

Voice

I hear you.

Water engulfed her, dragging her down. She thrashed, pulling on nonexistent support to return to the surface. Light disappeared in a matter of seconds and darkness took over. She could no longer tell the difference between up and down. She screamed knowing that no one could hear her.

The cruelest form of death was to drown. Your last inhalation above water was not enough keep you alive. Every second that you struggle was every second given to you to regret. Every second made you wish that you had at least one more chance to be on land to say what you could not before. It was most cruel because your last words, no matter how important, would never be heard.

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"Yoona!" called out her friend. Yoona turned and found Hyoyeon running to catch up with her. Yoona waved smiling at her. Hyoyeon caught up to her and they both headed to school together.

"How was your audition? Did it go well?"

Yoona's smile slowly slid away as she thought of her audition. She took out her notebook and scribbled quickly on it.

*I did not make it.*

Just yesterday, Yoona attended an audition held by a famous acting company. Every year this company held auditions for promising future actors and actresses. It was her dream. She had been planning for this moment since young. Yoona had tried out for everything acting related and no one could deny that she was a natural.

Yesterday however, was the worst experience she ever had. Once she entered, the judges' expression changed immediately. Throughout her audition, not a single one looked at her and immediately after she was done, they dismissed her. Their frowns were evident along with pointing fingers and whispers. Yoona was mute, not deaf.

It happened nearly two years ago when a terrible accident occurred, causing the car she and her family was in to lose control. The car crashed through the bridge railing and was hanging half way out, leaning dangerously to its doom. Police officers hurried to help each member of her family out before the car tipped. Unfortunately, Yoona was still in the car when it lost balance and dropped to the depths below.

She could not recall what happened afterward but Yoona had been saved. Yoona had recovered but the water had damaged her vocal cords forever. She had returned to her school after the summer ended and her life had been changed. Classmates who admired her looked away and picked on her. Teachers who praised her before now treated her unfairly believing that she was worthless. Those were just a few of the reasons as to why she moved away. Yoona did not want to remember what happened there.

Hyoyeon read the line carefully.

"It's okay Yoona. The stupid agency is not worth going into. You'll be able to find one that recognizes your skills soon," Yuri said encouragingly. Yoona responded with a weak smile as they entered her new school. Nothing was the same anymore.

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Yoona walked alone onto the familiar bridge that she always passed on the way home. Today however was slightly different. Yoona looked curiously as she found a slender girl with long brunette hair sitting on the railing facing the lake, her legs dangling in the air. The girl looked like she was going to jump. Yoona dropped her belongings and ran forward.

Don't jump! she wanted to yell forgetting that nothing could come out. The brunette responded and looked at the incoming girl. She lifted her legs back over and onto the ground. She stared with a small smile at the now panting girl.

"I wasn't going to. I was waiting for someone," the stranger explained simply. Yoona just waved her hand, asking for more time to catch her breath but suddenly realized that something impossible had just occurred.

She could hear me?

Yuri just smiled wider as if answering her question.

That's impossible! How can you hear me?

Yoona was sure that she did not make a miraculous recovery for if she could not hear her own voice, how could anyone else? Yoona's eyes widened as thoughts whirled through her head. It was a lucky guess. That was all there was to it.

While Yoona was deep in her thoughts, Yuri had made her way back from picking up Yoona's belongings.

What is your name? Where did you come from? Yoona started to write but the stranger placed her own hand over hers, stopping her midway.

"You don't need to write. My name is Yuri and I'm from a small town a few hours away from here."

Now Yoona was completely shocked. Yuri secretly adored that clueless face of hers but did not want to waste any more time. Yuri hoisted Yoona's backpack over her shoulders, freeing one of her hands and grabbed onto Yoona's.

"I'm new here so can you show me around? How about we go somewhere to eat first? My treat."

It was hardly a question. Yoona looked at Yuri's cheery face and nodded. Somehow she ended up following the shorter girl and continued holding on to her hand as they both entered a restaurant. Common sense would tell her to not hang around strangers, much less accept a meal with their hands locked tightly within each other's fingers. When they finally sat down across from each other, Yoona asked the question that bothered her most.

How can you hear me? I know that I had damaged my vocal cords during that accident. I

cannot hear my own voice and no one else can either. How can you?

Yuri gave a small chuckle as she wiped her chopsticks clean. She stole glances at the boisterous crowd and wondered what they could hear. Yuri thanked the woman who placed appetizers onto the table before returning to Yoona.

"You see those people?" Yuri asked pointing at the crowd. Yoona nodded.

"They can hear a lot of things. They hear wonderful music, what their friends are saying and can hear even the tiniest whispers at times. They hear with their ears, a sense that has been granted to human beings and animals alike. I'm a bit different. I listen with my heart and I choose to listen to you."

Yuri grinned brightly and even let out a small laugh. She didn't expect people to understand but if they did, it would make the world a much better place to live in. Yuri picked up a piece of meat and lifted it up to Yoona.

"Ah," Yuri prompted, arms outstretched. Yoona accepted it and chewed. How long has it been since she found someone that could understand her without the use of pen and paper? Not everyone understood sign language. After losing friends and becoming a hindrance to everyone, Yoona had resorted to leaving herself out.

This odd cheerfulness coming from the other girl was slowly drawing Yoona back out from her solitude. She liked being heard.

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The next day, Yoona was stationed in her usual seat in the back of the class while Yuri sat a few desks in front of her. They were in the middle of math class and the teacher copied a complicated math problem from yesterday's homework onto the blackboard. He rapped the board with his knuckles to get the class' attention.

"Okay, I know that none of you would get this. This question is actually much more advance than anything you would encounter here or even in first year university but I wish that you guys would give it a try anyways."

The teacher paused and looked for volunteers. He made eye-contact with Yoona but she quickly looked away.

"Sunhwa, please come up here and attempt this question please," he finally decided.

Yoona looked down on her notes, battling with herself. Her perfectly completed answer in her notebook was urging her to move but her fear forced to remain seated.

"I wish I was mute. Then I wouldn't have to answer stupid math questions either," whispered a jerk sitting next to the door to his friend. Yoona felt her face go red and stared intently at the back of the person in front of her.

Immediately following, the sharp sound of someone getting hit by a book was heard. Everybody looked up simultaneously at the door. The boy that just spoke was clutching onto the back of his head.

"What the-"

He looked up at the stranger who was not dressed in a school uniform. He gaped for she was absolutely beautiful but her scowl was too apparent to miss. The girl didn't say anything and threw his book back onto his desk. The teacher pushed up his glasses before speaking.

"Excuse me. I am not aware that I have a new student. Who are you?" he questioned. Yuri smiled graciously and literally watched the teacher melt. She bowed politely.

"Hello, my name is Yuri and I'm here to see what class is like here. I'm planning on enrolling my sister here and I want to see whether this school is suitable for her. I've gotten the principal's permission."

The teacher scratched his head and just nodded absentmindedly. Yuri smiled once again and walked to the back of the room, right to the empty row occupied only by Yoona. Yoona stared at her as Yuri sat down next to her. Everyone else was trying to catch a glimpse at the gorgeous beauty that entered the room.

The teacher coughed loudly, telling them all to return to the board. Sunhwa was still staring blankly at the board. Her piece of chalk didn't even make contact with it. The teacher sighed and told her to sit down. Yuri was quick. She lifted Yoona's arm with her hand and kicked the desk she was sitting at to create some noise.

"Yes, Yoona?" the teacher asked kindly, turning due to the sound. Yoona stared at Yuri, her hand still up in the air, too shocked to even realize that Yuri had already let go. Beside her, Yuri was pretending to survey the classroom but her finger was pointing to the blackboard underneath the table.

Yoona looked uncertainly at her teacher and back at Yuri who was still prompting her to make a move. Yoona grabbed her notebook nervously and stood up. Aware that everyone

was staring at her, she took a deep breath and walked forward. The teacher was rather taken aback as his usually unresponsive student slowly picked up the piece of chalk and started answering the question. When she was done she held the chalk up for the teacher to take but avoided his gaze.

Everyone else quickly flipped to the back of their textbooks checking if the answer was right and was immediately astonished. The almost non-existent girl who had never raised her hand nor disturbed the class correctly executed the solution in perfect form, not missing a single detail.

Someone started to clap her hands and everyone joined in. Even the teacher had to praise her.

"Wow Yoona. That was very well done. I'm very impressed. You should not have kept that brilliance of yours inside of you like that. I look forward to more participation!"

"Go Yoona!" Hyoyeon cheered and several others joined in. The jerk in front looked slightly abashed. Yoona even smiled a little before heading back to her desk. As she did, she looked at Yuri who had her arms crossed. Yuri just gave her a thumb up.

"Okay class. After the display of intelligence that you gorillas will never reach, turn to page 356."

Yoona beamed into her textbook. Perhaps Yuri thought that she wouldn't notice but she did. Yoona's stomach did a somersault when she saw Yuri being the first to clap for her.

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"Did you see that girl that was in our class today? She was SO attractive. Do you think I can get her phone number?"

Whispers like that were traveling through the school for the whole day but Yuri and Yoona chose to ignore them. School ended a long time ago and after spending some time with each other, Yuri was walking Yoona home. It was getting late.

"Your school sure beats my high school by a lot. It's actually quite nice, not to mention a lot bigger than mine. Does it have a lot of extracurricular activity?"

Yoona nodded.

There's a lot. This school is especially famous for the arts.

"Including acting?"

Yes but it's still early in the school year so none of them have actually started yet.

"Are you planning to join in any of them?" Yuri asked curiously.

Yoona just shrugged.

"Hmm. Well, if you do I'm sure you'll do great," Yuri encouraged. Surprisingly, these words seemed to give a boost in Yoona's confidence. Yoona just smiled and changed the topic.

You have a sister, right?

"Yes. Her name is Krystal but she is at home with my parents right now."

You mean you came to this town all alone? Wouldn't your parents mind?

"I sneaked out. I wanted to see you in person." she answered casually. Yoona now understood that Yuri's reason for being in class today was a complete lie. Everything Yuri said was like a mystery to her. Yoona was certain that she had never met her before yet Yuri seemed to know her pretty well.

Where are you staying?

"I haven't thought of that yet."

Yoona halted in her tracks and looked at Yuri shocked.

Really? Then where did you stay yesterday?

"I just walked around..." Yuri replied, not really giving an answer. Yoona assumed that it wasn't exactly a luxurious hotel room.

Stay at my place for the night. It's not the biggest house but my family would not mind.

Yoona wondered if Yuri could hear the shyness in her voice even if it wasn't said out loud.

"Thanks. That will be great."

When they reached her home, Yoona opened the door and peeked inside. Good. Everyone was asleep.

"When you said they wouldn't mind, does that mean you won't tell them?" Yuri whispered.

No, that's not it. I'm just hoping that my mom would be asleep so-

Yoona was cut short when she saw her mother sitting at the kitchen table with her arms crossed. She looked disapprovingly at both her daughter and the newcomer's brunette hair.

"Didn't I tell you that right after school to come back home?"

Yoona had her head down like a little girl being scolded.

"How did your audition go?"

Judging by her daughter's fidgeting hands, it did not go well. Her frown increased even more.

"Yoona, that company is the one of the finest out there! I thought I told you to prepare for this one seriously. If you keep slacking off and hanging out with people like her then you will never become an artist!"

Yuri raised a brow when Yoona's mom pointed at her. Yoona continued looking down.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't want to disappoint you, mom. I really didn't.

She bowed to her mother hastily as an apology before escaping to her room.

