

"Three bullets in the gun,
and one of them was for her."



Black Revolver
9celcius

CHAPTER 1

black | Dark Pavement

In a high-rise apartment complex in the affluent part of town, a young woman walked tiredly up sixteen flights of stairs before taking the elevator for the next twenty eight floors. She then walked up two more flights of stairs before reaching her apartment. By instinct, she put her back against the wall next to her door, looking down at the door cracks before slowly unlocking and opening her door. She stood still and listened carefully for any movement.

She was met with utter silence.

Pleased, she took her hand off the door knob behind her and locked it. Twice. Yawning, the young woman took off her white leather jacket and hung it in the closet next to the shoe rack. She carefully stepped out of her boots and padded quietly to her bedroom. There, she began taking the white dress shirt off her small frame and slipped her jeans off her short but shapely legs. Continuing her routine, she treaded tiredly into her bathroom, turning on the bright bathroom lights. By habit, she had closed her eyes and opened them slowly as to not be blinded by the sudden brightness. Stepping into her wide and spacious shower, she washed quickly before moving on to brushing her teeth and changing into her sleeping clothes.

Finally, taking one last look at the city's night view through the window that made up an entire wall in her bedroom, she shut off all the lights in her 1300 square feet apartment and went to bed.

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The cell phone on the dresser started to vibrate and ring loudly. The vibrations shifted it slowly across the surface of the dresser and it slowly inched towards the edge. After a few seconds, it finally made its way to the edge and tipped over as gravity continued to do its work. However, before the device could even begin its journey down to the soft white carpet, a pale hand suddenly reached out from the navy bed covers at an alarming speed and caught it.

“Yes?”

“Good morning Taeyeon.”

The woman sat up. “Yuri.”

“Sleeping in this morning I presume? You usually pickup before first ring ends.”

Expressionless, Taeyeon flipped the blankets off her and swiveled herself so her feet touched the ground, next to her white slippers. “Jessica had another club opening last night. In the heart of downtown Seoul.”

“Ah.” Yuri’s smooth voice answered, “yes, she mentioned that a while ago. I presume it went well seeing how you returned late.” It was a statement, not a question.

“I am to meet the new head of security of the new facility today. Jessica wasn’t too pleased that a few paparazzo slipped in.” Taeyeon replied, changing into a black dress shirt and dark jeans.

“I see. You took care of them of course?”

“Nothing too complicated.”

“Well then, thank you for the update.” Taeyeon could almost hear Yuri’s smile through the phone. “Go easy on this one would you? Having three different heads of security being fired on their first day isn’t very convenient for me to manage. Paperwork.”

“Yes Yuri. I understand. Goodbye.” It was the end of the conversation, obvious to hang up now.

“Bye Taeyeon. Mind the fiancé for me.” The voice turned cold.

“Always.” A cold reply as Taeyeon hung up her phone, putting on her boots and a motorcycle jacket. Turning around, she looked at the other side of the closet.

‘Black for today. I need to get some work done.’

She picked up the black katana off the shelf and slipped it around her back before walking out the door.

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Sweaty palms. She hated people with sweaty palms.

‘A sign of weakness’ Taeyeon thought to herself as she shook the man’s hand. *‘Slippery grip, trembling arms, obvious signs of anxiety. Absolutely unworthy.’* She would have to wash her hands again after this interview. She resisted the urge to roll her eyes as she noticed the man’s eyes twitch at the sight the katana she held in her hands.

“Thank you for your time Ms. Kim.” The man said in a steady voice that would have fool most people into believing in his false confidence.

Expressionless, Taeyeon bowed politely as she replied, “no, thank you Mr. Lee.” She took two steps back before turning around, walking towards the elevators. She didn’t bother turning to face the man when she spoke in the same expressionless tone, “You’re fired.”

Automatically, the two fellow bodyguards that had been following Taeyeon since the start of the meeting turned on their heels and walked towards Mr. Lee, showing him the way out.

Walking into the elevator alone, Taeyeon looked down at the hand that Mr. Lee had just shaken with the first expression she let out for the entire day. Disgust.

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Taeyeon followed the blonde haired woman silently as the latter shopped around the literature section in the antique store. As the owner of J Enterprises, Jessica Jung was the owner of many of the city’s most popular shopping centers and night clubs. She was also the fiancé of the president and founder of Force Industries – one of the largest military tech developer and manufacturer in the world – Kwon Yuri.

Taeyeon, her personal bodyguard, observed her silently from behind as Jessica browsed through many of the rare books in the store before finally settling on two rather beaten up classics. Taeyeon would give her life to protect Jessica – though she actually served under Yuri’s employment. As her adoptive sister, Taeyeon owed everything to the Kwon family for taking her in. She considered her service as a form of repayment for their generosity.

Looking around at their surroundings, Taeyeon waited patiently next to the executive as she paid for the books. All in cash. Her wandering eyes settled on a female figure down at ground floor of the shopping complex. The woman’s hair cascade in soft curls as her eyes shined brightly, awake, lively, and most of all, they were full of curiosity.

‘A foreigner.’ Taeyeon thought as she watched the young woman absorb her surroundings in awe. *‘There is no way a local would look so lost.’*

“Taeyeon.” Jessica called out softly as she picked up her purse and newly purchased books.

“Are you prepared to leave Jessica?” Taeyeon said quietly, head lowered slightly in respect. Everything was for Jessica. Everything and anything.

Seeing Jessica nod, Taeyeon offered a bent elbow and looped it around Jessica’s arm, leading her carefully out of the store.

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Filth. Absolute filth. Drunkards who thought they could do anything they wanted just because they had money. Taeyeon’s narrowed eyes watched a trio of well dressed men from her spot on the upper floor.

Though glitzy and glamorous, Jessica’s clubs inevitably attracted many...unwanted guests. Having a reputation of class and trendiness, it is easy to say that such guests were best gotten rid of. Quickly. Especially tonight. Tonight was the big night everyone in town had been waiting for – a live concert in the club by some of the biggest stars in the nation. As for now, the in house DJ was spinning the tunes before the show started.

Taeyeon continued watching the men laugh and leer at many of the younger club goers, her hands turning even whiter as she tightened her grip around her katana.

Walking over with two drinks in her hand, Jessica casually leaned on the railing next to Taeyeon and offered her one of them. “Scotch?”

Taeyeon turned around to face the club’s boniface, expressionless as usual.

Jessica smirked as she looked Taeyeon in the eye and added, “On the rocks.”

Allowing her lips to curve up into what really couldn’t be called a smile, Taeyeon accepted the glass and lowered her head in a bow. She downed the glass quickly in a manner that Jessica had to wince – yet Taeyeon’s face showed no signs of acknowledging the sting of the alcohol.

Raising an eyebrow, Jessica looked at Taeyeon closely in the face, noticing that the latter’s eyes were set someone downstairs at some of the tables. Following the shorter girl’s line of sight, the blonde smirked once more at the sight of the three drunken men. “Taking the trash out soon?”

Never taking her eyes off the men, Taeyeon lowered her head once in a curt nod, “Now, actually.”

“Need help?” Jessica raised her chin, looking down at Taeyeon’s attire of choice this night – black mock leather elastic leggings that hugged her curves, white tank top, and her usual black leather jacket.

Jessica completed her inspection and smiled somewhat devilishly, “No?”

Looking down at her own clothing, Taeyeon looked back up with a cold gaze and said “Not tonight,” before handing Jessica her katana and walking down the stairs.

Taeyeon could feel Jessica watching her amusedly as she approached the group of men who predictably began leering at her and offering drinks. Taking one last glance at her mistress who gave her a nod, Taeyeon tightened her grip on the long knife she had hidden in her sleeve as she plastered a charming smile on her face, suddenly acting shy.

Fifteen minutes had passed by before Taeyeon was sure that no others would engage and follow her and the men. Waving off an offer for a drink that was obviously laced with a sedative of some sort, she smiled and excused herself outside to “get some air,” offering a small but luring wink at the three. Making sure to give the trio a free shot at her cleavage, Taeyeon got up and walked towards the back door of the club.

As usual, her targets soon followed. Leaning on the wall that lined the alley behind the club, Taeyeon waited patiently as she soon heard the heavy footsteps of the drunk men. They surrounded her, blocking her from the view of anyone who might have been looking – not that there was. Grinning stupidly, the one in the middle, right in front of her, decided to be brave and reached and hand out to touch her face.

“Pretty aren’t cha. Know who I am? I’m the heir to one of the biggest companies in Asia – Dynacore Financial, ever heard of it sweet cheeks?”

Taeyeon smiled in response and dragged a finger down the man’s chest. Of course she knew of Dynacore, one of the many shady financial institutions that robbed their clients of money with unreasonable interest rates and policies. It was run by the mafia. After a moment, she pushed the man away and broke her way out of the semicircle

Continuing to grin stupidly, the man nodded to his two companions. “Sorry hun, but we can’t let you off so easily, not after buying the drinks you know?” They proceeded to surround Taeyeon once more. “It’d be rude not to pay us back in full right?” His voice grew husky as perversion twisted his face and he placed a hand on the short girl’s shoulder.

Smirking, Taeyeon grasped the hand on her shoulder with two fingers and moved it aside as if she were picking up a horribly smelly piece of waste and dropped it so that it returned to man’s side.

Growing angry, the three men began reaching out to grab her but she was too quick. Too quick for them

to react. Too quick for them to even see what had happened when they felt cold steel flash across their throats and blood flowing in a crimson cascade, leaking life out of them.

Wiping the blade off with a white piece of cloth, Taeyeon looked casually down at them as if looking at a piece of blank paper on the floor and narrowed her eyes coolly.

“Don’t touch me, scum.”

She turned and waved her hand as she walked back into the club, four men clad in black suits coming out of nowhere, dragging the bodies into a van.

CHAPTER 2

pink | Intersection

‘Amazing. Seriously amazing.’

The dark haired woman looked at her surroundings in awe. She was standing in the lobby of a large shopping center filled with stores as far as the eye could see. The biggest shopping center in the world. A dream come true for many women – especially for the one named Tiffany Hwang. After standing still admiring all the ads, stores, and people, Tiffany excitedly ran off to the first store that caught her eyes.

Fresh off the plane, Tiffany had been assigned to a case that was linked to Korea- the Triad Killings. Members of the Korean branch of the infamous crime organization have been killed mysteriously in a surprisingly large amount lately. Killed before undercover agents could even figure out that the victims were Triad members. Strangely, almost all of the victims died of a slit throat. Whoever was responsible had a very sharp blade and very good technique. And the killer in question had information on the Triad. Very good information. And information Tiffany wanted.

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Tiffany sat on the couch, reading through a pile of papers while the TV blared CNN news and her laptop was on the homepage of BBC. Clothes were already strewn haphazardly across her bed, shopping bags sitting in a corner in a dangerously tall pile. A cup of coffee sat empty next to her, another cup half empty on her other side. The window was open to let out the lingering smell of smoke from the cigarettes her informant had been smoking just a half hour earlier.

The killer had struck again last night. The bodies were found in front of the Dynacore headquarters – obviously dumped, but they could not trace who had did it.

This time, one of the victims was the heir to Dynacore – a Triad run financial agency. Of course, the company was a cover up used to gain influence over both the economy and government. What was strange wasn't the fact that the three men were killed, but that they were killed the day before a planned assassination of a local politician that was trying to shut Dynacore down. The killer was either very lucky or had known inside information that was privy to only the best undercover agents. Tiffany strongly believed it was the latter.

‘We got a lead telling us that the killer was from this area. I was finally able to dig through some records of the killings and all points lead here and now three more are dead. But that’s it. What now? We can’t even figure out if the person is female or male! How on earth are we supposed to track this person down!’

Frustrated, Tiffany threw the file cases back onto the coffee table of her rented apartment, combing her fingers through her hair and grabbed the remote to turn off the TV. She had hit another dead end. Upset, Tiffany decided to do what she usually did to relieve stress – shop.

Flipping through a directory she had picked up at the airport, she spotted a rather large ad: A grand opening of a new shopping mall in downtown Seoul. It was hosted by the beautiful and mysterious Jessica Jung of J Enterprises – the owner of the shopping mall Tiffany was in just the day before. She was a tycoon that ran almost all of the popular shopping and clubbing establishments in Korea.

After a moment of contemplation, Tiffany made up her mind to go. Her local informant wouldn’t be back until tomorrow afternoon anyway. She padded into her restroom, turning the bright fluorescent lights on. Slipping out of the casual jeans and t-shirt she was wearing, Tiffany proceeded to take a much needed shower before changing into her favorite shopping clothes – shorts, heels, t-shirt, and a light jacket to top it all off. Oh, and her gun. An agent should never forget her gun.

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Tiffany stood amidst a large crowd gathering in the center of the shopping center. There, everyone waited for the official grand opening ceremony. Reporters moved eagerly about, trying to get into better positions to take that cover shot, city big shots straightened their ties and fixed their hair, shoppers fidgeted excitedly waiting for their grand opening coupons. Somehow, Tiffany had managed to be shoved up to the railing blocking all onlookers from the red carpet walkway.

Rubbing the area of her ribs where she collided into the railing, Tiffany looked up as everyone else began to whisper excitedly. The ceremony had started and the live band had stopped playing as many different executives walked down the steps.

Tiffany’s eyes followed the blonde and her body guard coming down the stairs. Most eyes were directed at the beautiful woman leading the pack – Jessica. Clad in a red dress, necklace with shimmering crystals, and the unmistakable five carat engagement ring on her finger, Jessica was a sight

to see. But even with this beauty, Tiffany's eyes were on someone else – the short woman carrying a white katana on her back: the bodyguard. Calm and expressionless, the woman walked silently behind the hostess.

From what information Tiffany had learned about J Enterprises from her debriefing before moving to Korea, she knew that this dynamic duo was a force to be reckoned with. Jessica Jung, engaged to the famous and powerful Kwon Yuri, was the daughter of an American senator before the family chose to move to Korea to serve as diplomats. This, along with her relationship with Kwon Yuri gave her inside knowledge to practically all the world's important political figures. Her bodyguard, Tiffany learned purely from rumors, was trained in Japan under both Japanese and American military fighting and tactical techniques. One story tells of how she had trained in the Amazonian jungle for half a year, armed with only a pistol and her katana. Of course, Tiffany did not know what to believe – the girl had her own fan club even though she had never spoken aloud publicly.

By the time Tiffany broke from her thoughts, the bodyguard and executive had steadily walked closer to her area. Soon, the pair was standing right in front of her, Jessica being interviewed by a few reporters. Tiffany couldn't help but stare at the short young woman's cold eyes, which were dutifully scanning through the crowd, ready for a threat.

Suddenly, the bodyguard spoke, not looking at Tiffany, but surely addressing her. It wasn't the fact that the bodyguard was talking to her that shocked her, but what she said. "Welcome to Korea. What is it like to be an Interpol agent?"

CHAPTER 3

black | Three Bullet Revolver I

Taeyeon knows. Taeyeon always knows. She knew of the plans of the Triad even before most of the top ranking Triad members knew. She knew when and where enemies would send assassins after Jessica. She knew that Tiffany was an Interpol officer the moment she spotted her at the opening ceremony.

It was the posture, gun, and homework that told her. Taeyeon wasn't stupid. She knew that Interpol had sent out numerous Blue Notices¹ trying to figure out who was killing the Triad members. She knew that they'd send in an agent sooner or later. She just wanted to relish in the feeling of making the poor agent's pretty face contort in shock and confusion. Never ask how, but Kim Taeyeon just knows things.

Just like how she knows that there would be an assassin disguised as a reporter standing five people away from Tiffany. It was the eyes. The look in the man's eyes. As if in slow motion, Taeyeon automatically moved away from the Interpol agent and pushed Jessica behind her right as the man pulled his gun out and fired. Taeyeon blinked as the bullet grazed her temple, leaving a long bloody cut and pulled out her katana. A split second later, the almost-assassin was on the ground, screaming in pain as Taeyeon stood coolly over him, sword stained with a surprisingly small amount of blood when compared to the man and the ground around him. She had cut him horizontally across collarbones – shoulder to shoulder – inches away from decapitating him. But that wasn't the wound that was spurting blood out like a fountain, no. The bodyguard raised an eyebrow as the man continued screaming in pain, clutching the stump of a wrist where his hand used to be – Kim Taeyeon had sliced his right hand off.

With a delayed reaction, the crowd began screaming and panicking and the other guards quickly turned into crowd control mode, quickly getting the witnesses to stay calm. Reporters snapped photos so early that the flashes felt like strobe lights going on and off at a party. Taking Jessica's arm, Taeyeon pulled her away from the steadily growing pool of blood on the floor and watched as officers and medics arrived, taking the man away.

