



# Reverse 4 You

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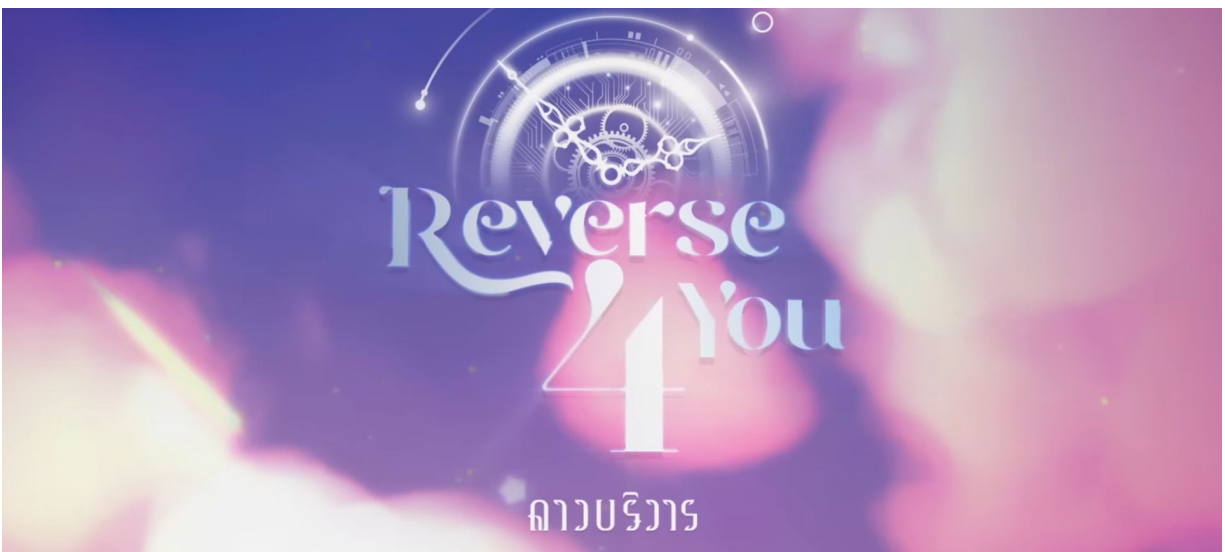


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Jattawa seems like an ordinary law student, but she has the ability to control time.

Her younger sister Vivi has the ability to see the future.

Lately, though, Vivi's visions seem to be wrong. Therefore, she finds it easy to disbelieve her latest prediction that P'Four, her university senior with a bad reputation, is her future lover.



"Reverse 4 You The Series" is a Thai Girls' Love (GL) series based on the novel by Zezeho. The series follows the story of Jattawa, a law student with

the ability to control time, and her younger sister Vivi, who can see the future.

### **The Premise:**

The series revolves around a central conflict: Vivi's visions seem to be inaccurate, leading her to doubt her latest prediction that P'Four, a university senior with a bad reputation, is her future lover. This skepticism stems from Vivi's past experiences with her visions, which have not always been accurate.

### **Key Characters:**

**Jattawa:** A law student with the ability to control time. She is portrayed by Methakhan "Me" Aekplakorn.



**Vivi:** Jattawa's younger sister, who can see the future. Her visions are often inaccurate, leading to conflict and uncertainty.



**Four:** A university senior with a bad reputation. Vivi's vision predicts that he will be her future lover.



# Introduction

**"I came back in time to fall in love with you again."**

Jattawa was a seemingly ordinary girl on the outside, but she possessed the extraordinary ability to control time. Despite her aspirations to become a lawyer, she entered law school, convinced that it would improve her challenging life. However, her younger sister, who had the gift of seeing the future, insisted that Jattawa would ultimately become a prosecutor.

Unconvinced by her sister's visions, Jattawa dismissed them as often inaccurate. This was especially true when her sister proclaimed that Four, a fourth-year student from a different faculty with a notorious reputation, would be her "future lover."

The university community regarded Four as a cruel person, leading Jattawa to believe it would be best to keep her distance. However, some feelings cannot be suppressed, especially when there is an inexplicable sense of familiarity with someone.

Jattawa yearned to uncover the truth behind her sister's prediction, to understand why she had been guided towards a career as a prosecutor, and most importantly, to explore the reason behind the profound sense of familiarity she felt towards Four.

# Chapter I : The Rain return to the Sky

## **Jattawa POV**

A short time ago, I started to like myself a lot in my dreams.

Now, I'm starting to like myself in real life.

And even if I don't know it yet, all I want is to stop time to gently tuck my hair strands behind my ear.

According to the dictionary definition, 'time' is a period that can be defined as a teacher, an hour, a day, a month, a year, etc.

And for you, what is time? You could reply that time is the most precious thing you have. Time is a collection of good memories shared with others. Or you could say that time cannot be reversed or corrected, which is why life sometimes becomes difficult when thinking about what to do next.

Let's summarize it.

Many of you may think that time is important but you can't do anything to control it, except for a watchmaker, of course.

But for me, it's different.

Every day when I wake up in the morning, it doesn't matter what time the clock indicates. I get out of bed, go through my daily routine, put on my wristwatch, and check the time. If it's still early, I go downstairs in our

narrow two-story house to have breakfast, whatever my sister prepares. But if it's already late, like now...

It doesn't mean I have to rush anyway... Why?

Because I am not someone who has to live in a world that keeps turning. It is the world that has to stop or turn around to wait for me.

Yes, I can stop time, and I can also make it go back...

That's why I am above all the rules and have never been in a hurry in the mornings.

Everything will stop moving, even the hands of the clock. The world itself will not turn according to the laws of the universe. That's what I can determine.

Seeing how time stops is great, but I can only reverse it for 10 minutes... That's what I call a cruel joke.

Fate likes to play tricks on me. As I mentioned before, I have two blessings, but I can only choose one per day. If I choose to stop time, I won't be able to reverse it until the day restarts at midnight.

That's the only frustrating thing that has always bothered me, but anyway, I still have better luck than that other girl.

"Today, it will snow."

"Are you joking? We are in Thailand."

I sat at the small dining table for two where she was already eating noodles covered in basil sauce.

The rice was already waiting while my little sister, 'See' with a cheerful face, wearing a yellow-toned apron, and a tired expression, shrugged as if to say, "No, I don't think so."



She was 16 years old, waiting for the end of the semester to start high school. She loved drawing, whether it was places or people. She was an outstanding student every year, a good cook, and always had a smile for the world. She was independent...

but she was also a bit crazy.

"Today, you will meet that special person," she murmured again. "On a snowy day in Thailand, with that person."

She had a talent related to time, just like me. Of course, we were blood sisters and we had been abandoned by our parents. But what made her different from me was that she saw disturbing images of future events.

It had happened many times, and sometimes I couldn't differentiate between the present and the visions she had. But what was this story about snow?

"Snow? Did you see it on social media or did you have a vision?"

"The second one."

"Well, you probably had a dream and thought it was a hallucination."

"Phi'Wa, have you ever eaten rice and accidentally choked on an eggshell?"

"In any case, the university has scheduled an interview for half past nine. It's nine o'clock, right? Will you take the time to smile with hot peppers between your teeth again? If I were your teacher, I would give you a failing grade."

"Oh please, I'm the older sister!"

"You sleep earlier and wake up later than me. Why are you so angry?" She told me as she chewed the noodles with basil that she had eaten, and then she showed her teeth, feeling furious with me. "Because you stop time to take a leisurely walk and enjoy the view. I'm jealous of my perfect older

sister."

"I'm not even close to being perfect."

"Of course, I should shut up. A girl who has hallucinations about snowfall has no right to criticize anything."

She rolled her eyes, took off her apron, and went upstairs, swaying her butt after I had teased her.

A month earlier, she had a vision that went so wrong that I couldn't help but make fun of her for a while.

She had said that she would win 60 million in the lottery. With so much confidence in her vision, I took all the money I earned from my part-time job, bought a ticket, and brought it home.

In the end, it turned out that my dear sister had only been dreaming. I lost money, and for that reason, I spent a week crying and lamenting.

And what was this about snow this morning? Did she really think it could happen in this country? The weather was as hot as the Egyptian desert.

"Take care of the house like a dog. I will go to the interview."

"Phi wa!!!" And she cried in the bedroom, annoyed. I laughed, adjusting my voice to make it less annoying.

"Don't you want to wish me luck for the interview?"

Her heart softened. She opened the door and let out a sigh, holding my stuffed piggy in her arms, which she had won by throwing balls at a fair.

"I won't wish you luck, but... Congratulations, Prosecutor."

"You're wrong, I want to be a lawyer."

"In my vision, you are a prosecutor."

Suddenly, I felt strange. My intention was to study for the entrance exam to law school and become a lawyer because I knew it would be a career where the pay would be good. That's why a person like me, eager for money, signed up.

I was glad I took the exam and that the university arranged an interview for that day, but being a prosecutor was never in my dreams. In any case, I would have to study law and have many jobs before being promoted to a position where I could earn a lot of money, and for that, many years were needed.

If there was something that could make me change my mind, it would only be the power to gain prestige and the money I adored.

"You can go now, Phi. You're just standing there like a rock. Don't rely on the fact that you can stop time."

Her words brought me back to the real world. I grabbed my bag and pointed my finger at her face.

The girl on the second floor nonchalantly bowed, scratched her cheek, and then turned around to walk back to her room.

As for me, I took the keys to my Y80 motorcycle parked in front of the house. I had bought it second-hand from a guy in an alley. It was red and had been with me for quite some time, surviving many close calls with death.

It was still half an hour before the interview time. The distance from the house to the interview location wasn't much. If the traffic wasn't too heavy, there would be no need to stop time.

If I ended up being late, well, we would deal with that later.

"Don't be nervous. The interview doesn't test your knowledge. If you pass the exam, you can still get in."

One of the seniors told us, law students, as we waited in line to enter Hall I at the end of the hall.

The older students tried not to get nervous because there were many girls. One of them had even fainted while waiting. It was quite amusing. If they were afraid, how were they going to go to court or apply the law? More than 70% of the potential students were men, and among those men and women, some had famous last names and parents working in the legal field.

Some people had already taught boys before, while I had a part-time job and the responsibility to take care of my sister every day. I was afraid, but words from the older person helped me feel better.

By the way, because my direct test score was first. I couldn't help before going to the exam. I stopped time every day to read a lot of books, especially 3 thick volumes 50 times each during the break.

Damn, I felt like I was so smart, I was so proud of myself.

While I was thinking about how proud I was of myself, two women who seemed to have become close friends while waiting for the interview as I did, caught my attention with their conversation.

"My older sister was here too before. This morning, she sent me a list of older people we shouldn't mess with."

"Who?"

"The first person is Phi Four."

There was such a comfortable image that it looked like it had been taken secretly while sitting cross-legged reading a book in the university library. It seemed harmless, just a pretty and feminine face, a woman who didn't care about anything.

"She can crushed you."

"Are you a volleyball player?"

"That used to be, but today, there is news that she can slap people more often."

"Aren't those just rumors? I wanted to tell them."

"She's good at arguing. She only has 2 or 3 friends, maybe. And you shouldn't take her seriously, or you'll be in trouble."

Those two girls were funny. The only person you couldn't look in the eye was probably Medusa. It couldn't be true that if you accidentally made eye contact with her, you would be slapped. It could only be true if there was already a problem between the two people.

Hearing them have that conversation, I couldn't help but shake my head.

"Ms. Jattawa Peangpradabkwan."

Coincidentally, one of the older ones shouted my name, so I diverted my attention and turned to answer: "Yes, I'm here."

I was the first woman called after the last man who came out of the interview room. His expression seemed calm, indicating that I could relax as the older woman had said before.

That's what I believed until I walked in and realized that person was the son of a diplomat due to his last name. Of course, he should already be good in this field.

The committee consisted of 4 people, two men and two women. All middle-aged, and their stern faces did not invite me to relax one bit.

At first, I only had to say the name of the school I had studied at, the purpose of the entrance exam to the university, and the faculty. They were simple questions until a teacher on the far left said.

"What profession do you want to pursue?"

"Lawyer."

"Why do you want to be a lawyer?"

"Because the money flow well."

"Then... if we take money out of the equation. What career would you like to study?"

"If money is not a factor, I don't want to do anything."

The room fell silent. Then the person who had asked the question put down his pen and put his hands together as if he wanted to explain something in detail.

"Listen, studying any field or working anywhere, if it is only motivated by money, it is not something that should happen. The teachers who see the grades of your entrance exam expect to hear something more than just caring about money." She smiled, looking disappointed.

"Our attitude and our words have power. More than you think, when working in any field, we really have to make an effort, not just focus on the compensation factor."

"Economic compensation is an incentive that makes me want to work or win against the other party." I replied.

A mature-looking man smiled, with a hint of disappointment on his face, before he spoke. "Let's look for something more than that. You are still a teenager, and you still have a long way to go. We cannot deny that your entrance exam grades have a 99% guarantee that you will be a student here. Congratulations in advance too. We will become teachers and students together."

His soft voice seemed to cut through me. I could only think that this was a bad attitude, but since I couldn't beat the person who had the highest score, then I was forced to be their student... Was it like that?

Was it because of my way of thinking? I wanted to be a lawyer for economic compensation. And who said that in the future, I would become a tax collector? That wasn't even a thought in my mind. It must have been a dream like that snowfall. It was impossible.

"Thanks for listening to my point of view too, Master."

The interview ended, and before going down the stairs, they reminded me that there were stalls selling things like t-shirts, bags, or other items that caught the attention of many students.

Some people had heard it, but I only had three hundred baht left for the entire month, not including the registration fee for the fourth grade. Even one bath was important to me.

"I'll buy the green pants too, so you'll have a green set. Do you want it? I'll only charge you 250 baht for this one!"

I must have been smiling as if I had food stuck in my teeth, just like that morning, with my hand holding a green shirt.

"If I can have the pants too, can you take 200?"

"Okay. Let it be 180, so I only get 20 profit, Nong."

"I only have 200 left." Because the rest of the balance is exactly enough for my sister's registration fee, I can't spend it.

"Ah, you can take the 200."

And that pair of pants suddenly became mine. In the end, the curse of wanting new clothes enveloped me, causing me to give in and look at the items in the store with desire.

The salesman, who looked like a senior, folded the green pants and put macarons in a bag.

The moment I crouched down to get money out of my pocket, something cold and white flew by and gently touched the back of my hand.

"You! It's snowing!! Take a video for Facebook! What are you waiting for?"

A loud cry invited me to look up at the sky that had been dark for a while. Actually, some snow was falling, even though this was Thailand.

People gathered to grab their phones and capture this phenomenon. I bet that in less than an hour, the television stations would have to talk about what had caused this phenomenon.

As for me, when I went home, my sister would laugh a lot at me because she seemed to have been right.

The crowd was amazed for a moment, but the funny snow quickly turned into soft raindrops. A portable umbrella was also included in the bag.

After leaving a shirt store that made me fall into the abyss and made me buy it, I took out a transparent umbrella and I extended it to cover myself.

I had decided that I would not use my special abilities. The ground was wet from the rain. For this reason, I don't want to run because I didn't want water to get into my shoes or else I would become a crazy woman who would be complaining while washing them again.

But my turning point came a moment later...

In the past, stopping or manipulating time would have been done for my own needs without attracting the attention of others. In a few words, whenever I stopped time, it was to sit down and read a book, travel by car to school on time, sleep more, or go back in time because I had forgotten to do something. I never used it for the benefit of others until, while walking through the crowd, I accidentally bumped into a girl who was walking in the rain.

Her hair was damp and soft. The long-sleeved white polo had become quite wet, but what caught my attention was not her beautiful sharp face or the slight frown, but those black eyes that seemed to be out of the ordinary. It



was as if there was a beautiful black universe in her eyes, and for the first time, I was clumsy. An apology escaped me, even though I normally thought that other people weren't paying attention.

And for the first time, I couldn't find the reason for my sudden temper. Why did I feel that I should meet again with the black eyes of the person who was now moving away?

So I went back in time. Everything around me slowed down as time stopped. I was holding the same umbrella, frozen in time, looking at the woman who was moving away.

Who was the person who had made me break the rules of time that I had established for myself?

Was it Phi Four, the person on the list of people I shouldn't get involved with?

It was then that I stared at her without thinking. Her facial features and arrogance were evident. It was said that she looked even more attractive in real life than in the photo.

Have we met somewhere before?

It felt more than just looking at a photo, more than just passing, a feeling of familiarity. What was the name of that 'déjà vu'?

It was as if this had happened before, as if I had passed by her more than a hundred times, but when? When?

Raindrops from the ground accumulated in the sky. People walked backward, including her and me. We were back a minute in time.

Well... it was time to start walking forward, knowing that person would be waiting. What was the purpose of that? To make eye contact again, even though she was just a college senior at the university.

I lifted the corner of my mouth to smile. When I saw the girl in a school uniform, wearing a gold chain pin under her neck, with the top two buttons open, attached to the bottom of her black pants with flared legs and white Vans shoes, I thought she looked very good. Now I knew what I had missed the previous time.

She looked good. As long as other women would still have to admit that going back in time seemed like it could be worth it, and that made me dodge the people who pushed me until I bumped into their shoulder. I stopped to look at her, frowning longer than before.

At that moment, I thought that although she looked arrogant and unconventional, I didn't see her as cruel as the rumors that had spread.

It turned out that she had been staring back at me for too long, and her beautiful lips opened to speak with a harsh accent.

"What are you looking at?"

# Chapter II : Little Jattawa

## POV: Jattawa

"Look at your face, it seems like you're in pain. Did the interview go well? Or are you embarrassed that it actually snowed today?"

I arrived home with a numb feeling on my face and found Vi sitting in front of me, her face beaming with happiness due to her accurate vision. Well, it had indeed snowed. It was the main topic on the evening news. I secretly cursed my younger sister a little and decided to change the subject.

"Is there something to eat? I'm hungry."

"Changing the subject again? You always do that!"

"Okay, I'm sorry for calling you stupid."

"I forgive you, but tell me, how did the interview go?"

"It went fine. The teacher said I have a 99% chance of getting in." I didn't tell her the rest because I felt embarrassed.

Upon hearing that, my younger sister danced with great joy before refocusing on the fact that I was hungry. "You came back so late that I thought you had eaten something outside."

"Not yet, I had to go sort out the loan issue to pay for your registration. I had just borrowed money to cover our living expenses for the month."

My sister had a lovely face, but she was quite expensive to take care of.

Suddenly, her smile faded. "Actually, you don't have to work so hard for me."

"Heh, you're the most important thing in my life. If I don't make an effort for you, then who else would I do it for? The dog?" I said, clicking my fingers to get her attention. It may sound cruel, but this is the reality.

"Brutal, but I love you very much." She smiled widely before making a move as if she was going to hug me, but I quickly put my hand up to direct her to go and do her duty.

I threw my backpack onto a bed filled with my best notebooks and drawing tools. As I mentioned before, I love to paint. And this time, I am sketching someone's face.

I didn't pay much attention to it. I just pushed everything to one side and threw myself onto the bed.

DAMN!!! What a day it had been.

"What are you staring at? Are you a track and field athlete?"

Just by looking at her face, I felt intimidated. How could she think I was a track and field athlete? Did I look like someone who played sports? Not even close!

Suddenly, I sat up, deep in thought. "Are you crazy?" It seemed that being alone in that room had led me to some kind of enlightenment.

"This is not good. Your pair of shoes looks more expensive than the first semester's fee. What were you thinking?"

I pushed Four out of my mind with the determination that even if we were at the same university, I wouldn't get involved with her again. Our eyes would not meet again. She didn't study law, as I had heard those girls say. She was in her fourth year at the Faculty of International Business Administration. There were at least fifty different paths we could take.

I listed the people I shouldn't mess with, and at the top of the list was "Four" with her thunderous voice.

While I waited for Vi to prepare dinner for us, I took out a long book where I recorded my income, expenses, and debts out of the ordinary. I calculated the expenses I had to pay during the semester.

In conclusion, I realized that I needed to find another job. My current job was washing dishes at a noodle shop at night, where I had one day off. Aunt Kae's store operated from 4:00 p.m. until midnight, but I only washed dishes until around 8:00 p.m. They paid me 120 baht per day and gave me two free noodle bags for my sister and me.

At this point, you might be wondering how I managed to survive with such a small amount of money. What about expenses like rent and utilities? We received water and electricity without having our parents around.

The first issue was that the amount of money I earned and my education were not compatible. Some guys sent us money to help us, usually around 6 to 7 thousand baht per month. We greatly appreciated their kindness and promised that we would never forget their support. With that money, we covered the water and electricity bills.

The second point is about our parents... I didn't know much about them. I remember that my father was a skilled tent-maker who created beautiful and unique tents. That was his profession, but secretly, he stole money to gamble. The day we were separated, I was only 6 years old. That night, in the middle of the night, with a baby in his left hand, he rang the doorbell of my uncle's house. After that night, my father never came back to us.

Where did my father go?

My uncle said that he had to go and fix some matters, but I never truly knew where he had gone.

I stopped waiting for him when I was in grade school. That's when I realized what I was capable of. I could stop time to play with other children, to have fun, or to go back in time to make something more perfect. Of

course, this ability was only known by my sister and me. The story of our father, who was distant from us, slowly faded from my sister's memory.

This narrow two-story house was the home that my father intended to give to my sister and me. At the moment, it was still in my uncle's name, but it would soon be transferred to my name when I turned 20.

Until then, what could I do? I had to borrow money to handle the necessary financial transactions.

"There's only canned fish left, so I stir-fried it with basil," Vi said as she entered the room with a soft voice. I left my pen on the page where I had been writing and received a plate of hot rice covered with canned fish and my sister's basil.

I walked over to turn on the old television that my uncle had given us three years ago. It was an outdated TV that relied on an antenna to receive signals since we couldn't afford to install a satellite dish.

"Can't we watch another channel?" My sister frowned, her shoulders drooping, before lying down on the bed.

"It's good to watch the news."

"Don't you want to watch Thai series like your friends?"

"You can watch on your mobile phone."

"Oh, but I want to watch it live. Besides, the internet connection is usually unreliable. I don't like it."

I spoke without taking my eyes off the news channel playing on the television. Then, I took a sheet of paper and a pencil to start drawing, smiling to myself. I realized that I had an artistic temperament. I stood there, watching the news in silence.

"The image of you as a prosecutor is becoming clearer," Vi said. "It seems like you're crying because you lost your first case."

"Vi!! That will never happen because not only will I not lose my first case, but I will become a lawyer. Didn't I tell you that already?" I was determined and convinced of what I wanted to achieve.

"I don't know, I can see you crying with your lover."

"Lover?" I quickly chewed my food before becoming interested in knowing more. I turned to my sister and asked, "Is he handsome? What kind of job does he have?"

Vi, with a wide smile, raised the paper she had been drawing on, revealing a face that was starting to take shape, including the details of my neck and forehead.

"I'm drawing. Wait for it to finish."

"Do you know that your drawing looks more like a woman's face?"

Finally, the results of the entrance exam were announced. As expected, someone with good grades like me should be admitted. On the day of registration, my uncle transferred money to me, so I called him to thank him; otherwise, I would have had to eat instant noodles for the whole month. I couldn't help but wonder why he was so kind to us. I thought maybe my father must have been a very nice person.

The first day of school had arrived, but it was just for registration and to meet with the older students who wanted to welcome the first-year students.

"Are you still not finished with your drawing?"

He had a student belt on, although I wasn't sure what it was for. I asked Vi to serve me a plate of rice. She was wearing her high school uniform, which was a bit wrinkled because she had forgotten to iron it the night before. I couldn't understand why she was so excited about her sister going to college.

"Finished? What drawing?" My younger sister tilted her head back and asked.

"Oh... well, the vision of his face doesn't appear often. Once I see it, then I can draw it."

"So it's going to be a few years before you see him again?"

"No, I actually had another vision this morning about something that happens after you cry for losing your first case," she said excitedly, smiling. "I'll hurry up and draw it for you."

I shifted my attention away from the topic and asked, "What happens after the event that makes me cry?"

That's what I wanted to know to determine if it was a hallucination or a vision.

"With your lover?"

"Yes."

"I don't remember."

"....."

"I was about to see it, but a car passed in front of the house, honked its horn, and distracted me."

I wanted to hit her. Why did she bring it up in the first place?

That morning, I couldn't be late. I had to join the line of students to pay respects to the national flag.

So, I stopped time and took my younger sister to school at the right time (during that time, she was frozen and didn't notice), before giving her 100 baht and complaining a little about having to find something cheaper. Then, I went to college.

Second-year students approached us and gave advice on the codes of conduct for older pupils. The person in charge mentioned that our faculty wouldn't have many activities outside of studying. In the distance, we could



hear the engineering students shouting to rally their fellow students. It was quite embarrassing.

"If you need help, you can ask us. We won't force you to show respect every time you come face to face with us, but if you raise your hand to show respect, the older students will accept it. They are here to study. Nothing should be forced. We hope that you will commit voluntarily."

That was what I needed to hear. With that, there would be no conflict with my part-time job, and I felt incredibly relieved.

My code senior handed me a sheet of notes from a first-year course that he no longer needed, saying that it was a detailed summary he had made for me.

I thanked him from the bottom of my heart. The older students there made me feel respected, so my gratitude was genuine.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"My name is Jattawa, but you can call me Wa."

"Okay, Wa."

Although he seemed serious, there was also a kind demeanor beneath it all. "By the way, what's your name?"

"Kawee," he replied. I thought about playing a joke on him, like calling him "Phi Kawee," but when I saw his expressionless face, I knew it wouldn't be the best idea.

"I heard that you had the highest score among all the entrance exams. It's important to study, but don't forget to pay attention to the society around you. Friends are also important. When we graduate and meet older students who graduated from the same university at work, it becomes easier to connect with each other."

"Phi Kawee, you mean having connections?"

"Not exactly, but let's say you have two new graduates applying for a job or training in the same office. Who do you think would be considered more, someone you already know or someone you don't?"

Well, the truth of the world may sound painful, but it's true.

"Thanks again, Phi Kawee."

"Okay, Wa."

Bow-wow!

I suppressed the warmth in my heart. Phi Kawee stood there, waiting, as if he was sure that a newbie like me would definitely have questions to ask. But besides some silly questions about studying, my only doubt was about the drawing my sister had mentioned.

"Do you know Four?"

"The one from the Administrative Committee?" Before he could finish speaking, I nodded. "I've heard some rumors. You're not supposed to get close to her. Don't waste your time. Her gang has the rector's daughter."

Gang? Hmmm... Did he want to make me scream? When I heard that her gang had the rector's daughter among them, I imagined they would be arrogant and troublesome.

"Do you have any other warnings for me?"

"Angie is friendly with people who give her food."

"Who is Angie?"

"Keep studying, and you'll find Angie around. She likes to be near the pool or sunbathe in one of the courtyards. Delicacies are her favorite, and after that, fruits and vegetables."

Did that mean that people could only interact with her if they had gold and money?

Many students stayed at the university after school hours. Some chatted and socialized, but I decided to go to the motorcycle parking lot and head to "Pizza the Pinball," a new restaurant opened by a chef who had just received a gold star in a cooking contest.

The week before, I had applied for a part-time job and they had given me a temporary position as a pizza delivery girl. My manager's name was Ping, a grumpy woman who was always angry if the staff made any mistakes.

"Why didn't you arrive before noon? It's already noon, girl. Next time, if you think you'll be stuck in school or something, just don't come. The store can hire someone else. Go change and put on the restaurant uniform and deliver the pizzas to the customers. Time is running."

This restaurant had a policy that if the delivery took more than 35 minutes, the customers would eat for free. Every second counted.

I grabbed the phone and the order list, hurried to change my clothes, and received a big pizza combo and snacks to put on the back of the motorcycle so I could deliver them.

Bad luck seemed to follow me. I had driven with half a tank of fuel, trying to save money that Ping had given me, but I had forgotten to check the fuel gauge.

I wanted to yell at my own stupidity. Why did I try to save 100 baht on snacks? Well, getting angry wouldn't help. It was better to hurry and tow the motorcycle to find a place to refuel.

"Add 40 baht, Phi," the gas station attendant said. "I'll take 60 baht to buy tofu for stir-fry."

"The minimum is 60, nong."

"Well, if it's 60, then it's 60." I sighed, feeling frustrated.

It took a long time to drive the motorcycle and deliver the order, which made me even later. It took me a while to enter the address into the GPS

and find the location. When I arrived, I realized it was a neighborhood with a lot of wealth.

I parked in front of the house next to the front door, where there was an intercom system (the people inside could see our faces). But before pressing the button, I heard a sound coming from a small pedestrian door.

"7 minutes late," a voice said.

"Ah!" That was all I could say.

When that small door opened, a girl about 1.70 meters tall (about 10 cm taller than me) stepped out in her pajamas, as if she had just woken up. Her voice was expressionless and exasperated. "Actually, it's been 8 minutes."

It was only at that moment that I looked closely at her face and remembered that she was the girl who had said, "What are you doing looking at my face?"

Four!

The girl who had spoken to me on that snowy day was now standing there, arms folded and frowning, as if she didn't even remember what had happened before.

"Are you the pizza delivery girl?" she asked, seemingly ready to argue.

"Yes..."

"You're late, so I can eat for free according to the promotion, right?"

That wasn't good. It wasn't free, because if it were free for her, they would deduct it from my salary.

"It's free because you're late," she insisted.

"....."

"Give me what I ordered and I will sign the receipt."

Since there was no valid argument I could make, I reluctantly handed over all the food on the order list.

My hands were shaking as I handed her the expensive pizza combo. She checked the food to make sure it was complete, then turned her attention to signing the receipt. But before Four could put her signature, I decided to improvise.

"Phi! Please pay for the order. What you asked for is almost the price of the whole meal, but for me, it's two weeks' worth of salary!"

Her slender fingers froze, and her pretty face looked at me. Her left eyebrow raised as if to say, "Keep talking."

I sighed. Apart from begging, there was nothing else I could do. Once the ability to stop time was applied, there was no turning back.

Once the ability to stop time is activated, there is no way to go back and speed up time on the same day.

"Well... if you don't help, next time if you order more pizza, it will arrive in less than 35 minutes."

"That's the job now."

"Yes." I forced a smile on my face with all my heart.

"Um..."

I shrugged because there was nothing else to negotiate at this point. The situation had no solution, but I didn't want them to deduct money from my salary. I raised my hands to pay my respects, hoping to appeal to their sympathy.

"My dignity cannot be mixed with rice. It would be better with fish sauce."

"I'm paying my respects. I am a first-year student at the same university as you. I have heard rumors about you, but I have never believed that you were that kind of person." I lied, as I had already come to believe what

others said after being scolded by their eyes. There was no choice but to speak kindly to the person in front of me. "Please pay the price. This is a part-time job that I do because I need the money. Let me bow at your feet."

Four's eyes glowed with interest. The universe seemed to have lit up for a moment. She was momentarily distracted from signing the receipt, and there was a sense of relief in her heart. I thought that being a senior and junior from the same university would be able to convince her.

"Do it." But I didn't convince her.

I stood still, my mouth unable to form words, and my eyes flickered unexpectedly.

Did I really have to bow to her?

I am not weak at heart.

What kind of person was she, and how would I get through this situation?

But I had no choice. I felt warmth overcoming the numbness in my mind when I heard those words.

I swallowed my saliva, feeling that my dignity was about to leave me.

I told myself it was for the next day's meal. Just showing respect to the older girl wouldn't kill me.

As I looked down, another thought came to my mind. Even before my real parents, I had never been inclined to wonder why they were gone. What happened to this unfriendly woman? Why did she do this? Why couldn't I back down? The words couldn't be taken back.

"F..."

"You're procrastinating. Stop doing it."

A harsh voice interrupted me before I could kneel again. Four turned her head to the side. "In addition, it's not me who ordered the food. The owner

of this house is someone else. Bowing won't help."

Oh!

She hurried to make a hand gesture to sign the receipt, indicating that I had delayed the delivery, before returning it to me. I was left standing there, bewildered.

Damn it! Why was she so petty?

"Next time, deliver it faster. This house owner is a very fussy person."

"Are you a servant here?"

"If that's the case, what's the problem?" I mustered the courage to ask. What was the problem? Why had she crossed her arms, pretending to be the owner of the house?

In the end, when I returned to the pizzeria, Ping told me that I had to work for her for a week without receiving any payment. On top of that, I had to arrive early for my shift and make sure not to deliver orders late.

All of this gave me a headache, and to make matters worse, I had forgotten to bring money for lunch.

After finishing my shift, I rushed to my other job washing dishes at the noodle shop. What kind of life was this? It was becoming too difficult to bear.

If Four had been willing to help me lie to the owner of the house, I wouldn't have to grit my teeth and work for free. I sighed as I approached my sister's school. I didn't want her to worry about the situation. When I arrived at the door, my sister, with a bright smile, was already waiting. She quickly said goodbye to her friends.

"Let's go home, idiot!"

Oh God! I felt so embarrassed when I opened my mouth and said things that didn't match her sweet face.

As she climbed into the back seat after giving me a high five, she rested her chin on my shoulder and looked at me with round eyes as if she wanted something.

"Tomorrow there will be a book sale at school, and I want to buy a drawing tutorial."

"Of course," I answered without hesitation, even though I knew there was little money in my pocket.

"Hooray!" she exclaimed. "I'll make delicious eggs for you to eat in exchange, Phi." Her joyful voice left me speechless.

My sister was a talkative girl. She told me everything that had happened at school as we made our way home.

When we arrived, my little sister got off the back seat, grabbed my arm, and stopped me before I left for work.

"Today, I had another vision where you and your lover went to the Maldives, so I finished drawing the face of your soulmate."

Well, going to the Maldives sounded nice. Maybe my lover was wealthy, possibly a foreigner. I tried to keep my face expressionless.

"Really?" I asked.

"Yes!" My sister brought her backpack to the front, opened it, and took out her sketchbook.

I turned off the engine and waited, ready to see.

I was in a good mood deep down because I thought I would have the opportunity to go abroad. I wanted to be the type of person who worked hard and had enough money to spare. If that were possible, I would work even harder. "Come on, let me see."

The sketchbook opened, and I looked inside. My eyes widened as I saw that the person in the drawing was a woman. In other words, it was Four. My



voice came out in a strange tone.

"Shit! This is Four."

# Chapter III : Who's in Charge Here?

## POV: Jattawa

At first, I had migraines, remember? Well, that has changed. Now the pain extended to my ankles.

"Did you draw a woman?" I asked.

"Yes, your soulmate is a woman," my sister replied.

"If it is this person, take her away."

"You are narrow-minded," my sister said with a disappointed face. "Keep an open mind; love has no fixed definition or conditions."

It's not that I was narrow-minded. I also didn't have any prejudice, but it seemed like I was just offending and having problems with Four.

My younger sister had now drawn the one who was supposed to be my soulmate. What did she want me to do? Should I drive back and hug the girl in the picture with love?

"Do you even know her?"

What a clever dog. My dear clever dog.

"I saw her in a vision."

"I don't like the girl's face in the sketch. I will go to work. Cook rice. Wait, I want Kao Lao when I eat again," I said, trying to change the subject.

I didn't wait to hear how Vivi kept joking about that and talking about predicting that crazy future. I started the bike and got comfortable.

My face was very numb, but don't get me wrong, it's not that I was embarrassed. It was just that I didn't want to accept the truth. I could only pray that what my sister said was just a dream.

But that was not easy at all. I washed the dishes, thinking about whether my soulmate was really a woman. And more than that, she was my superior. Should my life be so miserable?

Thinking this, I argued with myself,  
*'No, because I could be a lawyer, but for that, I had to work hard.'*

It would be very unfortunate. It was better not to know the future. My soulmate had an aggressive personality and was not good to associate with. Why did it have to be her? I couldn't understand it.

I wanted to forget about it, in case my destiny could change in the future, but before going to bed each night...

"Wa, I saw you and Four at the university star contest," my sister suddenly said.

My sister had been having new visions, and that could be really annoying.

### **The first day of school arrived.**

I quit Pizzeria the Pinball because I wanted to focus on studying. There wasn't a single outstanding debt, not even from the aunt across the alley.

On the last day, I raised my hand to pay my respects to Ping and said that I hadn't had one bit of luck working with her. Ping finished listening with blood rushing to her face, scolding me, and telling me not to come back as she threw the uniform in my face.

What could I do when I was overwhelmed by her constant nagging? No, I wasn't going back. I could only say that because I was waiting for the pizza that I would bring to my sister to eat while the oldest continued to look at me upset.

"Bye Ping, I probably won't come here for anything because I'm not good at eating pizza either. I'm sorry because I'm also poor."

They say that at the university level, no one is late. This time, I accidentally did it because my back hurt so I had to ride my bike slowly.

The day before, I had carried a large number of things at work, which affected my back. I decided not to stop time because it wasn't necessary. Upon entering the classroom, I simply became the focus of attention of the people in the room. The teacher didn't complain at all and continued teaching his class while I entered.

I chose to walk and sit in the corner. The reason was that I didn't know anyone. Coincidentally, there was a man sitting on his chin as if he also wanted to avoid society.

The son of the famous and handsome diplomat had an expression on his face that showed he was very bored with his lesson.

"Hello," he greeted me without turning around, continuing to look at the board.

"Hello," I responded briefly.

"Go sit somewhere else. Don't steal the air conditioning," he said, still not facing me.

Oh! The air conditioning was public, so we had to share it, right? "You can go, I have the right to sit here too."

"Your perfume is too scandalous."

"I don't wear perfume. You must be smelling other people."

"I don't like sitting next to women."

"Look, I'm just one person. Who does that thing where they look at gender?"

"I do not want to speak with anybody."

"You don't have to talk. Because I don't want to talk to you either. Anyway, just now, you asked me to speak first, right?"

Obviously, he couldn't argue with that. I put my bag in a way that prevented him from seeing me and sat down comfortably. I hadn't realized that the girls in front of us had covered their mouths to start gossiping. What were they gossiping about?

"My name is Khun," he suddenly said while still looking at the front of the room like before.

"Eh? What?"

"Seriously? I told you my name. Shouldn't you tell me your name?" he seemed confused because I wasn't interested in him.

The first subject was about law in everyday life, laying the foundations for understanding its meaning and importance. I carefully wrote down

everything I heard in detail. His hands were swinging; he seemed to be very naughty. Did that mean we were getting close?

Something strange happened. After the morning class ended, I was about to take the elevator down to the shared cafeteria to sit and eat a lunch box that my dear sister had made for me when a group of four female students came straight towards me. I could remember that they were the same ones who had been sitting in front of me in the previous class.

"What is your name? Do you want to go eat with us?" one of them smiled. Since I didn't have any friends, I agreed to start a conversation. I finally knew what they wanted.

"Have you heard of Khun before? We saw you together in class," they asked.

They were fans of Khun.

The boy I had argued with before was a celebrity on the '**TL Cute Boy & Girl**' page that brought together young students with attractive profiles. Khun was widely known and had been selected for the following month's contest. You might ask how I knew, but on the day I had met Four, when I went to register, many people were talking about him as I walked to the cafeteria.

"Do you have Khun's number? His Facebook, IG, Twitter, whatever? Nobody knows anything about him," they asked eagerly.

"I just met him this morning," I replied.

"But he also talked to you. Although he never talked to any women, um... it's probably more. It's fair to say that he doesn't talk to anyone," they said.

In fact, saying that we had spoken was not entirely correct. Rather, we had fought. Was that better than not talking? So I just answered curtly, "I don't know, I just asked to sit there and he let me."

"Anyway, if you can talk to him again, ask for his IG."

"If not, I will forget it-but I would definitely forget it." Still, I had a doubt, so I asked, "Do you know Four from the administration?"

A moment earlier, the girls who were smiling and interested in the handsome boy fell silent.

"Four, Faculty of Administration, year, international branch," I emphasized.

"I know who she is," one of the girls said, her mouth also crooked. "She was a senior at my old school."

"Oh, what kind of person is she?" I asked.

"She was involved in sporting events, a leader of her club. Everyone loved her. She could have been a volleyball player. Applauded by friends, but only a few managed to be close to her," she explained.

What the girl said seemed strange to me. As if something had happened.

"What do you mean when you say she could have been a volleyball player?" I inquired.

"That's Boston! The one who is talking on the phone," one of the girls exclaimed.

My question was ignored as the four girls had seen a member of the medical team walking around, talking on the phone. The sight was that of a neatly dressed boy. After he walked away, the group returned their attention to themselves.

"What would be a good place to eat?" one of the girls asked.

"I brought food from home," I replied.

"Oh. We are going to eat at the mall, we just don't know where?"

While they were thinking about where to go, someone parked nearby, and they were ready to leave. They weren't interested in being with me. They only reiterated their request not to forget to ask for Khun's information.

Damn, they were supposed to study, but they acted like they were only going to fall in love with men.

When I was alone, guess who I had to have lunch with?

Him, soooo...

"Sit with me," Khun said.

Khun was a boy who was unlike any other. Maybe that's because of his antisocial behavior.

I didn't object like he did in the classroom; I just stayed silent, putting my interest in my lunchbox. When he asked me if I was ashamed to bring rice from home to eat, I said no because my sister made delicious food. She cooked soft rice, and a restaurant couldn't cook curry rice like that.

"Why did you come to study law?" he suddenly asked, wanting to engage in conversation.

"I just want to be a lawyer," I replied.

We were both silent for a while until he spoke again.

"Aren't you going to ask me?" he questioned..

Finally, I got it. Khun wanted me to show interest like he was used to. I let out a long sigh as I poured some curry over the rice when my mouth asked for it.

"Well, I can ask you why you came to study law, but if I had to guess, I could bet it was because your parents forced you to do it. Your father is a diplomat who surely wants his son to follow his example," I said.

Khun's eyes widened before he responded.

"Are you a Goddess?"

If controlling time could be counted as being a Goddess, maybe yes, I am.



"It's not difficult to guess. Your life seems to go in a straight line, like in a soap opera, right?" I continued.

"Yeah!"

"Oh, so I guessed correctly?"

"God, let's be friends!"

It seemed like I was wrong about this boy. He was just a crazy person just like me.

We started following each other on Twitter. He was the one who gave it to me because I didn't have Facebook or IG.

In the world of Twitter, it was a bot that hid under an O-shaped sheet and had a bunch of phrases like:

'If I'm not the one standing next to you, then I'd like to take a seat.'

'What makes me cry the most is the onion.'

'When you have no hair, then you must be bald.'

Wow! Could someone please take him away from here!

"Where are you going, friend?" Khun shouted loudly as if he was afraid that his friend would disappear when he saw that I stood up.

"I'm going to wash the lunchbox and then to the university medical center," I replied.

"Why?" he asked, seeming to want a reason.

"Because I need pills for back pain. It would be free medicine, and if possible, I would ask for a patch to prevent pain in the middle of the night. Ordering it there would save me dozens of bahts," I explained.

"I will go with you."

"There's no need."

His face seemed to not understand; he seemed to be asking for a reason.

"Because we just met," I said.

He extended both hands, shrugging his shoulders. "Does that mean we can't go together?"

Okay, it was time to make friends. After all the time I had been working part-time, no one usually approached me.

But do you know why he wanted to be my friend?

"I have wanted to be friends with a simple person for a long time," he said.

In short, my personality and image looked dull, perhaps accidentally including my face, my way of speaking, my dressing in the correct student uniform with the skirt tightly pleated and the simple ponytail to keep it out of the way.

And that he wanted to be friends with a dull person like me showed that he was fully aware that he stood out from everyone else. That made me wonder if I really wanted to be friends with a high-profile celebrity.

"Are you staying in the university dormitory or in an external one?" Khun asked.

"At home."

"With your parents?"

"With my sister, we are orphans."

"I'm sorry..."

I rolled my eyes and waved my hand back and forth. "It doesn't matter, it's not that dramatic," I reassured him.

As we walked and talked, a thought came to mind. "Do you know Four?" I asked.

"KaNiKaZo, Super Angies? Yeah, that anime was quite fun. I used to watch it when I was young."

Nonsense!

"Be serious. I'm genuinely asking you."

"No, I don't know that person. Why? Is he richer or better-looking than me? How could he capture the attention of someone like you who's not interested in appearances?"

Stupid assumption. Khun certainly holds an excessive amount of confidence in his looks. However, I must clarify that the name belongs to a girl. And I'm inquiring about her solely because of the text messages my mischievous sister sent me during the morning class:

Vivi: Wa, you haven't turned back time today, have you?

Jattawa: Not yet.

Vivi: Save it to help Four. Today she broke her leg. I saw her in the hospital.

Jattawa: Why should I help her by stopping time? It would be better to use it to wash dishes.

Vivi: What kind of mean person can stand to see their future soulmate hurt?

She deserves it. That self-centered woman never spared a thought for a humble pizza delivery girl like myself. It is inevitable that she will provoke someone, sparking a confrontation that results in a broken leg.

Jattawa: Damn her! It's a good thing her legs are broken so she won't challenge anyone to bow at her feet again.

"Why do you look so lost, Jattawa? By the way, why did you ask about Four?" Khun waves his hand in front of my face. I return to reality,

compose myself, and briefly explain to him.

"No, I'm not lost... And Four is not a boy. She's a girl. I just heard that she's intimidating enough to be avoided. That's why I asked."

"Ah ha..." Khun's suspicions fade away. We continue our walk on the sidewalk, heading to the nursing center together.

Honestly, I have no willingness to save Four. Yet, why do I keep asking around about her? Perhaps it's because of my naughty sister's frequent use of the phrase 'future soulmate,' perhaps I secretly desire to see that vile girl fall.

Yeah, the latter one feels more fitting.

My newfound friend shifts his gaze to the football field and nods, signaling me to redirect my attention. "They're having a race."

His nonchalant, monotonous words prompted me to give it a glance. However, there stands a girl, arms crossed, leaning against the imposing metal scoreboard. Not far from her is a referee who prepares to blow a whistle, signifying the start of the race.

'Audition for Sports Game Runners' - the signboard proudly displayed in bold lettering.

"They seem to be in a rush to find athletes," Khun continues. "I want to watch, but let's drop you off at the nursing center first."

Oh... Could it be that she intends to cause chaos on the running track? I urge my brain to command my feet to carry away indifferently. Yet, the phrase 'future soulmate' echoes persistently in my head, preventing me from moving forward.

One more thing: I can sense a bad omen.

"Then, let's stay and watch," I say, turning my head to Khun, who looks surprised.

"Are you kidding me?" he asks.

"No, I just want to watch it too." With that, I change my direction and head towards the football pitch, surrounded by running tracks.

Several students are seated on the grandstands. Some are cheering for their friends, while others enjoy snacks as they watch the spectacle.

As I approach the signboard, Four lowers her crossed arms, scans the surroundings, and walks calmly towards the referee. It seems like she's about to start a fight with someone.

"What are you doing here, Four?" The male referee would be a senior student like her. He asks her in a friendly manner, showing their intimacy.

"This morning, I went to apply for a volleyball player selection," Four explained.

"And then?" The referee was confused.

"The P.E. students doubt that I'll be able to compete."

"Oh... I see. Your leg has been-"

Abruptly, she cuts him off. "They told me to finish among the top three runners in this race, and only then will they allow me to participate in the audition."

That surprises me. She's not here to pick a fight, but...

"So, I want to join this race."

She's asking for help.

Khun gestures for me to take a seat on the grandstands. I follow my tall new friend to a row in the middle.

As we sit there, the noises emanating from the phone held by a bespectacled boy irritate me to the point that I can't help but let out a deep sigh. But for

Khun, they don't seem to bother him at all. He whispers to me:

"This four-eyed boy looks simple and plain too. Let's invite him to join us." Then he turns to ask for his name.

That bastard seemed to want to be friends with anyone who would go unnoticed!

I returned my attention to what was happening on the field. I noticed how the referee mentioned that the competition would start in a minute.

Four, already a tall girl in pants and a sweatshirt, walked to the number 4 spot. Apparently, that was her lucky number.

At that moment, I noticed that Four's proportions looked like that of a perfect athletic body. Her legs were long, she was tall, and her rolled-up sleeves revealed arms that showed she was a volleyball player. They weren't heavily muscled, but just by looking, you could tell that they belonged to a very strong woman.

That qualifying race was exclusively for women. Everyone was ready, waiting for the countdown and the whistle to blow.

Oh, that's right, her legs were...

Thinking about that, I couldn't help but remember what my sister had said. I wasn't sure if her legs had been injured or experienced something before, which certainly wasn't a good thing and could jeopardize her future in the sports industry.

And if my guess wasn't wrong...

Four would break her leg in that race.

I was very sure of myself. I stared at the event with indifferent eyes.

# Chapter IV : Incapable of Showing Compassion

**POV : Narrator**

**XX International School's Female Volleyball Team**

*Six Years Ago...*

"My name is **Seemaysa Narawattanavech**. You can call me **Four**. I'd like to join this team because I have a personal passion for volleyball."

That was the introduction of a 10th grader who joined the club for the first time that day. As she spoke, a few senior students who had been listening began teasing her, a typical norm among rowdy athletes.

Some commented on her appearance.

**"You should apply for the cheerleading squad!"**

Others doubted her talent.

**"Personal interest? Do you even know the basics?"**

And then came the final blow:

**"Your last name sounds familiar, but I've never heard of you."**

Those last remarks caught the attention of another 10th grader, a Chinese-looking girl who had introduced herself before Four. In an instant, she gave Four a scrutinizing glance. This girl, who was of the same height, carefully observed Four's pale face, saving her suspicions for a conversation after the club activities.

**Kie** was often called 'Chinese Bitch' (or 'Chinese Girl' for the sake of some politeness) for her Asian looks. Her family ran a grocery shop, and her father was also nicknamed 'Chinese Uncle.'

They seemed like a perfect match—a Chinese uncle and his Chinese-bitch daughter. Kie did not have many friends and never expected to find someone in this school who would befriend her or engage in casual small talk with her. But today, she finally found someone she could connect with in this volleyball club.

"I really like your name, Seemaysa. And your nickname too, Four. It feels like there's an interesting story behind them."

A friendly voice greeted Four when she washed her face with tap water behind the gymnasium. Someone approached to wash her face as well. No doubt, it was Kie, the China-doll girl who noticed Four's dull expression earlier. Although she used an easy-going tone...

"Are we close enough to criticize each other's names?"

Four would not reply to her with the same level of intimacy. The porcelain China doll giggled and chimed in, "Why not? You're Four. I'm Kie. We're on the same volleyball team, and we both love volleyball. It's a matter of time before we become close friends, buddy."

The poker-faced girl appeared unfazed by Kie's words, casually wiping her hands with the towel draped over her left shoulder. In response to Four's apparent indifference, Kie narrowed her eyes and leaned in closer to continue saying:



"By the way, that's weird. I've never heard that the Narawattanavech family has an heiress. I only knew that they have a son."

"What?!" The youthful beauty's gaze abruptly shifted towards the big-mouthed China doll. Four's eyebrows furrowed in surprise.

"I enjoy reading gossip magazines, and I remember that this family is famous for their sports equipment business. Let me guess. You're a mistress's daughter, am I correct?"

"Go to hell. You bitch, Kie!"

Four's furious voice erupted. The girl showed no interest in carrying on the conversation. She turned away from the tap, ready to walk away. Unfortunately, Kie, with a smile on her face, grabbed Four's arm, stopping her from leaving.

"Now you're being rude to me. That means we're close enough, right?"

"Piss off!"

"Fine. I'll let you go." The irritating girl gave in easily, releasing Four's arm without hesitation. They were on the same team anyway. They will be again tomorrow and in the days to come.

Normally, Kie did not pay attention to any rich or famous student in this prestigious international school, except this girl, Four. The China doll couldn't help but grin to herself.

*'Finally, somebody inferior to me...'*

Kie had secured admission to this school through the athlete quota. How could the daughter of a grocery store owner like her become an international school student without this opportunity? As soon as she entered this school, Kie found herself surrounded by wealthy young ladies whom she couldn't relate to at all.

Kie just believed that Four would share the same status, and that was the sole reason why she wanted to befriend her.

Otherwise, she would regard Four as someone beneath her. Despite her family's financial challenges, Kie believed she was better than a mere bastard girl.

Even though they were not in the same class, the China doll always found excuses to have lunch with Four, who remained indifferent. According to Kie's everyday observation, many students tried to approach Four, but she completely ignored them.

*'She's nothing but a fake young lady!'*

Sometimes, Kie couldn't resist insulting Four silently in her mind.

One day, Kie decided to leave the roundtable of her nonsensical but super-rich friends and approached the fake young lady whom she had always been intrigued by, Seemaysa.

"Hi, bastard girl!"

Upon receiving that rude greeting, Four shot her a furious stare and promptly stood up, determined to find somewhere else to eat. Realizing her mistake, the China doll half-heartedly apologized, her right hand casually slapping her own face as if to feign sincerity.

"I won't call you that anymore. I promise."

Honestly, that wouldn't easily dissipate someone's anger. This time, Four, still indifferent, couldn't forgive Kie or accept her apology. The perfect figure stood up, unwilling to continue having lunch there any longer. Four walked to the trash station, waiting for the dishwasher to collect her used plates before leaving the canteen.

*'Fine. I'll forgive you this time because it's actually my fault today.'*

Kie muttered to herself, eating her lunch alone.

*'That arrogant bitch...'*

The upcoming sports game against other international schools in the same network was fast approaching. Apart from the club members, there were many students applying for the volleyball competition.

The girls and boys were assigned to different courts, practicing in separated areas divided by a school building. Those who had hoped to catch glimpses of cute, athletic boys were left disappointed.

On the day of starting player enlistment, as the coach announced the selected candidates, the 10th graders, who had initially lost hope, were taken by surprise...

"Wing spiker"

"Yes?"

"Wing spiker."

"Yes!" Kie raised her fist, overcome with joy at her success. The previous enlistment match had been tremendously exhausting.

"Four." The same tall, tough-looking coach called out. The girl standing behind Kie raised her hand in response. The coach continued, eyes still fixated on the name list, "Also wing spiker."

"But coach! Both of them are still freshmen! How can you let them be starting players!?"

"I just went with the results of the recent enlistment match, that's all."

"If you let these 10th graders be starting players, I'll resign as libero," declared the grade 12 senior who was determined to protect the dignity of

her friends who failed to secure the starting positions. The libero position held a significant role on the court, with a distinct uniform that set them apart from others.

After scribbling something down in his notebook, the coach finally lifted his face. Their eyes met in a serious exchange. The entire gym fell silent, with some nervously swallowing their unease.

And then, the coach briefly said:

"That's fine."

He was willing to forgo the arrogant libero.

"Wait! How about the team captain position? Are you going to appoint a 10th grader too?"

"You've already resigned, haven't you? Why would you concern yourself with the positions?"

"Now, what's your next move, Khim?"

Bound by her enduring connection with the team, the straightforward libero set aside her ego, tightly clenching her fist and ultimately swallowing her words.

"I've changed my mind."

"Good."

"What about the team cap-"

"Nat, the middle blocker, will take over after the previous captain graduates."

The distrust among the seniors lessened, since the juniors did not threaten the captain's position as they were worried. However, their resentment still lingered. Khim scrutinized Four and Kie from head to toe, looking down on them even before the practice started.

Definitely, the wing spikers needed to communicate more with each other. In fact, it was Kie who made the effort to approach Four. However, Four would only respond with brief replies before turning away, showing little to no interest in chatting or enjoying any jokes Kie made.

This dynamic seemed to stem from Four's antisocial personality, or Kie wanted to believe so. Nonetheless, Kie couldn't help but curse Four's unfriendliness. This kind of relationship weighed on Kie, reaching a point where she considered giving up on her attempts to connect with Four.

One night, everything changed when this friend, who shared the same team position, carried her backpack to the athlete's dormitory, knocking on the door for someone to open it. Kie, a country girl who had moved to Bangkok for her studies, was fortunate enough to stay in the school dormitory thanks to her athlete's quota. The China-doll girl had no idea why Four decided to permanently move there. All Kie could notice was that Four had been crying on the way.

"Why are you crying? A fight with your parents?"

"A parent. I only have a stepmom," replied Four, who roughly wiped away tears with the back of her hand.

"I forgot about that..." Kie had been aware that Four lived with her biological father and stepmother, his legitimate wife. Kie wanted to ask Four's real mother, but considering the circumstances, it was best to change the subject.

"Don't cry. They say two packs of instant noodles can fix anything. Let's go to 7/11 in front of the school."

Unfortunately, as Kie held Four's hand, leading her to the convenience store, they were suddenly caught by the coach, who urgently needed to use the restroom.

"Run 50 laps and go to bed!"

It wasn't the prospect of instant noodles that stopped Four from crying. It was her exhaustion and heartburn that left her speechless. She gritted her teeth, pushing herself to keep running despite having faced family problems just hours ago. As for Kie, the China doll collapsed on the ground and sat back on the 48th round. However, the coach had declared that if any of them stopped running before completing the 50th round, they would have to start all over again.

"I'm sorry, Four. I was the one who brought you here. Who could have known the coach would come this way?"

But what Kie really had in mind was:

*'It's all your fault! You dragged me into this mess! Why did you come to see me so late at night? Fine! I was being nosy and led you here. It's partly my fault then. Damn it!'*

Four noticed Kie had stopped running and halted as well. She bent down, placing her hands on her knees to alleviate her fatigue. Then she turned her gaze toward Kie, whose face was flushed from exhaustion.

"I wanted you to open up about your worries after having the noodles."

"Look at me now. I kept running and made myself hungry instead."

Four closed her eyes and let out a deep sigh. She walked back to Kie, who was lying at the edge of the running field, and reached out her hand.

"Get up. Let's start the laps again. The coach is watching us from the dorm window."

Kie raised her head in surprise. "Aren't you angry that I made you run again?"

Four shook her head slowly. "You made me stop crying. Thank you."

***'Thank you...'***

Kie vividly recalled that moment when her hidden resentment, prejudice, and blame towards Four instantly vanished. The sincere gratitude and earnest gaze she could notice from Four... Those things surprised Kie, as she had expected some level of anger or reproach in return.

*'You're angry, but you feel thankful towards me?'*

That left her utterly bewildered. The China doll avoided eye contact, overwhelmed by guilt for all the negative thoughts she had harbored about Four. "O...Oh."

"Let's finish this quickly so we can go to bed. Can I sleep next to you from now on?"

*'She even asked to sleep next to me!'*

"U...Umm."

She replied awkwardly, but soon her lips once again transformed into a lively grin. This time, it was no longer a fake facade. Sometimes, a simple 'thank you' could leave a lasting impression.

The girl accepted Four's outstretched hand, gripping it tightly as she lifted herself up. Finally, this socially withdrawn friend yearned for a connection.

"Four, this means we are friends now."

Four remained silent, simply nodding in response.

Before the word 'friends' became nothing more than a mist of memory.

**POV : Jattawa**

Currently

"Look, Jattawa! The fourth rail is so fast!" Khun's enthusiasm ignited my enthusiasm for the race.

Not only she applause, but also the exhilarating jolt she inflicted on her poor shoulders. It was undeniable that Four was leading the pack, leaving the others far behind. However, as they reached the curves, like the first one, their speed dropped to that of the fifth lane racer.

Hmm. It seemed to excel on straight roads but struggled in corners, where we often experienced more deceleration underfoot. In fact, in the second corner, the runner from the fifth lane overtook her.

Then, at the third turn, she was passed by the runner in the first lane. And in the fourth turn, the last one before the finish line, if she managed to maintain her position, it meant that she would secure one of the first three positions and would have the opportunity to audition for the volleyball team, as promised by the P.E. students.

Unfortunately, her imposing figure collapsed and the entire audience went crazy. All eyes were on Four, accompanied by critical comments.

*'Didn't she have a metal implant in her leg? Why did she participate in this race?'*

*'Who do you think you can beat with a leg like that?'*

*'What is she trying to prove?'*

In the midst of those harsh comments, Four stood up, blood dripping from her knees. The referee bellowed into the megaphone, urging her to sit down and not try any harder. The medical team rushed to help her.

However, she decided to ignore them. Although her right leg could no longer support fast running, she ran forward, dragging her leg as if she was afraid of being overtaken. The proud beauty gritted her teeth as the referee shouted persistently through his megaphone, trying to stop her.



There were a few meters left. But what did it matter if you crossed the finish line? Why the hell was she trying so hard? The current situation clearly showed that she could no longer participate in the volleyball team audition...

The harder she tried, the greater the damage to her right leg would be. She was exhausting all her strength because the opponent was chasing her. This power of determination could not last long.

Of course, that was no surprise. She finally broke her leg.

The tall figure collapsed once more and harder than before. This time, she probably lacked the strength to get up again. Four gasped for air, staring at the finish line just 5 meters away.

I found myself covering my mouth in disbelief. I didn't expect her to get up once again. Her eyes radiated a strong desire to claim third place.

That challenge, posed by the P.E. students, was undoubtedly intended to mock her and show that she was incapable of finishing it.

What the hell is tormenting my heart? Is it her agony or my own empathy?

I wanted it to stop! I saw that she was right. I couldn't witness her self-inflicted pain. I didn't know why, but it hurt every time she fell. I bowed my head and gritted my teeth. It could be that she deserved it, but I had already made my decision...

I was going to go back in time.

I planned to rewind time as far back as possible, to ten minutes ago, when Khun and I were leaving the cafeteria, heading towards the nursing center.

"Why are you running, Jattawa? Hey! Wait for me!" Khun yelled at me.

I didn't have time to explain, so I'd let him catch up to me later. At the moment, the race had not yet started. The referee was still enjoying his drink and chatting with his friend.

Four was leaning against the scoreboard, arms crossed, just as I estimated.

Honestly, even though running makes it hard for me to breathe, I couldn't stop myself from blocking her path. Her eyes, which were previously focused elsewhere, now focused on me, narrowing with an air of superiority.

"So, you really are a student." She recognized me for being the pizza delivery girl. "Aren't you done with the pizza thing yet?"

"No," I interrupted with a touch of boredom. "It's not about the pizza..."

"Alright." The mean girl looked over my head ignorantly, as if she believed we had nothing unresolved between us.

That was true, but...

"I have something to ask you."

She wasn't listening to me; she was even extending her arm to push me away.

"My answer is no."

How mean!

How cruel! She even pushed me so hard!

"Can you withdraw from the race, please?" It was a request that made the girl turn around to look me in the eyes. She didn't say anything this time, just frowned. It was clear that she either didn't understand me or thought I was being nosy. But she was listening.

That was strange.

"You'll get hurt, you know?"

I wasn't good at showing compassion at all.

"Everyone will laugh at you."

But I was worried about her.

"If something happens to your leg, everything will be in vain."

It felt like...

She had been falling repeatedly during this race.

I don't really like her, but I didn't think she was someone who deserved criticism for her efforts. She shouldn't be trapped by students' underestimation.

"You shouldn't try too hard."

That was the first time I was worried about someone other than my little sister. "Please don't run just because someone dares you to do so."

I turned back time because her eyes seemed full of pain. But Four still kept her poker face.

"Are you crying for me? Is that pizza order that important to you? Good. I will pay for it."

**That's not it, idiot!**

"Give me your account number."

If she couldn't hear my inner voice, I wished she could read my eyes!

"Actually, I'm not the type of girl who is easily moved. But I lied to you about the delay in delivery, so I will refund your money."

**Wait. Did she lie? Bitch. Damn bitch. Worst bitch ever!**

But anyway, I really didn't want to see her collapse. More importantly, I couldn't go back in time again, but she ignored me and advanced towards the referee.

"This was the first time I cried for another person," I declared with feigned strength. As she passed by me, she finally stopped walking.

Our backs were facing.

"Consider it compensation for your lie. Please don't join the race."

"Ridiculous," she snapped, dismissing my request as nonsense. Then she walked away and headed toward someone she was willing to chat with: her friend, the referee.

Turning my back, I watched what had happened earlier. The same conversation where Khun asked me to stay and watch the race. It took Khun a while to catch up to me. He seemed to doubt why I changed my mind and hurried to leave.

I stayed silent, watching the girl I went back in time for, only to find her tightening her shoelaces even tighter. Believing a stranger's words must be a challenge. My tears stopped flowing even before Khun arrived. Without suspecting anything, he insisted that I watch the race from the stands. The same persuasion as before.

"No, I don't want to see it," I decided to refuse this time.

"Why?"

The whistle blew.

"I just don't want to. That's all."

To tell the truth, I even stayed away from the tracks. I didn't want to witness what I had already seen. If that fool believed that I simply cried for compensation, I would leave her alone! I would just let her fall and break her leg! She deserves it!

"Jattawa, look! The girl in the fourth lane didn't make a move!" Khun's loud scream prevented me from moving forward.

My eyes widened in surprise. I turned around to see what was happening. My evil soulmate remained in its original position. The tall figure rose from the initial pose. Lost in thought, staring at the court with a genuine desire to prove herself in front of the team of physical education students.

Four seemed ready to rush forward at any moment, but she might be having trouble with her inner self or something else, which made her stay still.

She chose to stay there until her friend, the referee, shouted into the megaphone asking her what had happened. The public went crazy again. Someone wondered out loud why the hell she joined the race and stayed there.

"It's none of your business!"

And that is her response. She managed to silence both the referee and the entire public in the grandstands.

In Thai, the word 'See' means four, and 'Maysa' means April. Therefore, the name Seemaysa signifies Four's birthday, which falls on April 4th.

# Chapter V : The Matter of Necessity

**POV : Jattawa**

"Vi, give me a piece of paper. I need to talk to you," I told my sister. She looked puzzled by my request.

Regardless, she tore half a page out of her task book and handed it to me, along with a pen.

Having returned from my part-time job washing dishes, I still had enough energy to engage in this conversation. I sat on our bed and drew a circle on the paper with her pen.

Vi came over, curious to see what I was doing. "What is that? A meatball?" she asked.

"A meatball, really? No, this represents the period of time in which we live!"

"Ah, a period of time. What's next?"

This time with a red pen, I drew another circle on top of the previous one.

"I feel that the world has witnessed this scenario countless times before."

"That's crazy! I mean, you are the only one who can go back in time in this world. Maybe you've done it so many times that it's screwing your head. Don't worry, sister! By the way, did you manage to save Four today? How did it go? Was she nice to you?"

"Come on! Give me a break! This is a serious matter!" I retorted, letting out a deep sigh. Perhaps this déjà vu effect was a consequence of the reversal of time. Vi's suggestion might contain some truth.

"How could she be kind to me! She is as bad as everyone says. She even did a scam with a pizza order. She is not only evil, but she is also tremendously good at that!"

"Don't judge a book by its cover, sister," Vi advised.

"Hmm, why don't you talk to her yourself?" Her personality is anything but friendly—only her deep eyes had a touch of attractiveness. That was it.

"She may have a difficult past. That's why she is expressed that way..." Vi reasoned.

"To hell with that!" I countered. "I bet she's been getting on people's nerves and earning a lot of hate. It would be better if you take another look at your sketch. Are you sure it really is her?"

"It's definitely her. Otherwise, how would you know that today she would break your leg?"

"Right."

"But she didn't break her leg, did she? I'm sure you helped her. Now tell the story; How did it go?"

In the end, I couldn't resist my only sister and told her what happened to Four. I also mentioned that she decided not to participate in the race as a way to compensate for the pizza order, so we were no longer in debt (at least that was my assumption).

Somehow, Vi found the story romantic.

"Romantic?" I questioned.

Being in tears before a stranger, begging her not to join the race... is that considered 'romantic'?

How had I never noticed before?

While I was waiting for my lovely personal chef to prepare dinner, my Facebook timeline showed me images and posts that reported how Four stood still at the starting point during the race.

The post was shared by Kawee. Many students and outsiders delighted in posting heated comments. They criticized Four for their audacity to participate in the race from the beginning.

That strangely hurt me too, maybe because it was me who begged her.

"She went crazy! I also heard her yelling at the audience in the stands. She probably wanted to slap athletes, like before," one comment read.

The comment made me frown. No, there were actually a lot of them.

"I thought she was just looking for fights with volleyball players. Does she want to fight with the runners now?"

"Why doesn't she get banned from the whole university? I've seen that clip. She is a real gangster! A real black hole!"

That clip?

"Let's eat!" A cheerful voice diverted my attention from the comments. I decided to save the clip information for later. I had no idea how serious the aggression could have been for someone to speak so badly about her to such an extent.

Tonight, we had canned fish again. Vi garnished it with a bit of hot sauce and served it on steamed rice. It filled us pretty well.

"By the way, I feel as if someone had been visiting our house," my sister said as she finished her meal. I was still cleaning my plate.

"Why?" I asked.



"The bathroom door was left open. A bottle of water disappeared from the refrigerator. The lights were on," she explained.

"Maybe he has been here," I assumed he also had the key to this house.

My suspicion did not last long. As soon as I handed my plate to be washed, I picked up my phone and dialed his number. It took a while for him to respond.

"Hello, uncle. It's me, Wa," I said.

[Umm,] his voice sounded strangely light and uncertain. He was usually an eloquent and direct man.

"Have you visited us today?"

[Well, that's right,] he admitted.

"What's up?"

[...]

Then he stayed silent, leaving me waiting for several minutes. I couldn't help but regret the money I spent on this call, as it abruptly cut our conversation short.

[I'll call you tomorrow.] his last word before ending the call.

At first, I didn't suspect anything. I decided to call Aunt Tui and inform her that the next day I would like to take a day off because we would return home together to prepare dinner and a refreshing drink for our beloved uncle.

However, right now, with his anxious face, Uncle revealed the most frightful news that we could ever imagine:

"I am going to sell this house," he declared.

"What!?" Vi and I exclaimed in unison.

"Yesterday, I had the agent come to see the house. Despite its excellent location, right in the center of town with all the amenities nearby, he thinks this place is old and needs a lot of repairs. He is willing to pay in cash for which he lowered the price from 4 million to 2.5 million baht," he explained.

My sister approached and grabbed my arm anxiously. She was afraid of what he was about to say. I had to face it immediately!

"But wait! This is our dad's house! It should be transferred to my name, right? Plus, lowering the price from 4 to 2.5 million is outrageous! You wouldn't dare sell it, would you?"

**What kind of deal was this? It was a house, not a grocery item! It was completely crazy!**

"Answer me!" I demanded. "Tell me you won't sell this house!"

The old man avoided eye contact. His worried expression reflected a feeling of despair.

"My son got a girl pregnant," he confessed.

"What?" I exclaimed.

"The girl's parents are asking for a dowry of a million baht."

I swallowed hard, and my hand grabbed my sister's back tightly. Vi also clung to my arm more firmly.

"I have no choice but to sell this house and share some money with you two,"

"What if I refuse?"

"I'm sorry, Wa. But your father legally transferred the house to my name. That makes me the rightful owner,"

Was he really going to use the law against a law student like me?

"But his intention to pass it on to me in the future counts as his will," I argued.

"No," the uncle shook his head and finally looked us in the eye.

"Did you ever wonder why you have not legally received your inheritance, even though your father has been missing for more than five years? Why haven't I transferred it to your name?"

Of course, I was wondering... but throughout all these years, the guy had been very nice to us.

"Because it's just his words. There is no evidence, written documents. You may remember that I told you about your father's intention to inherit it, but I can still tell the court that I have never made such a claim,"

"Uncle, you..."

"Once again, I apologize. For the last few years, I have been giving you money for no hidden reason. My wife scolds me for it every month. But the current circumstances leave me no other option,"

"But where are we going? You told us that your wife doesn't want us to live with you, right? Even if we end up sleeping on the street, are you really going to sell this house?" Vi suddenly exploded, tears running down her cheeks.

This middle-aged man was my father's younger brother, a member of our family whom we trusted unconditionally. But everything had changed. Although we never anticipated that he would betray us in this way, his response pierced us like an icy wind:

"I said I would share some money with you. Now both of you are adults. I also have to consider my own family. It's time for you to manage your own lives,"

## **One week later.**

That house was full of our precious memories. Despite its age and small size, it was where Vi and I grew up together. We used to grow sacred basil in our garden and help each other fix our chronically defective lights there.

It was quite sad that we had to move simply because its rightful owner was our own uncle. He made this decision for the good of his son. His action was justified by his family. We, who had overwhelmed him all this time, had to bow our heads and let it go.

Although I made an effort, that night, I went back in time to record our conversation on my phone. I hid it in my pants pocket and waited for him to mention Dad's inheritance.

Unfortunately, my uncle noticed that there was a hidden communication device in my pocket. Even though there was nothing suspicious, he became paranoid. Wasn't I carrying my phone with me in the previous round? That's why he carelessly released it. But this time, there was a glimpse of contemplation in his eyes. He took a moment to order his thoughts before making a clear statement:

"I never said your dad intended to pass it on to you. You must be mistaken, Wa," he claimed.

His words held no weight for us in court. In the end, I had to endure his cold statement once again, that we should fend for ourselves.

The concept of family had been completely destroyed. But upon further reflection, I realized that it was natural for him to prioritize his immediate family instead of burdening them with our struggles.

The portion we received was 300,000 baht. His wife was very cunning. She scolded us for selling our electronic devices to earn some money. She asked why we didn't leave some for the newcomer. To make matters worse, she even reminded us of the money her husband sent us every month. I remained silent, listening calmly while sitting at the counter of 7-Eleven with Vi.

The call finally ended when the credits ran out on the other end.

"Where should we go now?" my sister asked, her eyes puffy from crying. She hadn't gone to school that day. Neither had I. While holding her pig plush and resting her chin on my shoulder.

My bank account had only about 340,000 baht (we managed to get around 40,000 baht selling our electronic devices). From that moment on, we wouldn't have anyone to support us every month.

"I hate the fact that we don't have our own bed," Vi expressed.

"Don't worry. Let's find an air-conditioned apartment. Remember how you've always dreamed of having one?" I offered the best encouragement I could give at that moment.

"And Wi-Fi too?"

"No problem. Let's find a place with Wi-Fi."

"I want a double bed. I want to sleep with you."

"Don't make me cry, brat!"

"Good. We will have everything you want."

"Is there an affordable apartment like that in Bangkok?"

"College dorms are like that. But if you can't stay there, I won't consider it either."

"No, we can find a normal apartment. I agree with that. I will leave school and look for a job on your behalf. Once you graduate and become a licensed lawyer, we can move to a new place with air conditioning and Wi-Fi."

Damn it. I had held back my tears for a long time, but now they burst forth from the innocence in Vi's gaze and her selfless thoughts.

My determination wavered.

"Sillyhead. I can afford to send you to school. Why would you give up, huh?"

"Well, your future is more important than mine."

"I'm your older sister. We are in this together. Your future matters to me too."

"Wow..." Vi whispered, and we hugged each other tightly as tears streamed down our faces.

I gently caressed Vi's hair, hoping to ease her stress from our financial situation. The money we had was not enough to support us properly, considering that we were young and still studying. But as her older sister, it was my responsibility to take care of her, my only family member, even if it meant working harder or taking on more exhausting jobs.

"Let's stop stressing!" I declared, determined to face the challenges ahead with a positive mindset.

Life went on, and that house was no longer ours. Dad had been missing for so long, leaving us as a burden on our uncle's shoulders. It was fair that he received some compensation from us.

In the last few days, I had been searching for an apartment before our last day in our house. However, most of the options I found were not acceptable. Some places were very cheap but were surrounded by partying and drinking.

Others were in Motorpunk communities. The moderately priced ones were already occupied, and those close to schools or universities were too expensive.

Fortunately, it seemed that fate was not completely against us.

Finally, we found an apartment, our new place to live, not far from Vi's school.

We were very lucky because Vi had a friend whose mother owned the place. When she saw my sister, we were warmly welcomed.

"Let me tell you something. Actually, this apartment was extremely expensive. Perhaps the connection of being 'friends' softened her heart. She offered us a fifty percent discount!" Vi explained.

"Are you close to this friend of yours?"

"Not really. We're not even in the same class."

"So, why did her mom give us such a generous discount?"

"Well, in ninth grade, we went to camp, and that night this girl stopped breathing while she slept. It so happened that I slept in the same tent. Remember when you taught me CPR? That night, I had to do it for the first time in my life. The doctor later told her mom that she survived because I did it correctly."

Ah, so Vi saved her friend's daughter from death.

CPR was a basic life-saving technique that involved chest compressions with both hands. I had taught Vi in case an incident occurred, considering there were only two of us in the house. It turned out that it not only helped us find a place to live but also created a connection with Vi's friend's family.

Believe it or not, this apartment had everything I had longed for my entire life. The cool breeze from the air conditioning made us feel like we were in the sky. The Wi-Fi was powerful and completely free. There was even a double bed, a water heater, and a small pantry. Good heavens! How did we get so close to luxury?

After organizing our small collection of clothes in the closet, my little nightingale, who was now satisfied with our new home, no longer felt depressed. She turned to me on the bed, muttering about dinner.

"Sister, can you go buy something for me to cook? I'm starving."

"Choose one. Canned fish or eggs?" I offered.

"Consuming too much of the same thing can cause health problems," she replied.

"Okay. Then I will buy some rice to eat with soy sauce," I suggested.

"No!" she screamed, jumping. "Eggs are fine. Get some pork or sausages too. I'll fry them. Oh, and grab some condiments too. I didn't bring anything from home. Don't forget the pepper! Let's use soy oil..."

I ended up jotting down a long shopping list that my little sister rattled off like magic spells. The list was as long as my arm.

Having found an affordable and conveniently located apartment, I felt relieved and no longer stressed. I hummed happily under the air conditioning, and the beautiful scene made me smile uncontrollably.

I was glad that my little one wasn't sad anymore.

But then, my smile suddenly froze in the air when I came face to face with a neighbor in the hallway. It must have been someone who liked to combine a college shirt with shorts. This girl was holding a garbage bag in her left hand.

The beauty with an antagonistic look narrowed her eyes at me, as if she remembered me very well.

"Four..."

She was the only woman who could get on someone's nerves with just a look. Is she the maid of this mansion? Why was this world so small? I couldn't believe it!

"Hey, throw this away for me," she said, shamelessly asking for my help.

Not to mention the unresolved pizza order scandal: now she dared to approach me so shamelessly!

hmmmm



# Chapter VI : Last time you didn't Smile

## POV : Jattawa

Unintentionally, I realized that the garbage bag Four had blatantly asked me to throw away was not filled with garbage. When I opened it, I found a large amount of familiar luxury clothing. The price tags were in dollars, and each item was worth around ten thousand baht when converted.

Holy bananas!

Not only was she devious, but she was also completely crazy.

How could I throw away those items?

No, where did she acquire them in the first place? Did she steal them from the owner of the mansion she used to work for? And now she wanted me to dispose of them!

What if the security cameras had filmed me red-handed?

Unfortunately, Jattawa Piengpradabkwan would become their scapegoat. If I were left abandoned and jailed without bail, I would have no chance of achieving my dream job as a lawyer.

Realizing the possible consequences, I returned to the third floor and knocked on the door of the opposite room, determined to confront its occupant face to face.

When Four opened the door and saw it was me, her face instantly contorted with a mixture of irritation and disdain. “What do you want?”

“Just get rid of them yourself,” I replied.

“Is it really that hard? Just throw them in the trash?”

“Not really, but I have no idea where you got them from. If you are truly innocent, then dispose of them yourself.”

“You’re thinking too much.”

Arguing with someone like Four, with her irritating tone and expression, made my head feel like a volcano about to explode. “You said you worked at that mansion where I delivered the pizza. That means you’re not rich. If you suddenly have these items and you no longer live there, it could imply that you stole them and ran away.”

“You’d better write a short story and send it to Kai Hua Roh. You could win 2000 baht,” she sarcastically replied.

~

**Translator's Note :**

**Kai Hua Roh** - content is a comic strip that offers humorous aspects of life, popular culture, society, politics, entertainment, and news.

“Ha! Oh really?”

“Are you going to say it’s all my imagination? Anyway, take care of your own trash,” I added.

Honestly, my arm was already sore from holding the bag for so long.

Her beautiful eyes, as if filled with the entire universe, looked at the garbage bag.

“It’s yours,” she said.

“Huh?” I questioned.

“Whatever’s inside, it’s yours. But don’t wear them because I would have to see you wearing them every day. You can sell them. Just keep them out of my sight.”

“I will not accept stolen goods,” I asserted.

“I already left that mansion. The lady of the house just returned from Los Angeles. She gave me all this.”

“Oh, sure?”

“They are genuine,” she added.

Well, they would definitely fetch a good price. I wanted to keep them, but I was afraid she had stolen them.

“But remember, we are not friends. Never knock on my door again. It’s annoying. Otherwise, you won’t have the chance to make that confused face in front of me anymore.” She clearly wasn’t joking, but damn it! I couldn’t contain my laughter any longer. I burst into a big, hearty laugh.

“What are you laughing at?” Four asked, clearly annoyed by my laughter. Her eyebrows furrowed even more, and her gaze was fueled by the desire to fight and tinged with spite. I managed to suppress my impulsive laughter and presented her with a reasonable argument.

“It’s just a knock on the door. You don’t have to threaten me like that.”

“I hate it.”

“Well, then you shouldn’t have a door.”

Oh shit! Just the slight narrowing of her eyes almost made me faint!

No, I wasn’t delighted. I was just afraid of being slapped like a volleyball bouncing on the court.

“I apologize...” Feeling the unsettling silence from Four, I gave up and offered an apology, my eyes looking toward the ground.

“What is your course?” Four asked.

Now, I also remained silent, unsure of how to respond.

“Answer me! Are you suddenly turning deaf!?”

“Why do you ask?” I finally mustered the courage to ask.

“You have a big mouth.” Her finger pointed toward me.

Personally, I believed that people wouldn’t hastily slap someone unless they were truly on bad terms. But now, under the pressure of her convincing voice, I changed my mind. I felt the need to go back in time and undo what I did. That’s how it is. I was going back in time to control my laughter. I didn’t laugh at Four’s serious statement to never knock on her door.

But the result was...

Our conversation instantly came to an end. Four slammed the door in my face and retreated to her room. I was relieved to no longer have to endure her wrath. I exhaled deeply, emptying my lungs completely. A feeling of relief washed over my entire body.

However, my tranquility was abruptly interrupted as the door opened once again.

Calm down, Jattawa. You’ve already gone back in time. Don’t keep fighting anymore. Those fierce eyes can’t hurt you.

“What is your course?” Four asked, looking at me with a serious expression.

Oh!?

Did I accidentally say something to make her angry again? Why did she open the door and ask me the same question? I was bewildered and terribly confused. I couldn’t help but give her an answer to satisfy her curiosity.

“I am specializing in law,” I replied.

Four nodded in response. “What is your name?”

“Jattawa.”

“I’m curious.”

If Vi were there, she would describe the expression on my face as someone who had their mouth full of salt and couldn’t speak. Everything was getting really strange.

Repeating the same question even after the reversal of time could be interpreted in two ways: either it was pure coincidence or she really wanted to get to know me...

“What’s wrong with a senior wanting to meet a freshman?” she added.

I shook my head quickly as if trying to put out a fire. How should a freshman properly introduce herself to an intimidating upperclassman?

Was that okay?

“Hello! My name is Jattawa Piengpradabkwan. You can call me Wa. I am a law student. I just moved here today. Nice to meet you.”

No! That sounded so strange, Jattawa!

For a brief moment, Four’s arrow-shaped lips formed a smile on the right side.

But why didn’t she smile last time?

**18:50**

“Whoa, I forgot to add garlic while frying the egg! It’s already cooked and completely ruined! Can you go back in time to let me know, please?” Vi exclaimed.

This little brat...

Did she see my power as her culinary assistant? I paused to dig through the trash bag and yelled at my sister, who was making dinner in the kitchen.

“No! That’s ridiculous!”

“But you’ve done it before!”

Well, that day I had already gone back in time.

Do you know what happened next? Although I rejected her request, she still asked me about the origin of this huge pile of clothes after dinner. I closed my eyes, pursed my lips, and gathered my thoughts before opening them. I told her, my happy and innocent sister, the truth.

“It’s from Four,” I explained.

“Wow!” Vi exclaimed. “That’s so romantic! She bought you clothes!”

Wait! Listen to your big sister first!

“Oh really? Putting them in the trash bag like this clearly shows that you were planning to throw them away. She simply gave them to me, telling me not to use them. She said they could be sold. Just keep them out of her sight.”

“Keep them out of sight... Why?” Vi asked, moving closer to me and sitting on the floor in front of me. She opened the garbage bag wide to see what was inside.

“Everything is new.”

“I have an idea,” Vi began, excitement in her voice. “This has something to do with your future soulmate. You should pay attention.”

The only thing I had learned that day was that the reversal of time couldn’t stop her from asking me the same question.

“By the way, I saw Four getting hurt in my vision before. The fact that you can go back in time to avoid it means that we can change our future,” Vi

explained, using gestures to illustrate the scenes. “I’m starting to doubt my visions. Which one is true and which one isn’t?”

“I can’t say for sure,” I replied honestly.

“Huh?”

I started with my index finger.

“First of all, I will definitely become a lawyer. There’s no way I’m going to change my mind and become a prosecutor. Your vision is false.” Then my middle finger followed. “Secondly, I’m not Four’s soulmate.”

“Why? Don’t you like girls?”

“What? No! It is not like that! Regardless of gender, I just don’t see any chance of us being together. A mean girl is not my type—she’s even a pizza cheater and an infamous troublemaker with a long history of fights.”

“But, at the end of the day, people tend to forget about their types and will choose to live with someone they love.”

“You have read too many novels.”

“You are going to say it yourself next week.”

“Hey!? Absolutely not! Work and studies already seem overwhelming to me. Right now I don’t care about love.”

“Let’s make a bet. If you say so, you have to buy me crab meat for dinner all week. And you also have to take me to the movies. I have never been to the cinema even once in my life.”

No way, I wouldn’t make a bet, and I wouldn’t swear to ever say it either. Who knows? I might come across that cheesy line in a book or something.

We sisters managed to sell all those luxury clothes in just one day on the Internet. Now we have more money.

Hurrah! Because of that success, the idea of earning additional income arose in my head.

Lately, I have been setting my alarm for around 5 AM. Every morning, I get up early, put on my university uniform, and make some ham and egg sandwiches. I buy the ingredients at a discounted member price at a nearby convenience store. My goal is to sell them as a morning snack at my university.

Many students enjoy my sandwiches. They eat them while working on their reports or whatever task they have. A sandwich is a simple and convenient option for them. It even offers garbage removal services if requested.

My regular customer for the past three days has been a certain guy.

“Why are the egg fillings a little bland today?”

Khun, I’m not sure why he has been buying my sandwiches, maybe because of our friendship. But I am really grateful to him. Since he started walking with me, my sandwiches have been selling like hotcakes even before school starts.

Most of the customers, from freshmen to upperclassmen, are those who are interested in him. But he always stays silent and gives me a slight glance.

Why was he looking at me?

“Friend, you should make a larger amount.”

“It would be a terrible disaster if they don’t sell.”

I had to confess that we have become quite informal with each other. He started first. If he remained formal, it would be strange. So, I played along.

“Anyway, about the part-time job I mentioned last time, could you help me find one?”



“Only full-time positions available.”

“OK, that’s fine. Thank you.”

“If you really want to show your gratitude, put some mayonnaise on this sandwich. Don’t forget it ever again!”

Wow, he have ended up buying that unfortunate sandwich.

To be honest, I didn’t forget to put some mayonnaise on it. That morning, I carefully prepared the sandwiches one by one. However, the mayonnaise ran out before the last one could finish. I placed it in the basket with the perfect ones, with the goal of saving it for my own lunch.

Unfortunately, Khun was unlucky enough to pay for that particular sandwich and choose it with his own hands. I wanted to warn him, but he ate it right away. That’s why I decided to keep my mouth shut.

We walked along the balcony of the law studies floor. We weren’t in a hurry because we still had half an hour before our class started.

“By the way, regarding Four, who you mentioned before...” As soon as I heard her name, I immediately turned to Khun. “I’ve done a little research on her. It’s a girl, right? A senior business major and, more importantly, a dangerous woman.”

“Is that bad?” I asked.

“Yes, haven’t you seen that video?” Khun replied.

As soon as he finished speaking, he picked up his phone, unlocked the screen, and started playing a clip. He gestured for me to come closer as we walked.

It was a short presentation video for the quota athletes of our university. I wasn’t sure how old the clip was, and I wasn’t particularly interested because I couldn’t see that fierce girl.

But then a girl with perfect skin and Chinese features appeared, probably popular with many men. She was smiling at the camera, about to introduce herself.

“Hello, my name is Kie...”

“Fuck you, Kie!!!”

Then, the center of our previous conversation erupted with anger. She vehemently shouted someone’s name, her fury clearly evident.

The camera focused on Four, impeccably dressed in her college uniform. Back then, she still had bangs covering her eyebrows. She didn’t pay attention to the welcome activities at their booth, instead expressing her frustration by saying “Fuck you, Kie!!!” and ripping off the collar of his shirt. She looked extremely furious, as her eyes turned completely red.

The camera shook, as if the cameraman’s hands were shaking.

“Why did you do that to me?”

It was a rhetorical question. Within seconds of her question, a forceful palm hit Kie’s left cheek, causing her to fall to the ground.

And that was the end of the clip.

“Is that bad enough, Miss Jattawa?” Khun asked. “Now that you know, don’t go asking about her. If she said to you ‘Fuck you, Wa!!!’ I doubt anyone would come to rescue you.”

What did I learn from that clip?

Oh, now I realized that when Four screamed, the tendons in her neck became visible, and that was strangely sexy.

**Damn. What the hell was I thinking?**

Let’s start over.

Normally, I was very focused on my law classes. But not that day. I asked Khun to send me that clip, and he shared it with me as a direct message on Twitter. That day's lesson was completely ignored as I borrowed Khun's headphones.

I discreetly placed my small phone under the desk and watched the video one more time.

To everyone else, her shout "Fuck you, Kie!!!" and her behavior clearly portrayed her as hopelessly immoral.

However, if you played this clip multiple times and watched it carefully over and over for an hour like I had just done, Four's words "Fuck you, Kie!!!" seemed to have a totally different meaning.

Her eyes didn't turn red with fury...

They turned red because she was crying.

Beneath those eyes of hers, I felt something peculiar, as if I knew her better than anyone. This short one-minute video, quickly judged by so many people, seemed to hide something behind it. For some reason, I felt undeniable anger towards this girl named 'Kie'.

But I just don't know the fucking reason yet.

## Chapter VII : Someone who Outshines

That day, Aunt Tui's house was much more crowded with customers than usual. A K-pop idol group was holding a welcome party at a nearby shopping mall, which naturally attracted their fans to this area to fill their bellies after enjoying the show.

My workload increased. Now I had to wash dishes, serve customers, and prepare ingredients all at the same time. I repeatedly cut up the red pork, boiled the meatballs, and ran to buy ice to keep the baskets full.

Not only was I extremely exhausted, but one customer even put me down. I had changed into my casual clothes because I didn't want my college uniform to get dirty. That woman, accompanied by her elementary school-aged daughter, pointed her finger at me while they ate their dumplings.

She told her daughter, "Noodee, you better study hard. Otherwise, you'll end up like her."

What kind of person was I? One who earned the highest score on the law school entrance exam and will one day become a lawyer? When that happens, I wouldn't look down on others like she had on me.

"Four had just sneaked out of his room after being home for a while. A huge

black Lamborghini stopped to take her away. Could it be someone from her family? That means she's rich, right? We're hitting the jackpot!" My sister ran to me and forcefully told me the news.

I had just returned home from my part-time job and hadn't even had a chance to sit down and relax yet. My eyebrows knitted together.

"She's just a part-time companion like me. She is not a rich girl," I replied.

"Are you saying I was daydreaming?"

"Yeah."

"What if I really saw it?"

"Go ahead and hit me in the face with your bare foot."

I threw down the challenge with confidence. However, that night, thunder rumbled, and I had to wake up to pick up the clothes hanging on the balcony. It was pouring rain, and I was in a hurry.

Despite the dark and rainy night, an elegant black Lamborghini found its place in the apartment's parking lot. The driver's side door opened in an instant.

A man in a white shirt and an extravagant tie came out and quickly unfurled an umbrella for the girl jumping on the opposite side. Four got out of the car. She was wearing an off-the-shoulder dress, not too short but short enough to have some freedom. She had always been taller, but now she had added a pair of black high heels to complete her formal ensemble.

"I don't need an umbrella," Four muttered, sounding annoyed.

"If you catch a cold, it will hurt me too," the boy spoke in a soft and charming tone.

He had that playboy vibe, the kind who knows how to charm the ladies.  
"Allow me to accompany you to your room."

"Can you please stop that, Pak? We are no longer at the party, and no one is watching us. We don't have to be glued to each other."

"I don't think it's strange to accompany you home because I'm worried about you. You're my fiancée."

Her fiancée... Did he just say that?

Somehow, it felt like the entire sky was throwing a starry tantrum. Did she really tell me she was my soulmate?

Her vision was not at all accurate.

Or maybe she just lied to me.

"If you're worried that I might take advantage of you, you're wrong," Four replied. "And? Even if I'm wrong, I know you only agreed to our engagement because my grandfather is fighting advanced liver cancer. Everyone can see what you're looking for. Well... you're a lawyer. You should know well that marriage requires the consent of both parties, not just a decision decreed by the family."

Damn! He was also a lawyer and could keep Four talking for a long time. That was pretty impressive. This Pak guy just wouldn't back down.

"Anyway, you ran away to live here alone. You don't even have a car. Let me take you home from now on," he said.

"Have you even bothered to ask my permission?" Four replied.

"If you are upset with your family, please do not unleash your fury against me. I understand; there is tension in the air, but I am not part of that mess. I understand how you feel, Four," he said.

"Then you must know that our commitment is the fundamental cause of this turmoil," Four retorted.

The argument with the quiet guy finally came to an end. Four, tired of the world, quickly got out of the umbrella and went up the stairs. The man

sighed deeply and stood there nervously in the heavy rain for a while. Finally, he decided to start his car and leave.

I couldn't help but question the true financial status of Four. How could an ordinary maid end up engaged to the owner of a supercar thanks to some twisted paternal agreement?

A huge mansion. Wardrobes full of opulent clothes. It seemed like she was hiding her true family background.

Speaking of Pak, he had that undeniable air of elegance and sophistication, the kind that would make any little girl's parents swoon. And to top it off, he was a lawyer, a very stable job that I had been dreaming of.

How was I supposed to compete with that?

Wait a second. Why should I compete with him? I just claimed that Four was my future soulmate. It didn't mean I was madly in love with her or anything like that.

However, that night, it seemed as if the stars themselves had crashed, lost in the darkness with no way to find their way back to the sky.

I was lying there, wide awake, feeling completely defeated by someone who dwarfed me in every way possible.

### **One day later...**

Last time, I managed to go back in time and desperately convince Four not to join the race. That would mean that Khun never befriended the four-eyed boy in this timeline.

However, I finally realized that destiny always follows its own plan and nothing could thwart their inevitable friendship. Coincidentally, the guy was

now having breakfast in the main canteen, so Khun insisted that I join him there.

His name was Joey, and he gave off an aura of shyness and quietness. What people didn't know was that he was a game casting wizard and was proficient in both console and PC gaming. And here's the most interesting part: he was a business student.

"Business major? You know Four, then?" I asked.

Joey adjusted his glasses and kept his eyes fixed on the screen, but his lips parted to respond, "Actually, yes."

"Are you close?"

"No, she has her own team." He paused, letting out a small curse as he missed a crucial shot. "The Four Snakes."

"I'm not very familiar with them," I said, remembering my mentor mentioning them once or twice.

"Stop by our business major cafeteria for something to eat. You will find them there."

If I went, Four would definitely mark me as a nosy law student who had nothing to do with her department.

"She's probably there with her friends, like every morning," Joey continued.

"Do you see them there often?"