Mrs. Im could only sigh loudly into her hands, disgruntled by the lack of achievement. She jerked back up when she heard the chair across shift and the brunette girl sat down in front of her.

"Who are you? Who said you can be in my house?" she demanded.

"You were an actress," Yuri informed, ignoring her questions.

"You participated in many dramas and were gaining popularity fast. However, you injured your leg during a stunt for a drama and were not able to participate in the movie that could've made you an international star. Now you've retired and have a family but still you want to live the life of a popular actress. Because you can no longer do it yourself, you are forcing your daughter to do so in your place."

"That is none of your business."

Yuri just shrugged.

"No, I guess not but I didn't come all the way to see Yoona unhappy. You were there during the accident. You know what happened to your daughter but I guess you're just too concerned about yourself that you don't even care her anymore."

Yoona's mother looked at her uncertainly.

"What do you mean?"

"Yoona goes to a school where everyone looks down or pities her because she's mute. People treat her differently either believing that she's useless or regard her like she doesn't exist. She experienced things that she doesn't want you to know so she hid it because she didn't want you to worry."

Mrs. Im looked troubled at this piece of information.

"During her audition, no one looked at her to see if she could act because she could not read the script out loud. If you feel terrible that she did not make it, do you think that she is feeling any better? She's not just living for your dream. She's living for her own as well."

Yuri saw the woman struggle to comprehend and noticed that tears were slowing building in her eyes.

"Yoona had to keep so many things bottled up inside her and it is killing her but what hurts her most is that no one understands her anymore. No one even tries to, not even her own mother. Just now, she wanted to say that she was sorry, that she did not want to disappoint you."

"What can I do? It's not like I didn't try but how can I understand her if she's not able to speak to me?"

"Not everything needs to be shown through words. Trust me. If you really wanted to listen to her, then you'll be able to," Yuri said softly. On that note, Yuri left the confused mother by herself and headed for the stairs.

"Thank you for letting me stay here for the night, Mrs. Im."

Yuri gave her a low bow before heading up.

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Yoona splashed her face with water until all evidence of her crying had disappeared. She exited the bathroom and returned to her room. She found Yuri sitting cross-legged on the wooden floor looking inquisitively at her possessions.

"Who is that up there?" she questioned pointing at the poster.

*Yeon Kwon Hoon.*

Yuri pouted a little but smiled again when she noticed Yoona laying down blankets and a pair of pillows.

"Does that mean I get to sleep here too tonight?" she asked innocently.

*Yes, there's not much room anywhere else.*

Yoona completely missed Yuri's big smile as the shorter plopped herself onto her freshly made bed, smoothing it out with exaggerated snow angel making actions and snuggling into her warm blanket.

Yoona bit her lip to suppress her grin at such unexpected aegyo. She laid herself next to Yuri and covered herself with her own blanket.

*Good night.*

No response. Yoona supposed Yuri was already asleep and closed her eyes. After a few minutes, the older sneaked a quick peek and turned her body to face the sleeping girl. Yuri pulled Yoona's blanket higher up to her shoulders before gently caressing Yoona's cheek.

*I want you to be happy.*

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Yoona opened her eyes slowly from her sleep and found herself looking closely at the most beautiful person she had ever seen. Yuri's arm was on her waist and she was sleeping soundly. Yoona did not move from her position, wanting the moment to last. They were close enough that Yoona could feel Yuri breathe on her skin. Sadly, it ended too quickly when her mother entered the room.

Yoona bolted into sitting position and Yuri's arm slid off her waist. Yuri woke up groggily and covered her eyes from the blinding sunlight. Through her blurred vision, she could just make out Mrs. Im's presence at the door. Whether she noticed their positioning or not, they did not know but Mrs. Im spoke calmly.

"Breakfast is on the table. Go out with your friend and have some fun, Yoona. Don't waste a perfectly good day sleeping. It is the weekend after all," she scolded lightly. Yoona blanked out for a second before jumping up and hugging her mom.

Mrs. Im hugged her daughter tightly, hoping that Yoona understood her apology and that from now on, she would try her hardest to truly understand her daughter's feelings. Somewhere inside her, she heard something. It was distant and quiet but she heard it nonetheless. The voice said I love you.

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"Hey look, she's selling ice-cream. I'll go buy some alright? You wait here."

Yuri did a light jog over and asked for two cones.

"Two please."

"How long do you think you can avoid her?" the ice-cream seller asked.

"Sunny, I want to spend more time here."

"You know you can't. You won't last long enough. Even if you do Taeyeon will hunt you down soon enough."

"Then I'm going to do the most I can before she does. If I'm getting punished anyways then I might as well do what I came here for."

Sunny looked at her half disapprovingly and half with pride. Noticing that Yoona was watching them curiously from afar, Sunny beamed and handed over the two cones.

"Thank you for buying!" she said loudly. Yuri smiled gratefully before jogging back.

*Thanks. What were you guys saying?*

"She's actually someone I know from my town so I chatted a bit. I guess she came here to get more business. The population of where I live is rather small."

*Oh okay. Where are we going today? You said you were new here but you sure seem to know where you're going.*

Yuri just grinned, ignoring all of Yoona's suspicions. Yoona no longer believed that Yuri came from another town and not even her recent lie about the ice-cream seller but she decided that if Yuri wanted to keep it a secret then she must have a reason.

They walked side by side admiring the setting and Yoona was pondering hard whether or not to wrap her arm around Yuri's. In five, she promised herself. When the time came, Yoona's hand sneaked behind Yuri's arm and missed by a mile.

"Hey, look over there," Yuri said, lifting her arm to point just as Yoona made her attempt. Flustered she looked at what Yuri was indicating. Large banners were hung up and it was clear something big was being held judging by the monstrous crowd. There was an open mini concert free to everyone and it was chaotic. People were running and pushing to get a closer look. Yoona watched the singers in amazement when someone bumped into her causing her to fall to the ground.

Yuri rushed to her side.

"Are you okay?"

Yoona nodded. A tall girl came back to apologize.

"I'm so sorry. Are you alright? I'm dealing with all these things today because of the stupid concert and I'm all rushed. I'm sorry," she apologized.

Yoona shook her head and returned to her feet. She smiled indicating that she was alright and expressed herself the best she could. The girl just stared at her with a look that seemed like she was thinking hard.

"What's your name?"

Yoona froze. How can she answer that?

"Oh don't be alarmed," she quickly said, misunderstanding Yoona's uneasy expression. "I work for Stars Entertainment and I'm a recruiter. Just by looking at you, you give me this very pure and unique feeling. So what's your name?"

Yoona decided that she couldn't stay silent any longer. She pulled out her notepad and wrote

her name down. The woman took a quick glance at her name before returning to study her.

"Im Yoona. So you are...mmmm."

Yoona started to feel uncomfortable and was taking a nervous step back when she felt something cold slide down her arm to meet her hand. Yuri was there with her.

"Well, my name is Choi Sooyoung. Like I said, I work for Stars Entertainment and if you are ever interested in this field, I would love to see your audition. Here's my card."

Yoona accepted it with shaking hands. She bowed again and again thanking Sooyoung. Sooyoung waved it off with a laugh.

"It's okay. No need to thank me. It's my job to recruit people that I feel is good. Got to run though, need to do some stuff. See you later."

With that, Sooyoung turned and left. If Yoona could scream, she would. Her finger kept running through the card, making sure that this was real. She had just been given a chance to try out at one of the biggest company dominant in most of Asia.

"You see, there's really nothing stopping you. There's something about you and only you that makes you special. Congratulations," Yuri praised.

Yoona jumped up and down, ecstatic to the point that tears were coming out. She threw her arms over Yuri's shoulders and the brunette hugged her back. When Yoona drew back, she gave Yuri a quick peck on the cheek before skipping out to the open spinning with her arms wide open, welcoming the beautiful sunlight.

Yuri watched her and although she felt very happy for her, she could also feel what was slowly depleting inside herself. Whatever...that will be her worry some time later. Ignoring this warning, she sprinted after Yoona.

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By night, they were sitting down on a blanket at an empty park, just enjoying each other's company.

1...2...3...4...ah, I'm going crazy! There's too many to count. Why are you making me count stars anyways? It's impossible to count all of them.

"It is because I want to watch you longer without interruptions. If it's impossible that means I

get to break all rules and watch you forever."

Yoona blushed at the cheesy lines but Yuri seemed dead serious. Her voice was soft and her eyes were sad. Yoona didn't understand.

Is everything alright?

"What if I told you I've been watching you for a long time? I came all the way here to find you, to know you and to be a part of your life even if it is just a few days," she said quietly.

Yuri, stop joking around, you can't have.

"What if I told you that the reason I came here was to make you break out from your solitude? To make you enjoy life again? To make you happy?"

Yuri...

But Yuri continued on.

"What if I came here to tell you that I love you?"

Yuri looked into Yoona's eyes, hoping and waiting for a reaction. Her expression was blank. Yoona could not deny that every time she's with her, she wonders why her heart flutters, why her brain loses control and why she wants to be with her so much. All in a mere three days, she had felt all those unfamiliar feelings but the logical side kept bothering her, making her question Yuri. How could a person do everything Yuri said without knowing her from before?

"I love you."

Yuri closed all space between them and tasted the lips that she had yearned for. It was gentle, caring and revealed her longing for Yoona. Yoona's body was trembling from the uncontrollable flutters inside her. She closed her eyes as she experienced every spark that ignited as their lips touch.

Yoona slowly returned the kiss and it grew passionate. Her hand slid under Yuri shirt, connecting with her soft skin. The other arm found its way to wrap around Yuri's body, entangling her fingers in Yuri's hair. Yuri planted a trail of kisses as she traced down her neck.

Yuri found herself lowering Yoona down to the ground while her hand caressed Yoona's

face. The pleasure they each had holding onto each other, taking possession of the other was immeasurable. As Yuri drew back and captured Yoona's lips once again, she knew she was ripping apart what was left in her.

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Yuri smiled one last time at the sleeping girl, stroking her hair. Yuri was weak, very weak.

"I'm sure you can feel it now can't you?" Taeyeon asked although not looking for an answer. She appeared silently from the shadows. The unsmiling figure looked upon the two, eyes emotionless.

"Yuri Kwon, you have crossed the line. You have ignored the rules set by us and you have fallen in love with her. You have also changed fate by meeting her. By doing so, you have altered what was written before any one of us even existed."

Yuri didn't even turn to face her. She continued stroking Yoona's hair in a calm manner.

"Have you suffered from the pain of not being heard? No matter how important those words were to you, no one can hear them?"

"No."

"I did. No one heard me. It's the same now. No one can hear her, no one except me. I want her hidden feelings to be heard. I want her happy."

Taeyeon showed no reaction.

"Whether or not I take you back is of no importance anymore. You will disappear even beyond our realm. I have no control over it. You feel it yourself."

Yuri chuckled softly.

"That I expected the moment I came but it's alright. I think I did all that I can for her except one. I want to give it to her before I go."

Yuri leaned down on top of her and kissed the sleeping girl one last time. She felt something escape her but she could only feel happiness as it did. Taeyeon watched as the figure in front of her disappear. Attaining a solid form for even a few days was already a miracle, but that miracle was ending. Yuri was gone, from this world and even from their realm, the realm after death.

What could she have done anyways, Taeyeon thought. Yuri was merely a spirit, a ghost of her past. Sacrificing even her spirit form for the girl that now lay alone on the grass was foolish. Taeyeon scoffed at the thought. It was not her business. She did not care...