Taeyeon turned to the Interpol agent and smirked – the first expression the agent had ever seen on the bodyguard. Ever. “The Triad needs to learn some new tricks don't you think?”

Leaving the agent ever more confused, Taeyeon led Jessica away towards the back exit as Jessica's press manager stayed behind to answer questions and quell the excitement – this was a very good start

for the shopping mall. All the newspapers would be covering it which meant one thing: free advertisement.

Taeyeon guided Jessica out of the back exit and into her personal ride – a steel color Nissan GT-R². Surprisingly, Jessica stayed calm throughout the ordeal. Rather, she worried more for Taeyeon's wound than her own safety. As soon as the pair were strapped into the car and Taeyeon began driving back towards Jessica's penthouse, the blonde was dabbing at the wound with a handkerchief, looking at the bodyguard with concerned eyes.

“Are you alright?”

Taeyeon merely glanced at her mistress and nodded, her face expressionless the entire way.

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A floor above her own apartment, Taeyeon led Jessica into the penthouse, helping the blonde set down her coat and bag.

She sat down on the couch at Jessica's insistence and allowed the woman to help her dress the wound. It was nothing to Taeyeon. She had been in worse situations before – much worse. She had had most of her ribs broken once and had her collarbone crushed twice before. This was nothing. But she nonetheless let the other woman tend to it.

“There. That should stop the bleeding.” Jessica said quietly as she finished taping a small gauze on the wound. “It's just a graze wound but look how close it is. It might have killed you.”

“No.” Taeyeon said bluntly, “It could have killed you. As your bodyguard, I need to take bullets for you. No harm should come to you under my watch.”

Jessica frowned at Taeyeon's words.

“But-“

“If there is nothing else, I shall leave you in your privacy Jessica.” Taeyeon interrupted, standing up and picking up her katana.

“Wait.” Taeyeon stopped at the door, turning around to face her mistress.

“Stay.” Jessica said, walking closer to the shorter woman. “I order you to stay.” Jessica tugged on

Taeyeon's sleeve, her usual calm and confident exterior dropped.

Taeyeon blinked at her, lowering her head. She had no choice but to obey.

'She still stirs feelings in me. Feelings that should have been buried and burned long ago. She is more dangerous to me than most believe. She tempts me to feel what I have vowed to never feel again.' Taeyeon thought as she looked in Jessica's imploring brown eyes. *'Does she know what she does to me?'*

Taeyeon already knew the answer. Jessica did. Yuri did. All three of them knew. And the latter two took advantage of it.

*'Everything and anything for her – for **them**.'*

Taeyeon looked up to see Jessica looking her in the eye, asking a question that didn't even need to be asked. Asking for something that wasn't Taeyeon's to give. Something that Taeyeon had an obligation to give to her.

...

'Such a tease.'

Taeyeon did not and, a part of her, could not resist the alluring blonde as she was led into Jessica's room. She never could resist then and she couldn't now for even more reasons.

Jessica must have felt her hesitate because the taller woman leaned over to whisper in her ear. "Please? You know what we must play this game. Why we all play this game. Yuri is coming home tomorrow. This is the only way she'd be content." Jessica noticed the lingering hesitance in Taeyeon's eyes. "This is the only way I'd be content. The only thing I ask of you."

A game Taeyeon was forced to play. A game she had to play because she was once in love. A game the three most powerful people in the world played because of their past. A game that Yuri demanded her to take part of because they all knew what happened at in the past. Because they all knew what happened at the 'business meetings' Yuri had with other powerful people. All for the business. All of the deals. All for the contracts. All for the power. And most of all, all for the sake of hiding their broken hearts. A game of who owns whose hearts – even when none of the three main players owned their own.

Taeyeon fell back against the wall, lifting her chin to expose her neck to Jessica. She felt soft lips

dotting kisses along her collar bone and up to her jaw bone when her phone vibrated in her pocket. Yuri.

She already knew what the text message would say. It always said the same thing.

-Business meeting. Do as she asks. I'll be home tomorrow. 3 bullets.-

Three bullets in a revolver that dictated Taeyeon's life and death. The custom revolver only had three chambers – for three bullets. One for each of them. If she ever fails to protect Jessica, the first bullet would go into the throat of Jessica's killer. The sound, which Yuri herself would pull the trigger to fire, would go into Taeyeon's heart. And finally, the last bullet would be meant for Yuri's head. Three bullets. Three lives. All revolving around the actions of one person. Taeyeon.

A game. Just a game. A game that started because of her [Taeyeon].

Jessica's lips connected with her neck, hand inching up Taeyeon's shirt, tracing a familiar path.

Taeyeon groaned as Jessica found the weak spot on her neck. A spot only Jessica knew how to find. Feelings only the blonde could make her feel.

Clothes were off. Emotional barriers down. Taeyeon allowed herself to be pushed onto the bed and hiss as Jessica traced the two long scars running across her back – two V shaped scars going from shoulder to shoulder. Taeyeon allowed herself to twitch when Jessica's hand touched a place only she could touch, stroking her with deliberate slowness, teasing her. Taeyeon allowed herself to wrap her arms around her mistress's back, embracing her, whimpering aloud as a tongue found its way down her navel. Taeyeon allowed herself to *feel* again when soft lips found their ways to hers. Taeyeon allowed herself a few moments of weakness, whining, whimpering, groaning, and shiver as Jessica decided to be coy with her hands and mouth, watching as her bodyguard silently begged for more. Taeyeon allowed herself to momentarily break down her emotional walls as she writhed underneath her mistress, hands tightly grabbing the white sheets, crying out the name of the lover that didn't belong to her.

Everything and anything for both of them – right?

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pink | Three Bullet Revolver II

Tiffany stood still in realization. She stood in the crowd as everyone panicked over what had just occurred. A million thoughts were running through her head as she absorbed what had just happened.

‘It’s her. It has to be her.’

Realization struck as Tiffany continued to process the information. Although her head was filled with thoughts about what to do and how the bodyguard knew her identity and admiration for her skills, there was inkling of interest that Tiffany herself had yet to register. Interest about this person whose name she just learned from a local reporter: Kim Taeyeon.

Tiffany knew what she had to do as she turned and spotted Jessica Jung and Kim Taeyeon walking out the back exit into the parking facility. She did what any good agent would do. Follow them.

Knowing that Taeyeon would probably notice her presence after a while, Tiffany ran to her car –an Audi R8 – turned on her GPS device and followed Taeyeon’s vehicle at a distance while occasionally turning onto a detour to avoid suspicion. Finally, she followed the pair to a luxury apartment complex, where she assume Jessica resided. She could see heavy security waiting outside for the executive so she simply drove past the building and waited for around fifteen minutes before turning around.

Since the security had gone in with Jessica and the bodyguard, Tiffany found her way inside the lobby. More security. There were three doormen, one of which was holding the glass door open and the other two whom were guarding the elevators. Four more guards stood stiffly around the area and Tiffany could spot at least two undercover sitting in the lounge area.

Pressing a certain button on her phone through the fabric of her pocket, Tiffany’s phone began to ring. Whispering an “excuse me” to the nearest doorman, she walked to a corner where she press her speed dial to call a trusted ally.

“Hey, Nicole. It’s Fany. I need a favor. Yeah. 900 Half Crest Ave. Yeah, the Rolyce Apartment complex. I need to get to the penthouse. Could you do that? Great. Lee Soo Kyu? 30th floor? Is that the closest you can get me? Alright, fine. Thanks!”

Tiffany hung up her phone and smiled apologetically to the doorman. “Um, yeah, I’m here to visit Lee Soo Kyu, I think she’s on the 30th floor? Could you call her for me so I can go up?”

The door man nodded politely as he picked up the service phone behind him and dialed a number.

Little did he know, Lee Soo Kyu's phone had been tapped by fellow agent Nicole so that the call rerouted elsewhere.

"Miss, please come this way. Ms. Lee has vouched for you and you are clear to enter." The doorman led Tiffany to the elevators where another doorman followed her into the elevator and pressed the button. The two stood in silence as Tiffany watched the numbers go up quickly but steadily. As the bell rang and the doors slid open, the doorman bowed and held the 'open' button.

"Thanks." Tiffany said, bowing in return as she walked towards room 308. Halfway there, Tiffany turned around to see that the elevator doors had closed and that the elevator was making its way back down to the first floor. She checked her watch and waited for the call. A minute later, the phone vibrated, signaling an incoming text.

-Done. You have 10 minutes to get up there.-

10 minutes to get to the 47th floor. Tiffany sighed as she broke out into a quick jog, trying to make as little noise as possible as she hurried up the stairs before the security cameras began working again.

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Tiffany managed to get into the apartment rather easily. Well as easy as it could be when the door had an electronic lock. Luckily, Nicole helped her out there as well.

'Bless her soul,' Tiffany thought, *'I don't know what we'd do without that little tech geek.'*

Hearing movement in one of the rooms, Tiffany quietly made her way into an adjacent closet that was connected to the wall of the room. It was a two way closet with slanted wood sills so that Tiffany could see out but outsiders could not see in. Tiffany had definitely gotten lucky.

A hiss broke her from congratulating herself on her luck of finding her way in and finding her target. Crouching, Tiffany looked carefully through the slits, eyes widening at what she saw.

'It seems these two are more than just mistress and bodyguard.'

Usually immune to these sights due to what she saw because of the nature of her job, Tiffany found herself surprised that her face was flushed at the sight of the two. There seemed to be more than just what meets the eye between the two. Like a close relationship. Like an attraction between them.

‘Like almost but not quite love.’

Tiffany was startled and blushed at a loud gasp. She spun around only to get an eyeful of heated flesh and passionate movements, flushing even redder, she returned to her position facing the other door until she was startled by a soft but sharp whimpering cry of the blonde’s name. She turned to see that the two had finished what they had doing and seemed to be in the process of falling asleep. Staying still for 20 more minutes, Tiffany finally believed that they were still and tried to make sure that she would not disturb the two. But as Tiffany turned to move out of her hiding spot, she heard the rustling of bed sheets and that Taeyeon had gotten out of bed, carefully removing herself from Jessica’s embrace and recovering the blonde with the comforter.

Tiffany tensed and moved her hand towards her gun as Taeyeon walked closer to her position. The short woman seemed to be standing still in front of the door, gathering something from a shelf next to it. Tiffany was about to sigh a breath of relief with the shadow that was Taeyeon stopped moving.

Tiffany’s heart skipped a beat as once again, the bodyguard addressed her without looking at her. “I do everything she asks of me. Everything *they* ask of me. It is the only way I know of to repent. I live only for them, to serve them, and for their happiness.”

Taeyeon finished speaking and turned away, walking out of sight into another room connected to the bedroom.

Tiffany let a tense breath escape as she turned to leave.

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black | Three Bullet Revolver III

Taeyeon stepped into the bathroom flicking the lights on with her eyes closed and opening them to turn the faucet on. There were two toothbrushes in the cup next to the sink. One for Jessica, one for Yuri. Dressed in only her white dress shirt, Taeyeon opened one of the glass cabinets behind her and pulled out a rather new looking toothbrush. Her own spare for these occasions.

Taeyeon proceed to brush her teeth. A few moments later, footsteps were heard from the bedroom and Jessica appeared at the bathroom door. The taller woman was clad in white shorts and a loose black dress shirt similar to the one Taeyeon currently had on. Jessica watched as Taeyeon methodically

brushed her teeth, seemingly ignoring the blonde's presence.

"Don't you ever wonder what life would be like if all of what happened never happened?" Jessica asked, leaning on the glass cabinets behind Taeyeon.

Taeyeon turned and looked Jessica in the eyes, face expressionless. The toothbrush left her mouth. "I don't." She said. "I can't." She added, looking back at the mirror and continued brushing her teeth.

Jessica stretched her legs and looked down at her feet, reaching into the pocket of her shorts and taking her phone out to look at the time. 10:12AM. Two hours since the incident.

"Do you love her?" Taeyeon's said, startling the taller woman. The question obviously took her by surprise. "Yuri I mean." Taeyeon added.

Taeyeon watched as the blonde looked at her through her reflection on the mirror. Hearing now immediate response, Taeyeon proceeded to spit and rinse, washing any remaining toothpaste foam off her face.

"I can't replace **her**." Taeyeon heard Jessica's reply. "I'm trying so hard but I can't do it."

Taeyeon stood up straight and looked at Jessica's eyes through the mirror. "No one expects you to."

"Yuri does."

Taeyeon stared at Jessica's reflection and dropped her eyes for a second before reestablishing eye contact. "She needs to move on," she said with her usual expressionless voice.

"Tae--"

"You need to move on as well." Taeyeon continued before Jessica could speak. "I will do this for as long as you and Yuri wish it, but I can't be what you want me to be Jessica. You know I cannot. You know why. I do this all for you."

Jessica looked back down at her feet, falling silent as Taeyeon moved to wash her face. The two were silent until Taeyeon finally turned off the faucet and reached for a towel to dry her face and Jessica spoke.

"Is it wrong to dream about what we can't have? What we could have had?"

Taeyeon paused in drying her face and looked up at the mirror to see Jessica staring at her.

"It is only wrong to dream about what we don't deserve."

CHAPTER 4

pink | Gravity Part I

‘Holy shit. Holy fucking shit.’

The same two lines ran through the agent’s head as she stood in the parking lot staring at her car door, keys in her hand. She had been caught – twice. And it was her first official day on the job. Awesome. Not only did she find her suspect and witness just how capable said suspect was, she also witness her suspect’s strange relationship with one of the most powerful women in the world.

Frowning, Tiffany finally inserted the key into her car and opened the door. Throwing her purse in, she pulled out her phone and checked for missed messages and calls – one new message.

- Meet tomorrow, your place. Nicole said you found something. –

Sighing, Tiffany sat back in her seat and closed the door. Her mind still trying to process everything she had learned today. Closing her eyes, she tried to relax her churning mind.

It didn’t seem like Kim Taeyeon was going to kill her. Yet. Still, Tiffany thought that it was strange how the young woman did not even hesitate to blatantly give her clues about who she was even though she acknowledged Tiffany’s presence and objectives. But burning even greater was the question of who this Kim Taeyeon is. Who is she underneath this shell of a bodyguard? A question Tiffany knew she shouldn’t be asking. An agent needs to always be detached from her job. Information is what she wants, everything else is just details.

Speaking of the elusive bodyguard, she was standing right in Tiffany’s line of sight, in the middle of the large concrete driveway roundabout. The short woman seemed to be staring down at the empty street in front of the complex.

She seemed to be waiting for something, or rather, *someone*.

Tiffany sat still and stared at the figure that was Kim Taeyeon. Never had she encountered someone so complicated in her life, and Tiffany thought her job introduced her to a lot of complicated people. She knew Taeyeon probably had already noticed that she had be staring at her from her car but that was irrelevant. Right now, simple curiosity drove Tiffany to stay. Curiosity may have killed a cat, but it certainly never killed a mushroom.

Determined to figure everything out, the agent turned the ignition on and backed out of her parking

spot. She circled the parking complex once before settling in a spot on the second floor where she could see and hear Taeyeon clearly if need be.

Tiffany sat and watched until she thought nothing interesting would happen other than Taeyeon occasionally moving from her stoic posture. About to leave, Tiffany's fingers had yet to reach the keys in her ignition when she heard the roar of a car engine. An Aston Martin sped down the street. The driver was obviously either crazy or crazy skilled as the driver drifted into the roundabout driveway and swerved into a stop, inches away from where Taeyeon was standing.

It was Kwon Yuri. *The Kwon Yuri.*

Tiffany observed as the driver seat window slid down and Kwon Yuri's face was revealed. Sun reflecting off her Dior sunglasses, the corporate mogul turned and looked at Taeyeon who bowed and opened the car door for her.

It was the first time Tiffany had seen the beautiful, powerful, and mysterious Kwon Yuri in person. A legend to many, the woman was both admired and feared. Often seen with her fiancé in tabloid and the news, she could have easily been a model or movie star but instead, the young woman chose to build an empire of military weapons, espionage, and technology.

Tiffany leaned forward to catch a better view of the two ladies of interest as she heard them speak.

"Taeyeon."

"Yuri."

"I'm finally back."

"Welcome home. Congratulations on another deal."

"Just a simple sonar system. I don't enjoy always selling missiles and guns."

"..." Taeyeon stayed silent and expressionless, settling into her usual demeanor.

"Did you do as she asked?" Yuri looked straight into Taeyeon's eyes. The taller woman had a cold, piercing attitude about her.

"Yes, of course." The body guard responded, lowering her head. The first time Tiffany had ever seen the short woman show a sign – however small – of weakness.

Yuri nodded before stepping away from her car. A well dressed chauffeur appeared and bowed.

Handing him the keys, Yuri looked down at the bodyguard.

