

# Chapter : Introduction

They say that when you like someone, our behaviour will start to change in ways that are unfamiliar.

After experiencing many loves times before, I never thought I’d feel anything as intense as this... and yet here I am, confused and unsure of my feelings. The first time I questioned myself, I couldn’t believe it was possible. I had spent my life in relationships with men, and suddenly I found myself having strange, fluttery emotions for a woman.

A woman who often comes at my new coffee shop, quietly sitting by the glass window near the walkway, at the corner where my line of sight can be seen most clearly.

At first, I thought nothing of her presence, but as she started visiting more and more—three times, four, five... up to thirty-two times now—I couldn’t ignore it anymore. I’d never been this obsessed with anyone before. I started counting how many times she came, what she wore, how she styled her hair, and whether her hair color or appearance changed.

Is this love? I wasn’t sure. I’d never felt this way about anyone before, and I

couldn’t understand how it came to be.

"Today, I’ll have a full cup of green tea smoothie with less sugar."

She said, her soft, sweet voice and charming smile tugging at me in ways I couldn’t explain. Her brown eyes held a pull so strong that every time I looked into them, I felt like I was being dragged into an endless spiral, like a deep vortex I could never escape.

We had never exchanged more than three sentences at a time. She came and sat for just one hour each day—no more, no less. And then she would leave as if she were a fleeting dream, always coming just enough to become part of my daily routine, so much so that on days when she wasn’t there, I felt an ache in my chest. It was unbearable.

"That beautiful girl who comes to our café every day is a writer." One of the part-time employees said as I stared blankly after she left.

I immediately turned to the sound of her with interest.

"How do you know that?"

I asked, my voice sharp with curiosity.

"I saw a clip in a bookstore a few days ago. There was an interview promoting her latest book. She’s known as **‘the writer ahead of her time,’**"

She explained casually.

"What does that mean?"

"Whatever she writes tends to come true. She had a scene about a plane crash in her latest novel, and now it’s happening in real life. It’s all over the news right now."

"What’s her pen name?"

**"Chloe."**

**.**

My curiosity about her made me invest in every book she had written so I could read them. They said that if you wanted to understand a writer's personality, you could find clues by reading their work.

Every story is a reflection of them—whether it’s the protagonist, the antagonist, or even the side characters. It felt like the entire world belonged to her alone, and I couldn’t resist my urge to learn more about her.

Her writing flowed smoothly...

The language wasn’t very elegant, but it was easy to follow and absorb without having to stop to analyze or overthink the meaning. Within no time. I want to talk to the girl I had been referring of her as "Chloe". But each time I tried gathering the courage to speak to her, she didn't show up.

The absence of her presence sent me into a spiral of unease. Where could she have gone? She wasn’t at the café, and the lack of her made my brain restless, as if the Dopamine in my system had stopped. The whole day I couldn’t concentrate, and I couldn’t do anything. I began worrying—what if she was sick or in trouble?

Why was I feeling this way? I had experienced love before, but nothing had ever felt as intense or overwhelming as this.

Three days passed, and on the fourth day, she finally appeared at the café again. Her return felt like a relief, but it also sparked a mix of anger and worry within me. Unable to contain myself, I marched over and sat down directly across from her, unable to stop the flood of emotions pouring from me.

"Where have you been?"

I asked, my voice sharp with a mix of frustration and genuine concern.

She looked up from her laptop, surprised, with a raised eyebrow.

"What?" she asked, her tone neutral.

"I mean... you’ve been gone for three days."

"Oh..."

She said casually, a slight smile on her lips as she nodded.

"That’s true."

"That’s true what? You disappeared. Do you have any idea how worried I’ve been?"

"...."

"...."

I could feel myself spiraling. My voice sounded desperate, my words tumbling out faster than I could control. My hand lifted automatically to hide my face, ashamed of how exposed I felt.

"I wanted to know... I needed to know,"

I admitted, the words sounding weaker now, almost like they were slipping out before I could stop them.

"What is it?"

She asked, tilting her head slightly, curious now.

Her gaze held me. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. My emotions hung in the air, fragile and uncertain, and I had no idea how she would react.

"Well... if I disappeared, would anyone know?"

The slight smile on her lips left me gasp. Her words and the lack of surprise in her expression only fueled my frustration.

"I thought you were sick."

"This is the first time you've opened up to talk to me, aside from asking what I want to order."

Then the person in front of me closed her laptop and placed both hands on the table, resting her chin on them. Her posture was cute but carried an air of confidence that made me slightly nervous.

"I see you at the café all the time, so I guess I’ve just gotten used to it." "This theory really works, doesn’t it? Familiarity... it makes the other person start to think about us when we’re gone…"

Both of us fell into silence for a while. I didn’t know what to say and kept glancing around nervously. I began to stand up but changed my mind and sat back down again, getting up and sitting down repeatedly about 5-6 times before finally staying seated.

"I know this sounds a little strange, but… I wanted to talk to you."

"About what?"

"About novels, I guess."

"You’ve read my novels before?"

"Your name is Jaa, right?"

Finally, I learned her real name without having to call her "Chloe" anymore. The sweet-faced girl nodded with a small smile and changed the subject.

"What have you read? Which of my novels do you like the most?"

"I like all of them,"

I answered truthfully.

"Your writing is interesting. The characters’ personalities are readable and not jarring. Your writing style flows smoothly without being overly elaborate. It shows that you are a structured and intelligent person. The more I read, the more I want to know you.”

"A compliment like that isn’t good, you know,"

She said as she let go of her composed demeanor, showing clear signs of shyness.

Obviously, her nervous look made her look even cuter and it made me enjoy watching her.

"Which character is most like you?"

Her expression shifted from nervousness to something more thoughtful as she looked at me. Her gaze carried a meaning that wasn’t easy to explain before she smiled and answered.

"The one I’m writing about right now, I guess."