"Not really; they have quite a reputation. They make fun of freshmen, seek revenge from page administrators, and commit all kinds of sins. They've slapped a quota athlete, slept on library shelves, never returned rented bikes, and even hid a professor's clothes behind the engineering workshop room..."

"Stop. That is enough for me."



"Actually, that is not even half of what they have done. Among athletes, Four is the most hated because she made her team lose but never took the blame herself."

"That is not true."

"Well, that's what everyone in our major says!"

"You shouldn't believe everything people say. They're called rumors, you know?"

"Don't know. When you look into her eyes, do you ever wonder if the rumors are really true?"

I couldn't argue with him. Four didn't seem like a good person. I rolled my eyes, doubting my own thoughts. Joey went on to tell me that no one could look at them for long from a distance of 2 meters.

Was that so? I pondered as I froze time and ran towards their canteen to see if their snake crew was there or not.

As a freshman, I was still unsure about campus placements. It could be that time had stopped, but as a time traveler, my energy was still drained. I was sweating profusely while searching until I finally found it located next to the commercial department building, a little hidden.

There were noticeably fewer people there than in the main dining room. It seemed like only business students frequented that place. God, that was so unfair! Why didn't they also build a specific dining room for law students?

That way, we wouldn't have to fight our way through the swarm of hungry zombies fighting for seats in the main canteen. Did the president's son study in that department?

After giving my tired legs a rest, I looked around as the world remained suspended in time, and there she was: the girl next door, who coincidentally never went out at the same time as me.

As I approached, I couldn't help but notice her meticulously pushing some cucumber to the edge of her plate of chicken biryani. I couldn't help but laugh. Seriously, was she a picky eater? Has she never experienced hunger in her life?

Oh? Or maybe she had never experienced hunger before.

And what was happening with her clothes? Why couldn't she button the third button on her shirt? She was practically showing off her bra! Why go to the trouble of going out late at night only to arrive at school early, looking so unpleasant and lacking energy?

I found comfort in an empty seat next to her. It was obvious that others preferred to avoid this gang. I took a closer look at the first member.

She wore a jean jacket and her face had a strikingly beautiful but hostile aura, very similar to that of Four. To be honest, Four seemed even less accessible. I figured we could judge by that infamous video of her playing the villain.

The second girl sat across from the first and exuded a beautiful presence that didn't quite match the rest of the crew. It was like a delicate flower among thorny cacti.

On the opposite side of Four sat the third girl. Her face did not show any signs of arrogance or fighting spirit, but there was an inexplicable flame within her. She seemed to me to be someone expert in the art of cursing and annoying others.

Saving Four for last, I took a moment to fully appreciate her. Well... her side profile looked quite impressive. If only people could let go of their preconceived notions that she was mean, arrogant, and unapproachable and instead look closely as I did, they would discover a whole new level of beauty hidden within our university.

Resting my chin on my hand, I looked at her frozen figure, temporarily trapped in time. I bowed my head and positioned myself to study her face closely.

In that moment suspended, she instantly became much less intimidating.

Four wore a kind of light-toned lipstick, and I think she had mastered the art of selecting the perfect shade for her. Her nose stood out prominently, like a masterpiece sculpted by the divine. Her finely shaped eyebrows did not require additional makeup. However, her most captivating feature undoubtedly lay in her eyes.

It was those fascinating eyes of hers, the ones that used to be red from crying so much before a hard slap hit Kie's face for unknown reasons.

When I looked deeply into her eyes, I felt like I had done this countless times...

Once again, I felt so uncomfortable.

Time had stopped, so I had no idea how much time had passed. I had gotten lost in the depths of her face, the face of my supposed future soulmate, according to Vi's vision. I had to admit that I had been staring for too long.

Then I realized that the tiredness from running had disappeared, and I removed my hand from my chin.

I buttoned her third button, transforming her from messy to orderly. According to our first meeting, she had unbuttoned the first two, so it must have been her style. It was amazing how perfect and superior Pak, her fiancé, seemed to be compared to me.

I was just a law student, still in the process of graduating, while he was already an experienced lawyer. I could barely take care of myself, but he seemed to possess the ability to care for and protect her. I rode around in my trusty old motorcycle, while he rode around in a multimillion-dollar Lamborghini.

I wasn't in love with the girl sitting next to me, but there was an undeniable feeling that the place next to her had always been meant for me.

Vi had suggested that it was simply a consequence of manipulating time too often – a rational explanation. But deep down, I didn't agree with her.

Still, it felt pretty strange to have been watching for this extended period; that was what brought me back to my senses.

I got up from my seat and walked back, suppressing a guttural laugh as I thought of how the merciless slapper despised cucumbers. I walked back to the main canteen without any sense of urgency, feeling enchanted by an inexplicable sense of euphoria.

The moment I let time flow normally, I was surprised by Joey greeting me.

"Where have you been?"

"What!?" My eyes widened in surprise. No way!

The four-eyed boy raised his face and removed the earphone from his right ear.

"I was talking to my playing partner. You just connected."

"Oh..."

That took me by surprise. I thought I might notice something unusual. I gave my chest a couple of gentle pats to calm myself down. Then I took a small carton of milk out of my bag, punched a hole in it, and started drinking. Although I had already had breakfast at home, I had to wait for Khun to finish his meal before going to our English class. He sat at the table with me with a bowl of curry in his hand, and we both sat across from Joey. The ambassador's son turned to his new friend and asked, "Have you ever played Cat Mario? I play it every day!"

"Just once... that damn game," Joey replied.

"Oh really? What about Dino Run? You know, the game we play when the Internet is down? Have you tried that one?"

"No."

"Well, for that game, I guess it would bother me too."

"Hey everyone!"

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a girl.

"Hello! I don't recognize any of you. And you, the sneaker girl, does that mean everyone is a freshman here?"

Kie, or as Four would say, 'Fuck you, Kie!' She was wearing her sports training uniform with the number 7 on the back, wearing a sleeveless sweatshirt and shorts. Also, black sports protectors on elbows and knees. Her skin was fair, as if she only practiced indoors.

"Yes, we are freshmen," Khun responded, pushing me lightly with his leg to remind me that she was the girl who was slapped in that viral video clip. I turned and glared at him. Of course I remembered her!

Fuck.

Kie smiled and said, "So, do any of you participate in any clubs?"

"I am," Joey responded. I heard him talking to Khun earlier about his gambling club.

"What about you two?"

"Alright. Let me introduce myself. I am the president of the volleyball club. I'm here to promote sports clubs for freshmen like you who might be interested. If volleyball doesn't appeal to you, we have other options such as archery, swimming, boxing, and various other sports clubs. You can always contact me, and I will help you connect with clubs that interest you. My name is Kie, and I am a senior majoring in arts."

I was taken aback.

"Aren't you a sports student?"

"No, we do not have a specialty dedicated to sports at our university. Where did you get that?" She showed a smile, seemingly transparent.

"Oh..."

"It's probably because people often refer to us athletes as physical education students. That could cause some confusion. No problem, feel free to use that term."

She explained, her smile still radiant. Then the china doll continued.

"By the way, I spend most of my time in the volleyball gym near the B7 building. If you are interested, please bring your student ID card when you apply."

"And..."

"Please spread the word among your friends. I won't bother you anymore. Enjoy your meal."

She radiated the energy of a lively and enthusiastic athlete as she moved on to the next group of students, extending the same invitation to join sports clubs.

Khun pulled me away from my lingering gaze.

"That's Kie... She's quite a cutie, don't you think?"

I mumbled, "Yes, more or less." But compared to Four... well, that's all I could think of. Khun raised an eyebrow at my response.

"You don't like her? Don't tell me it's some kind of female envy. You are my friend. Jealousy is not your style!"

"Jealousy? Are you serious? I'm just telling the truth."

"How true?"

The fact that her enemy was more attractive...

"Forget it," I avoided making eye contact with him. "Hurry up! Finish your meal, and let's return to our air-conditioned classroom."

"If you're jealous of her..." he continued, mocking me casually.

"No way. Don't act like you know everything."

"Any guy would fall in love with a girl like her."

"But I'm not a guy."

"Oh yeah..." Khun lowered his voice as if he had just realized that. "So you're admitting that it's a case of girl-on-girl envy?"

"Just like!"

That was annoying. That fool is really crazy. I wasn't jealous, I just didn't like her.

But why?

The next afternoon, instead of relaxing in my apartment before going to work, I was dragged to a meeting organized by the second-year students for us, the freshmen of our major. Tan handed the megaphone to another second-year girl named Kook-kai. She took charge and spoke about the key point of the meeting.

"We have the mission to find our representatives for the epic Prince and Princess Pageant. Since we are the only majors in our department, those chosen today automatically advance to the university round!"

A wave of nerves ran through the crowd. Not many of us were excited about the idea of participating in such activities. There were only a few brave souls, but they were a rare breed.

The second-year students pressured us to present 10 candidates: 5 boys and 5 girls. Then, it would be up to the public to vote for the most powerful couple. The first boy chosen by the elders was our dear Khun. He turned to me with a pleading look, as if silently begging for help. However, I just clapped and cheered him on, laughing at how he became the favorite.

Let's be realistic. All he did was give me those intense looks. How was I supposed to be his savior?

At first, I was simply enjoying the activity, scanning the stage to see who could become the princess of our specialty. Most of the girls were encouraged by their friends or volunteered. As for the prince, it was most likely our resident jokester, Corgi Khun. But as I mentioned before, our major was flooded with boys instead of girls.

### **Then, eventually, it happened...**

“We need one more girl. How should we do this? Is there no one else willing to step forward? Well... Hey, you! Girl! Yes, you, get up, please! You look charming and innocent.”

Wait a minute! Kook-Kai pointed her finger at me and motioned for me to take a step forward. I raised my eyebrows, completely perplexed. The boy next to me nodded repeatedly.

“It’s you.”

Curse! Now it was Khun’s turn to revel in my embarrassment. I reluctantly got up and waited for someone to choose me. I came here to study, not to be someone’s choice!

“Let’s do a quick simulation. I have prepared some questions for you to answer. Once you have all answered them, the audience will vote for their favorites. Easy. Now, let’s get started!”



Kook-Kai made it sound like a piece of cake, but I had never done it. In high school, I was just Jattawa, a typical student who ran to teachers asking for any chance to earn some money. Maybe that's why I never had time to make friends or join any activities.

But now, here I am, standing nervously in front of a sea of eyes.

Khun was the first of us to pick a piece of paper from the jar. Kook-Kai quickly opened it and read aloud what was written in his clear and strong voice.

“So Khun, if you could go back in time, what would you do to make a difference in this world?”

Nooooo, seriously, the one who could turn back time was standing there looking like a total fool!

Alright, let's see how our friend, Corgi Khun, handles this. Show us your cool side, man!

“Why would I want to go back in time to do something for the world? If I could really turn back time, I would use it to get more sleep. Who cares about the world? Simply throwing trash in the trash can is my way of saving the world. Not even Superman could do it better than me.”

Oh God... It was so obvious that he was just joking because he was completely upset. It was like he didn't even want to be the Prince, but I'm sorry...

“Khun is so unique!”

No matter what he did, even when he clearly showed his anger, Khun remained the heartthrob among the girls in our major. The applause for him was so deafening that I was pretty sure he would be crowned prince. When would people open their eyes? Khun was nothing special; he was just crazy!

The questions were distributed one by one, and finally, it was my turn as the last candidate. My hand shook as I grabbed a piece of paper. Kook-Kai

showed me a slight smile, as if to calm my nerves. She unfolded the paper, just as she had done with the previous nine candidates, and read the question aloud:

“What is your type?”

Vi, little trickster! You totally fooled me!

I forced a wry smile. She challenged me to reveal my type. And now I couldn't turn back.

“Well, I think... types aren't really that important.”

Thank goodness I didn't make that bet. Otherwise, I would have been totally crushed. Those words my sister said weren't the first things that popped into my head. But then, my wandering eyes landed on someone in the opposite corner...

It was the girl who absolutely despised cucumbers but decided to take a bite of a pickled cucumber from her burger. As soon as her tongue touched it, she made a hilariously disgusted face. She quickly threw it into a nearby trash can and proceeded to meticulously remove all the pickles from her burger.

She was very funny. If we ever ended up together, I might have to cut the cucumbers into very small pieces before cooking them. It felt like I had done something like this before.

Could there be more to this?

My feelings for this mysterious girl.

“Because, at the end of the day, people tend to forget about their types and choose to live with someone they love. That's all...”

I came back to reality when the muscles in my lips began to hurt from smiling so much. I looked into Kook-Kai's eyes, and she made a big “Wow!” as if she was surprised by my answer. I could hear some freshmen whisper, “That's so true.”

Then, I looked over at Khun, who gave me a thumbs up.

I must have lost my mind when I saw her, and those words just escaped me. The déjà vu continued to affect my head, leaving me completely disoriented. But do you know what the craziest part is? The result of the votes.

Prince of Law :

**Khun**

Princess of Law :

**Jattawa**

Later, I found out that most of the guys weren't moved by my answer. They simply told me I had a "lovely smile."

## Chapter VIII : The Answer

"It wasn't good," I expressed my dissatisfaction. "I wasn't okay with being labeled a princess."

When I voiced my concerns to Khun, he responded by whistling obnoxiously cheerful tunes and insisting that it was perfect for the prince and princess to be close. But I reiterated my disagreement. I didn't want to sacrifice my job washing dishes just to practice for some event every night.

As soon as Vi heard about this, she smiled knowingly and revealed that she had already seen it in her vision. She had kept it as a surprise for me. But this was not a pleasant surprise. I was not happy with this princess thing.

"Why not? What's wrong with being a princess?" Vi asked.

"I have to work."

"But you can still work on your free days?"

"If I don't go to work on some days, it means we won't make any money. We depend on ourselves, and no one is helping us. Don't forget that." Despite the gloomy mood I created, Vi remained surprisingly calm.

"Think about it like this: If you win in the university round, the reward should compensate for all the time lost and then some."

"But I'm not like the others, all neat and pretty," I lamented. My only power is to control time, and I can't even show it. How am I supposed to compete with those girls? I felt lost from the beginning. I'm just pasta without sauce, you know?"

"Huh? What's pasta without sauce?"

"So tasteless and bland."

"Ah... I'm sure you know how to make a joke. Let me give you a Russian pity joke, ha ha!"

Vi forced a smile. That darn Corgi bot Khun has rubbed off on me now.

"But many people like your smile."

"You told me that I smile as if I had something trapped between my teeth."

"That's only when you're faking it," Vi quickly clarified. "Anyway, now that you've become the princess of your major, all you need to do is win, okay?"

"No."

I still didn't feel well. And honestly, Vi's radiant smile was making me nervous, so much so that I needed to escape to the balcony.

I grabbed my phone and saw a text message from Khun. I was tired of his constant assurances that having me as a princess was great so he wouldn't get bored. Yeah, well, I'm the one who is bored now.

"Peek-a-boo. Hiding from me, huh?" Vi followed me and hugged me from behind. Her eyes were shining, but I furrowed my eyebrows in response.

"What now?"

"I just had a vision."

"What did you see?"

"Four standing on the roof of our apartment. 10:10 p.m. That's the time I saw on her wristwatch."

"Why did she go up there?"

"No idea," Vi replied. "She sat on the edge, her eyes filled with sadness, fixated on the crescent moon in the night sky. She looked beautiful. Too bad there were very few stars." The last part was just her opinion.

I put my phone down and raised my head to look at the moon. That night, it appeared as a half moon in the darkness, with no stars in sight. The shadow of the clouds loomed not far away, making the night even more misty and dark. I looked down and spoke in a monotone voice.

"It's not our business; she can do whatever she wants."

"But she is your future soulmate, sister!"

"The future is unpredictable. Didn't you just find out that I can save her from breaking her leg?"

"So you don't care if Four commits suicide? Even if she is the one at your side when you taste your first defeat in court?"

I remained silent for a long moment. Vi continued holding my gaze, waiting for my response. It was so difficult to explain, so I put on a facade of indifference and responded without making eye contact.

"It hasn't happened yet. That's why I feel indifferent towards her." It wasn't entirely true. It was just an excuse, a way to avoid the truth.

I was curious enough about her to notice the pickles on her burger, enough to ask my classmates about her. I was tired of playing that video clip of Kie getting slapped repeatedly.

Four, how had this girl managed to catch my attention?

Miss S, a sophomore who insisted on anonymity, revealed that Four once grabbed her by the chin, warning her not to expose the Serpents' secrets.

She is so terrifying yet strangely captivating.

**09:55**

A small clock on the nightstand gave off a soft glow, reminding me that 10 p.m. was approaching. I watched as the second hand moved across the dial. My little sister was sleeping soundly, hugging her precious stuffed pig and wrapping her leg around me to comfort me.

Why would Four go up to the roof? That question was spinning in my head, like the hands of the clock turning.

**10:05**

Finally, it was after 10 p.m. I contemplated it for a moment before gently moving Vi's leg from my waist. I rose to a sitting position and ran my fingers through my unruly hair.

Okay, let's go. It won't make me seem too nosy. If she's really going to jump, I'd regret lying idle on my bed.

**10:09**

The roof was on the fifth floor. As I opened the door, a gust of cool wind brushed my face, reminding me of the altitude. The roof was an empty expanse, with only a water tank and some abandoned furniture occupying the corners.

And there she was, the black hole girl of the entire university, sitting on the edge just as my little sister described. Her left hand gripped a can of beer as she took quick sips.

I approached Four, convinced that she had completely lost her mind.

"Drinking beer on the edge of the roof, aren't you afraid of falling?"

She seemed surprised by my presence, turning to me with a displeased expression and slowly lowering the beer can as if to say 'Get lost.'

"Ah," I nodded, muttering under my breath, "You're drunk."

"It is none of your business."

"If you're drunk, go back to your room. Why are you sitting here?"

"You are a real pain. Last time you asked me to withdraw from the race. Now, you show up when I want to be alone. Go back to where you were. Go away!"

"I just wanted to admire the beautiful moon tonight. If I had known that someone as unpleasant as you was sitting here, I wouldn't have wasted my time coming up."

Let's go for it, Jattawa.

Get involved in an argument that could potentially end with a slap. Then, I realized that I had let my temper get the best of me.

I quickly covered my face with my hand. But it was too late. The unfriendly girl raised her right eyebrow. Her look clearly showed that she saw through my lie.

"You have a balcony to look at the same moon. Why the hell did you have to come up here?"

"Maybe because there's an entire universe up here... and I was just afraid of losing it. It is higher and prettier."

I finished it quickly. I rested my chin on the cement edge and looked up at the sky for stars. There were only a few, as they were obscured by clouds.

Four gave me an irritated look, as if trying to scare me away. When that didn't work, she clicked her tongue in annoyance. She took another sip of beer and continued looking at the moon. Time seemed to stretch on



infinitely in this cold climate, and only silence enveloped us until she broke it. "Why?"

"What?" I was confused for a moment by that vague question. "Why for what or for whom?"

"Why did you try to dissuade me from the race?"

"Oh, it's about that."

"You were hired by the physical education students, right?"

"No."

I blurted out, my voice betraying my genuine desire for her not to misunderstand me. I was aware that I was only making everything seem more suspicious, and I lowered my voice. "Maybe because I saw you fall in one of my future visions."

"Isn't that strange?" Hearing her question, I turned to look at her side profile.

"What's wrong with that?"

"You sound worried."

I was speechless. Explaining that I had the ability to go back ten minutes in time to resolve situations would sound too fantastical. Who would believe me?

It seemed like her beer supply was running low. She placed the empty can on the opposite side, away from me, and grabbed a new one from the row on the concrete edge. She opened it and looked at me.

"Kie hired you. Just admit it."

"Huh?—"

"Why did I see through you?"

"Why didn't you stay from the beginning if you thought someone had hired me?"

Now, she was the one left speechless. She squinted, perhaps out of drowsiness, annoyance, or simply trying to see me better. I stood my ground, not afraid of this girl who was known for slapping people.

"I do not want to talk to you anymore," Four stated. "Go ahead and keep looking at the moon until you've had your fill."

Her long legs no longer dangled precariously from the edge of the roof. She walked away from me, standing tall on her feet in her college uniform, the same one she wore earlier that day. Her left hand loosely grasped the unfinished beer. Almond eyes scanned the collection of empty cans.

"Throw them for me, will you?"

I watched Four walk away, gradually disappearing from my sight. The cream-colored door was slightly ajar, as if beckoning me to return to my room as well.

She had not been able to see the universe in her eyes; it was obscured by gloomy clouds, much like the stars in the sky tonight.

After appreciating the beauty of the crescent moon for several minutes, I realized how wonderful it was to observe everything from this empty space, although I felt a little alone up here.

I approached the discarded beer cans, contemplating selling them as a set. Seriously, who in their right mind drinks alcohol in a death-defying place? Leaning out, I looked at the ground and found nothing particularly impressive about it.

Maybe she had intended to fall to the hard ground, but my arrival unexpectedly changed things. The sad eyes that Vi saw before, therefore, transformed into ones filled with anger.

"As long as other specialties keep up with their internal competencies, we still have our freedom," Khun exclaimed with a noticeable sense of relief in his voice, grateful that there were no activities that interrupted his schedule. He continued to focus on the big screen at the front of the class.

Candidates from other races were locked in an intense battle to secure their place as representatives in the university round. Meanwhile, we had been enjoying some much-needed freedom.

The elders had invited us to join their LINE group chat, instructing us to visit them when necessary. Khun's social media accounts listed in his portfolio were mere decorations. Only I knew his hidden identity on Twitter. He never bothered to respond to LINE messages or share an online monopoly game.

During our Gen-Ed class that morning, we happened to run into Joey. He didn't pay attention to the professor's lecture; instead, he buried his head and wrote down a list of games he planned to buy to stream that month. When the professor gave us a break to find his post-class exercise file, I took the opportunity to turn my attention to my quiet friend.

"What is your main interest, Joey?"

"Marketing," he responded, circling the names of two games with his red pen. "Are you going to ask about Four again? I rarely see her around here. She's a senior and she's not full of classes like us."

I wanted to act disinterested by nodding slightly as if I couldn't care less about her. But when I turned back, I was caught off guard and almost lost my balance: Khun was hovering very close, a skeptical glint in his eyes.

"You asked about Four again, right?"

"It is none of your business."

"Jattawa, spit it out."

"Spit what?"

"Yes, tell your friend now why you are so curious about her."

I gave him a blank smile, as if I had something stuck between my teeth. I processed all the events in my head. How much could I tell him without revealing my powers? I gave him a brief summary that we live in the same rooms in the apartment building, facing each other. That made Khun full of excitement.

"Don't mess with her or your face will end up getting hit."

"Why are you always so pessimistic with people?"

"Why do you defend strangers? I'm your friend."

"I'm not defending anyone. I just think you're too negative," I replied firmly. "Just a one-minute clip, how the hell would you know everything about her?"

"You've been getting on my nerves lately, Jattawa."

"You told me to speak freely, remember?"

"About that senior girl. I don't want you to mess with her or get close to her. I'm afraid you'll get hurt."

"I don't want to, but it turns out that we are neighbors. What choice do I have?"

"That's all? Are you not interested in her at all?"

"No, I'm not." Would he believe what I was saying?

"You are a liar."

"Why would I lie to you?"

"Now I remember that in the audition race for the runners, Four was the fourth runner who did not start the race. You ran there just to see her, right? Not only do you have good taste, but you're also a..."

"Shut up! Now I know why your damn mom or maybe your damn dad called you Khun. You sure squawk like a talkative myna bird."

Giving me an intense look with those fiery eyes, the cute and smart guy finally backed away, muttering to himself under his breath. But, being the dumb friend that he is, he accidentally blurted out a sentence that was stronger than intended, almost as if he wanted me to understand it.

"You are like the Moon, you know?"

Why the Moon?

What was happening with the Moon?

The Moon was much prettier than me.

Above all, it fulfilled its great duty, faithfully rotating around the Earth, since it was a satellite.

English was not my strong subject. However, when I studied for the entrance exam, I learned from law textbooks the importance of foreign languages for lawyers. We couldn't afford to show up in court looking clueless, armed only with a "Yes," a "No," an "Okay," or a "Really?" in our vocabulary.

Khun, on the other hand, was dragged into an intensive English course on his father's orders. He wasn't a genius in the language either, but hey, money had come to the rescue. Who says you can't buy your way out of everything?

And as for me, I approached a friendly-looking English teacher. Because I often worked with adults, I was skilled at sharing my story and seeking advice at the same time.

The teacher advised me to first focus on memorizing the vocabulary. He suggested that I approach the vocabulary head-on, starting from my freshman year, not with frantic haste, but with steady effort. He also recommended an excellent novel in English that I could buy or borrow from the university library. The vocabulary in that book wasn't too difficult, so I should be able to delve deeper into each sentence.

I thanked him for the advice, and in the afternoon, I hurried to the air-conditioned library. Our library had several floors with elevators. Wow! I felt so close to luxury!

Foreign novels were kept there. I dove into them carefully. Sometimes the titles could be in English but were actually translations from other languages.

"Thank you, Ma'am," I gave the young librarian a smile and followed her navigation instructions.

Now, where could I find 'Mr. If Not Now, Then When?'

"Jeans!"

As I ran my finger along the spine of the book, my attention was suddenly caught by a noise coming from the opposite side.

I started, but I still managed to suppress my "eeks." In an instant, I recognized the voice, none other than that of my neighbor, an expert in slapping. How could I forget her when we had a late-night talk just the day before?

"Is this the book you are looking for?" Four's voice rang out, followed by the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Aha, but I need volume 2. This is volume 1."

Damn! It must be her and her group!

Just the mere sound of their voices made everyone know that they were dangerous to the environment. I planned to evade them by sneaking to another shelf and returning later. However, Four seemed to believe that there was no one else in the area. She began engaging her friend, Jeans, in an unrelated conversation.

"Hey!"

"Spit it out."

"Have you ever experienced a strange feeling?"

"What kind of feeling? I find it strange when I feel like pooping."

"Nice try. Fancy a slap in the face?"

My God!

It was driving me crazy, seriously! I could already imagine it all in my head. You could go ahead and mess with her, but I didn't want to know about it!

But before I could run away from that shelf, I heard Jeans burst into laughter.

"So what kind of strange feelings are you talking about?"

"Déjà vu."

My feet froze to the spot. I didn't turn my face, but my ears were wide open, listening attentively to Four's next words.

"I experience déjà vu quite often."

"Everyone has experienced it before. It's just a glitch in our brain, which makes us think that things have happened before. But really, it's just our imagination."

"No, it doesn't seem like that to me."

"So how do you feel?"

"I feel like I've met someone before, although I just recently learned her name."

I could hear my heartbeat pounding in my chest.

Jeans casually advised Four to get some rest or stop thinking about her family. Four listened in silence.

Jeans then found the book she was looking for and told her friend that they should leave the area. I leaned against the bookshelf, looked at the spines of the books with empty eyes, and then collapsed on the cold floor. My heart was still racing with excitement.

I had to hurry up and pick up Vi. I needed to tell her that my sister hadn't imagined things. See? She felt the same too.

Was that 'someone' Four mentioned standing there? If so, it meant that there were moments between us that had been missed and repeated over and over again, just as I suspected.

I was on cloud nine, smiling like crazy as we shared the same feeling.

I would have sliced some cucumbers for her for breakfast or gently tucked a stray strand of hair behind her ear. I would have diligently buttoned her long-sleeved shirt before she left for work each day.

Imagining all those little moments made me smile once again.

But how would I know? The heartfelt feeling instantly vanished when I'm about to leave our apartment, only to see that nice guy driving my future wife home in his flashy Lamborghini.



# Chapter IX : What is your true color honey?

**POV : Jattawa**

"I told you, I feel like I've known Four before, remember?"

"Yes, I also told you that it might be a side effect of frequent time reversals."

"That's right!" I quickly unlocked the door without bothering to look at the doorknob.

Our eyes met while Vi was eating her ice cream, waiting to join me inside. The ice cream started to melt all over her fingers. It's kind of gross, but I'll have to ignore it for now. "I have proof that this is not just a side effect."

"What is the proof?"

"Four feels the same way."

"Is it true?" Her jaw dropped. "That's crazy."

After that, we went inside and discussed the matter.

I stand firm; this is truly amazing!

Since Four doesn't have time control powers or time immunity like me, it's almost impossible for her to experience the same déjà vu experience.

There are several epic theories waiting to be discovered by Jattawa and Jaravi.

One of them will explore how incidents that occurred previously are repeated.

"Someone must have the ability to turn back time, just like me."

"You mean Four?" Vi asked, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

I scratched my chin, contemplating carefully. "No, if it was her, then she wouldn't question her own déjà vu experience. No, it wasn't her."

"Then who? Who else is destined to have a relationship with time like ours?"

"Before speculating about who this person is among millions of people, let's first try to understand why only Four and I can feel it."

My sister nodded in agreement. She took the last bite of her ice cream and casually wiped her hands. Ugh, you're just making it dirtier, you little rascal! Then she plopped down on the sofa in our comfortable apartment.

"I thought it was because you and Four were already familiar with each other, but every time the world resets, the scenario changes." Vi took her sketchbook from her bag and started sketching a dark shadowy figure. "There's someone out there who can turn back time further than you. The big mystery is who he is, why he does it, and why he keeps turning back time so often."

Then she made a brief sketch of Earth.

"Every time this person turns back time, the Earth turns back. Oh, and the Moon too, because it is a satellite."

I sat next to her, watching as she drew arrows to show the Earth rotating in its normal direction.

"Now the world continues to turn clockwise, the same events continue to happen. The greengrocer still sells his vegetables. The poor man still falls off his bicycle. The children who should be born will be born again, and so on.

But for you, everything is different. Your scenario has changed. Let's say in the first act, you will be Four's girlfriend. Then in the second act at the Loy Kratong festival, or maybe on Halloween night in the third act, you don't like Four and won't easily accept being her girlfriend. But then again, in the fifth act, you'll agree to go on a date with her in the mountains or something. Do you understand?"

"Are you telling me that the events between me and her have been changed by a mysterious man with the power of time reversal? And that's why we're experiencing this severe déjà vu?"

"Yeah, like that... You're actually quite smart, aren't you?"

Pak!

I threw the pillow aggressively at her adorable yet annoying face.

"If I'm not smart, how can I raise a monkey like you?"

"Please, bunny!? I'm a bunny!"

Damn...

I forgot that my front teeth are famous for their capacity to grate coconut. When I was little, my classmates called me 'Hamster.' As they got older, they switched to 'Bucktoothed.' But hey, it's actually called 'Rabbit Teeth'!

And did you know? My teeth are so adorable! My smile makes me the princess of the majors. Mom and Dad should be very proud of me.

"That's just my assumption. You don't have to believe me."

"I've believed in every possibility since I discovered the power of controlling time." I answered without thinking too much.

I got up and headed to the fridge, looking for a snack to soothe my growling stomach before leaving for work. There is only one carton of milk left. I put a straw in it, took a sip, then sat back down next to Vi, who started doing her homework.

"Did you get a vision today?"

"Your motorbike will break down tomorrow," she said without glancing at me.

"Should I fix it first?"

"I'm not sure. It might be better if you buy a new one using the cash we have in the bank. I'll take some art commissions to help you out too. If you keep riding that bike, you're really risking your life before you graduate."

"Hey, watch your mouth!"

"My mouth talks about the future. Believe me, otherwise you won't be able to become a public prosecutor in the future."

"I told you, I'm not going to be a public prosecutor."

"It's up to you. Just trust me, Mother Public Prosecutor."

Is it just me, or is my sister becoming more and more annoying?

I relaxed under the air conditioner until I no longer felt tired. I assigned Vi to be the room keeper and head of dinner preparation while I was out.

Checking the clock, I realized there wasn't much time left before my shift started at Aunt Tui's place. But I know I can arrive on time. I'm still thrilled by the news that there are other people experiencing the same déjà vu experiences as me in this wide world.

With a smile on my face, I put on my helmet, turning the key to start the engine with a burst of energy. Suddenly, a sleek black jet car parked not too far from me.

That's Pak and his stunning Lamborghini...

And there she was, the girl who made my heart race in the library, getting out of the passenger seat. While closing the door, she said a monotonous

thank you to Pak then turned towards me to enter the apartment building. Our eyes met by chance.

I quickly averted my gaze, started my old motorbike, pretending not to be bothered by Four's presence. Sometimes I wonder why we never see each other at this hour, but now I wish I didn't know her usual way of getting home.

Oh, I almost forgot, she has a fiancé. And most importantly, that guy was far superior to me, in terms of distance to the Moon.

I felt so sad, but I couldn't explain why. There were so many things on my mind, like, who else could turn back time like me, or the impossibility of dating my potential soulmate. I rode my motorbike without thinking. I didn't even notice the green light and the sound of the car horn behind me. While washing dishes, I accidentally cut myself with a pot scrubber. Aunt Tui looked worried and called me to ask what happened. She suggested that I rest if I didn't feel well.

"I'm fine, Auntie."

"You still haven't treated that back pain, have you?"

"I recovered from that a long time ago." Since we moved to our new place, our comfortable bed has changed things. Although occasionally, the pain occasionally comes to visit.

"By the way, did you quarrel with your uncle? He stopped by and asked me to look after you two. Did you run away from home?"

"No!" I immediately waved my hand to deny it. "I'm just overwhelmed with studies. As for Uncle... Yes, my sister and I moved to a new place. We didn't fight with him. We just told him to sell the house."

"Ah, a family matter then? Auntie won't pry any further." Aunt Tui showed serious maturity by not poking her nose where it didn't belong. "After all, auntie thinks you are a hardworking child. If you need help with money or anything else, don't hesitate to tell auntie. Auntie will help you."

I put my hands in a 'wai' gesture, touched by her warm words. "Thank you, Auntie. Now that I'm a student, I have more responsibilities. If I feel overwhelmed, may I call you and take some time off?"

"No problem at all. Now, go back to work or rest if you are still tired. Auntie will go back to the storefront."

"Yes, Auntie,"

Deciding not to look for a place to rest, I instead followed her to continue working. However, my body suddenly froze when I saw a man sitting on a red plastic chair in our shop. He wore a formal white shirt with black trousers and a pair of expensive and shiny leather shoes. I think he just took off his blazer and left it in his car.

Its Pak.

He seemed rich enough to afford that supercar, yet here he was, enjoying noodles at a roadside stall. That quite surprised me.

How old is he? Maybe in his early thirties? It seemed about right, considering how mature and exuding a beautiful aura he was.

"Sister, do you also accept custom orders?" He was a smooth talker, addressing a middle-aged woman as 'Sister'. This person is truly charming.

"Of course, darling~" Aunt Tui beamed as she responded. She was divorced a long time ago, so a greeting from a young man could brighten her day.

"Can I have some crispy pork with Chinese broccoli and a bottle of water?"

"Wait a moment, my dear..." answered Aunt Tui before telling me to get a glass of ice and a bottle of water for him.

I couldn't help but keep my eyes on him as I did so. He wasn't glued to his phone like most people; instead, he carried a small notebook and pen in his hand. He scribbled things, both related and unrelated to his work. Well, let's assume it's 'work-related'. Yes, that's definitely about the job.

"Here's your water."

Pak raised his head to look at me, his servant. He put down his pen and gave me a small smile.

"Thank you, beautiful girl," he said, then returned to his notebook.

Geez! We barely know each other, but he's already flirting with me. Can his subtlety melt Four's icy heart? He's like the lawyer version of Brad Pitt. I scratched my head, not at all sure what to do. How could I suddenly change from a plain and innocent girl to a sweet and beautiful girl?

I stole a glance at the owner of the luxury Lamborghini while washing the dishes. I felt inferior to him in every way. Will I become a smart-looking lawyer like him someday?

Vi also predicted that I would become a public prosecutor.

Honestly, I don't hate public prosecutors or anything. It's honorable work, but my goal is not to become a civil servant. I'm sorry if money is my priority. Private attorneys have the potential to earn more.

That's who I really am. I'm not trying to marry someone rich. I am like a bird who is not afraid of unstable branches. If the branch breaks, I still have wings to fly. I just want to rely on myself.

I admit that at first I had secret hopes. I wanted a soulmate who could support me, but it doesn't matter if that's not possible. I just want someone who can cook because I'm not good at it. When Vi told me that my soulmate was a girl, well, bubble wrap me! I never thought that would happen! And what's more, she is a famous girl who is rumored to be the university's black hole. I used to be scared, but not anymore.

Now I feel more like a loser.

How can I compete with that Mr. Handsome? He can work his magic even on Aunt Tui. He looks very cool and very tall. His long legs combined

perfectly with his shiny leather shoes. Will I look half as good as he does when I become a lawyer?

Today, I feel strangely sad for no reason. And what's worse, my motorbike broke down on the way home even though the gas tank was full. Vi's predictions are very accurate.

Thankfully, the apartment isn't too far away, so I can ride my motorbike home.

“Sis! You're home!”

My beautiful sister waves at me from the balcony. She's happy to wait for me there. Wearing a loose yellow apron, she has probably just finished preparing our dinner.

Vi is the only reason I can forget my tiredness. I am so grateful to have her, my little sister! Honestly, I don't know how I would have lived without this little girl.

The next day, I took the bus, my temporary mode of transportation. I took Vi to school, then took a motorbike taxi to the university. It feels like a waste of money. I also can't bring in sandwiches that make a profit. I don't know how to carry them.

Kook-Kai called Khun and me this morning to discuss the Prince and Princess Contest. She told us that the event will start intensively next week. I'm not sure if she took pity on me or what, but she gave me lipstick, telling me to put it on because my lips were dry as a desert.

“Wow! Look at that car! Whoever is behind the wheel must be really cool!”

During our lunch break, as we were walking towards the main cafeteria, a shiny yellow Porsche drove past us. It looked new with a red license plate.



Khun, being the dreamer he is, couldn't help but fantasize about getting closer and touching it.

"That must be a Bumble Bee."

"You mean the car model?"

"No, I'm talking about the color. Any yellow Porsche is a Bumble Bee in my book."

Sometimes I wonder what's going on in Khun's brain. He grabbed my arm and pulled me into the parking lot like a kid on a sugar high. With his phone in hand, he snapped a photo of the parked supercar, eager to share it with his loyal Corgi bot Twitter followers.

Oh, but here's the interesting thing: It turns out that the owner of the astonishing Bumble Bee is not the cool guy Khun imagined.

"It's a girl," I nudged Khun's side, urging him to lift his head and watch the sight of long, graceful legs exiting the car. My eyes widened in disbelief as the girl revealed herself completely, tall and beautiful.

"That's Four!"

Khun enthusiastically pulled my shirt. I was as surprised as he was. That Bumble Bee costs millions. The costs are extremely expensive, whether paid in cash or in installments. I remember Pak mentioning that he had to drive her around because his fiancée didn't have a car.

Could it be that he bought it just for that purpose?

Obviously, she's not just a servant in the mansion. I shook my head, thinking about the fact that a waitress couldn't have a lawyer like her Lamborghini-driving fiancé. A servant also can't afford a luxury apartment and a new Porsche.

"Let me delete my post quickly."

"Why?"

“I’m worried he’ll sue me for cybercrime.”

“Cybercrime! You bastard! Please, no more jokes, dude!”

I turned my attention from this fool to Four.

Her eyes involuntarily glanced at us. She was carelessly holding some textbooks in her hands. Today, she looked casual in a loose white long-sleeved shirt and uncut black Adidas trousers. Her shoes were the same brand she wore that snowy day.

Looks like she’s a Vans fan.

Khun keeps gossiping about her, so I asked if he knows anything about her fiancé, but he shook his head. Then he asked me the question again: does she have a fiancé?

By the way, what’s going on inside her head? Why is she dressed so elegantly that it makes my heart race? If I didn’t know she was a fellow student, I would have thought she was going for a job interview or business negotiation.

What’s your game, Four? What are you planning?

Rzzz!

Vi: It must be very cold in that supercar!

As usual, my sister must have seen the vision beforehand.

“What do you see?” I messaged her, and here’s her response:

Vi: Hahahaha

What is that annoying laugh? If I were next to her, I would flick her forehead as hard as I could.

### **Afternoon classes end at 3:30 p.m.**

The professor mumbled something about trading contracts and I noted it down without fully understanding the concept. I'll have to review it later in my free time. Taking the elevator to the ground floor, I said goodbye to Khun. He noticed that I didn't have a ride today and volunteered to take me home, despite living in the opposite direction.

Now, look at the black and white Ducati his father bought him... If I sat in the back, we would definitely look like a couple. The girls in our department are already giving me enough death stares, and that's more than enough!

"Um... No, thank you. I also have to pick up my sister from school. How can the three of us ride the same motorbike?"

"It's okay. Just get on. I'll take you to the school. You guys can take the bus from there. It saves more money."

"No, I appreciate the offer."

"Are you offended?"

"No, it's not like that." I took a deep breath. "It's just that everyone thinks we're a couple. One day a girl messaged me, calling me a slut. People don't realize that we're just friends."

"Who dares to call you that? Give me their name!"

"Forget the internet trolls. I'm just saying that riding with you gives me unwanted attention."

"If you ride a motorbike taxi, it doesn't feel like you're dating a motorbike rider, right?"

"Are you wearing a motorbike taxi jacket now?"

"Then come with me. That's all. I like you anyway."

We looked into each other's eyes for a long time. He was sitting on his big, luxurious motorbike, swallowing nervously. Then he spoke in a softer voice.

"I was just kidding, Jattawa..."

"Well, it sounds like that." I avoided his gaze. "I'll wait for the bus at the front gate. Stay safe on the road."

"Ya..."

Why is he making that expression? Khun seemed to realize that he crossed the line. After turning around and walking away, I glanced at him and saw him ruffling his hair, as if to say, 'Damn.'

I felt my nerves flutter, unsure if his words were true or if he was just playing with me. Maybe he really likes me, or is it just a joke?

However, I can't let a single sentence ruin our friendship.

That's why I decided to turn back time to when we were in the elevator, about 5-6 minutes ago. Now, I walked back to the parking lot with Khun, who was humming with joy. I don't know what will happen, so it's hard to stay calm.

"Hi Jattawa, where's your motorbike today?"

"There's a motorbike taxi waiting for me. I've paid the fare, so see you later, friend! Drive safely!"

"Oh? You seem to be in a rush today..."

I heard him mutter as I walked straight out of the elevator. I'm sorry, Khun. If I don't take action, things might get awkward between us.

At least this way, you won't beat yourself up for saying that carelessly. I'll stay calm too.

Now, I'm standing in front of the university gate, pretending to wait for the bus. I lied about the motorbike taxi. What sane person would choose that option? I need to save every baht I can.

I need to have a decent amount of money in my bank account and study hard for my future legal career. My sister also needs support, and there are always other expenses too...

Lost in thought, I realized I shouldn't have left my bike at the repair shop. What if it ends up costing me a lot of money? I'd rather kill myself.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the amazing Bumble Bee car leaving the front gate. Someone stupidly hid their true status despite driving a luxury car. Envy automatically crept into my expression. I'm sick of rich people, but deep down, I still want to experience it for myself.

Ah, the complexity of life!

Actually, Four had driven quite a distance, but she suddenly stopped and backed up to where I was waiting for the bus. The window next to the driver's seat was rolled down. Wait a minute...

Vi: It must be very cold in that supercar!

Don't tell me Vi means the same Bumble Bee supercar.

The girl behind the wheel turned to me. She asked directly, as if she was reluctant to say it, "Need a ride?"

"No, thank you..." Honestly, when you sound too nice, it gives me the creeps.

Instead of leaving, she insisted, "There's something I need to talk about."

"What!?"

"Legal matters. You're a law student, right? Come in, we need to talk."

This time she ordered me, her face facing the front window. We didn't make eye contact, so I blinked in confusion.

“But I have to pick up my sister from school—”

“Get in!”

**Hey, no need to bark at me with your snake eyes!**

**I'm just a first-year law student. Why not ask your awesome lawyer fiancé, huh?**

# Chapter X : Not a Coincidence

Cars are usually just a means of transportation, so I never imagined anyone could drive one with such grace.

I'm tired of constantly stealing glances at the person next to me. I find myself looking at her so much that our eyes occasionally meet, which probably annoys her. To cover up my embarrassment, I quickly grinned goofily and said,

"Your car is pretty cool."

She took a sharp breath and asked, "Praise?"

"Yes," I replied, glancing at the owner of this amazing Bumble Bee for the 108th time. I couldn't help but notice how skilled she was at provoking others with her sharp wit.

"This car screams that you are more than just a servant in the house."

"None of your business,"

Realizing that I should change the topic, I paused for a moment and then continued, "What legal issue would you like to discuss?"

"Which high school is your sister in?"

"Do you always have to answer a question with another question?" I retorted.

"You should be aware that the traffic light has turned green. You'd better tell me which way to go first, otherwise I'll go the wrong way. Which is easier

to answer? Your sister's school or my law puzzle?" She said, her eyes looking at me as if she thought I couldn't understand the basics myself.

Taking a deep breath, I told myself not to argue with her. It made sense to prioritize direction, so I gave in and instructed her on the way to Vi's school. There was a hint of annoyance in my voice as I spoke. Even though our conversation seemed rational, I didn't agree with the current situation, and I bit my lip in annoyance.

After memorizing the directions, Four continued our discussion. "If I want to prevent someone with severe dementia who cannot understand important things from signing a contract, what steps should I take?"

"You mean file a case in court or something?"

"Whatever you call it in your legal jargon," she replied, still focused on the road ahead. "What should I do? Where should I go? And what is the success rate?"

"We have the internet, in case you don't remember,"

"Different websites, different answers. I hate relying on unreliable anonymous comments,"

"What about your fiancé? He's a lawyer, isn't he?" I asked, realizing that I had accidentally eavesdropped on their conversation.

"How did you know that my fiancé is a lawyer?"

Unlucky! My eyes opened wide from the sudden realization. I wanted to slap my mouth hard because I forgot that I was eavesdropping on her...

"Reply to me!" Four's voice became more and more aggressive.

She stared at me through the windshield, her beautiful eyes piercing with menacing power.

"I... accidentally overheard your conversation on that rainy day. I just went out to the balcony to get my clothes. I didn't intend to eavesdrop on you



guys,"

As soon as I finished my explanation, I sat back and relaxed, pretending to nonchalantly reveal the truth. Then, without missing a beat, I smoothly shifted the conversation back to her legal matters, hoping to divert Four's anger from my unintentional intrusion into her personal matters.

"If you are dealing with someone suffering from severe dementia, you can file a case in court, proposing that he/she be legally recognized as an individual with a disability. Then, you or a trusted relative can act as his or her curator. A curator is a responsible attorney who can cancel the contract upon request if the person has entered into a contract themselves. A voidable contract is different from a cancellable contract. Cancellable contracts remain in effect until the curator requests their cancellation. You probably already know the lines,"

"Continue,"

"All you need are medical records confirming the person's diagnosis of dementia, and then you can contact a lawyer or request a court-appointed attorney. From what I know, the court in charge of such matters is the Central Juvenile and Family Court, but it's best to contact city hall first," I suggested.

"What about the success rate?"

"The success rate depends on whether the person you are filing a case against actually suffers from dementia or not, right?"

Four furrowed her brows and glanced at me sideways, clearly displeased with my tone. I've probably read too many crime novels, where criminals often plan to take advantage of someone's business or inheritance. I found myself wondering if Four had a shady plan involving her parents.

It's possible, right? Anything can happen. This luxurious new car could have been obtained with other people's money.

And look how she dressed up today. He may contact the concerned agencies and gather information regarding the matter.

"You should consult with a lawyer. After all, I'm just a freshman. All my legal knowledge comes from textbooks. A real lawyer will give you much better advice,"

"Thank you,"

"No problem," I replied.

"And no matter what thoughts about me come to your mind, if you dare share them with anyone, you will suffer the consequences,"

"Are you threatening me?" I asked, taken aback.

"Yeah right. You're still a freshman, right? I totally forgot," Four said, looking down on me for not knowing her well. "So, you quit your pizza delivery job?"

"How did you know?"

Four remained silent for a moment, her poker face making it difficult to decipher her thoughts. "I happened to order another pizza by accident..."

Hey, don't swallow like that! That cuts your words short!

"And I didn't see you."

"Oh..." I replied, realizing that it was another 'accident'.

First, when we were talking about her fiancé and I pretended as if I accidentally caught wind of their conversation. Now, she's throwing around the word 'accidental' for this pizza incident.

Was it really an accident? I may never know.

I can turn back time, but delving into the depths of my soulmate's mind remains a mystery.

As we arrived at Vi's school, my little sister happily broke away from her friends and followed me to the car. Her friends squealed in astonishment when they saw the glamorous Porsche parked to the side, waiting for us. Vi greeted me with her usual attitude, and I could tell that she had seen this moment in her vision.

"Look! Look at this! The car is so sassy!" Vi exclaimed.

"Get in the back. Don't talk, don't smile, don't breathe," I said to my sister.

"I guess I should play dead,"

Placing herself in the back seat, Vi's face lit up with an unstoppable smile. She politely greeted Four, pretending not to know that the stranger sitting in the driver's seat was here to pick her up or something.

I'm really sick of Vi's endless cheerfulness. Tone it down, little brat! Can't you see your sister putting on her best poker face? How can you stay happy?

"Are you Wa's friend?" Vi asked Four in her cheerful voice.

Wait, now she's acting like she doesn't know her? She even saw her before I did! Her acting skills are really impressive! "I never knew my sister had such a beautiful friend."

Four remained silent, carrying out her chauffeur duties with a superior attitude. I had to step in and respond to Vi myself.

"She's a senior," I answered, glancing at Four. "Everyone says she's quite arrogant, so she wouldn't talk to a lowly person like you."

Vi looked at me through the rearview mirror, her eyes filled with confusion at my attempt to anger Four. But I brushed it off. Even with my small

provocation, Four remained as quiet as a mouse, which ended Vi's smile due to the uncomfortable silence.

See? I warned you!

Vi kept her mouth shut until we finally reached our apartment.

"So, what's wrong with her? According to my vision, Four looks very kind and friendly!" Vi exclaimed.

"Your eyesight is completely wrong. They are as unreliable as cockroaches with singed whiskers,"

"Oh... I hate cockroaches, especially when they start flying," Vi shuddered. "By the way, could it be that she was just being nice to you? Who knows? She refers to herself as 'sister' and calls you 'daughter'."

Urgh, that's disgusting!

I flicked Vi's forehead as she looked at me with joy in her eyes, pleased with her own theory.

Rzzz!

The workshop uncle called me. I asked him to explain what happened to my motorbike, which I left in his garage. This morning, he told me it was beyond repair. Apparently, some sneaky rats decided to feast on the internal wiring while I stupidly parked it near an abandoned building near Aunt Tui's place.

Curse you, rats!

"You want to sell it? I can give you two thousand dollars," the uncle suggested.

"Really? Can't you fix it, Uncle?"

"You'd better buy a new one. It's been used for too long, and you drive it every day. How many times have you brought it to me?"

It was like an act of God emptying my money bag.

I ended the call and then dialed Aunt Tui's number to tell her that I couldn't go to her house tonight. Meanwhile, I told Vi about my plans to buy a new motorbike while she was busy preparing dinner in our small kitchen.

As I approached her, I held our expense account in my hand.

"Listen. We need to tighten our belts and save up to buy a new motorbike. Tomorrow, we'll hunt for one. You might have to go to school in the afternoon,"

"Okay, ma'am!" Vi saluted me like a soldier then bent down to lower the fire on the stove.

"Paying cash is cheaper than paying in installments. However, it also means your pocket money will be reduced by 10 baht until you finish 10th grade. I'll sell more sandwiches and find another part-time job—"

"Can you buy me a laptop and stylus?" Vi interrupted.

"Huh?" I startled, lifting my face from the account book to meet her eyes. It felt like we were speaking different languages. I just told her to save up, and now she's asking for a new laptop? "You want a laptop? And what is a stylus?"

"A stylus is an electronic pen used for drawing on a PC or laptop. I've accepted art commissions, but some clients charge me less because they're handmade," she explained.

I remained silent, giving Vi a chance to explain further.

"I'll replace the money, sis. Trust me," she said.

If I give in and get the laptop for her, our account book will suffer. It will take us a long time to recover from this financial impact.

I took a moment to reconsider. Even though I'm not an expert on art commissions and their rates, deep down, I want my sister to have the

opportunity to pursue her talents. She has used my hand-me-downs, starting from uniforms, cellphones, and bags—anything that can still be used.

Only the two of us are involved in this busyness.

"Okay, okay. We'll search for a laptop after we get the new motorbike," I agreed, not expecting her to pay me back. Vi seemed oblivious to that fact as she jumped up and down with joy, promising to make a lot of money with her art commissions to support us.

After dinner, Vi showed me the stylus she had been eyeing online. She had dreamed about it and swore she would master it in no time.

It was almost 10 pm, and I was lying in bed, face up, scrolling through my phone for an affordable bike. Vi was right next to me, also lying down, diligently doing her homework. The ceiling lights were turned off, and only the small lamp on the bed was our companion. She hummed softly in a melodious tone, in harmony with her writing. Then she suddenly stopped and turned to me.

"She's on the roof again," she said.

"You mean Four?" I diverted my attention from the chat messages and gave my full attention to Vi.

"Yeah, but I'm not sure which night it is. The moon is hazy, but it should be around midnight," she said.

"Let her do her job. Why is she always up there? Maybe the cold wind helps her relieve stress. If that's her secret to relieving stress, then we don't need to think too much about it," I said, trying to dismiss Vi's curiosity.

"Why don't you ask her while she's talking to you? If that's just her way of unwinding, then we don't need to worry," she suggested.

"What's there to think about? She's not part of our family," I replied.

"I see visions of the people around me. The fact that I can see Four in the future means she will definitely be important to us. Admit it, you will have a girlfriend, and she might be the girl next door!"

"Hurry up and do your homework! I need sleep, my beauty. We have a lot to do tomorrow," I said, trying to change the subject.

"Okay!"

I rolled to the side, my back to Vi. I turned off my cell phone and placed it on the bed. I squeezed the soft blanket in my hands and closed my eyes. I imagined two slow lorises slowly crossing the road, a technique that always helps me fall asleep.

*'The first step of the slow loris master. The second step of the slow loris master. The third step of the slow loris master. Step four—'* I mumbled to myself, starting to drift off.

"You fell asleep at your desk again, Wa. I told you, princess, don't push yourself too hard, right?" a gentle voice woke me up from my drowsiness. I narrowed my tired eyes due to the bright lights in the room.

The pile of documents on my desk seemed to tower like an imminent volcano, ready to erupt. As I looked around, I noticed a lawyer's robe hanging elegantly on a stand to the left. I wasn't sure if it belonged to the attorney or the public prosecutor.

The woman who woke me up stepped closer to my desk. Her face, accompanied by a subtle grin, made me pause for a moment.

There she is...

"Time to team up with your sister,"

it's Four!

"You'd better prepare for your case tomorrow. What if everyone starts wondering why the prosecutor this time has dark circles like a panda?" Four said with a friendly smile.

"Prosecutor...?" I echoed, my voice still hoarse from just waking up. "Wait, you mean you're a public prosecutor?"

The woman, exuding her mature beauty to the fullest, laughed softly. "Ridiculous, you are the public prosecutor! How could I be involved in that?"

Four's friendly smile enveloped me, and even though it should have given me goosebumps because it was too unbelievable, I narrowed my eyes at the sight of her familiar presence. A strange warmth enveloped my heart as she stepped closer, wearing pajamas and leaning on the edge of my sturdy wooden table. She was beside me now.

"Judging from your confused face, you must be very tired," she said.

Suddenly, Four leaned over and placed a gentle kiss on my forehead. My eyes widened in surprise, and in an instant, the entire scene was dragged into the distance.

And just like that...

I immediately returned to the real world from my dream.

Why would I dream of something like that? Me, a public prosecutor, asleep at my desk? Buried under piles of papers?

And most importantly, Four, that arrogant troublemaker, actually kissed my forehead and asked me to sleep! And there I was, boldly asking her 'that' in my dream. It seems like my subconscious has gone crazy!



My heart feels uneasy. I lay down and listened to the clock tick for a few minutes. This room is quieter than the house Uncle sold. There, we didn't have the luxury of air conditioning. We could hear random car horns and other annoying noises, and the fan sometimes buzzed like an electric shock to the motor.

Vi was already asleep, and the lights had long been turned off. Luckily, the glow-in-the-dark clock allowed me to see the time clearly.

**11:02**

Before I fell asleep, Vi mentioned seeing Four on the roof again. She couldn't give me an exact time, only a vague idea of around midnight. The dream I had still lingered on my face like a hot blush. Is this just my imagination playing tricks, or did it really happen before 'Mr. Mystery' turned back time?

However... it felt oddly comforting. I mean, the feeling of someone caring about us, using terms like 'sister' and 'daughter'. It made me want to dream about it again.

Will I become a lawyer like her fiancé?

Will I live together and share a bed with her?

And will I kiss her and make love to her?

NO! Impossible! I have to get these wild thoughts out of my mind! I can't let them go any further!

After a while, I let out a deep breath. It was hard to fall back asleep at this late hour anyway. I quietly got out of bed, careful not to wake Vi. I walked to the closet, grabbed a long-sleeved shirt to wear for additional warmth, and took a folding chair that I had obtained from exchanging points at a minimarket a few days ago.

Then, I walked to the roof, unfolded the chair in a secluded corner, out of sight, so I could keep an eye out for anyone sneaking in quietly. Finally, I rested my chin on my hand and enjoyed the moonlit view tonight.

What are you doing, Jattawa? Just because of that one kiss, are you afraid she'll jump off the roof? Are you really afraid of a future without her?

I don't think tonight is the night she's going to come up here.

I interlocked my hands, eradicating the annoying mosquitoes. I peeked at the watch tucked in the pocket of my robe. It was already half past midnight. Wow, I could have been sitting here without getting paid all this time! I was surprised at myself.

At 1 am, I was sure she wouldn't come up here. So, I went back to bed.

The next morning, I woke up and enjoyed breakfast prepared by Vi. Then, we took the bus to look for a new motorbike. The little brat insisted on buying a yellow one to match Four's Porsche, and I jokingly flicked her forehead for it.

In the end, we chose a white motorbike, my choice, registered in my name. We then went to an IT shop to buy a laptop and stylus for Vi.

Vi spent an hour browsing and trying to find what she wanted. After that, we went back to our apartment and unpacked our shopping.

By 3 pm, Vi couldn't go to school anymore. So, I took her back to our apartment and went to work at Aunt Tui's house as usual.

Khun sent me a message asking why I was skipping class and expressed his concern that I might be sick. I just told him that I was skipping class to buy a new motorbike. We exchanged a few more messages before I turned my attention back to the pile of dishes waiting in the basin.

Can you believe it?

Tonight, I took my trusty folding chair back to the roof, ready to spy on someone again. This time I also brought mosquito repellent. Now, those pesky mosquitoes are running away. Hah, serve them right! You can't prey on me anymore just because I was born on September 15th, you know?!

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Translator's Note: In Thai, September (Sep) is *Kan-Ya-Yon* (Kor-Yor), and 15 Kor-Yor is a famous mosquito repellent brand in Thailand. This is why Jattawa jokingly calls himself born on September 15 or Kor-Yor 15.

But hey, what am I doing here? Just laughing at my victory over the fleeing mosquitoes? Alone on the roof, not knowing if the culprit will show up?

Just because I'm afraid Four will do something drastic like committing suicide, is it necessary to go that far?

I looked up at the moon. All this time, I never realized how beautiful the Earth's satellite was hanging in the vast sky. They say the shadow resembles a rabbit.

But if you look at it long enough, it starts to resemble something else. The more I looked, the more it looked like a chicken. Wait a moment! If you squint your eyes properly, it even resembles a crab claw.

The following night, my mind delved into the dark side of the moon and the interesting conspiracy theories surrounding it.

In the days that followed, I found myself contemplating the vastness of the universe.

Who actually rules over this cosmic expanse? Who has the power to rule these dazzling stars?

Or maybe it is hidden in someone's sight. It can be born from the connections we make and the shared experiences that shape our lives.

Day after day, there were times when Four and I would accidentally leave our rooms at the same time, heading towards the university. I found myself desperately avoiding eye contact, my face still slightly red because of that crazy dream. Vi likes to tease me, always trying to bring up Four in conversation. But I've become an expert at changing the subject, keeping the fact that I stay up until 1 am a secret.

Four and I... we might have another chance to talk to each other when she climbs onto this roof, my lunar observatory.

In fact, the reason I wait here every night isn't a big plan. It's just because her kisses and gazes in my dreams warm my heart so much. They provide a sense of solace that makes me long for the opportunity to talk to her once again.

Tonight, she might fall into a deep sleep. And if I could send a message directly into her dreams, I would tell her this:

To my future wife... You would never know that I sit here every night, watching the moon, patiently waiting for you.

# Chapter XI : The moon on Probation

"Is this your new hideout?"

I've lost count of how many nights I've fought mosquitoes here. Usually, sleepiness tries to overtake me, but I manage to restrain myself from falling asleep in this chair.

However, on the most important night, the night when Four appeared, I fell asleep first. I woke up to her seductive voice, taunting me with its monotonous melody. She leaned against the edge of the roof, arms crossed.

Her charming almond eyes looked at me.

Unlucky! I had intended to hide and observe her, but now she caught me.

"You rent a room but never sleep in it. That's quite strange." And now she can't hold back her chatty nature... Yes, she's really good at that.

"The view from here is much better." I scratched my arm awkwardly, feeling a twinge of embarrassment. Did I accidentally let a drop of drool run down my chin? No way, that can't be happening, right? "You came here too. Rented a room but never slept in it."

"Yeah," she answered sharply. "So what?"

"Why can't you speak well? Others might think you are annoying them."

Four furrowed her beautiful eyebrows, her voice softened. "Well, maybe I'm bothering you."

I can't help but think that it's my fault for not being as intimidated or silent as when we first met. On the other hand, I found her weak attempt at a threat quite amusing. I got up from my folding chair and stood next to her, feeling the pain in my neck from the long sleep.

I saw the notebook in her right hand. It looks like a diary.

"After you're done, go," she said, lowering her notebook as if trying to hide it. It was clear she was trying to chase me away.

"The roof is a public space for all tenants."

"But I won't let you stand next to me."

Her words left me at a loss for words for a moment. My mind went blank. But then I remembered a silly joke I saw on Khun's Twitter.

"If I can't stand next to you, let me sit." I pushed myself to go with the flow, carefully sitting down on the cold floor, raising my face to meet Four's gaze with a playful smile. "I'm not standing. I'm sitting, okay?"

"You're so annoying, Jattawa. For real."

She emphasized my name while averting her gaze. Her perfect and flawless face let out a sigh of deep annoyance. After a moment of contemplation, the tall girl sat down beside me, placing her red diary beside her.

Her legs are very long, which explains her past as an athlete. I tried to restrain myself from observing her too closely because she might not feel the same way as me.

"Have you applied for the curator position? Any luck?"

"Not yet."

I nodded in understanding, even though she didn't look my way. I didn't dare investigate further. The only reason I'm waiting here is...

"Why did you come here?" I actually wanted to ask her,

*'You didn't come here to jump off the roof, right?'*

My brain tells me not to be so blunt. It won't do any good.

"Just like you," she answered, her head leaning back against the wall, which now towered over us. Her eyes, filled with a small universe, looked at me.

"Take the mosquito repellent here. There's a bunch of bloodsuckers."

"That's my mosquito repellent. I paid 20 baht for it at 7/11."

"Then? You won't share? Or do I need to pay to share it with you?"

"No, what I meant was, 'take it from here if you want to it.'"

“.....”

Judging from her silent response, I could already predict her next move...

Option A: She gives me an annoyed look and lets out a series of scoldings before forcing me to take it.

Option B: She gets angry and goes off the roof.

Just as I was about to turn back time to change my words, Four clicked her tongue in annoyance, stood up, and went to get mosquito repellent.

She slid it right between us, a little in front. It was strange that she wasn't as angry as I expected. I carefully observed every little movement she did, this vicious college girl. Her graceful hair fell softly across her cheeks. In the dream, that hair caressed my face as she planted that kiss on my forehead.

It felt a little ticklish in my dream...

"Do you think it would be ungrateful of me to claim my family members as disabled?"

Her monotone voice pierced with a thought-provoking question, snapping me out of my thoughts about her. When she leaned her head against the wall and looked up at the sky, her eyes were on the stars, not me. This is actually a difficult question, so I'll give her a general answer.

"Even if they are your parents, your actions are completely justified if they suffer from dementia. I mean, you can't just let them unknowingly sign a contract with some random person, right?"

"Not my parents."

"Is that so?" I shouldn't assume. "Well, if you want to discuss it with me, like we did last time, before you contact a lawyer, please do so. Just tell me the whole situation, and I promise not to leak it to anyone else. I have serious ethics as a prospective lawyer, you know."

"I thought you wanted to be a public prosecutor."

Hah!?

"Why do you think like that?"

Four's cosmic gaze showed a hint of surprise, as if she had just realized that she shouldn't have said it. Her face couldn't be seen clearly, but I didn't really notice it.

We have the same dream. We dreamed of the same future, as if it had already happened.

She probably remembered what she said in our dream.

Oh no! I really wanted to ask her if I looked like an old woman because of all the workload, but I bit my tongue and pretended to be innocent. I couldn't risk mentioning anything related to my powers.

"You're not very good at guessing, are you?" That's the best response I can give. "But hey, I'll help you as much as I can. If it's beyond my abilities, I'll ask my professor."



"I just want to know if I'm being ungrateful or not."

"As I said before, I want you to explain your situation first."

At first, Four remained silent, her gaze fixed on the shining moon hanging above, seemingly detached from all the drama that was taking place.

I raised my head too. Even though I've been looking at the moon for several nights, tonight it looks even more amazing. Is it because I have friends? Or is it just because of the cold air seeping through the concrete floor?

"My grandfather had terminal liver cancer and had to be hospitalized. My grandmother suffered from various illnesses, but she remained at home because her health was relatively stable. However, she struggled with memory loss, and it was quite severe. Sometimes, she forgot that her husband was sick or even what he ate for breakfast. She often screamed at night, calling everyone and sharing old stories while crying. The only thing she remembered was that she had a grandson and a granddaughter who were born from different mothers. And she thought I was still a 17-year-old girl."

I pulled my knees up and hugged her, diving into her story. Grandchildren born from different mothers...

This means that Four's father has two wives.

"She always asks what we want because she is ready to buy or give it to us."

"Does that include your car?"

"No, I bought it myself."

Wait! How does a senior student have so much money? I feel suspicious.

"But if I ask, she'll probably still buy it for me."

"Isn't that great?" Listening to the story, jealousy towards the silver spoon began to emerge again in me.

"Well, I think so, but at the same time, it means she's willing to buy something and pass on her inheritance to me and her other grandchildren."

"That's fair, isn't it?"

"But if that grandson isn't her biological grandson," Four turned to me, her gaze sharp. "Do you think this is still fair? I am her only legal heir."

I was at a loss for words.

"And everything in that house should be mine." Her voice and gaze carried a mixture of seriousness, pain, and sadness. She struggles with the knowledge of her rights, but there is an underlying sadness within her.

"Is there a will or something?"

"My grandfather was hospitalized just a day before his lawyer showed up."

Well, I can understand this game.

"Normally, if your grandfather died without a will, then his inheritance would be divided into two parts: one for his wife and another for his legal successors and grandchildren. Now, you are worried that the grandson will claim his grandmother's share. Even though he is not her biological grandson, he probably forgot that fact, so you want to declare him disabled and try to have all his legal actions dismissed, or something?"

"You're pretty sharp, but it's not a perfect answer." Four's voice sounded like she was patting a child on the back for successfully opening a yogurt cup.

"What I want is for his will to become invalid after the court declares him disabled."

She hates her stepmother and her son so much?

So, if a will is written by a person with a disability, the will will automatically be invalid because the person making the will is not aware of the matters contained in the will. However, other types of contracts remain valid until canceled. The latter is called a voidable contract.

Confusing, right?

A contract that is void from the start is not valid, but a contract that is void becomes invalid if one of the parties involved (in this case the curator) cancels it for legal reasons.

Now, let's get back to what's happening right now.

“So... if you believe he is not a legitimate member of your family, you should tell your father.”

“He hasn’t listened to me for the last five years.”

“If he lives abroad, you can still try calling—”

“He was dead.”

“Sorry...” I shouldn’t have brought it up, lowering my head in regret. “But your mother is still your mother. Maybe you could try talking to her to—”

“I don’t know my biological mother. I grew up with my stepmother.”

“S-so, you’re like the daughter of the legal wife. You should check whether your father has acknowledged his illegitimate child—”

“I am an illegitimate child.”

Wait. These lines are serious and heavy, so let’s stop treating them like sitcom punchlines! You left me speechless once again!

“My grandfather and stepmother didn’t accept me, and my father... Well, he only acknowledged me and let me use his last name because he had no other choice, thanks to those good DNA results.”

Now that I had connected all the dots, all I could do was let out a heavy sigh.

“You’re not ungrateful, based on what you told me. You have your father’s blood, so you’re the rightful heir. So, what about everyone else? Your

stepmother and her son are outsiders in this mess.”

“Is it true?”

“Yeah, just take it to court.”

“Okay, I believe you.”

How can someone like me gain her trust so quickly? I can’t think about it either. But what I know is, her claim about her brother not having the same bloodline is true.

This is strange. I believe in her, and she believes in me.

Silence enveloped the roof. We watched stars streak across the sky, their twinkling captivating our attention.

Wait... It’s just a helicopter. While we were relaxing, the girl beside me suddenly called my name with determination in her voice.

“Hey, Jattawa.”

“Yes?”

“Don’t let this become known to anyone, not even your best friend.”

“I won’t. I already told you. Besides, if you didn’t believe me, you wouldn’t have told me all this, right?”

“I don’t know.”

“You wouldn’t be able to say that. Humans can’t be irrational.” Four hid her face, placing her hand on the red diary. “I was enchanted by its beauty, and that is why I revealed its truth before you.”

It’s a terrible excuse, but I have to accept it. “Is it true?”

“Yes.”

No, that's not the reason. The moon is enchanting, but when it comes to convincing her, I have greater power...

She can't remember how deep our love for each other was in the previous alternate universe.

I looked at the girl of my future soulmate. It feels like the empathy I have for her over and over again. Here in this corner, the way I secretly looked at her side profile must have happened many times.

I'm now 100% sure about it.

Every time the world resets and events start again, neither of us can remember anything. But there is a feeling that makes me wait for her here, and for her...

Her subconscious works the same way.

You didn't realize that, did you? You are not in love with the Moon.

You just... feel the same way as me.

Tonight, everything feels enchanting and full of sparkle. We sat quietly together until past one o'clock. The senior girl finally urged me to go to sleep, while she herself returned to her room. I lay on my side, with my hands supporting my face. My cheeks felt warm in contrast to the cold air from the aircon.

I love how this turned out tonight.

And I also like the Moon.

### **The next day**

I've gathered some information from classmates about the 'Four Snakes', or as I like to call them, 'Snakes'.

They are the most famous girls in our university—well, infamous ones to be precise. Let's start with the first member,

'Jeans.' She happens to be the dean's daughter, which explains her courage to challenge anyone. As her name suggests, she likes wearing jeans. She always looks angry and even helps Four slap the admin of the gossip page. She's like the intimidating bad girl you see in the movies.

Next is 'Lukmee'. Her name matches her cute appearance. Unfortunately, she is still part of the group and agrees with whatever her friends do.

And do you remember 'Fang'? She's the one who I think has an inexplicable flame in her. That's true. Her reputation for condemning people and shutting down any opposition is well-deserved. I have no intention of challenging her, no way.

Let's skip talking about Four this time. Remember that she is destined to end up with me.

Overall, their collective actions are often referred to as an 'unnatural disaster.'

Some of their pranks, such as setting up cones as barriers in parking spaces reserved for high-ranking professors to teach them a lesson about the time wasted looking for a parking space, are actually quite funny. In fact, the campus president immediately ordered the opening of a new parking lot for students in the empty space. I agree with this idea.

However, I strongly disagree with the physical assault and bullying of freshmen and classmates.

"How about it, have you found the book I recommended?"

After class, when I was about to have lunch with Khun, the English professor greeted me with a warm smile. I remember finding the book at the library last week. I tried reading it while waiting for Four some nights, but I found it too challenging. So I returned it.

“That’s... a bit too difficult for me, Professor.”

“Some international program students also serve as tutors.”

“Well... I don’t have any money.”

I’m sorry that I’m having financial difficulties.

“I really appreciate your help, Professor. I will try to learn more vocabulary and watch YouTube tutorials.”

“We can study together,” Khun supported me.

The professor tightened his grip on the strap of his bag, still smiling, ready to go. He uttered his last words before leaving: “Ah, the love of youth and learning—the classics combined!”

I glanced at Khun, who just returned my smile with blissful ignorance. It seems that from now on we have to walk even further.

“Find a place to sit. I need to use the restroom.” I have a trick to put distance between us.

“Okay. Just come to me as soon as possible.”

I’m relieved he complies, but I’ll take as much time as I can.

“Ya, ya.”

I stopped by the restroom on the first floor of the foreign language center. When I was about to open the door after using the restroom, I heard the footsteps of several girls. They gathered in front of a large mirror, fixing their appearance before leaving for lunch. Their conversation contained sharp cruelty.

That’s right.

They talk about me.

“Hey, did you see that? She’s doing it again!”

“Who are you talking about? Your mother?”

“You little bitch! I’m not talking about my mother. I’m talking about bitchy Jattawa, the law major’s black hole daughter.”

Is that my nickname?

Is that what they call me?

“Oh, I saw it too! She keeps attacking Khun, but to be honest, Khun would never choose an ordinary girl like her. That’s why they haven’t become a thing yet.”

You misunderstood, friend. In fact, he was the one who asked me out. If I didn’t turn back time, things would be even more awkward between us right now.

Usually, I can easily brush off other people’s criticism.

Usually, I respond with a dry smile and lower my head, either in front of or behind them, because what they say is complete nonsense.

“She’s a total slut, always surrounded by her male friends.”

I do not know what to do. Maybe other students at this university also look at me the same way, seeing me as a black hole. Khun and Joey will be my only friends.

I wish I could disappear from here. They can keep saying bad things about me, but I don’t want to hear it directly.

“I really want to know who chose that bitch as their main princess. Isn’t there another girl in the law department? I can’t wait for the contest organizer to post her photo on the university’s fan page. I’m sure she’ll get the least number of likes. She truly is a black hole among the contestants.”



Okay. I would pause time, open the door, and quietly slip out. As I took a breath and tried to clear my mind of thoughts filled with gossip, the sound of the bathroom door next door suddenly slammed shut, followed by a very familiar voice, saying a familiar sentence.

“Noise pollution. Get lost!”

Another black hole of this university.

“Oops! Oh! I didn’t mean you, Four! We never called you a black hole, I swear! Otherwise, let me die in the toilet! The girl I’m talking about is—”

“Then? You’re still annoying. I’m reading some news.”

“1...”

As Four started counting down the numbers, the students rushed to pack their things. The sound of their hurried movements revealed their fear of reaching the count of ‘three’.

“2...”

Their noisy footsteps disappeared within seconds. The toilet returned to a calm state, the same as when I entered.

The girl outside suddenly stopped counting, and my heart pounded, feeling a strange change in the air.

She confronts the girls for unknown reasons, perhaps driven by her personal problems. But I’m sure she’s just annoyed by their gossip. It’s too wild to think that she’s defending me.

Gosh, why did she do that? If all she wanted was a moment of peace, she could sit in her room, undisturbed and lost in gossip.

This is truly the worst. Falling in love with her now? Not on my agenda. I haven’t prepared my heart for anyone.

But...

Perhaps the quickest thing to give in this world is our sincere feelings.

I have fallen in love with her, even in my dreams.

And now, my feelings for her have spread into my life too.

Even if you may not realize it, I would love to stop time, even if just to tuck a strand of hair behind her ear.

I opened the door while time stopped. Yes, I've paused time. In front of me, Four bent down to reach for the tap, closing it after washing her hands. The water remained motionless, waiting to splash when I touched it.

"Thank you..." I whispered with a smile, the words were only intended for myself, not heard by the other girls. "From now onwards, and in the future, please take care of me."

Her hair felt incredibly soft, like when strands of her hair touched my cheek in that dream. I rarely tuck anyone's hair behind their ears, except for my sister who can't manage it herself. As I got older, I rarely touched other people.

My eyes accidentally caught a glimpse of the light from her cell phone screen, still shining brightly as time stopped. The screen was tucked into a shallow jeans pocket, allowing me to read the caller's name clearly.

**'Pak'**

Oh no... My heart feels broken. How could I forget that she has the perfect fiancé?

She may seek legal advice as well.

I slumped my shoulders, feeling down, as I exited the toilet. Time returns to normal, and I have to find Khun as I promised. I tried to distract myself from the fact that she was superior to me in every way. I slapped my cheeks lightly, hoping it would snap me out of this gloomy state.

Trust your sister's vision, Jattawa.

She's mine. Only mine!

At this time, I realized that people should not be labeled with hurtful names like 'black hole' or other negative terms. Experiencing it directly is excruciating. How has Four survived this long? No one was really used to such cruel words; they were just hiding their weaknesses.

However, despite everything, Four showed me kindness when she shouted, "Noise pollution, Get lost!"

But a few days later, I found myself witnessing Four slapping someone right in front of my eyes...

# Chapter XII : Stop behaving like some Angie

You won't believe what I saw that day: Four unleashing her serpentine power.

Let me explain...

Our university held a photo shoot for the public relations campaign in our vibrant stands, with professional photographers hired for the event.

Our university was renowned not only for its academic excellence but also for its attractive students. The Prince and Princess Pageant always drew a lot of attention, and clicking a photo contributed to the Popular Vote round. The winner of this round would receive benefits for the final round and a reward of 5,000 baht. When I heard that, my heart raced like a crayfish dancing in the river. However, with my plain appearance, I felt I had no chance against the other contestants.

“Hello everyone! I'm Yaya-Ying, in charge of publishing the amazing photos from the Prince and Princess page. Today, we'll use this locker room as our dressing area. Once the mentors finish transforming you into royalty, come find me here. Accessories are available on a first-come, first-served basis,” announced the trans senior with a fabulous bob hairstyle, her face glowing with excitement. She pointed to a long table filled with accessories, ranging from pink books and teddy bears to a live St. Peter's fish. Was she serious!?

“You'll need to choose one of these accessories for your photo session. The photographer will only take two photos of each of you because he's eager to get home and crash,” Yaya-Ying scolded a hipster boy who was busy

adjusting the lights. He looked at her with a mix of disdain and affection. There seemed to be something more between them.

“Now everyone, get into position!”

Kook Kai brought his makeup and hair equipment to Khun and me in the busy locker room. After working his magic on Khun’s hair, Khun looked absolutely stunning, like the male lead of a Korean drama. His expression was a mix of unfortunate disorientation and angelic innocence. As for me, Kook-Kai took quite a while to decide on my hairstyle.

“Anyway, smile like you did during your princess audition,” Kook-Kai instructed. “I’ll curl the ends of your hair and create a high ponytail. You also need to pick a cute and cool prop for your photo. Your character is the sunny girl who brings smiles to everyone. Understood?”

“Clear as crystal.”

I expected something colorful or pastel, but the prop I ended up with was the St. Peter’s fish! I was the last contestant to emerge because Kook-Kai got stuck watching a hair curling tutorial on YouTube while working on my hair.

Khun was quick, and Yaya-Ying urged him to pick an accessory promptly. He chose a cool black backpack and slung it over his shoulder. But for me? What the hell?! A half-dead St. Peter’s fish? It was still flapping and gasping desperately for air.

My face was already plain and now I had to pose with an aquatic creature! The contestants from other specialties burst out laughing. Some sarcastically suggested that the pitiful fish could be my secret weapon for the popular vote round. It was clear they were mocking me. I puffed out my cheeks, trying to hide my embarrassment. That’s when Khun walked over and saw my less-than-ideal accessory.

“Do you want us to change?” the innocently charming boy proposed. I turned to him with a grateful look but then shook my head.

“No, I can’t,” I replied.

“I see. So, you plan to make it into a spicy dish, right?”

“After the photo shoot? No way, I can’t eat it. I’ll return it to nature.”

“No way! St. Peter’s fish is cultivated for food. If you just release it into a river, it might not survive. Just eat it.”

“But it’s very unfortunate,” I said, looking at the poor fish chosen as my prop. “If I don’t want to eat it or release it, what should I do?”

“Just keep it.”

“Keep it?”

“Yes, keep it in a beautifully decorated fish tank. Connect it to an oxygen concentrator, feed it regularly, and don’t forget to find it a few fish friends. That’s your last option.”

Another responsibility added to my already busy life. I turned to meet the fish’s desperate gaze. Did you need an oxygen concentrator too, little friend? You’re quite demanding. Or should I just throw you into a spicy Tom Yum soup? It didn’t matter. I’d figure it out later! Taking pictures with a fish was no different from a normal student ID photo session. Despite my fidgeting and dragging my feet, that’s what I told myself.

Since each contestant had only two chances to pose, my turn quickly came despite being last. Yaya-Ying directed me to the third floor of the stands and instructed me to create my own pose. I could sit, lie down, do a somersault, or strike a yoga pose—whatever I wanted. The only condition was that I had to include my fish friend in the photo.

Let’s give you a name right now. Nice to meet you. Patty Fish! Patty Fish, listen up. You better not make any unexpected movements when the camera clicks, got it?

My face looked silly and uncomfortable. I went up to the stands with Patty Fish in my hands. My original plan was to hold her tail and place her head

down as if she were the centerpiece of an extravagant table. However, when the photographer began the countdown...

“Oh!”

Patty Fish decided to disobey and escaped from my hands. I quickly bent down to save her from a messy death and the gruesome splatter of guts. The wet aquatic creature remained in my arms. The photographer, apparently eager to finish the day, paid no attention to my strange poses. I could hear him counting down to another shot.

“Wait! Time out!”

The camera clicked. Well, that was just fantastic. There was no chance to even crack a smile. The last shot was already over. I carefully placed Patty Fish back on the tray and ran toward Yaya-Ying, still clutching the tray.

“Can I do it one more time, please?”

“No, it’s not possible. Everyone else had only two chances too.”

“But my prop couldn’t stay still!” I protested, showing him the tray. I shouldn’t have used it as an accessory to begin with. Others had bags, notebooks, balloons, even floats...

And then there was me, the last contestant, stuck with a St. Peter’s fish? How unfair. The photographer and Yaya-Ying exchanged a brief look, each trying to shift the blame. The other contestants had their eyes fixed on me. Khun stepped forward, stood next to me, and used his charming voice to plead with the organizers.

“Can you help my friend?”

“But everyone else—”

“If what everyone wants is justice, why not use the same accessory for all of us? As part of the organizing team, shouldn’t you prioritize both equality and fairness?”

Hearing his argument, Yaya-Ying's eyebrows furrowed in anger.

"Hey, how old are you? Don't forget that you're talking to someone who's not your class. You're representing your specialty, so there's no room to be picky. Last year, the princess of Mass Comm had an incredibly voluminous costume, and you know what? She didn't complain. So don't act so high and mighty, okay?"

Damn. Yaya-Ying, our cute ladyboy, was completely upset at that moment.

"You were late too, so blame yourself, not others. If you're not satisfied with the photos, that's your problem. Why don't you just give up if you can't stand it?"

At this point, I wished I could go back in time and hold Patty Fish tightly in my hands. I was really thankful for my special power, which would save me from this mess. I went back in time and firmly secured the silly fish—there would be no problem. Well, except for my awkward smile. The nerves never seemed to disappear!

After the photo shoot, I signaled to Khun to wait for me in the canteen. I grabbed a large bag to hold our poor fish, Patty, and headed to the back of the stands, where a tap was waiting for me. That was where the janitor used to hook up the hose to clean the area. I turned on the faucet and carefully poured water into the bag for my little fish friend.

Then I heard a fight nearby. With a hint of doubt, I tilted my head, wondering if it was 'her' or someone else. Suddenly, another girl responded:

"You're a sore loser! You made your team lose and yet you're blaming Kie for it!"

That was it. I quickly sealed the water bag and silently tiptoed toward the source of the commotion behind the stands.

Oh my God! It was Four! She had grabbed the collar of another girl's athletic uniform and was pulling hard.



Uh-oh... That was the most unexpected thing of the day. When referring to Kie, it was probably a sign that she was a junior. The girl that Four had grabbed was shorter than her, with lips tinted slightly orange as if edited by a filter. Her face and body exuded a fearless disdain towards her superior, and her eyebrows were furrowed in resentment.

“Fuck you, Four! You’re always such a nasty loser. You deserve it with that crippled leg! You’re jealous of Kie these days, aren’t you?”

“It’s clear that you started all this.”

“Why shouldn’t I? Kie is my captain! The doctor told her to take those damn anti-anxiety drugs for years. She’s never satisfied with our victories. At night, she can’t even sleep and heads to the gym, hitting the ball through tears. If it’s not your fault, then whose fault is it supposed to be?”

“You weren’t even there. What the hell do you know?”

Four’s teeth clenched as she suppressed her anger.

“I know! Everyone knows that you couldn’t catch a ball and ended up breaking your leg, which caused the team to lose in the semifinals. You’ve been limping around with that metal in your leg for years. That’s why when you saw Kie, you went crazy.”

Using nothing more than her bare palm, Four delivered a powerful blow to the girl’s left cheek, jolting her face and interrupting her words. I quickly covered my mouth and widened my eyes in shock. That slap was hard enough to make you cry.

“If I’m such a nasty loser, then you’re a fool too,” Four said coldly. Her only response from the girl was a slight twitch of her lip that revealed her disdain.

“And don’t mention your captain’s name to me again. She was my friend once, but she isn’t anymore, by choice.”

The taller girl retreated, ready to end the conversation. However, the junior student saw this as an opportunity. Taking advantage of Four's momentary lapse in caution, she grabbed Four's hair, pulling it back and initiating the fight.

"You can't just slap me freely! I'm an attacker too!"

My heart raced like a drum. Should I step forward and shout, "Security! We need help here!" or should I hide and watch the spectacle unfold between these girls of different weight classes?

Driven by sheer resentment, the younger girl lunged forward, while Four demonstrated her superior tactics. With her left hand, Four grabbed her opponent's right wrist, twisting it slightly to neutralize her strength, before forcefully grabbing her chin. The final blow was a powerful push, using all her strength.

But the younger girl refused to back down. With her long nails, she tried to scratch Four, desperate to leave a mark. My heart raced as if I was watching an action movie. The real catfight wasn't as loud as in soap operas. Both sides didn't shout frantically. The taller girl moved with precision, using her physical strength and tactical prowess, while Four bit her lip, clearly irritated by the provocations.

Was she a professional fighter? How could my future soulmate have such a turbulent history? And damn it! I had already used my time control power that day. I couldn't find a way to separate them or intervene. I realized that jumping in now wouldn't do any good, so I kept my mouth shut and continued observing silently. If it turned into a legal showdown, honestly, I'd be fine being a witness pointing the finger at Four.

No matter how angry she was, resorting to violence was never justified. In such cases, the other party could claim self-defense. The result was not surprising. The junior student (probably older or the same age as me) quickly ran away as if she were in a 4x100 meter relay, disappearing from sight. Judging by her tangled hair and battered face, she had taken a thorough beating. The mean girl stretched her neck, a sort of exercise routine to relax after the pinch-and-pull episode.

I couldn't stand her remorseless posture, not to mention those overpriced sneakers with loose laces. I took a deep breath to gather courage, grabbed my fish companion in its bag, and emerged from my hiding place.

“Article 391: Any person who commits a forceful attack against another person will be punished with a prison sentence of not more than one month or a fine of not more than one thousand baht, if the attack is not serious to the point of causing bodily harm to the victim, or mental distress.”

Four, her face marked by bruises and scratches from sharp nails, turned her attention to me. She seemed surprised to see me there, clicking her tongue and ordering me around once again.

“Can you speak like a human?”

“It's legal language. Are you saying legal language isn't human language?”

“I don't understand it. That means you're not speaking a human language!”

“Anyway, you just physically attacked someone. If that girl is seriously injured, you could be charged under Section 295.”

“Stop! Enough of the lectures. Save it for your intensive session before the exam.”

“Then why did you start attacking that girl in the first place? No matter how much she provoked you, you have no right to resort to violence!”

“I was just giving her fair warning before I ended up in jail.”

“Not to mention the university punishment! You've been acting ignorant, like you're enjoying a leisurely raft ride in the middle of the ocean. What were you thinking when you slapped her like that?”

Four wiped the blood from the corner of her mouth and let out a hoarse laugh.

“Good. When you become a licensed attorney, I'll ask you to be my personal attorney in case I get into a fight with anyone.”

“You are a bother!”

“When I brought that younger girl here, she told me exactly the same thing.”

“And? That works perfectly, then. You slap me, I collect my compensation.”

“How much are we talking about? Should I write you a payment check in advance?”

She kept her annoyed tone and walked toward me with a mischievous glint in her eyes. She clasped her hands behind her back. I swallowed nervously, afraid I would end up getting hit. As the distance between us narrowed and her right hand was raised, I closed my eyes and took a step back.

“Hey you.”

Four placed her hand on my right shoulder, her grip strong like that of a volleyball player. I opened my eyes and came face to face with her. Her beautiful face with lightly shaded lips opened, and she spoke her last words before walking past me.

“Angie is holding on to your leg.”

“Huh? What does that mean? Who is Angie?”

When I looked at my feet, I couldn’t help but exclaim, “Holy lizard!”

It wasn’t just an exclamation. The creature inspecting my shoes turned out to be a monitor lizard, officially known as *\*Varanus salvator\**.

According to Four, her name was Angie.

Kawee had mentioned that Angie was very friendly. But when she raised her head and showed her look, I could honestly say that the girl, with her tongue sticking out, didn’t seem as friendly as he’d said. Maybe it was because I didn’t bring any snacks.

But seriously, Angie, what are you doing here?! She lived near the pond and sometimes sunbathed in the garden. My fellow mentor had warned me about her!

Maybe this huge, chubby lizard had stopped by after soaking up some sun. I didn't have anything for her to eat and, honestly, I was afraid she would bite me. So, I decided to hold the bag of fish tightly in my arms and quickly follow Four. Don't you dare mess with my fish Patty! The first thing that came out of my mouth after reaching the tall girl was:

"It would be a shame for Angie if I started calling you Angie."

She didn't even look at me; she just kept walking and responded, "Damn lizard."

"Like I said, I'm sorry about that damn lizard."

"You're like those physical education students at our university."

"Do you mean Angie? Are you comparing me to monitor lizards?"

"No, I mean those stupid physical education students. You're as stupid as they are."

Well, that was a relief.

"You just slapped her and now you call her a stupid physical education student. What kind of holy lizard are you?"

Despite my calm voice, my words might have been a little harsh, as Four suddenly stopped walking. I almost forgot to hit the brakes. Her royal highness, the slapping queen, turned towards me, our faces only a few centimeters apart. Oh...I couldn't bring myself to look into her eyes. I diverted my gaze to my fellow fish in the bag. I love you, Patty fish. Let me seek comfort in your presence. I'll give you a second chance.

"Are you always this mouthy wherever you go?"

When I took one look at her cold, stoic face, I realized it was wiser to concentrate on watching my fish. I loved nature, fish, and even Angie at the time.

“By the way, I’ve been wondering about something.”

“I’m sorry...”

“Just answer my question.”

My heart began to pound in fear of that critical question. If I couldn’t give a satisfactory answer, unfortunately, my face might end up sore. Four moved closer, as if she wanted to keep this conversation just between the two of us, even though there was no one around.

This time, she didn’t use nerve-racking words. Her voice, soft and gentle, broke the silence.

“After that day, why did you stop looking at the moon on the roof?”

# Chapter XIII : The Moon never changed

"Since that day, why did you stop looking at the Moon on the roof?"

Ouch! I raised my head and opened my eyes, staring at the person who asked the question. When Four was deep in thought, observing or reconsidering something, she would usually squint halfway.

At that very moment, she was staring at me with that habit. Her dark eyes were so close that it was as if they were practically within arm's reach, closer than a 1-foot ruler.

Those marks on her face...

She deserved them, but I still felt the need to play nurse and heal her. I was speechless, not knowing how to respond.

As I let my gaze fall to her lips, I was struck by a sudden memory of that soft kiss on my forehead from the dream. It gave me a jolt of nerves, not because I was afraid of her but because I felt too embarrassed to look deeper into her eyes.

But wait, first I needed to focus on her question. What did she just say? Why did she wonder why I never returned to the rooftop after our little talk that day? What did all this mean? Did she go back there too?

"How did you know that?" I lifted my head. There was also a hint of nervousness in her eyes, but it could just be annoyance.

"Don't answer my question with another question."

Yes, she was clearly upset.

"But you've done the same thing before..."

"Well, I'll give you an answer. Yes, I accidentally went up there. It was just a 'coincidence.'" She said, emphasizing her words. "Now, can you answer me?"

I didn't dare tell her the truth: initially, I went up to wait for her because my little sister saw her sad. I was worried that she might do something drastic, so I wanted to avoid it. But then she opened up and shared her concerns, and I stopped worrying about her. That's why I hadn't returned to the roof. Who would confess something like that? So all I could do was look into her eyes and remain silent.

I wasn't sure if it was just in my head, but for a brief moment, her gaze seemed to hold a hint of sadness, as if some of the stars that once illuminated the entire universe had suddenly faded.

"The Moon is still as beautiful as ever. Why don't you go see it sometime?"

How was I supposed to respond to her? How could I explain everything to her?

Like I went up there for her and not for the Moon...

I pondered for a moment, desperately trying to find an excuse. I nervously swallowed before finally responding.

"Well... I have to get up early in the morning to make more sandwiches to sell, so I go to bed early. By the way, did you accidentally end up on the roof every night? Is that how you found out?"

She seemed to believe my explanation, but her expression was still fierce as always. The aggressive girl extended her arm, pushing me back forcefully. She then turned abruptly and walked away from me, as if she wanted to end the conversation.



Her actions were irritating. It seemed like she was avoiding further scrutiny. Grabbing my bag of fish, I quickly reached for it. I intended to lecture her on her legal provisions and warn her not to get into fights in the future.

However, my feet stopped as soon as I saw her yellow Porsche in the parking lot.

Why was it covered in cuts and scratches? And there, written on the car, were the words "nasty loser." A can of spray paint was lying on the ground nearby.

Four must have seen it by now. Ignoring the vandalism, she opened the driver's side door and got inside. If I was not mistaken, the same words were used by that PE student who reprimanded her.

Or maybe...

She dragged that third-year student to confront her because she caught her red-handed, vandalizing her fancy vehicle.

That was going too far...

I mean, the PE student went too far. It would cost her at least ten thousand baht to repair all the damage and repaint the car. Although violence was not the appropriate solution, I would dare say that someone who does not apologize deserves a good slap.

Umm...

That might sound contradictory coming from me. But actually, that PE student was so disturbing. Four would be carried away by her pure whim.

Maybe I should encourage my future lover to take legal action against that physical education student and make her pay for the damages.

That's how it is! If I could guide her through the process and she received sweet compensation, maybe she would even get a piece of it. I moved to her side. I mean, I was scolding her before without even knowing the full story.

I wish I could go back in time and apologize, or at least refrain from calling her "Angie."

However, I had already used my power that day. In the end, I slumped my shoulders and bit my lip in regret, watching as Bumble Bee turned onto the university road.

Sorry, Four. I had no idea.

In the evening, I biked to drop Vi off at our apartment. I would be late for my shift that day, so I didn't have time to relax in my room with a drink. As I approached the apartment, I noticed that the impressive Bumble Bee was not parked in its usual spot.

