



# Secret

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# Synopsis

It is unclear whether it is her sweet and pretty face or the fragrance of the perfume that lingers around her that captivates **Run**, as if she were enchanted by the older sister.

Meanwhile, the older sister approaches the younger one with cunning intentions, only to find herself trapped by her own schemes, unable to break free as she wishes.

Although Run firmly insists, "I'm not interested in your past," the stains of her previous life continue to act as a barrier to **Ann's heart**.

While one person strives to offer love in every possible way, the other tries to close off every avenue, determined to prevent love from disturbing her.

*In the end, will these two find a way to be together?*

# Chapter 00

**For the first time in my life, I feel so excited.** Even when I'm in front of the camera, posing as instructed, I've never felt as nervous or self-conscious as I do now, sitting across from the makeup artist who is carefully applying color to my face.

The previous artist had fallen ill, so she was replaced by this new one, who leans in close to apply eyeliner with intense focus. Our faces are almost touching, as she concentrates on her work and looks directly into my eyes.

**My heart pounds so loudly I fear she might hear it.**

The proximity, the faint perfume from her slightly unbuttoned white shirt revealing just a glimpse of her smooth, pale skin, has me struggling to maintain my composure. My palms are damp with sweat.

*What is this feeling?*

"You have such beautiful eyes," she says softly, smiling as she steps back to check the symmetry of her work. I continue to stare at her, knowing that if I look away, it might make her task harder.

"Thank you," I reply shortly, not knowing what else to say.

When someone compliments me, I usually don't react at all because it might seem like I'm being modest. But with her, it's different. It's a warm, fluttering feeling in my stomach—something I've never felt before.

"You must hear that a lot." She laughs, leaning in again. "Your face is so well-proportioned. It's easy applying makeup on you."

"If I downplayed it, I'd probably come off as insincere," I joke awkwardly.

"Cute," she replies with a teasing grin.

## **Thump! Thump!**

The sweet-faced girl in front of me, as beautiful as any I've ever seen, makes my heart beat even faster as she smiles so widely that her face wrinkles. Then, something unexpected happens—she reaches out and playfully pinches my cheek with teasing seriousness, leaving me as stunned as she is. Her eyes widen with surprise at her own action.

"I'm sorry! I didn't mean to... my hand moved on its own. Did it hurt?"

"No, it didn't," I assure her quickly, not wanting her to feel bad. The sensation of her touch lingering like an electric current through my body, inexplicably making my heart race even faster. "I'm just glad you like me."

"You even reacted as a 'little sister,' how adorable! I wish I could take you home with me."

"...."

"What am I even saying?" She laughed slightly, shakes her head and begins packing up her makeup kit. "Anyway, I'm done."

"Ah... okay."

For the first time, I regret that the session is over so quickly. Usually, I would be irritated and can't wait to wipe the makeup off, but today is different. I wanted more time with her—to be closer, to inhale that intoxicating scent coming from her. Unable to resist, I blurt out the question that's been on my mind.

"What perfume are you wearing? It smells so good."

"Hm?" She raises an eyebrow slightly. "Mine?"

"Yes, it's lovely. The soft scent coming from you made me curious about it this whole time, I want to buy it too."

"It's called Obsessed... a clear bottle. I just bought it recently. It seems to be good if people are raving about it—maybe I should use it more often."

"It suits you perfectly. Seductive, passionate..." I murmur, almost lost in the daze of how it makes me feel.

She looks momentarily taken aback, then laughs awkwardly. "I don't know how to respond to that."

"...."

"Well," she continues, smiling playfully, "with compliments like that, I guess I'll be wearing it every day from now on."

Before I could say anything else, the photographer's assistant appears, calling me back to the set. The makeup artist finishes packing, ready to leave. A sudden urgency rises in me—I don't want her to go, not without some way to see her again.

"Shall we meet again?"

She looked surprised for a moment, then gave me a gentle smile. I wasn't sure what she was thinking, but she answered gently, not vaguely, but sincerely.

"If fate is real, we will meet again."

"Fate..."

"I used the wrong word," she quickly corrected herself with a laugh. "Fate doesn't quite fit in this context, does it? So... if the attraction is real, it will bring us together again."

"Attraction?" I echoed.

"If you want to see me and I want to see you, the universe will find a way to bring us together again."

"...."

"And I hope so, because that would mean we would be attracted to each other."

After she said that, she turned to leave, looking at me with a smile—so full of charm that it made my heart melt. Without thinking, I follow her, ignoring the assistant's calls. I catch up to her and gently grab her wrist.

I held her without knowing why, and when she turned to meet my gaze, I suddenly found myself speechless.

"Hm?"

"Both sides have to *want* to see each other, for the attraction to work, right?" I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

"Yes. If we meet again, it'll be because something good brought us together." she replied with a soft smile before turning to leave.

We didn't exchange phone numbers or ask for each other's Line contacts. I let her walk away, watching as she disappears from view. When I return to the set, I can't shake the sense of unfinished business, the ache of something left unsaid.

I want to see her again...

***If the attraction is real, I hope the universe will bring us together once more.***

# Chapter 1 : The Attraction

It's been several days, yet I still can't shake the thought of that makeup artist. Since that day, I've been asking the previous makeup artist-who had taken leave-about her, trying to find out who she was. But no one seems to know. It's like she was just a freelancer, filling in temporarily, coming and going without a trace.

If attraction is truly a force that the universe uses to bring people together, I should have found her again by now. Unless, of course, it's just one of those fancy lines you'd see on a book cover.

Right now, I'm wandering around the mall with two close friends, old schoolmates I haven't seen in ages. We decided to meet up and catch up. It's a good distraction since being alone has only made me more restless, constantly thinking about her. Meeting my friends has helped me forget, if only for a little while.

"I have a boyfriend now," Rungtiwa announced, her voice brimming with pride. She said it as if it were a huge accomplishment.

She used to be the modest girl in high school who always wore thick glasses, but after getting LASIK in university, she returned looking so stunning that I almost didn't recognize her. All of us, myself included, reacted with excitement-it was hard to believe that the studious, nerdy girl we knew had found herself in a romance.

"Where did you meet him?"

"We met through a game."

"That's so nerdy!" teased Bow, a friend with a bit of a tomboyish vibe. Letting go of her initial excitement, she added, "I thought he might've approached you, or maybe a friend introduced you."



"It doesn't matter how we met. The important thing is that we did, right?"

"Have you met him in person yet?"

"We've known each other for two days. He's really nice in person, and we get along well."

"I bet most of your conversations are about in-game items, right?"

"How did you guess?"

"What else would a nerd like you talk about? You even met in a game!" Bow teased, then turned to me with a grin. "So, Run, what about you? Do you have someone special in your life?"

As soon as the attention shifted to me, all eyes were on me. I shook my head with exaggerated drama and spreading my hands, imitating the voice of a celebrity's son.

"No, I don't have anyone."

"Why is it that pretty girls like you never have boyfriends?" Bow nudged me playfully with her elbow. "Are you just too picky?"

I shrugged, shoving my hands into my jeans pockets and glancing around nonchalantly.

"You've got to be picky, right? Besides, I haven't met anyone I like-" I trailed off, realizing the words weren't entirely true. The sudden pause in my sentence didn't go unnoticed by my two observant friends, who immediately narrowed their eyes at me.

"Stopping mid-sentence like that. What does that mean?"

"It doesn't mean anything. Just making things up in my own head," I avoided their eyes because I didn't feel like explaining anything yet. Besides, I probably wouldn't see that person again, and I was too lazy to elaborate.

"Come on, you're not telling us anything! Keep us updated, Miss Model. You've found someone you like, haven't you?" Rungtiwa chimed in.

"....."

"My beautiful friend opens up about her life, but she's keeping this to herself. It's kind of hurtful. I told you when I got a boyfriend; you should tell us too." Rungtiwa added with a slightly grumpy tone.

"I don't have a boyfriend, so there's nothing to share. But if you're asking if I've met someone I like... it's not exactly that. I'm more impressed with someone. But I probably won't see her again."

"Who is she?"

"I don't know."

"Are you serious? You meet someone you like, but you don't even know who they are? Where does this happen?"

"This is Thailand," I replied teasingly. "And I said I was impressed, not in love. **Besides... she's a woman.**"

I glanced at the perfume counter without realizing it and quickly approached, intrigued. My friends, still engrossed in our conversation, followed closely, clearly wanting to continue, but I didn't bring it up again. Instead, I focused on the perfumes in front of me, searching for a scent that reminded me of her.

"Do you have Obsessed perfume?" I asked.

"Yes, we do. It comes in 50ml and 100ml. Which would you prefer?" The sales assistant at the cosmetics counter answered professionally.

I asked to try it first, spraying some on my arm and taking a sniff. The scent reminded me of her, but it wasn't quite the same, though it was supposed to be.

"What's wrong with you? We were talking, and you just ran over here to smell perfume. Stop changing the subject," Rungtiwa said irritably. But when she saw me sniffing my arm repeatedly, she grabbed it and sniffed it herself. "Yeah, it smells good."

"I'll take a bottle, please."

I don't usually wear perfume, but the scent made me buy it on the spot, and I left with it in my purse. The scent lingered on my arm, filling the air, making me imagine her walking beside me, close enough to touch. It was such a rash and uncharacteristic decision-so unlike me.

"Wow, you're acting weird today. You usually say you're allergic to perfume, but today you bought some. You're definitely changing," Rungtiwa observed suspiciously, while Bow smiled, teasing.

"A woman should never stop being beautiful, and of course, she should smell good too. I think you're trying to impress someone."

"Impress someone? What are you talking about? I just wanted to buy some perfume. Do you really have to be suspicious about everything?"

"Nooooo!" my two friends chimed in unison, raising their voices playfully. I wrinkled my nose and looked down at the perfume bag, smiling to myself. Even though I couldn't see her, just smelling the perfume was enough to ease my thoughts about her.

*The scent really was incredible. Maybe it wasn't her that impressed me so much- **maybe it was just the perfume.***

Yes, that must be it.

After we parted ways, I headed straight to the train station to head home. As I waited, my eyes wandered aimlessly until someone came and stood next to me, holding a large bouquet of yellow flowers that partially obscured their face.

Flowers always catch my attention-they are like nature's way of reminding us that our world is vibrant and beautiful, unlike any other planet. But it seemed like the world was about to gift me with something even more beautiful. The person holding the flowers lowered them, revealing their face, and when they turned to look at me, our eyes met.

"Huh?"

I didn't know her name, but I recognized her face so clearly that I instinctively cried out in surprise. The sweet-faced woman looked at me in confusion before bursting out laughing.

"Is this coincidence or fate? How do we keep meeting like this?"

"What brings you here?" I asked.

"I was just taking a walk and ended up with some flowers to take home. What about you?"

She looked at my shopping bag. Embarrassed and afraid that she would notice that it contained perfume that smelled the same as the one she used, I quickly hid the bag behind my back and smiled awkwardly.

"I was buying some cosmetics."

"Whatever your reason for being here, I'm glad to see you again. I thought we wouldn't see each other again."

"I thought the same."

"How cute!"

"....."

"You were like my 'nong' (little sister)." She laughed, holding the bouquet in her hands. "You're not as indifferent in person as I thought."

"Indifferent? I have never been indifferent to you, not even from the beginning."

Before she could respond, the train arrived. We both got on the same train, but since the platform was crowded, we ended up standing right next to each other.

Her perfume was just as strong as it had been the other day, filling the air around us. The smell was so strong that it made my heart race, and I was a little annoyed that everyone else on the train could smell it too.

*Why did I suddenly feel possessive? What's wrong with me?*

"You didn't finish your sentence. Why did you think I was indifferent?"

"I didn't exactly mean it like that... hmm, how should I say this?" She raised a hand to scratch her head. "I sent you a direct message on Instagram, but you never read it or responded. I thought maybe you didn't want to talk to me. But when we met in person, you were just as sweet as ever, so I blurted it out without thinking. Don't take it seriously."

"Did you sent me a chat? I didn't know."

"You must get a lot of messages, huh?"

"Um... yeah, I never really check them."

"I see," she nodded, not making a big deal about it. "But I'm glad we met again, even if I'm a little overwhelmed today. Which station are you getting off at?"

"To the next station."

"You're going to get off so soon? That means we'll only have a short time together," she said with a smile, looking a little disappointed. "We barely got to talk."

"Which station are you getting off at?" I asked.

"Daeng Room."

The train kept moving, and people gradually got off at each stop, making it less crowded. My station was approaching, but I still wanted to talk to her. When we got to my stop, I decided not to get off and stayed on the train with her.

"Aren't you going to get off?" she asked, surprised.

"I'll go with you."

"Are you going with me? You're the younger sister here. Why are you taking me home? It's dangerous for a girl to stay out late."

"Well... I don't know. I just want to spend a little more time with you."

"How cute."

She had called me cute so many times. Every time she complimented me, I felt butterflies in my stomach and bit my lip. Noticing my reaction, she laughed softly.

"Okay, I believe you want to stay with me a little longer. How about this: you take me to my house, and I'll take you home as a thank you."

"Do you have a car?"

"Yes, but I really don't like driving. I'm lazy. But today, I'm going to put my laziness aside to take you home."

She spoke kindly, and when we finally got to her stop, we had a little more time to talk. She told me that after that day, she tried to message me on Instagram, but I didn't respond, so she thought I had forgotten about her. Her voice carried a hint of sadness when she said this, so I quickly made up for it by following her back on Instagram.

"From now on, I'll send you a chat every day. Don't be upset, okay?"

"I'm not that upset, really. Don't treat me like a kid... We're here."

Her house was a two-story wooden structure, neither too big nor too small, surrounded by greenery. I imagined it would be quite shady and serene in the morning, but as I arrived in the evening, it seemed a bit dark and gloomy.

She invited me in, offering me a drink as she arranged flowers in vases around the house. I admired the feminine touch evident in her home's decor.

"Do you live here alone? That sounds dangerous."

"I've lived here for a while. Everything's fine. Besides, the neighbors keep an eye on me. There's nothing valuable to steal here, just flowers."

"I love flowers too."

"Really? So-" She picked a single yellow flower from the remaining bouquet and handed it to me. "Here, take this one, since you like them."

"Thank you. I have nothing to give you in return."

"Just having you as a friend is more than enough."

"Are we friends yet?"

"Or did I assume too much?" She looked a little embarrassed, and I quickly shook my head.

"No, it's not that. I'm just happy."

Why was I so happy about this? I couldn't understand it myself. Many people admired my work and wanted to be my friend, but I had never felt as happy as I did now, being her friend.

"It's getting late. I should take you home," she said.

"But we just got here," I mumbled, almost whimpering without realizing it. She laughed softly and reached out to pinch my cheek gently.

"You're so cute."

"Last time, you did the same thing."

She quickly pulled her hand away and scratched her head awkwardly. "I don't usually do things like this. It's just that you're so adorable."

"It's okay. I'm not upset at all. It's nice to be admired. In fact, I only regret that I visited your house for such a short time. It seemed like the universe brought us together, and then we had to part ways again."

"Gravitational pull, huh?" she said, as if recalling a distant memory. "You still didn't forget it."

"How could I? How many people casually bring up gravity with someone they've just met?"

"You really are unique. But it's getting late, and I'm starting to worry. Your family might be concerned too. Let me take you home. You can visit again next time."

"Can I really come here?" I asked, excitement written all over my face. She smiled broadly, then suddenly grabbed my face with both hands and playfully squished it like putty.

"Why are you so cute?"

"May I?"

"Of course, you can. Next time, I'll cook for you, and we can hang out and chat."

"Seriously? Can it be tomorrow?"

"Sure. I'm free tomorrow. Let's meet up."

I beamed with joy. She reached out again, as if to pinch my cheeks, but pulled back at the last second, laughing as she realized what she was about to do.



"Don't smile like that too often. I can't handle it."

"Same goes for me. Don't smile like that too much either. I can't handle it either."

We locked eyes and smiled warmly. Today might just be the happiest day I've ever had.

Two strangers who didn't even know each other's names, and yet, now we felt close. From now on, I won't just think about you, because you'll be right in front of me.

**The force of attraction brought her close to me!**

## Chapter 2 : Accepting the truth

Right now, I'm looking at the flowers in the vase, alternating between the direct messages from that older sister that she sent me a few days ago, and smiling with happiness.

Finally, the force of attraction has brought us together. I kind of regret checking the messages late because most of the time, the people who send them are fans reacting to my stories or Instagram posts trying to flirt casually with something like, "Hi." So, I didn't pay much attention to my inbox, but from now on, I'll be more attentive because this was the first way she contacted me.

**Ann :** *Pretty girl, do you remember me? I was the one who did your makeup.*

Just that simple message made me smile broadly, showing that she was also trying to keep in touch with me. I just didn't respond, and she probably thought I didn't want to talk or something. If we hadn't met today, I would never have known that message existed.

Thinking about it makes me feel good. Today, I even visited her house, learned about her life, and was even invited to visit her again.

**Why am I so happy?**

To make the conversation less one-sided, I typed a reply and followed her back as well.

**Run:** I remember and I will never forget. We have an appointment tomorrow, right?

Soon after, she sent me a heart in response to my message, indicating that she had received it. I waited for her response for a while. It took her quite a while to type, as someone who is not very fluent in texting.

**Ann:** I won't forget. See you tomorrow. Want me to pick you up?

**Run:** I'll go alone.

I felt bad asking her to pick me up since I would be bothering her by visiting her house, so I decided it would be better to go alone. It made me seem more polite and like a good girl.

After our conversation ended, I took a shower, turned off the lights, and went to bed, but my hand couldn't stop scrolling through her Instagram photos. She didn't post a lot, but it seemed like she carefully selected each photo to show off her best self.

She really has a great sense of style, and her makeup is elegant.

Her traveling lifestyle also seems quite luxurious...

This must be the world of adults. She doesn't reveal much about her personal life, not even on Instagram, which is set to private for approved friends only. She also doesn't have many friends following her. I'm so glad I'm one of them. It makes me feel important. Oh, I really want to see her.

I better sleep fast so tomorrow comes faster.

I woke up earlier than usual today, maybe because I was excited or maybe because I was afraid of being late. I'm usually very punctual when it comes to work, but this was a meeting with someone, and even I am confused as to why I'm so excited and happy.

I spent almost an hour picking out an outfit, trying on different options, and even sprayed on a new perfume that I wouldn't normally touch. But it's her scent, that big sister's... Spraying it on makes me feel like she's with me all the time.

## **I really like her!**

Around nine o'clock, I left home and took a taxi to her house. Today is a weekday, so the traffic was pretty heavy. But I arrived a little before ten, which was the agreed time. The beautiful woman who heard the doorbell came out to greet me with a radiant smile, welcoming her guest. My heart raced at the sight, and I smiled back at her.

"You're just in time! I thought you might be a little late."

"Am I bothering you? Are you busy?"

"No way. I was just making something simple to eat while I waited for you," she said, putting her arm around my shoulder and laughing.

"Welcome!"

We walked side by side, and the person who had her arm around me suddenly stopped and gave me a sideways glance, as if she had just realized something.

"This perfume smells familiar..."

"Uh..." I felt a little embarrassed and confessed. "I bought the same perfume as you. I'm obsessed with it."

"That's why the smell seems so familiar."

"When I use it, it feels like you're always around." I spoke shyly, almost squirming with embarrassment.

The beautiful woman looked at me with a smile but didn't say anything else, probably thinking that if she did, I might get even more nervous. I was glad that she didn't bring up the subject again.

"Sit down. I'm going to turn off the stove."

She gently pushed me to sit on the couch inside the house before heading into the kitchen. I sat there, looking around as I waited for her to return. It

wasn't long before she came back, holding a glass of water with condensation on it and handing it to me.

"You didn't have to bother. Bringing me water like this makes me feel like a guest."

"Well, you're a guest, so I have to treat you properly. You came all the way here, so of course you need something to drink. We can have lunch around eleven," she said, sitting down next to me, placing her hands in her lap, and smiling as she watched me sip my water politely. "We meet again."

"Yes, we met."

"But this time, it was planned, not just a coincidence." She smiled, crossing her legs with an elegant posture that made her look even more regal than before. "By the way, today is a weekday. Don't you have classes?"

"I already graduated."

"Really? You still look so young. How old are you?"

"Twenty-four."

"You're much younger than me." She nodded to herself as if calculating the age difference in her head. Since she asked about me, I figured I should ask her something too, so it wouldn't seem too one-sided.

"And how old are you?"

"I can't remember."

"Oh, come on, don't keep it a secret. We're just getting to know each other," I said, pretending to pout like I was about to cry, just to show her that I was genuinely interested. The beautiful older woman laughed heartily, rolling her eyes playfully as she revealed her age.

"Thirty."

"Exactly thirty?"

"I'll stay thirty. Even if I'm older, I'll still say thirty."

"You still look like you're in your early twenties."

"What a sweet talker." She reached out to pinch my cheek. "So cute!"

I leaned forward willingly, smiling widely. Since she loved pinching my cheeks so much, I was happy to let her do it all day because I didn't mind at all. Receiving her affection was a kind of happiness for me.

"Whenever I'm with you, I always feel so attached to you. Does it hurt your cheek?"

"No, it doesn't hurt. The more affection you show me, the better I feel, like I'm receiving love."

"Love is not usually shown like this."

"So how is it demonstrated?" I continued smiling widely.

The beautiful woman looked at me as if she was thinking about something. "Do you really want to know?"

"Yes."

"Like this."

She cupped my face with both hands, leaned in, and **kissed me**. My smile froze as I slowly frowned, quickly pulling away in surprise because I wasn't prepared for something like this.

"W—what was that?"

"...."

"Why did you do that?" I stood up, feeling completely lost.

The beautiful woman remained calm, her expression neutral as she rested her hands on her lap, showing no signs of surprise.

"I thought we were on the same page."

"On the same page about what?" I started to feel uncomfortable. My shock made me grab my bag from the couch, feeling completely lost. I think I should go.

"Judging by your reaction, you probably should. Want me to give you a ride?"

"No, that is unnecessary."

She watched me closely and then nodded in acknowledgment before pursing her lips slightly and raising an eyebrow.

"Will we see each other again?"

"I..."

"I'm sorry for being so impulsive."

Before she could say anything else, I ran out of her house.

There were no goodbyes, nothing but my lingering shock. As I walked out the gate, I caught a glimpse of her in my peripheral vision. She had followed me to the door, hands in her pockets, eyes cold, lips slightly parted as if she were smiling. All the while, I was left feeling distressed and unable to hide my confusion.

*What happened? How did things end up this way?*

I didn't go straight back to my room. Instead, I stopped by my close friend Rung's house. She was still looking for a job, so she stayed home all day. When she saw me arrive, she seemed surprised, but I stayed silent, too stunned to say anything.

"What's wrong with you? You didn't call before you came. What if I wasn't home?"

"Then I would look for someone else."

"You look like you saw a ghost. What happened?"

**"I was kissed."**

Since my friend asked so directly, I blurted out my answer bluntly, still in a daze. The feeling of her lips on mine was still fresh in my memory.

"What?!" My friend shouted in surprise, quickly sitting down next to me, full of curiosity. "Who kissed you?"

"Even if I told you, you wouldn't recognize her."

"I'm not asking because I know her. I'm asking what she is to you that led to a kiss. Tell me what happened. Do you have a boyfriend now, or what?"

"Boyfriend? No way. It was a woman."

"Oh my God!" My friend put her hand on her chest in genuine shock. "I'm not going to judge, but you need to talk or vent about this. How did this happen? You didn't come here just to sit around and look shocked, did you? Today, I'm willing to be your toilet so you can flush everything."

"You just want to hear the gossip."

"Of course! What's the point of having a friend if I can't get the details? You'll feel better after you get it off your chest, and I'll get to keep the gossip. We both win."

I hesitated for a moment, trying to gather my thoughts before briefly explaining how I met this woman and what led to the kiss. Although my account was brief, it was enough to convey the situation. Rung nodded slightly as she processed everything in her mind before speaking.

"So you ran away because you felt uncomfortable, right?"

"No..."

"Then what?"



**"The opposite of feeling bad... I felt good. I felt good, okay?"**

"So why did you run away if you felt fine?"

"I wasn't prepared for this. I looked up to her like an older sister. I admired her and felt happy to be around her, but then she kissed me..." I said nervously, fidgeting with my hands. "This is crazy. I'm so confused."

"You're confused because you liked the kiss, but you didn't expect your admiration to be sexual attraction."

"Stop it! That's disgusting. Sexual attraction, seriously?"

"You're shocked because she's a woman, and you like her."

I was shocked, unable to deny the truth. To be honest, I felt excited about what happened. I didn't feel disgusted at all, but I ran away because I was scared of my own feelings.

"Aren't you surprised that I felt good with a woman?" I admitted, feeling dejected. "Even I was so shocked that I ran away."

"Surprised, of course. But I can't be too shocked, or you might freak out even more. Besides, these days, it's not a big deal. Men date men, women date women, and BL series are all over TV. So I don't see why I should make a big deal about it. I'm just a little surprised that it's you, someone who's never had a boyfriend. And then when you finally meet someone you like, it turns out to be a woman."

"I never said I liked her."

"Well, do you like it or not?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" I screamed, bringing my hands to my temples. My hair was a mess from running my fingers through it so much. "I really admired her. I was so excited and happy to be around her."

"....."

"I met her, and I knew we would meet again. It was like the world had brought us together, but I never thought of things like that."

"So that scared you. Just accept the truth, and you will find peace."

ilvyxoxo13

# Chapter 3 : Name

**I can't sleep.**

I tossed and turned all night because my mind was full of thoughts about that woman.

The feeling on my lips still lingers, refusing to fade. And then there are those words from my close friend; it made me stop, think, and realize what I'm feeling. It's a sensation unlike anything I've ever experienced before. For the first time, there's a fluttering in my stomach, as if something is spinning inside me.

*"Just accept who you are."*

Maybe I was shocked by the sudden kiss, but I know I wasn't disgusted. What I felt then was confusion, reluctance, and the fear of accepting what I am. I still remember her face when I walked away—not shocked, not angry, just standing there, as if nothing had happened.

Because she already accepts who she is. No, she knows exactly how she feels... that woman.

It's like she opened up a whole new world to me. It's not unusual these days, but I never thought it would happen to me. Kissing a woman and feeling something—that's undeniable.

Men have tried to woo me for years, but I never felt anything for any of them. But with her... my heart raced in a way it never had before. Just thinking about that moment, the atmosphere, the emotions, it makes me feel both hot and nervous. I grip the sheets tightly, my thoughts consumed by her.

She hasn't left my mind since. I can't stop thinking about her, and I can't deny it.

So, what now? Should I go against my nature? I've already acted coldly towards her, and I don't expect forgiveness. But the thought of her disappearing from my life is unbearable. Can someone you've just met really have such a strong effect on you?

If I could just touch her again...

If she would give me another chance...

The wetness between my thighs makes me press against the pillow. My imagination runs wild, but embarrassment creeps in as I begin to grind against the pillow, hugging it tightly. Slowly at first, then faster. Moans escape my lips as I wish it would all end quickly. Finally, I reach my climax, her image vivid in my mind. My body tenses, then relaxes. My mind goes blank, like a cleared forest. The cool air on my skin brings me back, and my face flushes in contrast to the air around me.

Ah... I can't deny it anymore. I'm obsessed with her. All because of that kiss.

A kiss that opened up my little world, that made me realize... **I like women.**

I haven't worked since I graduated. I haven't even applied for jobs yet, though I have savings from modeling and commercials. With all this free time and a restless mind, I sit in my room, constantly staring at my phone, hoping she'll text me. But there's nothing. No messages since that day.

She must be mad at me. Of course, anyone would be, after how I reacted. But the thought of her cutting me off completely makes my chest tighten. I want to reach out, but I don't know how.

I'm still staring at the last message on my phone, debating whether to send something. Might as well try. What's the harm? I've already lost so much.

**Run:** Phi?

The simple message made my heart pound like a drum. I nearly threw my phone away, terrified of the disappointment that might follow. I waited

anxiously for more than ten minutes, convinced she wouldn't respond. Tears welled up, but then, like a drop of rain in a drought, her reply appeared.

**Ann:** Yes, what happened?"

She replied! I couldn't gauge her emotions from the message, but the "yes" showed she wasn't angry. My hands trembled as I carefully typed my next message, hoping to keep the conversation going.

**Run:** Are we mad at each other?

**Ann:** Who's mad at who?

I smiled. It seemed she thought I was the only one upset. She was giving me a chance to explain.

**Run:** I'm not mad at you. I just want you to know that. I feel better now. I'm sorry about that day.

I wanted to add, "*No need to apologize...*" but I hesitated, unsure how she'd take it. Overthinking things, again.

**Ann:** I won't let that happen again.

**Run:** It's okay, I'm not mad. So, are we okay now?

**Ann:** If we weren't mad at each other, then we're fine. How have you been? You've been quiet.

**Run:** I'm fine. Haven't done much lately.

**Ann:** That's good.

Her response, "That's good," left me uncertain—was she saying it's good I'm not mad, or good that I've done nothing?

**Run:** Are you free today? Do you want to grab something to eat?

I gathered my courage to ask her out. I wanted to see her again, feel her presence, smell her perfume. But then...

**Ann:** I'm not free. I have plans.

Again...

The outright rejection made me swallow hard. It wasn't that she was angry, but maybe she just didn't want to see me.

**Run:** Don't worry.

**Ann:** Why do I feel bad about saying I'm not free? It's not that I don't want to see you. I just didn't think you'd want to come.

**Run:** Where are you going?

**Ann:** I'm going to a club. Not sure if it's your thing, though.

**Run:** I can go. I'm old enough.

**Ann:** I thought you were only 18, baby face. Honestly, I'd love to see you too. If we meet, it'll help us feel like we're not mad at each other.

**Run:** Then I'll go with you. Which club?

**Ann:** Finding each other inside might be hard. I'll pick you up around 9 p.m. if you're coming.

**Run:** I will. I'll be ready.

**Ann:** Why am I so excited to see you? It's weird.

She ended the conversation with that, but it left me smiling. I'm so glad I decided to reach out. Otherwise, these feelings would have remained unresolved.

After we agreed to meet up, I rushed to my closet, excitedly searching for the perfect outfit for a night out. To be honest, I'm not very familiar with

these types of places, but for her, I chose to go.

I just want to be near her, to learn a little more about her world.

It's not so bad.

**Hmm... Looks like I'm really obsessed with her.**

I dressed quickly and applied my makeup, waiting anxiously in the lobby of my condo. By 9:10 p.m., she arrived in her sleek European car, catching eyes as she pulled up to the entrance. She got out, leaning on the roof and whistling when she saw how well-dressed I was. I was equally amazed at how different she looked.

Normally, she dressed casually, but tonight, she was stunning—sexy and alluring. Her short, shoulder-length hair was styled in loose waves, and her dark red lipstick made her look even more captivating.

“You look beautiful tonight. Well, you always do,” I said, my voice filled with admiration.

“Not as much as you. You look different tonight.”

“Not really. I usually dress like this. You just see me in casual clothes because I'm too lazy to dress up.”

“Really?” I laughed. “You're beautiful no matter what you wear.”

“If we keep praising each other like this, we'll never get going. Let's get in the car. My friend is waiting, and I don't want to keep her for too long.”

“Are you sure it's okay for me to come along?” I asked, feeling a bit anxious, like a stranger stepping into her world.

“It's fine. I wanted to see you, remember?” She winked and gestured to the car with a cool, confident motion. “Come on, get in, young lady.”

I smiled broadly and sit into the sports car, nearly sinking into the low seats. The condo manager couldn't help but stare at the luxurious vehicle.

Honestly, her lifestyle—her home, her car—made me wonder where she got all her money. But asking too many questions felt inappropriate.

**She's rich, that's all.**

"This is the first time I've been in a car like this," I admitted.

"There will be more times to come."

I couldn't take my eyes off her as she drove, her profile illuminated by the passing streetlights. She glanced at me with a teasing smile.

"What are you looking at? You're making me blush."

"You're so beautiful. Did you know that?"

"I know."

She said it without false modesty, which only made her more captivating in my eyes. The scent of her Obsessed perfume mixed with mine, filling the car as if our worlds were blending.

"I'll try to get us home early tonight, so we can rest," she added.

"Don't worry about me. Take your time. I was the one who asked to come along."

"You're so cute."

While I kept telling her how beautiful she was, she never stopped calling me "cute."

The car pulled up in front of the club, where a valet waited to park it. She handed him a generous tip before we stepped inside. The club was dimly lit, the air buzzing with music and conversation. Due to the government's strict COVID measures, the crowd was thin. I was still scared of the virus, but my desire to be with her outweighed my fear.



“My friend is at that table,” she said, pointing to a corner where a woman in a blue dress sat, her hair cascading down her back. It was too dark to see her face clearly, but her elegance was unmistakable.

We walked over, and Phi greeted her friend briefly before introducing me.

“I brought my Nong with me today. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Not at all. I’m glad you came,” the woman said, though the way she referred to “you” felt a little strange to me. Still, I sat down in front of them, while Phi sat beside her friend and began mixing drinks. There was something about their interaction that made me uncomfortable, but I decided to observe.

“Your Nong is beautiful,” her friend commented, studying me.

“You look great today, too,” Phi replied, as if they weren’t as close as I assumed. “Since we’re all here, let’s introduce ourselves. My Nong’s name is Run. And this is... my friend, Peuan.”

I smiled and nodded, though their dynamic felt odd. Phi wrapped her arms around Peuan, swaying slightly to the music.

“You have such a cute face, but I feel like I’ve seen you before,” Peuan said, her gaze lingering on me.

“Probably from a TV commercial,” I replied politely.

“Yes, definitely. You stand out more than most.”

“Hey,” Phi narrowed her eyes playfully at her friend, “don’t go flirting with my Nong.”

“How could I flirt with your nong when I’m already involved with the older one?” Peuan teased.

The word “involved” made my heart sink. Please, no. Could Phi really have brought me to meet her partner, right after kissing me the other day?

“Good to know,” Phi responded lightly. “But don’t flirt with her. She’s very protective.”

“A protector, and yet you brought her to a place like this?”

“I wanted her to come. I wanted us to be closer,” Phi said, looking at me with a longing expression. She touched Peuan’s shoulder casually, but it sent a tremor of annoyance through me.

“Are we close yet?”

