



THE LOYAL PIN

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Story by
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Dear

All readers

Thank you for giving me this opportunity and waiting.

PREFACE

I would like to say I'm grateful for every opportunity I get to write a preface of a book I have written. As an author, the preface is always on the last page, which must be written at the end.

The joy of writing a novel is one of the top happiness in my life.

This novel is my first-period novel inspired by the fascination of the photographs of a beautiful actress. I really enjoyed writing this novel. So far, Princess Anilaphat Sawetawarit is my favorite character.

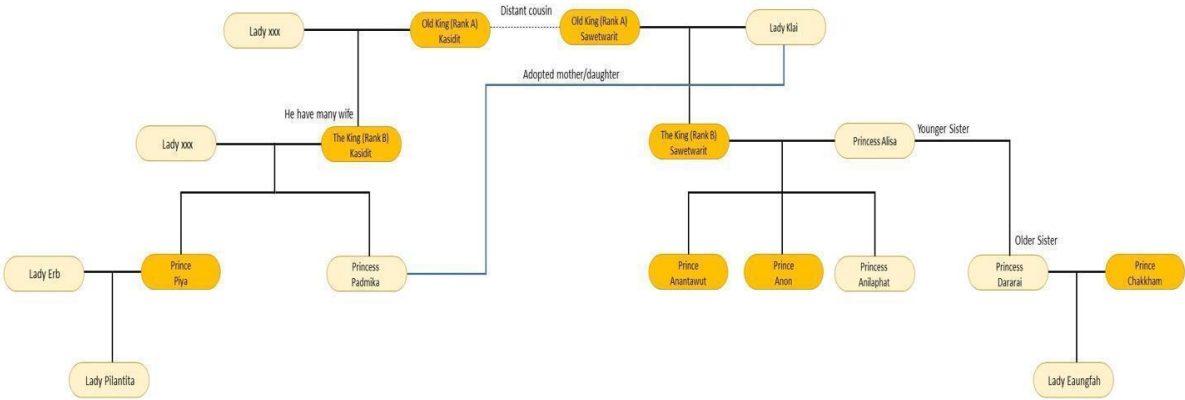
Personally, this novel is very attractive.

I would like for readers to 'love' and 'enchant' this novel together.

Love

MONMAW

PIN PAK FAMILY TREE



CHAPTER 1

Giant black plum tree

A tall girl is climbing on the thick branches of a giant black plum tree whose leaves are adorned with red, purple, and black plums. She moves from branch to branch swiftly, and she looks very agile.

Below, a dark-skinned chubby girl is spreading a colorful striped Sarong^[1] to receive numerous black plums that the tall girl above is continually chucking her black plums. When they fill up her Sarong, she pours them into the yard before spreading the sarong to get other black plums. She repeatedly does that until she starts to get tired.

“I think that’s enough, my princess.”

Under the shadow of a big tree, a young girl named Prik, who is the black plums receiver, is telling her Royal Highness Princess Anilaphat Sawetawarit, who kept picking up black plums as if she is going to pick them all today.

“Please come down already, before anyone else sees you.”

“I’m still enjoying it. I don’t think anyone will see me.”

She shouts back and is still throwing down a bunch of big red-black plums.

"Who says no? Over there! Khunpra Chom is walking to this way now."

Prik needs to mention Khunpra Chom, the closest governor of the king. Khunpra Chom is in charge of inspecting the entire palace's order and has full authority to punish any servant's misconduct in the Sawetawarit palace.

Khunpra Chom has a giant body with rough, tanned skin, a full mustache, and beard on his face. He looks extremely formidable.

Not only are the servants fearful of his formidableness, but the princess also recognises Khunpra Chom as her top enemy to her

mischievousness.

“My princess, please come down quickly! He's almost here now.”
Prik tells her hastily.

Thud!!!

When the tall girl fell onto the ground, it was absolutely ridiculous.

When the one who fell down is the youngest princess who possesses Sawetawarit Palace where Prik has been living since birth,

Of course, it is unamusing and unlaughable...

“Oh my gosh!!” Prik shouted loudly.

“Calm down, I’m still alive, I just got scraped knees.”

“Yes, you are not dead, but I will be. I will definitely receive the guillotine penalty.”

Prik is so flustered in an awkward posture that the princess found it hilarious.

“You think it's funny, don't you? I might have been hit in the back very badly.”

“Anyway, where is Khunpra Chom? Where has he gone?”

"Ohh... I beg your pardon, my lady." Prik's attitude changes from being afraid of the guillotine penalty to being extremely flustered. "I lied to you about that...."

"Are you kidding me, Prik?" The princess pretends to be serious to Prik.

“...”

“How dare you lie to me about this? You know I fear Khunpra Chom even more than my father.”

“Well... what is done is done, can’ t you?” Even though she responds to the princess like this, her two hands are bowed down to the princess's feet with great love and fear of death.

“Huh, but my knee is bleeding. Do you want me to let your lie go?”
Princess Anilaphat is smiling when she sees Prik trembling like a newborn

bird. "If I go back to the palace like this, all the servants will panic for sure."

"..."

"I haven't mentioned my father, mother, and brother yet." The princess is still teasing her by constantly saying the names of Prik's overlords.

"I am deeply sorry. Please don't punish me." When the princess saw Prik's constant trembling, the princess decided to stop bullying her closest servant.

"Or should I go to the Bua Chompoo^[2] Palace to bandage my knee's wound?" Finally, the princess finds a way out for Prik.

"That is a brilliant idea," Prik is delighted.

"Thanks for the compliment." The lady sarcastically sneers at her, but she doesn't seem to realize it because now she is focusing on picking up all black plums on the ground.

"Come and lift me up, don't just be concerned about the black plums..." Princess Anilaphat has difficulty trying to push herself up from the ground. "You need to be concerned about me."

"I'm coming! Why do I have to carry both fruits and a girl like this?" the lady said, sighing.

"Haha, I dare you to carry me high." The princess commands and laughs at her arguing as always.

If there is someone else, Prik wouldn't have dared to equalize herself to the princess because she is afraid of being punished or expelled from the palace. Only when she is with the princess, Prik will dare to argue with her because she knows how much the princess favors the arguments.

However, Princess Anilaphat has not taken care of Prik as a servant but as a friend, associate, and even as an inseparable buddy.

When the princess wakes up every morning, the first thing she looks for is Prik. When the princess is back from school, she will hurry to change her clothes and go to see Prik in the kitchen every day.

Princess Anilaphat must have Prik by her side in order to collaborate committing mischievous things every day.

For example, like stealing snacks from the kitchen, where food specially made by Mae^[3] Paen, the head chef. She cherishes her food so much they have to be guarded. The deep-fried rice crackers are stored in the jars that deserve to be stolen by the princess and her companions, which consists of only Prik.

They pretend to be ghosts to fool the palace chefs and gatekeepers.

Not to mention climbing trees to steal fruit because they have done it countless times. They would choose only the fully bloomed big trees that Khunpra Chom cherishes for the King's sightseeing purposes.

It can be said that if the princess knew which tree is her father's favorite, the next day that tree would become a target for Princess Anilaphat and Prik to steal the fruit.

This giant black plum tree shares the same fate as the other previous trees.

“Please walk slowly, my princess.”

Prik escorts Princess Anilaphat to the Bua Palace which the Princess renamed it the “Pink Bua Palace” because of the numerous pink lotuses in the pond in front of the palace.

The simple yellow two-story wooden palace is the residence of Princess Padmika. She is a distant relative but has a close relationship with the Sawetawarit clan. Princess Padmika's father is the cousin of the Prince of Sawetawarit. He has several sons and daughters with many mistresses.

One day, Lady Klai, the mother of the King of Sawetawarit Palace who gave birth only sons, became fascinated by the adorableness of his cousin's youngest daughter, Princess Padmika. Lady Klai wanted to raise her like an adopted daughter since she was young. It could be said Princess Padmika grew up with the King of Sawetawarit Palace like a real sibling.

Since she was a young teenager, Princess Padmika has served her majesty in the Grand Palace. After her death, Princess Padmika decided to

leave the Grand Palace to set up a small residence in Sawetawarit Palace in the area that Lady Klai had bequeathed to her.

Princess Padmika is single and lives at the Bua Palace with her servants. Two years ago, she adopted Pilantita, the only daughter of her older brother, Prince Piya... The reason was because Prince Piya was involved in a boating accident that capsized until his death along with Lady Erb who was his wife.

Pilantita Kasidit or Lady Pin is a pretty and neat-looking girl. She appears rather shy under the strict and disciplined tutelage of her aunt, Princess Padmika.

Pilantita looks calmer than other girls her age.

Especially compared to Princess Anilaphat who is only one year younger than Lady Pin.

"What happened to Princess Anil, Prik? She's walking with a limp." Pilantita was learning to make dumplings with Mae Koi, the cook at the riverside pavilion greeted Prik who supported Princess Anilaphat towards her.

Lady Pin's sweet face is now full of concern.

"She fell off the Giant Plum tree," Prik tells Lady Pin. "She climbed the tree like a monkey."

"Prik!!!" Lady Pilantita shouted angrily, with her beautiful eyes looking at Prik and said, "Don't accuse the princess so much."

Prik lowered her head. Pilantita's sweet, angry eyes were even more terrifying than Princess Padmika's stern eyes.

"Princess Anilaphat too. You just keep laughing." This time she looks at Princess Anilaphat with an angry look.

"It can't be helped that I want to be a monkey like Prik said," she mocks, but Lady Pin doesn't laugh and looks disgruntled.

Still, Lady Pin looks at Princess Anilaphat's bruised knee with concern.

“I'll bandage your wound.” Lady Pin's face is frown, but her voice is gentle.

“Prik, can you bring me the medical kit from inside the palace? P^[4]Koi, please lead Prik there.” Lady Pin turns to Mae Koi, who answers her simply.

“Yes, ma'am.”

Pilantita looks at Prik and P’Koi's back until they enter the palace and then turns to Princess Anilaphat with furious eyes.

“It looks like you're being too mischievous.”

“How come? I just want to eat some big black plums.”

When they first met and when they were together alone, Princess Anilaphat tried to convince Pilantita to call her by her name, not to use the royal titles because *'Friends don't talk like that.'*

Then, it is considered a default act by themselves.

At first, Lady Pin, who’s taught strictly in traditional practice like her aunt, cannot easily comply with the princess's dictation. However, Princess Anilaphat is too stubborn. She convinces Lady Pin to listen to her many reasons until Lady Pin finally complies to her. Lady Pin finds it difficult to be able to omit royal titles. As a result, the conversation of the two noble girls becomes strangely awkward.

"I don't know anymore. Who told you to climb the tree?"

“I don't know either. I just only know that I want to share plums with you.”

Princess Anilaphat replied with a smile revealing a cute and adorable dimple.

Lady Pin looks at Princess Anilaphat's stained body and shakes her head and sighs. She reaches her hand to get rid of the dry leaf from Princess Anilaphat's head.

“When did I say I wanted the black plums? You must be stubborn because someone might tell you that’s the king’s favorite black plum tree.

He even orders Khunpra Chom to take good care of it, and to not let servants steal the black plums...”

She says and gently flicks the dust-off Princess Anilaphat's clothes.

“No servant dares to disobey him. Only the king’s youngest daughter has wanted to become a thief since she was young.”

Princess Anilaphat does not argue anymore but keeps laughing non-stop and thinking curiously.

It is widely rumored that Lady Pilantita is soft-spoken and quiet.

Why did she complain about Princess Anilaphat this time so long? The princess started to feel a bit remorseful.

"Princess Prik has arrived."

Prik made a sound. She carried a handful of first-aid boxes. Mae Koi did not follow her because she thought that Lady Pin would not be in the mood to continue learning to cook with her anymore.

“What Princess?” Princess Anilaphat taunted Prik, smiling.

“Prik likes to cross the line, you deserve to be hit,” said Lady Pin with an annoyed tone.

“Getting whipped by a rattan would be more appropriate,” Princess Anil objected, smiling wickedly.

“You are so wise.” Prik pretended to bow.

“If you are still playing, I might die of bleeding.”

Lady Pilantita looked at Princess Anilaphat again impatiently, but hurriedly began to gently clean the wound on the princess’s knee. She applied an antibiotic ointment before covering it with a clean white bandage to complete the first-aid step.

“Are you feeling better?”

Lady Pin raises her eyes to look at Princess Anilaphat with concern, afraid to hurt her after applying an ointment. However, she finds the owner of that flawless face is now smiling pleasantly.

“I'm better now, after you’ve stopped complaining.”

“...”

Princess Anilaphat's answer made Lady Pin's eyes widen. If they had been alone, Princess Anilaphat would have pinched her arm.

“You are so “wise”.”

“Prik!” Lady Pin glanced at Prik, who is just as cheeky as her overlord.

“I want to eat black plums.” Princess Anilaphat sees the eyes of Lady Pin getting angry and hurriedly cut her off. “Prik, prepare salt and pepper.”

“You are so “wise”.”

“Prik!!!” Lady Pin shouted.

“I'm going to prepare some salt and pepper, and some black plums right now, my princess.”

Prik runs swiftly to the kitchen in fear of Lady Pilantita's gaze.

“It seems Prik fears you more than me now.” Princess Anilaphat murmured.

The Lady looks at Princess Anilaphat's face astoundingly until she figures out the reason why Prik has never been afraid of her overlord.

Perhaps it is because of her shining, bright, and gentle eyes. She's never seen such from anyone else. Her light shaded lips are always smiling with no trace of anger, not even one time.

“Because Anil is like this, who could ever be afraid of you?” Lady Pin looks at Princess Anilaphat while biting her lips tightly. “You're adorable.”

“Adorable?” the Princess raises her eyebrows with curiosity. “Do you adore me?”

Princess Anilaphat smiles as her dimples appear on her flawless cheeks. Lady Pin doesn't smile back and looks in the opposite direction.

“Here I come.” Prik appears with a mouthwatering plate of black plums and a bowl of salt and pepper.

When Princess Anilaphat sees the plate of black plums, she smiles and reaches her hand to take a black plum. Suddenly, her hand is hit by Lady Pin in front of Prik's eyes who is pretending not to see such action.

“You should wash your hands first.” Lady Pilantita grabbed Princess Anilaphat's hand. “Look, your hands are dirty.”

Princess Anilaphat's face is sorrowful as she sees that Lady Pin's eyes are furious.

Prik gulps her saliva down as she predicted this before.

“Prik,” said Lady Pin, still glaring at Princess Anilaphat.

"Yes, my lady."

“Take a bowl of water to wash the princess’s hands.”

“Yes, my lady,” Prik replies and goes into the palace again. In her mind, she admires herself for predicting the incident.

Without any hesitation, Lady Pin dared to hit Princess Anil in front of Prik’s eyes. However, she didn't dare order the Princess to wash her hands by herself. Actually, Lady Pin has always spoiled Princess Anilaphat herself! That karma then belongs to Prik; me who walks in and out of the palace round and round!

This time, Princess Anilaphat didn't smile and sulked, repeatedly rubbing the back of her hand where it was hit by Lady Pin. She looks extremely pitiful.

Lady Pilantita sees the princess’s smooth white hands are red, and suddenly her heart has sunk down.

“Anil, Are you hurt?”

Lady Pin lifted her beautiful eyes to look at Princess Anil's eyes and briefly gently caressed her hand to comfort her for a while.

“The pain disappeared ever since you first rubbed my hand.” Princess Anil said with a smile. “If I get hit and you comfort me like this...”

“...”

“You can hit me any times you want....”

CHAPTER 2

Caterpillar

Lady Pin's daily life is quite simple.

She goes to school from Monday through Friday. She wakes up early at dawn, showers, gets dressed, neatly adjusts her long silky black hair flowing down to the middle of her back. After she comes down to have Mae Koi's prepared breakfast which usually is boiled rice with toppings or simple dishes like fried vegetables, fried pork, or fried fish.

Actually, the King requested Lady Pin to attend school with Princess Anilaphat by a luxury car everyday since they study in the same school; where all the royals study. However, her aunt does not agree with the king's request because she believes Lady Pin should not put herself at the same level as the princess. P' Perm is assigned to drive 'Chao Kae' the only old car available at the Bua Palace.

Little does her aunt know... There have been many times that Princess Anilaphat stands to hitchhike Chao Kae by the palace back gate to have a ride with Lady Pin.

'Your Highness, why are you getting in this car? Where is Lung Plai?'

At first, P' Perm felt so nervous he was unable to do anything when he saw Princess Anilaphat open the car door to sit next to Lady Pin with a straight face.

'Lung Plai? I don't know. I told him to drive three rounds around Thewes to the right; Thaksinawat'.

'I don't understand what you said, Your Highness.'

'You just need to know that I will go to school by this car, P'Perm. If you ask any more questions, I will tell my father that you displeased me.'

After what the princess said, P'Perm stopped his doubt.

From that day on, whenever P'Perm drove and saw Princess Anilaphat smiling widely; waving her hand to stop the car by the palace wall...

P'Perm would stop the car without complaining.

Lady Pin herself cannot say more.

Whenever she is about to complain to Princess Anilaphat... when she sees the princess looking back with her dimpled smile, Lady Pin feels so weak. She can only turn her face away looking at the view outside the car window.

How can Lady Pin scold her? ...

Princess Anilaphat is behaving well and only sitting still. She does not even bother, disturb, nor annoy her.

Once arriving at school, Princess Anilaphat immediately ran and disappeared into her big group of friends. Lady Pin is used to seeing Princess Anilaphat among her group of girls of the same age in the morning before classes, during lunch, or even after classes.

Although Princess Anil is surrounded by many friends, Lady Pilantita can still recognize her easily from the crowd.

It's as if Princess Anilaphat's body shines and bathes in sunlight,

It is inevitable whenever she takes the car to go, she will take it back to return.

Some days, hitchhiking for both going and returning; however, Princess Anilaphat's hitchhiking is unpredictable.

Any day that Princess Anil joined the way to school or back home, on that day Lady Pin would be extremely happy.

When Lady Pin returns from school, her main routine begins. Her aunt often prepared tasks that the women of the palace are considered to be learning. Tasks like stripping Maprang^[6], fruit carving, making glass roses, folding dumplings, or making Pang Sib snacks. Sometimes even sitting to put together garland until one's back is stiff so that her aunt can have a garland for Buddha statue worshiping in the evening.

In her early training days, her aunt often taught Lady Pin by herself. Every step of the process was detailed, arranged, meticulously, and orderly. Lady Pin sometimes held her breath in fear of doing anything against Princess Padmika's wishes.

Once her aunt thought Lady Pin's skill was enough, she allowed Lady Pin to practice with Mae Koi alone at a pavilion in front of the lotus pond from late afternoon until it was dark.

Every twilight, during this time, she always looks forward to seeing someone each day.

The person who is always playing in the late evening often distracts her one way or another.

She would escape after stealing snacks from the Front Palace Kitchen. She often hides her wounds from playing with first-aid kits. Sometimes she would calmly join fruit carving lessons; but she would eat while carving leaving no finished work left for Mae Koi's suggestions.

There were a few times that she would carry a textbook to ask for help with homework.

It seemed to be her pretending for mockery as if those books were excuses that Princess Anil used to irritate her and give her headaches by answering her endless questions.

There was a time when Lady Pin had a headache that felt like catching a fever when Princess Anil brought her Thai language homework to ask her to teach Thai proverbs.

'Khun^[7]. Pin, what does it mean to push a mortar up a mountain?'

'It means to do something beyond your ability, Anil. It requires a lot of patience.'

'Should we bring a pestle along?'

'Ae... that is not stated in the textbook.'

'Then why would one need to push a mortar up a mountain to be meaningful when you don't bring the pestle along?'

‘...’

‘And, if you bring the mortar and pestle up, what would you do next? Make chili paste?’

‘...’

‘What’s wrong, Khun Pin? Why do you look like you are about to faint?’

On the days that Princess Anil and friends (and when by friends, there is only Prik) don't show up, not even a sign, Lady Pin would always think that it is a blessing to not have a troublemaker to distract her every day.

Even though she kept telling herself that, Pilantita’s eyes continued to search for the two girls until the sky transitioned into a dark blue.

Every night before Lady Pin slept, she would recite prayers with her aunt for a long time in the prayer room, before her aunt allowed her to go to bed.

Lady Pin had her own private bedroom since the very first day she entered the Bua Palace, which she loves very much.

The room was spacious, beautiful, and decorated attentively with feminine furniture by her aunt.

The room brings her a sense of confidence, that ensuring her aunt's willingness to provide for her both physically and mentally makes her feel at home, safe, and secure.

Before she goes to bed, Lady Pin prepares her textbooks according to tomorrow’s schedule. After double checking that everything is prepared...

She begins writing in her thick grid line journal which is well kept hidden in a drawer above the desk.

She expresses her personal thoughts, writing them letter by letter.

Word by word...

She conveys both memorable and indelible stories into that gridded journal. Lady Pin felt sorrow in response to certain messages, while a smile blossomed on her face upon reading stories that touched her heart between the lines of the journal.

She first started journaling when she lost her father and mother at the same time.

At the time sorrow began to seep deep into the depths of her heart. Lady Pin discovers that the memories she has of her family are gradually dissolved into the relentless passage of time until it dries away. The image of her family's recent happiness had become completely blurred.

Forgetting fond significant stories that you wish to hold onto, can be more agonizing than saying goodbye.

Even when you long to recall it once more,
you cannot...

Lady Pin dedicated herself to document all memorable and enduring stories within her diary, to recall all her precious memories, events, and feelings throughout her life.

In case if she ever loses someone or something once more,

She would be able to revisit those memories with a turn of delicate paper,
at least in her own diary...

Every night... After she finishes journaling, she prepares to go to bed early.

She would start by alternating between slapping and wiping the mattress clean with her hands like her aunt always taught her. Then she would chant a short prayer then prostrate three times on the pillow. Next, she'd lay down and neatly tuck herself with the blanket towards her neck.

Unfortunately, Lady Pin grapples with sleeping difficulties. Frequently unintentionally connecting many stories in her head, like the ivy buds clinging to the fence.

Until she can fall asleep, it tends to last until late at night.

Lady Pin's daily routine seems to be in this continuous cycle on her school days.

But even if it is Saturday or Sunday, Lady Pin still has to wake up at dawn anyway, for her aunt is not pleased to see her sleep in until the sun rises. On weekends, Lady Pin often simply dresses up in a small flower-patterned dress, looking pretty and cute.

Her main duty on the weekend is helping her aunt prepare food to offer to the monks who came for alms at the back gate of the palace. After that, Lady Pin will have breakfast with her aunt in the late morning.

Her late meal on holiday is much more special than her school day because her aunt personally supervised Mae Koi's cooking.

After finishing breakfast, her aunt usually goes to do errands inside and outside the palace.

For inside errands, her aunt is responsible for inspecting the orderliness of the Front Palace Kitchen room; especially when welcoming important visitors or a party day for both inside and outside guests. Her aunt also volunteered to be the head to direct everything in order to please the King at most.

For outside errands, it would be going to the market, fabric market, floral market, or meeting old friends from her teenage years in the main palace.

On free days like this, Lady Pin usually spends her time making snacks such as Pang Sib^[8] or Miang Lao^[9], doing homework, or sometimes reading textbooks in her aunt's reading room.

Today... apart from sitting alone looking at the surrounding scenery at the pavilion in front of the lotus pond,

Lady Pin wants to do nothing at all.

She sighed for a long time when she noticed that during this period... Someone seems to be in silence.

It seems to have not seen that person's face... for many days.

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“Why are you looking so distracted, Lady Pin?”

That familiar soft voice rang through her ears; Lady Pin then was startled when she found that Princess Anilaphat's face was barely a pinch away from hers.

“Anil ...”

Without knowing, Lady Pin pulled herself away from Princess Anil as much as possible,

as if she fears that Princess Anil would know that her heartbeat is beating so rapidly.

“Since when did you come, Anil? I did not notice any noise.”

“Just a while ago. I sat here and waited for a while; expecting for when you would notice me.” Princess Anilaphat gently smiled; prompting Lady Pin to smile in response before she realized it.

“Little that I know...I kept on waiting.” Princess Anil laughed a little before directing Lady Pin’s attention to a petite glass box in front of her, concealed by a thin, dark-color cloth.

“What is that, Anil?” Lady Pin’s beautiful brows question with suspicion before her eyes widen as Princess Anil finally removes the cover of that mysterious box.

“w-worm!!!!”

Lady Pin can hardly speak when she sees a plump green glass worm climbing on the oleander stem in that rectangular glass box. There is a newspaper placed at the bottom of the box to catch the worm’s droppings. Steel grates covered with lush green watercress leaves are placed over the paper.

"What are you having fun with Anil?" Lady Pin asked with a trembling throat.

“Having fun? ... I am very serious here.” Princess Anilaphat's dark yet brilliant eyes look very determined.

“Raising this worm is your intention?” Lady Pin tilted her head while seeing the light green fat worm creeping from one oleander stalk to the other in its sluggish manner.

“I'm raising a butterfly, not a worm!”

Her full and wavy lips said angrily.

“In the end, this chubby sluggish caterpillar will turn into a beautiful butterfly.”

“Is that what is stated in a textbook?” Lady Pin tilted her neck and looked at the glass worm in the square box again with consideration.

“Yes... it was stated in a foreign textbook; a picture book in my father's reading room.” Princess Anil's voice is extremely dazzling "but I want to know if it is really true... so I went to snatch a worm under Ta Som's watercress tree."

“...”

“I also snatched some watercress leaves, oleander to feed it.” Princess Anil looked so proud when she mentioned how she feeds the worm which keeps on eating and eating and eating.

“Why do you not believe in the textbook?”

“It is not that I do not believe in the textbook” Princess Anilaphat thoughtfully said, "I just wanted to know if it is really true."

"You are a strange girl" even though Lady Pin herself is older, her height is only at Princess Anilaphat's shoulder; however, sometimes Lady Pin couldn't resist when there is an opportunity to suppress Princess Anilaphat just for a little bit “Still, you seem to be very curious.”

Lady Pin knew inside her heart that Princess Anilaphat's thoughts were different from others, not only compared to girls of the same age, but also unlike everyone she had known in her entire life. Princess Anilaphat often questioned her curiosity and refused to obey any prohibitions or rules that she could not find a reason to support.

Hence to say it is a royal habit,

Her class comprises princesses with whom she was really close, yet none of them resemble Princess Anilaphat.

There are princesses who are arrogant, causing others to bow and walk on their knees. Some are so spectacularly neat. However, there is no one as mischievous and wise as Princess Anilaphat.

“Prik is more curious than me,” Princess Anilaphat smiled when she talked about her close friend, who hasn’t been seen today, not even a shadow.

“Yesterday, Khunpra Chom scolded a servant in the Front Palace for fidgeting like an earthworm reduced to ashes... Prik wondered how it would be, so she snatched some ashes and sprinkled them on earthworms. Once Prik found out what it meant, I would know it as well.”

“Snatching here and there... Anil is very stubborn.” Lady Pin wearily blew out her breath, but deep down she held such great affection for the person in front of her that she couldn't help but let out a little grin.

“Loving here, loving there”

Princess Anil repeated the word by flickering her tongue into a clear ‘r’ sound.

“Is that so, Lady Pin?”

The princess innocently smiles making herself look cute and adorable enough to make Lady Pin flustered and suddenly change the topic.

“So, how is it?”

“How is what?”

“That earthworm.”

Instead of answering, Princess Anil shrugged, squirmed, and laughed non-stop.

Lady Pin cannot stop laughing. Princess Anil’s action does not look even a bit like the ugly disgusting earthworm.

It will just make her become cuter...

Perhaps because of Princess Anilaphat's eye-catching face, her beautiful slender brows resemble a carefully crafted portrait, her dark slender sharp eyes gleam intensely, a graceful nose bridge descending to her lovely wavy light pink lips. Her smooth and glowing complexion compliments her rosy cheeks that easily flush when she indulges in play.

Nonetheless, her aunty who has never complimented anyone, sometimes mentions how beautiful Princess Anilaphat is to Lady Pin, and she has never seen anyone as beautiful as her.

“Is there something on my face?”

“What?”

"I saw you staring at me for a long time." When Lady Pin saw Princess Anilaphat curiously lifting her brows high and raising her hand to wipe her face, she inevitably had to change the topic of conversation again.

“Will this caterpillar really become a butterfly?”

“It will... but first it has to turn into a cocoon.” Princess Anil kindly touches the soft caterpillar with her index finger. “Once released from the cocoon, it will become a beautiful butterfly.”

“That's unbelievable. How could such a fat caterpillar turn into a light butterfly?” Lady Pin still wonders.

“Let's just say... can I leave this glass box with you to look after at the Bua Palace?”

Lady Pin's face turned pale, imagining herself taking care of Princess Anilaphat's pet worm on her own.

“What for? Why would I need to take care of this ugly caterpillar!”

“To keep it with you is a good idea, so I can come here often.”

Princess Anilaphat's eyes shined extremely brightly as she uttered that sentence.

“To see the caterpillar?” Lady Pin's weakly speaks.

“No...” Princess Anilaphat replied with a laugh.

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“To see you.”

CHAPTER 3

Temple Fair

"Are you sure Auntie Pad is not here this evening?"

Princess Anilaphat asks to make sure after hearing Prik tell her that Princess Padmika is going to her friend's funeral in the suburb this evening.

"As sure as death." Prik said, smiling at the corner of her mouth.
"May she be back to the palace late at night."

"Smiling like that, what is in your mind, my lady?" said Pilantita, cautiously looking at Princess Anilaphat.

"Tonight, a temple fair will take place at the temple behind the palace, Khun Pin." Princess Anilaphat's twinkling eyes represent thousands of meanings, "I would like to invite you to go to the fair with me."

Lady Pin widened her eyes in awe.

How would she... dare to go out at dusk?

not only escaping to a temple fair

but also leaving the palace after sunset? Pilantita won't even dare to think about it.

"I do not dare. It is so dangerous."

"It is okay, my lady. I and the princess often escape to the temple fair. It is not dangerous at all; besides, it is so much fun."

Prik, who was sitting by Lady Pin's knee, spoke up in a hushed tone, which made Lady Pin look at her thoughtfully. It is true that Princess Anilaphat and the others can live without limitations, for they never easily follow any rules.

But that does not mean those omissions are generously granted to her...

"Please come with me, Lady Pin, it is not easy to have an opportunity like this."

Princess Anilaphat looked at Lady Pin with her innocent eyes; Lady Pin could not even dare to speak out to reject her fearing it would depress her.

Finally, the three girls sneaked out of the palace; leaving from the wall at the backside of the palace; to visit a small temple fair in the alley behind the palace.

For Pilantita, the temple fair is spectacular, with its sparkling lights, vibrant colors, and immersive ambient sounds that can be overwhelming, making her eyes blurred and hard to resist.

Shops line up and fill up both sides of the road, offering a variety of items. Some sell snacks, while others offer savory dishes like rice noodles with coconut milk or fried noodles. What truly catches one's attention is the dance arch that captivates Prik, making her long to join the uncles and aunts on stage, to the point where her neck seems to keep stretching out of desire.

The sole obstacle preventing her is Princess Anilaphat's strict order and reason in a gentle voice,

'Prik, you are so young. There are drunk people on the stage. If a pedophile comes to bully Prik, what will you do? It will be frustrating and a waste of emotions.'

How can Prik ignore these words from her Highness? Hence, whenever she attends the temple fair, Prik can only gaze at the dance stage, often straining her neck in the process.

Even if she cannot go out and dance as she desires...

Prik obeys Princess Anilaphat more than her father and mother; Plai and Yuan. While Princess Anilaphat occasionally exhibits childlike mischievousness, at times her thoughts appear remarkably intricate and profound for her age.

"Everything is so amazing!" Princess Anilaphat said pleasantly.

"That is true, your Highness." Prik quickly replied.

"Shh."

Princess Anilaphat raised her index finger to touch her mouth, not wanting Prik to use the royal titles outside the palace.

“Oh, yeah!”

Prik quickly adjusted her words, but they remained convincing enough to prompt Lady Pilantita to frown at Prik for seemingly taking advantage of every opportunity with Princess Anilaphat.

While Princess Anilaphat is very fond that Prik talks to her like a friend.

"Nu^[10] Pin."

“Yes?”

While Lady Pin was quite irritated by the manner in which Princess Anilaphat addressed her, she had to grudgingly respond.

"What's wrong? Why are you making a pouty face?" Princess Anilaphat lifted her brows high, "Do you want to have some cotton candy?"

“Who wants to have cotton candy? I... ah, I'm just afraid that someone in the palace will see us...”

"Do not be afraid, Anil is here," Princess Anilaphat lifted her hand and slapped her chest solemnly, making Lady Pin smile helplessly.

Lady Pin found the way Princess Anilaphat called herself by her own name is so cute and adorable.

“Are you hot, Nu Pin?”

“No.”

"If you are not hot, why do your cheeks turn red then?" Princess Anilaphat is still naturally curious.

"Then it must be the heat... It has been so hot today," Lady Pin stubbornly retorted before pretending to look in other ways, as if there were a whole lot of interesting things.

“When it is hot, you have to drink sweet drinks,” Princess Anilaphat mused. “Let's go buy some, Prik.”

"I want some rocket water^[11]."

Prik swallowed her saliva while imagining the sweet refreshing multi-colored rocket water's taste.

"Okay," Princess Anilaphat smiled as always, "I have a lot of money today."

"You have a lot of money every day, Nu Anil," Prik argued.

"It is a lot more today because I stole it," Princess Anilaphat said, smiling at the corner of her lips.

"Did you take it from your mother's wallet?" Prik inquired, maintaining her usual role as a loyal companion to her overlord.

"Stolen from my personal piggy bank."

Prik annoyingly rolled her eyes as she heard the Princess's answer.

"Anil enjoys claiming that you've stolen things, though in reality, everything belonged to you from the start," Lady Pin remarked with a touch of irony. "Anil simply wishes to be recognized as a thief..."

"Do you think so, Nu Pin?" the Princess said while laughing.

"Yes."

"Then... one day I will steal something from Nu Pin, just wait and see."

Princess Anilaphat widely smiles, making both her dimples shine brighter than ever.

"You just keep talking, Anil ..."

Lady Pin whispered nonchalantly, but within her thoughts, she pondered deeply on what possessions Princess Anilaphat truly desired to claim as her own; which made her talk in a playful way.

Surprisingly, the one who couldn't stop dwelling on this statement more than anyone else was Prik. Now, she contemplated methods to discreetly enter Lady Pin's bedroom at night to steal something that her overlord had mentioned earlier, as was expected of a servant adhering to her lord's wishes.

Still, what does Princess Anilaphat want from Lady Pin?

Probably a round fat piggy bank.

"Nu Pin, you can choose any rocket-colored water that you want."

Princess Anilaphat said as the three of them arrived in front of a rocket water shop with square glass jars filled with colorful carbonated sweetened beverages lining at the front. The dark brown color is cola flavor. Next comes the same dark color, that is, Zaxi, which tastes a bit like a balm. The dark purple one is grape flavored, the green one is soda, and the red one is Salak.

"I will have the red one."

Lady Pin pointed her finger at the red jar then suddenly remembered what her aunty always told her

'Rocket water is useless. It also causes tooth decay.'

Observing the expressions on both Prik and Princess Anilaphat's faces after they took a big sip of Cola rocket water, and seeing them close their eyes in delight, Lady Pin couldn't resist trying some herself.

The sweet and sparkling taste is very refreshing. Lady Pin then understood why Prik kept on demanding to drink rocket water from the moment she stepped into the temple.

"Ahh"

"Ahh"

Princess Anil and Prik closed their eyes, almost simultaneously letting out a peculiar sound after finishing their Cola rocket water.

"Anil, Prik, do not do that! It does not look appropriate."

At that moment, Lady Pin's usually sweet eyes took on a sharpness akin to a knife's edge. However, Princess Anilaphat and her friends found it amusing and playfully mimicked putting their hands together at waist level, acting cute and tidy.

"Heh, you are so stubborn, Anil. Keep up being sarcastic, and from now on Pin won't complain anymore."

Lady Pin delivered a sermon with a cold glance directed at the Princess. Her soft-colored lips twisted into a frustrated expression, and she briefly shook her head before striding ahead of the two obstinate children, without glancing back.

“Wait, Nu Pin.”

Princess Anilaphat's face turned pale. Regardless of how stubborn or mischievous she could be, Lady Pin's stern gaze never wavered at this moment.

Princess Anilaphat had no choice but to trail behind the slender figure with a ponytail swaying back and forth, left and right.

Finally, Princess Anilaphat grabs the wrist of the person in front to stop and wait...

"Nu Pin, don't be so angry with me."

Princess Anilaphat was worried to see Lady Pin's beautiful eyes looking so angry.

"I am sorry."

Princess Anilaphat's voice was incredibly gentle, yet the touch of her slender hand holding Lady Pin's hand was even more tender.

She not only grasped Lady Pin's hand firmly but also shook it like a child clinging to her mother's hand to remain close.

"That's enough, Anil. It's embarrassing, I am not really angry with you."

Lady Pilantita struggled to swallow her saliva as she gradually withdrew her hand from Princess Anilaphat's grasp.

"It is really hot today. Look at your face, Nu Pin. Red as a fruit of Nettle."

Prik closely looked at Lady Pin curiously.

"Don't they call it Ivy Gourd, Prik," Princess Anilaphat nicely interrupted.

Upon realizing that Lady Pin might not appreciate her continuously sassy behavior,

Princess Anilaphat immediately adjusted her smile...

"That's a cotton candy shop, Nu Anil, do you want some?" Prik, who has no interest in anything other than food, pointed her finger to the colorful

cotton candy spinning pot with a lot of excitement.

"Sure, get one for Nu Pin, too, Prik. Here's the money."

"Thank you." Prik received the money and quickly ran to the cotton candy shop.

"Since when did I say that I want to have cotton candy?" Even though she claimed not to be angry, Lady Pin maintained a stoic expression, leaving Princess Anilaphat unable to predict what she was thinking inside her mind.

"Nu Pin didn't tell me, but I want you to try it." At this time, Princess Anil was quite reserved; she didn't even dare to smile. She can only speak with a smile instead, as if she is a girl who has never appeared sad like anyone else.

"Here you go, Nu Anil, Nu Pin," Prik ran back with two dreamy cotton candy stalks. "The blue one is Nu Anil's, the pink for Nu Pin, mine is yellow."

"No one knows me like you, Prik."

"No one. Who would know Anil likes blue?" Prik said, opening her mouth wide to bite the bright yellow silk candy cotton ball.

"I also know; just like Prik, that Anil likes blue," Lady Pin said, unpredictably looking at Prik, "And I do not even like pink."

"That is not true!" Princess Anilaphat and Prik loudly reject each other at the same time.

"Nu Pin likes pink!"

Princess Anilaphat and her friends continue to persist, showing no intention of giving up.

"Who said that?..." Lady Pin feigned ignorance, delicately grazing her pale pink cotton candy in a poised manner as Princess Padmika's niece.

"Most of Nu Pin's belongings are all pink." This time, Princess Anil argued without giving up at all.

"Anil was right." Prik agreed, always on her overlord's side.

“Using that color, does not mean I will like that color.” Lady Pin grinned happily; her eyes gleaming with a mischievous twinkle.

Sometimes, it's fun to manipulate these two stubborn kids.

“Lady Pin”

A thick hoarse voice stopped the argument of the three girls like magic.

Especially when they saw that the voice was not just anyone, but P’Perm; a driver of the Bua Palace. The children widen their eyes while holding their breath.

“You are here, Lady Pin. Princess Padmika asked me to look for you,” P’Perm who respectfully bowed while talking to Lady Pin. When he glanced and saw Princess Anilaphat, he panicked then bowed down lower than before until his head almost hit his knees; making him look very bizarre.

“Ah, are you also here, your Highness?”

“Yes,” said Princess Anilaphat in a calm voice. “I invited Khun Pin. Do not make a big deal out of it, P’Perm.”

Princess Anilaphat's face now looked more solemn than ever while Lady Pilantita kept her face down and tightly pursed her lips until it formed a straight line.

“Please have mercy, your Highness. I have to bring Lady Pin back to the palace according to Princess Padmika's order, your Highness ”

At this time P’Perm's face looked uncomfortable; enough to make Prik feel pity.

“Okay” Princess Anilaphat finally uttered after being silent for a long time.

“Let's all go back together.”

CHAPTER 4

Punishment

The exterior of the Bua Palace is a two-story structure that appears neither old nor new. It is painted in a soft yellow hue, which contrasts with the dark green roof and features circular arched windows. It exudes a dignified beauty, much like its owner.

The interior is adorned with simple dark brown wooden furniture, lacking the opulence and intricate design seen in the Front Palace, which serves as the residence of His Royal Highness. This distinction is evident from the moment one ascends the stairs to the gable roof.

When P'Perm led the three girls into the large welcoming guest's hall, Princess Padmika was already sitting and waiting on an intricately patterned long wooden carved chair.

She has a straight back; her black hair neatly tied in a bun with a bright beautiful face with some late forties aging marks. She is wearing a black laced dress because she just returned from a friend's funeral in the suburbs.

Pilantita and Prik bowed respectfully before taking their seats on the floor, each tucking one leg to the side as they sat in front of Princess Padmika, their expressions showing a touch of trepidation. In accordance with her equal rank, Princess Anilaphat opted to sit in a chair beside Princess Padmika.

Being strict with the tradition, Princess Padmika bowed her head to pay respects to Princess Anilaphat knowing that she was the daughter of the owner of the Sawetawarit Palace. However, with their age difference, Princess Anilaphat bowed with a respectful posture to Princess Padmika like a normal girl.

Princess Padmika offered a cold smile before turning her gaze toward her niece, Lady Pilantita, who, at that moment, kept her head lowered and steadfastly avoided making any eye contact whatsoever.

Though Princess Padmika's sharp eyes did not show any sign of anger, it made Prik who accidentally looked at the Princess for a little bit, afraid enough to hide her face down and almost hit her own knees.

“Lady Pin”

Pilantita notices her aunt's numerous complaints delivered in a hushed tone as she calls her name.

It was hard to respond without her soft plump lips trembling.

“Your Highness”

"Why are you hanging out of the palace at night without telling me?"

Princess Padmika inquired sternly, her tone firm but her expression calm and inscrutable as she gazed at the niece who was crouching so low that she was nearly touching the floor.

"I do apologize, aunty."

Lady Pin gazed up and looked at her aunt for a moment, before bowing her head down even more.

"It is all my fault, aunty."

Princess Anilaphat said in a very firm voice. In reality, she shared a cousin relationship with Princess Padmika through their bloodline, but due to their significant age difference, Princess Anilaphat referred to Princess Padmika as her aunt. This was because her grandmother, Lady Klai, treated Princess Padmika as her youngest daughter, and even her father treated Princess Padmika as a younger sister.

To Princess Anilaphat, Aunt Pad was a figure of beauty, elegance, and deep admiration. In contrast, Prik feared Princess Padmika more than anyone else because she upheld the palace traditions with greater solemnity and strictness than even the King.

“I was the one who forced Khun Pin to come with me.”

“Force?” Princess Padmika's face suddenly became more serious. “Did you bound her arms and legs, dragging her to go with you? I do not

think so...”

“...”

“Lady Pin walked by her own legs...”

“...”

“Didn’t you, Lady Pin?”

At this moment, it wasn't only Lady Pilantita who quivered with fear; rather, Prik appeared to be even more terrified.

“Yes, aunty”

Princess Padmika continued to observe her niece with care. She had no desire to scold or anger Lady Pin for any reason because she was well aware that Pilantita is indeed as fragile as a glass. Even though she lost both father and mother at a young age, she had always conducted herself in a manner consistent with traditional teachings. If ever there was a time for an unusual occurrence, it would be now.

“However, when Lady Pin makes a mistake... I must punish you.”

“...”

“Do you know why I have to punish you, Lady Pin”

“Because I am wrong.”

Pilantita replied to her aunt in a full sobbing voice, blaming herself for not resisting.

Her anger grew as she questioned herself and discovered...

Even though she was aware that accompanying Princess Anilaphat to the temple fair at this hour would eventually lead to her aunt's punishment, as it had before, would she still opt for leisure?

And when the answer was 'yes.'

Lady Pilantita was deeply frustrated with herself.

"What did you do wrong?"

Princess Padmika strictly repeated her words.

"I am wrong because I decided to go outside the palace."

Lady Pin could only think of that answer. Up until now, she herself had not been able to understand how serious her mistake was.

"How about Princess Anilaphat, what do you think is wrong?"

Princess Padmika turns to look at Princess Anilaphat this time; curiously she wants to know the intentions of the protagonist.

"I do not think that going out of the palace is wrong."

Princess Anilaphat spoke with a composed voice and radiant eyes that captivated her audience. However, Lady Pin anxiously glanced at Princess Anilaphat, fearing that her aunt might also reprimand Princess Anilaphat.

Lady Pin did not wish such an outcome.

"It's wrong that we did not inform you in advance, which worries you."

"Is that it?"

Unconsciously, Princess Padmika began to feel a fondness for conversing with the King's youngest daughter.

"If there would be any more inappropriate actions, it would be going out at dark, especially with only girls; it is too dangerous."

"Princess Anil is very clever." Princess Padmika flashed an affectionate smile to Princess Anilaphat fondly; she was not accustomed to arguing with girls before; because Lady Pin is submissive, and moreover, she was also quiet.

"It appears that Princess Anilaphat has a good understanding of thinking maturely, so why did you still go through with it?"

Princess Padmika's question not only caused Princess Anilaphat's eyes to widen and gleam but also made it impossible for her to suppress her smile.

“The reason I still do that is because I’m still young. **A child cannot stop their own curiosity.**” The bright dimples on her cheeks promptly brightened up the gloomy guest room atmosphere where the younger girls were offering trembling prostrations.

“However, when I listened to your words a moment ago... when I think about it, I understand that adults have reasons to worry.”

“Once you understand, what do you think about it?”

Princess Padmika curiously asked Princess Anilaphat with affection.

“After thinking, I agreed with some parts and disagreed with some.”

“Which part do you disagree with?”

“What I do not agree on is ... the fact that the world outside is worth learning; and a child should not languish only in the palace... You just need to have an adult to accompany you and to guide you both the good and bad.”

Princess Padmika could not help smiling even though she was angry with her niece Lady Pin.

Princess Anilaphat was different from any girl of her age but in a good way.

She is graceful, intelligent, bold, and dares to speak out.

While many ideas appear to be too advanced for Princess Padmika to grasp...

The King had even told princess Padmika about his little daughter about the mischievousness around the palace that:

'Punishing Anil is hard... Because she thinks like a lawyer. You cannot reason with her easily.'

The King chuckled as he spoke, his eyes brimming with affection when he mentioned Princess Anilaphat.

'I may have entrusted her with Prince Anan for too long. He studied in Europe and developed modern ideas. He raised Anil as his daughter, which may have influenced her turning out this way.'

The King mentioned Princess Anantawut, the eldest son, the owner of Burapha Palace located in the East of the Grand Palace.

The King also had a second son, Prince Anon, who is now studying in Europe, following in his brother's footsteps.

But the one he loved and was fond of the most was Princess Anilaphat, the youngest daughter who was almost twelve years apart from her older brother.

"Good idea. Good idea. If a child should not languish in the palace, then maybe next time I shall bring Lady Pin and Princess Anilaphat to a funeral together."

Princess Padmika said giggling.

"It is okay." Princess Anil was still smiling broadly even though her face was beginning to lose color.

Who would want to play around at a funeral.

There is nothing fun about that.

"Nevertheless, Lady Pin must face consequences today." Despite inquiring about Princess Anilaphat's reasoning for an extended period, Princess Padmika ultimately stuck with her initial decision.

"Yes, aunty" Lady Piantita kept her head down as usual.

"I'm going to hit Lady Pin with sticks three times, and a week of detention."

"What about me?" Princess Anilaphat's bright eyes widened curiously.

"You are not under my supervision."

It is the truth that Princess Padmika should not be involved.

"If Khun Pin is punished, I must also be punished. I invited her."

Princess Anilaphat's firm voice without any slight hesitation, coupled with her determined and beautiful countenance, prompted Princess Padmika to reconsider a more suitable punishment.

"Even if you do not punish me, Prik and I will stay in the Bua Palace with Khun Pin, not going anywhere for seven days and seven nights."

Excellent!

Hearing Princess Anilaphat's statement, Prik praised her overlord in her head.

"Then I will punish you as well," Princess Padmika finally spoke out in submission.

"I really appreciate it" Princess Anilaphat bowed her head while Lady Pin had to muster great effort to hold back her tears because she didn't want to witness Princess Anilaphat being punished alongside her.

"I might reconsider and confine both of you to the reading room throughout the entire day tomorrow. Punishing Princess Anil for seven days and seven nights could make the king furious."

"Thank you for your kindness."

Surprisingly, Princess Anilaphat is now smiling broadly and satisfactorily accepted the punishment.

Huh

Prik, who was still crouching on the floor, could only once again praise her overlord in her head.

Princess Anilaphat, Princess Anilaphat...

Why are you striving so hard to incur Princess Padmika's punishment?

‘You’re quite clever!’

CHAPTER 5

The Reading Room

The reading room of the Bua Palace is quite petite, as it resides on the pentagonal porch of the palace. This porch is embellished with large arched crows egg green windows that stretch from floor to ceiling, encompassing all five sides.

In the center of the room, a dignified teak table had been positioned with a deliberate placement, allowing the exquisite light to filter in from the sides. It was encircled by a substantial bookcase, housing textbooks whose pages had begun to yellow, emanating the nostalgic scent of aged paper that permeated the room.

"Aunty asked you to copy the textbook, why do you keep drawing, Anil?"

Lady Pin impatiently asked when she glanced and saw Princess Anilaphat is more excited to draw and scribble in a book rather than copying textbooks, which was her aunt's punishment for their transgression—sneaking off to the temple fair at dusk without informing anyone.

"I am bored, Khun Pin. Why would you have to copy it when all the letters are already in the textbook?"

Princess Anilaphat looked up to Lady Pin with crystal clear eyes in the sun.

"You copy it for the sake of remembering; aunty might check it when you leave the room."

Lady Pin rested her chin on her hand with a sense of boredom, pondering whether there would ever be a time when Princess Anil would follow someone's instructions without questioning.

"If she really wants to see it, I will recite an article in the textbook for her, I memorized it in my head." Without finishing, Princess Anilaphat turned her attention back to the drawing in her notebook.

“Well, when we were punished, I noticed you accepted auntie’s words.” Lady Pin wanted to win over this stubborn child, investing her time in trying to get through to her.

"I promised not to go out, but not to copy textbooks." Princess Anil still has no intention of letting Lady Pin catch up with her.

Lady Pin could only sigh when she realized that defeating the Princess would be challenging. She then switched to look at Princess Anilaphat's sketchbook and frowned.

"So what are you drawing? It looks like a doodle drawing.”

"I’m drawing Khun Pin's face." Princess Anil beamed a radiant smile, her dark eyes now gleaming brightly.