I immediately ordered my little sister to keep an eye on Four and let me know through chat. I was anxious to know when she would return, the condition of her car, and whether that guy with a lawyer's pedigree would take her home.

I couldn't get rid of that uneasy feeling. If she needed to repair her car, it meant that Pak could take this opportunity to take her home like before. Something didn't sit right with me.

"The guy in his Lamborghini? Yes, he will take her home. I saw it in my visions."

Vi's clear, bubbly voice informed me, making me sigh deeply and ignore it.

"Are you jealous?"

"No, it's not my style."

"Well, if you already know who your future soulmate is and there is a boy hanging around her, it's natural that you feel a little jealous. Totally normal."

"No, I'm not that kind of girl."

Or maybe just a little bit.

"I have to go to work now. Don't forget to lock the door. And please don't play the music loudly when you're alone. You may not hear anything else. And..."

"And make sure you prepare dinner for me. I'll be back to eat it. No more canned fish. I'll bring some meat soup as always. Hehehe, I already heard and saw everything in my visions."

Vi laughed, reveling in her own pride.

"Go ahead, be proud of yourself. My powers are much more useful than yours! While you may have visions, I can pause and reverse time. I have won from the moment I was born, beating you."

"Oh, and let's not forget the Fish Patty (St. Peter's fish)."

During my lunch break, I called the landlady for recommendations on affordable fish tank stores. Fortunately, she had a spare fish tank and related equipment that she was no longer using, and she agreed to give them to me.

Before I went to work, I reminded Vi to clean the tank and take care of everything to ensure that Fish Patty, our first pet, stayed happy and healthy. And guess what she said?

*"No! It looks so delicious, sister! Why do we have to treat him like a pet? I feel guilty when you treat food like a friend."*

*"He is my friend now!"*

*"But your friend seems so delicious to me."*

This little brat! I hoped that when I returned home, I would find Fish Patty swimming happily instead of being roasted and devoured by my sister's hungry hands.

My phone rang, indicating a new LINE message. I parked my motorcycle in front of our apartment just in time, took off my helmet and stashed it under

the back seat. With my free hand, I took the two bags of beef soup that Aunt Tui gave me, and then took out my phone hidden in my jacket to read the message.

[Kook-kook-kook Kook-Kai: Wow! I need your ideas for the talent show for the university round. Text me tomorrow at 6 pm, okay? If you plan to use any type of instrument, let me know. I will inform the contest organizer to make sure it is ready for you.]

[Kook-kook-kook Kook-Kai: By the way, send this message to your boyfriend too. Khun never bothers to read my messages.]

### **Boyfriend?**

Ugh! that term made me uncomfortable. I quickly responded to Kook-Kai, clarifying that we were just friends right away.

Then, I logged on to Twitter to relay his messages to Khun. He had always been a die-hard fan of that bluebird app and never bothered to use LINE even though he filled out the ID details for it.

With the digital tasks completed, I took a look at Four's parking spot. It was still empty.

Yeah, it wasn't a big surprise. Vi had already told me. A guy in a suit drove a flashy car to escort Four home around 5 PM.

My little sister also mentioned in our chat that he even walked her to her room. She must have fallen for Pak's charms. That guy knows how to make magic out of it and melt hearts.

Deep down, I felt so small and defeated, but I kept it to myself. I climbed the stairs in silence, and when I reached my destination, the third floor, I headed to the front room. I hung a bag of beef soup on the doorknob as a peace offering to the owner of the room, whom I had scolded earlier.

Next, I took out a piece of paper a little bigger than a post-it note. I wrote a two-line message on it but couldn't decide whether I should put it in the

beef soup bag or not. The first line contained the remains of my persistent resolution.

*'Sorry for scolding you. I didn't know what was happening before. I shouldn't judge a book by its cover. I'm the worst. To make up for it, I bought some meat soup with additional add-ins like blood sausage and meatballs. I wasn't sure if it met the standards of dignity, but for me it had deep meaning.'*

As for the second line, it came directly from the depths of my heart:

*'I won't go back to the roof again. The Moon may be beautiful, but it is not made for me to conquer.'*

There was a strange feeling swirling inside me. Ever since Vi said that Pak would take Four to her room, it was like she was living in a different dimension. While others seemed to live their normal lives, I moved forward slowly, tormented by my excessive thoughts.

Finally, I decided to put the note in the bag of meat soup. That day, the stars went out before they could light up the sky.

I entered my room a few seconds later. Vi greeted me with the sound of her scribbling happily with her new pencil and laptop.

"Hey, big sister! I already put Fish Patty in her tank. Thank you for being so kind. We're having extra steamed eggs for dinner thanks to you!"

"It's the perfect combination with meat soup and blood sausage," I told her in a playful tone, gently patting her on the head and planting a loving kiss. "Now, let's dig deeper, my little munchkin."

"Honey, what if I looked like her? Would you still love me?"

What I was babbling about was my appearance: messy bun and bangs, a baggy plaid shirt, and worn-out shorts. It was my go-to work outfit, perfect for getting dirty.

"With wet hands and arms covered in detergent bubbles. Overall, it looked like a mess would definitely love you no matter what, baby."

It would have been fine if I hadn't continued...

"But I really like your soft and silky hands, my little cake!"

It is a scene straight out of a romance novel.

Meanwhile, I opened my palms and examined them carefully. The ten fingers were wrinkled by the water.

My thumb had some scratches from my temporary job: folding paper bags with banana chips. My palms were far from being described as "soft" or "silky."

They weren't ideal to hold, and my fingers weren't kissable. I'm nothing compared to Pak.

I couldn't imagine what it would be like if I still lived with my dad or mom. How would they comfort me and ease this pain? Could my true love cure me? That was a crazy thought I had that would never happen. I only had my loving little sister as family. So, as her older sister, I would keep this feeling to myself and never show any vulnerability.

This dark feeling started with me and ended with me. This night seemed like an eternity. I stayed awake, repeating that couple's conversation over and over again.

Those romantic lines felt like a dark and heavy meteor crashing into me, the girl they looked down on. It took me several hours to finally fall asleep.

And then the next day, I realized what Vi meant...

*"Sometimes you don't realize that you too hold a special place in someone's heart."*

# Chapter XIV : Reasons we Fall in Love

That Saturday, I had a part-time job at a brand-name import store where I reviewed and organized the merchandise. The store was located not far from a shopping mall, and although it only had one floor, it was filled with a wide range of products, including collectibles, K-pop albums, dolls, plushies, and more from different countries. In simple terms, nothing was made in Thailand except the workers' uniforms.

The workload was substantial, but the salaries made it worth it. Customers were always coming and going, some to shop while others just to browse.

I had applied for this job a long time ago, but that morning I received a call informing me that the former part-time worker had resigned. Without hesitation, I accepted the offer and enthusiastically applied to start working immediately. The manager seemed surprised by my enthusiasm, but he eventually hired me to work there every weekend. The work schedule was mainly daytime, from 11 AM to 7 PM.

I called Aunt Tui and explained that I could only work at home from Monday to Friday because I had gotten another job. I was honest with her, and she seemed to understand and support me, even praising me for my perseverance.

However, on my first day, I felt completely overwhelmed. All the product labels were in English, and I came across the word "figure" and pronounced it like "fi-gu-re."

Fortunately, my manager, Kram, who was in his thirties, was kind and patient. He had been helping me learn to read unfamiliar words. The only



downside was that it was quite strict. We were not allowed to take breaks or even kneel while welcoming customers. We had to stand at all times. That was a firm rule. I could do anything for extra money. I was not discouraged.

[Vivi Jaravi: Make sure you eat something. You don't want to pass out from hunger.]

"Jattawa, if you cannot disconnect from your communication device, keep it in the locker behind the store."

Kram's stern voice echoed through the store. He gave me an intense, menacing look while I was in the recommended products corner. More than ten customers were looking at me.

Sure, he was nice enough to teach me a few English terms, but in everything else, he was incredibly strict and never afraid to embarrass his employees in front of customers. He almost seemed intentional, as if to demonstrate that this store prioritized customer service, even if it came at the expense of the workers' dignity.

I knew it was my fault for reading my little sister's message instead of concentrating on my work. I apologized, turned off my phone, and reorganized the pens with panda heads on the tips according to the color shades assigned by the store. Kram walked up behind me and emphasized his point with a booming voice.

"If I see you doing it again, you will fail the probationary period. Understood?"

"Clear as crystal. It was my mistake, sir."

He then returned to the warehouse when a delivery truck pulled up. Kram reminded me of some important rules to remember. First, always wear a clean and appropriate uniform. Women had to tie their hair up and cover it with a hairnet to prevent it from falling out.

Secondly, when it was time to eat, if we were still serving a customer, we had to continue providing our service. Thirdly, as merchants, we were not

allowed to engage in unrelated activities or sit and relax while on duty. We could only sit when we lined up the products on the lower shelves, and even then, we had to kneel. Sitting cross-legged or in any other posture was not permitted.

Lastly, we had to diligently observe customers, no matter how busy we were. If a customer seemed lost or confused, we were to rush in and offer our help with a genuine smile.

One of the senior employees, who had just handed me some packages, was putting the last rule into practice. He saw a perplexed-looking customer between the lamps and quickly walked over and asked, "Ma'am, may I help you?"

His service-oriented smile was as sweet as could be.

This wouldn't have caught my attention if it weren't for Four! We were separated by different sections and she was in the recommended products, so if I hadn't raised my head, I wouldn't have recognized anyone I knew in this store. I concentrated on lining up the pens on the lower shelves with my hands busy with homework, but out of the corner of my eye I kept sneaking glances at the girl in shorts.

Four scanned the shelves of lamps with hopeful eyes once more, but her search seemed futile when she finally approached the clerk with a monotone voice.

"I'm looking for a lunar lamp."

"Oh... We have a great variety in our warehouse. We have the collection of Sailor Moon wands, some inspired by Justice Pao..."

"I prefer the Moon..."

Four interrupted and identified her objective. The one that makes the recipient feel that she has conquered the moon. I wasn't naïve enough to ask her who the lamp was for, considering that the day before I was

complaining about conquering that celestial body. But still, the question lingered in my mind like an old pop song repeated over and over again.

It was only a dream? Had I just had... a dream? It's you? Is it really you?

The older employee ran into the warehouse and came back to show her three different moon lamps. The first was a cheerful yellow orb painted with a smiling face. The second, a crescent moon with a pink rabbit sitting on it. The last one was like a miniature replica of the real Moon.

It didn't look coarse like the real thing, but instead captured the essence of the moon, shining with its enchanting silver light. The shadows inside mimicked its natural features, drawing you in like an iPhone wallpaper and captivating you with its charm.

Four selected the last one and followed the clerk to the counter to make the purchase. Then they asked her a question,

"Do you want to leave a message inside the box?"

The flawlessly beautiful girl paused in contemplation before nodding gracefully.

"Of course."

"What type of message would you prefer us to write for you?" the employee asked with a smile, grabbing a shiny gold gel pen and a piece of paper, ready to write the message.

"Please feel free to write only the recipient's name."

It took even more time to think about this than it did to find and choose the lamp. It had been going on for a while and I couldn't help but feel tense and anxious to know what she would say. Finally, Four lowered her head, avoiding eye contact with the employee. Then she said:

"Please write: *'You said you would never conquer the Moon, so I reached it for you... Jattawa.'* "

My heart raced at that moment. A wave of emotion washed over me, inexplicably moved by the sincere message. In the midst of this infinite universe, Four's thoughts remained the most mysterious to me.

I returned home with my legs numb from a long day of standing; Four's dazzling yellow bumblebee was still not in its usual parking spot. As a simple muggle in the car repair business, I had no idea how long it would take to bring back this impressive car after changing its color.

In the afternoon, the incomprehensible girl finally bought the moon lamp with a stand. I couldn't help but wonder how my short, whiny message could inspire someone like her to take up the quest for the Moon for my sake.

That feeling of wonder continued to linger in my mind for hours, no matter how hard I tried to get rid of it. The next question arose as I headed to my room and recognized the absence of items hanging or installed in front of my door.

Well... I couldn't help but wonder how she planned to deliver it to me.

Would someone like her knock on my door and deliver it to me in person? No, that would never happen. Even if I mustered up the courage, I doubted that I could hand her that meat soup face to face.

"Big Sister!"

As soon as I opened the door, without even setting foot in the room, my hyperactive little sister surprised me by screaming my name at the top of her lungs. I was about to scold her for making such a noise, but as soon as I entered, she ran towards me, holding a mysterious box in her arms. Well, it wasn't really a mystery to me. It was the moon lamp. Her face was radiant with joy.

"Your girlfriend left this for you and said only you can open it!"

"Stop calling Four my girlfriend!"

"Ha ha! I didn't mention any names, but you seem to know exactly who left it for you. You think about her all the time, don't you?"

I couldn't stand her know-it-all smile. I poked her forehead playfully with my index finger and then focused my attention on the minimalist white box that bore the name of my workplace.

"No, I do not know! I just saw her buy it. It's from the store where I work."

"So, do you know what's inside? What is it? If you're too slow, I'll open it myself!"

"Stop!"

I stopped her from getting too carried away. I took the box from her arms, held it, and headed towards Four's room.

"What the hell are you doing? Don't give it back!" Vi yelled at me.

I turned around, looked at her sternly, and ordered her to return to our room. She pouted but obediently retreated to our room as I instructed. I wasn't going to return it. I just wanted to know why she went to the trouble of finding me this moon lamp. It was a nagging question that I couldn't find the answer to on my own.

She told me not to knock on the door, so I decided to knock on the knob to get her attention. She tapped for what seemed like an eternity, and my hand started to hurt, but it was a while before she finally opened the door, looking annoyed.

"You told me not to knock, so I pressed the doorknob."

"What a headache."

The girl, dressed in her royal blue and white striped pajamas, frowned as she glared at me.

"If this is not important, you'll dead."

Upon closer inspection, I noticed that the scratch marks on her face had not yet fully healed.

"Why did you buy this for me? In exchange for meat soup or what?"

"And? What is the problem?"

"Then, I will take your words and the expression on your face as a 'yes' to my question. Why didn't you buy something like beef soup, noodles, or instant noodles, something similar in price?"

"Have you read the message inside the box?"

"Yeah. In fact, I even heard it with my own ears."

That's why I wondered what made her go through all this trouble to get me the Moon.

"Can't you just read it and accept it? Why complicate things so much, huh?"

"I don't really like receiving gifts."

I lied, secretly crossing my fingers behind my back. I loved gifts, but I just wanted to understand her reasons. Especially coming from someone like Four, who I scolded the day before, how could a sane person give me something as expensive as that? More importantly, her silence at that moment made me feel uncomfortable.

"And your look too."

"Do you remember the day you begged me not to participate in the race?"

"I asked you first! Please stop changing the subject!"

"When you cried for me that day, it felt so genuine and sincere... so warm that I couldn't help but believe in your concern."

The girl's soft voice, looking into my eyes, dispelled all the discomfort and anger in my heart, leaving nothing but a feeling of warmth. She said she believed in me, and that's why she left all her desire to win behind and decided not to start running...

I looked into her cosmic eyes. They had softened, as had her voice. It felt like time had frozen around me, even if it was just for a brief moment. Everything remained still, but emotions flowed in motion. The only assurance that time had not stopped completely was the slight bite of her lower lip as her beautiful eyes blinked. Finally, Four turned her head to look elsewhere.

"The moon on the rooftop is really beautiful. You were right about that."

"Yes." She responded.

"Have you been up there for nights already?"

"So many nights without you." She answered brusquely.

What's wrong with being without me?

"So the Moon looks different."

My heart raced once again. I had another sleepless night. I placed the moon lamp on its stand next to my bed. I didn't turn it on, but it still gave off a faint glow in the dark. I saw her insisting on calling it an engagement gift until I fell asleep. I didn't know why Four's words made me feel lost in a dream, I didn't understand her and I never would.

These wild thoughts plagued me for two consecutive nights. It had been a weekend full of lying on my side and staring at this replica of the Moon in a whirlwind of thoughts. It took me hours to finally fall asleep late at night, which caused me to struggle with conscience in my law classes on Monday. Fortunately, I had Khun writing down the lecture notes for me.

"Prosecutor, please make your final statement."

Once again, I opened my eyes in my dream. I could recognize her immediately because of the familiar atmosphere of the courtroom. I looked down and noticed that she was wearing a black robe adorned with a white sash and a gold floral pattern, carefully placed on my left shoulder. In front of me was a middle-aged man in the same outfit next to the accused. Damn, Vi was right. I was a prosecutor and I was about to come face to face with this experienced attorney.

In this dream, I couldn't control myself. It was like I was reliving a scene from a movie, a flashback from a distant past. My body instinctively stood up to present the final statement as instructed by the judge. I looked into the eyes of the accused, who looked back at me with an air of arrogance.

The case at hand was serious. I looked at the pile of documents, full of notes and photographs. It revolved around the brutal robbery and murder of a 16-year-old girl by a 25-year-old man. His motive? To get money for drugs. He had a history of committing multiple violent crimes. My blood boiled when I saw the girl's photo.

She was the same age as Vi in the current timeline. No wonder I felt so disturbed. Thank God I had matured enough to hide my emotions perfectly. I looked at a woman sitting in the courtroom, tears streaming down her face as we discussed her daughter's tragic fate. I assumed she was the girl's mother. The words continued to come out of my mouth, as my heart raced relentlessly.

"Therefore, I request the maximum penalty provided for in the penal code."

"Are you serious, Jattawa...?"

"Which is the death penalty."



The crowd erupted into a frenzy.

"What's up with the surprise, folks? While the defendant was stuck behind bars, there was no escaping the fact that he would likely get some sentence reduction, starting with life in prison and perhaps even 20 years or less. It depended on his behavior. Well, not everyone is an expert in legal matters. The term 'death penalty' can give anyone the chills in real life."

"But let us not forget that it is up to the court to judge his fate. And this defendant... is a real piece of work. It was very scary. While he prematurely lost an innocent life, he had a long list of past crimes."

Still, my heart couldn't help but feel uneasy. The defense lawyer seemed to have experience: he was a serious and experienced man in his fifties. However, there was a hint of worry on his face, indicating that he doubted his chances of winning. This was an important case that required a break for the judge to make a final decision.

Is it because there was not enough evidence? No, this case was clear. Perhaps it is because of the presence of journalists. Who knows? And honestly, I wasn't in the mood to find out.

After all, she was just a student. She would save all the details for when she was a lawyer or prosecutor.

In my dream, I collected all the files and left the courtroom while the judge took a break. As I walked down the steps in front of the court building, I wondered if my adult self owned a car.

Suddenly, a tall, slender woman approached me as if she had been waiting for me all this time. I gripped the strap of my bag tightly. There were no surprises here, it was none other than Four in her adulthood. She had a sly smile on her face and a cool, natural vibe.

"How did it go?"

"Eh, it was... good."

"Good job."

She gently ran her thumb over my cheek and then trailed it to my bottom lip.

"Your lips no longer tremble. Well done."

My heart wasn't beating as fast, but it still felt tight in my chest. Fortunately, Four's gentle touch helped keep me sane.

"I miss Vi... but I tried not to cry in the courtroom."

"I saw... What's wrong with her?"

Why did I miss her so much that I was on the verge of tears? Wasn't that little brat waiting for me at home and pursuing her passions?

"Can we visit Vi tomorrow... please?"

Despite my calm voice, deep down I felt a pang of pain when I mentioned Vi.

"Of course, I'll pick you up tomorrow."

"Thank you very much, Four."

The next day, we would go see Vi. That was a relief. I was eager to see how much Vi had grown and what she had been up to. I wanted to know about her job, her relationships, etc. I was very curious.

We both walked towards a yellow Porsche with white stripes. It was without a doubt Four's style. It wasn't the same Bumble Bee she used to drive during her college days. This one looked newer and more modern. It was even a convertible, so it was definitely more expensive. I was really wondering what Four does for a living.

The tall woman turned to me with a smile and gently stroked my head with love and care.

"Whenever you feel like crying, I will always be by your side. You know that, right?"

"You are always by my side... I know it."

Her words made it seem like I cried often. And to be honest, I could feel an inexplicable pain inside me and Four was there to ease that pain. Then the answer hit me in the face the next day.

Four takes me to visit Vi.

And I saw... her absence made me cry...

Right before my eyes was a framed black and white portrait of my little sister. She was wearing a small smile. Well, actually it was her high school application photo. Below the picture were some numbers.

That's right, some numbers.

Birth...

Death....

I couldn't remember the dates and I didn't want to. At that point I could barely stand upright. My eyes filled with tears and warm tears ran down my cheeks. Four grabbed my arm to keep me from collapsing. I carefully placed the flowers in front of Vi's cremation niche. The sound of sobbing filled the air and I found solace in Four's comforting embrace.

Saw...

She died.

She had gone.

She passed away at the same age as the girl in my recent case. That's why the sight of the girl's photo touched me to the core. I buried my face in Four's soft, silky shirt. Her heart was beating just as fast, but she looked calm on the outside.

The touch and warmth of Four's body gave me a sense of security. Her scent was light but fragrant.

We stayed there for a while... right in front of Vi's resting place. No matter how many times I looked at her, I couldn't let her go. This dream was like a nightmare on steroids.

I kept reminding myself to talk to my living sister as soon as I woke up. This was truly a nightmare, an agonizing nightmare. After I stopped crying, I told my girlfriend I wanted to go home. That was a holiday. Four mentioned that she wanted to stop by a new branch of her sporting goods store at the mall. I nodded slowly, wiped away my tears, and followed her toward her Porsche.

As I left the temple, I couldn't help but feel Vi's absence. I felt the need to hold Four's hand or any part of her body that was within my reach, but she was behind the wheel. I needed to stop acting like a crybaby.

Days had passed since Vi's untimely departure, and it had shaped my mature self. I had learned to control my emotions, even when I was dealing with the Four store employees. I put on a confident smile and walked in as if I had the power to dismiss them on a whim.

No way... That's not what it really was.

Monday came with my usual responsibilities. An intern enthusiastically handed me a cup of coffee, as if it were her usual duty. I didn't even bother to thank her, instead I let out a fake cough and gave her a stern look.

I sarcastically asked if it was a cup of coffee or a footbath concoction and theatrically poured it into a garbage bag, conveniently placed inside the garbage can. With a nasal apology and a guilty look, she quickly brought me a new cup of coffee, which tasted much better.

It had that sweet and creamy touch, like the kind of coffee Vi used to make... I couldn't stand my future self. She despised everyone in that silent office.

They only approached me for business matters, without affectionate words or casual conversations. They politely addressed me by my name, "Miss Jattawa," creating a sense of distance between us.

Could I change this? It wasn't right with my future self. And it seemed like the rainy season was approaching. The rain was falling heavily. Four texted me apologizing for being stuck at a charity ball where she had to stay until the end to maintain a good reputation.

She mentioned that she would pick me up half an hour late. In my dream I had matured enough to reply that I was fine and would wait at the restaurant near the Attorney General's Office.

Forty minutes passed as I tried to kill time by reading a business newspaper. Oh look, there was also a picture of Four somewhere in the middle. The article highlighted her role in the young marketing team and how she had taken her family business, a well-established brand since her father's generation, to new heights.

I approached the store owner and borrowed some scissors. I carefully cut out Four's photo from the newspaper, appraising her and giving her a soft kiss. I loved her from the bottom of my heart. She was my whole life. I folded the photograph and kept it safe in my wallet, treasuring it as if it were a precious treasure.

Suddenly, a familiar yellow Porsche owned by you-know-who, also known as my girlfriend, pulled to the side of the road. Four got out of the car with an umbrella that matched the color of her supercar. She really seemed to have a thing for that vibrant tone.

I got up and waited for her with a radiant smile, not caring about the rain or the people around us. I paid no attention to anyone, not even the man in his black mask at the nearby table. Who cared about the world when you had Four, the one and only?

As her tall figure strutted halfway across the intersection, something caught her eye. Her eyes widened and she dropped her umbrella without hesitation. In one swift movement, she ran towards me, using her arm to fiercely wipe

something off my shoulder. Confusion filled my mind as I fell to the ground. It took a moment to understand the reality of the situation. The masked man had taken aim at me, intending to stab me with the same scissors he had borrowed.

But Four bravely intervened and sacrificed herself to protect me. Everything became clear when the cowardly attacker fled, disturbed by the commotion caused by the store owner. I remembered his pathetic way of running because of his lame legs.

He was the father of the defendant I had fought against in court, the one for whom I had asked for the death penalty. He had been sending me a lot of angry letters, full of curses and threats, since I took his son to court. I reported him to the police years ago, but I never thought he would have the guts to follow through.

His son was to blame, but he blamed me for taking legal action against him. To make matters worse, he was looking to get revenge on someone he cared about so much! What an idiot! Your son could only end up in jail!

His son committed a crime and had the nerve to point the finger at the prosecutor who was simply doing her duty? Shamelessness ran in the family!

In this vivid dream, my beloved Four was soaked in blood, staining her once pristine white shirt. She collapsed and I desperately tried to hold her up, tears streaming down my face. She was conscious but too weak to speak or stand.

"Call an ambulance, aunt!"

I turned to plead with the owner of the store. Her hands were shaking, but she managed to dial the emergency number and provide our location. I was very grateful for her help.

"Four, please, you're going to be fine. Everything is my fault."

Her palms, still warm, held mine with the last remnants of her strength. It was like she was silently telling me to stop crying like a fool.

"Please... Without you... I don't know how I would survive alone in this world."

My heart was in agony. Her eyelids slowly closed in pain, as if the universe itself was collapsing. She meant everything to me. Please don't take her from me too...

"Four."

And so, I woke up in the middle of class, drenched in sweat and breathing hard. My scream caught everyone's attention, including the teacher. I tried to regain my composure, taking deep breaths to calm myself.

"My apologies."

It was just... a nightmare about Vi's premature departure at such a young age. A nightmare where a relative of the accused got angry and tried to kill me. And a nightmare where the victim of those sharp scissors was Four, my future soulmate.

"Jattawa, why are you crying?" Khun asked, surprised.

I used the back of my index finger to wipe under my eye. It was just a lingering tear from my dream. He quickly pulled his handkerchief from his shirt pocket to wipe my tears, but I stood up from my desk before he could reach me. I gathered my belongings and quickly put everything into my messenger bag, saying goodbye to the professor.

"Wait! Have you just dreamed about Four?"

"Excuse me, sir. I suddenly remembered that I have urgent matters to attend to."

"Forward. Don't forget your post-test next class."

"I won't do it. Thank you very much, sir."

I bowed respectfully to say goodbye, while the professor continued pointing his laser pen at the slides. Khun seemed perplexed, as he hadn't finished his sentence. As soon as I left class, my phone vibrated incessantly with his messages, but I wasn't in the mood to read them at the time.

I needed to find her. I started interrogating people on campus, forgetting that I had the agility of a sloth. Who would have imagined I would be a failure with this type of career?

"Where's Four, business student?"

"Well, I'm a senior, but I have no idea. Even her classmates have no idea about her hangouts," Kook-Kai responded, seeming concerned by my question.

"I told you not to mess with her. Why don't you listen to me, Wa?" Kawee, my mentor, shook his head in disbelief and scolded me for trying to get involved with the Four Serpents.

"Probably behind the noodle bowl-shaped building I often see Four and her friends having a barbecue," a senior suggested in the university cafeteria.

I ran over there, but there was no one in sight. At that very moment, I really needed to see Four. I missed her, even though she lived right next door. I missed her, although we still had a lot of time to spend together. I just missed her. Missed her. I still miss her...

Feeling discouraged, I began wandering the trails, ready to give up and return to our apartment to see her. But then, my eyes saw a girl sitting on the bridge in the middle of the pond. She was with Angie, who was raising her head and sticking her tongue out at her. Four took a cucumber out of the bag and left it, waiting for her dear friend to come and eat it.



Without wasting another second, I grabbed my bag tightly and headed towards the bridge. The fierce and fabulous girl turned to see who was running towards her and stopped at the foot of the bridge. She then threw away the remaining cucumbers and stood up.

"Four..."

"That Moon... If you don't like it, throw it away. Don't give it back to me."

She snapped and turned around, ready to walk to the other side of the bridge. No, I wasn't there to talk about the Moon. I just missed her. I ran forward and wrapped my arms around her in a surprise hug.

Four froze in her tracks, surprised and caught off guard by my sudden display of affection. My arms clung to her slim waist, silently begging her not to move away. I pressed my cheek against her familiar, soft back. I must have hugged her countless times. Just like we fell in love with each other.

I couldn't remember all the details of my dream, but that image of her covered in blood because of me...

That day, when it was just the two of us, she was there for me. I closed my eyes and poured out my most sincere confession.

"Thank you for staying by my side, Four."

# Chapter XV : Everything belongs to Four

That day I paused in time and hugged someone in an eternal embrace. The sweet scent of her shirt tickled my nose, making it impossible to let her go. I glanced at our mischievous Angie, the monitor lizard, dangling in the air as she hopped toward the pond. I couldn't help but burst out laughing. It felt so good—truly incredible!

If only the world could freeze in this happiness and protect us from any future misfortune, that would be the perfect ending for us. When I released the pause button, Four turned her gaze towards me, her eyes filled with a mix of intensity and curiosity.

"Let go."

"I'm sorry."

I smiled shyly and quickly released my hug. I took a step back and nervously scratched my cheeks, avoiding direct eye contact with the captivating girl before me. I was embarrassed to refer to myself so intimately in front of her.

The taller girl tilted her head to get closer and see my hidden face better.

Four's eyebrows furrowed slightly, a mix of curiosity and skepticism in her expression.

"You do not feel good?"

"I'm fine."

"You're not."

"I am."

"You're smiling," Four commented, crossing her arms and pointing her chin at me. "What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing's wrong with me, I'm just madly in love with you. See you later!"

I abruptly cut off our conversation and turned around, trying to escape the current situation.

However, Four surprised me by following me and grabbing my hand without warning. My body involuntarily turned towards her. Before I could even utter a word, her voice conveyed seriousness.

"Go to the clinic." Her words were firm and authoritative. "Who knows? Unconsciously, you might end up hugging random strangers."

I couldn't help but feel touched by someone genuinely concerned about my well-being, beyond my little sister and my Aunt Tui, who had known me for so long. I never imagined that someone would be so interested in my physical condition.

My hands felt numb and sweaty, lacking the softness typical of a female lead in a drama series. They were rough, with worn and torn skin. I didn't want Four to feel uncomfortable when I touched her.

Who could fall in love with someone who looked like a prickly cactus instead of a delicate flower like me?

"Why are you suddenly silent? Don't tell me you can't go to the clinic alone."

How could I make her believe that I was perfectly fine? Yes, my back hurt a little, but that was a common symptom. It was her hand that was causing my concern. I hid my face to gauge her reaction. Four's furrowed eyebrows were gone, replaced by a poker face that was difficult to read.

"Don't put up with it. Just let it go. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

"If you don't feel well, I'll take you home."

I was about to faint because of her...

When I opened my mouth to explain to Four that I needed to lie down on the clinic bed for a while, a scene from my dream suddenly appeared. It was the moment I cried in front of Vi's cremation niche.

"Well, I'm... totally fine. Please excuse me. I have some urgent business to attend to right now."

I quickly pulled my hand from her comforting grip, offering an apologetic nod for my abrupt exit, and took off like a rocket towards the motorcycle parking lot. I just wanted to stay by Four's side as long as possible, but Vi held a special place in my heart. Now it was just the two of us. Without looking back at Four, I left her behind.

While riding the motorcycle, I dialed Vi's number. I knew it was a risky move, but my heart was already at her school, breaking the rules for the first time. It took Vi a moment to recover, and my heart raced with anxiety.

"What's wrong, Wa? Why the sudden call? I had to excuse myself to go to the bathroom, you know?"

"Take your things and meet me in front of the discipline office. I'll be there in a minute."

"Why?"

I hung up the phone and put it in my pocket. I sped up, eager to get there as quickly as possible. We seriously needed to talk. I remembered Vi once mentioning something about not being sure she would make it to graduation. Back then, I didn't pay much attention to it, so I let it go. But now, after dreaming about it, I couldn't help but feel nervous. My sister could have foreseen her tragic fate.

When I arrived at her school, I saw Vi standing in front of the discipline office, clutching her black backpack. The moment she saw me, she greeted me and gestured for me to join her. I parked my motorcycle and headed to the office to request an early release for her, explaining that we had urgent family matters to attend to. Since Vi was sitting behind me, she asked:

"What's wrong, sister?"

My words stumbled and failed because of my anxiety.

"I had a dream today, perhaps triggered by lingering memories from the alternate timeline. I dreamed about Four... and also about you."

"And? What is so important to me?"

"You know exactly what I'm talking about, but you refuse to tell me."

"Wa, I really don't understand what you mean."

"If you know!"

Don't cry, Jattawa. You can't seem weak in front of your sister no matter how cruel this life is.

"We still had a long way to go to solve this damn problem. I know you've seen your own damn future. Why don't you tell me so we can avoid it?!"

"Oh, so that's what you're talking about..."

Her voice trailed off into silence. I saw her chin rest on my shoulder, but it was different from the usual playful gestures of hers. This time, my little sister looked absentmindedly ahead.

"You saw me die before my graduation, right?"

"I can't take this anymore. Damn! Why must God punish us like this?" I struggled to swallow the lump in my throat. "Tell me what you saw in your visions."

"I did not see anything."

"Liar!"

"I'm not lying, Wa. I just couldn't see myself in your successful future. That's why I know I won't live to see it."

As she explained, I tried to steady my rapid breathing. My sister hugged me, as if to make sure I didn't worry about her. But that only intensified the pain in my heart, reminding me that in the future (the future I had been fighting for) my beloved sister would not be by my side. My mind kept replaying the same scene from my dream. Damn it... I couldn't bear the thought of my own future.

"I will change your destiny," I said firmly. "No matter what I have to sacrifice, together we will live a better life."

"Wa."

"Do not leave me alone."

Vi remained silent, and her grip on me tightened even more. She buried her face in my shoulder, her body shaking with sobs. She was crying... I couldn't stand to see my little sister cry.

"Please save those tears for moments of pure joy."

I changed my plans and decided not to return home. I used my thumb to indicate a left turn at the next intersection. Vi had always wanted to go to the movies. She had never experienced it before.

Although every baht had to be carefully guarded, it was worth spending some on moments of joy from time to time. Vi looked surprised when I took her to a shopping mall. She rubbed her eyes like a little girl, wiped away the warm tears, and looked at me.

"Can we change our destiny here?"

"No," I said, shaking my head as I turned off my motorcycle.

There might have been dried tears on my face, but inside, I was still shedding them. I gave her a forced smile. But this place could bring us some happiness as we figured things out. She tilted her head and frowned, taken aback by my statement. I quickly clarified,

"Let's watch a movie, airhead."

Doubting my sudden change, Vi kept insisting, "I'm not going to die tomorrow. You don't have to spend your money on this."

But I put on a cheerful front. "I might have looked clumsy because it's also my first time watching a movie in the theater. Oh, and we have to get some popcorn."

Although I wasn't a big fan and it was ridiculously expensive, it was worth it for Vi, who loved sweets.

It was her first time at the theater, so everything had to be perfect for her! The air conditioning was even cooler than our apartment.

"It's so dark," Vi leaned closer to me in the dark since there was nothing on the screen yet.

"We're going to have crab for dinner tonight. I want it to be the most delicious meal ever, okay?"

"Are you serious?"

"Yes, I know you've wanted to try it for years."

"Today you are the best, like a sugar daddy! I promise to make it so delicious that you will want to buy crab again and again..."

Sugar daddy... That wasn't true. This was the best thing I could do for her.

"If I had a car, I would take you on all kinds of adventures during your vacation. That would be surprising. If I had enough money to make all your wishes come true."

"True, that would be even better."

If that dream were nothing more than a nightmare that would never come true, I wouldn't ask for anything more. I took a look at Vi's adorable profile. Her lips curved into a cheerful smile as she stared at the huge screen.

She also had a power related to time, just like me, blood ties and all. But even in this theater, the fear of losing her lingered, and tears threatened to well up in my eyes once again. I hung my head, unable to accept that damned future.

A future without her...

A future where I am myself but stuck up...

Suddenly, a warm touch landed on the back of my hand. I lifted my head and turned to my little sister, who was still engrossed in the movie, her eyes glued to the screen. Slowly, she turned to me with a comforting smile. She uttered the words: "I am... fine." Her eyes formed a straight line as her smile widened.

How could it be okay? Of everything in this world, she was the one I loved the most. The love I have for her is irreplaceable. It is not a type of romantic love, but a bond between sisters. She was too strong to accept the idea of her premature departure.

*"Stay strong, Jattawa. Fate gave me the power to change the future. That must be the reason I have this time control power within me."*

The film took more than three hours to conclude. We wandered through almost every floor of the mall. We managed to get two crabs and a folding laptop desk. Getting them back to our apartment around 7 pm proved to be quite a challenge. I had already called Aunt Tui and asked for the day off.

"Head to our room and make space for these goodies. I'll bring the package and meet you in a minute."



"No, let me do it," Vi interrupted, getting off the motorcycle and running happily toward our apartment. I yelled at her, reminding her to be careful on the stairs.

Oh, my little munchkin, please don't trip or get hurt. I raised my head to watch her until she disappeared from sight. Then, I opened the back seat and took out my bag.

A well-dressed but vaguely familiar woman emerged from the driver's seat of a sleek white Japanese car parked next door. She was a stranger to me and so was her car. I could tell she was middle-aged, but she was dressed as if she was trying to look ten years younger. She was making a call to someone who wasn't answering. Her heels clicked against the floor in frustration.

Finally, she started up the stairs alongside me. I didn't pay much attention to her. She could be looking for a friend, her husband, or even her son. I removed the key from the bike and then slowly climbed the stairs, hampered by my persistent back pain.

It was quite annoying to have this chronic problem as a result of my temporary delivery job. When I reached the third floor, I noticed the woman I saw earlier standing right in front of Four's room.

Who the hell was she? Don't tell me she was her sugar mommy! While it was too dark to observe her clearly outside the apartment, in the well-lit hallway inside, I could now clearly see the elegant and luxurious white pants and thin belt that were out of reach for commoners like me.

Not to mention the valuable jacket that covered her shoulders. How did I know all that? Well, I had just been to the mall with my little sister, and those price tags gave me goosebumps.

As I continued walking toward my room, the mysterious woman persisted in knocking loudly on Four's door. I mean "persisted" as an exalted one. The intensity of her knocks suggested anger or frustration. Perhaps this was why Four didn't like the sound of knocking so much.

"Four! Open the door! Talk to your mother! What's up with this silent treatment?!"

Mother? Could she be Four's stepmother that she mentioned earlier? I pondered this thought as I turned the doorknob to enter my room, feigning indifference to the commotion occurring just a few steps away. However, when I entered and prepared to close the door, I heard her last words:

"I'm tired of pretending to be your dear stepmother!"

She must have believed that no one was listening to her; that's why she spoke out loud like that. Clearly, she and Four didn't get along. Eavesdropping is not something I usually did, as it wouldn't add money to my bank account or improve my life. But when it came to Four, I couldn't help but open the door a crack, just enough to hear their conversation and catch a glimpse of what was happening.

The woman continued to knock persistently, and the sound echoed through the hallway. Finally, Four couldn't take it anymore and opened the door. She was standing there in her sports clothes, a t-shirt and leggings, with a towel over her shoulder. Despite the interruption, as soon as Four recognized the woman, a mischievous smile spread across her face.

"You're struggling like a fish sinking in boiling water. What eats you up inside?"

The woman's hand came down with a quick swipe, hitting the nervous girl's left cheek. I quickly covered my mouth, suppressing any gasps or heavy breathing. Another mark... Another mark on my future lover's face!

"You may think you're smart to sue your own grandmother for disability, but I could also sue you for being a runaway granddaughter who doesn't give a damn about her family. Do you really think you're a genius? Conspiring with your cousins behind my back?"

"Well."

The arrogant girl nodded in response, "Don't you think I'm pretty smart too?"

"Bastard..."

"Not as much as you, who had your medical license revoked."

I frowned, surprised by the family conflict unfolding before me. The woman could no longer contain her frustration, and she let out a deep sigh.

"Hey! Just wait and see who is really smarter."

"Wait and see? Wait and see the uncomfortable truth that is even worse than my illegitimate birth? The truth that Film is not my father's real son?"

Four spoke, a mischievous smile on her lips as she looked at her stepmother. Her gaze remained unperturbed by the woman's presence.

"Legally speaking, everything Film would inherit actually belongs to me. When the truth comes out... Well, I'm grateful that my reluctant father recognized me as his legal daughter."

"Nonsense."

"Even without the court's ruling, your voice is clearly shaking at this moment."

The woman raised her voice, and her frustration grew.

"You are a fool, oblivious to your own place!"

Four maintained her poker face, looking indifferent as if the curse that escaped her stepmother's lips was nothing more than a joke.

"You are nothing more than a burden that stains the name of our family. It would be better for a bastard like you to go live with your gold-digging mother!"

Those words hit me hard, even though they weren't directed at me. I couldn't see the woman's face since her back was turned, but I could tell that Four was still calm. Calm as if she were very familiar with this. Calm as if she had heard these words countless times before.

"Besides, you're nothing more than a burden."

An evil smile gradually spread across Four's face. She responded with such conviction that she rendered all the woman's curses meaningless.

"Good."

And with that, Four spoke her last words before the door slammed shut.

"See you in court when I prove that Film is not even my father's real son."

This was not a simple family problem. Although Four had mentioned it before, I never realized the depth of her strained relationship with her stepmother. As their conversation came to an end, the older woman left with the sound of her heels echoing through the hallway as Four resumed her exercise routine. I closed the door quietly, only to turn around and find myself startled, letting out a cry of surprise. Vi stood there, arms crossed, looking at me.

"What were you eavesdropping on?"

"These are adult matters."

"You're still a girl. You can't even cook or wash clothes properly. And your dirty socks always stay under our bed. I have to clean all the time. Oh, there is one thing you can do... iron."

"Never tell this to anyone."

"Fine. I'll keep it a secret, just for the crabs. This is something only we know. The rest of the world will never get this chance."

"Perfect."

"By the way, what were you eavesdropping on? There are no secrets between us."

Since there was no other option or reason to hide this from my little sister, I let out a deep sigh and prepared to tell her everything while she continued cooking.

After hearing the whole story in detail, Vi seemed equally surprised. She suggested that Four's family problems were just the tip of the iceberg, which left me puzzled as to what she meant by the iceberg analogy. Vi called me an airhead and went on to explain that she was referring to something unpredictable and uncontrollable. Then she laughed...

My attention momentarily drifted away from Four's stepmother and back to the afternoon dream that kept replaying in my mind. Would Vi still be my accomplice, celebrating New Year's Eve by my side as she always had? Feeling lost once again, I realized how much we depended on each other to laugh and support each other every day. Without her, I...

*No, you must stop thinking like that, Jattawa.*

I shook my head, reminding myself of the importance of changing the future. That goal alone was worth reflecting on.

"Wah! Are you listening to me? What's going through your head?"

"Oh? You called me? What did you say?"

I raised my face, returning to reality. It seemed like Vi had been talking while I was lost in thought. She pouted, turned on the frying pan, and continued talking.

"I was wondering if you had fallen in love with Four because lately you seem more interested in her than before."

"I'm in love...?"

I raised my palms and looked at them. They were not as soft and tender as they should be for holding hands; rather, they were rough. However, Four

did not hesitate to take them. She didn't let go when our hands touched, even though her athletic hands were softer than mine. What's with this feeling stirring under my chest? Could it be love?

Vi playfully mocked me for smiling like a fool while dodging her question. But well, it wasn't like that; I just got lost in my thoughts and forgot to respond. As she tried to change the subject to dinner that night, she chimed in with a suggestion.

"You've probably been in love with her since the nights you started looking at your moon lamp. Hmm?"

"No, I think it might have started even before that."

She commented, pointing the spatula she had in her hand toward my face. She narrowed her eyes.

"Wa, you're a tsundere."

"Tsundere? Is that a new term among high school students?"

My little sister rolled her eyes, clearly exasperated. She then stood up, adopted a teacher's stance, and explained that she was referring to someone who hides her emotions instead of expressing them. She also added that it wasn't a new term but had been used widely for years. Silly! Well, I figured I just didn't know it. Everyone had things I wasn't familiar with.

Dinner that night was amazing. Vi's cooking skills never failed to impress me. With the addition of fresh crab, a top-notch ingredient she had been craving, we feasted on crab fried rice and a tasty stir-fried crab curry. There was even leftover crab meat in the refrigerator. I savored the new flavors, a delicious departure from our usual omelets and canned fish salads. The food was so delicious that I wished I could buy crabs for her to cook every day, but we were limited by our funds in the bank account.

Every time I saw her cheerful face, I felt a pang of vulnerability. She multitasked, listening to music while washing dishes, tidying, doing homework, and feeding Fish Patty in his tank.

She even talked to him, indicating her love for the little fish. I no longer had to worry about her trying to eat him. That was a relief. Before we went to bed, I whispered to her and asked if she was afraid of the uncertain future without me. She shook her head, her eyes still shining brightly.

"Right now I'm here with you, talking and sleeping together. I feel so happy that everything else doesn't matter."

"Don't cry, big sister."

Once again, her warm hand comforted me. With a radiant smile as her guide, she playfully used her fingers to form a smile on my lips.

"Come on, give me a smile. Feel free to smile like you have something stuck between your teeth."

"Brat..."

"You said you would fix things. I trust you will find a way to help me. So don't cry anymore. If Four's leg hasn't broken, then I know I won't be leaving anytime soon either."

"Hmm."

I responded with a trembling voice. "I promise, I will make it happen."

After hearing my words, my little sister treated me like a child who needed comfort. She leaned closer, hugged me tightly, and rested her adorable face on the same pillow as mine. The big stuffed animal acted as a barrier between us. Vi fell asleep instantly, as if a switch had been turned off.

Meanwhile, I couldn't seem to fall asleep. I looked at her and gently stroked her head, repeating my promise to myself: I would save her. And I had to succeed. After all, I had already changed Four's fate once, right?

"Good night, my little one."

The next day, it could have been pure coincidence or something else. Four and I opened our doors simultaneously. Vi, in her school uniform, playfully nudged my arm and laughed, as if emphasizing the importance of this moment. I frowned, trying to scold her for her mischief, but her expression quickly faded when I saw Vi's downcast look.

Stop pretending! I turned my attention back to the older girl we ran into. I couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed by Vi's impulsive hug earlier. As I dragged Vi towards the parking lot, she shouted happily in the hallway, her voice echoing through the corridors.

"Four! I couldn't find your car anywhere. Do you want to join us on our trip to your university?"

This little brat! Did she completely forget what I told her the night before? I had hugged her and listened to her family drama! How could she offer her a ride without raising suspicion? I turned to Four and forced a dry smile.

"You want to join us?"

Damn! Why did I invite her too?

"Go ahead. The police will arrest all three of us,"

She replied in her usual monotone and poker face. Grabbing a thin notebook, probably filled with class notes, she strode down the hall, leaving us behind. I grabbed Vi's soft arm in frustration and shot her an intense glare, but the chatty girl simply smiled and scratched her cheek, unfazed by my irritation.

What if she had really accepted our invitation? How would she have dealt with my racing heart? I watched as Four got into a light blue taxi. Well, I must also have the strange belief that blue taxis have superior air conditioning!

I dropped Vi off at her school with only five minutes to spare before the national anthem started playing, making sure we arrived on time. Usually,



whether we arrived early or late, I would rush out without a second thought as I always had something to attend to, like selling my sandwiches. But that day, as Vi said goodbye and headed toward the school gate, I cut the engine and stayed a little longer, watching her until she was out of sight.

I love you so much, Vi. Nothing and no one can replace or compare to you. If I had to choose between everything in this world and you, it will always be you.

Perhaps, if we really need to alter our destiny, we should look for that "mysterious person" who possesses the ability to turn back time even further than I can. The challenge is to know who "he" or "she" is and where to find them. It all seems so complicated.

However, my puzzle began to be solved in the evening when the contest organizer gathered all the princes and princesses of each specialty to rehearse the main show.

# Chapter XVI : Just a Fake Moon

Late in the afternoon, my anxiety peaked as I sat in my classes, anxiously awaiting the moment when I could pick up my sister.

"Yaya-Ying told us to meet her in the basement of the main building at 6 PM. We have to rehearse for our dance and catwalk show," Khun informed me. Hearing Khun's announcement, I couldn't help but burst into protest.

"That's ridiculous! If it's so late, go alone!"

"You're the one who's being ridiculous! Everyone else agrees to attend!"

Khun rested his chin on his hand and looked at me intently. "A family problem? If you want to quit, I will do it with you."

"Really?"

"Of course not," he replied, frowning. "If you don't go, it makes the law career look bad. We already did the photo shoot and posted our photos on the fan page. We have confirmed our presence on the list of candidates. If we get points deducted for not attending rehearsal, rumors will spread like, 'Oh! That girl, Jattawa, the older princess who doesn't give a damn about essays or college activities.' Law students, from freshman to senior, will develop prejudices against you, curse you, and beat you. And me too! So let me crush you first if you dare!"

"Quite fun? I'm a human, not just some potatoes. You can't crush me!"

Ugh! I was already tired of Khun's jokes. Letting out a deep sigh, I stopped writing down the professor's words.

Anyway, it was all a mess in my head. I couldn't concentrate because not only was I talking to Khun, but I was also stuck thinking about Vi. I decided to give Khun my full attention and ask, "So, what time does rehearsal end? When can we finally go home?"

"Probably around 7:30 PM, maybe even later."

"That sounds more like a meditation retreat than a university activity."

"It's only an hour and a half a day, and it's only for a week. The contest will take place next Tuesday."

"That sounded even more boring than sitting around listening to lectures. Not to mention the personal talent show we had to come up with..."

"Well, they asked us to showcase our unique talents on the big day. I initially suggested demonstrating my exceptional skills in ironing a student uniform neatly and quickly in one minute. However, Yaya-Ying instantly texted me on LINE, urging me to reconsider because the judges weren't exactly known for their sense of humor."

Wait! Ironing was an art form. It required precise hand movements and selecting the perfect fabric straightening spray for different types of textiles. It was quite a challenge to finish ironing in one minute. If it were as ridiculous as they made it seem, laundromats would have already been converted into cafes or Thai barbecue joints.

In the end, I gave up on the idea of ironing and proposed a new act: a magic show! Surprise, surprise! Yes, I know, I had no idea about magic tricks, but it slipped out of my mouth, you fool! As I rolled my eyes and silently scolded myself in the conference room, I sent a message to my little sister, expressing my concern for her:

"I'll pick you up after class. Come see your perfect sister rehearse her catwalk. We could go home together at 7:30 PM, it was safer that way."

But it also meant I couldn't work at Auntie Tui's house until after the day of the contest. I turned to Khun and told him to meet me in the basement of the

main building at the designated time. He had no problem with that because he needed to go back to his room and water the parsley he grew on his balcony. He had three jars: Nanny, Jessy, and Pook Pik. Seriously, was I still in touch with reality?

Sometimes, I couldn't help but cringe when I remembered that time he asked me out. Although I turned back time to avoid it, I couldn't understand what was going on in that guy's head. Whatever, let's forget it. Maybe he had fallen head over heels in love with his parsley plants. While I waited for Vi, I took the opportunity to skim through that day's lectures. I sighed; this school was full of kids.

Today my little sister finished school at 4 p.m., so we had plenty of time. We sat at the marble table in front of the law school building. I saw her; she seemed excited and fascinated by the spacious university environment. She acted like a little bird asking for worms from her mother's throat.

"Wow, your little sister wants a coffee with milk."

I usually hit her on the head and brought her some instant coffee. Ha, you can't sweet talk your way to food! But because of that dream of hers, I was willing to do anything for her. I put the account book in my bag and asked her directly what she wanted. We all knew why I was spoiling her at that time...

"What coffee? The one on campus?"

"No, not on campus. My friend says the cafe across from your university has a solid 5-star rating on the review page."

"Ah... That cafe has lots of carefully arranged cactus pots. Just looking at them gave me a creepy feeling."

"Do you want to go with me? Or do you prefer to wait here?"

"I prefer to wait here. I want to outline the vision I just had."

"Sounds good. And remember, don't follow any strangers."

"Don't follow any random strangers. Just wait here. If I need to go to the bathroom, I'll wait until you come back first. I have it. I have seen everything in my vision."

Now, I wish I could see the future like her. To save gas, I decided to walk to the coffee shop instead of taking the motorcycle. It was about a ten-minute walk and I would have to wait about ten minutes and four seconds to get her latte. Luckily, Vi was in a very lively area, so I didn't have to worry about leaving her alone. The security guard was also nearby. By the way, this latte was surprisingly fantastic. I took a sip and instantly fell in love with it.

"Ing-Ing! Don't bite that toy!"

A mother was arguing with her son, sounding stern and serious. The little boy had put something in his mouth, just doing what little children do. At first glance, I couldn't help but smile at his adorable pout. But when the little one took the toy out of his mouth, I saw clearly what it was... Of all things, it was a woven toy fish.

And it wasn't just any knitted toy fish you can find anywhere. I remembered the intricate weaves and vibrant colored patterns. The purple eyeliner was shaped like a cat's eye. He had three false eyelashes under each eye and his tongue stuck out playfully. Kids must have loved this kind of stuff. The memory that was once etched in my mind was now reforming.

Dad must have done it.

I quickly approached the strict mother and realized that I might look suspicious. She quickly picked up her son and held him in her arms. "Ma'am, I'm sorry I scared you. But can I know where you got this knitted toy from, please?"

"The knitted toy?"

"Yes, the toy in your son's hands. Can you tell me where you bought it? Or... did someone give it to you?"

"Oh," she seemed to understand what I was asking now and stopped frowning, but she still looked skeptical. "I saw this old man selling them on the street. He could barely walk and had to take breaks under the overpass, so I decided to support him."

"Well, thank you very much, ma'am."

With that, I quickly ran in the direction she indicated. My heart raced in a strange, nervous way. I was about 70% sure he was my dad. He used to tell me how he painted his fish with unique designs to make them stand out from the rest. As I ran, I couldn't help but wonder: what if it's really him? Should I get angry at him for leaving us behind as sisters, or should I break down and tell him all the tragic stories of our lives? No, I should let him know that both Vi and I had special powers and that Vi needed his help right now. Maybe he already knew because he was our dad!

But when I finally reached my destination, I suddenly froze on the spot. I even forgot to breathe. There was an old man drinking water from a bottle at the side of the path. In his right hand, he held a knitted toy fish for sale, each of them labeled with a price. He looked so frail and pale, with deep wrinkles on his face, arms, hands, and legs. He looked much older than some eighty-year-old men. He looked like a grandfather or even a great-grandfather. How could my dad look so old?

"Dad."

I tried to call him. We were only six feet apart, but he couldn't seem to hear my voice over the constant flow of passing cars. I raised my voice a second time, calling out to him and adding a few more words, "Dad? Is it you? It's me, Jattawa."

The water bottle in his hand shook even more. It was not because of his fragile state but because of his shock. This meant that he was reacting to my words. Although I couldn't understand why my dad looked as old as a 100-year-old grandfather, I couldn't help but smile with a 10% boost in confidence. Now the chances of it being him were up to 80%!

When I took a step closer and began to say, "I still remember your knitted toy fish. They were so unique..." he suddenly stood up with unexpected strength. Ignoring the traffic on the overpass, he ran across the street, narrowly avoiding a taxi that screeched to a stop to pick up a passenger. The horn blared loudly, and the thin, pale man, who should have had no strength left, arrived in the middle of the road and pushed himself to continue forward.

"Dad! Wait!"

"Do not leave us! You have to save Vi."

My mind was consumed with the desperate need to stop him. I forced my body to take a sudden step toward the road, filled with fast-moving vehicles. I just wanted to explain it clearly. If he really was my dad, he had to tell me why he disappeared. And yes, did he know about our powers? Did he also possess them, as something innate in our lineage? Wild thoughts flooded my mind in a matter of seconds about life and death. My confidence meter was at 80%, so I was only 20% away from final confirmation. By simply saying "yes" or shedding tears for his long-lost daughter, we could go back to the way things used to be and address our problems together!

Maybe I would have died if a powerful force hadn't grabbed me by the shirt and dragged me back to the trail.

"You are crazy! Can't you see the pedestrian overpass right here?"

"Four."

Her gaze was full of surprise, and her voice, although aggressive, also had a touch of confusion. I assumed she was grabbing my shirt so hard because she was scared by my crazy behavior...

"Don't they teach traffic rules in your law classes?"

She exclaimed angrily. "If you're in such a hurry, jump every other step of the stairs!"

She didn't seem happy. "Don't you dare do it again!"

She was worried about me, wasn't she? Her voice softened, as if she was begging me to follow her words. It was so obvious, even a clueless female protagonist of a web novel could see it. In other words, Four didn't hide her feelings for me at all.

"Do you understand what I mean, Jattawa?"

"Yes..."

I answered hollowly. It felt like my scattered brain had finally returned to my body and soul. If one day I did something without thinking and overestimated my power, it would be nice to have her there to catch me and prevent me from falling into the abyss. I bowed my head in regret for a moment, and then my thoughts returned to Dad. I started thinking about using my powers to stop time to chase after that old man who had an 80% chance of being my father. But then I realized something: I couldn't use my powers. What the hell was wrong with me?

*"Big sister! Hurry up! Go back in time and warn me not to use shampoo as toothpaste. I'm dying because of the chemicals!"*

Damn! I completely forgot that I had already used my powers that morning to warn my little sister not to use shampoo on her teeth. I was really afraid that she would end up poisoned or something.

No way!

Did this mean I couldn't reach him? Frustrated with myself and my luck, I vigorously scratched my head and grimaced. That was all I could do. I continued to look for the man, but he was nowhere to be seen. He could be selling the toy fish my dad made. But he reacted when I shouted my name...

"Do you want us to go to university together?"

The voice of the girl next to me brought me back to reality. Four stared at me, wondering what was going on in my head. Her cosmic eyes were filled



with thoughts, but she kept them to herself.

By the way, what did she just say? "Do you want us to go to university together?" Was it a question or an invitation? I avoided her gaze and replied softly, "If you also go to university, do you mind if I accompany you?"

"Alright. Follow me."

Four raised her hand and used her index and middle fingers to point at the staircase, reminding me not to run across the street. Sometimes I couldn't read her poker face, and this was one of those times. I climbed the steep stairs of the overpass alongside Four. Her actions made me feel like she was interested in me. Was I reading the signs correctly? Or was she just letting me go? Or did I like her so much that she tricked me into thinking she liked me too? It was confusing, wasn't it? I was also confused with myself.

"Do I look like a human crosswalk? Stop looking at me like that... unless you're aiming for a death-defying trick."

Oh, so she had realized it too. I gave her a wry smile, not knowing what to do. I shifted my gaze to the floor of the overpass but couldn't help but sneak a glance at her long legs, which used to walk faster. It felt like she was intentionally matching her pace to mine.

Since that day, the day her stepmother invaded our apartment, something had changed every time she looked at the replica of the Moon. She had an uneasy feeling; that was the closest way to describe it. I witnessed her being slapped right in front of me.

She didn't fight back because the other person was older. In Social Studies class, we learn that the most influential social institution is the family. So, is that the kind of family that has formed her since childhood?

As I walked down the opposite stairs and headed toward the university door, Four broke the silence and asked,

"Who do you think will win? Me or that woman?"

"What are you talking about?"

"My stepmother."

It was like I was struck by lightning. My eyes widened, and I couldn't help but stop sneaking glances at her profile. How does she know? That night, I thought I was hiding my eavesdropping skills better than any character in a Thai melodrama. How did she manage to find out? Four let out a small laugh, looking at me like I was a complete fool. Well, I must admit that I was completely flabbergasted.

"Our doors are not that far apart, you know? I've been watching you too. How do you think I didn't realize you were listening through the gap in the door?"

"I didn't mean to—"

"It's good that you heard it, so I don't have to waste time telling you."

She interrupted me, making my excuse meaningless. "She said she's going to sue me for asking to be Grandma's guardian but never taking care of her. If you were a prosecutor, would you file this complaint?"

"If there is evidence to support it, then yes."

She stayed silent as we continued walking together.

"But you're not even afraid of her. Why are you so worried?"

"I'm worried about something else."

"I can be your advisor."

"Really?"

"Yes, so please don't ask me 'Really?' I'm so tired of hearing it."

A small smile appeared on her beautiful lips as she tried to act calm. She looked ahead and said, "I no longer wish for Grandpa's inheritance or

anything in that mansion."

"Because? Is it because of what your stepmother said, because of fear of losing in court, or simply because of boredom with the whole situation?"

The taller girl remained silent as we passed through the small pedestrian gate. A few boys and girls walked past us before she finally continued.

"Since I had to leave volleyball, my life lost its direction. Conquering that mansion became my only purpose, the only thing that gave meaning to my existence."

"But... what happens now?"

Four stopped walking abruptly, causing me to stop as well. She turned to look at me. "Now there's something else."

Why was she giving me that tempting look?!

"I'm interested in someone right now."

Why was she saying something so ambiguous to my face? Was she trying to drive me crazy? She made me feel like I was being swept up in a whirlwind of emotions! I couldn't stand looking into her eyes anymore, so I lowered my head for the millionth time that day. The small muscle in my chest, known as my heart, was working overtime, beating loudly in response to its existence.

"W...who is that lucky guy? I can't guess anything."

I tried to probe her, hoping she would deny that he was a 'boy' or at least question why I assumed he was a boy. But the response I received was far from what I expected.

"It's someone I gave my LINE ID to, but he never added me as a friend."

Clearly, that someone was not me. My heart sank. This was what heartbreak felt like. The same heart that used to race with excitement now felt oppressed. I forced a smile, raised my head, and spoke in my normal tone.

"That person seems to be treating you badly."

She narrowed her eyes as she looked at me. Her voice was barely audible.  
"Yes, very bad."

"I suppose... and as for the inheritance and what rightfully belongs to you, you must continue fighting for it and claim what is yours. I have to leave now. My sister is waiting for me."

"Okay."

I replied to Four, still looking at me instead of walking away. She forced me to be the one to turn around, and I walked away with my head down. Her short reply weighed heavily on my heart and left my mind blank. Aren't you supposed to be my future soulmate? Why had she fallen in love with someone else? I only have eyes for you. This felt so unfair.

On nights like this, when there were so many things to deal with, people tended to go to bed late. It wasn't exactly the same as insomnia but rather a restless state of mind that kept me awake. Here are the causes of my anxiety:

First, during our slightly late dinner, my little sister mentioned that she had been awarded a spot at an arts camp. The camp would take place at a natural attraction, and participants would create works of art inspired by it during their three-day, two-night stay at a hotel. I initially rejected her request due to my concerns about that issue.

However, she pleaded with me and explained that this camp used to be expensive and that she had had a vision of herself returning safely and getting excellent grades on her math test. But as her older sister, I couldn't help but worry. I was still thinking if I should sign her up for the camp and let her go.

Second, around 9 pm, I decided to call my uncle to ask him about my dad.

"Uncle... Can I ask you something?"

"What's happening?"

His voice had a tinge of regret for what he had done to me.

"The last time you saw my dad, did he look like an 80- or 90-year-old man?"

"I don't believe it. When you and Vi were still little, he looked like an ordinary man of about thirty!"

"Okay."

"Do you have something on your mind, Wa?"

"You... Have you ever considered the possibility that our dad has passed away?"

"No, I haven't."

"I just know. He's not dead yet."

Towards the end of our conversation, I shared everything with my little sister. She was smart and imaginative, incredibly capable of formulating hypotheses that gave me goosebumps.

"Maybe that old man is our father. He could be someone who constantly goes back in time, capable of reversing it much further than you: days, months, years, or even several years. That's why he looks older than he should."

"Because?"

"When you pause time, do you still sweat?"

"Of course."

"You see? Your body is not affected by time. Whether you reverse or stop time, your memories, feelings, and everything inside you are not reset. I think that's why Dad looks older than his actual age!"

"I'm still confused."

"Ah, forget it. I'm not entirely sure either. If you really want to know the truth instead of just guessing, find him and ask him. Anyway, this doesn't worry me at all. As long as I have you by my side, everything will be fine!"

So, Dad was the mysterious man who turned not only this world upside down but the entire universe. Now that I had realized the highly plausible hypothesis, I couldn't help but wonder why Dad kept going back in time.

What was he trying to fix? Just thinking about the first two causes gave me a throbbing headache. However, there was a third that seemed like a missing piece of a puzzle, which left my heart aching.

Third, Four was in love with someone else. Brief and concise, but catastrophic. Before Vi drifted off to sleep, she advised me to systematically eliminate every source of anxiety from my mind. So there I was, lying in bed with my arm over my forehead, contemplating how to address these worries. Let's tackle them one by one.

I glanced at the moon lamp I had never bothered to turn on. It was time to deal with the final worry from my catalog of stress. Quietly, I got out of bed, careful not to disturb my sleeping sister. I went to the kitchen in search of a suitable box to contain the object I had received from the neighbor. I couldn't stand looking at that fake moon anymore. Every time my eyes fell on it, her confession tormented me.

Truth be told, the box was currently housing Vi's notebooks. After some searching, I finally found a rectangular container. Carrying it back to my bed, I reached out to pick up the exquisite model, intending to admire it one last time before saying goodbye.

*Now was the time for you to fade away, my invincible moon.*

It was rather unfortunate, however, that it had never been turned on. I let out a deep sigh, echoing in the silence. My fingers fumbled around, searching for its switch. Very well, before I banish you to the deepest corner of my heart, I will let your handcrafted beauty shine through at least once.

Click!

Normally, that lamp glowed beautifully in the dark. When it was on, it radiated a glow that rivaled the actual full moon in the night sky. What caught my eye, however, was not the light itself, but the shadow it cast on the wall.

Some mysterious codes appeared before my eyes. I looked back at the troublesome moon in my hand. These codes were not visible to the naked eye. It seemed that someone had used a special pen to write these codes on the surface of the moon, revealing them only when the light was on.

Four... I'm Four?

My rebellious heart skipped a beat. I gently placed the moon back next to my bed, its soft glow still illuminating the room. With my left hand on my chest and my right hand opening the LINE app on my phone, I looked for the "add friend" option.

Carefully, I entered the numbers and letters shown in the shadow.

"I am Four." The LINE profile photo that appeared on the screen belonged to her.

***"I'm interested in someone right now... It's someone I gave my LINE ID to, but they never added me."***

Jattawa, why didn't you suspect this or turn on the lamp at least once? If you had, you would have known for quite some time that...

it was me, the girl Four is interested in.

**Hey! Leave me a vote , okay?**

**Loveyaaa!**

(( ~ 3~)♡



# Chapter XVII : A Pronoun for Jattawa

"What the fuc--!"

Vi overreacted and exclaimed in English as she burst into the kitchen area and found me red-handed preparing breakfast. She rubbed her eyes in disbelief and walked over to make sure it wasn't just her imagination.

"Get out of my sacred territory!"

"Come on! The last time I set instant noodles on fire was like 4 years ago, okay? Give me a chance to prepare something delicious for my beloved sister."

"Is that your true intention?"

"Yeah."

I poured the sliced cowpeas into the pan and mixed them with some curry paste. I felt so lively, like a sunflower.

"Take a shower and get ready for school. I got up early to make these sandwiches, so we have plenty of time."

Should I just conclude that I woke up early? I spent the whole night sleeping on my side, staring at the moon lamp and reconsidering whether I should add Four in my LINE chat or not.

Little by little, I realized that it was already 5 in the morning. I basically unknowingly stayed up all night. I finally got up, charged the moon lamp

that had been on the whole time, fed and talked to Fish Patty, and showered before making sandwiches and breakfast.

The chorus of "*Hide You*" had been in my head all morning.

My little sister still doubted my cooking skills, but she simply scratched her cheek (a habit I had as well) and disappeared into the bathroom with a towel in her hand. It had been years since I last tried to cook; I burned instant noodles, so I decided to let my little sister be our chef for life.

Honestly, I was terrible at cooking. Not even the stray dogs would touch my food. But at that time, the Internet was my savior. And somehow, everything seemed so vibrant and pastel that that simple silver spatula looked so colorful. I used a heart-shaped mold in the pan and fried two eggs in it. Standing in front of the stove, I waited with a smile, watching the eggs take shape.

Why did I make heart-shaped fried eggs? Probably because they reminded me of the sun. My heart felt like a dark galaxy full of planets and satellites, and there it was: the Sun, shining brightly in the middle of it all.

I felt delighted...

Shit! My heart-shaped fried eggs were completely burnt!

"Don't you dare invade my sacred territory ever again!" Vi exclaimed again.

So, I was permanently banned from entering the kitchen. She seized my apron and retreated to the pantry. She tried the fried cowpeas with chili, and suddenly her face contorted.

"What an ironic dish. Fried chili without spice. You must have used just a drop of chili paste and mixed it with other weird pastes."

"You should be a chef," I said, resting my chin on my hand, playfully teasing my little sister as I waited at the table, "or a food critic."

"These are the easiest recipes ever, even little kids could handle them. But no, not you. And what's up with this? Fried cowpeas without any type of

meat? Even frying eggs is a challenge for you! Let's pray that Four's cooking skills are at least a little better than yours."

"What were your last words?"

"Oh, nothing! Just some random murmurs."

"Liar! When I told you that Four was in love with someone else, you seemed secretly excited. And this morning, you didn't even bother to ask why I wasn't freaking out anymore."

"Ha ha ha."

"What's so funny? Come on, tell the truth, brat."

"Well, I had a vision when you went to get my latte. I even took it out. I saw you turn on the moon lamp and smile at yourself. It was pretty obvious that it had something to do with Four."

"So, you anticipated this and still let me go through all that stress?"

"Take it easy! Don't be angry with your personal chef."

I saw she shook the spoon she had in her hand.

"I just want you to enjoy that moment when you realize that Four likes you too. It's more romantic and moving than knowing it in advance, don't you think? Think about it!"

Damn. I couldn't argue with her verbally.

"At least you can cross one worry off your list, right?"

"Honestly... I'm just looking forward to your arts camp now."

"What's wrong with Dad? Don't you think about him anymore?"

I sighed deeply, using only half of my lung capacity, and said: "I had a revelation this morning."

"Which is it...?"

"Given that Dad doesn't seem to give a damn and left us with Uncle, basically to fend for ourselves, the answer is pretty clear. He even tried to run away, although his body was old and weak."

"What is the conclusion?"

"He doesn't want to be part of our lives."

"Hey... don't say that. Last night, you were still--"

"I have made a decision, Vi, just as you overcome your fears because I am by your side. We have each other, and that is enough. Right now, we must focus on ourselves and our future, not on our father who abandoned us." My words might have sounded too harsh to my little sister, who was still too innocent about the world.

"Until now, I had learned from those and many life events, Vi. Our uncle carelessly sold our house, even though it was an inheritance from our father. I encountered a mother who looked down on me when I worked washing dishes and taught her daughter to do the same. There was also a couple who included me in her sweet talk without considering how I would feel about it."

"This world had been cruel ever since Dad left us to face it alone."

I had become the one who hugged and comforted my little sister whenever she was sad or in pain. No matter how big the problems were, I had to be strong enough for her to depend on me.

However, that tender kiss from Four...

The kiss on my forehead after a long day of work in that dream. As described in the Chinese song:

*"The Moon Represents My Heart."*

*'Just one soft kiss from you, my heart skips a beat. I still remember very well all those deep feelings from that moment.'*

How the hell did I feel this way towards a bad girl like her?

My university had its own symbolic color: golden yellow, like the golden shower trees. Every time I passed by them, they looked like sakura. It was as if being in love with someone could turn the entire world into a magical place.

Unfortunately, the parking lot was full. Perhaps because I had classes in the afternoon, all the early risers who had classes before noon had taken all the possible places. I made a U-turn and decided to ask the security guard to help me park.

He pointed me to a place near building B7, as long as I left there before 6 p.m. Without hesitation, I quickly mounted the motorcycle to secure the place.

Oh! It was the building next to the volleyball gym. I was surprised by its enormous size and stood there for a moment to observe. It was much bigger than the gym at my old school. I turned off the motorcycle and took off my helmet, ready to rush to my class.

I wouldn't have stopped if I hadn't seen that stunning yellow supercar, which had been recently repainted. I immediately knew it belonged to Four, who made me feel very happy throughout the evening. However, I couldn't anticipate what would happen next when she got out of her car and entered the volleyball gym.

Wait, what?

Shit! Please, please, don't get into another slap fight, my dear Four!

I had to run! I didn't mind being late to class as long as I could catch up to my angsty soulmate who just walked into the gym. I didn't want her to fight with anyone and get hurt like last time.

Her stepmother scratched her in a catfight and slapped her, and now she was stepping into enemy territory. Was she crazy? I scolded her secretly in my head.

When I arrived at the gym door, I was greeted by a huge scene.

"Bring that damn Ten here."

The arrival of the tall, athletic figure caused the other 5 or 6 girls to stop practicing all at once. They were all dressed in black and yellow PE uniforms with knee and elbow pads, or at least that's what I think they were.

To be honest, I wasn't an expert in sports. Among them, the girl who scratched and spray-painted Four's fancy car was nowhere to be seen.

Believe me, it has to be her.

"What's going on? Why do you want to see her?" asked the girl who seemed to be the most powerful member.

"I want compensation."

"Compensation?"

Instead of explaining, Four took a folded piece of paper out of her pocket and handed it to the girl, the older player, I assumed. She read it with a frown and skepticism. The other members of the team looked confused. After reading the note, the older girl handed it back to Four and spoke casually.

"So, you want Ten to pay you back for damaging your car? It cost you like ten grand or something, and you're here to get some cash?"

"Not really. My insurance covered it," Four said. Man, I wished I could see her face from there, not just her back from afar. "I want an apology."

The older girl seemed amused.

"Come on, Four! Ten is not that kind of girl. You must be confusing her with one of your enemies."

"You can't fool anyone with that, Kwan."

They both seemed to know each other well. Kwan raised her palm in a way that could totally anger people.

"So you're going to force her to apologize for something she didn't do? Don't show your true intentions here. You have no evidence and your claim is baseless."

"I can be your witness!" I exclaimed, totally ruining to them.

All eyes were on me now, including Four's eyes. She seemed taken aback, and when she realized I was gripping my bag tightly and walking towards her, she gave me a *"don't you dare"* look to stop me. But it was too late. I walked in, stood right next to my tall future love and giving Kwan a determined, sincere look.

"I saw a physical education student yelling at Four with the same phrase painted on her car."

When a witness came forward on the spot, Kwan stood silently, caught up in the incrimination. Other PE students whispered to each other in hushed tones, probably frightened by the impending drama.

Finally, someone as stressful as Kwan was able to present her defense.

"Did you know?" She took a step towards me, revealing a smile. "Everyone calls Four that. You're still a freshman, so you might not know. But let me enlighten you. If I was mad at her, I would use a knife to scratch her car, just like someone else did here. It is not a big thing."

"So, you basically confessed."

"Come here!" Four ordered, trying to grab my arm and pull me outside. However, I managed to shake her off with all my strength and firmly remove her hand. I looked at Kwan and continued our conversation, determined and resolute.

"From what you said, you are now the main suspect."

"What?"

She frowned and bowed her head at my unpleasant statement.

"Regardless of its 'genuine' intention, what you said before implies serious intimidation. That is a crime according to article 392 of the Penal Code. Any person who, by threats, places another in a state of fear shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than one month, or a fine not exceeding one thousand baht, or both."

I recited the law, and that completely shut Kwan's mouth.

"If you're defending yourself by saying you had no intention of threatening her, it's still reasonable to consider yourself the prime suspect since Four's car was scratched and sprayed with nasty words. And you openly stated that you would do it too. That's enough to make you a suspect."

"Brat!"

"Don't reveal your true personality, Kwan!" Four came in and pulled Kwan away from me before she could yell in my face. I took a quick look at the girl who could be part of my future. She seemed trustworthy, even without saying much.

"Your junior bothered me first!"

"What a fool! Do you not understand the law and instead see it as a nuisance?"

The retort that came from Four's glamorous lips could drive anyone crazy. Kwan gritted her teeth, furious.



"Well, my dear Four, she was lecturing me on how to recite legal topics. It did not matter. I like you, so I'll let it go. Let's get back to reality, okay?"

"Bring Ten here to apologize," Four's determined voice declared her intentions once again.

Honestly, if my motorcycle and I needed repair, even if my insurance covered it, I would demand significant compensation for the taxi bills I would endure while waiting. Four was too kind to ask for anything more than an apology. However, even though she only wanted that, Kwan's pride could not bring her back to rationality.

"I told you Ten didn't do it. She was with me all day."

"So how did you know... what day it was? No one has told you that yet." My trick question left her speechless again. Now it was my turn to smile at the older girl in her volleyball uniform.

"And don't even try to act like you saw the date on the form Four gave you, and say that's how you knew it was the same day as the incident. Come on, rational people wouldn't come to that conclusion."

Well, that was a hoax. I was just trying to make the Dodgermaster lose her temper. It seemed to work like magic because Kwan looked furious, as if I had just insulted her in front of her entire team.

She couldn't do much more than shoot me menacing glances. But then, the locker room door opened, and two other girls entered the scene, diverting everyone's attention, including Kwan's.

The Dodgermaster was now rising like a cunning fox.

"What's going on here?"

With a bright smile, Kie arrived and stood next to her friend Kwan. But it was the girl who followed Kie who was the main culprit of this conflict, "Here," hidden behind her innocent face, she used Kie as her shield.

"Four said someone on our team damaged her car."

"Who? Can you identify it?" The senior who looked like a Chinese doll questioned Four.

What the arrogant girl should do was point out Ten and use me as her witness. But why did she hesitate and look at Kie without taking any action?

"Four." I called her and gently tugged at the hem of her shirt. Four looked at me out of the corner of her eye and then regained her composure, crossing her arms and shifting her weight onto her right leg.

"Here, the one behind you." Four finally spoke, avoiding direct eye contact with Kie. Now, Kie turned to her junior teammate.

"Did you really do what she says?"

"I did not do it! I despise her, but I would never do something so disgusting, like what she always does!"

"Haha." Four let out a short laugh and then smiled.

Kie nodded her head in response to her junior's words. The current situation made me feel that speech was silver and silence was gold. I felt uncomfortable, since they were willing to overprotect each other. Kie's next statement really disgusted me.

"Let it roll. Everyone at this university knows exactly who is causing all the problems here."

"So, are you going to fire me, the witness? Oh really?" I couldn't take it anymore.

As much as I was upset, I decided to confront Kie, the team captain, from what I heard. Meanwhile, my enigmatic, cosmic-eyed companion continued to stare at my side profile as if she didn't even mind. "I was there too. I saw everything she did."

"Come on, little one. I bet, Four pressured you to back her up. Your judgment is not always accurate. Double-check your confidence level."

Surprisingly, Kie stumbled over her words and quickly forced a fake smile in response to my punch.

"Well, if you're defending her so fiercely, you must do it willingly."

What was wrong with that? Did I believe Four coerced me into being her witness? Her confident gaze got under her skin. It was as if I actually believed her own twisted version of events. I took a deep breath, trying not to lose my cool, and decided to hit back with some well-chosen words:

"Or have you ever hurt someone for your own benefit? Is that why you automatically assume others would do the same?"

I counterattacked because of her annoyingly composed smile. However, Kie's face clearly expressed her surprise. If you looked closely, her eyes widened. She even instantly turned to Four, although my soulmate pretended to ignore her.

What's going on here?

"Here!"

Kie's voice took on a harsh tone, and her eyes could not hide the concern she felt. She called her teammate her junior because she seemed to be the one who established the laws.

"Apologize to her!"

"Huh?"

Something really suspicious was happening. Why the sudden change of mind after arguing with me?

"Kie, I don't."

"Just apologize and let's get this over with! Or take it on yourself!"

Kie barked aggressively. Her fake smile had long since disappeared. Ten looked lost, trying to find a way out of this mess, just like Kwan did before.

"Your words are pure talk! Why don't you go to the police then?!" Ten exclaimed.

"Well..." Four turned her attention to Ten. She still had the marks Ten left on her face.

"Wait until I get the clips from my front and rear cameras. We'll see."

Yes the dash camera in the car. From the beginning , why did I have to flex my legal knowledge to argue with her?

Without the protection of her elders, Kwan was left speechless and finally apologized half-heartedly. For me, Four's few words had the impact of a slap in the face. She was like a waterfall, with calm waters running deep.

We left the gym room, which was the students' territory, and I couldn't help but express my displeasure by whispering,

"If you had the clips, why didn't you use them as evidence from the beginning?"

"Actually, I don't have them." Four said with a poker face, maintaining her composure, and we continued to look ahead to avoid drawing attention to our conversation.

"Hey?"

"I don't have them. I was just showing off so Ten would confess. How could a car that wasn't running record a video?"

That's how it is! She was really dumbfounded by the fact that those physical education students were stupid enough not to notice. Okay, I admit it, I didn't understand it at first either.

Four and I finished our conversation and hurried out of that place. But I couldn't help but wonder why Four only wanted an apology. She wouldn't cover the repainting costs or the taxi bills when there was no Pak to take her. If I were in her place, I would demand serious compensation to teach Ten a lesson.

Here, bitch! You trapped my soulmate into accepting her fiance's trip!

I continued walking quickly, lost in my thoughts about this scandalous situation, until I collided with a girl who suddenly stopped right in front of me. It was like a scene straight out of a romance manga as I took a step back and looked at Four, who was now a little ways away from the volleyball gym.

"By the way, what happened there? A legal conundrum?" She turned to me and asked, blocking my escape route like she was a boss. It's not like she was planning on bailing out, even if my class was about to start. I just felt too shy to hold her gaze for more than two seconds after that embarrassing LINE ID moment.

"You speak very well in front of others but you act as if you are deaf when you are with me. What happens to you?"

"You're being a little rude. I'm not going to chat with someone who is rude."

I remained silent.

"You speak very well in front of others but you act as if you are deaf when you are with me. What's wrong with you?"

The fierce girl repeated what she said before in a more polite version, but I stood firm.

"It still doesn't seem right to me."

"What's wrong with it? I already eliminated the 'what the hell' part!"

"Don't know. It sounds strange. Even Kie... She can use pronouns better than you."

"She called me junior and referred to herself as 'Kie.'"

*"Alarmed"* and *"Speechless"* would be the best descriptions of Four's facial expressions at that moment.

I started to say, but then closed my lips tightly, seemingly searching for the right words before coming to a conclusion.

"If you're not satisfied, forget it."

I didn't expect such a furious response and that fierce look from my future lover. She stormed to her car and drove away angrily from me. Seriously, I volunteered my class time to be her witness, and this is how she repays me?

As I headed toward a shortcut to my classroom, I noticed the familiar bright yellow Porsche pull slowly to the curb. The driver's window rolled down halfway.

This felt like déjà vu. I could already guess what she was going to say.

"Enter."

You see? The same words as last time.

"I have a class. If you really want to pay me to be your witness, buy me some dry food instead of taking me to a fancy restaurant."

"I'm offering you a ride."

Oh God, did I just embarrass myself? Please no. It must be just the heat that made me sweat like crazy.

"Come on, will you? Or do you prefer to walk under the scorching sun?"

"I'll walk."

"3 ..."

"I'll help you count down, 3, 2, 1. There you have it. Feel free to go wherever you want. Your face isn't the only arrogant thing about you. One day, you might end up physically hurting me with that attitude. You can't even speak nicely. No wonder your crush has never added you as a LINE friend!"

"Shut your mouth, okay? Because I am that bad person. Sometimes it is enough to sit and just breathe."

"For me, you wouldn't have to waste your car's coolant."

Four's gaze remained fixed on me. Maybe this time I pushed too many buttons. Normally, I would worry about the consequences of speaking like this, but with her, I felt strangely confident that she wouldn't do anything. If I were someone to be afraid of, well, I'd be even scarier. First of all, she liked me.

There is no need to elaborate on that. In second place...

"You're a...!"

I am her amazing future wife.

"Pain!"

You see? All she could do was grit her teeth and growl like a big cat.

After surviving a grueling pageant rehearsal, I finally dragged myself tiredly home around 7 pm, with my little sister glued to my side. But when we reached the door of our apartment, we found a large plastic bag blocking the way.

I quickly opened it and discovered a 5kg bag of jasmine rice, 2 packets of imported canned fish, a large packet of instant noodles, and another large packet of Pipo jellies. On the bag of rice was a message written in permanent marker: For Jattawa.

Oh my God! What kind of lover gives her girlfriend dry food like this? I was really speechless at that moment. I mean, I joked about it in the afternoon, but who would have thought she would go buy it for me?

"Wa, did someone leave a bag of donations outside our door?"

My little monkey ruined the moment in a split second. I pouted, let out a sigh, and shifted focus.

"Just take them inside. Why are you being so nosy? Having food is amazing. It saves us a lot of money."

"Don't try to change the subject. I can tell from that message and your happy eyes that it is from your beloved Four."

I hit Vi on the head while she dared to mock her older sister visually and verbally.

"You have such a big mouth."

"And you're so bad!"

She grumbled as she dragged the bag of dry food to our room, rubbing the spot where I hit her, pretending it hurts. They had called me that again. I tried to ignore it since Vi loved to joke.

I headed to my room, took off my useless uniform belt, and then went to the fish tank to feed Fish Patty. But at that moment, my little sister started screaming from the kitchen, claiming that she had stolen her job: feeding her precious friend.

Seriously, since when did the one who brought Fish Patty here, me, become the third wheel?

**People really change when they are in love.**

Speaking of dinner tonight, we had pickled lettuce, a spicy salad with canned fish, hard-boiled eggs with tamarind sauce, and the softest, most tender steamed jasmine rice, courtesy of Four.

Honestly, Vi and I usually settle for whatever rice was cheap enough, but that jasmine rice was on another level of delicious. We continued taking rice out of the rice cooker and finishing everything. I even scraped every last bit from the kitchen and gave it to Vi. I leaned on my hand and watched my cheerful sister chew happily.



"Why did you stop eating?"

I smiled and shrugged a little, saying, "I'm full."

Honestly, I could continue eating, but cooking more rice just for myself seemed like a hassle. Furthermore, we had devoured everything on the table except for that boiled egg with sweet sauce, which my little sister swallowed in one bite. Watching her eat made me feel like I was feasting alongside her.

It was another sleepless night. I had stayed up all night the day before, and this time I had to force myself to sleep before passing out in front of Khun the next day. I couldn't let him make a fuss about it. He still remembered when his parsley choked from being overwatered and he died:

*'Nanny didn't like the balcony. She should have noticed it and brought it inside her. Damn, no parsley dressing for months.'*

That's what he said, I couldn't help but smile and think that he was a nature enthusiast. Well, he grew parsley and I had my pet St. Peter's fish. We both dealt with the edible things. It was no wonder we were friends.

Back to reality: the lights in my bedroom were already off. I spent a while teasing Vi, jokingly stealing her pig stuffed animal. Now that she was curled up under the blanket, getting ready for sleep, I turned my attention to the beautiful moon lamp.

Its soft shine highlighted the hidden message on its surface Four's LINE ID. I couldn't help but smile at the idea. But before I could savor the moment, a cheerful voice interrupted my reverie.

"Just add it already, Wa. Why are you playing hard to get? We got the jasmine rice from Four."

"You airhead! Could they win you over with just a 5kg bag of jasmine rice?"

"Hey, if it's Four's, I'd give her my heart while it beating!"

"Little minx."

"Good night, sister. I'm very sleepy. Don't forget to add her." Vi said quickly before turning the other way, as if she didn't want to fight me anymore.

My God! I should have slapped her forehead one more time before we went to bed. That's what I thought, but in reality, I tucked little Vi under the blanket and then happily returned to my moon lamp. I also started to feel sleepy, so I only spent 2 or 3 minutes admiring it before turning it off. It still glowed in the dark, as if by magic.

Whoever had invented that lamp was a genius.

As I was about to fall asleep, a wave of doubts hit me. Should I add Four on LINE or not? I'd never actually been in a proper relationship before, so I had no idea.

Remember when Khun confessed his feelings for me and I was not at all prepared for that? Yes, I hit the rewind button in that situation very quickly. But now I had this secret code to enter the realm of romance, and all I had to do was click on that little search box and add Four. If I tried, I would feel uncomfortable and have nothing interesting to say.

If I didn't do it now and enjoy the moment a little longer, I was afraid she would change her mind. Oh what the hell!

I simply typed myself

I AM FOUR, and there it was, her LINE profile appearing.

I added her and then quickly turned off the phone. It was like a mix of excitement and nervousness when I placed the phone on the bed, snuggled under my warm blanket, and lay there, all alone in the dark, because Vi was sleeping safely. So let me escape to my dreamland.

*Sweet dreams, Four.*

I swear I felt like I had fallen asleep for a quick nap and now the alarm clock was startling me awake. Vi was breathing heavily beside me, sitting with her palms covered in sweat despite the cold air conditioning.

"What happened?"

"I woke up to drink some water and then I had that vision."

"The vision about your future?" I asked anxiously, raising my upper body to sit next to Vi. "Just tell me."

"No," she said, shaking her head, tears threatening to appear. "I saw Four, but she wasn't in her room. She was at some convenience store or something. Her watch stopped at 11:59 AM."

"And? Why did you scare me with that?"

"Hey, listen to me... her watch was covered in blood!"

"No!"

My heart raced. I placed my hand on my chest, trying to steady myself. With child-rearing experience under my belt, I managed to maintain my composure, grabbed my phone, and turned it on.

Why was I so slow?! My heart pounded in my chest as I waited for her to answer the phone. I opened the LINE app and called 'I Am Four' Even though I added her less than an hour ago, I don't care what she thought of me.

If something bad was about to happen that night, maybe we only had 8 minutes to act! Come on, Internet connection! Don't fail me now! I prayed silently as I tried to comfort Vi, who was still scared, eyes closed, hands

shaking, face hidden in her palms. She was just as anxious, unable to control my breathing.

Finally, Four answered the call.

"Calling the wrong number?"

"Where are you?"

The other end of the call went silent, probably because they couldn't understand why I was asking so intensely. I asked her about her location in a rather intimidating manner. After a moment's pause, she responded with the most terrifying response.

"7/11"

## **VISION CONVENIENCE STORE**

"Which? Which store?"

"The one next to our apartment. What happened?"

"Can you wait for me inside?"

"I'm here at the bar counter."

"Please wait until I arrive."

I quickly ended the call and informed Vi that I was going out on my motorcycle to see Four. Vi nodded and prayed softly, hoping that we could change the course of events. I controlled the world, stopped time at 11:58 pm, and, with clenched fists, left the apartment.

I ran to my motorcycle to the store. It wasn't far, but I was in a hurry. I couldn't bear the thought of Four being in danger.

Take it easy. You'll see her soon. I can change this. As I mentioned earlier, Four was sitting at the bar counter. Her phone was right next to her and she

was enjoying her meal prepared in the store's microwave. I felt more relieved now that she looked okay.

The problem was, if I approached her immediately and released the time at that moment, the surveillance cameras would capture my sudden ghostly appearance. So, I parked my motorcycle across the street and let time flow again.

Four looked up and noticed my presence. She frowned, probably surprised by my quick arrival after our call. I flashed a big smile and waved to the girl behind the glass window, indicating that I would be there soon. It looked like she was about to get up, but I quickly shook my head to let her know that I wasn't ready yet. I said, "I'll be there," to reassure her, and she continued waiting obediently.

But just as I was crossing the street...

A pickup truck crashed through the window and crashed directly into the bar counter where Four was sitting. Half of the truck crashed into the store and I couldn't believe what I saw. My mouth opened wide as Four was crushed before my eyes!

**"NO!"**

I could no longer maintain my composure. My knees gave out and I collapsed on the road. Because I told her to sit there, the accident happened just like in Vi's vision!

**~ Hey! Vote for this chapter, 'kay? Loveeeyaaa! ♡**

# Chapter XVIII : Yesterday, ten minutes ago

It all happened too fast for me to process it in my head. I spent about a minute in a state of shock and stupefaction, my knees throbbing with pain. The pain finally woke me up, but it couldn't overshadow the tragedy unfolding before my eyes. My heart was pounding beneath my left chest, and I felt a ringing in my ears. I had paused time, so what should I do next?

The store manager regained consciousness faster than me. The man came out from behind the cashier's counter and approached Four's lifeless body on the floor, covered in blood. It was a jarring and abrupt scene. He seemed hesitant, unsure if he should touch her or not.

Finally, he used his index finger to test her breathing. Then he screamed. My ears were ringing, and I couldn't fully understand what he was saying, but it was enough to break my heart.

"This girl is not breathing! Call an ambulance!"

Oh no! She was no longer breathing. My hands shook restlessly. I told myself to calm down and gave my face a quick slap to stop my entire body from shaking. I had already successfully changed the future before, so this time I must be able to do something too!

Rzzz!

A call from Vi. My little sister was calling me. I saw her name on the screen, but what caught my attention was the digital clock in the corner: '00:00.' It was midnight. That's right.

My power had already been restored! That meant I could use my power again. Thank God, the accident occurred a few minutes before midnight. I placed my hand on my chest to calm myself. Yes, I needed to handle this right this time. I had to go back in time to ten minutes ago, before Four was crushed by the truck.

Ten minutes ago I was asleep in my bed. Ten minutes ago, Vi still hadn't had her vision. Ten minutes ago... I suddenly woke up and threw off my blanket. I grabbed my phone, turned it on, and called Four. I felt even more nervous than last time, but she still took forever to answer the call. I anxiously pinched the blanket, praying that she would answer on the other end.

[Calling the wrong number?]

"Four! Please, come back! Please!"

I couldn't be sure if the stopped time would allow me to reach her in time.

"How did you know I'm not in my room?"

"I beg you. Please don't ask me anything now. I'll tell you everything later. Please come back quickly."

My eyes were turning red.

"I'll wait in front of the apartment. Please don't make me wait more than 9 minutes."

I did not know what the meaning was behind her silence. When I hung up the phone, my little sister, curled up under the blanket with her big stuffed animal, finally woke up. She seemed sleepy, probably she was thirsty. She remembered that she had said that she woke up and found some water in the refrigerator and then she had the vision.

I used both my hands to hold her pretty face and make eye contact with her.

"Vi, listen to me."



"Yeah!?"

"I just turned back time to ten minutes ago."

"Really? Why?"

I walked over to the moon lamp and turned it on so there was some light. I then turned to my sister, who was still innocently asleep and couldn't even lift her head.

"You woke up because you were thirsty and you had a vision of Four... running towards an accident. I couldn't give you more details. We will talk about it later, when everything is okay. I got up and grabbed a jacket to put on over my thin t-shirt."

"I am changing the future. While you wait in this room, if you have terrifying visions, don't let them scare you. Calm down and breathe deeply. Remember I can handle it."

"Ah... Umm! I won't let them scare me."

"Good job, darling! We are saving someone who is between life and death!"

I kissed my little sister's forehead and walked outside. I put my phone in my jacket pocket, ready to head out and wait for Four outside. Vi still looked confused, but because we'd been through a lot of time-shifting before, like coming back to remind her that ingredients are missing or warning her not to fall down the stairs, Vi simply nodded and hugged her stuffed friend tighter. She was also prepared for any heart-stopping visions.

I had the room key in my hand and made sure to lock the door to keep Vi safe. As I looked into the empty room next door, the memory of Four being crushed by the truck flashed through my mind. I closed my eyes and shook my head, trying to regain focus. I had the power to change destiny, and I wouldn't let anything bad happen to her. If only she would listen to me, get up and walk away from that place...

Every second seemed to last an eternity as I kept my eyes peeled for her yellow Porsche. My feet were restless, and I crossed my arms to protect myself from the cold night air.