“I wish we were closer,” I replied, forcing a smile while watching their interactions closely.

“Let’s get closer tonight. Let’s dance,” She said, standing and pulling me along with her, Peuan following closely behind. The three of us made our way to the dance floor, where Phi and Peuan started swaying their hips slowly and sensually, as if they were one.

I tried to dance, but I wasn’t very good at it. Mostly, I just watched Phi, wanting to understand the nature of her relationship with Peuan.

Before long, Phi and Peuan were practically embracing, their hands caressing each other’s bodies. I began to feel like a stranger. Peuan started kissing Phi’s shoulder, trailing her hand down her arm to her waist. Phi looked at me and waved, then wrapped her arms around my neck to guide me in dancing. She laughed joyfully.

“You’re really not good at dancing, are you?”

“Yeah, I don’t come to places like this very often.”

“Think of it as opening your eyes to the real world. This is who I really am.”

“Well, it’s pretty sexy,” I replied, trying to stay composed.

Now, the three of us were dancing close together. Phi’s eyes stayed on me, even as Peuan hugged her from behind and began caressing her neck in

front of me. Phi noticed my discomfort and laughed, gently cupping my face in her hands.

“You look jealous.”

She laughed, then lost herself in Peuan’s advances again. I stopped dancing, feeling breathless and uncomfortable. I spoke, unsure if she could hear me over the music.

“I’m going to the bathroom.”

“I’ll go with you. I need to pee too,” Phi said, but as she tried to leave, Peuan grabbed her hand.

“Ann, where are you going?”

“I’m going to the bathroom with her. Keep dancing. I’ll be back soon.”

“Come back soon. I’ll miss you.”

“I’ll miss you too,” Phi said, smiling at her friend before leading me away.

As we walked toward the bathroom, I frowned, finally realizing that Peuan was more than just a “friend.”

“What’s wrong? Why are you like this?” Phi asked, raising her voice over the music.

“Your friend isn’t just a friend, is she?”

“You could say she’s an acquaintance. We just met.”

“I thought you were with a coworker or an old friend.”

“All my friends are married now. I’m the only single one left.”

“If I had known you were bringing me with a...”

“She’s not my girlfriend. Just someone I’m getting to know.”

“But you two... are clearly involved.”

“In places like this, people are more affectionate. I didn’t want to do that with you because I thought you’d get upset again.” She playfully tapped my nose with her finger. “Go to the bathroom. I’ll wait for you.”

I looked at her, feeling strangely hurt over something that might not even matter.

“Even though I thought we were close, this is the first time I’ve heard someone call you by your name.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I never told you my name. But I like it when you call me ‘Phi.’ It’s cute.”

“So... your name is Ann?”

“.....”

Her name is Ann.

## Chapter 4 : Do you think its easy to be your Nong?

The night was over, and now I was sitting in the car with my beautiful older sister and her friend. I was sitting in the cramped backseat of the sports car. She drove me to the front of my apartment, then got out of the car to watch me go in before waving at me.

"Take a shower and go to bed immediately. It's late. You don't want to stunt your growth."

"How old do you think I am? I'm already at the stage of repairing the wear and tear."

She laughed at my response as I pouted, feeling like she was treating me like a child. Naturally, my eyes glanced at the passenger seat with the window rolled up. Her friend... who was about to continue the night with my beautiful Phi, and I had no idea where they would end up.

"Let me know when you're in your room."

"You already dropped me off in front of the apartment. What are you still worried about? You should let me know when you get home."

"Okay." She responded cheerfully and waved me in.

As I got inside, she opened the car door, got in, and drove away slowly. I could only stand there watching until the car's taillights disappeared from view. My heart ached as if needles were piercing it, forcing me to press my lips together tightly.

The two of them would probably do something together... I don't even want to imagine.

Why does it hurt so much? Now I've officially become her little sister after rejecting that kiss. If only I had agreed that day...

### **Would it be like this?**

I don't even know if I'm feeling regret or sadness, but I can definitely feel the pain and heaviness in my heart. I just went back to my room with my shoulders slumped, took a shower, got dressed, and went to bed. But... after lying in bed for a while, I couldn't sleep.

I was still restless, just like yesterday, but even more so today. She hadn't texted me directly to let me know whether she'd gotten home or not. While I waited for her message, I stared at my phone, letting my mind run wild.

*What could the two of them be doing at this point?*

*Were their scents mixing?*

*Did her perfume match hers, like mine when I wear the same perfume?*

They must be having fun.

Thinking about this, I gripped my phone tightly. Is this jealousy? Do I have the right to feel this way after rejecting her? I felt like I needed to do something, so I sent her a direct message around 3 a.m. to see if there was any response.

**Run:** Did you get home?

But there was no answer, as if the number I dialed was not available at the moment... Maybe her phone was no longer near her, or maybe she simply wasn't paying attention because her focus was elsewhere. I clenched my fists, hit the pillow, and turned over in bed.

**Damn it, go to sleep already! Whatever she's doing, it's her problem!**

In the end, I couldn't sleep all night and ended up going to the condo gym at 6 a.m. to work out until 8 a.m. I must have checked my phone 800 times, but there was still no response. Maybe it was the lack of sleep that made my

headache worse, and my mood was just awful all day. I sat alone in my room, staring at the computer, with no real purpose.

Around 11 a.m., I finally got a reply:

**Ann:** I've been home for a while. Sorry for not replying sooner. I woke up late today.

**Run:** Okay.

I stared at my phone for a long time, seeing that the message had been read hours ago, but it took her more than two hours to reply. My reply was full of annoyance, hoping that she would sense the unusual atmosphere through my words.

**Ann:** What are you doing?

**Run:** Just playing with my phone.

**Ann:** That sounds cool.

**Run:** What's so cool about that?

She didn't reply, and I saw that she had read my message. An hour passed, and I, who initially wanted to express my displeasure and let her know my feelings, was now the one who was feeling uneasy because she wasn't replying. I started getting angry with myself. What right did I have to be angry with her when I had chosen this path myself?

**Run:** And you? What are you doing?

In the end, I couldn't help myself and continued the conversation. She read the message and took about ten minutes to respond.

**Ann:** I just lay in bed, not doing much.

**Run:** And your friend?

**Ann:** She went home.

**Run:** Did you guys stay together all night?

As soon as I typed that, I wanted to close my eyes and take the message back. It felt like I was eavesdropping, wanting to know but not wanting to know at the same time. I wasn't sure what she would think about it.

**Ann:** Something like that. I'm so hungry.

She changed the subject, not going into specific details, as if to leave me wondering what had happened last night. I didn't know what to type next. My hands and feet went numb as I realized they had spent the entire night together and that what I had imagined had actually happened.

**They were happy together, while I was the only one lying awake, restless and unable to sleep...**

**Run:** Go eat something.

**Ann:** Too lazy to get out of bed.

**Run:** But it's almost too late.

**Ann:** Why don't you bring me something to eat? Hehe.

Her messages seemed playful, but when I saw it, I couldn't help but feel irritated. "Hehe?" She looks so happy.

**Run:** What do you want to eat?

**Ann:** Anything is fine. Are you really going to get me something?

**Run:** Do you want me to come over there?

**Ann:** That would be nice. If you're free today and not doing anything, it would be nice to see each other. I'm alone today, free all day.

**Run:** Okay, I'll get you something to eat.



**Ann:** How sweet of you. I was just joking; I didn't think you'd actually come.

**Run:** If you dare to invite me, I dare to go.

I'm not usually like this, usually proud and indifferent to others. But since it's her, today I wanted to see her, to see the face of someone who had just had a night of happiness, so I decided to go visit her.

After our conversation ended, I left the condominium, called a taxi, and went to her house, knowing exactly where she lived.

About twenty minutes later, I arrived at my destination. Now, I'm in front of her house.

**Run:** I'm here. I brought you food.

**Ann:** Come in, the door is not locked.

And just as she said, the door really wasn't locked. I wanted to scold her for being so careless—she's a woman who lives alone—but she wasn't cautious at all. When I walked in, she wasn't downstairs, so I went upstairs to find her, figuring she was in her room. I knocked on her door, thinking she must be inside.

She was actually lying on the bed.

"Your food is here."

"Come in."

Her voice from inside made me open the door. The cool air from the air conditioning touched my skin, but it didn't send a shiver down my spine like the sight before me did.

There she was, lying face down on the bed, completely naked except for a blanket draped over her body. She greeted me with a tired but sexy smile, showing no embarrassment about her nudity.

"Why so quiet all of a sudden?" I turned around, nervous. My lovely Phi, still lying face down on the pillow, laughed. "Have you never seen someone naked before? What's there to be ashamed of? We're both women."

"I didn't know you were naked."

"But I knew I was naked, and I still called you. What's there to be ashamed of? The owner of the body doesn't even care."

"I just don't know how to act."

"Okay, I'll put something on."

She got up from the bed, completely naked, and walked past me without a hint of self-consciousness.

Her well-proportioned figure, with slight muscle definition in her arms, showed that she took good care of herself through exercise. She went to the closet, took out an oversized T-shirt, put it on, barely covering herself, and then went back to bed.

"Now you can look at me properly. You are such an embarrassing kid."

She wrapped herself in the blanket that covered her lower half, wearing an oversized T-shirt that looked even sexier than when she wasn't wearing anything. I turned my face away, feeling my cheeks heat up, awkward in this situation. Looking at her made me shy, but not looking felt rude, so I could only smile shyly, like a naive kid, at her openness and lack of embarrassment.

"That smile is so cute. Come here," she called me with her hand. I walked toward her, almost without thinking, and she pinched my cheek. "So cute!"

"Do you usually sleep without clothes?"

"Yes, it's more comfortable. Sorry for being too relaxed. Most people wear pajamas, right?"

"Yes."

"You should try sleeping without clothes; it feels different."

"I can't. The air conditioning is too cold."

"Cold skin feels better against someone else's skin," she said casually. "Get someone to sleep with you, and you won't be cold."

"So, did you sleep with someone last night?" I asked, looking straight into her eyes as she still held my cheek. The beautiful woman raised an eyebrow slightly and then chuckled.

"I won't tell. I'll leave you guessing. But, you know, it's getting cold now." She grabbed my collar without warning and pulled me close to her, making me lose my balance. Then she threw me on the bed next to her and hugged me tightly.

"My little doll."

"W—what?"

"Hug me. I'm cold."

She draped her leg over me, causing the blanket covering her to slip. Her smooth, slender leg rested on top of me, with only the blanket partially separating us. Her scent, a mixture of light perfume and something subtly sexy, filled my senses, making my heart race uncontrollably.

"If I had let you kiss me that day and agreed, we would probably be lying here naked together right now."

"What are you talking about?"

The beautiful older sister giggled with joy and snuggled closer, rubbing her head against my neck, tickling me. At that moment, she was like a kitten, doing whatever she wanted, treating me like her servant. And the truth is, I completely gave in.

I surrendered without a fight.

I also felt good being held by her. For a moment, I wondered if I should try to kiss her. When I looked at her, our eyes met, and I leaned in, wanting to try, but she suddenly pulled away and stood up, stretching.

"Alright, time to get up."

"....."

"Have you eaten anything yet?"

When she pulled away, I ended up burying my face in the pillow. She must have known what I was thinking, so she pulled away provocatively and changed the subject. Was this her way of seducing me? Teasing me and then walking away, nearly naked like that?

"Not yet." I replied with my face still pressed against the pillow, feeling embarrassed.

"What are you doing?"

"Feeling sleepy."

She laughed. "If you keep lying on your stomach like that, you won't be able to breathe."

"Then give me CPR."

"Hmm?" She hummed in a high-pitched tone and then laughed happily.

I slowly looked at her, feeling a little annoyed by her cheerful behavior, before suddenly deciding to jump up and pin her to the bed, causing her laughter to stop.

"What are you doing?"

"You're teasing me."

"When did I do that?"

"Right now."

"You're overthinking it. Who teases their little sister like that? I was just—" She trailed off and rolled her eyes as if searching for the right phrase. "I just wanted to snuggle up. It's cold."

As I held her shoulders down, I looked at her with longing, filled with a desire that was becoming harder to suppress.

"Then let's snuggle."

As soon as I said that, I leaned closer, but she turned her face away, looking out the window. Her light brown eyes reflected the light outside. She didn't reject me, but she didn't agree either. I nuzzled her neck, though I expected a kiss.

"Do you think I'm that easy?" she suddenly said.

"...."

"If you want to do this, then go ahead."

"...."

"But then you won't see me again."

## Chapter 5 : Step Back

When I heard her words, I froze, unable to do anything. I just buried my face in the crook of her neck, too afraid to move.

"But if we stop now and go eat, we can still see each other often."

"Why are you treating me like this?" I complained, feeling hurt. "On the first day, you kissed me."

"That day, I couldn't resist."

"But today..."

"That day was that day, and today is today."

I pulled away from her neck to look at her face. As much as I wanted to, I wasn't sure I could bear the idea of not seeing her again.

"I'm really sorry."

"It's okay," she said, turning to smile at me and raising an eyebrow. "I'm hungry now, let's eat."

She jumped up and walked toward the door, while I remained frozen on the bed, too embarrassed to move. I knew exactly what I had just done.

"You can't even look at me."

"I understand. Just relax," she said, pulling me back onto the bed and ruffling my hair affectionately. "I can't help it if I'm irresistible."

"How dare you say that."

She laughed and pulled me to my feet. "Let's eat. The atmosphere between an older sister and a younger one should be cute and playful, not you

invading my bed like that."

Hearing this, I started to feel irritated. She seemed to be emphasizing that this was the only kind of relationship we could have, as if mocking me for rejecting her earlier. I got up and followed her downstairs for the meal. She began eating the food I had brought, not caring much if it was tasty, just eager to fill her stomach.

"And you? You haven't eaten yet, right?" she asked.

"It's fine. Watching you eat is enough for me."

"No way," she said, interrupting as she held out a spoonful of food to me. "Open your mouth. I'll feed you."

I stared at the spoon, letting my thoughts wander. Sharing the same spoon—didn't that count as an indirect kiss? But before I could overthink it, I opened my mouth and took the food, chewing quietly, my head down, feeling embarrassed.

"Don't be so shy. The more awkward you feel, the worse it gets between us. Just relax," she said, continuing to eat.

I swallowed the food and spoke like a child, unsure of everything. "How can you act so normal? Just now, we were in bed, I did... that, but you act like nothing happened."

"Because it wasn't anything wrong or unusual. If I acted embarrassed too, it would only make things worse. It's better to let bygones be bygones."

"You're amazing."

"I've been through a lot."

"What have you been through?"

She smiled faintly and narrowed her eyes, as if lost in thought. "Keep getting to know me, and eventually, you'll find out. When you do, you might want to run away."

As we talked in that peaceful moment, her phone rang, cutting through the atmosphere. She hesitated for a moment before answering, then smiled sweetly, as if the person on the other end could see her.

"Hello, Daddy."

The word "Daddy" caught my attention. Was that smile really for her father?

"I'm just having a meal... No, I'm staying home today, too tired from going out last night... Hmm, today isn't convenient. Maybe another time... Don't pout. If you do, I won't meet you again... I make the rules, remember?... Alright, good boy. You're cuter when you listen. We'll meet when I'm ready. Bye."

She ended the call and continued eating. When she noticed me staring, she smiled as if nothing was unusual.

"What are you looking at?"

"Was that your father? I heard you say 'Daddy.'"

She laughed and shook her head. "I won't tell you. You can guess."

"A boyfriend, then?"

"Someone like me doesn't have a boyfriend."

"So who was it?"

"Just someone who came into my life and will eventually pass through," she shrugged, collecting the plates. "I'm full. I better stop before I get fat. Wait here; I'll be back."

She went upstairs and returned with something that looked like a twig. Raising an eyebrow at me, she walked outside. Curious, I followed and watched as she smoked a cigarette, exhaling thick clouds of smoke. Despite telling me to wait, I stood nearby, observing her behavior.



"Do you smoke?"

"I'm trying to quit. Using e-cigarettes helps," she said, blowing smoke in my face with a playful grin. "Serves you right. I told you to wait, but you followed me anyway."

"You're not what I expected."

"And what did you expect?"

"I thought you were a smart woman."

"And a smart person can't smoke, have one-night stands, or have a sugar daddy?" She looked at me, raising an eyebrow, showing no shame. "And now, what do you think of me?"

"I think you're a bit too laid back."

"I'll give you a week."

"A week for what?"

"The more you get to know me, the sooner you'll run. You won't be able to handle who I really am."

"Do you really think I'll judge you for being yourself?"

"Most people do," she said, exhaling smoke and patting my head gently.

"But if you want to leave, I won't be mad."

"Don't underestimate me. I'm not someone who cares about the past."

"It's not the past yet," she said, looking out at the view. "This is who I am —'take it or leave it.' I don't want you to get contaminated."

"....."

"Think carefully about whether you want to keep getting involved with me. I have a lot of baggage, and I don't want someone as pure as you getting

involved with someone like me."

"Are you trying to scare me away?"

She laughed, crossing her arms. "If what I'm doing is considered bad, then I'm all bad... If this were a novel, I'd be the character you're warned not to get involved with."

"....."

"And in real life, someone like me isn't fit to be anyone's friend or lover."

She left me with those words to think about. On the way back, I couldn't stop thinking about her. What she does is disgusting to most people. If this had happened before, I would have thought the same thing—that she is someone who wastes her body without a care in the world. She never hid who she was, leaving the decision in my hands.

So, can I accept it? Right now, I'm fascinated by her. But what about the future? After a while, when I fully realize that she's not pure, will I still see her as clean and not care about these things?

I sat alone, lost in thought, and decided to consult my friends. During a group call, I shared what I had experienced, without revealing whether she was a man or a woman. I just shared the facts about her. Everyone responded in the same way.

[Someone like that isn't worth associating with. What if one day they have a one-night stand behind your back? Could you handle that? People don't change their nature.]

Rung said, voicing her opinion. Bow then agreed.

[They're being open with you so that one day you'll accept them as they are and then use the excuse that... well, you knew it all along. You can't change someone just because you love them. It's like someone who drinks, you can't just stop them.]

[If you want someone who doesn't drink, you have to choose someone who doesn't drink from the beginning. You can't change him.]

Both of them was expressing their opinions out loud. I listened and thought about what they said, without making any big decisions. It all depended on me.

[Today you like him, but one day you won't be able to tolerate his filth. He only told you who he is, you don't even know about his past. No one can change anyone.]

[You said he has a sugar daddy, right? Are you really going to settle down with a guy like that? You're a model, with lots of men wanting to be with you. Do you really need someone like him in your life?]

No one agreed with me. And I hadn't even told them that this person is a woman. My friends completely rejected her, advising me to stay away.

[That person will stain you.]

"But you don't know him like I do," I replied weakly.

[From what you've told us, we know enough. Infatuation may be blinding you to how bad he really is. But when it wears off, you'll regret giving your heart to someone like that. You'll lose your heart and your body, and gain nothing but sickness.]

"But we are like siblings."

[Siblings can have children too. Don't justify keeping him.]

I had no counterarguments, so I just listened silently and said goodbye to my friends before sitting alone with my thoughts. Since everyone is saying this, does that mean I should stop seeing her?

To avoid being contaminated and getting too deeply involved, I should follow my friends' advice and distance myself, for my own good.

Stop seeing her...

It's what everyone wants, and it's what I should do.

More than a week has passed since I distanced myself from that woman, simply because my friends advised me to stay away from her. She hasn't contacted me either, as if she knew this would happen. She told me about her life in detail so that I could decide what to do next.

**Stay or go, and I chose to go.**

This left my emotions numb in a way I couldn't describe. My heart didn't agree, but my actions were the opposite of what it wanted. So I stopped contacting her and threw myself into work.

The only thing that stood out from my usual routine was a direct message from a popular TV actor who wanted to meet me. I decided to keep talking to him, with an empty heart, just to fill a void inside me.

Today we arranged to meet up—John, a handsome mixed-race rising star currently on every TV screen. He's a hot topic, recognized by everyone, with countless commercials and billboards.

John picked me up after my photoshoot. We kept the meeting quiet—he didn't want anyone to know, and neither did I.

"Have you been waiting long?"

"Not long. I could wait forever for you."

His sweet words almost made me turn away. His good looks didn't stir any feelings in me, and I wasn't sure why he was doing this. It felt forced, but I

wanted to try.

Opening yourself up to new possibilities and people isn't a bad thing, right?

"So, where are we going today?"

"How about a movie? It's dark; no one will notice us."

"That sounds good."

For a first date, watching a movie and having a meal is as basic as it gets, even for a superstar. And that's how we would start our night....

He asked us to buy tickets, leave them with the staff at the door, and go in first. Then he would go in later. Our seats, which we had chosen, were quite VIP and private, given the high ticket price. I also noticed that the seats were like beds.

"Are these really beds?"

But what can I do? Since we're here, we might as well watch the movie lying down. It's probably no big deal.

After lying down for a while, John came in after the movie started. When he arrived, he took the blanket that was provided and gave me a smile without even looking at the screen.

"How's the movie? Is it fun?"

"It's okay, just focus."

"What perfume are you wearing? It smells great." He leaned in closer, sniffing without actually touching me. I stiffened slightly, feeling uncomfortable, but I didn't pull away, trying to appear brave.

"Obsessed."

"Obsessed, huh? I see why you chose that perfume. The name suits it... It's making me feel a bit strange."

"Aren't you watching the movie?" I asked, trying to shift the focus.

"I'd rather watch you... After the movie's over, let's go to my room."

I looked at him, immediately understanding his intentions. I'd heard rumors that he liked to send direct messages to women, inviting them to meet up, and if they agreed, things would escalate quickly. Now I knew I was being invited into something risky. I smiled at him, playing along.

"Are you really inviting me to your room right after the movie?"

"Nowadays, with 5G internet, everything's fast and instantaneous. Besides, when our hearts are in sync, time doesn't matter."

"But we just met."

"I was impressed with you from the moment I first saw you, and I always will be."

"Where did he get those lines from?"

I thought, almost making a disgusted face but managing to maintain my composure. I smiled shyly, like I was acting in a play.

"Softly spoken."

"What?"

"Sweet talker."

"Have you tried it yet?"

"Well, I can guess."

"There's no one around..." he said, like a predator testing the waters. "Can I kiss you?"

"You're in a hurry. Just because I look like this, it doesn't mean I'm easy."

"So why make it difficult? When a man and a woman are together, they do things like this. If we like each other, it doesn't have to be complicated." He leaned closer, his hands slowly reaching for my legs, which were stretched out on the bed. I shivered slightly at the touch. "May I?"

"It's too early. I'm not in the mood yet."

Honestly, I was starting to get annoyed. I hadn't been watching the movie at all because I was too distracted by this guy's persistence. Since no one else had entered the theater—likely due to the high ticket price adding exclusivity—I sensed danger. I knew I had to find a way out.

"So what would make you interested?"

"Be a woman of color."

"Color?" He raised an eyebrow, clearly confused. I immediately realized how absurd that sounded.

"I was just rambling. Don't pay attention to it."

"Now, it's just the two of us. Let's open up to each other."

"Like this?"

"When a man and a woman meet and like each other, they should do things to please the other person."

"And?"

"Can you make me happy?"

"To do what?"

"Use your mouth."

I was stunned by such a direct request. The handsome guy unzipped his pants but didn't show his private parts, wanting to see how I would react. I looked at that part and then back at his face, almost laughing.

"You're so direct, it's surprising. Is this how you treat every woman you've ever met, handsome?" I said sarcastically, but he just smiled.

"Please, just do it. Your scent is driving me crazy."

"Let me give you some advice."

"What?"

"Use your hand."

"Okay, my hands are fine. If it's your hand, I'd be fine with it."

"Damn!"

"Huh?"

"Go find a hole in the bathroom and take care of yourself."

I got out of bed and immediately left the theater, not caring if he was unhappy or calling me.

What the hell! I gave someone a chance and ended up with an idiot like that? I'd rather die than do that what he insisted. Just because he's a star, does that mean he can sleep with whoever he want just because his famous and handsome?

He didn't follow me like I thought he would, probably because he wanted to stay out of sight, not wanting anyone to see him, or maybe he wanted to cut off contact with me and find a new victim who would suit his needs. I went out to the front of the mall, hailed a taxi, and told the driver where I was going.

And here was my destination... in front of the older sister's house.

She wasn't home yet, there were no cars parked, and I couldn't get in because the door was locked. So I sat and waited for her until the sky changed color. Around 8 p.m., the lady of the house came in and opened the electric gate. I was dozing off when the headlights of the car and the sound



of the gate opening startled me awake, and I saw her beautiful face standing there with her arms crossed, looking at me.

"What are you doing, sitting here?"

"Phi."

I stood up, looking at her face, which showed no smile or expression, before throwing my arms around her. She flinched a little, stepping back because she wasn't prepared for my sudden embrace.

"What is it?"

"I missed you."

After hugging my beautiful sister, she let me into the house without saying a word. She went to get some water and poured it for me, then sat down next to me on the sofa, looking at me with a smile and speaking in a relaxed tone.

"Why didn't you call me before you came? We have each other's numbers."

"I was afraid that if I called, you wouldn't answer. Besides... I came in such a hurry."

"In a hurry? Did something happen?"

"Yes..."

"Yes?"

"Today, I had a meeting with a rising star," I explained briefly. My beautiful sister looked surprised and laughed a little. "That's a good thing."

"It wasn't what I expected. He—"

I told her the details of what happened today. She listened with a smile, as if it was nothing out of the ordinary, and simply said.

"Men, right?"

"A person you just met can do something like that? Ask me to use my mouth?"

"You know, you and I kissed when you came to my house."

"Are you bringing this up again?" I said, blushing. "It's not the same thing."

"How is it different? If I were a man, it would seem like I was taking advantage of you."

"Why do you have to compare yourself to that guy?"

"I just want you to see the fact. But still... knowing someone for less than an hour and asking for this, he must be pretty quick. He's known for that kind of thing. You shouldn't have taken the risk."

"I just wanted to give someone new a chance... But to be honest, I wasn't really into it." I waved my hands, looking frustrated. "I tried."

"Did you really try?"

"If it was you and me, and you asked me to use my mouth... I could do it." I looked into her eyes. She looked a little shocked and shook her head.

"But since we are sisters—"

"Can we stop being sisters?"

"....."

"Do you think I'm... in love with you?"

I confessed honestly, feeling like there was nothing left to lose. After a week of having nothing but thoughts of her in my mind, regardless of her past or present, I could no longer suppress my feelings.

"You're just like that man, a fast mover. Don't get involved with someone like me. Being my Nong is better," she replied without any visible discomfort and patted my head. I pushed her hand away, starting to get seriously angry at her indifference to my feelings.

"Just because I rejected that kiss, you're going to reject me forever? Don't you want to give me a chance?"

"Run—"

She called my name for the second time since she introduced me to her friend who was staying at her house the other day. I ignored her and pushed her onto the couch, then climbed on top of her in a self-indulgent manner.

"You can treat me like a toy, just like you do with others. Or if you need money... I'll give it to you. Just show some interest in me, okay? I'm already crazy about you."

She looked at me with affection instead of love, making me feel worthless and small.

"We're worth more than that. And I'm comfortable with our relationship as it is. I've never had any friends. Everyone I've been close to has had their own agenda. You want to know the truth?"

"What?"

"Meeting you wasn't a coincidence. It was part of my plan because I wanted you."

"Sorry?"

I widened my eyes while still on top of her. The sweet-faced woman chuckled, then reached out to hug my neck and sighed.

"I asked the makeup artist to take the day off and went in her place to meet you. I wanted to charm you. If it worked, great; if not, it didn't matter. But it worked... You really are charmed by me."

"Yes, you did it."

"I intended to deal with you after you came to my house, like I did with other people. Meet and then say goodbye without any obligation. It was better that you left in shock that day, so we didn't end up spending the night together."

"If you've gone this far, why don't you continue and let me be your Nong?"

"Because you're so adorable." She pulled my cheeks. "Little daifuku."

*Translator: **Daifuku** is a Japanese mochi treat filled with sweet red bean paste or other fillings. It's soft, chewy, and a popular dessert.*

"The atmosphere is not very conducive to affection right now."

"So what should I do?"

"Sleep with me." I pressed my lips together, feeling embarrassed to say it. She smiled, narrowed her eyes at me, and then asked:

"And can you handle that? Do you know how women make love?"

"You should teach me."

Her gaze changed to one of affection and seduction, making my heart race so loudly I was afraid the person below me could hear it. She looked into my eyes until our noses almost touched and asked again:

"Are you sure you want it that way?"

"Yes."

"Okay, then I'll teach you. But be prepared."

"....."

**"You will see the worst side of me."**

## Chapter 6 : Question and Answer

"I don't care about your worst side anymore because my desire has reached its peak. Lust and passion have blinded me. To me, you are infinite beauty. No matter what happens, no matter what your past was like, no matter how much you hurt me now, I will let it all happen."

Our lips met. This was my first real kiss. I didn't even know what to do. The sweet-faced one pulled away from me and smiled.

"You really don't know how to kiss, do you?"

"That's why I asked you to teach me."

"Alright, follow me then."

Her tongue slid across my lips, tangling gently. My body weakened as I experienced, for the first time, what it was like to communicate through touch. Her scent, her endless allure, had me falling backward with her on top of me.

Then she pinned my hands above my head.

"Impressive, you got it right on the first try."

She didn't just say that, she kissed both sides of my cheeks and began licking my earlobe. I shivered with an emotion I'd never felt before, but I let it happen. It felt good, this bodily connection, this exchange of mutual desire. Even though it was just the beginning, it felt right.

She moved to the crook of my neck, trailing her tongue up my chin. I tilted my head back, giving myself over to her completely. What had started as me being the one to make the first move had now turned into her dominating me, attacking me until I was completely defeated.

We kissed again, our breaths mingling. She was also breathing heavily with shared passion. Then she pulled away, pressing a light kiss to the tip of my nose.

"That's enough for today."

"Huh?"

"First lesson, go slowly."

She stood up, straightening her clothes and tying her hair into a cute bun with the elastic around her wrist, giving off a cool vibe. I sat back, looking at her in confusion, as if everything had been left unfinished. She let me wish for more, not continuing, almost as if she were teasing me.

"Are you kidding me?"

"No, but there's no need to rush."

"But..."

"Don't you want to see me often?"

"Yes, I want to."

"So that's it. Because if you get everything now, you would leave me right after."

"....."

"And I still want to see you again..."

"So what are you going to do next? I... haven't... yet..."

She understood exactly what I meant and just smiled, as if there was nothing that couldn't be solved.

**"You'll have to take care of yourself, then."**

She was a master of seduction, incredibly wicked and a bit of a tease. After spending some time together, she drove me back to my apartment. Before I got out of the car, she charmed me again by leaning over and giving me a quick kiss on the cheek, something she had never done before. I squirmed, embarrassed, not knowing how to react other than to stare at her as she gave me a mischievous smile.

"What's wrong? It was just a kiss on the cheek. Didn't you like it?"

"It's not that I didn't like it, it's just... once I didn't want to be just sisters anymore, everything seemed to change... Are we dating?"

She laughed, as if the word "dating" was a bitter joke to her.

"No, we are not."

"....."

"Someone like me doesn't date. Go ahead, leave. Let me know when you're in your room."

"Sure."

I responded calmly, not wanting to leave her side. Or rather, I wanted to be with her all the time, but it felt like there was an invisible line—something like, *'I'm just going to give you this, and you're going to have to accept it.'* And I was in the position to accept it because it was my choice.

"You said okay, but you're still sitting here. Why? Don't you want to leave yet?"

"I want to stay with you a little longer, but... I can't."

"You're good at begging, aren't you?" She pulled my cheek again and laughed. "My little daifuku."

"You keep doing that."

"It's because you're so cute. That's another reason why I want to see you. I feel like if I don't pinch your cheeks, my heart will hurt."

"So why don't you let me stay here?"

"You could stay, but you wouldn't be able to handle it."

I didn't say anything. She reached out and patted my head as if she understood.

"There's still plenty of time. Let's get to know each other. You're still young and have a lot of people to meet, but you chose to be with someone like me instead of running away."

"That's not something I can control."

"Then you'll have to put up with it like this. Now go, I have to go somewhere."

"Where are you going?"

"I won't tell."

She ended the conversation and didn't say anything else. I reluctantly got out of the car and watched her drive away until she was out of sight.

She did seem to have a lot going on, but it certainly wasn't work-related. I'd never seen her do any work except for that one time she did my makeup. Maybe she was going to find someone else after making me all weak and vulnerable.

Thinking about it, I shook my head, realizing that I was being irrational. Whatever she was doing was her business. I had already decided to accept the relationship as it was, so I should learn to deal with it.

After returning to my room, I did what I always do—I told her I had arrived safely. But there was no response, as if she was busy with something else.



What was she doing?

When she was just my sister, she was so kind. But when I told her I didn't want to be sisters anymore, she seemed like a completely different person. I'm not sure if that's a good feeling, but...

**Ann:** I prefer this status more. Even if it's not clear what we are, it's clear that we're definitely not sisters.

When she finally read and replied to my message, it was around five in the morning. I checked the message at seven and sighed because there was nothing I could do about it. Even if I asked her, she wouldn't tell me. Asking too much would only make me annoying.

Someone like me, who has so many options, ends up in a situation where I can't do anything because my heart has chosen this path. Why is this...

At ten o'clock, I went to her house as usual. She was still as careless as ever—she didn't lock the door. I or anyone else could just walk in as if she had visitors all the time, and that frustrated me. I wasn't jealous, but it seemed dangerous for a woman who lived alone. When I knocked on her bedroom door, she called out from inside as if she knew I had arrived.

"Come in."

Everything was as usual—she was naked under the blanket, lying on her stomach, looking at me with sensual eyes and smiling.

"It's good to see each other like this every day," she said, beckoning me to come closer. "Come here and give me a hug."

Sometimes she was like a cat, and I was the servant who came to her whenever she called. I slid under the blanket and hugged her. Our bodies

touched, her skin so smooth that I couldn't resist running my hands over her hips. She smiled at me sweetly.

"Your hands are playful today."

"Can I kiss you?"

"I haven't brushed my teeth yet. Let's do something else."

I nuzzled into her neck, the scent of her skin mixed with a light hint of perfume. I couldn't help but feel a little surprised.

"I can smell your perfume."

"I spray perfume before bed... just in case."

