

JULY 2012

# THERE, THAT STAR.

ONE-SHOT COLLECTION VOLUME I  
BY: THENINTHTRACK

**There, that star. There, you are.**

## HEARTS FOR MEMORIES

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She keeps things.

The love letter she wrote back in fourth grade is crumbled and stained with a drop of chocolate milk. It speaks of the first fluttering she felt and Tiffany doesn't want to forget that, so she keeps it tucked between a book she has read only once and that is now lost between thirty-six other books in her closet. But she has it and that's all that really matters to her anyway. There's also a pile of movie tickets on her top shelf. The first five have the name of her second boyfriend scabbled on them to know she went there with him and there's a large print of a pair of lips on the sixth to remind her of the first kiss she gave away.

Tiffany needs something for everything to remember her memories by, because she's scared she'll them forget otherwise.

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Taeyeon hasn't given her anything. There are no stuffed animals even after they've gone to the amusement park twice, because Taeyeon can't win anything. And there are no sweet text messages saying "Let's have lunch together," or "I'll pick you up after work," with a tacky heart at the end because Taeyeon really just likes to surprise Tiffany every day, just like today.

It's weird how she has never noticed before, but Tiffany's hair seems lighter with the sun setting as she pushes the glass door open.

"May I have a cappuccino?" She grins and walks behind the counter, giving Tiffany's hand a light squeeze before leaning against the wall.

She watches Tiffany brew the coffee expertly, her back turned to her and her hair swaying, the locks in a dance, hypnotizing her. It's a moment she wants to be able to replay endlessly in her mind so she captures each movement and fills the biggest part of her memory with it, in the space between Tiffany's apology pout and her genuine smile.

Tiffany presents her a warm cup of coffee, the foam threatening to spill over the edge but with a big crooked heart drawn on it. Taeyeon takes a large sip, despite it being hot and slightly burns her tongue.

The foam rests on her lips and Tiffany wipes it away with a tissue, chuckles and wants to make a mean remark when she notices the faint print of lipstick on the cup and can't help but thinks it's the only thing Taeyeon ever leaves behind that she can actually touch

and keep. The thought of not cleaning it and storing it somewhere safe at home occurs to her.

She wants to store memories like Taeyeon does, without the help of silly love notes and cheesy love songs. It makes her feel bad and stupid and she figures she can do it, but then she looks at Taeyeon and the thought of having nothing to remind her of her is choking.

She decides to spend some more time trying to remember Taeyeon's smile, that dimple on her chin, that mole on her left cheek, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

But it's not like they are anything anyway.

\*

"I'm scared."

"Of what?"

"That I might forget you. Because you haven't given me anything."

"Because I haven't given you anything."

"Nothing to remember you by."

\*

They kiss for the first time while going for a midnight walk, at the place where they first held hands, fingers awkwardly tangled.

Tiffany realizes and wonders, in the moment where Taeyeon's lips are at their softest against hers, how that memory stayed after she had ripped the pages of her diary and attempted to destroy all memories of Taeyeon. She was getting too close and it frightened her, because they had held hands and she knew she'd eventually feel warm from the touch. The shreds of paper went from her room, to the kitchen, to the living room and Tiffany wanted to curse herself, because now she was only spreading the memories.

The hesitance was evident the second time their hands found each other and instead of feeling hurt, Taeyeon just kisses her again, brushing Tiffany's lower lip with her tongue and hopes that Tiffany gets the message, because she's planning to stay and have Tiffany remember her forever.

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"I don't know what you are to me."

Her voice is low but buzzing against the soft skin of Taeyeon's neck. For a moment she believes Taeyeon is asleep, until she hears sheets shifting and Taeyeon's eyes meet hers, their noses barely touching.

"I think you know."

It's a warm whisper, Taeyeon's breath grazing her lips. It always makes Tiffany feel stupid afterwards, but her lips feel tingly and it does this funny thing where the only thing she can think of is Taeyeon's skin, Taeyeon's mouth and everything Taeyeon. Tiffany breathes out shakily and she's already forgotten what they were talking about.

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They run until their legs give up and they crash into each other, sand sticking to their skin and hair. Tiffany's laugh is full and it echoes in Taeyeon's ears, imprinting itself in her memory. She wants to put the sound of it in a song and the smile that goes along with it tucked forever in the folds of her heart. Taeyeon loves it that much.

"You have my heart," she says softly, hovering over Tiffany.

Tiffany's laughter fades, but her eyes still twinkle. They're big and they're ones Taeyeon wants to look into forever.

