mattress, “it’s really coming down out there.” She pulled a large set of headphones from her duffel bag and fished her iPod from her pocket.

“I heard it’s not going to let up for days.” Sunny set her DS on tall dresser beside her bed. She turned to the suitcase near her feet and pulled a pair of warm pants from her bag. She slung the sweatpants over her shoulder, “I guess we should look on the bright side. Think of it as a mini-vacation.”

Taeyeon chuckled glancing at the girl on the other side of the bed, “that’s a great way to think of it.” She slipped her headphones over her ears drowning out the sounds around her.

“Sooyoung said it.” The younger girl shrugged heading for the door. “Woah, Fany-ah? What are you doing out here?”

Tiffany stood in mid knock grinning at the girl before her. She cleared her throat, “I was wondering if I could talk to you.”

“Yeah, what’s up?” Sunny started for the stairs.

Tiffany laced her fingers behind her back as her gaze searched the floor, “I need to ask you a favor...”

“What is it?”

Her crescent eyes met the smaller girls, “switch rooms with me.”

“What? Why?” she continued to the stairs, “I’ve already started to unpack.”

“Please, I share a room with those hyper kids at home! Do I have to do it here too?”

“And you’d rather subject me to it?” Sunny scoffed, “no thanks.”

Tiffany steadily followed behind, “*Please?* I’ll do your chores for an entire week—no month when we get home!”

“Why don’t you ask Taeyeon to switch?”

“Because that—.” She watched in bewilderment as Sunny neared the bathroom, “what are you doing?”

“There’s no bath upstairs only a shower.”

Tiffany clapped her hands, cheesing, “there’s one in my room!”

Sunny paused, her hand on the knob; voice disbelieving, “Really?”

The excited girl nodded rapidly, “Yeah, it’s so big! You’ll love it!”

Sunny smiled at the girl hopping around behind her, “You really are trying hard.”

“I...” her hand disappeared in her hair, “I just need a quiet roommate right now.”

“Okay.”

“Really?”

When Sunny nodded Tiffany took the smaller girl in her arms, “Thank you Sunny!” she jumped around, “Thank you!”

“Alright, alright, let me see how big the bath is.”

*

The pink creature crept into the large bedroom her eyes fixed on the figure lying on its stomach as it thumbed through a thick magazine. She leaned over the bed and straddled her unsuspecting prey. Gently she brushed the hairs covering Taeyeon’s neck to one side and slowly started to plant soft kisses on the delicate skin.

Taeyeon breathed in moans as she relaxed, letting the magazine fall from her grasp. Tiffany raked her nails down Taeyeon’s back, her kisses paving their way to the sensitive skin just below her left lobe. Both sides were fragile but she knew Taeyeon liked it more on the left. She gifted a flurry of bites to the area, causing Taeyeon to stretch and squirm underneath her. Leaning close to her lover’s ear she breathed her words in a single hot stream, “what if it wasn’t me?”

“I knew it was.” Taeyeon mumbled, her voice muffled by the pillow she’d forced her face into to stifle her sounds. Tiffany eased herself off of the smaller girl, picking up the magazine from the floor, “How?”

“You’re hair.” She turned from Tiffany trying to hide her red face, “It smells good.”

Tiffany smiled at the obvious act, “Thank you for getting me another bottle.”

“It made me think of you when I saw it.”

Tiffany passed her fingers through Taeyeon’s hair, her attention far from the quarterly, “I feel like I haven’t seen you in months.”

“That’s because you practically haven’t,” the older girl huffed turning back to her girlfriend; her face now a faint pink hue, “You leave so early and I come in so late it’s like all we get to do is sleep together now.”

“Aw, you’re so cute when you’re upset,” her hand trailed to Taeyeon’s back, “don’t worry about all of that. I asked Sunny to switch rooms with me.” She leaned on her palm grinning, “We can pretend it’s our own personal vacation. Snowed in with nowhere to go.” Her voice grew low, her eyes glistening in the light, “It could be fun.”

Taeyeon knew that look well by now. Her heart was about to go on a rollercoaster. She grazed the back of her hand over Tiffany’s cheek, moving closer to the alluring girl.

“Yah! Kids you in there?!” Sooyoung’s voice boomed through the door. She tapped briefly before swinging it open. “Yeah,” she yelled to someone down the hall her focus on them and not the frantic scene in the bedroom, “I’m getting her now!” she glanced at Taeyeon and Tiffany who were now sitting on opposite ends of the bed; Tiffany thumbing through the magazine and Taeyeon bobbing her head to the silent music coming from her headphones. “I found her Yuri!” She turned back to the person in the hallway.

In seconds Yuri appeared beside the taller girl, “You told Sunny she could have our tub?”

“Oh, uh, we’re switching rooms.”

“Aw, it has water jets! She’ll be in there forever now!—what are you doing?”

“Hm?” Tiffany shrugged, shaking her head, “nothing just reading,” she looked to Sooyoung, “did you need something?”

Sooyoung gave her a quizzical look letting out a small chuckle, “Sica ordered food from the hotel’s restaurant. You guys should come down if you want to eat.” The suspicious gleam in her eyes gave away the real meaning of her offer. Jessica wasn’t going to let anyone eat unless they were all together. Taeyeon set her headphones down and shimmied off the bed. She looked to Tiffany and then to the upside down magazine in her grasp. “Come on Fany-ah, aren’t you hungry?” She mumbled now understanding the reason for Sooyoung’s chuckles.

Tiffany nodded meeting the group of girls at the doorway.

They walked past the upstairs kitchen area and then the second bedroom, rounding the corner to the spiraling stairs that led down to the main kitchen. Seohyun met them on the stairwell, travelling in the opposite direction.

“Maknae,” Sooyoung held her arms out at her sides, blocking the stairwell, “don’t tell me you’re not ready to eat—I’ve just finished gathering everyone!”

Seohyun smiled shaking her head, “I was going to look for dishware. There doesn’t seem to be enough—.”

“—we’ll look for you.” Tiffany took Taeyeon’s hand and pulled her back to the top of the stairs.

“You sure?”

“Yeah,” she flashed a smile, “We’ll be down in a second.”

Chapter 2

“Could you grab this?”

“Hm? Oh, of course.” Taeyeon took the stack of plates from Tiffany who was standing in front of her on a stool, searching the high cabinet for dishware. Taeyeon scanned her eyes over the feminine figure before her. Tiffany was wearing her favorite pink shorts with a matching hoodie and ankle socks. Her gaze lingered on Tiffany’s pale legs, studying their motions as the taller girl climbed onto the counter top.

“I don’t see any glasses, do you?” She glanced over her shoulder at the dazing girl, “Tae Tae?”

“Hm?” Taeyeon pulled herself from the trance she was joyously falling into. The wavy haired girl giggled turning to face the flustered girl. She held her arms out for Taeyeon to help her down.

Taeyeon crossed to Tiffany and wrapped her arms around the younger girl’s waist. Instantly the grinning girl pulled her into a quick kiss, “It’s been six months and you still get as red as the first time we kissed.” She ran her hand over Taeyeon’s cheek, caressing the soft skin, “If people keep seeing you like this they might get suspicious.”

“I’m sorry,” she breathed, “I can’t help it,” she mirrored Tiffany’s actions as she leaned in to greet Tiffany’s lips once more.

She really couldn’t help it. Everything Tiffany did played at Taeyeon’s heart. Pulling at the strings in such a manner that she often wondered how she could have possibly lived so long without feeling such intense affection; though deep down she knew that all of her years spent yearning from afar only made moments like these sweeter. After so many years of wanting she could finally have what she’d been waiting for—what they’d both been waiting for. All those years of craving only made her want Tiffany more.

“Fany-ah...” Taeyeon whispered her voice faint. Her hand gracefully slipped into the sea of dark tresses, disappearing in the wavy mass as she pulled the younger girl closer. She tilted her head to the side, gently grazing her lips over the elevated girl. Electricity passed through her spine as Tiffany’s nails travelled down the length of Taeyeon’s back; breaths escaping her in labored pants.

Her lips parted beckoning Taeyeon to fall into her. The shorter girl moved to accept but failed when Tiffany pulled away. The temptress grinned, tracing invisible lines up and down Taeyeon’s sides. The motion made the spellbound girl shudder, her knees nearly buckling under her. She leaned in again but gained nothing. Over the months Tiffany had made a habit of teasing

the older girl. Taeyeon couldn't figure out what she hated more; the teasing or how much she loved it.

A soft whimper escaped her lips as she failed again. Tiffany chuckled snaking her arms around Taeyeon's neck. She brushed her lips past Taeyeon's cheek to her ear, kissing at the soft skin while her hands played at the base of Taeyeon's head. "Come on Tae Tae," she crooned, her words hot with passion, "don't you think we should go down stairs now?"

The frustrated girl groaned, slipping her hands under Tiffany's bare thighs. Her moves were fluid as she gently set the taller girl on the ground and pulled Tiffany's lips onto her own. Tiffany didn't tease any further as her back rested against the counter, Taeyeon's body pressed firm against her own. The shorter girl's hand slipped between them, slowly pulling at the tab of the zipper that separated her from an area she'd yet to explore.

She—

"Yah," Called a voice from around the corner, "Did you guys find the plates?" Tiffany pushed herself away from Taeyeon before Sooyoung made her way into the small kitchen. "Hyoyeon got cups from the staff, come on—the foods getting cold!" Taeyeon cleared her throat, cautiously running her hands over her mussed hair. She quickly followed Sooyoung down the stairs. Tiffany stood dumbfounded as her breathing took its time steadying. She re-zipped her partly open hoodie before joining.

*

"Took you two long enough," Jessica smirked giving a know-all look to the shameless pair. She grabbed the plates from Taeyeon. The shorter girl sat down and pulled out the chair beside her, avoiding the gaze. In moments the sound of clamoring utensils and idle chat filled the room.

"Wow this is delicious."

"Five star."

"I wonder how much it would cost if we had to pay for this room."

"Let's not talk about it." Yuri sighed, turning to Sooyoung, "Can you pass me that?"

"Wow, it's so tender!" beamed Yoona, "I had beef like this on a show once. It must be imported from there."

"Here," Tiffany rested her hand on Taeyeon's, ceasing the losing battle Taeyeon was having with her large cut of meat. She took the knife in her own hand and started cutting the succulent meat into bite size pieces for her lover.

Jessica watched the cute scene from across the table, grinning at how loving such a simple act could be. She glanced at her own plate, letting a long sigh escape her as she cut her own food into smaller pieces. She would never admit to anyone how much she herself longed to be part of such caring acts. No one needed to be burdened with the grief that plagued her heart. The brunette closed her eyes, leaning back in her chair as she savored the food in front of her; unaware of the pensive eyes tentatively watching.

*

“What do you guys want to do after we’re done?” Sunny sipped her ice tea, “There’s a really good selection of movies on the TV.”

“Yes!” Sooyoung pumped a knife wielding fist in the air, “the resurrection of movie night!”

“Yah,” Jessica flagged the taller girl, “be careful with that.”

“I’m sure we’ll all join in. It’s not like we have anything better to do, right?” Yuri smiled, her eyes panning over the girls surrounding her.

Taeyeon bobbed her head in agreement as she chewed thoroughly. Tiffany brushed her leg against Taeyeon’s, keeping her eyes focused on her plate.

The older girl cleared her throat, feeling the familiar warmth burn at her face as the alluring motion persisted.

“Um,” she coughed, “actually, I think I’m just going to turn in after this.”

“Really? It’s so early.” Sunny sighed.

“Yeah, but I think I’m going to be sick.” Her breath hitched as Tiffany’s spare hand slipped from her lap into Taeyeon’s, giving a slight squeeze to her firm thigh. Taeyeon gasped springing from her seat, “I’m going to go lie down.” She turned fleeing up the stairs.

Tiffany calmly rose to her feet avoiding the assortment of gazes, “I’ll check on her, she probably just ate too fast or something.”

*

“Fany-ah,” whined the mumbled voice buried in the pillow, “don’t you think that’s dangerous? What if they saw you?”

“I don’t think any of our members can see through tables.” Tiffany walked over to Taeyeon’s bed, grinning at the fretful girl. She knew her words hadn’t calmed her. “Hey,” she stood at the edge of the bed, “I’m sorry Tae Tae, I just—I don’t know... I just get that way... when I’m around you.”

Taeyeon was sure that if her face grew any hotter she would melt. She rolled over onto her side smiling at the younger girl, “I guess we’re hopeless at being discreet.”

“Mhmm,” she folded her arms over her chest, twisting from side to side, “you’ve never been very good at it. Always stealing glances at me... holding me...” she sighed haughtily brandishing a cocky smile, “humph, I guess you were always in love with me.”

Taeyeon laughed at the playful girl batting her eye lashes in front of her. “As if you were any better!” She crawled on her knees to the edge of the bed.

“What?” Tiffany scoffed exasperated, “I’m way better at it than—whoa!”

Taeyeon scooped Tiffany up into her arms and tossed the frazzled girl on the bed, immediately launching her hands at the slender frame. Tiffany laughed, trying to swat the tickling hands away. “Stop Tae Tae—ah! Stop!” her squeals filled the room. Taeyeon straddled the younger girl, enjoying the sounds from the squirming figure under her. She chuckled trying to figure out the perplexing series of movements Tiffany was trying to use to escape. She was so enthralled she didn’t notice she’d been over taken until it was too late.

Their tousele lasted for what seemed like hours though in actuality it was only a few minutes and soon they were both exhausted. Tiffany’s frantic movements died down until finally

she collapsed next to the equally winded girl. Tiffany huffed, a few stray laughs escaping her tired lungs as her hand lazily trailed up Taeyeon's chest to her cheek. She cupped her hand around the delicate skin, her own head resting against the soft pillow. Taeyeon placed her hand on top of Tiffany's. She closed her eyes, letting herself enjoy Tiffany's gentle caress.

Tiffany's voice was husky; a stark contrast to the vivid squeals that had emanated from her moments before, "*Finally*, we're alone."

"Mm," Taeyeon sighed drinking in the words with a slight nod. Suddenly her eyes burst open a gasp escaping her. She hadn't really thought about it until now.

Tiffany lay facing Taeyeon, an expressionless look in her eyes. Taeyeon had never seen Tiffany like this, gazing at her with such an unreadable expression. A flutter in her stomach caused the confused girl to shudder. She could have just asked what Tiffany was thinking, but she didn't want to tempt it. "Um," she inched out of the bed, "Hey, do you want to watch that movie?"

Tiffany blinked her expression unwavering as she watched Taeyeon head for the door. "I think I'll watch the movie." She mumbled, fending the awkward air. Tiffany nodded, sliding off the bed, "Alright."

*

Taeyeon sat up straight on the couch, her hands folded in her lap. Tiffany watched as the awkward girl whose arm she was latched onto fidgeted, her eyes focused on the movie. The frustrated girl sighed leaning close to Taeyeon's ear, "you can't be comfortable." Taeyeon shook her head, flashing a small smile, "I'm alright."

"You sure?" Tiffany tucked her legs under her, brushing her arm against Taeyeon as she shifted, "everything's alright?"

She felt Taeyeon tense, her smile ever-present, "yeah, everything's fine." She knew she was lying. "Ok," Tiffany sighed resting her head on the rigid girl's shoulder. She had to have done something in order to get this type of response from Taeyeon, but she couldn't figure out what.

"You know, if something's bothering you, you can tell me." She mumbled. "Everything's fine."

Tiffany huffed; she wasn't going to get an answer out of Taeyeon, especially not in front of the members. She let her worried mind overtake her, resting her head back on Taeyeon's shoulder.

*

Taeyeon lay in bed her eyes fixed on the resting figure across from her, studying the rise and fall of the sleeping girl's side as she scooted back closer to Taeyeon. The silent girl huffed, eyeing the vast space separating her and Tiffany. She rolled onto her back, letting a frustrated sigh pass through her. For the fourth time that night she shut her eyes, trying to find her way into sleep though by now she was sure it was useless to do so.

Her eyes fluttered open at the sound of Tiffany's restless shuffling. The resting girl murmured indistinctive words to herself as she rolled to face her girlfriend. Her arm reached out

in hopes of slinking itself around the older girls waist as it often did but found nothing in its path. She patted the area with her hand searching for the warmth she craved. Her head lifted slightly from the plush pillow, “Tae Tae?” she mumbled, her eyes squinting in the dark room. She blinked a few times before her eyes adjusted to the darkness.

Taeyeon quickly closed her eyes, feigning sleep. Tiffany inched closer towards the tense heap. “Taeyeon-ah?” she called again, hovering over the smaller girl. “Are you sleeping?” Tiffany waited for a response. When there was none she sighed heavily and lowered her head onto Taeyeon’s chest. Her arm slipped possessively around Taeyeon’s body, her eyes closing. Taeyeon waited for Tiffany’s breathing to slow before opening her eyes. Though she quickly shut them again when the younger girls head rose.

Tiffany returned to her previous pose. The inquisitive girl tilted her head as her eyes searched Taeyeon’s face. Her hand lightly brushed over the *sleeping* girls cheek, causing shivers to pass through Taeyeon's spine. Tiffany’s thumb passed over the soft skin, caressing the familiar area. It always amazed her that she could still feel so shy when she touched Taeyeon. Her face flushed as she smiled. Taeyeon wasn’t the only one who still blushed when around the other.

“Tae Tae...” Tiffany whispered, her voice shattering the silence of the room. Her thumb trailed to Taeyeon’s mouth and made a lingering pass over the delicate area. It grazed slowly over her lovers bottom lip, enjoying what little moisture was there. The entranced girl drew her own lip into her mouth as thoughts of wetting the older girls lips with her own invaded her mind. She exhaled unconsciously, her eyes closing. She leaned closer towards the girl who’d gone stiff due to Tiffany’s motions.

She felt her head tilt to meet Tiffany’s but stopped when she remembered she was supposed to be asleep. Tiffany’s mouth didn’t connect with hers as she’d hoped. Instead the wavy haired girl trailed her thumb to Taeyeon’s neck and tilted her head to the side. She stared at the exposed skin briefly before leaning in to taste it. Taeyeon’s eyes burst open a silent gasp escaping her.

Tiffany’s tongue flicked at the warm skin beneath her. “Mmm...” She moaned, her hand traveling to Taeyeon’s side. She planted kisses along the tense girls jawline before returning to play at the newly claimed area once again. She could never get tired of this. Exploring Taeyeon was something she’d thought about doing for years. She used to find herself staring at Taeyeon when they were hanging out or during recordings thinking about kissing the smaller girl. All of those restless nights spent dreaming about Taeyeon had led to this moment. This moment where they were finally together, expressing such intense feelings of passion that she was sure at any second her heart would give out from such an overload. Though without Taeyeon responding, it felt weird to continue. With much determination Tiffany reluctantly pulled her lips away from the sweet skin she’d been nibbling on and rested her head on Taeyeon’s chest once more.

“Yah,” she panted, the ferocious rhythm pulsing under her, “Your... hearts.... Beating... so ... fast... now...” she rasped, tightening her hold, “say...something.” Taeyeon let go of the breath she’d been painfully holding; her voice was timid compared to Tiffany’s as she stumbled over her words, “w-we-we’ve never b-been alone like t-this.”

“I know,” Tiffany grinned drunkenly, “isn’t it wonderful?” she kissed the bottom of Taeyeon’s chin, expecting the older girl to join her.

Her voice grew smaller as she remained unmoved, “We’re alone.”

“What?” Tiffany questioned, unable to hear her.

Taeyeon blushed embarrassed, “you know... alone... at night.”

“Oh,” Tiffany lifted her head once again finally catching on, “*oh*,” She stared at the red girl, “that’s why you’ve been acting weird?”

Taeyeon’s brief pause confirmed her suspicions.

Tiffany eased herself off of Taeyeon and sat up pulling the older girl with her. She opened her mouth to speak but was cut off as Taeyeon uttered a response. “I’m sorry Fany-ah it’s just someone’s always there you know? Hyoyeon, or the girls... I always have a reason to control myself. But here I don’t...” her eyes fell to her hands in Tiffany’s, “If ...if I start to kiss you,” her eyes searched the sheets below, “how will I know when you want me to stop?”

Tiffany sat still, holding Taeyeon’s hands in her own. Taeyeon glanced up to her girlfriend but let her eyes return to the sheets when she found that same unreadable expression from before. She was unfamiliar with it and that scared her. She felt a shiver canvass her body. Tiffany’s hand left hers and trailed up the confused girl’s arm. She tucked her hand behind Taeyeon’s neck while her free hand tipped Taeyeon’s chin up to meet her. She leaned in, deepening the kiss as she pushed Taeyeon back onto the bed. Her hand snaked around the smaller girl’s back pawing at the area before slipping back around her waist to rest on Taeyeon’s stomach.

She grazed her nails over the thin fabric causing a startled moan to escape her lover. Tiffany pulled away staring at the girl under her, “what makes you think I want you to?”

Chapter 3

Sunlight broke through the thin white curtains drawn in front of the sliding door, playing at the floor where a pile of upturned blankets lay strewn in a haphazard design; the aftermath of a one sided battle they’d lost. The bright beam advanced up the edge of the bed, greeting the two sets of legs entangled with each other as it continued on its path. It crept over the sheer white sheets covering the delicate bodies gently embracing one another underneath.

Taeyeon stirred as the sunlight’s warm glow met her face. She rolled over grumbling as she nestled her head under Tiffany’s chin. She would avoid waking up for as long as possible. Partly because she was enjoying the feeling of Tiffany’s arms wrapped around her waist and partly because she was too tired to do anything else. Unfortunately she couldn’t avoid the shrill ring blaring from the device on the bed stand behind her. She thought about letting it ring but decided against that idea when she realized that might disturb the girl beside her. With a groan she blindly reached for the hotel phone.

“He—hello?” she croaked, her voice weary from the long night of passionate singing. “Yes, Taeyeon-ssi? This is Lyn. I’m calling to inform you that there may be a few upsets today in regards to the power as one of our main lines was destroyed last night due to the storm. You may have noticed the brief blackout last night?” Her voice was loud and jarring; too abrasive for the gentle atmosphere in the bedroom. “Um...” she glanced at the girl sleeping soundly by her side. She hadn’t noticed anything last night but her, “yeah...”

“I thought so. I personally apologize for any hardship that these inconveniences may have caused you. To make up for these conditions we at our hotel offer all of our indoor activities, including dining to you and your members free of charge. I have taken care of the logistic. Please, enjoy your stay...”

Taeyeon nodded carelessly, setting the phone back on its receiver. With ease she slipped back into her lover’s hold. Cuddling close to the warm body.

“Mmm,” Tiffany sighed, relaxing as Taeyeon’s body met her own, “good morning...” her words were slurred and drowsy; voice no better than Taeyeon’s.

“Good morning,” the older girl smiled kissing the bottom of Tiffany’s chin.

“Did you sleep well?” Her words vibrated against Taeyeon’s lips as they rested against the younger girl’s fragile neck.

“Mmhmm, you?”

“*Amazing.*” Taeyeon pulled back to meet the dreamy gaze of Tiffany’s dark eyes. “What time is it?”

Taeyeon shrugged, effortlessly tucking a lock of hair behind Tiffany’s ear. Somehow she felt more relaxed now. At ease and untroubled.

“Are you hungry?”

“A little,” she chuckled, her hand trailing over Tiffany cheek, “I didn’t really get to finish my dinner last night.”

The taller girl grinned, giggling. “Sorry,” she rolled over pulling back the thin sheet to exit Taeyeon’s bed, “I’ll fix us some breakfast.”

Taeyeon stared at the pale skin of the exquisite figure searching the floor for her clothes. Tiffany turned around gazing past Taeyeon to the window, “It seems to be pretty early.”

The awestruck girl exhaled, her eyes devouring the feminine figure.

She drew her bottom lip into her mouth and chewed at the corner, crossing the room to meet the girl who was now turning to open the door.

“I changed my mind,” Taeyeon’s wrapped her arms around Tiffany from behind, halting the taller girls motions; “I’m not hungry at all.”

*

Seohyun sat in a daze staring at the cup of tea Jessica had prepared for her some time ago. The warmth of the cups base stung against the thigh tucked under her as she sat alone on the living room couch, but she didn’t mind. Her thoughts were elsewhere; constantly replaying over the morning events that led her to this particular moment.

She didn't understand Yoona anymore. Ever since that morning months ago when they'd shared the kiss, that neither one could speak to the other about, Yoona had been up and down. One moment she would be talking to Seohyun like nothing ever happened and the next she would be avoiding the younger girl as if her life depended on it. This morning had proved to be the most recent example of Yoona's odd mood swings.

Seohyun lay on her back indulging in the quiet of the room. Though they had all unanimously decided that this CF shoot- turned weather disaster was to be treated as a mini-vacation, she planned on finding somewhere remote to practice her acting.

"And also a gym...." She mumbled, staring up at the ceiling, "there has to be one here." She turned to her left where Yoona's bed existed in its ready-made state. She'd been glancing at the area every few minutes, trying to figure out if the older girl had even slept in the room with her last night. Seohyun had returned to their room alone last night after watching Yoona follow Hyoyeon, Sunny and Sooyoung into the kitchen for post movie drinks. She tried to stay awake and wait for the girl but eventually fell asleep.

When she awoke, Yoona's bed appeared untouched and the older girl was nowhere in sight. Seohyun could only ponder on the possibility of what it all meant. The piercing trill of the telephone on the night stand between their beds pulled her from her thoughts. Before she could reach for it the sound stopped and Yoona entered the room. She shut the door behind her, being sure not to make too much noise. Seohyun watched from under her thick comforter as the tall girl crossed the room to the space behind her bed.

She was dressed in blue jeans and a red tee shirt; clothes different from the day before. Maybe she was in the bathroom, the pensive girl deduced, taking note of the damp towel slung over the other girls shoulder.

Yoona bent down reaching in her bag for the object she wanted. When she found it she took the hair dryer in her hand and turned on her heels to exit; eyes briefly landing on the form hiding under the covers across the room. The long haired girl turned to the large sliding door behind her and the back to Seohyun.

Seohyun could only wonder what she was thinking.

Yoona pivoted to the glass door and twirled the long white stick until the blinds were closed, halting the suns assault on Seohyun's face. She turned back to check if she was successful and let out a content sigh when she confirmed she was. Seohyun smiled peeking at the girl staring at her. She opened her mouth to give thanks but stopped as Yoona started towards her bed. She set the hairdryer by the phone and knelt near the girl whose face was slightly covered by the warm blankets. Moments passed as Yoona's inquisitive eye's held their gaze. It was then that Seohyun realized the older girl thought she was sleeping.

Yoona's moves were tentative and small. Her palm lay briefly on Seohyun's side, slowly passing over the folds of the comforter. She kept her fingers light so that the resting girl couldn't feel her.

*Though Seohyun was well aware of her touch.
The innocent hand grazed over the rumpled fabric until it rested just over Seohyun's head. The older girl gently tugged back the thick covering; her eyes falling on the serene form.
Silence.*

Time passed before Yoona moved again.

Seohyun lay trying her best to control her troubled breathing, but it was becoming nearly impossible. She fought with confusion as a curious warmth grew on her face, motioning slightly back and forth. She could only guess at what it was. The warmth played at her cheek before trailing to her chin. She felt her head tilt with its guidance. She couldn't hold her thoughts anymore.

Instantly her body grew as warm as the hand holding her.

Yoona's face was just inches away, her stunned eyes panning between Seohyun's calm pair. Neither spoke for a while, frozen in their timid embrace.

"This," Quaked Yoona's voice, "This doesn't change us." She tried to steady her words, "I still can't..."

"I'm not asking you for an explanation." Seohyun sat up, watching the older girl grab her hair dryer. Her movements were hesitant and unsure, just like her voice.

The younger girl sighed, "I'm sorry Unnie. I never meant to con—."

"Why are you sorry?" she scoffed, her eyes on anything but the girl watching her, "I should be apologizing to you." Yoona took the doorknob in her hand, mumbling to herself, "I wish I could give you an answer."

"I can't go out like this," Sunny protested, trotting down the stairs, "wait I'll go grab my stuff and change."

"Come on," Sooyoung followed, linking her arm with the shorter girls, "we aren't dressed any better!"

"Yeah," Yuri nodded claiming the other arm. She dragged the smaller girl to the front door, "We're just going down stairs to walk around anyway."

"Hey Seohyun," the tallest girl called, noticing the pensive figure sitting alone on the couch, "you want to come with?"

Seohyun let out an inaudible sigh, smiling as she rose from her seat, "Sure."

"Cool! We're going to get lunch at one of the restaurants downstairs. Hey, is Taengoo here?" The younger girl glanced around the suite, "no."

"Ah," Sunny nodded, "okay."

*

Tiffany lay joyously savoring the weight of the girl who had passed out on top of her some time ago. She figured it had to have been hours since the light in the room was much darker than before. Yawning she tilted her head back further into her pillow and stretched her

hand over head before letting it fall to Taeyeon's hair. She ran her fingers through Taeyeon's mussed tresses, kissing the slumbering girl's forehead.

Taeyeon nuzzled her head further into Tiffany's neck, constantly exhaling in a stream of hot pants onto her skin; unknowingly causing the area to tingle in anticipation for the next puff of warm air. Her hand passed through the mass of tangled locks to the older girl's neck where she drew a number of small circles before continuing down to the small of Taeyeon's back.

A content sigh breathed out of her, ending with a moan as she grazed her nails repeatedly over Taeyeon's untainted skin. She would give up anything to stay in this moment forever; to be able to experience this forever. A chuckle left her as she realized the humor of the moment. Now it was she who needed to use the restroom.

Tiffany slowly lifted Taeyeon's body off of her own and inched out of the bed, thankful that there was a washroom connected to the bedroom so that she didn't have to be without Taeyeon's embrace for too long.

She returned quickly to the disheveled bed, untangling the corner of the fitted sheet from Taeyeon's foot and slipping it back over the edge of the mattress before easing in beside Taeyeon who now lay on her side facing the sliding door. She draped her arm over the smaller girl's waist, tenderly kissing the ball of Taeyeon's shoulder. Taeyeon flinched as Tiffany's hand flattened over her stomach.

"Cold!" she gasped, taking Tiffany's hand in her own. The younger girl chuckled, "Sorry, the water's freezing." "That's alright," Taeyeon relaxed wrapping both hands around Tiffany's, "good morning, again." She smiled drawing Tiffany's hand to her face. "I don't think its morning anymore. You've been asleep for a while."

