# Chapter : Introduction

"Khun Tae! Khun Tae, sir! There's an emergency at the entrance of our mine! Did you hear me, ma'am?"

"What the hell is it now!?"

The loud noise in the early morning startled someone who had just fallen asleep a few hours ago, forcing them to groggily open their eyes.

A tall figure, over 174 centimeters in height, sat up in bed and reached out to yank the door open with a frustrated expression.

Her sharp eyes narrowed at her trusted subordinate, who was standing outside the room, panting. The light from the main hall illuminated his lean frame, as she hadn't bothered to turn on the light in her own room.

"What is it, Thos!? Why the hell are you yelling so early in the morning? Can’t I get even a little sleep?"

"You can go back to sleep later, Ma'am, but right now, you need to change and come with me. Someone was attacked near the mine entrance, but luckily, a worker found them just in time. We don’t know if they’ll make it or not."

***Bang!***

The door slammed shut in Thos’s face, leaving him standing there, mouth agape in confusion.

Inside the room, the woman quickly switched on the light, making the entire space glow brightly. She hurriedly shrugged off her nightwear, rushed to the wardrobe, and pulled out a black crew-neck T-shirt, slipping it on along with her usual straig.ht-cut jeans.

Just before she yanked the door open again, she didn’t forget to grab her black leather jacket.

"Instead of rushing out to start the mine, you still have the nerve to stand here and talk nonsense. I don't understand why you were assigned to be the mine manager.

**Tichila Suphparamet** muttered in mild annoyance, though her eyes gleamed with amusement as she looked at her stunned subordinate—who was not only the mine’s manager but also handled nearly everything for her.

She strode swiftly toward the Jeep parked in front of the house, still adjusting her jacket as she walked.

With a quick, effortless motion, she jumped into the driver’s seat, while her subordinate—who was nearly as tall as she was—moved just as fluidly, hopping into the passenger seat beside her.

“Well, you slammed the door in my face so hard that I thought you were going back to sleep. I was just debating whether I should knock again or not —didn’t want to get kicked in the face if you suddenly decided to charge out.”

“How could something like this happen at our mine? And who found them?”

Tichila ignored his nonsense and went straight to the point. She wasn’t about to waste time when she had been dragged out of her warm bed before dawn.

Her sharp eyes stayed fixed on the road ahead, lined with thick trees and overgrown grass. Hands and feet worked in perfect coordination as she expertly maneuvered the vehicle toward the scene, navigating the familiar terrain with ease.

Living among hundreds of male workers had molded her into a strong, capable leader. She didn’t panic easily, and what she’d just heard didn’t shake her in the slightest.

“It was one of our workers. He stayed at his girlfriend’s place in town last night and was just returning to the mine when he stumbled upon her. The foreman called me right away, and I ran straight to your house.”

First, she was ‘Khun Tae,’ then ‘boss lady’—a mix of titles she only ever heard from those closest to her. Tichila didn’t respond, but her foot pressed harder on the gas, propelling them toward their destination at top speed.

They arrived in no time.

Tichila jumped out of the vehicle alongside her subordinate, striding toward a group of three or four male workers gathered at the scene. The moment they saw her approaching, they instinctively stepped aside, allowing their boss to take center stage.

She crouched beside the unconscious woman while the beams from multiple flashlights illuminated the figure lying on the grass. Dawn was breaking, but the artificial light allowed her to take in every detail.

Her gaze swept over the woman’s delicate frame. Even in her current state, she was undeniably beautiful. An oval-shaped face with elegant features— arched brows, long lashes resting against her pale cheeks, a straight nose with a slight tilt at the tip, and full, inviting lips.

*Yes.... Inviting.*

Tichila caught herself thinking that and saw no reason to deny it. The beauty before her was undeniable.

The woman’s clothes and hair were dirtied with dust and blood, likely from a head injury.

Despite her battered condition, the radiance of her beauty still managed to overshadow everything else.

She could hardly see anything else besides that breathtakingly beautiful face.

*This woman… Had she fallen straight from the heavens?*

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# CHAPTER : 01

Two days had passed, and now it was the third. The nurse was still unconscious, lying motionless on the hospital bed in the recovery room.

Late in the morning, the door to the patient's room was pushed open, revealing the tall figure of Tichila as she stepped inside, accompanied by her trusted subordinate.

"How is she doing, Priao? She still hasn't woken up today, has she?"

"Not yet, Madam. The doctor just came in to check on her a moment ago and has just left," Priao replied.

Seeing her superior enter the room, the nineteen-year-old girl, who had been assigned to watch over the injured woman, immediately sprang up from the sofa.

"She's been asleep for quite a while,"

Tichila murmured, her gaze falling on the unconscious woman. Her head was wrapped in a bandage, her eyes peacefully closed. The once-pale face now had a bit more color.

"Alright, Priao, you should go home, take a shower, and get some rest. Tos will drive you. In the meantime, I'll stay here and watch over her. You can come back in the afternoon."

"It's okay, Madam. I brought extra clothes with me, so I can shower here. I don't want to trouble you, especially when you already have work at the mine," Priao insisted.

"I told you to go home and rest, so just go. You won't get proper sleep here with the nurses walking in and out all night. Besides, I have a meeting with Inspector Than here. Now, hurry up."

"Alright, Madam. I'll come back as soon as I can."

"Tos, keep an eye on things at the mine, then pick me up when you bring Priao back."

"Understood, Madam," Tos replied.

Once the two had left, Tichila stepped closer to the bed, her gaze fixed on the injured woman's delicate face.

Even in sleep, the beauty she had noticed the first time they met still lingered, making it hard to look away.

Her long eyelashes remained closed, concealing the eyes beneath them. Her skin was smooth, her features youthful. Judging from her appearance, she was likely several years younger than Tichila.

Tichila let out a quiet sigh, her mind dwelling on the stranger who had ended up in this situation within her territory.

According to the miners who had first found her, it was a twist of fate that had led this woman to suffer misfortune under her watch. And now, all Tichila could do was stand there, looking at her with sympathy.

As she was deep in thought, a knock on the patient's door interrupted her. Tichila quickly shook off her thoughts and turned to greet her close friend, who had just stepped inside in his plainclothes police uniform.

"Right on time."

"She hasn't woken up yet?"

Inspector Than, a stern-looking man, asked as he stepped closer to the bed, glancing at the unconscious woman.

"Let's talk outside. We don't want to disturb her."

"Alright."

Tichila gave a short nod before following him out of the room. They walked a little further down the hall, searching for a quiet spot to discuss the injured woman's situation.

"I've already sent my team to investigate the scene thoroughly,"

Than started.

"And? What did they find?"

"All the security cameras in the area were out of order. A shame, really. But I've ordered my team to check other routes nearby that might give us some clues. It'll take some time. Also, from what the miners who found her said, it looks like she was kidnapped. One of them saw a van speeding away from the area just as he was driving toward the mine entrance. More importantly, they heard two gunshots before that. When they found her, she was still semi-conscious. Based on the circumstances, I believe it was an attempted murder. The question is-do those bastards know she's still alive?"

"The bullet went into her shoulder from behind,"

Tichila noted, her expression dark.

"She was running away. What could possibly drive someone to be so cruel to a defenseless woman?"

She studied the woman's appearance again. Judging by her clothes and overall demeanor, she seemed to come from a wealthy background.

Tichila might not know her personally, but as a fellow human being, she couldn't help but feel anger at the people who had done this. It was disgusting how some so-called '*civilized*' people could act so inhumanely.

"People are getting more selfish every day,"

Than muttered.

"If someone stands in their way, they just get rid of them. There could be a hundred reasons for this. And another thing-there's not a single piece of identification on her. We'll have to wait until she wakes up to find out what really happened. In the meantime, it's on you to keep an eye on things. This happened in your territory, after all. Plus, you already signed off as her emergency contact." "That's not a problem,"

Tichila replied.

"She's another human being, just like us. I'm not heartless."

"Yeah, sure. Or is it just because she's beautiful?" Than teased.

"I saw how you were looking at her."

"Don't be ridiculous. Is this really the time for that kind of talk?"

"I'm just saying what everyone's thinking," he chuckled.

Talking about it only made it hurt more. Loving a close friend one-sidedly for so long was a pain that Thonthan had learned to endure.

He gazed at the beautiful face of Tichila, the owner of the gemstone mine, feeling a familiar heaviness in his chest. It wasn't as if she didn't know how he felt-he had harbored feelings for her for years. But their friendship had lasted this long because he had accepted the reality that he would always be the only one in love.

Tichila only had eyes for women. He had known this for a long time, and he never saw it as wrong. If anything, he had come to terms with the fact that the woman he loved would only ever be attracted to the soft curves of other women, never to a broad-shouldered man like him.

And even knowing that, even understanding that no matter how much time passed, Tichila would never see him as more than a friend, he had never once thought about giving up. Years had passed, but his heart remained stubborn.

For whatever reason, he only knew that he was willing to love her-despite the quiet, constant ache of seeing her look at women the way he wished she would look at him. Loving Tichila, in itself, was the only happiness he allowed himself, no matter how bittersweet.

He didn't rush it, didn't force it, but he had no intention of letting it go, either.

"If you keep talking nonsense, Than, I won't speak to you anymore. If you're done here, just leave already."

"Come on. Now you're just trying to get rid of me. And don't sulk so much, will you? Do you want me to keep coaxing you? Because if you don't want a man like me running after you to make up, stop acting like a sulky little girl."

"Idiot! Who's sulking?"

Tichila clicked her tongue and shot him a sharp glare. Rather than wasting her breath arguing further, she simply turned on her heel and walked away.

Than could only watch her go, sighing in resignation.

She had such a beautiful face, yet she always dressed in a way that was practical and completely devoid of softness. And still, he had fallen hopelessly in love with her.

Was it because she was beautiful? Smart? Strong? What was it?

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While Than stood there drowning in his unchanging emotions, Tichila silently re-entered the patient's room and walked over to the bed.

Her sharp eyes studied the sleeping woman's delicate features, and her friend's words echoed in her mind once again.

*"Isn't it just because she's beautiful? I saw the way you looked at her."*

Was it true? Had her eyes truly betrayed her, allowing the inspector to read her so easily?

And if that were the case, could a heart that had sworn never to love again still waver?

Tichila had always feared the feeling of caring for someone.

*Fear of loss. Fear of disappointment. And, in the end, fear of love itself.*

That was why, after her last relationship ended in heartbreak, she had refused to let anyone else into her life.

She let out a slow, heavy sigh, trying to clear her thoughts. But just as she turned to return to the sofa, a faint movement caught her eye. The delicate fingers resting beside the injured woman's body had twitched slightly.

Her brows furrowed, and she quickly stepped closer to observe.

Then, the movements became more pronounced. The long lashes, untouched by the light for nearly three days, fluttered. That was all it took for Tichila to swiftly press the call button by the bed, signaling for a doctor or nurse.

Her sharp gaze stayed fixed on the woman's lashes as they trembled before slowly revealing a pair of beautiful eyes. The fair-skinned woman blinked rapidly, trying to adjust to the brightness after being unconscious for so long.

Tichila had wondered more than once over the past two days whether this woman's eyes would be as beautiful as the rest of her face.

Now she had her answer. And the moment those stunning eyes locked onto hers, a strange excitement pulsed through her heart.

Before she could say anything, the door swung open, and the attending doctor entered with two nurses. Tichila instinctively stepped back, giving them space to work.

She watched in silence as they examined the patient, noticing how the woman's gaze occasionally flickered toward her, filled with confusion.

But she didn't speak. She only responded to the doctor's questions about her injuries.

"Do you feel pain anywhere in particular? Any discomfort in your head or torso?"

"I..."

The woman's full lips parted slightly before pressing together again, her brows furrowing as if she was trying to gather her thoughts. Finally, she answered,

"My head hurts... and my shoulder. It still hurts a lot."

"The torso, arms, legs, and other parts of your body-can you still move them normally?"

The doctor asked clearly.

"Try moving your arms, legs, fingers, and toes a little so I can see."

The young woman followed the doctor's instructions while Tichila kept watching her every move without looking away.

"Your body's response is normal. The scratches and wounds on the outside may cause some pain and soreness, but it's fortunate that you were wearing long sleeves and long pants, so there aren't too many scrapes. However, you might have some bruising from the impact. The most painful injuries are proChapter :ly the ones on your head... and from the gunshot wound."

"Gunshot?"

The injured woman repeated the doctor's words, her eyebrows furrowing as if trying to process them.

"I was shot?"

"Yes, you were. Once you're fully awake, the hospital may need to do a thorough check-up. But first, I need to ask for your personal details so we can create a patient record. May I know your full name?"

After the doctor finished asking, the patient just stared at her in silence. Her eyes flickered to the tall figure standing in the corner, watching her.

Her eyebrows furrowed again and again, her lips pressing together before slowly parting to let out a soft, almost hesitant word.

"I..."

# CHAPTER : 02

The whole room fell silent for a moment. Everyone was waiting for an answer from the young woman, but she didn't seem ready to say anything, except for the short sentence she had started earlier.

Seeing that the patient was taking a long time to respond, the doctor in charge decided not to pressure her.

"It's okay," the doctor said gently.

"If you're not ready to share your personal details with the hospital yet, that's fine. For now, you should rest. When you feel ready, you can give your information to the nurse later."

Her voice was calm and reassuring. But the strange reaction of the woman on the bed-her furrowed brows and intense gaze-made Tichila feel uneasy.

It was as if she was accusing Tichila of abandoning her, leaving her to face the pressure alone.

But why? They didn't even know each other. Why was she looking at her like that?

Tichila stared back, her eyebrows knitted together in confusion. The other woman, meeting her sharp gaze, instinctively pressed her lips together before finally speaking in a barely audible voice.

"I... I don't know, doctor. I really can't remember my name."

Silence filled the room once again. Tichila stood frozen, unable to respond.

The woman's expression-full of fear and uncertainty-didn't seem like she was joking.

Did she lose her memory from a head injury?

This wasn't a drama or a novel. Tichila frowned, realizing the complications ahead.

And all of this wouldn't have happened if the woman hadn't ended up in trouble within her territory.

"In that case, I'll need to ask you a few more questions about your condition," the doctor said.

With that, the medical team got back to work, while Tichila simply stood there, quietly listening.

Some kind of resistance suddenly built up because of those beautiful eyes that kept glancing at her from time to time. It was a warning sign that made Tichila try to keep herself composed.

She wasn't a relative or someone close to her. They had never met before. She was just another human being who had simply been kind enough to bring her to the hospital. That was all.

Just because she had such a delicate, sweet face and a pair of beautiful, charming eyes, it shouldn't make her feel this shaken. Her heart shouldn't be beating this wildly.

It shouldn't...

"As the person who brought her to the hospital and even signed as her relative, the doctor would like to invite you to discuss her condition for a moment. Would that be okay?"

When the female doctor directed her attention to her, Tichila had no choice but to nod. But before following the doctor and the nurse out of the room, she couldn't help but glance back at the person lying on the bed without saying a word.

Once she had the chance to sit across from the attending doctor in the consultation room, her curiosity got the best of her. As soon as she sat down, she immediately asked about the patient's condition.

"So, doctor, how is she doing?"

"From the initial assessment based on the brief questions I asked earlier, I suspect that the accident might have caused a brain injury, leading to memory loss."

"What does that mean for her? I mean, what are her chances of recovery? What's the treatment plan?"

"To be certain, we'll need to conduct more detailed tests. But for now, I can only explain that the severity of memory loss varies from patient to patient. In her case, it could just be temporary. She may need time to regain her memories, but I can't give a definite timeline. It could take three months, six months, a year, or even longer."

"And in the meantime, how will this affect her daily life?"

"You don't have to worry too much. Most patients with similar conditions can still live their daily lives normally. Their routine habits will continue as usual. The only issue is that she might not remember events related to herself."

"I see."

Hearing the explanation didn't completely ease her worries. The doctor noticed her reaction right away.

"I've been given some details about the patient from Inspector Thonthan. For now, I think she should stay in the hospital until her condition improves. Meanwhile, her family members might already be searching for her or calling hospitals to check. If everything goes as expected, you don't have to worry. Our hospital will take care of that for you,"

The doctor assured her.

"Alright. Thank you very much, doctor. If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now." "Yes... please."

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Once again, Tichila couldn't get that woman out of her thoughts. Learning about her condition left her speechless and confused.

Beyond feeling sorry for her, she also had an unreasonable worry-if her suspicions were correct, then this woman was being targeted, someone was trying to harm her.

*What will happens next?*

A small woman, as fragile as a kitten, wouldn't be able to fight anyone off. And now, with her memory gone, leaving her to fend for herself was no different from sending her straight into danger.

Her thoughts were conflicted. One part of her wanted to stay out of it because it wasn't her problem. But another part couldn't stop worrying, even though it had nothing to do with her.

Tichila sighed and walked back to the recovery room. As soon as she stepped inside, her eyes met the woman's soft, delicate face-staring at her with wide, expectant eyes.

She stopped beside the bed, looking down at the thin figure who kept gazing at her as if she had been waiting for her return.

"You really don't remember anything? Not even your own name?"

"I already told the doctor everything. You heard it all, didn't you?"

Her sweet voice carried a hint of annoyance, catching Tichila off guard. She had only wanted to confirm, but the sulky glint in those beautiful eyes left her momentarily stunned.

Wait-why was she acting upset? They didn't even know each other! What was this woman thinking?

"I just wanted to make sure. You happened to have an accident in my area, and I brought you to the hospital even though we've never met before. If you could remember your name, I could help contact your family or someone you know, so you wouldn't become a burden to others."

"....."

Her pale face went even more colorless. The harshness in Tichila's voice seemed to have shaken her. Her dim, uncertain eyes trembled slightly.

The woman with the sweet face lowered her gaze to her hands, unsure of what else to do. Tichila's words had made it clear-she didn't want to take on anyone else's problems or get involved. That realization weighed heavily on the fragile woman, making her seem even smaller, even more helpless.

Her full lips pressed together tightly, as if surrendering to the bleakness of her situation.

"You've been awake for a while. Are you thirsty?"

Tichila's heart clenched when she saw that dejected expression. She might seem strong on the outside, but she knew exactly where her weaknesses lay. And right now, she was losing to the sight of this small, vulnerable woman who didn't even remember her own name.

The woman slowly lifted her gaze to the taller figure in front of her. The earlier words had stung, making it clear that Tichila had no intention of staying involved.

And yet... something about her made the woman feel safe.

Maybe it was instinct-the way someone lost and afraid sought out shelter. Just being near her felt comforting. And right now, the aching pain throughout her body and the dryness in her throat made it easy to push aside the harshness of their earlier conversation.

"I am thirsty."

Tichila glanced at her for a moment before reaching for the water pitcher on the bedside table. She poured a glass, added a straw, and then held it up to the woman's lips.

The drinking water slid down her throat slowly. Her delicate movements, filled with grace even in this condition, held Tichila's gaze.

She had been unconscious for two whole days, and thirst must have been unbearable. But even as she drank nearly the entire glass, she didn't rush. Every sip was calm, unhurried.

"Do you want more? You seem really thirsty."

"Thank you, but I'm full now."

The woman looked up at her and offered a soft smile.

Just small smile, that gaze from so close-was enough to shake Tichila's heart in a way she hadn't been prepared for.

Even with her pale face, bandaged head, and bruises marring her fair skin, her beauty still had an undeniable presence. And those soft, gentle eyes...They were dangerous.

Tichila found herself holding her breath, suddenly unable to breathe properly.

Tichila fought hard to suppress the emotions threatening to surface. The beauty and charm of the woman before her were almost too much to resist. She forced herself to maintain an expression of indifference, unwilling to let her weakness show.

Who was this woman? Where had she come from? Letting herself be affected so easily was unacceptable.

Just as she was reminding herself of that, their silent exchange was abruptly interrupted by the arrival of her two subordinates, who had returned to the hospital.

She quickly placed the empty glass back on the table, using their presence as an excuse to compose herself before turning to greet them.

"You're back. Did you get some rest, Priao?"

"I got some, but I was worried about you, so I asked P'Thos to drive us back to the hospital,"

Priao replied before glancing past her boss's tall figure to the woman on the bed.

"She's awake?!"

The woman was indeed awake, her delicate frame sitting up, watching them with sad, uncertain eyes.

"Yeah, she's awake, but she still doesn't remember anything,"

Tichila confirmed.

"For now, I need you to take care of her until we can contact her family."

Priao blinked.

"Wait, what do you mean?"

Both siblings turned to stare at the unfamiliar woman, who lowered her gaze, looking even more lost. Tichila let out a quiet sigh before explaining.

"Her brain suffered trauma. The doctor says she has amnesia-she doesn't even remember her own name. We'll have to wait for her relatives to reach out. In the meantime, I need you to stay here with her. Thos and I have to get back to overseeing the mine. Call me if anything happens, got it?"

"Understood, Miss."

With that settled, Tichila turned back to the woman on the bed. Even though her face remained neutral, she noticed the way those soft, pleading eyes searched hers, as if silently asking her not to leave.

But she had work to do. She couldn't spend all day watching over a stranger.

"I have to get back to work. You'll stay with Priao for now. If you need anything, just ask her. Understood?"

"...I understand."

But then, after a pause, the woman hesitated before asking in a small, uncertain voice,

"Will you... come visit me again?"

Tichila's heart clenched at the quiet fear in her tone.

"If I'm free, maybe tomorrow,"

She replied shortly. Then, turning to Thos, she said,

"Let's go."

Tichila turned to her subordinate, signaling for him to follow as she walked out of the hospital room. The woman on the bed could only watch her retreating back until she disappeared from sight.

"You should get some rest,"

Priao said gently.

"You're still injured. The more you rest, the faster you'll heal."

The woman hesitated before asking,

"That woman... is she your boss?"

"Yes, Khun Te is our Boss,"

Priao replied with a respectful nod.

"Now, try to sleep."

"....."

Seeing that her caretaker had no intention of continuing the conversation, the exhausted woman let go of her curiosity, sinking back onto the bed. The pain in her body made it easy to succumb to rest.

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Meanwhile, outside, Tichila and Thos made their way toward the four-door pickup truck parked in front of the hospital. Though she kept walking steadily, a quiet concern still lingered at the back of her mind. "Is it true?"

Thos asked, breaking the silence.

"About her memory loss?"

Tichila shot him a look.

"Who jokes about something like that, Thos?"

"Hey, I was just making sure,"

He said with a shrug.

"But... what if we can't contact her family? Wouldn't that mean the responsibility falls on you? After all, she did run into our mine to escape."

"Do you have a better suggestion? Like leaving her somewhere so we don't have to take responsibility?"

Thos gasped in mock horror.

"I never thought you were the heartless type, Miss! You'd abandon a small, beautiful woman like that? And in her condition? She wouldn't last long out there, you know. Wouldn't it be better to... keep her? What a shame to let such a lovely sight go. Imagine coming home after a long, exhausting day and having a gorgeous woman serve you a cold drink. Or maybe even-"

"Shut up, Thos!"

Tichila snapped, glaring at him.

"What? I'm just saying it how it is. Or are you saying you're not affected at all? She's like a little angel, don't you think? Maybe we should call her that... Angel... A fallen angel walking among us."

Tichila scoffed at his dramatic choice of words but couldn't help the small smirk tugging at her lips.

"Angel...?"

"Yeah! You don't like it? I mean, she does look the part. Unless you have a better name in mind?"

Tichila paused for a moment before shaking her head.

"No. I can't think about it now."

Tichila yanked open the driver's side door and hopped into the truck. Her subordinate, following closely behind, wasted no time jumping into the passenger seat. Without hesitation, she started the engine, and the vehicle pulled away from the hospital, heading straight back to the mine.

A knowing smile spread across Thos's face. He understood his boss's response perfectly.

He had never doubted that his boss had a cold heart. That just wasn't the kind of person Tichila was. No matter how tough she appeared, she would never turn a blind eye to someone's suffering-especially not to a life hanging in the balance.

*But more than that...How could his boss really ignore someone so beautiful?*

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# CHAPTER : 03

More than a week had passed since they started investigating the case, but there was still no progress. On top of that, no relatives or friends had come forward to claim the injured person at the hospital.

Late in the morning, Tichila arrived at the hospital, looking tense. She walked through the lobby until she spotted a young inspector sitting on a long bench near the entrance.

"You just got here?"

"Yeah, I just left the station and came straight here."

"So, it's been a whole week, and there's still no progress? Is this case really that hard, Than?"

Tichila looked at her friend, who was in full uniform. He stood up, revealing his tall frame-over 180 cm. His thick, well-shaped eyebrows furrowed in frustration. Earlier, he had called her, mentioning that he wanted to meet her at the hospital. She already had a feeling that he wasn't just here to give her an update on the case.

"We've hit a dead end, Miss. The culprit is highly skilled. They left almost no traces for us to follow. And to make matters worse, the victim has no memory of what happened. That makes things even harder. We have to work twice as hard, but I'll be honest-there are so many cases piling up. This one might take some time, but we're not ignoring it. I'll keep pushing forward."

Hearing this only made Tichila more frustrated. Today, the doctor had approved the patient's discharge, allowing them to continue recovery at home. That only added to her worries.

"The doctor said she can leave the hospital today. What do you think we should do?"

"If you ask me, Miss, I'd say the mine would be a good place. It's big, secure, and spacious enough for one small woman to stay safely."

"You're joking, right?"

Tichila gave him a sharp look.

"Taking responsibility for someone's life-someone we don't even know-is not a joke. Can we be realistic here?"

"I am being realistic! Don't forget, we suspected that someone was trying to kill her. That's why I think the mine is the safest place for now. They'd never expect her to be there. They might not even know she's still alive. I've made sure to keep things quiet for the past few days. We've been keeping an eye on the crime scene, but there's no sign that they've come back. As for her accommodation, if it's inconvenient for you, I can contact the relevant authorities to take care of her instead."

"Are you being sarcastic?"

"No way! Who would dare?"

Than shrugged, but his exaggerated tone made it obvious that he was teasing her, earning an annoyed glare from Tichila.

"If you want her to stay at my house, that's fine. But at least hurry up and sort things out, Than. I don't want to get too involved in other people's business. I don't need any more burdens."

"No more burdens?"

Thun almost burst out laughing at her cold and distant attitude.

"Come on, Miss, you're saying giving food and shelter to one small woman is too much of a burden? You literally run a mine and take care of hundreds of workers. Be real with me. Or are you just pushing her away because you're scared of something?"

"Scared? What nonsense are you talking about?"

"It's not nonsense. We've been friends for years. You can lie to the whole world, but you can't lie to me."

This time, Than called her out directly. He had known her for too long. No matter how indifferent she acted, he could see through her. The way she kept pushing the woman away-it wasn't indifference. It was something else.

"Alright then, if you're not comfortable letting her stay with you, I'll take her home with me. My official residence still has an empty room. It should be fine for her to stay there for now."

"Are you crazy? A man and a woman living together alone? People will gossip!"

"Oh? But didn't you just say you don't want more burdens? I was offering to help you out. Fine, let's settle it this way-I'll take care of her myself. I don't want my friend to feel pressured, so I'll handle it. Okay?"

"Shut up!"

Tichila snapped, her voice sharp with frustration. She wasn't really mad at Than-she was mad at herself. The idea of him taking that woman to live alone with him irritated her more than she wanted to admit.

Than was a good guy, but he was still a man. Letting a beautiful woman stay with him in his house-it was like handing sugarcane to an elephant. "What's this? Why are you so worked up? Don't tell me... you're jealous?"

Than smirked, pointing at himself playfully.

Tichila's sharp glare could have cut through steel.

The angrier she got, the more beautiful she looked. Not that she realized itshe was always too busy scolding him.

"Stop being so annoying and shut up already. You're a police inspector, but you act like a child. If your subordinates see this, who's going to respect you? Now, wait here. I'm going to settle the hospital bill."

With that firm statement, Tichila strode toward the finance department, leaving Thun standing there with a grin, watching her walk away.

She says she doesn't want to take on more burdens, yet here she is, paying for someone else's medical bills.

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Inside the hospital recovery room, a young woman was packing up belongings into a small backpack. She had been assigned to stay with the patient for the past week. Once she was done, she placed the bag beside the sofa, preparing for their departure.

The 19-year-old girl glanced at the frail woman as she slowly moved to sit up, her feet dangling off the bed. She quickly turned to grab the set of clothes she had brought, which she had prepared just in case. Incredibly, after all this time, she still didn't even know the woman's name.

Everyone, including her employer, had only referred to the woman as..."**Miss"**.

"These are some clothes for you. My Miss asked me to bring them so you'd have something to wear when you leave the hospital. But they're mine, just so you know. They're the newest ones I have-I've only worn them once. I hope you don't mind. You're so small, so I think they should fit. My Miss said that after we leave here, she'll take you shopping for new clothes."

"Thank you, Priao. Your Miss sure likes giving orders, huh?"

"She's not like that. She is kind."

"Kind? Where? She looks so stern! I've never even seen her smile."

The patient took the opportunity to gossip, unable to hold back her thoughts about the cold, expressionless woman she had encountered multiple times. She knew Tichila was going out of her way to help, but did she really have to act so distant?

"And don't ever think I'd be picky about your clothes, okay? I don't even know who I am or where I come from. For all we know, I could be a homeless person. Why would I care about wearing your clothes?" "Oh, come on. With your face and skin? There's no way you're homeless," Priao replied, shaking her head.

"I might not be from the city, but I can tell that much. But let's not argue about this. You should go change first. Miss will be here soon, and she's always on time. Everyone at the mine knows that. Since you'll be living there too, I thought you should know."

"Thanks, Priao."

The woman smiled at the girl's kindness. But as she got up from the bed, she couldn't help but ask,

"By the way, what happened to the clothes I was wearing before? Are they still around, or were they thrown away? And my old clothes... were they thrown away, Priao?"

"They weren't, but they were covered in blood, dust, and had tears in them. Still, I kept them for you. I made sure to keep them properly."

"Thank you so much, Priao. If you hadn't stayed with me, I wouldn't even know what to do."

"The one you should really thank isn't me-it's my Miss. If she hadn't ordered me to take care of you, I wouldn't have been able to. But first, you should hurry and change. If Miss arrives and sees you still like this, she'll get that stern look on her face again."

The girl's words made the patient sigh in resignation.

Without another word, she got up and went into the bathroom. Her wounds weren't fully healed, and her body was still sore, but she didn't want to be more of a burden than she already was.

About five minutes later, she emerged in fresh clothes-just as the door swung open to reveal Tichila, followed closely by a sharp-looking police inspector.

Tichila's steps faltered slightly at the sight before her. She swept her gaze over the frail woman, now dressed differently from how she had always seen her in hospital gowns.

She wore a fitted white t-shirt and beige linen pants-simple, but a far cry from the patient attire she had gotten used to. The new outfit made her look brighter, healthier.

Her once pale complexion now had a natural rosy hue, and her lips, which had been colorless the last time they met, had regained their soft pink fullness.

Yes, two days. That was how long Tichila had been too busy with work to visit, breaking the routine she had unknowingly set.

"Are you ready to leave, Priao?"

"Yes, Miss."

"Then let's go. Once we're done here, I have to check on things at the mine."

Tichila's eyes flickered toward the woman who immediately lowered her gaze, avoiding eye contact. She didn't comment. Instead, she silently picked up the neatly folded hospital gown and placed it on the bed.

"This is the clothing you were asking about. I'll carry it to the car for you."

"I'll carry it myself. Thank you very much, Priao,"

Said the speaker, reaching out to take the paper bag and holding it herself. But at the moment when she accidentally glanced up at the tall person, the calmness hidden in the eyes of the person who had been staring at her made her almost unable to keep her composure.

She never wanted to be a burden to anyone. If there had been even the slightest other option for her in this life with no place to go, she would never have troubled this woman-not even a little.

"If everything's ready, let's get going,"

The inspector said.

"Let me carry the bag for you. Hand it over, Priao."

"It's alright, Inspector,"

Priao replied quickly.

"It's just personal items for a woman. I think it'd be better if I carry it myself."

"In that case, let's hurry up,"

Tichila said. Even as she spoke, her gaze never wavered from the delicate woman in front of her, who still kept her head down, avoiding eye contact.

"Can you walk to the car? If not, do you want a wheelchair? I can call the nurse to bring one for you."

"It's okay. I can walk," she replied simply.

She didn't want to be a burden. That was all she wanted to say. But she never expected the woman who always kept a cold, unreadable expression toward her to suddenly reach out and take hold of her wrist-lightly, yet firmly.

She looked down at the slender fingers wrapped around her wrist, her heart pounding wildly.

Just this little touch from her-how could it make her heart race like this?

It was warm. It was safe. And somehow, she wanted to feel it again.

Slowly, she lifted her gaze, meeting the taller woman's eyes. For a fleeting moment, it was as if the world had stopped spinning. Their eyes locked, and time stood still.

But it lasted only seconds. Realizing what she was doing, she quickly looked away, glancing around nervously.

Then, as if to snap her back to reality, she noticed the curious stares from the inspector, the household staff, and even the younger workers at the estate. A sudden wave of heat rushed to her face, and she immediately tried to mask it with a neutral expression.

"Hurry up and get going. What are you standing around for?"

Tichila said, her voice turning firm, as if trying to suppress something.

"Go on ahead. I just have something to return to her."

It was a poor attempt to cover up her moment of weakness.

And for Thonthan, who had been secretly in love with her, it was a familiar scene. He could only shake his head in exasperation.

It hurt. But he had grown used to this kind of pain.

"You have something to return to me?" she asked hesitantly.

As soon as the others had stepped ahead, she raised her free hand to tuck a loose strand of hair behind her ear, trying to hide the growing heat on her cheeks.

The simple motion, so natural and unguarded, combined with her bashful demeanor, sent a strange ripple through Tichila's chest.

Without a word, Tichila reached into the pocket of her dark brown jacket and pulled something out, holding it out to her.

"This is yours. The doctor asked to remove it when I brought you to the hospital."

"Thank you."

She stared at the bracelet that was being handed back to her before carefully taking it. Her fingers brushed over its surface as she examined it for a moment.

"Keep it on and wear it once we're in the car. We need to go now."

"Alright."

Before she could say anything more, the taller woman gently took her hand and led her toward the car, where Inspector Thonthan and Priao were already waiting.

"We'll part ways here," Thonthan said.

"If I get any updates, I'll call you. And when I have time, I'll drop by the mine. Good luck. As for your case, I'll do my best-so don't worry."

"Thank you so much, Inspector."

His words made her turn to him with a grateful smile before stepping into the car with the other two women.

The vehicle pulled away from the hospital, heading straight for the mine.

Throughout the ride, she sat quietly in the backseat, lost in her own thoughts. She glanced down at the paper bag she held, then slowly opened it, pulling out the neatly folded clothes inside.

Her delicate fingers brushed over the fabric, her brows furrowing as she struggled to recall something-something just beyond her reach. The effort made her temples throb with tension.

With a small sigh, she put the clothes back into the bag and instead took out the bracelet.

Her eyes traced over its smooth surface, taking in its simple yet elegant design. But as she studied it more closely, her brows suddenly knitted together.

There-at the seam of the bracelet-was a faint mark. Something unusual. Something she hadn't noticed before.

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# CHAPTER : 04

**"Nam."**

Her soft lips mouthed the name unconsciously as her delicate fingers traced over the engraved letters on the bracelet. They were in English, but she could easily read them aloud in Thai.

Even though some of her memories were missing, her ability to read and write remained intact. So deciphering the letters on the bracelet was not difficult for her.

She lifted her head with a hopeful smile, her eyes shining with excitement. She wanted to share this discovery with the driver-only to find that their eyes met through the rearview mirror at that exact moment.

Once again, her heart skipped a beat. And as usual, the person in the driver's seat had been watching her every move through the mirror.

"I know my name now,"

She finally said, her voice uncertain yet filled with anticipation. Her heart raced every time she accidentally locked eyes with the woman who always maintained a stoic expression.

There was no immediate response. Tichila continued to glance at her through the rearview mirror, waiting for her to elaborate. Meanwhile, the young woman sitting in the front passenger seat eagerly turned around to look at her.

"You remember who you are?"

Priao asked excitedly.

"No, not exactly," she admitted.

"But look-right here, on this bracelet."

She held up the bracelet to show them the intricate engraving. Her face was glowing with enthusiasm.

"It has an English name carved into it. If this bracelet belongs to me, then these letters must be my name, right? My name is Nam! I must be Nam!"

Her excitement filled the car, reaching the driver-but the response she received was far from what she expected.

"It's just an engraving,"

Tichila muttered flatly.

"I thought you actually remembered something important."

Her expression immediately fell.

She lowered her gaze back to the bracelet, then slowly moved to hide it from view. The happiness she had felt moments ago faded, replaced by a growing sense of disappointment.

Maybe she couldn't remember everything about herself just yet, but wasn't discovering a clue about her identity better than nothing?

As she sat there, lost in her thoughts and emotions, the driver furrowed her brows slightly-almost as if she had just realized something important herself.

The bracelet has carved grooves. But what about other marks?

Tichila glanced at the person sitting in the back seat again, lost in thought but choosing not to say anything.

"But I think it's a good idea, Miss,"

Priao said.

"At least now we have a name to call her. It's better than just calling her 'Miss' all the time. Plus, we don't have to come up with a new name. This one suits her, don't you think, Khun Nam?"

"Uh... you can just call me 'Pee', Priao. I've told you so many times. No need to be so formal. I don't even know who I am or where I come from."

"If you don't know, then calling you 'Miss' is the right thing to do,"

Tichila replied firmly.