"You have it," Taeyeon repeats, thumbs moving away windswept hair from Tiffany's face, their lips just inches away and she lets her eyes close, inhaling Tiffany's scent, Tiffany's warmth. She whispers against the shell of her ear, her breath tickling. Taeyeon's not sure what this is, but her mind says it's a good thing even if she doesn't have a heart anymore to tell her that.

"There's no need to be afraid, because I gave it and you have it now."

Her throat closes and she lifts herself up, feeling dizzy looking at Tiffany, her eyes tracing her eyebrows, her nose, her lips. It's dizzying in a good kind of way with her head spinning and spinning, but only around Tiffany.

Tiffany shifts underneath her, her hand moving up to find Taeyeon's, "I know." It's barely there, but Taeyeon catches it anyways. It's Tiffany's voice after all. Taeyeon let herself

press onto Tiffany's body, feeling sand digging into her skin and Tiffany thinks this could be it. This is what they can be.

"I have your heart," Tiffany smiles softly and hears Taeyeon breathing shakily, "So I'll remember you."

Their lips meet somehow and Taeyeon trails kisses down to her neck, leaving a love bite along the way as a stamp to their promise. It leaves Tiffany's heart shaking so hard she has a hard time breathing, her fingers tangled in Taeyeon's locks. She can only let out a raspy, "I will," before she captures Taeyeon's mouth with her own and makes sure that Taeyeon knows that she means it.

## IT'S LOVE SO DON'T THINK

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They were right outside her front door, mist trailing from between Yuri's frozen lips. They only moved so slightly when she spoke and it was obvious she didn't bother. Taeyeon figured she wasn't worth any effort anymore.

"Let's break up."

She could only vaguely remember Yuri's blurry back and the few wet drops on the ground that weren't rain.

\*

Taeyeon felt like she had given all of her love and now that someone else was willing to love her, she was running out of it.

"I'm sorry. I can't."

She saw Tiffany's smile falter. It has made her stomach jumble, she blanked out for a second and she wished it all didn't happen, because only Yuri could do that and only Yuri's smile was pretty. Yuri, Yuri, Yuri, she thought, but she could only see Tiffany in the dark lit room.

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Tiffany moved on quick. The realization made her feel a mix of nausea and shame, because they weren't anything and it was her who couldn't love. Yet, at the sight of Tiffany laughing, whispering –probably stupid things, lies, lies, lies- in some girl's ear, Taeyeon couldn't help but feel the energy leave her body, her spirit limp.

Their mutual friends were singing some old well-known ballad, off-key and their hoarse voices were scratching her eardrums. She glanced at Yoona swaying her head and murmuring along, her eyes heavy and her body splayed out on the couch, half of it pressed hard against Taeyeon. Yoona was never really much of a drinker, but was a horribly adorable one when she did.

"You're okay?" Taeyeon reached out and swept aside some tousled hair, "You should go home if you don't feel well."

The drunken grin made her chuckle and she gave a soft smile in return. "No?" Yoona shook her head slowly, resting her chin on Taeyeon's shoulder. It hurt when she pressed down hard, trying to meet Taeyeon's eyes.

“Taeyeon.”

“Hmm?”

“You’re with stupid,” Yoona said, her words slow and strained. Her hand traveled up to Taeyeon’s chest and she was about to get slapped, she was sure of it, when she felt the pumps of Taeyeon’s heart underneath her touch and Taeyeon’s body relaxed.

“It’s this the one you should listen to,” she spoke softly. Taeyeon looked at her, confused. She moved her hand and gently placed it on Taeyeon’s head, eyes unfocused but nonetheless sincere. “Not this one. This one’s stupid.”

Taeyeon could only stare at her with wide eyes and then frown, not understanding it, until she followed Yoona’s gaze and it landed on Tiffany.

\*

Taeyeon studied her closely and smiled when Tiffany looked up at her. It was getting dark and the air was chilly, but they remained still, watching leaves fall one by one. She wasn’t sure what they were, because it was obvious that Tiffany was seeing this girl but spent more time with her. It was something she thought about occasionally at night, falling asleep with a victorious smile on her face.

“I really like it here,” Tiffany said. She threw her head back and watched the sky, smiling as she continued.

“You know how you sometimes feel like you’re not you anymore?” Taeyeon’s eyes were soft when she looked over. She nodded.

“Like sometimes you get so caught up with life and you’re too busy to notice that you’re living, but you’re not alive. At all. You’re just a shell that’s going through the daily things in life, because you have responsibilities and promises and everyone expects something from you.”

She sighs and Taeyeon swept away some windswept hair. Tiffany lowered her head and stared at her feet.