"Sorry." "Don't be." Taeyeon blew hot air onto Tiffany's hand before rubbing her hands over the chilled skin. Tiffany smiled widely at the caring gesture. She would never get tired of Taeyeon's doting. "Fany-ah." "Hm?" The blissful girl closed her eyes reveling in the instant. "I love you."

Her heart raced at the adorning words, drinking them in slowly, "I love you, Tae Tae." She replied drunkenly, her heart beating fast in her ears.

"Is your hand warm now?" "Mhmm," she giggled, unable to shake the giddiness overtaking her, "do the other one?" Taeyeon rolled over facing the love drunk girl. Her expression just as intoxicated, "of course." She pulled Tiffany's other hand to her mouth and practiced the same actions as before until Tiffany's hand was warm. She kissed the younger girl's finger tips her eyes on the shimmering necklace around her lover's neck.

Tiffany followed the older girl's gaze, her smile ever-present, "you know what's funny? I actually wanted to buy it for you."

“Really?”

The younger girl nodded tracing her free hand over the ring hanging from the thin chain, “I thought it would look good on you.”

Taeyeon chuckled, “thank you. I’m sorry it was a little nicked.”

Tiffany pouted, recalling the story Taeyeon told her, “If I’d came in sooner you wouldn’t have had to cry so much.” She gave a kiss to Taeyeon’s hand, “I’m sorry.”

The shorter girl grinned, caressing Tiffany’s cheek, “it’s okay.” She leaned close to Tiffany’s ear, causing a shiver as she trailed her hand down her side, “All that matters now is that we’re together.”

Tiffany nodded, reeling in her drifting mind as Taeyeon’s deft hands continued to explore.

*

“There not here yet?”

Jessica shrugged, “We’ll just leave some for them. Pass me that?”

Sooyoung grabbed a few slices of Italian bread before passing the ornate basket to Jessica.

“These baskets are so pretty,” Sunny studied the salad bowl as she handed it to the girl at her left,

“Do you think we have to return them?”

Hyoyeon shrugged, immediately handing the salad bowl to Yuri, “Probably not. I’ll wash them after just in case.”

“Alright.” Sunny nodded, starting on her food.

“You should eat your vegetables,” Seohyun warned, “They’re good for you.”

Hyoyeon sighed grabbing the bowl again. She placed a bit of the foliage on her plate and set the bowl back down, engaging again in the idle banter.

“Movie again tonight?”

“How about just some TV?” Yuri suggested, rubbing her full stomach, “There’s a new show I’ve been wanting to watch.”

“Sounds good to me.” Yoona agree, parlaying with Sooyoung for the last slice of Italian bread.

“I’m so glad that we get this time.” Seohyun smiled, amused by the display.

“Me too,” Sooyoung nodded, “would have been better if I brought my PS3 though.”

“Yeah, but there’s no way we could have known.” Jessica claimed the bread as her own. Sooyoung sighed, too full to protest, “True,” she continued to nod.

Sunny smiled, rising from the table, “you should get a DS like me.” She handed her plate to Hyoyeon who was already at the sink.

The tall girl shrugged heading for the couch, “probably. Where is it? You should bring it down.”

“I was going to,” she crossed to the stairs.

Jessica glanced at the display of her cell phone, “it’s well past nine, you guys didn’t see them at all when you were walking around?”

Yuri shook her head, “no, but we didn’t go everywhere.” She took her dishes to Hyoyeon, “this place is so huge.”

“When did you see them leave?” Jessica turned to the dark haired girl at the corner of the table.

“Hm?” Seohyun met her gaze.

“Didn't you tell Sunny they weren't here?”

“Oh,” Seohyun joined the older girl at the sink, “I meant downstairs. I haven't seen them either.”

“Oh,” Jessica set her plate on the counter near Hyoyeon, “ok.” She turned to Yuri, following her into the living room, “What show was it that you wanted to watch?”

*

Sunny hopped up the stairs and rounded the corner to the bedroom at the end of the hall. She'd meant to grab her belongings the night before but passed out sometime after losing to Hyoyeon in a drinking game that still had her a little buzzed. She knocked briefly on the closed door and carelessly pushed it open when there was no reply. The occupants were too absorbed in each other to notice.

Chapter 4

Taeyeon panned her eyes over the group of girls staring at her. Yuri was in front of her on the other side of the coffee table, the TV flashing bright behind her head. To her right, Taeyeon's left, was Sunny at the end of the couch, scowling with her head in her palms, muttering silently to herself. Between herself and Sunny sat Seohyun void of expression.

At the far end of the right side of the couch was Hyoyeon, detached from the situation; gaze lazily planted on the TV. Sooyoung was sitting on the floor beside her, leaning on the coffee table with an eyebrow raised. Yoona was between Hyoyeon and Jessica studying the Taeyeon with a furrowed brow. Like Seohyun Jessica didn't have much of an expression. Tiffany sat by Taeyeon's side, quiet and unmoved; a stark contrast to how she'd been just minutes ago.

“No, no! This can't be happening, not like this.” Tiffany sat on the bed, shaking her head as her hands gripped at her tangled hair, “what am I going to do Tae Tae? What are we going to do?”

Taeyeon glanced over her shoulder at the anxious girl frantically mumbling; her eyes misting. She finished slipping on her pants before going to the paling girl. Sitting next to Tiffany, she pulled the younger girls hand into her own, “Shh, everything will be alright Fany-ah.” She crooned running her palm over Tiffany's head in an attempt to calm her lover's scared heart.

Tiffany quickly pulled Taeyeon's hand back into her own, shocking the small girl at the tightness of her grasp, “No it won't!” she cried, her body trembling. Her tears begun to stream, “They're going to take you away from me. They're going to break us up. I knew this would happen—I knew it! They'll send me back to America and I'll never see you again,” She threw

herself into the smaller girl burrowing her head under Taeyeon's chin, "I can't lose you Tae Tae... not now, I-I just got you..."

"Tiffany," Taeyeon's hands rubbed gently at Tiffany's back, "no one can take me away from you. Ever. If I have to quit So Nyuh Shi Dae and search the world I will. I'll do anything to be with you." She rested her lips on the crying girl's forehead, letting them linger before pulling away, "I love you."

Tiffany's sobs started to quiet as Taeyeon framed her face with soft kisses, speaking reassuring words to the relaxing girl, "I promise you everything will be fine." She lifted Tiffany's chin, her eyes boring into the younger girl, "you believe me, right?"

Tiffany gave a small nod, her shaking subsiding.

"Ok." She pried herself away from Tiffany who was hesitant to let go and went to the door where she retrieved the pink heap of clothes, "Get dressed." She returned to the bed and handed the articles to the younger girl, "We'll go downstairs and... talk."

Tiffany replied with another small nod dressing herself as the older girl had instructed.

Taeyeon sighed running her hands through her hair. She needed to be calm for Tiffany's sake but in reality she too was falling apart. What if everything wasn't going to be okay? What if everything Tiffany said was going to happen? How would she find Tiffany half way across the world? And if she did find her beloved, would Tiffany's family stand in the way? If she took too long to find her would Tiffany still lo—

"Tae Tae?"

Taeyeon turned to the girl who was now standing at her side, lacing her fingers between her own. She flashed a smile at the younger girl, "Ready?"

Tiffany nodded, her voice shrinking as they exited the room, "Don't let me go."

She looked over the girls in the room once more taking note of Tiffany's tight hold. Her tremors were starting again. Taeyeon knew it would only be moments before the younger girl broke down and she didn't want that to happen. She took a deep breath and held it in. It was best to just say it fast.

Say it fast and get it over with.

Exhaling she forced the words from her, "I...we..."

Tiffany came to her senses. She didn't want her lover to do this alone. After all, she was half of the equation, "Tae Tae and I... we're..."

But Taeyeon wasn't going to let Tiffany be the one to say it.

If they're going to judge anyone it's going to be me, "We're dating."

"We're together."

"What?"

She wasn't sure who said it but she gave them an answer anyway, "She's my girlfriend."

An explosion of murmurs spilled from the girls.

"I can't believe this!" Grumbled Yuri, crossing her arms over her chest.

"Are you serious?" Sooyoung eyes widened.

Taeyeon nodded as Tiffany shrunk behind her. She would be strong for Tiffany no matter what.

“Since when?” Yuri’s face scrunched, the anger overtly noticeable.

“Since our break.” Taeyeon held her ground.

“What?!” Sooyoung threw her hands to the air, “That was like half a year ago!”

She felt Tiffany flinch at the young girl’s volume. The wavy haired girl’s head was now behind her shoulder, shielding her face from the girls. Taeyeon could feel the tears seeping through her shirt.

“You didn’t think to tell us?” Yuri’s huffed, her voice pained.

“You’re mad...” It was more of an observation than a question.

“What?” her face contorted again before she shook her head waving her hands in front of her face, “No, I mean yeah but only cause you didn’t tell me!”

“Huh—?” Taeyeon lifted her head questioningly.

“They were afraid; it’s not the easiest thing to bring up.” Jessica crossed her legs from her seat at the end of the couch.

“You knew?” Sooyoung gawked, turning the attention to the older girl.

Jessica nodded, closing her eyes. Her moves were so passive Taeyeon couldn’t help but wonder what could possibly be going through the brunettes head.

Yuri scoffed snapping her head back to duo in question, “You told Sica and not *me*? We’re roommates Fany!”

“Unnie, don’t be upset. They were just scared.”

“Wait—you too Maknae?”

Seohyun averted her eyes to the floor below her, unwilling to give an answer to Sooyoung or the shocked eyes coming from the other side of the couple.

“Did everyone else know too?”

“I did.” Sunny spoke her first words since the *accident*.

“Really?” Taeyeon didn’t feel right talking to the girl for fear that she would blow up at any moment but she couldn’t stifle her curiosity.

Sunny nodded, dangerously calm, “Yeah.”

“... How?”

The dark haired girl sighed and turned to Taeyeon a small smirk on her face, “You never cleared your user name off my computer.”

Jessica’s eyes popped open as she snapped her fingers muttering something to herself. Sunny continued unaware of the older girl’s actions, chuckling in an attempt to lighten the mood, “After that it really wasn’t that hard to figure it out.”

Tiffany dried her eyes loosening her hold on Taeyeon’s arm. “So obvious,” She mumbled into Taeyeon’s shoulder.

“You weren’t any better,” Sunny scoffed reaching for the bag of chips on the table, “This girl,” she hitched her chin at Tiffany, her eyes addressing the rest of the girls in the room, “you know how she always loses her phone? I found it once—,” she spoke while chewing, “All the pictures and messages—everything was about Taengoo. It was like a shrine.”

“You went through my phone?” Tiffany lifted her head to meet Sunny’s gaze, forgetting her fear.

“I was trying to call the house to let you know I found it but I don’t know how to work that cryptic thing.”

The tense atmosphere started to evaporate from the room. Taeyeon leaned to Tiffany’s ear. “I guess we were both a little obvious.” She grinned, thinking back to their small quarrel from the day before.

“A little?” Jessica muttered, “Do you know how hard it was trying to cover for you two?” she rolled her eyes, “It’s a fulltime job! Seohyun and I—!” She looked to Seohyun, “tell them Maknae.”

Seohyun clasped her hands in her lap her eyes low as she started to blush, “Unnie, you shouldn’t write Fany “hearts” Tae Tae on the bathroom mirror and leave it there... even when the fog is gone the words stay if you don’t clean it.”

so Fany Taeyeon thought shaking her head.

Snickers passed through the room before leaving them in a silence similar to the one that had greeted the duo when they initially entered the area.

“So...” Taeyeon cleared her throat. Her words were tentative, “you guys are ok ...with it?” She ran her thumb over the back of Tiffany’s hand, feeling the taller girl retreat behind her once again. She hadn’t let go, “with us...?”

The silence continued for what seemed like eternity.

Taeyeon was surprised when Yuri was the first to speak.

“I’ve never thought of you two being like... that... but it just,” she looked to the ceiling, “it seems right.” A sigh escaped her, “I guess that’s because you two have been together practically ever since I met you.” she nodded confirming her thoughts, “It would be weird to see you with anyone else.”

“Yeah,” Sunny nodded also, finishing the chips, “I guess that’s why hearing about you with Taeyeon was such a shock.”

Yuri chuckled, nudging the taller girl to her left, “Taeyeon, Taeyeon, maybe she thought if she couldn’t have Taengoo he was the next best thing.”

Sooyoung shook her head.

“Tsk, silly girl.” Sunny joked.

Laughter passed through the room.

“I think it’s beautiful,” Yoona exhaled, her words tripping out of her mouth. Taeyeon wondered if she’d been holding her breath the entire time, “Love is love.” She smiled turning to Hyoyeon who sat silent beside her, purposely avoiding the eyes of the girl she knew had to be staring at her, “Right Unnie?”

“It’s wrong.” Sooyoung mumbled, her finger massaging her chin.

Tiffany sighed painfully her hand clutching at the fabric of Taeyeon’s sleeve.

Taeyeon felt her body stiffen as her hands curled into fist, her eyes darkening. Call it wrong, call

it whatever you want she didn't care

Just don't make Tiffany cry.

Yuri noticed the movements of the shorter girl and nudged Sooyoung's side once more, urging her to speak.

The taller girl glanced to the couple sitting on the couch and quickly shook her head, her hands waving in front of her face, "Not you—you're not wrong! It's just I think of all of us as sisters. So now it's like my sisters are... well... you know..." she made a flurry of gestures with her hands.

"—UGH!" Sunny shuddered, clasping her hands over her face.

"We get it." Taeyeon nodded, stopping the younger girl from trying to explain. She could only imagine what was going through Sunny's head.

"I think I'll have to get used to it but don't worry. We're all family here, right?"

Sooyoung chuckled, "now it's like you're my parents instead of my sisters!"

Taeyeon sent her smile, thankful of her attempts to make Tiffany smile. She felt Tiffany's grip ease once more. The wavy haired girl closed her eyes, tension leaving her body as she rested easy against Taeyeon's back letting relief overtake her.

Some time passed before anyone spoke again.

"But," Yuri started her gaze pensive, "what does this mean for us? For So Nyuh Shi Dae?"

Taeyeon answered with a question unsure of how to reply, "What do you mean?"

"Are you going to go public?"

She could feel an anxious wave tempt the room. Yuri definitely wasn't the only one who longed to know their answer.

Taeyeon glanced over her shoulder to the girl leaning on her, "I don't think either one of us is ready for that, right?"

Tiffany didn't respond.

Taeyeon accepted her silence as agreement. She felt her body lean forward as Tiffany's body slump against hers, "Just being comfortable in our home is more than we could ask for."

As if on cue Tiffany's hand trailed down Taeyeon's arm and slipped around her waist. Taeyeon instinctively covered Tiffany's hand with her own. She tucked her legs under her, leaning her arm on the pillow to her left.

Seohyun smiled at the warm display, feeling a wave of relief rush over herself. She didn't know what she would have done if things had gone differently. Everyone in the room meant so much to her. Their feelings and thoughts were equally important. She watched as the girls around her slowly started to turn their attention back to the TV before glancing to the girl at the far end of the couch.

She hadn't said a word.

"Unnie?"

"Hm?" grunted the ponytailed girl.

"You're awfully quiet."

Hyoyeon rose to her feet, raising the volume on her iPod, “I don’t care about any of this, love will only hurt you in the end.”

All eyes followed the detached girl as she headed for the stairwell; all except that of the girl whose eyes had fallen to the floor.

“What’s up with her?” Sooyoung flipped through the channels.

“Eh,” Sunny shrugged, rolling her eyes, “you know how she gets when anyone talks about anything remotely romantic.”

“Mmm,” Sooyoung nodded glancing over her shoulder to the couple, “don’t worry about her, she—haha!” She stifled her laughter. Taeyeon lay with her mouth agape on her back with one arm hanging off the edge of the couch. The other rested on Tiffany’s back who was on top of Taeyeon, arms firmly clutched around the smaller girl’s hips. They breathed in rhythm fast asleep; exhausted from their long eventful day.

*

Hyoyeon stood on the balcony of the room she’d been sharing with three other girls. Well, sharing wasn’t quite the word for it.

“More like squatting,” she muttered, lowering herself to the snow speckled ground below. The brisk night air blew around her, shaking her bones but she didn’t care. It gave her something to worry about; something else to focus on other than her own impending breakdown.

“You’re upset,” Wavered a muffled voice. Hyoyeon looked to the sliding door to reply but stopped when she realized the voice was coming from the balcony below. She sat still, unwillingly overhearing the conversation taking place under her.

“I... I just want to understand.” Spoke a second voice. Hyoyeon wanted to look over the edge of the railing to put faces to the two but she didn’t need to, she knew who it was.

Seohyun stood behind Yoona timidly crossing her arms over her chest, “Those things you said... about it being alright... it...it only applies to them?”

“Yes—I mean—no,” Yoona shook her head, huffing in frustration, “I don’t know... I mean—.” She spun around instinctively taking the taller girls hand in her own. She opened her mouth to speak but sighed when the words didn’t come. She peered into Seohyun’s eyes her breath visible in the biting air as she tried to find her words.

Her eyes trailed to their hands. Somehow seeing the way Seohyun held her made it easier to speak, though what came out wasn’t much of a perfect sentence, “I’ve never thought about this... us... but then that night... it was like my mind exploded. There are so many thoughts,” her voice fell to a whisper, “so many questions.” She whispered, closing her eyes, “It just keeps replaying in my head... you hand on my cheek, your breath on my skin... your lips. I can’t stop thinking about it. No matter how hard I try.” A faint thumping filled her ears as she fell into warmth, “Maybe I don’t want to.”

Yoona opened her eyes, surprised to find herself in Seohyun’s embrace. She lifted her head from Seohyun’s chest, her arms firmly wrapped around the taller girls back. She couldn’t

stop herself from leaning into the kiss. Though what frightened her more was that she wasn't sure if she would have wanted to.

After convincing Seohyun to return to their bedroom that night months ago, she thought that things would go back to the way they were before their kiss. However she quickly learned that wasn't going to happen and decided to switch rooms. Seohyun urged her not to do so and in the end traded rooms with Jessica. Yoona felt horrible about it but even more so because she hadn't told the younger girl why they couldn't sleep near each other. She didn't plan to. Just thinking about it upset her.

"You asked Sica Unnie to trade rooms with you?"

Yoona froze, standing in front of her dresser, "She told you?"

"No, she would never do that. I heard you."

"You were awake?"

Seohyun nodded her eyes on the floor below, "I thought you said things were alright. Did I do something wrong?"

"No..."

"Then why?"

"..."

"Can't you tell me?"

"It's nothing," Yoona shook her head, "I just think it might be better for you."

"For me?" Mumbled the younger girl, digging her nails into the stuffed animal she was holding.

"Maybe it will help you."

"You," her breath hitched, she tried to muffle it with her large plushy, "think I need help?"

"What? No, I didn't mean it like that." Don't cry Seohyun, please, I can't take seeing you cry anymore. "You're not yourself lately." Her voice wavered, "You're not happy around me."

"How can you say that?" she rose from her bed, still clutching the doll as she crossed to Yoona,

"I'm always happy when you're near me."

"In the day but at night—." She caught herself.

Silence.

"What?" Seohyun spoke softly.

Yoona shook her head; she'd said too much already, "I'm hurting you."

"Yoona," she stood behind Yoona, staring at her through the large vanity mirror; her eyes pleading, "don't go."

"It will be better for us." She turned away. She couldn't hold the gaze.

"Then I'll switch," the younger girl huffed, walking away.

"Why?" Yoona glanced back to the mirror, studying the frustrated girl.

"If you're not here then what does it matter?" she tossed the plushy on her bed, mumbling to herself as she stormed through the bedroom door, "A room is just a room."

This wasn't right. Kissing Seohyun, enjoying this embrace; it wasn't fair. If she didn't know what she wanted she didn't deserve to taste Seohyun's sweet lips.

Her hand grazed over Seohyun's stomach playing at the hem of her shirt.

What are you doing Yoona? Chided her thoughts as she moaned into the taller girl.

How can you treat her like this?

How can you use her when you don't know what you want? Her hungry cry's continued to fill the air as Seohyun's hand danced in her hair.

Seohyun leaned closer to the panting girl, anxiously waiting for Yoona's fingers to brush against her skin.

How long can this last? You're both so young. How can she know what she wants?

A familiar voice stirred in her head, different from her scolding conscious, "*one day she'll abandon you.*" The words rang clear in her head drawing her from the heated moment.

"No!" Yoona screamed, pushing herself off of the stunned girl. She didn't mean to use so much force but she couldn't control herself. It seemed as if that was beginning to become a habit of hers. Yoona cursed her strength when Seohyun's back connected with the balcony railing.

"Oh Seo—I—I'm so sorry—!" she backed away, her body trembling as she reached behind her back for the sliding door, "we can't—I'm sorry—I just—I!"

"Unnie..." whispered the small voice of the hurt girl. Her eyes welling from the pain of her heart and back, "Yoona," she called again. Her arms were still outstretched, pleading for the girl to return to her. They wrapped around herself when she didn't; accompanying her body as she slid to the cold ground below. The bitter chill of the freezing air returned to her so quickly it was hard to believe Yoona had been there just moments before.

"I know you love me." Her words forced their way through jagged breaths. "I know it," she managed before her soft whimpers penetrated the air. It hurt Hyoyeon to listen and not be able to help the younger girl. Seohyun deserved comfort and Hyoyeon knew it was her responsibility to help; after all this was mostly her fault. But even so she didn't move. Seohyun needed someone strong to soothe her. And she was in no position to do so. Her eyes were already streaming with tears even before the memories of her own heart ache filled her head.

Chapter 5

It was just another day at practice the first time Hyoyeon met her. The moment she laid eyes on her she was entranced. She'd never seen her before; mainly because she never really bothered to look around when walking through the halls of the tall building. She wasn't sure what had made her eyes stray from their familiar place glued to the floor, but as she watched the tall slim figure dancing alone in the middle of the hallway she realized she didn't really care.

The girl twirled in front of her, spinning to music only she could hear when their eyes met. It was as if time stopped. Hyoyeon felt as if her heart would explode from the irregular rhythm it was beating. Her hands clenched and her mouth grew dry. It was only when a strange flutter in the bottom of her stomach that she came back to her senses and was able to tear her eyes away from the girl. Quickly, she barreled into the large practice room.

During the rest of the day she couldn't keep her mind off of the taller girl. She wondered her name, her age, where she was from, what she sounded like... I bet she sounds like an angel.

"Hey kid, you dance really well." Called the patronizing voice of the tall girl coming towards her.

Hyoyeon sighed as she stuffed her belonging into her backpack. This was indeed a typical day. Usually she was fast enough to avoid the bullies but today her attention had been focused elsewhere. She cursed herself for staring so long as the group of girls surrounded her.

"Maybe too well." Smirked the second girl. She was mouthy and small. Full of useless words.

"Hey," the tall girl shoved Hyoyeon's shoulder eager for a reaction, "Those are nice sneakers. Where did you get them?"

"Thanks, they're imports from America." She knew she shouldn't have replied but the words slipped out. She wasn't feeling much like herself that day.

"Ah, you buy American shoes 'cause you want to be American? Or 'cause your feet are so big?"

"What are you saying?" the tallest one laughed, "of course its cause her feet are big!"

Hyoyeon's shoulders slumped momentarily as her strong posture shattered. Quickly she built herself up and squeezed her way through the gaggle of girls.

"Ha! What's this?" The shortest one's hand darted inside the open pouch at the back of Hyoyeon's bag. Again she cursed but this time for having not closed it after grabbing her headphones.

The tall girl watched as the thief pawed through Hyoyeon's wallet, "anything good in there?"

"Eh, no not really." She replied, shoving Hyoyeon's money into her own pocket.

"Ah, well we better keep it anyway." They shared a laugh, "don't want you wasting your money on more man shoes."

Hyoyeon wasn't stupid enough to fight back. There were five of them and while she knew she could take most of them one on one there was no chance that they would give her that option.

She spun on her heels and brisked out of the practice room, thankful that she hadn't bought a drink earlier that day at the vending machine. Maybe she couldn't make it home but at least she could phone someone to get her.

Of course that will probably be late... Hyoyeon stood at the bus stop searching her backpack for loose change. Part of her knew she'd already found as much as she was going to find but she persisted. Mainly to keep her mind occupied so that she couldn't focus on the tears welling up behind her eyes.

A brief gust of wind past by her as she looked to the sky. The sun was setting and she would soon be without a way to get home.

Maybe it would be best to go back to the studio. Maybe I can use the phone there and wait... her gaze fell to the ground a long sigh escaping her.

*"I like these shoes." She mumbled feeling the tears seep from her eyes. So much had happened that day. So many things piled on top of one another. The girl, the bullies, her money... everything was beginning to be too much for the young girl. She just wanted things to be better; to be happier. She wanted to be less afraid
Less lonely... her head fell into her palms. She was too consumed in her emotions to hear the girl approaching from behind.*

"Excuse me, Ho-yeon?"

Great, another bully, Hyoyeon remained crouched over her bag, clutching it to her chest. She couldn't lose anything else today. She couldn't afford it.

*"I think this belongs to you." The voice sang sweetly, nearing her ear. The sulking girl turned her head, jumping back slightly when she saw it was the girl from before.
The long haired girl was kneeling down beside Hyoyeon holding her wallet securely in her hand, "take it." She smiled when she noticed the hesitation in the smaller girl eyes.*

Hyoyeon nodded taking the small black item in her hand. Her voice was meek, "thank you."

"You're welcome."

They both stood up together. Hyoyeon let her eyes quickly gaze over the taller girl. She was now wearing a long white skirt and a black blouse. An elegant ensemble, different then the black ballet uniform from earlier. Her hair fell long over her shoulders, curling and relaxing to perfectly frame her face. Her eyes were soft but bright and inviting while her voice was kind and calming; reassuring, as if anything she said could be used to make someone feel safe. The girl caught Hyoyeon's stare and gifted another small smile causing Hyoyeon to turn back towards the road, her face unusually warm.

"It's Ho-yeon right? I heard what those girls said about you."

"Hyoyeon." She mumbled her eyes on the ground.

Silence

She could feel the foreign girl's presence lingering by her side and wondered why she hadn't left. Her eyes fell to the newly reclaimed wallet in her hand.

How did she...? She wanted to ask it but forming the words was too difficult a task to perform. She peered inside the wallets folds and sighed. It was just as she expected. Void of money.

"You don't say much do you?"

Hyoyeon shrugged, her eyes returning to the ground as she slipped the wallet in her pocket. Her legs are so milky andtoned... Again her face flushed before she tore her eyes away. What's wrong with me?

"I think you're sneakers are nice. My sister has a pair like that." She met Hyoyeon's gaze on the ground, "Don't believe what those girls say."

"Thanks. But you don't have to talk to me if you don't want to."

"I want to." Her voice smiled.

“Okay.” Silence consumed them again as she pondered on what to say. Thankfully the tall girl was full of questions.

“Do you wait here every day for the bus?”

The quiet girl nodded.

“Is that safe?”

Hyoyeon shrugged, “I guess... I don’t usually have any trouble.”

“Oh, that’s good.” The girl bobbed her head, her eyes focused intently on the shorter girl, “My name’s Jessica.”

“Jeshkah?”

A small giggle left the dark haired girl. She pointed to her mouth urging Hyoyeon to look at her. Hyoyeon didn’t dare turn away. She watched as the girl formed the syllables slowly for Hyoyeon to follow; her lips gracefully let the sounds pass, “Jes-si-ca.”

*

“Unnie?” Seohyun slowly pushed the bedroom door open, “Unnie, I need to talk to you are you in here?”

She entered the large room where three beds were lined in a row jutting from the wall to her right.

“Hello?” she called again, stepping further into the vacant room.

“Oh Seohyun,” Sunny exited the bathroom a towel wrapped securely around her body; a puff of steam surrounding her, “What’s up?”

“I was just looking for Hyoyeon. I couldn’t find her in her room.”

“What do you mean her room?” She poked around in the small suitcase near her bed, “She’s been sleeping in here with us.”

“Yeah, it’s getting really cramped,” Sooyoung popped up from between her and Yuri’s bed.

“What were you doing down there?”

“I dropped phone.” She lifted herself onto the bed near the far wall, “so there’s another room for Hyoyeon to sleep in? That liar!” She shook her head, “She said that there were only three beds downstairs!”

Seohyun shook her head, “No... but actually that’s kind of what I wanted to talk to her about. I wanted to know if she would switch rooms with me.”

“Oh yeah? Why? Tired of being in a room with Im Choding?” Sooyoung and Sunny shared a chuckle, oblivious to Seohyun’s brief flinch at the reference.

Seohyun kept her smile light and shook her head, “I just want to experience life on a second floor.”

“I’ll switch with you.” Yuri smiled from the doorway.

“Really Unnie?”

The tan girl nodded sitting down on her bed, “sure. It’s too crowded in here anyway. Between this one snoring all the time,” she rolled her eyes at Sooyoung, “and this one hogging the bathroom.” She watched as Sunny reentered the steaming chamber, “You don’t have to ask me twice.”

*

Hyoyeon jerked awake at the harsh breeze slapping her cheek. It took her a second to regain herself and realize where she was. Every inch of her body ached from the blistering cold as she pushed herself up from the snow speckled balcony. If it wasn't for the awning above her and the thin screen protecting her from the harshness of the weather she was sure she would be dead.

Or at least very close to it.

Hyoyeon drug herself back into the large bedroom and slid the door close behind her. Sunny met her with a quizzical gaze as she stood unpacking her belonging from her suitcase, "what were you doing out there?"

The pony tailed girl shrugged as she flopped onto the large chair in the corner of the room. She grabbed the pillow from her side and curled around it, fatigue consuming her.

"Seohyun was looking for you."

She grunted in response, her ear buds still in her ears. Though the music had long since ended she could at least use them as a barrier from conversation. She needed to sleep and let her body unthaw from the terrible conditions she'd subjected it to but she couldn't.

It's all my fault. She thought, remembering the scene that took place on the balcony below her earlier.

Hyoyeon huffed rolling back over towards the other girl in the room.

I'll take a shower and then I'll talk to her. She rose to her feet and sulked to the washroom, *I'll fix this.*

When she exited the bathroom Sooyoung was on her bed playing Sunny's DS and Sunny was busy typing away on her computer. Yuri was sleeping on the bed in the middle.

Wait

"What happened to Yuri?" She studied the rise and fall of the tall girl neatly tucked under the thick comforter in the middle bed.

"Seohyun and her switched." Sunny frowned from behind her screen, "You lied to us."

Hyoyeon turned to her bag near the chair and bent down.

"You said that she was sharing a room with Yoona and that Jessica's didn't have room for two people."