Hearing that, Lady Pin then looked down at the drawing in the notebook until the tip of her nose almost touched the piece of paper. The drawing began with a circle in the center with a circle in the center featuring a wavy line at the top of the circle resembling a strand of hair. There are two small dots inside the circle to resemble eyes. Below, there's a semi-circular curve resembling a smile.

Looking at the picture closely, Lady Pin looked up and gave a cold look to Princess Anil.

“Am I that ugly?”

"What? Ugly? But I think it’s cute." said Princess Anil, smiling.

“Does this picture look cute?” her beautiful light-colored wavy lip was now contorted with bias.

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. .
.

“You are cute.”

Princess Anil pointed the pencil in her hand toward Lady Pin and grinned widely, revealing her dimple. Her eyes seemed even brighter than before.

“Anil!”

Lady Pin's voice remained solemn and hushed. Her large brown eyes carried an air of irritation, but her fair cheeks, adorned with perspiration-dampened strands of hair, flushed with redness.

Lady Pin pulled herself away from the Princess's drawing book and sat back down to prepare to copy the textbooks. Her lips were tightly packed in a straight line as if trying to suppress something.

Something that was rapidly bouncing in her chest.

Please...

...slower your beat

“Then I will redraw it carefully, so the drawing will be as cute as the real person,” said Princess Anilaphat in a teasing voice.

“Just do whatever you want, Anil.” Lady Pin glanced at Princess Anilaphat with anger but smiled a bit. “As if you would believe me if I forbade you.”

After hearing Lady Pin's words, Princess Anilaphat couldn't speak and instead burst into laughter.

Lady Pin sighed once more and then diligently refocused on copying the textbooks. She felt relieved as the Princess's laughter subsided. It appeared that the stubborn child might come to her senses and resume copying the textbooks.

On the contrary...

“Khun Pin.” That clear voice made Lady Pin feel nervous.

“Yes?”

“Let me take a look into your eyes.”

“...”

While Lady Pin was taken aback by Princess Anil's words, she instinctively directed her gaze toward Anil's clear eyes. It was then that she

noticed Princess Anilaphat holding a pencil at eye level and making intricate motions, resembling a skilled painter.

Princess Anilaphat earnestly observed Lady Pin's petite visage. Pilantita's eyebrows had a rounded curve to them, and her prominent nose added an air of determination. Her beautiful wavy light pink lips framed her face, and the lady's smooth cheeks occasionally blushed for reasons unknown. Her large light brown eyes, akin to those of young fawns, possessed both sweetness and strength.

'Lady Pin has a small mouth and nose, it's so lovely and cute. I would really want her to be another daughter of mine.'

Princess Alisa, Princess Anilaphat's mother said that almost every time she met Lady Pin that Princess Anil almost could recite all her mother's words by heart.

Furthermore, it remains deeply ingrained in her thoughts each and every day.

"There." Princess Anilaphat brought the pencil near her face and playfully winked one eye. "Khun Pin, can you please smile?" she asked, smiling brightly.

Unconsciously, Lady Pin smiled back, which seems to look like she genuinely listened to Princess Anilaphat's words, but in reality, Lady Pin's affectionate smile aimed at the arrogant person in front of her.

After moving the pencil in and out for a while, Princess Anilaphat resumed sketching in her notebook. Meanwhile, Lady Pin spent her time gazing at Princess Anilaphat's smooth cheeks and prominent nose. Princess Anilaphat had been deeply engrossed in her drawing for quite some time now.

Until...

"How about this time?" Princess Anil asked while handing the drawing book to Lady Pin who had been sitting, putting a hand on her face glancing at her for a while.

"Beautiful."

Eventually, after Lady Pin had been contemplating the drawing in the notebook for a while, she murmured,

"Beautiful?" asked Princess Anilaphat in a clear voice.

"Disgraceful!" Lady Pin frowned then replied in a deep voice. "Why did you draw me as a woman with a big head, big breasts, and such limp arms and legs?"

"Does it not look alike?" Princess Anilaphat raised one brow curiously.

"Not even a bit!"

"Then, I will draw it again." Her slender eyes widened in an almost imploring manner, but Lady Pin didn't perceive it that way.

"Anil!" Lady Pin sternly raised her voice, "Not only do you refuse to copy the textbook, but you also annoy me."

This time, a scowl formed on Lady Pin's face. She pushed the Princess's drawing book away with a petulant attitude, as she realized once again that she couldn't control Princess Anil.

"If you draw it again, I will get angry," Lady Pin's sweet fawn-like eyes looked menacing.

Nevertheless...

"I will draw something else then." Princess Anil said giggling without care.

As if Lady Pin stared until her eyes plopped out, Princess Anil still remained unconcerned.

Even now, Princess Anilaphat continues scribbling and humming Christmas carols, for she is a girl who never frets or worries.

"I will not care about you anymore."

Lady Pin said while raising her hand towards her temple as if she was getting a headache from this little child in front of her.

It appears that her aunt's punishment of confining her and Princess Anilaphat in a small room happens to torture her the most.

At this moment, Anil is so stubborn.

Even Princess Anilaphat's persistent habit of biting her pencil still tempts her to extend her hand and playfully pinch her cheek until she cries.

“Hey!” Princess Anil smiled at the corner of her lips. “You said you do not care, but why do you keep on looking at me?”

“Tch!”

After she gets caught, Lady Pin presses her lips together firmly, then turns her face away to avoid Princess Anilaphat's gaze before resuming her task of transcribing the textbook. It appears that, this time, she is determined to not easily raise her head to look at the person in front of her.

The little child commenced to disrupt Lady Pin's concentration again, as if she had been sent from heaven to interrupt her textbooks copying.

“*Khun Pin... look at this.*” That sweet voice eased Lady Pin's resentment as easily as if nothing had ever happened before.

“...”

Once again, Princess Anil put the drawing book near Lady Pin, who then focused glancing at the drawing intently.

“This is Anil’s dream house.”

Calling her own name to make amends with Lady Pin always seems to be effective, as every time Pilantita hears it, she can't help but muster a faint smile. Especially at this moment when Princess Anilaphat's eyes grew bright, she appeared innocent like a good girl like others.

How could Lady Pin be cold-hearted?

“It looks much smaller than the Front Palace, Anil.” Lady Pin looked at the drawing of a small one-story house surrounded by pine trees and said attentively. “Why do you want to stay in a small house?”

“I think it is cozy,” Princess Anil said with a gentle smile.

“A small narrow place like that, we are always in plain view.”

As she was speaking, Princess Anil’s eyes were unlike what Lady Pin had ever seen before.

It looks dreamy...

But it seems so serious, enough to make Lady Pin’s heartbeat faster again.

"If I really had my own house..." Princess Anil speaks with an extremely soft, decent voice.

“I would ask you to stay with me.”

Rippppppp

The sound of the pencil in her hand, pressing against the paper until it left a broad mark, abruptly snapped Lady Pin out of her brief daydream. She hastily turned to the next page, feeling uncertain about what to do.

Lady Pin responded to Princess Anilaphat's invitation with silence.

She continues to copy the textbook quietly, her hands sweaty, and her heart racing.

“If the paper gets torn... will Auntie be mad?”

Princess Anilaphat softly muttered, expressing her guilt over causing Princess Padmika to become angry with Lady Pin once more.

However, this time, Lady Pin never once raised her face from the textbook, forcing Princess Anil to remain as still as a stubborn child possibly could.

After sitting still for a long time, Princess Anil's eyes began to flicker. She slowly placed her arm on the writing table to use as a pillow for her head.

Before too much time had passed, she fell asleep...

After hearing Princess Anilaphat’s rhythmic breath

Lady Pin's heart also seemed to have calmed down...

Lady Pin had never had an opportunity to witness Princess Anilaphat asleep, so she earnestly propped herself up and gazed intently at this rare sight in front of her.

Her lovely countenance appeared to have lost some of its radiance in slumber. She possessed straight, lengthy, beautiful eyelashes, and her small lips were slightly ajar, giving her an innocent appearance. Her humid hairline clung to her cheek due to the stifling heat in the reading room.

Lady Pin smiled...

She smiles without cause.

She only understands that she must now set down the pencil in her hand, then prop herself up and regard Princess Anil with a greater level of seriousness than ever before.

And she doesn't appear to intend to resume copying the textbook at all!

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CHAPTER 6

Khun Pin's bedroom

"While Prik contemplates various strategies to discreetly enter Lady Pin's bedroom and acquire the '*something*' her overlord had mentioned, her mind races to the point of near exhaustion with these thoughts. Unexpectedly, Princess Anilaphat takes an action that catches Prik off guard.

'Your Highness, Aunt Pad. I have a matter to discuss.'

Prik vividly recalled the day when Princess Padmika visited the Front Palace to organize a welcome banquet for Prince Anon, who was due to return in a few weeks. Princess Anil seized this opportunity to seek counsel from Princess Padmika in the presence of the King.

'What do you want to consult with me, Princess Anil?'

'Not a lot, just something mischievous.'

The King laughed and affectionately gazed at his youngest daughter as he spoke

'Not at all, Father,' Princess Anilaphat's voice remains as cheerful as ever. *'I just want to sleep over with Khun Pin at the Bua Palace.'*

'What's the matter? Why do you have to stay overnight?' The King asked his youngest daughter with a gentle, affectionate tone rather than a compelling one.

In a few days, I'll be taking my exams, and there are several subjects I don't fully grasp. That's why I would like Khun Pin to help me with tutoring those subjects, Father. Additionally, if I need to study late into the night and then return to the Front Palace on foot, I believe it could be unsafe.

At this moment, Princess Anil had an exceptionally endearing expression. Her deep, bright eyes sparkled with clarity, and her smile lit up

her face, revealing dimples on her fair cheeks.

To rank the individuals in this world who might be swayed by Princess Anilaphat's gestures...

The first place would definitely belong to The King.

And second in line would be Lady Pilantita.

"You are indeed rational," the King replies to his youngest daughter with kindness. 'Pad tell me... What do you think?'

Hearing his words, how could Princess Padmika say a word or give reasons to oppose The King's wishes?

'It pertains to such an issue; there should be no complications, Your Highness.

In response, Princess Padmika lowered her head with a deep expression of devotion.

'Then I'll have to ask you to prepare a bedroom for Anil.'

'Yes, Your Majesty' Princess Padmika bowed again to acknowledge the King's word before turning to directly talk to Princess Anilaphat.

'The Bua Palace is ready to welcome Princess Anilaphat any day. Please just tell me the day you want to stay overnight; I will ensure a bedroom is prepared for you without any omissions.'

'I highly appreciate your kindness, aunty.'

That's brilliant!

Prik inwardly cheered and celebrated when she discovered that everything unfolded exactly as her overlord had planned.

If it proves challenging to sneakily acquire what's needed, then take the direct approach, leveraging the King's authority to eliminate any hindrances, ensuring the princess faces no further obstacles or annoyances.

Princess Anilaphat displayed great cleverness in using her privileges at the opportune moment, and Prik couldn't help but admire and

revere her for it.

"How many days will you be away, Prik?" Princess Anilaphat inquired as Prik struggled to organize her clothing from late afternoon into the evening.

"I'm not sure either, my princess. Without any communication, I must exercise caution."

"One night is enough." Princess Anilaphat, who finished preparing her clothes within an hour, said in order to remind Prik who is still arranging her clothes, placing items in and out of her favorite bag. "No one dares to spend more than one night at the Bua Palace."

"But based on what I've heard from Princess Pad, it appears you can leave at your convenience. It's not a significant issue."

Princess Anilaphat beamed, recognizing the wisdom of her loyal servant, Prik, even though she hadn't received a formal education like others.

It's only Princess Anilaphat who dedicates her playtime to impart lessons to Prik during some evenings after school. Her sole wish is that Prik becomes proficient in reading and writing, ensuring that no one can deceive her in the future.

"However, Prik appears highly intelligent and cunning.

"It wouldn't be inaccurate to say that..." Princess Anilaphat often invested her time explaining intricate subjects for Prik to grasp, as much for herself as for Prik.

Princess Anilaphat persisted to do this.

Therefore, Prik possesses more wisdom than the other servants.

"But, if we stay here for several nights, I want to be considerate of Aunt," Princess Anilaphat's voice retained its usual gentleness when speaking to Prik. "Don't you think so?"

"Of course, my princess," Prik replied, but she continued to keep her head bowed in fear.

"If you're frightened, spending just one night should suffice."

"Yes, Your Highness," Prik nodded, still uncertain about whether to place a red or purple cloth in her bag.

"You can take both of them, Prik." Princess Anilaphat smiled affectionately to her close servant. "Then you can think of the color tomorrow. No color is right or wrong, and no one should criticize anyone for their choice of clothing."

"You are so wise, Your Highness."

Princess Anil is like this, and so Prik held her in high regard, understanding her princess's intention: *'do whatever you want to do.'* This implied that in the entire kingdom, no one understood Princess Anilaphat better than Prik.

"By the way... what are you going to steal from Lady Pin's bedroom tonight?"

Prik whispers because she's afraid that someone will hear her.

Princess Anil listened to Prik's question and smiled then raised her index finger to her lips and answered with a soft voice.

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"It is a secret."

"Is this... your bedroom, Khun Pin?"

Princess Anilaphat looked around the spacious and airy room that was surrounded by many windows.

When she noticed Lady Pin's belongings scattered here and there, Princess Anil elatedly smiled.

"Whoever said they don't like pink?" Princess Anil chuckled, her sparkling eyes appearing as if she were purposely enticing her audience.

"Anil can recall and retain information," Lady Pin retorted with a sharp, disapproving gaze. **"Fault finder!"**

"Is that so?" The princess still smiled while moving towards the large window next to Lady Pin's desk looking out at the outside scenery.

"There is such a large courtyard over there. It can be seen clearly from here."

Princess Anil spoke as if she were musing to herself. A gentle breeze swept through, ruffling her raven hair and accentuating her striking, attractive features.

"Maybe." Princess Anil's voice sounded extremely dreamy. "I might as well build a palace there."

"..."

"So, you can always see me."

This time Princess Anil's grin stirred up Lady Pin's feelings, causing her to turn away.

"Who wants to see you all the time?" Lady Pin's voice was so soft that it almost disappeared into the wind.

Princess Anil said nothing, but only reacted with a smile as usual. She then walked to sit on the chair in front of Lady Pin's desk with a curious look.

"How can you study? ... I did not see you bringing any book along." Lady Pin adopted a stern tone when addressing the young girl before her, who appeared to be as sly as ever.

"A sword pierces the heart, just as books do."

Princess Anil pretends to ignore Lady Pin's objection and keeps staring at the items on the table as though they held her interest.

"A book resides in your heart?" Her once big, round doe-like eyes seemed to transform into those of a tigress in the blink of an eye. "I knew that you would not really want to study. All you want to do is play and have fun, that's it."

“I just want to stay overnight in your room... that's all.”

This time, Princess Anilaphat turned to gaze into Pilantita's eyes with a more earnest expression than ever, although a faint smile still graced the corners of her mouth.

“...”

"After learning this, you shouldn't insist on opposing me," Princess Anil stated before returning her attention to the items on Lady Pin's table. This left the listener to continue biting her lips tightly and feeling uneasy.

Lady Pilantita had become so accustomed to Princess Anil's evasive conversations that she hadn't anticipated such a direct response.

Without knowing how to respond,

Lady Pin could only sit still and stare at Princess Anilaphat.

Lady Pin's desk boasted multiple bookshelves and an assortment of other items, all meticulously arranged. The room's owner was known for her strict and organized nature.

“Are you still keeping this paper windmill, Khun Pin?” Princess Anil refers to the bright orange paper windmill inserted as a bookmark of the large book on the bottom shelf.

“You gave it to me. How can I throw it away?”

Only when Lady Pin offered a gentle smile that her petite countenance appeared irresistibly sweet, making it difficult to avert one's gaze.

"I'll always remember it. When I initially came to stay with my aunt in the palace, my life felt incredibly lonely and lost. You were the only one who came to play with me."

Pilantita's beautiful eyes shimmered with emotion as she reminisced about her initial meeting with Princess Anil and her friends.

“There was a time, you and Prik were obsessed with handmade paper windmills, and you gave one to me.” Lady Pin smiled warmly as she

remembered the time when Princess Anil had chosen to give a silly windmill to both Prik and herself.

Princess Anilaphat decided to give the most beautiful to her.

“Glad to see it again,” Princess Anil said with a smile, then glanced around with the curiosity of a child.

“I have never seen you tie your hair with a navy-blue ribbon.”

Princess Anil nodded towards a clear glass jar filled with many thin black and white ribbons. A single thick navy-blue ribbon makes it stand out.

“Um... that ribbon does not belong to me.” Lady Pin's little face now turned red. She keeps on pressing her lips for a moment. She utters the next sentence, “The ribbon is yours.”

“That is why; it looks so familiar.”

“One day Anil dropped it in the car on the way back to the palace.” Lady Pin glared at Princess Anil, fearing that she would be offended. “I washed it and thought of returning it for a while.”

“Is that so?” The princess's eyes, once dark, now gleam with brightness.

“You looked at me as if I was a thief.” Lady Pin's beautiful wavy lips are now distorted in annoyance.

“Who said so?” said Princess Anil laughing. She then changes the conversation by picking up a compact tale from the shelf.

“Let's start studying.”

Princess Anil walks while holding a tale to Lady Pin's wide bed. She then stretches out on her stomach without waiting for an invitation.

“Will you sleep here tonight? Aunty arranged for you a big guest room.” Lady Pilantita's face turned pale because she hadn't anticipated this.

“Let Prik sleep in that room. I will sleep here. Your bed is quite spacious.”

Princess Anilaphat talked while turning the tale page by page, page by page, showing no sign of looking up to pay attention to Lady Pin.

Lady Pin sighed when she saw that Princess Anilaphat probably would never get out of her bed. So, she crumpled and seated herself on the floor beside the bed.

“Please come up here, Lady Pin. Come to lie next to me and read me a tale.”

Princess Anilaphat not only speaks but also taps her hand on the mattress, signaling for Lady Pin to join her.

“You are so spoiled.” Although Lady Pin frowned, she could not help herself smiling after seeing Princess Anilaphat's pleading eyes.

Noticing that Lady Pin had not yet come, Princess Anilaphat swiftly arranged the mattress and pillows. However, as she was doing so, she noticed something that made her pause, and her hand stopped.

Beneath Lady Pin's pillow is a blue handkerchief embroidered with soothing English letters.

The letter is A.

"This is the handkerchief I gave you to wipe away tears when Auntie was angry at you, why are you keeping it under the pillow?"

"I..."

Lady Pin's eyes widened and froze unconsciously. After swallowing down her saliva, Pilantita mumble replied.

“I just washed and folded it on the bed...I was intending to return it to you tomorrow.” Lady Pin glanced into her sweet contemptuous eyes looking at Princess Anil. “After folding it, I might have forgotten it under the pillow.”

Lady Pin reached out and grabbed that handkerchief, hurriedly handed it to Princess Anil in a look full of guilt.

“No need to return it, I will give it to you.”

“I do not want it.” Lady Pin turned her head in the other direction before tightly clenching her lips. But she was holding on to that blue handkerchief tightly in her hand, unwilling to let go.

“Even though you do not want it, I insist on giving it to you.” Princess Anil's expression turned slightly gloomy when she heard Lady Pin's stern rejection. “Keep it as a memorable gift. That once I have wiped your tears.”

“...”

“If you really do not want it, I will keep it.” Princess Anil held out her hand to receive the handkerchief from Lady Pilantita, her eyes looking gloomier than ever, but Lady Pin put the hand that was holding the handkerchief behind her back.

“Anil said you gave it to me.” Pilantita's expression was extremely stubborn at this time. “I will keep this handkerchief myself.”

“...”

"And I will keep it at its best."

CHAPTER 7

Dancing Ballerina

The King has organized a welcome reception for Prince Anon several weeks prior to his return, recognizing that his second son has been studying law abroad for numerous years. As such, the King desires to host a grand reception to bestow honor upon him.

Therefore, all the supervisors are the royal relatives who had worked closely with the lords in the Grand Palace including Princess Padmika, who is in charge of taking care of all the sweet and savory dishes in the banquet.

Every preparation is in order; aligned with the rules and regulations. The guest's menu must be selected by Princess Alisa and every dish must firstly pass the strict cooking control from Princess Padmika.

For this reason, ... This past weekend, the Front Palace kitchen looked extremely lively since Princess Padmika has enlisted the servants and chefs to create a variety of dishes which are both delicious and exquisite from early morning until late evening to be presented to Princess Alisa to taste and select.

Many are busy, many are having fun.

When someone is dedicated to anything, there must be one who receives the benefit of that perseverance, in some way.

In Princess Anilaphat and Prik's case, they are receiving the benefit from Princess Padmika's efforts.

Princess Anilaphat and her friends are enjoying themselves.

How can they not be happy? They can have snacks that the cooks made for Princess Padmika for menu selection in the morning. Then go to taste the various foods in the kitchen in the afternoon as if there is a food festival.

They go around and around the kitchen as if they could not find a way back to the palace for a week until the reception day has arrived.

In the late afternoon, Princess Alisa and Prince Anantawut went to pick Prince Anon up at the airport. Princess Anilaphat did not accompany them because she had just returned from school. Therefore, she had to stay and wait for her elder brother at the palace.

No one knew...

Even now it is time for Princess Anil to change her dressing for the feast, she is still squatting, happily eating delicious snacks with Prik in the corner of the firewood storage room.

“You eat like Chuchok^[12]... Watch out, your stomach might blast to death.” The princess worriedly looked at Prik who kept on eating Mu Sarong^[13].

“Why is it so bad to die with a full stomach?” Prik raised her neck and argued while still chewing on food.

"Sometimes you say cunning things." Princess Anil said laughing.

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“Oh, my Goodness! Princess Anil”

Her eyes widened as soon as she heard Princess Padmika's stern voice loudly from behind. Not to mention Prik who choked on Mu Sarong with her eyes wide open and raised her fist to hit her chest many times. Everything is chaotic.

“Yes, aunty” Princess Anilaphat wiped the corners of her lips with the back of her palm before turning her head to accept Princess Padmika's call.

She then notices that Princess Padmika does not come to see Princess Anil's hiding place alone but brings her niece Lady Pilantita, along.

"Why are you squatting to eat like this? **Ungraceful! Really ungraceful!** You, too, Prik, your gluttony might lead to choking to death."

Princess Padmika furiously shook her head while giving a cold look to Prik.

"Forgive me, Aunty. I am so hungry, I just got home from school a while ago."

Princess Anilaphat, intoxicated, looks at Princess Padmika's glittering eyes inevitably.

Meanwhile, both Lady Pin and Prik bowed their heads and took turns swallowing their saliva.

"Oh, my Goodness! No one prepares snacks for Princess Anil, so she had to come here to find something to eat by herself like this?"

Princess Padmika proclaimed with a resounding, commanding, and elegant voice, with the intention that all the kitchen servants would overhear her.

All the kitchen staff lowered themselves and avoided making eye contact with Princess Padmika. Knowing the truth that Princess Anil has a preference for not having snacks in the palace like other princesses, but instead enjoys clandestinely pilfering snacks to share with Prik by the kitchen or in the secluded corner of the firewood storage room.

If someone were to discover the princess, arrange a spread of food, and present it elegantly on a bench, she would change her mind and abstain from eating it altogether.

She derives satisfaction from seizing snacks herself.

"Princess Anil, please return to the palace now. Remaining in the kitchen will only make you smell," Princess Padmika said, her tone laced with a hint of irritation. It was early evening, and she had noticed the King's car returning after picking up Prince Anon, parking in front of the palace.

"Lady Pin" Princess Padmika glittered towards her niece.

"Yes, Aunty." Lady Pilantita neatly replied as usual.

"Please take Princess Anilaphat to dress up." Princess Padmika said in a softened voice, "The reception will begin in a few hours."

"Yes, aunty"

"Prik, you stay here and help, there's no need to accompany Princess Anilaphat." Princess Padmika's condemned voice made the crouching Prik only respond shakily.

"Yes, My Princess."

Lady Pilantita grabbed Princess Anil's wrist and led her to walk side by side along the corridor toward the Front Palace.

"Anil keeps on making trouble." Lady Pin's stern expression became even more severe as she turned to reprimand Princess Anilaphat, who continued to cast concerned glances back at Prik.

"While Khun Pin continues scolding," she said with a laugh.

"Huh!"

Lady Pin could only contemplate in silence, feeling Princess Anilaphat's hand shift from being pulled a moment ago to now tightly clasping her hand, all five fingers interlocking seamlessly.

The warmth that surged at their fingertips caused Lady Pin's cheeks to gradually flush red. She clumsily withdrew her slender hand from Princess Anilaphat's grasp.

"Hmm? Doesn't Khun Pin want to hold my hand any longer?" Princess Anil raised her eyebrows, wearing a smile.

"You're grown up now, you can walk on your own. You don't need me to lead you." Lady Pin replied softly before compressing her lips firmly into a straight line.

"Is that so?" Princess Anil's countenance gave the impression that she was harboring some semblance of regret. Seeing that, Lady Pilantita then suddenly changed the topic of conversation.

"What are you going to wear today?"

"I don't know... It seems that mother asked Nom^[14] Yoi to prepare it in the dressing room," Princess Anil mentioned her favorite nanny who had taken care of her since she was young.

Nom Yoi is still relatively young and unmarried, in her thirties. When she was chosen to become Princess Anil's nanny, she was in her twenties. Hence, it can be rather awkward for anyone to refer to her.

Nom Yoi here. Nom Yoi there...

But after a while, she started to get used to it, and was glad to take care of Princess Anil, who is a delightful and cheerful child to raise. When she was a toddler, Princess Anil had an easy appetite and was not a crybaby like children are normally. Only when she grew up a little, she kept fleeing to play mischievously in the palace until she was wounded and came back to apply medicine, every other day.

Nevertheless, Nom Yoi still has an affectionate bond with Princess Anil as if she were her own biological child.

"By the way, what dress do you want me to wear?"

"I like to see you in the white dress." Lady Pin smiled a little when she recalled Princess Anilaphat wore her beautiful fluffy white evening gown at the winter party in Sawetawarit Palace at the end of the year. *"But anything you wear you look beautiful and lovely in any outfit."*

The latter sentence is more like a muse to herself.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing."

When the couple arrived at the dressing room, they found that Nom Yoi already waiting. She displayed a hint of impatience, possibly because the time was considerably later than the expected dressing time.

"Princess Anil, please hurry up to take a shower or you will be late. I have prepared your clothes. Her Highness chose it for you."

Nom Yoi pointed her finger towards the sleeveless navy dress that was sewn in a simple yet elegant pattern. The top is embroidered with silver

silk threads to flicker in light. The bottom skirt is pleated and moderately fluttering. It was not as fluffy as a doll as the former dress.

"Mother knows that Anil likes to wear dark clothes." Princess Anilaphat always uses her own name when talking to Nom Yoi. "What about Khun Pin's dress?" The latter sentence turned to Pilantita.

"P'Koi will bring it for me." Lady Pin replied in a clear voice, "Aunty intends to let me take you here to get dressed."

"Aunty sees me as a three-year-old?"

"What can I say? A fourteen-year-old who climbs a tree and catches worms. How can I consider that to be older than a three-year-old?"

"You're right." Princess Anilaphat smirked widely, "Then, today I will stand still for Khun Pin to control how I dress, is that good?"

"I hope that is true."

Unfortunately, Princess Anilaphat did not have time to continue her conversation with Lady Pin even for half a word for now Nom Yoi is intentionally pushing her towards the bathroom.

Lady Pilantita was dressed in a fluffy white dress looking adorable. As Princess Anilaphat exited the bathroom, the fragrance of her skin and the silky quality of her hair were so enchanting that they appeared to sparkle and shine, enough to make Lady Pin squint.

Especially, when she has dressed up in a dark navy dress.

Her off-white skin is even more accentuated to be whiter than ever...

Lady Pin absent-mindedly looked at Nom Yoi tying Princess Anilaphat's hair while at the same time her hair was being styled by P'Koi.

The girls spent a considerable amount of time in the room, yet it was still considered quite early in relation to the banquet's scheduled time.

An early evening reception took place in the courtyard before the palace, with a lush green lawn adorned with vibrant flower arches and small round shrubs in each corner, resembling a miniature flower garden. At the heart of the setup stood a lengthy dining table for the reception, set against

the backdrop of round guest tables. Surrounding these tables was a snow-yellow light railing along the bushes, adding to the overall allure of the scene.

The party has not started. Therefore, the reception hall at the Front Palace only has the owners of the Sawetawarit Palace gradually gather.

"Anil, is that really Anil?" Prince Anon said with a clear voice as he approached his sister with joy.

Two girls stood up and paid homage. Princess Anilaphat looked at Prince Anon thoughtfully, barely remembering her brother's face.

After looking, she found that her elder brother looked like their mother. The more he smiles, the more they look alike.

"When I departed, Anil was only as tall as my elbow. Now, it seems you've grown to about the height of my shoulders."

"I've nourished her generously with milk and butter, just like foreigners. Anil is like my own eldest daughter."

Prince Anantawut mocked his own sister, getting laughter from everyone.

"This must be Lady Pin that Anil told me in a letter?"

"Yes, brother," Princess Anilaphat replied curtly, as she wasn't particularly acquainted with her older sibling.

Prince Anon greeted Lady Pilantita with a polite smile, while Princess Alisa, who had just entered the hall, rushed over and warmly embraced Lady Pin.

"My Lady Pin is so cute today, as beautiful as a doll."

"Mom! You're biased, your little daughter is also beautiful and sweet today, why do you only admire Lady Pin?" Prince Anantawut is still enjoying teasing his favorite sister as usual.

"Mother truly adores Khun Pin, brother. She mentioned how she wished for her to be like another daughter. She doesn't care about me," Princess Anilaphat played along with her eldest brother.

“Anil is not really my daughter.” Princess Alisa playfully remarked, casting a knowing glance at Princess Anil. “She’s more like a mischievous little monkey.”

“Mother said as if...” Princess Anil’s glitter is sly and shiny.

"Ahem, Anil..." Prince Anantawut’s voice was semi-strict, semi-conscious, sounding extremely contradictory.

"Don't say what you think!"

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The atmosphere at the party was quite dull, as most of the guests were senior relatives, princesses, or ladies of equivalent rank who took turns approaching Prince Anon to introduce themselves. It became so overwhelming that he almost turned his welcome reception into a game of throwing garlands to find a partner, struggling to catch his breath.

Princess Anilaphat and Lady Pilantita received compliments likening them to angels descending from heaven from nearly all the senior guests at the party, until they grew somewhat weary. They decided to distance themselves and enjoy the reception beneath the ivy-covered facade beside the palace.

Unlike previous feasts in Sawetawarit Palace, in this feast, a dance floor is prepared in a fashionable way. The two girls watched the women take turns dancing with Prince Anantawut and Prince Anon happily.

“Khun Pin... shall we dance?” after looking at others for a long time, Princess Anil said with a clear voice.

“Right here?” Lady Pin’s big doe eyes widened in surprise.

“Mm I just studied dancing today... Could you be my partner?”

“Sure.”

Princess Anil extended her hand, gracefully bowing to invite Lady Pin to dance. Lady Pilantita shyly and sweetly smiled as Princess Anil’s delicate, white hand gently touched her slender waist.

They both moved gracefully to the rhythm of the music, resembling ballerinas in a music box.

The pleated navy skirt, layered over the white, billowing skirt, fluttered with their graceful movements, creating an indescribably charming sight.

"Someday, if I'm not here with you, will you be lonely?"

After dancing until the final notes of the song, accompanied by classical musical instruments, Princess Anil straightforwardly inquired.

"Well, if you weren't here, there'd be no one mischievous to keep me company,"

Lady Pin mused, laughing thoughtlessly.

"I asked if you are going to feel lonely." Princess Anil's eyes bore a more solemn and unfamiliar expression.

"I don't know, it hasn't happened yet," Lady Pin said, tilting her head in thought. "I still see you in front of me every day... I can't even imagine what it would be like to feel lonely."

"But for me, if I do not see you..."

The voice is so low that Lady Pilantita gets closer and listens attentively.

"I will be so lonely."

CHAPTER 8

The Answer

The bright summer sun shines through Chaipayruk^[15] tree leaves, reflecting on Lady Pilantita's clear cheeks who is sitting on a white-painted wrought iron chair under the widened shade of a large tree.

The courtyard ground looks to be adorned with the remains of faded pink Chaipayruk flowers that turn to almost white underneath the tree. On the tree, the pink and dark red inflorescences outstandingly blow among green leaves; waiting to change its color to pale white and blown away, falling aimlessly and down in its cycle.

"Lady Pin... you are here."

Princess Padmika's strict face seemed much more relaxed when she sat on the chair opposite her niece.

"Yes."

Lady Pin answered her aunt, smiling a little as usual.

"Are you stripping Maprang?"

Princess Padmika looked at the yellow-skinned Maprang piled up and a large clear bowl that held more than half the water in front of Lady Pin for a while then asked.

"Yes, aunty."

She always chose her words carefully when conversing with her aunt.

"You're good at stripping now. In the past I had to hold your hand to strip it. We wasted a lot of Maprang until you can make each one. "

Princess Padmika looked at the brass carving knife in Lady Pin's delicate palm with a proud twinkle in her eyes after seeing the pattern on the surface of the bright Maprang, it is predictable that Lady Pin is streaking a seashell pattern.

"But why are you preparing so many stripes? Are you eating them all? There are only two of us in this Palace."

"I am... preparing a spare just in case."

Pilantita bowed her head, her silky cheeks glowing bright pink competing with the ripe Maprang.

"Just in case... Is that so?" Princess Padmika's brow rose high because she had predicted something. "Do you intend to please Princess Anil?"

Although her aunt's tone appeared gentle with no trace of resentment, Lady Pin promptly lowered her head without feigning otherwise.

"I am not that specific, Aunty. But if Princess Anil arrives, I will have a glass of striped Maprang in syrup to offer to her. Princess Anil really likes it."

"But it seems like she prefers having snacks near the firewood storage room," Princess Padmika said with a laugh.

"She is so wayward."

Lady Pin grins a little as she recalled Princess Anil and Prik's fiery attitude when they were enjoying the Mu Sarong until her aunt caught them red-handed.

"If Princess Anil weren't here right now..." Princess Padmika's keen gaze momentarily grew thoughtful, and she eventually spoke in a measured, audible tone. "You might be quite lonely."

"Not here?" the hand that was sliding the edge of the Maprang suddenly stopped. "Why she will not be here?"

Lady Pin's large brown eyes were brimming with bewilderment and frustration.

Frustration...

Uncertain of whom to direct her frustration towards or to make demands of...

"I've heard that Princess Anil will be going to Europe to study, just like her brothers," Princess Padmika continued in a calm and enigmatic tone

as she observed Pilantita, who now pressed her lips together firmly, deep in thought.

"At first, I thought the King would not send her to study abroad like the princes, for she is his beloved little daughter."

"..."

"But as he observed Princess Anil's wisdom and distinctiveness among other children, Luang Phinit, his trusted advisor, consistently emphasized to His Majesty the potential missed opportunity if Princess Anil didn't undertake overseas studies. Eventually, the King made a decision, as he didn't want his youngest daughter to lag behind his two sons."

"The Crown Prince went to London when he was eighteen years old. Now, Princess Anil is just fourteen. Isn't that several more years?"

Lady Pin's eyes suddenly glowed with hope.

"Who said that?"

"..."

"The King has already arranged for her departure in the next two months... He realized that the sooner she leaves, the more proficient she will become in language acquisition."

It appeared that Aunt Pad's clear, resonant voice had transformed into a fleeting breeze, carrying a message that Lady Pin couldn't quite capture in its entirety.

Pilantita is focused on *'The next two months,'* which is going through her thoughts and is hard to easily get rid of.

"Oh, my Goodness, Lady Pin! You look so pale, are you going to faint?"

Princess Padmika gazed upon Pilantita's pallid visage and noticed her hands tightly gripping a brass carving knife. Concerned, she extended her hand to gently touch her niece's arm in a heartfelt manner.

"*Nothing, Aunty...*" Lady Pin could only speak and was silent.

"Please take a seat and rest first. You do not need to strip any more Maprang. I am afraid that you will faint and get wounded."

"Yes"

Lady Pin sadly gazes up to her aunt's worried eyes before immediately letting go of Maprang stripping.

And then just sat still there...

Pilantita's 'sitting still' means sitting with two hands in front of her lap, lowering her eyes, looking blank with a motionless body.

Seeing her niece become like that, Princess Padmika was even more terrified.

"Lady Pin" she said with a very soft gentle voice.

"Yes."

Pilantita replied, while sitting still, looking superficially as if that sweet voice was coming out of the stone statue's lips.

"Why are you becoming quiet? don't be discouraged about studying, I will let you study until higher education, even if it is in Thailand."

She is testing the water...

For she cannot guess her niece's sudden gloomy action.

"I am not carried away." This time, Lady Pin made eye contact with her aunt before answering in a hoarse voice that is almost unheard.

"I might just feel hot."

"In hot weather like this, it is really refreshing to have striped Maprang made by Khun Pin."

Princess Anil's voice is still extremely bright. At other times, Lady Pin would have wished to hear the princess's voice endlessly.

But this time... no matter how much brighter Princess Anilaphat's voice was,

Pilantita's heart felt even more burdened by a heap of inadequacy.

All she could do was gaze blankly at Princess Anilaphat, who was smiling joyfully as she scooped up the striped Maprang, shaped like

seashells, which had been candied until they resembled open and closed shells. They were arranged in a clear bowl with syrup and ice, and Princess Anilaphat was indulging in her favorite snack without restraint.

"That is true, my lady. To taste Yai Pean made dish is not as delicious as Lady Pin's made."

Prik flattered in a sweet soft voice.

"...if it is refreshing, please eat more."

The voice was soft and sad as a sobbing.

"Khun Pin don't you want to eat it with me?"

Now Princess Anil's eyes pleadingly shine before she smirks until her cute dent shows and invites in a pleasant voice for no one can resist these gestures.

But Princess Anil's dazzling gimmicks didn't work for Pilantita at this time.

The more she thinks that she will never see that bright sunshine smile and will not hear Princess Anilaphat's every word for a long time.

Lady Pin feels that it is so hard to act normally...

"Anil, please eat it. I don't have any appetite."

After saying that, Lady Pin can only swallow another sobbing lump down her throat.

"Are you hot?"

Pilantita shook her head frequently instead of answering. At this time, Princess Anilaphat saw that Lady Pin's face was as pale as white paper.

"Stomach pain?"

She still shook her head and pursed her lips tightly. Those big eyes are full of complaints.

"Prik!"

Princess Anilaphat's voice grew solemn, making Prik quickly swooped in and sat beside her knee.

"Yes, my Lady."

Prik answered with a trembling voice, for she never sees Princess Anilaphat's face as solemn as this.

"I ask you for something."

Princess Anilaphat asked while still looking towards Pilantita.

"Asking me to go where, my lady?"

Prik can only speculate.

"For you to go anywhere, far away."

Prik's eyes widened as she raised her head to fixate on the princess's serene countenance, which exhibited no hint of her usual playful teasing. Consequently, she could only respond with unwavering loyalty.

"I humbly accept, my lady."

But before crawling on her knees silently, Prik did not forget to turn around and grab her bowl of striped Maprang along before turning back to bow Princess Anil again.

"Very wise, my lady."

Without this dilemma, Princess Anil would have to laugh out loud at Prik's behavior, but now she can only look at Prik's thick back who '*Goes anywhere, far away*' as she commanded.

When Prik had gone, Princess Anil moved to the chair next to Lady Pin before gently and kindly asking.

"What exactly is wrong with you, Khun Pin? Why did you not answer me?" Princess Anil observantly approached Lady Pin's face, "Your eyes are so red, or have you caught a fever?"

Once Princess Anil's hand touched her rounded forehead.

Lady Pilantita's first tears drop down...

Then the second, third, and countless drops followed.

Finally, her beautiful eyes are completely turned into the veil of tears.

"Khun Pin..."

The twinkling bright sparkling looks had disappeared from Princess Anil's eyes for the first time. When she sees Lady Pin's tears, she cannot do anything but get her own handkerchief to wipe away the tears from the girl in front of her, who is now looking as fragile as the clear glass with uncontrollable gestures.

For she still couldn't comprehend why Lady Pin had shed so many tears.

So, all she can do is put her other hand on Lady Pin's hand.

"I would be lonely..."

After difficulty trying to stop her tears, Lady Pilantita spoke in a hoarse voice.

"..."

Princess Anil sat still, starting to compile up the reason for Lady Pin's tears in the latter sentence.

Lady Pin knew about my plan to study abroad?

"Anil once asked me if I would be lonely when you are not around."

"..."

"I... just... found out... today..."

After saying that, Lady Pilantita was sobbing until she tossed herself, so Princess Anil reached out and pulled her fragile little body into her arms while gently caressing the hair of the person in her arms, as if she was afraid that Lady Pin would break down in front of her.

"I am lonely."

"..."

Lady Pilantita continued to sob in Princess Anil's embrace with a gentle tremor.

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"I never want to be far away from Anil..."

CHAPTER 9

In The Blink of An Eye

"Why does Anil need to study far away from home?"

I blurted out at some point while pretending to read a thick English textbook in the eldest brother's reading room at Burapha Palace.

Behind people's backs, the two of us often use simple and ordinary conversational phrases because sometimes we feel very tired of formalities.

"..."

The Grand Prince not only did not answer the question immediately, but he just flipped through the yellow pages of the book in front of him and smiled calmly.

"Then is there any reason that you shouldn't go?" He replied without looking up from the book.

"Because..." I was stunned.

"*Because?*" This time, the eldest brother closed his book before raising his eyebrows, questioning me instead.

"Because I'm too young," I replied.

From the first day, my mother knew my father's desire to send me to study in Europe. Mother kept appealing to my father with repeated words such as:

'Your Majesty, please change your mind... Anil is so young. I can't keep my daughter away from my eyes.'

Mother repeatedly said so, both in a solemn and tense voice until the voice trembled, with a light sobbed, but no matter what voice or gesture it was, it could not change father's orders.

So, I chose to answer my eldest brother's question using reasons borrowed from Mother.

And hide someone's reason for...

'Never wanted Anil to be away' inside my mind.

"Going at a young age is an advantage."

"Father keeps saying like that."

I sighed with desperation, because even The Grand Prince who had always agreed with me, this time he agreed with Father and Luang Phinit.

From now on, No one will be able to oppose my education for sure...

"If you have a chance, you must seize it right?"

"If it is not what I want, is it still called opportunity, brother?"

"That's it..." the Grand Prince suddenly laughed, "Anil likes to ask questions unlike others. This will be really suitable for studying abroad."

"If I like to question then why do I need to study abroad?" The more I hear unexpected answers from my eldest Brother, the more curiously I brainstorm questions. "Why can't I study in our homeland?"

"That is because if Anil really studies here, you could only ask questions endlessly." Eldest brother smiled.

"But if Anil goes to study elsewhere, your questions will always be answered."

"..."

His answer left me speechless and initiated my understanding of something.

"Let's put it this way, our nation **isn't falling behind**, but rather, **it's still somewhat cautious**," my elder brother's tone was exceptionally measured.

"Afraid to ask questions, moreover, afraid to know the answers. If Anil continues to study here, Anil will eventually conform."

My eldest brother spoke with a discreet attitude while smiling every time I asked questions that no one has bothered answering as usual.

"Because I know you too well, so I cannot let you to lose yourself. Let's just say that your early childhood education has been meticulously examined for countless reasons," he explained.

And then the conversation is over.

I chose to remain silent, lost in thought, with no further excuses for argument.

As a result, my eldest brother went above and beyond for my sake, even dedicating four months to stay with me in England initially to ensure everything was in order before his departure.

A week from that... My life clock is busy circling to government departments, ministries, bureaus, departments to do business on studying abroad.

Let's not mention hanging out day after day as before, sometimes I even have to ask the school to leave.

Not mentioning taking the time to meet someone...

Someone who keeps avoiding my face. That she even changed to go to school early in the morning, fearing that I would stand by the wall waiting to catch a ride at P'Perm's car as usual.

And she changed her pick-up stop from the school gate to somewhere unknown.

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'Anil is a child who never suffers and grieves like anyone else.'

It was my mother who first said this sentence, then came father, the eldest brother, elder brother or even I, myself started to believe that the sentence is true.

And it is probably true without change...

If only I had not heard Lady Pin's sobbing words.

'I am lonely... and I do not want to be far away from Anil.'

Lady Pin's sentence had the power to stab a hole in my heart, causing a sharp pain until I almost fell in front of her right there.

But at that time when Lady Pin was as fragile as she was ready to fall apart in front of me at any moment, I could only pretend to be as strong as I always was.

Who would know that evening...

A girl who has never suffered as her mother said keeps tucking her face on the pillow and groans until tears almost distilled into blood.

Someone who has never cried...

When she cries...

It appeared that tears welled up in her eyes, as if she had summoned all the sorrows from her life to cry out at once.

I cried so much that I had to hold my hands to cover my mouth to swallow down the tears.

I did not know what I was sad about.

Little that I knew...

Even after that day, it seemed that Lady Pilantita was trying to avoid me. In addition to changing the going to and coming from school time, she also refused to come down and sit in the pavilion in front of the lotus pond as usual.

I had a lot of things to clear, so I could only ask Prik to take good care of Khun Pin on my behalf.

Even more discreetly, I asked my father's permission that while I was studying far away from home, I would ask for Prik to take care of Khun Pin for me.

That would be good for both Prik and Khun Pin.

On Prik's side, no one will dare to bully her.

On Lady Pin's side, she will have a friend like others. Prik is very clever at monitoring people's emotions. Moreover, if that person is her overlord, Prik will immediately know what to do to make her overlord feel as great as if she had the followers.

In fact, the 'followers' are seen to be the only Prik.

'Since I know that Princess Anil will go to study abroad, Lady Pin looks so lonely, my lady.'

Prik, who turned out to be a close servant of Khun Pin, persuaded me as soon as we met at the Front Palace.

'Moreover, if anyone accidentally mentions that you will be leaving in the next month, her tears will drop down every time.'

Prik kept talking while I listened peacefully.

'There was a time Princess Pad accidentally broke the news that Princess Anil had already prepared and scheduled her departure date during dinner time. Lady Pin put down her cutlery and immediately ran away and cried in her bedroom.'

'How did you know, Prik, that Khun Pin was sneaking up and crying?'

'I snuck my ear to the door of her room.'

'Cunning, as usual'

'Princess Pad asked me to, my lady. That is why I dare.'

'How was eavesdropping?'

'She's sobbing so miserably, my princess. It's heart-wrenching to the point that I almost rushed to beg you to change your mind about leaving.'

'Is that so?'

'It is so, my lady. Lady Pin sobbed until she seemed to break her heart. I feel sorry, but I do not know what to do.'

'Other than that, did Khun Pin mention anything to you?'

'She has asked me a few times if Princess Anil is no longer here, would I not be lonely? Would I not feel sad?'

'What did you say?'

Khun Pin's question is so resonant with my heart; that I must listen carefully to the answers of my close servant.

'I only replied... I will definitely feel lonely, but hope you will be back soon.'

Prik's large, shining eyes moved me so deeply that I nearly broke down in tears once more in her presence.

'Do you know how long your soon is, Prik?'

'You ask me just like Lady Pin. At first, I said either two or three years, but Lady Pin said it wouldn't be less than seven years. That is why I cried in front of her, my lady.'

'Oh, so you didn't actually know that I'll be gone for that long.' I swallowed hard, feeling a lump in my throat. Being away from someone's life for such an extended period is not easy.

Especially with the people we are close to...

It is really difficult.

'Yes, that day, Lady Pin had to comfort me instead of crying, and I lost all my beauty.'

Prik said with an embarrassed smile.

'Well, who can predict how long my princess will be away? That's more than half my lifetime, my princess'

Prik, who was just twelve years old, murmured.

'No matter how long.' The next thing I knew, I looked at Prik with fondness. *'In the end, I will come back anyway.'*

'Lady Pin comforted me like that also, my princess.'

'If Lady Pin comforted you like that, she might have overcome her sadness now.'

'No, my lady.' Prik said, pouting her lips, *'She seems to be more and more dull, from talking less, she hardly talks to anyone. Even Princess Pad herself noticed that Lady Pin was much quieter than before.'*

'Then why did she come to comfort you, Prik?'

'Knowing that it does not mean she can get over it, my lady. Until now, when I followed Lady Pin doing errands at the Front Palace, if any servant mentions how they need to prepare Princess Anil's belongings to go abroad, Lady pin had to put both hands up to cover her ears and quickly walk past the servants. That is far from being able to get over it.'

'Is that so?'

That is what I can answer Prik before remaining in silence again.

My typically bright thoughts immediately turned dull and foolish when it came to anything related to Lady Pilantita.

Starting with not knowing how to console Khun Pin from her grief.

Because it is hard to even cheer myself up.

Fortunately, fate wasn't too unkind to us. On a Sunday afternoon, when I had no prior commitments, my pre-arranged meeting with Prik was a success.

Finally, Prik postponed my rendezvous with Khun Pin to the garden behind the Bua Palace, where we sat in the shade of the Chaiyapruk tree.

Khun Pin's face looked a little thin, her gloomy eyes did not shine as they usually do.

"Are you avoiding me? ..."

"Of course not."

Khun Pin refused, even though she kept looking away, pretending to look here and there.

Look at everything...

Except my face.

"But it's been a while since I've seen you," I unintentionally rambled.

"Maybe it is because Anil has been doing a lot of errands." Khun Pin said, looking down at the leaves and playing it with her toes, "You don't even have time to play, so how you can come to see me?"

"That's true. Running errands can be quite tedious. I'm feeling exhausted and lazy, Khun Pin."

Anil hasn't gone very far...I've been unable to see your face."

This time, Khun Pin gazed up to look at me, but when I really looked in her complaining eyes,

It turns out that I did not dare to make straight eye contact with Lady Pin as usual.

"Now, I've completed all my errands. Khun Pin will have to endure seeing my face until you're thoroughly bored," I said with a wide smile, but Khun Pin remained tight-lipped.

"Who will ever get bored of Anil?" After saying that, Khun Pin's tears drop again. Seeing that, I could only pull Khun Pin into my arms and gently pat her hair as usual.

"Did I make you cry again? Whenever you see my face, you always cry," I whispered in Khun Pin's ear, who was sobbing softly and restrainedly.

"Even if I do not see your face, it does not mean I don't cry."

The response of the person who kept snuggling her face on my shoulders was hoarse, trembling.

"Anil does not make me cry. I cry on my own."

"..."

I could only tighten my lips when I heard Khun Pin blame herself. My chest ached as if the wet tears on my shoulders carried a poison that seeped into my heart.

Uncertain of how to console the weeping girl, I tightened my embrace and continued to speak soothing words until her sobs gradually subsided.

"I will write you a letter every day, I promise."

The night before the trip seemed to be a sea of tears... of mother, Nom Yoi and Prik.

