

Chapter 1

I sat in one of the few luxurious sports cars that existed in the country. But instead of feeling great, I felt uncomfortable with the owner, who now boasted about how rich and wealthy he was and when he started to work. If he could, he would show me his bank book.

"Na, you're very good at making money. You're still young, but you have so much money." I replied without showing any feeling even when I felt so annoyed.

What was I thinking? I should've followed my instinct. I should have known that I shouldn't give this guy a chance. He has nothing else but his luxurious car. If I have to guess, he must have a shady business that made a lot of money and laundered it like some celebrities these days.

"Do I have enough that you would give me a chance, Genlong?"

The driver was quick. I just pretended to admire him, and now he touched my leg. I looked at his rough hand with disgust and brushed it away.

"You're quick."

"I pursued you for a while now, Gen. Why don't you say yes now?"

"It has been two weeks. This is the first time I've come for dinner. Is this long?"

"If you don't like me, why did you get in my car?" Na started to get annoyed, but he was calm. I smiled at the corner of my mouth. I felt pathetic towards him.

"I wanted to know what will happen next."

"Do you know now?"

"You did not pass. Let's go home." I replied coldly with a don't-care attitude. It seemed like I hurt his ego. He probably never got rejected like this before. He was now fussy and turned the wheel to the side of the road. He exploded and hit the steering wheel with his hand.

Smack!

"I'm not a toy. Are you playing with me?"

"Did it hurt?" I looked at him, who tried to be so dramatic. What did he expect from me? Did he want to see me cry? Why was he so angry? I did not understand this kind of person.

"You played me! Of course, it hurts."

Why was he so stupid? I asked about the steering wheel, not about other stuff.

"When did I play you? Did I ever give you false hope? You invited me out for dinner. Here I am. Now I'm telling you that it didn't work. That's it."

"No one ever did this to me."

"Because those girls could be bought." I smiled bitterly. I might have hit the spot. Now he looked at me angrily.

"Didn't you get in my car because I have money too?"

"That's it." I sighed with tiredness. "I couldn't date a beggar. Yes, you have money, but in the bigger picture, you're not in my league. You wouldn't pass."

"Do you know who I am?!" All of a sudden, the guy had amnesia.

These new rich men who recently made money from shady businesses for 3-5 years were always hot-tempered. They never had to wait. When they

were annoyed, they liked to boast about who they were and how big they were.

But it was not their lucky day; they had to deal with me today.

"Yes, I knew you have some big connection, but do you know what..." I looked at the owner of the car and smiled. "Do you know who my father is?"

"If you did not know, someone will introduce themselves at your house today. So you will know me better. Even a son of a minister couldn't annoy me this much."

We both stared at each other for a long time, like we were fighting. I caught him nervously diverting his eyes. He wouldn't want to do this.

"I.....I'm sorry."

"Keep your sorry and drop me off at a mall. And stay away from me from now on. I wouldn't let it go again if this happens."

He finally dropped me off at the mall and drove off. He did not even make eye contact. I wasted my time with something nonsense, but at least I got rid of something useless in my life. It wasn't a total waste of time.

So he wasn't the one for me.

I decided to have a date with Na today because I wanted to prove something that my fortune-teller friend said to me.

I had been waiting for two weeks, and last night was finally my queue. My friend, who was my close friend, Chubby, and also a famous fortune teller.

Fortune Teller Pani.

I called my chubby tomboy friend. She could read Gypsy cards, telephone numbers, car registration numbers, and house registration numbers. She was good at reading other people's horoscopes, except her own.

Girls always dumped her.

No, I won't talk about my friend's private life. I wanted to talk about my fortune that she read. I wasted 500 baht on her, and the answer was...

"You are about to meet your soul mate. She is a girl."

I complained so much to her after I heard that. I did not believe anything she said, even though she was my friend.

That's nonsense.

I, Genlong, could never date a woman. A silly fortune teller!

I was born perfect. If I died wasting myself with breasts, not with a penis, how would the underworld react to that!

God did not make me with that mistake!

I wouldn't give her any review or comment. She should go fool celebrities, ministers, or someone who would believe her. I wasted my 500 baht and that was it.

I shook the idea out of my head. I had many fun things to do today. I had an appointment with my old friends from elementary school. A friend whom I hadn't met for ten years. I was surprised with myself that I was excited to see her. I sacrificed my Korean series and came out to see her. I might still feel guilty from the look in her eyes from that day when I said it to her face.

"Leave me alone. You gave me lice."

Her tears and her sadness were still in my mind. It was something so small, but I felt so guilty. I did not feel guilty now, but I never forgot that.

I never forgot that I felt obligated to come out today to see her.

I was 2 hours early before the appointment time. I walked around inside a mall with nothing to do. But it was alright. It was better than going out with a loser man.

I spent time shopping and bought a few clothes that I wasn't sure I would wear. People always looked at me, which made me feel uncomfortable. I grabbed sunglasses in my bag and wore them inside a mall. I hate the looks when people stared at me. Even if it was a stare from admiration, I still did not like it. I loved my privacy. I did not like anyone to look at me or to be near me. If I loved to be in the spotlight, I would be in the entertainment business by now. The sunglasses helped me hide myself a bit; at least people did not know what I was thinking.

While I was on an escalator, I met a pair of eyes that rudely stared at me. I paused and made eye contact under sunglasses to let her know that I knew she was looking at me.

Weird, she did not give up.

Should I pick a fight with her?

A sweet-looking face girl, wearing square eyeglasses with a ponytail, old shirt but not dirty, looked at me curiously—too curiously, and it made me feel uncomfortable.

"Is everything ok?"

"Beautiful."

Stunned...

She looked at me admiringly. I meant to be mean to her, but now I was shy. I couldn't be mean toward people who admired me.

"Thank you." I smiled and did not complain.

"Excuse me then."

"You are beautiful like before."

"Yes?" I paused when I was about to turn around and walk away. The sweet-faced girl smiled at me as if she knew me for a long time.

"It's me, Gen... Aeoy. The friend who made you cut your hair because she gave you lice."

I did not know why I was so excited to see my old friend. We were apart for so long that there was an awkward feeling about it. But if we weren't close, I wouldn't be out like this.

I was happy to see her. **"Aeoy."**

My elementary school friend who looked mostly the same—cute, soft—except her glasses and her hair that now was longer. Her face structure changed because she was older. Her face, eyes, nose, and mouth looked better than when she was young, but nothing prominent about her. Why was that? There was something that I couldn't pinpoint.

"We haven't met for more than ten years. I thought you wouldn't want to see me," Aeoy said while we sat at a pizza shop. We did not know where to go. Pizza seemed easy.

"Yes, it has been a while. How are you?" I noticed that she paused a bit but smiled at me anyway.

"I'm fine." She nodded. I looked at her bag that seemed to be stuffed with clothes.

"Did you just come from the Northeast?"

"Yes, I planned to come into Bangkok and stay with my relative."

"I see." I did not know if I should ask her any more questions. I was not good at chitchat.

"Where do you study now?"

"I took a second entrance exam but did not get into a government university. So now I will study in a private university. That's good because now I have more time to work and earn a bit of money."

I felt guilty when she said she had to work for money. I never had to do anything like that since I was born. My parents gave me all the money I needed. I felt like I cheated everyone who had to work harder in this world.

"What about you, Gen? Where do you study now?"

"I passed the exam. I'm now in university. My life is pretty normal."

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

"No."

"Come on," she said in disbelief. "Is there any good-looking girl that is still single?"

"Me, I don't have a boyfriend."

"Why not?"

"I never met anyone who gets me." I said to her frankly and looked her in the eyes. She looked at me, considering. "I don't know how to explain. I never met anyone who gets me, who can make me feel sensitive."

"Wow, you don't look like someone with that emotion." Her sweet laugh under those square eyeglasses made me laugh too. She gave full attention to whomever she was speaking to. She made another person feel good.

While we talked, Aoey took off her glasses and wiped her face with a tissue. I looked at her admiringly. My heart skipped a beat when she looked at me with her light brown eyes.

My heart throbbed.

Throbbed.

There was something in that second that made me quickly grab my heart and squeeze it tight. It was not pain, but I did not know what it was. The beautiful eyes were surprised to see me like that.

"Are you ok, Gen?"

"I... I don't know." I turned my face the other way. What happened to me? That was crazy! "I have a pain in my heart."

"That is dangerous. I read it somewhere on the internet. You should visit a doctor."

"Aoey, put your glasses on."

"What?"

"Put them on."

Aoey was puzzled before putting her glasses back on. That made me calm down a bit. We caught up a bit more like old friends. We reminded each other about a funny memory when I stopped seeing her as a friend because I got lice. We laughed together.

"I was so sad then. I cried myself to sleep because you hated me."

"I'm so sorry. I wasn't a good kid. I still remember that."

"I forgave you because you saw me again today. Now we are back on the same track."

"Yes."

After a while, it was time to say goodbye. I did not drive today, so I had to call a taxi. But today, I did not want to separate from those beautiful eyes. So I invited her to share a cab. I volunteered to drop her at her relative's house first.

But...

I saw some hesitation in her look. Her face was full of worry. Even though it was a slight concern, I still spotted it.

"Is everything ok?"

"No, nothing. Let's go."

I knew something was wrong, but I did not want to press her too much. When I asked her for the direction, she sounded so confused. She couldn't explain the direction, and finally, she said: "*Soi Rangnam*."

The taxi took us there, which was not too far from the mall we were at. Once we arrived, I offered to walk her home, but she refused immediately.

"No, that's ok. I can go from here. Please go, Gen. You will need to find another taxi if you let this one go. I'll call you later."

"Okay."

I replied and let her do what she wanted. I did not believe her because it was obvious that she hid something from me. But it was not my place.

No, it was not my place.

Something, or maybe my guilt for blaming her for giving me lice, made me pay the taxi fare and get out. I walked back to where she was dropped off. She stood there at the same place, looking worried. Her lips shut tight. She was tense about something. I guess I knew now.

Was I a social worker?

"Aoey," I called out to her.

She was spooked and turned around to look at me.

"I don't feel right leaving you here alone. You don't have anywhere to go, right?" I said. I think I figured it out a while ago when we were in the car. But I did not care until now.

"N... No."

"Do you still have lice?" The beautiful-eyed girl shook her head.

"No."

"Then, you pass my evaluation. You can sleep at my place."

"But..."

"That's it."

I cut the conversation and walked ahead, sort of forcing her to follow me.
Damn it! Since when was I such a good person?

Well, it was payback for when I blamed her for giving me lice.



Chapter 2

We both arrived at my studio, the one my mom bought and gave to me. I only came here once in a while when I had a morning class or an early exam because it was right next to the university. Aoey put down her big backpack and looked around excitedly.

"Such a beautiful room."

"You can spend the night here then," I said.

The sweet-eyed girl looked at me with surprise.

"What about you, Gen?"

"I'll go home."

"No," Aoey shook her head. She really did not want that, and I did not know why. I sighed.

"If you don't want to sleep here, where are you going to sleep tonight then? You called me because you wanted my help from the beginning, didn't you?" I said it openly, and that took her aback. The embarrassment on her face made me feel guilty.

"I did not reach out to you for help. But you are the only friend I have in Bangkok, so I..."

"That's what friends are for. Don't worry about that."

No, this wasn't me. What I just said was a quote I often saw on Twitter or Facebook. I never liked that kind of cheesy post, let alone using it with this sweet-eyed girl.

Why did I do that?...

"I couldn't just stay here anyway. I shouldn't stay for free at least."

"Can we talk then?"

"Yes?"

I walked to a small built-in sofa near the door and crossed my legs. I looked at her while she stood there thinking about what to say. I wanted to know about Aoey's story. Why did she come to Bangkok without a plan?

"Why are you in Bangkok, Aoey?"

"I'm here for school and to get a job," she said without making eye contact. It was obvious that wasn't the only reason. There must be something else too.

"What about your parents? Teacher Salee? How come they let you come here?"

"I'm a big girl. I can take care of myself," she argued like a small kid. Teacher Salee was our teacher in elementary school. She was very strict, straight like a ruler. I was the daughter of a big policeman in the area. She didn't care about that at all, I remembered that well.

"Are you running away from home?"

"No."

The quick reply without thinking made me understand the big picture. The sweet-eyed girl looked like a grown woman, but she answered the question like a child. I saw some resistance in her. I wondered why she ran away.

"Well, you don't have to tell me if you're not ready."

"I did not reach out to you for help. I got your number from Si. She told me she met you in Phuket and exchanged her number with you. I asked for it just in case I wanted to see you. I did not think to..."

"You don't have to explain."

"I don't want you to misunderstand me."

Not only was she like a child, but she also loved her honor. I smiled a bit and pretended that this was not an issue. It really wasn't a real issue. Let me just help her out for now.

"You stay here tonight then. And stay here until you know where to go."

"I won't stay," the sweet-eyed girl confirmed. "It's too comfortable. I don't like it."

"?" I frowned when I heard her reason. "What do you mean, 'too comfortable'?"

"It was too good. You haven't met me for ten years and now offer to help. I gave you lice once, remember?"

Why was she so cute? Finally, I laughed out loud and pleaded for her to stay.

"Please, I beg you to stay. You stay here tonight. If you leave, I don't think I can sleep tonight. Are you really worried about me?"

Her question made me think twice. Did I really worry about her? A friend whom I hadn't met for ten years? Did I really worry about her?

"Ummm."

The sweet-eyed girl stunned and diverted her gaze.

"I don't know why, but that made me feel shy."

"Don't be cute." I touched her hair gently with admiration. "Spend the night here tonight then."

The sweet-eyed girl gently pulled on my shirt. I looked at her in surprise.

"Yes?"

"Sleep with me tonight, Gen. I don't have lice."

I burst out laughing at her funny statement.

"Are you afraid of ghosts? Is this why you wanted me to sleep here?"

"I am not afraid of ghosts!" The sweet-eyed girl looked at me with confirmation. Even when I looked at her eyes through the glasses, I still shook me.

"Ok, I believe you. I'll sleep with you tonight. But I have to call home first."

"Ok, thank you, Gen."

The smaller friend smiled at me widely. It made me feel shy because in my life I never did anything to please anyone and make them so happy. It might be the same feeling as when I released a bird, fish, or made merit. It was that kind of feeling. I smiled at her and walked out to call my mom, telling her I'd spend the night at the condo.

"Are you really staying at the condo? I hope you don't plan to spend the night at a guy's house," my mom's voice teased me from the phone, making me roll my eyes almost back into my brain.

"Don't tease me like that. Is dad there? He will send someone over to the condo again this time."

"No, he is not here. I couldn't say that if he was here."

"Where is he?"

"He said he has a work meeting."

"Do you believe him? Does he have a mistress?"

"Maybe."

"Yes, please call him."

I chatted with her a bit more and hung up the phone. When I turned around, Aoey wasn't too far from me.

"Oh! Aoey, I already told my mom that I'll sleep here."

"You're quite close to your mom. That's good."

"Yes, my dad too."

"You're lucky."

I looked at her and noticed a sad look on her face. I thought back about Teacher Salee. She was very strict. She won't be close to her daughter. We should change the subject. I wasn't good at consoling people, especially with family issues.

"Let's take a shower and go to bed."

"You sleep so early."

"No, usually I watch some Korean series before bed. What about you? What do you usually do?"

"I like listening to music, practicing my music, and writing a novel."

"You do a lot of things, and you can play music?"

"Yes, I can play a bit. My senior friend at school teaches me to play this and that, but I'm not that good."

"What about a novel?"

"Yes, I am a writer. I have some followers." She smiled with her eyes too. That kind of smile made me smile too.

"I would love to read it sometimes." You're such a happy tiny girl.

I felt a bit awkward when I heard the shower noise. I mostly spent time by myself. Now I have a friend staying together, but it wasn't too bad. Now I waited for her to finish showering so I could get in. The sweet-eyed girl showered for around 15 minutes. She walked out with a loose old T-shirt and shorts.

But that worn-out T-shirt did not make her less distinguished. It could be the warm water, the heat, no glasses, or her long hair, or whatever it was. I could say that Aoey was a very good-looking girl.

Her mouth, neck, eyebrows, chin... all the features on her face fit together. I looked while she dried her hair and did not realize that I was now checking her out. She did not look this good when we were in elementary school. I wanted to tell her to stop wearing those silly glasses and pulling her hair up all the time. It made her look so simple.

"Are you checking me out?" Aoey said, and that made me jump as if I did something wrong. I laughed nervously when I made eye contact with her.

"I'm sorry. I'm just surprised that you have grown so much."

"You grew up too. You looked good when you were young, but now you look even more perfect."

I smiled and felt a bit shy. I received this kind of comment all my life, but I did not know why I felt shy when the sweet-eyed girl said it.

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

"Why? Are you hitting on me?"

"No!" I replied immediately. Aoey laughed out loud and gave me a big smile.

"How come you're so serious when you get teased? You've never liked anyone before in your life?"

"Um, no, I never liked anyone."

"What type of people do you like? I'm curious."

"I want to know too."

We both looked at each other in a quiet moment. It was a very simple conversation, but I did not know why it made both of us nervous. I seemed to realize the awkwardness first, so I got up abruptly.

Thump thump...

"I'll take a shower and then let's go to bed."

"Okay."

My heart throbbed again. Something squeezed the left side of my chest, but it wasn't painful. It was the second time today. I might be getting sick. Mom would be so worried if I told her. I should have that checked at a hospital.

I shook my head, trying to forget about that, and went to shower. Twenty minutes later, I walked out after putting lotion on my face. Aoey was looking at her computer that she had brought with her. She seemed to be looking up something on the internet.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm checking the feedback on my e-novel. I uploaded the ending today and got good feedback."

"What's the story? I want to read it sometime."

"No, I'm embarrassed."

"What?!"

"You should wait for the new one." The sweet-eyed girl shut her laptop and placed it gently on the table as if she wouldn't want to make a mess. "Let's sleep."

"Okay."

I walked to the switch, turned it off, and walked back to my king-size bed. I never shared a bed with anyone before. Only when I was young did I share a room with my brother, but that was a long time ago. It was a bit awkward. Where should I put my hands? I needed my side pillow.

"Sorry to disturb you. I will stay here only one night."

"Where are you going after tonight?"

"So many places to sleep. I'll be okay. I have other friends in Bangkok apart from you, Gen."

I did not say anything else. If she insisted that she was okay, it wasn't my problem. I just acknowledged it and said goodnight. I couldn't see anything, not even my hands, because it was a very dark room.

I felt odd having someone else next to me when I slept. I flipped and flopped all night because I worried that I would hug her during the night, thinking she was a side pillow. I was not sure how she would think if I did that. I was always nervous to touch other people, even if she was a woman like me.

Tick tick tick...

The sound of the clock ticking on the wall was so frustrating. I couldn't sleep because of it. Now the person next to me was already snoring. She must be exhausted. I turned over to the side and pushed myself up to look at the sweet-eyed girl next to me. My eyes had already adjusted to the darkness in the room. How could she sleep so well while I was wide awake?

"Arg!"

Aoey woke up frightened while I quickly lay down, pretending to be sleeping. The sweet-eyed girl sat up with heavy breathing like she was scared of something. I took a peek at her. I saw Aoey put her face down in both of her palms like she was crying.

She was crying?

It was like a silent weep. Aoey lay back down quietly and turned her back toward me. I did not know what happened, but my heart felt pain. What was it? Sympathy?

"Gen, are you sleeping?"

Aoey asked while her face was still turned away from me. I did not know why, but I did not reply and pretended to sleep.

"You sleep deeply."

Aoey talked to herself. I, still pretending to sleep, turned over and put my arm around her waist as if I was hugging her. She flinched a bit and slowly tried to take my arm off. My stubbornness made me hug her even tighter. I could feel her tense up, but I pretended to be in a deep sleep.

"Ummm..."

The sweet-eyed girl froze and tried to remove my arm again. But I hugged her tighter, so she just lay there, frozen.

My nose was at the back of her head. It made me feel nervous and hot. I pretended to sleep like that for a while.

I did not know how long it was until Aoey closed her eyes and her breathing became slow and steady. I realized she had finally fallen asleep again.

Great! Now I made her sleep while I couldn't sleep.

Great!

Chapter 3

"Why do you look so tired?"

My mom asked as I slept on a big sofa in the middle of the house around 1 o'clock. I had returned home to pack more clean clothes to stay at the condo again. My tiredness made my mom suspicious.

"Did you really sleep at the condo? Why do you look so tired? Did you do something bad?"

"If it weren't for Leonardo DiCaprio, I would never do this for any man," I replied to my mom, who had woken me up after I had napped for 10 minutes. "Thank you, Mom."

"Why do you look so tired?"

"I saw a ghost last night. I couldn't sleep."

"We never made merit after we bought this condo."

"Do we need to do that when we buy a condo? But don't worry, ghosts can't hurt me. I'll go pack some clothes."

"Ah?" My mom looked at me questioningly. I continued preparing.

"My school schedule is out, and I have a morning class every day. I don't want to commute every day. I came home to talk to you about this. By the way, have you seen Somkit?"

"Maybe he's in front of your dad's office. Have you seen your dad since you've been home?"

"No, not yet. Excuse me then."

Since I left my condo, I had thought a lot about my old friend from school. There was a mix of curiosity and worry. It was quite certain that she had run away from home. But why did she leave? What drove her, with only 420 baht in her wallet, to come to Bangkok, where the cost of living is so high that one meal would cost more than a hundred baht?

Before I went to my room, I stopped by my dad's office. I didn't have enough time to talk to my dad, but I wanted to speak to his close aide first.

"Hello, Uncle Somkit."

"Hello, Gen."

Uncle Somkit was my dad's close aide. He was a 40-year-old man with a lot of experience. He was an influential figure, especially in a grey area. I wouldn't describe it in detail because my dad never wanted me involved in that.

"I have a favor to ask, but please don't tell Dad."

When I said this, the stern-faced man looked worried.

"It's nothing serious. I just need some help. I want him to know something but not everything."

"What is it about?"

"I have a friend from elementary school. I want to know something about her. I think you can help me easily."

This wasn't a difficult task for Uncle Somkit. He had handled much more challenging tasks than this. If my dad didn't have him as his aide, Dad wouldn't be where he is today.

"You want me to find information about your friend?"

"Yes."

"What do you want to know?"

"Anything at all. Is it too much trouble for you?"

"Tell me her name and address. I'll have something for you in a week."

"Thank you."

That was one thing checked off my list. Next, I gathered all the clothes I didn't want and took them to my condo. I saw Aoey wearing old, worn-out clothes and made a mental note to give her my clothes. She should get rid of those old clothes. I had bought so many clothes, many of which I had only worn once because I didn't want people to see me in the same clothes twice. I could give them to her.

I felt guilty seeing her in those worn-out shirts. I packed and headed back to my condo, where I had left quite early that morning. When I arrived, I was shocked to see a letter left on the coffee table in front of the sofa. The messy handwriting on the paper made me squint my eyes as I tried to read it...

"Thank you for letting me spend the night. I'll get in touch with you later. Happy to see you, Gen."

After reading that short message, I felt weak and tired. I threw my Versace luggage, which was stuffed with my old clothes for her, on the floor. What was wrong with her? Did she think she could just show up whenever she wanted and leave whenever she wanted?

She didn't have much money with her, to begin with.

I canceled my plan to spend one more night here and left my luggage at the condo. It should be good that she left. I didn't have to worry or take care of anyone else. But I wasn't sure why I felt a bit...

Worried.

I looked at myself in the mirror in my car, wondering if I was really worried about other people. I knew myself well enough to know that I was a self-

centered person. I never thought about others. Even my mom was tired of me being so self-centered. I ignored my brother, and now I was worried about that sweet-eyed girl.

No, it wasn't me. I should be myself. My old self. I didn't care about her. It wasn't my business.

I started the car and drove out, listening to music and looking around the sidewalk until the car stopped at a traffic light. I saw a stray dog. Its body was so thin, like a skeleton. It walked around tiredly and slumped down on the side of the street, with no one caring about it.

Where was she going to sleep tonight? Was she going to sleep like that dog on the street?

I cringed in my stomach. I felt a sharp pain in my heart. I saw the street light and quickly took out my phone. I googled something quickly by typing in...

"Where can I sleep without spending money?"

Google can tell you anything. I stumbled upon a famous webpage with the exact question I asked. The answer was clear...

Temple...

I felt scared thinking about sleeping in a temple. No, I wasn't scared of ghosts. It was more awkward about being a girl sleeping in a temple. I had a headache thinking about the news on TV about a bad monk doing something to a girl. I was such a sinful person, but I couldn't help it. Her appearance was not normal.

She just didn't realize how good-looking she was...

Temple... there were so many temples in Bangkok. Let me think, if it were me, where would I go? She didn't have enough money for a taxi. She didn't know the way well enough to get on a bus.

The only possible option was to walk.

When I realized she would walk, I went back to my condo. I asked myself which way I would walk. I, who had never talked to the security guy or the receptionist, now smiled widely and asked them a question. It seemed to work; people always responded nicely.

"Where is the nearest temple around here?"

I got the answer and followed the directions. I never realized there was a temple around here. I didn't even know the name of the road. My mom got this condo because someone couldn't pay back their debt. So my mom took the room and gave it to me. I rarely came here, but now I thought I should visit more often.

I turned the car into Soi 11, which was four streets down the road. I arrived at a small local temple. I wasn't sure if I could find this on Google Maps. They shouldn't call it a temple. It was so quiet and deserted.

Even a ghost wouldn't live here.

I parked the car and got out, walking around to look for her. I wasn't sure if I would find the sweet-eyed girl here, but I had to try. I couldn't think of another place she might go.

Or... she might sleep in front of a Seven-Eleven.

How could I think of my friend like that?

I looked around the temple. People looked at me curiously. They didn't know what I was thinking under my sunglasses. I didn't like when people looked at me. Not many people liked being watched.

I walked around for 10 minutes and felt so disappointed. Aoey wasn't here. Most of the time, I was right about many things, including exams. But if she wasn't here, where could she be?

"Gen."

A clear voice called my name while I was deflated. I looked up and saw her drinking milk and eating a piece of bread. She looked so surprised.

"Aww."

"Why are you here, Gen?"

I was a genius. I was smart, beautiful, and a genius. I had to give myself a kiss when I got home.

"Aoey, why did you leave?" I spoke coldly and took off my sunglasses. I looked at her fiercely.

"Are you out of your mind? You just left a note!"

"No, I hate saying goodbye."

"Don't you hate sleeping in a temple?"

"Who told you I'm going to sleep here?"

"Aren't you? You're not smart, Aoey. Not smart and very annoying. You could be proud, but don't make other people worry." I grabbed her wrist and dragged her back to the car, but she resisted.

"Don't touch me!"

I blinked in surprise. Aoey looked as surprised as I was. She folded her arms across her chest and turned her back to me. She looked at the snacks and milk on the floor and changed the subject.

"Look! It's all on the floor, my first meal of the day."

"If you're hungry, you need to eat rice, not snacks." I tried not to focus on her rejection and concentrated on her first meal.

"It fills me up too."

"Aoey!" She flinched after I yelled at her. I felt sorry for yelling that loud.

"I'm sorry for being upset, Aoey. I'm so worried about you. Let's go home. I will never let you sleep in a temple, and you can't say no," I said before she

could reply. "Please, come back with me."

"Do what I said!"

Aoey was stunned and nodded when I was harsh with her.

"Okay."

Finally, she followed me to the car. We grabbed her bag and got in. It was dead silent as we drove home. I knew I was in a bad mood.

"How did you know I was at the temple?"

"Guess."

"You're good. Is there anything you don't know?"

I didn't know myself. Why did I have to look for a long-lost friend from elementary school? Why did I have to beg her to come home with me? I didn't understand it.

Oh, it was frustrating.

"I don't know why you ran away from home."

Silence...

Nothing came from the sweet-eyed girl. There was something she was hiding and wouldn't tell me about. But it was okay; I had already asked Uncle Somkit to find out. I would know soon.

"But it's okay. It's not as important as where you'll sleep tonight." I sighed.
"You'll sleep with me from now on."

"What?"

"I'm moving to the condo now. My class schedule has moved to the morning. My mom's house is a bit too far from my university. I don't like sleeping alone in the condo."

"Are you afraid of ghosts?"

"Yes." This wasn't like me. I wasn't sure why I had to lie.

"How could I stay for free?"

"I never said you could stay for free. I thought you'd look for a job."

"Yes, but it won't be enough for your rent, water, and electricity bills."

Now I was annoyed with her.

"More than money, you'll need to clean, take care of my stuff, and find me some food. Can you cook?"

The sweet-eyed girl started nodding in agreement. Her top bun bobbed with each nod, which made me smile.

"That's good. If you're useful, it isn't a problem."

"I'll stay with you until I can rent my own place. I'll pay rent and be useful."

"Okay, it's a deal."

"Deal!"

Finally...

Chapter 4

I had been confused lately. I sympathized with others and even begged Aoey to live with me. I didn't gain anything from this arrangement. If I needed a maid, I could have asked someone at home, but I had asked Aoey to move in instead. It seemed so nonsensical. Why had I done that?

It had been a week since Aoey moved in with me, and I hadn't been home for a week either. It took me a while to adjust, but now I felt comfortable with her. We talked and consulted each other, even though sometimes I didn't fully understand her.

"Did you know that you can mix fabric softener with water to clean the floor? It makes the floor dust-free."

"Really? That's amazing." I acted surprised, though I didn't really care about the method as long as the floor was clean. I would have paid someone to do it for me, but she had initiated the conversation.

Aoey was now cleaning the floor with a mop. I admired her diligence and effort to be useful. She had gotten a job at a convenience store and, after work, came home to clean my place. She did everything without ever being lazy.

"Will you have time to go to school?"

"If I study at an open university, I'll have time."

"Why don't you try for an entrance exam at a government university?"

"I'm not that smart. I don't think I could compete with others. I can study anywhere. It doesn't matter."

"We have such different ideas. My family put so much pressure on me to get into a government university. It was considered the first step in my career. My dad even tried to bribe me with a Patek Philippe watch as a reward if I got in."

"Is that the name of a magician?"

"I just said it's a watch brand."

Some people were indifferent to luxury brands. For Aoey, Patek Philippe was as unknown as Lee Min Ho being a boy band singer.

Did she even know who Lee Min Ho was?

"You're smart. You don't have to study hard. You actually don't have to work and can live comfortably. You're perfect—beautiful, rich, and smart," Aoey said, looking into my eyes as if she wanted me to understand that she meant it. But every time I looked her in the eyes, I felt shy and had to look away.

"You don't wear glasses anymore."

"I'm cleaning. I don't need them."

"Do you wear them at work?"

"Sometimes."

"You should wear them."

"Why?"

"I don't know, but you should." I looked at her directly despite feeling weak. I needed to tell her to do what I asked. Aoey nodded in agreement.

"Okay, I'll wear them."

"You should pull your hair up and skip the makeup."

Aoey smiled after I made so many requests. I knew it was a lot to ask, and I didn't fully understand why her makeup bothered me.

"No, I won't."

"Good." I was worried about her. She was so naive and beautiful that people could harm her.

"I think my salary from the convenience store isn't quite enough. I should find another job."

"Are you working too hard? You're so tiny."

"There will be something I can do."

After Aoey finished cleaning, we sat together and watched TV. This was another activity where I felt comfortable with her.

We talked about Korean actors and series. We shared many interests, which made me realize the meaning of intimacy.



Knock, knock.

There was a knock on the door. I grabbed the remote control and hit pause, pausing the actor's wide-mouthed expression. Aoey got up to answer the door. I saw my brother, Great, in his school uniform, looking surprised to see a stranger.

"Is this room 1725?" Great asked, taking a few steps back to double-check the number. I called out from inside.

"Come in. I'm here."

Great poked his head in and saw me, looking surprised to find that I had a visitor—a "friend."

"I didn't realize you had friends," Great said, pointing at Aoey with a surprised look.

"My name is Aoey." Aoey, without her glasses, smiled at my brother, leaving him stunned.

"Great, you're being rude. Don't stare at her," I said.

He smiled and nodded shyly.

"Hello," Great said.

"You two look alike—Great and Gen," Aoey remarked, looking at Great thoughtfully. "If you were a man, you'd look like this."

"Why are you here?" I cut off the conversation, feeling annoyed with both of them, perhaps a bit too much.

Great, carrying his school bag, sat down next to me and pouted.

"I miss you."

"Come on."

"It's true. Mom said you weren't coming home for a week. I thought you might have a boyfriend here. I wanted to see what kind of man could win your heart, but it turns out to be a woman. Ouch! Why did you hit me?"

I hit him for not understanding me. He should know me better than this. I wasn't an "easy" person. I welcomed everyone but had never had anyone "invade" my space.

"What do you think when you see a woman?"

"It's still weird. I didn't know you had friends."

"Why not?"

"You're not a good friend. Ouch! You hit me again." I smacked him on the head with a sound like a drum. Aoey laughed at the scene.

"You two are so cute," Aoey said, checking her watch. "Oops, I have to go, Gen. I've cleaned everything now. You can make a mess again. I'll be back to clean it later. Bye!"

"Okay," I replied, watching Aoey walk out.

"Don't forget your glasses!" I reminded her. Aoey walked back, smiling at me with her whole face.

"Okay."

Once my brother saw her leave, he got up excitedly, ready to speak, but Aoey rushed back in. She walked in clumsily and tipped over. . My brother moved to support her, but—

"LET GO!"

Her yell and the force of her rejection brought silence to the room. Great and I were stunned by the loud noise and fierce reaction. I had never seen her like this before.

"I'm sorry. I'm in a hurry. I forgot my mobile phone."

"Be quick."

Aoey grabbed her phone, looked at me, and then walked out. I shrugged, signaling her to go to work. Once the door was completely shut and I was sure she wouldn't return, Great broke the silence.

"Your friend is weird."

"Weird how?"

"She seems sweet, but at the same time, she's hiding something inside." Great put his hand over his chest. "Fascinating." He looked like he was daydreaming.

"Don't be silly. Do you know what's fascinating?"

"Of course, I do. She's like you, Gen. All men are fascinated by you too. They want to know what you're thinking."

"Come on, know-it-all boy. Are you fascinated by me too?"

"I'm not fascinated by you. I know you all my life. But your friend, Aoey..."

"You should go home."

"What?! I'm not done talking, and you're already changing your tone. I'm here because I miss you. I haven't seen you for a week."

"If you miss Mom, go home to see her, not me!"

"You have such a bad mouth. By the way, do you know if Aoey has a boyfriend? Go home!"

"What?! I'm your brother. Stop kicking me out the door."

"You are annoying. Go home!" Great looked confused but slowly got up, grabbing his school bag.

"By the way, don't tell Mom that I'm with a friend," I warned him.

"Why?"

"I'm not ready to explain. I don't want to explain to Mom and Dad the same way I have to explain to you that I have a friend."

"Why are you acting like you're living with your partner?"

He started to realize I was genuinely annoyed. He finally left. Once I was alone, I began to process what had just happened.

Why did Aoey reject help from Great? He was just trying to help.

It didn't seem normal. Should I ask her about it?

I waited until Aoey came home later. When she arrived, she let her hair down. Her long hair was wavy after being tied up all day. I watched her quietly as she walked toward me. I bent down next to her face.

"Aoey," I said teasingly.

She jumped, startled as if she'd been electrocuted. She tried to hit me, but I quickly blocked her hand. We stared at each other, and she backed away when she realized it was me.

"I... I'm sorry."

"Are you okay? You don't look fine at all," I said, stepping closer. She moved away quickly.

"Nothing."

"Why did you try to hit me?"

"I just got startled."

"That was a bit of an overreaction." I reached out to her, and under her square glasses, I saw her beautiful eyes. "Let me see if you're okay." I reached in to check again.

Aoey retreated and folded her arms. Her sweet eyes looked away in another direction.

"You don't want me to touch you."

"N... No, not like that." She looked so scared and nervous that I felt pity for her. Her shaky hand reached out to touch me. "Here, I'll touch you now."

Grab!

I grabbed her wrist and squeezed tightly. Aoey looked shaken and scared. This wasn't normal.

"Why are you so scared to be touched?"

"You can tell me, Aoey."

Aoey's face showed discomfort. Now I was really curious about what was going on. She looked at the floor and replied in a whispery voice.

"I think other people are dirty."

"Including me?"

I let go of her hand, feeling bad but trying to understand. People were different; I hated geckos, and she might be okay with them. It wasn't her fault.

"You are different."

"Oh?"

"I don't feel that you're dirty."

"Why are you so afraid of me then?"

She looked at me with tear-filled sweet eyes. From her sad look, I had no idea what it meant.

"I feel dirtier than you, and I don't want you to be stained with my dirt."

What was this?

That was the end of our conversation. We took turns showering and then went to bed. We didn't discuss anything more, but we weren't mad at each other. The atmosphere was still heavy and stressful. I didn't know what that was.

Then, I just wanted to do this...

I didn't know why...

I moved toward Aoey, who had turned her back to me. I put my arm around her waist. She was a bit jumpy; I knew she hadn't fallen asleep yet.

"Let me hold you. Maybe you'll feel better," I said, closing my eyes. I rested my face on the back of her neck and pulled her in tight, to make her feel 'not dirty.'

"You don't have to worry at night if I pretend to hug you again."

"You pretended to hug me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"If I hold you, you'll sleep better," I said. "I'm going to sleep now. Let me know if you feel uncomfortable."

"If I'm uncomfortable, will you stop hugging me?"

"No, I'll keep hugging you. When you're jumpy, it wakes me up too. So, if you sleep well, I sleep well too."

"You're still self-centered like when we were young."

Aoey patted my hand gently, as if to say thank you. We slept that night soundly, without Aoey waking up again.

Chapter 5

I liked to win...

Aoey was always jumpy when I walked past or touched her, so I tried to touch her as often as possible to break the ice and build new habits. It seemed to work—not a hundred percent, but definitely better than before. Aoey got used to me touching her, which made me feel like a winner. I was ready for the behavior-changing award.

Cool...

I felt good that she let me touch her, more than Great. I was sure I was her closest friend in the world. But her statement that day was still in my mind, buried deep in my thoughts. Why did she view me differently from others?

What did I do that made her think I was better (cleaner) than other people? I was a bit upset when she said I was clean and she was dirty when she was with me.

I wasn't a detergent.

I thought about many things while watching her work quietly, typing in her notebook. She caught me looking.

"I can't work if you're going to look at me like that," she said, glancing at me with a look that melted me. "Do you have something to say?"

"No." I stretched and looked away nervously. "I just thought you're very serious when you work."

"I'm writing a novel. I'll publish it at night. How am I going to finish if you keep staring at me?"

"I'm not being loud."

"But the way you look at me—it feels strange."

"Oh?"

"It's like I'm being touched."

My face was stunned when she said that. Aoey laughed out loud when she saw my reaction.

"See, this is why I can't focus on work. Instead of looking at my computer, I'm now looking at you. Your eyes are so beautiful; how can I look away?" Aoey said, resting her chin on her palm. "Don't look at other people like this."

"I mostly wear sunglasses. But if you feel uncomfortable, I'll wear them."

"It's the opposite of uncomfortable. I said your eyes are beautiful. If you were a man, I'd be so sensitive."

Throb, throb...

My heart beat loudly, like a drum in a battle. It pounded hard, like I'd had a heavy workout, especially when I looked into her eyes.

Blush... Why did I feel like this?

"Aoey"

"Yes?"

"Why do you think I'm clean and you're dirty?" I finally asked what had been on my mind. She looked nervous when I brought it up. I wasn't sure if I'd asked something too sensitive.

"Did I say that? I don't remember. It might not mean anything."

"Why am I cleaner than other people? Why don't you want others to touch you?" I looked directly at her, wondering why I was so curious about her. The question had lingered since last night.

The sweet-eyes realized I was serious and shut her computer. She took off her glasses and looked me in the eyes.

"You, Gen, are out of my league."

"Ah?" I frowned. I'd started by challenging her, but now I was confused. "What do you mean?"

"I've always admired you, Gen. Since we were in elementary school. You're cute, proud, rich, with respectable parents." The sweet-eyes shrugged. "You were so charming and in control. You could tell people what to do. You looked good even when you were self-centered. And now you're the same—beautiful, in control, charming, even when you speak, move, or look."

"These are just physical things."

"Other factors too. You're smart, got good grades, come from a good family. You're so perfect. Too perfect to be...a human being."

What! What was I then?

"Compared to me, I have nothing. I'm from the upcountry and came to the city with only 500 baht. We're so different. I'm still surprised why you let me live with you. Why have you never discriminated against me?"

"Why would I do that?"

"There are many things you don't know about me, Gen. If you knew, you might think I'm a piece of trash." There was sadness in her voice. Her beautiful eyes looked sad, and I couldn't stand it.

"You're not disgusted by me now, right?"

"No, it's not a disgusting feeling. You're different from other people."

"Then prove it."

"Ah?"

I looked at the smaller girl and smiled. I gestured for her to come closer, instead of walking toward her.

"Come here. Let me touch you."

Aoey looked puzzled. She awkwardly got up, walked toward me, sat down next to me, and touched my arm gently, as if to prove that what she said was true.

"See? I'm not disgusted by you. I just don't feel like I belong here."

I cupped my hands around her face and forced her to look me in the eyes. Aoey was a bit stiff when I touched her intimately like that, but she was much better than before.

"I couldn't tell just from touching your arm. You have to do this." Not only did I cup her face with my hands, but I also gently rubbed her smooth cheeks. "Your skin is so smooth. What cream do you use?"

"The same brand you're using."

"La Mer?"

"I don't know. I stole it from you. I wanted to be beautiful like you."

Our conversation was trivial. We just wanted to talk to each other.

"You're not afraid of me anymore, right?" I asked. She nodded.

"I think I feel good when you touch me. It's strange. I've never felt like that before."

Aoey reached out her hand and gently touched the back of mine. We looked into each other's eyes. There were no words, just long eye contact. Her

beautiful light brown eyes looked at me like she was entranced, and I was entranced too. I didn't know what made me want to get closer to her...

Throb, throb...

Throb, throb...

What was I doing?

"I don't want to talk to you now. Go back to your work." I got up to take a shower, trying to shake off the atmosphere by changing the subject. "Are you applying to any schools?"

"No, I want to save more money."

"When do you think you can do that?"

"I don't know."

"Umm..."

I let the subject pass and went to shower and get ready for school. When Aoey went into the shower, I quickly opened her notebook and checked her novel. What was the story, what was the website, what was the pen name?

Did I care too much about another human being? That wasn't like me at all. I cared about her future, especially if she wasn't planning to go to school.

Should I do something to help her?

This wasn't me at all...

I sat in a lecture room, pretending to listen to the teacher while actually reading Aoey's novel. I never cared to read anything else except for exams. I didn't even read Harry Potter; it just didn't entertain me. I preferred movies or music. But now I was reading Aoey's book, and it wasn't bad.

I remembered an interview with a celebrity who advised that if you want to enjoy a novel more, replace the names of celebrities you like with the characters. I used this technique in Aoey's book. It actually was a good romance novel.

Many people read it too...

I wondered what she gained from posting this novel. She didn't get anything at all. It seemed like a waste of time.

"What are you reading, my dear?"

Ja-Aeh, my classmate, poked her head to see my phone's screen. She raised an eyebrow and smiled when she saw me looking at her. She ignored my annoyance with her nosy habit. She was a nice, friendly friend, but I didn't want to talk to her.

I just didn't like making friends.

"This is the Dekdee website. I read it too. What are you reading?" Ja-Aeh didn't care that I was agitated. Now I was reading a scene where the characters were being naughty under a blanket. "Oh! That's a good one. Aoey is a good writer."

When I heard Aoey's name from Ja-Aeh, I felt so proud of my friend. She was a famous writer.

"Yes, it's good."

"It needs some good rewriting. It could be a self-published book."

"What's that?"

"It's a book that writers write, publish, and sell themselves. They can make a lot of money. I think writers from websites do this."

"Really? Good money? How much is good money?"

"I don't know, but I think they can make a six-digit income. Each book costs a lot, and if there are many orders, they make a lot of money."

"Thank you, my good friend."

I smiled back at my friend for the first time, feeling ten times bigger in heart. Ja-Aeh looked at me shyly, caught off guard.

"Wh... what did I do?"

"You helped a person pay their tuition fee."

I talked with Aoey about self-publishing. She shook her head in disagreement.

"No, I don't have money."

I knew what her problem was. Money was never a problem for me, but when I was about to say something, she cut me off immediately.

"I want to work with a publisher. I don't want to invest anything myself. If my work is good, someone will invest in it. I think it's risky to publish my own book. What if no one orders it? I'd lose my self-confidence. People like to read for free; that's what they like."

She was so problematic. I sighed heavily and wrapped my arms around my chest, looking at her with agitation. She had no clue how upset I was because she kept refusing every offer I made, as if it were a dangerous thing.

"Have you ever sent your work to any publishers?" I asked.

"Yes, I've sent some, but I never got any reply."

"What if they never respond? You'll publish a book in your next life." My tone was tough because I wasn't happy that she refused to fight for her dreams.

"Don't worry. I'll pay for your publishing."

"No."

Now her tone was tougher than mine. I didn't understand why she had to refuse every offer as if it were a threat.

"Why?"

"It's none of your business. This is my business."

Silence fell between us. I nodded slowly at her words, avoiding eye contact. Aoey quickly realized that wasn't the right thing to say and tried to brush it off.

"That's not what I meant."

"Forget about it."

"No, we can't just forget about it. I just...just..." The beautiful eyes bit her lip. I tried to walk away, but she pulled my shirt. "I don't want you to feel more pity for me."

"Ah?" I looked at her curiously. Tears were filling those beautiful eyes.

"It's generous enough for you to let me stay here. If you help me more, how can I repay you?"

"It's not a matter of feeling pity. I never thought of it like that."

"I wanted to be your friend without you feeling like I'm taking advantage of you. It's enough for me to be your friend. People like you should not get involved with people like me."

"People like me are not that great," I said, upset by how she looked down on herself. "I haven't done anything to be considered that great. I've never earned money. I've never worked in a convenience store. All I do is ask my parents for money."

"In my opinion, you...are the best." Her beautiful eyes looked at me, as if trying to see inside me. "I wanted to rise to your level. That's what I wanted."

Throb, throb...

"Aoey..."

"Please don't help me. I'll handle this myself. Please."

My heart beat faster again.

My head spun a bit. I didn't have many friends. I didn't know that someone would try so hard in a relationship, wanting to rise to my level and look me in the eye. It made me feel weak. I had to look away.

"What can I do if you say this?"

"Thank you for understanding." Aoey looked a bit awkward before sliding into me and hugging me. She still didn't like to be touched, but she hugged me because she cared about me.

"Don't be angry about what I said. That it's not your business. I didn't mean it like that..."

"I understand now."

The smaller girl looked up from my chest, surprised.

"Your heart is beating so fast."

"I think so too. I should visit a doctor. I think something's wrong with my body."

"You should see a doctor. If you die, I'll be so sad."

I closed my eyes and pushed her face away teasingly, but I was actually afraid of those beautiful eyes. I didn't want to get too close.

"You sweet talker. Are you worried you'll be homeless if I die?"

"I'm worried I won't have anyone to hug...Gen!"

I sat down on the floor, exhausted. My heart was racing, and my body felt weak when I heard that. I needed dinner, I guessed. But my legs felt too weak.

"What happened? Did you faint?"

The smaller friend wanted to pick me up, but I brushed her off. I felt like I was losing to something.

"I'm okay. I'm fine. Don't come any closer." I waved my arms.

Aoey paused and tilted her head, looking at me like a curious kitten.

"What's happening to you?"

"I'm losing..."

"To what?"

I didn't answer but sat there quietly. Aoey kept looking at me, and I didn't know how to explain it.

I was losing to her!

Chapter 6

"How much money can you make selling a novel?"

I proposed the self-publishing novel project to my mother, who was an investor. She looked surprised and laughed. I knew she could easily give me the money, but she had to ask questions and make it more difficult.

"Quite a bit. And you don't have any savings?"

"Yes, I have savings, but I don't want my friend to know that I'm an investor. Money is always a sensitive issue. She once said she didn't want to lose a friend because of money."

"Don't do it then if she's so worried about that."

I thought she was playing hard to get. She knew I didn't like to beg. It was tiring.

"If you call your friend who owns a publishing company and put money into it, I'll remember this till the day I die."

My mom looked at me in surprise. She gave me a gentle smile. I had never asked her for anything before; she knew I had a big ego. But if I begged her this much, it meant it was a big deal for me. She nodded in agreement.

"Okay, you begged for it. How did you know this friend, though? I don't see you having many friends. Do I know her?"

"My childhood friend. I don't think you'll remember her. I just want to help her, and I can see it will make money. It might be a small amount for you, but it's a lot for her."

"I see. Are you someone's *'Daddy Long Legs'*? This is what cool people do."

"If my friend finds out I was behind her success, she'll be so pleased and appreciative. If he were a man, he'd be down on his knees in front of me, but if she were a girl, she'd transform into a man and devote herself to me too."

"Your life is complicated."

It was even worse than a bad novel.

In the end, I had a business deal with my mom. We chatted for a while, and I had to leave. As I walked to my car, Somkit ran after me with a big smile.

"Gen!"

"Yes?"

"I got some information about the girl you asked about."

"The girl I asked about?" I looked at him blankly, then remembered what he was talking about.

"Ah, yes. What's the update, please?"

I was excited to know more about the girl I had been living with for two weeks now. Even though we talked and slept next to each other, I barely knew things about her. She still didn't talk about herself much. Today, I would find out what happened to her.

"It was a tough story."

I looked at my friend, who was heating some pork balls and boasting about how great they were. I looked at her... for a long time... long time.

"Your friend has a sexual issue with her stepfather."

That was the reason she ran away. I didn't dare to ask her directly; even if I did, I wasn't sure she would tell me. We weren't that close.

"Aoey." I called her. She turned and gave me a sweet smile under the glasses I had asked her to wear to hide her eyes.

"Yes?"

"How is Teacher Salee?"

"She is well as usual." She glanced at the microwave, showing no emotion. I thought that was odd, so I walked toward her and stood next to her. The beautiful eyes turned around and looked at me as I stood behind her.

"I'm much taller than you, Aoey. If I hug you from behind, I have to bend down." I bent down and hugged her after I said that.

My arms wrapped around her slim, tiny body. My chin rested on her shoulder. I smelled the light shampoo fragrance from her long hair. I felt so good that I didn't want to let go.

"Aoey was an adopted child. She was shocked when her adopted mother kicked her out of the house, accusing her of flirting with the stepdad."

"That's why your friend had to run away from home."

My eyes were watery when I heard that. I wasn't sure what that feeling was—maybe pity. This petite woman had been kicked out by the woman who raised her. She no longer had a mother figure. It must have hurt so much.

"Gen, are you okay?"

"You're much shorter than me. I can tell just by looking."

I placed my hand on her head. I didn't know why I did that. She was amazed at my awkward gesture. We looked at each other, and I finally said what I felt.

"You've got me. I just want you to know that." I tried to walk away once I said that, but Aoey pulled on my shirt to stop me. She looked at me with a serious face.

"What do you know?"

"What's that?"

"You knew something about me?" Her beautiful eyes searched for the truth in mine. Now I was nervous and worried by her tension.

"Do I need to know something?"

"Did you investigate something about me?"

Silence.

We both sat in silence. I felt bad and turned my face away. But I didn't feel guilty for wanting to know who my roommate was. What did she do? Who was she? What had she been through? I had a right to know.

"Yes."

"Why?!"

"I wanted to know why you came to Bangkok. What was your story?"

Her sweet eyes widened in surprise. Aoey stepped backward and wrapped her arms around herself, as if for protection.

"Why do you need to know about me?"

"Why not?"

"I've never been nosy about your business. I've never investigated..."

"You knew my story. Who I am, where I'm from."

"And you don't know who I am and where I'm from?"

"I don't know why you ran away from home. I'm just worried about you."

"You're not worried about me. You're just nosy. If you wanted to know about me, why didn't you just ask?"

"If I asked, would you tell me that you ran away from home because of something with your stepdad?"

Because she was frustrated, it pushed me to use a sarcastic tone. I felt bad after I said that. She looked at me in shock, as if I had exposed something she was ashamed of, and I had made her feel worse.

"And now you know! Are you happy now?" She screamed at me and darted out of the room. I stood there quietly. Why were we fighting? I just wanted to know more about her. Why was it such a big deal?

"Leave if you want!"

No one had ever screamed at me like that. She thought I would give up everything just for those beautiful eyes? Even my dad had never yelled at me like that. Who did she think she was?

She was just a girl with problems.

I looked at the door nervously, expecting her to come back. But ten minutes passed, and the sweet eyes weren't back. I started to feel anxious.

The clock on the wall showed it was after 9 PM. Bangkok wasn't very safe. It was dangerous, and she had just walked out like a drama queen. Did she expect me to run after her?

Okay, I would!

I grabbed my mobile phone and a bit of cash. I walked around, looking for her. I had never walked around here before; I usually just drove.

"Hello, security. Did you see a small woman with glasses walking out?"

"No, no one has walked out yet."

"Okay, good." I replied, realizing she hadn't left the building. I walked back to the lobby and called her from my phone. This time, she wasn't a drama queen. She just picked up the phone and told me where she was.

"I'm right behind you."

"Oh?" I turned around and saw her right behind me. Her face was still mad, and I saw tears in her eyes, which made me feel guilty. But the tears seemed to be more about anger than sadness.

"You have to apologize to me now," Aoey said, hanging up the phone. People who walked past looked at us, but quickly walked away when I glared at them.

My first reaction was to fight back when she gave me an order like that. Even though I knew I might be wrong.

"Why?"

"You are wrong."

"Don't you think I have a right to know that the person I live with has been through something?" I told her the reason, but that wasn't all. I didn't think she was a thief or anything. I just needed to know the whole story.

"If you wanted to know, you could have just asked me. Don't snoop behind my back."

"What kind of secret do you have? Are you a drug dealer?"

"Are you going to apologize to me?"

"No."

"Okay, I'll leave. This time, I'll leave for real."

I still didn't care about the threat. Aoey walked out of the lobby and almost through the security desk. I bit my lip tightly. My conscience was fighting inside my head. One voice told me to let her go wherever she wanted. The other voice told me to stop her before she left.

Oh no! Now I was fighting with myself.

The voice in my head won. I ran after her. She was beyond the security desk, so I had to take bigger steps to keep up with her. I finally stepped in front of her and paused to catch my breath.

What was this all about? What kind of drama was this? And I was running after someone!

"For what?"

"Where are you going?"

"It's my business." I couldn't believe I was having a moment like this. Was this what people did? Fight with their friends?

"It's late. Let's go back. Don't argue with me!" I yelled, looking at her fiercely as she refused to go back. We locked gazes for a long time until Aoey looked away, her eyes lowered.

"You don't apologize to me, and you're wrong!" Her tone sounded like a cry. It made me pause in surprise. "We are friends. If you wanted to know anything about me, you should ask. Don't snoop around behind my back. We all have secrets we don't want people to know. Can I have my own secret? Can I have my own space?"

I bit my lip tightly. I had never had to say anything like this in my life. Oh, damn it! I couldn't stand seeing her cry.

"I'm sorry." I finally said it. I never thought I'd have to apologize to someone like her, who didn't deserve this. I felt so weak. Why was that?

Aoey looked at me with her sweet eyes full of tears.

"Really? Do you really mean that?"

"Yes, I didn't know it would upset you this much. I just worry about you and wonder what I can do to help." The sweet eyes gave me a tight hug. Her crying face was now buried in my neck. I felt sensitive and very awkward. "I won't do it again. I'll ask if I want to know something, and you should start talking too."

"Please don't do it again."

"Okay. I was wrong."

"I was wrong too. I was too angry." She let go of me, and we stood in silence. It was a deep moment that made me feel as if the whole world was just us.

Honk! Honk!

The horn of a passing bus broke the moment like a bubble popped by a needle. We let go of each other, confused, and continued as if nothing had happened.

"First, let's go home," I invited her. She smiled at me and grabbed my arm.

"Okay, Let's go home."

"Alright."

"Home sounds cozy. I'll call your condo my home now."

The word "home" sounded nice and warm, more than "condo."

"It's so nice to know that there is someone who loves me in this world," Aoey said as we walked back.

"Who?"

"You, Gen."

I smiled at the word "*love*." It gave me a strange feeling.

"Ah ha."

"I love you too, Gen, in case you didn't know."

Throb, throb...

My heart skipped a beat when I heard that. I thought I had just realized something from what she said. It might not be my sickness.



Chapter 7

A sketch paper in my hand wasn't the picture from the project teacher assigned. Instead, it was the image of the beautiful eyes I couldn't shake from my mind. I didn't know why, but I remembered every detail of those sweet eyes. My heart trembled even at my own drawing.

"I love you too, Gen, in case you don't know."

Since that night, this sentence had been echoing in my mind. I questioned what made my heart tremble. I was afraid of the answer I might find, so I tried to stop thinking about it.

Friends said things like this all the time. I just wasn't used to it.

Ring!!!

The ringing phone pulled me out of my thoughts and back to reality. The universe worked in a strange way when I saw the caller's name. I had to calm myself before answering. I didn't want to appear too excited.

"Hello, Aoey."

[Gen, I don't know who to tell, but I'm thinking about you. Listen to this.]

"Yes, what's up?"

[My novel will be published. A publisher just contacted me. My dream is coming true now.]

Her happy voice made me smile. I would love to see her happy face now. Her smile must be huge, and her eyes must be shining with joy.

"I'm so happy for you. Let's celebrate."

[I'll treat.]

"No, I don't want to eat Chinese buns."

[Yeah, whatever.]

We hung up. I stared at my phone and smiled. I never thought I would be so happy for someone else's success. I wasn't excited when I passed exams because I always knew I would. But seeing her happy made me happy.

It was an odd feeling for me.

I researched where we should go to celebrate. If the restaurant was too fancy, Aoey might not feel comfortable, thinking she didn't deserve it. But a regular restaurant might seem too ordinary.

Should I let her choose?

I drove home with a sense of happiness, planning to freshen up before we went out. But when I arrived, I saw my brother, Great, sitting with Aoey and chatting as if they were very close. He came here without telling me.

"Hi, sister." He greeted me with a big smile. "Why do you look like you're going to puke?"

"Why are you here?" My tone was cold as I saw them chatting.

"I'm here to see you. But I'm lucky Aoey is here, so I don't have to wait alone. She told me she's now an author and you two are going to celebrate. Can I join?"

What the...

"Why?"

"To celebrate."

"Are you close with us?"

"Yes, I'm close with you two. I just wanted to join. Why are you so fussy? Let me join."

I was about to argue with him, but Aoey, seeing how much Great wanted to come, cut me off.

"We can take Great with us. The more the merrier!"

I gave her an annoyed look, but she didn't seem to notice.

No, this wasn't going to be fun. But I didn't want to ruin the mood, so I had to let him join. That made me even more upset. Great and Aoey just couldn't stop talking. Weren't they tired? I didn't have a chance to speak at all.

I didn't remember the topic, but somehow Great mentioned me in the conversation.

"I don't know if people like Gen will ever find true love."

I looked at him with agitation and sarcasm.

"What do you mean?"

"That's what I mean. You look down on other people all the time. Your future partner will have to be a good follower because you like to be a leader." Great said this to Aoey, who seemed to be very interested in the topic.

"Yes, I'm curious about what your boyfriend will look like. Men like to be leaders, you know."

"I can be single if I can't find anyone smarter or better than me. I still haven't found anyone like that."

"But it's love, you know. You might fall for someone who isn't better than you." Great said this with a know-it-all attitude.

"I will never like a loser like that." I looked at him sarcastically.

"You might just give in to him." He shrugged.

The phrase "give in" made me realize something. I looked at Aoey, but she still didn't seem to know anything.

"I wonder what kind of person you'll give in to."

"No one." I said casually and took a sip of water. Aoey continued talking.

"What's your type? Someone who is just your type?"

Was she forcing me to talk about my ideal partner? I looked at her and smirked.

"I never thought I had one before."

"Does that mean you have one now? How?" The sweet eyes looked at me through her glasses. I met her gaze directly.

"People like you, with beautiful eyes." There was a silence between us.

Aoey looked nervous and quickly turned away, adjusting her glasses that had slipped down her nose. Great didn't seem to follow what was happening.

"Yes, I like people with beautiful eyes too. Like you, Aoey," he said.

I looked at him sarcastically as he just repeated what I said. No brainer.

Why did he just compliment Aoey? Bastard!

"You have beautiful eyes too." She responded, resting her chin on her palm.
"I like your eyes too, Gen. If I'm with someone, they have to have beautiful eyes too."

Throb, throb...

My heart beat so fast, and I started to realize what made it beat abnormally. I thought I understood what was happening to me now.

I wasn't just giving in to her; my sensitivity was all around her. I decided that I would never give in to her.

I looked back into her eyes.

I didn't know what she was thinking, but there was a small war happening between us. I knew I would never give in, even though my heart swung from gazing into those clear light-brown eyes. I believed my gaze could be as powerful as hers.

I didn't know how long it passed until Great waved in front of us for attention.

"What are you two playing at? Looking at each other like that?"

"Excuse me, I have to go to the restroom," Aoey said and quickly walked out without looking at me again. Great looked at her strange reaction and raised his eyebrows.

"What happened to her?"

"She needs to pee."

"Why does she look red? And your face is red too." Great looked at me curiously. I just felt hot in my face but was annoyed by his comment.

"You have too much free time to notice other people all the time. Are you paying as much attention to your school?"

"I just said your face is red. Why are you mad at me?"

"You're talkative today."

Great moved around a bit and looked in the direction Aoey had walked away. He checked if she was back yet and quickly started gossiping.

"Did you help her with her book publishing? Mom said you're playing the role of daddy's long legs."

"Shut up!" I pointed at his face, urging him to be quiet. I worried she might hear this. "Why did Mom tell you?"

"Mom asked if I knew your friend. I guess it has to be Aoey since she's the only one you're close with. You're pretty cool, doing something like this."

"Don't ever talk about this again. Aoey can't know about this."

"Why?"

"Stop being nosy!"

If someone as arrogant as Aoey found out she was published because someone helped her, she'd be hurt and feel worthless.

"Okay, I won't talk...but I need something in exchange."

"What is it?"

"Can you help me with her?" Great smiled shyly. My Casanova 18-year-old brother, a good-looking boy, now made a dreamy face. "I like her."

"But she is much older than you."

"Only two years. I'm old enough to make a baby... Ouch! Why are you hitting me!" I hit him hard on the head, making a loud noise. People in the restaurant looked at us curiously.

"What is this dirty talk! Respect your elders!"

"I just wanted to say I'm grown up. You can be my matchmaker. I really like her."

"No, I won't."

"Then I'll tell her you asked Mom to publish her book, not because the publisher liked it!"

We locked eyes like we were in a war. Great's stubbornness was typical of the youngest child. He would get what he wanted. I sighed and gave up.

"You have so many girls. Can't you spare her? I don't want to hurt her."

"No one is going to hurt her. I promise I'll take very good care of her if we're dating."

"Why her?"

"She's mysterious," he said frankly. "I've never met a sweet girl who is also very timid like this."

It reminded me of the time Great tried to help Aoey from falling but got brushed off. It was the challenge that was fun for him.

I'd help... I believed Aoey wouldn't go for it.

"I'll tell her that you like her, but I won't help you further. You have to do the rest yourself."

He gave me a big smile.

"That's enough. If you say something, Aoey won't cut me off immediately. Now, she's coming back. Don't forget what you said."

We all sat and enjoyed the food without discussing it further.

Today, Aoey was in a very good mood. She smiled, laughed, and hummed a tune. It would be nice if she were this happy every day. Even though I wasn't keen on the topic, I asked her about my brother.

"You don't have a boyfriend, right?"

"Ah?" Aoey, who was watching TV, looked at me curiously. "No."

"Do you want to have one?"

"No." I smiled to myself, feeling satisfied that Great didn't get what he wanted.

"I wanted to be with you, Gen."

My heart skipped a beat at that. I tried to stay calm and looked at her.

"You don't want a boyfriend, but you want to be with me? What do you mean by that?"

"I don't want to spend time with a boyfriend. I don't like anyone touching me. A boyfriend would touch me, and I'd rather not deal with that."

"Are you so afraid of being touched?"

"I just don't like it." The sweet eyes looked at me in surprise. "Why are you asking?"

"I guess I wanted you to be my girlfriend," I said jokingly. The sweet eyes widened in surprise. I reached out to close her mouth with my hand, laughing. "I'm joking. Great wanted me to ask you."

"Are you a matchmaker now?"

"Great likes you. He asked me to help."

The sweet eyes looked at me differently now. Her mood shifted abruptly from happy to fuzzy. I couldn't keep up with the change.

"And you're helping him now?"

"What's wrong with that? Shouldn't I help him?"

"No."

"Why not?" I stared blankly at her. Aoey stood up to make eye contact with me.

"In this world, anyone could be my matchmaker but not you," she said coldly.

She walked into the bathroom immediately and spent a long time in there. I was confused and didn't know what I had done wrong.

Matchmaking was clearly the wrong idea.



Click votes, lovely readers! ♡♥

Chapter 8

Aoey and I had been living together for two months. Time flew by quickly. The calendar on the wall reminded me of this. Aoey's book was now in the process of being "rewritten" and should be on a shelf within the next two months.

Aoey told me that I would receive payment four months after the book was already in the store. But I couldn't wait that long. I asked my mom to transfer the money earlier because I wanted her to quit her part-time job at a convenience store. She should be in school at that time.

That day was the first day in my life that I had six-digit money in my bank account. I looked at my phone in disbelief, as if I were now in a surreal world.

"My first payment is six figures, Gen."

"I'm happy for you. You earned it yourself. I couldn't do it on my own." I looked at my friend, who now couldn't stop smiling. So, I told her right away, "You should enroll in school now. You don't need to work anymore."

"How can I stop working? This doesn't mean I can earn as much again."

"You can write another story."

"It may not be as good as this one."

"I'll read it first if you care so much."

"Do you also read novels?"

“Yes, I even read your published story. The one where the hero was a prince who fell in love with the heroine born to a thief.”

Aoey looked at me in surprise and covered her now-pink face in shyness.

“You actually read it. I’m so embarrassed.”

“Why?”

“There was a love scene in there. You might think I have a dirty mind.”

I smiled and looked at her adoringly. It was so funny because she posted it on the internet for a thousand people to read, but she was embarrassed when I read it. I was just a reader of the post.

“It’s a beautiful scene. I wonder what you were thinking when you wrote that.”

Aoey covered her face and shook her head. “Do not make fun of me.”

“I’m giving you a compliment.”

“I don’t know why I feel uncomfortable when it’s you.”

“Okay, I won’t bother you anymore.”

We both stared into each other’s eyes in silence. But an alert sound from Aoey’s phone broke the silence. Her soft eyes shifted their attention to her old phone. She frowned when she read it.

“Is everything okay?” I asked curiously.

“Yeah,” Aoey turned her phone face down. “I just need to be more serious about quitting my part-time job. What should I do when I quit?”

“Write a novel?”

“I’ll think about it.”

Aoey didn't agree with my proposal. She left her phone in the same place when she entered the bathroom. Curious, I grabbed her phone to see what it was about. But her phone was so old that it deserved to be in a museum.

It must have been a free phone...

My curiosity got the better of me. I managed to get it working. The last message was on the screen and it wasn't open.

[Skyfall: I miss you. Please come to work. I'm waiting for you.]

I was upset to read that, but I could tell that the message didn't make her happy. She wanted to quit her job.

It was from her colleague. But why did I get upset? Ever since I saw the message, I didn't talk to Aoey again. I looked at her in uniform angrily.

"Are you going to quit today?" I realized my tone was too sarcastic. She looked at me, confused, and asked what was wrong.

"I'm not sure."

"Resign today."

"Because?"

"Because I said so." I looked deeply into her eyes.

"Why do I have to follow your order?"

"Do what I told you."

"You're being irrational. I don't want to hear that. I'll make my own decisions." Aoey packed her things and left the room.

I was left alone and upset. No one had ever bothered me like that before. But she didn't care. I let her stay there and published her book. Asking her to quit her job wasn't too much to ask.

I walked anxiously. I decided to follow her eventually. I needed to know which branch of the convenience store she worked at. I was surprised to learn that the place where she worked was so close to the condominium. I didn't go into the store because my family took care of everything. They bought all the things I needed and sent them over.

I watched her working inside the store. I felt annoyed when I noticed that many of the customers were staring at her when they left, especially the men.

She was more beautiful than when we were young....

She had lice growing up. Her face was smooth, but her skin was shiny. She didn't wear makeup—how did she look so good? Being beautiful could be dangerous. I should do something to make her look less attractive. Maybe when she fell asleep, I could draw on her face.

It could be washed away anyway.

I imagined so many things as I looked around the store. I could see her near the counter as people came in and out.

Before long, I saw a man with dyed blonde hair. He looked more ugly than handsome. He gave her a very big smile with crooked teeth. He was obviously flirting with her. I wanted to throw my shoe from outside. But I could only watch from afar. However, Aoey looked uncomfortable.