"What’s their personality like?"

I asked with genuine interest. My question hung in the air, filled with unspoken curiosity. The atmosphere shifted between us as though something waited for an answer from her...

"This is something you'll have to wait and see, but I can tell you the name of the character."

"That's good enough. What's her name?"

Because I'm her biggest fan, it was so nice that she was willing to share these small, private details with me—details that no one else knew. The sweet-faced girl pressed her lips together slightly before answering in a short of a nasal voice. It sounded sweet to my ears, embedding itself into my head like a permanent scar.

**"Chloe."**

"Can you give me a rough idea of what this novel is about?"

"It's a secret, but I'll only tell you."

"Okay, I promise I won't tell anyone."

Her voice held a certain intensity, as if it emphasized that this was a special secret meant only for me. It sent a thrill through me and I promise to keep it and never tell with anyone.

**"Our love story."**

**Note:**

**Book Title : CHLOE**

**BY : CHAO PLA NOY**

# Chapter 01: Our Love Story

I repeated the phrase again, as if hoping the other person would clarify further. If she didn’t say anything, I would misinterpret and think that this novel was a romantic story between me, the coffee shop owner, and the sweet-faced writer sitting in front of me.

It seemed like she knew what I was thinking, as she explained further with a bright, cheerful smile:

"The name of the novel is **Chloe: Our Love Story."**

"Oh, so that's the title, huh?"

I laughed awkwardly, almost grabbing the customer's green tea to drink it, but instead, I just wiped the table with my hand.

"That's a really cool name. But why did you use your pen name as the title of your novel?"

"It tells my story."

"Hmm."

"I’ve decided that this will be my last story. Once this project is finished, I want to try doing something else. I want to leave this with a beautiful farewell."

Upon hearing that, I was a little shocked. The truth was, I wasn’t lying about being her devoted fan, even though my admiration might have had a personal fascination behind it.

"Why stop writing all of a sudden? It’s such a waste. Not everyone who writes novels gets to have fun doing it."

"I just don’t have any stories left to write. Love stories always repeat themselves, you know? I love you. You love me. You love it, and it doesn’t love you back. It loves me instead. This cycle just keeps going on and round."

"Even though it sounds like a common theme, there are millions of ways to write a story that’s still unique. The details make the difference. It’s a pity..."

"I could keep writing if you wanted me to,"

She said, looking into my eyes and smiling faintly. Her words felt teasing, but they caused my heart to swell, especially since I felt like I might have feelings for her.

"I’d like for you to keep writing."

"Then come and ask my mom."

"......"

"Not funny, huh? I was just trying to make a joke,"

She said. Her reaction caught me off guard. It was clear my attempt at humor had thrown her off. She looked a bit flustered, her cheeks turning red. If I wasn’t mistaken, she was embarrassed.

"Being funny isn't really your thing, is it, Ja?"

Ja's shy expression made me press my lips together, trying hard not to show any signs of irritation. If you had never talked to her before and looked at her at first glance, she would seem like a quiet, slightly haughty person— someone who works at a computer and has no time for idle chit-chat.

But when I actually got to know her, she was incredibly cute, warm, and tender, completely opposite from the image I had conjured up in my head. "I should take my leave now,"

She said.

I wasn't sure if it was because she was shy or if she was starting to get annoyed with me. She packed her laptop into her bag, stood up, and that made me stand up as well. I felt regretful that our conversation had to end here.

This was the first time we had spoken in a real, meaningful way. I wanted the conversation to last a little longer. I wanted to talk to her even more...

Damn it... Talking to a woman like this. I must have been crazy, craving to see her face all the time.

"Are you coming tomorrow, Ja?"

I asked hesitantly, my voice wavering.

The sweet-faced girl just smiled faintly without answering. And that caused a pang of sadness in my chest. "If I come, then you'll see me."

"Okay," I said.

I didn’t dare hold her back any longer. I only stood there, watching her walk away, her back growing smaller and smaller until she disappeared from view. She didn’t give me hope or promise me anything about tomorrow. She was both lovely and cold at the same time.

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For me, today was a good day, except to meet up with my old high school friends. We had been friends since our teenage years, and we still kept in touch to this day. Friends who knew the deepest, most intimate truths about me and who would always tease me without fail.

We clinked beer glasses, tipsy and merry. Our conversations got rowdier and more teasing as the evening went on, the beer loosening our tongues.

"Hey, Kee, do you have a new husband yet?"

Sorn, the most sharp-tongued of the group, brought up the question.

I froze.

"What? You don’t have any other questions to ask?"

"Talking with you and not bringing up a husband would be a waste. Beauty doesn’t last forever, you know. Look at us—everyone’s married now except you. How can we not worry about you being single?"

"Are you asking out of concern or just being nosey?"

Gaem, a friend who had just gotten married, interrupted wasn’t very pleased by the comment.

"You don’t even have to get married, you know. Being single is fine. Why bother getting mixed up in Kee’s affairs?"

"Today, you actually make sense,"

I said, giving her a thumbs-up as praise.

"Marriage isn’t everything. If you don’t get married, you can sleep with anyone in this world. Remember that."

"Aw, so now you sound all wise, but why did you even get married, you slippery snake?"

Koy, a friend with two kids, chimed in, clearly disagreeing with the choice of living a life without marriage.

"I was pregnant, duh. Why are you asking that?"

"Are you sure the baby in your belly is Pete's?"

Sorn laughed loudly, and that set the whole group off laughing. Our group had always teased one another this way, so it was more of a funny, lighthearted jab than anything serious. We were close enough that sharing stories like this felt as casual as asking,

"What did you eat today?" "Honestly... I’m not really sure,"

Koy admitted.

"Are you serious?"

I leaned closer to Gaem, really wanting to know. And that response made her spray water in my face instead—rather like coconut water on a dying ghost.

