

All The Small Wishes

By Jiyou Kim, Oto Ueda, Josiah Lee, Jeremy Cheng

I struggled to remember the last time I had trust in someone. Whatever the length, that was a while ago. It could have been twenty, maybe thirty years. The garden had sunflowers planted. I leaned in to take just one sniff of a flower. When I smelled the sweet, sensational smell of sunflowers, it instantly took me to a time that I have always tried to forget—the day my life changed forever. (*opponent*)

How to Disappear (Luna's Perspective)

It was the summer of 1963, my 13th anniversary of living on this planet, and the day my life changed forever.

It was a hot day in the fields of Sweden.

My Mom and Dad said we were going on a trip. We got in the car and started driving to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Dad steered the car and turned toward the freeway, and we were on a gravel road. My parents were talking in the front seat. There were fields filled with sunflowers. I rolled down the window, leaning a little forward. The cold air hit my face, which made me unable to open my eyes. We pulled up to the rest and took our time in the restroom.

“Do you want anything, sweetie?” Mom asked.

“I'm a bit hungry.” I replied to her.

She said I could choose one snack at the station to make sure I would not starve during the trip. The variety of different snacks went from hard candy to gummies and chips to chocolates. I got some snacks that would ease my boredom, and Dad came into the shop to pay for the gas. We headed to the car to continue our trip. The car engine started, and we made our way to Stockholm. We turned our car towards the freeway, and the long drive continued once

again. I picked up and opened the chips I just got, and later I fell asleep.



I opened my eyes to the sunshine of the late afternoon and the car door opened. Mom dragged me to the front desk of the hotel. The attendant handed my dad the room key. The door opened to reveal two large mattresses almost queen sized with the bed sheets firmly tucked into the mattress with two pillows. The next day, I got myself up to the window to open the windshield. Instead of morning sunshine, we got a cloudy, rainy day. The view from the window was covered with gray fog. The dark sky made us unable to go to the beach. I thought it could not get any worse until Mom said,

“Sweetie, we have to go home, Dad has to go home to work, his manager needs him for something.”

“Why?” I said.

“We barely did anything.”

“But we need to, Luna. I have important work to do. I'm sorry,” Dad added.

The car engine started, and we started to head home to our small house. I sat with a big sigh, and I had a boring time in the car again for several hours, just like what happened on the way to the hotel. Unlike what I hoped it would be, our car was in deep silence. After a minute, Mom faced Dad.

“You should have made sure that you would not have to go back home for work.”

“I can't help it, I can't help it when my manager calls me back. What would we do if I lost my job? Do you not want a roof over your head and food on the table?” Dad said it back to Mom. And that was when I knew this would be a long, huge fight.

“You said we were going to have a happy vacation and that you would put your work aside for a chance to have family time with our daughter.”

“Do you want a place to live, eat, and sleep? If I don’t have a job right now, we can’t even imagine going on a family trip like what we are doing right now! I could just not go to work, get fired, and we could end up living in a homeless shelter.”

Not again. Please, just PLEASE stop arguing!

I was praying to God that they would stop fighting so we could be like a normal family just for today. I tried to stop the fight, but I was so terrified that my mouth froze and I couldn't say anything.

They argued and argued, without an end in sight. We got home after a 5-hour drive. Dad stormed into the house, and Mom went for a walk. But the moment my mom returned home, they began arguing again.

Please, please stop.

I wanted to scream, but I didn't. They argued in the fading light. With tears in my eyes, I drifted off to sleep, listening to my parents say the worst stuff that I had ever heard in my life. They fought on and on. A few hours later, I heard the instant crying, yelling, and screaming. I opened my teary, bruised red eyes. I put on my slippers and headed down the hallway. Unlike what I wished and prayed for, they were still fighting. The loud screaming echoed down the hallway. I hid under the desk in my pajamas. I waited for my mom and dad to make it up and stop yelling at each other; however, it didn't stop. **(battle)**

I hid there for hours and hours. I started to think that this argument was never going to end. I heard constant loud noise echoing inside the whole house. The non-stop throwing of words kept me in my precarious position. I hid under the desk, feeling hopeless. Then I heard the door slamming shut, and then I saw a silhouette of Mom.

“Come out, honey, it’s okay, it’s all over now,” Mom said with a kind voice.