That was him, Skyfall—the boy from the chat.

She had to take some action so that this guy would leave her alone.

I surprised myself, knowing that I was wasting my time peeking into the convenience store where Aoey worked. And I had to hide it from her as well. However, I had something else to do... I was there to...

Wait...

Almost two hours later, when the Skyfall guy came out to smoke a cigarette, I took a deep breath and composed myself before walking in with

a big smile at him.

“Sorry.” The man, who was now holding a cigarette, looked at me in surprise. I gave him a flirtatious smile that made him choke on his cigarette.

“Yeah?”

“I wanted to ask you something.”

“Yes?” He dropped the cigarette on the floor and stepped on it to put out the fire. He wiped his hand on his shirt repeatedly as if it were very dirty.

“Do you have a girlfriend?”

My direct question made him super uncomfortable. I flirted with him like a pro.

“N... No.”

“Do you have anyone in mind?” His bulging eyes looked into the distance and he shook his head like a liar.

“No.”

“That’s good.” I stood up and looked at the boy, who was shorter than me by about three centimeters. “If I knew you were trying it with Aoey, I would hurt you.”

I had the ability to threaten people. My cold voice and eyes would curse people and freeze them if I was angry. The man in front of me changed from surprise to indifference when he realized I was threatening him.

“What do you think you can do to me if I go after Aoey?”

He went from being nervous to openly challenging me. I waved to my dad's boy, whom I had called earlier, to wait. A big guy appeared next to the blonde boy while I was standing on the other side.

“I think I can. You have the option of leaving her or not going to work or school for two months.”

That was the end. Skyfall promised that he would leave Aoey.

Now that I was bored waiting for Aoey, I returned to my condo and took a nap. I woke up to find Aoey sitting beside me on the bed, looking at me.

“You scared me. What time did you come back?”

Aoey pressed my chest and told me to continue taking a nap.

“A little while ago. I was watching you while you were sleeping.”

“Huh?”

“I don’t feel good fighting with you. I’m sorry,” she said with a sad expression. I had forgotten about that because I had been paying more attention to the blonde boy. I nodded in agreement.

“You don’t have to apologize. I was being selfish. I was wrong too. Don’t worry about it.”

“I quit.”

“Oh, good. Now you have time to study or write a novel. Whatever you want to do, I support you.” I smiled at her and gently touched her cheek with the back of my hand. Aoey took my hand and looked into my eyes.

“I’ll spend my time writing a novel. I have an idea for a new plot now.”

“Which is it?”

“I’ll let you read it. I’ll write it just for you.”

“Okay, I’ll look forward to it.”

“Wait until I’m brave enough. I’ll let you read it. I promise.” What kind of novel needed courage? But whatever, I’ll wait.

“Oh... Gen.”

“Yeah?” Aoey now stood up and showed me her back as she said that.

“Next time you visit me, please come in. It’s too hot outside.”

I jumped when I heard that. She turned around and gave me a smile. My face turned bright red because I had been caught red-handed.

“You saw me?”

“Yeah.”

“Why didn’t you say something?” Aoey looked at me and smiled so beautifully. “I wanted to know how you planned to reconcile with me.”

“No, I wasn’t there to make peace with you.”

I was there to see the guy who tried to flirt with you, and I never did anything wrong. I never had to make up with anyone.

“What you did, I’m so touched.” She turned around and gave me a beautiful smile beneath her thick glasses. **“I love you, Gen.”**

She said it as casually as if it were a normal statement. I froze at this statement and replied in a controlled, casual voice,

“Yes, because I’m a lovely person. It’s hard to resist.”

“What about me? Am I adorable to you?”

I nodded. “Yes, you are.”

“Do you love me then?”

“I’m tested. I need to sleep.”

I collapsed back onto the bed and rolled over with my back to her. My heart was beating so fast, and I felt the pressure of her words.

I had just stood outside a convenience store—

why was she asking me if I loved her? Did she want me to confess my love to her? That was crazy!



Chapter 9

She had a lot more to do now that we were living together. I was her financial and educational advisor. She had some money and was looking for an open university to study at.

“There’s a good one here. It’s close to our condo.”

“The tuition fee is very high. I wanted to study somewhere cheaper.”

“This one is expensive, but you don’t have to pay for the trip or get up early. It could end up costing the same in the end,” I suggested, but she was still stressed about it.

“Tuition fees for four years are not cheap.”

“You can continue writing your novel. You were paid 100,000 baht. You’ll get around 400,000 baht for four books.”

“Publishing doesn’t mean that every book will make money.”

“You can publish it yourself. You have some money now.”

Her eyes seemed to light up. She smiled brightly at me. “That’s true. I forgot that I have some money now. I’ll make the next one so good that readers will pre-order it. I don’t need an editor anymore.”

I looked into her beautiful eyes, which seemed to light up the whole world with hope. It was the first time I felt happy with someone.

I never felt empathy for other people.

I glanced at my watch and realized it was time to go. I had an appointment with my mom; she wanted to talk to me about something. I left Aoey to do some school research at home.

I left home only to find a surprise I didn't expect.

My mom had set me up on a blind date.

"His name is Tod. He's my friend's son. He's a medical student." After my mom introduced me, Tod looked at me with dreamy eyes, much like other guys did.

"Yeah."

"Why don't you introduce yourself?"

"I guess you already did it for me. Hi Tod, I'm Genlong. I'm 20 years old. My dad is a man, and my mom is a woman." I wrapped my arms around my chest and leaned back in boredom. My gesture gave my mom a headache.

"Mind your manners, Gen!"

"It's okay," Tod said in a low voice and looked at me adoringly. He looked at me like I was a child, and I hated that. "It's okay, I know you didn't have time to teach her."

I was immediately upset when I heard that comment. It implied that my mother didn't raise me well.

"Great sarcasm," I said, smiling, and so did Tod.

"I have to keep up with the smart people." Oddly enough, I felt okay with him when he wasn't boring. It made me more interested in him.

The meal passed peacefully, even though I felt a little bad when he spoke like that in front of my mother. After the meal, he walked me to the car and apologized.

"I'm sorry I made that comment. I'm only human."

“That was tough for the first time.”

“You’re a troublemaker.” The handsome future doctor had already given me the nickname as if we were best friends and smirked at me. It was strange that I didn’t hate him like I usually do with men.

“Leave.”

“Am I going to see you again?” He raised his eyebrows at me. I shrugged.

“Even the wind.”

That was all I said. I didn’t like giving false hopes or misunderstandings. So he got in the car and left.

My mother, who was now sitting next to me, smiled at me. She wanted feedback on the future doctor. I was agitated for her.

“Mom, I’m only 20 and I’m still studying. How could you introduce me to a boy? Does Dad know anything about this?”

“It doesn’t matter. I’m just introducing you to a nice guy. I didn’t tell you to get married tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. I evaluated this guy; he’s handsome, rich, well-educated, comes from a good family. He’s perfect. You wouldn’t be able to find a guy like that again!”

“He’s too perfect. I wanted to be the perfect one in the relationship.”

“Then you can marry yourself.”

“It’s what I thought.”

“Well, try to hang out together. You’re not losing anything. You’re too self-obsessed. You think you’re the best in the world. Open your mind. I don’t like the way you think.”

“I’m living my life.”

“I’m worried about you. You’re obsessed with yourself,” she said in a very concerned tone. She seemed to be very worried that I had no friends. She was worried that I would turn into a heartless bitch.

“I’m not that bad. I love dogs and cats. I love you and Dad. I know how to love.”

“What about men?”

“I don’t have one now.”

“Something might happen to you.”

“What’s that?”

“Another beautiful girl like you would have a new boyfriend every day. But you don’t like anyone. Many men tried to get you, but you don’t like any of them. Be honest, do you like girls?”

Her question made me stiffen. I looked away, trying to avoid eye contact.

“What do you mean? I don’t like anyone yet, but that doesn’t mean I like girls.”

“Well, I was just asking. Why do you have to be upset?”

“I’m not upset, Mom.”

“Well, you’re obviously upset. Your mood is changing. Are you on your period?”

“I don’t want to talk to you anymore.”

After dinner, I picked up my car and drove back to my condo. There were a lot of people who had bothered me in one day. My mom introduced me to a man, and my brother stopped by unannounced.

Great greeted me when he saw me enter. "How's your blind date with the guy Mom set you up?"

I quickly looked at Aoey after that question. Her sweet eyes didn't make any eye contact since I entered.

"You know everything, huh? Why are you here anyway?"

"I'm here to see you."

"You knew I was with Mom. Why the hell are you here?"

He knew I knew why he was here. Great rolled his eyes and tried to make up some excuses. Silly brother! He was so annoying.

"I wanted to see you. I knew you would come back here. I also helped Aoey find a university."

"Since when are you an expert on this topic? Go home. There are only girls in this room. A boy in the room makes it even more difficult for my routine."

"Do whatever you want."

"I'll get naked!" I glared at my brother. "Go home!"

"Why are you kicking me out? I wanted to be with you."

"No, I want to be alone."

"You're not alone. Aoey is here too."

"I wanted to be alone with Aoey. Just the two of us. Go!"

My unfriendly tone startled Great a little. He left reluctantly. I turned around to look into Aoey's sweet eyes. She was now shocked by what I had just said.

Then my face turned red.

"I just wanted him to get out of here."

"Okay," Aoey nodded and still didn't look at me. She didn't say much. I thought it was strange because she was still very talkative that morning.

"Are you okay, Aoey?"

"I'm fine."

I grabbed her arm, but she pulled away. I felt rejected. My ego was bruised. Did I know how many people wanted me to touch them? But she rejected me.

"What's wrong with you? You're grumpy with me all the time," I asked bluntly. She paused at that question but still turned her back on me.

"I'm never bad-tempered with you."

"You are now. You're angry with me about something, and I want to know why." My tone was firm now, but she still rejected it.

"I'm not in a bad mood."

"If you tell me why..." I walked up to her and did something I never thought I could do. I wrapped my arms around her body and rested my face on the back of her neck. I smelled something nice. "I'll make it up to you. I don't want to fight you."

Wait... what was I doing?

My legs had just walked toward her, and my arms had wrapped around her. I surprised myself and realized what I had just done two seconds later. But if I let go and left now, it would be even more awkward.

Aoey was also startled. I could feel the tension in her body, but after a while, she relaxed and gently touched my arms.

“I’m not angry with you, really. But I don’t know how to explain it.”

“Try me. I’m listening.”

She didn’t reject me, so I stayed where I was. I rested my chin on her shoulders. The fragrant smell of her hair made me relax, and I didn’t want to move. Was I trying to be sweet?

“I don’t feel good knowing that you went out with a boy.”

“Huh?” I paused as she tried to explain.

“How can I explain this? I’m worried about you. I don’t want you to meet the wrong guy.”

“Don’t worry about me. My mom already evaluated him. He’s perfect, good-looking, well-educated, and comes from a good family.”

“So you like him now?” Aoey shook my arms and stepped forward. She tried to escape my embrace. “If he’s so good, you should go out with him.”

“I didn’t say I like him.”

“He is so perfect.”

Her harsh tone confused me. I was in a good mood, and now I wasn’t.

“—He’s nice, but that doesn’t mean I like him. If I liked someone, it’s just a matter of whether I like him or not. That’s all.” I wrapped my arms around myself and felt annoyed. “If you were a man, I’d think you were jealous of me.”

"Crazy!"

"Yes, I'm crazy because you're not a man. That's why I'm confused." That also made her feel uncomfortable.

"I'm just worried about you. I'm worried that if you have a boyfriend, you might be distracted with your studies."

"Is that what worries you?"

I smiled, feeling challenged and happy now. I thought I was cute for being so confused. "Maybe I worried too much. I'm sorry."

"You don't have to feel sorry. We're close friends. It's normal for you to worry about me."

"Okay," Aoey looked at me. "It's normal to feel concern for close friends."

"Yeah."

"Great gave me a kiss on the cheek today," she said.

I opened my mouth in surprise. I felt like I had been hit with something hard in the stomach. I looked at Aoey, feeling so angry.

"And you let him do that to you?!" I screamed uncontrollably.

"Yeah, I just wanted to know if you'd be okay with that."

I clenched my fist and looked fiercely into her eyes. I was now beginning to lose control of myself.

"Were you okay with that?"

"I was."

A smile appeared on her face. Her bright eyes made me sensitive. I felt like I was a little kid who had been caught doing something wrong, but I didn't even know what I had done wrong.

"Did you feel something?" Aoey walked over to me and took off her glasses. She was shorter than me and looked at me, showing her beautiful eyes. "Are you feeling worried about me?"

"Hey."

"That's how I felt when I heard you went on a blind date with a man." Her sweet smile made my heart beat faster. Her voice mesmerized me and made sure I followed every word she said.

"You mean Great didn't kiss you?"

"You know I don't like anyone touching me. I feel like everyone is dirty, except you, Gen."

Damn! I had forgotten about that. I was so upset thinking about another guy kissing her that I forgot about the possibility.

She took my face with both hands after seeing how stunned I was.

"What would you do if Great really kissed me? You don't like it, right?"

"No, I don't."

"That's strange. We both feel that way."

"Yeah."

"If we were men, we would be jealous, but we are just close friends."

I turned my eyes to the ground. I asked her to put on her glasses because I couldn't stand those eyes.

"Yes, that's true." I admitted it.

"So, I don't feel so good today because I was jealous of you." She seemed to be talking to herself and hugged me from the front. She liked being touched by me now. She was very different from how she was in the beginning. I guess we were closer than before.

I wrapped my arms around her and hugged that small body tightly. I barely touched someone like that. It was strange that I let her do this.

She was my first friend.

My first hug.

My first jealousy.

Yes, I was jealous too.

I knew that wasn't normal.

I had been a smart girl all my life. So I was going to be smart about this too.

Now the lights were off, and we both went to bed. It had been over 30 minutes of silence. I pretended to be asleep, but my head was full of what had happened. My mind replayed the events of the day over and over. Aoey was moving around. Finally, she reached out for my arm, carefully placed her hand around it, and came closer to me. I could smell her soap.

She was calmer when I held her. That happened a lot. She felt safe and fell asleep through the night. But now I couldn't sleep because my heart was beating so fast. I noticed my heart was racing, skipping beats in those sweet eyes. Now I didn't like myself.

"Tell me, do you like girls?"

My mom's question echoed in my head. So many feelings went through me. I didn't even know what they were. I didn't feel bad, but at the same time, I didn't feel good either.

While I was battling with myself in my head, Aoey came closer to me and turned her face towards mine. Our faces were so close to each other, but I pretended to be asleep.

We were silent for a long, long time. I thought she must be sleeping. But I felt her moving. The faint scent of soap was closer, and I felt a light touch...

On my lips.

A kiss.

Her lips were pressed against mine softly. I couldn't open my eyes because I was supposed to be sleeping. She stole a kiss from me. The thief turned to the other side and breathed calmly.

At that moment, I opened my eyes in shock in the darkness. I was having difficulty breathing because it had been unexpected.

No, this is not what friends do. It didn't feel like we were friends...



Chapter 10

“Where are you going, Gen?”

I sat in front of a mirror, applied my makeup, looked at her through the reflection, and answered, “I have a date with Tod.”

She remembered the name of the guy my mom had set me up with.

“You two are close. That’s a bit fast.”

“It’s not that hard because we have the right chemistry. Just like you and I, we hadn’t seen each other in a long time, but we also got close quickly.” I smiled and brushed my cheek for a finishing touch. Now I was ready to go.

“Are you going to be late tonight? I’ll expect you for dinner.”

“It might be late. Go ahead. Don’t wait.”

“Why are you going to be late?”

“I’m going on a date.”

I smiled and walked away. Aoey put on my shirt and was about to say something, but I interrupted her.

“I’m in a hurry. We’ll talk later.” I left her alone in the room and walked out, carrying a feeling of guilt. I had to get rid of this awful feeling as soon as I could!

I didn’t feel right being sensitive with my close friend. Ever since the kiss, I had planned to keep my distance appropriately. I was born a girl, and it

wouldn't be good if I ended up having a girlfriend. I thought that the feelings between us might have come from the intimacy we shared. We were too close, and it was too awkward to tell her.

Aw, we shouldn't kiss. I like a penis that you don't have.

I couldn't say something like that. No, never.

I went on a date with Tod, a guy my mom introduced me to. I started a chat on a chat app, flirted with him, and asked him out. At the time, we were sitting across from each other, and I had no idea what to talk about.

He wasn't good at dating.

Usually, men would make an effort, but this time I initiated it. I had to try to entertain him.

"I'll treat you this time. Order whatever you want to eat," Tod smiled at me and raised his eyebrows. He wasn't like other men who looked at me like a dog looks at a plane in the sky.

"That wouldn't be good. I'm a man. I can't let you pay. If your mom finds out later, I'll be in trouble."

"If Mom knew I asked you out, she would be happy. Please, tidy up. I'm rich."

"You are such a snob." I glared at him. He smiled apologetically. "And you get angry easily. I guess no one ever tells you this."

"Why are you being nasty to me? I'm not here to pick a fight."

"What you said could almost start a fight. You were probably spoiled by men. Do you have any female friends?"

“Yeah.” I replied, feeling annoyed. He thought that by being the one who made the first move, he earned the right to talk to me like that.

“How can they be your friends?”

“We don’t have to eat if you say something like that.” I pushed the heavy menus to the floor. Tod leaned back, hugged himself, and shook his head.

“All you have is a beautiful look.”

I gritted my teeth hard, thinking about grabbing a huge glass in the middle of the table and smashing it right over that future doctor’s head. “Let’s be honest. I don’t like you.”

“I don’t like you either. You’re a big mouth.” I couldn’t help it. The future doctor laughed and took a sip of water in front of him.

“I mean... I can’t go out with you. That’s what I wanted to say today.”

I looked at him, angrier than before. In my life, I had rejected people, and I had never been rejected before. But now this doctor was saying that he didn’t want me in his life.

“I don’t like you either.”

“So why did you invite me?”

“I just wanted to get to know you better. I might like you, but I’ve already realized that there’s nothing I like about you.”

“Is this because I rejected you?”

“You don’t deserve to look at me.” I was so upset now that I felt ashamed. If I had a gun, I would shoot him.

“How did your parents raise you? You’ve never known disappointment before. It’s both good and bad.”

“Now you’re criticizing my parents.” I stood up, frustrated. “You’re the biggest jerk I’ve ever met in my life.”

“Before you get angry, can you first listen to why I’m rejecting you?”

“No.”

“I’m dating someone, and it’s a boy...”

“I said n... what!” I sat up immediately in surprise. Tod took a sip of water and clasped his hands on the table, speaking again.

“You heard right. I’m rejecting you because I have a boyfriend. I don’t want you to have feelings for me.”

“I don’t have any feelings for you.”

“I knew you had no feelings for me since we met on the first day. I’m surprised you asked me out today.”

“You could have said no.” I sighed, feeling lighter. Now I was embarrassed that I had flirted with him so much in the chat. The handsome face put his palms together and placed them on the table.

“I’m here to ask for your help.”

“What help do you want to ask from a girl you just criticized?”

“Well, you’re not well-trained.” I glared at him because he kept criticizing me, but I didn’t hate him. Maybe what he said was true, or he had what it took to say it.

“You want my help but you keep criticizing me. Should I help you?”

“You are a spoiled brat, but criticizing you made you see the truth and listen to me more.” I rolled my eyes and looked out the window. But I saw someone standing there, looking in. I had to pretend I didn’t see her and looked away.

Of course I saw her. She just stood there. My heart sank. Why was she here? Did she follow me?

My heart clenched uncomfortably at those eyes. I couldn't breathe. I had to look at Tod now and beg for help with the look in my eyes.

"Are you okay? You don't look well."

"I haven't been feeling well lately. How can I help you?"

She wanted to leave the restaurant even though they had just arrived and hadn't ordered anything. The future doctor raised his eyebrows in surprise.

"It might be a strange request."

"Tell me, I'll help you if I can."

"I want you to pretend to be my girlfriend."

"Huh?"

"I want to fool my family. I'm bored of the blind dates they set up. You're not seeing anyone right now, are you?" He searched for confirmation. I glanced out the window from the corner of my eye and nodded.

"No, I don't."

"So pretend to be my girlfriend. If you meet someone, then we can break up." I paused and processed this in my head... What was I getting out of this situation? My heart skipped a beat when I saw her out of the corner of my eye.

"I have a condition," I said firmly.

"Tell me."

"You'll pretend to be my boyfriend in front of someone too." He laughed amusedly.

“Deal.”

“Deal.”

I didn't know how I ended up here. The guy I wanted to date to get rid of that weird feeling with a woman turned out to be gay. He also asked me to pretend to be his girlfriend. I wondered if there was no one in this normal world. I met a perfect guy, and he liked guys. I'm a perfect woman, and I liked a woman too.

She was my only close friend!

After a while, I tried to look out the window. I didn't see her standing in the same place. I thought about letting go, but my heart was now shaking.

“You're just beautiful, but you have such a bad temper. Don't move your legs like that.”

Tod smiled and looked at me. His big sarcastic mouth couldn't stop moving. I wanted to poke him in the eye with a fork, but he seemed to be calmer when he said such things. The handsome boy asked me frankly.

“What do you have in mind?”

“Nothing, I have to go to the bathroom. I'll be back in a moment.”

I finally got up and looked for Aoey right away. I had ignored her when I saw her standing there, but now that she was gone, I was looking for her. I gripped the phone in my hand tightly. Should I call her? Would it be okay if she noticed that I saw her there? My head was spinning as I dialed her number. I was confused. Then I saw Aoey in a t-shirt, jeans, and her old canvas shoes walking in a small alley next to the restaurant towards the bathroom.

She picked up the phone with her voice shaking. I hid to see how she would react when she spoke to me.

“Hi Gen.”

“Where are you, Aoey?”

“I’m at home.”

She was referring to our condo. I sighed as she lied. Why did she do that? She shouldn’t have shown how she felt about me.

We were just friends!

“I’m at a mall right now. Do you want something to eat?”

“No, don’t worry. I’ll get some myself.”

The sweet voice was silent and then asked, “How are you, Gen? How is your date?”

“It’s okay. He’s a good guy, unlike any other guy.”

He had a big mouth and he liked men. I didn’t lie to her. He really was different from other guys.

There was a long pause between us now. I felt pain in my heart for saying something like that to her, but I wanted to cut off whatever went wrong between us. It would be better in the long run. I didn’t want our relationship to get any worse.

“Aoey, I have a boyfriend now. I want you to meet him because we are close friends.”

I squeezed the phone in my hand so hard that I shuddered. The other end of the line was so quiet until she finally said something.

“That was fast.” She replied in a calm and controlled voice.

“Even if I have a boyfriend now, you’re still my best friend.”

“Aha.”

“If you feel lonely, you can go out with someone. I can introduce you to a good guy.”

“I have to go.” She hung up the phone immediately as if she had had enough. I dropped both arms as if I had no strength. But I told myself that this could be a good thing.

We were both women. We weren’t supposed to like each other, especially since she was my best friend.

It was not natural!



Chapter 11

Because she thought I had a boyfriend, Aoey kept her distance from me. Even though we were in the same room, we didn't touch each other and didn't talk about personal things. The sweet eyes might have been busy with her new novel and her school enrollment. She didn't have much time for me. I was also studying a lot, with many projects from my teachers. So, we didn't have time for each other.

Time flew by so fast. Aoey finally got into the university she wanted, but what frustrated her was that my brother also got into the same university as her, in the same class.

"I can study whatever I want. Mom and Dad don't pressure me. I wanted to study where Aoey studies." At that moment, he spoke of her as if she were a close friend. The sweet eyes didn't seem to mind, and they were now closer to each other than to me.

How come there was a wall between us?

"There will be hazing activity at the university for three nights," Great told me what would happen before school started. I nodded and looked at Aoey.

"Are you okay with spending a few nights somewhere else?"

"Why wouldn't it be okay?"

Aoey and I made brief eye contact. The sweet eyes quickly looked away. She was angry. Of course, she wouldn't be okay. She didn't like anyone touching her. There would be a lot of physical contact in the hazing activity.

"That's good if you're okay."

Since then, Aoey and I never touched each other again.

Even when she woke up from a nightmare at night, I didn't go near her. I wouldn't give her any hope, and I wouldn't give myself any hope. I tried not to get too sensitive. But I was still worried that she was going to the hazing activity. I needed to do something to help her.

The day I had to go to college finally arrived. I took Great and Aoey to the college. The sweet eyes quickly said goodbye and walked in with my little brother. Both of them looked close to each other.

I was upset to see that and quickly called someone to fix it. Not long after, the person ran up to me at the university gate and smiled widely.

"It's really you, Beauty! This is a dream."

"You're not dreaming. It's me here."

"It still feels like a dream."

"Nut," a man who once threatened to cut his wrist to get my attention, looked at me with admiration.

The tall guy looked at me like a loser who could never get to me. I returned that with a cute smile. I never thought I'd have to see him again. Luckily, he studied here and was at a meeting for student activities.

"Can you help me with what I asked you for?"

"Here you go." He handed me a big, sticky pink card.

"Just hang this around your neck. You'll be one of the members of a board committee here. But don't let anyone catch you."

"Thanks. I'll take you to dinner."

"Are you really going to invite me to dinner?"

"And a movie."

I thought it was worth the exchange, even though I felt a little upset with him. I wanted to see with my own eyes if Aoey could really get through this period, despite the wall between us. Why was he so kind?

Nut made everything easy for me. He sent me an activity sheet. Many people who didn't recognize me looked at me strangely. Nut introduced me as his girlfriend. People's reactions were priceless.

Even I was surprised, but it was okay as long as I could avoid all the prying questions.

The college welcome activities included singing the college song, writing your dream, and so on. I secretly looked at Aoey, and she seemed to be fine with them. Sometimes, she would just stand with her arms around herself because she was afraid of being touched.

What was causing this? It seemed like panic or fear of being touched too much, and that worried me.

Then finally, the icebreaker activity that the seniors forced the freshmen to play together.

Touch...

After all the friends gathered in a circle holding hands to sing a song, it wasn't a complete circle when one person refused to hold hands, and that was Aoey. She hugged herself tightly as all the friends looked at her with judgment. A sweet senior came up to her to ask if she was okay. I stood there, watching everything that happened, but I didn't know what they were saying. Everything seemed stuck. Suddenly, the senior reached out his hand and touched her, but she pushed him away harshly.

"Do not touch me!"

That's what I expected.

"I didn't do anything to you. Why is it so important?"

“I told you not to touch me.” Aoey raised her eyebrows and looked at the boy, who now looked angry. “Dirty.”

“Hey, that’s too much. I took a shower. I’m not dirty...”

Another older girl immediately interrupted. She tried to stop everything, but once she touched Aoey, it happened again.

“Don’t touch me. Dirty.”

It was a disaster when Aoey became a weirdo in front of her elders and all her friends. I felt sorry for her. I was about to step forward to help, but suddenly, a tall guy stepped in and stood between the elders and Aoey.

“Enough. If she doesn’t like it, then don’t touch her. She’s not worth it.”

The low, deep voice said loud and clear before turning to Aoey and saying, “You can rest with me here.”

Aoey looked at him and nodded. She followed the tall guy while I watched from afar. I tried to look for those two where they were. I found them sitting inside a stadium.

He didn’t know what they were talking about, but the situation looked very tense. That handsome boy wrapped his arms around himself, looked at Aoey, and then left. Aoey stood there alone for a long time. After a while, she hugged her knees and started to tremble and cry.

Pain...

I felt a strong sensation in my chest that made me want to scream. I almost went crazy watching her cry. Why did she cry? I worried about her. Who would comfort her?

When my patience reached its limit and I was about to enter, that handsome older man came back and handed her a bottle of cold water. The sweet eyes wiped away her tears shyly and looked up. The guy chatted with her standing for a while before sitting beside her at quite a distance.

Now he had a friend.

Bastard.

“Gen,” the voice bothered me.

Nut came out to find me. He gave me a big smile after he finally found me and showed me his 32 teeth. He looked like Godzilla with all those teeth.

“Nut.”

“I looked for you everywhere.” Nut followed my gaze and seemed surprised.

“That’s a troublesome girl.”

“Yes, that’s my friend.”

“Did you ask to come in because you’re worried about this girl?”

“Yes.” I nodded. “She’s a little strange, that’s why I worry about her. I knew she would end up like this.” I looked at Nut and gave him the most beautiful smile I could, gently touching his arm flirtatiously. “Nut, can I ask for your help to take care of her?”

He looked at me obsessively when he heard that. He looked like he was almost crying when I flirted with him. “Yeah, sure. I’ll take good care of her.”

“Tell your friends she has some problems. She doesn’t like being touched, or she’ll...” I paused and made up a story. “Go crazy.”

“Go crazy?”

“Yes, but she has to be here for three days. She can’t spend three days like this. Please help her.” I smiled at him again. “I’ll book two tickets for a movie, okay?”

“Sure, no problem. No one will touch her for these three days. Everyone will treat her well. I promise.”

“Thanks, Nut, and don’t let him know I’m doing all this.”

“Why?”

“She doesn’t want anyone to know that she has a mental illness and only I know. If you can’t keep this secret... that’s too bad.” I played with him and disgusted myself. Nut quickly wanted to please me as if he was my hero.

“I promise. Trust me.”

“Thank you.”

After asking Nut to help me with Aoey, I stayed to observe her a little longer before going home. For the entire three days, I was so worried about the sweet eyes. I called Nut very often as if he were really my boyfriend. Nut happily updated me about Aoey, who had managed to adjust. She had more friends and no one touched her because they were aware of the problem. That helped me calm down a lot.

But she was still upset about something.

“Jade is helping Aoey closely. They are like close friends now.” Nut referred to that handsome senior who rescued Aoey as a hero on a white horse. “Aoey is a very popular freshman. Everyone thinks she is so mysterious. When she takes off her glasses, people say she is so beautiful. But those people have never met you, which is why they think she is beautiful.”

“Take off her glasses?” I gritted my teeth and felt so upset that Aoey didn’t do what I asked. Those eyes were inviting trouble.

“At first, she seemed like a troublemaker, but now everyone likes her. She’s nice and calm, but don’t touch her.”

“Enough. I don’t want to hear it anymore.” I finished listening and hung up immediately. She was popular now. What the hell was this?

It had been three days, so I went to pick her up from the university. I sat in the car and watched from afar. I wanted to see how cheerful she was when she wasn't with me. A large group of friends followed her and chatted with her. They laughed and joked as if they were having a lot of fun. Aoey stood in the middle of the circle, as if she were a star surrounded by people. Among them was Jade, that handsome senior.

I wanted to know if she would be cheerful when she saw me. I got out of the car and waved at her, trying to get her attention. Everyone looked at me in astonishment, but I didn't care. I only cared about one person.

Suddenly, when Jade saw me, his smile faded.

Damn! This was frustrating.

Great, who was also in the back, ran up to me when he saw me. He looked just as upset as I was. When he caught up with me, he started filling me in on things I already knew, like a kid gossiping.

"She's a star now. She might even win the popular vote. Look, everyone is surrounding her like she's a celebrity."

"Don't be a loser."

"I won't give up. I'm just upset." I didn't respond because Aoey came over and greeted me.

"Hi Gen, how are you?"

How am I? Really? It's such a distant question. We haven't seen each other in just three days. Why ask such a stupid question?

"I'm fine, as always. Should we go back?"

“Okay.”

Her joy at being with her friends vanished, as if swallowed by a black hole. I dropped Great off at my mom’s house, and we headed home. There was an awkward silence the entire way. Normally, she would have updated me on what had happened over the past three days. Wasn’t that what friends do?

“I wasn’t here for three days...” Aoey said. “Don’t you want to know how my days have been?”

“How are you? You look fine, though. You seemed happy. I saw you smiling from afar.”

“You don’t know how I feel, but... forget it. I’m not that important.”

Sarcasm.

“How are you?”

“Nothing to update.”

“Why do you want me to ask then?”

I didn’t pay much attention to the way I asked because I didn’t really know what to ask. I knew everything about Nut. I knew what her day was like. I knew more about her than anything else.

Aoey looked at me, disappointed and sad. I was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

I lost to her tears.

“Since you have a boyfriend, you don’t care about me anymore.”

“What did you say? Of course, I care about you.”

“Just like you are now. I don’t have anything important for you at all. You didn’t even ask me how I was the past three days. When I didn’t say

anything, you didn't care to ask anything else. I knew that if you had a boyfriend, I'd lose my place."

"What's wrong with you? I'm so confused. How did you lose your place?"

"Now. You don't care about me anymore. Not just now, but when we sleep, you never hug me anymore. You never come near me again. You treat me like I'm some kind of germ."

"Aoey, I never thought that. It's just..." I didn't really know what to say. How could I tell her that I didn't hug her because I couldn't go any deeper?

"I slept very deeply, so I didn't hug you."

"No, because you have a boyfriend, so you distance yourself from me. It's so nice to have a boyfriend," said the sweet-eyed girl with a sarcastic tone. "Maybe I need to get one myself."

I bit my lip hard when I heard that. She wanted to have a boyfriend. I felt a sharp pain in my chest. But what I had now was so unnatural, so I tried to deny it as much as I could.

"That's actually a good idea. Maybe he can calm you down.... Then you can stop trying to attract attention."

Aoey looked at me with disbelief and anger. She didn't shout, but her voice clearly showed that we were now at war.

"Fine. I'm going to get a boyfriend."

"Don't forget to introduce him."

That was the last thing we said before everything went silent. She was so happy with other people, but she gave me attitude when she saw me.

How cool was this?

Chapter 12

I didn't know why, but Aoey and I were so distant at the time. We slept in the same room, but it didn't feel like we were together. I guess it was partly because of school. Both Aoey and I were focused on studying and our new social lives.

A new social life...

That bothered me a little when I thought about what I had talked about with Great at noon. My brother gossiped about Aoey like a child whose toys were stolen. She was now surrounded by friends her age and some older ones, like insects flying around a beautiful flower. She also had many female friends. I was a little jealous of her. I thought that if I didn't help her with her published novel, she wouldn't have enough money to study.

I didn't like having that thought.

I was now free from any assigned tasks or projects, so I spent my free time drawing in my sketchbook. I was frustrated that many of the drawings in my book were of her beautiful eyes. I wanted to talk to her but was too pride to start first. I was Genlong. I never gave in to anyone, especially not a girl who gave me lice.

"Do you have a lot to study?" I hated myself for starting the conversation. She made me go against all my rules in life, dammit!

"Yeah." Her short reply annoyed me a little.

I gritted my teeth in response, but Aoey didn't see that. She didn't talk much, so I had to keep talking to her. I poked my head into her notebook and tried to read it.

"Why do you write the same things over and over again in every book?"

When Aoey saw that I had read that, she took the book from my hands. It wasn't a very hostile action, but she did raise her voice. "Get back."

"...."

"So I can remember if I repeated them."

No...

That note was for other people. I sighed and looked at it.

"Are you taking notes for other people?"

She looked at me annoyed because I kept rummaging through her things.

"My friend didn't come today. I'll write her a note."

"Is she paying your tuition?"

"I'm just helping her."

"It's good to help other people, but don't be stupid."

"I'm not a fool!"

"Well, I don't like stupid people."

That's how she made friends, being used as a maid. She was curious about what her life would be like at university, what kind of friends she would hang out with.

I went out with Tod that day. He also took his boyfriend with us. I didn't know how to react when my boyfriend introduced me to his other boyfriend.

"This is my boyfriend. Singha."

A tall, handsome, dark-skinned guy who you'd never guess liked men. He acknowledged my existence with a nod. I liked to judge people when I saw them. I realized this guy was... the best.

Ohhh, my Tod was the bottom!

Maybe I had to read the novel Boy Love on the Internet to see how they did it.

"It must be convenient for you to go out since you have me as your cover."

"I have to thank you."

Tod and I were closer now since we talked openly about his sexual preference. His family was very strict. He said his dad hired someone to follow him and see where he went. It was hard for him to see his boyfriend.

Her father was stricter than mine, who had a beautiful daughter.

"I have a question I've been meaning to ask for a long time. Can I ask you something?" I looked at the two men in front of me.

"What's that?"

"If Tod is a medical student, Singha must be an engineer." I threw out a question and an answer at the same time. The handsome boy shook his head.

"No, I study business."

"So there's no need for a doctor to date an engineer."

"Why engineer?" Tod laughed when he saw me and looked confused.

"I don't know. I saw it in books and on the Internet. BL novels are always a story between a doctor and an engineer. I never saw anyone working as a teacher, doctor, farmer, fisherman, or bricklayer."

It would be fun to imagine a big, muscled, sweaty guy on a construction site, flirting with a woman saying, "I wanted to fuck you with this big, tight muscle."

Oh...

Who would read that...

"Because engineer sounds cool."

"And the doctor has to be the passive one? Why are so many doctors homosexual, Tod?"

"I'm not gay. I just have a boyfriend."

That was so absurd. The three of us had dinner together and chatted openly. Singha seemed to like me. He talked a lot with me. If he wasn't with Tod, I would have thought he was flirting with me.

After a while, my phone rang. It was for my appointment with Nut, Aoey's senior at her university, who helped me last time. I said goodbye to the two men and went out to see Nut where he said he was waiting. The tall guy was now waiting and looked nervous. I didn't like this kind of person. I didn't know how people without confidence could go on with their lives.

Bored...

"Nut."

He turned around quickly when I called out to him. He was wearing his college uniform because he had a class that morning. Nut was also in her uniform.

"You're here, Gen—"

"Well, we have an appointment, I had to come."

"I thought you could cancel it."

"No, I won't do that. I told you I'll pay you for your help..."

"That help?" A sweet voice said behind me. I closed my eyes as I realized who that voice was. I hated being surprised, but I had to act really surprised.

"Oh, what are you doing here?"

Aoey was also in college uniform. She came with that handsome senior who helped her.

And she didn't wear her glasses...

"I was nervous, so I asked Jade to come with me."

"And Aoey is here with Jade," I replied. They were so close to going anywhere together now.

"So this is Gen, as beautiful as you said." Jade smiled at me. I smiled back and tried my best to be nice to him, even though I was really upset.

"Nice to meet you, Jade." I flirted with him with my eyes to test him, but it seemed to pass through him like a breeze.

He focused only on her... not bad.

We all walked together with Jade and Aoey walking in front. I walked with my arms around my chest and whispered to Nut about the topic we discussed earlier.

"Aoey doesn't know that I was behind the hazing event, right? Did you tell anyone about it?"

"No, I didn't tell anyone."

"That's good... these two are pretty close, huh?" I asked a trick question. Nut was just too wrapped up to not notice what was wrong. He kept telling me the story.

"Jade was the one who helped Aoey back then. He was a hero in her eyes. Aoey is a sweet girl. Jade likes sweet girls."

"Really...?" I said slowly and sadly. "What about Aoey? Does she like him?"

"I don't know. Today is the first date for both of us. If she didn't like it, she wouldn't be here."

I saw Aoey give us a look. I looked straight at her to let her know that I knew she was watching. She turned to Jade and spoke to her with much joy. She wanted me to see that.

Did she think I would care?

Arrrrggg!

I was angry, but no one could tell.

Nut and Jade wanted to invite the girls. I actually told Nut that I wanted to pay, but that the guys had to be cool in front of the girls.

The movie we bought tickets for was a horror movie, chosen by Aoey.

I didn't know what the sweet eyes were thinking, but they all agreed. There was nothing else to see anyway. There were four seats in a row. The guys let us girls sit next to each other in the middle and they sat at the end on either side. When we were next to each other, I whispered:

"How is your date?"

"It's good."

"You chose a horror movie because you wanted to be scared and hug your date, right?"

Aoey looked at me and said, "How smart."

That short answer annoyed me. Now she knew how to use a sarcastic tone with me. But I shrugged and showed no emotion.

"Everybody knows."

She wasn't the only one who knew how to speak with sarcasm...

I stopped paying attention to Aoey and looked straight at the screen. I had to say that I wasn't a fan of movies like that. Even how well the makeup was done, in my head I knew they were just acting. I could only imagine people acting as the director told them to. Each actor went home and lived their life outside of the movie. They all had a life just like us. There was nothing to be afraid of like in the movie. Paying money to watch something like this was so pointless to me. Watching a movie was just a way to kill yourself sometimes.

But anyway, this movie was pretty good. The sound, the creepy scene, the hanging from the ceiling. Many people screamed in the cinema but I just watched it without any emotion.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Aoey close her eyes tightly in fear. When the scene was about to reach its climax, the sweet eyes searched for someone to grab onto.

She couldn't turn to me because she had to act cold, but she also couldn't turn to Jade because she didn't want to be touched.

I grabbed her hands, intertwined our fingers and squeezed them tightly. Aoey was surprised and looked at me with two big eyes. I didn't feel anything with the movie but I pretended to be in front of her.

"Oh, I'm so scared."

Shit... when would this end?

When Aoey saw that I showed my weakness, she was kind. When the next ghost scene came, she brought her face close to me and covered her eyes. I had to pretend that I was scared too just to comfort her.

This wasn't me at all.

"Here they are again... noooo."

Finally, the movie ended...

Aoey and I walked out of the cinema holding hands. We both forgot about the boys we had gone with. Jade and Nut looked at us and smiled as if they were seeing something so beautiful.

"Two beautiful girls holding hands. It's such a sweet thing to see," Nut said, making Aoey realize what we were doing. She let go of his hand, and I wrapped my arms around my chest.

"You two must be so scared, but why did you choose a horror movie?" Jade joked to Aoey, who shrugged in response.

"Horror is supposed to be scary. It seems that someone is more scared of it than me," she said, talking about me. I pushed my hair back and sighed.

"Well, it was a ghost movie." I looked at the watch on my wrist. "It's late now. I have to go home."

"Really?" Nut looked so disappointed. "Are we going out together again?"

"If I'm not dead, we might meet again. I have to go now," I said and looked at Aoey, who stood still. I could tell she was protesting. She wouldn't be coming back with me.

"We're going home."

"I am not going."

I looked her straight in the eyes, which were now staring back at me defiantly.

“Do what I told you.”

“No.”

“Don’t be stubborn.”

“I will do that.”

Silence...

Now everyone was looking at us. Aoey closed her lips tightly.

“I won't love you if you're stubborn.”

I wrapped my arms around myself and stormed out, expecting the sweet eyes to follow me, and she did. She silently followed me to the car. Even when she listened to me, she was still stubborn.

“Why did you bully me?” Her soft eyes looked at me sadly. I pursed my lip. Was she looking for a fight again?

“I wasn't trying to intimidate you, but I just didn't like it when you were stubborn.”

“Won't you let me do anything on my own? When I didn't do what you said, you always said I was stubborn.”

“Why did you do what I told you then?”

“I don’t know,” Aoey looked at me defiantly. “I won’t do what you say again.”

“I won't love you then.”

“Someone else will love me.”

“That Jade guy?” I smiled. “He just looks handsome but not interesting at all. Why are you in a hurry to get a boyfriend, anyway?”

“You told me to get a boyfriend! That way I won’t have to seek your attention.” I paused and realized I said that. So I was the one who pushed her to do that.

“How are you going to date someone? They can't even touch you! And... another thing, this world is so cruel. You don't have to rush to get a boyfriend.”

“You have a boyfriend. You had a date with Tod in the morning and a movie at night with my superior. What a bitch!”

“What did you just say?” I was surprised by what she said.

“Fox, vagabond.”

“Are you nsulting me?!”

“Better than nobody.”

Sweet eyes opened the car door and sat quietly. She didn't say anything else. I jumped into the car and continued fighting.

“Why did you insult me? Why did you do that?”

“I just don't understand that you have a boyfriend but you went on a date with Nut.”

“I can date whoever I want. I can have a few more men if I wanted to. It's my business, not yours.”

“I'll do it too.”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I'm jealous!”

The atmosphere in the car was now dead silent. I was shocked by what just came out of my mouth. Aoey was equally shocked and wasn't sure she heard right.

“What did you just say?”

“I said I was worried.”

“No, you said you were jealous.”

“No, I did not.”

“I am nearsighted, not deaf.”

“I feel dizzy.”

I collapsed against the window, pretending to faint. Aoey shook my body in disbelief, but I closed my eyes tightly. I didn't know how to get out of this situation. She still insisted even when I fainted.

Crazy... That was crazy.

Chapter 13

Since I said that word, Aoey seemed to be in a good mood. She stared at me constantly, trying to find something there. I realized that she was acting suspiciously, and I had to do something.

"Tod will come today."

The sweet eyes that were once happy now didn't look very happy anymore. I pretended not to see her.

"Why would he come here?"

"I just wanted him to visit me. I wanted to show him my world. I wanted to introduce my most important friend to the boy who is important to me because they are both important."

I won.

I left her speechless, and she didn't have a smile, which made me feel weak. She wasn't very happy but didn't show it too much.

Tod arrived at the condo not long after that. The handsome guy was kind enough to bring some snacks and introduce them to each other.

"Here's Aoey. She's my best friend. This is Tod, my boyfriend." The handsome boy looked at me in surprise. He didn't expect this kind of introduction. Aoey said hello and tried to smile as much as she could.

"Should I go now that your boyfriend is here?"

"No, why leave? Two important people in my life should meet."

This was a small studio with limited space. The three of us sat in a corner of the living room while Aoey arranged snacks on a plate.

"Something's wrong," Tod told me quietly.

"What are you saying?"

"You. Something is wrong with you." He looked at Aoey. "Your best friend is also strange."

"What is strange?"

"Your eyes."

I felt analyzed, so I shifted my sitting position uncomfortably. Tod liked to analyze people and couldn't seem to hide it. When we met on our first day, he looked right through me too, remember? I considered whether I should continue covering up the truth or tell him. But it wasn't the right time to tell him anything. I could only ask for help.

"From now on, you must follow my example, my conversation, even when you don't agree. Please keep in mind that it is an act."

"Something wrong?"

"Please."

"Well, I guess I have to help."

"Here you go," Aoey announced with snacks and drinks. She sat down and smiled happily but awkwardly. Why did she have to make it so obvious? Couldn't she suppress her own feelings?

"Do you still have gay men following you?"

The handsome man who took a drink looked at me with amusement. But he had to follow whatever my example was.

"Yes, sometimes."

"How did you handle them?"

"What can I do?"

"If I were you, I would chase them away. It was difficult to be born as a human being. They shouldn't be homosexuals. Do you know that in ancient times they would be punished? I don't like them."

I tried to be unpleasant but didn't agree with what he had just said. Aoey sat there silently while Tod got more involved.

"They didn't do anything to us. Gays aren't bad people."

"They're not bad, but they're not normal people. If you're born a man, go ahead and be a man. Just like women, they should like men, not girls. It's so unnatural that I don't like it." I took a sip of water and thought of something else to say. "I had a woman flirt with me once; I scared her away as soon as I could."

"What did you say to her?"

"Sick," I said as I looked at Aoey, who avoided my eye contact, so I emphasized a little more. "You too, Aoey. If a woman flirts with you, you have to reject her; people might think you're sick too. You should stay away if you're hanging out with those kinds of people."

"...."

"If you are crooked, I will hate you too."

There was a dead silence between us. I heard a fly buzzing around a trash can clearly. Aoey smiled awkwardly at us.

"I've never dated a woman."

"Good for you."

"I'll go to the convenience store downstairs. Do you want anything from there?"

I looked into her sweet eyes and shook my head. I assumed she wanted to quietly escape somewhere to process what I had just said. I heard the sound of an elevator and was sure she had just left. Tod started to argue with me openly.

"What was that all about? When did you have anything against the third gender? You talked shit. If anyone heard that, they would want to kick you in the face."

I looked at Tod and leaned back on the couch exhausted. I rubbed my face with both hands tiredly. "Was I really being rude?"

"Do you want to send him a message?" The handsome man was intelligent. He understood that there was something between the lines. I nodded in response.

"Yeah."

"You two like each other."

"No!" I quickly dismissed that statement. "She likes me."

"Does she know that you knew this?"

"I don't think so. I don't think I ever showed her that I know."

I wrapped my arms around myself like a shield. Aoey's reaction to what I said made me feel pain on the left side of my chest. It felt like someone was hitting me over and over again.

"You should tell her frankly instead of doing this."

"That could end our friendship. We are friends and we shouldn't get involved in that kind of relationship."

"Do you think your friendship will still be there when you're doing this? Stopping seeing her might be better for both of you."

"I don't want to stop seeing her. I wanted to be with her like this," I replied normally, but the handsome boy could read me. There was a long pause from Tod that made me wonder what he was thinking.

"That?"

"You feel the same way she feels."

"No!" I screamed nervously, which only made the situation worse.

"Too much emotion."

"Not really."

"When someone was chasing you and you wanted to say no, how did you do it?"

"I'm just telling them no. That's all."

"Why can't you do that to her?"

"She's my close friend." I bit my lip. "My first close friend."

"You're not good at lying."

"What do you want me to do? What do you want from me?"

I started to get angry with him and tried to take control of the situation by getting angry. But this way could only work with someone who fell in love with me, not with Tod.

The handsome boy cupped my face with both of his hands and forced me to look into his eyes. His dark eyes looked into mine and now made me release my anger.

"You can tell me everything like when I told you I like boys."

"I..."

"Tell me the truth."

How close were we? There was a voice in my head that screamed, "Don't admit it, don't tell." On the other hand, I felt like Tod was my brother and I wanted to tell someone about this.

If I said it, would it come true? ... The fact that I'm not normal.

"I don't know." I averted my eyes. "I always feel weak around her."

"....."

"Does that mean I'm not normal? I'm jealous of her. Is that supposed to happen?"

"Being gay or lesbian is not a mistake, Gen."

I turned my back on him.

"How is this not a mistake? Look at me!" I pointed at myself. "I was born with everything. Don't you see how perfect I am? I was born beautiful, rich, and well-educated. Do you know that I can speak three languages: Chinese, Thai, and English?"

"So?"

"How could someone so perfect have such a black spot in his life?"

"Why is love between two girls a black spot in life?"

"Society is not that open, and I am not open to that."

I said with a trembling voice, whether with sadness or anger, I didn't know, but I couldn't accept myself for that.

"No!"

"If you wanted to be so perfect, go out with a man and have the most miserable life. If I were you, I would want to be happy. Perfection doesn't

give you a good life."

"You may be okay with imperfection in life, but I'm not. Not Genlong. If you think it's okay to be gay, then why are you lying to your family?"

At first, it was just an argument, but now it turned into a debate about LGBT issues. I never hated them, but I wasn't ready to live in their world either. What would my parents think of me? What would the people around me think of me?

"I'm not going to argue with you now. We can talk later when you're calmer."

The handsome boy stood up and walked towards the door. I felt uncomfortable for having made him angry. It wasn't even part of the problem.

He then suddenly turned around to comfort me.

"Be yourself, Gen. Just be happy with who you are."

"Be brave with those you love, even when you have to leave your comfort zone."

Tod left while I was still confused with strong emotions. I didn't agree with what he had just said. He was one of them. He could say whatever he wanted. Humans were social animals. If you didn't care what other people thought, you had to live in a jungle.

I was part of that society. I wouldn't break any rules. I was a normal person.
And I a woman.

I had to stop this nonsense as quickly as I could!

After telling me that, I sat on the sofa hugging my knees and waited for Aoey to come back. But for a long time, she did not appear. The convenience store was very close to the condominium.

I got up and decided to go out and look for her. I was still frustrated by the conversation. I could have just called her, but I wanted to talk to her face to face. While I was waiting for the elevator, I heard a scream not far away. Damn... I knew that was her voice.

I followed the voice and found her hiding in the fire escape. The sweet-eyed girl hugged herself, crying silently and covering her mouth with her hands to cry as quietly as possible. What I saw made me feel so heavy in my chest. I was angry at myself for feeling so much for her.

I was a woman. I shouldn't have any feelings for this woman. It wasn't right!

"Hey."

She jumped once she heard my voice. Her sweet eyes looked up, and she wiped away her tears immediately, but it was a little too late.

"G..Gen, what are you doing here?"

"I have to ask you, what are you doing here?" I wrapped my arms around myself, trying to cheer myself up like when I tried to intimidate other people. "Quite a lot to be like that."

"As?"

"What you're doing now," I had to be clear with her because it was necessary. "You make it too obvious."

"What do you mean?" She looked so surprised, so I said it frankly without hesitation.

"You like me."

There was a silence between us. Aoey was now frozen in shock.

"I don't know why you have feelings for me, Aoey. We're both women. More importantly, we're friends." I bit my lip in pain, but I figured it was time to deal with it. "I don't want to lose a friend like you. I've never had a close friend before, and you're the first."

"...."

"You're my first in many ways. You're my first friend in elementary school. You were the first one who gave me lice. You're the first person I wanted to be with. But if you have feelings for me, I think it has to end."

Aoey's tears ran down her cheeks. She looked at the ground, no words, no answer from her. I wanted to bite my tongue and fall dead now.

But I loved myself and couldn't see myself becoming a freak.

"I might hate you if you do that."

Aoey looked at me in shock. I felt so sorry for her that she was now looking at me with tears streaming down her face. What was I doing now? Why was I hurting her so much? I could pretend it never happened.

"I'm sorry, Gen"

"Ok, fine. We have it clear now. Let's go back."

I walked ahead of her, but I didn't hear any footsteps following me. Aoey was standing in the same spot, looking at me seriously. And said...

"From now on, I'll leave this."

"...."

"You're just my best friend."

Her words hurt me so deeply that I would rather die. But all I did was nod my head and walk back without showing any emotion. Once I turned around, I grabbed my heart.

Was it the right thing to do?

I did the right thing, didn't I? Women are for men.

I did the right thing...



Chapter 14

From that day on, Aoey and I were very estranged. I started sleeping at home instead of the condo. I felt selfish for running away while Aoey had nowhere to go. I vanished from that place even though I was the owner. I didn't know how Aoey was right now.

I cared about her, but I couldn't show it.

When I returned to spend some time at the condo, there was a big wall between us. We were at a distance, not touching each other, much less talking. I was there out of duty, that was all.

I felt so skinny now. I didn't eat much and slept less. I wore sunglasses because my eyes had dark circles around them. I didn't realize something was wrong with me until my mom made fun of me.

"Is your heart broken?"

Her statement made me freeze. Growing up for 20 years, I had never experienced a broken heart before. I didn't want to admit that I had one either.

Meaningless. I was the one rejecting her, but why did I feel so bad?

"Gen," I rolled my eyes when I heard Great call out my name. What now?

"What?"

"You have to help me," my little brother was now kneeling next to my chair where I was eating with my mother. I looked at my self-centered brother and slowly took his hands off of me.

"You're so annoying. What's all this for?"

"I am losing."

"Lose what?"

"I'm losing to Jade, my senior, and other men who are after Aoey. She's very popular now. She's the star of the school." My brother was now whining like a child. I pretended not to pay attention, but I was actually all ears.

The star of his school... I wasn't surprised. The first time I saw her, I realized how handsome she was.

"What do you want me to do?"

"You have to tell her to stop being so flirtatious."

"Flirtatious? Aoey?" I asked in disbelief. Great insisted, nodding his head.

"Yeah, I don't know where she learned to do that, flirting with her eyes. Is that yours?"

"No, why would I teach her that? We barely talked lately."

"Are you two fighting?"

"No, not really." I didn't give a clear answer because I also didn't know if our last conversation was considered a fight or not.

"If you're not fighting, you have to do something. I really like Aoey."

"You've been chasing so many girls in your life. You really don't need my help."

"But this is Aoey. The mysterious Aoey that I never get close to."

"That means other people can't either."

"Yes, but it would be better if you stopped flirting. It's so devious. Please help me." Great shook my arms looking like he wanted to cry. "Or you flirt with those men who tried to get to Aoey. When they see you, it would be easy to change their target."

"Are you reading too many bad romance novels? That strategy won't work in real life. What if there's an upcoming top model who flirts with you? Would you still focus on Aoey?"

"Of course not."

He was such a sincere person...

I didn't say anything else to him. I'd let him deal with it and pretended not to care, but I considered what to do.

It wouldn't be like flirting. I wanted to know if those men were really good enough for Aoey. Well, I was her good friend after all.

I decided to go back to my apartment that night after Great told me about those men, though I pretended not to care. But I ended up frustrated when I found out that she came home late. It was already 9 PM, but she wasn't home.

I sat in the lobby of the condo waiting for her, whether out of concern or jealousy I didn't know. My eyes searched for her and waited to see when she would enter. Finally, I saw a small sedan pull up and Aoey got out of the car.

He had short hair... I didn't know if he was a boy or a girl.

I hid out of fear that she would see me. Once she passed my hiding spot, I followed her pretending that I had just returned from a convenience store to buy a bottle of water even though our fridge was full of water.

"Hey," I called out to her as she walked to the fridge for cold water. The sweet eyes didn't even look at me. There was an icy feeling outside of her. "Hey."

"...."

"Why did you come home so late?"

"I'm an adult. I had things to do." Aoey turned to look at me. She didn't have her glasses on like I asked. I could clearly see the changes in her.

More beautiful...

She had her makeup on.

"What were you doing so late?"

"You never spend time here again, and I never asked you."

This was her way of saying, "leave me alone." It really pissed me off, and I wanted to shake her and yell at her to stop being so annoying. But I could only cross my arms, raise my chin, and glare at her.

"Whose car was that?"

"Did you see that?"

"Yeah."

"How could you see that? Were you in the store? Since when do you buy things from here?"

"Since my close friend used to work there and retired, I sometimes just use their service."

Aoey shrugged as if she didn't care how much attention I paid her. She walked back to the sofa casually.

"My friend."

"Man or woman?"

"Why do you want to know? Is it important to you?"

"You changed."

"Life has to go on... How long are you going to be standing there? Sit down. I wanted to ask you something because you are my close friend."

I sat down in a space next to her on the couch. I looked into her sweet eyes with surprise and sat down next to her. I wanted to know where this would take us. She was more assertive and not shy like before. She changed a lot.

"What's wrong?" I said.

"I wanted to ask you about my love life."

She was playing with me...

I acted surprised to make her feel like I was paying attention. I wanted to know if she acted happy to hear her love story, how she should react to that.

"I heard from Great that you are very popular. Many men are chasing you."

"I don't wear my glasses anymore."

"Can you study without them?"

"I wear my contact lenses. Thanks to my new friends who taught me how to put on makeup and wear contact lenses. I could never realize that I had many men who love me."

"...."

"No less than you."

"What do you really want to ask me?" I replied.

Aoey shrugged.

"Love life."

"What's up with that?"

"I have four men chasing me now. Who should I choose?"

I looked into her eyes for any nonsense, whether she made up those numbers for a dramatic reaction or not. But Aoey wasn't a liar, and I was good enough to know when she was lying to herself.

"You have to choose the best one that you like. Is there anyone you like more?"

Which boy did you like more than me? This was the real question. Aoey paused and sighed.

"They are all good, including Great. They all have their strengths. One is always good to me since the first day we met, that is Jade."

"Oh."

"Phong, who dumped me today. He's my classmate. He's a rich guy and he treated me like a princess."

"Hmm."

"The other one is called Mint."

The name took me by surprise. It was definitely not a boy's name.

"As?"

I caught a smile at the corner of her mouth, but it quickly disappeared as she continued with her story.

"Yes, Mint. It's a woman."

I didn't know why I felt tense. The sweet eyes in front of me tried to test me with something.

I once said I didn't like women who acted like men. She tried to make me angry.

"Then?"

"She is nice and sweet. She has beautiful fingers."

The last sentence made me bite my lip patiently. I tried to be still to manage the rage inside me. I had to pretend to answer her love riddle. Otherwise, I wanted to pinch her cheek.

Why fingers? There were so many things to look at instead.

Why would I care about fingers anyway? She wasn't rude at all, but why was she so upset?

"You're so weird. You look at people's fingers."

"Great is the last one. He's perfect and has beautiful eyes." Aoey looked at me as if trying to hypnotize me. **"...like you."**

She flirted with me... she tried to hypnotize me like she did with other guys. I knew this trick well because she also used it when she wanted to flirt with someone. I laughed and looked away.

"Too many chosen ones might confuse you. They're all good. I was just like you. I was so confused about who was the best, who I should date. I ended up not seeing anyone."

"Do you have many men chasing you?"

"Maximum 13 men at the same time."

I boasted to a number of men. She paused for a moment and nodded.

"You're beautiful. That's no surprise."

"If you ask me, I suggest you take some time to make up your mind. If you don't like anyone in particular, everyone can be your friend. If you don't end up choosing, they can be friends."

"Who is the best of the four?" Aoey asked.

She didn't understand what I was trying to tell her. She didn't have to choose now. "Well, Great is...."

"Because he's your brother?"

"He has beautiful eyes like me. You might like them." I looked straight at her and now she turned around. I smiled at my victory. "I'm going to bed now. Let me know when you get a choice. I'm glad I was able to help you out tonight."

She had such a big mouth even though she had unstable emotions now. She had four men chasing her even when she barely put on makeup. What would happen when she learned how to put on makeup perfectly?

I became too obsessed with her story... too much to not know myself.

The story about men chasing her bothered me a lot. I wanted to talk to her more about it, but I didn't want to be obvious. I suggested she find a boyfriend. Why should she be upset then?

[Gen...] Aoey called me when I tried to calm myself down by getting a manicure.

"Hey, Aoey." The bad thing was that I felt happy when I saw her call as if it was her first time calling! I needed to calm down. I had just had a roller coaster of emotions.

[The thing is...]

There was some hesitation in her voice. I adjusted myself by stretching my back to try to hear her.

"What happened?"

[I have a favor to ask you. It's okay if you can't help me.]

"You need money?"

[I would never do that. The thing is, my friends and I had an assignment to do together, but we have nowhere to go. Can I take them to your condo?]

"Of course, I thought it was something serious."

[I'm so sorry. I don't know when we'll end things though. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable.]

"I can go home if that's better for you."

[But this is your condo. I can't kick you out of your condo.]

"Don't worry about it. This is a group task, right?"

[Thank you very much, Gen. Wait a second... the room owner said it was okay. Mint, you have to give your ID card when you arrive. You can park in Gen's parking spot. There are two parking spaces we can use.]

"How many friends are you inviting?"

[Around five.]

"Is that Mint... your friend?"

There was silence on the other end. I had no idea what that silence meant. She might be thinking of some excuse... why was she quiet? Give me a straight answer if there's nothing to worry about.

[Yes, we are a group of five. Mint will also come.]

She brought that girl into our space. I almost said what I thought, but I had to restrain myself. I responded politely.

"Well, you have to work on your homework."

I hung up the phone and pushed away the hand of a woman painting my nails. Now, on the back of my hand was a smudge of nail polish. The people inside the nail salon looked at me nervously.

Damn! Little scoundrel!



Chapter 15

"Do what you need to."

That was my last sentence. But then, what was I doing now inside my condominium where Aoey's friends were everywhere?

I actually had a plan to have dinner with my dad and watch a TV drama with my mom. But I immediately changed my mind when I heard the name — Mint. I turned my wheels 180 degrees backwards only to be sitting invisible in my own condo. I wasn't sure why I was here. All the money seemed worthless because there was only one person actually doing the work.

Of course, it was Aoey.

The girl with glasses opened 4-5 books around her and wrote the report in her notebook while her friends were chatting and eating fruits and food at the table while some were drinking beers bought from outside. They treated this place like a bar. They looked ready to dance after finishing the report. How could she have friends like that?

"Everyone seems to be working very hard at their task." I looked around and said it out loud, but I didn't mention it to anyone in particular. But those people seemed to have little responsibility. No one seemed to care and they answered me

"We've already done a lot. Aoey just needs to finish up a bit, right, Aoey?"

Aoey turned to her friends and nodded. She didn't pay much attention to the conversation and went back to her work. She looked like a silly girl who was being used. I couldn't stand what I saw so I got out of bed, I was watching TV and turned off Aoey's computer screen. The sweet-eyed girl

looked at me in surprise and also angry because I interrupted her work. But I didn't care at all.

"It's just a bit of work. Don't waste your time."

"It's not just a little bit of work. There's a lot of it."

"I thought they just said a summary."

"Is...."

"I don't like stupid people."

"...."

"Especially those who let themselves be used. If you work hard to get other people to get the same grade as you, you might as well fail the whole group... I'll be very upset if you don't."

I just spoke quietly to her. But my tone was sharp and loud enough for her to follow. She seemed to agree with me but refused to budge on the issue.

"I told you it was a bit of work. Aoey closed her laptop now." The big fat girl with glasses said as if to support what she said before. "Come on! Let's celebrate. We're all approved. Let's relax."

What the hell did you do besides eat, gossip, and be fat? She even tried to rope me into her direct sales business. But I stopped her immediately when I told her my mother owned a company.

My mom was smart. She made money from stupid people who cheated stupid people. That was... direct selling.

"Now we're done..." Aoey looked at me timidly. I wondered how she would handle her friends. But she seemed weaker than I thought.

Why did I have to please them so much?

But they had no way. It was a waste of time to talk to people like that. There was no sign from any of them that they understood what Aoey tried to say indirectly. They still called Aoey and me to their night party.

"Come on! Let's celebrate. We'll definitely get an A grade. What game should we play? The King Game?" I looked at another cute but quiet girl who sat quietly from the beginning. A smile appeared on her face after her friends proposed the game to her. Of course, she knew this game.

The game where you had to touch each other.

It was a challenging mind game. It was a game to play with friends and it used to break the ice between people. It started with rock, paper, scissors. Some dancing and then it went downhill from there.

Take off your socks, take off your clothes, hugs, kisses. If you didn't want to lose, you had to do it. The people who started playing didn't want to lose.

That was well planned but in the wrong place because I was here to play too.

"How do you play that?"

I looked at Aoey who was so painfully innocent. She was so dumb, dah! How could she not know this kind of game while I was so fast?

"We will draw lots. Whoever has the paper that says 'king' will give the people orders. The king will assign two numbers, for example, number 2 and number 5 are kisses on the cheeks. Whoever got those numbers has to follow the rules." Aoey looked stunned because she realized that this game would have some contact.

"What if I don't want to do it?"

"So you drink. The actual rule is to take off your clothes, but we are in a student uniform. There are only 2 pieces of shirt and skirt. We will get naked pretty quickly."

"Are you going to play, Gen?"

One of Aoey's friends called me as a close friend. I didn't like it but what could I do. Those were her friends. If I made it too obvious that I didn't like that, it would also be hard on the eye candy. She was already so helpless.

"I'll just watch. I couldn't drink." I declined the invitation but saw out of the corner of my eye that one of them raised his eyebrows in question.

But I didn't really care.

I sat on the outside of the circle and watched the game. Everyone played well. The order was fun. Some were to recite a poem, to look into each other's eyes. The orders were mostly sweet. Some told the story of the first kiss, telling the story of oneself, of one's family, something no one had ever known before.

"King's Order No.3 to talk about your first love"

Everyone looked for number 3. Aoey finally raised his hand.

"Tell me when you had your first love."

Mint, a sweet-looking little girl who sat silently for a long time, asked Aoey. This game was created to help her. Ok, I'll pay more attention to the game now.

"I don't know... I didn't realize it was love then."

"You didn't know then, which means you know now?" The fat friend reached for the glass of whiskey and drank it. That was the drink for the loser of the game.

"I think I knew."

"Who was?"

"I won't say it," Aoey replied shortly. "But I will tell you the story."

The sweet eyes didn't turn to look at me. I reached for my earbuds and put them on, but I didn't turn on the music because I still wanted to know who

her first love was.

I never asked her this and now I was curious. Everyone had their first crush. I had one too. I secretly loved my art teacher when I was in 3rd grade because she looked like a pug, the dog I liked but mom wouldn't let me have because it didn't look right. My mom's reason was because the dog didn't inspire her. Its nose was too flat.

Was that called love?... I guess so. Because I always loved her because I wanted a pug.

But wait, no, I didn't join the game. I wasn't supposed to tell the story.

"Someone I couldn't reach. I couldn't even imagine going out. I could only watch from afar."

The sweet eyes said slowly and it shook my heart. Why did I feel like she was referring to me. Because Aoey once said that she wanted to climb up to me.

Wait, I had to listen.

"It was a very delicate relationship. I almost lost a friend."

That was absolutely me....

I pretended to look away. My face felt hot from shyness. That was me. I felt like she was saying I love you in public. Damn! That's why I had to use my headphones and pretend I didn't hear anything.

"Your friend? Who was so tall? Prince William?"

"That's all."

"What?! That's not enough," Mint continued. The sweet eyes gave in, drinking all the whiskey in the glass and shrugging.

"I give up. Let's move on."

After an hour, the game was still going on. As I predicted, some clothes and accessories like watches, rings, necklaces, socks were removed. Now there was a touching part.

"No.5 takes No.2's hand"

Aoey and another friend with glasses raised their hands. I could immediately see their uncomfortable faces.

"I can't do it. I give up."

She drank a shot glass with the bottom...