"...."

"Emergencies..." That word can mean a lot of things, but I wasn't going to ask questions because I didn't want to torture myself and feel hurt.

"You replied to my message very late last night."

"I had some business to attend to."

"...."

"But you're not allowed to ask about that."

It almost sounded like an order. I nodded in understanding, feeling a sharp pang deep inside. Then I nuzzled her harder, wanting to claim her as mine. She giggled as if she were tickled, then let out a soft moan of pleasure that made my entire body tremble with desire, to the point where I wanted to take off my own clothes.

"What should we do today?" I asked.

"What activity do you mean?"

"Anything. Just tell me."

"If I have to think and decide, it might be a little selfish."

"Tell me anyway. I never say no to you, do I?"

"So let's get started with this..." She pressed my head against her breast.

"Think about what you want to do."

I immediately opened my mouth to lick it when she asked. It was what she wanted, and I wanted it just as much. Today was another lesson she allowed me to experience after our kiss. Even though I wasn't particularly skilled, it didn't matter.

"Umm... Good girl, you're doing great."

But that was all we did. She told me to stop after she was reasonably satisfied, and then she got up to take a shower and change her clothes. She even decided what we would do next, which was to leave the house and go out to eat together, even though, in reality...

**I wanted to stay home with her.**

"I thought we were staying home today," I said wistfully. The beautiful woman glanced at me briefly and smiled.

"Sometimes we have to do something else. Staying at home all the time is so boring."

"Actually, I think staying home is fun."

"Fun, but torturous."

This time, I was the one who looked at her sideways. Sure, it was torturous. She would let me do certain things, but she would never let me finish, holding back as if she wanted to frustrate me on purpose.

"So, what are we going to do today?" I asked.

"Nothing special. I'm hungry, so I thought we could grab a bite to eat at the mall, do some shopping, and then head home."

"I liked the last part of the plan better," I admitted.

"You're as obsessed as me, huh?"

I looked at her with a playful and innocent face. It seemed like we had gotten even closer now. Of course, after everything we had done, there was nothing left to hide.

Soon, we arrived at a nearby shopping mall. After parking the car, she headed straight to a fancy Thai restaurant. From what I could tell, she had a special taste for luxury. The food had to be delicious, and price was not an issue.

The beautiful woman ate with such pleasure that I was mesmerized by her every move. Everything she did looked so graceful and captivating.

"Are you going to eat or are you just going to stare at me?" she asked without even looking at me, as if she could feel my gaze. I nodded with a smile, resting my chin on my hand and watching her intently.

"Just looking at you fills my hunger."

"Such sweet words. You're much bolder now. Not like when we first met, so quiet and reserved."

"There's not much left to hide now, is there? We've become quite close."

"Hmm... That's a nice way of saying 'really close,'" she said, finally looking up from her plate to meet my eyes. "We're going to be even closer soon."

"If you hadn't told me to stop halfway, we would be much closer now."

"That won't work," she said, shaking her head.

"....."

"Things that come too easily become boring. It's better to lure you in like that," she added with a playful smile.

"You're really skilled at this, aren't you? You get what you want by doing exactly that."

"Something like that."

"But I'm already willing to give you whatever you want. No need to play games," I replied, smiling.

She just smiled back without saying anything, a smile that seemed a little shy, and continued eating. I watched her and smiled too, before finally starting to eat. But I was soon interrupted when someone approached and greeted her.

"Ann," a deep, soft voice called.

It was an older man who seemed excited and happy to see my beautiful companion. However, she simply looked surprised and gave him a sweet smile.

"Mr. Phon, what a coincidence."

"I haven't seen you in a while. You've been gone for a while. I thought you had completely forgotten about me."

"I could never forget you...." Her words, full of affection, made me grip my fork and knife tightly. The beautiful woman noticed, put down her cutlery, and looked at me briefly.

"I'll be right back. Just stay here," she said as she stood up and linked arms with the older man. Without any embarrassment, and said, "Let's talk outside."

She left me sitting alone, disappearing with an older man.

From their familiarity, it was clear that this wasn't just an ordinary relationship. The beautiful older sister had even revealed who she was and what she had done before, so it wasn't hard to guess that this older man was probably someone she had been involved with.

Thinking about this, I put my fork down as if I had lost my appetite, biting my lip to hold back the tears. While she only felt a little sorry for me, I felt a lot for her alone. It wasn't fair.

The twenty minutes she was gone felt like an eternity of torment. In my mind, I wondered what she was doing with him—if they were just talking or if there was more to it. Before long, she returned with her signature smile as if nothing had happened.

"Sorry, I said a little too much."

"Just talking?" I said abruptly without meaning to.

The person in front of me raised an eyebrow slightly, noticing the tone of my voice, and shrugged.

"Just talking, seriously."

"What were you talking about that took so long? Leaving me sitting alone for hours."

She leaned forward and touched her lips with her finger. "It's a secret."

"What could be so secret? It seems like you always have endless stories, don't you?"

"Don't be annoying." Her initially friendly tone turned cold and harsh, and she looked at me as if to say she was serious.

"....."

"That's not very nice, dear."

Her tone softened when she saw me sitting upright in shock. She patted my head and then rubbed my back, making me feel like an insignificant puppy.

"Is it really that important that I want to know what you were doing with whom and where? It's obvious that the relationship between you and him is not ordinary. We also have a special relationship, so don't act like I'm just a nuisance."

I complained in pain, tears streaming down my face. She looked at me with a resigned expression before letting out a deep sigh.

"So this is how hard it is to date someone younger," she said, reaching out to wipe away some of my tears and tilting her head with a smile. "You know I had a relationship with him?"

"Yes."

The people around us looked at me curiously, but she was the only one who seemed to see it as something trivial, even cold.

"Why ask if it will hurt you more?" she said softly in the restaurant, without making much noise. "Just talking, seriously. It's nothing serious. It's over between me and him."

"Serious?"

"I never took anyone seriously. That's the truth. You can rest assured. He passed through my life and left. We talked like adults. It's over, and I'm not going to continue. Okay?"

"But you..."

**"Now, I only have you."**

"One day, will I disappear like he did?"

I asked her through tears. Even though she tried to comfort me, I kept asking for an answer, which only seemed to hurt more, and it was true.

**"Yes, you will disappear. We will become strangers when that day comes."**

ilvyxoxo13



## Chapter 7 : The Past

We went back home and cuddled on the couch. The pretty-faced person let me do whatever I wanted. We kissed, caressed, and she allowed me to touch her under her clothes on the top of her head, guiding me on what to do.

Being with her was like being in a new world that I had never experienced before. It was as if this world had only the two of us, and she was the teacher guiding me—a teacher who was incredibly sexy and stern at the same time.

However, at a certain point where things could have progressed further, she suddenly walked away without any warning and replied with an indifferent expression.

"That's enough."

She pushed me away, sat up straight, and adjusted her clothes after they had become disheveled because of me. She fixed her messy hair, reached out to gently rub her neck as if she felt a slight pain, and then narrowed her eyes, looking at me with a stern look.

"Kid."

"....."

"Next time, don't do that. Only teenagers leave marks."

I pressed my lips together, feeling guilty for trying something a friend of mine once told me about. Making a kiss mark is a way of showing what's been done and indicating that she's taken. When I did it, I was just thinking about what I'd heard before and wanting to make her mine. If she ran into any of her people, they'd know she was no longer available.

"I'm sorry."

"Knowing your mistake is the first step to being forgiven. But it is a nuisance for me to have to go and get a coin to scrape it off."

"Does that really work? I thought it was just something people were talking about on the internet."

"It helps a little, but it would be better not to do it again."

Her tone was serious, not playful. I sat there silently, like a child being scolded. Seeing that I wasn't being stubborn or arguing, the pretty-faced person smiled at me, as if to pat me on the back after a scolding, then ruffled my hair until it was all messy.

"It's time to go. I'll take you home."

"Can't I spend the night?"

"I have things I need to do."

I glanced at the clock on the wall, which read a little after 8:00 p.m. I was a little surprised that she had things to do so late most nights. I didn't know where she went or what she did, and when I asked, I never got an answer, so I kept quiet and picked up my bag, understanding.

"Okay, if you say so, I will go."

"Good girl." She leaned in to kiss my cheek playfully, then pulled my cheek until it stretched. "You little daifuku."

"You always call me that."

"Because it's cute."

"....."

"So cute."

After dropping me off and drove away, I called a taxi and told him to follow that car, so I could observe her actions.

"Are we playing detective?" The taxi driver teased me as I craned my neck to get a better look. Embarrassed by his question, I could only manage a shy smile.

"Well... something like that."

"Looks like the car in front is playing detective too," he commented.

"Probably watching someone in the house."

"But how could she see anything? Apart from the lights, there is nothing else visible."

"If you can't see the face, at least looking at the ceiling is better than nothing."

"Huh?"

"I mean, she probably spying her lover."

That remark hit me right in the chest.

Someone like her—having a lover? She's pretty cold and doesn't seem to have feelings for anyone. The way she lives, not caring about anyone and prioritizing her own happiness, along with the way she treats me...

"Probably not," I said, almost to myself, because I found it hard to believe. When the lights in the house went out, her car started again and she drove away.

"What should we do? Keep following her?"

"No, it's okay. Just take me back to the condo where you picked me up."

Ann probably had nothing else to do. My original suspicion faded, but a new one emerged—who was in that house? Even though I didn't really believe the taxi driver's theory, the thought lingered in my mind. I couldn't just ignore it. I knew I couldn't ask her about it either, so I had to keep this discomfort to myself, taking it back to the condo where I tossed and turned in bed.

*Whose house was that? Who was she watching? Could someone like her really have a lover?*

As I stood there staring out the window at the lone, twinkling star, my direct message notification lit up. It was from the pretty-faced person, sent at midnight. I picked up my phone and read her message, smiling with joy.

**Ann:** Have you arrived at your room yet? Why didn't you texted me?

Even though her concern came a little late, I could feel the worry behind it. I glanced at the message, hesitating whether I should reply. I opened it so she could see that I had read it, but I didn't reply. I let her worry a little, so I wouldn't be the only one waiting for her messages.

My life isn't completely empty. Aside from romantic affairs, I have work to focus on, and now I've been offered a new project. Someone contacted me to play a role in a BL series, or a boy-boy drama. The role I was offered isn't particularly interesting, but it's a big step toward breaking into the

entertainment industry. The person who introduced me to the job organized a luncheon to try to convince me to accept the role.

"You're perfect for this. It's an important step, and when you do it, more opportunities will arise."

"Why do women in BL series always have to be the villains?"

"Well, it's BL, right? The women are always the extras."

"That's why I don't want to do this. Two men loving each other already indicates their homosexuality. How can a woman get in the way of their relationship? It's a little confusing."

"Because she's there to get in the way of their love."

"And a man who has dated women before suddenly decides he likes men?"

"It happens a lot, people who don't know each other."

"Most gays know themselves well."

I continued to argue, not agreeing with this line of thinking. The person trying to persuade me looked at me, surprised at how in love I was.

"You speak as if you actually know about this."

"People who like women have always liked women. Most of them just try dating men and realize it's not for them, that's all."

"Well, that's what this series is about. The character knows he's gay, but he tries to date a woman, and that woman is you."

"Isn't there a role where the woman supports their love? I don't want to be the obstacle in their relationship."

"So, are you going to do it or not?"

"Let me think about it."

"Come on! A great opportunity is knocking at the door, and you're being picky? The producer specifically asked for you! He said your striking beauty would be a hit if you accepted the role."

"The producer isn't the only one with the right to choose, you know? I'd like to have a say in the role I play. But that doesn't mean I'm not interested." I replied, keeping the opportunity open, although I had some reservations about the role. I'll call to confirm whether I accept or not.

"You're so arrogant! As arrogant as your appearance," I was teased a little, but I didn't care.

After saying goodbye to the person who contacted me, I started thinking about that beautiful person, wondering what she was doing, so I decided to call her. She replied with a cheerful tone, seemingly happy that I had reached out after not replying to her message since last night.

[Ah, the arrogant one is finally willing to talk to me?]

"Why is everyone telling me this today?"

[Who said that?]

"One of them is you. What are you doing now?"

[Thinking about you.]

Even though it was just a simple statement, it made me smile with happiness. No matter how hard I tried to hide my smile, she could still tell that I was smiling.

[Are you that happy? Smiling so much you can't stop.]

"Of course! When someone says they're thinking about me, I have to smile. Shall we meet today?"

[We see each other every day. You're hooked, aren't you?]

Her teasing made me smile a little out of mild irritation, but that's just how she is, and I like her for it.

"Well, you're good enough that I want to see you."

[That's how it is with young people, full of hormones. Come on then. I'm not doing anything, just thinking about trying to cook something. Come taste my food.]

"Now that's what I call having something good."

"Well, you can become the lead, but only if the network is committed to developing you. From what I saw on TV," said my beautiful elder sister, who had just served a bowl of clear gourd soup that she had worked hard to make.

She was expressing her opinion as I told her about my duties. She didn't agree with my idea that women should play villains and refused roles that didn't fit that image as it seemed too irrational to her.

"But I don't want to play a villain."

"In a series about boys' love, you have to be the villain. If it's a series about girls' love, the men will be the villains. It's normal."

"And in your real life, are men villains or heroes?"

She smiled slightly and hummed as if thinking before answering. "For me, a villain can be a man or a woman."

That answer made me frown a little. It seemed like she was speaking from experience. Yes, she dated both women and men. In real life, anyone can be a villain.

"So do you prefer women or men?"

"Women," she answered almost immediately, as if it were something common. I smiled with joy and blurted it out without hesitation.

"See? You're gay too."

"You really call that gay... Yeah, I guess I am."

"So why can gays date both men and women? If you only like women, you would only date women."

She laughed at my blunt response and affectionately ruffled my hair and pinched my cheek.

"Sometimes in life, things don't go as planned."

"So your first boyfriend was a man or a woman?"

"I've never had a partner," she said.

"And your first partner, then?" I answered with a somewhat somber tone. It seemed like she had never taken any relationship seriously, not even with me.

"Are you trying to trick me into sharing something?"

"I thought we were close."

"The more you get to know me, the more you'll want to distance yourself."

"Why?"

**"Well, my past—is disgusting to many people."**

"I don't care about the past."

"Easy to say if you haven't heard," she said, then pulled out a chair to sit next to me instead of across from me.



The seating arrangement indicated our relationship. Couples often sit next to each other because they want to be close together, reducing the need to be apart.

If you love each other very much, you sit close to each other. If you've been together for a long time, you sit across from each other. She chose to sit next to me... maybe because we're in the phase of loving each other very much. Thinking about it like that made me smile, and I clasped my hands together in gratitude for the meal.

"Let's eat and enjoy the meal."

I poured the clear soup over the rice with the gourd, cutting it into small pieces to eat. The taste was not bad at all for someone who was cooking for the first time. And yes, I still didn't want to leave the same conversation to get to know her better, both in the present and in the past.

"Tell me more so I can get to know you better."

"Choose wisely. If you end up not liking me, there's nothing I can do about it."

"Do you really care if I end up not liking you?"

She smiled gratefully, a response that said, *"I don't care,"* and that made me a little irritated. It would have been nice if she'd shown a little more interest. I was still very interested in her.

"Okay, but don't end up throwing up or spitting out your food. I put in the effort. It would be more disappointing to be rejected than to not like it."

"Stop emphasizing rejection. If I say I'm not interested in the past, it means I'm not interested."

"If you're not interested, then why keep asking?"

When she countered, I had to come up with a new explanation.

"I just want to understand you better, to know what makes you who you are today."

I pouted as I continued to eat, trying to get to the bottom of it. The beautiful woman rested her chin on her hand, looking at me with a smile. She never showed any signs of annoyance, and if she was truly displeased, she would simply adopt a neutral expression. I had to know when to stop.

This time, however, she seemed calm and relaxed, as if she was deciding whether or not to share. Finally, she revealed the first personal detail I had heard from her in a long period of silence.

**"I was married at eighteen to a man much older than my father."**

## Chapter 8 : Final Words

Her statement in the first sentence was like jumping straight to the climax without any introduction. I swallowed my food with difficulty, starting to hesitate whether I really wanted to know or not. But curiosity had brought me to this point, and there was no turning back now.

I always remember...

***The past doesn't matter. The present is the best, and I like who she is now.***

"Do you want to hear more?"

"We've come this far, which means you're willing to tell me. So what happens next?"

"You're so curious," she teased, poking my cheek. "Well, it doesn't really matter. We got married, and after a while, he died. His assets became mine. The end."

"You can't just get to the climax and end the story like that. At the very least, there has to be some story for me to tell. Why you got married, how you felt after you married him, and what happened after he died."

"It's a tragedy. The more I tell it, the more melodramatic it becomes. But if you want to hear it, I'll tell you. After you hear it, you can judge me as you wish."

She clasped her hands together and rested her chin on them, as if she were beginning to reminisce about the past. She continued her story as if it had happened yesterday. I listened intently as I took bites of my food.

*Her name was Ann, a beautiful young woman whose parents had placed all their hopes in her, believing that one day she would bring wealth and fortune to the family. But as is typical in the countryside, they expected her to marry someone rich rather than work for it herself because that would*

*take too much time. Eventually, an older, wealthy man in the area took a liking to their daughter, Ann.*

Yes, it was her.

*She knew from the beginning that she didn't like men, so she strongly opposed being forced into a marriage just for a dowry. But she couldn't go against her parents' wishes. The arguments escalated to the point where she told her parents that this would be the first and last time she would repay their kindness. Her parents half-listened; as long as their daughter agreed to the marriage, that was enough. So, she decided to marry a man older than her father and live with him, even though his family didn't like her very much.*

"But she didn't care."

"....."

"To be honest, I was more interested in the old man's daughters than him. He often tried to seduce me and even tried to sneak into my room, but... well, the mood wasn't good."

She joked and continued the story, describing what it was like to share a life with a man as old as her father. It made her feel sick every day, but she had to endure it. The smell of old age, her helplessness, and her declining health—all of it made her increasingly frustrated because she could never really enjoy herself.

"I even thought about putting herbicide in his food so he would simply die."

"....."

"I wanted to get it over with, but I didn't."

At this point in the story, I looked suspiciously at the bowl of clear soup in front of me. She laughed when she saw me gripping my fork tightly and playfully ruffled my hair.

"There's no herbicide in it. You can eat it."

"I didn't say anything."

"Your eyes give you away."

"So what happened next?"

*But not long after, due to his old age and various illnesses, about three years after their marriage, he died of a heart attack. Half of his assets became hers because they were legally married. Even though her relatives tried to contest it in court, they were unsuccessful because the law was on her side. There was no will, and no one could do anything. Ann gave a substantial amount of money to her parents and then cut ties with them completely. The remaining amount was enough for her to live comfortably for ten years, and she used this money to continue her studies until she graduated from university.*

"....."

"Believe it or not, I love learning. Even though I don't have a stable job, I'm well-educated."

"No wonder you're so rich, living alone and not working except as a makeup artist..."

"No, I'm not a real makeup artist. It was just me pretending, switching places with a friend so I could meet you," she said, winking playfully. "Do you still want to hear more?"

"Yes, tell me everything. I'm ready to listen."

*She lived life to the fullest, dating women as she pleased, but never finding the right one. She even wondered if maybe she only thought she liked women, so she tried dating men but still felt nothing.*

*But after graduating, Ann realized she no longer had the motivation to work. With all the money she had, the idea of working a regular job for peanuts made her feel incredibly lazy. Once you make a large sum of money from a side hustle, it's hard to find a reason to live a normal life again.*

"To me, the body is just a vessel. It made me money once, so why couldn't it do it again? That's how I started making money in a way that suited me."

I didn't offer any opinions. I didn't really agree with that mindset, but it wasn't my place to say anything because it was her life. I was younger, so who was I to try to preach to someone who had been through so much?

**Compared to her life experiences, I felt like a baby.**

"Most of the people I've been with have been rich. Since they wanted my body, I figured I should get something in return, something equal to what I was giving. You can call me a 'sugar baby,' and I wouldn't mind or be offended. That's just the way I am."

"I wouldn't call you that."

"Do you feel like throwing up your food yet?"

"The food is delicious; why would I vomit? You're just telling me about your past, and I asked you to do so. Don't look down on me."

"You're pretty open-minded, but if it's too much, you don't have to listen."

"It's not too much. The past is what shaped you into who you are today. I told you, I don't care about the past."

"....."

"The past made the present, and the present will affect tomorrow. If I am the person who like you today, that is all that matters."

"You really like me, don't you? But what if one day we have to go our separate ways? Won't it hurt like hell?"

"Do you even know what it's like to feel hellish pain?"

When asked back, she raised an eyebrow and laughed, thanking me for my clever answer. Then she reached out, hugging me tightly with a playful smile.

"You're really lovely."

"And why did you choose to meet me?"

"Ah, I knew a question like that would come up someday. How should I answer—?"

The pretty-faced woman acted as if she was searching for the right answer.  
"I just happened to see your picture."

"There is no such thing as coincidence. You even got all dressed up to meet me. Instagram doesn't show things randomly like on a feed. You must have searched for my name. Come on, tell me how you found me."

"A boy I was dating was really into you."

"Huh? A boy?"

"Yes, a boy."

"And?"

"I used to date a younger guy. He was a big fan of yours, he really adored you. He would always show me pictures of you. I'm not sure if he was trying to make me jealous or what."

"And you got jealous?"

"No, I just looked at your pictures and thought you were beautiful. That was it. Even that boyfriend—let's call him that, although I don't know what else to call him. I don't want to call him a 'kid' and make him sound like he's ten years old." She laughed and continued.

"That boyfriend would casually mention things like, *'She's an angel beyond reach. What kind of person would be with her?'* Something like that."

"And that made you want to be with me?"

"I was just curious to see how out of touch you really were, but then..."

"...."

"I let it slide until I broke up with him and met up with a friend from college who had become a makeup artist. I mentioned that I want to have the chance to do a makeup for a photo shoot, and that was the beginning of the connection and eventually..."

"...."

"Here we are."

She gently caressed my cheek, and I put my fork and spoon aside, hugging her. I felt grateful for whatever it was that led her to seek me out so we could get to know each other. Even after hearing her past, I didn't feel any aversion. It could be called infatuation because, if it had been before, I might have thought that this woman wasn't someone to be around.

"You have me now, so don't push me away."

"You're talking like a cat. Aren't you going to eat?"

"I want to hug you more than I want to eat."

"Finish eating first. Today we have new things to learn."

I pulled away from her embrace and quickly ate my food. The pretty-faced woman reached out to pat my back and handed me a drink, laughing as she watched me eat so eagerly, shaking her head in amusement.

"Eat slowly. There's no need to rush. We have all day together. You know, we have similar bodies."

"I admit it. I'm anxious."

"Little rascal."

She laughed and watched me eat happily. Her smiling face made me stop and look at her, feeling captivated and overwhelmed by affection, although



she always anticipated that it was not love and that we had no status with each other.

“What? Why did you suddenly stop and stare at me?”

“You know, I love your smile. It's kind and sincere.”

“How can you say I'm sincere? You expect too much from me.”

“But you didn't ask for anything, even though I'm already willing.”

“Isn't it nice to spend time together for a long time?”

“You want to stay with me for a long time, don't you?”

She was silent for a moment before nodding, which made my heart race uncontrollably.

**“Yes, I want to be with you.”**

In the end, I agreed to participate in the BL series, even though I wasn't very interested in it at first. But after hearing my Phi's opinion that there was nothing to lose, it would be a good experience and could be the start of a successful career in my future, I gave in to reason. You could say she was a significant part of my decision. After I agreed, my senior was thrilled, her excitement and laughter coming through the phone as she teased.

[Good decision. What made you change your mind?]

“Well, thinking about it, there's nothing to lose.”

[Great. Then come to a casting session so the director can see you. It's just a formality, really. They've already chosen you.]

“Okay, I'll come with you.”

[You're so cute when you agree so easily. By the way, I was going to ask you that yesterday when we met. Did something happen to you?]

“What kind of thing?” I asked, looking surprised as I smiled at the phone, absently tapping my leg.

[I don't know. You look radiant and full of life, your eyes shining.]

“Seriously?”

[Do you have a boyfriend?]

“Crazy!!!” I exclaimed, nervous. “I don't have a boyfriend.”

[With that high-pitched voice, you must have one. Having love is nice. I'm not criticizing. By the way, who is he? You usually look so reserved and arrogant, I thought no one would dare approach you. Or are you the one after him?]

“What are you talking about? I don't really have a boyfriend.”

[Well, there must be someone you're talking to. I'd like to see who it is. Who could make you feel this way?]

I kept laughing and acting like I didn't understand. I wasn't planning on sharing personal details with acquaintances. What they could possibly gain from me was another matter, and more importantly, the person I'm dating now isn't necessarily my boyfriend.

“Seriously, there's no one. So, let's stick to the plan. Please send me the details I need...”

I ended the conversation by refocusing on work and hanging up. Then I quickly texted my influential sister to update her on the progress. I wanted her to feel satisfied that she had played a role in this decision. After about thirty seconds, she quickly responded.

**Ann:** Great. It's good for you too.

**Run:** Honestly, if it weren't for you, I probably wouldn't have decided to take this on.

**Ann:** Seriously? You're saying that? Haha, thanks.

**Run:** Yes, you are the reason.

I stated firmly, wanting her to understand how important she is to me, before typing out the details of the conversation I had with the senior who invited me to participate in the series.

Today I reflected on how I was teased about whether I had done something recently, perhaps gotten involved with someone special.

**Ann:** And what did you say?

**Run:** I said no.

**Ann:** That's right. In this field, it's better to say that you're single.

But it seems she noticed. As I typed it, I bit my lip, feeling embarrassed and strangely scared because we never talked about love. She approached me with clear intentions and was open about it. I knew why she was interested, so I didn't feel fooled. I was very willing because I felt the same way.

**Run:** But still... We've never discussed our feelings deeply. It seems like I'm the only one who thinks this way.

**Ann:** What way?

She typed back, seeming to already know but wanting me to say it myself.

**Run:** I have feelings.

There was a pause after she sent a message back. I imagined she was thinking about how to respond, and every second that passed made me nervous.

**Ann:** Feelings for me?

**Run:** Yes, there is only one person.

**Ann:** If you're referring to me, I already told you that I approached you with selfish intentions. I still feel guilty for deceiving you.

**Run:** But I was willing to be deceived. I thought I was falling in love with you.

I hesitated and sent the next message: *"I'm falling in love with you."* It took a while for the response to come back. I thought she might have thrown the phone away and almost called her back, feeling anxious, but then she replied.

**Ann:** No. I'm not a good person.

**Ann:** I am not worthy.

**Run:** Don't interrupt like that. If it's still not clear, let me be direct.

After a pause, she typed back, which almost made me drop my phone.

**Ann:** I don't love you.

**Translator** : that hurts, but i understand Ann's point of view. it feels like she's afraid of losing Run, so she's making Run want her more—an obsession, indeed.

*if they got together too easily, it wouldn't take long for Run to lose interest.*

# Chapter 9 : The Detective Caught

I arrived at the casting as scheduled. Although it had already been decided that I would play the villain, I still had to perform in front of the camera for the director and others to see. Even though it was my first time, I did my best. There were some awkward moments, but I told myself that I could do it. The director praised me, saying that I had done well, but he mentioned that there was still something missing.

“Your eyes... they looked a little sad today. But your acting was great overall.”

“Thank you.”

“But don’t worry.”

That was all the director said before he let me go home. As I was getting ready to leave, packing my things, I noticed someone staring at me. When I turned to look, I saw a woman about my age. As soon as our eyes met, she quickly looked away.

**She was staring at me.**

I raised my eyebrow slightly, a little surprised. It wasn’t a hostile look. I could sense her shyness and awkwardness, which made me smile to myself.

Still, I didn’t go over to start a conversation or anything because we had just met. I’m not the type to start conversations easily. Usually, it’s others who approach me first, and only then can I continue to build a friendship. So, we just exchanged glances, and that was it.

Alright, back to my own story...

No, it's been about me from the beginning. I meant the story about my "sister"... Ann. Since we talked that day, we haven't spoken.

There was no anger, but I was too hurt to try to talk to her. As for her, she stayed silent. I wasn't sure if she was waiting for me to make the first move or if she wanted me to take some time to accept what she had said. So our conversation ended with just "*I don't love you,*" which hurts every time I think about it.

Just as I was about to put away my phone and call a taxi, I received a message from the older sister I was thinking about. She said hello casually, and that was enough to make my heart race immediately.

**Ann:** What are you doing?

I admit I was eager to respond right away, but I didn't want to seem like I was anxiously awaiting her message. So I waited a while before responding, pretending I was busy with work and had just seen it.

**Run:** Just finished casting. Heading back now.

**Ann:** How was it?

**Run:** Nothing is too difficult if you apply yourself to it. What about you? What are you doing?

**Ann:** Thinking about you. You've been quiet since that day... are you still mad?

She thought I was angry because of her direct words that were meant to help me move on.

**Run:** Like I said, I wasn't mad, just more hurt and sad that you left me with no chance to remain hopeful.

**Ann:** I'm not mad, but I don't know if I should reach out or not. It sounds like you're mad.

**Run:** Why would I be mad at you? Then it means we're not mad at each other.

**Ann:** That's good.

She replied briefly before typing the next sentence.

**Ann:** So, do you want to come over? I just tried making basil fried shrimp and I'd like someone to try it.

I smiled, and the hurt feelings instantly disappeared. Was this her way of making amends? Luring me with food? I decided to tease her a little.

**Run:** Just to try the stew? You'd have to owe me more. It's quite far from your house.

**Ann:** You'll finish with dessert.

She always does this, trying every way to attract me. Even though the last line days ago was meant to make me give up, she found ways to attract me, and it worked.

I quickly called a taxi to her house, my heart burning with longing and wanting to see her so badly.

As soon as we met, I rushed to hug her and buried my face in the corner of her neck a little higher to breathe in her familiar scent and perfume.

"What is that?"

"I missed you so much."

She put her arms around me and gently stroked my back, her long hand running down the middle of my back, making me feel as if she was casting a spell.



“Hmmm, I missed you too. We’re not really mad at each other.”

“Can we have dessert first and then the stew?”

Without waiting for a response, I kissed her passionately, full of affection and desire at the same time. She kissed me back, slowly leaning back, letting herself fall onto the couch and allowing me to do whatever I wanted. No matter where I touched her, she easily complied and laughed happily.

“Your desire woke up again. Just seeing me and you’re already on top of me? Aren’t we going to talk? Is this how you set the scene?”

“If we talk, I’ll end up feeling sad again. Let’s not talk.”

“Okay, let’s not talk.”

As I mentioned, after we had dessert we would move on to the main course, but there wasn’t much dessert, just some affectionate banter before we were pushed away as usual. Sometimes I get frustrated wondering why we didn’t finish, but she always smiles and answers everything I ask.

“Do you want it to end quickly?”

“Of course, I don’t want it to end like this.”

Her word “end” has many meanings. I’ll have new experiences quickly and I’ll have to part with her quickly too.

She’s never been serious with anyone, and I’m no exception. Being in a relationship without status is painful like that, and she’s always been open about wanting it to stay that way. I was the one who accepted the offer, unable to negotiate anything.

Being in love with someone so cold, who, although smiling, has a heart as hard as stone, makes me feel scared and submissive, so all I can do is endure the pain if I still want to see her. But she seems to want to see me too, so it’s never gone too far.

The stew she made today was still as delicious as ever, perhaps because I hadn't eaten since morning, and when I arrived, she didn't say much.

We spent almost another half hour being affectionate, and now I was so hungry that I felt dizzy. When I took my first bite of food, the pretty-faced person rested her chin on her hand, watching me eat in silence, which made me feel embarrassed.

"What are you looking at?"

"You eat so deliciously, you chubby, round little thing," she teased me with a cold tone. "So, tell me how the things in casting went today?"

"It went well. The director praised my performance. Besides, I wasn't too worried because my friend assured me that I would definitely pass the test. I just had to attend the audition as a formality."

"That's impressive. Now that you're becoming famous, are you going to forget about me?"

"I couldn't forget you even if I tried. There's probably only one person like you in the world. I'd even bow down to you."

"Is that really so?" She laughed and reached across the table to ruffle my hair. "So what happened next? Was that it?"

"Well... a little more. At the casting today, someone was looking at me furtively."

I thought about the woman who was looking at me furtively. When I looked at her, she turned her face away. Feeling a little playful, I mentioned it to see her reaction.

"No wonder they were staring. You're so beautiful and extraordinary. Even me, follow you on Instagram. How was the person staring? Did they like you?"

"Do you think it matters whether they liked me or not?"

“Of course it matters.”

I felt a sense of joy upon hearing this before falling into her next statement.

“I’m glad because you met someone who suits you.”

“What does ‘suit’ mean?”

“People of the same level. The person auditioning has to be good-looking, the same age, and most importantly... clean and organized.”

I put down my fork, starting to lose my appetite. She always compares herself to others and diminishes her own worth, often evaluating herself negatively based on her past.

“Are you full yet?”

“What does ‘clean and organized’ mean? Does it mean pure, never having had a past like you had?”

“Something like that.”

“I don’t care about the past or what anyone did before. The present is what matters most to me.”

“But the past shapes us into who we are today.”

“But the present can make tomorrow better if we make it good.”

We stared at each other, and the pretty-faced one smiled, satisfied with my answer.

“You understand how to use words, huh? Anyway, I’m glad you found someone good. Have you talked to this person?”

“No, I just watched from afar. I told you about this,” I said, a little irritated that she didn’t care at all about someone showing interest in me.

"If you push me too far away, be careful that I don't actually leave." I added.

"It has to be this way. We deserve the best."

"What if I told you you're the best?"

"You'd be wrong." She glanced at the wall clock. "Finish your meal and I'll take you home. I have business to attend to."

"More business? Can you tell me what it is?"

"No, I can't."

"...."

"You know, 'business' is a term they don't elaborate on. If it was something they could say, they would say exactly what they were doing, not just 'business.'"

Her explanation made me frown, but I kept my composure. "I thought we were close."

"We're close enough. I've never shared so much about myself with anyone before, and I've never met anyone as often as I've met you. Usually, people come and go."

"I still want to get to know you better."

"Greed. Knowing me as you know me now is enough. Knowing more might make you less inclined to look at me."