"It’s not true, you fool. Even before marriage, I may have had a lot of dates, but I only ever dated one person at a time. I have standards."

"I thought you were done with that phase?"

"By the way, are you still haunted by the breakup with Tee? It's been almost a year now, hasn't it?"

At the mention of my ex-boyfriend, I made a face as though holding back words. I was done talking about it. I used to cry about it endlessly, but time had truly healed those wounds. Now, it was disgust and anger, far removed from the heartbreak I once felt.

"Let’s not talk about it anymore."

"Why do you keep getting dumped every time you date someone? Or was it not as cool as it looked?"

Koy's face displayed genuine curiosity. As soon as the topic of intimacy came up, everyone looked at me with eager, probing eyes.

"Ugh, why bring this up specifically?"

"Well, you’re beautiful—by far the prettiest in the group. You’re educated, well-established, and you don’t have the same ‘desperation’ issues as some of the famous models on Twitter. With all those qualifications, if it's not your bad nature, it must be your sex life?"

"Ugh, the same thing every time... nothing exciting, nothing spicy. Sometimes I even fake it. This doesn't included the helicopter position. If we were talking about the most adventurous, I’d rank myself in the top five, though."

I spoke with enough confidence that it wasn’t a problem for me.

"I think the reason we separated is that we just didn’t share the same values anymore. It was better that he broke up with me before the wedding. Otherwise, we would’ve gotten married and divorced anyway, and that would’ve been embrassing."

"It was probably that helicopter pose of yours that scared him off,"

Sorn said, crunching on some peanuts.

"So, I’ll be watching the next one. If this breakup happens again, I think the problem lies in your personality."

"No way, I don't want any relationship anymore."

"Every time you say that, I swear, three days later you’re pregnant. Just like Gaem here. Heartbroken every time and vowing to stay single forever, and yet... look at her now—two kids!"

“I wasn’t just pregnant by accident. That day I was ovulating, and Pete forgot to take precautions.”

“Well, there you go. You were pregnant by accident, then.”

“Fine. I got forced into marriage. It's boring.”

The teasing continued, with the friends poking fun at the realities of marriage and life choices. The one who was the target of the jabs couldn’t deny it, but at the same time, didn’t want to respond too much—it was true. Some members of our group were anti-marriage, while I, once the most popular in our circle, had become single and alone.

“I really don’t have anyone.”

Because, I thought maybe I would end up with a wife instead...

"What makes you so sure? Don’t shut yourself off from love,”

Koy said, concerned that my experiences might lead to me having a cynical view about relationships. She tried to encourage me with wise words, but I shook my head.

“I’m not bitter about love. I just think maybe what I’ve experienced in the past wasn’t really love.”

“What kind of philosophy is that?”

“I just have this strange feeling I can’t explain—something about certain people. It’s hard to put into words.”

I bit my nails as the memory of the writer’s face from earlier today crossed my mind—the first time we’d talked so deeply and for so long. That feeling, like a swarm of butterflies in my stomach, came back, and I felt my breath hitch.

“It doesn’t feel... well, I don’t know.”

“But you’re saying you won’t have a husband, but you’ve got these feelings for someone? Are you sure you aren’t just... interested?”

“I... I don’t know.”

I bit my lip slightly, uncertain.

“Oh, I can see it. You’re hiding something from us, aren’t you? You just want to admit it.”

“It’s not that simple,”

I said, my voice slightly shaking.

The teasing escalated, and they kept poking at me. My friends had always been brutally honest about these things, but this was different.

The truth was, I wanted to get closer to her. I didn’t want this to feel crude or embarrassing, though I couldn’t deny that my feelings tugged at me.

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After drinking and spending time with my friends, we all went our separate ways by called taxis. Anyone whose same route would join together in the ride. But I was unlucky—I had no one to share a ride with. My house was far, and everyone else’s paths were different.

It was very late now, and no cars seemed to be passing by for me to catch. I pressed the app for a taxi again, but it felt as if all the requests were being denied, and I was beginning to lose hope. The heat in this country was suffocating, even at midnight.

Unlike the cold climates where the cool breeze was a welcome relief at night, here, it was just constant sweat, and I desperately wished to get into a car and escape to the air conditioning.

While I was lost in my thoughts, trying to ignore the oppressive heat, I heard a faint honk from behind. At first, I thought it was someone signaling at me to move out of the way, but as I looked, I noticed the car had come to a stop beside me.

“...?”

The sound of an electric window rolling down came from a modified old Mini Cooper. I bent down instinctively to get a closer look and froze in place when I saw the person inside: it was her, the novelist whose face had been replaying in my head non-stop since this afternoon.

I blinked and rubbed my eyes, unsure whether I was dreaming. I stared again to confirm that this wasn’t just some trick of my imagination.

“You...”

“It’s really you? What are you doing out this late at night?”

“I came to have dinner with some old school friends in this area. Now I’m trying to find a way to get back home. What about you? What brings you around here?”

“Get in. I’ll give you a ride.”

My heart leapt in rhythm, as if dancing a tango. I tried hard not to smile too widely, fearing that if she thought I was smiling that much, she’d find me strange or unhinged. Even though the car was a tiny Mini Cooper, somehow having her behind the wheel made it feel perfect and just the right size. It made me want to buy one, just because it looked so cute.

“You haven’t answered yet. What are you doing here?”

I tried to engage her in conversation as we rode, wanting to hear her voice close to me.

“Maybe I was stalking you a little, following you.”

The slow answer and the gentle smile that accompanied them sent a jolt of sensation through my chest. Was she joking? Was it a playful tease? Or was there truth in it? Her smile wasn’t accompanied by laughter—it was simply soft and lingering, making me wonder.

Or maybe it was just my own wishful thinking.

“Be careful. If you actually are stalking, I’ll make you cold,”

I teased.

“Well, if I’m cold, maybe you can warm me up, then.”

“What, huh?”