In the end, most of the drink went to Aoey. The sweet-eyed skin now turned red. Her eyes were red and she looked like she couldn't control herself, but she still didn't let anyone touch her. I started to worry about her. She was ordered to gently touch a friend's cheek 3 times. I couldn't bear to watch her take another drink, so I interfered.

"I'll play for her."

I pushed Aoey's hand away, which was now reaching for another glass. I walked over to the fat girl and touched her cheek 3 times. Everyone looked at each other and groaned.

"That's cheating."

"This is my home. I have the privilege. I will play for Aoe and I will play for you."

Aoey couldn't sit up straight now. I backed her up against the bed and inserted myself into her place. I hated losing and I won't lose. I would never drink either.

I couldn't drink anyway, so I had to win. It was the only option.

"No.2 recites the multiplication table backwards from 12 to 9."

I smiled and did what she told me to do, which took everyone by surprise. She also ordered me to recite the Chinese language or did something challenging that they never thought I could do. They now enjoyed challenging me more.

Here were the most challenging orders.

"No.2 unhooks No.7's bra with one hand."

Perfect, I got number 2, I started looking for number 7, which was me. This game was definitely planned. But I would move on.

My bra was unhooked, inside me was so empty. So anyway, they couldn't take my tits off.

"Food snack No.1 to No.3. by Mint and me again...."

"#2 Look into #1's eyes for 1 minute, whoever loses has to take a drink."

Did I have to say who against who again?

I won the staring game. My eyes were the most dangerous weapons of all. If someone stared at me, they would either lose as if they were cursed or end up obsessed with me.

I once looked into the eyes of a very rich man and in 3 minutes I was able to order a Hermes perfume. Was that great or what?

Mint lost and now her face turned red after taking a drink. I wrapped my arms around myself like a proud winner. Like I said, I would never lose.

No way!

"No.3 and No.1 have to kiss for 1 minute."

That was definitely their plan. They must have planned to use that on Aoey but now she had already fallen asleep.

Mint looked at me excitedly. That made me feel so disgusted. This must be your plan to get Aoey. But now it didn't go as well as the plan. She would get me instead.

If she lost, she would have to drink but she e couldn't do it.

I couldn't stand losing either.

But kissing this short girl!

I couldn't breathe properly and I didn't know what to do. But now I was part of the game. Mint crept closer to me like a tiger slowly approaching its victim. I glared at her and that made her stop.

"This is a game. If you don't kiss me, you lose and you get a drink."

"I'm not gonna lose."

Mint smiled and walked over while I patiently bit my lip because there was nothing I could do.

Suddenly...

A large, heavy wallet hit Mint hard in the face. Everyone turned towards the direction the wallet came from. It was Aoey who glared back at her angrily.

"That's my Gen!"

“ ”

"Leave my Gen alone!"

The drunk girl was very angry. I had never seen Aoey in this version before. She was upset, angry, and fierce. She had a queen-like look on her.

Her friends tried to take Mint away from me because they were worried something might happen. Mint seemed very upset about being hit hard in the face.

"She's really drunk, just forget it. Let's end the night here," I said abruptly. It was good news because if I were to kiss this girl, I'd have to clean my mouth and a dentist wouldn't have any work to do.

"This is a game and it's not over yet."

"You really want to kiss me, huh?"

"N... No, no" She quickly changed her answer.

"If you lose, you have to drink."

Aoey grabbed the bottle that was now half empty and drank it as if it were water. Everyone was shocked to see that. "Are you happy now? The game is over. Get out of here."

Everyone looked at Aoey in surprise. I walked over to Aoey and hugged her to calm her down.

"Please go home."

"So you can touch Aoey now?" Mint looked at me and Aoey suspiciously.

This girl must have known that sweet eyes didn't like being touched. This game must have been a way for her to show it, out of curiosity.

"Yes, I can touch her but not other people." I said sharply and glared at Mint. I sent out a fierce energy that made her back away. "You two are just strangers."

Now it was just us after everyone left. Aoey stood still in the same spot because she was so drunk. I sighed after seeing her so drunk and helped her up.

"Get up. I'll take you to bed."

"Were you really going to kiss Mint?" Aoey asked in a drunken voice. It made me laugh.

"If I have to, I will. I don't want to lose."

"I helped you."

"Yes, that was a good thing."

"No, I helped you because I don't want you to kiss anyone." The sweet eyes filled with emotion looked straight at me. "If you're going to kiss someone, it should be me.."

"Huh?" I was forcefully pulled by my neck towards her before she pressed her lips against mine. I could smell the alcohol on her breath. The smell made me feel dizzy. I pushed her away. "What are you doing, Aoey?"

"I kiss you."

"You are so drunk."

"Drunk is good, so I'm brave enough to do something that crazy."

After finishing the sentence, she pushed me down and pressed her wet lips on mine aggressively. She didn't seem to know how to do it, but she did her best. I was surprised, but slowly followed her lead with curiosity.

I kissed her back...

I slid my tongue into her mouth while using both of my arms around her neck. She was in a surrender position. The little girl let out a low moan from her throat. I was so dizzy, but I finally flipped that little body over to lay on the floor before shifting so I was on top.

"My Gen..."

Aoey slowly opened her eyes to look at me. Her light brown eyes were yearning for me. I couldn't resist that so I leaned down to kiss her again and

started having my way. My instinct that had been repressed now surfaced and I took it out on the small body. She put her arms around my neck.

"Gen... Gen..."

Her low moan drove me even deeper. I peppered kisses all over her face as I used my hands to unbutton her student shirt one by one. Even though I had everything she had, I was so fascinated to feel her.

The pleasant smell... Her soft skin....

Her moan...

Her lips...and the exchange of moisture between our tongues...

What could I do with this little body?

"My Gen..."

"My Aoey.."

We both stare at each other for a long moment. Those light brown eyes mesmerized me until I almost stopped breathing. I forgot who I was and what I was doing. I lean towards the small body again and...

"I'm going to pass out."

Huh?

"Hey.."

"Zzzzzzz." Sleeping?

I was stunned and held her face with both hands. She fell asleep even though she was calling my name a few minutes earlier. Her breathing was now stable and her cute face looked like she had fainted. I was stunned.

What was even more shocking was... what the hell was I doing?

I looked around and became aware of my hands on her glistening breasts. Her shirt was unbuttoned by me. I sat on top of her and my breathing was now short and rapid.

My feeling exploded and found no release.

I wasn't drunk, not even a little. But now I was in this position on top of her.

She got me back in a big way!



Chapter 16

I could not sleep. I felt so confused.

I lost my first kiss. Well, I didn't count when she stole a kiss from me while I was asleep and I pretended I didn't know. It was just a touch on the lips. But that was a long, intense kiss, much more than just a touch. All night long, I felt adrenaline rushing through my body. I was up all night, so I sat up and finished Aoey's report. I figured I'd do better than her.

I'd let it slide this time.

I admitted that I wasn't thinking. I just followed my own desire and abandoned my own reasons. Friends didn't do that to each other. I didn't know why Aoey did it. It could be an act due to alcohol or intentional. But what scared me was my conscience.

My life... I couldn't have this dark area. I was a woman, and I should be with a man. I shouldn't kiss a woman. But I could still feel her smoothness and softness in my hands. I looked at my hands and then at her sleeping body on the bed. I felt so nervous. That was just by using my hands. What would happen if I did anything more than that?

What if I switched from my hands to my mouth?

Oh no! I couldn't stop thinking!!

Finally, when the sun came up, Aoey woke up with a bad hangover around 11 am. I looked at her with understanding. I prepared a supplementary drink for her to help her feel better. The beautiful girl looked at me in surprise.

"When did I fall asleep? I felt like I fainted."

"What you remember?"

"Nothing."

That had to be a trick.

She was trying to get back at me when I pretended to faint in the car. Aoey was vindictive, but at least she pretended to forget about it. That saved my face.

"I was so drunk last night. I drank too much. Did you do anything strange last night?" I wanted to test the tricky little girl.

But regardless of whether she could remember or not, I decided that I would have to talk about what happened because I had to put out that forest fire for a second time before there was a third. I was Genlong. I had my own rules and I would not have any dark spots in my life.

Drunk is drunk. That kiss didn't count. I still had my first kiss.

"You kissed me last night," I said normally. She seemed surprised, but more surprised than embarrassed. "You don't remember anything at all?"

"I fainted. Please don't be offended."

"I could be lying if I said I wasn't offended. You kissed me when there were so many people around. I couldn't explain what happened to other people." I stood up, put my arms around myself, and looked at her demandingly. I wanted to see her reaction. But Aoey was always Aoey, so innocent. She believed every lie.

"I kissed you when there was no one here."

"I thought you said you couldn't remember."

"...."

"But it seems that you do remember..."

She had no answer for that. She must be feeling embarrassed. I also felt bad for cornering her like that. But if I wasn't firm about this, more headaches might arise. Being mean to her was the only way to stop her. I didn't want to feel like an ant bumping into honey all the time.

It was so dangerous for me, so I had to be bad.

"If you were drunk, I wanted to tell you that your subconscious was very scary. We are friends. No friend kisses friends like that. If that was your plan..."

"You explain it as if it were something so bad. But you kissed me back and pressed me against the bed. That was also your subconscious and you didn't even get drunk."

I was speechless. Both my arms fell to my side. I pinched myself deeply with my nails. I was under pressure. What I had done the night before was dangerous. But what the hell! I would never admit that I felt... sensitive too.

I couldn't say that. I couldn't let that happen.

"Emotion of the moment."

"...."

"I just responded to your excitement. It's human nature. I followed whatever stimulated me. If someone else, like a security guy or a taxi driver, had kissed me, I would kiss him back if I was horny. That's normal."

"I tense you?"

I didn't know how to answer that question. I paused for a long time before finding some reasons to support my explanation.

"I just reflected what you did."

"I was drunk last night."

"You should never drink again."

"But you didn't. How come you responded with so much emotion if you don't have feelings for me? Then why did you kiss me?"

She cornered me again. She wanted me to confess that I loved her, but I didn't even want to hear that.

"I admit I felt something last night, but it wasn't love I was looking for."

"Is it so hard to admit that you like me?"

"Yeah."

"...."

"We are both girls, and I, Genlong, will only date one man."

I saw the pain in her eyes. I had to turn the other way. My heart was also in pain. The harsh words that came out of my mouth made me feel so bad. I didn't understand why I had to torture myself either. Should I just let my feelings flow naturally? But it didn't feel right either.

Two women in love. Two women kissing. Two women dating. Two women having sex.

"If I hadn't fainted last night, how far would we have come?" the youngest girl broke the silence.

"Why did you pretend to be asleep then?" I looked into her eyes to show her that I knew her plan. The sweet eyes looked at me in surprise.

"I was worried that if we slept together, the next morning might not be as good as we thought because you are like that."

"...."

"You can't accept your true feelings."

"It was good that you fell asleep."

"You don't admire how you feel and you might feel disgusted afterwards."

I didn't understand those kinds of people. I always wondered how those people could handle other people's judgment. I didn't hate them, but I told myself that I would never be like that.

I was embarrassed! I couldn't stand that.

I was emotional now because we were too close. The only way to make me stop that feeling was Aoey having a boyfriend or...

To get out of my life.

"I won't talk about this again. You have to get over it as quickly as you can."

"Is it that easy?" Aoey said angrily. "Is it that easy for you to forget someone?"

"If we are not in the environment, we can do it."

"What I have to do?"

"If you don't have a boyfriend..." I held my breath and said the next sentence like a bad bitch, "You have to get out of here, out of my life."

"Why are you so mean, Gen?" Aoey's face was now full of tears. That made me very sad. It wasn't easy for me to do something like this either.

"Please don't make me hate you."

"We're together," my beloved brother told me happily.

That was two days after Aoey and I had that conversation.

To be honest, I was very upset. I was the only person in the world who knew how I felt but I couldn't express anything. I pushed her away and now she found a way out.

Hanging out with my younger brother... Great.

She chose to have a boyfriend, instead of getting out of my life. I felt hurt. I pushed her as hard as I could while she was still trying to stay close. Poor girl.

"What's wrong, Gen? Why are you so quiet? You look like a sad puppy."

I glared at my brother. I just heard the bad news that they were dating and now he was calling me a puppy. I wanted to bite his head off.

"Well, take good care of her but try not to touch her." One good thing about that was that he could still tell what was going on. At least he could give some advice. Great also understood that Aoey had this untouchable status. If it were someone else, he might not understand.

But how could my little brother handle that? It must be difficult for him.

I talked to Aoey as if nothing had happened. We were close as always. I pretended to forget all the dramas that happened between us. Aoey was now talking to me about Great. I thought she wanted me to know all the details. But at least they couldn't touch each other anyway.

"Nut, my eldest senior, asked me about you the other day," Great smiled and looked at me.

"How did you two meet?" I pulled my hair back like I was in an advertisement. "I'm beautiful. He chased me. Why?"

"He said he wanted to go out to see a movie again. Why did you go out with a guy like that?"

"I give everyone a chance."

"Wasn't it because I was in the Student Committee?" I looked at him suspiciously. I was feeling a little tense now.

"What do you know?"

"I knew from Nut that you watched Aoey from afar. You're so cool." Great bumped my shoulder with his as if he was proud of me. "And you told Nut to take good care of Aoey. I was wondering why all the elders were so nice to her. You were in the back." "Don't let Aoey find out."

"Stop trying to be cool. It wouldn't be a problem if she knew. She'd thank you for it."

"She doesn't need to know."

The more I knew, the deeper I would go. I thought it was best to keep some distance in the relationship. It would be good for me too.

"I want to kiss Aoey." My brother said it out loud, with no connection to the previous conversation. I looked at him and smiled.

"You just started dating. How long will this last?"

"I want to finish inside her. I want to have sex with her."

I choked on water through my nose and mouth. I coughed hard, really hard. Great looked at me and shrugged. He understood why I was so surprised.

"You... What the hell is wrong with you? She's my friend."

"That's normal. I'm a man. You're my sister. I can talk to you about this."

"But I'm a woman and you're talking about my close friend."

"Should I take her to a doctor to treat this strange habit she has? Why can't I touch her? She seems to hate everyone in the world. Is she the same as you?"

I paused and considered what I should say. "Well, I can't touch her either."

"It's really not normal if you can't touch her either."

"Maybe you're not the person she really loves."

"Why is she dating me then?"

Because of me...

I wasn't happy because I didn't want to admit what was abnormal in me.

After packing my bags and saying goodbye to my parents, I drove to a mall. I had a date with Tod, and I was hoping he would bring his boyfriend, Singha, too. I was there just to be his excuse. Damn! Why did I agree to this? It was such a waste of time.

“You two don't really need me here. No one will know that you two are dating. I feel like a third wheel here.”

I was a third wheel everywhere I went, both Aoey and Tod. How was being single so depressing?

“I didn't ask you to come today as an excuse or anything. Singha and I just wanted to see you.” The handsome boy turned to his boyfriend and gestured for confirmation.

“Are you that in love with me?”

“I think you might be feeling lonely.”

“Because?”

“Aoey has a boyfriend now. You must feel bad.”

I rolled my eyes. I blurted out some words that Aoey was dating. They seemed to be throwing it in my face.

I saw a bookstore as we walked. I excused myself to go in there. Aoey's book was already published. I didn't know where the best seller was, but I could help boost sales by buying them all.

I had just spent my money on over ten of the same books. Tod looked at me in surprise when he saw what I did.

“Are they for a gift?”

“Yes, I will give it to someone, but I don't know who yet. I will buy them first.”

“What is the book about?” The handsome boy grabbed one of the books and read it.

“A love novel?”

“Yeah.”

“Who wrote this? Why do you have to buy so many?”

“.....”

“Oh, hey?”

I barely said a word, but he already knew the answer. Well, he was always smart. I could never hide anything from him.

“Can you put this in my car, Singha?” I made a request that also sounded like an order. Tod looked at me and shook his head. He turned to his boyfriend and asked him politely.

“Could you help her, please?” No protest from Singha. He took all the books I bought and walked back to the car in the parking lot, leaving me alone with Tod. Tod seemed a little annoyed that I gave his boyfriend an order. But I didn't care. Men were supposed to help women anyway.

“Why are you looking at me like that? I can't stand it alone. I'm a small woman.”

“If you want to ask someone for help, you should ask nicely.”

“Gen.” Aoey's cheerful voice made me nervous. I was afraid that she would catch me buying all of her books. I slowly turned around and tried to look as normal as possible.

“Hello, Aoey. What are you doing here?” Once I turned around, I saw that she was coming with a group of friends from college, including Jade, a senior who was competing with Great. That short woman wasn't here. Was she dating another guy? I didn't realize she was capable of doing that.

“I came to see my book that is on sale today.... Hello Tod,” she greeted.

“Hello.”

“You're here with so many people.” I looked around, and it was the same group of friends that had messed up the condo. I thought I would stop seeing those lousy friends. They took advantage of her, without any respect. She should only see them for chores, but not to be around.

I had to talk to her about that.

“I'm a good person. I have many friends.”

That sounded oddly sarcastic. She meant that I wasn't nice and that's why I didn't have many friends. I was a troublemaker.

“What will you do after that?”

“We'll go to dinner like good friends.”

Oh... here we go again.

“She will invite—” Aoey's fat friend, whom we had met but I never remembered her name, said. I looked at Aoey and felt annoyed. “You're so rich. You invite everyone.”

“I want to apologize for my bad behavior the other day.”

I looked at her friends and wondered if they had any idea how hard Aoey worked for her money. Now she had to spend at least a thousand baht on these useless friends.

“That's great. I'm hungry now too.” I smiled at Aoey innocently. “I'm your friend too. Let me go with you. Tod will treat everyone.”

Tod looked at me and smiled.

I said this without asking him, but I knew that amount of money was very little for him.

If he wasn't rich, my mom wouldn't have introduced him to me.

“Are you okay with this?” Aoey asked and looked at Tod. The handsome boy looked like he was thinking and shrugged.

“The more, the merrier.”

The agreement between Tod and I was that we were dating because of his actual situation at home. He had to be my boyfriend in front of Aoey. His boyfriend, Singha, was asked to go home first.

Otherwise, it would be too suspicious. We ate at a barbecue restaurant in the mall. Everyone in the group was wearing student uniforms, while Tod and I were dressed casually. All eyes were on me because they were curious about me. They seemed impressed with my beauty and curious about what kind of watch I wore.

“Patek Philippe.” I said this when Aoey's fat friend (I still didn't remember her name) poked her head out to look curiously. She asked through her nosy act.

“It was a gift from my father when I passed the entrance exam for the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University. It cost around 2 million baht.”

Everyone at the table was silent. Tod looked at me and shook his head, but I didn't care. Well, I was born rich. That wasn't my fault.

“Your friend is so rich, Aoey,” one of the friends named Jao (I'm not sure why I could remember his name) said casually, but I recognized the sarcastic tone. I still remembered when we played a game that night at my condo, but today he was being hostile.

But I enjoyed it when people didn't like me. I had fun bullying others.

“I’m not just rich. I’m very rich,” I said confidently and placed a piece of pork on the grill. “And I’m beautiful too.”

“I can tell how rich you are by your condo. The condo is right in the center and with elegant decor. It must be more than 5 million.”

“It’s 7 million,” I continued. “The common fee is 30,000 baht a year, and there’s also a gym and a saltwater pool.”

Aoey looked at her friends with an apologetic expression. She felt sorry for them. I didn't see why she had to do that for them. They judged people by their accessories and messed with my watch.

That was not my fault.

“Oh, my new iPhone Jade Black 128 Gigabyte is ringing and vibrating.” I saw the name of the person calling and quickly grabbed the phone and walked out. “Excuse me, I have to answer.”

I quickly stood up from my seat because I couldn’t stand the look in their eyes. I felt so uncomfortable even though I was the one who tried to bully them. I couldn’t understand how Aoey became their friend.

The biggest problem was the one calling me now, Great. If he only knew that Aoey was here with another guy, he might go crazy. I was surprised that it was her boyfriend, but he wasn't there. How could I let her come with someone else?

“How are you, Great?”

“How come you're right in the middle of Aoey's group of friends?” I quickly looked around for him. He had to be nearby somewhere. I didn't feel right about this.

“Where are you?”

“Do you know anything about Aoey seeing the other man?”

“I said where are you?”

“I'm at the restaurant... you!”

The screams on the phone made me run back immediately. I was now rolling on the floor, fighting with Jade. When did she come in? I just left.

Tod, the only man there, stepped between two guys. He took some crossfire. Great was now drunk with rage. He didn't hear anything. He was so angry.

“Great! Stop it!”

I shouted at him, but he didn't seem to hear anything at all. It was chaos in the store. Other customers stood up from their seats and ran out of the restaurant. Aoey, who wanted everything to stop, rushed to stop them, but Great pushed her hard until she crashed into a hot grill filled with hot soup. Her arm was scalded by the hot soup.

“Hey!” I screamed at her and ran, but she pushed my hand away with hatred. Aoey looked at me with contempt as if it was all my fault.

“What!” I asked in shock.

“This is what you wanted, right?”

“What do you mean?”

“You destroyed everyone around me. You called Great here to humiliate me. You won. Now everyone hates me. No one wants to be my friend, and now, just because I'm in love with you, you hate me for it.”

“.....”

“If you hate me and push me away that hard, I'll walk out of your life, Gen.”

“.....”

“I'll hate you too, Gen!”

Chapter 17

It had been a disaster. Great destroyed things in the restaurant, and we ended up at the police station. Uncle Somkit was there to help sort out the problem.

Uncle Somkit returned home in the same car as us. He glanced quickly at Aoey and realized that this was the girl I had asked him to investigate. But he didn't say anything.

We sat in silence all the way until I took Great and Uncle Somkit home and then left with Aoey back to the condo.

I could tell there was going to be a storm soon. Aoey seemed to be seething with anger at me, and I was prepared for what was coming.

I was determined to answer.

Suddenly, when we were at home, she said, "I'm moving."

My heart dropped to my ankles. I had prepared myself for a huge fight but not to hear that she wanted to move out.

"Where will you go?"

"There must be somewhere I can go."

"Are you trying to get revenge on me?"

"No, but two people who hate each other can't live together."

Finally, she got straight to the point. I stood with my arms around myself and looked into the sweet eyes that now looked so angry. I wanted to see

how far she would go.

"When did I hate you?"

"Haven't you realized that you hate me?" Her breathing was short and rapid. She clenched her fist tightly. "You destroyed my relationship with all my friends. You bragged about your money and looked down on my friends. You treated them like shit! Why did you do that?!"

"Well, they really are a piece of shit."

They didn't deserve to be her friends. They took advantage of her and judged people from the outside. I could tell by the way they looked at me.

"But they are my friends."

"I'm your friend too."

"Friends shouldn't do what you did. You called Great to the restaurant to make things worse. You told Great that I had a date with Jade—"

"So you were on a date with Jade?" I was interested in that topic. The jealousy inside me was boiling, and now I wanted to fight. "You're a whore!"

"It's my own business. I can see who I want to see. I can do what you do, too."

"I'm not surprised..." I looked at her and thought of the most painful word I could think of. I decided to throw a hand grenade right at her face. **"I'm not surprised your mom thought you were flirting with your stepfather."**

Aoey's hand hit right on my face. It was hard enough to make me lose my balance. I was stunned with pain on my cheek. The gentle eyes clenched her fist so tightly. I was filled with rage now that I felt guilty for saying that.

"Bitch! How could you say that? You don't know anything!"

"What should I know then? Tell me."

"One thing you should know is that you are the worst friend I have ever had in my life. I hope you are happy alone and die alone."

The girl chose the worst insult she could ever think of. She was overwhelmed with feelings and guilt. She knew she shouldn't say that, but now she was shocked by what she had just said.

"Okay, now I know."

"Know what?" She continued and pushed my chest. She wanted a fight.

"Now I know I'm a bad friend."

"This is when you should deny it. If you say you're a bad friend, it means it's true. You hate me!"

"Whatever you'd like to say." I was so weak now. My brain was numb and I was confused, and I wanted to leave. I turned around to leave the room.

"Why do you hate me so much? Is it because I love you?"

I clenched my fist and said nothing. The crying behind me shook me.

"Is it so bad that I love you? Is it so bad?"

"I don't hate you. It's actually the opposite, the total opposite." I turned around to look into her sweet eyes. "I hate myself for that. Please understand!"

"...."

"I don't hate you. I hate myself for being like this."

We both looked into each other's eyes. My tears rolled down my cheeks, but I wiped them away with the back of my hand. I didn't want anyone to see my weakness.

"I hate myself for being so confused. I hate feeling immense pain, but I still can't accept myself. I envy you because you can express what you feel. But

I can't..."

"You're embarrassed to admit that. How are you going to put it?" Soft eyes grabbed my wrist as I turned around, about to leave.

"...."

"What do you mean you don't hate me? Does that mean you're..."

"Don't say it, Aoey! Don't say it!"

"What happened to your face? Did you fight with her?"

"She thought I called you to get you to come with another man. I wanted to tell you that Jade is not her boyfriend. They are friends."

Even though I fought with her. I still tried to cover up for her, and fixed her situation. Damn it! I was Genlong. I was supposed to be a bad girl, not a saint like this.

Great hugged me as tightly as a python. I tried to push him away from me. "Let me go! What are you doing?"

"I'm so sorry. I don't want you to get hurt like that. I'll explain it to Aoey."

"You just explain your business."

I went back to my room and closed the door. I didn't want anyone in my space. No one could see me weak, especially when I was sad. Tears were a sign of weakness. I had determined that no one would ever see my tears except myself.

But Aoey did it that day. She made me feel guilty for saying that. I felt bad because she thought I hated her and wanted to destroy her. The worst thing

was that I said what I felt.

Was that wrong?

Was it sinful?

When I was tense, I liked to relax by soaking in a warm bath. I thought the tension would flow out of my pores and down the drain. But the tension continued to simmer in my heart. It was sadness, but not anger.

This is what sadness felt like...

I felt so much pain when the person I love looked at me disgustingly. The worst of the worst was that she was my best friend, and I fell in love with her.

Could I fall in love with my best friend?

My phone rang as my thoughts were drifting. I saw the name of the person calling and answered the phone by turning it on speaker. I was still in the bathtub.

"What do you want, Great? I'm in the bathtub."

[You must be stressed to get into the bathtub.]

No one really knew that this was how I released my stress. Only people within the family knew.

[Aoey is here to see you. She can't come in. Please open the door for her.]

I sat up immediately. My heart was beating fast.

"What? Where? Here at home? How can she know where my house is?"

[I brought her here. She is now in front of the room.]

I hesitated before answering.

"No, I want to be alone today. Tell her to go away. Please take her back to the condo and don't touch her."

I wasn't trying to play hard to get or anything, but my eyes were swollen. I didn't want anyone to see me when I was weak. After a warm bath for an hour, I felt lighter and a little dizzy.

"Gen... Gen!"

I frowned when I heard a scream from somewhere. I saw Aoey standing outside, looking at me.

I thought she was gone.

I didn't open the window or notice she was there. I closed the curtain to tell her to go away. But I was still there by the window; she stayed where she was.

Why was she pressuring me? I wasn't ready to talk.

"Great!"

I knocked on Great's door. He smiled because he knew why I was there.

"Why didn't you take your girlfriend home? I said I don't want to see her."

"She's so stubborn. She insisted on talking to you today. She chose to wait there."

"She wants to put pressure on me."

"You should talk to her."

"I'm not ready to talk."

"Well, she'll stay there all night. Do you know how many people die from dengue?"

I growled at him and wrapped my arms around my chest. I wasn't that easy. If I was easy, I'd have too many husbands already. Many men pressured me in many different ways. But no one had succeeded until that moment.

I couldn't let a girl succeed today.

"Give her some mosquito repellent spray!" I turned to go back, but Great grabbed my arm and looked at me like a puppy.

"Please, sister. I don't want her to get sick."

"No!"

But actually...

I went downstairs to watch her in silence. I stood there silently watching her as she tried to brush the mosquitoes off. I looked at her with a mix of feelings of adoration and frustration before coughing lightly just to get her attention.

"Why are you organizing a party for mosquitoes?"

The girl turned around and jumped up immediately. When she jumped out of her seat, our faces were so close. Her face almost collided with mine. I took a step back and spoke to her with my arms crossed over my chest.

"Oh, I'm glad you're finally here to talk to me."

"Your tone is totally different from last night. Don't you hate me anymore?" I said sarcastically, but I also expected her to respond, yet she didn't say anything in return. Aoey just stood there with a sad face. I wasn't sure what Great had said to her, but she had completely changed.

"It was crazy."

"You know when people are the most honest?" I crossed my arms and looked her straight in the eyes. "When they're drunk and angry."

"I'm sorry."

She gave up so quickly. What was I supposed to do now? Was she done answering me? She had to stop with those puppy dog eyes. Damn it!

"You didn't do anything wrong today. It was me. I disregarded your friends and called Great to fight you. Oh! I'm a bad friend and I'll die alone like you said."

I emphasized what she said. I couldn't help it. Aoey looked like a sad puppy now with tears in her eyes.

"Hit me," she said sadly. It made me feel so weak.

"What?"

"I know what I said made you very sad. Please hit me back." She put her face closer to mine. She looked like she was prepared for a kiss rather than a punch. I took a step back.

She was flirting... again.

I turned my face away nervously. She seemed to know I was nervous.

"Or we're both half to blame. I misunderstood you today and got upset with you. And you said something nasty to me too. I think we're even. So let's get over this."

I realized what I told her about her stepfather. It made me feel guilty.

I never felt guilty in my life before. Even when I killed a gecko lizard when I closed the door, I blamed the same gecko lizard for being there and staining my beautiful door. I somehow let it all go because I felt so guilty about it. What was wrong with me?

"What did Great say to you? Why are you completely changed?"

"I know how good you are for me."

"Huh?"

"You asked your mom to publish my book, didn't you?" You scoundrel! She finally told me. I bit my lip hard in anger. I had to put her in her place today. Bastard!

"I read it and I think it's good. I think it will make money, so I published it. If it's not good, the publisher won't do it. It's bad for them too, you know." I looked her in the eyes and crossed my arms. "Go ahead and be mad at me. You can hate me more than you already do. I did something you didn't like."

"I'm not angry and I don't hate you, Gen."

"Why?"

"Love blinds me and makes me forgive."

I paused and pretended I hadn't heard. I almost fainted. She'd been waiting for this moment, hadn't she?

"Let's just say I'm not a good person. I'm a bad friend like you said."

"What kind of bad friend would do so much to help me? You bought all my books too."

"When did I do that?" I was surprised because I was pretty sure she didn't see that and Singha had put them in the car.

"Great showed me your trunk. He said you bought them all and kept them at home. You did it to help me, right?"

"Who would be so crazy? I bought them for my friends."

"I didn't know you had so many friends."

I was nervous now. The sweet eyes cornered me. I had no way to escape. What was that? She was such a different person from the one who had hit me.

And those eyes...

"You helped with my homework by making my report get an A."

"Really? An A?" I said in surprise, but then realized I was supposed to be angry. "I had some free time."

"You went out with Nut because you asked Nut to watch me during orientation." She looked at me with her flirtatious eyes. I assumed Great had said that too.

"I called Nut and talked to him. He told me everything you did that day."

What else did she know? Did she even know that I imagined seeing Justin Bieber naked swimming with me on a date? I fidgeted when I saw her flirtatious look. I wasn't comfortable with this feeling.

I was feeling shy...

"We're friends. I was worried about you as a friend."

"You're my close friend. I should know you better... but I didn't. I said something stupid and hurt your feelings. I'm sorry... please."

Please? Her eyes and her tone... where did she learn to do that? And that sweet talk? Like she knew I would melt upon hearing that. It worked so well. I shifted my gaze around nervously, but it seemed like her eyes were a strong magnet pulling me in. I couldn't focus on anything else but her.

I was sweating... hot.

"You said you should get to know me better? What do you know about me?"

"You're kidding yourself that you don't feel anything, Gen." But you do feel them... so much."

The smaller girl stepped forward. My legs went so weak as she came closer. I stopped when I could no longer move backward, my back trapped with a tree trunk. She looked at me and smiled triumphantly at having cornered me.

"You like to be in control. You're a perfectionist who worries a lot about what others think of you. But deep down I see that you're very pretty."

It didn't sound nice to me. I listened and thought that these weren't good traits for a good friend. But I felt very shy because of the way she looked at me.

"It doesn't sound nice."

"You are beautiful in my eyes."

"Hey!" I called out to her to stop. She expressed too much of her feelings. "I told you before not to show..."

"I love you, Gen."

"I know. You say it often."

"I love you and I want you..." The sweet eyes looked at me. She mesmerized me and grabbed my hand and pressed it to her left breast. I felt her heartbeat.

"I want to swallow you whole. If I can..." My throat went dry from the surprise. I could collapse on the floor. She played an offensive game this time. Only guys chased me, but never a girl.

"I don't understand."

"It's not too hard to understand. Or should I kiss you? Hmm?" The smaller girl said jokingly and stood on her tiptoes, so her lips were right on mine.

"You have to understand that I'm crazy about you."

"Do you know what you're saying? I told you before that I wasn't a lesbian."

"Let's see how far you can go." She smirked. "When you're ready, I'll be here."

The girl pulled my neck with both hands and put her lips next to my ear. "Look how far you can go. I'll make you admit how much you love me."

Chapter 18

She knew me...

Despite my reluctance and refusal, my actions were the opposite of what I said. Her sweet eyes advanced aggressively.

She had been waiting for this moment for so long. Our relationship seemed to suddenly improve after months of dragging our feet. The sweet eyes stopped hiding her feelings and showed them so obviously. She made it seem so normal.

Close friendship.

Girl vs. Girl.

That night before bed, Aoey took my arm and wrapped it around her like we used to. I resisted at first, but then I thought that the slight sweet smell of her soap was attracting me. I just went with the flow.

I thought it was the soap that attracted me to her.

She was more aggressive than she used to be. When I thought she was already asleep, she turned around and gave me a kiss on the lips, intentionally making sure I knew she had kissed me.

“Gen, are you sleeping?”

“ ... ”

“I want to play the King's Order game again.”

Damn! Imagine how much self-control it took to keep myself from feeling like I was part of her body. That smell, that voice, and those sweet lips close to me.

“Ouch! My arm hurts.”

I woke up because I remembered that I had burned myself with the frying pan. I opened my eyes and saw her looking directly at me, and I smiled slyly.

“Still awake.”

I quickly pushed her head towards my chest to avoid those complacent eyes. We slept like that all night while I tried like crazy to calm myself. I fought hard, saying my prayer to distract myself.

“This was me, Genlong... who never lost.”

This was the first time Aoey spent a night with me at my mother’s house. The sweet eyes acted a bit shy in front of my mom and dad. I felt a bit uncomfortable introducing my friend to my family even though Great should have done that job.

“You have a friend for a pajama party,” my mom said while looking at Aoey. It seemed like she recognized her from somewhere.

“She gave me lice, remember?”

“Professor Slim, right?”

“No, Teacher Salee.”

“Yes, that’s right.” She recognized Aoey and looked at her with admiration. “You’re much more beautiful as an adult woman. Where did you get your plastic surgery? I want to do it too.”

“She hasn’t had any surgery, Mom.”

“You’re so beautiful. Where did you get it from? Your mom or your dad?” My mom continued chatting, but Aoey suddenly felt tense when asked about her family.

“Aren’t you supposed to go to your poker card club?” I quickly changed the subject.

“How did you know?” she asked, surprised, while placing her clutch under her armpit.

“I’ve never seen you go anywhere but a poker club. Go ahead, please. This is a place just for young people’s conversation,”

She gently complained but still walked away when she understood that only Aoey, Great, and I could be there. We walked to the dining room. An American breakfast with ham and sausages was prepared. Great, who tried to sit next to Aoey, was hit by me. He complained and crossed the table to sit in front of us. We all sat down and were about to start eating our food.

“Let’s switch,” Aoey said. I wondered why we had to switch plates, but then I looked at the plate she put in front of me. I saw a heart-shaped ketchup design.

She was flirting so early in the morning.

I looked back at her but said nothing. It was such a cute flirtation that made my heart beat faster. But I couldn’t show anything, especially when her boyfriend was sitting right in front of us. I couldn’t make it more obvious.

“Just like that, huh?” I whispered back.

Aoey shrugged. “Ah-ha.”

“Is this your true self?” I whispered without looking at her. “I never knew you in this version. I thought you were very shy.”

She smiled cunningly. “I’m like this only with you. No point in being shy if the relationship doesn’t progress. Might as well give it my all. In my life, I’ve never flirted with someone like this.”

“This isn’t flirting. This is being a slut.”

I coughed just to get Great’s attention, who was now having breakfast. I smiled and slid the plate towards him when he looked up.

“Aoey drew you a heart, but she’s too shy to give it to you.”

Great looked very surprised and turned to look at the sweet eyes with admiration.

“You don’t have to be shy. I’d be happier if it came from you.”

I looked at Aoey like a winner, but she didn’t seem to care. She grabbed a bottle of ketchup and drew another heart on her plate.

“I have so much love for you. I can give all I can.”

The sweet eyes slid another plate with a heart towards me. She rested her chin on her palm and smiled sweetly. “Let’s see how long you can resist,” she whispered.

Cunning...

“So, you’re not mad at Great after he caused all those problems yesterday?” I changed the subject. Great, who admired a heart on his plate, looked up and growled at me.

“Why are you bringing this up?”

“I’m curious. How is it that she got madder at me than at you, who caused so many problems yesterday?”

“I said I’m sorry, and Aoey doesn’t hold grudges. She can’t stay mad for long. How cute!”

Great openly admired Aoey. The sweet eyes smiled back but said nothing. Aoey doesn’t hold grudges, huh? If he saw what happened the previous day, he wouldn’t say that.

“You’re not mad at Great but exploded at me,” I looked at her slyly.

Aoey leaned close to my ear. She was openly seducing me because we were both girls. It didn’t seem obvious. Her lips touched my ear softly.

“I’m full of lust only for someone I’m in love with.”

I froze because I didn’t know how to respond to that. I felt so hot with a trembling heart when she whispered in my ears. Aoey sat normally and took a sip of her drink. I was still frozen.

“What’s wrong with you? Your face is red,” Great asked when I was still surprised, and I responded without thinking.

“I’m hot.”

“What?”

“It’s hot. The sausage... It’s hot. Now I’m full,” I got up to leave. “I’m going to shower.”

“I’m coming with you.” Aoey kept flirting without raising much suspicion. The sweet eyes now looked at me seductively. She was trying to defeat me. I looked back and motioned with my finger.

“Follow me if you’re in,” I didn’t want to lose this time.

She was stunned by my response. Both our faces now turned red. Our imaginations were flying so far, though in reality, we barely saw each other’s shoulders. Did she think she was the only one who knew how to seduce?

“Lead the way, I’ll follow.”

Aoey still responded. I turned around with the sweet eyes following me. My heart was pounding hard. I didn’t know what to do next. I just seduced her without any expectations because I wanted to win.

When we finally got to my room, just the two of us, we could talk openly to each other.

“I thought you said you were going to shower. Here I am,” the sweet eyes teased me.

“You’re so insistent today,” I crossed my arms and looked at her.

“I told you I like you.”

“But...”

“I’m not asking for your permission. I seduced you intentionally to make you admit that you like me too.”

“I don’t like you.”

“Really?” Her tone was more sarcastic than convincing. I am annoyed by her tone. “OK, I believe you.”

“You have to believe me. Don't forget that we both have boyfriends,” I reminded her that neither of us were single. What we were doing now was wrong.

“I can break up with Great if you want.”

“Why did you go out with him then?”

“You told me he's the best, remember?”

“Why did you believe me?”

“I love you. Whatever you say, I believe you.”

“Understand...”

“Do you love me, Gen?” The soft eyes asked mockingly. It didn’t seem like she expected an answer. “If you love me, you have to believe that I love you. Like I believe in what you said.”

I looked at her and sighed. She wasn't like this when we first met. She was quiet and shy. Where did she get all these flirting techniques from? Was it an online novel?

“I'll take a shower. Oh! I'll take a shower alone.”

“Oh come on, what a coward! You didn't say that before.” The verbal challenge annoyed me. But I thought the soft eyes knew what to say to get under my skin. I tried to ignore those verbal taunts.

“Work harder.”

“What?”

“I might let you shower with me someday. **I'll let you scrub every inch of me...** Maybe one day.”

I walked into the bathroom as she stood there with a flushed face. She didn't realize that I had never flirted like that before.

Damn! I flirted with so many guys and felt nothing, but I felt something with this girl.

Aoey and I were back in the same condo. It felt like a couple who fought and then got back together. When we got home, I couldn't help but be sarcastic with her.

“Are you not moving anymore?”

The sweet eyes now looked at me angrily.

“Is that for me?”

“Well, I was just wondering,” I shrugged. “I wonder if you really do move, where are you going to be? Are you going to stay with your college friends?”

When I pressed the question, she came up to me and gave me a cute guilty face. “You should forget a lot of things I said. I'm so stupid that I can't see through all those friends.”

She found out from Great that a friend in that group told him that he was with Jade. He felt guilty for blaming me for causing all the problems.

“I'm glad you realized how stupid you are. I don't like stupid people who think they're smart.”

“Why do you have to be so mean? I know you're not a bad person, but the things you say can really hurt people. You should be more careful with that.”

I looked at her and contemplated. Was it my imagination that I thought she was more open to telling me things than before?

Fighting made us feel closer to each other...

“Are you going to see the same friends again?”

“I have to meet them at the university anyway. I can't turn my back on them. We still have to do some homework together.”

“I'm about to tell you not to burn the bridge.”

“I may have fewer friends now.”

“Am I your friend?”

“I do not wanna be just your friend, Gen.”

The sweet eyes flirted again. My heart was beating fast. I had to pretend I didn't hear that.

“I'll talk to you more often, then.” She added and gave me a sweet smile. How come she looked so cute? Or maybe she was always like that but I pretended not to notice. Oh! I was losing to her.

I used my hand to push her face out of my way. I didn't want to talk anymore. After a while, her phone rang.

I could immediately tell that her mood had changed. She had been cheerful but now she was frowning. I turned around to see who she was talking to.

“Don't call me again!”

She threw her phone on the floor and stomped on it. She looked so scared that I had to rush over and give her a hug.

“What happened, Aoey! Are you okay?” I shook her who now stood still with tears in her eyes. She looked at me and let go of me.

“Don't touch me. I'm dirty.” She crossed her arms over her chest.

“Aoey?”

“I'm going to take a shower.” She quickly turned around and walked into the bathroom without a towel. I stood there and looked at her broken phone on the floor. I didn't care if the phone was broken, but I cared about who had called her.

Who?

Chapter 19

After last night, Aoey was cheerful and acted like nothing happened. I guessed she didn't want me to ask her about what happened. I could tell there was a problem, even other people saw that face full of smiles. I didn't think it was a real smile. But... I had to pretend like nothing was wrong.

“Your phone is broken now. How can I contact you?”

“Telepathic contact.” The soft eyes smiled mockingly. She seemed to be very comfortable when I didn't protest her flirtatiousness.

I liked it too.

“Buy a new one.”

“No, I don't have anyone to contact.”

“Me.”

“I'll see you at home anyway.”

“Don't you want to call me and tell me you love me over the phone?” I joked. The sweet eyes smiled and shrugged.

“I want to show it in other ways.” The vague meaning gave rise to so many interpretations, so I simply ignored it. I grabbed the car key and was about to leave. She looked at me, who was not wearing a student uniform.

“Where do you go today?”

“To visit a friend.”

I didn't explain anything else and she didn't ask for more details. She might have thought I was visiting a friend I was working with on an assignment. She didn't want to answer any more questions either.

I drove to a nail salon to get a manicure first. I saw some beautiful colors the night before, so I wanted to paint my nails first before doing anything important... which was...

Buy a bird...

I did some research that a bird could be a friend and live in a condo.

Aoey liked to say that she had no friends. I had the idea of getting her a pet, a talking pet, a bird. I had to choose between a parrot and a myna. Many people had parrots as pets, and I wanted to be unique, so I chose a myna. I asked Uncle Somkid (he was always my choice for help) to find such a bird because he had no idea about birds. The older man made an appointment with me to deliver a cage.

“There it is. A myna.”

“To talk to?”

“If you train him, he'll probably talk. What happened? Why do you want a bird now?”

“I want to speak with someone.”

“Poor.”

I looked at Uncle Somkid and realized that it was actually my fault that she said she needed a friend...

“Thanks for your help.”

“I also wanted to ask you if you have seen my handcuffs.”

“Handcuffs?” I said in surprise. “How do I know that?”

“I don't know if I accidentally left them in your car when I took you to the police station the other day. I don't know where they went.”

“I'll look for them. I'll let you know if I find them.” I smiled at him and thought about other things. Well, he was the only one I could ask for help. “I wanted more help from you.”

“Yeah? What is it?”

I handed over Aoey's broken cell phone.

“Can you take this and fix it, please?”

“In this state? Why don't you buy a new one?”

I actually bought a new cheap phone to put Aoey's old SIM card in. I wanted to give it to her, but then I changed my mind.

I wanted to know who the last call was. I wanted to talk to that person, so I chose not to give her the new phone.

“There's something important here,” I lied. In fact, I wanted to see what was on this phone. “Can you fix this for me, please?”

“No problem. Did you take out the SIM card?”

“Yes, it's done. Please fix it.”

“OK.”

“Thank you.”

I said thank you and carried the bird, our new member, home with my colorful, shiny nails. But once I opened the door, I stopped when I saw Great sitting there.

Awkward...

“You're here again.”

“What? What kind of greeting is this? Wow, what is this?” The nosy Great came in and took the cage out of my hand. “What kind of bird is this?”

“Myna.”

“You have a bird? Since when did you want a pet? You even kill ants whenever you see them.”

“I’m not that bad. The bird is for Aoey, so she won’t be too lonely.” Aoey looked at me in surprise. “You said you don’t have many friends to talk to. I bought you a myna. It can talk.”

“Beautiful.” Aoey gave me a big smile. I didn’t know what she meant, whether it was me being cute or the bird being cute. But it made me feel so embarrass that I looked away.

“How do I teach him?”

“I don’t know,” I replied. “You might have to talk to him every day. He’s all yours. You can teach him whatever you want him to say.”

Sweet eyes walked beside me and whispered to me.

“I’ll teach him how to say **'Aoey loves Gen.'**”

My heart pounded once I heard that. My patience was falling apart. The sweet eyes looked at me as if they were hypnotizing me. I thought I was already falling there.

“Why are you two always in your own world?” Great said.

I immediately snapped out of the mesmerized moment and looked at him.

“What’s happening?”

“Nothing. I’m just jealous. I wanted to look into her eyes too,” Great told Aoey. I simply shrugged and walked away.

“You can watch it now. I’m going to watch TV.”

Aoey washed the dishes and did her chores as usual. Great was now sitting with me.

“Why can't I touch her? I'm her boyfriend.” He got upset.

“She doesn't like that. Why would you touch her anyway?” I said with some agitation.

“But I'm her boyfriend. If I can't touch her, then what's the point?”

“Break up with her if you can't handle that.”

“Gen, I'm serious! Can you give me better advice? Can we take her to a doctor?”

“What kind of doctor can cure this?”

“A psychiatrist! There must be something causing this problem. You can't even touch her, right?”

No, I can touch her and I was the only one who could touch her. But I didn't tell him that. I didn't see the point in telling him that.

“How am I going to explain to her why I took her to the doctor? Because you wanted to sleep with her, so I'm taking her to the doctor?”

“What a poor excuse.”

“Is not true?”

“Yes it's true.”

I hit him on the head with a feeling of disgust. Was that the only thing he was thinking about?

“She's my friend. Be nice to her. You can have sex with other girls but not Aoey,” I said in a very serious tone. He looked at me feeling guilty. He treated me like his older sister now.

“I really like her.”

“If you really like her, you'll wait as long as it takes. Otherwise, you can break up with her and date other people.”

Now he was upset with me because I was telling him to break up with her all the time. He stood up and threw a pillow on the couch.

“I'm not going to talk to you now. I'm going home. Aoey, I'm going home now.”

Aoey turned around but didn't say anything to him. I noticed that she wasn't warm to him. It was a little cold. I wasn't surprised that Great didn't feel things were moving forward. He couldn't even touch her, let alone have sex with her.

“Okay.”

“Aoey?” I walked over to her, who was washing dishes in a small kitchen sink.

“Have you ever wanted to see a psychiatrist?” I expressed my concern.

Aoey looked at me in surprise.

“Why would I need one?”

“Well, you don't let anyone touch you. It must be something a doctor could...”

I didn't finish my sentence. Gentle eyes came up to me and hugged me with her face in my warm neck. It was like a cat trying to find a warm place. I was stiff because she caught me off guard.

“I can touch you here.”

“What about other people?”

“I won’t touch anyone but you.” The smaller girl looked at me and looked like she was trying to kiss me. I turned my face away and carefully backed away.

“Do not joke.”

“I’m fine. Don’t worry about me. If I can touch you, I’m still fine.” She smiled at me. “I just want to touch the person I chose to touch. I’m fine.”

“Poor Great. My brother is very upset because he can't be around you. I'm worried that you two will break up over this issue.”

“That is what I want. I don't want Great and you know that its only you that I want, Gen.” The sweet eyes meant it. I felt guilty for forcing Aoey to choose.

“You should break up with him soon.”

“I'll do it right away when I can,” she said flirtatiously. “But you'll have to replace him, Gen.”

“You're too good at flirting now.”

“Nah, I have to try harder with people like you. People who don't accept the truth.” She smiled and stopped because she remembered something.

“Speaking of doctors, I have to go see one.”

“What happened?”

“There’s something strange here. I found it here.” She raised her left arm and touched the side of her breast. I looked at her and worried about the disease that many women had.

“Do you have a little ball?”

“It could be, but I'm not sure. Feel this. I'm not sure if I'm being too paranoid.” I reached out and felt the side of her chest without thinking.

I didn't find anything unusual...

“Nothing here.”

“Yes there are.”

Wait.

I felt like she was tricking me. Aoey smiled slyly and looked at me like a cat that had just caught a mouse.

"Here... is my heart. Please take it."

I was losing again.

Finally, the myna became one of the household members. I tried very hard to get it to speak, but it remained silent. I thought it might be a mute bird, incapable of learning to talk.

"Uncle Somkit, did you give me a sick bird? The bird hasn't made a sound at all. I'm not even sure if it's still breathing. Does it breathe in and out through its nose?"

I spoke to Uncle Somkit on the phone while searching for his handcuffs, which he said might be lost in the car.

[You have to try hard. I heard some birds can actually talk.]

"It's so hard to get him to say a word. Did you forget to put the batteries in?" I looked around my car and sighed. "I don't see your handcuffs. They're not in my car."

[Okay, okay. I'll buy new ones. It's a shame. They were new... By the way, your phone is fixed.]

"What about all the information? Is it still there?"

There was silence on the other end of the line. I had to repeat my question.

"Are you okay, Uncle Somkit?"

[Is this really your phone?]

His serious tone scared me immediately. I sensed there was something more to it than he was letting on, but I insisted that the phone was mine.

"Yeah."

[Nothing. Come get your phone.]

"Something must be wrong. Otherwise, you wouldn't be so serious," I teased him. He seemed uncomfortable and shook me. "What did you see on my phone?"

[If it's your phone, what can I say then?... I'll return it to you at your condo.]

"You're not calling me about the handcuffs, are you?"

There was no answer on the other end. It was the first time he hung up on me without saying goodbye. Thirty minutes later, he arrived at my condo in a van and handed me back Aoey's phone.

"Here it is."

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"I thought you had something to tell me."

We looked at each other for a long time. Finally, he threw both arms in the air as if he had given up.

"Okay, I'll say it."

"Yeah?"

"Is that you in the photos?"

Photos.

I didn't respond, as I wasn't sure what he was talking about. I turned on my phone and looked through photo files I'd never seen before. At first, they were normal photos, but towards the end, there were images that shouldn't have been there.

Nude photos.

I swallowed a huge lump in my throat. They could have been pictures from the Internet, but my heart shook with fear that this was something real and not what I hoped.

Aoey's photos...

Aoey's videos...

"I don't want to say anything right now. Did anyone else see this?"

"The guy who fixed it and me."

"Please don't tell Dad."

"You haven't told me if it's you or not. But I think it looks like you, though it may not be you."

The girl didn't look happy at all. I bit my lip hard but didn't say anything.

"I'll talk to you later." I walked away from him and scrolled through those photos. Each picture was taken at different times and places, but it was the same girl. Some video clips came with sound, which I had to mute. I couldn't see the face clearly, but it was the same person in the photos and videos. What I was sure of was the mark on the shoulder. I wanted to

confirm if it was her. I needed proof.

"Did you ever get an injection in your shoulder when you were young?"

"Maybe."

"Do you have a big scar there?"

"I don't know."

"Can I see?"

She was surprised but willing to show me her shiny, smooth shoulder. I sighed when I didn't see anything there.

Ugh... that wasn't her.

"I didn't get an injection here. It was on the other side." She rolled up her sleeve on the other side to feel for a scar. There it was on her shoulder.

I was stunned.

"Gen, are you okay?"

I didn't know what had come over me. It could have been disappointment or something else, but I couldn't speak. I went into the bathroom and locked myself in there for hours.

Why did you take those photos?!

Why did you take that video?!

Chapter 20

**WARNING THE CONTENT OF THIS CHAPTER ARE NOT
SUITABLE FOR YOUNG AGE.**

I couldn't sleep... and I couldn't look at her for 3 whole days...

The sweet eyes tried to talk to me as usual. Even though I tried to act as normal as possible, but I still tried to avoid her. I was so confused and obsessed by those videos and photos. I had questions in my head WHY did she take those photos?

Was I am within her rights to do so?... That was her phone. She took it and kept it. It was me who intruded on her privacy.

"Are you okay, Gen? You've been looking strange for the past couple of days."

"Oh? I'm fine."

Even I knew it wasn't normal. I couldn't look at her like before. I felt disappointed...

"Did I do something to upset you?"

"Nothing."

"I love you, Gen."

I looked at the person in front of me who had just told me she loved me but I didn't know what to do. I could only walk away. I grabbed my bag and

decided to leave but I had no idea where to go. But I couldn't be in the room with her. I couldn't handle it. I didn't know if I could ever handle it.

The best thing would be for me to go home and sleep...

Before I left the condo, a small hand tugged at my shirt. I couldn't look at her anymore. I pulled her hand off of me and walked away like a heartless bitch.

People these days had sex when they went out, it was a normal thing, I guess.

I never realized she had a boyfriend. She disgusted anyone who touched her. My heart was pounding like I had too much caffeine. I had to find something else to do to occupy my head. I focused my tension on my studying. I finished assignments as if it would help me graduate. Arrrggg!! I couldn't even drive with a conscience. How could I finish my homework?

Fuck it!

But as I sat there, my phone rang with a ringtone that was not familiar to me at all. But that wasn't my phone. It was Aoey's phone....

I put her SIM card into the new phone that I plan to give her.

I looked at the caller number. No name was displayed. She never saved the number. I paused for about 10 seconds to reconsider whether I should answer or not. My curiosity got the better of everything. I pressed answer and started talking.

"Hello."

[I called you and you don't answer or call me back.]

I frowned at the voice of an older man. The way he spoke was authoritative.

"Who is it?"

[You are not Aoey.]

I thought a bit before answering.

"Aoey is in the shower. I am her friend. Who should I tell her that she called her?"

[A friend? Fine. I want to ask you something. I'm her stepfather.]

He introduced himself and that made me a little nervous. I thought about what Uncle Somkit told me about his stepfather.

"Yeah?"

[Aoey left home many months ago. She never called back and I wanted to know where she is now.]

"She's with me. I'm Gen."

[Gen?]

"Yeah."

[How do you know her?]

"I've been friends with her since elementary school."

He wanted to know where Aoey was now. If I told him I was a friend in Bangkok, he would know she was there now.

One thing he didn't realize was that he was now talking to me, Genlong. I was too smart for him.

[Where are you now?]

"Am at home."

[Where?!]

"What's that?"

He was annoyed that I didn't tell him my location. Finally, my boring day had something fun to do.

[I mean what province are you in now.]

"Aoey didn't tell you where she is?"

[I wouldn't ask you if she had told me.]

"Why don't you ask him then?"

[Eh, you...]

He seemed fed up with me. But I finally told him where I was because I wanted to know more about him.

"I'm in Bangkok."

[Ok, that's all. Tell Aoey to call me as soon as possible.]

"Yes," I replied coldly without a proper goodbye.

I stared at the phone for a while after hanging up. Something didn't feel right. Why would a stepfather call his daughter? Even her mother, she never called her. She was just a stepfather.

I wanted to know.

I would do everything I could to find out!

The real Aoey couldn't call him back. I chose to text him instead. From Aoey's last reaction when she picked up the phone, those two were not on good terms.

She would be able to read. She couldn't be that stupid, but she got angry easily. She couldn't be that smart.

Aoey: What do you want?

That was all I texted and waited. There was no greeting, no rude words. It was just a simple sentence. Not long after, the stepdad called again but I refused to answer. He must have known she didn't want to talk to him.

The phone was silent for about 10 minutes. He finally sent a text after no one answered. He typed poorly and used strange words. He was not well mannered and tried to pick a fight with me, a much smarter college student.

Stepdad: I'm going to see you in Bkk.

Why would a stepfather want to see her? Their relationship wasn't good to begin with.

Aoey: What for?

Another 5 minutes passed.

Stepfather: So you can do your job. It's been a long time.

I didn't feel well. What kind of work was he talking about? I was shaking even though there was nothing in that sentence. Should I continue?

Yeah...

No...

Aoey: What job?

The last sentence sent shivers down my spine.

Stepfather: **Wife's job.**

I kept that story to myself for a long time. I waited for the stepfather to contact Aoey again. After 1 week, the relationship between Aoey and I was awkward. The sweet eyes tried so hard to get close to me, but I tried harder to avoid her.

"Gen." Aoey finally stopped me by standing in front of me. "Why are you avoiding me?"

Wife...

That word from my stepfather was in my head the whole time. I couldn't get it out. I wanted to ask her the truth but I couldn't.

Was she really having an affair with her stepfather?

She betrayed her mother...

Did she seduce him?

She didn't seem to be defending herself in the videos. Was there more to it? It was too serious to ask. I chose to stay quiet.

"No, I didn't avoid you."

"You don't sleep here and you don't talk to me when you do. Did I do something you didn't like?" The younger girl shook my arm. "Did I make fun of you too much? Did you feel uncomfortable?"

"I have so many tasks. One day I didn't have time to take a shower."

"Really?"

We both stayed silent. As I was about to say something, my new phone rang with her number.

The ringtone that rang at this moment made me feel numb. I couldn't answer the phone. I couldn't move. Aoey looked at my new phone in surprise.

"When did you buy a new phone? Where is your old phone?"

"I have two phones... I have to go to college. That must be my friend calling. I have to go now."

I pulled her hand away from me and walked over to my bag. I pulled out both my phones; the new one and the old one from the bag. I ignored her and acted casual. After we parted, I looked at the phone immediately and of course.

It was the stepfather.

Good time.

A message came in from the same number. He seemed annoyed that he had to text instead of talk.

Stepdad: Don't you dare avoid me. Pick up the phone.

The phone rang again. I hung up the phone to show that I wouldn't answer it and to piss him off. It worked. The next message came through.

Stepdad: I'm in Bangkok now. Meet me at 99 Peep-In Hotel. If you still ignore me, I'll show your videos to the world!

He exploded and blurted out the keyword. He was a stupid and short-tempered person who had just threatened Aoey for something she was unwilling to do.

Blackmail...

At first, I wasn't sure if Aoey had consented to this relationship or not. She didn't defend herself in the clips, but from her messages, that wasn't the case.

She didn't fight back, but that didn't mean she was willing to.

I gripped the phone tightly in my hands. It was time to find out the answer for myself. I wanted to know her, she would have to see me.

I had to find out the truth today!

I didn't know where that damn hotel was. Luckily, I could find anything with this Google map technology. I had a feeling that it wouldn't be too safe

if I went there alone. I asked Uncle Somkit to send someone with me, just as backup. I arrived at a cheap, low-quality motel that I would never have dreamed of entering in my life.

Here...

Aoey's stepfather sent me his room number. I knocked on the door when I got to the room. I felt pain in my chest. What kind of place was this? I had to come here to meet this kind of person, really?

After the knock, the door opened. A short, white-headed man looked at me in surprise.

"Who are you?"

"I'm friends with Aoey."

There was surprise on his face before he recovered. "Who is Aoey? I don't know you."

"Are you the man in the video?" I showed Aoey's phone and played the video to the bald man. He was taken aback before he started talking again without any sign of guilt.

"Maybe or maybe not. You can't see the face anyway."

"Just this statement made me realize it was you. How long have you been using this to blackmail her?"

"It's none of your business..."

"Catch him..."

Uncle Somkit's big, thick hand grabbed the old man's collar and pushed him into the room. The other man who worked for Uncle Somkit invited me into the room before closing the door behind him. He tried to keep all the noises inside.

There was just a bed in the middle of the room and a big mirror on the ceiling. It was for reflection when someone had sex there. I stood with my arms crossed over my chest and looked around. My heart felt so much pain. Was this what my best friend had to go through?

How long did he torture her?

"Who the hell are you?"

"How long did you do this?"

"It is none of your business."

A click was heard

The sound was Uncle Somkit pulling the trigger and now sticking the other end into the old man's eye. He looked pale now. I still crossed my arms and felt a sharp pain in my chest.

"She wasn't willing to do that, was she?"

"Go ask your friend if it was consensual or not."

"You're blackmailing her!" I grabbed the gun from Uncle Somkit's hand angrily and shoved it into his stinking mouth. "How could you do this to a girl who had her whole life ahead of her?"

Tears rolled down my face in pain. My face must have looked like I was so crazy. The bald stepfather now started talking to me better.

"Please do not kill me."

"Do you have any more photos and videos?" Uncle Somkit asked in his calm, cold voice.

Uncle Somkit hugged me and slowly took the gun from my hand. He placed me on his back.

"No."

"Liar," I said, my hand clenched tightly. "I'll kill you!"

"If you kill me..." Aoey's stepfather tried to get up and argued with me. He looked like a cornered stray dog wanting to get up for the last fight but Uncle Somkit pressed his head with the tip of the gun. "I'm going to release those photos."

"So you have more... I'll find them all" I tried to control my emotion and my voice. "Even if I had to search the whole world."

"You really don't realize your situation here, do you?" Uncle Somkit explained with a bit of anger. But the stepfather was a loser stray dog. He would fight for his life.

"Go ahead, kill me! I won't die alone."

"We all die alone. Let's see if you really want to die like you said." I said angrily and looked deep into his dark soul through his eyes. No one ever wins if I stare at them, especially with my anger.

"Please do not hurt me."

"Did Aoey ever tell you this?"

"....."

"How dare you say that after the shit you've done?" I walked out when I said that. I couldn't stand another minute in that room. It was so disgusting and made me want to vomit.

Uncle Somkit took the phone out of the old man's hand for safety reasons and followed me.

"What do you want me to do with him?"

"I want him to leave... to leave this world."

"But it wasn't you in the photos and videos. I think we just left them..."

I glared at him and that shut him up immediately.

"I'll take care of him. Killing someone is a big deal. I'll teach him a lesson. He wouldn't dare do it again."

"If your own daughter was raped and blackmailed like that, what would you do?"

Uncle Somkit didn't reply. I knew his answer well enough. He would never just *"teach someone a lesson"* if it were his daughter. I smiled sarcastically at him.

"Yeah, that's what I thought." I pressed my lip tightly and clenched my fist. "Can you pretend that nothing is happening today?"

"Why?"

"Someone could easily do this if it was me in the video."

He looked at me and sighed. I asked Uncle Somkit to keep track of who was in the videos and I was about to lie.

"You know your father doesn't like a liar."

"I'm an exception for my dad." I looked at him with a smile. "Please ignore what's happening today."

It was such a heavy day for me. Manicure in the morning wouldn't help either. While I was stuck in the car at the red light, my head was filled with Aoey's story. I wanted to distract myself so I grabbed my phone but accidentally dropped it on the floor of the passenger seat next to the driver's seat. I ducked under the seat but felt something hard and cold. I wasn't sure what that was so I grabbed it and was shocked to see it.

"Handcuffs."

They were under the seat the whole time. The light turned green, so I didn't have time to pick up the phone from the floor. I drove back to the condo and put the handcuffs in my purse. I still couldn't get the story of what had happened out of my head. It wouldn't be easy to forget.

I returned to the condo at almost 9PM because I talked to my dad for a long time. Aoey walked straight towards me when she saw me coming in. She seemed nervous because of my cold reaction in the past 3 days.

"Have you eaten dinner yet, Gen? Let me cook you something."

I looked into the sweet eyes that tried to make up for any mistake. The mistake she didn't make. I felt sorry for her. My eyes were filled with tears and I felt so guilty for thinking badly of her.

Why did I feel disappointed? I shouldn't feel disappointed for someone who had been through hell.

"Are you crying, Gen?"

"N... No." I tried to cover myself and shrugged. "I'm allergic to something. I'm going to take a shower."

I left my bag on the small table in front of the sofa and walked into the bathroom. This was the first time in my life that I felt so dark. My heart filled with hatred.

I asked... to get rid of someone.

After learning Aoey's story and trying to connect the dots myself, I had gone to see my father. I was close enough to him, but I never knew what he did deep down. I knew he was a high-ranking government official, that he was powerful. I didn't know what he had to do in the past, to have everything like today.

He did everything so that I could have what I had today.

"My princess, why are you crying?"

My dad was shocked when he saw my swollen eyes. He knew I didn't cry easily. If I cried, it must be a big deal. I was his favorite daughter. He was so proud of me. When he said my name, I saw love and adoration in his eyes.

My princess... that was my name and only he could call me that.

"i wanted to ask you a favor."

"What's that?"

I told him Aoey's story but pretended it was my own. I handed him the phone with the photos of Aoey without a face.

"They're blackmailing me."

He cried and bit his lip hard. I could tell he wasn't going to let that go easily. He didn't ask anything else. He was ready to handle the problem for me.

"I'll take care of this. He won't be your problem anymore."

It should have been something I felt good about. But I felt so depressed. I wasn't happy. I was scared and I felt immoral. My head and my heart were in conflict.

Someone was about to die... die because of my lie.

I spent about 1 hour in the shower. I had too much on my mind. When I was stressed I would always spend hours in the shower. I thought the water would wash away the bad stuff. When I felt a little better, I got out and went to bed.

But...

"Gen."

I saw Aoey holding her phone tightly. Her face was full of tears and embarrassment. I knew immediately that the sweet eyes now knew that I knew her story.

"Yes?"

"Why do you have my phone?"

"Are you going through my bag?"

"That's not important. I'm asking you why you have my phone." Her shaky voice shook me. I wanted to give her some excuses, but that could only make things worse. I decided not to say anything, but walked over to her to comfort her.

"Don't touch me. Don't come closer."

When I entered, she quickly walked away. Her face now looked like she had seen a ghost or something horrible in life. The smaller girl pulled at her own hair and shook her head.

"Anyone in this world can see this, but not you! NOT YOU! If you hate me, how can I go on living? Don't come near me."

Chapter 21

Translator's Interruption:

*I should have included a **warning** for this chapter, but I know I'm not the only one who was eagerly awaiting this part HAHAAAA*

Her eyes were filled with fear and disgust. I looked into her sweet eyes with so much sorrow. I wanted to comfort her, but she refused and walked away from me.

She wasn't upset with me; she was too upset with herself to be around me.

"I don't care about that, Aoey."

"Why did you do this? I told you not to interfere in my affairs. I don't want you to know my dirty problem."

Dirty...

I was angry at myself even more because I misunderstood her for the past three days. I was hurt that I couldn't do anything to heal her.

"I know everything."

"No."

She pulled at her own hair in desperation. She didn't know what to do. I rushed to hug her, but she pushed me back with such force fueled by anger.

"I told you not to touch me. Don't touch me. I'm dirty."

“No, you are not dirty. To me, you are a naive girl. You are like a child. Come to me. Don’t go away,” I told her, opening my arms for a hug. I wanted her to come to me, but she shook her head. Her face and eyes were so confused, like a little bird shaken by fear and danger.

“Why are you lying to me? You saw those videos.” Sweet eyes gripped her heart in pain. Her face was filled with sorrow. I felt the pain as much as she did.

Why did I feel so much pain? How come I cared so much about her?

“I can’t be here.”

She looked left and right nervously, searching for something. She ran to the closet and started taking out her clothes. I saw her nervousness and knew I had to do something. I glanced at some flashes in my bag. They were Uncle Somkit's handcuffs.

I needed to calm her down...

As Aoey was taking her clothes out of the closet, I walked behind her and touched both of her shoulders, forcing her to turn around. She was about to shake me off when I quickly put the handcuffs on her.

They clicked.

“What is that?” Aoey looked at her hand in confusion. I quickly locked her other wrist. It was now locked by the handcuffs.

“I’ll keep you here.”