She didn't say anything else and watched as I finished my meal, waiting for me to finish. After the meal, instead of going home right away, we watched another episode or two of a TV show on the couch, since the sky wasn't dark yet and she wasn't in a hurry.

If I had to guess, her business probably had to do with that house again. I snuggled up close to her on the couch, sliding my hand under her shirt,

enjoying the feel of it, and inhaled her scent, speaking in a playful, cat-like voice.

"I want to see you every day."

"Well, we see each other almost every day. Except on weekdays. As for me, I have no work to do... I want to see you more than you want to see me."

"Should I move into your house?"

She looked at me and laughed without comment, which meant "no." Despite her apparent kindness and constant smiles, there was a fine line dividing her private space.

"If you want to visit me, you can, but you don't have to live here. I'm more comfortable alone and I don't want you to see my less pleasant sides."

"Why do you always talk so much about your flaws? I told you I can accept them."

"When you're in love, you can accept anything... Look, where is your hand going?"

When I touched the zipper of her pants, she squeezed my hand and looked at me with a smile. "You're getting bolder."

"I just want to explore new territories; I've never been there before."

"Let it remain mysterious."

"We've done so much already."

"True, we did a lot today, and it's time to go home," she interrupted, getting up to straighten her clothes and turn off the TV with the remote control.

"Come on, grab your bag. I'll give you a ride."

"I'm not full yet."

I didn't mean that I was still hungry because my stomach was already full of the stew. I meant that I wanted more of her. The touch of her hand rekindled my desire, and I wanted to stay close to her endlessly.

"Every party must end. We'll start a new one later."

We traded metaphors until she pulled me off the couch, asking me to grab my purse while she grabbed her keys and started her sports car with the remote. The car roared loudly, displaying its power and high price.

"Alright then, we'll start a new party later."

As usual, the elder sister took me to my apartment. Today, I was very happy, perhaps because I received new and mysterious experiences. Her scent and perfume still lingered on me, making me feel good. I smiled all the way home until I reached my destination.

At the appropriate time to leave, I said, "I'm going now."

I watched her car drive away, then hailed a taxi that had just arrived and stopped to pick up passengers, as usual. Today, the driver was not the same person, but he continued his role of discreetly following her car to make sure she stopped at the same house as before. Sure enough, she parked, turned off the engine, and stood still, as if watching the lights go out in the house, just like the days before.

*Whose house was this? Why did she come here every night? What was going on?*

As I asked the driver to turn off the engine and lights, the person who had parked and was watching in front of the house approached the taxi where I was sitting and knocked on the window. My eyes widened in surprise, wanting to hide under the seat, but it seemed like it was too late.

**Knock, knock.**

The tapping on the window grew more insistent. The taxi driver turned to me, speaking in a tone that suggested he had given up. "You can't hide now.

Just come out; she's already got you."

I swallowed nervously and slowly straightened up, opening the window. The older sister, seeing me sitting inside, looked straight at me with a blank stare.

"Go out and talk."

With no other option, I had to get out of the car, looking down, embarrassed and feeling guilty.

"I am really sorry."

"What does sorry for mean?"

"For following you."

"You know it's wrong?"

She didn't smile like usual, and I felt like she could use her stern look. Her voice was even colder and more menacing than usual, though it wasn't overly frightening. Still, I could sense an unusual intensity in her emotions.

Of course, I was invading her privacy, sneaking around like a detective trying to catch someone in the act of seeing a lover or something.

"I want to know what you do every day."

"And what does that matter to you?"

She switched from the familiar "nong" to "you," making my heart skip a beat, as if she was pushing me out of her safe zone, as if I was invading her space.

"I'm just... worried."

"Or just nosy?"

"....."

"What do you gain by knowing?"

"Because it's about you... I want to understand every aspect of who you are."

Tears began to well up in my eyes as I felt anxious that she might be extremely angry and possibly shut me out. Our relationship seemed to be going well, but it could end just because of my curiosity.

"I've told you a lot about myself today, haven't I? Is there anything else you want to know?"

"Everything. I want to know who you're waiting for."

"This is too much!"

She spoke in a harsh tone, her hands digging into her pockets as she stared at me intently. "If I had known you would be like this, I wouldn't have wasted my time on you in the first place."

"Please."

"What I hate most is someone who wants to know things that shouldn't. When something is not allowed to be known, and they still try to snoop. When we are in a relationship and it causes so much discomfort."

And those words, like a bolt of lightning, almost made me collapse.

**"We will not meet again."**



# Chapter 10 : Thin Threads

"Are you breaking up with me?"

I could feel my voice shaking. Fear spread throughout my body. The beautiful woman in front of me continued to stare at me coldly and shook her head.

"This isn't a breakup because we were never together. Let's stop here."

She was about to walk away, but I grabbed her arm like it was the last straw I could hold on to.

"I'm sorry! I was wrong!" I said, and hugged her from behind.

The previously gentle sister didn't even shrug her shoulders in annoyance. She just stood there, turned to look at me, and said in a monotone voice, "Let go."

"....."

"You're annoying."

She snatched my hands away, walked to her car, started the engine, and drove away.

When I left, tears were streaming down my face. I felt completely helpless, like there was nothing I could do. In the end, all I could do was call a taxi and head back to my apartment. This was the first time I truly understood what heartbreak meant.

I tossed and turned all night, unable to sleep, my mind racing with thoughts.

*What if I hadn't acted that way?*

*What if I had done this or said that differently?*

*Would things have turned out differently?*

But all I got in return was emptiness. No real answers came to mind because her heart was too hard to understand.

She was a complicated person. Even now, I still don't fully understand her. As cruel as she seemed, it was part of her charm that kept me drawn to her. I was so captivated that I couldn't pull away. I wanted to know everything about her. Even when she revealed her darker side to me, it still wasn't enough. I had pried into aspects of her private life that she never wanted me to know.

***But what exactly did she not want me to know, to the point of cutting me off completely?***

She was the one who approached me first, even though she had intended to deceive me from the beginning. I was so anxious that I couldn't stand it, and before I knew it, morning had arrived.

I wanted to work, to be contacted by someone for a modeling job, an acting role, anything to distract me from my thoughts. But I was a freelance model and actress without any contracts. I only worked when contacted directly. So with nothing to do, I was left in this restless state.

I had to do something. I wasn't ready to lose her. With that thought, I got dressed, took a shower, and went to her house. Normally, she never locked the door, no matter what time it was. I hoped today would be like the past, when I could just walk in.

But today....

It was different.

The door was locked from the inside. No matter how much I shook it, the door wouldn't budge. It was a clear sign that she knew something like this was going to happen.

She hammered the final nail into the coffin, as if to remind me, *"You no longer have the right to enter my world."*

No... I couldn't let her go. We hadn't even started. My heart had already sunk so low; it was impossible to back down.

"Please... open the door. I'm sorry, please," I begged.

**Bang! Bang! Bang!**

I knocked on the door, causing a scene. If she had neighbors, someone would surely come looking soon. That was exactly my intention, to embarrass her into opening the door.

And it worked. I wasn't sure if she gave in out of embarrassment or simply realized that no matter how long she kept quiet, I wouldn't stop pestering her.

She opened the door easily, wearing only a T-shirt and shorts, clearly not even wearing a bra underneath. Her face remained cold. The more I persisted, the angrier she became.

"You still don't understand what I'm trying to say by locking the door like that?"

"Don't do this to me," I begged, tears welling up again as I felt completely hopeless.

I used to think that people who begged for someone who didn't love or care about them were pitiful, but now I understood. It felt like my heart would stop, as if I had nothing to lose, not even my dignity. I had to do something, anything, to make her stay.

"I wish I had never met you in the first place if I had known it would end like this. Go home. I want to sleep."

"I'm not going anywhere. Please just talk to me."

"We already talked about everything last night."

"But I'm not done... I promise I'll never cross your boundaries again. Please don't do this to me."

I cried so hard it felt like my tears were turning to blood. She cut me mercilessly, without a shred of care. Maybe she had done it enough times to become numb, but to me, it was nothing like that.

There was still a lingering connection, a delicate thread of emotion and kindness that I had never experienced before. It might have been a trap, and I was the fish she had caught. But I didn't care. I dove into the trap willingly, letting her do whatever she wanted, as long as she didn't leave. That was all I wanted.

"But what you're doing now is invading my personal space. You couldn't even keep your first promise... Stop bothering me. Go home."

She slammed the door in my face, locking it from the inside with a loud click. I stared at the door, leaning my forehead against it, unsure of what to do next.

"I'm not leaving. I just want to sincerely apologize. I want you to understand that everything I did was out of curiosity. I wanted to know everything about you."

"...."

"I love you."

Time seemed to stretch into eternity as I stood there with my forehead pressed against the door. After I confessed my love, the door slowly opened. My body shook slightly from the pressure, and there she was, the woman I had been begging for love and understanding from, looking at me with tired eyes.

"We just met. Is it really that easy?"

"Yes, it's that easy." I replied.

"Even though you knew I approached you just to sleep with you?"

"It doesn't matter why you came to me, it doesn't matter anymore. I'm willing to accept anything now."

She stared at me for a moment, then sighed deeply.

"Did you even sleep?"

I shook my head. The dark circles under my eyes must have been a sure sign of the emotional storm I had endured—sleepless nights, endless tears, no appetite. I had withered away in just one night.

"Why are you so quick to give your heart to a stranger?"

"You are not a stranger."

"We're about to become strangers to each other."

**"I won't let that happen."**

"Not today, but it will happen someday. I've told you all along, I've never had a real relationship with anyone." She reminded me, emphasizing the nature of what we had.

"Whether this ends now or later, the outcome will be the same. While you haven't lost anything yet, protect what's left." she added.

"Take it all," I said, letting my arms fall to my sides as if to say I had nothing left to give. Whatever she expected of me, I was ready to give it.

**"Just don't shut me out."**

"You're so young, Run. So naive, it's almost scary. And of all people, you ended up with someone like me."

She invited me into her home. My hunched shoulders straightened a little, as if a drop of water had just soothed my parched heart.

"Crying like that on my front doorstep... people passing by might think I did something to you."

"Normally, you don't care what people think."

"They're already giving me the stink eye. Now here I am making a beautiful young lady cry outside my house. At the very least, go inside, get some water, take a nap, and then leave."

I wasn't sure if she was softening, but since she'd invited me in, I took it as a small victory, an honor to be entering her world again. She walked into the kitchen to get me a drink, while I sank onto the couch in the middle of the living room, hands folded in my lap, feeling small and guilty.

"Drink some water and rest."

"And when I wake up, you'll tell me to go away, right?"

"That's probably what's going to happen."

"Then I won't sleep."

"Pathetic. Why don't I ever learn from dating younger people? The last one was like that. I thought switching from men to women would be different."

"Did that person love you as much as I did?"

"Do you know how many times I've heard someone say 'I love you'? No matter if they were young or old, you're not the first."

"But mine is real."

"Everyone's love is real to them. But I've never cared about anyone's love, and you'll be no different. I don't take anyone seriously, Run," she said, using my name so formally.

"But at least you care a little about me."

"I admit that."

"That's enough for me," I said with a sad smile.

How had I become this person? I felt completely humiliated, stripped of all dignity. If crawling to her feet and begging could make her stay, I probably would have done it. Is this what love does? Does it destroy us like this?

"I'm not worth the good feelings you're giving me."

"You don't have to remind me so much. If you keep saying that, I might start to believe it."

"Great. Then it will be easier to let go."

I looked into her eyes with determination, the same look she gave me last night when she told me it was over.

"I won't let go."

"Is it because we haven't slept together yet?" She said it so casually, as if asking if I had eaten.

"I didn't come here for that."

"Stop," she said, lunging at me and pushing me down onto the couch.

Her hands pressed against my weakened shoulders, tired from the sleepless night and endless crying. Despite my exhaustion, I still had enough strength to be shocked by what was happening.

"This time, I'll let you do whatever you want. Let's get this over with, and then you can move on."

"I already told you, I didn't come here for that! Do you really think all I care about is your body? I'm not that kind of person!"

"You've been showing up every day because of this, haven't you? At first, I thought I'd just sleep with you and get it over with, but now the situation has changed. If we do this, you'll feel like you've won, and then we can go our separate ways. I can't carry the weight of your feelings anymore."

"I said no! No, no, no!" I screamed, pushing her away and covering my face with my hands.

Tears welled up as I sobbed uncontrollably. She looked stunned, not expecting such a strong reaction from me. I had been so curious and eager before, but here I was, rejecting her.

**"This is the only thing I can give you. Because if you want love... I have none to give."**

I sobbed harder, her words stabbing deep into my heart like hundreds of knives.

As she watched me crumble like a small child, the anger in her eyes disappeared. Instead of pushing forward, she lay down and pulled me to her chest, wrapping her arms around me and gently stroking my hair. Her hostility dissolved into something softer, almost tender. It only made me feel even more pitiful.

"I'm sorry I made you like this," she whispered.

"Why do you keep pushing me away, putting up walls like this? What did I do wrong? Why can't you love me?" I sobbed, the words spilling out of me like a river.

**"It's not you, it's me... I'm the one who doesn't deserve love."**

"Don't keep talking like that. I told you I don't care about the past tense of 'what.'"

"But what I care about are people who aren't worthy of anyone. Even looking in the mirror, I hate myself. It's just that you're my first love, but as soon as you meet someone new, you'll forget about me on your own."

"How can I forget you? I will never be able to forget."

"Don't threaten me with tears, sweetie. Go to sleep. You haven't slept all night, have you? Health is the most important thing."



"Don't change the subject."

"I'll hold you until you fall asleep. It's the only good thing I can give you... besides love."

She gently rubbed my back. I continued to sob, not knowing when I fell asleep.

When I woke up, it was already past seven. The beautiful woman who had been holding me got up and left the couch, leaving me alone. But I understood; the space was narrow, and I was lying on her arm. She must have felt uncomfortable, so she got up to stretch and move around.

A soft, pleasant aroma wafted into the house. White smoke billowed out into the area. I followed the smoke and saw a slender figure standing outside, smoking a cigarette. Just as I was about to call out to her, an Instagram message interrupted me. I didn't know who it was.

*"Hello."*

I read the message without much interest. It was probably just an Instagram fan coming to say hello or compliment my work. I turned off the screen and got up to leave. The beautiful woman, seeing that I was awake, raised an eyebrow slightly and smiled.

"Did you sleep well?"

"Do you smoke too?"

"It's an electronic cigarette."

"I've never seen you smoke before."

"I only smoke when I want to think in silence alone. That's the dark side. On the other hand, I've done everything. I've had many lovers, I've drunk alcohol, I've smoked, without a heart."

"....."

"Do you still think I'm worthy of you?"

"Smokers aren't bad people." I looked at the e-cigarette in her hand curiously. "Can I try it?"

"It's not a good thing."

"It's just to try, not that I'm going to get addicted. Marijuana is legal now."

"But e-cigarettes are still illegal."

"It's ironic, isn't it?"

She smiled and handed me the vaporizer to try.

"First press the button and then inhale the smoke."

She gave me a brief lesson. I tried to follow her instructions, and before I could stop coughing, the cold sensation in my throat was overwhelming. The beautiful woman laughed at my reaction and shook her head.

"It's always like that the first time."

"Yes, the first time is always painful, both with cigarettes and with love," I said metaphorically, then handed the device back to her.

"You must be tired of me, right? Talking nonsense, being scolded and comforted, but I still keep bothering you."

"I admit I find it annoying. That's why I don't like dealing with teenagers."

"...."

"But I like you. Still, it's not love."

"You don't have to repeat yourself. I understand that it's not love. After falling asleep and waking up, I suddenly felt much calmer. Remembering the night I cried uncontrollably in front of you, I felt a sense of self-pity. Anyone would be irritated by that. I don't blame you."

"But we can still sleep together." she said.

"So after we sleep together, we'll end up as sisters? It's a mysterious kind of relationship."

"True."

"Are you just being cautious?"

"Of what?"

"Afraid that if you accidentally fall seriously in love, you'll get hurt."

"Probably, because from what I see, most people who fall in love end up hurt. Some even threatened to kill themselves. But I didn't care. If you don't love yourself, how can you love someone else? And in the end, those people didn't die."

It seemed like she was implying that no matter what was done, it would be useless.

I crossed my arms, nodded, and looked up at the sky with eyes that were bruised from crying so hard.

"I won't die because of you."

"Then there's no need to be annoying." She reached out to stroke my hair.

"Come on. I'll take you."

"And you're going to continue with your business, right?"

She didn't answer. Even now, I still haven't gotten an answer about who owns that house. Maybe it's a lover she's afraid of hurting, so she doesn't want to open her heart to anyone.

"Then let's go back. I won't ask for more." I added.

"Let's go."

The beautiful woman started the car and waited for me to get in before driving silently, not saying anything the whole way. It was strange that she didn't take me back to the condominium as expected but instead headed towards Lam Sali, which was far from my house.

This place felt familiar, like where I had secretly followed her once, and finally, she slowly turned off the headlights and parked in front of a house with the lights on inside.

She brought me to this house without explaining anything. I looked at her, not knowing how to react or what to say. Should I ask? Would she be mad if I spoke? I remained silent until she spoke.

"Do you want to know why this house is so important that I come here every night?"

I bit my lip and nodded in acknowledgement. The beautiful woman looked up at the lights of the house and leaned forward to get a better look.

"That's something that, if you knew... you'd probably despise me."

"Why do you think I would despise you so much?"

"Because what I do here is not a good thing."

"But it seems like you've never cared about what others think or how they approach you. You've always been blunt about the men you meet. Sometimes I wonder if you say I might despise you because you're afraid of being hated by me."

She looked at me and smiled lightly, her eyes filled with the usual affection she displayed in normal times. "That's right. The frequent need to defend yourself means that I must really be afraid of being hated."

"And the fact that I secretly followed you made you very angry, but now you're the one who brought me here. Tell me, I can accept anything."

"For love?"

"Yes."

She asked directly, and I answered directly. There was nothing left to hide. The beautiful woman looked at the house and spoke again.

"This is the dark side you should know about. If you find out and want to leave, you can."

"Go ahead and tell me. What other dark side is there that I don't know about? Whose house is this, and why do you come here every day? Is it because of love?" I asked with determination.

"Love... Hmm, I'm not really familiar with that word. Whether it's love or not, I'm not sure. But it feels like there's a thin thread of attachment."

My heart skipped a beat, feeling a sharp pain. But since I had decided to listen from the beginning, I couldn't back down now. No matter who the person in the house was, I would have to accept it.

The reason why she couldn't love me or open her heart might be because of the person in this house.

"Who makes you feel attached?"

"The blood in the heart."

"...."

**"My own son."**

ilvyxoxo12

# Chapter 11 : Miss You

Even though I told her I could accept and listen to anything, I was shocked by what she revealed. I couldn't believe that this beautiful woman already had a child. She didn't seem like someone who would let something like that happen, considering how much she enjoyed life.

When she saw my stunned silence, she smiled sadly. It wasn't sadness at my reaction, but rather at the situation with the house.

"A child born of a man, a child I did not want to be born."

"But he was born."

I interrupted, wanting to side with her, telling her that she wasn't cruel enough to abandon the child. But she shook her head slowly and looked back at the house.

"He was born because of some agreement."

"What kind of deal?"

"An exchange for five million baht."

"...."

"Did you sell your son?"

"Yes."

Her answer was too hard to believe. I looked at her in shock. The wise and worldly elder sister met my gaze and repeated, "I don't love my own son, so how could I love anyone else? From now on, think carefully about whether you still want to be involved with me."

"...."

"Getting involved with me will only hurt you because I can never give you what you want. I'm already being considerate of you... Run."

"...."

"If someone tells you not to get involved with someone like me, that I'm a bad and dangerous person... Believe me. I am that person, I am bad. I am dangerous."

"....."

"I don't really love anyone."

She took me back to my house, still wearing that characteristic smile. I didn't know if that smile was one of affection or a final goodbye.

She seemed to believe that after knowing this, I would no longer want to be involved with her. Meanwhile, I was in shock, full of various doubts and uncertainties.

Should someone like me get involved with someone like her? The past influences the present, and people don't change easily. I certainly wasn't skilled enough to make someone like her a good person.

As I contemplated these thoughts in the shower—yes, my mind was filled with her and her situation from the moment I started showering until I finished getting dressed—I walked out of the bathroom.

A message from someone that wasn't specifically a greeting, but seemed more like a comment on a story, popped up. It was from the same person who had messaged me earlier that night with "Hello."

"Such beautiful eyes."



I read the message without replying but decided to check the sender's profile. It was the same person I had made eye contact with at the casting. I scrolled through her Instagram with interest. She was an attractive woman my age, but why did she seem so eager to talk to me?

To avoid seeming too indifferent, I decided to reply playfully.

**Run:** You're beautiful too.

The message was read immediately. Shortly after, the other person liked my message and continued the conversation on Instagram, as if she wanted to keep the dialogue going.

"We met. I don't know if you remember."

**Run:** I remember, but when I turned around, you didn't make eye contact.

"Your eyes are so beautiful, but they're also intimidating. I was afraid you'd think it was rude for me to stare."

**Run:** But you still messaged me here on Instagram. What's your name?

"Aff."

**Run:** Your name sounds like a celebrity. I'm Run. I think you'll definitely get the role today.

**Aff:** Climbing is like applying for a job. Whether you get it or not depends on the decision of the people in charge.

**Run:** You've already done it. You're beautiful and your acting is great.

**Aff:** The compliments keep coming.

**Run:** It's weird. Even though we haven't spoken in person, chatting feels as comfortable as if we're long-time friends.

I browsed through her Instagram to see what kind of work she had done. There were photos of advertisements, modeling, and images from her

school days, which gave off a pure and innocent vibe, in stark contrast to my older sister's mature, socially adept, and worldly appearance.

**The difference was like night and day.**

**Aff:** Only contacting you if we have the chance to work together. It will be easier to talk without embarrassment.

**Run:** Chatting is easy, but when we meet in person, everyone is quiet and not as skilled as they are. Let's see how it goes in real life.

**Aff:** Trust me.

**Aff:** I'll be the one approaching you. I hope you don't find this unpleasant.

Even through the text, I could sense something unusual, perhaps due to the intense gaze and behavior she had displayed, which seemed odd. I decided to tease her to see if my radar was working properly.

**Run:** I don't care. You're beautiful.

**Aff:** Why don't you care just because I'm beautiful?

**Run:** Well, you started the conversation because you thought I was beautiful, didn't you? It may seem self-centered, but I'm curious to see how you'll respond. I want to read your thoughts through your messages.

I smiled, feeling like I might have found someone similar to me.

I might be narrow-minded or unable to accept my older sister's behavior. I wasn't sure. So, I tried to distance myself because she seemed to be pushing me away.

Plus, with my recent modeling work and script readings with other people, I naturally distanced myself from her. Although my mind was still preoccupied with her, I missed her, but I was trying to move on. Since she didn't give me any hope, I should leave with dignity instead of blindly chasing her.

Plus, I recently made a new friend who constantly messages me on Instagram, apparently trying to get closer and flirt. Now, I have a lot to do, and I'm not alone anymore.

After meeting Aff, we started spending more time together. We go out alone when we have the chance. Although we haven't revealed our true selves, we seem to understand each other well. I know I like women, so I don't see the need to close myself off to someone with similar tastes who is open to talking.

*Sometimes talking to someone who is open to us is better than chasing someone whose outcome seems impossible.*

"Run, let's stop by the perfume section for a moment." Aff said, who now calling me informally.

She motioned me to the perfume department, which I had been trying to avoid. I stood back, arms crossed, looking away, not wanting to think about the time I stopped here looking for the same perfume as the older sister used and accidentally ran into her at this station.

*Was that her intention all along?*

Suddenly, I smiled. Even though I tried not to think about it, her thoughts kept coming up. While Aff was testing perfumes and talking to the salesperson, I checked my phone, which was empty. The older sister hadn't texted me since she revealed who lived in that house. I hadn't contacted her either, feeling guilty.

*Am I disgusted by the woman who has a child or by what she said about selling her child?*

*Did I judge her too quickly? If I had asked her more details about her decision, would she have been willing to explain?*

I had so many questions in my head. Before I knew it, Aff was nearby.  
"What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing, just rambling. Have you chosen a perfume?"

"Yes."

"What perfume?"

"Obsessed."

My heart raced. I nodded and didn't ask anything else, then walked around looking at the items for a while before we headed home in separate taxis because we had different routes. If it were my older sister, even if we were going in different directions, she would always come back to drop me off first. That's what adults do...

*Why am I thinking about her again?*

"Your mind is wandering again. Is something wrong today?"

"Seriously, it's nothing. I'm probably just tired. We just finished the first shoot."

"Even as an extra, you're this tired. The main actors must be exhausted."

"True."

"When are they going to make a romance movie between women? Maybe we'd get tired of it like that."

"Do you want to be tired like this?" I asked, smiling. Aff linked her arm through mine and nodded.

"It would be nice if the female-female scene was more widespread. Then we wouldn't have to play villains fighting other men over a man."

"I think the same."

"We think alike in many ways."

Aff moved her hand to hold mine and scratched the middle of my palm. I felt a new sensation in my lower abdomen, as if butterflies were flying. This made me think deeply, and I could tell why she was doing this.

"Guess what I'm thinking right now." Aff said.

"I can't guess."

"Do you want to visit my house?"

The challenging question and the test of sincerity made me look into the eyes of someone of the same generation, knowing full well what she was doing. My mouth almost replied that I would go, just to see how far I could push. But I restrained myself.

I shook my head. "That's not a good idea. It's getting late. I'll be late getting home if I go."

Aff's face clearly showed disappointment. I always do something ambiguous to make her think deeply and then retreat. I don't even know why I do it like this. It's like I learned this technique from someone. Ah... thinking about her again.

But to avoid disappointing Aff too much, I pretended to whisper softly in her ear, almost teasingly.

"Next time, I will."

A radiant smile appeared on the young actress's face. She understood my tone and the meaning behind it very well. We thought alike without having to speak, even if it was difficult to understand.

"Okay, then you should come next time." She smiled.

"The taxi is here. I'll go now."

She leaned in as if to kiss my cheek but changed her mind, apparently playfully teasing me as I had done to her. We laughed together. I watched her get into her car and close the door before I hailed the next cab.

But instead of heading home, I asked the driver to take me in the direction I wanted. Before I knew it, I was parked in front of Phi's house.

Today, her front door was ajar, unlike usual. I looked at it in surprise before paying the driver and going out to investigate. Inside, the house was a mess, as if it had been ransacked. In addition to the mess, there were two men standing over my sister, who was lying on the floor, holding her cheek. Her blouse was torn, and she looked like she had been attacked.

"Phi!"

"Don't come in."

She waved her hand to stop me. The two men standing nearby looked at me and put their hands on their hips, looking confrontational.

"This is not a child's business. Get out of here."

"I'll call the police."

I took out my phone, dialed 911, and showed them the number. Thankfully, it wasn't like in the movies where the criminals grabbed the phone and attacked me. The men looked shocked and left, but not before turning around and pointing at my sister menacingly.

"This time it's just a warning. If you do it again, next time you'll be dead!"

My Phi said nothing, remaining silent. She wiped the blood from her mouth with the back of her hand and stood up. I tried to help her, but she pushed me away, wanting to show that she was strong enough to stand up on her own.

"No need. I can stand. How did you get here?"

"I took a taxi."

"Really?" she said, sounding frustrated. "I'm not ready for visitors today. Please get out."

"How can I leave? What if they come back and attack you again?"

"Do you have the ability to help?!"

She yelled at me, and I flinched a little because her voice was different from her usual calm tone. Her angry demeanor, so different from her usual smiling self, left me speechless. The sweet-faced woman tossed her hair back and paced back and forth anxiously.

"Damn, why did it have to be today? I didn't want you to see this."

"And seeing this, what does it mean?"

"It just reinforces that I'm a bad person."

"How can you be a bad person when you were attacked?"

"I was attacked because the main wife sent people to deal with me! I thought we wouldn't see each other anymore. Aren't we cutting ties?"

"Why do you talk to me like that? I came here because I miss you, and you keep pushing me away."

"If I'm such a bad person, why do you still miss me? You should have a good life. You're in a series now, you have a new social circle. Don't get involved with someone like me. Go back..." She walked towards me and pushed me towards the door. "Don't come back here."

"I'm not leaving."

I turned and leaned against the door, resisting her strength. We stared at each other, determined. Today, I would not back down, even if her gaze seemed to threaten my very existence.

"People who talk nonsense are annoying."

"Yes, I am annoying, but what can I do? I love you and I won't stop!"

"...."

"And today, I'm not going home."

I walked in and pushed my way into the house, sitting down with my arms crossed and refusing to move. The pretty-faced woman looked at me with a weary heart but did nothing but sit down on the sofa opposite, wiping the blood from her mouth with the back of her hand.

"What do I have to do to make you give up on my problems?"

"Treat your wounds."

"Who's in charge?"

"Treat the wounds first. I'll do it for you."

I didn't answer her question and instead got up to look for the medicine box. I assumed it was in one of the drawers in the house until I finally found it behind the refrigerator. I dusted off the box, cleaned it, and took out the cotton and alcohol to treat her wounds.

At first, the beautiful woman refused, keeping her hand over her face to prevent me from touching her. But when she saw that I was serious and angry, she seemed a little surprised because I had never acted so assertively before. Eventually, she allowed me to tend to her wounds, wincing slightly as I worked. As I treated her, I told her about what had happened.

"We should report this to the police."

"Reporting it won't help. That's the police officer's wife."

"Can't the police officer's wife be prosecuted?"

"This is where you know."

"Are you really the lover?"



I looked at her. The beautiful sister looked at me briefly without answering.

"Why don't you talk about it openly in situations like this? You usually seem so open about your own story."

"Isn't that disgusting enough?" she said, turning her face away. "Isn't it because you couldn't accept it?"

"Initially, yes. But when I see you, I forget everything. Blame your pretty, charming face."

At first, she seemed tense, but when I said that, she laughed unexpectedly.

"You idiot."

Her laugh made me smile too. I didn't ask anything else, but she began to explain on her own.

"I'm not his lover anymore... We were involved once, but that was a long time ago. He's the same man I met at the restaurant last time."

"Ah."

"Aren't you going to ask more?"

"May I?"

"You're already here."

"Did you continue something with him?"

"No, but he tried to keep going. He sent flowers and kept calling. I made the mistake of not rejecting him right away, and his wife got suspicious, so she sent people after me this month."

"Does she know that a place like this will be safe?"

"It's not the first time she's sent people."

I looked at her, feeling worried and letting out a sigh. "You're living too dangerously. You should move out. Today they came to hurt you, next time, they might kill you like they threatened."

"That's just how life is. Dying means nothing."

"Think of those who live and love you. How much would they be hurt?"

"No one would get hurt. I'm alone."

"You always ignore those who care and worry about you," I said, tending to her wounds, my voice shaking as if I felt neglected. "But I understand. I'm just someone passing through, easily pushed aside by you."

"Are you really not going to stop loving me?"

"I am trying."

"But you're still not trying hard enough. You're gone for days, and then you suddenly show up... When will you be able to let go?"

"Maybe not until we're both dead."

"How touching." She reached out and touched my cheek with a smile, even though it was still bruised. "It's the first time someone has actually cared."

"Because you never paid attention to the people around you."

"These people only come for their own benefit from my body."

"But it's different for me. Today—"

My words are interrupted again. She suddenly pulled me close and kissed me softly. I shivered a little in surprise but then melted into the kiss, wanting her more than anyone else.

"Do you want me?"

"Phi, I didn't come here expecting this."

"But now, I want more from you."

After saying that, she pulled me to the couch.

**"I miss you... Run."**

ilyxoxo12

## Chapter 12 : Confess

We dragged our bodies into the room before our clothes flew in different directions, and we ran toward each other. Now, nothing stands between us—both the clothes and the emotions that once felt like walls.

She is the dream I always wished for. Now, all I can do is watch her, doing everything carefully, applying the lessons I have learned. I know what she like from all the guidance I have received. As for her, she have allowed herself to be free, not resisting as things unfold. There is no pulling away, no telling me to stop.

She is my dream.

She's my desire.

Our scents embrace, blending into one. The passion I have for her dominates me, filling my chest. I want this to continue infinitely, without pause, but the human body has its limits and must have time. My hands still caress her, not giving her time to think or worry.

As I kissed her lips, I could still taste the metallic bruises she had sustained. The more I thought about it, the more I felt sorry for her. But my desire for her overrode everything else, and in that moment, I didn't want to be anywhere else.

“Just a little longer,” she whispered.

She pushed my head down and led the way. I parted my lips, ready to devour the prey that was prepared to fight and resist, but ultimately be caught. The low moans from her throat drew me deeper into the moment.

The more she moaned, the more she made me feel like I was winning. I felt like I was sharing her bliss, while my own body burned with heat and desire, content to be the giver. She climaxed again and flipped me onto my

back, taking control. I blushed, wrapping both arms around her chest, biting my lip in uncertainty.

“It's okay. How can it be happiness if we don't share it?”

That was her reasoning, and so she taught me like a skilled instructor. I never knew what it was like to have someone else give me that kind of pleasure. Nature had always taught me to rely on myself, but having someone else help me made me realize that two heads really are better than one.

### **Her fingers...**

I let out a high-pitched moan, unlike hers. It was full of surprise and ecstasy. I was satisfied, but I ached for more, unable to stop myself from asking for it. At one point, my body trembled, and I wrapped my legs tightly around her.

“Enough, please. I can't catch my breath.”

“Okay, the night is still long.”

And she kept her word.

The night went on, and at some point, I must have passed out without even realizing it.

The sound of sparrows outside the window and the sunlight streaming across my face woke me. The brightness made me blink at the ceiling as I gradually came to.

The room was filled with a cloud of smoke, but it carried a minty, fruity aroma. The beautiful woman, now wearing only a T-shirt, sat up in bed,

watching me. When she saw that I had woken up, she greeted me with a light kiss on the forehead.

“You slept soundly last night.”

I suddenly felt shy, grabbing the blanket to cover my face, avoiding her gaze. Pretending to be drunk like in the movies and claiming I didn’t remember anything felt too fake. All I could do was blush, a stark contrast to last night when I couldn’t stop myself from asking for more. A soft chuckle followed as her hand gently patted my head affectionately.