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Yoona had awoken and found herself in her own room. She blinked a few times. She didn't remember coming back last night. Her doe eyes shot open when she realized something. Where was Yuri? Yoona picked herself up and searched the house. No one was there. She hurried downstairs and found her mom sitting at the table, reading the newspapers.

Mom, do you know where Yuri is? she signed.

Mrs. Im just shook her head as she drank her coffee. Confused, Yoona exited through the front door in her pajamas, looking for her. After a quick jog around her neighborhood, she determined one thing. Yuri was not here.

Yuri!

She felt like crying. Why would Yuri have left her without saying anything? Was she lost? Or hurt? These thoughts distressed her even more as she ran through the neighborhood once more. She stopped when she reached the park they were at yesterday night. The blanket that they shared was still there. Tears were starting to fall as she picked up the blanket with shaking hands.

Yuri...Where are you? Yuri! Why did you leave me?

"YURI!" she screamed. It was as if time stopped. She let go of the blanket and dropped to her knees. Her expression illustrated only a small portion of her shock. This couldn't be right. The sound that she had not heard for ages had just escaped her mouth and was still ringing in her ears.

"Yuri...Yuri..." she tried once again. She could hear her voice. Yoona's ears could not be deceiving her for she was getting weird stares from passing neighbors.

"Stop saying her name already," said an annoyed voice from behind. Yoona straightened up and found a short girl walking closer as if she knew both her and Yuri personally.

"Who are you?" Yoona asked unsteadily with her newly recovered voice.

"My name is Taeyeon. Yuri no longer exists so you should just save your breath. She won't come back."

The certainty and spite in Taeyeon's voice scared Yoona.

"Why? Why won't she come back?"

"A spirit like Yuri should not have even come back to Earth, let alone messing with destiny. Truth be told, I should be taking back your voice right now and erase your memories."

Reality hit Yoona hard when she realized what Taeyeon had just said. Taeyeon supposed that by scaring her Yoona would just go away but was surprised when she saw the taller go on her knees again and grabbing hold of her arm.

"Please, tell me where she is. I'll give you back my voice, anything that you want, just tell me where she is," Yoona pleaded. Taeyeon hid her astonishment and pulled her arm away.

"Get a grip. I told you she's gone. I can't do anything about it. She chose to trade in her soul for your voice and she got what she deserved."

"I don't care about my voice!" she yelled, completely startling the shorter girl.

"There's no point being heard by everyone else if I can't be heard by her. I wanted to know her better. She knew everything about me but I knew nothing of her. I want her back...Yuri," Yoona sobbed.

Taeyeon watched the girl cry, burying herself in her hands. Even as the enforcer and caretaker of the dead, known to be emotionless, was slightly moved by the history shared by the two.

"Do you really want to know her?"

Yoona nodded through her tears. Taeyeon cleared her throat and lifted Yoona to her feet. The strength this petite girl had was no joke.

"I'm taking you somewhere. Whether or not you will feel better or worse about it I don't care but if you really want it then here goes."

Yoona was pulled carelessly forward and in a flash, her surroundings changed completely. It was of her old high school before she moved away. Why in the world did Taeyeon bring her back? Surprisingly, as she walked past the students, no one looked or even paid a bit of

attention to the two strangers.

"Taeyeon, why is no one looking at us?"

"We're in the past. These are Yuri's memories. You said you wanted to know Yuri better and why she knew you so well. This is why."

Taeyeon dragged her by the arm with a firm grip. She flung Yoona forward and she stumbled a few steps before looking up. The wall was plastered with pictures and newsletters. They were all dated two years ago. Yoona's mouth dropped open while Taeyeon just nodded.

"Yes, this is year 2008, the year when your accident occurred and specifically four months before you left this school."

Images of her past flew into Yoona's mind and it disturbed her greatly. Yoona shook the memories out of her head. She took deep breaths and was determined to control herself.

"Why here?"

"For that reason," Taeyeon replied and pointed. Yoona turned in the direction she was pointing and saw her. Yuri was walking down the halls talking to a friend cheerfully, one hand carrying a stack of books. She did not have brunette hair yet and the books she was carrying indicated that she was in her twelfth year. She was a senior while Yoona had been two grades lower.

Yuri and her friend were entering their homeroom when Yuri suddenly stopped and looked at Yoona's direction. Yoona froze believing that Yuri saw her but slowly realized that Yuri's eyes were not focused on her but rather an event behind. Yoona turned her head and could not believe what she was looking at.

A few rooms down, a teacher was yelling at his student who was looking down at her shoes, trying hard not to cry.

"Do you think it's funny to make fun of me on the blackboard? You will be punished for putting such offensive messages and pictures on the board! Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

The girl shook her head furiously and waved her hands wildly, desperately trying to say that she had nothing to do with the board incident. The teacher didn't understand what she was trying to express. Furious at the soundless gestures, he pulled out his metal ruler.

"Give me your hands. Now!"

Trembling, the girl raised her hands and the teacher smacked the ruler down cruelly. The student was crying silent tears as the teacher continued to hit her. Through her tears, she saw her classmates behind the teacher making faces and laughing at her. They set this up to pick on her, the mute girl that could not defend herself.

Yoona's anger was boiling inside her and she wanted to tell the teacher off but Taeyeon held onto her wrist.

"You can't do anything about it."

Yoona glared at Taeyeon furiously and twisted her arm out of Taeyeon's grip. She was about to dash forward when she saw a girl with long brown hair in her school uniform rush pass her.

"Mr. Choi," Yuri called out and the teacher stopped to look at her.

"Yuri, you should be in class."

"Yes I know," Yuri replied and caught a glimpse of boy behind him making faces. The boy saw her glaring and quickly returned to his book. Yuri frowned.

"Sir, I think this girl has learned her lesson. I think this is enough for now," she said softly as she took the ruler from his hand. He let out a huff and reluctantly agreed. He could hardly say no to his favourite student. Mr. Choi just nodded impatiently and returned to his classroom, barking at the rest of his students to work. Yuri slowly turned to find that the student's hands were still up and was extremely red.

"Are you oka-"

"Im Yoona. Get back in class!" Mr. Choi yelled. The student dropped her hands immediately and entered the room before she could get into anymore trouble.

"Yuri..." Yoona did not know that Yuri went to the same school as her. She didn't even know that Yuri was actually her savior for all she did that day was cry without looking at anyone. Yoona started to move towards Yuri when her surroundings switched once again. Yuri was walking down the same hallway Yoona just saw her in.

Yuri saw Yoona the next day after their first encounter and waved. When Yoona saw her, she looked down, burying her face into her books and entered her homeroom. Yuri dropped her

hand. Was she embarrassed about yesterday?

"Yuri, the bell rung already," Tiffany, her friend, said pushing her in through the door. Tiffany watched the disheartened Yuri take her seat. Not understanding why the sudden change in mood, Tiffany just shrugged it off.

Another change in setting told her it was another day. This time, Yoona was looking at Yuri's back and found her peeking into a room through the door window. Yoona had never seen Yuri look so school-girly before. She was talking to herself with added squeals and complaints. Curious, Yoona looked over Yuri's shoulders.

Yuri looked for the one person she wanted to see. They were currently starting a new play and Yoona was part of it. Although the drama teacher did not allow Yoona to have the lead character, Yuri wanted to watch her practice anyways. She watched as the teacher assigned Yoona a boring role with absolutely little to no screen time.

"You butt, she deserves a better role than a magical tree!" she complained and kicked the door. She ducked just in time when the teacher twisted to see where the sound came from. Relieved that she didn't get caught, Yuri peeked again. Yoona had offered herself to help decorate the set. As she worked, Yuri noticed how she smiled and worked diligently painting the set. Yuri found herself grinning stupidly when she saw paint smudged on Yoona's face.

Another student then came up and asked if Yoona needed help. Yoona looked a bit nervous. Yuri was tiptoeing to see if Yoona accepted the kind girl's help. She saw Yoona nod shyly and let out a silent cheer. Yes!

Yuri felt someone tap her shoulder and spun around. Her friend was looking at her oddly.

"What are you doing Yuri? Are you looking at her again? You perv," Tiffany jeered as if this was a regular occurrence.

'Ya! Tiffany! I am not a pervert! I'm just...watching over her that's all," she faltered.

"Then why don't you go up to her and say hi?"

"I can't do that! She looked away from me the other time. I think she might feel burdened because I was there to help her. I don't want her to feel that I'm here to pity her or for her to feel ashamed of herself..."

"That is such childish thinking, Yuri. I'm sure she won't feel that you are just pitying her if she got to know you better."

"Maybe a bit later?" she tried. Tiffany just rolled her eyes.

"You are an embarrassment to us seniors. Ya, shove over. Let me look too."

The two best friends tried their hardest to get a glimpse of her.

"What's her role?" Tiffany questioned.

"A tree."

"You're kidding right?"

"No but I guess that's not too important. Watching and learning can still do her good. Did you know that Yoona wants to be an actress?"

"No, why would I? I don't stalk her."

Yuri ignored the jibe.

"She's pretty," Tiffany commented.

"I know," Yuri answered softly with no hesitation.

Taeyeon snapped her fingers again. Taeyeon and Yoona were still inside the school but were now in a different hallway on the first floor. Yoona saw herself limp in through the doors, heading to the nurse's office. Yoona remembered that she was injured that day, tripping onto the hard gravel as she was running track. Yoona remembered what happened as if it were yesterday.

Inside the office, the school doctor studied her.

"That is a pretty bad scrape you got there, you should be more careful," the doctor said as he leaned on the door offhandedly, closing it from the outside.

"Let me examine that for you," the man offered kindly as he lifted her leg up to his lap. Yoona gasped when she realized that he was not attending to her cut but rather his hand was roaming over her skin. Yoona pulled her leg down and bowed nervously before trying to escape. Just before she reached the door, the doctor pulled her back and trapped her against the wall. Yoona could not scream for help. All she could do was cry and push.

He pressed himself on her as she tried desperately to get away. The hungry man trapped both her wrists with one hand and with his other pulled on her shirt aggressively. He crushed his lips onto hers and Yoona turned away, screaming inside as he continued his assault, his hand grabbing onto her breast. She pushed him away with all she could muster, kicking him hard in the shin. The doctor grunted in pain and Yoona scrambled to the door again. The doctor lunged after her and pulled on her shirt. The t-shirt tore, revealing her bare shoulder and bra strap. Yoona kicked him again as hard as she can, and pulled the door open.

She ran through the hallways, knocking into a girl and they both fell to the ground. Yoona scrambled to her feet, leaving the girl behind on the floor. It was her last day at this high school.

Yuri was staring at her torn clothes and red markings on her skin. As she ran away, Yuri picked herself up from the ground and walked carefully to the room Yoona had just ran out of. It was the nurse's office. Yuri found herself staring into the open door and found the doctor nursing his leg. Judging by his ruffled clothing, it was he who had raped her. The man looked up shocked as Yuri closed her hand into a fist and rushed to the principal's office.

The setting changed once again.

"Mr. Choi?"

"Yes, Yuri?"

"Do you by any chance know where Im Yoona is? I've noticed that she hasn't been around these two days."

"Ah. The mute girl left the school. We don't know why but she's gone."

Yuri's heart stopped beating. She could not believe that she would no longer be able to see her. Before she exited the room, she spoke again, her voice shaking.

"Mr. Choi. Please don't call her 'the mute girl'. Her name is Im Yoona."