I froze for a moment, unsure how to respond.

I couldn’t decide how to take her teasing. Was this just playful banter? Or was there something more beneath it? My mind swam with possibilities, and my voice was caught between laughter and nerves. I tried to mask my hesitation with a cautious smile, unsure whether to let her words linger or brush them off.

“But how should I do that?”

The tension was electric, and it made me want to know more.

“Hug me.”

The voice came from her lips, sounding like a joke, but I wasn’t entirely sure if she was playing or being serious. Throughout our time together, my feelings were all over the place—embarrassed, uncertain, and confused.

Now we were both caught in silence. I didn’t know how to respond to the joke because I wasn’t sure how the other party felt. Today was the first time we had actually spoken seriously. During the afternoon, she still appeared shy and hesitant, but this time... was it another joke? Or did she actually mean something?

“Where is your house? Is it near the café?”

“It’s at the café itself, actually.”

“That’s nice. It’s both your home and workplace, just like my house.”

“What does your house do?”

“I won’t tell you. I’ll let you wonder... Stand up straight, and then I’ll tell you.”

Her words left me wondering, but I wasn’t brave enough to ask further. I felt as though I was caught in a mix of both embarrassment and hesitation. “This joke... isn’t funny? Waa... why does everything I try to say feel so awkward?”

She made a face that looked like she might cry, but it wasn’t too serious. I

wasn’t sure how I should respond—whether to accept the joke or ignore it. I found myself indecisive.

We stayed in silence for the rest of the way, and before I knew it, we were in front of my house.

“We’re here. How nice that we got here quickly. Otherwise, I would’ve embarrassed myself playing a joke that was awkward, huh?”

“Yeah... we are really here.”

The moments of happiness passed by so quickly. I looked at my café and at her beside me, feeling a small pang of regret. I smiled at her as a way to thank her for the trip.

“Thank you so much for dropping me off. If it weren’t for you, Jaa, I would’ve been in trouble.”

“It’s fine. After all, we’re familiar with each other.”

The words “familiar with each other” made my heart flutter with an indescribable warmth. I smiled at her again before opening the door and stepping out of the car.

I closed the door gently and stood, waving her off. But just then, the car’s engine turned off, and she stepped out of the vehicle to approach me.

“Did you forget something?”

I asked, puzzled.

The sweet-faced writer had a look of hesitation before answering,

“It seems like the car broke down.”

“Hm? The car broke down?”

The question hung in the air, and my heart started to race. Would this be a situation that would force us to spend more time together? Or was fate playing a trick on me?

These thoughts swirled in my head as I looked at the car that clearly wasn’t starting and at her uncertain expression.

“Yes, it just suddenly broke down. Well, the car is old.”

She tried to look like she was half-smiling, half-on the verge of tears—a look that somehow made her even cuter. Then she stood on her tiptoes and added in a pleading tone,

“Would it be okay if I stayed over tonight?”

“What?”

“It’s not okay, is it?”

*Oh no... aww... how cute.*

“Yes, of course,”

I answered quickly, almost like a dog jumping at a piece of chicken bone as though I’d never eat again in this lifetime.

“It’s no problem at all. I mean, your car is broken.”

“Well, thanks for your help. But don’t worry, I bring my own pajamas so I won’t have to borrow anything from you, Khun Kee.”

She walked over to the front of the car and opened the trunk to grab a small bag containing her clothes.

“All set, Khun Kee. I’m a little excited, to be honest. I’ve never stayed overnight anywhere before—it feels like my very first time.”

“What?”

She didn’t answer and quickly led the way to my café, her sweet-looking figure walking ahead. I followed behind, torn between feeling happy and confused about her intentions.

**Wait... am I being flirted with right now?**

**Note:**

**Book Title : CHLOE**

**BY : CHAO PLA NOY**

# Chapter 02: Romance Novel

I used all of my savings to take over the shop and rent the building to continue the coffee shop business from the previous owner. So, both the shop and my living space became the same place, which turned out to be very convenient.

I could wake up in the morning and start working immediately, without having to waste money on gas driving back and forth between two places.

I was born and raised in Bangkok, but my family wasn't wealthy. My parents are civil servants with enough pension money for living. As for me, I graduated from a well-known public university, which made it easy for me to find a job with a high salary, allowing me to save a lot of money.

If it hadn't been for the embarrassing situation that made me not want to go to work, I would probably still be working at the company, just earning my paycheck. I feel lucky that I decided to leave my job and open this coffee shop. If that hadn't happened, I would never have had the chance to meet her.

She... is the one who is currently showering in my bedroom.

While I pretended to pick things up here and there in my room, the sweetfaced writer walked in, wearing her pajamas-a T-shirt and comfy sweatpants-with her hair damp. The warmth she radiated made the scent of the soap she had just used fill the room. I smiled at her as a good host and asked,

"How's it? Do you need anything?"

"No, not at all. Thank you so much for letting me stay over. Actually, I have something to tell you."

"What is it?"

"Well..."

The sweet-faced woman looked at me, her eyes shifting as if she had something on her mind. For a moment, I thought she might be about to confess her feelings to me.

"Yes...?"

"I'm uncomfortable."

I straightened up, feeling like I was in the way. Just as I was about to say I would go sleep in the storage room, the sweet-faced woman spoke up first,

"I usually sleep without clothes, so wearing this outfit feels a bit awkward. I just wanted to let you know I won't be wearing any underwear. That's enough discomfort for me."

"Oh... okay."

I almost laughed at my own overthinking.

"Actually, I don't wear underwear when I sleep either. Looks like you'll have company after all."

"I already have a lot of of friends."

"Huh?"

"But it's good that I know too."

The sweet-faced girl giggled before looking at my bed.

"Do you really need such a large bed?"

"Well, yes. When I bought it, I just thought I wanted to sleep in a spacious bed so I wouldn't roll off."

"Oh..."