She stuffed her clothes in her bag, ignoring Sunny's words.

"You should go down stairs. There's no reason for you to not be sleeping in a bed."

"Yeah," Sooyoung nodded, "seriously, aren't you tired of sleeping in a chair?"

She wanted to argue. To contest that her being there was fine or ask that one of them leave instead but she knew that it would be pointless. Sunny wasn't going to leave her large spa like bathroom, Sooyoung wasn't going to leave her wonderful second story view and Seohyun... well, she'd hurt Seohyun enough. There was no reason to bother her. She thought about asking Yuri to room with Jessica but she knew that would only bring up questions of why she herself didn't want to be in the same room with the older girl and she didn't want questions. She didn't need anyone prodding in her business.

With a defeated sigh Hyoyeon turned back to the two girls staring at her. She gave a slight nod and gathered her belongings. “You’re right,” she mumbled reaching for the doorknob, “I’m sorry.”

*

Jessica tossed awake with a sigh. “Just another restless night.” She mumbled sitting up. She scooted to the edge of the bed and slid on her slippers. These fretful nights; there was no point dwelling on something that happened so often it was now just a part of her life. She exited her bedroom and passed through the living room to the kitchen for a glass of water.

She pulled a glass from the dish holder near the sink and held it against the opening in the fridge, enjoying the small sounds her movements were making. She took her time finishing the glass and pour another before heading back towards her room. Her steps turned into tiptoes as she noticed the large blanket spread out on the floor and the two bodies underneath it.

How did I possibly miss that on the way out here? She smiled to herself.

Jessica stared longingly at the lovers. Her gaze wasn’t creepy; just inquisitive. She was intrigued by how their bodies seemed to fit perfectly into one another.

Like puzzle pieces. She nodded, smiling again.

Taeyeon lay on her stomach with one hand under head while the other hung over Tiffany’s waist who was on her side turned away from Taeyeon, clutching at the small bit of blanket covering her. The older girl inhaled deeply before letting it go with a sigh, rolling onto her side as well. Her hand lazily slipped off of the younger girl’s waist as she shifted. Jessica signed turning her back on the sight of a frowning Tiffany shifting under the cover, immediately responding to the lack of hold she desired.

“*Tae Tae-ah...*” The small voice whined.

The response was delayed “*...Are you cold?*”

“*Hng.*” She whined again.

“*Here,*” a flurry of rustles came from the blankets, “*come closer to me...Better?*”

Tiffany sighed, satisfied, “*mmhmm.*”

Jessica was already in front of her door before she turned back to gaze at the pair now locked in each other’s embrace. She felt ashamed for witnessing their simple act of love, but she couldn’t help it. This was as close as she would get to experiencing it. She would be lying if she said she wasn’t envious. It was embarrassing how much she wanted what they had; how much she longed for someone to hold her how Taeyeon was holding Tiffany with her arm under Tiffany’s head and hands buried in her hair while Tiffany grasped at Taeyeon’s shirt holding her so close it seemed as if they could become one. It upset her that she yearned for someone to look at her the way they looked at each other, to be there for her as her friends were for each other. It pained her that she was destined to be without but she would never admit it.

It would be humiliating if anyone found out how much I ache inside.

An awkward feeling grew in her chest. Her own thoughts startled her. She broke from her trance shaking her head. Staring at them wasn’t going to make her situation any better.

Whatever situation that may be.

“I love... Fany-ah,” the short girl mumbled against Tiffany’s forehead. It was those words that made Jessica shudder

“Love you Taengoo...” and Tiffany’s lips leaning into Taeyeon’s that made her tears fall.

In moments Jessica was back in her room, rubbing the wetness away from her eyes. She’d gotten good at controlling them over the years but sometimes they liked to catch her off guard.

A soft knock at the door pulled her back to her feet and further from the sleep she needed. She never thought it would be her.

“Why are you here?” Jessica felt her body tense, realizing that her words sounded more like an accusation than a normal question.

She was relieved when Hyoyeon didn’t seem to notice, “Circumstances.”

Jessica ran her eyes over the smaller girl, studying the bags in her hands. She immediately knew what it meant but couldn’t stop herself from asking anyway, “you want to room with me.” Now her question sounded like a statement.

Hyoyeon remained meek; her head hung low with her backpack slung over her shoulder.

A small grin flashed on Jessica as her eyes lingered on the purple straps.

She remembered.

“Everyone else’s room is full and they’re getting tired of all the moving around.” Hyoyeon’s eyes finally met Jessica’s. Her words paused as she wondered how long ago it had been since she’d had a chance to view the large clear orbs, “I don’t want to disturb them anymore.” What were once bright and inviting were now dark and forlorn.

“If you want me to go I—.”

Jessica shook her head, stepping to the side, “you’re fine.”

“Thank you Jessica.”

An inaudible sigh escaped Jessica as she crossed to her large disheveled bed.

She never say’s it anymore.

“Sorry if I woke you up.” The ponytailed girl grumbled, her voice dripping with weariness.

Jessica crawled under her blankets and pulled the covers up to her face, “its fine. If it’s too cold for you near the window we can switch.”

“Don’t worry about me.” Hyoyeon set her bags near the foot of her bed and let down her hair before collapsing on to the soft surface. “I’ll be fine.” She closed her eyes, exhaling shallow breaths as sleep overtook her, “you won’t even know that I’m here.”

*

“Hyoyeon, over here!” the dark haired girl waved her arms over her head beckoning to the small form that had just entered the bus.

Hyoyeon felt her face flush but quickly shook the feeling, something she’d learned to do yesterday after arriving home and replaying the events of their first meeting over and over in her head until she was sure she would never forget it. She had no intentions of scaring off the girl who had befriended her so easily by acting weird around her.

Hyoyeon met the grinning girl at the back of the bus and took a seat beside her. "Good afternoon." Smiled Jessica, her eyes shining bright in the midday sunlight. "Hi." Hyoyeon swallowed the lump in her throat and tucked her hair behind her ear, "you take this bus too?" "Mhmm," she nodded, her fingers lacing in her lap, "I guess we'll be seeing more of each other."

"Yeah," she smiled determined to do away with her one word answers. For some reason she felt Jessica deserved more, "I—I'd like that."

"Me too," the words were easy for Jessica. Hyoyeon watched the older girl untie and redo her hair into a tight bun.

"You.. ballet?"

"Hm?" her head tilted slightly, her eyes meeting Hyoyeon's again.

"I mean... you like ballet?"

Jessica shrugged, "it's okay. I really just like dancing. Something about letting my body do whatever it wants while music courses through me makes me feel alive, you know?" she covered her mouth, chuckling lightly, "what am I saying? Of course you do." Jessica nodded, "you're an amazing dancer."

"Uh, um, thank.. Thank you." The blushing girl stammered, unable to break from Jessica's gaze.

"I mean it," her kind eyes softened, "Whoever thinks different is an idiot."

The rest of the ride continued in near silence with Hyoyeon trying to focus on the steps she'd been practicing the day before and Jessica listening to her CD player. They arrived to the studio early as usual and entered the building. Hyoyeon turned to the girl walking slightly behind her side to bid her farewell.

Jessica shook her head, "I'll walk you inside."

"You don't have to. You might be late."

"I have plenty of time, besides it's down the same hall." She continued walking towards the hallway, "I'm older than you so I have to make sure you get there, right? Isn't that how you do it here?"

Hyoyeon gave a slight sigh and followed behind; a small smile creeping onto her face. She could tell Jessica wasn't going to take no for an answer and she didn't really want her to.

There were only a few other girls in the room when they entered. Jessica paid them no mind but Hyoyeon hung her head low, counting the planks of wood that made up the floor as she walked to her corner hoping that the girls were too occupied to notice her.

They were.

"Looks like we've got another stupid American."

"What?" Jessica spun on her heels her eyes frozen on the girl whom she identified as the leader. The girl held her ground though it was obvious she felt intimidated, "Nothing. We didn't say anything about you or your 'boyfriend'." She chuckled, turning back to her friends.

Jessica glanced to Hyoyeon and then back at the girls.

Before the tall girl had a chance to react Jessica was behind her with her fists balled tight, "Apologize."

The girl jumped, startled by Jessica's speed. She opened her mouth to speak but stopped when Jessica inched closer.

"Don't do it," the shortest one called to her leader, "if we get in trouble again they'll let us go." The bully grumbled backing away from Jessica, "I'm sorry."

"Say it to her face." Jessica's words were quick and sharp like a knife cutting effortlessly through crisp air.

The girl turned to Hyoyeon and with a sigh bowed, "I'm sorry Hyoyeon."

Hyoyeon, stunned by the act, could only nod in acceptance.

"Give her back the money you took yesterday."

Hyoyeon reached for Jessica's shoulder, "It's okay, she doesn't—."

Jessica gently grabbed Hyoyeon's arm her cold eyes glancing over her shoulder to her before falling on the bully again, "Give her back her money."

The girl nodded and quickly pulled a wad of Won from her pocket. She didn't bother to count it before thrusting it towards Hyoyeon.

Hyoyeon didn't notice though. She was too busy overheating from Jessica's touch. Her heart began to race as her questioning thoughts flooded her mind.

Why am I getting like this?

Today, Yesterday... is this what happens when you have friends?

Is this what it feels like?

Jessica let go of Hyoyeon's hand and gently nudged her shoulder.

"Thank you." She bowed returning to the moment.

"You're welcome," the bully replied embarrassed by the ordeal. Her eyes panned between Hyoyeon and Jessica before she turned on her heels and scurried back to her group. Somehow Hyoyeon knew she wouldn't be a problem anymore.

"I have to go to practice. I'll see you at the bus stop?"

"Hm?" Hyoyeon lifted her eyes from the handful of money in her palm, "yeah!" She belted, a little too enthusiastic for her own comfort. Her voice lowered, "Thank you for um... that."

Jessica shook her head, "Don't worry about it. I told you, we're friends," she grabbed her belongings, "and I'm older so I have to take care of you." Her eyes returned to their normal bright state as she smiled before heading to the door, "no matter what."

Chapter 6

Jessica sat at the small table on the balcony peering out past identical buildings to the rising sun. She couldn't actually see the giant star itself, but she could tell by the way everything gradually grew brighter around her that it was dawn. She lifted her cup of tea to her lips, drinking away the chill from the whirling wind slicing through the mesh screen that was protecting her.

She sighed, watching her breath escape her as a bittersweet smile crept onto her lips. This was the longest Hyoyeon had willingly been around her in years. Well, outside of work that is. The smile left as quickly as it came.

How could I let it get this bad? She thought, closing her eyes. Jessica crossed her arms over her chest and took another sip of the warm liquid. She didn't want to think about it. About how she'd readily given up on something before she'd even had the chance to properly claim it as her own. Another sigh passed her lips. This day was too beautiful for her to be sad so early.

Let's wait a couple of hours before getting depressed.

*

"Taengoo..."

"..."

Tiffany ran her fingers through Taeyeon's hair, pushing the stray tufts away from the sleeping girl's face. She leaned closer to her girlfriend's ear.

"Taeyeon-ah," she breathed heavily, her lips grazing Taeyeon's ear.

"Hmm?" The small girl stirred nuzzling her face further into her pillow.

Tiffany kissed gently at the shell of Taeyeon's ear, exhaling hot breaths as her warm kisses trailed to the older girl's earlobe. She nibbled on the soft flesh before slowly sucking it into her mouth and running her tongue along the smooth surface. She traced her finger down the smaller girl's sleeve and slipped her fingers under the soft fabric.

Taeyeon moaned, shuddering as goose bumps quickly formed on her body. Tiffany drew circles on Taeyeon's shoulder, keeping her touch light much to the disappointment of her girlfriend who yearned for more. Her lips kissed at the sensitive skin under the smaller girl's ear causing another throaty moan to break through her. She painted Taeyeon's jaw with teasing kisses before arriving at her mouth. Taeyeon's lips were already parted; waiting intently.

"Taeyeongie," Tiffany tucked a tuft of hair behind Taeyeon's ear, brushing her thumb over the soft skin she'd previously shown affection to. "Are you awake now?"

Taeyeon gasped bringing her hands up to Tiffany's neck. Before she could reply Tiffany pressed her lips against Taeyeon's.

Instantly she found herself being over taken by the smaller girl. Her senses heightened by the moment. Six months in and there were still butterflies in her stomach. She didn't mind. Kissing Taeyeon would never be normal. Their tongues continued to dance feverously against one another, complementing each other's softness in a number of passes. Her hand slipped onto Tiffany's stomach, pushing her down so that she was on top. They both knew where this was going.

Their kiss was quickly losing its innocence.

"Ah... Taeyeon," Tiffany moaned her hands on Taeyeon's biceps. She felt the muscles contract and release as the older girl's hands trailed down to the waistband of Tiffany's pink shorts. She was quickly starting to love this side of Taeyeon; this forceful passionate side of Taeyeon, hungry for Tiffany's attention. She discovered the new persona just nights ago and while she loved sweet, caring Taeyeon, *this* Taeyeon drove her senses wild. With *this* Taeyeon

she didn't have to hold back or worry about who might see them. She didn't have to suppress her feelings, which even though they were together she still had to do around the rest of the world. With *this* Taeyeon she knew that she could let herself go and spill all the emotions and feelings that constantly over flowed from her gushing heart.

Except right now that is.

"Tae Tae." She gasped at the kisses on her throat. Taeyeon knew she was sensitive there, "T-Tae-y-yeon wait!" She grabbed the shorter girl's hand, stopping her from treading lower, "Not, ah! Not out here," She panted
 "Mm?" The smaller girl continued to nibble on Tiffany's neck.
 "Not... out... here..." She grabbed the smaller girls head.

Taeyeon took in the familiar surroundings, "why are we out here?" her eyes panned over the living room as she remained hovering.

"We fell asleep out here last night. It was too cramped on the couch and I couldn't carry you up the stairs so I pushed the coffee table against the wall and brought you here."

"Oh," she smiled at the girl below her, "you could have woken me up."

Tiffany eyes turned to crescents her head shaking, "You looked so peaceful."

Taeyeon blushed at the kind words. Tiffany's honesty always made her heart flutter. She could practically feel it jumping out of her chest. She closed her eyes feeling the rise and fall of Tiffany's breath under her palm. The sensation, coupled with the light massaging Tiffany was giving her neck, was almost too much for her. Her thoughts made her face a deeper shade of red even before she spoke.

"Do..." She caught her eyes drifting over Tiffany's body, "Do you...want to..."

"Hm?" Tiffany smiled tilting her head to the side, "what is it Tae Tae?"

"Let's um... let's go upstairs..."

"Oh?" She leaned up to Taeyeon's ear, brushing her lips against the tender flesh, "to do what exactly?" her voice was dripping with desire as she seductively raked her finger nail down Taeyeon's spine.

The smaller girl shrieked tumbling to her side.

"What's wrong?" Tiffany sat up, her concern for the girl hissing in pain replacing her need to be sated.

"Ah!" she arched her back, "It's nothing."

"Tell me."

She relaxed, slowly, "My back's just a little sore."

"Hm," Tiffany nodded, "Probably from sleeping on the floor."

Taeyeon gave a tentative nod, "... Yeah."

Tiffany's brow furrowed, her head tilting to the side. She reached for the girl's shirt, "Here, let me see."

Taeyeon rested her head in her arms as Tiffany eased the smaller onto her stomach and lifted her shirt, "I think you might have scratched me yesterday."

Bite marks speckled the small of Taeyeon's back and claw shaped bruises trailed in various areas

over her skin. Small crescent shaped imprints were on her shoulder blades. Tiffany had done more than just scratch the girl. She'd marked her territory.

Seeing the state of her lovers marred skin made her blush in shame at letting herself indulge in releasing a teaspoon of the pent up emotions she'd been harboring for years.

"Oh Tae Tae I'm so sorry! I-I couldn't control myself." Her words were true; she couldn't help herself.

Taeyeon rolled over under the girl straddling her, "it's okay Fany-ah." She chuckled masking her discomfort.

"Does it hurt?" she peered at Taeyeon's midriff. There were a few bite marks there too.

Taeyeon shook her head, cupping the teary eyed girls face, "just a little." She pulled the fretful girl closer, "its fine, I promise."

Tiffany wanted to resist the kiss to punish herself for hurting Taeyeon but she couldn't. Even now she wanted to ravish Taeyeon just as frantically as she had before. Maybe even more so.

"Wait, let me bandage it." She demanded, showing no signs of resistance.

Taeyeon nodded silencing the girl falling into her.

"In the living room too?!" Sunny roared. "Is nowhere safe?!" She stifled a laugh at the sight of Tiffany hurrying off of Taeyeon.

"Sunny we weren't—."

"Relax. I'm just kidding." She headed back to the kitchen, "You guys hungry?"

Taeyeon sighed watching Tiffany collect their blankets. "I'll take these upstairs."

Tiffany mumbled, carrying the folded blanketing in front of her.

She rose to her feet with a huff, "Starved."

Taeyeon let out another groan and went to the kitchen, knowing that if she followed the younger girl her cravings would out trump food once again.

"Good morning." Taeyeon called to the girl now standing at the stove heating up a frying pan.

"Morning." The bubbly girl replied smiling widely, "Sleep well?"

Taeyeon nodded.

"Good."

"—Ow!" Taeyeon rubbed her shoulder from the hard blow she'd received from the now fiery girl.

"You jerk!"

She knew this was going to happen sooner or later.

"I can't believe you! What did I say?" her fist connected with the tender area once more, "I didn't ever want to think about my two friends getting it on but you just had to do something worse! Inconsiderate jerk! Haven't you ever heard of a lock?!"

"I thought it was Sunny—ow! Stop hitting me!"

"Urgh!" she threw her hands overhead in exasperation, "Its worse than when I walked in on—never mind! God, I can't get that image out of my head. You and her... ugh!" she shuddered.

"I'm sorry, really I am! I—no not my back, no!" A pained shriek burst from the crumbling girl as she fell against the counter, her back frozen in an arch.

"Taeyeon are you alright?"

"I'm fine!" she called sweetly to the girl upstairs through gritted teeth. "Hey," she held the arm she'd used to block her side with her hand as the other grabbed Sunny's shoulder, "You're right, I was careless. I should have made sure that the door was locked. If you're upset with me that's fine, hit me all you want, just don't take this out on Tiffany. She's still kind of shaken by it." She looked to the staircase, "I can tell."

Sunny softened at the protective gleam in Taeyeon's eyes. She had no intentions of harming Tiffany. In her eyes Taeyeon was all to blame. She smirked returning to her pan, "Don't worry."

"Taeyeon-ah what's wrong?" Tiffany bound down the stairs, nearly tripping at the sight of a battered Taeyeon, "Did I..." Her voice lowered as she quickly cut her eyes to Sunny. She stepped closer, "did I hurt your shoulder too?"

"No, I—."

"She ran into the fridge."

"Ah," Tiffany sighed, "Taengoo," her hand went to Taeyeon's waist leading her to the table, "You have to be more careful." She pulled out the chair, "sit down. I'll fix you something—do you want a pillow for your back?"

The smaller girl shook her head, "no I'll be alright."

*

"Who would think it would flood so easily."

"Mm." Hyoyeon nodded, glancing at her watch.

"Do you really have to go home right now?"

"What else is there to do if I don't have practice?"

"We could hang out." Jessica kicked at a pebble near her foot.

"Hang out?"

"Yeah, if you want to, I mean. I don't exactly feel like going home right now and I'd hate to wander around alone."

"Okay."

"Really?"

Hyoyeon nodded to the smiling girl, "mmhmm."

*

"Thanks," Tiffany took the watermelon from Sunny and set it on the cutting board, "are there grapes in there too?"

"Green or red?" Sunny peered into the steel refrigerator.

She glanced over her shoulder at Taeyeon who was controlling the TV in the living room,

"Green," she nodded, "she likes the green ones better."

Sunny handed the container of grapes to Tiffany earning a thanks before she focused her attention back on her eggs.

Initially them being in the kitchen together had been awkward until Sunny pulled her into a hug and reassured her that she wasn't upset. Tiffany remained quiet before she slowly started returning to her normal happy self.

"I think the cables out." Taeyeon mumbled to know one in particular, flipping through blank channels.

"What? Down here too? Aw, man!" Sooyoung stood at the bottom of the stair set shaking her head, "I thought it might have just been in our room." Disappointment left her as she took notice of the stack of pancakes on the counter, "Mmm," she motioned towards the delicious tower, "what are you making?"

Sunny glanced at the tall girl and sighed, "I guess I should just cook for everyone since more people keep waking up."

"Of course!" Sooyoung smiled taking a seat beside Seohyun who was at the far end of the table sipping a cup of tea, "Don't skimp either, I feel like I could eat that whole stack by myself!"

"Unnie," Seohyun set her cup on the table, "you don't have to cook for me if it's too much trouble. I can fix my own."

Sunny shook her head smiling at the Maknae, "It's not a problem, I'm just being grumpy."

Taeyeon set the remote to her side, "I think I remember Lyn-ssi saying something about that—the cable or power going out or something."

"Really? When?"

"Yesterday morning I think." She shrugged.

"Did she say anything about the storm?"

"I don't think so."

Seohyun turned to the large sliding doors on the other side of the spiraling staircase, "It doesn't look so bad today."

"Hmm," Sooyoung stroked her chin, "maybe we're in the center of it. You know, like the eye of the storm."

"Mm," the younger girl nodded taking another sip from her cup.

"Here you go," Tiffany set a plate of fruit in front of Taeyeon. Chunks of watermelon were set in the shape of a large heart with grapes filling its center. Taeyeon couldn't hide her blushing cheeks or large smile. Before Tiffany could walk away she grabbed the younger girl's hand and pulled her to the chair by her side, "join me."

The wavy haired girl returned the smile and nodded, taking her seat at Taeyeon's side. Taeyeon forked a chunk of the red fruit and held it out for the younger girl, "Ah..."

Tiffany gracefully took the fruit and did the same for Taeyeon, quickly losing herself in their own world. Seohyun didn't seem to notice, her focus was still on the window. Sooyoung, on the other hand, held her head in her palms with her elbows propped up on the table as she sat across from them, her eyes glazed over.

Tiffany's fingers passed through Taeyeon's hair gently tucking the locks behind her ear before combing a few untamed tufts on the top of her head. Her hand trailed down to the base of the smaller girl's neck where she wrapped her arms around Taeyeon's shoulders leaning in for

another chunk of watermelon. Taeyeon instinctively held the fruit out towards her lover. Tiffany took a small bite and tilted the fork back to Taeyeon, giving her the rest. She placed a small kiss on the older girl's cheek and rested her head on Taeyeon's shoulder.

"Aw..." Sooyoung sighed, smiling drunkenly at the couple.

Taeyeon cleared her throat remembering that there were others in the room. She set her hands in her lap her eyes awkwardly gazing up to meet Sooyoung's.

"Why did you stop?" The love drunk girl groaned her eyes eager to witness more affection.

"Um... It's kind of weird with you staring."

"Ah, you know she can't help it." Sunny set two stacks of pancakes in the center of the table, "She's a hopeless romantic through and through."

*

"So, what should we do?" Jessica tucked her thumbs under the straps of her book bag, her long pony tail swinging gleefully as they walked side by side down the street. She caught Hyoyeon trying to do the same thing out the corner of her eye. "Wait, if you do that it won't—."

Hyoyeon's straps grew long until her book bag was drooping down her back. The smaller girl blushed when Jessica chuckled.

"Here," the older girl smiled, "let me." She stood in front of Hyoyeon and readjusted the straps, tying the ends in knots when she was done, "there, now it won't do that." They continued down the sidewalk.

"So what should we do?" she asked again.

"I don't know," Hyoyeon shrugged nervously tucking her long hair behind her ear. "Are you hungry?"

"Not really." They paused at a crosswalk. Jessica glanced around, taking in the sights as Hyoyeon watched the cars pass by.

"Yeah, me either."

The famished girl wrapped her arms around her grumbling stomach trying to muffle the low growling sound. When Jessica didn't look at her she thought she'd succeeded.

"You think I want you to die?" Her words were monotone; her eyes on the buildings across the street.

"Huh?"

Though her voice was cold her face surprisingly was not. She turned back to Hyoyeon, her lips curled into a slight smile, "If you're hungry just say you are." The younger girl felt her nervousness return. Over the past months this had become routine for her. Jessica's calm word continued; the light changing in front of them, "Always be truthful to me."

Hyoyeon could only nod. She was powerless to the soft gaze.

*

"Good morning." Seohyun grinned to the older girl crossing into the kitchen.

Hyoyeon washed her hands in the sink before taking a seat at the table. "Good morning." She replied with a yawn, "You made this?"

"No," she shook her head, "Sunny."

“Ah,” the pony tailed girl nodded grabbing a plate from the stack on the table. They were the only ones in the kitchen; a rare event. She figured this would be the best time to bring it up. To start fixing what she’d broken.

“You look heartbroken.” She started, her words firm.

“Hm?” Seohyun didn’t meet her gaze.

“I can tell. I’ve fe—seen it before.”

“I see,” Seohyun didn’t sigh or show any change. She just turned her head to the window.

“Seohyun... I...” She couldn’t continue. Not without the younger girl looking at her. It felt too weird.

Hyoyeon sunk back into her chair a low grumble of words passing her lips, “How have you managed to deal with this on your own?”

Seohyun set her cup on the table, her eyes studying the patio outside, “It’s not impossible. I didn’t want to bother anyone.” Her eyes met the older girls, “Taeyeon and Tiffany are so happy now and Jessica... she’s always willing to help but who’s there to help her? She has her own problems to deal with.” She meant to stop there but continued when she noticed how Hyoyeon seemed to be eager to hear more.

“I feel bad for her. She always in so much pain over whatever happened to her but she never brings it up. I think she can’t. Whatever it was must be too hard for her to think about.” Hyoyeon opened her mouth to speak to ask Seohyun how much she knew about their past but stopped when the younger girl turned back to the window. She didn’t really feel much like eating anymore but she stayed in her seat and continued working on her food, afraid that leaving would be too obvious. She didn’t want to be obvious.

*

“Ah, I’ll get you next time!” Jessica yelled, wagging her finger in the air.

Hyoyeon smirked glancing at the girl walking by her side, “You let me win.”

“No,” Jessica protested staring at the neon lights illuminating the arcade floor, “you really are good.”

“Not as good as you, Sica.”

The taller girl froze, eyeing the girl at her side, “What did you call me?”

Hyoyeon rubbed the back of her neck, her words stumbling, “I—It’s nothing.”

“Say it again,” the dark haired girl urged, moving closer, “call me Sica.”

“Um,” she could feel the nervousness washing over her. Every time she thought she’d gotten use to the feeling Jessica would do something that made her stomach start flipping all over again, “...Si...Sica... is that okay?”

Jessica held her eyes closed, “Hm...” she sighed, her head tilting to the side, “Its fine.”

Hyoyeon sighed, when Jessica back away. “So what other games are you good at?”

“Hm...” Jessica glanced around the arcade, “Ah!” she jumped dragging the shorter girl to a large interactive unit. Hyoyeon didn’t mind but caught herself frowning when the hyper girl pulled away, “I’m good at this!” She pointed to the Pump It Up console.

“Really?”

The taller girl nodded, “Come on, I’ve got some money left.”

“Alright,” the long haired girl smiled, taking her position beside her friend.

The game started. Jessica instantly began to skillfully move to the music, hitting all the right steps at all the right moments. She started to loose herself to the grooving sounds thumping through the large speakers but caught herself when she noticed the trouble her companion was having. Eventually Hyoyeon’s score fell low and she stepped off of the platform; her head hung low.

“Sorry.” She mumbled to the older girl who also had stopped playing.

Jessica’s emotionless stare fell on Hyoyeon causing the younger girl to feel even more shameful. She was letting Jessica down and even though it was just a game it got to her.

“Here,” The older girl let down her hair and moved in front of Hyoyeon. She combed her fingers through the shorter girl’s hair, pushing the dark strands out of her face. Hyoyeon closed her eyes instinctively as a slight shudder cascaded in waves over her body. She could sense everything; Jessica’s fingers running through her hair, Jessica’s scented lotion wafting from her neck, Jessica’s breath slowly closing in. For a moment she thought Jessica was going to hug her and instinctively brought her hands up to meet the taller girls back. They’d only hugged twice before. Hyoyeon remembered them perfectly because like the first time she met Jessica, she’d replayed the event over and over in her head until they were properly engraved in her memory.

The first time happened when she was taking a break during practice. She was standing at the vending machine trying to decide between buying water or soda when two hands covered her eyes. She was startled at first but when Jessica called “Guess who?” she immediately knew who it was, even if she did say it in English. Jessica let her arms hang over Hyoyeon’s shoulders when the shorter girl guessed right and leaned close to her ear. “Get the water, it’s better for you,” was all she said before she was called back into her room. Hyoyeon tried her best not to watch as the taller girl walked away, her skin tight attire moving seamlessly with her steps.

The second time was shorter but more direct. They’d been standing at the bus stop after practice waiting for the bus to come when a gust of wind blew through them. The older girl shrieked and cursed herself for opting not to bring a jacket that day. Hyoyeon on the other hand was fine. She watched the taller girl slink her arms around her waist and instantly started to think of how she could warm her friend. They were standing so close that she could feel Jessica shivering beside her.

I could just put my arm around her. She thought her hand rising behind Jessica’s back. No, she stopped herself, I should ask first.

The timid girl swallowed hard before clearing her throat. She didn’t do it to get Jessica’s attention but she did anyway.

With the older girls kind eyes staring, made it that much harder to speak. “Do you...”

She didn’t have to; Jessica knew what she was thinking and quickly leaned into the younger girl, her body shivering against Hyoyeon’s slightly warmer front.

The loud hiss of the bus in front of them broke them apart just seconds later. Jessica smiled,

bounding up the stairs, "Finally!"

Hyoyeon sighed following behind, disappointment clear on her face.

Both times she'd felt this familiar tingling in her body that made her quake with anticipation. However when Jessica pulled away she realized an embrace would not come. "There, now you can see." Jessica smiled, returning to her platform, "You look nice with your hair pulled back." She held her hand out for Hyoyeon to grab, "Want to try again?" Hyoyeon nodded, she would accept holding hands over a hug. As long as she could be close to Jessica it didn't matter what she was doing.

"Yah," Jessica came back to her senses, catching the gaze of the girl standing behind her in the doorway. Hyoyeon's voice was husky; her words nearly mumbles, "What are you doing out here? Come inside, you'll catch a cold."

Returning to reality hadn't gotten easier over the years. The empty feeling remained the same. There were no more days spent wandering the streets; no more nights of old video games and cheap food.