“There’s nothing left to be ashamed of. Let me see your face.”

“Not yet, give me a moment to compose myself.”

“I’ve never seen you right after waking up. Don’t you want to see my face like this too? This is the first time we’ve woken up in the same bed the next morning.”

Her words piqued my interest, so I peeked out from under the blanket to finally look at her face in the morning light. I had seen her face before, but not in this context. The other times were after she had spent a hot night with someone else, not me.

“Why aren’t you naked today?” I asked her.

“The air conditioning is cold.”

“That’s unfair! You slept naked with other people. I want to experience what it’s like to see you naked after spending the night together too.”

“You’re full of demands,” she teased, placing her vape on the nightstand and pulling her shirt over her head, leaving her completely naked, as if she were satisfying me. “Satisfied now?”

She was still herself—completely shameless, as always. I nodded, pleased with the small sense of control I had over her, even if it was just making her strip at my request.

“Last night...”

“Hm?”

“Were you happy?”

As soon as I asked, I covered my face with the blanket. She laughed and lay down next to me, pulling me into a hug under the covers. The sunlight filtering through the blanket allowed us to see each other in the dim light. She smiled, pinching my nose playfully, making me frown.

“You always treat me like a kid.”

“It’s because you are, just like guys always ask: ‘*Was I good? Did you like it?*’”

Her comparison stung a little. Seeing my expression, she quickly added, “Of course, I liked it. Everything I taught you was not wasted, there was no mistake. I liked it, one hundred percent.”

“How would you rate it?”

“A perfect ten.”

“Great!”

I smiled, feeling proud and shy. She pulled me into her chest, my face pressed against her soft skin, burying myself in the scent I adored.

“Thanks.”

“For what?”

“For comforting me last night.”

“It wasn’t just comforting,” I said quickly, feeling a little irritated that she saw my efforts, which had earned a perfect score, as mere consolation. “It was an expression of love.”

I still insisted on telling her that I loved her, even though she was reluctant to accept it. A faint smile appeared on her lips, and she hugged me tighter, so much so that I could hear her heart pounding in her chest.

“Whatever it is, thank you for not thinking less of me.”

“Why would I think less of you?”

“Well, I—”

“Stop talking about the past and using it to judge yourself as damaged. Last night, I didn’t think about any of that. To me, you’re still pure, just a woman like any other. It’s your body, and you can do whatever you want with it. I don’t mind at all. But if you keep bringing it up, I’ll start to wonder what you’re trying to convince me of.”

“You’ve gotten much better at talking,” she laughed and nodded. “Okay, I won’t bring it up again. Are you hungry?”

“Hungry for what?”

“You’re direct,” she teased, playfully ruffling my hair. “What would you like to eat, fried basil or clear soup? I’ve only learned how to cook two things.”

“I’ll eat you instead.”

“Fried basil, then.”

“That’s not one of my choices.”

I pouted playfully, running my finger down her chest, teasing her until her nipples hardened. The hairs on her arms stood on end, and I knew I was turning her on, circling my finger around her like that. But she managed to pull away, keeping control of herself.

“I chose fried basil because it’s spicy, just like me.”



She stepped out from under the blanket and put back on the T-shirt she was wearing earlier, though she left the lower half bare. This left just enough to the imagination, making her look even more seductive than being completely naked.

“Stay here and rest. I’ll call you when the food is ready.”

She said before walking downstairs, leaving me rolling around in bed, inhaling her lingering scent. Our long morning conversation confirmed that last night wasn’t a dream, though a small part of me worried that she always said that if we crossed that line, we wouldn’t see each other again.

I wondered if she would still keep it. If so, it wouldn’t be much different from being used and abandoned.

As I stood there, lost in thought, a direct message notification pinged. Seeing the name “Aff” made my heart instantly sink. Guilt spread through my chest. Yesterday, she invited me over to her place, but here I was, lying with someone else. And my Phi had no idea that I was seeing someone.

Yes, Aff was someone I was talking to, but my feelings for my Phi were much more intense, even though I knew that was all I could have.

**Aff:** What are you doing? Are you awake yet? Do you want to meet up today?

I just read the message without replying, not knowing what to say or how to deal with the situation. I put the phone away, resting my hand on my forehead, looking at the ceiling. A little while later, my beautiful Phi came to call me for breakfast. She noticed my hand on my forehead and asked worriedly.

“What’s wrong? Are you stressed about something?”

“No, nothing,” I lied quickly. “I just missed you while you were downstairs.”

“Of course. Go down and eat. Put on some clothes.”

“Okay.”

Even though she told me to dress up, I couldn’t resist copying her. I wore only a T-shirt, leaving my lower half barely covered, hoping to tease her a little. When I finally got down there, she saw me copying her and smiled.

“Imitator. Not shy anymore, huh?”

“There’s nothing left to be shy about, right? You’ve seen it all.”

“Hurry up and eat it while it’s still hot.”

“I’m not hungry.”

The weight of my thoughts settled heavily in my stomach, killing any appetite I might have had. Her expression fell, clearly disappointed. She always put so much care into the meals she prepared.

“But I’m going to eat it because someone made it with love,” I added quickly.

Her smile returned as a reward, and I pulled up a chair to sit across from her. There was already food and a cold drink prepared for me. I picked up my spoon and fork, but all I did was push the rice around on my plate.

“You’re really not hungry, are you?”

“I admit, I have a lot on my mind.”

“So that’s why you put your arm on your forehead earlier? I thought after such a sweet night, you’d be much happier today. Rate me last night.”

She asked, looking a little unsure, though she was completely confident in her actions. I smiled a little, giving her a playful sideways glance.

“Copycat,” I teased.

“Now you’re making me lose confidence.”

“Ten.”

“If I scored a perfect ten, then why are you still stressed?”

“Well...” I began, slowly explaining everything that was on my mind. “It’s about what you always say.”

“I say a lot of things,” she said, trying to figure out what I was referring to.

“About how if one day we slept together, we would never see each other again.”

“Oh,” she said, as if it were no surprise. “Yeah, that’s the idea. It’s to keep you from getting too attached.”

“Well, we’ve been through something before, and now you suddenly seem scared.”

“If it’s about that... hmm,” she said, pursing her lips as if she was thinking deeply. Her expression was so cute that it was almost endearing. “Let’s consider it an exception then.”

“Why?”

**“Because we are already connected. You make my heart race.”**

“I feel the same way when I answer.”

We laughed together happily, our laughter blending perfectly as if we were singing a duet. Okay, I didn’t have to worry about that anymore; it meant I wasn’t being sent away. But that still didn’t make me ready to start eating.

“Is there anything else?”

She noticed. I looked at her and put my fork down as if to express what was on my mind. Since she was open about everything and told me everything, it wouldn’t be fair if I kept quiet about my own problems and didn’t let her know what was going on with me.

“Actually, I’m talking to someone right now.”

She raised an eyebrow, momentarily stunned as if she were surprised, but then she smiled. “During the time we didn’t see each other?”

“Yes.”

“Is he handsome?”

“She’s a woman. You know I like women.”

“Is she pretty?”

“Yes, she is. We met during a casting call.”

I briefly explained to her how we started talking and how the person came into the picture while I was contemplating things.

The pretty-faced person listened silently, not showing any opinion until I asked her.

“Are you mad?”

“Why should I be mad?”

“Well, you’re always pushing me away. If I had someone else, you’d be mad. Why? You’re so open about these things.”

“Why does it feel like someone is being left out?”

“It seems like I’m the only one who loves you.”

I complained, and the pretty-faced person picked up the fork and started eating without any visible reaction. Whenever I told her that I loved her, she usually didn’t show any response. It was better than before when she just remained indifferent. Usually, she would immediately retort with something like ‘no’ or ‘I’m no good.’

“If you don’t eat, I’ll eat myself. I’m hungry.”

“Changing the subject, huh?”

While eating, she accidentally dropped her fork under the table. She exclaimed, “Oops,” and I could only shake my head.

“You’re clumsy too.”

“Get it for me. My back hurts, I can’t bend down.”

“You’re getting old.”

“The older I get, the hotter I get.”

I grimaced slightly, but she was right. Older people with more experience are indeed more attractive. I admit that. These past few nights, she’s never been boring, and it feels like I’ve been in love with her for a long time.

Her fork ended up next to me, so I bent down to pick it up. But my peripheral vision caught sight of her exposed inner thighs, and a certain thought occurred to me.

Instead of picking up the fork, I crawled...

Kneeling under the table, I grabbed her legs and looked down at her. She looked down, clearly aware of what I intended.

“I am hungry.”

“You’re not eating your meal,” she said, gently pulling my hair and guiding my head between her legs.

“So eat something sweet first, and we’ll continue with the savory stuff later.”

“As you order.”

After I said that, I complied, and she spread her legs wider, tilting her head back and moaning softly as I used my mouth. As what I had said, she was indeed incredibly attractive.

# Chapter 13 : Comfort

Today was another day full of joy. I felt comfortable spending time with her, participating in various activities. After lunch and dessert, the beautiful Phi invited me to go shopping at the mall. I had no objections, especially since she suggested that we spend the night again. We walked hand in hand without any shyness. If this were in the past, I might have felt a little embarrassed and insecure, but now I wanted to tell the whole world about our relationship.

Walking around the mall with her made me notice many things. First, she wore high-quality items and spent money freely, never hesitating to spend even a single baht, with the motive of *"I can always earn more later."* When we entered luxury brand stores, the staff welcomed her warmly, as if she were a regular customer.

*She can always earn more later. But where would she find that if I've never seen her working on anything substantial?*

I kept quiet about my curiosity, fearing that it might spoil the pleasant atmosphere, and watched her shop with fascination. Even though she was wearing a mask and sunglasses today, she still radiated charm and elegance, just like the first day I met her. She seemed even more famous than I was.

"This bag suits you perfectly," she said, handing me a small bag to try on as she spun me around. "The small size is cute and suits you well. I'm buying it for you."

"I can't accept it. It's too expensive."

"Don't refuse when an adult gives you something."

Today she seemed especially cheerful, turning me over like a doll and examining me in the mirror.

"You're more beautiful than ever," she whispered softly, which made my stomach turn. My face flushed with embarrassment. Of course, the pretty-faced person couldn't help but playfully pinch my cheek. "So shy, so cute."

"Again?"

"Just a little teasing. I wouldn't mind letting you take care of it all night," she added with a smile.

"I'm embarrassed, but you're not. What are you saying?" I pouted, though I was more embarrassed than I let on. The staff, who couldn't hear our whispered conversation, just saw us laughing and complimented the bag I was wearing with a sweet sales pitch.

"This one is perfect for you, ma'am. It's cute and age-appropriate. I usually only see Ms. Ann here alone, not with a friend."

"What friend? Does this girl really look that old? Haha," the eldest sister laughed, and the team looked a little confused and quickly corrected themselves.

"That's not what I meant."

"You know, she's not my friend," she said, but she didn't explain our relationship. Instead, she continued to look at the mirror with a sweet and charming look, showing off her charm. "Let's go."

"How am I going to pay for the sponsorship?" I teased, asking with a double meaning, although it didn't compare to what she had just said.

"In many ways," she replied, turning to the team and handing them the bag. "Take this, please."

"Certainly, Ms. Ann."

After the staff took the bag, it was just the two of us, able to speak freely without whispering. I looked at her, reaching out to stroke her arm, and gave her a look that conveyed my desire for her.

"Let's go home after we finish shopping."

"In a hurry? We have all night to have fun."

"I want to take advantage now."

"You are so anxious."

She stroked my hair affectionately, her gaze making me want to teleport back home immediately. But I had to wait. The bag was insignificant compared to how much I wanted her. Nothing was more important to me at that moment. If I'm anxious, it's because I've just unwrapped a beautiful gift and I want to savor it all night.

"Please?"

"If you keep acting like this, we can go home now. We're done shopping."

After paying, we left the mall, both of us beaming with happiness. The beautiful older sister was in a great mood. No matter what I said, she agreed with me, even when I suggested going home. But just as we were about to leave the mall, she suddenly stopped and quickly hid behind a nearby pillar. I stood there, confused, and looked around.

"What is happening?"

She didn't respond and instead put a finger to her lips, signaling for me to be quiet. After about two minutes, I heard the distinct sound of children running and playing. A woman ran up to her son, playfully scolding him, "Don't run so fast, honey. This isn't our house."

I smiled at the mother and son, feeling a bit of affection at the scene. However, another woman followed behind, taking a different path and stopping near the beautiful older sister, who was now emerging from her hiding place behind the pillar. Her initially cheerful expression had turned into a stoic and cautious demeanor.

"I wasn't hiding. I just wanted to lean against the pillar because I was tired."



Sometimes she would come up with the most irrational excuses. Watching her, I tried to figure out who this family was that made her hide so visibly.

"Do you want to go greet the child?"

Her voice was sharp, her gaze fixed on the little boy who was still laughing with her mother.

"You don't have to use that tone. It sounds fake."

Their conversation was decidedly hostile. At this point, I felt like a third person reading a novel, trying to piece together the unfolding drama and make sense of the situation around me.

I realized who this family was—the one whose car was parked in front of her house every night, what she called "business."

The child could be hers.

"What are you saying? I don't understand."

"Do you think I don't know whose car is parked in front of the house every night? If you don't want anyone to know, you should drive a quieter car, not a European model with a roaring engine. Sometimes the noise wakes a child from sleep."

My Phi swallowed hard. I had never seen her so disconcerted before. Even when faced with intruders in her home, she remained calm and smiling. But this situation, where her car engine disturbed the child's sleep, made her visibly uncomfortable.

"Go say hi, at least. After all, you gave birth to him."

"No, I don't see any point."

"Do this to show that you have feelings and humanity."

"I already said I wouldn't interfere."

"It still seems fake. You only see the outside of the house and you don't know how the child is developing. Now you have the chance, look closely... the child is already walking."

"Let's... let's go back, Run."

She turned toward the parking lot, pretending not to care. However, the child's mother, apparently aware of the moment, she let the child run after the beautiful woman who was about to leave. The child tripped and fell with a loud thud.

Ann looked back, startled, and started to reach out to help, but hesitated, as if unsure about touching the child. She stood there with her hands open, indecision clearly written on her face. Eventually, the mother, unable to bear it any longer, had to intervene.

The mother comforted the crying child, saying, "It's okay, honey. If you fall, you can get up." But the child, still upset, clung to his mother for comfort.

Ann clenched her fists and turned to leave abruptly, without looking back or calling out to me. It seemed like she was determined to leave, and I had to chase after her like a lost duckling.

"Wait for me!" I yelled as we pulled into the parking lot.

The beautiful Phi started the car with a loud roar and hesitated as if listening before nodding and getting in. She waited for me to join her, and once I was in, we drove home in silence. There was no explanation, but I was able to piece together the situation from what had happened.

She kept her promise by taking me to her home but left me alone downstairs while she retreated upstairs with only a brief comment: "Give me a break."

I didn't press her for more because I understood that someone who had just gone through a difficult situation wouldn't be in the mood for anything deep.

At least she didn't leave me in my apartment, showing that she still wanted my presence to comfort her, even if she needed some time alone. All I could do was stay quiet and worry about her from a distance, giving her space to deal with her feelings.

With nothing else to do, I turned on the TV and watched mindlessly, occasionally looking up, worried but helpless. I had made it this far, and that was an achievement in itself.

I didn't know how much time had passed, but eventually, the beautiful older sister came down and sat next to me on the sofa. She gently caressed my face and looked at me with a thoughtful look. When I woke up, feeling her presence, I saw her familiar and comforting smile return.

But the look in her eyes changed. She looked lonely, and there was a sadness I couldn't describe.

"Oh, I must have fallen asleep."

"I'm sorry for making you wait so long."

I tried to get up and get closer to her, but she pressed me down, making me lie down. She bent down, touched my forehead, and snuggled into my side, pressing her head against my neck as if seeking refuge.

"Can we stay like this for a while?"

"Yes."

Normally, she had a charm that made my heart flutter, but now, when she was sad, she seemed even more pitiful and intriguing. I felt a pang of guilt in my heart because even though she was suffering so much, I was still thinking about these things.

I could only close my eyes, calm my mind, and wrap my arm around her neck, holding her close to give her comfort.

"You smell good."

When she mentioned the smell, I felt unsure. Normally, she never commented on it, so today, I might have smelled like sweat. The surprise made me shiver a little, and I was about to get up.

"Maybe I should go take a shower first."

"But I said you smell good, so why take a shower?"

She reached under my shirt and unbuttoned it, releasing me from her embrace. Her hands moved to the front and played with me as if she knew exactly what she was doing.

"Let me enjoy this for a while."

I took a deep breath, not knowing what to do. I admitted that I felt great, but I was also worried about her because she had just been through something unpleasant.

"You don't have to do this. We can just hug."

"Don't say that. We agreed to go home and be affectionate."

She buried her face in the corner of my neck and used her mouth to drag it, making me moan involuntarily.

I closed my eyes, feeling an emotion. "But you just went through an emotional shock... Should I keep saying that?" But she didn't stop; her hands and mouth continued to stimulate me.

"Well, then comfort me. Right now, I need someone to help me forget."

When spoken like that, I couldn't refuse. Or rather, I could never refuse at any time. Whenever she wanted, I was ready to give her all the pleasure and comfort she needed to get through this difficult time.

We held each other and shared the pleasure just as we had yesterday, but today's pace was different from last night's. It wasn't rushed; everything was soft and gentle. It was more about soothing the soul than creating excitement.

She clung to me, wet and relentless in her demands.

Her voice, reaching every peak, was released without holding back, not caring how loud it was. She just wanted to release the emotions that were building up inside her and destroy her sadness through sex.

To me, it was a good story, but to her now, I could only be a means to overcome these events. I had no objections; as long as she was happy, I would do whatever she wanted. I was in love and obsessed with her.

I love her. Sex made everything clearer than before. I already knew I loved her, but I didn't think it would be this much. It would be nice if she loved me as much as I do, but it's okay. Just having this makes me happy. It makes me realize that with love, I'm not greedy. I just want to make the present good.

And the gift was very good, so good that I screamed when I reached my peak. The beautiful face let me release my sounds and beat with satisfaction. My body almost fell apart, expressing itself until it was soaked.

It was all on the couch. She threw herself at me, laughing and expressing her pleasure, then gently bit my ear when she saw that I was starting to fall asleep.

"You are so weak."

"Just rest... give me a moment."

"No rest. Even if you want to rest, I'll keep going," she said, then sat up, lifted my legs, and pressed her body against mine, rubbing herself. The sensation intensified after the recent climax.

"Please, I'm still... Ah, it's happening again."

"You can continue."

"Umm... are you trying to kill me?"

"Dying of pleasure is a good thing."

Despite her hardness, I stayed like a child. We rubbed until I reached my peak again, but it seemed like she wasn't finished. She crawled up to my face, straddled me, and made me open my mouth.

"I'm not done... help me, please."

Her voice was pleading. I used my hands to grip her thighs and did as she wanted. Her pleas and desires made it impossible for me to refuse, and it seemed like this encounter was easing her pain, making it disappear as if by magic.

"Ahh! thank you... thank you.... very much."

She kept saying this until she reached her climax, then she pulled away and snuggled close to me. Her hand rested on my hip as we lay together on the couch. She covered my ear with kisses, nipped my chin playfully, and giggled after being so tense all afternoon.

"I really like you."

I, still sleepy, smiled at what I heard and nodded.

"And I love you so much," I said before falling asleep, not giving myself the chance to hear what she said next.

But I woke up with a shiver. My skin was touched by the coolness of a warm, damp cloth that she was using to clean me. I woke up suddenly and saw her, beautiful as always, cleaning me while wearing only a t-shirt, as she usually does.

"What is happening?"

"I'm cleaning you."

"What's the occasion?" I tried to get up, but she pushed me back down, spreading my legs and cleaning every corner until I felt embarrassed and quickly closed my legs.

"It's okay, I can do it myself. I'm going to take a shower."

"But I want to do this," she said, lowering her voice and frowning. "Isn't that right?"

"Well... you can do that, but... why?"

I couldn't help but be curious. She's usually sweet, but her doing something like that made me wonder.

"Do you need an excuse to do something nice? Just be quiet. I'll clean you up and don't ask any more questions."

"We can talk?"

"Sure," she said with a smile, closing her eyes in contentment as I gave in.

She continued to touch my body with the damp cloth, and I awkwardly picked up a shirt that had fallen to the floor, placing it over my chest to cover myself a little so I wouldn't feel too exposed.

"Do you feel better?" I asked, a little tense, not sure if I was hitting the right spot. The beautiful woman nodded, not feeling as bad as she had that night.

"I feel so much better. If it weren't for you, I would be in a bad place. Thank you for being here with me."

"I like being with you anyway; I'm not trying to comfort you or anything."

"It's true, we have the right chemistry," she said with a smile, dipping the cloth in warm water, wringing it dry, and then continuing to clean my arms. I watched her with pleasure, feeling overwhelmed with emotions.

"It's not just about chemistry. It's about showing love."

"Do you love me that much?"

"I want to do everything I can for you."

"Good kid."

As we exchanged sweet words, my phone buzzed with a message from Aff, I hadn't responded to yet. I quickly grabbed it, feeling a little nervous. I didn't know why I felt this way, as if I was with one person but had to communicate with another, causing a sense of unease.

"Is this the woman you were talking to?" The beautiful woman asked. I bit my lip and nodded, not knowing how to respond.

"Yes."

"Let me see her face."

"Is everything okay?"

I thought to myself, but handed over the phone. She slowly scrolled through the photos, making satisfied sounds.

"She's really cute. She seems like a good match for you."

"Well, she must be cute since we're acting together," I replied jokingly, as if I was pouting. Ann didn't seem jealous at all. "I hadn't responded to her messages all day."

"Why didn't you answer?"

"Well, I was with you."

"You can answer while you're with me. Go ahead, answer."

"Do I have to answer now?"

"Right now."

Suddenly, she insisted that I get up, so I quickly replied to Aff saying that I was out and couldn't talk at the moment, but that I would call back later. The beautiful woman took my phone, read the message, then raised an eyebrow and smiled.

"Do you want to go back now?"



"Not yet."

"If you're not coming back, then do call her here. In fact, you can talk while you're at my house. I don't mind at all."

She handed my phone back and grabbed a small bowl of warm water to dispose of it. But as she walked away, she stopped and turned to ask me in a neutral tone,

**"Between this person and me, who do you like more?"**

I was surprised by the question, as if she wanted to gauge my feelings. It made my heart race a little, feeling good that she was starting to care about what was happening to me.

"I like her better."

"...."

"But I love you more."

"Hmm."

She replied simply and then walked back into the bathroom, leaving me with my mouth slightly open and my heart happy.

At least now, she seemed to be thinking something about me. If she didn't care, she wouldn't have asked. Maybe, just maybe, she was starting to feel something for me too.

# Chapter 14 : Phi is jealous

I'm so happy...

Even though it's just my imagination that she might be starting to have feelings for me, it feels like I've gotten a step closer to her. She asked who the person who came into my life is. From pushing me away, showing no interest, and even encouraging me to be with someone else at first, now she's asking me to compare, wanting to know who I like more.

Breaking down someone's emotional walls, especially someone like my older sister, is harder than pushing a boulder up a mountain. She's the type who doesn't get attached to anything—people come and go, and it's normal to her. She believes she's not suitable or worthy of anyone. But this time, she's starting to feel something, and it's making me happy.

All day today, at the blessing ceremony for the drama, you could see the joy on my face. I was spreading happiness to everyone around me. People used to think I was stern and standoffish, but now more people are coming to talk to me. Especially Aff, who noticed I was too happy and couldn't help but ask:

"You're in such a good mood today. Did something good happen?"

"Could you tell? Yeah, just a little," I laughed playfully.

"You disappeared for a while and barely responded to my messages. Now you're back, and you seem so happy. It feels kind of weird."

Because we're the same type of person—though we've never said it outright—it's like recognizing a kindred spirit. Aff likes women. I like women. We go places together, and our relationship isn't exactly ordinary; we both know that. So, it's no surprise that she would ask such things. There was a hint of suspicion, but it only made me happier.

Everyone's suspicious of me. Everyone's a bit jealous. I matter to them now.

"Do I seem that happy to make you suspicious? Anyway, how have you been? I haven't seen you in a while. Are you doing well?"

"Yeah, I've been fine."

I raised an eyebrow in curiosity because she didn't seem troubled or down. More than I expected, my absence didn't seem to make her feel gloomy, which surprised me.

"Have you had good things happening, too? Or... do you have someone you're talking to?" It was my turn to ask with interest.

The sweet-faced woman smiled without answering or showing any particular reaction, glancing at the offerings and changing the subject.

"Besides wishing for the success of my first drama, can we ask for blessings for other things too?"

"I think the divine is listening to us now. You can ask for anything. So, what will you ask for?"

"I'll wish for good things to happen."

Such a cryptic wish, but never mind. If someone has good things happening in their life, we should be happy for them. I should feel relieved if she's found someone better than me during the time I was away because, in that gap, someone came to fill my own void as well.

This is also the first drama I will act in. Even though I've done many things, this will be my first actual performance—it's not a commercial where I briefly appear, nor a photoshoot with static images. This is real acting, expressing emotions through my eyes, words, and embodying another character. It's quite a challenge.

Honestly, I wouldn't have taken the role if it weren't for my Phi's encouragement and approval. I want her to see that this day has finally arrived—a step closer to becoming a full-fledged actress.

While thinking of her, I caught a glimpse of a woman standing not far away, hands in her pockets, in a relaxed stance, wearing a white shirt and jeans, smiling in my direction.

Thinking of Ann, and here she is, like KFC delivery.

The sister I was just thinking about gave me a small wave, signaling that she was there. I couldn't break away just yet because I was still participating in the ritual alongside others, and I had an interview about the drama coming up. But to let her know I had seen her, I smiled widely, hands still in prayer—a smile filled with pure joy.

*Everything is going so well, both work and love. How can everything be so perfectly aligned?*

After the ritual and interviews, I rushed over to where my sister had been standing for quite a while, worried she might have been waiting too long. Her beautiful face lit up with pride as she saw how well I was doing in my career, and she reached out to playfully pinch my cheek.

"You're growing up. Will you forget me now that you're becoming famous?"

"You're the one person in the world I could never forget. Don't worry about that."

"Do you have anything else to do?"

"Just a quick chat with the fans, then I'll head home. Why? Did you miss me? Want to spend some alone time together?"

"You're in such a great mood today. What's gotten into you?"

How could I tell her that I was happy because I sensed she was jealous, here to watch and see what I was up to, who I was with? To make her feel more at ease, I introduced Aff to her.

"This is my friend, Aff."

Aff, having finished talking to some of the elders, walked over when she saw me gesturing.

Two beautiful women meeting for the first time, they looked at each other for a long time. I glanced between the two of them, feeling uneasy. It didn't seem like they were meeting for the first time.

"Hello, Phi Ann," Aff said, giving a respectful wai, her voice tinged with nervousness, even calling my sister by the correct name. My sister, stunning as always, looked at Aff with soft eyes, receiving the wai and smiling with a certain charm.

"So, we finally meet in person."

"Do you know each other?" I asked, starting to feel uneasy.

Both of them remained silent. My sister quickly changed the subject, inviting us to have dinner together.

"When you're done, I'll treat you both to dinner. Friends of yours are friends of mine too," she said, still watching Aff with what seemed like more than just casual interest. It was starting to irritate me. "Are you done yet?"

"Almost, I just need to say goodbye to the elders."

"Alright, I'll wait here."

She said nothing more, standing in place as we went to pay our respects to the elders. Once finished, we made our way to her sleek sports car. Aff admired the car with eyes full of awe—eyes she once had for me, now directed toward someone older and more experienced. I didn't like it.

We got in the car and headed to the restaurant my sister had picked. The whole way there, I stayed silent, wanting to observe their behavior. My

sister and Aff chatted easily, as if they'd known each other for years.

"So, Run plays the love interest of the male lead, and Aff plays the younger sister of the male lead who falls for Run too? What a tangled love story," my sister commented, seeming to understand the plot on her own. "It's a BL series, but at least there's a female love interest. It seems like they want to push a girl-love storyline as well."

"Seems like it," I replied, my tone clipped, turning to look out the window, starting to feel more irritated by the second. But the two in the car didn't notice my mood.

"Phi Ann, you're so beautiful. Have you ever thought about acting?" Aff asked.

"I'm too old for that now. Let the younger generation have their moment. Watching them grow is more fun."

"You're even more beautiful in person than in photos."

"You're sweet."

"You're so charming."

I glanced at Aff, who was talking to my Phi like that, feeling a surge of anger. She was so focused on my sister that she seemed to forget I was even there. Are we even a thing? Why is she so focused on my "girlfriend"?

"Charm is for people who catch my interest," my sister replied, knowing exactly how to respond to win over her listener.

The car pulled up to the restaurant she had chosen. I hurried to the table, making sure to sit next to my sister, determined not to let Aff take that spot. Even though Aff sat across from us, it only seemed to encourage them to look at each other more.

No matter where I sit, I can't seem to get in the way of them.

I glanced at my sister and placed my hand on her thigh under the table, stroking it in a way I knew I could. My sister raised her eyebrow and smiled playfully, making my heart skip a beat.

Her charm really is overwhelming. I wanted to tease her, but it backfired, and now I was the one being teased.

The food was served, and the conversation continued. From their discussion, I could tell that my sister had reached out to Aff first.

"You reached out to Aff? And she talked to you?"

"Of course. Phi Ann said she was your sister, so I replied... I don't usually chat with just anyone."

"Sister..."

I drew out the word, pulling my hand back, but my sister quickly grabbed it, not letting me go. I smiled a little, feeling like I had won a small victory.

"Saying we're just friends wouldn't be appropriate. I'm a lot older than you."

Ann explained it as if she were just clarifying, not out of concern that I might misunderstand. "But Aff is quite friendly. We talked all night."

"All night?"

"Phi Ann is fun to talk to."

"No wonder you went quiet for a while," I teased Aff, starting to piece together that the "good things" she mentioned might be because of my sister.

I glanced at my sister and bared my teeth in a mock snarl, but when she looked back at me, I couldn't help but smile, lacking the courage to pick a fight.

"You were the one who disappeared first."

"Well, at least neither of us was lonely. We both had someone to keep us company. Speaking of which, Aff, can I ask you something?"

"What is it?"

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

The direct question left Aff stunned, and she nervously rubbed her face or at least pretended to, thinking it would make her look cute.

"No, I don't."

I almost laughed at that. Right. Aff and I aren't even official. We go out, hold hands sometimes, but that's just something close friends do. You have to sleep together first before it's considered official.

But that's not always the case. With some people, even sleeping together doesn't make it official... like the one sitting next to me.

"How can someone as cute as you be single?" Phi asked her.

"Haven't met the right person yet."

"And what kind of person would be the right one?"

They looked at each other and smiled sweetly.

I knew immediately that Aff's attention was shifting from me to my sister. Well, of course... someone older, more experienced, stunning—who wouldn't fall for her charms? Even I was head over heels.

But I'm already in the "Win" club since I've seen every part of my sister, something she didn't. And I'll make sure Aff never gets to see that side either.

After we finished dinner, my sister drove Aff home. They said their goodbyes like normal, with Aff standing there watching until the car disappeared from sight. Now that we were finally alone, it was time for me to speak up.



"What was that all about?"

"Hmm?"

"Why did you do that?"

"Do what?"

"Flirting! You were practically throwing yourself at Aff!" I said through gritted teeth, my jealousy rising as I clenched my hands tightly on my lap like a child about to throw a tantrum. "Why did you even message her out of the blue? You don't even know her!"

"I message anyone who's cute, just like I did with you. Why... are you mad? You're so cuteee," she teased as she steered the car with one hand, reaching over with the other to pinch my cheek playfully, knowing she could get away with it. But that only made me angrier.

"I'm serious!" I slapped her hand away, and it smacked against the steering wheel with a loud thunk. Immediately, I regretted my reaction. "Sorry! Did that hurt?"

"It did, and I don't understand why you had to use force."

"I didn't like how much attention you were giving Aff."

"Are you jealous of Aff?"

"Yes. Very."

"But I thought you liked me more," she said coolly, focusing on the road ahead. I wasn't sure how she interpreted my use of the word jealous, but I meant it about her.

"I do like you more, that's why I'm still here. But why are you messing with someone I'm talking to?"

"Someone you're talking to..." she smirked. "You say that so confidently."

"It's not..."

I hesitated, realizing she seemed off after I mentioned being jealous. She must have misunderstood, thinking I was possessive of Aff.

My initial anger began to fade, and I smiled, feeling like I had the upper hand.

"Even though Aff and I aren't officially together, we are talking. You interfering is causing problems between us." I added.

"I just wanted to get to know her, to see what kind of person she is and why you're so interested. That's all."

"And why do you need to know? You never let me be with anyone else, and now that I am, you're acting like you want to block it. What's the problem? Are you afraid?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid that I'll like Aff more than you. That you're being jealous."

My sister abruptly pulled the car to the side of the road and switched on the hazard lights as soon as I mentioned the word jealous. She stared at me, stunned into silence.

"Jealous? Me? Don't be ridiculous." She laughed, a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

"If you've found someone good, I'm happy for you. I just wanted to get to know her and see if she's really a good person." she added.

"And what do you think? In your eyes, is Aff a good person?"

I raised my eyebrow, feeling victorious. Ann clearly felt something, even if she didn't realize she was acting out of jealousy.

"She's good, but a bit too easy."

"You're judging her too quickly. You barely met her, and you're already calling her easy?"

"What kind of person flirts with me that much right off the bat? She even invited me over her place when we were talking through DMs."

"Did you flirt with her first?"

This was new to me. I was a bit shocked to find out that Aff was the type to invite people to her place so quickly. I had been in that situation before, but I didn't expect my sister, who hadn't even met her in person at that point, to get the same invitation.

"I didn't flirt, but if you say I have a natural charm that draws people in, then yeah, I guess I could say that."

"So full of yourself."

"You're falling for me too, aren't you? You tell me you love me every day, yet you're still chatting with other people."

"I'm not hiding it. I'm talking to her openly, and now you're about to steal her from me."

"That girl's not worth me stealing, and I don't need to steal her anyway. With just a snap of my fingers, she'd be at my house, just like how you followed me."

She said mockingly, belittling me to the point where my face flushed with anger.

