**San Jose, United States of America, 7 Hours Later**

"I kinda don't feel well..." - Hyuna whined.

The two girls who chatted and tattled happily immediately stopped their argument, hearing Hyuna's statement.

"Maybe it'd be better if I went home"

Jihyun knew that Hyuna just didn't feel like partying with all those gloomy thoughts to deal with, so she didn't complain too much and gave her a nod of understanding.

Gayoon, on the other hand, seemed a little bit upset. - "Come on, you are missing all the fun!" - She pouted in disappointment - "How can you be sick the day of the solstice!?"

Words faded out when she noticed Jihyun's glower, who signaled her not to twist the knife in the wound.

"If you don't feel well you'd really better head home and get some rest, girl" - Jihyun said in a gentle voice, trying to play down Gayoon's excessive reaction - "Do you want us to walk you home?"

Hyuna refused and bid a weak goodbye to her friends.

Jihyun took another sip of her drink, quietly watching the younger girl who walked away behind the door of the café. She waited for her to disappear before turning her attention to the sandy-haired girl.

"Did you really have to reproach that she is going to miss all the fun?" - She exasperatedly asked.

"I just wanted to tell her that we will miss her, how is this wrong?" - Gayoon justified. - "And she really acts weird lately, why don't she just relax a little bit to have a drink with us?"

Jihyun just shook her head - "She suffers from an illness that you have suffered from before..."

Gayoon understood what she meant, but quickly changed topic not to awaken those old wounds.

Her friendship with the red-haired American girl had grown up firm and strong over time and even if it sometimes made her cry in pain, she had already accepted that they liked the same person.

It was hard, but she had to be supportive not to lose another one of the only three people who really cared about her.

Losing Jiyoon's heart like a fool in favor of others was unforgivable, but losing Hyuna and Jihyun's friendship would have killed her.

"I'm sorry" - Jihyun muttered, noticing her sorrowful look - "I shouldn't have..."

She didn't want to pick that kind of conversation. It was the worst place, in public, and even the night she was supposed to have fun, but that awkward dialogue were interrupted by a couple of newcomers.

"Dani!" - Jihyun shouted, sweetening her voice.

The girl ran towards her boyfriend who smiled and gave him a peck on the lips. - "I missed you so much" - She softly added, grabbing Daniel's hand who took a seat and waved a polite greeting to the sandy-haired girl.

Gayoon just ignored their bothersome outpourings of love, and focused on the girl who followed the brown-haired dude.

There weren't words that fit a proper description for the weird girl who stood before them.

She was dressed halfway between quite stylish outfits and a few pieces of clothing of a skater in the suburbs, with the large jeans accented by a pair of quirky earrings and an oversized red t-shirt.

Her hair was brownish and deliberately messy but styled almost flawlessly with a few dyed strips of red that matched with her hazel eyes.

Under the layer of queerness she was really cute.

She and Daniel shared the same eyes and their facial features resembled each other, but while he was tidied with his well-ordered beard and his short hair, she seemed to issue oddities for each small detail.

"I finally have the opportunity to make you two meet" - Daniel stated with a smile - "Jihyun, this is my sister Kylie. Kylie, this is Jihyun"

Gayoon listened to the bunch pleasantries, and quietly shook his sister's hand when Jihyun introduced her as a close friend.

Her English wasn't still even comparable to fluent, but she managed not to look too clumsy to his sister, scraping through with a few nods and muttered phrases.

The place was getting warmer as more and more people started partying, drinking and chatting in every corner.

The amount of alcohol she had drunk, the loud music that was drawn out of the amplifiers mixed with the countless number of voices of all kinds made the sandy-haired girl dizzy.

Jihyun and Dani sweetly isolated in their own private world, leaving the other two girls alone, which made Gayoon somehow uncomfortable.

Kylie examined her persistently with her charming yet piercing gaze, as if she were trying to study her in all the smallest details.

The brown-haired girl drew a smile and ventured an attempt to start a conversation with her, still cautiously observing her from head to toe.

"They seem a little bit busy with their own stuff, so..." - She chuckled, pointing at the couple, who kissed quite passionately - "Why don't we just let them be and have a drink, instead?"

Gayoon was a seized with a mixture of surprise and pleasure when she noticed that she was the one who were being chatted up.

The girl had somehow envisaged that girl as a boring and even snooty young business woman who would have looked down on her discounted her for the whole night.

Kylie was light years away from the person she expected, with her lighthearted personality and her immaculate savoir-faire.

"So, I figured out you are not very proficient in English, are you?" - She asked, earning a nod. - "I don't mind your accent, though; I have a Korean employee who speaks like you. Your accent is cute..."