No more Hyoyeon.

Now where there was once laughter and happiness was only distance and remorse.

Chapter 7

"There," Tiffany ran her hands over Taeyeon's back, marveling at her thorough bandage job. She massaged Taeyeon's sides, careful not to graze any of the cartoon Band-Aids, "Does that feel any better?"

"Mhmm," Taeyeon rolled over, welcoming the feeling of Tiffany's weight pressing firm against her hips, "Thank you Fany-ah."

The wavy haired girl smiled shifting to get off of the older girl but was quickly stopped by Taeyeon's hand tugging at her own. The smaller girl trailed her index finger up the sleeve of Tiffany's hoodie before cupping her neck and pulling the wavy haired girl down on top of her. Taeyeon gently caressed the delicate skin under her thumb as she pressed her lips against the underside of Tiffany's chin. The younger girl gasped, feeling her body relax further onto her lovers. She'd meant to take a shower and spend the day exploring the building with Taeyeon but as Taeyeon's hand found its way onto her back she knew the chances of that happening were running thin.

If we keep this up we're going to end up spending the entire day in here again. She knew she should stop. Taeyeon's back, though bandaged and not as bad as she'd originally thought, was not fully healed and she didn't really want to tempt leaving any permanent marks on the older girl's skin. After all, that would be pretty hard to explain to their managers. But Taeyeon was touching all the right places. Her lips were now on Tiffany's throat, suckling on an area she knew could make Tiffany surrender. There were five and after yesterday she'd found them all.

Though the temptress was not as easily defeated as Taeyeon had hoped she would be. With a quick jerking motion she lifted herself from Taeyeon's hold and shimmied off the bed, walking towards her bags that she'd gotten after breakfast, "Not until your back gets better." "Ah—" Taeyeon shook her head propping herself up by her forearms, "I wasn't! I just wanted a kiss."

"Really?" Tiffany grinned raising her brow, "that's all?"

Taeyeon's glowing face was enough of an answer.

The tall girl chuckled, "Aw, I love when you get all flustered, you're so adorable." She gave a small peck to Taeyeon's cheek before crossing to the bathroom, "we have to practice self-control or else we'll never leave this room."

The sulking girl fell back onto the bed. "Would that be such a bad thing?" She mumbled, rolling onto her stomach.

"I heard that." She called, returning to the bedroom.

"Well, would it?" she moaned, burying her face in her pillow.

"Taengoo..." Tiffany kissed the moping girls back, "Don't be such an Ahjumma."

"But who knows when we'll get another opportunity like this." She arched her back, leaning into Tiffany's small shows of affection, "We'll go back to work and be so busy that we'll only see each other in passing and when we're working." She shuddered as Tiffany's hands began to knead her thighs, "we should just stay up here and relax."

Tiffany pouted stepping back from the older girl, "Tae Tae..."

"Alright, alright," Taeyeon sighed. She sat up again, realizing she wasn't going to be able to break the younger girl. A small smirk passed her lips, amused that she'd even attempted to convince her; Tiffany seldom caved first, "Where do you want to go?"

The wavy haired girl shrugged, "Sooyoung said there were a lot of good stores here."

"Probably expensive."

She shrugged again, "Five star building, five star shopping." She headed for the bathroom door, "I'll be out in a second."

*

"Why do you like it here?"

Hyoyeon swung back and forth on the swing, her arms around the chains and her hands in her pockets. She shrugged, "It's quiet."

"Yeah, but its freezing!" Jessica rubbed her hands over her arms desperately trying to warm herself.

"You should dress warmer." She smiled, her ponytail blowing to and fro over her shoulder as she played.

Her eyes traced Jessica's frame.

The older girl was dressed in a short black skirt and white blouse with a red pea coat. Much like the outfit she'd worn the first time they met, only in reverse. It wasn't terribly cold out of season but because of the wind chill Jessica was having quite a hard time.

Don't dress warmer, she thought a small grin washing over her face. She'd semi expected

Jessica's poor choice of attire and had purposely brought her to the park so that she could perhaps coax the taller girl into her lap. Though as time passed and she sat there with her legs swaying under her she realized that Jessica wasn't getting the hint and she didn't have the courage to ask.

Hyoyeon chewed on the corner of her lip, feeling her stomach begin to stir. She quickly ripped her eyes away. She was sure she should have been use to the odd sensation by now but instead of becoming familiar the feelings seemed to grow more intense every day.

Well, not every day. She thought. Just when she was around or thought about Jessica.

"That is every day," she muttered. Thankfully Jessica didn't notice.

The older girl pouted steady shivering. "Can't we go somewhere warmer?"

"Where would you like to go?"

Jessica shrugged, "I don't know. Let's get something to eat."

*

"Hey," Hyoyeon grinned, eyeing the pensive girl nursing a cup of tea at the kitchen table, "you know, when I left hours ago you were sitting there."

"Not much to do today." Seohyun took a sip of the cooling liquid. It wasn't hot enough.

"Why don't we go shopping?" she grabbed a glass from the dish rack and went to the fridge,

"There's a mall in the building across from us."

"So it's all one hotel?"

"Mmhmm."

"We're not supposed to go outside."

"There's a crosswalk. I got a map from the staff." She downed a glass of water before refilling it, "there's also a bunch of gyms and recreational rooms. We could check them out. I found a room with really good acoustics."

"Hyoyeon Unnie! Did I hear you say there's a mall?" Yoona darted out of her bedroom meeting the older girl in the kitchen. She was already taking a seat at the table before she noticed Seohyun.

Hyoyeon panned back and forth between the two girls. She hadn't expected both, but if she could get them to come together it would probably be much easier to confront them, though for whom she was unsure. "Yeah, Seohyun and I are going down in a few, you should come with us."

Seohyun's eyes finally met Hyoyeon's, "Unnie, I don't think—."

"Oh come on, you were practically dying of boredom a moment ago. Yoona wants to go and I want you to go so let's all go together. You don't want to let your Unnie's down do you?" She knew the girl wouldn't protest and Yoona, if she was smart wouldn't either.

*

"Wow Taeyeongie." Tiffany tugged on Taeyeon's arm, pulling it closer towards her chest. She pointed to a white shawl, gracefully falling off the shoulders of a curvaceous mannequin.

"It's so pretty don't you think so?"

"Taeyeon nodded letting herself be led into the store.

Tiffany greeted the clerk and headed for a rack of shawls in different colors. She glanced at the smaller girl sauntering around the other side of the rack.

“What’s wrong?” she searched for her size in pink and also in white.

The shorter girl shook her head giving a small smile. She really wasn’t upset. In fact, though she didn’t want to admit it, she was still just a little bit tired from the day before. Her body betrayed her when she let out a yawn that she’d been fighting to suppress. Tiffany noticed, watching the smaller girl from the corner of her eye as she paid for her new accessory. She immediately caught on. In truth she was still tired herself. With another ornate bag in hand she wrapped her arm around her girlfriends and steered her out of the store. “You’re still exhausted.” She nodded slipping her fingers between Taeyeon’s.

“No, I’m fine,” she yawned again taking the bag from Tiffany and adding it to her own load. Tiffany giggled, leaning her head on Taeyeon’s shoulder, “Let’s just walk around a little bit more.” Her voice grew soft, “Then we’ll go back and cuddle.”

Taeyeon was sure her face couldn’t get any redder. She watched as Tiffany’s thumb brushed back and forth over her hand. Soon they would be back in their room and those hands would be drawing circles on her shoulders or massaging her neck or losing themselves in her hair. Maybe they would just be playing with her own, tracing the spaces between her fingers; another thing that Tiffany loved to do.

“What is it?” Tiffany straightened her posture, feeling Taeyeon’s eyes on their hands, “should I not do that here?”

“You’re fine Fany-ah.” She shook her head, “I like it. Besides, there aren’t a lot of people here and no one seems to notice.”

“Okay.” She smiled, lowering her head back to the crook of Taeyeon’s neck.

*

“Ah! This looks delicious!”

“It’s cheap too.”

Jessica gracefully sipped the bowl of soup in front of her, dabbing the corners of her mouth when she was done, “So what else do you like to do other than dance?”

They’d been friends for some time now but their relationship mainly revolved around practice and hanging out afterwards when they were allowed to.

Hyoyeon shrugged, “I collect things sometimes.”

“Like what?”

“Stickers, stamps,” her voice trailed off into silence, “sounds kind of boring, huh?”

The dark haired girl shook her head, her lips curling into a smile, “Nothing you say sounds boring.”

Her eyes were always too pure for Hyoyeon to return the gaze. Warmth blanketed her skin causing her to turn away; her attention back on her stew.

“You do that a lot around me.”

“What?”

“Blush,” she always spoke so easily, “Are you uncomfortable?”

“No,” she fought to bring her eyes to Jessica’s, “I don’t think so.”

“Then why do you?” The older girl continued to sip her soup, her large orbs studying the smaller girl.

“I don’t know.”

“Hmmm...” a still silence passed over them as her eyes finally dropped to her bowl. Hyoyeon felt Jessica’s leg brush against hers as she shifted in her seat. Her skin was cold despite the warmth of the small restaurant.

“What are you thinking about?” Hyoyeon spoke to keep her mind from wandering.

“You.” She said as if it was the only obvious answer.

The reply was timid; almost inaudible, “What about me?”

“When are you leaving?” Her question was the same.

“In a couple of months. I’ll be studying there for a while.”

“Hmm.” Jessica nodded, pinching her chin. Her head dipped too low for Hyoyeon eyes to follow,

“We have to hang out more before you go.”

“Okay.”

She slipped her hand over Hyoyeon’s, “Promise me Hyoyeon.” Her eyes were swirled into an expression the younger girl couldn’t quite understand.

Hyoyeon grinned, her hand easing in Jessica’s fragile hold, “I promise Sica.”

Chapter 8

“What’s that?”

Tiffany studied the large foiled plate in her hands. She gave it a shake, “Left over’s I think.”

“From tonight?” Taeyeon stood on her toes, peering over Tiffany’s shoulder.

“Probably.” The taller girl headed for the spiraling stairs, “Let’s take it up stairs.”

Taeyeon nodded, following quickly behind.

“Are you sure there’s a microwave up here?”

“Yeah,” the wavy haired girl crossed to the counter of the small second floor kitchen. She peeled off the plate’s wrappings before setting the dish in the small white machine. “I thought there weren’t any glasses up here.” She scoffed watching Taeyeon pour two cups of water.

“Uh,” the shorter girl scratched her head; eyes darting around the room, “I didn’t notice them...?” It sounded more like a question than a statement.

Tiffany smirked spinning around to lean against the counter behind her. She crossed her arms and legs simultaneously, giving a disbelieving look to the girl standing at the island across from her.

Taeyeon sighed, mumbling the fast string of words Tiffany was waiting to hear, “I saw them but I didn’t tell you cause I didn’t want you to move.”

“Ah, busy staring at me huh?” She batted her eyelashes.

Taeyeon took a sip from her glass her eyes landing on the floor.

With ease Tiffany hopped onto the high counter, smiling widely, “you’re so adorable.”

The reddening girl shrugged, collecting the discarded foil near her girlfriend. Admitting her “adorable” acts was always slightly embarrassing. She’d try to be discreet and steal glances or touches when Tiffany wasn’t looking, but Tiffany would always eventually catch her. She halfheartedly thought the younger girl was on a mission to see how much she could make Taeyeon blush each day. Though in reality she had no idea how these small confessions swelled Tiffany’s heart.

“Bwa, ha ha!”

“What?”

Taeyeon turned from the trashcan to the girl on the counter, “Look,” she held a small post-it note out for Tiffany to read.

For: Fany Eomma & Taeng Appa

From: Sunny and Sooyoungie -> **Best Daughter!!**

“That kid,” she sighed, glancing up to meet Tiffany’s eyes, “She—what’s wrong?” Tiffany shook her head, drying her misting eyes, “It’s just... they really accept us.” She gave a small chuckle, unable to stop her tears, “I’m sorry.”

Taeyeon smiled easing her hand into the crying girls, “Don’t be.” She brushed her thumb over Tiffany’s cheek, wiping away the glistening trails.

Tiffany rested her hand on top of Taeyeon’s; her eyes crescents, “I don’t know when I’ll finally start to believe this is real.”

“Our members are amazing,” she shook her head, dropping her hand to the taller girls neck, “Our *friends* are amazing.”

Tiffany nodded, leaning in to meet the lips beckoning her. “Not just them though,” she spoke through kisses, “you too.” Her arms wrapped around Taeyeon’s shoulders, “I’m still expecting to wake up one day and have this all be a dream.”

Taeyeon pushed herself further onto her toes, dropping her free hand to the elevated girl’s thigh for leverage, “Fany-ah,” she breathed her lips lightly grazing against the anxious pair, “I’m real.”

With a faint exhale she eased into Tiffany, whose lips were already parted in waiting. They played against each other; their movements soft and slow yet intense and brimming with passion. A startled moan escaped the shorter girl as the wavy haired girl showered her tongue with affection, sucking and nibbling on the softness with fierce restraint.

It always surprised Taeyeon that Tiffany had so much control. She was like water in a leaking faucet; surging with pressure but trickling in only drips. Sometimes those droplets would fall faster when Tiffany would let more of her emotions flow, though still her expressions of wanting would be a controlled stream. Even now and before when the younger girl had marked Taeyeon, Taeyeon could tell she was holding back. The way she moved; the way she kept her

kisses just light enough for Taeyeon to feel but not indulge in it was as if she was afraid to unleash herself onto Taeyeon.

That or it's just another maddening way to tease me.

She felt Tiffany's fingers graze her neck before tensing briefly and relaxing on her shoulder. It was then Taeyeon realized it had to be the first reason.

She's afraid she might hurt me.

Taeyeon whined subconsciously, trying to force herself further onto her tippy toes and into Tiffany. She hoped the younger girl hadn't heard the embarrassing sound but she couldn't help it. If Tiffany was the water dripping from a faucet, then she was the cup underneath it; full and constantly craving for one more drop. Already overflowing yet yearning for the water to gush into her; to cause her tip over just so she could be filled again.

The frustrated girl huffed when the nagging machine that had been beeping for some time now failed to stop. She lowered herself onto her heels releasing a content sigh as she turned towards the microwave, but Tiffany didn't want her to let go yet.

In one calm motion she wrapped her arms around Taeyeon's head and pulled the older girl to rest against her. Her ear pressed against Tiffany's chest, Taeyeon closed her eyes; enjoying the soothing sounds and warm hold of her lover. Even now she found herself wishing moments like this could last forever.

"Fany-ah."

Tiffany rested her chin on Taeyeon's head, her own sigh of satisfaction leaving her; touched that even still her girlfriend would randomly call her name. It never ceased to make her heart flutter.

The microwave beeped again though this time Taeyeon didn't move to it. Instead she turned around and tucked her hands under Tiffany's legs pulling her close.

"Oh, Taengoo is this okay? I don't want to hurt you." She lightly draped her arms around Taeyeon's shoulders.

"Its fine Fany-ah, I'm strong."

Tiffany tightened her grasp, resting her head against Taeyeon's shoulder. She trusted her.

The smaller girl let out a chuckled heading across the threshold to their room.

"What? Am I heavy?"

"No, it's just you're not really any higher off the ground."

Tiffany shifted, locking her legs around her girlfriend's waist; her eyes closing, "That doesn't matter." She inhaled slowly, breathing in Taeyeon's scent, "I like this."

"Aww...!"

Their heads simultaneously turned to look down the hallway. Sooyoung stood in front of her door shaking her fists under her chin as she rapidly hopped up and down.

"So cuuuuute!" She squeaked. If she went any faster she might have exploded.

Tiffany smiled tightening her hold. She knew if Taeyeon got embarrassed she would put her

down and that's the last thing she wanted, "Thank you for the food Sooyoung. We're going to enjoy it now."

"Are you going to feed each other?" She bounced closer.

Tiffany didn't have time to reply. Sunny's voice boomed from the floor below, "Yah—Choi Sooyoung, what are you doing?! Come down here and find my DS!"

Taeyeon took the opportunity of distraction and hurried into their room.

She set Tiffany down on the bed, immediately missing the warmth on her back, "Ah, that kid."

"She just loves love."

"Even so, I'll wait a second before going back for our food."

*

"She's being incredibly stubborn today," Hyoyeon watched the taller girl trot off to the restroom of the large food court. Save for a few workers scattered here and there, the area was eerily vacant.

"She doesn't want to be around me." Yoona mumbled, playing with her food, tediously separating grains of rice from each other.

This attempt at fixing the duo was quickly becoming a failure. Even before they'd left the suite Seohyun had made a point to either stay one step in front or behind Yoona and Hyoyeon. While Yoona on the other hand stayed close to Hyoyeon. As far as she knew they hadn't even looked at each other.

Hyoyeon dropped her hands to her lap, "Have you talked to her since that night on the balcony?" "She told you?"

She shook her head, "I heard you. Seohyun won't tell me anything. She won't tell anyone anything."

"Oh," her eyes lowered back to the table, "um, no, I haven't really seen much of her since then. I guess now things will go back to how they were right Unnie?"

It was time to stop filling Yoona's head with pessimistic and cynical thoughts as she'd been doing for months now. Even if they both hated her afterwards, she had to go through with it, "Is that what you want?"

Yoona's brow furrowed, "It doesn't matter what I want. I have to be realistic. We're idols... it won't last. It can't. We're so young. What do we know?" She looked to Hyoyeon for a response, her gaze pleading the older girl to agree.

Hyoyeon wouldn't.

"You kissed her though, didn't you? Didn't you want that?"

The young girl huffed shaking her head, "I—I forgot myself," her eyebrow trembled with upset, "I forgot what was important. It won't happen again."

"What could be more important than Seohyun?"

Yoona's head jerked from her lap, "Not—." She started, her eyes set ablaze. Her words caught in her throat, her fire quelling. "It's my work—our image right Unnie?" Just saying it was enough to make the young girl tear.

Hyoyeon inhaled deeply folding her arms over her chest, “Yoona, I’ve been a horrible Unnie.” She let the breath go slowly, closing her eyes, “You came to me for help and I just made it worse. I... I was hurting. I gave you advice without thinking about what you were dealing with. I was wrong.”

“But—!”

“Forget what I said. I made a mistake. I wasn’t thinking about your feelings. I just wanted someone to listen to me.”

“But you said—.”

“Yoona, if you love her... if you love her you should be with her. That’s all that matters. Don’t think about what I said only think about what you want. Be true to yourself.”

“But... what if it doesn’t work out?”

“What if it does? You shouldn’t waste this chance. She loves you and I know you feel the same. Don’t you? Can you really look at me and tell me you don’t love her?” Her eyes raised from her palms landing on the girl clutching her shopping bags close.

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. “Seohyun...”

“So you’re the reason.” Her voice was low and dangerously controlled.

“Seo...” Hyoyeon stuttered. She wasn’t good at this. She would have been better off putting them in Jessica’s hands since she seemed to have a way with uniting lovers.

“You’re why she’s acting like this?”

“...” The older girl shut down, crumbling under the younger girl’s pained glare.

“What did you tell her?” Her voice was too soft—too delicate for Hyoyeon to reply.

“...”

“Unnie?” she spoke through gritting teeth, “Say something Hyoyeon.”

But there wasn’t an answer.

“Wh...Why would you want to hurt me like this? Hurt Yoona like this?”

“I just...” the sound of her own voice surprised her, “there is no excuse, but I’m fixing it now.” Seohyun opened her mouth to speak but all that came out was a burdened sigh. She shook her head in defeat.

“Maybe this is for the best.” For the first time that day she acknowledged Yoona, “Could I ever be with someone who can’t think for themselves?”

She turned on her heels taking labored steps back into the sea of stores. She half expected half longed for Yoona to come bounding after her. Tugging at her arm and pulling her into an embrace that would assure her everything would work out just fine. But that wouldn’t happen. She’d finally got her answer. Yoona wouldn’t come after her. She was too busy drowning in tears.

*

[>Hey]

...

[>r u sleeping?]

Hyoyeon groaned fetching the vibrating device from her nightstand.

[<-Not N E more whatsapp?]

...

[<-Sica?]

...

[<-Sica?]

[->I want to tell you something]

[<-What is it?]

[->1st I need to ask you a question]

[<-k]

...

[->Ur my Best friend right?]

[<-Yes!]

[->And I'm ur best friend?]

[<-Of course Sica! Jeez, you're questions are really easy! ☺]

[->haha, those weren't my questions ☺]

[->... I just wanted to make sure]

[<-What do you want to tell me?]

...

[<-zzzz...zzzz...]

[->I <3 u]

[->Forever]

[<-I <3 you Sica]

...

[->Hyoyeonie?]

[<-?]

....

[->Nevermind]

[<-What did you want to say?]

Hyoyeon waited for a reply but there was none. She needed to know what was on the older girls mind. No matter how small or big the thought was. She wanted to hear it. Jessica always spoke with such ease around her but it seemed that the closer they got to Hyoyeon's departure the clammier she got. It wasn't like she was ignoring the younger girl it just seemed that everything she said took much deliberation and thought to say. As if she only wanted Hyoyeon to hear the best of what she had to say. That or she was censoring herself.

"Sica?" called Hyoyeon to the darkness of her room, "Sica?" she peered over the edge of her bed at the mass on the floor, "Sica what were you going to ask me?" The response was heavily delayed. "It's nothing," the older girl shifted in her sleeping bag. "Jessica..." she sat up, pulling her blanket tight around her shoulders, "please."

The older girl huffed lifting her torso from the floor, “Really Hyoyeon, it’s nothing. I’ve already forgotten what I was going to say. Go back to sleep. Your mom will get mad if we stay up.”

With a frown Hyoyeon flopped back onto her bed mumbling under her blanket, “One month before I leave is a choice time to start keeping secrets.” It wouldn’t be long before she returned to her slumber though if she’d stayed awake just a moment longer she might have heard the barely audible question she so desperately wished to hear from the anxious girl on the floor.

“If you lo... if you like someone but you don’t know if they like you back... should you tell them?”

*

“Mmm...this food...”

“Mmhmm,” Taeyeon nodded, spearing the last square of ravioli on her fork, “even as left over’s it’s delicious.”

“I wonder what else they make. Probably really good desserts...” Tiffany’s eyes fluttered to the ceiling, “we should get a menu tomorrow.”

The older girl continued to nod; “Mm!” she shook her head, snapping her finger. Taeyeon quickly chewed her food so that she could speak, “Let’s go there.”

Tiffany gasped, beaming as she clapped her hands, “Like a date?”

“Yeah,” she smiled enjoying the excitement in her girlfriend’s eyes, “A date.”

“Wow,” the wavy haired girl sighed pinching her chin, “I can’t remember the last time we went on one.” She stood from the small wooden table near the sliding door and sat down on Taeyeon’s bed.

“Two months ago,” the smaller girl nodded, “The 15th. We walked around that bookstore and had dinner at our restaurant.” A laugh escaped her as she recalled the outing, “It was a rare day when we had more than three hours to spend with each other.”

Taeyeon set the dirty dishes in a pile feeling the aware of the eyes canvassing her, “What?” she glanced over her shoulder.

Tiffany threw her hands above her head falling back onto the large bed, “I have such an amazing girlfriend!”

Taeyeon leaned over Tiffany, her hands on either side of the swooning girls head, “Oh, you too?”

“Pfft,” Tiffany couldn’t hold her laughter, “you’re so cheesy!” She broke through Taeyeon’s barricade, rolling away.

“You started it!” Taeyeon tickled the laughing girl’s side causing her to squeal and thrash around.

“Stop! Taeyeon—!” Tiffany frowned briefly when the attacking hand pulled away. “Ah,” it was quickly replaced with a limp smile, “I’m so tired. What time do you think it is?”

Taeyeon shrugged grinning at the sight of Tiffany's mussed hair, "eight, nine maybe."
 "Hm," she gathered the dishes, "We should go to sleep so we're well rested for our date."
 Taeyeon met the taller girl's side, "want me to help you with those?"
 "I've got them," she gave a small peck to the girl opening the door for her, "Go take a shower."

*

"Could I ever be with someone who can't think for themselves?"
 She'd spoken about her like she wasn't even there.

Yoona stood in front of the large bedroom door massaging her throbbing temples. After finally making her way back to their suite she'd collapsed on her bed and cried herself into a fragile sleep. She couldn't keep her eyes closed. Every time images of Seohyun walking away. Her face painted with a look she'd never seen on the younger girl. Eventually she realized that her restlessness was affecting her roommate and left the room, desperate to find solace in anyone that would listen. It was the only one that had light seeping out from under it at this hour. Still, it'd taken her many failed attempts to knock on the door. The answer was nearly immediate.

"Come in." Tiffany pushed her glasses onto her nose smiling up from the glowing screen on the bed side table, "Oh Yoona, what are you doing up this late?"
 The young girl inched closer into the dimly lit room, feigning a smile.
 Instantly Tiffany took notice of her friend's disposition, concern washing over her, "what's wrong?"

Yoona shook her head, trying to hide her puffy face, "What are you working on?"
 But Tiffany was a veteran of this act; the swollen cheeks, the red eyes and slightly vacant stare, it was all very familiar. She knew not to press right away. If Yoona had something to say, she had to ease into it.

Tiffany closed the laptop careful not to wake its owner whose head was resting on her thigh, "Nothing, just looking over something Tae Tae's finishing for me."
 "This late?"

"I like to read it sometimes before I go to sleep."

"Oh," the tall girl nodded, her eyes weary, "It's like a fairytale?"

The wavy haired girl folded her glasses setting them on the laptop, "something like that."

"I should go," Yoona glanced to the door, "I don't want to keep you up."
 Tiffany shook her head, resting her hand on Taeyeon's back. "You're fine. Besides, I'm too excited to sleep." She crossed her legs as Taeyeon's arm slinked around her waist, "We're going on a date tomorrow."

"That sounds nice, Unnie." She gave the older girl a hesitant grin, unsure of why she'd thought barging in someone's room this late was a good idea.

Tiffany quickly quelled Yoona's uncertain gaze, motioning for her to sit on the available bed. Her warm smile was wise and inviting. At ease, it didn't take long for Yoona to open up, though the words were as muddled as her mind.

"Seohyun...she, well, I too—I mean, we both together—no, um... I... I woke up and she was—she—"

“Whoa,” Tiffany flashed her palm, “take a breath, Yoong.”

The younger girl obeyed, cursing her failed tongue.

“Now, let’s try again.” Her hand went back to Taeyeon, “Something happened between you and Seohyun?”

Yoona nodded losing her nerve to speak.

“And whatever it was caused you to question your feelings for her?”

Her nod was smaller this time.

“And now you’re confused because you’re afraid you might lose her no matter what you do.”

Yoona furrowed her brow, confused as to how the older girl could possibly have understood her situation.

“I know what you’re afraid of.” Tiffany’s hand passed effortlessly through Taeyeon’s hair. The sleeping girl cooed lightly at her lover’s soft touch, “I’ve been there.” Her head bobbed, “I’ve felt it.”

“What...” she took another chance at words, “what should I do? I don’t know what to think of it all. I have so many doubts... so many questions... I’ve heard so many things...” Her shoulders slumped as her eyes fell to her hands, “I’ve never felt so messed up in my life. It’s like everything that I thought I wanted was instantly replaced with something else. But when I think about it all I realize that what I thought I wanted wasn’t even my own thoughts.”

“You want advice?”

“Mhmm,” Her eyes flashed desperation.

“Stop asking for advice. The way that you handle Seohyun has to be your choice. Stop letting others cloud your mind. Everyone’s experience with love is different; we can only help you based off of what we know. You have to make the decisions so don’t you want your answer to be based off of what you think and not what we think?” Her hand rested still on Taeyeon’s hair as she thought briefly on what to say next.

It didn’t take long.

“You can’t go around lying to yourself even if you do have good intentions. It will only end up hurting you more.

When I was dating Taeyeon all I could think about was being with Taeyeon. I’d come home after spending time with him and do anything to be with her. Just the anticipation made my heart race.

Before we got together that night when I came home and we argued. I didn’t know why she was upset but I knew it was because of me.” Taeyeon nuzzled her face against the folds of Tiffany’s loose pajama pants, beckoning the carefree hand to continue its soothing motions, “Holding her while she cried. I knew I had to fix it.” Her fingers continued comb the soft tufts.

“When I think about all the nights I thought about being with Taeyeon but was too afraid to tell her how I felt, I get upset. If I’d just been honest with her... If I had more confidence we would have been together a long time ago. But you know, what we went through it made us so much stronger. I don’t doubt her love for me. I know that what we feel for each other is true.” As

if on cue, Taeyeon's hand pressed firm against the small of Tiffany's back, her thumb grazing just under the hem of her pajama shirt. Tiffany blushed continuing with a sure smile.

"I don't know what you feel for Seohyun but whatever it is you have to give her an answer. Stop asking others for advice. Stop worrying about all the what-ifs. *What if she leaves, what if I can't love her enough?* In the end thinking about it is what brings it on. Take everything a day at a time. Be true to yourself and be happy. Okay?"

Yoona smiled, relieved at the feeling of pressure subside from her temples. A rush of warmth passed through her body. Her fingertips instinctively grazed her lips at the thought of confessing to Seohyun ran through her head. The gesture was more than enough of a clue for Tiffany to guess what happened between the two younger girls.

The wavy hair girl grinned at Yoona's alleviated disposition; pleased that she seemed to be considering what she'd said. She let a yawn escape her, passing it to the taller girl before sharing a laugh.

"It must be really late, huh?" She watched Yoona lean back on her hands; her head slightly dipping. "If you want, you're welcome to sleep there." She chuckled realizing, "I haven't." Before the words were out of her mouth, Yoona was under the covers, curling her body around a large pillow. Her breaths were easy and rhythmic as she quickly faded into sleep, mumbling slurred words of thanks to the older girl, "Thank you Fany Unnie ... Tomooooorrow IIII..."

Tiffany nodded watching the younger girl. She waited until all was still before dimming the lamp at her side; casting an orange glow throughout the darkened room. She eased herself under the covers kissing Taeyeon's forehead before turning her back to the smaller girl.

Taeyeon's draped her arm over Tiffany's hips, kissing lightly at the taller girl's ear, "You're so good at not giving advice."

Tiffany settled into the older girl's hold, locking one of Taeyeon's legs between her own, "I hope I helped her."

"I'm sure you did."