She tried to take them off. I looked at her and sighed. I should have known that handcuffs wouldn't come off easily. Even a thug wouldn't be able to get out of them; how could I possibly plan to get out of them?

“Can you calm down first?”

“I’m out of here.”

“You’re not calm enough.”

“Let me go.”

I pushed her to the other side of the closet door and blocked it with my arm. She was so tired, and now I had to handle her. I understood why she was acting like this, but I wanted her to calm down so we could fix the problem together.

“Where are you going? There’s nowhere you can go. I won’t let you go anyway. You have to be here with me.”

“Don’t come near me. I’m dirty.”

She tried to get away from me, even though there was no room for her to leave. I hated the word ‘dirty’ she used. It turned out that I hate it now as much as the word ‘stupid’.

“I never thought you were dirty.” I walked over to her and smelled the soap on her body. “You smell good.”

“You know what I meant, Gen.”

“What do I have to do to prove that I didn’t think you were dirty? I never thought you were disgusting because of your bad experience.”

“You didn’t notice the way you looked at me the last few days.” Sweet eyes looked into mine. Her eyes were now filled with tears. I bit my lip and was angry with myself for looking at her like that. “You were upset with me.”

“I’m very sorry I did that. But now I understand everything. I didn’t feel disgusted by you.”

I brought my face closer to hers. I could no longer suppress my sexual instinct. I licked the tears from her face with my tongue.

“I didn’t feel disgusted by you.” The younger girl resisted, but her nervousness made me feel powerful. I understood men who abused women

now. I wouldn't treat her like that, but I felt good, and it was much better than that old bastard.

"What are you doing, Gen?"

"Showing you that I don't dislike you." I gently touched my lips to her soft cheek and moved down to her bare neck. She tried to resist, but I used my hand to pin her against the closet door. Her resistance felt weaker now. Sweet eyes were still unsure of how to react.

I felt naughty and put my hand on her shirt, exploring her chest with my wet lips.

"Gen..."

"Where did you feel dirty?"

I knelt down in front of her. The sweet-eyed face was now red. She bit her lip and thought. Then she grabbed my hair with both hands and said nervously,

"Here... I feel bad here."

I unbuttoned her shorts with my hands. I felt uncomfortable but in a good way. There was no turning back from there. If I had a choice, I would do it again and again.

I looked into her eyes again. I looked at her obsessively. I knew she could feel it too.

"From now on, don't feel bad again."

"Gen."

"Don't run away from me again. Otherwise, I'll get angry with you."

"What am I to you then?"

"Whatever—" I smiled slyly. "—Whatever that makes you happy."

I touched her most sensitive part. She was stiff and unsure, but she supported herself to stand up.

“You’re mine, Aoey.”

“Aaahhh.”

Her small body shuddered. Her body was so hot at that moment. Her moan was low in her throat. Her hands, which were grabbing my hair, tightened even more. It woke me up to go deeper.

“Gen... it’s...” Aoey gasped and shuddered. I pressed my face against her midsection and sped up faster and harder. “I.... can’t.... stand anymore.”

I stopped and looked into her eyes.

“Do you want me to stop?”

Her face looked like she wanted to cry when I playfully stopped. The smaller girl now pursed her lips and pushed my face back, even though she was so shy.

“Dont make fun of me.”

I smiled and continued with what I had been doing before. Her moaning started to shake me. I didn’t feel like myself when I heard her moan either.

I wanted more... what else could I do?

“Gen... I feel like I’m about to explode.”

Let it go...

I didn’t say it because I couldn’t stop what I was doing. Finally, the first explosion hit me.

“AAAHHHHHH!!”

The small girl cried out and sat down weakly. Aoey sat in front of me and rested her head on my shoulder, panting. I cradled her small face and looked into her light brown eyes, smiling at her.

“Are you feeling better now?”

“Yes.” She nodded.

“I’ll make you feel even better.” I looked down at her wrists, which were locked. “I can’t get close to you because your hands are in the way.”

“So...” She raised her arms up high, putting them over my head and pulling me towards her. “Okay?”

I smiled. The sweet eyes seemed to have forgotten what happened before.

“What are you going to do?”

“Make you feel better.”

I pretended to be so experienced in this even though I had never done anything like this before. But I had to cleanse the wounds in her heart or at least make her forget the pain for a short while. I touched my hands softly everywhere on her body. My wet lips gently touched lower and lower on her face.

“How is it here?” I asked.

“That too.”

“Where else do you feel dirty?”

I unbuttoned her white, long-sleeved pajamas. Her soft skin showed because she wasn’t wearing a bra when she was ready for bed. But her arms were still cuffed, and she couldn’t take off her shirt. Now only parts of her body were showing.

I wanted to explore those covered parts. I was more pleased than if she were completely naked.

What else could I do? I wanted her so badly. I wanted to do more.

The little girl was now shy because I was staring at her obsessively. She covered her face with her hands.

“Do not look at me like that.”

“It’s too late to be shy. I’ve done so many things to you already.” I took her hands off her face. “Now I’ll take it step by step. Let me taste you.”

I looked at her like a delicious dish. I pushed her to lie down on the floor, raised her handcuffed hands above her head, and ripped her shirt open in half. Her shiny, smooth skin in front of me invited me to taste. The slight sweet smell pleased me even more.

Should I bite her?

I wanted to destroy her.

“Gen...”

“Ummmm.”

I let a low moan escape from my throat. I couldn’t control myself; I felt like a hungry animal that doesn’t let anyone touch its food. Aoey was shocked by that. I had to admit I was lost in that lustful feeling. There was no more snobby Genlong.

I didn’t know who I was anymore; **I might be worse than Aoey's stepfather when it came to my sexual instincts.**

“Don’t be mad at me. If I did something too harsh...” I couldn’t stop myself and bit her nipple. “I don’t know... hmmm, but I couldn’t help myself.”

My heart was beating faster. I felt like I was about to drown with my short breath. I released so much heat from my body against hers. She didn’t respond, but her hand gripped my hair tighter. Maybe she was trying not to shake my confidence.

“It’s okay. You can do whatever you want with me. Just you.” She pushed my head back to the same lower position.

“Eat me... Eat me all you want.” Not that I needed approval, but once she gave the green light, I lifted both knees to make my way.

“I’m going in.”

Whatever I did, I did it to the end. I never left anything half-done.

I remembered from when I was young that I refused to do something if I wasn’t good at it. When I was young, my mom let me choose between learning guitar or learning piano. I chose piano because it was more luxurious and not too hard on my fingers. I was so good that I won many competitions.

I always wanted to be on top of everything. I learned to speak more than two languages because speaking only Thai and English was too common. I asked my dad to send me to China, and I came back fluent.

I chose the best university in the country. I prepared and read books three years before the actual exam. I wanted to get into the architectural design faculty. I learned and practiced drawing a lot until I got in. My dad celebrated my success with a 2 million baht watch, probably the most expensive watch a student could wear, just because I asked for it.

I got into everything. I always did the best I could. I never did anything half-heartedly until now...

Hey, I was shocked by what happened that night. I was now sleeping in bed with my hands still cuffed. But I was restless with the mission half-done. I went into the bathroom and watched lesbian porn on the internet. The site was so unsafe with viruses and malware, but I watched it anyway, and it made me realize that I had made a lot of mistakes.

Damn! Who would have thought I would have sex with a woman?

My God...

I did everything with my instinct. We had our flow emotion, but my freshly painted rainbow nails stopped it.

Did I really have to explain what happened?

There were many other ways to get us to the other end of the rainbow, but in my opinion, the mission was not complete. Now, I looked at my stupid nails with hesitation.

If I cut my nails, Aoey would be happy.

If I kept my nails, I would be happy.

Whose happiness was more important between Aoey's and mine? I was the cool girl with a beautiful manicure.

Why did I care about other people's happiness? I deserved to be happy, but why did I have to care about how others felt? It was my happiness.

I would keep my beautiful manicure!

"Gen?" Aoey's voice brought me back. Her sweet eyes woke up and walked towards me. She was surprised to see me resting on the toilet at 3 a.m.

"Yeah?"

"What are you doing?"

"I could not sleep."

Aoey looked at all the tools around me and became even more confused. I had a laptop on my lap, a nail polish remover on the sink, and a nail clipper in my hand that I hadn't used yet.

“You should go back to bed.”

“I want you to sleep next to me.” Her sweet voice melted me. We looked into each other's eyes and walked away. We just did something together.

“I'll follow right behind you. Let me check something.”

“What are you watching?”

“Nothing.”

Aoey looked at the screen, and her face immediately turned red. She understood right away.

“Why do you have to look at this?”

“I'm... learning something. I didn't complete the mission. Now I know what it is.”

“What is it?”

“Do I really have to tell you? It's kind of awkward to say it.” I looked at the nail clippers and nail remover in the sink. “I have to cut my nails.”

I immediately changed my mind when she stood right in front of me.

Was this the genius Genlong? He valued the happiness of others more than his own. What a crazy idea!

I could write a novel.

****The Girl Who Lost Her Manicure.****

I would beat the famous *Harry Potter*. She gave me such a sweet smile. Sweet eyes giggled and nodded.

“Okay, I understand.”

“Go back to bed. I'll follow you in a minute.”

“Let me help you cut your nails.” The younger girl grabbed the nail polish remover from the sink and soaked it on a cotton ball. “It’s faster if I help.”

All my doubts about my manicure were gone. I watched as sweet eyes adoringly did my nails. I looked at her and wondered why it all happened for the first time with her.

My first friend.

My first lice...

My first concern...

My first time having sex... with handcuffs for the first time.

“You're scared of me?” I asked but didn't look her in the eyes. When I remembered what had just happened, even I was scared of myself. I would never have thought I had such an animal instinct.

“Did I look scared?”

“I don’t know. Maybe you don’t want to talk about it. I don’t want you to feel weird about it,” I said, embarrassed. “If you feel good about it, it will be good in the long run.”

“In the long term? Does this mean that this will continue?” She didn’t seem scared like I thought she was. I was more relaxed knowing that.

At least I made her happy... I guess.

“Were you happy, Aoey?” I asked and then immediately felt shy about my question.

Aoey paused, then nodded and smiled.

“Yes, I am happy. You are my happy machine.” She said and gave me a sweet smile. My heart skipped a beat as I felt in love.

I would never admit it, but it happened.

“Aoey?”

“Yeah?”

I finally said something after a long silence.

“You are my first love, Aoey.”

I said while we were getting our nails done at 3 a.m.

It was my first time telling someone I like them.



Chapter 22

Aoey looked at me in surprise at my confession. She glanced up from my hands and stared into my eyes as if trying to hypnotize me. I almost stopped breathing. Her beautiful eyes were filled with tears. I reached out to wipe them away in surprise.

“What happened, Aoey?”

“Really?”

“Do I look like a liar?” I was a little annoyed that she didn't believe me.

“No, not like that. I never expected you to say that... first love? And now?” Aoey looked so confused. I sighed with a smile and shook my head.

“Of course, you're still my first love. If I don't count my art teacher who looked like a pug. But now I know that wasn't love. I just loved the dog, but my mom wouldn't let me have it.” I thought about that with disappointment. My mom was so mean.

“My heart is about to burst.”

Aoey didn't listen when I complained about the dog. She touched her chest in the heart area. She looked like she was having a heart attack.

“Is it that crazy?” I laughed and pulled the laptop off my lap, sitting on the floor with Aoey. “I thought you knew how I felt for a while now. Why are you still excited about this? Are you overreacting?”

“You're not the kind of person who would say something like that. I was touched. I thought you were so blind.”

Yes, that was me.

I reached out and gently stroked her back. I laughed at her reaction. She must have been really surprised.

“I guess I don’t need to clean my nails today. I’ll be busy telling you to stop crying.”

“You don’t have to clean them.”

“Okay.”

I shrugged but figured Aoey had different ideas about that. Sweet eyes now pushed me down onto the bathroom floor and kissed me aggressively. I raised an eyebrow in surprise but let her do as she pleased.

After kissing me, she moved down to my neck. Both of her hands tried to get into my shirt. I grabbed her hands by surprise to stop her. “What are you doing?”

“I wanted to do it. I don’t have nails.”

“What?!”

“I want to do it.”

I sat up in surprise. Aoey stood up in confusion. She didn’t understand what happened. “Are you going to do that to me too?”

“Yeah.”

“You will do it to me.” My direct statement made it awkward between us. We had done something before but it was still very new to say it out loud.

“We take turns doing it.”

“I don’t think so.”

She was so nervous about the idea. Aoey immediately tensed up. “Do you mind if I do that for you?”

“No, I don’t know, but...” I swallowed a lump in my throat. I didn’t know what to say, but I didn’t think we were that close yet.

“Why don’t you let me do it?”

“I want to do it to you.”

“I want to do it too.”

We stared into each other’s eyes, not wanting to back away. I was so confused. *Did other people fight over something like that?*

“What happens if I don’t let you?”

“I won’t take no for an answer.”

How come it was a serious fight now? Aoey, who usually did as I said, stood firm in her response. For me, doing it to her was more of an advantage. I was the one in control, not a follower.

I would never let anyone control me, especially in that matter.

“That’s too bad because I won’t let you do that,” I said firmly. I couldn’t believe how determined I was. “If you love me, you’ll do what I told you to do.”

“But you just said you love me, so why don’t you do what I told you?”

I patiently closed my eyes and waved my hands to reject her reaction. “We should stopped talking about it today. We can’t find a solution.”

I stood up and walked over to the bed. I lay on my back and turned away from her. Aoey stood up and did the same.

Did other couples also argue like this?

The atmosphere was very tense all night. I couldn't sleep and had no idea if Aoey was sleeping or not. We both woke up at 6 o'clock when the alarm went off. We took a shower, got dressed, and left for college.

Actually, I had a class in the afternoon but I just needed to get out of the house because I had no idea how to handle that situation, the *give-or-take* situation. I didn't have any friends to talk to about it. I could only ask one person.

Why did it have to be this guy?

"What a surprise! You're here at my faculty."

Tod, who was at the same university as me, sat down to chat with me. He could already tell that I had a bad vibe.

"What made you so grumpy?"

It was a blue vulva...

but I didn't say it. I fidgeted. I didn't know how to start the subject. I started chatting about this and that.

"Are there any real men in this faculty?" The question that made me nervous made Tod look at me and shake his head in boredom.

"Not all doctors are homosexual."

"Well, a lot of bisexual novels are like that. Even you are gay," I looked at him and tried to get on the topic. "Are you a taker or a giver?"

“No! We are not talking about this.”

“Yes, we are!” I complained loudly. I had actually gone there to talk about this topic, but I couldn’t ask him directly. The handsome man looked at me and was confused. He tried to understand what I was thinking.

“What’s the matter, little devil? Are you here to ask me if I’m a giver or a taker?”

“I wanted to know. I don’t need to know about you. I just wanted to know about this... bisexual people like you,” I said awkwardly and realized my face was bright red. “Can you be a taker if you’re a giver?”

Tod looked at me skeptically. I thought I saw a small smile at the corner of his mouth, so I didn’t want to look at him. “As far as I know, people are different. Some are born givers. Some are born takers. Some can change.”

“Why is it so confusing?”

“It’s an individual thing.”

“I wanted to know... if you’re receiving... I’m curious...” I thought about the subject nervously. I felt so nervous and about to faint when I had to say something like that. “Does that mean the giver has power over you?”

“Nobody thinks about things like that. Do you?”

“Well...”

“Why? Do you like women?”

It felt like he knocked me out with a baseball bat with that question. The handsome boy looked at me smiling. He always knew what I was thinking.

“Is it Aoey?”

“Tod... Please pretend you don’t know... pretend we just chatted about this topic.” I rubbed my face with both of my hands. My face felt burning. The future doctor in front of me laughed happily to see me speechless.

“You have to let it go naturally. She’s not straight. Ummm... I don’t know much about that either. But I think you and Aoey...”

“ ”

“You two should take turns.”

“Bye bye!”

I quickly walked away because I couldn’t bear to talk to him anymore. It was a wrong decision to ask this future doctor. I only told him my private story so he could laugh at me.

Oh my God! How did I get so tense about that? It was a silly thing.

I had just had a love confession and a sexual experience, but somehow I didn’t want to look into sweet eyes because of the issue that hadn’t been resolved.

It wasn’t a fight...

But we didn’t end it peacefully.

But I couldn’t escape forever. I had to go back to the condo to face the truth. Aoey looked at me when I got home. I unlocked the handcuffs in the morning. We still didn’t talk about last night. There was something hanging in the air between us. Something awkward.

“Are you at home?”

“Yeah.”

That wasn’t a normal question. I never greeted her with that reaction. She was obviously at home. Something was so awkward.

“I’m going to take a shower. I’m so dirty.”

I felt lost and needed an escape. I spent a good 30 minutes showering and came out in a t-shirt and shorts. Aoey was now watching TV while sipping

on her soda. She gave the TV her full attention. That was good. I didn't have to avoid her too much.

“You don't want me to do it because you don't want to feel like you're losing your power, right?”

That direct question was so unexpected. The smaller girl asked with seriousness in her voice. What the hell was this? How come she was so brave to talk about it more than me?

“Mmmmm... yeah, I want to be in control,” I said and looked into her eyes. “I like being in control. That's me.”

“Even in that?”

“I like to hear you moan, Aoey.” Now we both turned red talking about it. Let's do it if she wanted to talk openly. “It turns me on even more.”

Sweet eyes looked at me in surprise. A glass of water in her hand fell to the floor. I had to shout at her.

“Water, Aoey! Water!”

“Ahhh... Okay... Can you please dry it with a towel?”

“Okay”

Aoey sat on the bed while I grabbed a piece of towel from the kitchen, sat on the floor, and dried it off. I usually didn't do this, but now it was so inconvenient that I preferred to keep myself busy with something.

But....

The unexpected happened when the Sweet Eyes lifted one of her legs and placed it over my shoulder. She wrapped her legs around my neck and pinned me there. I looked at her in confusion. Sweet Eyes looked at me and pushed herself up with one elbow on the bed, leaning back seductively.

"Okay, I'll let you be a giver. If you like being in control so much, I'll let you."

It was really unexpected. I never thought I would see Aoey do something like that. My heart was beating faster and I was now distracted. I stopped mopping the floor and walked over to her. I crawled over her body and sat on top of her.

"Where did you learn to do this seductive move? What made you give in anyway?"

"Because I love you. I thought you might be happier if I do what you told me." Aoey grabbed my neck and pulled me towards her. Those seductive eyes drove me to a deep desire. "Let's see how far you can control me."

"Nothing I can't do, including this."

"That's good..." Aoey said in a playful tone. "Eat me then."

I leaned towards her and smiled.

"Don't beg me to stop then."

I didn't know how long I slept, but I knew it wasn't morning because the sky outside was completely dark and I still felt groggy. But what surprised me was that someone was up and looking at me adoringly.

Even though we slept in the dark, I still felt and saw those eyes quite clearly. My eyes were already adjusted to the darkness. I could see her eyes

clearly.

"Are you awake?"

"I can't sleep."

"Why?"

"I felt like my heart was going to explode."

I tried to force myself to sit up, but the gentle eyes pushed me back down, gently gesturing me to continue sleeping.

"Go back to bed. I just wanted to see you while you're sleeping."

"It's really late." I rolled onto my side to look at the clock on the wall. "Do you have a class tomorrow?"

"Yes, but I couldn't close my eyes even if I wanted to."

I sat up despite her protest. The blanket that was previously covering her now fell away, revealing her bare chest. I could still see them clearly even though we were in the dark. It was a little awkward, but I had to act cool.

We just finished our mission... it may be normal that she is still alert and full of adrenaline. But how come that I am so tired? Was it just me who was a giver? Or was I too old?

But we were the same age.

"I'll stay up with you then."

"You care so much about me. Is it because you own me now?"

I was surprised by that strange question. Aoey was a very simple person. Ever since she tried to seduce me... up until now we did it.

"Let's see how long you can last."

I still remember what she said before.

"I'm worried you can't sleep. Maybe you haven't been trying hard enough."

"Huh?"

"I'll help you sleep better." I leaned down and kissed her bare shoulder. Aoey raised an eyebrow and smiled.

"I'm curious how you're going to do that?"

"I'll do the same to you. But if you still can't sleep, I'll keep doing it."

It seemed to work. Aoey slept until morning after I relaxed her a bit more... being naughty with her.

I felt proud that I had done everything so perfectly. I couldn't stand doing things halfway. I had to be the best. Whatever I did, I had to be the best. Otherwise, I wouldn't even have to start...

This too...

I studied, or I would call it obsessively studied on how to give and how to take. I watched lesbian porn, read a bisexual novel, and did a lot of research, and it paid off. I did well. I woke up that morning happy and did my routines. I even made a toast to Aoey. I never did that for anyone.

Aoey woke up after I grabbed a big t-shirt and put it on. That was the only thing I was wearing. We both looked at each other and smiled. Should we be more shy?

"You get up so early, Gen."

"Yes, I was wondering that too."

"Are you in a good mood?"

"Yeah..." I shrugged. "I guess."

"Why are you in a good mood?"

"It could be for giving you a good night's sleep, I guess," I said proudly and put food on a plate and gave it to Aoey. "Here's your breakfast. This is all I can do."

"You ate me and now you're showing responsibility too. I should have flirted with you at the beginning. I shouldn't have waited so long."

Aoey bit into the food and smiled sweetly at me. My heart was beating hard like a drum. I had never felt this way with anyone before... ever.

That girl was the first girl who had that much effect on me.

"Kitty."

"Huh?"

I called Aoey and smiled. One word that could describe how I felt about her was Kitty. Kitty was so adorable, mysterious, seductive, and stubborn.

"I don't know. I think it's kind of cute."

"Monkey," Aoey told me again.

I was surprised that they called me that. I gave her such a cute name but mine was monkey, really?

"How come I'm a monkey?"

"I like a monkey with red cheeks. I wanted to call you as master and you were as naughty as a monkey last night."

"That doesn't sound great at all."

"Little monkey."

Sweet Eyes had fun calling me by that name despite my protest.

"Are you angry with me?"

"This thing won't make me angry."

"You really change. Before, you wouldn't tolerate this word... it's so nice. You're my Gen. My little monkey."

That morning the world was so pink in my eyes. I looked at her, who was now chewing a piece of toast with deep feeling. I bit my lip trying to stop myself from hugging her.

I was so madly in love. I better look away. "How was last night?"

"What do you mean?"

"How much score would I get?" I smiled in the corner with pride. I did my best in everything, including sex. I was proud and ready to take full scores like the entrance exam I took or a piano competition on many stages.

"6."

"What?!" I looked at her in surprise and blinked in disbelief.

"What is the total score? 6?"

"10 of course."

"Why did I only get 6?" I looked at her in disbelief. I really thought I had done a pretty good job. She looked at me innocently and took a bite of the rest of her toast, brushing some bread crumbs off her hands.

"I just gave you a score as you requested."

"I should get full marks. Did I do something wrong? Did you cum?" I felt like I was hit in the head with a club. My confidence was gone.

I did everything right... I cut my nails.

"Of course I did." The little girl walked over to the fridge and casually poured herself a glass of water. It made me even more upset.

"If you finished, why did I get 6?"

"My instinct tells me you're 6."

"Where are the other 4?"

"It doesn't matter."

"Of course it does." I was a perfectionist. She should have had her best sex because I gave it to her. Why did I only get 6?! Or did she just say she cum and I didn't?

"Are you okay, Gen?" The sweet eyes walked towards me and looked at me sweetly. "If you want, I'll give you a 10 out of 10."

I looked away. My confidence had been shaken. She must be so disappointed in me. She must expect more from me.

"Don't try to be nice now."

"Did you do your best?" Sweet Eyes looked at me sweetly trying to comfort me. I sat up straight and pretended I hadn't tried my best. "You can try again."

I grabbed her shirt and pulled it off her head. She looked at me in surprise but didn't protest. "Let's see if I can do better."

Chapter 23

I was a little bit out of it all day. Aoey and I went shopping. The sweet eyes grabbed this and that in the basket and turned to me to make a comment.

“Do you like this brand?”

“Whatever you choose.”

My brain wasn't here. All I was thinking about was the score; I had almost gone crazy. I barely made eye contact with Aoey. I didn't feel like the best. My confidence wasn't as high as before, just because of one problem.

“Why are you so quiet today?” The soft eyes met mine and smiled. “Are you thinking about the score?”

I took a step back, lacking confidence, but she grabbed my arm tightly and didn't let go. “You don't even look at me.”

“I didn't make you happy.”

“When did I say I wasn't happy?”

“I got 7 out of 10,” I said with little confidence. Aoey smiled sweetly.

“You have to learn to accept the truth. You just have to keep practicing. There is no runner who can win a marathon without practice.”

“We're not running a marathon. We're talking about...” I paused and realized we were in the supermarket. It wasn't the right place for this topic. “I studied for that. I don't need to practice. But I still got a 7.”

“Is punctuation that important to you?”

“It's important to you. It's your happiness.” I bit my lip and sighed. “It made me realize now that I'm not the best at everything. It made me realize that I'm not good at this.”

“You can compensate me with something else then.”

“Can this be compensated?” I said with low self-esteem. “How can I do that?”

“I don't know. How about you give me a smile now?”

“But...”

“You are my happiness. If you are happy, I am happy.”

I looked at her in shock. I knew she cared about me, but I didn't realize she cared so much about me. I looked into her eyes and smiled awkwardly.

“Whatever you want me to do, just tell me.”

The sweet eyes looked at me slyly and tiptoed to my ear, where she knew was my most sensitive part. “Tonight... I have a dessert to serve you, straight to your mouth.”

I squinted my eyes thinking about what she wanted to say.

“Okay, shall we see how tasty that is?”

“Are you able to finish me off? I'm so delicious.”

I challenged her with my eyes. I couldn't resist the seduction. I leaned towards her until our lips touched, even though we were in the middle of a supermarket.

“I'll chew you up... there won't be anything left in my mouth.”

Aoey smiled at the corner of her mouth. Her light brown eyes looked straight at me and said mockingly, “Let's see how much score you can make

tonight.”

So embarrassing... I got 7 out of 10... again.

I was now obsessed with it. I couldn't talk to anyone but Aoey. I had to talk to the one who gave me the grade. Wasn't that awkward? Sweet Eyes were very supportive. But now I lost my confidence. Aoey had to make all the decisions about everything. Now I looked like a loser.

Great visited us that day. My brother always came with a smile. I noticed Aoey's awkward reaction, but she tried to hide it as much as she could.

“Can your bird say anything now? Did you teach him anything?”

“No, I do not have time.”

“Why are you so busy?”

I quickly looked at Aoey, who was now pouring water into a glass for the visitor. I saw a smile on the corner of her mouth.

“I'm working on my exam.”

***I checked my score every night. I never got anything higher than a 7.
That was crazy!!!***

“What is your exam?”

“The exam after class. Don't you ever have to take an exam? Enough with the questions. Why are you here anyway?”

“I miss Aoey and you. Why? Am I not allowed to be here?” Great turned to Aoey and smiled. “Do you miss me, Aoey?”

“Um,” the short answer left room for interpretation. I felt bad for my brother. He called Aoey many nights to chat, but Aoey always ended the conversation within 2 minutes and cut the line. Why were they hanging out anyway?

Aoey didn't spend time chatting with Great when I was there. Instead, she did chores all the time. She always did that when Great visited her. I felt sad for my brother. When Aoey came into the kitchen, I quickly asked her a question.

“Are you coming off like a second grader? It's not going anywhere. You seemed so stiff when you were talking to her. This isn't you at all.”

“And you think I feel okay with this? Aoey never gave me a chance. I don't know why. We only had lunch together in college. We never went on a date, watched a movie, listened to music, never anything.”

“I think you should break up with her.” I said it frankly, but not for myself. It was so that he would understand.

“No, I love her. She chose me. She must have feelings for me. I have to do something.”

“What's that?”

“I want to take her to the beach.”

I understood immediately. I looked at him as if my eyes were knives that could cut him into pieces. “You know she won't let you touch her.”

“There must be some way that works. What about alcohol? When a woman drinks, it becomes easier.”

“Bastard!”

Aoey, who had just come out of the kitchen, saw my face and wondered what was wrong. "What happened? What are you two talking about? You look so serious."

"Great said he want to take you to the beach," I immediately said as I was thinking of a way to stop the plan. I couldn't let my brother do something so horrible. Don't do anything so horrible to Aoey.

"Really? It would be so romantic to go with Gen." Aoey completely forgot that Great was sitting right there. When she mentioned "romantic," she didn't really include my brother.

"Do you want to go, Aoey? My family has a house on the beach." Great continued as Aoey looked at me and smiled seductively. Aoey forgot to cover those seductive eyes from Great.

"If Gen goes, I'll go too."

"I don't know. Let me think about it." I cut the conversation short.

Great didn't sound very happy. He might also be upset with Aoey because she wanted to take me with her everywhere. After we all stayed silent for a moment, Aoey changed the subject and asked me for help.

"I'll vacuum. Can you fill the bottles with water, please?"

"Okay."

"That is sweet."

Aoey continued with things while I walked to the fridge and did the work I was asked to do without complaint. Great glanced between Aoey and me back and forth. He quickly got up and followed me like a duckling. "What happened to you? Are you doing chores now?"

"We help each other. Why?"

"You're not a good person. You're a dictator who tells people what to do. What made you do what Aoey asked you to do? This is great."

“Huh?”

I never realized that I was so engaged with my pretty Aoey. If Great hadn't mentioned it, I wouldn't have remembered my past self. What made me get up and fill up the water bottles?

“That's true. Since when did I become a good person?” Once I realized what happened, I put down all the bottles and went back to watching TV. Aoey, who was now vacuuming, looked at me and asked in surprise.

“That was fast.”

“I don't think it's my job. Why would I do that?”

“Because I ask you to.”

“Why would I do what you ask me?”

“Because you said you would do whatever I asked you to do because you don't perform well.” I immediately stood up and walked to the fridge, filling the bottles. Great, he saw what happened but didn't understand anything. My brother walked to Aoey and asked confused.

“What did she do that's not so good?”

“Bad score,” Sweet Eyes said without an explanation, making Great feel even more confused.

“What score?”

“A test.”

“Did your score go down? Yours?”

Great looked at me in disbelief. All the conversations made me blush. Damn! I couldn't stop asking? It was my black hole in life.

“We all have ups and downs. Can you please stop asking?”

“You never get anything wrong, except when you were drunk and kissing other people.”

Aoey immediately turned off the vacuum cleaner and turned her attention to the story. I glared at Great with hatred. Why the hell did he dig up this shit?

“Kissing other people?”

“Yes, this little lady was perfect when she was drunk, she was a crazy girl. She wasn't herself at all. Mom loves to tease her the most. She'll trick Gen into drinking if she wants to see something fun.”

“This must be the reason why you're not going to drink.” It was awkward listening to Aoey talk about it. She kept pressing Great for more information. “Why did she drink then, if she knew she couldn't control it?”

“She is so weak when it comes to drinking. All of us in the family knew that. Alcohol is not always amber-colored. Sometimes it has no color. Mom switched her glass with Vodka once. She was so drunk then.”

“Shut up! Don't you have anything else to talk about?”

I filled the bottles with water and turned around only to see Aoey smiling at the corner of her mouth. She seemed to enjoy learning about my yet another mistake.

“I would love to see it.”

“I won't make that mistake again. You won't see it.”

I could tell that the sweet eyes were now so curious to see me drunk. But I was too smart to be a fool again. I was fooled by my mother once; I wouldn't be fooled by this sneaky little sweet pea again.

"What about the beach?" Great continued the same conversation. I shrugged and changed the subject.

"I don't know. Let me think about it. I need a bath."

I quickly stood up and walked to the bathroom to avoid answering the question. I just wanted to be left alone because I was upset with Great, who showed so obviously that he really wanted to touch Aoey. I, who was his sister and Aoey's secret lover, couldn't make any decision.

I sounded like a bad person...

If I said yes to the beach, Aoey would be at risk with my brother. If I said no to the beach, I felt very sorry for Great.

"I said don't touch me!"

A scream came from outside. I had to get up from the bathroom and ran out. I saw Great standing stunned with a red hand mark on the side of his face. The sweet eyes stood there trembling.

"What happened?"

"Why can't I touch you? Why?!" Great exploded. "Then why are we dating anyway?"

"Then leave it, leave it now!" Aoey shouted back.

Great, who was usually playful and cheerful, was filled with pain.

"Damn!" Great kicked my coffee table hard and walked out of the condo without speaking to me. Aoey stood there shaking. But when I walked over to her, she ran into the bathroom and quickly rinsed off where Great touched her.

"What are you doing, Aoey?"

"I don't feel well."

She then grabbed a bar of soap and rubbed it on her skin over and over again. I had to stop her by grabbing her hands to make her stop and hug her.

She had some pretty bad scars.

"You're clean. Trust me, Aoey."

"I want to clean it one more time."

She still felt dirty. I had to confirm that she was clean by lifting her clean, soft arm up to my face and kissing it. I rubbed my face on her arm.

"It's clean now. Trust me if you love me."

She seemed calmer once I did that. Soft eyes looked at me with tears in their eyes. She hugged me and openly showed me her weakness.

"I love you, my Gen."

"You need to see a psychologist."

"I'm not crazy. I'm fine." She immediately denied.

"Seeing a psychologist doesn't mean you're crazy."

"You can heal me, Gen. I don't need a shrink. You held me and touched me." She took my hand and put it on her face. She grabbed my other hand and put it in her shirt.

"But Aoey..."

"Please help me."

I sighed deeply and comforted the sweet eyes.

I needed to take her to a psychiatrist. She needed treatment. Aoey was now sleeping in bed while I was researching treatment. Tod called me while I was researching. He was a doctor I felt confident and safe with.

"How are you, Tod?" I said in my normal voice, but there was no response from the other end of the line. I stopped working and paid more attention to the conversation. "Can you hear me, Tod?"

"Gen... I want to die."

"What!? Is this a joke?" I laughed, but there was no comment from my fake boyfriend.

"Singh dumped me. He's seeing the other guy now."

"Oh, Todd."

"I don't know what to do. I can't talk to anyone but you. I want to die."

"Where are you? I'll come see you."

"I'm in my condo."

"Send me your location. I'll come see you right away."

I dropped everything and got out of bed. His voice was so bad. But Aoey, who I thought was sleeping, grabbed my arm and squeezed.

"I will not let you go."

"Are you awake? Let me go first. I have to go. Tod needs me now."

"It's 11 PM now. Don't leave now."

"So what? It's only 11."

"This is not the time to go meet a guy at his condo. I won't let you go."

"This is important. He really needs me now."

But my explanation made those sweet eyes even firmer. She seduced me immediately.

"I need you now, Gen." The soft eyes looked at me with deep determination.

"Am I not important to you?"

I didn't have time to explain. I got up and got dressed. I didn't know where to start, though. How could I explain the story of my fake boyfriend who got dumped by another guy and now wanted to kill himself in a short period of time?

This world was so full of shit.

"Gen."

"Yeah?"

She quickly put the handcuffs on one of my wrists... click.

"What are you doing?"

"You're mine."

"Aoey, this is not the time. Don't do this now," I said with my strong voice that normally worked with her.

"Do what I say."

Sweet eyes quickly placed the other side of the handcuffs on my other wrist. I now looked like a prisoner.

"Aoey, let me go now. This is a serious matter."

She lifted my handcuffed hand over her head. It now seemed like I was hugging the small body tightly with my bound arms. It was such a strange and sexy position at the same time. The smaller girl now wrapped both her legs around my waist, making it harder for me to walk.

"Do not go."

"I'm angry now, Aoey."

Sweet eyes kissed me all over my face and moved softly to my ears. She knew where my weakness was.

"You can't stay mad at me for long, I know."

"..."

"Eat me now."

"Aoey, it's not the time." I was mesmerized by the sweet brown eyes.

"Please... eat me."

I tried to be strong as the little girl playfully ran her tiny fingers from my ears to my neck. She teased me with her soft lips around my chin to my neck again.

Ok... now I was shaking.

"Why are you doing this to me, Aoey?"

"On the bed or on the door?"

I finally kissed her back. My two legs walked back to the bed.

I was worried about both sides... here or there.

I needed to fix that problem first. Tod's problems seemed to be lesser now that my sexual instinct got the better of me. Wait a minute... Tod. Aoey seemed to have more problems than you.

I was worried about Tod, but I didn't know what to do with the current situation. This wouldn't take long. The handsome boy could wait.

I lost to her again.

Chapter 24

I couldn't leave my apartment, so I asked Tod to come here. Aoey was even more upset. Lately, I realized that I was so spoiled. Now I knew that I could make demands because I was loved. I sighed when I realized that she wouldn't try to understand.

“Why do you ask him to be in our space?”

I looked around my studio and felt a little strange. Now, this was our space. It sounded cozy.

“It's just a visit from a friend.”

“That's your boyfriend.”

“Great was here too. I have no problem with that.”

“Great is your brother.”

“But he's your boyfriend.”

“Why are you arguing with me? Can't you just let me win sometime?”

She raised her voice at me, something she had never done before. I looked into the soft eyes that were now lost. She pouted and didn't apologize, but went to bed and left me alone, confused.

I better change the subject.

“Take off my handcuffs. I won't know how to explain this to Tod.”

“Don't let him in if you don't want to answer any questions. How can he visit a girl at 1 am? What kind of man is this?”

“If you had let me out earlier, it was only 11 at night.”

“Why didn't you leave then?”

“Who seduced me?”

“You could say no.”

“I was handcuffed, I was harassed. Who could say no to that?” I waved my handcuffed wrists in front of her face as she sat on the bed. “Please unlock this.”

“No.”

My guest had arrived. He knocked twice until I walked to the door. I had to hide my wrists by covering them.

“I'm sorry I asked you to come here,” I said with guilt on my face.

The handsome boy now looked awful but he still gave me a weak smile. I invited him in. Tod paused and sniffed something in the air. “What?” I asked. Tod looked at me and replied casually.

“I smell sex.”

“You're crazy. There's no smell of sex.”

“Yes... I can smell fresh sex. It's hormone... it's...”

“Are you here for the nonsense?”

I pretended to act normal even though I was so embarrassed. How could a doctor know so much?

“You might be confused. My nose is funny.”

Tod looked at Aoey who was sitting on the bed. The sweet eyes acted like a child. I had to make some noise to remind her to be nice to him.

“Okay.” She turned around to look with an expressionless face and said hello to Tod coldly.

“Hi, make yourself at home.” Then she headed to the kitchen to avoid him.

Tod, who saw what happened, immediately knew that something was wrong with Aoey. “I'm so sorry. Did I make you fight?”

“Don't worry about it. She's a little cold.”

“I really don't know who to talk to. You're the only one who knew my story.”

I reached out my hand and gently touched his arm. I never comforted anyone in my life, except for Aoey. My life was so strange now. Suddenly, I had a close friend, a brother, I had a partner... both a man and a woman.

The handsome boy looked at my handcuffed hands in surprise. “Why are you handcuffed?”

“Ummm...we were just playing. Forget it.” I quickly changed the subject because I didn't want to explain what happened. “What happened to you?”

“You two were playing at 1 am?”

“I said forget it. What happened to you?”

“Singh told me he likes women. He wanted to break up with me.”

“Oh?” I was as shocked and confused as he was. Could a man who was dating another man change his mind about another woman? “Was he lying to that woman? Isn't that an excuse for why he likes another guy?”

“No, he really likes that woman.”

“But he's gay.”

“He's not gay. He just likes me.”

“Is that possible? If a man likes another man, then he's gay.”

“When you like Aoey, are you gay?”

“N... nooo. I never said I like Aoey.”

I never told anyone about this relationship. I didn't know how to react. Only Aoey and I knew. I had to act as if nothing had happened.

If no one knew what happened between us, there was nothing between us.

“You looked uncomfortable. You're usually so confident and never stutter. I'm pretty sure I smelled it right. I smelled love everywhere in this place.”

My face was so hot at that moment. I could iron my student uniform with my face now.

“So you're a lesbian?”

“No, I'm not a lesbian.”

“See. You only like who you like. It just happened to be Aoey, who happened to be a woman.”

“I'd never heard of this definition before. I thought that if you're a man and you date a man, then you're gay. If you're a woman and you date another woman, then you're a lesbian.”

“That's so narrow-minded. We can love who we love in this world.”

“Can I love my mom's husband? Or my grandmother's husband then?”

“You know it has to be morally acceptable. Don't ask for something you already knew.”

Tod walked over to the bird in a cage and looked at it for a long time. Today the handsome guy just wanted to have a friend. He just wanted to talk to

someone. Sometimes, people just wanted someone to listen to their problems.

“That means you two aren't gay, but you happen to be men who love each other. Right?”

“I could put it like that.”

“Can I ask one more question?”

“Yeah?”

It was so nice to have someone like him who opened up my worldview. I could ask questions and learn a lot from him.

“Did they insult each other like men do in a bisexual novel?”

“Sometimes, but not very often, because if it's too much, we become just friends. Why?”

“I read some bisexual novels. That's how they talked. I was just wondering if they do that in real life. Novels often claim to be based on real life.”

“It seems you like bisexual novels.”

I was curious to know more about his life and wanted to talk shit to him for a while.

“I love history. Can I try something with you?”

“Try what?”

“I wanted to call you a son of a bitch. You deserved to be fucked and they left you. Who the hell would want to be with you!” I said it with a mocking tone but mixed with a sly tone.

“Gen.”

“Did they break your fucking heart? Haha. You deserved it. I wasn't really surprised that he left you.”

“.....”

“I'm kidding. I just wanted to talk like kids. I never swear, but I wanted to try it with you.” I gave him my prettiest smile, so he could forgive me. I finally got revenge on him for being a bad mouth to me.

Fucking Tod.

You fucking deserved it.

I was happy now.

I should change the subject now. The teasing was done.

“Where were we? You don't like men but you like Singh.”

I knew he was a little upset, but I acted so innocently. I went back to his serious topic, so he could forget what I just did.

“I like Singh because he was Singh. I never liked any other boy.”

“You talk like you might like girls.”

“I've dated women before.”

I was the one who was shocked now. I needed to read more about this kind of bisexual novels on the website. I needed to update my worldview.

They may have liked men but they were not homosexual.

Fucking Tod.

Piece of shit.

I was so happy with the bisexual world.

“Have you ever slept with a woman?”

After hearing the question, he turned to me and smiled at the corner of his mouth.

“Guess.”

I stared at him in disbelief. I felt sweat pouring down my back. The handsome boy saw my reaction and laughed. He turned to the bird again.

“Is this a Myna? Can it talk?”

Okay, let's change the subject. I wasn't ready to find out that Tod, who had a boyfriend, could date a woman and have sex with her.

“I want to train him, but he doesn't talk. He must be a mute bird.”

“What do you want me to say?”

“Well...”

I hadn't finished my sentence. Aoey walked out of the kitchen and looked at the two of us who were just chatting. In her mind, it might have seemed like we were flirting.

“Gen, I'm really sleepy. It's really late.” Gentle eyes looked at Tod critically. “Is it okay if I ask you to come home? I couldn't sleep with someone else in the house.”

The handsome man looked at me and smiled.

“I just got here not long ago. But if you really need to sleep...”

“Why don't you go for a walk? I wanted to be alone with Gen.”

That was Tod, who always made me nervous since the first day we met. I touched my forehead, feeling a bit of a headache. I felt like I was in a silent war between a smart, handsome man and a stupid, jealous girl.

“Gen...” Aoey called out in a serious voice.

“Do you really want me to leave?”

“Todd... please.” I wanted to scream out loud because I was in the middle of the war. The handsome man responded by laughing.

“I'm just kidding. I'll be leaving soon.”

“You can go now.”

“You're so jealous,” the handsome man caught Aoey off guard. “I like men. Don't worry about me.”

“Ah?”

“It's the same as you and Gen. You like the same sex. I like the same sex too.”

His revelation made Aoey very surprised, but I denied it because I wasn't ready to admit that I like the same sex.

"Stop the misunderstandings, Tod. Aoey and I are not lovers."

Aoey looked at me with her sad puppy eyes. It made me feel so guilty. But what should I say? Tod was still my boyfriend. Aoey still had Great as a boyfriend.

"Eat me!"

A shrill, high-pitched voice came from a cage in the corner of the room. The three of us froze. The little bird hopped into the cage and showed off its new skill.

"My Gen... Eat me now..."

I rushed to the cage immediately and hugged it tightly as if to silence the nasty bird. But the more I hugged it, the more the bird growled, gasped, and moaned.

"Eat me here... Good... Oh, Gen, good girl."

"My Aoey. You are delicious. You are delicious."

This time it was Aoey who rushed over and hugged the cage because she didn't know what to do either. Our faces turned red like tomatoes.

Damn!

There were so many things I taught him to say, but he chose to repeat these words. Tod looked at the two of us and covered his mouth with his hand in surprise. He smiled before bursting into laughter.

"You two put on quite a show in front of the bird, huh?" He laughed with satisfaction.

His laughter made me very angry. I bit my lip hard. I promised myself that the bird would be in a frying pan tomorrow. I would eat the damn bird!

"Tod, please pretend you don't hear this." I begged and almost cried. The handsome man stopped joking and stopped laughing. He understood what I was like.

"Thanks for making me laugh so much after such a bad day." He placed each of his hands on our heads. "You are both sweet. Even the bird can tell how much fun you had together."

"Oh no! I said stop. I wanted to cry."

"Okay, I'll stop. I'll leave now. And you, Aoey, don't hate me. Gen and I are a fake couple. I dated her to fool my family."

In fact, we could sit and talk about it for a long time, but it was 2 am now. It wouldn't be a good time for a long story. I would tell Aoey the next day.

Aoey was stunned and then embarrassed at what she did. She was rude to him at first. "Okay."

"I'm leaving. I might stop by sometimes. I'm not myself right now. I hope you don't mind."

"Okay, Tod." The sweet eyes were very nice now.

I said goodbye to him and waited for him to leave at the door. I felt bad and pitied him, but there was nothing I could do. Before he left, he looked at both of us and asked the last question.

"Before I go..."

"Yeah?"

"If you're not going out... What are you two?"

I thought he wanted to make fun of me for asking that question in front of Aoey. As if he wanted to see my reaction when he asked it in front of Aoey.

I gave him an angry look. I would shoot him if I had a gun.

"Best friends." Aoey replied in a neutral tone, but there was some implication of sadness in it.

"Best friends who love each other," I said. **"We're both in love. That's our relationship."**

Chapter 25

Tod stared at the bird for a while thinking of what to do with it. It was free of the handcuffs now. There were so many words! I taught it words but it chose to whine and scream in front of the handsome boy who liked to make sarcastic comments. That was so embarrassing.

Do you know that image and ego were the most important thing for Genlong?!

"Eat me."

"I will eat you!"

I shook the cage like crazy. The living thing in there flew away in panic mode. Aoey took the cage and moved it away from me as if to hide it as if she was trying to hide some medicine from a little girl.

"Don't be violent."

"You don't hear what he said in front of Tod. Good thing it was Tod. What if it was my mom or Great? Oh! I can't imagine." I grabbed my own hair angrily. "Should we let him go? Or interrogate him?"

"Just teach him something else. It's not his fault. We didn't teach him seriously enough. We just focused on something else." The sweet eyes reminded me of reality. "We did that in front of him as if we were teaching him how to speak. If you wanted to blame someone, maybe it was me who did it... too loudly."

Why did the conversation make me blush? I coughed and shrugged.

"I'll give the bird the benefit of the doubt."

"Next time I'll be silent."

"No, that's not good."

"Why?"

"I like hearing you moan."

We fell silent again. I thought our conversation had gone too far again. But I liked it. It was awkward but I liked it. It was like verbal make-out.

The sweet eyes looked at me seductively.

"Just my voice that you like?"

"Are you flirting again?"

"I haven't done anything. I'm just asking." Aoey came in behind me and wrapped her arms around my waist from behind. She put her face on my neck passionately. I had so many emotions today. At night, she was playful and seductive. At midnight, she was jealous. And now she was very submissive to me.

"I wanted to stay mad at you but now I'm so tired"

"Why are you angry with me again?" I laughed and looked at her playfully. "You've been angry with me often lately."

"If you had told me about Tod, I wouldn't have been so stupid... and I wouldn't have had to seduce you."

"So now you're saying it was my fault that you seduced and handcuffed me?"

I looked at her and she was now trying to hide her face in my neck. She wouldn't make eye contact with me. I thought she was very cute.

"How many times did you eat me today? Do you remember?"

"I don't know, but the bird clearly remembered your voice." I touched my forehead thinking. "If the bird had spoken like that when Great was here, we would be in big trouble."

"Why would he be here? I already broke up with him."

It reminded me that Aoey just fought Great at noon today.

"It's just a fight. You haven't broken up with him yet."

"Then I'll tell her to break up with me. So it's good for both of us. We don't have to worry when the bird talks again."

"The talking bird is a problem." I laughed and sighed. "Let's go to bed."

"Don't you want to eat me one more time?"

"I thought you were sleepy."

"I love you a lot."

My heart was beating fast every time I heard that. I didn't know if it could be normal when I heard it.

"Ummm."

"It was nice to hear you tell Tod that we love each other," the younger girl said as she put her face in my neck. Her voice was nasal and she started to shake. I could tell she was crying.

"What's wrong? Why are you crying? We were just talking." I sat up straight as I held her in front of me. Aoey was now kneeling on the floor looking at me. Her eyes were filled with tears but there was no sense of sadness.

I wiped the tears from her face with my finger. I looked at her with adoration and surprise.

"Why are you crying baby?"

"It's like a dream. You fell in love with me. It sounds impossible."

"Why is it impossible? I think I told you that I love you from the first time we slept together" I laughed.

She cried then and now she was crying again...

"You are too far out of my league. It is impossible for me to get you."

"What good does it do me to be praised so much? What do I have that makes me so different from you? Why do you think you don't deserve me?"

"To me... you're like a princess. It's good enough to be your friend." She continued talking. "You always excel. All the teachers liked you. You're smart and rich. You have something that shines."

"That sounds more like a Christmas tree than a person," I laughed, which made her laugh too.

"I think you also realized that you are better than other people. Did you ever imagine seeing someone like me?"

I didn't say anything because that was exactly what she had just said. I never had the idea of being interested in a childhood friend who gave me lice when we were young.

Not to mention she was a woman.

"It's like Great told you that I lost you... I didn't feel anything when we were young. After looking into your eyes when we met again, it always makes me shudder."

"Since the first day we met? I think you always said you were disgusted with people who like the same sex..."

"I just wanted to push you away..." I admitted the truth with shame. "I wasn't okay with myself feeling emotional over you. I knew how you felt about me at the time. I was really mean to you then."

"Then you have to make it up to me for making me sad."

"In this way?" I leaned in to kiss her, but Aoey pushed me away.

"I did not mean that."

"What!?" I was surprised, but I still acted cool. "How would I make it up to you then?"

"Let's have a date."

"Hmm?"

"Let's go on a date. Like other couples, holding hands, kissing and finishing it in bed. That's what I want. Can you do it for me?"

I agreed with surprise. It was such an easy trade-off. I thought it would be a bit harder. The younger girl gave me a sweet smile and walked me to bed.

"That's very nice. Let's go on a date tomorrow."

"Yes hahaha"

"You are so happy. Where do you want to go?"

"Let me think. But any place is good if I go with you."

I took her face with both hands and pulled her closer to kiss her and looked into her eyes.

"Yes, that's true. Any place is good with you."

I thought it would be easy... but there was nothing easy in this world.

Our dating plan was derailed once Great was right there in front of the room. He cried and begged Aoey to come back to him. Four of us sat and chatted in the same room.

Tod was here too. That's why there were four of us. And for safety reasons, the bird cage was hanging outside on the balcony. If I was lucky, the wind might blow the cage down to the ground floor.

He was lucky I didn't fry him!

When Tod was alone at home, he was very depressed. Aoey and I were the only two happy people looking at the other two unhappy people. What should we do now...

"I'm breaking up with Great today."

My cute kitty was angry because Great interfered with the happy day we planned since the night before. I was so upset and couldn't keep it up. I was upset with him even before he showed up to ruin our date.

"Don't do that now. You're angry and Great was so sad. I pity him."

"And you don't feel sorry for me?"

"Why did you go out with him then?"

"I did that for you."

"What are you two complaining about?"

Tod looked at both of us as if warning. He seemed to know what the story was here and wanted Aoey to tone it down.

"I want to talk to you, Great" Aoey stood up to talk to Great outside. But my brother seemed to know what was coming. He was still sitting in the same place.

"No, I want to sit here." He took his drink out of his bag and put it on the table. "I want to be in a good mood today."

I looked at a bottle of Vodka on the table and sighed. It must be my dad's alcohol collection. Now what?! Is he going to be a drama king?

"It's too early to drink, Great."

"I'll drink it now. It makes me happy."

AoeY looked at my brother angrily. The sweet-eyed girl was usually calm but now she was seething with anger. "If you want to be happy, just go home and drink. Why are you here?"

"Hey," I said in my normal tone but gave him a warning look. After he realized I was serious, he vanished into the kitchen. "I'll be right back."

I stood up and followed her into the kitchen. The soft eyes stayed there, sulking. I grabbed her cheeks to calm her down. "Ouch! That hurts."

"Why do you have to be so angry? Great is here to talk. He's not asking you to marry him."

"I'm upset. Why does it have to be upset? My way of acting is so obvious. He should understand that I don't like him and that he should leave."

The more I got to know her, the more I realized she was stubborn. I smiled and realized how stubborn she was, but she was so adorable.

"You have to fix this yourself. Don't be picky. We can have a date tomorrow."

"Can we really do this tomorrow?"

"We can go at night. I'll take you to a nice restaurant, we'll watch a movie, I'll come back and we can make love, okay?"

The sweet eyes looked at me with shining eyes. In fact, I had a class the next day. I had a lot of homework to do. I would finish my homework that

night, finish some work with my friends in the morning, and go pick her up at night. That should be fine.

Such a great busy life.

"You're smiling now. Smile at Great when you leave. Please do it for me."

"Okay." The sweet eyes lifted reluctantly but still did not go.

"Is there anything else?"

"Can I kiss you now?"

"There are people outside."

"It's exciting. Let's see if they catch us."

"Are you that naughty?"

I quickly leaned over the door to look outside. I didn't realize she was that kind of person. She liked the excitement, the mild masochism. It was a little sexy though...

"Hurry!"

I leaned into her. Sweet eyes wrapped her arms around my neck. We kissed passionately for a long time as if we weren't going to stop until someone saw us. Her naughty hands moved under my shirt and seduced me to dive deeper into this. I pushed her away as I was worried it was going to be too long. I gasped.

"You are so naughty."

"I want to take off your clothes."

When we walked out, Great and Tod looked at us but didn't say anything. I was paranoid that they might know what Aoey and I were up to. The sweet

eyes came out in a better mood. She smiled at Great when I asked her to. Now she looked like a little girl who had just received her candy. Naughty...

"Drink some water here, so you won't be too tired."

The handsome man looked at me with a smile as if he knew something. I looked at him in surprise, even Aoey was surprised.

"Why should I be?"

"I don't know. You looked happy though."

I took a glass of water from Tod, who was always a know-it-all. I drank the whole glass in one go, just to cover it up, but... the taste of the water was something different. I freaked out.

"I've finished."

Great looked at me happily. The vodka my brother brought there with him was now in my body. I knew right away that nothing would ever be normal again. Aoey looked at everyone in confusion.

"What happened?"

Great who tried to talk to Aoey now explained everything to her because he wanted to see her sweet smile.

"I'll show you what Genlong looked like in another version."

"Damn!"

It was just a glass of vodka. It was okay! I tried to stabilize my situation. I looked at everyone sitting around me. As long as I could look them in the eye, I was fine.

It was just a glass of alcohol in my body. A little later, it would come out as sweat or urine. Who would get drunk that fast? When my mom tricked me into drinking back then, it was much, much more than this. This was nothing.

I am invincible!

Everything was normal. We all chatted casually. The sky was bright outside. My myna bird was mute as usual. Everything was now under control.

I heard a tiger growl from a dark cave with a hermit coming out with a staff in his hand, wading through the water and saying to me....

The goddess!

Wait, how come I was now in a cave with a hermit? She was now wearing a green traditional Thai dress. There was a traditional Thai music band on a cliff.

Real fantasy shit! I didn't feel normal now. Where was I? What year was this? I didn't feel like myself now.

"Gen?"

A voice called out to me from my imagination. I opened my eyes to see Aoey wiping my face with a wet towel.

"Aoey... What happened? How did I end up here?" I tried to sit up but couldn't. Both of my hands were clasped above my head with a lamp above the headboard. "What is this?"

"You're so stubborn. I had to do this."

"Lock me up like a prisoner?"

"You were so drunk," Aoey paused and threw the wet towel into the bucket of water angrily. "Kiss everyone. How could you do that?!"

I stared at her blankly. I couldn't remember anything. All I could remember was a cave, a hermit, and some water... oh, and a tiger. She might really enjoy the story.

What a story!

"I can not remember anything."

"I know! Do you know how I feel?"

"I don't really remember." I bit my lip guiltily. I thought I could hold on. That was because of Great, a bastard. He used me to entertain Aoey, just to get to her.

I felt bad seeing her grumpy face, so I playfully hit her with my knee.

"Don't be angry. I can't make it up to you now. I'm tied up. Can you please free me?"

"

"No.

"My arms are sore," I said angrily. I could break the cable I had tied myself with, but I would have to explain to Mom and that would sound strange.

Since I was handcuffed with a lamp cord, I pulled her out immediately. What else could I think of when I said I was handcuffed with a lamp cord?

"I want to punish you."

"I didn't know what I was doing... I kissed Tod and Great, and you? Did I kiss you too?"

The sweet eyes grimaced and then turned red. Then, I realized that I must have done something to her too. Wait... Did I do it in front of Great and Tod?

Wait wait wait.....

"What do you think?"

"What did I do?"

Aoey rubbed her neck and showed several marks on her bare neck. She has so many kiss marks on her neck. I was shocked and felt a heat run down my face, now all over my body.

"Did I do it in front of other people?"

"Yes, but I ran to hide in the bathroom just in time."

"That's a relief." I sighed. " At least you were able to escape."

"No, you came into the bathroom and we hugged." The sweet girl unbuttoned herself, revealing teeth and kiss marks all over her body. I almost fainted. Damn! Was that in my subconscious?

"Did I do anything else?"

"Well..."

"More? Oh, please!"

"Tod and Great rushed to help me. They dragged you out of the bathroom and locked you in here."

"Great, bastard!"

I was angry when I realized that all my good image had disappeared in front of Aoey and Tod. Now I had nothing to defend.

Damn it! Son of a bitch! I'll kill him!

"I'm so sorry. I hurt you. I'll make it up to you," I said apologetically. Sweet eyes looked at me and smiled.

"How are you going to do that?"

I saw that sly smile and realized that she was planning something. Aoey, who was now half naked, because she showed me all the marks on her body. She crawled towards me slowly like a hungry tiger walking towards its prey.

"I'm asking you. How are you going to compensate me?"

"An appointment."

"We already agreed on that. That doesn't count."

"We can make another appointment then."

"No, that's boring. One date after another date."

Her small hand slipped under my shirt while I was unable to protect myself. I looked at her with a warning look as I tried to stop her evil cunning plan.

"No."

"What are you going to do now?"

"I have legs."

"Are you going to kick me?" She sat on top of me and crossed her arms.

"Ok, kick me now."

"Come on Aoey. Stop playing around. Untie me now," I said casually, but I was actually worried that she might do something. Aoey leaned down and supported herself with both of her arms, looking at me with her seductive eyes.

"No."

"If you're naughty, I won't go on a date with you."

"You won't be mad at me for long. You'll take me, I know it."

Sweet eyes slipped her hands inside my shirt and moved down to touch the most sensitive part I'd ever touched before. She touched it playfully. I bit my lip, angry and sensitive, but still I didn't give in.

"I'll be so mad at you."

"It must be so embarrassing, not being in control."

"Hey!" I screamed as his hand became more invasive. I jumped. "I'm angry now and I won't forgive you."

"You're still in control."

"Ahh.." I tried to be quiet but it seemed like I had lost against her. She pushed harder pulling my pants off my feet.

"No..."

"Tell me... tell me what to do."

Aoey was now not the same girl I knew when we were young. She was totally different from when we met again recently. She was now bossy and demanding, changing from a kitten to a wild cat. I was confused, not sure if I liked her or not now.

She kissed my belly playfully and moved down. Her hand played with my nipples. I was quiet. I tried not to express anything but my body said otherwise.

"Wait until I'm out of this, Aoey."

"I will free you whenever I want..."

Finally she did something that no one in this world would ever do to me. She went down and touched my most sensitive part with her soft lips...

That was a power game. Touching the most sensitive part was a way for me to show control. That's why I couldn't go out with just anyone. I didn't want anyone to have control over my body.

Especially that part...

"Ummmm..."

I couldn't help but moan uncontrollably. My voice gave her some excitement. Her brown eyes looked at me hungrily and whispered. "Tell me... tell me what you want me to do. You're in control."

I took a deep breath, raised my head and looked into her eyes. I looked at her with lust.

"I'll tell you."

She seemed happy, seductive, fun and more obsessed than before.

"Eat me," I ordered. I felt like a boss now. "You have to keep eating until I tell you to stop."

"I'll suck you up little by little." Aoey licked her lips before diving in...

"Don't say it. Do it until I shudder, otherwise, it'll be you!"

I pushed myself when she showed she could do it. "Oh ahhh!"

"I'll show you I can do it."

The new sensation I had never felt before was from her gentle touch. At first, I tried not to make a sound, but now I couldn't hold back any longer. I let out a moan from my throat when her lips touched my most sensitive part.

I couldn't stop myself.

I wanted to scream but my body and brain were still lost.

My temperature was rising. The heat from my body was sent everywhere. The more I moaned, the more Aoey enjoyed it. Her small hand was playfully touching everywhere. Her hands went wherever they wanted to go.

"Don't come yet... no"

The little girl begged as she pulled her shirt over her head and leaned towards me. "I want to listen to you. Now I know why you like listening to my moan."

"Aoey... please." I almost cried when my body was at its peak. I had to beg her. "Please finish me. Don't torture me."

"Let me enjoy your body." The smaller girl whispered in my ear and bit it.
"I love every part of you."

"I love you too Aoey," I said like a drunk. My brain was all over the place.
"I love you so much I could die."

"Well... I'm happy that you love me so much."

I made long, deep eye contact with those brown eyes.

"Oh my Gen, you should know that in this world, there is no one I would love more than you." She reached into a drawer next to the bed and pulled out the key. "After you're done, it's your job to tell me how much you love me."

"Okay. Untie me then."

"...."

"I'll tell you how much I make love with you all night long."



Chapters
26. 25

Chapter 26

Vodka, Myna, and wives...

Three things I tried to stay away from in this life and the next. I woke up almost at dawn. The sky was still dark, waiting for the sun to shine. I looked at the person lying next to me. She was exhausted like me. How could Aoey and I end up here?

Not only was I awake, but Aoey, who hugged me all night, now moved and smiled at me. Her eyes were shining and full of love.

"How do you wake up so early? Why did you look at me like that? Are you angry with me for what happened?"

I glared at her. She wouldn't let me go unless I did what she wanted.

"Knew well?"

"I couldn't get enough of you."

I saw her joy. This was not the same Aoey. She was a totally different woman, another version that no one will ever see except me. How good was that? It seemed like there was also another version of myself that I never knew. And only Aoey could see this.

It was this love... we became someone we never knew just because of this one person, this one person...

"Why do you love me, Aoey?"

I wanted to know why. I never asked her why she loved me and was obsessed with me. The other men who pursued me did so because of my

looks and wealth, but those were external factors.

Ummm....we are all judged by the outside. I assumed Aoey would also look from the outside first.

"I don't know. There was never a reason. I knew that when I looked at you, being with you made me happy. Do you know why you love me?"

I paused as I thought about it. I don't know why I love her. We were friends when we were young, but once we met again, my heart became very unstable.

Eye contact, being with her, made me happy.

I felt the same way...

"Umm... now I understand."

"Do you understand what?"

"That we love each other."

That was love. I just felt love. I didn't need to look for a reason. There were so many handsome men chasing me, but it didn't make me feel the same way. With her, I felt full. I felt sensitive. Everything was right.

"If I were a man, would you love me the same way, Gen?"

"I don't know." I rubbed her soft arm gently and moved down to her curvy waist like an explorer. "I like that you're a little girl, with beautiful eyes. You have something those men don't have. But I never looked at other women because none of them looked as beautiful as me."

"I'm not as beautiful as you."

"Then I have no reason to love you. I just love you."

"Then we have the same reason." The smaller girl flipped me over onto my other side and got on top of me. She leaned down and kissed me on the

chin. "I just love you."

We simply love each other.

That's all.

"How are you, Tod? Are you feeling better now?"

I went out to see Tod at his university. He was in a very good mood because of what just happened. He was in love and most importantly...

9 out of 10.

Aoey told me my score in the morning, which surprised me. It made me wonder what made my score go up so much.

"Because it wasn't you who was doing it. I was doing it too. It was actually a 10 but I didn't want you to be so proud."

What a cunning and cheeky girl... But I successfully achieved a near-full score.

When I walked into her faculty with the handsome boy, all eyes were on us, but I was used to it.

I was beautiful...

"It's good that I study hard. It keeps me busy, so I don't have time to think about it. But I can't forget it... I saw Singh and the new girl going to the beach together."

"How did you see that? Were you a shellfish there?" I asked sarcastically.

The handsome man laughed and shook his head when he heard my sarcastic comment. "Your beauty was gone when you made that kind of joke."

Sometimes I wanted to kill this guy. I was here to check on him!

"I saw it on their Facebook. They seemed in love... It seemed like they had been together for a long time even though we just broke up."

"Did he cheat you?"

"I don't know."

"How did you meet?"

"He practice sports..."

The short story was that Singh joined Tod's basketball game. They both had the right chemistry from the game, football, and then the relationship developed. They both knew each other's stories. Singh told Tod about his family and how tough it was. He didn't have money to study. His parents separated while Singh lived with his grandmother.

Tod felt sorry for him, so he lent him some money...

Wait!

"Was there any money involved? Don't you think he was a con artist?"

The handsome man immediately rejected the idea when he first heard about it. He said angrily and refused to be fooled. "I'm not stupid."

"Love blinds us."

"And you think the reason Aoey is with you is because you benefit her or something?"

Now it was me who strongly refused. Aoey would never do that. It was certain. "Don't compare Aoey to a pimp like Singh. Aoey never asked me for anything."

"But you are supporting her financially. If you weren't rich, do you think Aoey would be with you?"

"Tod!"

"It's the same thing."

"No, it's not," I replied. I got really angry. It was a waste of time being there. "Don't compare your cheap love with my love. I'm not stupid."

"I'll see how smart a person like you will be. If you find out that the people you love with all your heart are with you only for your money—"

I glared at the man. I knew he was so sensitive now, but it was too much. He never crossed the line and attacked my love. "Then be with yourself. If I'm stupid, at least she's still with me. Unlike you... how much did you pay? He still left you!"

I walked back to my condo in a bad mood but... love made me happier. I saw sweet eyes working seriously on her computer. She could be a wild and sexy cat or she could also be a serious person.

When I was upset, I usually relaxed by taking a bath, but to my surprise, just one look at Aoey working, now my bad mood simply disappeared.

Beautiful...

"What are you doing? You look so serious."

Aoey looked up from her computer and made eye contact with me and sent me a sweet smile. "I'm writing a new novel."

"What is it about?"

"Our love."

"Hey?"

"I'm telling the story of our love, but I added some of my imagination. It's good."

The littlest girl smiled so widely. I could feel happiness in her. I walked over and sat behind her. I gave her a hug from behind and smelled the nice clean soap from her.

"Are you telling my story?"

"Yeah."

"Am I a man or a woman?"

"You're a man, of course... You're my love. My Gen. My original plan was to write it just for you as a love letter, but now we're already in love, so I'm writing it for other people to read now." The sweet eyes kissed me on the cheek before returning to her screen. "Let me finish this. I need to concentrate."

"You kick me."

"I'm shy when someone is reading my work."

The sweet little girl was now writing here and there. I walked towards the fridge. Although I told Tod that I was sure about Aoey, to be honest, I was shocked by what Tod said.

If she wasn't pretty.

If I didn't have money...would she be interested in me?

"Gen."

"Huh?"

I picked up a glass of water and drank it while thinking about so many things in my head. Aoey, who was now typing on her computer, said casually.

"I already broke up with Great."

What!? Water splashed out of my mouth. I could almost see a rainbow if there was sunlight. Aoey looked at me and laughed when she saw my wet face.

"What happened? Why do you have to be so surprised?"

"Did you break up with Great? How is my brother now?"

"He didn't listen. I said I wanted to break up with him. He just hung up right away. I think he didn't want to hear it either. He might not be too interested in me anyway. We never held hands, we never kissed. It was like the love of kindergarten children."

I listened to her cold voice telling me the story with confusion. The sweet eyes had so many angles, some were so cute and sweet, and some were so cold.