The smaller girl crossed her arms and looked around, as if inspecting the room.

"You don't have many belongings. Most of the furniture is freestanding. It should be easy to move. You don't plan to stay here forever, do you?"

The sweet-faced girl said this almost like a mumble. Now I felt like I was being interviewed in an odd way, but since I stayed silent, she turned and gave me a sweet smile.

"Well, let's just sleep now, shall we?"

"Okay."

I walked to the other side of the bed, not sure why I was feeling so excited. The sweet-faced girl slowly slid under the blanket and lay next to me, then turned her head to meet my gaze.

"Won't you turn off the lights?"

She asked.

"Ah, right," I replied.

The excitement made me forget something as simple as turning off the lights. So I quickly got up to turn off the white light before returning to bed, my eyes still wide open. This wasn't the first time I had shared a bed with someone, but for some reason, I was nervous.

How did we end up lying next to each other like this?

It's unbelievable... Just a few days ago, I couldn't stop thinking about her, day and night. I was too shy to even talk to her, and now, suddenly, she was lying next to me. I could smell the faint scent of her soap and hear the sound of her breath.

Right now, I was stiff with nervousness, too afraid to do anything but lie still and stare at the ceiling, wondering if she was asleep yet.

"Are you asleep?"

I blurted out before quickly closing my eyes. Why did I have to bother her with that question?

"Not yet," she replied.

"Aren't you tired, Khun Keer?" "Not really. I usually stay up late,"

I said.

"What do you do so late?" "Well..." I hesitated.

*I was thinking about you...*

Since I opened this shop, she's been on my mind constantly. It's like I'm a high school student who loves going to school just to see the senior I have a crush on and secretly watch her.

In the morning, when standing in line, it felt the same... I stayed up late thinking about her and woke up early just to wait for the chance to sit down and work for an hour each day, like a crazy person.

"I was just thinking about random things, which made me stay up late because I couldn't sleep. What about you, Ja? Do you usually stay up this late?"

"Ja stays up late. Mostly, I stay up thinking about what to write next in my novel, and then I wonder what I'll eat tomorrow. Life is pretty simple, you know? Write novels, eat, and then sleep."

"With a job like this, you don't meet many people, do you?"

"Yeah."

"So where do you get all the information to write?"

"Well, about 70% is imagination, and 30% is real experiences-mine and other people's-mixed together, and that becomes a novel."

The sweet-faced girl tilted her head slightly toward me, as if trying to get a better look.

"But this novel... it led me to meet you."

"So you're saying you wrote it because you wanted to talk to the owner of the coffee shop?"

I asked with a smile, locking eyes with her.

"How did you know?"

"Well, when you write something, it often happens, so I guessed."

I laughed and turned to look at her.

"By the way, is that ability of yours for real? Writing something and it actually happening?"

"I don't know. I want to prove if it's true, too. This morning, I wrote about a scene where the main character's car breaks down. And guess what? My car broke down today."

I smiled slightly, not really believing it. Part of me thought she was just pretending the car broke down to stay with me, but why would she do that? Was she interested in me, just like I was in her?

"It sounds amazing. So, after the car broke down, what happened next?"

"Then the other protagonist offered to let her stay the night. It was an awkward night, but exciting. Both of them slept in the same bed but couldn't fall asleep. The other main character secretly thought that maybe she faked the car breakdown to get close to her, maybe trying to do this or that to make things easier."

I swallowed a little, feeling embarrassed, as if the sweet-faced girl had read my mind and was teasing me. Honestly, I had planned to pretend to turn over and hug her when I was half asleep, maybe touch her a little to make things easier.

But after hearing her talk like this, I was too shy to do anything except blink awkwardly.

"So, what kind of romance novel is this? The other main character sounds so cunning."

"You don't plan to do anything naughty like that, do you, Khun Keer?"

She chuckled softly, and her laugh made me smile awkwardly in the darkness.

"I don't know what you are saying, Ja."

"Then let's sleep. But it's good that we talked about this, because I have something to tell you."

"What is it?"

"When we sleep, don't accidentally touch me, okay?"

"I'll try to be careful."

I shifted slightly to give her some space. The thought reaching out and touch her were over, especially since our relationship was still just starting.

I didn't want to ruin it because I still wanted her in my life, even if she was just a customer who came to drink coffee for an hour each day.

"Good night."

"Good night too."

Even though I said that, I wasn't sleepy at all. The scent of her soap was overpowering, and I already had feelings for her. When little things triggered those feelings, it sent my mind into a frenzy. The scent was hers, and it made me feel restless.

I turned to the other side to avoid inhaling her scent too much. As I was drifting off to sleep, I suddenly jumped in surprise when one of Ja's arms draped over my waist.

"Mm..."

The soft groaning sound from behind me made my heart race. Damn it, she told me not to touch her, and yet here she was hugging me. What was going on? She is a human being!

After a while, the sweet-faced person seemed to be getting cold. Her arm, which had been hanging outside the blanket, shifted to wrap around me, pulling me closer. Her smooth skin brushed against my arm, and I could feel her body against mine.

Was she doing this on purpose to make something happen? Was she testing me to see if I'd let things go without saying anything?

I pretended to turn over and face Ja, who was still with her eyes closed. Our faces were only a hand's length apart, and that made me want to lean in closer. However, I spoke up first to see how she would respond.

"Are you asleep?"

"No,"

She answered, still with her eyes closed.

I paused for a moment and bit my lip. She wasn't asleep. She was touching me. She wanted something, but she wasn't brave enough to initiate it. Was this a signal?

Because I'd been through a lot in my life, so this wasn't new to me. My instincts pushed me to lean in, and just as our noses were about to touch, Ja opened her eyes and stared at me in the dark.

"That's too close."

"Huh?"

"At first, it was cold, but now it's hot,"

The sweet-faced person turned to the other side.

"Good night."