Yuri walked alone in the empty halls, her feet dragging behind her, until she reached the nurse's office. Yesterday, the doctor was forced to leave after she revealed what he had done. There was no one in the office anymore. Yuri leaned her back against the wall. She elbowed the wall with full force, letting out all her frustrations. If only she managed to come earlier, then nothing would've happened. Tears flowed down her cheeks as she slid down helpless onto the floor.

Arms wrapped around her and comforted her. Tiffany tried her best to calm her down but Yuri continued crying. How she wished to have at least spoken to her once.

Taeyeon nudged the motionless Yoona and held onto her arm. Taeyeon snapped her fingers and the scenery changed again. This time, they were nowhere near the school. Instead, they were outside and in front of them was Yuri in her school uniform walking on an old bridge heading home.

"Yuri!" Yoona yelled. Behind Yuri was the same man that had raped her. The man slapped the unsuspecting girl and his fingers gripped tightly onto Yuri's neck.

*"You! You *****! You were the one that made me lose my job! You were the one that told everyone on me! My wife and daughter left me and everyone looks at me with disgust. Do you know what I'm going through right now?"*

The deranged man was pushing Yuri against the frail railing of the bridge and Yuri coughed from his grip, struggling to breathe.

"You deserve it!" Yuri spat.

"If I'm going to lose everything then I'm going to take you down with me! I'm going to kill you!" he hissed. The man was insane and was leaning closer.

"Let go!" she gasped.

His grip tightened until Yuri could no longer make a sound. The old wooden railings of the bridge could not support the weight of the two people. It broke apart and sent the two falling down to the depths of the lake below.

Water engulfed her, dragging her down. She thrashed, pulling on nonexistent support to return to the surface. Light disappeared in a matter of seconds and darkness took over. She could no longer tell the difference between up and down. She screamed knowing that no one could hear her.

The cruelest form of death was to drown. Your last inhalation above water was not enough keep you alive. Every second that you struggle was every second given to you to regret. Every second made you wish that you had at least one more chance to be on land to say what you could not before. It was most cruel because your last words, no matter how important, would never be heard.

Yuri swam with all her might. Although Yoona had already left school, Yuri wanted to meet

her again. Yuri wanted to tell her that she had been watching her during the last few months. That she had watched her act, watched her smile, and watched her cry. She wanted to tell her that even if no one else in the world understood her, she did.

Yuri could not hold her breath any longer and reflex took over. Water flooded her lungs and unbearable pain scorched her insides. Her mind was losing consciousness. No one could save her. Her last words escaped as bubbles and her eyes closed, her body no longer fighting to survive.

"Yuri!" Yoona shouted again as she watched the two plummet into the water. Taeyeon held her back so that she did not jump in after Yuri. Yoona screamed and pulled out of her grip. She ran onto the bridge, searching desperately for her in the bottomless lake.

There was nothing she could do. Pushing Taeyeon aside, she sprinted to the rusty payphone on the other end of the bridge. She dialed 911 as quickly as possible and prayed that someone will pick up. Before anyone did, Taeyeon had caught up with her and was dragging her away by the waist, shouting.

"YOU CAN'T MESS WITH THE PAST! IT'S AGAINST THE RULES!"

"I don't care about the rules! She's drowning! I need to save her!" Yoona shrieked and fought desperately to reach the phone that was swinging disdainfully in front of her. Taeyeon clung on to her waist as hard as she could and snapped her fingers.

They were back in present time and at the park where they started out. Finally Taeyeon released Yoona and she fell to the ground.

"I warned you. The more you know the more it hurts. There's nothing we can do."

Taeyeon bent down next to her and comforted the crying girl. Never had she wanted to cry for someone. She was cruel, emotionless and pitiless but Taeyeon's eyes were starting to water as she held Yoona in her arms.

"It's going to be alright. Yuri wanted you to be happy right? You have to be happy for her. You have to. For Yuri."

~~~~~

**~A Year Later~**



Yoona walked out of the building, a grin plastered on her face. She had passed the last audition. She was now guaranteed a contract with Stars Entertainment. Once outside, she faked a sad look. Waiting impatiently for her was Hyoyeon, leaning on her car.

"Hey, how was it?" she asked. Yoona shook her head with a deadened expression. Hyoyeon automatically patted the girl's head.

"It's okay. There are always other companies out there. I'll treat you to ice-cream."

Yoona could not hold her happiness any longer. She laughed out loud and Hyoyeon, though momentarily perplexed, just laughed along. Hyoyeon was tricked once again. For almost every audition Yoona did the exact same thing and Hyoyeon bought it every time. Yoona's laugh was melodious.

"How many times do you have to trick me?" Hyoyeon questioned.

"Well, it's the last time because I'm guaranteed a contract! Do I still get my ice-cream though?" Yoona added innocently.

"Fine. Just to celebrate the tenth time Kim Hyoyeon is tricked by famous actress-to-be Im Yoona."

Yoona laughed again and got into the car. Together they drove to a familiar park. They got out and absorbed the sunlight that the beautiful day offered. Further away was an ice-cream stand crowded by many kids. Yoona noticed that it was not the same vendor as the one she saw a year ago.

"I'll go get it," Hyoyeon said. Yoona watched as Hyoyeon ran over to get the ice-cream. Yoona smiled to herself. She remembered the time when Yuri and she spent a day similar to this one. She missed her very much.

A small boy was running around playing tag and tripped in front of her. Yoona quickly helped the boy up but he was crying like mad. A young woman came sprinting from behind and held the boy close, trying to soothe his crying. When the boy finally stopped wailing, the woman sighed in relief.

Unknown to her, Yoona was staring at her wide eyed. The woman had short brown hair and was very familiar.

"Aish, I don't even know why I bother to do baby-sitting. I can't even handle kids."

The woman pulled her hair behind her ear and saw Yoona staring. The woman looked at her with equal curiosity.

"I'm sorry but is your name Im Yoona?"

"Yes it is," Yoona replied. Tiffany's mouth dropped open.

"Your voice. It has recovered!"

Yoona nodded.

"That's amazing! Oops, forgot to introduce myself. My name is Tiffany," she announced with a bright eye smile.

"What do you do these days?" she asked Yoona.

"I'm currently studying at a university majoring in the arts."

"Wow, that's awesome. She would've been so happy for you..." Tiffany trailed off, her smile disappearing. Tiffany licked her lips nervously before speaking.

"You probably don't remember me but I attended the same high school as you with a friend. You probably don't know her either but her name is Yuri Kwon."

Yoona's heart clenched.

"This may be a bit weird to say now but...she really liked you. She was an idiot really. I don't think she ever introduced herself to you. Not too long after you left, she...she..." Tiffany paused hesitantly. Yoona knew exactly what happened and it replayed constantly in her mind. It was her nightmare.

"She was attacked on her way home and fell into the lake with her attacker."

Yoona felt her eyes tearing and Tiffany's was doing the same.

"I know I shouldn't even be mentioning this but I want to tell you what she couldn't. She really cared for you but she was afraid to approach you. She loved you."

Yoona blinked furiously, trying hard not to let her tears fall out. Someone patted her on her

shoulder. Hyoyeon was back, gazing worriedly at her.

"Are you alright?" she asked. Yoona nodded and wiped her eyes clean. Tiffany wiped hers just as quickly and knew that their conversation had come to an end. Yoona looked back at Tiffany and extended her hand.

"It was a pleasure to meet you Tiffany. If it's alright with you, do you think we can exchange phone numbers and meet up some time? I would really want to get to know you and Yuri better."

Tiffany smiled and nodded eagerly. Yoona pulled out her favourite notebook and pen before handing it over to Tiffany to write.

Yoona looked at her two belongings fondly. Although she did not use it anymore, she always kept it close. It reminded her of the time when she couldn't speak. The time when everyone ignored her, picked on her, misunderstood her and when one person had come into her life, changing her forever and showing her what love was.

*I love you, Yuri. I know you are still encouraging me and supporting me every day. Even though you are very far away from me, I can still hear your voice because I listen to you with my heart.*

**~End~**

# Voice II

## Sequel to **Voice**

### **Memory -- noun.**

1. *Memory is the retention of, and ability to recall, information, personal experiences, and procedures.*
2. *Memories are often accompanied by feelings and emotions.*
3. *Memory involves awareness of the memory.*

*Her finger traced each word carefully, not quite understanding. Ability to recall...why couldn't she do exactly that? And personal experiences...she could think of none.*

*Feelings and emotions. That she could fully understand. They were constantly taking over her, the feeling of sorrow, regret, anger, but most dominant for her was an unexplainable feeling of longing. How to describe it? A hole, even a dull pain at times, but definitely a sense of emptiness inside that made her feel incomplete. Memories were accompanied by feelings and emotions right? Then explain to her why she could only comprehend one side of this equation?*

*The most important would be the last line. Memory involves awareness of the memory. She had absolutely no recollection, none of this so called 'awareness' of anything from her past so does that mean that she had no memories, no past? From what she could make out, memory equals to fact. An event must occur in order for someone to truly remember it.*

*Memories were proof of one's existence. If a person did not have memories, no information, and no personal experiences then what does that mean for that person?*

*She slammed the book shut and hurled it at the wall. She screamed in frustration and cried. She was now left with only two choices.*

**Remember -- verb.:** *Recapture the past.*

***Forget -- verb.: Cease to think of.***

*Which to choose?*

~ 2012 ~

Yoona strolled onto the renovated bridge. It was no longer made of wood but of stronger material. Yoona grazed the metal railings gently as she walked slowly to the center. Yoona let a sigh as she leaned on the sides, admiring the beautiful setting. It was early spring. Life had begun once again. She smiled as she spotted buds on the once empty tree branches and heard the chirping of birds. The lake was calm enough for her to see her own reflection.

The lake looked so peaceful that it was almost impossible to believe that it had taken away someone very important to her. She glanced at the nearby payphone that she had once touched. It was also replaced with a new one. Yoona had not been able to save Yuri Kwon.

Yoona silently recounted all the things that she had learned about her through Yuri's best friend, Tiffany. At first, she might look cold and mean but once you know her a bit better, she was actually a very warm person that would be there for you if you ever needed her. She did not like melons and absolutely hated cucumbers. She was a quiet person, a complete opposite of Tiffany. She does not like to cry in front of others so she exits the room instead. How Yoona wished that she got to know Yuri herself rather than through Tiffany and her stories.

Just a little more than two years ago, Yoona had not been able to speak due to an accident. She was mute, lonely and hurt. Yuri had come to find her, releasing her from her solitude. They spent only three days together and Yoona experienced true love. The memories of spending time with Yuri were the happiest Yoona had experienced for a long time. It ended too quickly for Yuri was not human but a spirit that came back to tell Yoona she loved her and that all she wanted was for Yoona to be happy.

Yoona was now a university student as well as a trainee in Stars Entertainment, both helping her succeed as a future actress. She gained some recognition by taking part in commercials. Yuri would've wanted that. Yoona was indeed happy, pursuing her dream, having great friends and a loving family. No matter how happy she was however, there was still this emptiness in her heart. She wanted Yuri back. Yoona blinked back tears as she whispered into the lake.

"I miss you Yuri."

~~~~~

They finished their movie and were heading home.

"I saw that commercial that you filmed. It was really well done," her friend Hyoyeon praised as she drove.

"It was so hard to film! It was such a windy day and I was freezing to death but I had to put up a smile pretending it was the middle of spring," Yoona complained jokingly.

"Alright, filming might've sucked but you looked really beautiful," Hyoyeon commented. Yoona blushed a little at that. Hyoyeon stopped the car in front of her house and she said goodbye to Yoona. Yoona waved back before being called back.