"I thought you were awake." She grinned, releasing another yawn, "Trying to seduce me in front of our Maknae...shame." She twisted around, pressing her lips to Taeyeon's before she could utter a response. The kiss was pure but not void of emotion. Taeyeon could tell. There was a hint of desperation mixed in with sadness and regret, as if she was asking for forgiveness. She hadn't heard all of what Tiffany told the younger girl but she knew that she must have made an example of their past. Tiffany hated to admit the things she'd done in order to hide herself back then. She twisted back around until her back was pressed firm against the older girl, safe in her favorite position.

With a light exhale she shook the troubled memories from her mind drifting to sleep. "I love you Kim Taeyeon."

Chapter 9

Taeyeon yawned, her eyes fluttering open to welcome the sunlight peeking through the large sliding door. She tightened her hold on her Tiffany's hip, giving it a squeeze before placing a kiss on the slumbering girl's cheek. With a stretch she slipped out of bed, smiling in awe at the sight of her girlfriend trying in vain to scoot back into her hold. In an attempt to appease the younger girl Taeyeon quickly grabbed a pillow and pressed it firm against Tiffany's back. She didn't want her to wake up. With another soft kiss she slipped on her robe and snuck out of the bedroom.

The upstairs kitchen wasn't nearly as equipped as she'd hoped but thankfully after a quick trip downstairs she had all the ingredients she needed for the perfect breakfast. She'd been thinking of ways to make this day as special as possible for her and Tiffany, a sort of "all day date" to put the finishing touch on what she considered to be an amazing mini vacation. She figured it would soon be coming to an end since the weather seemed to be a little bit better when she'd woken up.

Just in case we should have to go back to work soon, we should have at least one day all to ourselves. Breakfast in bed, a little bit of light shopping to get ready for tonight, dinner...

"Tae Tae, what are you doing up so early?" Tiffany stood on the other side of the island rubbing the sleep out of her eyes; a fighting yawn escaping her.

"Uh," She glanced at the eggs in her hands thankful she hadn't crushed them after being startled from her thoughts. She tossed the question back to the taller girl, trying to buy time. "Why are you up?" If Tiffany saw her cooking she would surely offer to help and she didn't want that. Today she didn't want the younger girl to lift a finger.

But Tiffany had already caught on.

With a large grin she lightly stepped into the kitchen, "Mm, what are you making?" Taeyeon sighed turning back to warming skillet, "Breakfast for you." She eyed the girl now standing at her; hands firmly clasped behind her back. Even half-awake Tiffany was stunningly beautiful, "Actually it's supposed to be breakfast in bed, but you're awake so..."

"Aw," The wavy haired girl calmly slipped her arms around Taeyeon's waist, rubbing her thumb against the smaller girl's stomach, "I always wake up when you're not near me. It's like my body knows you're not there..." She gave a kiss to the smaller girl's ear exhaling as she spoke, "besides, why would I want to be in there when you're in here?" Taeyeon couldn't argue. Cooking with Tiffany trumped cooking with Tiffany in a room less than thirty feet away by a landslide.

The realization caused her to chuckle sinking into her lover's hold. "Could I ever be more in love?"

"Mm..." The wavy haired girl sighed, nuzzling her head into the nook of Taeyeon's neck, "I ask myself the same thing every day."

*

“Wow Sica... these are all yours?”

“Yeah,” Jessica nodded, glancing over her shoulder to the girl sitting on the floor. Hyoyeon continued to gawk at the vast collection of videogames stacked neatly on the entertainment stand.

“Well, a couple of them belong to my sister.”

“Have you beaten all of them?”

“No.” she finished tying her hair into a bun and took a seat beside the younger girl, “But I’m going to try to before school starts. I’m sure I won’t have time when I debut—if ever.”

“You will Sica, I know it.” Hyoyeon smiled, finally choosing a game for them to play.

“I wish we could play all of these together. That’d be a crazy summer.”

“Yeah, that would be fun. Sleepover’s every night... Thanks for inviting me to your house, by the way. I wasn’t sure I’d get to see it before I leave.” She gave another look to the large bed room she’d been studying since she’d entered hours ago, “It’s so neat and your beds so big!”

“It can fit the both of us so you don’t have to sleep on the floor.”

“Thanks,” Hyoyeon mumbled, feeling her face flair at the thought of sharing a bed with the older girl.

Jessica nodded in response, setting up the TV. She handed a controller to Hyoyeon and took the other for herself. Together they sat in silence, watching the opening scene of the colorful videogame play out on the large screen.

Hyoyeon stole a glance at the girl sitting by her side. Jessica was wearing loose pajama pants and a white t-shirt. Her hair was pulled back though a few strands fell around her face. She thought about fixing it for her but stopped when her mind fell into a daze. She didn’t have a chance to realize she was staring.

“You’re really leaving.”

“Yeah...” she cleared her throat, “three days.”

Another veil of silence covered them; both deep in thought.

Jessica spoke first.

“Maybe you shouldn’t go.”

“Hm...”

Jessica’s lips curled into a small smile when Hyoyeon remained quiet, “I’m just kidding, I know you have to.” Her smile faded; eyes returning to the screen, “... for a second there it looked like you were actually considering it.”

Of course I’d consider it. I love you. She thought she’d said it out loud when she felt herself blush but realized she hadn’t when there was no reaction from the older girl. Not yet Hyo, at some point tonight we’ll tell her. You can’t leave without saying.

“Jessica! Dinners ready!” the small form bounced into the room and hopped onto her sister’s bed. “What are you guys doing? Oooh, can I play?”

“No and get off my bed!” she rushed to her feet, hoping to spook the younger girl. It worked instantly, sending the small Jung speeding back towards the door, “Why not? I’m telling!”

“Jeez,” the older girl rose to her feet, “is your brother this annoying? Come on lets go eat.”

“So Hyoyeon,” Mr. Jung grinned from the head of the table, sipping his water, “are you excited to be studying abroad?”

“Yes sir, it’s a great opportunity.”

“I don’t know what Sooyeon’s going to do without you.” He gave a chuckle, “You two are practically joined at the hip. And in such a short time too! Isn’t that right honey?”

Mrs. Jung nodded at his side. Her lips curled into a small smile as she chewed her food.

“You’re going to miss her huh Sooyeon?”

“Yeah” Jessica shrugged, her gaze low, “I guess.” She held a less than amused look on her face.

“Oh am I embarrassing you?” He gave his daughter a nudge, eyeing Hyoyeon, “Heh, heh, she’s embarrassed.”

“Dad!”

“What?” He gave her an innocent look turning back to Hyoyeon, “You know I don’t usually allow my girls to have company over but Sooyeon practically cleaned this entire house to have you over. She’s never done that. You must be a very special person to her.” He watched as his daughter shifted uncomfortably in her seat, “Ha, ha, she’s so embarrassed. She’s not even talking anymore.”

“Sica?” Hyoyeon lay on her back watching the girl at her side. Since dinner Jessica hadn’t said much to anyone. She thought the older girl would revert back to her normal self once they were alone but still she remained quiet.

A small grunt came from under the thick comforter, “Hm?”

“Is something wrong? You seem upset.”

“In three days my best friends leaving.” Her words were sharp and accusatory as if she was committing the worst of treasons by leaving.

“I’ll be back.”

She rolled over with a forceful huff, “Yeah, but what if I’m not here? What if something happens?” She shook her head, “I don’t even know how long you’ll be there.” Jessica returned to her side, “What if you forget me?”

Hyoyeon propped herself up by her arm, “that’s a crazy thing to say, I’ll never forget you.”

“You promise?”

“Yes.” She reached for Jessica’s side, perhaps in an attempt to comfort the older girl or maybe she just wanted to touch her, “I promise. Don’t say things like that.”

The older girl sat up with another forced sigh, taking Hyoyeon’s hand in her own. She turned around to face the girl behind her, “Hyoyeon?”

“Yes?” She searched for Jessica’s eyes in the dark room.

Her voice spoke timid and soft, “I want to ask you something.”

*

“You’re going to burn everything.”

“I won’t.” Taeyeon frowned forcing her attention back to the darkened contents of the sizzling skillet. A few moments ago it had been bacon but now she wasn’t so sure.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to help you?” Tiffany crossed her legs sitting on the counter beside Taeyeon, skillfully peeling an orange.

“I’m sure.” She retrieved a few new slices of bacon from the fridge, discarding the charred batch and pan in the sink. “I’ve got it.”

The wavy haired girl tucked a few strands of damp hair behind her ear, watching the shorter girl search and find another pan, “You seem really nervous.” She split the orange into wedges, “what’s on your mind?”

“Nothing.” Taeyeon shook her head, cautiously glancing at Tiffany; instantly she regretted it.

Her eyes melted at the sight of Tiffany’s exposed skin; pale and slightly steaming under her loosely tied robe. With much determination Taeyeon pulled her eyes from the tempting sight, intent on not ruining this batch of meat, “Maybe you should put some proper clothes on.”

“Distracting?” The taller girl grinned, taking a slice into her mouth.

“No.” Her voice wavered, “It’s just...what if Yoona wakes up and sees you?”

“She left.”

“When?”

Tiffany shrugged, her dark eyes sparkling, “When I got out of the shower she was gone.” She eased off the counter, retying her robe as she sauntered towards the smaller girl, “You didn’t see her pass by?”

Taeyeon shook her head, feeling the warm aura closing in.

“Ah, you’re heads in the clouds today.” She rested her hand on the small of Taeyeon’s back,

“Come on Taengoo just let me help you. The eggs are getting cold.”

Taeyeon spun around to meet the face of the girl shamelessly teasing her, “What’s gotten into you today? What happened to ‘not until my back heals’ and all of that?”

Tiffany gave another shrug a smirk drawn on her face, “I wasn’t going to try anything.” She broke off another slice of orange and eased it between Taeyeon’s parted lips, “Just giving you some orange.”

Taeyeon’s felt a rush of heat surge through her body, her mind failing.

“You look disappointed.” Tiffany pulled away taking a seat at the small white table.

“I’m not.” She turned back to their food, trying to hide her frown.

The temptress giggled resting her chin in her palm, “okay.”

*

“We got a call today; the storm seems to be passing. They say it should be another day or two.”

“Yah, don’t change the subject—look at this!”

“Ah,” Sooyoung shook her head, reaching for the remote, “its hairline, hairline!”

“It’s huge!” Sunny ran her finger over the minor scratch on her DS screen for the third time that day, wishing it was just a smudge, “That’s the last time I let you—.”

“Borrow my things’, I know I know, jeez! It’s not like you don’t have another one.”

“Every good DS player has two DS’s.”

Sooyoung groaned, tossing the remote to the end of the large couch, “It’s still not working!”

“Hey...” Yuri closed the bedroom door behind her and shuffled into the living room.

“Hey,” Sunny glanced over her shoulder from her spot perched on the coffee table, “haven’t seen you in a while.”

“Yeah,” She watched the dark skinned girl plop down beside Sooyoung.

“Where were you yesterday?”

“Sleeping.”

“The whole day?”

She nodded, stifling a yawn, “I thought I’d get some rest by changing rooms.”

“What’s wrong?” Sooyoung headed for the kitchen, “Im Choding’s bothering you?”

“No,” she sighed shaking her fingers through her long dark hair, “actually, something’s bothering her. Like seriously bothering her. Every night she tosses and turns—moans and cries. I literally spent the other night just holding her so that she’d calm down.”

“What about last night?” Sunny tore her attention from her DS; setting it down by her side.

Yuri shrugged, “I heard her get up and leave but I haven’t seen her since.” She folded her arms over her chest, “I keep asking her what’s wrong but she just says everything’s fine.”

“Hmm...” Sunny rubbed her chin, her eyes rising to the ceiling.

“Yah,” Sooyoung’s voice was hushed; returning to the couch with chips in tow, “I think it has something to do with Seohyun.”

“Yeah,” the smaller girl bobbed her head

“She’s acting weird too?” Yuri shifted into a sitting position pressing her back against the arm of the chair.

“Mhmm,” Sunny panned her eyes between the two girls sitting across from her, “they haven’t been right for a while now.”

“Since our last break almost.” Sooyoung added with a nod.

“Wow, that long?”

“Yeah, Sometimes Seo cries too. At first I thought she might have failed a paper or something but now I’m sure that’s not it. I think our Maknaes are fighting.”

“Hey,” Hyoyeon called flashing a troubled smile as she entered the suite; crossing to the kitchen. She ran her hand across her forehead; exhausted. After helping a distraught Yoona back to her room last night she immediately left for the gym, in hopes that working out would help her think of a way to fix the mess she’d made and also give her a quiet place to let her own emotions go. Though by the time she stopped crying long enough to think about her situation, it was already morning and her body was worn out. All she wanted to do now was listen to some light banter from her friends and fall asleep.

“Afternoon,” Yuri smiled over her shoulder before turning back to the matter at hand.

“What are you guys talking about?” She anchored herself at the far end of the couch.

“Maknaes are fighting.” Sunny repeated, taking the bag of chips from Sooyoung.

“What do you think we should do?” Yuri pulled her knees to her chest playing with the hem of her pants leg.

“Nothing, you guys shouldn’t do anything. They’re fine.”

Sooyoung cut her eyes to the tired girl, folding her arms over her chest. “You know something.”

“What—?”

“—Tell us.” Urged Sunny.

She couldn’t do this. Not now. It was too early, her body was too tired and her mind was too weak, “There’s nothing to tell. They’re fine.”

“Really? Crying all night is fine to you?”

“If something’s wrong with our kids you should tell us.”

“Yeah, you don’t have to room with them,” spoke the tan girl shaking her head, “do you think that’s fair?”

“We just want to help.” Reasoned Sooyoung, “You should know that.”

Maybe they could help, but she couldn’t do that to the young couple. She’d already caused enough trouble. What if they didn’t want anyone to know? What if it didn’t work out between them and they wanted to just go on acting like it never happened? She couldn’t be the one to oust them. “Seriously guys its fine.” Hyoyeon shook her head, pushing herself onto her feet, “I took care of it.”

“Ah!” Sooyoung clapped, “so there *is* something wrong!”

“What—,” she was too fatigued to notice her slip up, “no—I meant—”

“—you call that taking care of it? Seohyun’s face was so puffy this morning she almost couldn’t see where she was going. You must have not done a good job.”

“I’m tired of secrets,” Sooyoung huffed, her voice pained, “I mean, I know we have to have them sometimes but when they start affecting others—when they start to make us worry are they worth it?”

“Guys, leave her alone.” The older girl stood in her doorway her arms passively crossed over her chest. They’d all been too busy arguing to notice she’d entered the room, “Maybe they swore her to secrecy.” Her voice spoke calm and controlled. *She always had a way with words*, “You wouldn’t want her to break that would you? What if they’d confided in one of you? Would you tell?”

If she hadn’t said anything; if she had acted like she always did when she was around Jessica she might have been able to leave the room in peace. But her mind and her mouth weren’t agreeing that day, “Thanks Sica...” Hyoyeon mumbled, her eyes falling to the floor. Sunny was too observant not to notice, “*Thanks? Sica?* Oh, now I know something’s going on. You never call her Sica; ever.”

Her face wasn't agreeing either.

"Are you blushing?"

"You never blush."

A brief silence filtered the room, but Sooyoung was quick to suppress it. "Jeez, the way they're acting you'd think they were hiding a secret affair too." She'd said it half-joking, trying to change the subject but it only made the atmosphere worse.

Yuri gasped, her hand covering her mouth, "Are you two in a relationship?"

—"What?"

—"No!"

The room fell silent, at their simultaneous outburst.

—"why would you?"

—"why would you?"

...

—"How would you?"

—"How would you?"

"Wow..." Sunny was the first to speak without an echo. "This is weird." Her voice trailed as she panned her eyes between the two standing girls. One calm, the other on the cusp of tears.

"You two are dating too?" Yuri's words were strained she anxiously asked again. She didn't notice Hyoyeon tearing up, her eyes focused on Jessica.

"No..." the shaking girl mumbled, her face still glowing, "never..."

"Oh," Sooyoung's face grew long, noticing the pain in the older girl's voice, "it's one sided."

"It isn't!" yelled Hyoyeon, "Shut up!" she tried to seem threatening but the tears leaking from her eyes only made her feel weak.

"That's why you always act weird when people bring up relationships."

"Oh..." Yuri nodded turning to face Hyoyeon, "you're not uncomfortable because you don't like it."

"I said be quiet—!"

"—you're uncomfortable because you're jealous." Her eyes panned between the two girls standing before her; her gaze far gone. "Maybe because you have to hide?"

Hyoyeon's trembling fist rose to her head, grabbing at her ears in a desperate attempt to block out their words. Everyday she'd fought to keep this moment from happening and now she was here; stuck in a situation where denial or admittance both meant the same thing. Her paranoia had over taken her. They all knew. Somehow they all knew.

"Hyo..."

*

"Are you sure?"

"Mhmm."

"I've never done it before."

“Me neither.”

...

“You don’t want to wait for someone special?”

“There’s no one more special than you.”

Silence

She spoke again, “We don’t have to do it if you don’t want to. I just... I had to at least ask before you go... It would just be between friends, so you don’t have to worry...” she gave a weak laugh, “it’s not like it means anything right?”

Chapter 10-1

“Yuri...”

“I know...”

“You went too far.”

“I know, I just... wasn’t thinking.” The dark skinned girl moved to stand but was quickly met by Sooyoung’s hand on her shoulder.

“Give them a moment.” She nodded, “I think they need to be alone.”

“Hey guys what was that noise? It sounded like something fell?” Taeyeon bound down the stairs crossing to the living room, “What’s with all the long faces?”

*

She’d begged her parents not to pick her up.

Exiting the plane she found her way into the large building with ease; following the many signs to baggage claim. It had been years since she’d last entered this place; years of work with minimal pay. She’d grown much during that time, not only physically but mentally also.

Being so far away from her comfort zone caused her to mature to the point where she was confident taking care of herself; pacing herself and keeping up with her health and chores. She seldom hung out with any of the other kids her age that she’d traveled with, intent on staying true to her goals and remembering what was important. And who was important. She was excited to be back home and even more excited to see her.

Every day she relived a memory of her and Jessica and everyday her feelings for the older girl grew. She’d never stopped thinking about her, even with the distance between them. They hadn’t really talked much since she’d left save for a few letters here and there and the one phone call she’d made telling her that she’d returned. She didn’t know why she hadn’t called more. Maybe it was fear. Maybe she was afraid that Jessica had forgotten her or that she’d moved on. She hoped with all her heart that wasn’t true. Jessica beat in her heart and she hoped that she did in hers.

Hyoyeon merged in the crowd around the large oscillating wheel, anxiously waiting for her bag to appear. That’s when she saw her. They’d agreed to meet after Hyoyeon had gotten settled but even so Hyoyeon planned to stop by Jessica’s on her way back to her house. She had

almost expected to find Jessica just as she'd left her. Adolescent and unchanged but the figure sashaying towards her was proof; Jessica had matured too. What was once flat and firm was now curvaceous and soft. Her eyes were alluring but still patiently calm; still with innocence but not without daring. If she had ever had doubt in her mind about what she felt it was definitely gone now. She was sure. She was in love with Jessica Jung.

"Hyo?" The taller girl gave a curious look to the long haired girl in front of her.

"Sica..." It always flowed easy.

Jessica paused, taking in the sound of Hyoyeon's husky voice, it was even better in person. Her lips curled into the small smile Hyoyeon knew well.

Without thinking she took the older girl into her arms. The hug wasn't without welcome.

"You came back." Spoke the voice muffled by Hyoyeon's large jacket.

"Did you think I wouldn't?" she couldn't stop smiling, "Sica, I wasn't leaving forever."

"I know I just..." she pulled away taking a good look at her friend. Hyoyeon had changed, from her hair to her height to her body. Everything was different everything was, "beautiful."

"Hm?"

She shook her head, taking Hyoyeon's hand in her own, "Let's go to my house. My parents are gone... We can catch up."

*

"Who?" Hyoyeon barreled into the bedroom, violently slamming the door behind her, "Who did you tell?!"

"What? I've never told anyone—Let go of me!" Jessica yanked her arm out of Hyoyeon's grasp hurrying to the opposite side of the bed. The daunting gleam in Hyoyeon's eyes was making her almost unrecognizable.

"You're such a liar! They all know about us!" she screamed flailing her arms in the air, "why did you have to go out there? I could have handled it on my own! I didn't need you!"

A pang of hurt flashed on Jessica's face but Hyoyeon didn't see it. She was too busy sinking deep into a sea of heartbreak exhaustion and conflicting emotions, "What do you want from me? You want to humiliate me—is that it? You want to keep reminding me of what happened? I get it—I made a mistake, okay? I'm sorry, why do you still want to hurt me?" She wasn't very loud anymore.

Jessica waited for Hyoyeon's shoulders to slump before replying.

She spoke soft, motioning towards the anxious girl, "Hyoyeon, I didn't tell anyone. Trust me, I would never do that."

"Why?" Her face twisted into a taunt scowl, "I'm embarrassing?"

"What—? I didn't mean it like that." Jessica's face was painted in confusion. She's being irrational.

"You're embarrassed by me! By what we had—admit it!"

“No—stop yelling at me!” She huffed, shaking her head. She had to stay sane for both of their sakes. “Sorry, just calm down. I think you’re having a panic attack.” She was close enough now to notice the slight film of sweat coating the younger girls bare arms, “or maybe dehydrated. Do you feel okay?”

But she wasn’t calming down, much less listening.

Hyoyeon backed away from Jessica crashing hard into the dresser behind her. She didn’t seem to notice still enraged, “What do you care how I feel? People like you are all the same.”

“People like me?” She froze, taken aback, “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“You lure people in just to get what you want and then you toss them aside when you’ve had your fill.”

“That’s enough Hyoyeon.” Taeyeon stood behind Hyoyeon near the door; her voice low and commanding. She hadn’t heard much but she knew that whatever was happening needed to end. This wasn’t the way it should be.

“You only care about yourself. Sociopath.”

“Hyoyeon ,that’s enough!” She took the younger girl by the arm.

She quickly pulled away, “Don’t talk to me like I’m a child!”

“Then stop acting like one! What’s wrong with you? How can you speak to her like that? If you love her so much then why didn’t you accept her when she told you?”

“Taeye—.”

Hyoyeon disarmed, eyeing the shorter girl, “When she told me what?”

Jessica shook her head, slightly waving her hand in a dismissive manner, “Taeyeon stop.” *Jessica no*, it was then that she realized why this situation had been able to drag on for so long. Why their issues had never been resolved.

You never said anything.

“*You didn’t tell her,*” By the time she turned to face the livid girl Hyoyeon was already gone, having left nothing but a faint trail of tears behind.

*

Tiffany leaned over the large bed, humming to herself as she finished fixing the collection of pillows before her. They had spent so much time talking over breakfast they hadn’t noticed the morning slip away. Tiffany didn’t mind. She would have been just as content spending the entire day in bed wrapped in Taeyeon’s caring hold than going out.

More than content. She chuckled to herself. That girl was definitely rubbing off on her.

After their meal Tiffany finally changed into “proper” clothes while Taeyeon hopped in the shower after many failed attempts to get Tiffany to join her. It wasn’t as if she didn’t want to. She subconsciously glanced at her hands before shaking the thoughts from her head.

Where’d that girl go?

“Tae Tae?” she called, exiting the bedroom.

She said she was going to be right back. She made her way down the hall, rubbing her hand over her stomach deciding that it must have been later in the day than she thought. She caught sight of the open door across from the staircase.

“Tae Tae? —Yoon,” she grinned at the young girl sitting on the bed in the middle of the room; her legs crossed under her, “so this is where you hurried off to, huh?” The younger girl smiled in response to the figure advancing at her side, “Taeyeon and I made breakfast. There’s still a little left if you want it. It’s probably cold now though.”

Yoon looked up with a small nod. Quickly she returned her eyes to the mass of shifting blankets in the center of the bed.

Tiffany noticed the limp hand hanging off the edge, “Have you been here watching her since morning?”

She nodded again, speaking softly as to not wake the girl sleeping next to her, “I want to be the first thing she sees when she wakes up.”

Tiffany giggled, covering her mouth with her hand. “She’s not in a coma.” She winked. She made a nudging motion with her hand and turned around, quietly leaving the bedroom.

*

“Don’t look at me like that.”

“But you said...”

“What was I supposed to say? I was trying to help you with Tiffany. Would you have listened to me if you knew how much of a hypocrite I am?” Jessica scoffed, “*Hey Taeyeon, you should listen to your heart and go after Tiffany. What? Is that what I did with Hyoyeon? No, I’m too much of a coward. I don’t follow my own advice.*” She leaned back against the headboard a defeated look in her eye, “That sounds great rolling off the tongue doesn’t it?” Before Taeyeon could reply she held up her hand, exhaling a heavy sigh, “I’m sorry, you don’t deserve that.”

“Taeyeon? Ah, there you are.” The bright eyed girl clasped her hands behind her hands behind her back, slightly twisting from side to side. “I’m going to make us sandwiches to go,” she smiled, “are you almost ready?”

“Um,” Taeyeon glanced at Jessica and then back to Tiffany, “Fany-ah, I think we might have to—.”

“—Yeah, she’s almost ready.” She steadied her voice, “She’ll meet you out in the hall.”

Tiffany’s tilted her head to the side as she studied Jessica’s gaze before nodding and exiting the room; pulling the door to behind her.

“Are you going to be alright?”

The frowning girl shook her head but not as an answer, more so out of habit. “You know,” she rose to her feet, her eyes on the door, “I always wanted something like this to happen. Is that weird? I always wanted a reason to have to explain myself.” She released another sigh, “I can’t say I don’t feel a little bit relieved.” Her lips trembled into a smile, “I’m glad everything turned out like this.”

Taeyeon repeated herself, unsure if Jessica had heard her. The sullen girl took slow steps she crossed the room, nodding, “I’m not going to let you miss spending a day with Tiffany for me.”

“She’ll understand. She knows that you were always there for me” she chuckled to lighten the mood, “even when I didn’t want you to be. She knows how much you helped us get together.”

This time her shaking head was an answer holding a smile, “You didn’t need me. Not even Maknae needed me. Think about it; whether I tried to help you or not you and Tiffany would have ended up together. She would have still dated Taecyeon, you would have ignored her and she would have confessed to you. And Maknae, her heart was made up long before she ever came to me. You guys never needed me... I needed you...” Her smile faded as she met the door speaking her truth, “I guess I needed to know that it could be done. That even as idols we could be happy...” she took the knob in her hand her mind sound accepting her realization, “That I could be happy.”

*

Remember that time we almost kissed and your sister walked in on us...? I think about it sometimes.

What if we did it again? You know, for old time’s sake?

She planned on saying something like that and now was her chance. She just had to say what she’d practiced and wait for Jessica’s reply. She’d say it jokingly so that either way it wouldn’t seem like it was actually something she’d wanted to ask for year.

Hyoyeon stood in the middle of the large bedroom she’d remembered quite well. It hadn’t changed much. Her parents were out grocery shopping and afterwards would be attending a recital of some sort for Krystal. They were alone and probably would be for hours. She’d promised herself that it would be the first thing she did when she saw the older girl again and right now the timing couldn’t be more perfect. It was now or never.

“Sica?”

“Hm?” Jessica stood at her dresser, her back to Hyoyeon.

Stay calm, “Remember that time we almost kissed and your sister walked in on us?”

“Yeah.” She nodded, a small smirk passing her lips. Hyoyeon was aware of everything those soft pink crescents were doing.

“I was thinking, how funny it would be if we tried again?” She added a laugh but it came out more awkward than cool.

Jessica gave a shrug; turning around, “Okay.”

Hyoyeon stood frozen. Though she’d pictured it countless times in her head she never really expected to get this far. In fact she’d never thought much past asking. Jessica crossed to her bed noticing the surprise on Hyoyeon’s face. She smiled sitting on her bed. “What’s wrong?” she patted the area beside her, “didn’t you mean it?”

“No,” Hyoyeon defrosted her mind, “No, I mean, yes I meant it.” She sat down beside Jessica leaving her legs to hang off the edge, just as Jessica’s were.

They were both determined not to let the moment slip away, “I guess we should be good at this by now huh?” Jessica quieted, waiting for a reply.

“Um...” The younger girls eyes searched the floor, her hands fidgeting in her lap, “yeah.”

“Oh,” she sighed, regretting having asked, “so you’ve kissed someone already?”

*“No,” Hyoyeon felt her face grow warm, “I thought you meant you.”
Jessica shook her head smiling again, “it’s for someone special, remember?”
“oh,” Her eyes went back to her lap.*

*Jessica took Hyoyeon’s hand into her own her smile returning, “ready?”
The younger girl nodded, feeling her body stiffen at Jessica’s touch.
“Close your eyes.”*

She listened to the command, waiting for Jessica’s lips to meet her own.

*They were everything she’d thought they would be: warm, soft, small and slightly moist.
Her ears burned from the sensation. The embrace didn’t last long before they both pulled away;
the same strange look of shock and confusion mirroring their faces.
This definitely wasn’t for old time sake.*

*It was as if something burst inside of her, sending fiery waves over her body. She couldn’t
think of another way to describe it other than sparks dancing wildly without direction. She
thought it was only her but as Jessica’s soft orbs met hers she knew the older girl felt it too.
What burned in her, burned in Jessica.*

*Without warning they lunged towards each other, frantically losing themselves in the
bevy of curious feelings and clumsy motions.
The moment was short lived.*

“Sooyeon!”

*

The dark skinned girl stood propped up against the wall of the kitchen. Silently watching her friend juggle an assortment of sandwich makings. Sunny and Sooyoung hadn’t had much trouble stilling their minds after their shameful display. It wasn’t that they didn’t care it just resonated deeper within her.

“If you’re going to stand there could you at least help me?”

The brooding girl feigned a smile, “Hi Unnie.”

“Hey.” Tiffany kept her eyes on her project, she didn’t look upset but Yuri could tell.

“I guess you heard what happened...”

Tiffany nodded carefully spreading mayonnaise onto the tower of bread slices, “Taeyeon told me.” She gave a small huff; her hands briefly perched on her hips, “I can’t believe you guys ganged up on her like that. You know she’s sensitive.”

“It was mostly me...” She confessed, leaning her back against the counter.

Tiffany shook her head, aware of the taller girl’s remorse. She wasn’t going to lecture her. “It’s not your fault. Whatever’s between them has been building for a long time now. I just hope they take this opportunity to let everything out.”

“Still,” Yuri folded her arms, her brow furrowed, “I can’t help but feel bad.”

“Hey, better to deal with it now than when we’re working right?” She turned to face the younger girl, giving her attention to the girl obviously fretting, “Don’t beat yourself up about it,

we all mess up sometimes.”