Not only did she turn, but she also made sure to create some distance from me, signaling that this was her personal space. I could only gape, feeling guilty for thinking that she might want me to try something. Not knowing what to do, I turned to the other side, unable to face her in case she turned back again.

Next time, don't leave me hanging. I finally understand the feeling of those my exes who would try to get close to me. This is what it's like!

.

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**It's morning...**

I can't even remember when I fell asleep. When I woke up, I found that the person next to me was gone. I felt a pang of worry, thinking she might be mad and wouldn't come to the shop to see me again. What was I thinking last night?

After drinking with my friends, I had the courage to try something new with a stranger I'd only spoken to for a day, and a woman at that. I've never felt this way before.

It's strange... so strange.

After washing my face to shake off the grogginess, I went downstairs to make sure Ja had driven away. But I found that she was still there, standing by the car talking to someone. I had to get out and greet her.

"What are you doing?"

The sweet-faced person glanced at me for a moment before smiling and greeting me.

"Good morning. It's a different morning, isn't it?"

She acted as though nothing had happened but then said that today felt different. Does that mean I need to interpret this again?

"I guess so. What happened?"

"My car's battery is dead. I called a mechanic to come change it,"

She walked over with her arms crossed, standing next to me while watching the mechanic change the battery.

"So, my car is really broken. I didn't made it up."

"Huh?"

"Don't tell me you think I planned to stay with you....Hehe."

She laughed softly, giving off a bright feeling. The thought I had last night about her pretending her car broke down made me feel a little embarrassed, but at least I kept those thoughts to myself and didn't say anything out loud.

"I didn't think that," I said.

*"Liar,"* I muttered under my breath.

"The car's fixed now,"

The mechanic reported the progress. Ja took some money from her long wallet, handed it over with a smile to thank him, then turned to talk to me. "Looks like there's no problem anymore. I'll be leaving now, but thank you so much for letting me stay. We just met, but you were kind enough to let me stay without any issues."

"I didn't think you'd look like a thief, and besides, even if you were going to steal, there's nothing here to take."

"Oh, but there is," she said.

"What?"

"Your heart."

She said that while pointing to the left side of my chest. When she saw I was silent, Ja raised her hand to cover her face, shyly saying,

"I know, that joke was bad, huh? I give up, I won't joke anymore. I'll leave now."

She acted all shy and looked around, pretending to be embarrassed, then moved like she was going to run to the car. But I grabbed her arm before she could go. Suddenly, I felt a powerful force from inside me, and I realized I couldn't hold it back anymore. I had to speak up, or I might lose my mind.

"You really took it," I said.

"Huh?" she asked.

**"Will you be my girlfriend?"**

A question I'd never asked before in my life. Usually, it's the guys who make these kinds of requests, begging for an answer. This was the first time I'd said it, and I never thought I'd be the one asking. Or maybe it was just too early in the morning, or maybe she was just too cute for me to resist. Everything felt so strange and out of place.

"It sounds weird, but I really like you," she said.

The air was thick with silence. Ja lowered her gaze, her face calm, while I stood there trembling, unsure of what would happen next. This feeling... it was something else.

When someone courts us and expects the other person to feel the same way, hoping they'll say it out loud. The time of waiting for the other person to say yes it is so torturous.

"Okay."

"...."

"Let's be together."

# Chapter 03: Obsession

It was a simple answer, like asking, "How are you?" and the other person getting the standard reply from English class, "I'm fine" or something.

Everything happened so quickly and perfectly that I almost couldn't believe it was real. As I walked up to my bedroom, I was still dazed and confused, wondering what was real and what wasn't. But everything seemed real enough that I had to pinch my cheek to remind myself:

**I have a girlfriend now.**

Just like that.

Born and raised with people always pursuing me, this was the first time in my life I had blurted out, "Let’s date."

It was a moment of truth, wondering how the other person would respond. Ja and I weren’t close. We didn’t even know each other before this. On top of that, we were both women. Asking someone out without even confessing love first seemed almost impossible.

But she said yes.

She said yes!

I jumped onto my bed, screaming into my pillow as my heart raced uncontrollably. I could feel the blood coursing through my body, electrifying every part of me.

I’d never felt this overwhelming fullness of love before. Sure, I’d been in love many times, but it had always been just... okay. Nothing that made me feel this excited, curious, or lively.

Now that we’re officially together, what next? We skipped so many steps— how on earth did I forget to ask for my own girlfriend’s phone number? What do I even know about her?

Even with all my past relationships, this feels like I’m a complete newbie. I don’t know what to do next. Usually, people would court me, or at most, I’d subtly hint for them to come closer. But this time, I was the one who initiated it, because I couldn’t resist my feelings anymore.

She slept right there…

Last night, her back and body had sunk into the mattress on the other side of the bed. I stared at the imprint left on the sheets, feeling envious that it got to touch her. Maybe it’s crazy or weird—call me what you will—but it made me crawl over to lie on that spot.

I imagined that she was lying on her back beneath me, her sweet face tilted up, looking into my eyes with a teasing smile.

. .

*"You should’ve done something to Ja last night."*

*"But you told me not to touch you!"*

*“Just say it. If you touch it, something will happen."*

.

My imagination ran wild until I buried my face in the pillow. The faint scent of the soap, the same scent that I used to spread all over the bed. I gripped the sheet tightly and rubbed my body against on it until the wrinkles of the fabric, thinking about it being her skin.

The sound of her shirt scrunching up made me wet, and I couldn’t help but curl up, panting, and kept imagining what we were doing.

I was untying her from her clothes.

She was moaning as her nipples were licked in my mouth.

Our bodies rubbed against each other until the room was filled with the scent of love.

In just a moment, I would....

.

***Knock...knock..***

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The sound of a knock on the door woke me up almost immediately. What was I doing? I felt a little embarrassed and shy before I got up and went to open the door in surprise. It was Pao, a part-timer employee at shop has started working already.