Everyone's tears but me.

I dedicate my finest moments to consoling others, all the while my heart extends its compassion to someone whose tears from the previous night remain a mystery.

Since she has been crying in advance for months...

I rose before dawn in preparation for my early morning flight, and even Nom Yoi expressed astonishment at my prompt readiness, no longer needing to urge me as in the past. Nom Yoi showered me with continuous praise, reassuring me that if I can maintain such responsible behavior even when far away, she will have no more worries.

As the moment arrived, two sleek, black cars had already been stationed in the fountain courtyard that stretched before the palace. Everyone, including my father, mother, and elder brother, was eager to accompany both my eldest brother and I to the airport.

Mother wants to ride in my car, so my eldest brother had to move to sit in another car with the elder brother and father thinking that it is funny to see mother fussing like a young girl.

It seems that Khunpra Chom had recruited the entire palace servants to sit and see me off at the fountain courtyard until it looked very pompous.

This includes Aunty Pad who waits in the main hall.

But there is no sign of her niece...

I have been looking for a long time. Finally, the two who I mourned so much walked hand in hand and hid in the main hall beside Princess Padmika.

Khun Pin and Prik...

When I got into the car, I could only turn the car window down and wave my hands all the way out, sending smiles as wide as my hearts could be pleasant.

The two could only wave back awkwardly.

Then the car departed slowly.

But in the blink of an eye, it took us outside Sawetawarit Palace gates.

In the blink of the second of parting...

Yet, the sight of Khun Pin's face through eyes full of tears that I saw for a split second when the car took off imprinted in my memories.

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And will remain so forever and indelibly...

CHAPTER 10

Grey Rain

"My lady, you came to hide over here? I've been looking for you for a long time."

Prik, who has blossomed into a graceful young woman, calls out excitedly from a distance before pausing to catch her breath in front of Pilantita, who is seated on a lengthy bench beneath the Cork Tree behind the Bua Palace.

"Don't stick your tongue out like that. It is improper. How many times have I told you?"

Lady Pin glanced at her and looked at Prik unpleasantly. Though Prik is intelligent and agile unlike ordinary servants, her mannerisms like a lady should have...

Cannot be found...

Yet Pilantita has never given up on her perseverance in refining Prik's neat mannerisms for the past three years of Prik's close service.

"My apologies, Lady Pin." Saying sorry but she keeps on smiling.

"What is that in your hand?" Lady Pin focused on the thick brown envelope in Prik's hand.

"It is Princess Anil's letter." Prik said as she handed the envelope to Lady Pin's delicate white hands before giving a sly smile.

"Mmm..."

Even though Pilantita only briefly answered, her full light-colored lips kept smiling. The twinkle flashed in those beautiful big brown eyes, proclaiming how happy Lady Pin is right now.

Prik has always been waiting for this moment...

The moment that she will hand Princess Anil's letter to Lady Pin.

Prik, more than anyone else, understands that Princess Anil's letter represents Lady Pin's lifeline to happiness on every occasion.

It is true that the days pass by as easily as white clouds drift through the sky. In the last three years, everything around Pilantita has changed. Throughout almost a year of admission to the university in the Faculty of Arts she has new friends, men, and women. She has a different and wider society than ever.

However, Prik can still sense that Lady Pin's genuine joy lies in her ability to read Princess Anil's letter regardless.

As if Princess Anil's letters were the drop of water to the wilted saplings to continue to grow.

Nevertheless, when Princess Anil's letter fails to arrive for over two weeks, and at times, experiences delays of months, the inconvenience becomes inconsequential.

Prik can barely face Lady Pin.

For the time, Lady Pin's body seems to be gloomy and sad, as if there was a gray rain cloud covering... Superficially, it looks diluted, but it is so intense in the sense that it is difficult to get close.

It is not just Prik who feels that opacity.

At least Princess Padmika is aware about this too.

"This one is yours, Prik."

Lady Pin carefully unwrapped the envelope and handed a postcard to Prik.

Prik also regularly received letters from Princess Anil. However, due to Prik's limited ability to read and write only simple words, Princess Anil chose to send postcards adorned with illustrative narratives, making it easier for Prik to comprehend.

She would either personally write a letter to Princess Anil in simple sentences or ask Lady Pin to write for her.

Every time Prik ends the letter with the phrase.

'When will you return? I have no one by my side now.'

Always miss my friend

Prik Prik...

Prik stared at the postcard which on one side is a view of the dull gray buildings she was not familiar with before flipping to the other side is a drawing of her face when she was young.

A girl with very curly hair in the shape of a big heart, marked with a short, easy-to-read message:

'Missing Prik badly... Anil.'

Prik smiled joyfully from ear to ear which made Lady Pin smile along.

And as it is always the same; as it always has been, after completing sorting out Prik's postcard, Pilantita separated and went to her bedroom to read her letter alone.

Lock the door...

Then carefully arrange the postcards according to the dates on the top right corner on her writing table.

For the three years that Princess Anil went to study in England, she wrote letters to Lady Pin very regularly as she had promised.

'I will write a letter to you every day. I promise.'

The first time she hears Princess Anil saying that Pilantita couldn't help but think to herself that such words are only words of comfort for her tears.

But as time passes,

Princess Anil has proved that she could do exactly what she had been told, which Lady Pin could not argue.

Lady Pin, on the contrary, responded to Princess Anil's letters only upon receiving her weekly missive, economizing on words in her replies.

She never started writing to Princess Anil, not even once.

Princess Anil's writing style has remained the same since the first letter until today.

It all consists of an orderly handwritten one or two-page letter. Other than that, it consists of a postcard which seems to be a journal.

One card per day... then collected and sent weekly and scheduled every week.

The first postcard

Sunday

'It is autumn. It is still as cold as ever. It is so good that it is Sunday, so I've been lying in bed until the sun fully rises. Today's food is as simple as ever, bread and bland vegetable soup. I miss Mae Paen's cooking so much.

In the late afternoon, I went for a walk in the park. The whole park looked yellow and orange, as the leaves here were changing color, but it seemed like I was there in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Everywhere you look, you see only old people.

I do not see any girls my age around here at all.'

Anil

Lady Pin gentle smile as she caressed the first postcard back and forth with a mournful expression. She then flipped back to the other side which is a wood-drawing, a landscape of a park filled with fallen yellow-orange leaves that filled the courtyard drawn by Princess Anil herself.

The second postcard

Monday

'Today, I discovered fascinating tales from Greek mythology. I eagerly volunteered to answer the professor's questions continuously. My responses were often accurate, earning me abundant praise from the professor.'

But when I came back to the accommodation, I just slept, slept, and slept. I woke up in the evening then I felt a headache because I slept at the wrong time, so I was a little dull. I did not want to eat anything, so I drank hot milk and slept until morning.'

Anil

Lady Pin's graceful, delicate brows furrowed the moment she completed reading the brief postcard. She wished she could magically enter the postcard and gently nudge Princess Anil's arm for napping at an inopportune moment and missing dinner, which heightened her concern.

She spent a moment reading the postcard repeatedly for a while, then flipped to the back to see a pencil sketch of the headless statue of the goddess of victory. Though headless, her wings are still wide open; symbolizing the urge to compete with pride.

The third postcard

Tuesday

'I have a funny story to share with you. Today, I slipped and tumbled in the school building's corridor, and for a moment, both of my legs were reaching for the sky. My friends, particularly Emma, burst into non-stop laughter.

Luckily, It's hard for me to get embarrassed, though I lost some cool.

But I'm not embarrassed.'

Anil

Lady Pin read this postcard with a plain face, not laughing with the 'funny story' which Princess Anil mentioned. She also unconsciously twitches her mouth at the phrase 'especially Emma' and stares at it non-stop.

When she flips to the other side, the postcard shows a picture of a girl with a big head with her legs up in the sky and another girl, probably Emma, standing covering her mouth laughing.

Lady Pin's cheeks were even more bloated in offense.

The fourth postcard

Wednesday

'Today the school took us to an art exhibition at the museum. I really like it. It seems that I should study art. What about you, Pin? Is it fun to study literature? Next year, I have to choose my path towards higher education.

Sometimes I am interested in history, sometimes in drawing, sometimes sculpting, but almost every time I want to draw the buildings and design my own house, thus I want to study architecture. What do you think I should do to further my studies?'

Anil

Lady Pin flips to the other side which is Princess Anil's self-portrait; making a confused face, surrounded by question marks, and then smiles fondly.

These postcards were all short messages, but Lady Pin kept reading them over and over as if she was memorizing them for final exams.

The fifth postcard

Thursday

'Today was cloudy all day.

London is so courtly and dull.

As those Khunpra in the Palace.

What about Khunpra Chom?

Is he still flowing to others?'

Anil

The sixth postcard

Friday

'I learned music today. I could not play anything, but I remember that you played the piano very well, so should I take piano lessons?'

Anil

The seventh postcard

Saturday

'I woke up late. Today I went to the library in the neighborhood and found a book that I liked so I read for a long time. I came back and had delicious food like beef steak. I really like it.'

Anil

After reading the seven days' postcards, Pilantita opened the letter folded in a navy envelope sealed with a silver shellac stamp.

Letter from Anil

Dear Khun Pin with respect

Khun Pin Khun Pin Khun Pin

How are you doing? It is the end of the rainy season and beginning of winter there. Frogs probably croak in the rain. You used to say you hated them when they sang late at night. It makes you unable to sleep. I have not heard anything during the rain for a long time.

The rain here is lonely, quiet, like people, not as jolly as our home.

I have been here nearly three years but still am not used to it. I like the way people here only mind their business, not the others, but it also makes me lonely at times.

However, I loved to learn. This place is not only learning through reciting textbooks, but there are stories to learn. I found out later that I am in love with learning.

Although I have numerous friends, they have different ideas, cultures, & languages. In the end, my best friend seems to be more than others.

I'm homesick.

I miss my father, mother, and brothers.

I miss Prik.

But the person that I miss the most, sometimes it makes me cry.

...

I miss you.

Anil

The letter content ends there but Lady Pin kept flipping through it over and over again; before writing back in a few sentences.

Khun Pin's letter

Dear Anil

It rains every night here and I really cannot sleep as you expected but the reason is not from the frogs croaking.

There is something else that makes me unable to sleep...

People here are fine, busy preparing breakfast, brunch and late-night meals are a big deal. If Auntie does not allow me to study at the university. I would think that the whole world only has a cycle around the palace.

Thus, the world outside is so wide that it made me feel surprised.

It is always cold over there, do not forget to keep your body warm; be in thick blankets and wear socks when you sleep. I do not want you to get sick. Finding someone to look after things won't be easy, and it won't be as comfortable as it is here.

I am not pleased to see you write about sleeping at the wrong time and having a headache. I'm not fond of the fact that you exclusively drink warm milk and then go to bed. What if you have gastritis? You need to be very careful. I am worried.

When you fall, having your legs uptrend pointing skywards, do you have any bruises? Did anyone apply medicine on you?

And who is Emma?

Regarding the study, I do not dare to recommend anything. Knowing that you always know what you like, know what you want and know what to do, I want you to do as your heart's wishes.

Regarding Khunpra Chom, He is still sober, formidable, and tricky as before as salt that still retains its salinity.

Regarding studying piano, I totally agree. For your personality is so elegant, it is perfect to play the piano, just imagine when you sit with your back straight and sprinkle your slender fingers playing the piano for me.

I cannot stop grinning.

I keep all your postcard journals. I now have a big collection, so I asked for an iron chest for my aunt to keep, but my favorite ones will be stored in the writing desk drawer so I can conveniently pick them up and read them whenever I think of you.

There are many years left until you come back, but I will not stop to mark off the calendar. That day aunty saw it and she scolded me for marking. It is a mess.

But I will not quit.

Why can't I make a mark? I'm eagerly counting the days until I can see you.

There is not a minute that goes by that I do not think about you...

Pin

CHAPTER 11

The Pine Palace

Suddenly, the desolate courtyard which can be seen every day from Pilantita's bedroom window is now having a big change that Lady Pin herself had never imagined before.

The tall grass covering one's head, and the trees were all cleared. The crispy brown land was flattened by a giant yellow roller. After going through that process for a while, all the builders coming from nowhere crowded in large numbers.

Pilantita, who watches the movement from her bedroom window every day, could not help but worry because she clings to that courtyard more than anything.

Why couldn't she hold onto it? Someone had verbally claimed that courtyard and pledged to construct a palace, ensuring she'd always remain in her view five years ago.

Even if it's a mere suggestion, gradually fading away and vanishing like a breeze, along with that smile from the past...

But instead, Lady Pilantita, took it seriously until she was still surprised.

"Do you know what the king intends to build on that courtyard?"

Lady Pilantita asked Princess Padmika during dinner one day. She was lost by her doubts, unable to hold back her curiosity for even a second.

"What...?" Princess Padmika raised her brows high and asked, "I thought you knew better than anyone."

"How is that Aunty?" Lady Pin's sweet voice was mixed with various surprises.

"The King has ordered a palace to be built in the courtyard as a gift to Princess Anilaphat when she returns to Thailand after she graduates from higher education."

“...”

When she initially discovered it... Pilantita's heart experienced a sudden flutter, and she often told herself that Princess Anil had a penchant for playful jests.

It might be only Lady Pin who takes the story of a palace on the courtyard seriously.

On the contrary...

That individual is even more tenacious about her own words.

"Princess Alisa told me that when she visited Princess Anil in England two months ago, she asked what Princess Anil wanted as a gift when she graduated. Princess Anil, who is now learning architecture, immediately handed her the palace plan to the King immediately."

Princess Padmika giggled and said in affection towards Princess Anil

"Princess Anil wished to have a small palace beside the Bua Palace, with Western design, planted tall pines around and named it the Pine Palace.

"The Pine Palace..." Pilantita repeats the words softly, recalling Princess Anil's drawing of a small house surrounded in pine trees when they were punished for copying textbooks in the writing room.

"Princess Anil still thinks unlike others."

"How unlike is that Aunty?"

"The design of the palace is beautiful, but it is a small one-story wooden house, not worthy of the honor of the King's favorite daughter."

Lady Pin silently listens to her aunt's words. The doubt of having such a small palace, she had also asked Princess Anil about it before.

'Why do you want to stay in a small house?'

'I think it is cozy. A small, narrow place like that, we are always visible.'

"Not only concealed at the palace's far end, but also not situated at the South side of the Front Palace as I initially anticipated. Prince Anan holds dominion over the East side, while Prince Anan claims the West side.

If Princess Anil had constructed a palace in the south, it would have completely encircled the Front Palace.”

"However, Princess Anil is always difficult to predict, Aunty." Lady Pin lowered her face, not telling Princess Anil's specific reason for building a palace in the courtyard because she wants to always be in the eyes of Lady Pin, to her aunt at all.

"I also think that way," Princess Padmika looked at her niece anxiously. "As for this matter, I thought that Princess Anil had told you in advance in her letter, instead, you had to ask me yourself."

"In her latest letter, she only hinted that there would soon be a surprise for me." Lady Pin answered her aunt, with a small grin of pleasure as she repeated the contents of the letter in her head on and on.

'Soon... there will be a surprise for you. If the moment comes, please know that... this gift is my sincere intention to give to you, from my heart.'

"That is more like Princess Anil. What about Prik? Do you know anything about this?"

Princess Padmika turned her head to Prik, who sat neatly folded her legs and overhearing not far from the dining table.

"I knew a little, Your Highness, because her last letter was a drawing of a small house next to the Bua Palace." Prik answered with a very pleading expression.

"So clever, this girl. You just saw that, and you already knew?"

"I do not, Your Highness."

"..." Princess Padmika curiously raises her brows.

"The reason that I knew was because I walked over and asked the builder what he was doing. He replied that they had come to build a palace for the King's youngest daughter. At that time, I knew and was confident."

"Aw! This kid! I accidentally complimented you. On the contrary, I was fooled again."

Despite Princess Padmika's resonance voice has a tint of laughter, but Prik promptly huddled down and buried her face in her knees, gripped by

the fear of imminent death.

Princess Padmika's relationship with Prik is bizarre. Prik is both afraid and fearful of Princess Padmika more than anything, but sometimes, Prik accidentally responded to her so fluidly and eloquently that she risked having Princess Padmika's anger many times.

On the contrary...

Not only Princess Padmika is not angry, she also remembered and admired Prik for her intelligence.

"I deserve to die, Your Highness," Prik answered in a shaky voice.

Princess Padmika looked at Prik fondly.

"Prik, please don't die. Let me have you for fun. A servant like you is not easy to find."

Hearing Princess Padmika's words, Prik quickly raised her head and sparkled as usual.

"Your Highness is very smart."

After she knew about Princess Anil's Pine Palace from her aunt, Pilantita watched the changes unfold on the courtyard through her bedroom window every time she had the opportunity. She is happy to see the little-by-little construction progress each day.

Princess Padmika said that there will be a main pillar laying ceremony and making merit to the monks in the near future. Prik heard about it and was very pleased with it, hoping to wander around the kitchen for snacks like every time there was a big merit ceremony in the Sawetawarit Palace.

Lady Pin can't help smiling when she imagined that if the owner of the Pine Palace was still here with Prik at this time, she would be wandering around and playing cunningly with Prik as usual.

Princess Anil, in her mind, is a young girl who looks like the last photo attached in a letter two years ago.

In that image, Princess Anil sports a radiant, wide grin amidst a sepia-toned photograph. Her formerly rounded cheeks have evolved into distinct, chiseled features. Her once youthful, dark oval eyes now gleam with even more intensity, and her full lips bear the hint of luxurious lipstick. This renders Princess Anil incredibly captivating, making it nearly impossible to avert one's gaze from the photograph.

The only thing that has not changed is her dimple that shines clearly on both sides of her cheek line.

Lady Pilantita kept the picture in a wooden frame hidden in a drawer at the top of the cabinet where the headboard lamp was placed.

She only takes it out and puts it prominently at the headboard just at dusk before going to bed every night.

Every night before going to bed, Lady Pin would look at Princess Anil's photo with contemplative eyes for a moment and wait until she is so drowsy enough not able to open her eyes then say '*good night*' to the photo before falling asleep sideways until dawn.

Even though she wants to know how Princess Anil has grown.

And the face that is as beautiful as a drawing, will now look more beautiful than before.

However, Lady Pin did not dare to write a letter to ask Princess Anil for her photo even once.

Princess Anil is still Princess Anil in the old photo that has become pale with the passage of time.

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“Pin”

“...”

“Khun Pin”

“...”

“Lady Pilantita, my lady!”

"Hmm? What is it, Sunee, I'm just sitting right in front of you, why are you yelling so loud?"

Lady Pilantita, who flinched all the way to the brim complained to Sunee, her close female friend who is sitting with a pouty face on a bench under a large rain tree opposite her with an unpleasant voice.

"I have been calling you from whispering to semi-shouting, Lady Pin. You do not pay attention to me at all?"...no you do not. Sunee propped up and complained. "If you do not believe me, ask Thanit!"

Sunee nodded towards Thanit, the handsome young yellowish-brown skinned man who sits next to him with a grin.

"Really, Thanit?" Lady Pin seriously turned to ask the young man at Sunee's challenge. She doesn't trust Sunee anyway.

"I'm sorry to say yes," Thanit retorted smiling, "Sunee has been calling you for a long time, but you seem to look distracted."

"I would like to testify for Sunee too."

Shada, the young woman sitting next to Pilantita playfully raised her hand high to testify for Sunee.

"Believe me now? Lady Pin is number one for being distracted."

"Mmm, but why do you call me?" Lady Pin's beautiful face was skewed with no argument against her best friend's accusations.

"I am asking you out for some ice cream. There are no more classes this afternoon, and I am bored of going home quickly. So, I remembered P’Kawin would pick me up this afternoon, so I will invite my brother to treat us ice cream at the new café."

Thanit's face suddenly turns pale even when Sunee has not finished her words. Why would this young man not know Sunee, her best friend who wants to be a matchmaker for her older brother and Lady Pin? He couldn't help but wonder in confidence that Sunee knows how he feels about Pilantita.

For three years now, he has played the part of a gatekeeper, occupying the role of a close male companion within a group that appears to have no hope of advancement otherwise.

Not even as a young man openly expressing affection for Lady Pin, like many other guys scattered throughout the university...

Thanit still cannot be like those people...

Each time he makes thoughtless proclamations... the chance of maintaining a close friendship with Lady Pin would undoubtedly be shattered.

Thanit is smart enough to realize that Lady Pilantita is well reserved.

The young men who persistently tried to court Lady Pin had to retreat without realizing the full extent of their competition. Moreover, Lady Pin wouldn't grant any man the ease of flirting with her; she maintained an aloof demeanor, even to the point of disliking their presence and showing no inclination to show favor to any of them.

But Thanit refrained from criticizing those young men who dared to express their desire to win Lady Pilantita's heart. In fact, he felt such empathy for these courageous individuals that he contemplated offering incense and candles as a tribute to their audacious determination.

Whoever dares to do, do so.

He is the one who never dares...

The three years of quietly mingling within Lady Pin's circle of close friends allowed Thanit to understand better than anyone else that behind her charming countenance, which could melt anyone's heart, lay a latent sense of authority that could suddenly manifest as a chilly, commanding presence through her large, brown doe eyes.

Pilantita, in Thanit's eyes, is extremely aggressive and difficult to reach.

"Sure. I am free."

Lady Pin's gentle voice is like a drop of water that extinguishes Thanit's fading hopes.

Pilantita's downside that Thanit knows for sure is...

She trusts Sunee more than anyone.

"Are you inviting me and Chada also?" Thanit probes.

"Of course! Do you think I am that mean?" Sunee smiles as always. Thanit then goes along.

"Sounds good, I will eat all the ice cream in there until the treater wants to cry."

Without knowing...Pilantita right now used a spoon to spread the vanilla ice cream in a tall glass in front of her.

"The ice cream has melted away, Lady Pin," Kawin softly said. The young man with a fop personality woke Lady Pin from her trance. She only smiled a little but did not say anything.

"Do you not like vanilla ice cream?" The young man noticed.

Lady Pin did not answer, looking at the slowly melting vanilla ice cream and the big bright red cherries, pondering if Princess Anil would come to the café together.

What flavor of ice cream would she like? ...

If she has to guess, it would be chocolate for one of the letters of Princess Anil clearly states her preference:

'The chocolate here is so delicious, Khun Pin. It is not as sweet as a scoop of sugar in our home. Anil prefers the bittersweet and bitter taste of chocolate to any dessert. I ate so much at once that sometimes my tongue splintered.'

"This café might not be to Lady Pin's liking, so let me suggest an alternative café. I'm confident the ice cream won't go to waste by melting like this." Thanit smirked, directing an unabashedly challenging gaze at Kawin.

"Don't be mistaken, Thanit, there is no café in the city that makes ice cream tastier than here" Kawin replied to Thanit with bold eyes with vantage.

In the middle of the long Cold War of two young men in front...

Lady Pin is still in a state of thought over Princess Anil's letter content when she heard the word 'taste' flashing through her ears a few moments ago.

'When winter arrives, the sight of people locking lips becomes unmistakably evident here. Whether it's a lover's kiss or not, it can be witnessed in various places: within the confines of an aging building, amidst the bustling park, tucked away in the library's corners, where serious and elusive academic texts stand guard.

As if people here were kissing each other openly anywhere that I could not help but ask...

How sweet is the taste of a kiss...

Lady Pin...Have you ever wanted to know like me?

What does a kiss taste like?'

Pilantita's face immediately heated up when she thought of this text of this person far away. She could only scold Princess Anil inside, *'Anil, why are you asking such a difficult question?'*

"Looks like you do not have to argue anymore, boys."

Chada interrupted the two men unexpectedly after observing Lady Pin's beautiful face for a while. Her slender, thin face sometimes looks distracted, sometimes grinning to herself, sometimes suddenly turning red, like a woman who fell into the depths of 'love.'

Not only now... but as Chada has noticed, Lady Pin has always been like this since the first time she knew her, but for the last few weeks.

Lady Pin seems to be acting more noticeable.

"No matter which café, Lady Pin won't stop being inattentive."

That afternoon, Kawin and Sunee gave a ride to Lady Pin at the gate beside the palace wall and left silently. They didn't even muster the courage to pay the customary visit to Princess Padmika.

But the story is more complicated...

"Khun Kua is waiting to see you in the hall, my lady."

Prik immediately informed Lady Pilantita's toes to step on into the palace.

"Khun Kua again?"

Pilantita's voice is extremely weary. From all the young men who have come to flirt with her, Lord Kuakiat ; Prince Anon's close associate is the only young man whom she cannot find any reason to refuse to meet with.

First,Khun Kua is always approaching the elders, whether through the majesty of Prince Anon or even Princess Padmika. Second, Khun Kua often waits in the reception room of the Bua Palace and always gets permission from Princess Padmika.

How can Pilantita pretend to ignore him, just like she did with a young man waiting on a university bench.

Today also,Khun Kua was already waiting for her in the lounge, but without the sight of her aunt because it was now time to take control of the kitchen.

"Hello, sister." The young man unfolded a sweet smile dripping for Lady Pin as soon as he met his face.

"Hello Khun Kua." Lady Pin just smiled and replied a little, perfunctorily. "You come to the Bua Palace so often as it seems like there is not much government work for you to do."

"Sister, please do not say that. I just stopped by to bring my mother's sweets and give them to Aunty Pad." Kuakiat laughed until his sharp eyes almost closed. The young man was already familiar with Pilantita's deep, insidious words.

Why wouldn't he know...

Pilantita is soft on the outside, hard on the inside.

Despite how beautiful and neat her face was, her thoughts were not so limp that it was as easily persuasive as many women in the palace he had met.

"If you just stop by to deliver the sweets and you are done, you can go back." Lady Pin spoke up in a calm voice.

"Sister, don't be so mean. I just want to have a conversation with you. I will be back to work in a minute. It will not be long."

Kuakiat still smiles. The young man's smile is so visually pleasing. Prik, who sat with folded legs beside Lady Pin's knees, kept staring at him until her eyes barely blinked.

In Prik's eyes, Kuakiat is so handsome. He is thin, tall, and graceful, with fine white skin of his Chinese descent from Mom Lamom, his mother. He's handsome, so eloquent and speaks sweet words.

There is nothing bad about Lord Kua...

Still, Pilantita does not seem to be pleased with him, no matter what.

"If you want to have a conversation, then talk to me." Pilantita said.

"Yes, then I will ask Prik to..." he turned towards Prik but didn't dare to ask directly.

"Prik, stay here with me, if you have any errand, call P'Koi instead." Lady Pin's sweet voice spoke knowing his trick.

"Mmm, yes, yes." Kuakiat only accepted.

Seeing Kuakiat's blunt face, Prik could only smile widely, showing all her teeth. Prik's intention was to encourage, but it looked superficially to mock Kuakiat.

Then, Prik did her duty to *'be the third wheel'* without failing. Any conversation he asked, to which the lady remained silent, prompting Prik to respond on her own. Any sentence about courtship, Prik will start questioning the young man; enough that he had to change the subject.

However, it doesn't imply that Prik isn't easily distracted. In the interim, she found herself counting her fingers, subtracting five from seven leaves her with two.

Two years! Until Princess Anil returns!

Lady Pin herself is very attractive, so how can Prik alone withstand and keep watch, as Princess Anil had emphasized repeatedly before her

departure.

While interrupting Kuakiat, Prik also drafts a letter in her head.

With intention to go back to writing this evening.

'My dearest Princess, I implore you to return as swiftly as you can. Any delay beyond this point appears to be too late. The enemy's onslaught is growing increasingly formidable.'

Prik Prik'

CHAPTER 12

The Grand Prince

For certain individuals, the waiting period seems to inch by at a leisurely pace, lasting seemingly forever, as if it were infinite.

While things had changed in the blink of an eye...

For instance, the Pine Palace was quickly completed on the same day as Pilantita crossed out her desktop calendar from the first day she waited; up to the sixth year; with a focused and hopeful attitude.

Under Princess Anilaphat's ownership, the Pine Palace, while not as vast as the Grand Prince's Burapha Palace or even the second Prince's Horadee Palace, is by no means as *'small'* as Princess Padmika had previously mentioned.

A western style ash-indigo one and a half-story house with a terrace in the spacious area surrounded by tall pines. The back of the palace is decorated with a beautiful garden with a pergola for afternoon tea hidden away in the corner of the garden.

Exclusively, on the side of the palace under the shade of the pine trees, there is a tennis court painted with green leaves contrasting with the bright white of the stadium border.

"Anil is both playful and well-off." Prince Anantawut who came to inspect the palace said thoughtlessly.

"It seems like Anil." Prince Anon said laughing.

"We'll see if we will be invited to play tennis here." The eldest brother said while swinging his arms forward and backward all the way, as if he was practicing to whip a tennis ball.

"It must have been hard, after I met her last year; it looks like the two of us will be the very last person that she will invite." Prince Anon raised his hand and stroked his chin, "I am afraid we both have to grow a mustache to frighten boys. Anil is so beautiful."

"I believe so, but I also think that the wealthier and more refined Anil becomes, the harder it is to find a man willing to propose to a woman of high status. It's like searching for a needle in an ocean."

"Your words gave me intuitions." Prince Anon remarked with a wide smile, "I fear that Western gentlemen may not share your perspective."

"That's even more concerning. Western men, particularly those of European descent, tend to be bolder than Thai men."

"Has Anil been appointed to be engaged to anyone?" Prince Anon finally asked, expressing his concern.

"Not as of now. In Father's perspective, Anil is still quite young, and the suitors worthy of her titles all have their imperfections. Some are older, some less affluent, and some appear unkempt; none seem to meet Father's approval," the Grand Prince explained, shaking his head.

"Being born into royalty is challenging, and being born as a female royal is even more challenging by many folds. At the very least, both of us can select a life partner without the constraints of royal titles, unlike her."

"Is that so?" It appears that The Grand Prince's gaze is dimming, if only for a brief moment, a mere fraction of a second.

But Prince Anon immediately noticed it.

"Soon, you'll be marrying Lady Parvati. Please, my brother, don't dwell on the past, brother."

The Grand Prince looked at his younger brother who had not only his sweet face from Princess Alisa, their mother, but also her gentle smile.

"I don't want to dwell on it, but I find myself unable to stop thinking, Anon. My commitment to Euangfah is strong, but our family ties are very close. If I insist on my own way, it won't bode well for our future child. With all the knowledge and studies I've had, how can I simply ignore it?"

Prince Anantawut looked gloomy when he mentioned Euangfah who is titled to be Princess Alisa's niece with grief.

Lady Euang, who is younger than the Grand Prince by almost twelve years, has a beautiful face and sweet gentle manners like a Lanna woman. This has imprinted in the eldest brother's every consideration from the first

time he saw her face when Princess Alisa took him to visit the Princess Dararai's palace, the prince's aunt in Chiang Mai.

At that time, Prince Anantawut only kept everything with him, regarding the desire which he expected that his feelings might change as time goes by, but as long time passes, the affection towards Lady Euang grew more every time he had the opportunity to meet his relatives at various events.

Even though they don't meet frequently, the tender voice with which Lady Euangfah addresses him as 'Brother, Chao^[16]' continues to resonate in his mind, causing a stir every time he reminisces about it."

"This is only between us, Anon." The Grand Prince smiled but looked even more gloomy. "Even Lady Euang does not know, nor should she know."

"But it seems that Anil is aware," Prince Anon admitted, unable to deny that he had learned this secret from Princess Anilaphat during his welcome reception when returning from Europe six years ago.

"That one, just a glimpse of her eyes, she will already know, Anon. She is very clever."

"If you've made a commitment to Lady Parvati, you should let go of her," Prince Anon advised, reminiscing about his 'future sister-in-law.' In Prince Anon's opinion, no matter how lovely and charming Lady Euang might be, she couldn't compare to Lady Vati, a foreign student with a captivating personality reminiscent of a Western girl.

"I know that..." the Grand Prince's eloquent face suddenly became solemn, as even Prince Anon could not defend himself in time.

"I will get over her, Anon, don't worry."

"Why was the Pine Palace required to be finished two years before Princess Anil's return?" Prik voiced her doubts on the day Lady Pin convinced her to enter and investigate the Pine Palace, despite being unable to contradict Princess Padmika's command:

'Lady Pin, please go and see for me. If there is anything untidy, we can fix it up in time.'

"Maybe because the King misses his little daughter so much, therefore, if it is Princess Anil's wish, His Majesty hastened to finish it early."

Lady Pin looked at the surroundings of the palace and answered Prik's question.

The interior of the pine palace was decorated with Western style furnishings. The central hall is characterized by a fireplace connected to the chimney, not different from drawings and coloring in thick tales. In front of the fireplace, there is a beige down U-shape sofa, which looks very soft and comfortable to sleep on.

Near the window frame on the balcony sits a smoky gray sofa and a round reading table. One master bedroom is simply decorated with indigo and taupe green, contrasting with the soft white of the bed linen. The guest room, which is three times smaller than the master bedroom, is decorated in the same color scheme. Beyond that was an English kitchen decorated with all the little things. To the East of the palace is a modest navy-painted office surrounded by shelves with thick picture books.

Even the bathroom has been given a Western touch. Suspiciously, there are potted green plants as well. The servant quarters are incredibly spacious, enough to make Prik's heart race as she envisioned them eventually becoming her own.

"Princess Anil's palace is beautiful, my lady," Prik mused as she explored every corner of the Pine Palace.

"Prik's overlord meticulously planned every detail, how could you not be delighted?" Lady Pilantita replied in a hushed tone, almost requiring her to raise an ear to hear.

"Very intelligent," Prik said.

"She is more Westernized." Lady Pin mused, "She is unlike anyone else before she left, anyway."

"Why should Princess Anil need to be like anyone when she is so much smarter?" Prik argued in favor of her overlord until her neck raised.

"You're quite similar, always fond of questioning and debating," Lady Pilantita remarked, lifting her disapproving gaze to meet Prik's unwavering stare.

"I don't know, I can read and write because Princess Anil has spared her playing time to teach me. I was smart because Princess Anil taught me more than my own parents. My beauty radiated, thanks to Princess Anil's constant praise and generous clothing donations. She even gifted me a necklace and bracelet, just like she did for everyone else. Lady Pin, please refrain from speaking ill of Princess Anil where I can hear. It might anger me to the point where I can't control myself."

"Prik!" Lady Pilantita could only say that and remained silent, for Prik's words of praise upon Princess Anil are echoing in her mind.

"Being by my side yet firmly on Princess Anil's team, Prik is quite partial. You have a deep affection for Princess Anil alone, don't you?"

Prik feigned indifference, as Lady Pin's accusation did hold some truth in her mind.

What are the outcomes of five years and six years?

Prik still vividly recalls her twelve years alongside Princess Anil.

"Please refrain from suggesting that I'm partial. Aren't you the one who loves Princess Anil more than anyone else?"

"I don't want to argue with you anymore." Pilantita's face suddenly turned red. "Now, you come in and clean up." Lady Pin said while pretending to look here and there, but there was only one thing that I didn't dare to look at...

Is Prik's cunning face, which is now staring at her!

"Yes, I will come here to clean up every day." Prik smiled widely, showing her white teeth.

"Perhaps not as often. The Grand Prince's engagement ceremony is scheduled for this week, and you'll need to assist with the Front Palace this time."

"That's right. I will have to go around the kitchen for snacks, but I will take some time to clean up here every day."

"Whatever you want, Prik." Lady Pin flicked her eyes at Prik irresistibly. While Prik did not pay any attention to Lady Pin's eyes, for she hurriedly went to clean up the servant house first.

"You look as glad as if Princess Anil will return tomorrow."

Pilantita looked at Prik's large thick back and murmured alone.

A day before the engagement ceremony between Prince Anantawut and Lady Parvati, Princess Padmika recruited many skilled women including Prik and her niece Lady Pin to help out making hundreds of bouquets to decorate the corners of the reception hall which has been designated as the place of the ceremony.

As the reception hall buzzed with commotion, Lady Pin's gaze drifted towards the opulent, shiny black car of Prince Anantawut as it entered the fountain courtyard. From her vantage point, while crafting a delicate crown flower (Uba Dok Rak), she could discern that the prince wasn't alone in the back seat; he was accompanied by a young woman.

Seeing that, the lady kept her head down making bouquets thinking that the young lady sitting next to the prince would have to be Lady Paravati; his fiancé, even hearing the buzz from the servants sitting around her. The lady is still only focused on making the bouquets.

It was only when Prik, who was seated beside Lady Pin, dropped a bundle of garlands in front of her, that Lady Pilantita raised her gaze in the direction of Prik's attention...

It was revealed that the girl was not Lady Parvati, but rather a teenage white girl. She possessed a slender, tall, and graceful figure with impeccable posture, aligning her straight back with her shoulders and regal neck. Her oval-shaped face was slightly upturned, highlighting the contour of her jaw. Her slender, dark eyes were expressive, radiant, and sparkled with life. She had a lovely nose and lips tinted with a soft brick red hue. Until that familiar face fixed its gaze on Lady Pin, causing her heart to flutter before she broke into a gentle smile, revealing adorable dimples on both her smooth cheeks.

That's why Lady Pin was confident at that moment...

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Nothing can go wrong...

And Lady Pin was not dreaming...

The girl standing in front of her is really Princess Anilaphat
Sawetawarit.

CHAPTER 13

Stranger

"Princess Anil only came to attend Prince Anan's auspicious event. She is not returning permanently. You don't have to be so exhilarating happy, Prik"

As Princess Padmika commented on Prik's changed demeanor, it became evident that Prik wasn't the only one who appeared withered, like a dried flower, upon learning the reason for Princess Anil's early return.

This time, Pilantita inadvertently released a long sigh, her shoulders drooping with weariness, much like Prik.

"Then will Princess Anil only stay for a few days, Aunt?" Lady Pin asked her aunt soundlessly.

"I heard she'll be staying here for a few months. It coincides with the school break before the new year, which aligns with your university's schedule."

Just hearing her Aunt say '*several months*', was sufficient to alleviate Lady Pin's anxiety, prompting a smile to grace her lips.

"What a coincidence, Aunt, that the marriage of Prince Anan coincides with Princess Anil's school holiday."

"It's not a mere coincidence. On the contrary, Prince Anan desires his sister to return for his wedding, which is why he decided to hold the ceremony during this timeframe."

"Is that so, Aunt? Prince Anan really loved and endured his little sister."

"He loved Princess Anil like his eldest daughter, and even the King asked his son, "*So is it me, or you are Anil's father?*"

Princess Padmika giggling said.

"He not only selected the timing but also took care of all the arrangements, including securing return tickets and expediting the

construction of the Pine Palace to welcome Princess Anil.”

This time, both Lady Pin and Prik nodded almost simultaneously because they just understood the reason for speeding up the construction and decoration of the Pine Palace two years before the return of its owner.

"Did you know of this early arrival, Aunty?"

"I just found out from Prince Anan the other day, when I asked you and Prik to clean the Pine Palace up."

"But why did Princess Alisa seem to not know about Princess Anil's return?"

Lady Pin asked her aunt, thinking of Princess Alisa's joyful moment, she jumped in and embraced her little daughter in the hall of the Front Palace this afternoon.

'Anil, why didn't you tell me that you'll be coming back?, my lovely girl.'

Saying only that, Princess Alisa did not wait to hear Princess Anil's answer in any way; she hugs tightly and kisses Princess Anil's forehead as if Princess Anil was just a little girl. Princess Alisa's mouth was smiling with pleasure. But instead, Princess Alisa's eyes lit up with thunderstorms that finally poured down and shrouded in her deepest love that she missed her youngest daughter so much. Even though she had just visited her daughter last year.

Pilantita recalls watching the events unfold before her, her emotions a blend of nostalgia and fondness, reminiscent of the way Princess Anil's eyes used to light up when kissed and embraced by her mother.

And felt floating as she repeatedly asked herself if the scene in front was true or if she was just dreaming...

Even feeling jealous of Princess Alisa that she was able to easily get close and possess Princess Anil's body... different from her who up until now, could only watch from afar.

"Princess Alisa was unaware, unlike the others. Her son and daughter were kept as a secret to surprise her." Aunty's clear voice woke Lady Pin from her trance.

“Do the foreigners call it 'sapai' (daughter-in-law), my lady?" Prik, now as cheerful as a flower in the rain, inquired Princess Padmika with a lively and clear voice full of brightness.

"Hmm. They call it a surprise, Prik." It is another time that Princess Pad gives time to joke around with the affectionate servant like Prik.

"Aa, **surparai**. next time I will correct it."

Princess Padmika smiled when she saw how determined Prik was with her tongue rolling when she uttered the word **surparai**.

"Princess Pad, Princess Anil would like to come to see you."

Suddenly, Phin, the servant of the Bua Palace walked in and informed Princess Padmika with a hasty gesture.

"She came here?"

"Yes, Your Highness."

"Hurry up and invite Princess Anil in, please don't let her wait for long."

Aunty's voice said with joy as if it made Pilantita's heartbeat so hard that it almost bounced out.

She also held her breath unconsciously as she looked at Princess Anil's thin tall body, which walked gracefully yet humbly after Mae Phin.

“It's been a long time, Aunt Pad” the Princess curtsied as a gesture of respect towards Princess Padmika before breaking into a radiant smile.

“Please take a seat, Princess Anil. Thank you so much for making the effort to greet me at the palace,” said Princess Padmika, reaching out to touch Princess Anilaphat, hinting her to sit on a single wooden chair beside her.

"Here is a little gift from England, I brought to you." Princess Anil handed Princess Padmika a gift box wrapped in navy paper wrapped with elegant silver ribbon in a respectful manner.

"Thank you, Princess Anil, for still thinking of me." The look in Princess Padmika's eyes now could not hide the slightest hint of admiration for the younger woman in front of her.

“Just a moment ago, in the hall, I was very rude. Mother grabbed me, hugged me, and kissed me non-stop. Then she dragged me to the bedroom. Therefore, I did not pay respect to you or even say hello to Khun Pin and Prik even for a little bit.”

"It's perfectly fine. Don't worry. Your mother was eagerly anticipating your return, so it's only natural to be this joyful. I understand."

Princess Padmika spoke with a deep understanding that no one else possessed regarding the sorrow Princess Alisa had endured during the past five to six years while being separated from her cherished little daughter, who was the apple of her eye.

"How are you doing?" asked Princess Anilaphat, smiling.

"I am fine," Princess Padmika answered, looking at Princess Anil thoughtfully.

She was beautiful in her youth... At this moment, her beauty had doubled. Not to mention her graceful and dignified stride, which left Princess Padmika unable to cease her admiration.

After small chit-chats, Princess Anil bowed and asked for Princess Padmika's permission with respect.

"However, today I would like to request the presence of Khun Pin and Prik to accompany me at the Pine Palace, Aunty."

Princess Anil's delightful voice caused both Lady Pilantita and Prik to clench their lips tightly, struggling to contain their excitement.

“Princess Anil doesn’t have to ask to borrow them,” Princess Padmika said smiling. “Even if you do not ask... I will give them to you.”

“Ahem Hemm! Cough Cough”

"What is stuck in your throat, Prik?" Despite the words Princess Padmika said to Prik, her eyes were fixed on her niece Lady Pilantita's reddened face.

"Nothing, Your Highness" Prik answered, before bowing her head to her knees in the fear of death.

"My plan is that Lady Pin will be responsible for Princess Anil's welfare during your time at the Pine Palace."

"Thank you for your kindness, Aunty."

"Lady Pin, what do you think?" Just looking at her, Lady Pilantita was completely frightened.

"No problem, Aunty."

"Good. Then you can go with Princess Anil first, and I will let Prik do some errands for a moment then to follow you two."

"Thank you so much."

Princess Anil answered Princess Padmika, before turning to give Pilantita a sweet smile showing off her cheek-side dimple as usual.

"Khun Pin"

Princess Anil lifted up her face from a large suitcase that is now scattered with souvenirs. There are scarves woven from many fine fabrics, several boxes of expensive perfumes, chocolate with many flavors and many more souvenirs.

"Yes?"

Lady Pin only can reply to Princess Anil then tighten her lips as before as she always did when Princess Anil started dragging a giant suitcase out and placing it on the fleece carpet in front of the fireplace. She opens and searches the items as if they were alive, until she looks up and calls Lady Pin's name a moment ago.

"What's wrong, you have been looking at me like that since entering my palace."

Princess Anil halted her teasing. She gazed up at Pilantita with her strikingly clear, serious brown eyes, causing Pilantita to avert her gaze.

"What kind of look?"

"The kind that sees me as somebody else."

"..."

Lady Pilantita acknowledges that she is unaccustomed to Princess Anil's currently more intense, sparkling eyes and can only remain silent, lost for words.

"Khun Pin acted as if... you did not know me before."

"..."

"Even though I wrote to you every day, I couldn't help but be frustrated."

Princess Anil's soft voice and the twinkle in her eyes were akin to a sharp razor blade, slicing through Pilantita's heart and causing her pain.

"It's just I haven't seen you for so long."

Pilantita's voice stuttered.

"Even though I received weekly letters from Anil...they were still letters I couldn't physically touch."

Lady Pilantita approached Princess Anilaphat, who was seated on the room's floor, and took a seat opposite her. They gazed into each other's dark eyes for a prolonged moment.

"In my recollection, Anil has always remained the same, much like the latest photograph you enclosed in a letter two years ago."

Lady Pin speaks with an absentminded face while staring at the face which looks like the photo she looks at before going to bed every night.

The distinction lies in the fact that Princess Anil's face before her, in the flesh and blood, appears even more beautiful and vibrant than the pallid photograph.

"But Anil who stands in front of me has now grown into an elegantly grown woman beyond my imagination."

Pilantita paused, swallowing hard as her saliva went down her throat.

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"I beg your forgiveness to admit honestly that I still perceive you as a stranger and mourn the fading memories of the young Anil."

“...”

The moment she uttered the words, everything around them was silent. The more she observed the beautiful face before her, the paler and sadder it seemed.

Lady Pilantita almost wished she could retract her cold, hurtful words and keep them locked within her conscience.

When she witnessed Princess Anilaphat muster a sorrowful smile as she wasn't sure how to compose her own expression.

Pilantita hates herself so much...

"Is that so?"

Princess Anil simply said, then looked down at the scarf in her hand aimlessly.

"I got it."

"Are you angry?"

It appeared that the person responsible for uttering the words that had cast a shadow over Princess Anil seemed much more despondent than she did.

"I am not."

Princess Anil's voice is calm. She looked down; only staring at the items in her suitcase.

"Just felt sorry."

"About what?"

Unconsciously... At this moment, Lady Pilantita was so close to Princess Anil that her shoulders almost rubbed against Princess Anil's shoulder.

"About me taking little Anil from you."

The princess said and laughed in a soft voice.

"I just have to grow up every day, not able to be the little Anil that you are used to...Please forgive me."

"Do not say that Anil." Pilantita's heart suddenly fell; only to hear Princess Anil's swaying voice. "Because I, myself, am not the same girl Anil used to know either."

"I do not think so." This time, Princess Anil has eye contact with Lady Pin. "When I first saw your face this afternoon, I did not think of anything complicated."

Princess Anil gave a grief sweet smile like no one would often see.

"I am so happy and overwhelmed to see you again... I was so happy that I almost wanted to jump in to hug you right there."

"..."

"Be it Khun Pin from my youth, Khun Pin whom I've only encountered through letters, or even the sweet, lovely Khun Pin standing before me now," the princess's soft voice took on an incredibly dreamy quality.

"I love every version of you..."

"..."

Before Pilantita's wide, doe-like brown eyes could fully register such words, there came the sound of hurried footsteps, as if someone was rushing forward to intervene.

"Is that Prik?" Princess Anil's gloomy eyes suddenly turned into sparkles. "Why are you sneaking around in front of the door like that and not coming in?"

"Can I, my princess?"

At that moment, Prik peered half her face through the wide doorway but remained outside the palace.

"Why not? Come in, I have many things for you."

"Really, my princess?"

That happy voice makes Lady Pin reluctantly look at Prik, who was running towards her overlord with a gesture like a little dog anxiously

waiting for its owner.

"How are you? Do you remember me?" Princess Anil's smile is as bright as the summer sun. "I miss you so much."

"I also miss you so much, my lady." Prik's clear tears filled her eyes. "When you left, my life was so bland."

"I was no different from you. I was lonely and alone," Princess Anil said fondly to Prik. "No followers."

"Well, Princess Anil, as you search all across the country, I'm the only one who will be your loyal companion," Prik said with a cheerful laugh.

"That's right. I only have you as you said. What about you? Do you have a partner now?"

"Prik does not have a husband yet, my princess."

"Is that so?" said Princess Anil and laughed fondly.

"Yes, at times I've thought about it, but then again, I believe not having one is better. Men are so annoying."

From that point onward, Lady Pilantita felt like an onlooker as she observed a servant speak warmly to her mistress. As soon as Prik received several freshly dyed scarves and numerous chocolates as gifts, she hastily made her way to the servant's quarters, having heard Princess Anil's words with her own ears:

'That house belongs to you.'

After Prik had left a little while, the atmosphere between the two women suddenly became awkwardly silent.

Princess Anil gazed at the sweet yet self-assured countenance for a brief moment. She noticed the slender, curved eyebrows, the familiarly shaped nose, and the plump lips adorned with gentle hues. However, her large, round, raw umber-colored eyes appear cloudy, as if their owner were in a sour mood.

"What's wrong? You look moody." Finally, Princess Anil, who had been silent all along, was the first to speak.

"Really?...I didn't realize." Pilantita turned away arrogantly.

"Or did Prik say something offensive?" Princess Anil's inquisitive, sparkling eyes appeared endearing.

"If anyone said something offensive, it would've been you."

"Hmmm, how come?"

"Never mind, it is not that important." Lady Pin's lips, shaped like chestnuts, suddenly contorted as if bothered.

"How can I let things go? I do not want to see you frown."

"Does it really matter if I frown or not?"

"Yes, it does..." Princess Anil flirtatiously smiled. "I do not feel good when I see you frown."

After conversing fluidly to each other, Lady Pin feels like getting her little Anil back when she clearly noticed that her Princess Anilaphat was still as charming and persuasive as ever, there is no difference.

"I want you to smile more, you have a beautiful smile."

"I guess having Prik smile is enough, you **miss** each other so much, don't you?" Lady Pin's eyes were cold, but full of power until Princess Anil was still in awe.

"Oh...so that's the thing you don't like?"

"..."

Pilantita did not say anything. Moreover, she stubbornly tried to get up and run away, but Princess Anil reached out and grabbed her hand tightly instead.

"Khun Pin, wait. Please do not go yet." Princess Anil's eyes are so affectionate at this moment.

"With Prik, I really miss her."

"I know. You said that many times," Pilantita, whose thin hands were held tightly, replied with an outraged voice.

Although she couldn't have known... that her own emotions were somewhat tangled and disconcerted.

Moreover, by the princess's thumb rubbing on her back hand gently, Lady Pin's thoughts were too blank to realize anything.

"With Prik, I just miss her like a close friend..."

"..."

"But with you..."