From what Tiffany could make out, Kwon Yuri had smiled at the shorter woman. However, it was even more surprising when the CEO's expression softened into what could only be called fondness before hugging Taeyeon.

'This is definitely getting interesting.'

• • •

"Smoke?"

Tiffany winced at the cigarette jutting out of the box and waved a hand to decline the offer. She was quite disgusted at her informant's habit – even if she herself had just quit two years ago.

"Put a shirt on Wooyoung."

Informant? More like ex-partner.

The young man smirked as he looked down to check his attire. Lounge pants, boxers, and nothing. Except for the large bandage wrapped around his left shoulder. "Really? Are you sure you don't just miss me a lot?"

"Just put a shirt on please?" Tiffany asked again as she sorted through the papers he had just given her. More paperwork. Great. "What is this crap you've given me Wooyoung?"

The two were close friends. Sure, they had done it a few times, it gets lonely out there when you're an agent for the International Police, but they both decided that a platonic relationship was for the best. It just didn't work out that way. The pair made an awesome team when it came to information gathering – filled a lot of Blue Notice requests during their time as partners. However, Kang Wooyoung had been picked to aide in military intelligence two years ago and had to resign his position as Tiffany's partner. Now, after two years of going solo and having almost no contact, he was her informant in Korea.

"So you think you found our man?"

"Woman. I'm sure it's her, but we need evidence."

"Evidence that none of our agents could find since the case started? Not even with our resources?"

"It isn't like we're trying to arrest her. We just want information from her." Tiffany said, trying to think of a solution.

“Do you think she’ll give it up?” Wooyoung stood up and walked around Tiffany’s apartment, picking up some of the files she had left in the kitchen.

“Of course not.” Tiffany replied, leaning back into the couch, “That’s why we need to extract it from her.”

• • •

“Wow, she’s hot.” Wooyoung said with a snarky grin, obviously relishing in how uncomfortable he was making Tiffany. “Are you sure she’s our suspect and you aren’t following her because you like to stare at her? I think she looks really good in black, don’t you?”

Exasperated, Tiffany sighed and shook her head. Wooyoung could be such a guy sometimes. “Get out of my car!”

“Fine.” Wooyoung said good humoredly before turning serious. “Be careful. Trouble likes to find her and she likes finding trouble.”

“What do you mean?” Tiffany asked. Her eyes followed Wooyoung’s pointed finger up to the second story of a large museum. A club. One of the few popular ones that Jessica Jung did not own.

• • •

black | Gravity Part II

Taeyeon sat at the bar, drinking her usual beverage of choice – scotch on the rocks. Actually, any hard liquor would do. It was one of the rare moments where she didn’t have to be monitoring Jessica or Yuri. The two wanted to spend the day at home since Yuri had just gotten back from Europe. Of course, there were a dozen hidden guards with them to replace her for the day. Two days to be exact.

Tuning out the hardly exciting ramblings of the wannabe 'suave' man next to her, Taeyeon stared hard into her half empty glass of scotch. She felt a pair of hands on her shoulder. She didn't have to look to know who they belonged to - one of the many coquettish ladies that frequented the club. They'd always show up without fail when Taeyeon was there. A fan group of sorts. Even when she tried shooing them away in violence, they'd just squeal in delight. Not only that, they would always try to come onto her

even though she would reject them. Every single time.

Taeyeon had felt her presense the whole way here – the agent of course. Choosing to ride her motorcycle this time, Taeyeon had noticed Tiffany’s Audi trailing her. She had to admit, the woman was good at what she does – weaving in and out to make it almost undetectable that she was trailing Taeyeon. However, Taeyeon is good at what she does and knew from the very beginning. So it was no surprise she said agent sat down on the bar stool next to her’s. Taeyeon ignored the other woman and downed the rest of her drink as Tiffany Hwang ordered a vodka.

‘Vodka. Interesting.’

Taeyeon noted from the corner of her eye that Tiffany had turned to look at her, about to say something when the ‘suave’ man suddenly raised his voice to emphasize some random point he was talking about – probably how big his appendage was but Taeyeon hadn’t been listening, though she had been thinking about slicing the aforementioned appendage off but that would be a bit crude.

Irritated, Taeyeon turned and quickly flipped her favorite switchblade out and moved quickly, barely touching the man’s throat. To onlookers, she looked like a blur before she had somehow pi9nned the man against the counter. Of course, everyone just assumed the pair were either arguing or making out like everyone else in the club so they ignored the two.

Taeyeon ignored the feeling of the eyes of the agent and fangirls on her back as she whispered calmly but threateningly in the man's ear as she pressed the flat side of the blade further into his neck.

"Fuck off. I am NOT in the mood to listen to your bullshit. So why don't you just go and put everything back into your pants - including your brain since that is where it seems to belong - and go hit on someone who cares. Like a prostitute - maybe if you pay her she might pretend to care."

For good measure, she pressed the blade into the counter next to the man's ear, easily cutting into the polished wood, showing just how sharp her favorite knife is. “Now, if you don’t want me to use my favorite switchblade here and cut of *something* that you might want to *keep*, even if I doubt that there*anything* there to cut off, I suggest you leave.”

Taeyeon released her old on the man and watched as he scampered off, face red and sweaty. She sat back down on her seat, ignoring the annoying squeals from her unwanted fanclub posy, and called for another glass of scotch. She placed a couple of hundreds on the counter, a silent payment for the cut she had made in it. The bartender, used to this, took it silently as he slid her order over to her. Taeyeon took a drink and chuckled as she felt the agent’s eyes still on her.

“What? You’ve finally come to arrest me now?”

“No.” Tiffany said bluntly, sipping on her own drink, “There is no point. No evidence.”

Taeyeon let out a hoarse laugh. She already had around eight glasses and was finally starting to feel the bare symptoms of alcohol. Curse her tolerance.

“It must be frustrating to have me here in front of you knowing that I did it and not be able to do anything about it.” She said, expressionless. “Hey Minwoo, another one.”

The bartender looked up worriedly at her, then again, he always did when she visited. “You sure? You’ve had-“

“Actually, just give me a whole bottle.” The short woman said with a tone of finality, throwing more bills onto the counter.

Taeyeon knew that the agent was staring at her as Minwoo passed over a clean glass filled with ice and a bottle of 18 year old Highland Park. “So why are you here Miss Hwang?”

Tiffany did not reply immediately but looked stoically at the shorter woman, “Do you always come here to drink?”

Taeyeon ignored the question and poured herself another glass and finished it in one go. Eleven down. She noticed Tiffany looking at the bartender who nodded and answered the question for her. “To a stupor, but it takes almost twenty shots of that.”

Tiffany nodded, understanding and proceeded to order a glass of milk. “I’ll be driving” she said in response from the queer look Taeyeon gave her.

Taeyeon laughed hollowly as she finished two more shots, glad to finally start feeling the effects of alcohol. She motioned for more ice. Thirteen down, seven more to go.

• • •

Taeyeon slammed an empty glass down on the counter, finally finishing the entire bottle. Twenty two glasses of scotch. Good stuff. Her surprisingly steady hands pulled out her wallet and took some bills out, paying for the drinks and tips. “Thanks Min. I’ll be going now.” She slurred, stumbling off her stool. “See you around Agent Hwaaang. Hope you aren’t hiding in a closet next time.” Taeyeon dragged out Tiffany’s surname as she raised her hands to rub her eyes as she walked unsteadily out the door, a trail of her fanclub posy members following her out.

Tiffany looked worriedly at Taeyeon's retreating back and turned to ask the bartender, "she doesn't drive does she? After she drinks?"

Minwoo looked at Tiffany with both eyebrows raised, surprised. "Drive?" He replied, "She doesn't even go home. She walks to the cemetery after this usually. Either that or one of her fan people take her home or get her a hotel room. They're actually pretty nice – if not sexually repressed."

"Cemetery?" Tiffany said to herself as she pulled out a twenty from her purse and placed it on the counter.

• • •

Pink | Gravity Part III

Tiffany followed Taeyeon out of the club. She looked around to see that Taeyeon had walked almost two blocks already, members of her posy dispersing as what Tiffany assumed was Taeyeon demanding them to leave. The agent walked over to her car, clearly sober after two hours of drinking milk and watching the bodyguard drinking herself into a stupor.

Turning on the ignition, Tiffany drove slowly up to Taeyeon, pulling over and following the shorter woman in her car. She rolled the passenger side window down and yelled out at the other woman. "Hey, get in. It's starting to rain."

Taeyeon ignored her calls, continuing to walk and eventually getting soaked by the rain. Tiffany watched and grimaced at how the usually composed bodyguard stumbled along the sidewalk, drenched.

With a sigh, Tiffany turned off the ignition and got out of her car, running up behind the shorter woman and pulled on her hand. "Hey, seriously, you're going to get pneumonia if you keep on walking out here like this."

Taeyeon jerked her hand away and kept walking. They were around half a mile away from the club by now.

"I'll take you there." Tiffany suddenly shouted, causing Taeyeon to stop moving. "I'll take you to the cemetery."

• • •

Tiffany looked sadly at the girl sitting next to her in the passenger seat. It was then she realized just how different her suspect was compared to the bodyguard image she showed to the public. Tiffany noticed for the first time how Taeyeon had dark circles under her eyes. How dry her lips were. How exhausted her eyes were when she looked into them. How sad Taeyeon is. Tiffany frowned as she turned a corner and reached a long tree lined road that led up to the cemetery. She noticed how Taeyeon suddenly tensed as they drove down the road, closer to their destination.

• • •

After a five minute drive up the long road, they had reached the inside of the cemetery where the guard actually opened the gate when he saw Taeyeon.

‘She must come here quite often.’

Tiffany drove down the winding path until Taeyeon told her to stop, the first words she had said since they left the club. She followed Taeyeon up a grassy hill until they reached a lone, white marble headstone that stood under a large beech tree. It would have been beautiful during the day when the sun was out. The hill was taller than any other, looming over the entire cemetery, overlooking the grassy green fields and trees.

It was then Tiffany began to understand. When she read the name on the grave, she found the first piece to a twisted puzzle that started the game these three women played.

Krystal Jung.

The pair stood in front of the grave. At first, she thought it was just water from the rain but she realized that the shorter woman was crying- that it was tears that were running down her pale, pretty face.

It broke Tiffany’s heart to see someone like this.

She watched as Taeyeon fell to her knees, sobbing into her hands. Tiffany didn’t know what to do. She could only stand and watch as Taeyeon let out screams that no person should have to let out. Screams of pain that could only belong not in any physical wound, but pain that could only reside in the heart.

• • •

Silver | Gravity Part IV

Yuri sat in her Aston Martin, watching the two figures standing on top of the hill. She knew who they were. She knew that Taeyeon would be here – she was always here on her rare days off, after drinking herself senseless. They all came here when they thought no one was looking. All three of them. Jessica, Yuri, and Taeyeon. Three best friends who could no longer bring themselves to love each other.

Yuri started when she felt fingers brush against her cheeks, wiping away her tears. Unbeknownst to herself, she had started crying. She turned to look at her passenger, Jessica, who was also silently crying. Her hands gripped the box she always carried tighter. The box that carried the revolver.

Tears still welling in her eyes, Yuri opened the steel lid of the box and picked up the gun, feeling the weight of it in her hands. She noticed Jessica flinching at the sight of the gun and took her hands in her own, comforting her. The gun was well built, sturdy, and heavy. Heavy, like the weight they all carried because of one infinitesimal second of their lives. One singular event that started a chain reaction. That started this game.

The death of Krystal Jung.

The death of Yuri's first love.

The death of Jessica's younger sister.

The death of Taeyeon's first assignment.

CHAPTER 5

pink | In the Confines of Silence

'Her small figure belies the muscle and strength inside of her.' Tiffany thought as she carried an unconscious Taeyeon up two flights of stairs and into her apartment. The smaller woman had cried on her knees until she collapsed, exhausted and soaked from the rain. Tiffany couldn't help but marvel at how fit Taeyeon was. Taut muscles rippled underneath her clothing she had surprised Tiffany when she first picked her off the ground. Propping the torpid girl carefully against the door as she walked into her dark bathroom to grab a few towels, Tiffany bit her lip in frustration - she just couldn't figure this girl out. Stepping out of the bathroom, she proceeded to gently move the girl onto the now towel covered bed, the agent laid Taeyeon down and sat there, on the edge of the bed, watching her unexpected but far from unwelcome guest.

Grabbing a spare towel, Tiffany dried the unconscious woman's face with utmost care - A face that the former couldn't help but stare at. The older woman's face seemed too innocent and childish to be a cold hearted bodyguard and murderer. Tiffany's eyes traced down the curves of Taeyeon's face, followed along the bridge of the other's nose, and rested on a pair of closed eyes. Tiffany felt - no - *knew* that there was something in Kim Taeyeon's face that told a story, a story of a painful past. The agent couldn't shake the feeling that there was something more to be known about the young woman.

'Like a child who was never a child. A girl who grew up too quickly into a woman without ever knowing the joys of adolescence. A chick that had to learn how to fly before it could grow feathers.'

Tiffany watched on concernedly as Taeyeon's peaceful face contorted in tandem with a burgeoning nightmare. Taeyeon twitched, brow furrowing as the dream continued to play out in her mind. Soon, tears began streaming down her pale face, worrying Tiffany.

"No. Don't. Please." Taeyeon muttered in her sleep, frowning. Tiffany could only look on, not knowing what to do.

"No! Take me instead! Don't! Please!" It was full on shouting now. Tiffany quickly gathered the sleeping girl in her arms, stroking the bodyguard's hair, hoping it would help soothe her.

"Argh!" Taeyeon's face contorted as if she was in pain. "No. No. I beg you. NO!" Tiffany felt her own tears rolling down her face. She was crying as well. Feelings of confusion erupted inside of her. Desire to accomplish her mission and curiosity of Kim Taeyeon's past faded as Tiffany realized that she felt? sorry for Taeyeon. That she felt like a mother trying to protect her child. Like she wanted to keep the older woman safe.

'Is it really worth using her to get information? To use her as a source when we don't even want to arrest her?' Tiffany's conscious was in turmoil. What was going on? Why is this so complicated? Tiffany never failed a mission, never doubted the methods she and Wooyoung had to use to get what the agency wanted as long as it didn't hurt an innocent. Now she's here, sitting next to the half-dry suspect they had been looking for for around two years, and not knowing what to do.

Exhausted, Tiffany decided that she should finish drying Taeyeon off before turning in. Grabbing the last towel left in the bathroom, she gently shifted the shorter woman so she could remove the heavy and rain-soaked coat the bodyguard was wearing. Wholly uncomfortable with removing Taeyeon's clothing, the agent chose to just remove the black dress shirt before patting the other woman down with the towel, drying off whatever water was left. Walking over to her unkempt dresser, Tiffany pulled out her white bathrobe.

Before she could close the drawer however, she spotted a shadow outside the window out of the corner of her eye. Spinning around quickly, she noticed the tail end of a moving shadow that skirted out of view. Tiffany stood silent and still, hand automatically at her gun in its holster. Two minutes passed before she released a breath she didn't realize she was holding and continued on with her task of keeping Taeyeon dry. Carefully sliding the bathrobe onto the sleeping girl, Tiffany continued watching the other woman sleep until she herself felt her eyelids grow heavy and falling asleep herself.

'I wonder if she has ever felt the warmth of love.'

• • •

Silver | In the Confines of Silence II

Yuri and Jessica sat in silence as the former drove down from the grave site. They had watched as Taeyeon sobbed until she collapsed and the other woman rushing to pick her up off the ground. Of course, Yuri knew who the other woman was. She knew after she spotted the other watching her and Taeyeon talk in front of the apartment complex. Yuri was never out of the loop - not when Taeyeon was around. She knows what Taeyeon knows and Yuri knows that Tiffany Hwang wasn't supposed to be picking her target off the ground and putting her in her car. Yuri knows that Tiffany Hwang wasn't supposed to take Kim Taeyeon back to her own apartment due to many obvious reasons, including the fact that Taeyeon was the main suspect in her case.

They had reached their destination: Tiffany Hwang's apartment. Handing the landlord a rather large denomination of money, she smiled as she took the master key and walked up the stairs with Jessica behind her. Reaching the room indicated by the landlord, Yuri inserted the key and turned her wrist, unlocking it. The couple stood still, thinking that the occupants would have heard by then and come open the door. However that was not the case, not a soul seemed to stir from the other side.

Pushing the door open quietly, Yuri was surprised at the sight of her trusted bodyguard asleep next to the agent. The agent seemed to have fallen asleep last seeing how she was sleeping on top of the covers, perched precariously on the edge of the bed.