I stayed silent, and she sighed. She approached me and tried to cool me down. Soon she began talking with a worn-out look.

“Luna.”

“Yeah?” I looked up with teary eyes to see my mom’s face.

“I need to tell you something very important,” Mom said.

She looked sorrowful and serious. Nothing like the smile she had before.

“Mom and Dad are going to have a divorce. I’m so sorry, honey, but that was the best way the three of us could be happy. You should decide which side you’re going with.” She said it with an exhausted look.

I didn’t know what to say or do. I heard my heart beating so fast with panic. It was so sudden that the only thing on my mind was confusion.

“I’m sorry. But, you know, you should go with your dad. Dad will give you so much more love than I can give you. Just go with your dad, even if he says no, okay?” Mom added.

“What?” I said.

That was when I realized no one wanted me.

Why? How could they do this to me? How could this have happened?

I slammed the floor and stood up. I yelled and kicked Mom out of my room. After a few minutes of silence, alone inside my dim room, I lay down on my bed. Feeling that nothing will work in my life.

This is not happening. No. No way. They don’t want me? I once felt like I meant something in this world. Like they were there for me and cared. I was happy, but not now.

Am I worthless? Nothing?

I am tired. I just want to feel like I meant something. I closed my eyes as my mind drowned in thoughts. A million reasons for my existence and my parent’s divorce, all connected to me, swam through my head. (***weakness and need***)

I opened my eyes and woke up. My eyes were sore because I had been crying the whole night. The weather looked as bad as I felt. With my heavy body, I got up and decided to go

outside to get fresh air. I looked around my room with a tiny hope that my mom and dad would be waiting next to my bed until I woke up, and they would cheer me up with a nice pancake breakfast my dad used to make. But hopelessly, nothing had changed.

I got up from my bed and began walking to the greenhouse with a downturned mouth on my face. My life would never be the same. The two people who I loved the most and who I thought loved each other the most had divorced and betrayed me. After that day, I stopped making an effort to make things work, communicate, and trust others.

Heather (Luna's Perspective)

I was watering my flowers. I looked around, and the flowers looked exceptionally stunning. White, beautiful heather. Like the one, I saw with him. Eric. I walked over to heather, and smelled the scent. As I smelled the flower, I felt the nostalgia of the city, and my whole body felt warm, like that hot summer day.



It was my first day of school as a third grader. I usually walk to school every day on a path that goes through the street. But I decided to take a new path in the woods to enjoy the scenery. With my backpack, I walked through the forest.

So calming, I thought, while the leaves rustled and the noise of the wind whistled through wind chimes calmed me from my family dilemmas. I walked out of the woods and saw my school in the distance.

"Hey, come over here!"

I looked over and saw a boy about my age standing in the middle of a flower field.

"Yeah, you, come over here!"

The boy shouted. As I walked over to him, I noticed his distinct blue shirt. He was standing right next to a scarecrow and seemed to be putting it up.

“Who are you?” I yelled.

“I’m Eric. A person from your school! Do you not remember me?” said the boy.

“Blue shirt, spiky hairstyle?”

Was he a boy from my class? Why is he calling me? Is he a nerd? Probably.

“I think so,” I said as I threw my hands up.

“I need to go to school!!! Can we talk later?”

I ran into him, and then I noticed how stunning the flower field was.

“Wow, this flower field is so pretty.”

I looked around with an expressionless face. It felt like I was in a different world where there was nothing but flowers.

“Right? It’s beautiful. And these are my favorite flowers, Heather. It felt like I was destined to find this flower field,” he chuckled excitedly.

“And I called you over because I wanted to be your friend,” he added, scratching his neck nervously.

I was a little bit confused because no one wanted to be my friend. Maybe it was a mistake that he called me?

“What?”

“Yes, you heard me right,” he said. That answered my question.

“Do you want to walk to school with me?” he asked awkwardly.

After we got to school, a group of boys who were famous for being mean came to us. They were pressuring him to complete his homework for them.

“Stop, Jake. I don’t want you to bully me anymore.”

“Did you just talk back to me, huh? How dare you!”

“Stop bullying him.”

That was when I realized Eric had a locket on his neck and lots of bruises on his arms.

“Why would you protect me?” he whispered to me.

“I don’t even know your name,” he said, looking down.