"Just admit that you're jealous. It won't kill you. Even if I'm not talking to Aff, there are plenty of others who DM me."

"Then go ahead and answer them. Invite them to your condo and don't tell me."

"Oh, I can do that, huh? Fine, I will. Just don't try to steal them next time."

"I won't steal them, and I don't want to. While you've been talking to others, it's not like I've been alone."

"Are you saying that while we've been seeing each other, you've been talking to other people?"

"I've never been exclusive with anyone. Oh, and we're not even dating, remember?"

"Damn it!"

"Don't curse at me."

"Ugh!"

I opened the door and stormed out of the car, walking along the side of the road, secretly hoping that she'd pull one of those dramatic scenes you see in movies—driving after me and forcing me back into the car.

But no, Ann had too much pride for that. Seeing me act out wasn't enough to make her chase me. She revved the engine and drove off without even looking back.

Tears welled up in my eyes as I watched her car disappear down the road.

***Damn it!*** *have we really reached the point where we're fighting like this?*

# Chapter 15 : I cant believe it

This fight, I'm not sure if it was intense or not, but I do know that we completely lost contact. I don't intend to reach out because I don't feel like I'm in the wrong. The other person, who usually acts oblivious, has disappeared too, leaving me in an anxious state.

No, I'm not wrong. I won't be the one to approach her first, not this time.

She abandoned me, I can tell. She even went after someone I was talking to, charming them and diverting their attention to herself. That alone made it clear how she feels.

As for Aff, after that day, we stopped talking altogether, as if we had never dated, never invited each other to hang out. We've become just coworkers, and strangely enough, I didn't ask her about it. If she wasn't going to continue, I wouldn't follow up either, knowing full well who was truly in my heart.

But the one I actually care for is the type who doesn't apologize or care. I'm at a loss as to what to do.

Each day on set, I give my all in front of the camera, the spirit of an actor fully on display. But once the director yells "cut," I return to being sad and lonely, clinging to my phone, hoping she'll blur things out again, giving me a chance to talk or continue something. But there's been nothing.

Loving or being infatuated with someone so indifferent is hard. It's not that she's closed off—she's too laid back, so laid back that I've become the narrow-minded one.

*But can you blame me? She messed with someone I was talking to.*

"Quiet today," Aff said, sitting beside me, her voice normal, like a coworker.

Her demeanor had changed. No longer was there any lingering affection or warmth. Seeing this stirred a bit of annoyance in me, how easily she could change her feelings. But whatever.

“I’m not being quiet. I just don’t know who to talk to. Everyone’s memorizing their lines.”

“But you’re quieter than usual. I noticed.”

“And you seem quite happy today.”

“I’m just taking it as it comes.”

“No, you’re happy. You must be in love.” I circled the topic before deciding I should ask about her sister, whether they were still in touch or not. “With Ann?”

“Don’t be silly. Ann’s like a sister.” Though she said that, her embarrassment was evident, which only annoyed me more.

“Are you still talking to her?”

“I message her now and then. She replies, but nothing special.”

“Are you sure there’s nothing?”

“And if there was? What then?” Her question felt more teasing than serious. “Ann is so sweet... really sweet.”

“Why don’t you take it further then?” I snapped sarcastically, but Aff just shook her head.

“We can only take it further if the other person does too. But we’re really just like siblings... come on, she’s a woman. It’s not like I’m courting her.”

“These days, it’s not uncommon for women to date each other.”

“True.”

It would be normal for her, of course, since we were kind of alike. We just never really discussed it formally.

“Did we ever date?” I asked bluntly, no longer feeling any shame. Aff looked startled by the directness before laughing nervously.

“Did we ever date?”

“I don’t know. It felt like we did.”

“True, there was a time we were always together. Honestly, if you’d gone to my place that time, we might have ended up... well, you know.”

“Too bad I didn’t go.”

“There’s always a next time,” she said, smiling playfully, but her eyes weren’t serious. I laughed and nudged her with my shoulder.

“Don’t play around. I’m serious.”

“I’m being serious too.”

“You’ve lost your shyness. You’re seeing someone else, aren’t you? But it’s not Ann.” I concluded. Aff’s sweet face made a motion, as if telling me to guess.

“Well... maybe.”

Her vague answer left me scowling after her as she walked away. So, was she still talking to her or not? Aff words said nothing was going on, but her eyes gleamed when Ann was mentioned. That superficial answer just left me overthinking.

I can’t take it anymore. I will talk to Ann tonight. We had a fight, but we should settle it. I don’t want things to stay like this.

By the time my scenes were finished, it was almost 10 p.m. Aff had already left around 7 p.m.

I quickly grabbed a taxi and headed straight to her house, filled with longing. It didn't matter anymore if she didn't reach out—I'll play it cool this time. Whoever reaches out first doesn't matter anymore.

The past is past.

When I arrived, the lights in the house were still on, signaling she wasn't asleep yet. I figured she probably didn't lock the door again, so I went in, not wanting to knock and face the awkwardness. Plus, I wanted to surprise her.

**But I ended up being the one surprised.**

The moment I walked in, I saw my sister entangled with someone all too familiar—Aff. The second she noticed me, Aff quickly pulled away, shocked. My sister, on the other hand, was just stunned.

“How did you get here?”

“I took a taxi. I planned to surprise you, but I didn't expect to be surprised myself.” I slowly backed away, trembling in shock.

It wasn't unusual for her to be like this—she's always been carefree, never tied down to anyone, not even me. But I still couldn't accept it, especially when the woman she was with was someone she knew I had a history with. It felt like a betrayal.

“Now that you're here, where are you going?”

“Anywhere,” I replied, my voice shaking, before turning to leave immediately. I sped out so fast I felt like I was running, but she grabbed my arm, forcing me to turn back and face her.

“Let me go!”

“I'll take you home.”

“Take care of your own business. Don't worry about me.”



“I have no other business.”

“Oh, you clearly do. Damn it! I came here to talk, but why did I have to walk into this?” I rubbed my face, still in disbelief. “No wonder you disappeared. You’ve got someone else now.”

“She’s not someone new. She’s just someone who comes and goes.”

“Did it have to be her?”

“It could’ve been anyone. I don’t care.”

“I knew you were easy, but I didn’t think you were **this** low. There are so many people in the world you could be with, but why her? You did this on purpose to take her from me,” I backed away, tears streaming down my face. “Damn it! I shouldn’t have come.”

“Yes, why didn’t you think about it? I’ve told you repeatedly that I’m like this.”

“I thought I could change you.”

“No one can change me. Not Aff, and not you.” Her voice was cold, but there was a hint of concern in her eyes.

“Good to know. That’s... great.”

“I’ll take you home.”

“Stop pretending to care. If you really cared, you’d have contacted me. But you didn’t. You don’t care how I feel, what I’ve been going through. Of course, you’ve had your fill. You use people and throw them away like tissue paper. You do it to everyone, and I... I was stupid enough to think I was different...”

“To me, you **are** different,” she muttered, almost to herself, but I scoffed bitterly.

“Different? But you still treat me the same as everyone else. Fine. Let’s be honest. I love you—no, I **really** love you.” I declared, making sure Aff could hear that my relationship with Ann wasn’t just normal. She needed to know she wasn’t special either, just like I had once felt.

“So what should I do? What do I have to do to keep being with you? What do I have to do to get you back in bed with me like before?” I added.

“Run,” she whispered, her voice low, as if to stop me from saying more. But I couldn’t stop now.

“You like money, right? I have a decent sum saved up. I’ll give it all to you, just so I can buy more time with you. **You’re practically a prostitute anyway, so let me just pay for you...** and you—” I turned to Aff, making sure she understood the kind of woman standing before her.

“Today, she’s with you. Tomorrow, it’ll be someone else. That’s her rule. If you want her to stay, you better pull out your savings like I’m doing. **Let’s take turns—share her.**”

“Stop it, Run. You’ve said enough.”

“What, suddenly feeling ashamed? I’m just stating the facts. I still want to sleep with you. I don’t care about feelings. I’ll work hard to earn more money and keep buying you. You’re my happiness, so why not give me what I want?”

“That’s enough!”

“You’re a terrible person. No wonder you gave your child away. It wasn’t because you couldn’t raise them—it’s because you’re too scared to love. You don’t even know if you love yourself. You’re pathetic!”

**Slap!**

Her hand landed hard on my cheek. She swung, tears filling her eyes before spilling down her face as she clenched her fists tightly.

"You can be as low as you want, but don't you dare cross the line when it comes to that child. How dare you bring that up?" Her furious expression made me shrink back a little, but I couldn't stop now. I had lost control.

"Did I hit a nerve? People like you are meant to be alone. Your life has no value, no worth, for anyone to truly love you."

"....."

**"And as for the love I had for you, I'm ending it here today. Do whatever you want! Today is the last day we will ever see each other."**

"....."

**"I will never come back to let you see my face again."**

I shoved her like a bully and prepared to storm off, but just as I did, a car came speeding down the street. Caught off guard by my anger, I hadn't noticed it and suddenly found myself frozen in the blinding headlights, terrified and sure I wouldn't make it.

The sound of screeching brakes echoed through the alley. In that split second, I thought I was going to die. But then, I felt the warmth of someone's arms wrapping around me, shielding me from the impact.

I wasn't dead...

The car, though fast, had good brakes and managed to stop in time. But what was even more shocking was that it was Phi who had thrown herself over me, trembling like a frightened bird. She held me so tightly, it felt like she wanted to bury me in her chest.

I stood there, frozen, still trying to grasp what had just happened. Slowly, she pulled away, visibly shaken by what she had done, and stepped back, looking as if she couldn't believe it herself.

"I... I really just shielded you, didn't I?"

"Phi..."

Her stunned expression made me forget, for a moment, that we had been fighting just moments before. She touched her forehead, as if trying to process what she had done, unable to believe it.

Even Aff, who reached out to hold her, was pushed away forcefully, as if she didn't want anyone near her.

"Someone like me... I shielded you? I was afraid of you dying, without caring about my own life?"

"...."

**"Am I... loving you? I can't believe it..."**

## Chapter 16 : Two people in pain

What did she mean by that? *'Am I really loving you?'* It felt like she was mumbling to herself, yet it also sounded like she was questioning her own feelings.

I was still in shock, realizing she had shielded me from the speeding car out of fear it would hit me. Then she slowly backed away, seemingly startled by her actions, and rushed inside the house, avoiding even Aff, who had come with her.

Now, the situation felt more surreal than ever. I ended up getting into Aff's car, planning to catch a ride to the main road to grab a taxi home. But instead, Aff drove us somewhere unknown. We eventually stopped at the nearest gas station, bought a couple of beers, and sat down on the benches outside the minimart.

"Looks like we're both the ones who got dumped."

Aff held out her beer can for a toast. I wasn't much of a drinker, but today was an exception. Everything had become too overwhelming, so I raised my can and clinked it against hers.

"Both of us."

We each took a swig, wiped our mouths with the back of our hands, and stared at the bright but meaningless lights of the gas station, while the events of earlier kept replaying in my mind.

"Honestly, she should've been mad at you, you know. You barged in at the worst possible time, like a third wheel ruining the moment." Aff joked, and I laughed along with her.

"Sorry for interrupting your fun."

"But maybe it was for the best. If it had gone further, and I'd fallen for her for real, it would've hurt even more. Now that I've seen what kind of person she is, it's a little easier to accept."

"You liked her that much? You'd only just started talking to her, right? As far as I know, it's only been a few days." I asked, genuinely curious. Aff nodded and took another small sip of her beer.

"Does it matter how long it's been? How many times did you meet Ann before you fell for her?"

I had fallen for her at first sight. I didn't answer because I found it too embarrassing. In hindsight, I realized I was even crueler than Aff.

"You're right. It's not about time," I finally replied. Aff let out a small, almost sarcastic laugh.

"Compared to her, the two of us are like naïve little kids. We met her a few times, and here we are, head over heels, while she didn't choose either of us. She walked away without a second glance, without calling for anyone."

"....."

"But it seems like she loves you."

Aff suddenly said, making me glance at her before quickly pretending I wasn't affected.

"What makes you think that?"

"Well, she literally threw herself in front of a car to protect you, like something straight out of a drama. I mean, you see it in slow-motion scenes all the time, but today it actually happened."

"If it were you, she'd probably have done the same thing."

"We both heard what she said. Don't downplay it. She loves you, but she can't come to terms with it. That's why she ran back inside." Aff shrugged and sighed. "I lost this round."

"We both lost. The real winner is the one who ran inside and left us standing out here."

We looked at each other and laughed. Even though we were both hurting, we could still smile because we were comforting each other.

"So, what are you going to do now? She seemed really shocked when she realized she loved you."

"She's just confused," I said, not really believing it, though my mind kept replaying her words. "I don't want to believe anything about her anymore."

"You're hurt."

"It's more than just hurt."

"Wanna get revenge?" Aff asked suddenly. I looked at her, intrigued but unsure what she meant.

"Is there a way? And how would you even make someone like her feel pain? I don't see how."

"She seems to love you. You heard her say it, so don't pretend you didn't. At the very least, her reaction was genuine."

"So?"

"People only get hurt by love when they feel betrayed. Just like you felt."

"....."

**"Wanna come over to my place?"**

I was shocked by her suggestion, completely caught off guard by her approach. I felt embarrassed and flustered, not sure what would happen if I actually went to her place.

"This is how we get back at her and blow off some steam."

Whether it was out of spite or something else, I wasn't sure, but I found myself agreeing. I ended up going with Aff to her apartment. It wasn't large, just a simple studio where the bed and TV were immediately visible when you walked in. There was a small coffee table by the side. It wasn't stylish, just a place to live.

"Sit down, I'll get you something to drink."

"No need to trouble yourself."

"Well then, let's get straight to it."

Without warning, Aff leaned in and kissed me. I was startled at first, eyes wide in shock, but eventually closed them and went along with it, accepting her kiss. She pushed me toward the bed as I stumbled backward, losing my balance and falling onto the mattress.

She climbed on top of me, kissing my face, my neck, and then moving lower, slipping her hand under my shirt. I flinched a little and grabbed her hand.

"Isn't this too fast?"

"Fast or slow, it would've ended up here anyway."

She didn't just say it—she pulled off her shirt, lifting it over her head. I watched her actions, feeling dazed. Instead of focusing on Aff, my mind was elsewhere.

What am I doing here?

Is this really what I want?



Despite how far things had progressed, my body wasn't responding. It didn't feel right, and I wasn't in tune with the emotions she was sending my way. Yet, I let her touch me here and there, forcing myself to go along with it. My mind was filled with confusion, conflicted by the sense that what I was doing was wrong.

This isn't me...

Aff pulled me up into a sitting position and took off my shirt as well. I was still confused but started touching her, knowing that was what I was supposed to do. I kept telling myself it was fine—it's just physical. Everyone does it. If others can, why can't I?

There's nothing wrong with this.

We kissed and touched, alternating between being the one in control and the one receiving. Slowly, our clothes came off, piece by piece, until we were left in just our underwear. I pushed Aff down onto the bed and started kissing her, but then I stopped—something was off.

The scent.

It wasn't her scent.

Aff's perfume was nice, sexy even, but it wasn't like my sister's perfume. Hers, despite being named Obsessed, wasn't as alluring. Aff's perfume was designed to ignite desire, but even that wasn't as intoxicating as her natural scent.

Aff's delicate frame didn't have the same muscular tone, and her moans didn't have the same melody.

How am I comparing the two of them in this moment? How am I doing this while we're in the middle of something like this?

"Enough."

I stopped myself and pressed my hands against Aff's shoulders, looking her in the eyes while biting my lip. She looked back at me, confused.

"We've come this far."

"To be honest, this isn't me. This isn't who I am."

"Just let things happen naturally. Don't overthink it. Having sex is just an exchange of feelings. Don't you want to get back at her and make her hurt?" Aff kissed me again and tried to push me back down onto the bed, but I pushed her away and shook my head.

"I can't. I really can't. I like what we're doing, but this... it's not for the right reasons. It feels like revenge."

I didn't want to do something out of anger, and I wasn't sure if I'd even feel better afterward. I was scared that I'd regret it later, and that would mean...

**If today goes wrong, it'll stay wrong forever.**

"So what if it's out of sarcasm?" Aff squeezed my shoulder tightly, her tone dripping with sarcasm, not unlike my own. "Is she the only one who's allowed to play games like this? Do we not have the right to do the same?"

"You're angry," I said, locking eyes with her. "You're the one who wants revenge."

"...."

"Do you really like Ann that much?" I asked directly.

Aff turned her face away, clearly uncomfortable with the bluntness of the question. Yes, she liked Ann. Not as much as I did, but she liked her nonetheless. And how could I blame her? I knew all too well how charming and captivating Ann could be.

Her maturity and attentiveness lured people in, making them believe they were loved, without realizing the damage she was causing to both of us.

"Why are we talking about her while doing this?"

"Because we ended up in bed because of her."

“Damn it, you’re killing the mood.”

Aff muttered as she pulled away and sat at the edge of the bed, rubbing her face with her hands. I followed her and gently rubbed her back, trying to console her.

“We both like Ann. I get it. But this... this isn’t right.”

“Then why does she get to do it? She flirted with you, she flirted with me,” Aff snapped, her eyes welling up with tears. “And what hurts the most is that she likes you more than me. She chose you.”

“If she really chose me, would we be here right now? She didn’t choose anyone. She chose herself.”

I was just as hurt saying those words. My feelings for Ann were as intense as Aff’s. But I wasn’t driven by the same emotions Aff was. I didn’t want to get revenge through something like this.

“Do you really think what we’re doing here is going to hurt her? She doesn’t care.” I added.

“She will care if it’s you... If she finds out the two of us had sex, it’ll hurt her because she loves you.”

“So this is your plan then?” I pulled Aff into a hug and rubbed her back. At first, she resisted, refusing the comfort, but after a while, she relaxed and rested her chin on my shoulder, seeking solace. “Stopping now is for the best. At least we can still be friends.”

“I liked you at first,” Aff admitted in a shaky voice. “But then she came along and distracted me, made me feel like I’d found someone who understood me, someone I could be with. But in the end, it was just a lie. She just wanted to pull me away from you.”

“She didn’t mean to do that. She was just having fun.”

**“She loves you!”**

Aff pushed me away and stared into my eyes. “She threw herself in front of that car for you. You saw the look in her eyes when she realized she loves you. It hurt me to see it.”

"....."

“You are a part of making that woman hurt as well.”

“So you really have feelings for her?”

"....."

“Aff, if doing it with me will make you feel better, we can do it. But are you sure it’ll make you happy?”

“Isn’t doing with anyone supposed to make you feel good, no matter what?”

“Let’s be honest. Neither of us was into it just now. I didn’t feel anything at all. You’re doing this out of anger. Ask yourself—were you really feeling it?”

Aff hugged me tighter, saying nothing. I could feel her anger subsiding as she began to cry softly.

“I do like you, Run, but...”

“I know. The person you really want to be with isn’t me. There’s someone else who stirs stronger feelings in you.”

“You feel the same way too, don’t you?”

“Yeah, I’m like that too.”

“At least tonight... can we just cuddle? I don’t want to be alone.”

“Of course. I don’t want to be alone either.”

We lay down, holding each other close, nearly naked but not in the way lovers do. It was the embrace of friends who understood each other’s pain.

We were both hurting. Even though I hadn't shown it much, my heart was full of bitterness.

When I thought about what Ann had done to both of us, how deeply it wounded us, I knew I had to come to my senses.

**She played with our hearts.**

She hurt two innocent, naïve women at the same time, all because of her need to win and her selfish sense of fun. And that's why we ended up like this.

I need to wake up.

Letting her go is the only way to free myself from this burden... **The only thing left to do is to cut her out of my life and move on.**

# Chapter 17 : Missing you

## Life goes on...

After experiencing such immense pain, I feel like I've awakened, becoming more enlightened. I keep telling myself it's okay—if no one loves me, then loving myself is enough.

Aff and I have become close friends since that night. There's nothing romantic between us; everything is pure and transparent. We can talk about anything. People on set have started teasing us, saying we have something going on, but we don't mind. We've become the "**ship couple**" of the set, which I find kind of fun.

It's been over a month, and I haven't heard from Ann. I haven't contacted her either. I'll admit, I miss her, but I'm trying to turn that longing into just fond memories. I don't hate her, and I don't think she hates me either.

We're not angry at each other, but we've drifted apart.

I don't want to get entangled in such unclear, ambiguous relationships again. In the past, I would have sulked, cried, and chased after her to her house, accepting whatever role she gave me. But now, I've changed, and it will stay this way.

"Your direct messages are piling up. Aren't you going to check them?" Aff asked, peeking at my phone while I scrolled through it.

I raised an eyebrow and shook my head. "It's probably just fans tagging me in photos or whatever."

"Maybe it's Ann."

"It's not."

A part of me thought it might be her too, but since I'd decided to cut things off, I figured it was better not to respond.

"You're so cold. Didn't she already show you that she loves you?" Aff said, casually bringing up the topic again. I gave her a soft smile, pretending not to care.

"Love or not, it doesn't matter anymore. Life has to move on, just like you. After you cried that day, you didn't seem sad anymore."

"That's because I've met someone new."

"Who?"

"An actor from another show."

"That was fast," I teased.

"He messaged me in the DMs, asked me out for dinner and a movie, so we got to know each other. He seems genuine."

"Him? It's a guy?"

"Yeah, a guy."

"I thought you liked girls."

"I want to keep an open mind. If I can love anyone, I might as well try. If things don't work out with this guy, I'll probably stay single for good," Aff said, sounding relaxed, as if this relationship wasn't that serious. She wasn't taking it to heart. "You should check your DMs too. Even if it's not Ann, someone might be inviting you out to eat, see a movie, or listen to music."

"I'm not ready yet."

"Why close yourself off? You're only hurting yourself."

"How so?"

“While you’re dwelling in your own misery, someone else might be out having fun. That’s why I decided to open myself up to dating men. Ann is the same way, isn’t she?”

That’s true. By now, she’s probably moved on. No, she never needed to move on—she never dwells in the past. Unlike me, still stuck in the same place, telling myself life has to go on but refusing to return to how things were. It seems like everyone else has moved forward except me.

“But I don’t want to act like Ann. That’s just not who I am.”

“It’s not about acting like her; it’s about giving yourself new opportunities. Why stay miserable? Find your happiness. Go out with others, open your heart.”

“Open my heart...”

“Smile! If you don’t open your heart, how will you know if someone’s a good person or not?”

“You sound so optimistic,” I laughed. “But even if I wanted to, no one’s coming after me. Besides, I don’t like people who slide into my DMs. You don’t see their face, and most of the time, the celebrities who do it are just looking for something shady. Not saying your guy is like that, but most of them are.”

“Then find someone who isn’t shady, who doesn’t slide into your DMs.”

“And where would I find someone like that?”

“The lead actor in this series.”

I glanced over at the lead actor, who was currently shooting a scene, and raised an eyebrow.

“You’re joking, right? We’re not that close. I’m not bold enough to ask someone I barely know to go out with me.”

“What if he’s the one who asks you?”



“What do you mean?”

**“He likes you. He asked me to play matchmaker.”**

Aff finally revealed after beating around the bush for so long. I didn’t feel much at first and glanced over at the lead actor from the series, who still had no idea he was being talked about. I thought for a moment, and for some reason, I found myself agreeing.

“Tell him to ask me, then.”

“Seriously?!”

“Yeah.”

**“That’s the spirit!”**

Aff’s matchmaking worked, but I had one condition: we wouldn’t go out alone because I didn’t feel comfortable. Aff quickly agreed. So, it turned into a group hangout with friends, though she arranged for the lead actor to sit next to me.

Even though his character in the series was madly in love with the male lead, in real life, he was all man—good-looking and charming with women. We’d barely spoken to each other before, aside from rehearsing lines, so this was the first time we had a real conversation.

“I’m glad we’re finally talking for real. I thought you were more standoffish.”

Game, the lead actor, said as he poured me a drink. He was quite friendly and always found something to talk about. I raised my eyebrows slightly and smiled, asking curiously.

“Do I really come off that cold?”

“Yes, totally. You usually only talk to Aff, so I’m glad we’re chatting now.”

“I’m glad too.”

I didn't know what else to say, so I just went along with the conversation. Aff, who had been listening to us talking so politely, couldn't hold back and teased us.

"Are you guys introducing yourselves in English or something? **'I'm fine, thank you, and you?'** Come on, be more natural! Stop with the formalities."

"And how exactly should we be natural?" I asked, a little annoyed at how riled up she was.

"Talk like normal friends do."

"Alright," I cleared my throat. "Hey, you've got a good-looking face. You're not stuck-up at all. I think I could be friends with you."

The whole table went silent when I said that, especially Game, who sat there with his mouth wide open. Seeing his reaction made me burst out laughing, wide-mouthed and full of joy. I couldn't remember the last time I laughed that loud since all the heartache.

"Look at your face! It's like you've seen a ghost. I'm joking!"

"You totally shocked me!" Aff replied.

"You said you wanted us to be more natural, right?"

"That was **too** natural!" Aff laughed and scrunched up her face. "Keep chatting; I need to go to the bathroom."

As she left, Aff gave me a playful wink, clearly not in need of the bathroom but just wanting to give us some alone time. I grimaced a little but quickly composed myself. Honestly, with Aff around, I could banter, but being alone with him made me feel awkward. Luckily, Game was a good conversationalist, so I didn't feel too lost.

"Aff's giving us some space to talk."

“You saw her wink, huh?” I sighed. “Honestly, I’m not good at talking. Actually, I don’t know what to say.”

“Talk about anything. I’m up for anything.”

“Why do you like me?”

“Okay, I believe you when you say you're not good at conversations,” the handsome man laughed and scratched his head awkwardly. “You’re so direct that you almost left me speechless!”

“Sorry about that. I’d like to chat more, but I’m really bad at finding topics to talk about.”

“Let’s start with the basics then. That’s how you get to know someone—start with simple stuff and gradually get deeper. Like... what’s your favorite food, what kind of movies do you like, and what kind of guys are your type?”

I gave a small, awkward smile. The first few questions were easy enough to answer, but when it came to the last one—what kind of guy do I like—I was at a loss. I had never liked any guy before.

As I was thinking of a response and about to open my mouth, a familiar, pleasant scent wafted through the air, as if someone important had just walked into a scene in a movie. My heart skipped a beat, and I told myself it could be anyone wearing that perfume.

But coincidence has a funny way of showing up at the wrong time, and this one seemed very intentional.

A slender figure stood over me, leaning on the table, smiling at Game, who was now staring at her in confusion, unsure of who she was. I glanced up at Ann, who was beaming down at me.

*How had she shown up here?*

“I like simple food, anything that fills me up. I watch romance movies, and as for the kind of guy I like... looks like I don’t have one yet.” Her playful

tone and smile made Game blink in surprise before offering a shy grin.

I felt a surge of irritation, realizing she had just stolen the spotlight. I quickly stood up to remove her from the position of hovering over me and glared at her, demanding an explanation.

“What are you doing here?”

“I was just walking by, and I saw someone who looked familiar, so I thought I’d stop by and say hi. What a coincidence!”

I glanced over her shoulder and noticed an older man waiting nearby. I looked back at her and smiled coldly.

“Yeah, what a coincidence. Out shopping? Looks like you’ve got your hands full.”

“I’m not carrying anything, and yet you can still tell I’m here for shopping,” she teased, looking back and forth between me and Game. “Are you two here together?”

It seemed like a harmless question, but I could sense her curiosity. I crossed my arms, licked my lips, and scanned the area for Aff, who wasn’t around. Then, I bluntly answered.

“Yes, we’re here together.”

“Just the two of you?”

“Yes, just the two of us.”

“A couple of young folks out on a date, huh?”

“Maybe like you—**an old adults out on a date.**”

“Go ahead, talk among yourselves. I just came to say hi,” she said, glancing at me with a hint of something like regret in her eyes. “You’re doing well, right?”

“Yes, I’m fine.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Well, I’ll be on my way then.”

She gave one last glance at Game, smiled again, and gracefully walked away to rejoin her companion, continuing her shopping. I could only watch her go.

The pain remained as raw as ever—it hadn’t lessened with time. She had never truly cared for me. I was the only one who was hurt, while she went off to enjoy her life with others, just like she always did.

**Cold and heartless. That’s who she was.**

I clenched my fists, tears welling up, but I fought them back. Games, who had been watching her, spoke up with admiration, as boys often do when they see a beautiful older woman.

“Who was that? She’s pretty.”

“You like her?”

“What?”

“Go ahead, hit on her. I’m sure she’ll go for it.” I replied sarcastically and slumped back into my seat, crossing my arms. Game looked startled and waved his hands in defense.

“No, that’s not what I meant. I just thought she was really pretty, that’s all. I wasn’t thinking that way.” He scooted his chair closer to me, trying to placate me when he noticed I’d gone quiet. “Are you upset? I don’t like her, I promise.”

“Feel free to like her. I don’t care.”

**“But I like you, Run.”**

"....."

“Aff probably told you that already.”

"That's pretty straightforward," I blurted out, barely thinking. It was all pure emotion. "How about we try dating?"

"Try dating?"

"I also want to know what it's like to date a guy."

Game looked surprised for a moment but kept his cool.

"Let's take things slow," he said gently, clearly wanting to ease the tension.

He wasn't trying to embarrass me, but I could sense that he didn't take my words completely seriously—maybe he sensed some sarcasm or uncertainty in my tone. To be honest, I was relieved he didn't just say yes. If he had, I'd probably be regretting it now.

After our group hung out, I took a taxi back to my condo. As I was about to step into the lobby, someone who seemed to have been waiting for me emerged from the shadows. It was her—the beautiful Phi, the one I had unexpectedly run into earlier today. She crossed her arms as she walked toward me. For a brief moment, I felt a mix of happiness and anger.

**If she want to come, she would and if she want to go, she leave.**

"This isn't another coincidence, is it?" I asked, fully aware of the answer.

The smile that used to grace her face was now gone, replaced by a more serious expression.

“No, I came here on purpose.”

“Is something wrong? You’ve come all this way after a month of silence. I thought we’d never see each other again.”

“I thought the same... until today,” she said, pressing her lips together before nervously licking them. “It’s been... intense.”

“What’s been intense?”

“Missing you.”

The way she said it—with that piercing gaze and serious tone—made my heart skip a beat.

No matter how much time has passed, she still has this affect on me.

I thought I had moved on, but seeing her again brought back all those old feelings I thought I had buried. It hit me like a bullet, straight to the heart.

I turned away, doing everything I could to hide what I was feeling.

“You’re really laying on the charm thick. After disappearing for over a month, you come back and start flirting again. What’s the deal?”

“Seeing you today made me realize how much I’ve missed you, Run.”

She stepped closer, but I instinctively took a step back. The beautiful woman hesitated for a moment, noticing my wariness. “Are you afraid of me?”

“You could say that,” I admitted, trying to keep my voice steady. “Just say what you really want. Why are you here?”

“I already told you. I missed you.”

I let out a bitter laugh. “Typical. You’re just a dog guarding a bone.”

“What do you mean by that?” she asked, her voice laced with both confusion and irritation. I gave her a knowing smirk.

“You saw me with another guy today, and suddenly you can’t stand it, can you?”

"....."

“Just like with Aff. Whenever you see me getting close to someone, you can’t take it.”

“You’re right. I can’t,” she admitted bluntly. “It’s the first time I’ve ever felt this way.”

"....."

“Is it love?”

She said it again, as if testing me, waiting to see how I’d react to her words. I clenched my teeth, unable to tolerate it anymore. She was toying with my feelings, and it was too much.

“Stop playing with me. Stop giving me false hope. After disappearing for months, you suddenly come back and wonder if it’s love? I’m not some toy for you to pick up and put down whenever you feel like it.”

“I don’t think of you that way.”

“Then why are you doing this? You’ve been gone since the last time we saw each other, and now you’re here, saying you missed me. What do you expect from me?”

"....."

“What, are you hoping I’ll cry, run into your arms, and tell you I missed you too? Then we’ll go to your place and sleep together? Is that what you’re expecting?” I spat out the words, feeling the pain as I said them. But Ann just shook her head slowly and crossed her arms.

“I don’t know why I’m doing this.”



“Exactly, you’re just a dog guarding a bone. You’re going to do it again, aren’t you? Go flirt with the guy I’m seeing today, seduce him just like you did with Aff, and take him away. Go ahead.” I glared at her, poking her in the chest with my finger.

“But know this—if you take him, I’ll just find someone else. I don’t care.”

“I didn’t come here to fight with you today. I just wanted to see you...” She reached out to touch my cheek, but I swatted her hand away. Her other hand grabbed my waist instead. “It’s such an intense feeling. I tried to escape it, but I couldn’t.”

"Please escape it and make that happen."

"....."

"Because the old Run is gone now. I don’t love you anymore."

## Chapter 18 : It's Over

The words I'd just said didn't reflect how I truly felt at all, not even a little. But I forced myself to say them so everything could end quickly. I didn't want to hurt myself anymore. Longing for someone, loving someone who doesn't give anything in return, only makes you feel worthless.

That's why I chose to say what I did today. Yet, the beautiful woman in front of me remained indifferent, raising an eyebrow and reaching out to pinch my cheek.

"Adorable."

"What are you doing?" I brushed her hand away, frustrated. I was being completely serious, but she acted as if I was joking.

"You've gotten bold now, haven't you? Rejecting me? I'm hurt, you know."

"Oh, really? You're hurt now?" I let out a sarcastic laugh.

"....."

"Do you think saying you miss me changes everything? You can't just come and go as you please. Not everything revolves around you." My tone was sharp, and I stared her down, challenging her. Her smile faded as she crossed her arms, growing serious.

"If I miss you, I just say so. None of this has ever been about me. I saw you today, so I came to see you. It's as simple as that."

"Well, if that's all it is, you can leave now. You've told me you missed me, and that should be enough."

"You're in a bad mood today. I'll come back another time."

“No need.”

“I don’t want to see you again,” I said firmly. “I’m moving on. I’m starting fresh with someone else.”

“With the guy who's with you earlier?”

“No matter who it is, it’s none of your business anymore. So please, let me go.”

I turned to walk into the condo lobby, heading back to my room. But her voice, suddenly serious, made me freeze in place.

“What if I don’t let go?”

“There’s nothing you can do anymore. This is where it ends.”