Yuri felt Jessica move behind her. Yuri knew Jessica must be just as, if not more, surprised as she is. Especially of the fact that Taeyeon would be in someone else's bed - clothed or not. Yuri pulled her fiance to the dining area, out of sight from the bed and living room, and sat on the stools, waiting for the other two women to wake up.

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An hour had passed before Yuri heard movement from the other side of the wall. Tiffany and Taeyeon must have woken up. Yuri gently nudged Jessica awake, who groggily lifted her head from the white linoleum countertop. The taller woman hesitated for a moment before leaning down and giving Jessica a kiss on the forehead and whispering "let's go."

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Yuri couldn't help but chuckle at the expression of shock the agent had on her face. Perhaps this is why Taeyeon like toying with her. The results were somewhat amusing. She and Jessica stood silently as Tiffany quickly stood up, brow furrowing as she tried to decide to be polite and bow or to be angered as to how the two executives got into her home.

Taeyeon on the other hand, just sat up silently on the bed, turning around so her back was to the other three. She removed the white robe she was wear revealing her bare body clad only in her underwear. Yuri tightened her jaw at the sight of the scars - she always did. She felt Jessica shift slightly as if wincing at the sight. Those scars brought up memories no one wanted to remember, or have for that matter. The two parallel V shaped scars running around the bodyguard's upper back was a reminder of what happened. A reminder that though Taeyeon accepted the blame, she had suffered as well. A reminder that Taeyeon herself might be nine feet underground as well.

It seemed as if the air in the room stilled - like all time had stopped - while Taeyeon dressed, captivating the other three with the sight before them. But it wasn't just the scars traveling along her otherwise unmarred skin that affected them. It wasn't just the fact that she was undressing and dressing in front of them. Yuri felt it was because of the fact that for the first time, the three of them - she, Jessica, and Taeyeon - were standing in the same room, together at the same time, with an outsider that happened to have walked into their secrets.

There would be some explaining to do on their part to the agent.

'It's the only way.'

"We need to talk." Yuri said aloud, breaking the silence. "Tiffany Hwang." She turned towards the agent who in response, looked at her with surprised eyes.

Yuri stood still as Taeyeon moved towards her and Jessica. She watched silently as Taeyeon looked at her with tired eyes before bowing, moving to leave the apartment when she felt Jessica move and go after her. Yuri watched as Jessica walked over to Taeyeon, helping her button the topmost button the shirt before leading her out of the apartment in silence. Yuri closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. There was no other choice but to do it now. She noted the confusion in Tiffany's face out of the corner of her

eye but decided to ignore the unspoken question Yuri knew the agent had.

"How much?" Yuri finally asked with a neutral voice.

"What?"

"To keep quiet. How much?"

Tiffany looked at her with an incredulous expression. "I don't understand. There is nothing that I would have to say."

"Then what do you want? You understand that something like this would greatly affect our - I mean Jessica and my images as corporate executives. You witnessed the shame of three of the most powerful people in the world, and there is nothing you want?" Yuri asked, still keeping her voice neutral.

The two stared at each other for a few moments before Tiffany said in a soft, careful voice. "I want to know what could possibly make someone scream in such pain."

...

blue | In the Confines of Silence III

Jessica guided the hungover Taeyeon out of the elevator and towards the car parked on the curb. She had known that Taeyeon often went out to drink whenever she had a break but she had never seen the result firsthand. The bodyguard would sober up and clear herself of the hangover before she would even meet anyone. She had never seen Taeyeon out of control. Never. Except once. Except once when Taeyeon lost herself. When this mess all started. When Krystal died. When Jessica almost died. When Taeyeon almost died.

'But she did die. Her soul died.'

Jessica bit back the memories that suddenly flooded back into her mind, the dam she had been building for seven years had cracked, all because of the pitiful sight of Taeyeon stumbling towards the car.

The blonde unlocked the car with her own set of keys and helped Taeyeon into the passenger seat seeing how it would have been difficult to put her in the back of a two door. Walking to the other side, Jessica entered from the driver's side and closed the door. She grabbed the half empty bottle of water from the center cup holders and held it to Taeyeon's lips, not trusting the bodyguard to hold it steady.

But she didn't need to worry. Taeyeon's hands were always steady. Always. Even when drunk, she could balance a knife on the tip of her fingers, fire a gun bull'seye ten metres away. She almost never missed.

Almost.

She missed once.

Jessica closed her eyes, expression neutral but mind whirling around memories she wish she had forgotten. She opened her eyes only to look into Taeyeon's brown and weary orbs.

Jessica wishes Taeyeon didn't miss. That Taeyeon didn't have to be so selfless and miss.

...

silver | In the Confines of Silence IV

"Taeyeon was a kid genius." Yuri stood at the window, looking out at the tall buildings outside. There wasn't anything spectacular about the view, but she couldn't bring herself to look at Tiffany. "She got a college degree in Aeronautics when she was thirteen. She knew her way back and forth in Medicine and knew how to perform open heart surgery when she was fifteen." Yuri reached out her hand to touch the cool glass, staring as the rain formed rivulet patterns down the window. "Amazing isn't it?"

Tiffany stood quietly behind her, listening and watching carefully, not making a sound.

Yuri breathed in and out loudly through her nose before continuing. "Her parents had passed away early on. Her mother died of birth complications and her father died six years later from a bad liver caused by his alcoholism." Yuri's left index finger began tracing one of the rivulet paths down the glass. "So my family took her in. We became best friends, sisters. Inseparable from each other. But our lives were

so different. Her father was a workaholic before he died, trying to work away the pain of losing his wife and to keep himself from hating his own child. He wanted her to walk his path - to be a military technology researcher."

Yuri sensed that Tiffany had moved closer behind her so she had waited to see if the agent would speak but was met with silence so she continued.

"My parents ran Kwon Corporation as you probably know. A pacifist organization dedicated to bring technology that would help end global problems like famine and war. We knew that Taeyeon would have been more than happy to work with us in helping research but my parents decided to honor her father's wishes - however against the idea of war they were. She worked for the government and helped develop state of the art ballistic missiles that were remotely controlled."

Yuri put her hand down and looked at her feet. "Though she worked, she and my parents decided that sending her to high school would be good. Some normalcy they said. To develop social skills. So she entered high school with me as a freshmen. All was well, we made friends, had fun. She met Jessica in our first year and they started dating. My family was close the Jung's so they had arranged a marriage between me and Jessica's younger sister, Krystal. The Jung's were diplomats, we were philanthropists, to top it off, the two of us actually liked each other, it seemed perfect. We were young and in love. Life seemed perfect."

"...Everything was perfect..." Yuri trailed off.

Yuri stopped speaking and closed her eyes, swallowing. She had never told anyone about their past. No one was supposed to know, but somehow, here she was, standing in the apartment of an Interpol agent, telling her the story.

"But..." Tiffany said, urging the taller woman to continue. Yuri knew she wanted to know. It was more than just a case now, it was just simple curiosity.

"But it all stopped being perfect."

• • •

black | In the Confines of Silence V

Taeyeon dozed off as she finished the water, faintly aware that Jessica was wiping her face with a tissue. Taeyeon never slept much. She didn't like sleeping, it made her afraid. It was the only time she was afraid because sleeping would make her remember.

Nightmares.

Yuri had gone off on a trip to Europe with her parents while Taeyeon had to stay behind because of work. A month had passed since Taeyeon's 17th birthday and school was out for the year. She, Jessica, and Krystal decided to just stay over at the Kwon residence for the weekend seeing how the Jungs were gone as well.

"You'll take care of my two little girls right, Taeyeon?" Mr. Jung smiled as Krystal and Jessica complained about being called little girls.

"Yes Mr. Jung. I will." Taeyeon said with a grin.

"Promise?" Yuri had said, one foot in the car.

"Promise." Taeyeon nodded and watched Yuri get into her parents' car and Mr. Jung get in his taxi before both drove away to the airport.

All was fine until someone knocked on the door.

They called themselves investors of new technology. They offered Taeyeon a job, they even had the contracts ready. Triple the pay from the government, freedom to research anything, flexible scheduling, all just for one catch - Give them the three new nerve toxins she was working on with the government.

Of course, Taeyeon refused. It was top secret project and having the toxin in the wrong hands would be disastrous.

"I'm disappointed in your response Ms. Kim. You are letting down very powerful men. I do hope you

will not regret this." The man had said before leaving.

And she did. Taeyeon regretted all of it - working in weaponry, for the government, opening the door to let the man in, all of it.

Two days later - the day Yuri was supposed to come back from her trip, they were taken. Taeyeon, Jessica, and Krystal were taken by masked abductors whom they later learned were Triad members. Holding, Krystal and Jessica at gunpoint, Taeyeon could only comply with their demands and was escorted from the warehouse to her lab by two men. She was forced to lie to the guards and tell them that the men were research aides and was then made to take three vials of the serum before they forced her back into the car and back to the warehouse.

• • •

"Prove it." The man had said, voice full of malice. He held a puppy in his right hand. It couldn't have been more than two weeks old. "Prove to me that it works. That it is real and you're not just holding a vial full of water."

"N-No." Taeyeon shrank back as the man stepped forward.

"Oh? Do you want me to test it out on one of them?" He gestured towards Krystal and Jessica who were chained against a wall, a guard with a gun standing in front of them.

"No!" Taeyeon moved closer to the other two as the man followed, laughing. The guard had stepped away from Jessica and Krystal, moving towards the shorter girl with his gun raised.

Holding a hand to signal the guard to stop, the man chuckled. "So then, what do you suggest we do Ms. Kim?" He moved suddenly and all Taeyeon felt was pain in her jaw, tasting the metallic flavor of blood in the mouth. Before she could realize what was going on, she felt another pain, this time on the left of her ribcage. She heard something crack.

He had kicked her, knocking her to the ground. Picking up the little case that held the vials, the man opened it and pulled the blue capped one out, pocketing the other two. "Now lets see what this one does

shall we? " He picked out the syringe and filled it halfway. He then walked towards Krystal with a twisted grin deforming his face, "It'd be quite a sight seeing what a nerve toxin can do to someone won't it?"

Jessica struggled desperately, screaming and kicking to no avail. All Krystal could do was move her eyes back and forth between the needle and the man's face as he leaned in closer, scream stuck in her throat. Taeyeon could only watch helplessly as she tried to get on her feet, coughing up blood.

"N-No!" She gasped. "No! Don't! Please." She started crawling towards the man. "Take me instead. Test it on me." She reached for the man's pant leg and looked up with desperate eyes.

The man stared down at her with a smirk on his face. "I would. Seeing how you seem to be **begging** to be in pain. But unfortunately, the higher ups want you alive. You need to make more of this -" he pushed the syringe slightly, a few drops of liquid dripped out of the tip and onto the floor in front of Taeyeon, "- for them."

"BASTARD! Taeyeon would never do such a thing!" Jessica yelled out, still struggling to get out of her restraints.

The man turned calmly around to face the older Jung and brandished a knife. "I beg to differ."

"No!" Krystal and Taeyeon cried as he stroked the hilt of the knife with his thumb.

"No. No. I beg you!"

"Now, Miss Jessica Jung, I would suggest you keep quiet as this discussion does not involve you." He took the knife and pointed it at her throat. "My patience tires of you three being so uncooperative. Perhaps I should - "

"No!" Taeyeon screamed again, lunging at the man. The guard took aim but was too slow to take a shot as the man easily grabbed Taeyeon off his back, holding her by the neck.

Gasping, Taeyeon clawed at his hand as he squeezed, nearly crushing her windpipe. After letting her

choke for a few moments as Krystal and Jessica cried for him to let her go, he turned quickly, turning around and crushing Taeyeon to the ground facefirst.

Taeyeon could feel the warm, sticky liquid of her blood trickling down her face. He had broke her nose.

"Now Ms. Kim, I was told not to kill you, but no one ever said anything about hurting you until you're**realmost** dead. Since you decided to play hero, I'll show your little girlfriend and friend what the consequence of trying my patience is." Pinning her to the ground with his knee on her back, the man put the syringe down on the floor and played with the knife between his fingers.

"I sincerely hope this won't kill you Ms. Kim." He held the knife as one would hold a scalpel, index finger pushing against the blunt side of the blade. With purposeful slowness, he cut a straight line diagonally across her back, smiling at the blood that bloomed onto her white shirt.

All Taeyeon could remember of that moment was pain and hearing herself scream.

For some reason, the man sent the guard out to check something before resuming his torture. He had finish slicing the second "V" across the back when a loud noise was heard from outside. Standing up, the man walked across the room to the door, leaving Taeyeon on the floor as Jessica and Krystal sobbing and praying that Taeyeon would get up.

Taeyeon recalled an adrenaline rush when she was finally able to move her head and turned to see that the syringe was still on the floor. The memory of what occurred next is all in slow motion.

Picking herself slowly off the ground, Taeyeon could hear ringing in her ears along with the relieved cries of her girlfriend and friend. Delirious with pain and blood loss, Taeyeon stumbled and found herself looking straight down at the syringe still half full of the nerve toxin from the blue capped vial.

The one toxin she had yet to perfect.

The other two worked almost instantaneously whereas this one would only work if injected directly into the bloodstream. It was to be an artificial substitute of the existing taipoxin, which was extracted

and purified from the venom a taipan snake. It basically choked one to death by paralyzing the respiratory system. As it is still in the experimental stage, it was supposed to be injected through the pulmonary arteries to take immediate effect.

Taeyeon is a certified surgeon, she knew where the pulmonary arteries were without having to open anyone up. She knew exactly where to inject it - they had tested it on mannequins and convicts on a death sentence. She knew where, when, and how. The man's back was turned, she had the perfect chance. She had steady hands - she is a certified surgeon - it was all perfect.

But she had never killed a man before.

She was never the one to inject it into the convicts, she only read the reports and examined the bodies afterward. The older researchers wouldn't let her do it.

It was all perfect.

But she missed.

An inch off from the main artery. She had injected it into another vein, one that would take longer to reach his lungs. One that would cost a life.

Letting the man collapse in surprise, she rushed over to unchain the other two. Grabbing the keys that laid on the small desk in the center of the room, she unlocked Krystal's binding's first, helping the girl down, ignoring the sharp pain and blood dripping down her back. As she finally undid Jessica's chains, she had neglected to see that the man had gotten up, reaching for a gun hidden in the desk drawers.

She had neglected to see that. But Krystal had not.

Pushing Taeyeon behind herself, Krystal moved to block the shorter girl and her sister right as the man fired.

Two gunshots rang out.

One bullet reached the wrong target - Krystal's heart.

Another reached the right target - The man's back.

Taeyeon could only gape in shock as the younger girl fell into her arms, the front of her shirt covered in blood.

"No." A familiar voice rang out. Kwon Yuri.

The dark haired girl rushed out from behind the police officer who had killed the man. She ran over to her fiancé, clutching desperately at her hands.

Though she had a faint memory of Jessica crying next to her, Taeyeon could only remember one thing from that moment.

Yuri's eyes. Accusing, blaming, burning, guilt wrenching eyes. They stared up at her as Krystal gasped heavily, tightening her grip on Yuri's hand and Taeyeon's arm.

"S-s-saranghae Y-Yuri."

• • •

pink | In the Confines of Silence VI

"After Taeyeon was released from the hospital, she left Korea." Yuri was still standing at the window, not looking at Tiffany.

Tiffany could only stand in silent shock as she watched the taller woman continue her tracing of rivulets down the glass. She had not expected anything of that caliber.

'No wonder Taeyeon hunts down members of the Triad.'

"She left to go to Japan, where she isolated herself, recovering from physical and mental trauma in a hospital in Kyoto. She never told us about it, not me, Jessica, or either of our parents." Yuri paused

again, staring out into the rain.

"She missed Krystal's funeral."

Tiffany looked up from her feet to see that Yuri was holding her hand up to the scarce sunlight, examining her engagement ring.

"She was gone for four years. No call, no letter. Just the doctors sending the occasional reports on her condition. We were all heartbroken. Our parents decided to continue with the marriage between our families so Jessica and I got engaged." Yuri fiddled around with the ring, pulling it loose before putting it back on again.

"She came back after the doctors said she was completely recovered - mentally. But everyone knew she wasn't. She was different. She was...like how she is now." Her face twisted in pain - like she was chewing glass - swallowing. Her voice wavered as she stopped speaking, dropping her hand and looking down at her feet.

Tiffany waited for Yuri to continue but the impending silence made her realize Yuri had finished what she had to say. Moving closer to the executive, Tiffany stood behind her, precisely two feet away.

She spoke softly, "You blamed her didn't you? That's why you can't move on."