She was charming and terrifying at the same time.

"Did you tell him the reason?"

"Yeah."

"Which?"

"I have someone else."

My brother might go crazy now. He was the youngest of us and was never disappointed by anything. He must be crazy at home and talking to my mom. Now I started to worry about him. I should go home and check on him.

"Did he ask you who he is?"

"Yeah."

"What did you say?"

Sweet eyes looked at me seductively. Two brown eyes looked at me playfully.

"Guess."

I was worried about Great and I also wanted to know what she knew. I drove home to see my mother pacing in a circle, looking very worried. I figured there must be some big problem.

"Where is Great, Mom?"

"He's gone crazy upstairs. He's playing the drum so loud. Dad's not home."

Great was my mom's most beloved son. I was my dad's most beloved daughter. When Great did something wrong, dad would punish him with rules and punishments. He was afraid of my dad, but his mom spoiled him.

I climbed the stairs to the sound of the drum. When the door opened, Great paused for a moment before continuing.

"This is too strong."

"Aoey broke up with me!"

I closed my eyes and listened to him like a child crying. All his life, he left other girls because he was handsome, rich, and had a car. This time, he was left by someone who didn't care about that, and he went crazy.

What could I say? Aoey's other option was better. I was beautiful, rich, and intelligent.

But I shouldn't be proud in this situation.

“Your relationship wasn't moving forward. Breaking up might be a good option. It's good for you too.”

“But I like her. She's the one I couldn't even touch. I just wanted to be with her. At least being her boyfriend was like we were connected by an invisible thread.”

What was that nonsense?

“Now she cut the invisible thread. Move on and get a new girlfriend. That's all. Whoever you want, just spend your money. We have plenty.”

“Can you stop talking like it's easy? If you like someone enough, you won't say things like this,” Great said. “But what do you know? You can only love yourself.”

“Don't look down on me. You don't know everything about me. If they leave me, I won't be crazy like you. If the girl finds out you're misbehaving, it will only confirm her decision. I can tell you this because I've dumped so many guys before. That wet trash.”

My little brother threw down his drumsticks and walked towards me pleading. “You're close to Aoey. Can you please talk to her? I've been thinking about what happened. Actually, nothing had happened. I just tried to touch her once. That wasn't a big deal, not big enough to break up with me.”

“Let me ask you something for real... do you really think you get along with her? Or are you just pushing it?”

He was reluctant to answer that. I felt guilty trying to talk to my brother about breaking up with the woman I love.

Was that confusing?

“I don't care. I like her. I love her. I really want to know who she is, to date her.”

“Didn't she tell you?”

I felt relieved. I knew that if she really told him, he would react differently to me because I was his big thorn in the side.

“Yes, she did, but I don't believe her.”

“What did she say?”

“She is dating a woman.”

Now my heart dropped to my ankle. I wanted to look normal but I knew I wasn't.

“What do you think?”

I barely made eye contact with him. Great didn't notice anything and shook his head.

“I don't believe her. It's an excuse I couldn't understand. She can go out with anyone except a woman. It's just an insult. If I only knew who she was, I would beat her up.”

“No, you won't.” I looked at him with contempt. Uncle Somkit, my father's assistant, would never hit me. But what I said made him even angrier.

“Why not! I don't care if it's a woman. Whoever steals from the one I love, I'll beat them all up, men or women. I don't care.”

My little brother walked over to the drumsticks and picked them up off the ground. He went back to the drum and started beating them madly again. I looked at him and sighed in concern.

I drove back to my condo.

What a headache!

I drove around worrying about some stupid thing. I barely had time to study. As I waited for the elevator, long arms wrapped around me from behind. I almost screamed.

“Cuckoo.”

“Aoey... I'm scared,” I rubbed my face nervously. The sweet eyes smiled at me. In her hands, she carried so many shopping bags.

“Are you here for the shopping?”

“Yeah, I saw you here, so I snuck in behind you. When you're scared, you look so cute.” It was so different from her serious work mode this morning, from when she was so cold talking about Great. Now she looked like a kitten playing with me, wanting me to take her in.

“Don't give me that sweet look.”

“Don't you love me?”

“What should I say?” I laughed and nodded, my face flushed. “I love you like crazy.”

“My heart beat so fast hearing you say that. I'm hot.”

The sweet eyes were playful and cheerful. She was so direct and open about it. Sometimes I felt like she was a man who talked about sex so openly.

“Don't be too lustful.”

“I'm just like that with you. I want to do that somewhere other than the condo. Should we go to the parking lot?”

I wanted to faint upon hearing her plan. I thought she was joking, but she changed the direction of the elevator to the parking lot. I was so confused, but I still followed her easily.

“Hey, I think...”

“Come on! Let's do it. We're here. Where's your car?”

“Are you serious? I thought you were joking.”

“Then why are you following me?”

“What if someone sees us?” I smiled at her but she responded by jumping happily and answered casually.

“Then we stop and continue when they're gone.” She was so cute.

I was so in love with her. No matter what I did, I fell head over heels for her. I tried to hold back from going all in, but it seemed like my head and heart weren't cooperating.

“You look so happy, Aoey.”

“Yes, it's been a long time since I felt happy like this. I don't remember the last time I felt happy. It could be when you came to kindergarten. You took away my happiness ever since.”

“So you were obsessed with me?”

“I admired you when you were so angry that I gave you lice and I ran to a barbershop and asked them to shave my head but my mom wouldn't let me.” I laughed and remembered the story. She seemed to have been obsessed with me for a long time. It was strange that when we met again, I was also obsessed with her. How had that happened?

She turned to look at me when I stayed silent. We made eye contact before she smiled at me and waved her hand around.

“Why are you looking at me like that? I'm shy.”

“You make me happy. You're like my happy vitamin.”

“I can't wait. Let me hug you.”

I pulled her hand and pushed her behind a pillar, to hide from the people. I looked around for cameras to make sure no one could see us. I kissed her passionately.

I kissed her passionately enough to get started. I pushed her away when I thought it was enough just for fun.

“I think...” I said reluctantly, “I think I'm lost with you. What did you do to me?”

“So good. I don't have anything I'm good at. I'm only good at this, maybe it will help us get closer.”

“Silly! I don't like you because of sex.”

“So why do you love her?”

The low voice that interrupted us startled me. It was a man's voice. A man I knew all too well.

I slowly turned around to see Great standing there with his fist clenched in pain. Aoey and I weren't prepared for this. There was no escape now.

“Are you in love because you both have breasts? You're sick!”

Translator's Interruption:

Oh God! Their situation might also lead something like what happened to kawee in 'Us'.

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Chapter 27

The three of us were in a very awkward situation. Great looked at us disgustingly. The worst of it all was the disappointed look in his eyes that he sent me. It cut me off with pain. I couldn't run away from this. The truth was the truth.

I stood in front of him and sighed.

“We're just in love. We're not sick.”

“Bitch!” Great screamed like a maniac. “You two are women, what part isn't sick? Men are supposed to be with women. What do you see when you're both naked?”

“Great, please. You lose.”

“How can I lose if you don't respect the rule? You stab me in the back.”

I glared at him. Damn! My brother said I cheated. I always won, but being told I cheated was too much.

“Great... Please, this is the truth,” Aoey said coldly. Her tone was so distant, so different from when she spoke to me before. The gentle eyes crossed her arms and looked at him with a feeling of emptiness, no expression, nothing there.

“Do you want me to accept that you are in love with my sister? You are the one who agreed to be with me. Why did you do this to me?”

“You can't stop loving. You can't even break up with me. How can you expect me to stop loving Gen and love you?”

“Why did you go out with me in the first place?”

“Just to get revenge on Gen,” Aoey said expressionlessly. Great’s eyes were filled with rage. “Gen said that if she saw anyone, it should be you. So I chose you. That’s all.”

“Pleas na oe stop, Aoey.” I told Aoey to stop talking. The more she talked, the worse the situation became.

“Okay.”

Aoey stopped talking when I told her. That pissed Great off even more when he realized that I was the one in control and he also realized that he was just a pawn in the game.

“Aoey... how could you do this to me? You treat me like a dog, even though I love you more than anything.”

“What did I do to deserve your love? We never held hands. We just talked. Why do you feel so strongly about me?”

“I just like you. Why do I need more reasons?”

“Yeah, Gen doesn't have to do anything. I just look at her and I'm crazy.”

“Please stop. Why do you keep hurting me?” Great screamed so loud in the parking lot. I didn't like being the center of attention, especially something like this. It was embarrassing.

“Please go home, Great. Let's talk at home.”

“I'm not going anywhere.” Great turned to Aoey and glared at her angrily. “All along I respected you, I never did anything to you, but not today, not anymore.”

My brother took a big step towards Aoey slowly. I looked at him and made an assessment of how I should handle him.

“Great... back off!”

“Even if you don’t like other people touching you, today I’ll do whatever I want. If you can touch Gen, I’ll do the same so you can get used to me too.” Great charged towards Aoey as expected.

As soon as my brother touched her, Aoey screamed so loud as if she had been hit with a hot iron. He immediately let go of her and took a step back. He must have been surprised by her scream.

“Aoey.... Aoey, are you okay?”

“Great, you're just like my stepdad. You act just like my stepdad did.”

My little brother started to get nervous. I quickly ran over and hugged her. Aoey pushed me hard and screamed like crazy.

What was wrong with her? What was I supposed to do?

“Gen, I haven't done anything.”

“Go home, Great ”

“Gen...”

“I told you to go home.”

He nervously walked away when he was told to go home. And I pulled Aoey close to me and let her cry into my shoulder, at least to make the crying quieter. I held her for a while to calm her down.

“It's me, Gen... Aoey.”

“Im dirty...”

Now people started to gather around us. I looked at everyone to get away.

“Move away.”

It worked. Everyone walked backwards but still turned around to watch from afar.

Aoey cried for more than 10 minutes. Her face was full of tears. I thought she might be dehydrated because of this.

Once she started to calm down, I spoke to her calmly.

“It’s okay, Aoey. I’m here. Let’s go home.”

“I want to take a bath,” Aoey started to be herself again after not saying anything for a while. “Can you take me upstairs?”

“Can you walk? Do you want me to carry you?”

“Can you?”

“I watched a Korean drama. You’re tiny. I should be able to do that. Wanna try?”

The sweet eyes nodded and felt a little better. I carried her on my back and walked towards the elevator. I didn’t know how she felt at that moment, but she seemed to like riding me like a horse. “You’re so cool now, Gen.”

“Carry you on my back? Did you see how people are looking at us? Some are laughing.”

“Do you care about other people more than me?”

“If I did, I wouldn’t be holding you. I’ve never done this to anyone or let anyone do this to me. You’re the first.”

“It seems I’m the first in everything.”

I laughed. It was true that she was my first everything. Did I spoil her? But it felt good to carry her like that.

I felt like I was being hugged.

I felt loved.

“You should be proud that no one in this world could do this to me.” I paused before asking, “It wasn’t an accident that Great was there, was it?”

She didn't say anything, but that was the clearest answer she could give. Aoey planned for Great to be there. Otherwise, she wouldn't ask me to have sex in the parking lot. I figured she wanted Great to know, so we wouldn't have to explain ourselves.

She could be crazy sometimes.

“Are you mad at me? Hit me if you want.”

“Love makes me blind and forgive you.”

“You're a copycat. That's my line.” The smaller girl wrapped herself around me so tightly. It seemed like it made her feel better now. She scared me half to death. “Gen, marry me.”

“What?!” I laughed and turned my face towards her, which was now resting on my shoulder. “Really?”

“How can I live without you?”

“How did you live then?”

“For me... you are my oxygen, my happy vitamin, my everything. If I don't have you, I'll die.”

“You're a sweet talker.”

It felt so good that I almost exploded.

Over the past few years, I searched for love like other people, but I always came up empty. No man ever fulfilled me. But the most shocking thing was that a woman, who I was carrying on my back, fulfilled me. And she became obsessed with me as much as I became obsessed with her.

“Let’s wait until we both graduate and if we’re still together, let’s get married.”

“Really?” Her cheerful voice surprised me. We were now in front of the condominium. I started to get tired even though she was a little girl.

“Yes, now get down. We're here.”

“It's home. It's our home.” The sweet eyes wrapped both of her legs around my waist like a monkey refusing to get off. “Let's get married and live just the two of us.”

“Yes.” I only said yes because I knew we couldn't really get married. We could only be together and live together.

I didn't know how my family would react. Great was shocked by what had happened. I wondered how far he would go with this. My mom might know everything now.

“Why are you so quiet?”

“Oh, nothing. Can you get down now? You're starting to get heavy.”

“I'll get off but on one condition,” the sweet eyes told me sweetly.

“Give me a shower.”

“Ha?”

“This will be another first story of yours. Give me a shower, please, please.” She was so sweet I smiled and sighed.

“Just a shower then, nothing more than that.”

As soon as I said that, sweet eyes whispered in my ears with her sexy voice. “Let's see if you can hold on.”

This line again...

I seriously researched her illness after what happened. Although I had never done anything like that. I usually asked someone to do it for me. But I took this matter seriously, contacted people, did research, and called the doctor for an appointment.

Apart from that, I also had one more appointment...

I crossed my arms, crossed my legs, and looked at the person in front of me, Tod, who disappeared from me for 3 days. And now he was back and acting like nothing had happened.

How could he do that? Did he think I would just let it go?

"I'm sorry."

Oh!... I didn't expect that.

"What is this? So unexpected." I tried to act indifferent even though I had already forgiven him.

"I was so unstable back then. I reacted too strongly when you said something sensitive. I just didn't want to admit that I was tricked. It was very embarrassing to realize that I was tricked. I'm an intelligent person who was tricked."

I looked at him with understanding. I never lost to anyone. It was unacceptable to be called stupid. It was painful. But he gave up too quickly.

"I know. I understand. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't angry. But I understand how you feel. I'll forgive you."

"Thank you."

"Is that all you want to talk about?"

"I've been apologizing since day one, but I didn't want to call you. But now there's something I need to talk to you about."

"What is it?" I took a sip of water.

"Your mom called to ask if you and I are really dating."

"What?" I almost choked on the water. I wanted to act normal, but he surprised me. Wait, I need to calm down.

"When did she call you?"

"This morning."

My mom seemed to know about me. I had no doubts about who told her about it. Great was always a spoiled brat. I knew something would happen, but it had been a few days and things seemed calm. I thought Great would get over this and not make a big deal out of it.

He was still a kid anyway. Damn it!

Then messages came to my phone.

Aoey: Gen... your mom is here at the condo.

Aoey: I don't know what to do.

Aoey: Now she is playing with the bird.

I jumped immediately. Tod followed right behind me, although he didn't know what it was about.

"What happened?"

"My mom is at my condo," I panicked. "She's playing with my talking bird."

Damn!

Chapter 28

Tod and I were now in front of my room. For the first time, I felt that inside the room was really scary. What if my mom hit me when she came in because she found out I was dating a woman and I covered it up with a man?

A woman who was also dating another woman...

But Mom didn't know about that. I had no idea how much my mother knew about me. But if she was already there, that meant she knew enough. Now Mom would know that Aoey lived there with me.

That damn bird!

“Do you think that damn bird has already told my mom about Aoey and me?” I said nervously. The handsome boy looked at me and smiled nervously as well.

“Have you ever taught the bird any new words since then?” he asked.

“I have so many things to do in life. How would I have time to teach the bird?”

“Well, what about the time when you have sex then? The bird can even moan like you.”

“Tod!”

I wanted to faint. I could never win an argument with that foul-mouth. But now was not the time for that. I needed to see my mom in that room first. I looked at him and sighed.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

“Can you kiss a girl?”

“Ha?”

“This is a good time to make it up to me after you made me angry.”

After talking about the plan, I opened the door and made out with Tod. Kissing a boy was very different from kissing a little girl like Aoey. I had to stand on my tiptoes and pull his neck towards me. His short mustache around his lips tickled me, and I could smell the light citrus perfume from him.

Unlike Aoey, who mostly smelled like clean soap.

Our kisses were like a hot young couple who just agreed to take their relationship to the next level.

“Oh... you’re here too.” Even though we fully knew she was there, we had to pretend we didn’t know. I acted surprised and tried to fix my shirt, which I had just unbuttoned, and my hair, which I had just shaken to look sexy, to look proper again.

She looked at both of us and raised an eyebrow.

“Yes, I’m here, and Aoey is here too.”

My mom gestured to Aoey, who was now staring at me with a sharp, fierce gaze. Her eyes were much scarier than my mother’s. But what could I do now? I had to trick my mother first.

Then I would make it up to her...

“Why don’t you call me before you show up here?”

“If I called first, I wouldn’t see something like that.” Her voice wasn’t angry. She shrugged as if it wasn’t a big deal. “Kissing is fun.”

“Mom!” I called out in shock. I intentionally wanted her to see that, but I didn’t have to bring it up like that. “Why are you here?”

“I want to visit the condo I bought. Can't I be here?”

From the look in her eyes, I could tell she was testing me and wanted to see how far I could go. I put on a big kissing show just for her.

I had to do my best. I started the lie, and I could go all the way! “Yes, you can, but you should at least tell me.”

“Do you bring Tod here often?”

She changed the subject immediately. She tried to relate it to her question. It might be difficult because bringing a man home was not me at all. But I started the lie!

“From time to time.”

“Just like today,” Mom smiled and looked at Aoey. “Is Aoey the one who visited you at home last time?”

“Of course. You remember her, right? You wanted to ask where she got her plastic surgery done; you wanted to get it done too.” I walked over to Aoey, hugged her arm, and rested my head on her shoulder like a close friend.

“You're still here. I thought you were going home.” I walked in and saw her working alone on her computer.

“She came back here. Now you can go.”

“Really?”

Mom and I were silent. Aoey didn't look me in the eyes. It seemed like I was in the corner, and Mom was the winner.

I hated losing, even to my mother. But I didn't know how much she knew.

“Do you have a bird too?” She changed the subject again and turned to the myna, who was now in a small cage. She gave him a look of pity.

“It was Uncle Somkit's.”

“It's a big bird in a very small cage. Poor thing. Do you know that this kind of bird needs a bigger cage, so it can grow and lay eggs or build a house for itself?”

“You're a know-it-all,” I said jokingly. My mom crossed her arms over her chest and raised her eyebrows.

“I once had one, and he could talk.”

“ ... ”

“I didn't know you had a bird like this.”

“You never asked,” my playful mom still talked about the myna. “Do you know what I taught him?”

I wanted my mom to forget about Aoey, so I kept talking to her about whatever she wanted to talk about: world economy, Barack Obama, Prayuth Chan-ocha, gold price, gasoline price. Whatever!!

“What was that?” She smiled and said to me.

“Come here Aoey.”

“ ... ”

“My Aoey. Delicious... oh, that's good.”

I almost fainted, but luckily Tod was by my side. He caught me in time, otherwise, I would have hit my head on the ground. My mom stood there trying not to laugh. She was happy to see me lose my mind. She enjoyed making fun of me and stood still making the bird sound.

“What happened? Did you faint? So sensitive. Why didn't you get so scared when you taught the bird to talk then?”

“I'm sorry. I couldn't stop the bird. It's so talkative.”

“Don't faint. Sit down and talk to me.” My mom looked at Tod and Aoey. “Both of you wait outside; I want to talk to Gen alone,” she said to Tod and Aoey casually.

Aoey and Tod left the room. Only my mom and I were left. In my life, I never lost anything, but there was something in life that I had to give up.

1. Aoey's eyes
2. My mom

My mom was playful. She had fun teasing me, especially when I was in situations like that.

“How are you, my love? Were you really about to faint?”

“Why didn't you tell me you knew everything?”

“I wanted to see how far you could go. You also lied to your brother. How did you end up like this?”

Her voice wasn't angry, but it was still playful. She wanted to tease me to see my reaction more than anything. “Okay, go ahead, Mom. How's Great?”

“Devastated. Teenage things.”

“Aren't you here to lecture me?” I said and looked at the ground. “I'm hurt, Great, your dear son.”

“You are my daughter too. Don't say that. I spoiled him because he is the youngest. But I love you just the same. I want to know everything. I won't judge. I want to know everything from you.”

“What did he say?”

“That you stole his girlfriend.”

I hunched my shoulders down. It really was my fault. It sounded weird that a sister would steal a girlfriend from a brother. And now I was telling the story to my mom. “It's my fault. I really did steal his girlfriend.”

My mom sat back on the couch and looked at me. I didn't know where to start the story, so she helped me.

“When did you two like each other?”

I sat down and answered quietly. “I'm not sure.”

“Let me rephrase it again then. When did you start liking Aoey?”

I looked at her embarrassed.

Damn! Did I really have to tell my mom my love story?

“From the first time we met, I fell in love with her.”

That was the beginning of my story. After that, the story just flew out of me: how I felt, the timeline. I told her how I felt about Aoey. She nodded but didn't convey any judgment, just listened to the end.

“Because you were tight-lipped, you and your brother ended up fighting just now. If you had told your brother how you felt, Aoey wouldn't have dated Great, and Great wouldn't be like her.”

I felt guilty when she said that. She was right about everything.

“Yeah.”

“Oh... my Gen, who always wins. You look so sad. Do you feel guilty?”

What she said suggested that I was losing. I wouldn't let that happen.

“I'm not losing. I don't feel guilty. She's mine.” I said firmly. “She's mine.”

“Delicious.”

“Mother!”

My mom covered her mouth and laughed as if she enjoyed repeating the damn bird. “At least you learn to love someone. You have feelings too. At least I can be proud of having raised a human being, not a piece of rock. As for him, he needs to learn to lose too. He can't win everything.”

“Is he seriously injured?”

“I feel sorry for him.” She used to spoil her youngest son, but not today.

“He changes women as often as he changes clothes. He slept with them and then left them. Many families came to me for compensation. I paid a lot for that. This will teach him a lesson.”

“Umm.” I was surprised that my mom didn't give much importance to me who hurt Great.

"One thing I don't have to worry about is that Great knew how to use condoms, so I don't have to worry about him getting anyone pregnant. He's enjoying his teenage life to the fullest. I never thought it would be her sister who would teach him a lesson."

She seemed to really mean it when she said that. I saw how cool she was and wondered how Mom spoiled him. But it turned out that she was judged by him too.

"But this is his first broken heart. Will he be okay?"

"When he was in high school, he also fought with his friends over women. But he won because his father supported him. He sent someone to beat them up. But now it's you, he loves you too much to do something like that. I think it's a good lesson for him. It will make him grow. The opponent is better than him in every aspect and she's a woman too."

"I'll talk to Great and explain to him that Aoey and I have been in love for a while now. But I'll wait for him to calm down a bit. It should be fine if I

apologize to him."

Mom looked at me in surprise, she was confused. "What?!"

"Will you apologize to people? Do you know how to do that?"

"What do you think I am? I was wrong, I'll apologize." I didn't understand why mom was so surprised by doing something so normal that other people do.

"Aoey is good. She changed you for the better. You never give up on anyone and you never apologize to anyone. It's not so bad to date a woman. Now I started to like her."

"Why are you so cool today?" I looked at her in surprise. She not only agreed with what happened but also understood me. "How do you handle it so casually? I'm dating a woman."

"As long as it's love, I'm fine with that. But just be considerate. I'm open to anything. You can talk to me about anything. Ah... I'm so thirsty."

Mom looked at me when I stood up and poured her a glass of water. Was she trying to control me? She liked to boss me around. Like when Aoey had told me I got 6 out of 10.

"You're nicer now."

"Isn't that a good thing?"

"Softer too."

"Enough! Mom."

"You're dating Aoey now, but what about Tod? You're dating two people at the same time? Are you both okay with this too? Oh wow! My daughter can control people."

I waved my hand to stop her imagination before confessing.

"That was a show. I went out with Tod to cheat on you. Tod also wanted me to cover for him from his family. We both wanted to get away from our family."

She didn't seem to care.

"You and Aoey have already had sex, right?"

"Mother!" I felt all the blood in my body rush to my face.

"Do you do it or she does it to you?"

"Mom!!!" I screamed and she laughed out loud.

"Why are you making so much noise? It's natural. I assume from what the bird told me, the answer is yes."

"I want to faint." I was about to collapse but my mom grabbed me by the neck.

"You can't escape all your problems by passing out, especially with me. I was just asking. I told you I wanted to talk to you about everything."

She's not there! She couldn't be nosy about that!!! I touched my own cheeks and breathed heavily. My mom put her hand on my head and laughed.

"You're cute."

"I've never said that before. You only say those things to Great."

"He's the youngest and his sister is so perfect that he can't compete. I don't want him to be a problem child and your dad loves you more than anything." Mom sighed and covered her mouth to whisper. "To be honest, I think I love you more, but I have to prove to Great that I love him more. It's a show."

I looked at her and laughed. I thought she was cute saying that. She loved us both the same, but she was a fun mother. She said she loved me more

when she was with me. When she was with Great, she told him she oved him more too. She wanted to be our heroine and Dad was a villain.

But she was the real villain...

"I should go now. I have to play cards. My friends are waiting for me." She stood up to leave. She was so cool. She didn't complain about anything and she understood me too. This was unexpected. I stood up and started complaining to her.

"You can't be too understanding. You should tell me that you don't agree with me dating a woman and that I also lied to you about Tod and kicking me out to look for my biological mother." I complained like a TV drama.

"I'm your biological mother. The money belongs to your father. I only know how to spend."

"Mom, I feel bad for Great. You have to at least be angry and throw things at me. You have to be angry that your daughter and son are fighting." I imagined the scenes in my head. "You have to plan to take me away from Aoey. Kidnap Aoey in a warehouse and force her to say in a recorded video that she will leave me alone. Force me to flee abroad. Laugh at our catastrophe and say whatever I want, I will be able to accomplish it."

"You don't seem like a soap opera lover."

"Great could commit suicide."

"If that's the case, let it be."

"Mom, how can you be okay with this?! I couldn't even feel good about myself when I realized that I like women."

I told her what I thought because it was too easy. I wasn't sure how to handle this.

It was too easy. My life shouldn't be this easy. I rejected Aoey all the time because I was worried about my family. I wouldn't have done that if I knew my mom would be that easy.

“Can’t I be okay with this? You’re in love.” She shrugged. “You’re both still young. It’s good that you have a friend. When you meet the right guy, you’ll break up. I know this because I was like that when I was young too.”

"What?!"

"When I met your father, I was a normal woman again. You don't have any plans to stay together until you're old, do you?"

I paused because I couldn't answer that question. It would be strange if women were together until we were old. Everyone would be the same again. It would only be a short time.

A life experience...

"Yes, I don't have any plans for that long."

"So, I'm fine. You'll get married and have children someday. Now you just learn to love. Love between women is not for eternity."

"I feel sad mom."

"Why are you sad? It's normal. In the end, you or Aoey will want a family of your own. It's very normal."

"But some stay together until they get married."

"Have you ever heard of anyone staying together until they die?"

"There may be some, but we've never heard of them."

"I think deep down you also know that eternal love doesn't exist."

How did she convince me? I now thought that between Aoey and me, the relationship was superficial. If I met the right guy, I could get away from her. And if Aoey found the right one, she might be ready to be touched too.

Someday... Aoey would walk away from my life and live a normal life. We probably wouldn't be together forever.

That was life.

After my mom came back, Tod left. Now Aoey and I were finally left alone. The sweet eyes looked at me a little annoyed. I guessed it was because of the passionate kiss between Tod and me. I had to act innocent and let her talk first.

"What is it like to kiss a man?"

There she was. The sweet eyes that were always soft and gentle like a kitten, but now they were growling at me. This kitten was ready to scratch my face with her paw when it came to jealousy.

"It's strange, but kind of nice. He was rough on the chin because of his mustache. Tod is taller, so I had to look up and pulled his neck towards me..."

"Shut up!"

"What?"

"I said shut up!"

The sweet eyes pulled me in for a kiss and bit my lip once and pushed me away. The moody feeling contrasted so much with his beautiful face. It made me laugh.

"Are you a dog? You bit my lip."

"Gen..." Aoey hit me hard in the middle of my back. I started to get angry and gave her a fierce warning look.

"That hurts."

"I'm jealous." Her direct confession made my anger disappear immediately. I was feeling passionate now, so I pulled her towards me despite her resistance.

"I wanted to trick my mom."

"You didn't have to do so much... French kissing and everything. What if I do it too? Is that okay with you?" The sweet eyes described the scene like when she wrote her book.

"I take a boy into the room. The man pushes me onto the bed..."

"He unbuttoned my pants. He touched my entire body with his lips and slid his finger in..."

"Stop!"

I covered her mouth immediately. Okay, I understood how she feels now. That was quite a scene. Nasty kitty!

"I'm just describing the scene and you feel it. What if you saw it? I was angry but I couldn't say anything because your mom was here. I wanted to bite you, pull your hair, bite you again and again and again.arrrggg!"

I ran up to her and bit her shoulder. She was so angry, but she screamed and gave up.

"You're cheating. I have to bite you, not the other way around."

"Would you stop being angry if you bite me?"

"Yes."

I let her sit down. This time she bit my shoulder, but I didn't scream because I didn't want to show any weakness. The sweet eyes bit harder when she saw that I had no reaction to it. I didn't show any pain and shrugged.

"Are you happy now?"

"No."

"What do you want now?"

"Kiss you."

I always lost to her... I had to make it up to her. She had fun touching me here and there, despite her demand for just a kiss.

Finally, I pushed her away.

I didn't want to put on another show for the bird. He might repeat it somewhere else. I had to change the subject.

"Was my mom nice to you today?"

"Yes, she was very kind. She even smiled when she heard the bird say that." Aoey always got embarrassed when we talked about that. I understood that.

That damn bird! He perfected it. Even I was convinced it sounds like Aoey.

"Yes, my mom is more open-minded than I thought. Even though you broke the heart of her most beloved son, she didn't do anything wrong."

"That's what I thought too. Your mom is kind, generous, open, and very mature. She's so different from you." Sweet eyes made a casual comment that annoyed me. I gave her an annoyed look for criticizing me. She gave me a sweet smile back. "I'm sorry."

How come I was so bad in everyone's eyes?...

"My mom is not a serious person. I was also surprised. I never thought she would be open about this too."

Most of all, I was very surprised to learn that Mom dated a woman before my dad. She might have been worried about me for a while that I might be a heartless bitch.

A selfish and heartless bitch...

Is this how my mom looked at me? And Aoey too?

"This means we can be together now, right? So we can get married in the future."

Aoey looked like she was dreaming. I looked at her smile and felt so loved. But deep down I felt guilty because I couldn't see myself marrying another woman. My mom went back to a normal straight life after meeting my dad. It confirmed to me that we all had to go back to our real lives at some point.

I would have children one day, with my husband. Aoey would too... But I wouldn't destroy her dream now. The future wasn't here.

"Will you still want to marry me then? Things change."

"I won't. Trust me. I love you, Gen. Only you."

The youngest girl hugged me passionately. I hugged her back and rocked back and forth. I was so happy...

So happy that I was afraid for it.

"What is your novel like? You said I'm the main male character. Am I elegant?" I changed the subject because the novel was what made her happy. She really loved that hobby.

"Beautiful like you."

"Oh? Why beautiful?"

"I'm writing a bisexual novel."

"Man, right?"

"Woman. It's my first time changing my style. I'm excited about it. You're the main character. I described you so beautifully," the sweet-eyed girl rested her chin on the palm of her hand. "A beautiful woman with long black hair, beautiful face, rich, intelligent, authoritarian, dictatorial, bad mouth..."

"Is that what you called a good description?" I said. Aoey laughed.

"Yes, I'll tell you how good the reviews are. The novel is not yet in the top rank, but everyone loves your character. They think you are a perfect husband."

"What is a husband?"

"Husband of all women."

I didn't know what to think when I heard that. How did my beauty become someone else's husband? Aoey showed on her screen that she now got almost 3,000 views even though it was posted just three days ago. She read the fans' admiring comments towards me.

But there was a different comment. I saw the most recent comment on the board. It wasn't related to the novel, but it looked like the author.

"I can't reach you, Aoey. You're not answering my phone. Please call me."

"Who's that?"

"Where?" She still didn't see the comment. I pointed it out. Her face changed from happy to stressed immediately.

"I think this is your mom. Do you want to contact her?"

"No." The sweet eyes said it angrily. I saw tears in her eyes, but she wiped them away. She raised her chin trying to be strong.

"Your mom might want to talk to you about something."

"I'm not her daughter since I left that house. You are now my most important person." She hugged me tightly as if she was looking for a safe place. "You are my everything."

I hugged her back and tried my best to comfort her. My gut feeling was that something would happen soon. I didn't feel good seeing Teacher Salee's

comment on the web board.

My sixth sense said something bad was coming!!



Chapter 29

I was a busy-body...

I sat in front of Teacher Salee, Aoey's mom, who had left a message on the novel's web board. She was the same strict teacher I had known, but much older now, with wrinkles on her face. I promised myself that I wouldn't let her see me as the same old me, so...

"You are a beautiful adult woman now, Genlong."

"Thank you."

I was used to compliments like that. I sat up straight and tried to be elegant while chatting with my elementary school teacher.

"How are you? Are you still teaching? Do you live in the same house?"

I didn't really care much about that. Where he lived didn't bother me at all, whether it was in a cave or a pond. Humans are social animals, so I had to make a proper introduction. I got straight to the point.

"I saw your message on the writer's web board, so I contacted you. I think you might be missing Aoey," I said, taking a sip of water. "I'm meeting you today to tell you that Aoey is okay."

"I'm glad to know that she's okay, and relieved to know that she's with you."

Worry was written all over her face, and she also seemed scared.

My curiosity was at its peak.

“Are you okay? You seem so worried.”

“I’m worried. But after knowing that she’s with you, I feel better now. Is your father still a police officer?”

“Yes, he’ll retire in three years.”

“That’s good... it’s possible...” Teacher Salee looked worried, then dismissed it. “Forget it.”

“Why don’t you tell me what happened?”

I saw some hesitation in her eyes, but she finally sorted it all out. What I learned next crushed me greatly. I would rather not have known about it at all.

“My husband disappeared.”

I was shocked, thinking of Aoey’s stepfather. I felt chills down my spine. I couldn’t breathe and felt like I was about to faint. I took a sip of water and controlled myself so as not to be shaken.

“Really?”

“I want your dad’s help. He must have a lot of contacts. Maybe he can help. I reported a missing person to the police, but it didn’t go anywhere. Nobody is helping me at all.”

“How long has he been missing?”

“Many months. I haven’t been able to contact him. I think he might be involved with some mafia.”

My heart was pounding so hard. I was worried that she might see something wrong with me. But, come on, it was almost impossible for that to come back to me.

“Why do you think there’s a mafia involved? What happened?”

“Several days ago, a group of men raided my house looking for something. They took out my computer’s CPU, right in front of me. I didn’t get any explanation.”

“Your husband asks for this,” one of the men told her.

Teacher Salee looked shocked. I guessed those were my dad’s people trying to find evidence since he believed the girl in those photos was me.

My dad took action. Aoey’s stepfather disappeared like a file on that computer.

“I don’t know what happened,” Teacher Salee buried her face in both of her palms and cried. “My husband might have visited Aoey,” she said.

“Why would your husband visit Aoey?” I crossed my arms and leaned back. I looked the woman straight in the eyes.

She paused and looked away from me.

“They are father and daughter.”

“Isn’t he's Aoey stepfather?”

“Did Aoey tell you that?” Teacher Salee asked curiously. She tried to test my knowledge.

“Yes, Aoey said that he is her stepfather. He is the reason she left.”

“How much did she tell you?” I smiled. I knew she was my teacher, but I lost a little respect for her when I realized how much she was obsessed with her husband.

“She said you love him more than her.”

“Don’t say that, Gen.”

I was angry because she was ordering me around. I tried to control myself and be aware that she was my teacher and a mother of the person whom I

loved. I told her I was sorry.

“I’m sorry, I wasn’t nice. I just don’t understand why you care about other people more than your daughter. Oh, I’m sorry. She’s adopted. She’s not as important as someone you slept with.”

“This is a second warning for you. Don’t say that.”

I was upset that I would have to be polite to her.

“Teacher, Aoey was treated badly. Do you really think she flirted with him? Why don’t you take her side?”

“This is our family affair.”

“This is child abuse. It’s not just a family matter. If I reported it to the police, everyone would know how much you love your husband but not your daughter.”

Teacher Salee stood up angrily. She couldn’t stand me anymore. I stood up and crossed my arms as well. Why would I respect an adult who didn’t deserve it?

“Sorry then. Forget what I asked you for. I’ll take care of it myself.”

“Yeah.”

The woman was about to leave when I called her.

“Teacher,” I said in my cold, controlled voice.

“Yeah?”

“We spent almost an hour talking, but you only talked about Aoey for two minutes. Do you love your daughter?”

I didn’t get any response from Teacher Salee. She heard my question and walked away, leaving me there upset.

She hung out on the guy because she never had a husband before... I didn't tell anyone that I went to see Teacher Salee.

I felt bad about Aoey's stepfather disappearing and how my dad sent someone to take the computer from her house. If I told anyone, it would only bring danger to me. I didn't think Aoey should know about this either.

Sweet eyes were happy with the comments on her novel and her work while I was working on an assignment from my teacher. Aoey dreamed that this novel would tell the world about her love life. She hoped to make a lot of money from it.

"If I can make a million, I'll buy a house." Aoey glanced at me briefly as she worked on her computer. "You can be my interior designer. It must be beautiful."

"Are you going to leave me here alone?" I laughed, but she smiled widely at me.

"No, you will design the house we will live in together. I hope you don't charge too much because it is our house."

I looked at her adoringly and shook my head.

"If we really live together, I won't charge you a cent. You don't have to save money. I can just ask my mom for the money."

"No, it has to be something I work for. That's the value. You'll design the house because that's what you do. Our house will be very nice. I'll pay money, and you'll work for it. That's great."

“I thought a million baht was enough?”

“A million won’t be enough,” I said. “Land in Bangkok is expensive.”

“How about a house in the countryside? Somewhere remote, away from people. Not too expensive. Just us in the countryside, running a farm.”

I couldn’t really imagine myself running a farm....

“You can actually live with your mom, Teacher Salee,” I immediately saw a sign of resistance. I wanted to slap myself for that.

“You don’t want to be with me? Why do you want me to be with Mom?”

“I’m just making a suggestion. Don’t be so serious.”

“I don’t want to hear you talk about my mom again. I told you that I only have you in my life. Only you.”

“Let’s be serious, Aoey...” My voice was serious. I thought about what my mom said before. “How many old ladies have you seen living together?”

“What’s that?”

“Someday you might find the right man and marry him. You might not love me like you do today. That could happen to me too. I told you I never liked girls. If it wasn’t you, I wouldn’t do it...”

Sweet eyes jumped up at me and hugged me. She looked so scared of what I was saying. She knew what I was trying to say.

“I’ve never felt that way about anyone. I thought you felt the same way too.”

“Yes, I’m sorry.”

“We love each other. That’s all that matters.” Aoey started to hug me and pushed me to the ground. “Do you think there will be a man who can make you feel the way I do?”

“Aoey, we’re talking....” Now I was attacked by her kisses all over my face. She bit my ear playfully. “How did we end up here?”

“I want you to know that you can only do this with me.”

“ ... ”

“I love you and I let you control everything. Who would let you do this if it wasn’t me?”

“ ... ”

“You need someone like me. Someone who follows you but also pushes you at the same time.”

I closed my eyes and let her play with my body. I floated away with her seduction. I really liked her acting like this, and I loved being in control, but I also loved that she took control at some point.

Ummm... but I lost that time.

Happiness... today it was with you, the next day it would fly away.

That was the truth of life. Happiness and unhappiness come and go all the time.

That’s how the world works. If you are very happy, unhappiness wants to visit you too.

At that moment... I was the happiest woman in the world.

I was beautiful, so hot that she'd be jealous, I was rich, smart, and in love.

I was happy like never before.

Then I forgot about everything in this world. I had Aoey every day of my life. Sometimes we would fight over something so trivial, but we would fix it, and it always ended up on the couch, in bed, or sometimes in the kitchen...

I'll skip the details.

I always dreamed of the happiness that people in a TV drama had—the joy in life. Now I had it, even if it was with a woman.

It was strange that I felt it only with her...

I wondered if I was a lesbian. But I dressed like a woman and I never admired another woman's body. I never thought other women were beautiful.

But I never thought other men were handsome either. That was strange...

I was never hungry for love, but I felt empty. Some say they need love because they lacked it in childhood. Some men claimed they had many wives because they didn't have a mother growing up. I had a great childhood, but I felt empty until Aoey came along... a petite woman who stared at me obsessively.

I loved her head over heels.



“The room is so quiet. Can you turn on the TV, Gen?”

Aoey asked in her sweet kitten voice as she got dressed for school. I grabbed the remote and turned it on, searching for something fun. But it was too early, so there were only news and kids' shows on TV.

I chose the same news channel. The TV presenters were talking inside the house, criticizing news and people in the news. One presenter changed the topic from the economy to an interesting news story.

[A teacher had filed a request for an investigation into the disappearance of her husband several weeks ago. He was found dead inside a large cement tank.]

I was surprised to see Teacher Salee's face on TV.

"What happened, Gen?"

I fell to the ground when I saw the woman on the news. Teacher Salee was now crying in front of the media. The TV described her story. Aoey helped me up from the ground but immediately turned back to the TV when she heard her mother's name. "That's Mom. Why is she there?"

"Someone is dead," I said with a trembling voice.

"What?"

"Your fa...ther."

Her eyes were fierce once she heard that. I noticed the fear in her eyes but also a deep satisfaction. The gentle eyes asked me with her cold but calm voice.

"How?"

That was what shook me. I felt a cold hand squeezing my heart and stopping all the blood from flowing through it. I was scared and felt guilty at the same time.

"Dead in a cement tank."

The light went out immediately when I finished that sentence, as if someone had turned off the switch. The soul of my life had just been sucked out of me.

"Gen!"

Chapter 30

I was in bed for 3 days straight. I couldn't concentrate after listening to the news on TV. I couldn't eat. I threw up from stress. I couldn't sleep at night. It must have been guilt. I started to understand what fear looked like.

It wasn't a fear of ghosts. It was something I couldn't explain.

"Gen... you're too thin now. Have you gained weight recently?"

Aoey, who helped take care of me, expressed her concern. All this time, the sweet eyes looked after me, gave me food and drink, cleaned me. I had no power to do anything. I felt guilty.

I felt bewitched...

But Aoey seemed to have no reaction to that news. She lived her life normally. She saw her mother inside that news, but she never mentioned anything about it.

"Aoey, have you contacted your mom?"

She paused briefly as she wiped me down with a wet towel.

"No," she replied, trying not to show any emotion.

"Why don't you contact her? Check if she's okay."

"I don't know why I should do that."

"She was on the news. I saw Teacher Salee crying. Don't you feel anything at all?"

"I do not feel anything." She stood up as if to end the conversation, but I pulled her hand. I felt the cold coming off it.

"Hey."

"I can't feel anything for her because she didn't feel anything for me either."

I knew... what she had been through. But I never knew how bad the relationship between Aoey and her mom was. I didn't know there was something between them that made her distance herself so much. Teacher Salee didn't seem worried about Aoey either once she realized she was safe with me.

What really happened?

After a long nap, my phone rang. I was surprised to see that it was Uncle Somkit's call. When I picked up the phone, his voice wasn't too good.

"Hello, Uncle Somkit."

[Gen, your dad wants to see you.]

I sat there feeling terrified. It had to be related to Professor Salee's news. It wasn't normal for my dad to want to see me.

"Okay, I'll go home."

I got up and dressed myself weakly. I struggled to get home to the big mansion where my parents lived. I had come there with a heavy feeling in my heart...

I went straight to see my dad when I arrived. His office always smelled like cigarettes. He was talking to his subordinates before asking everyone to leave, including Uncle Somkit. His face looked stressed, but once he saw my weak body, he immediately turned into my sweet daddy.

"Why are you so thin?"

"I saw the news." I crossed my arms over my chest in fear. I was far more afraid of the sight of a dead body in a cement tank than I was of my dad scolding me. "Did you do that?"

He was silenced when he saw my reaction. He stood up from his desk and hugged me. I wasn't expecting this. I thought he had called me to scold me about the video. The one where I pretended to be me.

I had lied to him about that.

"You don't have to know about this."

"Of course, I knew about this. I asked you to do it." I shook to the core. I admitted it was pure anger. But once the anger was gone, I now had to deal with the consequences that were driving me crazy. "Dad... it was on the news. Is it true?"

"Let me worry about that. But why did you lie that it was you in the video? Why did you tell me that you were blackmailed?"

I was very sad and avoided his eye contact. I couldn't tell him that it was revenge for someone else.

Just because of my anger.

"I knew you'd fix everything for me, if it were me." I tugged at his shirt like a little kid. "Will we get arrested? Did I get you in trouble?"

"Some small problems, but don't worry about that."

"I'm sorry."

I cried and hugged him in fear. I always adored him. I thought he was a powerful man who could help me out of a problem, no matter how serious the problem was.

My dad was evil on top of evil. I should be fine as long as I had my dad.

"Don't cry. You're strong, my princess. Go on with your life as normal as possible. I'll take care of everything."

He hugged me like a warm dad but he didn't really help me....

I met Uncle Somkit at the front door before I left. The old man looked at me with pity. His face was full of worry. I couldn't help but ask him what my father was facing. I knew there must be a lot of trouble, but Dad would never tell me anything. Uncle Somkit could tell me.

"Can you tell me what the situation is now? Can Dad really handle this?"

"I can't say much Gen. Everything's going to be okay."

"I don't feel that way at all. I felt like something big was coming. Please tell me what happened, so I can handle it better."

Uncle Somkit looked at me and nodded.

"Okay. There was a video of me inside the hotel's CCTV."

The car's license plate was in my mother's name. The police are now in the process of investigating. They might call me soon. My dad was doing everything he could to protect me.

Uncle Somkit said that Dad is now trying to destroy the evidence related to me. There was nothing to worry about. Everyone was a professional.

I didn't like this word... professional.

The current situation was not that bad but it affected my dad a little. Teacher Salee sent a request to a Rescue Center to help investigate her husband's death. The investigation team dug deep to find information related to my father.

My dad was behind everything...

The police not only investigated the murder case, but also found out all the things that dad ever did. They might find some small things that dad did.

Money laundering...

All grey businesses.

All because of Aoey's problem, I made it so big. This was all a butterfly effect. I just wanted to punish a bad guy, but now he echoed my father.

"How will our family end?"

"Now we are just in an investigation period. They won't find anything."

"Did he really do it?"

Uncle Somkit looked me in the eye but didn't answer, nothing at all. But that might be supposed to be an answer in itself.

"Now we have a plan and you must be prepared whatever it is."

"How can I prepare?"

"I'll tell you later."

I was about to leave when Great saw me and yelled at me from the second floor and told me to stop. My brother looked at me in disbelief when he saw me. I must have looked like crap that even Great, who was still mad at me, was nice to me.

"Are you possessed? Why do you look like that?"

"What do you want? Are you okay with me now?"

"No, I'm angry with you but I don't know who to talk to except you."

"What happened?"

He looked left and right and gestured for me to go inside the car. "Let's talk in the car. I'm paranoid that someone might hear us."

Everyone was acting strange today, me, Dad, Uncle Somkit, and now even Great, who was mad at me but now wanted to talk to me. Once we were in the car, Great looked at me worriedly.

"Are you here for the Anti-Money Laundering Office?"

"How did you know about this?"

"I heard Mom and Dad talking about some money laundering. I didn't understand what it was about, but I don't feel good about it." He shifted uncomfortably.

"What else do you want to talk about?"

"I don't feel well, Gen. I heard they're trying to transfer assets or something. It sounded big. Now Mom said I have to go to Macau soon."

This was big... very big. I couldn't believe that what I asked Dad to do had such an impact on us.

"Going to study there is good for you. You can be smarter."

"Come on, be serious. I felt that something around here is changing in a big way. I also heard that it was Aoey."

"What did you hear?"

It seemed so awkward to say it. My younger brother bit his lip and cursed.

"Shit! Ok, I'll say it. I heard that Dad asked his people to kill someone... who you said abused you, but it was actually Aoey. Is it true?"

"Is that all you want to say? Now get out of the car. I'm leaving."

I ordered him to get out of the car, but he was too stubborn and tried to pressure me into giving him an answer.

"Tell me. The problem is that big now. Aoey doesn't let anyone touch her because she was abused, right?"

It was so awkward to say it. "Shut your mouth!"

"Gen, our family is about to fall apart because you helped her. Do you know that our powerful family is about to end because you lied to Dad to help your childhood friend?"

"So what? Why don't you blame me, not Aoey? She didn't do anything wrong," I said angrily. My chest ached because I was the one who started all this.

"Her stepfather was a bastard, Great. Prison wouldn't do him any good. He'd do it again once he was out. It was better that he died."

"It's fine if only he had died, but now he's dragging us all down to hell with him. Why do you care so much if one girl gets raped? Aoey wasn't the only one who was raped. Do you think you can help them all?"

"She's the one I love."

"If you love women, find someone else. You can find whoever you want. We have money, why this one? She was defective, you should..."

I slapped my selfish brother hard. Great touched his cheek and looked at me confused. I never did anything like that before. He was the youngest in the family who was spoiled all his life and now he couldn't stand his sister punishing him.

"You hit me because of that woman? Why do you hurt me all the time? She tricked me into a relationship like an idiot and now she made us fight each other."

"I'm fighting you because of your stupid thought." I bit my lip in anger. I couldn't believe my brother had such a selfish thought. "How can you blame her? If you truly love someone, no matter what happened, you should be able to love her no matter what. This wasn't her fault at all."

“.....”

"Why don't you think it was the bastard's fault? How can you blame the victim? You were born in a good and well-educated family, but you are narrow-minded. You judge the rape victim. You say she's defective. You should look in the mirror again."

"Gen..."

It was the worst fight of our lives. My brother shook and got out of the car. He cried like a baby because we had never fought so hard. I too shook with guilt for what I was putting my family through. I was afraid we couldn't stay there any longer.

If I weren't here, how could she live...

Aoey left for school that day. I sat quietly in the room alone. I heard the key at 4 o'clock. I quickly stood up after waiting all day.

Sweet eyes smiled as always once they saw me waiting. I hugged her tight as if she could disappear from me.

"What's wrong Gen?"

"I miss you. I want to hug you."

Aoey laughed and hugged me back. We both buried our faces in each other's necks and smelled each other like a precious gift we loved.

"You look strange today."

"I love you, Aoey."

"Something happened?"

The young girl let go of me and looked at me curiously. I kissed her passionately first and carried her to the bed. I rarely kissed her first.

"Gen... talk to me."

"Pamper me today, Please."

"No, I'm surprised and suspicious. Something must happened." Aoey pushed my chest away. "Tell me."

How could I tell her that I might not be with her anymore? Who else in this world could I turn to?

Did she have a relative or some family members she could turn to?

What was I supposed to do? I felt so sorry for her.

"Nothing." I leaned down to kiss the girl beneath me. I pulled her shirt out of her skirt and put my hand in. "I just wanted to help you unbutton your shirt."

She didn't buy it because I never liked that before. But she did swing both her arms around my neck.

"Who could say no to that?"

I had to do something. I had to make sure she would be okay when I wasn't there.

Hey never forget to vote!

(^_•)

Chapter 31

"I'm so excited. This is the first time we've gone out to a romantic place like in a movie."

Aoey was so happy. She smiled so big that I saw her beautiful teeth. I could tell from her eyes that she was really happy.

"What a date?"

"Isn't this a date?"

"There will be one more person here with us today."

The sweet eyes deflated like a balloon I just popped.

"I thought you were going to take me on a date and we'd end the night in bed." She made a sweet and cute face at me. "But it's okay. I'm happy you're here. We'll go home together, just the two of us anyway. It's like a date to me."

"What would you do if I wasn't with you?"

"I couldn't go on living," she replied immediately. There was a sharp pain in my heart. Her sweet eyes looked at me worriedly. "Why did you say that? I don't feel well."

"You were fine before."

"Did you bring me here to break up with me?"

Aoey looked so worried that I had to laugh. She was so adorable and cute.

That day would come. The day when I couldn't be by her side. And it seemed like it was going to come soon.

"I can finish you off at home. I wouldn't have to take you somewhere nice."

"I don't know. You've been acting strange lately. You have something on your mind but you won't tell me."

"You must be worried about me."

"I want to take away your pain. I can bear it all on my own if that will help you."

I wanted to cry when I heard that. Damn it! How could I leave her? Even though it was a short period, I was so happy. She was my first everything...

She was my first love.

Was there really nothing else I could do? Why did it turn out like this?

My phone rang, and I had to shift my gaze from Aoey to my phone. I stood up to take the call.

"Please wait here. I'll talk to my friend."

"Who is it?"

I didn't say anything but walked away to take that "friend" to the table. He turned around when I called out once that a friend was here. The soft eyes immediately turned somber.

"Mother."

Teacher Salee looked at her daughter full of love, but she didn't express any love. She just stood there and stared at Aoey. It didn't help the atmosphere at all. She had to say something.

"Please sit down." Once the woman sat down, Aoey quickly stood up. She refused to be at the same table with her.

"What is this? Why did you bring her here?"

"Let's talk, Aoey."

"No!" She was so adamant about it. Other people in the restaurant started staring at us.

"Please sit down. Let's talk."

"No, I don't want to talk."

"Sit down!"

The sweet eyes looked at me unhappily but sat quietly as I ordered her. I was proud of myself because I could sometimes control her with words.

"Do what I told you."

I just said it, and she always did as I asked. Now Aoey sat down, but the mood was still somber. I wanted her mother to be there to clear things up. I needed to help mend this relationship...

This wasn't my area at all...

"Aoey... please talk to your mother. Teacher Salee misses you," I started, but Aoey gave me a fierce look and smiled.

"Do you think she misses me? She's in Bangkok because she was looking for her murdered husband, isn't she?"

Teacher Salee, who heard the sarcastic statement, tried to contain herself.

"Stop saying that, Aoey."

"Isn't that true? And your name is Mom... don't you feel uncomfortable? I call you Mom because I don't know what to call you. Teacher Salee, this woman... or Aunt?" Aoey was so bad in a way I'd never seen before.

"Be nice to your mom, Aoey."

"If you were me, you wouldn't be nice either!" She finally stood up and snapped. "A mother who forgot about a baby she raised once a new man came in. You never cared about what had happened. You judged me even though I was the victim!"

"I saw you were flirting... you took off your clothes one by one. Nobody forced you to do anything."

What she said shocked me even more. This was the other side of the story that I hated to hear. But I had to hear them.

"Do you know why I had to do that? You never listened to what I said. You insulted me. You think I seduced him. I wasn't a bastard here. It was you."

"Understand!"

Teacher Salee slammed the table. Now other tables heard our entire conversation. Everyone paid attention to us, but these two didn't care anymore.

"Why did I take off my clothes? Because he said that if I didn't, he would post the video he recorded on the Internet!" Aoey said and grabbed her heart.

"What do you think I fell into by acting like a porn star every time I had to give in? Do you know how painful it was to act like a porn star in a movie I didn't want to make?"

"Aoey..." Teacher Salee was shocked. It seemed like no one had heard of it. I wanted to cry once I heard it. My heart was so painful, but I had to hear it.

"Do you know how old I was when he did this to me? I had to take birth control pills, and I took the morning after pill because of him!" Aoey hugged herself and cried like crazy.

"I hated myself every day. I couldn't let anyone touch me. They were all disgusting. But you never realized this. You cared more about your

man than me. You're a teacher. You taught thousands of children, but why couldn't you see what was wrong with me? Why?"

"He sent me the videos to remind me that it was recorded. I never deleted them. I kept them to remind me of what I had been through. It's a good thing he's dead... otherwise, **I'd be the one to kill him.**"

"I never knew this. You never told me." Teacher Salee trembled. She walked towards Aoey, but Aoey turned away from her. There was no respect in Aoey's eyes.

Teacher Salee was a different person...

Ignorance was a killer. Teacher Salee was one of them.

"You never listened to me. You called me a bitch and kicked me out of the house. You threw a 500 baht note in my face, remember?" Aoey hit her chest. "You yelled at me and told me I was adopted. I didn't have anyone else in this world, but you kicked me out. If I didn't have Gen, how would I have ended up? Do you have any ideas?"

I couldn't contain my self anymore. It hurts me so much knowing what kind of hell she been through. I stand up and slammed the thousand baht bill on the table and walked towards her.

"Let's go, Aoey."

I was wrong...

I invited her mom over to fix the relationship, but it was impossible. It just emphasized the pain. I knew she had been through a bad experience, but I never knew how bad it was. My guilt for asking my dad to take action was lessened once I heard all the brutal details.

I guess... that's why she seemed happy when she saw the news.

Some people might think that this matter should be left to the law. But for a victim like her, a vigilante was the most beautiful thing for her. It was quick without any process. It was hell delivered to someone who deserved it after

having been through hell herself. The people who judge those who took revenge are the people who had never encountered that...

Now that we were in the parking lot, Aoey pushed me and started punching me with her fist in anger.

"Why did you call her here? Why did you do this to me?" She hit and grabbed my collar. She couldn't control herself. I wasn't angry with her, but I tried to calm her down by hugging her. It wasn't easy at all.

"Shhh it's okay, Aoey."

"It's not right. Why did you do that? Did I ever tell you that I wanted to see her? Why are you meddling in my business?"

I hugged Aoey, who was now crying like crazy. I didn't feel angry at all. I tried to hug her, but she tried to get away. When I got her, she cried and cried.

I cried too... I was filled with pity. Now I understood when she said she would bear the pain herself to help me.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know it would hurt you so much."

"Why did you do that?" She calmed down a bit but was still crying. I patted her and rocked her to calm her down. I tried to steady her.

"I don't want you to think that you are alone in the world."

"I have you."

"If one day I'm not here, you'll have your mom..." I hadn't finished my sentence when she pushed me.

"Why do you keep saying that? Where are you going?!" Her angry tone silenced me, and that made those sweet eyes look at me in disbelief, even though there were still tears on her face. "Tell me, where are you going, Gen?"

"My family has a problem... I may not be here with you anymore."

"No..." Aoey grabbed my arms tightly as if I was going to disappear at that moment. "I can't live without you. You can't leave me, Gen."

Her mood suddenly changed from angry to scared. She was so scared that she hugged me and buried her face in my chest while shaking her head in disbelief. I stroked her back to calm her down.

"I'm not leaving now."

"I won't let you go at any time. Don't leave me. I can't live without you," she looked at me. "In this world, I only have you. How can I continue living without you?"

"Damn!"

I felt like my heart was about to break into pieces. I loved her, and I also cared for her. I now realized how bad the relationship between her and her mom was. Leaving her seemed to be the worst thing for her.

"Promise me you won't go anywhere. You won't leave me."

"I..."

"Say you promise!"

I looked into her eyes and nodded. "I promise."

"That's good... very good."

Aoey put both her arms around my neck and pulled me in for a hug. We stayed like that for a while and then walked back to the condo. The younger girl was now following me around everywhere as if she was afraid I would disappear at any moment.

Teacher Salee still contacted me through my phone after that day. The old lady sounded so sad. She seemed like she was holding back tears every time

she talked to me. She must have been feeling guilty and shocked about Aoey.

[Gen... please take good care of her. She must be mad at me. I don't think she'll listen to me even if I visit her. She only has you now. Please take good care of her.]

That emphasized the fact that I couldn't leave her. She had no one but me.

After the talk with Uncle Somkit that day, there wasn't much of an update. Everything was still under investigation—both the murder and the money laundering. Dad spent that time reselling some of his assets and stashing money in a bank overseas. My mom kept updating me on that. She just warned me to be prepared.

Aoey had become so attached to me lately. There is a day that she even skipped school just to be with me. If she was at school, she would call me every hour to see where I was, what I was doing. If it were anyone else, I would be upset, but I understood how she felt. And because I loved her.

I loved Aoey...

It was love.

"Why do you have to go with your dad? You didn't do anything wrong," Aoey asked one day after we finished watching a Korean TV series.

"I didn't do anything wrong, but we won't have any money if we stay here. My family has already transferred all our money out of the country."

"Are you leaving for money?"

"My father's old enemies will also be waiting for him to fall. They will immediately take revenge when they find out. The best revenge will be to hurt his daughter and son, you know?"

I had asked Uncle Somkit why I had to run too. He gave me that reason. But the main reason was money. All property and money would be confiscated if I was found guilty. In that case, we would be bankrupt.

"But why are you leaving? Are you afraid of not having money or of your father's enemies?"

"Maybe both reasons. I just need to be prepared," I replied, but her mood immediately changed.

"You promised you wouldn't leave."

"I promised I wouldn't leave."

"Really?" Aoey immediately looked happier. I reached out to pinch her cheek. "But we can't live together here, right?"

"Yes, it will be a lot of expenses. We have to move somewhere first, but we don't know where to go yet. If that day really comes, the day I have no money, I will be poor Genlong who doesn't even know how to make money —"

"Don't be afraid. You have me. I will support you."

"Really? Can you?"

"Yeah, sure. If you're just with me, I can do everything... Speaking of which... I have to go."

Suddenly, Aoey jumped onto her laptop on the table. She searched for something. The light from her laptop shone on her face. I looked at her in admiration.

"Are you writing a novel?"

"No, I'm looking for a new direction for the two of us." Her sweet eyes looked at me and smiled. "I like this feeling. We're running away."

"So we're not getting married?"

"We don't have to get married. I'm happy when you're with me. You're my vitamin."

I loved her... the girl with glasses sitting there.

We were both obsessed with each other. Every time I thought about leaving her, it caused me a lot of pain. I decided that if that day came, I wouldn't run away with my family. I would stay with Aoey.

I wanted to try this.

I got out of bed and sat next to Aoey who was looking for our new place. There was a place in a small village in Thailand, where there weren't that many people. We both agreed that if we had to escape, we would choose to be there.

Somewhere only we knew...

"So we agree," she smiled broadly at me. I nodded but didn't take it seriously. But I thought it might be possible. It was cheap and quiet.

"Yes, here."

"If we're going to hide, we'll go there." Aoey hugged me happily. "This is our new home."

"Yes, our new home."

Translator:

I believe the place they're referring to is where Dokrak started her coffee business and where Pam, who is a dentist, was finally found by Dokrak.

*The title of the novel is **US**.*

It's the same location where Dahwan had a project, and where the music video was shot with the song composed by Pleng.

*Kimhan followed Dahwan there, and they both met Aoey, the author of the their true-to-life story titled ***Kimhan... I Dream of You***, which was in the last chapter of Dream by Chao Planoy.*

*Dahwan and Kimhan are both characters of **My marvellous dream is you** that currently in TV series.*

*And Pleng is the character of **Affair**.*

Every novel of Chao Planoy is always connected.



Chapter 32

Finally...

Uncle Somkit called me one morning. His voice was so tense, it woke me up immediately.

"Gen, it's time to go. I'll send someone to pick you up and take you to the airport."

"Can't I take Aoey with me?"

"We're on the run, Gen. How will your family feel if you take Aoey with you? She was the reason your family is in this trouble."

Aoey, who was lying next to me, noticed my tension. She realized that the time had come. She could read through my silence.

"Gen," she said softly.

Her gentle eyes held mine as she grabbed my arm tightly. She looked like she was about to cry. I looked at her and tried to give her a smile to cheer her up. "Don't make that face."

"You won't leave me, will you?"

I stayed quiet, and she could read it again. It was a dilemma. My family had now packed their bags and was ready to leave the country. I had to choose between my family and Aoey. It was a turning point. I stood at the intersection where I had to make a decision.

"Let's run away." I grabbed Aoey's hand and looked at her. "If we're going to run away, we have to go now. My dad's people are coming to find me."

We have to go now.”

Aoey looked at me and smiled. Her face was full of tears. I finally made the decision to follow our plan—to run away together. I wasn't sure if it was the right decision, but I was going to do it anyway.

My dad should be the one running away, not me. But I recently received confirmation of the real reason I had to run too...

I appeared on the hotel's CCTV.

I would never tell Aoey that I was involved in her stepfather's disappearance. I didn't see the point in telling her. I didn't want to burden her with that detail. I just wanted her to be by my side and forget about that bastard.

The bastard was gone now, and I was one of the factors in making that happen. The police were now looking for the woman on the CCTV...

I was lucky that the video quality was low; it wasn't clear who it was. But the biggest problem was that the tip-off usually came from someone known. Even though my dad had already gotten rid of all the evidence, it wasn't smart to take risks. Running away was the best option for me. My dad didn't care about himself at all. He only cared about my safety.

I had to go...

But what about Aoey? I could never leave her. She was my cute little girlfriend who had nowhere else to go. So I had to stay and take that risk. I had to leave my family.

We both got dressed in 5 minutes or less. Aoey didn't forget about the bird. She didn't want it to die alone. I looked around my apartment, which was filled with good memories—the corner where Aoey wrote her novel, the bed we slept in together, and my college homework.

My life was about to change...

We both left the condo as quickly as possible. We got into a taxi to go to the bus station. We planned to take a bus to our destination. But the first step had already been hard for me.

I sat on a bus for 9 hours straight for the first time.

I threw up the first time. Damn!

“If I had known it would take 9 hours to get there, I would have been opposed to this province from the start. We should have chosen a place a little closer to Bangkok.” I wiped my face after throwing up as I got off the bus. Aoey gently stroked my back and laughed.

“If we stay close to Bangkok, it will be too easy for people to catch you. This province is far enough away. It is good for us to take refuge here.”

“Take refuge?”

We sounded like prisoners... but yeah, we were close to that.

“What now? It was so sudden. We have no place to stay tonight.” I looked at my watch. It read 10 PM. “This province is very quiet. Are you sure we’re still in Thailand?”

“There is a small hotel. A 2-star hotel for only 3,000 baht.”

“Is there a room at that price?”

“It’s cheap here. I’ve contacted them before but I didn’t know the date. The owner should let us stay.”

“Have you already planned all this?”

“Umm... I’m well prepared. I paid the rental fee for 2 months. We’re finally here. Now our bird can stay outside. It doesn’t have to be inside all the time anymore.”

“Why are we staying at the cheap hotel then? We should be staying at the rental house.”

“It’s already late. The owner of the house must be sleeping. Let’s do it tomorrow.” Aoey hugged my arm. “Don’t rush. The most important thing is that we’re here together.”

I looked at her and smiled. She looked so happy that it made me forget why we ended up there. The situation was bad, but I didn't feel that bad. It was because she was with me.

“Ok, let's do it. This is my first 2-star hotel.”

“First time again, huh?” she said in a teasing tone.

“Yes, it is,” I smiled.

“Do you want to get dirty with me for the first time in a 2-star hotel?” Her sweet eyes walked with their fingers on my arm and smiled. “We are going to have a new experience here.”

“If you don't mind the vomit smell in my mouth. I'll do anything adventurous with you.”

“It seems like there are so many activities we can do together. Yeah, yeah, let's do it.”

Did I escape to that place for adventurous activities?

There was the serious beginning of a new life...

I looked at the house she had rented in amazement. It was a one-story wooden house with no paint. The floor was hardwood and creaked when we walked. It sounded like a haunted house (but I wasn't scared). There was no air purifier, no air conditioning. There was an old rustic bed. I looked at the condition and wondered how I ended up there.

My life changed so abruptly...the night before, I was sleeping on my expensive mattress at home.

But Aoey lay next to me with her big smile on the rustic bed, looking at me happily.

“It only costs 3,000 baht a month and we have all the furniture we need. This is the only place we can get this good deal.”

“Do we really have everything?” My statement sounded like a complaint. Aoey looked at me, so I smiled at her. “It’s great. You did well finding the place.”

“In Bangkok, we couldn’t find a house like this at this price. We can stay here for a while. I like the bed.” Aoey crawled onto the bed and pointed at the headboard. “I like this.”

Was it that good? That rusty headboard...

“It’s so classic.”

“I did not mean that.”

“What do you mean?”

Aoey jumped to the ground and walked over to her luggage, searching for something inside. She happily pulled out the handcuffs.

“Here’s our toy. I can chain it to the headboard of the bed. It’ll be fun.”

“You are so dirty,” I laughed.

“The thing about this bed is that it makes a squeaky sound when we do something. I’m going to get even hornier when you direct it.”

MY GOD...

But when I saw that Aoey was happy, it made me happy too. Although my life wasn’t as easy as before, if other people could live like this, I could too. I still had money in my savings account; I could just take that money to buy what we needed.

Buy an air conditioner...

Buy a television...

Money can buy anything.

I could tell that Aoey was happier than she had been in Bangkok. But she had to keep in mind that we were on the run.

I escaped from a police investigation.

I ran away from my dad, who wanted me to leave the country.

It was a quiet town. My dad's news was big, but not enough to replace the evening TV drama. People still didn't know who I was. We could still walk down the street. Aoey and I held hands and walked as if we were on vacation. The sun was setting, the sky turned dark blue. I smelled something strong in the air.

"It's the smell of the Slate tree."

"It's strong."

"Some people like the smell. I like it. I feel close to nature. I never smelled it when we lived in the condo."