“Yeah, I guess,” Her eyes rested on the glistening chain around Tiffany’s neck. The tail end of her thoughts slipped from her mouth, “...There’s so much we could have talked about.”

Tiffany gave a smile to the pensive girl before turning back to her food, “We can talk now.”

Chapter 10-2

Taeyeon sighed pulling the last of the band aids from her back. Most of them she probably hadn’t needed in the first place as she was quite the fast healer and rarely kept scars unless the wound was severe. She stared at her reflection in the mirror above the sink, “I think that’s it Taengoo.” she muttered making sure for the umpteenth time that the bun of her hair was secure. When she was sure it wouldn’t fail she took one last look at herself through the full length mirror hanging on the back of the bathroom door and headed out of the room.

She smoothed out the fabric of her tight black dress once she reached the bottom of the stairs. She wanted to look perfect when she saw her.

“Hey,” Taeyeon called, passing into the living room, “Have either one of you seen Fany?”

Sooyoung looked up from the chess match she was playing “No, wasn’t she with you?”

The short girl shook her head watching Sunny take her turn; she was losing by a landslide, “We decided to split up. She thought it would be more fun that way.”

Sunny watched the older girl tug at the hem of her dress, “Wow Taeyeon, you look hot!” She moved another chess piece after Sooyoung took her turn, “Where are you off to?”

“Fany and I are going to dinner.”

“Really?” Sooyoung scoffed, “Good luck, the prices in the restaurants here are outrageous!”

“Delicious though.” Her opponent nodded focused on the playing pieces in front of her.

“Why did you guys pay? We get everything for free.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Lyn-ssi said so. She said we get to dine and use all of the facilities for free.”

Sooyoung rose from the table accidentally knocking over the chess board in her fit, “You mean to tell me I could be eating five star food and relaxing in a five star spa instead of playing this archaic crap?!”

Taeyeon chuckled, her voice lowered, “Sorry for not telling you sooner. It slipped my mind.”

“Come on Sunny, forget about that let’s go! We don’t have a lot of time left to enjoy this place!”

She pulled the older girl to her feet, stopping her from cleaning up the mess.

“Nice dress,” Yuri smiled shuffling by Taeyeon to the couch.

“Thanks, have you seen Tiffany?” She checked the display of the clock flashing on the DVD player under the TV.

“Worrying about me?”

Taeyeon turned around to the sweet voice.

She exhaled hard her jaw unhinging. Tiffany stood with her hair falling free around her face in waves of black. She was wrapped in a black dress with white accents. While it was loose, the dress still managed to show her curves beautifully. Dipping and swelling where needed. The thick satin white ribbon around her midriff only helped aid the affect.

The taller girl held her hands in front of her gripping her small black clutch. She smiled in crescents at the girl standing mouth agape across from her. "Ready to go?"

"..." her eyes scanned the length of Tiffany's body, travelling slow to thoroughly sample the stunning image.

"Tae Tae?"

She took her time when she reached the taller girls elegant long legs, deeply entranced by the milky tones and the flawlessness of her lovers exposed skin.

"Jeez Taengoo," Sooyoung snickered nudging the shorter girl from behind, "close your mouth. You're drooling everywhere!"

She must have been staring at Tiffany for a while because when she snapped out of her trance Sooyoung and Sunny were wearing different outfits and Yuri was no longer on the couch. She drew her lips in trying to not ruin her makeup. Sooyoung hadn't exaggerated by much.

Taeyeon cleared her throat meeting Tiffany with a nod, "Y—yeah, I'm ready." Tiffany slipped her arm under Taeyeon's pulling her to the door; her smile ever present, "Good," she waved to the girls, "Be back later!"

*

"You're not an actor. This isn't a set, its real life. We're real and I'm sorry it took me hurting you to realize that. Instead of asking others for advice—instead of asking others what I should do or how I should behave, I should have just listened to myself. I should have just talked to you. I should have just told you what I feel. Exactly what I feel... Seohyun... Juhyun... I love you."

*

"What is it?" Tiffany shifted under Taeyeon's gaze as she leaned against the wall of the spacious elevator, "You look so out of it."

Taeyeon continued to stare, "That isn't the dress you were looking at when I was with you."

"Yeah," she smiled wide, "I thought this one was prettier," the young girl twisted from side to side causing the end of her dress to sway back and forth. Her head tilted to the side; smile fading, "You don't like it?"

"No—no, I love it... it looks so good on you." Taeyeon shook her head. She could do better than that, "you look beautiful." She closed the distance between them, "you are beautiful," she felt Tiffany's chest brush against her own, holding the blushing girl in a gentle embrace, "You're gorgeous Fany-ah."

In moments Tiffany's lips were pressing against hers, lingering. A wave of electricity overtook the smaller girl's body. It would never feel familiar, she was convinced. Her hands slid up the fabric of the wavy haired girls dress. The strapless garment was cut low enough for her to feel much of her lovers bare skin hidden beneath the waterfall of hair. She moaned into the taller

girls mouth, feeling her tongue graze against her own teasingly.

Not tonight, she thought moving her hands to Tiffany's hips. There wasn't going to be any tempting tonight. She couldn't take it. *Not with her looking so*

Her brain scrambled when she felt the younger girl wriggle out of her hold. She sent the grinning girl a quizzical gaze.

Tiffany straightened her dress, "we're in an elevator."

Taeyeon glanced at the display above the sliver door, "but we still have thirty floors left,"

Tiffany raised an eyebrow at her girlfriends reasoning. "I don't mean it like that." She wrapped herself around the younger girl once again, her voice low, "we could just...." She drew circles on Tiffany's arm, "keep kissing..."

"You can't use my own moves on me Taeyeon," she laughed at her girlfriends attempt to mimic her routine, "they don't work."

Taeyeon pulled away a frown cast on her face, "Why do you do that?"

"What?" she blinked, now smiling.

"Why do you tease me so much?"

Tiffany shrugged, shaking her head. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes you do!" the older girl pouted, "I hate it, you know."

Tiffany scoffed, holding her arms behind her back. "You do?"

"Y—yeah," Taeyeon tried her best to act upset as the temptress neared her, "it's not fun at all."

"Oh yeah?" She stood close to Taeyeon, cornering her in the small space.

"Yeah." It wasn't even a whisper.

She closed her eyes anticipating another kiss but there wasn't one. The elevator stopped letting on a small group of people all dressed in formal attire. Disappointment flooded her as she scowled inwardly at the cluster of people. It didn't last long when she felt Tiffany's fingers walk up her back. The wavy haired girl cupped her hand over Taeyeon's ear as if to tell her a secret, but there was no confession. Just the hot wet sensation of Tiffany's warm soft tongue dancing over her lobe. It wasn't until they all were exiting that she spoke again murmuring.

"What are you going to do about it?"

*

"Mmmm..." the muffled voice of the aggravated girl whined, tossing in her large bed. Yoona drew her lip into her mouth, pausing to watch the slumbering girl stir before coming to rest. Moments passed before she tried again.

"Hmm?" the mass of blankets groaned, "what is it?"

Yoona played innocent, clasping her hands together in her lap, "Oh, you're up!"

Seohyun huffed; her eyes still shut, "You've been shoving me for the past thirty minutes now."

She turned to the wall, annoyed, "what is it? What do you need?"

The older girl smiled, her orbs on her hands, "You."

"For what?" she didn't get it, "I'm sure whatever it is you can get someone else to help you."

"We're the only ones here but that's not what I meant." She took the younger girls hand in her

own.

“What are you doing?” Seohyun questioned, startled by Yoona’s actions.

“I’m apologizing.” Her eyes finally met those of the girl who she’d been watching all day. Her smile persisted; sincere.

But Seohyun wasn’t smiling.

“It’s too early for this.” She mumbled, turning back to the wall.

“It’s past six...” Yoona looked at her hands again. At least she hadn’t pulled away.

“I was up late last night.” Seohyun could hear the faint deflation in the older girl’s voice but didn’t turn around. She didn’t want Yoona to see her like this.

But Yoona had already noticed it hours ago. “Crying?” She offered, “You’re eyes look puffy.”

Seohyun remained silent.

“Over me?”

Still no reply.

“...You must be really mad at me...” She involuntarily squeezed the younger girl’s hand, “Instead of talking to you or trying to figure out things on my own I went to someone else and listened to them without thinking about why they felt the way they felt... I was stupid—.”

—Yoona,” Seohyun faced her once more, her eyes pleading, “I know you have a lot to say but I really *am* tired. Can we do this when I wake up? I promise, I only need another hour or so...” her voice trailed into a yawn.

She must have really cried hard last night.

Yoona nodded feeling Seohyun’s hand go limp in her grasp. She could wait another hour. She’d wait until morning if she had to. So long as Seohyun would hear her out she didn’t mind. She fixed the thick covering around the taller girl, tucking the fabric firm under Seohyun’s sides before returning to her sitting position; eagerly waiting.

*

“Wow Fany-ah, this place is beautiful.” Taeyeon surveyed what she could of the dimly lit restaurant. The art the atmosphere the music, it was truly five star and brilliantly captivating. Tiffany smiled settling into the seat her girlfriend had pulled out for her. “I thought you would like it.” She leaned back when Taeyeon finished pushing her in. “It made me think of you.”

Taeyeon felt herself smile, sliding into her own chair across the small round table, “It did?”

Tiffany nodded sipping her water coolly, “Mmhmm, the feel is very you; chill but fun and warm.” She smiled as Taeyeon started to blush. She thought the same, that this place was oddly like herself, but she didn’t think Tiffany had noticed. Tiffany continued, “There were a lot of different restaurants to choose from but this one had a special air to it.”

The small girl fiddled with her napkin, beaming, “you didn’t have to make the reservations, I would have done it.”

“I know but I wanted to do something for you for a change.”

Taeyeon clutched the ornate cloth in her hands. She thought briefly before glancing over her

shoulders. There weren't really that many people in this particular area of the restaurant and the few that were weren't looking at them. She set the napkin on the table and slowly rose to her feet. Tiffany could only watch in puzzlement, her head tilted slightly as her girlfriend pulled her chair from the table.

The confusion disappeared quickly, an expression of adoration taking its place at the sight of the smaller girl trying to discreetly carry her chair to Tiffany's side of the table. She felt her face flush, matching Taeyeon's as the older girl sat down next to her. Her girlfriend didn't notice though. Her focus was on the hand she was shyly easing into Tiffany's lap, looking for its partner. Their fingers laced briefly under the table before starting their usual playful games.

*

"Gah," Yuri leaned back in her chair, setting her glass on the table, "They're so in love with each other."

"Shh!" Sooyoung pulled her attention from the scene taking place over her shoulder, "don't talk so loud!"

"Relax," the tan skinned girl rested her elbow on the table, "no one heard me and besides I didn't name names."

"Still," the taller girl watched a group of people pass their table, lost in chatter, "we don't want to take chances." Sooyoung huffed, crossing her arms over her chest, "man, if you're going to be reckless like this maybe I should take you back to the room."

"Calm down, jeez, you get so ornery when you drink." Yuri refilled her glass from the wine bottle on the table. She'd asked for the whole thing so that their waiter didn't have to keep coming back to their table. Though he didn't seem to mind, "couldn't we go to a different restaurant? I don't feel good eavesdropping on them like this."

"We will; this is just the first stop. I didn't know they were here. It was clearly a coincidence."

"We're *clearly* spying." Yuri mumbled waving her hand in front of Sunny's face, "jump in anytime."

"Look." Sunny's gaze remained unwavering; fixed on the couple at the other side of the half full room. She had the best angle.

*

Tiffany started cutting the roasted chicken in front of her into smaller pieces immediately after receiving it. She smiled when Taeyeon unfolded a cloth napkin and draped it over Tiffany's legs before doing the same for herself. This was one of her favorite aspects of their relationship. She loved that they had grown to the point where they were comfortable enough with each other to just sit in silence; their actions and their hearts being the only modes of communication. Taeyeon didn't need permission to brush the hair away from her face so that it wasn't in the way when she was trying to cut the spicy meat and Tiffany knew she didn't need to ask before offering the older girl the first bite. It was all welcomed.

Tiffany eased another forkful into Taeyeon's mouth and then into her own. Before she could realize it the older girl's thumb was grazing over her bottom lip, wiping away the sauce that had failed to make it beyond the soft heavenly entrance. She lifted her finger to her mouth

ready to lick it away but stopped when Tiffany quickly shook her head.

That might look suspicious. She thought, wiping her hands on the napkin her lap. She glanced around the room.

There were a lot of people there now; too many for her to count. She wondered when they had all arrived.

Probably when I was getting lost in my Tiffany. Waves of heat warmed her cheeks as she thought about how truthful her cheesy realization was. She reflected on their evening. Tiffany looked so elegant, so gorgeous.

Simple always looks so stunning on her This time it was her ears that were on fire followed by a flurry in her stomach but that wasn't from her thoughts.

Tiffany's leg rubbed against Taeyeon's again as the younger girl scooted closer to her lover, unaware that she was overloading the shuddering girl's senses. She rested her left hand on Taeyeon's thigh, with no other intention than needing to feel her lover close to her. Taeyeon flinched at the touch her brain well past maximum capacity. She hunched over the table, coughing on the piece of lettuce she'd been trying to chew. A soft hand met her back patting gently as another lifted a glass to her lips.

"You okay?" The soothing hand rubbed in circles over Taeyeon's back before withdrawing and resting briefly over her shoulders.

Taeyeon nodded, giving a small smile, "yeah, eating too fast I think."

"Be careful," Tiffany reached for her own glass but found it empty. She looked around the room, "Tae Tae, do you see a waiter?"

"Hm?" Taeyeon set both glasses down after filling Tiffany's with her own water, "did you say something Fany-ah?"

Tiffany drew her lip into her mouth positive that if the sound of her heart thumping beat any louder everyone in the room would surely hear it. "Thank you." She smiled.

Taeyeon started eating again. "For what?" She hadn't even noticed.

It was second nature by now.

Tiffany sighed shaking her head. It always amazed her that one person could make her feel so superbly volatile. She could only hope that she made Taeyeon feel half as ethereal as the older girl did her but she never seriously doubted it; Taeyeon made sure of that. The wavy haired girl moved to tuck her hair behind her ear, though found she didn't need to as Taeyeon had already beat her to it, before reaching into for her purse.

"Taeyeon?" She fiddled with the small object in her lap.

"Hm?" Taeyeon's soft brown eyes looked to her. Looking into her.

She hadn't really thought of a romantic way to do it. Not anything as touching as what Taeyeon had done for her. Her mind raced.

"Look over there—what kind of piano do you think that is?"

"Hm?" she turned to the direction Tiffany was pointing gazing at the white grand piano in the center of the room, "I don't know. Seohyun could probably tell—what are—?" Tiffany's arms

came from the side and wrapped around her neck. She gave a chuckle at the girls perplexing actions, “are you trying to choke me? We already did that part remember?”

Taeyeon chuckled sitting back in her chair. A cold startling sensation met the exposed skin under her collarbone bringing her attention to the area Tiffany’s eyes were canvassing. “I saw it when we were walking around.” Her voice was low, eyes peering up past eyelids; chin tucked in, “It’s not the same but it’s similar.” She played with her own.

Taeyeon’s mouth fell open once again. her eyes panned between the girl beside her and the necklace clasped around her own neck. She held the ring with one hand as the other involuntarily rose to cover her heart. “Oh Tiffany... it’s beautiful...” she fought to stop herself when she felt her body leaning towards the younger girl. Tiffany had to do the same.

“I love it,” she sighed dropping her hand from her chest into Tiffany’s, “thank you,” she squeezed her hand; eyes softening even further, “Thank you...”

She wished she could kiss her but she knew it was impossible.

Taeyeon studied the item around her neck, marveling at its design. It was silver with a brushed look and feel. There was a mirrored line weaving and looping on its surface and another etched on the inside.

“You really like it?”

“Yes,” her voice was breathy now, more air than sound. She continued to stare in awe, entranced by its intricate patterns, “its lovely Tiffany. Is it a vine?”

Tiffany chuckled covering her mouth with her hand, “they’re words.”

“Really?” Taeyeon looked harder. The weaving and looping design were in fact words, fixed in a small cursive font.

“I had it engraved but I had too much to say so they had to keep making it smaller to fit all the words on.” She huffed furrowing her brow, “stupid since you can’t even see it now, huh?” “That doesn’t matter,” she tried to decipher the English words, “it’s not like I can read it anyway. “ She gave Tiffany’s hand another squeeze, “Tell me what it says, Fany-ah, that way I’ll always know.”

Tiffany shrugged feeling embarrassed, “it’s stupid...”

“Don’t say that. I know it has to be wonderful since you thought of it just for me...” she leaned closer, linking her arm around Tiffany’s. She could understand why the younger girl liked to do it now. It was surprisingly comforting. She closed her eyes, “Tell me.”

Tiffany mumbled something she didn’t understand.

“Hm?” Taeyeon questioned her head relaxing onto Tiffany’s shoulder.

“*If I am your heartbeat*,” she closed her eyes, “*you are my soul*.” her head tilted to rest against Taeyeon’s.

“Tiffany...” the love struck girl sighed, her eyes drifting into euphoria.

“*How I wish I could kiss you.*”

Tiffany pretended not to hear. She knew she hadn’t meant to say it but if she acknowledged it she definitely would act upon granting the wish they both prayed for.

Tiffany's eyes passed quickly over the room, "I'll be right back Tae Tae," she reluctantly pushed herself from the table, out of her lovers warm hold, "restroom."
Taeyeon nodded leaning back in her chair; eyes still lost and ardent.

*

"Yah, Sooyoung are you okay?" Sunny patted Sooyoung's shoulder from across the table. The younger girl had been twisted in her seat for quite some time now, "Don't pass out," she pulled back to her food, "and don't stare so much, you'll get a neck cramp."

The emotional girl turned back to her company, gazing up to the ceiling, "Ah... true love..." You would have thought she herself had just received the necklace. "I hope they stay like that forever." She crooned her eyes slightly pained at the thought of them separating. "I'm sure they will." Yuri mumbled nursing her glass, "I couldn't imagine having to see my ex every day."

"Mm," Sunny nodded before shaking her head, "I don't think our girls will ever have to go through that. They would never breakup with each other."

"We might if she finds out I've murdered you!"

The trio jumped at the hushed voice standing behind Sunny.
"Waa!" Sooyoung nearly tipped the table over, "Where did you come from?"
"Shouldn't I be asking you that? Seriously guys, eavesdropping?!"
"We weren't!" the taller girl protested, "it's just a coincidence!"
Tiffany folded her arms over her chest her eyebrow raised at the young girls slurry words. She wasn't buying it.

Sunny shook her head waving her hand in front of her face, "She's telling the truth, she wants to go to every restaurant tonight and she wanted to stop at this one first. We came here the other day and had to pay but she wanted to try their food for free this time."
The irate girl sighed shifting from one foot to the other. She couldn't really be mad on a night like this.

"Okay but..." her tone was much softer now; delicate. She fiddled with her hands, "could you go now?" she pleaded, "If Tae Tae sees you she'll feel weird and get nervous." Tiffany smiled as she remembered the feeling of Taeyeon's head resting on her shoulder, their fingers laced in her lap, "I'm having a really great evening, and I don't want it to end."

The three girls shared a look, glancing at one another with smiles on each of their faces. They'd never seen her so happy. Perhaps even glowing. "Of course Fany-ah, we'll leave."
"You have your key don't you? We locked the door to the foyer."
"Yeah, I do," Tiffany nodded starting for her table, "thank you."

Sooyoung winked at the girl as she passed her, "we'll be sure to head back to the room very *very* late."

Tiffany playfully tapped the girls shoulder as she snaked through the sea of tables without a word. She wasn't sure she could deny what the younger girl was implying.

“I’m back,” Tiffany grinned sliding into her seat.

Taeyeon greeted her with a smile, immediately taking her hand. Tiffany’s smile widened enjoying how cute her girlfriend was behaving. The older girl felt exceptionally affectionate that evening. No, she felt like this all the time, only tonight she wasn’t having any trouble expressing it.

“I thought you might still be a little hungry so I ordered you some soup.” She spoke with a low calm tone. Taeyeon closed her eyes resting her head on Tiffany’s shoulder. The wavy haired girl smiled; a commanding warmth pulsing in her stomach. She could easily get used to this Taeyeon, completely at peace and without worry.

She traced the V’s of Taeyeon’s fingers; a move she knew the older girl loved, especially between her index and middle. She’d never told Tiffany but the younger girl knew. Every time she ran her finger over the tender area Taeyeon’s reaction was the same: a shallow gasp, a slight shudder and a soft exhale in a breath of wispy giggles; her eyes on their hands while Tiffany’s stayed fixed on her, gaze longing and intent.

In all her days and nights spent dreaming of moments like this she never thought such a pure simplistic act could bring upon this beautiful of a reaction. A reaction Taeyeon herself wasn’t aware she was even giving. Tiffany wouldn’t tell her. If she told her she might become aware and stop. And Tiffany didn’t want her to stop.

She never wanted her to stop.

Now that I’ve gotten rid of those kids there’s no chance that she will! She beamed inwardly.

Her eyes welled with affection as she watched Taeyeon draw a quivering lip into her mouth. She wanted to freeze the moment to capture the image forever in her mind. With her free hand she outlined the ring dangling from her neck, her mind spinning in a spellbound haze.

“Excuse me,” bowed the tall male waiter standing near their table. He wasn’t the same guy who’d been tending to them all evening. In fact his entire uniform was different. Not the usual red shirt and black and pants that everyone was wearing. What was red for others was a rich shade of blue for him. His pants were black but of a finer material along with his vest and white bow tie.

Not wanting to be rude, the wavy haired girl pulled her eyes away from the girl lost in their own world. “Yes?”

“I’m sorry to disturb you but would you mind coming with me?”

“What is this about?” Taeyeon asked a hint of irritation in her voice as she returned to reality.

“My boss will explain everything,” he stepped aside extending his hand towards the back of the room, “please.”

Taeyeon's glanced at Tiffany, their eyes sharing a silent conversation. Tiffany smiled in response to Taeyeon's questioning gaze.

"Come on Tae Tae," she rose to her feet, "It probably won't take long."

The man led them through the restaurant to the kitchen where a familiar woman stood talking on her headset with a wooden clipboard shielding her face and a large purse slung over her shoulder. She nodded her head touching her hand to her ear as she walked around in circles, the train of her red gown flowing gracefully behind against the spotless marble floor. She looked much younger with her hair up.

"Good evening So Nyuh Shi Dae." She bowed, "I trust you have been enjoying your stay at our hotel."

"Yes," Tiffany smiled unconsciously glancing at Taeyeon, "It's been quite amazing."

Taeyeon couldn't stop her lips from curling into a crooked smirk as she briefly thought about how wonderful the past few days had been. She was fervent to get back to her evening, "Excuse me Lyn-ssi, but what is it you need with us?"

"Ah yes," The woman pushed her glasses back on her nose, "Straight to the point!" She lowered her clipboard to her side and motioned for them to follow her.

Together they hurried behind the older woman. She took them through the astonishingly large kitchen of their restaurant, past a set of heavy black swinging doors, down a steep staircase and into a long narrow hallway. It was unsettlingly empty in comparison to the area behind them.

A nagging buzz echoed from the halogen lights hanging above, flickering rapidly causing dissonant rhythms to bounce echoes off the pipe laden walls.

Tiffany didn't like it.

The vibe was so daunting she had a hard time believing that it was even part of the lavish hotel at all.

After walking for what seemed like an eternity for the small impatient girl anxious to return to her date, they arrived in front of another thick black door. Much like the one they'd passed before only this one was barred with a large metal pole and sealed with a collection of deadbolts and locks.

Tiffany inched behind the shorter girl instinctively stepping in front of her. She slipped her hand into Taeyeon's safe grasp her voice wavering, "Lyn?"

*

"How did you find me?"

"It wasn't hard," Jessica stood in the doorway of the empty hall staring at the girl sitting on the wooden floor facing the wall. She sighed picking up on the unmistakable faint sounds of sniffles. Uncrossing her arms she went to the girl who was slowly pulling her legs into a fragile embrace. She herself was just as delicate, "actually, it was pretty hard. I had to find a security guard and ask him if he would let me see the monitors so that I could track you." Jessica sat on the floor beside Hyoyeon, "He wouldn't though."

Hyoyeon buried her head in her knees, trying hard to mask her tears. But the evidence was too great not to notice. “Hyoyeon,” Jessica called. She paused briefly before continuing; her voice firm, “we need to talk.”

“Why?” The distraught girl roughly rubbed at her red eyes trying to dry her tears, “What is there to talk about?” She turned to Jessica, finally meeting her gaze, “Everything’s already out there...” she fought against the soreness in her throat. Moments ago her sobs hadn’t been so quiet, “I fell in...I confessed to you... and you abandoned me.”

She lost against the harsh pain, her eyes beginning to stream again as her voice shattered, “You never even gave me a chance to take it back, I would have denied it if it meant I could have you as a friend but you didn’t give me a chance, you never gave me a chance...” her head fell back to her knees, muffling her weak voice, “so what could we possibly have to talk about now?”

The sound of Hyoyeon’s voice echoing in the room was too heartbreaking and too taunting for her to hear without making her fall apart herself. If they were going to have this conversation she had to at least be sure that no one would walk in on them if they both lost it. “Let’s do this in our room.” The brunette mumbled, rising to her feet, “it will be easier to talk there. I’ll... I’ll tell you everything...”

Hyoyeon wanted to oppose with the older girl but she couldn’t decline an explanation. Her heart was yearning to know what Jessica had to say. It had always been yearning to know what she had to say. What reasons had caused them to end up like this; distant and at far ends of each other’s worlds.

With shaky legs she hoisted herself up and walked after the taller girl, stopping abruptly when they reached the door. Jessica understood the younger girl’s hesitation.

Hyoyeon had never been one to let others see her cry.

“Here,” Jessica pulled a handkerchief from her pocket, remembering that she’d come prepared with this in mind. Hyoyeon was reluctant to accept, but eventually did.

“Thanks,” she mumbled into the soft fabric, startled when an old sensation came to life from deep within. Her senses tingled as they reawakened from their long slumber. She took another long breath, holding the cloth closer.

It smelled so good

So beautiful

So Jessica.

*

It was the scariest thirty seconds of her life. She couldn’t deny it, she couldn’t hide it. They already knew. Lyn’s words repeated incessantly in her head, driving her further into a whirlwind of unease as she watched the older woman fiddle with the collection of locks on the door.

“Our security guards witnessed a scene in the elevator earlier. I’m sure you know what I’m referring to.”

Taeyeon tried to swallow past the lump in her throat, racking her brain for something to say that could fix all of this. That could stop this from destroying the world she’d practically just

started to build. She could feel Tiffany's tremors shaking up her arm. Or maybe they were her own, she couldn't tell.

This wasn't supposed to happen. This wasn't the way she thought her date would end. Hidden somewhere where no one could hear them or knew where they were. She hadn't even brought her purse let alone her phone. She hadn't seen the point since the only person that would have called her was by her side.

Her brain raced over scenarios and ideas of what could possibly be waiting for them behind the door. What fate would meet them: A soundproof room for negotiating blackmail, a slew of reporters quick to bombard them with questions about their secret relationship or worse, their managers and family livid and ready to disown them... Her grip tightened on Tiffany's hand; resolute.

No matter what awaited, she wouldn't let go. She would never let go.

Lyn finished undoing all of the locks. She shoved the huge cartoon-like key ring back in her purse and turned around, "After hearing about you two—oh my, you two look terrified!" She studied the quivering forms behind her, flashing a smile when she thought upon what might be troubling them. She'd seen that look countless times before, "Please, don't be scared. Everything's fine. I apologize if I've frightened you." She threw the door open with ease, "I felt that it would be best to move you to a more private area so that you can eat in peace, without worry."

Lyn ushered them into the small unfurnished room behind the door, "We here at our hotel exist solely for those who are the face of the public but don't necessarily want their lives out in the open too." She followed them inside and turned around to the exit, pulling a metal gate from the top of doorway. She punched a set of numbers into the archaic dial pad near the gated door. Taeyeon's confusion started to quell when the room started to move. "an elevator."

The older woman turned back to face the couple. "We pride ourselves on our strict policy of customer privacy. There are no journalists or members of the media allowed on the mountain and everyone that we employ is held to a completely flawless nondisclosure contract." She sighed giving a small chuckle, "I'm sure you don't want to hear about all the fine details. Just trust me when I say that here in our hotel you are safe and free to do as you please. We've been keeping the secrets of diplomats and idols from all over the world for years." She touched her hand to her ear, giving an apologetic smile to the young girls, "one second." she brought the clipboard to her face starting a conversation with the device.

The duo shared a glance, both chuckling when they let out identical sighs of ease. Tiffany's brow furrowed, her finger rubbing over the back of Taeyeon's hand urgently, "Do you..." she changed to a whisper, "do you think this is real?" Taeyeon gave a sure grin, doing her best to appear calm. She tamed the stray hairs threatening to fall into her lover's eyes, "I hope so, places like this have to exist right? It only makes sense." Tiffany huffed nodding. She wanted to believe what the older girl was saying. She needed to.

Lyn's conversation ended when the elevator came to a stop. There was no display to tell them how far they'd travelled but by how cool the temperature was Taeyeon guess they were somewhere near the roof.

Or on it?

"Ah, here we are." Lyn kicked the gate to un-jam it before lifting it up and letting the two girls out. "This is The 300rd, a personal favorite of our restaurants. Set atop the roof of The 300rd building, you probably know it as the one with the mall." She pushed her glasses back on her nose smiling with glee, "built more of a greenhouse than a restaurant so that you get the grand view of our mountain and the other three buildings of the hotel."

She motioned for them to follow as she continued to speak on the modern restaurant. The enclosure was set with a dazzling theme of black, white and pale blue. It was much smaller in size than their previous restaurant but somehow it felt more spacious.

Probably because it's less crowded. Taeyeon observed, scanning her eyes over the area.

There was a door in the far corner leading to the kitchen and a fully stocked bar on the wall beside it where a man stood spinning a bottle in his hand. Directly across from the elevator was a small shallow pool with a white platform in the middle of it for the pianist and her instrument. Three rows of small round tables stretched the majority of the room while another row of booths were against the glass wall closest to them.

"We reopened it just a few hours ago since the weather is starting to return to normal." She stopped in front of a large table with a frosted glass top. It glowed much like the stairs in their suite and the ice sculptures lining the back of the crescent shaped booth. The seat itself was blue with a velvety look and feel set against a dark wood frame. The older woman stepped aside to let the girls in. "it may still be a little chilly but I'm sure you will find the heated seats more than sufficient in warming you." Lyn waved her hand in the air calling a waiter to her side. As he came closer Taeyeon noticed he was the same man from before. He handed them each a menu with a bow.