“Everyone expects me to be there and it should somehow make me feel alive, but I don’t a lot of times. When everybody wants my shoulder, I feel so used, because I don’t think that the thought had even crossed their minds that maybe I don’t want to. That it’s tiring and that eventually I won’t feel alive anymore because of it.”



Tiffany looked up and stared at Taeyeon for the longest time. Her eyes were so dark and Taeyeon couldn't decipher how she felt. It was all so fast and all so confusing, because right at this moment she wanted to kiss Tiffany so badly, have her flush under her touch and have her respond as hungrily as she was.

But then she thought back to the girl at the karaoke that night and how Tiffany smiled, perhaps that same smile that she gave her that one night and could only offer Tiffany one of her own instead.

It remained silent for a while and they stayed like that, breathing in cold air and tasting winter on their skin.

"It's funny," Tiffany said after a while. Taeyeon looked over to see her smiling. "Because even though I like this place, this is the first time that I've felt alive."

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Taeyeon spent two weeks thinking about Tiffany, wrote down pros and cons of having her in her life on a piece of paper, decided to throw it away and laid down thinking about her again.

It was a tiring routine, because Tiffany made her think a lot, about all sorts of things. Things she never thought about before and she began to wonder why she never felt like this with Yuri and which one of the two was actually love.

After two weeks and numerous moments of quietly observing Tiffany, she concluded that Tiffany was pretty, nice and a tease, but every word that came from her was genuine and that she was thinking about her a lot more than she did with Yuri.

She had replayed the image of Tiffany's hand lightly touching that girl's arm probably a hundred times and compared her smile that night to the one Tiffany gave her when she confessed. Tiffany and that girl didn't last, but Taeyeon racked her brain to convince herself that the smile was different. Just because, she thought.

She also thought of Yoona and after two weeks, Taeyeon decided to stop thinking.

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They walked side by side, bumping shoulders every now and then. Tiffany let out a giggle every time they did and after the fourth time or so, Taeyeon boldly grabbed her hand instead. It didn't help much, because they kept bumping shoulders and Tiffany kept

giggling, but Taeyeon could feel Tiffany's fingers tighten whenever they didn't.

She looked over to see Tiffany's smile splattered on her face, one she hadn't seen before. It could be because Tiffany looked really beautiful tonight or that, she hoped, Tiffany only looked like this when she was with her. Either way, it prompted her to say the next words with the confidence and love that had lay dormant for far too long.

"I can make you happy, you know. Make you feel this way forever, if you want to."

Tiffany's steps slowed down. She stopped to look at her. Her eyes were dark again, she didn't smile and her breath was even. Taeyeon thought Tiffany was the hardest person to read.

"Hug me," she said eventually. Her look was soft, gentle, and Taeyeon did as she was told, melted in her embrace instead, wanted to crawl underneath her skin and make them one so she would never do without her.

## FEBRUARY FALLS

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Yonghwa says he's sorry and all Seohyun hears is his voice lowering to a whisper, his words dying with the volume. As she has imagined, tears start to well in her eyes and she quickly lowers her head in the hope he didn't see them.

They're in front of her dorm and her mind wanders to her sisters for a slight second. In that second she wonders if Yuri didn't stay up too late to finish her homework, whether Yoona has caught up on her sleep and if the rest of them left some of tonight's dinner in the fridge for Tiffany since she's been craving 잡채.

The next second her thoughts are back to him, standing in front of her with his expression full of guilt, his thumb stroking the back of her hand, sad eyes apologizing.

She doesn't know how she does it, but it feels like every muscle in her body tenses up, every energy drained from her body as she pulls her lips up aching and she smiles a small smile and knows the moment she has, he's taken it as an *okay, I hope you can be happy. Don't worry, I'm fine.*

Yonghwa knows her well. He's taken note of the way her eyes only light up when she's genuinely happy, the way she scrunches up her nose when she dislikes something and that she touches her hair when she's nervous. It totally escapes him though, how she's outright lying to him right now.

"I'm sorry," he says again and this time she hears him loud and clear. It triggers something, but the tears of before have dried up and no more will come out. She touches her cheek to make sure, because Seohyun has thought of this moment numerous times before. She has imagined herself weak, tears streaming down her face, clutching her chest in pain and calling out his name.

None of that is happening and she feels so light she could fly or maybe, she thinks, she's already flying, that her soul just ripped out from her body seconds ago and now she's floating in the air looking down on a Seohyun made of flesh and bones, but no soul.

He pulls her into an embrace and she takes in his scent for the last time, fresh laundry and dawn, and Seohyun feels like the only things missing are her soul and a heart that's whole.

## THINGS DON'T MATTER

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Their first date was at the beach. Yuri held her hand throughout the car ride and she wondered then, not only just to the beach, where they were going.