"Yeah." I didn't say anything because I thought the smell wasn't pleasant. Aoey went silent again. I turned to look at her. She was nervous.

"Is everything okay?" I asked.

"So..."

"Can I ask you something? I've never asked you this before."

"What's that?"

"What really happened to your family?... If you really don't want to tell me, that's okay too."

She was so nervous to ask about it. I reached out to take her hand and linked our fingers together. I swung our hands up and down as we walked.

There was something I couldn't tell and something I couldn't say. I chose to skip the murder case and talked about my father's issues.

"My dad is in trouble for his money laundering and some shady dealings," I said openly because very soon everything would be in the news. "His enemies are attacking him, including me and Great. Great left the country. I'm the only one left here."

"Damn."

"How do you feel knowing that my dad has dirty business?"

"Do I have to feel something?"

"Well, if he's in politics, people will say he betrayed his country. Now it's known that my dad is a bad guy."

Even I was a bad person. I asked my dad to do something wrong. Despite that, the victim was a bastard. I had no right to judge anyone. What goes around comes around. I was from a rich family, and now that I was living in the countryside, I smelled this unpleasant tree.

"I love you for who you are. It has nothing to do with your family. You love me for who I am, even if you are a perfectionist and I am dirty..."

"You're not dirty. Please, don't ever say that again," I said in a loud voice. She fell silent.

"I just wanted to tell you that we love each other. Anything else is irrelevant."

"And if I am poor, do you still love me?"

"If you are poor, you have me. I will support you. I can work. We will find something. You can stay at home and give me orders as usual."

"Are you crazy? I can't stand the fact that you would have to support me. But don't worry. I'm rich. I'll take care of you."

We walked and tried to forget whatever our problems were. There was nothing we were afraid of...

Nobody knew us. This was our new world.

I was happy with her, nothing else mattered...

Or maybe it did...

I knew this was the province, but were there really no department stores?

I would love to go to a hair salon. But after seeing an aunt who owned the shop with hair like a bird's nest, I had to think twice. If she couldn't handle her own hair, I wouldn't let her touch mine. And it was so hard to find an ATM. But this was a market; there should be an ATM somewhere.

I felt like I had taken a time machine back to an old market. There were shops selling food and necessities like pork, mushrooms, duck, and chicken, but no luxury items.

Damn!

I was about to scream, but first, I needed to calm down and find an ATM. Where the hell was I?

“Hi, gorgeous!”

I turned towards the voice and saw a 7 or 8-year-old boy looking at me with admiration. I knew he liked me because I was beautiful.

I playfully pushed my hair back.

“Hello, boy.”

“I’ve never seen you around here. Are you new?”

This place was really something. People must be nice here, or there would be no serious crime.

“Yes, I moved here a week ago. I’m looking for an ATM. Where can I find one?”

“There’s a 7/11 over there. A little walk. Let me walk with you, but you have to go out for coffee with me.”

A boy from the countryside acting like a womanizer from America? I shrugged and walked along with the boy, who introduced himself as “Nueng.”

His womanizing showed in his eyes. He would grow up to have many wives and probably impregnate some of them.

“What’s your name?”

“I’m Gen.”

“Gen, you are very beautiful, like a Wolk cover girl.”

“What is Wolk?”

“The fashion magazine. My big sister said I can compliment a girl by telling her she looks like a Wolk cover girl.”

“You mean Vogue?”

“Is it Vogue? That’s such a strange name.”

I thought Wolk was even weirder, but it didn’t matter. A boy that young wouldn’t know anything about foreign fashion magazines.

In fact, he was nice enough to mention it.

“I thought only Pam the dentist was beautiful. But now you're here too. This is such a nice place.”

“Dentist Pam? Which Pam?”

“A dentist named Pam. She's very beautiful.”

“Compared to me?”

“You two are different. Dentist Pam is warm and beautiful, but you are damn beautiful.”

“What does ‘damn beautiful’ mean?”

“You’re so damn beautiful that the dead would want to be reborn just to be near you.”

That was such a strange encounter, but I would remember that line to use on Aoey.

My love would be shocked to hear it.

“You probably tried it with Pam before me, right?”

“Yes, but I think she’s a little strange.”

The boy and I walked until we reached the 7/11. We were still discussing the dentist whose name had really caught my attention. She must have been truly beautiful if I couldn't stop talking about her. I wanted to be in a beauty pageant with her.

“Why strange?”

“She kissed a sister who owns a coffee shop.”

I paused as I reached for the ATM.

Wait, this dentist Pam must have been a woman because she was beautiful. The sister who owned the coffee shop was obviously a woman too. This

immediately caught my interest.

“Are they both girls?”

“Yes, I saw them kissing in the cafeteria. Do women kiss? I'm so confused.”

“You don't have to know everything. You could grow up and kiss a boy.”

I laughed and stopped paying attention to the kid. I swiped my card and tried to get some cash out. 5,000 baht should be enough for a while since there wasn't much to spend money on in this place anyway.

But...

I couldn't get the money out.

What did that mean?

“What happened? You look like you've seen a ghost.”

I thought about what my mom said earlier. She told me to withdraw all my cash to avoid it being confiscated. But it seemed like my money had already been confiscated. I thought I would live an easy life here.

I had nothing left in my bank.

I didn't have any money!

Translator:

HAHAHA i guessed it right. And that little guy is a real hokage.

But thanks to him , Rak and Pam meet again. ♡



Chapter 33

"It's okay, Gen. We can live without money."

I was hugged by Aoey, who was now stunned by the fact that I had no money. She tried to calm me down, stroking my back. I sighed again and again. I couldn't believe that I hadn't taken out the money like my mom suggested.

"Even though we live in the countryside, we still need some cash, Aoey. We have to pay rent, water and electricity bills, and so on."

"I have some money left from my book. I'll also get more jobs."

"I'll look for a job too."

"No, I won't allow you." Her sweet eyes said in a high-pitched tone.

"Why?"

"I told you. You don't have to work. I'll support you."

"Are you crazy?" I laughed at her. "You spoil me too much. It's okay. There should be something I can do."

"I said you don't have to do anything. Just stay home. I want you to live comfortably with me."

"But..."

"No, don't work," Aoey said abruptly, and that ended our conversation. Luckily, the cost of living there was low. The sweet eyes still had some money to pay the rent.

But the worst came later...

"Here is your allowance. 200 baht per day. Is this enough?"

I looked at the money in her hands, feeling so awkward. I felt so uncomfortable because I wanted to grab that money to save what little ego I had left. But I realized that Aoey didn't think that way. I could only wave my hands.

"No, please keep it to yourself."

I never thought I would have a day like this. A day where I would have to take a small allowance of money from people like her. I used to spend 5,000 baht a day easily, but now I had to ask my girlfriend for some money.

I... couldn't stand it.

"Don't think too much, Gen."

"No, I couldn't. I won't accept it." I gave her a sharp look to insist that I would not take any of her money. When the girl realized I was serious, she backed away.

"Lower your ego, Gen. It's needed here. How are you going to live without this money?"

"I can live without money."

"You still need money inside the country."

"I'll look for a job," I insisted again. "There must be something I can do here."

But... there was nothing. No job that suited me.

Aoey could do anything. She made it look so easy. But why was it so hard for me to look for a job?

I couldn't work at a gas station because of the smell of gasoline. I couldn't work at a convenience store because I got into a fight with a manager who licked his lip while looking at me like he wanted to eat me. I stood outside a fabric store but couldn't stand the pattern on the fabric.

No job suited me!

I walked home sadly to find Aoey standing at the front door waiting for me. She looked so worried and ran towards me immediately once she saw me. She punched me right in the chest.

"Where were you?"

"I was looking for a job." I couldn't look her in the eye. I felt like a loser. "Don't hit me again. I feel bad enough as it is. There's no work I can do."

"I told you not to work. Just stay home."

"How could I take advantage of you like that? I'm Genlong, who's good at everything," I said with low self-esteem. "I always thought I was cool and smart. I can speak three languages, I'm excellent at piano, but I can't do anything here, not even at a gas station..."

I swallowed a big lump in my throat and covered my face. Aoey hugged me to comfort me.

"These jobs aren't made for you. I told you that I'll support you. Look, I'm working on my new book project. Once I have the money, we'll be fine," Aoey smiled at me and used both of her hands on my face, forcing me to look at her. "If you want to be useful, you can help me talk to my clients, help me pack, help me with delivery."

"But you're not publishing anything now? Have you finished writing?"

"Yes, almost."

"We need money until then anyway."

"I also worked at a job today. I earn 400 baht a day. We will be fine. Trust me."

"But..."

"Stay home and take care of our house, my beautiful girl. When I'm tired and need a massage..." The little girl smiled slyly. "Give me a sexy massage."

"Is that all I can do?"

"That's how I was before too. That's all I can do, but I make you happy, because... you are a vitamin for my heart."

The little girl took my hand and walked me back inside the house. I felt a little better once I heard that. I knew I was useless, but at least I made her happy.

At least...

But I felt useless anyway...



Aoey took care of all the household expenses. Not only was she writing a novel, but she also worked during the day. We picked leaves and vegetables on the roadside to save money.

"We don't need to buy. Some vendors pick vegetables like this to sell too," the sweet eyes said as she cooked.

I looked at the vegetables on a plate. They didn't look so good.

"Can we really eat them? They don't pass any quality control tests at the store." I picked the vegetables on my plate. I wasn't sure what should go

into my body. Aoey, who did everything from preparing the food, cooking rice, walking to the table, and tasting it in front of me.

"Here. It tastes so good." Sweet eyes brought the fried bell to her mouth and chewed on it.

"It's clean and tastes so good. Trust me. Try it."

"Are you sure?"

"Do you love me? If you love me, you have to trust me."

I tried it while she encouraged me. It tasted good. She sat down on a chair next to me after seeing that my face was better after I tried it. She looked at me eating and smiled.

"I love you a lot."

"Oh?" I paused as I put food in my mouth. I looked at her in surprise because she just told me she loved me so unexpectedly. "Why are you telling me now? What's the occasion?"

"I'm so worried that you can't live like this. This is nothing like your old life, and you might as well leave me."

"Why do you think that?"

"I can't do anything at all. My life is so useless."

Now I realized that without my parents, I was just a nice-looking little living creature that was worthless. If I were stupid enough, I would sell myself to earn a living.

But I wondered how much I would earn?

Now I was curious about myself...

Aoey reached out to touch my arm. She smiled to give me some encouragement. "Don't think you're worthless. You make me sad. You're

everything to me."

I could feel something in her hand. It was a rough hand. It wasn't the same anymore. I was curious, so I grabbed her hand and took a look.

Her palm was covered in scars and scratches. She tried to pull it back, but I held her tight.

"Why is your hand like that?"

"I'm allergic to detergent."

"Really? Can detergent be that bad for you?"

Aoey took her hand away and smiled sweetly at me. "I'm glad you're worried about me."

But I didn't smile at her. I knew she was hiding something. It must have something to do with her part-time job. I never asked her what she did, though.

"You never told me what kind of part-time work you're doing?"

"Selling things as usual."

"A convenience store? I went there often but I never saw you there."

"I help sell things at the market."

"Do they give you 400 baht a day?"

"I do a lot of things. Don't worry, Gen. I'm fine. My hand was soft before because I lived comfortably with you. But my hands were like that when I worked a lot when I lived with my mom too. I'll be fine."

I looked at her, and she look at me. I sighed and told myself that she wasn't hiding anything suspicious.

"If the job is too difficult for you, please don't do it."

"We won't have any money."

Why was money such a difficult asset for me now? I couldn't argue with that, so I stayed quiet. I processed in my head what I should do.

There had to be something I could do.

Dr. Tod.

This name suddenly popped into my head. I felt better once I thought of my friend who I was close with. We even kissed pretendingly in front of my mother. I hadn't contacted him since I ran away.

Would it be okay if I reached out for help?

"What are you thinking?"

Aoey asked when I fell silent. I thought about telling her, but then... I knew she would be against the idea of letting another person into our new world we just created.

"I was just daydreaming."

"Are you hiding something from me?"

I shook my head until my ponytail shook as well. Aoey smiled at me and put food on my plate like a loving girlfriend.

"Let's eat before it gets cold."

I felt guilty for doing something behind Aoey's back. That was the first day I had turned my phone on since I ran away. I was paranoid that the police, the CIA, or the DES—or whoever—could find me. But I didn't think the Thai police were that efficient yet. And I was in trouble; I needed to turn it back on. The police wanted my dad anyway.

I didn't plan on making a call from that phone. I just wanted Tod's number and would turn it off again. I did what I planned, and now I had to bury someone else's phone.

I sat in a coffee shop that was almost cool, but as someone who studied interior design, I realized that the owner had designed it herself. Some of the furniture didn't fit well in the shop. Some of it was useless, but what the hell, I was in a province, not in a fancy coffee shop in Bangkok.

“Excuse me. Can I borrow your phone for a moment?”

Not only did I despise her interior design, but I also asked for her phone. She was the cute little girl that the boy who made out with the dentist had talked about.

She was pretty, but I wanted to see the dentist more.

“Yes, sure,” she replied.

The pretty sister handed me her phone easily. I smiled flirtatiously and dialed Tod's number. My heart was beating so fast. The voice on the other end sounded surprised at the different number.

“Todd. It's me, Gen.”

[Naughty girl. Where are you?]

It felt good to hear that he was excited to talk to me. I was paranoid that he wouldn't want to talk to me anymore because I was a nobody now.

“Thank you for answering the phone,” I said.

[Why wouldn't I?]

“Because I don't have any money now.”

[What nonsense! I'm not your friend because you're rich or poor. Where are you now? Do you know that your mom is so worried about you? She keeps asking me where you are and can't get in touch with you.]

“How is everyone now? Well, don't tell me. In fact, I don't have time to talk to you. I borrowed someone else's phone. Can you do me a favor?”

[What is it?]

I felt so embarrassed. That was the first time in my life that I had to ask for someone else's money.

“Is it okay if I borrow some money? I'm in some kind of trouble.”

There was silence on the other end of the line. I had to call out to him to make sure.

“Why are you silent? You don't want to give me money or you're worried that I won't be able to pay it back?”

[No, not like that. I feel bad for you.]

I felt a big lump in my throat. It wasn't just him who felt bad. I felt sorry for him too.

[Why didn't you go with your family? At least you would have some money. You wouldn't be in trouble like this.]

“I would have money but not Aoey.”

There was a big sigh on the other end. Tod ended the conversation because he didn't want to make me feel bad.

[How much do you want? Tell me your bank account number.]

“I can't use my account. It's been confiscated.”

[How am I going to transfer the money to you? ... Okay, tell me where you are. I'll drive there to give it to you.]

“I can't tell you. Forget it. It's too much trouble. Thanks for talking to me.”

I hung up the phone quickly. I didn't want to waste other people's money and handed it back to the owner.

I sat down and made some drawings on a piece of paper to kill time. I forgot that I couldn't use my account. I wouldn't feel comfortable if Tod visited me. It was too dangerous to let too many people know where I was.

My life was so screwed up at the moment. While I was drawing, the owner looked at my paper.

“You can draw quite well. That's so beautiful,” she said.

I sat back proudly and didn't hesitate to brag. “I studied interior design. I have some basic drawing skills.”

“Can you paint a wall?”

“Huh?”

“I'm looking for someone to paint the wall of my coffee shop. I wanted a beautiful picture on it, but there was no one good enough. Can you...”

“I'm Genlong,” I introduced myself and looked the owner up and down.

“I'm Dokrak but you can call me Ram.”

She wasn't originally from there. She must have been from Bangkok. At least that's what the watch on her wrist said. It was a Panerai Luminor 241 power reserve, 40 mm. I could tell it was authentic. Why had a rich person

like her decided to live here and sell coffee for 25 baht a cup? Was it worth it?

“I heard about you from Nueng.”

“What did he say?” she asked.

“He said he saw you and the dentist Pam kissing in the store.”

I looked like I had seen a ghost when I finished my sentence. I laughed and had fun making the shop owner feel uncomfortable. This was what I was good at: scaring other people.

“Don't worry. You're dating a woman. It's normal. I'm dating a woman as well.” I told her openly as if she were my close friend. She was surprised that I was so open.

“Did you just move here?”

“Yes, I wasn't familiar with this place and I don't know if I will be. How do you do it?”

“I'm happy just being with someone I love in peace.”

“Dentist Pam? I heard she's really hot.”

I was in a competitive mood. I wanted to see who would be more beautiful, Genlong or Pam. The little girl didn't answer. She just smiled shyly. She didn't feel that comfortable talking about herself. She just wanted to talk to someone.

Couldn't she hear me?

“I ran away with my girlfriend,” I shook the ice in my coffee cup. “Is it possible to live with a woman until we are old?”

“It shouldn't be impossible,” she started to be more open with me now.

“Someone we love isn't always of the opposite sex.”

“But you can't have children,” I said.

“It doesn't matter. You can do so many things to have a child. I ran away here to create my own world with my beloved too. I'm happy here.”

“But there is nothing in this city.”

“You're from Bangkok. You're not familiar with this environment—”

“I don't know anything and I feel useless. I'm about to raise my white flag,” I shrugged. “Sometimes I feel like I shouldn't be here. I make my girlfriend work harder than she should.”

“How?”

“I don't have a job,” I said with a dark cloud hanging over my head. “I can't work. I don't know how to do a job. It's my ego, my personality, or whatever. I don't have a job. Now I feel like I'm taking advantage of Aoey. She's my girlfriend. I can't stand being her burden. I wanted to leave.”

“Don't think for her. My girlfriend thought for me, she made a lot of mistakes. Her happiness is being with you. I know it.”

“You can say that because you own a coffee shop. You have enough money to buy an expensive watch, but I have nothing.”

“But I also see that you have a Patek Phillipe.” She knew a lot. I looked at my watch and smiled. Someone finally knew what I was wearing.

“This is all I have. It's just an accessory.”

“You draw very well. I'm asking you to draw for me now. It would be nice if...”

We hadn't talked about work yet, when a doorbell rang. Someone just walked through the door. The shop owner looked nervous and stood up abruptly. I followed her gaze and saw a super beautiful woman with a sweet look. She had the exact same eyes and light eyebrows as Aoey. She kept looking back and forth between me and Rak.

“Pam.”

“Sees it,” Rak eplied.

The tone wasn't very sweet but it made me feel excited. There stood the dentist Pam. She was really beautiful like the little guy said.

Her mouth, neck, eyebrows, chin, skin, everything about her was so perfect. But I didn't like the slight vanilla smell that came with her. I preferred the citrus smell. But vanilla suited her well.

I could bet she was more delicious, she had a sweet taste, and I was a bitter lemon.

“This is Genlong,” Rak introduced me.

I could read right through Pam. Not only was she beautiful, but also super jealous. There was some pressure around her that almost made me laugh. I was Genlong. If you pressured me, I would pressure you back....

“We'll talk later, Rak. Nice to meet you.”

I winked flirtatiously at the shop owner and smiled at the dentist before leaving.

I had a habit of making fun of beautiful people. I felt like it was a beauty contest. I had to win.

It felt so tense around her. I better go. I looked at my watch and it wasn't time to go home yet. I hung out at ski and there first. I only had 40 baht in my bag. I could just walk and walk and walk.

I stopped at a construction site where a boutique hotel was being built. I could design their hotel but I hadn't graduated yet.

I looked around and stopped in front of someone who looked very familiar. She was wearing a big shirt and a big hat, but I knew who it was. My heart clenched tightly. I quickly hid myself because I wanted to watch her.

She was mixing cement in a big bucket and wiping away her sweat. I was so angry and wanted to rush over and ask her why she had to lie to me. She told me that she was selling things at the market.

But my anger disappeared when I noticed the scratches and scars on her tiny hands. She was trying to support me. I felt so helpless for not being able to help her at all. My eyes filled with tears.

Oh, my Aoey.

I ran back to our house, which was not far from the market. I rushed to her drawer where she kept all her important documents. I took out her only notebook. There was only 15,000 baht in the bank. She would not be able to publish her own book, pay the water and electricity bills, and cover the rent.

No... we couldn't live like this!

I ran back to the coffee shop. The shop owner didn't seem too happy when she saw me because of the trouble I had caused before I left. But she changed immediately once she saw that I was crying.

"Can I borrow your phone one more time, please?" I asked.

"S...sure," she replied.

I dialed Tod's number again. His voice sounded happy to hear from me.

"Todd... I'll tell you where I am. Please come see me!"

Chapter 34

Overnight, Tod traveled to me by plane and then by car to the city. I was surprised to see him the next morning after I had called him the previous evening.

I turned my phone on but silenced the call, so he could contact me.

The place of our meeting was Rak's café, where there were two dogs with strange names: *Sorapong and Tanatsee*. I wanted to play with them, but I had something more important to do...

“I have 100,000 baht for you,” Tod said.

My heart skipped a beat when I saw the piles of money Tod was carrying with him. It wasn't much money in my previous life, but now 2,000 baht was very valuable. I never thought he would give me so much.

“I know you're rich, but I never thought you'd be so generous with me. You know I'm broke, right?”

“This isn't my money. This is your mom's,”

“What?!”

“I talked to your mom after I talked to you. She gave me this money.”

“I don't just have a foul mouth. I'm also a loose cannon,” I said, mad at myself for telling him where I was. The handsome guy looked at me, shaking his head.

“Your mom is so worried about you,”

“You shouldn't have told my mom. I don't want it to be a big deal,”

“Running away is big enough. Your mom is so worried about you. She was worried that your dad's enemies might hurt you. She thought someone might do something to you.”

“No one will. This village is so remote. There isn't even a ghost in this village,”

“Stop being so silly. I'm serious... you can't live here. You've now realized that the outside world is harsh. No matter how tough you are, you were under your father's protection, but now you're just a fool without him,” Tod said bluntly.

Damn! Could I just slap him with a shoe? I knew he was blunt, but he could be nicer to me. I was already sad enough without his criticism.

“Stop trying to convince me. I'm not going anywhere. I'll be here with Aoey.”

“Are you too naive? Do you really think the two of you will be together until death do you part?”

“Ahem!” Rak coughed to warn us, probably thinking we were being too loud. She believed that if two people loved each other, they should be together. She might not have liked what Tod said.

“Yes, I can live here. I have money now,”

“What will you do when you run out of money? Are you going to keep calling me for more?” Tod stated, matter-of-factly. “And what about your future? Are you going to stop studying? Give up your plans to go abroad, no more shopping, cinema...”

“I can do all that with Aoey here,”

“Will she also stop going to school?”

I paused and looked at him, knowing he had hit a weak point. “Do we... do we have to study?”

“You wonder about that too. She can’t go to school because she has to be with you. What did she do to deserve this?”

"Gen, Aoey needs friends. She needs a social life, to apply for a job, and all that. Why does she deserve to live like this? Tell me, how do you live now? You don't have any money. Let me guess... Aoey is supporting you.”

I started to feel ashamed. I couldn’t stand hearing all this from someone else. “Please stop. If you’re going to criticize me like that, I have to go,” I said, ready to leave.

“Your mom will send someone to pick you up,”

I was shocked to hear that. I felt bad for having to deal with this. Was he trying to force me to run away again?

“Why did you do this? You found me, and now you want to force me to run away again?”

“I’m trying to reason with you. Your mom wants you to go to Macau with her. At least go to school there and wait until the situation improves. You can come back anytime.”

“I’m not going,” I said firmly.

“Are you going to live like this? Think about it. If you’re here, Aoey can’t go to school. She has to work hard, with no future. And you’ll be here until you’re 80, calling me when you run out of money. Love doesn’t fill your stomach. Love needs money too. At least you need to know how to make money.”

I shuddered, feeling horrible for agreeing with everything he said. But I didn’t want to give in. I walked away from the café, taking the money with me.

I could live here. I had money now. I would use that money to publish Aoey's book. We would have more money to live on.

Yes, I could do it. Love doesn't need so much money.

Aoey came home completely exhausted but still went to the kitchen to cook for me. I walked over to her and pulled her arm. I pointed at the table where food was already laid out.

"You don't have to cook today. I have food for you,"

"Huh?" Aoey looked surprised. I brought her over to the table where there were three or four plates of food.

"I bought so much food for you today,"

"So much food. Where did the money come from?"

I paused because I had forgotten to think of an excuse. But since she was smart and beautiful, I thought of something quickly.

"I saved 40 baht every day from what you gave me for two weeks. I realized how good I am at saving," I said with a smile.

"You're very nice," Aoey said, hugging me. "But you don't need to save it. You can spend the money. The money I give you is for you to spend, not to save."

She said that without thinking about herself. I felt sad and guilty at the same time. Tears wanted to come out, but I had to hold them back and smile.

"I'll use it on you,"

I sat her down to eat. I noticed how weak she was. She was so thin, and her hands were rough. She never showed how tired she was when she was at home. And she still didn't tell me what kind of work she did.

"Aren't you thinking about studying?" I asked casually as we ate.

Her sweet eyes stopped and looked at me, as I pretended to eat and chat casually. "We don't need any certificate to live here," she said.

"But it's better to have a certificate. You don't plan to sell things at the market and earn 400 baht every day, do you?"

"I will sell my book," she said confidently.

"You only have 15,000 baht left,"

Aoey put down her utensils and looked at me, ready to confront me.

"Did you go through my things?" she asked angrily.

"Yes, I wanted to know how much money you have. You don't have any money," I sighed. "I'll try to call Tod and ask for money," I lied.

"No!" she snapped.

Her sharp tone made our conversation turn serious. However, I had prepared myself for this.

"I'm starting to feel like I'm dragging you down now," I said with pain. "I shouldn't have brought you here. You got into a good college, but now you work hard to pay the rent, the water, and electricity bills. You have no future here."

"I told you I'm happy like this. I wanted to be with you," she insisted.

"What happens if we don't love each other one day?"

"I will never stop loving you."

“Does eternal love really exist?” I asked, biting my lip in pain. “Because you couldn’t touch anyone, you thought it was love when you could touch me.”

Aoey slammed the table hard, her anger making me reevaluate how I would handle this.

“I always love you. I was in love with you even before we met for the second time. Whether we can touch or not, it doesn’t matter. I love you, Gen, and only you!” The sweet-eyed girl put her arms on the table.

“Why are we fighting? I worked hard to get back to this. You don’t even hug me, you support me. Why don’t you?”

I stood up and walked over to her. I hugged her from behind. She resisted but relented when I kissed her head. She turned around and hugged me, burying her face in my chest.

“Don’t act like you’re not happy with me. I can’t stand it. I’d rather not have an education than live without you,” she said.

“Oh, my Aoey.”

“I’m scared. I love you so much, Gen.”

And I loved her so much that I couldn’t take her future away from her. Even though what Rak told me echoed in my head all the time. “*Don’t think for her,*” she had said. But seeing Aoey’s hands, her scars, her thin body, the life without a future... I realized many things now.

Three days later, I called Tod to give him my answer.

“I’m leaving here. Please tell my mom,” I said.

I met Tod again at the coffee shop. He was still in town because he knew I would contact him. The handsome man nodded and sighed.

“I know you’re making a good decision. It must be difficult. But I knew you were doing this for Aoey, right?”

I tried to hold back my tears.

“T-Tod... if I have to go, can you take care of her? Just update me on how she is. She’ll be heartbroken if I’m not with her. I’m worried about her,” I said, my voice shaking even though I tried to control it.

She had no one else but me. But I still decided to leave. It should be better if I wasn’t there.

“Yes, I will keep an eye on her. I will support her,” Tod assured me.

“One thing you need to know... she’s sick. I want her to be examined by a doctor. I’ll tell you everything later.”

“Yes, I will do that,” he promised.

“The money, the 100,000 baht I borrowed...”

“It’s 99,500 baht now because you spent 500 baht on food yesterday. However, that’s your mom’s money, not mine.”

“Even so, I’ll leave it with you... I wanted to keep this money for Aoey’s book. Please help her.” I pleaded.

“Umm...”

“If I’m not here... don’t speak ill of me to her,” I shouted, my voice breaking. “If she loves me, she’ll be so heartbroken without me.”

I cried in the café. Everyone looked at me in surprise. Tod didn’t say anything because nothing would help now.

“I will do everything you ask of me, but just one thing...” he said softly.

“ ...”

“You have to leave Aoey. For her and your own good.”



Chapter 35

Everything was ready. All I had to do was say goodbye to Aoey. I barely had anything to pack. It was just me and the clothes I was wearing. Tod said that my mom had someone waiting for me at the border, who would guide me across to the neighboring country, and from there, I could easily be taken to Macau. I just had to get out of here.

We planned to leave at 1 AM. I didn't know how much time I would need to say goodbye. I wanted to make the most of the little time we had.

It was so hard to leave her like this...

"Okay," Tod said.

I visited Aoey at the construction site. She seemed surprised to see me there. I just smiled and called out to her.

"We're going home,"

"But I need to keep working," she replied.

"Skip work. You don't have to,"

"But I've already worked half a day. I might get fired if I stop now. The contractor will scold me,"

"No, he won't. I've already spoken to him,"

The contractor was confused but accepted 1,000 baht from me. He let Aoey go without asking any questions. He received more money than he would

have paid for a worker. The sweet-eyed girl was very confused that she could leave early. She walked out awkwardly.

“How do you know I work here?”

“I knew for a while. I saw you working here. I was waiting for you to tell me.” I said, giving her a complaining look. “You lied to me about selling things at the market.”

“I’m sorry... I couldn’t tell you that I worked here. I didn’t want you to worry because I’d be upset if you worked here,” she said guiltily, hugging my arm. “Are you mad at me?”

“Yes, I was, but not anymore. I don’t want to waste time getting angry.”

“Why are you so kind today? Why are you picking me up? Is everything okay?”

“I miss you. Since we’ve lived here, we’ve never spent time together on a date. Let’s do it today. I’m so bored. I might just run away if I stay this bored.”

“Don’t say that... again.”

“Let’s go on a date then—”

“Okay.”

We spent the whole day wandering around the market. It wasn’t a big area, but walking around could be very hot, and there wasn’t much to buy. We mostly bought food and enjoyed the greenery of the trees. This town was suitable for walking or cycling. There were some motorbikes, but I thought they were a bit noisy.

I didn’t want to take Aoey to Rak’s café because I wasn’t sure Tod would be able to hang out there. But we didn’t need to go there. We just walked around, and before we knew it, it was 6 o’clock.

Time goes by so fast...

“I always wanted to go on a date with you when we were in Bangkok. We finally did it today. I’m so happy,” Aoey said.

She walked happily until she stopped in front of our wooden fence at home.

“What comes after a date?” she asked.

“We finish it in bed,” I replied.

Aoey gave me a big smile. I laughed and put my arm around her shoulder, walking her into the house.

“Why waste time? Let’s play on our rusty bed that will make a squeaky sound, just the way you like it.”

“Arrrg! You’re naughty today. Can I moan loudly today?”

“Anything you want, my kitty, but don’t let the bird hear us. It’s a nasty little bird.”

“Let’s be loud. Both of us.”

“Naughty.”

We both went in and cleaned ourselves up. We ended up in bed like we had planned. I started it, and she didn’t protest. She seemed very happy today. No matter what I did, she seemed to be doing just fine.

“You are so pretty today.”

“Yes, I am pretty.”

“I love you every day. I love you more than anyone else in the world.”

We cuddled in bed with a variety of rhythms. Sometimes we were gentle, sometimes fierce. We started at 8 PM and continued for 3 hours. I didn’t let Aoey have any rest.

I had to seize the moment. There was no time left...

The rhythmic creaking sound of the bed followed our movements. We took turns making happy sounds as if it was just the two of us in the world.

The sweet eyes beneath me looked up obsessively, like when we first met in elementary school and on the first day we met again. Both of her arms wrapped around my neck, and we whispered words of love into each other's ears. I was almost on the verge of tears.

"I love you, Gen."

"I love you too, Aoey."

"My Gen."

"My Aoey."

During all the time we spent together, I might have seemed happy, but the girl beneath me had no idea that I had a huge lump in my throat. Goodbye seemed so scary. I couldn't imagine saying goodbye to her. Would I be able to leave? I kept wondering...

"Again," I begged. Aoey, who was drenched in sweat, looked at me and laughed.

"What happened to you today?"

"Can I have it again?"

"I think you should eat something special today. Tell me what you ate today. I will prepare it for you every day."

We continued making love over and over again like never before, and I felt so fulfilled.

"Again, my little kitty."

"Again."

"I want it again."

Our last time ended because Aoey was too tired to continue. She raised her arm as if giving up.

“I can’t, Gen. I’m so tired.”

“You give up so easily.”

“You are so good today. My baby, you got 10 out of 10.”

But I couldn’t stop and kept kissing her the whole time. I wanted to hold on to every moment, every smell, every feeling because I couldn’t have it again.

“Okay, I won’t do it again, but you have to kiss me.”

I was ready to cry...

Luckily, all the lights were off now. The room was dark. There were some lights shining down from the sky, but it was still too dark to see that I was crying. Aoey kissed me easily. I wanted to ask for it again, but I thought Aoey was about to sleep.

“You will sleep now?”

“Ummm...” She looked like she had fainted.

I looked down at the girl beneath me and let the tears roll down my cheeks. I picked up Aoey’s pajamas, which were now scattered on the floor, and put them back on her. I didn’t want Teacher Salee to see her daughter in an awkward situation.

Yes, I called Teacher Salee to come over. Then she could be with Aoey when I left. I made an effort to finally put on her clothes. I grabbed the handcuffs she brought from Bangkok and locked her wrist to the rusty bed. Afterwards, I got dressed and left a letter on a pillow next to her. She could read it when she woke up.

The letter... was the hardest thing I’d ever written.

[Aoey,

If you read this letter, you will understand why I have to go and leave you behind. I thought that only love would guide us through all the difficulties, but that was not the case at all. I hate being poor.

Since I was born, I have never lived badly. When my family was in Korat, our house at least was made of cement with many facilities in it. But living here with you is not the same. It is not comfortable. I don't like the wooden house that makes a creaking noise when I walk. I feel hot during the day... There is nothing good about it.

I cannot stand it....

These difficulties have made me realize that I love myself more. Living a poor life makes me hate everything here. I hate the stupid smiles of the people from the provinces. I hate the smell of the trees. I hate the market that cannot provide me with the things I like. But most of all, I hate the fact that I have no money.

Even though you said you could support me, people like me cannot live in the countryside on just 200 baht a day. I cannot live with this environment; I will never be happy around it.

No air conditioning.

No smart TV.

No water heater.

Even the bed is rusty.

I love you, Aoey, but I have realized now that being poor is eating me alive. I feel empty inside and wonder why I didn't run away with my family.

The answer is you...

I have to live like this because of you. I will be better and happier without you. I have to leave you behind. Please understand me... I wanted you to understand that it is natural for men and women to be together. It is impossible for two women to be together until the end. One day, you will meet a man who wants to marry you and have children with you. I, Gen, will have to find a husband as rich and intelligent as I am. I don't think I can fight against nature anymore.

Only in novels does a woman love a woman and a man be with another man without being judged by society. If such a place exists, I never thought I would see it.

I don't want to prove that our relationship will last forever. I'm not a guinea pig. If it makes your life easier, you can hate me.

Because it seems I have started to hate you too. Because you made me be in this situation.

I leave.

I hope I never see you again.

Genlong.]

By the time she finished reading that, she would hate me. She would never forgive me. She would forget that she ever loved me. I looked at the little girl sleeping in the bed and tiptoed out of the room to go downstairs. Teacher Salee was waiting and smiled at me.

"How is she?"

“She’s sleeping now.” I couldn’t tell her why she was sleeping so easily.
“Teacher, please take good care of her. She’ll be sad when she wakes up. I might not be able to handle her...”

"Yes, I can. She is my daughter."

I felt sorry for Teacher Salee now. She would have to handle her daughter with the broken heart she would be left with upon learning of my departure. I went. Aoey hated her too. What goes around comes around. That was what Teacher Salee had to give back to Aoey, even though she didn't mean it.

Karma... everyone has to pay their own karma, even me.

I took her husband away from her. It was time for my loved one to be taken away from me as well. It was only fair, but Aoey did nothing wrong here. Why did she have to go through this?

She was always a victim.

“Before I go, I’ll leave this with you. You’ll need this.” I handed her a key for the handcuffs. Mrs. Salee looked puzzled.

"What is this key for?"

“You’ll know when you go up. You’ll need this. And here’s for Aoey. She’ll need this. I want her to go back to school.” I took out my watch, a gift from my father when I passed an entrance exam, and handed it to the old lady in front of me. “I don’t know if this watch can make any profit, but it’s an expensive watch. It should be enough for her tuition.”

"Don't do this, Gen. I can take care of her."

"Please take this. Think of it as a gift to compensate Aoey for bringing her here. She should be in school... or at least keep it for her treatment. She needs a psychologist."

I explained to Teacher Salee earlier about Aoey's illness. She reached out her hand to take the watch.

“You are so good to Aoey.” Teacher Salee didn’t know about our relationship. She looked at me gratefully and nodded. “Why do you have to go? It was your father who was doing the money laundering business. It shouldn’t have anything to do with you.”

This was another thing she didn’t know about...

"Teacher, I have something to tell you, and it is up to you whether you forgive me or not."

"What's that?"

"I’m the one who asked my father to kill your husband."

Teacher Salee looked shocked once I made my confession. She paused before raising her hand and slapping me hard across the face. I lost my balance. I was numb and in pain, but it couldn’t compare to what she had to go through.

After slapping me, she clenched her fist tightly. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she hit me again. She ran to hug me right after that.

"Thanks, Gen... Thanks for killing that monster for me."

That was the feeling of the confession. When I received forgiveness, I felt light. I smiled at her and cried with her.

"Please don't tell Aoey about this. I want her to forget about that man, as if it never happened to her."

"I'll forget about him too."

Teacher Salee and I looked at each other in silence. We understood each other. If we were in a normal situation, this would be a time of struggle between us. But now we were at the farewell. We didn't have time. We would remember only the good.

"Please take good care of Aoey."

"Gen?!"

Our conversation was cut short when Aoey's voice called out my name from upstairs. The little girl woke up and didn't see me lying next to her. She must have been surprised that she was handcuffed to the bed. I had to get out of there now.

"I have to go now. I'm afraid if I see her, I won't be able to leave."

"Good luck, Gen."

I walked out of the house, but Aoey was still shouting my name. Her voice chased me. I could barely lift my leg to get out of the house. Tod, who waited in front of the house for a while, nodded at me. He indicated that everything was ready and we were ready to go.

"Let's go."

"Like I said before. If I ask you to stop the car, don't do it... no matter what I say, don't stop the car."

"I understood."

"Gen!!"

Aoey screamed from inside the house and was now walking down the stairs with her wrist bleeding. I looked at her bloody wrist in surprise. I wanted to run to her. The handsome man grabbed me and threw me into the car before rushing into the driver's seat.

"Don't go, Gen!"

The young girl ran after the car, which was now moving away. Aoey ran to the window and banged on it like crazy, crying.

"Gen, get out of the car. Where are you going? You said you wouldn't leave me."

I covered my ears with my hands. I didn't want to hear it. I looked down at the floor so I didn't have to look at her. The soft eyes were hitting the window with the handcuffs that were tied to her wrist. Blood was everywhere.

"Get out of the car, Gen. Don't leave me. I can't live without you, Gen!!"

That was it. I couldn't stand this. I didn't want to leave anymore.

"Stop the car... Hey, stop the car now!"

I tried to open the door, but the driver was determined to get me out of there. He continued to drive away at full speed. Aoey began to disappear from the mirror.

"I said stop the car." I tried to grab the steering wheel, but Tod pushed me. "Stop the car. Please... Tod... please."

I hit him, I called him names. I completely forgot how well I was raised. I was rude and aggressive. I did everything I could think of to get him to stop the car.

"I told you to stop the car. Stop the fucking car! You piece of shit." I hit him as hard as I could. "Please let me go see her."

I wasn't going to let that happen. I looked at the bloodstain on the window in pain. I could only knock on the door.

"No, if you get out of the car now, you will lose your chance to leave the country. I am doing this for you."

"But Aoey fell to the ground. Didn't you see that?!" I lamented. "She can't live like this. Please help me. I'm about to die. Please help me."

"You two will get through this."

"How can I live... how can I live like this?!" I touched my heart that felt like it was broken into pieces. "If it hurts me so much, how much must it

hurt Aoey? Tod, please help me.”

I saw that his eyes were also filled with tears. He felt sorry for me, but he had to do it. That was the best solution for all of us.

He was doing his job; he took me to the border where my mom had everything arranged.

That was the last time I saw Aoey before leaving the country as planned.



Chapter 36

Three years had passed.

One year has 365 days. Three years is more than 1,000 days that I was away from Thailand.

The world kept turning. People lived their lives. They went to work, listened to the news on TV, and bought new Facebooks and phones as expensive as gold.

Today, I was richer than ever and knew how to make money on my own.

I was a cartoonist and hadn't taken the master's course. That was the change in my life. Genlong, who had a perfect life, was the best in fashion, looks, hairstyle, and studies. My whole life I had been perfect. But that was me in the past. I was no longer the same Genlong.

My new English name was **Kate Wang**. People there had English names, so they called me Kate. It was an easy name.

My life changed a lot from what had happened three years before. After I left Aoey, I lived in Macau. My dad was richer than ever. We just couldn't go back to Thailand. I had recently found out that my dad was a partner in a casino in Macau. He wasn't the owner but a major shareholder. It was a guarantee that I wouldn't starve to death.

Sometimes love needed money, but money never needed love. My dad always said that if you knew how to make money, love would find you.

Even though my pocket was so deep, I still didn't want to spend money. I realized that one day, if I didn't have my father, I could go back to being

that poor Genlong.

I was now an online cartoonist. I made a living drawing novel covers. The money wasn't much, but at least I knew how to make money. I remembered the first time I received my first payment for work I did online. I cried and proudly showed it to my mom. My mom smiled and looked proudly at me, not at the money.

"My daughter has grown up now," she said.

That made me realize that I had grown up. I used my Thai name for the cartoons I worked on online, but I used my English name for the novel covers I drew.

Why would I do that?

Just so I could draw a cover for someone without her knowing it was me. That was my pseudonym on the novel cover drawing. I could ask for more money using that trick. But my main job, drawing cartoons, was so busy at the moment that it prevented me from doing anything else.

"Gen!" Tod's voice called me as I was reading a tourist brochure upon arrival at the airport.

"Tod!" I shouted with excitement.

"Take it easy!"

I rushed to hug the handsome boy with excitement. I had missed him so much. He was just as handsome as he was three years ago, but now he was wearing glasses, which made him look more mature.

"Are you afraid that people won't know you're a doctor? Why do you have to wear glasses?"

"Just like you. Are you afraid that people won't know you're an artist? Why do you have to wear ripped jeans? You're not the same perfect Genlong I met years ago." Tod scanned me from top to bottom.

Lately, I realized that wearing an artistic outfit helped my personality. I didn't need expensive clothes; just casual shoes could make me look good.

I used to wear pretty expensive shoes back then.

"Let's catch up later. I have to check into the hotel first."

"A good woman wouldn't ask a man to go to a hotel together when they see each other."

"If you weren't gay, I would ask you to have a baby with me."

Our relationship was very close, like that of brothers. In the past three years, we had kept in touch every day. No matter how busy we were, we would chat or talk.

He told me he was going to Hong Kong, so I had to urgently clear my schedule for him. I flew from Macau to meet him in Hong Kong so we could hang out together because I missed him so much.

He was my second-best friend, second after Aoey.

The handsome man paused slightly when he saw my driver-Jonathan, or John. They smiled and greeted each other in English.

"I'll take you to the hotel."

"Thank you."

John volunteered to drive for me, which was unusual because he usually had a high-level job with my father. He enthusiastically offered to do it once he heard that a friend from Thailand was coming to visit me. He wanted to take me even though I told him it was my personal business. He volunteered to do this for free.

I was so anxious...

"Do we have to speak English when we talk? Is it considered rude if we speak Thai?" Tod asked from the back seat.

"You can speak Thai. John is not nosy. He knows we are Thai. If you want to talk to him, you can switch to English."

I secretly looked at Tod through the mirror and smiled. I felt much happier because I was finally with someone from the same country, besides my family.

Having a friend was so nice.

"He's your boyfriend?"

"You're getting straight to the point." I laughed and secretly glanced at John. "I'm not sure about the relationship. He keeps asking me to marry him."

"He is so handsome. You should marry him. It is the right time now. I can feel his wealth from here. He is our driver today, but I can feel that he has an aura of a rich man."

"He's one of my dad's partners in the casino."

"He's fucking rich! But he doesn't look Chinese at all."

"It's a mix between Chinese and British."

"What are you waiting for? Just spread your legs. He's handsome and rich. He just came out of a soap opera."

John was a man of power and wealth. We met when I moved there. I was a mess back then because I was so sad. I had to visit a psychiatrist. I was depressed. Even though he was a busy man, he still took the time to visit me and hang out with me.

When he found out I loved drawing, he helped me find my footing in drawing. He was the one who told me I could be an online cartoonist to make a living. His kindness made me open up a little. However, we hadn't agreed that we were dating.

John was like a life jacket thrown into the ocean when I was about to drown.

"I spread my legs once."

"What?!"

"I was too sensitive back then, so I just went with the flow."

I told Tod what happened. I was so depressed and sad back then that I wanted to kill myself. But John was someone who stood by me and helped me until I got better... and now... John and I were in an ambiguous relationship. He volunteered to take care of me; all he asked for was a chance.

I was feeling lonely and hoping that someone new could help me out of the depression situation, so I had sex with him once. That's how we ended up in an unclear situation.

Not a boyfriend, but not just a friend either.

He was ready to be more than just a friend, but I was the one who wasn't ready.

It was the first and only time I would do that. Not again...

Finally, John stopped in front of the hotel he owned. Tod explored the suite room he had just checked into for free. He was impressed with the owner before expressing his gratitude.

"Thanks, but it doesn't have to be a suite."

"Just take it. He's rich. This is nothing to him." I laughed and sent John a smile in thanks.

"Make yourself at home. Kate, if you need anything, let me know."

"Okay."

He left, and now it was just the handsome guy and me alone. Tod walked over to the couch and sat down comfortably. He looked at me, who was still standing.

"Why did he leave you alone with me in the room? Aren't he worried that I might rape you?"

"I told him you like men."

"Hey, don't tell other people."

"Well, it helps that he's not jealous."

"He's not jealous, but he drove himself to the airport. I bet he wanted to meet me first."

"Even if he's jealous, he can't do anything. It's all up to me." I walked over to the couch, sat down near him, and started chatting.

"Everything is alright?"

"Are you asking about me or Aoey?"

I sat up straight, realizing he had caught me. All the way from the airport, I wanted to ask about it, but I didn't want to seem so desperate, so I had to talk about something else.

"Whoever."

"I'm fine."

"Why are you quiet? You're not curious about me?" he continued to mock me. I began to feel agitated.

"Just tell me. How is Aoey?"

He laughed when he saw that I was upset. Tod nodded and sighed.

"She is doing well and is now famous. She's not as well-known as JK Rowling, but she is very well-known. Some company bought her copyright for a TV drama. Her life is good now."

"That's good to hear."

"As I told you earlier in the chat, her fame also made me a kind of celebrity. I own a publishing company that makes a lot of money. Oh! You have something too!"

Tod handed me a check. "Here's to the major shareholder."

I was puzzled and looked at the check he handed me. "When did I become your partner?"

"When you gave Aoey your 100,000 baht for the book."

"But I gave her that money to make the book."

"She refused when I gave her the money, so I had to come up with a plan. I pretended to be a publisher and offered to print her novel. It was a good thing, though, because I got some benefits. But I can't take advantage of your money. We must share it. Take it."

"You never told me anything and now you tell me that I own a publishing house. Not only are you nosy, but you keep secrets."

"The secret makes me more mysterious."

I looked at the check and felt nothing.

Damn! Aoey should be richer. She shouldn't have to share money with other people. This was annoying. "Save it for Aoey."

"We both share the money, and we still have plenty of it. Don't you think she's richer? I told you she's very famous and very rich now. Her life is on the up."

I had heard that she could smile. I was proud of my little friend who was now successful after having to go through so much in life.

"Thank you for keeping your promise that you would take good care of her. Aoey grew up successfully today and you are a part of that."

"It's not for you." We both fell silent as we were lost in our own thoughts. Tod sighed before changing the subject.

"I came to Hong Kong this time not only to travel but also to talk to you about something."

"What is it?"

"Your cartoon, MATE."

I was surprised when he mentioned my cartoon project that I had finished two weeks ago. It was the cartoon that I drew and posted on a website. I had received very good feedback that ranked me in the top 5. I never thought that my story would be a success.

The story of Aoey and me.

"What's up with that?"

"Some reader sent an email to Aoey about your story on the Internet that was very similar to her story on the Dekdee website. Aoey sent me here to deal with the copyright infringement... She thought the artist of the story copied her work."

"Hmm."

I leaned back comfortably in the chair. At first, I thought she might know I was the artist.

"What do you want to do?"

"If she's not happy with that, I'll ask my website to take it down. I'll pay the fine, or whatever."

"But you didn't copy it. Why would you remove it?"

"Whatever makes her feel better."

"You try to please her too much." Tod rested his chin on his palm and looked at me with a loving gaze. "Genlong, who never gave up, but now you will easily erase her caricature even though she did not commit any theft."

"If it looks the same, there's no point in being stubborn. Aoey asked you to talk to the artist like this, which means she's ready to start a legal process. I'll give up to finish it."

"I think you should talk to Aoey. It was similar, but it's not the same anyway. Gen, you drew pictures that tell your story from your point of view. Aoey wrote a story from her point of view. It was the same story about two women who look at each other and fall in love. **There's a bird... oh! And most importantly... some handcuffs.**"

I felt like someone was squeezing my heart until I couldn't breathe. I tried to forget it, but the handsome man only stirred the memory again.

"So you're here to travel or to ask me to delete my cartoon... or what?"

"I flew here to ask you to come back to Bangkok together using travel and royalties as excuses."

"Why would I come back?"

The handsome man looked at me and didn't say anything for a long time. I didn't like that calmness, but I waited for Tod's next comment.

"Attend Aoey's wedding again."

I felt numb as if someone had hit me in the head with a club. I could have fainted at that moment. At first, I thought he was joking, but on second thought, I knew it was true.

"Did she?"

"Yeah."

"Why is she in a hurry? Is she better from her illness?" I asked him about her physical problem that no one could touch. Tod nodded.

"Better... I told you before in the chat."

"You didn't mention any details."

"She's much better now. She was almost cured. Why don't you seem happy for her? Don't you want her to get married?"

I tried to smile but I wasn't sure how I felt. It had been three years but I still felt something.

Possessiveness....

But what right did I have? I was the one who left her. Tod looked at me and handed me a wedding invitation that he had just taken out of his bag.

I felt as if a piece of paper in the envelope was something hot. It might burn my hand if I touched it. But I had to be strong and took it from him. The blue card printed with gold characters looked very luxurious. I could feel that she had a good life. The expensive wedding invitation could say a lot about a beautiful married life.

The groom could be rich...

"Who is the boyfriend?"

"A brother of Aoey's psychologist."

"Okay," I looked at the card in my hand and put it down. "I'll put some money for a gift in an envelope and ask you to give it to her."

"Don't you want to go together? Don't you want to see with your own eyes that she's happy?"

Was he testing me? He wanted to know if I still had feelings for her. Lately, I had been telling him that I could get over it and live my life normally. Maybe he was trying to fool other people.

And me too....

The wedding invitation card in front of me seemed to shake me quite hard from head to toe. I could barely smile. I didn't think I would be able to attend the wedding....

"I don't think I should go. She might not be happy to see me. I hurt her pretty badly."

"But from my point of view, you are a very important part that helps her now. If it weren't for you, she wouldn't have been cured. If it weren't for you, Aoey wouldn't have money for school. If it weren't for you, she wouldn't have been able to publish her book. She wouldn't be successful today."

"You have to go, Gen."

I leaned back on my couch and glared at the bossy boy in front of me.

"You like to make requests. Three years ago, you visited me and told me to leave Aoey. Today, you order me to go to her wedding. Do you have good intentions or are you doing it for fun?"

"Yeah, I'm not sure if I meant well or if I was just doing it for fun." Tod also leaned back and looked at me casually. "I just want you to be a part of this wedding. You play an important role in Aoey's life, you even drew the cover of her famous novel."

"I also violated her copyright."

"You have everything to do with Aoey's life. You mustn't miss her wedding."

That was true. I played an important role in Aoey's life but attending her wedding...

"She's getting married because she has no one left. Don't you want to attend the important day of her life?"

"What do you mean she has no one left?" I looked at the handsome boy in surprise. I didn't like the tone of it. "Where's Teacher Salee?"

"Aoey's mom got married to another new guy and moved to another country. She has to get married," Tod shrugged. "She's fed up with a life with a stepfather. She doesn't want to move in with her mom. She's worried about not having anyone, so she decided to get married."

"She's getting married because she needs someone to depend on?" I started to feel nervous after hearing this reason. "What about the guy? Does he love her?"

"I guess. He takes good care of her, but it seems Aoey doesn't love him back."

We both fell silent. We were both in our own thoughts. The handsome boy looked at me and raised his eyebrows mockingly.

"Do you want to go now?"

"No, I don't have a good reason to go."

"Copyright violation is a good reason. I found the best reason for you to go back to Thailand to clear things up with the novel's owner."

"We can communicate by email or just remove the cartoon. It's that easy now."

"It's up to you. I'm just here to give you the news."

"I'm not going."

"Okay."

"Stop looking at me like that."

"Uh-huh."

"Don't go! I told you I'm not going."

"I did not say anything."

"I am not going!"

WELCOME TO THAILAND

Why did I end up at Suvarnabhumi Airport?



Chapter 37

Afterwards, I told Tod that I would stay at a hotel in the center. The handsome guy ran towards me with a happy face. The last time we met, I insisted that I would not go back to Bangkok. Five days after that, I booked a plane ticket like a loser.

"You can't stand that... the perfect Genlong."

"Can you stop looking at me like that? Don't you think I'm embarrassed enough?" I crossed my arms and looked away. I didn't want to look him in the eyes. The handsome boy, who was now taking a sip of his coffee, waved his hands in an apologetic gesture.

"I'm sorry. I can't help it when I see you lose. How long are you going to stay here?"

"Well..." I paused in embarrassment. "Until she gets married."

"You're really here for the wedding."

Her wedding was scheduled for the 15th of next month. I had about a month to be in Thailand. It could be because I wanted to stay in Thailand. I wanted to see how she was doing.

"I want to see her. I want to know how she is. But I'm not sure if she'll be okay to see me. On second thought, I can't be that important to her right now. She's about to get married. So... I came here. At least to congratulate her. If I came with the intention of congratulating her, she can't be upset about it."

I was talking in circles more to myself than to Tod. It sounded like an excuse, I guess. Tod nodded understandably.

"Aoey will be surprised to know that you are here for her wedding."

"Here's my excuse: the issue of copyright infringement. Something to talk to her about." I shifted uncomfortably. "Can you help me make an appointment with her? I..."

"Yeah." He agreed even before I finished my sentence. "Aoey is having a fan meeting at a bookstore in Siam Square. I'll give you an appointment that day."

"Are you going to tell her it was me?"

"No."

"I think it's for the best too," I smiled nervously. "She might not want to see me if she knew it was me."

"Get ready for that then."

Besides being a bad experience that scared me, Aoey was another reason that could scare me. The 3-day period before meeting Aoey, I was not quite myself. There was some hesitation about whether I should meet with the eye candy or just book a return ticket to Macau.

But I really wanted to see her...

I wanted to know how she was doing for the past 3 years. I could guess that the sweet-eyed girl wouldn't chat with me like a long-lost friend. I was curious about how beautiful she was now. We were both older. I wondered what she looked like now.

Even I was different...

I used to be Miss Perfect, everything had to be branded, expensive stuff, but now I switched to something affordable for my income. I used to wear expensive clothes, it could cost up to 2000 USD. Now I only wore a 10

USD t-shirt. The most I spent lately was 25 USD if it was really worth it. My past experience taught me that no matter how expensive your clothes were, it didn't tell your worth at all. The worth was in you.

What a deeply meaningful life...

After three days, the day came for Aoey to meet her fans at a bookstore downtown. Tod had to pick me up because I was no longer familiar with the address after 3 years away from Thailand.

"Taxis here are the same. They make excuses not to take you. I'll pick you up."

That was his explanation for taking me there. He skipped work and school for that. But I guess I thought the handsome guy wanted to see what our reaction would be after not seeing each other for a long time.

"What do you hope to see between Aoey and me?"

"I want to see cats fight." That was the typical foul-mouthed guy I dealt with for a long time.

"I have to be there anyway. I'm the owner of the publishing company she's in. I'm here to represent Aoey regarding the violation of her copyright."

"What a great excuse! I thought I had to talk to the lawyers."

"To be honest, I have no idea who will win between you and Aoey if you really have to fight. No one copied anything. It's just the same story from a different point of view."

"I told you I'll take that off."

"You're losing then."

I hated the word **"lose"**. Tod knew very well that I hated this word. He tried to push me to fight.

"Fuck it!"

"Occasionally, you'll be rude, but it's cool and I like it."

We both chatted until we got to the event.

She wasn't a celebrity, but having her readers lined up for her was something.

Aoey wasn't there yet. Tod said that she was looking for a parking spot.

"Is she driving now? Does she have a driver's license?"

"Why would you need one if you have a driver?"

I looked at Tod in bewilderment but remained silent, waiting for an answer. "Her boyfriend?"

"Yes, you will see today," he said without looking at me. He seemed to be having fun with the situation. "I want to see both of your reactions when you meet."

"You're really having fun."

"I couldn't miss this."

"Aoey is coming. I should step aside. I can meet her when we discuss copyright. Are you afraid?"

I paused and turned around to look at him. I was upset to hear that, but I couldn't deny that I was very nervous about seeing her again, even though I knew her every move from Tod over the past few years. I had no idea how she would react if she saw me.

"Leave."

I lost... I couldn't be there because I was too scared.

She was a little girl who couldn't really do any physical harm to me. The best she could do was scold me and hit me. But I was too scared. I felt like I couldn't pay back the debts I borrowed from her and I couldn't look her in the eye.

Oh! What an impact she had on me!

I stepped aside but still tried to catch a glimpse of her arrival. Ten minutes later, the petite woman I never forgot appeared among her fans. She gave an interview on a small stage prepared for the event. Her sweet face in a long white turtleneck shirt with long hair made her look elegant.

She looked surprisingly mature. Her glowing skin and red lips reminded me of the past when she would hug me and call me, "*My Gen.*"

My heart was beating so fast I was worried it might burst out of my chest. Tears welled up in my eyes. I was filled with love and longing.

I longed for her.

It had been 3 years. I wanted to run over to hug her and say hello, but I couldn't.

"This doesn't seem to be hiding." His voice haunted me at all times and in all places and made me wipe my tears quickly. I hid in a corner where no one could see me, but not this guy.

"I'm scared."

"You're hiding here because you don't want her to see you. But eventually, you two will meet today."

"I'll let her work in peace. She can get upset later when she sees me."

"You always worry about her."

"This is what cool people do. What time will she finish here? I'll go for a walk for now."

"It could be an hour or a little more than that. She needs to give her signature. I already told Ten to meet me at an underground restaurant."

"Ten?"

"Her boyfriend."

I don't know why, but when I heard that, I felt a pain in my chest like a sharp knife piercing my heart even though they are about to get married. I told him frankly about how I felt.

"You still have feelings for her."

"No, I do not."

"Your face doesn't match the lie you just told."

"How can you accuse a girl of lying?" I left that area because I had finished talking to him. "Let's get out of here. I don't want her to see me. I need to be prepared."

I couldn't accept that... but it seemed like I still had feelings for her that were about to explode. I needed to truly understand that she now belonged to someone else.

I had no right!

Finally, I couldn't run any further. At that moment, I was standing in front of a restaurant where Tod made an appointment with Aoey. To be honest, copyright wasn't an important matter at all.

I just wanted to see her but...

"Tell her I'll take down the cartoon. I'm leaving."

I turned around, but the handsome boy used his arm to block my neck from behind. He laughed when he saw my reaction.

"It's too late now. You can't just run away like that. Genlong isn't a person who runs away."

"Tod!"

I was pushed into the store. I couldn't run any further. I paused, straightened my back, fixed my posture, and entered the restaurant. I arrived at the table where Aoey was sitting, playing with her phone. She still hadn't seen me.

A man sitting next to her stood up to greet us first.

"Hi, Tod. She must be..."

There was a pause from him, who greeted me and looked me in the eyes. I was not surprised because it was a common reaction of more than 90% of men who saw me for the first time.

"I am Genlong. The artist who will discuss copyright."

As soon as I introduced myself, Aoey's face lit up with complete surprise. Her old, sweet, light brown eyes widened in disbelief.

She dropped her phone on the table.

"Hi, Aoey," I said, mustering all the courage I had to greet her, trying to cover all the stories we had shared.

"Gen. Can you remember me?"

There was a silence between us, as if time had stopped. We both stared at each other for a long time until Aoey finally did something that no one expected.

She picked up a glass of water and threw it in my face as if she had slapped me.

The freezing water hit my face and soaked parts of my clothes. We were now the center of attention in the store. Tod grabbed me, pulling me behind him and scolding Aoey.

"Why did you do that?!"

"You said this is the person who copied my novel, right?" she asked, getting no response from Tod. "It's fitting for the writer to be angry at the imitator."

"But this is too much. It's Genlong. It's Genlong!" Tod seemed more angry than I was. I pulled on Tod's shirt, placing him between Aoey and me. I smiled at him, understandingly.

"It's okay, Tod. She have the right to be angry. I was wrong."

"Yes, you did!" Aoey said angrily. "I just splashed water, but compared to what you did, it's nothing. **Try taking off a pair of handcuffs with a blood everywhere and running after a car like a dog chasing its owner. You'll learn that pain is incomparable.**"

It wasn't about copyright that we were fighting. It was about the past that only the two of us knew.

The young girl grabbed her bag and was about to leave the restaurant. But she turned around and spoke to me angrily. "About my copyright, I will sue you to death. You will have nothing left. Mark my words!"

She walked out of the restaurant, leaving Tod and me standing there, confused. I was prepared for this encounter not to end well, but I wasn't expecting the splash of water.

"It seems I pushed too hard for fun."

"I made a mistake."

"About coming here?"

The handsome boy looked worried about me. I shook my head and tried to dry myself with a handkerchief.

"About not wearing a raincoat. I would have done the same as her. A little revenge," I laughed and walked out of the restaurant, wanting to avoid being the center of attention.

Tod followed right behind me, still worried.

"If you're angry, let it out. Don't try to smile. I feel uncomfortable."

"I'm not mad."

"Why not? Anyone would be angry."

I paused and looked at Tod. I repeated Aoey's words, "If I have to compare the water splash to being handcuffed and running after a car like a dog chasing its owner... No, I'm not angry. I really hurt her a lot. She has the right to be angry. I would be too if it were me."

"I knew that Genlong was not a weak and forgiving person."

"But I forgive her. She is my first love."

Finally, the handsome guy felt sorry for me and hugged me tightly. Tod was there that day and helped me not to get out of the car.

"Now you're the sad one."

"I can be sad. She has been sad for a long time."

I knew that day wouldn't be easy. I had to learn my lesson after I hurt her over and over again.

Once I got back to the hotel, I took a long shower to calm down. A bath helped improve my mood after dealing with so many bad things. The water would wash away my sadness.

While I was in the bath, the hotel phone rang. I reached for it when I had little energy left. The voice on the other end was the receptionist, who told me I had a visitor.

"Her name is Aoey. Do you want to see her?"

I jumped out of the tub excitedly before agreeing to let her up. "Yeah, sure. Send her up."

"We'll send her to your room."

Why was she here? I quickly got dressed before she arrived at my room. My doorbell rang less than five minutes later. I opened the door, expecting to see her.

"Hello, Aoey. Why are you here?"

"Can I come in?" Her harsh tone surprised me. I felt like she had come there with a bomb ready to explode at any moment.

"What's wrong?" I said awkwardly.

Aoey quickly turned around to look at me as if it were a stupid question. Or I thought that whatever I said now would just piss her off anyway.

"Can't I be here even if nothing happens? You violated my copyright."

"I'm just asking. You can come anytime."

"Why are you here?" It was a simple question, but for me, it had many layers of complexity.

Why are you back here?

What do you want?

What is your plan?

"I'm here to discuss copyright. You thought I copied you and wanted to talk to the artist. That's why I'm here." I didn't get straight to the point. Aoey walked to the bed and sat down angrily.

"If you knew you made a mistake, you would easily end the dispute by removing the cartoon. That's what you would do. I know it." Her sweet eyes looked at me as if demanding an answer. "You have another reason. Why are you here?"

"What kind of reason do you expect to hear?"

"The truth."

"I miss you."

We both fell silent. There was surprise in those beautiful eyes. I smiled at the corner of my mouth but quickly hid it. I told myself I shouldn't do that.

She was about to get married. I shouldn't make her doubt her wedding, not even a little.

"Is that what you want to hear from me?" Aoey frowned at my question.

"Do you miss me?"

"No," I shrugged. "I think about you, but I don't really miss you. It was a long time ago."

It seemed to reopen the wound. Aoey stood up angrily, just like she had in the restaurant.

"So you're actually just here for the royalties. If this hadn't happened, you'd never want to see me again... right? The letter you left me was true. You hated me for that phase of your life."

"There were so many reasons why I couldn't go back to Thailand. But now it's okay. I have a new passport with a new name. I have a new identity. I can now travel in and out of the country easily. But there's something more important than copyright."

"What's that?"

"You're getting married."

The sweet eyes looked at me in astonishment. I thought she wasn't very happy that I knew about this.

"How do you know?"

"Tod told me," I said, thinking about her fiancé. "Your boyfriend is cute. He looked hygienic. He looked suitable for you. You will have a happy married life."

"I pushed for copyright but not for this." She said, as if complaining to herself. I looked at her with a big question.

"What do you mean?"

The young girl nervously backed away when I looked at her. "Nothing."

"Does that mean you knew all along that I drew that cartoon?" I walked over to her. She was cornered now. The little girl backed up until her back hit the bed, and she sat down on it. She had run out of excuses.

"You asked Tod to tell me about copyright, just so you could see me?"

"Yeah."

I closed my eyes. I lost to this girl again. In the past three years, I tried to let her go by not contacting her. But now I was tricked into this.

"So you acted like you were surprised to see me at the restaurant. Was that an act?"

"I knew you could be the artist. And it really turned out that if it was you..."

"Why would you want me to come back here if it makes you so angry?"

"I want you to see that I have money now." The sweet eyes looked at me aggressively. "In the letter you told me that you couldn't live with me because I didn't have money. But now I have it."

Now she was a step behind. She quoted the very bad letter I had written and could barely remember the details.

"I had nothing, so you couldn't live with me. I have everything today-fame, money-but the person next to me is not you," the girl smiled. "The good thing about being poor is that you can filter out the people who stay in my life. I wanted you to see that I met a better person and I can do it."

It must have been so painful that it drove her to seek revenge. I looked at Aoey with pity. I wanted to give her a hug. My eyes must have revealed so much that it upset her.

"Why are you looking at me like that, huh!?"

"I'm proud of you." I reached out to touch her cheek gently in admiration, but she ignored it.

"I don't need your support."

"I am proud that you have become an intelligent, successful, and famous person."

"Don't look at me with pity as if we were on friendly terms. I don't need your support or anything." The sweet eyes walked to the door and turned around angrily. "I hate you, Gen. Keep that in mind."

"Yes, I know."

The door slammed shut. I stood in the room filled with sadness.

I see, it was the right decision to get out of her life then. After I left, she got a better life.

I had made the right decision.

Translator:

Until in what episode would we stop crying?

Its my 4th episode now. 🥲



Chapter 38

That day, I became a very sought-after person.

The hotel reception called to inform me that another visitor had arrived. I was surprised to find out it was Ten, Aoey's boyfriend.

We had never met before-only seen each other at the previous restaurant. He visited me at the hotel but didn't come up. I went down to the lobby to meet him.

"Hello."

"I'm Aoey's boyfriend."

"I know."

We both fell silent. I looked at the man in front of me, wondering what he wanted. He was well-mannered, about my age, and hygienic. He wasn't a top-model type, but he was a good-looking man. Aoey had good taste.

"Why are you visiting me?" I asked first; otherwise, we'd be there all day. It was 11 in the morning.

"Aoey's mom told me to contact you."

"Teacher Salee?" I sat up straight. "I thought she was abroad."

"Yes, she is abroad. Can I speak to you openly?" He asked politely. I nodded in agreement, not wanting him to feel too uncomfortable.

"Yes, sure."

"I spoke with Aoey's mom and told her that Aoey is sick. She refuses to eat, travel, or take medicine. She just sleeps all day. I'm worried about her. Her mom said you might be able to help."

"I'm not a doctor."