“You came so early.”

“Not early. This is normal time. I want to ask if you can turn on the air conditioning in the shop.”

“Oh, sure.”

I smiled at the part-timer in a good mood until she couldn’t help but ask.

“You look so happy today, Khun Kee. Did something good happen?”

“Is it obvious? Well… just a little bit.”

“No matter what it is, congratulations. Oh… Khun Kee’s mom is downstairs. She arrived a while ago."

“My Mom?”

I made a slightly surprised face before walking to pick up the phone in the room, but there was no call. When I went downstairs, I saw that it was really my mom who was walking around the shop, even though she had been here countless times.

“Why are you here, Mom?”

“This is Mom. Where are the manners in asking?”

I pursed my lips and complained in a low voice, bored because whenever my mom came, she would always tease me.

“Why are you making that face? Keep it to yourself.”

“What’s wrong? I didn’t do anything.”

I said while pursed my lips and walked out.

I greeted her by hugging the elderly person with longing.

“You didn’t call to tell me you were here.”

“I had business at the Revenue Department and it was on my way so I stopped by. How is it? Is your shop about to go out of business?”

"Thank you for the blessing, Mom,"

I said through gritted teeth, slipping my hands into the pocket of my apron.

"Do you want anything? Maybe be my first customer today?"

"Will it survive?"

My mother, who had never approved of my decision to open a café, shook her head as she looked around the quiet shop. To be fair, these days, anyone with a bit of money seemed to think opening a café was the answer to everything.

I was one of them—just looking for something to kill time and distract myself from the shame of being unmarried. At first, she had strongly opposed the idea, but fearing I'd overthink, she eventually let me do what I wanted, likely waiting for bankrupt so she could console me later.

"You should just come back home and try applying for a job again. It can't be that hard."

"Mom, I'm not planning to work under someone for the rest of my life."

"But if going it alone and failing like this, then maybe you should. Otherwise, you might end up with nothing to eat… no partner… dying alone with no one to take care of you."

She let out a heavy sigh.

"I really wonder, though, why does everyone keep dumping you? How many have seemed decent and then disappeared?"

Why is everyone bringing up me getting dumped lately? And what about the past decade where I was the one leaving people? Why doesn’t that count for anything? Ugh, my reputation’s completely ruined.

"Three people. But I’ve dumped more than that, Mom. No need to emphasizes it."

"At this age, Kee. Stop treating this like a game."

"A game? You think I’m playing around?"

My temper flared as I thought about my most recent failed relationship.

"The last one, he even booked the wedding venue! But he canceled because he loved someone else."

"...."

"And what did you do to make him leave?"

"Oh, come on, Mom! How much more are you going to push me down?

Why don’t you just admit that he’s a complete jerk? What kind of decent person ditches their fiancée for someone else right before the wedding? At least we made a profit—you kept the dowry, didn’t you?"

"Of course I did. What else was I supposed to do? Let him walk away scotfree?"

It still stung, though, even with the dowry in hand. The guy had agreed without a fight, probably because he was embarrassed too. But the last time we spoke, he had the audacity to say,

*"Just think of it as me paying you to break up."*

Oh, the nerve! Just talking about it makes me wanted to kick him in the face.

"Then stop complaining, Mom. You got the money. Let it go." "Fine. But hey, I know a friend’s son who’d be perfect for you—"

I raised my hand in a firm stop signal, shaking my head.

"Don’t even go there, Mom. I’m not interested."

"You haven’t even met him. How can you say no? You’re still single."

"Who said I’m single?"

"Oh? So, you have someone now? Who is it?"

"Leonardo DiCaprio."

"...."

"If I told you, Mom wouldn’t know. Why does everyone always ask who I’m dating? What do you want me to say when you wouldn't know anyway even if I told you?"

"Describe him then! Who he is , what he does for living, how old he is?

*Ugh,* How did I raised you? Talking to you makes my blood boil. I don’t even want coffee anymore."

My mom sighed heavily, clearly annoyed.

"Never mind. I’ve decided to set you up with my friend’s son. He just came back from studying abroad. Well-educated, financially stable—he won’t let you starve when you’re old. He's the son of an apartment buildings owner in Huai Khwang."

"It’s not like he’s giving me the buildings. No, thank you. Besides, I’m not planning to leech off anyone. I won’t let people look down on me."

"Just meet him first before deciding. Don’t argue, or I’ll beat you up."

I grumbled incoherently, making sure my mom couldn’t catch a word of it. She picked up her bag and handed me about five thousand baht with a pitying expression that made me hesitate to accept it.

"Don’t act so arrogant. Take it."

"You think that’s enough? Five thousand won’t even cover anything."

"Excuse me? It’ll buy you a few meals at least. Hurry up and go bankrupt so you can go back home. I don’t understand why you insisted on struggling to open a café. Kids these days, I don't know what they're thinking...."

My mother grumbled endlessly as she walked out, leaving me mortified because my staff overheard everything. As much as I hated to admit it, she wasn’t entirely wrong. The café barely made any profit, and I might as well have opened it just for appearances.

But you know what? It’s worth it because I met Ja.

After my mother left, I sat at the counter, calculating this month’s expenses. Unsurprisingly, I was in the red again. Maybe Mom had a point—most people did love coffee, but they usually opted for big-name chains like Starbucks instead of a small, out-of-the-way shop like mine. I needed to rethink my options, maybe switch to something else entirely.

While frowning at the numbers on my calculator, the bell at the door jingled, signaling a customer. I didn’t look up since Gao, my part-time employee, was at the front to greet them.

But then I heard a sweet, familiar voice that instantly made me lift my head in excitement.

"Ja! What are you doing here?"

"Oh, just drove over, as usual,"

She said with a small laugh.