“Are you happy?” Yuri asked her at one point. The question lingered in her mind even after the date ended. She felt like she was when she said yes, but questioned herself when she was back at home, slipping between the sheets and sleeping alone. It meant something, even if Jessica didn’t realize it.

The car was warm and the engine buzzed softly. Jessica looked down to see their hands still tightly holding. She loosened her grip to see what would happen. Perhaps Yuri would let go, perhaps she’d hold tighter, maybe she would intertwine their fingers –

“Your hand is cold.”

Jessica could feel her palm starting to sweat and she wiggled her fingers only slightly when Yuri brought her hand to her chest, letting out a long sigh. It was scary to even think of moving. Her hand was warm now, but her cheeks were burning.

“Let’s have some fun,” Yuri smiled and dragged her out of the car.

Yuri spread her arms and they cut through the air with the slightest effort as she ran like a child, hair flowing endlessly. Jessica watched her with wonder and could only see the grains of sand that she kicked up as sparkling dust, putting her under a spell.

“I come here often to clear my mind,” Yuri said as soon as she calmed down her breathing. Her eyes scanned the waves, a faint smile on her lips.

“Why often?” Jessica asked, coming to stand beside her.

Yuri turned her head to her and stated evenly, “I live life. A lot of shitty things happen when you don’t live it, but it hurts more when you actually do.”

Jessica had looked at Yuri with sad eyes at that moment and Yuri’s own flickered when she caught her gaze.

“You’re not living life, are you?”

She wanted to say – yes, I am, with all my heart. But truth was that she couldn’t remember seeing the green of the trees on their way here, hadn’t recognized the air to be salty when they dug their feet into the sand.

Jessica sighed deeply.

“No, I don’t think I am.”

She froze when Yuri’s lips pulled up to a mischievous grin and hands gripped the hem of her shirt to begin stripping off her clothes. Clad in unmatched underwear she turned to Jessica and winked.

“Your turn.”

The waves crashed into them and the hair on Jessica’s neck stood up. But she smiled and she laughed and she thought that she was quite happy storming head-first into the ocean in her underwear with someone she had just met, holding onto Yuri’s waist like it was her bay, where she wouldn’t drown and could maybe even live. It was the most ridiculous thought, but she felt alive.

## BARE UNDER LOVE

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She blamed her unreliable heart. It was wavering and Tiffany didn't have the courage to let herself down. She eyed Taeyeon and squeezed her eyes shut when she felt her heart swell. It was a feeling she hated; it made her feel very, very foolishly in love.

"...and then she just did it. Unbelievable." Taeyeon took a sip of her can of coke and Tiffany only snapped out of her thoughts when she offered her some. Tiffany shook her head.

"We should do that sometime," Taeyeon mumbled.

The frown on Tiffany's forehead made Taeyeon chuckle.

"Skinny dipping," she said, "we should do that."

"Skinny dipping?"

"Skinny dipping."

The driveway was abandoned and somehow the dark made Tiffany feel uneasy, as if Taeyeon could very easily kidnap her right in this instant, strip her off her clothes and throw her in ice cold water. Everything sounded very appealing, except for the water.

Taeyeon jumped off the hood of the car and went to Tiffany's side, tugging her shirt.

"What do you think?"

"About what?"

"Skinny dipping!"

"We're not -"

"Let's go."

The car door opened and Taeyeon held out one arm, a gesture for her to get in, like Tiffany was some kind of princess.

Before she knew it, Tiffany was in the passenger seat heading to nowhere with Taeyeon holding her hand.

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It was strange. Tiffany had witnessed a sweat-soaked Taeyeon undressing herself after hours at the gym day by day before heading for a shower in their shared apartment, her clothes as much as Tiffany's thoughts scattered everywhere.

Now she got a shirt thrown to her face and the same Taeyeon clad in underwear in front of her, but it felt so different she had to swallow hard. She gripped the shirt tightly.

"Don't tell me you're chickening out now."

"I'm not," she protested, pulling down her own pants. She was about to take off her shirt when she felt Taeyeon's hands gripping the hems of it.

"Let me help you then," she grinned. Tiffany raised her arms to let the shirt pass and shivered when their eyes met. Something was definitely different.

All she heard were the faint brushings of leaves against the wind and it made her all the more conscious of her breathing. Tiffany felt like she was running out of air and that her heart was pounding so hard, Taeyeon was able to hear its rapid beating.

"You want to get naked now?"

She stared at Taeyeon. "What?!"

Taeyeon's laugh echoed through the woods and she looked at Tiffany with the most mischievous grin.