"I don't want to blame her. I wish I didn't. But I do." Yuri looked at the steel case on the floor next to her. She bent to pick it up, opening it. The revolver gleamed in the struggling sunlight. The bullets rest snugly in their foam indents under the barrel. "My mind blames her but my heart blames myself. I'm blaming everything on everyone when there isn't anything to blame nor is there anyone to blame it on."

Tiffany lowered her eyes, voice neutral and steady, but still quiet. "Do you love her? Do you love Jessica?"

Yuri did not move, but Tiffany could see the faint reflection in the window and noted that Yuri had also looked downwards. "I do. I'm trying to."

"She is as well." Tiffany replied. "It's all a matter of whether or not you forgive yourself and Taeyeon for what shouldn't be yours to feel guilty of."

Yuri turned her head halfway to look at Tiffany with questioning eyes.

"Are you willing to let go so you can love Jessica as she deserves? Why can't you let the memory of her go? Why can't you stop comparing Jessica to Krystal? Why can't you forgive Taeyeon so she can forgive herself?" Tiffany raised her voice until her very last word was a yell. She exhaled nosily before softening her tone, "It just seems like no one is winning anything from your game."

Yuri finally turned to fully face her and replied with an empty smile, "It wasn't designed to have a winner."

Tiffany looked at her in anguish. She shouldn't have interest in this, but she did. She couldn't stand seeing the three women torture themselves over the past.

"Can't you just let Taeyeon go? See that Jessica is in pain too? It isn't just about the two of you."

"I'm trying to. I know that it hurts. It's just so...hard." Yuri stared down at the open gun case in her hands. "You see this gun? It has only three chambers. One for each of us in a sense." She paused to see if Tiffany understood and continued when the agent nodded, acknowledging the fact that she knew about the gun. "Taeyeon made it with her own hands when we were fifteen. We had watched a movie about friends who committed suicide after one of them died. She said we should do the same. It was only a joke back then?but now, it's just cold hard fact. We bound ourselves to this game and accepted the rules without question."

Tiffany swallowed and felt like a brick had slid down her throat. "Then let me play," she said quietly.

Yuri looked at her with wide eyes. "What?"

"Let me play. Unless you're willing to let things go, I won't stand here and watch the three of you wait for the day you'll have to kill yourselves." Tiffany felt as if fire ran through her veins. She was sick of how blind the three of them were, so helpless in their own haze of events, so caught up in their own

little world."

Yuri looked down at the revolver, smiling her empty smile. The two stood in silence, facing each other for what felt like hours before Yuri looked up and spoke.

"Why?"

Tiffany was surprised at her own answer. "Because I care too much. Because I don't ever want to see another human being cry the way she did ever again."

Yuri kept her hollow smile as she reached her hand to the case and pulled out one of the bullets. She held it up to eyelevel, admiring the intricate name carved on it before reaching for Tiffany's hand and pressing it to her palm.

"One player less in our little game." Yuri said before walking past Tiffany and out of the apartment.

Tiffany stood silently and listened to the door close and the footsteps fade into the rhythm of the pounding rain, her hand still in the position Yuri had left it. She looked down at the metal object and read the name carved in minute font.

Jessica Jung.

CHAPTER 6

silver | Interplanetary I

It was the loss of self control. The lack of restraint. The barrier finally gone. No more third bullet. No more need for Jessica to die. No more waiting for Jessica to die. No more triangle of chaos. Just a game of two deaths - Taeyeon and her own.

It was all for the sake of redemption and forgiveness.

Right?

Yuri rarely doubted herself.

But she doubted herself.

She wondered if it was the only way.

She wondered if it was the only way. She wondered if the revolver was the only answer. She wondered about how everything ended up this way, broken and bent.

Then she wondered about something she avoided thinking about for a long time.

She wondered if she loved Jessica.

...

black | Interplanetary II

Attachment was unnecessary. Affection a hindrance. These are laws. These were lessons learned during training. And in life. These were rules she believed in and followed ever since.

Except she couldn't.

Not when she worked with her two best friends whom she felt she did not deserve to even associate with. Not when a certain agent continued to butt into her life. Certainly not when there were moments

of breakdown.

Breakdowns like these.

Taeyeon looked down at her half empty lass of scotch and watched the amber liquid and ice whirl around the cold glass, clinking against it as she rotated it in one hand. She ignored the soft caresses on her back by one of the usual flirts. She felt another presence and looked to her right, seeing the agent entering the bar and walk towards her, stopping only when she was standing next to the bodyguard. The two gazed at each other stoically, motionless and silent. Taeyeon couldn't help but squint as she looked up at the other's face which was backed by a bright, flashing strobe light. The agent casually slipped an American twenty into the flirt's hand and motion for the unintended intruder to leave them alone.

Shifting her weight slightly, the flashing lights seemed to se the American aglow. the light shined off her dark hair, showering her dark silhouette with what seemed to be a halo that lined her figure. Like the corona of an eclipse, the light that always lined the shadow over the sun.

'Like an angel.'

Slightly drunk, Taeyeon grinned and chuckled at the thought. She blinked up at the other, neither relenting to speak first.

• • •

Taeyeon thought she was seeing things. She thought she saw him. She saw him when she dreamed those nightmares that made her afraid of ever falling asleep sober. She saw him when she closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep. She saw him during the times most people thought about what made them happy. She saw him when she was asleep, eyes closed, and not the slightest bit aware of herself.

But this was different.

She saw him.

A face within the crowd.

She saw him.

A familiar and frightening face amidst the sea of people in the train station.

She saw him.

She saw the face of Kang Joon In. (totally made up name before you go Google it)

The face that lived in her nightmares.

But this time, she was wide awake.

• • •

blue | Interplanetary III

It always went like this. A routine the couple had been rehearsing since their engagement.

Jessica would be lounging on the couch, reading a book as Yuri sat next to her; resting her head on Jessica's lap as she watched whatever happened to be on television.

Today, it was a drama about a doctor falling in love with the patient.

Jessica looked up from her reading and was drawn into the show as it featured her favorite actor. She lowered her book, gently placing it on the glass coffee table in front of her, moving slowly as to not disturb Yuri who was enamored with the show.

During the commercial break, Yuri sat up. She looked down at Jessica's hands which were folded neatly on her lap. Yuri thought for a moment before reaching over hesitantly and took hold of one of Jessica's hands. "What would you like for dinner?" She asked, remembering to squeeze the hand she was holding with gentle insistence.

Sometimes Jessica didn't feel like eating.

Looking up Jessica gazed into her fiancé's dark eyes - her own filled with subtle surprise at the unusual gesture. "Anything is fine."

The blonde watched as Yuri stood up, letting go of her hand as she slinked into the kitchen with her usual slow, graceful steps. Jessica was never terribly skilled at cooking. Not awful – but nowhere near as good as Yuri or Taeyeon – who was actually a wonderful cook – or even her sister, Krystal.

Jessica gazed at the kitchen entrance as the sounds of cooking and cutting echoed through the spacious apartment. Realizing that she was remembering, Jessica shook her head as if to literally cast off the thought of her sister.

She had to move on.

*'I **need** to move on.'*

• • •

Pasta. Angel Hair with pesto sauce peppered with basil.

It always amazed Jessica how anyone could make something so delicious out of almost nothing. The couple sat side by side on the black leather couch, absorbed by the meaningless drama that was currently being aired.

It was silent other than for the tinkling of forks against plates and the sound of the television. Yuri was the first to finish, putting her plate carefully down on the coffee table.

It took about another ten minutes before Jessica finished her own plate. As she leaned over to take the other plate, ready to go wash them, she felt a soft, but heavy weight on her left shoulder. She looked over to find that Yuri had fallen asleep, leaning against the red velvet pillow that was between them. Jessica smiled softly as she gently put down her plate and leaned back into the couch, allowing Yuri and pillow to rest against her left side as she wrapped her arm around the her fiancé.

After a few moments of stillness, Jessica gently tugged the red pillow away, laying Yuri down on her

lap in a more comfortable position. She looked down at the sleeping woman and gently brushed a few stray locks of hair away from the other's face. The motion was familiar.

It was what she used to do for Taeyeon.

The motion was familiar.

Yet foreign.

And Jessica also wondered.

She wondered if she loved Yuri.

• • •

black | Interplanetary IV

There was no forgiveness in her punches, kicks, and strikes. There was no sense of pity or sympathy from her as she broke their jaws, noses, arms, legs, and perhaps a rib or two. She was volatile and angry. She was no longer in control. No longer in control of anything.

Life.

Feelings.

Herself.

She pinned one of the men down and began striking at his head, delivering punches until her fist began to bleed. She did not feel the pain through her drunken haze and did not stop until she felt a pair of arms wrap around her, weaving underneath her arms and clasping behind her head, effectively locking her arms and head. She couldn't move - she was too exhausted and drunk. She could not move to twist out of the hold she could have easily avoided. She could not move to wipe the sweat off her brow. She could not move to wipe the blood off her hands. She could not move to brush the dirt off her pants. She could not move to dry the tears flowing down her face.

The Interpol agent kept her hold on the bodyguard and looked around at the destruction.

Taeyeon knew that as the agent looked around, she'd see the mess she had made. The agent would take in the sight of the unconscious Triad members with broken bones. She felt the other woman inhale as the other's eyes finally rested on the man Taeyeon was kneeling over. She knew that Tiffany had finally realized what Taeyeon had done.

She had gone on a rampage. She had lost control and now these bodies were the evidence.

Taeyeon had never felt as hopeless as this moment. This one moment when Tiffany held her immobile and she couldn't help but cry at how much she missed being able to feel.

How much she missed how the pain in her knuckles felt. How much she missed keeping herself locked away.

How she felt as Tiffany shifted from her headlock grip to a gentle hug, firm arms wrapped around the shorter woman as the younger of the two allowed her to cry in her arms.

So that was what Taeyeon did. She cried. She cried into Tiffany's warm arms as the few stars visible in the dark velvet sky twinkled harmlessly as if nothing ever happened.

• • •

silver | Interplanetary V

Yuri had woken up, surprised to find herself laying against Jessica's lap. Rising, she turned to look at her fiancé with questioning eyes.

She was once again surprised to find a soft smile on the other's face, eyes twinkling.

"Good evening. Did you sleep well?"

Yuri nodded slowly, still gazing at Jessica's content face.

“Good, I know you’ve been having some trouble sleeping lately with all the traveling you’ve been doing. Why don’t you go shower and sleep while I clean up?” Jessica stood up and picked up the two empty plates on the coffee table, walking into the kitchen.

Yuri followed the suit, slowly getting up from the couch and treaded towards the other direction into the bedroom.

• • •

Yuri dried her hair with a towel as she listened to the sounds of the water flowing as Jessica showered. She stopped her movements as her eyes closed in on the case resting on her nightstand. It was the gun again. She reached a hand out and grazed her hand across the smooth, cool surface.

Was it worth it?

Before she could think any further, the sound of the bathroom door opening snapped Yuri out of her thoughts. She slipped the case into the bottom drawer of the nightstand before looking up.

For the first time in a long time, Yuri felt vulnerable.

For the first time in a long time, Yuri felt like it wasn’t wrong.

Jessica stood shyly at the door of the bathroom, clutching at the white towel that was wrapped around her body, hair still dripping.

For the first time, Yuri realized just how *beautiful* her fiancé is.

• • •

pink | Interplanetary VI

"What the hell is wrong with you? Why do you keep doing this?" Tiffany asked, almost in tears due to her frustration. She thought that Taeyeon had gone home. She had watched the woman call for a car to pick her up.

Tiffany turned to see a black car at the curb. An old black Cadillac, driver still waiting patiently.

She turned back and watched as Taeyeon laughed dryly, wiping off tears as she picked up a knife off the floor. A knife one of the unconscious men had dropped.

The agent couldn't help but notice that the older woman held the blade in an almost religious fashion - as if it were sacred.

In a way, it was.

Part of a ritual.

"Would it be too cruel to ask Jessica to do this?" Taeyeon laughed lightly before turning to face the younger girl, flipping the knife lightly between her fingers.

The bodyguard looked up straight into her eyes, showing Tiffany bloodshot, teary eyes. It was then Tiffany realized what made the proverbial clock tick.

Dilated pupils.

The smell of alcohol on the older woman's breath.

She was high. Kim Taeyeon was high and had a knife in her hand, ready to spill her own blood.

• • •

blue | Interplanetary VII

Jessica wasn't sure of what to make of her muddled thoughts.

She had stood under the shower for a while, nothing doing anything but letting the water run and shower her as she stood in silent contemplation.

Jessica wasn't sure why she decided to step out of the shower and out the bathroom door with only her towel on, not even drying her hair.

But she had the faint impression that her staring at the cabinet that held Taeyeon's spare toothbrush and then gazing over to see the two separate glass cups that held her and Yuri's individual toothbrushes had something to do with it.

Jessica could only look shyly at her feet as Yuri finally looked up, putting the revolver case in the bottom drawer of the nightstand.

It wasn't as if Jessica had never seen Yuri dressed in her night attire before – large shirt with short, same as what Jessica wore – but it seemed like something was different.

As if she was looking at her fiancé in a new light.

So she just let go.

She pushed her muddled thoughts aside and finally decided to take a step forward.

She felt herself slowly stepping towards their shared bed, watching as Yuri moved to stand up. They stood only a few inches away from each other, gazing into each others' eyes, trying to see into the new depths they had both discovered.

So when Jessica felt Yuri move closer, she decided it was time to see past what was there before.

Jessica let her towel drop onto the floor.

...

pink | Interplanetary VIII

They struggled. Tiffany struggled to pin the shorter woman down while she fought with the other for the knife. The kicks hurt and punches bruise, but Tiffany kept trying. Seeing an opening, she snapped her right arm back and delivered a right hook right to the left corner of the bodyguard's jaw. Hearing teeth clicking, Tiffany took a chance and grabbed the knife by the blade, ignoring the pain and pulled it away from Taeyeon's hand.

Tiffany stepped a few paces back as she watched Taeyeon struggle to get up, the alcohol and drugs taking a toll on her physical abilities. Steeling herself, Tiffany made her way to the others' side cautiously before grabbing the woman's right arm in a vice like grip and pulling her up.

"Don't you see?" Tiffany said hoarsely as she dropped the knife and pinned the bodyguard against the wall of the alley. "This isn't the way to do it. This isn't a way for you to die."

The fight knocked out of her, Taeyeon could only shiver silently against the wall, arms tensed against the tight grip of Tiffany's hands.

"Why can't you understand that no one blames you? That you're hurting everyone?" Tiffany raised her voice as tears began to roll down her face.

"Why do you care?" Tiffany barely heard Taeyeon's almost inaudible whisper. "No one asked you to care Agent Hwang."

Tiffany looked down at the crown of the bodyguard's lowered head. She wasn't sure how she felt. She felt sadness, worry, confusion but one feeling seemed to be rising faster than the others: anger. She suddenly tightened her grip on the older woman's arms before immediately regretting her action as she heard a soft whimper from the other.

She relaxed her grip as she felt wetness from the others' eyes drip onto her hands. And for the second time that night, Tiffany pulled the older woman into a tight hug.

“Because you need someone to care Kim Taeyeon, you all do.”

• • •

black | Interplanetary IX

Taeyeon had never felt so exposed and weak. She knew the agent was strong and capable, but she blamed herself for letting herself fall into the deceptively warm arms of alcohol and intoxication. She had wept into the shoulder of the agent, staining the white cotton fabric of the others' blouse.

Now she followed the other meekly as they entered Tiffany's apartment for the second time. However, this time Taeyeon was awake and almost sober.

Taeyeon was quiet as Tiffany directed her towards her bathroom where Taeyeon showered quickly, enjoying the momentary comfort of the warm water.

The bodyguard put on a bathrobe and stepped out of the bathroom. She was surprised to see that the agent had prepared bandages and disinfectant and was waiting for her to finish her shower. As experienced as she was, Taeyeon couldn't help but grimace as the agent rubbed alcohol on a particularly nasty scrape on her knuckle before wrapping it with a gauze and bandage.

She stood still as the taller woman handed her a large shirt and a pair of shorts which she quietly accepted. They both changed silently, backs to each other at opposite ends of the bedroom.

Taeyeon stood at the side of the bed and looked up at the agent's face which held a small smile as the other gestured for her to lay down.

The two laid down on the bed quietly before Tiffany turned off the desk lamp, enveloping the two in darkness.

For the first time in a very long time, Taeyeon felt something familiar.

Something she had missed.

Something she hadn't felt since Jessica.

Taeyeon felt safe.

Taeyeon fell asleep feeling warm.

• • •

Ring Ring

Taeyeon stirred as she heard the call of a phone. She felt the bed shift as the agent move.

“Hello?”

The voice on the other line was inaudible.

“Now? Where are you?” Tiffany's voice sounded worried and strained.

“I'll be there right now.”