Princess Anil shifted the hand that was holding Lady Pin's slender fingers to her own fair cheek, then gazed into Lady Pin's eyes affectionately.

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"I feel more than that..."

CHAPTER 14

Investigate

"I feel more than that..."

A soft, pleasant voice echoed in Pilantita's ears as if the wind blew between the gorges of the sheer cliffs.

And her hands were still held gently as they caressed Princess Anil's cheeks.

Her instinct quickly withdrew her hand from Princess Anil's hold, yet her heart still yearned for the tender contact now emanating from the person before her.

And her body appeared more responsive to the heart's desires than to the directives of her mind.

Pilantita's delicate hands were also restrained from showing slight affection towards someone.

"How much?"

Lady Pin moved closer to Princess Anil; so close that they can almost hear each other's breathing. She asked in a serious tone, gazing up her brown eyes and making contact with the dark eyes that had been staring at her for a while.

"Hmm."

"You said you miss me more ... How much more?"

Only then, everything went silent for a long time. Princess Anil swallowed her saliva difficulty before saying in a distant voice.

"So much that I do not know how to define it..."

"..."

"All I'm aware of is... the days and nights of anticipating your letters passed so slowly, gradually wearing away at my sanity until I felt utterly adrift. Every time I read your missive, no matter how brief or

uncomplicated the content, it felt like my heart was rekindled with joy and optimism, only to dwindle once more as I counted the days until the next one arrived. This has been the pattern throughout my entire five years there."

"..."

"Just understand that... I yearned too ardently for solace, relying solely on the letters from you. I longed both to see you in person and hear your voice, and I was intensely curious about how you had grown. However, since I couldn't do anything about it, every night before bed, I could only rely on my imagination to paint a mental picture of you."

"..."

"Just understand that... I was in pain and deeply saddened that I couldn't be present for every significant moment in your life, from your high school graduation, the joy of being admitted to the Faculty of Arts, to last year's birthday celebration with friends at a restaurant near the university. I've missed out on all of your important days."

"Anil ... please do not be upset."

While Pilantita was well aware that she couldn't resolve every issue that troubled Princess Anilaphat, she couldn't resist offering comfort to the person before her.

"In fact, Anil is with me at every moment."

"..."

"As I often tell you in my letters."

Unconsciously, Pilantita found herself gently caressing the area beneath Princess Anil's eyes with her remaining hand, as if she were trying to dispel a weariness that clung to the dark eyes.

"That there is not a single minute that goes by I do not think about you..."

"Then you should probably understand me better than anyone, Khun Pin..."

This time it was Princess Anil who moved her body closer to Pilantita. She took hold of Lady Pin's hands, placing them in her own lap, all the while gazing deeply into her eyes.

"I just ask myself if I have to think of someone all the time..."

"..."

"While I was awake... and asleep."

"..."

"With all of this can it still be called just merely missing someone...?"

After speaking softly, Princess Anil tenderly embraced Pilantita's delicate form, as if she feared that Lady Pin might crumble before her. A comforting warmth coursed through her body and into Lady Pin's heart. Instead of pushing her away, Lady Pin nestled her face into the embrace, remaining there for an extended period. Strangely, Princess Anil's enticing scent seemed to have the opposite effect, soothing their emotions.

Forced her heart to stop beating in some way...

and arouse them to dance faster sometimes.

However, what nearly shattered Pilantita's mind were the soft whispers in her ear at that moment.

"But for me."

"..."

"It's more than missing... it's a desire."

"..."

Not wanting to push away, Pilantita chose to do so, promptly withdrawing herself upon hearing Princess Anilaphat's words.

A heart-pounding statement makes Pilantita know the answer to the same question as Princess Anil, that she kept asking herself for many years.

So all the time it's not just missing...

But it's desire instead?

"Anil... I..."

"You don't need to say anything; I don't seek any answers from you. I've simply responded to your query about what it's like to experience more than just missing someone..."

Princess Anil's face, as exquisite as a painting, suddenly clouded with sadness, causing her to avert her gaze.

Although a convincing smile had once again graced Princess Anil's countenance, Pilantita's sense of guilt for breaking away from her longing embrace still hung in the atmosphere.

"Let's take a look at your souvenir..." Princess Anilaphat changed the topic by reaching for a box of perfume from her suitcase and handing it to Lady Pin.

"I like this smell. Not sure if you'd like it or not..."

Princess Anilaphat omitted the words, *'Because I have never encountered a scent as delightful as your aroma.'*, just in her own contemplation, avoiding witnessing Pilantita's awkward demeanor as she had a moment ago.

"I will try it out later."

Pilantita also pondered to herself, *'Who did you smell this scent from? You seem to like this scent a lot?'* in her own thoughts as well.

"Another souvenir for you is a sketchbook."

"Sketchbook?" Pilantita, taking a compact sketchbook from Princess Anilaphat's hand curiously.

"A sketchbook that embodies my response to what goes beyond mere longing."

Princess Anil's somber, sparkling eyes stand in contrast to her smile, which reveals dimples on her cheeks.

"I long for you so intensely that I find myself sketching you from my imagination every night before bedtime."

"..."

Pilantita flipped through the pages of a sketchbook, each one adorned with beautiful pencil lines, and her eyes displayed a sense of puzzlement

from the first page to the last.

Those pages are all filled with sketches of her.

Sketches of her in her youth in various postures.

This book exclusively featured her sketches, without any mixing or inclusion of others, not even Princess Anil herself.

"Why do you wear such a frown? Do you not like it?"

"I like it...but I..."

Seeing Lady Pilantita with her head down, Princess Anilaphat comforted the girl in front of her with a very soft voice.

"The book is full. Therefore, I only want to return the owner of the image. Khun Pin, please don't dwell on anything else."

It seems that the important task that Aunty Pad asks Lady Pin to take care of Princess Anilaphat's well-being turns out to be only preparing breakfast and evening snacks for the Princess in the palace. For lunch and dinner, she will join her father and mother at the Front Palace.

Other than that time, Princess Alisa planned for her youngest daughter to accompany her to visit her senior relatives according to etiquette and customs that should be done because Princess Anil had just returned to Thailand after having been living abroad for a long time.

Although Princess Anilaphat's words had left Lady Pilantita's mind in such turmoil that she could barely sleep for even a moment that night, Lady Pin rose early the next morning to set the table for Princess Anilaphat's first breakfast in the Pine Palace now that it was complete.

But the result of Lady Pin's perseverance was much lower than she had expected...

"You eat too little. you do not like it?"

Lady Pin glanced at the breakfast plate that consisted of toast, fried bacon, fried eggs, fried beef sausages, grilled tomatoes, and grilled mushrooms with baked beans in a tomato sauce that she asked Mae Chuen, the chef of Prince Anon's Horadee Palace to prepare.

Lady Pin trusts Mae Chuen that she is more skilled in Western food than anyone else, because Prince Anon prefers Western food rather than spicy Thai food. Therefore, seeing that the sumptuous breakfast on Princess Anil's plate is depleted by half Lady Pin who had breakfast with her could not help but be anxious.

"Or does it not taste like what you have eaten there?"

Pilantita asked, looking at Princess Anil, who had gathered a knife and fork before lifting the orange juice to take a sip with big eyes full of concern.

"The taste is fine, but I am tired of Western food, Khun Pin."

Princess Anil simply said that then lifted the cloth to the corner of her lips with a slow mannerism. As a person of no hurry.

Over the past few days, Lady Pin had come to realize more than anyone that Princess Anilaphat's movements in her twentieth year exuded grace and elegance, particularly when accompanied by the constant, gentle smile that adorned her face.

Pilantita could not deny that she could sit and watch Princess Anilaphat all day all night without any distraction.

"Then what do you like to eat? I will prepare it for you."

"I want porridge mixed with meat on top with lots of fried garlic and coriander."

Princess Anilaphat's expression, as she spoke with a vacant gaze while swallowing her saliva due to hunger, almost prompted Lady Pilantita to rush into the kitchen and prepare rice porridge immediately. However, she reminded herself to always maintain the manners instilled in her by her aunt.

"Then I will ask P'Koi to prepare porridge for you."

"Tomorrow will be fine. I already have an appointment with my mother late this morning."

"Do you like porridge with pork, chicken, fish or shrimp?"

"Shrimp."

"What is your favorite snack for the evening? I shall prepare it."

Pilantita's big brown eyes were staring at Princess Anil's dark eyes, screwing for an answer.

"Savory dumplings with fish filling."

"Steam or fried?" Lady Pilantita didn't want to repeat the same mistake twice. For her, the pain of preparing food and then seeing Princess Anilaphat only eat half of it was as heartbreaking as a mother whose child refused to eat.

"Steamed."

Lady Pilantita promptly went to prepare with a strong sense of determination. Princess Anilaphat watched until her graceful figure disappeared, and then she kindly instructed Prik, who was sitting neatly beside her legs.

"Prik, come up and eat, Lady Pin has gone, you want to eat it, don't you?"

"Can I, my lady?" asked Prik, raising her head looking in the direction of Pilantita who walked away with distress.

It is odd that she distresses Lady Pilantita's majesty more than Princess Anil's title.

"Of course, if it doesn't bother you that I've already had a meal," Princess Anilaphat replied with a laugh.

"Then I'll eat it, my princess."

"Please enjoy, Khun Prik." Princess Anil waved her hand inviting Prik to sit down in the chair next to her. She also moved a large plate towards the front of the important visitor before changing a new set of knives and forks for her with a look of pampering.

"If you're not full, there's more to fill," Princess Anil ordered casually, but Prik was aware of it.

"What do you want to know about?" Prik said, using a fork to poke a well-colored fried beef sausage and give a big bite.

"You are as smart as who?" Princess Anil grins slyly.

"As smart as you, of course. " Prik replied proudly.

"Then tell me about it. Who are those dogs in a manger? How do they react?

After her overlord had said, Prik poked a fork into the center of the half-cooked egg yolk which Princess Anil barely touched and smeared on the plate while making a sullen blunt face as if she was about to go into battle with someone.

"So many of them, my princess. One is a close friend who I glanced at and know that he is head over heels in love with Lady Pin; Khun Thanit. Another one is a little magnate who is a close friend's brother like Khun Kawin, who always waits to pick up and deliver Lady Pin, but he does not dare to come and greet Princess Padmika even once."

"Is that so..." Princess Anil's beautiful dark painting-like brow suddenly frowned with irritation.

"Or the numerous unidentified friends at the university, I know because I listened to the conversation of Khun Sunee and her best friend Khun Chada when they were sitting on a bench reading under the Chaiyapruk tree."

"Lady Pin is so hot."

Princess Anilaphat murmured to herself.

"So hot. Does that mean charming, my princess?" Prik used a fork to sweep up the baked beans with tomato sauce and chewed with a full mouth before asking in a loud voice.

"That is right. You are so smart. I have been thinking of the Thai word for a long time, but I cannot figure it out."

"Huh, my quick-witted thought is undeniable, my princess."

"But you have omitted someone's name." Her sharp dark eyes narrowed subtly. "The person who you called is my number one enemy."

"Oh, Khun Kua, my princess?" She asked, wiping the sauce clean on the plate with toast and throwing it into her mouth, chewing as if she imitates the Western mannerisms.

"You are referring to Lord Kuakiat Kankua, Prince Anon's close associate, who is the son of Prince Kobkiat the close friend of Princess Padmika?" Prik jerked a smile at the corner of her mouth that was now stained with the fried egg yolk stains.

"Mm, that one. This guy has caused me insomnia for many days."

It was at this time that Princess Anil had already realized the perfect advantageous qualities of Lord Kuakiat; she cannot help but be anxious.

"Khun Kua has a strong connection. He's outstanding at being able to come in at any time with lots of excuses to approach Lady Pin. Having noble ancestry, good looking, tall, thin, and graceful. He also speaks every word politely. A flirtatious look in his eyes, wise to speak, wise to converse."

Prik keeps on talking without breathing because she has finished all the food on the plate and has nothing to pay attention to.

"Whose side are you on, Prik?" Princess Anil's face instantly became as still as a sculpture.

Beautiful yet cold and untouchable...

"Of course, yours, my princess." Prik bowed her head in a hurry until her forehead slammed against the table with a loud **bang**! She needs to rub her forehead for a while.

"Then answer me, which rank is higher between a lord and a princess?"

"Of course a princess."

"Then can you say that Khun Kua is higher than me or not?"

"Not at all, my princess."

"The next question, between Khun Kua and me, who is more attractive?"

"It's definitely, YOU; Princess Anil. Since I was born, I had never seen anyone more attractive than You. You were so attractive when you were young. Currently, you are much more attractive than before. Khun Kua cannot beat you on that."

"Really?" Princess Anilaphat squinted sharply towards Prik.

"It is more true than it really is."

"Then don't compliment Khun Kua's attractiveness in front of me again..." Princess Anil squinted only at the corner of her mouth, which only Prik knows what such a smile meant.

"Noted, my lady."

"That's it? Is there anyone else, Prik?"

"There isn't anymore, my princess. More importantly, Lady Pin has not laid eyes on anyone." Prik smiled with confidence in her eyes.

"That's good..."

Princess Anilaphat's expression took on a hint of arrogance. Despite her annoyance with Prik's story, she realized the importance of being well-informed. Delayed knowledge could potentially lead to complicated situations down the line.

"I have something important to ask you, my princess."

"Please say so." Princess Anilaphat's beautiful slender brows once again huddled in anticipation of a question that seemed to be filled with the sternness of her close servant.

"My princess said if I am not full, can I have more?"

"..."

"Where can I have more ...?"

The lights in the hallway of the pine palace were soft yellow. Princess Anil was already seated on a single smoke-gray sofa next to the balcony window when Pilantita carried a plate of snacks into the offer.

On the plate, decorated with steamed savory dumplings with fish filling, which was only by a glimpse you can only know how much the maker folded the ridge with care; sided with fresh chili and lettuce, it looks very appetizing.

Princess Anil opens her hand to invite Lady Pin to sit down on the opposite chair separated by a small table. Lady Pin cast an indifferent gaze at Princess Anil, who was dressed casually in Western attire, her eyes filled with astonishment. Princess Anil wore a light blue collared shirt with sleeves rolled up to her elbows, paired with cream-colored shorts that reached above her knees. Her pale skin appeared remarkably smooth and luminous, almost blinding to the eye. Sitting with her legs crossed elegantly, Princess Anil's unexpected and dazzling beauty left Lady Pin momentarily speechless, prompting her to discreetly shift her gaze elsewhere, unable to fully comprehend the stunning sight before her.

"These savory dumplings look tasty. Did you really need to make them by yourself?"

"How would you know that if I made it?" she slowly sighs before asking as her eyes kept her eyes fixed on the outside of the window, pursing her lips so tightly that she was almost bruised.

"Such beautiful folds like this, if it was not Aunty Pad, then only you could do it," Princess Anil said with a smile. The sparkling radiance in her eyes outshone even the stars on this moonlit night, at least in Pilantita's eyes.

"You always exaggerate," she said, but Lady Pin could not help but smile satisfactorily when the compliment from someone which she herself has never neglected, even the slightest body movement of Princess Anil.

"Truth as certain as death. Or will you deny that you didn't prepare this dish?" This time, that charming dimple on Princess Anil's cheek became even more prominent, and Lady Pilantita chose not to respond, fearing she might lose the argument.

"It may be P'Koi or me, but no matter who made this, you must eat all these dumplings tonight, otherwise I will be disappointed."

Lady Pin's big round brown eyes were pleading with no pretense. This morning, will Princess Anil know the disappointment and sorrow that Lady Pin's breakfast had been so neglected?

Did she know that her simple talk was followed by enormous preparations from the time the line dragged on until the evening?

Enormous enough to make Pilantita even had to go to the market to select the ingredients herself. And when she does not trust even the skill of P’Koi, the cook who has taught her to cook almost her whole life... Lady Pin had to do it herself almost every step.

Both the process of preparing the dough, stir-fried fillings full of ingredients and a complicated process. Even making the dough requires both years of practice and composure. Pilantita not only prepared the dish meticulously but also applied all the culinary knowledge she had acquired since her youth to perfect it.

"Your cooking is absolutely delicious, just the way I like it..."

No matter how tired it is. Lady Pin was completely relieved just hearing Princess Anil's simple words.

"If you like it, please eat it a lot."

"Yes," Princess Anil had just spoken, and continued to read the textbook in a focused manner, until Pilantita began to smirk.

"You say you like it, but you do not seem to eat at all."

Lady Pin's chestnut-shaped lips were skewed unintentionally.

"If you want me to eat it, then feed me. My hands are not free, I have to flip the textbook." Princess Anil smiled cunningly.

"Hmm, such dignity, Anil," Pilantita heard the words and could not help but raise her turbid eyes to Anilaphat's eyes.

"It is not about dignity." Princess Anil said looking at the letters in the book as if there was nothing more interesting "It's because I'm stuck reading a textbook."

"I've made it myself since yesterday evening. If you disregard it, I might get upset," Lady Pin's voice quivered as she acknowledged her own unease compared to Princess Anil's composed demeanor.

"So, you made it, not P’Koi?"

This is the first time that Lady Pin really hated Princess Anil's smile and had to accept the words in defeat.

"If I feed you, you will eat it, won't you!?"

"Mm, I will." Princess Anil said pleasantly laughing.

"Then I will feed you." Lady Pilantita's face looks irritated.

"Aaamm."

At this moment, instead of feeling remorse, Princess Anilaphat eagerly opened her mouth wide, giving Lady Pin a sultry look that made her consider pinching Princess Anil's hand until it turned green, just to make her feel the pain of remembrance.

Though she wanted to win, she then fed her dumplings to Princess Anil to eat undisputed.

"These savory dumplings with fish filling are so sweet..."

Princess Anilaphat, who had never experienced sorrow like others, mumbled with a half-joking tone, causing Lady Pin to turn her head away involuntarily once more.

And the incident went on.

Princess Anilaphat, who remained engrossed in her textbook, continued to snack leisurely. As soon as her mouth was empty, it was promptly filled with the next dumpling, as the snack maker wished for nothing more than to see her enjoy every bite.

"What are you staring at?" Princess Anil suddenly asked when she saw Lady Pin turn away every time, she fed her dumpling. "Why is your face so red?"

"...."

Pilantita flinched as she heard the words she intended to avoid until her dumplings were finished.

"I... Um..."

"If you do not answer, I will not eat the remaining two dumplings." Princess Anil smiled when she knew fully well Lady Pin's weakness.

"Your shirt collar..."

"..." Princess Anil's brows curiously raised.

"Is too deep..." Lady Pin slipped out.

"Is that so?" Princess Anil raised a smile like a vantage.

"Yes..." Lady Pin answered but kept her head low.

Seeing that, Princess Anil could only smile widely.

Before buttoning down the next button to show off her beautiful collar bone that could be challenged to hold one's breath.

"Anil, I said it was too deep, why did you unbutton more?"

Pilantita's face blushed up. Even though her heart was pounding, she could not help but glance at the imaginative soft collar bones that she could not resist.

"Too deep?" Princess Anil grinned, looking down at the book indifferently.

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"Once I unbuttoned another button, the previous one was considered not that deep."

CHAPTER 15

Visitor

Prince Anantawut's wedding ceremony was widely regarded as a significant event that brought immense honor to the Sawetawarit Royal Family, earning them recognition throughout the city. It encompassed various traditional rituals, starting with the elegant morning pouring water ceremony and culminating in the evening's grand and spectacular wedding ceremony.

The discussion topic has revolved around the magnificent and luxurious Sawetawarit Palace, where the King issued orders for various sections to be prepared to host his eldest son's wedding ceremony.

The guests are all people in the high society circle who are willing to gather in great numbers.

Or even the suitability of the perfect match between the noble handsome groom; Prince Anantawut and Lady Parvati who look dazzling in contemporary bridal gowns...

Yet the most notable topic of conversation is the rare beauty of the youngest daughter, Princess Anilaphat...

In this context, Lady Euangfah, or anyone else for that matter, is commonly referred to as 'Chao Euangfah.' She is the youngest daughter of Prince Chakkham and Princess Dararai; the elder sister of Princess Alisa. If Lady Euangfah did not come from Chiang Mai to attend Prince Anantawut's wedding ceremony in Chiang Mai by herself, one might suspect that the lavish praise heaped upon Princess Anilaphat by the guests at the event was merely an attempt to flatter the King and Aunt Alisa, rather than a genuine sentiment.

In Lady Euangfah's recollection, Princess Anilaphat was undoubtedly beautiful and articulate. However, what truly surprised her was the remarkable transformation in Anil's beauty as she grew older, reaching an extraordinary level that was considered exceptionally rare. This was in stark contrast to her mischievous demeanor in the past.

When Chao Euangfah saw Princess Anil at the morning ceremony before her own eyes...

At that moment, she came to the realization that the rumors about Princess Anilaphat were not exaggerated in the slightest. In fact, they could only capture a fraction of Princess Anilaphat's true beauty.

The sight of her younger cousin, Princess Anilaphat, in the morning ceremony, wearing a pearly white lace blouse paired with a smoke-gray skirt, exuding both sweetness and solemnity, remained in Chao Euangfah's mind throughout the day, as it had caught the attention of many.

Before her memories are superimposed with this new image

Replaced by the same person...

The appearance of Princess Anilaphat in a long brick-red evening gown, her face adorned with makeup matching the color of her dress, remained unchanged despite the emotional turmoil that persisted in her heart throughout the day.

Regrettably, Chao Euangfah, who is unaccustomed to deep contemplation, cannot easily relinquish an obsession all of a sudden.

Therefore, with curiosity in her heart, she resolved to pay Princess Anilaphat a visit at the Pine Palace in the afternoon, just one day after Prince Anantawut's wedding. She wondered whether Princess Anil, in her casual attire, would still possess the same beauty that had occupied her thoughts all night.

As it happened, Princess Anil was attired in a bright white shirt and cream shorts that reached her knees. The minimal makeup on her face seemed to captivate Chao Euangfah's heart even more than Princess Anil's appearance in her brick-red evening gown or her pearl-white dress.

Chao Euangfah realized at this moment that her visit with Princess Anil was...

a real struggle.

"Your palace resembles the ones I've seen in Western magazines, absolutely beautiful and inviting, Chao."

At this time, Chao Euangfah is sitting on a single gray sofa by the balcony window across from Princess Anil. She looked around in astonishment at the reception hall of the pine palace.

"Do you like it?" Princess Anil spoke in a pleasant voice.

"I like it, chao."

Chao Euangfah stared at Princess Anilaphat's dark slender eyes and gave her a subtle twinkle in a smile.

"My father and mother's palace is enormous and spacious, but it looks so solemn and does not feel as cozy as home."

"But in terms of architecture, your father's palace is both beautiful and precious."

"You are an architecture student, chao. You must have an appreciation for how the ancient wood has turned out so beautifully." Chao Euangfah modestly inclined her head.

"Even if I did not study that, I still see that your palace is so beautiful, Khun Euang."

Princess Anilaphat poured tea from a white ceramic teapot positioned on the central table between them. She then elegantly slid the teacup toward Chao Euangfah with a graceful and deliberate gesture.

"English tea. I brought it back from London. Khun Euang do you want a taste? I brewed it myself."

"Thank you so much, chao, sister." Chao Euangfah said, holding a white teacup in the same color as the tea pot and taking a sip slowly before smiling in satisfaction. *"The tea tastes so good, chao..."*

"Really?" said Princess Anil softly smiling.

"Chao, or maybe because you brewed it yourself...makes it so delicious."

Chao Euangfah replied in a sweet, clear voice, so sweet that Princess Anilaphat; the interlocutor could only be reminded of her eldest brother.

Fully aware that her eldest brother still held affection for Chao Euangfah, Princess Anil observed keenly. She had noticed the blend of

somberness and enchantment in her brother's eyes on the night of his wedding ceremony when he exchanged glances with Chao Euangfah, who had come to offer her congratulations and had been present from the morning ceremony to the evening celebration.

My eldest brother still can't let go...

It's difficult to move on when Chao Euangfah, your esteemed cousin of twenty-two years, is as beautiful and radiant as the first blooming flower. Her sweet and gentle demeanor, reminiscent of the Northerners, has captivated Prince Anantawut to such an extent that he occasionally, though discreetly, reveals his feelings through his eyes.

Princess Anil gazed at Chao Euangfah's sweet, oval face, her delicate eyebrows, and her radiant eyes that sparkled in the afternoon sun. Chao Euangfah's fair skin, bathed in the warm sunlight streaming in through the balcony window of the Pine Palace, evoked a gentle sigh from Princess Anil.

She feels sorry for Lady Parvati, the newly bride and her sister-in-law.

"You're over praising me..."

"You mentioned it felt like I was sweet talking. I commented on the tea because it tasted delightful."

Only those radiant, dark eyes cast a glance into her own. Chao Euangfah felt a sense of embarrassment and found herself momentarily unable to respond, prompting her to hesitantly lift the hot tea to take a sip.

"Then I shall seize the chance to prepare tea for you more frequently," Princess Anil said, smiling and revealing two dimples on her cheeks that appeared to enchant Chao Euangfah, making her gaze intently at Princess Anil's face as if she were under a spell.

Throughout her life, Chao Euangfah had grown accustomed to the ardent gazes of men, all staring at her with desire. She had mastered the art of pretending to disregard them in order to avoid any complications. Beneath her gentle demeanor, Chao Euangfah's true nature remained as cold and impenetrable as a towering, unscalable wall.

She has never fallen for any man...

But on this occasion, it appeared as if she were surreptitiously gazing at Princess Anilaphat with an enchanted expression in her eyes...

Which steps taken had gone wrong...

Chao Euangfah kept repeatedly asking herself again and again.

Reminding herself that the person she was looking at now could only be a close relative with higher rank, and nothing more.

The crucial aspect is that she is a woman just like her...

What is there to expect...

Finding a solution seems quite challenging.

"How is your father's health? Mother mentioned that he isn't feeling very well. As a result, Aunt Dararai had to remain to look after him, and could not come to attend the Grand Prince's wedding ceremony." Princess Anil changed the subject when she noticed that Chao Euangfah had been unusually quiet for some unknown reason.

"My father's health was steadily declining, chao. Yet, just days before the wedding ceremony, his condition worsened once more. Consequently, my mother couldn't participate in Prince Anan's event due to her concerns for my father." Chao Euangfah's lovely brows furrowed in concern the moment Prince Chakkham's illness crossed her mind.

"Since I came back, I still haven't had a chance to visit my uncle and aunt. I need to find a chance to visit them."

"If you go to our palace, I'll take you around Chiang Mai myself, chao."

"It must have weighed on your mind," Princess Anil smiled so gently that Chao Euangfah found herself lifting her tea cup for another sip, uncertain of how to respond.

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"Anil, I brought you..."

Pilantita's voice fell silent as soon as she made eye contact with an important guest like Chao Euangfah, taking her first step into the Pine Palace in the late afternoon.

Pilantita felt uncomfortable with both Princess Anilaphat and Chao Euangfah fixing their gaze on her; it seemed as though her presence was out of place or unexpected.

She could only wonder if she was interrupting the conversation between the two of them...

Who could have expected that at this moment, the exquisite Chao Euangfah would opt to have a private meeting with Princess Anilaphat in the Pine Palace, rather than staying at the Front Palace alongside Princess Alisa, who is her aunt's apple of her eye?

"Hello, Khun Pin," Chao Euangfah broke the silence with her customary smile after a moment.

Chao Euangfah was noticeably more composed in her demeanor compared to Pilantita. However, it was quite surprising to witness Pilantita entering the Pine Palace with such confidence, as if she could come and go freely. She also addressed Princess Anilaphat with an intimacy that implied equality.

"Hello, Khun Euang," Pilantita greeted Chao Euangfah, but her smile seemed somewhat ambiguous, especially when her eyes briefly met Princess Anilaphat's, which also appeared clouded.

Pilantita's cunning smile took on a more devious quality, causing Princess Anilaphat to arch her eyebrows in suspicion. However, Princess Anilaphat refrained from saying anything that might irk Lady Pin even slightly.

"I've never had the chance to see my younger sister's palace, so I took this opportunity to visit her, Lady Pin," Chao Euangfah explained the reason for her visit to the Pine Palace to Lady Pin, without realizing it.

"Yes, Khun Euang."

Pilantita nodded in acknowledgment but remained silent. Princess Anilaphat pretended to shift the tea pot to a table in the hall, near the fireplace, and then moved to sit on the beige sofa. She did so without uttering a word, allowing Chao Aung Fah to join her on the adjacent sofa, also without speaking.

When Princess Anil sat on the middle sofa.

According to the etiquette, the two ladies had to sit side by side without arguing.

Even though Lady Pilantita remained motionless for a while, she eventually took a seat next to Princess Anilaphat, not wanting to appear impolite by continuing to stand in front of her.

"Khun Euang, please remember our scheduled meeting for tomorrow. Join me for a game of tennis, it would be an honor. If I extend invitations and no one shows up, tomorrow could turn out quite dull," Princess Anilaphat initiated the conversation, sensing the profound silence in the room, almost able to hear each other's breath.

"Chao"

"Khun Pin, too. Please don't distort Anil."

"Yes."

Upon hearing Lady Pilantita's curt acceptance and observing her disapproving expression, Chao Euangfah couldn't help but wonder. It had been a long time since Lady Pin was known to be somewhat reserved in her speech, yet she had always greeted Chao Euangfah with a smile and a friendly disposition.

It was only during their encounter at the royal wedding that Lady Pilantita openly displayed her disapproval towards her.

"I need to leave now. I have an appointment to go to Chinatown with Aunt Alisa this evening."

"I see. That is why my mother did not book me today because she is taking her favorite niece around." Princess Anil said with a smile while Pilantita kept her head down and looked at the fleece carpet in front of the fireplace.

"It turns out that I asked her to take me, chao." Chao Euangfah said then smiled sweetly to Princess Anil.

"I must take my leave now, Princess Anil. Farewell, Khun Pin," Chao Euangfah said, directing the latter part of her statement to Lady Pin, who was raising her hand in a gesture of farewell to Chao Euangfah due to being younger.

"Goodbye, Khun Euang." Pilantita quietly replied to Chao Euangfah.

"I will walk you to your car, Khun Euang." As soon as Princess Anilaphat stood up, Chao Euangfah noticed that her height was only at the shoulder of her cousin.

This little story incited something in her heart to flutter again.

"Don't worry, sister. The car is parked in front of the porch, chao." Chao Euangfah said as she lowered her head slightly to say goodbye before walking to the luxurious car that was waiting in front of the Pine Palace.

"If Anil looks at Khun Euang till she is out of sight like that, why won't you follow her to Chinatown?"

Not only did Lady Pilantita's voice turn hoarse and cold, but her amber-brown eyes also appeared even colder...

"Who would want to go to Chinatown?" said Princess Anilaphat, crouching down next to Lady Pin so close that her shoulders pressed against Lady Pin's shoulders who kept frowning.

"I just want to be with you. I do not want to hang out."

The beseeching tone caused her quivering full lips to momentarily convulse before settling into an even more contorted expression as her gaze shifted towards the teapot on the center of the table.

Pilantita could not figure out why she was so upset with the white teapot set in front of her.

All she knew was that; Prik was with her all afternoon and the Pine Palace also had no other servants to help, for Princess Anil cherished her privacy very much.

Which can only mean that Princess Anil personally brewed this tea to welcome the beautiful visitor herself.

This speculation appeared to trigger an inexplicable surge of anxiety in her mind.

"Really?"

Lady Pin's voice is still cold.

"You've returned quite recently, and Anil is so charming. It seems like the palace is quickly filling up with visitors."

Lady Pilantita crossed her arms and surly looked at the fireplace for a long time.

"You have slandered me so much," Princess Anil said laughing. "The visitor is only Khun Euang, who is my **cousin**."

Princess Anil's voice is so focused on the word "cousin" that Pilantita's sullen face began to look much more relaxed.

"Will there be even more people tomorrow?" Pilantita slowly distanced herself from the body, which appeared to be sliding down and collapsing towards her as if Princess Anilaphat had no bones.

It does not mean that she doesn't want to get closer.

If she got closer, her heart would beat so vigorously that it might feel as if it were about to burst from her chest.

She does not want that either...

"I have only invited my brothers, Sister Vati, and Khun Euangfah. I have no idea whom my two brothers will invite, Khun Pin."

Hearing that, Pilantita seemed to be full of concern.

Even though she herself could not figure out what she was worried about.

"Maybe... I will meet Khun Kua this time."

“...”

Princess Anil's composed tone prompted Lady Pin to bow her head and tightly purse her lips. A medley of emotions swirled within her,

blending together until they were nearly indistinguishable.

She knows very well that there is not any slightest reaction to Khun Kua.

However, will Princess Anil understand this as she does?

"What is that?" Princess Anil looked down at Lady Pilantita, who kept her head down for a moment, changing the topic submissively.

"I've crafted a flower wreath as a gift for you," a slight smile graced her typically stern visage. "I recalled your fondness for the aroma of cork flowers, which currently blanket the courtyard behind Bua Palace. Prik and I fashioned them into a garland to present to you. If you were to place it in your bedroom, it would fill the room with a delightful fragrance."

Without realizing it, at that moment, Pilantita lifted her gaze, gazing affectionately at Princess Anil, and her lovely lips, resembling chestnuts, broke into a shy smile, causing her to involuntarily smile in response.

"It looks so lovely," Princess Anilaphat remarked while gazing at the three garlands displayed on a silver pedestal. These garlands were unique, as the flower stems were woven into circular shapes, eschewing the use of thread, unlike typical flower garlands.

"Can I hold it like this?"

Princess Anilaphat laughed as she picked up a garland and put it on her white wrist and shook it up and down in a mischievous manner like a girl.

"If you want to wear it that way, you can." Lady Pin smiled sweetly, "I have offered it to you. You do as you please."

"Is that so, Khun Pin?" Little did Pilantita realize that her words had brought immense joy to Princess Anilaphat, who continued to smile radiantly.

"Why does your hair garland look cuter than other bunches?" Princess Anil asks as she moves closer to Lady Pin. She also reaches her hand to touch around Pilantita's garlands on her hair bun gently so that someone's face starts to blush.

“You are lying to me. Prik and I help each other to weave every bunch to look similar. If they are cute, they are all cute. If they are ugly, they are all ugly.” Pilantita pouted her lips like a pouty person.

"Really?" said Princess Anil, laughing. *"However, in my perspective... everything is simply to revolve around you. It would be more beautiful than anywhere else."*

The captivating voice, coupled with the sparkling eyes, stirred something within Lady Pilantita's heart. As Princess Anil's face inched closer and closer to hers continuously ...

Until the tip of Princess Anil's nose gently traced along her cheek and came to a halt at the garland adorning her hair bun, gathered at the nape of her neck...

Her heart almost stopped beating in that second...

Princess Anil briefly sniffed Pilantita's hair bun, then slowly retraced the tip of her nose along her cheek once more...

In the blink of an eye, it feels like an eternity.

Lady Pilantita instinctively held her breath when the intense, dark eyes ceased their gaze, now only a finger's width away from her.

"The cork flowers smell so good," Princess Anilaphat finally said out in a sweet, floating voice.

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“However, the scent of your cheek is many times more fragrant...”

CHAPTER 16

The Tennis Court

Prik's large, deep brown eyes also flickered in disbelief, unable to comprehend that the scene unfolding before her was indeed real. It wasn't merely a dream, with a celestial backdrop like the ones her mother used to conjure each night to lull her to sleep during her childhood.

For Prik, the vision of the elegant and charming royal cousins, dressed in radiant white sportswear, strolling around the tennis courts with their dark green surface under the brilliant blue sky on such a splendid day, was almost beyond belief. They appeared as exquisite as the heavenly angels depicted in art.

Prince Anantawut was noticeably more formally attired than the others, donning a long-sleeved polo shirt and white slacks. On the other hand, the newlywed Lady Parvati sported a pale pink sleeveless blouse matched with a short, pleated skirt that fell just above the knee, complemented by a striking fuchsia pink headband, which appeared particularly vibrant.

Prince Anon opts for a more casual attire compared to his brother, sporting a long-sleeved polo shirt paired with white shorts and sneakers of matching color. As they stand side by side, the closest advisor to the elder brother, Lord Kuakiat, dresses similarly to Prince Anon, making them look like distorted twins.

Another pair, seemingly coordinated, consisted of Lady Pilantita and Chao Euangfah. They were both attired in short-sleeved polo shirts along with white pleated skirts that extended nearly to their knees, presenting an immaculate and well-groomed appearance befitting Thai ladies.

Unlike everyone else, the sole exception was Princess Anilaphat, Prik's superior, who donned a light blue short-sleeved polo shirt paired with short white pants, revealing a strikingly attractive thigh. This unexpected attire left both the eldest brother and the older brother utterly perplexed, their brows furrowing in unison.

As for Prik, today she was as beautiful as everyone else. She wore a white jumpsuit that Princess Anilaphat gave her as a souvenir on the first day of her return from England.

'I cannot play tennis.' Prik remembers what she said when she received the all-white jumpsuit from Princess Anil.

'I intend to spend my school break teaching you how to play tennis.' Princess Anil lady smiled fondly to Prik like she always does.

'So, I do not have to play well before I can wear this beautiful dress?' Prik expressed her regret with a squinted expression.

'Who said that? This dress is only for you to pick up the tennis balls. When you can play, I will promote you to wear a pleated skirt dress.' Princess Anil said in a laugh as usual.

But since she returned from London, Princess Anilaphat has been very busy. When will she have time to teach Prik? Prik had never even held a tennis racket, let alone played the sport. Today, she found herself wearing a dress gifted to her by Princess Anil as she stood on the court, dutifully collecting tennis balls.

"You're so cute today."

The moment Prik entered the field, Princess Anilaphat rushed over to her, extending her hand to gently pinch her cheek, showing great affection as she turned it from left to right.

Princess Anilaphat's behavior caused Prik to anxiously glance back at Lady Pin.

Upon noticing that Lady Pin had not paid her any attention, Prik could only breathe a sigh of relief.

Prik would know better than anyone that ever since Princess Anilaphat's return, Lady Pilantita's eyes had lost their usual clarity and had instead taken on a somber demeanor whenever she looked at individuals close to Princess Anilaphat, whether it was intentional or unintentional.

There was only an exception for Princess Alisa...

However, Prik did occasionally detect a subtle hint of jealousy in Lady Pin's eyes when Princess Alisa expressed her affection for Princess

Anil through continuous hugs, as if Princess Anil was still a little girl.

So, how could Prik not be fearful of Lady Pin's eyes?

"How are three men and four women going to be matched?" Prik looked around the field while counting her fingers curiously.

"Exactly, Prik. I heard that Prince Anon invited another friend over. But it's time now, and I haven't seen anyone arriving yet," Princess Anilaphat hadn't even completed her sentence when a tall, slim, honey-skinned young man swiftly approached Princess Anil through the courtyard fence gate.

"Surprise! Your Highness."

Princess Anilaphat greeted the honey-skinned young man before her with a radiant, wide smile, her face beaming with undeniable happiness.

"I've been wondering for quite some time about who Prince Anon's friend might be. So, it turns out to be you, Pranot. When did you return?"

"Just a few days ago, Your Highness. I also attended the Grand Prince's wedding," Pranot replied with a cheerful tone.

From Prik's perspective, Prince Anon's friend possessed a genuinely warm, friendly demeanor and was quite amiable.

"You did? Why did I not see you?"

"I arrived near the end of the event. I inquired about your whereabouts, and the Grand Prince informed me that Your Highness was quite occupied, as you were held back by Princess Alisa to greet numerous relatives," Pranot explained before bursting into laughter, prompting Princess Anilaphat to reminisce about the chaotic night and even shed a tear.

Despite being recognized as Prince Anon's friend, Pranot had a closer relationship with Princess Anilaphat than with Prince Anon. This was because he was presently pursuing a master's degree in law at the same university as Princess Anilaphat. Consequently, he was entrusted by Prince Anon to look after the Princess during her time in England.

Unbeknownst to many, Pranot had become not only a friend but also a mentor to Princess Anil, and at times, even her ally. Their bond grew so

strong that eventually, Pranot regarded Princess Anilaphat with deep respect, akin to an influential figure within their circle.

"I missed you so much," Princess Aniaphatl said with a smile.

"I missed you as well, your majesty, even though it's been less than a week since I last saw your face," Pranot remarked with a smile. However, Prik, who stood between the two of them, couldn't muster a smile. Her gaze shifted toward Lady Pilantita's somber countenance, her eyes fixed on Princess Anil and Pranot.

Lady Pin's cloudy surly eyes are not a surprise, for Prik had already guessed...

Strangely, it was Chao Aung Fah, who typically wore a constant smile, now appearing so serious that Prik had to sneak another glance just to confirm.

"**Ahem!** Hold your horses, Pranot. That is my sister, do not forget it." Prince Anon's firm voice interjected, causing Pranot's once radiant smile to abruptly shift into a more reserved one.

"Forgive me, Your Highness. I was just joking with Princess Anil," Pranot quickly turned to offer his respect to Prince Anon, who had been standing behind him for some time without his awareness.

"That's good," Prince Anon allowed a small smile to appear at the corner of his mouth when he realized he had teased Pranot successfully.

"It seems that Prince Anon is overly protecting little sister, unlike Prince Anan." Lady Parvati said to Prince Anantawut who was relentlessly cheerful while looking at Princess Anil

"Anon simply behaves this way, Vati. He's aware that Pranot is Anil's loyal supporter. There's not much to ponder," Prince Anantawut commented, giving Pranot a sharp and commanding look as he continued to wear a reserved smile. **"Isn't that right, Pranot?"**

Prince Anan's resonant half-joking, half-talking voice clearly indicated that beneath that moment's smile and laughter... In fact, he protects his little sister more than Prince Anon.

"As certain as death, Your Highness. Princess Anil is my superior. I am nothing more than her devoted follower, sir."

Pranot's response elicited laughter so contagious that it reached a crescendo, and even Prik, who wasn't privy to the entire story, couldn't help but join in. However, the two ladies, on the other hand, still maintained their poker faces, refraining from laughter unlike the others.

"It's starting to get late now, let's start playing, how should we organize the teams, does Anon have any idea?"

"I've got a plan," Prince Anon responded to Prince Anan, waving his hand back and forth as a signal for everyone to gather beneath the expansive rain tree. Its branches stretched out and extended precisely over the seats on the sidelines.

This might appear to be a coincidental arrangement, but it's Princess Anil's deliberate intention.

"We must arrange both men's and women's doubles teams and distribute the talent evenly to ensure fairness," the Vice Prince began instructing once everyone had gathered. "Prince Anan will be partnered with Lady Vati, Anil with Pranot, Kuakiat with Khun Pin, and I will team up with Khun Euang."

"Nice pairing, Anon," Prince Anan complimented, but when Prik observed the expressions of each of the leaders, she could discern various reactions. Some were so delighted that they couldn't contain their smiles, such as Khun Kua and Pranot. Others frowned in displeasure, like Lady Piantita, and some maintained a stoic poker face, like Chao Euangfah, whose feelings were inscrutable.

However, the only individual who consistently wore a smile on her lips, as though she had received a precious gift, was Princess Anilaphat. Prik discreetly observed her overlord's cunning and sparkling eyes, forming a suspicion in her mind.

Such a gaze was undeniably familiar to Prik... The very same look Princess Anilaphat wore whenever she persuaded Prik to engage in mischief, or even torment their targets such as the palace servants, cooks, or the gatekeeper.

Prik had a hunch that the victim this time would be Lord Kuakiat.

"What's the competition's rule?"

"There will be two rounds of competition. In the first round, four teams will compete against each other, and only the winning team will advance to the final round."

"I believe Anon is quite considerate. However, who will face off against whom in the initial round? We should have a mediator to adjudicate; otherwise, someone might be placed at a disadvantage," Prince Anan remarked thoughtfully.

"Could Prik be the arbitrator, dear brother?" Princess Anil inquired, her smile accentuating her dimples.

Princess Anilaphat's smile may appear charming on the surface, but Prik discerns that her sweet smile at this moment doesn't hold the same allure as it seems.

Instead, it was a deviously sweet smile.

"Of course, but can we trust that Prik will truly remain neutral and not show any favoritism towards Anil?" Prince Anan inquired with a smirk. "However, let's be realistic; Prik is still unfamiliar with each person's skills. Let Prik make the selections for the sake of fairness."

"Yes, sir."

"So, who is the first couple to compete?" Prince Anon asked Prik in a very enthusiastic voice.

At this moment, Prik found it challenging to swallow her saliva. She was aware that every decision she made would undoubtedly influence Princess Anilaphat's actions this time. Princess Anil had placed her trust in Prik and assigned her this significant responsibility without specific guidance. How could Prik dare to let down her princess's expectations of her wisdom?

"The first couple I chose is Princess Anil and Khun Pranot to compete with Lady Pin and Khun Kua's team, Prince Anon." After careful deliberation, Prik made this decision.

Princess Anilaphat smiled proudly at Prik.

Primarily, Prik had a clear understanding of whom the princess intended to face and how in the first game. Consequently, she proposed this from the outset, eliminating the need to wait and see whether they would have a chance to encounter each other in the subsequent round.

Secondly, if the princess can win in the first game, there will be time to sit to rest and watch the next match to wait for the finals.

It is considered that all the things that the princess has taught Prik all her life have been accomplished without any argument today.

"So, the second pair is Khun Euang and I, competing with Anan and Khun Vati." Prince Anon announced in a loud voice, "Now, I'm going to be a referee, let's start the game."

Upon hearing this, Princess Anilaphat's face instantly lit up with a broad smile, her excitement impossible to conceal. She turned around, extended her hand, and playfully lightly touched Pranot's hand before proceeding to greet their opponents, such as Kuakiat and Lady Pin, at the center of the field.

"Khun Kua, please don't save your skills."

Princess Anilaphat, with a smile, addressed the closest governor of her second brother, who was currently bowing his head humbly. Although this young man had a close relationship with Prince Anon to the extent that they could engage in conversations, being in the presence of Princess Anilaphat, who was significantly younger than him, seemed to carry a certain aura of authority that left Kuakiat even more awestruck than he would have been in a regular encounter.

"I will do my best, Your Majesty."

It was during that instant that Lady Pilantita briefly locked eyes with Princess Anilaphat before instinctively lowering her head, as she typically did, unsure of how to respond. She couldn't grasp why, at that very moment, she felt a sense of unease, as though a somber mist had enveloped her body, even under the clear sky.

"Anil served first." After tossing the coin. Prince Anon then signals towards Princess Anil's side and Pranot to serve.

Other than Prik, who was preparing to collect the balls on the field, everyone else were all sitting in the seats under the rain tree on the shaded side of the field, which remained pleasantly cool without direct sunlight.

Chao Euangfah fixed her gaze upon Princess Anilaphat's tall and slender figure, which stood prominently at the far end of the field, getting ready to serve the first ball of the game. Princess Anil momentarily lowered her head, examining the tennis ball that had bounced on the ground, before executing a high toss and then swinging to strike the ball as close as she could to Khun Kua's toes.

Pow!

"Serve ace Anil on points."

Prince Anon announced the score with a loud voice while Kuakiat had a pale expression on his face. He was still shocked by Princess Anilaphat's strong and fast serve.

The young man admitted that he was not prepared to compete seriously because he only wanted to meet Lady Pin. Even minutes before the start of the match, Kuakiat thought that he could beat his delicate opponent Princess Anilaphat as easily as a piece of cake.

On the contrary...

Princess Anilaphat in the field was so fierce that he was stunned in horror.

Princess Anilaphat seems to be taking this competition more seriously than he expected. Therefore, he must be more serious about the race with no choice.

Pow!

"Ace! Anil scored."

Kuakiat's efforts seem to have yielded no results. This time Princess Anil's serve continued to pierce the young man's toes like the first time.

Pow!

Pow!

"Anil looks as serious as a world champion."

Prince Anantawut said bluntly at the end of the first game that Princess Anilaphat and Pranot's team easily scored with three aces in a row and strikes back with a ball in front of the net once.

"I don't know if I can call it a team competition when neither Pranot nor Lady Pin have had a chance to hit the ball once." Lady Parvati added to Prince Anon, smiling happily.

"If Anil takes this seriously next time, who will dare to come and play with Anil?" Prince Anantawut was laughing with affection towards his favorite sister.

"Vati would be the one who will not." After Lady Parvati's words the couple burst into laughter in unison. While Chao Euang Fha was still staring at Princess Anilaphat's every movement with extreme interest.

The next game, Khun Kua and Lady Pin's serve, was still interrupted by Princess Anilaphat's uncompromising play as always. The winner of the first match was Princess Anil and Pranot's team as Prik expected from the beginning.

It was a win that left Kuakiat feeling significantly disheartened and physically bruised, as he had been struck by Princess Anilaphat's tennis ball without any hesitation.

"Here's your face cloth, sister," Chao Euangfah said as Princess Anilaphat took a seat on the bench along the sidelines. Chao Euangfah then passed her a white towel, wearing a sweet and alluring expression.

"Thank you, Khun Euang," Princess Anil sent a sweet smile to Chao Euangfah, enough to make Pilantita have to turn her head away with frustration.

The responsibility of handing out sweat towels after the match fell to Mae Phin, a servant of the Bua Palace, who had been instructed by her aunt to welcome all guests of the Sawetawarit Palace. Pilantita couldn't comprehend why Chao Euangfah assumed Mae Phin's duty by taking a white towel from the gold tray to present it to Princess Anilaphat in that manner.

Pilantita grew even more exasperated when she realized that Princess Anil had chosen to sit beside and had not uttered a single word to her,

starting from the moment they first encountered each other on the tennis court up until now.

"Please defeat my brother, Khun Euang," Pilantita scowled when she heard Princess Anilaphat's sweet voice talking to Chao Euangfah.

"You must pray for me that I hit a ball, chao." Chao Euangfah's sweet voice flew in her ears, Lady Pin inevitably then secretly glanced at Chao Euangfah's who at this time is only smiling sweetly to Princess Anil.

The more she looks, the more discontented she becomes...

So Pilantita can only look the other way once again.

"I would like to volunteer to be a referee for this game." Pranot announced in a cheerful tone before the start of the team match of Prince Anan and Prince Anon; two princes from the Sawetawarit Palace.

This is considered to be a very interesting family competition.

Princess Anilaphat watches the game from start to finish, allowing her to predict which team will emerge victorious as they remain closely matched. Surprisingly, Lady Parvati displays greater enthusiasm for the game than expected. However, it is regrettable that despite Prince Anan's clear advantage over Prince Anon, he uncharacteristically misses a simple counterattack from Chao Euangfah, which is unforgivable.

Princess Anilaphat furrows her brow as she realizes that her eldest brother is still consumed by his forbidden affection for Chao Euangfah, unable to free himself from it...

Pilantita, who paid no attention to the ongoing competition before her, frequently glanced at Princess Anilaphat's side. She noticed that Princess Anil appeared unusually serious, which caused her some concern, even though she was hurt that Princess Anil refused to engage in conversation with her.

Nevertheless, Lady Pin desired for Princess Anil not to be saddened by anything...