“My name is Luna,” I replied to him, whispering my name.

“Hey, look!” said the bully.

“Look at the two lovebirds meeting up.”

“I’m not a lovebird.” I looked at the bully.

We tried to leave through the back door of the school. The bullies left us, and we trekked up the stairs to our classroom.

“Thanks a lot for that, Luna,” he said as we walked through the hallway.

“No problem, you should ignore those jerks.”

“Yeah, thank you.”

As the silence between us continued, I thought to myself,

I wonder what class he is in. Hopefully in my class, 738.

“What class are you in?” I asked. With a little bit of hope in my voice.

“My class is 738.”

Yes. He goes to 738.

When I arrived at my class, Eric was talking to some boys. I went to my desk and took my math book out of my backpack. Eric glanced at me with a smile on his face, and I did the same thing. His mouth widened more, and mine did too. From that day on, we became friends.

★ ✎ . °

It was a sunny day. About nine years passed, and we were seventeen high schoolers. My mother divorced my father during those nine years. But Eric was with me. He grew taller. And I grew feelings for him.

“Such a sunny day, huh?” he says.

“Right? I can't open my eyes.”

“Should we go to the beach after school?”

“Sure,” I said.

After school, we head to the beach. We played until the sun went down. We lay down on the sand with our wet clothes on.

“My eyes are sore because of the water, do you have a towel?” he says, blinking barely.

“No.”

“Oh, come on.”

“You invited me, you should have been prepared.” I said it with a smile on my face.

“Shut up,” he said, looking at me weirdly.

We laughed. And we were silent for a moment.

“Luna?”

I turned my face to look into his eyes.

“Yeah?”

“I'm so glad I called you over when I first saw you,” he says.

“I'm so happy. Luna. you're my Heather.”

Heather? It's his favorite flower. Does he like me? I wanted to say.

“Give me your hand,” Eric said.

I raised my hand, silently.

His skin was warm and sandy. We held hands and looked at each other.

We lay on the sand, holding hands. He rubbed my face, and we kissed beneath the beautiful stars.

And I melted.



Time went on, it's been 50 years since his proposal. He was just a bundle of sunshine, and I couldn't imagine living without him. We always thought we could be together forever.

But guess what? Life decided otherwise.

He was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer. The doctor said he doesn't have much time left. After that, we began spending time doing what we wanted to do together. We visited the places we have in memory. The school we went to together, the beach we first kissed, and the white heather flower field where we first met. Despite the changes in the places, the image of our silhouette and the panorama around us had imprinted itself inside our hearts. Together, we built a flower garden. Heather was the first flower we planted. We grew white heather, just like the one from the flower field. The time we had left was not enough.

At all.

He became weaker and weaker.

He started losing all his hair.

He started losing his memories.

He started using a wheelchair, and he started staying at a hospital.

It felt miserable to watch him die.

"Come closer, Luna, I want to see your face," Eric said.

I came closer.

Just as it felt when we first met in the flower field when we were in third grade.

He was lying on the hospital bed. He had several strings connecting him, and he was wearing an oxygen mask. The sound of the vital sign monitor felt so loud.

"I want you to know that my love for you will continue long after I'm gone. You have been my life's dock, Luna. And I will remember every moment that we've shared. Thank you for making every single moment of my life so wonderful. I will always love you. Remember me not with tears of sorrow but with a heart full of joy for the moments we've shared. I am so thankful

for having the chance to love you and be loved by you until the very end. You're my Heather, Luna, and you will always be," he said.

He had the kindest smile I've ever seen.

"I love you too."

Tons of tears fell out of my eyes, I gently leaned on his shoulder. Sooner or later, my sight became blurry.

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April 20th. The day we first met and the last day together. The full-bloomed flowers in our garden began dying. It felt like suffocation. Tears were the words the heart couldn't speak. He was my first and last love. Though time may pass and seasons may change, my heart will always hold a special place for him. Deep inside my heart, until the day I die, he will remain a special memory in my heart. **(ally)**

All The Small Wishes For You

(Heather's Perspective)

A thudding sound echoed through the hallway.

"Move, Heather!" said Emily as she walked past me, laughing with her friends.

