

Over and Out

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Over and Out

by [melecs](#)

Summary

One of Taehyung's two-way radios ended up in the middle of some park. He forgot about it. That is, until someone else found the lost half.

Notes

I swear, it's like I disappeared from the face of the earth, only to return with some short one-shot. Sorry—I've been busy applying to colleges, and as much as I'd love to think that fanfiction is more important than college, that's not the case :(.

Before anyone's like, 'wow, this is totally a ripoff of Firewatch,' like yes I'm admitting right now that this is inspired by Firewatch because I freaking love that game.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Hello?”

It felt like the air grew cold and hot at the same time, like a fever shot through him, leaving Taehyung with an involuntary shiver stuck in his spine. Instinctively, he grabbed the nearest object that maybe could pass as a weapon—a Hello Kitty mug given to him as a gag gift—and it probably didn’t look intimidating but Taehyung cared more about his young life than he did about his masculinity.

“Hi, hello?”

A muffled *click* sounded in the air, “I have a weapon,” Taehyung gripped the mug’s handle just a bit tighter, “So if you’re a ghost, stay back.”

The ghost didn’t respond. With his free hand, Taehyung rummaged through the pile of junk decorating his nightstand, revealing one half of the two-way radio set Jimin had given him. An orange light indicated low battery, but Taehyung ignored it and pressed the ‘call’ button with shaking fingers. “Are you a ghost?”

The voice was definitely coming from the radio, but Taehyung still had to make sure; in all the scary movies, ghosts liked to crawl into objects and possess them. *“A ghost? Uh, no, I’m actually at a park!”*

Taehyung gulped. “Are you a ghost at a park?”

“No!” The voice laughed, and that calmed Taehyung down a bit. He didn’t think ghosts could laugh. *“I’m a vampire.”* Taehyung’s breath caught. *“Just kidding, I’m human. Did you leave a walkie-talkie here?”*

He sat back and thought for a moment. “I got, like, this two-way radio from my friend. So if anyone left it at the park, it wasn’t me.”

“Sweet, then it must be fate!” The voice belonged to a boy, perhaps more high-pitched than Taehyung’s, laced with a kind of enthusiasm that was rare among Taehyung’s classmates or neighbors. *“I’m Hoseok. Don’t worry, I’m not some creep who’s gonna track you down or something like that. I’m eleven.”*

Somewhere deep in his brain, Taehyung recalled the words of his mother, telling him not to talk to strangers. Obviously, ‘Hoseok’ had never heard such a rule. And Taehyung was nearly ten, and maybe liked to live a bit dangerously (if the weather was right). “I’m Taehyung,” he said, and one glance at the radio in his hand convinced him to tack on an, “Over.”

He guessed the loud, crackling noise on the other end was Hoseok laughing. *“Oh, I like that! It’ll make us sound like secret agents. What’s your secret agent name? Over!”*

The first thing Taehyung’s eyes landed on was a flyer, headlined with the large English ‘V is for Victory,’ which Taehyung took and ran with. “Um, ‘V’. What’s your secret agent name?”

He almost forgot to say, “Over.”

“I’ll be Agent J-Hope. Agent V and Agent J-Hope, on the case! Now we can solve crimes and stuff. Over!” For a stranger, Hoseok didn’t seem so bad.

“Is that really what secret agents do? Over.”

“I dunno, it’s a secret! Over!”

They talked like that for another hour, back and forth, Taehyung getting used to the sound of a young stranger’s voice. Hoseok had a bubbly voice, one that let Taehyung imagine him with an expressive face.

But soon the battery light was flashing red and Taehyung’s wrist had cramped up a good amount. “You can hang onto my radio,” Taehyung said, “and we can play secret agents together tomorrow.”

Hoseok didn’t respond until half a minute later with a dull electric crackle and an, “*Agent V?*”

“Yes, Agent J-Hope?”

“You forgot to say, ‘Over.’”