"The team of Prince Anon and Khun Euang emerged victorious in this round, sir," Pranot announced. After his declaration, there was a ten-minute break before the Grand Final resumed. This final match featured

Princess Anilaphat and Pranot's teams against Prince Anon and Chao Euangfah's team, with Prince Anantawut serving as an honorary referee.

In this final round of competition, even Princess Anilaphat displayed a more relaxed and measured pace compared to when she competed against Lord Kua. However, thanks to Princess Anilaphat's unmatched skill, it still resulted in an effortless victory.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the champions of this round are Princess Anilaphat and Pranot's team. Surprisingly, Princess Anil did not express as much joy over this victory as she did when she defeated Khun Kua. After exchanging congratulations with Pranot, Princess Anilaphat proceeded directly to her previous seat, which was next to Lady Pin's seat. At this moment, Lady Pin was seemingly unaware, as she was absorbed in acting out Khun Kua's actions.

"Khun Kua..." said Princess Anilaphat in a cold voice.

"Yes, Your Highness..." Kuakiat responded hurriedly.

"I will sit here. Please go sit somewhere else." Princess Anilaphat's face was emotionless, making Kuakiat act recklessly.

"Forgive me, Your Highness," he replied in a shaky voice, before quickly moving to another seat.

"Please drink some water first." said Pilantita, who sat beside Princess Anilaphat carefully pushing a glass of water to float jasmine flowers to the lady. Seeing that this beautiful face was dripping from sweat as well, having just finished a tennis match.

"Thank you, Khun Pin."

Surprisingly, that brief statement dispelled Lady Pilantita's grievances throughout the morning from the heart like magic.

It is ridiculous that she is being offended alone...

and stop being offended alone without Princess Anil knowing a thing.

Because today's competition ended with the victory of the home team who invited visitors to compete. Prince Anan then affectionately talked to Princess Anil.

"If Anil is this dedicated to competition and unwilling to give up on anyone like this, it might be challenging to convince other guests to participate in such events in the future."

"Isn't everyone yielding to Anil this time? So, perhaps next time, someone might seek revenge, don't you think, Khun Kua?" Princess Anil directed her dark, gleaming eyes toward Khun Kua, who currently had his head humbly lowered.

"I will have to train hard to compete with you, Your Highness."

"Khun Kua still was able to hit some tennis balls. All I could do was hold my racket at the end of the court, having no chance to hit even one."

Pranot's conversation still caused laughter to erupt as usual. In the meantime, Mae Phin and P'Koi gradually bring Princess Padmika's pungent orange to serve at the court side table.

"It is a great honor to eat Aunt Pad's pungent orange."

Prince Anon gazed at the elegantly designed glass containing a fragrant orange concoction made from lychee, rambutan, and longan. It was adorned with aromatic orange slices, ginger, fried shallots, and a delicate gold leaf on top, and he could only admire it.

"It tastes so good and refreshing." Prince Anantawut said, while smiling after scooping up the pungent orange for the first bite.

"I like it also." Lady Parvati said.

"I heard that Khun Pin's striped Maprang stripes in syrup is also very delicious." After taking several mouthfuls of pungent oranges, Prince Anon said out of the blue.

"That's right, I have heard that also." Prince Anan immediately confirmed his younger brother's words.

"Thank you, Your Majesty," Piantita said before looking down at her feet as usual.

"I wish to taste some of Lady Pin's cooking once. Whenever you do Stripped Maprang again, may I have a chance to come taste it?" Kuakiat not only seized the opportunity to converse but also cast a captivating glance at Piantita during the moment.

"Don't bother, Khun Kua. I don't indulge in it very often, even though I do it occasionally for my aunt," Pilantita replied, curtly dismissing Khun Kua's hopes so swiftly that he turned his gaze away in embarrassment.

"Cough cough." Prik even choked on the pungent orange which Princess Anil gave her, when she heard Lady Pin say that to Khun Kua.

"Eat slowly, Prik! You might choke," Princess Anilaphat said with a smile to Prik.

"Yes, my princess," Prik responded with concern upon noticing the gleam in her overlord's eyes.

"You rarely made it for Aunty, Lady Pin? That is a pity. I have not had your Stripped Maprang for a long time, I miss it so much," Princess Anilaphat said in a sweet voice.

Pilantita suddenly caught Princess Anilaphat's impulsive, dark, gleaming eyes, and then replied involuntarily in a sweet, soft voice.

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"If Princess Anil wishes to eat the striped Maprang, I shall make it for you early tomorrow."

Hearing that, Princess Anil smiled sweetly at Pilantita as Prik continued to eat her pungent orange while thinking alone...

Huh

What is it with these two people?

One of them was unruly...

while the other one showed clear bias.

CHAPTER 17

Raining All The Time

"Why did you order Prik to go and serve Aunty Pad in Kanchanaburi?"

Pilantita asked Princess Anilaphat as soon as she stepped into the Pine Palace in the late afternoon of a rainy day.

"Then why can't Prik go with aunty?"

Princess Anilaphat, who was sitting by the balcony porch window, looked up from her book and raised her eyebrows when she noticed the concerned expression on Lady Pilantita's beautiful face, which was difficult to anticipate.

"Because... if Prik were not here like this, wouldn't it be challenging for you? Anil's pine palace relies solely on Prik for service," Pilantita's slender eyebrows furrowed. "Without Prik here, who will look after you?"

"That's not a problem at all," Princess Anil said, "Actually...I prefer to do everything myself."

"But..."

"Khun Pin, don't forget that I've been studying abroad. Over there, not a single servant or even half a person is available. I am very accustomed to doing everything myself. In addition, Aunty Pad went to her friend's auspicious ceremony only for a few days. While Prik has never ventured beyond the palace walls, wouldn't it be beneficial for her to explore the outside world like this? Considering that the servants of the Bua Palace were all occupied with their tasks, and Prik had ample free time without specific duties, she usually spent her days meandering around the palace. It might not be a bad idea for Prik to accompany Aunt Pad and serve her in this manner."

Princess Anilaphat made a lengthy talk without giving a chance for Lady Pin to engage in the conversation. Yet, Pilantita's lips remain disturbingly skewed with worry.

"I do not want anyone to take care of me."

"..."

"I just only want you to please me..."

Princess Anilaphat said, offering a gleaming smile to Lady Pilantita, who was always looking out the window.

"But I do not stay with you day and night." Lady Pin replied in a murmured voice in her throat.

"What's so hard about that?"

"..."

"Then you just come to stay with me all night."

The dark eyes gleamed so brightly that Pilantita thought in resentment.

How she struggled to keep up when she was younger... It appears that as Princess Anilaphat has grown, she has become even more elusive.

"What is today's afternoon snack?" Without any reaction from Pilantita, Princess Anilaphat suddenly changed the topic.

"Scones. The other day you said you wanted to have scones with hot tea, so I asked P'Chuen to help me make it."

Pilantita said in a sweet voice. She carefully arranged a tray of appetizers that consisted of three or four beautiful brown baked scones and a hot tea on the center table.

"You see... that my life needs only you is enough," Princess Anil said. Meanwhile, Lady Pilantita was looking with a cold look.

"I hope that is true..."

"..."

"The next day, do not let me see..."

"..."

"That you are calling for someone else other than me."

"..."

It is just a simple threatening sentence and the glance from Pilantita's eyes that makes blood inside Princess Anilaphat's body become cold like she is cursed.

This time, it turns out that Princess Anil's side was avoiding her eyes...

Princess Anil raised her cup of hot tea and sipped before reaching for a scone. She cut it through the middle and placed it upward on a plate then used a jam knife in a separate bowl to spread jam over the scones, after finally scooping the cream on top of the jam again. She repeated the same thing for both pieces, then took the scones and placed them on the plate for Lady Pin with a gentle smile.

"Thank you, Anil."

Pilantita's face suddenly turned red. Even though she was used to being pampered by the young men that surrounded her, there has never been a warmer feeling than receiving a small piece of pastry decorated with jam and cream with care from the person in front of her.

Maybe that is the reason why her scones taste so special.

Especially when she saw that Princess Anil had prepared many scones for her.

The scones seem to have a sweeter taste than ever...

But the sweetness is not from the jam.

They sat there drinking tea with scones for a while, in silence. Each of them laid their eyes on the lingering to the raindrops outside the window, and it seemed that today's seasonal rains were making the surroundings quieter than ever.

"It has been raining like this all day, and I don't want you to go back to the Bua Palace just yet," Princess Anilaphat said as she noticed Pilantita getting ready to leave after a long afternoon tea.

"But..."

Bzzzzz Clap!

Pilantita hadn't finished her sentence when a sudden thunderclap shook her, startling her like a frightened person. Princess Anilaphat looked, then reached her hand out and grabbed the trembling body of Lady Pin towards her chest with a very cherished gesture.

"May your consciousness come back, Khun Pin." Princess Anilaphat's hand gently rubbed back and forth on Pilantita's glossy black hair for a while. Lady Pin's trembling had subsided somewhat. "It seems that Khun Pin is still afraid of thunder, just as you were when you were young."

“...”

Pilantita didn't argue or reply to any of Princess Anilaphat's words, but she held onto the Princess's waist tightly, drawing her closer as the next thunderclap resounded. The thunder was accompanied by a heavy downpour, transforming the view outside the window. The sky had turned a dark gray at this point.

“Looks like you cannot go back to your palace for a while,” said Princess Anilaphat, pulling Pilantita to sit on the couch in front of the fireplace before holding her hand to comfort her.

Without realizing it, Pilantita moved closer to absorb the warmth emanating from Princess Anilaphat's body. The relentless sound of the heavy rain sent a chill deep into her heart.

Maybe it is because of something that is ingrained in every part of her memory.

Her parents passed away on a heavy rainy day...

The ship was wrecked and tumbled into the rain and water on a day when the thunder rumbled non-stop like this...

"I want to go back and prepare dinner for you, but I may have to wait until the rain stops." Pilantita said in a low voice.

"You're always thinking about taking care of me," Princess Anil said, laughing. "Take a day off today, but if you get hungry, I'll prepare a simple salad and onion soup for you, along with some bread, all by myself."

“Can you do that?” Pilantita's big clear brown pine-colored eyes concealed no trace of surprise.

"Yes, but it is only enough to eat," Princess Anil said, smiling widely, showing off her dimples. The smile was so bright that Lady Pin herself unconsciously smiled along.

"Have you become less afraid of thunder, even if just a bit?" Princess Anil's voice was soft and soothing, yet her touch on the back of Pilantita's slender white hand was even gentler.

“Yes... it should be a lot better now.”

"That's good."

"But... I still want to stay like this for a while."

Lady Pin said in a sweet hoarse voice as Princess Anil seemed to pull her hand away from the back of her hand when she heard that she was much better.

"I see."

Princess Anilaphat smiled gently as usual while moving the body closer to the small person until their body pushed closer to each other than ever.

Lady Pin leaned her face against Princess Anil's thin shoulders in an unpretentious, spontaneous manner. Only then, the fear and chill that lingered in her heart suddenly subsided as if it had never happened before.

Pilantita closed her eyes relaxedly. The deep, complex fragrance emanating from Princess Anil's body combined with the rhythmic sound of the rain hitting the roof. It turns Lady Pin into the depths of her slumber. Even in a dream where Pilantita lies in a field of colorful fragrant flowers, Princess Anil follows and lays beside her to hold her hand, not letting go.

Maybe that is why Pilantita's slumbering face lingered, a small smile in the corner of her mouth throughout her sleep.

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It is still raining heavily but the sky had already turned dark by the time Pilantita awoke from her slumber. She found that she was now lying on a large pillow instead of leaning on Princess Anil's shoulder. On top of her, she was covered with a smoky gray blanket, just like the color of her favorite sofa by the window. The sound of international music played from the speakers of the record player on the shelf by the fireplace. The smell of food from the kitchen invites her to feel hungry.

Lady Pin sprang up from the sofa in haste, feeling extremely ashamed. She was responsible for taking care of Princess Anil, but she fell asleep until she had to take care of herself instead like this.

"Are you awake, Khun Pin?" Princess Anilaphat greeted Pilantita, who was still blinking sleepily. "I have finished preparing dinner, Khun Pin should get up, wash your face and come to eat."

"I'm sorry, Anil," Pilantita made a face like she was going to weep.

"Sorry about what?"

"I fell asleep... and became a burden to you," Lady Pin said, her chestnut-shaped lips forming a wry smile.

"What burden? In this heavy rain, I won't let you walk back to the Bua Palace, and I've offered to cook for you. Let me showcase my culinary skills."

"Okay."

Pilantita replied shortly but obeyed Princess Anil's every word with ease. She got up to wash her face, clean her eyes, and dress up her messy hair. She spent quite some time in the bathroom. When walking out, she found that the dining table was already prepared.

On the table was a plate of green salad mixed with shredded chicken breast with balsamic dressing. Next to it was a smoky onion soup, flanked by slices of French bread. In the middle of the table there is a basket of different shapes of bread and fresh butter in case anyone wants a refill.

"This looks delicious," said Pilantita, sending a sweet smile to Princess Anil.

"Will it be enough to eat? There are only light meals."

"That's plenty. I do not eat a lot for dinner."

Hearing this, Princess Anil grinned and refused to say anything as she was just quietly enjoying her own dinner while Pilantita continued to compliment the meal in front of her. Now, Pilantita is no different from a little girl, receiving the care and attention of someone she has longed for since childhood.

Think of it... today she came to take care of Princess Anil instead of Prik, but instead, from the moment she walked into the palace until now; it turned out that she was taken care of by Princess Anil that she felt ashamed.

After dinner, Pilantita clears her guilt by volunteering to wash all the dishes. Despite Princess Anil's firm assistance on helping, Pilantita was too stubborn for her to dare to disagree.

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From the early evening until late at night, the rain was too heavy to venture from the Pine Palace to the Bua Palace with just a single umbrella. Eventually, Lady Pin decided to spend the night at the Pine Palace, yielding to Princess Anilaphat's persistence. The princess claimed that the guest bedroom in the Pine Palace was very comfortable for sleeping, and she even mentioned Prik's absence for the night, hinting at an air of mystery that couldn't be easily explained. Despite never having encountered anything that would make her afraid in ages, Princess Anil was unusually insistent.

It's quite rare to find someone who, despite being afraid of mysterious things, would play tricks on the cooks and palace gatekeeper, pretending to be a ghost like Princess Anil did when she was young.

Aware that she was walking into the shallow trap of a cunning individual, Pilantita was still willing to proceed.

After showering and changing into the pajamas that Princess Anilaphat had prepared, Pilantita noticed that the hall was now illuminated by soft, concealed ceiling lights. Princess Anilaphat had also showered and was seated comfortably on the sofa in front of the fireplace. The gentle

yellow light from the fireplace created a warm and cozy atmosphere that contrasted with the daytime ambiance.

"It's late now... Are you not sleepy yet?" Pilantita said as she walked over and sat down on the same sofa, so close that her shoulders crowded over Princess Anil's shoulder.

"Not yet. Khun Pin came to stay overnight with me, I would have a hard time falling asleep because I want to talk to you all the time."

Pilantita found herself biting her lips and looking down at her feet when she saw the sparkling light in Princess Anil's eyes.

"What kind of conversation do you want to talk about? Are we not talking all day today?"

"Talking in your sleep, you were sleeping all day," Princess Anil chuckled continuously until Lady Pin lifted her gaze to meet hers... Princess Anilaphat's chuckle turned into a solo grin.

"Anil, please don't tease me." The cloudy-green twinkle in her eyes suddenly turned into a doe eyes, as Princess Anil had not expected.

"I won't do it anymore. I still want to chat with you but are you already sleepy?"

Princess Anilaphat said as she lifted Pilantita's hand and gently stroked the back of it, playing along, with the understanding that Lady Pin wouldn't hold it against her.

Princess Anil has the privilege to hold her delicate, silky hand and caress it like this throughout the night.

"No... I may have slept a lot like you said." Khun Pin said laughing "I do not feel sleepy right now."

"Let's sit here and relax first."

"Yes."

Pilantita responded simply, her gaze fixed on Princess Anil's thumb as it gently caressed the back of her hand, lost in thought.

Finally, something she had been pondering accidentally slipped out, though she wasn't sure if it was an appropriate question or not.

"Why does Khun Pranot, a friend of Prince Anon, appear to be closer to you?"

Pilantita continued to lay her gaze on the back of her hand as she asked her in a silent voice.

"Hmm," Princess Anil curiously lifted her brows, "What do you mean, Khun Pin?"

"I just wanted to know... What exactly does Khun Pranot think about you?"

"Pranot is my close friend..." Princess Anil smiled, "Anon assigned Pranot to look after me over there. So, he's like another real brother. However, Pranot is cheerful, talkative, and humorous. In the end, he feels more like a dear friend than a brother."

"Really?"

Pilantita looked up at Princess Anil with a hard-to-read look.

"It is, why would I lie to you?"

"The other day I saw Khun Pranot kiss you." Pilantita's beautiful face turned sour when she said this sentence.

"Kiss? Where? When? Why don't I remember?" Princess Anil's expression widened shockingly.

"Kiss on the back of your hand, on the day we played tennis when he said goodbye," Pilantita's beautiful eyebrows frowned indignantly even when she just recalled her memories...

That she does not want to remember.

"Oh, a hand kiss?" asked Princess Anil, "He likes to tease me that I am a princess, so he tends to kiss my hands mocking the gesture of respect for a princess in the Western way."

"I don't know, a kiss is a kiss, anyway," Lady Pin's voice trembled slightly at the end.

"Who said a kiss was a kiss?" Princess Anil acted clueless. Once again, she lifted Lady Pin's hand and gently kissed the back of it, her eyes locking onto Lady Pin's with an enchanting gaze.

"Indeed, kisses come in many different ways, with great meanings."

Pilantita's face heated up like having a fever. At this moment, the appropriate action would have been to retract her hand swiftly. However, she opted for silence and allowed her hand to naturally rest in the grasp of the person before her.

"This is called a hand kiss, often used when you want to honor the other person." Princess Anil commanded, lowering herself to kiss the back of her hand once more, this time with even greater gentleness.

Pilantita's heart raced as she watched Princess Anil draw nearer. The white pajama robe, loosely tied, started to slip, revealing glimpses of Princess Anil's silky skin.

Surprisingly, Princess Anil had now brought her face closer to Pilantita's, so close that Pilantita couldn't help but hold her breath when the princess blinked, and her long lashes brushed against the side of Pilantita's rosy cheeks.

The playful touch was so tantalizingly enticing that Pilantita bit her lip with such force that it almost left a bruise.

"This is called a butterfly kiss, a playful kiss often used with children," Princess Anil explained, while she lightly brushed her nose along Pilantita's face, who remained as still as a statue.

Princess Anilaphat's lips finally pressed onto Lady Pin's soft-colored lips before saying softly.

"This is called a lip kiss. It can be used to express love or to greet a close friend."

Pilantita gulped down her viscous saliva with difficulty. Even knowing fully well that the situation in front of her now had escalated to such an extent that no one between her and the princess had to immediately stop this action.

However, Princess Anilaphat displayed no intention of stopping, nor did she voice any prohibition.

So everything continued to progress smoothly with the subtle tricks of someone's cunning game...

Her beautiful face now shifted to meet her gaze. Her dark, captivating eyes seemed intoxicated as they stared at her intensely. Her thumb brushed back and forth across her lower lip, almost as if casting a spell, and Pilantita felt herself irresistibly drawn into a vortex of desire.

She realized it when Princess Anil placed a kiss on her lips...

The deep, soulful kiss made her heart almost stop with every touch of her hot tongue against Princess Anil's cool one. A sweet and fragrant taste lingered in their mouths...

Infiltrating into rippling thoughts...

blending suffocating breath...

Pilantita's heart almost stopped beating as Princess Anilaphat withdrew her lingering lips and whispered softly in her ear.

"This is called a French kiss."

"..."

"It is only used for expressing desire for a lover."

CHAPTER 18

It Is Still Raining All The Time

Despite the ongoing rain, Pilantita was determined to walk back to the Bua Palace, as it was not yet pre-dawn. However, she had to come up with an excuse to ensure that Princess Anilaphat's snacks were prepared perfectly today.

Initially, Princess Anil spoke many words, but eventually, when Lady Pin insisted on leaving, Princess Anilaphat didn't say anything to stop her.

"Let me walk you with an umbrella, Khun Pin." Princess Anilaphat said, before grabbing a large black umbrella from the storage behind the hall door.

"I can go by myself. I do not want to disturb you." Pilantita bowed her head and clenched her lips tightly until it became a straight line.

Princess Anilaphat's face suddenly lifted, her brows furrowed, and her sharp eyes focused contemplatively on Pilantita's face for a while. Finally, she let out a sigh of resignation.

"Then, can I just walk to the front porch?" Princess Anil's gentle voice at this time was as soft as the whisper of the rain. Pilantita accidentally contacted Anil's gloomy eyes for a moment, and suddenly looked away again.

"Yes"

Princess Anilaphat smiled tiredly before leading Lady Pin through the hall doorway that leads to the terrace. A drop of rain hits her face as soon as the door opens. The chill weather enveloped Pilantita's fragile body, and she had to raise a hand to stroke her arm to warm it up a bit.

Princess Anil opened her umbrella before handing it to Pilantita attentively. Lady Pin spooned her big anxious eyes up to her sharp eyes for a moment before gazing down to her full lips unconsciously.

"Please walk carefully, Khun Pin. Be careful of slipping."

“Yes... Anil, please go back inside. If you get soaked by the rain like this, I am afraid that you will get sick.” Pilantita said in a weak voice as if she were talking to a little girl.

"I would like to see you off until you walk to the Bua Palace then I will go back into the Palace."

"Anil is so stubborn..."

“...”

Seeing that Princess Anil had no intention of going back in, Pilantita decided to walk back to the Bua Palace without looking back at her anymore.

The Princess sits on an indigo wooden chair that blends with the color of the terrace looking at the owner of the slender body, who is walking in a hurry, traverses the path that looks the most wet. Soon, that thin figure disappeared into the surrounding fence of the Bua Palace.

Pilantita's body was out of sight... but Princess Anilaphat was still leaning on the same chair. The beautiful face at this moment carries a serene expression of contemplation.

The passionate kiss that night seemed to be violent and intrusive to Pilantita...

The anxious expression on Lady Pin's face after their kiss still lingers in her thoughts.

'I am going to excuse myself to sleep first.'

Pilantita suddenly regained consciousness then ran away and disappeared into the guest bedroom in a hurry. The sound of the door closing so quickly was like a declaration that no one wished anyone to intrude into her world.

The sound of the door closing still echoes in Princess Anil's head until now.

What steps went wrong...

The once-cherished beauty of Pilantita, held dear like a precious crystal ball for many years, had, in reality, become as fragile as a soap

bubble, vanishing at the slightest breeze.

In the past, it was Princess Anilaphat who felt this way...

It continued to rain... and Princess Anilaphat remained there until late.

"Princess Anil, Lady Pin has assigned me to offer you breakfast, my lady."

Princess Anilaphat raised her eyebrows curiously as to why the person offering this morning's meal turned out to be Mae Phin, a small-bodied servant of the Bua Palace instead of Lady Pilantita as always.

"Where's Khun Pin, Mae Phin?"

Upon hearing such a solemn voice, Mae Phin hurriedly placed a food tray on the center table before stumbling clumsily. She couldn't recall a time when she had seen Princess Anilaphat's usually beautiful face looking so tense.

"She is in the palace, my lady."

"Why did she not come here by herself? Does she have any errands to do?"

"None, my princess." Mae Phin replied honestly.

"Or did she get sick because of the rain?"

"Lady Pin is fine. She also made this seasoned rice porridge herself."

It turned out that Mae Phin's innocent smile accentuated Princess Anil's concerns, making her heart ache even more.

"Mae Phin, take it to the dining table for me. I will go and eat there soon."

"Yes, My princess."

"Thank you," said Princess Anilaphat to Mae Phin however, she stared blankly at the crows' eggs green window of Khun Pin's bedroom.

She sighs again when she sees that window at this time... is shut.

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Pilantita's mind would be no different.

"Lady Pin told me that it was not convenient to come and see you."

P'Koi, a trusted servant of Princess Padmika, muttered with great embarrassment as she reluctantly complied with Lady Pilantita's request. No matter how hard she tried to persuade her, she refused to come down and meet Princess Anilaphat, who had come to visit Lady Pin at the Bua Palace.

"Is that so...?"

Princess Anilaphat swallowed her saliva with difficulty. Once again today she was completely rejected by Pilantita. She forcibly smiled at P'Koi and said in a very gentle voice.

"Will you please tell Khun Pin that I will come to see her again."

Hearing those words, P'Koi's heart almost fell to her toes with a considerate attitude towards Princess Anil.

Until late evening... It was still Mae Phin who offered the snacks to the Pine Palace. This time, Princess Anil just glanced at the Thai dumplings on the plate with soulless eyes and didn't say a word.

After Mae Phin had departed, Princess Anilaphat took a seat on a wooden chair on the balcony, gazing toward Khun Pin's bedroom window, much as she had spent most of the day doing.

The difference is that the windows are now almost open, and you can see the soft yellow light through the white sheer curtains that are blown by the wind.

But when Princess Anil raised her face and looked intently for someone.

That window suddenly closed...

...shut with a flickering sensation that passed over Princess Anil's heart, leaving no room for hope.

For Princess Anilaphat, what Pilantita is doing is not merely avoiding...

Instead, it is seen as ignoring and discarding the long-standing love they shared, leaving her utterly shattered.

Princess Anil was still staring at the light that crept through the gap in the window and the rain still hit on her fragile body, which remained motionless like a sculpture.

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It was very late, and Princess Anilaphat remained seated on the smoky gray sofa by the window. She was engrossed in a pencil sketch of a woman, a method she used to soothe her thoughts about Lady Pilantita. They were so far apart that they couldn't see each other face to face.

She never dreamed that even when their bodies were so close,
Their hearts would be distant.

Distant enough to make Princess Anilaphat nostalgic for Khun Pin, causing her to express her feelings by sketching various poses of the lady once again.

Unfortunately, no matter how similar the pencil sketch is to Pilantita, it lacks the warmth of flesh and blood or the tangible feelings she longs for.

Moreover, at this time, it was also soaked with tears that ran down non-stop like raindrops, until that image appeared blurred as if it did not exist.

Eventually, she buried her face in her hands, crying uncontrollably until her body trembled incessantly.

It continued until the break of a new day...

as if her tears would eventually dry up and become somewhat diluted.

"Mae Phin"

Pilantita stared intently at today's breakfast tray, expressing displeasure before calling Mae Phin.

"Yes, my lady."

"Did you not offer the food to the Pine Palace? Why does it seem untouched?" Pilantita's brows furrowed. Her big round eyes now glowed so brightly that Mae Phin did not dare to contact her eyes.

"Princess Anil told the servant to bring back the food. I do not dare to disobey, my lady."

"Did she mention her food preferences?" Pilantita appeared quite anxious, and Mae Phin couldn't help but feel excited as well.

"She said nothing, my lady."

"Or did you not ask?" Lady Pin wrest.

"I have asked but Princess Anil kept shaking her face. No matter what, my lady."

Pilantita's face suddenly turned pale. She stared blankly at the tray for a while then murmured to have Mae Phin to pay more attention.

"In the evening, I will make her favorite Mu Sarong, which you have to try to offer to her"

"Yes, my lady."

"Please tell Princess Anil that..."

"..."

"I made it my best."

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The sky changed color a long time ago, but Mae Phin still stood by the back door of the Bua Palace kitchen. She couldn't figure out what to do with the plate of Mu Sarong in front of her, whether to eat it herself or throw it away makes her feel ashamed of Lady Pin. Since Mae Phin saw with her eyes that Lady Pin was determined on making this *'favorite snack'*.

Not to mention that she is known for being honest.

"P'Koi?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Mae Phin has not come back yet?"

After hearing a few sentences from the kitchen, Mae Phin rushed into the kitchen with a tray of appetizers in a state of alarm.

"Here I come, my lady," she sputtered and answered with a trembling voice.

Pilantita did not look at Mae Phin's face first. The gaze on the full plate Mu Sarong with sadness, was so gloomy that Mae Phin also grieves.

"Have you told her that I intentionally made it?"

"I told her, but Princess Anil told me to bring it back."

"Did she say anything else?" Pilantita's tone began to tremble.

"Princess Anil mentioned that she won't be taking any meals from the Bua Palace for the next two days. She'll be staying at the Front Palace for a few days."

"Mmm"

Lady Pilantita responded briefly, then headed to her room without partaking in the dinner that P'Koi had already prepared, leaving P'Koi and Mae Phin standing there, puzzled about the reason behind her actions.

Two days later, Princess Padmika returned to the Bua Palace with numerous renowned sweet and savory treats from Kanchanaburi. Pilantita, who hadn't had dinner for several days, couldn't decline her aunt's invitation to join her at the table.

"When I wasn't here, was everything all right?"

"Everything is alright, aunty."

Lady Pin whispered as she absentmindedly sifted through the rice in the dish.

"Why is the Pine Palace so quiet? Has Princess Anil gone to the Front Palace?"

"..."

Lady Pilantita's slender hands gripped the spoon tightly, her beautiful eyes filled with redness. She continued to gaze down at her plate of rice, offering no response. Princess Padmika noticed her niece's distress, but before she could inquire further, Prik entered the palace.

"What's wrong, Prik? You look so nervous."

"I hastily brought Princess Alisa's message to you."

Prik then sat in a folded leg beside the chair that Princess Padmika was sitting on.

"What's the matter? I was just about to go to see her to bring some souvenirs to her palace."

"For the past few days, Princess Anil has been suffering from the flu, so she stayed at the Front Palace. Prince Anan arranged for a doctor to treat her, and she's gradually recovering. However, she's not fully recovered yet. Nevertheless, Princess Anil expressed her desire to return to the Pine Palace, so she has already come back here. This is the message that Princess Alisa wanted me to convey."

Hearing this, Pilantita suddenly pauses.

"Oh, dear, Princess Anil is usually so strong, she has never been sick like anyone, how come is she sick? Is it because the weather is sometimes hot and sometimes rainy?"

Princess Padmika's face was deeply worried about Princess Anil while Pilantita clenched her lips so tightly that she almost covered blood.

"I think it must be drizzling on a heavy rainy day." Prik said as she lifted her burnt brown eyes to look at Lady Pin with a meaningful glance.

Pilantita immediately put her cutlery together, even though her plate was barely eaten.

"What is the matter, Lady Pin? Are you full? You have eaten not even half a bite."

"I am full, Aunty."

Pilantita held back her sobs before she spoke with difficulty.

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"These days I do not feel any appetite..."

CHAPTER 19

Fever Raving

Pilantita's heart was filled with anticipation as she eagerly looked forward to visiting Princess Anilaphat tomorrow. Ever since she learned that the princess had been ill for three days without her knowledge, Pilantita couldn't sit still, consumed by worry about Princess Anilaphat's condition.

During this moment, even the briefest pause without seeing each other's faces felt like an eternity.

Let alone the wait until tomorrow...

After waking up and wandering around in her bedroom for a while, Pilantita finally decided to visit the Pine Palace late at night.

Naturally, the main door leading to the Pine Palace's terrace is securely bolted. However, Lady Pin, who can enter and exit the Pine Palace freely, chooses to use the small door that connects to the kitchen and Prik's house.

Peering through the lit kitchen window, Lady Pin noticed Prik was busy with preparations. Instead of using the key as initially planned, she lightly knocked on the kitchen door.

"Is it you, Lady Pin? I was really shocked."

"It is me, who else do you think it is?" Lady Pin jokingly played with Prik, as if at this moment there was no trouble, but her heart trembled at the scent of the Pine Palace furniture which she had not set foot in for days.

"I have never seen you come to the palace at this time before, my lady. So, I thought..."

"That ..."

"That there's a ghost knocking on the door to take me along." Prik pretended to look around paranoidly.

"You are just rambling." Lady Pin flicks up her surly eyes and looks at Prik as an obvious scolding.

"What did you come to Pine Palace for, my lady?"

"I've come to see Princess Anil... Is she asleep?" Pilantita's brown eyes flickered while mentioning the name of someone she had not been able to get out of her thoughts in recently.

"Not yet, Princess Anil, even though she got sick, she still had the habit of sleeping late at night. I am preparing warm water and a towel for her, my lady."

"Prepared for her to wipe herself?" Pilantita's voice was lowered strictly.

"Yes, Princess Anil is very possessive. She does not allow anyone to wipe her body, even her mother."

"Are you done preparing?"

"I'm done, I'm going to take it."

Lady Pin uses the back of her hand to touch the surface of the water in a large silver bowl. After she found that the warm water was just right, she spoke to Prik in a superficial voice that sounded like a request...

Instead, it was a command that Prik couldn't refute.

"With that, then please take a break, I will give it to her."

Even though Prik's expression was full of frustration, she could only accept Lady Pin's request undisputedly.

"Yes, My lady."

Pilantita looked until Prik's back had disappeared out of sight then took the silver bowl with the lining cloth and headed straight to the open bedroom door. The soft yellow light that emanates makes it predictable that the owner of the room has not yet fallen asleep as she should.

Pilantita slowly and thoughtfully opened the bedroom door. The room is so spacious, decorated in western style with warm light from the lamp next to the bed. Her heart thumped when she saw that Princess Anilaphat was still reclined against the pillow on the bed, reading a book in an unusually tranquil manner.

“Prik put a towel and warm water on the table and then please leave. I want nothing more,” Princess Anilaphat said in a calm voice, not even looking up from the book. Pilantita stood there speechless, not knowing how to start the conversation this time.

Hearing no response from Prik, Princess Anilaphat looked up curiously. When she saw that the person who was standing weary at the door was Lady Pilantita, the one she had not seen in days. Princess Anil glanced at that face for a moment with blank eyes.

“Oh...”

Princess Anilaphat only said that and continued to focus on the book as if nothing had happened.

She treated Lady Pilantita as if the person in front of her was like an ether...

“...”

Princess Anilaphat's brief and cold manner is like the sharp edge of a knife cutting into Pilantita's heart.

Before pressing repeatedly until her heart felt like it was torn apart, leaving severe wounds.

Even though the lady had already prepared herself... she could not bear this sudden pain.

Lady Pilantita's whole life, she has never been ignored by Princess Anilaphat before...

Pilantita's brown eyes flashed with intensity, but her overwhelming concern compelled her to enter the bedroom of someone who wouldn't even glance up. She sank onto the bed beside Princess Anilaphat, even though the room's owner hadn't uttered a word of invitation.

This time, Princess Anil let her eyes meet Pilantita.

As they locked eyes at such close proximity, with their faces mere inches apart, Lady Pin noticed that the once brilliantly shining dark eyes now appeared clear but neglected, giving them a sad and unfamiliar expression, quite different from what she remembered.

There was silence for a while, then Pilantita arrogantly raised a hand and touched Princess Anil's rounded forehead.

"Your body is really hot. You should rest a lot. Why do you keep reading textbooks?"

Lady Pin asked in a very sweet voice while one hand reached out to pick up a heavy book from Princess Anil's hands and placed it on the small table beside the bed. It was as if forcing the lady to just stop reading the book.

"Have you taken your medicine?" Pilantita's beautiful brown eyes are now so full of concern that they are obvious.

"I have taken them for a while," Princess Anil's voice was a little hoarse, but it was still as soft as ever.

"But your body is still hot. Let me use a towel on you." Pilantita looked at that beautiful face, that is now red with fever, causing her heart to tremble in pain.

"No need to, I can do it by myself." The strengthless eyes that met her seemed to have incited Pilantita to rage like a fire.

"Please let me do it. See! Your eyes are strengthless, how will you still have enough strength left to do anything?"

She began by touching Princess Anil's forehead and continued to trace her fingers down to her cheek, chin, arm, and slender hand. From Pilantita's perspective, it seemed as if Princess Anil's body was alarmingly hot.

"Your body feels incredibly warm," Pilantita's elegant brows furrowed, and her face was filled with concern, as if the entire world were on the brink of collapse.

"Let me help cool you down."

"..."

At that moment, Princess Anilaphat appeared to be burdened with something, leaving her too weary to object. Consequently, she could only allow Lady Pin to tend to her body as she saw fit. As the warm cloth moved from her forehead and face to the sides of her cheeks and overheated skin,

down to her neck and collarbone, Princess Anil spoke wearily, just before Lady Pin began to work under her clothing.

“Why are you acting like that?”

“...”

“Is there anything slighted about?” said Princess Anilaphat, while slowly unbuttoning her nightgown, before taking off her shirt for Pilantita to wipe her body easily.

"Nothing..."

In reality, it's the opposite... Princess Anil's flawless skin is more likely to capture one's attention rather than repel it, as Pilantita seems to be behaving.

"Does that mean it is worth looking at?"

“...”

Lady Pilantita remains silent. Her small hand now wipes Princess Anil's body from the chest, stomach, sides, waist and back, with a trembling hand, until Princess Anil can sense it.

For Pilantita, washing Princess Anilaphat's beautiful body, which resembled a jade sculpture, without holding her breath, was not an easy task. Princess Anil's radiant skin seemed to possess a certain magic that made Pilantita's breathing irregular.

"Are you feeling better?"

No matter how difficult it is...

In the end, Pilantita was able to complete her mission.

Princess Anil looked at Pilantita pressing the last button of her nightgown then said in a pleasant voice as usual.

"Yes..."

"With that please take a rest, I'll also leave now."

Even though she was the one who said goodbye first, at this moment, Pilantita's beautiful brown eyes were full of longing for the person in front.

Upon realizing that Lady Pin was behaving as if she were about to leave for the Bua Palace, Princess Anil gently touched Pilantita's slender shoulder with a pleading expression.

"I have a headache..."

Upon hearing those few words, Pilantita's heart instantly melted, much like wax under heat. She instinctively brushed Princess Anil's hair behind her ear with a delicate touch.

"Is it painful?" Pilantita could only say to the person who snuggled nervously on her thin shoulder. "What should I do to make you feel better?"

"Can you stay with me for a while?" Her voice was hoarse and weak, but it was filled with pleas. It squeezed Pilantita's heart until it became more fragile than ever.

"I can stay with you until you sleep."

"Can I sleep on your lap?"

'Just as long as you do not ignore me again... I can give you more than a nap on my lap.'

Pilantita could only think so in her heart. But did not dare to utter that very exaggerated sentence.

All she can do is be silent and not answer... knowing fully well that as long as she does not refuse, in the end, Princess Anil would have chosen to lie down on her lap as she had already expected.

The second her beautiful face rests on her lap, Pilantita's heart suddenly warms up...

It's like a moment to cherish a possession of something value that cannot be easily possessed which she herself had never expected.

Pilantita lifted her hand and gently stroked Princess Anilaphat's hair, her heart filled with wonder and concern. Princess Anil's once-clear cheeks were now flushed with fever, making her appear delicate and fragile. Pilantita continued to caress her with the utmost tenderness.

"How did you get a fever? I have never seen you sick before."

Pilantita made a soft voice as if talking to a little girl.

"It must be from the drizzling rain," said Princess Anil in a hoarse voice.

"Which day?"

"The day I went to stand and see you off at the terrace. That day I sat on the balcony for most of the day."

"..."

Pilantita was immediately silent and was sure she was the reason Princess Anilaphat had gotten sick,

"Why did you not come to see me for many days?"

Princess Anil's hoarse words, mixed with intermittent cough, hit Lady Pin's heart into pain again.

"Why do I come to see you every day?"

Her words reacted arrogantly, but Lady Pin's thin hands gently caressed Princess Anil's soft hair...

"Well... because I want to see your face every day."

"Why do you want to see my face every day?"

"No reason," said Princess Anil in a soft voice before closing her eyes, exhausted by the fever.

"Your words sound like those of a spoiled person."

"..."

"Perhaps it's because you have people pampering you all the time, which is why Anil is so spoiled," Pilantita remarked while gently caressing Princess Anil's lips, as she often did.

"Anil is everyone's favorite." Lady Pin unconsciously stroked Anil's pink cheek. *"Everyone loves and endears Anil..."*

"But some don't..." Princess Anil argued.

"Who does not love Anil?"

"You don't"

"..."

"You are the one who never loved me."

Princess Anilaphat spoke weakly with her eyes still closed, unaware of the intense, passionate gaze from the person whose lap she was resting on.

"How do you know that I do not love you?"

Pilantita's voice was so full of sarcasm and sorrow that even the person who was lying on her lap began to identify it.

"You might"

Princess Anil's voice is extremely vague.

"But not reciprocated with the same love as mine."

"How do you love? Can you tell me about it?"

Even though Pilantita was aware that asking this question would likely lead to her defeat, she still voiced it.

"Love... because all my memories are filled with thoughts of you," Princess Anilaphat said slowly, as if she were reciting poetry. "And every time I think about it, my heart races and it aches."

"..."

"Love... with the desire to get closer, to meet, to talk, to touch..."

"..."

"As cherished, not wanting anyone to cling on."

"..."

"Love that fills with desire."

"..."

"What about you?" Princess Anilaphat looked up at Pilantita, who was silent at this time.

"How do you love me?"

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Following Princess Anil's soft-spoken words, it felt as though everything before Pilantita had suddenly dimmed, rendering her sight useless. The silence enveloped her, muffling the sounds of her surroundings, while her heart thudded like a drum, and her breathing grew labored, akin to that of an unwell person.

Pilantita was left stunned, struggling to regain control over her consciousness as best as she could.

"We..." Pilantita finally spoke her heart out. "How can we love each other like that?"

"The question is what definition do you love me?" said Princess Anil in a calm voice. "It's not that we can love each other or not at all."

"..."

At this time, Lady Pilantita could only bite her lips tightly, as she always likes to do every time she has to ponder. But the story this time is too difficult for her to handle.

"I..."

"..."

"Do not know."

"..."

"I do not know how I love you."

After suppressing it to the greatest but in the end, Pilantita's tears finally fell on Princess Anilaphat's cheek...

Princess Anilaphat raised her hand, gently wiping away Lady Pilantita's tears, as if she intended to console the person beneath her.

"If there is someone in your mind from the first moment you wake up...until the last moment before sleeping."

"..."

"If there is someone you suffer even more when you see her depressed, anxious as she acted differently, feeling so happy when you are

close with and have a conversation."

"..."

"If there is someone who makes you feel uncomfortable when she's closer to others than you."

"..."

"If there is one..."

"..."

"That person is Anil, isn't it?"

Princess Anil's dark eyes were so serious that Pilantita did not dare to lie.

"I..."

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"Khun Pin..." said Princess Anilaphat with a solemn voice as soon as she saw Lady Pilantita's hesitant expression.

"Please think carefully before answering, I do not rush a thing."

"..."

"Today if I said anything that misled you, just consider that I am delirious because I have a fever."

Princess Anil said slowly, closing her eyes again, strengthless.

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"Do not take anything for granted, Khun Pin..."

CHAPTER 20

The Journal

Pilantita chose to look after Princess Anilaphat until dawn because she couldn't bear the thought of leaving the sick person all alone. Additionally, it might have been because Princess Anil's self-professed narcissism made her strongly dislike her straightforward response: *'I do not know how I love you.'* very much.

Pilantita was alarmed by the thought that her seemingly unconventional response might lead Princess Anil to reconsider their relationship. She even feared that if she ever lost sight of the princess, her ethereal beauty could vanish right before her eyes.

Pilantita is so worried...

So last night, she kept her gaze on the beautiful face as Princess Anil entered her rest, holding her thin hand until the morning, refusing to sleep. She constantly touched the sick person's forehead anxiously, like the flu that Princess Anil was sick with is a terrible disease that can take the lady away from this world at any time.

If Pilantita did not have some errand at the university, she will still be in Princess Anil's bedroom and will not return to the Bua Palace so easily. But before leaving, Lady Pin instructed Prik to take care of Princess Anil's food and medicine, as if she herself would not be there for several days.

After quickly completing her errands to register for her final year at university, Pilantita declined an invitation from Sunee and Chada, her close friends who wanted to go hang out in the commercial area near the university. They often window-shopped and looked at clothes to pass the time. Pilantita declined without hesitation, eager to return home as quickly as possible to check on the princess's condition.

But as soon as Pilantita set her foot into the Bua palace, she found Prik sitting folded neatly waiting for her return.

“What's the matter? I urge you to remain in the service of Princess Anil, do not be away. Then why are you sitting here in the Bua Palace?”

Lady Pin pressed her voice low in frustration. Her beautiful face now looked so sullen and angry that Prik did not want to encounter it.

"Princess Anil has been in Chiang Mai since this afternoon," Prik replied with a fearful tone. "I hurriedly came to inform you about it, my lady."

“Visit to Chiang Mai.” Hearing that, Pilantita's beautiful eyebrows furrowed even more. "How did she go, with whom did she go? Her body was still swarming in the morning, and she has not recovered yet."

Prik closed her eyes and could not resist Lady Pin's overly cloudy eyes.

"This morning, there was a call from Princess Dararai informing Princess Alisa that Prince Chakkham had suddenly passed away. All royals must hurriedly go to the cremation of Prince Chakkham in Chiang Mai, my lady."

Prik explained at length, concerned that Lady Pin's mood might become so gloomy that it would be hard to console her if she kept such important news to herself.

"At first, Princess Alisa had planned to take Lady Euang to Chiang Mai and intended to bring Princess Anil along to pay respects to Princess Dararai and Prince Chakkham two days from now. However, due to an unforeseen incident, the schedule had to be abruptly changed."

Prik's lengthy answer this time has made Pilantita silent for a long time, for she had never expected. Not only the deceased after a long illness of Prince Chakkham and the matter at Princess Anil had never said anything to her about the itinerary of going up to Chiang Mai with the beautiful Chao Euangfah before.

"It is heartbreaking..." Lady Pin murmured to herself, "Khun Euang must be very sad that she did not have the opportunity to see her father on his last day."

“Lady Euang is very sad. She cried her eyes out no matter how Princess Alisa comforts her, she does not feel better at all."

Prik recalls the adorable body of Chao Euangfah that almost fell on her feet, then sighed with pity for her.

“Only when Princess Anil gave her a comforting hug and wiped away her tears, Lady Eueang was able to calm her mind and stop crying for a while.”

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"A comforting hug?" Pilantita's voice was so low and cold; it gave Prik goosebumps all over her body.

"Yes, this comforting hug," she said, making a gesture consisting of lifting two hands up to hug herself tightly. "And wiping away her tears like this." Prik gestured with her thumb to wipe away the invisible person's tears in front of her with a soft, gentle gesture that she imitated Princess Anil in almost every detail.

"Such a tender expression is what made Khun Euang stop crying," Lady Pin replied with a slight curl of her lips, though her eyes didn't share the same warmth. "So, how are they planning to travel?"

"They travel in a big group. The King, Princess Alisa and Princess Padmika went in a large royal carriage. The Grand Prince and Lady Vati went in another private car. The Vice Prince drives another private car by himself, while Princess Anil sits in the car from Chao Fah Palace with Lady Euang, my lady."

"I don't understand..." Pilantita's sullen expression was so solemn that Prik could not breathe all over her stomach. "Why didn't Princess Anil go with the Vice Prince?"

"Because Princess Anil promised to hold Lady Euang's hand all along the way," Prik said, avoiding Lady Pin's sharp gaze paranoidly. "Lady Euang was rather insistent today. She insisted on Princess Anil going with her".

"I got it."

Lady Pilantita's expression unexpectedly became calm and composed.

"You don't have to tell me anymore."

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'I don't want to hear about it.'

The sentence after Pilantita chose to intentionally omit it.

Lady Pin still couldn't find the answer to why Prik's story that she herself was unable to see with her own eyes caused frustration and annoyance to the point of anger towards everyone involved in this matter.

She is angry at Lady Euangfah who is too fussy and is also very specific to pleading with someone in particular.

She is angry with the Vice Prince for allowing his sister to ride in other people's cars despite having to drive alone for a long distance by himself.

The most furious thing is probably Princess Anilaphat...

Angry that Princess Anil's warm embrace and gentle manner in wiping tears, is not hers alone ...

"If you say so, I won't tell you anymore."

"Mmm"

"..."

"Do you know when Princess Anil will come back?"

Lady Pin bit her lip in a way that anyone can quickly realize that she was in an extremely stressed state. On the other hand, Prik could only think that Lady Pin just said that she wouldn't want to hear about it but in less than a minute, she suddenly changed her mind.

"Princess Anil and the Vice Prince will be back later than anyone else, probably two weeks later."

"Does that mean the other royals will come back first?"

"Yes." Prik gulped down the viscous saliva with difficulty. "Because Lady Euang had promised to take Princess Anil to visit Chiang Mai. On the side of Prince Anon had to wait to bring Princess Anil back together. Therefore, they had to stay and travel to Chiang Mai."

"Mmmm." Lady Pin's face was so distracted and unpredictable that Prik could only bend her head thoughtfully. "They actually give a lot of promises to each other."

"..."

"Just close relatives."

Pilantita's murmur low voice sounded filled with sarcasm.

"These days, you keep taking care of cleaning the Pine Palace and wait for your overlord to return then."

Pilantita said in such a low voice that she went back to her bedroom, locked the door, before walking to sit still at the bedside reading table, without knowing what to do.

She didn't feel sleepy at all despite being on Princess Anil all night watching. Moreover, her thoughts and mind seem to work harder than ever.

'If there is someone who makes you feel uncomfortable when they are closer to others than you.'

'If there is one... That person is Anil, isn't it?'

Princess Anil's vague words last night suddenly lingered in Pilantita's thoughts again. She stared at the drawer on the right side of the book desk for a moment, searched for the hidden keys in the pencil box to open the drawer, then picked up the old thick book out to dust off with an absent mind.

Some of the texts are so eye-catching that Pilantita has to stop and read...

12th March

I never really like it when Anil is constantly surrounded by so many people. Anil smiled at everyone, and Anil's smile was so cute and bright

that I am jealous that I want to keep her for myself alone.

But how can I do that?

I don't like it when Anil is only interested in Lady Euangfah, her elder cousin from Chiang Mai, both about taking a walk around the palace and inviting her to have snacks at the Bua Palace. Doesn't Anil know that the Bua Palace's snack is only offered to Auntie and Anil.

It's not for 'others'.

I know that Anil is cute...

But can Anil be cute with me only?

30th April

I tried... but in the end, my tears kept flowing. I can only tell myself that Anil was not 'stuck' to your new friend Khun On, the ambassador's daughter, and forgot about me. However, when I found out that Anil chose to go to Khun On's birthday party at Sawasdiaphat Mansion instead of visiting me at the palace on the weekend like she always does. I could only cry in my room.

Even as I am writing this diary right now, I am still sobbing non-stop.

Will Anil know that today I've been looking for her since late afternoon till evening...

But I wait until I'm tired... I could not even see Anil's shadow.

I'm really angry at her!

Pilantita contemplated caressing the blurry text on the old, champed paper.

'If there is someone who makes you feel uncomfortable when they are closer to others than you.

If there is one... that person is Anil isn't it?'