I picked up my notes scattered on the floor and stood up, approaching my locker. Every day feels the same. It was like watching the same cartoon episode over and over again. Like the other days, I went home alone after school. They don't want me to be happy, but I'm fine. I saw the girls at the exit of the school, so I started running, hoping that I won't be in their sight. The cold air pierced my skin. **(problem)**

I lay down on the grass and sighed in the secret place that probably no one knows even exists. There were no flowers planted. It was just a bunch of fresh green grass that looked soft and bright. My secret place is hidden by long ivy, and nobody can see me from outside. But a few weeks ago, I started seeing a Grandma planting flowers. She kept talking even though no one was listening to her. Sometimes she laughs, cries, and even gets mad at the flowers. But today, I'm going to make it clear why the Grandma keeps talking to the flowers, or maybe someone, and what she is talking about.

But one thing came to mind,

Maybe this place belongs to her. She comes to the garden every day at around 3:40, which is the time I arrive at the secret place. Every day. Maybe she is talking to me, and she could see me from outside? No way.

Before I finished thinking about how Grandma kept talking to something or someone I couldn't see, I could see the silhouette of Grandma with a large straw hat, a garden trowel, and some new flowers.

Okay, I will talk to her today. (plan)

I promised myself, and before I finished thinking, Grandma sat down in the exact same place as yesterday and started planting flowers. I could barely see Grandma inside my secret place with her flowers.

“... Is that Heather?”

As I glanced and thought about the flowers, I suddenly lost my balance. Before I could react, my head was already lying on the grass, and my upper body was jumping out of the ivy. I could hear an old voice from the back.

“Oh... My... God”

When I opened my eyes, I could see the face that I had wanted to see for a long time. The grandma had a wrinkly face, but I could see that she had big, round, shiny emerald eyes that everyone would want. As the emerald eyes reflected my face, she said,

"Are you okay?" she asked with a calm voice.

Embarrassed and caught off-guard, I scrambled to my feet and faced Grandma. As she stared at me with a mix of surprise and amusement, I finally had the courage to speak.

"Um, sorry, I didn't mean to eavesdrop or anything."

I mumbled, as my cheeks turned a deep shade of red. Little did I know that this chance encounter would be the beginning of an unexpected friendship and countless shared memories in the secret garden.

"What are you doing there, dear?"

Grandma asked. Her voice was a mix of surprise and curiosity. I cautiously lifted my head from the grass, avoiding eye contact with her as my face blushed red.

"Well, I, uh... I was just hiding from everyone,"

"Oh, why were you hiding? Would you mind telling me why you were hiding? I'm a good listener."

She talked to me in a calm voice, and I was surprised that I didn't feel uncomfortable with the person I started to talk to a second ago. It felt like I had known this person for a long time, like family. It was weird. She had the strong power to make me feel comfortable in front of her. And that day marked the beginning of our friendship.

★ ✨ °

"Luna," I called her name.

It had been three weeks since the incident.

"Hey,"

She said it with a smile. I tried to smile back at her, but I couldn't. My mood was really bad because of the bullies. Luna might've realized something strange and asked me if I was okay. I haven't told her about the bullies. I felt insecure and weaker even when I was thinking

about it. With my watery eyes and blurry sight, I continued talking all about the things I suffered for.

I stuttered, and some words were ununderstandable, but she calmed me down and patted my back while I was talking.

After my long talk, Luna replied to me.

“Remember, you are the author of your own story. Never allow yourself to become a victim or let anyone else define the meaning of your life. Define it for yourself and build a story that helps you to live fully and freely.”

I couldn't understand very well that I am the author of my own story, but I was definitely sure about how Luna was the perfect listener just for me.

(Luna's Perspective)

These days, I'm getting ready for the last minute of my life. Every day, my heartbeat was getting slower. And I started to think about my garden.

My life.

My everything.

It is true that I stopped talking to people when I was young, but I have a friend now that I need to care about. When I was young, I struggled with having a good relationship with people. It was hard for me. I didn't know how to overcome it, and I always thought that there was no one who could be by my side and listen to my stories, my dreams, my hopes, and all my small wishes.

And I saw this angel-like little girl who started giving me hope in the last minute of my life. I realized it at first sight. Her name is 'Heather'.

From that day on, I decided to protect her. I tried to be the person she could trust, telling her little wishes that only she could think of when she was a child. And that was the thing that I needed the most when I was young.