“Oh! Over!”

“Over and out.”

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Taehyung didn’t think he’d still have an imaginary friend at age twelve. His friends picked on him, his parents picked on him, and Taehyung just swallowed it all with a smile.

Because Hoseok wasn’t imaginary. He was real, maybe the most real person Taehyung had ever met. Taehyung just didn’t tell anybody.

He’d held on to that tacky plastic radio for almost two years, talking to Hoseok almost every day. They had it down to a science: Taehyung would come home from school, go up to his room, and do his homework with the radio turned on until bedtime (and sometimes a few minutes after).

The two just clicked. Hoseok knew exactly how to make Taehyung laugh, and Taehyung could write Hoseok’s biography with his eyes closed. Everything about Hoseok was common knowledge to Taehyung. It was refreshing, and different, and Taehyung kept a pack of AA batteries under his bed. He toted the radio to school every day, in the hidden pocket meant for a water bottle.

He knew the other twelve-year-olds weren’t like this. He knew they weren’t so dependent on a voice or on a mental image of what a boy might look like. But Taehyung still dreamed of being a secret agent, of matching a face to a voice.

Without ever laying eyes on Hoseok, Taehyung had become attached. Something about his words, about the smile Taehyung could hear through a speaker. It was just comfortable—sitting on his bed, radio pressed to his ear. So he'd keep doing it, whether it was in secret or not.

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Hoseok.

—*Yeah?*

What do you look like? Over.

—*Well, I'm a boy. I'm fifteen. Over.*

Wow, I forgot you're old! Over!

—*You're thirteen, right? So I'm not super old. But I have black hair and brown eyes, over.*

So do I. We're twins, Hoseok! Ov—

—*Yah, we are not! C'mon, don't compare me to you, Tae. I guess I'm kinda tan? And some people say I look like a horse, but I don't really know, over.*

I bet you're pretty. Over.

—*Ha! No way. Over.*

Hoseokie is prettyyyyyy—

—*In your dreams. Over.*

In your *mom's* dreams. Over!

—*Wow, how grown-up. Over.*

I never said I was grown up! I don't wanna be a grown-up. Over.

—*Same here, and I'm closer to being an adult than you are. Let's just be kids together forever. Over.*

Deal.

-

“Sing a song for me, over.” Taehyung's legs swung off the side of his bed, head flat on his pillow.

Hoseok laughed, “*Oh, yeah, I'm the best singer ever.*” He sucked in a deep breath and began belting out some trot ballad his grandparents probably knew. Hoseok was definitely not the best singer ever. His voice was cracking and it sounded more like screaming than anything

else. At particularly rough spots, Taehyung would mash the ‘call’ button and just groan into the receiver. But it made Taehyung laugh, so hard his stomach hurt, and just before Hoseok went for a high note he stopped and said, *“What the hell, Tae, are you chewing something?”*

“Yeah, I’m eating pizza.” His ‘Over’ was muffled by a rather ambitious bite.

“It’s like dinner and a show! Over!”

Taehyung fished another slice out of the box, “I want a refund, over.”

“Oh, don’t be like that. Hey, what do you call a sleeping pizza, over?”

Taehyung thought for a moment before declaring, “I don’t know. Over.”

“A pizzzzza! Over!” Hoseok exaggerated the ‘z’ and just the way he said it, with such pride in his voice, was enough to make Taehyung start laughing again.

“A singer and a comedian. Jung Hoseok, the ultimate double-threat. Over.”

Hoseok’s loud guffaws were enough to make Taehyung turn the radio’s volume down. *“Hey, you like it. Over.”*

“Yeah, I do.”

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Hoseok, do you have a girlfriend? Over.

—Yeah, she’s a real babe, over.

You’re serious? You really have an ultra-hot girlfriend? Over?

—I just told you, yeah, she’s super sexy and all that. You wanna know who it is? Over.

Uh, sure.