“Even though you still have feelings for me?” she asked, stepping closer and wrapping her arms around me from behind. “Can you really live without me?”

“I’ll manage. If I can’t, I’ll learn to. People fall in love many times, and I’m ready to start over. I’m sorry,” I said, prying her arms off me without even looking into her eyes and added.

**“You’re only part of my past now.”**

Without another word, I walked into the condo, not bothering to look back. I didn’t know what she was thinking, but it wasn’t long before she left quietly.

And as usual, she would disappear, and I would become just another person who passed through her life, just like all the others.

### **It was a decisive move...**

I praised myself for it the next morning as I stared into the mirror. I looked at my own reflection, my tired eyes sunken from lack of sleep. I missed her so much when she was standing in front of me, but I still chose to reject her. I chose to endure the pain now to protect myself in the long run. Everyone gets their heart broken, and everyone moves on. If they can do it, so can I.

As I thought about her, I reached for my perfume, intending to spray it, but stopped when I realized it was her scent. I put it back down. Anything that reminded me of her too strongly, I would stop using—especially that scent.

**Obsessed...**Fixated. Consumed.

I would no longer be consumed by her.

It was a regular shooting day, as usual. Game greeted me in a way he hadn't before on set, maybe because we'd hung out and had dine our together, making us closer. I smiled at him as he chatted with me about random things. Right now, we were friends—friends who knew the other had deeper feelings.

"It's a long shoot today, huh? That's great... I get to spend the whole day with you," Game said, sitting next to me, his tone playful. It was the right thing to say in this new phase of our relationship.

"Getting to compete for you with another guy in the scene—it's such a strange role," I laughed. "In real life, if I knew my competitor was a man, I'd back off right away. I know the guy I like doesn't like girls."

“Well, I’m different. If I knew the other person liked girls, I’d still try.”

“Why are you that confident?” I asked, remembering a tweet I’d read about how most guys think they can win over a girl who’s with another woman.

They feel it’s a challenge. Now I was curious to see how he would respond, wondering if his attitude would align with mine.

“It’s not about confidence. It’s about giving myself a chance... Sexuality is fluid, you know. A gay guy can date a tomboy, or a transgender woman can date a straight woman. So what’s the big deal if a lesbian decides to try dating a guy?”

“That’s... an unexpected answer. You’re more open-minded than I thought.”

“The world’s changing, right? Not every guy is some arrogant alpha male. Not everyone is that bad.” Game raised his eyebrows playfully.

I laughed and gently pushed his face away, feeling affectionate toward him. The way we were behaving was noticed by several people, and I quickly pulled my hand back, realizing I had been too casual.

I had spent so much time with the other person before, that I’d started to think touching and physical affection were normal. And now, I was doing it the way she did.

“There’s a flower delivery for you,” the assistant director came over, holding a huge bouquet and handing it to me. “The messenger just dropped it off. Said it’s for you, Run.”

“For me?” I took the flowers, confused. “Who sent these?”

“Why don’t you check the card? There’s a card with it.”

It seemed the assistant director was as curious as I was. It wasn’t common for fans to send flowers to the set. They usually did that at events. So whoever sent these knew where I worked, what I was doing, and was probably close to me. Even Game, sitting beside me, craned his neck to see who the sender was.

The moment I opened the card, my mood darkened. I had managed to forget her for an hour, and now she was reminding me again.

*“Work hard, my sweetie. From your Phi.”*

“Well, isn’t she sweet, sending flowers to encourage you? I thought it was from a boyfriend for a second there,” Game said with a sigh of relief.

Before I could respond, the soft, familiar voice of the sender spoke from behind me. Ann had appeared on set and was now smiling down at me.

“Do you like the flowers? They’re the same ones we saw at the train station, remember?”

I jumped up, startled, and quickly stood.

“What are you doing here? They don’t allow outsiders on set.”

My blunt question caught both the assistant director and Game off guard. They were surprised by my sudden hostility. Ann’s smile faded, and she looked slightly annoyed by my rudeness.

“I came with the makeup artist. She’s a friend of mine.”

“Damn,” I muttered under my breath, feeling like there was no escape from her. I handed the flowers back to her.

“Take your flowers back. I’m allergic to the pollen.”

“Really? That’s too bad,” she said, taking the bouquet back and looking at it with a hint of sadness.

“Unwanted flowers... that’s kind of tragic, don’t you think?” She turned to Game, as if asking for his opinion. The poor guy, still clueless, nodded awkwardly.

“Then I’ll give them to you instead,” she said, handing the flowers to Game. “Don’t refuse, or the flowers might cry.”

Game accepted the flowers, still confused, and replied simply, “Okay.”

“Well, enjoy. I’ll go talk to my friend now.”

She gave me a brief glance before walking away, hands in her pockets. I watched her leave, my heart racing. I hated myself for feeling both excited and happy to see her, but I was also proud that I had resisted her, showing her that she didn’t affect me.

“Isn’t that the same sister we saw at the mall? I remember how beautiful she was,” Game remarked, still watching her walk away. I shot him a sarcastic glance.

“What? Did you fall for her too?”

“No, it’s not like that,” Game quickly denied. “I’m trying to win you over. How could I like someone else?”

“Don’t be so sure.”

People who had been involved with her could change within days of being charmed by her—like Aff. And since Game was younger and likely easier to manipulate, I realized I needed to explain a few things to him.

“Game... I have something to tell you about myself. Once you know, you can decide whether you still want to pursue me.”

“You’re so straightforward.”

“I don’t have time for subtlety anymore. I want to move on too, and maybe you can help me with that.”

“Really?”

“Do you have about ten minutes?”

“Yeah, sure. We’re not shooting right now. You’ve got me curious. What’s going on?”

“It’s about my sexual orientation.”

I wanted to make everything clear so Game would know what he was getting into. So, I told him the story—why that Phi sent me flowers, and what we had been to each other. Game sat there quietly, not saying much, as he listened to how I had been in a relationship with a woman and how I was now trying to open my heart to someone new. He’d come along at just the right time.

After a moment, he finally spoke.

“So, I’m here to help you move on from your sister, huh?”

“Don’t put it like that. I don’t mean to use you, it’s just...”

“No need to explain. I get it. That Phi came back into the picture to pull you back in—that’s why she sent the flowers and came to the set. At least you were upfront with me. If I’d found out later, I would’ve felt like an idiot for being tricked.”

“If you want to walk away, I’d completely understand. I won’t blame you.”

“I’m not walking away. I like you already. I told you, people’s sexuality can be fluid. If you open your heart, you can fall in love with anyone—even if I’m a guy.”

Game responded with such reason and calmness. He didn’t accuse me of using him because I had confessed everything from the start.

“Do you think that Phi would try to come after me?”

“She’s done it before, and it worked.”

“She loves you, you know. Her methods are just a little... off.”

The word **love** was the same one Aff had used to describe Ann’s feelings for me. I’ll admit, it made me feel a little flutter of joy. But at the same time, I knew she was dangerous. The only way to escape her was to walk away, for good.



I didn't want to be her backup anymore.

"I'm telling you all this so you'll be careful. Don't let yourself fall for her."

After warning him and explaining the situation, it was time for Game to go shoot his scene with the lead actor. We had to part ways for a while. I went to the makeup artist to get ready for my next scene. Of course, Ann was there too, since she was friends with the makeup artist. I couldn't avoid her—I had to face her.

"You really have beautiful eyes," the makeup artist said as she carefully worked on giving me a more dramatic look, perfect for a villain. "The casting team really knew what they were doing. These are some of the prettiest eyes I've ever worked on—whiskey-colored."

"Her eyes aren't the only beautiful thing about her," Ann chimed in from where she sat, crossing her legs. "Her cheeks are like daifuku, so plump and cute."

"Stop teasing her! Actress hate having puffy cheeks on camera. Don't make her self-conscious," the makeup artist scolded playfully.

"But in my opinion, that's the cutest part of her," Ann said with a giggle, standing up and sitting next to me. She poked my cheek. "Especially when she pouts. It's adorable."

"You're talking like I'm not even here," I muttered, trying to stay calm.

Normally, if someone complimented me like that, I'd smile and take it as a compliment. But because it was her, I was determined to be as distant as possible. She wouldn't get any smiles from me. She wouldn't get any of my usual affection.

*From today onward, she would be just another person. I wouldn't let myself be her fallback anymore.*

"See? Now she's upset. Don't make that face. She's just teasing you because she cares," the makeup artist said.

“The actress doesn’t seem to be in the best mood today. Can she still perform?” Ann asked with a grin.

“A professional always performs. I’ve got my lines, and I’ll play my part, even if someone’s irritating me. I’ll brush it off... like tissue paper.”

“Oh no, I’ve been reduced to tissue paper.”

The makeup artist noticed the tension between us and started to look uncomfortable. Finally, she told Ann to leave so we could finish getting ready.

“Alright, alright. I won’t bother anymore. Carry on.”

She left without complaint, leaving me and the makeup artist to continue in peace. But even though I had told her to leave, I couldn’t stop thinking about where she might be. She had come here for me, and if she couldn’t get to me, what would she do?

Once my makeup was done, I immediately got up and started looking for her. Even though I had sent her away, I couldn’t help but want to find her. Maybe she’d left already, or maybe she was hiding somewhere.

But after walking around for a bit, I heard her familiar laugh coming from behind the trailer where the actors took breaks. That laugh—I recognized it instantly. When I peeked around the corner, I saw her standing there, chatting with Game. They were both laughing and smiling like they were having the time of their lives.

“What are you two doing?”

My voice startled Game like he’d been caught red-handed. Ann, on the other hand, just raised an eyebrow at me.

“We’re just talking to the leading man. He’s quite charming.”

“Don’t you have anything better to do? Why are you meddling on set?”

“I’ve got nothing better to do. I’m free.”

“Well, other people are busy. If you’ve got nothing to do, maybe you should leave.”

“Wow, kicking me out just like that? So harsh,” she pouted dramatically.

Game, sensing the rising tension, quickly excused himself, saying he had a scene to shoot, even though it was actually my turn. Now I was alone with Ann, and we could finally speak frankly.

“You’re doing this again?”

“What am I doing? Just talking to the lead actor.”

“You’re flirting with him, just like you did with Aff.”

“And why can’t I?”

“You can. But not everyone’s going to fall for you.”

“I don’t know about that,” she said, scratching her chin playfully. “From what I’ve seen, most people do fall for me. Including you, right, Run?”

“That was in the past. Not anymore. Why are you doing this?”

“I’m trying to win you back.”

“Win me back by flirting with younger guys? What do you expect me to think?” I scoffed and looked up at the sky.

“That trick is getting old. You flirt with everyone who gets close to me just to push them away. I’ve already told him everything—how we were involved, and how he should be careful of you because you’ll pull this again. It’s not going to work.”

“Do you really hate me now?” Her tone suddenly changed, becoming more serious. She stepped closer to me. I tried to back away, but she grabbed me by the neck and pulled me toward her. “I don’t believe if it can be this easy for you.”

“It’s not easy—” I started to say, but before I could finish, she kissed me. I stood there, not responding, just letting her kiss me as I stared at her blankly. When she realized I wasn’t reacting, she stopped, pulling away and nodding as if she’d finally understood something.

“You’re serious this time, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

“You’re really going to cut me out of your life?”

“Yes.”

“No matter what I do, you won’t come back?”

“Yes.”

“I see.” She gave a short, quiet reply and walked away.

I stood there, frozen, watching her leave with a heart full of pain. My mouth said I felt nothing, but inside, I was screaming for her to turn around and look at me. Everything inside me felt conflicted, and I collapsed onto the ground, burying my face in my hands.

She’s really gone, isn’t she? This is what I wanted.

So why am I the only one in pain? Just because she’s not chasing after me anymore.

It’s over.

# Chapter 19 : Sulking

“Run, I need to talk to you.”

Game, likely worried that I might have misunderstood, hurried over after finishing his scene. To be honest, I wasn't upset with him at all. I wasn't feeling anything in particular toward him. I was simply in a sad mood, so I gave him a faint smile. It probably made him even more uneasy.

“What is it?”

“There's nothing going on between me and Ann.”

“Of course not. How could there be? This is a drama set.”

“I mean, there's really nothing going on. We were just talking. Nothing more than that.”

“What were you two talking about?” I suddenly felt curious, which prompted Game to start explaining.

“She was just chatting with me about normal stuff—how I got into the industry, whether this was my first BL series, things like that. I just wanted to explain because I didn't want you to misunderstand.”

The handsome actor gestured with his hands as he spoke, trying to show he was being sincere and that there was truly nothing between them. I believed him. They had just started talking, so how could there be anything more? Or maybe I had interrupted her before she could really start using her charm.

“I didn't misunderstand.”

“But you look sad.”

“I'm not sad because of you,” I said truthfully. “Ann and I just had a talk, and it didn't end well.”

Game, who already knew about my relationship with Ann, nodded in understanding.

“That’s a relief. At least I know I’m not the reason for your sad face. But you should know, she did invite me to dinner.”

“Really?”

“She said she wanted to get to know me better, but she wasn’t just inviting me. She said she’d invite the rest of the crew and other actors as well. I wasn’t sure of her intentions, though, so I declined.”

“What did you say to decline?”

**“I told her I don’t like older people.”**

I couldn’t help but burst out laughing, completely forgetting about my sadness for a moment. Game smiled, clearly pleased that I was laughing.

“There it is—a smile. You look much better when you’re smiling than when you’re sad.”

“Well, that goes for everyone. Did you really tell her straight up that you don’t like older people?”

“It wasn’t as bad as it sounds. It fit the conversation. She was mostly joking around, asking if acting in BL dramas and kissing men ever made me feel anything. I told her it was just acting and that I actually like women... that I like you.”

“Oh...”

“So then she asked if I liked younger people. I told her it didn’t really matter, but if I had to choose, I wouldn’t go for someone older. It was my way of politely saying no.”

“And if I hadn’t told you about her, would you have liked her?”

Game scratched the back of his neck, looking unsure.

“I don’t know. She’s incredibly charming, especially with her body language and the way she talks. Her gaze can be really tempting. But because of you, I was cautious. I just cut her off and told her I don’t like older people. She laughed it off, and that’s when you showed up.”

So that’s what happened. They weren’t having some cozy conversation like I had imagined. It was all lighthearted, and I had just walked in at the right time. I nodded in understanding.

“Thanks for telling me.”

“I had to clear it up right away. I’m being honest.”

“You’re a sweet guy,” I told him sincerely.

“So why not try loving me?”

“Let me think about it.”

He flirted, so I flirted back, not giving him false hope but not shutting him down either.

I had told myself I’d open up, that I wouldn’t close myself off just because my first love hurt me. I wouldn’t reject the possibility of new love. We talked a bit more before resuming filming. By the time we wrapped up for the day, it was already 10 p.m.

Game, who had his own car, offered to drive me home. He didn’t try anything inappropriate, didn’t ask to come up to my place under some excuse. Honestly, I didn’t think he was very good at flirting. If Aff hadn’t told me he liked me, I probably wouldn’t have even realized it. He acted more like a friend than anything.

“See you next week, then.”

“Next week?” Game looked a bit disappointed. “So we’re only going to see each other on set? Once the shoot ends, we won’t meet anymore?”

“Don’t be so dramatic. You’ve only just started trying to win me over. If I go out with you right away, what kind of woman would that make me?”

“You make a good point, but I still don’t like it... Fine, see you next week.”

“Well, if that feels too long, we can grab coffee tomorrow. I’m not flirting; I just want to get to know you better.” I offered. Game’s face lit up at the suggestion.

“You just said you wouldn’t rush into things, but now you’re asking me out for coffee?”

“It’s just coffee. It’s not going to make you look bad in my eyes. So, tomorrow?”

“You’re making tomorrow sound special. I’ll see you then.”

“Alright. Go home before I change my mind. See you.”

“See you.”

I watched as Game’s taillights disappeared into the distance, smiling softly to myself before turning to head inside the condo.

But before I could make it, I heard some commotion in the distance. When I turned to look, I saw a familiar figure stumbling around with someone supporting her. My eyes widened in disbelief. Ann was staggering, almost tripping over her own feet, pointing at me with a fiery look.

“That’s her. I’ve got a problem with her.”

“There you are! I’ve been dealing with this for over an hour,” the taxi driver, dressed in his uniform, looked like he was on the verge of tears.

“This girl has been waiting for you, making a scene the whole time. I was too scared to leave her alone, afraid someone might try to take advantage of her. I’m glad you’re here. Please take care of her.”

“How did she end up like this?”



“I don’t know. She’s drunk as a skunk... Oh, and the meter’s running. I need to go return the car soon.”

I was still confused, but feeling bad for the taxi driver, I pulled out my wallet and paid nearly 300 baht. Then, I hurried over to support Ann, who was in terrible shape. The strong smell of alcohol hit me as I helped her stand up.

“How much did you drink?”

“You heartless girl!” she screamed before shoving me away. Already unsteady on her feet, she nearly fell but managed to catch herself. “You met that guy and started seeing him in no time.”

“What’s wrong with you?” I asked, feeling a sting from her words. “If you came here to pick a fight, you’d better just leave.”

“I will leave! But not before I say my piece,” her voice was slurred, like an old record playing out. “You said you loved me, but you met him for just a few days, and now you’re moving on? How could you?”

“I didn’t do anything wrong,” I said, trying to keep my emotions in check. “Why do I even need to explain myself? We’re not together anymore.”

“Yes, you do! You made me like this!” Ann pounded her chest with her fist. “It hurts, right here. You did this.”

"....."

“I never should’ve met you. This is my fault... all mine.”

“Yes, it is your fault. If we hadn’t met, we wouldn’t be feeling like this.”

“And you still have the nerve to say that? After everything you’ve done to me, you’re just going to walk away?”

Ann’s words were starting to get muddled. The alcohol was clearly taking over. I had never seen her so out of control before. It was both alarming and intriguing. I wanted to keep talking just to see where this would go.

“Are you faking this to get attention? It’s not working.”

“Yeah, I am! I tried apologizing, I told you I missed you, but you didn’t care,” she shouted before collapsing to the ground. Her drunken state made it clear she wasn’t faking. I stood there, arms crossed, refusing to help her up.

“Why should I care? We’re done. I’ve moved on.”

“If you’re moving on, shouldn’t you at least ask if I’m okay with it?”

“This isn’t about you. I’m not okay with our relationship.”

“You’re so greedy! We agreed not to have a status. I’m not someone who can be loved.”

“I was okay with that before, but now I don’t want it anymore. We should both be happy it’s over.” I said, feeling a sharp pain in my chest but determined to stand my ground. “And yes, I’m greedy. If I can’t have it all, I don’t want any of it.”

“Your greed... it hurts me.”

“That’s your problem. You have to deal with it. You come and go as you please. Don’t think you’re the only one who gets to do that.”

“I came back, didn’t I? So why are you still pushing me away?”

“Because you’ll leave again, and I won’t put up with it anymore.”

“Can’t we go back to how things were? Things were so good before.”

"No."

“Why not?”

"Because it's only good for you. I'm suffering. I don't want to experience that kind of thing again. I'm much better now that you've been gone."

"And you're going to have someone new."

"Yes."

"Then?"

"In my place, with someone who can give me everything... The last guy I went shopping with, or find someone new. Someone like me can find anyone, I'm so good." I sarcastically said. The pretty girl raised her hand to cover her face and shook her head.

"Yes, I used to be able to do that, but now I can't."

"....."

"Because of you alone"

"I didn't do anything to you."

"Because I love you!"

The beautiful woman turned back toward me, her cheeks wet with tears. Her expression of deep sorrow shocked me. I was surprised by what I had just heard. It had never come out of her mouth before, and I couldn't help but ask again, not believing my ears.

"What did you say?"

"I love you. I love you. I love you!" she sobbed as she staggered to her feet, barely able to stand straight. "How dare you make me like this? I was doing just fine, and you came into my life. Why did you have to disturb my peace?"

"I was happy with my free life, not tied down to anyone or anything, until you showed up. Why couldn't you just come and go? Why did you have to make me feel good? Why did you make me feel like I mattered when I'm worth nothing at all?"

"Why do you always say you're worthless?"

“Because I’m a whore!” she screamed, hitting herself like she hated herself deeply. “My life has no value. I’m not fit to love anyone. Someone like me... someone who even sold their own child to survive—I have no right to love anyone, and no one has the right to love me. But you... you made me feel like a real person again.”

"....."

“You made me want to be a better person,” she cried like a small child. “I’ve always hated myself whenever I’m with you, someone so pure. I’ve kept myself away from right and wrong, but you made me human again. You need to take responsibility for that... you need to take responsibility, Run.”

She collapsed onto the ground, drunk beyond belief. This time, I ran to catch her, preventing her head from hitting the floor. Her confession of love wasn’t like something out of a romantic drama. Instead, she was explaining why she thought she wasn’t good enough for me, how low she had fallen, and all the things she had been through that made her afraid to love anyone—even me.

She hadn’t been able to love me because she hated herself, so she pushed me away. But now, she was begging for love. She had no way out, and she hoped I could be her escape.

“If you don’t love yourself first, how can you love me?” My voice trembled. I felt both angry and sorry for her at the same time. “You don’t value yourself at all.”

“I’m worthless. I don’t deserve you.”

“If you keep thinking that way, and getting drunk like this, what do you really want? Are you asking for love or asking me to leave?”

**“I don’t want you to leave, but I’m too scared to ask you to stay... I don’t know.”**

She rested her head on my chest, crying. I held her tightly. It was a heartbreaking confession of love, so different from her usual self.

“If you’re too scared to hold me back, then why are you here?”

“I couldn’t stand how cold you were to me. I couldn’t stand the thought of you with someone else. It’s like... if you leave, no one in this world will ever love me again.”

“Ann...” I gently stroked her face and sighed. “Do you even know how many people are in love with you? You’re the one who doesn’t accept them.”

“I don’t want any of them. I want you, but I’m too scared to ask you to come back. But I do want you back... I’m just afraid that if you do come back, I’ll disappoint you again. I’m not a good person.”

“Why are there so many ‘buts’ in what you’re saying? Can’t you just be straightforward? Do you want me to come back or not? Make up your mind.”

“I don’t want to be alone anymore.”

"....."

**“Please, come back. I really do love you... I really do.”**

Her desperate plea made me smile through my tears. It was the most unexpected way for her to apologize. Maybe I had alcohol to thank for this. If she were sober, I’d never hear these things. She would keep it all to herself, acting proud and aloof, suffering silently, and letting it pass because of her ego.

“If you want me back, then try harder.”

“I don’t know how to beg.”

“Try. You’re close to making me soften up.”

Upon hearing that, she brightened up, her eyes wide with excitement like a little child. It was rare to see her like this.

“Really? So you’ll forgive me?”

“Let’s see.”

“Pleaseee! Huhu!”

I burst into laughter when she said that. She’d never begged for anyone before, didn’t care about anyone, never bothered. Now, when I asked her to beg, she just blurted it out.

“I begged! Now will you forgive me?” she pouted, sulking.

“Plead for me.”

“Pleaseeeeeeeee!”

“Ask for forgiveness.”

“Forgive meeeeeeeee!”

“Oh my God, how can you be so cute? How can you be so irritating and adorable at the same time?” I wrapped her in my arms, filled with love for her.

All the thoughts of letting her go had completely disappeared. I couldn’t ever let go of her, especially not after a confession like this. How could I?

“If I’m cute, then love me.”

**“There hasn’t been a single day I didn’t love you, Ann.”**

“Good.” She tried to stand up but staggered again. “Let’s go sleep together.”

“What?!”

“When you make up, you sleep together.”

“What are you talking about?” I laughed, trying to help her stand upright.  
“How about walking straight first?”

“I am walking straight—whoa!” She collapsed to the ground, her legs giving out, and started crying again.

“I can’t even stand up. I’m worthless.”

“Oh my God, Ann,” I laughed through my tears. “When you sober up, you’ll be so embarrassed.”

“Hic, I’m worthless... but I love you.”

I rocked her gently, looking up at the sky with a sense of peace. To love someone and have them love you back, even in such a messy state, felt amazing.

*Love isn’t scary at all. It’s only us who are afraid of it... And the one most scared of love is her, right here.*

“I love you too.”

“That’s good... we love each other. Don’t ever stop loving me.”

**“There’s never been a day I didn’t love you.”**

# Chapter 20 : Crazy [The Last Chapter]

"I'm sorry, but I can't go today."

I said this to Game when he called, telling me that he was on his way to pick me up for coffee. As I spoke, I felt a deep sense of guilt. I glanced over at the person lying on my bed, fast asleep, and spoke with a heavy heart. From the tone of my voice, I could tell that Game had sensed something.

[Something's happened, hasn't it?]

"Yeah."

He had an incredible sense for things. I answered briefly because I didn't know how to explain. Last night, I had given him hope, but now it seemed like I couldn't give him what he wanted anymore.

Or maybe I never could. Maybe I was just fooling myself, using him to forget someone else...

[It's okay, I understand. It's just coffee after all.]

"I'm really sorry."

[Don't sound so sad. We're not even a couple yet, just starting out. I just feel a little disappointed that our beginning was so short.]

He didn't need me to explain. It seemed like he understood that the coffee date wouldn't happen—and that there wouldn't be a next time either.

"I tried, but I don't want to lie to myself."



[You're not the first or only person in the world to try to run from who you are. And it's not your fault either.]

"If it's not my fault, then whose is it?"

[No one's. It's just about feelings and preferences. Your heart has already made its choice. It's just bad luck that I came into the picture. Even if I'd shown up earlier, there's no guarantee I'd be chosen. You're a good person for telling me now and not giving me false hope.]

"But why does it feel so significant, just missing a coffee?"

[It's your tone that makes it sound that way... but it's okay. We can still be friends, right?]

"Thank you, Game."

We talked for a little while longer before hanging up. I sighed and stared at my phone for a long time. Honestly, if you know what you want and who you love, you shouldn't try to distract yourself with someone new. The other person will just end up being hurt. And that's exactly what happened, even though it hadn't progressed far.

I turned back to the bed, grabbed the damp cloth I had prepared, and gently wiped down the beautiful woman who was still sleeping, unaware of anything because of the alcohol. She was as clueless now as she had been last night, but I wondered how things would be when she woke up. Would she go back to being the cold, heartless Ann? Or would she be the sweet, vulnerable kitten she was yesterday? I couldn't predict.

As I wiped her neck, trying to make her more comfortable, she slowly opened her eyes. She didn't react dramatically, like in a soap opera, asking, "Where am I?"

She just stared at the ceiling, turned to look at me, and rubbed her forehead as if she had a hangover.

"I managed to get myself here, didn't I?"

“That’s right,” I replied with a smile, remembering how she had thrown a tantrum last night.

I couldn’t help but chuckle at the thought. I wondered if she remembered. Can people really forget everything when they’re drunk? There had to be some memory of it, even if just a fragment. The question was whether she would pretend to remember or claim to have forgotten.

“What time is it?” she asked.

“Why? Do you have work to get to?”

"That’s sarcastic."

Knowing she didn’t have a 9am — 5pm job like most people, I threw that comment her way. She kept her hand on her forehead, eyes closed, and spoke again.

“I’m thirsty.”

“I’ll get you some water.”

“Thank you.” She said it so sweetly.

I rushed to the fridge, grabbed a bottle of water, and handed it to her as she tried to sit up, still dealing with her throbbing headache. She took the water from me but avoided looking directly at me.

“Let me stay here for a bit. Once my headache goes away, I’ll leave.”

“Why do you need to leave so quickly?”

“Why would I stay here and be a burden to you?”

“Don’t act like this is some kind of drama. Being drunk doesn’t erase your memory. You must remember some of what happened.”

I noticed her flinch as she lifted the bottle to drink. Her face turned red, and even her ears flushed. She was probably embarrassed, realizing what she

had done last night. Maybe she didn't remember everything, but she definitely remembered enough.

"I wasn't in my right mind. Don't hold it against me. I was drunk."

"Drunk people don't lie," I replied with a smile.

She puffed her cheeks like a child who didn't know how to defend herself. "That's not true for everyone."

"Why don't we talk about what happened?" I crouched down in front of her as she sat on the bed. I placed my hand on her knee and smiled at her.

"Talk about what?"

"About what happened last night."

"I don't remember."

"Even just a little?"

She covered her face with her hands, clearly embarrassed. "I was so wasted. Don't take anything I said seriously."

"I'm not holding anything against you. If anything, I thought you were adorable." I laughed, and she peeked at me through her fingers.

"Adorable? Even in that state?"

"It was cute to see a side of you I've never seen before."

"I looked like a mess, not cute."

"Seems like you remember more than you let on." I teased her. "Do you remember telling me that you love me?"

"I was drunk."

“I knew it would be like this when you woke up. That’s why we should talk while you’re sober, so you can’t dodge it anymore.” I squeezed her leg firmly, feeling a bit angry but trying to keep calm. Now, I knew exactly how she felt about me. The only thing left was to make her admit it. “You couldn’t handle it when I said I was leaving. That’s why you got so drunk, right?”

“It was just frustration.”

"....."

“I’ve never been rejected by anyone before. It doesn’t mean anything. People like you—”

“Not worthy enough to love someone. Enough. I’m tired of hearing it.” I bared my fangs in a serious manner. “The feelings that prevent me from loving or liking you, and only running away like you’re worthless and worthless. You can’t love anyone like that. I don’t want to hear it anymore. I just want to know if you really love me.”

“Run...” She met my gaze and sighed. “I’m serious. If you knew what I’ve been through, you’d be disgusted by me. The past always affects the present.”

“I only care about now and what happens in the future. Whatever you’ve been through, whatever you’ve done, I can handle it.”

“Those are just words said in the heat of obsession.”

“And I’m very obsessed with you,” I replied, looking straight into her eyes. “My feelings are real. No matter how much you hurt me, I always come back to you. I know I can’t leave you. And I know that you can’t run away from me anymore, either.”

“Maybe last night I was just acting, trying to make you feel sorry for me.”

“Well, if it was an act, it worked.”

She abruptly stood up and started pacing, trying to explain that what happened last night was just drunken foolishness and a fleeting moment of emotion.

“Listen, Run, I’m a sugar baby. If we’re being blunt, I’m just a prostitute.”

“And so what?”

“And so what? While you’re headed for a bright future, moving forward, why would you want to get tangled up with someone like me?”

“We’re already tangled up. You brought yourself into my life.”

“And I regret it to this day.”

“You regret it, but not as much as you love me.”

“Maybe I’m just obsessed with you right now. It’s just chemicals in the brain, making me think it’s love,” she said, waving her hand dismissively. “I hate losing, so I’ll do anything to win you back. But one day, I’ll throw you away like I did with everyone else.”

“Well, let’s wait for that day.”

“You can’t just agree with that! If you get the chance, you should run away. Don’t let me catch you every time... I’m worried about you.”

“Isn’t that because you love me?”

I grabbed her wrist to stop her from pacing. “You love me and I love you. Our feelings are the same. Why do you keep denying it?”

“I’m scared I’ll hurt you!” Her voice was loud, almost a shout, but it didn’t shake me one bit.

“I’ve already chosen to risk getting hurt by someone like you.”

“Are you stupid or just an idiot? Your future is so bright, and you’re choosing to be stuck with someone like me. Listen to me... I don’t have a

real job. I've lived off men until I got rich. I even sold my own child. How can I ever love anyone?"

At this point, she broke down in sobs, covering her face with her hands. "I can't love anyone. I'm too scared to love anyone."

"You already love me." I pulled her into a hug. Even though she tried to resist, I held on with all my strength. "Why are you torturing yourself like this? Why are you devaluing yourself?"

"I've lived with this feeling of worthlessness for so long." She sobbed.

In reality, she was fragile. She was like cracked glass, held together by glue, ready to shatter at any moment if touched. That's why she built up this shield, acting tough, living each day as if nothing mattered. But once she met someone she truly liked, she became completely confused, thinking she wasn't good enough.

She loved me so much, and I could see that now. I wouldn't let her walk away just because she thought she wasn't good enough.

"You should find someone better, someone without a tarnished past, someone you can be sure won't break your heart."

"People can change. I understand that. Even you... You keep saying you're not ready for love, that you don't know how to love anyone, but you're falling in love right now. And I'm right here."

"....."

"Hold on to me. Keep telling yourself to be a better person every day. That's how you'll change."

"Can I really change? Someone like me—"

"You're a person with a heart. You do love yourself, and you love me. You love your child, too."

"....."

“What kind of person drives by someone’s house every night just to check if their lights are off? That’s an act of love from a mother.”

“That’s all I can do...” she sobbed, unable to control her emotions. “I don’t have any right to him. And because I’m so cruel, I don’t have the right to anyone.”

“You’ve already changed, and you can keep changing.” I kissed her face all over, holding her face in my hands. “You have a heart. You have love.”

“I don’t deserve love. I don’t deserve you. I’m too dirty. I’m... I’m—”

She couldn’t finish her sentence before I kissed her, silencing her self-destructive words. She tried to pull away, but I held on, kissing her until she stopped resisting and let it happen naturally.

“You look beautiful to me. What should I do? I love you so much that I don’t feel anything for anyone else. Are you going to hurt me again by leaving me?”

“You’re still so young, Run. Right now, you may love me, you may be obsessed with me. But what about in the future?”

“You started off hating yourself. Now you’re scared I won’t love you. You’re not afraid of leaving me. You’re afraid I’ll leave you, aren’t you?” I smiled and wiped her tears with my thumb. “So what if I get left behind one day? Let’s just love each other and leave the future for later.”

“Love makes people suffer.”

“Are you so scared of suffering that you’re running away like this? Then feeling sorry for yourself after, like when you got drunk last night? Is that better?”

“Why are you so good at arguing today?” She laughed through her tears, looking surprised that I could counter her every word. “How did you make me feel like a child when it comes to this?”

“You may be experienced in many things, but when it comes to love, you’re still a kid. You’re so scared of it that I can’t believe this is the same confident, charming woman I met.”

“I’m still the same person.”

“But now you’re seriously in love for the first time... Congratulations.” I smiled at her. She paused for a moment, then sighed.

“I guess I can’t escape anymore.”

“How could you escape? Every time you run away, you come back.”

“I...” She looked away shyly and hunched her shoulders a little. “I can’t promise that I can change completely.”

“But I promise I’ll always be good to you.”

“Forever doesn’t exist.”

“Then let’s make it last as long as we can. All I want is to have you.”