"You're not here as a mine worker. Eventually, you'll have to leave. Just think of yourself as my guest. And Priao, make sure everyone understands that."

"Yes, Miss," Priao responded, accepting the order respectfully.

Meanwhile, Tichila shot a sharp look at the person who was now giving her a sad, disappointed gaze.

That look again.

Why was she sulking now? Didn't she understand that being too familiar with everyone wasn't always appropriate?

In a place filled with male workers, it wasn't safe for a delicate and beautiful woman like her. And someone who looked so refined and fragile would only be an even bigger burden on Tichila. She had to keep a closer eye on her, much more than anyone else.

But her good intentions weren't understood. Instead, they came across as rejection, making the other woman feel even more hurt.

Her eyes burned, and she couldn't hold back the shaky voice that escaped her lips.

"Honestly... if you'd be so kind, I'd be happy just staying here as a worker. If you need me to do anything, just tell me. I'll do my best in exchange for a place to stay and to repay your kindness, Miss."

"I don't like people calling me 'Miss' so casually, Priao, didn't you tell her that?"

Annoyed, Tichila turned to her subordinate, who remained silent beside her, using the question to mask her own emotions.

This woman had no idea about her own situation. Someone as delicate as her-what could she possibly do? She looked like she could be blown away by the wind. And those soft, delicate hands-had they ever even held a broom? Washed a dish?

She wasn't looking down on her; she was just making a guess based on appearances. And there was nothing about this woman that suggested she had ever struggled with such matters before.

And that was exactly why the person who suddenly found herself under her employer's scrutiny, without knowing why, quickly turned to her with a startled and slightly uneasy expression.

"Oh! Do I really have to say it? Because normally, I see the workers in the mine calling you 'Miss'. And I've never seen you object to it."

"But those people are our own," Tichila reprimanded her in a firm voice.

"Yes, I understand now," Priao replied.

"Then, once we get home, I'll explain it to Khun Nam later."

"There's no need, Priao. I can hear everything clearly from right here. And you don't have to scold Priao either. If anyone is at fault, it's me."

"Khun Nam..."

The young girl tried to turn around and signal the other party to stop teasing her. But it seemed that the person who had a humble attitude earlier had a secret stubborn personality and would not listen to anyone.

"But everything I said is true, Priao. This isn't such a big deal that it warrants a fight. Just explain it to me properly, and I'm ready to understand. I only have amnesia, not brain damage. My mind still works fine-I can think. There's no need for you to take out your dislike for me on Priao. If you're angry, annoyed, or dislike me just because I've brought trouble and responsibility onto you, then you should direct those feelings at me, not at Priao."

Oh! Tichila was completely caught off guard by the long-winded argument that the other had delivered with such determination.

And believe it or not, instead of getting angry, Tichila fell silent.

Meanwhile, the one who turned pale as a boiled chicken was the young girl sitting amidst the verbal clash between the two adults.

Her eyes darted back and forth between them, growing even more confused. Not only had she never seen anyone argue with her boss so fearlessly, but even more shocking was that her boss-the one known for sharp words-was the one who backed down.

*Unbelievable.*

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After that... the atmosphere in the car remained utterly silent for the rest of the journey.

The car eventually entered the territory of the gemstone mine, about thirty kilometers from the city. After turning off the main road onto a long path leading into the mine, they drove about five hundred meters before reaching a fork.

Tichila turned the wheel to the left, and within two minutes, they arrived at a grand house standing tall amid lush greenery.

The vehicle came to a stop inside the garage. The young woman, visiting this place for the first time, hesitated slightly before stepping out of the car, feeling a small but noticeable sense of nervousness.

Her gentle eyes scanned the area, instinctively surveying the unfamiliar surroundings.

The place was spacious, with a raised, semi-traditional Thai-style house surrounded by lush greenery. The lawn around the house was wide and open.

A little farther away, three smaller houses were neatly lined up, clearly separated from the main house.

"The room I asked Aunt Prung to clean-it's ready, right, Priao?"

"Yes, Miss, it's all done."

"Alright, let's go inside. But first, we need to talk and clear some things up."

"Yes."

She responded and followed the other woman inside. The homeowner kept talking as she walked, as if she didn't want to waste a single second.

"While you're staying here, don't wander off unnecessarily, especially without letting someone in the house know first. The mine isn't just what you see here. Not far from here, there's a workers' camp and staff housing with hundreds of people coming and going. So, while you're here, you can't just roam around as you please. Understand?"

"I understand."

"In this house, it's just me and my younger brother. The first house you saw, the one closest to this one, belongs to Priao's family. The other two belong to long-time workers here. We live together like family. During the day, there will be a housekeeper who comes to clean and cook-Aunt Prung, Priao's mother, and Tos's as well. You'll meet him soon. If you need anything, you can ask Priao or Aunt Prung. Got it?"

"Got it."

"Oh, and there's Tos too. You can ask him for help if needed. He's the manager here. I assume you already know that."

"Yes, I do."

"One more thing-during the day, I'll be at the mine and won't be back until late at night. You might have to be alone sometimes because Aunt Prung won't be here all day. Everyone has their own work to do, and Priao will be busy with hers too."

"Alright."

"As for your clothes and personal items, you might have to wear mine tonight. I'll take you into town tomorrow morning to buy your own."

"Thank you so much, but really, you don't have to go through all this trouble for me. If you have some old clothes you don't wear anymore, you can just give them to me. I don't want you to spend money because of me."

She didn't know how to properly express her gratitude. The taller woman acted completely normal, as if they hadn't just argued in the car earlier. That only made her feel even more guilty, so much so that she couldn't even look up to meet her eyes.

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Sometimes, the lady of this house felt so distant, so hard to understand. Lost in thought, she kept her head down as she walked-until she suddenly bumped into a solid figure.

Looking up, her face instantly grew hot. The arms wrapped around her waist sent her heart racing. When she noticed the other woman's gaze drop lower-settling on her chest-she quickly pulled away, almost stumbling. "I'm sorry! I wasn't looking where I was going."

"What you just said... are you sure about that?"

"Huh?" She tilted her head in confusion.

"You said you'd wear my clothes."

The question alone wasn't much, but the smirk tugging at the corner of the taller woman's lips, combined with the way her eyes lingered on her chest, made her feel even more flustered.

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Even underwear?"

The woman's voice carried a teasing edge.

"I don't think we'd be the same size. If you wear mine, I'm afraid they might be a bit... loose on you."

Oh! If her face had been hot from embarrassment before, now it was burning for a completely different reason.

*Did she just insult her chest size?!*

Instinctively, she glanced down at herself, suddenly questioning things she'd never thought about before.

*"What kind of woman says things like that?! How could she just assume it would be loose? Maybe... maybe it's not as small as it looks! Why does she have to judge first?!"*

She huffed and rolled her eyes at the woman's back as she walked away. Once again, their exchange left her grumbling under her breath while following behind.

And for the person trailing behind both of them, watching their interaction unfold-it was almost impossible not to smirk.

*Seriously... what's going on between these two? There's definitely something there.*

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# Chapitre : 05

As the evening arrived, the warm sunlight slowly faded beyond the horizon.

The bright sky was replaced by a deep navy blue, and a few stars started to twinkle. Looking up at the sky, an unexpected feeling of loneliness crept into her heart.

"I shouldn't have sent Priao home so soon..."

She mumbled to herself. After letting the girl who had been keeping her company leave, the big house fell into complete silence.

Even though she felt lonely, deep down, she knew she had made the right decision. The girl had stayed with her all day-she deserved some rest and personal time.

She let out a soft sigh. It had been an hour since the owner of the house had dropped her off and then driven off in his jeep toward the mine. Now, she sat on the bench in front of the house, waiting for her to return.

She kept glancing toward the road, stretching her neck to look, only to swat mosquitoes in between. Her body, still weak from injuries, begged for rest, but she still couldn't bring herself to go inside and be alone in her room.

The large trees surrounding the house made the air feel cooler, with gentle breezes brushing against her skin. But at the same time, the stillness of the night only made her feel lonelier.

The sound of crickets filled the air, blending into the quiet night. The sky kept changing colors as she waited, making time feel even slower.

Finally, the sound of an approaching engine broke the silence. The green camouflage jeep that had left in the afternoon was now rolling into the garage.

The moment she saw it, the loneliness that had weighed on her heart all evening disappeared in an instant.

"Khun Te, you're back!"

Before the tall woman could even step onto the porch, she rushed toward her, smiling so brightly that she couldn't hide her excitement.

Just seeing her face was enough to chase away all her loneliness.

"Hmm. And why are you standing here? You should be resting in your room, not out here donating blood to the mosquitoes."

"I'm just waiting for you to come back."

Her heart started pounding. The way she called herself had changed, and it was shaking her heart like a swinging pendulum. The softness in her voice, so natural and without pretense, was melting every feeling inside her like ice turning to water.

"Why are you waiting? Have you eaten yet?"

"Not yet. I just told you-I was waiting for you."

"Then, are you really hungry? I just got back from the mine and feel a bit sticky. If you want to wait and eat together, let me take a quick shower first. Can you wait?"

She tried not to blush, but the warmth spreading across her face from her gentle tone and sweet smile was impossible to fight.

Her voice was softer than usual, and the way she spoke made her heart flutter. She couldn't help but smile as she looked at her slightly sweaty but still striking face.

"Go take your shower first. I can wait. I'll sit here on the sofa, okay?"

"Okay. I'll be back in ten minutes."

"Alright."

When she spoke nicely like this, she seemed kind of cute. She found herself thinking about it as she watched her walk toward her bedroom.

She was taller than the average Thai woman and dressed simply-just faded jeans and a black t-shirt under a dark jacket. Her long hair was pulled back into a high ponytail, showing off her elegant, fair neck. She had a lean, athletic build, and every step she took was confident and full of energy.

Everything about this woman was affecting her in ways she couldn't quite understand.

Was she fascinated by her beauty? Drawn to her charm?

The emotions stirring in her heart made it impossible to find an answer right away. She didn't even remember her own name, so how could she figure out what she was feeling? She exhaled softly, trying to release the strange, unexplainable emotions welling up inside her.

She walked over and sat on the sofa in the middle of the living room, just as she said she would.

Less than ten minutes later, Tichila reappeared in front of her.

"All done. Let's go to the kitchen."

"So now you're just sitting here, gulping down water? At this rate, you'll be full from that instead of rice."

She sounded like she was complaining, but still, she quietly placed a piece of omelet onto the other person's plate. Her expression remained neutral.

"If you really can't eat anything else, just stick with the omelet for now. Tomorrow, I'll tell Auntie not to cook such spicy food again."

"Thank you, but you really don't have to go that far. If everyone else here can eat it, I can too. I'll just try to get used to it little by little."

"And then what? Complain later that your stomach hurts? I don't have time to take anyone to the hospital again. Just eat up so you can rest. We have to wake up early tomorrow. I'm taking you into town to buy some things."

"Okay."

After that, silence fell between them as they focused on their meals.

Once they finished eating, Tichila led the way out of the kitchen. But before they could go their separate ways to their rooms, a loud, off-key singing voice suddenly filled the air from the front door.

"*Woahhh, yeahhh! Ohhh-!"*

A tall, handsome young man with fair skin strolled into the house, clearly in a great mood. But the moment he saw her sister's serious expression, he froze mid-step-just like her feet, which nearly tripped over themselves. "Heh... Hey, big sis. Why are you home earlier than usual today?"

"Earlier? What are you talking about? It's already 7 PM! Do you even bother looking at a clock?"

The moment he heard her sharp tone, his smile widened-almost reaching his ears. Pretending not to notice her scolding look, he kept grinning like he always did.

"Come on, P'Te. I just forgot to check the time, that's all. No need to sound so scary."

Then, as his eyes landed on the beautiful woman standing beside her sister, his expression immediately changed. His eyes sparkled mischievously.

The stunning stranger in front of him made his heart skip a beat. And, true to his flirtatious nature, he wasted no time waiting for her sister to introduce them.

"Well, hello there! I'm Phetai, P' Te's younger brother. And you are...? Are you a friend of my sister's? Or maybe the new employee helping out at the mine? Either way-nice to meet you!"

With eagerness radiating from his entire being, the young man extended his hand, hoping to establish a friendly connection with the beautiful woman. But before he could even get close to achieving his goal, his sister's sharp voice cut through the air, shattering all his hopes in an instant.

"Keep it in check, you little flirt. This woman is not here as a worker. So, don't even think about acting all touchy and annoying around her. If you don't listen, don't say I didn't warn you!"

Tichila shot her brother a glare, but he, being the peculiar person he was, didn't seem the least bit discouraged.

With a shrug, he grinned mischievously and even dared to lean his beautiful face closer to the stunning stranger-so close that she instinctively pulled back in surprise. However, before he could push his luck any further, a swift and firm slap landed right on the top of his head.

*Thwack!*

"Oww! P' Te! What the hell was that for?! Are you even sure that was just your hand?"

"You're lucky it was just my hand. If you keep acting all sleazy and disrespectful toward this woman, next time, you'll get something worse."

"Owww! What's with all the fuss? I was just teasing a little! Geez, is she your wife or something?"

As soon as those words left her mouth, the woman in question froze. She looked up at the tall figure beside her, who was now staring daggers at his younger brother. But before she could even process the absurdity of the situation, what came next made her even more dumbfounded.

"Yeah. My wife. So now that you know, don't even think about pulling any stunts like that again."

Without another word, the speaker grabbed the stunned woman by the wrist and swiftly dragged her into the room, leaving the younger brother standing there, mouth agape, rubbing his sore head.

"Whoa... Savage. I was gone for just a week, and now she suddenly has a wife?! When the hell did that happen?"

But Phetai wasn't the only one standing there in confusion. The moment the door shut, the woman who had just been pulled inside could only stare at the room's owner, her mind still struggling to catch up.

*"Wife."*

There was no way to interpret that word in any other way. No matter how she tried to think about it, there was only one possible meaning.

"Stop looking at me like that. What I said was nothing more than words. If you want to stay here peacefully without anyone bothering you, then just go along with what I told my brother earlier."

"But... he's your brother, isn't he? And the workers in the mine already know that I'm just a lost woman who ended up here. So how can I suddenly be... um, your wife?"

"Listen carefully. My brother doesn't know everything that happens in this mine. As for your situation, only a handful of workers are aware of it, and they won't spread the news to anyone beyond that."

"...."

"I just told you for your own good. There are plenty of young, hot-blooded workers here. If they know your status in this place, at least they'll be more respectful. But if you're not comfortable with it, it's up to you. It's about your own safety while you're here. Do whatever makes you feel at ease." Tichila frowned even more. The words she just heard were still unclear, but that didn't mean she didn't understand at all.

"But why do I have to be, um... your wife? We're both women. Why can't I just be your relative or close friend?"

"I don't have any relatives. And I've never had a close friend."

"Then you..."

Her curiosity showed in her eyes, making Tichila turn to her with an irritated look.

"Why are you asking so many questions? Everyone in this mine knows that I like women. Does that answer your question?"

The way those words were spoken so clearly made the listener's heart tremble like a swinging pendulum.

The phrase '*like women*' had an unexpected impact on her mind. Hearing it directly from this person changed how she saw her.

She wasn't disgusted. In fact, it was the opposite-she just felt like she had to be even more careful around her.

How was she supposed to act when they were so close? A woman liking another woman-those feelings of attraction were no different from those between a man and a woman. The same went for relationships.

So how could she not feel anything when she had to act like they were something more, even though, in reality, the other person seemed more annoyed by her than anything else?

"You don't have to worry. Yes, I like women, but not every woman. Especially not you. Consider yourself an exception, so there's no need to be so cautious around me."

Tichila caught on immediately. The way the other person spoke, along with her expression, only made her irritation grow.

If she wasn't interested, then why act so nervous?

"I understand. I know that someone like you, the owner of this sapphire mine, would never look at someone like me, a complete stranger. But since we're not actually anything to each other, do you really think we can fool them? Even if we can, how long could we keep it up?"

"And do you really think you'll be here long enough for the truth to come out?"

Silence filled the room... The sharp comeback left the person with nowhere to go, standing frozen, throat tight, unable to say a word. The feeling of being choked up made it impossible to respond.

Not remembering anything about herself was frustrating. She had become a burden to someone she had never even met before. How long would it stay like this? Was there anything she could do to help herself? Could she find a way to leave this place on her own?

So many questions filled her mind, pressing down on her chest until she unknowingly let them out through the heat welling up in her eyes. The weight of her own existence was suffocating, making her feel completely helpless.

Yet, she had no choice but to endure the sharp words thrown at her every single day.

Her eyes started to turn red, tears gathering at the corners. The sight of it made the sharp-tongued person suddenly feel a pang in her heart.

She never intended to hurt anyone with her words. But sometimes, trying to protect her own feelings led her to act in the opposite way.

As the atmosphere grew even more uncomfortable, she no longer wanted to stay there. She was afraid that her feelings of hurt and frustration would show, annoying the other person-or worse, making them pity her.

"I'll try to do as you suggested. If there's nothing else... I'd like to go to bed now."

Her voice was barely above a whisper, but the owner of the room still heard every word clearly. She wanted to say something, to take back what she had just said, but the words felt too heavy to speak.

"Don't forget to wake up early tomorrow. We have to go into town to buy a lot of things."

"Okay."

"And one more thing."

"Hm?"

She turned back again, facing the person who kept finding ways to hold her in conversation.

"Call me P'."

The room fell silent. Then, it was Tisila herself who felt a sudden rush of heat creeping up her neck-whether from her own words or the way she was looking at her with warmth and a hint of satisfaction.

"It's just to make things more believable," she added quickly.

"If we want people to think we're something, calling me 'you' sounds too distant. It wouldn't make sense, right?"

"And what about you, P' Te? Are you still going to call yourself 'I' when talking to me?"

She was stunned for several moments. Her face felt hot, her heart raced.

The way she called herself so softly, so gently-it sent a shiver through her. Her clear eyes watched her, waiting for an answer, shaking her heart more than she could handle. "W-Well...it's 'P'."

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# CHAPTER : 06

The new morning started with a cool, cloudy atmosphere, without sunlight. Even though it was already past 7 a.m., the sky looked like it might rain. The cool breeze carried the scent of fresh air, making leaves fall from the trees onto the grass.

It was the first day of her new life as a resident in this house. The slender young woman woke up early, took a shower, and got dressed, preparing to go out. She didn't want the house owner to wait too long or think she was lazy.

But even though she thought she had woken up early, it seemed the owner of the house was up even earlier. As soon as she opened the door and stepped out of her room, she saw a tall, slim woman-Tichila-standing in the living room, trying to wake up her younger brother, who was curled up on the sofa.

"Ton! Wake up already! Why are you sleeping here? Don't you have a bedroom?"

"Ughh... P'Te, let me sleep a little longer. Why are you waking me up so early?"

The young man groaned sleepily, grabbing a pillow to cover his ears. He turned his back to his sister, who stood with her hands on her hips, looking completely fed up.

"You're unbelievable! It's already late! Everyone else has been up working for ages, and you're still lying here like this? When are you going to stop being so useless, Ton?"

"....."

When her words were met with nothing but silence, Tichila had to try hard to keep her temper under control. She looked up at the ceiling and let out a deep sigh, trying to calm her frustration.

She had been tired of her brother's irresponsibility for a long time. She always blamed herself-she could manage workers at the mine, but she couldn't do anything about her own brother. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't change him.

Phetai was twenty-three, almost ten years younger than her. Since graduating, he hadn't done anything serious. He never cared about work, not even the family's mining business. He didn't seem to care that one day, it would be his responsibility.

In reality, the role of managing the mine should belong to him, the rightful heir of Suphormet. Not her. She was just an orphan adopted by their parents before Phetai was even born.

"I said get up, Ton!"

This time, it wasn't just a command. Her voice was so low and serious that it sent a chill down her brother's spine. Realizing that she was about to lose her temper, he quickly jumped up before the water jug in her hand ended up being poured over his head.

"Ouch! Calm down, P'Te! I'm up, I'm up! Don't pour that on me-I don't want to take a shower this early!"

He grumbled, his face scrunched up in frustration. His messy hair stuck out in all directions, ruining his usual charming and carefree image.

Seeing him like this, his sister could only roll her eyes, too exhausted to even put her frustration into words. If one day she wasn't around anymore, how would this useless little brother of hers survive? How would he even live? She had no idea. No matter how much time passed, she still couldn't see any hope for him.

She was tired-but she couldn't say it out loud. No matter how much she nagged him, it was like water soaking into sand, disappearing without a trace.

She had a duty to repay the kindness of those who had raised her by taking care of her brother. No matter how hard it was, she had no right to complain.

"I'm going into town today. As for you, you have to go to the mine and learn the work from Thos. Got it?"

"No way, P'! I have plans with my friends today. You already know I'm hopeless when it comes to mine work. Come on, P'Te, even if you force me to go, I'll just end up staring at rocks and gravel, not understanding a thing. It never makes sense to me! But if there were pretty girls there, maybe I'd be more interested. But what do we have? A bunch of scruffy, bearded old workers. And even if there are women, none of them are as gorgeous as your girlfriend. By the way... where did you find her? She's crazy beautiful."

"Stop Chapter :bling and don't try to change the subject."

Tichila snapped at him again, glaring as her brother grinned mischievously. It was always like this-if he wasn't disappearing from home for weeks, he was driving her crazy with his nonsense.

"Geez, just a little teasing and you're already mad. I get it, I get it-you're super protective. But don't worry, I wouldn't dare mess with my own sister's girlfriend."

Once again, Tichila let out a long sigh, exasperated by her brother's annoying antics.

And all of their back-and-forth wasn't lost on someone standing at a distance, listening with a face that was growing warmer and redder by the second.

The word *"girlfriend"* kept slipping from his mouth so easily, making her heart race. Did he really believe it?

Even though it was just a fake relationship to fool others, she couldn't deny how much it affected her.

"Tell me, are you going or not? If you agree to go learn the work in the mine, I'll give you back the full salary I deducted before. But if you don't, then just use what you have left until you learn how to work properly. And don't come complaining later that you don't have enough money. So, what's your choice?"

"Oh, come on, Big Sis! Why are you being so harsh on your own little brother? I'm your brother! Can't you feel a little sorry for me?"

"Don't expect sympathy from me. Even if you're my brother, if you don't know how to work, I won't make any exceptions."

"Please, P' Tichila! Just this once, okay? I already made plans with my friends for a trip. I can't cancel at the last minute! Let me start next week instead, I promise I'll go learn the work in the mine without complaining. Please, please!"

Phetai pulled out his best pleading voice, but as always, his sister's calm, unreadable gaze sent shivers down his spine. Even though he knew better than anyone that she had a kind heart, sometimes Tichila could be really scary.

"Fine. Since you promised, I'll let it slide this time. But you know what will happen, right? If next week you try to avoid it again, forget about your salary, credit card, or even your car keys. You won't be using any of them."

"Got it! I swear on my honor, I won't break my word!"

The young man quickly answered.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to shower and get ready to meet my friends. Bye!"

Just as he was about to turn and head back to his room, his face lit up with a playful grin as he greeted his sister-in-law, who was standing nearby with a small, polite smile.

"Oh! Good morning, Sister-in-law! I heard P' Tichila is taking you to town today. Have fun!"

Without waiting for a response, he disappeared into his room, leaving his sister-in-law blushing deeply.

Her reaction wasn't too different from the woman beside her, who had also heard Phetai's teasing words. But even so, her embarrassment was nothing compared to the person whose fair face was now turning a bright shade of red.

*She looks so cute when she's flustered.*

Tichila found herself staring at her in a daze. But the more she looked, the faster her heart raced.

"P'Te told me to wake up early, but I still woke up later than P'Te."

*P'Te...P'Te...P'Te*.... Why does that name sound so soft and sweet when it comes from her lips? It makes my heart feel so strange...

"It's not that late anyway."

She tried to hide her feelings, but the more time passed, the stronger they became.

"Are you hungry? I was thinking we could grab something to eat in town later. I have some errands to run first, and then we can go shopping at the mall later in the morning."

"Okay. I'm not really that hungry right now."

"Alright, let's go then."

With that, Tichila walked ahead toward the four-door pickup truck parked in the garage. She got into the front seat beside him, and soon, the truck pulled out of the mining area, following the same road they had taken back from the hospital yesterday.

Inside the car, they exchanged a few words here and there, but for the most part, both tried to keep their emotions in check.

After a while, the truck turned into a place just before reaching town. Tichila told her to wait in the car, and she simply replied, "Okay." Left alone in the idling vehicle, she watched as her tall figure disappeared into the building.

Her eyes wandered around, but seeing nothing particularly interesting, she let herself sink into her thoughts instead. Slowly, she closed her eyes, trying once again to recall something-anything-about her past.

She had tried so many times, forcing herself to remember, desperately wanting to know more about herself. But no matter how hard she tried, all she ever found was emptiness, always followed by a dull headache.

She had no idea how much time had passed. The next thing she knew, the truck door opened, and she hopped back into the driver's seat.

"Were you sleeping? You can keep resting if you want,"

Tichila glanced at her before turning her focus back to the road.

"No, I wasn't sleeping. Just resting my eyes."

"In about fifteen minutes, we'll pass by a restaurant with really good food. Do you want to eat there or at the mall?"

"Either is fine. I'll let you decide."

Since she wasn't the type to insist on anything, she didn't push for an answer. They continued the drive in silence until they arrived at a restaurant. They spent some time eating there before heading to their final stop-a shopping mall in the city center.

They started in the personal care section, moved on to clothing, and eventually ended up in the lingerie section, where rows of brands and styles were on display.

"Take your time shopping. I'll step outside to take a call real quick."

"Okay."

As soon as the tall woman walked out to take her phone call, the young woman turned her attention back to browsing through the lingerie section.

It didn't take her long-within five minutes, she had picked out a few pieces in her size and handed them to the store clerk.

"That's it? Are you planning to wear them and wash them every other day?"

The tall woman commented when she returned and saw her handing just a few sets to the staff for checkout.

"You've already spent a lot on me today, P'Te. Three sets should be enough."

"If you think it's too much, then just put it on a tab. When you remember who you are and where you came from, you can pay me back."

Then, turning to the staff, Tichila continued,

"Get another dozen in the same size, mix the colors, but no red."

She didn't even ask for an opinion. Her decision was final, leaving the petite woman with no choice but to stay silent.

Once the clerk packed everything into paper bags, they carried their shopping and prepared to head back to the car.

But on the way, as they passed a phone store, Tichila suddenly stopped.

"Is this really necessary? I don't think I need one," she hesitated.

"It's for emergencies. If something happens, you need to be able to call. Don't worry, it's all going on the tab."

"Alright then."

Not wanting to argue, she let her do whatever she wanted. After some time, they finally made it back to the car. As Tichila was organizing their bags in the back seat, one of the lingerie bags accidentally slipped and landed at her feet. She bent down to pick it up.

That's when her eyes landed on the size tag, clearly printed on the packaging.

She swallowed hard.

Tichila glanced up, her gaze shifting toward the petite woman's chest as she handed over the rest of the bags. The simple t-shirt she wore did little to hide her curves.

*She looked small and slender, but... that size? Seriously?*

Without realizing it, she swallowed again. Meanwhile, the woman-now aware that someone was staring at her chest-stood frozen, not knowing how to react.

She had intended to turn away, but the moment her eyes caught sight of the lingerie in the tall woman's hands, a certain remark she had once made about her flashed through her mind.

She had almost forgotten that she was still staring at her chest. Instead of stepping back to escape her gaze, the woman-who had once been underestimated-straightened her posture slightly, subtly pushing her chest forward with a newfound sense of pride in the curves she had been born with.

Internally, she smirked at her stunned, wide-eyed reaction.

Was the size label on the lingerie clear enough now?

Maybe now she would finally realize that just because she was petite, it didn't mean *everything* about her was small.

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# CHAPTER : 07

She used to live alone, but ever since a new member came under her care, the routine of the mistress of the gemstone mine had started to change.

She used to eat breakfast alone every morning and spend her evenings in the same repetitive cycle for years. But over the past week, the person waiting at home had become a reason for her to return earlier than usual.

Every evening after work, she would always find a slender figure sitting idly on the bench in front of the house, waiting.

And every time she saw that face, all her exhaustion from the long workday seemed to vanish in an instant. Her heart felt lighter, more alive. This person's presence had started to play a role in her life, slowly becoming a part of every moment that had once belonged only to her.

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Around 7:30 AM, Tichila stepped out of her room, dressed and ready to head to the mine like every other morning. But then, she nearly raised a hand to massage her temples when she saw her younger brother's ridiculous outfit.

"Are you dressed for the mine, or do you think you're a CEO inspecting a shopping mall?"

She glanced him up and down. His once messy hair was now neatly styled. He was wearing a deep red suit, polished leather shoes that gleamed, and sunglasses perched on his nose. The sight made her shake her head in exasperation.

It wasn't that he didn't look good-he did-but showing up to a dusty, dirtfilled mine in a fancy suit was beyond absurd.

"Come on! It's my first day, sis. I have to look sharp-like a true executive!"

"Executive? In your dreams."

Tichila rolled her eyes, too tired to argue. She let out a deep sigh and simply stood there, watching as her brother continued to pose with his hands in his pockets, acting cool.

Just then, he suddenly turned, grinning widely and waving enthusiastically at the slender figure who had just stepped out of their room.

"Hi! Good morning, sister-in-law! Today's my first day learning about the mine. How do I look? Handsome enough to walk beside the boss?"

"Uh... um... y-you look... handsome."

Flustered by the way he called her "*sister-in-law*," a title based on a completely made-up situation, she could only manage a stammered reply as her face grew warm.

The word "sister-in-law" sounded so deep and meaningful that it had an unexpected effect on her heart.

"There! See? Even my sister-in-law is speechless and flustered. That means I'm so handsome it's making her shy, right? No need to deny it! I'm just as cool as my big sis. If you ever change your mind and want to be with me instead, I'm always ready. But seriously, what kind of couple sleeps in separate rooms?"

"Shut your filthy mouth right now, Shorty! Do I look like your playmate?"

The one being questioned quickly changed the subject, unsure how to answer her brother's unexpected remark about the sleeping arrangements.

"Come on... I was just joking! No need to be so serious. You're so jealouseven with your own little brother!"

"You're the problem! Aren't you supposed to be going to the mine? Go eat your breakfast already!"

"Okay, okay, boss! I'm going!"

With that, the mischievous younger brother hurried off to the kitchen, leaving his sister standing there. She turned and met the gaze of the slender figure who had been silently watching, looking both nervous and embarrassed.

Over the past week, as they spent more time together, they had come to understand each other better. The initial awkwardness between them had faded significantly.

Now, the usual sharp look in her eyes when dealing with her brother softened when she turned to face the other person. And just that simple gaze made the one being stared at feel oddly flustered.

"Are you heading out to work now, P'Te?"

"Yeah. How's your wound? Still hurting?"

"It's much better now. It should be fully healed soon."

"That's good. You've been stuck at home all week. If you don't mind the heat, do you want to come to the mine and watch them dig for gemstones?" "Really? Can I go?"

The invitation made her unable to hide her excitement. After spending days just sitting around the house, she had been feeling restless. So, when the mine owner personally invited her, she couldn't help but feel overjoyed.

"Yeah. If you want to go, hurry up and change. But it's pretty hot out therewear long sleeves. I'll wait for you at the dining table. You've got five minutes to change."

"Got it! I'll be ready in less than five minutes!"

Finishing her sentence with excitement, the slender woman quickly turned and hurried back into her room. The tall figure left standing there could only watch her retreating back, a small smile forming at the corner of her lips without even realizing it.

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Tichila walked over to her younger brother, who was busy stuffing food into his mouth without a care in the world. Not long after, the woman who had gone to change returned and joined them at the dining table.

Tichila looked up, scanning her outfit with approval. Jeans paired with a well-fitted long-sleeve shirt-though not exactly rugged, it suited her, giving her a delicate yet charming look.

"*Ahem!* Sorry, I almost choked on my rice,"

Her brother suddenly interrupted.

"You know what? I think I'll go wait in the car. I'm full anyway. You two take your time."

With that, he flashed a cheeky grin at his sister before slipping away, not wanting to be the third wheel between her and her "*lover*."

After a while, as he sat in the jeep, whistling happily, he glanced up and saw his sister stepping out of the house with her companion. He watched as his sister lifted a wide-brimmed hat and gently placed it on the other woman's head.

Seeing that small moment of care made him smile.

The woman his sister was with was undeniably beautiful-so beautiful that he had been tempted to tease and flirt with her just for fun. But seeing the way his sister treated her, the way she showed a rare softness he hadn't seen before, he knew he had to step back. If this woman could bring his sister happiness, he wouldn't stand in the way.

"So, P'Te, what do I have to do on my first day?"

He asked, shaking off his thoughts.

"You'll find out when we get there. I'm assigning Tos to train you,"

Tichila replied, glancing at her brother as he climbed into the backseat, knowing his role well.

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She started the car, driving out of the house at a steady pace-not too fast. The road was rough, and she didn't want the woman sitting beside her to endure too much discomfort.

"Do whatever you want, boss, but please, not anything too heavy. If you're going to make me work hard, at least respect my outfit a little,"

Her brother whined.

"You're the one making it complicated. Who told you to wear a suit to the mine? The workers are going to laugh at you. They might even think you're just some rich kid who's all talk and no action. Honestly, it's exhausting dealing with you."

"Why should I care what they think? Besides, they wouldn't be wrong. I really *am* all talk and no action,"

He admitted shamelessly.

Tichila gave up trying to argue with him. There was no point wasting her breath. Instead, she let the journey continue in silence.

Eventually, the jeep rolled to a stop in a wide clearing beside a large camouflage tent. The tent served as shelter from the sun and rain, as well as a multi-purpose space for various needs.

Tichila jumped down from the jeep and walked around to the other side, extending her hand to help the smaller woman step down.

"Thank you," she said softly.

"Put your hat on. Luckily, it's not too hot today,"

Tichila reminded her before turning to glance around. Spotting one of the workers passing by, she called out,

"Hey, wait a second. Go find Tos and tell him to meet me at the tent." "Yes, boss," The worker responded before hurrying off.

With that taken care of, Tichila led her younger brother and his so-called "girlfriend" into the tent to wait.

Before long, Tos arrived, slightly out of breath, sweat covering his forehead. "Tos."

"Yes, boss?"

"Take Phetai and teach him everything he needs to know about the mine today. No exceptions, no special treatment. If he causes any problems, you have my permission to discipline him,"

Tichila ordered. Then, turning to her younger brother with a serious expression, she added,

"And you-don't cause any trouble. Got it?"

"Aww, P'Te, why are you being so harsh?" Phetai whined.

"Stop messing around. I'm not letting you treat this like a game anymore. Start learning what you're supposed to be responsible for. If one day I'm no longer here, how are you going to manage this mine and its workers?"

"Why do you always say such nonsense? You're the boss here-there's no way you won't be around!"

Phetai protested, though a hint of unease crept into his voice.

"Fine, I'll learn. But managing the whole mine? No way. I don't have what it takes. It's better if you just take care of me forever."

His words were stubborn, but deep down, they came from a place of fear. Tichila had been his only source of stability ever since they lost their parents. If she wasn't here, he wasn't sure how he'd survive.

"Stop acting like a spoiled kid. Get to work,"

Tichila said firmly, dismissing him before he could argue any further.

She knew Phetai wasn't as strong as his name suggested. He had never truly lived up to the resilience their parents had wished for him.

As her brother was led away, a fleeting moment of exhaustion crossed Tichila's face-one she hadn't meant to show.

It lasted only a second, but it was long enough for the woman beside her to notice. And as she silently watched, a deep sense of sympathy filled her heart.

The entire time they had been living under the same roof, even though they didn't spend every moment together, she had come to understand Tichila's world. From her environment to the heavy responsibilities she carried, it was clear how much weight this woman bore on her shoulders.

No matter how strong she appeared on the outside, Tichila was still just a woman. Wasn't it only natural that even she would have moments of weakness? She was human, after all, not unbreakable in every way.

She was absorbing everything that made Tichila who she was, slowly embracing every emotion that came with it.

"I have to go oversee the workers at the mining site. You can come with me if you want," Tichila said.

"Okay,"

The young woman nodded. But just as Tichila was about to step out of the tent, a delicate hand reached out and took hers without warning.

"Can I hold your hand, P'Te?" she asked softly.

It was impossible to resist the pleading look in her eyes as she tilted her face up to meet Tichila's gaze. And so, without a word, Tichila tightened her grip, holding the smaller hand a little more firmly.

There was no need for more words-only a warm smile from the woman walking closely beside her.

The gentle touch of their hands sent warmth coursing through both of them, straight to their hearts. With every step they took, it became undeniablesomething was beginning to take root between them, something neither could ignore.

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Tichila led her to an open area, where the mining site stretched before them. Dozens of workers were busy at their tasks, their movements steady and focused.

The young woman watched in fascination as a large backhoe scooped up soil, piling it into a high mound. A group of workers then sprayed water over the soil, letting it flow down into sorting equipment. There, experienced hands sifted carefully, separating precious gemstones from the dirt.

"Do you want to get a closer look at how they sort the gems?"

Tichila asked.

"Yes."

With that, Tichila took her hand again and guided her toward the workers.

But just as they approached, the woman suddenly let go of her hand and darted forward, reaching down to pick something up from the ground.

"This is... a gemstone vein, isn't it?" she exclaimed.

Tichila stood still for a moment, her gaze fixed on the small piece of mineral held out for her to see. Amidst the pebbles-some black, some deep green-was something valuable, something most people wouldn't recognize unless they had spent years working in the mines.