"It's not skinny dipping if you're not naked, stupid."

"Oh. Right."

"So?"

"You go in first."

The water sent waves of chills down her body the moment she went in, hand holding tight onto Taeyeon's. It left her with an odd sense of relief, her fear leaving along with the shivers when she got used to the cold. Taeyeon's skin was whiter than she remembered in the dark.

"You're cold?"

Tiffany's hand had drawn to Taeyeon's hip and she was about to pull back when Taeyeon laid hers on top of it, holding it in place.

"Be careful."

The water reached their bellies. Taeyeon hummed their favorite song and turned around to give Tiffany a smirk. Her hands found Tiffany's arms and she rubbed them feverishly, closing the distance between them slowly but surely until her arms were around Tiffany's shivering body. Tiffany was sure it wasn't because of the cold.

"Ready to get naked now?"

Tiffany cursed herself for not recognizing the glint in Taeyeon's eyes, because in the next second her bra hit the water with a small thud. It sent wrinkles down to the rest of the lake.

"You." Her eyes sent daggers.

Taeyeon felt the glare even in the dark. "You can take mine off," she tried to negotiate.

They were far off from the main road, the lake hidden behind a thick layer of trees. No one could ever find them. It was the perfect crime scene, Tiffany thought.

"I'm half-naked now thanks to you."

"Wasn't that the whole point?"

"I could've done it myself."

"Where's the fun in that?"

"I'm capable of killing."

"That I know, you heartbreaker."

"I'll save you your heart. A broken leg should do."

"Oh, come on now." In the midst of inventing ways to murder her, Tiffany failed to realize that Taeyeon's hands were still on her back. The slow caresses to smooth her anger did their job and she huffed in defeat.



"Thanks for coming with me." The look in Taeyeon's eyes made her shift just slightly. Taeyeon was so simple, so easy to read, but she was also the one Tiffany was in love with and it seemed like that fact colored every of her judgment.

She leaned into Taeyeon's embrace and after drawing useless circles on her back for a while, Taeyeon's hands traveled down to her hips. It made all the hair on her back stand up and Tiffany imagined their hearts joining each other, making a pact to always carry one another with each other.

A sudden jerk and she found herself bare under Taeyeon's gaze. She watched her ripped panties float away from her in disbelief.

"I'm so sorry," Taeyeon looked at her in panic, eyes wide like the moon, "I didn't think you'd wear underwear of such poor quality."

A shriek traveled through the forest and water splashed. Seconds of silence followed after and behind curtains of long soaked hair was Taeyeon's smile and Tiffany's victorious one.

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It burned. Taeyeon's skin was like fire and it pressed against her own as they were huddled together in the back of Taeyeon's car. It was still dark, but the day was about to break in and blind their eyes in an instant. Tiffany tried to let herself drown in sleep when she heard Taeyeon's voice.

"Don't fall asleep. The sun will rise in an hour or so."

"It's not like this is the most comfortable place to sleep, anyway."

Taeyeon looked at her.

"You're not comfortable?"

She shifted and Tiffany felt her thigh deliberately brush against her own. The air suddenly got heavier.

"I am. Just saying sleeping in the backseat is never good for your back."

"Okay."

Taeyeon shifted again and Tiffany squeezed her eyes shut. The burning got worse with

Taeyeon's hand on the side of her waist. She cleared her throat.

"I'm sorry about your underwear," she said, "It should be here somewhere."

"It should be," Taeyeon nodded, "I'm not keen on going back into the water though." She remembered the cold and made a face.

"You have to find mine, too."

"Where did you get them anyway?"

"Why? They're pretty sexy, right?"

"Hmm..." Taeyeon thought for a minute. "They are, but they rip so easily."

"Exactly."

Tiffany gave her a wicked smile when she turned to her. "You're such a tease."

She got a shrug in response and moved away wet strands clad to Tiffany's cheek, cleared her face.

"Heartbreaker," she grinned.

Everything was so easy, Tiffany thought. Undressing in front of each other was, making suggestive jokes was, huddled naked under a shared blanket in the backseat was. But she knew that confessing wouldn't be.

Their thighs were tight against each other and she wondered what happened to the empty seat next to them.

"I think you break a lot more hearts than I do."

The blanket slid off her shoulders, baring her chest and she quickly covered herself. She looked up and saw Taeyeon confused.

"No, I don't."

"You do." Tiffany rested her head on her shoulder, sighing. She couldn't look her in the eye.

"You break hearts without knowing and that makes it a lot more painful," she continued.

The sigh made her quiet.

"Maybe," Taeyeon paused, "But as long as I don't break the most important one then it should be okay, right?"