Lyn smiled to the girls glancing at her clipboard, "I'll leave you to your night now and I apologize once again if I scared you or hindered your outing. We here at our hotel only wish to make you feel comfortable. If you ever would like to plan a trip we have a couple's package that is full of fun and also relaxing activities. Have a lovely evening."

*

"It wasn't even that you didn't love me."

Jessica flinched, startled by the voice of the girl standing beside her in the elevator. She hadn't said anything since they left the hall some time ago.

"If it had been that alone I think I could have dealt with it." Her voice was fine now, long since void of the sobs that hindered it before, "But you abandoned me. You were my friend and you stopped talking to me. You just went on with your life like we'd never met. Like I didn't exist."

Jessica did her best to stop from fidgeting. Everything Hyoyeon was saying was true. She couldn't deny it. She couldn't deny any of it.

"If it wasn't for So Nyuh Shi Dae I would have never seen you again. And you could have lived

like that. That would have been okay with you, wouldn't it?"

Her response was delayed though well thought. She wasn't going to lie, "...yes..."

*

"You should have seen your face!" Tiffany laughed snaking her arm out from under their cover to refill her glass, "you were so scared!"

"So were you." Taeyeon replied chewing the bite of cake Tiffany had previously fed her.

"Yeah," Tiffany nodded sinking back against the comfortable seat, slightly buzzed, "I just kept thinking *'not again, please don't put my Taengoo through this again'*."

After finally settling into the new environment they learned that all the restaurant had to offer was dessert since everything else wasn't up to hotel standards after being closed for the past few days. Neither one of them minded partly because they were both quite full from the dinner they'd shared just under an hour ago but also because they were too drunk off of each other's presence to care.

Taeyeon chose a slice of marble raspberry cheesecake for dessert while Tiffany chose a large cut of rich chocolate cake though neither one had intentions of eating the slices themselves. Together they sat bundled up under a blanket feeding each other small bites of their decadent treats.

"Mm," the smaller girl snuggled closer to the girl at her side savoring the closeness of her lover's warmth under the long thin blanket. They'd been given two but the other was still folded on the end of the table, unused and untouched, "you were there too."

"Yeah," Tiffany sipped from her glass of champagne, "but I shut down. Even before with the girls, I fell asleep while you did all the talking." Her eyes dazzled kissing the back of the hand intertwined with her own, "you're so strong Tae Tae."

Taeyeon's heart skipped beats as her free hand framed the younger girl's cheek. Her eyes swirled deep and intense, full of emotion, "I'm strong because of you, Tiffany." She held their joined hands up between them, "Because of this." Her thumb passed effortlessly over the younger girl's jaw, gently caressing the soft skin under her palm, "Because of your love." Tiffany's eyes dissolved into crescents a heartfelt sigh breaking through her. Leaning in was only natural.

She let her lips rest briefly on Taeyeon's cheek before pulling back to glance around the restaurant. Aside from a few waiters here and there they were alone. Taeyeon gave a look around the room, surveying the scene for herself. No one was paying attention to them, except for their waiter but he was focused on the woman behind the piano. Still the kiss she placed on Tiffany's cheek was apprehensive; small and timid with worry. She still held a little doubt that this place could be as safe as Lyn had boasted. That they could truly let themselves go in such a public setting, even if there were less than five people in their presence.

She could tell the younger girl wanted more but she knew Tiffany wouldn't take the initiative. She was thinking the same thing. This place had to be too good to be real. Tiffany didn't need it. She didn't need to embrace Taeyeon here if it meant jeopardizing what they had.

Still

in this atmosphere with this romantic mood and the stars shining bright through the glass wall beside them it was hard not to want to kiss the girl holding her hand and caressing her cheek. In fact it took everything in her not to.

Tiffany pulled Taeyeon's hand from her cheek and to her mouth. Exhaling hard the wavy haired girl kissed the back of Taeyeon's hand, with more passion than she'd given the other earlier, before rubbing the soft skin against her face once again. She smiled between kisses, hoping that showing her lovers beautiful extremity affection would help quell the burning in her chest.

Taeyeon peered sincerely into Tiffany's eyes falling fast into the soft brown orbs. They always drew her in with ease. Calling at her in looks only she could decipher. She was always powerless when it came to resisting. She could lose herself in Tiffany forever and never be satisfied. Taeyeon knew.

She was hooked; addicted and helpless.

Her head lulled against the plush cushion, her eyes closing. "Mmm," she exhaled drawing her legs onto the seat. A slight wave of embarrassment washed over her as her eyes reopened. She always felt so mortified when her body betrayed her this way but she couldn't help it. Tiffany could make her feel so strong and yet so vulnerable at the same time that the clashing feelings could only result in causing fragile mewls to escape her.

Still she couldn't help but feel a little humiliated when Tiffany would witness her small awkward sounds, thinking that the younger girl might find them off-putting. But that was far from the case. In reality it was her weakness. Tiffany lived to drink in Taeyeon's moans of reception. Thought she could never tell.

If Taeyeon knew how much Tiffany thrived off of hearing her she would lose what little influence she had in keeping Taeyeon at bay. And that wouldn't be good for either of them. After all, one of them had to be able pull away so that they could enjoy other activities or essential tasks like work and eating.

"... *Fany-ah...*" Taeyeon's trembled voice fell on Tiffany's shoulder as she leaned forward into the slim figure, "Mm...—!" she hissed when Tiffany nipped at the back of her hand.

Tiffany let go her eyes bursting open, "Oh!" she held Taeyeon's other hand in her lap, "I'm sorry! I got carried away..."

"Don't be. It didn't hurt I was just a little startled."

Tiffany nodded smiling faintly, a little surprised herself.

She was really getting into it, Taeyeon grinned deviously twisting around studying the girl she lying against. She wasn't sure when the tables had turned. *It's probably this place.* She reasoned feeling her face flush as Tiffany drew her lip into her mouth; her dark eyes staring back at Taeyeon. *Or maybe it's just her.* The wavy haired girl swallowed hard licking her lips in anticipation. Not even a second passed before Taeyeon found herself doing the same.

Her hand reclaimed its place on Tiffany's face as their lips met, parting briefly only so that Taeyeon could let out a gratifying sigh of relief before crashing back into her lover. Tiffany

was slightly shocked at the desperation in Taeyeon's passionate acts, her tongue trying hard to massage every inch of her own as her hand gently cradled the younger girl's head. Tiffany thought only she had wanted it this bad but now that idea seemed far past preposterous.

Her hand came unlaced from Taeyeon's to meet the older girl's waist pulling her closer as she relaxed further into the seat. She felt her eyes flutter under their lids at the sensation of Taeyeon's endlessly heaving chest press against her own. Lusting, she groaned into her lover's mouth feeling her mind stir. She'd wanted this all night. She'd craved it.

Tiffany broke away from the kiss, tilting her head back in ecstasy. "Tae Tae..." She called, her eyes boundless with desire; voice huskier than usual.

"Hng?" The smaller girl moaned burying her head in the crook of Tiffany's neck.

"Let's go."

Chapter 10-4

No Hyoyeon, I wouldn't be able to live with it.

That's what she hoped the older girl would have said when they were in the elevator but she didn't. She'd tried to fight the impending river of tears but there was no way she could dam them. Jessica could live perfectly fine without her.

"Hyoyeon... please don't cry..." The brunette took Hyoyeon by the wrist, pulling her into the bedroom. Hyoyeon was far too exhausted to resist. She helped the younger girl to her bed where the fragile form collapsed onto the soft surface, drawing her legs to her chest. She lay on her side; eyes on nothing in particular.

How could it have been so easy for her?

was it really was just one sided? Somewhere deep in her heart she'd always held out a tinge of hope that Jessica felt the same but now that was fleeting.

"...have you eaten today?" Jessica asked pacing the room, her focus on nothing in particular. "You should eat something..."

As she expected Hyoyeon didn't respond.

"I'll order us something." She mumbled, slowly exiting the room.

Jessica passed through the empty suite and sat at the kitchen table taking the cordless phone from the wall. She purposely took her time when calling in their order sighing heavily when she was done. It was obvious to her that she was trying to stall but she wasn't sure why. Maybe she was afraid of how Hyoyeon would react to what she had to say or maybe it was just force of habit; a natural reaction after all these years spent avoiding the topic. Either way she knew it had to end. With heavy feet she rose from the table and back to their room.

After tonight she was sure Hyoyeon wouldn't want to share anymore.

“They said it’ll be about thirty minutes.”

Hyoyeon was just as she’d left her; knees sucked in, back to the door.

“Is there anything I can get you while we wait?” She inched closer to the frail girl, “or do you want to take a quick shower or some...?”, her voice quieted as she rounded Hyoyeon’s bed.

Jessica stared at the girl studying Hyoyeon’s somber expression with distain. Her sigh was pained with a hint of relief as she shuffled back to her own bed, retrieving a blanket to drape over the limp form.

“At least you looks peaceful when you’re asleep.”

*

“Which way is it, right or left?”

Taeyeon glanced at the tattered napkin in her hand, “Left.”

“Okay,” Tiffany peered down the long corridor, “What now?”

“I think it says go straight.” The older girl replied squinting to read the smudged words sloppily written on the paper.

“Kay.” The taller girl tugged urgently at her girlfriend’s hand leading her down the long hallway, eventually stopping when they reached another T intersection, “What does it say?”

Taeyeon tried in vain to decipher the smeared words but there was no use, “Um, I’m not sure.”

“Hm?” she took the napkin into her own hand, “why is it so messed up?”

“My hands were kind of sweating.” Taeyeon mumbled in reply.

Tiffany’s lips curled into a devious grin, “anxious?” She crossed her arms over her chest.

Taeyeon shook her head lowering her gaze in an attempt to hide her blush. “No,” she changed the subject, “let’s go this way for a while and if we don’t see the crosswalk we’ll just go the other way.”

The wavy haired girl gave a small shrug, smiling wide, “Whatever you say Tae Tae.”

They headed down the hall to their right shoulder to shoulder Tiffany’s arms wrapped around Taeyeon’s.

They walked for what seemed like forever before the younger girl huffed, her brow furrowed, “we should have just went back the way Lyn brought us!”

“It was an auxiliary exit.” She gave a small grin to the frustrated girl, poking at her waist, “not having fun getting lost with me?”

Tiffany yelped her body tingling, Taeyeon knew she was ticklish there, “Ah—Tae Tae, stop!” her cries broke into laughter as the older girl persisted only stopping to pick up Tiffany’s purse when it fell from her grasp.

“Ugh,” she handed the small black clutch to her girlfriend, “I guess it’s not down here.”

“Yeah, let’s try the other way—.”

“Taengoo!”

Tiffany’s hand constricted around her arm at the sound of the loud voice. As she turned to its origin Taeyeon caught a glimpse of Tiffany’s lip tightening at the sight of the three girls ambling their way.

“Hey guys, having fun?” She smiled, greeting the trio.

Yuri studied the couple, her face wracked with concern, “Are you okay? We saw them take you away and thought something might have been going on. What happened—are you alright?”

“We’re fine,” Tiffany answered quickly, “nothing to worry about.” She flashed a small smile, discreetly trying to pull Taeyeon back the way they came.

“You were in the restaurant?” Taeyeon asked, puzzled at the actions of the girl beside her.

Sooyoung ignored the question her fists balled tight in front of her face, shaking back and forth menacingly, “Good,” she growled through gritted teeth, “I would have shown that guy a world of hurt if he messed with you.”

Sunny hit the taller girls shoulder, she seemed to be the only one without a drunken gleam in her eye, “No you wouldn’t. Stop trying to be a hero and don’t shake your fist like that you could damage your wrist!” The shorter girl sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose, “These two are going to drive me insane.”

Taeyeon sent the younger girl a sympathetic smile as Tiffany pulled her down the hall. Sooyoung threw her arms in the air slinging them over Taeyeon and Tiffany’s shoulders, halting their escape, “Where are you sneaking off to?” The girls shared a look but didn’t have time to come up with answer before the drunken girl spoke again, “If you’re trying to get back to the room you’re going the wrong way.”

“Yeah,” Yuri chimed, her eyes glazed, “Don’t you guys have a map with you?” she gave a crooked smile, wagging her finger, “you should always carry a map.”

“Mmhmm, mmhmm!” the taller girl added nodding excessively, “We’re going dancing.”

“Dancing?”

“Yup, some French guy’s throwing a party in one of the halls. It’s like a night club!”

“You guys should have read the brochure.”

“They were too busy to read.” Sooyoung teased wiggling her eyebrows

“Ah, really girls” Tiffany huffed; her face flushed, “how did you get like this!”

Sunny sighed apologetically, following behind the four girls. She could feel Tiffany scowling at her even if she wasn’t facing her direction. “We were eating dinner and this one started ordering drinks,” she pointed to Yuri, “Then they started playing those stupid drinking games.”

“We tried to get her to join in on the fun.”

“Someone has to take care of you.” She shook her head, “I feel like a babysitter...”

“Hey!” Sooyoung pouted glancing over her shoulder to the smaller girl before turning her attention back the two under her arms. “You guys should come with us!”

“I don’t know,” Tiffany farced a yawn, “we’re kind of tired, aren’t we Taeyeon?”

“Oh, but what could be more romantic than dinner and dancing?”

“Yeah,” Yuri smiled, “you’ve already done the dinner part. Just come for a little while!” her mood changed quickly as she frowned, crossing her arms over her chest, “We hardly all hang out anymore.”

Tiffany sighed seeing the sadness in her eyes. She knew it's was more than that. With a frustrated groan the wavy haired girl nodded, her lips tight, "Fine," she looked past the Sooyoung to her girlfriend, "you don't mind do you Tae Tae?" Taeyeon smiled her warm eyes calm, "not at all Fany-ah." Her hands swayed at her sides, "I would love to share a dance with you."

Tiffany snaked her arm around Sooyoung's back, her demeanor softening. "Ah so sweet!" Sooyoung boomed in the empty corridor, "I hope that one day I have what you have..." "I told you; stop thinking about it so much, maybe then it will happen." Sunny grinned watching the scene play out in front of her: two hands blindly searching for each other, until they finally came to rest in each other's grasp.

*

"Unnie, are you going to sit there all night?" Yoona nodded, smiling at the mountain of blankets beside her, "Yup." "Aren't you sore?" "Ah," she ignored the aching in the small of her back, "Just a little." Seohyun inhaled deep before exhaling in a yawn, "Lay down."

Yoona wasn't sure she'd heard her correctly but she wasn't going to question it. Holding her breath she spun around and lowered herself until she was stretched out beside Seohyun. She clasped her hands over her torso forcing a tense sigh from her chest.

*

"So," Yuri slurred taking a sip of the vibrant red drink in her hand. She leaned over the small metal table to steady her failing equilibrium, "Jessica and Hyoyeon..." "Ugh," Sooyoung scoffed leaning back in her chair, "will you shut up about them?" her speech wasn't much better, "all day it's been—Jessica *this* Hyoyeon *that*." "I just can't believe it." The tan girl mumbled, her head in her hands.

"You have to admit, it is kind of shocking." Sunny added nursing her sparkling water, "With the way they act towards each other. It's hard to believe they're together." "They're not together" Taeyeon corrected shaking her head, "they just have a history." "I guess we can all agree their relationship didn't end well." "We never saw how they were before we met them so we didn't really have a reason to think there was any bad blood between them."

"Wait, you knew about them?" Tiffany asked, setting her cocktail down on the small round table. Taeyeon shrugged, "I only had a hunch. I didn't know for sure until today." She slid out of chair, "I'm going to get some more cherries, do you want anything?" The wavy haired girl shook her head, watching Taeyeon's hand slip from her own, "no thanks." "Hm..." Sooyoung exhaled slowly, glancing at the girls around her. "Well!" she clapped her hands together, "This is bringing the mood down." she stood from the table, "Tonight's supposed to be about fun! Come on, let's dance!"

“Ah, this girl,” Sunny grumbled, rounding the table.

“What about you guys?”

“I’m going to wait for Taeyeon.” Tiffany smiled clasping her hands in her lap.

“And you?” Sooyoung looked to the slumped figure.

Yuri shook her head slouching over the table, “I’ll join you in a bit.”

“Alright,” she shrugged, walking off towards the dance floor, “come on Bunny.”

“Yah! Don’t call me that!” She yelled, following behind.

“Don’t feel much like moving?” Tiffany turned to the girl on her left.

Yuri shook her head grumbling something under her breath.

“Do you want me to get something for you? Or we could go back to the room if you’d like, you don’t have to stay here.”

“Pffffffftttt.....” she chuckled, swaying in her chair, “I’m not drunk, Tippahny.”

Tiffany extended her hand to the younger girls shoulder, “You should take it easy for the rest of the night.”

The dark skin girl frowned leaning back in her chair; her hands over her eyes. “I thought I was the only one.” She mumbled.

A small sigh escaped Tiffany as her brow furrowed. “I know,” she rubbed the upset girls back, “I know but you’re not so it’s okay, okay?” Her eyes darted around the dimly lit club. Sooyoung and Sunny were lost and Taeyeon wasn’t back yet. She looked to the girl now resting her head on her palm and her elbow on the table. “I need to use the restroom, will you be alright?” She gave a sloppy nod only stopping when her chin came to rest against her chest. Tiffany gave the intoxicated girl one last glance before rising to her feet and hurrying off to find the washroom. As soon as she got out she planned to take Yuri back to the suite whether the younger girl wanted to go or not.

*

“Seo?” Yoona glanced to the girl beside her. She rolled to her side to get a better view. It’s been way longer than an hour. She shimmied closer to the sleeping girl until there wasn’t much space between them. “Seohyun,” the weary girl yawned pressing her hand against the slumbering girls shoulder blade, “I’m sorry that. I didn’t just talk to you, but I didn’t know what to do. I’ve never had to deal with anything like this before,” she closed her eyes, involuntarily drawing her lip into her mouth, “when you kissed me...I didn’t know what to do. I’ve kissed people before but it was never like that. It never felt so... *strange*.”

She sighed shaking her head, “Even now I can’t really explain it. It was like my body was made of glass and you were breaking it—shattering me into a million tiny pieces.” She yawned, briefly parting her eyelids, “And you confessed to me too. Oh, I was so confused. You said it with so much ease, like it was just a natural thing to you. Like you’d told me a thousand times before.

I’ve always dreamed of the day someone would tell me they loved me—I think every girl does...” they closed again, “but I never thought those words would come from my best friend, So Nyuh Shi Dae’s Seohyun...” she nuzzled her face in the feather filled pillow, letting her body

relax. Maybe Seohyun couldn't hear her but she wasn't going to stop talking until she'd said it all.

Yoona spasmed back from sleep seemingly moments later picking up where she'd left off. It had to be in the past midnight by now, "I couldn't process it. My mind, my body everything felt weird. Like something had changed inside of me. Or something had awakened.

I tried to force myself to be around you and act like nothing had happened." She huffed ashamed, "I thought that if I didn't acknowledge the problem it would go away and I could go back to having you as my friend like we were before but it didn't go away. The confusion only grew worse. I started analyzing everything—the way I act around you, the way I feel when I'm around you, how I feel around other people compared to when I'm with you. I should have just listened to myself but I wouldn't even entertain the idea that I was falling for you."

Her words became muffled; her face buried deep in the soft surface, "I guess I just wanted to convince myself that was how all friends were but I think somewhere inside I knew it was different....I should have listened to what my body was trying to tell me. That even before you kissed me it was attracted to you..." her words drifted as sleep consumed her yet again. This time she was sure she wouldn't be able to fight back.

*

"Where did Yuri go?"

Taeyeon lifted her head from her palm briefly meeting her girlfriends gaze, "Hm? Oh, Sooyoung grabbed her."

Tiffany took her seat as Taeyeon's attention fell back to the table. She watched as the older girl played with the fruit at the bottom of her tall frosted glass, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah..." She huffed leaning forward over the table.

Tiffany slipped her hand onto the smaller girl's leg, urging her to look at her, "What's wrong?"

Taeyeon gave another sigh this one more breathy, "This night was supposed to be our night..."

"I know," she gave a small smile cupping the girl's cheek with her free hand.

Taeyeon willingly fell into Tiffany's soft caress but, "I know its selfish but I just wanted to spend some time alone with you." Her eyes returned to the table as she deflated even further, "Maybe we should just turn in."

"Oh," Tiffany crooned, pulling the girl into a hug, "It's not that bad. I'm sorry tonight's not turning out the way we wanted." She pulled back sliding out of her chair, "Dance with me." Taeyeon remained motionless.

"Come on," she gave the shorter girls arm a tug, "Just one dance and then we'll go." She sealed the offer with a wink.

Even when intoxicated Taeyeon was powerless to argue. With another sigh she let the taller girl lead her to the dance floor. This definitely wasn't the way she thought their date would go.

*

“...I didn’t mean to scare you.” Murmured the sleep ridden voice, “I just didn’t want to end up like Tiffany and Taeyeon Unnie. They were going through so much and it was scaring me. Seeing how sad Taeyeon was because she was hiding herself from Fany... I didn’t want to become that way with you. Maybe I should have told you I like you rather than I love you. Maybe then you wouldn’t have been so scared but you have to understand, I’ve felt this way for a long time.” Seohyun sighed rolling onto her back, “I guess somewhere along the line I started to think that you knew how I felt. I thought you would definitely accept me. I didn’t realize that it turning out like this was even an option.”

Yoona rolled onto her side leaning over the younger girl, “What’s going to happen to us?” Her voice was meek despite the new wave of energy washing over her. Seohyun starred up at the girl hovering over her with inquisitive eyes, “What do you want to happen?”

*

Taeyeon swayed to the driving pulse of the bass pumping from the speakers around her, constantly cutting her eyes to the curvaceous figure in front of her. She held a devious grin, entranced by the sight of the beautiful girl’s body moving in rhythm with her own, her hair whipping from side to side, dancing to groovy house melody. With her free hand Tiffany pulled the end of her dress down, an action she’d been doing ever since they’d got onto the dance floor. An outfit like that definitely wasn’t made for the type of movements she was doing. She looked to Taeyeon wondering why Taeyeon’s dress wasn’t doing the same.

She stared at the girl standing motionless before her. “Do you need to sit down?” Taeyeon didn’t reply too busy devouring Tiffany’s body with her eyes to notice anything else. Ever since she’d seen Tiffany in that dress her mind had been set on one thing. That dress was deadly hypnotic. Tightening and relaxing perfectly with the dips and swells, caressing her just right in all the best places, begging for Taeyeon’s touch. “Tae Tae?”

The track mixed into a slow intoxicating techno beat with a lady speaking words the bewitched girl couldn’t understand. In one fluid motion she turned around pressing her back firm against her lover’s body. The closeness, the song, the alcohol; it was nearly overwhelming. A dire sensation burned in her, driving her thoughts and her body. She needed to be sated.

Taeyeon unlaced her fingers from Tiffany’s hands and took them in her own, guiding them to her hips. She pushed herself further into the girl standing behind her until there was no space between them.

“Fany ah...” she moaned, letting her head fall back onto Tiffany’s shoulder, lifting one hand to thread through Tiffany’s hair, “Mm...”

“Are you feeling alright?”

“Yeah of course,” she smiled her voice a breathy whisper. She closed her eyes, reveling in the feeling of her hips grinding in against Tiffany’s pelvis.

Tiffany took note of the slurred speech. Her friends were never as good at holding their liquor as her. “Where did you learn to dance like this?” she managed spellbound by Taeyeon’s hips gyrating without end.

Taeyeon pouted swiveling around in her lovers hold, “I don’t always have to be cute, “ her fingers trailed over the small of Tiffany’s back; the bare skin of her leg rubbing against Tiffany’s. Her dress was short, this Tiffany knew. She just hadn’t realized how much so until now.

“I know.” She mumbled her words muffled by Taeyeon’s hair.
 “Or dorky.” Her hand ran over Tiffany’s thigh to the hem of her dress.
 “I-I know...” she shuddered Taeyeon’s hand was steady playing with the soft fabric as if she didn’t realize the action was making her fingers brush against the younger girl’s leg.
 What is she doing? In the middle of a dance floor? Her fleeting voice of reason questioned.
 “Taeyeon, what are you thinking?” She pulled away, smoothing out her dress yet again, “are you okay?” She wanted to check the older girl’s temperature but stopped herself, fearing that she would get roped back in.

Taeyeon looked on with a somber expression, a vast contrast to the deep innate hunger smoldering in her eyes, “No... maybe we should go back to the room...?”
 Tiffany nodded, her eyes darting around. The place seemed more crowded now, “alright just let me tell the girls.” She turned to find them but was stopped by the smaller girls arms tightly wrapped around her waist.

“No,” she whined, resting her head against Tiffany’s back, “Don’t...they’ll be fine.”
 “they might look for us.”
 “I’m sure they’ll figure it out. Besides we need some alone time....” Her hold loosened as her hands found the younger girls, luring her towards the exit, “Please Fany-ah...”

*

“Wait!” the younger girl squealed pushing the shorter girl off of her.
 “What?”
 “this isn’t right.” She huffed, trying to steady her labored breath.
 Yoona rolled to the side, freeing the girl below her. “I understand...” She sighed, crossing her arms over her chest.
 Seohyun propped herself up on her forearms, “no, I mean we should take it slow. I don’t want to ruin this by being rash.”
 Yoona grinned riding waves of rapture from their haste session. It was just as she’d described before. A shattering sensation unmatched by anything she’d ever felt before, “It feels so good.”
 Seohyun smirked relaxing onto her back, “yeah...” she sighed, her eyes closing.
 “You’re really good at it.”
 She caught herself gravitating back to the girl at her side, “We have to take it slow.”

“mm,” Yoona moaned, it was all that she could muster; her mind swirling.

“That way it will feel even more amazing when we kiss again.”

“do...” she broke the quick silence.

“Hm?”

“do you think we could do it one more time?”

“I don’t think we should. Not yet at least, Kissing is what got us into this mess in the first place.”

Chapter 11-1

Sooyoung groaned raising her head to meet the cold device held firmly in her hand. “Hello So Nyuh Shi Dae?” boomed a jarring voice, “Good morning, this is Lyn. I’m calling to inform you that the problems with the main lines have been fixed. You should find no problems with you televisions now. And also, another bit of good news for you,” the feminine voice grew softer as Sooyoung’s head dipped back down to the hard surface she’d been sleeping on, “the storm..... rescheduled..... three hours...”

“What was that?” The groggy girl mumbled dozing between words. Her eyes remained shut, reluctant to open.

“The storm is over and your CF has been rescheduled. The set is being rebuilt as we speak. At the latest should be ready in about....” The phone went limp in her hand falling to the kitchen table with a small thud.

Taking solace in the quietness of the room she drifted back to sleep desperately hoping that doing so would lessen the murderous headache waging war against her brain. She hadn’t thought a hangover could ever be this bad and could only wonder just what series of events had left her as she was; half dressed, covered in sweat and glued to the kitchen table.

“Ooh,” the aching girl groaned, lifting her head briefly to cross her arms underneath. Even thinking hurt. Her questions of how and why she’d fallen asleep in the spacious room would have to wait until much later; or at least until her ears stopped ringing. Right now all she wanted to do was sleep and recover. Unfortunately she was unaware that this was just the precursor to a hectic day.

“Who was that on the phone Unnie?” Seohyun emerged from Yuri’s bedroom to her left, pulling her hair back into a tight pony tail.

Sooyoung slowly lifted her head from her arms, just enough for Seohyun to hear her mumbles, “That manager lady.”

“Oh,” she smiled crossing to the kitchen. “Was she calling about the blizzard?” she asked, digging around inside the fridge.

Sooyoung grunted a response burying her face back in her arms unsuccessfully attempting to hide from the invading light bleeding through the blinds behind her. Seohyun claimed an apple and went to the sink to wash it. She glanced over her shoulder at the

older girl whimpering behind her. “You two went out drinking last night?”
 “Huh?”

She turned around, sensing Sooyoung’s confusion. “Yuri Unnie is passed out on the couch,” she inched towards the girl, perplexed by her downed status. This definitely wasn’t Sooyoung’s first time drinking but she’d never seen the older girl in this bad of shape the day after. “You have a hangover?”

The older girl nodded.

“What can I do to help?”

Sooyoung shrugged, touched by the innocent girl’s concern.

Seohyun eyed her fruit and then the girl sitting in front of her, “will eating help?” she set the apple before the taller girl in hopes of helping to revive her.

“Thanks... but I don’t know if I can keep it down,” she mumbled, slipping her arm from under her head to snake around her waist. Her eyes cracked open just enough for her to make out the form of the young girl standing by her side, “Is Sunny in our room?”

“No you big jerk!” Sooyoung shifted, slightly taken aback and confused by Seohyun change in attitude and voice...? “Over here idiot.”

“Unnie!” Seohyun whispered, “Not so loud,” she explained heading for the stairs, “she has a hangover.”

“I bet she does!” The shorter girl smirked poking Sooyoung’s head, “the way you were carrying on last night I’m surprised you’re not still drunk!”

“Sunny...” the tall figure pleaded slumping further over the table, “please... be quite...”

Sunny watched Seohyun from the corner of her eye, waiting until she was gone before backing away to take in the sight of the younger girl. Sooyoung was a mess, dressed in a thin pair of black shorts and a white camisole that looked as if it had been torn. Her hair was in all directions save for the matted side she’d slept on and her body was covered in the sticky film of cold sweat. There was nothing that could leave Sunny without sympathy for her.

Sunny’s hand fell to her side while the other dove in her hair as she questioned, “Do you remember anything that happened last night?”

Sooyoung sighed thankful the older girl listened, “no.”

“Really?” her voice grew quieter, arms crossing over her chest, “*nothing at all?*”

The tall girl shook her head, “Not a thing.”

Sunny scowled punching Sooyoung hard in the arm.

“Ow!” Sooyoung’s eyes burst open as she rubbed her arm, growling, “What was that for?!”

“That’s for not remembering!”

“Ah!” she hissed floored by the intense combination of pain throbbing in her ears, eyes, arm and stomach, “that hurt—!”

“Shut up!” Sunny pouted turning towards the stove, “I’m making you something to eat, stupid.”

“What with all the yelling? And who answered the phone earlier?” Jessica pulled her bedroom door to and met the duo in the kitchen, eyeing the rustling mass of blankets on the couch as she passed through the living room.

“It’s nothing,” Sunny grumbled slamming a pan down on the burner.