How much longer would it take to arrive?

Did she ignore my warning and continue eating, thinking I was joking or talking nonsense or... or... or...

Finally, the moment I was waiting for arrived as the expensive supercar silently slid out the door. I couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. I walked over to where she used to park. Even though we were so close now, I still felt like something was missing.

Four turned off the engine, waited a few seconds before opening the door, and got out of the car. Now, she was standing in front of me, with a poker face, revealing no emotions as always.

Thank you Heaven for giving me this power. I'm very grateful. The girl in front of me was now safe. She was still alive.

"So what is the problem?"

She asked in her usual monotone voice, bringing me back to reality. I swallowed, having no excuse. I just wished that if I could talk to her, who was taken away by the car accident, I would hug her tight so she would stay one more time. Our silent eye contact filled Four's gaze with curiosity even more. She approached me and asked impatiently.

"You said on the phone that you would tell me everything, but now you are turning a deaf ear. What's the matter?"

The more I looked into her eyes, the happier I felt when we were next to each other now.

"I missed you."

"....."

"Umm... I had a nightmare that something bad had happened to you, so I hurriedly called you late at night. I'm sorry for bothering you to come back because of this little matter."

It was difficult to breathe properly because I couldn't read her gaze at all.

"The nightmare may not come true, but when I woke up, I felt like I needed to make sure you were safe and sound."

Four still listened to me silently. Why did I come up with these lies? It was nonsense. I felt very guilty for saying that I would tell her the truth. I let out a sigh, feeling like a total mess. Finally, I took a deep breath and looked at her.

"That's why I came back to you... yesterday." I said it well when the clock struck 11:59 p.m.

She was still looking at me, saying nothing, but after a moment, her expression softened. She responded to me at 00:00.

"I missed you too since yesterday."

Our "yesterday" had different meanings. She was talking about yesterday in the real world, while I was referring to yesterday that had been rewound.

"I'm glad my accident was just a nightmare you had."

The way she said it sounded so bittersweet. It was as if her eyes were telling me that no one else had cared about her. Four, with her poker face that used to be known for being tough and unfriendly, kept everything to herself.

She gently held the back of my neck and leaned closer. It was hard to predict what she would do next until her warm lips touched my forehead ever so gently. It was a touch full of warmth and affection.

It felt like a dream...

Almost too good to be true, the warmth of her hand behind my neck was like that dream, or maybe even better. Her body language said it all, and she

comforted me after my nightmare. If she had never had someone who really cared when bad things happened to her, the same thing happened to me.

In fact, I had never received comfort from anyone either. Throughout my life, I had built a wall around my vulnerability because I had to protect my little sister.

But right now, as Four withdrew from her kiss, I couldn't help but hug her tightly, as if we'd known each other forever. A deep sigh escaped me, and I couldn't ignore the sweet aroma that lingered from her kiss.

She felt so familiar, like it had happened before, over and over again. And the best thing was that she didn't seem to mind my hands, which were much rougher than other girl's.

There was no need for words between us. After that magical kiss, Four seemed a little shy and avoided eye contact. She clicked the car's remote to lock it and then said quietly, "Let's get in together."

Her hand held mine as we walked, not side by side, but with me a little behind. As we climbed, I found myself fixated on our intertwined hands. My feet took me to the third floor without even realizing it, and that's when I remembered the bag she left in front of my room that same night. I came back to reality and raised my head to talk to her right in front of our rooms.

"T... thanks for the survival food packages."

To my surprise, Four chuckled and looked at me as if she had found something incredibly funny. "You make me feel like I'm on some kind of merit-making mission."

"Well..."

I hesitated, struggling to find the right words to say. She was right; she felt a little like making merit.

My actions seemed to amuse her, and her smile widened. "Forget it. It's already quite late. Go to bed."

"Oh okay."

I replied, feeling a little embarrassed as I scratched my cheek. I inserted the key to unlock the door and entered. However, just as I was about to close the door, I heard her call my name.

"Jattawa."

"Yes?"

I hurriedly turned to her. She seemed a little nervous as she said, **"Sweet dreams this time."**

I didn't expect her to say something like that before leaving. She caught me off guard, and I lowered my hand from my cheek, giving her a warm smile that made her eyes narrow.

"You too, Four."

Just seeing her safe and sound made my day. Back in my room, I briefly told Vi what happened. My little sister admitted that she was also scared when she saw the vision of Four but trusted me to fix things, which helped her calm down. She had a lot of faith in her older sister.

That had been one of the scariest days of my life. I lay back down to sleep, and soon enough, I heard the sound of an ambulance siren in the distance—a grim reminder of the tragedy we narrowly avoided. The news would report on the van crashing into the store the next day.

*"Jattawa, sweet dreams this time."*

Again, I thought of her voice, which was softer than usual. No, I shouldn't be surprised. I'd have to listen to that every night in the future anyway.

The next day, the morning news reported that a 34-year-old drunk driver

crashed his pickup truck into a convenience store. Miraculously, there were no victims, but he ended up injured. He was lucky to be alive but would have to face a huge compensation.

It wasn't something to laugh at at all. If I hadn't saved Four, it was possible that someone would have lost their life due to his carelessness. Hopefully, that incident would teach him a valuable lesson about drunk driving.

As for my love story, I didn't dare look Four casually in the eyes when we met that morning. I just gave her a slight smile and let her lead. It wasn't that I didn't like that kiss that happened while she was chasing away a nightmare. The truth was that I felt a little shy about it.

After sharing all the details of the story with Vi, she was quite surprised. She called it a night of sweet nightmares.

See, she told me that if she hadn't warned me, I would have gone crazy from the sight of my watch. I couldn't even imagine what would have happened if I couldn't go back in time.

Every time I saw Four on campus, I couldn't help but feel grateful for my special power and irritated with that drunk man at the same time.

"Forget it," I tried to tell myself. "She's safe and sound now. At least I know I can always save my little sister when the time comes."

By the way, one night, while chewing my food, the following observation occurred to Vi.

"How could Four know that an accident would happen to her?"

Now, that was a question that bothered me in the morning as I pondered that conundrum. How could I suspect anything after so many days?

"You don't suspect her at all?"

"No." I stood firm. "I might have had a feeling. Bad could mean anything, including accidents."

"Don't play dumb, sister."

This little brat.

"She wasn't even angry about the unexpected call; that is totally possible. But come on, don't you think it's a little irrational that Four didn't delve into the details?"

"I don't know..."

I dodged the question, sticking to my theory that she might have guessed it. I didn't want to think about it too much. After saving Four's life, I still had to reconsider Vi's art camp. She would be far away. Although she saw herself returning safely in her vision, I was still worried about it.

At the end of the day, I could no longer resist those innocent bunny eyes begging for the parent's signature on the paper. I finally signed it to give her my approval and then triple-checked to see if I was really sure she was confident in her vision.

Time flew quickly, and the day finally arrived. On Sunday at 14:00, Vi boarded the bus, ready for her artistic adventure. She would return Wednesday afternoon. I had taken a day off to say goodbye to her. We'd been through this before with Girl Scout camps, but something about that dream was getting on my nerves.

"Just in case you turn canned fish into a spicy mess, I left a post-it note on the refrigerator with a step-by-step guide. Don't mess with my cooking kingdom, okay? And remember to fill those water bottles and store them in the refrigerator. No more eggs in the freezer, okay? If you can't stand it, head to 7-Eleven. Oh my gosh, I'm so worried about my totally incapable sister."

"I'm more worried about you."

"Just take care. Who knows, you might even sneak your soulmate into our room. Oops, forget it! Bye-bye!"

"Wait! What's that supposed to mean, Vi?"

She didn't clarify it. Vi simply laughed and ran off to catch the bus, waving goodbye from the window like a mischievous elf. Yuck! Why did she have to drop ambiguous hints like that? As if her older sister was going to bring someone home! No way!

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: I'll twist your ears when you come back!]

I sent her a spiteful message. She read it and hit me back with a super annoying bunny sticker, shaking her butt like she was making fun of me. This is not over!

Don't tell Vi that when I came home from my job washing dishes, I quietly curled up with her stuffed pig on our bed, tears streaming down my cheeks. Why did she have to leave it there? It was a constant reminder of her absence in this empty room. As the night progressed, I lost my appetite. I was just waiting for Vi's text. She pinky promised to text me as soon as she checked into the hotel.

Bzzzz...

[Vivi Jaravi: Image sent.]

[Vivi Jaravi: I have arrived! The room is great and dinner seems like a feast. I'm totally stealing the recipe to cook for you when I get back.]

I laughed and cried a little when I saw the photo she sent, sharing her moment with me. It was a cozy room with a comfortable double bed. There was a balcony with a stunning view, but the curtains were closed because it was already late. I saw another girl, about Vi's age, unpacking her things on the floor. Just seeing Vi happy like that made my heart swell with joy. Please, please, don't get into trouble. I beg you.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Stay under the covers.]

[Vivi Jaravi: Yes, ma'am... (with a pouting sticker)]



It's already growling!! Oh hell! My dear stomach was protesting in full force because I hadn't fed it yet. I responded with another sticker and then headed to the kitchen.

While reading her recipe for Spicy Fishless Canned Fish Salad, I realized I needed sliced red onions.

Good news: she was a professional at cutting.

Bad news: We were out of onions.

Although I was tired, I didn't want to waste her handwritten recipe. So, I grabbed my motorcycle key from the drawer and did a little victory dance as I headed to the parking lot. And don't worry, I double-checked to close the door behind me. My destination was Uncle's grocery store, the place to go for all your snack, meat, fruit, and vegetable needs. The store closed at 21:00, but it was worth it because it was closer than the market and saved me extra effort.

I did a little shopping since we still had some Four's dry food left in the kitchen. I grabbed some red onions and other essentials like toothpaste because we were running out of this one too.

On the way back, I was overcome with a desire for something hot and sweet. So, I stopped by a soy milk store I had been eyeing for a while. But hey, I promise I won't overspend, okay? It was just that a few days ago, a teacher liked my sandwich so much that she tipped me a hundred baht for my hard work. And guess what? I was using that money to distract me from missing my little sister.

There was a long line at the soy milk store, as if they were giving it out for free, but I decided to wait. I ordered a bag of soy milk with Job's tears, but the seller told me it would take half an hour because they were going to get fresh Job's tears just for us. At first, I was tempted to cancel my order because I was lazy, but then I noticed someone sitting at a table at the Pad Thai restaurant next door.

A girl was swinging on a chair. Her right hand was pouring some liquor into a glass. It was Four. I turned off the motorcycle's engine and quickly told the busy saleswoman,

"Ma'am, I'd better wait at the Pad Thai restaurant. I want soy milk with Job's tears and a side of 20 baht fried dough sticks."

"Alright. Don't worry. You're in line, girl."

"Actually, you should give me some discounts for making me wait so long. Haha!"

I dragged my motorcycle and parked it in the private parking lot of the Pad Thai restaurant. It was pretty busy there, but instead of ordering something, I walked over to Four's table and casually grabbed a plastic chair to plop down in front of her, beginning our conversation.

"Pad Thai and alcohol are not a good combination."

Raising her head from a thoughtful position, Four looked quite drunk. Her eyes were shining but wandered as if they were on a sightseeing trip. She narrowed her eyes, trying to focus on me. It was a fun thing to watch, and I couldn't help but smile.

"It's me, Jattawa. How do you plan to get home after this?"

"Driving."

She answered briefly and then drank half of her glass. She had no idea how many bottles of liquor she drank that night.

"Recently, there was news about a drunk man who crashed his car into a convenience store. Drunk driving is not okay. Not only is it illegal but also extremely dangerous."

It also slightly aroused my former anger.

"Are you thinking of putting me in jail?"

"Well, if you're determined to drive home, jail might be a safer destination. Don't you believe it?"

The drunk girl was in no mood for a verbal argument. She looked so dizzy and needed to sit down. Unfortunately, the chair in that restaurant had no backrest. Needing some support, she leaned forward and rested her elbows on the table.

She still had half of her Pad Thai left, but it seemed like she had lost interest in eating. I sighed at the thought of good food going to waste. If we ended up together, I would definitely give her a lecture on food appreciation.

"Can I finish it?"

With her approval, I brought the plate closer and satisfied my hunger with the delicious leftovers of my future lover. Is this what they called a date? Sharing a plate together under the neon lights at night had a romantic touch. Then, without thinking, I blurted out, "Why do you often go out at night? Last time, you were also at the 7-Eleven having a snack."

"How did you know? I didn't mention that I was eating."

Oh no, now I was starting to get suspicious of this drunk girl. Four raised her eyebrows, looking skeptical. She put down the bottle of liquor, apparently forgetting to pour herself another drink.

Oh! Had I just revealed that I went there and reversed her fate? Nervously, I put down my fork and spoon, deflecting the question by grabbing her bottle and glass in my hands.

"I'll answer your question if you tell me why you think that nightmare mentioned was related to an accident."

"I'm good at dreaming." She replied.

"Huh?" I tilted my head in confusion.

"You won't believe it, but I dreamed about this annoying girl who pulled me out of a convenience store and warned me that I was going to get hit by a

truck."

Ah, now it made sense. She had a déjà vu dream about what really happened. Last time, I could have dragged her out of the store and talked to her like we were in a sci-fi movie. I couldn't even begin to imagine Four's expression in that alternate universe. I gave the totally drunk girl a small smile and changed the subject.

"Whatever, you're not driving anywhere tonight. If you do, I will call the police to arrest you."

"Answer me first."

"What is the question?"

"How did you know I was eating at 7-Eleven? No... How did you even know I was there?"

"Well... that's not hard to guess. Did you expect a better answer?"

With a poker face, I could persuade her more effectively. Since she wasn't fully conscious, she didn't have to say much. She stopped looking at me doubtfully and then reached out to retrieve the glass from her. I noticed it, removed it, and put on a smile.

"I already warned you."

"It is none of your business."

"What's the matter? If you're stressed or need help, why don't you say it out loud? I have told you that it is the ethical duty of a lawyer not to reveal the information of her client. Even if you ask me for advice about an evil plan, I am willing to help you instead of revealing it. Getting drunk is not a solution."

"Will you listen to me?"

"I'm not your little pet."

"No."

"Good. Then I'll call the police. I will tell them that there is a drunk woman trying to drive her car. Some handcuffs and bars will make you feel better."

"How long are you going to remain silent?"

"I'm going to call 911."

"Do it."

I picked up my phone, pretending to dial the number. Four smiled aggressively as if she had never lost. She wiggled her index finger, gesturing for me to come closer. Ugh, I was planning to play it cool, but curiosity got the best of me.

I gave up and leaned closer to hear what she was about to say. Her flawless face came closer, and Four's warm breath caressed my cheek. Without being prepared for that, I almost fainted. Only a hoarse whisper made me sober without drinking.

"Listen to me..."

What was she going to say? I was so confused. Should I prepare for a heartbreaking revelation? Maybe she was going to confess...

"Give me back my drink if you don't want to suffer your doom. Do you understand, Miss Moon Rabbit?"

# Chapter XIX : My Heart is Waiting

"Where is the key to your room?"

I asked Four, my heart pounding as I helped her up the stairs to the third floor. All this was happening because she insisted on partying harder. She ripped the glass out of my hand and drank the alcohol so fast that it stained her entire shirt. Yes, you didn't misunderstand. She directly swallowed it down her throat; 'swallowing' didn't even begin to describe it. Seriously, if you had seen it, you would agree with me.

"Four! I'm waiting for an answer!"

I scolded her, gently sliding her against the wall because she couldn't stand this chaos anymore. She ended up sitting on the floor with her knees up. Yuck! I had to take her back to our apartment, and her flashy supercar was parked in front of the Pad Thai restaurant. At least I was able to drink the soy milk. Forgetting the spicy canned fish salad, anyway, at that time, I was too lazy to cook.

By the way, I gave Four a moment to find her key, but she was totally lost in her own world. She was too drunk to concentrate, poor thing.

"Just so you know, I'm freezing here and I'm not leaving you in the hallway."

"Umm."

Yeah right, like I could really do that. As much as I wanted to get her out of the freezing hallway, I couldn't help but notice that her shirt was soaked in that strong smell of alcohol. She really needed to get to her room as soon as possible.

"So, when will you give me the key?"

"It's in the car..."

"Hey?"

"In the car... My key."

*Who knows, maybe you could even sneak your soulmate into our room.*

Oops! Vi's prophecy echoed in my head. I was now mulling over the pros and cons of going back to get her room key instead of guiding her safely to her room or even temporarily accommodating her in mine.

Vi wasn't there, so there was room for one more person. The math told me that option A was a waste of gas, and option B would probably leave Four confused tomorrow morning. Very good, let's take her! Why do you have to sacrifice your own bed when someone stays over, even if it's big enough for two? Okay, now I get it: the smell situation.

I managed to drag Four to the other side of the bed, which was Vi's territory. She landed right on my sister's precious stuffed pig and crumpled it. I patted her on the arm a few times, trying to get her to turn around so I could rescue the stuffed animal and put it in a safe area.

"Don't lie on Oink Oink!"

"Umm."

"You see? If you had come back, you wouldn't have come this far."

I couldn't help but scold her, even though she had already closed her eyes and was curled up, moving to the other side. I wasn't exactly an expert at dealing with drunk people, but Vi often got sick and had a high fever, so I'd try to do what worked for her.

First things first, clothing had to be light and comfortable. Those tight pants she was wearing wouldn't do her any favors. I debated whether she should unbutton them or not, but it felt a little awkward to do so, so I just

unbuttoned a couple of buttons on her shirt. As for the liquor-stained shirt, I planned to take it off and leave her in just a sweatshirt, but when I undid the fourth button, I saw that she was only wearing a black bra underneath.

Damn, there was no way I was going to undress an unconscious major! I quickly buttoned them all up and let her sleep on Vi's pillow.

Good.

I would wash that sheet when she was sober the next day. I was so tired at that moment. Bringing my future lover into my room didn't exactly make my heart race. At this point, I would rather pinch her belly to wake her up.

After a refreshing shower, I put on a comfortable t-shirt and shorts and drank my soy milk in the kitchen. I calculated the money I spent in advance on their Pad Thai and liquor. Of course, there would be a bill for Four, which would likely include detergent charges.

Around 21:00, after a night in which I miraculously finished my homework before the deadline, which was tomorrow, I left my desk, stretched my back to relieve the pain, and headed to my room. I was worried that Four had thrown up in my bed, but she was just sleeping soundly, holding Oink Oink in her arms.

Sleeping in the same bed with a drunk girl didn't matter at all, right? I tried to convince myself before turning off the lights. My hand caressed the moon lamp out of habit.

Let me ask you. Do you think I can really sleep when Four is next to me? No way! Even though she didn't toss and turn in her sleep, it was like my inner voice was shouting,

*"Hey! You're sleeping with your future soulmate, Jattawa!"*

Then I couldn't close my eyelids and ended up with insomnia after staring at Four's face for hours.



What did she call me again? Miss Moon Rabbit? Okay, I may have buck teeth, but that didn't mean I belonged on the Moon. That was crazy. I couldn't help but laugh. Her voice was so sexy and annoyingly sober at the same time. It was perfect...

**"Even if the entire universe despises you, I would still love you. They will never know how soft and tender your lips were, whether in reality or in a dream."**

Around 03:00, drowsiness finally started to take over my body. I let out a deep sigh, ready to visit dreamland after staring at someone's face to the max.

Meanwhile, Four's eyelids slowly opened. Her eyebrows furrowed as if she had a headache from drinking too much. Instead of falling asleep, I felt wide awake. When our gazes met, her consciousness finally returned within 4 seconds.

"Jattawa. Is it you again?"

Me again? What was she talking about? Before I could ask her, Four's warm hand reached out to touch my cheek. Her thumb ran until it stopped on my lower lip, leaving me speechless. It was as if the beautiful girl was not fully awake yet and the alcohol was still influencing her.

"Is it fun to intrude on my sleep so often? Did I frequently appear in your dreams?"

"Well..."

Four, in her adult form, also appeared in my dreams several times. Our minds were really uncontrollable. I tried to make appropriate statements, warning her that this was reality. However, the girl with sleepy eyes approached and put her lips on mine, leaving no space between us...

"Umm..."

I had never kissed someone before. I never imagined what it would be like or expected someone to give me my first kiss. Since I didn't prepare for this, I automatically let out a small moan.

The taste of her liquor still lingered on her tongue, making my head spin and numbing my body, that sweet, familiar aroma too. Her perfect skin pressed against mine...

I couldn't help but think: Liquor is not a flammable material. Four is a flammable material. Under her hot breath, her hand descended to my waist and her lips still pressed against mine, showing no intention of letting me go. I turned around and tried to escape, ending this awkward moment myself. However, that's not what Four wanted. She stopped me.

Holding me back with... her sexual desire,

This was no different from how the Moon was attracted to the Earth. I could push her beautiful face away from me and scream to wake her up, but instead, I closed my eyes and let the drunk girl's tongue enter my mouth effortlessly.

The point is... it wasn't just a kiss anymore.

Her hand slid under my sheer shirt, rising higher and higher, and my consciousness struggled to comprehend that her hand had finally reached my bare chest.

My eyes widened in surprise and I let out a soft moan in my throat, not knowing how to react to her grasping motion. Biting her tongue was out of the question; I definitely didn't want to incapacitate my future partner, and I doubt that's our collective responsibility.

I quickly considered whether I could handle this situation or not. If the answer was no, I would go back in time and retreat to the safety of the couch. But if the answer was yes... if I could handle this heart-pounding situation, I would let it flow... because... I was... on the verge... of going crazy.

"Ummm... Four..."

I managed to murmur, the first coherent word after the whirlwind of my first kiss. As I attempted to sit up, Four quickly pushed me onto the bed. Her warm body lay on top of me, and her intense gaze was as seductive as her sober scent.

I swallowed the mix of nerves and tense, trying to regain my composure even as my heart raced. But this time, Four didn't just kiss me. She lifted my shirt and exposed my abdomen to the cool air of the room, in the blink of an eye, she caressed my chest, leaving me unprotected by my bra.

"Four, you're not dreaming..."

But my words seemed to fall on deaf ears as Four's confidence took over. She quickly removed her shorts, revealing only a black bra that matched the hem of her seductive underwear. Both of my hands gripped the blankets tightly as my eyes continued to gaze at her slender waist, accentuated by toned muscles. It was evident that this former athlete still exercised regularly.

Every time she moved or breathed heavily, her muscles were revealed slightly, captivating my attention. I never imagined my soulmate's naked body. Those veins on her neck should have given me a clue when she screamed, but at the time, I found them sexy without delving into further thoughts.

*"Jattawa, you silly girl! How can just one look at her abs turn you on? That's not like you at all!"*

Four's breath was scorching, especially when she pressed me down after lifting my shirt, leaving my breasts exposed. I felt so exposed and embarrassed under her gaze that I forgot about my time reversal power. All I could manage was to close my lips tightly as her warm breath drove me crazy.

Her lips--still wet from our previous kiss, gently brushed my nipple and I couldn't help but let out a deep moan trying to control the sensations that

overwhelmed me. But when her tongue began to play with my sensitive spot, a soft "Ahh" escaped my lips involuntarily.

I felt overwhelmed and could no longer trust the blankets. I used my arm to hug her neck as my nipples, especially the right one teased by her lips, became even more sensitive. When she began to pull down my elastic shorts, exposing more of my skin, my embarrassment grew as I couldn't let her see my most intimate area.

I quickly got up, pushing her away, but she was stronger and turned me around, hugging me tightly from behind. Her arms held me, preventing any escape, and her lips approached my ear, her nose brushing my cheek.

It felt like she was sitting on my lap, trapped in her embrace. Her fingers slid down my bare back and she whispered hoarsely:

"Are you really going to leave me?"

"You... need to recover." My breath caught in my throat.

"If you want me to let you go, say so. I'm counting to three. If you don't say anything, we'll have to help each other."

### **Help us?**

"It wasn't my fault you got excited late at night. Why do I have to help you? You are the one who is awakening my devilish side!"

"1.."

The countdown began, along with my chest heaving without proper coverage. To make matters worse, with this back-hugging posture, her body pressed against mine, skin to skin.

"2.."

I wanted to go back in time, but it was simply because I wasn't an expert—well, I didn't even know how to do it. If we continued, I was going to lose my virginity, so how could a newbie like me make her cum?

"3..."

"I... I don't know how to do it,"

I decided to tell her the truth. She giggled a little behind me before using her slender index finger to tease my nipple, making my knees weak.

My God...

This is so exciting!

"Don't think about it too much," she said. "I will fulfill your wish."

That was her advice: simple and clear.

After finishing her words, Four continued to make a kiss mark on the right side of my neck. Then her playful index finger moved down to my pants, sliding under my panties to my sensitive spot.

A busy girl like me never had time to study how to masturbate. That's why, when her warm finger entered my body, my first reaction was to gasp softly and startle.

In the blink of an eye, Four added another finger. In my opinion, she felt very tight. She probably thought the same because she stopped creating another kiss mark on my neck and called me "Girl" in her soft voice.

Just having them inside me was more than enough, but now she was slowly taking them in and out. Faster and faster, I couldn't help but let out a long moan of satisfaction.

One of my hands gripped the blankets tightly, while the other accidentally squeezed Four's thigh. It seemed like she was lying on my body. She was my support and she even stretched her legs to make me feel more comfortable. I don't know when she managed to remove her black bra. I realized it when my back touched her bare chest with her rising nipples.

Damn... I wanted to see them!

I moaned, breathing heavily through my mouth as my sensitive spot felt so tight, like I was about to cum. The faster her fingers moved inside me, the harder my pussy tried to snatch them away. I felt like a volcano before it finally erupted.

This must be what people call an orgasm-or, to put it simply, the feeling of cuming. My pussy contracted repeatedly, faster than my heartbeat. A sticky liquid bathed her motionless fingers. Four let me breathe deeply.

But a moment later, her playful thumb pressed my clit, making me tremble beneath her body. The weight of her finger drove me crazy, and her sexy voice tried to draw me to heaven.

"Quick... Help me."

"I... really... I don't know how."

"Don't be like that. You're torturing me."

She looked really distressed.

"Please..."

Like I said, this was my first time. I didn't know the rhythm. I didn't know if my emotions alone could make her cum. I was afraid my fingers might hurt her. I wasn't going to deny that I wanted to do it too, but I just needed a couple of weeks to do my research.

I turned towards the warm body and saw what was next to me. I looked at the naked breasts. It was a shame the room was too dark, so I couldn't make out the color of her nipples.

Suddenly, Four lifted my chin with her hand and her eyes met mine. I didn't care about the rest of the world. I only knew that, in her eyes, the entire universe seemed so beautiful and pitifully needy.

"Fast..."

"I'm sorry, but I'm very sleepy." I decided to suppress my feelings because I really didn't know how to continue. Well, I know I'm very selfish.

"Can you help yourself?"

"Jattawa!"

"Four. This would be my most embarrassing denial. Miss Moon Rabbit will be cheering you on."

She gritted her teeth and some veins appeared aggressively on her neck.

"Little witch!"

Normally, I had to get up early to laboriously prepare the sandwiches. But at that moment, it was necessary to break all the rules. I woke up and saw an angel sleeping on Vi's side of our bed. Four was a sleeping beauty, a pleasure to behold in the morning for me. She looked so sexy without any clothes protecting her naked body. There was no need to worry about the cold air conditioning; she slept safe and sound under the covers, with only half of her chest braving the wind.

What happened last night was...

Every moment remained vivid in my memory. My body was touching hers for the first time... It felt so fresh. The only unfortunate thing was my inexperience; I couldn't help Four properly.

In the end, I let her figure things out on her own. Would I have a second chance? If so, I'll do some research online and find some tutorials to prepare.

The night before was so dark that I couldn't properly see the color of... them. That's why that morning I decided to remove the covers and take a look while she was still sleeping. Unfortunately, the moment I tried to do so, the unconscious girl suddenly woke up.

I closed my eyes and sat up. One of her hands combed her hair back in an unintentionally attractive manner. As the blankets fell, Four looked down

and then realized she was half naked. She was stunned for a moment, and so was I because the color of her nipples from the side was... pink.

I quickly removed my hand and squinted, pretending that I was still asleep, but secretly watching her. The girl who murmured, just awake, frowned, probably feeling a headache. She slowly opened her eyes.

OMG, they were strawberry flavored!

Looking around the room, Four's gaze finally landed on me who pretending to be fast asleep. This was the first time I had seen her so stunned. Perhaps her throbbing head was rewinding every scene from the previous night. Of course, she must have thought it was all a dream, so she eagerly approached, but now, reality hit her and she woke up speechless and anxious.

As for me, I didn't know if I should ask her to take responsibility. Last night I felt great, but even if she was a girl like me, she took my virginity. The evidence was my blood on the sheets.

"Jatta... Jatta..."

Her soft voice faltered and she bit her lips, apparently angry with herself. Four wiped her hand again, probably feeling guilty. But this morning she controlled herself better. Do you know what I did after I woke up? I went around and around like crazy. Fortunately, I didn't scream like the female protagonists in melodramas.

Finally realizing that her chest was not covered, Four lifted the covers to protect her pretty body. All her emotions were suppressed under her poker face, and then she extended her arm to push my body.

"Hey! We need to talk."

"Talk? Without any problem!" I pretended to be a little sleepy, waking up to her call. I sat up, making sure the blankets covered my chest. Of course, I couldn't forget about that. Then I looked her in the eyes firmly.



"What's happening?"

"Last night..."

"Last night, we..."

"Yeah."

"We?"

"Yeah."

"Do we sleep together?"

"It wasn't recorded in your memory at all?"

"No!" She quickly justified it, although she still seemed perplexed. Only me...

"Did I get you drunk? I just thought I had a dream."

"So, it means that you dream about kissing girls so often that you can't differentiate between what's real and what's unreal when you're drunk. That's great! So, you also don't remember what the girl in your dream looks like even though she's sitting here?"

"I'm sorry..."

"Can your apology make my blood return to the sheets?"

I sneaked a glance at the stain... Well, let's forget about it. However, it seemed to open Four's eyes even more. She couldn't close her mouth and seemed completely speechless and hallucinated. She should be thankful I didn't scream. Anyway, it was a matter of mutual consent, so we should talk about it calmly and sensibly.

"That's probably caused by some kind of friction. Less than 50% of women break their hymen during their first sexual intercourse..."

"So... I didn't care if it was just friction or whatever, but it was clearly your fault!" I looked at her silently, staring at her until she avoided my eyes guiltily.

"I... I really thought it was you in my dream again."

That had been tickling me since last night.

"Again...." I raised my voice to repeat her words, pretending to be very serious with my arms crossed. "Please explain."

"Why did you raise your collar? A gangster look doesn't suit you."

My best friend was bothering me a lot this time. He kept telling me about my long-sleeved turtleneck jacket that I wore over my student shirt. From the greeting to the start of class to the time of the lecture... I had so many things on my mind at that moment, so I finally let out a deep sigh at him.

"Only insect bites. The bug was huge and sucked very well... It also tasted like strawberries."

"What type of insects? Have you seen the doctor yet? Last week, a student from our university was admitted to the hospital due to horseflies as well. You should get checked..."

"That's enough, Khun. It's just a bug. I may not be able to kill it, but I can handle it."

His goofy look clearly showed that he wanted to see the marks, but my stern look stopped him right there. In the end, my best friend continued taking notes of what the professor showed on the slides, even though I

basically skipped a lot of them. I tried to shake off all the meaningless thoughts. Thinking back to the conversation with Four...

That morning, I wasn't surprised that she dreamed about me, just like I dreamed about her. But her guilty face made me wonder if more than half of her dreams were sex-related. That wasn't funny at all. Was she a pervert? How could my soulmate be so horny?!

"Just tell me what you're going to do next," I told her that morning, trying to keep my voice steady. I really wanted to know her reaction.

"How old are you?"

"If I were still under 18, I would go crazy or I would sue you legally. I am 19 years old, going to turn 20. Although the age of youth continues until the age of 20, the law protects us only until the age of 18."

"Umm...."

She moaned, lost in thought. Can you guess her reaction? No, it didn't even occur to me that this fierce woman could compensate me or ask me out like in romantic movies. That was ridiculous. She excused herself to change in the bathroom. While waiting, I also got dressed before she returned with her wrinkled shirt 2 or 3 minutes later.

Later, she asked me two questions.

"Did you give your consent last night? And was it good?"

My little test was canceled in the blink of an eye.

"It wasn't that bad," I replied.

"Well, that's great."

"That's all?"

It was an incident that occurred by mutual consent. I couldn't get angry like a little kid. Although I wasn't an adult yet, I was mature enough to

understand it. What was spinning in my head right now was the fact that Four left me alone in my room, telling me that she would take a motorcycle taxi to get her car. To be honest, I was not at all satisfied with our constantly unchanging relationship.

Hey, isn't it funny! After all those deep moments between us, how could I pretend it was nothing?

This was too frustrating! Go, Four! If one day you fall in love with me, I will try so hard to achieve it that you will have to beg me on your knees. You'll have to make up for the time I wasted washing the damn blood stain on the sheets.

Damn... I forgot to ask her to pay me back for the liquor, Pad Thai, gas, and detergent. I paid her in advance.

Oh my God! I lost both my money and my body!

After class, I heard that next time we would have a test on what we had been studying since the term started. I wasn't anxious like other students who cried because they didn't have enough time to memorize everything.

I could pause time as much as I wanted, so I wouldn't be nervous at all about the exam. What was much worse than that was that the Prince and Princess Pageant would take place the next day. Last Saturday, Kook-Kai sent me a LINE message informing me that I had to prepare my own outfit for the day.

"Let's go buy tomorrow's costume. In front of the gH2 shopping center, there is a market. Everything is very cheap there. It would be illegal to sell it even cheaper," Khun said, leaning closer to me when I was cleaning out

my trash can. It would be illegal to sell them even cheaper... Is this a joke? Should I laugh at him? Forget it.

"Let's get to the point: You should have prepared yours, right?"

"I'm looking for an aloha t-shirt. My old one is boring."

"What colors are you looking for?"

"Jet black and pinkish violet."

"You airhead! If you had a spec like that, when could you find one?"

I felt so tired of him...

"It depends on you. I can accompany you, but I won't buy anything. I have prepared mine."

"So, are you confident in your casual attire?"

"No, but I don't want to win or draw attention from the start. I prefer to blend into the scene as if I were just one more of the staff."

"Take care of your mouth. Everyone feels disappointed when they don't get attention on stage."

I jokingly imitated Khun's words. He might be irritated by that somehow, so he was caressing his cheeks with his bright smile. At first, I didn't think much of it, like it was just a friendly gesture, but he reminded me of the time he once asked me out. Come on, Khun. You make it difficult for us to just be friends.

"Let's go. A gentleman does not hurt a lady."

"You said I shouldn't think of you as a lady but as a human being. You said it yourself on the first day of school."

"Correct! I forgot."

"I was just trying to create a little distance between us. Forget it. I won't bother you anymore. Do you want to go for a ride with me, or will you take your motorcycle?"

"I will follow you."

I chose the second option without hesitation. Then, I separated from the annoying Khun. Since I arrived late that morning, I had to park further away. The motorcycle parking lots were completely full. I filled out a complaint form and left it in the university's suggestion box, asking for more parking space.

I wondered if the president had already read my complaint. As I walked, I couldn't help but feel tired, which reminded me of my heavy breathing last night. Four was constantly on my mind. It was all the car parks' fault for not having enough space. Otherwise, I wouldn't have to walk so far to get my motorcycle.

"Hey, you!"

I heard a serious greeting behind me and slowed my pace to look at the woman who called my name. I was a little surprised to find the rival of my future soulmate: Walking next to me, Kie was wearing her student uniform miniskirt. Her light-skinned face didn't have the same glow as when we met; now she was stern and serious.

"What's your name?"

She turned to me, her face devoid of its previous joy.

"Jattawa."

"Look me in the eyes!"

Her tone was authoritative and I obediently shifted my gaze to meet her small eyes. She seemed satisfied that I complied with her order.

"Are you close to Four? That's a little strange. How close are you? How did she get you involved to show your legal experience?"

"Actually, I chose to help willingly," I confessed.

"Then you must be quite close."

"Why are you so obsessed with our relationship?"

"Four has told you about that, right?"

"What was that exactly?"

I felt as clueless as a chicken with a puppy barking at it. Trying to keep a poker face, I stayed quiet, waiting for her to reveal more.

"Do you believe her?"

"Do you mean do I believe in Four and her story?"

"Yeah."

I decided to play along.

"Well... I have no reason to doubt her, do I?"

Ha.. Kie's grip on my shoulders tightened, like a threat, and I could feel the strength in her hands. I could read everything through her eyes.

"You better know that no one will believe you."

"At least, I don't think she lied to me. Otherwise, you wouldn't be so worried and scared of the truth come out."

"What proof do you have that I did something, huh?"

"Everything is evident in your mind. You can fool everyone, but you can't fool yourself. What is not true can never be true. Don't fool anyone! They took matters into their own hands! But you chose to remain silent and hide the truth,"

What had this seemingly harmless woman done to Four? I wouldn't know until she decided to tell. Our conversation ended on a sour note. Kie took a deep breath to calm herself before quickly walking away, I couldn't trick her into revealing the truth and I was frustrated by my own incompetence.

Maybe Four should be the one to satisfy my curiosity.



# Chapter XX : For someone waiting with me

I really couldn't stand Khun's Hawaiian shirt. In fact, I despised him greatly. The day before, he managed to find one in jet black and pinkish purple, and he put it in his backpack, preparing for his special talent show. When I compared him to his eldest princess, who was standing next to him in a simple t-shirt and short jeans, he truly outshone me in every way.

That day there would be several rounds of walks. The first round included personal introductions and headlining performances in our student uniforms. The courtroom was already open for the public to find their seats, and the honorary judges would arrive in 15 minutes or so. We had sophomores helping us with makeup and hair. A sophomore with adorable marshmallow cheeks was in charge of me and the older agriculture princess's makeover. She introduced herself as Plum.

"Feather? Do you like fruit, red, purple, or yellow?"

Oh, she was excellent because she was doing a good job!

"Do you want some braids?" Plum asked me after observing my hair carefully. She had just finished combing the hair of the eldest agriculture princess.

"No, thanks."

"Let's do it."

"But my hair doesn't look so good."

“You’re right. Your hair doesn’t look good. That’s why we can’t leave it like this.”

She frowned, acting with all her might like an old person, which didn’t really suit her swollen cheeks, making her look like steamed dumplings from September 11.

“So, do you agree with that?”

“Do what you want.”

I couldn’t really argue with her anyway. I must admit she had some talent. Her makeover was like a work of art. She was transforming me from a simple girl to a cute Japanese babe. Although I still didn’t quite fit in with the princesses of other specialties, she put some sections of my hair in two braids, creating a crown on my head so that no one could notice that it was quite rough and messy. She shouldn’t have wasted her time arguing with me at the beginning.

“What happened to your neck? Why do you have a big bandage?”

“It’s just some insect bites.”

“Do you want to take it off? I can hide it with a little powder.”

“No, thanks.”

“But it will make you look ugly on stage.”

“The wounds are quite horrible. Please leave them like this.”

It was Four’s fault! Her kiss marks might have faded a little, but they were still there. I had a serious argument with Plum. Although she was not happy about it, she relented and went to help other princesses who were waiting for her assistance. I was relieved because I thought maybe she had taken it from me without my consent. That strawberry-flavored culprit was so irresponsible! She didn’t even show up.

[Vivi Jaravi: You can handle this, Wa. There is no need to think about winning or losing!]

My little sister sent me a comforting message. Just by reading it, I realized that I didn't feel pretty enough to survive this contest with my natural face. Anyway, let's treat it as a meaningless activity.

It wouldn't benefit me in any way unless I won.

It was boring and it worried me. I was already worried about my little sister, about my friendship with Khun, who was starting to cross the line, and about the girl next door, Four, who hadn't shown up since she left my room. She suddenly disappeared. Was she dead?!

"I changed my acting to singing. Pay attention, okay?" Khun came to tell me after a second-year student finished slicking her hair back.

This was crazy. He already looked stunning with his bangs. Now that his face was shining without bangs, he looked like a contestant in a modeling contest. He hadn't even gone on stage yet. I could tell that my dumb friend would win at least one award. When I faced it, I felt like a small star eclipsed by the Moon.

"By the way, how do I look?"

He asked happily.

God, I really hated his question.

"Good, great."

"What do you mean good, great? Why aren't you surprised by my new appearance?"

"Wow! You look amazing, Khun! My heart skips a beat! If we weren't friends, I would scream nonstop! That big forehead of yours matches you so well. My God! Is it a forehead or a second Sun?! You shine so much! If you confess your love to any girl, she will definitely agree because of your charming forehead!"

“Exactly!”

Curse! Why were his eyes shining like that? I was just being sarcastic! Don't he realize it's just an act?! I bared my fangs, but only my rabbit teeth were visible. I couldn't help but shake my head out of boredom. The judges took their seats. Yaya-Ying hurried everyone onto the stage for our main show. Our makeup artist on duty, Plum, did a satisfactory job with my light makeup, making my face look better than natural. I looked at myself in the huge mirror once again, silently waiting for a money-related reward.

500 baht would be fine. 5,000 would be even better. Oh, eating for free for the rest of my life would be a dream come true! After my parade in the student uniform and my presentation, everything went smoothly.

Other contestants began showing off their talents on stage, from Thai dance to acrobatics, musical performances, cooking, and more. Now it was Khun's turn before mine. He had brought his new guitar with him. Walking to the center of the stage, he smiled dazzlingly at me. Everyone could see it.

Why did I have to make others misunderstand us even more? They might think we were dating, since it was just the two of us most of the time, with Joey occasionally joining our gang. I wouldn't be mad if people didn't understand me, but I really hoped Khun wouldn't say my name out loud or do anything that would make us feel uncomfortable around each other after this show.

The night before, he posted a random tweet on Twitter. He was retweeted by about ten thousand people.

*Men just want to date someone calm. That's all I hope you can see  
everything through my eyes!*

*I could see it more clearly every time I tried, but I needed to act like I had  
no idea because I just wanted to be friends.*

The boy in his aloha shirt and beige pants placed his fingers on the guitar chords. After the introduction, he began to sing a famous song that many of us had heard before. The audience below waved to the rhythm.

No, Khun... I don't agree with the chorus of this song.

*Thinking of it all, is there a way for you  
to fall in love with me?*

*If you would just try, turning around and looking,  
I'm still waiting... secretly waiting for you right here.*

*And I'm full of love, ready to offer it.  
I just want to have some love.  
Waiting here, baby, it's me...*

Although our friendship was incredible and amazing...

Even though he didn't look at me, I still felt nervous because of his smile. His song on stage made me return to the dressing room where other contestants were resting after their performances.

His gaze, when I turned, darkened for a moment. When Khun came down from the stage, I quickly walked past him to take my place. He smiled at me, and that made me feel even guiltier.

"Get well, Jattawa. The show must go on." Because the simple magic trick I prepared was so common and had already been exposed on the Internet, it seemed incredibly disappointing when I, the magician, was here in a simple, casual outfit, delivering it with my mundane speech.

No one seemed engaged, and I was painfully aware that my performance was the weakest of all the shows. There were fewer than ten people who applauded me. Now, the prince and princess of the senior final were taking the stage and, no doubt, their performances would outshine mine. My thoughts kept drifting to my little sister. I wished she could be there with me right now. Why did I have to care about the dynamic between me and my best friend?

We all changed back into student uniforms and gathered in line on the stage once again. It was time to vote for the rose. Each rose corresponded to a point. The contestant with the greatest number of roses would secure the

popular vote prize. Likewise, the contestant who got the most likes on the university's fan page would win another prize.

The time for voting on the roses was limited to just 5 minutes. And now 4 minutes had already passed. A crowd of people flocked to the other princes and princesses, who needed bags to carry their roses.

Meanwhile, I had only managed to gather three. Many students in my major chose me as their representative because of my undeniably cute smile, but in the presence of others who excel in looks, talent, or even the cool fashion style shown in the previous round, I felt like an ordinary girl standing clumsily in that scenario. It wasn't my place.

Khun looked at me with a pained expression. He wanted to give me a bouquet of roses from his own hands. But that was against the rules, and he knew it well, so he tried to offer me an encouraging smile.

That day was a complete disaster. Until they handed me the fourth rose from backstage, I leaned in to accept it from the girl I hadn't seen in days, and our eyes met, which startled me.

Four seemed a little uneasy, her eyes darting around as she approached me. I took the hint easily, my narrowed eyes signaling my anticipation of her next move. The mere sight of her face lifted my sinking heart as if nothing had gone wrong.

"You're here," I greeted her with a slight smile, meeting her gaze at a closer angle while maintaining the charade of holding the rose. "That must mean you enjoyed the magic trick."

"No."

"If you didn't enjoy it, then you shouldn't vote," I tilted my head, waiting for her response, even as she maintained her inscrutable poker face. "Vote for what you really like. Don't vote simply out of pity for someone you know."

“I didn’t like the magic trick... I like you.”

At the conclusion of the Prince and Princess Pageant:

“And now, the final results are available! Our College Princess of the Year is Miss Satinee Meepodpai of the Education major, and the prince is Mr. Puri Kongprasit. Congratulations to both of you!”

The announcement echoed through the hallway as I ran backstage to find Yaya-Ying, who was busy organizing the roses. Each contestant’s roses were being collected and placed into boxes for the staff to count. I had a mere four roses, which clearly placed me in last place in the contest.

“Yaya-Ying!” I called out to the senior girl, who was supervising the freshmen as they loaded boxes full of roses into an old wheelbarrow.

“Can I take these roses?”

“You are Jattawa, the one with the 4 roses, right?” Her words were like an involuntary edge. Ignoring her sarcasm, I quickly nodded in confirmation.

“Yes, I have 4 of them.”

“Forward. If you want more, take others too. Anyway, we’ll throw them away after the contest.”

“Thank you so much.” I offered a salute and moved toward the box labeled ‘Jattawa Piengpradabkwan.’ Identical roses of the same shade were scattered inside the empty container, while others were crowded together. I looked for the rose with a cross marked with a permanent pen on its stem. Once I located the one delivered by Four, I quickly added another mark to this special flower. I would definitely make an effort to find her later.

“Hey? Just a rose? I thought it would help us lighten the load. What’s wrong with that girl?”

When I left, their unsolicited chatter followed me, similar to gossip. Anyway, I could find a smile in everything, even in the face of the result of my contest. No award, just a handful of awkward moments on stage. However, the single flower in my hand had the power to brighten my day.

If I had thoughts, I’d probably be tired of my perpetual smile by now. Even the curry shop owner looked at me strangely when I requested a bag to protect it. At the time, it wasn’t as catastrophic as I anticipated. At least the sky seemed brilliantly clear to my eyes.

“Hey, Jattawa.”

My name was called as I walked along the path, engrossed in reading about flower care on my phone. Looking back, I saw Khun running toward me, as if he had been looking for me. Oh, not only did he manage to get the award for most likes on the university’s fan page, if I wasn’t mistaken.

“You didn’t wait for me.”

“I’m sorry. I really didn’t mean to do that. I was in a bit of a hurry, so…”

“Forget it,” He interrupted, as if he didn’t want any more excuses, but....

“Just tell me you didn’t leave because of the song I sang.”

It took me a moment to come up with some explanations. I was at a crossroads: force a fake smile or admit that our relationship couldn’t progress beyond this point. I needed to put the rose in a safe place for later and concentrate fully on the dilemma before me. It seemed like time stretched into eternity... It was so long that I was beginning to wonder if I had somehow stopped time itself.

Certain adults advocate hiding emotions as something we should do. However, I have come to believe that this advice does not fit all circumstances. Khun deserved to spend his youth looking for someone he



could be comfortable with, someone in front of whom he could be his unfiltered self, a girl who reciprocated his feelings. That girl was not Jattawa, who had already entrusted her heart to someone else.

“Khun.”

“Yeah?”

He responded with a genuine smile, although a hint of concern and hesitation lingered in his gaze.

“I like you.”

My opening sentence caused him to beam with a radiant smile, as if his heart was being pleased.

“You’re my best friend.”

The second sentence wiped the smile off his face. He seemed taken aback by my involvement.

“Some people are better when they are friends.”

The third sentence made my best friend’s smile disappear in an instant.

“Is that so...?”

He took a step back and turned to leave. I watched his figure move out of sight. His feelings mattered to me, but I had chosen honesty for both him and me. Persisting in my misunderstanding would only lead us down a regrettable path. Naturally, I kept my poker face for the moment. However, my heart ached deeply with the weight of my guilt. I wasn’t sure how I should behave with him from that moment on.

“How did it go, darling? The contest was today, right? Did you get a prize?”

“No, not this time.”

Aunt Tui’s head shook the moment my response reached her ears.

“Oh no! They must have stones in their heads! If it were up to me, you would get top grades. You are a sweetheart and you work hard. Those judges must be blind as bats.”

Her voice was as comforting as a grandmother’s during her grandchildren’s annual visit.

“But do you know, darling, about the princess? Win or lose, life goes on...”

“Thank you very much for trying to cheer me up, Aunt Tui.”

“What? I’m not trying to cheer you up. I’m just telling the truth. People often get caught up in appearances rather than what’s inside. I have been by your side for years and I know you. You deserve the highest score.”

“If you had been there, you could join the chorus that my magic trick was a disaster.”

“Listen, dear,” Aunt Tui said as she put aside her knife after preparing the tofu for the customers. She moved her little chair closer to mine while she washed the vegetables.

“Some of those boring soap operas are still a success. Have you ever wondered why people still tune in?”

“Maybe because some people find them entertaining.”

“Bingo, you clever one!” She gave me a good pat on the knee and offered me boisterous praise. “Votes and reviews cannot measure your real value. Some might give you a measly 10 out of 100, but others might very well give you a perfect 10 out of 10.”

“Your advice made me smile, and it’s true. Why should I let only a few people judge me? You sound like a psychologist,” I complimented her genuinely, and I meant it.

“Oh, I saw a series last night, and I still have it in my head,” she responded.

I chuckled as our conversation shifted to her current favorite show. Aunt Tui recommended it to me because the male protagonist is more intelligent than those in other series. I nodded to make her feel appreciated, but in reality, I rarely watched dramas.

I preferred to stay up-to-date with the news and immerse myself in legal studies. Our new apartment had satellite television, a luxury we didn’t have in our old house. Sometimes my little sister indulged in Thai teen series.

Speaking of which, memories of our dad’s house came to mind. A few days before, I passed by there on a motorcycle. The new owner appeared to be a retired man with a friendly beagle. Our holy basil had been replaced with a pot of Bird of Paradise. What a pity! Why would you discard our holy basil?

It doesn’t matter. I needed to focus on the present. That day started on a low note due to the contest, but receiving the fourth rose from Four lifted my spirits.

However, Khun managed to knock me down again, though not as deeply as before. My emotions were moving on a roller coaster like a stock market chart. As I worked, I racked my brains for ways to patch things up with Khun. During a water break, I tried to text him, but he didn’t read or respond. His Twitter account remained inactive. Could something like this happen to someone like me?

An ordinary girl who didn’t even wear lip gloss at school? Yuck! Let’s put it aside! This relationship could consume me so much that I could graduate from law school the same year as my fellow medical graduates. Well, Jattawa, you have to move on. If we are really friends, he would eventually go back to his old self. This time, I promise that I will support his hobby of growing parsley.

Around 15:00, I returned home and there was no sign of Vi. She would return from her camp tomorrow. That night she would stick me with instant noodles. Although I had her own ingredients for her spicy canned fish salad recipe, I had a hard time getting the seasonings perfect and it didn't match the deliciousness that Mom brought to it. In the end, I didn't even bother to cook it, even though everything was already prepared.

As I poured boiling water into a cup, the sound of knocking echoed through the door. Our rent is always paid on time, and the landlady wouldn't strike me as the type to check on us unless we left the apartment. We were diligent about paying because our bank account still had a healthy balance. Could it be from the neighboring unit? But I didn't remember doing anything disturbing. I couldn't help but wonder who was looking for me.

"Only a moment!" I shouted, putting down the teapot and covering the cup of instant noodles with its lid.

Hurrying, I reached the door, not wanting the visitor to wait long. As I opened the door, my gaze fell on the taller girl who was standing there, seemingly lost in thought. Her cosmic eyes held mine, as if to anchor me, preventing any escape.

"Four."

I tried to suppress my smile, looking away as I remembered the events of a few hours ago during the contest. The rose was still in perfect condition.

"You mentioned that you don't like knocking on doors."

"Forget it."

She started the conversation in a way that made me raise my head in surprise.

"Do you mean forget about that night?"

"I mean the knocking on the door."

“Oh, sure. Your sudden change of topic took me by surprise. What’s happening? How can I help you?”

“I just want you to know that I gave you the rose not because we slept...”

“You’re wrong. We did it while we were sitting.”

“It doesn’t matter.”

I interrupted her as she remained silent.

“I’m not angry with you. I appreciate the rose. I didn’t win any prizes, but I did win four roses. And four is better than three, at least in terms of quantity.”

“Your way of thinking is more mature than that of most 19-year-olds.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment. In fact, I was quite satisfied with it. So, you canceled the rules of knocking on doors just to tell me about the rose?”

“Well... I also want to apologize once again.”

“From what I’ve gathered, you rarely apologize.”

“I was worried that you might feel upset because a girl took your virginity.”

“Oh!”

I was momentarily speechless. I didn’t expect her to worry about such a trivial matter on my behalf. I now understood why she knocked on my door. I offered her a smile as Four waited.

“What if I cried? What was your plan after avoiding me for days? Actually, let me ask you this. Why did you distance yourself from me?”

“Well...”

Four looked away to the side, frowning as she spoke quietly.

“Aside from fantasies or self-exploration, I have never been intimate with anyone either.”

Holy God! My eyes widened in surprise. I was worried I would lose my sanity after she took my virginity, but did she also experience the same confusion? Is that why she avoided me? It was incredible. She seemed very experienced. However, that night, she encouraged me to go with the flow and explore freely. Stifling a laugh, I offered her a reassuring smile.

“Hey, if I had really felt sorry for it, I would have shed tears that night.”

She met my gaze, not in a confrontational way.

“I cannot remember it.”

“Next time, don’t get so drunk.”

I stood on tiptoe and leaned closer to her ear. With my hand covering her mouth, I made sure only she could hear my words. The light, sweet scent of her wafted out as I playfully whispered:

“So you can notice when I have my arms around your neck.”

# Chapter XXI : Someone who feels the same

## THE NEXT DAY

Although I didn't have morning classes, I did have an appointment for my part-time job, which involved sewing doll faces onto keychains at a newly created factory. As they were currently understaffed, they had allowed us to take a substantial workload home, compensating us with 0.75 Thai Baht per piece. For my initial batch, I ordered 200 pieces. The production team approved my request, stipulating that I sign the contract before noon.

However, the day before, Four kept me awake until 21:00. We were playing a guessing game for five seconds. Can you imagine what happened? Allow me to recap the events.

**Realizing that I had wrapped my arms around her neck, an action that signified mutual consent.**

Four was momentarily speechless, her eyes widening in surprise. Now, if there was a reason for me to be upset, it would be because of her inability to remember anything. After all, it was our first time. How could her memory fail her so easily?

"Do you like girls?"

Four rearranged her expression, feigning indifference as she tilted her head to pose the question.

I contorted my face playfully before answering.

"I should be the one to ask you that."

"Really?" she stated indifferently. "I think I like girls."

"Oh."

"And I like you... Jattawa."

**MY GOD!**

I couldn't hold it in anymore. I stopped time, covering my cheeks with my palms in an attempt to suppress any unintentional words. Curse!

How could someone say something like that with such a serious face? It was as if she was simply verbalizing what she had been thinking this whole time. I felt indirectly embarrassed.

If I were in her place, I'd be nervously hiding my face or trying some awkward dance moves. Once I recovered, I released the pause, adopting my poker face in front of the girl. No, I didn't act ashamed of anything. Who would feel shy about her?

"You've already told me this twice."

"Yes, twice." Her gaze remained sincere and direct. "And you? Do you share the same feeling?"

It would have been wise to use my power again to mask my dumbfounded expression at that moment. I acted impulsively, using my skill too soon. I clenched my fist, regaining my composure. My voice trembled slightly as I addressed her.

"Is that a question or a confession?"

At that moment, my mind warned me that the girl in front of me was trying to act cool. Every main character in any drama series would do that, right? Four would probably shrug or tell me to figure it out on my own. I completely misunderstood the situation. I overlooked the fact that Four was one of those enigmatic beings of the cosmos. She could not be easily read.



"It should be a question because I don't want to pressure you," she stated calmly, her firm stance a testament to her self-assurance. The weight of her candor left me a little overwhelmed. I couldn't give a hasty answer to her question that night.

My attempt to retire early for the night was thwarted once again. I found myself sleepless and plagued by a headache from consecutive nights of insufficient rest. Walking down the stairs, my thoughts wavered between whether the girl next door was still sleeping or had started her day, perhaps attending classes or meeting friends. Little by little, I realized that my mind was consumed by thoughts about that captivating girl. The answer to her question already resided within me.

There was no need to ask...

I liked her.

I was in love with her eyes and her entire being, regardless of her gender or personality, even if she didn't fit my usual type. However, as I mentioned, I wanted to maintain an air of nonchalance and chose not to provide an immediate response.

I wished her goodnight and quickly closed the door, my heart skipped a beat. Four was like a witch with words, keeping them simple but impactful.

Well, it was time to regain my focus and refocus on the current tasks at hand. There were numerous urgent matters awaiting my attention. Two hundred keychain dolls, including fifty bears, fifty pandas, and one hundred seals, still lacked their distinctive faces. I secured the bag containing these unfinished creations on the back seat of my motorcycle and returned to my apartment.

I dialed Vi's number, eager to determine her location. With weariness evident in her voice, she revealed that her bus would arrive at school in the next half hour. I hid my joy and informed her of my intention to meet her there, maintaining my usual tone. I was also eager to seek her advice, particularly on how to craft a response to Four that strikes the balance between not seeming overzealous but also not too distant.

Notifications for LINE messages flashed on the screen, momentarily diverting my attention. At first, I assumed it was a message from Vi, but my attention sharpened when I recognized the sender's identity, causing me to cease any ongoing activity.

[Four: The last time I saw you having a coffee with milk.]

[Four: If you're a fan, I can suggest a lovely cafe or even go find one for you, myself..]

Ah, the latte incident when we passed each other on the overpass. In truth, the cup of latte I was holding belonged to Vi. Latte wasn't exactly my preference, although I could tolerate it. It wasn't bad, but it was a bit pricey at times. My younger sister had an affinity for anything involving grilled milk pork skewers, lattes, you name it.

So how did I respond? I decided to read the messages, suppressing the urge to write a reply.

## **POV : NARRATOR**

*I've probably fallen in love with you again.  
Just wondering, maybe.  
But if you're so heartless like that, well,  
I'm speechless.  
And I know this is not right...*

The song gently filled the car, accompanying the artificial coolness of the air conditioning in contrast to the scorching weather outside. Just like the sun in the sky, someone was elated, unlike the cold air inside the car. Quickly, Four's left hand caught on, changing the song. Clearly, she wasn't in the mood for tunes that hit too close to home.

After Jattawa read her LINE messages without replying, the three-digit number on the traffic light irritated her to no end.

And now, the girl next door seemed to be having difficulty with the basic operation of the phone. She was like that part....

*"But if you're so cruel, well, I'm speechless. And I know this is not right."*

Both hands held the steering wheel, which had now been changed to her favorite colors, black and yellow, perfectly matching the exterior of the car. Four tapped her index finger on the steering wheel, synchronized with an internal rhythm, mind wandering to the car's license plate and some kind of sticker on the truck in front of her.

That damn sticker was a cross. A mere symbol to most, but to Four, it was the Thai, the marking of the fourth tone. Jattawa's presence resonated throughout her world. Awakening love again, Again, and again.

Today, Four didn't have a sophisticated class at college, but she dressed formally: a crisp white long-sleeved shirt paired with dark navy jeans, sans modern rips. Her beloved black and white Vans sneakers adorned her feet, and her hair cascaded freely, embodying the ideal niece beloved by grandmothers around the world. In fact, she dared the maddening traffic to revisit that mansion, the place she once fled.

A notification caught Four's eye. Disappointment flickered across her eyes as she realized the sender was not Jattawa, but....

[Film: When will you arrive, Khun?]

A frigid message from his stepbrother, only a few months older. To be honest, Film was not malicious or hostile like his mother. But he had never

shown a familial respect towards Four, a feeling that was reflected in both words and actions.

During high school, as soon as she learned that her father's illegitimate son was attending the same international school, she transferred to a renowned all-boys institution in a distant town.

Film got along with everyone except the girl her mother called the daughter of a woman of bad reputation. She despised Four, echoing her mother's sentiments, although she skillfully maintained a façade of aloofness, employing formal pronouns such as 'khun' and 'phom.' That was Film's convenient way of stating his disdain.

[Four: In an hour.]

[Film: Not everyone has the luxury of waiting only for you. Lunch in thirty minutes and back to work is the goal.]

[Four: I'll be there in thirty minutes, Film, I assure you.]

Four gritted his teeth. The recipient was disgusted by his discrimination due to her status as an illegitimate child. However, he found it even more disgusting since the results of his DNA test revealed that he was not a biological descendant of his father. The adults pressured her relentlessly, but this guy was still immune to suspicion.

Fortunately, Film had been a heavy smoker during his teenage years. Four confided this to his grandmother and carefully preserved the sample. The lab meticulously compared the contents of his cigarette filter to the blood of his father and his grandmother.

The conclusive test results revealed unequivocally that Film could not be his father's biological son. This revelation shattered the excuse that he was a two-month premature baby, as his mother had claimed. It became clear that his mother had conceived him with someone outside the family.

"I'll talk to your grandfather about this once he feels better. At the moment, his health is too fragile."

When Four and Film were 17 years old, the court handed down the verdict: the man guilty of his father's fatal car accident, due to negligent driving, was sentenced to prison. On the last day of his father's funeral, a young man dressed in a crisp white outfit stood solemnly by the door, his eyes filled with tears as he greeted the guests.

Meanwhile, the girl next to him lowered her gaze, conflicted with his emotions. She struggled with her response to that situation, as her relationship with her father had been distant and strained.

He had never held her hand or carried her in his arms. They had never exchanged kind words between them, and her last name was simply a formality for the sake of legal documentation. In any case, the pointed glances had ceased to exist, silenced forever by his passing. He no longer had to endure sitting at the same table as his father, a feeling that offered him some comfort. Staring at the monochrome portrait of his father, Four struggled with her emotions.

"Am I ungrateful for not being able to even shed a tear for him?"

However, it was in her father's closet that Four finally released her pent-up tears that same night. It was the culmination of events, perhaps arising from the incident when, arriving late for school, she had asked for his help to give her a ride. Instead, Film, her stepbrother, ordered the driver to leave without her.

Throughout the trip, his father's irritation had found voice in a cascade of scolding words. When they arrived at his school, before opening the car door, he reached into the front drawer and pulled out a watch with a modest price compared to the one adorning his wrist, which cost barely one hundred thousand baht. It was a watch adorned with golden hands and Roman numerals, a suitable accessory for both men and women. She pressed it into her hand, a silent plea captured on her face as she hurried to embark on her day's work.

"Use this! Never forget your time again!"

The words echoed in his mind. At that moment, the girl wanted to clarify that her lateness was due to not waking up on time, not to an indifferent attitude. However, an intuition of hers told her that this explanation had little relevance in his eyes. Then, he simply bid her farewell, expressing her gratitude in the gesture, and she accepted the opulent gift.

What she didn't know was that the reason for those tears shed within the confines of that closet was the same watch that adorned her wrist. He had not lived to learn of his wife's betrayal. The matriarch of the family, however, was aware of all the hidden truths. It was she who contacted the doctor and preserved the DNA report that revealed the painful secret.

Tragically, dementia now held her mind captive, erasing vital memories from her reach. Despite Four's exhaustive attempts, the elusive DNA report remained hidden in the labyrinthine corridors of her grandmother's mind.

"Should I make another try?" The absurdity of the idea was evident. Her father was gone and gathering the DNA sample from her stepbrother proved to be a formidable challenge. Relying on samples from her grandparents ran the risk of making inaccuracies. In a concerted effort to banish these distressing thoughts, Four shifted her gaze to the traffic light in front of her, which turned green in rapid succession.

However, even as the world sped by, her mind lingered on another topic: Jattawa.

For in the presence of Jattawa, thoughts of her incessant pursuit of inheritance and family rights faded away. Her eyes remained fixed on her phone, waiting for Jattawa Piengpradabkwan's response.

Conversations rarely graced the dining table within the walls of this mansion. Unless it was something significant, meals were consumed in

silence. The head of the table remained vacant due to the absence of the elderly man, who was currently hospitalized due to advanced liver cancer.

Sitting next to her grandmother, Four gave her a hand as the old woman's hands shook as she reached for her food. In front of her sat her father's older sister, someone who constantly ignored Four due to her status as her illegitimate daughter. Her aunt's disdain for Four was evident.

The titles imposed: the girl was forbidden to address her as "Aunt." Whether aunt or uncle, they should be addressed as ma'am or sir only. Before all of them, Film, Four's half-brother, demanded to call himself "young master" instead of "brother."

Four's grandmother finished her meal quickly, although her memory failed when it came to how much she had consumed. Such mistakes led her to reprimand the maid for not providing sustenance.

"Grandma..."

Four's voice was soft as she helped her grandmother into a wheelchair and placed a thin wool scarf over her lap, guiding her toward the garden, a sanctuary for fresh air and comfort. Alone and together, they were finally able to exhale.

"While I was away, did Mrs. Waran approach you to ask for something?"

"Why do you address your mother that way?"

Four's lips curved into a knowing smile at her grandmother's comment. Her stepmother, Mrs. Waran, only allowed the title "mother" in public settings, a concept that Four found completely repugnant.

"Mrs. Waran instructed me not to call her 'mother' unless we are in the presence of others. You are also very aware of that. You used to support me, remember? Or did you really forget everything?"

A moment of silence weighed as the old woman's gaze was directed towards a swing under a towering tree nearby. She heaved a deep sigh.

Recognizing her grandmother's behavior, Four stopped the movement of the wheelchair and spun around, kneeling before the older woman.

"Please... you must be able to remember it. The report that only we have... Where is it?"

Four's plea had an undertone, a whispered promise to thwart the arrogance of the alliance between mother and son. Anxiety drew deep lines on her grandmother's face.

For a moment, Four's heart fluttered with hope, but...

"Why did you address your mother like that? Do not do it again."

"Grandma... She's not my mom."

"She gave birth to you. What else should you call her then?"

"Grandma..."

Four's voice faltered as her grandmother failed to grasp the reality that she was not referring to the woman who gave birth to her. During Four's previous visit, her grandmother had difficulty remembering her name, which delayed the opportunity to ask about the DNA report. When her grandmother's memory apparently returned, the issue had completely disappeared.

After seeing her grandmother to bed, Four made a stop at a Pad Thai restaurant before retiring to her apartment. There she drank two bottles of liquor stolen from the kitchen pantry of her house. Sometimes the allure of her oblivion attracted her: a means to numb the pain within. And then, as if by fate, a strange encounter occurred. That night, a colossal moon rabbit materialized, threatening legal repercussions for her drunken state.



"It's enough. The heat outside is starting to bother me. Escort me to the library. Your grandfather should be there too."

Four closed her eyes and exhaled deeply at the sound of the old woman's vibrant words. She should not expect coherence from a grandmother whose memory was failing even after her husband's hospitalization. Little by little she opened her eyes again and Four gave a forced smile.

"Alright. I'll take you to the library."

At times, she contemplated using a DNA sample from any family member, perhaps her grandmother. This idea had occupied her thoughts for a while. But the obstacles were clear: concerns about accuracy and the fact that Film had stopped smoking. Infiltrating Film's room presented an insurmountable challenge. If she was to use his hair for the sample, she would have to pull out numerous strands by the roots.

One question remained: should she abandon this idea altogether?

At the very least, Film had genuine affection for her grandmother. The company also witnessed his dedication. After doing some internships at an operational level, he won the affection of the employees. His proficiency came from an education abroad, which gave him fluency in foreign languages. In particular, he orchestrated a triumphant viral marketing campaign aimed at teenagers, all on a limited budget.

The sudden ringing of her phone brought her out of her contemplation.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: No, thank you. Please do not bother. Also, I don't really like coffees with milk. The latte cup you mentioned belonged to my sister.]

Events seemed to resist aligning with her desires. Could this imply that Jattawa had no romantic interest in her? The prospect hardly hurt. Who could feel affection for an older person who had an altercation before them? Four made an effort to suppress any feeling that was about to arise. It was evident that she would not win Jattawa's heart. However, despite her

intention to move forward, her mind was still entangled in thoughts about how best to approach Jattawa.

Her priority at that moment was her grandmother. Slipping her phone into the back pocket of her jeans, Four crouched once again in front of her grandmother. Tenderly taking the older woman's hand, Four looked into her eyes.

"Grandma, I need you to listen to me."

"What's happening?"

"You and grandfather only have one descendant: Me, Others are mere strangers."

Around 14:00, Four arrived at her apartment. Noticing the absence of Jattawa's motorcycle from her usual spot, she assumed that the other girl was probably working part-time. Wearing her sports attire, she ran on her treadmill, while her thoughts revolved around the enigma of Jattawa's refusal. Initiating contact and offering greetings to others was not among Four's strengths. Aside from her friends in the gang, she had never tried things like this with anyone else.

"You approached me with concern, hugged me, and defended me. You said you didn't regret what happened that night. So why did you refuse a simple latte?"

Although her exertion caused sweat to drip from her skin, it did little to quell her tumultuous contemplations. That girl, Jattawa, seemed to harbor an affinity, but she hesitated at the prospect of dating someone. The resulting silence persisted from the previous day. Jattawa was skilled at masking her emotions, which made Four's patience essential as she waited for a response on the other girl's own terms.

Four knew that her confession was a proclamation of love, not a marriage proposal. It was a notable change for her, someone who until now had paid little attention to relationships with girls. Now, she had filled pages of her diary with just one name, and even verbalized her emotions in person,

momentarily abandoning her hard-earned prestige. Surely Jattawa should be moved, or at least intrigued.

But maybe it's her fault that she frequently finds herself lost in dreams of that girl. These dreams had begun to blur the line between reality and fantasy, making her feel as if she shared her existence with Jattawa. Every detail revealed in the dreams was meticulously noted.

The adult Jattawa had appeared in those dreams 15 times, and 9 of those 15, featured intimate moments. Her dreams painted Jattawa's female form in vivid colors that left her overwhelmed. And when she woke up, she was forced to avoid the girl next to her, looking away from her or waiting until Jattawa left her room. That's why that night, the line between reality and her dreams became blurred for Four. She couldn't distinguish one from the other, lost in a maelstrom of emotions.

Four had meticulously mapped out Jattawa's timeline, taking advantage of a veiled threat against a first-year student to extract the information. Simple bullying, but the freshman responded with an overreaction on Facebook, as if Four had committed a serious crime.

Ironically, even the treadmill logo featured the same symbol-plus. Jattawa's persistent reminders were becoming almost comical in their frequency. Slowing down the treadmill, Four wiped the sweat from her forehead with the small towel slung over her shoulder before sending a message to her confidant, a friend who still didn't know all the truths.

[Four: Jeans.]

[Four: Are you free tonight? Let's have a shabu feast overnight.]

Her friend, Jeans, responded quickly, indicating availability.

[Jeans: Sorry, I have a movie marathon date with Plum.]

Undeterred, Four approached Fang and Lookmee, but they too declined the offer to spend the night. Frustration mounted, and Four brushed her hair

back in agitation. Pak was an option, although not desirable. Despite his persistent text messages, Four had no affection for him.

His commitment intentions were transparent and his proximity to 'Madam Waran,' Four's stepmother, only deepened her disgust. Her current emotions reflected the unease she felt during her college's welcome camp her freshman year.

The urge to repeatedly check messages from the girl next door consumed her, fearing she had missed something important. However, the responses had consistent meanings, leading Four to realize that she had not yet responded to Jattawa.

Let's start with....

*'You know, Jattawa? Sometimes, it is as if we have loved each other for countless lifetimes. There are no excuses here. I really believe that you like me and that we are meant to be together. I'll take care of that chick, your sister. I will treat her like family. And consider your fish well cared for. I will be the person you will adore. We can even raise a dog or cat if you fancy her. My wealth could turn this apartment into a full fledged San Pedro fish farm.'*

But Four delete the message she type and instead she send this :

[Four: I would give you all the stars in the sky if you asked me.]

Message sent...

Her fingers moved in time with her racing thoughts, and the message quickly took shape. Her mouth fell open and a muttered "damn" escaped her. But before she could cancel the message, Jattawa Piengpradabkwan read her words, making canceling the message impossible.

Four clicked her tongue and frustration resonated inside her. She placed her phone on the pile of documents on her desk, looking for a moment to compose herself. Getting up, she grabbed a towel and headed to the bathroom, muttering "damn" under her breath.

"Damn it! Damn it! Damn! Damn! Damn!"

A new resolve took hold. She wouldn't write impulsively or send every thought that passed through her mind without thorough examination. Four swore this to herself as the warm water cascaded over her, calming her as it flowed.

Little did she know...

*[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: It is not necessary to do all that.]*

*[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: You are already my universe.]*

*[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Regarding your question yesterday, my answer is in the above lines, my dear universe.]*

However, within moments, those three sentences disappeared before Four could fully process them and were quickly replaced by:

*[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Is this a joke? You are surprisingly funny.]*

~

**God! She really went through with her plan to make Four's courting difficult and drag out some time before answering him. HAHAAHHA apaka sama mo po Jattawa! 🤪**

## Chapter XXII : Could it be you?

My younger sister accurately captured the events through her visions, although not all of the intricate details *and the details of my night with Four would never be revealed to her*. She was visibly embarrassed for me, and I gave her a playful smack on the forehead in response.

Her advice was simple: be myself and respond to the chat in a timely manner. She agreed that I should have refused the latte instead of making up a falsehood for Four. Who could have anticipated that her response would make my heart race?

[Four: I would give you all the stars in the sky if you asked me.]

During my part-time shift, I maintained a constant smile. Initially, I impulsively sent three messages but managed to cancel them before she read them. I opted for a fresher approach. I usually struggled to decipher her thoughts, and I was determined not to make it easy for her to understand mine this time.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Is this a joke? You're surprisingly funny.]

About ten minutes later, while I was still busy washing dishes, my phone rang twice in my shorts pocket. I quickly rinsed my hands with dishwashing liquid and dried them with a small towel before reading his messages.

[Four: It's not a joke, Jattawa,]

[Four: I can joke with you if you prefer, but not this time.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Wow, you are so determined!]

I chuckled as I typed and sent my response. I realized that maybe she didn't have much experience with dating. That was probably the reason for her reaction. But of course, if I'm her first girlfriend, how could I pretend that she didn't affect me? My thoughts wandered despite my outward composure around her. I turned off notifications to fully concentrate on my work...

The euphoria was running through me, reaching an almost overwhelming level. It permeated my entire being. I was on cloud nine; I even laughed to myself. I was so elated that I could barely complete my dishwashing task. Fortunately, there weren't many customers, which allowed me some leisure.

As dusk fell, I returned home with two bags of pork and blood sausage soup. My intention was to hang one on the doorknob of the adjoining room and enjoy the other with my sister, who had just returned from camp. I wondered if Four had eaten dinner yet. If not, perhaps I would save this for consumption either as a late-night meal that evening or tomorrow. Ah... considering her physique, she probably didn't eat late at night very often.

Damn! My thoughts turned to that night once again! I made a conscious effort to ignore her muscular physique and soft, husky murmurs. I warned myself not to dwell on it as much as she seemed to. This self-reprimand accompanied me as I walked back to my room. At the dining table, my younger sister playfully pointed her spoon in my direction, her eyes squinting as if she were watching something above my daydreams.

"Ha! You only slept with her once, and yet you are madly in love with her. I'm sitting here too, didn't you notice?"

"Give me a break! I shared it with you to gain perspective, not for you to make fun of! Do you want to test my patience?"

I saw her playfully swing the spoon in her hand.

"Come on, don't be angry. You're not supposed to frown when you're in love."

"I'm frowning because of you!"

"You're being so harsh."

"Finish your soup. Tomorrow, also make a spicy canned fish salad. I have all the ingredients."

"Don't tell me you haven't cooked anything while I was away."

"I did cook some instant noodles."

"Pathetic."

I smacked her small forehead, playfully turning it a shade of red with my mock aggression. She pouted at me, trying to look intimidating. I scolded her gently, telling her to finish her food and wash the dishes instead of blaming her sister. She argued, insisting that she was simply telling the truth. She reluctantly continued eating as I threatened her with another flick to the forehead.

"This little brat... You bring so much liveliness to the room as soon as you return."

Despite my sister's presence, sleep escaped me that night. Even at 23:00, the moon lamp continued to shine as a reminder of the girl who gave it to me. I wondered what Four was doing. Was she thinking of me the way I was thinking of her? If I had accepted her confession when we were together outside my room, saying something like, "Of course! I like you too. I have fallen in love with you from the first moment I saw you," what would have happened?

She wouldn't have just said a few words and walked away like Khun, right? I was tormented by the fear that all these emotions might be one-sided. I kept the rose carefully stored in a zip-lock bag and placed it inside the drawer next to our bed. Maybe one day Four would see it again. Then again, maybe not. She was a bit embarrassing, something I'd rather appreciate alone. Yes, it was my own private whim.



The next day, I took Vi to her school before heading to my university as usual. I walked around selling my sandwiches, but what was unusual was Khun's absence.

Even though his impressive Ducati was parked in the parking lot, he hadn't responded to my direct messages on Twitter. It was clear that he was there but intentionally avoiding me. I completely understood his reasons, so I didn't feel angry or belittled. However, I must admit that this morning felt different. Something was missing. I had saved him a sandwich in case he showed up.

Without him around, selling the sandwiches became a challenge, which made me late for my morning class. I ran down the hallway, panting when I reached the door. Inside, Khun sat in his usual cold spot, like the first day we met. Taking a deep breath, I walked over and sat next to him as if nothing was happening.

"Hey,"

I greeted him, even though he was concentrating on the conference and pretending not to listen. I continued:

"I saved you a tuna sandwich."

He remained silent.

"If no more signs of friendship, I'll move to another place."

As I stood up, preparing to reposition myself and stop causing him discomfort, he suddenly grabbed my arm, his once negligent gaze replaced by his usual self, adorned with an eerily sad expression.

"Can't we just try?"

He looked into my eyes and loosened his grip on my arm, as if only the two of us could perceive the words he was about to say.

"Just for one day. Could you be my girlfriend for a day? And if it doesn't work out..."

His voice softened even further. "We can be friends again."

"You already know my answer, Khun."

"But you haven't tried to consider me as anything more than a friend."

I leaned back in my chair, trying hard to maintain a calm and reasoned discussion.

"We are constantly together. If I harbored romantic feelings for you, I would have fallen in love with you from the beginning. Isn't it like this?"

"No, it's not," He said, letting go of my arm. The look on his face made me feel a pang of guilt for hiding my true feelings from him after all this time.

"You already have someone in your heart. There is no place for me anymore."

In our youth, when we hurt, a friend, a simple apology would be enough. We could fix things and play and laugh together again. But as we've grown, mere apologies no longer work the same magic. Sometimes, they are ineffective, and breaking up is not the sole responsibility of one person.

"Why do you like me?"

I asked directly, searching for the truth. For a fleeting moment, he bit his lower lip, apparently not knowing how to express himself.

"I don't know... You're not the kind of girl I would have imagined falling in love with, but here I am, in love with you."

"Do you believe it or not? I feel the same."

"What do you mean?"

"I share that feeling for Four."

His eyebrows furrowed in disbelief.

"Do you like girls?"

"I knew you would ask me that." I offered a slow smile. "I just realized, she is not who I would have imagined either. Like I said, my feelings reflect yours. We've both fallen in love with people who aren't our typical types."

Our conversation took on more weight.

"But Four is someone we shouldn't mess with. We both know it. Do you think she would reciprocate your feelings?"

"Yes, she corresponds to my feelings."

"Are you sure? What evidence do you have, Jattawa? I have not witnessed any signs."

"You have not glimpsed all the facets of my life. Our interactions at university and the trip home barely scratch the surface. My existence encompasses more than the routine of daily studies. I walk my little sister to school every day, tirelessly search for part-time jobs, and work from dawn to dusk. Even my weekends are dedicated to part-time work. Making a living is an uphill battle. You are part of my life, but you are not its entirety."

What I inadvertently disclosed was deeply serious, leaving Khun completely astonished. Maybe I needed an outlet for the stress accumulated in my miserable life. Once again, the thought of going over my words to elaborate on them was exhausting, and I was not willing to go back in time for this conversation.

"I hope you can understand, Khun."

"What about Four? How important is she in your life? It was evident that she only understood fragments. Given your busy circumstances, how do you manage to make time for her?"

"Because I really care about her.... She is always in my heart, wherever I go."

Our gazes met, each filled with contrasting feelings. My honesty was simple, but it hurt him deeply. Khun looked at me as if he wanted to label me as "ruthless." He swallowed before regaining his shaky voice.

"Just tell me that your heart really belongs to her."

"Of course." I answered with composure. "My heart really belongs to her. I'm sorry that my frankness has led you to feel this way about me."

Khun looked away without another word. His response filled me with concern and prompted me to seek clarity.

"We can still be friends?"

"No. It's better this way. I think we can't look at each other anymore."

During my first year of law school, I found my first friend, and now, in that same year, I lost him just as easily because I can't reciprocate his feelings. Khun was right. I couldn't look him in the eyes and exchange smiles as easily as before. I found myself trapped in the awkwardness of the situation...

When the teacher announced a 10-minute break, I sneaked to the bathroom and came back, deliberately choosing a seat far away from him. I was more attentive than usual, making up for the absence of our usual banter. My mind incessantly replayed scenarios in which I could turn the clock back more than ten minutes. How could I make him see me only as a friend?

But insisting on that was useless. The most I could do now was focus on the present instead of pointlessly repeating the past. At this very moment, my concentration should be on firmly gripping the law license in my hand.

Noon arrived, and I consumed my last tuna sandwich for lunch. Joey's absence today was not surprising given his lack of classes.

Khun, on the other hand, had reverted to his antisocial mode, cutting off communication with others. He sped away on his Ducati through Gate 3, presumably seeking sustenance beyond these walls or retreating to his bedroom.

*"You will adapt to this, Jattawa."*

With a little luck, time can mend our friendship and eventually bring us back together...maybe, I encouraged myself, trying to anchor my thoughts in the present. However, in the middle of the bustling cantina...

"My dear Jattawa, do you mind if I join you?"

A voice called my name from behind, startling me to the point that I almost choked on my sandwich. I looked around, struggling to regain my composure as I recognized the person who had sat next to me: Kie, the captain of the volleyball team. I had never liked her smile; she was consistently insincere and laden with ulterior motives.

"Where is your friend?"

"He's gone." I couldn't resist telling a little white lie.

"Can I accompany you in the meantime?"

"What do you want?"

She let out a giggle as I figured out her intentions. A heavy hand landed on my shoulder.

"Just relax." She said with an icy smile. "This is not the right place for our conversation. See you at the gym after lunch."

"If your matter is not serious or confidential, why not address it here? This cantina is full of people. What is there to fear?" I pressed, refusing to give in.

"It's about Four," She replied quietly, her gaze locked on mine.

The name floated in the air, drawing the glances of a couple of girls passing by. She was more than willing to raise her voice as I continued to insist.

"I am convinced that the gym is a better place. If your friend doesn't show up, maybe you should walk to the gym with me."

Keep your composure, Jattawa. You can pause and reset this moment. If something seems doubtful to me, I would follow my usual strategy. Avoiding someone within the confines of our university would not be a good idea. My nervousness began to subside, and I apprehensively continued to nibble on my sandwich, aware that Kie remained seated to my right.

Suddenly, my phone rang with a message. I stepped away from Kie and quickly unlocked my screen to read my little sister's messages.

[Vivi Jaravi: Hello.]

[Vivi Jaravi: Don't go anywhere with strangers. Don't trust anyone but Four.]

[Vivi Jaravi: Is that okay?]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: You mean the girl with light skin and Chinese appearance?]

[Vivi Jaravi: No, I mean everyone except Four.]

"Excuse me, are you the eldest princess of the law?"

A gentle push on my shoulder jolted me, causing me to quickly close my phone and turn to the sophomore, a former member of the contest organizing team. She was smiling at me, holding up a sheet of paper with a list of names.

"We are having a meeting about the sporting event. Yaya-Ying asked me to gather all the princes and princesses. Did you finish your food? Could you

join me for a brief moment?"

I glanced discreetly at Kie, who had turned toward us, clearly trying to listen to our conversation. She raised her eyebrows indifferently despite asking me to leave with her shortly. The girl with delicate features, who looked like a Chinese doll, nodded as if she was unfazed, as if she had some kind of urgent mission. Something felt off about this whole situation.

At first, Kie seemed eager for me to accompany her, but she let me go without any resistance.

Secondly, this staff member only worked for the organizing team because she was on probation. It was unlikely that she would continue with her role.

Last but not least, she mentioned gathering all the princes and princesses, deliberately omitting someone like Khun, who could be considered a prince. Her attention seemed to be solely on me.

It seems that her charade was quite poorly executed, underestimating my perception to some extent. However, I couldn't reveal that I had realized her plan. Instead, I needed to maintain an air of innocence and play dumb. I met her gaze directly.

"Where should I meet you? I haven't finished my lunch yet. I'll catch up with you, so please inform me of the meeting point."

She didn't seem worried about her careless plan, answering me without hesitation.

"Next to building 81. Do you know the location?"

"Yeah."

"Please do it quickly. I'm not sure if seniors have afternoon classes."

"Understood."

I forced a smile on my face and watched as the staff member walked out of the bustling canteen. Then, Kie's calm voice caught my attention.

"It is okay for you to attend the meeting after lunch? We can have a conversation later, so it seems."

My tone sounded a little stiff, and my gaze towards the woman next to me was still stern and suspicious. After finishing my sandwich and drinking the remaining orange juice from my portable cup, I washed my lunch box and proceeded to convince the volleyball team captain that I had fallen for her plan. Once I was out of her sight, I retrieved my phone and dialed Kook-Kai's number.

[What's going on, Jattawa?]

"Do we have a meeting scheduled for today's sports game?"

[Not today. Most likely next week. Yaya-Ying mentioned that the college prince has an incredibly busy schedule right now. It has become quite a popular product and receives offers from several agencies for possible drama series. We are perfectly fine with that as long as it helps promote the university. By the way, why are you asking about this?]

"Oh, nothing really. Thank you so much."

I ended the call, my frustration growing at being played by Kie. While I wasn't sure of her motives, it was undoubtedly something sinister. In my irritation, I dialed my sister's number as I walked briskly along the trails. It was lunchtime, so Vi must have been engrossed in her art assignments, hunched over her laptop. After a few beeps, Vi answered the call.

"Vi, what did you see? Why did you send me that warning?"

[It's a pretty long vision; I had never come across one so detailed before. Are you free to speak now?]

"Yeah."

[Let's see... To begin with, I witnessed the vision of a light-skinned girl with a Chinese appearance, almost as tall as Four. Unfortunately, I couldn't understand the conversation, but she seemed to order someone to lure you



in and engage you in a moderate physical altercation. She anticipated that you would fight back. Additionally, she asked another girl to capture a video and edit it to show only your retaliation. Meanwhile, she planned to be in the cantina, using it as an alibi to prove that she was not involved.]

"What comes next?"

[When you were finally pushed to the ground, you reacted just as she anticipated. That video went viral.]

"Why would she do such a thing?"

[The goal was probably to discredit you by tarnishing your reputation.]

"Didn't I rewind time to protect myself?"

[In fact, you did. I observed two potential outcomes. When you decided to turn back time and avoid interaction with strangers, you spent the entire day hiding in the library. However, in the afternoon, when you ventured to the parking lot, that's when it happened. You were approached, and events unfolded as before.]

I had made two different decisions, but both paths led me to the same result, like rivers merging into a single ocean. How could I confront a brain that had already devised contingencies?

[The next night, it poured with rain and you found yourself without an umbrella. You walked in the rain, under the scrutiny of onlookers. You were tear-eyed after the committee meeting, overwhelmed by the weight of the imposed probation.]

Hearing this, a pang of sympathy for myself ran through me. I refused to allow my life to be dictated by such fate. I was determined to cut all connections with that woman. The evidence spoke for itself, freeing me from any feeling of guilt.

The root cause of this confusion was Kie's manipulative thinking. Her preferred method of resolution was to deflect blame onto others.

Four was sheltering from the rain with her three companions in the hallway.

I stopped walking.

"Did she really come to see me?"

[In fact, she ran through the rain, approaching you, her friend's jacket protecting her head as she hugged you under the shelter of the umbrella.]

She was once again by my side on that difficult day.

"That's all?"

[Yeah, that covers it. By the way, you haven't followed any strangers, right?]

I had a hard time swallowing after absorbing the disturbing array of potential outcomes.

"According to what you have told me, avoiding the situation is not a feasible solution. In fact, every choice seems to lead to a negative outcome."

[Wait! Pause, Wa. You can't confront her directly. Why not just take a Grab motorcycle and leave it overnight at the university?]

"And what about the next day?"

[Well... you could make it up with a friend.]

"And the following days?"

The situation is not due to that woman, but to me. Why am I forced to participate in this game of hide and seek within the same institution where I gained my place thanks to my own achievements?

[I do not wish to witness you crying in reality... Even witnessing your distress in the vision was more than enough for me.]

Her voice, tinged with emptiness, urged me to reevaluate my next actions. Should I challenge Kie out of impatience, or should I avoid the topic to ease my little sister's worry? But...

[Please avoid her. Sooner or later, she will graduate.]

"Can I avoid the situation for now?"

[If you can!!]

"However, in the future, I will not have the luxury of evading when presenting cases before judges and others. That is absolutely out of the question!"

It's... Please reconsider.

"And I think I have a third option."

**Please tap the vote before leaving**

**Thankies!**

(~<sup>3</sup>~)~

## Chapter XXIII : The Moon at Noon

I assured Vi that everything would be okay. She might not have full confidence, but I certainly wasn't a kid anymore who resorted to avoiding consequences - like skipping class or faking an illness when I didn't finish my homework. My choice to study law arose from my desire to engage with people and various situations, rather than scared away from them.

So, I assured Vi that I could handle this and that it would be a piece of cake, but in truth, it was quite stressful to go back and face that woman in the canteen. I was worried about looking suspicious. This marked the initial step in dismantling their miserable plan. By approaching her and leaving together, I was frustrating her intentions, since the surveillance camera could capture her participation.

"Kie, you mentioned that you had something to discuss about Four. Is that right?"

Her surprise was evident as soon as she saw me after her lunch. Clearly, this was not part of her plan. A fake smile slowly crept over her unique oriental features.

"Have you already met with the organizing team?"

"Yes, Yaya-Ying informed me," I replied, smiling as I locked eyes with her sly gaze. "Now, let's hear your side of the story."

"Okay, okay"

"By the way, I need to leave an assignment at the language center. Could we walk in that direction? It's a shortcut to the gym."

Kie's reaction suggested that she was realizing that things were not happening as she expected. She let out a frustrated exhale and made a strange noise before carrying her plate to the plate return station.

The road to the language center was known for its overwhelming foot traffic. All students of all specialties had to cross it if they were dedicated to the study of foreign languages. Actually, I didn't have any assignments to present there; I basically made that detail up to keep her off balance. I kept a deliberate distance from her in the hallway, adopting a stoic expression and feigning ignorance.

"So, what did you want to discuss?"

"Are you considering joining my side?" she said bluntly, perhaps it was a new tactic.

"I will not side with someone who orchestrated harm against me and tried to frame me," I stated. Her small eyes widened in amazement.

"What are you implying?!"

I kept my smile, as if I possessed a mystical perception that allowed me to read her intentions. Although it may have seemed foolish, she had left me little choice.

"Your actions were unfair. Even your own teammates disapproved and told me the whole truth."

"Yes... it was causing some friction between them."

"I hope you're not foolish enough to plan another assault on me. Otherwise, your name will be recorded at the police station tonight as the mastermind behind a physical assault. I will have your teammates testify as my witnesses. In any case, if something happens to me, you will be the prime suspect!"

And now... I had become a big, big liar.

"Who?" Her question boiled between her clenched teeth. "Who told you?"

"Not just one person."

"Liar!"

"If I'm lying, how would I know? I'm not a fortune teller. Without mentioning your plan..."

Just mention any name, Jattawa.

"Let Ten act as photographer and edit a video to present me as the villain."

"Those damn bitches! Who had the audacity to betray me?"

Kie cursed vehemently, fixing her eyes on me as if she could silence me with a single glance to safeguard her hidden agenda. My thoughts spiraled out of control and my legs shook as if I were addressing a huge crowd.

Unfortunately, the tall girl seemed to sense my fear. A smile formed on her lips as she looked at my vulnerable state, and she grabbed my arm tightly. We stopped dead.

"Scared, right?"

I was too weak to escape her strong grip on my arm.

"What is the problem? Why don't you look me in the eyes and act tough like before?"

Her anger had increased to the point where she forgot about the swarm of students bustling around us. Fear gripped me as she challenged me; she truly believed that her comrades had turned against her. Damn, I didn't anticipate that she would expose her true colors in the middle of a crowd like this. I thought that if there were others around, she wouldn't have to put me through such a situation.

"What's going on with Kie and that girl?"

"I don't know."

Two girls walked past us and looked at us curiously.

"But there must be a reason."

"What? Reasons?"

You should be more discerning and perceptive to prevent this type of abuse. Instead, they were believing that this respected senior is completely justified in reprimanding others like this. This is absurd! The hallway was full of students, but they were all ineffective. Another couple passed by, and once again, the same inquisitive reaction.

"I think that girl must have provoked her."

This is dangerous. Even if Kie crossed a line without restraint and ended up with bruises all over my arm, she would just end up hurt and be the subject of gossip.

Kie had masterfully cultivated her reputation in the eyes of others. Maybe it was time to change tactics and design a new strategy. However, at that time no one was on my side.

Nobody... But...

"Fuck you, Kie!"

I think the moon could appear at noon.

"Never put your hand on my girl!"

A mixture of complaint and command emerged behind me. It was not necessary to turn around; I knew immediately who it was. My anxiety and fear inexplicably dissipated, particularly when the familiar athletic form resolutely pushed away Kie's pale hand, as if she had harbored disdain for Kie from a previous life.

Four lifted my arm, revealing skin reddened by the strong grip. For a fleeting moment, her anger surpassed even the last time she faced Ten. Her

pristine face transformed into a stern expression as she looked her rival in the eyes.

"Come here."

My intuition sent me a warning signal that Four might resort to physical action this time, but it might not be the right time or place for it. She was clearly struggling to maintain her composure. And I was correct in my assessment. Kie's back met the unyielding concrete wall, and her throat released an involuntary "Arg!" in response. Instinctively, I took cover behind someone taller than me, using Four as a shield.

This was not an auspicious sign, especially since we were in a blind spot on the second floor of the language building. I wasn't sure when my hand reached out to grab Four's arm, my grip firm to communicate my unwavering faith in her. She didn't downplay it or turn to punish me; her gaze remained fixed on her adversary, as if she intended to teach Kie a harsh lesson. Kie responded by narrowing her eyes haughtily.

"Aren't you the one on parole?"

"And you will be too for abusing a girl and exercising your authority like a tyrant!"