Even though the lady pretended to be foolish and ignorant as if she were a dumb lunatic, the only answer to this question was Princess Anilaphat.

Pilantita couldn't conceal the warmth of the midday sun that emanated from the tale that... she believed Princess Anilaphat valued her as dearly as her most cherished possession.

Particularly during the period of adolescence, when Princess Anil's adorable innocence has transformed into a captivating beauty...

Pilantita's heart now harbors twice as much jealousy towards her than it did during her youth.

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25th December

I miss you...

When will Anil come back?

I am suffering waiting.

'If there is someone in your mind from the first moment you wake up...until the last moment before sleeping.'

The response to this question becomes even more evident. Whenever Pilantita flips through the pages of her notebook, she encounters text that either directly or indirectly alludes to Princess Anilaphat. Surprisingly, there are instances where she simply writes the word 'Anil' or 'miss' on an entire page.

Not mentioning her obsession with waiting for letters from some place far away, bringing Princess Anil's image to look at before going to sleep every night, No matter how she avoids it, the answer was already self-evident.

'If there is someone you suffer even more when you see them depressed, anxious as he acted differently, feeling so happy when you are close and have a conversation.'

In this regard...

Shedding tears would serve as the most undeniable proof.

Pilantita is absolutely certain that she has wept countless times due to Princess Anil's disregard, especially in recent times when Anil rejected both her meals and snacks.

It's natural for her to stay in her room and weep crying as if she had devoured her own tears.

While she's delighted to grow closer and engage in conversations with one another...

Even if she feigned deafness and blindness, she would still perceive the joyful sensation that wafted through the air like soap bubbles whenever she was in proximity to Princess Anil.

4th September

The night that Anil slept over in my room.

Anil said she wanted to build a palace in the courtyard that could be seen from my bedroom window.

But I think she didn't take it seriously.

It made me really happy...

I'm displeased with the realization that Princess Anil discovered and became aware of everything in my bedroom that I had intended to keep hidden.

But I do really love to stare at Princess Anil's innocent face as she sleeps.

Enough to make me think of having her sleeping over in my room more.

Though it makes me unable to sleep...

No matter how she looks at it, the questions during Princess Anilaphat's feverish day are not difficult to answer.

The most difficult thing is to accept the truth...

But Pilantita's unease about this matter seemed to be scattered in various directions, cropping up here, there, and everywhere.

Pilantita flips to the very first page of the journal to re-reads it.

16th October

Within the Sawetawarit Palace, aside from Aunty Pad, who is my father's younger sister, the Front Palace also includes a prince and princess. Though they are distant cousins, in terms of rank, they are also regarded as my extended family, like uncles and aunts.

Both Prince Anantawut who resides in the Burapha Palace, Prince Anon who is currently studying in England.

And Princess Anilaphat.

My youngest aunt, who is one year younger than me. She's tall, slender, has fair skin and a glistening face. Most importantly, she has prominent dimples on both cheeks, looking very cute.

It was fortunate that Aunt Pad was the adopted daughter of Mom Khlai, therefore she was considered the adopted sister of the King.

Therefore, Sawetawarit Prince and Princess respected aunt Pad as their aunt as well.

So, I was able to have the advantage of becoming their cousin as well.

Otherwise, it would be weirdly funny if I had to refer to naughty Princess Anil as aunt in every word.

Pilantita glanced down and read the contents of that page, then sighed in confusion. She closed the journal and recalled Princess Padmika's words last year.

'After coming back from visiting Princess Anil in England, The King was really worried about Princess Anil's fiancé.

Lady Pin froze her busy hand, that was picking flowers in the silver tray to prepare the garlands for the monks immediately upon hearing her aunt's words about Princess Anilaphat's fiancée,

'Why would The King be worried, aunty?'

'He did not see any man worthy of his daughter as for the proper rank, dignity, and equal status, they all already have a spouse or partner.'

'Then will Princess Anil be able to be like you?' Lady Pin asked with her eyes sparkling.

'That'd be difficult, Lady Pin. For me, not getting married isn't uncommon. I served the royal lords in the palace from a young age but Sawetawarit is a large royal family, wealthy and very respected. However, Princess Anil must have a partner.'

'...'

'You also must have a partner.'

'...'

'I have selected some.'

Upon hearing her aunt's words, Pilantita's heart felt a sharp ache, as though it were being clenched by an invisible force. That night, she remained awake, unable to sleep at all. Since that day, her aunt's words would occasionally resurface in her thoughts when she drifted into moments of absent-mindedness...

Her aunt's words were akin to thousands of tiny needles that only pricked at her emotions, attempting to extract a bit of *'self-control.'*

Thus... sometimes,

Aunty's words turned into a meaningless haze as Pilantita pretended to be oblivious for a while just because she couldn't resist some of the suddenness that arose in her heart.

Pilantita currently avoids dwelling on her aunt's words.

She strolled over to the bedroom window and stood there with crossed arms, gazing at the Pine Palace, which today appeared as gloomy as a gray rain cloud.

This stark contrast was due to the absence of the Palace's usual owner,

Making it seem dull and dim in Pilantita's perception...

Princess Padmika returned to the Bua Palace in the evening after almost a week had passed. Pilantita was waiting to welcome her aunt with a

very enthusiastic look, hoping to hear news of someone she'd been pondering about.

“Are you standing and waiting for me at the front of the palace today?” Princess Padmika said laughing. Her Highness was dressed in a black lace dress for she is in mourning.

"I am worried that you might get tired from the journey, so I came to wait for you." Seeing Princess Padmika's tired face nearby, Pilantita became really worried about her aunt. How is Princess Dararai and Khun Eaung? Are they able to handle their grief?"

“Princess Dararai is much better now. Before I came back, I saw that her face looked brighter and happier.” Princess Padmika said, smiling gently at her niece. “As for Khun Euang, at first it seemed like she could take it easy but when Princess Anil returned early, she looked depressed again.”

“Princess Anil has already come back?” Lady Pin’s beautiful brown eyes sparkled immediately. “I thought Prik said that Princess Anil will stay for another week...”

“The King has commanded Princess Anil to come back with the Vice Prince because he has urgent business at the ministry.”

“I see,” Pilantita smiled in relief.

Her long wait has finally stopped...

After contemplating every story for more than a week, Pilantita had the utmost desire to meet Princess Anilaphat.

Her gaze fell upon the soft yellow light that emanated from the Pine Palace which looked bright and lively as soon as the owner of the palace returned.

However, tonight she was determined to meet Princess Anilaphat.

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She had an important matter to talk with Princess Anilaphat as soon as possible...

CHAPTER 21

A Hairpin

The bedroom door is open wide enough to see Princess Anilaphat's thin body in a black cloth which is now sitting in front of her mirror table to take her earring with focus.

Pilantita took a deep, apprehensive breath before mustering the courage to firmly rap on the massive wooden door, signaling her presence to the room's occupant.

As soon as she saw a glimpse of Princess Anilaphat's face, she gazed suspiciously at her.

Pilantita suddenly experiences shortness of breath.

Princess Anil placed the removed side of the earring in a beautifully engraved jewelry box before gesturing to invite Lady Pin to sit down on the mattress instead of a long sofa at the end of the bed as usual.

“Khun Pin...please take a seat first.”

Princess Anilaphat's smooth face was difficult to read. It was as if a subtle force compelled Pilantita to comply with her instructions effortlessly and without resistance. Meanwhile, Princess Anilaphat refocused her attention on removing the remaining earring, showing no sense of hurry.

Pilantita gazed at her own reflection in the mirror, marveling at the stunning figure she saw before her. She was dressed in an entirely black outfit, which accentuated the flawless beauty of her body, making it appear even fairer than usual. Her lips, painted in a rich crimson hue, added to the overall charm of her face, rendering it even more striking, graceful, and exuding a sense of authority.

For her...Princess Anilaphat's beauty is sometimes as cute and bright as the midday sun, but sometimes is deep and profoundly mesmerizing, like the beautiful moon light at night.

And this time... The night beautifies Pilantita as to fall in a deep spell.

The gentle demeanor of Princess Anilaphat when she removed the long strands of the earring and the necklace decorated with a beautiful ruby was mesmerizing to look at. Princess Anil put the whole set of accessories in a box, and then proceeded to sit quietly on the mattress opposite Pilantita.

Princess Anil still smiles at her as usual; the little difference will be that Princess Anilaphat's beautiful, sweet smile has now turned blunt as to be coated with bitter pills.

"I didn't expect to see you tonight."

"Is it too late?" Pilantita frowns.

"No, I'm just surprised."

"I have something important that I want to talk about with you."

Princess Anil curiously lifted her brows.

"What's it about?"

"..."

Not only did she not answer Princess Anilaphat's words immediately, but this time, Pilantita kept pretending to look away that way for a moment. Before changing the topic of discussion stubbornly.

"Anil... have you already felt better from fever?"

Lady Pin asked softly and reached out to hold Princess Anil's soft white hand with such a gentle touch.

"Yes, it's gone," Princess Anilaphat said, pleading fondly, rubbing her thumb on the back of Pilantita's thin hand. "I won't have a fever that would bother you again."

Princess Anil's complaining voice had stirred up Pilantita's nervousness even more, knowing that since that night, it was her who remained silent and let Princess Anil be held up by such ambiguous answers without the slightest chance to understand each other.

"Anil, I implore you not to speak in such a manner," Pilantita's grip on her hand tightened. "Anil knows what has to do with Anil,"

“...”

"I never feel bothered."

Pilantita's beautiful brown eyes are now looking extremely serious but when the sharp dark oval eyes looked back, it turned out to be her who had to look away first irresistibly.

Upon witnessing this, Princess Anilaphat smiled, revealing a broad, radiant grin. It marked the first occasion in days that Pilantita had seen her display such a cheerful expression, showcasing her dimple.

It was her, who made that smile disappear...

And it was also her who brought the beautiful smile back to Princess Anil's beautiful face as usual.

"I haven't seen you for many days." Princess Anil said in a soft voice, moving her body closer to Lady Pin.

"Anil misses Khun Pin..."

Pilantita slipped out of her shy smile before pretending not to know anything as her usual act when she was attacked by Princess Anil's sweet words.

"I thought Anil would be so fascinated in Chiang Mai that you didn't want to go back to Bangkok."

A trace of resentment flashed so clearly in Pilantita's clear brown eyes that Princess Anil could only pretend to laugh beyond anything.

"I'm still angry."

"About what?"

"You never told me that you have a schedule to go to Chiang Mai." The sweet voice was stuck in many parts of the wayward horn, "I mean before Anil found out Prince Chakkham was deceased."

"Oh..., about that?"

“...”

"No matter how much I want to tell you, aren't you the one avoiding me?" Princess Anilaphat raised a smile at the corner of her lips like a

winner.

"I don't know anymore, if Anil really wanted to tell me, you would find time to tell me," Pilantita argued stubbornly.

"So can I tell you now?..."

"..."

"My mother and I were scheduled to go to Chiang Mai last week."

"It's too late, Anil!"

"Is that so?"

The Princess said in a laugh while moving closer until her body was seamlessly overlaid with the touchy person's body realistically.

"Then Khun Pin, come to punish me..."

"..."

The gleam in Princess Anil's eyes appeared so captivating that it prompted Pilantita to redirect the conversation once more, as needed.

"How are the people in Khum Chao Fah?" asked Pilantita in a very cautious voice.

"They are still mourning." Princess Anil said while recalling Khum Chao Fah which is now covered in a sad and gloomy atmosphere due to irreversible parting of uncle Chakkham.

"Aunt Dararai is incredibly resilient, she has readied herself, but it appears that Khun Euang is still struggling."

"Then Anil must be **tired of comforting**," the stern voice at the end of Pilantita's sentence was so sarcastic that Princess Anil could recognize without difficulty.

"I'm not tired, I'm willing to do it." Princess Anil said with a sly smile before fearlessly meeting the cloudy green gaze of the person in front of her.

"Really?" Pilantita's beautiful brows are now frowning.

"Yes, because Lady Euang is my cousin, if I don't console her then who will?"

Princess Anil continued to wear a teasing smile, almost as if she relished the sight of Lady Pilantita's expression becoming more skewed.

And more...

"I just hope that you don't have to hug each other day and night." Pilantita raised her head high with an arrogantly low glance. But the person listening kept smiling.

"Not that much."

"..."

"When Khun Euang was asleep, I didn't hug her."

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"Did you sleep in the same room?" Pilantita was silent for a moment before asking Princess Anil's words in a cold tone.

"Yes," Princess Anil said in a smooth voice. "At that time, the visitors in Khum Chao Fah were overwhelming. Khun Euang then offered Anil to stay in her room for several nights."

If you count the accommodation in Khum Chao Fah's big and small residences, there is no lack of rooms as Princess Anil said, but when Lady Euangfah who is in grief urges her to stay together in her room, it is difficult for Princess Anil to refuse easily.

Doesn't mean that Princess Anilaphat won't notice the strange attitude of her beautiful cousin. Whether it's the way she looks at her when she's lost in thought, her affectionate words that occasionally carry subtle depth, or her charming demeanor when they are alone together."

Princess Anilaphat must pretend not to know anything as if she was foolish without any clue.

"..."

Pilantita's lovely countenance remains cool and flawless, yet her heart is anything but, as she possesses a deeper understanding of Lady Euangfah's thoughts than most.

That's why she's so furious...

"In the same bed?" Eventually Pilantita finally asked it out bluntly.

"No...", Princess Anil replied with a relaxed expression. "Khun Euang lay on the mattress beside her bed. No matter how many times I have invited her to come up and sleep together, she doesn't."

Pilantita pursed her lips tightly and frustratedly, for uncountable times... she hated the excessive generosity of the youngest Princess of the Sawetawarit Palace.

"Such an interrogation."

"..."

"Are you starting to be jealous of me?" Princess Anil wanted to tease the pouty person as usual. However, this time Pilantita doesn't pretend to be ignorant like she usually does.

"Yes"

"..."

"I'm jealous of you."

"..."

"For a long time now."

"..."

"You also know I'm jealous but pretended not to."

Although her graceful eyebrows retained a slight frown, Pilantita's brown eyes appeared remarkably composed and steady. As for Princess Anilaphat, who had initially intended to playfully provoke Lady Pin into a scowl, she found herself struggling to swallow the lump in her throat upon hearing Lady Pin's sincere confession.

For the first time, Princess Anil chose to avoid the person in front of her and change the topic...

"That's right..., I have important gifts for you."

Princess Anil said in a clear voice before getting up to find something in her suitcase that was placed at the end of the bed.

“...”

Pilantita's lips skewed when it became clear that Princess Anil was deliberately evading the conversation about Lady Euangfah, her closest relative!

Princess Anil searched for '*souvenirs*' for a short time and returned to the bed with two intricately carved wooden boxes.

“What’s that, Anil?”

“A hairpin. Aunt Dararai gave me a golden one and a silver one.”

Princess Anil opened the two wooden boxes. The first box is a tiered silver hairpin with silver tassels hanging looking very delicate and beautiful. The second box is a crown-shaped gold hairpin with a tunic patterned with Pikul flowers, as beautiful as a silver hairpin.

With one glance, Pilantita knows how exquisite and valuable the two Lanna hairpin carvings in front of her are, probably because Princess Dararai has loved and adored Princess Anil, her niece since she was a child. Therefore, such a precious gift was unregretted.

"Anil wants us to have matching hairpins."

Princess Anilaphat said, smiling before picking up the gold hair stick and handing it to Lady Pilantita.

"I can't accept such a precious thing like this, Anil," Pilantita looked closer and saw how precious it was, so she spoke without thinking.

"The adults gave you something, can you refuse it?"

"Anil is a year younger than me, have you forgotten?"

"But if I really relate our titles, I'm your youngest aunt, have you forgotten?"

Princess Anilaphat giggly said in a good mood, but her words didn't give Pilantita any compromise.

“...”

When she couldn't argue, Pilantita only bit her lips tightly in a straight line, so Princess Anilaphat grabbed the golden hairpin in her hand and gave her a sweet smile.

"Please don't make such a face like that, Anil will pin it for you," Princess Anilaphat said, moving to sit overlapping Pilantita's back; so close that the other person began to be unable to breathe deeply. "Sit still, Khun Pin."

Princess Anilaphat whispered in Pilantita's red ear as she reached out and caressed the smooth glossy black hair that stretched all the way to the middle of her back with a gentle touch. She then gently gathered Lady Pin's hair into a bun before using the stick to pin it, making it look so stunning.

"It's so beautiful, Khun Pin."

Princess Anilaphat said as soon as Pilantita turned her head to look at her. An intricately patterned hair stick with tassels hanging down to clear the hair highlights Pilantita's sweet face to look more beautiful than she ever had imagined.

Princess Anilaphat raised her hand and touched on Pilantita's pink cheeks as she was mesmerized. Her twinkle eyes are full of love and desire towards Lady Pin, unable to disguise.

Unexpectedly, Pilantita returned her gaze with the same intensity in her eyes, maintaining unbroken eye contact, unlike before. Princess Anilaphat absentmindedly traced her finger over Lady Pin's lips.

"But from now on..."

Princess Anil swallowed her saliva difficultly, feeling something overflowing when she then said the next sentence with a soft voice.

"This hairpin only belongs to you."

Pilantita's tears welled up because she knew the deep meaning of a Hair Stick as a gift from Princess Anilaphat better than anyone else. Now, she could only hear her own confession crying over and over in her thoughts when the touch of Princess Anil's thumb continued to gently trace her lips without stopping.

Her consciousness seems to fade away...

Until she let out the sentence that was in her mind unconsciously burst...

"I used to tell you that I didn't know how I loved you."

“...”

“I lied”

“...”

“Actually, I know... and have known it for so long.”

“...”

“I know... how I love you.”

Pilantita raised her gaze and locked eyes with the person before her for an extended moment. Then, she brought her palms together and gracefully lowered her head onto Princess Anilaphat's shoulders, as if showing the utmost reverence. With a tender and hesitant touch, she pressed her lips to Princess Anil's soft cheeks, then gradually extended her arms to encircle her delicate waist. Finally, she buried her face in Princess Anilaphat's chest. At this moment, Princess Anil stood bewildered by the unexpected turn of events.

Pilantita held her embrace firmly, her voice resolute and unwavering as she spoke.

“From now on...”

“...”

“This hairpin is mine.”

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“While Pilantita belongs to Princess Anilaphat only...”

CHAPTER 22

Putting a Hairpin

"Pilantita belongs to Princess Anilaphat only..."

Even when spoken with determination in a gentle voice, some words remain uncomplicated to comprehend. However, it's difficult for my blank mind to understand them so easily.

At this moment, my ears are filled with the sound of my racing heartbeat, while my stomach feels like it's swirling with the fluttering of millions of butterflies, their wings in constant motion. My once unwavering consciousness has now been shaken and carried away by a newfound sense of delight I had never encountered before.

Compared to Khun Pin's perplexing and somber words from last week, *'We... how can we love each other that way?'* Feels like a deadly poison that can trouble my mind greatly. Khun Pin's recent words of self-sacrifice, however, are akin to a miraculous elixir effectively healing me back to normal in the blink of an eye.

For as long as I live, I believe there can be no words sweeter than Khun Pin's short and simple sentence tonight.

"Pilantita... belongs to who?"

I gently lifted the chin of the person who had been nuzzling her face shyly against my chest so that we could meet each other's gaze. I noticed that Khun Pin's face was flushed, as if she had a fever. The once uncertain and hesitant big brown eyes now exuded a sense of confidence and stability, free from any lingering doubts.

"I... belong to you."

"..."

"Always yours."

"..."

I couldn't help but smile immediately upon hearing Khun Pin's endearing words. What brought an even bigger smile to my face was the unmistakable spark of infatuation, as if she had fallen deeply in love, shining brightly in her eyes. In that moment, some of the emotions I had kept bottled up for so long surged forth uncontrollably.

"How about Anil?..."

“ ... ”

"Who does Anil actually belong to?"

“...”

Khun Pin's once clear brown eyes now appear somewhat unusual, with one half conveying sweetness, while the other half seems to bear a forced and unwavering determination.

I found myself unable to resist extending my hand and gently caressing the determined individual's rosy cheeks before me, taking a moment to reflect upon it, all while the other person anxiously awaited my response.

So, I bent down and placed a kiss on the oval forehead for a long time, wishing so that this kiss would serve as a promise between us.

"Actually, I gave myself to Khun Pin from the very start..."

“...”

Khun Pin responded to my words with a smile, tears of joy glistening in her eyes. She extended her delicate hand and gently caressed my cheeks, causing my heart to skip a beat once more. Her inviting eyes seemed to beckon me to kiss both sides of her cheeks. The sweet and alluring scent of Lady Pilantita's skin intoxicated my senses, and I couldn't help but impulsively press a kiss onto her lips, surrendering to the emotions that flowed freely in that moment.

Khun Pin was instantly taken aback by the gentle and warm touch. She quickly withdrew her blushing face and used her small hand to push my body away, creating some distance between us.

"Anil... can you stop first?"

"Why?"

"I..."

"Or do you hate me..."

"No it's not like that!"

"..."

"Who could ever hate Anil," Lady Pin glazed her pleading eyes.

"If you don't hate me... then why do you have to push me away?" I glanced back, my eyes feigning detachment from the prayer.

"I just..."

"..."

"Can hardly breathe."

When I saw Khun Pin keeping her head down and shyly nibbling her lips, I could only laugh. In response, Khun Pin shot me an annoyed glance.

"Anil... what are you laughing about so much?"

I laughed because I found Khun Pin adorable.

"..."

"You're so cute..."

"..."

I said with a sweet smile as I held the slender waist of the person in front of me and settled her onto my lap. I then rested my head on her shoulder, fully aware that at this moment, Pilantita's heart was beating rapidly.

"No one is as cute as Anil," Khun Pin remarked, gently caressing my cheek with her thumb in an affectionate manner, treating me as if I were still a young girl.

"Especially when you smile..."

"..."

"Your dimples are so adorable..."

She beamed a sweet smile before leaning down and placing affectionate kisses on both of my cheeks, the emotions overwhelming me in a way I could clearly recognize.

"I've always been dreaming..."

"... "

"That one day I would be able to kiss Anil's dimples..."

I'm unsure whether it's due to Lady Pilantita's endearing words or the gentle touch that lingers, leaving a subtle impression on my cheeks...

...that has captivated me to such a degree...

"Unlike Anil, who desires to eat you entirely..."

I couldn't resist but to kiss her luscious lips and then gently insert and explore with my tongue, savoring the sweet taste that had been pent up for a while in the other party...

The taste of the kiss is overflowed with warm and sweet desire... Especially when Lady Pilantita responded by wrapping her arms around my shoulders, drawing me closer, as if she never wanted to let me go. I found myself becoming even more enamored with this kiss, unable to pull away...

Just as I contemplated pulling my lips away in hesitation, Pilantita's warm tongue embarked on a passionate exploration, provoking, and reciprocating, causing a shiver to run through me.

Should I leave it this way?...

I kept reasoning questions to myself, nevertheless I refrained from finding a solution. Suddenly I started to drag my lower lip behind her pale pink ears and slender neck gently passionately.

The touch of a small hand tracing a soft rhythm down my shoulders, coupled with the suppressed lip bite of the person sitting on my lap, stirs a passionate longing within my heart...

"Tonight... Khun Pin "

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“Can you truly belong to me or not...?”

I whispered sweetly in Pilantita's ear before gently biting her thin earlobes seductively.

The red-faced girl remained motionless for a long moment. Pilantita swallowed her saliva before addressing my question in a steady calm voice...

“If something that I had offered to Anil...”

“...”

“Anything Anil desires is possible.”

“...”

At this moment, Pilantita's sweet face appears as though it has been meticulously pondered..."

I have no reason to hesitate with that...

My hand kept unbuttoning the shirt of the trembling person on my lap. Moreover, my breath has been halted every time my fingers touch Khun Pin's soft, hot feverish tender skin.

I could only take a deep long breath as I struggled to swallow my saliva.

Thus, each step was taken at an extremely slow pace... before Pilantita's full breasts revealed themselves before me.

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I nearly held my breath until it felt like I might suffocate to death.

Ultimately, Khun Pin simply extended her hand and discreetly concealed her beautiful breasts in embarrassment. Her delicate, smooth skin has become flushed and warm throughout her entire body. I smiled softly to ease her nerves, before gradually guiding Khun Pin's hands from covering herself to wrap around my neck.

"Anil..."

"Yes"

"I'm shy..."

"Why are you shy?... You are beautiful," I said as I tenderly planted a soft kiss on Pilantita's pale pink nipple. *"Can't you give it to me?"*

Pilantita shyly glanced her eyes up looking before answering the question by imprinting a passionate kiss on my lips...

I carefully removed the golden hairpin from Khun Pin's bun, allowing her glossy black hair to cascade down her slender, white neck. Afterward, I gently guided her slender shoulders and back to rest on the spacious pillow. Next, I reached out to pull her skirt and bra away from her slender body, because those loose fabrics are distracting at the moment...

Unfortunately, Khun Pin quickly hid herself beneath a blanket, just like that. I warmly chuckled at the bashful woman and extended my hand to switch off the headboard light, leaving only the soft yellow glow, hoping it would help ease Khun Pin's nervousness.

Furthermore, at this moment, I decided to remove all my clothing, and then I gently positioned myself over the warm torso on top of Khun Pin, who lies beneath a thin blanket.

The velvety skin beneath my body is incredibly smooth, and it easily enchants me effortlessly.

"Khun Pin..."

"..."

"Do you love me?"

I asked while gently running my fingers up to the neckline of Pilantita's breasts. The young woman beneath me maintained tightly sealed lips and did not offer a response. I then playfully teased her by caressing her bosom with my lips before arousing her sense of lust. Pilantita was startled and wrapped her arms around me tightly.

No answer...

Is that so...

I eagerly sought an answer to that question by slowly tracing my fingers all over Pilantita's figure. Even though I was aware that the young woman had to hold her breath and tense her stomach each time my fingers unpredictably trinkled across her burning body.

But Khun Pin continued to remain silent... Instead of answering, she responded by offering a deep embrace from below by showering my cheek with repeated kisses.

I reciprocated by placing kisses on her warm body... starting from her glowing forehead, moving down to her beautiful eyelids, flushed cheeks, and curved chin, then tenderly nuzzling behind her pink ears and along her graceful neck for a long period. Khun Pin reacted to my passionate touch by pulling my waist closer to her body than ever before...

My fingers gently touched Khun Pin's beautiful breasts with great care before using my warm tongue to savor the light-colored bosom sensually and provocatively. Khun Pin's body responded involuntarily, quivering as it began to arch welcoming the gentle touch of the tip of my tongue.

I savored Khun Pin's round bosom for an extended period... after I gently traced the tip of my tongue to experience the velvety white flat belly which had a heightened tension this time, as Khun Pin began to breathe panting rapidly.

I gazed upward at her lovely crimson visage, with her lips tightly pressed united in passion before leaning down and gently guiding it through my warm lips along her thigh that Khun Pin had earlier clutched the blanket and tightly wrapped around. Khun Pin flinched and promptly brought her legs closer together. Her tiny hands attempted to guide my face away from her sensitive area as if she was struggling to regain her composure.

"No, Anil... Not there..."

"Why not Khun Pin..." I remarked with a wayward tone.

"I'm shy...Please don't tease me."

"I see..." I said, raising a smile before lowering myself to lick Pilantita's luscious spot, not waiting for her to be ready.

"Anil!"

Before everything falls into silence, Khun Pin's voice can only express frustration. Pilantita clenched the blanket with one hand, causing it to wrinkle. While the other dug into my shoulders deeply. For a brief moment, I pushed the pain aside by obsessing over Khun Pin's sweet deep taste that I have always yearned for...

Before long, my warm tongue penetrates Khun Pin's body, before her burning body trembles happily... Pilantita's hands were both firmly holding me, draping over her in a wistful manner as though she were on the verge of drowning.

I embraced Khun Pin's velvety soft skin close with deep affection. She continued to slightly twitch before she gradually regained her breath steadily.

"I requested you not to kiss, yet you persisted," Pilantita continued complaining about my disregard of her orders *"Anil's mouth is completely dirty, see?"*

Despite the seemingly reprimanding words, Khun Pin's delicate fingers lovingly brushed across my lips.

"I mentioned that I desired to embrace you entirely," I smiled, "and I desired to punish you..."

"Punish?" Khun Pin's exquisite, finely arched eyebrows lifted in curiosity.

"Punish, because Khun Pin refuses to answer my question whether you love me or not..." I displayed a cold-hearted expression, making it clear that I expected Khun Pin to respond to my inquiry about her feelings.

"With everything happening..."

"..."

"You still don't know?" Pilantita's sweet smile lit up, and she gazed at me with captivating eyes. She then draped her arms around my neck, drawing me close, and whispered in my ear.

"If I didn't love you..."

"..."

"I wouldn't have let you go this far..."

"..."

"If you still don't know yet... then please know..."

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"That I love you so much..."

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"..."

Khun Pin's horse whisper resonated softly in my ears, causing my heart to flutter with a unique happiness that couldn't be matched anywhere else..."

"I love you more..."

My confidence only allowed me to boast about my love. The petite individual beamed with joy, then gently pulled my face towards theirs, offering a passionate alluring kiss...

I reciprocated the kiss, as if my desires weren't fully satisfied, before allowing it to follow naturally. During this moment, my two fingers began lingering inside the moist sensual spot of the person beneath me...

Before embarking on a deeper connection than ever before...

Gently caressing, playful and tender...

Invasively wandering...

Crossing boundaries, entirely...

Faster, rushing...

Intensely ovulating...

Lost in the moment, forgetting oneself...

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... *abundantly climaxing.*

CHAPTER 23

Lady Pin's Happiness

"Khun Pin"

Princess Anilaphat's gentle voice resonated tenderly near Pilantita's blushing ears, who was preoccupied searching for her own disarrayed garments disseminated across the edges of the bed.

"Yes"

Pilantita appeared completely unperturbed as Princess Anil embraced her from behind. Her naked body overlapping against her exposed, smooth back provides a captivatingly alluring soft sensation. Princess Anil's slender hand extends, delicately grasping Pilantita's rounded breasts before gently fondling it. The young lady lifted her head proudly, her lips firmly set as she allowed the Princess to bestow a tender kiss on her shoulder...

"Why did you wake up so early, even before the sky had fully brightened?" Princess Anilaphat withdrew a kiss from her slender shoulder before softly murmuring, as her gentle hands continued to explore Pilantita's flat stomach, unwilling to go elsewhere.

"I have to hurry back to the Bua palace to prepare breakfast for you." Pilantita remarked while gently directing the princess's hand to caress her cheek with love and affection.

"Khun Pin often pretends that my only concern is food," Princess Anilaphat's words effortlessly elicited a loving smile from Lady Pilantita...

"I'm concerned that my aunt might not be able to locate me," Pilantita leaned in and tenderly kissed Princess Anil's hand, which she had been holding all the while. "Anil, please don't be fussy."

Princess Anil leaned her chin on Lady Pin's slender shoulders with a pleading expression, tightening her embrace as though she feared that Lady Pin's delicate waist might vanish from her sight...

"Because I still desire to embrace Khun Pin..."

Upon hearing such a sweet voice, Pilantita's heart fluttered, especially when the person behind her, with a beautiful tone in their voice, sensually traced their nose along her hot neck.

Pilantita 's consciousness seems to be dispersing in an unexpected direction...

"You have been hugging me all night..." the voice of the person in the embrace sounded soft. *"Isn't that enough?"*

"Even if I could hug you for the rest of my life from now on..." Princess Anilaphat whispered in Pilantita's ruddy ear, *"It still is not enough."*

"You're such a sweet talker..."

Pilantita means almost every word.

Princess Anilaphat was recognized for her intelligence and skill in negotiating with charming words. As she matured, her demeanor and speech became increasingly sweet and pleasing to the point that even Lady Pin found it surprising...

As they delved into a deep and intimate relationship with each other, Princess Anil's every utterance increasingly took on a courtship-like tone, leaving the listener trembling each time.

Especially when it was graced by the delightful flavor of Princess Anil's tender lips...

The sentence *'Anil is such a sweet talker'*, was too illogical to dispute.

"Is it sweet words or sweet lips?" Princess Anil passionately kissed Pilantita's lips and added, *"Khun Pin probably has a better understanding than anyone else."*

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"Anil, could you please change what you said to something like... 'only I understand'? It would be more appropriate." After parting her full

lips, Pilantita spoke with an unwittingly offended tone, though she couldn't quite fathom why.

"Only I... know how sweet your lips are."

"..."

"If anyone claims to know..."

"..."

"I may have to discipline you for your fear and to ensure it doesn't happen..."

Upon hearing this, Princess Anilaphat feigned a chuckle, her voice carrying a playful tone, before placing a kiss on Pilantita's clear cheek being pleased.

Without conscious thought, a tender caress from Princess Anil softly brushed over the crown of Pilantita's chest. It abruptly shifted into a repetitive and deeply groping motion until Pilantita could only clasp her heart as her entire body swirled with an exhilarating sensation. Her hand inadvertently tightened its grip on Princess Anil's playful hand just before moaning out the princess's name when Lady Pin's gentle body was tightly embraced from behind...

"Anil..."

But Princess Anil doesn't appear inclined to respond at the moment...

With her plump lips, she sensually trailed along Pilantita's neck, as though savoring a delectable fruit. The young woman bit her lips retentively almost every time Princess Anil caressed her earlobes playfully.

"Could you stop that?" Pilantita's plea for respite was extremely hoarse, *"Anil, you know I'm in a hurry..."*

"Hmm," she said seductively, "if you're in a hurry..."

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"Then I will hurry for your sake"

"Anil!"

Lady Pilantita merely raised her voice and then pressed her lips together so firmly that they almost turned purple once more. Princess Anil's slender hand began to slide down tenderly inserting into her delicate, sensitive, damp area.

The petite figure in the embrace quivered as if succumbing to a fever. Pilantita clasped the Princess's wrist, increasing her hold and pressed her head against it, struggling to contain her intense emotions. Especially when Princess Anil possesses and intrudes into her body... The firm sensation moving in and out at a leisurely rhythm initially before transitioning into rapid thrusts towards the end, resembling a repetitive pulling her body into the land of ecstasy...

Pilantita's torso rhythmically swayed as she sought Princess Anilaphat's passionate lustful embrace, looking at her with desire. Princess Anil planted kisses on Pilantita's unblemished cheeks and forehead.

"Did you see..."

"..."

"That I hurried," Princess Anil said giggling.

"Anil!"

"Yes?"

"Why do you like to provoke my anger?" Pilantita gave her a cold look.

"Because when you're angry, you look so cute." Princess Anil replied, leaning on her pillow and wearing a bright smile.

"Anil, please continue resting; it's still early," Pilantita reached out to tenderly stroke Princess Anil's hair. "Last night, you had traveled a long way... and besides..."

"Besides what, Khun Pin?" Princess Anil's gleaming eyes now appeared affectionately to Pilantita.

"Besides, last night... Anil hardly slept."

Pilantita spoke while caressing her slender fingers across Princess Anilaphat's pale cheeks. Even though she was fully aware that her response was no different than walking into the trap set by the person before her...

But if that answer pleases the cunning person...

If that could be swapped for a broad smile, revealing the deep dimples on the person's cheeks before her.

She was ready to plunge into the deep pit without wasting any time without a second thought.

"But what do you want for brunch?" said Pilantita in a soft voice as if she was negotiating with a little girl.

"Anything that will give me enough strength for tonight..." Princess Anilaphat raised a smile.

"Anil!" Pilantita uttered her words in a tone of irritation, but all she could do was make verbal threats to the one holding her in this warm embrace. She dreaded that any physical action, such as pinching or striking Princess Anil, might mar her appearance, and she was even more concerned about the possibility of hurting Princess Anil and, consequently, suffering herself.

Pilantita could only cast a stern gaze at Princess Anilaphat, who was currently laughing incessantly with a mocking tone. After a brief period, the mischievous duo pretended to be innocent, easily concealing themselves under the bed covers while exchanging sweet smiles.

"I want Khun Pin to make a simple breakfast here and eat together, could you do that?"

"Then I will spoil Anil," Pilantita unfurled a tender smile before affectionately leaning down to kiss her full lips. "I'm going to take a shower and change my clothes for a bit, but I'll be back with you shortly."

"Yes, I will wait for you."

Those dark, slender eyes now sparkled and gleamed, causing Pilantita's face to flush with warmth. Still feeling quite shy, she gently kissed the princess's tender cheeks with a hint of embarrassment. Following

that, she resolved to rise slowly and get dressed, although she found it nearly unbearable to be apart from the person in the bed even for a moment.

"I'm going now."

"Please come back hurriedly." Princess Anil offered her customary soft smile, but this time, the sparkle in her eyes was twice as bright than before.

Pilantita quickly withdrew her gaze from the person in front of her and hurriedly walked out of the room, afraid to look back...

If so, she won't be able to leave anyway...

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"Good morning, my lady."

"Prik!"

After the exchange of greetings, Prik stood there with a smile in front of the room. Lady Pin was suddenly taken aback because she hadn't anticipated an event like this.

"What have you been doing here since dawn?" Pilantita brought her hand to her chest as if trying to soothe her rapidly beating heart to slow it down.

"It's not unusual for me to arrive at Pine Palace early in the morning..." Prik's parched lips curled into a sly, mischievous smile that seemed to conceal a hint of concern.

"But what reason could you possibly have for being in Princess Anil's bedroom since early morning? That appears even more peculiar..."

"*I, uh... mm...*" Lady Pin's voice and gestures at this time were all suspicious. "Whatever it is, it's not your business."

"Sure," Prik raised another evil smile before bowing her head to Lady Pin respectfully.

"I'm leaving..." Pilantita lifted her head with an air of arrogance, and she might have gracefully retraced her steps to the Bua Palace had Prik not spoken with a smug smile and a haughty tone, asking...

"My lady..."

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"Looks like you have buttoned your shirt all the wrong way."

"..."

Pilantita's complexion paled, and she promptly bent down, frantically inspecting herself with a worried expression. Upon discovering that everything on her body was perfectly in order with no anomalies, her lovely brows furrowed in annoyance.

"They're all fine, Prik!" She directed her irritated stare toward Prik.

"Is that so, my lady?" Prik widens her eyes to pretend, as if she were completely surprised. "I may have been mistaken, because at this time the sky is dark."

"..."

Prik's broad smile appears superficial, even innocent, but her large, chestnut-brown eyes seem quite cunning. Pilantita's inner sense...

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Has she been outwitted by Prik?...

"Is that you, Lady Pin?" Princess Padmika's surprisedly asked almost as soon as Pilantita's feet stepped onto the Bua Palace. At this moment, Lady Pin's heart almost fell to her toes irresistibly.

Aunty never had woken up so early in the morning, but today aunty is in the reception hall early in the morning, until Pilantita wonders why it

had to be specifically today... The day she acted in a defiant manner like never before.

"Yes... Aunty," Pilantita 's voice trembled with many worries in advance.

"Where have you been?" Aunt Pad's calm voice made it hard to guess her feelings at this time.

"I went to stay over at the Pine Palace, aunty." Pilantita decided to answer honestly. "Last night I went to see Princess Anil and were chatting until late at night, so I asked her to stay in the guest room."

Pilantita exhales as gently as possible.

"Is that so?"

"Yes, Aunty."

"Being acquainted with Princess Anil, I can't blame you."

"..."

"But, whatever you do, please be very considerate to Princess Anil..." Hearing that, Pilantita's heart suddenly twitched.

"Nonetheless, we are beneficiaries of His Majesty's benevolence..."

When she listens to the end of her sentence...

Pilantita's heart is shattered...

"Yes."

Upon hearing her own deceptively straightforward response, Pilantita's thoughts began to whirl like a disturbed ant nest.

Even though she couldn't discern which of her actions might be considered sinful.

But now she feels very guilty...

She asked herself, Will I continue to do this?...

The answer is *'I still want to.'*

It wasn't because she was being obstinate or unwilling to heed her aunt's guidance...

It turns out that once she reaches this stage in her life, Pilantita cannot resist her heart.

She'd rather burn hell in the deepest abyss than break up with her beloved Princess Anilaphat...

"Lady Pin please go take a bath, don't you have to prepare breakfast for Princess Anil?"

"Today, the princess instructed me to prepare breakfast at the Pine Palace, Aunt. She prefers easy breakfast."

Pilantita replied before looking down at her feet.

"I don't hold you responsible for anything. Why do you keep your head bowed like that?" Princess Padmika sighed gently as she observed her niece's sudden gloomy expression. "Regarding the overnight stays, if it's Princess Anil's desire, I have no objections."

"..."

"I just don't want you to bother her first."

"So... If the princess invites me again tonight..." Pilantita's voice was so gentle, one had to listen attentively. "Can I stay at the Pine Palace, aunt?"

Princess Padmika gazed at her niece with a tender expression. Upon noticing the pallor and anxiety on her lovely face, she spoke in a soothing tone.

"You can stay over, Lady Pin." Princess Padmika raised a light smile, "as it's proper."

"Yes, aunt."

Pilantita bowed to respect her aunt before walking up to her room, Princess Padmika stared at her niece's delicate back until she's out of sight.

Her brows furrowed in deep thought about something.

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Something that she's so worried about...

CHAPTER 24

Silence

"Is it really okay, my lady?"

Prik said while looking at Lady Pin, who was busy picking up all the ingredients to make chocolate cake, which were scattered around a long table in the middle of the English kitchen of the Pine Palace.

"What's good?" Pilantita glanced at Prik before responding. Her lovely face, slightly sulky at the moment, was adorned with cake powder and exuded charm. "And what's bad?"

"Er... That you are opening out the baking recipe that Khun Kua gave you several months ago in Pine Palace. Isn't it bad?" Prik sighs and shakes her head wearily, "If Princess Anil knew..."

"Prik! Shh!"

Despite being fully aware that Princess Anilaphat was currently having lunch with The King and Princess Alisa at the Front Palace, Lady Pin hastily raised her index finger to her beautiful lips, signaling Prik to remain quiet.

"I'm not very good at making Western desserts, so I have to open a book like this, and the chocolate cake recipe is only in Khun Kua's book..."

"But..." Prik's burnt brown eyes remained squinting anxiously. "Princess Anil doesn't seem to like Lord Kuakiat that much..."

"If you don't say anything... I won't," Pilantita's beseeching look was fixed directly on Prik, a sight the latter never imagined she'd encounter in her lifetime. "How will Princess Anil know?"

"But, ... I don't feel good about this anyway, my lady."

"With that then... Please take this." Lady Pin grabbed something from the small pocket of the sweet-colored crinoline skirt and handed it to Prik tactfully.

Actually, there are several folded banknotes that should have quite some value.

"Will this be good, my lady?"

"Or you won't take it?"

"This matter shall be considered a secret between us, my lady..." Seeing Lady Pilantita's uncertain gesture, Prik quickly grabbed the banknote from her hand and hid it on the edge of her Pa Nung as if she had behaved like this a trillion times.

Pilantita just smiled stiffly when she saw how bright Prik's eyes were.

"I will help too so Lady Pin will finish the cake by the time Princess Anil returns," Prik pretended not to see Lady Pin's indignant gaze, and immediately went in and grabbed a little bit of things diligently.

Pilantita let out a deep sigh. From the moment she encountered Prik in front of the bedroom earlier in the morning until now, she was certain that Prik *"knew too much"* for her to feign ignorance. Perhaps Prik should have been less informed than Pilantita, who was the one responsible for this situation.

For how cunning Prik's overlord is.

Prik herself is just as cunning...

"That's my finger, Anil..." Pilantita rebuked the actions of the person in front of her in a semi-affectionate and semi-reproachful tone. Her lovely flushed face was accentuated by a pleasant smile. "It's not cake."

"Is that so?"

Princess Anil responded with a sweet tone, yet playfully slid Lady Pin's fingers along her own full lips proactively in a teasing manner.

"It's inevitable..." Pilantita's gleaming dark eyes drooped, *"Because Khun Pin's fingers are more appetizing than the cake."*

Princess Anilaphat said, smiling dazzlingly.

"You lied to me that if I fed you, you would eat the cake I made..."

“...”

"But in reality, you're just trying to tease me."

Pilantita's spirited voice was so endearing that Princess Anilaphat couldn't resist gently kissing Lady Pin's slender hand, which she had been holding.

"Please refrain from kissing, Anil... we are in the garden, not the bedroom," Lady Pin stated, mirroring Princess Anilaphat's audacious demeanor, and cast a suspicious glance around a teahouse tucked away in the corner of the Pine Palace Garden.

"No one will see us, I hired Prik to look in front of the palace for a while." Princess Anil smiled in a good mood.

"Hire?" Pilantita's lovely eyebrows arched in curiosity. "Do you mean to say that even Anil needs to employ Prik?"

"So that Prik can pay attention," she said with a chuckle. "Providing her with a modest allowance so she has some money to save."

Upon hearing this, Pilantita took a deep breath. Suddenly, the events of late that morning rushed into her mind like a series of ripples.

She couldn't help but wonder...

How many bills have Prik received today?

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“Ahem, ahem, hum!”

Pilantita distanced herself from Princess Anilaphat as soon as she heard Prik's cough, then put on a feigned smile. Unlike Princess Anilaphat, who gradually released Lady Pin's hand and wore a pretense of not knowing anything, like the others.

"What's caught in your throat, Prik?..."

"Nothing is lodged in my throat, my princess," Prik replied with a mixture of deep affection and a hint of dread, "Prik, I just hurry to deliver

Mae Phin's message."

"What's the matter, Prik...? Why don't you let her in?"

Prik refrained from directly responding to Lady Pin, expressing her concern that Mae Phin might stumble upon something in the Pine Palace that shouldn't be witnessed. Therefore, Prik felt the need to swiftly prevent Mae Phin from entering the palace without hindrance.

"Prik noticed that Mae Phin was quite occupied, so I offered to personally deliver the message to Lady Pin."

"What did Mae Phin say?" Pilantita's beautiful eyebrows frowned.

"Khun Kua's waiting to meet Lady Pin in the Bua Palace guest room." Prik said worriedly looking at Princess Anilaphat's solemn expression.

"Khun Kua again? ..." Pilantita's lovely countenance took on an unfriendly expression, particularly upon observing the enigmatic and composed visage of Princess Anilaphat.

Pilantita's anger towards Lord Khuakiat erupted helplessly.

"Prik..."

"Yes, my princess." Prik bowed down to the ground to acknowledge Princess Anilaphat's cold voice that she had never heard before.

"Invite Khun Kua to have some tea with me here."

"But... Anil." Lady Pilantita has a very restless gesture, in fact, today apart from Princess Anilaphat, she doesn't wish to talk with anyone.

Let alone Lord Kua with Pilantita, seeing his face is frustrating and annoying every time...

"Do as I say..."

"Yes, my princess."

Upon hearing Princess Anilaphat's concise words, Prik could only inch backward before standing and hurrying off toward the Front Palace. Meanwhile, Pilantita could only steal glances at Princess Anilaphat's beautiful face, which resembled a silent sculpture.

Princess Anilaphat calmly raised her cup of tea and sipped it as Prik walked into the tea pavilion with a tall thin figure in a white suit. Kuakiat lowered his head as a greeting gesture to Princess Anilaphat with a respectful attitude before turning to greet Pilantita and giving the girl a sweet smile.

"Please sit down, Khun Kua." Princess Anilaphat smiled at the corner of her lips and invited him to sit down in the chair opposite her. "You're just in time for tea."

"Thank you, Your Highness."

Kuakiat took a seat in front of Princess Anilaphat, wearing an awkward expression. He felt particularly uneasy under the weight of her dark, piercing gaze filled with authority, which had the capacity to instill fear in him easily.

It's not that Kuakiat doesn't notice...

Princess Anilaphat possessed a beauty that radiated kindness, much like the sun's warmth to others. However, in his eyes, her image was murky and indistinct. It resembled a shadow cast upon the already shadowy ground, making him feel stifled. Her eyes, still as deep as a well, bore into him with a probing intensity, as if assessing his worth. While Princess Anil can spread a wide sincere smile to others without regret, he only received a stern smile that was hard to predict.

"During work times like this..." Princess Anilaphat stretched out a cold smile as she glanced at the luxurious diamond-encrusted wristwatch on her wrist. "Why did you come to visit the Bua Palace?"

"I just wanted to stop by and have a brief conversation with Lady Pin."

Kuakiat has a restless expression. The young white man's ears were now clearly red. He swallowed the viscous saliva with difficulty as he saw that Princess Anil's beautiful face was still adorned with the coldest smile ever.

"Actually, the Vice Prince and I are scheduled to walk around in Chiang Mai today, but he was called back by the Ministry because he was informed there is an urgent and very important task ahead..." Princess

Anilaphat said, while knocking her beautiful slender fingers down on the white center table rhythmically and contemplating, "It seems that Brother rushed to the Ministry early today."

"I'm..."

"It's such a shame; that you're working at the same place as him..."

The lady offered a faint smile and cast her gaze downward, leaving Prik anxiously observing the situation, her stomach fluttering for reasons she couldn't quite grasp.

"While my brother seems too busy, unable to take a rest... But a close governor like Khun Kua has the time to **wander around**..."

Princess Anilaphat's sharp eyes on Kuakiat are intruding. The young man bowed his head before reluctantly saying.

"I'm wrong, ma'am... Your Highness, please forgive me."

Pilantita cast a sympathetic glance at the young man before her. She was more accustomed to the image of Lord Kuakiat, who typically exuded pride and self-assuredness in his "goodness," rather than seeing him sitting with hunched shoulders and bowing in front of Princess Anilaphat like he was now.

"Why do you have to apologize to me?" Princess Anil giggly said. "Since you've already informed me that you have something to talk about with Khun Pin."

The princess said with a smooth voice before reaching her face closer to Khun Kua than before.

"Just say what you need to, Khun Kua... Khun Pin is here."

"But..." Kuakiat's eyes unexpectedly widen to defend against Princess Anil's such words.

"But what?"

"..."

"Or is it something that needs to be discussed **one-on-one**?"

This time, Princess Anil looked at Pilantita who kept on shaking her head and looking back wishing to explain her trillion explanations.

"No, that's not it, Your Highness..." Kuakiat swallowed a big gulp of saliva down his throat. "I just want to invite her to the ministry's club dinner next week, Your Highness."

"A club dinner?" Princess brows feathers curiously rising high, "Is it a dance party where the dance partners are usually lovers or couples?"

"Uhh..." Kuakiat is stunned.

"What are you with Khun Pin, Khun Kua?" At this time Princess Anil's brow frowned. "How dare you invite Pin out like this."

"No, Your Highness... I just thought that Lady Pin might want to join me at the dancing party."

Kuakiat can only utter these words then keep his head down and avoid Princess Anil's eyes that had already begun to appear a little angry.

"Khun Pin, do you want to go to the dance party?" Princess Anilaphat turned her head to ask the person next to her, who was biting her lips tightly.

"I don't want to go..."

"..."

"I never said I wanted to go."