—Well, you can’t tell anyone. It’s... Yoon Eunhye.

Jung Hoseok. Are you kidding me? Like the superstar?

—Ha! Wow, Tae, I had you going there! If I could see your face right now...

I seriously thought you had a hot girlfriend! Hobi, you’re gonna give me a heart attack. Over.

—What if I actually did have one? Would you be jealous? Over.

Well, I don’t know. It would be weird, over.

—It’s okay to be jealous, Tae, I know you want me. Over!

I do not!

—It's fine. I don't want a girlfriend anyway. Over.

-

Park Jimin was standing in Taehyung's room with a bottle of beer and a smirk on his face. "C'mon, you still have this thing?" He picked up the handheld radio and gave it an experimental toss, like he was weighing it. "I can't believe I ever bought this for you, geez. I got it for like, eighty percent off."

"I still use it." Taehyung didn't know how to open a beer bottle; he wrung the cap against his shirt until his fingers stung, hoping Jimin wouldn't notice his many failed attempts.

"Need some help there?" Jimin took the bottle and cracked it expertly against the rail of Taehyung's bed. He'd been on an odd rebellious kick lately, wanting to try anything and everything, and alcohol definitely seemed to be a favorite. "And that's funny, because I lost the other half right after I gave it to you. I hoped you'd forget, so I never told you. Sorry."

Jimin had really grown since then, his jaw sharp as he tilted his head back for a drink. There was still some roundness to his cheeks, but by college it would all hollow out. They had both changed. "Yeah, I mean it's good for other things besides communication." It's a weak lie, but Taehyung's never been cool under pressure.

"Sure, sure," Jimin said, "Now enough with all the childish stuff—we're here to make you a man, right? So let's get drunk."

It was probably a terrible idea, especially since they were both seventeen and only had two six-packs of convenience store beer, but Taehyung still pushed the radio aside and took a long first sip.

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—I know you're online, Tae, I see the little blue light.

Hi, Hoseok.

—Seriously, what's up with you lately? Is this radio just collecting dust for nothing?

No, I—I want to talk to you, really, but I'm just...worried.

—Worried? The great Kim Taehyung?

Well, yeah. My friends are pushing me to do adult stuff, you know? Like, mature things.

—And talking with me isn't mature? Tae, you aren't even eighteen. I know you well enough to know you don't really wanna do that stuff.

You don't know what I want. You've never met me.

—Bullshit, Taehyung. I know you better than anyone.

Sure, Hoseok. I'm gonna log off now.

—*Taehyung, I freaking care about you, okay? I don't want you doing things you don't want to do. I want you to be happy.*

Listen, I just need some time to clear my head right now, okay?

—*Fine, bye.*

-

Hoseok?

—*Yeah?*

I'm sorry. Over.

—*I'm sorry, too. Over.*

-

She was girlish and cute and her skin was dewy like she had something to be nervous about. Taehyung wasn't nervous at all; it was just dinner, just greasy pizza. He had nothing to be nervous about.

"When Jimin told me you'd be here, I couldn't believe it," she said, "A lot of girls like you, you know. Wait until I tell them I'm having dinner with Kim Taehyung."

He hardly knew this girl. She somehow knew Jimin, and Jimin always got what he wanted. This time, he'd wanted Taehyung to go on a blind date.

"Yeah, this is different for me. But who doesn't like pizza, am I right?"

The girl nodded. She hadn't looked Taehyung in the eye the entire night. A shy girl, one who never wanted to talk about herself and only wanted to talk about Taehyung. He didn't have much experience with girls, and that hadn't really dawned on him until that moment.

"Hey," he took a large bite, vaguely aware of the sauce dripping down his chin, "What do you call a sleeping pizza?"

"Huh?"

"It's a joke!" Taehyung smiled widely, the way all the girls said was 'charming'. "So, what do you call a sleeping pizza?"

She blinked. "Uh, I don't know?"