"There's something like that?"

"Of course."

The air got chilly and Tiffany wrapped the blanket more securely around her shoulders. She found it suddenly very cold.

"I haven't broken yours, have I?" Taeyeon whispered.

Tiffany looked up with a slight jerk and found Taeyeon's face dangerously close to her own. It felt very warm when Taeyeon spoke.

"Your heart," she paused and exhaled, her breath coated Tiffany's lips, "It's a pretty damn important one."

It was then that Tiffany felt more naked than ever with Taeyeon looking so deep into her eyes.

"I'm really bad at this," she chuckled, "But... But it'd be nice to do this more often with you. Like, watch the sunrise and lie in each other's arms and stuff. I'd really like that."

It took an eternity, Tiffany was sure, before she unfroze and her brain processed Taeyeon's words. She woke up from her daze still looking into Taeyeon's expectant eyes.

"So?" Taeyeon asked nervously, her eyes fixed on Tiffany. She panicked when Tiffany's darted away.

"I'd... I'd hold your hand when we go grocery shopping," Taeyeon bit her lip, "I'd make you breakfast, unload the dishwasher, kiss you awake.. Would you like that? I'd do a whole lot of things I dislike doing now. But I'd do that for you."

An answer didn't come, because the distance between them was too small for Tiffany to not do nothing. It still burned, but this time Taeyeon's lips set her on fire and the softness was addicting, her smooth skin against her own even more.

She gasped for air when Taeyeon pulled back an inch and nuzzled her nose in her neck.

“Say it again.”

Taeyeon looked up to see her smile. “What?”

The smile got wider. “Say it again.” She moved to kiss Taeyeon’s lips lightly, tenderly.  
“Say it.”

She felt her grin against her lips.

“I’d love you. Would you like that?”

“Yeah... I’d like that.”

## AUTHOR NOTE

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It took me a while before I started writing one-shots, mainly because I thought short drabbles suited me more. In a few sentences I was able to tell a whole story and I thought that was quite lovely.

When I first started writing my first one-shot *Hearts For Memories*, I had spent at least a whole week on it. Writing, stopping, writing then stopping again. It seemed like an endless cycle and I didn't really know when I could finish it. The concept/idea for this shot had occupied my mind for quite a while before that, too. It was something that I, myself, was suffering from at one point though not to that extreme.

It's a bizarre thought really, but thinking about it, everyone is afraid of exactly that – forgetting. Forgetting little moments: snippets of long nights conversations; the feel of a past lover; that blissful joy one once felt upon meeting someone; the laughter; smiles; kisses; and ultimately people altogether. It's not uncommon to forget people – there's that cute guy/girl waiting in line for coffee, a friend of a friend you exchanged greetings with once, that old man you passed by while hurrying to class or work. It's a different thing when we forget people we've shared cherished memories with, people we thought would stay with us forever or even when they are right in front of us, expecting and wanting them to be there, forever – there's that feeling we can forget how they feel underneath our fingertips, how they light up when they look at us.

Tiffany is kind of all of us that way – fearful, desperate to grasp on something that can prevent that from happening. Taeyeon is that something. Her movie tickets, love letters, love songs, presents – they all got replaced with Taeyeon's heart.

It's kind of stupidly romantic if you think about it, but what's more convincing that you'll remember someone than having them stay and hand you their heart? Our memories will fade at some point, but if there's someone who plans to stay and remind of us every single day of them, at least we'll remember that one person.

The next shot that I wrote, I think quite shortly after, was *It's Love So Don't Think*. Its theme/concept is quite simple, but it's something that I thought all of us have or would have to deal with at some point in our lives – getting over a break-up.

As Taeyeon is struggling to get over Yuri, there comes Tiffany – ready to love her. And you can see that Taeyeon is already swaying towards her from the beginning. I, however, wanted Taeyeon to only love her when the time was right, when she truly was over Yuri.

Throughout the shot you'll notice that Yuri, even if they broke up, still has her place in Taeyeon's heart. Obviously. She thinks of her whenever, wherever and despite her slight

jealousy towards Tiffany's new flame, she can't help but compare the two. She questioned her feelings towards Tiffany, her feelings towards Yuri and like with most of us, she needs a push to be sure and there you have Yoona.

Yoona's drunk talk was about the heart and mind of a person. Everyone struggles with that, because we have a heart and a mind but they tell us to take different routes at times and it's confusing, frustrating and stupid, stupid, stupid. This talk really wasn't about which one is right and which one is wrong, but in this case, to me, it's really only the heart that knows what it's talking about. Even if it's too stupid to talk sometimes.