Pilantita's answer made Kuakiat's face pale. Currently, only Prik has sympathy towards Khun Kua.

"Anyway... keep on trying, Khun Kua." Her beautiful full colored lips are smiling and showing off her dimples on her soft cheek. "This time, Khun Pin doesn't want to... Maybe next time she might comply."

"..."

"Water drips down the stone every day. What happened to the stone, Prik?" Princess Anil turned to Prik, who was seated neatly beside her leg.

"Water drips down the stone every day... nothing happens to the stone."

"..."

"Because it seems the water has dried up first, My Lady," and the servant and overlord smirked to each other in front of his eyes so Kuakiat couldn't help but feel humiliated.

"Is that all you have to say to Khun Pin?"

"Yes, Your Highness." Kuakiat must answer that without a choice.

"Then let's have cake and tea together first." Princess Anilaphat's voice was extremely gentle, yet tiny grains of sweat filled Kuakiat's palm.

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"So you come to hide over here, Your Highness?"

While Kuakiat is sitting there with a bad expression on his face. Pranot's cheerful voice suddenly popped up in time. The tall thin body walked with a big smile into the tea hall with a familiar and friendly attitude.

'What day is it today? Why is there such a wrong place, wrong time like this!'

Prik could only ponder this in her mind as she quickly moved to escort Pranot to a seat in the pavilion, displaying her exceptional service.

"Hello Khun Pin, Khun Kua, Your Highness..." Pranot smiled playfully as he bowed his hand and waited for Princess Anil's hand to kiss her as usual.

But this time, Princess Anil hurried to hide her hands behind her slender waist.

"You can't do that, Pranot... This is Thailand."

The lady snorted, looking at the angry face of Lady Pin in anxiety.

"Then I can wait until we're there."

Pranot erupted into laughter, closing his eyes with amusement. Unaware, he failed to notice the somber expression in Lady Pilantita's eyes.

"What makes you come here?" said Princess Anil, inviting him to sit down beside Lord Kuakiat who had been sitting motionless for a while. "Let's have tea and the cake that Khun Pin made together."

"I just missed you, so I came by." Pranot lifted his hot tea and took a sip with a relaxed expression like a good-natured young man with the same mannerisms as before. "I stopped by the other day, but Your Highness went to Chiang Mai."

Pilantita's face twitches when she hears Pranot's words '*I just missed you*' with her ears.

"I went to Uncle Chakkham's funeral; Khun Euang's father."

"I've heard the same thing, Your Highness. Khun Euang must be very sad." The young man said as he scooped up the chocolate cake before giving Pilantita a thumbs up in admiration, but Lady Pin simply nodded in acceptance.

"Grief is natural. Are you enjoying the cake, Pranot?" Princess Anilaphat deliberately steered the conversation away from the topic of Lady Euangfah, showing her deep concern for Lady Pilantita.

"I like it, My Highness... Khun Pin is so skilled." Pranot smiled broadly and sincerely until Kuakiat began to feel more relaxed.

"The lady's skill is good, both at Thai desserts and foreign desserts, Khun Pranot," Lord Kuakiat's voice carried an air of pride, as if he considered Lady Pilantita to be his possession. "This chocolate cake should have come from the book I brought to you, right?"

"..."

Prik's eyes widened upon hearing the conversation about a topic that both she and the lady had been guarding as a secret. Meanwhile, Lady Pilantita remained seated, seemingly unaffected by the words, as if the conversation were merely a passing breeze.

"I think you must have misunderstood... This cake is actually the recipe of Mae Chuen, the cook of my brother's Horadee Palace."

Princess Anilaphat interrupted the discussion in frustration and deemed the possibility of Lady Pin using his recipe for the cake as a minor

issue that could be disregarded. However, the self-serving bias in Khun Kua's words was something she couldn't tolerate, even for a moment.

"I," Kuakiat said in a subdued tone, realizing that today wouldn't be the day for him to articulate any words that made much sense at all.

"In fact, I have business with Princess Anil."

An uninformed person spoke up in the middle of the conversation.

"What is it about Pranot?"

"I would like to know your schedule to return to England, Princess Anil." he said, raising a glass of hot tea and taking a sip with no trouble.

That's the opposite of Pilantita's scorching heart. ...

The girl's face is pale, completely pale...

"I will return on the same day as yours." Pranot smiled as broadly as ever. "Your university will almost start. Let's leave early next month, shall we?"

Princess Anil stretched out as she looked at the young man in front of her.

For the first time, Princess Anil wanted to lift her hand and hit Pranot's lips several times.

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For the next time, Pranot should know how to keep his mouth shut.

CHAPTER 25

Birthday

Pilantita's nightmare has been going on for almost a week.

In a dream...

She saw Princess Anilaphat in a pitch-black dress cross-stamped on her favorite smoke-gray sofa by the balcony window. Constantly, she observes the rain dancing beneath the weight of the somber, overcast sky.

The moment Pilantita took a seat on the couch opposite the princess, her fragile form gradually dissipated, akin to morning mist vanishing under the gentle warmth of the sun. Pilantita extended her hand metaphorically, attempting to grasp an intangible presence in front of her. Upon the realization that everything had become void and empty, the girl swiftly crumpled, sinking to her knees beside the couch in despair. She slapped her hand against her face and began sobbing until she was nearly gasping for breath. Every time the dream reached this moment, she instinctively recoiled.

Upon her initial awakening,

Pilantita found that after she opened her eyes, tiny grains of sweat filled her forehead... Pilantita discovered that tiny beads of sweat adorned her forehead. Her pillow, as usual, soaked in her tears. Lady Pin extended her arm to gently pull Princess Anilaphat's nearby body closer, drawing her into an even tighter embrace until there was no space left between them.

"Khun Pin..." The drowsy but tender voice of the person next to her whispered softly in her ear almost every time Pilantita pulled her delicate body closer than ever. *"Did you have a nightmare?"*

"Yes..."

She often answered the short question by burying her small face into the warm embrace of Princess Anilaphat's chest, as if seeking the comfort of her mother's womb. Princess Anil would reach up and gently stroke her glossy black hair, showering affectionate kisses upon the moistened

forehead of the person nestled in her arms before they both swayed into slumber once more.

While Pilantita couldn't sleep easily...

While tonight brought a slightly more favorable circumstance than the preceding nights, with only an unoccupied space beside her in bed, it was because Princess Alisa had insisted that her young daughter spend the entire day in the Front Palace and had chosen to stay in her mother's bedroom, as if Princess Anilaphat were still a child.

Princess Alisa's rationale is easily surmised, yet Pilantita feigns ignorance, deliberately avoiding its mention as if it were an unspoken secret.

In fact, Princess Alisa's feelings are not much different from hers...

Princess Alisa now wishes to spend as much time with her little daughter as possible.

Ever since Pilantita learned of Princess Anilaphat's impending return to England through Pranot about a week ago, she has sensed that her moments of happiness are slowly dissipating, much like steam rising and vanishing into the air. She refrained from discussing it with Princess Anilaphat, and the princess, in turn, understood all too well that the subject was as delicate as the splinter she was more concerned about.

Nevertheless, Pilantita's concerns have reached a pinnacle that she can scarcely fathom,

An anxiety so encompassing it seems to shroud everything.

The story of what's close at hand...

And an uncharted distant future...

Pilantita's greatest concern is not that... Instead, it revolves around how she can carry on without the heart she has wholeheartedly bestowed upon Princess Anilaphat, leaving nearly no remnants for herself in the process.

Perhaps it's because her emotions for Princess Anilaphat have been overwhelming for so long. However, there stands a formidable societal barrier, interwoven with a sense of indebtedness to her aunt. Therefore,

Pilantita promptly resolved to dismantle this heavy thick formidable barrier herself. Everything she struggled to withstand was akin to powerful rapids capable of breaching and inundating, a feat beyond her own imagination.

Pilantita hadn't originally planned to be this emotionally attached to Princess Anilaphat...

Yet the story has unfolded in this manner, with no capacity to change.

On the surface, the situation may bear some resemblance to the parting of five years ago... but in reality, the essence is entirely distinct. The last time around, Pilantita was ensnared by a mere 'crush' and did not descend into the profound depths of love and a profound connection as she has now.

Prior to this, Pilantita could carry on without a kiss, whether it was a delicate peck akin to the touch of butterfly wings or fervent kisses infused with profoundly sweet sensations.

The absence of a gentle caress before falling asleep used to be of no concern to her.

But this time...

She yearns for Princess Anilaphat's passionate kisses and profound love as if being cherished in such a manner is something she has never experienced depletion from in her entire life.

She's uncertain that she can live without Princess Anilaphat.

Consequently, Pilantita frets about what the future holds...

However, that overwhelming anxiety is momentarily assuaged by a steady, unhurried heartbeat emanating from the chest she envyingly rests upon. Surprisingly, the intricately alluring fragrance she finds captivating emanates from Princess Anilaphat's soft body. It offers a comforting embrace, lulling Pilantita back towards sleep once more.

If she can sleep this time...

The sole mercy she seeks from heaven is to never experience a jarring dream like that again.

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"A white dress again?"

Princess Anilaphat provided instructions while wearing a gentle smile, directed toward the girl before her, who was diligently fastening the final button of her blouse with a sense of anxiety.

"The buttons, too... Must you fasten them all the way to the last one? I'm finding it hard to breathe."

Pilantita's lips are skewed as she lifted her gaze to meet Princess Anilaphat's, then spoke in a hushed tone.

"You have to..."

"Why do I need to do that? It's too hot." Princess Anil's voice sounded adorable, prompting a fond smile to escape from the lady.

"Anil prefers to unveil the collar so thoroughly that you can glimpse everything beneath..."

Pilantita uttered these words as she tenderly ran her fingers along the princess's hairline, her touch gentle upon the rosy ear. She then leaned into plant kisses on both of the princess's cheeks.

"I'm jealous..."

"..."

"I don't want anyone to see it."

"..."

Upon hearing that, Princess Anilaphat was filled with joy.

"Why are you feeling so envious of me? I rarely go out anywhere, only occasionally meeting Prik and family members each day."

"Who mentioned that? There have been numerous visitors, both men and women, coming and going lately," Lady remarked, affectionately tracing her fingers along the princess's full lips. "Weren't you in Chinatown with Mother just yesterday?"

"Who would be concerned about me?" Princess Anilaphat said with a sweet smile.

"Can I say that?" Lady Pilantita pondered the endearing sight before her and couldn't resist showering multiple kisses on Princess Anilaphat's soft cheek where a deep dimple glistened. "Anil is truly delightful to behold..."

Upon hearing Pilantita's words, Princess Anilaphat's dark eyes twinkled, radiating cuteness that filled the lady with joy. She was so engrossed in the story before her that she momentarily forgot her worries. At that moment, her life resembled the unaltered picture she had longed for, nearly identical to her dreams.

Pilantita once dreamed that...

If only she could really get married and live with Princess Anilaphat.

Pilantita's daily expectations are quite simple: she anticipates the routine of preparing Her Majesty's attire each morning, crafting snacks for teatime and early evening as usual, engaging in cheerful conversations and laughter during the evenings, culminating in a passionate yet tender love story late at night before drifting into a peaceful slumber. All she requires is a reassuring embrace to comfort her when she awakens from a nightmare.

Is Pilantita's wish too demanding...

Several days ago, her aunt granted her a week's stay at the Pine Palace solely due to Princess Anilaphat's request.

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"I've been separated from Khun Pin for quite some time, and there are many things I wish to talk about with her. It would be gratifying to allow Khun Pin to temporarily stay with me at the Pine Palace."

'If it doesn't bother Princess Anil too much. I have no problem with that.'

Pilantita learned that Princess Anilaphat had never relinquished her own desire to wander freely like a breeze.

She was always aware of what she wanted, moreover, Princess Anil never hesitated in any way to get what she was aiming for... She took the advantage from her royal authority in the right time and the right place always.

That's Princess Anilaphat's way.

A method capable of consistently transcending the traditions upheld by Princess Padmika.

"My mother has invited Khun Pin to have lunch at the front palace today." Princess Anil said, gazing up to meet Pilantita's eyes. "Can we go together?"

"Aunt Alisa has never instructed me to see her like this before." Pilantita's current expression openly displayed her concern. "Does Anil have any idea if she has anything in particular to talk to me about?"

"I don't know about that..." The princess gently tugged at Lady Pilantita's slender waist and embraced her tenderly. "I only know that Mother is very fond of Khun Pin."

"..."

"She often told me that she wanted Khun Pin to be her adopted daughter, and I listened to her words until I remembered it by heart."

"..."

"Indeed, I hold a deeper sense of gratitude for Mother than anything else."

"..."

"Now, My mother wants Khun Pin to be her youngest daughter-in-law."

"Anil!"

A daughter-in-law? How could she be so daring? Pilantita's face flushed, unable to help but feel embarrassed. Meanwhile, the storyteller

continued to giggle incessantly, prompting Lady Pin to intervene with a light touch on her upper arm to suppress her laughter.

Shortly before noon, Princess Anilaphat extended an invitation to Pilantita to accompany her in the royal carriage to the Front Palace, and Pilantita couldn't decline. Given this, even though Princess Anilaphat would have walked alongside her if she chose to walk, Pilantita didn't want her to endure the intense midday sun, which would have caused her to sweat profusely before reaching the Front Palace.

"Anil is so spoiled..." Once the car door closed, Pilantita softly murmured, her words meant only for the two of them to hear. In response, the one being complained continued to smile, gazing at the scenery outside the car window in a cheerful mood.

Pilantita couldn't help but think about the old days when the princess waited to get in P'Perm's car in the morning to ride Chao Kae to school with her.

At that time, little Princess Anil was just smiling a little while laying her gaze out the window like this...

The person she had accused of being a stranger... had actually never changed, but she held steadfast to her own feelings.

Before Pilantita's thoughts could drift into a daydream, Uncle Plai drove both of them to the Front Palace first.

Pilantita took a deep breath, concerned about the events of the day. If it had been like this in days gone by... she and Prik would frequently spend lunchtime preparing snacks for Princess Anilaphat to enjoy upon her return from the Front Palace.

Outwardly, she appeared to have faithfully carried out the responsibilities her aunt had assigned to her.

On the contrary, Pilantita herself passed the time of waiting for Princess Anilaphat...

In reality, the girl who had immersed herself in anticipation... despised waiting more than anything else.

The dining table at the front palace is filled with exquisite dishes. By just a glance, Pilantita could know which dish was made by her aunt. She let out a soft breath when she found that her aunt's sharp eyes were already watching.

Monday is a working day... The lunch table of the front palace is all just women. The host position is occupied by Princess Alisa. On the left side is Lady Parvati, the wife of Prince Anantawut, the eldest son. Next to Lady Vati is Princess Padmika. On the right side is Princess Anil, the little daughter sitting beside her.

Lady Pilantita ...

The woman that Princess Anilaphat said was like the youngest daughter in law of the Sawetawarit Palace.

"My Lady Pin..." Princess Alisa looked gentle and said to Pilantita, "Eat a lot, Aunt Pad intended to prepare this."

"Thank you."

Lady Pin looked into Princess Alisa's eyes, which appeared younger than her age, while offering a sweet and bashful smile. It dawned on her that Princess Anilaphat's gentle and sweet voice was a clear reflection of her mother's.

"I find it endearing when you display a touch of playfulness. You resemble a charming doll."

Princess Alisa genuinely smiled, not feigning her words to simply please the young girl before her.

Nothing eluded the keen gaze of Princess Padmika, who was once again under the scrutiny of Princess Anilaphat's dark, slender eyes.

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Lunchtime unfolded more smoothly than Pilantita had feared, thanks to Princess Alisa's amiable demeanor.

Strangely, after that, Princess Alisa discreetly directed Lady Pin and Princess Anilaphat to accompany her to her private dressing room, away from the watchful eyes of the eldest daughter-in-law or even Princess Padmika.

Princess Alisa's dressing room, which was connected to her bedroom, was remarkably spacious and elegantly designed. Despite having envisioned its size beforehand, Pilantita couldn't help but feel humbled by the reality, realizing her imagination had fallen short.

In fact, Princess Alisa's dressing room is much more luxurious than she had imagined...

The spacious room is enveloped by vast mirrors adorning the walls. Along the only fabric-covered walls are lengthy sofas adorned with graceful golden patterns. Behind these walls, there seems to be a concealed space with rows of chests and securely locked safes.

Princess Alisa gestured to invite Pilantita and Princess Anilaphat to sit on the sofa to wait before she disappeared into her secret cabinet for a long time.

"I found it." Princess Alisa's voice sounded so ecstatic. Pilantita struggled to contain her curiosity. In the next moment, Princess Alisa proceeded directly to the sofa, holding a scarlet velvet box.

"This is my beloved ruby jewelry set," Princess Alisa remarked as she handed over the velvet jewelry box and unveiled it. "Rubies adorned with diamonds."

The jewelry's brilliance shone brightly the moment the lid of the deep velvet box was fully lifted. It featured a necklace adorned with sizable rubies encircled by diamonds. The sight was so stunning that Lady Pin could only gaze at it in wonder.

"I wish to give it to you." Princess Alisa stated before gently lifting a beautiful ruby necklace from its velvet box and placing it delicately around Lady Pilantita's graceful neck.

"Aunty..." Pilantita had a reflexive habit of declining spontaneously. However, upon recollection, she decided to remain seated quietly, allowing Princess Alisa to treat her like a doll and dress her without any resistance.

"It's so cute..." Princess Alisa observed Pilantita with the ruby necklace, finding it highly satisfying. "This necklace suits Lady Pin perfectly," she remarked.

"Thank you so much," Pilantita could only manage to reply. She could acknowledge the immense delight Princess Alisa was showing towards her today. It felt just as nourishing as Princess Anil's words, knowing she was favored by one of the most influential individuals in the Sawetawarit Palace: Princess Alisa.

It could be stated that the valuable ruby necklace was of lesser worth compared to Princess Alisa's acceptance of her.

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"However, ... I suspect that Anil had a hand in this," Lady Pilantita remarked once they arrived back at the Pine Palace. "Aunt wouldn't bestow upon me such valuable jewelry without a valid motive."

As soon as they entered the room, Pilantita couldn't hold back her suspicions.

"What did Anil say to Mother?" Pilantita embraced Princess Anil affectionately. "Please assure me that I can feel at ease."

"Khun Pin, please believe me..." Princess Anilaphat initiated a passionate kiss before speaking in a tender tone, "Mother has a deep affection for Khun Pin alone."

"But Anil might've said something," Pilantita snuggled up against Princess Anil's chest pleadingly.

"Despite Auntie's fondness for me, today's circumstances appear exceptionally urgent."

"I only informed my mother..." Princess Anil lovingly caressed her hand to her hair.

"That it's almost your birthday."

"..."

"I did not force or persuade my mother to give you any gifts."

Pilantita is silent as she's speechless...

The explanation Anilaphat provided was considerably less significant than she had anticipated.

Pilantita didn't expect Aunt Alisa to favor her this much.

"Does Anil remember my birthday?"

The girl shifted the topic with the intention of sparking a conversation, well aware that Princess Anilaphat remembered her birthday even better than she did herself.

"Of course, I do." Her face lit up with a sparkling smile. "What Anil remembers is not overstated in the least."

"..."

Pilantita is indisputable because on every anniversary of her birthday, Princess Anil had tirelessly made international phone calls to wish her a happy birthday throughout their five years of separation.

Princess Anil gave importance to her special days so much that Pilantita is shy to ask...

"My birthday this year..." Pilantita gently strokes Princess Anil's delicate fingers and anticipates. "Could Anil possibly wake up early to engage in acts of merit, such as giving alms to me?"

"Khun Pin..."

The moment she heard Princess Anilaphat's voice... Pilantita's heart plummeted instantly.

"Can it be tomorrow?"

"..."

The moment Princess Anilaphat started speaking... Pilantita's tears began to flow uncontrollably.

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"I can't wait until your birthday," With a sense of guilt, Princess Anilaphat gently used her finger to wipe away the tears from Pilantita's cheekbones...

"I must go back to England..."

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"Within next week from now."

CHAPTER 26

Wait For Me

"Your Highness, you promised to spend the long school holidays teaching me tennis so I could upgrade to wearing a white skirt dress like the others. Why are you leaving for England so soon?"

Prik, sitting neatly folded beside my knees, had a disheveled and creased expression on her face that made me feel guilty. She murmured that my departure for England appeared to be happening sooner than she had anticipated.

"I can't really make that choice," I argued with a feeble voice. "The Grand Prince hasn't had a chance for a honeymoon with Lady Vati yet, so he decided to drop me off there and took it upon himself to arrange the entire schedule."

"No matter how tight the schedule is, Your Highness should postpone the time to coincide with Lady Pin's birthday..." Prik's full lips turned, her thick eyebrows knitted. "The reason Lady Pin fell ill this time might be due to sorrow."

Prik's candid statement felt like a weighty, solid object that harshly struck the back of my mind. I gazed at the closed door, letting out a soft, weary sigh.

At this moment, the patient whom Prik had diagnosed personally was peacefully asleep in that room.

Right after Khun Pin heard the confirmed news of my departure from my own lips, her tears flowed continuously, resembling raindrops on a gloomy and overcast day. The image of Khun Pin weeping like a young girl is etched deeply in my mind. Even now, unconsciously... that image frequently emerges, causing my heart to ache so intensely that I find myself raising my hands to clutch my chest without realizing it.

Exhausted from shedding tears that seemed to have no end, Khun Pin indeed fell ill during yesterday's twilight.

Her smooth, pale torso is flushed and burning as if it were ablaze...

She does not want to eat, does not want to sleep, does not desire to talk to anyone.

Omit only me...

Who is the exception to everything...

I informed Khun Pin's illness to Aunt Pad then appointed a Western doctor to come and check Khun Pin's condition at the Pine Palace. After a thorough examination, the doctor provided a large set of painkillers and tonics for Khun Pin.

Aunt Pad visited her niece at the Pine Palace just before Khun Pin slipped into a deep slumber, with minimal impact from the medication.

'I ask you to watch over Lady Pin.' Aunt Pad said to me in a worried voice. *'No matter how I ask her to come back to the Bua Palace, Lady Pin refused to. Now I have to bother Princess Anil.'*

'Aunty don't worry. Khun Pin has taken her medication. Her getting some rest would be much better. Leave it to me.'

Under Khun Pin's always lenient attitude... in reality, the young woman concealed her defiance towards her aunt, Princess Padmika, in various ways.

"It's my own fault... I refrained from informing Khun Pin of the deadline," I remarked, gazing out of the expansive window. "If I disclose it too early, I fear Khun Pin would become overly concerned. Revealing it now seems too short for her to cope with..."

"It's really hard to get over it, my lady, Lady Pin has been waiting for five years, not being happy for three months, and you're about to go."

"I haven't been here for very long this time, just close to two years," I mentioned with a somewhat uncertain sentence, not entirely sure if it was meant to console Prik or provide comfort to myself.

"But two years can feel incredibly long for someone who waits," Prik's weary brown eyes locked onto mine. "The circumstances have changed, and there's no turning back... Lady Pin's waiting will be many times more difficult than before."

Once again, Prik's conversation pierced my heart to the point that I almost choked on the steaming tea I had just raised to my lips. Who, I wondered, had taught Prik to speak such scorching sarcasm towards others?

"Prik, promise me you won't say such things to anyone else. **I insisted firmly.**"

"I only speak to Your Highness," the girl responded, bowing so deeply that her forehead touched her knees. "You are so understanding; you understand my intentions and won't hold me accountable."

Heh, such a good survivalist.

Prik is too clever...

"If I could control my own fate completely... I would have chosen not to leave here from the very beginning, Prik."

"..."

"Do you think I have many options?"

"Forgive me, My Lady," Prik said with tears welling up in her eyes this time, seeming genuinely remorseful.

"I won't take it personally. If you assist me in preparing porridge for Khun Pin," I interjected, having no inclination to prolong the conversation with someone as insincere as Prik.

"Your Highness is so smart!"

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The tasty pork porridge... which Prik and I made was completed in the early evening.

Khun Pin recovered just in time...

As I opened the door to visit her, the evening light streamed through the window at the head of the bed, casting a gentle glow over Pilantita's fair, lovely face, creating a serene tableau. Prik arranged the patient's meal tray and placed it on the bedside table. She glanced discreetly at Khun Pin with

a concerned expression before gracefully retreating on her knees, silently understanding my desire to have a moment alone with Khun Pin...

“Khun Pin...”

“...”

"Do you have a headache?"

I affectionately touched the back of my hand to Pilantita's warm forehead. Khun Pin's large, expressive brown eyes, filled with sorrow, gazed up into mine, causing my heart to waver and plummet, like descending into a deep abyss with no visible bottom.

She took hold of my hand and lightly tapped her warm cheeks with a sweet and pleading expression.

“As long as Anil is around, I feel much better.”

"I'm still here..." I forced down the lump in my throat, knowing the hidden deep meaning within Khun Pin's words.

"I haven't gone anywhere..."

Upon hearing... Pilantita's tears abruptly ceased as if a mechanism had commanded their halt. I gently wiped away her tears with my fingers, my heart heavy with the realization of the unexpected depth of pain.

"Have some porridge... so you can take some medicine. I cooked it myself. I will feel remorseful if you refuse to eat."

"I will eat it..." that sweet voice sobbed, piercing our hearts mercilessly. *"Only when Anil feeds me..."*

"Sure..."

“...”

"I will feed you."

I spoke in a hoarse voice, my thoughts reverberating in my chest and causing me to tremble.

Yet, I had grown accustomed to concealing my vulnerability from others. I used to cry only when I was by myself.

All I could do was forcibly smile and move closer to Khun Pin, who now leaned against the large pillow that was resting against the headboard.

I spooned a small amount of porridge and, with a resolute motion, blew on it to cool it down before eagerly feeding it to the person before me.

"Be careful, it's hot." I said so when I saw Pilantita's blushing face, slightly skewed. "Eat carefully."

I gently brushed Khun Pin's tiny, damp, and sweaty strands of hair away from her face and tucked them behind her ear. Thankfully, the warm individual in front of me obediently ate the porridge I had prepared, finishing nearly the entire bowl. What was even more cute was her willingness to take numerous pills without hesitation, which I couldn't help but admire.

"Good girl..."

I sprinkled a sweet smile as a reward for the person in front. Unconsciously, Pilantita reciprocated with a smile.

"I want to be Anil's good girl..." Khun Pin whispered while looking down at her loosely interlocking hands on her lap. Her two thumbs were circling each other, indicating her subconscious contemplation.

"I..."

"..."

"Don't want to worry Anil..."

I reached out and grabbed Pilantita's thin hand as if the suffering is truly permeable through the senses.

I wished to absorb all of Khun Pin's pain and make it my own...

"Don't blame yourself like that, okay?" I kissed Pilantita's oval forehead affectionately, "I know that Khun Pin is trying so hard..."

Pilantita's tears welled up once more. She approached me slowly, wrapping me in her embrace as if she feared my body might disintegrate into dust.

Until Khun Pin spoke again with a trembling voice that silent embrace was wet with her tears for a moment on my shoulders.

"Have you eaten anything, Anil?"

It's difficult to suppress my tears when I hear the raspy voice of an ill person asking a strong person in such a concerned tone.

"I can eat Khun Pin's leftover porridge, and I might be full..." I smiled as wide as I could. "I also ate some bread a while ago."

"This time, can I feed Anil?" Khun Pin murmured with a voice barely audible, her small face nestled against my chest.

"Why would you want the sick person to do the feeding? I'd be embarrassed if others found out," I replied, chuckling affectionately.

"You don't have to make it public to anyone..." The lovely face, which had just withdrawn from my chest, wore an expression of mild annoyance. "Anil wouldn't want to upset the ill person."

"It's not that I want to avoid upsetting the ill..." I gently raised Pilantita's finger and placed it against my lips affectionately.

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"I must say that I do not wish to offend Khun Pin anymore."

"Did Anil prepare all of the necessary stuffs?"

On my final night at the Pine Palace, Pilantita inquired as she moved from the guest room to my bedroom for the third night.

"Everything's fine."

"Have you separated your winter coat to wear when you arrive at the airport? The weather there is colder than here."

"I have," I replied with a gentle smile as I moved to embrace her slender waist from behind, aiming to reassure her. "Don't worry, Khun Pin."

"How can I not worry?" She reached out and tenderly stroked my upper arms as if lost in thought. *"The deeper I love, the more I worry..."*

Upon hearing that, I tightened my embrace significantly, as if attempting to meld our bodies into one.

"But I love Khun Pin more," Khun Pin gave me a loving smile as soon as she heard me bragging like that.

"Can't you allow me to love Anil more, once?"

"I'm just telling the truth."

Khun Pin chuckled and planted repeated kisses on both of my cheeks, treating me like a girl, before gently running her hand over my lips and speaking in a hoarse voice.

"Let's go to bed. Anil must wake up early tomorrow."

"Yes," I obeyed her.

"Can you not turn off the lamp tonight?" said Pilantita, I was about to extend my hand to switch off the lamp at the head of the bed, just as I did every other night.

"Tonight, I want to see Anil clearly."

"Okay."

That was the cue for me to answer, and then I settled down next to Khun Pin, who had shifted to lie on the same pillow as usual.

Pilantita's clear brown eyes met mine, and her beautiful face, bathed in the gentle yellow light of the lantern, wore an expression of such sorrow that I couldn't look away. Unconsciously, she ran her fingers across my face, tracing from my forehead to my temples, then my eyelids, down to the nose bridge, over my cheeks, and finally, she lingered around my lips for a moment.

Pilantita gently shifted her position, settling herself over me. I couldn't help but smile, realizing that I was now held by this bashful individual, who had never initiated a romantic affair between us before.

"What are you smiling about?"

Khun Pin asked but didn't wait for my response. She uses her warm tongue to taste and explore my lips little by little, little by little, akin to a kitten eagerly lapping up milk from a large bowl.

The cat's little tongue starts to taste my chin, earlobes, and neck mischievously. My heart flutters with every temptation made by Khun Pin. I reached up and caressed the back of her head inextricably. The other hand pulled her nightgown high above her waist before caressing her smooth and sleek hot flesh passionately.

Now I attempted to move my hand to remove the Lady's underwear to move down frustratingly. At that moment, Khun Pin bit down firmly on my lower lip as if she wanted to restrain my mischievous, still hands.

"Tonight, Anil must remain still to please me."

Khun Pin's raspy voice took on a commanding tone as she stripped away my robe entirely to the brim of my naked torso, which is straddled under her fully dressed torso, yet it was frayed which only added to her allure.

Pilantita's gaze lingers on my body from head to toe. As a result, I feel a rush of embarrassment, causing me to bite my lips to restrain myself.

"Anil's body is as beautiful as a jade statue...", Pilantita said, she delicately traced her nails from my chest down to my lower belly. "But please know that..."

"..."

"Anil is a jade statue owned by me..."

Before I truly suffocated in front of her... Pilantita bent down and dragged the tip of her tongue along my body in the same imitative behavior I'd teased her before, but her playful, cat-like touch set my heart racing. It was impossible to anticipate the path that Pilantita's warm tongue would take.

All I know now is that she is sucking my body's markings, as if she finds pleasure in every inch. I held my breath every time I experienced the girl's urge.

My exposed senses quiver as soon as Pilantita's small lips suck nudging onto the top of my bosom with desire. My two hands wrapped tightly around the back of the person on top before moaning out Khun Pin's name embarrassingly.

“Khun Pin...”

Khun Pin couldn't respond because her mouth was occupied. She lifted my breasts up and kissed them before fondling them like a child had a toy. I arch my back uncontrollably, I reach out and surrender at the top of her chest.

The image of Khun Pin biting her lips firmly fills me with irresistible affection.

Especially now that she slid her fingers down and circled around my wet sensitive areas in an unexpected manner... I flinched as Khun Pin used her fingers to caress at my sensitive area to create a warm, moist, smooth coating on her hands..... The pulsating sensation surged forward and persisted until I noticeably arched my hips to experience the wet sensation uncontrollably.

My hands gripped the sheets inadvertently as Khun Pin's fingers awkwardly slipped inside. A tingling sensation that occasionally decelerates, at other times accelerates that I have never experienced before; causes me to catch my breath intermittently. Soon, my body is heavy and hot, it's liberating and soaring to the highest peak I have ever felt before.

Khun Pin possessively laid over me and embraced my body that was happily climaxing. She softly expressed her love in my ear with a continuous tender voice before giving me one more gentle kiss on the lips.

“...”

"I have marked all over Anil's body..."

“...”

"Go back there, Anil can't hang out with anyone else," Pilantita said, lovingly caressing her fingers on my nose bridge.

"Khun Pin accused me ...", I said before moving up to take possession of Pilantita. "Besides Khun Pin, I have no one...."

“...”

"But for the same reason" I reached out and unfastened Khun Pin's night clothes away from her body, because it annoyed my eyes.

"This time can Anil mark Khun Pin?"

I, who had spent the entire night in a state of half-sleep and half-wakefulness, finally decided to sit up beside the bed. It was not yet dawn, and I tried to be as quiet as possible to avoid waking the person next to me, who had been crying softly for most of the night.

Yet, Pilantita was conscious almost as soon as I moved my body.

"Anil woke up so early in the morning. Sleep a little longer."

The warm body sat up and hugged me from behind. Her bare torso pressed against my bare back until a warm sensation surged in my chest.

"Anil didn't sleep well... so I'll get up and wash my face." I gently caressed the owner's upper arms as I spoke.

"Can't you stay?"

"..."

"I..." Pilantita tightened her embrace on my waist even tighter. *"I don't want Anil to go anywhere..."*

As soon as Khun Pin expressed thoughts that had evidently been concealed deep within her mind for the first time, I felt something hot and wet slitting on my back.

Pilantita cried so many times last night, I can't count...

"Khun Pin..."

"..."

"Anil will be back soon..." I turned around and hugged the warm body anxiously. "I promise..."

"..."

"I'm worried..." Pilantita glided her hand on the red bruise she marked on my cleavage early in the evening with a gloomy absent-minded gesture. "Will Anil have anyone to replace me there?"

"..."

"Anil is so charming."

“...”

"Will you remember that you have given yourself to me?"

"Of course..." I spoke up before snuggling my face down to Pilantita's white neck, irresistibly. *"For the rest of my life."*

“...”

"I have never seen anyone in sight other than Khun Pin."

I can only mention that and then passionately kissed Khun Pin's thin shoulder. The gentle sensation of her smooth torso and tears stirred up the desire to comfort her with another gentle love activity.

But in this love chapter, Pilantita reacts significantly differently every time.

A kiss that gets wet with tears...

The torso trembling while weeping...

Low moans, sobbing...

I felt an intense mixture of tenderness and longing, as if I feared my body might vanish before her eyes.

I remember Khun Pin's every move, bending down, and hugging her tightly when I realized that Pilantita had reached the peak of happiness. I reached out and gently caressed her shiny black hair and bent down to kiss the edges of her eyes soaked with tears to comfort her.

"I will soon come back..."

I whispered softly in Khun Pin's ear in a simple and short sentence...

Anticipating a PROMISE...

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"Khun Pin, please wait for me..."

SPECIAL SECTION

EPISODE 1

Windmill

[1]

In the waning hours of that afternoon... I found myself gazing at the somber, ashen plume rising from the crematorium chimney, my tears falling silently. Amidst the tumultuous commotion, where numerous unfamiliar faces moved about, all I could sense was the reassuring embrace of my aunt, enveloping me in warmth...

I only recognize that I am not fighting alone. For my Aunt, my father's youngest sister volunteered wholeheartedly to adopt me, who was orphaned without the slightest hesitation.

But in fact, the emptiness caused by the loss of important things without stands still is so empty that no one can fill.

The moment I entered Sawetawarit's embrace, I couldn't help but feel like an outsider. Despite the King's words of welcome, I couldn't shake the sensation of residing in a stranger's house.

My Aunt graciously provided me with a generously appointed, beautifully decorated private bedroom. She also granted me the chance to attend a renowned high school in the Palace district, along with her loving care, guidance in essential skills, and instruction in proper etiquette, befitting a well-mannered young lady. Aunt's generosity has been truly remarkable, and I wholeheartedly embrace every aspect of it with joy...

Yet that hollowness is still nailed inside my mind as if it were a part of me...

I've always lived with such idleness...

Until one day, I met my 'youngest aunt' who had never had a chance to meet each other before.

...Princess Anilaphat Sawetawarit

For quite some time, I had heard about the King's youngest daughter, known for her immense affection and enduring nature. I could only listen with curiosity. Nevertheless, in noble circles, sons have consistently been given precedence over daughters.

And then all doubts were easily solved on the day I had the opportunity to meet Princess Anil in person at the waterfront pavilion of the Bua Palace.

The young princess I met was as beautiful as a sculpture created by a God. The princess is taller and thinner than the average child. Her skin is smooth and delicate glow like a well-carved jade. Her stunning face is distinguished by beautiful slender brows, dark oval eyes glittering with sparkles, her high sharp nose and the light-colored full lips are beautifully wavy, as if they were drawn.

That stunning little girl is playing origami with Prik, the servant of the Front Palace with a very fun attitude.

I immediately realized instinctively that the girl was Princess Anilaphat... My youngest aunt.

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"Hello, my name is Anil. What's your name?"

A clear voice asked as soon as she saw that I was standing there staring at her for a while.

"Pilantita, my princess." I whispered and answered without self-confidence. "My nickname is Pin, my princess."

"Aa..." Her dark-eyed eyes grew brighter, as if taking a keen interest in my conversation. "Lady Pin, who is now at the Bua Palace with Aunt Pad, is that right?"

"Yes, my princess"

"Can I call you Khun Pin?"

Princess Anilaphat smiled until a deep dimple mark appeared on both cheeks, looking adorable.

"...fine, you can call me anything." I kept my head down, looking at my toes.

"How old are you?"

"Thirteen."

"I'm twelve..." her once-beautiful countenance now appeared disheveled. "May I not call you older sister because in fact, the two of us are only one year apart in age."

I laughed fondly at the person in front of me.

"Whatever, my princess."

"Then I'll just call you Khun Pin as usual." The faint smile on her face radiated such brilliance that it felt as though a second sun had just risen before my very eyes. "I prefer to be friends with Khun Pin," she said, "rather than emphasizing I'm younger."

She remains unaware... In reality, not only is she not my younger sister,

But she also holds the title of my youngest aunt herself..."

"Khun Pin, do you know Prik?" The princess stretched her hand towards a dark-skinned, curly-haired girl who had given a wide smile, waiting for a greeting from me for a long time. "Pin this is Khun Prik, and Khun Prik, this is Pin."

"Ahh..."

I stood a little confused while Prik kept her eyes rolling, knowing her overlord before making a sound to accept the conversation out grudgingly.

"Tung pow!"

"I'm sorry, I'll do it again." The young princess smiled widely. "Prik, this is Khun Pin, Khun Pin this is Prik."

"Hello, Khun Prik."

I immediately greeted Prik, fearing that Princess Anil would have more tricks again.

"No, my lady, addressing Lady Pin in such a manner can bring Prik to an equal standing."

"If Prik is concerned that you might rise to my level."

Little Princess Anil tapped her own finger on her hairline rhythmically. Her face was tense, as if thinking hard.

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"Then Prik has to learn to wash your hair every day, you know..."

Hearing that, I even had to hold back my laughter by clenching my lips tightly. Prik, on the other hand, raised her two hands to scratch her head, making it messy with a distraught expression.

Strange that the emptiness in my heart...

It's like being filled in what lacks within myself...

Even if it's considered small, but...

With the fact that now I know that...

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How good is my youngest aunt?

[2]

"Khun Pin"

The little princess was busy folding the colorful paper windmills with Prik, her sidekick.

"Yes."

I both accepted and hurriedly brought snacks like Krathong Thong to present in front of Princess Anil who did not pay attention to the snack in front of her unlike Prik... That one was staring at the Krathong Thong in the

plate, while swallowing her throat, sticking out her tongue, and licking her lips.

"Khun Pin, Which color of the windmill do you think is the most beautiful color?"

"Probably orange..."

After thoughtful reflection, I responded with an assessment of Prik's pink windmill. Not only was it distorted and uneven, but the center also bore noticeable glue stains. In contrast, Princess Anil's blue windmill resembled a sunflower in size rather than the typical straw windmill.

The orange windmill, which appeared particularly appealing, was the one Princess Anil had meticulously adorned to make it even more beautiful than all the windmills she had crafted.

"My Princess," she said, swallowing a big gulp down her throat. "You should lay down your hand from the windmill for a moment, and eat the Krathong Thong first?"

"Are you hungry, Prik?" The dark eyes still shine brightly like I've never seen before. "Then eat first."

"Is that okay?"

Prik turned to meet my uncertain gaze, and with a knowing look in their eyes, they easily grasped what I hadn't explicitly articulated.

"Anyway, I'll have to let my princess eat first."

Prik spoke up in a voice so weary and tired.

"All right," Princess Anilaphat said, "Did Aunty Pad make it, Khun Pin?"

"I made it myself." I answered the question while shyly bowing my head. "P'Koi taught me."

"Is that so?" Princess Anil smiled and said. "Then we will eat more."

"If it doesn't taste right. I must beg for forgiveness."

"Khun Pin, eat with me."

Princess Anil said and gestured to me to walk and sit across from her. I, who had never been accustomed to such a friendly welcome, stood still, not knowing what better to do.

"If you sit down and eat, Krathong Thong would be even more delicious."

A smile graced my lips upon hearing Princess Anilaphat's words. Earlier, I had heard rumors that despite her mischievous nature, the youngest daughter of the Sawetawarit Palace had a warm and amiable demeanor, speaking sweetly to everyone, even her own servants.

"With such a statement, I wouldn't dare to refuse."

I finally sat down opposite Princess Anilaphat. It was evident that Princess Anil's invitations were not merely a matter of courtesy. At that moment, she took several Krathong Thong^[17] for me and Prik, each with a very generous attitude.

I smiled and discreetly savored my own Krathong Thong. Prik, on the other hand, seemed to be devouring hers with gusto, taking large bites one after another. I couldn't help but raise my index finger in an attempt to signal her to slow down, especially since we were right in front of Princess Anilaphat.

"Eat slowly, Prik." Princess Anil, who promptly caught on to my concern, quickly cautioned Prik with the intention of pleasing me. "You might choke."

"Eh, ai aa ee."

Prik answered the order even though she was still chewing full Krathong Thong in her mouth.

After the snack, Princess Anil became obsessed with making her own orange windmill. It didn't take long for the orange windmill to be completed. Princess Anil smiled proudly before blowing hard on the windmill.

Seeing that the orange windmill was spinning as hard and fast as she had predicted, Princess Anilaphat handed it in front of me.

"I give this."

"Hmmm, for me?"

"Yes."

Princess Anilaphat said as she moved her face closer to me. Her beautiful face up close was more beautiful than I had ever seen. Moreover, those pairs of eyes are more dazzling and beautiful, they shone like a field of stars in the dark night.

"But I didn't play with the windmill." I argued as a spoiled person.

"You don't play, you just keep it." Princess Anil spread a sweet smile to me, "Just keep it, and I'll be so happy."

"..."

"If you accept my windmill, you're willing to be my friend."

Princess Anil said while holding the windmill high for me, making me have to look up...

The bright orange color of the colored paper is folded in a circle in the center that looks like a swirling flower. The contrast with the bright blue of the cloudless sky looks beautiful like a simple painting of a happy painter.

"Thank you, Your Highness."

I extended my hand toward that orange paper windmill, experiencing a range of emotions I had never anticipated.

"If I ask Khun Pin for something..."

"..."

"Are you able to give it to me?"

Princess Anil's eyes gleamed so brightly that I refrained from speaking any unnecessary words.

"If I can do it... I will do it."

I raised my eyes and looked at the smiling face of the person in front of me fondly.

"That's good," Princess Anil smiled at the corner of her lips.

"Why is it so good?"

"It's good that I believe Khun Pin can do it, as my only request is for Khun Pin not to use royal vocabulary when you speak to me when we're alone, that's enough."

"How's that? I don't understand."

"I want you to have a conversation with me like a friend. No complicated royal vocabulary."

Princess Anilaphat is talking about *'friends'*.

A *'friend'* I never had.

"Why?"

"Because friends don't use royal vocabulary..."

"..."

"And now Khun Pin is my best friend..."

[3]

I couldn't help but voice my frustration when I noticed the newly acquired injury on Anil's previously pristine knee, now a vivid shade of red. "Why does Anil continue to be so mischievous? How many times have I cautioned you against climbing trees?"

"Last time Khun Pin forbade me to climb the Ratchaphruek tree, I obeyed every word."

"I'm referring to all the tall trees, not just the Ratchapruk trees," I remarked with a pensive frown upon hearing Princess Anilaphat's explanation. "Don't try to assert that this time your fall from the Tropical Almond tree wasn't your fault, Anil."

"Is that so?" Anil chuckled and inquired, "I didn't mean for Khun Pin to get upset, did I?"

"..."

"Please..."

It felt as though my disheveled expression couldn't help but break into a smile upon seeing the radiance in Anil's deep, dark eyes. And that

smile also revealed my cherished deep dimple on her cheek.

Anyway, I'm going to lose to Anil day and night...

"I'm not angry, I'm not angry." I avoided the eyes of the tall person by pretending to be focused on the wound on Anil's knee with a keen gesture, as if I was a specialist doctor. "The next time Anil falls again; I promise not to care at all."

"It means if I get hurt." Anil smiled slyly, "Wouldn't Khun Pin look after me, right?"

“Right.”

I knew very well my solemn tone, but I kept my head down. I want to avoid eye contact with someone who keeps smiling.

"But Anil knows," she used her name as she often likes to do when she wishes to beg. "That Khun Pin wouldn't be that mean."

"Let's wait and see." I raised my head up arrogantly when I saw with my eyes how stubborn Anil was, "Whether Anil can beat me or not..."

[4]

What a shame that even after I spoke what could be seen as firm instructions to Anil, she persisted in her relentless tree-climbing endeavors. It seemed like she had to visit the King's favorite tree almost every time, solely to learn about it.

It might not be regarded as unusual for Anil to continue being mischievous.

However, it appears highly improbable that I will genuinely ignore Anil again, despite my choice of words suggesting otherwise.

...I couldn't bear to see my youngest aunt endure the pain every time she fell from the big tree.

"This time it seems you're in significant pain," I expressed concern, "to the point of bleeding."

I asked when I knew Princess Anil had fallen from a large tree that was blooming beautifully at the Bua Palace.

"Because the Bungor flower is so beautiful." Princess Anil said with a cute smile. "So, I wanted to climb to pick a big branch of flowers as a gift for Khun Pin."

"Why do you have to give me a gift?"

Anil moves her face closer before answering in a clear voice.

"Should I have a reason?"

"...Yes."

"Anil just feels that Khun Pin suits pink and purple." The dark eyes shimmer. "Don't you like flowers? I heard you said this evening that you'd like to have a non-fallen Bangor flower to have in a vase."

I raised an eyebrow high when I heard Anil's innocent words and looked at the huge bouquet of flowers filled with pinkish-purple flowers and dimly white.

"If it's what causes Anil to get hurt, I don't like it."

For the first time, I said something to indulge in every word without thinking about it first. The next thing I knew, I saw Anil's pure face glowing red, and my face was burning hot for no reason.

"However, I still want Khun Pin to like this bouquet of flowers," Anil smiled softly, "Since I'm already hurt, can't you just like it?"

"..."

"I just want to see Khun Pin smile."

Unknowingly, when I heard Anil's request, some kind of warmth suddenly flashed into my heart like the hot lava of a volcano that quickly encroached upon the cracked land.

Excluding my aunt, Anil was the first person to genuinely care about me in a way I had never anticipated.

"Then this Bungor bouquet will be considered an exception..." I smiled softly at the person in front of me, "I will put it in a vase in the bedroom and look at it morning till night."

Anil heard this and gave me a sweet smile before barely shutting down when she heard the next sentence.

"But..."

"Yes?"

"Anil doesn't have to climb a tree to get flowers for me ever again."

"...Why?"

The little girl tilted her neck and pretended to be curious, forcing me to say the next sentence again.

"Because I don't want Anil to get hurt anymore..."

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"I'm worried"

SPECIAL SECTION

EPISODE 2

Touchy... Neglected

[1]

Today's late afternoon, the weather is very hot and sweltering. However, P'Koi and I still choose to sit and strip the Maprang to prepare Maprang in syrup and ice for aunty at the Bua Palace terrace. Realizing again, I found that I was looking for someone almost all the time, for this time someone '*and the gang*' tend to wander around the waterfront pavilion by some coincidence or intentionally depending on the selection of quote words.

But today I don't see that couple, not even a shadow...

"Today I heard that Princess Dararai, the younger sister, has come to visit Princess Alisa at the Front Palace." P'Koi suddenly blurted out without a clue. "She came with her only daughter named Chao Euangfah, my lady."

"I see." I pretended to answer P'Koi's words like that with no interest in interfering with the matter of the Front Palace master at all, "Why did P'Koi suddenly mention this?"

"I saw you looking for Princess Anil."

"Is my expression so obvious?" I've raised my eyebrows a little doubtful at my own posture.

"Yes, my lady." P'Koi said, smiling like a kind person, "Your neck looks so long now."

My face suddenly heated up, but I clenched my lips tightly and pretended to see another way, without daring to make direct eye contact with P' Koi as usual.

"Is Princess Anil required to stay and greet her relatives, which is why she's not frolicking around the Bua Palace as she typically does?"

I decided to ask P' Koi directly until it was in the minute of curiosity, slashing, and overcoming the arrogance and the attitude.

"Yes, my lady." said P'Koi while her hands were stripping Maprang non-stop. "Chao Euangfah is Princess Anil's closest cousin. Princess Dararai was also pleased with Princess Anil; her youngest niece. Every time she comes, she only calls for Princess Anil."

"It seems like everyone is favoring Princess Anil, P'Koi."

I popped up an unknown smile when I thought of the sun-rayed smile of my youngest aunty, Princess Anil.

"Yes, Princess Anil is cheerful and bright, the people who see her, love her."

I smiled at P'Koi's words before turning my head and eyes, stripping Maprang diligently.

"Chao Euangfah... Is she a grown woman?"

I asked Koi after we had been silent for a while.

"She's approaching her full womanhood. She's beautiful especially when she is dressed in Lanna clothes, her white skin, dazzling delicate face and her courteous manners."

I nodded in response to P'Koi's words with absent-mindedness, not paying much attention.

"Lady Pin is also stunning, your mannerisms are neat and cute as well."

"Is that so?"

I pretended to raise my eyebrows knowingly. P'Koi was afraid that I would be disappointed, so she quickly praised me nominally.

"Yes, my lady." P'Koi nodded, afraid that I wouldn't believe it.

"Between Chao Euangfah and Princess Anil, who is more beautiful?"

"Well, it's not easy to make a comparison with Princess Anil. She possesses a unique kind of beauty. Princess Anil is akin to a living sculpture, with her tall, graceful stature, flawless skin, and a face that

resembles a work of art. The only drawback is her mischievous nature, my lady."