"Yoona," Hyoyeon called from the car. Yoona waited for her to say something but Hyoyeon suddenly turned a bit nervous.

"I...I wanted to ask you something but never mind. I'll talk to you later about it," Hyoyeon stammered. Yuri waved goodbye again and drove off. Yoona watched the car leave curiously before entering the house. Wonder what that was all about?

"Hi Yoona! You're back earlier than I expected," Tiffany called out from the living room. After meeting about a year ago, they had blossomed into good friends. Since they went to the same university and were both trainees at Stars Entertainment, they decided to rent a house and live together.

"Hey," Yoona replied and sat down on the couch next to her. Tiffany hugged her pillow as she surveyed Yoona carefully. Yoona looked back at her.

"What?"

"How was your date with Hyoyeon?"

"It wasn't a date, Tiffany."

"Well, it sure seemed like one but whatever, how did your non-date go?"

Yoona covered her face with her hands, slightly embarrassed.

"Tiffany, this is really not a date. We just did typical things that friends would do."

Tiffany just sighed. She slammed her pillow against Yoona in exasperation.

"You are so dumb sometimes. Isn't it obvious that Hyoyeon likes you more than a friend? I mean she asks you to go out with her almost every day and look at you with those 'I like you' eyes. You're the only one that thinks it's not a date."

Yoona was surprised at Tiffany's exclamation. Was it that obvious? If it was then why did Yoona not catch a thing? Yoona frowned slightly in confusion. The silence seemed to trigger something in Tiffany.

"You don't like her?" she asked incredulously.

"I do like her!" Yoona exclaimed. "I just don't know if I like her in that way, that's all..."

"Then why don't you at least give her a chance?"

Yoona didn't answer, subconsciously pulling on the pillows end. Tiffany studied her carefully before asking slowly.

"That person that you mentioned to me before, you're still thinking about her aren't you?"

Yoona found herself hugging the pillow tighter. Yoona had once talked to Tiffany about how she was in love with Yuri but not by name. Tiffany had been Yuri's best friend in high school. It would not make sense if Yoona told Tiffany that she met Yuri after her death.

"Yoona," she started. "It's already been two years. You have to open yourself to new people eventually. Maybe it's time to truly move on."

Yoona bit her lip. Every time she thought of Yuri, she found it so difficult to let go. She knew that Tiffany was right though. She really did need to move on.

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"Good work everybody. The commercial was very well done. It will be broadcast next month," the director announced and Yoona quickly thanked him before leaving. She had promised Hyoyeon that they would go watch a musical later on that day but still just as friends. Hyoyeon had yet to say anything.

Yoona changed out of her CF clothes and back into her own. She exited the studio in a rush. She was late. Yoona pulled out her phone to text Hyoyeon an apology as she snaked through the crowd distractedly and did not notice a runaway vendor with his cart, desperately trying to escape the police officer. A hand wrapped around her waist and pulled Yoona's body

against hers just in time, narrowly missing the speeding cart.

Yoona breathed heavily at the thought of almost getting hit. Her hands were clutching onto the stranger's arm that was still around her. Yoona looked up at her savior and found that the person's face was covered with the hood from her jacket. Yoona did not want to move; this warmth felt so familiar. Before she could ponder any longer, her unknown savior quickly let go and hurried away into the crowd.

Yoona stood frozen. Her mind blurred with so many things but that embrace was unmistakable. Forgetting all about Hyoyeon, she sprinted after her.

"YURI!" she screamed. The hooded figure did not hear her and continued walking. Yoona chased after her, still not giving up even when they reached the sketchier side of the city. Once Yoona caught up with her she ran to her, holding onto her from the back.

"Please tell me you're Yuri. Please," Yoona cried. The stranger lifted her arms hesitantly and placed a hand on Yoona's. Suddenly, Yoona felt a sharp pain across her back and was knocked out. Surprised, the stranger caught her in her arms before she fell and knelt down on the ground beside her.

The person who hit her was looking down on both of them with anger and jealousy. The girl threw her weapon aside and looked at the hooded figure straight in the eye.

"Why did you hit her?" the person asked angrily as she held onto Yoona.

"Because I wanted to. And where were you? You were supposed to come and find me!"

"That doesn't give you the right to hit her," the girl retorted.

The taller of the two scoffed. The spite in her voice when she asked the questions was obvious yet her appearance would have never told you that she had it in her. EunKwon was born with kind features that hid her true personality well and her wardrobe was very much like an average teenager. Right now however, EunKwon was not in her better moods.

"Is she really hurt?" EunKwon muttered stubbornly.

"She's knocked out," she answered, stating the obvious.

"Fine, bring her back but once she's up, she's gone."

The figure lowered her head and waited until EunKwon turned her back on them.



"I can't tell you I'm her because I'm not the person you are looking for." she whispered gently to the unconscious Yoona. She pulled her hood back, revealing long brunette hair with black highlights. She lifted Yoona up onto her back and carried her off.

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When Yoona woke up, she found herself in an unknown place. She soon realized that someone was staring at her.

"Where am I?" she asked dazed. The young girl who was surveying her smiled.

"You're at my house. You're lucky we didn't just leave you on the streets like that. Near here, the dogs are considered more civilized than the beasts who claim they are human."

Yoona looked at her shocked. Just by looking at the girl, she would've never expected something like that to come out of her mouth. Suddenly the door to the room opened and she came in with a canned drink.

"Yuri!" Yoona cried but Yuri did not do anything. She merely glanced at her and handed the drink to the now smirking girl.

"Here's what you asked for EunKwon,? Yuri said quietly. EunKwon took the drink before returning to Yoona.

"So you know her name...interesting. Do you know her Yuri?"

"No, I don't." she responded. EunKwon nodded in comprehension but was not completely satisfied.

"Then I guess we don't really need her anymore. The people outside are getting really restless. It's so annoying to hear them whine. We should just give her to them so they'd shut up, shouldn't we?" she threatened nonchalantly.

EunKwon's casual tone while saying it seemed like she had done this many times. Yoona's eyes widened in fear as EunKwon clapped her hands once and got off her chair.

"Well, guess it's time to throw you out."

EunKwon advanced to get her but Yuri stepped in front of her, stopping her midway.

"I'll take care of her alright?"

EunKwon raised a brow. She frowned slightly at Yuri's sudden request.

"Whatever, do as you wish Yuri but after you're done, I want to talk to you," she said coldly. She threw Yoona one last glare before leaving the room.

Yuri slowly turned on her spot. Yoona quickly pushed herself up and watched her draw near. Even with the changes, Yoona would never forget her nor mistaken her. The girl in front of her was indeed Yuri. Yoona's hands shook as she reached for her face and touched her skin. Yuri was real and alive. Yuri took her wrist, stopping her midway.

"Why do you say you know me?" she asked apprehensively.

Where to even start? Yoona explained slowly, starting from their first encounter.

"Two years ago I suffered from an accident. I have lost my voice and could not speak. I withdrew from the world. I was locking myself up until you came to find me. You helped me out of my solitude. Three days later, you went away. I thought I would never be able to see you again."

Yuri looked confused and turned away from her, dropping her hand down to the bed.

"Then I'm not the person you're looking for," Yuri got off the bed and walked to the window, looking afar but taking in nothing. Yoona did not understand. Why was she pretending so hard not to know?

"Yuri, I know I'm not wrong. You are her. The one I know from two years ago, it's you," she insisted.

"She can't be me!" Yuri said angrily but instantly regretted her outburst. Yuri twisted around to find Yoona's frightened expression.

"I'm sorry...I just can't be her. All my memories start and end here. I've been nowhere else."

Yoona looked down to the floor, holding back tears. The gentle voice that belonged to Yuri, she could hear it in her heart and she could hear it now. It was identical.

"Can you hold me? Even for just a minute?" Yoona asked softly. Yuri didn't understand what was happening as Yoona drew near and encircled her arms around her waist. Yuri felt her heart clench painfully as if trying to tell her something. Yuri's beating heart forced her to hold

onto Yoona tightly, revealing a type of emotion that she had long forgotten. How did this happen?

Im Yoona.

A voice inside spoke to her. Yuri didn't understand where this voice came from but it echoed clearly inside her. It told Yuri her name. They slowly drew apart and Yuri looked at her with utter confusion. The familiarity of the name troubled her, soothed her and made her wonder.

"Im Yoona?" Yuri asked inquisitively. Yoona looked at her with a teary smile.

"I've lost you for two years and wasted the time when I could've been with you. I promise that I will never ever let you leave me again."

With that said, Yoona sealed her promise with a kiss.

Why do I feel this way for her? Why does my heart speak to me like it never did before? Why does it hurt me to let her go?

Yoona's soft lips against hers felt wonderful, her body pressed against hers felt so right. Yuri returned the gentle kisses unknowingly, following the orders her heart demanded.

"Two years ago...you came to find me. You helped me out of my solitude...you are the one I love..."

Yuri eye's shot open. She broke their kiss and pushed her away. Yoona stumbled a few steps backwards.

"Why-"

"I'm not her. I can't be her. You got the wrong person," she stammered. Yuri was scared. There was just no way that she could've been that person.

"You need to go," Yuri said hastily and grabbed her by the wrist. Before Yoona could resist, Yuri pulled her down the stairs and out through the door. It was getting dark and that could only mean chaos. Ignoring Yoona's protests, Yuri dragged her all the way back to where she found her. Yuri flung her forward.

"Go home. I can't be that person for you. I can't pretend to know something I don't. I'm sorry," she said softly.

Yuri looked away from those tears and caused her to falter. Suddenly, a sound echoed through the night and Yuri knew where it came from. Her hand slid into her back pocket and pulled out Yoona's cell phone.

"This person has been phoning non-stop. I've sent her a text telling her to come find you here. This is the person you should be with right now."

Yuri grabbed her hand roughly and forced the phone into her palm. Without looking at her, Yuri turned and broke into a full out sprint, leaving Yoona on the streets alone. Yoona dropped to her knees. She had just made a promise to never let her go but she had just let Yuri leave her once again.

Hyoyeon was panting when she finally found Yoona. She ran to her and dropped down next to her.

"Where were you? I thought you were hurt! Yoona, don't ever scare me that way again," Hyoyeon said as she held onto her tightly. Yoona cried within Hyoyeon's embrace.

