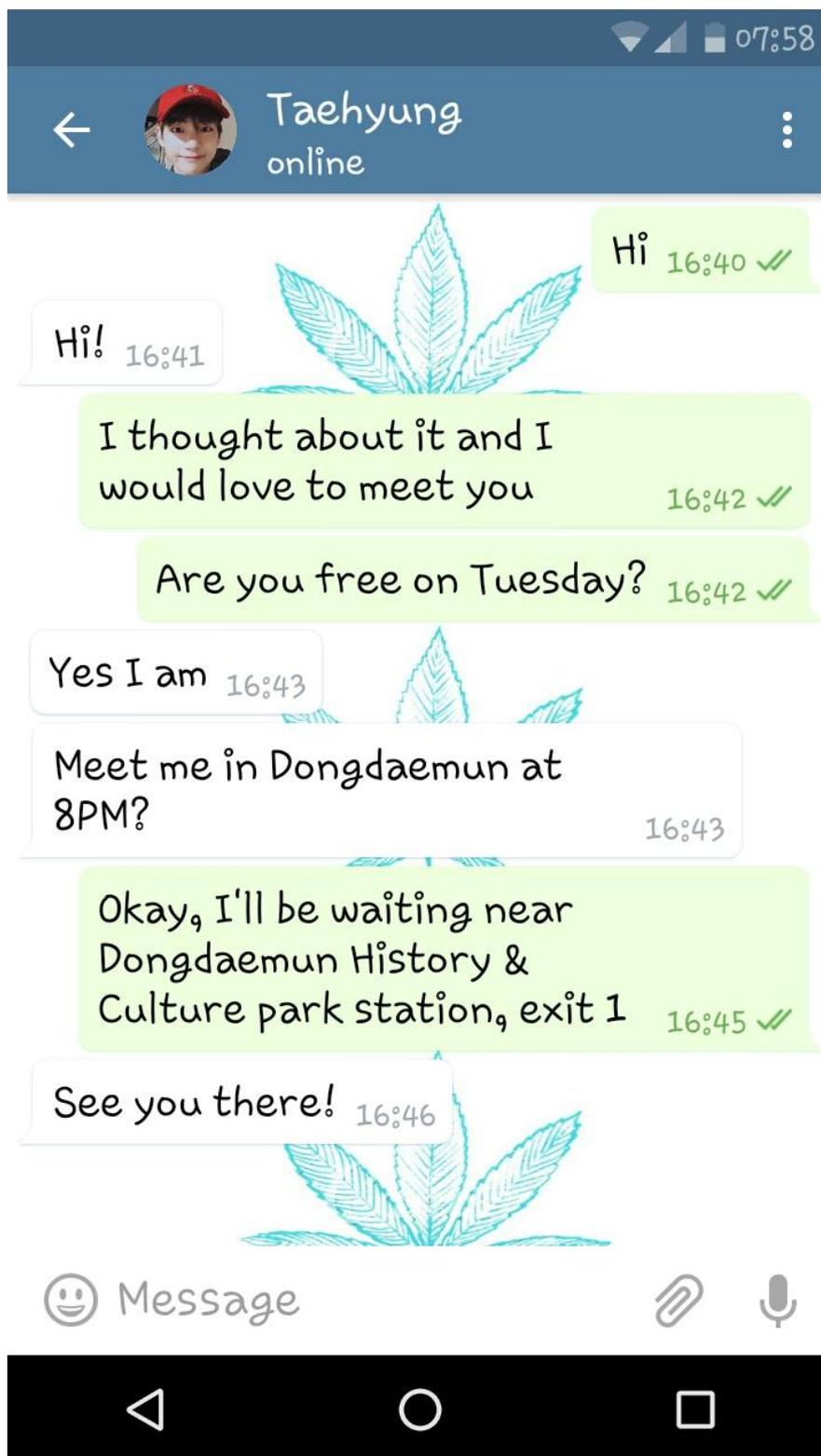


The dreamy one



For some reason, Lilah always considered Dongdaemun to be a safe haven. She could walk around the area for hours and she would never feel tired. She was glad she was visiting the place one last time before heading back home.

“Excuse me, Lilah?” a raspy voice rung in her ear.

“Oh, you must be Taehyung. Nice to meet you!” she let out a shy smile.

As if his profile picture wasn’t surreal enough, Taehyung was even dreamier in person. Lilah couldn’t help but find herself fixating his attire in admiration. He was rocking a denim jacket on top of a plain white Tee with black pants and checker vans. She was wearing a red and white romper with white vans and a short denim jacket.

“So, you told me you haven’t been everywhere here in Seoul,” Taehyung initiated.

“Yeah, the seasonal rain can really ruin your plans,” she sighed.

“Tell me about it.” He suggested, “Well, we can start from here and take a main tour around the district. Did you go to Namsan Tower yet?”

“Not yet, but that’s definitely on my bucket list,” she divulged. “Shall we?”

The pair walked around the area for a while, before Lilah realized that their original itinerary was drifting.

“Taehyung, where are we going?” she asked, beginning to worry.

“Ah ... I think we’re lost,” he felt apologetic.

The confusion on Taehyung’s face amused Lilah. She got lost in Seoul herself a couple of times, but losing the way with a local as a guide was definitely a first for her. “It’s okay, we can walk around until we find our way.”

“That might take quite some time. Let me look up the closest bus station,” he helplessly tried to save the situation.

By the time they reached the bus station, their ride had already left. They sat on the bench waiting for the next bus, before Taehyung abruptly stood. “Do you drink coffee?”

“No, but I drink hot chocolate,” she replied, eyeing Taehyung in confusion.