"Little girl!" Four had just referred to me as a little girl! I tightened my grip on her warm arm, sneaking a glance at Four as she faced her enemy head-on.

"Come on, Four! Everything happened because of you! You told her about 'it'!"

"Whether I revealed it to her or not, you have no right to hurt her!"

Kie tilted her head and looked at me with a smile on her lips.

"I'm really curious to know who she is, a relative, a stepsister or... her legal daughter? How could she say something so disturbing?"

It was pure luck that Four kept her calm demeanor.



"Or maybe a girlfriend? I almost forgot, there was also a lesbian in your circle. But hey, you can't be gay."

"It is none of your business."

"Now that you've answered this, it's probably the right answer," Kie said, an expert at provoking people but trying to mask her intimidating look. I couldn't make fun of her with the observation. She was putting up a front because none of her teammates were there to support her. Her only weapon now was her words.

"Your girl may look like a pushover, but she is far from stupid. In any case, someone on my team betrayed me too."

"You and your group are the real snakes here, not me or my friends."

"Oh really? We're just different races, including this troublemaker first year."

She shot me a disdainful look.

"I should break your leg and give you a new crippled limb."

That was it. Four's patience had worn thin. Her palm landed hard on Kie's infuriatingly beautiful face in retaliation for her vile threat. But that was not the end. Four then grabbed Kie's hair and tilted her face up, forcing her to meet her gaze.

"If you dare carry out that plan or even think about it..." Four's voice was icy and determined, "Rest assured, I will ensure that you face will even more serious consequences."

Kie remained silent and her lip trembled. "Your athletic aspirations will crumble, just as you did to mine."

Was that true?

Did Kie cause Four's injury?

I now realized that the incident that left Four's leg damaged, preventing it from functioning properly, was the fault of that woman, recognized throughout the university as the captain of the volleyball team.

I was speechless, looking at Kie in bewilderment before she received another slap on the opposite cheek. However, mark my words, this woman was tough enough to withstand any punishment.

"Do you still hold a grudge against me for the past? Wasn't it enough to slap me in front of everyone when we were freshmen?"

As her haunting words came to an end, the captain's head was forced to turn in the opposite direction due to the impact of the third slap.

"No, I don't have any worries about that anymore," Four stated, whose statement was punctuated by the fourth slap.

"These are for the bruise you caused on my girl's arm and the threat you directed at her."

"Four, that's enough," I pleaded softly.

My concern wasn't for Kie; it was more about the potential impact on Four. Surprisingly, my softly spoken request made Four remove her hand from Kie's hair. It seemed like my influence reached here.

Four's lips curled into a grim expression of hatred as she glared at her adversary. She issued a final warning through a low growl,

**"From now on, if anything happens to Jattawa, regardless of its magnitude, rest assured that you will be held accountable."**

Four's gaze dropped to Kie, who now had clear fear in her eyes, and then it went down towards her leg. Maybe even with her leg. Four and I walked down the stairs in silence. Her ponytail swayed gently, catching my attention. I wasn't sure where to direct my attention at the moment. There were still questions in my mind: about Kie's disturbing comments, about the idea of breaking her legs.

However, I was aware that investigating such personal matters would violate her privacy. That's why I chose to remain silent. If Four wanted to share these details with me, she would do so when she was ready.

Still, the implications were strong enough to suggest that Kie's story was more twisted fiction than tragic reality. Four did not recklessly misuse her leg, causing an accident. The need for a metal implant was not her fault.

Once we had distanced ourselves far enough from the building, Four suddenly stopped her steps. I followed her lead, my foot stopping in the air due to her abrupt stop. She turned to me and her gaze fell on the red mark on my arm. Palpable concern colored her expression. It was as if the marks had worsened and turned into insect bites or leaf abrasions. It made her think about facing Kie again.

"I'm fine, really. It's just a little red. Thanks for your concern," I interrupted preemptively, afraid of being dragged off to the infirmary.

"How many times should it be?" Four's question carried an air of frustration.

"You mean, how many times should you slap her?"

"Yeah."

"I can't say for sure. But it doesn't sound like an intellectual solution. Besides, you've already slapped her four times, like your name."

"Sometimes intellectual solutions fall short. Look at the redness on your arm."

"We have a university committee to handle these situations."

"You would be surprised, Jattawa. They will not expel a volleyball player who has caught the attention of the national team. Fame comes first, justice comes later."

Having exhausted my counterarguments and considering the unfortunate reality that people tended to idolize Kie, ironically, the scenario she

described seemed plausible.

"So... are you worried about me?"

I directed the conversation toward my current curiosity.

"Yes, I am," Four responded, and her response came in just four seconds. Between us, it felt as if the entire universe stopped momentarily. Even without my intervention, it took me a moment to regain my composure. I quickly looked away and felt a flutter in my chest.

"In what kind of relationship?" I asked, my shyness evident as I scratched my cheek. Senior-junior... Her words faded away who live in the same apartment.

"You often use 'big girl' and 'my girl' when you address me."

"Is that peculiar?"

"You just seem a little distant."

Four's fierce expression softened and her index finger rested on her lips. Her intense gaze remained fixed on me. I gasped, silently hoping that the new pronoun I chased would match the one I heard in that dream. There was a certain affection in it, making me feel like her little girl, even though she was noticeably taller than me.

Why did it take more than four seconds this time? Finally, she made a decision. She pointed to herself and said, "Big girl."

"Yeah."

Then, her finger moved to point at me, indicating "my girl"

No! No.

"Could it be 'my girl'?"

"Huh?"

A frown furrowed her forehead in response to my request.

"What did that mean?"

"You refer to yourself as 'big sister' and me as 'my girl'."

"I have never addressed anyone that way," she replied sternly.

It was clear that this change was a challenge for her. I empathized and recognized that it could take time to accept change. I crossed my arms and took a step forward. As expected, she quickly followed suit and walked beside me silently.

Good! I would whisper my thoughts to the birds and trees, making sure they heard me clearly. I can't even help myself with something as trivial as this. How will I ever reach the stars in the sky?

"You're annoying me?"

"She is so irresponsible."

"Jattawa, I know you're talking about me."

"Or maybe I should give it more time?"

Finally, her aftershocks stopped. I feigned innocence and headed towards the parking lot with a fellow Serpents member. I saw her worried expression as she furtively glanced at me. I reveled in the feeling of becoming an integral part of her life.

"First, I'll go back to my apartment. No more classes for me today," I said, realizing I still had a stack of keychains waiting for me to sew their faces.

"Where did you park your car? You don't need to fire me."

"Just here."

"Oh."

I punished myself internally for jumping to conclusions and thinking that I was so indispensable. I forced a smile.

"See you later."

"When?"

"Hey?"

"You said 'see you later.' When will you see me later?"

"Well... in our apartment?"

"That means you'll just walk past me."

"But we will still cross paths. What is the problem? Do you like me so much that you want to spend more time together?"

"You mentioned that this is your first time, but you got close to someone you started developing feelings for, right?"

"You're not planning on taking me to a fancy café or treating me to something extravagant like you've done with others, are you?"

"On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you like me?"

My questions remained unanswered. It might be too challenging for someone like her, who rarely made concessions. I understood her character, so I opted for a more general consultation. Meanwhile, Four looked at me silently, her expression giving nothing away.

"Do you have anything else to tell me?"

In less than a second, she closed the distance between us, lifted my chin, and placed her lips on mine. The cherry flavor of her lipstick lingered. My eyes widened in amazement. Had she just kissed me in the middle of college?!

Our kiss was fleeting compared to that night.

However, I slowly closed my eyes, giving myself over to the gentle rhythm. It was an exquisite sensation... so exquisite that even after she broke the kiss, my heart was still racing. I couldn't look away from her bright pink lips as she slowly uttered...

"I really like you so much. I can't give you a score because you will always outperform them."

Was this what heaven felt like?

"And I want to spend more time with you, not just walk by. So, would you like to go on a date with me?"

**Okay the stage start moving!!**

$(\sim \overline{\phantom{x}}^3 \overline{\phantom{x}}) \sim$

**Anyone , dont forget to votee!**

# Chapter XXIV : Reaching for the Star

I was completely stunned, Four's cherry-colored lips seemed to have stolen my consciousness. Although her words reached my ears, I was immobilized. She had just asked me out! She continued talking for another sentence or two, but my attention was completely consumed by the cacophony of my racing heartbeat.

"Jattawa?"

Four tilted her head, and her ponytail danced in the wind, catching my gaze and bringing me back to the present. I managed to mutter a response, my voice weak, causing a slight crease of confusion to form on her forehead, followed by a look of slight disappointment.

"Actually, I didn't want to push."

"What day should we go?!"

My words burst out, driven by fear that her invitation would slip away. My voice was embarrassingly loud, which might remind you of a foolishly anxious person who couldn't contain her excitement about an upcoming date. At this moment, that description didn't seem too far away. This feeling was simply too wonderful! The kiss was amazing. Her soothing voice. In her presence, everything seemed to align perfectly.

Four licked her lips with a contemplative look. A mere moment passed before the plan solidified.

"If you feel the same way about me, let's set a date this Sunday."



But why did there seem to be a tinge of discouragement in her tone?

"If you don't like me, you might need a little more time to think about it."

Was that a clever way of asking if I reciprocated her feelings or not? She was quite a strategist. Four, despite her apparently reserved demeanor, had already declared her affection for me three times. In response, I managed to avoid answering three times in a row.

Maybe it was the lingering effect of our earlier kiss, but I found myself timidly tilting my head down, tucking a strand of hair behind my ear in a way that reminded you of the protagonist of a soap opera. Then, gathering my courage, I said something that left me burning with shame.

"What if I love you so much? When should we go out?"

Standing in front of the bathroom mirror, I looked at my reflection and then tapped my cheeks twice, as if to make sure this wasn't a dream. Oh my God! It was real! Even returning home didn't dispel the flutter of anxiety inside me.

Just an hour ago, both her and me confessed our love to each other. We were really in love. The scene where she gently lifted my chin and kissed me replayed in my mind like an endless loop. This kiss was different from the ones she planted on my forehead or the tender one we shared in bed.

This time, our lips met under the warm embrace of the sun, and to add a hint of awkwardness, a fellow student witnessed our moment in the parking lot. Where should I bury my burning face from now on? As I rode through the tailgate on my motorcycle, I furtively glanced at the side mirror, catching the lingering figure of Four as she watched me leave until we were both out of each other's sight.

No one had ever done something like this for me, leaving me unsure how to process such a novel experience.

*"What about tomorrow?"*

She responded when I asked her where we could go if we wanted to indulge my affection for her.

*"What days is my girl available?"* She said, and her tone had less authority and more affection as she changed the way she addressed me.

My mind felt strangely blank, as if it were temporarily incapacitated. I stuttered, my words disjointed, confessing that I couldn't remember my schedule at the time. I assured her that I would have to check the university calendar online once I returned to my room.

At this, my lips curved into a smile and she stroked my head with an almost playful air, ruffling my hair as one would a small child.

*"Don't disappear again. I will be waiting for your answer."*

Even now, I found it hard to believe that she shared the same feelings for me. With some free time before I had to go find my little sister, I settled into my usual spot and continued sewing the faces on the keychains. The online radio, a background hum of the app on my phone, persisted in playing a series of amorous tunes. A line from a famous old song pricked my heart and caused me to accidentally prick my finger with the needle. The music of love never had much hold over me until it entered my life.

*"Who makes me feel so in love?  
Who visits me in my dreams?"*

*Who do I long for every day?  
That person is you.*

*What is love like?  
Is love as tender as you?"*

For God's sake, if these lyrics kept affecting me this way, I might suffocate from the intensity! I wasn't ready to answer her yet.

I noticed my hands were shaking slightly as I unlocked my LINE chat. It's time to get a grip, Jattawa. There was work to be done, so control your fantasies! No matter what happens, a date with her is on the horizon. That's what I tried to tell myself.

By the way, I haven't forgotten Khun, I took a quick photo of my pinky and sent it via direct message on Twitter. The notification showed that he had seen the message, but no response appeared on my screen. Maybe we should retain our status as friends, those who could still share smiles, at the very least.

[Vivi Jaravi: Everything okay?]

A chat notification interrupted the melody of the song. I quickly picked up my phone and typed responses for Vi, who was probably taking a break between classes.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: More than good.]

[Vivi Jaravi: Huh? Talk now!]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Let's talk when we meet.]

[Vivi Jaravi: Aww, I can't wait for school to be over!]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Go back to studying.]

[Vivi Jaravi: I know! I head to class.]

[Vivi Jaravi: You have me in suspense and I won't be able to concentrate! You are so bad!!]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Your teacher is waiting, little baby.]

I left the chat with my heart warmed by the playful banter. It was always fun to make fun of her. While humming the tune on the radio, I chose another colorful bear to sew on her face.

Upon returning to my apartment, I connected to the Wi-Fi and checked my calendar. The next day I had a morning class at 09:30. The afternoon was free. If I was considering a day trip, I would need to take a day off from Oh My Pap, either Saturday or Sunday. It was a decision I hadn't fully made yet.

I wanted extra income and a perfect date. However, I was inclined to do it the next day, alleviating the potential insomnia that could affect me if I was late.

Should I delve into some 18+ content? Perhaps explore various case studies on intimate matters? No, that's absurd! Who would engage with that material right before a date? But, again, they could serve as educational ideas. No, no! Focus, Jattawa! This is your first date and there is a lot more to discuss than just that. I shook my head, silently berating myself as I accidentally pricked my finger again.

Damn you, needle! You're making me look like a fool.

When it was time to pick up Vi, I grabbed my work tools and set them aside next to the couch. Taking the key to my motorcycle, I put on a jacket over my t-shirt after changing out of my student uniform.

When I went down to the parking lot, I noticed that her car was gone. It was possible that she was busy with some errands or responsibilities.

Our interactions were quite limited, and I couldn't deny that I secretly longed to see her. I couldn't help but wonder why I missed her so much.

"Awww! So you and Four are dating?" my younger sister asks, brimming with excitement from the back seat.

She playfully slammed her glass of Coke against my shoulder, prompting me to emit a low growl as she pushed the cold glass away. Arriving at her school, I saw Vi waiting anxiously with an assortment of snacks that she balanced behind me.

Oh, I forgot to mention: I told her the details about how Four came to rescue me during that incident, she confessed her love for me again and asked me out.

"The simple fact of having a date does not automatically make us girlfriends. Be careful with your words," I chided her gently, reminding myself to control my own enthusiasm when talking about Four. I'm the one who needs to stay calm.

"It's basically the same! Once you have the date, you will become girlfriends," she insisted with youthful confidence.

"Is that a prediction from your sixth sense?"

"No, just a guess,"

"She wants me to choose the date and time, but my calendar is full. You know it too. Tomorrow I have classes in the morning and a visit to Aunt Tui's house in the afternoon. I also have work on the weekend,"

"You could take a day off,"

"But that's money,"

"But that's your soulmate,"

For a moment I was speechless because, deep down, I really wanted to go.

"You should try it. Look, I just received a payment of 2000 baht after submitting a draft for my art commission. I can support you!" Vi was quite a worker.

Since she got her stylus, she has been working diligently on numerous projects. The money she won was deposited into my bank account and she insisted that we use it together. Each piece of art she created fetched a price ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand baht, depending on the complexity. If her clients planned to use the work for commercial purposes, she charged an additional fee.

Honestly, her earnings, although uncertain, still exceed my entire monthly salary accumulated from multiple jobs. However, taking a day off didn't seem right to me as it might present me as irresponsible to the boss, but subjecting myself to working under intense pressure wasn't a good option either.

Maybe I would take advantage of my time at Aunt Tui's house to make a decision. Both money and a date with Four were important to me.

"Alternatively, you could scrap the Sunday idea and opt for tomorrow afternoon. What do you think?"

"Wait!"

My reverie was abruptly shattered by the appearance of a familiar figure. I paused while washing the vegetables and turned to my uncle. His expression had a mix of regret and exhaustion, and I couldn't help but notice that he seemed more haggard than the last time we met. I greeted him politely.

"Are you looking for some noodles?"

I reminded myself that harboring anger toward him for our lost house was not productive. If anyone deserved my anger, it was my absent father who left us behind. My relative hesitated for a moment before continuing to speak.

"No, I'm here to talk to you."

"What's happening?"

"Have you already used the money I gave you?"

"No, not yet."

He took a deep breath before continuing, his tone timid. Could he borrow one hundred thousand baht from me? Ah, now I understood it. That's why he seemed so apprehensive.

"My son needs financial help again."

"You are very aware that you already took our house away from us. Do you really expect anything more from us?"

"I know... I know, but this time I promise I won't bother you again. Tone and his wife plan to open a steakhouse franchise, but we've already given her parents the entire dowry. I'm short of money, so I have to ask for your help."

"If you were in my position, would you be willing to lend money to someone who took your house and sold it? Your son is an adult. He is even older than me. His irresponsible actions, getting a girl pregnant, led to Vi and me being forced to leave our own home. If he still faces difficulties, he should learn to fend for himself or find a partner who can support him."

Ungrateful niece: that's probably how he perceived me. If I was financially well off, I wouldn't hesitate to offer him some help, since he once helped raise me and my little sister. It was a sense of obligation I felt.

I apologized for my inability to provide financial assistance. He did not press the matter further. He drove off on his old, beat-up motorcycle,

something he hadn't seen in a long time. It was clear that he was facing real difficulties. He usually traveled in a van, which he probably had to sell.

A tinge of guilt washed over me. He used to send us money from time to time, but now that he was facing difficulties, I couldn't return the favor and even found myself criticizing his son. Losing control like that wasn't productive. It had been another day where my emotions dominated me.

Around 19:00, Auntie Tui requested to speak to me after serving her special Thai sukiyaki soup to all the customers.

Her face lit up with joy as she opened her LINE chat and proudly showed off her son's photo. Despite her husband's divorce, she still had her beloved son Tai. Five years older than me, Tai had been studying abroad. He was diligent and constantly looking for part-time employment while abroad.

Aunt Tui had been running her noodle and a la carte dish business to support her son. His return to Thailand was certainly wonderful news for his mother, but it was not at all ideal for me.

"I'm considering closing the store." Yes, she had raised this possibility several years ago.

"Tai doesn't want me to continue working."

I smiled.

"I have a lot of envy."

"Don't be envious. You too will graduate like him one day."

"I meant that you have a very united family."

The middle-aged woman was momentarily taken aback, her lips forming an "O" as she misinterpreted my comment.

"I apologize. I misunderstood. Well... sometimes, others may not have what you have either."



"It's true that I have a wonderful little sister, but I can't spoil her knowing that." I kept my smile. "When do you plan to close the store? I'll have to start looking for a new job."

"Maybe next month. First, we will have to inform all our regular customers."

"All good things inevitably come to an end. I sincerely appreciate everything you've done for me. You've helped support me and my sister."

Her eyes conveyed a sense of sympathy, but she was making the best decision for her family. I understood completely. It was just that I was a little anxious to find a new job for weekday afternoons. My taste buds had gotten used to her noodle soup. When you've been using something for a long period of time, it's strange to think that you may never try it again. I wasn't shedding tears, but I must admit there was a certain emptiness deep inside me.

Aunt Tui mentioned that she would give me some plates and bowls. As for the noodle cooking equipment, she suggested that she could reserve it for a monk's robe offering ceremony that she possibly intended to host. After all, who wants to work indefinitely? She would simply retire and her son would take care of the rest.

I came home earlier than usual that night because Aunt Tui wanted to close the store early and prepare the house for her son's return. Parking my motorcycle in front of my apartment building, I noticed Vi leaning on the balcony railing, as usual. However, this time, her adorable face was frowning and her voice cut through the air clearly.

"Our air conditioning is broken!"

I could only hope that the landlady didn't insist that we cover the cost of the repairs. Sharing the news of Aunt Tui's shop closing with Vi, she acknowledged it with a nod as she deftly tended to the frying pan. Her lack of surprise indicated that she might have foreseen it in her visions. Using a notebook as a makeshift fan, I let out a deep sigh as I waited for the Chinese

kale with crispy pork belly I was cooking. I was a little late since she didn't anticipate my return.

"You could consider buying an oven and baking cakes-orange cakes, vanilla cakes, chocolate candies. People like these desserts. We could sell them at night or something," Vi suggested, tasting the soup with the tip of her tongue. The initial investment would be substantial. If we can't sell them all, we could end up with a surplus.

"I think I'd rather find a labor job," I replied, reasoning that at least with labor, I can rest when I am fatigued. "Did you tell the landlady about the air conditioning? What was her response? It's scorching hot here,"

She mentioned that a technician would come tomorrow or the day after.

"And what about you? Have you informed Four of your available date?"

"I have not decided yet."

"There are only a few hours until tomorrow."

"I guess I can tell her before I go to bed."

"You're making her wait. To someone who is waiting, every second seems a hundred or even a thousand times longer."

"You should be on my side!" I responded, wiping a bead of sweat from my forehead. "By the way, how are we supposed to sleep in this room? It's stiflingly hot, and we don't even have a fan."

"Nice try changing the subject! We were discussing your date with Four tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Do you want me to go on a date with her right away?"

"Yeah. You could go after your morning class."

As the tantalizing aroma of her bowl of Chinese kale filled the air, Vi placed it on a plate. Then she prepared another pot and filled it with water to make

a clear glass noodle soup.

"And don't stress about your friend Khun. Sooner or later, he will reconnect with you."

"How can we still be friends?"

"As you both grow older, I've seen glimpses of your future interactions. He will be your confidant when you clash with Four, and likewise, he will lean on you when his plants wither or he faces discord. Believe me, his dependence on you will only increase, especially given his problematic girlfriend. Clearly, maintaining their friendship is doable," Vi explains, offering a reassuring perspective.

Will Khun ever be able to make a decision? I asked myself. But maybe he would eventually find someone else who could mend his heart. This revelation alleviated some of my concerns. Thank goodness for Vi's ability to glimpse the future. I picked up my phone, launched the Twitter app, and composed another message to him. While my feelings today were genuine, I recognize that they were also quite direct.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: I still value our friendship.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: We could go together and buy another aloha shirt.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Please reply. Looking forward to your reply.]

As before, he read the messages but did not respond. Frustration prompted me to send another image of my pinky before I decided to abandon this effort and refocus my attention on Vi. I asked her about the possibility of taking a day off this coming Sunday for the appointment. Vi scrutinized me, probably annoyed by my incessant questions on the same topic. She assured me that she could make up for any income I might lose and urged me to make a quick decision.

This was my first date. It was natural for me to feel a little apprehensive. Shortly after, I navigated to my LINE chat looking for a contact whose

name consisted of a number in English. With my thumb, I wrote a few lines of text, while the other hand was busy fanning me with a notebook, desperate for a hint of coolness.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: I will be available tomorrow afternoon. Where do you want to go?]

According to my observations, she had not yet returned to the apartment, presumably catching up on something that was keeping her busy. Consequently, she had not had the opportunity to read my message. This delay worked in my favor since if she responded quickly, I would probably end up running around in front of my mischievous little sister, who would probably throw me disapproving glances or tease me mercilessly.

"What's the matter? Why are you spinning around like a chicken on a skewer?"

Well, it seemed that my efforts to avoid this situation were in vain.

"Argg." That was the sound of my irritation seeping out.

"You specifically told her to meet tomorrow, right? Is that what you said?" Vi's eyes lit up abruptly; her excitement was undeniable. "Did you really ask her out tomorrow?!"

"Exactly! By the way, do you think Four could tell me some of her secrets? Like her leg with the metal implant or her relationship with her stepmother?"

"I think so."

"Why do you say that?"

She bristled briefly before continuing.

"I observed your pale expression, as if you had just accepted an uncomfortable reality, although I can't be entirely sure. In my visions, I saw the two of you enjoying ice cream, holding hands, and making other affectionate gestures."

"Well, it seems that she was quite practical by nature."

Around nine in the evening, my sister and I retired to bed due to the stifling heat of the room, which made it uncomfortable for her to watch TV or surf the Internet. I turned off the lights, allowing the moonlight to gently grace the moon lamp. Capturing the beauty of it, I took a photo and made it the header of my Facebook profile.

Image description:

"If you ever wonder about the extent of my love for you, let me assure you that my affection is as vast as the moon's orbit around the earth."

Was that too cliché? Probably not, I found it charming. I still hadn't received a response from Four regarding my proposal for our date. I became increasingly worried that she might have some prior commitments, just when I was expected to arrive the next day.

Meanwhile, I had been perusing some 18+ websites to find out about intimate activities, similar to how girls relate to each other or various positions. It wasn't that I was expecting anything, but I did think that simply taking her hand and walking her home without further proximity seemed a little old-fashioned. After all, we had already kissed, right? She seemed to enjoy it, and I'd like to make up for my inexperienced attempts last time.

Vi, on the other hand, fell asleep pretty quickly. When I looked at her, she was curled up next to her stuffed pig and sweating a little. I used the notebook on our bed as a makeshift fan, hoping to provide her with more comfort while I waited for Four's response. Hopefully, her response would be quick; otherwise, I might have a hard time falling asleep that night.

Perhaps because of the open window, I heard a heated argument from outside. Normally, Four's or Pak's sophisticated vehicles were virtually silent, but this particular conversation carried an intensity that suggested disagreement. I left my computer, got up from my place, and approached the window, tilting my head slightly, trying to discern the source of the commotion. Oh, that was Four's stepmother.

In the parking lot was the recognizable yellow Porsche next to another car that appears to have been parked there temporarily. A middle-aged woman exuding fury did not turn off the engine, but she quickly exited her vehicle to reprimand her stepdaughter.

"What do you want? Spit it out!" The older woman responded sharply. I stealthily observed her interaction through the partially closed curtains.

"What are you implying?" Four asked, tilting her head as she maintained her poker face. It was evident that she was deliberately trying to provoke her stepmother.

"Money, shares, or even cancel the engagement! Whatever your demands are, just say them and leave our family!" The older woman's voice shook with anger, her frustration palpable.

"Aren't those things rightfully mine as the sole successor of this family? Besides... you and your son are strangers who should be the ones to leave."

Four's response was laced with a touch of cold confidence. The issue of her half-brother, who was not related by blood, came to the fore. Four had asked me earlier if she should let this matter go, but she remained determined to claim what was rightfully hers. If I were in her shoes, I would be just as determined to make it happen. I would even consider taking legal action for the humiliation she suffered from that slap.

"Don't be too confident. Your fiancé won't be able to save you!" the older woman spat.

"You've been close to that man since your days as a forensic pathologist. You orchestrated my engagement to him by talking to Grandma," Four shot back. The younger woman smiled, nonchalantly resting one leg over the other and leaning forward with her arms crossed. "I've talked to him about canceling our engagement. I will not ask you for help regarding my plans."

"What do you know?"

"Connecting the dots is not a challenge. Film is a stranger to our lineage, and you often ask Pak for advice on ownership transfers. It seems he's well-connected. It is plausible that he informed you of my court request, although I never revealed it to him."

"Ha! Let me give you one last warning, you bastard girl! Express your demands and we can conclude this conversation peacefully. I mean a genuine ending, free of lingering resentment, even if you are nothing more than a lost cause."

That was crazy! The family inheritance rightfully belonged to Four. No one had the authority to easily deprive her of what was rightfully hers. No way! If I were next to her, I would whisper softly, urging her not to be carried away by that woman's cruel words. However, I remained hidden behind the curtains, silently waiting for my thoughts to align with hers.

Four took a moment to reflect, and the long silence between them made my heart race with nervousness. The middle-aged woman looked at her stepdaughter, her expression a tumultuous mix of emotions, which no doubt included anxiety and fear. She visibly struggled to steady her breathing, preventing herself from bursting into a fit of screaming. What I could discern was her desperate plea for Four to consider her proposal.

Unfortunately...

"What could I want when everything already belongs to me?" Four stated firmly, underlining her point.

"Everything?!" she emphasized once again, exuding an inexplicable air of superiority, perhaps due to her calm tone or the undisclosed influence she exerted capable of dismantling her adversary effortlessly. With nothing more to say, the tall figure turned and walked up the stairs. Her stepmother's gaze was brimming with indignant fury. She watched Four's departure with her anger momentarily contained before getting into her car and speeding away. I think the battle had finally begun. And a disturbing premonition weighed on me.

As I lay on my bed, a notification on my phone illuminated the dim room. Four should have responded to my chat message. It was very likely that she had not yet reached her room, and it was possible that she was typing her response as she walked up the stairs.

[Four: Meet me at the university. Choose the meeting place you want.]

As I read her message, I quickly composed a response.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: How about we meet at your usual parking spot?]

It went offline for a short period, about ten minutes. It occurred to me that she had probably just returned to her room and taken care of her immediate tasks. If she tended to take quick showers, it was possible that she was taking one right now.

Alternatively, if there was a pending task or report, she could be working diligently on it. My inability to sleep forced me to fan the notebook to relieve my sister's perspiration. I placed my phone near her, eagerly waiting for her response. When I saw the chat notification, a warm wave of excitement ran through me. However, the content of her message caused a different feeling...

[Four: Do you want to keep our relationship a secret?]

What? My intention was simply to make plans. Why did she interpret it so pessimistically?

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: I don't understand.]

[Four: I figured you'd prefer to avoid being seen together.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: The university campus is full of students, including the parking lot. I don't care about others seeing us. I just want to avoid causing you any inconvenience or complications.]

[I'm No. 4: By the way, what time in the afternoon?]



[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Let's say at 13:30 (smiley sticker)]

[Four: Great, see you in the parking lot around that time.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: No problem. Are you going to bed now?]

[Four: I'm organizing my wardrobe. You should go to bed. Sweet dreams, Jattawa."

Could it mean that she was busy choosing her clothes for the date? My mind briefly considered several possibilities before deciding to respond.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: So, see you tomorrow.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: PS Good evening!]

[Four: Sounds good.]

After concluding our chat conversation, I turned off my phone, and an overwhelming feeling of emotion washed over me. The night was sweltering, but inside me, a star shone brightly against the background of the dark sky. Despite my efforts to suppress my excitement and convince myself to fall asleep, my thoughts kept returning to Four. Finally, I fell asleep around midnight.

I woke up five hours later.

The clock rang at 05:37, Vi was still fast asleep, holding her beloved stuffed pig tightly. I gently pushed her leg away from me, which was wrapped around my waist. I took off the blanket and sat down. Although the air conditioning unit remained idle, cool morning air filtered in through the open window. In the distance, I could hear the soft snoring of a cat. I looked out the window and saw an orange cat adorned with a collar. Presumably, its abode was somewhere nearby.

"Don't you ever dare touch my Fish Patty, okay? Orange?"

"Meow..." The cat answered me.

At that moment, my spirit was uplifted as I breathed in the fresh morning air, stretching my body with an exuberant sigh. Before leaving for college, I had to make sure I turned in all the sewn dolls. I walked over to tend to Fish Patty and engaged in a brief playful interaction. He opened and closed his mouth, then shook his head, as if conveying a silent message of "Good luck, Jattawa."

I offered her a nod of approval before grabbing a towel and heading for a refreshing shower. In the end, I opted for my usual hairstyle. As I experimented with a few alternatives, I concluded that letting my hair cascade down like usual felt more appropriate. As for the sandwiches, the task of selling them still appealed to me, although I no longer had Khun's help. I was determined to do everything I could to make ends meet and strive to improve my relationship with him as much as possible.

At 06:30, I woke a still-sleepy Vi from her rest, urging her to take a shower and make us breakfast. Vi, not normally one to fall asleep, seemed a little sluggish today, perhaps due to the heat of the night before.

At 06:46, I am sitting at the table, watching my little sister prepare our usual meal. Before long, we were savoring a hearty breakfast of steamed jasmine rice accompanied by a tempting portion of spicy dry red curry.

However, a hint of intrigue emerged at 07:42. With her high school uniform on, Vi's face radiated a glow as she finished washing the dishes. Leaving her amber apron on the coat rack, she avoided helping me pack the keychains and instead headed to our shared room. Moments later, she emerged wielding a nail clipper in front of me.

"What's the matter? Put on your socks and start getting ready,"

"Sit on the couch. I'll take care of it," she stated, sitting on the couch and gesturing for me to join her. "Come on."

"No need, it's a waste of time," I replied, hoping her actions weren't guided by some disconcerting vision.

"It's not a waste,"

"Then, leave it,"

"Well... you need to trim your nails," she revealed, her words causing my gaze to drift downwards, focusing on the dilemma at hand, or rather, on my fingers.

I was surprised by what she suggested. Could it mean something below the belt? The events of the previous night replayed vividly in my head. With Vi's implications in mind, I was pretty confident that history would repeat itself tonight.

# Chapter XXV : Overthinking

My attention for the moment was solely on my ten fingers, averting my gaze downwards in a blush of embarrassment due to the illicit vision my younger sister glimpsed. I was well aware that during our recent dates, events seemed to pass as easily as sliding on a banana peel.

However, Vi's confirmation of my inner thoughts made me wish I could bury my face deep in the earth. My mind became a chaotic whirlwind of thoughts, tangled and intricate. Suddenly, a fellow student sat next to me, to my right.

It was Khun. His expression was as indifferent as ever, not even bothering to exchange greetings. I turned to him, surprised. Could it be that we had reconciled? Even though he initially chose a seat in the front row, Khun moved from the back to sit next to me.

"Hey..."

I offered a casual greeting, involuntarily clenching my fingers into fists before carefully arranging my computer in front, adopting the demeanor of a diligent student awaiting the professor's lecture. I put aside any thoughts about the impending date for the moment.

"Where are you planning to have lunch today?"

"Same place."

Oh my God! In fact, he was now conversing with me, although he avoided direct eye contact. I couldn't help but smile, undeterred by his apparent lack of attention. We were discussing the impending test in class and our preparation levels. Khun's answers remained concise and direct. On the

surface, he seemed almost normal, although his eyes continued to avoid mine.

Finally, I decided to approach him after class and ask him why he decided to come back. Without a doubt, it was a difficult decision to make. Silently, he packed up his belongings, lost in his thoughts, and his response had a weight that made me feel invaluable.

"I'm more afraid of losing you than of disturbing myself," he admitted, and his words conveyed a deep emotion that he hadn't fully understood before. It was amazing how intense the emotions could be.

"If I could go back in time, I would and it would stop me from saying it," he added, finally meeting my eyes after three hours. He smiled and spoke his last words with a touch of joy. "I'll keep loving you until I find someone I like more than you, okay?"

Damn! My affection for him seemed to have grown even stronger... but in a strictly friendly way.

"Well... okay. I understand."

"Brilliant! I can't concentrate at all when we're fighting, so you owe me free sandwiches as compensation!"

"No problem! I'm more than happy to be able to do it."

"For three meals," he added with a smile.

But hey, that was my hard-earned money!

However, at least we could share lunchtime together again. This marked the first instance of me prioritizing friendship over finances. Today, Khun was clearly making an effort to appear normal. He interacted with Joey more than usual and deliberately avoided interaction with me.

And that was fine. Everything would be okay eventually, as time worked its healing magic on both of us. Someday he would find someone he preferred over me. He wasn't the master of the universe, so he couldn't bend

everything to my will like he was orchestrating a novel. Life didn't always go as planned.

We parted ways after lunch. Joey headed to his afternoon class and Khun mentioned his plan to buy some plants. I kept my afternoon plans a secret, not revealing where I was headed or with whom. I simply informed them that I had some errands to run. As I was pondering my plans, it suddenly hit me: what am I going to do with my motorcycle if I go with Four? In response to this realization, I quickly texted Four, suggesting we meet at a mall.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: How about we meet at the mall? Otherwise, I will have to leave my motorcycle at the university.]

[Four: See? You're not comfortable with anyone knowing about us.]

Hey?! Her response took me by surprise. My reasons were very clear, so why did she make me feel guilty? I pursed my lips, and a slight pout formed on my face as I typed my response.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: It's not like that. I just don't want to leave my motorcycle at the college overnight. How would I get to school tomorrow?]

[Four: What's your license plate number? I will ask my friend to let the night shift security guard take care of it.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Is your friend related to the president or something?]

[Four: Yes, she is the president's daughter.]

Correct! I almost forgot. That senior, Jeans, shared the same last name as the president. But there was still a problem.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: What about my classes tomorrow?]

[Four: I'll take you.]

Oh my God! If this kept up, I might end up falling madly in love with her! I made a quick stop at the bathroom to fix my appearance, especially my messy hair. Luckily, I found the jackpot in the basement of Building B1. There was Kie, holding a report in her hand, waiting patiently for the elevator to go up the stairs. Pain-relieving patches adorned both sides of her face, indicating some discomfort.

I noticed the volleyball team captain's gaze briefly shift to me before returning to the red number displayed on the digital screen above the elevator. Her eyes seemed to have a hint of dissatisfaction, possibly hinting at a recent conflict with her teammates. Well, she must have done a decent job. Speaking of which, did Kie and I part on good terms?

Definitely not, considering she was the one responsible for hurting my dear Four. Due to her injury, Four had to undergo a procedure that involved a metal implant to support her bone. The road to recovery had been long and challenging, dashing her hopes of pursuing a career as an athlete.

I could only imagine the immense emotional and physical toil this had taken on her. Hopefully, during our date, she would tell me about her experiences, and maybe I could offer her some help, especially when it came to legal matters. Just wait, Kie.

That day, Four and I had an exciting date ahead of us, which was much more important than dwelling on the actions of a simple hypocrite like Kie. Every step I took towards our designated meeting point felt like a drumming against my chest. I silently scolded myself for succumbing to nervousness. After all, I had seen Four in the most vulnerable state possible, right? Then again, it was completely natural to feel a flutter of excitement before a date, no matter how many times you'd been on one.

I anticipated that Four was waiting for me in her car, sitting confidently behind the wheel. But as she approached the area, I realized that my assumption was wrong. In fact, she was sitting on a bench nearby, not far from the parking lot. I was breathless when I saw her. She looked absolutely stunning once again.

Dressed in a crisp pair of white Vans sneakers and vibrant yellow pants, she effortlessly complemented her sleek white and yellow Porsche. Her ensemble was completed with a loose-fitting, long-sleeved, crew neck shirt, elegantly tucked into one side of her pants, exuding an air of fashion-forward confidence.

And then there was me, feeling like the worst version of myself. Why did I choose to show up in my simple student uniform? Scanning the surroundings, the flawless girl saw me heading towards her. There was a spark in her eyes, a flash of emotion as our proximity increased. Her tall figure rose gracefully, closing the distance between us.

I wondered how she would greet me. With a confident gait, she did not move slowly, which was in stark contrast to my usual lazy pace before bed. Her approach was quick, and in an instant, she was in front of me. One of her eyebrows arched slightly as she spoke:

"Have you eaten?"

"Yeah."

"With your friends?"

I responded with my gaze slightly lowered to evade the intensity of her presence. I couldn't help but admire the sunglasses that hung casually around her neck.

"Yeah."

"So, you don't want to eat with me?"

"It is not like that. I brought my lunch box. If I hadn't eaten it, it would have been wasted. Also, I wanted to help you save some money."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah."



A hint of disappointment crossed Four's expression. It occurred to me that she might have had a particular restaurant or dish in mind, something she wanted to share with me.

However, I didn't want to be a financial burden, considering my limited resources. It made sense to opt for a date that wouldn't put a strain on our budgets. But then I realized that I was completely wrong. We weren't heading to a restaurant. Instead, the owner of the Porsche took us to an upscale shopping center, a place I had passed often but never dared venture into.

She expertly parked the car in the basement, silencing the engine before undoing our seat belts. Without missing a beat, she continued, her words clear and decisive, preempting any possible objections.

"In that case, let's enjoy some desserts."

"Desserts?"

Was she referring to the 'love juice' I had heard about? My heart raced as my mouth betrayed my ongoing internal debate in the blink of an eye.

"Are you planning to kiss in the car?"

"Huh?" Her beautiful face suddenly wrinkled. "What did you just say?"

Damn! I mentally punished myself for expressing that thought out loud. The atmosphere between us changed rapidly, transforming into an uncomfortable air. Clearly, Four's line of thinking was nowhere near the 18+ territory I inadvertently mentioned. Why wouldn't she be? After all, Vi's visions hinted at something, and her insistence on cutting my nails made me wonder if there was something more.

Or did I think about it too much? Maybe my little sister didn't mean to have implications? But no matter how much I tried to divert my attention, shame and cluelessness overpowered my senses. The only way to save this situation was to laugh nervously and awkwardly.

"I was just kidding. Let's move on. Desserts are waiting!"

There you go, Jattawa.

I gave her a wide smile and a playful wink, hoping to ease the tension. Today, the girl behind the wheel wouldn't test any boundaries. I needed to keep my composure. If I wasn't under the influence, I wouldn't have taken things this far. Fortunately, Four joined in on the charade. I couldn't determine if my tall companion was simply shy or indifferent to holding hands.

One hand gripped her phone, while the other rested casually on the hem of her vibrant pants. I followed her obediently, like a child. Our destination seemed to be a bakery, but I was just guessing since she hadn't provided any details. However, the initial stop at this shopping complex strayed from the culinary realm: it was a high-end clothing store. And the prices were in the four- to five-digit range!

"Pick out an outfit and change," Four instructed.

"What?"

"Choose what you like best. Put it on. I will cover the expenses."

"No, I don't want an explanation. But I'm not naked."

We exchanged a long look, wrapped in a heavy silence. My mind involuntarily replayed the suggestive scene I blurted out earlier, causing me to look away, completely embarrassed by my own words.

"I mean, I'm already dressed and my student uniform is pretty neat," I clarified, well aware of the brand's exorbitant price range. I know she's incredibly rich, a millionaire heiress with significant funds at her disposal. But honestly, I was fine with what I was wearing.

"It doesn't matter; take something."

"Are you making up your own rule?"

"Yes, I want to avoid looking like a sugar mommy or giving off creepy vibes. Just change so it looks like we arrived together."

Ah, so your hesitation to hold hands earlier was fueled by fear of misinterpretation. I'm genuinely surprised, my mouth forming an 'O' in surprise. It wasn't like her to be so considerate. Suppressing a laugh, I gave her a smile and politely declined her offer again. But then Four dropped this bombshell:

"Bad-mannered girl," she joked, narrowing her eyes.

"I was just trying to help you save some money!"

"It is rude to refuse an offer from an adult."

"But you said you didn't want a sugar baby."

"I may not want a sugar baby, but I already have one. Now behave and go change. Oh, you can also buy something for baby chick."

Wait...

"Who is the chick?"

"Your sister."

Well, well, Vi, you naughty rascal! You've earned an endearing nickname from Four. An innocent, yellow, small, fluffy chick. Should I feel envious in this situation?

"Please go ahead and pick something," Four instructed, urging me forward and breaking through my mental barrier.

She gently pushed me into the tent, and I felt her presence like a comforting anchor. Two women, dressed in store uniforms, greeted us with welcoming smiles, ready to offer their suggestions. This situation was foreign to me, and I responded with a shy smile, clinging to Four's shirt as if seeking guidance from her. She moved next to me as if she could read my

uneasiness, and I found comfort in her closeness. Naturally, I didn't let go of her hand.

In addition to my lack of familiarity with this experience, I also lacked the ability to coordinate outfits. I grabbed a short-sleeved T-shirt with long English text on it, along with a pair of yellow knee-length shorts, attempting to replicate Four's outfit for the day.

"Shorts are fine, but this shirt is not quite your style. Try something else."

"Should I have your approval too?"

"No, it's not about my approval. I just don't believe a T-shirt with a caption like *'I'm from hell and I'll avenge that bastard who sent me there!'* accommodates you."

A soft thud rang out as the clothing I was holding slipped from my grasp, its descent halted by Four's quick hands. In that fleeting moment, the corner of her mouth curved upward, as if she found my clumsiness endearing. Placing the shirt back on its hanger, she settled into a blob-like beanbag couch, waiting patiently for me to make another selection.

With a renewed sense of independence, I ventured out on my own. I located two plain T-shirts, one pink for Vi and one white for me. Four directed me to the locker room to change. Upon entering, I marveled at the large mirrors that adorned the opulent wooden walls. The space was equipped with various accessories, which allowed a complete evaluation of the set.

The old saying that women spend forever choosing clothes suddenly made sense when I walked out of the store an hour later, freshly dressed in my selected outfit. As I anticipated a delicious dessert destination, Four guided me towards an escalator, taking us to the next floor. Her brief statement momentarily stopped my objections.

"Let's go find some shoes."

Oh please...

These opulent offerings were far from my personal style. Before I could express my reluctance, a banana milk-flavored popsicle gently brushed my lips, effectively sealing them. Her gaze, full of affection for my apparent adorableness, left me defenseless.

I seemed to have a penchant for everything yellow, from the moon to her shiny Porsche. I blinked at the lollipop in my hand and accepted it as if it were a gift from an old man.

I am a grown woman, but why did I feel like a child in her presence? Four asked me about my favorite brands, and I responded by mentioning Nanyang-Changdao, a well-known Thai brand of classic rubber sneakers. As long as they are genuine, I think if they are authentic, they will last a long time.

"Um, let's go to the Converse store."

Wait, Nanyang-Changdao and Converse sounded completely different. Four's choice seemed baffling, to say the least. The sneakers on display boasted four-digit price tags, making me look up like a puppy looking at an airplane. Among them, the high ankle variants caught my attention. While I wasn't sure of the exact name, it seemed like something Vi would like. I could potentially use them for PE. Although schools used to require plain white sneakers. Besides, I was hesitant to ask Four for yet another favor. However, she surprised me with another suggestion.

"Get one for your sister."

"Is this how you treat all your dates?"

"I guess so."

**My heart sank at the realization...**

"Because you're on my first date."

This last revelation lifted my heart from the depths of pain. A mixture of surprise and joy made my heart skip a beat. She was in her last year of

university studies and was already 22 years old. Could this really be her first experience dating someone?

"I'm the first girl and the previous ones were all men?" I asked softly, my fingers gently caressing the slippers displayed in front of me.

"If we include carpooling as a date, then probably yes," she replied.

"No, let's exclude that," I quickly clarified. Including simply sharing a car ride with Pak shouldn't count as a date; he simply offered her a ride.

"If we count that, half of the population would have gone out with taxi drivers."

My statement evoked her laughter, although to me it was not a joke. I wanted to emphasize this point because the memory of Pak was still bothersome. At least, Four had already mentioned the cancellation of the engagement, which gave me a sense of relief. Four selected the sneakers I had been admiring from the shelves.

"If you like them, go ahead and take them."

I expressed my gratitude with a smile and a nod.

"If you plan to buy me shoes, I don't know how many bags of beef soup I would need to leave at your door to return the favor."

"Were those bags of beef soup yours?"

"Hey? Don't tell me you didn't know!"

"I thought they belonged to the boy who lives on the lower floor." Her voice and expression had a touch of guilt.

It was my turn to raise an eyebrow. "The boy from the bottom floor? Could you give me more details?"

Four proceeded to recount an incident in which a freshman from another university helped her move her treadmill the first day she arrived. He

recognized her from the infamous video clip of her where she slapped Kie. Unlike others, he reacted differently.

"This boy, who was the same age as me, evidently had a preference for athletic girls."

So, it turned out that Four fit his ideal type and had been trying to get his number or at least his LINE ID. If he ever crossed paths with her, he was determined to engage in a long conversation.

Naturally, Four completely dismissed his efforts and treated him as mere trash. You rascal, Four belongs to me! Even in our next lives, she will still be mine! Mine!! Remember this! I printed it out even before our first meeting. Vi could attest to that. She saw everything in her visions!

A snap of fingers near my face stopped my internal monologue against the unknown person. Four held up the pair of sneakers she was holding and asked:

"So, do you want these, little Wa?"

Little Wa...

Little Wa...

**Little Wa is my name.**

"Don't stay silent and keep looking at me. I'm starving!"

Her impatient tone jolted me awake. I diverted my gaze to the girl who affectionately referred to me as "Little Wa." I noticed her swallowing timidly, although I couldn't be entirely sure if that was due to her hunger.

In the end, she bought the sneakers and told me to put them on right away. They were white and navy blue, exquisitely displayed in the box. I was reluctant to diminish its shine by wearing them.

Sitting on the couch, I looked at them regretfully as I put on the socks that she also bought at the same store. Placing my sock-clad feet on the floor, I

was ready to put on my sneakers just as Four returned from the checkout counter. With quick efficiency, she stuffed the receipt into her back pocket, arms crossed and one leg resting casually as she fixed her gaze on me and the laces in my hands.

"Give me a moment please."

Vi usually takes care of tying my shoelaces. Old people tend to let go. Tying shoelaces had never been my strong suit. Unexpectedly, Four walked over, knelt down next to me, and proceeded to fasten the white laces as if dealing with a child.

"You seem better suited to outdoor work than housework," she commented, her eyes fixed on her task instead of mine. A fortunate circumstance, as my lips almost formed awkward excuses that I quickly suppressed. No, Jattawa, please don't do it. Maintain your composure: You have succeeded admirably so far. Don't expose your dirty side!

15,000! I was in the ice cream parlor located in the basement of the shopping center. Although I had suggested splitting the bills to Four, she once again asserted her authority as an adult, insisting on her right to offer gifts to the younger ones. As a result, Miss Jattawa's objection had transformed her into a bad mannered girl.

As I waited, my toes tapped rhythmically on the ground. I contemplated the best way to pick up Vi and head to work. I was reluctant to go with this suit, for fear that it would get stained or wet. I had intended to keep it safe and sound in a zip-lock bag next to the moon lamp. Four was currently in line, placing an order, while I held on to our table to secure our spot.

This ice cream parlor worked with a system similar to that of KFC, where the ice cream was ordered at the counter. The menu displayed on the screen behind the cashier was overwhelming, with a variety of ice cream options that seemed more complex than Starbucks. Four asked me what I wanted but I just told her to get something affordable for me. She agreed.

But now she had returned with an ice cream cake adorned with strawberries that oozed out of a huge container resembling a wine glass. Even a primary



school student could tell that this was no 20 baht gift. The forbidden fruit always seemed sweeter to this senior snake. Even though I had asked for something affordable, she brought me an expensive ice cream creation.

"Let me ask you, do you think just the two of us can finish this?"

"I've done it before."

"What happened after?"

"I ended up ordering another ice cream cone after finishing it."

"Oh my God."

Was this the same girl whose slim body was full of muscles? My eyes widened in amazement as her gaze remained serious. Perhaps the rich had bigger stomachs than ordinary people.

"Then if I eat with you, you might still be hungry."

"Last time it was smaller," she clarified as she transferred the cake to a separate plate. "Don't be picky. Consider yourself warned."

"Aren't you worried about maintaining your image?"

"Everything shattered as soon as you witnessed my fight with Ten." I chuckled at her response.

"Will you slap me too if I manage to make you angry?" My joke didn't amuse her much. Instead, she pointed her index finger to her lips. Initially bewildered, I finally understood her gesture.

"You will receive a slap from my lips."

My face blushed and I quickly closed my mouth. As I looked at the strawberries, memories of her nipples came to mind... I focused on the cake, lifting the flat spoon and avoiding direct eye contact with the girl across the table.

The icy sensation of the ice cream was surprisingly smooth. I quickly tasted the strawberries, hoping they would complement each other well. And I was right. They were incredibly delicious!

So much so that I wanted to take some home for Vi to try. Unconsciously, I shot another glance at Four. She rested her chin on her hand, watching me. How embarrassing. Did I seem too gluttonous in front of her?

"Aren't you... going to eat too?"

Her thin lips curved into a slight smile. Gracefully, she chose an extra plate and scooped some ice cream cake on it, indulging in a different way than I did. Every time she licked her lips or took a bite of a strawberry, her bright pink lips captivated me like those of a goddess. My soulmate was a vision of exquisite beauty.

The way she crossed her legs, rested her chin, stared at me, or even savored every bite of cake...

All of these actions left me wondering why fate had tied me to her. Did some celestial mishap lead Four to step on a cosmic duck, thus leaving her sentenced to fall in love with a modest duckling like me?

After consuming three triangular slices of ice cream cake, a feeling of satisfaction enveloped me. Four waited patiently until my pace slowed before dealing with the remains. Her ability was truly remarkable. How many hours of activity would it take to expend all these calories?

"Have you ever regretted spending too much?"

"Never, I'm rich enough."

"So, those luxurious clothes you gave me that day..."

"No, those were my stepmother's. I didn't want them around, that's why I urged you to discard them." That explained her insistence on separating from them. Then a thought occurred.

"Does that imply she was trying to impress you?"

"Only in the presence of other family members, like my uncles and aunts."

"Is that why you left home to live alone?"

"I am just a girl born out of wedlock, a burden in her eyes."

"However, in my opinion, you are nothing short of extraordinary."

Her hand stopped mid-movement, suspended in the air as she reached for a brown napkin. She averted her gaze from mine as if she was bewildered. She was a little surprised that no one had ever spoken to her that way. Slowly, a smile appeared on Four's lips.

"Thank you."

I decided to change the subject.

"Anyway, as for Kie, she seems to have backed off. I ran into her today and she didn't say a word." I led our conversation as we left the ice cream parlor, hoping to discover the enigmatic connection between them.

"That's a relief. Aren't you curious to know the reason for our enmity? Because you are on my side."

"Is this a recurring pattern for everyone around you? I was referring to the underlying intrigue."

"Only three of them."

"Do you mean the members of your gang?"

"Yes," she responded with a hint of reluctance, apparently not wanting to delve deeper into the topic.

"Do you need a new bag? The one you have is fake."

"What? Fake? But the dealer assured me it was Grade A."

"Indeed. A grade A fake, a replica that infringes copyright. Consider purchasing a new one if you don't want to contribute to harming the original producer."

Could anyone else convey a message as concise but powerful as her? A pang of guilt washed over me. My face paled and my voice faltered.

"Starting tomorrow I won't wear it anymore. I will find a genuine replacement..."

"Please don't suggest buying me a new one. If that's the case, I will return everything in this bag to you." I interrupted before Four could respond further.

The contents of the bag included the clothes Four bought for Vi. Four's eyes narrowed in disgust, but in the end she simply nodded, apparently worried that I might give her all back. She asked about our next destination. Not being familiar with the options due to my busy schedule, I suggested an arcade game after some thought.

We were on the top floor of the shopping center, as Four informed me. Opting for the escalator instead of the elevator, we lazily ascended. Then, I realized that Four had avoided talking about her history with Kie.

"Four, I feel that we have not fully addressed our previous conversation. I'm just curious about the extent of your conflict with Kie. How strained is your relationship?"

"Perhaps we should postpone that discussion for another day."

"Why?"

"I have never revealed the whole truth to anyone, not even close friends." Her gaze carried a weight, a burden she seemed unwilling to unload.

"Do you trust me?" This time, her captivating eyes softened. "No matter how inconvenient the truth may be, I promise to be by your side indefinitely. If you wish to keep it confidential, I will respect your wish. All

I ask is that you share some of your feelings, and I will be here to listen. Consider it my way of repaying you for the clothes and shoes we have generously received."

Four directed her gaze forward as we approached the end of the escalator. She slipped her warm hand into mine and guided me to the right, toward the game room. I looked at her, waiting for her response. She hesitated, scanning her surroundings before finally...

**"Kie broke my leg, just like you heard."**

And so, the story between Four and Kie began to unfold.

# Chapter XXVI : What Is the Most Important?

**POV : KIE**

Five years ago. Volleyball...

This is what puts me in the center of attention in the eyes of the coach, my teammates, and the spectators. Every time we achieve a victory, I plant a kiss on the trophy and raise it high, bursting with pride. I capture a photo of that triumphant moment and quickly send it to my father, who lives in the country. My photo holding the trophy even appeared in a newspaper, a treasured snapshot that my father meticulously cropped and framed before displaying it on the wall of his grocery store.

That's why my heart beat for this sport above all else. My only confidant is Four. We share the same role on the team: we are both wing attackers. Over the past year, we secured our places as regular players, representing our school against other international teams within the same network. We emerged victorious and took first prize. Our setter, Cat, executes her duties with finesse, throwing the ball perfectly for me time and time again. Often, she playfully put her arm around her neck.

Her family is well-off and she loves taking me out to lunch. It's one of the reasons I appreciate this opulent friendship. Still, she is a senior and sometimes, if I bother her too much, she might get angry and jokingly call me a "Chinese brat." Her guidance often guides me toward Four's refined manners.

As for Four, we have amazing synergy, reflecting similar scores. Whether competing internally or against other schools, our performance consistently shines. My years in grades 10 and 11 are beyond measure. Those who once looked down on me now occupy the stands, cheering me on during school sports day.

But when I reached grade 12, the coach told us that this time some scouts from the Thai Volleyball Association (TVA) would come to watch us in the competition. I was very excited and looking forward to the games against other schools. My position was quite prominent. I had to practice a lot and work harder on my attacks. The dream of being part of the national team was coming true.

However, my dream was shattered with astonishing ease when the coach announced the starting lineup. My name was conspicuously absent from the list. The coveted wing spiker positions were awarded to Four and another 11th grader, Ja.

"Kie, you will be a substitute."

The coach's tone was cold. An incredulous protest came to mind: What? Me? A substitute?

Impossible! Something had to be wrong.

"Could you explain to me the reason for this decision?"

I was about to voice my objection, but Four beat me to it, raised her hand and spoke on my behalf.

Bravo! I thought.

"Are you asking about the friendship between you and Kie?"

Our coach was not moved by such a feeling.

"If that's the case, you don't need to question me. Instead, make an argument if you think Kie outplayed Ja in past matches, including today's forward."

Four was silent this time. I frowned deeply. What was happening? I admit that I missed some practices and failed some services. But in the recent game, just a few days ago, I scored two crucial points for the team when we were tied 24-24. On that occasion, I was almost lifted into the air by everyone, trophy in hand. They praised me; even Four did. The coach even invited us to a feast.

However, now he was displaying a cunning disposition, attempting to sideline me, someone who had contributed to the school's prestige, from the lineup so carelessly.

After practice, I asked Four to go back to the locker room first, and then I hurried over to the coach to make up with him.

"Coach!"

He was in the process of folding his chair.

"I'd like to talk about my substitute position."

"Forward."

"Is it supposed to end like this?"

"Conclude how?"

"As if you had already decided to have that girl as a starting player."

"In your tenth grade, you used your skills to snatch the starting position from your superiors."

His words pierced me like a knife.

"But now, your position has been taken due to your lack of concentration and discipline. Both arise from your recklessness, assuming that you will always be the owner."

"Have you considered that having me as a starter in the national matches, instead of that newcomer, could increase our chances of winning?"



"I only know that your predecessors did not behave like you."

They never confronted me in this way or belittled their young people like what he is doing. His words stunned me. He concluded the conversation, wheeling the chair to a corner of the gym, instructing me to lock the door and return the key to the locker room. I stood stock still, clenching my fists as I struggled to control my breathing. This was terrible. And I couldn't confide this to my father. I just couldn't. Plus, our neighbors would surely berate us if I wasn't on the live stream.

I had to secure a spot in the crucial starting lineup. I shouldn't be left as a substitute waiting on the sidelines for the opportunity to play. Of course, tears won't help me. I needed to approach Ja and discuss this matter with her. I had to make her see why I should be the owner of it, emphasizing our greater chances of winning. Then I found myself talking to Ja, trying to shake her self-confidence. I subtly reminded her that if she really wanted the team to win, she should give the position to an experienced senior like me.

Unfortunately, this girl was unfazed. She responded coldly, stating that she would do her best. Damn brat! I should have been the one on the court! They were all privileged girls! Why did they have to harbor the dream of a sports career? I should be the one TVA contacted!

"Four."

At night, I turned to my close friend. She was already asleep. Despite her apparent tiredness, I woke her up because I needed to discuss this urgent matter. Four was not a heavy sleeper; she woke up easily.

"What's going on, Kie..."

She murmured.

"Why do you play volleyball?"

She seemed taken aback.

"Because I love it. Why do you ask? You are aware of my aspiration."

Our dreams were aligned: we both aspired to join the national team and compete on a global stage. If I had to sum up my dear friend's life, I would say this: Four was the descendant of one of the top ten billionaires in the country. Her family specialized in importing sports equipment, musical instruments, and well-known brands of sports clothing. Even my sports shoes were imported by her family. Her life seemed to be on a bed of roses. However, she was a bastard child.

Her illegitimacy made her look like an outcast in the eyes of other family members. She secretly fought against her stepmother, hiding it from her father. Her grandfather and other relatives made fun of her, even her own mother who abandoned her. Only her grandmother was next to her. The day she implored the school to allow her to reside in the athletes' dormitory, she told the coach that she wanted to focus on training. In reality, her stepmother had been threatening her life and well-being. Her father suffered a fatal car accident...

Without her father, she was easier prey for her stepmother, who became bolder in her mistreatment. Her legal status as the daughter of her father protects her, but she is precarious. Her life revolves around this last name. She is not worried about her money; she never experiences financial difficulties. Attending a prestigious university is a fact. With wealth, she has unlimited possibilities.

For me, my father's words rang in my ears when he admitted that he could not finance my education after high school. Fate led me to apply for an athlete's place at this school, which took me to Bangkok with only a meager allowance from my father. So what I was trying to convey to Four in the middle of the night was that...

"I know you want to be a volleyball player like me, but you're rich and the TVA's indifference may not worry you."

Four frowned but was implacable.

"You have to understand my situation. Without tenure, my talents would remain hidden and college admission would be difficult to achieve. But you have the means for a higher education. You own a portion of your father's wealth. We can continue playing together once we both enter college."

"I don't want to depend on his money."

She replied with a blank look. Silly girl! How could she talk about having millions in your bank account and yet be reluctant to use them? If you don't need them, just transfer them to the account! I thought.

"Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

"Yes, I do."

She sighed.

"You want me to resign so you can take the starting position."

"Brilliant! You realize it quickly."

I offered her a thumbs up.

"But will the coach be as understanding as you?"

"He's ruthless! Don't be too direct. Just make up an excuse, like a fake injury or discomfort. Whatever!"

"Why silence?"

"Just wondering..."

"About?"

"If you ever cared about my feelings."

Her question took me by surprise. I was speechless. I bit my lip as I studied the girl in the next bed. She was looking at me, waiting for my answer. What should I say? If I didn't care, why would I have become friends with

her, a girl born out of wedlock? She should be grateful that I never exposed her secret, but now she made me feel like a self-centered individual.

"I also dream of being a starting player. You're rich, remember? Even if you don't take this path, your financial future is secure. But not me, Four. I come from a more difficult background. This is not selfishness due to an unfair destiny." My argument did not seem to satisfy her. She probably wanted to bring up my lack of practice and poor performance. However, those are not my flaws, definitely not! I knew I could rise to the occasion as the game approached. The team trusted me; they couldn't be successful without me as a starting player.

"Quit. Tell the coach that your leg or knee is injured or something."

I concluded, turning around and collapsing on my bed. I would let her deal with her own conscience and understand how privileged she was to have been born into prosperity. I cried in solitude all night. I couldn't understand why the coach couldn't prioritize my obvious talents over the feigned discipline.

Two days later, Four volunteered to help our coach organize the balls after practice. I left the gym and let her cheat on him. There was an ice cream vendor who frequented the school grounds every night and served the students who lived in the dormitories. Feeling a wave of relief, I decided to treat myself to a scoop of vanilla ice cream and another of banana, Four's favorite flavor. Look at me, how thoughtful! Thanks to her wealth, Four could easily treat me to ice cream every day, but today I would treat her!

Upon returning to the gym, my intention was to sneak in once their conversation concluded. That way, when I came in, the coach could easily inform me to take the starting player position. Excellent! If things turned out the way I imagined, my original plan would work again. However, life tends to throw obstacles in my path. As I approached the closed gym door, the coach's voice reached my ears, and his words struck a disconcerting chord.

"Four, do you think I'm stupid?"

"What do you mean?"

"Everything you mentioned, the excuse of your injured knee—based on my observations during practice, you seemed perfectly healthy. Coincidentally, your close friend is now on the bench as a substitute player. Did you know? Ja informed me that Kie approached her with a similar request to resign. I congratulate Ja on her determined stance, but you..."

His words floated in the air, and my nerves went crazy, as if I had been caught red-handed. That infuriating brat must have ratted me out!

"I'm torn between being disappointed in you and understanding the difficult position your friendship puts you in."

"So what are you going to do, coach?"

"Will you be on her side?"

"Will you agree to let her resign?"

I leaned against the wall, eagerly listening to their conversation.

"Go back and inform Kie that I rejected your request because I caught you pretending to be hurt."

"What?!"

"I'm not sure why you bow down to her, but if you ignore your own well-being, at least consider the interests of the team and the school. A professional athlete cannot neglect the value of discipline and practice. I assigned her as a substitute player to instill this in her."

"But could you give her one last chance, please? This match has immense meaning for her."

Well done, Four! Talk loud! Tell him!

"If you consider this carefully, please clarify who you think performed worse in the selection match: Ja or your friend?"

Why silence? Just say 'Ja'!

"Speak. It's just the two of us here. Nobody is listening."

"Kie..."

"Damn, Four. Say it louder. I cannot hear you."

"Kie! My friend, Kie."

Damn it!

"In that case, do you still want me to replace you with her?"

"No..."

"Good. However, since you tried to trick me, run three laps around the football field and then go back to your dorm! Go!"

My anger towards my friend ruined the ice cream I had in my hands. My eyes widened when I heard the quick footsteps running towards the exit door. Four was supposed to be running as part of her punishment. I hurried away and sought refuge in a corner of the warehouse. Wearing my number 10 uniform, Four ran out of the gym on her long legs, leaving me seething with rage behind.

How could she do this? A true friend shouldn't betray me like this! Four's insincerity hit me deeply. It was as if I had forgotten the days when we shared meals from the same plate, when we ran together in the rain doing errands, when we committed to making the national team side by side. What had just happened there? How could she utter those words simply because of less pressure from the coach? If I were as rich as her, I doubt I would act the same. In a fit of rage, I threw the ice cream, walked upstairs, and plopped down on my bed, waiting for my turn to take a shower amid the cacophony of tenth and eleventh graders clamoring in the bathroom. The noise grated on my nerves. Sitting there, reflecting, I wondered if switching to another team might be the answer. The one who approached me last year was impressed by my skill. But that school was up north, quite

far away. Furthermore, her team was not outstanding and her point guard was quite weak. Our compatibility was questionable, an obstacle that could hamper my future prospects.

Lost in thought, Four returned from her run, settled on her bed, and deliberately avoided eye contact, her demeanor saturated with guilt. She picked up her towel, toothbrush, toothpaste, liquid soap, and a change of clothes, preparing to take a dip in the shower. I watched her closely, waiting for her to open up and tell me the truth. But then...

Did the school forget to pay the electricity bill? In the middle of the darkness, a voice screamed. Even though the clock read eight o'clock at night, the entire residence, even the streetlights on the soccer field, were plunged into darkness. In the confusion that followed, cries for flashlights and lanterns echoed. I was further disturbed when Four turned on the ceiling light next to her bed, causing me to squint as my eyes adjusted to the sudden brightness. She turned to me and spoke, remorse evident in her voice.

"I'll leave the light on. My flashlight is in the drawer. Feel free to use it."

Four and I share a similar habit. We waited for everyone else to finish using the bathroom before taking our turn, a smart strategy to avoid the crowds. That day was no different. Four was sitting on the floor next to her bed, engrossed in typing on her phone. She was probably chatting with someone, probably Jeans, a classmate she interacts with quite frequently. Although I had little concern for her communication, what really mattered was why she didn't adequately defend me against the coach's pressure.

Twenty minutes passed, and the bathroom was already empty. Some tenth and eleventh graders were playing board games under the lamplight in the common area. Meanwhile, most 12th graders entertained themselves in their beds with phones or laptops. Watching Four, I waited for an apology that didn't come. Instead, she stood up, flashlight in hand, ready to head to the bathroom.

"You want to join me?"

"No."

I replied.

"Aren't you going to apologize? I heard everything you said to the coach. You are such a hypocrite!"

"Well, what should I have done? It is not false that you have not given your best in training or during the selection match. You're obsessed with the idea of being a starter!"

"Enough! I won't waste my time arguing with a heartless rich girl like you!"

Before she could reply, I stopped her with a wave of my hand, put on my headphones, and turned up the volume to tune out. Four heaved a deep sigh. She was well aware that I would not be receptive to anything else she had to say. She headed to the bathroom and left me fuming on the bed. I kept cycling through songs, dissatisfied with each one, as my agitation intensified.

To make matters worse, a fellow 12th grader started watching an action movie, amplifying the bedroom with gunshot-like sounds. My fury knew no limits, mixed with a feeling of desolation and fear. I longed to continue my studies at a university, to rise as a superstar, as I had always done. I refused to be relegated to the background.

And yet, in this maelstrom of emotions, I couldn't help but wonder. I wasn't the problem here. If Four had quit, I wouldn't be in this situation. If only Coach could acknowledge that I was truly hurt... But wait, should I really let her take the blame?

Reality dominated my consciousness. I consoled myself with the belief that everything would turn out well. Four had knowledge of a substantial part of her father's inheritance. She can easily advance through college without fees. Stowing my phone under my pillow, I took the flashlight out of the drawer, following Four's earlier suggestion. I embarked on my journey to the bathroom. Our bathroom housed several shower stalls, divided by curtains.



Four was likely in the fourth stall, a nod to the numerical meaning of her name. Her flashlight was close to her, shining light on her as she undressed. I turned off the light in my hand, advancing towards the figure of my equally tall friend. Is this the right course of action? Certainly, there was no need to worry. Her wound would heal eventually. Her importance paled in comparison to the potential consequences of my own marginalization.

Mustering up my courage, I grabbed Four's flashlight, turned it off, and set it aside to evade detection. Although shrouded in darkness, I knew where she was. I pushed with all my strength, making her stumble with a slight "ouch!" Her head must have hit the wall. There was no time to lose. I sat down, clenched her fists, and gave her a hard blow to the joint of one of her legs. She winced in pain and struggled to regain her balance, a difficult feat for someone who had just fallen into darkness.

I became obsessed with my goal of securing a spot in the starting lineup, relentlessly hitting her leg again and again, increasing the force with each successive blow, intensifying the damage. There was no one around to witness our fight. That annoying 12th grader was engrossed in her movie, her loud audio filling the room. I could claim the advantage. In the midst of the tumult, I made out sounds like "crack" and "thud" emanating from Four's leg. I couldn't fully understand or articulate what was happening. However, one thing was unequivocally clear: fortune had not sided with me.

A sudden burst of light illuminated the room at the wrong time. In front of me was Four, dressed in her T-shirt and shorts, sweat glistening on her skin, her eyes wide in disbelief as they fixated on me, the perpetrator. Damn! I was stunned too. Why did the lights have to come back on at this precise moment?

"Kie..." Her voice was full of pain, perhaps due to her injured leg or perhaps realizing that a friend like me could cause her harm. Although the fear of retaliation loomed, I felt no remorse. After all, a rich girl like her had no right to feel bitter. I quickly left the bathroom, my heart pounding relentlessly. The girl I left behind remained in shock and silence. I returned to my bed without arousing suspicion. Everyone was preoccupied with their own affairs. Finally, Four's voice calling for help reached my ears. As the action movie transitioned into a romantic scene, silence took over the

bedroom. Now, everyone could hear her screams for help, causing us to run to the bathroom, including me. I had to play my role convincingly.

If she decided to divulge this incident to anyone, she would not confess it. To my surprise, Four remained silent. Even when questioned by the hospital doctor, she refrained from revealing the cause of her injuries. The doctor did not ignore that she had been attacked. As I sat with my teammates outside the emergency room, enduring the wait in the middle of the night, I kept my mouth shut. The hospital only provided access to the emergency department at this time.

In the end, the result was Four's broken leg. A metal implant was required to support her leg bone for a minimum of a year; that was what the medical professionals had advised. Our coach visited her and found out that she would no longer be able to participate in the next match. Suspicion spread throughout our team as everyone speculated about who could have caused her injuries. The coach questioned each of us and his scrutiny focused especially on me, as if I were the main suspect. I managed to deftly navigate the interrogation.

Months later, Four underwent a complete transformation. Now sporting bangs that highlighted her beauty even more than before, her hair had grown longer. Dressed in the university uniform, she seemed different, perhaps because of my usual view of her in volleyball practice clothes.

Seeing her being picked on by the elders left a strong impression. The 'barkers' ordered the freshmen to perform fifty sit-ups. Despite her damaged leg, Four persevered and completed the grueling task. Our eyes met and she studied me, frowning in an effort to determine my identity. At the same time, a second-year photographer gathered all the quota athletes in a line to introduce them. A wave of nervousness washed over me knowing that my former best friend was on that same line. If she was sure of my presence, confrontation was inevitable.

As expected, Four lunged at me, grabbing my neck and unleashing her fury in a cascade of screams and tears. Her open palm hit my cheek repeatedly, like a relentless shock. Although my shame grew as I was exposed in front of everyone, I made a conscious decision to maintain my composure and

assume a distant demeanor. I offered a smile to my once close friend, drawing another slap before a boy intervened and took her away.

Surprisingly, social media generated unexpected public reaction. Confined to the dorm due to my quota, I lay on my bed, scanning the virtual discourse around us. The consensus described Four as a malicious figure, and 100% of respondents perceived her negatively. Curiously, a made-up narrative gained traction, claiming that Four was responsible for the loss of a match and her subsequent broken leg, fueling her animosity towards the entire team.

Some even claimed that she deliberately sabotaged us in that match, leading to widespread disappointment. Supposedly enraged at her more successful teammates who were allowed to pursue her athletic dreams, they lamented her fate as the recipient of a metal implant in her leg.

What? These rumors bordered on the absurd. The only undeniable fact was that I am the catalyst behind her broken leg, condemning her to a life as a metal-enhanced being for an extended period. Our team members were predominantly wealthy. Two of them were studying abroad, one returned to the countryside, and three attended different universities. I wasn't sure about the rest, but in simple terms, they had all disappeared from my sphere of influence, leaving me to my own devices.

Whoever falsified these tales portrayed Four in a clearly unfavorable light. Well... so be it. The more her reputation crumbled, the less trustworthy she would seem. If, at some point, she decided to reveal the truth, I would maintain the advantage. My university life prospered. As a sophomore, I earned deep respect from the incoming freshmen.

Considered the most outstanding player on the team, I practiced diligently through sleepless nights. Sometimes, inexplicably, tears welled up inside me. Good memories of Four, my former practice partner, emerged. Her smiles were etched in my memory. While she occasionally exhibited a mischievous streak, it paled in comparison to her current cold disposition.

Sleep escaped me without anti-anxiety medication. The doctor advised me to share my feelings instead of masking them with smiles. I was good at

smiling and pretending had become my strong suit. Furthermore, I was missing close friends. As my companions surrounded me, I did not consider them companions. Four had new friends, but I didn't. I only had her, and she persistently occupied my thoughts. My rewards included higher education, volleyball, and victories.

However, there was no punishment for my actions against Four. Annually, I claimed victory in sports competitions, wearing my best smile while clutching the trophy. At the same time, Four watched from the stands, her gaze directed downward, distant and frozen. We passed each other in silence. The camaraderie that once existed between us had dissipated. She had even changed her usernames on social networks; Kie was conspicuously absent.

Her Facebook account now carried the label "I'm No. 4." There was nothing left between us. Our connection may now be a negative point. Internally, the victories never gave me the happiness they should. A heaviness took hold of my heart and left me perpetually speechless. The trophies I placed on the bedroom shelves might impress my father, but under my pillow, a crimson notebook remained hidden.

We once watched a movie together in which the female protagonist used a crimson diary to repeatedly write down her wishes. Over time, she filled numerous notebooks until the day the male protagonist emerged from his vegetative state. In our 10th-grade minds, the narrative left a deep imprint. We believed that the crimson diary had powers to grant wishes. Four's current stance on this myth remained unknown to me.

However, I had covered countless pages with my longing.

**Wishing I could...revive the friendship with Four. Rekindle friendship with Four...**

# THE CAST

## CAST OF THE ADAPTED SERIES

### MAIN ROLE:



FOUR



**JATTAWA**



## SUPPORT ROLE

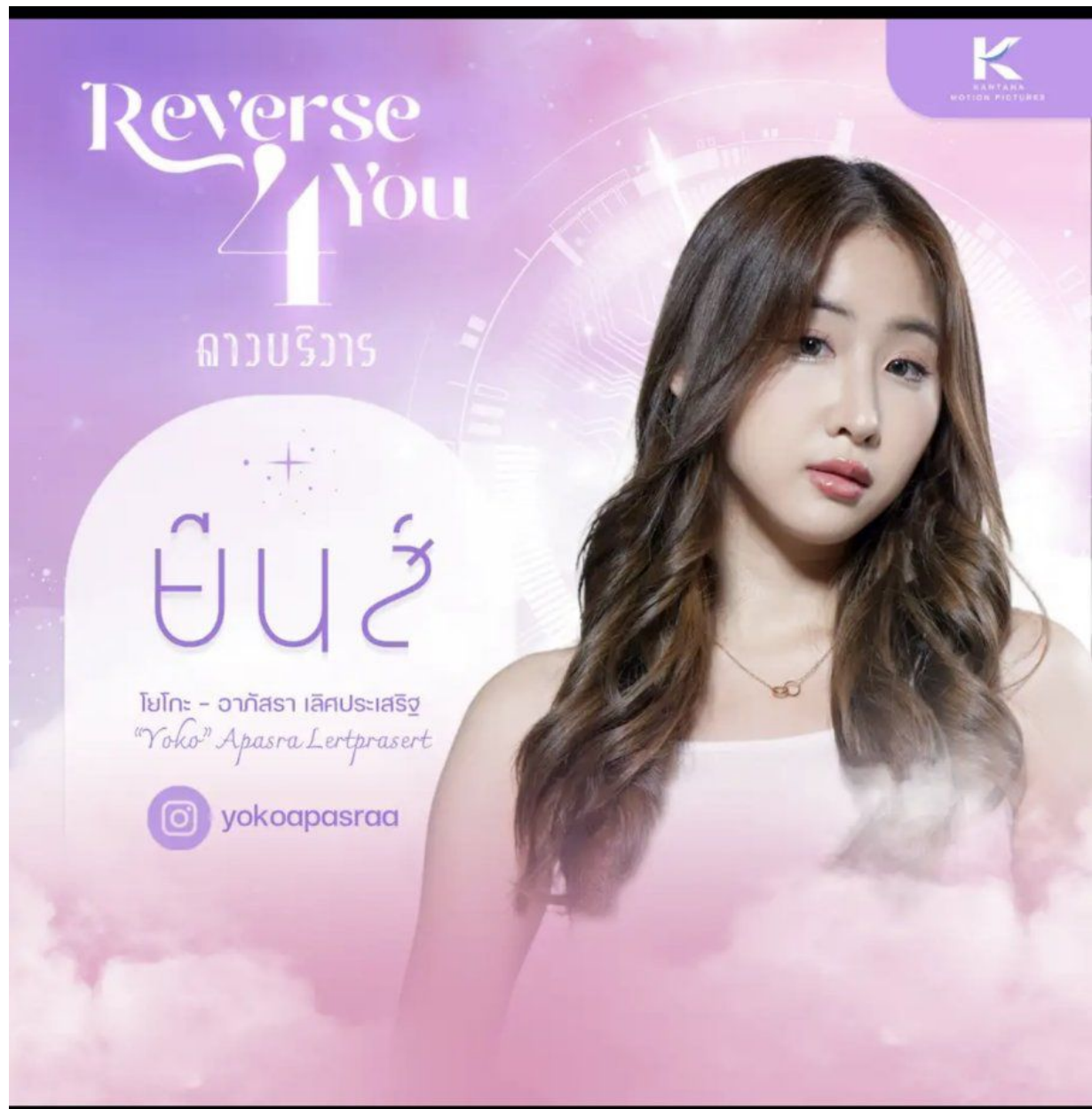


VIVI





**KIE**



**JEANS**

## Chapter XXVII : Bad Focus

**Kei was the one who shattered her leg, all to snatch the starting player position.**

The realization washes over me with the force of the recent past. My hand instinctively goes to my chest, attempting to still the turbulence within. Four catches this, her gaze sneaking towards me. She swears she never intended to divulge this secret to me. She admits she kept it from everyone, even the members of the Four Serpent.

Now, I alone bear the weight of her truth. I'm unsure whether to feel gratified for being entrusted with this knowledge or devastated that Kei, that accursed individual, could so casually rob my soulmate of her athletic future.

"It's long in the past," she utters calmly, her grip on my hand tightening as if the pain is tightening its grip on her heart. A moment later, she eases her hold slightly, as if endeavoring to release the pain. My thoughts whirl, stunned into a kind of stupor, until her voice rouses me from it.

"I've reclaimed my equilibrium now, so there's no necessity to pursue legal action against her."

"But—"

"Please, I beg you. I wish to carry this truth to my grave, but I don't want to deceive you like I have with others. Hence, I've chosen to confide in you."

So, she places her trust in me... even more than in her close friends.

"That Kei is a meaningless figure from the past."

"Little Wa, I beseech you. Please let it go along with the metal that was once in my leg."

Since her eyes offer glimpses into her heart, I can perceive, with startling clarity, that deep within she wishes to keep the incident buried. Not wanting to mar the pleasant atmosphere of our outing, I suppress the urge to voice my desire to exact revenge on that wretched Kei for Four's sake.

"Alright, I'll let it go for your sake."

"Thank you."

We continue our stroll. A game zone becomes visible not too far off. Ah, so this is what Four meant by a "*Game Arcade*." That must be the term she's more used to.

"Do you still want to befriend her?"

As we exchange coins, the question slips out involuntarily. Four doesn't seem perturbed in the least, responding with nonchalance.

"No, I don't."

That's all there is to it. I refrain from prying any further. Though Four has moved past it, Kei remains trapped in the cycle of guilt. She must dread the possibility of the truth coming to light someday.

This is likely why she clings to me. I clear my mind of this puzzle, redirecting my focus to the bustling game arcade, overcrowded with individuals of all ages. Inwardly, I exclaim "Holy Banana!" at the sight.

My dear Four exchanges 500 Baht for an array of coins. This sum could provide my little sister and me with several meals. The first area she guides me to is the realm of claw machines. Each attempt requires 10 Baht. She encourages me to try first. For a fleeting moment, I waver, though the desire to give it a shot secretly lingers.

After all, it's her money, and consideration is due. Nevertheless, I ultimately accept her 10 Baht coin and endeavor to claim a plush kitten from the grasp

of the mechanical claw. I had already successfully snatched it using this delicate claw, but now it's slipping! Damn it!

"No more."

"How can you give up so easily? This is just your first attempt?"

I only now realize that my cheeks have puffed up in frustration over failing to secure the plushie. Four chuckles, her eyes sparkling, as if she finds my reaction endearing. Four has always been like a caring older sister to me, and I find it hard to look away from her.

"Now, let's try again."

"Can you do it for me?"

"Huh?"

"I want you to grab it for me. I'd like to watch you."

Four seems momentarily puzzled, but upon seeing the determination in my eyes, she relents and inserts another coin. Her fingers manipulate the buttons and control the claw's grip, while mine are pressed against the glass in hopeful anticipation of her successfully accomplishing this challenging mission.

After a total expenditure of 70 Baht, we secure a medium-sized brown Kangaroo plushie, which she then hands over to me.

"It's yours."

"You don't like it?"

"No, baby."

The tenderness in her voice makes me blush. I accept the Kangaroo with a grateful nod, my nerves preventing me from saying more. The Game Arcade is an astounding novelty for someone who, like me, is accustomed to a quieter life.

I suddenly realize the sheer enjoyment of throwing a basketball through a hoop. The hoop sways from side to side when we score 10 points. Four and I engage in friendly competition, though I'm soundly defeated by her. Even in the car racing game, I keep careening into the racetrack walls while she crosses the finish line to complete her second lap.

As I begin to enjoy gaming, I suggest that we play together, driven by my intense desire for a tie. Four's grin widens, radiating happiness, and my reaction to this doesn't go unnoticed as I shyly hide my face.

"I'm the one who invited you, so don't worry."

"But a good date should involve splitting the bill."

"That depends on our agreement and the situation. The game has already started. If you don't concentrate, you might lose to me again."

"Oh." That's a valid point!

The screen displays a countdown, and my virtual car is poised to accelerate. I place my hands on the miniature steering wheel, realizing that Four is doing the same in the next seat. Her foot, clad in stylish Vans, hovers over the pedal, while it dawns on me that I should do the same. It appears I'm fated to lose to her right from the start.

It's almost time to pick Vi up at her school. Four and I step into the elevator, which struggles a bit to accommodate us, underscoring the need for our mutual assistance. I speculate that Vi will likely introduce these plushies to Oink-Oink as we walk toward the vibrant yellow Porsche.

Four opts to open the backseat door rather than the trunk, explaining that it's more convenient to store the dolls, snacks, other prizes, and shopping bags there. I heed her advice, playing my part like an obedient child.

I lean into the car, gently placing the load I've been carrying onto the seat, and then settle into the front seat next to the driver's seat. Four is already at the helm, and the blessed air conditioning is pumping out a refreshing chill.

"Do you remember where Vi's school is?"

"I do."

She replies, and in that moment, our first prize, the Kangaroo plushie, slips and falls to the car floor. We both catch sight of it through the front mirror, and in a synchrony that seems almost magical, we both reach for it at the same time, as if our thoughts are intertwined.

With her longer reach, Four is faster at securing the toy, but what truly captures my attention is the proximity between us. Our noses are almost touching, and an electric charge seems to hang in the air. She returns the playful Kangaroo to its original position before turning her gaze back to me.

For an instant, time feels suspended. My heartbeat drums like amplified bass notes. Her dark eyes hold me captive, and I can't look away. Her eyelids start to close, and her lips beckon to me, as if under the spell of some enchantment.

My fingers clench my pants, a manifestation of my inner restlessness. The urge to lean in and kiss her is overwhelming, to convey through my actions what words might struggle to express.

Today has been an exceptional day, and I wish for more. **I want my body language to express the depth of my feelings.**

But initiating such a move—would it come across as too forward?

As Four begins to regain her focus and starts turning back towards the driver's seat, I act on impulse. Gently, I use both hands to cup her jaw, leaning in to kiss her. The contact ignites a burst of sensation—warmth, tenderness, and the lingering sweetness of the ice cream cake we shared.

As she tilts her head in response, my right hand instinctively reaches out for support, only to land between her thighs, confined within her neatly fitted pants. My left hand holds the back of her neck, while my mischievous right hand inadvertently presses against the unusually warm car seat. She flinches slightly, but my resolve is unshaken. Responding to the dictates of my heart, I press my lips more firmly against hers.

"Ummm." Four lets out a groan from deep within her throat.

Her tongue doesn't move as actively as before, as if she's grappling with something unsaid. Quelling my own racing emotions, I withdraw my lips, a step back driven by the sudden awareness of what my right hand had unintentionally ventured into. The pressure of my palm must have caused her discomfort, a pang of guilt that now hangs heavy in my mind.

"I'm sorry."

I'm so grateful to her for not biting my tongue. She swallows hard, releasing a deep sigh. Her posture tenses, her thighs instinctively clamping together as if in self-defense. Her gaze pierces me, forgiving. The engine goes silent, and she arches a single eyebrow in inquiry.

"I won't believe it was accidental."

"It truly was! I thought it was just the seat cushion."

Unfortunately, the fabric she's wearing today isn't the usual heavy denim or slacks. My guilt weighs heavily on me. She lifts my chin, forcing our eyes to meet.

"Even though I was drunk, I remember fragments of that night."

"The night you did that to me."

I retort, attempting to shift the blame back onto her. But Four merely shakes her head with a slow, deliberate motion. Her gaze remains steadfast, and then she slightly wets her lips before speaking.



"Wa, you're bad girl! You were acting irresponsibly, burying yourself under the covers."

"But I told you, I didn't know any better."

"Defiant child! Always ready with a retort to the adults."

"But, that night..."

"Let it go." She interrupts, her tone firm, yet the next question she poses carries a softened edge.

**"And now? Have you done some research?"**

Alright, I surrender. I now completely grasp why Vi advised me to trim my nails. Though this isn't my first rodeo, it's my first time, in a sense. Don't let that confuse you. It might not be my virgin experience, but it certainly is my inaugural encounter of the vehicular kind!

Damn it!

Four has cut the engine, creating a brief pause. She's like a ravenous serpent, her hunger is apparent. With a nod, my unspoken signal that says, **"Yes, I got the hang of this,"** she wastes no time in resuming.

"My car windows are tinted."

"I see."

"Are you going to keep coming up with excuses? Will you offer me an apology for your cruelty?"

"Come on, you can't just dwell on that one thing!"

"Then remember, you initiated that kiss."

"But, isn't a bed a more suitable setting?"

"Will you come to my room? Or should I barge into yours and ask your sister to vacate?"

Oh, right! That's an unfeasible option. My sister and I are joined at the hip. We're inseparable, especially in the current situation, where I fear her stumbling upon something she shouldn't.

Vi is also an introvert, content to remain cloistered in our shared space. Introducing her to the realm of 18+ content is unnecessary. Ultimately, I'm defeated once again. There's no way I can argue my way out of this since I'm the one who initiated these advances. With a deep inhale, I collect myself in mere seconds, averting my gaze from her mesmerizing eyes. Then I vocalize my decision.

**"Okay. I'll give it a shot."**

"Right now?"

"Four!"

"Go ahead, little Wa." She stares at me with her mischievous smirk.

"How could you possibly be this perverted?"

She presumably cuts off the engine since the temperature inside the vehicle is rising. But after giving it some more thought, it may be that this trim girl removes her long-sleeved top, showing only her white bra. It has an open front. I'm reminded of that night by her cleavage.

**Jattawa, don't mess up! You must atone for what you did to her!**

Four reaches out and lowers my seat so we have more room by adjusting it. Her thin form crosses over to my side and takes up some room in my seat. I am successfully placed on top of her body by her. As we confront one another.

"My car windows are tinted."

She says again in a seductive tone.

"I recall that."

Her thin lips make a wicked grin, and her eyes briefly glitter. My chest is dug into by her lovely face. My new t-shirt is being rolled up by her both hands from behind as her warm left hand presses down.

Even though this underground parking lot blind spot is dark and lonely, I continue to scan the area anxiously until Four quickly removes my bra. Due to my timidity, I shyly whip my hand at Four to shoo her away, while I gaze at her. But when it's all said and done, none of our upper bodies are covered.

I want to give her lovely body a kiss. I proceed according to my emotions, beginning with the sweet-smelling neck on her lovely, slim body. I softly taste her chest with my tongue after lowering my lips to it. Her hand reaches inside my pants and softly presses on a sensitive area of mine with a pleasant touch.

**Her look is the villain, and her fingers are the bad guys. They silently say: *"Do it for me."***

I pull my lips away from her full breast, nervously reaching inside her pricey yellow trousers. I've never done something like this before. I lie on her body, unable to stare into her heavenly eyes, so I divert my attention to the backseat. I reach out my fingers and touch her sensitive spot. In her body, both of them are constricted just like mine.

When I attempt to flip my fingers, the girl beneath me groans slightly. Her brow furrows as if she can't take it any longer. I share her sentiments. I want to twist and spin because I'm so full on the inside. My wet fingers want to drag her along with me. Her heated breath and those shifting packs make me feel like I'm on fire. A simple touch of my nipples on her skin causes me to shiver with delight.

"Four... Ahh.."

I can't continue because a deep kiss from her sealed my lips shut. She's teaching me that our prior kisses were only childish. She closes her eyes

and moves her fingers in and out in different patterns, rapid and slow.

Her invading tongue enters my mouth, raising my entire body to unconsciously withstand her overwhelming emotions. My cherry tips crush on her... Oh my gosh... I try to slow things down by moving my hips, but she refuses. Four grabs my waist from behind with her free hand and pulls me in closer.

"Ooohh."

When her body responds so eagerly I can't help but exclaim, "It's really tight and dense."

"Go on." She begs in a husky, sexy voice.

This is irresistible. I comply, inserting two of my fingers with neatly trimmed and filed nails inside her body as my thumb playfully rubs her skin above her pubic bone. This is my way of repaying her for what I did to her that night. Anyway, her delicate spot is so soft and tender. When she raises her face up and gulps down, her barely visible Adam's apple slides up and down with her, that sight truly turns me on.

I'm driving myself insane by subconsciously leaning in and biting her to make a kiss mark. However, because I'm about to experience climax, I put too much pressure on my teeth, startling her. The part of me becomes tense, but Four continues teasing me by slowing her fingers. Her lovely yet cunning eyes narrow by half.

**"No, don't be mad. All I want is for us to move at the same pace."**

I feel like I'm being tricked by her. I pout against Four, tightening my lips. I accelerate my fingers, shifting from stroking to crushing. I crouch down and nibble on her strawberry-flavored nipples. I let her groan until I'm pleased, then transition to licking them to relieve her discomfort. "Don't challenge me! If I can control time, I can control your emotions as well."

"If you... help me. I'll help you... as well." I bargain with my shaking voice.

"Do you want to pick up Vi late?" She looks at me, attempting to appear superior.

"You aroused me." I attempt to keep talking despite my shaky voice.

"You must be punctual."

"See? You're so savage."

She lovingly brushes my cheek. Her remarks make me feel like a little fox. For 2 seconds, I wrinkle my brows in displeasure. When her fingers flip within me, I can't help but let out a loud, wailing shriek.

We are concentrating on our current task, both of us entwined within one another. Our warm legs weave together like a web. The air becomes increasingly heated, and perspiration pours from our pores. She's unrealistically perfect.

A sigh escapes her lovely lips. Her physique is flawless, as is her temperature. Everything about her makes me want to run away from her. When she finally hits the peak after all this time, I let it flow, undoubtedly getting wet. It's incredible that we got there at the same moment, and I'm going to pass out after wiggling my hips for so long.

I take a long breath, exhausted from panting, but my dominant hand is still toying with Four's body. I enjoy it when she squeezes me. I can sense what's going on inside her. I berate myself for not providing her with this fantastic experience that night. Without warning, she takes out her two fingers, taking my voice away with the short climax. After the little contraction, everything within me trembles. I secretly want her to remain for a long time. She gives me a short kiss on the cheek.

"Let's go pick up the baby chick."

"Can you tell me what time it is?"

I turn my back on the control panel, making it impossible for me to see the time.

"Almost 4 pm." Her voice isn't trembling at all, which is presumably due to the fact that she works out often. I close my eyes, trying to suppress the fire in my chest.

*'Jattawa, you need to go get your little sister! You can't request another round.'*

I torment my tough senior even more by carefully slipping my fingers within her body. When she contracts her lips, about to be enraptured by it, I swiftly pull them out and giggle at my successful trick.

Four looks at me with a bit of anger in her eyes. Of course, I'm only an innocently savage young lady who has twice messed with her heart.

Nonetheless, she isn't so enraged that she feels compelled to punish me. Her response is to embrace me tightly and kiss me passionately. I'm addicted to it, allowing her tongue to invade inside me conveniently. But then she releases her lips in the most devious manner. She makes me crave her...

Should I continue teasing her then?

Due to the traffic jam, we're picking up Vi later than expected. While stuck on the road, I call her to apologize. She brushes it off and reassures me with her cheerful voice. She must have seen everything in her visions; that's embarrassing! Nevertheless, I'm grateful that she advised me to trim my nails. After ending the call, I glance down at my nails during the standstill drive. Four sneaks a look at me and asks:

"Are you okay?"

"Do you want to do it again?" I turn to her, gazing at the girl who's no longer meticulously dressed. Her hair is tousled as well.

"I'm not that easily aroused."

"But you frequently dream about us making out, don't you? In the past, we would just exchange glances and meet eyes. You should confess that you're easily turned on, you pervert!"

"You're quite outspoken. Becoming a lawyer suits you."