"She's gone, she left me again."

~~~~~

Taking a deep breath after the agonizing run, she slowly opened the door. EunKwon was waiting for her inside with her arms crossed on her bed.

"What were you doing back there? I was starting to get worried about you today until I found you and that girl hugging in the stupid alleyway. Why was she holding on to you back in the alley?" she demanded angrily. Yuri could only tell the truth.

"She thought I was someone she knew but I have never met her in my life. She has mistaken," she answered.

"Then why didn't you let me deal with her?" EunKwon questioned.

*Because the moment she touched me, I felt something I've never felt before.*

"That's not important but EunKwon, you can't just go knocking people out like that. Your father would've disapproved. I just don't want you get hurt alright?"

EunKwon breathed loudly at her explanation. It was true. Her father would've punished her if he knew that EunKwon was still fighting. What cheered her up a bit was that Yuri cared for

her.

Yuri fidgeted a little, hesitant to ask a question that she already had the answer for. What were the chances that she remembered wrongly?

"EunKwon, where was I two years ago?"

EunKwon gave her an odd look.

"You were on the bed next to mine. You were not awake yet."

Yuri let out a small but somewhat sad chuckle. That's what she thought. Whoever Yoona was looking for, it was not her.

"Yuri, come here."

EunKwon's voice dropped to a much lower volume as Yuri sat down next to her.

"Are you thinking about your past again?"

Yuri blinked, avoiding her gaze. EunKwon wrapped her arms around Yuri's waist, her chin resting on Yuri's shoulder.

"Yuri, just let go of it. You've tried and nothing came. It'll only create more pain. Just start over again. Forgetting means you can be anyone you want to be from now on. Isn't that better than always struggling?"

Yuri didn't reply. EunKwon didn't know if her words had gotten through but it did. Yuri had tried too hard. Why resist when the second choice was so much simpler to do?

"And just FYI, I don't like it when other people latch onto you and you shouldn't let them either," she scolded in a cute voice while pouting. EunKwon was like a child. Her mood swings were quite serious at times but Yuri knew that she was just lonely and needed someone to be with her. Yuri had known her ever since she woken in the hospital. EunKwon was her first friend.

"Because you, Yuri Kwon," she continued, "You belong to me."

EunKwon kissed her lightly on the cheek before snuggling even closer. Yuri remained motionless. It was the same intimacy than what Yoona and Yuri had shared just an hour ago but the feeling was different...just so different.

~~~~~

"Yoona? Yoona!" her classmate called.

"Huh?"

"The class is over," he said giving her a weird look.

Yoona didn't even realize that they were free to go. The past few days passed like a blur. Nothing had managed to stay in her mind for more than a few seconds. It bothered Yoona too much to have Yuri so close but so far away at the same time. She quickly picked up her cell.

"Hello?"

"Hi Hyoyeon, it's me. You don't have to pick me up today. I have an unexpected club meeting so it's going to take awhile. Can you relay the message to Tiffany for me? Thanks, bye."

Yoona shut her phone quickly and let out a sigh of relief. Lying was not her strong point. Yoona could not help herself. She had returned to this alley waiting for Yuri to appear. No matter how hard she tried, she could not forget. Yoona pushed herself off the wall when she heard someone come back.

Yuri stiffened. Yoona wasn't supposed to be here. She was angry. What if someone had found her before she did?

"Why are you here?"

"I need to talk to you. I need to know."

Yuri flung her arms in exasperation.

"What more do you need? I told you I'm not her!"

Yuri turned to leave but Yoona clung onto her arm.

"Please just think about it. The month of May, I found you on the bridge then you brought me to a restaurant. You could hear me and you taught me how to listen with my heart," she insisted. Yuri stared at her as she continued.

"You came to my school, you slept at my house, and we went out together. Don't you

remember anything?"

Yuri swallowed painfully as she looked at her. She knew nothing of what she was talking about.

"No."

Yoona felt her hopes slipping away.

"Look, I don't remember doing any of those things. No matter how hard you try to force me, I still won't remember."

"Then why did you kiss me? How did you even know my name? You felt something Yuri. I know you did," Yoona said firmly.

Yuri bit her lip. Her mind and her heart told her different things but she could only trust what she knew was true.

"What I felt doesn't matter. I was not even here two years ago meaning I couldn't have been with you. That's fact and I can't change it."

Every time Yuri denied it, it was like a stab at her heart. Yoona couldn't hold in her frustrations any longer.

"Why can't you just trust what your feelings are telling you? Do you know how much you're hurting me right now? Why can't you just remember what we shared?!" she yelled.

"How can I just trust my feelings with nothing proving that they are real? And you, do you really think that it's your trust in your feelings that is telling you that you love me?" Yuri retaliated furiously. Yoona froze, shocked by Yuri's outburst.

"Everything that you just said, aren't they all just *memories*? You say you love me but it's your mind that you're listening to right now Yoona. Your memories of that person, what you guys did together, how you felt about her was of that person and only that person. The one you remember loving, you just *think* it's me. I haven't done a single thing that you mentioned. You don't even know what I've been doing just a week before and you claim to love me?"

Yoona's heart died. The words thrown at her hurt so badly but Yoona could not deny what she was saying. It was true. The memories that she remembered was shared with Yuri's spirit. If the Yuri in front of her was standing right here, then could she really not be her?

"I can't pretend to be someone that has done so much for you. It's not fair for you and it scares me. What if someday you realize that it's not me? What's going to happen then?" Yuri asked her.

Truth be told, Yuri was more than scared. She was terrified. Even if Yuri wanted to be with her, how could she ever match with that person, that Yuri that did so much for her? When Yoona could not give her an answer and Yuri realized that it was impossible for them.

"Don't come to find me. I don't know you and you don't know me. Our lives have never crossed and it's best that it stays that way."

Yuri felt sorry that she had to speak to her in such a way but what better way to make her leave? This shady neighborhood was not a place where she should be. Yuri turned her back on her and walked away. Yoona's tears, how it pained her to see it. It was as if a pair of hands was strangling her, restricting her from breathing. All she wanted was to be that person, the Yuri that Yoona knew and loved. It would make everything so much easier.

~~~~~

"Yoona, what happened?" Tiffany gasped as she opened the door to let her in. Yoona was trembling, her eyes were swollen indicating that she had cried. Tiffany rushed over, encouraging her to sit down and to drink some warm tea.

"Yoona, are you okay?"

Yoona did not answer. Her hands were shaking uncontrollably.

"Why are you shaking like that?" Tiffany asked worriedly. Tiffany knelt down in front of Yoona and held her hands.

"Yoona, what happened? Where were you?"

"I was with Yuri today."

Of all the things Yoona could've said, this was the least expected and Tiffany just didn't understand how she could come up with something like that.

"Yoona, Yuri passed away more than four years ago. It's not possible that you were with her," she answered doubtfully.

"No, I know I'm not wrong. She really is Yuri. I know her touch, I know her voice, and I



know her! I could never mistake her for someone else!" Yoona tried to convince both Tiffany and herself as she clung on tightly on to Tiffany's arms. Tiffany shook her head in denial, refusing to give in.

"Yoona please. I've shown you pictures and I've told you stories about her but you have never met her before! That voice or that touch you are talking about is not her! The person you saw is not Yuri! Yuri died okay? She was attacked by a deranged man and fell into the lake. She died with the person that friggin raped you! Don't you get it? She died because of you!"

Tiffany's eyes widened in shock, breathing heavily after her outburst and she covered her mouth with her hands.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean that. I really didn't Yoona. It's not your fault. I'm so sorry," she stammered but Yoona's grip on her arm loosened and fell limply to her side. What scared her more was that Yoona started to laugh through her tears.

"Yoona?"

"You're right, she was right. Everything you both said is true. What was I thinking? I have never spoken to her in person and I have never felt her touch before when she was alive. I didn't even know that she went to my school," she let out a teary chuckle, laughing at her own stupidity.

"Yoona..." Tiffany started but Yoona stopped her.

"Who am I to claim that I know her when I've never even met her? I'm just an idiot, trying so hard to relive memories that should've never come to existence in the first place. They're not real are they? They're not real."

Tiffany sobbed uncontrollably as she watched Yoona try to laugh it off. The pain on her face, the sadness in her heart, it hurt Tiffany to watch Yoona struggle like this. Tiffany held her tight and together they cried. Memories were only memories and that was all there was to it.

~~~~~

Yoona exited class and Hyoyeon was once again waiting for her outside campus. Two weeks had passed since that incident occurred. Yoona had told herself to forget about it, to forget about everything.

"There's a new restaurant opened nearby. It's a tad expensive but I heard it's pretty good. Do you want to go there?"

Yoona nodded happily for the thought of food always cheered her up. Once they got there, they found a group of people lining up outside the door.

"Wow, this place must be awesome. Look at that crazy line-up!" Hyoyeon laughed and Yoona joined in.

"We have time, let's join the line."

They hurried over to the end of the line, waiting in the cold. Hyoyeon took off her jacket and gave it to Yoona. Yoona tugged on the coat with a shy smile on her face.

Yoona poked her head out curiously as she saw a group of young teenagers handing out pamphlets and carrying an empty donation box, asking the people in front of her for some spare change. The people shook their heads and waved at them saying no. For someone rich enough to eat at this restaurant, they sure were cheap.

One girl broke free from the crowd and tapped Hyoyeon gently on the shoulder. Hyoyeon turned to look at her but was confused. The young girl waved her hands and twisted her fingers into unique shapes, none that Hyoyeon understood. The girl looked down, saddened. She looked so discouraged.

Yoona in turn tapped the young girl's shoulder to get her attention.

What's your name? she signed in similar hand movements. The teenager lifted her head slowly when she realized that Yoona understood.

My name is Sulli, she signed back.

"What are you guys all doing right now?"

I'm volunteering to help raise money to fund my school for children with disabilities. A lot of children are hurt because they are often looked down on or treated differently by others. We want a place where we can feel comfortable being ourselves.

Yoona was very glad that something was being done for them and that Sulli herself was helping others. Yoona had gone through exactly that with no one to help her. She had also once been hurt and had once hid herself from the world.

Yoona reached into her purse and pulled out her wallet. She took out all she had and passed it to Sulli. Sulli's eyes widened in shock. She had not expected so much from her. Sulli quickly

pushed the wad of bills back into Yoona hands, shaking her head.

I cannot take that much! Sulli signed hastily. Yoona laughed lightly and handed it back.

"Please accept this. I really want to help out those children. At one time of my life, I experienced exactly what they are going through so let me do my bit alright?"

Sulli took it back reluctantly. Even so, she still looked a bit downcast.

You're the only one that donated to us so far. They don't even want to look at us.

Yoona understood. It was not just communication that prevented others from helping but rather how they didn't want to get involved. So many people didn't understand.

"Hey, cheer up alright? I know it hurts and at times you feel like there is no one that will understand you but please believe that there is someone that is willing to help. There are people who will love you and every one of those children regardless of what others think. Take me for an example. I can understand you and I will listen to what you have to say. I will listen to you with my heart and so will many others. Please don't give up."

Sulli started tearing up and bowed low before returning with a grateful smile.

Thank you for everything. I won't give up and I'll tell others not to either. If you ever have time please come and visit us. I would really want to see you again.

Yoona smiled and took the pamphlet from Sulli. She studied it carefully. The location was not unfamiliar and she nodded. Sulli grinned at her one last time before skipping back to her group, proudly putting the money into their donation box. Sulli signed something happily at her and Yoona signed back. This was their way of making a promise.

Although Yoona might not have noticed, Hyoyeon was actually listening in on their conversation. She shuffled uncomfortably. It was true that she had been friends with Yoona when she was mute and did not feel ashamed at all being with her. Even so, she realized that she had not done enough to make her feel comfortable. She had watched Yoona get laughed at and she had watched how Yoona was hiding herself in the back of the room but Hyoyeon had done nothing.

"The next two in line please!" a waitress hollered, distracting Hyoyeon from her thoughts. Together the pair went in and took a seat. They chatted happily even after their food arrived. Hyoyeon stopped her eating to point at the opposite table.

"Hey, you see those people?"

Yoona froze. She had heard that line from someone before.

"You see those people?" Yuri had asked pointing at the crowd. Yoona had nodded.

"They can hear a lot of things. They hear wonderful music, what their friends are saying and can hear even the tiniest whispers at times. They hear with their ears, a sense that has been granted to human beings and animals alike. I'm a bit different. I listen with my heart and I choose to listen to you."

Yuri had grinned brightly and even let out a small laugh.

She had smiled so beautifully for her even though they had only just met. Yoona shook her head and turned to look at the direction Hyoyeon was pointing at.