"A pizzzzza!" Taehyung was too busy laughing at himself to see the girl just sitting there, neatly dabbing her red lips with a napkin.

"I don't get it."

Taehyung stopped laughing. “Oh, it’s—like, the pizza is *sleeping*, you know?” She didn’t know.

Automatically, his eyes flitted to his bag, collapsed against the table leg. There was a handheld radio in that bag, and just the thought of it made Taehyung anxious. There were things he’d rather be doing than sitting across from a girl who only knew his face and didn’t think jokes were funny.

When all the pizza was gone, Taehyung had eaten far more than half of it. He offered to pay because Jimin had told him to.

“I can walk you home,” he slung his backpack over his shoulder and that was when it really started to feel like a date. Because he did walk her home, and halfway there she slipped her hand into Taehyung’s own.

She was a nice girl, a nice first date. But her voice was too soft and she never laughed and her hand was too small. And the whole time, Taehyung’s focus was on the familiar weight of the radio on his back.

They didn’t talk about a second date.

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—*Give me your number. Over.*

No, why would I do that when we can talk like this? Over.

—*Because then I can send you texts, and I can see what you look like and all that. Over.*

Don’t you think this is better than texting? It’s more personal. Over.

—*Yeah, but I—I dunno, I just want to...*

To what?

—*I wanna see you. Over.*

Listen, Hoseok, I—it’s kinda scary, how things are different with you, over.

—*What do you mean? Uh, over.*

Like it’s weird, but in a good way. I’ve never met you, but that’s—it’s pretty exciting. Over.

—*God, Taehyung, if you’re saying what I think you’re saying...*

I am. I mean, we should’ve known, right? ‘Don’t talk to strangers’ and all that. Look what happens. Over.

—*Stop for a second with that ‘over’ crap. I wanna see you, Taehyung. I bet you’re pretty, I bet you’re so fucking pretty.*

Hoseok, if you were here right now, I'd—I don't know.

—*What, what would you do, Tae? Would you kiss me if I asked? What would you do?*

Yeah, Hobi, that's it. I dunno, I'd—I'd touch you.

—*Geez, Tae. You make me crazy sometimes, have I ever told you that? Next year's my second year of college; I can move out and you can come stay with me. We won't need any of this radio stuff. Just you and me. Won't that be nice? God, I bet you're beautiful.*

Yeah. Yeah, that would be so nice. Wanna see you, Hoseok. And I know you're pretty, I just know.

—*Oh, what're we gonna do, Tae? We're a mess.*

But it's kind of a nice mess.

—*Yeah. I like it.*

-

“Hey, Tae, toss me your bag real quick.” They were standing in a parking lot, sun beating down on the asphalt, Jimin fanning himself with a wallet. “I want a snack.”

He was a good distance from Taehyung, but nothing Taehyung's refined trick-shot abilities couldn't cover, so in one swift motion he vaulted the bag off his shoulder and aimed it toward his friend. Both of them laughed when it landed far off the mark, hitting the pavement by Jimin's feet. “Close enough.”

“Hey, a snack's a snack.” Jimin rifled through the backpack's jostled contents, pulling things out as he went. “What the—why do you have just a random antenna floating around in your bag?”

Taehyung's heart stopped. “Uh, no, it's—it's stupid, it's from that radio...”

Jimin laid that out on the ground as well, and it took Taehyung a second to realize that it was *just* the antenna. Nothing else. “Um,” he watched in horror as Jimin spread out part after part on the black tar—a speaker, a shattered screen, two AA batteries, the plastic button with the paint worn off from Taehyung pressing it so many times. “Not anymore. Sorry, Tae.”

Suddenly the sun felt too hot and his head felt too light. “It's not broken, right? I mean, you can put it back together, *right?*”

“Tae, it's just a cheap radio. You've had this for like ten years, so yeah, it's gonna break sometime. I'll buy you another one, though. Promis—”

“No, Jimin. I can't just—he was *there*. That was *him*. I want Hoseok, I need to talk to him.”