"And how are you so sure it's a gemstone and not just a rock or a lump of dirt?"

Tichila asked, her eyes narrowing with curiosity.

Tichila asked with curiosity, her eyes shifting between the gemstone ore and the sweet, confident face smiling at her.

"Because Nam once...."

"Oh no, Miss! Something big has happened!"

A worker's loud shout from afar instantly interrupted their conversation. Tichila quickly turned to look at the chubby male worker who came running, panting heavily.

"What is it?"

"Khun Phetai, Miss! Khun Phetai is fighting with a worker over there!"

"Unbelievable! First day in the mine, and he's already causing trouble! That wild little brother!"

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# CHAPTER : 08

Tichila barely had time to process before grabbing the wrist of the woman beside her and following the male worker who led the way.

When they arrived at the scene, loud cheers erupted from a group of workers who had gathered in a circle. Two men were relentlessly throwing punches at each other, neither willing to back down.

It was clear at a glance that the well-built worker, hardened by working under the sun and wind, had the advantage over her younger brother, who had a slim frame like a Korean actor.

"Stop! I said stop!"

Tichila's sharp voice cut through the cheers of the workers, none of whom seemed inclined to break up the fight. The only exception was Thot, the manager, who appeared just as unable to control the situation.

"I said stop!"

Her furious voice rang out again, but it did nothing to silence the shouts or halt the brawl.

Her eyes, blazing with anger, swept the area. Acting on instinct, she grabbed a bucket of water within her reach and hurled it over the two men, who were fighting like wild dogs.

"Madam!"

The workers exclaimed in unison. The rowdy cheering died instantly, and their faces turned pale at the sight of their mistress.

Her expression and piercing gaze sent chills down their spines. Everyone knew what fate awaited the troublemakers in mere moments.

Yet, the sudden silence didn't affect the towering worker, who was still poised to throw a powerful punch at the man beneath him.

"I told you to stop!"

***Thud!***

This time, she didn't just use words. A forceful kick, fueled by her dwindling patience, sent the muscular worker sprawling into the dirt.

The towering man, once standing firm, now lay on the ground, utterly defeated. Meanwhile, her loyal subordinate rushed forward to help their young master, who was struggling to get up, blood trickling from his mouth.

"How are you, Shorty? You okay?"

"Damn it! I look like a mess. My suit is ruined."

"And you still care about your suit?"

There was no response from the man who was still dazed from the fight. He just wiped the blood off the corner of his mouth with a cool expression. Meanwhile, the worker who had been kicked and sent flying landed flat on his back. He quickly pushed himself up, his face filled with rage.

"You think you guys can gang up on me? You think you're so tough?"

The burly man pointed angrily at the woman who had just kicked him. His rage was at its peak, even though he knew she was the boss here. But to a man like him, there was no reason to fear a small woman.

"No one is ganging up on you, and no one here thinks they're tough. But we have rules. Everyone knows that if you start a fight, there will be consequences. Didn't the foreman tell you that before you started working here?"

Tichila tried to stay calm while responding to the furious man, but the more she remained composed, the more arrogant he became.

To him, she was just another rich woman. How powerful could she really be? Controlling a bunch of men in a mine-wasn't that only possible because of money? In the month he had worked here, he had never seen this socalled "*boss lady*" do anything other than give orders.

If she got hit, she'd proChapter :ly just scream like any other woman. What a joke. The thought made him laugh mockingly.

"Hahaha! The rules here only apply to workers like us! Don't act like you're being fair, Boss Lady. There's no way you'd kick your own little brother out of this mine. You'll always take his side no matter what."

"It looks like you've got the wrong idea."

Tichila's voice remained firm.

"I made this rule myself. Since he's my brother, I can't punish him the same way as the workers, but that doesn't mean there won't be consequences. Right and wrong still matter. I will decide the punishment. There are plenty of witnesses here. If my brother is in the wrong, there will be no exceptions." "Big si-"

"Shut up!"

Tichila cut her brother off sharply. Her icy glare made him lower his head and stay silent, not daring to say another word.

"You don't have to act so fair! I already know I'm getting fired today. So don't pretend to be nice to me. Just say what you want, but you better pay me my wages. And one more thing-there's no way a real man like me would ever bow down to a woman like you. That would be humiliating!"

"Hey! That's enough! Watch your mouth!"

Tos, who had been listening for a while, finally lost his patience. He was about to charge at the foul-mouthed worker, but his boss raised a hand to stop him just in time.

"It's fine, Tos. I'll handle this myself."

"Oh ho! Look at that! The boss lady is tough, huh? And how exactly are you going to 'handle' me? Are you challenging me to a fight? Then come on! What are you waiting for? I'll even be generous. If I lose, I'll kneel before you and crawl like a dog. But if you lose, you have to hand that woman over to me for a night or two. Deal?"

"You bastard! You've crossed the line now!"

Once again, Tos couldn't hold back his anger. And once again, his boss's sharp gaze forced him to swallow his frustration.

Tichila said nothing, but her cold eyes locked onto the arrogant worker, who acted as if he feared nothing. Meanwhile, the woman who had been dragged into the bet looked up at Tichila with a pale face and trembling lips.

"P' Te..."

Her voice wavered with fear. She was terrified that Tichila would accept such a ridiculous challenge. There was no way a woman like her could win against a man that big and strong.

"Don't waste your time worrying about his nonsense,"

Tichila said, lowering her gaze to meet the frightened woman's eyes. A small hand clung to her arm, trembling with worry. Gently, she placed her own hand over it, her grip firm and reassuring.

"Just trust me. His words will be nothing but empty threats. They won't come true."

Slowly, Tichila pried the delicate fingers off her arm. Her gaze then shifted to the smirking man, who was watching her with mocking amusement. His arrogant smile only deepened as she calmly stepped forward into the open area of the courtyard, accepting his challenge without a single word.

"P' Te..."

The woman left behind could only stand there, heart pounding, eyes filled with fear. Tears threatened to spill-not just because she had been used as a bargaining chip, but because she was deeply worried about the woman who had just stepped forward to face a ruthless man head-on.

Even though Tichila was tall, her slender frame was clearly feminine. How could she possibly stand a chance against such a big, muscular man?

"Don't worry, Miss Nam. There's no way our boss will let anyone lay a finger on you,"

Tos reassured her.

"That's easy for you to say! Didn't you see how huge that guy is? He's a man! There's no way your boss can fight him! Are you all just going to stand here and let her get hurt?"

Nam was on the verge of panic. She was trembling, her hands cold as ice, completely terrified of the violence that was about to unfold before her eyes.

"Calm down, sister-in-law. Just watch and see, like Tos said. That guy doesn't know our boss at all. If he doesn't end up in a hospital bed after this, then don't call her the boss of Suphphromet anymore,"

Petai said, still wiping the blood from his mouth. He let out a laugh, but Nam found no comfort in his easygoing attitude.

A murmur rippled through the crowd as the big man swung his heavy fist toward Tichila's face. But at the very last moment, she tilted her head, dodging it by mere inches. In the same fluid motion, she drove her foot straight into his chest, sending him stumbling backward, nearly falling flat on his back.

"Damn it!"

He cursed in humiliation, never expecting a woman's kick to have that much force. His face twisted in rage. Losing the first exchange to a woman wasn't just embarrassing-it was infuriating. Blinded by anger, he charged at her wildly.

But brute strength alone was useless against someone with real skill. Tichila was fast-faster than he could keep up with. She landed a clean punch to his chin, but at the same time, he managed to strike her mouth, making her stagger.

"P' Te!"

Nam screamed. Seeing Tichila lose her balance made her heart stop. But before she could even process what was happening, Tichila had already steadied herself. She wiped the blood from her lip, her expression calm and unwavering.

Her sharp gaze locked onto her opponent. He smirked, thinking he had the upper hand. But as he lunged at her again, her patience finally ran out. She didn't have time for this nonsense.

Without hesitation, she jumped and kicked him square in the chest, making him stumble. Then, in one swift motion, she spun around and delivered a powerful kick to his chin.

The man went flying, landing hard on the dusty ground.

Before Tichila could follow up with another strike, the man quickly raised his hands over his head, signaling surrender before she could land another blow.

"Enough! I give up, Boss!"

"Should've knocked him out cold instead,"

Phetai muttered, frustrated that the guy got off so easily.

The crowd of workers erupted in murmurs and exclamations, their voices filling the air the moment the fight ended. The man lay sprawled on his back, blood trickling from his mouth-a pitiful sight.

Tichila merely stood still, her sharp eyes watching him without emotion. She lifted a hand to wipe the corner of her lips where blood had seeped from the earlier punch. But before she could even lower her hand, a small, trembling figure rushed forward and threw herself into Tichila's arms.

The unexpected embrace caught her off guard.

Overwhelmed with relief, fear, and a dozen other emotions, Nam clung to her tightly, her whole body shaking.

"Nam..."

Tichila whispered. The warmth of Nam's arms wrapped around her sent a deep, steady thrum through her chest. She hesitated, but then gently raised a hand to stroke Nam's head as she buried her face against Tichila's shoulder.

"Why did you do that?"

Nam's voice trembled.

"I was so scared. I was terrified that you'd get hurt."

"You don't have to be,"

Tichila murmured.

"Do you really think I'd let anyone lay a hand on you that easily? Not a chance."

The words slipped out before she could stop them.

Realization struck them both at the same time. Nam, face burning, quickly pulled away from Tichila's arms, her hands clenched at her sides. She dared to glance up for just a second before immediately looking away, her cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

And yet, no matter how much they tried to regain their composure, the silent exchange between them did not go unnoticed.

The workers had seen everything.

No one needed to ask any more questions. It was clear as crystal clear-what kind of relationship their boss had with the beautiful face woman who had just stepped away.

That women belonged to, Tichila, their boss. And now, not a single one of them would dare lay a finger on her.

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# CHAPTER : 09

"Ouch! Can you be more gentle, Priao? Are those hands or feet?"

"Stay still, Khun Ton. If you keep moving, it'll hurt like this."

"Are you talking back to me? You crazy kid! I'm your boss!"

"So what if you're my boss? If you don't need anyone's help, then do it yourself. That way, I can get back to work. I don't have time to waste."

"Hey! What the hell? You're really pushing it!"

Phetai's jaw dropped as he watched the cotton ball soaked in medicine get tossed into the trash. The feisty girl from the house didn't even bother listening to his complaints as she turned and walked off with a huff.

"You didn't even finish treating my wound! How could you just leave like that, Priao? P' Te, how can you let a kid like this stay in your house? If it were me, I would've kicked her out a long time ago."

"You two have been like this since you were kids. Aren't you used to it by now? It's a good thing it's just Priao. If it were me, I'd pour a whole bottle of alcohol into your mouth. You like causing trouble and still have the nerve to talk back. We'll definitely settle this today."

"Come on, P' Te! You already know I didn't do anything wrong. That thug was the one who started it! Why am I still the one being punished?"

"We're in charge of people, Ton. You can't just let your emotions take over. Earning respect from others doesn't always require using force."

"Sure, no force. But from what I saw, the guy you beat up is proChapter :ly going to be stuck eating rice porridge for days."

Tichila shook her head at her younger brother's sarcastic remark. She didn't like firing anyone, but rules were rules. After questioning the workers who witnessed the dispute, they all confirmed that her brother wasn't the one who started the fight or threw the first punch.

Given that, keeping a reckless troublemaker around would only cause more problems for others. Worse, he could become a danger to the female workers-or even the person sitting there holding a cotton ball, blinking at her.

"Go get some rest. I'm too tired to argue with you."

The frustration in her words and expression was clear, making Phetai sigh in defeat. Without another word, he turned and headed back to his room.

Tichila met the gaze of the person beside her, suddenly at a loss for words. It seemed like her family matters were no longer a secret to the person in front of her.

"If you're done cleaning the wound, I think you should take a shower and get some rest, P'Te," Nam suggested.

"Are you saying I'm dirty?"

"Well, you are a bit messy."

"If you think I'm dirty, then there's no need to treat this wound. I can just shower and take care of everything at once."

She wasn't just talking-she was already making a move to get up and clean herself up. But before she could, the soft hands that had been carefully tending to her wound for so long reached out and grabbed her arm, stopping her in place.

"It's not the same," Nam said.

"This is to disinfect first. After your shower, I'll apply the medicine again."

A faint smile tugged at the corner of her lips, making Tichila pause for a moment. Her heart felt warmer, stirred by those gentle, caring eyes looking at her.

Nam's delicate hand lightly dabbed the cotton on the area around her wound. Every touch was soft, tender, and careful.

No wonder, the closeness between them-their breaths mere inches apart-was pulling Tichila in, making her eyes linger on Nam's beautiful face as if she were lost in a trance.

As if acting on instinct, Tichila lifted her hand to touch Nam's, making her pause. The emotions she had been trying to hide flickered in her eyes, unguarded. The distance between them was so small that she could feel Nam's warm breath against her skin, enveloping them in a moment where only they existed.

The vulnerability of shared emotions drew them closer, their lips slowly inching toward each other.

Nam's eyes fluttered shut just as the soft warmth of Tichila's lips pressed gently against hers.

It was deep, still, and lingering... until the older woman slowly moved, savoring the kiss with tenderness laced with longing. The heat rising within her made her crave more.

Her tongue slid past parted lips, met with a willing response. As the intensity of the kiss deepened, Nam's arms instinctively wrapped around Tichila's neck, just as Tichila's arms tightened around her, pulling her closer, pressing their bodies together.

"Mmhh..."

A soft moan escaped between breaths, lost in the passionate kiss that left no room for thought.

Fingertips trailed beneath the hem of a shirt, gliding gently over smooth skin. The touch made Nam arch subtly into the warmth, drawn into the embrace as if seeking more.

But before the intoxicating touch could go any further, the one who regained composure was the first to pull away from the soft, inviting lipsalbeit with lingering reluctance.

Tichila's sharp gaze lingered on the rosy lips before her, mesmerized. Yet, the fear creeping into her heart made her want to turn and run from the feelings and actions that had surfaced from deep within.

"Uh... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to,"

She murmured, her voice barely above a whisper.

It was quiet-so quiet-but it still rang clear in Nam's ears. The words *"I didn't mean to"* made her lips curve into a faint, emotionless smile.

Her heart clenched painfully at the realization. That kiss-something that had shaken her to the core-hadn't even been intentional. The disappointment stung, knowing that Tichila didn't feel the same way she did.

"It's okay,"

Nam replied quickly, forcing a light tone.

"If P'Te didn't mean it, then there's no need to dwell on it."

She hurriedly reached for the first-aid kit, using it as a shield to hide her emotions.

"You should go shower and rest. I'll put this away."

And before she could betray her feelings any further, Nam turned on her heel and left, leaving Tichila frozen in place, trapped in a whirlwind of confusion.

Tichila didn't call her back-not even when she knew that look of disappointment was because of her own hesitation. But she had long since trained herself not to get attached so easily. She bit her lip, forcing herself to suppress what she felt, unwilling to give in to emotions that could lead to something uncontrollable.

She couldn't afford to forget the reality of their situation. She didn't truly know who Nam was-not fully. And that uncertainty was dangerous. Because if one day Nam remembered who she was, would this place, these people, still hold a place in her heart?

Or would they simply fade away with time, lost to circumstances beyond anyone's control?

Tichila let out a heavy sigh, the weight in her chest pressing down on her. From this day forward, she needed to be more careful-with herself, with her heart.

Because if she let herself fall too deeply, she knew all too well who would be left carrying the weight of heartbreak in the end.

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It had already been days. Days of waiting for someone who never returned in time. Night after night, she found herself sitting alone, her silent anticipation ending with yet another solitary meal.

Morning after morning, she awoke to emptiness, not even catching a glimpse of the person who always left for work before dawn.

*Was P' Te avoiding her?*

*Or worse... did she regret it?*

*Or was she simply too busy, burying herself in work at the mine?*

Nam had no clear answer.

The clock read past ten in the morning. How many times had her eyes flicked to the wall clock, only to return to staring blankly ahead, lost in thought? The weight in her chest was heavy, full of longing.

The loneliness surrounding her made her drift into a daze, so much so that she didn't even hear the approaching footsteps behind her.

"Khun Nam?"

The first call was soft, but there was no response from the woman curled up on the wooden bench beside the house.

Seeing this, the visitor, who had been sent by her employer to collect some documents, called out a second time.

"Khun Nam?"

"Oh... Priao,"

Nam turned to face her, offering a faint smile. But her expression held nothing but loneliness, something Priao could see clearly despite the attempt to mask it.

"What are you doing out here?"

Priao asked.

"I came by to pick up some documents for Miss and saw you sitting here, not moving since I arrived."

"I just have nothing to do. I don't know where to go, and I don't even know what I *should* be doing."

"Are you feeling lonely, Khun Nam?"

"If there was something for me to do here, anything at all, it would be better than just sitting around all day, wouldn't it?"

The sadness in her soft voice made Priao sigh inwardly with sympathy.

"But your condition has only just improved," Priao pointed out.

"Maybe Miss just wants you to rest and recover fully first. Once you're feeling better, I'm sure she'll find something suitable for you to do."

"That's not how I see it,"

Nam murmured.

"Your Miss proChapter :ly thinks I'd mess up her work. She proChapter :ly doesn't believe I'm capable of anything."

"Why would you think that? Madam isn't like that. She wouldn't judge someone's abilities without even knowing them first. Please don't overthink

it."

"It's impossible not to overthink,"

Nam countered.

"Don't forget-I'm just a guest here. No one knows who I am or where I came from. And now, I'm just a burden, lying around all day in someone else's home. If you don't want me to dwell on it, then tell me-is there anything I can do? I can help you at the office if you need. I think I might have some knowledge of handling paperwork. I feel like I do."

"Uh... but maybe we should ask Miss first," Priao hesitated.

"She did give orders not to let you work..."

"I just want to help. I don't want to be useless like this, Priao. Please understand me. Let me do something, even if it's just a little thing. I promise I won't be a bother or cause any problems. Take me with you, okay? After we come back, I'll talk to your Miss myself. I'll tell her that I want to work, alright, Priao?"

"But..."

The one being pleaded with could only look at the woman in front of her with sympathy. She understood how the other person felt. Besides, she thought it wouldn't be a problem to let her come along and see something new. Even if it was just an office, it was still better than being stuck at home all day and night.

A life that felt like being confined wasn't very enjoyable.

"Alright then. You can come, but just to sit at the office. I don't think my Miss will mind."

"Thank you so much, Priao."

"It's okay. I understand that staying at home all the time can make you feel lonely."

With that, Priao, unable to refuse, led the other woman to the jeep parked in front of the house.

"You can drive a jeep, Priao? Since I've been here, this is the first time I've seen you drive."

"Of course, I can. I've lived here since I was born. When I went to school in the city and there was no one to drive me, I had to drive myself. My Miss ordered P'Thot to teach me how to drive, just in case of emergencies. Besides, we have vehicles specifically for use at the mine. When necessary, the workers can use them too. I'm part of Suphpromet's people, after all. After finishing school, I have to help at the office, handling paperwork and managing wages for the workers. Luckily, it's school break now, so I can help at the mine full-time."

"From what you're saying, it sounds like your Miss is very kind to everyone."

*Except for her*.

She rarely got to experience that kindness. Every time things started to go well, the kindness quickly disappeared, replaced by coldness. It was more unpredictable than the stock market.

"Yes, my Miss is usually kind. But when she's strict, she can be really tough-just like you've seen before."

As they continued talking, the conversation between the two women flowed smoothly. And for someone who was already curious about a certain person, hearing more about her was definitely interesting.

When her eyes caught sight of the documents Priao had a mentioneddocuments meant for the Miss-the curiosity that had been lingering for days grew stronger, leading to even more questions.

"You said you're picking up documents for your Miss. Has she been working really hard lately?"

"Not really. She comes home early every day."

Because she didn't think much about the simple question, which seemed like a normal one, she answered honestly without noticing anything unusual about it.

"Is there something wrong? Why do you think Miss is working too hard? There hasn't been much work at the mine lately. It's just us clerks, like me, who have to rush to finish the workers' payroll since the end of the month is coming."

"Oh, is that so?"

Her voice carried a hint of disappointment, though she didn't know why she felt this way. If the answer had been that the other person was busy working hard with no time to spare, she would have felt better. Instead, she felt let down and sad.

"And what about you, Phetai? I haven't seen him at home much lately. Has he been learning the work from your Miss?"

Sometimes, she felt like a fool. Even though she already knew the truth, she still kept asking-hoping to hear something, even just a tiny bit, that could make her feel better.

But in the end, the person behind the jeep's steering wheel could only click her tongue and mutter under her breath without realizing it.

"Someone like him? After causing trouble, he disappeared as usual. He's never been one to stay at home. Now, he's just going to be another burden for Miss for a long time."

Hearing that, she could only smile faintly. With things being the way they were, she could no longer find any reason to deny reality.

*Disgust....Annoyance...Deep down, the other person proChapter :ly just wanted to push her away from here completely.*

Just thinking about it made a lump rise in her throat.

Even though she didn't want to feel this way, the feelings surfaced on their own, beyond her control.

Lost in thought, she barely noticed when the jeep pulled up in front of the office.

"Do you need me to carry anything for you, Priao?"

As soon as she got out of the car, the woman with the sweet face didn't forget to offer her help to the one struggling with documents.

"It's okay, this isn't much. You should go inside first-it's too hot out here."

She didn't say anything more. Worried about the other person, who looked fragile on the outside, she quickly walked ahead into the air-conditioned office.

But as she followed behind, her gaze wandered around the area-until it suddenly stopped on something.

She froze.

Her whole body went cold. Suddenly, her heart burned with pain at the sight before her.

From where she stood, she could clearly see the closeness between the coollooking young inspector and the person she had been thinking about for days.

*Was this the reason?*

Was this why the other person had said that what happened between them was just an accident?

She should have never let herself feel this way from the start.

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# CHAPTER : 10

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Hours had passed, but the painful image she had seen by accident was still stuck in her mind. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't shake it off. Her eyes burned, and she had to put in a lot of effort just to keep her emotions in check.

But who would know how difficult it was for a heart that already felt so deeply?

"Khun Nam, I have to go into the city to run an errand for Miss. But I might drop you off at home first," Priao said.

"But I don't want to go home yet, Priao. I don't want to be alone. Please let me go with you." "But-"

"Please, Priao."

Nam pleaded, both in her voice and in her eyes. She wasn't in the right state of mind to be alone.

"Alright then."

In the end, Priao couldn't resist the sadness in front of her. She felt sorry for Nam, and for the first time, she was willing to disobey her employer's orders.

"If Miss finds out, I'll be in big trouble," Priao muttered.

"I'll take full responsibility. Besides, your Miss doesn't really care about me. And right now, there's no way she'd come home at this hour. If you don't say anything, I won't, and Aunt Prung won't either. That way, she'll never know I went out."

"You're really getting me into trouble," Priao sighed.

But it was too late to change her mind now. Turning back wasn't an option.

The pickup truck pulled away from the mine at a steady speed. Several times, the nineteen-year-old girl glanced at the woman beside her and sighed heavily.

Taking a woman with no memory into the city without permission was risky. Her employer would surely scold her. But in the end, she couldn't bring herself to refuse.

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They talked about many things along the way. Time passed, and after a while, the truck turned into the parking lot of a building, coming to a smooth stop.

"This is the Gem Museum,"

Preaw explained.

"Madam asked me to bring some important documents to a gemstone dealer we're meeting here. Do you want to come with me, Khun Nam?"

"I don't want to wait in the car. Let me come with you, Priao. While you handle your business, I'll just walk around outside."

"Alright, let's go inside together. It won't take long," Priao said.

Since she couldn't refuse, the young woman-who now played the role of Miss's assistant-led Nam into the Gem Museum. This place was a collection center for sapphires, both cut and uncut, gathered from all over the world.

Gem traders, jewelry business leaders, and gemstone enthusiasts alike saw this museum as a hub for those fascinated by the dazzling beauty of precious stones.

"Nam, just stay around here and don't go too far. I'll be back soon," Priao reminded her.

"Take your time, Priao. No need to rush. I can wait."

"...."

After reassuring Preaw, Nam watched her leave before turning her attention to the stunning displays around her.

The sparkling jewelry inside the secure glass cases caught her eye, drawing her closer to admire them.

"Black Spinel... the black gem from Kanchanaburi,"

She murmured, recognizing the stone in front of her without even needing to read the label.

Her gaze wandered over the colorful gemstones, and she found herself naming each type with surprising accuracy.

This familiarity...

The more she looked, the more she felt a strange sense of recognition. Had she known these gems before?

She slowly stepped forward, completely absorbed in her thoughts, eyes fixed on the dazzling gemstones. Her brows furrowed slightly as she tried to make sense of the strange feeling.

Then***Thud!***

She accidentally bumped into someone. It wasn't a hard collision, but it was enough to make her snap out of her daze and quickly look up.

The woman in front of her stared at her intensely, making Nam feel guilty right away.

"S-Sorry!" she blurted out, quickly apologizing.

"....."

"Sorry, it was my clumsiness that made me bump into you."

"....."

There was no immediate response from the woman, who just stood there staring at her with an odd expression. Just as she seemed about to say something, their conversation was abruptly cut off by the arrival of a third person.

"Let's go. I'm done with my errand," Priao said.

"Already? That was fast,"

Nam replied, turning to Priao. Before leaving, she glanced back at the woman she had bumped into and gave a small, apologetic smile.

"I really am sorry. I didn't mean to."

With that, she turned and walked away, leaving the other woman standing there in silence, watching her disappear into the crowd.

The pickup truck drove along the road heading back to the mine. As it turned into a private property area marked with a clear sign, a white Land Rover that had been following them at a distance slowed down. It stopped near the entrance, watching as the pickup disappeared inside.

The person inside the Land Rover observed the truck for several minutes, carefully watching the movements of its passengers. After a while, the vehicle quietly pulled away and left the area.

"It's already late. You should go rest, Priao. I've taken up your whole day. Thank you so much," Nam said.

"Are you sure you'll be okay on your own?"

"I'll be fine. Go get some rest, Priao."

After getting her reassurance, Priao finally left for home, while Nam walked back inside with a heavy heart.

The loneliness and painful memories of the day made her dread returning to this place. Thoughts swirled in her mind, pushing her toward an important decision. Living in a house where the owner didn't even want her there-was it really right to stay?

*She had nowhere else to go, but how could she keep staying where she wasn't welcome?*

Lost in her thoughts, she barely noticed her surroundings as she stepped inside. Even after crossing the threshold, her mind was too clouded to pay attention to anything around her.

As the door closed behind her, she remained unaware that every movement she made had been under someone's watchful gaze the entire time.

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***Knock! Knock! Knock!***

The sudden knocking at the door startled her. She frowned in confusion. She hadn't seen anyone on her way inside, yet someone was here, knocking so soon after she entered. She didn't let the uncertainty linger for long.

As she pulled the door open, her heart skipped a beat. A flood of emotions crashed into her at the sight of the person standing before her-someone she wasn't ready to face.

"P'Te, do you need something?"

She tried to keep her voice steady, but it wasn't easy. The painful image from earlier in the day still haunted her, replaying in her mind over and over again. Seeing him now only made the ache in her heart sharper, more undeniable.

She finally understood what this feeling was.

"I told you before not to go anywhere without letting me know first. You just got back-does that mean you don't intend to listen to me at all? Do you realize how much trouble it would cause if something happened to you?"

"I'm sorry for disobeying your order, but I came back safely. And from now on, no one will have to worry about me anymore,"

She said, her voice laced with quiet resolve.

Something about the emptiness in her gaze made her chest tighten. Unlike before, she didn't avoid her eyes. She met her stare directly, her sadness laid bare.

"Tomorrow morning, I'll leave this place."

"....."

The decision she had been weighing all day finally found its voice. Rather than staying where she was unwelcome, clinging to a place where she wasn't wanted, she would take a leap into the unknown.

If her departure meant that the owner of this house could live her life peacefully, unaffected by her presence, then leaving was the best choice.

"You said you're leaving-does that mean you remember who you are and where you came from?"

She had tried to keep her emotions in check, building walls to contain the turmoil inside. But the moment she said she was leaving, those walls crumbled. A deep, unshakable pain gripped her heart.

Her full lips were pressed tightly together, and her face showed no sign of playfulness. That look was making the heart, which had been trying to run away all along, burn even more.

"No, I still don't remember who I am or where I came from. But I just know that I have to leave."

A faint smile appeared at the corner of her lips. Even though she still couldn't remember her identity, one thing was clear-deep down, she wasn't the type to shamelessly stay where she wasn't welcome. The owner of the house had made it obvious that her presence was unwanted.

"Thank you for everything. Thank you for taking care of me so well. If I ever find out who I really am, I promise I'll return the favor one day."

"What are you even saying? Do you even realize it?"

Tichila stood frozen, staring at her intensely. The nonsense she was spouting, as if she had completely given up, was stirring up emotions inside him, making her frustration rise.

"You don't even know who you are, yet you're acting all tough-what's the point?"

"I'm not acting tough. But if my presence is making you uncomfortable, if it's causing you trouble and forcing you to avoid me, do you really think I should stay here?"

She lifted her chin and argued back, unable to hold back the mix of hurt and disappointment crashing inside her.

"If me staying in this house is making things hard for you, if it's changing your life, making you have to avoid me every day, then that alone is reason enough for me to leave."

"And who said I was avoiding you? I just have work to do. You're just someone staying in my house-it's not like you have some huge impact on my life. So tell me, exactly how is my life so terribly affected?"

He was just arguing, hoping to change her mind. But for someone drowning in disappointment all day, she couldn't grasp the real meaning behind his words.

All she could focus on was the fact that she had no influence over him. That was all.

The heat around her eyes intensified, and it felt impossible to hold back her emotions any longer. The feelings rising in her chest squeezed her heart so tightly that she couldn't stop the tears from falling.

"I know. Someone like me doesn't affect your life at all. Not like your girlfriend does!"

Tichila froze at the words thrown at him, at the way she shouted through her tears. The hurt in her eyes, the bitterness in her voice-it shook her, making her forget every decision she'd made.

And suddenly... she had no idea why she was even so upset.

"What are you talking about?"

"I understand now. That day, when you said you didn't mean to kiss me, I finally get why. It's because you were already dating Inspector Than, right?"

"I'm just friends with Inspector Than."

Her voice was firm. No matter what, her friendship with Than was not something she would allow to be dragged into this mess.

She was clear about their relationship and never had any intention of using her friend as a shield for her own feelings. She knew exactly how Than felt about her, which was why she would never selfishly hurt him.

"What kind of 'friends' kiss and hold each other like that?"

"...."

Tichila stood frozen, staring at the emotional woman in front of her, feeling completely at a loss. As she struggled to make sense of her words, fragments of past events flashed through her mind, helping her piece things together.

"Don't say anything ridiculous like that again. Than and I would never do something like that. Because if I ever wanted to do something like that with someone... I'd only do it with the person I actually wanted."

It wasn't just words. Tichila's emotions, stirred by her vulnerable state, overflowed beyond her control.

Before she could react, she pulled Nam into her arms. Her slender body was caught in Tichila's embrace just moments before her lips crashed against Nam's, reclaiming what had been haunting her mind for days.

Tichila poured every deep, unspoken feeling into the kiss. Her lips, her tongue-every touch was filled with longing and desire.

Because the truth was undeniable. The only person she wanted was Nam. This wasn't a mistake weather this time or any other time.

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# CHAPTER : 11

The deep of passionate kiss felt like it was draining all the energy from her body, leaving her legs weak. The intense way she was being kissed made it almost impossible to stand. Their bodies were pressed so tightly together that Nam had no choice but to rely on the other's arms for support.

A teasing tongue swept through her mouth again and again, savoring every bit of sweetness. Her mind blurred, and all thoughts seemed to fade away.

The sound of a door closing echoed faintly, as if from a great distance. But the heavy, breathless gasps between them grew even clearer. The heat between them intensified until she could barely keep up with her breathing.

Desperate, she lifted a trembling hand and pressed against the other's chesta silent plea before she completely lost her breath.

Tichila finally pulled away, leaving the soft lips red and swollen from the force of her kiss. Her gaze fixed on the pale face that was still tear-stained. The woman she had just passionately kissed was still weakly clinging to her, panting in her arms.

"Are you still going to say you didn't mean to do that, P' Te?"

Her voice trembled with frustration, her question laced with hurt. But how could she lie? Every single kiss-this one and all the others-had always been intentional.

Her heart yearned too much to deny it any longer. Tichila gently wiped away the lingering tears on those soft cheeks. Her eyes locked onto the ones looking back at her, filled with silent surrender-offering everything without hesitation.

"I told you before, Nam. I like women. Yet you keep coming closer to me. Do you really not realize that... this isn't right?"

"And why isn't it right?"

Nam countered without hesitation.

"I'm just following my heart. I feel something, so I just do it."

Her straightforward answer made Tichila unable to control herself. Every part of her wanted to pull Nam back into her arms, to kiss her over and over again-making up for all the days she had tried to run away.

She had never longed for or wanted a deep connection with any woman since her last love had ended. But from the moment she met Nam, the emotions she thought had disappeared long ago started stirring again, invading her heart and body, refusing to let her rest.

Ever since that first kiss, that first embrace, the memory of Nam's scent had been imprinted in her senses. It drove her to the edge of madness-craving more, wanting to touch her again, to taste her skin, to cover every inch of her soft, pale body with kisses she could no longer resist.

Every night before she could finally fall asleep, did she even know that she was always in Tichila's thoughts?

And now, after hearing that confession-one that couldn't possibly mean anything else-the fire inside her burned even stronger, making it nearly impossible to hold back her desire.

"Do you even realize what you're saying?"

"Of course. I'm not you, P'Te."

"You're so stubborn. And so defiant."

Tichila sighed in frustration. It was getting harder and harder to resist this headstrong woman who had no idea just how much she was shaking her self-control.

"This is just who I am," Nam replied.

"I'm sorry if my feelings make you uncomfortable."

She tried to push herself away, but the arms still holding her showed no sign of letting go.

"When did I say I felt uncomfortable?"

Tichila shot back.

"It's because you're so stubborn-so reckless-that I have to say this. What if I told you that right now, I want something deeper with you? Would you agree?"

"P' Te..."

Nam's eyes widened in shock. What she said was just referring to the special feelings she had for the other person. It didn't include the sexual matters the other person was talking about.

And the straightforward demand without any playful gestures also made the Nam's hearts drop.

Was that how love worked? If she feels special towards someone, does it have to be something physical?

It wasn't that she wanted to hold back with Tichila-it was just that this felt too fast. Were they really ready for something so intimate?

Seeing the hesitation on Nam's face, Tichila, who had never been one to force anyone, immediately understood.

Slowly, she loosened her arms around Nam's waist, setting her free. But strangely, instead of relief, all she felt was emptiness.

"You should rest, Nam,"

She said, her voice quieter now.

"If we keep arguing like this, what you're afraid of might actually happen."

She glanced down at Nam's delicate fingers, still gripping her arm. She was trying so hard to keep her emotions under control, but Nam, who clearly knew her own heart, had no intention of letting go.

"I'm not afraid," Nam whispered.

"If what you want is really going to happen, I won't stop you. But I just want to know-are you asking this because of your body's desire? Or is it because your heart wants it, too? Just answer me, P'Te, and I'll give you everything."

"So, Nam, do you really think someone like me would just go around asking to have sex with any woman, even though I don't feel that way? Because if that's what you think, then there's nothing I can say."

"Is it really that hard to just say that you like me, the same way I like you, P'Te?"

She couldn't help but raise her voice at the stubborn woman who kept holding back her feelings. Her confession, born from sheer frustration, sent a tremor through Tichila's heart, shaking her to the core.

And when the owner of that sweet face lifted her head to meet her gaze with a defiant look, it was as if a grenade pin had been pulled, ready to explode at full force.

The emotions he had been suppressing burst free, compelling her to pull Nam's slender body into her arms and claim her soft lips with a kiss filled with desperate hunger.

Instead of resisting, the woman welcomed the kiss-worse, she responded eagerly, surrendering to the intimate touch with full willingness.

The feelings she had tried so hard to suppress shattered into an uncontrollable longing. Their tongues, already familiar with each other, tangled together as if they had been yearning for this moment for far too long.

Even when her delicate body was pressed down onto the bed, the taste of her lips was too intoxicating for her to pull away, not even for a single second.

Their bodies, pressed tightly together, grew hotter, breaths quickening with rising desire. The older woman's restless hands roamed freely, caressing every inch of Nam's beautiful body, driven by an insatiable craving.

From her slender legs upward, her touch trailed along the fabric that hid the soft, delicate skin beneath. The silky smoothness under her fingertips only fueled her curiosity, making her desire intensify tenfold.

"Take it off."

"P'Te..."

The short, unexplained words sent a jolt through her, catching her off guard. But just when she thought her request was directed at her, the truth turned out to be quite the opposite.

The tall woman pulled back, only to strip herself instead. Every movement she made became the sole focus of her wide-eyed gaze, unable to look away, not even for a moment.

A wave of heat surged through her body, a restless warmth that spread from head to toe. Her well-proportioned physique, now bare of any clothing, was nothing short of a masterpiece-sculpted to perfection.

Tichila's sharp, beautiful face had always been captivating, but when Nam had the chance to look at the entire slim body of the person in front of her, whether it was the chest that fit her body perfectly, it was drawing her eyes and making her stare involuntarily.

A strong abdomen filled with rippled abdominal muscles without excess fat, the strength that is evident to the eyes, it is a charming and attractive sight.