“Okay, wait here. I’ll be right back,” he left his seat in a hurry.

"It's not like I can go anywhere, but sure!" she inaudibly answered him with a smile.

A few minutes later, Taehyung showed up with two ice cream cups in his hands. "I'm sorry, the coffee place I know around here was closed, so I got us ice cream. I didn't know which flavor you'd like, so I went with Vanilla as a safe choice."

"Vanilla is actually my favorite flavor, thank you!" she nodded as she grabbed it.

Soon after, the bus arrived. "That's our cue. Let's go, Lilah."

The bus ride was offly quiet. Taehyung was a good eater; he finished his ice cream in a jiffy. Lilah, on the other hand, took small spoonfuls every now and then. She was a nervous eater by nature, and eating in front of someone she just met didn't make things any easier.

From time to time, Taehyung would introduce some sites they passed by. He was very thoughtful and caring. Soon enough, she started feeling more comfortable around him.

"We're here!" Taehyung announced as he stood up, followed by Lilah.

"Ouah, the night view is amazing!" she gasped.

"I agree, starry nights are my favorite," he confessed. "We're going to take a lot of stairs, watch your steps."

One thing was for sure, Taehyung did not lie about the amount of stairs that were awaiting them. By the time they made it to the entrance, they realized that they may have come too late.

"Ah, the place is closing in 20 min," Taehyung sighed.

"It's okay," Lilah assured him, "I don't mind. We don't have to take the elevator, we can just wander around until closing time."

"More stairs? Are you sure?" Taehyung inquired.

"I'm certain," she affirmed. "Let's go!"

Just like she's heard and read and saw online, Namsan Tower was basically lovers' nest. Lilah could spot her native language on some of the love locks, and that warmed her heart. Not only couples locked their hearts in this place, but also friends, families, and so on.

"I don't believe in the love lock myth," Taehyung suddenly spoke.

"Oh yeah?" Lilah pouted, "Why is that?"

“Because so many couples have entrusted their relationships here, and they’re all broken up now,” He answered.

“I see,” she nodded. “Did you ever come here with your girlfriend?”

“No,” he quickly denied, “Like I said, I don’t believe in this myth.”

“I see where you come from,” she agreed. “I mean, I wouldn’t want to bet the future of my relationship on a myth either.”

The pair followed the long trail of stairs that led them to Seoul City Wall. Hiking the ancient wall was on Lilah’s bucket list, so she didn’t mind the hassle. But along the way, she started losing balance as their stroll progressed.

“Are you okay? You seem unwell,” Taehyung worriedly asked.

“I-I’m fine, I’m just a little bit dizzy,” Lilah reassured her partner.

“Do you want to take a break?” he offered.

“No, it’s okay. Let’s keep going,” she objected.

“Are you sure?” he eyed her suspiciously, “We still have a long way to go.”

“Yes, and it’s nearing midnight, so the faster we go, the better,” she took a few steps ahead.

As they finished their mini-debate, a few drops of rain started landing.

“What do you know,” he joked, “It looks like the weather won’t let us have that break anyways.”

Luckily, Lilah was anticipating the rain since she was stuck under it so many times before. She opened her umbrella and invited Taehyung to join her underneath it. He was a big guy, so they were bound to get closer to each other to shield themselves from the rain.

On their way down, a distant scenery caught Lilah’s attention. She suddenly stopped to take a picture and handed Taehyung the umbrella. As she was focusing her phone on the view, he stood behind her and raised the umbrella above her head while she took the picture.

With the distance between them shortening, Lilah’s cheeks became red. Taehyung noticed it and couldn’t let it slide. “Lilah, your face is red.”

“It is?” she tried to act nonchalantly, “It must be because we walked a lot. God, I hope it’s because we walked a lot.”

Taehyung immediately understood that his gesture intimidated her. In response, he gave her back the umbrella. "Here, you can have it. The rain is not heavy so I don't mind walking under it."

"But you might catch a cold!" Lilah felt bad that her sudden reaction may have made Taehyung uncomfortable.

"I don't mind," he assured her, "Plus, I think I'm strong enough to handle a cold."

"Well then," Lilah stopped and closed the umbrella, "I guess I'm strong enough to handle it as well."

The long walk suddenly landed the duo near Deoksugung Stone-wall road.

"You know, there is a rumor that says that couples who go through this road are bound to break up. It's a myth that's been going on for quite some time," Taehyung narrated.

"Interesting," she commented, "Perhaps, the couples who locked their hearts in Namsan Tower went through this alley, which led to their eventual break up."

"That's an interesting way to put it!" Taehyung couldn't hide his enthusiasm about her theory.

Sadly, their conversation got interrupted, as Lilah wasn't looking where she was walking and ended up stepping on a broken tile that had water underneath it. Her right foot was immediately soaked.

"Ah, just great!" she sighed in disbelief.

"Oh, how bad is it? Do you need tissue?" Taehyung tried to help.

"I don't think tissue is gonna help dry all of this off," she sassily replied.

"Ha, you're a smart one," he laughed it off.

"Not in this situation, I'm not," she felt silly.

Although it was almost midnight, Taehyung kept his word and took Lilah everywhere she was supposed to go but couldn't. From the gloomy BokgyeongBok palace to the Cheonggyecheon stream, and even Korea house earlier when they have just met. Their walk finally ended near another bus station. With all the mess Lilah has been through, she decided to end the date before anything more embarrassing could happen.

"Well, I really enjoyed tonight. Thank you for the tour, I couldn't have done it if it weren't for you," Lilah shook his hand in gratitude.

"My pleasure," Taehyung held hers with both his hands, "Have a safe trip back home."

a few hours earlier