"Looks like it's someone birthday. Ouch, they just smashed his face to the cake," Hyoyeon cringed then laughed. Yoona laughed weakly before returning to her meal. Forgetting was harder than she anticipated.

~~~~~

Hyoyeon walked her home quietly. After the meal, Yoona had done everything half-heartedly. When they reached the house, Yoona handed back Hyoyeon's jacket to her.

"Thank you for tonight. I had fun," she said. Hyoyeon didn't know if it was the right time to mention it but she couldn't let it wait any longer.

"Yoona, can I talk to you for a bit before you go?" Yuri said quietly. Yoona nodded and Hyoyeon took a deep breath.

"We've been friends since high school and we've always been together ever since. I realize now that I think about you and I worry about you more than anyone else. I also feel the happiest when I'm with you. The feelings I have for you exceed what a friend should have. I like you Yoona...will you be my girlfriend?"

Yoona could not pretend that she was not expecting this. Hyoyeon had always been her close friend and she enjoyed her company immensely but to change their relationship from friendship to something more, she was uncertain. Noticing Yoona's troubled expression, Hyoyeon quickly spoke.

"You don't have to reply to me right now. I just wanted you to know how I feel for you. Please think about it."

Yoona could feel how nervous Hyoyeon was. Hyoyeon really did love her yet her heart was still not ready to accept this kind of love.

" Hyoyeon...I don't want to hurt you but I don't want to lie to you either. I'm sorry."

~~~~~

Hiding in the shadows, the figure slowly walked away before she could hear Yoona's answer. The girl had finally confessed and Yuri knew that she shouldn't even be here to watch it. Yuri leaned her back against the wall and her fist pounded on where it hurt most. The physical pain her fist brought was nothing compared to the pain that erupted from her heart.

Yuri did not understand. She did not understand why it tore her apart like this, seeing Yoona with someone else. She slid onto the ground defeated. Yuri knew there was something about her. Ever since they had met, Yuri had been having constant headaches with flashing scenes that she could not recall clearly. It was like a scratched CD, jumping from one part to the next, skipping over important details. Was it even possible for Yuri to have known her? Her lack of memory was taunting her.

"Doctor she's awake!" someone exclaimed next to her. Her fingers twitched but she could not move any other part of her body. She could hear footsteps drawing closer. The woman opened her eyes forcefully and shone light into it. Afterward she spoke.

"Can you hear me? I am your doctor. Do you know what your name is?"

She answered but it came out as a gargled mess. She strained to keep her eyes open and tried again.

Doctor Kim nodded and continued to proceed with her examination.

"Seohyun, keep talking to her. I need her conscious."

The nurse nodded and proceeded with asking questions.

"Do you know where you are right now?"

"Hospital..." she answered weakly.

"Do you know why?"

"No..."

"You have been in a coma for around two years now. You were found on a lake not too far from here. A phone call was made through a payphone to the police department and they found it strange that no one was talking. They searched for the phone's location and when they came, they found you floating unconscious. Luckily, they brought you here just in time."

She groaned from the amount of information. Her vision was blurring again and was slowly drifting back to sleep.

"Seohyun, don't let go back to her sleep yet. Distract her!" Yuri ordered. Seohyun nodded quickly in comprehension. Seohyun grabbed hold of her hand.

"Is there something you really want to do once you get back up?"

Her mind could barely process her surroundings but something echoed inside, telling her that she did.

"Yes..."

"What is it?"

Pain shot through her body and she whimpered, trying to pull her hand away but Seohyun held on tight. Panting slightly afterward, she tried to find the answer to that voice ringing in her head. The throbbing pain took over her and she fell unconscious once more.

~~~~~

*Yuri was looking out at the window blankly. Who was she really? Apart from what the nurse had told her, she could not remember anything but her name.*

*"Don't you ever get tired of looking out the window?" a voice sounded from behind. The voice belonged to the patient beside her who had broken her leg in a fight. Yuri blinked, not knowing what to say.*

*"Well, if you ever do, please talk to me instead. I'm dying of boredom."*

*Yuri soon found out that her name was EunKwon. Because of the days they had spent with each other in the hospital, Yuri and EunKwon soon became friends. One day however, the*

*same nurse from before came in and spoke to the both of them.*

*"EunKwon, your leg has recovered just fine. You're father is filling out the documents but he'll be coming to pick you up very soon," Seohyun told her. EunKwon nodded in understanding.*

*"Yuri, I'm sorry to tell you this but you need to leave the hospital soon. The hospital cannot let you stay any longer because there are just too many new patients coming in. The higher levels say that because you are over 18 and is perfectly health, you should be able to take care of yourself. The tantrum that you threw a week ago didn't exactly help in their decision either..."*

*Yuri had nowhere to go. She does not remember her family or anyone that she might've known from the past. She had nothing on her, nothing to help her survive once she leaves. Nonetheless, Yuri nodded, accepting her words. Other people needed this bed more than she did.*

*EunKwon looked at her worriedly. Her dad suddenly came in through the door and said hello to Yuri. Yuri inclined her head in respect.*

*"Yuri doesn't have anywhere to go dad. The hospital is kicking her out," EunKwon declared.*

*"Really? How can the hospital just do that to a child?!" the man bellowed, his voice thunderous. EunKwon took the opportunity to leap off her bed and clung on to her dad's arm.*

*"Do you think that she can stay with us? I really want her to stay with us," she suggested. EunKwon's father looked a bit hesitant.*

*"EunKwon dear, what if she doesn't want to stay with us? We have a difficult background. Don't you think we should ask her first?"*

*The man turned to Yuri.*

*"Do you have anywhere to go? Any family members or friends?"*

*Yuri lowered her head shamefully.*

*"Well, we have a spare room and if you don't mind how messy our house is then we would love to have you stay with us."*

*Yuri didn't know how to respond. The kindness he had shown was more than she could ask*

*for. Her eyes started to turn teary. EunKwon beamed and leaned her head onto Yuri's shoulder, hugging her arm.*

*"Then that's settled. Yuri's coming with us!"*

After that, Yuri had never returned. She had left with EunKwon and her family but now she knew what she needed to do. The tragedies of her past had taken over her life long enough. It was as if someone lighted a fire inside her. She was now in control. If there was anything, no matter how small, that showed even the tiniest connection between Yoona and her, then Yuri was going to find it.

Yuri pushed herself off the wall, determined. If there was ever a place she needed to go, Yuri needed to go home.

~~~~~

Every so often, Yoona had found time to return to this place. Last time however was near early spring. Now, it was getting very close to winter. Instead of stopping by the lake however, she passed it while driving and headed for another destination.

As promised, Yoona had found a day off to visit this new school that Sulli attended. Sulli greeted her cheerfully and took her hand as she led her through the hallways. Yoona looked curiously into each room and studied every feature the school included. Braille markings were there for the blind, ramps and many other additions were also inputted but Yoona felt that the best part of this school was that everyone was willing to lend a helping hand. The teachers were friendly, the staff was supportive and the children were happy.

Yoona greeted everyone she passed and Sulli was more than thrilled to have Yoona around. Of course, she couldn't help but ask for a simple autograph.

"I'm not even popular. You need someone like Lee Hyori. That way, people will actually know who it's from," Yoona teased but Sulli insisted.

I saw you on commercials and you were really good unnie. I know that one day you'll become a great actress and I would have the honour of saying that I know you and have your autograph.

Yoona adored this girl. To be honest, Yoona wished that she could have been as cheerful as Sulli at the time when she could not speak. If she had been more like Sulli, she would have met more people and opened herself a bit more.

Yoona signed Sulli's notebook with a small message on the side. Sulli beamed at her and dragged her forward to the last room in the hall.

I want you to meet Mr. Song. He's a volunteer here and he's a really nice person. He always helps whenever he can.

Yoona nodded and followed her in the room. Mr. Song was playing the piano quietly to himself when he heard someone enter. He smiled in the direction that the sound was coming from while still playing.

Yoona stared at the man. It was him. She would never forget this man's face. Those fingers that were playing the piano now were the same fingers that had curled around Yuri's neck. Yoona's hand clenched into a fist, shaking. He was still alive yet something made her anger waver. The man's eyes were unfocused and were not looking at her. He was blind.

Sulli tapped quick rhythm on the table and Mr. Song smile grew wider.

"Sulli, welcome back,"

Sulli quickly tapped something else and Mr. Song understood. This was their way of communication.

"We have a visitor. Hello, what's your name?"

Yoona hesitated before answering. She struggled to keep her voice calm.

"Im Yoona."

"Very nice to meet you Yoona," he said. Yoona thought that he had died along with Yuri. Now that he was sitting in front of her, she had a question that burned her insides.

"How did you survive?"

The man looked surprised, not quite understanding her question.

"Pardon?"

"I mean...your eyes, how did it happen?"

The man pondered on that question carefully. He sighed as he recalled what happened.

"It was my punishment. I have done something very wrong, two things in fact. I fell in water and I thought I would've drowned. I was sent to the hospital when I was found. When I woke up, I realized I was blind."

Yoona swallowed as she listened. This man destroyed her life and destroyed Yuri's. One side of her wanted him dead; his life in exchange for Yuri's.

"I regret what I have done. During the long days at the hospital, I realized how wrong I was for doing what I did. My wife and daughter left me, people were looking at me differently and I blamed someone else for it but not anymore. It was my own fault and I deserved it. I should have died but someone gave me a chance."

The man cleared his throat before continuing. Yoona didn't know where this was going.

"They told me that someone had made a call to the police after we fell. Someone saw us and saved us. Because of that call, we survived and were brought to the hospital. It was as if the heavens have opened up to give me one more chance."

A call? Could it be that the call that had saved him was made by her? Yoona had dialed 911 before Taeyeon could stop her but she did not manage to hold on long enough to hear someone reply. The police had gotten her final struggle to save her. If what he said was true, then she had changed the past.

Yoona dropped to the ground. Sulli hurried to help her, asking her if she was alright. No, she was not alright. He said we, he said us. Silent tears were leaking out, mixed with countless emotions but filled with hope. She hastily wiped her tears with her sleeve and stood back up. Yoona had doubted herself so many times after their last encounter. Tiffany was right but Yoona was not wrong either. Her voice was trembling when she asked.

"The girl...that fell with you...was she saved as well?"

The man did not understand how she knew of the girl student that fell with him. He frowned slightly as something dawned on him but answered her question anyways.