What's with that demeanor? She said that and then turned away? And that grin too! Goodness, she's conceding to me. She should acknowledge that I think about explicit things more or less all the time. Does she enjoy it so much? I start to ponder.

After ruminating ceaselessly, I decide to voice my thoughts. "So what comes next?"

"What?"

"Our relationship... What happens after this date?"

She remains quiet. I watch every rise and fall of her breath, anticipating her response. "What do you think?"

"Please don't do this. I detest rhetorical questions."

"Don't you wonder why I'm leaving the decision to you? Progressing or concluding, our relationship lies in your hands."

Despite the casual tone, I can't believe her succinct question. "*What do you think?*" carries such profound weight. By letting me decide, she's hinting that today's date is a mere trial.

I clench my lips, resisting the urge to shout that **I've wholeheartedly given her my all from the very start**. Fortunately, my adeptness at masking my emotions lets me retain my composure instead of bursting out in elation.

"I like it."

I pause momentarily. "I like you... and our date."

This is embarrassing.

**"And if you kiss me once more, we can officially consider ourselves a couple."**

As if choreographed, we both turn to each other. Her deep eyes can't conceal her delight. Four seldom smiles, and a big grin is a rare sight on her countenance. Yet there it is, a broad smile on her lovely face. Every feature broadcasts her excitement with my answer. The car ahead of us accelerates as the traffic light turns green.

**Swiftly, she cups the back of my neck, draws near, and gives me a quick, fleeting kiss** before shifting gears and driving off.

Who would've thought she'd kiss me again right away? It was supposed to happen tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or even next week...

Not merely moments after I mentioned it like she did...

**This means she's officially my girlfriend...!**

Four, you make me blush...



## Chapter XXVIII : Because I only have her

We just arrived home, but Vi is bustling around, tidying up the dolls and trying on the new clothes in front of the mirror. She's eager to see how she looks in them. She really loves her new clothes, probably because they're way beyond what we could normally afford. She puts one on over her school uniform and hops around like an excited bunny, her eyes sparkling.

"This is amazing! She's like a sugar mommy."

That's undeniably true. Four is wealthy and spends money like she's on a mission to use it all up.

"Now, spill the beans. What happened after your intimate encounter?"

My grin fades, and I can't resist giving her a light knock on the head for her big mouth. Vi pouts, explaining that the visions just popped into her head, and she couldn't control them.

"Don't play the role of a dinosaur parent. Kids can distinguish right from wrong. Love and intimacy are intertwined and shouldn't be reserved until marriage or until you're in your 30s."

I sternly narrow my eyes at my little sister, while she innocently gazes into my eyes with deep curiosity. Eventually, I relent, knowing that we are exceptionally close. It's time to officially share my relationship status with Four. I can't give her all the intricate details, so I briefly summarize that Four and I have started dating. Vi's reaction to the words **"go out"** is explosive.

She dashes onto the sofa and excitedly screams into a pillow. I furrow my brow, observing her reaction. It should be me who's acting this way, not her.

"First love. One love. Forever love. How romantic!"

After her outburst, Vi places the pillow on her lap and enthusiastically gives me a double thumbs up. Her face beams with delight, making me want to playfully pinch her cheeks. I roll my eyes.

"What did you see?"

Her eyes form into two crescent moons as she smiles.

"You got married and officially registered your marriage."

"In our country?"

I find the situation ironic, especially given the current period. If we were talking about the next 1-2 decades, maybe that would be a possibility.

"At this point, the most feasible option might be the Life Partnership Act, but it still differs from the Thai Family Code, which only recognizes marriages between men and women. Not only are the labels distinct, but the legal rights they provide are also at varying levels."

"It's confusing... I don't fully grasp it. If the law says you can register, then you can."

I'm not in the mood for a full legal explanation, but as a future lawyer, I have to practice my communication skills. I sit next to her and attempt to break down the complex concepts into simpler terms.

"Listen. Section 1448 only validates marriages between a man and a woman, and only after their marriage is registered do they gain the legal status of a married couple—husband and wife."

"Got it."

"But the Life Partnership Act is an entirely different matter. To begin with, under the family code, marriage can be entered into when a man and woman have completed their seventeenth year, whereas the Life Partnership Act only permits individuals who have turned twenty to enter into same-sex marriages. Can you see the distinction?"

Vi's expression becomes less engaged. She slowly nods as I continue my simplified lecture. "Furthermore, as legal life partners, we can't adopt children or access social welfare benefits. We're also ineligible for tax benefits, as the act doesn't encompass that. Consequently, even with the Life Partnership Act, there's still a lack of fairness for the LGBT+ community."

"That's really harsh."

"Now, do you grasp the differences?"

"I don't really want to understand them. It just seems so unjust."

And she's absolutely right. I don't intend to be overly dramatic, but the reality is that true equality is still a distant goal. Many narrow-minded individuals question the significance of legal marriage when love is the primary factor. I've come across some comments on social media that I found utterly absurd.

The concept of life partnership has evolved over generations in legal terms, gradually gaining importance in matters of law, healthcare, and even social welfare.

But what happens when these couples are faced with situations where their life partner needs to be admitted to the hospital, and yet they're reduced to the label of "**friend**"? It's ironic, isn't it?

I assure Vi that sooner or later, new laws will be established to provide fairness. I give her head a comforting pat and suggest that she changes or tries on the new clothes without her school uniform underneath.

As for myself... I need to head to Aunt Tui's place for work. So what about my girlfriend? I still need to earn my own living.

"Can't you just stay and give me all the juicy details of your romantic date?"

"Don't be childish. We're still making 120 baht from my work. Money is always a priority." I respond to the adorable girl.

Upon hearing this, she turns away with a playful pout. I chuckle, thinking about the term Four uses to affectionately describe her "**baby chick.**" It suits her perfectly.

I change into my casual attire, carefully fold the clothes that Four bought for me, and place them in the laundry basket. I certainly don't want my new fancy clothes to get dirty. When I step out of the room, I find Vi trying on the dress I picked out for her. I have a keen eye, and the dress compliments her beautifully.

"Make sure to prepare dinner, alright? I'll be back around eight, and I'll bring some meat soups as usual."

I leave her with these instructions, adding a playful hint to make her wait eagerly for my return.

"Oh! Four came up with a nickname for you too."

"Really? What did she call me?"

"I won't spill the beans just yet. I'll share it once I've had something delicious."

"You're so mean!"

I chuckle like a mischievous character, swiftly exiting the room and leaving her in a state of curiosity.

Descending the stairs, I maintain a cheerful stride, feeling as if I'm strolling on the keys of a piano. I'm even willing to forgive the bird that left its mark on my bike's rear mirror. Tonight's evening is remarkably bright, and the cool air is invigorating.

I'm officially dating Four. As I gaze at her yellow bumblebee Porsche, memories of our intimate moments and the warmth of her flawless skin come flooding back. Oh, blast it! My thoughts are starting to run wild again! Just as I start the engine, a chat notification chimes. I pick up my phone and find a series of LINE messages from the girl I've been missing so dearly.

[Four: I think I want a certain ten-digit number.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: What do you mean?]

[Four: I mean your number.]

She's not toying with me or trying to be coy. She's being straightforward, not allowing me much time to savor this newfound happiness. I read her messages three or four times, soaking in every word, before typing my phone number in response.

[Four: I'll give you a call. Make sure to save my number, alright?]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Alright. *(Sent with a heart sticker.)* ]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: I'm off to work. I'll bring back some meat soups for us.]

I avoid getting carried away by the moment, quickly locking the phone screen and slipping it into my pants pocket.

My evening becomes a hundred times brighter. I assist Aunt Tui in setting up the tables and arranging the chairs. Something seems off about her demeanor today; there's an unusual coldness in her expression. She calls me over for a conversation before any customers arrive.

"I appreciate you, Wa. You're a hardworking young woman, raising your little sister all on your own. My son speaks highly of you."

"Thank you, but I sense there's more you want to say..."

Her downcast appearance hints at underlying concerns. Aunt Tui lets out a sigh. **"I've settled your debt. I'm referring to the 100,000 baht."**

"Huh?" My voice involuntarily escalates, verging on a scream. Confusion knits my brows as I struggle to grasp her meaning.

"You borrowed money from your uncle, didn't you? He approached me, expressing his frustration over your refusal to repay him. I felt sympathetic towards you, so I paid off the debt in advance. Your uncle seems like a decent man; he didn't mention any interest."

**Hold on!**

"Ma'am, you've misunderstood. I never borrowed that amount from him."

Frustration simmers within me, ready to boil over. My impulse is to dial his number immediately and unleash a torrent of scolding, citing legal regulations as I see fit. However, all I can do for now is clench my teeth and speak the truth.

"Please retrieve the money from my uncle."

"What do you mean?"

"Did you borrow money from him a while ago and forget about it? He might just be seeking repayment."

"No, the reason my sister and I are living in an apartment right now is because our uncle sold our house, despite it being rightfully mine. He only gave us a paltry sum of 300,000 baht and left us to cope on our own. I let it go because he used to provide monthly support. But this time, it's gone too far. He attempted to lend me 100,000 baht for his son. I declined, but rather than accepting my refusal, he deceived you into giving him the money."

I lower my voice, struggling to contain my surging anger.

"You should never have given him the money. Let's confront him together and reclaim it. We must file a complaint with the police because I won't let this slide easily."

Aunt Tui appears dumbfounded by the truth, distress slowly creeping onto her face. Yes, it's my uncle's fault for dragging her into our issue. This might be his wife's scheme, or perhaps they planned it together.

"Darling, here's what we'll do. I think you should have a discussion with your uncle. After all, you're family. You're still young, so don't let your anger get the best of you. Just let me know once you've spoken with him. There's no need to hurry and repay me. I'm patient. It's better than damaging the bond between you and him."

"But I..."

"Honey, just talk to him first. Alright? He's your senior relative."

The outcome of this unfortunate incident is a further decline in my financial situation. I take advantage of a lull in serving dishes to head to a nearby public restroom and make a call with my heart ablaze. He doesn't answer, which only fuels my frustration.

I open the LINE chat to inform my little sister that I'll be coming home late today due to a conversation I need to have with our uncle. I assure her that I'll explain everything when I return. She reads the message but doesn't respond. I wait for a while, and then her Facebook feed displays an odd post:

[Vivi Jaravi: Thanks to my body for breathing w/ me.]

What's with the "w/"? I wonder when my little sister started using the spelling of teenagers' chat language. She used to complain about how her classmates annoyed her with their informal spellings. But who knows, maybe she's busy or getting into a Thai drama series.

Regardless of the reason, she's seen the message, so I need to calm down and keep working until my shift ends. I bought some meat soup, even though our kind Aunt Tui offered to give them for free.

"Don't forget to approach him with kindness," the middle-aged woman reminded me once more before I even started the engine. Instead of reassuring her, I offer a tight smile.

Then, I set off to see my inconsiderate uncle. His house is located in a middle-income townhouse community. He's been paying monthly installments for years. Despite working hard, he's managed to accumulate more debts. His wife falls for false online advertisements, leading her to work only 2-3 hours a day from home. Even though she doesn't make any money, she remains stubborn.

I arrive after sunset, and the darkness has settled in. I ring the bell in front of the one-story house with a steel gate. I wait for a moment before a woman in loose, comfortable sleepwear emerges. It's my uncle's wife, who immediately puts on a disgruntled expression upon seeing me.

"Why are you here?" her unwelcoming voice hits me as she stands by the closed door, not even bothering to open it for me.

"I'm here to discuss the falsehoods you shared with Aunt Tui."

*Calm down, Jattawa. You need to manage your emotions better than the woman standing before you.*

"What falsehoods?" she continues to lie with a straight face. Such a deceitful woman. "You borrowed 300,000 baht from us. The bank transaction is proof of that. We're only asking for 100,000 baht back, so you should be grateful."

Oh my goodness! My eyes widen. How can this woman, who is fully aware of the truth, so effortlessly spew such venomous lies? I clench my fists, glaring at her in a surge of anger. I'm on the verge of defeat. There's no concrete evidence that my father left that house as an inheritance for me. He's not here, not protecting my sister and me from this harsh world.



They could easily claim that the money they transferred to us was a mere loan. I could attempt to make it appear as if they borrowed money from me, but without any contract between us...

Right, no contract. How can I shift the balance and become the victor of this twisted game? Maybe I should confront this immoral, worthless aunt, drag her to the police station, and accuse her of borrowing money from me and not repaying it.

That way, at least there would be a record, potential evidence. If she signs it, I could potentially use the document to sue her in court and retrieve the money for Aunt Tui. A written statement carries some weight, after all.

What am I reconsidering? Is resorting to violence against this infuriating woman the solution to this problem? Is that... my way of resolving things? By giving a false statement? I shake off that impractical notion. I ease the aggression in my gaze. With her hand on her hip, my uncle's wife gazes at me as if she's utterly bored with my presence. Fine, if she wants it this way, let's sever this family tie right here, right now.

"I'll wait until Uncle comes back. He must be on his way."

"Ha... Do whatever you want! Just wait outside. Don't even think about stepping in."

"Let me remind you that we're no longer a family. As for the money, I'll pretend that you initially gave us only 200,000 baht. And please grasp that our bond is breaking not solely because of financial matters, but due to your parasitic behavior that seeks to exploit me and my sister."

I take a deep breath, trying to quell the overwhelming frustration that has surged within me.

"Keep in mind that you won't be able to seek my help, no matter the circumstances. If I become a lawyer one day, and you find yourself in need, rest assured, I'll help you lose. If I become a public prosecutor, and you stand as a defendant, I'll drive you into a corner. Remember this. The world may seem vast, but it's smaller than you think. What I'm telling you is a

promise I intend to fulfill, for you, my uncle, and your son. I'm waiting for Uncle to arrive just so I can deliver this message to him in person."

She laughs as if my earnest words are utter nonsense. With an obnoxious high-pitched voice, she retorts, "**Whatever!**" and rudely retreats into her house. I remain perched on my bike.

At this dusk hour, mosquitoes begin to swarm and buzz around my arms and legs. My sole aim is to speak to him once more. I imagine he'll pale when he hears what I have to say. And I'm absolutely correct. He's rendered speechless upon returning home and finding me confronting him. Yet, he's shrewd enough not to apologize or admit to deceiving Aunt Tui. Fear of potential voice recordings likely fuels his silence.

They used to be kind, but those days are now firmly in the past. But I no longer care, even though the sum of money could have covered our tuition for years.

Never mind. My thoughts scatter as I ride my motorbike back home. Where is my heart now? Likely with Four. I miss her once more. My heart softens for her. She transforms my bleak days into moments I yearn for. Knowing that she's part of my future is one of the things that keeps me looking ahead. When it involves her, only her, I can smile even in the face of life's hardships, including these provoking red traffic lights.

My affection for her has grown so immense that it can no longer be concealed. Filled with joy, I stop by a tofu drink shop to buy soy milk enriched with a generous amount of soybeans, one of Vi's favorite treats.

Humming along to a popular tune, I park my bike in front of our apartment. Yet today, there's no sign of Vi waiting for me on the balcony. That's weird. I swing the key in my hand and ascend the stairs. My brows furrow as I realize the door isn't locked.

"Vi, I told you to never forget to lock the door."

Despite her absence, I step into the room and reprimand her. I leave the bags of food in the living room and begin searching for her. She's not in the

bedroom or the bathroom. Perhaps she's in the kitchen, engrossed in cooking, and thus couldn't wait outside.

"Hey! I've got something crazy to tell you."

I hasten towards her favorite spot. But before I can call her name again, my voice falters, and my eyes widen abruptly. I instinctively cover my mouth with my hand, stifling a scream or even the shattering of my heart. Her petite body lies upon the floor.

**A medium-sized knife is lodged in her abdomen. One of her hands rests next to the knife's handle, while the other lies by her side. Her thick blood has drenched the new dress I had chosen for her, a garment she must have adored. Her eyes remain open, but that doesn't signify life.**

I can't believe it... I can't believe what I'm witnessing. I swiftly slap my cheeks in an attempt to rouse myself from this nightmare, then drop to my knees and search for her pulse.

No! Impossible. Her heart isn't beating. What the heck is going on? That vision... Tears stream down my face, without the sound of sobs.

I part my lips, attempting to call out her name. Gently, I cradle her head in my lap. She appears so feeble, and I'm cut off from my senses. My ears are filled with a piercing ringing. All I can perceive is her vacant stare. My breathing grows ragged, mirroring the struggle of the girl resting on my lap.

**Compose yourself. I must regain my composure. Closing my eyes. I attempt to turn back time by a mere ten minutes.**

This time, I push my bike harder, racing against the clock to reach home sooner. I sprint up the stairs, faltering momentarily before regaining my balance and rushing to the scene that I had witnessed earlier. A scene where my younger sister lay engulfed in her own blood. But there's nothing I can do. Hours must have passed since her passing. My brief time reversal cannot alter this outcome.

**"Vi."**

My hoarse voice calls out to her over and over again. I've spiraled into madness. What is happening...? My surroundings blur into insignificance until Four's voice reaches me.

Slowly, I comprehend that I must take her to the hospital, hoping against hope for some miraculous reversal instead of just clinging to her lifeless form and shedding tears. Even though the truth is stark-she is beyond life's grasp. No hospital visit will change this fact. Even the paramedics arriving in the ambulance can discern that she has been lifeless for hours.

But no, this cannot be. I wipe away my tears. This must be yet another nightmare. A ghastly, dreadful nightmare. In the hospital, I listen to the doctor's words, but comprehension eludes me.

My ears resonate with an underwater-like ringing. See? This is merely a dream. When he concludes, I return to the waiting area and fix my gaze on the floor.

My feet are bare as I had hurriedly rushed out without my shoes. The floor beneath is icy, thanks to the air conditioning. This is the sole sensation that registers with me at the moment.

I will awaken shortly. I repeat this mantra to myself. Everything will be fine. I will awaken soon. Then,. Vi and I can strategize on how to avert this situation. I will awaken..

It's akin to the dream where Four pressed a kiss to my forehead, the dream where she was struck by a knife...

In the end, they are merely dreams because we found resolutions. I won't be going to work in the evening. I will confide in Vi that Four playfully referred to her as 'Baby Chick'. Vi will be a bubbly baby chick, her forehead frequently tapped by her elder sister.

**Together, we will ensure this nightmare doesn't transpire in reality.**

"Wah..." A soft yet resonant voice utters my name. I recognize its source.

It serves as a reminder that a mere few hours ago, we made the commitment to date each other. She assisted me in summoning the ambulance when I was overwhelmed and unable to articulate anything. She trailed behind us in her car. She too was present during the doctor's explanations. However, my world remains sealed off as my sister's eyes reflect nothingness.

"Please stay by my side."

"Don't think over anything. I'm right here, right beside you."

"Yeah..." My response carries a hollow weight.

"Dawn is nearly upon us. I'll soon awaken."

I let my head rest against her warm shoulder, leaning upon the girl who has become a part of this tragedy. I'm aware of how Vi would beam when I emerge from this slumber and change her destiny knowing that her demise in her cherished kitchen must have taken her by surprise.

I even know that Vi will sip on the soymilk as she listens to me. The table will be set with meat soups, piping hot steamed rice, and a few inexpensive side dishes she prepared while I was at work. We'll share dinner at our modest table, engaging in laughter, arguments, and conversations about various topics as we always do.

But.. despite all this knowing, my heart refuses to be swayed by rationality any longer. The surge of emotions overwhelms me, and I cry out, surrendering to the intensity of my feelings I bury my face in Four's chest and cling to her, akin to a child seeking comfort, just as I did when I hugged my dad after my classmate ruined my shoes. The anguish from that day couldn't be more distinct from what I'm experiencing now.

I'm cognizant that my little sister's time in this world will be cut short. I tried to believe that my determination could shield her. Why was she subjected to such a violent act?

My mind remains incapable of unraveling that puzzle. Vi has never shown any signs of suicidal tendencies. She wanted to be with me. We wanted to

be together. I yearn to cry out in case she can hear me.

*Why did you leave me, Vi? This isn't a joke! Return for dinner tonight, you airhead sister!*

*I've prepared soymilk with an abundance of soybeans just for you. Can you hear my voice? How can I possibly live in this world? Without you, I don't want to breathe. No. I can't accept this, Vi!*

Then, an idea arises in my head.

**I will restart this. I will reset everything to the very beginning.**

I can fix this, and I know I can.

# Chapter XXIX : The Point of No Return

Closing my eyes, Vi still lives in my dreams. Sometimes I can hear her voice when I'm awake. Every time I realize I'm still breathing on this Earth, my heart races, a constant reminder that my only family has left me and won't return. Vi...

The pain of only being able to embrace her in my memories is unbearable. I expressed my disbelief to the police about their assumption that Vi committed suicide. They seem to have reached their conclusion too hastily.

The investigating officer appears irritated by my persistence, likely due to my repeated statements.

"My sister never showed any signs of wanting to take her own life."

I clasp my ten fingers together on my lap, facing the male officer who appears to be around the same age as my uncle. My voice emerges huskily from my parched throat. I haven't had water in far too long.

My body feels weightless.

"Clearly, this wasn't an accident."

The middle-aged investigating officer lets out a deep sigh, his tone carrying a sense of weariness.

"Have you seen your sister's Facebook post?"

"Yes, I have."

I keep my gaze lowered, avoiding making eye contact with anyone except for the girl who accompanied me to the police station, Four.

"That could potentially indicate that your sister was dealing with depression and had suicidal tendencies."

He states matter-of-factly.

**"No, that can't be true!"**

The words rush out of me before I can even process them. My head is still bowed, my brows furrowed in disbelief. My eyes feel hot and heavy with unshed tears. It takes a moment for me to quell the pain in my chest, lower the intensity in my voice, and regulate my breathing.

**"My sister wasn't depressed."**

"But her post..."

"She didn't write that post herself! She didn't use that style of spelling! She never employed text abbreviations like 'w/' or other informal terms."

It's my fault for not realizing this sooner.

"The fingerprints found on her phone, the knife handle, and even the doorknob all belong to your sister."

"What about the surveillance cameras?"

He falls silent, his response evasive. That stillness is too lengthy until I look up and meet his gaze. There's a glimmer of sympathy in his eyes that wasn't there before.

"The apartment has two surveillance cameras, one above each set of stairs in different wings. Only one of them is functional. Our investigation shows that two individuals, who are not tenants, entered the apartment in the evening. We have pictures of these suspects for you to review."



A slim laptop is turned towards me. The screen displays a blurry screenshot taken from the surveillance footage. I can make out the figure of a long-haired young man in a university uniform.

"I know him. He's a friend of one of the tenants."

I used to see him frequently, though he hadn't been visiting his friend as often lately. It's unfortunate for him to appear tonight. Another officer presents me with a different screenshot. This time, it's an adult male dressed casually in a polo shirt and trousers. I narrow my eyes as I scrutinize the image more closely. Suppressing my vulnerability, I slowly shake my head.

"I've never seen him."

"Okay."

I'm eager to share more information with them. I mention that the door was unlocked and emphasize that if Vi had indeed committed suicide, her right hand wouldn't have been positioned on the knife as if someone had manipulated her posture. I stand resolutely, unwavering in my position.

Nevertheless, the investigation officers decide to question Four as well, given that she went to retrieve something from her car around 7 PM. I strongly believe the incident must have occurred before that, possibly when someone used Vi's phone to post that message.

With my gaze cast downward towards my toes, I wait anxiously for my girlfriend to emerge from the interrogation room. Each minute creeps by and the cold seems to have seeped into my feet and toes.

Our room is now cordoned off as a restricted area for crime scene investigation. Four has kindly invited me to stay with her for the time being. She bought some clothes for me and prepared meals despite my lack of appetite.

Since that day, I haven't attended university. Khun called me out of concern, and I broke down in tears while recounting everything to him on Four's

balcony. He held me in a comforting embrace from behind, as if he feared I might leap off in a bid to join Vi.

He's so nice to me, very nice. I can't help but feel guilty for constantly leaning on him and breaking down in his presence. I can't allow myself to die just yet. I have to remain alive until I uncover the truth about what happened to Vi.

I'll do whatever it takes to unearth the reality of the situation and throw that bastard in jail. I must find **'Dad'** to alter our fate. If Vi's assertion is correct, he's the only one with the ability to rewind time even further than I can.

Yes, I'll search for him, even if it means extending a substantial sum of money or struggling to identify him amidst the passage of time that has rendered him older than his ID card photograph.

Upon learning about Vi, my uncle's wife used his phone to deliver a sarcastic form of condolence, remarking,

"See? Those who enjoy cursing others eventually find themselves ensnared by misfortune. Everything they wish upon others returns to them."

Curse? Did I truly curse them? I merely drew a boundary they should not cross in the days to come. I just opted not to be their aid, and that's considered a curse? It's ludicrous...

At last, the interrogation concludes and Four exits the room. I attempt to dispel the complex thoughts swirling in my mind, lifting my head to meet Four's gaze. She's my sole anchor in this existence. Yet, her demeanor is graver than when she entered the room. And then, her voice, so devoid of emotion, dispels any doubts I may harbor.

"Did they show you pictures of the suspects?" She asked me.

"Yes. The first one is an acquaintance of a tenant, but the second... I don't recognize him."

"I do."

"Did he visit you?"

"No." She murmurs, struggling to contain something by clenching her fists and avoiding my eyes. **"He's the man who caused a car crash that claimed my father's life five years ago."**

Those words send shivers down my spine. The unknown figure captured on the surveillance footage is intricately connected to her past. My mind feels as if it's being squeezed momentarily. My mouth hangs open, a whirlwind of emotions overtaking me.

Four closes her eyes, as if striving to quell the turmoil within her chest. She turns to me, gathering her voice with effort. "I need to share something with you. But promise me that you'll listen calmly. Agreed?"

"Yes."

Four appears more anxious than I've ever seen her, evident in her heavy breathing and the gravity of her tone. Drawing my legs closer, I hug them and relax my shoulders. My gaze is fixed on my last resort within this universe. Gripping the hem of her shirt, I steady my fluttering form, poised to absorb her words attentively.

"My presumption might be incorrect, but the real target of this murder is probably..."

"Me."

**Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!**

My heart races, a rapid rhythm pounding in my chest. I clench my teeth and clutch her shirt even tighter.

"We live next door. It's possible that the assailant was instructed to eliminate me, but due to a grievous error, he entered the wrong room... yours."

"An error... How could that happen?"

"Why not? Think about it. Imagine if the killer accessed the incorrect wing of the apartment. Miscommunication could easily ensue; perhaps he was instructed to enter the correct wing, ascend to the third floor, and locate the fourth room on the left-hand side."

Normally, tenants retrieve their packages from the central office, with only the landlady and residents knowing their room numbers. Could this discrepancy have confused him?

More important... a mastermind lurks behind the scenes, orchestrating the puppet that committed this act. I try to analyze the situation based on the provided information.

"I suspect the mastermind instructed him to access the apartment's right wing, but the assailant misunderstood, interpreting it as the staircase on his right."

I interject, using my hand to press against my throbbing chest.

"Why are you so certain that you're the intended target? Is it because he's the one responsible for your father's death?"

"Yes, he was behind the wheel during the accident. Despite being sober, he drove recklessly. He claimed his vision blurred at night, leading to the crash. My grandfather managed to send him to prison... and my stepmother refused to negotiate settlements. In any case, he seems to have been out of jail for some time now."

"So, you believe he seeks revenge?"

"No." Her curt response sends shivers down my spine, raising goosebumps.

"Then why would he do this?"

"It's my stepmother."

Four's teeth clench.

"I should've realized sooner that my father's car crash was **no accident**. And now, it's happening again. She's the one orchestrating all of this, which is why everything is proceeding so smoothly. No fingerprints, no traces. Plus, **there's solid evidence portraying Baby Chick as depressed...**"

She hesitates to continue, carefully avoiding words that might wound me, rapidly shifting to discussing her stepmother, a prime suspect in this disturbing affair. My heart aches with every word I hear.

"The reason there's no trace is that she used to be a forensic doctor. Her license was revoked eight years ago due to fabricating an autopsy for a lawyer. She accepted the blame entirely and refrained from testifying against him. The lawyer who vowed to support her unconditionally as repayment is... Pak."

So that's how she knows Pak. Their work intertwines.

"There's a way to cast suspicion on the man in the surveillance footage."

"How?"

"He shouldn't have a reason to be there, which makes him a prime suspect for further investigation."

Four's assumption carries a high likelihood, whether he's the murderer or not. He lacks a discernible motive to be present there, and he's coincidentally linked to her father's death.

Furthermore, her stepmother left behind a trail of curses the night before our date, which was also a day before the tragedy. I believe the police and the public prosecutor can indeed assist us. And I don't know if I'm mentally prepared to confront the murderer responsible for my little sister's death.

"I'm sorry,"

Four suddenly expresses with guilt. I'm taken aback. My mind is operating at a crawl, struggling to keep up, leaving me silent as I wait for her to clarify.

“The intended target was probably me, not our baby chick.... If it had been me, things might not have unfolded this way.”

“The one at fault is the one with murderous intent. Why shoulder all the blame yourself?”

“Because I’ve never truly wanted anything from that family. I’ve only challenged her to satisfy my wrath. Now, in the end...”

She’s so strong, holding back her tears.

**“An innocent girl fell victim in my place too.”**

If that’s the case, then I’m also at fault.

“Yes, take them to court. As for the inheritance and what rightfully belongs to you, you should continue fighting for it and reclaim what is yours.”

Four believed in my words; my encouragement inadvertently pushed her stepmother to want to eliminate her. My heart is on the verge of exploding due to my death wish.

An intrusive idea surges through my mind, prompting me to release my grip on Four’s shirt. My trembling hand searches frantically in my bag, seeking out a cutter. Four’s eyes widen in shock. In that brief moment, she forgets to steer the car, her hand quickly intercepting mine and taking the sharp object away.

“Let go of me.”

“No!”

**“How can I live without Vi...”**

Crash! Our car collides with another vehicle from behind. While not severe, the impact sends our bodies lurching forward. Thankfully, our seat belts prevent any serious harm.

**“What were you thinking?! I told you to stay with me!”**

Her gaze is filled with genuine concern. Looking into her eyes, I feel like I'm being brought back to reality. My breath is heavy and trembling with fear. I'm uncertain whether it's the aftermath of the car crash or the realization that I was on the brink of harming myself with a cutter.

"I'm... sorry..." I murmur, my voice barely audible. Tears well up once again. "I'm sorry for urging you to take them to court..."

"No, don't cry. It's all my fault. I'm the adult here, older than you. Yet I made such a reckless decision. Please don't blame yourself."

Her embrace is so warm and comforting. Just moments ago, I was perilously close to endangering us both.

What's happening to me? Didn't I just remind myself that I must stay alive to uncover the truth and search for Dad to rewind time? I need to regain my composure. I'm behaving like a foolish child.

Moreover, I must also confront the furious man outside the car, the owner of the vehicle that collided with ours. Four takes a deep breath, collecting herself. Her maturity far surpasses mine.

"Please don't do anything reckless, my little Wa. Promise me, okay? Will you promise me?"

"I promise."

"Good girl. Just wait here, alright? I'll sort things out with the other party first."

I don't respond, instead hugging myself tightly. Four pats my head before stepping out of the car. Using the back of my hand to dab away my tears, I glance out of the window, observing her.

Her presence radiates warmth... Her hands, her body, her embrace, even her voice—everything is infused with warmth.

Slowly, I start to feel better, and the intensity of my death wish begins to fade.

**POV: Narrator**

“You told me to go to the stairs on the right-hand side. That’s why I ended up in the wrong room. Besides, there was a girl living alone there. How could you pin all the blame on me?”

“Shut up! I said the RIGHT WING, not the right-hand side!”

Waran jabs her index finger at the driver’s wheel, leaving a long scratch on its surface. Her voice is a seething mix of suppressed anger and imminent explosion. Beside her sits a man of similar age, his head bowed and eyes wide with fear. She glances at him from the corner of her eye, her frustration evident.

“Do you realize that it’s all over social media now?”

His lips tremble as he responds sheepishly,

“I thought you had planned for every possibility from the start.”

“I was prepared for that wretched bitch’s lifeless body, not an unknown girl!”

“I apologize... Doctor.”

Starting from a mere scratch and escalating to a peck on the wheel, Waran’s control over her emotions is evident in her composed expression but betrays her through her furious voice.

“Don’t ever call me that again! I’m no longer a doctor, and you’re not a nurse anymore!”



He lets it slip, accepting the guilt as a necessary balm to soothe the fire raging within Waran's chest. Then the cover of darkness helps him dodge a potential slap across his face, at least for now.

"Sak."

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Let's stick to reality. You missed the target. I won't refund your deposit, but you won't receive the rest."

"What?" The man's eyes widen in disbelief. "What you asked me to do was incredibly risky! And there's also the surveillance cameras."

"You know well enough that I can handle the surveillance cameras."

Waran scrutinizes the situation, glancing at the rearview mirror while parking the car on a deserted street. She checks for any signs of other people around. When she's assured they're alone, she continues the conversation.

"If we attack that wretched brat again too soon, it will raise suspicions. The social media narrative is that the 16-year-old girl suffered from severe depression. If we stay low, things will likely resolve themselves."

"But the surveillance camera..."

"I told you I can manage that."

Sak's breathing grows heavy, beads of sweat forming on his nervous and anxious face. "How do you intend to do that?"

"I'll bribe one of the apartment tenants to act as your alibi, claiming to be your friend."

"Then, you should've arranged that in advance for me."

"Quit pestering me with your irritating complaints! If you hadn't botched things up, this situation wouldn't be spiraling out of control!"

She sneers at the pitiable man. If the deceased girl had been Four, Waran would only need to orchestrate testimony that the unfortunate girl was coerced by the impending engagement.

Pak, being closely connected to her and a lawyer, would undoubtedly lend a hand. With that setup, the blame for Four's hypothetical suicide could easily fall on either her bedridden grandfather or her grandmother afflicted by severe dementia.

However, this fool managed to commit a colossal blunder. He mistakenly ascended the staircase on the right-hand side instead of entering the right wing of the apartment building. As a result, an innocent girl fell victim instead of Four.

Moreover, the girl's sister is resolute, publicly asserting on social media that her younger sibling never suffered from major depression disorder and never contemplated suicide.

The situation is quickly slipping from Waran's grasp.

"So, Doctor... Um, I mean 'Madam'! What's your next move? Will you bide your time until things settle down and then get in touch with me again?"

Waran gazes into the profound darkness ahead. It's approximately 8 PM, and she's deeply lost in thought.

"Or are you suggesting I take the same approach I used with your husband?"

"Shoosh!"

The woman in excessively extravagant attire presses her index finger to her lips.

"No, you didn't do anything to my husband. It was simply an unfortunate accident."

She strives to maintain a cryptic tone, yet Sak is heedless. He fully comprehends the intentions of this former doctor, a woman whose medical license was revoked.

“Indeed. I was insufficiently cautious on that particular night.”

“Exactly.”

She exudes an air of authority, deliberately shelving the past to concentrate on the current dilemma.

“Listen carefully! Don’t you dare try to run away. Live your life as usual. If you receive a warrant or summons, just comply and present yourself. Tell them you were visiting a friend, and I’ll provide you with that person’s number later. You’ll need to meet with them on your own. If that girl tries to intimidate or threaten you, keep your mouth shut.”

“After this problem is resolved, the agreed-upon payment... I’ll have to allocate that money to silence the news agencies due to your blunder. Be thankful that I’m not demanding the deposit back from you.”

Waran fixes an intense stare on her conversational partner. Sak’s hands tremble in fear. He isn’t so much afraid of the bloody aftermath of the unfortunate girl as he is of the crime he’s committed. He has a wife and a young daughter in kindergarten. What if he ends up imprisoned for this crime?

Waran had provided him with a substantial sum of money, enough to buy a house, after he orchestrated the accident that night. Sak doesn’t truly comprehend why she ordered him to eliminate her husband. He merely did it for financial gain, using the money to secure a home for his family.

Meanwhile, Waran appeared uninterested in negotiating any settlements.

At that time, his wife was pregnant. Despite the looming prison sentence, the compensation seemed worthwhile. Upon reuniting with his family, life seemed perfect, until the day she assigned him a new task. She instructed

him to use rubber gloves, reminding him to leave no traces of DNA, and to strike at a crucial point in the abdomen.

She also directed him to confiscate the girl's phone and craft a message resembling a suicide note. She anticipated that the passcode would likely be the girl's birthday, as Four had a strong attachment to the number '4'. To evade fingerprints, she suggested using a stylus with a dull rubber tip, readily available at any miscellaneous store.

Unlocking the phone was optional.

It was a perfectly timed coincidence. Then, an unfortunate girl was in the kitchen, happily preparing a meal. A knife was held in her hand, and with swift precision and a small amount of pressure, any resistance would be quelled.

From behind, he lunged at her, grabbing the wrist of the girl who was slicing vegetables and thrusting the knife into her own abdomen. There was no opportunity for her to resist; she was injured, with no strength left to scream or move. Her slight frame crumpled before him, her innocent eyes fixed on him throughout.

*'Wa... Help... me...'*

She struggled to voice her plea, but only a feeble sound escaped her dry lips. As he watched her life slowly ebb away, a twinge of sorrow flickered deep within him, a momentary pang for the young girl submerged in her own pool of blood.

He sighed, knowing this was merely a task he'd been assigned. With his heart numbed, he cast his gaze around the room, searching for the source of the playing music. Her small phone, displaying signs of economic use with a visible crack, rested on the petite dining table for two. He entered the passcode provided by the former doctor, but to no avail.

After three failed attempts, unease crept in. He proceeded cautiously around the room, finally spotting a laptop with a stylus on the coffee table facing the sofa.

Her Facebook feed glowed on the screen.

Gotcha! Crafting a message to simulate the girl's presence on her social media, he pretended to be her while she lay dying for those few minutes. Exiting the room and securing it behind him, he knew he'd entered using a bent wire. With what he believed to be the completion of his task, he left.

However, the girl was not his intended target. Thus, as soon as Waran caught wind of the news, she called him in a fury.

"Get out of my car!" She barked.

"Erase all call history. If there's anything further, I'll initiate contact."

"And what about the girl who's still alive?"

"If she dies too, we'll arouse suspicion!"

"Understood. My apologies, ma'am."

He swiftly opens the car door and steps out. Waran seethes at the undesirable outcome, her anger intensifying as she contemplates the fact that she would need to concede defeat and relinquish everything to Four, the true heir of the family. Her son has no stake in the inheritance, stocks, or assets. Driving her car away, she struggles to let it go. Nevertheless, she recognizes the need to temporarily disengage, pretending to be occupied with work and feigning a lack of time to use social media.

**POV : Jattawa**

Days have passed since the incident, and Vi's case has become the talk of the town on social media. Her Facebook page has been flooded by members of the online community. Under the post that I firmly believe she didn't write herself, comments pour in from thousands of people.

*"Rest in peace, dear. May you find peace in the afterlife."*

*"My uncle also succumbed to depression."*

*"Vi might have felt isolated, with no one to turn to. Perhaps she was weighed down by troubles with friends, studies, or her family, leading her to make this tragic choice. Rest in peace."*

*"I heard her sister adamantly insisting that Vi never had any suicidal tendencies. This tragedy might have unfolded due to the sister's influence. What a pitiable girl! My heart goes out to her. May she find a better family and more compassionate siblings in her next life. If anyone shares my sentiment, please type 'I pray for absolute forgiveness' under my comment. Don't forget to check out my merit-boosting bracelet. Prices start at 2,999 baht. One bracelet equals 10 merit points. The more you have, the greater the merit you earn. If you're interested, please inbox me."*

I report the most recent comment I've read. What is wrong with this woman? How could she exploit my little sister's death like this? I was always by Vi's side, and I knew her personality best. What gives her the audacity to pass judgment on us? **'Absolute forgiveness'?** Ten merit points for a bracelet? It's clear she's trying to capitalize on a tragic post. How dare she insensitively type 'I pray for absolute forgiveness' on my sister's Facebook feed?!

I clench my teeth, realizing I'm gripping my communication device too tightly. I shoot an angry look at it, trying to compose a biting response. However, the sound of a plate landing on the table breaks my concentration. The aroma of cheese wafts into my nose.

"Omelet," Four says, her hand gently covering my phone, silently urging me to set it aside. "Eat your dinner first."

“I don’t have an appetite. There are so many people online who refuse to believe that Vi was murdered! If it were you, would you tolerate it?”

“I can’t control other people’s minds.”

I’m left speechless. Her expression looks empty. It almost slipped my mind that the girl in the vanilla apron was unfairly judged by the entire university. She was painted as the one responsible for her team’s loss and faced hate because her rival is Kie, the university’s darling. There’s so much about her that the online communities don’t know, yet they’ve already condemned her based on a one-minute video clip. Four doesn’t share the truth with anyone either, even though it’s eating her up inside.

Embarrassed, I lower my head. The endless stream of comments on Vi’s Facebook page is beyond our control. I need to calm down and trust that justice will prevail. At least in this case, justice can be served. I believe that.

“Thank you for everything, including this meal.”

I lock my phone’s screen and pull the omelet plate closer to me. Four has arranged the plate beautifully. It could be a dish straight out of a cooking show. Despite its enticing appearance, I’m not hungry. In truth, my stomach seems to have lost its sense of timing for meals.

I can’t comprehend why all the news headlines, especially in the online media, are fixated on the idea of depression, despite my adamant protests against it. I’m aware that many individuals grapple with major depressive disorder (MDD) due to isolation or oppressive circumstances. One of my university professors even gave a lecture about it.

But Vi is different. Both of us know without a doubt that she has no intention of leaving me. There’s not even a hint of MDD in her.

It should be evident to everyone. She was in the middle of cooking, playing some music, and her Facebook was open on her laptop screen. She had ongoing art commissions she was dealing with for her clients. These irregularities alone should make it clear that this was not a suicide. This is deeply unjust for her.

But because she can't return to life, everyone is quick to jump to their own conclusions without restraint.

The omelet is actually quite tasty; my taste buds confirm that. However, I'm not in the mood to smile or feign happiness. My mind is preoccupied with thoughts of whether I can continue to exist, yet Four's voice never berates me, urging me to stay with her.

"I'm going to make a call."

"Are you calling your stepmother? Can you put it on speaker? Is that uncomfortable for you?"

"No." She places her phone on the table.

"Not at all. I was planning to take the call outside, thinking it might bother you."

"I want to hear the voice of our suspect."

"No problem."

Four searches for 'Madam Waran' since she hasn't saved her number under 'Mother.' It takes a moment for the other end to answer. The voice that emerges from the speaker is clearly feigning nervousness.

[Four? Are you okay? I just saw the news. I'm on my way to your apartment. A girl was found dead there, right?]

"Why are you coming over?"

[I'm worried about you. Why did you ask something like that?]

"Worried... Just because a girl killed herself here?"

Four is very clever. She catches on immediately.

"That's weird. You should be more concerned if it's murder or something like that."



Yes. I narrow my eyes, studying this woman's intentions. That's a valid point. It's peculiar for her to rush to her stepdaughter's place merely due to a suicide. She's overdoing her act, pretending to be anxious as if Four might be in danger. She's so invested in her performance that she's neglecting logic.

I swallow hard, trying to keep listening.

[Mother's just concerned about you, darling. I don't know how true or false the news is. Am I mistaken?]

"Could you talk normally? These fake endearments are sickening."

[Anyway, I'm almost there. Please open the door. Don't make me knock the door repeatedly.]

That command seems to escape her clenched teeth. A shiver runs down my spine from her tone before the call ends. Four and I exchange anxious glances.

"She must've guessed that I might use the speaker or record our conversation."

"I believe so."

I've eavesdropped on them before.

"Why do you think she's coming here?"

"To put on a show."

My brows furrow.

"Playing the role of a concerned mother. Trying to seem less suspicious."

And that seems to be exactly why she's here. She's here to stage a scene straight out of a melodrama. She'll barge in uninvited, sit down for a chat.

But when she realizes I'm here too... curled up on the long couch, there's no shock in her eyes. It's almost as if she knows that her stepdaughter would have someone else staying with her. She asks if I'm Four's friend. Four smirks, arms crossed.

"She might be a relative of the girl you accidentally killed."

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

I hug my knees tightly, feeling repulsed by her raised right eyebrow, like she's truly wondering.

"I'm joking. This is Fang."

She uses a fake name.

"My friend from the university. She's staying over for a few nights. We have a report to work on together."

Why? Why doesn't Four reveal that I'm Jattawa, the sister of the girl she killed? I glance at my toes, contemplating her reasons. It hits me that it's for my safety. She's fabricating my identity to shield me from this woman.

"Alright. Can we have a private family discussion then? About something important."

She smiles, flicking her eyes towards me, anticipating that Four will send me away. I turn to Four. She nods, a hint of nervousness in her eyes. Pursing my lips, I give in and step into the bedroom. I leave the door slightly ajar, just like that night.

The woman continues to play her role, as if she's worried that I might overhear. Should I record it? No, a video might be unclear. I'll record their voices, just in case this becomes new evidence. I pull out my phone, heart pounding, as I record their conversation.

"By the way, I find it hard to believe that your concern for my well-being motivated you to come here."

"It all happened in the room across the hall. How could I not be concerned?"

"How did you know it was the room across the hall? Our apartment doesn't display room numbers, and the news only mentioned it happened on the third floor."

She corners the older woman, leaving her speechless. The silence is pierced by scratching noises and sounds of the woman's long nails against the table. Nausea churns in my stomach, but I endure it. I need to know what excuses she's conjured.

"Why do you think I wouldn't inquire upon my arrival?"

"....."

Her voice grows colder. Her lips curl into a careless smirk. Her heavily made-up eyes look at Four, resolute. At this moment, I'm just her friend, Fang, an extraneous character.

"I don't understand a word you're saying, including what you said on the phone."

She raises her hand, crafting a gun sign and aiming it at Four.

"Don't test my patience. Otherwise, bang!"

Her finger-gun points upward, a dry sound mimicking a small breeze escaping her lips, like the sounds of a trigger.

"I'll remind you of a lesson from your childhood. This time I won't mistake my target. Recall your kindergarten days when you despised cucumbers? Revisit the feelings you experienced then. Keep quiet and stop debating with adults, alright?"

"You murderer! Investigative officers will unveil evidence against you! The prosecutor will file charges! Prison will be your new shelter. You dared to take my sister's life and even attempted to kill Four!"

It's late now. That venomous woman has left after clashing with her stepdaughter. This voice recording could serve as solid evidence if the public prosecutor helps us decode her insinuations. I'll be a witness too.

"Calm down, Jattawa. Don't lunge for her neck... Doing that would make you the perpetrator. This voice recording should be our ally."

By the way... Is that venomous woman connected to Four's fear of pickles? I'm recording. It makes me forget my musings as fury engulfs me.

Before lying down, I perch on the soft bed, my mind a whirl. Four advises me to rearrange the buttons on my pajamas, her face inches from mine. I fixate on her features.

"Done," She says, her eyes meeting mine. They're warm and reassuring.

"I don't want you to succumb to depression. Let's rest. Until everything's right, sleep like this with me every night."

"From now on..."

"Huh?"

"From now on, I want to sleep with you every night. I want you beside me. I say these words, my tears for the night almost spent. I bury myself in her embrace, and she reciprocates.

*"You're so fragile, Jattawa."*

*'Don't be such a tearful mess.'* I silently scold myself.

*'Don't cry too often, Jattawa. Be stronger, Jattawa. Care for Four only. Everyone else is just black-and-white portraits.'*

I plan to halt time and cry to my heart's content, but my power eludes me. My eyes widen in shock. Clinging to Four, I squeeze her tighter, fear

coursing through me.

Why can't I use my power?

No matter how hard I try to pause or reverse time, a feat as effortless as breathing before, I feel no control. My heart races. Thankfully, Four holds me close. I attempt to pause time again.

No... It doesn't work. I try to reverse time.

No... It doesn't work either. What's happening? This can't be.

**Has my power vanished? Am I now just an ordinary girl?**

# Chapter XXX : Monday Morning

**Ten years later...**

As defined by the dictionary, 'time' refers to an infinite period often expressed in moments, occasions, dates, months, years, and so on. For me, time was once something I could control.

I wake up on an early September Monday morning. The familiar presence is absent from my sprawling bed. The pillow's indentation still lingers, suggesting her recent departure. My assumption is confirmed as the sound of water cascades from the bathroom, reaching my ears. A slight grin tugs at my lips as I stretch, easing my stiffness. Then, I shut my eyes, feigning sleep, anticipating her touch to rouse me after her shower.

"Wa."

Ten minutes trickle away after my eyelids seal shut. A tender whisper graces my earlobe. Her breath, mingled with the fragrance of soap, blesses this Monday morning, the start of the workweek.

"Moon Rabbit..."

Four summons me by my nickname and playfully shakes my form. I perceive the sound of towels patting her hair dry; she must be finishing her shower.

"This is Monday morning, your favorite moment."

"Hell no! I despise it!" A curse inadvertently escapes my lips.

Despite my pout, my eyes remain shut. My pretense proves futile. Blast it! Four's caught me again! I must open my eyes and rise. The woman beside me affectionately smooths my tousled hair, bestowing me with a fond smile.

"Rabbit is awake. Mission accomplished."

I adore it this way. I cherish her genuine smile, one reserved solely for me. I relish the fact that upon waking, she's the first thing I see.

Four perches on the bed's edge. She's clad in form-fitting white slacks paired with a black belt, its silver emblem a symbol of an exclusive brand found only in luxury malls. To top her upper body, she sports a black bra. She won't do a top until her hair is entirely dry. I know her routines well.

"Let me dry your hair."

"Go take your shower first. I'll head to the kitchen."

"Nah,"

Irritated by my unruly hair, I hastily bind it into a bun to top my head with a rubber band.

"You're heading back to Bangkok today and returning to Nakhon Pathom on Thursday. I want to savor every moment with you."

A wry shake of her head greets my words. She acquiesces, retrieving a hairdryer, plugging it in, and allowing me to play hairstylist this morning.

I'm 29 this year, and Four is 32.

I've been serving as a public prosecutor for five years, and let me tell you, it's not an easy journey by any means. During my first year, I didn't have the luxury to pick the province or district where I'd be stationed.

Allow me to elaborate:

As an assistant public prosecutor, which means I was quite new to the job, I was assigned to the northern region of Thailand. It wasn't terrible, but being

far from home took some getting used to.

Fortunately, Four was able to visit me frequently. Whenever her business allowed, she would stay over at my place. Those nights were the ones I felt her arms around me, and, naturally, I could drift off into a peaceful slumber.

For the most part, my time in the North went smoothly. Except for the occasion when a colleague tricked me into trying a '**Ba-Dai Frappe**' from a food street vendor. He assured me it was delicious. After work, I headed to the market and ordered it, only to be met with laughter from everyone around me.

Turns out, 'ba-dai' means 'plain water' in the local dialect, so 'ba-dai frappe' was essentially a water frappe... which didn't actually exist.

Then there was this guy, a postman who regularly delivered mail to our office, trying to flirt with me. I opted to ignore his advances and let him discover on his own that I had a girlfriend, as evident from my Facebook profile.

But that's all history now. Let's focus on the present.

Last April, I put in a request for a relocation either to Chonburi or Bangkok. However, the order of priority also depended on seniority. In the end, I settled for moving to Nakhon Pathom, a neighboring province of Bangkok.

At the very least, I now get to see Four much more frequently compared to my early years as a public prosecutor. She drives to my place on Thursday evenings and stays until Monday. We cruise around in our convertible luxury car, enjoying the fresh air on weekends. We hold each other close while we sleep until the break of dawn.

Occasionally, we share passionate moments on the kitchen floor at night. Well, that's beyond my control.

*Who's bothered by time, place, or circumstance when we're consumed by desire?*



As I continue drying her hair, memories of the past rush through my mind. The past decade has been a whirlwind of events, each shaping the person I've become today. My happiness exists solely in the presence of Four. Vi's passing thrust me into an ocean of pain, but the official verdict of her case as suicide drove the knife even deeper.

The stranger we suspected, 'Sak,' claimed he was merely visiting a friend in our apartment. I couldn't fathom it. Despite Four's belief in his connection to her father's death and his poorly acted facade as a supposed friend, I held my ground in front of the investigators.

Tears streaming down, I asserted, *"My sister never attempted suicide."* Social media comments hurled insults, curses, and dubbed me a fool incapable of accepting reality. I refused to waver...

Until the public prosecutor issued a non-prosecution order due to lack of evidence...

To be fair, it wasn't entirely his fault; the evidence truly was scant. All we had was a voice recording hinting at the truth of that venomous woman. But you know what? They dismissed the content of the recording as a mere mother-daughter argument. No one listened to Four and me. And that's why I became a public prosecutor instead of an attorney. I won't allow this to happen to anyone else.

I'll give it my all. If the evidence from the investigators falls short, I'll secure warrants for all parties involved. I'll interview more witnesses and bring forth as many charges as possible to ensure the perpetrator is imprisoned. I'll ensure they pay for their sins. I definitely will.

When it comes to that poisonous woman, Four's stepmother, can I forgive her? Absolutely not! Since Vi's passing, I haven't experienced any dreams about the future or been able to wield control over time. I've tried to rationalize this, and I've come to the conclusion that it's a result of imbalance.

Allow me to elaborate. Time is divided into past, present, and future.

Past: Time Reversal

Present: Time Pause

Future: Visions

But with one of these elements missing, the balance of time manipulation powers becomes disrupted, ultimately vanishing.

On the day Vi breathed her last, I was still able to reverse time. However, just days after that, my powers seemed to evaporate.

**Hence, I developed this hypothesis. I've become an ordinary person.**

Years ago, after losing my first case, I wept on my girlfriend's shoulder. It wasn't due to losing against the opposing party, but because I still carried Vi's prophecy about the event. The memory of my little sister lingered vividly in my heart and mind.

The search for Dad has never stopped. I've enlisted the police's help to age-progress his photo, and I've plastered these updated images on missing person posters throughout Bangkok whenever I find the time. I am resolute in finding him. He holds the key to Vi's salvation. I haven't surrendered my hope. I know I'll reunite with him because the world I'm in is brimming with the inexplicable, all since I acquired my time manipulation abilities.

Now, let's talk about Four, her family, and the issues lurking within.

Four made the decision to relinquish her role as her grandmother's curator. Instead, she entrusted her stepbrother, Film, with that responsibility. Her grandfather, sadly, passed away when she turned 23. During that time, she inherited only a partial sum in the form of cash and some stocks. The idea of DNA testing to challenge her stepbrother's legitimacy never surfaced again. She shared with me that she no longer sought anything. Her efforts to do so only seemed to breed more suffering.

Four carries the burden of guilt for Vi's passing. Whenever she voices such thoughts, I gently press a kiss to her cheek and reassure her that it's not her fault. The true culprits here are the perpetrator and the mastermind who orchestrated this heinous incident. Whenever we visit Vi's final resting place, her heart pulses with the weight of her self-blame.

"No... It's not your fault. Please don't torment yourself like this. Are you staying by my side because you feel responsible for what happened to Vi?"

"No," She replied.

"I initially wanted to distance myself because being around you reminded me of my own past greed. But my love for you is too strong to stay away."

Recalling her candid words from that day reinforces my sense of self-worth and determination to keep living.

Furthermore, Four possesses remarkable skills in marketing and international relations. Her family's company, in which she holds stocks, is engaged in sportswear and sports equipment.

Previously, it had limited itself to the middle to high-income customer segment within the capital city, and the brands it carried were mostly familiar only to Bangkok residents. Yet, Four had a keen eye for untapped potential in the rural areas.

She expanded their branches across various provinces in the country, coupled with a strategic focus on bolstering online content. Her marketing strategy proved to be a triumph, curbing the proliferation of counterfeit products in the market.

**That's the woman I love. She excels in every facet: her career, culinary skills, life partnership... and yes, even making love.**

Typically, when we're together, Four handles our breakfast and dinner preparations. Lunch is usually ordered from outside. Cooking isn't something I often engage in.

But when I do, I make sure to incorporate cucumbers in it, sliced into tiny cubes, as a means to counteract her aversion. In fact, it's a form of therapy.

The history behind it is rooted in the violent abuse Four endured at the hands of her stepmother, who would force her to eat this particular vegetable.

On the whole, our relationship has been blissfully perfect... incredibly so. Perhaps it's because that fateful day hasn't arrived yet, the day when Four will be stabbed. And if you're curious about Khun...

Following graduation, he entered into an arranged marriage with a woman selected by his father. They wedded two years ago and now have a son. We still maintain some level of contact, although not as frequently.

Most of his calls come when he's seeking an outlet for his marital stress after a spat with his wife. These calls often begin in the evening and extend into the late hours. If Four is with me, the conversation can't go on for too long, but when I'm alone, I sometimes chat with him until I fall asleep. Often, my responses are limited to casual affirmations like "Umm" or "Oh."

Khun repeatedly voices his frustration with Nung Ning's personality. He describes her as sharp-tongued, prone to blowing minor issues out of proportion. She has a penchant for sharing her life with the world, like posting tearful pictures on Instagram during New Year's Eve or discarding Khun's beloved tree during the Loy Krathong festival. She thrives on attention.

I actually met her at a reunion party last year. I can't stand the type of woman who sizes others up from head to toe, under the assumption that no one can match her. Interestingly, as soon as she learned of my profession as a public prosecutor, she approached me with friendliness.

As I finish drying Four's fragrant hair, I gently brush it, pressing my face into its softness and inhaling deeply to savor its scent to the fullest. This ritual is especially meaningful since she'll be away for several days.

Ah, the refreshing aroma!

Our post-shower, changed-attire breakfast consists of muffins and boiled eggs. Four has culinary prowess spanning a wide range of dishes, except for those involving cucumbers. I leisurely chew, relishing the flavors of the sliced tomatoes. I'm aware that she must have taken cooking classes; otherwise, she wouldn't consistently craft such innovative menus.

So, I inquire, and with an indirect kiss, as she takes a bite from the muffin I'm holding, she confirms my suspicion. She's been attending online cooking classes every Friday.

"I plan to relocate to Bangkok next year to spare you the long drives," I mention, my teeth sinking into chewy muffins as I scan the newspaper.

"I only feel exhausted after our escapades."

"How can you drop such a bombshell so early in the morning?" I retort, narrowing my eyes across the dining table at the faultless woman sipping orange juice with her enchanting gaze.

"Keep your thoughts clean. I have a load of serious cases today."

"Why am I the pervert in your eyes?"

"Let's see... Last night, we made out at 9 pm, then again at half past midnight, and yet again at 2 am. Quite the pervert, I'd say."

"And your poker face won't help you escape this one."

"I apologize. Next time, I'll ensure we wrap up before midnight."

Oh heavens... that might actually make me more tired. I nearly choked on my orange juice at her response.

We move on to discussing our upcoming holiday plans, where to go and what to do. Eventually, we agreed on a two-day getaway, knowing we'll need to return to work soon after. My workload has been overwhelming lately, even forcing me to bring unfinished tasks home.

Hence, we settle on the idea of spending our free time watching Netflix or streaming volleyball matches.

Volleyball... It used to be her dream to grace the court.

Now, Kie has secured a spot on the national team. Renowned not only for her skill but also her captivating appearance. She even has a male colleague of mine as a devoted fan. Kie and Four have never reconnected, which isn't surprising considering their friendship had been severed. Yet there's something I've yet to reveal to Four. On April 4th of this year, Kie sent her a voice message.

[Four... I don't know if it's too late to say this. But I'm sorry... sorry for everything I've done to you. It's unbearable without you. I have to feign happiness. I have to fake a smile, a laugh...] Kie's voice trembled.

[It would have been better if we'd stayed friends. If only I hadn't lost control and broken your leg. We would have been on the volleyball court together. While I struggled, you would have made it to the national team before me. But I can't turn back time. I can't undo the past. I tell my past self to apologize to you while we were undergraduates, and revive our friendship.]

[If you hear this and find it in your heart to forgive this terrible friend, please reply with anything and accept my friend request.]

My heart races as I listen to the voice message.

That night, Four was fast asleep in my arms, heavily inebriated from her private birthday celebration with just the two of us. Swiftly, I deleted those voice messages. No way... they can't reconnect.

Don't take Four away from me. If she diverts her focus elsewhere, how will I survive? Plus, Kie isn't deserving of friendship. She harmed Four and

sabotaged her future. She's irredeemable. My anger flares... anger enough to block her and return to the comfort of Four's embrace.

That's the incident that makes me relish streaming volleyball matches. *Keep it up! Keep sprinting on that court! That way, Four won't entertain thoughts of giving you another chance...*

We depart from our apartment around 7 am. The car Four drives now isn't the one that haunted my nightmare. This one is a Porsche, distinct from the vehicle in my dream solely by its yellow color and convertible design.

The tall figure opens the door for me to sit beside the driver. I offer a thankful smile and buckle my seatbelt. With a slight twist, I toss my messenger bag onto the backseat.

What's the most nerve-wracking case for today? Ah, the murder case of the woman in the rental apartment.

The odds of success are at 100%, at least in my estimation. The investigative team has provided a comprehensive set of evidence. The only remaining task is to delve deeper into the motive and expertly piece together the puzzle ourselves.

The defendant's attorney had summoned two witnesses in court. The victim's father, influenced by family pressures, opted to cremate his daughter's body during the ongoing investigation to help release her spirit to the heavens. However, I still hold one witness in reserve, along with the defendant's statement to the investigating officers. This gives me the upper hand.

I now understand why Pak always carries his little journal with him. These days, I've started carrying one too. Even though my power to pause or reverse time has vanished, my life continues.

"How do you plan to get back home today?" Four breaks the silence as we wait at the red light of an intersection. I reorient myself and look at her.

"By bus mech."

"Bus mech?"

"That's the local term for a motorcycle taxi."

"Really? I've never heard that before."

"I just learned it a few days ago myself. I used to think it meant a taxi-bus."

Normally, I'd return home by taxi or public van. Lately, however, I've grown impatient waiting for a taxi and weary of enduring my rumbling stomach. The public van is perpetually overcrowded.

Hence, I've turned to the convenience of motorcycle taxis. The drivers refer to their services as 'bus mechs,' teaching me a new term in the process.

"I'll buy a car for you."

"But we agreed that I won't rely on your money anymore. Just during my studies was enough. Besides, I can use a motorcycle taxi or a public van when you're not available."

"But I can't be with you every day. That means you'll have to endure the hassle on so many days of the week." Her gentle voice has a way of melting my resistance.

"Think it over. With a car, you can go anywhere and hang your graduation gown at the back. You won't have to carry around all those documents. And when you're with me, I'll be your personal driver. Agree? I'll even teach you how to drive."

"Let me take some time to consider."

What I really mean is 'no, thank you!' It feels like such an extravagance, and my salary isn't that high yet. I don't want to burden myself with gas expenses or car payments. I'm afraid Four might go ahead and purchase the car outright for me. She's wealthy enough to do so, and my birthday is just around the corner this month.



"If you're planning to give me a car for my birthday, I won't be pleased." I have to make that clear just in case.

"No one gets upset about receiving gifts when they're adults."

"I just don't want to deal with filling up the gas."

"Well, for longer trips or when you can't wait for a public van, a motorcycle taxi can cost you nearly 100 baht per ride. Sometimes, you might even need multiple rides to reach your destination. If you're spending like that every day, the cost of gas is much more reasonable."

Is she kidding me?

"Seriously?"

I'm not good at calculations. Actually, it's more accurate to say that I'm a bit careless about this stuff.

"I'm not joking."

She replies, continuing, "If I want to buy something for you, you have to accept it. Don't turn down a gift from someone older, okay?"

"Then, in installments." I briefly responded to her proposal.

Our understanding of each other is quite strong because situations like these have arisen before. Four has a tendency to buy things for me, including more expensive gadgets like phones, as well as covering other school-related expenses such as graduation fees and barrister courses.

There are also miscellaneous expenses that often amount to five-digit figures. I never easily allow her to take on the role of a benefactor. I consistently assure her that I will pay her back in installments. I meticulously record each expense in my account notebook and have been repaying her ever since the first month of my career, despite my modest income.

Four often returns that money to me in various forms, such as treats, clothing, or even cooking ingredients. As of now, I have cleared my debts. However, as evident from our previous conversation, I am about to accumulate a new debt. I'm fairly certain that she plans to understate the cost of the car she intends to gift me for my birthday so that I won't have to reimburse her the full amount.

I'm uncertain of what divine intentions lie behind this. Why did fate bestow upon me this ideal girlfriend? Is she compensation for my past wrongdoings? Whenever I gaze upon Four, it strikes me that I will never encounter another person I can love with such intensity.

This realization fills me with apprehension. I fear the day when I might no longer be her primary concern. It's almost irrational, the desire to be her one and only for the entirety of our lives. I'm adamant about not sharing even a fraction of her with anyone else.

When did I begin seeing people in such black-and-white terms?

I scrutinize them with severity, becoming distant and haughty. Their flaws are magnified, and I leave no space for them within my heart. I choose to dine alone during lunch and avoid social gatherings. Khun is the sole exception, owing to our long-standing acquaintance.

Every day, I mark the calendar, eagerly awaiting the moments when I can reunite with Four each week. Her warm embrace is my sanctuary, a reassurance that this world still has room for me. I've asked her whether I appear foolish to her. She would slowly shake her head and assure me that she comprehends me. She even suggested visiting a psychiatrist to discuss my antisocial behavior, offering to accompany me. Automatically, I declined.

Discussing Vi and recounting the tragedy in my own words to a doctor is something I wish to avoid. Four seems to sense this, as she never raises the topic of the unjust court ruling in our conversations.

Today, I met the same court clerk as before. Her constant smile tends to grate on my nerves, particularly when she notices a handsome attorney.

Well, indeed, today's attorney appears to be roughly my age. He's quite presentable and composed. Allow me to explain again.

Officially, the clerks who work within the courtroom are addressed as "court clerks." However, for informal conversation, I prefer to keep it concise.

This particular case has garnered substantial attention on social media. I've grown weary of the deluge of fake news, especially those propagated by counterfeit websites. On occasion, I'm compelled to issue a prosecution order for four charges and a non-prosecution order for two, simply because the investigation officers haven't furnished sufficient evidence.

Yet, these foolish websites portray it as if I haven't issued any prosecution orders whatsoever. They are below even novice status!

As I mentioned earlier, this case involves the murder of a 30-year-old woman who rented an apartment on a monthly basis. The defendant, aged 36, is the landlord. He strikes a subdued figure, not menacing in the least. Instead, he comes across as someone who adeptly conceals his emotions and conveys messages through his eyes while keeping his head bowed.

His business was inherited from his mother, who relocated to the countryside. Despite this, he steadfastly denies having murdered his tenant and has enlisted the assistance of a lawyer friend. If one wishes to avoid jail time, why commit the crime in the first place? Is it truly so challenging to exhibit a modicum of self-control?

The judge is approaching his diamond jubilee. I've had the occasion to cross paths with him in the courtroom before.

As the judge enters, everyone rises in deference. The ambiance becomes considerably more solemn, with silence reigning throughout the room. The reporters and the audience members who were previously engaged in chatter fall quiet.

**Now, let's see how the past decade has transformed me into someone distinctly different.**

# Chapter XXXI : Over Speculation

"Your fingerprints were discovered on the corpse. Additionally, the police have revealed that the victim's time of death falls between noon and 1 pm during the incident. If you claim innocence, then where were you during that time? Were you at your office desk on the ground floor?"

I inquire of the defendant. As there are no surveillance cameras within the apartment, he's left with only two options. Should he reply 'yes,' I'll summon a witness who can testify that he wasn't present between noon and 1 pm on that day. This witness is a postman who was delivering packages at the location. However...

"No." He responds, his demeanor calm yet rigid. "I wasn't there."

In an instant, the witness becomes irrelevant.

"Then, where were you?"

"I went out to purchase groceries. I rode my bike from the apartment."

A grin forms on my face, nudging him toward the trap I've set.

"To a nearby convenience store, I presume?"

"Well... yes, ma'am," He concedes, avoiding eye contact.

"Are you struggling with financial difficulties?"

"With all due respect, Your Honor,"

The defendant's attorney interjects, raising his hand.

"It is evident that the prosecutor is attempting to manipulate the defendant's response to suit her own narrative."

I had assumed he might be an inexperienced attorney who hadn't yet learned the ropes. The attorney, whose name escapes me, finally interrupts. Tilting my head slightly, I await the judge's response to his argument. However, I mustn't be too careless; I must present my objection.

"I would like to pose a question pertaining to the collected evidence."

The judge adjusts his spectacles and nods in agreement, granting me permission to continue in my role.

"The court consents to further questioning. Objection overruled!"

"Thank you, Your Honor,"

I acknowledge with a nod, then turn my attention back to the defendant.

"So, have you been facing financial challenges? Please respond with a simple 'yes' or 'no,'"

He hesitates, glancing at his attorney. Meanwhile, I circle around the enclosure in front of him, maintaining my grin and unwavering gaze to emphasize the importance of my question.

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, but I..."

"That is why you killed the tenant and absconded with her authentic gold necklaces and bracelets," I conclude, shifting my gaze to the judge.

"I possess images of the victim showcasing her possessions on social media. This woman frequently wore two gold necklaces and often flaunted her valuable belongings in the public domain. The defendant is one of her friends on Facebook. Kindly permit me to introduce this evidence."

All becomes distinctly evident. I press the remote control, projecting the evidence onto the TV screen. Three photographs appear, each contributing to the court deliberation.

The first image depicts the victim displaying her necklaces and bracelets. The second is a photograph of a stack of 1,000 baht banknotes. The final image captures the victim and her spouse, both adorned with gold rings on every finger.

However, there is something unusual about this. Yet, I opt to disregard it for now.

"...In conjunction with the contusions on her neck, which resemble the marks of forceful neck restraint, and the imprint on her lower abdomen. We have conclusively linked the fingerprints on her neck to the defendant. Given the unequivocal nature of this evidence, I posit that his financial struggles prompted his actions. He chose to strangle and physically assault the victim, who resided alone..."

I pause momentarily, allowing the defense an opening to object.

"And subsequently, he pilfered her possessions before departing."

This pause is a strategic maneuver, designed to draw attention to the notion that the victim's cause of death wasn't the result of strangulation but rather a head injury. This injury likely resulted from violent aggression, such as a powerful kick, which led to her falling and striking her head on the floor. I'm uncertain if the attorney will seize upon this detail as a basis for argument.

Now, the defense's turn comes, as they begin to question the defendant. The attorney sets himself apart from his client through his tone and gestures.

"Have you inherited your business from your mother? Is that correct? When did you assume management responsibilities?"

"Indeed, sir. It was last June."

"Meaning you took over as the landlord approximately three months ago?"

"Yes."

"Can you recall all the tenants within your apartment complex?"

He shakes his head in negation. The attorney's line of inquiry persists.

"Then why did you extend a friend request to each tenant on Facebook?"

"To remind them of the rental payment deadline, sir. This policy was established by my mother from the outset."

It's likely that he's also involved in running the underground lottery, which involves sending numbers via chatbox. I keep this possibility in mind, and my intuition seems to be on point. However, let's stay focused on the primary matter at hand.

"At the time of the incident, you stated that you were outside buying groceries, not in your apartment. Do you have witnesses who can verify your presence at that specific time and location?"

"Yes, the owner of a noodle stall and an elderly individual selling brooms from his cart, who is a daily presence in the area."

"Objection!" I interject.

"Earlier, the defendant confirmed that he visited a 'convenience store nearby,' not a noodle stall. Therefore, which statement is accurate?"

"Your Honor, I request that the prosecutor respects the defendant's statements and listens to his response. It's evident that the defendant was interrupted before completing his statement."

This time, the judge sides with the attorney, advising me to be cautious with my words and await my turn. In truth, my intent was to stir the news reporters and the audience, and it appears to have worked as expected.

Recognizing the influence of social media, I manipulate its power to guide public perception. It's a tactic I've honed-a strategy to secure an advantage.

Just as someone attempted to manipulate the narrative, falsely portraying Vi's death as a suicide. Someone for whom I lack concrete evidence, yet the circumstantial connections point strongly-around 80% certain-to her involvement, along with the man and the tangled threads of inheritance.

I took a deep breath to refocus my thoughts. I stand within the courtroom's confines, and distraction is unacceptable. My sole mission is to ensure this defendant's conviction, no matter the hurdles.

Although my confidence in victory preceded my entry into this room, as the defendant's attorney begins to question him, tailoring questions to yield favorable answers, the defendant's demeanor worsens.

The attorney delves into specifics about the shoes worn on the day of the incident, attempting to establish that the footprint on the victim's abdomen doesn't match the defendant's footwear. The defendant remains silent, keeping his head lowered. I prop my elbow on the desk before me, scrutinizing his deepening despair.

Could it be guilt? Fear? A potential plea bargain? Or perhaps he can no longer bear the burden of the truth, which is now rising from the depths of his conscience? At last, his inner turmoil surfaces.

The pressure of the judicial proceedings seemingly wears on him, causing tears to flow. Wrinkles appear at the corners of his eyes, a subtle indicator of his emotional turmoil, despite not being advanced in years.

"I didn't kill her..."

He sobs, the confession coming through choked words.

"I strangled her, but I didn't actually kill her..."



[What's up? Do you need some help?]

The gentle voice from the other end has a calming effect on me, like rain falling onto a volcano.

"Regarding Vi..." I've been contemplating whether to discuss this with her since the afternoon. "Was just... has a feeling that something isn't right."

Finally, I made up my mind.

[Like what...?]

"Are you busy?"

[No, go ahead.]

It's excruciating for me to vocalize this.

"Today, I was involved in a murder case as the prosecutor. The evidence strongly points to the identity of the murderer. However, the defendant has still retained a lawyer to represent him. He refuses to confess to being the murderer."

"After being pressured, he started confessing."

I can't take another bite of stir-fried chicken with basil and push the dish away. Resting my cheek on the desk, I speak to Four through the speakerphone.

"He admitted to strangling her, but... He didn't kill her. The reason behind the strangulation was that woman. She had ridiculed him about his appearance, saying he looked old, had no girlfriend, was bald, and so on. He lost control on the day of the murder. She taunted him, *'Can anyone tell you're the landlord? From a distance, I thought you were a thug.'*"

"In that moment, all rational thought vanished. He rose from his seat, charged at her, and strangled her to silence her mockery forever. He even threatened to fire her if she dared to mock him again. But after giving her some air, she stared at him with fury, retreated to the staircase, and pointed at his face, declaring, *'Just wait! I'll call my boyfriend to beat you up, ugly face!'*"

"Around noon, her boyfriend visited her apartment. The man appeared thuggish to the defendant. Worse, he seemed quite irritated as he ascended the stairs. Terrified that he might be attacked as the woman had threatened, the defendant grabbed his motorbike key, started the engine, and sought refuge at a noodle shop owned by someone he knew. He remained hidden there from noon until late afternoon. Upon his return, the victim's boyfriend had already left."

"Later that evening, the victim's father came to see her. He knocked on the door and called for his daughter, but no one responded. Hearing her phone ringing within the room, he asked the landlord to unlock the door."

I recount the defendant's confession to Four.

In reality, there's no need for secrecy as the general public was allowed to attend the trial. Before she asks how this relates to Vi, I swiftly explain.

"I've been considering whether what the defendant said could be true... And in Vi's case, what if there was no assault involved?"

[Do you really think so?]

"I'm not sure... It's just that I was so certain the defendant was the culprit, but hearing his voice and observing his demeanor, I'm starting to doubt and feel like I'm prosecuting a scapegoat."

"Are you busy?" I ask her again, my spirit deflated as she remains silent.

Perhaps I've interrupted her during a business meeting or her evening relaxation. Instead of giving me a direct response, she inquires if my fridge is well-stocked. I respond with a 'no,' and she hangs up. She must be

swamped with work. It's my own fault for behaving childishly despite nearing thirty years of age.

I should be at my desk, concentrating on my caseload, but instead, I called my girlfriend, troubling her about my job. I slap myself for my impulsive behavior, then rise and shuffle to my large bed, still clad in my formal attire-minus the robe. I'm famished, exhausted, and sleepy...

Wishing for tomorrow to be a Saturday.

Only a few days remain until I hit thirty, yet I remain ensnared in this monotonous routine. I'm still clueless about how to assist my sister. My father remains untraceable. I've harnessed social media, yet the answers elude me.

Ten years have passed since Vi's last breath, and now... I'm still grappling with unresolved matters.

I think of the moon lamp. Safely packed in its box, it stands as a treasure from the past. Though aging, it still functions flawlessly. Fearing damage or scratches, I keep it nestled within its protective confines. I wish for it to become a cherished memory, so I've ceased my nightly gazes upon it. My gaze drifts to the opaque white plastic box, concealing the dormant Moon within.

Allowing my thoughts to wander unhindered, without the company of the slow-moving sloths crossing the road, I drift into slumber. Despite my protesting stomach, I lack the energy to rise and investigate the fridge.

Damn it... Earlier, Four invited me to accompany her for grocery shopping this morning, an offer I foolishly declined.

As time progresses beyond midnight, a tantalizing aroma brushes against the tip of my nose, rousing me from a haphazard dream. The sudden light prompts a squint as I adjust. The kitchen produces a series of click-clack sounds. For a fleeting moment, my heart races, fearing a potential intruder. Yet, logic prevails, and I realize that no thief would be engaged in such savory cooking.

"Four!"

It must be Four!

"Four!!"

My voice erupts like that of a child welcoming a parent back home. I hastily slide down the bed and rush to the kitchen, rubbing my eyes. A surge of warmth courses through me as I spot the familiar figure in an apron. As anticipated, Four stands there. The taller woman lifts her face from the pot on the stove, a welcoming smile gracing her lips.

"Hello. Today, I'm your personal chef."

"What? Did you actually drive all the way from Bangkok?"

She giggles. "Of course, I didn't want to risk any stomach troubles. I'm just a bit delayed because I had to pick up some ingredients."

"You've gone through all this trouble..."

She deftly shifts the conversation by gesturing toward the dining table.

"Now, my little wa, have a seat."

I obediently follow her directive, settling into the chair with my thighs pressed together and my hands resting on the table. I watch as the tall figure swiftly grills the slices of sea bass on the pan, one by one. She remembers that I can eat all kinds of fish except St. Peter's fish.

Fish Patty (do you remember him?) passed away during my sophomore year. He accompanied me when I moved into Four's apartment.

One morning, his sudden demise was a shock to me, as he remained motionless in the water. It took me quite some time to overcome the grief, as every time I fed him, memories of my little sister resurfaced. I'm unsure of the cause of his death-possibly a fish disease.

My depression prevented me from disposing of him with the trash. Four assisted me in digging a small hole in the apartment garden to give him a

burial beneath a tree. He returned to nature, to be reborn as an integral part of it once more.

This is why I cannot eat St. Peter's fish, and I'm grateful that my girlfriend recalls this detail.

The scent of miso sauce further stimulates the appetite for the sea bass. My stomach growls loudly, as if imploring for sustenance. I tenderly stroke it, soothingly reassuring it to remain patient. I notice a smirk playing at the corner of my on-duty chef's lips.

"Shall we continue discussing the case?"

"Yes?"

"Regarding the man you suspect might be a scapegoat."

My mental faculties spring back to life.

"Oh..."

The emotional load I've carried throughout the day eases as a woman arrives in person to uplift me.

"Don't tell me you're here because..."

"I returned because I know this must be overwhelming for you. Don't worry. Just share with me what's troubling you."

Guiltily, I lower my head, releasing a deep sigh as I empty the contents of my mind.

"I'm contemplating the possibility that if this man isn't the murderer, then it's plausible that no one killed Vi. I mean... It's so convoluted. That night, your stepmom visited you, obviously harboring sinister intentions, yet she paid no mind to my presence in your room. It's as if she was incredibly assured, leaving behind no trace of evidence, which is precisely what unfolded. But after handling a similar case, I'm starting to feel like... Vi might have taken her own life because she didn't want to live with me-"

"Wah."

"Yes." I respond, my voice hushed and mellow.

"You're a public prosecutor, and there will be more cases in the future awaiting your attention. Will you approach them on a case-by-case basis?"

"I'm just concerned they might follow the same pattern."

I strive to shake off the imagery of my sister tormenting my mind.

"If you're in this state, what will you do when the victim is around the same age as Vi? Will fear paralyze you, or will you fight for justice?"

"I don't know. I might shed tears."

"You shouldn't, babe."

Setting down the knife, she ceases slicing the decorative veggies. She serves me the grilled sea bass and offers me a small bite to sample. The fish is tender, and the miso sauce complements my palate.

"Hunger tends to make people more jittery."

"Is that a theory?"

"No, just an observation based on the circumstances."

After finishing the bite, I pout playfully. "Hey! I'm serious, and you can't evade the topic with this delicious sea bass."

"I just want to say that you need to establish boundaries between work and your personal life."

"Especially for someone like you, who has to handle various cases. Some might be similar, some might be different. It's important to give your best effort, but you shouldn't link a case to your personal history. If you're concerned that this man might be a scapegoat, then it's up to you to ascertain the truth. You must uncover whether he is or isn't, and discover the

actual culprit who deserves prosecution. You need to gather evidence instead of making assumptions and connecting them to your past experiences."

Upon hearing that, I'm left momentarily speechless. I've been overthinking things, while someone wiser like Four can effortlessly guide me out of the tunnel. I'm now certain that Vi never harbored any intentions of ending her life.

How could I have entertained such foolish notions as her considering suicide?

**Damn it! Jattawa, you airhead!**

"B...but if it's indeed the case, I'd be in a real bind because I pressed charges against the defendants with a multitude of allegations. I was utterly confident in the courtroom. If I backtrack on my statements..."

"Rectifying your mistake doesn't equate to losing face."

She remarks, resuming her culinary efforts in the kitchen, allowing me to engage in some introspection. Yes, my clarity of thought has returned, yet my mental processes still seem sluggish.

"Then, if it's not him, who do you believe might be the culprit? A thief?"

"Considering the account you shared with me this evening on my way back, I think there's a character that seems to have been overlooked."

I likely furrow my brows so intensely that a crease forms on my forehead.

"Who might that be?"

Who has been overlooked in this case?

"The victim's husband."

Ah... yes. That never crossed my mind. Now, the investigating officers have some extra work waiting for them.

I'm repaying my chef on-duty. After preparing and sharing dinner with me, my job advisor's gaze takes on a mischievous twinkle as I emerge from the bathroom, clad only in a towel. I can easily discern her thoughts. Propped against the headboard of our bed, she watches my every movement with keen interest.

"Shall we give it a try?"

Finally, she voices the unspoken thought. I knowingly grin, raising an eyebrow while slipping into a pair of sleeping shorts.

"So, you returned for this specific reason."

"I came back to see you."

"Which can be translated as '**to make out**' with me. You could just be upfront about it."

"Are you kidding? You know very well that, apart from my affinity for that, I drove back here because my little bunny mentioned she had nothing left to eat in her fridge. I'm also fairly certain my little bunny's dinners must have been takeout that she struggled to finish."

"I know. Can't I just tease you a little, you randy?"

"I'm not a randy."

"Who kept dreaming about making love to me even before we officially started dating?"

Her demeanor turns somewhat awkward yet playful.

"That was a premonition! I also dreamt that you would become a public prosecutor one day, and look, it happened."

I'm well aware that it's déjà vu, but I have to feign ignorance, nonchalantly shrugging my shoulders.

"A coincidence for me."



I settle at the edge of the bed, slipping into a loose tee with a rounded collar. Before I can fully slip my left arm into the sleeve, the sweet-scented woman pounces from behind.

She swiftly removes my t-shirt, signaling that it's unnecessary for tonight. Her voice, laced with flirtation, tickles my ear.

"Everything else might be coincidental, but as for this matter, I'm fully intentional."

She is swift in her actions. Barely a moment later, her nimble hands slip into my shorts, her middle finger making deliberate contact with my skin. I lean against her left shoulder, raising my head to nibble playfully at her earlobe. She teases me, calling me a 'naughty girl,' but hey, I'm a grown-up now, and I can give as good as I get.

The tip of my left breast is tenderly caressed, and it responds eagerly to her gentle touch, causing it to perk up. She kisses my neck hungrily, her hunger matching mine. She requests my help in return, and I let out a giggle. I'm willing to assist, but perhaps not in this particular posture. She seems to read my thoughts, withdrawing her finger and maneuvering us to a more comfortable position on the bed.

She discards her clothing, letting her white bra drop to the floor. I shower her flawless arm with affectionate kisses and playful nips. Then, I straddle her legs while her back reclines against the bedsheet.

*Tonight, my plan is to offer her oral pleasure before asking her to reciprocate.*

My tongue finds its way to the sensitive spot that's eagerly waiting for my touch. Her deep and prolonged moans reach my ears, fueling my rhythm. Her hips move in tandem, and her legs spread wider to grant me better access. Tilting my head slightly, I press my lips against her sensitive area and proceed to suck gently. I close my eyes, lost in the sensation of her sultry cries.

"Umm..."

I increase the pressure of my tongue, encouraging her to vocalize her pleasure even louder.

"Aaaahhhh!"

My hands grip her waist firmly as I imagine her arching back in delightful pain. A self-satisfied grin tugs at my lips as I dutifully fulfill my role as her girlfriend, especially considering the long drive she endured to be here tonight.

This time, I rely solely on my lips and tongue to bring her to the pinnacle of pleasure. Soon enough, her release comes, accompanied by a breathy 'Aaah...' that signifies her journey to ecstasy. Her body trembles with the force of her orgasm, and I bow my head, lapping up the traces of her arousal before nestling beside her, ready for slumber.

"How was it?"

She turns toward me, her cosmic eyes narrowing.

"As quick as usual."

"Who else would it be? You've teased me until I'm practically begging."

"And isn't that pleasant?"

"You..."

My words are cut off as quickly as her hand moves to touch my sensitive area, causing me to gasp. With nothing below the waist, she's able to insert her two fingers, the middle and index, into my depths. Her free hand trails along my thigh, igniting sensations that spread from there to my lower belly. I admit that I'm breathless.

The woman beside me is entirely unclothed, and she holds the power to determine when I'll reach my peak. She is a master of tactics. She frequently keeps me on the edge, leaving me pleading for her affection. It's likely a form of karma for the playful torment I subjected her to on our first night together.

No, that's not the whole truth. There have been countless occasions when she's brought out my blushes, finding my flustered state adorable. I can't fathom how I could appear adorable while writhing in ecstasy, longing for release. Regardless, if she believes it, I trust her. She alters the rhythm, alternating between fast and slow. I clutch the pillow tightly, my cries echoing the whirlwind of emotions coursing through me via her skilled fingers.

"I beg you..."

My self-control dwindles.

"Faster, please."

"You won't starve yourself again, will you? Promise me."

"Ummm."

Of course, I swiftly nod in agreement, locking her gaze in a beseeching stare.

"Promise me."

"I...promise."

A playful grin tugs at her lips as she affectionately pinches my left cheek. Her hand moves in sync with my desire, increasing its pace. She leans closer, her body exuding a fragrant aroma that indicates she took a shower before joining me. I feel a twinge of guilt for disrupting her evening after a long and busy day.

However, those thoughts evaporate as I feel the tightening sensation and the impending release building with every thrust of her fingers.

"Ummm."

"Aaaah..."

I exhale deeply through my parted lips. The sweet essence of our passion trickles out between my legs. Although I've recently showered, my skin now glistens with a sheen of sweat. I'm about to reach for my hand to wipe my forehead, but she pulls me into her embrace from behind. Her warm chest presses against my back, reminiscent of how it was during our first intimate encounter. She captures my lips in a lingering deep kiss.

"Good girl,"

She praises me softly.

"Shall I take care of 'that' for you?"

Her playful tone suggests she's aiming for another round. I know her all too well-we've spent a decade together.

"No, thanks. I'm satisfied."

"Just a little licking..."

"No!" My firm denial seems to momentarily dampen her spirits.

She plants another tender kiss on my temple, as if conveying her wish for me to have peaceful dreams. She draws the blanket over both of us, her head resting on the expansive pillow. In her warm embrace, I surrender to the embrace of slumber.

# Chapter XXXII : Friendship Revival

**24 September**

I got in touch with the investigation officers to request a warrant for the victim's husband, or rather, her boyfriend, as they aren't legally wedded yet. I asked them to initiate the process of summoning him for interrogation. In addition, we are gearing up for another round of judicial consideration for the defendant in the ongoing case. This round is likely to be the final one, as the defendant has retracted his previous statement and recounted the incident, necessitating his attorney to restructure his defense strategy.

"No need to worry. If he's truly innocent, there should be evidence to support that." Four reassured me earlier in the morning.

She had given me a lift to work before heading back to our apartment, marking the beginning of our weekend. However, our anticipated days of relaxation are marred by an additional challenging assignment. If it weren't for Four's presence, my weekends would probably resemble ordinary days, where I could afford to rise a bit later.

The defendant appears notably paler this time around. It's been reported that he's been refusing meals. The memory of him breaking down in tears within the courtroom resurfaces in my mind.

His expressions, his countenance, and the tears he shed all seem to proclaim that despite his intense resentment towards the victim, he's incapable of committing murder. I brush away my apprehensions, stand to acknowledge the judge, and focus on gathering my composure, adhering to Four's

guidance. I must strive to keep my personal life separate from my professional duties to the best of my ability.

Today, the defense attorney introduces a new piece of evidence, freshly approved—a surveillance camera positioned beneath the flyover. It captured the defendant riding his motorcycle at around 12:30 p.m., en route to the noodle store. His recurring glances backward during the journey suggest a certain apprehension, a fear of being followed. The footage also confirms his return to the apartment later in the evening.

This presents a contradiction in relation to the police's estimate of the victim's time of death. Initially, I had postulated that the woman's demise happened prior to the defendant's actions, implying that he fled after committing the crime. Well, I can proceed with that presumption.

However, after careful consideration, I realize that bringing up this discrepancy might not be advantageous. The defense attorney could potentially exploit the same surveillance footage to establish the victim's time of entry into the apartment. Therefore, it's a strategy I should avoid; the odds of success appear slim.

Had the defendant spoken the truth from the outset, the defense attorney would have wielded this footage as supportive evidence, likely preventing my successful cross-examination. Hence, I maintain my composed poker face, fulfilling my role as a dedicated public prosecutor determined to present a strong case. As I've stated earlier, if the defendant is indeed innocent, the evidence will ultimately work in his favor.

**Incidentally, did this dashing attorney purposely wash his robe to feign a newcomer's innocence?**

Ambushing an opponent might be a deliberate tactic in his repertoire. The legal field often sees attorneys with well-worn robes, emblematic of their seasoned professionalism. The fresh, pristine robes usually belong to those less experienced. Nevertheless, exceptions exist, as strategic and resourceful attorneys like him can also emerge.

"Based on the findings of the police investigation, it has been determined that the victim's cause of death was not due to strangulation, but rather a severe head injury inflicted by forceful impact with the floor. Such a level of injury is inconsistent with a simple fall or a mere push.

As demonstrated here, distinct evidence, including a noticeable footprint and bruising, was discovered on her lower abdomen. It can be reasonably inferred that she—please pardon my frankness—was subjected to a forceful kick. The imprint corresponds to a men's shoe, size 43."

The defense attorney excels at rendering vivid imagery through his words. He adeptly mimics my mannerisms and integrates them into his style of explanation. I find this mimicry vexing.

"In accordance with the inquiry conducted in the victim's apartment, the specified shoe was not located within her premises. Notably, the victim possessed only slippers and sneakers."

I glance at the judge, addressing him respectfully.

"Your Honor, with all due regard, I believe the absence of the shoes should not be construed as indicative of the defendant's innocence. It is common sense that no perpetrator would deliberately leave such incriminating evidence at the scene of the crime."

"Allow me to elaborate on this matter, Your Honor," he also turns his attention to the judge.

"While our focus has primarily revolved around where the defendant could have concealed potential evidence, I suggest we consider the presence of another individual who features prominently in this case."

The attorney operates the remote control, projecting an image of the victim alongside her husband onto the screen. This time, he employs social media references, displaying a full-length photograph capturing the couple's joyful expressions.

"...The victim's husband. This individual consistently wears a pair of black formal shoes."

Indeed, he's a sly attorney who chose to wash his robe to feign inexperience in order to catch the opposing prosecutor off guard. I allow a faint smile to cross my lips before offering a subtle nod, acknowledging my complete misjudgment.

Evidently, subsequent to the defendant's confession, the defense attorney diligently scoured various sources for evidence—surveillance footage, social media pictures, and most compelling of all, the front camera of another tenant's car which distinctly captures the defendant strangling the victim before releasing her. The victim had vehemently cursed at him and gestured angrily toward his face before ascending the staircase.

As for the missing necklace, I presume that the victim's husband seized it back from her. I need to confirm with that car's front camera whether the victim still wore the necklace or not. Regarding the absent necklace, I speculate that the victim's husband might have forcibly reclaimed it from her possession. I must verify this hypothesis by consulting the front camera footage of the vehicle to ascertain if the victim was still wearing the necklace at that time.

In my assessment, the defendant should still be prosecuted for the act of strangulation, which constitutes physical assault under the purview of the law. My evaluations are starkly dichotomous, marked solely by 0 and 100. The trajectory of my life up until this point has witnessed a transformation from the past.

In the public sphere, my choices narrow down to a binary paradigm: 'victory' or 'defeat.' Building upon substantial evidence, including the introduction of surveillance footage subsequent to the defendant's change in testimony, I have conducted a reevaluation. The probability of prevailing in this case stands at an abysmal 0%.

Yet, what does that signify? Within my journal, I have encircled the phrase 'victim's husband' and inscribed 'defendant' beneath it, as a note for a forthcoming prosecution case.



However... The power dynamics can be altered. Notably, the clip presented by the attorney lacks an accompanying audio track. I have the potential to bring a counter-suit against him, implicating him as an accomplice alongside the victim's husband. Such action could result in his indictment on a separate charge. I embody the type of public prosecutor who adeptly employs questioning techniques to maneuver the opposing party into a corner.

...It is mere contemplation. My intentions never enter the realm of action. Amidst the demanding tasks that clutter my office, replete with towering stacks of documents, the coffee I've procured near the entrance of our building serves as a modest stimulant for my weary mind.

The absence of an intern or assistant to alleviate my workload is palpable. The aspiration that once occupied my dreams foretold a future where I would ascend to the echelons of a high-ranking public prosecutor, commanding respect and deference.

Yet, I'm hesitant for that day to materialize. For it's the day that Four might be imperiled. Persistently, I contemplate ways to extricate myself from this particular case. Abruptly, my phone rings.

[Unknown: I would like to meet with you.]

[Unknown: I have something to tell you.]

My fingers halt their rhythmic dance upon the keyboard. My attention is diverted to the illuminated screen, as a message from an unfamiliar sender graces my device. My brow furrows, spurred by curiosity. I await the departure of the Class-4 Public Prosecutor (PP). He is still chatting with someone in the office, which I shared the room with several others. As he vacates the premises, I relinquish my focus on my tasks, instead opting to respond to the enigmatic correspondent's message. Their profile lacks a visual representation.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Who are you? How do you know me?!]

[Unknown: I can't type down the details here. Kindly provide a date and time, then I'll tell you the designated meeting point.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: What is it about? My father?]

[Unknown: No.]

Well then, the foundation for further discourse is non-existent. While I offer him a second opportunity to elucidate, the enigma remains resolute in his demand for a personal rendezvous. Consequently, I surmise that he is either a swindler or an annoyance. Opting to thwart any potential nuisance, I decide to block him and return to my tasks.

The internal phone resounds with its distinctive ring. Nestled beside the two fax machines, it beckons the administrative officer to halt her present task of unsealing an envelope. She rises, approaches the telephone, and offers her name and designation to the party on the other end. Engaging in a brief moment of silence, she ultimately replies with a succinct 'yes, sir.' The receiver is gently returned to its cradle, and she pivots to address me.