The idea of having Taeyeon write down pros and cons of having Tiffany was actually a playful jab at all of us. Because almost all of us have made a list of certain qualities we wish our future boyfriend or girlfriend would have, a list of what's good and bad about a person before we decide to take that jump – whether it'd be on actual paper or in our minds. I thought it'd be fun to have that in the story, because we all know that in the end, once we've fallen in love that that list doesn't matter anymore.

And so did Taeyeon. The moment Taeyeon threw that piece of paper away and decided to stop thinking, was when she stopped thinking of Yuri. And that was when she was ready to love Tiffany.

*February Falls* is actually a drabble, but considering the fact that I actually put much thought into this one compared to all my other drabbles, I thought I'd include it in this collection. It's about a break-up. Very simple: just that. And break-ups are everywhere and I felt like I had to write something about it some time.

Break-ups are hard to put on paper, to me. Because in the moment of a break-up, you don't just feel sad. There are lots of things you feel, things you didn't think you'd feel and going through all that is worrying, because you're not entirely sure if this is how it's supposed to be.

That feeling of your emotions scattered everywhere is written is a slight subtle way with this drabble, because it's a feeling that doesn't surface that obviously. It's that weird tickling something crawling underneath your skin and it's almost sickening. You have Seohyun having tears in her eyes one moment, the next she's thinking about her sisters in an almost casual way, like nothing is happening. Her mind wanders to places, to thoughts that aren't relevant and it gives her that unsettling feeling as she stands in front of Yonghwa, them breaking up and him comforting her.

The moment it finally sinks in, that Seohyun realizes this is truly over, she doesn't cry. And she surprises herself with that, because she has imagined her reacting differently and not like how she is now – dry of tears and light like a feather.

And there, that kind of break-up is the one that's the most painful to me. Where you don't cry, you don't smile, you just stand there like a statue, yet you feel like you're out of your body. And then you know, your heart isn't whole anymore and you're left without a soul.

One of the few drabbles/shots that I haven't published is *Things Don't Matter*. A discussion about life made me think and this was what came out. It was written just before *Bare Under Love* and mind you the similarity of stripping, heh. Aside from that though, it bears a whole different message.

*Things Don't Matter* speaks about seemingly two strangers who go on a date together. Why the beach is often chosen as a setting for my stories, is because I've spent about fifteen years in a small far-away village with my mother's home just a five-minute drive away from the sands, sunsets and salty air. I won't go into detail, but the beach at five in the morning is a magical place where everything comes alive.

As Yuri is somewhat childish in this one, she also has a side that doesn't go unnoticed. I feel it's only when you truly live life that you can understand and fully feel everything – the birds singing, feeling happy for that couple in love, a shitty day at work, a great kiss, a terrible kiss, being stabbed in the back, lost – all of that, no matter how awful they are, make you who you are and bring out sides from you. Yuri is able to be like a child, because she lives life and finds every little moment to be memorable.

Jessica doesn't and it's not about feeling alive for the rest of her life just because Yuri came into it. It's for that small moment, for that little special moment that will resonate with her and one that she'll think back to when it so happens that Yuri won't stay in her life. This shot is really all about living the moment.

And finally, the last one and my favorite one to write so far is *Bare Under Love*. I had this idea, this feeling, I started writing and within a couple hours it was done. The story wasn't something that lingered in my mind for very long, but as I wrote it, the more I thought it'd stay with me for quite a while.

Unlike with *Things Don't Matter*, Taeyeon and Tiffany aren't strangers – they're best friends who know each other in and out, have spent a great deal of time together and have no trouble at all undressing in each other's presence. I wanted them to be so comfortable with each other and jump right into the story that it makes people wonder whether they're together or not. They're on that fine line of not-yet-lovers but more-than-friends.

The spontaneous suggestion to go skinny dipping gives the story a really light, playful feel which I absolutely loved to write. I didn't want them to lose their friendship's

dynamic, just because they're in love with one another. They're still playful, still teasing, still friends and still comfortable with each other despite the unspoken tension between them.

The bantering is to make this fun, carefree and just two friends enjoying their time together despite the fact Tiffany's aching for the perfect moment to confess. I made Taeyeon be this mischievous, little prankster, because it lightened the air between them and so that things didn't change between them. I also wanted Taeyeon to remain subtly mysterious, that people wouldn't really know what she's thinking and whether she felt the same way, because once she'll make her confession, the impact would be that much greater then.