Desire surged, leaving no room for hesitation. Tichila pressed her bare body against the one lying beneath her, their skin touching, igniting an even greater fire between them.

"Hmm... P'Te..."

A soft, trembling moan escaped her lips as warm hands caressed her, gently kneading with a perfect rhythm, awakening a deep and overwhelming sensation within her.

"You're so tiny... but how is this-"

"Don't try to act sweet. I remember someone once said it was small."

She shot back with a hint of lingering grudge, her voice sharp but playful. And when those teasing fingers brushed over her breasts, her body instinctively arched, responding to the electrifying touch.

"Ah!"

"Nam, you're so beautiful... and absolutely irresistible."

The sweet, seductive words melted her completely, making her body weak in her arms. Tichila's lips traced down her neck, leaving tingling kisses along the way. She tilted her head back, surrendering, allowing her to take whatever she pleased.

The alternating sucking and gentle bites stimulate the blood in the body, leaving the indulged person feeling hot repeatedly. The tip of the tongue flicks rapidly against the soft pink peak that begins to swell, creating such a tantalizing sensation that the slender body can only writhe beneath the other person.

"Um... P' Te"

The sweet voice moans softly, with a flushed face. The two hands intertwine with the thick, soft hair of the person who has been drinking and licking her chest for quite some time. The heated touch seems to urge her to arch her chest toward them repeatedly.

A certain feeling is building within, causing the lower body to start feeling warm and tingly. The toes curl tightly against the bed due to the sensation. The belly is filled with waves of warmth that are gathering, and it seems to become more intense, making the one who is indulging her aware and ready to respond willingly.

The well-shaped lips pull away from the cherished breasts, slowly laying kisses down to the smooth abdomen. The touch of the hot lips that kiss and linger can pull her consciousness away, making her lost in every sensation being indulged.

"Let me, dear."

The breathy voice is faint, as if in a dream. The fragrant, soft skin contrasting with its fair smoothness is tempting enough to make one unable to resist lifting the slender white legs and placing tem on the table.

She wants to taste and possess the person in front of her so badly.

"Ah!"

The moment the sensitive spot is touched by the hot tip of the tongue, the attacked person jumps in shock. The body was aroused because of the touch from the tip of the tongue that rushes toward the sensitive spot. It is a new sensation that the body has just begun to learn.

Oh! The person lying with half-closed eyes feels that her body is experiencing these touches for the first time. The touch from the tip of the tongue savoring the deliciousness is speeding up, zealously applying it to that part of the body. It is creating a tingling sensation so intense that the body can only squirm in response accompanied by moans.

"Hmm..."

Tichila let out a satisfied moan in her throat. The response that showed how much the person being pampered was tingling and made her urge to hurriedly flicker her tongue greedily.

The sweet moaning sound matched the rhythm of her lovemaking. Her beautiful hips bounced to receive the pleasure, unable to resist the hot sensation when her body was thrown to the edge of her passion.

The slender body threw itself down, panting heavily, her mind dizzy when her body had released all the pent-up feelings until it was all gone.

"This is just the beginning, and you're already tired?"

"Why are you teasing me, P' Te?"

Argued while panting, but before she could finish, she was startled when the other person's slender fingers moved in, caressing her wetness, causing her body to immediately respond by tensing up to receive the other person's touch.

"I want to go inside, let me, Nam.

There was no immediate response, but the reaction without resistance was the answer that made the speaker slowly push her fingers into the body of the person below her.

Sweat began to seep into the sweet face, the face was twisted because of the stinging pain that was spreading throughout the body. The thin body could only bite its lips tightly when the body was invaded. The discomfort was building up inside to the point that it almost wanted to move its hips, retreat.

"Ugh... P' Te, Nam is uncomfortable."

"Nam, don't tense up. Because the more you tense up, the more it will hurt and uncomfortable."

Tichila said in a trembling voice before leaning down to kiss the plump lips to comfort her.

She was trying very hard to control herself because the squeezing force that was hugging her fingers tightly was strangely creating a feeling of pride in her heart.

She was not so naive that she didn't know that the sensitivity of the body that was responding to each other right now was the answer that made her know how much the other person deserved to be cherished.

She couldn't be violent or speed up the pace of love as she wished. The slender fingers that had firmly penetrated the other person's body were left still, waiting for the other person's body to adjust to the novelty that had invaded and embedded itself inside.

"Does it hurt any less?"

The tall owner of the body snorted before deciding to lean down and flick her lips to lick the two plump breasts again. The tip of her thumb started to circle the sensitive spot, intending to arouse the other person's body to relax from the pain.

And it worked. When the stimulating touch knew the direction, it was bringing the tingling sensation to replace the pain until it was almost gone.

The slender body could only let out a soft moan. The delicate hand unintentionally dug the tip of her nails into the smooth, soft back when the other person's fingers started to move in and out slowly.

The tingling sensation mixed with the uncomfortable, stinging pain made it impossible to resist those feelings. Even more, the person pushed the slender fingers in until they were as deep as possible, then slowly moved out and pressed in again. Every repeated emphasis made the slender body tremble and tense in response every time.

The level of tingling that increased in intensity made her focus only on the pleasure that the other person was giving her until the image in front of her started to blur.

The slender body fell down and breathed heavily. While the tall person's entire body pressed against the weak body with a feeling of satisfaction, the skin touching skin, the body trembled because of the force of the breath of the person below, and the fragrant body scent when the face was buried in the crook of the neck, it was stimulating the blood in the body of the person who had not yet been released to run even more.

"Don't run out of energy yet, Si."

Tichila teased and lightly bit the ear of the person below.

"I haven't started yet."

"P' Te, but Nam just..."

"Nam, just lie still, I'll do it myself."

*Do you do it yourself every time?*

The person who was loved repeatedly wanted to respond like that. But the other person's deadpan words made the listener only purse her lips tightly, her face flushed red when the whole body started to shake because of the force of the hips pressing to grind the proportions. Their womanhood was close and rubbed against each other with emphasis on the rhythm.

"P' Te, go easy."

The heavy rhythm of the thrusts made her have to reprimand the other person with sweet eyes. The slender hands reached out to push the stomach that was tense with muscles when the other person moved her hips on her body.

Tichila looked strong and charming in a way that made her heart tremble. Especially when the beautiful face was full of emotion, desire like now, it was even more fascinating to the point of wanting to not let anyone have the chance to see it like she saw it.

"Does it hurt?"

Tichila asked in a soft, trembling voice, her hips still moving toward the slender body without pause.

"No, I'm fine,"

She replied, feeling almost consumed by the passionate love play of the other person.

"If that's the case, can I ask for a little more strength?"

Tichila pleaded with her face flushed red, desire trying to hold back halfway simply because she wanted to cherish the person beneath her, making her nearly go crazy.

And when the person beneath her responded to the request with a nod, one beautiful thigh was lifted and draped over her shoulder to thrust their love into each other with fervent rhythm.

The rhythm of love that began to intensify made the slender body only able to shut her eyes tightly, moaning incoherently as the intense impacts caused the edge of the bed to hit the wall in time with the passionate love.

Yet, the one who was focused on making love showed no signs of caring about the embarrassing sounds growing louder, unlike the other person who, despite being in a state of overwhelming arousal, still thought of the embarrassment.

If someone happened to walk by and heard the passionate sounds of love between them...

....*where would she hide her face tomorrow?*

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# CHAPTER : 12

The next morning, Phrae slowly opened her eyes. Her body felt weak and sore, making her not want to move at all from the soft, comfy bed. She glanced to the side and saw that the spot next to her was completely empty.

Tightness.

Just that thought alone made her heart ache. She bit her lower lip without realizing it.

The marks from last night were still there. The feeling she left behind still lingered deep inside her. But the woman who now completely owned her body and heart was nowhere to be found-not even for a moment this morning after what they'd shared.

Suddenly, she felt worthless. Sadness rushed through her chest, and her eyes began to burn with tears. Did their night together mean nothing more to her than just satisfying her physical needs?

Her mind was spinning with emotions, but in the end, she could only try to hold back the pain in her heart. She bit her lip again as she slowly sat up. The moment her feet touched the floor, a sharp pain reminded her just how intense things had been last night.

Her legs were so weak she almost fell. She reached out, fumbling for something to hold on to and stay steady. After a moment, she slowly moved toward the bathroom, her bare body aching with every step, needing to wash off all the traces of lust still clinging to her skin.

The large mirror reflected all the rose-colored love marks clearly-from her neck down to her chest, even her stomach and inner thighs. Every inch of her body had been claimed. She could only stand there, face flushed, as she looked at the evidence she left behind.

Scenes from last night flashed in her mind-the passion, the hunger, the way they went at it again and again. It made her realize just how starved the mistress of this house truly was.

Not to mention the young, horny workers she'd been warned to be careful of-turns out the lady of the house was proChapter :ly just as lustful as the ones she'd been warned about.

Last night, he had taken her almost until dawn to finally let her fall asleep. And when she woke up, she was already gone, leaving her alone to deal with the aftermath of everything they'd done.

That same wave of hurt and disappointment kept crashing over her heart again and again.

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Meanwhile, the woman in question had already gotten up before the sun was even out and rushed out of the hospital in a hurry. "Where are you rushing off to, P'Te? Can't you walk slower?"

Someone called after her.

"It's already late, I need to hurry home."

"In a rush to go see someone at home, huh? Just admit it."

"So what if I am?"

"I'm not judging,"

Phetai shrugged with a cheeky grin.

"I get it. You miss her a lot. Otherwise, I wouldn't have heard all that banging on the wall coming from sister-in-law's room when I got back last night. Seriously, it was wild."

"You little punk! Shut your mouth right now! Don't you dare say stuff like that where she can hear you. If she finds out, I swear I'll kill you!"

"What! Why are you blaming me? You were the one making all that noise! I just happened to hear it while passing by. I wasn't trying to eavesdrop or anything."

"And do you think that's something you should be talking about?!"

Tichila snapped, trying to cover her embarrassment with a stern voice, but her younger brother just kept grinning, clearly enjoying teasing her.

Who would've thought that, on a random day, the guy who'd disappeared from the house for over a week would suddenly come back at a time when she wasn't being careful-thinking the house was completely empty.

Since she's already back, maybe she should just go ahead and move her stuff into her room once and for all.

"Come on, I was just teasing. I'm your little brother, and stuff like that is totally normal between couples, right? I get it-my sister must've been seriously love-starved for a while."

"You little brat! You just keep running your mouth!"

She raised her hand, ready to smack him on the head, but he quickly jumped into the car and took off, leaving her standing there grinding her teeth in frustration.

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Living in a place full of mostly male workers, crude jokes and innuendos were nothing new to her-she'd gotten used to it. She could blend right in, and maybe that's why over time, she'd picked up some rough habits herself.

Less than thirty minutes later, the car that had left the house at dawn returned and parked in the garage. As soon as Tichila hopped out, she stormed into the house without sparing her younger brother a single glance.

"She's really into her, huh? If that's the case, why are they even sleeping in separate rooms?"

Phetai muttered to himself as he walked off to his room to rest.

Meanwhile, Tichila pushed open the door to her room only to be greeted by... emptiness. She looked left and right, scanning the whole place, hoping to find her somewhere.

*Where did she go?*

Tichila barely had time to finish the thought before she rushed off to the kitchen to ask the housekeeper, who'd come by to clean and cook like she did every day.

"Auntie Prung, have you seen Khun Nam?"

"Oh? I just saw her walking around here a moment ago. Why don't you try checking the backyard garden?"

"Thank you, Auntie. I'll go take a look."

"Of course, Madam."

After getting the answer, Tichila followed the hallway straight toward the garden behind the house. When she arrived, her eyes landed on a familiar, slender back-someone sitting on the hammock with their feet dangling, tied between two big trees.

Seeing that she was completely lost in thought and hadn't noticed her yet, she instinctively slowed her steps, walking as quietly as possible.

The breeze gently lifted her long hair, carrying a soft, familiar scent toward her. That scent-still lingering in her memory from the night they had spent so close-filled her chest the moment it hit her nose. She couldn't help but breathe it in deeply.

But just smelling it in the air wasn't enough.

Moving up quietly behind her, she leaned in and pressed her nose to her cheek, stealing a soft kiss. Startled, the daydreaming woman jerked slightly in surprise.

"Ouhh.."

The person sitting and daydreaming felt their heart drop. If it wasn't for the pair of arms that quickly wrapped around her, she proChapter :ly would've screamed-or maybe even slapped whoever dared sneak up and touch her like that.

"Did I scare you? If it wasn't me and someone else came up while you were zoning out like that, they could've carried you off somewhere already."

"Well, who told you to sneak up on me like that, P'Te?"

The hurt and disappointment she'd been feeling earlier suddenly started to fade. Just from the warmth of her arms around her, and the way her nose nuzzled against her cheek-it was like all the sadness melted into this strange, soothing warmth.

"That kiss just now-yeah, I meant it. I wasn't just playing around. Or... do you want me to prove it again?"

Before she could even answer, she kissed her cheek again. But this time, the press of her lips and the tip of her nose lingered longer than before. And it didn't stop there-her lips kept moving, planting soft kisses all the way to her ear. The tingling sensation made her whole body shiver.

"Mm... P'Te... that's enough,"

She whispered breathily.

"You sound just like last night... You believe me now, right? That I wasn't just messing around?"

Tichila whispered close to her ear, her voice rough with emotion. She finally loosened her arms to pull away from the hug and walked around to stand in front of her, making the other person look up.

"You expect me to just stand here like this?"

"Then come sit down,"

Nam said softly.

"I was about to head back inside anyway."

Nam pushed herself up to stand, but before she could take a step away, her strong arms pulled her slender waist back into a tight embrace.

"Why are you in such a hurry? Are you mad at me or something? One of the workers at the mine got sick, so I took him to the hospital. As soon as I was done, I rushed back."

"I'm not mad or anything,"

Nam replied, as if she knew exactly what she was feeling inside. Her calm response made her stop in her tracks. She stood quietly for a moment before sitting down on the hammock where she had been, pulling her to sit on her lap. She didn't resist - when you care about someone, sometimes you just go with the flow.

"You sure?"

"I'm sure. I'm not mad. But maybe... you should let me go now? What if someone sees us? It might look bad."

She said it, but her body didn't move away. She was mature enough not to play hard to get with someone she had just shared something so intimate with. She just didn't want things to get too public.

"Let them see. Everyone at the mine already knows what we are to each other."

"But that's just what you wanted them to think, isn't it? Something you made up?"

"And what about last night, when you gave yourself to me over and over again - was that just made up too?"

Tichila said as she looked her in the eyes, trying to read the truth on her face while she kept avoiding her gaze.

"Say it - tell me last night wasn't real, just like they all think."

She just wanted to hear her say it. Sure, she used to run away from her feelings before, not wanting to get attached. But after everything that happened last night, she didn't want their relationship to be just physical anymore. Her heart wanted more - it wanted to hold onto her.

"What happened last night... do you really want it to be just a physical thing, Nam? Tell me honestly."

Tichila asked again to be sure. Nam hadn't expected a question like that from someone who always seemed to keep her distance before. She didn't know what to say.

She just looked deep into her eyes. The seriousness in her gaze made her heart flutter - because even though she wasn't sure about anything, his expression said it all. "And what about you, P'Te?"

She finally said.

"Do you want it to be just that? Just a physical connection, something fun and temporary for you? Because if that's what you want, I know I have no right to ask for anything more. In the end... I'm just a girl you helped. And if we're talking about gratitude, then yes, I owe you. If this is your way of collecting that debt... I won't blame you."

She was being completely honest. Of course, it would hurt if he saw what happened between them as just a one-time thing, something that meant nothing. But she wasn't naïve. She wasn't a fairytale heroine who'd cry over giving herself to someone she secretly had feelings for.

If anything, sharing that physical closeness made her more certain than ever that the strange feelings she'd been having were real. And the more connected she felt, the harder it was to hold her emotions back.

"If I saw what happened last night as just a way to repay a favor, I wouldn't be sitting here trying to talk to you like this," Tichila said quietly.

"Then why can't you just say how you really feel?"

She snapped, her voice rising a little out of frustration.

"Why do you always talk in circles and make me figure it out myself?"

She didn't mean to lash out, but she was tired of guessing. The mixed signals were too much.

"Oh? You want me to be straight with you?"

Tichila smirked slightly, looking at her pouting face with amusement.

"Then what if I told you... I want you to stay here as my wife - would you say yes?"

"P'Te!"

"Well, didn't you say you wanted me to be direct? Why are you so shocked? If you don't want to tie yourself to a girl who works under the sun in a dusty mine, you can just say no. I get it. Life here isn't exactly fancy or comfortable like in the city. Maybe the world you came from is nothing like this place. If you don't think you can handle living here... I'd understand."

It might've sounded like she was sulking, but she wasn't. Tichila was simply being real - she understood the reality of the situation.

This was who she was, and she couldn't run from that. Even someone who once claimed to love her deeply couldn't fully accept her life and everything that came with it. A different lifestyle could lead to love that ended in goodbye. It's not easy to be with someone who spends their days in a place so far from the modern world.

So it wouldn't be surprising if someone, who had only grown close to him through brief moments of affection, couldn't commit to staying in this kind of life forever.

Not surprising at all...

"But why do you assume I *can't* live in your world?" Nam replied, her tone firm but calm. "I may not know who I really am or where I came from yet... but so far, living here hasn't been unbearable. If someone finds happiness in a place - even if it's different or hard - they can adapt, right?"

"You *say* that now," Ticha said softly. "But it's not that simple."

Here's the translated passage in smooth, natural everyday English while preserving the emotion and depth of the original:

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"You're right. It's not easy," Nam said softly. "But if you don't believe me if you think everything I said was just sweet, pretty words meant to sound good - then let's just forget about what happened last night. Because either way, one day... I'll have to leave you."

Confusion.

The more she spoke, the more it hit her - this person who had spent so long trapped in the shadows of past heartbreak... was feeling everything all over again.

She had never truly moved on from the fear of losing someone, had never stopped being afraid of getting hurt. That fear made her keep her heart locked away, too scared to love or let anyone in - just to avoid the pain of goodbye.

But now, heaven had somehow thrown this woman into her life. She stirred something inside, turned her once peaceful world upside down, made her feel things she didn't want to feel - made her fall, deeply and helplessly.

She never expected to want something more. Never thought she'd ever wish to build a life with any woman. But with her... it felt real.

So why, then - why did this moment, the moment these feelings were finally clear - feel so fragile? So easily shattered, like flipping a coin?

Everything between them could change in an instant. And that lingering fear... it just wouldn't leave.

Even now, as Nam gently stood up from her lap, eyes full of quiet hurt, then turned and walked away - Ticha sat there, frozen, lost in a storm of emotions.

Just the thought of treating what happened last night like it meant nothing was enough to make her chest ache. It felt like something invisible was squeezing her heart tightly. But if she wanted to keep going - if she truly wanted to take this all the way - could she handle it if things didn't work out in the end?

She had lived alone for so long that she'd gotten used to it. But if that woman she'd given her heart to walked away someday... could she really go back to being alone again?

When fate brings love into her arms... why does that love come wrapped in so much fear?

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# CHAPTER : 13

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Tichila let herself dwell on this confusing thought for a moment. She knew for certain that she couldn't do something that went against her heart. She was anxious because the girl was upset and walked away from her.

The tall woman got up from the hammock, ready to go inside the house. But then her phone inside her pocket vibrated. She had to pick it up, annoyed.

When she saw that it was her best friend, the inspector who called her, she couldn't ignore this call

"Hello, what is it, Than?"

She said flatly, frowning as she listerred to the other end of the phone.

"Okay. I'm heading out now."

After she ended the call, she glanced back at the house, hesitated.

She was worried about that sulking girl, but this was also important. She let out a heavy sigh. In the end, she decided to go to the car that she parked in front of the house and headed downtown for the second time that day.

*Why was her life so hectic?*

Tichila drove the car, she was concerned. Meanwhile, the girl who walked away from her stayed inside her room. She sulked like crazy when she heard the sound of a car driving away from the house. It was clear what the woman chose.

What happened between them didn't matter to Tichila at all.

Suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her chest, it hurt so bad that she couldn't speak. She couldn't say that she wasn't upset. She tried not to show how upset she was in front of Techila. And now, it was overwhelming when she was alone.

*Disappointed? Yes.*

*Hurt? She was*

*Terribly upset?*

It hurt so badly that she had to let it out through her tears.

Every action that woman did had an impact on her feelings. Even though she didn't regret giving herself to the woman she loved, she was very upset about it.

Feelings were fragile and complicated things. She said it was fine if the woman would think that everything between them was just carnal desire and bodily response. But she was so upset when the woman made it clear that it was all she wanted from their relationship.

Talking about it made her feel irritated with herself. She wiped the tears on her cheeks, her chest hurt from the pain she felt. Still, she tried to get rid of that feeling. She did not want to dwell in this state when there was no use.

After she came to that conclusion, Nam immediately took out her casual clothes that she wore indoors.

She just wanted to do something to get her mind off things. Shortly after, the delicate girl walked out of her room after she got ready for what she planned to do.

The house was silent, the girl planned to sneak out. She believed that no one was home as usual

She had been contemplating this for a while. But then, Petai's room was opened and the tall man walked out.

"Oh, Sister-in-law! You don't have to look that surprised. I don't have anywhere else to go, I'm kinda bored. So I want to stay home today."

He said first with a knowing look. The girl could only watch as the man came to sit on the couch, looking bored.

Ever since she came to live here, this was the first time she had seen the man stay home.

Does it mean it will flood at the mine today?

"Tan, do you know how to drive a Jeep?"

Then she thought about something, the girl quickly asked him, hopeful.

"Please, P' Nam. I might look like this, but I will let you know I could drive an excavator. A Jeep is nothing for me. Unlike its name, it doesn't give me the heebie-jeebies, you know. Why do you ask?"

It was then that the young man took in how his sister-in-law dressed.

She was wearing a pair of fitting jeans, a long-sleeved plaid shirt, sneakers, and a wide-brim hat The way she dressed kind of made him nervous for some reason.

"I want to go to the mine."

See!? He was right to be nervous. He blinked when he heard his sister-inlaw.

"Why would you want to go there? Are you joking? It's hot and dusty. You're perfectly comfortable here, why would you do that?"

"I will work there."

"What!?"

At first, he thought that Sister-in-law was proChapter :ly just joking. Now, he heard it loud and clear. Petai was even more surprised.

"Did P' Tae really allow you to work there?"

The more he talked, the more his eyes caught on how his sister-in-law was smiling so sweetly at him. It made him even less sure about all of this,

"I already talked to P' Tae about this. Tod and Priew are also there. You just have to drive me to see those two"

"P' Te? Allow you to work at the mine? How is this possible?"

Petai asked again, unsure. He knew that his sister was possessive, she would never let her lover mingle with the miners

With how pretty sister-in-law was, there was no way Techila would allow it, he thought. But then, the sweet smile Narm sent him made his heart melt like wax.

He couldn't say no to any pretty girls, including his sister-in-law.

Why do I give in to every beautiful woman?

Petai scolded himself internally.

"Please, Tan. Take me to the mine. Everyone here knows how to drive the Jeep, even Priew. I never saw you drive it, but I bet you would look so cool."

"Fine, fine, I will drive you there. But you have to protect me if P' Tae scolds me, okay?"

"Okay. I won't let P' Tae scold you, I promise."

After she completed her first goal, the beautiful girl smiled with delight.

If the woman wanted to make a decision for her that she couldn't stay here, then she would prove that she was fine staying where her heart was....

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After she finished her business downtown, her heart yearned for a certain someone all the time, she quickly drove home.

But while she was entering the mine area, she saw the Jeep at their house's entrance. Techila slowed down and peeped her head out of the window to shout at her brother, asking him.

"Oi, where are you going? Did you just come back from the mine?"

"Yeah. P' Nam asked me to drive her to the mine."

Petai grinned and shouted back to his sister. But after she heard that, the woman got out of her pickup and walked to the Jeep.

"Get out. I'm heading to the mine. You take that car and go home. Did Narm tell you what she was doing there?"

"What?! To work, right? She said she talked to you about this."

Then he stepped out of the car and let his sister get in it.

Suddenly, he felt a shiver run down his spine, her voice and expression were unreadable. He knew what it meant, his sister didn't agree with her lover working at the mine for sure.

That was a close one. He was in this life-threatening situation all because of that sweet smile.

He was lucky that his sister didn't say anything else. Now she drove the Jeep back to the mine quickly, leaving him there watching the car, feeling relieved.

Whether it was because she was familiar with the way, or something else, Techila arrived at the mine less than ten minutes later as she wanted.

The taller woman headed to the canopy to calm herself. As she was walking, she couldn't help but look for the girl who disobeyed her order by sneaking into the mine without letting her know first.

The girl was preoccupying her mind to the point that Techila couldn't fully focus on anything, and she was so good at throwing tantrums.

Techila was angry at herself. Her heart was more fragile than a broken eggshell. She was so anxious when her brother told her that the stubborn girl sneaked into the mine to work in this unfriendly environment. She wanted to drag the girl home so badly, if she could.

It seemed that her blood was hotter than the afternoon sun, given how anxious she was feeling. Before she could ask the bypassing miner, she noticed how beautiful the girl was amidst the crowd of miners who were sorting the gems from the dirt in the implement.

No matter how normal or unrevealing the girl dressed, it was very clear how pretty she was.

*How...could Techila not get possessive of her?*

But what irritated her even more was how the girl was covered with laterite and clay, the girl was sitting there like a child playing with dirt.

She approached the girl, her face was emotionless. She didn't let the female miner who noticed her nudged the girl. She announced coldly, and it was loud enough to attract the miners' attention.

"Come home with me, NOW!!"

"P' Tae?"

The girl looked up from the gems she was sorting. She muttered. Techila had a dark look when she stared at her, the girl glanced around at the miners nervously.

The delicate girl stopped what she was doing when those eyes were glaring at her. She decided to go to the tailer woman obediently.

"I'm still working, as you can see. I cannot get off work now, P' Tae."

"Go wash up, now."

Her voice was low, a dark look on her face. The searing heat was burning the girl, her whole body flushed red. Her unblemished face was covered with sweat. Her hair was tied into a bun under that wide-brim hat. She did not dress revealingly at all, but Techila did not want to see her like this.

The girl was delicate, she deserved to be treasured. Who on earth let her do labor work out here in the sun like this? What if she got sick? It would be a big problem.

"I want to finish my work."

"Go ahead. If you want me to drag you home in front of the workers, then be my guest."

"Why are you so demanding, P' Te?!"

It wasn't just a threat, she knew that. The woman's expression made it clear that she was willing to do as she said.

No matter how hurt she felt, she didn't want the miners to see them fight like this.

That was why...she was willing to follow the woman to the canopy. Then she took off the boots she borrowed from the miner at the canopy, leaving them to their owner.

"I will take you to wash up nearby. You would be itchy so much if you waited until you got home Did you bring your spare clothes?"

"I didn't."

"Stubborn and ignorant."

The girl's ignorant answer made Techila search for something inside the drawer. Meanwhile, the girl who was still angry at her didn't even glance in her direction to see what the taller woman was doing.

Do whatever, it wasn't like Narm could stop her.

"Get in the car."

"Didn't you say you were going to take me to wash nearby? Aren't we walking there?"

"Suit yourself if you want to wash where the miners can see. I can take you there, too."

"Can you just talk to me like a normal person for once?"

"Why should I talk to you like that when you sneaked to the mine without letting me know?"

"You told me yourself that I can't possibly stay here. So I'm proving to you that I can adjust. I have a feeling that I am used to doing these things. Maybe I once worked in the field as well. Why can't you give this a chance?"

Both of them were ready to crash with anger. They stared at each other, refusing to back down. Both of them had their own reasons. In the end, Techila was the one who backed down.

She was losing against this girl in every way. Those cutting words got to her. She felt something when those eyes looked at her with hurt and disappointment. The girl was upset.

Techila cared about this girl. She cared about her so much that she did not want to see the girl's eyes watered with tears like this.

Love the word engraved right in the middle of her heart. It ingrained and slowly sank inside, inescapable.

*Tichila loved this girl.*

She loved her...even though she did not know who this girl was.

She loved her, even though she had no idea what they would face tomorrow. She only knew that once she loved her, she couldn't take it back in time.

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# CHAPTER : 14

Once Tichila realized she had lost the argument in her heart, she didn't want to keep fighting and upset the other person even more. So, she chose to give in. Without saying a word, she gently grabbed the smaller girl's wrist and led her toward the car.

The camo-patterned jeep drove through a path surrounded by tall, shady trees. The nature around them was peaceful and so different from the mining area-it felt like a whole other world.

The closer they got to their destination, the more the fresh scent of moisture in the air and the faint sound of a flowing stream started to awaken excitement in the girl who had mostly stayed indoors since moving here.

A sweet smile appeared on her smooth cheeks, and Tichila, who kept sneaking glances at her, couldn't help but feel her heart skip a beat.

Her beauty, her sweetness, and even her stubbornness-all the things that made up this girl-were everything Tichila once told herself she should run away from. But in the end, her heart gave in to this charming, strong-willed girl.

The car slowed down and finally stopped in the perfect spot. The girl stepped out, eyes sparkling with excitement as she looked around.

Right in front of them was a clear stream flowing down from a waterfall above. The water wasn't deep, and you could see the stones under the surface-everything looked so clean and fresh.

"P'Te... are you really going to make me bathe here?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Are there no people around here?"

She asked, glancing around the area again. The sounds of nature all around them felt surprisingly fresh and peaceful. "Usually, no one comes this deep into the forest,"

Tichila explained.

"Most people stop at the entrance we just drove past. It's quite far to walk in, and it takes time. It only felt close to you because we came by car."

"I see... then, I just need a little time. You can wait in the car if you want, P'Te."

With that, she made a move to head down toward the clear stream. But just as she was about to walk off, the taller woman gently grabbed her arm.

"If you go in wearing jeans like that, you'll proChapter :ly end up sinking. The water may look shallow, but don't be fooled by how clear it is."

"It's just a quick rinse. I'll be fine. Besides, this is the only outfit I brought. If you're not letting me go in with this, are you telling me to take it off?"

It wasn't just her words that made Tichila feel like she was being teased-her tone and the confident way she lifted her chin and looked her in the eye clearly showed she was doing it on purpose.

Tichila held her gaze but didn't say anything. She didn't take the teasing seriously. Instead, she calmly handed her something, placing it in the smaller girl's soft hands without a word.

"Use this to rinse off. Then wash the clothes you're wearing. They're all covered in dirt. No way it'll be clean if you just go in like that."

As she looked down at what was in her hands, her brows furrowed in confusion.

"A sarong?"

She asked, glancing up at the taller woman who was smiling teasingly at the corner of her lips.

"Why? You don't know how to wear it? All the local women around here wear these. It's part of their daily life. Sometimes, when they have to wash in front of others, this helps keep things modest. But if you really can't wear it, that's okay too,"

Tichila said with a sly tone.

"And why do you think I can't wear it? It doesn't look that hard,"

She shot back.

"Well then, hurry up and change. You need to get cleaned up-you look like a scruffy little kitten."

"Fine," she replied confidently.

With that challenge in her eyes, there was no way she was going to let the older woman keep doubting her ability to adapt to life here. Sure, none of this was familiar to her, but she believed effort could overcome anything.

She stepped behind a big tree to change clothes. Once she opened the sarong, she realized it was the easy kind-like a one-size-fits-all skirt with elastic. Super simple to put on.

See? That's it? Nothing hard about it.

Once she had changed, she walked back out, now wearing the sarong and holding her old clothes in her hands. Even though she felt pretty awkwardespecially with Tichila staring at her without blinking-she did her best to hide her embarrassment.

"You can go wait in the car, P'Te. I won't take long," she said softly.

Tichila just nodded, but instead of heading back to the car, she sat down on a log by the stream and kept watching.

Her heart was racing out of rhythm. The soft pink skin peeking from above the edge of the sarong, and the clear view of her cleavage-it all caught her eyes and stirred up something inside her. Her blood felt hot, spreading warmth and a rush of sensation that made her stomach tighten and twist.

The memory of that naked body writhing beneath her, completely under her control, kept flashing through her mind. The sweet, breathy moans filled with pleasure still echoed in her ears.

That soft, vulnerable face lost in the passion of love-those images haunted her, making the heat in her blood surge even more.

Tichila slipped into a daydream while watching the scene before her. And the girl bathing in the stream wasn't clueless either. The way the wet sarong clung tightly to her body made her feel more and more self-conscious.

Whether it was because of embarrassment or frustration from being watched so intensely, her focus completely shifted away from the clothes in her hands. All she could feel was the weight of those eyes, burning with desire. Her delicate hands just kept scrubbing at the jeans, not paying attention to anything else-until it was too late.

By the time she noticed, her shirt had already slipped away in the current, floating further and further from her.

Startled, and not thinking clearly, she instinctively moved with the water, trying to grab the shirt before it got too far. But in her rush and distraction, her heart dropped in panic. The edge of her sarong had slipped from her chest, leaving her exposed. In that moment of chaos, she didn't even know what to grab first.

Just as she was flailing to catch the falling fabric, a strong arm suddenly wrapped around her waist and pulled her close.

"P'Te... my shirt!" she gasped.

"Let it go, it's floating away."

Her panicked face was glistening with droplets of water. The captivating sight before her held Tichila's gaze still.

It was both sweet and seductive in a way that made the blood in her body feel scalding hot, the sensation creeping downward with an intensifying heat.

"If I let go, where will I get clothes to wear when I go home?"

"Then don't wear any."

Those words, simple yet commanding, seemed to freeze everything in place. Her eyes, full of desire, drifted lower, piercing through the clear water, grazing her body with her gaze. The woman, too distracted by her floating shirt carried away by the current, followed her gaze in panic, her face flushing red.

Color rushed to her soft cheeks. The closeness of her embrace made it impossible for her to reach down and pull the edge of the sarong that had slipped down her chest to cover her now bare skin.

"P'Te, let go of me,"

She pleaded, her body burning under her gaze, her heart pounding uncontrollably.

"You looked so pale last night, but now... I can see you even more clearly than before."

It wasn't just the words-her hand gently moved to touch the peak of her full chest, and that tender touch sent a shiver through her, making her squirm and blush deeply.

"You pervert! Let me go now!"

But she didn't let go. Unable to resist the temptation before her, she leaned in close to her soft cheek, her nose brushing along her skin, making her turn her face away, trembling all over.

"P'Te, don't do this,"

She said, pressing both hands against her chest. Her lips and the tip of her nose trailed lower until they reached her pale neck, sending a wave of sensation that made her squeeze her eyes shut. The gentle nibble, as if teasing her into surrender, stirred a deep, fiery response in her blood.

She felt like she was melting from the touch of someone who had indulged her in pleasure all night long.

"Why are you stopping me? Why are you guarding yourself from me?" Tichila whispered in a husky voice.

Her lips continued to graze and nibble along the smooth, porcelain skin, captivated. The soft, sweet scent of her body was like a tether-one she couldn't bring herself to break away from.

"We're not anything to each other... are we? That's why... this kind of thing shouldn't keep happening,"

The woman said softly.

Tichila lifted her face from the crook of that pale neck and gazed at the delicate face glistening with water droplets. Her long, wet hair clung to her flawless features. Those full, pink lips-lips she'd tasted throughout the night-looked even more tempting now.

Was there any part of this woman's body that hadn't already been claimed by her touch?

"Not anything to each other?"

Her voice was still sweet, not the least bit angry at the other woman's wounded tone.

"What tells you we're nothing to each other? Tell me, is there a single inch of your body that isn't mine? Tell me-is there anywhere I haven't held, haven't kissed, haven't made mine? After everything, you still say we're nothing?"

"Isn't it because of you?"

She replied quietly.

"You're the one who wanted what we had to end here."

"So you just decided on your own?"

Tichila countered.

"Did I ever say that? Because as far as I remember, I already told you... what I wanted you to be to me."

"......"

Because what Tichila had said was true. Even if she sometimes seemed unsure or afraid of what was happening between them, not once had she said she wanted to end things.

In fact, the only clear thing that ever came from her lips was that she wanted her to stay here-as her wife.

"Do you really think I'd just let my wife walk away that easily?"

"P'Te..."

All the sadness she'd been holding onto melted away in an instant. Her heart softened, completely disarmed by just a few honest words from the woman standing in front of her.

The way she said it might've sounded simple, but it was filled with more love and sincerity than anything else.

"I might not be perfect. I've got a simple personality, nothing special. I don't know what the future holds... but if that day ever comes, please-don't turn your back on this place. I want you here. I want you with me. Let me love you. Don't leave me."

"P'Te..."

Her voice came out as a whisper, lips trembling with emotion. The look in her eyes, full of fear and uncertainty, cut straight through to the heart. And Tichila understood-completely-what she was so afraid of.

"I'll stay with you, P'Te. With my whole life, my every breath-it all belongs to you. No matter what happens in the future, I promise... I'll never turn my back on this place. I'll never leave you."

Her sweet vow was carried softly on the breeze, with the cool stream running gently around them and nature wrapping them in quiet warmth. Tichila's arms tightened around her, pulling their bodies even closer until there wasn't a space left between them.

She tilted her face up just as Tichila leaned down. Their lips met in a kiss that started soft and slow, but soon deepened-fueled by the desire that had been building between them.

Her arms rose to wrap around Tichila's neck as the kiss grew more intense, both of them surrendering completely to the moment.

Two tongues intertwined, sweeping away the sweetness from each other until their bodies were breathless. Emotions and desires surged high beyond control. The delicate Tichila, embraced under the water's surface, moved closer to the crevices of the riverbank.