Only when he felt Jimin's small hand on his back did Taehyung realize he was crying.

“Hoseok? Like your imaginary friend from when we were eleven? Taehyung, it's just a radio.

It's okay. We can get a new one right now."

"I don't want a new one. I want *that* one." His skin was sticky, hands trembling, legs weak. Because it had only taken one moment of carelessness for Jung Hoseok to disappear. "I don't want a new one."

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It was a clear day, the kind of day where the sun was tucked nicely behind some trees and where the grass just seemed brighter. The perfect day, Taehyung thought, to go to a park.

He just liked to walk, to smell the spring air and see how the light hit the tiny green lake. The worn backpack was secured by his shoulder, and he trekked the path with sunglasses flipped to the back of his head, in the way Jimin made fun of.

He liked to walk until he needed the water in the secret pocket of his backpack. He liked to walk simply because it was relaxing. He liked to walk—

—straight into other people.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" Taehyung bent to pick up his water bottle when he was suddenly hit by *cute dog, cute dog, cute dog*. Immediately, he reached out to pet it, not even thinking that the owner might be against it.

"Don't sweat it! It's totally fine—and Mickey loves attention." The voice was loud and bouncing, and when Taehyung looked up there was a man with daring orange hair and a contagious smile. Maybe it was dangerous, but Taehyung's stomach did a little flip; he hadn't expected to bump into someone so handsome this early in the morning.

Taehyung stood up. He was just a bit taller than the man, whose mouth looked like a heart and whose face was so naturally expressive. "Sorry! I should've asked first, but it's not my fault that when I see a cute dog—I just need to pet it, you know?"

The stranger laughed, a hearty and genuine laugh that sent a chill through every bone in Taehyung's body. Because that was the laugh he'd fantasized about hearing in person, the laugh that sounded so different when it wasn't distorted by an outdated speaker. And here he was, giving Taehyung his full attention, beaming with stars in his eyes and dimples at the corners of his lips: "Hoseok..."

The smile fell, and Hoseok's face went slack. He stared at Taehyung for a long time, charting every detail of him. "Taehyung? Taehyung, I—"

"I have so many things to say to you," Taehyung's words poured out fast; he'd recited them hundreds of times to no one, in mirrors or late at night, like that would eliminate his guilt. "You were right, I should've gotten your number, because one day I dropped the radio and it broke everywhere and I tried to find you, I really did, but I couldn't and now I'm so sorry and please say something before I think you hate me."

Then the smile spread itself back onto Hoseok's face, and he looked at Taehyung in absolute wonder. He wasn't how Taehyung imagined him to be, but he was perfect. Both of them ignored the dog pawing impatiently at their feet, too busy with thoughts of *I can't believe you're here, I can't believe this is you.*

"Taehyung," he said, "I knew you'd be pretty."

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Hoseok. Over.

—*Yeah, babe? Over.*

Buy me lunch tomorrow, over.

—*I just bought you lunch today! Over!*

Okay, but you're older, so—

"Taehyung. Hoseok." Jimin looked positively exhausted, wedged between the two men talking loudly over the television with plastic radios in their hands. "You're sitting like one meter apart. You guys are cute, but can you just turn those things off for half an hour?"

Taehyung sighed, glancing dejectedly at the new radio in his hand. "Fine," he said, and pressed the 'call' button, "Buy me lunch pretty please, over."

—*Ugh, deal. Over and out.*"

End Notes

Anyway yeah VHope's been killing me lately. Every 21st Century Girl live is another nail in my coffin. I have 5 BTS fics going right now, among other fandoms, so I'm a busy bee but since writing is far more enjoyable than college applications, it's a good kind of busy.

Hmu [on Tumblr](#) and [on AFF](#) and also [on Twitter](#)♡♡♡

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