When I started talking to Heather, I realized that she could think more deeply than me. I promised myself that I would tell her the stories of the best moments of my life, the little stories, and the memories that this garden has. I started to hide letters in my garden so Heather could find them when I disappear. Even if this garden has bad memories within it, every single one of them is so precious to me, and it helped me overcome the small and big challenges in my life. *(self-revelation)*

(Heather's perspective)

Today, Luna didn't show up at her garden. I was not really worried. Two days had passed. She still didn't show up. Three days, four, five, six, and one week. As the day passed, one thing started to come to mind.

Maybe...

I was hesitant to go to the garden, as I was afraid that these possibilities might be true. The clock struck 3:40. It was the time she usually came to the garden. With a little hope, I ran towards the garden, wishing she would smile at me like she always does. She was not there. I looked at the blooming flower, and I found an envelope inside a little hole where tiny squirrels would keep their precious acorns. I picked it up. On the red envelope, I could read "To my lovely Heather" in her handwriting. My heart raced so fast as I slowly opened the envelope and started reading the letter.

Dear Heather,

I'm sorry that I had to tell you in letters. When you are reading this, I think I'm not in this world anymore. Before meeting you, I was scared of talking to people out of fear of betrayal. I felt like no one wanted me in this world, and that's why some people from my past made me think that I was a failure and nonexistent. I believed it. I also had a time when I felt loved, needed, and important. But

that wasn't forever. The one feeling came in again, that I wasn't doing enough to be needed in this world, or that I wasn't changing the world in any way. I think it was when I found a stray cat I was feeding dying on the road on a cold, rainy day. It's weird, but it saved me. It made me feel like it's selfish to choose to die when some don't even have a choice. That was when I decided to live. And then, years later, I met you, Heather. You saved me from the darkness of my life. I felt stupid, being stuck with a past when you're trying to overcome it, face it, and fight with your fear again and again. The happiness you gave me was immaculate. Please take care of my garden. And bring one flower from my loving garden and go to Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery on the fifth row, where me and my husband are. We will be waiting for you. **(desire)**

Being in this world is a gift, but making it a better place just by being in it is a blessing.
Heather, you are truly one of those wonderful people who shine in our lives simply by being there.

All my love and more,
Luna Knight

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I finished reading the letters. Lots of feelings came into my mind, and so many tears came out of my eyes. The paper was soaking wet because of my tears. I held the letter tightly, cut one exceptionally beautiful heather, and rode my bicycle to the cemetery where Luna is sleeping in peace.

I arrived and thought about how beautiful the cemetery was. I went to the fifth row as she said and found "Luna Knight" and "Eric Knight" written on one grave. My heart was wretched when I saw her name. I couldn't believe that she was gone. My heart ached, and it broke. I saved

my tears and placed the heather on their grave. It was four p.m. I watched the sunset as I wished Luna a better place.

I went home an hour later. It was dark outside, and my mom was worried about me.

“Heather! Where have you been? It's already seven.”

“Sorry, Mom,” I said with an unenergetic voice.

“Are you okay? What happened?” Mom asked, looking anxious.

I told her the story of what happened today, and I couldn't hold my tears. I started sobbing in my mom's arms. She was silent and kept patting my back until I calmed down. After an hour, she started to talk about when I was still in her tummy.

“When you were still in my stomach, there was an old couple near the house, planting flowers in an empty lot. They were a delightful pair, always kind and deeply in love. I'll never forget the beautiful heather flowers they were planting. They were so vibrant and beautiful, it took my breath away. And that's why your dad and I decided to name you Heather. Sometimes, I still wonder about that old couple and where they are now. The husband died, and she disappeared. But recently I started seeing her again. I might be hallucinating, I don't know. If I could, I would love to talk to them again.”

My eyes were wide open with surprise. I knew instantly that it was Luna and her husband, Eric. They've been involved in my life since a long time ago, even before I was born. No wonder I felt comfortable around her.

She said she loves me as her friend.

I felt it in her hug.

In her laugh.

I guess that is why we met.

She needed me, and I needed her.

I took a deep breath and smiled at Mom.

“I'm sure they are in a better place. Way better than we could imagine.” (*new equilibrium*)

The End

- *All the Small Wishes* -

By Jiyou Kim, Oto Ueda, Josiah Lee, and Jeremy Cheng