"P'Te, someone might see us."

The slender figure, Nam, was startled when her half-naked body, which had been hidden beneath the water's surface, was lifted by a tall person and placed on a rock.

The water level was only high enough to submerge half of her body. Although the height of the rock could conceal both of their bodies from view, the open space was too exhilarating to describe.

Both breasts were exposed in front of the tall woman. Although the lower part was not completely bare because the sarong had not slipped off, the act of inserting herself between her legs caused the hem of the sarong to rise, revealing her soft thighs.

It barely covered anything.

"This corner, no one can see us. Just give it to me, Nam. I can't hold back anymore. I want to eat my wife so bad."

Tichila comforted the other person, giving them confidence. The two plump, soft breasts were rising and falling with each breath, stirring the blood in her body to a boil. She wanted to suck the pink, sweet tip to her heart's content right now.

She was so thirsty for the taste of love that she couldn't resist the overwhelming desire. She couldn't control herself from leaning down to devour the two plump breasts as her heart desired.

"Umm... P'Te.."

The slender body shuddered slightly as the warm tip of the tongue touched the nipple. Tichila swallowed it into her mouth, while her other hand moved up to squeeze and knead the other breast to stir the blood in her body.

The slender fingertips teased and teased the nipples that were shrinking against her hand. A sweet, agitated moan was released from her plump lips, unable to resist the tingling sensation from that touch.

"Are you still upset about last night?"

Tichila whispered hoarsely, her mouth still drinking in the peak of the breast that had come into her palm without relent. Her palm caressed the curves and contours of the enchanting body.

And the only meaning conveyed in the moment when that hand slipped under the hem of the sarong, the warm touch caressed and circled around the slender white legs, stopping at the curves of femininity, gently squeezing and nibbling, making the owner of the delicate figure shudder.

"No, not anymore,"

Nam bit her lips tightly, feeling a thrill as if her heart would burst because of the skilled moves of someone who seemed to be very skilled good at this.

"I want to go inside,"

Tichila whispered hoarsely, seducing by sliding her slender fingers along the crack of the delicate flower petals that squirted sweet juices to moisten her slender fingers.

"Umm... P' Te,"

The one being attacked moaned softly, looking into the eyes of the tall person with a pleading gaze. Her body was ready, but the one controlling the game was not in a hurry.

Tichila continued to tease that part, kneading and rubbing lightly to create a tingling sensation until the owner of the beautiful flower could not stand it anymore.

"P'Te, come in, please,"

She pleaded, her face flushed. Her body that was about to explode was yearning for another touch, one that would allow her body to be released.

Tichila didn't hesitate. Her two slender fingers slowly pushed into the soft petals. The movements were slow, but each motion emphasized every moment as her fingers rubbed inside.

"Ahh..."

The tantalizing thrill is about to burst. The deliberate movements spread tingling sensations throughout every pore. The slender body tenses its abdomen, responding to the fiery touch. Her chest shook violently according to the rhythm of her breathing filled with passion.

Tichila leaned down to suckle the sweet-colored nipple again, her slender tongue teasingly flicking and caressing, nibbling and sucking. Sometimes she bit the sweet-colored nipple with her sharp teeth.

"Umm... P' Te,"

It hurt but she still felt the taste of excitement. Her body was attacked from above and below at the same time. It created a tingling sensation that made her beautiful hips bounce along with the rhythm of their passionate love.

The tall person left a kiss mark on her white breasts, sucking and pulling the sweet juicy flesh as if wanting it to melt in her mouth.

The more she looked, the more she touched... the more she felt an increasing hunger. The pampered body trembled all over. Tichila used one hand to support her delicate back, throwing herself into the rhythm of love according to the rising intensity of her emotions.

"Umm... P' Te ... it's deep... it hurts."

The slender figure gasped and dug her fingers into the shoulder of the tall man. The impact from the slender fingers, deeply embedded in her body, created a tingling sensation along with a heavy feeling in her abdomen.

The sweet face is flushed, the forceful movements accompanied by the thumb's tip that crushes right at the sensitive spot, it sends shivers through, almost unbearable. The body trembles, the fair skin turns rosy, blood surges through the body due to the deep touch of the other person.

"Nam, you make it impossible for me to resist. You're too sexy, Nam."

Tichila whispered hoarsely. Even though the other person told her that, their body responded in the opposite way. The slender body arched up to receive her touch passionately. The body's reaction indicated that the other person was tingling from her touch.

The moment the body was thrown up to the peak of emotion, the slender hugged her tightly, burying the drug in her shoulders, although it felt painful, but the force of the slender fingers that were buried deep in the other person's body, it created a huge sense of pride in her heart.

Tishila hugged the trembling body to her chest with possessiveness. How many words of love were spoken through the touch? It conveyed that her heart had been placed at the feet of this woman until it was completely gone.

The woman who would be her life and breath.

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# CHAPTER : 15

When the heart opens up and fully welcomes someone in, the first morning of a new relationship - with clear feelings and connection - can bring a happy smile to her face from the very moment she wakes up.

Tichila looked closely at the soft, sweet face of the person still asleep in her arms. Her long eyelashes rested gently on her eyelids, and her lips were naturally pink and full. They looked so tempting, she couldn't resist leaning in to softly kiss those beautiful lips.

The soft touch felt like marshmallows, and it instantly sparked deeper desire. Her feelings started to take over, leading her hand to gently cup her bare breasts, massaging softly. Her warm tongue slipped into her mouth, tasting the sweetness of her lips while she was still asleep.

"Mmm..."

The one being woken up by such a passionate touch let out a soft moan. The familiar feeling made her respond to her even without opening her eyes. Her arms wrapped around her neck as she moved to lie on top of her. Their naked bodies pressed together, stirring desire from the very start of the day.

"Mmm... P'Te, you're up so early."

"Who told you to look so delicious? Can't I have another round before work?"

It wasn't just words - the way her hips slowly pressed against hers made her bite her lip in response. Her arms, which had been around her neck, slid down and gripped her back tightly as she moved rhythmically on top of her.

Her long hair was all messy, but it didn't take away any of her beauty. In fact, seeing her face lost in the moment of passion only made her fall for her even more.

Nam was drawn in by every movement, feeling a deep, thrilling happiness every time - and craving her touch like someone who could never get enough of her love.

"As far as I remember, P'Te once said the workers here are all a bunch of horny guys. But right now... I'm starting to think their boss might be way hornier than any of them."

"So what? You're the wife of the boss now. You don't need to worry about house chores, and you don't need to do any hard work outside either because I'll take care of all that for you. But when it comes to the bedroom... you might have to put in a little more effort. Now that you know that, do you think you can handle it?"

Their eyes locked, even as their bodies were still moving passionately. Every heated motion brought waves of pleasure they both deeply felt.

In such a short time, they had already come to understand each other on a deeper level. When both people feel the same longing for one another, there's no reason to hold back those feelings.

Sex is a natural part of being human. When love and affection are there, it's not strange to want that kind of closeness - whether it's often or not, it's just part of being in love with someone.

"If you're going to throw out tempting lines like that, can I still change my mind? Because if I can, I'll change it right now."

"Too late, beautiful. It's not every day a gorgeous woman shows up in the middle of the mine and falls right into my hands. If I let you go now..."

"....."

"Changing your mind now would be just plain foolish,"

She said, moving her hips faster, driving her passion into the one beneath her with heavy, labored breaths. The pressure building inside her, on the verge of exploding, made it impossible to slow down even a little.

"Saying something like that... does it mean other women have fallen for you before, P'Te? So every woman who falls for you, you just... devour them all? You never let any of them get away, do you?"

Jealousy clouded her mind as she pressed the question through her nose in a pouty tone, her soft hands trying to push back the body that kept thrusting into hers relentlessly.

But how could she resist such a storm of passion? That final intense rhythm made Tichila collapse her weight onto her body, panting in short, shallow breaths.

"It feels so good, Nam... why is it this intense?"

"I don't want to talk to you anymore, P'De. Get off of me right now."

"So harsh,"

Tichila whispered near her white ear, nibbling it lightly, making the one beneath her burn with heat all over.

"Harsh? You just said it yourself a moment ago, and I heard every word, loud and clear. You seem quiet, but when it comes to these things... you're no small player, huh?"

"No small player? I've never had anyone else. I've only been with you, day and night like this. Don't you realize how starved I've been? If I had someone else, I wouldn't be this desperate."

"You better be telling the truth. If I ever find out you're fooling around-"

"Then what?"

Tichila looked down at her with a teasing smile.

"How will you punish your woman?"

"I'll cut off your tongue. And your fingers too,"

She said, flustered, her face burning red with embarrassment. The way she clearly called her, *her woman,* made her feel like she was truly owned by someone-deeply, genuinely.

Warmth spread through her chest. She no longer felt like she was alone.

"Savage... who would dare cross you?"

"I mean it, Nam's not just bluffing."

"If it's come to this, there's no way I'd do anything like that. Even if I'm aroused, I'm not a flirt."

"But if you ever slip up, P'Te... Nam will do the same."

"You think I'd just let that go? If you want to not get out of bed, go ahead and try. But for now, there's still something about me that I need to tell you..."

Tichila gazed into the eyes of the one in her arms for a moment before deciding to lie down beside her, pulling the delicate body gently into her embrace. She cradled the perfectly shaped head and let it rest upon her shoulder, sharing her warmth through the closeness of their touch.

"Go ahead, P'Te. Nam is ready to listen to anything about the person you loved,"

She whispered softly, tightening her slender arm in response to the embrace, echoing the same emotion.

"My heart... it already belongs to you, Nam. If I could, I'd want to spend the rest of my life with the woman I love. But there's still one thing... one truth I want you to know,"

Tichila said, her voice steady and unhurried.

Because when it came to letting someone truly into her life, she didn't want any part of her story to remain a secret from the woman she loved.

At the very least, that person deserved to know...

That she wasn't the woman who had everything, despite what others might see from the outside. Ever since the first day the other woman stepped into this place, Tichila had sensed something in her-something that made her feel deeply uncertain, even afraid of the differences between them.

It was very possible that the world the other came from was entirely different from this one, like they were born into two separate eras.

"Today, we may still love each other deeply. But you can never truly know what might change in the days ahead. Memories that fade away todaythey're not eternal. One day, the things that once slipped from memory for a moment... they'll come back. When that day comes, will we still be the same? You'll never know."

"....."

"I'm just a woman with nothing. Everything you see-even the position of lady of the house-is just a duty, a responsibility I've taken on to repay the kindness of those who raised me. Someday, all of this might change. I'm just an adopted daughter, taken in and raised since I was young. Knowing this, will you still accept someone who has nothing to offer?"

As the words, heavy with vulnerability, came to an end, the woman who had been resting her face against the other's chest, listening to the rhythm of her heartbeat, slowly lifted her gaze to meet the eyes of the one holding her.

Their eyes, separated by barely a breath, trembled with emotion. That look said more than words ever could-so much that the listener gently leaned forward and placed a soft kiss on the other's chin, using her touch to soothe and reassure.

A quiet vow passed between them, that her body and heart belonged only to this one person.

"Remember this, okay? My life, my every breath-it belongs to you, P'Te. My body and my heart, they're yours and yours alone. As long as I can stay in the arms of the one I love, as long as I have you by my side like this... I won't ask for anything more. I'm ready to be with you for the rest of my life... unless you're the one who no longer wants me to be in yours."

Every word she spoke came from the depths of her heart. From the moment their eyes first met, it was as if her life had been destined to belong to this one person-the one who gave her new life and ultimately became the owner of her heart.

Every emotion made it clear that she didn't wish for anything more in this world than to simply stay by her side.

As long as she had this warm and safe embrace from this person, she would never need anything else again.

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The sun was shining brightly around midday. For people living under the same sun, the passing of time didn't feel all that different.

Inside a grand mansion, standing tall within a high-value estate, a pair of sad eyes gazed at the man lying unconscious on the bed. A delicate hand reached out to gently hold his unmoving hand, softly whispering words as if talking to him-just like she did every day.

"When will you wake up, Dad? I wait for you every single day. I really want to hear your voice. I have so much to tell you. Please wake up and talk to me, Dad. Don't sleep for too long."

Once again... her words were met with nothing but silence.

**Thicha Watthanawaranon** sighed deeply, feeling tired-not from her father's illness, but from waiting in hope. Even though the hope of seeing her father open his eyes and return to normal life seemed faint, she tried her best to keep her fragile heart strong.

When it was time to leave for work, she turned to the private nurse who had been taking care of her father since he fell ill, and gave her a softl smile.

"P'Mon, I'll leave Dad in your care for now. I have to go to work."

"Of course, **Khun Neme**. Don't worry, I'll take good care of him. If anything happens, I'll knock on your door right away."

"Thank you so much, P'Mon. I'll be off then."

As soon as those words were spoken, the owner of the delicate lips walked out of her father's room, heading straight to her own office, which was located in the west wing of the house.

Ever since the pillar of the family had suffered an accident and fallen into a coma, Thicha had chosen to bring her work home so she could care for her father more closely.

As a designer, which was her direct responsibility, and as the youngest daughter, it wasn't an obstacle to her work-even though she no longer went to the company as often as she used to.

**Phetklao Jewelry**, a company involved in the production and export of precious gems, was founded by her mother, **Phetklao**, with the constant support of her father, who stood by his wife through everything.

Since her mother's passing three years ago due to illness, her father had taken on the role of company president in her place-until his accident left him bedridden.

Her only sister, who held the position of vice president of the company stepped up to the position of the leader according to the privilege she should have received.

But now, the leader of Phetklao Jewelry had mysteriously disappeared without a trace. The news of her disappearance was kept secret for various reasons-whether to protect the company's interests or to avoid possible scandals that might arise, depending on society's perception.

Because of this, finding someone who had been missing for months was no easy task. At that thought, the owner of the delicate lips could only sit and stare at the design drafts in front of her, overwhelmed. Her mind was so full of worry that it took great effort to concentrate on her work.

Yet even then, the silence around her was abruptly interrupted by the sound of a notification from her smartphone.

Her slender hand reached for the phone and opened the message with anticipation. Since her sister had disappeared, Thicha had never let the device out of her sight.

**[I have something to discuss with you. I'm coming up to your office.]**

Thicha read through the message sent via the popular messaging app. Then, instead of replying with text, she simply sent a sticker as a way of acknowledging and agreeing.

Thicha placed her phone back where it was and chose to sit and wait calmly, knowing that with a message like that, the sender was surely already on their way to her house.

And just as she had expected, the knock on the door came shortly after. The rhythm of the knocking was instantly recognizable to the room's owner.

The door, which had not been locked, swung open to reveal the tall, slender figure of someone who stepped into the room with a warm smile the moment their eyes met.

"Hello, beautiful,"

The visitor greeted the room's owner, their sharp eyes focused on the slender figure moving from behind the desk toward the sofa in the corner of the room.

"Hello, P'Perth. Have you eaten anything yet? If not, I can ask the maid to bring something up for you."

"No need, I've already eaten," came the reply.

**Lieutenant Colonel Pittinan Piranphat**, a police officer, walked in and dropped herself onto the sofa beside Thicha with the ease and familiarity of someone long accustomed to the space.

Thicha, being nudged slightly, didn't move away-this behavior was typical of someone known as her sister's best friend since their early high school days.

Her coming and going in this house was no surprise. Everyone in the household was well-acquainted with her. Even making her way up to this upstairs office was nothing unusual-certainly no obstacle for Pittinan.

"I heard P'Perth said you have some business to talk about P'Nam. You've heard news about P'Nam already, haven't you?"

"Calm down. Don't you think I deserve a moment to catch my breath?"

"But I'm just worried about P'Nam. It's already been months, and we haven't heard anything about her. Who knows if he's safe or not by now..."

The foolish words, laced with genuine worry and concern, were met with quiet composure from Pittinan. She simply observed with a calm heart, showing only a faint smile on her face for the person in front of her to see.

"The reason I came by today isn't because I have any news about Nam, but actually because of Uncle Yan."

"Dad? What about him?"

"Well... I came to visit your dad, just like I usually do. But what's special is that I also wanted to come see you."

"P'Perth! What's with the secrecy? You texted me acting all secretive-I thought it was something serious that couldn't be shared with others." She couldn't help but protest, even throwing her a mock glare like she often did.

"Do the police not have anything to do these days? Is that why you have time to mess with me like this?"

"You're both so easy to sulk-just like siblings, completely alike. And look at that face, all that cuteness has vanished now."

"Perth, don't joke around like that."

With that, she tried to push away the tall woman's hand as she teasingly reached out to pinch her cheek. Even though this kind of behavior had long been considered normal between her sister's best friend and herself, Pittinan could never understand how something she did out of fondness could stir her heart so deeply every single time.

Being touched by someone she secretly had feelings for... it was something she knew she should distance herself from.

"P'Perth, don't mess around like this."

"Why? I've always done this, haven't I? Or are you too grown-up now to play like this? Do you have a boyfriend or something?"

She didn't stop there. The woman sitting beside her leaned in closer, her warm breath brushing against her smooth cheek, causing her blood to rush to her face in a heartbeat.

"P'Perth, move back. Don't change the subject. I'm still mad at you. That little stunt of yours wasn't funny at all. I'm going to work now. If you've got nothing to do, go find your girlfriend!"

"Whoa, why are you kicking me out like this, sweetheart?"

Perth suddenly grabbed her slender waist just as she was about to walk away, pulling her down to sit on her lap. But her slightly awkward movements and the gentle, serious look on her face-with no trace of teasing-left the young officer completely stunned.

"P'Perth, let go of me! Don't do this!"

"Okay, okay. I won't. I was just teasing. Why are you so serious today?"

Pittinan quickly released her when she saw her storm off and plop herself behind her desk in a huff, leaving her completely bewildered.

Pittinan was used to her being moody, and usually she would find a way to coax her back like always-but today, she didn't have the time or energy for another round of playful bickering.

"I'll come see you again tomorrow. Don't stay mad too long, alright?"

Pittinan gave the room's owner a warm smile before stepping out, heading toward the bedroom on the east side of the house. She spent some time in the patient's room and only left when she felt it was the right time.

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The BMW S1000 RR sped off from the Wantawanon residence and hit the main road. About fifteen minutes later, the big bike came to a stop in front of another grand white mansion-just as impressive as the one she had just left.

A tall figure, over 170 centimeters, stepped into the house. As she passed by a housemaid, she couldn't help but ask to save time looking for her father.

"Is Dad in his office?"

"No, Captain. The General is in the library. I just brought him some snacks a moment ago."

"In that case, can you bring me a glass of water to the library?"

"Yes, Captain."

After the maid replied, Pittinan headed straight for the library. She knocked politely before pushing the door open. Inside sat a dignified, recently retired senior police officer, who looked up the moment she stepped in.

"Well, what brings you home today, Captain? You've been gone nearly two weeks."

"I've been working on some things, Dad. I stopped by today because I need your help with something."

"I thought so."

The retired Police General calmly sipped his tea. He already knew-if it wasn't something serious, his daughter would never come asking for help like this.

Pittinan moved to sit on the chair across from her father, getting straight to the point.

"Perth needs someone trustworthy and skilled to go undercover at a gemstone mine. It's not an official mission and it's outside my area of responsibility. That's why I'm asking for your help, Dad."

"So I've heard about this already. How many people do you need?"

"Just two people is enough."

"You'll hear from my men within the hour. You can work out the details with them yourselves."

"Thanks so much, Dad. I'll head back to my condo now and wait to hear from your people."

"You're really not staying the night at home, Captain?"

"I still have some urgent work to finish. Maybe next time, Dad."

Pittinan gave her father a respectful goodbye, then turned and walked out of the room. The former high-ranking officer could only watch his daughter's back as she left, disappearing from view.

She was his only daughter, and she'd followed in his footsteps every step of the way. So, as much as he wished she'd stay close to home, deep down, he knew he had to let her go.

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# CHAPTER : 16

Ever since their hearts became one, each day had been filled with happiness. The once-serious face that rarely smiled was now smiling more often, and people around her noticed. Love was overflowing-it was impossible to hide all that joy.

"How have you been? It's only been less than two weeks since we last saw each other, but you look so happy. Like someone in love."

"Oh, come on, Than. You came all this way just to tease me about this?"

Tichila replied with a laugh. She tried to deny it, but her words and smile pretty much confirmed what he suspected-it was true.

Thornthan just smiled, accepting the truth. Even though he'd been busy with his own responsibilities and hadn't had much time to visit lately, he could still guess what was going on. He remembered how his friend showed interest in that beautiful woman from the very first day they met.

Tichila hadn't told him anything directly, but from what she just said, it was clear-there was no need to explain further. He knew her well. They'd been friends for so long that sometimes words weren't necessary. He could just feel it-Tichila was in love.

"Well, not exactly that... but I do have some updates about Miss Nam I wanted to tell you."

Tichila paused for a moment, surprised by what she heard. Living happily with the woman she loved every day, she had completely stopped thinking about all that ever since that day.

Having someone to love and be loved by made her want to be selfish-she didn't want reality to take that love away. No matter where her partner came from or who she really was, Tichila had already made a promise to herself: she would love her and take care of her as best as she possibly could.

So when she heard her friend mention "*updates*," she wasn't sure how to feel.

Tichila paused for a moment, a little stunned by what she'd just heard. Living every day happily with the woman she loved had made both of them stop thinking about everything that happened before. Since that day, they just focused on each other.

Their life together made her want to be selfish. She didn't want anythingespecially the truth-to come and take their love away.

No matter who the woman she loved really was or where she came from, Tichila had already made a promise to herself: she would love her, protect her, and take care of her the best she could-just like any woman in love would do.

So now, hearing this update from her close friend... she didn't even know how to feel.

"You're awfully quiet,"

Thornchan teased.

"What happened to all that excitement before? You couldn't wait to find out who Nam really was. Now you don't seem interested at all."

He couldn't help teasing her now that he had the chance. Deep inside, he felt a mix of things-worry, jealousy, and maybe even a little hurt. After all, he had always cared for Tichila.

But no matter what he felt, her happiness was what he wanted most. Sometimes, he didn't even understand himself-how could he still be so loyal to his own heart?

"This really isn't something to joke about. Just tell me what you found out. At the very least, if we know who she really is, maybe we'll finally understand why someone tried to hurt her... and who would want to go that far."

In the end, she was able to put aside her selfish feelings. The truth about what happened-the reason the woman she loved lost her memory-was something she couldn't just ignore.

No matter how much she wanted to protect their current life together, deep down, she knew no one would ever truly want to live their whole life not knowing who they really are.

Even if her lover couldn't remember anything right now, that day would come-sooner or later. The truth would catch up with them. And Tichila knew she couldn't run from it forever.

"As for who Nam really is, I've got my team working on it. But what we found today is more about the people we think were behind the incident. We've got a lead on one of the suspects-someone who might've had a hand in what happened that day. And it looks like the police might be close to tracking them down."

"So in conclusion, everything that happened was just like we suspected, right?"

"Yeah... from the evidence we've gathered so far, it seems to line up with our theory. But we still can't say for sure-not until we actually catch the person responsible. And in the meantime, I want you to keep a close eye on Nam. Let her know she needs to be careful. Try not to let her go anywhere alone. We don't know if they've figured out that the person they tried to kill is still alive. If they have, there's a chance they might come back to finish the job."

"Don't worry about that. Thanks, Than. I'm really counting on you."

"It's my duty as a policeman."

There was nothing else that needed to be said. Tichila felt his sincerity-deep and genuine. Thornthan wasn't just a good friend; he was the best friend she had. And she would repay that kindness with the same love and care. She would never hurt him-now or ever.

As her thoughts wandered while watching the police inspector walk away, her phone suddenly rang, snapping her back to the moment. She quickly reached into her pocket to answer the call. "I was just thinking about my wife."

"Such sweet talk the moment you pick up,"

Nam replied with a smile in her voice.

"I've finished all the paperwork. If you want to come pick me up, you can come now."

"Give me a few minutes. I just dropped by home to take care of something real quick. I'll head out and come get you right away."

"P'Te, please drive carefully. You don't have to rush. I can wait."

"But I don't want my wife waiting too long. Even just a few hours without seeing you-I already miss you like crazy."

"You're always so sweet with your words,"

Nam replied, smiling shyly into the phone. Just as she looked up, she caught the teasing grin of a younger colleague who clearly knew all about the relationship between her and the "lady boss."

That look only made her blush even harder after ending the call.

"You two are so sweet these days. Lately, I've noticed the boss drops by the office a lot more often. Ever since you started helping out, really."

"Oh come on, Preaw... Can't you stop teasing for once?"

"At this point, are you still shy around me, Miss Nam? You know what? Ever since you came into our mining office, the boss has been smiling so much more. I really hope it stays this way. I want to see her happy, just like everyone else. Before, she was always so wrapped up in work and worrying about the workers... and don't even get me started on all the stress from dealing with Mr. Ton."

"Was she really that serious all the time?"

"Yes! It was really hard to get a smile out of her. She'd bury herself in work all day, go home, eat, then sleep. Same thing every single day. I honestly felt sorry for her sometimes. But look now-since you came in to help out in the office, all those accounting tasks that used to take me all day? You've been able to finish them in just a few hours. That means we're really lightening her load."

"Sounds like you really love your boss, huh?"

Nam listened quietly, and her heart softened. Everything Preaw had said made her realize just how lonely her partner's life had been before. She wanted to love her, care for her, and be there every single day-filling in all the empty spaces from before.

She wanted to give her everything she'd been missing. She wanted to always see that beautiful, confident smile full of happiness.

"You know, Miss Nam... the boss means more than just a kind employer to me. If it weren't for her, me and Tos wouldn't have had the chance to study. She supported our whole family through everything. And it's not just usshe's helped so many workers here. Some of their kids who did well in school, she paid for all their education too. Honestly, how many bosses out there would do something like that? If someone doesn't love and respect her, I don't know what kind of heart they have."

"She never told me any of this."

"She's just like that. She never talks about the things she does for others.

Only we who've been around her for a long time know how much she's done."

All those words of admiration clearly showed how much love and respect everyone had for their boss. And hearing it all made Nam feel even more touched, more impressed.

The stories went on for several minutes, one after another, making her smile the entire time. Until finally, a four-door pickup truck slowly pulled up to the front of the office.

Nam stood up and walked out to the waiting vehicle, where someone had been expecting her.

"Did you wait long? Sorry I'm a bit late."

"No, not at all. You already told me you had something to take care of. But what made you want to take me into town today?"

"I just wanted to take you out, maybe do a little shopping in case there's anything you need or want. And also... I thought it'd be nice to get out of the mine for a while-go have a nice dinner outside. I don't want you to feel too cooped up here and get lonely."

After those words, she reached out, fingers gently lacing with the slender hand extended toward her. Matching smiles lit up both their faces. And then, Tichila leaned in, pressing a kiss to those soft, full lips, unable to resist the pull of affection.

"I missed you."

"I missed you too, P'Te. Now drive, please... if we keep kissing like this, someone might see."

Tichila chuckled softly, smiling into Nam's eyes before placing one more tender kiss on her lips. Then she gently pulled back, shifted gears, and the vehicle began moving forward-both of them completely unaware that every moment, every touch, every smile had been silently watched from behind a nearby tree.

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A phone was lifted to someone's ear, and a quiet report was made through the line.

"The woman that the captain asked me to watch-she has amnesia after an accident two months ago. Very few people know about it. The boss here personally ordered that the story be kept quiet from the rest of the workers."

"But somehow it still reached my ears."

"Yes, sir. A few workers let it slip after drinking. But don't worry, even if the story spreads a bit further, your friend is safe. No one around here would dare meddle."

"And what makes you so sure?"

"I'm very sure, sir. No one would dare touch the woman who belongs to the lady of this land."

There was a stunned silence on the other end of the line. For a long moment, the listener couldn't respond, needing time to process the shock. She knew she hadn't misheard-but she still needed to hear it again, to make absolutely certain.

"Are you saying that's a fact? Or is that just what the workers *think* is happening?"

"At first, I wasn't sure either, sir. But judging from their behavior since you assigned me to stay here... it's definitely more than just a rumor among the workers."

"Alright. I get it. For now, let's just let things be. But if anything seems off, report to me immediately. Because if we've found her, it's only a matter of time before the ones who want her dead find her too. And I don't think they'll sit back quietly."

"Understood."

After ending the call with her subordinate-who'd been assigned to uncover the truth that had long weighed on her mind-Pittinan sat quietly, brows drawn tight.

*Amnesia?*

No wonder her friend hadn't recognized her the day they'd bumped into each other.

So she had lost her memory... And on top of that, the revelation of her friend's romantic connection with the powerful owner of the mine only added layers of looming complications.

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With a heavy sigh, Pittinan glanced down at the watch on her wrist. Her duties for the day had long ended, and she'd buried herself in work for far too many hours already. It was time to get out of the office.

Making her way to the parking lot, she straddled her prized big bike, the powerful engine roaring to life before she surged onto the main road.

Living in the capital city, with its heavy and crowded traffic, is something everyone must deal with.

However, people who are used to it can skillfully maneuver their expensive cars through the main roads and eventually escape the traffic jams.

Pittinan drove to the entrance of a village he knew well. Once he turned onto the private road, the busy traffic disappeared, and only occasionally would another car come from the opposite direction.

Since the road was quite long and mostly empty, he sped up. But after a while, his sharp eyes caught sight of a familiar sports car. It looked like the car was speeding up to get away from a motorcycle that was chasing closely behind.

The suspicious behavior made Pittinan accelerate even more, hoping to stop the motorcycle. But as he got closer, the gun that was about to be aimed at the car was quickly pulled back.

The two men on the motorcycle, wearing full-face helmets, noticed just in time and sped away quickly, leaving behind the frightened driver who immediately pulled over to the side of the road.

Thicha rushed out of her car, shaking in fear, and ran into the arms of the person who had just gotten off the large motorbike.

"P'Perth, they were following me. They wanted to hurt me. They had a gun!"

"It's okay now, sweetheart. Calm down. They're gone. I'm here now. You're safe. They can't hurt you anymore."

She gently stroked her head to comfort her as she stood trembling in her arms. While they were still trying to calm down, a luxury car pulled up beside them, and a tall man quickly got out, looking shocked.

"What happened, Neme? Captain Perth, I saw two men on a motorcycle chasing Neme's car. Is she okay? I was trying to catch up, but I saw you go after them first. Did they hurt you? Are you alright?"

"She is okay now. Those two men... they tried to shoot Neme."

"What?!"

Chawin's eyes widened. He looked at the beautiful woman who had just stepped away from Captain Pittinan's arms, clearly even more shocked.

"I think we really need to report this to the police. We can't just let it slide. Someone like Neme shouldn't have any enemies. Even if it's just a misunderstanding or they mistook her for someone else, we should still be careful. Right, Captain?"

He then turned to Pittinan, who had been quietly listening. When the victim herself looked at her for an opinion, Pittinan finally nodded in agreement with what Chawin said.

"Yes, it's proChapter :ly a good idea to do what Mr. Chawin suggested. So, Neme, leave your car here. I'll take you to the police station myself."

"But I think it might be better if I take care of it. After all, Neme and I live in the same house. We can go back together after. That way, we won't trouble the Captain to have to drive Neme back again. Right, Neme?"

After hearing that, Thicha stayed silent. Even though she and Pittinan were very close, and in a scary situation like this, the person she wanted most by her side was still her sister's best friend.

But Chawin's reason made it hard to argue. They lived in the same house, after all. So she looked at him and said:

"Okay then... I'll go with P'Chawin. I'll call you after we're done, P'Perth."

"Alright, that sounds good."

With that, Thicha quietly followed Chawin, leaving Pittinan standing there, watching them with unreadable eyes.

As a person with a military background, Pittinan's instincts wouldn't let her see this as just a normal incident.

This wasn't an accident. It wasn't a mistake or a case of the wrong person.

The real target... was someone like Thicha, who didn't even know what was going on.

# CHAPTER : 17

By the time all the errands were taken care of and the journey back home was complete, the sun had already dipped low, marking the transition into evening. The wall clock showed that it was more than fifteen minutes past dinner time.

Still, the person who had been receiving updates via phone from the young man about recent events had patiently remained seated in the living room, waiting for all the family members to return so they could have dinner together.

In the dining room, Thicha sat across from two family members. One was the young man who had just returned home with her, and the other was a woman in her early forties who still looked remarkably beautiful.

The woman looked up and began questioning them about what had happened earlier as they ate.

“Is everything sorted now? What did the police say?”

“We were only able to file a report for now. The police suspect that it might have been a case of mistaken identity. Normally, I haven’t had any conflicts with anyone to the point of having an enemy who’d go that far to harm me.”

“Even so, Neme, you really need to be careful. They were bold enough to attack in broad daylight—before the sun had even set! From now on, wherever you go, you must be extra cautious. Keep an eye on your surroundings at all times. The world we live in today is dangerous; you can’t trust anyone. If anything happened to you, it would be another tragedy for our family. I don’t want anything bad to happen to anyone else.”

“I understand. I’ll be more careful from now on,” Thicha replied.

Thicha smiled, touched by her aunt’s concern. This was the same woman who had gone from being her mother’s younger sister to becoming her stepmother after her mother passed away from an illness just two years prior.

At first, discovering the deep relationship between her father and her aunt had made both Thicha and her sister uncomfortable. The idea of such a relationship within the family felt unsettling.

However, as they grew older and more mature, able to think for themselves and understand things better, it no longer felt like such a heavy issue.

Eventually, both sisters were able to accept the decision their father and aunt had made to be together.

But as she and her sister matured into adults capable of thinking independently, it no longer felt like such a burden to come to terms with their father’s decision — and their aunt’s — to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple.

**Chatruadee** was a woman of both beauty and intelligence. At forty-two, her age was just a number—it hadn’t dulled her charm or capabilities one bit.

Besides being smart and talented, her aunt’s well-rounded qualities played a major role in their father’s decision to choose someone so accomplished to walk alongside him in life.

Chatruadee was a key member of the executive team, just as skilled as her older sister—Thicha’s mother.

The love and bond within the family had always been there. And for all those reasons, it became easier for Thicha and her sister to accept their aunt as their stepmother.

“We still haven’t heard anything from Nam until now. Captain Perth promised to help follow up on the matter—has there been any word from him yet?”

Chatruadee asked.

“No, not yet,” Thicha replied.

“I actually had the chance to talk to P’Perth about it just the other day, but there hasn’t been any progress at all.”

“That’s strange,”

Said Chawin, who had been quietly listening until now.

“No matter what happened to her—whether she’s okay or not—we should’ve heard something by now. It doesn’t make sense for everything to just go silent like this. And Captain Perth is well-connected—her father’s even a general. But there’s been zero progress, despite her promise to look into it.”

He couldn’t hold back anymore, voicing his concerns aloud. However, his words—casting someone else in a negative light—were the atmosphere at the dinner table fell into a heavy silence for a moment.

Thicha stacked her utensils together and reached for her glass of water, taking a sip. She was worried about her sister and didn’t want to dwell on negative thoughts.

More than that, she was unhappy with what the young man had said— knowing full well that he often clashed with the person he had just mentioned.

“I’m full now. Please excuse me,”

Thicha said politely.

With that, she quietly slipped away upstairs—something she often did. The moment her bedroom door closed, her smartphone rang, as if it had perfectly timed the interruption.

Thicha picked up the phone and glanced at the screen. Her heart skipped a beat just from seeing the caller’s name. She knew she shouldn’t be feeling this way about this person, but no matter how much she tried, she couldn’t control her emotions.

“Yes, P’Perth?”

“Have you gotten home safely?”

Pittinan asked right away.

“And what did the police say about the report?”

“The police think it was just a misunderstanding. They believe the attacker mistook her for someone else. I already told them I don’t have any enemies or issues with anyone.”

“Even so, I think you really need to be careful, Neme. Don’t let your guard down.”

“I will, I’ll try to be more careful. But honestly, I don’t think something like this will happen again. The police said it was just a case of mistaken identity, after all.”

As soon as she finished speaking, she could hear a heavy sigh from the other end. There was no doubt that Pittinan was wearing a tense expression, staring at her phone as if it were the person she was actually talking to.

“Neme, listen to me carefully,”

Her voice turned firm and serious, a tone that immediately silenced her and commanded attention.

“No matter what the situation is, I want you to be more careful from now on. And when you’re going out—anywhere, anytime—if possible, I want you to let me know beforehand. Can you do that?”

“Like I’m supposed to report to a guardian, right?”

Thicha replied, half-teasing.

“I’m serious, Name. This isn’t a joke. Even if you think of it that way, just consider me your sister’s representative. You know how much your sister worries about you.”

Pittinan said firmly.

With that reasoning, how could someone like Thicha—who loved and respected her sister like a second mother—argue any further?

“Alright then. From now on, if I go anywhere, I’ll send you a message first. If there’s nothing else, I’m going to hang up now.”

Not knowing how to continue the conversation, Pittinan was left staring at her phone, a tense expression on her face, frustrated by how oblivious she seemed.

The trust Thicha had in those around her, combined with her naturally reserved personality, made it impossible for her to voice any criticisms or warnings out loud.

So what she was doing now was the only way she knew to best take care of her best friend’s younger sister.

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Around 10:30 p.m.—not exactly late for people living in the bustling capital —but inside the grand mansion, everything had grown quiet. Everyone had already retreated to their private quarters.

A soft knock broke the silence, sparking a flicker of irritation on his handsome face. Even though he was displeased by the unexpected visitor at this hour, he didn’t want the encounter to be overheard by anyone else.