Taeyeon felt a hand stroke her hair before hearing a whisper, “work calls, sleep.”

Taeyeon's mind faintly registered the sound of rustling clothing, jingling keys and the sound of a door closing before her mind drifted back to sleep.

• • •

Ring Ring

Tiffany's phone again.

Ring Ring

Taeyeon woke up fully this time. *'She must have forgotten her phone.'*

Ring-Click

“Hello?”

“Kim Taeyeon?”

A pause. “Who is this?”

“Agent Hwang won’t be coming back. Not unless you come.”

Panic. “Where?”

“Where everything ended and began. The warehouse.”

“Who are you?!”

Taeyeon clutched the phone tightly as she heard a soft chuckle.

“Kang.”

She froze at the name.

“Kang Wooyoung.”

CHAPTER 7

silver | Cathartic I

They were tangled in each others arms, silent and warm. It was the first time her chest didn't hurt. It was the first time her heart didn't ache.

She acted out in duty before and now she wasn't so sure anymore. But that didn't matter, she told herself to save the thought for later and just enjoy the moment she had never had a chance to experience before. She told herself to just relax and then gave into sleep.

• • •

Yuri dropped the phone. Just moments ago everything was fine – she and Jessica had woken up and she had decided to make breakfast while Jessica showered - and now everything has gone wrong.

Agent Tiffany Hwang was missing.

• • •

It wasn't like she had never seen Taeyeon upset before, but this was different. It was as if the bodyguard was unhinged in the mind. It pained her heart to see Taeyeon sitting on the bed with her arms hugging her knees, staring at nothing in particular while she rocked herself back and forth, mumbling incoherently.

She was glad she didn't bring Jessica along – Jessica would not have been able to handle a sight like this. It was what Taeyeon was like before she left for Japan.

[flashback]

Yuri stood emotionlessly as Jessica screamed and ran into the room, leaving Yuri to stand alone in the empty hospital hallway. Yuri had not yet been able to forgive Taeyeon just yet but was also shocked at the sight of a haggard and thin Taeyeon crouched in the corner of the room, hugging her knees while she rocked back and forth on her heels. A bloody knife laid on the floor as the back of her hospital

gown was soaked scarlet.

The doctor and nurses rushed in as they heard the piercing scream. Two nurses dragged a hysteric Jessica out while another pushed Yuri towards the waiting area as the others pulled Taeyeon off the floor and onto the gurney and to the emergency room.

That was the last time either of them saw Taeyeon before receiving a letter from a psychologist in Japan saying that Taeyeon was living in the top hospital in Japan and was receiving treatment for both her physical and mental trauma.

[end flashback]

Yuri walked further into the apartment and crawled onto the bed, sitting next to the other and placed a soothing hand on her back. She was at a loss as to what she should do to comfort her friend.

“She’s gone and it’s my fault.” Taeyeon’s voice was barely a whisper as she continued to rock back and forth, making the bed shift slightly with her movements.

Yuri frowned as she stopped stroking a hand down Taeyeon’s back. It hurt Yuri to think that Taeyeon was placing blame on herself once more, much like what happened to Krystal.

Much like what Yuri was like before.

The dark hair woman shifted closer and enveloped the bodyguard in a tight hug.

“Shh... it isn’t your fault Taeyeon, nobody knew this was going to happen.”

She felt Taeyeon flinch at the thought of him. The man that had been giving her nightmares for the past four years. Yuri started to stroke Taeyeon’s back once more, hand higher up her back. She paused once again when she felt the bumps underneath the smaller woman’s shirt. She noticed how Taeyeon winced as she touched the scars, lifting her collar aside Yuri looked down at the scars. They seemed raw and pink, as if they were just recently opened. Yuri immediately pulled away, hands holding tightly onto Taeyeon’s shoulders.

“What have you been doing to yourself Taeyeon?! Why are you still doing this?!” Yuri yelled at an impassive Taeyeon. “Why are you still cutting them?! Why won’t you just let them heal?!”

Taeyeon looked up at Yuri, eyes blank. Yuri could only look on in pain as she heard what Taeyeon said next.

“Because I don’t deserve to let them heal.”

• • •

Yuri had rocked Taeyeon back to a restless sleep. The poor woman had cried and rocked herself to the point of exhaustion. Taeyeon’s words replayed in her head like a mantra, she had whispered them nearly deliriously before she had fallen asleep.

“Have you ever felt that feeling where its like you can’t breath and your lungs are burning even though you’re only an inch away from the surface? Like you’re so close to making the pain stop but you just can’t seem to swim that last stroke towards the oxygen? Like your whole body is on fire and you can’t put it out even though you’re standing right next to water? That is how I feel Yuri....it hurts...it hurts so much...”

There were no actual signs that this was agent Hwang’s apartment – no pictures, no calendars, not even a visible computer – nothing but the cell phone that was laying on the floor. Everything else was arranged rather neatly other than for the empty coffee cups and take out boxes resting on the coffee table. Nothing was out of place or seemed to have been disturbed by a forced entry and exit.

Something about this was quite odd.

• • •

pink | Cathartic II

Ring Ring.

Tiffany's sleep was disturbed by the sound of her phone. She quickly picked up before the sound would awaken her guest.

"Hello?"

It was her friend and fellow field agent, Nicole.

"Tiffany. Where are you? Didn't you get the text? Check your contact phone, you should have received a text from him by now."

Confused, Tiffany picked up the other phone on the night stand and opened an unnoticed encrypted text message. Reading it, Tiffany's eyes snapped open wide.

"Now?"

"Yes. You got it right? I think you should go. Something is definitely up."

"I'll be right there."

"Call me when you're done. I want to know what is going on."

Tiffany hung up and sighed before she felt Taeyeon shift in bed. She turned to see the bleary eyed woman look up at her, trying to blink away the sleep. Tiffany stroked her hair and gently whispered in Taeyeon's ear, "work calls, sleep."

With that, she quickly changed, grabbed her pistol and keys before walking out the door. She had left her civilian phone behind.

• • •

She clutched at her phone, staring down at the text message she had received. An unknown number. Impossible seeing how this was her contact phone – the only way for her to reach her informant. No one knew the number other than the director, Nicole, Tiffany, and the informant.

From: Private Number
To: Tiffany Hwang
Text: 83556396879474
56A Main Street.

It was the code of an informant.

• • •

She cautiously stepped into the small café and put a hand subtly to her pistol as she approached the only man sitting in the area. As she walked past he quietly slid a file across the table and she took it without looking at him. She quickly sat down at a far away booth behind him, making sure she could see him before glancing through the file. She then texted Nicole with the information.

Text: Do you have any info on Choi Siwon? Agent #413105SS.

She waited for a few minutes before Nicole sent her a reply and some of his files – the same as the ones he handed to her.

Text: He's an undercover agent working in China and Korea dealing with the Triad. His last plane ticket was booked for yesterday 7:15PM and his status at the moment is as an informant. Don't you already have an informant? Do you want me to check on him too?

Tiffany looked up to see Choi Siwon looking back at her, his head turned to face her. He gave her a small smile and waved for her to join him at his table.

Tiffany stood up and sat down across from him looking grimly at her phone as she replied.

Text: Yes. His name is Kang Wooyoung.

Something was very, very wrong.

• • •

silver | Cathartic III

“Taeyeon.” Yuri gently shook Taeyeon’s shoulder, trying to wake the girl. “Taeyeon, wake up.”

The bodyguard stirred and eventually blinked her eyes open as she sat up.

“Taeyeon. Did anyone come in the room when you were asleep? Something seems odd. Did Tiffany leave or something? Don’t you think everything looks too neat to have had someone break in?”

Taeyeon shook her head, her throat was dry and her voice raspy, “no, I heard Tiffany leave. She said she had work to do.”

“When Kan- he called you, what did he say?” Yuri asked firmly, holding onto Taeyeon’s arm as Taeyeon flinched at the memory of his voice.

“He said that she wouldn’t be coming back. That I had to go to the warehouse if I want to see her again.”

Yuri tightened her hold as she listened to Taeyeon’s shaky voice. There was no doubt of the fear Taeyeon had for this man. Yuri knew that Taeyeon would have charged the warehouse and have destroyed everything in her fury but this man – whoever he was, Kang Joon In or not – was the one thing that all three of them – especially Taeyeon – feared. The one memory they had tried to cover had come back to haunt them.

“Taeyeon, this is Agent Hwang’s phone right?” Yuri picked up the cellphone laying at the foot of the bed. Seeing the other nod, Yuri took her own phone and texted someone before receiving a reply a minute later. Using Tiffany’s phone, Yuri dialed the number that was just given to her and waited as it rang. She put the phone on speaker when someone picked up.

“Agent Hwang?” Yuri asked.

“Who is this? How did you get this number?”

Yuri ignored the question, “This is Yuri. Where are you?”

“I’m at a café, why?” The agent replied, confused.

Yuri glanced at Taeyeon whose eyes narrowed as she looked down at the phone.

“Hello?” Tiffany called out but was ignored.

“Yuri.” Taeyeon’s voice was suddenly cold and tense. “Where is Jessica?”

“At home. I told her not to come. Why are you –“ Yuri looked back at Taeyeon and immediately felt dread coursing through her veins.

• • •

pink | Cathartic IV

Tiffany hung up the phone after Yuri called. The never told her what exactly was going on but she knew that Jessica was in trouble somehow. She needed to get to them and figure out what had happened.

“Siwon-shii, do you know a Kang Wooyoung?” Tiffany asked, blurting out the question and surprising the young man.

“No, I can’t say I do. Is he part of this case? I only know of a Kong Joon In who is part of this case but he has been dead of four years.”

She bit her lip, thinking of what to do when her phone began to ring, interrupting her thoughts. She checked the number to see that it was Nicole.

“Bad news Tiffany, I forwarded his file to you. Everything on his file checks out but...”

“But?”

“Kang Wooyoung isn’t supposed to be your informant Tiffany. He couldn’t have been. He is listed as a deserter from the army and is Kang Joon In’s biological brother. He wouldn’t have passed the screening to be an informer for this case. He is too close to one of the subjects.”

Tiffany dropped the phone. Realization hitting her. Siwon stood up, leaning over the table, “are you alright Tiffany-shii?”

“I-I need to go.” Tiffany picked up her phone and grabbed her purse. “Call Nicole Jung and HQ, I know where Jang Wooyoung is.”

• • •

Tiffany rushed out of her car, phone in hand as she dialed the number to her civilian phone, praying that Taeyeon and Yuri had it with them.

“Taeye-“

A man in a hat and suit approached her from the side, Tiffany instinctively reached for her pistol when the man lifted his head, showing his face that was hidden under his hat.

“Wooyoung?!”

Tiffany felt a sharp, throbbing pain at the underside of her skull before everything turned black.

• • •

silver | Cathartic V

Yuri and Taeyeon rushed back to the apartment, only to find unconscious guards and the door wide open.

Yuri stood still as she watched Taeyeon fall to her knees, shaking. Yuri herself could only look in silent shock. It was as if ice had replaced the blood in her veins, she could not move. Her mind felt numb and

hazy as she walked slowly past the overturned coffee table where they had dinner just last night and towards the dining table where Jessica's glasses laid over a pile of loose papers. Yuri froze when she saw the note amongst the paper, weighed down by the glasses.

Look out the window. Maybe you'll see something.

Yuri cautiously approached the half open window and looked outside, down at the street. Her eyes widened when she recognized agent Hwang's Audi.

Yuri heard a phone ring behind her and saw Taeyeon slowly picking up the phone they had brought from the agent's apartment.

Yuri turned back to the window. Tiffany stepped out of the car and Yuri could only watch helplessly as she saw two men approach her, one with a hat on from the right and the other from behind the car. The man with hat seemed to have revealed his face, making Tiffany stop her movements as the other man knocked the agent out with police baton.

"Tiffany!" Yuri cried out, making the man with the hat look up at her. Yuri couldn't make out the face but could guess that the man was smiling at her as the other man dragged the unconscious girl into an unmarked van.

Yuri turned back around to see an expressionless Taeyeon holding the phone up to her ear. Yuri stood close enough to hear the voice on the phone.

"So Kim Taeyeon, what does rage feel like to you? Helplessness? Adrenaline? A murderous rampage? Tell me, Kim Taeyeon, what does rage feel like when you're on your knees before the brother of the man that ruined your life? What does it feel like to see that the two lives you want to protect so badly are taken away from your reach?"

Yuri could hear Taeyeon's breath caught in her throat at the familiarity of the voice.

"What does it feel like to have two lives to choose from again?"

The line went dead and Yuri stood up straight, looking at Taeyeon worriedly.

“Taeyeon...” Yuri said as the other girl stood with the phone still up to her ear.

“Taeyeon?” Yuri moved around to look Taeyeon straight in the eye. Taeyeon’s eyes went from being filled with fear to what Yuri recognized as rage. “Taeyeon! Don’t do this. Don’t let him goad you into this.” Yuri tried to reason, “don’t...”

Yuri watched as Taeyeon tightened her grip on the phone, crushing the sides before dropping it onto the floor, further breaking it apart.

“I can’t do this anymore.” Taeyeon replied monotonously, “I need to make it stop.”

“What do you mean Taeyeon?” Yuri said, nearly in tears. She grabbed onto both of Taeyeon’s arms, afraid that she would leave and do something rash.

“I want it to stop hurting.”

CHAPTER 8

silver | Exhale

Yuri stared down at the steel case that held their lives together for the past eight years. The one thing that has kept them from moving on and the one thing that has kept them from falling apart. She gently traced a finger along the objects in the case. The revolver, polished and pristine, its three chambers visibly empty. A bullet with her name on it, engraved in silver, A bullet with Taeyeon's name on it, engraved in black, and an empty slot for Jessica's whose bullet was engraved in the brightest of blues.

Yuri's hand traced along the cold metals until they led her to the last indentation in the velvet cushion that lined the case. The last slot. Empty. Void of an occupant.

Krystal's bullet.

Yuri closed the case and slipped it into her coat as she walked out the door, following Taeyeon's trail. She did not know where Krystal's bullet was, not after Taeyeon removed it following the incident, before her departure for Japan. But one thing Yuri did know:

No matter where it was, Taeyeon would believe that it should be embedded in her own heart.

• • •

"Taeyeon, wait."

The older woman paused as she leaned over to get her boots from the shoe cabinet.

"Don't go. Please. We need to-"

"Is there a future in what we do? A future that we would want to look back upon and remember what we caused? I don't think so." Taeyeon turned to Yuri as the older woman laced her boots. "There is no future for us. Not with me and him in it."

"..." Yuri stayed silent as she watched Taeyeon prepare her katana and gloves.

Just as the older woman was reaching for the door knob, Yuri stopped her.

“Taeyeon, wait.”

The bodyguard stilled, face growing irritated as she turned to face the executive.

“Here.” Yuri turned to the couch and reached into her bag, holding the metal case. She opened it carefully and lifted the gun off the velvet cushion, followed by the two bullets that lay beside it.

“I’m sure the guards will have firearms.” Yuri said, looking Taeyeon in the eye as she gently held the weapon out for the latter to take.

Taeyeon stared at the firearm for a moment before looking back up at Yuri. With her left hand, Taeyeon took the firearm and held it tightly.

“The bullets are meant for me Yuri.”

Yuri couldn’t read the expression in Taeyeon’s face as the guard placed the gun underneath her coat. The latter nodded curtly at the younger woman before turning to open and walk out the door.

There seemed to be a lack of color in Yuri’s vision. Everything just seemed black and white now, nothing in between. She thought it a bit funny as she watched Taeyeon run out the door, katana in hand. There seemed to be nothing that would stop Taeyeon, nothing to keep her from running back into the past. She had tried to stop the bodyguard from going out that door and to rather call and wait for help but for the first time in a long time, Taeyeon did not listen to her.

And that made Yuri feel helpless.

• • •

blue | Exhale II

A voice echoed around her. She recognized it, but couldn't recall where she had heard it before.

“Patrol the perimeters of the area. There are more than 10 warehouses here, she won't find us easily.”

Groggy, Jessica opened her eyes slowly and squinted from the harsh light shining upon her. With her affected vision, she could make out the figure of a man watching another man walk out of the room.

Looking around, she could see that she was in a large, open room - the center of a warehouse. Rafters ran along the area along with heavy machinery scattered about. Hearing footsteps approaching, Jessica tore her eyes away from what looked like an elevator and turned towards the source of the movement.

Jessica gasped as she finally got a good look at her captor. His face was one that she would never forget, the face of Krystal's killer.

She flinched as he knelt down in front of her on one knee so that they were pretty much at eye level. Noticing her movement, the man smirked and shook his head.

“Jessica Jung.” He said, slowly rising back up to his feet. “Owner of all the popular and famous night playgrounds of Korea and even some in Japan. Aren't you a capable one?”