"Miss Jattawa, the PP requests your presence."

"Immediately?"

"Yes, in his office."

"Understood. Thank you."

I offer a concise expression of gratitude to the administrative officer, maintaining an aloof and distant demeanor, deliberately projecting an air of arrogance and coldness. This attitude isn't solely for my own sake; I doubt it's reciprocated. My main concern is the reason behind the Public Prosecutor's summoning. Could it be due to a discreet exchange of messages I engaged in? Unlikely. I glanced at my phone for a fleeting moment, ensuring he didn't catch sight of it. Has someone lodged a complaint against me?

As I traverse the corridor towards his office, I continue to mull over the purpose of this unanticipated meeting during work hours. While the PP is not as stern or severe as my previous superior in the North, I can't dismiss the possibility of this being a reprimand. A scolding from him would mar my otherwise pristine record.

A memory resurfaces of the day of my university interview when Thailand was uncharacteristically draped in snow. Comparable feelings of apprehension and trepidation seize me, much like that distant day.

What might be the cause? My behavior? My introverted disposition? Or perhaps an urgent matter. Eventually, it transpires that none of these assumptions hold true. The topic he wishes to address is unexpected:

"I heard that the woman who gave you a ride this morning is your girlfriend. Is this true?"

He removes his reading glasses, carefully placing them back in their case, which rests open on his left side. It is challenging to decipher the gaze of this middle-aged gentleman, adorned in a suit. The intention behind his question remains unclear, potentially a mere inquiry or perhaps a veiled criticism. Seated across from him, I bow my head slightly.

"Yes, she is my girlfriend."

"Is she a tomboy?"

"No, she's simply an ordinary woman."

"Ah, so you're the tomboy then?"

"I am an ordinary woman too, sir. We are both women." I respond with a measured and steady tone. "Is there a problem with that?"

"What about your reputation? What are your thoughts on that?"

"I don't believe there's a problem. I can effectively separate my professional responsibilities from my personal life."

I should pay tribute to Four for her quote.

"Furthermore, while the law stipulates that only a man and a woman can legally marry, it does not dictate that only a man and a woman can experience love."

A faint smile graces his lips as he ponders over my statement.

"You're the individual who managed to pass the bar exam within a year, correct?" His affirmation follows shortly. "We, as public prosecutors, are more fortunate than the often rigid judges."

"Indeed. By the way, why did you wish to meet with me?"

This time, his demeanor shifts, his voice deepening and his gaze growing more intense. The smile fades, replaced by an air of gravity.

"Do you know how aware I am of this?"

"No, I do not."

I lift my head to meet his gaze, straightening my posture to exude professionalism.

"In light of the woman's murder in the apartment, we have encountered substantial backlash across social media."

"But the landlord has already been exonerated of the charges I brought against him."

"No, it pertains to a different individual."

He sighs. It becomes evident that this case is fraught with complex challenges.

"The victim's husband, who was subject to a warrant, seized the opportunity to garner public sympathy by posting about it. Some of the ensuing comments brought your personal life into public view, citing your role as the public prosecutor on this case."

I remain silent, absorbing the weight of his words.

"I strongly recommend you consider altering your names on social media platforms, including Facebook. Using your real full name might not be advisable."

"I believe your supervisor's perspective holds merit. It's indeed a precarious proposition to employ one's actual name on social media platforms. Such information is easily accessible to anyone."

Four supports the viewpoint, then selects two packs of Milo and places them into the shopping cart she's guiding. I reach up to pick an additional pack, occasionally desiring a break from my usual morning black coffee bitterness. With the additional items in hand, our conversation resumes.

"True, I admit I've been somewhat careless."

Addressing the subject of the victim's husband's attention-seeking post and the sympathetic comments, Four offers to intervene.

"Please refrain from doing so, Four."

I interject, placing a finger gently against her lips to forestall her objection. Irrespective of her thoughts, I continue,

"No matter the thoughts running through my mind, I need you to let this go. There's no need for you to shield me in this situation. The court will deliver justice as evidence dictates. His attempts to gain public sympathy or appear innocent are a futile endeavor, considering that the outcome hinges entirely on the strength of the evidence."

"It's just hard for me when you're embroiled in this."

My response carries conviction,

"I've resolved to embrace this reality since choosing this career path. We proceed leisurely among the supermarket aisles, as tomorrow being Saturday grants us some reprieve from haste. However, concerning you... Certain comments even included photos of you after deducing our relationship. Your image has experienced some tarnishing."

"Why would you think that being with you could tarnish my image?"

"It's not that I thought that way. While I assured the PP of my innocence, I'm still concerned that this development might negatively impact your professional standing. Have you observed the disparaging comments that have surfaced? They serve as a stark reminder that certain factions continue to harbor intolerance."

Her serene countenance matches that of the PP's from earlier in the day. I find myself incapable of foretelling her upcoming statement.

"So what?"

She remarks tersely, leaving her response succinct.

"Well then, if you feel the need for more distance between us..."

"No, absolutely not!"

Her stride halts, and her cosmic eyes fixate on me intently.

"There's only one 'Wa' in this world. I won't step back or allow you to leave simply due to others' opinions."

"Four..."

Over the past ten years, she hasn't frequently vocalized her affection for me. Instead, she prefers to express her feelings through tender actions. Her love is intertwined with every meal she prepares, every piece of furniture she selects, each coordinated outfit we wear, and even the type of shoes that complement my attire. She notes every detail, commits my recollections to

memory, and demonstrates that this woman, indeed, is confessing her love continually, if not with words.

My heart brims with happiness. I dip my head and smile, walking ahead as she pushes the cart. Her svelte figure hastens its pace to align with mine. We are not children yearning for sweet declarations at every turn. We merely require our hands clasped, never allowing the other to slip away. Our conversation veers toward plans for tomorrow, my birthday. We contemplate the prospect of indulging in a day of Netflix binge-watching or dining at a restaurant we've been eager to try after frequently passing by it. Four opts for the latter choice, offering her rationale,

"Tomorrow we can also look for your car."

I find it unwise to reject her well-meaning proposal. Nor should I be obstinate.

"I'll reimburse you in installments. Don't give it to me for free."

"Shall we make a bet? If I lose, I'll allow you to repay me in installments. But if I win, you must accept my gift without further objections or any such thing."

"What's the bet?"

Her sly smirk coaxes a playful pout from me. I decide to strike first to ensnare her.

"No bedroom shenanigans, you trickster!"

"Such a randy. Always fixating on bedroom activities."

"Oh, come on! You're the one that gets me thinking about that stuff. Whatever! I'll pick the game. Let's play solitaire. The one who finishes the game first wins. Deal?"

Her smile remains unyielding. It's a widely known fact that Four always acquiesces to her doted-upon girlfriend. She rests her arm on the shopping cart's handle.

"Sure, whatever you want."

While today's happiness seems impenetrable, as we head back to the parking lot after our plastic-free shopping spree to safeguard marine life and mitigate global warming, something unexpected occurs. A woman strolls past us toward the car adjacent to ours. She unlocks her vehicle, and even the car's distinctive beep doesn't warrant our attention until...

"Four..."

The delicate voice shatters the silence. Our hands freeze in mid-motion, both of us swiveling to observe the fair-skinned, oriental woman in her casual attire. She resembles a neighbor running errands, yet she's also a familiar face from televised volleyball matches and newspaper features, "Kie."

I despise these kinds of coincidences.

"You... moved to Nakhon Pathom?"

She avoids meeting eyes, as though she can't bear to lock gazes with her former friend. I project an air of indifference toward this person.

"Indeed."

Precisely. That's how it should be.

"I messaged you on your birthday, but I assume you were so furious that you decided to block me."

Oh no! If she delves into this, Four might suspect me of harboring prejudice against her. I sneak a glance at the taller figure beside me, yet her lovely countenance remains remarkably composed.

"I just want you to understand that I wasn't intoxicated or irrational when I said those things. I genuinely want to rekindle our friendship. Now that I'm standing before you, I hope to convey this in person. I truly apologize for obstructing your prospects in athletics."



"Just let it go."

"Are you still holding a grudge against me?"

"No." Four coldly replies,

"You're not that important."

"Four..."

"At first, I hesitated because I struggled to recall your name."

"Some things can't just return to the way they were on the surface."

"So, this province is Kie's hometown?"

I break the silence as our car exits the shopping mall through the rear gate. Four extends her hand to turn on some soft music before responding, her eyes fixed on the road.

"Yeah, true."

"Have you thought about what Kie said?"

"I'm aware."

"Huh?" I inadvertently widen my eyes, a question slipping out. "What do you mean?"

"That night, I overheard the voice message you played."

My heart thuds loudly. **Ba-dum! Ba-dum! Ba-dum!**

"Are you angry with me?"

"No, not at all. I can be a bit foolish when it comes to you."

Her words trigger a pang of guilt within me. I shouldn't have kept it from her. It should have been her decision whether to reconnect with her old friend or not. But I... acted immaturely.

"I'm sorry..." I express my remorse sincerely. "I shouldn't have done that."

"I'm more interested in knowing your reasons."

"The reasons behind why I kept it from you?"

"Yes."

"I was just worried that I might get less of your attention."

I expect her to remain silent, yet surprisingly, she bursts into laughter, her left hand gently patting my head. After adjusting her hand back to the steering wheel, her flawless face is adorned with a joyful grin. She appears much happier than before.

"What's so funny?"

"You," she responds.

"What about Jeans, Lookmee, Fang... no, the latter one should be called 'Lady Fang' now. Anyway, aren't you worried that I might care more about them?" She added.

I shake my head quickly and elaborate, "Your friends are very close to you, but none of them truly know you. You haven't even shared with them the reason you have a metal implant in your leg or why you quit playing volleyball. You haven't revealed this to your family either. There are only two people who know the truth about you, Kie and me."

"Don't overthink it. Even if I reconnect with Kie, I know where my priorities lie. But I won't go back to her. I despise those who talk behind people's backs."

Initially, I thought she was talking about the day when Kie ambushed her, but then I paused and recalled the fact that Kie tried to harm me, and Four intervened. I decided to ask her directly if 'backbiting' refers to that incident. She nods in agreement, which makes me feel even more guilty for being a factor in their separation. It's no wonder Four sometimes sees me as immature. I can be quite selfish and impulsive at times.

The mood on the way back becomes somewhat somber. We aren't fighting, but there's a sense of dullness because I'm upset with myself. When we arrive home, I head upstairs to grab some cloth bags for our shopping items and help her arrange them in the fridge and on the shelves.

Four takes out two frozen beer cans from the fridge that were placed there yesterday. She invites me, looking a bit worn out, to join her on the terrace. There are two reclining chairs there. I'm still contemplating whether enjoying the beer under the air conditioning or out on the terrace is a better option.

I get my answer as soon as the natural breeze caresses my face. The night air is pleasantly cool outside. Even more captivating is the view. In the distance, I can see Phra Pathom Chedi, Thailand's tallest stupa, illuminated by the lights of the night. It's the most prominent landmark of this province, and during the middle of the month, it becomes quite a tourist attraction due to the variety of food and OTOP products available.

"I never got to admire the view from up here," I admit as I open the chilled beer can, my gaze wandering across the nightlights on the terrace.

"It brings back memories of that day," Four remarks after taking a sip of her beer. "Our first time on the rooftop."

"You kept chasing me away."

"I apologize, but back then, I just needed some time alone."

"Alone... What were you thinking while you were sitting on the edge of the rooftop, drinking so many cans of beer?"

"Loneliness."

"Huh?"

"I felt like I was turning my back on the entire world, living alone on this planet."

"Did you get angry when I came up there?"

"Not really. I was just not accustomed to it."

"Was it better... I mean, when I came to you?"

"Yeah, it was the best!" She playfully elongates her voice. "After that, I didn't go up there for a while. I had some projects and assignments to work on and review. When I did return, I found you asleep with your head tilted on your shoulder. It was adorable."

"You thought I was cute?"

"Yeah, cute enough to make me watch you for a while."

Her lips, which were just sipping beer, curve into a smirk. Oh no! She's making me blush by reminiscing about our past.

"But you never came back."

"Don't tell me you went up there to wait for me!?"

"Oh."

"Let's not dwell on that."

The elegant woman in the reclining chair beside me flicks her tongue; she often does this unconsciously when she's feeling shy or annoyed, and I'm certain that this time it signifies her shyness. Four crosses her arms, her gaze on the not quite full Moon, before steering the conversation in a different direction.

"You know, there was a time I thought my life was meaningless and that I shouldn't have been born in the first place."

"But then volleyball changed your mind, right?"

"No, I felt the will to live even before I joined the club."

"So, what kept you going?"

"Someone in my dreams."

I immediately turn, studying her profile, and then tilt my head, asking her inquisitively, "Someone in your dreams?"

I fire off questions. "Who is this person? Is it a man or a woman? Is it your ideal partner? Do you still dream about them?"

"Can I respond without words?"

"Are you trying to provoke me?"

"Come closer."

"Oh gosh! I didn't mean that!"

I know what she's implying just by looking into her eyes.

"So, are you going to tell me who this person in your dreams is, or should I leave you alone out here?"

Why is she grinning? It's quite exasperating. She tries to detain me, setting her beer can on the ground and turning towards me. Gently, she cradles my face in her hands. She studies my features intensely, her thumb sliding down to my lower lip.

"Someone with lips like these."

She plants kisses up to the bridge of my nose, causing me to instinctively close my eyes.

"This kind of nose."

She tucks a strand of my hair behind my ear and traces its outline.

"These ears, and..."

"E...Enough! Don't try to sweet-talk your way out of this! You can't fool me!"

She releases my face and picks up her beer can, resuming her drink. A smile still graces her lips.

"I'm not sweet-talking or trying to deceive you. I'm merely describing the woman in my dreams."

"Huh? Are you saying that I'm—"

"Yes."

Oh no! I'm utterly stunned!

"At first, I wasn't sure either, but when these dreams became frequent, it was as though they were memories of things that had already taken place... I don't know. In my dreams, I encountered a woman who conveyed love to me through her determined yet resolute gaze."

Could the subconscious mind truly shape such vivid dreams? I'm left to wonder, and I can't help but inquire immediately.

"When did you begin dreaming about me?"

"Probably when I was around 15."

"Were we... well... in your dreams?"

"It was a morning."

She grins once more.

"A morning when we both woke up at the same time. We looked at each other, and it felt as though I had known this girl longer than anyone else."

I keep my head lowered. I understand why she kept having dreams about our future because everything has been happening over and over again. But how do I explain to her that there are people with time-manipulation abilities in this world? I swallow down my thoughts and continue my inquiries with a smooth tone.

"Did you have more dreams after that?"

"Yes, the second dream about you was on the night before my 10th-grade volleyball semi-final match. I saw the same woman crying and saying something."

"What did I say? Can't you recall what I said?"

"I can, but I don't want to repeat it."

"Why not? Please tell me."

Her playful grin gradually turns into a straight line. Four hesitates to answer, prompting me to press further with the same question and a deeper, more serious tone. Eventually, she concedes to the secrecy no longer.

"In my dream, you said, **'Farewell. I'm not hiding from you, but you just can't remember me.'**"

Her words stir restlessness in my heart.

# Chapter XXXIII : Jaravi

## Peingpradabkwan

*The following day...*

The watch dial informs me that it's past seven already, and the sun's rays filter through the window curtains, casting an illumination over the bed sheets.

I've been awake since 2 a.m., lost in thoughts about what my girlfriend told me until morning. Four is still peacefully asleep, holding me just like usual. Her warmth offers a sense of reassurance, but it can't quell the unease in my chest. I've been ruminating incessantly—what could be the reason for me to bid farewell to someone I love so deeply?

That dream...

Even if Four believes it was merely a delusion, I'm certain that it signifies a harsh future awaiting us. Between the day she got stabbed and the day I bid her farewell, which one would come first?

I exhale deeply, hoping to alleviate my stress.

Today is my birthday, and Four would dislike it if my eyes continued to radiate uncertainty and anxiety due to our conversation from last night. I delicately move her arm from my waist, rising to sit for a moment. I glance at the sleeping beauty beside me, lean down to plant a kiss on her cheek, and then head to the bathroom. I need to brush my teeth, wash up, and tame my unruly hair.



*'Keep smiling, Jattawa. You must appear happy in front of Four. After a demanding week, our weekend shouldn't be overshadowed by sadness.'*

Today, she baked a pizza using regular bread for me. Its cheesy topping and crispy edges are sure to help me gain some weight. We share breakfast and watch the news on the couch together. A cup of coffee is thoughtfully placed before me by my caring girlfriend.

"Let's play the game we agreed upon last night. If you lose, we'll head out immediately, alright?" she says as she flips through the front page of the newspaper to read.

"If it's about the car, can we save that discussion for later?"

"Why?"

"If I were to get a car, I'd have to learn how to drive and endure the lengthy lectures to acquire a driver's license. Lately, I've been incredibly busy dealing with cases involving public officials and those that have garnered public attention. Could you please postpone your plan to buy me a car?"

"Well..." Four lets out a slight groan, lost in thought. "If I lose this solitaire game to you, I'll accept your gift regardless. Agreed?"

"Oh gosh! Okay!"

"Thank you so much!"

I kiss my two fingers and touch them to her cheek. She appears a bit displeased, but she still concedes. I left my old motorbike at Four's condominium. She alternates between using it and her Porsche depending on the distance she needs to travel.

Initially, I left it there with the intention of moving back to Bangkok sooner or later, but I ended up where I currently am. In reality, I don't mind using older vehicles. Many motorbikes remain in service for decades.

However, Four deems it too risky. The greater the distance, the more anxious one's heart becomes. So, I yielded to her wishes. That means we don't need to go anywhere today.

At noon, we order a substantial combo of pizza, fried chicken, and spaghetti to devour in front of our big screen TV. We sprawl out on the couch, wrapped in each other's arms, indulging in a Netflix binge. Two pizza meals in one day may be a bit greasy, but they're undeniably delicious. In my younger years, I never dealt with such gastric issues.

Four sets down the candles on our Italian dish. There are 30 of them, signifying my new age. I feel somewhat bashful about growing older, yet I can't help but smile.

"Make a wish," Four prompts me and then launches into the English version of the happy birthday song.

My thoughts gravitate back to our conversation from last night. I strive to keep a smile on my face, although a part of me wants to break down in tears. I close my eyes and silently wish to never be separated from her. Then, I blow out the candles. It takes me two attempts to extinguish all of them.

I must acknowledge that the me from a decade ago could never have imagined the taste of authentic, expensive pizzas. This wasn't a type of cuisine I could freely order and indulge in while consuming entertainment media. My life has undergone a complete transformation.

I have a partner, a professional career, obligations, and responsibilities to meet my clients' expectations. I've become their beacon of hope.

But without my little sister...

**I can't wholeheartedly declare that I live a contented life.**

"Are you missing Vi?" Four asks.

"Huh?" I turn towards her. How is it that she can discern my thoughts just by observing my profile? Her lips aren't curved into a smile, but they seem to imply something.

"You're always like this on your birthdays."

That's true. I bow my head, feeling guilty for dampening the mood again this year. "I apologize, Four."

She offers a faint smile and slowly shakes her head, "No worries."

Last year was no different. I'm so frustrated with myself. I've never managed to become accustomed to the reality that Vi is no longer here. Never... It's as if I'm just going through the motions day by day.

Occasionally, when I pass by a school and catch sight of a girl laughing with her friends, I envision Vi as an overlapping image. I blame myself every birthday, replaying scenarios in my mind.

*If only I had chosen not to go to work...*

*If I had stayed with her, that dreadful incident might never have occurred.*

My mind struggles to absorb the narratives or even the central themes of the American series displayed on the TV with subtitles. I find solace in resting my head on Four's warm shoulder. Her occasional gentle strokes through my hair serve as the only tether grounding me to the present moment.

**Bzzz!**

The phone, left on the transparent glass coffee table before the sofa, emits some vibration. The screen illuminates, notifying me of a received email. Though my current state of mind offers little enthusiasm, I roll my eyes in a lackluster manner and extend my hand to retrieve the phone, suspecting it could be work-related.

Yet, it's not a work-related matter at all. The email originates from an unfamiliar website, its subject bearing an oddly written message.

*[Hello, Jattawa! We're a website that you engaged with in the past.*

*(Almost) ten years ago, you composed an email, and today, our website is delivering it to you as you wished.]*

What on earth is this?

I sit up straight, informing Four that I'm going to refill my coffee mug. My eyes scrutinize the enigmatic email once more. With two mugs of coffee in hand, I detach myself from the cozy couch. As the first two lines yield no significant insights, I decide to delve further.

***[Let's explore the message that your past self wished to convey to your present self:]***

Scrolling down, a lengthy passage unfolds on the screen. The opening line alone sends shivers of shock down my spine.

**"Wa! It's me, Vi! Hehe!"**

Vi... Could it really be you?

*[I penned this email when I was 16, and you were 19, still a university freshman. Someone introduced me to this website that lets us send emails from our past to our future selves, so I thought of sending one to you.*

*Oh! I used the money I earned from my art commission, so don't worry about it! If you're reading this, I guess you've managed to keep your email address unchanged. Are you excited to see me?]*

Unbeknownst to me, tears begin to stream down my cheeks. Her vibrant voice and radiant smile resurface vividly in my mind. Of course, I'm beyond elated to find out who utilized this service to send me an email.

*[As I'm typing this email, you're probably buying a latte for me. :D It feels like you've been away forever! My thirst is finally quenching!*

*Anyway, Sissyyyy is getting it for me. I solemnly swear to gulp down every last drop. You won't find even a tiny bit left at the bottom of the cup.*

*Well, I can't claim to be the harbinger of profound messages, but I really wanted to send you this email on September 15th because I wanted to wish you a happy 30th birthday.*

*I know that by then, I won't be around anymore. I don't know if you're missing me right now, but if my absence brings you sorrow, I hope you'll miss me a little less and embrace your birthday happiness even more. :)*

*This whole pre-writing a birthday wish thing feels rather awkward to me. Anyway, our clever big sister won't have the chance to taste her little sister's cooking on her birthday.*

*All I can do is send my wishes. I wish you a fulfilling professional life. May joy be your constant companion, and may you feast on far healthier fare than the spicy canned fish salad or the fried eggs I used to whip up for you.*

*I wish you a love life as smooth as silk, filled with tenderness and warmth with Four. Ah... What else? My thoughts are running dry. Let's just say—I love you!*

*Thank you so much for everything. You're the most wonderful sister, and I'm sorry for any times I've been a burden. I'm truly grateful for being your sibling.*

*From Jaravi Piengpradabkwan. ]*

My lips involuntarily curl into a smile, mingling with the warmth of tears welling in my eyes.

This email was composed on the day I met Dad. Vi employed a website to send it into the future to now. In every character she typed, she poured her innocence and charm.

I sink down onto the cool kitchen floor, my back finding support against the counter's surface. Despite knowing there's no one on the other end to read it, I type out a response. The email's subject line even cautions against expecting a reply.

*I'm equally glad to have you as my sister.*

*I'll find a way to bring you back. I promise.*

*Until then, Vi.*

*No matter how dark this tunnel might seem, I'll seek out that glimmer of light and navigate through it to change your fate.*

It's been three days since my thirtieth birthday. I've replenished the printer on my office desk with four-color ink. I open the file containing the missing person poster, and there appears the edited image of my father, altered to project him as decades older.

In reality, I had distributed these A4 posters extensively even before my university graduation, but their ineffectiveness had discouraged me. However, this time I won't be disheartened. I tell myself that I can't afford to lose motivation. Somewhere in the past, a girl is waiting for me.

Just last week, I informed my girlfriend of my serious intention to resume the search for my father. This is why, on Monday, Four brought back a stack of posters (approximately 200 sheets) to Bangkok. She offered to assist in putting them up. I was concerned it might disrupt her schedule, so I asked her to do it when it suited her availability.

The poster production consumed all the ink in my printer. I'll need to procure fresh supplies to refill it. My plan is to print them out and join Four this weekend in posting them throughout Bangkok.

Saturday presents a favorable opportunity since it's Four's niece's birthday.

Her niece is actually her stepbrother's daughter. Technically, considering her stepbrother doesn't share a bloodline with the family, one might think,

*'No, this can't be Four's niece.'*

But, in essence, she's just a little kid.

**Bzzz!**

Four: All done. I've put them up everywhere. I also shared them on Twitter and Facebook.

As luck would have it, I sneak a glance at the message and then click the mouse to instruct the printer to produce another 100 sheets. I then grab my phone to respond.

Jattawa: Thanks, Four. Finished with your work?

I've taken the advice from my professor and changed my name on all social media platforms.

Four: Not yet. I have a flight tonight. I'm heading on a business trip to Taiwan.

Jattawa: When will you be back?

Four: Prior to Frame's birthday.

'Frame' is Four's niece, as mentioned earlier. At only four years old, she's quite chatty and fond of conversing with Four.

Four still visits her grandmother at the mansion occasionally, so her ties with that side of the family haven't been completely severed. More significantly, Four's grandmother's dementia appears to be worsening.

Currently, the inheritance and ownership of Four's grandfather's assets have been lawfully distributed among his relatives, including his grandchildren like Film and Four.

How can the wealthy perceive hundreds of millions as ordinary? Four received a sum exceeding 500 million baht, as well as stocks. On that day, she displayed no astonishment upon hearing the figure. It was my eyes that widened, as if I had misheard.



In the evening, I continue my conversation with Four until her flight takes off. I bid her a safe journey. Engaging with Four is what brings a smile to my daily life. As she types,

Four: Talk to you later in Taiwan

I reply with a heart sticker. Just seconds after our chat concludes, a phone call chimes in.

"Hi."

I greet the caller, balancing the phone between my ear and my rising shoulder while preparing a cup of Milo for a nighttime break.

[When will you return to Bangkok, Wa?]

Khun inquires with a tired tone. Let me guess, it's surely about his wife again.

"This Saturday. I need to attend Four's niece's birthday celebration."

[Why haven't you two broken up?]

"What?!" I retort firmly, stirring the Milo powder into the hot water with a small spoon.

Then, he starts discussing his stagnant love life that he's become so weary of. Nung-Ning often jokingly claims behind his back that he's a man who converses with trees. What sets this conversation apart from our previous ones is that, this time, Khun speaks with a sense of seriousness about his impending divorce.

In regard to his roughly 1-year-old child, he expresses his determination to raise the child entirely on his own. I offer my casual support, sensing a heightened level of sincerity from him than before.

As water flows from the shower, I engage in a conversation with Khun over the phone's speaker. We're not engaging in a video call, only a voice call, so it suffices. If you're curious about his occupation, I can inform you that he

has pursued the career path dictated by his father due to familial expectations, even though he's not particularly inclined toward it.

[If I had rejected the woman my father introduced me to, I wouldn't be in this situation. I called him a few days ago, and you know what he said? He claimed to have merely found a potential partner for me but didn't pressure me into marrying her. So, why have I endured this for all these years?]

"Calm down."

[He spoke as if time could be rewound. He completely disregarded my feelings when he said that. It's been years and now I'm more concerned about my son than seeking a new wife.]

"Khun."

[Huh?]

"If you could turn back time and you knew that your child wouldn't be born, would you still choose to change the past?"

[...]

The other end remains silent. For a minute, there's nothing but the sound of flowing water amidst the stillness. Then, a long, deep sigh reaches my ears, followed by a contemplative response.

[I would. How would he feel growing up without his mother? How would he respond to his friends' inquiries?]

"That's not the point, Khun. Growing up with a single father doesn't necessarily lead to a sense of inadequacy. You simply need to be a good parent to him."

[But every child needs both a father and a mother. Otherwise, they might face difficulties as they grow up.]

"No." I calmly counter.

"My sister and I were raised without our parents, and we never worried about societal opinions. Are you concerned that your son will turn into a troublemaker? You're making it sound like every wayward youth lacks a complete family structure."

My thoughts flow into a lecture to my best friend. After all, I'm technically an orphan too.

"It's all up to you. Your responsibility is to be a good father..."

[But I'm not confident in my ability to be a good father!!]

He interjects as though confessing a sin.

[Alright, I admit it. I'm afraid my son will have a tumultuous upbringing because I lack self-assurance in my parenting skills. Dealing with children is not my forte. I struggle to focus. It's my fault for bringing him into this world.]

Listening to him, I now fully grasp his predicament. His concern lies not only in being a single father but in the fact that he wasn't prepared for parenthood from the outset. I switch off the shower after completing my wash and drape a towel around myself. Holding my phone, I address him through it.

"Understood."

[Huh? What do you mean?]

"If I had the power to go back in time, I assure you, I'd guide you onto a different path."

Khun falls into silence for reasons unknown. He might be perplexed or interpreting my words as dark humor. However, I genuinely contemplate the notion. If time could indeed be rewound, I would unequivocally alter his destiny. I'd advise him to follow his passions and pursue his desired career. It's disheartening to see him so discontented with his present life.

Could I truly turn back time?

Something within me insists that I can. Those instances of déjà vu serve as concrete proof. Only if I can locate my father, he might possess the ability to alter the course of events.

But then, if he truly had that power, why didn't he take action or at least make an appearance ever since the day Vi passed away? This perplexes me. Not to mention his abandonment of us, forcing us to fend for ourselves. He even fled when he encountered me.

[What are you up to?]

Khun's inquiry jolts me out of my reverie while I sit on my bed. I snap back to reality. As you're aware, my speaking has waned day by day.

"I'm getting ready to work."

[During these hours?]

"The caseload is overwhelming."

[Take a break. Are you some kind of superhuman? You aced the bar exam in a year, and now you're toiling so relentlessly! If you were a pilot, you'd probably be a captain by now!]

"You're exaggerating."

[I'm not. You're an incredibly strong woman. By the way... What role does Four play in your life? How have you two managed to stay together for so long?]

"You shouldn't generalize like that."

[Even though I have a child with my wife, I still contemplate ending our relationship. So, is it truly feasible for love to endure?]

"Is it that love can't persist, or is it that you haven't yet discovered the love of your life? Some couples are fortunate enough to share a love that spans their entire lives."

Khun opts not to engage further tonight, citing a headache.

Consequently, he veers the conversation toward trivial topics like *'Have you eaten?'*, *'What did you eat?'*, and *'What time do you go to bed?'* I respond as much as I desire.

As the hour grows late and dizziness sets in, I adjust the bedroom temperature, switch off the lights, and announce to the phone that I'll retire to bed within ten minutes. Thus, he bids me goodnight and allows me to leave the conversation. I nestle into the bed.

In the encompassing darkness, I yearn for Four's presence. Calculating the time difference, she might not yet have returned to Thailand. It would be an imposition to call her now.

Separated by time zones, I find myself longing for her companionship. I'm admittedly a bit spoiled. The last time, she drove all the way from Bangkok to cook me dinner. However, this time around, I can't allow that to happen again. She has her own pressing matters to attend to. I close my eyes and whisper to the inner child within me...

Four is working. Saturday. Five hours ago, Four's flight took off. She returned to her condominium to retrieve her beloved Porsche and is scheduled to pick me up in Nakhon Pathom around 4 pm.

This morning, I purchased a birthday gift for her niece, a plushie suit. I've learned that Frame has a special fondness for her bunny plushie, which she

carries with her wherever she goes.

I've prepared myself, donning an outfit that combines casual and formal elements. The top is a haute couture, cream-colored blouse with a Peter Pan collar, while the bottom is a light-brown knee-length skirt, cinched with a silver belt.

Having taken a final glance at myself in the mirror, I receive Four's call indicating her arrival in front of my apartment. I swiftly grab the gift and my bag, slip into the light-shade court shoes, lock the door, and descend the stairs.

My intense loathing for her stepmother remains unshaken, so much so that I could wager my life on it. This enduring contempt causes me to always wear a poker face whenever our paths cross. Even after a decade, my disdain for her hasn't diminished in the slightest.

"You look quite disheveled,"

Is how I choose to greet my girlfriend, her eyes adorned with dark circles that speak of little rest. A closer examination of her visage reveals the evidence of her ongoing fatigue.

"I'm thinking of retiring and resting on a bed made of banknotes."

"Why not open a bubble tea shop?"

"There are already too many of those around."

As the car navigates the outskirts, we engage in a lengthy conversation. This route is often congested with trolleys, a situation that occasionally triggers my apprehension. However, Four remains remarkably unfazed, her fearless disposition evident.

"Are you exhausted? You haven't taken a proper break this past week?"

Upon my inquiry, Four responds with an enigmatic grin, prompting me to arch an eyebrow and voice my curiosity.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing." She playfully drags her voice.

"I just appreciate it. Everyone else pushes me forward, but you're the only one who asks about my well-being. I want to thank you for that. Just being with you brings me comfort."

A rosy hue instantly adorns my cheeks, and I can't suppress the smile that tugs at my lips.

"I also want to express my gratitude for assisting me in distributing all those posters to find my father."

"My pleasure."

I have yet to reveal Vi's email from the past to her. Initially, I had considered wiping away my tears and sharing the content with her.

However, if she inquires into how Vi was aware of her premature demise, I won't be able to divulge the truth, such as the unique powers I once possessed. Given the fantastical nature of those abilities and the fact that I've 'used to' possess them, I opt to withhold this information from her.

This stands as my solitary secret that I've yet to disclose to Four. Likewise, Four likely harbors her own concealed truth.

**Bzzz!**

Sitting in the car for a while longer, a message arrives from an unfamiliar Facebook user. While I'm not typically enthusiastic about messages from strangers, I read each one to ascertain their intent.

However, this time, the words sent by user devoid of a profile picture quicken my heart rate dramatically.

???: I'm the one who messaged you earlier.

???: Please come to see me. I have something important to tell you. **It's about your sister.**



# Chapter XXXIV : The Last Riddle

On the elegant long table in the dining hall, an array of dishes is meticulously and artfully arranged. At the table's center rests a 3-pound chocolate cake adorned with four candles, each symbolizing a year of the young birthday girl's life.

The room's lights are dimmed, and all the adults join in singing the traditional 'Happy Birthday' song, their voices filling the space. Seated at the head of the table is Frame, the birthday girl.

I clap along with the rhythm, forcing a smile despite the turmoil within me caused by the mysterious message I received about my late sister.

During our drive to Bangkok, I confided in Four about it. She advised me to take screenshots of the conversation and store them securely. I questioned the sender with inquiries like '*Who are you?*' and '*What do you want?*', but they evaded direct answers via social media.

Instead, they insisted on meeting in person and instructed me to set up an appointment.

Both Four and I decided to play along, planning to meet this mysterious individual tomorrow. Since we are in Bangkok, staying overnight and meeting with them is not a significant inconvenience.

We've arranged to meet at a café at 10 am. The sender agreed to this arrangement but initially insisted that I come alone. However, I was reluctant to meet a stranger without someone accompanying me, so I convinced him to allow Four to join as well.

Despite the sumptuous cake and the assortment of dishes before me, I find it difficult to calm my racing thoughts. Four seems to sense my unease and offers comfort by gently squeezing my hand. Her gesture does bring some solace, and I express my gratitude with a glance—*Thank you for being by my side.*

Four's stepbrother, Film, appears to be in high spirits, especially when in the company of his lively daughter. His wife sits attentively beside their daughter, ensuring her neat consumption of cake. Frame's eyes widen with delight as she gazes upon the mountain of presents from her family and other attendees.

Only her great-grandmother, the most senior member of the family, has left the table to rest. Her deteriorating memory seems to prevent her from recognizing Frame. I heard that she denied the girl's existence because she had never seen her before. It's a somber note amidst the celebration.

Madam Waran, Four's less-than-friendly stepmother, assists Frame in expressing gratitude to each gift giver. Frame herself is a delightful and well-behaved child. She's already changed into her pajamas, her cotton hat complementing her bedtime attire. Twin pigtails secured with navy blue ribbons frame her face, and she cradles a white bunny plushie adorned with a flowery skirt in her arms.

When it's my turn to present my gift, the little girl eagerly unwraps the package, revealing the blue jean dungarees for her beloved bunny plushie. Her eyes light up with excitement, and she promptly thanks me without needing a reminder from her grandmother. I nod in response, my own smile mirroring her happiness. I'm relieved that she appreciates my gift.

Four's stepmother shoots me a brief glance, a momentary exchange that communicates more than words. She then prompts Frame to open the present from Four. Given that Four has just returned from Taiwan, I noticed a paper bag in the car trunk, presumably filled with souvenirs for me (she always brings something back for me) and a gift for Frame's birthday.

This present, I deduce, must be imported from overseas. I hazard a guess that it might be a music box or perhaps Taiwanese bubble tea.

"Auntie Four!" Frame exclaims in sheer surprise upon opening the white box adorned with red ribbons.

"It's a treasure box!!"

My curiosity is piqued by her exuberant reaction. As she removes the contents from the box, I'm taken aback to find a three-tiered case filled with 120 colors of a renowned art supply brand.

*I see... Children are often more enamored by an assortment of colorful pencils than anything else. She's so enthralled that she refers to it as a treasure box.*

Such an item never held much appeal for me. It was only Vi who was enchanted by such things, longing for what we couldn't afford back then.

*Vi... I find myself missing her once again.*

"Auntie Four! You're the best! Now I have the biggest color set in my class!"

"Fantastic. Just make sure you don't lose any of them, alright?"

Frame's grin widens. "I won't! And if anyone wants to borrow mine, I'll charge them 5 baht each!"

Well, this girl certainly has an entrepreneurial spirit!

Madam Waran clears her throat slightly. "Frame, remember to thank your aunt properly. Don't forget your manners."

Following this gentle reminder, the young girl offers her heartfelt gratitude to her aunt, her voice bubbling with enthusiasm. She carefully places the gift back into its box and efficiently organizes all her presents into a sizable cloth bag, resembling Santa's sack of gifts.

The woman with malicious intent assists her niece, creating a heartwarming scene. It's evident that this family has raised the child well. Frame is adept at using tablets, yet she isn't consumed by them. She's an aspiring artist who

enjoys drawing and painting. Four told me that Frame often delves into old family photo albums.

**The more I observe her, the more I see traces of Vi within her.**

Suddenly, Four, who has been holding my hand, glances at her phone and then addresses me,

"Wa, can you stay here for a moment? I'll be back soon."

"Of course," I reply.

"Just give me ten minutes," she says before rising from her seat and planting a quick kiss on my temple.

As Four walks away, an awkward feeling starts to settle in. I was here on Frame's previous birthday as well, yet the unease remains.

Film's wife, seated across from me, offers a smile, and naturally, I respond with one. I notice that after assisting Frame, the enigmatic woman informs the group that she has something to attend to and heads towards the mansion's left wing—the same direction Four took.

*Please, no.*

I silently hope that nothing untoward occurs. I swiftly rise from my seat, excusing myself politely to visit the restroom. While I may lack any supernatural powers to extricate Four from this situation, I'm determined to do whatever I can to protect her from this woman. In the hallway leading to the garden, a voice dripping with fury and clenched teeth rings out:

"My granddaughter called me a '*murderer*' a few days ago. What did you tell her?"

Two figures stand facing each other, but their bodies are slightly apart. I halt my steps and press my back against the wall, eavesdropping on their conversation. It's as I suspected—they have something to discuss!

"I didn't return home to plant malicious ideas in my innocent niece's mind," my girlfriend retorts icily.

"You're always at home, never working due to your revoked medical license. How did you mold your own niece into a mirror image of your weaknesses?"

"That's quite enough of your smart retorts."

"Why not? Are you planning to revert to your old ways? You, with your filthy hands."

If she starts berating my girlfriend, I won't hesitate to intervene and protect Four. Yet, Madam Waran remains silent, and I can only hear the sound of their breathing. There's a pause before she speaks, her tone tinged with hopelessness.

"You don't understand. I'm grappling with something beyond my comprehension. My niece was destined to bear the 'Narawattanavech' family name."

"Everything was fine until you appeared. Just forget about the past. If I had known you'd turn out to be so humble, never seeking stocks or taking legal action... Film, I wouldn't have gone down that path."

"So, you're going to pretend everything is fine...? What about the victim?"

"You should be grateful to that girl who paid the price in your stead."

**"How despicable..."** Four's voice trembles, mirroring the agitation coursing through me. "So, you admit that you orchestrated this."

"Are you recording this conversation?"

Why does her voice carry a tone of indifference?

"That's ridiculous. Quit relying on childish tactics. Focus on the present. Who would care about a mere stranger?"

Then, she utters an "Hmm" as if recalling something. "Or could it be because she's more than just a girl next door?"

"Oh, you bastard girl... You've been nothing but a thorn in our side since your mother dumped you here, burdening our family with your presence. I should feel sorry for you, I suppose. You've undergone countless DNA tests just to be reluctantly accepted into this family. You've never been introduced publicly and somehow ended up partially disabled. A mere kick and you'd crumble."

Enough is enough!

"Then go ahead."

Before I intervene, Four's determined voice rises, challenging the woman before her.

"If you dare to indulge in any of your twisted tendencies, be prepared to face the consequences." Four's shadowy figure edges closer.

"I'm not recording this conversation, but you're deluding yourself if you think that matters. I'm aware that your crimes can't be pinned down through words alone, and you have an extensive network of connections." She inches even closer.

"However, never forget who holds the power over your son and granddaughter's destiny, the woman you so eloquently refer to as the 'bastard girl' standing before you."

"You!"

"I know that you're powerless now. You're on the verge of becoming someone who needs a caretaker due to the symptoms you've meticulously documented in your diary... the same diary you had a psychiatrist analyze for you."

Clearly, this revelation has left the venomous woman speechless. Her fury seems to have rendered her incapable of uttering a single word.

"Listen closely. I could charge you with numerous offenses—tampering with autopsy reports, engaging in adultery, and falsely presenting someone else as your husband's child, enabling your relatives to commit fraud within our company, and..."

Four hesitates, possibly avoiding the mention of the mysterious man who could be a significant witness in Vi's murder case.

"Let's just say, I won't take immediate action. Instead, I want to witness you constantly grappling with fear. I want you to experience the torment that my father and my younger self went through... **along with an innocent girl!**"

With those final words, she concludes her statement.

"Oh! About what Frame called you a murderer, correct? Perhaps it's time to restrict her access to those melodramatic soap operas on the free TV channels."

11th Floor, Four's Condominium.

This marks only my third visit to Four's condominium since assuming my role as a public prosecutor in the Northern region.

Everything remains as it was, except for the addition of a large framed picture on the living room wall. It depicts me in my graduation gown and Four, who presented me with balloons. We had a professional photographer capture that moment.

Frankly, I never anticipated she would retrieve the digital file to display it on the wall. It harks back to the old days, and that evokes a sense of bashfulness within me.

"Milo." Four hands me a white mug, its sweet aroma drifting up. I shift my focus from the picture to thank her, taking the mug of hot chocolate. I sip it leisurely as I trail her to the bedroom.

"I overheard your conversation with that woman," I begin, having thought about what to say during our car ride. "Aren't you worried about her? She seems like she might be plotting something devious."

Four retrieves another pillow from a drawer and nonchalantly shrugs, as if it's of little concern.

"Admittedly, she has Pak as her lawyer, ready to turn the tables in her favor. But I'm certain she won't. She's powerless against us."

"Is that insight from the diary?"

"More or less."

"Now spill the beans."

"Just a woman consumed by extreme anxiety, spiraling into the depths of madness. She's concocted numerous convoluted schemes, but now, in her advancing years, she's haunted by the fear of making mistakes."

She playfully places a towel on top of my head.

"Why don't you hop into the shower? I'll set out some clothes. Let's put my ludicrous stepmother out of our minds."

"Alright, I'll be in the bathtub." I tiptoe to plant a kiss on Four's cheek.

While I'm still apprehensive about the woman's instability, if Four asserts it's of no consequence, I'm inclined to believe her.



In Four's condominium, there's a spacious bathtub that comfortably accommodates both of us. We can sit face to face without feeling cramped.

I create a layer of frothy bubbles across the water's surface—they're white and plush. If I were Vi, I'd have fun playing with them, fashioning whimsical formations on my head and face.

After a few moments, Four, already clad only in her underwear after shedding her trousers and shirt, enters the room. She grins at my modesty amidst the bubbles. At this point, I'm no longer embarrassed. It's amusing to observe her as she disrobes, unveiling her nakedness.

"Care for a lap to sit on?" Four inquires as she occupies the opposite side of the bathtub. I grin, subconsciously scratching my cheek in an attempt to alleviate my bashfulness, and shake my head.

"No, why are you teasing me?" My tone carries a playful undertone, bordering on provocation.

Whenever we share a shower or bath, Four invariably envelops me from behind, regardless of what we're doing, standing or sitting. If she's in a mischievous mood, she enjoys tickling my waist, prompting me to squirm within her embrace. If she volunteers to wash me, that often harbors some ulterior motive. She's a true trickster.

Failing to convince me to sit on her lap, she relents and shifts the conversation to the mysterious guy who messaged me in the evening. She's wary of him, and naturally, so am I.

"But I'm not afraid since you're coming with me."

"My lovely bunny, I'm not Wonder Woman."

"I know. You're accompanying me because you want to protect me. And just having you beside me puts me at ease."

"You're making me blush, honey."

I pull a comical face, conveying my disbelief. Yet, a memory suddenly surfaces, wiping the smile off my face. Right, there's something else I want to discuss.

"While speaking with your stepmom, you mentioned a diary. I had no idea you kept one."

Four's lips form a surprised 'O' as if to say, "Oh, that thing."

"I don't write in it regularly, just occasionally."

"So, it's more like a journal for significant events."

"Not exactly... It's not quite that kind of journal."

I let the bubbles cascade over my left arm, maintaining eye contact. I inquire, "Then, what kind of diary is it?"

"Do you really want to know?" Her tone is overly serious as she seeks confirmation from me.

"Do you have a secret that's too embarrassing to reveal?"

"If it makes you think I'm a pervert, then yes, it is scary."

"Now I'm intrigued. I want to read it too." My mischievous gaze is directed at her, while my hand playfully dives into the water, gently stroking her thigh.

"Come on, bunny. Sit on my lap."

"Let's save that for tomorrow."

"What are you thinking? I'm not planning anything strange. I just want to help you bathe."

"Oh, really..." My voice trails off, my cheeks warming with embarrassment for overthinking the situation.

I stall for a moment, evading the inevitable, before finally shifting onto her lap. Four's poker face is on display, but her eyes gleam with mischief. My back nestles against her warm, bare chest. I can sense the subtle rise of her arousal, but I've grown accustomed to her touch from behind. It makes me feel secure. I snuggle against her left shoulder tenderly. I momentarily forget that my wriggling might provoke her, as she suppresses her desires. I hope she won't retaliate by tickling my waist as much as possible.

"If we're too dressed up, it'll make us stand out and attract unnecessary notice."

"Oh... you're quite clever!"

Four grins briefly. "I am a marketing manager."

"Who also happens to love bunnies?"

"Yes, particularly a bunny who remains naughty even in the bath." Four's voice is a soft flirtation.

She leans down to place a gentle kiss on my cheek, but she doesn't venture further into intimate territory. She never pushes or coerces me into physical intimacy. That's one of the many things I adore about her.

Tonight, it seems our bath has turned into an unusually prolonged affair. It takes us a while to make our way back to the plush, expansive bed.

Adjacent to our bedroom is a terrace, separated only by a glass door and light blue curtains. This bedroom feels somewhat grandiose in comparison to my apartment.

I recline on the bed and gently rub my slightly bloated belly, awaiting Four, who is busying herself with opening envelopes. The pile includes utility bills, monthly phone statements, and other correspondence. Swiftly and effortlessly, she retrieves her phone and uses internet banking to settle the bills. The papers are then neatly filed away in a drawer, and her attention shifts back to me.

"Tomorrow, let's dress casually when we meet that man."

"Why? What's your theory?" I tilt my head, my curiosity piqued. "I don't think he'll come dressed formally to meet us and draw attention. He'll likely try to appear as—"

"Hey, not sleeping?"

"I'm waiting for the diary."

"So, you haven't forgotten."

"I have a feeling it's connected to me in some way."

Her words spark my curiosity. The tall figure in navy blue pajamas joins me, sitting on the bed. She unlocks the drawer next to the bed, and my interest is piqued. Curiously leaning forward, I try to catch a glimpse of its contents. Inside, numerous red diaries are neatly stored, nearly ten of them. She gathers all of them and places them on her pillow.

"You can read them chronologically, from the first to the last. The one at the bottom is the earliest volume, and the top one is the most recent entry I made ten years ago."

Taking the diary from beneath the others, I examine its worn, red cover.

"But if you haven't updated them for so long, why were you concerned about leaving it at your grandmother's mansion?"

"I don't know. Sometimes, when we stumble upon things that might be related to our secrets, our conscience tends to make us overly cautious. I happened to sneak my diary in without realizing."

"I see..."

I refrain from pressing further but shift to a cross-legged position.

"Could I read your diaries until late tonight?"

"Trust me, it won't take you more than ten minutes."

Initially, I'm intrigued by the mixture of emotions in her smile, but I playfully respond with a mischievous grin. She reclines on her side of the bed, engrossed in an English novel she's halfway through. We both value each other's personal space. I focus my attention on the diary in my hands and turn to the first page.

"Become a starter. Become a starter. Become a starter..."

These words repeat on the first page as if she's been practicing calligraphy in an elementary Thai class. My brow furrows as I look over at my girlfriend, who is engrossed in her book yet sporting a slightly embarrassed smile. '

*Becoming a starter'* must relate to volleyball, perhaps her aspiration to become a starting player on her volleyball team. Yes, that seems likely. This phrase continues for the next few pages before giving way to a new entry. *'Kie becomes a starter too.'*

Clearly, this diary is more of a wishing journal. It appears to have been written during her high school years, the peak of her involvement in volleyball. The wish for Kie the Betrayer spans just one page.

"After that, Kie... um... did that to you?"

I ask, my gaze not leaving the diary.

"Yes."

"How many entries did you make in a single day?"

"It varied based on my mood. I stopped when I felt sleepy."

"Why did you think of using a diary for making wishes?"

And, remarkably, these wishes seem to have come true! She stays focused on her novel.

"I saw it in a movie. The main character had a red, magical diary. Everything she wrote in it became reality."

"I believe it's more due to our efforts."

I smile and refocus on the next page. A new wish catches my eye.

**"Able to walk again."**

This entry must have been made after she had a metal implant in her leg. I attempt to visualize it and feel a pang of sadness.

A high school girl betrayed by a friend, injured, and robbed of her dream future. As I read, my heart aches for her. It's truly heartbreaking. The desire for her leg to heal returns in subsequent entries, spanning volumes two through six.

These diaries document the pain she experienced due to her physical condition. Unable to run or jump, she had to skip PE classes during her freshman year. The wish in volume seven is for her to play volleyball again, but as we know, that dream never comes true.

And then, the last volume, the eighth volume...

**"Jattawa."**

My name appears in the diary. On every page. Throughout the entire journal. I turn the pages quickly, rereading everything, but only my name is present.

"Why..."

I turn to her, opening the diary as I question her.

"Why..."

"Because I love you." Her direct answer leaves me momentarily speechless. "I started writing your name when I realized I was getting interested in someone I barely knew."

A joyful glint fills her eyes. "On what day did I ask for your name?"

*"What's your name?"*

*"Jattawa... Why do you ask?"*

*"I'm just curious."*

A memory from a decade ago replays in my mind. Back then, she threw a bag of luxury clothes at me and demanded my name in her commanding tone. She was quite the boss. But did she really open the door twice just to ask for my name because...

Her voice interrupts my racing thoughts.

"Can't a villain like me fall in love and make wishes?"

My eyes widen. I quickly shake my head.

"No, I mean! It wouldn't mean that much to you."

"As I said, my feelings for you have been building since you stopped me from joining the race."

She wasn't losing her mind; we had formed connections countless times. Even if we can't remember them all, they still reside deep within us. While I hide my face, the book in her hands is bookmarked by a postcard and then gently closed. She edges closer to me.

"Why does my little bunny think she doesn't matter much to me?"

"Because even though everyone told me I had a cute smile, they all ignored me during the Prince and Princess Contest."

"But I didn't just like your smile. Because I like and love everything about you."

She...

"And I can embrace all your weaknesses."

I'm a 30-year-old woman, clutching my blanket to keep my shyness at bay. If I were to meet her gaze right now, I'd probably melt away. Her hand reaches out, lowering the diary in my hand, and in a brief moment, she steals a kiss. The minty taste of toothpaste lingers.

"Let's get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow is a big day for you. Don't forget."

Why is she so warm, gentle, kind, and dependable?

"Ah... yeah."

The most wonderful woman holds me close, as she does every night we're together. I rest my face against her warm chest, hearing her breath and the rhythm of her heartbeat in harmony. My mind is split in two directions. At times, I yearn to revisit the past; at other times, I'm content with the present.

But there's a fear... the fear that even a slight alteration to the past might mean she would not be mine. I reassure myself that I, Jattawa, will make sure to safeguard both of my precious treasures.

"I don't hide anything from you anymore."

I snuggle even closer to her, my thoughts racing. But then, she throws an unexpected question my way.

**"What about you? Do you have any secrets you've been keeping from me?"**

A secret...

Like the fact that I used to possess the power to manipulate time? Why has she brought this up all of a sudden?

My heart begins to race faster than before, anxiety dominating my thoughts.

*Does she have some suspicion about my past abilities?*



# Chapter XXXV : A Father's Heart

On another September morning, I find myself struggling with insomnia as my thoughts continue to race. Four's probing question has left me uneasy, wondering if she has somehow uncovered a confidential secret. I alternate between deep contemplation and moments of drowsiness, only to be jolted awake by the sun's rays filtering through the curtains.

"Umm..."

The woman wrapped around me mumbles, her eyes squinting against the sunlight. Four adjusts her position, pulling me closer. Her face nuzzles into my neck, her nose tickling me.

I raise my hand to endure the sensation before turning over to wake her. But Four's eyes are already open; she notices that her movement has roused me and offers a gentle forehead kiss accompanied by an apologetic look. I throw off the blanket and rise to greet the new day.

The tall figure of Four heads to the bathroom for her morning routine. I stretch on the bed before following suit. Standing together in front of the full-length mirror, she finishes brushing her teeth and reminds me:

"Don't forget to dress casually."

"Yeah," I respond with an unclear voice, my toothbrush still busy.

"By the way... about your question last night, asking if I had any secrets. Why did that come up?"

As she undresses, Four answers in her usual tone, "Why not? Can't I have a moment of self-indulgence, just like you secretly liked me right from the

beginning?"

Ah, I see. I had assumed she might be suspecting my special abilities.

"Well, that's true," I murmur as toothpaste bubbles form. "I fell in love with you the moment you showcased your confidence."

"That's quite bold," She teases, discarding her top and starting to remove her pants.

"It's self-preservation."

"I beg to differ. I've heard you have a tendency to stand up against others."

"So, you're probably relieved I'm coming with you today."

Finally, a smile breaks through my nervousness after the long night.

"Exactly."

The appointed time has arrived. Four and I find ourselves seated at a corner table in a quiet cafe. We're on the same side, and her grip on my hand steadies my restless feet, a habit of mine whenever I'm excited or anxious.

**Bzzz!**

???: Tell the woman beside you to move to another table.

A message from the enigmatic man furrows my brows. Swiftly, I type back a response.

Jattawa Wa: No, I don't trust you. If you're nearby and can observe us, come over and sit down. I'm fine with bringing my girlfriend along, just as we agreed yesterday. And if you're a criminal, you should have noticed my uniform in my Facebook profile picture.

Growing impatient with the charade, I adopt a more assertive tone. It seems to work, as after a brief pause, the cafe's door chimes to announce a new customer's arrival. Clad in black and wearing a mask, a man of our age

proceeds to order a drink before seamlessly taking a seat at our table on the opposite side.

"Do you recognize me?" He casts a nervous glance at both Four and me, his posture tense.

"Take off the mask," Four demands.

"No."

"How are we supposed to identify you then?"

"Ms. Prosecutor," The suspicious man shifts his attention to me, his voice urgent. "Can't you recall me at all? I used to live next door in that apartment... I witnessed... well, your girlfriend kissing your forehead in the parking lot at night."

"During our university years?" I query, eyebrows furrowing. "Are you referring to our time as students?"

"Yes, you were wearing student uniforms. You wore them often, while your girlfriend didn't."

"Let's get to the point," Four interjects, her composed tone a shield for me.

Hearing her voice, the man fidgets nervously, mirroring my habit. He bows his head, eyes shut, as if weighed down by guilt. "Your sister didn't commit suicide."

"I know." Both Four and I respond in unison.

"Well, naturally, you must know your sister better than anyone. But what I want to convey is... the man who took your sister's life..."

**Please drop those dramatic pauses!**

"...is the same person who pretended to be my friend!"

"So, you're the witness who lied to the police to shield that damned murderer?!" I involuntarily exclaim.

Thankfully, it's not too loud, and no one seems to have noticed. My eyes widen, and my grip on Four's hand loosens; it curls into a fist to restrain my urge to pummel this wretch sitting before me.

This man... I can vividly recall that day. During the testimony, he claimed to be an acquaintance of the suspect, insisting the suspect had merely visited him to borrow something. But his nervous demeanor back then was hardly that of someone telling the truth.

And now, here he sits, directly in front of me. If I still possessed control over time, I'd freeze everything and slam his head forcefully onto the table, matching the intensity of his deceitful lies.

"Please, don't stare at me like that."

I sneak a glance at Four, who's on my right-hand side. I notice she's shooting him an intense, cross-armed gaze. She's simply handling this situation more composedly than I am.

"Continue." She orders, her voice carrying the weight of my anger.

"Well... at the time, I was struggling with my tuition fees."

"And that's your excuse?" Four inquires.

"Ms. Prosecutor, please hear me out. My financial difficulties were real because my father diverted my tuition fees for something else. That part is true. However, my reason for accepting money to be a false witness was due to a threatening call from a woman."

A waitress arrives, serving his coffee and smiling at all of us, inquiring if we need anything else. I quickly shake my head to signal her to leave, hoping to continue our conversation in private.

The young waitress seems oblivious to the implications and dutifully wipes the spilled liquid from the table, while an air of darkness and silence

envelops our table. It's only after she departs that the man takes a sip of his coffee and resumes his confession.

"Her threats weren't explicit, but her tone made me feel like disagreeing would lead to something terrible happening to me."

"Do you know who she is?" Four inquires.

"No, I'm not even sure how she got any number. Probably through my Facebook account, as it was linked to my phone number. She instructed me to coordinate with another guy to fabricate a story. His name is Sak. He gave me some cash and the details I needed to report to the police. He admitted to killing the wrong person. He also warned me that if I ever revealed the truth to anyone, he'd eliminate me too."

His grip on the coffee cup trembles. Fear prevents him from meeting anyone's gaze. "It's been a decade. I've managed to put him and that incident behind me. The nightmares have stopped."

"Then why did you reach out to me?" I struggle to suppress my anger as I question him.

"I'm getting married and moving to another country."

**"Wow! So, congratulations!"**

I can't help the sarcasm dripping from my words.

"So, you're getting married and living your happily ever after. Is that why you decided to send a wedding invitation to someone who unfairly lost her sister? How wonderful! I'm so genuinely thrilled for you!"

"Wait, that's not what I meant." He rushes to defend himself, hearing the bitterness in my voice. The masked man lifts his gaze, regret etched in his eyes.

"What I'm trying to convey is that I no longer have to fear being murdered in this country. That's why... I'm coming clean with you."

Inside, I'm far from being alright. With Four's stepmother's strategic maneuver, I'm left unsure of my next steps. When I propose that he becomes a witness for us, hoping to reopen the case (with potential assistance from my provincial prosecutor), he promptly declines.

"I'm here to confess my wrongdoing. Just a confession to you. Otherwise, I'd be in serious trouble!"

"What about my sister? She never received justice. You're the only one who can point out the murderer, so why are you so selfish?"

"But your sister is already dead! Even if the court found out who murdered her, it wouldn't bring her back to life!"

"You!"

"Jattawa." Four's interruption prevents me from hurling more heated words at him. She turns to me, using her expressive eyes to convey that she'll handle the intense conversation. Then, she shifts her attention to him, reminding me of a critical point.

"He's not a reliable witness."

Her voice remains as composed as ever.

"He's a stranger who surfaced a decade after the public prosecutor issued a non-prosecution order. There's no evidence of financial transactions or conversations between him and Sak. It's futile to expect him to be a credible witness."

Well... that's a valid point. Sudden appearances of witnesses aren't uncommon. They might grab public attention but often have little impact on the case.

"That woman who threatened you might not even exist," Four probes him.

**"Or perhaps, you might actually be the real murderer."**

"No, it's not me! Otherwise, why would I confess?" He retorts.

"I'm trying to understand that," The elegant woman remarks, her tone laced with a hint of sarcasm as she stares at the masked man unflinchingly. **"Or maybe you inadvertently left behind some evidence..."**

"I already told my friend what happened after I was threatened by that woman!"

"By what means did you communicate this to your friend?"

"Chat messages."

"Then provide us with the evidence."

Four's tactics and enthusiasm for pressuring him are impressive. I can't help but admire her skills in handling this situation. However, the man claims the chat records are on his old Facebook account and that he's forgotten the password.

"Damn it! I shouldn't have tried to play nice and talk to you before my wedding. Those are the wrong paths!" He curses under his mask, a clear display of his frustration.

"You're only making yourself look more suspicious," my girlfriend taunts him.

"Like I said, I chose the wrong path." He turns to us with a stern expression. "Fine, I'll show my sincerity by giving you my email address to access that Facebook account, along with any passwords that might come to mind."

"What's stop you from giving us false passwords?"

"Ms. Prosecutor's girlfriend, you're making baseless accusations," he retorts.

"What was your intention when you contacted Jattawa? Did you plan to confess, apologize, and then leave this cafe with a clear conscience?"

"It's a confession."

"What's the point of confessing when you've consistently refused to cooperate with us? Is it just for your own peace of mind?"

The man falls silent after Four's pointed statement strikes home. He lets out a deep breath and nods.

"You're right... I might be selfish, but I still wanted to tell your girlfriend the truth and apologize to her in person."

And that confession stirs a faint flutter in my heart.

*'What should I do?'*

I gaze out the window from my seat next to the driver's. We're entering Nakhon Pathom, en route back to my apartment and the impending cycle of weekly responsibilities beginning tomorrow. Lost in thought, I inadvertently drift away. Four is likely pondering too, as she remains silent.

"I could make my stepmom reveal the truth, but I fear it might not be substantial enough to serve as evidence, especially given her current psychological diagnosis results."

"I understand."



"I apologize." Unexpectedly, the chauffeur chimes in, though it's not her fault. "This is all because of me."

"Please don't blame yourself. As I said, the culprits are the mastermind and the murderer, not someone who nearly became a victim herself."

Over the past decade, I've come to realize that this woman carries the burden of believing it's all her fault. She avoids violent scenes in movies, shuns news of deaths in newspapers, and can't even read novels featuring gruesome content. Within her, a profound vulnerability has grown, constantly convincing herself that my little sister died in her stead. It's a misconception, a significant one.

Amidst the soft notes of a piano melody, we allow ourselves to be enveloped by silence. Outside, the sky is darkening. It's around 5 p.m., and the day is rather overcast.

Public vans and trucks share the road with us, heading toward the same destination. My fear of these vehicles slips my mind as I ponder what to discuss with my provincial prosecutor. A hint of dizziness creeps in. If he refuses to help and instead ushers me back to work, it wouldn't sit well with me. I'm not sure. Asking for help isn't my strong suit, unless it's from Four.

Their thoughts have always appeared as black and white to me, and I've never truly valued them over the years.

Tomorrow marks Monday, the onset of yet another mundane week. A stack of hefty case reports adorns my desk, administrative officers gossip incessantly, my role as a state lawyer involves mediating between a public official and the community over abuse of power, and there's a farewell party for an intern at 8 pm.

Just mentally listing these tasks makes me queasy. I shut my eyes, resting my head against the cushion of my seat. Suddenly, a gentle touch graces my lap. I open my eyes and find my cherished rabbit neck pillow. Four has placed it there for me.

"Thank you."

I drape it around my neck, close my eyes, and let the fatigue that's accumulated since last night embrace me.

*'If you can also see visions like Vi, why didn't you tell us about my father? Why did you leave us like that?'*

For the first time in years, I experienced a déjà vu dream. In the dream, I'm sobbing uncontrollably before my uncle, who appears much older. Streaks of silver have invaded his hair.

The backdrop is his house, which looks more worn, mirroring its owner. My uncle stands a mere meter away from me, rubbing his temples anxiously. His face is more lined, and I'm filled with rage. What did I just say?

Uncle can see visions?

*"Wa, I never shared this with my wife and son. Only Jett and I know about the powers within our family. It's in our blood."*

My father's name is Jett, both his first name and nickname.

*"So, you knew Dad was alive because you still had your ability?"*

*"Yes."*

My heart feels a whirlwind of emotions. Uncertainty swirls within me as I attempt to comprehend this situation in my dream.

Four isn't by my side, and I stand here in my formal attire amidst the dark, punctuated by the sound of thunder. Rain is imminent. I steady my breathing and address the old man with a calmer tone.

*"Could you shed light on why Dad left us?"*

*"I apologize; I'm clueless about that. Jett merely mentioned that he needed to rectify something in the past. He hinted that it might be his final chance, as when he left you and Vi with me, he appeared aged. This alteration could be a consequence of tampering with time."*

*"But you once said he looked like a regular man in his thirties."*

*"I lied. I'm not someone who can tell the truth that easily."*

His voice carries sincerity and honesty. As my fury subsides somewhat, I let my guard down and press him once more on whether he truly knows my father's whereabouts. He confirms his earlier response.

Then, I inquire about his son, pondering if he also possesses the same abilities as us. He slowly shakes his head, explaining that these powers are only inherited through the bloodline of the eldest child.

And so, I decide not to pursue IVF (In-vitro Fertilization) or find a way to conceive. The legacy of our family's time-controlling powers will fade away forever.

The final revelation hits hard: I am the last who can inherit this power, yet I've never been able to wield it. I woke up from my doze during the ride due to my phone buzzing in my outer jacket.

Four appears quite vexed by the car's swaying, as if we're navigating a racing game. I rub my eyes and shake my head to fully rouse myself. Retrieving my phone, I glance at the caller's name.

"Uncle."

It's as if I've just emerged from a dream featuring him.

"Hello. What's going on, uncle?"

I greet him with a dry voice. The woman behind the wheel shoots me a curious glance. I silently signal to her that I'll share the details later.

[Are you available? What are you up to?]

"I'm free at the moment. How can I assist you?"

[Are you still searching for your dad? I was at my office and noticed a missing person poster on the public relations board.]

Posters and signs are customary in every company. I'm aware of this because Four mentioned she photocopied the posters and distributed them across the factories in her business group. This suggests that my uncle likely works within her company.

"You probably understand why I'm searching for him."

[What do you mean?]

It appears that the events from my recent dream are beginning to unfold.

"Let's discuss this in person." I ended the call. My heart feels a tad lighter.

I'm growing weary of approaching the truth step by step. Jattawa Piengpradabkwan isn't equipped to handle this weight. When Four inquires about the situation, I muster a smile and fib that it pertains to inheritance matters. She senses from my demeanor that I'm not ready to delve into it further, so she refrains from pressing.

I gaze out of the window once more. The view outside the car is darkening as we enter the central part of Nakhon Pathom. The deeper the car ventures, the faster the bright backdrop recedes; it brings to mind the time-controlling power I used to wield.

On Monday, after finishing half of the case reports on my desk and conducting a brief for the public official, I requested an early departure. I politely declined the post-work gathering. My status as an antisocial individual is reaching new heights.

Four is unaware of this, as she's visiting a factory in Chonburi. We exchange texts about our activities, but I opt not to inform her that I'm boarding a public van to meet my uncle in Bangkok at 4 pm.

I transcribe the dream's conversation into my journal. A well-groomed male student steals glances at my notes and strikes up a conversation.

"Are you a writer?"

He inquires, then delves into the details of his sci-fi novel, which he's posting on a website.

Somewhat bored, I dutifully listen as this middle-school kid narrates his story. At the very least, this diverts my attention and accelerates the passage of time. I almost forgot the directions to his house. If it weren't for the assistance of the grocery store owner, I would have become lost.

I express my gratitude to the store owner and make a purchase in return for their help. As I step into the housing estate, it's evident that many homes have undergone renovations, altering the neighborhood from my memories.

Dark clouds are rolling in. I know that my dream is about to materialize.

As expected, when I ring the doorbell next to the worn gate, my uncle, who is likely alone, emerges to greet me, mirroring the scenario in my dream.

Just as my dream foretold, he invites me inside, explaining that his wife is still out shopping and won't be back anytime soon. I decline his invitation with a shake of the head and initiate our conversation, matching every word from my dream. The only difference is that my fury is significantly diminished.

"Have you glimpsed our future?" I pose an additional query.

"I have, though not as frequently as my son and wife's future."

"Then, you knew that..."

"No, I wasn't aware that Vi would be lost. I couldn't even discern that the black robe I briefly saw in my visions was your prosecutor uniform."

In my mind, I piece together a timeline, connecting the dots. On that particular day, my uncle had approached me about selling our house, and my attempt to record our conversation after reversing time had failed. It's the reason my gaze narrows instinctively upon my uncle. Criticism escapes my lips before I can stop myself.

"So, our family raises their children in ignorance, then casts them aside to fend for themselves?"

"Don't chastise me for keeping the truth hidden."

"Why not? Dad abandoned me and Vi, while you perpetually concealed the truth, feigning incompetence."

Tears begin to form, but I suppress them and clench my teeth in disappointment.

"What were you thinking? Do you even care about us?"

"What should I have told you? That your father vanished because he didn't want to lose his daughters? Is that what I should have done?!"

"Lose his daughters.?" A numbness seeps into my heart. I echo his words, tilt my head, and question him in bewilderment.

"What do you mean?" The old man's hands instinctively cover his temples, as though he has inadvertently revealed something forbidden. A grave and uneasy expression crosses his face. "Truthfully, I don't possess a full understanding of it, and that makes it difficult for me to explain to you."

"I can't shake the feeling that you're not being entirely honest, much like you've done in the past."

At that moment, it seems as though Uncle's composure is unraveling.

"I've disclosed everything to you! I possess the gift of foresight. Your father can manipulate time, perhaps even pause it. On that evening, he paid me a visit. He appeared like a venerable great-grandfather, yet held the strength to carry you, in his arms. He entrusted you both to my care. He revealed that he had manipulated time countless times, attempting to rescue his daughters. This might have been his final endeavor to reset everything. Those were his parting words. Are you finally content?"

I'm rendered speechless. It takes me a moment to regain my bearings.

"Dad..." My voice emerges devoid of life. "Are you telling me that my father rewound time to mend the past because things had turned so bad?"

Uncle's voice, this time, adopts a softer tone, likely due to the strain from his prior outburst.

"No. Jett's affection for you and Vi is boundless."

**"He undertook multiple journeys through time, unwilling to accept the loss of his daughters."**

*Translator:*

*His daughter? What?*

*So its not jus Vi who've died?*



# Chapter XXXVI : Someone in The Poster

I take the last public van back to Nakhon Pathom around 8 pm.

This evening, my uncle has laid bare the truth before me, and it's causing a nauseating churn within me. The revelation is staggering: we have the ability to manipulate time.

Well, to be precise, it's the descendants of the eldest child in each generation of our family who possess this power. It doesn't matter how many children the eldest has; the time-controlling gift is divided up among them.

If one of the siblings passes away, the others lose their powers. However, if the eldest continues to have offspring, the new children will inherit the ability.

To simplify, let's use my father and uncle as examples. My father is the eldest child, and my uncle is his younger brother. The offspring of my father are endowed with these special powers. But since my uncle is a younger sibling, his children won't manifest the time-controlling aptitude.

In my generation, should I have a child, that child will inherit this unique ability, while my younger sister, like Vi, won't have a supernaturally endowed child even if she becomes a parent.

Essentially, as Uncle explained, the child gifted with the power of time reversal is more likely to succeed in life, as they can rectify past errors.

On the other hand, the child most burdened with anxiety is the one who can glimpse into the future, for it's a challenge to navigate how to avert impending mishaps. Consider, for instance, breaking a leg in the next two days. Deciding whether to stay at home or venture outside becomes a dilemma.

If you choose to remain indoors for safety, you might still end up tumbling down the stairs in your own house. I possessed both the power to pause and reverse time, albeit within their limitations. I owe an apology to my sister for seizing one of her potential gifts.

Nevertheless, it's akin to a family curse. Our forebears wielded these abilities in both virtuous and malevolent ways. Some enjoyed immense prosperity, while others faced destitution. My uncle disclosed that only he, my father, and I still possess these powers (though, in truth, I don't have it anymore). For an average person like me, it sounds incredibly extraordinary.

However, matters are not as simple as they seem. Every individual endowed with time-controlling abilities experiences certain constraints. My uncle's gift allows him to glimpse only a second into the future.

I, on the other hand, can reverse time by a maximum of 10 minutes. Vi, perhaps, possesses the capacity to glimpse something momentarily, but she can't regulate or predict when these insights occur.

As for my father, Uncle revealed that only he can rewind time by a significant margin, but he can only pause time for brief intervals. Each time he manipulates time, there's a price to be paid. Aging, perhaps? A reduction in life expectancy? Or something else entirely!

I contemplate these possibilities while the public van sways from side to side, provoking a sensation of nausea as we're packed like sardines in the backseat, five passengers in total, including myself.

On the day Dad entrusted me and Vi to my uncle, he spoke to him with reddened, teary eyes, confessing that he had manipulated time over a hundred times. He couldn't bear to witness Vi's murder any longer, nor did

he want to witness my demise. My head is throbbing with confusion. Everything feels maddening, and I can't alleviate my stress by unloading it all onto Four.

After taking a motorcycle taxi to my apartment, the night has grown late. I unlock my room and head straight for my bed. Collapsing onto it, I carry the weight of all these problems only on my shoulders.

I glance at the case reports on the head of the bed that I brought home with me and question whether I've taken the wrong path. I relinquished the opportunity to become an attorney and instead opted for the role of a public prosecutor, earning meager pay and burdened with responsibilities not of my choosing.

Why did I make this choice? Simply because I didn't want to witness another victim denied justice, similar to my little sister. Yet, the reality remains that justice eluded her completely.

Under these circumstances, why should I concern myself with helping others? Why read through all those case reports to prosecute someone, don the robe to argue until my voice gives out, spar with opposing attorneys, and seek retribution? Will these actions resurrect Vi?

No, Jattawa, you're naive. Justice is an illusion. The moment I opted to become a public prosecutor... That moment I... I was such a...

**Bzzz!**

Four: Are you feeling tired today? Hang in there. How about planning a getaway for this weekend?

Four's message momentarily interrupts my negative spiral. Indeed, there's still this woman who's concerned about my well-being.

Jattawa Wa: I'm alright. I skipped the party tonight.

Four: Why?

Jattawa Wa: I wanted to have a video call with you. Can I call you now?

Four: Go ahead.

I voice call her, eager to share my daily work routine with her. We discuss dinner plans. I fib that I had some porridge to prevent her from worrying too much or considering driving over to check on me.

Her voice on the other end is like a soothing balm. I snuggle under the blanket, a piece of cloth that once enveloped us both. Partially shrouded by its warmth, I pretend she's right beside me under the other half of the blanket. Despite my drowsiness, I continue to converse with Four.

The following day. And it's yet another... disastrous day. I rise from sleep late, my eyes reluctantly opening as the clock strikes eight in the morning. Even if I manage to rush through a shower in 30 seconds, it's impossible to reach my office on time. I scramble as quickly as possible, but alas.

The road between the market and my office is in complete chaos due to a monstrous traffic jam. The public van I'm on stops so frequently to pick up and drop off passengers that I start to feel nauseous. Four's right, I should start driving my own car.

To make matters worse, when I finally reach my office, the women there are chattering about me as if they believe I might be taking a day off. I can't be bothered anymore. With a poker face, I stride to my desk, remove my blazer, and drape it over my chair. The others lower their voices, resuming their work quietly after gossiping about me behind my back. And by 'disastrous,' I don't just mean being late.

I realize that I've left behind my little journal, the one where I record every work-related detail and important matter. I search my blazer pockets in vain; it's nowhere to be found. I might have lost it or left it at home...

“Damn it...”

I mutter.

“I forgot the case reports too.”

An administrative officer gives me a sidelong glance. I hurriedly sip on my long-sleeved blazer again and grab a motorcycle taxi. Even though it's pricier than the public vans, it's far quicker. The vans show up only every 20 minutes, and I can't afford to wait that long.

“Where are you headed?”

Someone calls from behind, but I'm too disinterested to turn and identify her. I offer no reply, hastening my steps to distance myself from her. A stranger's calls continue throughout the journey back to my apartment. Riding on a motorcycle taxi, I can't make out what they're saying on the phones. I pocket the phone, suspecting it might be some random mugger. The scorching weather compounds my vexation.

As the rider prepares to bypass red lights by riding on the sidewalks, I intervene, quoting the law to explain why such actions are wrong. No matter how much of a hurry we're in, we should never flout the law.

Thankfully, he takes my advice to heart. Upon reaching my apartment, I instruct the rider to wait outside while I dash upstairs to my room. I hastily scoop up the case reports and then rack my brain trying to remember where my journal could be.

The stifling heat intensified by the lack of air conditioning leaves me drenched in sweat. As I open the window to get some fresh air, I'm gripped by the nagging fear that I might have misplaced the journal in yesterday's crowded van. The thought churns my stomach, but a minute later relief floods in as I spot my cherished journal beneath the bed.

Breathing easier, I descend the stairs, pick up the phone, and dial the number of the stranger who had called earlier. It could be either a mugger or someone familiar. Calling back is the only way to ascertain.

"Hello. Did you call this number?"

[Yes, I called from Bangkok. Are you the one who put up the missing person poster?]

Ah, that missing person poster... My eyes widen. I halt in my tracks.

"Yes, that missing person is my father. Have you seen him?"

[Ah... I think it might be him.]

"Where!? A-And are you with him now? Are you keeping him with you? I'll give you a 10,000-baht reward just in case you missed the message at the bottom."

[Calm down. There's no need to rush. Your father is renting a temporary apartment here, but he can't afford the whole month. And if you're from out of town, try to get here by tomorrow morning at the latest. He's still here.]

I lapse into silence, sensing something amiss.

"I hope you can come here quickly."

I steady my voice.

"Yes, I'll leave in the evening after work. It might be late by the time I arrive. Please add my LINE account using this number and share the location. I'll pay you double the reward mentioned on the poster. Should I take a motorcycle taxi to your place?"

[It's not too far; you can walk.] Hmm, someone's trying to play me.

His speech carries a blend of accents from Suphan Buri, Nakhon Pathom, and Ratchaburi. It's not feasible for him to give me precise coordinates; instead, he provides the apartment's name.

Someone who calls me when I'm in my apartment and isn't perplexed by the term 'motorcycle taxi,' which is not widely understood outside the provinces, especially not by Bangkokians. It's too coincidental for him to be

a local who commutes to work in the capital city. He didn't call me from Bangkok. No way.

I end the call, descending the stairs again to tell the rider to take me back to my office. At lunchtime, I waver on whether to seek Four's counsel. The bustling ambiance of the A La Carte restaurant beside my office is utterly distracting.

The table next to mine is discussing monkeys that have taken to climbing lamp posts, and municipal officers and firefighters are attempting to apprehend them before anyone gets hurt. While awaiting my bowl of pork thick soup noodles, I suddenly recall that the man on the phone had mentioned I could visit in the morning as well, even though his tone suggested he wanted me there immediately. He had also sent me the name of the apartment.

Let's analyze this critically. In a typical scenario, if a daughter who's been hunting for her father learns his location and knows where to find him, she would naturally rush to reunite with him. Alright then. I'm setting out right away. But not to that location.

"Hey, Jattawa! You came back to your apartment this morning, didn't you?"

"I forgot something." I offer a curt reply to a nosy woman around my age on the ground floor.

As we pass each other, I spare her no more than a glance. I've been labeled as arrogant; that's what she's told the local vendors.

I quicken my pace, breezing through the corridor. The nearer I get to my apartment's door, the more unsettling the sensation becomes. It's not déjà vu. It's as if this never transpired before.

I can't say I suspect anything, but I'm racing to my apartment with the hope of stumbling upon something that could alter the course of my destiny. It's akin to standing at a crossroads: do I speed off to Bangkok or return home?

This is the first time I've selected the latter.

My instincts seem to have steered me right. When I left for work this morning, I distinctly remember locking the door. Yet, now, it stands unlocked. My heart plummets with fear. My immediate response upon realizing that my apartment is unlocked is to call the police.

I provide them with an account of the situation. Once the officer on the other end grasps my location, he promptly dispatches assistance and advises me to stay with the landlord or someone trustworthy. He strongly urges me not to enter the room on my own, as the intruder might still be inside.

That's indeed wise advice. I hang up the phone, standing frozen in place as I fight to quell my shivers. What if the intruder is a dependent or a relative of a defendant from one of my past cases?

They could be harboring intentions to harm me, similar to the dream I had where Four was stabbed as a consequence of my plea for capital punishment. The lack of legal comprehension, combined with the often illogical aspects of the judicial process, can result in harm to others.

With caution, I reach for the doorknob, easing the door open just enough to discreetly peer inside the room. However, what I witness renders me momentarily immobile.

An elderly man, somewhat awkward in his movements due to his age, stands before my desk. His withered hand, a testament to the passage of time, tentatively touches the stack of missing person posters pertaining to someone I fervently desire to locate. Without hesitation, I push the door open further. My voice escapes me in a gasp of astonishment.

**“Dad!”**

Indeed, it's my father!

Before me stands the elderly gentleman, his countenance pale and his cheeks sunken. He slowly pivots to face me, despite the bewildering circumstances that surround him. He appears even older than the day we first encountered one another beneath the flyover near the university.



His gaze, clouded and ambiguous, meets mine. I survey him from head to toe. Although his appearance is frail and pallid, his attire isn't entirely worn. He doesn't resemble a homeless person. His eyes are enigmatic, a maelstrom of emotions swirling within them. The ensuing silence is oppressive. I clench my fist, summoning determination, and begin our exchange.

“Hello.”

Unsure of what actions to take or words to utter, I opt for the most straightforward inquiry.

**“What are you attempting to achieve?”**

# Chapter XXXVII : Just Give a Reason

Dad gazes at my face for a moment, his expression contorted with restrained emotion until he can't hold it back any longer and breaks down into grim sobs.

In truth, I haven't had much contact with this elderly man, but in that instant, my body instinctively moves forward to offer support. I gently embrace him, our heights matching though I'm slightly taller due to his hunch.

"Are you really my father?"

I inquire once more. His tearful cry is a clear affirmation. My initially loose hug tightens.

"Please don't leave me again..."

There's so much we need to discuss and mend. My heart races, thudding like it's about to escape my chest. Its pounding reverberates in my ears.

He's here, the man I've been tirelessly searching for. Even though he doesn't verbally assure me that he won't flee, I decide to close the door and call the police, explaining to them that it was a misunderstanding and there were no intruders.

The officer on the other end grows irate and lectures me for a while. I apologize to him over the phone and then fetch a glass of water for my dad, who remains awkwardly rooted in the same spot.

"Please, have a seat. I'm not angry about your disappearance. I just want you to sit down and have a reasoned conversation about it."

"Dad."

"Your visit isn't solely about observing my apartment, is it?"

He maintains his silence, and it's incredibly agonizing for me.

"Dad, please say something to me. You can greet me, inquire about me, or explain what your intentions are instead of staring at me as if you can't bear to look at my face."

He still doesn't utter a word. I continue speaking, my voice trembling. The glass of water I hold remains untouched.

"Do you know? I grew up with Vi. We had to fend for ourselves as Uncle's wife detested us. Each day, we were told to pay our tuition and other expenses. Though Uncle sent us money for several years, we still had to make every minute count to earn a living. Then, we were dumped, and our home was taken away. Vi passed away when she was just sixteen, and she never received an ounce of justice. I had to see a therapist and take those inscrutable medications. Now, I can't access my time-controlling abilities anymore. Just a few days ago, I finally learned who took Vi's life. It was only yesterday that I discovered the powers that course through our bloodline. And today, I was nearly tricked into heading to Bangkok by you! You abandoned me! You repeatedly ran away and deceived me! Why did you do that?! Answer me! Stop keeping your mouth shut!"

"Wa. I just..."

"Just give me a sound reason," I murmur, swiping away the tears that have streamed down my face since I delivered my lengthy speech moments ago.

"I'm here solely to ensure that history doesn't repeat itself."

"Fantastic! So, you possess the ability to turn back time. But why did you feel the need to forsake us?"

Dad begins to exhibit more noticeable emotions.

"You're becoming angry."

"Yes! I'm furious!" These tears are so vexing.

"If your intention is truly to alter our destinies, then why didn't you stay with us?"

"You don't comprehend. I've done it over a hundred times."

"What is it that I don't understand?! The issue is you abandoned us."

"Just listen to me!"

"...."

"Listen... Given how everything has unfolded..."

Dad takes a seat in the office chair. After expelling such a loud shout, he struggles to stand steadily. He breathes heavily and commences speaking, his gaze fixed on the floor.

"During the initial 34 rounds, I single-handedly raised you and Vi."

His voice carries a tone of remorse.

"I lost both of you when you were little due to my alcoholism. I frequently erupted in fits of rage and struck you both. On occasions, I couldn't even make it home on my bike, and you were too young to fend for yourselves. You nearly perished once because both of you consumed distilled water, and Vi almost died because you were both starving. That night, I slept on the street beside my toppled motorbike. Since my power's imitation was to turn back time to the moment I first encountered someone..."

He halts, panting from the extended speech.

"I perpetually rewound time to the day you were born because that was our initial meeting."

Oh, dear... He traveled back in time to save us. Yet, my doubts still linger about his rationale.

"Why didn't you quit drinking during the second iteration?"

"I couldn't."

His hands move across his face to brush away the tears.

"I was careless, thinking I could always reset. But each time we were together, either you or Vi or both of you met your demise at the hands of a father like me. By the 35th iteration, I realized you two were better off not living with me in the first place."

"Are you insane?! You just needed to change yourself!"

This conversation is painfully logical.

"So, you're telling me you let us die 34 times, and then on the 35th time, you absolve yourself of responsibility by leaving us with Uncle?"

"At first, I hoped it might work that way, but even in my absence, Vi still met an untimely death."

Whenever Vi is mentioned, my heart tightens violently.

"Dad, how many times did you rewind time?"

"I lost count after it started severely affecting my health. I've grown so old. I think it must be no less than 200-300 times."

"Haven't you ever thought that if you could rewind to the day I was born, you could learn from those mistakes, strive to be better, and properly raise me and Vi so that Vi didn't have to die like that?"

"I apologize."

He utters just two simple words, two words that have the power to melt my heart. His gaze holds profound sorrow. I should compose myself and

converse more kindly with him instead of souring the atmosphere between us. I close my eyes and offer my apology. I guide him to the sofa, helping him walk, as he seems like an old man drained of all strength. He sips some water, seemingly without thirst. After a brief rest, we continue our conversation.

"So, since the 35th iteration, did Vi die the same way each time?"

"Are you asking about her suicide?"

"Do you believe the news reports?"

"If I believed that, I wouldn't have tried to pressure that young man into telling you the truth."

So, Dad's pressure was the reason that guy reached out to me? I'm left speechless. Dad explains he wasn't adept at using social media, so he resorted to following that guy and leaving threatening letters in front of his house. It terrified him.

Sometimes, Dad was apprehended and taken to the police station numerous times. It was his last resort. He repeatedly rewound time to alter our life paths, but his addiction to alcohol was the one thing he couldn't change. The money he earned from selling woven fish toys was consumed by rent, transportation, and alcohol in the evenings.

Dad played a role in every event, even the day he caused my bike to break. He did it to prevent me from riding that old motorcycle, which would have died in the middle of the road, leading to a car crash and my broken arm.

He manipulated time to force me to buy a new one. When Vi attended her art camp and needed to recharge her mobile plan for internet access, the organizer forgot to mark her attendance, and she was stranded at the gas station. Dad turned back time to leave a note on the top-up machine, tricking her into believing it was broken. This made her wait until she reached her hotel and could use the hotel Wi-Fi to contact me.

Whenever any mishap that might negatively affect us occurred, Dad rewound time to give me another chance to grow up and welcome Vi back to the world before leaving us with Uncle. Emotions stir within my chest. I'm torn between feeling remorse for my anger and a warm desire to apologize and say *'thank you.'*

"What about Mom? Did she know you could manipulate time?"

"She did, ever since we started dating. I was a boastful alcoholic. She left us a few months after giving birth to Vi. Please don't be angry with your mom. She attempted to take both of you with her, but I rewound time to stop her."

"Why?"

"Your stepdad had vile intentions toward you. He attempted to... harm you."

Dad clenches his teeth, his cheeks sinking even deeper. I can immediately guess what that monster attempted to do to me.

"I confronted him, hitting him repeatedly, but he reported me to the police for physically assaulting him. That's why I rewound time again."

"Thank you..."

I utter this sincerely from the depths of my heart. But then a doubt creeps in. I tilt my head and furrow my brows inquisitively.

"In this latest iteration, the alternate universe, you raised me and Vi to the point where we remembered you before leaving us with Uncle."

"Yes, there was something unusual happening."

"What was it?"

"I left you girls with your uncle, but as you grew up, you began asking about me, even though you shouldn't have had any memory of me. It's as if certain memories became layered."

I stay silent, awaiting his continuation.

"As you grew older than Vi, you began searching for your dad. Eventually, your uncle called me to pick you both up. I reluctantly brought you girls back, unsure whether my decision would hinder your futures or not."

"But what prompted you to leave us with Uncle once again?"

"Every time I looked at you two, fear gripped me."

"Because I knew I might not be able to turn back time again, that this time I might die. Something in my subconscious told me to refrain from using my ability anymore, so I resolved to make this last iteration the best one."

"The fact that you lured me to go to Bangkok and then appeared here... Does it relate to my death or the 'best round' you mentioned?"

"No." He coughs wearily, his left hand resting on his chest.

"In reality, two burglars will break into your room around 5 pm, just before you finish work. They'll likely notice the open window and climb in through it, or they might force their way through the door. They'll search for valuables, leaving a mess behind. In the end, they'll make off with your microwave and printer."

"So, you're here to stop them?"

"I'm here to hide in the restroom and wait for them to leave, then clean up your apartment. You might step on broken glass when you return from work."

I'm left dumbfounded. I never anticipated such a trivial reason. Dad's motive is to prevent me from getting hurt. It's simultaneously ridiculous and filled with paternal love. My mind goes blank. His intricate time reversals boil down to...

He did everything for us. The two of us he tirelessly tried to save in his own way. The man is trapped by his chronic addiction to alcohol and his condition of time reversal meeting someone for the first time causing him to age prematurely.



I can't say *"You should have changed during the second round,"* because it wouldn't have made a difference. Adults sometimes get lost just like teenagers do; getting lost means failing to find the right path. It's not his fault. At least, I'm not angry with him anymore.

"But you're remarkable."

I lift my head at his unexpected comment, eyebrows furrowing in confusion.

"You're not affected by time reversal at all. Well, I should say you can execute time reversal in the most flawless manner among us."

"You mean those ten minutes?"

"They're the ten minutes for which you don't have to trade your lifetime or body age. Don't forget that."

"You make it sound like we're superior beings. Oh gosh! We're just ordinary people living within society. If we're fortunate, we might achieve success. But if we're not, we could end up trapped like you!"

"At least it could have saved your girlfriend from dying in a car accident."

He hits the nail on the head.

"That night, you used your power twice, right?"

"Yeah, that's true. I admit that our powers have greatly benefited me and Vi, but what about you and Uncle? How did you both end up like this? We could have been wealthy or held significant social positions. We could have been business owners instead of renting in this rundown house, and I wouldn't have to deal with those peculiar dreams resulting from the consequences of time reversals."

I point at myself.

"See? I graduated from law school and passed the bar exam. I could have become a public prosecutor even without my time-controlling power. How

could I have achieved all of that? Why didn't our ancestors take steps to ensure a better future for their descendants?"

What I'm trying to convey is,

"How could we have failed so miserably with such powers?"

Dad responds with a resigned expression, helping me grasp the full picture.

"Because no power can ensure success without our own effort. And perhaps, perseverance is another unique ability."

Well, that's absolutely correct. My sister, my future, and a stable profession with reliable income—these are the things that drive me to strive for my life goals rather than getting trapped in a cycle of time reversal.

I deeply respect my father's heart. His love for us is genuine. He cares for me to the extent of luring me to Bangkok just to ensure my apartment is clean and safe from broken glass. At the same time, his love is impulsive and thoughtless, but I won't hold that against him. I bow my head, lost in thought. I inquired about my mom from Dad.

He describes her as hardworking, talkative, and easily deceived. No wonder she never realized that her new husband had numerous mistresses. Well, what did I really expect to gain from uncovering the truth? Just being able to meet him is more than enough.

"What about the previous rounds? Have we ever had a conversation like this before?"

"It was the last time. We had a similar conversation, but not when you were 30. It will happen several years from now, after your girlfriend gets stabbed and you're too worried about her to go to work."

The nightmare I've been trying to avoid, isn't it?

"What happened after that? Did you run away again?"

"We met at the hospital. I went to sell my fish toys to the children there, but it was too crowded to escape from you successfully."

I chuckle, and so does he.

"We talked, but not in as much detail as we are now."

The smile on my face gradually fades.

"At midnight that day, I turned back time once again."

"Oh my God! I've been misunderstanding!"

I exclaim in response to the unexpected twist. The reason only Four and I share these peculiar déjà vu experiences is this!

Last time, we were already aware of this. Dad revealed everything to me that night, and then I confided in her about my time reversal power.

Ordinarily, time reversal doesn't tamper with my memories, but because Dad kept reversing time to my birth, as an infant, I lacked the consciousness to retain those memories. As for Four, who doesn't possess any time-related powers, her memories were reset just like anyone else's, but some emotions still lingered in her heart.

We simply can't remember!

Déjà vu is a side effect that occurs for ordinary people, but for us, our subconscious recalls past events through our dreams. We've seen it all before, but our minds were also rewound to a childlike state.

To simplify, Dad reversed time for me and Vi's benefit too frequently. I would have liked to explain everything in detail to Dad, but it's all too intricate. I decide to keep this to myself and shift the conversation to another crucial matter.

"Dad, if you could reverse time once more, would you be willing to change yourself for the better?"

"So, you're not confident, are you?"

"Let me ask you again. Can you reverse time to when I first met someone, instead of when you first met me?"

"I'm not sure if that would work."

"That's true. You might never have tried it."

"Um..."

"Can you try it? Let's revisit... well, the day when it was snowing in Thailand. The day I met Four, my girlfriend. Our relationship has been complicated by many factors. If I could return to that point in time, I would rectify everything on my own. I would change her perspective and save Vi. I would live each day meticulously. I'd search for you, and we would live together. It would be perfect."

"Why are you avoiding my gaze? Is there hesitation due to something?"

"I've already explained why I ended up leaving you girls with your uncle again, haven't I?"

"Because you felt you couldn't reverse time anymore...?"

"Yes." His voice grows dry after our lengthy conversation. He takes another sip of water, as if thirsty. He still avoids meeting my eyes.

"If I were to die because my life reached its end, I wouldn't be able to save you anymore."

This time, it's me who's rendered speechless.

"When that time comes, Wa, would you be willing to take a risk?"

"How so?"

"Your primary goal is to save Vi's life. Well, there's only one way to achieve that after reversing time."

"What way?" I remain silent, attentive to his words.

"You must eliminate someone from your life."

"Who?" My voice unexpectedly trembles. Please, don't let it be her!