Moments later, the door to his private bedroom opened, revealing the elegant figure of a woman slipping inside. She wore a flashy, silky robe that clung to her body.

Most likely, underneath that robe, she was wearing nothing more than a thin, body-hugging nightdress in the same shade—just like every other time.

Her well-proportioned figure stepped forward and sat gracefully at the edge of the bed. Every movement was laced with feminine charm, and it sent the young man’s heart racing with a storm of mixed emotions.

He was shaken by her provocative behavior, yet also afraid—afraid of what shouldn’t be happening.

“Khun Chat, why are you coming to see me at this hour? It’s not even that late, but what if someone sees you? What then?”

“You’re overreacting,” she said coolly.

“What are you so afraid of? You weren’t this nervous when we were doing other things.”

“Khun Chat…”

He said, trying to keep his voice steady.

“Did I say something wrong?”

She asked, her tone even, her eyes narrowed with subtle disapproval.

Her calm voice and that cold glance made Chawin realize he’d let his anxiety show too much.

“No, you didn’t say anything wrong. I just worry that if someone happened to see you sneaking into my bedroom… it wouldn’t end well.”

Chatruadee let out a soft laugh from deep in her throat. A smirk tugged at the corner of her lips. Her beautiful face showed no signs of aging, and her eyes were still as unreadable as ever. She seemed completely unfazed by his concern.

“What are you so scared of, Chawin? Who’s going to dare come upstairs at this hour?”

“Maybe not the house staff… but Neme is still here. You know our situation, Khun Chat. The nature of our relationship doesn’t allow us to just casually walk into each other’s rooms like this. You’re Khun Natee’s wife. And I’m just…”

“My husband.”

The blunt, immediate reply hit him like a slap. Chawin stood frozen, unable to deny just how deep the relationship between him and this woman had become. As an ordinary man, he had to admit—he couldn’t resist the lure of desire.

Chatruadee was a woman any man would want to touch. As a man, it was impossible to reject something so beautiful when it was handed to him on a silver platter. And once it happened the first time, it was only natural that there would be a second.

What had begun as a moment of weakness and lust, typical of a man’s impulsive desire, had gradually turned into a tangled web of secret encounters that persisted to this day.

Their affair, rooted in secrecy, carried a thrill that he couldn’t deny. And the truth was, the reason he had continued this illicit relationship with the wife of the man he owed so much to—was because of her irresistible seduction in bed.

Chatruedee was passionate, and she knew exactly how to satisfy him. But even though she gave him what he physically desired, he had never once viewed their connection as anything more than a physical fling. That’s why the label she so boldly declared always stirred discomfort deep within him.

It wasn’t the first time she had said it, not by far. But her stubborn belief in a title that could never truly exist—one that ignored the harsh reality—was the very thing that made him want to end this twisted relationship once and for all.

And yet, once a mistake has been made, walking away is never easy.

“Why that look on your face?”

She asked, her tone sharp.

“Or are you going to argue that you’re not my husband?”

"Come on, Khun Chat, you know exactly where we both stand. No one can know about what’s going on between us."

When she spoke in that cold tone, the 32-year-old man—who had been secretly involved with her for quite some time—chose to back down.

This woman wasn’t just beautiful. She was smart and dangerous in her own way, the full package. So, going against someone like Chatruadee was not something a smart man would do.

Back when he was just a low-level employee in the company, Chatruadee was the one who supported and helped him. One day, he felt he had to repay her kindness with something deeper—and from then on, it was like luck just kept falling into his lap.

There was also that one lucky incident when he helped the company president’s eldest daughter during a bag-snatching. That moment earned him favor from the company’s top boss.

What once seemed like a dead-end job suddenly turned into a big leap forward.

With strong support from the company’s most powerful figure, nothing could stop his career from rising. Becoming the manager at a top company like Phetklao Jewelry gave him something to be proud of.

And more than anything, it gave him the chance of a lifetime—an opportunity most men could only dream of. And that’s exactly where he was standing now.

But no one knew that the price he paid for that success was a hidden mistake from a moment of weakness—a choice that now kept him walking a path he knew deep down wasn’t right.

There was no turning back now. The only way out was to keep going forward, no matter what.

"I just missed you. Why do you have to overthink everything, Chawin?"

It is not just words, because the graceful figure with its enticing curves is stepping closer.

She stands pressed against his body, her breasts pushing against his firm chest through the thin fabric of her nightdress. Her hand moves lower, teasing the growing hardness that begins to respond.

Even if one were made of stone, they would not be able to resist such an enticing touch.

The young man clenches his jaw tightly, his desire overflowing uncontrollably. The heat in his body, awakened, is calling for release. The urges of lust are universal, and the overwhelming desire to release it on her body is no different from any other time.

It becomes the beginning of a passionate love scene that makes one forget everything else.

What does guilt matter when compared to the pleasure shared together?

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# CHAPTER : 18

One evening, as the sun slowly disappeared behind the horizon, the once quiet house now felt full of life. The sound of people chatting mixed with noises coming from the kitchen.

It made Tichila, who had just gotten home, stop and look toward the kitchen, where her beloved was busy helping out and cooking.

A soft smile formed on Tichila’s lips. She stood quietly, watching until her partner turned around and their eyes met, both smiling warmly.

“You’re back, P’Te!”

“What are you all doing? It smells so good I could smell it from outside. I followed the smell all the way in!”

“I am helping Auntie cook today. And not just as an assistant—I made your favorite dish all by myself.” “It’s really tasty too, ma’am,”

Auntie added.

“I only showed Khun Nam how to make it once, but she did it all by herself today. I’m starting to worry you’ll replace me with her soon!”

“Wow, is it really that good?”

Tichila asked with a smile, eyes gleaming with affection as she looked at Nam. Her playful tone made Nam blush.

“I think you’re too nervous to try my cooking,” Nam teased.

“Maybe we should just give all this food to the workers instead.”

“Hey! Wait a minute! You made this for me, right? You can’t just give it to someone else. It’s mine—I’m not sharing!”

Tichila said playfully.

“Well, you didn’t look like you wanted to eat it,”

Nam replied with a smirk.

“Of course I want to eat it. If you’re the one who made it, I love everything. I’ll finish it all—no leftovers.”

Her words were sweet, but even more powerful was the look in her eyes. It was so clear and full of affection that it made Nam’s face heat up with shyness.

“I want to pinch you till you bruise,”

Nam muttered softly, just loud enough for only the two of them to hear. Embarrassed, she quickly turned away and began scooping food into plates to bring to the table.

Dinner was prepared just for the two of them, as Phetai had already gone out earlier to attend a friend’s birthday party.

After the housekeeper left to give them some private time, the cozy dinner —cooked with love—was filled with warmth and happiness.

They spent time like this together every day. Work in the morning, back home in the evening, doing little things together like any normal couple.

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Time passed. After finishing their evening routines, they found themselves on the back balcony, which extended from the bedroom. It became their little spot to relax together under the moonlight.

The moon was full and glowing, lighting up the dark blue sky. Crickets sang loudly, just like every night. A gentle breeze carried the cool night air, wrapping around the two of them as they sat close together.

“The moon is beautiful tonight,”

Nam said softly.

The one who spoke looked up at the sky, her back resting gently against the warm embrace of the woman she loved. The warmth from their bodies, so close together, made her feel comforted—she never once wanted to pull away from those arms.

“The moon might be beautiful tonight, but it’s still not as beautiful as the person in my arms right now.”

“Lately, it feels like you’ve gotten sweeter with your words. It used to be so hard to get you to say something nice.”

“Well, that was back then. Things are different now. People can change, you know. And if I can’t be sweet and speak kindly to my own wife, who else would I say it to?”

It wasn’t just the words whispered in her ear—it was also the soft breath brushing against her cheek, making Nam close her eyes and feel completely at peace.

The arms around her tightened, not in a way that made her feel trapped, but in a way that made her wish they could be even closer.

“You’re not allowed to talk sweet like this to anyone else, okay? Especially not to any other girls,” Nam warned playfully.

Tichila chuckled.

“I spend all my time at the mine—where would I even find the time to be sweet with anyone else?”

“Oh, so you’re not counting the times you go into town, huh? Don’t think I don’t know about those girls who try to get close to you. Even the gem dealer’s daughter who came to the mine to meet you wasn’t exactly shy.”

“Who’s been telling you all this? Honestly, I don’t even look at anyone else. Ever since you came into my life just a few months ago, everything changed. I don’t even know how to explain it… but you’re the only woman I’ll ever love. You’re my everything—my life, my breath.”

There was nothing fancy in her words. No poetic language. Just pure feeling straight from the heart.

And somehow, that deep feeling reached Nam completely. Slowly, she turned in Tichila’s arms to face her. Gently, she lifted her hand to touch Tichila’s face, looking deep into her eyes to let her know—without saying a word—that she felt the same way.

“I love you, P’Te,” Nam said softly.

Just a few simple words, but they held so much meaning. The deep emotions shared between them made Tichila lean in, gently pressing her lips against Nam’s in a tender kiss.

What started as a soft, sweet kiss slowly grew deeper and more passionate. Nam tilted her head back slightly, letting herself fully respond to her partner’s affection. Their lips moved together, and their familiar breaths mixed as they shared the warmth they always longed for from each other.

Their connection was like a spark near dry grass—every touch set off flames of passion.

Their bodies held each other tightly as they moved together from the balcony into the bedroom. Their lips never separated, still caught in an intense, fiery kiss. Nam’s back pressed gently against the wall, as Tichila leaned in close, not letting go.

“Mmm…”

Nam could feel all her energy being drawn into the kiss. Her arms reached up to wrap around Tichila’s neck for support, while her legs, weak from the emotion, pressed in closer, as if they couldn’t be apart.

“I love you, Nam. And right now, I want to show you how much I love my wife,” Tichila whispered.

“Crazy! Every time there’s something like this.”

“Then will you give it to me?”

“And has there ever been a time that Nam didn’t give it to P' Te?”

The sweet pair of eyes were half-closed, the oversized shirt that she usually wore to sleep was no obstacle to her aim. The slender palm reached under the hem of the shirt, lightly caressing the flat stomach, and then moved down to stop at the target.

The force of squeezing and kneading lightly on the mound of flesh, the raw touch of the lover, fanning the flame of lust to become more and more intense.

The smooth, clear face was flushed all the way to the ears, the breath was panting, indicating the emotions that were being felt, how much she was enjoying the taste of the lover’s touch.

The hem of the shirt was pulled up, hanging over the plump mound of breasts, Tichila embraced the sweet pink lotus into her mouth, creating joy by sucking and pulling like a hungry Chapter :y.

“Mmm… P' Te, go easy.

The sound of sucking mixed with the sound of moaning. The body trembled because it could not contain the lustful emotion. Both of them breathed heavily. The passion that gradually increased in intensity led the evil finger to slither along the crack of the wet rose petals.

The tight feeling began to embrace the two long fingers that slowly invaded her body. When the beautiful wood enveloped the strong fingers to the deepest, the rubbing movement inside made the thin body feel tingling until her face and stomach convulsed.

The white legs were lifted up and wrapped around the waist. Tichila's other hand held her waist before they passionately thrust into each other.

"Umm, P' Te."

Both hands gripped the tall woman's shoulders tightly. Nam unintentionally dug her nails into the other woman's shoulders every time the rhythm became more intense as if she couldn't control it.

"Kiss me, kiss me, P' Te."

The half-closed eyes that were overflowing with desire looked at each other pleadingly. Tichila didn't hesitate to lean down to kiss her full lips as requested.

The twitching sensation from inside that was rhythmically embracing her fingers was a physical response that made her realize that the owner of her heart had soared to the peak of her emotions.

"Umm,"

A groan escaped her throat. The pinch from the palms that were tightly gripping her shoulders, the bones tensed slightly, followed by the weight being dropped weakly. Making Tichila smile while panting.

“My wife is crazy hot.”

“Then who is it because of?”

“Because of Nam.”

Tichila smiled into the eyes of the person in front of her, kissing her red lips lightly again. Her slender fingers slowly withdrew from the wetness and changed to embrace the thin body with her whole body.

“Hold on tight to me.

“P' Te, are you going to do it again?”

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Tichila smiled. She did not intend to do what the little person was asking. Because as soon as she put the thin person down on the bed, she chose to sit down next to Nam and took something out of her shirt pocket to hold in front of her.

“This ring, which I made for Nam alone, wear it. It represents all of my love.

"P' Te,"

A smile of joy and delight clearly appeared on her sweet face as the small diamond ring was carefully placed on her left ring finger by the woman she loved. Her sweet eyes fixated on the symbol of love with overwhelming emotion.

But suddenly, the scene before her seemed to blur, and was gradually overlapped by images of some event. A sharp pain shot through her, cracking open memories. She raised her hands to her temples, trying to ease the pain that chased after images of a similar event.

"Nam, what's wrong? Is your head hurting?"

"Yes, it just suddenly started hurting."

"Lie back first. I'll go get some medicine for you."

Without hesitation, the person concerned for her beloved rushed to help her delicate body lie down on the bed. Tichila quickly stood up from the bed to get pain relief medication, before returning to the bed with a water bottle that was already in the room.

Since the other person moved in with her, there hadn't been a day when she neglected the woman she loved.

"Sit up and take the medicine, Nam. Hold on, it will get better soon."

Tichila helped her delicate figure sit up to take the medicine, her worried expression clear. Recently, the headaches of the woman she loved had been happening more frequently, which had become worrisome.

"If the pain is too much, should we go to the hospital?"

"No, it's just a periodic pain. But after taking the medicine, it will gradually get better like it always does."

She tried so hard to suppress the pain, which seemed more intense than usual. She didn’t want her beloved to worry too much, especially with the images overlapping in her mind, as if they were events that had occurred before in her life.

The clarity of the images was so vivid it was almost believable as reality. And if that were the case, then where had the diamond ring on her finger gone?

A sense of doubt arose, something she couldn't push away, but in the end, all her suspicions were dismissed, clearing from her mind.

She had no desire to know anything. She didn't care about anything else, except for the woman who was gazing at her with eyes full of love and concern.

The only woman she would love, the one she wanted to spend her life with as long as she still breathed.

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The sky outside had not yet brightened, but the person who woke up early felt the dryness in her throat. Her delicate hand searched for the water bottle she always kept on the bedside table every day.

But today, the emptiness, accompanied by the feeling of drowsiness, made her feel thirsty before even fully waking up. She exhaled in frustration with herself.

Thicha was too lazy to get up, trying to force her eyes shut again. But in the end, her thirsty body wouldn’t allow her to fall back asleep.

She finally decided to get up from the soft bed. The blanket was pushed off her body, and she muttered quietly to herself as she reached to turn on the bedside lamp, still in a half-dazed state.

Her slender body supported itself as she got up from the bed, walked to grab the robe hanging in the corner, and put it on.

She was preparing to walk down to the kitchen. But just as she reached for the door handle to open it, a strange image appeared before her eyes.

By chance, the feeling of drowsiness vanished in an instant.

Her legs felt numb and frozen in place, her entire body tingling from head to toe. Her heart pounded chaotically, overwhelmed by a rush of emotions that hit all at once, leaving her unable to react. She was stunned and alarmed by the scene unfolding before her eyes.

Chawin’s disheveled hair, his tall frame clad only in a wrinkled set of pajamas, and the fact that he was walking out of her aunt’s bedroom in the early hours of the morning—these details sent a flood of questions racing through her mind.

She desperately hoped it was all just a misunderstanding, or perhaps she was simply overthinking it.

But no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't convince herself otherwise.

The man her family trusted was conspiring in betrayal. The two of them were working together to stab both her father and her sister in the back. .

# CHAPTER : 19

The door, which had only been slightly ajar, slowly closed. Thicha walked back and collapsed onto the bed again, her hands and feet trembling, her mind confused and dizzy, struggling to control the flood of emotions that were rushing in.

She never imagined that something immoral like this would happen to someone in her family.

Fear began to form in her heart. The accident that happened to her father, leaving him in a comatose state. The disappearance of her sister, with no news of whether she was alive or dead.

Were the two incidents connected? What else was she unaware of? And then there was the incident that happened to herself.

A variety of questions popped into her mind, turning into fear so strong that she couldn't help but let her tears fall. She remembered the warning her sister's best friend had given her.

*Could Captain Pittinan know more than she did?*

As that thought suddenly crossed her mind, her small body hurriedly reached for her phone, her hands shaking.

The situation was so overwhelming that she even forgot to check the time. Her anxiety consumed every bit of her being, and each second spent waiting on the phone seemed to stretch on forever.

But then... the wait seemed to be coming to an end when a familiar groggy voice came through the line.

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**"Hello?"**

**[Who's calling, Captain? It's only 5:30 AM, isn't it?]**

The sweet voice that came through the line made Thicha realize immediately that she had called at the wrong time. The words she was about to say were swallowed. Everything around her seemed to freeze. Her eyes, still filled with tears, stared blankly at the smartphone screen.

**[Hello? Hello, Nem? Why aren't you speaking? Is something wrong, Nem?]**

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The voice from the other end of the line could still be heard, but Thicha chose to hang up and turn off her phone, turning her back on the only hope she had left.

In a situation that filled her with fear, the one person she thought of before anyone else was still not someone she could rely on.

Tears came flooding down, shaking her body with each drop. The pain felt as though she had been left standing in the middle of a raging storm, unable to escape.

No matter which direction she looked, the world seemed too vast for her. It was filled with loneliness and too overwhelming to handle.

She had never faced cruelty alone before. It was a weakness Thicha had never outgrown. A life that had always been nurtured with love, cared for by family, had never made her aware of the cruelty of the world around her.

Everyone was love and trust to her.

*"Where are you, P'Nam? I miss you. Please come back to me. Don't leave me like this. I'm scared."*

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In the midst of fear gripping her heart, on the other side of the line, the person who had been abruptly cut off seemed to stir awake. Pittinan's bare body shifted out of the blanket, her face tight with worry as she stared at the smartphone, her expression anxious.

"What's going on, Captain?"

The person lying beside him had to move as well, seeing her loved one get up from the blanket, sitting up, and staring at his phone with a furrowed brow.

"I'm not sure either, but something seems off with Nem. Otherwise, I wouldn't be calling at this hour,"

Pittinan told her partner, before deciding to quickly get out of bed and search for her clothes to put on in a hurry.

"Are you going to go see her now, Captain?"

"Yes, I think so. I'm sorry, Khwan, but I'm afraid something bad might be happening to Nem."

"I understand, Captain. I'm just worried."

Khwan expressed her concern for her partner, understanding well the nature of her job and responsibilities. Their relationship had always been like this since the beginning.

Situations like this weren't new to her. In fact, she had grown quite accustomed to it.

Before she decided to become romantically involved with Pittinan, she knew her only as her sister's superior officer.

But as time passed, the opportunity to meet more often turned their relationship from one of a younger sister to a close friend into a romantic one.

A year of being together, and never once had the younger sister of her friend been anything less than important to her partner. The name she heard most often from her partner's lips was the name that made her smile most when she spoke of it.

Many times, the closeness and care she showed made her wonder if, had Pittinan not been in a relationship with her, she might have assumed that their connection went beyond the relationship of a friend's sister.

But with all that considered, she knew it wasn't something she should dwell on. The two of them had known each other much longer than she had known Pittinan as her lover, and if Pittinan had any feelings for that woman, they would have proChapter :ly been together by now. She always found reasons to talk herself out of these thoughts.

And this time, just like the others, her partner's urgency made Khwan only able to understand.

"Thank you so much for understanding, Khwan. I'll call you later."

"Okay, drive safely, Captain."

"Got it. I'll be on my way now."

With those words, laced with a concerned smile, Pittinan quickly left the condo, her tall figure disappearing as the door closed behind her.

Normally, the two of them hardly had time to spend together. The deep connection they shared the night before wasn't something that happened often.

And when her partner did find time to visit, something always seemed to come up, forcing Pittinan to leave before the sun even rose.

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Less than fifteen minutes later, the BMW S1000 RR roared into the driveway of the large mansion. Driven by her anxiety, Pittinan had arrived in a hurry. She checked the time on her luxury watch; it was still early, and it would be rude to enter the house before the monks had even set out for their morning alms round.

Though they were close, it wasn't as if they could do whatever they wanted. She grabbed her phone again, attempting to dial the last number, but the result was the same each time.

"Stubborn girl. Calling me and not speaking, then turning off your phone like this? What are you thinking?"

Her worry only deepened, and her concern overwhelmed her to the point where she had to exhale deeply to release the anxiousness building inside her. As she was considering forcing her way into the house, her phone's vibration startled her, catching her attention.

The owner's attention was drawn to the machine, prompting her to quickly check the screen.

The most recent number was dialed again without hesitation. Before the voice on the other end could respond, Pittinan quickly asked questions, her voice trembling with concern.

She was almost going crazy with worry-how could she be so concerned about her best friend's sister?

"Neme, what happened? I've tried calling you several times but couldn't get through. I'm at the front door now. Why did you call me but not say anything? Then you turned off your phone to avoid me."

"Did you call me, P'Perth?"

"Yes, of course,"

Pittinan furrowed her brows in confusion as the voice on the other end seemed to have no idea what was going on.

"I think I accidentally dialed, sorry about that. Also, my phone battery was proChapter :ly dead. I just woke up and am charging it now."

"Really? Nothing happened, right?"

It was hard to believe that someone as small as Thicha would make such a mistake. Even though she wasn't fully convinced, there was nothing more she could do than ask.

"Nothing happened, really. Sorry again for making you worry, P'Perth. I'm still a little sleepy, I worked late last night. I'm going to go back to sleep now."

Without waiting for a response, the person who had been crying and had swollen eyes quickly hung up, feeling guilty.

Yes! She felt guilty, which is why she turned her phone back on, afraid that the person she had disturbed so early in the morning might worry.

But everything turned out as she had expected. Pittinan had come all the way to her house. The other person was always like this-ever since they met, her sister's best friend had never been indifferent to her.

Sometimes, too much concern often leads to uncertainty, making it hard to control one's feelings. It was so overwhelming that it made her feel special.

But how could it be like that when the person she secretly hoped it could be ended up saying... Pittinan already had someone she loved.

She knew she shouldn't fall in love, but she just couldn't stop her feelings.

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It was almost 8 a.m., and Thicha was still holed up in her bedroom. The only reason she stayed there was that she didn't want to face the traitor. She knew she wasn't ready to pretend everything was fine and act normal as if nothing had happened.

So, waiting for the two of them to leave for work was the best choice she could make at that moment.

Her sister wasn't home, but her father was still unconscious and sick. Even though she wasn't the most capable person, in this situation, she felt like she was standing in the middle of a den of hungry crocodiles, her back pressed against a wall.

If she didn't fight to survive, she would just have to lie there waiting to be cut down.

Amidst all the confusion, her desires didn't seem to match the reality she faced. The knock on the door that came soon after startled her, pulling her from her thoughts.

"Neme, are you awake? Are you okay? Why are you sleeping in so late today? Open the door and let me in."

The voice that seeped through the door only intensified the fear inside her, making her jump even more. Thicha tried to steady her mind, gathering every ounce of courage to face the person she had once loved and trusted.

But once trust was broken, it became nearly impossible to confront someone with a broken heart and shattered faith.

Chatruadee has become a stranger she can no longer trust. Because if everything goes as she suspects, her aunt seems too cold-hearted to trust. To destroy someone's life like that isn't something a warm-blooded person would do.

The fear and panic made Thicha feel numb all over. Her hands and feet were ice-cold. Her lips were tightly pressed together, and her eyes were wide with fear as she stared at the door as if terrified. The blanket she grabbed for comfort didn't help ease her fear at all.

"Neme, did you hear your aunt?"

"Yes, I heard. Just a moment."

Finally, she found her voice, though her heart was pounding with fear. But the situation in front of her was pressing her to open the door, her face pale.

"Are you sick? Why is your face so pale? I saw you having breakfast, so I thought I'd check on you."

"Well... I just have a slight headache, so I thought I'd sleep in today. But I'll get up soon to take a shower. By the way, why haven't you gone to work yet?"

"I was about to go, but I'm worried, so I came to check. And I have something to tell you."

"What's that?"

"There's an important meeting at 1 p.m. I know you don't like it, but you should attend."

"I understand. I'll attend the meeting today. And from now on, I'll try to go to the office more regularly."

"Hm, what happened to my niece? Normally, when I invite you, you always hesitate."

It was a surprise to hear something from her youngest niece that no one had expected. Thicha never liked to get involved in things outside her responsibilities. She always said she wasn't good at managing things.

But today, Thicha was making her aunt feel surprised. Since the disappearance of her older niece, many tasks in the company had fallen on her shoulders, including Chawin, who had slowly started playing a more significant role recently.

However, Thicha had no problem with her youngest niece stepping into a more important role, replacing her father and older sister. Chatruadee had never lacked money or power.

She had been born into wealth, just like her older sister, so there was no need to compete for it. Even the idea of legally registering her marriage to her husband, Khun Natee, was never something she felt the need to claim.

As for the right to hold and manage the company, which had been established with Watthanawaranon's money, she never considered taking it from the direct heir, not even a single baht. In fact, she would be happy if her youngest niece started focusing more on management alongside her own skills.

"I just want to change a bit, you know? Right now, Dad is still sick, and

P'Nam has disappeared. I don't want to leave all the responsibility to you, Aunt. It makes me feel selfish."

"Oh! I thought it was something serious. You're overthinking, Neme. I'm your aunt, and Chawin isn't anyone else. No one thinks like that about you. Don't worry too much."

"Thank you so much, Aunt."

"So, are you coming with me today? I'll give you a ride, or do you want to drive by yourself?"

"I haven't even gotten dressed yet. You go ahead, Aunt, and I'll follow in my car."

"Alright, I'll go now. You hurry up and get dressed."

"Okay."

With that, Thicha could only watch as her aunt turned and left the room, taking deep breaths as if she could finally relax. She had no idea if she had accidentally given anything away or acted suspiciously.

Throughout her life, the people around her had always protected her, surrounded her with kindness. This world of tenderness had made her someone who never saw others in a negative light, and she never had to pretend to be something she wasn't.

The more she thought about it, the more anxious she became. She had no confidence. She wasn't sure if she could do it well enough.

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# CHAPTER : 20

Before heading to work, Thicha stopped by to see her father, who was still unconscious. Wearing a neat skirt suit, she quietly sat down on the chair next to his bed. Her eyes gently watched his pale face, which hadn’t shown any change, just like every other day.

There were so many things she wanted to say, to let out—but no matter who she was with, she wouldn’t let herself act differently or show weakness.

“Today I have to go into the office. If anything happens, P'Mon, you can call me anytime, okay? No exceptions. I’ll come back as soon as I can. Please take care of my dad for me.”

“Yes, Khun Neme. Don’t worry. If anything happens, I’ll call you right away.”

“Thank you so much. Then I’ll get going now.”

She gave the nurse a small smile before turning to her father. Leaning in close to his ear, she whispered softly—even though she knew he couldn’t respond, he was still her emotional anchor right now.

“I’m going to work now, Dad. Please give me strength. You have to get better and wake up soon, okay? Don’t let me fight through this alone anymore.”

After those heartfelt words, Thicha—someone who had never really felt lonely before—pulled herself together. She took a deep breath to stay strong, then shortly after, her luxury sports car sped out of the house toward the company.

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The clock read 11:15 AM when Thicha stepped out of her car, which had been parked in the spot reserved for executives. She moved confidently, without hesitation.

It was true she didn’t really like getting involved with company management, but her role as a designer—and as the owner’s daughter and a major shareholder—meant she couldn’t avoid the meeting room entirely.

Thicha had a key role in the company as the direct heir. She walked into the elevator heading to the executive floor. When she stepped out and was about to enter her office, someone she really didn’t want to see suddenly showed up.

“Oh! Neme, you’re at the office today?”

“Yes, I heard from Auntie that there’s an important meeting this afternoon, so I had to come in,”

Thicha replied, trying hard to hide the dislike she felt, not wanting to show it on her face or let Chawin notice.

Chawin heard her response and forced a smile, even though inside, he was far from calm.

“That’s great. If there’s anything I can help you with, just let me know.”

“Thank you, Chawin. If I need anything, I’ll let you know. I’ll excuse myself now.”

“Of course.”

With a polite smile, Thicha turned and walked quietly into her office. Chawin just stood there watching her small figure disappear behind the door. Once she was out of sight, the smile on his handsome face quickly faded, replaced by a blank expression.

Wearing a suit, Chawin then walked straight to another office not far away. As soon as he got past the secretary and entered the room, his frustration made him rush in to see the person inside—Chatruadee—who simply looked up at him without any surprise.

“Why did your niece suddenly decide to join the meeting today? She’s never shown any interest in this stuff before.”

“She proChapter :ly just wants to start learning about the management side of things. Her dad’s sick, and her sister has disappeared. It’s not surprising that Neme wants to step up and take responsibility in their place.”

“Well, it wouldn’t be strange—if Neme was normally the type to care about management. I’m just worried she might start getting suspicious… about us.”

“Neme’s not someone who overthinks things like that, Chawin.”

That calm, dismissive response—with a tone clearly favoring the younger niece—made it hard for Chawin to hide his growing irritation.

“Seems like you trust and care about your younger niece more than the older one.”

“Neme has never caused any harm to anyone.”

“And Nam has? Has she ever hurt anyone?”

The frustration he had been holding back suddenly spilled out. His sharp words struck a nerve, and Chatruadee looked up, locking eyes with him in a way that felt almost like a challenge. For a moment, she forgot herself and stared at him with raw emotion.

Chawin smirked slightly, as if mocking the reaction of the woman sitting across from him.

Chatruadee might seem like a woman who was good at everything—but no one knew her weakness better than he did.

She was like a brilliant fish stuck in shallow water. Smart, capable, and full of knowledge—but she’d made one huge mistake, she had given him her heart—completely, carelessly, and laid it right at his feet.

And now, the situation had shifted. He, who used to be beneath her in every way, now stood above her. Their relationship was like the old saying:

*"a chicken sees a snake's foot, a snake sees the chicken's breast"*—each of them knowing too much about the other.

The truth was, it was him. He was the one who caused her husband’s accident—the one that left him in a coma. He had done it himself, just to get rid of Natee, who had begun to suspect something was going on between him and Chatruadee.

And all of this had happened right when his marriage to the woman he truly loved was about to take place.

He did it to remove the one obstacle that could ruin everything. But his dream still crumbled—because the bride was kidnapped on the wedding night. And that? He knew exactly who was behind it.

A cunning woman like Chatruadee… of course it was her.

Even knowing all that, he couldn’t do anything about it. Both of them had secrets. Both had blood on their hands. Fighting someone like Chatruadee wasn’t easy. He knew it.

She was smart, sly, and always one step ahead. If he ever thought he had the upper hand, the truth was—she had already moved past him. A woman with poison in every word and move like her? She was rare.

Chatruadee let out a quiet laugh, a bitter one. She was mocking herself— mocking how foolish she felt, right as the pain hit her heart all over again.

It was the biggest failure of her perfect life. When it came to love, she had lost. What hurt the most was knowing that the relationship had spun out of control, all because of desire. And she had no one to blame but herself.

When she looked back, it all started with lust, jealousy, and a dangerous craving for love. Once she gave in, right and wrong had become blurry. Her own desires had taken over, pushing away everything else that should have mattered.

While she had been trying to end her marriage the right way—hoping to finally be with him—Chawin had been doing the exact opposite.

She gave her all to him, but he was the one pushing ahead with plans to marry her niece. The wedding plans were set, and every action he took that went against her hopes pulled her deeper into a dark, blind, and deaf emotional state.

Her jealousy had driven her mad. She was so consumed by it that she was willing to do anything to get rid of whoever stood in her way—even if that person was her very own niece.

What was done couldn’t be undone. There was no turning back. Her conscience had long been buried. But as for her younger niece—Thicha— she didn’t deserve to be dragged into this dangerous mess.

She knew exactly who was behind what happened to Thicha a few days ago. Of course she knew. But because of love—just that one word—she chose to turn a blind eye.

Even though she knew the real target was proChapter :ly herself. Because if anything happened to the family, she would be the first one everyone suspected.

She knew all of it… yet still allowed herself to be the fool. Not because she was waiting to be destroyed—but because she didn’t have the heart to destroy the man standing in front of her with her own hands.

“I’ll pretend I didn’t hear those words from your mouth,” she said coldly.

“Don’t forget what forced me to become this way. If you hadn’t been so obsessed with marrying Nam, I wouldn’t have needed to do any of this.” “But Nam is your nice and the woman I love. You already know that I have to marry her no matter what.”

“If marrying Nam is just your way to get what you want, I’ve already told you—it’s not necessary. Whether it’s power or money, I can give you the same. Let me warn you about something, Chawin. If it’s not love, don’t expect me to go this far for you. As for the past, just let it go. I’ll try to ignore your feelings. From now on, it’s up to you to choose your own path. But when it comes to Nam, don’t ever do anything foolish again.”

“Are you threatening me?”

Chatruadee meant every word she said—he knew she was capable of doing everything she promised. A woman like her could give him anything he wanted.

But there was just one problem—he didn’t want to spend his life with her the way she wanted.

He didn’t love her.

So why should he force himself to live with someone he didn’t love? Everything Chatruadee wanted was the opposite of what he did. But don’t expect a man like him to just bow down so easily.

Chawin clenched his jaw tightly and stormed out of the room, clearly angry. As soon as he was gone, the woman in the room let out a quiet breath.

She hated herself in that moment. Hated how weak she felt every time she had to argue with the younger man she couldn’t help but fall for.

Then her phone, lying silently on the desk, lit up with an incoming call. It pulled her back to reality. She stared at the unknown number for a moment, then picked it up to listen.

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**[Miss Thisa is still alive. The ones who were sent to work last time made mistakes but hid the details and did not report. Now the police are searching for them.]**

**“And how could you let such a big mistake happen?”**

[**I’m sorry, Ms. Chatruadee. I’ll fix everything as quickly as I can.]**

**“Don’t let me down a second time. You know there won’t be another chance.”**

**.**

Her voice was cold—just like her icy hands. Once she fall into a deep pit, it’s hard to climb back out. Her life was already coated in shades of grey, and if it turned pitch black, it would just be another step in the cycle of someone trapped in obsession and darkness.

When she can’t see a way out, all she can do is keep going forward, feeling her way through. The situation she was in now wasn’t any different—it felt like she was being pushed back down into that dark pit again.

If she didn’t fight to survive, there was only one possible ending.

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# CHAPTER : 21

Inside a shopping mall during the holiday season, the two lovers walked hand in hand, casually strolling through various departments. It was rare for the gemstone mine owner to have some free time to relax and shop like this.

So, when their eyes caught sight of clothes from a famous brand that shared the same style as her lover, she, always attentive to every detail about the woman she loved, led her tall companion into the clothing store that caught her eye.

"Why do you need to try it on? The brand is famous, and I can tell by just looking that you can fit it."

"Well, I want you to try it on first. Is that okay?"

"Alright,"

She said with a soft smile. Who would dare to refuse? The moment her sweet, pleading eyes met hers, she nearly melted under that gaze.

One shirt after another was held up against her figure with careful attention. Every action from the slender woman brought her happiness, every moment spent together was so precious to her heart.

"You look really good in this jacket, don't you? I like it. How can you be so tall? You're so perfect."

"Why, don't you like it? My height is useful. I can easily carry someone small like you,"

She teased, leaning in to whisper in her ear.

"It also makes it easy to... *ahem*."

"P'Te! Stop it right now. Watch what you're saying-this is a clothing store! What if someone hears you?"

She blushed again, flustered by the playful look in her eyes. That gaze made it very clear what she was thinking.

Tichila's words only added fuel to the imagination, making her think of the passionate nights they'd shared-something she never seemed to get tired of. Just the thought of it made her heart race.

Her stomach fluttered when she accidentally glanced at her long fingers, imagining what they'd felt like when they were touching her body.

When did I start liking this kind of thing so much? she wondered. Just one look from Tichila was enough to make her crave more.

"But I'm whispering so close-who's going to hear me? I want to go home already. What should we do?"

"I'm not talking to you anymore, P'Te. You're impossible."

She said, cheeks burning, walking past her quickly.

Then Nam handed the shirt she thought would suit her to a staff member so they could ring it up.

She figured this kind of thing-choosing clothes and taking care of payments-was Tichila job now. She could handle it however she wanted.

Once they paid, the two of them walked out of the store arm in arm. It was a special day, and she hoped nothing would ruin it. But something deep inside her was starting to sense that something wasn't quite right.

"It's already 3 PM. Should we head home now? Do you want to go or do you still want to look around?"

"I don't really want anything else."

"Okay, how about we stop by the restroom before we go? It'll be a while before we get home."

"Sure, that sounds good."

Tichila smiled, happy that her partner agreed so easily.

As they approached the restroom, Tichila's sharp instincts kept making her glance around. She couldn't help but notice two men quietly following them from a distance.

A strange gut feeling told her not to let her guard down.

"Nam, you go in first-the restroom's open now."

"Huh? You're not going in first, P'Te? I thought you were the one who wanted to use the bathroom since you brought it up."

"You go ahead. I'll go in after you. Hand me your bags, I'll hold them for you."

Tichila took two or three shopping bags from her hands. Once Nam had disappeared behind the restroom door at the far end, she quickly pulled out her phone from her pocket and typed out a message to someone-someone she needed help from.

She got a reply. They messaged back and forth until everything was clear between them.

Just then, Nam came walking back out of the restroom.

"Huh? You still haven't gone in yet? It's open, you know."

"I'm done already."

"That fast? Or were you secretly texting a girl? I saw you! You just put your phone away a second ago."