Annoyed at the condescending tone of his voice, Jessica steeled herself and snapped back, “who are you? Do you think you can get away with this?”

“Who am I?” The man asked, laughing as he turned his back to her, walking about. “I am the man who is about to change your life. Again.”

Jessica opened her mouth in retort but was interrupted.

“I am his brother. My name is Jang Wooyoung and my brother is Jang Kang In. My brother is dead because of you. And now you will die as well - But not before you watch Kim Taeyeon suffer in front of your very eyes.”

...

A loud noise woke Jessica once more. The sound of the warehouse door opening.

Looking around, she saw a group of men walking in with one carrying a person as Jang Wooyoung walked calmly towards an empty chair, pulling it over so it sat directly across from Jessica, no more than 4 meters apart.

Wooyoung motioned for the men to move towards the chair and Jessica watched as one of the men set the person down on the chair.

Jessica couldn't help but gasp as the men moved away and revealed the person as no one other than Agent Hwang.

...

black | Exhale III

Taeyeon sped down the busy city streets on her black Kawasaki ZX, weaving in and out of traffic as she made her way quickly towards the warehouse district. She brought with her her favorite blade, one forged by the great Yoshindo Yoshihara during her training in Japan. (According to a certain fanpage, Taeyeon had sliced through more than 100 bullets with it during a training session).

Her other weapon, one she found rather distasteful but more graceful than the other models in her personal armory was the AWC Badlander .22LR Silenced Pistol. The only firearm she had in her armory - a gift from a former combat instructor.

She had only one goal in this mission. To save Tiffany and Jessica. It didn't matter who the people were and what they were capable of. It didn't matter if they were dead or alive. As long as she could get to Jang Wooyoung and end it all.

As long as Jessica and Tiffany make it out alive and unharmed, nothing matters.

Not even death.

• • •

pink | Exhale IV

Stirring, Tiffany drifted back into consciousness and blinked wearily as the blur in front of her focused into a figure of a woman.

Jessica Jung.

Now alert, Tiffany's eyes widened as she quickly looked around her surroundings and then back to Jessica, who was now staring intently at her.

"Where are we?" Tiffany asked.

"The warehouse district." Jessica replied. "Around the outskirts of town."

• • •

Tiffany struggled with her bonds as Jessica watched.

"It's useless you know. I've tried." The older woman said wearily even as the agent tried her usual tricks but was met with futile results.

"Wooyoung...I can't believe that he would do this." Tiffany said as her shoulders slumped, giving up on trying to get out. "We have been friends for so long...I don't understand why he would do such a thing. He was a top agent for Interpol, highly respected and well rewarded...to think that he's with the Triad is-"

"Is what Tiffany?" A male voice rang out from beyond the field of light the lone lightbulb hanging above the two women provided. Wooyoung strode into view, now dressed in a grey suit. "To think that I am with the Triad is..." He leaned down so he was level with Tiffany's face, too close for her liking, "...surprising?"

“After all those years with you in interpol, do you find it surprising that I’m one of them?”

Tiffany steeled herself as Wooyoung began circling the two at a slow, leisurely pace. Though she was very much shocked and felt betrayed, she knew that an expression of hurt is what he wanted.

One that she would never give him.

“To think that I had no idea that my brother, the one that I thought had died in a car accident was actually dead because of her, that little bodyguard the agency had been looking for the whole time. They told us that he died in Japan. The brother I never got to have.”

Tiffany could see Jessica’s eyes widen at what he was saying.

“You of all people,” Wooyoung walked up in front of Tiffany and once again leaned to face her, “know that I have very little people I can call family. My mother was all I had. How do you think I felt when I finally found him again, only for him to die a few months after meeting him again. The brother I so adored when I was little, the one that disappeared with my father after he left.”

Wooyoung began pacing around, making Tiffany nervous as his composure faltered.

“So now, I’ve come to find the one that broke my mother’s heart. The one that broke my heart. That military enlistment notice? The separation of you and me? It was all planned so I can get here now. So I can be where I was meant to be, following my brother’s footsteps - with the Triad.”

“I’ve finally found her, and will the two of you here, I’ll have my revenge.”

Tiffany couldn’t help but flinch as he suddenly rushed into her, pushing her back into the seat even more.

“She will suffer.”

...

blue | Exhale V

Bang! A gunshot rang out, startling Jessica. Tiffany immediately looked up, searching for the source of the noise as Wooyoung only smiled.

“I guess our guest has arrived.” Wooyoung said with a smirk. He waved his hand and a group of men that was standing by in the shadows stepped out, awaiting instructions.

“Prepare everything as instructed. I want these two,” Wooyoung paused to gesture at Jessica and Tiffany, “to see everything, but not within reach. Take up up to the mezzanine and then take them from there once I’m done.”

“Yes sir!” The men said, spitting into two groups.

Jessica felt the men grab hold of the chair was was seated in and began moving her easily to the one of the cargo escalators on one side of the warehouse while Tiffany was moved to the other.

“What the hell are you doing Jang?! You’re crazy!” Jessica shouted as she tried to struggle against the bonds.

Wooyoung only grinned as he watched. “We’ll see who is crazy at the end.”

Jessica couldn’t help but feel a shiver up her spine when he flipped out a scalpel from underneath his sleeve.

“Remember this?” He waved the metal which reflected the light coming in through the high windows. “I wonder how Taeyeon would like to have this drawing across her back again.”

It was at that moment Jessica finally realized just how mad Jang Wooyoung could be.

• • •

Jessica wanted to scream. She wanted to tell Taeyeon to not take a single step closer. Her muffled cries mixed with those of Tiffany but boths’ attempts were futile. The guards had tied cloth tightly over their

mouths and their words could only become incoherent cries.

Jessica struggled frantically against her ties as she watched Taeyeon walk slowly across the room, towards Wooyoung.

“I was expecting you.” The man said, sitting in the armchair that was placed in the center of the room. His posture was very much of a man who had already won, his legs crossed and draped over one arm rest while his back rested against the other arm of the chair. In his hand was the scalpel that Jessica refused to look at.

Helpless, she could only watch wide-eyed as Taeyeon made her way in front of Wooyoung, standing no more than two meters from him.

“No hello?” Wooyoung said with a tone of mocking offense. “How very impolite!” Wooyoung adjusted his position so he was sitting properly in the chair, elbows resting on his knees as he leaned forward.

“We both know why you are here, so let’s cut to the chase.” Wooyoung said lightly, smirking when he saw Taeyeon’s hands twitch. “Kneel.”

Taeyeon blinked, but stayed silent.

“Kneel. Kneel before the brother of the man that started it all. Kneel and beg me for forgiveness for killing my brother. Kneel down and beg them, Wooyoung pointed at Tiffany at Jessica without looking at them, beg your beloved *mistress* - Jessica could feel the venom dripping from his voice - and precious little Tiffany there for forgiveness, for getting them into this situation.”

Jessica could see that Taeyeon’s expression was unchanging, but she knew that the woman was having an internal struggle within her self, the guilt must have been flowing through her body. Pounding at her heart and mind, pushing her knees forward unwillingly.

Wooyoung’s smirk twisted into a sick grin, Jessica could see the gleam in his eyes,.

A hunger that could only be called demonic.

The silence that followed seemed to only add to the feeling of fear pooling in Jessica's stomach. In that silence, Jessica could hear the bodyguard whisper.

"Forgive me."

• • •

pink | Exhale VI

Tiffany couldn't help the tears she felt pouring down her face. She could feel the wetness stain the cloth tied around her mouth. She watched Taeyeon was forcibly shoved onto the ground, head pinned down with her face turned to the side. Wooyoung pulled the kantana strapped onto her back away and flung it onto the floor with a loud clatter.

Even from where Tiffany was, she could feel the intensity in his eyes. She even felt the five guards around her tense as Wooyoung adjusted his hold on the scalpel with a flick of the wrist.

The room was still as Wooyoung roughly pull at Taeyeon's leather jacket and shirt collar from behind, revealing the bodyguard's back, the twin parallel scars in plain sight.

Tiffany watched as Wooyoung lowered the scalpel to one end of the top scar. He paused, the sick grin on his face widening.

"I hope you scream."

He pressed the blade down against the scar.

Tiffany squeezed her eyes shut.

• • •

blue | Exhale VII

Jessica's throat felt dry as she finally gave up on screaming, exhausted from the effort and the struggle that had put up against the guards who tried to silence her.

Taejeon's choked sobs could be heard as Wooyoung finally finished the slow torture, wiping the bloody scalpel with a white handkerchief before putting the blade back into his pocket. He tossed the handkerchief aside and Jessica watched as it flutter slowly onto the floor, the dark red droplets of blood contrasted against the white.

Taejeon laid on the floor, unmoving except for the frantic breaths and the occasional sob that Jessica could hear.

Wooyoung had cut along Taejeon's scars. The cuts were not deep nor where they immediately fatal, but Jessica could help but choke as she watched the blood seep into the back of the white blouse that Taejeon had on.

"So Taejeon. Let's continue with this little game." Wooyoung smiled as Taejeon struggled to sit up.

"Now you get to choose." Wooyoung had his arms cross, but held a finger up to point in the general direction of the two captives. "Tiffany." Wooyoung's finger fell to one side before falling to point at her.

"Or Jessica."

Jessica felt a sharp pain on the back of her head before her vision faded to black.

• • •

silver | Exhale VIII

Yuri leapt out of her car, not bothering to lock the door as she ran toward the nearest warehouse. The place was a maze of sort, at least 40 large warehouses were located in the complex along with numerous smaller ones.

As she ran closer to the entrance, Yuri spotted a trail of bodies that scattered throughout the complex. She followed the trail until she was led to the centermost warehouse where she saw the body of a man she recognized as one of Wooyoung's guards. The man had a clean line of blood trailing from his throat.

Yuri knew no one but Taeyeon could have done that.

Across the floor, Yuri could see a silenced pistol lying on the corner. She recognized it as Taeyeon's only firearm.

Looking at the body with a grimace, Yuri continued forward into the warehouse where she found two TV monitors sitting at the center of the empty room.

They were CCTV feeds from two different places. Yuri's mouth opened in horror as she saw what was going on in each of the screens.

The monitor on the left showed Jessica standing in a glass case that was filling with water. She could only look on in silent anguish as she watched her fiance pound desperately on the glass, trying to find a way out.

The monitor on the right was just as eerie. Yuri could see Tiffany sitting alone in an empty room, tied to the chair. From what Yuri could see, there were explosives strapped to the young woman's chest. There was a timer at the front that ticked down the time rapidly as the agent attempted to struggle against her binds.

Desperate, Yuri looked frantically around and spotted two exits on either side of the warehouse she was standing in. One door was open with a bloody handprint streaking down the middle of it.

Yuri breathed in deeply and reached into the bag she was carrying and pulled out the one thing she swore she would never use.

A gun of her own.

• • •

black | Exhale IX

Taeyeon steeled herself as she tumbled across the floor, landing in a crouched position right leg extended beside her. Never taking her eyes off Wooyoung, Taeyeon moved slowly around the crates that separated them. She stayed low, extending one leg in front of the other, sliding herself so she could get closer to the elevator.

“Taeyeon~ Where are you? I know you are here. You can’t hide forever.” Wooyoung said, making his way around the crates as well, pistol raised in front of him. ‘Come out, come out where ever you are.’”

Taeyeon cringed at how sweet his words sounded. It didn’t help that she knew he had some sick, demented ideas on how to kill her and the others if he could manage it. Crouching lower, Taeyeon winced at the pain continuously shooting from her back and tightened her grip on the sword. A Wooyoung turned the corner, she readied herself and sliced at his ankle.

Wooyoung caught sight of the movement too late and was forced to back away, leaving him with a bloody calf as he stumbled onto the floor. He roared in pain through gritted teeth as he held onto his injured leg and watched as Taeyeon jumped behind the metal gate and into the elevator. Reaching for the gun that had fallen out of his hand, Wooyoung aimed shots at the silhouette of her figure but his bullets were impeded by the metal grating that surrounded the elevator.

• • •

Gasping for air, Taeyeon grunted as she tried to turn her head to inspect her wounds. The cuts on her back were still bleeding profusely and Taeyeon could feel the effects of the blood loss. She had managed to get away from the skirmish with only a bullet graze wound on her arm. Ripping half of her sleeve off, the bodyguard wrapped the cloth around the wound and stood up as she felt the elevator stop.

Running out, she was met with the horrifying sight of a struggling Jessica who was trying to keep her head above the water as the tank filled up.

Taeyeon dashed up to the tank and placed a palm upon it as she looked anxiously for a way to get the other woman out. Jessica, upon seeing Taeyeon calmed down a bit and placed her own palm against the glass.

“I’ll get you out.”

The words were not mere statement but felt more of a command. As if there was nothing that would happen other than Taeyeon getting Jessica out of the tank.

Running around to the other side, Taeyeon spotted the large padlock holding the chains and latch closed at the top edge of the tank. Gritting her teeth against the pain, Taeyeon jumped and hoisted herself up the side, nearly screaming as she felt the strain against the torn muscles of her back.

Seeing how there was only about 5 inches left of air left for Jessica, Taeyeon quickly worked on the lock.

After several unsuccessful tries at picking the lock, Taeyeon was left frustrated as she noted the rising water leaving an inch of space for Jessica. She looked in anguish as Jessica placed a palm up against the top of the tank, looking on with desperate eyes and she took a deep gasp of air as she was finally submerged in the water.

“No, no, no!” Taeyeon screamed in rage and began slamming the hilt of her sword against the lock. She looked around desperately and found a large monkey wrench against the wall across the walkway connecting the Mezzanine to another. Leaping off the tank, she dashed across the walkway and grabbed the tool, stumbling at the weight of it. Taeyeon had no choice but to drag it across the walkway and made her way back to Jessica.

Panting, Taeyeon’s eyes widened as she saw an unconscious Jessica floating in the tank. She quickly lifted the wrench up as high as she could and began slamming it against the thick glass, slowly crack it with each strike.

Finally breaking the glass, Taeyeon tensed against the force of the water flowing out as the tank collapsed upon itself. She rushed forward towards Jessica’s limp body and pulled out from the mess

onto the dry area of the ground. Resting Jessica's head on her lap, Taeyeon held Jessica's hands as the younger girl coughed haphazardly, spitting bits of water out with each exhale.

"Jessica! Jessica..." Taeyeon said, grasping weakly at Jessica's face. "Are you okay? Are you hurt?"

Gasping, Jessica shook her head weakly as she slowly recovered from the oxygen deprivation.

The bodyguard wrapped her arms around the younger woman, embracing her.

It was the first time in many years that Taeyeon had initiated skin contact with anyone. She had missed the feeling of warmth Jessica had always radiated. It was different. It was different compared to having Jessica embrace her first. Things almost felt like the way they did back then - before anything had happened and perfect was still perfect and whole.

Taeyeon could feel the strip of the trapezius on her upper left shoulder rip. A stinging, overwhelming pain that immediately spread through her body. The shock of a bullet tearing through her flesh forced out a gasp as she let go of Jessica and whipped around, hand already on her gun, the revolver.

...

silver | Exhale X

"Agent Hwang!" Yuri cried as she forced her way through the door.

There were not as many guards as she thought. Her desert eagle managed to take care of the ones that she encountered.

The agent looked surprised at her presence.

Yuri scrambled over to the woman and knelt down, trying to figure how to get her out of the bounds and to do it before the bomb went off.

Breathing deeply, Yuri glanced over at the timer counting down the seconds.

3 minutes.

Yuri took another deep breath before turning to look the agent directly in the eye.

“Do you trust me?”

• • •

black | Exhale XI

BANG!

One shot.

Taeyeon managed to aim one through Wooyoung’s upper thigh as the man attempted to duck behind a storage case.

She had been able to push Jessica out of the line of fire before luring Wooyoung away from the mezzanine and onto the main floor below once more. Ducking and darting, Taeyeon managed to avoid the bullets the man aimed at her but was slowly wearing down as the pain and blood loss from the bullet graze on her shoulder and back intensified.

Taeyeon knew she had to think of something. She was down a bullet and would not be able to defeat Wooyoung by gunfire unless she got a perfect shot.

Leaning against the wall, Taeyeon panted to catch her breath and bit her lip.

There was no other choice. Two bullets was better than once.

And with that, Taeyeon forcefully pried the metal grip off the left side of the revolver, revealing a small slot just large enough for a bullet to sit inside.

Pushing the swing out cylinder out, Taeyeon took the bullet and slid it into one of the two free chambers.

Sighing, Taeyeon pushed the cylinder back in and cocked the gun.

'Forgive me Krystal.'