“You’re giving too much. Love without conditions only makes the other person take advantage.”

“It seems like you’re more afraid than I am,” I laughed, kissing her gently.

This time, she kissed me back willingly, wrapping her arms around my neck.

“Yeah... I’m scared of everything.”

“It’s okay. We’ll work through it, one thing at a time. Remember, you’re not the only one who’s scared, and you’re not the only one who has love.”

“....”

“I love you too.”



“.....”

“I....”

“.....”

“I love you.”

This time, her words were filled with sincerity, and such words were not easy to come by from someone like her. I found myself with tears in my eyes, and the beautiful face before me gently wiped them away.

“I’m sorry I’ve never said anything like this before. I just needed to be sure.”

“That’s enough. I don’t need anything more.”

I hugged her tightly and kissed her neck softly, mixed with my sobs. She stroked my back gently, showing equal concern. After that, we began a new chapter in our love. This time, it wasn’t about gaining anything but about a love that was purely exchanged through our hearts, communicated through our bodies, fingertips, and the all-encompassing feelings. Our bodies melded into one.

**We inhaled each other’s scent.**

**We were captivated by one another.**

And we loved each other, without thinking about the past or worrying about the future. We only focused on how to make the present as perfect as possible. I didn’t care about her past, what she had been through, or what she had done. All I knew was that things were good now, and I wanted to maintain this goodness for as long as possible.

Let time do its work. We would prove our love to each other every day from now on. I would show her that even someone like me could have serious love, and I would show her that someone like her deserved good love too.

**I was so deeply infatuated with her.**

**— *The End* —**

# Ann 1 : Original Nature

## **Can people really change?**

I ask myself this every day after I started dating Run, a girl nearly six years younger than me. At first, I approached her just for fun, thinking I'd leave her eventually like I did with everyone else. But now, I find myself deeply entrenched in a relationship that could only be described as **stable**.

## **Is stability even real in love?**

It's a question I've always pondered, because I've never truly experienced it. Over time, I started to believe it didn't exist, especially since Run was so young. For someone like me, it seemed impossible. I used to imagine that the person I'd settle down with would be older and, of course, financially stable because I've always been someone who craved comfort. But Run? She was the opposite in every way, and I'm shocked at how much I've changed because of her.

It's laughable—I've only just discovered jealousy because of this girl.

Being with someone younger made me act immature, too. Emotions I'd never felt before surfaced. I started doing ridiculous, irrational things I'd never done, like pretending not to be jealous while sabotaging a budding connection between her and another woman. I couldn't stand the thought of her being happier with someone else, of hearing her moan someone else's name instead of mine, or losing her forever.

Here I am—someone who used to get by living off men, using my body like a vessel and feeling entitled to do so—now making a living running a restaurant, while also managing Run's career and earning a percentage of her income. She doesn't care or feel uncomfortable about money, no matter how much she earns, she lets me handle everything.

**She loves me that much—more than I ever thought possible.**

What she doesn't know is that I feel the same.

Now, Run has fully entered the entertainment industry after starring in her first BL series. Her second and third projects are on the horizon, and I've heard rumors about her becoming a lead actress for the network. I'm happy for her, watching her career grow, and I hope to see her succeed in everything she does—now and always.

If **always** even exists.

I've never believed in **forever**, because nothing lasts. Every man or woman I've been with eventually fades away, even I'm usually the one who leaves first. But in the end, it's always the same. I thought it would be the same with Run, but here we are, still together after more than a year. Even I'm surprised.

Aside from my first marriage, where I lived with my husband for three years before he died of a heart attack, Run is the longest and most serious relationship I've ever had.

There have been many times when I thought about walking away because I felt too old and unworthy. But every time, Run would come back and tell me she didn't care about my past. All she wanted was for us to focus on the present—if we do well today, tomorrow will be better. It was a refreshing perspective, one I agreed with. If we do right today, tomorrow holds no fears. That's how I feel even now.

"I'm done with work," she says.

"Tired?" I ask, reaching up to gently stroke her hair, the way I always have since the beginning. She has those beautiful doe-like eyes, filled with adoration every time she looks at me.

"Not tired at all, especially knowing my manager was there the whole time."

"Such a sweet talker."

"Let's go home and taste something sweeter."

She reaches out to clasp my hand, intertwining our fingers, making us one as we walk together. She doesn't care about the looks we get from others. There are frequent rumors about her being into women, but her agency always denies them. I've told her to be more careful because she's in the spotlight now, but she never seems to care.

"They're not wrong. I am gay, after all."

Her nonchalant attitude makes me smile. She almost wants to announce to the world that she's with me, just to keep everyone away from her—and from me—out of jealousy.

She's still a kid in many ways, but strangely, I don't find it annoying anymore. The more she clings, the more valued I feel.

"Alright, let's go home and **taste** it, then. Wait here. I'll get the car," I tell her, walking toward the parking lot.

As I head to the car, I hear someone calling after me. A man, around my age and with an air of importance, rushes up to me. I recognize him as one of the directors from a series Run had worked on before.

"Excuse me!"

"Yes?"

I turn to see him out of breath, leaning over with his hands on his knees. His face is flushed, and his words come out haltingly.

"Are you leaving already?"

Given my past experience with men, a question like that—especially from someone I don't talk to often—feels like a way to gauge my interest. I give him a charming smile, instinctively using my old tricks.

"Yes, I'm about to leave. Is there something you need?"

"Well..." He hesitates. "I've never done this before."

"Out of breath, huh? You should exercise more," I said with a soft laugh, adding a touch of charm. I couldn't help it. It's second nature at this point.

"Would you like to grab a coffee sometime?" he asked.

"Hmmm... Ann doesn't drink coffee," I replied, using my name to make sure he'd call me correctly. "Maybe if you invited me to something else, I'd agree."

"Anything you want."

"What do you feel like having?"

*He probably wants me.*

Everyone who approached me was the same. But just as I was playing the game, I caught someone watching me out of the corner of my eye, and a sudden chill ran down my spine. I'd never felt this way with anyone before.

***Damn it... why do you always show up when I'm being my old self?***

"I'll let you decide," he said.

"If we're destined, maybe we'll have that meal."

I replied hastily, ending the conversation as quickly as possible before turning and heading toward Run, who was staring at me. Her eyes were welling up with tears, disbelief and pain clearly reflected in those beautiful eyes. Guilt washed over me, but I pretended not to notice, asking her anyway.

"Why do you look like that?"

"I know what you were doing," she said quietly.

"I wasn't doing anything."

“The more you act like this, the more I hate you.”

The word **hate** pierced my heart. Even though I knew I was in the wrong, I wasn't the type to be scared by a kid.

“Let's talk in the car,” I said.

“I'll go home by myself.”

“Get in the car,” I snapped.

My voice was harsh. I knew I was wrong, but I still had the audacity to scold her, forcing her to do what I wanted. Though she wanted to lash out, seeing how serious I was, she followed me reluctantly like a little duckling following its mother, her face sulking all the way.

Once we got in the car, we sat in silence. Run crossed her arms and glared at me before speaking first.

“Didn't you say we were going to talk? Go ahead.” she said.

“I'm thinking about where to start.”

“Start with how skillfully you were flirting with Mr. Chan. Didn't you promise to make today the best it could be so that tomorrow we wouldn't have any regrets? That you wouldn't hurt me? But today—” Her voice trembled, and though she was scolding me, it was clear how deeply hurt she was. “Today, you hurt me. And tomorrow, I'll still be hurting.”

“I'm trying to change,” I lied, even though I knew I was fully in the wrong. I am **Ann**, someone who always did whatever I wanted. Apologizing and admitting fault wasn't my style. That didn't mean I didn't feel guilty, though. “Just give me some time.”

“How much time do you need? Every day, I give you all my love, never holding back. But do you know what I feel every day? Fear. Fear that one day you'll get bored of me. I constantly have to be loving, cheerful, and as forgiving as an ocean.”

“And I’ve been good, haven’t I?”

"But today, you were awful!"

“I’ve been a bad person from the start. I’ve always told you this. Why can’t you accept it?”

“You said you would change.”

“I have changed.”

“You call this changing?”

"....."

“We’re not getting anywhere today and we never will as long as you think what you did was right.” She reached for the door handle, but I grabbed her wrist tightly, biting my lip. “Let go, Ann.”

“I’m sorry.”

My apology seemed to calm her down a bit. She let go of the door and sat back, though she was still clearly upset.

"Feelings don’t just disappear that easily, you know. Once they’re hurt, they don’t just heal overnight."

“I’m trying. It’s a habit... a hard one to break.” I ran a hand through my hair, closing my eyes briefly. Guilt weighed heavily on me for making her cry. “I like to test my charm. It was bad timing.”

“No, it was **perfect** timing. If I hadn’t seen it, you wouldn’t even realize it was wrong.”

“I won’t do it again.”

“Just saying it doesn’t mean much. Sometimes I wonder if I should just give up, let you live your life the way you want.”



"...."

"We don't love each other equally. I always give more, and you know it. That's why you feel free to do things like this."

Her words of frustration made me understand a little, but the idea that she loved me more? That wasn't true. I just expressed my love differently.

"Can love even be measured? I could just as easily say I love **you** more than you love me."

I felt a surge of irritation. If I didn't love her, why would I stay in a committed relationship this long? Someone like me wouldn't do this for just anyone. I'd never even apologized to anyone before. She was the first to hear it from me.

"Then prove it. Like I show you every day."

"How do you want me to prove it? Just tell me, and I'll do it. Then maybe you'll stop being angry."

I slouched wearily, resting my head against the steering wheel. I turned to look at her, my eyes soft, trying to seduce her into forgiving me a little. But instead, she turned her face away, refusing to meet my gaze. I felt foolish.

**Damn.**

"I don't know. Make me believe that you truly love me and that you won't involve a third person in our relationship anymore. Today, I've lost trust in you."

"..."

"And tomorrow will be the same."

## Ann 2 : Beg

"If you make today good, tomorrow will be worry-free..."

But here I was, having made today a disaster and causing more heartache for Run. Her face, stained with tears, made me feel an ache deep inside—knowing I had failed to keep my promise not to give her reasons to doubt me. It was like thousands of needles stabbing my heart as I watched her in pain. I'd already apologized, but it seemed to have no effect. Now, she didn't trust me anymore.

### **Can I really not change?**

Honestly, I hadn't done much. Okay, maybe I did flirt a little, but that's all it was—a way to see if I still had that effect on people. It was just bad timing that she caught me in the act, and now it's turned into this mess.

"Prove it," she had said.

I didn't know how I was supposed to prove it. But one thing was clear: if I had that coffee meeting with the director, I'd have to do something to shut it down for good. But whatever I did, Ran would need to see or hear it for herself. Telling her about it afterward wouldn't do any good—she wouldn't believe me anyway.

### **Fine... I'll prove it in my own way.**

Soon enough, I **accidentally** ran into the director again in the parking lot of the company where Run worked. Well, I wouldn't call it an accident. I had a hunch he was waiting for me, knowing Run's schedule and deliberately hoping to meet me. His face was flushed as he tried to muster the courage to approach me. I smiled politely, greeting him as usual and striking up a conversation.

"Fate, or coincidence, that we meet again?" I teased.

"Coincidence," he replied.

*Yeah, right*, I thought. But I didn't mind. I wanted this encounter as much as he did, just to get it over with.

"Well then, I guess today is the day."

"..."

"How about that coffee?"

"Sure," he said, eagerly.

We headed to a nearby café behind the building. It was a quiet spot, not too far from the company. While he went to order the coffee, I sat at the table and called Ran, who, despite still being upset, picked up. Her cold tone made me sigh.

[Yes?]

"Still mad at me, huh?"

[It's not anger.]

"Do you hate me, then?" I playfully asked, knowing full well she didn't hate me. She was just holding back her emotions, trying not to lose her temper out of respect for my age. "Are you free right now?"

[I don't have anything to do.]

"Good. Hold the line, don't say anything. Just listen to what I'm about to do."

[What are you going to do?]

I didn't answer her, placing the phone face down on the table. Soon, the handsome director returned with our coffee. I smiled in gratitude, giving him a flirtatious look as I always did.

“Such good service. Do you treat all the women like this?”

“No, just doing my job,” he replied shyly.

"Seems like it's a habit. Cute," I complimented, taking a sip of the coffee he brought. "You got the order just right. So attentive."

I kept praising him, and he blushed with embarrassment. I gazed at him, narrowing my eyes like a snake ready to strike, and then, without hesitation, got straight to the point.

“Why do you like me?”

“Huh?” He was caught off guard by the direct question. “Uh... Miss Ann, I...”

“Come on, let's not beat around the bush. I know you were waiting for me in the parking lot. There's no such thing as coincidence—**only intention.**”

“I...”

“Be confident. Women like men who speak clearly and know how to treat them well.” I propped my chin on my hand, a bit annoyed by his stammering, but understanding he was nervous. “I'll ask again: Why do you like me?”

He straightened up, took a deep breath to gather his courage, and cleared his throat. “You're beautiful.”

**Typical.** Men were always so superficial. Was there nothing else that could make me feel special besides my looks?

"That's it?"

"You have a great personality. I love the fragrance you wear. It's... captivating."

“I love this perfume too. Seems like a lot of people are impressed by its scent,” I said, alluding to Run, who had once complimented my perfume

and even bought the same one. I had to admit, the fragrance added at least 50% more to my charm.

“You have beautiful eyes. It’s like they’re always shimmering, so full of depth. I feel like I could get lost in them. I want to—”

“Want me, don’t you?” I interrupted, smirking.

"I just want to get to know you."

"Let’s be direct," I replied. "You want me, right?"

"I like you, but as for wanting..."

"Let’s not dance around the truth. Most men who approach me want the same thing. So, let’s cut to the chase."

I took another sip of my iced coffee before flashing a smile.

“If you want to be with me seriously, the first thing you’ll need is a decent amount of money in your bank account."

"What?"

“I enjoy love, but I don’t enjoy living on the edge. Anyone who wants to date me has to understand that I have certain needs. If you want to be with me, you’ll have to meet those needs first."

"....."

“It’s like a... **sponsorship**. I’ll be yours, in exchange for what you’ll provide me. The concept was simple—**you pay, I stay**. It wasn’t hard to understand."

"....."

“Every man I’ve dated has paid. The minimum is a monthly allowance of about 100,000 to 150,000 baht. I also need a condo, bought outright, where

I can live and we can have our little love nest. You'll need to provide me with a car, and, of course, branded bags from the latest collections."

"....."

"If you can meet these requirements, after we finish our coffee, we can go handle our **business**."

I crossed my legs, smiling as I watched his face turn pale. He clearly hadn't expected me to be so upfront. He wanted love, not a woman looking for financial support.

"Are you serious?"

"Did you think someone like me could afford a convertible on her own? Do you think just being a manager for a young actress like Run pays that well?"

"I didn't expect you to be like this."

"Don't judge me so quickly. I'm just not the woman you fantasized about. If you can't provide what I ask for, then we're done. Nothing will happen."

We locked eyes, and I could see he wanted to leave, but he was trying to maintain some semblance of decorum.

"Oh, and one last thing. I'm also involved with Run. She's one of my girlfriend. You'll get me for one day, and the rest belong to her." I leaned in closer, smiling. "I like women more, but I keep men around for... **other reasons**."

The director stood up almost immediately and stormed out without looking back, bumping into things as he rushed away. I laughed as I watched him hurry off. After he disappeared from sight, I sighed, then picked up the phone to speak to the person who had been listening the whole time.

"So? Did you hear everything?"

[I heard it all.]

“He’s gone and won’t come back. Are you still mad at me?”

[Is this how you’re turning someone down?]

“Well, it worked better than expected. He ran off with his tail between his legs.”

[And what if he had money and really wanted to take care of you? What would you do then?]

“Hmmm... what should I do?” I teased her, drawing out my words. “I haven’t thought about it, but judging by the car he drives, I doubt he could support me. I’ve calculated everything—no good man would want me. It’s only you who can accept me completely.”

[You said you wouldn’t do this kind of thing anymore, so I didn’t care about the past.]

**“That’s why I love you.”**

The line went silent. I wasn’t sure if she was still mad or just shy, so I called again to make sure she was still there.

“Run, are you still there?”

[I’m here.]

“Are you still angry?”

[.....]

“Come see me after work.”

[Why?]

“It’s time to continue our love story.”

I waited for my young girlfriend at home, cooking food for her because I knew she'd be starving after filming all day. By around 10 PM, Run arrived at my place in a hurry, but when we faced each other, she composed herself, pretending that her earlier rush had never happened.

"You're back?"

"You can see me, so why ask?"

Such a sarcastic response...

"I made food for you. You must be hungry. Come eat."

I walked over to her, wrapped my arm around her shoulder, and gently guided her to the dining table. Her beautiful eyes rolled a little, but she let me lead her and sat down without complaint, though she still kept her cool by not touching any of the food.

"Eat. It'll make me sad if you don't eat what I've made."

"Is this your way of apologizing?"

"This is the best I can do. If this isn't good enough, I don't know what else to do."

"Have you never apologized to anyone before?"

"Not really. Usually, when someone's upset, I just let them go."

I spoke the truth. I never got too attached to the people in my life. If they caused too much trouble or were hard to talk to, I'd say goodbye and find someone new. My life was simple like that.



“So why haven’t you let me go? I’m stubborn, demanding, and complicated.”

**“Because I love you.”**

I’ve said it twice today already—consider it an upgraded apology. I leaned my elbow on the table and smiled at her calmly. “Are you still going to be mean to me?”

“I’m still upset about what you said about letting that director guy take care of you. What if he actually had money and wanted to support you? What would you do?”

“I wouldn’t do anything because I know he couldn’t afford it.”

“You always have a main plan but no backup. I think about everything. What if things went differently? Would you really start seeing him and only spend six days a week with me, as you said?”

“You overthink. It’ll make you age faster.” I pulled a chair next to hers and played with her ponytail teasingly. “If that actually happened, I’d tell him... right now, I don’t have time to settle down with anyone because I’m already with someone serious.”

“You should’ve told him that from the start. You shouldn’t have even given him that option.”

“Most men don’t back down when they know two women are involved... It’s some ego thing I don’t really understand. That’s why I used this plan first, then told him I’m already taken—by you, the actress who I managed of. That way, he’ll see me as a gold digger. The more he hates me, the further away he’ll run.”

“Why do you always try to make people hate you?”

“It’s easier. But there’s one person who, no matter how much I try to convince them of my dark side, just won’t give up.” I slid my hand from her hair to tilt her chin. “But I didn’t expect you to be this stubborn.”

“What can I do? I love you.”

“And I love you too.”

“Promise you won’t flirt anymore.”

“I can’t help it.”

"....."

“Alright, just consider that my first mistake. There won’t be a second.”

When I made my promise, her beautiful eyes softened, and she threw her arms around me, burying her face in my neck like a playful child, as she always did when she wanted to be affectionate.

“I hate it when we fight. I’m scared of losing you.”

“All because I flirted a little?”

“If one day, someone comes along who’s ready to take care of you and give you everything you ask for, would you leave?”

I laughed and hugged her tightly.

“Have I ever asked you for anything?”

“No, never.”

“Money can’t buy me everything. And with you, money doesn’t matter at all.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yeah. I never thought I’d say something like that. Before, money was like a god to me. But now, you’re more important than any god.” I let go of her and gently pinched her chubby cheek. “We’ve made up now.”

“I wasn’t mad, anyway,” she said with an adorable tone. Suddenly, I found her even more endearing. I stood up and pulled her along.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“We’re skipping dinner.”

“What?”

“You can eat me instead.”

I started unbuttoning my shirt, revealing my lingerie. She blinked in confusion, clearly caught off guard. I had never made the first move before. I tilted my head and narrowed my eyes at her.

“I’ll count to three. If you don’t eat me, I’ll button it back up.”

“Is this another level of apologizing?”

“You could say that.”

“Can I eat you right here at the dining table?” she asked excitedly, having never done anything in such a place before. I glanced at the table and shrugged.

“If you can manage, go ahead.”

“I’m not mad anymore.”

"One..."

She lunged at me playfully, her hands exploring eagerly. I laughed at her cuteness and let her have her way, something I’d never done for anyone before.

***Having a younger lover really does keep your heart youthful.***

## Ann 3 : Surprise [The Last Pov]

“What do you want for your birthday this year?”

The pretty-eyed girl asked as I sat reviewing the accounts for the restaurant I owned. I looked up from the ledger and raised my eyebrows slightly in surprise.

“Birthday? You mean mine?”

“Well, of course! Who else’s would I be asking about?”

“Hmm, I don’t know.”

“You seriously don’t know?”

I really didn’t. Thinking back to my childhood, birthdays never meant much to me. We weren’t rich back then; my parents worked hard just to make ends meet. They could barely remember their own birthdays, let alone mine. As I got older, I started receiving gifts from men who supported me, but the gifts were always material things bought with money. So, they didn’t hold any real meaning. Whether it was my birthday or not, all I had to do was ask, and they’d give me whatever I wanted.

Sometimes it was flowers, other times a diamond ring or a gold necklace. The most expensive gift I ever received was a fancy car, but I sold it off because I preferred the money.

I smiled at her and shook my head, amused by how excited she was about giving me a birthday gift. I gently lifted her chin with my hand, feeling a bit touched by her enthusiasm.

“Just having you on my birthday is enough.”

“Why are you so greedy? You already have me every day! Come on, just ask for something. I’ll get it for you.”

“A Porsche.”

"....."

“Just kidding.”

I laughed at the stunned look on her face. I knew she had only just started earning a decent income, so expecting a gift that extravagant was a bit too much.

“You must have gotten lots of expensive gifts before.”

“They didn’t mean much.”

“So, even if I give you something, it wouldn’t mean anything either... Hmm, I’ll have to think about it.”

She wasn’t about to give up, and she went off to think hard about it. I watched her, feeling amused by her determination. Seeing her so intent, I closed my ledger, got up, and sneaked up behind her to kiss the nape of her neck teasingly.

“I don’t need anything. Having you is the best gift.”

“That’s not enough. This is the first year I get to give you a birthday gift, so I want it to be something special and memorable.”

“In that case, let’s create some good memories for my birthday. You don’t need to buy anything. Just strip down and cuddle with me all day. That would make my birthday perfect.” I reached over to unbutton her shirt, knowing I could get away with it. She let out a half-hearted protest but ultimately gave in.

**With her, what more could I possibly need?**

Having her made my heart race in a way I'd never felt with anyone before. I'd never had to worry about what the other person thought or felt because I'd always done whatever I wanted without a care for anyone else's feelings. But this small woman in front of me, with her long hair reaching down her back, her occasional stubbornness, and her eyes and heart that were only for me—she was different.

We undressed each other and began making love right there in the living room. I didn't care where we did it because anywhere with her made me happy.

Happiness... I'd never known what it truly meant to love someone until now.

I'd been through countless relationships, or rather, lustful encounters. None of them were love. It all started when I married my first husband for money, as my parents wanted. After he passed away, I started living for myself and believed that love didn't exist.

### **Not even parental love.**

My parents only saw me as a source of financial benefit. After giving them a decent dowry, I cut them out of my life entirely. If even a parent's love could be so doubtful, how could anyone else's love be genuine?

But this girl... she made me believe.

She was infatuated with me.

Obsessed with me.

She never cared about my past. For her, the present was what mattered most, and she forgave all the mistakes I had made. I was surprised someone like this even existed in the world, to the point where I started to wonder if she loved me more than I loved her.

### **Can love even be measured? I was curious.**

After our love-making, the scent of our intimacy filled the room, making me feel weak with satisfaction. The pretty-eyed girl soon drifted off to sleep on top of me, her naked body resting against mine, while I lay there staring at the ceiling, lost in thought.

“I know what I’m going to give you for your birthday.”

“You’re not asleep yet?”

“I was, but then I suddenly thought of the perfect gift.”

“What is it?”

“It’s a secret.”

“Come on, tell me. I don’t like surprises.”

“You’ll like this one.”

“Is there anything I’d like more than sex?”

She giggled. “You pervert.”

She playfully traced her fingers around my breasts, causing my body to react on its own. Goosebumps rose on my arms as my skin became taut under her touch. “Let’s just say it’ll be the most meaningful birthday you’ve ever had. But... I’m a little scared.”

“Scared of what?”

“Scared you’ll be mad.”

“Don’t surprise me with anything too risky,” I teased, though I was genuinely curious about what she had planned. “Come on, tell me what you’re up to.”

“I’m not going to reveal it! You’ll have to wait.”

She left me wondering about it until we both drifted off to sleep.

It was now my birthday... and the pretty-eyed girl woke me up at five in the morning. Not being a morning person, I was annoyed. After all the energy I'd expended the night before, now I had to wake up early too. My face scrunched up in irritation, but her wide, cheerful smile melted away my moodiness.

"Hurry up and get up! Let's go make an offering to the monks."

"Make an offering?" I looked at her as if she'd just said something absurd. Giving offerings to monks was far from anything I ever did. "No, I'd rather not. I don't feel right around monks."

"What are you talking about? People like that exist? Just stand up, put your hands together, and make a wish. Then this year, and every year after, will be filled with good things."

"I'm doing just fine as it is."

"Come on, get up."

Reluctantly, I got dressed quickly, washed my face, and went outside with her to wait for the monks. We made an offering together for the first time. I couldn't even remember the last time I had done something like this. It wasn't that bad; I was just a bit grumpy about having to wake up so early.

Once everything was done, I rushed back into the house, feeling uncomfortable about doing something good when I considered myself a sinner.

"I can't take it anymore. I need a shower and then I'm going back to bed. I feel like I'm on fire."

"You're being dramatic. It was just a small good deed."

"Exactly, that's why I don't feel good. No more surprises like this, okay?"

"That wasn't even the surprise. I was just inviting you to make an offering."

"Whatever. I'm going to bed."



“Why are you so sleepy? Fine, go rest. I’ll let you be.”

“What about you?”

“I’ve got a shoot today, and then I’ll be preparing your birthday gift. Keep your phone close.”

“What are you planning? I don’t trust this.”

“You’ll see. Now go to bed,” she teased as she grabbed a taxi and left for work.

By the time I realized I should’ve gone down to see her off, it was already too late. Everything was happening much faster than usual.

She definitely had something up her sleeve.

*But oh well, it’s supposed to be a surprise, right?*

Time passed, and it was already 3 PM when I woke up with a start, startled by a call from Run, who had told me to keep my phone on standby. As soon as I answered, she fired off instructions, not giving me a chance to say anything.

[Meet me at the place I pinned, okay? You need to be there before 6 PM. If you’re late, I’ll be mad. And dress nicely, in something pastel, because I’ve got a surprise.]

Before I could respond, she hung up. I checked my messages and saw the pinned location— a restaurant not too far from my house. I didn’t bother asking any more questions after that. I got up, showered, dressed in pastel

colors as she requested. The only pastel color I had was pink, so I picked a pink top and white pants. Then, I grabbed my bag and other essentials, feeling a bit excited as I started the car.

I wasn't planning to be excited, but that girl always made me nervous, wondering what she was up to. I wanted to know.

I arrived at the restaurant just past 5 PM—only five minutes before 6, which wasn't late. The place was eerily quiet, which felt unusual. I really hoped she wasn't planning to do one of those cheesy things like in the movies, where you walk in and friends jump out, shouting, **"Surprise!"** with confetti and balloons.

No, that wasn't my style. I wasn't the kind of person with many friends. For that sort of thing, you needed a social circle, and my circle consisted mostly of men I had left behind. So, no chance of that happening.

Still, I proceeded cautiously... Just in case.

As I approached the door, I noticed a sign that read,

***"Closed for a private event due to a birthday party."***

Whose birthday party could it be if not mine? Seeing that, I opened the door.

What I saw made me freeze. I almost turned and walked out, but Run quickly stepped in front of me, arms and legs spread wide, blocking my exit.

"Once you're in, you can't leave."

"Run, why did you do this?"

I only called her by her name when I was serious, and this time, I was both serious and stressed. Inside the restaurant stood a family—Mina's family.

If you're wondering who Mina is, she's the person I left my child with. I gave her my baby to raise and took a lump sum of money in return to sever

the mother-child bond. And now, I was standing face-to-face with them, sweating from head to toe. I never expected to encounter something like this. I wasn't prepared for it at all.

And that child...

"Don't be mad at Run. She means well," Mina said, noticing that I was about to start arguing with the pretty-eyed girl. I glanced at Mina and then quickly averted my eyes, unable to meet her gaze.

"Stay out of it. This isn't your business."

"I can't stay out of it. Otherwise, you'll ruin your own birthday."

"Damn it, I shouldn't have come," I muttered, trying to leave the restaurant again, but Run continued to block me. Her face looked like she was about to cry, but she stood firm, facing me down like a lioness.

"Please stay. I know this is what you want most."

"What I want? This is what I've been avoiding the most. Why did you do this to me?"

Suddenly, I felt something grab onto my leg like a leech sucking blood. I glanced down and saw a toddler, wobbling in squeaky shoes, staring up at me with bright, innocent eyes. My heart skipped a beat. I was overwhelmed with emotions—excited, scared, and more nervous than when I'd seen a monk that morning.

"Mama!"

"Why are you just standing there? The child's greeting you—say something," Mina urged with a calm expression.

I stood frozen, looking like I'd seen a ghost, tears welling up in my eyes. I didn't know what to do. I had never been scared of anything before, but this small child was terrifying me to my core.

"I... I don't have a child."

“This is my child. Don’t be cruel to a kid.”

“Then take your child.”

“Whoever gave birth should take the child.”

“Hey!”

The loud sound startled the little one who was clinging to my leg, and he began to pout. Panic-stricken, I knelt down and started waving my hands in front of him as if he’d understand what I was saying.

“I’m not scolding you, okay? We’re just talking calmly.”

But he wasn’t having it.

“What do I do? He’s going to cry!” I turned to Mina for help, but instead of showing concern, she just crossed her arms and looked away as if she hadn’t noticed. Run, standing behind me, crouched down and placed a comforting hand on my shoulder.

“Why don’t you try hugging him?”

“Hug him?” I nearly choked on my words. “Why should I hug this child?”

**“Because he’s yours.”**

"...."

“Hug him as a mother. Isn’t this something you’ve been wanting to do?”

The pressure from Run’s hand on my shoulder made me feel like I was choking. I wanted to lift my head and act like I didn’t care, but the innocent look in the child’s eyes made me give a weak, awkward smile.

“I can’t hug him. There are too many germs; he might get sick,” I mumbled, making excuses.

Where would I find the courage to hug him when I had sold him off out of selfishness? How could I call myself his mother? That would be the worst thing to do.

Suddenly, the child, who was unsteady on his feet, stumbled, and instinctively, I caught him, pulling him into my arms. I felt his tiny heartbeat, and out of nowhere, tears began to stream down my face.

The smell of baby powder hit my nose, and his soft, innocent skin touched mine. His small arms wrapped around my neck, tugging at my hair as if he wanted to play, all while giggling.

“Mama, mama.”

"....."

“Mama”

"....."

“Mama.”

Hearing that word clearly from his mouth made me burst into tears. I hugged the small body tightly, unwilling to let him go. This was what I feared the most—falling in love and becoming attached to him. I was scared that if I met him, I’d never be able to let go.

I was hugging him so tightly that the little one started to cry. Run, sitting nearby, tapped me gently and laughed through her tears. “Hold him more gently, okay? He’s crying because he’s feeling uncomfortable.”

“I love him... I love him,” I kept saying, not even realizing what I was saying. I had never believed that pure love could exist in this world. My own parents didn’t even love me, so how could love be real?

Until Run came into my life...

But even then, I thought love only came from bonding over time or shared experiences, not something you could just declare after meeting someone

for the first time.

Even if that someone was the child I had given birth to.

“Waaah!”

“Let him go for now,” Run laughed and tried to separate me from the child.

Once the little boy was free, he wailed even louder. Mina’s partner came over to pick him up and walked away. I instinctively reached out to take him back but quickly withdrew my hand, feeling too ashamed.

“I’m sorry... I lost control.”

“It’s okay. He’s your son after all. You can come visit him anytime; no need to park your car outside the house and stare anymore.”

"....."

“Consider this a birthday gift.”

“No, what if he finds out who I am?”

“So what?”

“He has the right to know who his mother is... I’m sure you learned by now not to hug him too tightly.”

Mina’s partner approached me with the child, but the little one, scared and hesitant, clung tightly to his current holder. I just watched, feeling guilty. I told myself it was okay; it wasn’t his fault that he didn’t want to be near me.

Run, seeing that I was still speechless, handed me a small, ribbon-tied lollipop and smiled brightly.

“Happy Birthday.”

“A lollipop?” I stared at it in confusion. “This is the gift? I thought it would be something more special.”

**“It’ll be more special if you give it to your son.”**

I looked at Run, amazed by her foresight, but I hesitated, knowing that candy wasn’t good for children.

“No, the lollipop will rot his teeth. It’s not good for him.”

“Just give it to him. The pastel colors on you, mixed with the lollipop, will be enough for him to love you.”

I nearly laughed. So, that’s why she made me wear pastel colors? I looked at the lollipop wrapped in plastic in my hand and tentatively offered it to the little boy, who was clinging to the person holding him, cautiously.

“Payu, do you want this?”

It seemed like he recognized his name because he turned to look at me. The moment he saw the colorful pastel lollipop, his tears stopped, and he reached out for it. But I playfully withheld it, gesturing that I wanted to hold him first.

“If I can hold you, you’ll get the lollipop.”

Surprisingly, Payu didn’t hesitate. He reached out to me, grabbing the lollipop as soon as I held him. Like any child, he immediately tried to put it in his mouth, though it was still wrapped in plastic, so it couldn’t harm his teeth. Yet holding him in my arms was doing wonders for my heart.

“Mama, mama.”

“Be a good boy, okay?”

I hugged Payu again, this time more gently.

He hugged me back, still fixated on the lollipop in his hand. I inhaled the sweet baby scent on him, trying to memorize every sensation—his heartbeat, his voice, his breathing. I then looked up at Run, feeling grateful.

“Thank you, Run. Thank you so much.”

“Happy Birthday.”

Tears streamed down my face as I looked at her, filled with love and gratitude that I couldn’t even measure. I wasn’t one for surprises, but this... this was an exception. She had done something truly wonderful, something that would stay with me forever.

“This is the best birthday ever.”

—*The Final End*—