"What? No way! I was just texting Inspector Than about some business. With someone like you around-so fierce-who would dare? Come on, let's go."

Tichila looked into her partner's eyes with a soft smile. She knew she was just teasing-but to her, it was incredibly sweet.

Tichila wanted her to be possessive like this. She wanted to be that special someone in her heart forever. Her love meant more to her than life itself. She wouldn't let anyone take Nam away.

Their four-door pickup truck rolled out of the shopping mall at a normal pace. Tichila kept glancing at the rearview mirror, quietly watching the movements of the two men on motorcycles following them at a discreet distance.

She remained calm and alert the entire drive. After about fifteen minutes, the road began to leave the city behind, and fewer cars passed by in the opposite direction.

"Nam,"

She said in a steady, serious voice, reaching out her hand from the steering wheel to gently hold her partner's. It was a gesture meant to comfort.

"Listen carefully. Stay calm and don't panic."

"What's going on, P'Te? Did something happen?"

Nam's voice trembled slightly with worry. She had started noticing how cautious her partner was acting.

"Two men have been following us since we were at the mall. Now they're tailing us on motorbikes. But don't panic, okay? Just stay calm and do exactly as I say."

"Why would they follow us? Are they...?"

Her voice shook with fear, but she tried her best to stay composed, just like Tichila had asked.

"It's okay, Nam. Don't be scared. Before we left the mall, I messaged Inspector Than to keep an eye on us. Today, we're going to find out who they really are. No matter what happens, you have to stay calm, alright? I'm going to turn off this road and lead them toward the spot where the inspector is waiting. Stay low in your seat, okay? Do you understand?"

"Okay."

Before she could say anything, she saw her lover quickly turn the steering wheel, driving onto a quiet, lonely road. The path was rough and full of twists and turns-only someone who really knew the way could handle the car so smoothly, just like Tichila was doing now.

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"Get down now, Nam!"

***Bang! Bang!***

"Ahhh!"

Before she could even react, the sound of gunshots rang out, followed by Nam's terrified scream.

But the driver behind the wheel didn't flinch. Tichila stayed sharp and focused. The gunshots-two of them-were aimed to blow out the tires, but she quickly swerved, dodging them with impressive skill.

Her hands stayed steady on the wheel, eyes scanning her surroundings with alert precision, not a hint of panic in her movements.

The sudden jerks of the car made Nam squeeze her eyes shut. Her heart raced, and she struggled to stay composed. Though fear gripped her tightly, she didn't want to be a burden to the woman she loved.

She didn't want to distract her or slow her down-so she just curled into the seat, trying to make herself as small as possible, not daring to lift her head.

"Hold on to the seat-tight!"

Tichila shouted over the chaos, her foot slamming down on the accelerator as she made a sharp turn toward the trap she had planned-like leading prey into a snare.

The motorcycle took the bait, riding straight into the ambush.

Out of nowhere, several police vehicles rushed in, surrounding the motorbike from all sides-front and back-cutting off every escape. If it weren't for Tichila, her close friend, Inspector Than proChapter :ly wouldn't have gone all out like this.

"Stop right there! Drop your weapon and surrender!"

The inspector's voice boomed, his gun aimed directly at the two men. They wore full riding gear and full-face helmets-just like professional hitmen.

In a situation that felt like a dead end, one of the two criminals still refused to drop his gun, completely ignoring the police's orders. Instead, he did something reckless-he pointed his gun toward the front of the pickup truck, which was the target.

***Bang! Bang! Bang!***

Gunfire rang out in the chaos, and the young inspector didn't hesitate to shoot at the criminal. As soon as the gun fell from the man's hand and his body collapsed, several other officers rushed in to arrest both injured criminals.

Yes-they weren't dead. The inspector had aimed carefully, not to kill, because his friend had stressed many times that they needed to keep them alive. The real goal wasn't to take out these small-time guys-it was to catch the mastermind, the one who wanted to harm a small, innocent woman.

"Nam, are you okay? Are you hurt anywhere?"

"No... I'm fine. I'm not hurt at all."

Her voice was soft and sweet, full of trembles. Her sweet face buried itself into the arms of her lover, who quickly embraced her tightly.

The pair of arms held her tightly, just like her own arms were wrapping around the body of the woman she loved, trembling in her embrace.

"It's good you're okay, my love. Now we'll finally find out who these people really are. You'll be able to live here without having to worry anymore."

"I love you, P'Te. I love you so much."

The person who has not yet shaken off the feeling of nervousness still stammers out "I love you" in a short voice, but the touch grows wetter from the liquid that seeps through the thick jacket. It causes her heart to twitch.

"P' Te..."

The slender figure quickly pulls away from the embrace of her lover, then lifts her hand, feeling the wetness of her own body. Her heart, still trembling with fear, suddenly drops. Clear tears gather around her eyes, before they fall, along with the ache in her heart.

"P' Te, you’ve been shot?"

"It should be just a graze on the shoulder. It's nothing. Don’t cry, don’t cry."

"How can you say it's nothing? Does it hurt a lot?"

Her voice grows anxious, mixed with sobs. Even though her lover’s face is smiling, she can't smile herself, as if her heart is about to break, just because she knows that the injury was caused by the other person protecting her.

"I’m really fine, it’s just a little scratch. It hurts like an ant bite."

"You idiot! How can it hurt that little?"

The person worried about her lover now whines, her voice rising, as she wipes away the tears that stream down her soft cheeks.

But at that moment, a knock on the car window from behind makes the injured person, Tichila, grit her teeth and force herself to turn around to unlock the door for her friend standing outside the car.

"How’s it going? Is anyone hurt? That bastard was shooting like crazy."

"His aim’s pretty bad, so he only grazed my shoulder."

The sarcastic reply, along with a pale face, made Thornchan only manage a slight smile at the corner of his lips. He couldn’t help but feel frustrated with the stubbornness.

"If you’re still talking like this, it doesn’t seem too bad. Honestly, I think you could have driven yourself to the hospital, you're still okay."

He said it, but who would know how deeply the injury to the woman he loved affected his heart?

He was worried, but he knew that his role as a friend didn’t allow him to show his deeper concern. He had to do his best as a friend, and that was all.

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# CHAPTER : 22

Tichila, along with the two criminals who were injured, was rushed to the hospital. However, since the two criminals were still alive, the authorities couldn't extract any answers immediately during their treatment.

Around 9 PM, the young police officer volunteered to drive the two girls home. Phetai, upon learning of his sister's injuries, hurried to ask about her condition with concern.

But in the end, he had to let his sister go back into the room to rest, with his sister-in-law following closely behind.

“How are you, sis? Does the wound hurt a lot? You don't need to take a bath tonight. I'll wipe you down for you.”

“I got shot in the shoulder, you know. You're really not going to let me take a bath? I’m afraid I'll smell bad, and my wife won't let me sleep with me.”

“Even in this state, you're still thinking about that, huh?”

“Nam knows, that if I don’t hug her at night, how will I be able to sleep? Let me take a shower. Just shower half of my body. As for the upper part can be wiped.”

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“Alright then, I’ll help you take off your clothes, and I’ll come help you wipe down in the bathroom too.”

“Do you want to bathe with me so we don’t waste time?”

“Alright, I’ll do as you say.”

There was a slight awkwardness, a hidden feeling of shyness in her manner, but it wasn't the first time they had seen each other’s bodies. It also wasn’t the first time they had bathed together.

So, within a short time, the delicate figure began helping the other person remove her clothes, leaving only bare skin. And, just like every other time, the well-proportioned body, like a masterpiece, made her feel a sudden heat every time.

“Nam, take off your clothes too. Stop staring at me like that, I'm feeling uneasy.”

"Yes."

Nam wanted to complain more about the person who woke up, but because she wanted her loved one to hurry up and take a bath and rest, she had no choice but to continue undressing in front of the person who was staring at her without blinking.

"Nam."

"You can go take a shower now,"

Nam tried to avoid the gaze full of desire, before her slim figure quickly grabbed a towel to cover herself, to escape from being undressed by the eyes of the person who was watching.

"Why cover up? In a bit, you'll be taking it off anyway when you shower."

The tall person muttered as she followed behind, frustrated. Why couldn’t she just enjoy the view of something beautiful like Nam for a little longer?

"I’m covering up from the person who’s awake. Just a minute, Nam would already be at a disadvantage if you keep staring at me like that."

"Are you going to devour me whole?"

As she said this, she used her uninjured arm to pull her slim waist toward her.

Even though there was a towel covering her naked body, preventing her from touching each other in every part, the white breasts that were exposed above the edge of the towel could easily cause the blood in her body to swell.

“P'Te, your injury is still fresh. The wound might get infected.”

“The shoulder was shot, but my mouth still works well, as you know.”

“No, You’ll take a shower first. Please trust me just once, don’t be stubborn.”

Seeing that the slender figure wasn't yielding easily, Tichila decided not to push further. She let the smaller person help her dry off willingly, even though every touch from the soft fingers against her skin caused her breath to catch multiple times.

Despite this, both of them managed to keep their emotions under control and got through that intense moment.

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The large light in the middle of the room dimmed to a soft, warm glow as the time for rest arrived. The two of them leaned against each other, close on the bed, her slender arms wrapped around the waist of the taller figure, her ear pressed to listen to the steady beat of her heart.

"If the bullet today hadn't just grazed your shoulder, I wouldn't have known how much my heart would shatter."

Nam's voice was sweet, yet trembling, and her heart ached as she involuntarily recalled the events that had happened today. She understood deeply how much the person lying in her arms meant to her heart.

The word love is so much, even though it is impossible to know how great its meaning is, and how to measure the amount of that word so much. But the only thing that is known is that if this woman is not by her side tomorrow, she will never know how she will be able to live her days in the future.

**Nam loved her so much.**

"I won’t let myself die easily, because I will never let your heart shatter. I won’t let you endure pain alone, and I will never abandon you. I won’t allow you to face anything in this world all by yourself. Even though I’m not a perfect woman, I want you to remember that no matter today or any day, my heart will always belong to you alone."

After what happened today, a feeling of unease started to creep in. The closer it gets to reality, the more the feeling of suspicion that was once buried deep in her heart seems to resurface, making my heart tremble.

And it seemed that the people who had been listening to each other’s heartbeats all the time could feel the hidden tenderness in their hearts.

The tall person, with a sweet face, lifts her head to make eye contact, feeling the warm breath between them, not even half a step apart. A delicate hand gently moves up to support the slender face, lightly brushing the lips of her loved one with her fingertips.

“I will belong to you only, P' Te, whether it’s my heart or my body.”

It was like holy water that soothed the heart, making it relieved from fear. The sweetness transformed into a desire, when the slender body led the plump lips to move and kiss hers gently.

The soft and gentle touch that was close, the temperature in the body started to rise, when the two of them started to intertwine with each other, familiarly.

It was as though a wave of relief washed over her, dispelling the fear in her heart. The sweetness of the moment shifted into desire as the slender figure leaned in, pressing her full lips softly against hers in a gentle kiss.

The tender touch, so intimate, caused the temperature between them to rise as they melted into each other, becoming more familiar with every moment.

“Mmm...”

A soft moan from the throat, the passionate kiss that began to grow more passionate, made the delicate body move and turn, straddling the body of the lover.

“My arm hurts, but I told you my mouth still works well, so let me feed you.”

Tichila's breath quickened after finishing her sentence, which carried a meaning that could not be misunderstood. The seductive body that sat astride hers, with delicate hands slowly moving up to unbutton the loose white shirt she often wore as a substitute for pajamas every night.

With every movement, it felt like her breath was slipping away. The injury from the bullet wound seemed to vanish as her focus shifted entirely. When the white shirt slid down her smooth shoulder, it seemed to mark the beginning of something much deeper.

Passing to the narrow waist, the white, plump breasts that stood out to the eyes, also made the person who yearned for them not fade away, her throats were dry.

The heat flowed through the abdomen, following to the middle of the body, the blood in the body rushed because of the beautiful body that had been touched and swallowed whole.

How sweet and alluring, the scent of the girl's body was still stuck in the mind's mind without fading.

"Nam."

Tichila's eyes stared at the white and smooth body like a tiger staring at its prey. She couldn't hold back until she had to reach out and touch it. The slender fingertips flicked the pink nipples. When the desire couldn't stop there, she wanted to possess it in her palm.

"P' Te, don't be too hard. It'll hurt your wound."

The owner of the beautiful breasts said in a trembling voice when she felt that her lover started to squeeze her breasts according to the desire that was getting more and more intense.

Even though she loved the taste of her lover's hot love very much. But she was still more worried about her lover's injuries.

"Didn't you say will going to feed me? I'm dying to eat it."

"You're so impatient,"

She complained, but she immediately leaned down to deliver the plumpness into the other's mouth.

"Ah! Take it easy, P' Te."

"Mmm."

Tichila groaned low in her throat with satisfaction. The tip of her tongue flicked on the erect tip, sucking and greedily pulling the plump breast. And the more the other person drank down on her breasts, the more the owner of the slender body arched her chest toward the lips of the person below her.

"Mmm... P' Te, please be gentle."

"You're teasing me. You didn't give in to me at first, but you came to tease me later."

"I wasn't teasing you. I just saw P' Te hurt, so I didn't want you use too much force. That's why I agreed to feed you."

"Then what if I want to eat more than this part of my wife? Will you feed me?"

The person who looked up from her chest and pleaded with her eyes sweetly closed, which made the person being fed understand the meaning of those words very well. Her sweet face suddenly became hot. In the past, she had never been the one to control the game herself.

"Then how do you want me to feed you, P' Te?"

She could only suppress her shyness and asked directly. The answer she got with her nervous attitude immediately brought a smile to Tichila's face.

"Move over here. Slide up and sit on my face. Put your hands on the headboard."

"P' Te, no. Can we not do this position? Nam is shy."

"No part of your body is a secret to me. There's no need to be shy. Please feed me."

When she heard those sweet words, her legs almost went weak. Her pleading eyes stared at her relentlessly.

The slender palm that was massaging her breasts was sliding down to support her small waist, trying to pull her to have to move up and sit on top of her in the position that the other person wanted with embarrassment.

“But, P'Te...."

“This is beautiful, why are you embarrassed?”

Tichila, spoke in a low, husky voice. Both hands gently held her lover’s hips, helping her stay steady. Her eyes were calm and warm staring at the woman's proportions with eyes full of desire.

The body of her lover is really beautiful, so beautiful.

“P’Te…”

She was so shy that she almost wanted to move her hips away but unable to move as her hips were gently held in place.

“Are you going to keep staring?”

“No.”

Before she finished speaking, the beautifully shaped lips immediately rushed in to taste the sweetness. The tingling sensation spread throughout her abdomen. The blood in her body was hot because of the tongue that was flicking into the juicy crack.

The fire of desire erupted hotly. The slender hands gripped the headboard tightly when the other person tensed her tongue and pressed it repeatedly on the sensitive spot.

"Mmm,"

Tichila groaned lowly in her throat with satisfaction. The more her beautiful hips moved, the faster her tongue swung, hungrily licking her delicate body.

"P' Te,.. ah!"

The slender body moaned in a husky voice. Unintentionally, she let out a loud hiss, her whole body trembled when the evil tongue moved its shaft to explore the warm groove, swiping and sucking the sweet love juices greedily. Every hot touch aroused her body to crave the touch of the other person more than ever before.

“P' Te, I can’t take it anymore.”

The whole body twitched, the tip of the tongue that was pushing in line with the rhythm of love, it stimulated the thin body to press that part against the other person’s lips repeatedly.

Sweat beads appeared on the round forehead, the breath was rapid, causing the chest to shake violently, the whole body trembled.

The legs were weak, but still tried to support herself, not daring to put all her weight on it because the other person refused to move her face away from the devour.

“P' Te… that’s enough, I can’t support my legs anymore.”

It was such a cute word that made the listener unable to hold back a smile. Tichila used one of her slender arms to help support the thin body to move and lie down beside her before moving to turn over to face the delicate body.

Propping up the body with one elbow, staring at the person, breathing heavily with a feeling of deep love and possessiveness.

“Sweetheart, if I had known that being fed by my wife would be this delicious, even if I had to get shot and couldn’t move my arm for a whole month, I’d still be willing.”

“You’re crazy! I am not talking to you anymore, P’Te. You’ve been too much today, do you know that?”

The sweet-faced woman cast a sharp glance at the man whose well-shaped lips were still glistening with traces of her love. The sight made her feel bashful in a way that words couldn’t explain.

“It’s because of you, Nam. I’ve become like this because of you. You’ve made me love and desire you so much I can’t even think straight anymore, do you know that?”

Once again, Tichila’s eyes landed on those plump, tempting lips. The sweet taste she had come to crave was something she never tired of, and she couldn’t resist the urge to taste them again and again.

Her beautiful face slowly leaned down, intending to savor that sweetness once more.

“P’Te, no… please!”

A wave of anguish surged in, wrapping around her head with a sharp pain. The scene before her began to blur before it was violently torn apart by a vivid image of a man.

His handsome face leaned in to kiss her gently. It happened in front of many guests who were smiling at the couple. Every detail of the moment was crystal clear in her mind.

Instinctively, she used both hands to push away the woman who was about to lean in closer, causing the other person to stumble back in surprise.

“Nam, are you okay? Are you in pain? Is your head hurting a lot?”

The concern for her loved one, made Tichila overlook the sudden change in behavior, even the sharp pain spreading throughout her shoulder from being forcefully pushed. She didn't focus on her own pain as much as the pain of the person in front of her.

The person who looked up at her with eyes that had changed. It reflected emptiness, hidden with deep sorrow. Even though it lasted only a fraction of a second, it was painfully clear in her heart.

"Are you okay? If you're not, maybe we should go to the hospital. Let me take you to see a doctor and get a full check-up."

"No, it's okay. I'm fine. It's nothing. You should rest, please. I'll go wash up in the bathroom first."

Without waiting for a response, her naked body slid off the bed. Her delicate hands grabbed the white shirt she had taken off earlier, quickly putting it on before walking into the bathroom, leaving behind someone who could only watch her fragile back, feeling a deep sense of loss.

Although she had somewhat prepared herself for the reality she had to face, when what she had feared started to become clearer, why did her heart feel so painfully heavy?

# CHAPTER : 23

It was the second day that Thicha had started working at the company. Leaving behind her usual design work to handle management tasks wasn't easy.

Since morning, she had been fully focused on learning the new job. But every task she had to understand gave her such a headache that it felt like her brain might explode.

She raised two slender fingers to gently massage her temples. But before her brain could relax from the massage, her smartphone, which had been lying quietly on the corner of the desk, suddenly rang. With a tired expression, she reached out to answer the call.

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**"Hello?"**

**[Hello! How have you been, Nem? I haven't called you in over a month!]**

**"I'm doing well, just been really busy. And now that you're free, you finally remembered to call? I thought you'd forgotten about me."**

**[Shouldn't I be the one saying that? If I don't call, you never call either. And I bet you forgot my birthday too.]**

**"What! How could I forget?"**

Thicha tried to cover up her forgetfulness, but her voice went up too high, revealing the truth.

**[Don't even try to make excuses, Nem. No one would believe that. I just called to invite you to my birthday party. This year, my parents are letting me have a small party at home. Please come. We haven't seen each other in so long. I really want to see you.]**

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Thicha felt uneasy right away because she was still worried about her father and her own safety. Still, she didn't want to hurt her friend's feelings by turning her down.

Merin was one of the few classmates Thicha was truly close with. But after graduation, their group slowly drifted apart over time. Only Merin kept in touch and called regularly.

Since she didn't have the heart to say no, Thicha had no choice but to agree to go to her friend's birthday party.

She told herself, *"Just go quickly and leave quickly. It shouldn't be a big deal if I don't stay long,"*

.....trying to feel better. But even after hanging up the phone, a quiet worry still lingered in her mind.

Pittinan's words echoed in her thoughts, making her even more anxious.

*"No matter what, I want you to be more careful when going out. If possible, could you let me know where and when you're going?"*

Thicha sighed softly. She was about to call to let her know her plans, just like she had asked, but then she hesitated. She didn't want to bother her too much.

She was still scared about what had happened to her before. At the same time, she was also afraid of disturbing hervwhile she might be with her partner-like that one time.

She spent several minutes thinking, and in the end, she chose to just send her a message with her location. She simply said not to worry-she was just following her suggestion. That way, if something did happen, at least Pittinan would know where she was and when.

Thicha decided to leave work a little early, because she had to stop by a shopping mall.

Thicha planned her time carefully. She wanted to make sure she had enough time to go back home, take a shower, get dressed, and travel to the party location on time-just as she had told her friend.

She managed to do everything right on schedule. But just before leaving, her phone rang while she was steering the car out of her house. She answered the call through her AirPods.

"Yes, P'Perth. I'm about to head to my friend's house now."

"I told you to wait. Didn't you read the message I sent?"

"P'Perth, I won't be long-less than two hours. And I'm already on the road. Don't worry, really. You don't have to come after me. I just wanted to let you know where I am. That's all. I have to go now, I'm driving."

Thicha ended the call and focused on the road, unaware of how worried the person on the other end was.

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Less than half an hour later, Thicha arrived at her friend's house right on time. Although the yard was spacious, there were many cars parked by guests coming to celebrate the birthday. Thicha decided to park along the wall outside the fence, just like the other fancy cars lined up there.

Wearing a soft-toned dress that made her fair skin stand out, the slender young woman stepped out of her car. She had visited this place several times in her teenage years, so she didn't feel nervous about walking up to greet the birthday girl, who was already waiting near the entrance.

"I'm so glad you came, Neme. We haven't seen each other in months! You're still just as beautiful and sweet as ever."

Her slightly taller friend walked up and hugged her warmly. After they stepped apart, Thicha handed over the gift box she had brought.

"Happy Birthday, May! I wish you lots of happiness and that you keep getting more and more beautiful every day."

"Thank you, Neme. Honestly, when I called to invite you today, I didn't expect you to go through the trouble of buying a gift. I just missed you and wanted to see you."

"It's your birthday! How could I show up empty-handed?"

Thicha said with a bright smile.

"Well, thank you so much anyway. Let's go inside. This year, I got permission from my parents to host the party at the pool in the backyard."

"Are your parents here at the party too? I should proChapter :ly go say hello to them first."

"If you want to greet them, you'll proChapter :ly have to video call them. They're not here. They flew abroad for a business trip about a week ago."

"Oh, really? I'm sorry, I didn't know."

The two girls continued chatting as they walked along the path that led them to the backyard pool area.

The whole place had been transformed into a party space, not much different from a typical celebration. There was a drink bar in one corner, lounge chairs by the pool, and tables and chairs set up around the area where about a dozen friends were mingling and enjoying themselves.

The atmosphere was casual and relaxed, similar to a class reunion. Thicha, although not someone with many friends, still recognized a few familiar faces as she made her way into the lively party.

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"Hey, everyone, look who's here! Our new member has arrived!"

When the host called for everyone's attention, Thicha became the center of attention as the friends who came to join the gathering turned their gaze toward her.

"Hello, Miss Thicha! It's been a while. You're still as beautiful and lovely as always,"

Said the first friend, followed by the second and others, making her smile back at them.

Thicha replied politely to their greetings. Although she didn't really enjoy socializing much, she knew how to behave when she had to attend social events.

"I think you should sit here for now, Nem. What would you like to drink? I'll go get it for you."

"No, it's fine, May. I'll get it myself."

"Come on, just sit here and wait."

"But..."

"Here's your drink, Miss Thicha. I think this punch will suit you the best. You wouldn't refuse, would you?"

"Uh... Thank you very much,"

Thicha said, looking at the guy who offered the drink politely. When kindness was offered, it was hard to turn it down.

She took the drink with a smile, knowing the guy's face from somewhere. He was a classmate, but they weren't close personally. Thicha didn't often mingle with others, and many thought she was snobbish, but in reality, she just didn't like chaos. It was nothing more than that.

"Nice to meet you, Miss Ticha. I'm Mike. We've seen each other a few times, but we've never had a chance to properly get to know each other. So today, I decided to take the chance and introduce myself to you. I hope you don't mind."

"Uh, it's no big deal. And you can just call me by my first name, Thicha. You don't have to add 'Miss' in front."

"Oh, I'm sorry. In that case, may I call you Thicha? And if you don't mind, would it be okay if I sit and drink with you tonight?"

"...."

"I think it would be nice to have Mike sit with us, Nem. That way, Nem will have someone to talk to. I don't want to leave you alone when I need to go somewhere else," Merin suggested.

"Alright, that's fine," Thicha agreed.

Since she understood how the host had to move around to take care of the guests, Thicha didn't want to be a burden to anyone. She just planned to have a drink, wait for the right time, and then leave. It didn't seem like it would be too difficult.

Time passed, and the conversation at the table continued as usual. The host would occasionally need to step away to talk to other friends.

Thicha raised her second drink, occasionally checking the small watch on her wrist. Her anxious expression was obvious, which didn't go unnoticed by the young man who had been observing her.

All the time, he couldn't help but ask,

"Thicha, do you need to go back soon? I've seen you looking at the clock a few times already."

"Well... actually, I didn't plan to stay at too long. I thought after blowing out the cake, I'd leave right away."

"Oh, I see. So it must be almost time then. It's less than 5 minutes until 9

PM."

The young man lifted his wrist to check his watch, and it was just as he had said. Shortly after, he saw the other friends, all tipsy, gradually gathering around the cake to light the candles for the birthday person.

"Well then, shall we go now?"

"Yes."

She quickly agreed, wanting to get through this time as soon as possible. Thicha was eager to walk alongside the young man and join the group of friends.

After the cake-blowing moment, Thicha stepped aside, intending to walk over to say goodbye to the birthday person. But then...

"Thicha, are you leaving already?"

"Yes. Thank you so much for staying with me tonight."

"It's no problem. I'm happy to. I'm really sad that you're leaving, but hopefully, we'll have the chance to meet again next time. Before you go, though, could you have one more drink with me, for our friendship?"

Wanting to get out of this uncomfortable atmosphere, Thicha didn't hesitate to take the last drink the young man offered. She raised the glass and drank it all in one go. Just as she finished, the birthday person walked up to her.

Thicha didn't waste any time and told her friends she was leaving. Even though one of them offered to walk her out, she politely declined, not wanting to pull the birthday person away from taking care of the others.

Because of this, the young man, who had been following her every step, made it hard for Thicha to refuse his offer. She just wanted to get out of the awkward situation quickly.

"Which car is yours, Thicha?" he asked.

"This one. Thank you so much for walking me out. Anyway, I'll go now," she replied.

"Wait a minute, Thicha,"

He said, noticing something seemed off. While she was bending over, searching for something in her bag, he impulsively grabbed her arm to stop her.

"Are you okay to drive? Let me drive you home."

"It's fine, I can drive. Thank you,"

She said, trying to pull her arm away from his grip. But it wasn't easy. Not only did he refuse to let go, but he also grabbed the car keys from her hand.

"Give me the keys back," she said firmly.

"Let me take you home. It doesn't look like you're in any condition to drive."

"Whether she's okay or not, I'll handle it myself. But right now, you should let go of my sister's arm and give me the keys back!"

This time, her tone wasn't just someone who had realized something was off with her own body. It was the cold, commanding voice of someone who had just jumped out of a car that had parked nearby.

Pittinan was glaring at the young man, who quickly turned pale. His sharp eyes stared intently at the strong hand that had just released her arm.

"P'Perth."

"Get in the car with me right now. How could you let yourself get this drunk?"

Without saying more, Pittinan grabbed the car keys from the young man, who was just standing there, looking pale. Then, she quickly turned to grab the young woman's wrist and pushed her into the car.

Before walking around to the driver's side, Pittinan couldn't help but look back, giving the young man a cold stare. He stood frozen, as if the look itself had frozen him in place.

And then, all the effort she had put into this... where would it lead?

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# CHAPTER : 24

The car had only just left the place when something unusual caught Pittinan's attention. The person sitting next to her seemed restless, shifting around in their seat. Perth frowned, puzzled by the behavior.

She kept glancing away from the road to check on the small figure beside her. At first, she thought maybe Thicha had just drunk too much. But now, Thicha's heavy breathing was getting worse, and she was rubbing her thighs in a way that made Pittinan start to worry even more.

“Neme, did you drink a lot? What’s wrong with you?”

“P’Perth... I feel so hot. I feel... uncomfortable...”

Thicha's voice was weak and dreamy, like someone losing control. It only took a moment for Pittinan, who had experience dealing with this kind of thing, to realize what was really going on.

“That bastard!”

Pittinan cursed under her breath, full of anger and regret. If she hadn’t been so worried and rushed over to wait in advance, Thicha might have already been taken away and violated by that disgusting man.

The thought alone made her chest burn like it was on fire. Her heart sank just imagining what could’ve happened if she had been even a little bit late — what kind of horrible situation her precious little sister might’ve ended up in.

“Hang in there, Neme. Don’t pull your dress up like that, okay?”

But no matter how many times Pittinan told her to stop, Thicha wasn’t listening. The drug was clearly taking a stronger effect, and it was nearly impossible for someone under its influence to control herself.

Seeing how bad things were getting and knowing her condo was closer than Thicha's house, Pittinan made a quick decision. She pressed her foot harder on the gas to speed up and get them there faster.

The sound of heavy breathing and the way Thicha seemed to be losing control made it hard for Pittinan to focus on driving. But somehow, she managed to park the car safely in her condo's parking lot just in time.

The elevator from the parking level to her apartment was the quickest option. But getting the smaller woman into the condo was a struggle — not because Thicha was heavy, but because of her restless hands constantly clinging to Pittinan.

“Neme, please try to stay calm. Focus. Just stay still.”

Pittinan tried to gently peel Thicha's arms off her, struggling to lay her down on the soft bed. It wasn’t easy. The problem wasn’t Thicha's size, but her hands — wandering and touching in all the wrong ways. “P’Perth… I can’t take it anymore… Please help me…”

“Neme, calm down, okay? Just hold on a little longer…”

Pittinan spoke firmly, watching as Thicha kept trying to pull her dress off. She knew very well what Thicha was feeling — she was desperate for someone to help release her from the effects of the drug. But Pittinan also knew she couldn’t take advantage of her like that.

Pittinan could feel her breath becoming shallow. She wanted to see it as something natural, to view the body and proportions of another woman in a regular way, but her eyes couldn’t perceive another woman normally.

When the other person pulled her dress off, leaving only a tiny pair of underwear on her body, Pittinan could only stare at the scene, feeling something she couldn’t quite explain.

Even though she kept reminding herself that the person lying before her was her best friend's little sister, whom she loved and cared for like her own sister, under the soft light reflecting off her pale pink skin, the sight was more than she could handle, causing her breath to catch.

"Nem, don't take it off. Let me find something for you to wear after a shower. Come on, get up."

Pittinan tried to ignore the temptation that made her heart race. She quickly helped the fragile, half-naked body sit up, hoping that the cold water would cool down the heat that was building inside the other person.

But it wasn’t that easy. Although she managed to help the small body down from the bed and walk her to the bathroom, the cold water running over her pale skin couldn’t counteract the effects of the strong drug.

"P' Perth, I can't take it anymore, please help me. I can't stand it anymore."

The soaked figure looked up at her with a pained, desperate expression. This made Pittinan, drenched herself, feel nothing but pity.

It seemed that it would take several more hours for the drug’s effect to wear off. How awful and cruel must the person be to use such strong drugs to hurt a small woman like this?

"Nem, be calm, just a little longer. Please, get back to the bed. You can’t stay like this, you'll get sick."

The first moment she thought about shedding her clothes, she only worried that the bed would be soaked with water droplets, making it impossible to sleep. But now, Pittinan finally realized how wrong that thought was.

Because as soon as her body found itself dressed in only a few pieces of clothing, the close proximity that could be described as skin-to-skin made her blood rush and course through her entire body.

"Please, P'Perth, I can't take it anymore."

The closer they became, the more her blood surged, making her ears ring and her vision blur. Pittinan could hardly keep her composure as her seductive body pressed closer, her skin touching her every inch.

Her blood was in turmoil, and the thrilling sensation spread from her stomach to her lower body, making her burn with desire, to the point where it almost felt like it was painfully tight.

Pittinan's gaze stared at the slightly parted lips invitingly. The heat of the person, the twisting body, it made her unable to resist leaning down to kiss the red lips.

The touch of the person above made Thicha tremble all over. The blood in the girl's body pumped violently. Pittinan's warm breath penetrated to explore the soft mouth, increasing the heat and passion. Her breath smelled of alcohol faintly, mixed with the warmth from the body that evaporated and hit her skin.

The smooth body pressed itself closer until it almost swallowed her into a small body. The fire of desire erupted, hot because of the yearning that the other person was calling for her touch so intensely.

"Ummm,"

The sweet voice protested in her throat when the person above pulled her face away.

"P' Perth, help me."

The slender body begged with a nasal and rumbling voice like she was going to cry. She could only lick her tongue under her body when the other person did not indulge her as she was demanding.

The hot desire from inside made the slender body only move easily and her hips press and squeeze the feminine proportions, making contact with the body of another person.

And finally.... Pittinan's patience line broke. The black bra that covered the two plump breasts was removed from the body. The sweet eyes were halfclosed, looking at her actions with a pleading look.

She was waiting for her touch.

Pittinan caressed her hands all over the white smooth body, stopping at the plump breasts, squeezing and kneading gently, making the person below the short body tremble because of the tingling sensation.

The beautiful, sharp face pressed against the white neck. She kissed down to the plump breasts that she was willingly bending towards her lips.

The more she smelled the sweet, rich fragrance from the woman's body, the more she felt the soft flesh shaking in her embrace, the more she couldn't hold back.

Pittinan couldn't touch the plump breasts for long. The body that demanded release made her have to move down to insert herself between the legs of the person who was struggling restlessly.

The last piece of the barrier was pulled off the white legs. There was no time to admire the beauty of the sweet rose petals for long because the owner of the beautiful bouquet was urging her to put the tip of her tongue on the center of the rose petals as requested.

The slender body twisted her whole body when the warm tongue dragged and slid along the slit that was moistened with sweet water. Pittinan tensed her tongue to invade and explore inside the warm groove, sipping on the sweetness until the slender body tensed and trembled.

"Ah,"

The beautiful hips bounced to receive the touch from the other person passionately. The more she moved, the more the living tongue swung and flipped quickly.

Pittinan's slender palm squeezed and kneaded the round end, splashing the emotions that were raging on the bodies that responded fiercely.

The more she urged, the more her emotional response would be. And it didn’t end with her body shaking. Because the body of someone who was stimulated by the effects of the drug was ready to be aroused without having to rest.

The sweet, cute face that was flushed, the lips that were breathing heavily, still called for her touch endlessly.

When it got worse, the desire that was aroused to the limit, no matter how much she wanted to cherish it, but the feeling inside that was crying out intensely made Pittinan have to move up to kiss the cute lips again.

The slender palm stroked down to massage the mound of flesh that had been touched by the tip of the tongue before slowly inserting a finger to stroke along the crack, feeling the slippery texture that was smeared around the fingers.

It indicated readiness for Pittinan to slowly insert two long fingers into the soft flesh slowly.

“Ahh, P' Perth.

The sensation from within was squeezing her fingers tightly. Her body was tensing and trembling against the intrusive touch from her. Even though it only happened for a moment, because the person who was ready to continue was starting to move his hips to meet her touch. It was stimulating the young woman to move her fingers according to the other person's request and desire.

Time and time again, the love battle on the bed was played out repeatedly. Every joy from the effects of the drug or even the desire from deep down, it covered up every sense of right and wrong and made both of them forget everything around them.

Two naked bodies ran towards each other time and time again, drinking in each other's bodies without anyone thinking about tomorrow.

Tomorrow, no one knew how life would continue from now on. Because every action that happened, happened to the wrong person, at the wrong time.

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# CHAPTER : 25

The light from outside slipped through the gap in the curtains, softly shining onto the smooth skin of the girl who was slowly opening her eyes.

Her long eyelashes fluttered as she tried to adjust her vision to the light. Once her eyes were fully open, she saw the sharp, beautiful face of the woman sleeping peacefully beside her. The sight made her heart skip a beat.

Thicha blinked quickly, trying hard to remember what had happened. Slowly, the memories of the deep, intimate night she spent with the woman next to her came rushing back, piece by piece.

When she finally pieced everything together, her eyes began to burn with tears. The truth hit her hard, stabbing her right in the heart. Even though she had secretly liked her sister's best friend for a long time, she had never once thought she'd actually end up getting close to her like this-especially not when her heart already belonged to someone else.

The pain in her heart was worse than the aching all over her body from last night. The guilt growing inside her felt heavier than anything she'd ever felt before.

She felt ashamed and pitiful. Even though she knew it wasn't meant to happen, that it was all a mistake, it was still wrong. And that mistake-she knew deep down-was mostly her fault.

Her heart was full of sorrow. She couldn't hold back the tears, and a soft sob escaped her lips in the silence of the room. Even though she tried her best to stay quiet, the sound was enough to wake the woman who had only been asleep for less than two hours.

Pittinan sat up and gently pulled her, still curled up under the thick blanket, into her arms.

"Don't cry, sweetheart. Please don't cry. I'm sorry... I'm so sorry. If I had just controlled myself a little better, last night wouldn't have happened."

Pittinan whispered over and over, full of regret. She had been thinking about what happened all night before finally falling asleep. Thoughts of what happened running through her head until almost morning.

And even now, she still couldn't figure out what to do about the mistake caused by her lack of restraint.

She didn't know how to face what had happened - the deep connection that had formed with someone she had always loved and cared for like a younger sister. How could she look her in the eye now, after crossing a line and breaking that bond?