• • •

Taeyeon had fired straight a single bullet into Wooyoung's left shoulder as he fired his own at her but missed.

Panting, Taeyeon rolled behind some crates as Wooyoung stayed hidden behind a tractor parked in the warehouse.

Somewhere in Taeyeon's mind, she knew this was a gunfight she wouldn't win.

Bang Bang!

Two shots went off. Krystal's bullet went right into Wooyoung's ribcage, forcing him to stumble.

Taeyeon winced as she felt a sharp pain in her upper left chest, right above her heart. Reaching up with a hand, she felt blood.

Gasping, she knelt over as the combined bloodloss seemed to have finally take its toll.

She felt his presence loom over her.

He coughed and she could felt some blood splatter on her.

"So this is it huh?" Surprisingly, there was no menace in his voice, not like before.

"Kim Taeyeon will die by my hand. A bullet through the head. Does that sound good?" Wooyoung chuckled. Taeyeon tried to move but only collapsed onto her hands.

At least she had saved Jessica. Yuri would have gotten help soon. Wooyoung would be too weak to

escape after this.

Taeyeon closed her eyes as she heard him cock the gun.

“Goodbye.”

Taeyeon let the revolver clatter to the floor.

Bang!

CHAPTER 9

blue| White Sunset I

Bang

Jessica's eyes closed, hand gripping the stair railing tightly as the sound echoed throughout the warehouse. She was stumbling down the stairs to the first floor and was caught mid-step when she heard the shot. Breathing slowly, she loosened her grip and stepped down the last few steps slowly, breath caught in her throat.

Jessica closed her eyes and exhaled.

• • •

pink| White Sunset II

The clock was counting down to her death and Tiffany was ready to accept her fate. She could only hope that the others were alright. That Taeyeon had managed to get to Jessica in time and that Wooyoung could be stopped from his madness. She smiled to herself as she thought about everything she had done in life. As a young girl she was always happy and active. She remembered how everyone called her the little angel Tiffany.

Tiffany closed her eyes and prayed.

• • •

silver| White Sunset III

“Do you trust me?”

“Yes.”

“Do you pray?”

“Yes”

“Close your eyes. I'm going to need as much luck and prayer I can get to diffuse this.”

Yuri threaded her fingers through the wires, recalling all she ever learned. She picked up her knife,

resting it on her selected wire.

Yuri closed her eyes and reassured herself.

• • •

pink| White Sunset IV

Blood.

There was blood everywhere. It was all that she could see as she watched in horror.

She had gotten there first, through the back entrance of the room. She skidded to a stop at the sight of Taeyeon kneeling on the ground in front of Wooyoung, a gun pointed at her head. Out of the corner of her eye, she numbly acknowledged the sight of Yuri standing next to her with a trembling arm extended with a gun in her hand.

• • •

silver | White Sunset V

He looked...just like him.

So very much like him.

Her arm wouldn't stop trembling, swaying unsteadily between Wooyoung and Taeyeon.

'Going to miss again?'

His voice mocked her. The same voice that had been mocking her for so many years.

'You couldn't save her. What makes you think you can save Taeyeon this time.'

'She's going to die'

'It's your fault.'

'Jessica is alone because of you.'

'You couldn't save them.'

‘You couldn’t.’

‘You can’t.’

‘You won’t.’

Her hand wouldn’t stop trembling. “I- I-“

“You don’t have to.”

Yuri snapped her head to the side.

“Tiffany?”

• • •

pink| White Sunset VI

Tiffany moved mindlessly, hand reaching towards Yuri’s outstretched one.

She took hold of the gun.

Ready.

She held her breath, raising the weapon.

Aim.

She kept her gaze on the two figures ahead, arm steady from the years of training, finger squeezing the trigger.

Fire.

Bang.

Tiffany flinched. She didn’t want to open her eyes.

But she did.

Both Wooyoung and Taeyeon were laying on the ground, blood pooling under their bodies.

With unsteady feet, Tiffany walked over to stand next to Jessica. She wasn’t sure when the latter had gotten there but Yuri hadn’t moved.

Breathing in sharply, Tiffany could smell the metallic sharpness of the blood. She didn’t want to look

down, but she did as she felt Jessica grab onto her arm.

There was a bullet hole in Wooyoung's head.

There wasn't one in Taeyeon's.

• • •

black | White Sunset VII

• • •

blue | White Sunset VIII

She stood on the beach, looking out at the feminine figure that was steadily growing smaller and smaller as she walked away from her.

Jessica sat down on a rock embedded in the sand and looked out at the ocean, enjoying the quiet of the secluded beach. There were only a few people around and everyone mostly stuck to themselves.

Sighing, Jessica thought back to the figure now standing at the other side of the beach and frowns. Her head suddenly aches.

Burying her head in her hands, Jessica sighs once more and runs a hand through her now-brown locks before standing up abruptly.

A feeling of restlessness took over and she was unsure of what to do with herself. Shuffling her around, Jessica made her way back onto the sandy beach where she eventually settled on drawing random shapes and patterns in the sand.

"Unnie...?" A small voice startled Jessica out of her reverie. She turned around to find a small girl looking up at her, eyes wide and watery. The girl was on the edge of bursting out in tears.

In small panic, Jessica glanced around, finding no one else in sight. Where had this girl come from?

Squatting down to stay at eye level, Jessica tried to smile reassuringly at the small girl. "What's your name? How can unnie help you?"

“J-Juhyun.” The girl frowned as her eyes grew even larger. “Where is Yoona unnie and Hyoyeon unnie and Sooyoung unnie?”

Jessica was at a loss. She did not know what to do. “I don’t know...”

The small girl started sniffing, tears beginning to roll down her cheeks.

“Shhh, don’t cry. Unnie will help you look for them.” Jessica took a hold of the girl’s hand and gently tugged her towards the direction of the nearest building: the seaside café.

• • •

silver | White Sunset IX

She could see them from afar as she stood in the balcony of the café. Jessica was holding the hand of a small girl. Yuri couldn’t help but smile softly at the sight.

Jessica was usually afraid of children.

Yuri briefly wonder what it would be like to be a mother. Would she make a good one? Would she be like her own mother? Wise and kind?

Yuri watched as the pair below look up at her and wave. She waved back.

“I’ll come down.” Yuri said, loud enough for Jessica to hear and nod.

• • •

“Who’s that.” Yuri asked, looking down at the little girl holding tightly onto Jessica’s sleeve. She had just walked out of the café restroom when she spotted Jessica walking in, a small girl in tow. She arched an eyebrow the pair approached her.

“This is Seohyun.” Jessica said gently nudging the girl. “She’s lost and asked me to help her. Say hi Seohyun, come on. She’s my friend, Yuri.”

Seohyun stared wide-eyed at Yuri and gave a hesitant bow before returning to grasp tightly at the now rumpled fabric of Jessica’s sleeve.

“Hi Seohyun.” Yuri said gently, bending down to extend her hand towards the little girl. “I’m Yuri. Nice to meet you!”

Seohyun bit her lip for a moment and looked up at Jessica before turning back to Yuri. She extended her own small hand and Yuri shook it gently.

“Don’t be scared, Jessica unnie and Yuri unnie will help you find whoever you are looking for okay?”

Seohyun whispered, her voice sounding even smaller than she looked. “Okay unnie.”

Yuri smiled. “Are you looking for your mommy?”

Seohyun shook her head, expression unchanging.

“I don’t have a mommy or daddy.”

Yuri looked up at Jessica, surprise and sadness matched in their eyes.

• • •

blue | White Sunset X

The trio walked along the shoreline, heading towards the nearest area that was more populated than the café.

“Unnie?” Seohyun asked timidly. “What do you do?”

Jessica glanced at Yuri who returned her gaze, tilting her head to the side. Jessica would answer first.

“I own buildings Seohyun.”

“Buildings?” Seohyun asked. “Like homes?”

Jessica shook her head. “No, not houses. I own stores and restaurants.”

“Oh...” Seohyun sounded dejected.

Jessica turned to face the little girl. “What’s wrong?”

She hesitated. “Umm...I wondered because...I wish Yoona unnie and Sooyoung unnie and Hyoyeon unnie and Sunny unnie and Hyomin unnie and Nana and Dongwoon and Luna and I could live in one big, pretty home...”

“You don’t live in a house?” Yuri asked, confused. Jessica furrowed her brow.

“We do live in a house.” Seohyun said with a strangely mature tone. “But we don’t have a home.”

• • •

Seohyun skipped happily along in the shallow water, splashing as the water washed in and out in a hypnotic pattern. She had finally gotten comfortable enough with her and Yuri to not be afraid of them.

“Yuri...” Jessica started, watching the small girl squat down and poke at a shell.

“I know.” Yuri said, turning to look at her. “You want to help.”

Jessica turned to return Yuri’s gaze.

“I won’t stop you. It’s your money and decision.”

“I just-“

“SEOHYUN!” A loud voice called out, catching the women’s attention.

“Yoona unnie!” Seohyun leapt up from the water and ran towards another similarly sized girl who was fast approaching.

• • •

“Hi! I’m Yoona! Seohyun’s friend!” The girl said brightly, a large grin on her face framed with sandy hair.

The new girl had tackled Seohyun into the ground with a hug. By the time Yuri and Jessica were able to separate and put them back on their feet they had already a body full of sand.

“Hi Yoona.” Jessica smiled, kneeling down to the little girls’ level. “Do you know where your unnies are?”

Yoona’s grin immediately faded. “Uh oh.”

• • •

The four of them continued wandering along the coastline. The two young girls skipping around the sand as Jessica and Yuri walked side by side, watching them.

“Unnie, why is that lady standing in the water like that? Her dress is getting wet.” Yoona asked, tugging on Jessica’s sleeve.

Jessica glanced at Yuri before looking out at the water to where Tiffany was standing. “She misses someone Yoona.”

“But she’s talking to that other lady in the wheelchair.” Yoona said brightly, not understanding.

Jessica squatted down to look the two girls in the eye. “You don’t have to be alone to feel lonely Yoona. When you grow up, you will understand.”

“Oh.” Was all that Yoona said before she looked at Seohyun and shrugged.

...

silver | White Sunset XI

“Yoona! Seohyunnie!” Two female voices called out, catching their attention. The two girls began running gleefully over to the two approaching figures.

“Hyoyeon unnie! Sooyoung unnie!”

“Where have you two been?! We were worried about you!” The taller woman scolded.

“Thank you for finding them.” The shorter woman said, approaching Jessica and Yuri. “We’re sorry for the trouble.”

“It was nothing, really.” Jessica said, smiling as she looked at the two little girls.

“It wasn’t her fault Sooyoung unnie! Hyomin made Seohyun cry and she ran away! It was Hyomin who was being mean!”

“Well really, thanks.” She said, offering a hand. “My name is Sunny, me and Sooyoung here run an orphanage nearby and we are just taking the kids out.”

“Oh?” Jessica said, sharing a look with Yuri before turning back, “we’d love to visit sometime. Yoona and Seohyun have been excellent company.”

Sunny smiled, “we’d love to see you guys.” She reached into her purse and pulled out a small stack of cards, most bent at the corners. “It’s not much but here’s our card.” She handed over a somewhat faded card. Yuri could tell that they’ve had the same stack of cards for a very long time. “I can’t say it’s really

neat place but I think the kids would enjoy seeing you.”

Sunny bent down to hold Yoona’s and Seohyun’s small hands. “Say bye guys. We have to get going now. I really hope you guys can come visit.”

“Bye!” Yoona and Seohyun waved energetically with bright smiles before turning around to run towards a small group of other kids gathering around Sooyoung.

“Bye. It was nice meeting you.” Yuri said, waving back.

“Bye!” Jessica said.

The couple watched as the children were loaded into an old, somewhat rusted van and the two caretakers get into the front seats. The vehicle pulled out of the lot and the children inside once again waved at them.

They watched until the car was out of sight.

Yuri looked down at the card and then looked back up at Jessica.

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Yuri smiled and reached out for Jessica’s hand, holding it tightly as she held the card up.

“Let’s go see some new property before we pay them a visit okay?”

• • •

pink | White Sunset XII

“Hey Taeyeon, How have you been doing?” Tiffany said softly, a small smile on her face. “It’s been a pretty crazy week. Yuri announced the closing of her company. She’ll be taking over her parents’ philanthropic company now.”

Tiffany looked down at the water moving against her knees.

“That means...instead of making things that hurt people she can save them now isn’t that great?” She could feel her eyes begin to water.

“That’s awesome Fany.” Taeyeon said, smiling up at her.

Wheel-chair bound, Taeyeon had just gotten out of the hospital two weeks prior. After extensive surgery and physical therapy, they finally let her out into Tiffany, Jessica, and Yuri’s care after five months.

“Yeah, I’m pretty sure her investors are angry though.” Tiffany forced out a chuckle. “The government too. It isn’t every day that your biggest weapons supplier closes down...”

A silence draped the air as the two women stared out at the ocean.

“How is your job Fany? Is the bakery going well?”

“Yeah, it’s going great. We just opened another store because business has been so great.”

Three months ago there was no bakery. Now there is a whole chain of them around Seoul.

“Do you think after I get better I can work there?” Taeyeon asked with a big smile.

“Of course, though Yuri would probably want you to help her cure cancer or something instead.”

Taeyeon laughed. “She probably would...hey, when are the movers coming again?”

“What?” Tiffany asked, confused.

“You said I’d be moving in with you right? I had to have some stuff from before right? I’ll need to move my stuff from storage to your apartment.”

“Oh, Yuri and Jessica have taken care of that already.” Tiffany said. “They have your stuff ready to move so it isn’t a problem.”

The waves splashed against the chrome of Taeyeon’s wheelchair, soaking her long pajama pants. They’ve come here every day since she got of the hospital.

The first thing she asked Tiffany to do after she got out was to come here.

Tiffany couldn’t help but oblige.

“Fany-ah?” Taeyeon said, breaking the silence again.

“Yes Taeyeon?”

“Where’s Krystal?” The older girl asked, turning to face at Tiffany. “I haven’t heard about her in a

while and she hasn't visited me."

"Well..." Tiffany closed her eyes. They had rehearsed the story many times and she knew it by heart. But it was still hard for her to think about lying to Taeyeon, even after she, Jessica, and Yuri had discussed it so many times.

"She was taken. She was taken and killed by very bad people... I'm sorry Taeyeon." Tiffany held her tears back as Taeyeon's eyes widened in shock, a look of sorrow clouding her face.

"D-did I know--"

"Yes. It happened before your accident."

"What happened to the people who took her?" Tiffany could see Taeyeon's knuckles turn white as she gripped the armrests of her wheelchair.

"They're dead." Tiffany said firmly. "They're dead so they can't hurt anyone anymore." She placed her hand gently on Taeyeon's, feeling the tense grip on the armrests loosen.

It was somehow soothing to Tiffany, feeling Taeyeon relax.

"Do you...do you think I can go see her?" Taeyeon asked hesitantly after another moment of silence.

"Of course." Tiffany replied, moving over to stand behind the older girl. "We can all go together."

"Okay." Taeyeon said softly, the two looking back out at the steadily dimming horizon. It was overcast but the sun set the distant clouds ablaze with color as it steadily descended.

Tiffany leaned in with a soft kiss on Taeyeon's forehead, closing her eyes as she took in the sound of the ocean and the soft feeling of Taeyeon's skin on her lips.

"I miss you Taeyeon..." Tiffany whispered, Taeyeon looking at her curiously.

"What?" Taeyeon tilted her head to the side.

"Nothing." Tiffany smiled sadly, shaking her head. With some difficulty, Tiffany pushed the wheelchair out of the water and onto shore, where they spotted Yuri and Jessica headed towards them.

"Let's go home now." Tiffany said as she waved at the approaching couple.

...

white | White Sunset XIII

Taeyeon looked up at Tiffany who was teary eyed but still smiling as she waved at Yuri and Jessica from a distance.

She couldn't help but smile in awe as the setting sun seemed to light up the sky behind her, making it look as if Tiffany was glowing like a radiant star.

Like an angel.

One that looked after her through thick and thin.

She made her feel safe.

She made her feel warm.

She made her feel whole.

Taeyeon closed her eyes, basking in the feel of the sea breeze on her face. She remembered so little, but felt so much.

She wasn't sure why or how, but she just knew. She felt it in her bones.

Tiffany had saved her. Reached out for her when she was lost in the dark and held on until the end.

She turned and looked at Tiffany, who was looking out to sea. She reached out for the younger girl's hand, holding it gently in her own.

Tiffany looked down and smiled curiously as Taeyeon's sudden action.

"Thank you, Fany."

Tiffany tilted her head to the side, "what for?"

"..." Taeyeon paused, not quite sure why herself. "For...just... being here."

"For just...saving me."



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