"I don't understand her, so I'm contacting you. I also heard from her mom that you and her were very close. I saw you arguing about copyright."

Yes, he was there that day too. I didn't know how to explain it to him, so I stayed quiet. I thought about the sick little girl alone. What was wrong with her?

She was fine the other day.

"Where is Aoey now?"

"At the condominium. I'll take you there."

A lot had happened in three years. Aoey, a petite woman, had come to Bangkok with less than 500 baht in cash. She now lived in an expensive apartment in the center. It wasn't as big as mine, but it was good for Aoey. I was proud of her.

"Are you living with her?"

"No, but I spend time here often. I don't want to leave her alone."

I was relieved to hear that-they weren't living together. Why did I feel relieved? They were about to get married.

"Ten, can I go in?"

"I have her key card. You don't have to be too polite to me. I want to be your friend."

He really tried to be my friend... I smiled and didn't say anything. I was an introvert, and I tried to build a bubble around myself so no one could get

too close. There were only two people who burst that bubble-Aoey and Tod. It would be strange if Ten could burst it too.

He was my ex-girlfriend's future boyfriend. It was just too weird.

His room was on the 22nd floor. We arrived in front of the door and looked at each other. We nodded before he tapped the card on the door and opened it. The door was ajar.

"Should we knock first in case she's naked?"

I looked at my new friend, unimpressed by his manners, but he smiled.

"It's okay if she's naked. We're getting married soon anyway."

That bothered me...

However, Ten waited at the front of the room. I turned around in surprise as he left me alone with Aoey. Damn it! I should at least tell Aoey how I ended up there. He just let me in, and I faced that little monster by myself.

I entered the room.

It was a studio with a total area of 42 square meters. There was enough space for a small sofa and a queen-size bed in the middle of the room.

I saw Aoey's body lying on her side, her back facing me. She didn't notice my entrance. She must have thought it was Ten who had the key card.

"I'm not hungry. Please go away, Ten."

I didn't say anything but sat next to her on the bed and touched her neck to check her temperature.

She didn't have a fever...

But Aoey dismissed it immediately. She still didn't like being touched like before.

"Don't touch me. I don't like being touched."

"I thought you were cured. You still don't like being touched."

Aoey sat up immediately upon hearing my voice. Her sweet eyes looked at me in surprise. We stared at each other in silence for many minutes. It felt like an eternal battle.

She finally broke the silence.

"How did you get here?"

"Ten brought me," I said with a scoff. "Seeing me caused you so much trouble? You refuse to eat."

"Don't be nosy," Aoey said angrily. She looked me in the eyes and asked frankly, "Why are you here? Just because Ten asked you to?"

"Ten told me that you've been depressed since you saw me. He thought I might be the reason... why? Was it so bad to see me?" I teased her, and it seemed to work. Aoey bit her lip, fighting against herself.

"Who said that? Why would I be depressed after seeing you?"

"I don't know. You still love me, I guess?" I made fun of her to make her laugh, but it made her angrier. She grabbed her phone and threw it at my head.

"Ow!"

It wasn't hard enough to make me bleed, but it hurt enough to make me angry. I grabbed her wrist and glared at her.

"This is too much, Aoey-"

"No, it isn't. How dare you say that? I don't love you anymore because you're a whore who left me because I had no money." She continued hitting me on the shoulder. "I can do more than this. If I had a hammer, I'd smash

your head in. If I had a knife, I'd stab you. I'll do whatever causes you pain."

"I'm in pain now."

"That's not enough. I wanted to hurt you more."

"You don't eat, you don't sleep-it's enough to hurt me. You don't have to do anything. I have my punishment now!" I grabbed her arm that was still trying to hit me. I used my other hand to push down on her chest, forcing her to stay still on the bed. "Whatever you want to do to me, just do it. You want to scold me, insult me, talk shit about me, but eat your food. Don't worry about other people."

"Who? Nobody in this world cares about me."

"I do!"

Suddenly, it was like someone had pressed the mute button on the TV. I was on top of her, staring into her eyes, trying to make her stay still. I wanted her to be still. She pulled her arms out of my grip and pulled my neck down.

"Are you worried about me? Why are you worried about me?"

"Friends... because we are friends."

"That's all?"

"What other thing?"

Our faces and lips came closer like magnets. An alert sounded from Aoey's phone, like a bell that saved us. What was happening? Why did we end up here?

We looked into each other's eyes while she was still beneath me. I pulled away and pretended nothing was wrong. "I have to go. Aoey, you have to eat. You don't want to be too skinny as a bride."

"Gen."

I wanted to end the conversation. My duty was done now. What had just happened was a mistake that could have negative effects. I had to pretend nothing had happened.

"Eat some food, okay?"

"You feel sensitive towards me, don't you?"

She was the same straightforward girl. She still spoke frankly, as if she wasn't about to get married.

"It was the atmosphere," I said seriously. "I'm single and lonely. Anyone can make me feel sensitive."

"You don't have anyone now, do you?"

I was about to leave but turned around when I heard that. Aoey took off her shirt and revealed her white lace bra.

"I can be sensitive. It's okay with me."

"Why are you doing this?"

"I want to know if you really don't feel anything for me."

"No, I don't feel anything."

The sweet eyes walked towards me and unclasped her bra in front of me. Her soft skin, which I hadn't admired for three years, now dared me to touch the. I turned my face away.

"Fine. Don't make me realize you have feelings for me." The sweet eyes leaned down and whispered in my ear. "I'll play with your feelings until you can't stand it."

Our faces almost touched. That was typical of Aoey's flirting, but it felt different.

I used to be flirtatious about love.

But this was revenge.

What did she expect? What did she want?

"I have to go. Don't forget to eat your food."

"How can I get rid of this feeling that you're not cooperating with me?" she said with a smile. "I should call Ten to help me relieve myself."

I turned around to glare at her angrily. A smile appeared on her face like a winner. It made me realize I was losing to her again.

"Yes, you have feelings for me." Aoey said with a sparkle in her eyes.

"Now it's my turn to give you unbearable pain!"



Chapter 39

Because Aoey said she wasn't relieved and still loved me, it made me so nervous that I had to drag her future husband to take me to the hotel as soon as possible. Her feeling of revenge was so destructive.

I never knew what she would do.

All the way back, Ten tried to be nice to me. I noticed something flirtatious underneath it. I had dealt with a guy like this before, so I recognized it.

"We'll have lunch from time to time. I wanted to be your friend."

"Yeah, sure. Bring Aoey with you. I think she should be better after we talk. You'll have a healthy girlfriend soon."

"I'm worried about her. She doesn't talk much when she's with me. It seems like she has so many things inside her that she tries to hide. She's close to you. I want to know about her through you."

I smiled and realized how clever this guy was. Only me, not an innocent young girl, would not be his victim. How could she choose this guy?

I could imagine she would be a single mother raising her son while this guy was hunting for a 53-year-old girl.

"Why are you going to marry her if you don't know her that well?"

"I like her. I wanted to marry her."

I sighed. I didn't understand his logic. How could you marry a girl just because you liked her? I could sense that his sentiment was dry. How could

someone who was about to get married give off such a boring vibe?

“My mom and Aoey’s mom are friends. At that time, Aoey needed a psychologist, so my brother, who is a psychologist, put her through the treatment process. My mom and my family love her. My family wants to take care of her. We want to do that. I don’t want her to think that she is alone in the world.”

“So you’re going to marry her?”

“I don’t care about that. She’s beautiful, and I like her.” The driver turned to me with a flirtatious smile. “But it seems I like someone else now.”

“You’re going to marry my best friend, and now you’re flirting with me.”

I stated the fact frankly. The guy was openly a womanizer, but he was not your typical cheap womanizer.

He was a one-of-a-kind womanizer.

“I wanted to be happy. I never liked anyone. I wanted to fall in love,” he said. I looked at him but started to understand. I once felt like that. This made me more open to him because I saw myself in him. It was me before I saw Aoey.

“That’s why you’re bored. I understand.”

“Were you like this?”

“Yes, I looked for someone who would make me feel encouraged. But I wasn’t trying to get married for that reason. If you don’t love her, marrying her won’t help.”

“What’s happening now? Are you feeling that now?”


I didn’t answer that question. I just gave him a smile and looked out the window. When the time comes, love will eventually arrive. And it might come in the wrong way, like loving someone I shouldn’t love. I hated that kind of twisted love.

Once I got to the hotel, all I did was lay down on the bed, just like Aoey did. Ever since our meeting, I was sure that I was still in love with her. I was tortured by the time I kept counting down to her wedding day.

Aoey was about to marry a lonely boy who was still looking for love. He was just like me in the past.

I sat down and thought of a plan. Aoey shouldn't marry him, but what reason should I give her? The wedding date was approaching, and I was the one who had to stay away as far as possible; otherwise, I would look bad.

I thought of someone.



“You want me to tell Aoey not to get married? Why don't you ask me to marry her?” He laughed sarcastically. “I gave her money. I took care of her. I took you to the border. Now you want me to ruin her wedding.”

“Because you are the most credible person.”

I visited Tod at the hospital where he was an intern. He looked well and mature in his white uniform.

He was a foul-mouthed doctor who looked cool.

“I can't let her marry him, not the boy who just flirted with me.”

“That's what she chose. What can we do? Why don't you finish the wedding yourself?”

“What will people think of me?”

“You’re thinking about that and asking me to do that for you? Oh! Honey... what a bitch!” He was still the same foul-mouthed guy. Damn! No one could really help me.

“Gen... don’t worry too much about Aoey. She did her best.”

“You don’t want me to worry about her. Why are you asking me to go to the wedding anyway? You want me to see if she’s happy. Now I’ve seen that she won’t be happy.”

“I told you to watch, not do something. Your job is to be there, put up money for the blessing, watch them get married, and that’s it.”

“I could not do it.”

“You marry her yourself. That’s the solution.”

Speaking of getting married, I had a flashback to when I was carrying Aoey and she whispered in my ear, “Let’s get married.”

I smiled at the memory.

Tod kicked my shin and woke me up.

“Why the hell are you smiling?”

“Nothing,” I sighed. “I’ll wage war on her about the wedding, but if it doesn’t work out, you’ll have to interfere. I couldn’t bear to see her fail at her marriage.”

“I want to see you handle it.” Tod seemed to be enjoying this.

“Are you thinking I’m trying to get her back?”

“It is not like that?”

“I couldn’t do that. First, she already hates me,” I thought about my bad letter to her. “Second, I can’t ask her to be with someone like me.”

“She might not be okay with that. She might be waiting for you to do something to get back together.”

“She is going through a copyright lawsuit. She definitely doesn’t want to get back together.”

I laughed at our twisted fate. I was the one who wanted the best for her but had to play the worst role in her life.

But it might be better than doing nothing. I had to warn him about that! I couldn’t believe that in one day I had already made an appointment with Aoey for dinner.

Sweet eyes didn’t answer my calls at least the first three times. When I was already giving up and stopped calling, she called again and agreed to meet up when I told her I needed to talk to her. She showed up two hours later. I could only remind myself that I had hurt her even more.

Just let it go...

But that was too much. I hated it when people didn’t respect other people’s time!

“I’m sorry. I just woke up an hour ago. I was working on a novel last night.”

I looked at my watch and tried to smile. If I weren’t her, I wouldn’t be smiling. “It’s okay. I’m glad you’re here.”

“You don’t use a Patek Philippe watch here.”

Aoey looked at my watch curiously. I quickly lowered my hand. “No, not really. It doesn’t really match my outfit. I’m changing my style.”

“You were so proud of your watch. Is your dad okay with you not wearing it?”

“You remember so many details about me.”

I smiled and was impressed that she never forgot me. Sweet eyes looked at me and smiled. I felt a soft touch on my legs.

Her bare feet touched me seductively. This sexy kitten was trying to test my patience.

“I remember a lot about you... every corner.”

“Let’s talk about something else.” I politely moved my leg away from her and got straight to the point. “I want to talk about your wedding.”

“What’s up with that?”

I could still feel her leg gently rubbing my leg playfully. I bit my lip and let it go.

“I don’t think Ten is the guy for you. Don’t marry him.”

“You surprise me. You can’t stand someone touching me, eating me like you did.”

“Focus on what I said.” I closed my eyes and tried to be patient. What she was trying to do was actually working on me; I was so sensitive right now.

“Ten will take off my clothes one by one and kiss me all over... do you think he’s as good as you?” Aoey rested her chin on her hand and looked at me. “I still remember the last day before you left. You did very well. I gave you 10 out of 10.”

“Please...”

“I always thought that men were scary after my bad experience. But when I had you, you were the best thing in my life because you made me so happy. Now I wonder if it would be the same to sleep with men, besides my stepfather.”

My heart was beating faster from the pain. Aoey was so good at inflicting pain on me. That must be her writing skill. She was so good at it.

“Men have fingers and tongues too. They can give me pleasure. They also have that thing that naturally gives women pleasure. I need to be more open about it.”

“Please stop...”

I almost grabbed my heart because it could fall to pieces. I had to change the subject at that moment.

“Please don’t get married. Do it for me. Ten isn’t the guy for you. You still have more time to look for someone who really suits you.”

“I can marry Ten, or any guy. It doesn’t matter,” Aoey shrugged. She didn’t seem to care at all.

“What does that mean?”

“I meant what I just said. I can marry anyone, anyone but not you!”

“Why are you doing this to take revenge for your own life? Getting married is no small matter,” I sighed weakly. “You are famous now. You have a good life. You should marry a good man who suits you.”

“I’m lucky to have Ten after my mother’s ex-husband messed me up.”

“Hey!” I shook her leg and yelled angrily. The sweet eyes seemed excited to see my reaction. “Stop doing this to yourself.”

“What?! I’m serious.”

“So why are you getting married? Are you trying to get revenge on me?”

“Does it work? Am I making you angry?”

“No, not even a little bit.” That was a huge lie. I didn’t know if she could tell, but I did my best to hide my feelings. “Our relationship ended a long

time ago. I only wish the best for you. I'm telling you this honestly because I was your close friend."

She just smiled back at me, seeming to belittle my friendship.

"Close friend... I appreciated that word a long time ago."

"But you don't believe anything I said just now."

I clenched my fist tightly and felt sad for having seen her at that moment. I knew I was the only one in the world she would never listen to. I shouldn't have to. She leaned back in her chair and smiled like a winner. I couldn't argue with her.

"Yes, I wouldn't believe anything you say. Even if hell was right in front of me and you told me not to go in, I would."

"Are you worried about me? Worried that I might be in pain?" she said in a vengeful tone and looked at me like a winner. "If you're worried about me, I'll keep doing it. I'll make you feel the pain I felt."

"It's none of your business. I'll marry whoever I want."

"I'll make your worry worst until you die. Go to hell!"

Chapter 40

I had been in Thailand for almost a week. I was full of emotions. I was happy to see my ex-girlfriend, whom I hadn't seen in a long time. It hurt me to know that she hated me so much, but I felt happier than sad, despite her hatred. I was glad to see her grow up and become a successful adult.

Now that I saw that she was happy, I should go back... right?

This morning, my mom called me from Macau. I assumed she knew where Tod was. My mom's complaints made my ears numb. "Thailand is not safe for you. Even though you changed your name and surname, it is still not safe. Come back now!"

I looked at the passport in my hand and laughed. Back then, I had left Thailand secretly. I needed a new name to come back. I didn't know how my dad did it, but I got a new identity, a new name, a new passport...

But I was the same old Aoey.

Tod visited me that day at the hotel. He came up to my room and lazily lay down on my bed. He was a very busy person, but he always had time for me.

"I don't want you to feel lonely. You don't have any friends here." Tod leaned on his elbow and looked at me. "How come you don't have any friends? You must be so mean that no one would want to see you. But once you had a friend, you made her your girlfriend."

"Fool!" I crossed my arms over my chest. "I'm thinking of going back to Macau."

“Aren't you going to wait for the wedding? You couldn't stand to see Aoey announce on stage that she's going to marry that man. You don't want to know about their love story.”

I didn't say anything. I assumed that was how I felt. But one more thing was that I thought I had caused her pain too. Every time she looked at me, I could see the pain in her eyes.

“You could say that. I think I should go. At least now I know how well she's doing.”

“What! You just got here. We haven't been anywhere together. We have to go somewhere first.”

“How are you going to do that? I've barely seen you since I've been here... apart from when you wanted to watch my drama.”

The handsome guy laughed and waved. “Okay, that's my fault... about our company...” He rolled his eyes before continuing. “**Our company...**”

“I will never get used to that.”

Tod talked about a publishing house he set up to publish Aoey's book. It was doing very well, even though traditional media was dying, but people had turned to the Internet to read for free.

“Our company will have a field trip for writers.”

“But there is only one writer, Aoey.”

“Silly, we have more than ten writers in the company. I wanted to thank them for helping us succeed. You should join too because, first, I wanted to hang out with you. Second, you are the owner of the company.”

“What a headache. I don't know anything about this company.”

“That's 100,000 baht. Come on! Just come... you should see Thailand before you go.”

“Boring.”

“Think of it as a date with Aoey. Have you ever taken her on a trip, other than when you ran away?”

What persuasion!

I sighed and agreed to go because I wanted to be with Aoey... one last time.

Well, a vacation before leaving Thailand.

How much profit did the company make? They could take more than ten writers to a luxury hotel like that... I hid behind a pillar in a corner of the hotel. Tod crossed his arms over his chest and shook his head at me.

“You seem to enjoy hiding in a corner lately. Where is my confidant Genlong?”

I rolled my eyes when I heard that. Now I felt bad because I decided to go there. “She’ll call me nosy again. I have nothing to do with this outing, but here I am.”

“But it’s your company.”

“She doesn’t know that.”

“Today she will know.”

“What?!”

I looked at him excitedly. “This is not what we agreed on. I didn’t come here to tell everyone that I’m a partner in the publishing house.”

“You won’t say it, but I will.”

“No.”

“Can you stop me?”

Tod dragged me to sit at a table where the writers were sitting. Aoey sat next to Ten and looked at me in surprise. Every time our eyes met, I saw sadness, depression, and a sense of revenge there.

The look in her eyes made me want to fly back to Macau.

“Why is she here, Tod?” Aoey couldn’t bear it, so she asked Tod in an annoyed tone.

“I thought you’d be happy to see her here. You were looking forward to date with her in the past.”

“Date?” Ted heard the word and turned around in surprise. It wasn’t vocabulary you used with friends. I quickly tried to be playful with the words.

“We call it a date when we go out. You dress up to look pretty.”

“She is our great partner in the company.”

She stiffened when she heard that. Her soft eyes looked at Tod as if she had been betrayed all her life.

“I have to leave the company then because I can’t work like that.”

She stood up angrily. All the chattering writers were now silent. The atmosphere of the outing changed completely. I felt so bad for being there.

“You don’t have to quit. I’ll quit. Just eat your food.”

“No.”

“Okay.”

“I said I can’t work with her.”

“Sit down.”

“No, why would I listen to you?”

“Do what I told you!”

My loud tone made Aoey stop and tense up as if she was cursed. The smaller girl stared at me. We both stared into each other’s eyes until she finally sat down.

All eyes were on me because they were stunned that I had just appeared and was already so overbearing. Ten smiled as if he was impressed that I could tell Aoey what to do.

Tod looked at me and made a gesture for applause and told everyone to keep eating.

“Don’t worry. They’re friends. Let’s keep eating.”

“I want to go for a walk. Excuse me.”

I apologized and left the table because I didn’t want to be the center of attention. I was sure I would become a topic of gossip later that night. I should have trusted my instincts. I shouldn’t have gone there and should have returned to Macau. I had just bullied Aoey in front of so many people. Her sweet eyes must have hated me even more.

It was very hot, but the sea breeze alleviated the heat somewhat. While I was alone, thinking, I heard a low, familiar voice from behind.

“Hey! Can I talk to you?”

I didn’t like Ten following me there. He shouldn’t make it too obvious that he was interested in me.

I didn’t want Aoey to see that, dammit!

“Why are you here? You should be with Aoey.”

“Aoey doesn’t want to talk to anyone. I wanted to talk to you.”

“Please don’t flirt with me. I’m not interested. I’m sorry,” I rejected him openly. My eyes and gesture were very obvious. Ten laughed.

“A woman like that is super strong. You must reject hundreds of men. You do it with such strength and naturalness.”

“Especially if you’re going to be my friend’s husband in the future. I really don’t want to get entangled.”

“Did you tell Aoey that I like you?”

Her direct question made me hesitate. Should she be asking me that? But what the hell... I didn’t want to be her friend anyway.

“Yes, did she tell you?”

“Not really. I understood that you warned your friend about me. Are you trying to ruin my wedding?”

“Yeah, I don’t think you’re husband material. Sorry, I have to be direct.”

“To be honest, I feel good that you’re trying to stop the wedding. Because I’m not sure I want to get married either. I don’t mind marrying her, let alone having sex with her, but I’m not entirely convinced. I’m sure you understand me.”

“If that’s the case, why do you still want to marry her? Do you think it’s a joke?”

“I pity her. At least if I can’t be a good husband, I can be her friend.”

I understood his logic, but I couldn’t accept it anyway. That marriage was for Aoey to have a family because she had no one left in the country. Marriage was a way to find a life partner, but it shouldn’t be without love...

“You can be friends without getting married.”

“Why don’t you stay with her then? If you really don’t want her to get married.”

I felt dazed...

It was a direct and simple question that I didn't know how to answer. Although it was true, why didn't I stay with her if I wanted her to have friends?

"I cannot stay."

"Then don't stop me. Let me marry her and be her friend."

"Don't sleep with her then."

"No way, I'm a human being. She's beautiful. If we're in bed together, how can I stop that?"

Ten and I looked at each other. He was actually a simple guy, a nice guy. My only problem was that he was Aoey's future husband and I was his anonymous ex-girlfriend.

What a complex relationship!

"What are you two talking about?" Aoey asked from afar as Ten and I stared into each other's eyes. There was a slight annoyance in her tone. She looked at both of us suspiciously.

"Nothing, I saw her alone, so I'm just keeping her company," Ten replied.

"You shouldn't do this." Aoey walked toward us and grabbed Ten's arm.

"What would the others think about this?"

"Are you jealous?" Ten laughed and followed Aoey back.

He turned around and said goodbye. I shoved my hands into my pockets. My eyes followed Aoey. She noticed her boyfriend flirting with me.

That couldn't be a married couple. I felt insecure all of a sudden. Aoey didn't look very stable. I thought they might have a fight after she saw us chatting. Although I didn't like Ten, I didn't want to be the reason they fought. I should help clear the air.

I ran after them like a good friend, but my legs froze once I saw the unexpected scene.

Aoey's arms were around Ten's neck. She pulled his face down for a passionate kiss. I froze and felt a sharp, deep pain in my heart. I clutched my chest as if it had actually been cut.

Pain... so much pain.

In that split second, as I stood there, my eyes filled with tears, I saw Aoey's eyes looking at me.

She saw me.

That's what she meant when she said she wanted to torture me, and she did.

I had only two options at that point: I could stand there and stare at them, pretending I didn't feel anything, or I could walk away. Her mission was to inflict as much pain on me as she could. It could get out of hand. Finally, I decided to just stand there and stare at them, pretending I didn't care.

Go ahead, do whatever you want to do. I would lick my wounds in silence alone.

Aoey... you would never see me weak. You should know me better.

"Ahem!" Tod interrupted.

The kissing couple stopped. The handsome guy looked at the three of us.

"The beach atmosphere here is very nice. Couples love being here."

Ten and Aoey held hands and walked toward him. They looked a little embarrassed.

But I pretended I didn't feel anything.

"I have no one at all. Poor me."

“You are the luckiest.” We all looked bewildered by his statement, especially me. “There,”

John appeared from a corner with a large bouquet of white flowers. He waved at me while I was stunned at the sight. His charming gaze made the beauty of the sea seem to fade away.

“Hi, Kate. Surprise!”

“John!”

Tod looked at Aoey and spoke loudly so everyone could hear. “How was your surprise? I called a guy for you.” He spread his arms. “Such a sweet atmosphere! Couples everywhere.”

Damn! What a pain!



Chapter 41

Now we were back in the dining hall. Everyone was outside doing their own things like taking photos, walking around, and talking. John and I hadn't eaten anything, so we agreed to do so. Aoey and Ten were also there, though I didn't know why.

This was Tod's plan. He planned to have us all together in this tense atmosphere.

“So you have a boyfriend,” Ten said casually. “I actually thought you might have, but you acted like you were single.”

I smiled but didn't admit, deny, or clarify our relationship. Aoey now looked at John all the time.

“What do you think, Aoey? Is Gen's boyfriend hot?”

Her light brown eyes turned to Tod and glared at him, but she quickly buried her expression. “They get along well. I was always curious about what her boyfriend looked like. I just knew that she likes beautiful eyes.”

A memory flashed through my head. She never really forgot anything. The more she remembered, the more vengeful she felt...

“Yes, that's right,” I continued, trying to brag a little about John, although I didn't really feel anything. “He's handsome, he has good leadership, he's smart, he's only 30 years old but has ten million in his bank account. He owns a business with more than 100 workers.”

“But you prefer followers... in everything.” Aoey said and we both looked at each other. I nodded.

“He’s also a good follower. He always pampers me; anything I ask of him is fine.”

“So you spread your legs for him.” Her sarcastic statement made everyone nervous. Only John still didn’t understand the thai language, and I was grateful for that.

“Yes, it’s nice to sleep with a man who lets me get away with whatever I want.”

Silence...

Everyone was aware of the tension between Aoey and me. Until Aoey’s sweet eyes averted her face. Why did I do that? For fun? Pain would follow. I didn’t think it was worth it.

“What are you talking about?” John asked me in English. I didn’t want anyone to understand us, so I switched to Chinese, which I was also good at.

“About you. I told them about your work. I’m bragging about you.”

“Don’t tell them anything too scary. I don’t want them to misunderstand me. Thailand isn’t open to the idea of a casino yet. They might not like it.”

“There’s nothing scary about you. I only see your beautiful side.”

“Why don’t you marry me then? I’ve asked you so many times.”

I smiled back flirtatiously. I didn’t know why I was flirting with him.

It might be the pain I felt for Aoey.

“Try again. I might agree this time. I’m bored of being single.” I looked at Aoey. “My friend is getting married too. I’m jealous.”

“Why don’t we do it now?”

Our conversation, amidst giggles that no one understood, seemed like a love scene in a foreign film. However, someone surprised me with a comment.

“Are you about to accept his marriage proposal?” she said.

I quickly turned to the person. I spoke Chinese. How could she understand that?

“Do you understand?”

“I studied. I’m not very good at it, but I understand the subject. Did I understand it correctly?”

Aoey quickly stood up. She could no longer maintain her good manners. Her sweet eyes seemed very upset. She stood up and simply left the table.

“Is she okay?”

John asked when he saw Ten following Aoey. Tod looked at the whole situation and smiled. He seemed to be satisfied.

“That was nice, and you’re good too,” Tod raised a glass of water as if to encourage. **“Sarcasm returned with sarcasm.”**

“Fool.” That was the end of the conversation.

Now John was lying on my bed, relaxing. I looked at the handsome boy and smiled. I was surprised he could find time to fly here for me.

“Why would I own a business if I can’t ask my people to work for me? I need time for myself too. You are my happiness.”

He was always a sweet talker. But he was always polite, even though he was authoritarian with his workers. My father was also a partner in the casino, so we were on the same level.

Good...

“Were you really serious about marrying me?”

The handsome boy got out of bed and approached me from behind. I stood by the window and enjoyed the view. I was startled when he silently approached me.

“I’m making my decision.”

“That’s not nice. You gave me hope, and now you say you’re thinking.” The older guy hugged me from behind and kissed my head lovingly. “I’m madly in love with you.”

“What’s wrong? You have so many women approaching you.”

“Those women want something from me, but not you.”

“I have what you have. I don’t know what I would need more.”

“However, you never used your father’s money. You earn your own money. That impressed me... it made me fall in love with you more.”

I turned around and looked at the cute boy. I had sex with him once, and I didn’t think it would work. Would I feel the same way this time?

I should try again...

As our lips were about to touch, the front doorbell rang. I pulled back from John, unsure of how I felt. It was a relief that we were on a break, but too bad I hadn’t figured out how I felt about it.

But what surprised me even more was someone at the door.

“Hey, what are you doing?”

Tod and Aoey were there and tried to look inside the room. John greeted them even though he must have been feeling annoyed.

Damn... that was close.

“We’re just chatting. What’s up?”

“I wanted to sleep here, and John sleeps in my room.”

“Huh?”

I looked at Aoey, who was now hiding behind Tod like a child who had just done something wrong. She avoided my eyes, not speaking.

“You’re Thai. You shouldn’t sleep with a man in the same room.”

“Are you worried about something like that too?” I smiled. Of course, the guy shook his head.

“No, not me. Aoey does.”

I looked into his sweet eyes and smiled, but still tried to keep all the excitement in.

“No, John can sleep here.”

Aoey immediately looked at me in disbelief. She looked angry and disappointed at the same time, so I quickly made up an excuse.

“I’ll go sleep in Aoey’s room, so you don’t have to move your things.”

Why would I need an excuse?

She looked relieved, so I walked over to John and explained everything. He pouted but seemed to understand. He wanted to continue our episode, but as I said, he was a good follower whenever I asked him.

“Okay, can I give you a goodnight kiss?”

The lovely boy leaned down to kiss me on the mouth. It was normal for Western culture. Of course, Tod and Aoey saw this. I said goodnight to John and followed Aoey to her room without saying anything.

A tense atmosphere surrounded us after Tod left. We were both quiet, but Aoey finally broke the silence.

“You two seem to be in love.”

“Are we being too obvious?” I replied casually, knowing it was a sarcastic comment. “I need to tell him to be less obvious.”

“How long have you been dating him?”

Now she dropped all the sarcasm and curiously asked me about the details like a long-lost friend trying to catch up.

“We have been friends since I moved to Macau, almost 3 years ago.”

“It was the same period when we separated. How good is it to be Genlong? You immediately had a rebound when we separated.”

“I’m going to take a shower.”

I cut the conversation off abruptly. I didn’t want to go into details. Because later, I would have to tell her that I met John because I had depression after I broke up with her. I needed someone to replace her, but deep down I knew that no one could replace her.

No one...

After I finished showering, she came into the bathroom. I got dressed and got ready for bed. I lay down to sleep immediately. I didn’t know what to do. That was the first night we slept together in the same bed again. I couldn’t be too close to her, but I couldn’t be too cold either, so I decided to sleep.

Once she got out of the bathroom and got ready, she turned off the light. I told myself to close my eyes, but my brain didn’t follow.

I was so tense... like the first day we shared a bed.

“Are you sleeping now?”

She said in her sweet voice behind me. I didn’t respond because I didn’t know what to say. I had to process every sentence I said to her because if I

missed something, we could end up in a fight.

"Talk to me, Gen."

Damn...

"I knew you were still awake. This is the first night we've shared a bed in three years."

We had the same idea.

"Aren't you sleepy?"

"You?"

"Yeah."

"How can you close your eyes every night?" The little girl was lying on her side next to me, her back to me. She said this while complaining to herself. "In the past 3 years, did you ever miss me? Miss sleeping next to me?"

"What do you want me to tell you, Aoey?"

"The truth."

"I thought about you, but I didn't miss you."

I lied. There wasn't a night that I didn't miss her. When I slept on my side, I always imagined her lying next to me. Some nights I cried, and other nights I kissed the pillows and said goodnight.

I wanted her to know... but I couldn't say it now. What was the point? She was about to get married in a couple of days.

"But I miss you."

I bit my lip patiently. She was so direct, while I hurt her by telling her that I didn't miss her. She confessed to me that she missed me. Or did she want me to feel guilty?

"Go to sleep."

"Okay." Aoey responded by turning around and hugging my waist. Her small hand was on my shirt.

Now she was testing how patient I am.

Damn! I said sleep, not get excited.

"Can you really see me getting married?"

"I already told you not to do it, but you don't listen. What can I do now?"

"But I wanted to hurt you."

"Do you see that I'm hurt? No, I'm not. Then why are you doing it?"

"I know you're in pain, but I still need to test you... are you wearing underwear?"

Her small hand moved higher and higher. She touched me wherever she wanted, but I took a deep breath and tried to pull her hand away.

"Go to sleep."

"I can't stand knowing that you had sex with that man." Her hand now moved to my waist and pinched my skin angrily. It hurt, but I didn't cry.

"How could you do that? Didn't you think of me when you slept with him?"

"Go to sleep."

"Help me sleep... you can do it," she said, bringing her face close to my ears and biting them gently. "Eat me."

I sat up to stop everything and got out of bed. I grabbed my robe and tried to get out the door.

"Where are you going?"

"Going for a walk."

"You don't want to be alone with me," the sweet eyes smiled defiantly.

"You're losing to me now."

Losing was always my weak point. I looked at her and sighed.

"Okay, I'm losing."

I finished my sentence and walked out, ignoring her. I needed to calm that sex drive. Damn! She was so good at this. She just wanted to spin my head around and get married.

Since when was she so defiant?

"I'll go too."

Her voice called from behind me, and I took a bigger step to flee. She slipped through the elevator door and stood beside me.

"Don't follow me. I want to be alone now."

"No, you're hot now. You might do something stupid."

The elevator door opened. I took even bigger steps trying to escape.

"No, I won't."

"I don't trust you. You spread your legs to John once; you can do it again for sure."

"What are you doing?" I said angrily. She ran beside me, trying to keep up.

"I don't want you to go to John."

"I won't do that."

"I don't believe you."

"If I do that, what's your problem? He's my boyfriend anyway."

"But that impulse is for me. If you want to relieve it, you have to use it on me."

It was crazy. What kind of conversation was this? I knew she was a writer, but what she said was very passionate. I covered my ears and moved away from the front. The little girl ran and cut in front of me. Now she stopped me from going any further.

"Stop walking. I'll follow you wherever you go."

"Why are you following me? Why did you do it? Don't you remember that you hate me so much!" I yelled at her. She tried to seduce me!

"I miss you. And the feeling is so strong."

Her tone changed immediately. From a ferocious cat to a little kitten I used to hug years ago. I could feel her sadness and loneliness in every word she said. I almost lost to her.

No... I had to fight the urge. She was about to get married, and my boyfriend was in the room waiting for me to be his bride.

"Aoey, you're about to get married."

"I don't want it anymore." The little girl grabbed my shirt like a child calling for attention. "Once I saw you again, I knew I didn't want to get married. I don't want it anymore."

"I want to be with you, Gen. You know already that you are my only vitamins so I can be happy."

"Aoey." I couldn't take it anymore.

"I never forgot us. When we were together, when I cut your nails in the bathroom, when we fought with the bird, when you got drunk on vodka, your memories are everywhere."

"I only have you all the time. My emotion, my impulses are back for you. Don't you feel the same?" Her sweet and tender voice made my heart beat fast.

"My Gen..."

Finally, she said the key word I was willing to give up everything.

"My Aoey."

Fuck it!

I pulled her body closer to mine and pressed my lips against hers. Aoey was surprised, but then wrapped both of her arms around my neck. We kissed for a long time.

The movement of our tongues, our breathing deeper and faster, and our hands moving to all the places I wanted to explore. I wanted to devour her.

I couldn't stand it anymore!



Chapter 42

Aoey and I were like two travelers who had been journeying for a long time. We were both each other's water source. The thirstier I got, the more I wanted to gulp it down.

We forgot that we were on a walkway outside the hotel. I heard footsteps approaching, and that's when we stopped. A hotel worker passed by, and we pretended that nothing was wrong, even though our hair and faces said otherwise.

After the stranger passed, we looked at each other, deciding whether we should continue. Finally, Aoey gestured for us to return to the hotel.

“We should go back,” she said.

“Okay.”

“Come on.”

“Lead the way.”

The small girl stepped in front of me but kept looking back seductively. My heart beat faster as I tried to keep up. We were so tensed that we hurriedly ran to get to the room as fast as we could. If we could just... get to the room.

Why did we need an elevator?

Why are we staying on the eighth floor?

Why did I go down to the beginning?

“Can we do it in the elevator?”

I looked around and saw the CCTV. I shook my head. “No, there’s a camera.”

“Why do I feel so tense? Do you feel the same?”

“Yeah.”

“Why aren’t you talking?”

I looked into those sweet eyes and said frankly like never before, “I’m so hot.”

The elevator chimed, telling us that we were now on the 8th floor. Aoey led the way out of the elevator, pulling me along. We stopped at the front of our room, but Aoey couldn’t find her key card. She searched nervously in her bag but still couldn’t find it. I had to help her search everywhere in her bag and pockets. We finally found it and slid the key card inside with our shaking hands. We looked like two drug addicts.

It clicked!

Once the door opened, the lights in the room turned on. We stared at each other for three seconds, then Aoey and I jumped on each other and kissed passionately. The little girl, worried that I might disappear, wrapped both of her legs around me tightly. Her lips kissed me softly all over, and she whispered in my ears the whole time, “My Gen.”

We still couldn’t reach the bed. I pushed her body against the door and bit her soft neck and shoulders. I ripped her tight little t-shirt. We were in the dance that led to our impulse of nature when the doorbell rang. Aoey pinched my arm.

“Don’t open it.”

“Okay.”

We both continued to hug and kiss, but the bell kept ringing. “We should check who it is,”

“No, I can’t wait any longer, Gen. It’s not the time.”

Now I wondered who was at the door. There could be some emergency. I finally stopped and fixed my shirt and hair. The little girl couldn’t contain her agitation as I opened the door.

“What are you doing?” The handsome boy, Tod, appeared at 11 pm. He looked at us and sniffed. “There is a smell...”

“What smell...?” I replied reluctantly. I wished he would go away now.

“The smell of love, but how is that possible if you two hate each other?”

“We’re sleepy now. Can you go?” Aoey said, trying to chase him away.

Tod was surprised and looked at me curiously. I supported her comment, “We’re going to bed now... very sleepy.”

“Really?! I thought we could chat. I’m leaving then.”

“Good.”

I forced him out of the room and slammed the door in his face. Of course, we quickly jumped on each other again. But...

Ding Dong!

The bell kept ringing. Aoey and I closed our eyes angrily. I finally opened the door and found Tod again. This time, Aoey and I said at the same time in an angry voice, “What the hell?”

“Wow, you two must be mad,” Tod started to feel guilty because neither of us smiled. “I’m just going to tell you that I have to go. There’s an emergency at the hotel. If I don’t see you tomorrow...”

I closed the door in his face. Aoey took off her clothes, revealing her bare skin. She gave me a seductive smile. We both exchanged words that we used to turn each other on.

“Eat me. Eat me now,” she demanded.

I took off my shirt and pressed her chest down, saying in a low, sexy tone, “Where should I start?”

“My best part.”

I nibbled on her breast and took a deep breath to take in her sweet scent. She always smelled so good. Her body and mine were now elevated in temperature.

“This isn’t the best part... no,” Aoey said with difficulty breathing. “Come on! Give it to me. Come down! Come down!”

The little girl grabbed my hair and pushed my head down. I followed her naturally, knowing I couldn’t wait any longer.

“Ahhhhhhh...”

“My Aoey.”

The moment I finished the sentence, Aoey's entire body arouses up. She raised her head to look at me and gasped. I looked at the girl suspiciously, licked my own finger, and stuck it in...

“No, I'm not finished.”

“Oh....”

“Here I am.”

Aoey's body tensed once more as I invaded her, my familiar place. The petite girl bit her lip and moaned low in her throat. She gripped my hair tightly.

“It really is you... Gen.”

I felt the same as her. I walked over and kissed her on the chin while my hand remained in the same place.

“It’s you....”

It had been three years.

I missed these moments... the times when we whispered love into each other’s ears and covered each other in our own sweat. Then, we talked about what felt good and what didn’t, how we liked it, and how we preferred it. We were both lovers and friends who could talk about anything.

I thought I would never have this again... our old days were back.

“Did you miss me?” she said with difficulty breathing and wrapped her arms around my neck. “Did you miss me, Gen?” she said as my hand moved lower.

“Let my body tell you that.” I moved my finger up at a certain angle that I knew was her weak spot, and it worked every time.

“You never forgot what makes me happy.” Aoey pulled me in and held me tight. I remembered the rhythm, the movement, and how she liked it. I could tell where she was now. I was sure she was about to cum, so I stopped.

“Don’t make fun of me.”

“I don’t want this night to end too quickly.”

“Don’t worry,” the little girl lifted her head and bit my lower lip. This kitten knew well what worked on me. “I won’t let this night end too soon.”

I lost myself in desire.

After going through the whirlwind, my emotions were released. I sat down and felt guilty for not stopping, and here we were at this point. We weren't drunk or anything. It was pure loneliness and desire that brought us to this point.

It all started at 11 pm and continued until 8 am. We stopped to rest every now and then, but whenever we looked at each other, it would start again. We were both exhausted now. I looked at Aoey, who was now sleeping. I shouldn't have let that happen.

I tried so hard, but once I heard the magic words—“*My Gen*”—I immediately lost myself in lust. And now it was time to pay.

I got up to take a shower. The person next to me, who I thought was sleeping, pulled my arm. She tried to open her eyes and called my name.

“My Gen.” Again....

“Yeah?”

“Where are you going?”

“Shower.”

“It's only 8 o'clock. Why are you in such a hurry?” The sweet eyes attracted me and rolled over me. “I'm still hungry.”

“Aren't you tired?” I looked at her in surprise.

I saw a smile at the corner of her mouth. She nibbled on my neck. “I've tried, but it's not me who's working; it's you.”

“Don't you think I'm tired too?”

“Don’t you want to hear my moan? It’s your favorite noise.”

The sweet eyes seduced me again, and it always worked. “Eat me.” I could never get out of bed.....

I lost again.

11 AM

It was time to get up. Aoey seemed to have had enough at that point. I looked at her as she stood up and walked to the shower with a towel wrapped around her. I was exhausted and could fall asleep standing up at that point. I probably used too much energy. As I dozed off, I heard a noise next to my ear, followed by a playful bite.

“Wake up!”

“Oh!” I blinked and looked at Aoey in a long-sleeved shirt. She looked fresh even though we did it all night.

“Have you finished showering?” I asked.

“Yes, it’s your turn to take a shower. It’ll wake you up.”

I walked to the shower as she said and looked at myself in the mirror. I was shocked to see that my neck up to halfway was covered in bite and kiss marks.

She was pretty rough with me last night.

I hadn’t even gotten into the shower when Aoey opened the bathroom door and walked in. She looked at me with a smile.

“That was my work on your body,” Aoey said as her sweet eyes hugged me from behind, making eye contact with me in the mirror. “If you plan on

sleeping with someone else after this, he will see it.”

“Did you plan this?” I asked.

“No, not really, but now I feel good about having done it,” Aoey replied, gently touching my shoulder with her lips. **“It's like when a child doesn't want to share ice cream, so they lick the ice cream. I licked you last night. Are you mine now, Gen?”**

“You want to possess me? What's the point of possessing me?”

“I won't let you be with anyone else. You're only mine.”

“Are you mine too, then?” I asked her. “I licked you too.”

“Do you want to be my owner?” she asked, looking at me curiously. “What do you want to do when you possess me?”

“If you are mine, I will ask you not to marry. Would you do that?”

Her sweet eyes raised their eyebrows and laughed. The kitten was gone. She was now a ferocious cat again. “Don't be too serious about what I said. It was just a joke.”

Aoey stepped away from me and walked toward the bathroom door. She leaned on the door and chuckled. “You can't be too serious about last night, right? It was just lust that we relieved each other from. Do you understand what I mean?”

I swallowed a lump in my throat when I heard that. I knew what we did last night wasn't right, but now she made it seem like it was nothing.

Last night, we jumped on each other, kissed, and whispered love, but nothing was serious. Was it just me who took it seriously?

She spun my head around like she said she would. She wanted to hurt me to the bone.

“I get it,” I said, looking at her directly now. “I won’t be too serious about it. It was just physical relief. We were both familiar with each other. It’s just that familiarity that set us off. I get it.”

“That’s easy. I like it. One more thing, I couldn’t do what you ask anyway. I’m about to get married. If you’re serious, you’ll be my mistress. Can you handle that?”

“ ... ”

“I know Genlong won’t be anyone’s love story. You don’t want to lose to anyone. So let’s keep it simple. We just sleep together. I gave you 10 out of 10, like the last time you handcuffed me.”

So she was saying it was nothing and was glad I didn’t mean it. I didn’t want to lose, so I nodded as if to show her I understood.

“I’m glad to know that you’re still good at this, even though you haven’t done it with women for a long time. I appreciate John for teaching you so well.”

She was calm. I didn’t know what she was thinking, so I said something back. “Kids lick their ice cream because they don’t want to share it with their friends, but John is different. Even if you or any man licked me all over, John wouldn’t really care.”

“ ... ”

“That’s the advantage of being a Genlong. People love me. Even though John knew I slept with a girl, he didn’t care. It’s still better than sleeping with another man.”

Aoey straightened up. Her face changed from happiness for the victory to grumpiness when she heard that.

“You believed it so much.”

“Like you did last night. You wanted me so badly, Aoey. Even though you’re a woman, think like a man, like John. How could you resist me?”

“I want to test if this is true. Let’s see if he still loves me when he sees all these marks.” I smiled arrogantly. She glared at me. I told her to get out of the room and treated her like it was nothing important.

“Get out of here. I’m going to take a shower.”

The sweet eyes left the room but didn’t forget to knock on the door. I didn’t lose to her, but my heart ached. It took me almost an hour to take a shower. When I was sad, taking a shower helped me more. When I came out, she was gone. She must have been angry or trying to make me feel as useless as a used tissue that is thrown away when used.

I left the room feeling as helpless as she wanted me to feel. I walked back to see John, hoping he could hug me and make me feel better, but instead, I ran into Tod.

That was good... better than John.

“Hey! Why do you look like that?”

“I thought you said you’d be back last night.”

My eyes were filled with tears. I couldn’t hold back any longer. First, he smiled when he saw me, then he saw my tears and sighed.

“What happened this time?”

“Why are you still... here... not in Bangkok? I thought you leave last night.” I sobbed and hugged him as if he were my older brother. “You’re here as if you know I need you here.”

“Gen... What happened?”

“It’s so painful, Tod. So much pain.”

She was successful in getting her revenge. She stepped on my heart. Our sex last night had maximized the pain even more after years of thinking it would be okay to deal with it. I wanted to possess her again, and I wanted her back. I felt sorry for myself after she treated me like a worthless tissue.

What happened last night wasn't real... really?

She told me she loved me... that didn't mean anything...

“What goes around comes around. This is what I have to pay. I don't think I can handle this... I'm about to die.”

“ ... ”

“I'm about to die... please... help me...”



Chapter 43

I cried only for a short period of time because I didn't see the point of dwelling on it. I just released my emotion and that was it. I didn't hold on to it for long, and I hated myself when I ended up with two swollen eyes.

It looked ugly, didn't it?

I wouldn't cry again.

Tod listened to my story. He just sighed and stroked my back. I didn't know what to do to help myself feel better either. We had a long history, and I had decided to get out of the relationship. Today, she got her revenge on me. It was reasonable.

I just had to bear the result of my action... that was all.

I understood all the pain she went through. I had left her to live with a mom who she thought didn't love her; it was like leaving her with a total stranger. When I came back, she wanted revenge and made me feel pain. She did a pretty good job.

She treated me like a piece of shit.

"I think I should go back to Macau with John."

John, Tod, and I were eating in the hotel lobby. I hadn't eaten anything since morning because I spent the whole morning with Aoey. I used up all my energy until my body was weak. John looked at me as I devoured the food quickly. He patted my back adoringly.

"When is John going to leave?"

"He said in another three days."

"So, you're not staying for the wedding? It's in a couple of days."

I gave Tod a sarcastic smile.

"You shouldn't ask."

The whole time we were eating, John was gently touching and twisting my hair obsessively. Tod saw all this and couldn't help but make a comment in Thai.

"He loves you so much. You should marry him so you can forget about the other person."

"Do you think marrying him will help me forget her?" I asked him curiously.

"No, I don't think so," Tod said and shook his head.

"That's why I ask."

"Other people would do it to escape this pain."

"I want to live my life in a smarter way. I did so many things wrong. But I won't miss this. I don't want to hurt a third person."

"You could just spread your legs."

"I can do a lot more than that, but no thanks."

We talked and laughed playfully. John looked back and forth curiously. I hadn't explained anything to him. Aoey and Ten came in and stopped at our table.

"Can we sit with you?" Aoey was not usually someone who wanted to hang out with a lot of people. She probably saw me and wanted to inflict more pain on me, so she asked to join the table.

"Sure," Tod casually invited her to sit down and asked the waiter for a menu. The sweet eyes paid no attention to the menu that was handed to her.

She just looked at John and me with an unfriendly tone.

"She doesn't like me," John said as he played with my hair without looking at Aoey. The foreigner seemed to have noticed that since yesterday, but he didn't want to say anything.

"What makes you think that?"

"The way she looks at me. She doesn't like me being too close to you. She's possessive of you."

"Speaking English is rude, speak language that people understand," Aoey said, looking at me. The way she expressed herself just now was too obvious. She couldn't control herself.

"John said you must be jealous of him. It seems you don't like John," Tod translated for me, which made Aoey and me feel awkward. Ten looked at Aoey and me curiously. The little girl quickly cleared her throat.

"Jealous? I just looked at him. They seem to love each other."

"I'm kidding. John is talking to Gen about the wedding."

Tod lied and made everything worse. I slowly reached my hand towards his under the table and pinched him. He seemed to enjoy this drama.

"Come on, Tod."

"I thought you wanted to know. I just translated for you. Gen will be returning to Macau within the next three days."

Aoey looked surprised when she heard that. She looked at me sadly, but I turned to look away. I was so confused by her reaction.

She hated me, but why did she look sad?

"Why are you leaving so soon? Aren't you staying for the wedding?"

"You're not the only one getting married. She's getting married soon too. She needs to get ready."

"Isn't it too soon? I thought I just proposed to you. Have you responded yet?" Aoey was curious.

I didn't want to talk about it, so I quickly changed the subject.

"I'm sorry I can't stay until your wedding. But I'll give you the envelope with the money."

Aoey quickly stood up. She had already forgotten her food. She looked at me and replied, "It's up to you. It doesn't matter if you attend or not. It won't help my wedding."

I looked at her as she walked away. I sighed and felt very sad. I felt like she was treating me like a piece of trash.



The beach trip was over. I returned to Bangkok, and now it was time to head back. John and I arranged to meet at Suvarnabhumi Airport one hour before departure time. We were staying at a different hotel, so we weren't close together. If we stayed too close, I wasn't sure if I could keep him away from me or not.

That was my sensitive moment; I seemed to open up easily to anyone.

I finished packing and was ready to leave. My hotel room phone rang. It was a call from outside. When I picked up the phone, I heard Aoey's voice on the other end, and it didn't sound good at all.

[Are you leaving today?]

We hadn't made any contact in the past three days. Aoey chose to call me one hour before I planned to leave the hotel. Let's see what she would do this time.

"Yes, I'm leaving today at noon."

[I'm sick.]

I didn't say anything. We were both quiet.

To be honest, I didn't believe her story at all, but I was still curious to know what had happened to her.

"Did you take the medicine?"

[No, I don't like medicine.]

"You won't get better if you don't take them. Take some medicine and get some rest. I have to go."

[Can you come see me?]

Her demanding tone put a smile on my face. I would be upset if it was anyone else, but Aoey was my kitty who was always unpredictable. She sounded adorable, even though she treated me like a piece of trash.

"How can I go? I have to be at the airport at least one hour before."

[I'm waiting for you. You have to come.]

She hung up the phone and put all the pressure on me. She knew my weak point. She wasn't that clever, but after three years, she was quite the mastermind.

I looked at the watch on my wrist. Although I didn't buy it, I was worried that she was sick...

And in the end... I lost to her.

Instead of going to the airport, I told my taxi to drive in the opposite direction to see Aoey. He came down to pick me up because I was an outsider and couldn't go up to her condo. Aoey walked over in a t-shirt and shorts. Her glowing skin and that outfit made me a little hesitant.

She was cute.

Damn! She always dressed like that before, and I wasn't this obsessed.

"What happened to you?"

After we entered her room, she turned around and looked at me.

"I miss you, Gen." I sighed because I was fed up with her flirtatiousness. She was more adorable when she tried to flirt a couple of years ago. But after three years, her innocence was gone.

"I'm here to check if you're okay. It seems you are. I'm leaving." I glanced at my watch. "John is waiting for me now."

The little girl grabbed my wrist tightly. Her sweet eyes looked angry when I talked about John.

"Wait."

"Aoey, you are a mature person. If you are okay, I will..."

The little girl pulled my neck down for a kiss on the lips. I had more or less prepared myself for that, so I pushed her away.

"Are you rejecting me?"

"It won't work this time. I won't fall for the same trick again. I have to go."

"My Gen..."

"I'm sorry, Aoey. I have to go."

I quickly turned around to leave the room. I tried to be strong, but inside I was very weak. The sweet eyes hugged me from behind and buried their face in my back.

"Don't go. I want you here with me."

"I'm here, but I have to go now."

"What do I do to make you stay?"

"Nothing, because I have to go."

"Do you want to eat me?"

"No."

We looked at each other for what felt like an eternity. Aoey looked down at the ground. I felt guilty, but I didn't know why.

"If I really can't make you stay with sex, that means I really have no value to you."

"Why do you say that? You're not just someone who has value because of sex."

"I never had anything, no money, no beauty. The only thing that made you interested in me was sex. But today, you reject me."

"Please stop going around in my head," I said and sighed. "You really hurt me. If you want confirmation, our sex on the beach really hurt me. You won."

The sweet eyes looked at me in surprise as she admitted it.

"You looked good when you were at the beach."

"If I didn't feel anything, I wouldn't leave Thailand... It hurts. You've successfully hurt me." I gently touched her cheeks lovingly, again and again. "I want to heal my wound. Please let me go."

“This is your excuse, isn’t it?” Aoey still didn’t believe me. “You just wanted to go see John, so you gave in easily. You love John, so you sleep with John.”

"Then I love you too because I sleep with you too."

“ ”

"That's it. You hurt me. I'm leaving." I pulled out an envelope full of money and handed it to her. "This is for your wedding. Save this for your future."

"I wish you happiness, Aoey."

I opened the door to leave, but I was surprised to see Teacher Salee standing at the front door, trying to open it. The old lady looked at me, surprised but happy to see me.

"Gen."

"Teacher Salee."

"Where are you going? Stay and talk to me."

I smiled awkwardly and looked back at the watch on my wrist.

"I really have to go and catch a flight. I’m glad to see you again." I turned to look at Aoey. "She’s sick. It’s good that you’re here. Please take care of her."

I finally got out and didn’t look at her again because I would never be able to leave if I saw her eyes once more. Her gaze was inviting me to fall into a trap she was setting for me. There were thorns inside the trap that would pierce me like a wounded animal.

It was strange that I felt okay with the cheating. But she was getting married in a couple of days. When I went down to the lobby, I asked for my luggage at the front desk. While I was waiting, Teacher Salee called me from behind.

"Gen, don't go yet. I have something to return to you."

Teacher Salee handed me my *Patek Philippe* watch, the one my dad bought me. I looked at it in surprise because I thought it had been sold for money.

"You didn't sell it?"

"I took it to the pawnshop, but then paid to get it back when I had enough money. Lucky I have it with me when I see you now. I'd like to give it back to you."

I took my beloved watch in my trembling hand. I felt as if I had regained a long-lost friend. I recognized my proud friend from the past. It was the symbol of my effort and dedication in reading and passing the college entrance exam.

And it was the symbol of Aoey's success today....

"It's nice to see you again."

"Thank you for everything. If I hadn't had your help—"

"What do you mean?" Aoey's voice came from behind. She had heard the conversation between Teacher Salee and me. She didn't get all the details, but she understood what happened.

"Aoey," Teacher Salee called her daughter's name. Aoey glared at her mother fiercely.

"How did you get Gen's watch?"

"Aoey, don't be loud. I asked her to have it."

Suddenly, as I finished my sentence, all the money in the envelope was thrown at my face. Money flew everywhere. Aoey hit me like crazy.

"What's wrong?" I used my arms to block her. The little girl kept crying and hitting me.

"You can't do this to me. You'll just leave me with all these guilty feelings. You left me alone for so long, and now you're telling me that you secretly helped me all along to make me feel guilty, right? Is that you? Why do you have to be such a bitch?!"

She kept hitting me. She looked obviously confused and sad. I just defended myself but didn't fight back.

"I'm sorry."

"You can't pretend to be a bitch and then be nice to me. You made me feel confused. You can't do this to me. Who's playing who now?" Aoey hugged me tightly and cried loudly.

"What should I feel now? Do you want me to hate you or love you? Pick one! Pick one!"

I was shocked and tried to stay calm. Time was running out. I stroked her back to comfort her, who was now hugging me so tightly as if she was afraid I might disappear.

What should I do? Should I tell her everything?

"What do you think?"

"It doesn't matter what I think, but I want to know what the hell is going on. You left me because I didn't have enough money. But you gave your expensive watch to my mom to sell and spent it on me. What did you want? Do you want me to feel guilty until I die?"

I tried to think of an excuse, but nothing came out.

"Do you think this will help ease the pain of what you did? Do you think I will forgive you after you gave me just a watch? You need to be punished much more than this. You cannot go back to Macau. I won't let you. I won't!"

"What do you want me to do?" I finally said it. There was nothing I could do to replace what I did three years ago. "I'll do whatever you want me to

do."

"Come to my wedding."

"You can leave after my wedding. Then we'll be even."



Chapter 44

I lost to her once again.

I told John to go back first. I knew that going to her wedding would be the most painful thing I had to do, but I would do it if she wanted me to.

If I could really help...

We barely spoke after that day. It was impossible to contact her because she didn't have a cell phone. I heard that the bride and groom went to rehearsals, fittings, and other preparation things. I wondered if Aoey had bridesmaids like other people. I knew she was really alone in Bangkok, or maybe she could call her friends from the interior for the wedding.

I was free today, so I went out to the mall to buy an outfit for the wedding. I went to the brand-name stores to get a dress that was pretty enough. It had been a long time since I bought an expensive dress, and I felt a little guilty about spending so much money. I now realized how hard it was to earn money, so I didn't want to waste it.

While I was shopping at the mall, I saw someone familiar out of the corner of my eye.

"Cherry."

A little mixed Thai-British girl was picking out a bracelet. She looked up, and when I called her over, she immediately got nervous.

"If you're here, that means Great is also here in Thailand... where is he?" If my brother's girlfriend was here, my brother must be nearby.

"Oh!"

I heard the sound of someone behind me. I quickly turned around to find Great staring at me as if he'd seen a ghost. He tried to run, but I quickly grabbed his ear.

"Ouch! Gen, it hurts."

"Why are you here and not in Macau?"

"You're here too, why can't I be here? I'm not the one with an arrest warrant or appearing on CCTV... Ouch, it hurts! Let me go!" My little brother slowly pulled my hand away from his ear. "I'm a big guy now. Have some respect."

"How come you're here? Why do you have to act so secretly?"

"Why do you react like that?"

"What are you doing here in Thailand?"

"Why? Can't I have something to deal with?" He slumped his shoulder down. "I'm here for a friend's wedding."

"A wedding?" I looked at Great as if I wanted to fight him, but he didn't seem afraid of me. "Is it so important that you had to fly here without telling Mom and Dad?"

"We all have other loved ones. What about you? What are you doing in Thailand?"

"A friend's wedding."

"Is it so important that you had to fly here?"

"Are you making fun of me?"

"Yes, that's how you are. Other people can't do it, but you can."

"Whose wedding?"

"A friend."

"What friend?"

"Koh."

"Who's Koh?"

"See! You don't know him. Why are you being so nosy? I didn't even ask whose wedding you're here for." I smiled and ignored him. He gave me a smirk.

"What are you doing at the mall?"

"Buying a new dress."

"Are you buying expensive clothes? Isn't it good to be the same Genlong as always?"

"Shut up. Where are you staying?"

"My friend's house."

"When will you be back?"

"At the same time as you." My brother raised his eyebrow mockingly at me. I sighed and shook my head.

"Mom must be so mad at both of us. The more she doesn't want us to go, the more we do."

"I miss you, Gen. I haven't seen you in a long time." My brother, who had the same eyes as me, hugged me with love. "I love you, Gen."

"What's the matter?"

"Whoever hurt you, I'll make them pay for it." My little brother got off of me and raised his eyebrows. "Am I cool or what?"

"I'm old or you're confused, I'm not sure, but let's go buy some food."

"Okay, let's go."

I finally got a bridesmaid dress at an expensive price. It felt like a waste of money, but I tried to respect the person I loved by buying the best dress I could afford.

But maybe the bride and groom would be happier if I put that amount of money in an envelope for them.

Great and I made an appointment to go back to Macau together after the wedding. It was very easy to book and pay for the plane tickets. I had just punched in an application and paid by credit card. But why was I in such a hurry to get the ticket?

Run away as fast as I could...

Everything would happen fast. As soon as she got married, that meant our relationship would end. Everything would be gone.

The hotel phone rang while I was in the room, feeling some sadness inside me. I was grateful for the call because it distracted me from my sad thoughts.

"Yeah?"

"Someone is here to see you. Her name is Aoey."

I clenched my hand on the phone and hesitated about what I should do. I let her up anyway. She came to my hotel. I wondered what that was all about. Why did a woman like me, Genlong, have to deal with something like that? I had never felt so heavy in my life.

I finally opened the door and found Aoey standing there, her eyes staring at the ground. She looked at me with sadness covering her entire face. This was not the happy face of a bride.

Where was the smile and the sign of happiness?

"Hey, are you okay?"

"Gen," she said my name with a shaky voice, and I felt so bad for her.

"What are you doing?"

"I just bought a new dress. I'm about to try it on for your wedding."

Aoey looked into the room and walked straight to the dress. "I don't want this."

"What do you want?"

Sweet eyes looked into my eyes, and she pushed me down in the middle of the bed. I collapsed on the bed, confused.

Sweet eyes sat on top of me and took off her shirt.

"I'm horny, and I want you... fuck me, Gen."

What she said was direct, and she tried to make sex sound like something low and dirty. I closed my eyes patiently. She leaned in to kiss me and tried to take off my shirt, but I pushed her hands away. "No."

"I'm getting married tomorrow. Today is the only chance to do this."

"Then don't do it if you don't have the chance. Even if I have the chance, I won't do it." I pushed Aoey aside and stood up. "Why are you doing this? Aren't you done stepping on me?"

"You don't feel anything. You even bought a dress to go to my wedding. Just do it. We can both feel relieved. I just want to fuck."

"I spoiled you for too long. I need to set some boundaries." I bit my lip hard. "Don't test my limits."

"What's your limit? What do you have to endure? You look fine. I told you to come to the wedding, and you're fine too. You didn't feel anything. Nothing!" The little girl started screaming louder and louder.

"You said you're in pain! You said I successfully hurt you since we slept together on the beach. But I can't say you're in pain now. You're even prepared to go to my wedding!" she added.

"What do you want from me?"

"I want to know if you ever loved me. Did you? You don't care if I get married? How can you be okay about it?" The sweet eyes teared up. "I don't want you to treat me like that. I want you to feel sad that I'm about to get married."

"Why would I do that?"

"At least show me that you love me. Tell me that you can't stand to see me marry someone else!" She pulled my dress out of the bag and threw it away. **"I want to see you cry and scream and beg me not to get married. Do something!"**

"I already asked you that."

"You told me you didn't want me to get married because you don't see me happy in the relationship. I don't want that," the sweet eyes said through tears. "Why don't you feel anything about me getting married?"

I squeezed my hand tightly.

Didn't she know me? I was the one who felt the most pain when I saw that she was about to get married. I couldn't bear to watch her big wedding, but I was there because she asked me to. She wanted to hurt me, and I was hurt.

But I couldn't help or do anything to change the way I felt. I would just go on and end this drama...

I realized that she had some feelings for me. How could she be happy if she married someone while she still had feelings for someone else?

The only thing that made her let me go was hating me. After she lived with that bad card for three years, I left her.

"I don't want to do anything useless. I don't see the point of being sad if you've decided to get married despite the warning I gave you." I looked at her and tried to keep my voice as calm as possible. "Don't expect me to be sad—"

"You gave my mom your watch to make money. We slept together. What does all that mean?"

"I got you into a bad situation. I should pay you back something." I sighed and pretended the whole thing was pointless. "I felt something, to be honest. I'm not a cold bitch. We slept together, so of course, there's a bond."

"But it's just that. I don't feel anything more than that. If you want me to whisper love and ruin your wedding, I don't think I can do that. This is me, Genlong, let go!" I smiled and pointed at myself arrogantly. "I will never be someone else's lover."

"You said you were in pain and wanted to go back to Macau."

"We just slept together. I might have been feeling possessive over you. But I'm fine now. It might have been the hormones too. Well, it was a lot of fun having sex with you. I'm not so cold that I don't feel anything—you gave me a 10 out of 10," I shrugged and continued, "When we had sex, it wasn't because we were in love. Can't you separate love from lust?"

"Are you lying?" she asked, looking at me in disbelief. The bad girl was now losing me as I replied.

"Congratulations.... I wish you many children. When I think of you, I'll remember the fun times we had when we had sex and handcuffed each other. That was fun."

Her sweet eyes filled with tears as she threw my things everywhere before leaving the room. I watched her small frame leave, sadness filling my heart.

"I'm going to your wedding, just as you asked for!" I shouted as the door slammed shut.

The silence that followed was terrifying. I grabbed my heart in my hand and threw myself to the floor, crying in pain.

That was the time to be sad. I could cry now.

It would be useless... to tell her that I loved her just one day before she married another man. It was good that she hated me.

It was a good start.

For the past three years, I left her with so much hatred. She should be married, and she should hate me. And now, its finally cleared that...

We were done.



Chapter 45

The wedding day finally arrived.

It was the day she would belong to someone else.

It looked like a big wedding. Not a celebrity wedding, but luxurious and very beautiful to ordinary people.

I was curious about the wedding guests, especially on Aoey's side. She was adopted by Teacher Salee and had no relatives or family, so who were the guests?

There was a table for friends from elementary school.

A table for friends from high school.

A table for Teacher Salee's friends.

Well, at least she had some friends. It was nice to see that she had friends so she wouldn't feel too lonely. But where should I sit?

"Are you Genlong?... Oh! You really are Genlong. You look amazing as always. I'm Si, we met once in Phuket."

Si was my friend from elementary school. He was the one who brought Aoey and me back together. I looked at the man who looked older than Teacher Salee. He might have never put sunscreen on his face.

"Hi, yes, you look good," I responded.

"Is this your greeting? You're saying I look fine now, right?"

I may not have gotten enough sleep. My greeting sounded so hostile. Now I knew where to sit once I saw Si.

Most of my friends from the interior were already married. Some even had children. They all looked at me with admiration.

“You look as beautiful as you always did when we were young. You looked so stunning,” said one of the friends whose name I couldn’t remember. I smiled proudly.

"Thank you."

“I remember when you moved, Aoey was sick. She was so attached to you,” one of my childhood friends recalled. “She stole my scissors to cut her hair. Luckily, one of the teachers saw her and stopped her in time before she went bald. She cried and blamed herself for having lice because she thought that she had driven you away. That was cute.”

It was a fun topic to think about for other people, but for me, it was very sad to hear. It could be true, like she said, that she fell in love with me first.

So much love from her that now I was in pain again. At the table, there was only water and soda available. A few other tables had some alcohol. I felt like time moved too slowly today. The bride and groom should be there walking towards the stage, but nothing happened yet. The guests looked hungry now, but the food wouldn’t come out until the couple was there. We were waiting.

We waited and waited.

Was something wrong?

One of the friends ran outside to look and came back with some news. It seems like there's a chaos outside.

“Someone is here to ruin the wedding. The bride and groom ran away. They are talking now. What a sight!”

I quickly left, and as my friend said, the bride and groom were no longer there. Tod, who had just arrived, waved to me.

“Hello, Gen. When did you get here?”

“You don't seem surprised to see me here.”

“Ha?”

I had told Tod I would go back with John and never informed him that I had changed my mind and canceled the return trip. The cute guy wasn't surprised to see me.

Instead, he greeted me as if he expected to see me.

“Do you know that I never returned to Macau?”

“Yes, I know.”

“How?”

“I talked to John on Facebook. He told me you were coming to the wedding before you got back.”

“You never talked to me.”

“I was busy. There are so many dramas I have to get involved in.”

While I was talking to Tod, I saw someone familiar pass by out of the corner of my eye. I suddenly ran after him and grabbed him by the hair before he could get down the stairs. “Why are you here?”

Great looked at me in surprise and then smiled.

“Oh! What a surprise!”

“It wasn't a coincidence that your friend was having a wedding here, was it?”

“Yes, it is a coincidence.”

“There’s only one wedding here today. I thought your friend's name was Koh?”

“Fuck that name,” Great shrugged. “To me, Aoey always seems like a fool.”

“Why did you come to his wedding?”

“You're here too. Why can't I be here?”