"Four."

"....."

"You have to choose between your lover and your sister. If you choose your girlfriend, remain in the present and lead your life. But if you choose Vi, I'll reverse time for you. However, you must not involve yourself with Four. You're well aware of what her stepmother would do to your sister."

**I don't like these two options. Not at all.**

"Four, are you busy?"

[I'm driving. I have dinner with an important investor tonight. He's a bit of a sleazy old man, but don't worry. I have my secretary with me. Do you need assistance?]

I close my eyes, releasing a deep sigh.

"Can you come see me?"

[Right now?]

"Yes, right now."

[What's wrong? You never call me so suddenly like this.]

"I have one last secret to share with you. Don't fret about your business dinner. I promise we can handle it."

She falls silent, and then I catch the voice of her secretary inquiring why she's changing lanes.

[Then, I'll be there a bit late. I need to drop my secretary off because she's working beyond office hours.]

"Alright."

I'm immensely grateful that she's willing to drop everything and come see me. I end the call and find myself sitting alone in a convenience store.

Around 5 pm, I call the police once again to apprehend those thieving jerks. Dad commends my shrewdness. He couldn't think of this solution because he was preoccupied with his own weakness against two young men.

"We're still humans, no matter what. Please refrain from using your power to resolve every single issue in your life."

That's what I told him. It might sound as if I were lecturing an adult, and that's likely true. I taught him a lesson. This clearly demonstrates that sometimes even an older individual lacks wisdom without careful thought and reflection. Dad could have simply called the police and avoided the need to resort to time reversal. Those endowed with special abilities often fall into the trap of overconfidence and recklessness. Making a fuss over trivial matters—that's been his approach.

Dad shared his number with me. I can discern from the initial digits that he's been using this number for decades. I saved his number, and we've agreed to meet once I've made up my mind. I need to inform him whether I wish to stay in the present or revert to that snowy day. I requested him to stay with me, but he declined with the following explanation:

He can't foresee the future. I might decide to stay in the present. If I wish to support him, I could simply provide enough money to cover his rent. Given his nightly drinking habits, this could potentially tarnish his public prosecutor daughter's reputation. I stand firm in my belief that there's no shame, and I express my desire to enroll him in a rehabilitation center. Even so, he excuses himself to return home and drink, as he does every evening.

At this juncture, I'm walking back to my apartment from the convenience store, which has been nearly turned into a mess by those burglars. The unfinished case files remain on my desk. While my plan is to issue a prosecution order against the victim's husband once all evidence is prepared, for now, I might need to prioritize the proposal for time reversal.

My gaze lands on the two distinct photographs.

On the left, it's Vi and me, her smiling brightly on the day she started high school.

On the right, it's me in my graduation robes, Four standing by my side. I have a choice to make...

Dad asked me to decide.

**Past or present? My dear little sister or my beloved partner? Vi or Four?**

## Chapter XXXVIII : My Two Love

Four arrives around 10 pm, elegantly dressed in her formal attire. She carries takeout food with her, seemingly aware that I haven't had dinner yet.

Stepping into my room, her tired expression still manages to hold a smile. I head towards the door to assist her with her belongings, transferring the contents of the takeout containers onto plates. We sit down at the dining table to share a meal.

Our hunger takes precedence, prompting us to focus on the food before engaging in conversation. Once our plates are cleared and washed, Four embraces me from behind.

"Now, let's talk about your secret. If it's not as surprising as my business deals, I might just devour you entirely," she playfully remarks.

Usually, I'd tease her for her slightly perverted tendencies, but this time, my heart is heavy, and I can't muster a smile or a jest. Placing the dishes in the sink, I wash my hands and turn around to face Four, even though she is still holding me. I rest my left side against her warm chest.

"Have you ever had to choose between two things that are immensely important to you?" I begin cautiously.

"Choose between?"

"Yes, imagine there are two things of utmost importance, but you can only choose one," I explain, burying my face deeper into her chest. "For instance, your family and your partner."



"I've never had to make a decision like that. My family isn't even worth considering. I've even made the choice to not know about my biological mother because that would only bring more pain."

Oh no, I shouldn't have brought up such a sensitive topic. I quickly apologize, although it seems like she didn't take it to heart. However, her eyes remain curious.

"So, what's going on? Can you tell me, please?"

I have spent hours preparing for this moment, and now it is time to lay it all out. I nod slowly, my nervousness and distress evident in my movements. Four seems to sense my unease and gently kisses my forehead before wrapping her arm around my waist and guiding me to the bed. She also notices the mess in the room, a reminder of the break-in.

Despite my efforts to clean up half of it, the intruders had still left a considerable amount of chaos behind. Asking Four to sit down, I take a deep breath and start with the burglars.

She is furious, immediately suggesting that we should move to another apartment. I hush her with a raised finger and continue, knowing that the time has come to reveal my deepest secret.

"Four, do you believe in supernatural powers? Like things that defy the laws of nature—like time reversal, time pausing, or even seeing visions?"

She looks slightly puzzled by my introduction. "You mean like magic and all that?"

She chuckles while gently tucking a strand of my hair behind my ear.

"Like time reversal, time pausing, and... something like seeing visions."

"No, I don't," she chuckles again, gently tucking a strand of my hair behind my ear. "My dreams are just nonsense. Don't read too much into them. They aren't accurate in the slightest."

"I can manipulate time."

"What?" Her confusion is palpable.

"I can control time, like reversing it or pausing it. I used to possess both abilities ten years ago."

I feel like a madwoman confessing her sins. My gaze avoids Four's; instead, I focus on the textured pattern of the bedsheets.

"Nothing was a mere coincidence—the warnings for you to quit the race, the calls to lure you to the convenience store, even waiting for you on the rooftop."

With that admission, I begin recounting everything to Four, and she listens in silence. I methodically order the events, starting from the moment I discovered my unique abilities and progressing through to the eventual limitations of those powers.

I pause briefly, suppressing the ache in my chest, before moving on to tell her about meeting my father and the decision he presented to me.

Her response to my long and tumultuous story is difficult to predict. The silence is maddening, and her cosmic eyes remain fixed on me. I occasionally steal glances at her, then avert my gaze, each time hoping she would dispel the awkwardness.

She could laugh it off, pat me on the head, and tell me I had successfully drawn her out from Bangkok with a fabricated tale. Alternatively, she might divert the topic to ease my embarrassment. Yet, all my assumptions were wrong.

"Then, what will you choose?" She asks, causing my head to snap up, my brows furrowing.

"Do you actually believe what I've told you? It feels utterly bizarre. Don't you harbor any doubts or suspicions?"

"If you want me to play the role of a gullible creature, lured by a girlfriend with divine powers, then go ahead and laugh, telling me it's just a joke.

That's all."

She teases, a faint grin on her lips.

"But that would mean you believe me without a shred of evidence!"

"My little bunny," she softly calls me. "I think you're going to bid me farewell, just like in my dream."

"Four... No." I shake my head, blinking repeatedly to suppress the tears that threaten to escape my heated eyes.

"I haven't decided."

These two life-altering choices aren't easy for me to make at all. Throughout all this time, I've never hesitated to turn back time to save Vi. But now, Dad's given me a new perspective—to keep only one of them.

True, if I hadn't known Four from the beginning, we wouldn't have grown close. We wouldn't have experienced our family issues, legal matters, dates, or even shared an apartment. My mind is consumed by thoughts, and my tears flow freely.

Today, I arrived at work late and left in a rush without returning in the afternoon. The provincial prosecutor even sent me a warning message.

Four pulls me back into her embrace. There are no words exchanged between us, only the sounds of our breaths and the rhythm of our heartbeats. We remain in this hug for what feels like two minutes, maybe more. She doesn't want to let go, but as I notice her exhaustion after this long day, guilt seeps in. I suggest she take a shower, assuring her that I'll make a bedtime brain-boosting drink.

"Join me in the shower," she invites, handing me two extra towels.

It's a somber bath time. The water cascades over my body, but I'm numb to its temperature. Absentmindedly, I gaze at Four as she gently applies soap, treating me like a fragile child. Normally, I would laugh and remind her of my age, but not today.

"Are you planning to move somewhere new? I can help you find a place, perhaps in a neighborhood with a low crime rate."

"I haven't thought about it."

"And work? Are you considering taking a half day off to address the burglary incident?"

"I haven't thought about that either."

Silence hangs in the air.

"I'm sorry. I must be bothering you."

"You're mistaken." My hands find their way to my face, as if to wake myself up. Our eyes meet.

"If this is weighing on your mind, making you more and more unhappy, I want you to make a choice."

"I want to choose the present too. I love you, Four."

"No, please choose Vi."

"Huh?"

She inches closer until our noses almost touch. A slight grin curves her slender lips. "Family love isn't as easily replaceable as romantic love."

"You're also my love, and no one can take your place."

"Perhaps you could find someone like me, but you won't find a sister like Vi."

My voice trembles as I argue in my state of distress.

"You're half-right. I won't find another little sister like Vi, but I won't find another lover like you either. I don't want someone similar to you. I only want you!"

Silence envelops us.

"Because there's only one of you in this world."

My words render Four speechless. We both understand that we're unique and irreplaceable to each other. I blink rapidly, masking the vulnerability that accumulates as warm tears pool at the corners of my eyes. I keep my head lowered, swiftly rinse off the soap, and then hurriedly exit the bathroom.

Ever since Vi passed away, I find myself crying multiple times a day. I don't want my adult self to revert to that state. I stand before the wardrobe mirror, dressing up, and silently urge my reflection to hold back the tears. Four is still in the shower, giving me the space I desire.

Both Vi and Four hold places in my heart. They aren't the same person, and I love them in distinct ways, yet they are my two loves. Dad speculates that if we were to go back in time to that snowy day, someone with time immunity like me might retain memories, as I wouldn't revert to infancy this time. However, for Four, Dad believes she might still experience fleeting dreams, but her memories would reset.

The sound of running water continues. I glance at my own reflection in the mirror, gather my resolve, and turn around. I approach the bathroom, take a deep breath, and knock on the door twice to gain her attention.

"I've made my decision."

Her shower stops, and she listens intently from within.

"I will..."

"Hold on. I'll join you shortly." She speaks calmly.

"Finishing my shower first. We shouldn't discuss something this significant with a door between us."

"Alright." My response feels hollow. "Then, I'll go get your pajamas ready."

"Sure."

Just five more minutes, yet it feels like an eternity. As I wait for Four to complete her shower, countless thoughts race through my mind.

When I knocked on the door earlier, ready to reveal my choice, she insisted on discussing it in person. It's not just about face-to-face communication; she needs time to brace herself emotionally.

A decade together has made me well-versed in Four's ways. She tends to mull over various issues while in the shower, hoping the water will wash away those tumultuous thoughts.

My mind swirls with so many recollections—the moon lamp, the preserved rose.

I retrieve these cherished keepsakes from storage. Switching on the lamp, I gaze at the etched letters and numbers that remain as vivid as ever on its surface. The desiccated rose is safely enclosed in a zip-lock bag.

Because of the path I'm about to choose, these precious memories might never be rekindled. I'm fully aware that I need to talk to Dad and divulge my decision. So, after reverently returning the sentimental tokens to their places and arranging Four's pajamas, I search my phone for the recently saved number. I hesitate for a few seconds before finally making the call.

The ringtone chimes twice before he answers. There's nothing that indicates he's living on the streets. Instead, the background carries the hum of conversation.

"What are you up to?"

[I'm outside a grocery store. I refrained from drinking tonight because I had a feeling you'd come to a decision.]

"Are you near here or in Bangkok?"

[I'm not far from your location.]

"Aha..."

[So, have you made your decision?]

His voice, weary and dry, poses the most difficult question through the phone line. But I have weighed my options and reached a firm conclusion.

"I'd like to live with you from now on. Knowing that you never abandoned us, but have always been by our side, I no longer harbor anger or resentment towards you."

"But my love for Vi remains stronger."

"We've shared so much together. She was a constant presence by my side. We ate simple meals and slept under the same roof. We laughed together during joyful times and cried together during moments of sorrow. Over the past decade, I've been seeking you out because I wanted you to save Vi."

"I'm sorry for choosing her."

Because Dad would have to endanger his own life...

[I understand that you'll choose your sister. You did the same last time.]

What?

"Did I choose Vi and abandon Four in the previous iteration?!"

[You blame yourself when Four was stabbed in your place. I believe it was more distressing for you last time. I understand. Despite my efforts to create some divergence in your paths, both of you still ended up crossing each other's lives.]

I run my hand through my hair in frustration.

"Why didn't you tell me that I left her?"

[Well, I...]

"Last time, I didn't choose her, and now I'm once again on the verge of not choosing her."

My voice intensifies. Fearing that the woman inside the bathroom might overhear our conversation, I head to the balcony and close the door.

"Why didn't you tell me from the start? I thought you rewound time without informing me. No wonder... that goodbye..."

How could I have missed this realization earlier?

[What's the difference?]

"Of course, there's a difference!"

I'm unraveling, my tears no longer held back.

"I'm about to leave someone I deeply love, and who loves me in return. The bond we've nurtured for a decade. Her warm homemade breakfasts, the late-night conversations, her care, and all the genuine affection she's shown..."

I feel utterly selfish.

"I'm on the brink of leaving her once more, and this time it's altered by the fact that I would retain all our shared memories."

Because I wouldn't be returning as a baby. I don't deserve her love. I'm crying because of this realization.

"No, that's no longer an option. I won't leave her."

[So, you're saying you'll choose to stay in the present?]

His voice carries a tinge of disappointment.

[My own life doesn't hold much significance, but after this final instance of time reversal, I might pass away, ending the possibility of turning back time...]



"You've been the one turning back time to mend things for me, but this is my life. Let me find my own solutions."

[...]

"Yet, nothing seems to change, does it?"

My voice turns confrontational.

"That's why, with this last opportunity, I'll make my own choice. I'll choose both Vi and Four."

[That's not feasible.]

"If I can carry my memories into the next timeline, I'm prepared to reshape our destinies and break free from this endless loop, unlike you."

[What on earth are you talking about? We've gone through this countless times, and it never leads to a favorable outcome.]

"Because you've been making the choices for me."

[...]

"You've consistently returned to the day of my birth, dictating my path since then. But in truth, you could have changed yourself, quit drinking, and prevented this trajectory."

[You're lecturing me, aren't you?]

"Yeah, that's what I'm doing. You're a flawed father, the most flawed of all."

"But you're also a devoted father."

I dab at my tears with the back of my hand, trying to stifle my sobs.

"Thank you for using your power to turn back time for me, for us sisters, even when you could have ignored us and focused on your own life."

[I'm...sorry as well...for everything.]

His voice sounds increasingly hollow.

"Actually, this time, you might not face a tragic end."

[No, I'm fully aware of my limited life expectancy.]

"Yet, this isn't a conventional time reversal. This time, you're sending me back to the moment I first met Four."

[What's the distinction? It's still a span of ten years.]

"At least, it's not thirty years."

He lapses into silence again, amid the clamor of his surroundings.

"If you're still alive then, please call me or send a message to this number at...9 o'clock. I'll come get you after my university admission interview. We might reunite if a miracle occurs."

[Wa...]

He says my name, his tone hard to decipher.

[What we share is a miracle.]

Indeed. I silently acknowledge that. My tears cease.

[Should you return, regardless of my presence, remember it's not your fault.]

"Thank you...and I'm sorry, once again."

[I accept your apology, my extraordinary daughter.]

"I'm proud to be your daughter."

[Same here. I'm grateful to be your dad...immensely.]

I inform him that I'm prepared to journey back around midnight...plus ten minutes.

Ten minutes past midnight should suffice to gather my thoughts. I gently set down the phone.

For those who might require clarification: this instance of time reversal diverges from the previous ones. Previously, my father consistently looped back to the day of my birth.

Understandably, my memories would fade as my brain hadn't matured enough to retain them. Yet, with this final rewind, I'll be transported to the day I first encountered Four at the age of 19. My father explained that I possess a kind of immunity to time alteration, enabling me to retain my memories (assuming he successfully returns us to that specific day).

However, for Four... Four won't retain any recollection.

Nonetheless, my decision is firm. I've chosen both Vi and Four.

"So, you're here?"

A voice breaks the silence. I turn and spot Four clad in the pajamas I'd set out for her. She steps onto the balcony, her countenance devoid of expression, her gaze distant.

"Let's head inside. It's a bit chilly tonight."

I lift my gaze, meeting her lovely visage.

"Four..."

She regards me in silence.

"I'm going back in time."

Her lips, typically so composed, attempt a smile.

"Yes, I'm aware."

"Do you think you'll dream about this occurrence?"

"Maybe." Her smile is painfully widened. "Perhaps, I will."

"In your dream, I wish to convey this..."

"Farewell. I'm not hiding from you, but you just can't remember me."

"That's precisely what you said to me in my dream."

At this juncture, it's likely the sole sentiment she can muster.

"Good luck, my little wa."

"My father told me you wouldn't remember anything. However, if, by some chance, you recall me or dream of this moment...could you please hug me?"

"I can offer you one right now."

"I mean... On that day, the day we initially met and the snow was falling, if even a fragment of that memory endures within you, could you please give me a hug?"

"Of course, without a doubt."

Her gaze and smile stand as our pact.

"If I could remember anything or dream about you, I promise I'd hug you. I wouldn't walk past or say something hurtful."

I chuckle, reminiscing about my girlfriend in her former mean-girl days. But the laughter wanes as I gaze at her, fully aware that we're parting ways tonight.

"Even if you couldn't remember, I'll orbit around you like the Moon."

"I've already promised to remember you."

I slowly shake my head, my face adorned with tears yet graced by a smile.

"No, you won't."

"Quit arguing with me. Let's go inside."

I comply with her suggestion, nodding, and step into the warmer space, leaving the biting wind behind. Four has already arranged the bed for our night's rest. It's her habit to prepare things for me.

As I peer at the neatly arranged bed, my heart grows heavy for the umpteenth time. Am I truly going back at ten past midnight? Must I risk this night becoming a mere dream or déjà vu for her?

"Come on, little bunny." She, already nestled under the covers, taps the bed invitingly.

"What I told you about time reversal is true. There won't be a tomorrow for us."

"I'm setting aside what you told me. Your decision is made. If I were to think I need to wake up and head to work tomorrow, I'd promptly respond to the irate investor with an apology message."

"Four..."

"I simply want to fall asleep with you in my arms, my little wa."

This is the flavor of farewell. It's genuinely bitter. I settle onto my side of the bed, cocooned within her embrace from behind. Four presses kisses onto my cheek as she often does. The emotions coursing through every

breath carry a different quality. It feels as if she too, is grappling with letting go.

"Sweet dreams, Wa."

"Sweet dreams."

"See you."

My throat feels parched and tight. A lump forms within me, but I manage to suppress my vulnerability. I reply to her.

**"See you soon, Four."**

# Chapter XXXIX : On a Rainy Day

"Hello! Hello! Are you still breathing? If you still refuse to wake up, I'll march out of the kitchen now to make sure you will!"

A persistent, high-pitched voice rouses me from the depths of darkness. A faint headache lingers.

One side of my head throbs, much like it used to during my university days when migraines plagued me. I gradually open my eyes and find myself under the gaze of an aggressively adorable face. The girl repeats her words.

"Wa! Don't get too cocky about your time-stopping power!"

"Vi!" I exclaim loudly, the intensity enough to startle the little girl, who stands defiantly with her arms akimbo.

But I don't mind. I sit up quickly. This bed is surprisingly hard. It lacks the expected softness. Never mind. My concern is focused on the girl with furrowed brows. Without a doubt, I cuddle her petite frame tightly with all the affection in my heart.

"I miss you!"

"You're acting as if we haven't seen each other in decades."

Indeed, it's been a decade. A decade since I last saw you, my little troublemaker. I can't let myself cry. I remind myself of this. I hold onto Vi even more tightly, proving to both of us that this isn't just another fleeting dream.

"I came back for you."

"Huh?"

"I mean... I came back from a nightmare to be with you."

"You mean ten minutes ago? Come on, spare me the melodrama for now. So, you're abandoning the law study path? Is being an attorney no longer in the cards?"

"I can be anything, as long as I'm still your sister."

My little one stands in silence, as if struck dumb by shock, confusion, or perhaps a mixture of both, giving me goosebumps. Maybe she's glimpsing something in her future.

Regardless, my ultimate objective is to save this girl. I plan to purchase a journal and meticulously document all the events I can recall from the previous iteration and the events that need altering.

This time, everything will be different. I'm making that promise to myself.

A little while later, Vi playfully ushers me to take a shower and join her for the homemade glass noodles with fried holy basil downstairs. You know what?

When I take the first bite, I'm nearly overcome with emotion. This is the flavor I've missed the most. The taste of my mothers' sister's cooking is simply divine.

The girl, adorned in an amber apron, scowls at me and watches me with a mix of curiosity and disdain.

"What's gotten into you? What happened ten minutes ago before you reversed time?"

"You don't need to know," I manage to say with a mouthful of food, my joy evident.

"But we've never kept secrets from each other!"



"I'll tell you later. But right now, I want to promise you that I'm going to fix everything. I promise, and this time, I won't break it."

"Well, as a soon-to-be prosecutor who has managed to win her first case, you should probably be focusing on your interview rather than spending time filling me in on what's happening."

**Clunk!**

The spoon in my hand slips from my grasp, hitting the floor in my astonishment. I lift my gaze to Vi, who is taking off her apron. I ask her in a hushed voice,

"I'm going to win my first case?"

"Absolutely! How can someone with the power to pause time like you lose to anyone?"

**Heaven above, please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please, let the girl sitting across from me not be joking!**

My breakfast becomes irrelevant. I rise from my seat and practically leap to hug her, even tighter than when I first woke up. I bite down on my lower lip, struggling to hold back my tears.

"What's wrong with you now?!"

There's nothing wrong with me. If her vision showed that I could wield my power at that moment, it means she's still alive! I wish I could express my gratitude to everything and everyone. I want to thank the heavens, including Dad and Four, for their sacrifices. Gratitude to every being that played a part in helping me save this girl.

**"A decade without you felt like an eternity."**

The truth slips from my lips. The little girl responds with a drawn-out "Huh?" before reaching her arms out, hands on my shoulders, to peer more effectively into my eyes.

"A decade?"

Her adorable face scrunches in confusion.

"Why a decade?"

"It's a long story."

"But I want to hear it."

"I promise I'll come back and tell you all the details. You'll be surprised, I guarantee it. But if we talk about it now, your big sister's promising future as a prosecutor might get delayed by a year, okay?"

"That's strange..."

"Hmm?"

"I thought you'd argue like you wanted to be an attorney. I recall you saying the path to becoming an attorney sounded more fascinating."

A faint grin plays on my lips as I gently pat her head.

"If you knew the reason behind my change of heart, you'd be quite impressed with your big sis."

She narrows her eyes in a playful way.

"Let me be skeptical first."

"You little brat!"

"Could you at least drop a hint? I've been anxiously waiting for you all day. Even Oink-Oink can't offer me any assistance."

Oink-Oink...

That pig plushie from the temple fair. Yes, I remember. After Vi passed away in the alternate reality, I packed away all our memories in a giant box and stored it at Four's apartment. I do miss that pig sometimes. I smile brightly, celebrating the success of this time reversal. My gaze locks with the innocent eyes of the girl who is eagerly anticipating my hint.

"So, you're curious about why I opted to become a prosecutor instead of an attorney and why I turned back time from ten years ahead...I mean, when I was already 30?"

"Of course, I'm dying to find out. Oink-Oink is too! You can go back just ten minutes, right? Oh, by the way, it's going to snow today!"

"Ah, I trust you."

"I thought you'd say 'that's nonsense'..."

She mumbles to herself. This is the most incredible miracle in my life. Dad did it! He managed to reverse time to the day I first met Four.

My heart races as I observe my sister right in front of me. I gaze at her with longing. Finally, Vi ushers me away again, urging me to hurry for my interview. She also assures me that she's eagerly awaiting my return to hear the full story. We reside in our familiar old house. The holy basil we cultivated still thrives here.

The alleyway retains its bustling atmosphere, just as I remember. This is the past that has become my present once again. Taking in the surroundings, I pull my beloved red Y80 motorbike to the front gate and kick-start the engine.

This is exactly what I've been yearning for. This marks the beginning of my resolution.

By 9 am, Dad will call me... if he's still alive. And as for Four, if she still carries any lingering emotions or memories, she will fulfill her promise and embrace me...

I desire nothing more than this. Interestingly, this round is quite different from the last. My motorbike stalled just a few meters away from our home alley. I had to manually drag it back home, then rely on a motorcycle taxi, navigating a few transfers to reach the university.

The bus stopped on the opposite side of the campus, requiring me to traverse the road using the flyover. I gaze at the flyover, a place laden with memories from the time I crossed it with Four before.

I miss her.

I miss her immensely.

I briskly walk to the building where the interview for new law students is being conducted. Anticipation courses through me, not so much for the professors as for Four.

Despite handling countless cases and being well-versed in legal provisions, my confident veneer is accompanied by a resurgence of my youthful restlessness. My wallet feels somewhat unfamiliarly light, perhaps due to the fact that I now earn tens of thousands of baht as a public prosecutor.

It's a far cry from the time when I was more financially secure and carefree.

Oh my goodness! When will I get the chance to meet Four? I yearn to see her right here, right now. I'm eager to embrace her wholeheartedly!

While waiting for my turn, I sneak frequent glances at the clock on my old phone. When will you call me, Dad? The question keeps echoing in my mind during the rides.

When my name is finally called, a familiar young man walks into the interview room at the end of the hallway. At that moment, I'm unable to divert my gaze from him. He doesn't spare me a single glance.

Understandably so, as we haven't met yet. My heart quickens its pace as I observe my future friend, a friend who hasn't yet been hardened by his troublesome future wife. Alright, I'm here to rescue you from that grim fate too, our resident dad joke bot!

Regardless, I intend to cultivate our friendship. If I have the choice, I'd still like to be his friend.

*"See you when the semester starts..."*

I whisper to myself while watching his retreating figure.

*"I'll even warn you about the parsley. I promise."*

My attention returns to my communication device. Dad is already running late for our scheduled call.

An unsettling feeling creeps in, and I release a heavy sigh. Meanwhile, I overhear two girls gossiping about Four. It's reminiscent of the previous round, except this time, I manage to suppress a smile and stealthily glance at her, appearing fierce in the picture.

*I miss her once again. I'll embrace you tightly when we meet again.*

**"Jattawa Piengpradabkwan."**

A senior student's voice snaps me out of my daydream. I revert to being a 19-year-old girl and quickly turn toward her, answering with a lack of composure,

"Yes, I'm here!"

If I were in my thirties, I might respond to the call with a "Hmm" and leisurely turn around to locate the source of the sound. It seems that even time reversal can rekindle our teenage personalities.

Nevertheless, my restless feet are something I can't seem to control, even in my adulthood. I pass by Khun, who's exiting through the door, his poker face intact, and that sight is oddly amusing.

However, the amusement is short-lived as I now find myself facing the four examiners. This time, I'm familiar with all of them. The professor with bobbed hair taught me during my final year, and receiving a good grade from her was an extraordinary challenge.

The other two male professors instructed the same course, while one of them previously worked as a public prosecutor.

The last, a senior female professor, regards me with the same inquisitive gaze as before, probably due to my admission exam results. She's also the professor who posed this question to me previously:

"Future career?"

The question remains the same, as does the tone of her voice. The only difference is my response. I offer them a sincere smile.

"Public prosecutor, ma'am."

"Why the interest in becoming a prosecutor?"

"I wish to play a role in the case screening process. My aim is to ensure that before issuing a prosecution order, the defendant's guilt is genuine. If the accused is being used as a scapegoat, my intention is to bring the actual perpetrator to justice."

"But a prosecutor isn't akin to an investigative officer, a detective, or an attorney involved in criminal investigations."

"At the very least, once the evidence is in my possession, the authority to issue a prosecution or non-prosecution order lies with me. Should I become a public prosecutor..."

I emphasize that aspect again.

"I won't press charges unless the evidence is unequivocal. This approach may exert some pressure on the investigation officers I collaborate with."

The senior professor raises an intrigued eyebrow.

"In the present climate, news headlines on social media often manipulate facts to garner public attention. Could you handle the public backlash if they misunderstand the situation and accuse you of failing to imprison a defendant?"

"Or, imagine if you prosecute a defendant on three charges but omit one due to insufficient evidence. How would you respond if the media concluded you didn't press charges for that particular offense?"

Truthfully, I've frequently faced such situations, but in that alternate reality, everyone was essentially two-dimensional except for Four.

Consequently, I simply ignored them, maintained my silence, and allowed those misguided news pieces to fade away. However, given the professor's expectations of a response from the top scorer like me, I've no choice but to draw a deep breath, wear a slight grin, and explain how I'd handle such challenges.

"I'd clarify the situation to them."

"How?"

"If social media can manipulate perception, then I'd use it to enlighten the public about legal matters. Upon becoming a prosecutor, I'd establish a platform to guide law students and rectify distorted news publicly. While the followers might be few, there will be those who understand the truth."

"That's quite challenging."

"I'm aware. It's certainly challenging."

Yet, having my little brat alongside me, I'm confident I can succeed.

"Both your admission score and your attitude are truly impressive, Miss Jattawa."

"Thank you."

"I'm looking forward to the prospect of our student-and-teacher bond in the near future."

"So do I, ma'am."

The interview concludes with an ambiance completely different from the previous iteration. My perspective has shifted, just as my motivations and life objectives have evolved. My words weren't mere jest; I'm resolute in fulfilling my commitments. I comprehend that remaining silent won't facilitate understanding between individuals. Hence, speaking up and extending a smile to others now sits atop my list of resolutions.

Descending toward the souvenir stalls, my interest diverges from clothing, guiding me straight to the stationery booth.

There, I opt for a yellow journal, a color that evokes memories of a certain someone and her association with the Moon. At that moment, snowflakes commence their descent from the sky, causing me to raise my gaze toward the clouded expanse.

The collective excitement is palpable as everyone whips out their phones to capture the scene through livestreams and videos. Just a bit longer now...

**I'm on the verge of reuniting with Four.**

Ah, it seems I forgot to carry an umbrella. My eagerness to meet Vi once more overshadowed my consideration for the impending weather.

**Bzzz!**

A message from 068008XXXX,

[I'll visit your uncle if you can forgive me...]



The message widens my eyes in surprise. My attention is more engrossed in this message than the unpredictable meteorological shifts.

Look! Look right here! Dad hasn't journeyed back several decades, thereby eluding the demise I initially anticipated. While I'm aware Dad might have aged, the realization that we can once again be a family is immensely heartening. From now on, I'll ensure his well-being. I reply:

Jattawa: I'll be there around 1 pm, on the condition you commit to rehabilitation. I'll give it a try. See you then. I'll have Vi accompany me.

Dealing with an inebriated individual isn't a problem, but I can't allow him to become unruly after drinking. I yearn for him to undergo comprehensive physical and liver care. I can't help but smile at the knowledge of his continued existence before pocketing my phone.

Aware that rain is imminent, a few droplets start to fall as expected. I tread upon the same path, the one where I once brushed past Four and accidentally collided with her shoulder.

My head and clothes begin to dampen due to the lack of an umbrella, yet I remain indifferent to my surroundings. Just a few more minutes, and my destination is almost within reach.

The area grows congested once again. Alright, my heart's rhythm accelerates exponentially. I pat my chest twice in encouragement as I step forward. And now I can see her.

### **My dear Four...**

She stands there, tall and commanding, in her student shirt paired with slim cropped slacks and those beloved Vans sneakers. Her demeanor exudes arrogance and an antisocial air, as if she's completely unconcerned about the opinions of others.

Gazing upon her flawless face at the age of 22 once again, I can't help but fall in love with her all over again. I smile and call out:

**"Four, it's me, Wa!"**

My faith rests in her promise, in the unbreakable bond that should transcend everything. She used to dream of me... ever since she was young.

But sometimes, expectations become too lofty. Her cosmic eyes meet mine with an empty stare, as if she has no recollection of me, no memory, no dream that could forge a connection between us. Dread fills me, the fear that perhaps she never dreamt of me at all.

"Wa... is the woman in your dreams." I gesture to myself, my voice fighting against the intensifying rain. Both of us are getting drenched.

"Those dreams... the dreams you used to..."

"What the hell are you blabbering about? Get lost!"

There's no need for thunder; my heart is in turmoil. I clamp my mouth shut, reining in the odd sensation within my chest.

Meanwhile, Four's brows knit together, her expression seemingly annoyed by my absurd greeting in the midst of this heavy rain. She extends her hand, pushing me away to clear a path.

Though I mentioned her dreams... though she told me I had been crystallized and embedded in her dream world for years...

This time, her captivating eyes are vacant, leaving me feeling as though I've been cast into an endless void, a bottomless pit. Or did I lose her in exchange for everything? She should at least harbor suspicions, a trace of her dreams or fragments of our memories.

Yet I summon the determination to turn around and follow her. Even from a distance, I can still discern the outline of her wet shirt. I hasten my steps, closing the gap between us, until I embrace her from behind. My vulnerable teenage emotions resurface with a vengeance.

*Yes, I'm crying. My face presses against her damp yet warm back.*

"Four, I am the woman in your dreams. The woman you're destined to share your future with. If you can't remember, that's okay. I'll recount everything to you. Together, we'll alter our fate. I'll shield you and Vi from any harm. If my memory eludes you, just remember the woman from your dreams."

"Geez... This rain is so vexing. Your words are muffled," she retorts flatly.

"Leave me alone! Quit bothering me! I don't care if the P.E. students put you up to this or not!"

"Please, think it over."

"Go away!"

Her dismissal freezes me to the core. Her cold, wet hands gently remove mine from her waist, then she pushes me away resolutely.

Her almond eyes shoot a glance of annoyance at me. Her lips remain sealed, withholding the words I've come to know so well.

And with that, she walks away, her departure chilling me to the bone, leaving me amidst the familiar sensations and the sting of disappointment. As the rain mingles with my tears, I'm left with a stark realization.

***Four never dreamed of me.***

***It's clear that this time, I've reclaimed everything as a trade-off for her.***

# Epilogue : Embrace

Four's Point of View

**Bang! Bang! Bang!**

Of all things, I despise these door knocks the most.

**Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!**

"Master Film wanted me to inform you that if you're not planning on joining for breakfast, the food will end up being discarded."

The voice of the kitchen maid erupts after the relentless knocking. Her irritation is palpable, likely stemming from my absence at the dining table while everyone else waits. I cradle my temple, nursing the unexpected headache, even though I retired early last night. Shaking my head, I manage a response.

"That's okay. You can go ahead."

"Should I let everyone know that you prefer to dine alone?"

"Inform them I'll be having my meal outside."

"Yes, ma'am."

A fabricator of stories. She'll twist my words into something malevolent, and soon the entire household will hold me in even greater contempt. It's a

recurring cycle.

Regardless of their roles-be they maids, gardeners, or the occasional part-timer-they all indulge in whispers behind my back, casting aspersions on my character. But I can't blame them, nor summon anger, for they simply obey my stepmother's whims in exchange for their wages.

I rise from my bed, another mundane day unfurling before me. Engaged in community service as part of my university parole, I must tend to the business major freshmen candidates awaiting admission interviews today. I'll be calling out their names during roll call, distributing documents, and whatever other bothersome chores my academic break is now tainted with.

Despite the fact that those P.E. students initiated the altercation, we are the sole party facing the consequences of seeking retaliation.

As soon as my phone flickers to life, it inundates me with incessant buzzing-an orchestra of chat notifications. My friends, one by one, send reminder messages.

[Jeans: Four, where are you? Remember you've got a task today?]

[Lookmee: If you don't show up before noon, they might just send you off to a Dharma camp!]

[Fang: Just assure me you didn't forget like the last time.]

There's a substantial amount of time left before our appointment. Why are my friends so frantic to ensure they see me before noon? I skim through their messages, shaking my head at their fervor. Deciding to address them all in one go, I fire off a message to our group chat.

[Four: Got it.]

After dispatching the message, a series of images flashes through my mind in a déjà vu fashion.

Annoyance flares up, further fueling the throbbing in my head. Regardless, I push past it, taking a towel along as I make my way to the bathroom.

Upon opening the wardrobe, a sight of my student uniforms greets me, untidied-it's plausible the laundry maid either forgot or intentionally left them in such disarray. Whatever. A portable iron is tucked away in my bedroom. Handling it myself is well within my capacity.

The water cascades over my bare form, beginning from the crown of my head and coursing down to my toes. I relish these moments in the shower. There's a certain appeal in the act of cleansing oneself, as if it has the ability to erase what should be forgotten or released. While this might not hold entirely true in the real world, I still find solace in the bathroom's quietude, embracing the tranquility it affords.

Whenever anxiety gnaws at me, which is the case right now, I tend to elongate my showers.

Presently, I find myself wrestling with a decision-whether to relocate and live on my own. In truth, I desire to stay, caring for my grandmother. She's the sole person who treats me with genuine kindness, even though the ravages of Alzheimer's have significantly altered her. Yet, remaining within these walls is an ordeal.

The ceaseless pounding, pursuing me wherever I go; the derogatory names; the disdainful stares that I meet with a smile; the moniker "bastard girl" my stepmother concocted to taunt me-it's all corrosive. I try to rinse these bitter thoughts away, but water can't cleanse a burden so heavy.

Exiting the bathroom, my mind drifting, I inadvertently kicked a coffee table that serves as my makeshift vanity. My luck proves abysmal, as my wounded leg bears the brunt of the impact. This very leg, implanted with a metal support to mend a fractured bone, had plagued me for over a year before the device could be removed.

And now, agony radiates through me... a searing pain! Gritting my teeth, I clamp down on my lower lip, striving to contain the suffering. I hobble over to the beanbag sofa, where I recline, preparing to rest for an extended interval until the pain subsides enough for me to resume my tasks.

It's 9:16 am. Breakfast, as you might guess, lies discarded as a wasteful act undertaken solely to inflict emotional harm. I summon the chauffeur, Chai-Chana. A fixture in our family's employ since before my birth, this Uncle Chai-Chana, however, feigns deafness to my request. He drives past a gas station with 7/11 nestled within, as if my appeal was of no consequence.

"I hope you won't continue serving us," I comment sarcastically, fully aware that my mood sours if I miss a meal due to my athlete's routine.

Nevertheless, Uncle Chai-Chana merely turns up the volume of the music, using it as a shield for his less-than-friendly intentions.

See? Everyone holds a distaste for me.

I divert my gaze out the window, then make a mental note to retrieve that 'thing' I left in a basement locker at the university building once the term commences. It's an item that has lost its value over time, a bit of wishful nonsense. I've outgrown the belief in such matters.

Regardless, I still intend to keep it, tucked alongside its preceding volumes, within my bedside drawer... especially that latest red journal.

Uncle Chai-Chana drops me off near the public van stop. While I'm not inclined to express gratitude, I offer a somewhat ironic, "Thank you for breakfast."

As the car drives away, I find myself under the sweltering sun. Dialing Jeans' number, I'm met with silence. She's likely tied up, living with her companion.

I call Lookmee next, encountering a busy line, which probably indicates she's engaged in a conversation with her partner.

When I reach out to Fang, she informs me that the minibus she boarded collided with a dog. The driver, a canine enthusiast, requested all passengers to disembark so he could tend to the injured animal. This implies that Fang will be late as she awaits another minibus.

## **Damn it all...**

They implored me to hurry, yet they are the ones lagging behind. Since there's ample time remaining, I opt to amble towards the sidewalks, hoping to find something for a late morning meal. I'm not one to fuss over food, but the Hainanese Chicken Rice ahead of me is plastered with a plethora of cucumbers. Their presence is nauseating. I clearly instructed the vendor to omit them from my dish.

I despise cucumbers... loathe them more than anything.

Back in my younger days, I exhibited picky eating habits. My stepmother, driven to exasperation, coerced me-a mere kindergartener-to consume cucumbers. She shoved several sizable slices into my mouth, sealing it with adhesive tape. My tears flowed unabated, yet she simply watched or commanded me to swallow the cucumbers, tape-covered mouth and all. Threatening to tape my arms, too, was her method to ensure my compliance.

It's revolting. My father witnessed her actions, yet he turned a blind eye. He allowed her to make me sob at the dinner table, while Film, his son with her, reveled in my distress, taunting and ridiculing me. I despise her and the taste of cucumbers alike. The mere flavor churns my stomach, as though it's a form of torment.

This story is one I'd rather not share with anyone. I've buried it in the past. Yet, every time I encounter that vegetable, memories of that incident resurface.

That woman craved my tears. Each time I cried, my father grew irritated, subjecting me to his nagging and adopting her practice of calling me "bastard kid," just as she did. Regardless of whether I was right or wrong, reasonable or irrational, my tears were an annoyance to my father. What if...

What if everyone within our family were privy to the truth: that my stepmother engaged in an affair and Film is not my father's biological child? I'm genuinely curious how each individual would react.



Abruptly, a desire to wield the truth as a weapon against her flares within me. Yet, an unsettling feeling suppresses this urge, warning me not to challenge my stepmother, as it might exact a toll on me. This odd impulse surges and then recedes, akin to an instinctual response. What's wrong with me?

Typically, on monotonous days filled with mundane tasks, I crave caffeine. I might purchase a cup of coffee on or off campus. Today, I'm drawn to the coffee shop adorned with striking cacti. As I push open the door, I find the establishment devoid of patrons.

The staff offer me welcoming smiles. I intend to order an Americano, but at the counter, I inadvertently request,

**"One Milo, please."**

Milo? Have I ever harbored an affinity for it?

"I mean, an Americano," I correct myself composedly, "Iced."

The young female barista offers me a reassuring smile, gracefully alleviating my embarrassment. "Certainly. Please wait a moment."

Due to my thirst, the scorching heat, and admittedly my reluctance to carry an empty cup into the university, I down the entire Americano and discard it into a trashcan beneath the flyover. A notification arrives from Fang, indicating her arrival. She's stationed at the freshman interview building, having disembarked from the minibus at the main entrance and moved ahead. I offer a succinct "Okay" in response and ascend the stairs to cross the road.

Another bout of déjà vu grips me, once more bringing forth a headache that slows my pace. It's as though I've traversed this path before. What on earth is happening? Could my brain be experiencing a sudden glitch? Then, the bustling crowd becomes boisterous. Under the flyover, all eyes turn skyward. Phones are promptly drawn to snap photos and record videos. I squint, and then I spot it. A voice cries out in excitement, "Snow!"

Snowfall in Thailand... An unprecedented occurrence... Yet, why does this phenomenon fail to stir excitement within me? It's as if I've encountered this spectacle before.

**Bzzz!**

[Fang: Those incoming freshmen are heading this way. Their questions are ceaseless. Utterly vexing. Hurry up! Could someone please assist me in organizing them? Are they genuinely petrified of flunking their interviews?]

The group chat jolts me back to reality. I briefly skim through the lengthy message from my friend and respond with another "Okay."

My strides become purposeful, seemingly unaffected by Thailand's first snowfall. A sense of loss gnaws at me, yet I can't pinpoint its source. Soon enough, the snow transitions into a deluge, on the brink of escalating into a storm. Rain, much like cucumbers, becomes an irksome presence. Standing amidst rain ranks among my top three aversions.

Foremost, door knocks top the list, for those within the mansion rarely treat me with respect and their demeanor echoes through their knocks. Secondly, cucumbers, their taste forever tarnished by my stepmother's torment. Lastly, rain, its presence marked by the sky's swift transition from brightness to gloom.

Brooding gray clouds never fail to unsettle me. I hasten my pace, striving to reach my destination sooner. However, as I enter a bustling area lined with souvenir stalls, I must slow down. Drenched hair and soggy clothes render me completely wet, an image bound to draw a disapproving look from the maid. Alternatively, she might leave them be, a punishment for a rebellious child who spurned umbrellas. The crowd and overcast sky agitate me further. And then...

"Four! It's me, Wa!"

A girl, appearing younger than me and devoid of the university's emblematic brooch, awkwardly extends a greeting. The university's

souvenir shop likely remains closed to new freshmen. She's probably here for her admission interview.

"Wa... is the woman in your dreams."

She continues talking, her finger pointing at herself. Amidst the cacophony around us, her words remain indistinct. She seems to be murmuring something about dreams. The rain only adds to my growing irritation; the cold touch is a constant reminder of my damp state.

"Those dreams... the dreams you used to..."

"What the hell are you blabbering about? Get lost!"

I retort sharply, my irritation heightened by her overly expectant demeanor. The girl's eager expression prompts annoyance, fueled by the suspicion that those P.E. students might have coerced a freshman into a prank against me.

The girl falls silent at the brunt of my response. I extend my hand, intending to push her away and proceed through the rain-drenched crowd to meet Fang. Yet, after a mere few steps, an embrace encircles my waist, leaving me surprised, irked, and even wetter than before.

Who dares to touch me? To breach the invisible wall of personal space I hold so dear?

"Four, I am the woman in your dreams. The woman you're destined to share your future with. If you can't remember, that's okay. I'll recount everything to you. Together, we'll alter our fate. I'll shield you and Vi from any harm. If my memory eludes you, just remember the woman from your dreams."

Ah, it's the same girl from earlier. I stay silent, perplexed by her words.

"Wee..."

Her sobbing serves as a testament to the tears I've unwittingly caused. Yet, my agitation continues, exacerbated by the ceaseless rain. A retort escapes me, my voice raised to counter the face pressed against my damp back.

"This rain is so vexing. Your words are muffled."

The sky mirrors my mood, shrouded in dark clouds.

"Leave me alone! Quit bothering me! I don't care if the P.E. students put you up to this or not!"

"Please, think it over."

"Go away!"

Having delivered my statement, I disentangle myself from the arms around my waist and shoot the girl a stern look, a warning in its intensity. Irritation persists, though beneath it, a pang of guilt stirs. She bears a look of sadness and disappointment, undeservedly so.

As I walk away, a vague sense of remorse follows me.

*Wa... But which Wa?*

I stride into an adjacent corridor where pedestrians seek refuge from the rain. I silently thank the phone manufacturer for designing a waterproof model, saving me from anxiety about potential damage after half an hour of soaking. At least I won't be rushing it to a repair shop. Fang awaits me there, donned in a uniform that could easily be mistaken for a crumpled piece of paper, lacking the touch of an iron.

"The landlady declined my request to borrow her iron. She advised me to buy one."

So, I got it right.

"I've got two," I fib. "Ordered them in a buy-one-get-one-free deal. I'll give you the extra."

Admittedly, my real motive is to spare myself from the sight of Fang's carelessly maintained uniform, so hopelessly wrinkled. Her makeup isn't heavy, but it distinctly communicates her mischievous personality. Fang responds with a grateful grin.

"Then, I'll pay you in installments."

"No need. It's on the house."

Though in truth, I need to go shopping for a new one soon.

"Are you sure?"

"If you don't want it, I can always give it to my neighbor."

"I'll take it! I'll take it! Thank you so much! Seriously, thank you!" Fang's appreciation manifests in her arms enveloping mine.

In my own damp uniform, I raise an eyebrow at her antics. She knows me well enough to realize she may have crossed a line. Apologetically, she promises to search for communal tissue. Perplexed by the term "communal tissue," I inquire further.

She elaborates that she plans to acquire one by scaring a prospective freshman around here into giving her theirs. Aha. That sounds just like us, leaving an impression on the incoming students that's far from warm and fuzzy.

I cast a fleeting glance at the lockers adjacent to the department's public relations office. Suddenly, the memory of that journal strikes me. Knowing Fang will soon rejoin me, I hasten toward the lockers to find my particular storage compartment, the one I pilfered from a sophomore last year-locker number 4444.

From my wallet, I retrieve a minuscule key nestled in a corner. Employing it, I unlock the locker I haven't accessed since the start of the school break. Inside, I find an emergency sweater, emergency pants, a stash of 2000-baht banknotes, and my commemorative journal. Everything appears untouched, no signs of intrusion by the P.E. students.

With my body and hands soaked, my plan is to take the red journal with me on my way back. However, I've noticed that my body seems to have a mind of its own since morning. It stretches out toward the journal and unfolds it.

The pages flick by hastily, but they seem strangely devoid of content. In truth, emptiness is to be expected. What more is there to write? If I continue, what could I possibly put down?

"Four! The professor is calling us!"

The summons, coupled with a towel tossed affectionately by my dear friend, draws my attention. I snap the journal shut and towel-dry my hair in swift motions. I then follow my friend to meet a stern middle-aged professor holding the roster of students on parole.

"Two of you are absent."

Her gaze sweeps, noting the absence of two students. Without preamble, she begins the roll call based on student ID numbers.

"Fah-lada."

"Here." Fang raises her hand.

"Suwit."

"Present." Another shaved-head boy. The professor continues until...

"Seemaysa. You again."

"Yes, I'm here." I respond in a lackadaisical tone. I've grown accustomed to being perceived as a troublesome presence in the committee's eyes.

"Where are Yolsima and Malita, huh?"

The professor raises her face to locate Jeans and Lookmee. It seems they're either held up by the rain or overly absorbed in their partners, causing their tardiness. Ironically, they were the ones pressuring me to hurry.

"They're caught in the rain, ma'am."

The professor slowly shakes her head, my excuse failing to sway her. She marks a minus symbol beside their names-a demerit for their tardiness-

while the punctual students are awarded a plus symbol.

"Now, go attend to the freshmen. I'll recheck your attendance after the event."

In that moment, I bow my head, my mind adrift.... A plus? Plus... Wa... Plus...

"I'll be back shortly."

I swiftly notify Fang and dart away from the basement. Some invisible impulse propels my heart and mind into action. The deluge has ceased, leaving lingering mist. Oblivious to my loose shoelaces, I tread upon the damp pavement I recently traversed.

"Four! Where the hell are you going?"

I remain heedless of my friend's boisterous outcry. My own comprehension eludes me, yet I am driven by the knowledge that something vital has slipped my mind. Something incredibly crucial. It's too paramount to halt my stride, even as a twinge of pain rekindles in my previously injured leg.

I come to a halt in the vicinity where I crossed paths with the freshman girl who enfolded me in a back hug. She's nowhere to be found now. Squinting, I scour the crowd, but she remains elusive. But wait! Am I truly in search of that girl? Could she be the woman from my childhood dreams?

*'Farewell. I'm not hiding from you, but you just can't remember me.'*

The tearful woman who bid me an enigmatic farewell. Yet, I remain ignorant of her. Neither the woman from my dreams nor the girl who embraced me are familiar. I'm plagued by uncertainty. I feel a need to locate her and demand what she wants from me.

But could it be that she's merely attempting to ensnare me like an April Fool's jest or that she's coerced by the P.E. students into ridiculing me? I might simply be courting foolishness...

The sensible course would be to pivot and return to my department building. I ought to complete my tasks and disregard that girl, similar to how I've dismissed others.

Still, my inclination to risk seeming foolish prevails. Once again, I initiate my search despite the exasperating throngs and my drenched attire. At this point, I start exhibiting peculiar behaviors. I engage in sporadic leaps to spot her, weaving through the clusters of people, and leaping again. My heart races, and I am uncertain whether it's due to the exertion or the trepidation of losing sight of her.

Finally, after my tenth leap, which inflicts considerable agony upon my vulnerable leg, I glimpse her making her way through the connected corridor, poised to exit the university premises. Her pace is languid, as though she's been sapped of her strength.

However, based on my calculations, she might have already boarded a bus or crossed the overpass and vanished from view by the time I manage to reach her with my enfeebled leg. It can't afford to break, not here where the path is straight and without the twists and turns of a track race. If I were navigating curves, I might have snapped my leg due to the bending strain it would endure.

But in this instance, my pursuit is solely focused on the fastest thing in existence: time. Or perhaps... Someone's heart. Yet, I remain baffled as to why I'm chasing her or what I've forgotten.

Her slow, seemingly absentminded pace allows me to close the distance without much effort. She ascends the flyover's incline, while another pang of pain shoots through my leg. It's a warning, a plea to desist from torturing myself by ascending the staircase. I stare at the steep stairs. A longing to call out to the girl, to beckon her back or at least make her halt, overwhelms me. Yet, her name eludes me.

"Wa..."

I utter, even though I'm uncertain if it's her name.



"Wa!"

"Damn it! For heaven's sake! How could she hear me? The cacophony below is deafening, and she continues her march as if entranced." My gaze flies to the staircase once more. It's hauntingly steep.

I must clutch the handrail, clench my teeth, and vault over every second step to keep up with her, all the while suppressing the fear of losing her. The pain I feel is akin to the agony I endured when I awoke with the metal implant in my leg for the first time. I stand atop the flyover, my injured leg craving respite. A heavy sigh escapes my lips as I call out to the girl, who's drawing closer to the other side.

"Hey, you! Yes, you, the one who hugged me earlier! Can you please halt for a moment?"

She remains oblivious, lost in her reverie. Her gait is dreamlike, and it's as though she could stumble at any instant.

"Girl! Over here!"

Why is she so unresponsive?

**"Jattawa!"**

I bellow at the top of my lungs, and abruptly, her steps cease. Slowly, her head, which had been perpetually bowed, ascends.

Observing her from behind, my heart experiences an erratic rhythm, spurred by her very presence. Instinctively, I know her name. Jattawa pivots my way. Her countenance bears the telltale traces of tear stains, their sole source evidence that the rain hasn't been the cause.

"Four..."

Her pallid lips enunciate my name, and teardrops pool at the periphery of her eyes. One thing becomes unequivocally clear: I despise seeing her cry. The ache in my right leg vanishes into insignificance. I stand taller, poised to advance.

My gaze remains riveted to her. The disappointment that previously clouded her eyes gradually ebbs, supplanted by a glimmer of hope.

***"You're here. Must mean you enjoyed the magic trick."***

***"You said you didn't want a sugar baby."***

***"Allow me to dry your hair."***

***"I was just worried that I might get less of your attention!"***

***"Have you ever had to choose between two things that are immensely important to you?"***

Each stride propels me toward Jattawa, each step accompanied by a cascade of memories, words spoken, voices heard, expressions worn. It's as though they have all occurred before.

***"Even if you couldn't remember, I'll orbit around you like the Moon."***

Yes, that's it! The realization dawns upon me of what I've been lacking, what's been amiss.

***"My father told me you wouldn't remember anything. However, if, by some chance, you recall me or dream of this moment, could you please?"***

I've never embraced another, never been genuinely kind. Yet she is the exception. Because there's only one of her in this world.

***"I apologize for the tardiness of my promise."***

I hold her diminutive form, which seems to have been waiting for this very embrace. Tenderly, I cradle her head against my left shoulder.

This time, Jattawa cries openly, but her tears are a testament to her elation. Gratitude shines in her gaze. Her lips remain sealed, as if grappling with words that are momentarily held back by her sobs.

"I apologize for the delay," I repeat, emotions both poignant and sweet coursing through my chest.

My embrace tightens around her, and almost involuntarily, a question escapes my lips, borne from my subconscious. "Will you run away from me again?"

Her response is a gentle, "No, I won't," accompanied by a muted mutter that's as cute as it is heartwarming. Believe me, I've never before been so captivated by someone's cuteness.

"I'm usually not so prone to tears," she stammers, her vulnerability endearing. "B-but, c-can you remember me?"

She raises her face to meet my gaze, her eyes locked onto mine, unwavering. There's no step back, and curiously, I find the situation entirely devoid of awkwardness. Instead, I smile and, with the familiarity of habit, brush a damp strand of hair behind her ear.

"I can't."

In the wake of my words, I catch a fleeting glimpse of something shattering within her eyes, prompting me to quickly amend. "But I can."

A weight seems to lift, and her lips, which were quivering under her teeth, relax. For a brief, precious moment, we just stand there, our connection unspoken, yet deeply felt.

"That's not funny. I'm not prepared to walk away if you're just going to jest," she retorts, a mix of emotions playing across her expression.

"Truly, I can't recall when I first knew you....But I do know that you're the one and only, a unique presence that eludes me elsewhere in this world."

Jattawa's lips curl upwards, her grin a testament to her contentment in this particular instant.

Another realization dawns upon me that anxious symbol is inextricably linked to her name, Jattawa.

"Please elucidate. Tell me everything."

"You wouldn't believe me."

"I can't even believe myself, scouring the earth for you."

"It's more fantastical than any novel you could imagine."

"Then, we must both be crazy."

The girl in my embrace giggles, her fingers brushing away the remnants of her tears. Her slight shivers betray a mixture of emotions. I meticulously observe each gesture, each nuance, and offer a warm smile to this bashful girl who still keeps her head lowered.

"Could you release me, just for a moment? Our clothes are drenched."

"Umm."

She's right, of course. I heed her suggestion, yet a twinge of regret tugs at me, for I can no longer feel the warmth of her against my skin. Even in her eyes, there's a smile. I find it difficult to avert my gaze, as if I'm helplessly drawn to her every second.

**It's as if I'm falling in love with her for the tenth, hundredth, or millionth time.**

"To summarize, I know everything about you."

"For example?"

"Everything, including your deepest secrets."

"Can you provide an example?"

"Your red journal, a vessel for repeated wishes."

My eyes nearly bulge out of their sockets. This is the last secret I'd ever disclose to anyone, and yet she seems to be privy to all of it. I extend my hand, inviting her to walk alongside me, and she nods, falling into step with my stride. In theory, when two people walk in harmony, their heartbeats synchronize.

"What else?"

"You're attracted to yellow."

"Go on."

"You're genuinely fond of Porsches, the sole brand you choose to drive."

"My favorite dish."

"You're not finicky about food, but cucumbers are your culinary bane."

**Wow, she's certainly Miss Know-It-All.**

"I could even make you eat them," she adds, her tone infused with a hint of pride. In response, I offer her a grin of pleasant surprise.

"How?"

"I'll demonstrate, later."

"Could you just tell me now...?" This is the first time I feel my cheeks flush. I'm pleading. "P-please?"

"But I want things to remain as they are."

"As they are?"

"Our relationship."

Lost in a swirl of confusion, I decide to listen further.

"I want our connection to grow organically, a gradual build-up of our bond. When the moment is right, I'll reveal everything, and I guarantee you'll be astonished. Trust me."

"So, you're saying goodbye here."

I'm praying for her to deny it, but a smile starts forming on her delicate lips. It's as resolute as her gaze.

"Yes."

Please, not this...

She speaks as if she's utterly unafraid of the possibility that we might never cross paths again.

"Thank you for remembering to hug me. But please, let's nurture our bond once more, so we can love each other as much as before."

My steps falter, as if my heart dreads the prospect of losing her.

"Alright..."

Ultimately, I agree to her request. We stop walking simultaneously, as if our hearts are synchronized. I feel like I'm heartbroken, but it's not actually the same.

"Let's do that."

Today is undeniably peculiar. It snowed for the first time. I've been ensnared by frequent déjà vu during the relentless rain. Then, I found myself in a mad dash after a stranger, solely to listen to her revelations about me. And now, I've obtained a half-refusal, half-agreement to start dating. Yet, I still haven't returned to my usual self; I've grown so accommodating for her, my words turning tender.

"I'll wait for you..."

Despite the redness that lingers in Jattawa's eyes from her prior tears, she blesses me with a broad smile that plumps her cheeks. Her eyes are luminous, a universe contained within their depths. A universe that hints at the countless stories...between us.

"Thank you again, Four."

"No problem."

"No matter what, I'll be moving in next door, same apartment as you."

"Huh?"

"I'll be there to help with your stepmother."

"So, you basically know everything."

"Yes, every bit."

She's become so animated compared to her tearful state. With a final smile for the day, she waves her farewell, as she has other matters to attend to. I struggle to maintain my composure as I see her off.

My wayward lip tugs upward into a smirk almost unconsciously. My mind instructs my body and injured leg to quell the pain and then urges my heart to race.

"We still have a lifetime to be together. Don't worry."

"Why can't we start now?"

**Seemaysa is flirting with a girl... and that girl is an utter stranger.**

"We'll be seeing each other often... so often, you'll be surprised."

"When?"

"Who knows?" Of course, she knows, but she's teasing me.

"Maybe when you're craving pizza."

"Then, I'll order pizza every day."

"Why put in so much effort?"

"We're meant to be, anyway."

Why am I putting in so much effort? Because I've missed her immeasurably, even though she stands right here, right now.

Once more, the girl waves-a true farewell this time. It's her turn to walk away, heart evidently lighter. She leaves me, my eyes tracing her receding form.

As she walks down the flyover, I study her sneakers, her swaying pleated skirt, her student uniform devoid of our university brooch or chain. Gradually, my gaze settles on her face, a countenance I still can't define as cute or pretty or anything else. She's just her.

**What enchantment did you cast upon me, huh, Jattawa?**



# Special Chapter : When she knows my Special Ability

*'What if she's aware of my supernatural abilities?'*

This question has been lingering in Jattawa's heart. It has been a year since the first snowfall in Thailand. Jattawa has intended to keep her extraordinary powers hidden from Four until they both mature and secure successful careers.

However, her senior has been growing increasingly close. Sharing an apartment and experiencing eerily familiar incidents to those from the alternate universe causes Jattawa's heart to race.

Eventually, as Four's university graduation approaches, Jattawa yields to her younger sister's persistent pestering and acknowledges the prolonged coy play. Most importantly, she resolves to reveal her special powers to Four on the 15th of September.

Upon her disclosure, silence is Four's initial response, accompanied by a contemplative expression. Her lips seem on the brink of speech, yet she refrains, shifting her gaze away from Jattawa instead. With deft hands, she focuses on serving rice onto Jattawa's plate from the pot of simmering delicacies.

"I present you with two options: to either believe me or not."

"Consider me partial to a third alternative—substantiate it."

"That essentially falls under your second option: disbelief."

The younger of the two furrows her brow, her head as heated as the pot of food, celebratory of her senior's imminent graduation. The climate itself is sweltering, and she has a mere hour before she needs to collect Vi from school. In a departure from her previous stance of immediate acceptance, Four seems to be issuing a challenge rather than unreservedly believing as before.

"Perhaps it's best if you laugh and dismiss me as delusional."

"You're not as deranged as someone who impulsively pursues a complete stranger."

"What impelled you to chase after me? Your déjà vu, am I right? That's it! Every event has played out before in the alternate universe!"

"You're not merely a déjà vu."

"You are my missing half."

"Enough..."

Jattawa averts her gaze, evading the affectionate stare sent her way by her partner through the steam rising from the hotpot.

While such tender gestures might fluster her, what's more crucial is bringing her initial point to completion. She reluctantly raises her head, her voice carrying the weight of the question.

"So, do you believe me now?"

"I challenge you to prove it."

"What must I do to convince you? Honestly, I could even catch your mouth agape in amazement!"

"Challenging me, are you? Then go ahead! Give it a try!"

Jattawa narrows her eyes, her gaze fixed on her girlfriend with a mischievous air.

"Then, focus on my right hand."

With those words, she retrieves her pencil case, revealing a green marker.

"It's here."

"A magic show, I see?"

Four's eyebrows arch upward, a smirk forming on her lips.

"Exactly."

The younger girl mirrors the grin, then suspends time. Amusement dances in her eyes as she sets her plan into motion. The tip cover of the marker is removed, and she leans in closer. With deft strokes, she crafts three whiskers on each side of Four's cheeks, dons her with circular glasses, and conjures a triangular nose to complete the illusion of a cat on her partner's otherwise flawless face. All this occurs while time stands still.

Giggling in this suspended reality, Jattawa props her chin on her hand, delighting in the opportunity to observe Four closely, seemingly for minutes, or perhaps an hour—time loses its grip when it's paused. Satisfied, she finally decides to release the temporal hold, her impish grin holding steady. She reverts to her original position, holding the marker, and allows the world to awaken once more.

"Before you head back to the apartment, you might want to pick up something... umm... for cleansing your face."

Four's brow furrows in bewilderment. Coincidentally, a passerby chuckles at the sight. Jattawa can't resist, and she snaps a quick selfie using her phone's front camera. It might not be crystal clear, but the image suffices to capture the painted features.

"Boo! You've transformed into a cat!"

"Holy sh\*t!"

Four involuntarily swears, caught off guard. She swivels her head back and forth in disbelief, half expecting AI-enhanced filters to be responsible. But the green markings remain on her skin, accompanied by the unmistakable scent of a marker. She's stunned by what she's seeing. Retrieving a mirror from her bag, she mutters the same expletive upon confirming the mischievous artwork on her face.

"Sh\*t..."

"Do you still think it's merely a magic trick?" Jattawa inquires playfully, taking another bite while observing Four's pale countenance.

"Can you try it once more?"

"Are you a glutton for punishment?"

"Come on! Give it another shot. You can use a different color."

Jattawa rolls her eyes.

"I can't. I can only perform it once a day."

"Turning someone into a cat?"

"Nonsense! I meant pausing or rewinding time!"

"Am I going to remain a cat in front of others? I mean, cat-like..."

"Four, please calm down," Jattawa thinks to herself, recognizing that the Four in her twenties is quite distinct from the Four in her thirties. Certainly, the 32-year-old version of Four wouldn't lean in closer, whispering about potential cat transformations. Revealing her secret prematurely might be a mistake.

"You haven't transformed into anything. Those are just some paintings on your face because I paused time and did a little artwork. I'm not a magician; I just have the ability to manipulate time."

"Where did this gift come from?"

"It's in our family lineage."

"How can something like this be a family trait?"

Initially, her sense of wonder resembles a question she is asking herself. Then, her attention shifts to someone else.

"Does this mean Vi can possess this power too?"

"No, Vi can't pause or reverse time, but she does possess a time-related ability. She can see into the future."

"That's unbelievable..."

"You, in your thirties, didn't react this way when I told you. You were much calmer."

"Do you prefer my older version?"

"Why not? Are you envious of your older self? Nevertheless, I wouldn't have childishly painted your face like this back then."

Jattawa bows her head with guilt, aware that other customers are now looking at her girlfriend and chuckling.

"I apologize. I won't do anything that annoys you tomorrow."

Four remains silent, but her gaze stays fixed on Jattawa.

"Please don't stay silent. It's making me uneasy."

"I'm collecting my thoughts."

"What are you thinking about?"

"About time reversals. Because you talked about me being 30 years old and more, like it's already happened before."

Jattawa finds herself at a loss for words.

"Has this... happened multiple times before?"

"Oh no! This is going to be a lengthy conversation..."

Jattawa inwardly groans. It seems she might have shared her powers with Four too soon. Yet, with the determined look in her girlfriend's eyes, Jattawa lets out a heavy sigh and raises her hand to signal for another bottle of water. It looks like her throat is going to get dry.

*The following day...*

"You airhead! You can't tell Four about this! Dad just called us a few days ago and warned us to keep it a secret, didn't he? If you're going to do this, why not just announce it on Thai Real TV!"

"Shut up, Vi!"

Jattawa hurriedly exits the kitchen, leaving the pot of tom yum behind, only to be pursued by her insistent little sister.

"No! No! No! You have to go tell Four right now that you're just joking."

"Sooner or later, she'll find out anyway."

"Is it really that hard for you to keep a secret? I don't go around telling everyone what I can do!"

**Snap!**

"Ouch!" Vi promptly receives a flick on her forehead from her older sister.

Despite reaching the same height as her sibling, her tallness doesn't work in her favor. She frowns and rubs her forehead, gazing at her seemingly cruel sister with big, round, angry eyes. Unable to withstand that stare, Jattawa ends up revealing her true motivation.

"Do you know why I did it? Four was becoming suspicious when I started giving her advice on dealing with her stepmother. I had to get involved to prevent her from confronting that woman. I did it to protect you!"

"Are you saying I owe you?"

"I'm just explaining."

"No, you're asking for a favor!"

"Oh my goodness! Maybe I shouldn't have told you about the previous universe either..."

"I would've wondered why Dad came back to us anyway. Besides, don't forget that I can see visions."

"Didn't you just say you could see the future?"

"You already knew! You're not an outsider!"

"Whatever! You've become quite the debater, Baby Chick."

Jattawa concedes to her adorable troublemaker, who has grown accustomed to her nickname.

"In any case, don't worry about what I told her. Just believe that love not only blinds people but also keeps them quiet."

In the end, Vi has to concede as well, as everything has already happened. It would be foolish to ask their father, who is currently receiving treatment at a rehabilitation center, to turn back time and prevent Jattawa's revelation.

His mobility has worsened, as they observed during their recent visit when they had to support him as he walked. So, no more time reversals, as another could potentially harm him further.

"Goodness... What's going to happen next?"

"If she remains silent, everything will stay the same, unless your visions show her spilling the beans. But I doubt that will happen with someone who mainly says 'okay,' 'fine,' or 'alright,' followed by a few words, like her."

"Of course, you know her best. You've lived with her throughout your multiple adult lives..."

Noticing that her sister has accepted her decision without further complaint, Jattawa grins and changes the subject.

"Go check your tom yum. I'm starving. Let's have breakfast and head to school."

"Thank you..."

"I've been giving you rides for years. Why are you thanking me today? That's amusing."

**"For saving my life!"**

The cute girl quickly lifts her head, almost as if she's afraid of any misinterpretation. She turns to her right, attempting to hide her embarrassment.

"It's like... I've never expressed my gratitude to you in person for your sacrifice and for coming back to me. Your past life was going so well."

Ever since Vi learned that her sister could have become a public prosecutor and lived a good life but chose to go back in time to save her, Vi has carried



a sense of guilt.

"Thank you, and I'm sorry for not only being your sister but also a burden."

"You keep calling yourself a burden."

"Isn't it true? If you didn't have me, if you were an only child, you could have had all three powers and enjoyed your love life..."

"Maybe even with a smile," Jattawa adds shyly while scratching her cheek.

"Huh?"

"I rarely smile, so you're my smile... I think. Moreover, even though Four is the love of my life, you're also my love. You're equally important to me but in a different way."

Vi's eye's turned red.

"No, Vi! Don't prepare to cry. I'm not in the mood to hug and comfort... yikes!"

Despite Jattawa's stern warning, Vi disobeys, rushing to hug her and sobbing like a little kid. It takes some time to cheer up the baby chick and lead her back to the kitchen.

It's almost 7:30 am, and half of the water in the pot has evaporated. The little chef sobs with a red nose in front of the stove. Jattawa shakes her head, admiring her little sister while waiting at the dining table. No matter how tall or old she gets, Vi is still a little kid in her eyes.

**Bzzz!**

Her communication device grabs her attention. It's a chat message from someone who needed to wash her face earlier.

[Four: I've been a cat overnight.]

[Four: [Image sent.]]

As soon as she sees the image sent by the other side, Jattawa inevitably giggles. Her marker really damaged Four's beautiful eyebrow. The other areas are now cleansed and clean. Only her right eyebrow still has a green line crossing it. It seems like she needs to cleanse the green mark that used to be a round spectacle on her face for a few more days to make it disappear.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: If you ask for another proof, I'll turn you into a tiger this time.]

[Four: That's cool. I want to eat some rabbit.]

Probably tickled by her heart, Jattawa giggles unconsciously after reading the message. While she's typing a reply, Vi, who has been sneaking glances at her, frowns due to the cheesiness of the love between her sister and her sister's girlfriend.

Their sweet relationship in her visions is already unbearable. Vi shakes her head. It seems like her big sister doesn't need any more sugar in her dish.

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: This rabbit is savage; eat her if you can.]

[Four: I've been eating her every day.]

[Jattawa Piengpradabkwan: Pervert!]

[Four: You started it.]

[Four: So, you really didn't erase me with a magic trick, did you?]

The traffic is jammed as usual because everyone is heading to school or work. After Vi has accompanied her friends and walked through the school gate, Jattawa feels relieved enough to attend her class. Four is free for the whole day.

However, at 6 pm, Jattawa has to start her part-time job at the same pizza place because Aunt Tui has already closed her noodle shop for a while. This prompts the older girl to sneak a comment to her girlfriend, saying:

"I'll financially support you..."

"And Baby Chick too?"

"Ah..." Four groans because Jattawa seems to anticipate her thoughts.

"I now believe you; this has happened before."

"No, back then, you didn't say it. Well, Vi was no longer with us, but you used to call her '*Baby Chick*,' and every time you bought something, you told me to share it with her. That's why I could guess it."

"I thought you just turned back time to ten minutes ago."

"You have a good memory. Yeah, that's the farthest I can go." Jattawa grins and tilts her head.

"But I don't want it to go that way."

"You mean going back in time?"

"No, I mean your financial support. You just said that you want to support us."

"Why? Don't tell me you're afraid of incurring debt?"

"You're not that type of person, I know, but I don't want to become someone carefree just because my girlfriend is wealthy. Additionally, believe me, I won't be able to pay my tuition fees on time and will need to borrow your money anyway. I'll need to spend money on so many miscellaneous things

during the last couple of terms of my study, so you've got to support me as you wish, but I'll pay you back as soon as I start working."

"That sounds so distant."

"No, it's a respectful and fair relationship."

The younger girl frowns relentlessly while Four's gaze remains fixed on the road. How could they be 'distant'? Ever since they started dating, she has been spending so many nights at Four's place making love. The only way to get closer would be to be literally eaten by her. Jattawa gulps at the thought, so she changes the subject.

"The bandage on your brow—the one you used to conceal the mark... If you drop me off at my department building, there might be rumors that you had a fight with someone. Please remove it."

"I will, but you must sleep at my place tonight."

"Four!"

"I'll eat a rabbit, as I said."

"But I haven't transformed you into a tiger!"

Jattawa's objection ends in a high pitch. She had just been thinking about what might happen, and now her girlfriend is bringing it up.

She doesn't dislike making love, but every time she stays overnight in the room next door, she always ends up waking up late. Perhaps it's the result of their bedtime activities or... the light, sweet scent of Four's room that lulls her into a deep sleep.

Lost in her thoughts, Jattawa grins when recalling the day she took a bath with Four. Then, the girl behind the wheel wakes her up after the traffic jam has cleared.

"About your time-controlling powers..."

"Yes?"

"Do they shorten your lifespan?"

The girl sitting next to the driver blinks upon hearing Four's question. It takes her almost a minute to reply to Four with a question and a smile.

"So, you're interested in them because you're worried about me?"

"Well... you mentioned that your father ages as compensation for using his power. Last night, I couldn't help but wonder if when everyone's time is paused and you keep walking around, living like nothing happened, will you... have a shorter life?"

"Nah, Dad told me that I'm the only one who doesn't experience any side effects. I don't have to exchange anything for my powers."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am. Do you think I look older?"

"Not at all."

Four quickly replies with her calm voice. Their eyes meet through the rearview mirror. Jattawa's beaming face and sparkling eyes melt Four's heart. The older girl can't help but slip out,

"You're too cute..."

This surprises Jattawa, as she doesn't see anything 'cute' about herself. She's a no-rank princess at her university and has only received four roses. She even has the fewest likes on Facebook.

Nonetheless, she remembers reading a psychology book that states: *'When you're in love, that person becomes the most beautiful in your eyes.'* Or something similar. Jattawa believes that it's akin to mistaking evil for good. But she isn't evil, is she? She silently debates with herself.

Then, she realizes that the car is already parked on campus. Four turns off the engine and reaches out to unfasten Jattawa's seatbelt caringly.

"Did you remove the bandage?"

"Aha. See? I'm removing it."

Four speaks while leaning closer to the mirror and then peels off the beige bandage. She looks regretful as some of her brow hair comes off with it. If Jattawa hadn't ordered it, she definitely wouldn't have done it.

At the university, there are strange rumors circulating about Four the Slapper being a lesbian. That's why every time she gives Jattawa a ride or accompanies her anywhere, there are some ill-mannered students who sneak glances at them or take unauthorized pictures and share them in random group chats.

However, all of these actions can be immediately halted by Four's fierce gaze. Those students quickly put down their phones and walk away, just like this time.

"I'll head off first. I need to pack up things at home and move them to my apartment."

"Okay, see you in the evening," Jattawa replies with her cheerful voice. She tiptoes to kiss her girlfriend's cheek, but...

"Pause the time and kiss me again," Four suggests, raising her eyebrow slyly and placing a finger on her lips.

"Right here?"

"Yess."

"I wish you could control time as well, but honestly, you'll be paused and unaware of anything."

"A kiss is a kiss."

"Do you think a miracle would happen and you could defy time?"

"Wow! Someone who can control time is saying miracles don't exist. That sounds quite controversial."

Jattawa silently grumbles about Four's challenge, probably because she can't find a good counterargument. When she shifts her gaze to those rosy lips, she notices that Four is rubbing her lips up and down like a warm-up to seduce her. The younger one shakes her head.

"I have to go."

Jattawa abruptly ends the conversation with her tangled tongue, waves her hand to bid a stubborn farewell, and turns around to dash away. Even though she can pause time and nobody would notice what she's about to do, she can't help but feel embarrassed.

This is outdoors! But maybe just a little wouldn't be a problem, right? She also wonders if Four would notice if she kissed her. Would Four sense her lips becoming warmer due to their touch?

With that thought in mind, Jattawa pauses time and stops walking away. The desire to say, *'I've kissed you. Don't you notice it at all?'* compels her to turn around and return to where her girlfriend is standing.

Jattawa grins for a moment. Once she has gathered enough courage, she tiptoes, tilts her head to the right, removes the obstacle—Four's index finger—and quickly kisses Four's warm lips as if she's being pulled by gravity.

Jattawa closes her eyes to savor the warmth while gently inserting her tongue into her girlfriend's mouth. Despite time being paused, Four's body feels as warm as ever. No matter how many times they've been together, she's still captivated by Four's body. The only drawback is that only she can sense it right now.

Damn it... As she releases her emotions and drapes her arms over Four's shoulders, Jattawa feels as if there are two hands on her waist, causing her to sneak a quick glance.

"Umm..."

**And then she realizes that both the hands and the moan come from the girl she is kissing.**



# Last Special Chapter : Saving Her Life

About 12 years ago, I'm certain I kissed Four and enabled her to move her body with her own mind while the world was paused. However, the truth is it all lasted only a few seconds, and it has never happened again until now.

This year, I'm already 32, and I've moved back to Bangkok. There are so many things I'd like to share with you from the past twelve years.

Firstly, Four still drives the same yellow Porsche; she only changed the model and design. Secondly, I got promoted. Thirdly, Fish Patty —the St. Peter's fish died under mysterious circumstances on the exact same day. Fourthly, Dad passed away three years ago due to age-related diseases. Vi and I cried as if it was the end of the world, but because I had Four by my side, I could get through that tough time. Lastly, Vi has become a fully matured Chicken. Let me explain...

We've been calling Vi *'Baby Chick'* for all this time, but now she's 29. Four used to call her that out of habit, but Vi started arguing, saying, *"No, I'm as big as a buffalo!"*

I raised an eyebrow at her. How could a chick become a buffalo? So, her new nickname is 'Chicken' instead.

Now Vi is a freelance artist who receives art commissions from both Thai and foreign customers. She graduated from an art school and is now improving her Chinese skills because there are as many Chinese customers as there are Western ones. Every day, she stays in her condominium — which Four bought for her, wakes up late, works until late at night, watches

Thai drama series, enjoys music, and then goes to bed. Occasionally, she flies overseas to find new inspirations.

We mostly communicate through chat messages because we live in different places, meeting each other only from time to time. In fact, she loves living in a high-rise condominium with a clear view of Bangkok, worth almost 10 million baht. Four was willing to buy it for Vi's birthday and insisted it would be disrespectful if Vi declined the offer. Well, Four always says that to me too when she wants to give me a gift.

How should I put this? Our lives have completely changed since our childhood days. Vi lives under the chilly air conditioner 24/7 as she wishes and never gains weight despite eating a lot. Instead, she's daring enough to grow to my height.

As for me...

"About the case of the self-hanged millionaire, have you received the autopsy report? Is it really a suicide like what the rumor is spreading on social media?"

I am listening while leaning my head on a hand on my desk that's buried beneath piles of documents.

"No, the deceased was killed due to a lack of oxygen, but he couldn't have hanged himself. That rope couldn't bear his weight. I'll turn it off and meet with the forensic scientist tomorrow."

"Why didn't you apply for the investigation officer position?"

"I will, as soon as I can't stand you anymore." I tease him, even though I know he just wants to chat.

It's just him and me in the office today because the others haven't returned from their summer breaks and extended vacations.

Kan is also a prosecutor, albeit with a lower rank than mine. We're the same age. He once suspected that I'm dating a woman, which made me laugh and

confirm that I indeed am. However, he took it as a joke. You know, talking to him or being around him reminds me of Khun. They would be good friends or perhaps *'frenemies'* if Khun wasn't so obsessed with gardening in the countryside.

"Who do you think stands to gain the most from his death?" I casually ask while flipping through the document pages, scanning for any pertinent information.

"I don't know, probably his children? I think it's related to his inheritance," Kan responds.

"Let's exclude his children then."

"Huh? What? You asked me to exclude what I suggested, Miss Jattawa?"

"He didn't leave a will. He has dozens of children and grandchildren. Each of them will receive only a small share. His legal wife is likely to get the largest portion," I say, looking up as a new idea forms in my mind. Our eyes meet; he appears quite disheveled on his first day back at work.

"By the way, I think I should order an investigation into his wife's background."

"Whatever. Up to you. You're always right," Kan says without sarcasm because I've often made the correct decisions.

I stood up from my chair, walk over to the office telephone, and dial the line for the on-duty investigation officer. Coincidentally, a young female administrative officer comes to my desk and places another large stack of documents on it.

The wind from the ceiling fan flips the cover page, revealing a picture of a young girl underneath. **That 16-year-old girl... from the case that led to Four getting stabbed.**

Our house is conveniently located close to my office, allowing me to return home without feeling too exhausted. Amidst the traffic, I drive my white

Audi, a birthday gift from my girlfriend. I park it in the garage next to Four's sleek Porsche. It's almost as if there's a secret affair going on between Four's Porsche and my Audi.

After locking the car, I pour the snacks I bought on the way back into Bok-Bok's feeding bowl. Bok-Bok is the dog we adopted from an animal foster home. He had suffered at the hands of a cruel person but found a new life with us. He sniffs the snacks but decides to retreat into his little wooden house. Although he can enter our house through the pet door we installed for him, he seems to prefer staying outside to exchange barks with other neighborhood dogs.

I jokingly scold him for ignoring my snacks, knowing it's a silly complaint. As I enter the house, the delightful aroma of something cooking in the kitchen wafts toward me.

"I'm back," I announce.

"Was it a heavy workload today?" Four calls out from the kitchen, where she's busy preparing our meal. We prefer a cozy, smaller home over a larger one.

"No, just heavy traffic," I replied.

I shed my blazer and skirt, opting for a sweatshirt and shorts. I make my way to the kitchen, craving the warmth of Four's presence. I hug her from behind, and she turns to offer me a spoonful of her Thai Chicken Coconut Soup for a taste test. Her cooking is always impeccable, surpassing a five-star rating. It feels like I should award her all the stars in the sky as a prize.

Perhaps I'm overly proud of her or simply addicted to her, but it seems like the more she cooks, the more delectable her meals become. However, I do feel guilty. She also returns from work every day. We've established a rule that whoever arrives home first prepares the meal, but my job and the traffic often make me the latecomer.

"We haven't gone anywhere during the long holiday together," she mentions as we set the dining table.

"We did a Netflix binge," I remind her.

She chuckles softly. "So, all we did was watch TV at home?"

"What's wrong with that? Is there somewhere specific you'd like to go?"

"Never mind. The long holiday is over."

"I can take my annual vacation leave," I suggest, clarifying that the public prosecutor's code of conduct uses the term "vacation leave."

"But you still have cases to handle."

"There are always cases throughout the year. Besides, for the case I mentioned, I need the police to conduct further investigations to gather more evidence."

"So, you're saying you'd take leave if I invited you on a trip?"

"Absolutely."

I walk over to her and give her a quick kiss. Then, I head to the kitchen to fetch two glasses of water. As I do, her voice trails after me, and without needing to guess what she's saying, I immediately respond.

"Let's plan a trip!"

"Yep..."

Working has consumed a significant portion of our lives since I passed the bar exam, and Four's career began when she joined her company. It's no wonder that we've hardly ventured beyond Bangkok since we started dating.

Well, I almost forgot. There was that one trip to the beach to celebrate Vi's 20th birthday when she came of age. We let her choose the destination. Moreover, the sea is usually less disorienting than the mountains, right?

"Can we please stop at the next gas station? I think I might throw up my breakfast."

I'm pallid, and my hands are clammy. I turn to Four and beseech her, though she remains unaffected by the winding roads. I clutch at her light aloha shirt, which doesn't provide much comfort. She nods and mentions that the next gas station is still a bit of a drive away.

"I'm sorry," her voice is tinged with regret. We've traveled a few kilometers, but there's still no sign of a gas station or anything of the sort.

"I shouldn't have caused you any trouble."

"The problem is me, not the destination. Please, just... blargh!"

I had planned to say, *"Please don't mind me if I puke in this car,"* but it's too late. Unable to finish my sentence, I unintentionally vomit on her lap as I turn to speak to her. The car's speed decreases, and Four quickly flicks on the hazard lights before gently patting my back. I feel a lump in my throat.

"Are you alright?"

I raise my hand to signal that I'm okay. Four hands me a bottle of water along with a face towel, disregarding the stain on her pants. I cough after taking a sip of water to alleviate my nausea. I feel incredibly sorry for Four and her car.

"I apologize."

"Don't worry about it. I've booked the resort. We can freshen up there."

"But there are still so many kilometers to go, and you have to drive in this condition."

"I'm more concerned about you."

"No need to worry about me. We've come this far. A little carsickness won't kill me. Plus, if we turn back now, your car and pants would be ruined for free."

Despite my reassurance, Four still looks concerned. She checks her phone to see how long it will take to reach the nearest gas station so that I can rest or find something refreshing to drink. However, we're surrounded by woods, and we need to drive about five more kilometers to reach a gas station. I force my eyes to close, hoping it might alleviate my carsickness.

I know precisely why I've had a headache and felt nauseous throughout the journey. That case... the one involving that young girl that resulted in Four being stabbed and hospitalized. I don't want it to happen again. I'm searching for a way to avoid it, perhaps by asking Kan to handle it for me.

We had reserved a bungalow at the resort. It's a glass house with a wooden roof and light brown curtains that shield us from the sunlight. When we part the curtains, we can see the mountain view with a massive waterfall.

There are attendants available to take care of those who wish to swim, offering life jackets for safety. While I do know how to swim, I'm not quite up for swimming in a river filled with those noisy teenagers. So, essentially, we plan to relax in our bungalow and soak in the beautiful scenery. Four is, of course, taking a shower.

I close my eyes, but the image of her getting stabbed, drenched in blood, vividly flashes in my mind once again. I force my eyes open because I don't want to descend into darkness, and my hands start sweating again.

[Khun: Heard you're visiting my province. Why not pay me a visit as well?]

A chat message from my best friend makes my heart stop pounding anxiously. I let out a long, deep sigh before typing a reply to him. Oh, by

the way, I changed my name on Facebook, Line, and Twitter as soon as I became a public prosecutor.

[Jattawa Wa: I forgot.]

[Khun: (Angry face sticker)]

[Khun: So, you have time for check-ins but not for your friend?]

[Jattawa Wa: Sorry, I got carsick. I'll visit you on my way back.]

[Khun: Okay. If you forget to visit me again, I'll be mad this time.]

[Jattawa Wa: Roger that!]

His message eases my tension a bit. At the same time, the sweet aroma of a blend of coffee and Milo wafts toward me. I turn my head to see Four, now comfortably dressed after her shower, walking toward me with two cups in her hands. She hands me a cup of hot drink, and I blow on it to cool it down. Four, the tall woman, takes a seat in the reclining chair beside mine.

"The view seems like it's worth my carsickness."

"Mmm," she responds, sipping her coffee.

"What's on your mind?" she asks.

"Hmm?"

"When you're worried about something, you get a headache, even on a short ride."

She observes. I pause, unsure of what to say. What she mentioned is true, but I never expected her to notice it.

"Well... I'm a bit concerned about my work."

"You said you already got over it."



"Well, even though I can pause or turn back time, I still have to deal with an incredibly challenging attorney."

"You're lying."

"No, I'm not."

"You always told me that you're not afraid of him."

"It's about something else, isn't it? Is it about a grim future?"

In the end, I decided to share my long-held dream with her. Perhaps it's the soothing green scenery that makes it easy to open up, and the words flow smoothly from my mouth. I've nearly finished my Milo-coffee. Four, the good listener, gazes out the window, her eyes fixed on the view. I'm not crying.

"My solution is to reject this case, I think."

"Can you choose?"

"It would be an act of God."

"Won't others gossip about you, as if you're being selective?"

"It's better than letting you get hurt."

"Alright. I respect your decision, although I feel like I'm causing you trouble."

"You've been nothing but helpful. How can you say that?" I object, playfully nudging her with my elbow.

I let everything flow away with the water while swimming on the second day of our trip. Since I'm not going to take that case anyway, why bother worrying about it now?

During this trip, surrounded by numerous children, a memory resurfaces. My uncle once mentioned that our powers can only be inherited by the eldest child. As I soak my legs in the cold water among the lively crowd, I share this piece of information with Four. She responds with a wry smile and apologizes for being a woman.

I shake my head and clarify that this isn't the point I'm trying to make. I simply want to suggest that we consider having a child when we feel more prepared. At the very least, after I successfully handle this case, we can think about starting a family, a child who would be a descendant of both of us. That's my brief plan, and Four always indulges her fortunate girlfriend like me.

Upon returning from my three-day leave, I find myself under pressure to accept a challenging case. They argue that, given my abilities, I should be able to secure a conviction against the defendant, despite my insistence that I'm still dealing with other complex cases. That's when the migraine strikes again one night.

Four rushes to support me as I nearly collapse in the bathroom after vomiting. She guides me to our bed, unbuttons my pajamas, and gently wipes the sweat from my body.

"Would you like to see a doctor?" she asks.

"I already saw one yesterday."

The doctor assured me that everything is fine. It seems like I'm just overthinking, and that's affecting my psychological well-being.

Truthfully, work has never weighed on me like this before because usually, all I need to do is give my best. But in this case, I fear that my job could harm someone I love. The blood, her expressions, and everything else fill me with anxiety. I want to protect her. If she were to be hurt, I'd gladly take her place.

"Then, good night, honey. Sweet dreams, my little bunny."

She whispers, her warm embrace offering me solace. Just listening to her kind-hearted voice feels like taking a miraculous medication.

*Mid-May*

I'm not ready, not at all. I examine myself in the mirror, my face so pale that it might be mistaken for illness or a mismatched foundation shade.

Four sends me a message during her work hours, inquiring if I'm well enough to handle today's case. I lie and claim that I'm fine. Of course, she doesn't believe it, and now she's driving to the trial in half an hour. I'll be standing on the right side of the courtroom, arguing for the defendant's capital punishment.

In reality, the defendant will receive a life sentence, but a relative of his attending the trial will likely be infuriated with me, the public prosecutor, and seek to harm me in the days to come.

**Bzzz!**

My phone in the left pocket beneath my robe vibrates. I retrieve it, and the screen displays my little sister's name.

[Vivi Jaravi: He's waiting outside the trial room.]

I furrow my eyebrows slightly. I text back to my sister, who's probably working at her condominium.

[Jattawa Wa: Who? Do you mean Four?]

[Vivi Jaravi: No, I mean the defendant's father.]

My brows furrow even more. I genuinely wonder how the defendant's father, who's attending his son's trial, could become involved with me. But before I can respond, Vi provides more context.

[Vivi Jaravi: You said something to him, and then the mood changed.]

[Jattawa Wa: What did I say?]

[Vivi Jaravi: I could see a vision for only 2-3 seconds. How could I make sense of it? Figure it out by yourself!]

[Jattawa Wa: Just you wait. When I see you again, I'll flick your forehead to humble your arrogance.]

I lean against the restroom sink and then send a response to my little sister. However, I abruptly stop typing as a realization dawns upon me. I said something, and the mood changed, didn't it?

My personality has shifted, from being reserved with my colleagues to becoming more talkative. That is why things are so different from last time, and it's a positive change too. It's amazing how powerful words can be, as powerful as one's heart.

"Hello."

I try greeting an elderly man in his somber white polo shirt. He looks weary and gazes at me with sorrowful eyes. I admit I'm feeling frustrated with him. The victim's relatives have every right to be upset, but the defendant's family should understand that he must face the consequences of his actions. Nevertheless, I maintain a smile on my face and calm myself.

"Are you the defendant's father?"

"Ah... Are you the attorney helping my son?"

He jumps to conclusions quickly, rising despite his crippled leg to place his hands on my shoulders. His eyes fill with hope, but before he can speak and entrust his son to me, I quickly interject with a composed voice.

"No, I'm the prosecutor representing the case against your son."

At first, he is dumbfounded, but then his gaze quickly turns to anger.

"But I want you to understand that I'm just carrying out my legal duty under universal law. I'm not prosecuting your son for personal reasons. He has committed a crime, and there is evidence of his wrongdoing. I'm speaking to you because I seek your understanding."

"If my son goes to jail, it's your fault!"

"No, even without me, another prosecutor would take my place. He's facing his sentence because of his actions. Please don't blame others."

His hands on my shoulders tremble. The defendant's father withdraws his shaking hands. I can see the uneasiness on his face, so I continue speaking.

"I want to inform you about my request for the court's judgment in advance. The sentence I'll be seeking is not as severe as the fact that a young life was lost. I won't compare this case to your daughter if you have one, but I urge you to consider your son's actions rather than blaming me for merely doing my duty."

"Then, can you reduce the sentence? He's the breadwinner of our family," he pleads, his voice softening.

"I don't think I can. But I believe the capital punishment will likely be reduced to life imprisonment."

Although I wish I could advocate for a legal amendment to make it a harsher penalty.

"Life imprisonment..."

"Please consider the late victim as well. I implore you on behalf of the victim's family; they raised their daughter with love and care. The girl had already planned her future, including her university admission. She had friends and a family, but she lost her life because of your son."

"...."

"Let's end your anger towards others alongside your son, who's going to face the consequences of his actions."

"How can I accept that my son is going to jail so easily?"

"It's even more painful for the victim's parents to see their innocent daughter pass away."

"....."

"I just want you to think about the victim and me, a prosecutor just doing her duty. That's all."

I give him another smile.

"Please consider the other parties involved too. I beg you."

And then, as my sister predicted, the mood changes. The defendant's father cries out sorrowfully, his gaze filled with guilt as he looks at his son.

I'm not sure if he feels ashamed because I, a prosecutor on the victim's side, came to beg him, or if he feels sorrow for the victim's family, who have lost much more than him. I offer him comfort for a while until it's time to enter the courtroom.

We walk in together, and I assist him in taking a seat in one of the front rows.

Scanning the room, I spot Four sitting at the back, observing me as well. We exchange smiles but make no attempt to involve ourselves in each other's professional roles. It wouldn't be appropriate for a public prosecutor to warmly embrace her girlfriend in the courtroom. So, I move to my desk, exchange pleasantries with the court clerk, and wait for the judge to take his seat on the bench in twenty minutes.

**Bzzz!**

My phone in my pocket vibrates again, but this time I choose to ignore it to maintain my composure. Someone has sent me a message, and it could be Vi trying to inform me that I made a mistake. I'm uncertain of the consequences of my conversation with the defendant's father beforehand. But at least, Four is here in the courtroom, and the atmosphere is different from the nightmare I experienced last time.

I'm incredibly anxious, especially when I catch the defendant's unwavering gaze and hear his remorseful sobs. Disturbing my concentration, the news reporters create a commotion as this case has garnered significant public attention.

The next intense vibration of my communication device only heightens my nervousness about the outcome of today's trial. I won't check it until I exit the courtroom and can find out what Vi sent me.

**[Vivi Jaravi: You did it!]**

**[Vivi Jaravi: You successfully resolved that issue! My big sister is the best!]**

***THE END***