What happened between them meant a lot to her, more than she could put into words.

"Please don't blame yourself, P'Perth. It's my fault,"

Thicha slowly pulled away from her warm embrace. The guilt she felt was too much for her to bear, and she knew they couldn't let it happen again.

"What happened last night... can we just forget it ever happened? Let's both pretend it never did."

"How can you ask me to forget, Neme? After what we..."

"We both know why it happened. We don't need to talk about it. If you could just forget it, I'd really appreciate that,"

She said, cutting her off.

Pittinan sat still like a statue, unable to say anything. Her words - spoken through tear-stained lips - left her confused and torn inside.

Thicha wanted them both to move on and pretend like nothing happened. Pittinan should've felt relieved she wasn't angry or blaming her... but somehow, that made it hurt even more.

The relationship that had developed-why then did she feel such a strange weight in her chest?

She had someone she loved, a reality that should be considered. Just the act of physically betraying her partner by sleeping with another woman was already wrong-something that should never have happened.

But then, why did it hurt so deeply when the person in front of her told her to forget her heart?

Deep down, she didn't want things to turn out like this. She didn't want the relationship between them to end this way.

But what could she do? If she were to stubbornly refuse to let go, would the bond they had built over time be completely severed? Would she be hated to the point that the other wouldn't even want to look at her anymore?

She was terrified that the person who once felt so close would become just someone nearby-without the closeness they once shared.

"Neme... I don't feel at ease. What kind of responsibility do you want me to take? Can you please just tell me?"

"I want you to take responsibility by going back to being the same big sister you used to be for me. That's all."

Could she take any more responsibility than that?

Both of them knew very well that things could never be more than this. Pittinan already had someone she was in a relationship with. She had never intended to fight for or demand responsibility just because of an unintentional connection.

Choosing to cut things off at the start-to solve everything by pretending nothing happened-was likely the best way out of this situation between them.

Thicha made up her mind to step away from the older woman. She tried to swing her legs down from the bed, but as she pushed herself up to stand, a sharp ache suddenly surged through her lower body.

Her legs trembled with weakness, nearly giving out beneath her-she would have collapsed onto the bed again if not for the older woman's arm catching and holding her in time.

"I'll help you get cleaned up."

Before the sweet-faced girl could refuse, Pittinan swiftly wrapped her arms around the smaller body, lifting her up into her embrace. The smaller girl could only widen her eyes in shock, completely unprepared for such treatment.

"P'Perth..."

"Just stay still, okay? Just hold on to my neck. If you don't want me to take any responsibility for what happened, then at least let me make it up to you in some way. Please don't make me feel worse about myself than I already do."

It was too hard to argue with that reasoning-or maybe, deep down, Thicha knew that her heart and body weren't ready to deal with anything right now.

She wasn't ready to take care of herself. She still needed support. So allowing the taller woman to carry her into the bathroom became a quiet act of acceptance-one she didn't resist.

After settling the smaller girl in the bathroom, Pittinan was quickly ushered out, forced to leave quietly with her head bowed.

She stood in the middle of the room, feeling lost, until her eyes landed on the bloodstains marking the bedsheet-undeniable evidence, like a blow to her growing sense of guilt.

What could she possibly do to rid herself of this feeling of guilt?

Thicha spent quite a while tending to herself in the bathroom. When she finally stepped out, her eyes landed on the clean set of clothes that had been carefully prepared for her. Beside them lay a sanitary pad.

The woman had thought of even the smallest details. It was a clear sign of care-because the body that had been invaded by a foreign object for the first time. It made her body want this."

Inside the bedroom, where there was no trace of its owner, Thicha was able to take care of herself more comfortably. She didn't take long to get ready, then she walked out to the hall, dressed and ready to leave the place that would now become a new memory.

A memory that would stay deep in her heart, one she couldn't deny had a massive impact on her emotions - both the joy and the pain all at once.

"I am going back now, but I'm not sure about my car from last night."

"I drove it myself,"

Pittinan replied. As for her own car, she'd proChapter :ly take a taxi to go get it later.

"Thank you so much, P'Perth, for helping me last night. Can I have the car keys back now?"

"I'll drive you home."

"But I can drive myself, it's okay. Don't bother."

"Stop saying it's a bother, Nem. You're the one who told me you wanted me to be like a sister to you. So why can't you treat me the same way as before?"

When she couldn't take it anymore, the feeling of discomfort inside her seemed ready to burst. Pittinan looked at her, confused, But in the end, the teary eyes staring back seemed to pull her back to her senses.

"Neme, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say it like that, it's just that I-"

"It's okay,"

She quickly cut her off, wiping away the tears that she couldn't hold back anymore. It hurt so much, always having to pretend she didn't feel what she actually felt. And when it became too heavy, this was the result.

The more connected their bodies became, the stronger her feelings grew. Someone who already had power over her heart now felt even more important.

The mood between the two of them turned gloomy and tense. She still didn't return the car key and just stood there quietly, while so many emotions filled the air.

But then, as if fate wanted to punish the one who did wrong, a loud ringtone suddenly interrupted everything. It jolted Pittinan back to reality, and she quickly picked up her phone.

A chill ran through her body. The name on the screen showed up at the worst possible moment. Pittinan stepped away to take the call in a more private corner.

"Hello, Kwan."

"Morning, Captain! You're awake already, right? I hope I'm not bothering you?"

"Uh... no, you're not. Is something urgent going on? It's quite early."

"No, nothing urgent. But the other day you left your watch at my condo. I'm driving by yours anyway, so I thought I'd drop it off. I'm in the elevator now, so wait by the door to let me in, okay?"

Her face went pale. Sometimes Pittinan just didn't understand why things like this had to happen to her. She was speechless, unsure how to face what was coming - two women about to meet.

Whether it was the woman she had cuddled with all night, or the one officially called her girlfriend - someone she didn't seem to feel anything for at all...

"P'Perth proChapter :ly has something to take care of. In that case, please give me back the car key,"

Thicha said calmly. Even though she didn't hear the conversation clearly, she wasn't stupid. She could figure things out on her own.

So the awkwardness on her face, the phone call at that moment, and the way she acted while talking to the person on the line-it all made it very clear this wasn't just a normal call.

"P'Perth, can you give the car key back to me? And please tell me what floor the car's parked on."

"Zone 8, fifth floor,"

She finally said as she handed the key back. Thicha didn't hesitate to reach out and take it.

She turned away from her and walked out of the room, her heart heavy with pain.

Now she had her answer-just as she had feared. The fact that she handed the key over so easily meant her time was running out. Something-or someonewas coming closer, and it was pushing her out of her life.

She reached out and pressed the elevator button, then stepped back a little to wait. She looked up at the red numbers counting down as the elevator came down to her floor.

When the doors opened, Thicha stepped inside. But just as she was about to press the button to close the doors, she caught sight of a woman stepping out of the elevator next to hers... and walking straight to the door she had just come from.

Her heart felt like it was being crushed by an invisible hand. Even though she already knew the truth, seeing it with her own eyes-so clearly and so soon-was like a knife to the heart.

She felt like she was falling into a dark hole, overwhelmed with pain. She loved her so much, and that's why it hurt this much. Loving someone who already belongs to someone else only brings heartbreak.

Knowing all this... why can't she just let her go of the owner of her heart?

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# CHAPTER : 26

Three days had passed. The gunshot wound was starting to heal, but who would've thought that spending more time together didn't bring happiness like it should have?

Over these past few days, something had changed. That change started to cause uneasiness. The distance in behavior slowly chipped away at the happiness they once had. Her delicate hands were busy cleaning her wound.

At a glance, it looked like she cared. But her distant, absent-minded expression didn't go unnoticed by someone who had been living so closely with her.

"I have to go into town today. Do you want anything, Nam? Or do you want to come with me?"

"No, it's okay. I want to rest at home. But your arm still hasn't fully healed... Are you sure you can drive? Or is Toss going with you?"

She looked up at her and let go of her arm after finishing putting on the fresh bandage. Her words were calm but dull and lifeless, and that made Tichila feel a deep ache she could barely hide.

"Toss isn't coming. But I can manage. It doesn't hurt that much."

"If you say it's not too bad, then I won't worry. I'll stay home today. I've got a headache and want to sleep for a bit."

"Are you okay? If you're not feeling well, should we go to the hospital? I want you to get checked properly. You've been getting headaches a lot lately. Just in case it's something serious."

Her voice and eyes were full of concern. But instead of a warm response, all she got was a quiet refusal. She kept her head down, avoiding her gaze.

"I'm really fine. I'll just take some medicine and rest like I always do. Then I'll be fine. I'll take my leave now?"

"....."

Because she couldn't handle the reactions that were starting to show clear signs of change, Tichila just sat quietly, not knowing what else she could do. She kept trying to think of positive reasons, but it had been days now, and the changes were becoming clearer and more obvious every day.

There were so many excuses. How many times had the other person made her feel distant? She could see everything, feel everything, but kept trying to comfort herself. In the end, the uncertainty overwhelmed her heart.

Even though she wanted to ask for clarity one more time, the emotional distance she sensed from the other person made her hesitate. She was afraid to even approach her, not wanting to be a nuisance.

She sat down, looking at the arm that was still hanging loosely from the sling, feeling down. In the end, she had to swallow her pain and decided to get up, head out, and drive into the city as she had promised her partner.

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Meanwhile, back in the room, the person who had stayed behind, after hearing the sound of the car driving away, picked up the phone and stared at it for a long time.

Her face was full of deep thought, with a mix of emotions swirling inside. But in the end, she dialed the number she had memorized so well.

She raised the phone to her ear, and as she waited for the line to connect, her heart beat faster. Just a few seconds of waiting, and then the familiar voice on the other end answered.

"Hello, it's Nam."

The first sentence was spoken, and only a moment passed before the person on the other end responded, leading to a conversation that would be important.

Everything in the world was moving forward, but for someone, the time of happiness was now being counted down.

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Tichila arrived at the police station right on time for her appointment. She walked briskly into the station because the young police officer had called to say he had something important to tell her.

That's why she had come all the way here since the young man had a task that kept him from coming to her.

No matter what the important matter was, as long as it had to do with the woman she loved, Tichila couldn't stay calm.

"Ah! Hello, Miss Te, coming to see the inspector?"

"Hello, Officer. I have an appointment with Inspector Thonthan."

"Please go inside. The inspector should be waiting for you in there."

The young officer politely invited her in. No one in the area didn't know Tichila, the famous gem mine owner, and best friend of Inspector Thonthan. So, it was normal for people in the station to see her in the inspector's office regularly.

"Even with your arm in a sling, you still drove yourself here?"

"Thanks for the greeting. You said it was something important, right?"

"Yeah,"

The young inspector replied with a straight face. But the look in his eyes, as he glanced at the tall woman sitting across from him, clearly showed he was worried.

Looking at her, he couldn't help but reflect. She had risked her life, shielding someone from a bullet. The deep love Tichila had for that woman was the reason he was now sitting here stressed and anxious.

"I found out who that woman is and where she's from."

Her heart started racing, but she tried her best to keep a calm face. Deep down, she wanted to turn away and avoid the truth she never asked for. But she knew well-she can't run from reality.

Especially not from her own identity.

"I thought you already caught the mastermind."

"They're still keeping their mouths shut. They won't give us anything easily. But at least the info we got might lead us to something. It could help us trace back to who they really are."

A brown folder, the size of an A4 sheet, was pulled out from the desk drawer and placed right in front of her.

Tichila glanced at it silently, but when she looked back at the young inspector, her eyes seemed to say: *You explain it. I'll listen.*

"This is just a rough profile on Ms. Nam. My team worked hard to dig this up. Want to take a look?"

"What's her name?"

Tichila asked calmly, eyes still skimming the document without bothering to reach out and open it, even though her friend had suggested it.

**"Thisa Watthanawaranon,"**

The young man replied, looking straight into his best friend's eyes like he was trying to read her emotions behind that still, blank face.

"She's the eldest daughter of Mr. Nathee Watthanawaranon, owner of Petchklao Jewelry. Her family runs a big business producing and exporting gems and jewelry. As for more details, you'll have to look inside the file yourself. I just skimmed through it."

"Thanks a lot, Than, for the info. I'm heading out now."

"Hey, wait!"

He called out, alarmed, as he saw her get up without even touching the envelope.

"Aren't you going to take the file? What are you going to do about this?"

"It's not important to me. Burn it, please."

And with that, she turned around and walked out of his office without looking back, hiding the flicker of sadness in her eyes. That file didn't matter to her - not even to the person it was about.

Because everything she'd felt these past few days had made her realize that those details... proChapter :ly didn't mean anything to the woman she loved anymore.

Her car pulled away from the police station while her mind drifted. Deep down, she could feel a distance growing, but for someone who still missed the other person deeply, she couldn't bring herself to walk away from the one who had her heart.

When Tichila got home, she let herself fall onto the sofa in the middle of the living room. Her eyes wandered to the bedroom door. The distance the other woman was putting between them-that was exactly why she couldn't bring herself to knock and bother her.

The pain and soreness proChapter :ly came from moving around too much with her injury. It was bad enough that the tall woman had to lie flat on the sofa.

She raised her good arm and rested it across her forehead, staring blankly at the ceiling without really seeing anything.

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She didn't know how long she'd been asleep, but she woke up when her younger brother came home-long after the sun had already set.

"P'Te, why are you sleeping out here? Why didn't you go lie down in your room?"

Tichila slowly opened her eyes, still groggy, her eyes red from either sleep or pain. A dull headache was bothering her, her throat was dry, and she felt chilled to the bone.

"Are you sick? Do you have a fever? Your eyes look red,"

Her brother asked, clearly worried. Without waiting for a reply, he reached out and gently touched her forehead.

"Whoa! You do have a fever. Where's P'Nam? Why'd she let you sleep out here? Did you two fight or something?"

"No, no... don't overthink it, Tod. I just got back from being out, planned to rest here for a bit, and I must've dozed off. That's all."

"What? So you haven't eaten yet, have you? Want to get up and eat something first? I'll call P'Nam too, so we can all eat together. It's almost 7 already."

"No need, really. I'm not hungry-I already ate. Right now I just want to shower and rest. But can you grab me some fever medicine?"

"Okay, okay."

Phetai nodded and walked off to the medicine cabinet. He grabbed two fever tablets and a bottle of water before heading back.

He handed the pills and water to his sister, watching as she swallowed them down.

Tichila was always strong and never liked to burden anyone. But now, the weakness she was trying so hard to hide under that calm appearance... it really stood out to him in a way he couldn't explain.

Her staying apart from Nam-it just wasn't normal. They were usually inseparable when they were home.

*Did they have a serious fight or something?*

"I'm going to bed now," she said.

"Didn't you say you were going to eat? What are you still standing here for? Go already."

"Oh right! I forgot. But seriously, if you're not feeling well, just say so, okay? If something happens to you, I'll be in big trouble. Who's going to take care of me?"

He said it jokingly, but no one knew just how deeply he was worried about her. Even if he wasn't the most responsible younger brother, the love he had for his sister was real-and just as strong as anyone else's.

After he disappeared into the kitchen, Tichila forced herself to stand up. Slowly, she made her way to the bedroom door and gently knocked.

A few moments later, the door opened, and a familiar delicate face appeared.

They had both been in the same house all day... yet somehow, the emotional distance between them felt so cold, almost freezing.

"Nam, have you eaten yet? Are you hungry?" she asked softly.

"What about you, P'Te?"

"I'm not really hungry. Just about to shower and rest."

"Alright then, you go take a shower and get some rest, P'Te. I'll go eat first,"

Nam said politely before walking off, leaving the one still standing there to carry all the weight of change and emotional pain alone.

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Time passed before the delicate woman finally returned to the bedroom. Even though she lay down beside her, under the same blanket, she didn't curl up into Tichila's arms like she used to.

That small change pierced Tichila's heart.

She wasn't new to the pain of being left behind-maybe that's why she could feel the sting of it more sharply than someone who'd never been hurt before.

Longing mixed with heartbreak in her chest. And just like she always did every night, Tichila slowly slipped her arm around Nam's waist, hoping to hold her close and feel that familiar warmth again.

But the touch she missed so much didn't last long enough to comfort her.

Nam's soft hand gently, slowly, pulled Tichila's hand away from her waist.

"I'm just worried you'll hurt your arm, P'Te. It's not good to sleep on it. You should turn back and lie on your other side, okay?"

No further words were spoken.

The pain inside her only grew deeper. Rejected, Tichila turned over and lay on her back, heart aching more than ever.

Staring into the darkness of the room, she finally understood with painful clarity-the fear she had hidden deep inside was now becoming real. Her heart, which she had once placed completely at the feet of the woman she loved, now felt like it was being crushed.

Her eyes burned.

And the tears she had tried so hard to hold back... began to fall, slowly and silently.

The warmth from the tears slipping down the corners of her eyes couldn't compare to the pain that was building in her heart.

If what she had always feared was really happening now, she was ready to accept it. She wouldn't be angry-not even a little-because deep down, she knew the truth: no elegant, high-class woman would want to stay with someone like her.

Someone who spent her days working in mines, under the sun and wind, living a simple, rough life.

If the woman she loved had truly decided to let go of her now... then she would accept it, too.

She wouldn't try to hold her back. She didn't want to make things harder for her.

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# CHAPTER : 27

Last night, she didn't fall asleep until nearly dawn. But not long after the sun started to rise, even though she had barely slept two hours, she woke up-disturbed by the heat coming from the body lying next to her.

Thisa quickly sat up from under the blanket. Her worry was overwhelming, and without thinking, she reached out and gently touched the soft skin on her lover's face, then down to her neck.

"P'Te... P'Te, wake up,"

She called softly, her lips trembling with concern.

She didn't want to show how worried she was, but in just a moment, she slowly got up from the bed and tiptoed quietly into the bathroom.

Her heart was still full of emotion. She couldn't ignore that her partner was sick.

She soaked a small towel with water, wrung it out until it was just damp, then gently dabbed it on Tichila's warm face. Carefully, she wiped down her body, feeling how hot she was.

While Tichila slept, Thisa's deep love poured out in her every action. All the things she had tried to hold back fell apart. Just a few hours of trying to stay distant had already made her heart ache. She wondered-if they had to be apart any longer than this, would her heart completely break?

She didn't know.

Thisa is spending her remaining time carefully observing every aspect of the woman in front of her, as if she wants to keep every detail in her heart.

The path of life, which cannot be avoided, has made it impossible for her to let go of the person she used to be.

She still has responsibilities, still has a family to return to, and in the end, she may just be a woman who doesn't deserve the immense love from this woman.

The woman who was married and had a husband should not bring any stains or problems into the life of someone like Tichila, who knows nothing about it.

This woman has already given her enough - even her life and breath. She is not someone who deserves these precious things, not even a tiny part.

Her emotions are still filled with confusion, with complex feelings of love that are divided into two parts. She can't separate them. It feels like being a woman with divided loyalty, and it makes Thisa feel disgusted with herself.

It's true that before, she could fully say that she loved this woman with all her heart. But as forgotten truths begin to surface, she realizes that the heart she gave to this woman was once someone else's.

She married a man out of love, and she can't deny that even though someone else came into her life and replaced that deep connection, it didn't erase the feelings she once had.

The feelings for the man who is rightfully her husband are still there. The reality of her situation is something that holds her back from turning away.

She doesn't deserve the love from the owner of this heart, not even a little. If she had known that their love would end in separation, she would have prayed not to have stepped into this woman's life and caused any hurt.

"I'm sorry,"

The soft voice slipped through her full lips, her delicate hands reaching out to cradle the face of the woman she loved. A quiet whisper of guilt, the tears she had tried to hold back suddenly fell. This might be the last chance she would have to feel the scent of her body the woman whose heart constantly says "I love you."

Her full, soft lips gently pressed against her, staying close, absorbing every touch, feeling every breath exchanged. She wanted it to melt together, to become one. That way, when they had to be apart, it would be the one thing that could keep her heart alive each day.

"Please forget me, my love, if my love causes you pain."

Tisha whispered softly, one last time, before she wouldn't be able to say it in front of the one she loved again.

"If my love causes you suffering, please hate me, forget me, erase me from your heart."

Her eyes filled with tears she couldn't hide, torn with longing. The countdown to the time they would have to let go had begun, and with every passing moment, her heart broke deeper. The pain felt like it was about to tear her apart, as though her heart might stop right then.

The agony squeezed her chest, turning into sobs. Her delicate hand tried to cover her mouth, hoping to stop the sound, but it was impossible.

When the person who had been resting her eyes a moment ago opened them and looked at her with eyes full of pain, it was as if their hearts were beating in sync.

"You're going to leave me, aren't you?"

It's a simple question, yet it strikes the listener's heart deeply. The pleading look shared between them is full of pain. Thisa feels it as if they are sharing the same heart.

She tries to turn away, pretending to be detached, but because her heart is still held by this person, she can't remain indifferent to the sorrow in her eyes.

"Nam apologizes. I'm sorry for everything. I'm sorry I couldn't keep the promise I made to P'Te. I'm a woman who isn't good enough."

"Is this why things between us haven't been the same these past few days?"

"....."

There's no answer, except for the overwhelming pain that floods in mercilessly. The pain pours out in the form of tears, again and again, spreading to the soft hand that gently cradles her face, caressing her smooth cheek, trembling.

She gazes at the person lying before her, their eyes locked with hers, both filled with sorrow.

It couldn't hurt any more than this. A love that can't be possessed. Tichila lets the tears fall from the corner of her eyes, unable to hold back the pain anymore.

"I won't ask why you have to leave, because I believe you have your reasons. Don't worry about anything. Don't feel guilty. Don't apologize. Everything you promised, I return it. Go back to doing your duties, go back to living your life happily, and go back to where you belong."

"P'Te..."

No other words slipped from her trembling lips, mixed with the sound of sobs. The pain was so overwhelming that she couldn't say anything more.

While holding her face gently, her trembling hand slowly moved up to undo the buttons of her own shirt, one by one. Her gaze never left the sorrowful eyes of the person lying in front of her, both of them filled with tears.

She wanted to use the remaining time to have the chance to nestle in the warm embrace of this woman one more time, to feel close again, before everything left only memories and the word "goodbye..."

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Later that morning, three days after trying unsuccessfully to contact someone, it became the reason that made Pittinan find herself at the Wattanawaranon house today.

The story of the deep connection that happened that night became the trigger for her growing anxiety, causing her to lose her confidence. Every step she took entering the house made her heart race uncontrollably, and the closeness she once shared with the person felt so distant, more than ever before.

The younger girl's intentions, setting a boundary that seemed unreachable, made her hesitate, afraid that approaching too closely might harm the feelings the other person had for her.

She feared that Thicha might hate her or drift even further apart than before. After just three days of silence, with no contact from Thicha, her heart was in turmoil, and she could barely focus on anything.

"Hello, Lieutenant. You just came in, huh?"

"I have some business. Is Nem around?"

Pittinan smiled at the child walking past. Her familiarity with the people in the house made her feel comfortable, without needing formalities.

"Young miss just went into her office a moment ago. She told me not to let anyone disturb her."

"But it's important. Can you let her know I need to talk to her?"

"Sure, please wait here. I'll go tell her."

"Thanks a lot."

After the child walked upstairs to notify her boss, Pittinan took a seat in the guest room, waiting. She glanced at her watch, her heart focused on waiting for the person she had been trying to contact since yesterday.

Not even five minutes later, the person she had been waiting for appeared, and their meeting was filled with nervousness. Their eyes met for a brief moment before both of them tried to act normally, just like before.

"Why haven't you called me these past few days, Nem? Yesterday, I tried calling you all day."

"My phone is lost. It dropped and I haven't had time to buy a new one yet. I mostly use my home and work number. But today is a holiday, so I was planning to go buy a new one."

"Really? I thought maybe you were avoiding me."

"I don't have any reason to do that. By the way, P'Perth has been here since morning. Is there something urgent?"

Even though the phone issue is true, which she wasn't lying about, the pain of secretly loving someone who doesn't feel the same still makes her try to cover her emotions. She walks to sit down on the single sofa and tries to talk to the other person casually.

"Is Aunt Chatruadee and Chawin out? The house seems quiet."

"Aunt left early this morning. As for Chawin, he's proChapter :ly here. I saw him finish breakfast and head back to his room. P'Perth, is there something going on? Why are you asking about them today?"

Because it's rare for someone like Pittinan to ask about them, Thicha took the chance to ask out of curiosity about the relationship between the two. She still wants to tell her older sister's friend about what she saw, but she doesn't know how to start.

"I have an important matter to discuss with you, Nem. Let's go out of town together. We'll leave now, get in the car, and I'll tell you why we're going there."

"Why? Why didn't you tell me earlier? Why are we going there? I don't see the reason for it."

Because she doesn't want to get too close to her. Thicha didn't think she should go along with the request. She didn't see the point and thought it was better if they didn't get closer. It would be too much and too dangerous for her feelings.

"Nem, I'm asking you. Let's talk about this in the car."

"If P'Perth doesn't give a reason, then I don't have a reason to follow your request either. If we're done with this, I'll take my leave now. I still have work to do."

"Why are you being so stubborn?"

Pittinan didn't hesitate to grab the arm of the person who was about to walk away, pulling them back to face him.

"Listen carefully. Yesterday, Nam called me and told me to pick her up. Just that reason is enough for you to agree to go on a trip with me, right?"

"What?!"

She could hardly believe her ears, but because of the serious look in her eyes, she could tell she wasn't joking. Her eyes lit up with joy, and a smile spread across her face.

"P'Perth isn't tricking me, right?"

"Why would I trick you? Are you willing to go with me now? We can talk about the details in the car. It's already late, so let's hurry. It'll take hours to get there."

"Okay."

Without wasting time, as soon as they agreed, they were about to leave the living room and head to the car parked outside.

However, as soon as they turned around, they froze when they saw the tall figure of Chawin standing in front of the door. His expression clearly indicated that he had overheard their conversation.

"I just heard you and Neme talking earlier, Captain. So, did we get any news about Nam? Did Nam contact you, sir?"

The young man's joyful expression made Thicha stand still, feeling frustrated inside. She didn't know if what she was seeing was genuine or just an act, but one thing was for sure - seeing the disgusting behavior of the man who was supposed to be her brother-in-law made her disgusted with him and protective of her older sister.

"Yes, we're about to go pick up Nam."

"Nam contacted you? Why didn't you tell me, Captain? Nam is my wife. Don't I have the right to know about this?"

"I'm sorry, Chawin, but I think it's not the right time for us to talk about this. You can wait here for the news. Neme and I will go ahead now." "Hold on, Captain. I'm coming with you!"

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# CHAPTER : 28

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Because she didn't know what words to use to refuse, inside the car that was speeding away from downtown Bangkok towards the destination, it was inevitable that a young man like Chawin would be accompanying her on the journey.

As the car moved forward, there were many times when Thicha couldn't help but glance at the young man sitting in the driver's seat.

A sense of discomfort quietly began to build up in her heart, but she couldn't express the emotions that were bottled up inside.

The only thing she could do was act as though she didn't know what was going on, just as she had been doing before. Even though she wanted to say something to her older sister's friend, she wouldn't dare speak it in front of the young man.

It was as if they had an unspoken agreement. The two girls sitting in the car made a conscious effort not to mention anything. Whenever the young man had a question during the journey, Pittinan would only respond with,

"I don't know much more than this. You'll have to hear it directly from Nam."

Short and to the point, offering no room for further explanation. Chawin didn't intend to push for more, either. He and Pittinan had never been on the same page from the start.

Many times, conflicts arose based on reasoning, but they always maintained a sense of respect for each other because there was a third party involved, which kept them from showing their true feelings too much.

"We've been traveling for hours. If you're tired, I can take over the driving for you, Mr. Chawin."

"It's fine, I'm not tired. Besides, I want to meet Nam as soon as possible."

And that was the reason why Pittinan felt the heaviest burden. Even though her friend had repeatedly emphasized that this trip was meant only for her and the her younger sister, now she found herself unable to fulfill her friend's wishes.

Having Chawin tagging along was such a complication for her friend, and Pittinan knew it well.

As someone who understood the deep relationship between her best friend and the owner of the gem mine, she was aware of the difficulties involved.

If you asked about sympathy, she couldn't deny it. She felt more sympathy for the woman than anyone else. The woman who, in just a few moments, would have to face pain without knowing what was going on or being at fault in any way.

Pittinan was lost in her thoughts, but many times, her attention was drawn to the sweet-faced girl sitting in the same car.

The complicated, unresolved relationship wasn't just about her best friend. She too was caught in a similar situation, a heart filled with discomfort, crying out to be freed from this lingering feeling.

She longed to see the bright smile they once shared, to hug the small frame that would always welcome her embrace, not just the broken feelings she was left to collect and agonize over.

The more her younger sister acted normal, as if nothing had happened, the more Pittinan could feel the distance between them. It felt as if she would never have the chance to be the person her younger sister trusted again.

The car sped along the main road for hours, until it turned onto a path where Pittinan had once driven herself to secretly wait at the entrance.

But today, she had the chance to visit this place again. The same white Land Rover smoothly entered the large property, surrounded by nature, before parking under a large tree in the spacious yard in front of the house.

The guests opened the car door, stepping out and sweeping their gaze around the peaceful house, surrounded by a variety of trees. Many types of flowers were planted all around, blooming in a range of colors throughout the seasons.

Was it in this large, serene, and comfortable house where her older sister had been living for months?

Thicha's gaze drifted toward the front door, where she noticed a tall young man, proChapter :ly around her age, standing and peering out. His handsome face seemed familiar, as though she had met him somewhere before, but she couldn't recall where.

"Hello,"

Thicha said as she stepped closer, ready to engage in conversation. She smiled warmly as she introduced herself.

"We came to see Nam. My name is Thicha, and I'm Nam's younger sister. I'm not sure if my sister is staying at this house?"

"Yes, she is,"

Phetai replied with a welcoming smile, understanding their purpose after hearing their introduction. His eyes scanned the other two guests with her.

Before this, he hadn't known who his sister's partner was, so he didn't notice anything unusual about the visit of these strangers.

"Please, come in and rest inside. I'll go get P'Nam for you."

Phetai invited all the guests into the house. Phetai was about to step aside to find his sister-in-law as he had been asked, but as soon as he took a step, a voice full of joy called out.

"P'Nam!"

With that voice, Thicha ran to hug her sister, tears streaming down her face. She was so happy that she forgot everything around her, even the tall woman who had walked out of the room with her sister.

"I'm so happy, P'Nam. I was so worried about you. Where have you been all this time? Why didn't you think about coming home?"

"Calm down first, Sis,"

Nam said gently.

Thicha's words were full of concern, and every touch was filled with care. This was something Thisa understood well, as she tightened her arms around her.

In that moment, Tichila just stood and watched, smiling softly. Although her heart felt dry, she couldn't help but smile with happiness. Even though the parting came suddenly, it was better than leaving without saying goodbye.

Tichila stood there watching the two sisters hug, amidst their sobs. But as soon as the two girls pulled away, the bright smile on Thicha's face was directed at the tall figure she had just noticed.

"Is this really you, P'Te? Hello! I never imagined the world could be this small."

"Hello! I didn't expect to run into you here either. It's been a long time. How are you doing?"

"I'm doing well! Is this fate or just a coincidence? But I'm really happy to see you again, P'Te."

Amidst the conversation between the younger sister and the woman she loved, Thisa could only stand and watch. The greeting showed such closeness and surprise.

When did they become close? How? Questions full of curiosity popped into her mind.

But while she was still standing there, confused, she was suddenly pulled into the embrace of someone who was acting arrogantly.

Thisa stood frozen, her body stiff. Her heart raced as she felt the warm touch of lips gently pressed against her cheek, and strong arms that should have felt warm. But instead, all she could feel was coldness.

Because just moments ago, she had been so happy that she didn't notice anything around her. She never expected that her legally registered husband would come with her younger sister and best friend.

"I've missed you so much, Nam, did you know? Ever since you disappeared, I've been searching for you like crazy."

Thisa's mind was spinning slowly with confusion, almost unable to process the actions unfolding before her.

She could barely gather her thoughts. As soon as she regained her senses, the young woman tried to pull away from the man's embrace, but it was difficult. He didn't show any sign of letting her go easily.

"Chawin, let go of me,"

She finally managed to say.

When the young man loosened his hold, the woman, who wasn't prepared for this situation, just stood there with a pale face and silent lips.

Her gaze, full of confusion, fixed on the man beside her, making his heart ache.

In the midst of this awkward moment, Chawin's strong arms wrapped around her waist, showing his possessiveness, which made her feel uncomfortable.

"I really want to thank everyone here for taking such good care of my wife. If there's anything we can do to repay you, please let us know. I'm ready to show my gratitude."

"Wait, what's going on?"

Phetai, hearing this, immediately stared at his older sister. He had always thought that the woman standing beside the strange man was his sister's lover.

But suddenly, someone was declaring that his sister-in-law was another man's wife.

"What is going on here?" he asked in disbelief.

"Enough,"

Tichila's voice was sharp, stopping all of his questions. Even though she felt weak and exhausted, she still forced herself to appear calm.

But the pain in her eyes couldn't be hidden from her younger brother, Phetai.

"Alright, if you're not feeling well, you should go rest, P'Te. I'll take care of P'Nam's guest."

The familiar way he used to address the woman, who once lived under the same roof as him, had changed. Even though Phetai wasn't good with work, he wasn't blind to what was happening.

While he couldn't fully understand the depth of it, the listless expression of his sister, who he had seen since yesterday, and her being abandoned while sick outside her room without the care she deserved, had made it clear to him today.

The woman in front of him was no longer his sister's lover, nor his sister-inlaw.

"It's okay. Since you're leaving here anyway, as the homeowner, I should see you off first."

Though her voice seemed calm, to anyone else, the words might sound ordinary, but to Thisa, they cut through her heart, leaving a deep wound.

The cold words of someone who had once lived together and loved each other-how could she swallow them? No one would understand the pain better than she did.

The anguish hidden in the eyes of the person who seemed to have no strength to stand-she knew just how much the woman she loved was bearing, how much physical pain hurt, but how could it ever compare to the emotional damage caused by a woman like her?

She had always said she loved her, but her heart wasn't brave enough to speak the truth. How selfish had she become to hurt the one she loved so much?

A million apologies wouldn't make up for her wrongs. It felt as if her heart were shattering. She wanted to walk over, hug her, or do something to ease the pain she was carrying deep inside.

But no, the reality of their relationship stood between them, preventing her from doing what her heart so desperately wanted.

The longer things dragged on, the more it just hurt both of them. The pain kept coming nonstop, and it felt like neither of them could handle it anymore.

Walking away might be the only way to help their hearts heal, even if just a little.

"P' Te is not feeling well. I don't want to bother you any longer. Please go get some rest. Thank you for everything you've done for me. Thank you for always taking good care of me, P'Te. Really, thank you so much."

At the end of her sentence, she could barely hold back her emotions. She tried so hard to hide her pain and looked toward the younger brother of the woman she loved-who was now staring at her without any warmth.

"Thank you, Tod. Thank you for everything while I was here. I have to go now."

Her eyes silently begged him to take care of Tichila for her. But his response was cold-unlike anything she'd ever seen from this usually cheerful guy.

It was fair. It made sense. There was nothing to complain about. She didn't blame him at all, even if he now hated her so much that he didn't even want to look at her face.

"Well then, we won't take up more of your time. I guess this is goodbye. Thank you again for everything, especially for taking such good care of my wife."

Chawin's words hurt both women even more. Even though what he said was true, it was like a sharp knife stabbing her heart over and over again.

No visible wounds, but it hurt so much she felt like she might collapse. Her legs were weak, but she forced herself to stay standing-looking at the one she loved with a heart full of pain.

"Thank you, P'Te. If we get the chance, I hope we'll meet again someday."

Thicha turned to say goodbye to the tall woman. She put her hands together in a respectful gesture and gave her a gentle smile.

"I just heard you're not feeling well. I hope you get better soon."

"Thank you. Take care."

Tichila said goodbye to the younger sister of the woman she loved, then Thicha followed her sister out. But just as she was about to leave, her eyes caught sight of a beautiful, sharp-featured woman walking toward her.

Tichila had been so focused on others, she hadn't even noticed this person was there.

Pittinan gave a gentle smile and handed something she had taken out of her shirt pocket to the taller woman in front of her.

She said just a few quiet words before saying goodbye and walking awayjust like everyone else had.

Tichila stood there, watching with a heart that felt completely shattered. Her eyes stayed fixed on the fragile figure of the woman she loved so deeply.

That body she once held in her arms every night... was now being held by another-by the man who was now her husband.

He was the one who had the right to stand by her side, the one who would likely share the rest of her life with her.

He belonged in her world. He fit. Unlike Tichila-a woman with nothing to offer but herself.

The tears she had tried to hold back slowly slid down her cheeks. It felt like she was standing in the middle of a violent storm, alone, abandoned at the edge of a cliff, ready to fall at any moment.

It was lonely... empty... and so cold.

Her body felt like it might break apart completely. Her heart had already been crushed beyond repair. Though she had no visible wounds, the pain inside was unbearable-like she could barely breathe.

Her body was drained, too tired to even stand. The love she once held onto had faded away. The tears falling down her face left a trail-a mark that reminded her,

**Love has gone... and will never return.**

What remains from now were the lingering traces of sweet memories... left behind to remember.

From now on, all that's left is just the pain that will stay deep in her heart for as long as she's still breathing.

All that remains is just the broken pieces of love that were left behind, like ruins.

But that love will never disappear from her heart, as long as she's still breathing.

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