“Why didn’t you come in then? Where did you come from, and where are you going?” I wasn’t feeling well at the moment. Great’s words echoed in my head when we met at the mall. And now my friend had told me about someone who ruined the wedding...

“It was you, Great!”

“Whoever hurt you, I will return the damage.”

“Why are you here, Great? Are you the reason the bride and groom aren't at the wedding?”

“I didn't do it,” he said with a smile and tried to block my hands that wanted to hit him. “No, it's not about me at all. It's about you!”

“What?!”

“I ruined the wedding. Oh! I feel fucking good!”

I pulled his ear and dragged him down the stairs quickly. Tod ran after us when he saw that I was about to kill my brother.

“Calm down, Gen. His ear might come off.”

“That really hurt. I just got my ears pierced,” my brother said with tears in his eyes, full of pain. I twisted his ear even more and hit him in the middle of the back.

“What the hell did you do? Did you ruin the wedding?!”

“It wasn’t that bad,” he said, rubbing his ear gently. “I just said that they’re happily married while my sister has to sadly watch her lover’s wedding.”

“What the hell are you talking about? When did you see me sad?”

“Come on! Stop kidding yourself. You were depressed and went to see a doctor for years. How much pain can you feel being here at her wedding? I thought you were planning to go back to Macau. I bet she asked you to stay, right?”

“You’re not that smart. You’re usually pretty dumb.” I turned to Tod, who looked away. “It was you, wasn’t it?”

“I didn’t do anything.”

“You’re the one behind it all. Come on, Tod! Why did you make it harder? I’m going back tonight,” I sighed and scratched my head. “I’ll go back and marry John like you told me.”

“You’re going to marry John? That’s great,” Great tapped my shoulder and agreed with the idea.

“Johnathan is the best for you. He’s handsome, rich, and smart. People like you, Genlong, deserve a man like John, not a girl like Aoey. She has nothing. She just has good looks, beautiful eyes, and everything. She’s only good for sex.”

“Everything you said is backward.”

“Her problem is that she hurt you. She didn’t deserve you at all,” Great continued, “She caused trouble for our family, and we had to move to Macau, and she never realized what she did.”

“Don’t say it too loud!”

“If people hear it, then what?”

“Do you want other people to know that our family ordered someone to be killed?” I said in pain. “What we’re dealing with now is karma. You mustn’t upset anyone.”

“If Aoey didn’t exist, then there would be no karma. You still love her, that’s why you pity her. Killing her stepfather put our father in a lot of trouble. There was even a video, and that’s why you had to go into hiding. Aren’t all the problems stemming from her?”

“I think you’ve gone crazy. Let’s go back. We’re going to the airport.” I pushed him out of the hotel.

“I don’t want to leave now. I need to know if the wedding will be canceled. I told the groom that you and Aoey were dating and that you were still in love. I think she’s getting married just to get back at you. Hahaha. Am I cool or what?”

“Excellent!” I raised my hand high, ready to hit him, but he didn’t try to hide. Instead, he showed me his face.

“Why are you so worried about that? The boyfriend should know the truth. You love her and did so many things for her. Aoey and the boyfriend should know that.”

“Why are you talking about this?”

“People who are getting married should know everything. Aoey asked you to be here. She still has feelings for you. Maybe this is her plan to use the groom to get back at you. I’m the real hero, telling the groom the truth.”

“Great!”

“She needs to stop thinking that you are a bad person. Genlong, who lived a luxurious life, had to live in the countryside. You had no money, you had to borrow money, and finally, you gave money to Tod to publish Aoey’s book. The thing about the watch, and her stepfather’s problem that you asked Dad to solve. Our family has so many problems that you had to run away to

Macau just because you love her. What do you get out of all this? You don't even have a girlfriend, and on top of that, she hurt you a lot!"

"Stop!"

"No, I won't. I can't stand her. How dare she get married and let you suffer? You're the one who's causing pity here."

"Is it true, Gen?"

The sweet voice of someone familiar came from behind. I was dozing off. I didn't have to turn around to see who it was. I slowly turned around to see Aoey in a white wedding dress. Her face was full of tears.

"Is it true?"

"I never knew what you did before. I only knew that your family was investigated for money laundering. I only knew what you told me. I never knew about my stepfather. I never knew that you had to go through all that because of me." Aoey's sweet eyes filled with tears as she walked toward me, shaking me slightly.

"Is it true about my stepfather? Did you really ask your dad to do that?"

I froze, unsure of how to explain. I remained silent.

"Yes, it's true," Great replied, pushing Aoey away from me. "Don't go near her. You don't deserve my sister!"

"Enough, Great! If you don't want her to talk to me, then don't say anything."

"I don't want her to be happy. Her happiness is built on our misery. Do you realize how difficult it is that we can't live in Thailand? That we can't have Som Tam and Tom Yam Kung?"

Was that our misery? I looked at him and shook my head. He shouldn't have mentioned that. Great continued to harass Aoey by pointing his finger at her forehead.

“Genlong lost almost 10 kilos in a few months and almost committed suicide because he felt guilty for leaving you alone in Thailand. It was all your fault.”

“Great, that's enough!”

“For the past 3 years, she made a living by drawing cartoons on the Internet, even though our family is very rich. She just said that love needed money and hoped to be with you one day. And now she has to come to your wedding. She doesn't deserve this. Bitch!”

Great pushed Aoey to the ground. She began to cry, and I wanted to help her, but the groom rushed in.

“Ten... please take her inside. My brother and I will be returning to Macau soon. I'm sorry about the chaos at your wedding.”

When Aoey heard that, she rushed to hug me, not wanting me to leave. “No, I won't let you go... I won't let you go.”

“Don't listen to Great, Aoey. He's lying. He's just doing it for fun. This is real life, not a novel. Who would do something like that for other people?”

“You! You did that. Stop denying it,” Great continued, trying to take Aoey's hand away from me. But she clung to me as if she might disappear at any moment. “Let go of my sister.”

“Please stop, Great.”

“What's wrong with you? Tod told me all about how she treated you. Damn it!” Great yelled. “I'm really asking you. You're her best friend, her girlfriend. How can you not know what she's been through?”

“ ”

“When you first arrived in Bangkok, she took you in her condo even though you two had been separated for more than 10 years. She secretly asked Mom to publish your novel because she didn't want to

ruin your confidence, so that you would have money to go to school. She really didn't have to do that."

"...."

"She went to your first day of orientation at college. She went on a date with a guy just to ask him to babysit you. She secretly bought all your books to help you out. She bought you a bird because you said you were lonely. You think people like this would easily walk away from you? You never thought about her, huh?"

"Enough. I was wrong... I was wrong." Aoey cried like a little girl, burying her face in my chest. I cried seeing her like that.

"Great, I said that's enough. It doesn't help. Ten... please take your girlfriend. We're going back."

"I'm not getting married anymore!" She hugged me tightly, shaking her head. "I'm not getting married. I can't love anyone else. Please don't leave me."

"Aoey..."

"I'm sorry, I never knew anything about this. I just blamed you because you hurt me... Please forgive me and don't leave me."

"Aoey, your boyfriend is waiting for you. You'll be late... you have to go." I tried to gently remove her hands from me, but she held on tighter. Great saw that I couldn't let her go and tried to help by pulling her away.

"Let go, Aoey!"

The girl was now on the floor, and the guests were starting to gather around, wondering what was going on because the bride and groom were not at the wedding. Teacher Salee rushed over to help her daughter, looking confused.

"What happened?"

“Gen... you love me, right?” Aoey cried. “If you love me so much, why are you leaving me? Are you angry about what I did?”

“No, I’m not angry.”

“Then why do you keep rejecting me? I’m about to get married. At least tell me for once how you really feel. Why do I always have to be the one to say it first? Why don’t you tell me the truth that I need to know?”

“”

“If you don’t say it, I’ll never know anything. Please... tell me now. It could be the last chance,” she cried.

I shuddered at her words. I had never really shown her any emotion and always let her come to me first. She was always the one to initiate everything. Even though I was angry, I still wanted to express my feelings.

If only I could have said it sooner, we might not be here today...

Finally, I walked over to her, now sitting with Teacher Salee. I knelt down, looked into her eyes, and said as sincerely as possible.

“I love you, Aoey.”

“There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t love you.”

Chapter 46

Everyone now surrounded us in silence and looked at Aoey and me with curiosity. I never expressed anything to her. I might have told her that I loved her once or twice, but I never really explained how I felt.

It was always Aoey who expressed her feelings. If it weren't for her persistence, I would still be rejecting the fact that I could like girls. No, I didn't like girls. I liked Aoey, and only Aoey.

There was no one in this world that could fulfill me. I searched for it all the time. But the first day I met her and looked into her eyes, I knew she would be the one to walk in and rock my world forever.

"I always looked for the right one, and that's you, Aoey," I said, taking her hand and gently touching her back.

"At first, I couldn't accept the fact that I had these feelings for you. How could I? You're a woman and I'm a woman. Nature created men and women to be together. I couldn't think of any other way."

"Gen..."

"I couldn't fool myself for long. In the end, I lost to you. I've loved you from the first time we met until today... there isn't a day that I don't love you."

The little girl jumped up and hugged me. We both rocked as we hugged each other, just like we did when we made up after a fight back when we lived together as roommates.

"I never wanted to leave you, but I couldn't stand to see you work so hard... You're just a little girl. You shouldn't have to work on a construction site to support me and give up your studies. How could I live with that?"

"I can live with that. You shouldn't decide for me."

"What if it was me working on the construction site while you stayed at home? Could you live with that?" I let go of her and wiped her tears with my thumb. "It hurts to think about that, doesn't it? That's what I thought."

"You may think I'm cold because I never really expressed anything, **but I really love you. Every minute of every day, I think about you and what you're doing. When I think about you, it hurts.**"

I grabbed my chest, my voice shaking as if I had lost control.

"I always worried about how you were going to live without me. Would you be crying? Would you hate me?... If you hated me, it would be easier for you to live."

"You wouldn't have to long for me if you hated me. You could move on with that hate. You could grow up gracefully. You're famous now, and you can live with other people. You're about to have a family."

"Gen..." Aoey cried. Her face was covered in tears. I couldn't help but cry with her.

"My mom said that there is no such thing as eternal love. In the end, everyone will return to their original gender. It is a curse to love someone of the same gender as you. If you meet someone nice, I will be happy for you."

"Gen, tell the truth. Don't lie... you're not happy. Tell me you're not." The little girl cupped my face with both hands and forced me to look into her eyes. "Be honest with me. Just tell me how you feel about this. Tell me!"

"Don't think for me. Don't do anything you think is good for me. I want the truth about how you feel. That's what I wanted to know."

I thought of something a woman, the owner of the coffee shop "Rak" once said. Her words stuck in my head all the time.

"Don't think for her."

It was her job to think about how she felt. I wouldn't be happy if my parents told me I'd be happier married to a man who was richer and better than the man I loved.

But that was love... you chose it for yourself. You won't be happy if someone else chooses for you.

It was the same here when I thought Aoey would be better off without me. She would have a better future, though she had a good future now. But what if it didn't turn out the way I expected? I could blame myself for leaving her alone to face all the trouble.

Okay... I'd be honest for once. No matter what happened, I'd kept my feelings to myself for a long time.

"I don't want to see you get married."

I finally said what I thought. It was the most honest thing I'd ever said. I felt relieved. Other people might think I was a bitch, but fuck them... I would do this for myself.

"I don't want to see you get married. I want you all to myself."

Aoey smiled at me. Her eyes were filled with tears. Her face looked happier than when she was taking photos in her wedding dress with the wedding guests.

"I always wanted to see you in the past three years. But I was afraid that you would hate me if you saw me," I laughed through my tears. "But I came back and found that you hated me and sprayed water on my face."

"Oh, Gen. Don't talk about that." Aoey laughed, thinking back to that moment. "Now I feel guilty."

"I'm not sure if it's too late, but can you be with me? Love needs money. I didn't know how to make money, but I know how to do it now. I made a lot of money by drawing cartoons. I make a lot of money every month, and I also draw book covers."

"You are very intelligent."

"The important thing is that I drew the cover of your novel. But I didn't say it. If you found out, you'd go crazy and leave the publishing house."

She seemed so shocked to hear that. She cried even harder now.

"You are behind all my success, my Gen."

"I know how to make money now. I have my own publishing company. I own a business now, so even though I don't have my parents, I can support you now."

We both stayed quiet for a while. Finally, I decided to tell her something I always wanted to say and that I knew would make her happy.

"Don't get married. Run away with me. If we get enough money together, I'll give you a wedding, just the way you want it."

She didn't waste any time; she nodded quickly. She cried and laughed at the same time.

"I'll go. I'll go wherever you take me."

"Get up if you want to go," Tod, who had remained silent for a long time, said, helping Aoey and me up. "I prepared a car for you."

"What?"

Tod looked at me and shrugged, looking like he was enjoying all the drama. "I'm careful."

"Did you plan all this?"

"I'll give it back to you. Let's go."

Tod took my hand and Aoey's hand on each side and kicked the two of us out of the hotel. Aoey ran with difficulty in her wedding dress. But we forgot that there was a groom at that event.

He ran and blocked us all in front.

"Are you just going to take her? She's my girlfriend."

Ten glared at Aoey angrily. Aoey didn't seem to care about him anymore. She hid behind me and yelled at him.

"Let me go, Ten. We don't like each other that much. We won't make it anyway... I like women. Please understand that."

"I don't want to." Ten looked at me questioningly. We both stared at each other for about a full minute. The groom finally sighed.

"I guess there's no way I can stop you."

"Can you please let us go... you have to understand me. We both searched for someone who would satisfy us. I found someone, and one day you will too. If you find the right one when you are already married, it will be too late."

"Aoey might be the one for me. Who knows. We'll love each other once we're together."

"Please, Ten.."

"I'm just kidding," Ten said, not seeming to care at this point. The wedding was actually for family. "I envy you for finding the right person for yourself. It must feel great."

"Someday you will know."

The groom walked up to Aoey and placed his hand on her head. "I realize now why you kissed me that day. You wanted Gen to see that. You never let

me touch you since the first day."

Aoey looked like she didn't want to be around Ten. She still had that uncomfortable feeling of being around other people. It wasn't as bad as it was three years ago. The little girl let Tod hold her hand despite the awkward expression on her face.

"I'm sorry, Ten. I don't deserve you."

"If you go with her, you'll be happy, right?"

"I will be happy every day if I am with her."

"There's no good reason for me to stop you then. The wedding was for me to be with you, so you wouldn't feel alone," Ten said, looking at me with a sigh. **"Why did two beautiful women end up together? What will a man like me do?"**

"Get another man," Tod joked. Ten laughed when he heard that.

"I'm looking for love, but not with another man. This isn't a gay novel. This is a lesbian world."

"Go. I won't stop you." Ten stepped aside and called out to me. "Gen."

"Hmm?"

"Stay in touch. Let me know how life is going."

I smiled at the nice, generous but lonely boyfriend. "Read our cartoon. That's the story of Aoey and me," I laughed.

"Always in sales mode."

We finally left the hotel. Tod ran to get the car while Aoey and I held onto each other tightly, as if one of us might disappear. There seemed to be

countless problems we still had to deal with.

My brother ran up to us, blocking our way. God! Until how many people would need to stop blocking us!

"Where are you going? I won't let you go," he demanded.

"Bastard. You ruined her wedding, and now you're here,"

"I came here to stop the wedding, but not to give you and Aoey a chance to be together," he said, clearly upset that things hadn't gone his way. Why was he so stubborn?

"Tod used you,"

"What do you mean?" he asked, puzzled.

"Tod told you everything between Aoey and me, right?"

"Yeah."

"And Tod asked you to ruin the wedding, to tell Aoey everything, right?"

"Yeah."

"This is the result Tod wanted. Now that you understand, go," I said, trying to end the conversation.

"I don't understand. Why would Tod do that? He told me all about how much you were hurt, and now you're saying you still love her and want to run away with her? How stupid of you to give up John, the casino owner, to be with this short girl."

"The short girl you're talking about is your ex-girlfriend,"

"You stole her from me. Stupid!"

"Are you calling me stupid?" I rushed to hit him on the head, but Aoey stepped between us.

"Great, I'm sorry I treated you badly in the past. I'm grateful that you ruined my wedding today. You told me the truth about what Gen did for me. You're the most sincere person I've ever met. You said what you thought—you said it when you loved, and you said it when you hated," Aoey said sincerely.

"Yes, and I hate you. You are the... oops!" Great started, but Aoey tiptoed over to him and gave him a kiss on the cheek, quickly stepping back because she hated having contact with men. He was stunned.

"I don't know what to do to repay you. When we were dating, I guess this is what you wanted me to do. This is all I can give you... thank you for everything," Aoey added.

I looked at him, wanting to kick him out into the middle of the street, and then glanced at Aoey, who had just flirted right in front of me. Great still touched the cheek that Aoey had just kissed, but now he looked at her more gently.

"Th...thank you," he stammered.

"Do you still hate me?" Aoey asked timidly.

Great, still upset but calmer, replied, "I hate you less now."

"You're very sincere,"

Great stood there, not knowing what to do, while Tod pulled the car up to us.

"Get in. I'll take you," Tod said.

"Where to?" I asked.

"It's up to you. Where do you want to go?"

Aoey and I had no plans; we just knew we had to leave the wedding. We finally got into the car, and Great wanted to join us too.

"Where are you going?!" Tod shouted when he saw Great trying to get in.

"I'll go with them," Great insisted.

"They're running away together. It's none of your business,"

"Run away? Where? Getting back together was a surprise, but where are you going? Are you going back to Macau? What about Johnathan?"

"I don't think I'll go back to Macau."

"Where are you going then?"

"Somewhere we will never be found," I said quietly.

Great was shocked and clung to the car. Now he seemed very worried that he would never see me again.

"Are you kidding? What about your family, me? Are you going to leave me too?" he pleaded.

"I'll be in touch,"

"Really? You won't have any money if you run away. You'll have to be a farmer and end up begging,"

"Fool! I know how to make money now,"

"I don't want you to go,"

My brother looked at me like he was about to cry. It made me sad to see him feeling bad.

"Don't make that face. I'm not going to die," I laughed and lightly hit him on the head. "If it weren't for you, I wouldn't have this moment. Thank you."

"I love you, Gen."

"I love you too."

"Let's go," Tod said, and slowly drove the car away. I stared at Great until his tall figure was no longer visible. Aoey hugged me tightly, and I hugged her back.

"Is this real? You're back with me now, Gen," Aoey asked, still in disbelief.

"Yes, it feels like a dream,"

We looked at each other and brought our faces closer together, completely forgetting that Tod was driving. He coughed to remind us he was still there, and luckily we hadn't done anything yet.

"Did you plan this outcome?" I asked Tod.

"No," Tod replied with a sigh. "I just wanted you and Aoey to talk before she got married. I didn't think you were happy, Gen, and it wouldn't have been fair if Aoey didn't know about this. If she found out the truth after getting married, she might have divorced Ten and ended up a widow."

He shrugged and continued, "If Aoey found out everything and decided to go ahead with the wedding, that would have been fair enough. At least she would have chosen. I was just butting in, but I wanted everything to be clear and fair."

"And now we're running away together," I said, feeling the reality settle in.

Tod smiled at us through the rearview mirror. "It's a good story. Nothing is better than two lovers who end up together. I also felt guilty three years ago for separating you two. Today, I brought you back together to start over."

He paused and then added, "One of you got better from strange symptoms, and the other now knows how to make money. Now you can live your lives without any problems."

I hugged Tod from the backseat and kissed him on the cheek, feeling grateful for him. I couldn't believe I had such a good friend. I was grateful to my mom for introducing me to this foul-mouthed man in the beginning. He was like an older brother who played an important role in my life.

He gave me another chance to fix my love...

The love that was almost gone....

Tod turned on his blinker and pulled over to the side of the road. I looked at him in confusion.

"What are you doing?"

"You drive, Gen. I'll call a cab to take me home,"

"Why don't you come with us?"

"You're running away. I have to get out."

"I still don't know where we're going,"

"Well, think about it while you're driving. Think about where you can live together, and don't tell me because I might tell your mom again." Tod said with a smile. **"Gen, Aoey, I wanted you two to prove that two girls can be together forever."**

He got out of the car and called a taxi. I got out too and looked at him with tears in my eyes, unsure of when we would meet again. Aoey got out as well and put on my shirt. Her sweet eyes called me back to the car with a smile.

"Let's go."

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"I have a place for us. Let's start there," she said.

"Oh?" I looked into her sweet, questioning eyes but then made a decision. "Well, if it's okay with you, it's okay with me."

"Now we are really together, like old times. My Gen."

I smiled at her. "Yes, just like old times. My Aoey."

Chapter 47 [The Last Chapter]

The most dangerous place was the safest place....

Aoey chose to move back to the same place. The same house we rented 3 years ago. It could be a coincidence or the house was supposed to be available right on the day we moved in. A tenant just moved in a couple of days ago.

I parked Tod's car at a bus station. After stopping at Aoey's condominium for his important document, we took a bus and arrived at this province. Everything felt the same. I threw up because of the bus. The driver was always the same bad driver.

We stayed there for two weeks. We told Teacher Salee and Tod that we were fine, so they didn't have to worry about us. But we kept the details to ourselves. Teacher Salee knew that Aoey was with me and had flown back to live with her foreign husband in her country.

I asked Great to tell my parents what had happened and that I would not return to Macau. I didn't want to know how they would react because I knew they would not agree. They would not oppose the relationship, but they must have been worried about my safety. But... we were in a very remote village. There was no place more peaceful than this.

Oh...

Another person I couldn't forget was Johnathan. I heard from Tod that he was very sad but he respected my decision. John was not a weak person. He could handle the truth that he loved a woman, not a man. I had to move on. I felt guilty but all I could do was ask Tod and Great to talk to him.

That was all I could do.

Everything was settled now. It was different from the first time we were there. We could barely do anything. Now we both knew what we wanted and what we didn't want.

I had quite a bit of money. I bought an air conditioner for the house, a new television, a new computer and a new bed.

A firm one with steel....

Aoey seemed to be obsessed with the new steel bed. When we bought it, she climbed onto the bed, tried to sleep on it, and even tried to ride it to hear the sound.

She was so sexy but scary at the same time. I was amazed to have such a naughty lover in bed. Fifty Shades of Aoey...

I went shopping. But Aoey did something even crazier than that. She asked the owner to sell her the house no matter the price. I was surprised to learn that Aoey had so much money. She also wanted to buy a new car.

"Then you will have a car to take me."

"You are richer than me." I lost a little confidence when I found out she was so rich.

"I made money but I never used it. I told you before that I would buy a house with you. Don't you remember? I can do it today."

"What do I have to do now that you've bought the house?"

"Now you're making money. Be my husband."

It was a strange feeling that I, a beautiful woman, was called husband.

Everyone called me princess when I was young. Later I was a popular girl that every man wanted. Now I was her husband. **God would cry because I wasted my beauty on a girl.**

Now we had a new car, a new house, but we had one more old thing with us.

"Is the bird still alive?"

Aoey pulled out the cage from somewhere and told me the whole story.


"Yes, I left the bird with the owner. I told him that I would return one day. I wasn't sure if he was still alive... The owner took very good care of him. Now he can even pray."

He was so religious that now the bird could pray. But when he was with us... he moaned.

"If you still want the bird to pray, keep it outside, not inside the bedroom."

The sweet eyes looked shy as she realized what I meant.

"I know."



I started drawing a new season of the cartoon. I had to work very late every night to meet the deadline. I was a punctual person, I couldn't miss a deadline.

Working like this took up all the time in my life. I slept only 4 hours a day. Some days I forgot to eat. I was always in front of my computer. If someone wrote to me on Facebook at 2 am, I was there. At 6 am, I was still there. Again at 2 pm, I could also reply.

If someone was looking for me. I would always be there... online. Poor me, I didn't have time to sleep. I worked as a regular office worker. My dad and mom would cry seeing me work so hard like this.

"Gen... I can't take it anymore."

The little girl said as she colored my work on the computer. I turned around to see Aoey wearing a white pajama shirt with shorts. She crossed her arms and looked at me unhappy.

"Why?"

"You don't have time for me. I ran with you away to live together, not to work with you."

"I have to earn money."

"You already have too much. You don't have time to sleep and you don't have time for me."

The girl walked over to my computer and tried to close it, but I knew it had moved, so I held on to it. "Don't do it, or else I won't be able to sleep even less."

"Stop drawing cartoons. You don't have to make money. I'll make money. I can sell a book and we can live 10 years."

"Don't brag. I refuse to cling to you financially."

"You don't have to hold on to me, but sometimes you have to eat me. Don't stay in front of your computer. I'm your wife!"

"I always thought I would be a wife."

"Well, we can take turns being the wife. But it won't matter who the wife is if you don't pay attention to me. Get off your computer now."

The little girl tried to control me. Aoey the one who was quiet like a kitten was gone. Now she was a cat trying to control the lion. She thought she could do that. I was Genlong who never gives up.....

"I'll take a break. You look so grumpy."

It had changed a lot!

"You're not made for hard work. My Gen shouldn't be working. My Gen shouldn't know how to work."

That.....

"And you want me to escape to Macau and let time pass for another 3.5 or 10 years?"

"No, stop working now. Your work is taking up your time." The girl walked over to me and sat on my lap, pouting. She stomped her feet stubbornly like a child. "Can't you just stay home? I want to see you. Hug you. Come inside and then go write a novel later."

"Oh... how self-centered." I laughed. "Well, you can tell me when you want to cuddle. I'll drop everything and hug you."

"Really?"

"Yes, but I have to work. I have to send it in 2 days. If I don't do it now..."

"Now." The sweet eyes grabbed my neck and looked into my eyes as if forcing me. "I wanted to hug you now"

Now she took complete control of me. I was Genlong who controlled everything in the world. I wanted some handcuffs to lock the little girl in bed, so I could get back to work.

"Ok, I have time for you..."

Aoey immediately took off her shirt and showed off her soft, glowing skin. I playfully leaned down to her neck and licked it. Her hands played with my shirt and ran down my body and unhooked my bra. My body naturally followed suit.

"Don't set the time for me. I'm the exception."

"Hmm."

"Okay, I'll let you work."

The sweet eyes stopped everything while I was in the mood. I was confused by her. She teased, manipulated and now she left as if she planned to get revenge after I left her alone for a while.

"Are you just making me hot and then leaving?"

"Are you?" Aoey smiled when she saw that I was gasping for air. "I was in too deep and now you're stopping. What should I do now?"

I decided I wouldn't lose to her. I sighed and grabbed a pen to continue the drawing.

"Okay. I'll keep working." Now we were both upset, instead of having hot sex we ended up fighting. I turned around to go to work and ignored Aoey. My sex drive was calmed by that.

Until....

Something interrupted me under the table. I looked down to see Aoey there. She tried to do something with the shorts she was wearing.

"What are you doing?"

"I'll help you while you work."

"In what way?"

"Keep working. I thought you were very busy."

"How could I work if you.....ummmmm...mmmm"

She didn't care how much I resisted. But to be honest, I wasn't really resisting. I was ready from the first time she came close. Lately, the little girl was very good at teasing me and seducing me.

She knew all my weaknesses, but doing that was too much. It was...

"Aoey... Aoey..."

When she saw that I'm nearly to cum, she stopped. She left me there, I almost screamed when she left.

"Why did you do that? I'm not..."

"It ends here..." The little girl came out from under the table and took off all her clothes. She walked towards the bed. "If you want to end it, follow me."

Damn... I thought I couldn't lose this time!

I slammed the mouse feather on the table and followed the sweet eyes. I grabbed all the clothes I was wearing and collapsed.

"You're dead tonight, Aoey."

That was love... passionate love, sweet love. We had so many different emotions. I didn't do any work the night before because I held her all night and now I was suffering from unfinished work.

Fuck it! It wasn't done. It wasn't done!

Today I had an appointment with Dokrak, the owner of the coffee shop. Since I moved here, it was the usual place I went to hang out, to play with the dogs. It had been 3 years since Dokrak still hadn't found anyone to paint her wall.

Since I was there, I applied for the job. What was wrong with earning some money?

I was stingy.

"Let me finish my cartoon this month and I will paint for you."

"Do you also draw cartoons? Where is it? Is it published?"

"It's on the Internet. You can read it for free. It's at the top of the sales charts now."

I boasted proudly. People were interested in our relationship, even though it was between two women. I didn't say on the internet that it was based on a true story, but people seemed to like it.

"What's name? I'll look it up."

"The name...."

The doorbell at the front door rang as I was about to tell her the name of my cartoon. Aoey, who had just run into the shop, looked at me. Her face was colorless. I ran towards her quickly.

"What happened, are you okay?"

Aoey ran to the store in her pajamas. She hadn't washed her face. I was worried to see her nervous like that.

"It's okay, you're still here."

"Huh?"

"I thought... you... you ran away, again."

"Why would I run away?"

"I don't know. I'm so paranoid." The little girl touched her chest and now realized how tired she was. "You were 10 out of 10 last night. I thought you might run away again to Macau, India, Cambodia or wherever."

She must have run looking for me and realized this was my usual place to be.

"What did you do so well to be given a perfect point?" Rak asked curiously. My ears turned red as if I had frozen.

"My cartoon."

"That's nice. You give a rating."

"What are you doing here so early?" Aoey asked and looked at Rak curiously.

I pointed to the wall to explain.

"We talked about painting her wall 3 years ago. The wall is still empty now. I'll take the job, but we haven't talked about the details yet. I told her about my cartoon. She wants to read it."

"What is it about?" The shop owner was interested in my caricature. I was shy, but I told her frankly.

"It's about our love. I drew pictures about our relationship. But I drew it from my point of view. Aoey told the story from her point of view."

Rak laughed. "I'll read both. Where can I find it? What's it called?"

"My story is called MATE." I answered first.

Rak turned to Aoey and asked her about her story, but Aoey seemed very shy. She, or most writers, didn't like to talk about what they wrote because she didn't want people to know how dreamy and imaginative she was.

"My story called best friends."

"It's the same story from a different angle?" Rak concluded and smiled at us. "I'll read it tonight."

We hung out there a little longer and talked about work. As we were about to leave, Love shouted to confirm with me again.

"Gen"

"Yeah?"

"Your novel is called Mate Best Friends, is that correct?"

Aoey and I held hands and nodded.

"Yes, it's called..."

"...."

"Mate Best Friends."

It was about two best friends who fell in love with each other.

THE END



Chapters
48. 47



Behind the Scene

Aoey's Point of View

It was another day that Genlong was still here...

I was so paranoid all the time that every time I woke up, I'd quickly check the space next to me in bed. If she wasn't there, I'd immediately look across the table where her computer was. That was her spot.

I found the beautiful girl there and sighed in relief that Genlong was here.

"Don't run away from me again..."

I was upset that we didn't cuddle in bed.

Lately, she was paying more attention to the computer and mouse than to me. I had to work hard to seduce her into paying attention to me. Why was she so worried about making money? I told her it wasn't that necessary.

"Love needs money. I'm worried I won't be able to take care of you."

Every time we argued, I gave up when I heard that reason. She had me as the main reason for everything she did but didn't like to give explanations.

She didn't brag because she liked to be cool...

"Did you wake up a long time ago?" I asked as I lay face down on the bed and looked at Genlong, who was drawing cartoons in front of her computer.

"Since 4 am," she replied, not even looking at me.

I looked at the clock and felt annoyed... It was 10 am. She had woken up 6 hours ago and had been sitting here the whole time.

That was crazy. I didn't like this version of Genlong.

"Gen."

"Hmm?"

"Who do you love more, the computer or me?"

The beautiful face finally turned to make eye contact. She smiled at me. Her eyes showed that she hadn't gotten enough sleep. I planned to complain but ended up feeling bad for her. I sighed.

"Of course I love you more."

"I love you but you have to rest."

"When I'm done with this episode, I'll take a long sleep... Oh, that would be nice."

I got out of bed and gave my lovely princess a massage. Genlong closed her eyes and relaxed. I wanted her to sleep so she could rest.

She was a real princess, a queen B. Now she worked so hard for money even though I told her not to work...

My income from the book was enough to take care of both of us for the rest of our lives. But Genlong was afraid of being poor. She was afraid that we might end up like before. She worked so hard that I couldn't bear that I was the reason for this.

That's how I must have felt... when she found out I was working on the construction site. She couldn't see me like that, so she decided to leave me and help me from afar.

"Why are you stopping?" Genlong opened her eyes. Her eyes, which were as dark as the night sky, looked at me in surprise. I smiled at her.

"My mind wandered."

"What are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking about our relationship from the beginning."

"Since you were in Bangkok—"

"I'm thinking back to elementary school when I secretly admired you."

Now Genlong paid more attention to me. She stopped looking at her computer and now looked at me. "Tell me. I want to know when you started liking me and how you broke up with me."

I looked at my princess and smiled.

"What do I get if I tell you?"

"Why do I have to give you something?" she asked but understood when she saw my seductive smile. "Yes... if you tell me a good story, you'll have me."

"Okay, I'll tell you. Come here. Lie on my lap and rest."

Genlong stared at the computer. She was reluctant to put down her work, but she eventually walked over to the bed and rested her head on my lap. I gently touched her face, feeling bad that her handsome face had dark circles around her eyes like a panda.

"I can still remember the first day we met... you walked into class and sat next to me. You called me Olivo."

You said I was thin like Olivo. You said I was a beggar's daughter because I was poor.

It was so strange that I let another girl treat me like that and call me a beggar's daughter. So I didn't feel like you looked down on me. I might have been thin and dirty. I didn't like to eat so I was small. Your beautiful face was that of a bad girl, but I understood you, so I didn't hate you.

You were so bossy since you were young. You were a good-looking girl, unlike the children in the hinterland. You had bright skin and long black hair, red lips, and beautiful eyes. There were so many boys and girls who wanted to be your friends. But they only lasted for a while because you were spoiled and difficult. All my friends couldn't stand you. Only I stayed with you.

Why was that?

I thought it was nice. You liked to share some expensive snacks with me. Just because of that... *'You're a teacher's daughter. Why can't you do this? Stupid.'*

You were a smart girl. You were good at everything. I felt like you came to school just to get the certificate, but you knew all the knowledge from the beginning. Even though I were being bullied, I felt good being with you. I was proud to have a friend as beautiful as you. Just like when you had handsome parents.

You were good at everything but... you had no friends.

No one ever wanted to do a task with you. You were bossy and never did anything you were asked to do. You were good at everything, but not in terms of relationships. I was the teacher's daughter, so I had to pair up with you for a task. I couldn't get away from that.

'You do the job. If you do it well, I'll buy you a new box of pencils.'

"No, it's a group project. We have to do it together," I said, but you looked at me unhappily.

'I'll give you my golden electric pencil sharpener. Do it. I don't like group assignments. It's too easy; they're only for stupid people.'

You were a real bitch...

I thought about when my college friend came to work on an assignment together. You were upset because my friends took advantage of me. You totally contradicted yourself. You didn't do your homework either.

We were close for about 2 years in elementary school. Your father moved to Bangkok in third grade. My sassy princess also moved in with her father. I was very sad that you had to go, but not as sad as when I found out that I had given you lice.

The cheeky princess had to cut her hair because of the lice I gave her. You made sure to get revenge on me in front of the whole class.

'We're not friends anymore. I don't like you anymore. Miss Lice.'

I remembered all too well how it felt to not be friends like that. My eyes were filled with tears as I continued to tell the short-haired Genlong that I was so sorry.

"I'm sorry, Genlong."

When I approached you, you walked away in anger and disgust. The perfect little lady who never did anything wrong in life except for those lice on her head.

'Leave me alone. You gave me lice.'

That was the last day I saw you at school. After that, I continued living my life as a normal school kid. That's all what happened."

"Your crying face is always in my mind. I never erased that," the sassy princess lying on my lap now said. I laughed when I realized you felt guilty remembering those times.

“Yes, you were such a bad girl, but that’s why I never forget you. I forgot most of my childhood friends, but not you.”

“I didn’t have any friends in high school,” She said.

“Really? You didn’t have any friends in high school either. Why were you so mean?”

She grimaced when she heard my comment. I laughed and kissed her forehead lovingly.

“I can be friends with myself in the mirror. I’m a cool girl.”

“Don’t worry. I can be whatever you want me to be.”

“You’re flirting again,” the princess looked shy as she reached out her hand to touch my cheek. “I still can’t tell why you like me. Why did you approach me when you came to Bangkok? We lost contact for a long time.”

“I met Si. He said he met you in Phuket and gave me your number. I kept your number and thought I’d contact you when I was on a tour bus going to Bangkok,” I said. “I didn’t have any other friends, so I tried to call you but I didn’t plan on asking for help. I just thought talking to someone I knew in Bangkok would be good.”

Genlong looked at me adoringly and touched my cheeks playfully. “It’s lucky you met Si and she gave you my number. Otherwise, you would never have called me. We wouldn’t be together like this... But when did you like me? Why did you like me? Or did it start in elementary school?”

“Are you crazy?”

“That’s what I thought. Did you like anyone before you met me? I remember you once mentioned that I was your first love.”

I looked at the girl below me. I remembered the sassy princess wearing headphones, pretending to listen to music. How did she hear that? “I thought you were listening to music back then?”

“Oh no... you caught me!” Genlong touched her cheeks in embarrassment.
“I was nosy.”

I laughed at her embarrassment, still remembering how I felt. “I never liked anyone... I don’t know why. Maybe because I had been through some bad experiences.

“Don’t talk about it.”

“Even though I didn’t have that experience, I thought I’d never liked any boy or girl. No one impressed me like what you said when we ate pizza together for the first time.”

“Imitator,” Genlong smiled.

“When did you start liking me?”

“Our first visual contact.”

“Ha?”

I first saw Genlong at a shopping mall where we had arranged to meet when I first arrived in Bangkok. I remember looking at a woman who passed by me with full interest. She was wearing sunglasses, but she looked so familiar. What excited me even more was when she took off her glasses, and we ate pizza together.

We both looked at each other. I took out my glasses to clean them; everything was blurry, but one thing I remembered well was her eyes looking at me.

Her dark eyes looked like bright stars in the night sky... Eyes that could swallow me whole.

“Aoey, put on your glasses.”

“Ha?”

“Put your glasses on.”

I had no idea how excited I was to put my glasses back on and see her more clearly. My heart trembled with excitement when we made eye contact.

I still wonder to this day how I first fell in love with her.

So I never showed any feelings. I never met anyone who made me feel that way. I thought I was excited to see an old friend who was as beautiful as a celebrity on TV. I thought I was impressed by her beauty until we spent more time together. We slept in the same bed. We hugged.

I knew we weren't just friends.

I was the one who knew it first...

Who expressed and knew deep down that she had some feelings for me...

She showed in many ways that she had feelings for me. There were many times that I tested her, but she was afraid, so she ran away from her feelings, and that hurt her.

"Stop calling my attention."

"If you like women, I'll hate you too."

"If you don't date anyone, you have to get out of my life."

"Don't do this."

I remembered all that... other people might stab her with a knife, but I was very patient. I wanted to be close to her, to be with her. I didn't want her out of my life like before. Genlong was the most self-deceptive, secretive girl I'd ever met. She never expressed anything. We almost didn't make it.

"You liked me the first time we made eye contact. What an easy girl!"

Genlong looked at me and smiled shyly. She liked listening to our story. Well, we are all embarrassed to hear our own stories.

“Gen, you fell in love with me too the first time we made eye contact. Love at first sight is real...”

“What if I were a man? Would you love me?”

“I didn’t love you for your looks. I love you because you are you, Gen,” I said.

Genlong looked at me suspiciously.

“You are so beautiful. Your beauty really struck me.”

“And you too, Aoey.”

We made eye contact, and I leaned in to kiss her. Before we moved on to the next step, we paused because the doorbell at the front door rang. Genlong sat up immediately.

“It could be my publicist. I ordered something online. I’ll go get it.”

Oh my gosh... I almost got it.

I watched the slender body walk away. I chuckled at her unsteady steps. She still needed more rest. I always watched her obsessively from elementary school, college, or whenever we met...

I loved her and hated her at the same time.

I couldn’t say I hated her, but it was a mixed feeling; love, hate, revenge. I never understood why she left me even though we promised we would be together no matter what happened, and then there was that horrible letter:

[To Aoey,

If you read this letter, you will understand why I have to go and leave you behind. I thought that only love would guide us through all the difficulties, but that was not the case at all.

I hate being poor.

Since I was born, I have never lived badly. When my family was in Korat, my house was at least made of cement with many facilities on site. But living here with you is not the same. It is not comfortable. I don't like the wooden house that makes a creaking noise when I walk. I feel hot during the day... There is nothing good about it.

I can't stand it....

This difficulty made me realize that I love myself more. Living a poor life makes me hate everything here. I hate the stupid smiles of the people in the hinterland. I hate the smell of the tree. I hate the market that can't provide me with the things I like. But most of all, I hate the fact that I don't have money.

Even though you said you could support me, people like me can't live in the countryside on just 200 baht a day. I can't live in an environment where I will never be happy around them.

No air conditioning.

Without television.

Without a water heater.

Even the bed is rusty.

I love you, Aoey, but now I realize that being poor was eating me alive. I felt empty inside and wondered why I didn't run away with my family. The answer is you... I have to live like this for you. I'll be better and happier without you.

I have to leave you behind.

Please understand me... I wanted you to understand that it is natural for men and women to be together. It is impossible for two women to be together until the end. One day you will meet a man who wants to marry you and have children with you. I, Gen, will have to find a husband as rich and intelligent as me. I don't think I can fight against nature anymore.

Only in a novel could a woman love a woman and a man be with another man without being judged by society. If it exists somewhere, I never thought I would see them. I don't want to prove that our relationship will last forever. I'm not a guinea pig. If it helps make your life easier, you can hate me. Because it seems like I started to hate you too.

Why did you put me in this situation?

I'm leaving. I hope I never see you again.

Genlong]

That letter drove me crazy. I couldn't eat or sleep during that time. The lyrics played in my head all the time in her voice as if someone had recorded it. I remembered every lyric, every line. I lived in rage for three years.

Genlong did it. I hated her with all my heart and told myself that I had to succeed so that I could prove to her that I could succeed.

Even though I hated her, I still wanted to see her. I wanted to know how the sassy princess lived. Was she really happy living without me? I rewrote the novel about our story and posted it on the Internet again. I called it "Best Friends." I got the best feedback any writer could ever get until one of my

fans sent me an email telling me about an Internet cartoon called MATE, with the same story.

When I read the cartoon, my heart beat very fast. Many things told me that the artist was Genlong. I knew she could draw very well, so I was 90 percent sure it was her. If I decided to report to the police or press charges, the cartoon would just be deleted. But I didn't want that.

I wanted to see the artist... Tod could handle it. I wasn't wrong. Tod could really do it. The handsome guy was the owner of the company, my manager, my employer, my brother. He could take me to Genlong. Seeing her again made me realize that...

I still loved her.

I couldn't deny that.

Hatred and love were intertwined. I wanted to kill her, but I also wanted to hold her. I wanted to ask her if she missed me. I later found out that Genlong was the one behind all my success and the real reason she had to leave...

And the fact that she loved me so much.

So lucky I asked Tod to bring her back despite the hate in the letter.

I hated that letter.

“What's wrong? You look stressed.”

The sassy princess who came back from getting the package outside looked at me in bewilderment. She wondered what she had done wrong. She wasn't

as overbearing as before, as she realized how wrong she had made me. “I hate you.”

“What did I do?”

“I’m thinking about the letter you left me three years ago.”

She was surprised to hear that. I laughed at her reaction.

“I had to write that,” my loving husband rushed to sit beside me and explained nervously. “Think about it. If I wrote you a letter saying that I have to go because I don’t want to see you work hard for me, that I loved you so much and gave you hope so that you would wait for me. I had to be mean, so that you could move on.”

“Leave that excuse alone. I still picked a fight for fun even though I understood it now. I wondered what was going through your mind when you wrote the letter. There must be some truth in it, or you wouldn’t be able to write a letter like that.”

The beautiful girl in front of me looked confused and finally escaped with her trick.

“I fainted.”

I knew her movement well enough, so I grabbed her by the neck. She couldn’t collapse on the bed. I laughed and pulled her towards me for a hug. “I’m kidding. Now you’re fainting when you can’t explain it. Why are you so cute?”

“What are you doing?”

“I was upset thinking about it. Next time just tell me honestly. Don’t ever disappear again. It won’t be great like the first time. I’ll be really angry.”

Genlong hugged me back and laughed. “Okay, I’ll say it straight next time.”

“By the way, what did you buy? Since when do you start shopping online?”

“No, this is my first time. I was wondering if I would make it.”

Now we turned our attention to the package on my princess's lap. I quickly grabbed the box towards me. “I'll open it for you.”

“Hey, nosy!”

“I can't open it?”

“Okay, okay. You can open it.” She didn't want to argue with me. “Fine, open it for me. I'll work a little harder.”

Genlong walked over to her computer on the table. She picked up a pen mouse and started drawing. I found a cutter and opened the box. I was curious to know what was inside. I found another small box wrapped in newspaper.

“What did you buy?”

“You're opening it right now. Don't ask, just open it.”

I pulled back the layer of wrapping newspaper to reveal a small, dark blue jewelry box. My excitement grew.

I opened the box and saw two gemstone rings with the letters A and G on each ring. I looked at it in surprise. “You asked for rings.”

“They are from Swarovski. The diamond rings won't arrive at home if I order them online.” The artist continued drawing in front of the computer, not making any eye contact. I put the ring on my finger and discovered that it was too big for my finger.

“I can't use ring A.”

“That's mine. You have to use the one with the G. Why would you wear a ring with your name?”

“You're so thoughtful. Why did you buy it?” I put the ring on and admired it. “It must have looked pretty on the Internet, that's why you bought it.”

“It was a pre-order ring.”

“Tasteful.”

“Of course, I’m Genlong.”

“What’s the occasion? Or did you just want to buy it?”

I admired the ring and thought it looked good on me. I should wear it all the time. The name Genlong was on my finger.

I still hadn’t received any response from her, but Genlong remained silent for a long time. I had to look away from the ring and look at her, now sitting in front of the computer.

“Why are you so quiet?”

“I’m excited.”

“Why?”

“Aoey, marry me?”

Silence fell between us. Genlong wasn’t looking at me but was no longer drawing anything on the computer. She sat still. I froze as if I were paralyzed from head to toe.

“Why are you silent? I thought you wanted to get married.”

The next thing I knew, I was hugging her from behind, still in shock. My emotions were through the roof. I cried and shook.

“What’s wrong? You scared me.”

“How could you do this? This is unexpected.”

I cried and hit her shoulder softly. Genlong turned around and spun her chair to face me. She pulled me to sit on her lap. My daring princess’s reaction was more nervous than mine.

“I thought a marriage proposal was supposed to be unexpected. I was so scared that you would cry so much.” Genlong grabbed her chest where her heart was. “So this is the feeling of a proposal. I never thought I could do this. I always imagined a man kneeling down asking me to marry him. How funny life is.”

I now hugged her and cried like a baby on her lap. I hugged her as if I couldn't believe it and thought this could be a good dream. “I can't believe it. You proposed to me.”

“I told you before that when I had enough money, I would propose to you. I have some now. But please, I don't want a big wedding. I don't want to be on the news. A woman married another woman or a gay couple got married—I don't want to be in some weird news section.”

“Whatever you want.”

“If we get on the news, my parents will find out and drag me back home. Let's do this... we'll get married nice and simple. I want a small, low-budget wedding like Rain and Kim Tae Hee, a Korean celebrity. We can invite just a few close friends.”

I never cared what my wedding would be like. The most important thing was that Genlong wanted to settle down with me. I couldn't say much because I was crying all the time. Genlong tried to talk and calm me down.

“What kind of dress are we going to wear at our wedding? Are we both going to wear a white wedding dress? We might end up in a beauty pageant.”

“It doesn't matter.”

“How is that? We have to think about what we're going to wear.”

“I don't really care what I wear.” I kissed her softly on the neck and added, “It doesn't matter.”

“What are you doing?”

Genlong noticed that I started to get naughty. Not only did my lips gently kiss her all over, but my hands also playfully touched her under her shirt.

“I’m more interested in what happens after the wedding.”

“You’re naughty again.”

“You always make me horny, even when you talk about the wedding dress.” I gently nibbled on her ear. I knew that was her weak spot. Her labored breathing was a sign that she was convinced. “The dress isn’t that important to me. I’m more interested in taking it off.”

“You’re flirting with me again.”

“Does it work?”

“I don’t know.” Genlong pushed me away and pulled off my shirt. He bit my cleavage, his favorite spot.

“I think it’s working.”

I smiled like a winner. Finally, Genlong carried me to the bed. She lost to me as usual.

“You always make me forget how stressed I was with work. This is a nice break.”

My daring princess took off all her clothes before lying on top of me. I let her lead me the way she liked, with kisses and caresses. Her soft hands gently explored my body.

You see!

The wedding dress wasn’t that important. The important thing was to take it off.

Special Chapter 1

Tod's Point of View

An alert on my phone let me know that I had received a text while I was eating a sandwich outside the hospital. I grabbed my phone to check the message and wasn't surprised to see who it was from.

Kate: Tod, I'm getting married.

Kate: Sending pictures.

I saw the message in my notification on the screen and stopped. I had so many mixed feelings.

I resisted opening my phone and reading the full message. It would show her that I had 'read' the message.

My relationship with Genlong was like that of a brother and sister all the time. At least that was how I showed it. What could I do? She had someone she loved and would always love, and that was Aoey. There was no room for me at all. When I could handle the disappointment of never winning in that situation, my only role was to be like an older brother to her... until now.

Four years had passed...

I wanted to congratulate her, but I felt horrible.

Yes, I had feelings for Genlong. Love could happen with anyone regardless of their gender. Above all, I also liked women.

Back to when I first met Genlong...

I was born into a wealthy family. My father owned a private hospital, and my mother was the headmistress of a famous public school. My parents had good profiles, and I was their only son. All expectations fell on me. I had to succeed.

I had to get A's throughout all the years.

I had to enter a prestigious university.

That included their expectation of having a good wife...

My mom... chose her friend's daughter, whom she assured was perfect: beautiful, smart, and, most importantly, rich.

"Hi Tod, my name is Genlong. I am 20 years old. My dad is a man. My mom is a woman," said Genlong, the woman my mom introduced me to.

She was perfect, but one thing she lacked was good manners. Another thing she had in excess was arrogance. I must admit that the first time we met, she didn't impress me at all except for her looks. She was self-centered, spoiled, and rude. If her parents weren't rich, she wouldn't have anything else. I promised myself that the first time we met would be the last. But funny enough... the sassy, self-centered girl contacted me and seemed interested in being my friend.

Even with her hostile attitude then.

I later found out that the real reason she wanted to be my friend was to run away from someone. I accepted it because I saw that we had common benefits; I also had a secret that I didn't want my family to know and could use a cover-up too.

I was dating a man.

If someone in my family found out, it wouldn't end well. The only son, the only expectation of the family dating another man would be a disaster. The cover story between Genlong and me stemmed from this. So, I got entangled with someone who shouldn't have been my friend from the start.

I went out with a man.

Genlong dated a woman.

We both hid the taboo relationship from our families. It was a conspiracy between us. We had the same path, and that's how we got closer.

We were so close that we both witnessed major events in each other's lives.

I broke up with Sigha.

Then I realized that I had almost no friends. I had no one to call to talk to. It was strange that I was thinking about that sassy girl. I called Genlong and was surprised to find that she was more worried about me than I thought, even though we had just met. Besides, Genlong wasn't the kind of person who would care about other people.

But she cared about me...

The breakup was so torturous. I dated a lot of people before, but most of the time, I was the one who dumped them... those girls. But it crushed me when a guy dumped me.

I assumed he was gay...

Genlong made me smile even though she fought with Aoey at the time. The bird that parroted the sound of them having sex was hilarious. I burst out laughing, and Aoey's reaction was priceless. She supported me through my dark moment... in her own way.

That's when she became a sister to me.

But only for a short period. When Genlong got drunk on vodka and kissed me passionately, that's when I felt something was wrong.

My heart trembled...

I was excited...

I missed those lips.

I was good at not showing emotions. No one knew how I felt. I knew love before. I realized when she kissed me that maybe I wasn't a hundred percent gay.

I liked women too... but why Genlong?

Life was so confusing. I cried a lot when I found out that Singha was dating a woman. A few days later, I felt emotional about my shameless friend kissing me. It could have happened because I was unstable from the heartbreaking episode.

I let that feeling go. It hurt me so much to see Singha post a picture of him and his girlfriend on Facebook. I thought I was over it, but I felt pain seeing it. I hated everyone in the world, including Genlong, who visited me with her happiness. She was in her love bubble with Aoey.

"I wanted to see what smart people like you would do if you knew that the person you love with all your heart only wants to be with you for your money."

My statement reflected how I felt. Genlong and I were born rich, and that's what people wanted from us. I assumed Aoey didn't love her the same way Singha cheated on me.

I was stupid...

Genlong was angry with me. She disappeared for a while. I chased her away, my only close friend. I ended up regretting what I had said.

I apologized to Genlong.

The sassy girl had a bad mouth. She sarcastically accepted my apology anyway. I thought I knew Genlong well enough. She had a bad mouth, but she had a good heart. She liked to act cold, but she didn't realize that she was ridiculous sometimes.

Ridiculous in a cute way... I'd tell you how my feelings towards Genlong started to change.

The kiss then was not clear...

It was clearer when we had the second kiss to cover up that Aoey lived with her in the condo. That's when I realized that I had fallen in love with her.

Her moist lips and our wet tongues touched, and even though it was a fake kiss, my heart shuddered. I might have been weak from heartbreak. Genlong was like an oasis in the desert. My heart was bigger with joy. It was love without expectations. I was happy just watching her grow.

Yes, such love existed. Love without possession.

I never thought about fighting for her.

I just supported her and was on her side.

Even on her worst day when she was embroiled in a murder case and an anti-money laundering case.

I was so worried about her when I couldn't reach her. Her family was on the TV news all the time. I had no idea where she was or how she was doing. I heard that her entire family had left the country, and she was left behind. Her mom tried to stay in touch with me, the only person who could communicate with her daughter. She asked me for help in finding her out of fear of the police and her father's enemy. She was worried about her daughter's safety.

What worried me most was... She couldn't live without money.

She was born into a rich and perfect family. She must have been in big trouble to run away. I saw a light at the end of the tunnel when Genlong

finally contacted me.

I had to convince her not to do it.

It was the best thing I could do. Seeing her again made me feel so sad. The perfect Genlong was now so thin. She didn't look very happy, but she still spoke positively about Aoey and how she was her happiness. I couldn't stand that.

I couldn't bear to see that Genlong was wrong about love.

“Love needs money, or at least you have to know how to make money.”

I tried to dissuade her using Aoey. The bold girl tried to ignore what I said, but I could see from her eyes that she agreed with me.

And yes, she contacted me.

Just three days later, Genlong called me back and agreed to go away...

Yes, I did. But what followed was the guilt I felt towards Aoey.



Special Chapter 2

Tod's Point of View

I was shocked to learn about the strange symptoms Aoey had. She couldn't stand anyone touching her, not even her mom. Whenever anyone got too close, she would scream. We all had to tie her up and send her to the psychiatrist. I never thought it was this serious.

But once she was with the doctor, everything became easier. I didn't know the reason that caused Aoey to act this way. But her mother, or Teacher Salee, whom she called Genlong, seemed to know. The old lady just cried silently. She seemed to accept what had happened, and I had to keep the promise I made to Genlong that I would take good care of Aoey.

The doctor who treated Aoey was an old friend of Teacher Salee, so Aoey started the treatment process right away. She seemed to be getting better little by little. She wasn't quite there yet and would cry out from time to time, not because of her symptoms, but because Genlong had left her.

That was the biggest concern.

She was like this for 6 months. It would not be good to continue like this. She didn't go to school and couldn't socialize. The treatment wasn't cheap. Something had to be done to get her back on her feet.

"Hey," I visited her at home. She wasn't hospitalized; she was still allowed to live at home. No one was allowed to touch her, so once she saw me

visiting, she immediately glared at me. I was the one who took Genlong away from her.

“What do you want?” Her cold and hostile voice made me sigh. Well, I would be angry too if it were me.

“I wanted to talk to you about Genlong and you.”

“What’s up with that? What do you have to say?”

“I have no excuses. I just wanted you to think about the truth.” I sat down, both hands clasped in my lap as Aoey stood with her arms crossed over her chest. She looked so fierce, as if she could kill me if she had a gun. “This is the real world.”

“Yes, this is the real world, not a dream. I will never forgive you because if I do, it would just be a dream. A dream that you took Gen from me. I will never forget it.”

“Yes, I took Gen because Gen couldn’t live like that.”

“Why are you thinking for both of us? We were happy!” Aoey screamed and glared at me. “You broke everything. If you didn’t exist, this wouldn’t have happened.”

“Do you really believe that? Do you think that without me, she wouldn’t have left you?” I had to dig up a disgusting truth that Gen asked me to tell. Otherwise, she couldn’t move forward. “Genlong was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Think about this, you started with love. Everything looked so perfect. But how long could you suffer from hunger? Five? Ten years?”

“....”

“The beauty of love began to fade. The cost of living is rising. Hardships surrounded the two of you. You’re just a little girl. How are you going to support Genlong?”

“I can do it!”

“Working at a construction site? Look in the mirror and tell me...” I thought of some horrible things to say.

“You’re nothing compared to Gen.” I hated myself and regretted saying that.

I saw that she was stunned and frozen by what I said, but no... I wouldn’t stop with just that.

“Genlong was beautiful from head to toe. She wears expensive things, and you’re a girl from the interior of the country who came to Bangkok. You can’t even socialize like normal people. You’re a beggar who fell in love with a princess. Genlong might be in love with you today, but once all that fades away and she sees things more clearly...”

“....”

“You pulled her down. How dare you lower her to your level? Being a beggar like you. Aoey... Can you really stand that look in Genlong’s eyes?”

“That’s not Genlong.”

“But she left you!” I was too embarrassed to say something like that to the girl. “I heard that she left you a letter. Didn’t the letter reveal something about her?”

I hit the right spot. Tears rolled down her cheeks. I didn’t know what the letter said, but I assumed Gen had left her some unpleasant messages. I tried to emphasize what Genlong had told her.

“Genlong moved on. How could you not?”

“Don’t lie to me. It won’t work, especially if it comes from people like you.”

“I don’t expect you to listen to me. I just want you to love yourself. It hurts the people around you to see you like this, especially your mother.”

“Especially my mother...” Aoey chuckled. “If I were like that and drove my mom crazy, I would do it.”

“At least get better at getting revenge.”

That seemed to work. It seemed to hit the nail on the head.

“What can I do with it?”

“She might have a husband now. I heard she moved to Macau. Her father has a casino business. She might end up with another rich person.” I made up a story. I knew Genlong was now dealing with depression too. But what else could I do... “If one day she came back and saw you like this, she wouldn’t regret leaving you then.”

“Do you know where she is now?”

“Of course I know. We keep in touch.”

“How is she?” I asked even though I was so upset with her. But it had to be bad, I told myself.

“She’s fine. She’s rich, happy, and living her life comfortably. The weather there is much better than here and...”

“That’s enough,” the little girl pinched herself.

“Tod, do you really think that if I can move on, she would be sad that she left me?”

“I don’t know,” I smiled. At least it seemed to work. “If I were you, I’d live my life to the fullest to make the person who hurt me regret leaving me. You’re writing a novel now, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Write your book and publish it. Market it well, be successful. Once you are famous, whatever you do, Genlong will know about it... You can sleep with

all the men in the world, and by then, Genlong will no longer be able to hurt you.”

“.....”

“That would be so hot.”

Bitter medicine was the best medicine...

From that day on, Aoey was a different person. She accepted the treatment and started writing a novel. I proposed to publish her novel, but she turned it down. Finally, I posed as an editor and contacted her.

Damn!

Studying at a medical school was hard enough... but her books could really sell...

Her books were so famous that I could even drop out of medical school. She had enough money to build a house and buy an expensive car. Aoey made a lot of money. Her work expanded into movies and TV dramas.

The sweet eyes began to blossom. From a little girl, she was now a queen in the book business. But fame came with self-centeredness. I understood where she was coming from. She became successful so quickly. She never knew that I was behind all her success until her third book was published. I decided to tell her the truth. She was upset at first, but then she was okay with it.

“That was good. With or without you, everything makes money.”

Her arrogance worried me. But what the hell... the sweet eyes started to socialize. Her relationship with her mother was slowly improving. Above all, she had a boyfriend.

Ten...

I thought Ten liked Aoey because of her looks. Ten was like a normal handsome man. Aoey agreed to go out with him, but her eyes never

revealed any love. She was oblivious to the relationship.

But she agreed to marry...

That's when I thought I was out of control. Teacher Salee met her new husband and was soon moving to another country. Aoey completely rejected the idea of moving in with her. Teacher Salee didn't tell me why, so I didn't ask again. I later learned that Aoey was planning to marry Ten, a brother of her psychiatrist.

How could I let this happen?

The image of Aoey running after the car while hitting the window with her bloody hands was still clear in my mind. I was the one who separated the two lovebirds. I had to do something, even though I had feelings for Genlong.

I took Genlong back to Bangkok.

I was the one who planned for the two of them to meet again. I also planned to ruin Aoey's wedding... hahaha.

I ruined the wedding only to find out about another wedding planned by Genlong.

I opened the message to let her know I read it. Genlong sent a picture of her and Aoey hugging each other, showing off their ring. They looked so happy, and I liked seeing my sassy girl smile.

Tod: Where is your wedding? I'll go.

Genlong: In Bangkok, so it will be convenient for you. It won't be big, just a small gathering. I will invite only close friends and family.

Genlong: You have to come, Tod. You are my most important friend.

I read the message and felt tears in my eyes, but I also smiled for her.

Tod: Absolutely, I wouldn't miss it.



Special Chapter 3 [Last SC]

Tod's Point of View

Two weeks later, Aoey and Genlong's wedding took place.

They were two modern women who didn't bother with auspicious timing; they just needed beautiful wedding dresses, booked a hotel, and were ready for the reception.

The wedding was held in a small ballroom in a hotel with a large table in the middle. It looked more like a meeting room than a wedding venue.

The two brides wore modern, elegant white dresses.

Genlong always looked stunning. All eyes were on her as she entered the room, her black hair perfectly framing her beautiful, bright face, and her eyes mesmerizing everyone.

The other wedding dress was sweet and simple; Aoey wore a white traditional Thai dress decorated with gold thread along the edges. She was breathtakingly beautiful.

The two brides were dressed differently but complemented each other perfectly. They showcased two distinct styles that harmonized beautifully. It was by design—they didn't want two brides in identical gowns.

“Wow, you look absolutely gorgeous,” Great exclaimed. “Ow! Why did you hit my head?”

“Don’t be rude on my wedding day,” Genlong scolded him.

Great had flown in from Macau to attend the wedding. He looked at his sister with admiration, and then at Aoey with open appreciation.

“Why do two beautiful women end up together?”

“Shut your mouth,” Genlong retorted.

“Why? One is my beloved sister, the other is my ex-girlfriend, and they ended up together.” Great pouted as he handed something to Genlong.

“Here’s Mom’s present for you—some money to help you two get by.”

I stood not far from them, peeking over curiously as Genlong opened the folded check. I saw the amount—**ten million baht**. Wow! Ten million. Aoey almost fainted at all those zeros on the check.

“Why did she give me so much? Does she know I’m marrying a woman?”

“Yeah, she said it won’t last,” Great replied sarcastically. “Mom still believes that a relationship between two women won’t last forever.”

“I’ll prove her wrong,” Genlong declared.

“You’re ungrateful.”

“What?”

Great, always a foul-mouthed boy, kept his voice low as he spoke to his sister. “You left two parents who love you so much and moved to Thailand to live with a woman you just met. If that’s not ungrateful, I don’t know what is.”

Aoey, who was standing next to them, looked guilty, but she couldn’t say anything—it wasn’t her place.

“Yes, you’re making me feel guilty... What should I do then? Take her to Macau?”

“Why not?”

“Our father isn’t a normal father. He’ll blame Aoey for our family problems.”

“She is guilty.”

Genlong raised her hand as if to slap Great, who defiantly moved his face closer to her.

“Hit me. It won’t change the fact that you left our family. You were Mom and Dad’s hope, Dad’s heart. Now I have to live up to every expectation.”

“Yes, that’s right. You’re an only child. Grow up.”

“You know I’m not that smart.”

“But you are now.”

“How?”

“At least you know you’re not smart.”

Both siblings remained silent, but their eyes conveyed unspoken words.

“You’re an adult, Great. I promise I’ll be back when they need me. Tell them I love them always.”

“You’re her favorite. Mom knows you married a woman and still gave you tens of millions. She didn’t complain about anything. She just said...”

“What did she say?”

“Better than the alternative—if you have depression and want to kill yourself again,” Great pulled Genlong into a hug.

“No matter what’s going on in your life, you have to promise you’ll come back to us, to see your family. Don’t ever think about killing yourself again. We couldn’t bear to see you like that again.”

Aoey heard everything, and tears filled her eyes. The other girlfriend who had just heard all that would only love Genlong even more.

“I won’t do that again,” Genlong gently stroked Great’s back. “I have Aoey now.”

“Okay, I’ll tell Mom that one good thing about Aoey is that she makes you happy.”

Genlong looked at the check in her hand with amusement. The number was so high that she had to make sure it wasn’t a dream.

“Ten million.”

“She’s worried you’ll end up a beggar. She doesn’t agree with your marriage, but she can’t come here. She has to let it go.”

“She could ask her people to take me home.”

“You’ll just run away again. I think she’ll wait for you to come home like last time,” Great said, even though Aoey was standing next to them.

“Aoey, congratulations. You look very beautiful today in the traditional Thai dress. You should get a husband instead... Ouch!” Genlong hit Great on the head again, scolding him for his foul mouth.

The wedding guests were just close friends: Me, Teacher Salee, Great and his girlfriend Cherry, Si (a friend Aoey kept in touch with), and Ten. The wedding was meant to let people know that the two of them had decided to be together. They didn’t want anything fancy. I thought that was good.

There was no band, no dance party. We just had dinner, drank wine, and talked about old, precious memories.

When everyone was having fun, I walked out to the bathroom. Amidst the celebratory atmosphere, something felt heavy in my chest. Seeing Genlong

slip into the room made me feel overwhelmed, and I almost cried. I wasn't sure if they were tears of happiness at seeing her so happy, or if it was the painful feeling I had towards her.

"Tod, what are you doing here?"

I was lost in thought, not noticing that Genlong had followed me out of the room. I turned to her and quickly wiped away my tears, but I couldn't hide them from Genlong.

"Why are you crying, Tod?" she asked, knowing all along.

"I'm feeling emotional. I'm glad to see you happy," I joked. Genlong smiled and came in to give me a hug.

"Come on, Tod. I didn't know you loved me so much. Only parents cry at weddings."

"It's because I love you."

"Oh my God! You gave me goosebumps when you said that. Look at my arms!"

Genlong showed me her arms, and her hair really stood on end. I could only look at her sadly. Love really had no gender. I had dated women before, then a man, and now I was in love with a woman who was about to marry another woman.

"Why are you looking at me like that? Are you okay, Tod?"

"How many times have we kissed?" I asked, pretending to count. "Twice. First when you were drunk on vodka, and another time when we tricked your mom."

"Why are you bringing this up now?"

I looked at Genlong and wanted to try one last time. I didn't know how it would turn out. A kiss... I deserved one, even if she might hate me.

“Kiss me.”

“What?!”

“I love you, Genlong.”

“ ”

“I’m in love with you. You know I’m not a liar.”

Silence settled between us. It was as if someone had pressed the mute button, sucking the air out around us. Genlong showed no emotion, but I tried to suppress my fear of rejection.

“I know this isn’t a good time to talk about this. But I think I’ve kept it bottled up for too long. I need to say something.”

“I know that sometimes it’s better not to say anything. I was like that too. But I’ve learned that not saying anything can make things worse.”

“Are you mad at me?”

I asked directly. Genlong, who had matured so much since the first day we met, looked at me and smiled.

“Someone loving me is better than someone hating me. Especially coming from you—I could never hate you. You deserve something in return.” The beautiful bride pressed her lips together in thought. “I’ll do as you ask.”

Genlong ran towards me, wrapped her arms around my neck, and pulled me close. She kissed me deeply, passionately, with her tongue. It was a real kiss.

A French kiss...

With rhythm...

But it lasted less than 30 seconds. Genlong pulled back and took a deep breath.

“We’ve kissed three times now. It’s weird kissing someone you’re not in a relationship with.”

“Yes, it is strange.”

“I’ve rewarded you, so now you’re my older brother again,” Genlong smiled at me and wrapped her arms around me. “This is our secret. Let no one know that we kissed.”

I rested my head on her shoulder and laughed. “Yes, it’s our little secret.”

“ ”

“Don’t tell anyone.”

My dear sister... you’ve grown so much...



THE END