I chose skinny dipping, because it requires being naked and because certain feelings surface when you do it, depending on who you're with. It's certainly ain't something that I see as rebellious, not something that mindless teenagers do to show they're fearless. I don't want that, because then this whole shot would have been weighted down by that stupidity, of not being who you are, of shielding yourself away behind a façade that is supposed to fool everyone. Fearless is exactly showing who you are, everything of yourself and that's what Taeyeon and Tiffany did.

An obvious metaphor is nakedness: being bare in front of the one who knows you best; in front of the one you love. It's how Taeyeon was just naked in front of Tiffany, yet she didn't know that Taeyeon felt the same way about her and vice versa. Showing everything of yourself in that way, is only in that way and doesn't guarantee that your feelings are bared as well.

One other metaphor that many didn't even realize was a metaphor and even found funny is Tiffany's 'poor quality underwear' that ripped towards the end of the shot. It showed how weak Tiffany really was, that she crumbled with a simple touch of Taeyeon and how Taeyeon broke that barrier when she ripped her panties, ripped through whatever it is that held them back. Because Tiffany hadn't bare herself yet to Taeyeon, physically and mentally – the underwear and her feelings – and she needed to be that in order for them to take the next step.

Back to Taeyeon's confession. Some things, some sentences, some sayings or stories just come to me and I can definitely say that about this whole shot, but that counts especially for the confession. Their friendship has already progressed so far that in most stories people would keep the confession simple, out there, like, "I love you," or "I can't imagine spending my life with anyone else," and then an, "I love you," again right after.



I don't do that. That's not something I'd say in real life and as it's a story that I'm writing, it's inevitable that my characters would have some of my own traits as well or something subtly similar to them.

Instead of going for a full-out confession like most, I wanted this one to be tender and gentle so that it would fit the lightly dreamy overall feel of the shot. Even if they've spent so much time together already as friends and know each other better than anyone else, I still wanted Taeyeon to take it slow. As she listed out the things she'd do for Tiffany, it was a careful approach, almost as not to touch that sensitive area that was their friendship.

The confession needed to not be in a way that would be too overwhelming to Tiffany, because despite it being obvious to us, Taeyeon didn't know how Tiffany felt. "Would you like that?" is a question that allows her to carefully thread towards Tiffany without scaring her away. It's considering, measuring Tiffany's feelings and as Tiffany finally kissed her, answered her question, she asked again upon Tiffany's request. "I'd love you. Would you like that?" It's not loving her yet, not yet in *that* way. But it's asking permission to do so, in a playful, teasing manner that is them.

Some have asked me how or why I write these stories and I hope you get a better idea of it now. Sometimes I just write, because I have an idea, a concept, a thought that I feel people spend too little time thinking about it, realizing it. Sometimes I see things happening, sometimes things happen to me, sometimes I look back on the past and then I'd want to write about it. Basically, from personal experience, from happenings in daily life, things other people experience – inspiration is everywhere, from an old couple holding hands as they walk down the street, to someone I saw at the airport once who had no one to pick him up.

Not one story is, however, my own true one. Not the one-shots, not the drabbles, not the longer stories. I feel like many believe my stories are what my life is – that I had someone confess to me so romantically, that I found myself falling for another girl, that I went skinny dipping once with someone I had a crush on, that I had found someone I knew loved me more than anything else. That's simply not true. I don't copy happenings from my own life and paste them in text.

Ironically is though, that these stories *are* me. I've never promised anyone a forever, but I've certainly once felt in love, I've felt happy, delighted, loved, special. I've felt sad, torn, sick of myself, indecisive, stupid and just plain horrible. I've felt surprised, I've felt nervous, about to give up, helpless, out of control, wild and content. I've been rejected, I've wished for love, I've wished for success,

I'll tell you what is me; the stone-paper-scissors the way Taeyeon did in OHAH, the uncertainty that Taeyeon felt when she confessed in Bare Under Love, the cutting off people easily with the switch of a button like Tiffany could, the abandonment I felt in the same way Tiffany did, feeling like a misfit like Taeyeon in ALLY, having everyone expect me to be there like Tiffany in It's Love So Don't Think etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. These are all just little things – they don't make the story, but they help build it.

What you read is not exactly what I've been through – it'll never be, because I'm just not that kind of writer. But they're part of who I am, the feelings my characters feel are what I've once felt too – what all of us have once felt and sometimes, I just want to tell the story of someone else, because more often than not, they can't.

Some have said I'm gifted and I'm more than flattered to hear that. Though I don't see it that way. I'm just writing and luckily I have the ability to transfer these feelings, these emotions to words that in a way people can find some comfort in.

I thank those who speak of me fondly and I thank those who have gotten to know me, beyond the stories that I write.

Love always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Aivy', with a small heart symbol above the first letter.

theninthtrack, and to friends – Aivy