"Yes."

~~~~~

Yuri walked alone in the small town that she had once called home. Although she did not remember that time, she supposed that she had spent most of her life here. It was a rather cold day, leaves blown away ruthlessly by the howling wind. She had walked through almost the

whole town, hoping that something would spark her memory. None did.

Yuri had asked people if a person named Yuri Kwon ever existed but apparently not. The only information slightly more relevant to her was that a family of three with the same surname had moved away almost three years ago. As to where, no one knew.

The wind started to pick up and soon it was raining. Yuri ducked her head at the sudden downfall and ran to the nearest building. Luckily, the doors were unlocked and she pushed through. The weather forecast was a hoax. The weather man announced with a cheery voice that it was going to be a cloudless sunny day and Yuri, sadly enough, believed him.

Yuri surveyed the inside of the building. It was a school with students rushing to their classes. Every one shot a look at the misplaced stranger before hastily getting to class. Yuri knew she shouldn't be in here right now but she suddenly felt something drawing her in. The setting of the flashes that took place in her mind was from here. Yuri hurried past the students, hands touching the walls for familiarity. She had been here before, this was her school.

Yuri paced through the halls looking for clues while ignoring all the weird looks she was getting. Yuri was nearing the end of the hall with still nothing. What did she miss? She spun, studying every single door to her sides. As if calling her back, the last door to the right seemed to pulse in a steady rhythm that matched her footsteps as she drew closer. It was like a vibrating image inside her mind and flashes started to occur again.

Yuri pushed the door open and let out a sigh in relief. There was nothing, just a simple bed on the side. Carefully studying the room, Yuri concluded that it was the nurse's office. Her memory was starting to stir.

In this room, there was a man. She remembered feeling intense anger and without her even knowing, Yuri's hand had curled into a fist. Not understanding, she quickly backed out of the room, shaken by the arousal of resentment.

Now that the students were in their class, Yuri was free to explore a bit more. Yuri turned to the one a few steps away and entered. It was like a storeroom. Yuri stepped over the disorganized objects lying on the floor and examined the labeled boxes on the shelves carefully. If she had left here around two years ago was unconscious for another two, then Yuri needed one that dated 2008.

Yuri scrunched up her face, waving her hand in front of her to swat away the filth. The box that she pulled down from the shelf was with no doubt home to many dust bunnies. Putting it down to the floor, she opened the box carefully and took out the first thing that caught her eye. It was a yearbook.

Yuri flipped the pages quickly, looking for proof that she had once been here and there she was. Yuri Kwon, senior year of 2008 along with many others. That was not what she was looking for however. Yuri's fingers flipped to the next few pages, looking for more and finally her eyes locked onto one picture. Im Yoona, it said underneath the photo. She looked young and had a shy smile. Her mind exploded with images.

*"Mr. Choi!"*

*"Are you okay?"*

*"Did you know that Yoona wants to be an actress?"*

*"She's pretty."*

*"I know."*

*"Please don't call her 'the mute girl'. Her name is Im Yoona."*

*She had watched her act, watched her smile, and watched her cry. She wanted to tell her that even if no one else in the world understood her, she did. Her last words escaped as bubbles and her eyes closed, her body no longer fighting to survive.*

*Her last words..."Yoona, I love you."*

All that had made Yuri's heart feel heavy had suddenly lifted as her fingers gently traced the name again. Yuri held the book closely as she found an open space to sit down in the mess. This book, it was the one solid connection that Yoona and Yuri shared. She leaned her head back, eyes closed and smiled.

*Thank you for letting me remember her again.*

~~~~~

Yoona said a quick goodbye to Sulli and left the building. She needed go back and find Yuri. Once outside, Yoona grimaced at the sight. Stupid weather man, he always lied to her. There was no time to wait. Yoona ducked her head under her hands and ran into the rain. To make things worse, the road that led to the school was under construction meaning that she had parked far away.

She waited impatiently along with many others for the light to change. The wind was starting to pick up and Yoona found herself hugging herself, no longer bothering to shield herself from the rain. Someone tugged her soaked jacket and Yoona looked down on the little boy next to her.

"My grandmother said that if you get wet, you will catch a cold. That's why I brought my umbrella today. Would you like to share with me?" the boy asked earnestly. Yoona was amused. The umbrella that he carried was miniature sized and was perfect for a child but for her to get under it was impossible.

The wind blew and caught the open umbrella under its wing. The umbrella wrenched out of the boy's hand and flew onto the streets.

"My umbrella!"

Without thinking, the little kid chased after it, ignoring the red light. The cars did not see him.

"Watch out!"

Yoona sprinted after him and shielded the boy with her body. The car screeched as the driver slammed down on the brakes but the slippery floor made it very difficult. Yoona shut her eyes.

~~~~~

Yuri jerked awake, panting. Within seconds, the feeling of panic took over her body. Yuri quickly picked herself from the ground and sprinted out the room. Yuri bolted across the hall, dodging and pushing students who were in her way. With the yearbook still in her hand, she ran down onto the streets.

Yuri had no idea where she was going to but a voice had called for her and it needed her. Without hesitation, she followed its plea. Her wet hair blurred her vision as she spun desperately searching for its owner.

"Please tell me where you are," she pleaded. Yuri sprinted blindly, not knowing where it would lead her. Without warning, she crashed into a burly man and fell to the ground, her hands scraping the uneven gravel. The man did not stop but rushed away. With trembling arms, she slowly pushed herself back up.

Still on the ground, Yuri stared at her bleeding hands. Where was her book? Her heart stopped when she realized the book had fallen into the deep puddle beside her. Yuri's only

connection with Yoona was drowning.

Yuri sank her hand into the water and pulled it back out. She took off her jacket and wrapped it carefully within it. Once done, Yuri scrambled back onto her feet. The voice was still calling for her.

Yuri found herself drawing closer and closer to an intersection crowded with people. Yuri forced herself into the crowd, finally enabling herself to see what had happened. An umbrella was lying on the ground by itself. In the middle of the intersection, a car had stopped slanted with its door open. The atmosphere felt solemn.

Yuri scanned quickly and found the driver talking to an elderly woman, clutching onto a little kid. The grandmother thanked the man before rushing to her other savior. The woman blocked the person from view but once she moved, Yuri finally saw her. The voice belonged to her.

Yoona pushed her drenched hair back, wiping her forehead from sweat. It had been a close call but she was glad that the driver had stopped just in time and that the boy was safe. As she stood up, Yoona found someone watching her.

Yuri broke through the crowd and took Yoona's wrist, dropping her bundled jacket onto the ground. Yuri embraced her tightly, refusing to let go for she was afraid that if she did, she would not be able to find her again. Yuri's tears mixed in with the undying rain. The dread that Yuri felt when she thought of what could've happened scared her so badly.

"I will never let you go and I will never forget you again. I want to remember for you. All I want is you."

~~~~~

Back at the inn that Yuri was staying for the time being, she was sitting on her bed, wiping her hair dry. Yuri then opened the yearbook once again, surveying it carefully. The joy and relief of realizing her connection with Yoona was immeasurable but something still nagged her. Yoona had not known her back then. This book had awakened her and allowed her memories of Yoona to return yet the ones that Yoona had mentioned were still not found. If it was this piece of missing recollection that had finally led to their meeting, then the Yuri that was sitting here right now had yet to proclaim her existence to Yoona.

The sound of the doorknob turning interrupted her thoughts and Yoona came out from her shower. Yoona sat down next to Yuri, biting her lip nervously. Now that Yuri remembered what happened before she fell, Yoona wondered what Yuri would be feeling right now.

"Yoon-"

"Yu-"

They had spoken at the same time. Yoona motioned Yuri to continue and Yuri took a deep breath.

"When we went to the same high school together...you didn't know me right?"

Yoona nodded regretfully.

"Then I have not met you yet...that person is still not me," Yuri faltered, looking down at her scarred hands. Yoona smiled because now she knew for sure that her heart had never been wrong.

"No, that person is you."

"But I still don't remember ever doing what you said. That person that came to find you, it's still not me. I-"

Yoona pressed her lips onto Yuri's, stopping her midway. She kissed her gently, her hand caressing Yuri's cheek. Yuri returned it but with slight hesitance. When they parted, Yoona looked deeply into her eyes, imploring Yuri to trust her.

"Yuri, don't think about what I've said anymore. I was so caught up in my memories that I just tried to force it on you. I just thought of what I wanted and I've hurt you. I'm sorry. I should have realized what I was doing earlier."

Yuri felt herself sadden as she wiped Yoona's tears away with her fingers. Yoona sniffed and calmed herself, now turning to smile at her. Yuri didn't realize till now how much she wanted to see that smile. Yuri's life mission for the longest time had been to make Yoona happy but it was now Yoona who was making her feel like the happiest person on Earth. It was as if that smile had given her hope.

"What exactly happened back then doesn't matter anymore. We worry too much over it and we distance ourselves from each other, hurting both of us. All I know right now is that the one that I'm truly in love with is you. That is what my heart is telling me. The times that we don't remember or wasted, let's just let it go and make new ones. What matters most about are the feelings I have for you and Yuri Kwon, I want to be with you now and forever."

Yoona paused to ask the question that she wanted most to be answered.

"Yuri...do you feel the same way about me?"

For the longest time, it had been so hard for Yuri to choose whether to remember or to forget about her past. Yoona had made Yuri want to forget so that she could hide and cry alone yet she had also made Yuri want to remember.

Which to choose?

It was no longer a question Yuri had to be concerned about. What to remember or what to forget was already determined by her heart. Yes, she had forgotten many things but her feelings for Yoona had never disappeared and nothing would ever make them go away.

Yuri kissed her tenderly on the forehead and inched her way back onto the lips. There was no longer doubt or hesitation. Their hands entwined as they fell onto the bed. Yuri lifted Yoona's hand so that she could feel the rapid beating of her heart.

Words were unnecessary to express how much she felt for her. Every beat, every kiss, every touch, it only said one thing and Yoona could hear it clearly inside her. Those words were said aloud too often, so much that most believe that it had lost its true meaning but for those who understand what they were feeling right now as they held onto each other, you would know that those words would never wear out.

Yoona, I love you.

I love you too Yuri.

~~~~~

It was early spring once again and as promised, Yoona was at the bridge staring out at the lake, admiring its beauty. The weather was nice and the lake was gleaming from the sunlight. It was absolutely stunning. Yoona looked down at her reflection and it revealed her sweet smile. Her lonely reflection was joined by another as arms wrapped around her waist.

"When are we going to eat?"

Yoona slapped her playfully on the arm as she whined but Yuri didn't seem to mind.



"You know, of all the things Tiffany told me about you, she never told me you were a shikshin."

"I'm just one of many," she replied nonchalantly. Yuri turned her around and leaned in, wanting to capture those lips when an annoying sound came to interrupt them. Yoona slipped her hand into her pocket and pulled out her cell. Changing it to a video call, she could see Tiffany's grinning face.

"Hello Tiffany?"

"Yoona! I have something amazing to tell you!" the phone squealed.

In a flash, Yuri snatched the cell from Yoona's hand and shouted into it.

"Yah mushroom! I've waited long enough alright? Why can't you just hold it in you a bit longer?!"

"Because Hyoyeon asked me out again! Eeeeeeeek!"

Yuri yanked the phone further away from the unnaturally high-pitched sound but could still hear it clearly. Tiffany had not changed a bit. Yoona laughed and congratulated her. Yuri on the other hand was a bit more curious.

"Where are you guys going?"

"Amusement park."

"What?! Kim Hyoyeon is so sly! Tiffany, no matter how hard she tries to convince you, don't go into the haunted house or anywhere dark and secluded alright?"

Tiffany bit her lip shyly and twirled her long straight hair.

"What if I want to go in?"

"Tiffany, you must resist! If you don't, she'll attack you like this!" Yuri quickly demonstrated what she meant by giving Yoona a peck on the cheek. Yoona blushed while Tiffany cringed.

"You guys are ewww! And your whole lecture meant nothing. All you wanted to do was to kiss Yoona! You can't deny it can you?"

Yuri grinned evilly while nuzzling her cheek on Yoona's.

"No."

Pushing Yuri away, Yoona quickly grabbed the phone back.

"Tiffany, ignore her. Just have fun. We're going to visit Sulli again but we'll be back for dinner. See you later!"

Tiffany nodded and waved goodbye. Yoona stuck her phone back into her pocket and when she turned, Yuri was already back to kiss her on the lips. Yoona returned it contentedly wrapping her arms around Yuri's neck. After all they've been through, they were back here again and this time it was not the end but rather a very beautiful new beginning.

**~End~**