"It seems that P'Koi's two beautiful people are walking side by side over there."

It would be difficult to claim that I saw both by chance, as the tip of my eye seemed to be looking at the path that Anil often used when she came to the Bua Palace.

After seeing with my own eyes that the girl P'Koi was talking about which is now walking side by side with Princess Anil in a close, intimate gesture as if they were siblings from the same parents.

I was stunned for a moment...

The sight in front of me is as beautiful as a painting by a master painter.

Pretty... But it was annoying.

Chao Euangfah is a slender young woman. Even today, she's not dressed in the Lanna style as P'Koi has praised but the beauty under the sweet contemporary long dress also made her look outstanding. I frowned my brows as soon as I saw that tall person walking beside her scattered sweet smiles to me from afar.

Sh!

Who wants to smile back at Anil?

[2]

"Are you stripping Maprang, Khun Pin, Mae Koi?" Anil greets with a bright voice as soon as she stepped onto the terrace of the Bua Palace. "Is there anything for me and Khun Euang to eat?"

I looked after the owner of the voice before looking towards the woman who was standing side by side. The closer I looked, the more I saw how beautiful Chao Euangfah's face was, more than I had ever guessed. Her small face looks soothing. Her big light brown eyes are glittering, and her light-colored full lips are well matched with the small dazzling nose.

"There's some flowered shape dumplings, Your Highness." P'Koi quickly responded to Anil with the most agitated attitude. "I will offer them to you now, Your Highness."

"You don't have to hurry up like that, P'Koi," I interrupted in a cold and dull voice that even I could feel. "For you might fall down and injure your head."

"Yes, ma'am."

P'Koi also turned to answer me before rushing into the Bua Palace's main kitchen.

"Anil would like to introduce Khun Euang to you, Khun Pin."

Anil leaned her face forward and widened her eyes imperiously.

Nevertheless, for some inexplicable reason, it wasn't evident that my affection for Anil was not as strong as it used to be.

"Yes..." I answered shortly.

"This is Khun Euang or Chao Euangfah, my mother's niece." Anil smiled as she gestured towards Chao Euangfah. "This is Pilita, Auntie Pad's niece, Khun Euang."

"Hello, chao."

Not just her sweet face, but Chao Euangfah's voice is sweeter.

"Hello, Khun Euang."

I raised my hand in a greeting, assuming that Chao Euangfah must have been older, as her physique now appeared more mature compared to Anil and me, who still seemed to be hovering on the cusp between childhood and adolescence.

"I brought Khun Euang to the Bua Palace because I boasted quite a bit about how much I prefer the snacks here."

Anil chattered, but I didn't listen to it like I used to.

"Really?" my tone sounded extremely numb.

"Yes." The tall girl still smiled widely, unconsciously showing off her dimples.

"Indeed, chao. Sister said endlessly that Bua Palace's snack is tasty."

"It's true, my lady."

Prik answered firmly. I was surprised that I didn't even notice Prik at all.

"If it tastes good, eat it a lot."

"..."

"It's a shame that I didn't make a lot." I spoke up as soon as I saw that beautiful face with a disturbing smile. "I wasn't aware Princess Anil was coming... and I had no idea there would be guests."

"However, I have to come to the Bua Palace every day, anyway."

"Where have you been?" I'm pretending to be asking for ransom.

"I took you for a walk around the palace."

Princess Anil said then smiled, not knowing how clouded my emotions were. P'Koi walked over with a tray of purple flower shaped dumplings at that moment. Prik rushed in to help as she licked her lips with her tongue until I had to look with forbiddingly at her with my surly eyes.

"I'm sorry." Prik retracted her neck and gave a teasing smile. "I can't help but be hungry."

"It looks so delicious, I want to eat it right now, too, Khun Pin."

"That's right, chao." Chao Euangfah said while smiling sweetly to Anil, "Did Khun Pin make all this?"

"P'Koi and I helped each other on this." I raised my head up arrogantly, "Please eat a lot, Khun Euang."

"Yes, chao."

Chao Euangfah's melodious voice effortlessly captivates the audience, almost lulling me into a trance. I would have succumbed to it if it weren't for the distracting sight in front of me, which made me furrow my brow first.

The image of Chao Aung Fah uses a small fork to carefully divide the flower shaped dumplings into four parts before forking one of the four

parts, blowing gently and then feeding it to the lips of Anil with a gentle gesture that I had to look not to be out of my sight.

The image of Chao Euangfah in the sky with a small fork divides the purple bouquet into four parts, then dips one of the four parts up and blows it gently and feeds it to Anil's lips with a gentle honesty that I have to follow without losing sight of it.

"It's hot, chao... sister. Eat slowly, chao."

[3]

Chao Euangfah and Anil had been back at the Front Palace for quite some time now, yet my listless emotions still clung to my thoughts and surroundings, much like the humidity that saturates the air on a hot, muggy day before a rain shower.

Fortunately, I've been back alone in my bedroom for a while.

Unfortunately, I don't know how to deal with my own gloomy thoughts.

I can't quite discern why I'm not as joyful as I once was when I watched Anil enjoy my dessert with the same delight as in the past.

Moreover, I was so irritated when I saw Anil smile at Chao Euangfah as if the whole world was just only Anil and Chao Euangfah; the two of them.

I can only pick up my journal and let out some feelings. I regard the book as a close friend who listens unconditionally to my good and bad stories.

12th March

I never really like it when Anil is constantly surrounded by so many people. Anil smiled at everyone, and Anil's smile was so cute and bright that I wanted to keep it with me.

But how can I do that?

I don't like it when Anil is only interested in Lady Euangfah, her elder cousin from Chiang Mai, both about taking a walk around the palace

and inviting her to have snacks at the Bua Palace. Doesn't Anil know that the Bua Palace's snack and dessert are only offered to Auntie and Anil?

There's no more for 'others'.

I know that Anil is cute...

But can Anil be cute with me only?

I could only write that and close my notebook, not knowing what better to do.

Until now, I haven't blamed Princess Anil for my problems.

For I blame only my unmanageable emotions alone.

[4]

At school, the person who always stayed beside Anil wasn't the Prik, who I was familiar with. Instead, it was Alisara, the second daughter of the Grand ambassador of the United Kingdom, who had a dazzling face and was just as sought after by the boys in the opposite school as the popular star.

Where there's Anil... Khun On often appears by her side as if they were shadows of each other.

If you're asking if I'm used to it... I'm used to it.

If you're asking if I like it... I don't like it.

I even dislike her especially during this period. Every noon, I go to the cafeteria for lunch. I always encounter Anil who is surrounded by a lot of people but the only person who was next to Anil's body was still Khun On.

Anil's companions frequently opted to sit at the table beneath the expansive canopy of a raindrop tree that provided ample shade. In the company of her friends, Anil transformed into a less talkative presence, assuming the role of a keen listener who maintained a radiant smile. However, she still stood out prominently amidst the group, akin to a second sun surrounded by a constellation of varying-sized satellites.

While my best friend Wilaiporn and I often choose a table in the nooks and crannies of buildings where the sun barely shines, I always

choose a seat on the side that can see Anil. Many times, I was surprised at my behavior, but in the end, I let everything flow to my heart's desire.

I always act unkind every time Anil notices me and chooses to raise her hand to say hello while sending me a big smile. Because at such times, Anil's friends, including Khun On, always looked at me in surprise. So, I responded to Anil's greeting by pretending not to see it.

But even if I pretend to ignore Anil...

I don't wish Anil would go back with Khun On every evening for a week like this.

I'm always waiting for Anil to come and wait for 'Chao Kae' and come back to the palace together someday. I feel very displeased to see Anil inviting Khun On to join the royal car back for several days continuously. I endured from Monday to Friday, but Anil still chooses to go back with Khun On every day like that...

However, every afternoon, Anil still came to the Bua Palace every day as usual.

Except today... Which is a weekend.

As far as I looked, I couldn't even see a shadow, only to see Prik wandering around looking for snacks as usual. I could only ask about Anil. Prik then gave the news that Anil was attending Khun On's birthday party and would stay at Khun On's house for one night.

I listened to Prik's words with a wavering emotion. But instead, my expression was as calm as usual. So, it can't be helped that tonight I inevitably choose to 'converse' with my journal again.

30th April

I tried... but in the end, my tears kept flowing. I can only tell myself that Anil was not 'stuck' to her new friend Khun On, the ambassador's daughter, and forgot about me. However, when I found out that Anil chose to go to Khun On's birthday party at Sawasdiaphat Mansion instead of visiting me at the palace on the weekend like you always do. I couldn't help but cry in my room.

Even as I was writing this diary right now, I still sobbed non-stop.

Will Anil know that today I've been looking for you since late afternoon till evening...

I don't even see your shadow.

I'm really angry at you!

I shut my journal and keep asking myself again and again.

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Why is everything related to Anil so important?

SPECIAL SECTION

EPISODE 3

Love Letter

[1]

Every morning before class, I consistently observe Anil standing in the corner of the expansive multipurpose hall stage, encircled by a crowd of admirers. Anil is always vividly visible to my eyes, as though the radiant morning sun has specifically chosen to illuminate her bright smile. Such a partial viewpoint is far from typical, yet I've never contemplated seeking answers for it.

...For what reason are my eyes always drawn to see only Anil?

"Princess Anil is so cute, isn't she, Lady Pin." Suddenly, Wilaiporn, the daughter of a wealthy baron and roommate, brought her face to whisper in my ear one morning that I had been secretly looking at Anil's tall figure for quite some time. "When she's dressed casually in the palace, wouldn't she be cuter than this?"

"Well..." I moved slightly away from Wilaiporn before answering her question in a soft voice that I could hardly hear myself. Thinking back to Anil dressing in a long, flowing white dress at the banquet to welcome the arrival of the Grand Prince a month ago. *"Pretty cute..."*

"That's what I thought! Next time, I'd like to find an opportunity to visit you at the palace, in case I have a chance to see her in any other clothes besides her school uniform." Wilaiporn smiled that I could only resent my friend. "Are you sick, Lady Pin? Look, you're blushing."

I inadvertently brushed the back of my hand against my cheek. Upon hearing Wilaiporn's remark and realizing that my face was burning like a fever, I concluded that I was physically well, not sick. The mystery lay in understanding the cause behind this flushed complexion and the accompanying rapid heartbeat.

"Maybe heat sickness. Let's get ready to line up, Wilai, it's almost time."

I just cut out the ridiculous conversation then glanced at the corner where Anil was standing. I saw that the tall, little girl looked back to me as well. Anil raised her hand to her shoulder as a greeting and gave a sweet smile showing off the deep dimples on both cheeks. Without any apparent reason, I responded to Anil's smile by curling my lips into a smirk and shooting her a frosty glare. Meanwhile, Wilaiporn remained engrossed in her persistent skepticism regarding the same narrative.

"There! Lady Pin's cheeks are so red. It's even redder this time than it was a moment ago."

"Let's just say I'm fine. Wilai, don't be too irritating."

[2]

"Here Lady Pin, someone asked me to give you a letter."

One afternoon before the English class started, Wilaiporn then walked over and handed the light brown envelope with a cautious and suspicious expression. I looked at the letter of unknown origin full of suspicion. There is no sign of reaching out to receive it from Wilaiporn.

"Whose letter? Can I not accept it?"

"You can't, Lady Pin. This is my brother's letter. He gave it to me."

Unfortunately, our desks are next to each other, it's hard for me to easily avoid conversations with my close friends. For even if I pretended to focus on the blackboard in front of me, I didn't know what else I could do. Wilaiporn continued the conversation between us by placing the letter arrogantly on my desk.

"A letter from your brother, why do I have to accept it. I don't even know him."

"Because you don't know him, that's why P'Winai had to write a letter to introduce himself."

"Why does he have to know me? He's not even my relative."

My face is probably very messy, not satisfied with the behavior of my best friend who is different every day. For such a long time, I became close friends with Wilaiporn because she is a good-natured person, unlike me who speaks less. In the past, Wilaiporn had never interfered with me like this before. Therefore, I couldn't help thinking that I wouldn't be able to catch up with this behavior of my friend.

"Even though he's not a relative, but he's the brother of your dear friend, Lady Pin, can't it be for my sake? Please get to know him, if you don't like him, just simply forget about it, that's it."

"No is no. Don't talk to me about it again, Wilai. Or I'll be really angry."

It was my luck that as soon as I finished the sentence Teacher Samorn walked into the classroom like a bell that saved my life at the last moment. I used my fingertips to knock the letter away from my desk. While Wilaiporn had a dejected expression like someone who was feeling extremely disappointed.

No matter what... It seemed like I had to carry the frustration of that letter throughout the afternoon until it was time for P'Perm to drive the Chao Kae to pick me up. As soon as he opened the car door, I found Anil already reclining and smiling in the car.

"Why are you sitting in Chao Kae today? Why don't you go back to the royal car with Khun On every day like last week?"

When I questioned Anil for the first time, my tone was drenched in sarcasm, and I couldn't help myself.

"Last week I had to do that because I had to, because the car that came to pick Khun On up that evening had a problem, so I had to ask uncle Plai to drop her off. Actually, Anil wants to go to Chao Kae with Khun Pin every day."

"Anil doesn't have to explain." I'm surprised that I'm still so fussy with Anil. "Anyway, I'm the one who waits for Anil day and night."

"That's not true." The little lady pretended to move to sit closer and smiled sweetly to me. "At least today I've been waiting for Khun Pin for a long time."

“Sh...”

I couldn't contain my frustration as I cast an irritated glance at the person now seated beside me. P'Perm, following his duty, began making his way to the car, seemingly indifferent to the ongoing conversation between Anil and me. During the journey back to the Sawetawarit Palace, I stared out of the window, aware that the young princess was fixated on my face, her expression unreadable.

I'm sure because I can see her beautiful face from the edge of my eye.

Moreover, she tried to glide her fingertips on my fingertips in the same playful manner as usual.

However, the time wasted in the car passed very quickly, as if the school fence was next to the fence of the Sawetawarit Palace. Soon, P'Perm brought us both to the Front Palace, but Anil waved to tell him to move on quickly without much thought.

“Take me to the Bua Palace.”

Anil spoke these words with a sly smile, a sight I had become accustomed to. Unintentionally, I crossed my arms and shot a frosty glare at the young princess. Despite feeling content that my farewell with Anil was being prolonged, I was aware that if Anil allowed P'Perm to escort her to the Bua Palace, she would linger until evening, as she always did in the past.

"Can Khun Pin teach me homework today?"

The small face was filled with a smile when she spoke in a sweet pleading tone. I couldn't help but smile. I forgot that I was playing the role of neglecting the person in front of me.

"What subject?"

"Any subject."

"...Anil !"

"What subject should it be?" Anil tapped her index finger against her temples with a smile on her face. "Mathematics is fine."

"Is Anil bullying me?"

I spoke up as I walked with my school bag and led Anil to the waterfront pavilion of the Bua Palace. Meanwhile, P’Koi rushed to bring the accompanying food to Anil as soon as she saw Princess Anil came down from Chao Kae knowingly.

"Thank you, Mae Koi."

Anil looked at the rice crackers on the plate for a moment and then thanked P’Koi in a cute, friendly manner as always.

Anil is always like this...

In other words, it's akin to freely sharing her own charms with everyone, much like raindrops saturating parched soil during the dry season.

I both love... and don't love this qualification of Anil.

"What Math question do smart people want unskilled people to teach?"

I raised both hands to cross my arms while we were both alone at the waterfront pavilion. The young princess did not show any fear or coldness towards me with a smile on her face. While she took out a notebook from her school bag before extending her palm in front of me, as if she wanted to ask for something.

"Can I borrow a pencil? I forgot to bring it from my school desk."

"Then look in my school bag, Anil. There's a stationery bag."

I said, handing the young lady a thick school bag. Unfortunately, Anil is too naughty to look for just a bag of stationery like I expect.

"There's an envelope in your bag."

Anil raised a well-known brown envelope before me, and in that instant, it felt as though scalding oil had been poured over me from head to toe. My only thought was that Wilaiporn had sneakily placed her brother's letter into my school bag without seeking my permission.

"Yes..."

I could only answer Anil shortly then remained silent like a dumb lunatic.

"What letter?" This time, Anil's dark eyes exuded an intense gleam unlike anything I had ever witnessed. "It looks like a love letter..."

"..."

Hearing that, I was stunned. It took me a long time to say the next sentence.

"Anil spoke as if you had often received love letters."

"I've received some," Anil said, with her eyes twinkling as if she was pleading. "But that doesn't mean I'm happy about it."

"Who did you get them from?"

I inquired with a serious demeanor, my heart contracting at the innocent response from the individual before me. I couldn't explain why I felt so agitated and uneasy.

"From seniors, juniors, friends, and some boys from different schools."

"..."

"I read it once and then tore it up. I didn't hold onto it to vex myself,"

"..."

"But Khun Pin kept this letter in your school bag like a precious item."

My heart suddenly ached when I saw that Anil's eyes were gloomy beyond what I could bear.

"I didn't keep it; someone placed it in my bag against my will."

"Khun Pin read it and didn't like it which is why you don't want to keep it?"

"No... I don't even care to open it."

"Then can I read it to Khun Pin?"

"What Anil wants to do, it's Anil's business. I didn't see that the letter was important."

"So, will Khun Pin allow me to read it?"

"Yes..."

I responded to that, not seeing that the text of the letter was anything more important than Anil's wishes. If Anil wills anything, isn't it my job to meet her needs?

But why do I think that way... I can't give myself an answer.

Anil fixed her eyes on the brown envelope in front of her... For so long that I unconsciously held my breath.

"I don't dare to read it," Anil said, pushing the letter in front of me with her fingers before looking at each other with a twinkle in her eye. "Because this is Khun Pin's personal business."

"Then tear it off?" I picked up that letter and carelessly tore it into pieces in front of the little princess. "What the content of this letter is, I don't want to know."

"You're right, Khun Pin."

Seeing that Anil smiled, I was so glad that my actions were the right thing to do.

"I have the right to choose to read only the letters I want to read."

[3]

"Here's another letter, Lady Pin."

Wilaiporn continued to play the role of matchmaker by handing me a brown envelope in the cafeteria during lunch break, but this time I learned to refuse right away by taking a letter from my best friend's hand and tearing it into quarters before her eyes.

Wilaiporn widened her eyes in shock when she saw my action in what might have been called 'rude', but I angrily gave my friend a thumbs up before returning to collect the wreckage and lay it in front of Wilaiporn with a very aggressive attitude.

"Lady Pin, Lady Pin, how can you be so mean."

"If I don't do this, you will sneak the letter into my school bag without telling me again."

I keep pouting in offense.

"Oh... Lady Pin, I'm really sorry about that," Walaiporn said, reaching out and shaking my arm like a little girl begging her mother for sweets. "I wasn't thinking much. I just want my brother to fulfill his first love."

"I don't like to be screwed, teased, or forced by anyone like this." I clenched my hands tightly when I heard Wilaiporn's answer. "And I don't like getting to know people I've never seen before. Do you understand me?"

"Now I understand, Lady Pin. Don't be angry with me. I will tell my brother to stop approaching you this way. Can we reconcile?"

"I won't reconcile with you until you promise me not to do this again."

I raised both hands and crossed my chest arrogantly. Even though I became weak when I saw the guilty look on my dear friend Wilaiporn's face.

"I promise..." at this time, Wilaiporn held out her pinky finger in front of me with a daring look. "Let's reconcile."

"Okay."

I reached out my little finger to touch my friend's little finger with a superficial touch. Surprisingly, in between, there was a buzz from a group of juniors sitting at the table behind me. After I followed their eyes, I found everyone staring at a small stunning girl who walked over to hand a letter to Anil who's sitting at a long table on the other side of the cafeteria. Anil is surrounded by many friends, including Khun On.

The young princess, although she raised her high eyebrows in surprise, was so kind that she reached out to receive the letter herself and sent a light smile to that brave girl.

Wilaiporn and I suddenly forgot about our feud temporarily when we both stared at the events in front of us with interest. However, under my calm gesture I found that my heart was falling to my toes, my heart seemed emptier than it ever had before.

Hearing the conversation after the brave girl with a stunning face walked back to her table...

My ears suddenly clenched like many rocks tied to them.

"So explicit, Pailin."

"You're absolutely correct... having the courage to approach and deliver the letter to Princess Anil while all her friends are present is truly remarkable."

"Handing it to her now is a good idea," someone declared in a self-assured tone, though it was meant to be Pailin's voice. "I've heard people say that the princess is quite gracious. Besides, she wouldn't want to embarrass anyone by declining the letter in front of so many witnesses."

Huh...

It seems that this little girl isn't as innocent as she looks. I accidentally shook my shoulder before laughing in my throat until Wilaiporn had to ask.

"What's wrong, Lady Pin?" She whispered, "But are we really reconciled?"

"You can say so."

"..."

"But if you do it again, I'll really stop befriending you."

[4]

"Does Anil have anything to tell me today?"

I took advantage of the opportunity when Anil begged me to teach homework at the waterfront pavilion of the Bua Palace, asking about what I had been thinking about all this afternoon and I could hardly concentrate on studying as usual.

"There are lots of things." Anil continued to smile as usual, "Either Anil won the race today in Physical Education or when teacher Wimol scolded Pimonpan who slept in Science class. Or..."

"I'd rather hear about the cafeteria..."

I raised both hands to cross my chest before interrupting Anil's conversation in a hoarse, stern tone.

"Hmm..."

This time, Anil tilted her neck suspiciously. Her dark oval eyes grew slightly and looked adorable.

"Khun Pin, want to know what Anil has for lunch?"

"No..." my eyebrows furrowed as soon as I realized that the other party had started playing with her words. "I want to know about the letter."

My conversation finally got to the point.

"Oh..." Anil nodded easily before starting to search for a sweet pink envelope in her own slim school bag. "Khun Pin, are you referring to this letter that the girl in room two brought to the cafeteria during lunch time?"

"Hmm," my eyebrows frowned even more, "How many love letters did Anil get per day?"

"Today I got two." Anil replied before swallowing saliva down her throat right in front of my eyes. "Some days I don't."

"Really?"

I cross my chest even tighter.

"Yes."

I don't know why, when I heard the innocent answer of the person in front of me, I was doubly frustrated.

"Have you read the two letters?"

"Not yet, I don't have time." the little princess still looked at me with innocent eyes, "Does Khun Pin want to read them?"

Now it was me, who was swallowing a big swallow, with difficulty with some of the two sides in the head.

"Will Anil allow me to read? Don't you think it's personal?"

I float a trial balloon.

"I have nothing personal with Khun Pin." The little girl smiled. "There is nothing about me that Khun Pin cannot know."

"So, can I read I's letter?"

"Of course."

Anil handed me a pink envelope as a good girl. I skewed my lips spontaneously, not pretending, but my hand reached out so quickly to receive the letter.

I was quite hesitant about whether to read the letter in my hand or not. Curiosity finally conquers everything, so this beautiful pink paper was unfolded and read by me, who had nothing to do with the letter.

'Dear Your Highness,

First of all, I would like to ask for your pardon for writing such a letter to disturb Your Highness. For the fact that I am not an expert in royal vocabulary, if there are any mistakes, I would ask Your Highness to forgive me .

In fact, the contents of this letter are nothing more than me wishing to inform Your Highness of how 'important' Your Highness is to me. Your Highness has inspired me to come to school every day without getting bored, because I only wanted to see Your Highness's beautiful and smiling face. Any day that I saw, I'd go home and have a good night's sleep every time.

In my view, Your Highness is so graceful that no one can compare, so beautiful that it makes my heartbeat faster. Your Highness is so beautiful that sometimes I dream about it. Apart from that, Your Highness is very hospitable, and everyone has the opportunity to see Your Highness's cute smile and dimples. Moreover, there are also neat mannerisms that are equally affectionate to everyone.

To be honest, I didn't want anything from writing this letter, but if Your Highness had some kindness to me, it would be very kind to just send a smile to each other.

Love

Pailin'

I read the contents of that letter repeatedly before folding it in quarters, following the old track. I can't help but sigh. When I found out that

the essence of the letter was not different from my own feelings towards Anil.

However, that doesn't mean I have to write Anil a love letter...

Not even hope about it.

.

.

.

There's absolutely no way I'm going to do that...

Dream on...

SPECIAL SECTION

EPISODE 4

Between That

[1]

'When winter comes, the image of people kissing here becomes helplessly clear. A couple's kiss... or maybe not a couple in a nook and cranny of an old building, in a crowded park, in the corner of the library at the back is lined with solemn and elusive academic texts.

As if the people here were kissing each other openly everywhere, until Anil couldn't help but question it...

How sweet is the taste of the kiss...?

What about Khun Pin...? Have you ever wanted to know like Anil?

What does that kiss taste like?'

.

.

'I never wanted to know what the kiss tasted like and expected that from now or even forever I would not wish to be aware. Should you be obsessed with textbooks now? I agreed that Anil should finish her studies as soon as possible.

I wish Anil could come back here.

where I wait for Anil every day.'

"Annie" Emma's deep voice woke me up from my trance. "You can't stop and stare every time you see people kissing."

"Why not?"

"It's rude," Emma shrugged her shoulders a little, as she always does, "you are turning the most ordinary things into weird things, that's why."

"Is that so?" This time it's me who shook my shoulders a little. "I didn't mean to... I just like to look, so I just stopped and looked."

"If you're kissing, you won't like it, right?"

"That's right."

"But..."

It seems that Emma is anxiously waiting for the sentence after the word "but".

"No, but." I responded to Emma's conversation with a chuckle. "I'm just thinking about whether I will have a chance to kiss."

"You will, Annie." This time it was Emma who burst into laughter. "You're in demand in this market."

"In demand?" I laughed when I heard this sentence from Emma's mouth. "You say it like I'm a product."

"You look above and beyond." Emma shrugged again, "Do you know the high state?"

"Mmm."

"You can enchant people."

"That's ridiculous, Em," I countered Emma's vague sentence with laughter before quickly changing the topic "Where are we going this afternoon?"

"I want to go to the old school library."

"Why?"

"I remember there were books that I can't find in the university library."

Emma and I moved to different universities to study in higher education. I study in the Faculty of Architecture in a famous university. While Emma studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts at a prominent university in this field. Emma's painting skill has its own style and is outstanding. I'm one of the people who can sit and look at Emma's pencil sketches for days without getting bored.

"Well, it's good to go to the library." I nodded thoughtfully in agreement with Emma. "Every time I go there, I get my favorite chair."

"Of course," Emma shrugged again, "Miss Helen, the librarian who is really fond of you more than others."

"Like what?" I chuckled, laughing. "You keep talking."

This time, both Emma and I burst into laughter at the same time. We walked through the light snow without haste. Even the streets of London are as gloomy and sober as London. Yet I feel that the grey moment of the beautiful building is tinged with the snowy white.

"Em..."

At some point, I called out to my dear friends, attempting to match the grace of their elegant strides.

"Hmm."

"Won't you try drawing a picture that gives the feeling of falling snow?"

"What do you mean, Annie?" It worked... When Emma stopped walking and turned to look contemplating at me, it was as if at this moment there was a question mark in the center of her sea-green eyes. "Snowing pictures or pictures that give the impression that it's snowing."

"Anything," I smiled. "Anything that when you look at it, you immediately feel the snow."

"What do you feel when you see snow, Annie?"

Emma began walking in the direction that led her to the high school library as determined as ever.

"How do I feel?" I thought, "as my thoughts can branch out in many ways."

"..."

"When I first laid eyes on the snow, being from a tropical climate, I found it incredibly beautiful and unfamiliar. It always excited me to see it, but as the snow melted on my clothes and left me increasingly damp, I

started to feel less enchanted. It began to feel like an unfamiliar presence to me."

"Hmm."

"Snow, in my opinion, is drier than reality." I chuckled. "You don't understand it, Em."

"I probably don't really understand."

"Let's just say I didn't think snow could resemble rain this much," I shrugged our small shoulders, mimicking the gestures Emma often made. "And let's just say I love seeing snow when everything is covered in white, but I don't like that it's 'wet' when I touch it, which is more than I thought."

"That sounds pretty hard to understand," Emma mumbled.

"I think so, too, Em." I nodded sheepishly.

"Honestly, I'm not very familiar with snow. Well, it doesn't snow much in London. And some years there's no snow at all, as you've seen all these years of being here, Annie." Emma's face at this time was extremely messed up. "Let's just say that someday I'll try to draw something like that."

"..."

"The kind of picture that will make you feel when it's snowing..."

[2]

"Hello."

Miss Helen, our high school library librarian, greeted me with a very smiling face. She is an English lady whom I agreeingly regard as an example of someone who deserves the word 'Madame'. Miss Helen's manners were so methodical that she couldn't find any complaints.

"It's been a long time since I saw you."

"Yes."

Emma answered Miss Helen briefly as I could only smile at her.

"I've already set up seats for you." Miss Helen smiled with a friendly expression, "Do you allow me to lead?"

"Yes," Emma continued to reserve her words.

Miss Helen continued to stretch out a light smile. Her tall thin figure led to the corner of the library where a long beige sofa had been lying motionless. Even though it's tucked away in the recesses of the library, it's located close to the large windows that still let in the beautiful light from the outside all day long.

It seems to be introverted, but instead it shines clearly in every feeling...

I'm fascinated by everything that's going in that direction.

"Thank you."

Emma said as she sat down on the sofa in a comforting manner.

"Take your time."

Miss Helen smiled before walking back to where she had left off, soon returning with hot tea and a large plate of mouth watering cookies.

"It's an alumni gift."

"Thank you."

Emma continued to respond to Miss Helen's conversation without me having to say anything.

"It looks like we're getting more welcome than we deserve." Emma turned and gave me a smile as soon as Miss Helen turned her back away. "I smell something."

"Smell?" I poured hot tea into a cup before lifting the big cookie and biting it a big bite. "Is it the smell of cookies, Emma?"

"If only that; would be good, Annie." Once again Emma shrugged. "Let me find the book I was looking for first."

"Well, take your time, Em. I'm going to sit here and eat cookies."

"What book do you want? I'll pick it up."

"Anything," we smiled, "but if it's good, there must be a picture."

"Hmm, You're such picky, Annie."

"Please... Em"

"Let's just say let's find it for you."

"...thank you, dear friend."

"You don't have to repeat that..."

[3]

I love the snow in London especially when you see it scattered like rain that almost drowns a city full of beautiful gray buildings until it is blown white, I really love it and can't give up. Has Khun Pin ever thought of loving something like this? Love even missing every time you think of it, for the snow that is scattered non-stop, sometimes it crams a feeling of silence until it feels so difficult to endure each other.

I miss home...

I miss it more than I thought I would...

Does Khun Pin know that you're one of the factors that makes my mind more delicate than ever?

If you don't know, please know now how important Khun Pin is to me.

Am I too digressive?

Perhaps it's because I've been longing for someone intensely lately. It's a type of longing that feels inexplicable, as if I can't pinpoint the exact reason or origin for it.

I miss Khun Pin so much...

Unexpectedly.

Observing the gentle snowfall seems to evoke in me a mix of heightened excitement and deeper sadness than ever before. I find myself struggling to navigate these contrasting emotions. Amidst it all, the sensation of missing Khun Pin **resurfaces**, despite my reluctance for it to do so.

Or am I too weak?

What do you think, Khun Pin?

Anil

‘The content of Anil's recent letter appears somewhat challenging to grasp, but I made an effort to comprehend it. I spent a considerable amount of time in the library researching information about snow. Eventually, I managed to gain a better understanding of Anil's sentiments because the snow in my imagination wasn't much different from what Anil had in mind.

However, I still dream that maybe one day we will both gaze at the snow at the same time, so that loneliness will not hurt Anil too much as long as I am near you.

Does Anil agree with me?

Even more when the snow stopped falling and piled up in thick piles, I will ask Anil to jump into the snow. In fact, doing so would be more wet than Anil had ever expected. Yet I still want to invite Anil to dash your whole self-down completely. After rolling on the snow as your heart's desire, I will invite Anil to make several more snowmen. I deep down believe that my snowman must be cuter than Anil's snowman.

Reading up to this part, has Anil felt less lonely?...

I knew that Anil is homesick, but never knew how important I am to Anil.

I only know on my side...

How much I value Anil.

Up to this moment, Anil has remained just as significant to my heart as she was long ago, despite the passage of time.

As for missing, I would like to say that I miss Anil just as well, but that missing is hard to gauge who is more. It is not as simple as an imaginary snowman contest when it is seen with the naked eye.

Even my missing for Anil can't be seen with the naked eye, believe me, Anil, I can feel it with every breath I take, but I can't do more than wait for Anil to come back...

In the meantime, ...

Anil please concentrate on graduating quickly so we both don't have to suffer such missing each other again.

There's not a minute that I don't think about Anil...'

It's me, Pin

SPECIAL SECTION

EPISODE 5

Secondary Night

[1]

My first kiss was stolen by Anil on a night when it was raining constantly.

A deep, hot kiss that almost stopped my heart every time our hot tongues touched each other's.

A sweet and aromatic taste lingers in the cavity of the mouth...

Mixed into the cleft of thought...

Dizzy in the breath of the absent...

My heart nearly skipped a beat as Anil pursed her lips and leaned in close, whispering gently into my ear.

"This is called a French kiss."

"..."

"It is only used for expressing desire for a couple."

At that time... my consciousness seems so blurry that I can't remember anything.

All I remember is, I could only choose to run away from the owner of my first kiss into the guest bedroom of the Pine Palace in utter confusion and rush. I locked the door tightly, afraid that some overflowing feelings would slip out for Anil to know.

In that room, I simply perched on the plush bed, idly tracing my fingers across my lips, while the words "unsuitable, shouldn't" continued to echo in my mind...

The intensity of my first kiss left me with a desire to keep my distance from Anil, even though I didn't want to. It's evident from my reaction upon hearing that Anil was unwell; I felt an intense warmth that was difficult to endure...

Unexpectedly... Anil boldly confessed her love to me on a delirious day whereas I repeatedly asked back cowardly.

"The two of us... How can we love each other like that?"

I asked... Though I was shaken by everything that was going on, I had to wait until Anil went to the funeral of Prince Chakkham in Chiang Mai with Chao Euangfah. That's why I decided to make a decisive decision to pursue my own needs. Instead of holding on to authenticity as it used to be.

Our first night came after I said to myself, *'Pilantita belongs to Princess Anilaphat only...'*

Last night... It was the night that Anil completely communicated her affection of her *'first love'* through my body completely.

Surprisingly, I can leave all my worries behind. My body seemed to absorb all the pleasures of the first night so easily. No matter where Anil touches me... It's like my body reacts too much to stimuli.

Surprisingly, my trembling torso was constantly demanding Anil's embrace. So, I went through last night with Anil countless love chapters.

It wasn't until early this morning that I intended to get dressed and sneak back to the Bua Palace to bathe and shed my clothes as quietly as possible fearing to wake Anil from her slumber. However, my body couldn't escape the slender person's hot touch.

The incredibly repetitive pleasure is like forming a demon smiling at me that I may be just dreaming...

[2]

"Where have you been? Anil had been waiting for a long time."

As soon as my first step stepped onto the floor of the Pine Palace's guest lounge late in the afternoon, Anil asked as if I had been missing for a long time even though we had only been separated for a few hours. If I

notice, I find that the self-calling pronoun of Anil has changed from 'I' to 'Anil' in a very sweet and realistic way.

"I fell asleep for a while."

I chose not to mention to Anil the matter of meeting my aunt in the early morning at the Bua Palace. without wanting Anil to be as anxious as I am now. The more I saw a small smile showing off her dent on the cheeks. I was holding back, which was inside and accidentally smiled at the person in front fondly.

"Anil waits to have breakfast with Khun Pin." A beautiful smiling person proudly gestures in the direction of the kitchen table. "Anil has prepared everything."

"Will Anil make it again?" I muttered, "Anil knows that I never wanted Anil to do anything on your own."

"It's nothing." The sweet voice is mixed with bright laughter. "Anil just wants to do something for Khun Pin sometimes."

The tall figure said while reaching out and wrapping her arms around my waist with a cherished attitude before bending down, she whispered in a sweet soft voice beside my ear.

"Khun Pin should love Anil more..."

Hearing Anil saying that, I accidentally smiled, unable to hold my emotions...

Smiling like you can't hold back your feelings anymore...

"At this point, I already love Anil so much..."

"Really?"

"Yes... So much that can't be more than this."

I responded to Anil's conversation before being led by a tall, graceful figure to a small warm table across the kitchen. The dining table is in the corner beside a large floor-to-ceiling window revealing a corner of the beautiful green garden of the Pine Palace, suggesting a great appetite.

"For breakfast today, there was mushroom soup, bread, boiled white beans with tomato sauce and beef sausage. I also have freshly made orange

juice.”

"You made a lot. Aren't you tired, Anil?"

I still linger in guilt for leaving my beloved Princess Anil bothered.

"Not at all. Anil likes it."

"Next time, Anil will have to wait for me." I'm still as stubborn as I am.

"Yes. Can you please have Anil's cooking today?" Anil made big eyes like an affectionate person.

"Oh yes..."

I still maintain the attitude of a very touchy person. Anil's breakfast was so satisfying that I felt ashamed that I volunteered to cook a Western breakfast for Anil, even though she did much better than me. I emptied my plate of food, wanting to make the other party happy. However, the person in front had only eaten a small amount like she always did.

"Anil is still eating as little as usual."

"Maybe the weather's too hot."

Anil only said that... I was very angry with the weather in Thailand like never before. Especially when the thunder rumbles even though it's just starting to get late. The weather was hotter than any other day, but Anil was still smiling and in a good mood.

"If it rains heavily... Anil won't easily let Khun Pin walk back to the Bua Palace."

I heard such words, and I immediately realized what was what but only pretended not to know, wanting to reserve my attitude.

Even though I know it's too late...

Because in the end, the raindrops poured heavily. The sky that was seen through the tall window next to Anil's favorite smoky gray single sofa, which had been keeping the curtain open all the time, looked gloomy as if entering the night. The sound of raindrops hitting the thick glass made a drowsy sound.

Anil went to pick up a record and put it in a player on the shelf next to the fireplace. The sound of international music with a very sweet melody comes from the elegant golden brown horn speaker. The tall person turned and gave me a sweet smile, stretching out her hand and pulling my body so that I could twirl smoothly into her embrace.

"Khun Pin..."

"..."

"Dance with Anil for a song."

"Yes..."

My simple response made the little Anil smile widely. Anil snuggled her left hand into my right hand while her right hand wrapped around my waist with a light touch. The princess led me to move smoothly to the sweet rhythm of the song, as if we were both stepping in the air with our feet not on the ground.

"When we were both young," Anil bent down and kissed my forehead so tenderly. "We used to dance together like this."

"That day, Anil asked me..." I swallowed the lump down my throat, recalling the story that brought pain to visit easily. "If Anil isn't around one day..., will I be lonely?"

"That day, Khun Pin replied to Anil that you don't know..."

"Yes... I might not really know that at that time."

"What about now?" Anil touched my forehead with her own forehead. Our faces are now known to mingle with each other until we can feel each other's breath. "Does Khun Pin know the answer?"

"Now I know..." I tiptoed up slightly to imprint a light kiss on Anil's lips affectionately. "I knew even at that time..."

"..."

"...I cannot live without Anil."

The tall person heard that and looked back at me with eyes full of sparkles. Anil tightened her embrace at my waist before bending down to

kiss me deeply which I'm not prepared for. I accepted the deeply passionate kiss and momentarily forgot myself.

All I know is...

If I can swallow Anil in my body...

I would have chosen to do it without hesitation.

[3]

That afternoon, both of us seemed to have wasted our time chatting on the sofa in front of the fireplace. The little girl asked me to tell her about my friends at university individually, claiming that I rarely write the details of my friends in my letters.

Perhaps it was because Anil's behavior was so gentle and sweet. So, I couldn't resist telling Anil the whole story. I noticed when she reacted strangely when I mentioned Sunee and Thanit, but after asking me thoroughly, it seems that Anil's attention is diverted to my body instead.

Anil started by interlacing our hands together before slowly moving up and leaning over my body until I had to lean back on the sofa reluctantly. Anil gave a sweet, satisfied smile as she saw me lay down on the beige soft cushion. She reached out and brushed my hair to tuck behind my ear. She glides her fingertips to touch all the way to the side of my cheek before leaning down and kissing my lips with her own warm lips in a slow, lingering manner.

"Is it wise to be so open like this, Anil?" I inquired as soon as Anil pulled back her lips, a touch of concern in my voice. "Prikk might come soon and catch us."

"Prikk will never see us," Anil said with a laugh. "Anil even asked Prikk to watch over the entrance."

"Anil is cunning, really cunning," my eyebrows frowned, "so Prikk would know everything between us."

I reminisce about the early morning when I accidentally met Prikk in front of Anil's room, when I tried to sneak out quietly.

Prik is cunning and insidious, no different from her overlord. She even dared to tease me that I buttoned the wrong button. Make me show my hot demeanor so clearly that I can't help but feel angry with myself.

"I must find a way to inform Prik... Because if she's completely in the dark," Anil remarked as she extended her hand, gently wiping the sweat from my forehead in a nurturing manner, as though I were a young child. "Who will assist the two of us?"

"However, Anil had to remind Prik well." I couldn't help complaining. "Sometimes Prik likes to bully me by teasing and making me embarrassed."

"Yes, Anil will remind Prik, Khun Pin, don't curse Prik."

Anil gave me a sweet smile while my lips distorted exasperatingly. These two people have always been so close together that I couldn't interfere anyway.

Anil responded to my messy face with a quick kiss on my cheeks and neck. Until I had to burst out laughing with so much enthusiasm. I can't help but put Prik's story aside in the middle of nowhere. For at this time, I myself could not help but indulge in the tempting touch that Anil had pampered.

Anil!" I made a sound while still laughing hard, "That's enough... I am tired."

"Are you tired?" The little girl smiled broadly and showed off the dimples I loved, "Anil saw Khun Pin laughing and I thought you liked it."

"I don't like it... I am just ticklish," I argued.

"Really...?"

Anil smiled at the corner of her mouth before bending down to touch my earlobes with a light touch that made my face slither like a fever. Until I moaned with a blurry voice for the cunning person to hear.

"Mmm..."

Hearing that, Anil raised a high smile. I hated and loved Anil's smile unspeakably, so I could only reach out and fondly caress the beautiful full lips of the person who was crushing on my body.

"Are you sleepy?... You look drowsy."

"Maybe because Anil slept too less last night."

Anil grabbed my hand and kissed them indulgently before slowly slumping down and pressing her face against my chest implicitly.

"Can I lie to listen to the sound of Khun Pin's heartbeat until I fall asleep?"

"Go to sleep, I'll hold Anil like this; not going anywhere."

I said as I reached out and caressed Anil's smooth glossy black hair. The little girl tightened her embrace towards me before starting to breathe regularly, that is a sign that she is indeed asleep.

I stared at the thick long raft of eyelashes and smooth cheeks on my chest and sighed, knowing that I was falling deep into love...

I love Anil so much...

Love even the sound of breathing regularly with the sleep that I am listening to at this time.

Love until I start to worry about the day ahead...

Love until I want to hug my sleeping Anil until we sink into this thick, soft beige sofa together.

.
. .

Love so much that I don't want anyone to find the two of us again.

[4]

"I want to know how Anil persuaded my aunt that she allowed me to sleep over at the Pine Palace."

I couldn't help but ask Anil after we were both in Anil's bedroom in the Pine Palace in the dark hours of the night.

"Anil just honestly asked Aunty," Anil smiled, "Anil has been dreaming about strange things lately, so I can't sleep alone."

"Hmm..." I just laughed hoarsely knowingly.

"Hmm." The frauds pretend to be suspicious.

"Anil is so evil." I pouted in disbelief, but my unloving hand reached out to wipe Anil's hairline away from her face like a godly sculptor. "I'm starting to feel sorry for my aunt."

"How did Khun Pin know that Anil wasn't really dreaming?" Princess Anil smiled brightly, looking very adorable. "Anil has nightmares every night, doesn't Khun Pin know?"

"Yes." I smiled along unknowingly, "Nightmares are nightmares... I don't want to argue with Anil anymore."

Hearing this, the princess could only give me a sweet smile before slowly moving towards me and hugging me tightly. Anil touched her forehead to my shoulder, as she usually does when she wants to plead.

"I really had a nightmare." Anil said in a sweet voice before placing a soft kiss on my shoulder, *"Dreaming of waiting for Khun Pin on the terrace on a rainy day, but Khun Pin didn't come..."*

"...I, myself, still feel guilty to this day." I reached out and stroked the delicate upper arm of the person in my embrace, "Can you forgive me?"

"Anil never thought of being angry with Khun Pin." Anil smiled sweetly before stealing a big kiss on my cheek. "Maybe a little neglected."

I responded to Anil's gloomy tone with several kisses before dragging the tip of my nose along the majestic neck of the tall person pleadingly.

"I promised that I would never leave Anil in the rain like that day again..."

"If Khun Pin did it again..." The little girl smiled, "Can Anil punish Khun Pin?"

"Can Anil punish me?"

My voice is visibly blurry. At this time, Anil pretended to be 'punishing' me by gently snapping into my ear that Anil knew was my very sensitive spot.

"Anil will punish you by 'eating' Khun Pin whole."

Anil said so as she tightened her embrace tighter than ever. I unconsciously held my breath. Anil's hot hand slips into my shirt as she continues to drag it towards my back. Anil began to skillfully unbutton the small buttons on my shirt. Sometimes I do wonder why Anil is so adept at love, but some subconscious keeps myself from asking. Perhaps because I was afraid that the answer would cause me to be disturbed.

So, I let myself fall into obscurity...

That is very clear in the touch like this...

Anil's hot hands are still chasing slowly on my back, playing calmly. As I unfastened the final button effortlessly, I keenly felt the moment my lovely shirt descended onto the mattress as effortlessly as a flower falling to the ground with a gentle breeze.

Without any objection from me...

For now, my lips are packed with Anil's beautiful lips.

Our hot tongues are coated with warm sugar.

I was indifferently consuming that sweet taste.

Even when the long skirt was undone at the end of the bed, I could not tell for sure. But as soon as my back was pushed against the soft mattress of Anil's bed, I could easily recognize...

That from now on, how our story will be.

Anil's warm lips started to move gently towards my ear, as if granting a favor. Unfortunately, that happened to be my most vulnerable spot. The instant Anil embraced the back of my ear fervently, my body quickly responded to that touch. Especially when Anil teasingly bit my ear lobe, I couldn't resist until I let out an embarrassing sound for someone to find encouragement from.

Our second night between us passed more slowly than the first. Anil seems to be earning in every sense with grace. Especially with my bosom, which she was only dragging her hot tongue to linger so it remained upright without becoming weary. Until I could only respond by gently running my fingers through the beautiful black hair of the person in my embrace.

“Do you like it...”

Anil simply extended herself and regarded me with the expression of someone who had become deeply obsessed.

“Calling it love would be more like it.”

The little girl smiled mischievously before bending down to savor the taste of my breast once more.

I bit my lip tight in response to the overwhelming feeling. Until Anil could drag the tip of her tongue over to *'taste'* my stomach. I unintentionally embraced Anil tightly, unable to restrain myself.

I spontaneously clenched my stomach as Anil's tongue hung around my navel and even more so as Anil's warm tongue drags down the center of my body.

As if I wanted to push away...

But actually, I desire to keep Anil's tongue gliding around non-stop...

Consensual resistance did not last long.

My second night's bliss was perfectly fulfilled by thrusting with each pull that Anil made as she sucked in my wettest and most sensitive places...

I can only long to reach for Anil's embrace...

.

.

.

Before the next chapter of love begins, free from monotony...

--- Please follow The Loyal Pin (Pinpak) Volume 2 ---

APPENDIX

I'd like to thank you.

Cover picture : This time, the author wanted an elegant graphic style cover, Khun Pixtions came to take care of it under the concept that the first book would be navy-blue and silver under the story of Pin Pak . The second book is paired between black and gold telling the story of wind which is very pleasing to the author.

Illustration : This time, Khun “Little doodle worm” takes care of it, so I have all four cute pictures.

Postcard : For the premium postcards, It was drawn by my younger cousin who drew the stickers “MONMAW,” This seven days postcard to represent Princess Anil’s sketch, which is very cute.

Box Set Illustration: This picture is special because it was purchased from a Japanese artist, Khun AYAKA SUDA. It is an image which when I saw it for the first time, I immediately thought of Anil. Though the original was a blonde girl, Khun AYAKA changed the eye color and hair color to black, which is very kind. After that, the graphics were done by Khun Pixtions.

Banner: Promotional banner on ReadAwrite from Khun YUELIAN helping the reading rate raise a lot.

Comment: Fun comments from various readers encourage the writer to finish the story.

Literary Translation 1 : By Jeepster

Literary Translation 2 : By P’ Lock

Idiomatic Translation: By N’Key

Thanks to 3 teams of translators for great contribution to transform the period Thai GL novel into an English version to all inter fans.

[1] a loose skirt consisting of brightly colored fabric wrapped around the body; worn by both women and men in the South Pacific

[2] Pink Lotus

[3] [Mae is a Thai word that can mean mother, mom or a term of endearment and respect for women or female-presenting individuals](#) and in the past, people used to commonly address women as ‘Mae’ followed by their names

[4] P’ is a word in Thai that means older sister or brother. [It is used to address someone who is older than you with respect.](#) For example, you can say P’ Perm to call an older man named Perm

[5] Lung is a Thai word that means Uncle.

[6] Maprang mangoes are an attractive diminutive fruit that are about the size and shape of an egg. The inner flesh is a bright orange. It is jelly-like and soft, and slightly fibrous. Palace women usually bring to be carved into various shapes such as shells and eat with syrup and ice as their favorite dessert in summer.

[7] Khun is an honorific title used to address or refer to a man or a woman of high social status or someone with a respected position. It is often used to show respect and politeness when addressing or mentioning such individuals.

[8] Pang Sib is Thai Dumpling made of thin sheets of rice or wheat dough enclosing minced meat and steamed.

[9] Miang Lao is a tasty snack made by tidbits wrapped in leaves, eaten along with a sweet-and-salty sauce.

[10] Nu in Thai is a 2nd person pronoun used for calling a little girl or boy and implying the speaker's tender feeling towards the child. Usually use Nu+the child's nickname e.g. Nu Anil, Nu Pin, Nu Prik, Actually Anil is younger than Pin but she acts older.

[11] Rocket water is a soft drink like sparkling water.

[12] Chuchok is the only one legendary beggar who has countless food to eat until he died

[13] Mu Sarong is one of the Thai deep fried snacks

[14] Nom (Mae Nom) "child caregiver" or "childminder." It refers to someone, often an older sibling or a caretaker, who looks after and takes care of children.

[15] Chaiyapruk tree (golden flower) ; this tree is very popular for garden Thai, Malaysia and India.

[16] Chao [Northern Dialect] [word added by a female speaker to the end of every statement to convey politeness]

[17] Krathong Thong is an easy Thai savory appetizer known as “Crispy Golden Cup.”