“I did.”

“Who was it?”

“Just stuff about the storm.” She shrugged, trying to ignore the haste movements of the small tornado zipping beside her, “Oh and the cable.”

“It’s over?” Jessica quickly grabbed a glass from the cabinet. She was trying her best not to get in the way of Sunny’s wrath but doing so was harder than she thought, “I wonder if they’ll reschedule our commercial— *tsk!*” the older girl frowned, cutting her eyes at the girl who made her jump nearly causing her to spill water everywhere.

“Reschedule?” Sooyoung grimaced when she tried to remember what the woman on the phone said, “I think we have three hours or something...”

“Three hours for what?” she sipped her beverage gingerly, straining to make sentences out of the low garbled words of the tall girl over Sunny’s clanking and banging of pots and pans. Her childish quest for noise was clearly deliberate. “Until they call for us, or is that how long they’re giving us to shoot it?”

“I’m not sure...” she gave another passive shrug, “I guess until they call for us?”

“Did you write it down?” She huffed annoyed that Sooyoung could remain so calm when Sunny was obviously craving her attention.

Sooyoung shook her head.

Jessica sighed sidestepping out of Sunny’s path once again, “alright, well wake Taeyeon and Tiffany and tell them to get ready.” She had to raise her voice to be heard over Sunny’s loud egg whisking. “And don’t forget about that one over there.” She pointed to the heap on the couch, “who is that? Yuri or Yoona?”

“Good morning Unnie!” Yoona bumbled through her door as if on cue. She scratched her head surveying the room, “Have any of you seen Seo?”

“I haven’t.” Jessica replied, disposing of the glass in the sink. She was still thirsty but trying to dance around the angry bunny bouncing was nearly impossible and definitely not worth it. Normally she would have stayed to see what was causing the usually cheery girl to act this way but she was pressed for time and had somewhere to be. Jessica glanced at the small post it in her hand, heading for the foyer, “I’ll be back in a bit.”

The young girl nodded turning back to the duo in the kitchen, “What about you two, have you seen her?”

Sunny didn’t answer; too busy muttering to herself to hear while Sooyoung pointed to the stairs; her forehead resting against the table once again. She wanted to get up and leave but she knew doing so would only exacerbate both situations; them being her headache and Sunny.

“Thanks!” the younger girl beamed bounding for the stairs, amazingly oblivious to the tense air wading around her.

Sooyoung perked up momentarily to address the girl before she could disappear completely.

“Yah, Yoona while you’re up there wake them up will you?”

“Awe,” she pouted, “why can’t you do it?”

Sooyoung's arms curled around her stomach returning to her previous position, "I'm...sick..."
 "Sick" Sunny scoffed slicing through a large onion, "yeah right."

"But —"

"—Scared?"

"No!" she whined puffing her cheeks, "I'm not scared."

"Then listen to your Unnie, okay?"

Yoona frowned scurrying up the remaining stairs, the third of many who would unintentionally be upset by Sooyoung that day.

*

Yoona watched the dark haired girl diligently search for clothes in her large black suitcase. With devious grin she pushed herself onto her toes and snuck into the room. Reaching her target, she gently wrapped the younger girl in her arms.

"Ah! Unnie!"

Yoona burst into laughter at the younger girl's startled reaction, "Good morning to you too."

Seohyun turned around in Yoona's arms taking the older girl's hands in her own. "What are you doing?"

Yoona raised an eyebrow her curious eyes sparkling in the midmorning daylight. "uh—."

Seohyun unlaced Yoona's fingers from around her waist and raised her hand to Yoona's lips, "Wait." She opened her mouth to speak but let out a small sigh instead, "...I don't want you to get the wrong impression." Seohyun grimaced turning back towards her bed. It took a moment for her to speak again, "When you came to me last night the last thing on my mind was kissing you. I wanted to be cold and stubborn. I wanted to be fickle with you, like you were with me but I couldn't." she exhaled flipping the cover of her suitcase down. "Even now I could... If I turn around..." The raven haired girl glanced over her shoulder, conscious of the body advancing behind her. "You make me reckless."

"Is that a bad thing?" Yoona continued to inch closer.

"No," she turned around, doing her best to keep her gaze low. "At least it doesn't feel like it." Their hands found each other with ease. So much so in fact that neither one was sure who reached for who. "Even if it was I wouldn't care." The troubled girl huffed shaking her head, "see what I mean? Since when did I become so careless?" Her eyes surrendered to Yoona's, searching deep within the large whimsical pools. "Only you make me feel this way..." she panned between them falling far into their carefree depths, "It scares me sometimes how much I want it. How much I love not always being in control."

A welcomed silence passed over them as they studied one another. Where Seohyun's eyes were brilliant and wise Yoona's were curious and full of naivety. They were opposites, two halves of a whole; the question and the answer. They were both unique, both different and both in need of the other; though neither one of them knew to what extent.

Seohyun fought hard to stop her body from leaning into Yoona's tender hold, "I don't want to ruin this by moving too fast, especially if you don't know what you want."

"But I do—."

“Yoong...” The younger girl smiled softly; her hand on Yoona’s shoulder instantly cutting the older girl’s words short, “I know you. You don’t make decisions easy. And even when you do you don’t always stick with them...” she let her hand slide down the shorter girl’s arm back into Yoona’s grasp, “If we rush into this...and it isn’t what you want someone might get hurt.... one of us will get hurt... I.. I’ll get hurt.”

Seohyun pulled away sitting down on her bed. She couldn’t help but feel a little ashamed for being overprotective of her selfish feelings, “I don’t think I can take that Yoona. I just...” she shook her head, folding her hands in her lap, “I’m not that strong.” She followed Yoona’s movements watching as the older girl sat down on the floor in front of her listening wholeheartedly. “I don’t think I would be able to face you,” her eyes focused on her hands, “So please, be sure about me.”

“I understand.” Yoona nodded her lips curled into a small smile. She did understand. After keeping the younger girl in the dark for so long it was only natural that Seohyun would be skeptical about what Yoona felt. She chided herself for not being able to convey her feelings better during her hazy sleep glazed confession but she didn’t dwell on it. She could beat herself up about that later. Right now all that mattered in her eyes was the fretful girl pouring out her worries in front of her.

She couldn’t help but smile at the sight; whenever Seohyun was like this Yoona instinctively burned brighter, trying her best to alleviate the younger girl’s mind. She knew that was what Seohyun needed. Yoona needed Seohyun to add structure to her life, to push her to make decisions while Seohyun needed Yoona to make her relax with her kind smile and inviting eyes. She knew that doing so always helped quell the uneasy girl’s anxiety but she didn’t know she was the only one that did so.

Yoona tapped her index to her chin, taking in all of Seohyun’s words. Suddenly she clapped her hands together, her smile dazzling, “So you want me to prove it to you.”

“No...I mean...”

“I will!” she nodded pumping her fist wildly in the air.

Seohyun laughed her tension diminishing, “you’re such a kid.”

Yoona pushed herself onto her knees and reached towards the younger girl’s lap. She took Seohyun’s small hands in her own, “This kid knows when to be serious. I’m not going to hurt you.” She looked on with genuine eyes, sure of herself, her words; of everything. “I’ll make you believe it.” Her arms slipped around Seohyun’s waist stealing a hug before standing fully. With an honest grin and a determined gleam in her eye Yoona headed for the door, spinning on her heels when she reached the doorway, “Seo Juhyun prepare to be courted!”

**

Yoona departed from the bedroom leaving the younger girl to get ready for the day. The divine scent of Sunny’s cooking wafted up the stairs, beckoning her to come and take part. She made it halfway to the spiral staircase before remembering. With a small “tsk” she snapped her fingers hurrying back down the hallway to the door across from the small kitchen.

“Unnie,” she called rapping lightly on the large door. She waited a moment for a reply. There was none.

Yoona knocked again, this time louder, “Unnie! Taeyeon Tiffany, it’s time to get up!” She pressed her ear to the door, intent that there would be a response.

“Fany-ah not again, you said I could rest now.”

“Unnie?” she cupped her hand over her mouth, hoping they hadn’t heard her. The sound of rustling sheets seeped through the thick wood.

“...Alright... just be fast this time, okay? The suns probably coming up by now.”

What? It’s been up for hours.

Yoona didn’t wait to hear more. She wasn’t sure if Taeyeon had been sleep talking or not but she wasn’t going to stay around to find out. She’d already heard too much; her burning cheeks were proof of that.

*

“You got my note?” The dark eyed girl grinned, studying the wooden floor below her, “good. I wasn’t sure if you would see it.”

Jessica glanced at the paper in her hand, her eyes tracing briefly over the words:

I’m not running, I just really like that room-Hyo

She took a seat by the younger girl, noticing that they were sitting much like they had been the day before only this time Hyoyeon wasn’t crying, “I guess I shouldn’t waste any more time.” She ran her fingers through her hair drawing her legs in beside her. Jessica gave a nervous chuckle, tapping her nails against the cold floor, “I don’t know where to start.”

“How about at the part where you said you could live without me.” She spoke with a grin; no malice in her voice.

Jessica paused before realizing the younger girl had meant it as a joke; a genuine attempt to keep the mood light. Still it didn’t really help her. “I know it sounds terrible,” her eyes darted around the room, “but you don’t understand. I couldn’t be around you.” In the end they could only settle on Hyoyeon, “I would have thrown it all away.”

Chapter 11-2

“Well that explains a lot.” Taeyeon mumbled emerging from the sea of blankets scattered in waves about the large bed. She sat up, leaning against the headboard, “Do you think she’ll tell her?”

Tiffany shrugged doing the same, “I don’t know. I hope she will eventually but right now with everything going on it wouldn’t be wise.”

“Did you tell her that?”

The wavy haired girl shook her head, yawning. “I didn’t have to. She knows.” She passed the action to her girlfriend who ended her yawn by letting her head fall to Tiffany’s lap. She sighed exasperated as the younger girls hand found its way into her tangled hairs.

“I know,” she bent down kissing the tangled mass, “I know, it’s frustrating but we have to be patient. It’ll take more than four days to fix their problems.”

*

“Age... age was never the issue. I fell in love with you the moment you looked at me.”

**

It might have been the first time she’d seen Jessica but it definitely wasn’t the first time Jessica had seen her; the quiet girl with long dark hair and deep brown eyes. Until today she’d been a mystery. An intangible being that Jessica could only study from afar.

Until this morning she had been content with doing just that. Like countless days before she planned to go through her daily routine she’d arrive early and wait in the hall their respective practice studios shared, then linger around the vending machines during break and lastly zip out of ballet as quick as possible, all in hopes of seeing her pass by; Of catching a glimpse of the fascinating girl who never looked up until today.

Her heart revved as she thought back to the brief moment. It couldn’t have been more than five seconds, maybe even less than that, but still it felt as if it lasted an eternity. There she was, practicing her ballet in the hallway waiting for her instructor to arrive when it happened.

Jessica stifled a squeal, stopping in her tracks, “She looked at me!” Her ears burned as her mouth spoke of the historic moment. Quickly, she glanced over her shoulders to make sure no one had heard her sudden outburst. There wasn’t anyone there; not yet at least.

The dark haired girl bounced back to the vending machine she’d previously been standing in front of. She glanced at her watch, depositing a number of coins into the tall roaring machine. Her break was almost over but she didn’t care. She could wait a little bit longer.

Just a little bit longer. She thought, peering off down the hall. She knew it would only be moments before the mysterious girl came her way. She always liked to get a drink during her free time, usually something full of sugar and completely unhealthy. Normally Jessica would disappear long before the quiet girl arrived convinced she definitely wouldn’t want to talk to her. After all in the time she’d spent watching the young girl she’d never seen her willingly speak to anyone who wasn’t faculty.

Jessica checked her watch again. Time was passing too fast for comfort. She huffed, bending down to retrieve the identical bottles from the cool receptacle. It was common for her to receive two drinks instead of one. Mainly because the machine was old but also because of the complex series of button presses and smacks she preformed; courtesy of all her days spent playing video games.

Staring at the twins cradled in her arms she formed an idea. She’d never thought of it before but it only seemed right. Jessica shifted her weight from side to side lost in the vastness of her mind.

Whatever she said had to be perfect.

Would you like this?

The machine gave me two, care to share with me?

Hey... I saw you across the room and...

The rhythmic squeaking of sneakers filtered into her ears, reanimating her. Those shoes with that blaring music; she instantly knew who it was. The short girl rounded the corner, fiddling with her CD player, as usual her focus on anything other than the world around her.

Jessica could have said something. She could have gotten her attention but the sensation building in her stomach was too intense; far more powerful than when she'd been pacing the floor thinking about her minutes ago. If this was how she felt just being around the girl she knew talking would be impossible at least for right now.

I still have one more chance to see her after practice. The young girl rationalized, setting the water bottle back in the bin of the vending machine, I'll speak to her then. With an unsatisfied nod she hurried down the hall intent on honoring her commitment.

**

"When I found you that evening at the bus stop I knew what I was getting myself into. Everything logical, everything rational inside of me told me this would end badly. But still I went after you." She leaned back on her palms, dropping her eyes from the girl frozen in front of her staring at the wall. She wanted Hyoyeon to interject but she didn't. She'd been waiting to hear this for too long, "I knew what I was doing and I didn't care.

I was convinced that I could control myself and get to know you without letting anything go too far. So over time..."she exhaled, "we became friends. Great friends." She watched as Hyoyeon stiffened, her hands fidgeting with one another in her lap, "but...I think you and I both know we wanted something more."

**

Hyoyeon lunged forward crashing her lips hard into Jessica's. Her actions were with such fierce intensity that it caused the older girl to fall back onto her bed. Without hesitation the younger girl was on top of her, blanketing the older girl with her own body. Jessica didn't mind. She'd been waiting for this; dreaming of this.

Hyoyeon's fingers danced in hair as her other hand clutched Jessica's side; her thumb gently caressing her hip through her clothing. By anyone else's hand it would have been just a simple touch but by Hyoyeon's it was anything but. The small fondling motion was nearly effortlessly filling Jessica's mind with boundless pleasure. She anxiously anticipated what the young girl would do next. Was she going to slowdown or speed up? Would she dare to tread lower?

The older girl moaned, her eyes fluttering without end under their lids at the thought. She felt herself grow frantic as Hyoyeon's weight shifted on top of her. Her thoughts were overwhelming, sprouting in every direction. There were so many things she wanted to do so many places she wanted to touch. So many areas to explore. She didn't want to hold back. With a deep exhale she let herself go, granting her hands the freedom to explore.

The buttons of her shirt were undone easily; almost as easily as the zipper of Hyoyeon's hoodie. Jessica let out a soft whimper, her head lolling back to the ceiling. "Hyo..." she

breathed through quivers when the younger girl let her lips meet the dip between her shoulder and collarbone. She knew what was going to happen. She knew she should have stopped it but she had no power. She'd wanted this for so long. Too long. Even before that night when they'd first tried sharing a friendly kiss. Jessica yearned for it. Though she didn't think they would move this fast.

Hyoyeon's thumb curled under the hem of her tank top, slowly pulling it up past her midsection; just enough so that she could see her belly button. Her lips trailed over Jessica's upper chest, speckling the porcelain skin with small kisses here and there; each one expelling a small burst of passion, each one not passionate enough. She could feel her movements rebelling into frenzy and wondered if she might have been letting herself go too far.

Though it was ridiculous she still held a little doubt that Jessica really wanted this. It baffled her that the prospect could be true. Jessica couldn't really feel the same way. Perhaps the older girl was just humoring her. When Jessica's pulled lightly against her head, urging her to suckle more on the tender area just under her neck her insecurities melted away. She was sure; both of them were.

This wasn't a careless encounter between friends or for old time's sake. It wasn't even spur of the moment. This was deliberate, this was voluntary this was inevitable.

Jessica whined unintentionally when Hyoyeon sat up straddling the older girl; her warm palms pressed gently against the taller girl's stomach. Jessica watched the two naive hands glide over her abs slowly advancing towards her. She felt her body tingle as they eased under her shirt. The fabric grew taut, bulging from their invasion. The innocent girl looked to Jessica asking for permission; hands steady hovering over the sought after area, their objective. If she'd thought they were going to fast before her opinion was now the opposite. They weren't moving fast enough. Jessica thrust forward arching her back to meet Hyoyeon's touch. The sensation caused her to tremble with satisfaction as she groaned indulging in gratification. "Mm," she crooned, closing her eyes; her lips perking in expectation. Her arms extended upward reaching out for Hyoyeon an action they would constantly repeat throughout their midafternoon tryst.

It didn't last long enough..

"Sooyeon!"

Jessica scrambled to her feet pushing herself off of Hyoyeon. "Y-yes?" she belted scurrying to pull up her skirt and fix her shirt at the same time. She tossed Hyoyeon her pants and straightened her hair stumbling towards the door. Light footsteps slowly crept up the stairs, pausing at the top of the set. "Will you come help your father with the groceries?"

Jessica cleared her throat glancing over her shoulder to Hyoyeon, "Uh," The younger girl overturned the beddings searching desperately for her hoodie or the undershirt she'd

carelessly discarded some time ago. She cursed herself for not having seen where it fell after tossing it over head.

Over head?

The older girl was already reaching behind the TV for the elusive garment. The tentative steps moved to her door where the feminine voice spoke again, "Sooyeon?"

She helped Hyoyeon into her shirt while Hyoyeon spun the taller girls skirt in the right direction. "Jessica?"

"Yes mom?"

The door creaked open. Jessica's mom stood in the doorway her expressionless gaze falling on the fidgeting duo now sitting on the poorly made bed.

"Will you come help your father?"

Jessica held her lips shut doing her best to mask her labored breaths. "Mmhmm," she nodded, hoping the passionate glow canvassing her flushed face had started to fade.

It had but not nearly enough.

Though even if her lust painted skin had returned to its normal hue it wouldn't have made a difference. Mrs. Jung had already seen all she needed to know what the two girls had been doing in her absence. No it wasn't the upturned bed or the perplexing trail of red marks shamelessly tainting her daughter's skin. Nor was it the curious way Hyoyeon wore her T-shirt with confidence even thought it was backwards and inside out. They could have put on a perfect show and she still would have known.

The scene threatened to replay in her mind but she shook it away. If only she hadn't been so eager to get Hyoyeon back in her room. If only her daughter hadn't been so hasty. If only she'd closed the door all the way. If only she hadn't been too busy moaning, succumbing to pleasure to hear her standing at the door...

Mrs. Jung cleared her throat determined not to explode. She wasn't going to lose it in front of them. She wasn't that type of woman. She could suppress her emotions, a trait she'd apparently failed to pass on to her daughter.

Jessica inhaled sharply slipping on her house shoes. "Say hi," she mumbled under her breath.

"H-hello." The flustered girl bowed. She didn't know what to do

"Oh, hello Hyoyeon," her lips curled into a small smile, "just gets back today?"

"Yes ma'am."

"I'm sure you're eager to see your parents. After my husband finishes with the groceries I'll have him take you home."

"Um... I was hoping she could spend the night." She rose to her feet, "I've cleaned the house and finished all of my chores for this week."

Her mother swallowed hard, her jaw tense, "Such short notice? I'm sorry Sooyeon but there's just too much we have to do tomorrow. Besides I'm sure you're parents are waiting for you. You haven't even been home yet have you?"

"No ma'am."

"I'll have him take you. Come on girls."

"She saw us...?"

The dark haired girl nodded, turning a bright shade of red "Mmhmm..."

"When she confronted me later I was terrified." Jessica's eyes rose from her lap, "she was so calm... I could tell something was wrong."

Silence

"...So," Hyoyeon's misting eyes met Jessica's solemn pair, "So that's why?"

Jessica sighed shaking her head, "No." she wrapped her arms around her waist, "I mean, that was part of it but it wasn't only her. It was you.

I would have thrown all of this away for you in a heartbeat but when I saw that you would do the same I panicked. I was sure that I was safe—that it would be a one sided love. That way I could always love you without you noticing. But I let things go too far...and then you confessed.

**

Hyoyeon stood at eagerly waiting under the—

**

"No," Hyoyeon grimaced waving her hand dismissively, "stop... I don't want to think about it."

"Sorry," Jessica dropped her head to her lap.

She shook her head pulling her legs to, "I still remember it word for word. Everything you said." She didn't need a reminder, "Why didn't you just tell me the truth?"

"I was young; we both were. I didn't think you'd understand. We come from such different worlds... I couldn't let you throw your life away...your dreams... it was for the best." Hyoyeon fought to hold back her tears, "You were my first everything Sica. My first kiss, my first best friend, my first.... The only one that really matters."

"You were mine too." She grinned, her voice soft, "I'm sorry that it was so complicated. No one should have to go through that. Not at such a young age."

"...It's not your fault." Hyoyeon mumbled shaking her head, "I think all this time I wanted it to be so that I could justify my hurt—my anger... but... now that you're explaining it," she scoffed shaking her head, "you were just as helpless as me."

Jessica huffed running her fingers through her hair, "When we both ended up being in So Nyuh Shi Dae I cried for days. Having to face you after forcing myself to shun you for so long... how could I? But then I realized that this way I could at least be around you. I could watch over you and no one would think anything of it. But I came to realize that all the love you once had for me had turned into spite and anger." A lone tear rolled down her cheek, startling her with its presence, "I'd missed out on the most important thing in my life way more important than all of this. I'd missed out on you and there was no way I could change it..." This time it was Hyoyeon who offered the handkerchief.

Jessica received it with a small chuckle. “Seeing Taeyeon and how she was around Tiffany it was like my past playing out in front of me. I knew I had to help her. So I focused on them instead of my own heart. I thought it would make me feel better, “her voice perked, “and it did for a little while,” before quieting again, “but now I just feel jealous and stupid.” She sighed, ashamed, “So stupid... Even my mom...” Jessica scoffed shaking her head at the memory, “even she regretted telling me to stop hanging around you. She said even that night she saw us she knew I needed it—that I needed you. But by then so much time had passed and you hated me. I didn’t know how to bring it up again or if you would have wanted me to. If you even cared.” “I always cared.”

Silence

“If I could go back and do it all again I would.”

Hyoyeon’s brow furrowed as she rested her elbow on her knee; her chin perched on her fist deep in thought. “I wouldn’t.”

“Huh?”

She sighed, her eyes focusing on the stunned girl, “what we went through... we are who we are because of it,” She explained. “Would you really want to change that?”

“But... we’d be together. Isn’t...” her gaze dropped to her lap, “isn’t that what you want?”

Hyoyeon shook her head, studying the older girl. “I won’t lie. A long time ago it was. But somewhere along the line my feelings got derailed. I started to resent you for ignoring me.” She scoffed leaning back on her palms, “It seems so pathetic now.”

Jessica chewed her lip, glancing around the room. It was so empty, so bare. Just four walls two windows and a wooden floor. “We could still try if you want.”

Hyoyeon smiled genuinely reaching for the brunettes hand, “Jessica it’s okay. You don’t have to feel like you need to make up for what happened. I know that’s not what you want.” The young girl huffed tilting her head to the ceiling, “Yeah, it’s okay,” she nodded to herself, “I think I just needed closure. I mean listen to me—all this bitterness and resentment... I’m in no shape to be with anyone right now.” She shook her head speaking more so to herself then to Jessica. As if she herself needed to hear her words, “No I have a lot of repairing to do. I have to learn how to believe in love again.” She grinned past a pained sigh, “And you need to find someone who can love you twice—no—three times as much as I do-did.” Hyoyeon chuckled trying to mask her mistake, “Don’t make me the reason why you can’t move on. Just because I was your first doesn’t have to mean I have to be your last.”

Jessica’s lips curled into a smile, believing the younger girls words. It was true. She didn’t love Hyoyeon anymore at least not the way lover should. But she was prepared to do anything to makeup her mistakes even if it meant farcing a relationship. Jessica exhaled in relief feeling her body calm, “thank you.”

“I should be thanking you Jessica. You—.”

Impatient knocks rumbled through the door, echoing inside the spacious room, “Jessica-ssi? Hyoyeon-ssi?” roared a deep voice, “Are you in there?”

“Yes!” Hyoyeon replied.

Jessica snapped her fingers, mumbling under her breath. How long had they been in there?
It couldn't possibly have been more than an hour.

The door flew open with a bang. The portly man bowed beckoning them to him, "We've been looking everywhere for you two. Hyoyeon you're needed in makeup and Jessica they're calling you for wardrobe."

"Oh," Hyoyeon rose to her feet surprised and slightly annoyed at the urgency of his tone.
They could have at least warned us that we were going back to work today, "Okay, I just need to go back to the room first."

He huffed scribbling something on a small pad in his hand. "Here," he ferociously ripped the page thrusting it out towards the girl walking towards him, "these are directions to the room. Please do hurry."

She nodded, "Of course, thank you."

He stood there as if waiting for something. Whatever it was he didn't get. With a huff the man spun on his heels racing off down the hall.

Hyoyeon shoved the note in her pocket glancing over her shoulder at the girl behind her, "guess our mini vacation's over."

Jessica nodding, "Yeah," she brushed miniscule grains of dirt off of her tight jeans, standing, "I guess so."

The ponytailed girl extended her hand a glimmer of hope in her eye, "...Walk with me?"

Jessica smiled accepting the offer, "Sure."

Together they exited the room hand in hand, tentatively stealing glances at one another, "You're hair looks nice like that. It reminds me of when we were younger."

"Thanks"

...

"Hey so since we're f-friends now..."

"Yeah?"

"I was wondering if you could help me with something."

"What is it?"

"I think I ruined the Maknaes..."

Epilogue

Season's Later

"Will you stop reading that thing?" Taeyeon frowned, leaning back in her chair, "It's embarrassing."

Tiffany batted her eye lashes, "Why write it for me if I can't read it?"

"I didn't think you'd have it bound." She glanced to the thick pink book in Tiffany's lap.

"Why not?" The younger girl smiled sweetly, "It's adorable." She thumbed through the dog

tagged pages of her favorite novel, “I wonder if our fans would be as supportive as you say they are in *Waiting* if they ever found out Taeny is real.”

Taeyeon shrugged lifting her gaze from the worn pages. “I don’t know.” Tiffany always loved the tender parts, “Does it bother you that we may never find out?”

“Not at all.” Tiffany shook her head lifting her eyes from her favorite chapter, “I never thought it would be true or that I’d have the courage to confess to you. And I definitely didn’t think you’d love me back—at least not with the same intensity that I love you. But you do.” She traced the lines of Taeyeon’s palm, her voice growing hushed as a stewardess passed by, “We *are* real. You’re my girlfriend, my love; my heart. Because I know that, I’ll never think about what anyone else thinks. As long as I’m with you, I’m so complete I don’t need anything else.” She gave a small kiss to the girl at her side. With a relieving exhale she rested her head in the crook of Taeyeon’s neck threading her fingers through the older girl’s.

Taeyeon smiled her body covered in a warm glow, “you always know what to say.”

“You have to hold his hand like *this*,” Yoona demonstrated, cupping her hand around Seohyun, “or link arms like *this*.”

Seohyun nodded staring at their linked arms, “O-okay.”

“If you want to do well, people need to enjoy your relationship with him.” Her arms drew back to her lap, “He’s a nice guy right?”

The young girl nodded fiddling with her fingers, “Mmhmm.”

“Then what’s wrong?” Yoona tilted her head so that she could look into Seohyun’s pensive eyes. She shrugged peeking up from her hands, “It’s just a little weird if it’s not with you.”

Yoona flashed a toothy smile, beaming, “Then try pretending he’s me!”

Seohyun clasped her hand over Yoona’s mouth trying to quite her before she could disturb the girl lying across the seats in front of them.

Sooyoung groaned, half sick-half passed out from her position sprawled out across the row of seat; the effects of a cold she was trying her best to fend.

The young girl waited for Sooyoung’s stirring to die down before speaking again, she closed her eyes grinning at Yoona’s suggestion, “I will...ah!”

The playful girl giggled, her mouth finally free. “Sorry, I didn’t realize you were so ticklish.”

Seohyun frowned rubbing her side, “Please don’t do that again—ah Unnie!”

The older girl tossed her head back laughing at her girlfriends jerking movements, “you look like a ragdoll!”

“Yah! Im Choding stop!” she the words nearly didn’t make it through all the laughter. They came to an abrupt stop when Seohyun’s leg accidentally connected with the chair in front of her. The reaction was slow but that didn’t make the groggy girl any less intimidating.

Sooyoung twisted around in her seat staring at the duo sitting behind her. Yoona released the younger girl from her grasp and eased back into her seat a limp smile on her frightened face. It was like staring a very hungry beast in the eye right before it turns you into its dinner. She braced herself for any screams that might come but there were none.

“Seohyun,” croaked the short haired girl’s voice, “don’t let this kid influence you. You’ve always been such a great Maknae.” Her eyes narrowed to the playful girl shrinking in her seat, “As for you KNOCK IT OFF!”

“Those two are so cute.”

Jessica nodded, stretching in her seat. She too had been woken by the younger girls.

The long haired girl continued, flipping through her in-flight magazine, “It’s a shame they think no one knows about them.”

“We all decided we wouldn’t press the issue. Forcing things never gets the best reactions.”

Yuri sighed leaning back in the comfortable seat. “Does it bother you that you guys never got to be together?”

“Who?”

Yuri hitched her chin to the competitive girl sitting a few rows ahead dueling Sunny via DS.

“Hyo and me?”

She nodded, shaking her fingers through her hair, staring calmly into her friend’s eyes.

Jessica smiled leaning her head on the small travel window, “No, I’m happy for her.” She fixed the blanket around her, “Sure, there was a time where I would have been angry or jealous or possibly cried for days on end but that would never happen now. When we were younger we were different people. We were compatible. If we’d been together back then and never went through all of what we went through I’m sure we’d still be together today.

But that’s not what happened. Still” She smiled, “I’m fine with it because what we went through made us who we are. We’re more experienced and wiser. On a relationship level we’ve out grown each other, it’s hard to love someone after they’ve hurt you for so long, but we’re learning to be friends again. And that’s more than enough for me.”

She turned to Yuri before giving a small chuckle her eyes enjoying the darkness outside the window, “Of course finding someone after all of this would be great too. I feel like I’ve earned it you know?” she glanced at the tanned girl before closing with a sigh and another small chuckle, “that sounds a little selfish huh?”

“Not at all,” Yuri replied, taking the older girl hand in her own, lacing their fingers together, “Sica, one day when you least expect it you’re going to look up and find someone staring right back at you.” She heard the older girl scoff but continued to look on; warm smile painted on her serene face, “Jessica?”

“Hm?”

“Look up.”

*~Fin...
Spoon*