Gayoon noticed she was very skilled with girls.

Kylie definitively knew how to touch the right topics at the right moment, making her at ease and relaxed, but on the other hand she was more likely to be a player.

The memories of her last one night stand still hurt and she exactly didn't want to repeat a similar experience, so she kinda got watchful to the advances of the other girl.

It felt like she was betraying her love for Jiyoon, even if the girl in first place was the one who refused her.

She couldn't accept that mistakes she had committed in the past had them turned apart so quickly without appeal and even if she tried to start over the girl she loved didn't seem to notice.

Her coldness was like a wild beast that devoured all the hope she felt, and her indifference daunted her feelings.

Maybe it was just the drinks she had gulped down but she felt dizzy and the urgency to roll away and cry alone was pressing.

Luckily enough, Sohyun passed by and came to greet her allowing her an excuse to temporarily refuse her flirts.

"Hey, Gayoon!" - The younger girl shouted, but immediately weakening her voice one she had noticed the brown-haired girl that looked at her with a slight disappointed.

"Whoops, did I interrupt anything?" - She smirked.

"No, you idiot, you did not" - Gayoon remarked it, stressing the not - "She's Daniel's sister"

Kylie skillfully disguised her disappoint for the interruption and introduced to the younger girl, who returned the greeting almost losing her balance and clutching to the counter.

She was mildly sloshed according to the sweaty face colored with a mouthed grin.

Her expression were euphoric way over the limit of sobriety but she still looked enough heedful to carry on a conversation and she decided to use the opportunity to get away for a moment.

"I need to go to the bathroom" - She grumbled half aloud, walking towards the restroom.

The sandy-haired girl made her way through the crowd and pushed the wooden door.

Stepping in, she leaned against the sink and raised her gaze to the mirror to observe her own reflection.

It returned the stare on the smooth surface and she could see her tired face altered by the drinks and her watery eyes wetted by the warm tears that flowed on her tender fairy skin.

Her heart raced and her face reddened as the sound of her sobs filled the air.

Each time she tried to start over again and forget about Jiyoon that nagging little voice inside the head reminded her of the countless mistakes that had led her to get mad in pain.

She kept repeating herself that it lied.

Jiyoon wasn't her salvation but the source of the problem. The thin line between love and obsession was blurred by the ethanol and she failed to see it anymore.

Her mind flew back to the time she used to take drugs.

She heard herself running in the forest with Hyunjung to get dead drunk and have sex on the wild meadow, without worrying about the wound caused by the brambles and by the stinging nettle.

It felt like being a God, immortal and invulnerable.

But the day after the bruises would have taken their toll and the drug was not enough to make it stop. She needed the feeling of freedom and yet she wasn't ready to bear the pain later.

Jiyoon was like a forest, elusive and untamed.

She caused the wounds and the only solution to keep her alive without giving up on her was the paracetamol that happened to take the shape of a certain red-haired girl...

"I knew I would find you here"

Gayoon heard a voice behind her who spoke with a trembling voice, but didn't have the strength to watch her directly in the eyes and stared at the mirror, instead.

"Go away" - She blurted.

Jihyun didn't leave. She neared to the sandy-haired girl and gently hugged from behind her slim body, seeking for her gaze on the reflecting glassy surface.

She dried Gayoon's tears with a finger, and finally their eyes met.

"You can't escape forever and you know it..." - Jihyun whispered - "You have to tackle the problems"

"How can I even try to tackle my problems if the only person who truly knows how to make me feel better doesn't even notice me" - Gayoon sobbed, trying hard to calm - "I am not worth anything, after all..."

The girl held her tighter, trying to remedy her tremors.

"You will win her over eventually, you just have to believe in yourself" - She sighed.

"I am not talking about Jiyoon, and you know it..." - She wearily replied, finally turning her back to look into her eyes - "I got over Jiyoon, she only made me suffer, but you... you always manage to make me feel important"

Their bodies were leaned against each other.

They interlaced their fingers together and as their faced neared Gayoon could feel fervency invade her skin, gently tickling her with a feeling of warmth and delicacy.

When their lips touched, it felt like blazing in the flames of an imaginary pyre.

Gayoon wanted it to last more, but the red-haired girl immediately pulled out. - "I am sorry, I shouldn't deceive you like this" - She sorely stated, asking for forgiveness with her eyes.

She sensed Jihyun's body that left her and exited the restroom.

Gradually, she felt the flames burn out and her body lose heat, but she smiled brightly.

She believed in love again.