"No, I mean…"

I was so overjoyed to see her that I couldn’t get my words straight. We’d just said goodbye this morning, yet here she was again. Seeing me struggle, Ja tilted her head and chuckled softly.

"Just joking. I wanted green tea, and now I’m starting to get a headache without it. Seems like I’m addicted... to both the tea and the person."

"I’ll make it for you right away."

Excited, I quickly jumped up and headed to the counter to prepare her a special green tea with an extra helping of whipped cream. As usual, Ja settled in at her favorite spot by the window, opening her laptop and casually scrolling through something.

While making her drink, I couldn’t help but steal glances at her, especially as the sunlight streamed through the window and illuminated her profile.

She looked like a painting.

It felt unreal, like she wasn’t even human.

"P’Gae, what’s the English word for klang-khlai?"

I flinched slightly at Phao’s sudden question, thinking I’d been caught staring. But my part-time employee, busy texting someone on her phone, didn’t seem to notice anything unusual.

"I’m learning English with a foreign friend who is a hardcore Harry Potter fan. I'm crazy about him, so I want to find some clever words "

"Maybe *‘crazy,’*" I suggested.

"Doesn’t that just mean ‘mad’?"

"It can mean both, I think."

"Alright, thanks!"

It was a perfect time as I continued watching Ja type away on her laptop. After making her drink, I quietly walked over to her, serve her drink and set it down in front of her. Then, unable to resist, I sat across from her just to watch her work.

Ahh....Was there a better word than "*crazy"* to describe what I was feeling right now?

"Why are you staring so much?"

Tge sweet-faced person who didn't even take her eyes from screen spoke, as if she had a third eye.

"Just admiring my new girlfriend."

At that, she immediately dropped her face onto the table, seemingly overwhelmed.

"Really? Don’t you think I'm embarrassed? I’m trying my best to act normal!"

"How could it be normal? We’re not just customer and barista anymore. Of course, you’re acting strange. My staff’s watching; they must be wondering what’s going on."

"You haven’t told anyone yet, have you? About... us?"

"...."

"Our relationship..."

When it became a special term, I felt my face heat up with a sudden wave of embarrassment.

"I haven't told anyone yet. How about you? Are you planning to tell someone?"

"Not yet... I don't have many friends, so there's no one to tell,"

She said while fixing her hair and clearing her throat, as if gathering her thoughts.

"So, here's the thing. I came today because there's a little problem,"

She confessed.

"What problem?"

"That us ..."

Her expression grew genuinely concerned, and made me feel uneasy. Could she was changing her mind about us? Maybe she’s realized it’s not possible, because she was just in a weird mood.

"....."

"I want to take you to meet my mom,"

She said.

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**We were just talking yesterday**. This morning, we became a couple. By the afternoon, she’s taking me to meet her mother. Even movies don’t move this fast! I sat in her car, watching her drive a cute old Mini Cooper that seemed to suit her perfectly.

The truth is, this visit wasn’t about introducing me as her partner. There was more to it than that....

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*"I don’t want you to feel pressured, okay? This morning, I had a fight with my mom... She didn’t believe I was staying at a friend’s place. She said I must’ve been out with my boyfriend."*

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Come to think of it, her mom wasn’t entirely wrong. She had stayed with her girlfriend. It’s just that last night, we weren’t officially a couple yet.

About 15 minutes later, we arrived at her house. It wasn’t far from my café, close enough to bike if she had one—which I doubted she didn't have one. Her house was a modest two-story wooden home, not too old but not brand new either, sitting quietly in a peaceful neighborhood.

After unlocking the gate and parking the car, she turned to me with a grateful smile.

"I’m so glad you understand and agreed to come with me."

"It’s no big deal," I replied.

It was a big deal, though. Meeting my boyfriend's family has always been nerve-wracking for me. And this time, it was even more nerve-wracking because it was my first time meeting the family of my girlfriend. I didn’t know how to act—should I be sweet and gentle, or should I play it cool and confident? I couldn’t decide how to position myself at all...

"Mom, I’m bringing a witness!"

Ja’s sweet voice called out into the house, clearly signaling for someone inside to come out and greet the guest. Before long, an older woman in comfortable house clothes, resembling pajamas, appeared, holding a pair of reading glasses and a book in one hand.

"Mom, this is Kee. Kee, this is my mom. See? I told you I stayed over at a woman’s house, not a man’s."

Ja’s mother removed her glasses and looked at me thoughtfully. I didn’t need to think twice to recognize her—I could still remember the smack of her hand landing on my back in the school cafeteria. It happened after she saw me show up at school without an undershirt, because it was too hot.

"Teacher Wilai?"

"Oh… your face looks familiar. Were you one of my students?"

"Well… something like that,"

I replied hesitantly.

I glanced at Ja, stunned by the coincidence. Could this really be happening? Her mom had been my high school teacher! Once she realized I was a former student, Miss Wilai relaxed her demeanor, no longer scrutinizing me so harshly.

"See, Mom? I told you there was nothing going on. You were yelling at me like crazy this morning."

"How could I not? I called, but your phone was off. You show up in the morning without explanation. A young girl staying out overnight is never a good thing… By the way, did your car really break down? How convenient it died right in front of Kee’s house."

Miss Wilai’s tone didn’t show any faith in her daughter’s story one bit. I nodded quickly, trying to reassure her firmly stating if this morning, a mechanic had indeed replaced the car battery right in front of my house.

"Fine, but I still don’t like you sleeping outside the house."

"Then how about Keer comes to sleep over here instead?"

"What?"

Ja proposed the idea with an innocent face. Teacher Wilai shot me a sharp look before turning to scold her daughter, as an old-fashioned parents often do.

"Doesn’t she have her own home? Why would she need to stay here? Besides, what if her parents get upset about her being out?"

"No one’s as uptight as you, Mom. And anyway, I’d rather hang out with Kee more because we’re close now."

Ja said this while linking her arm with mine, clearly enjoying showing me off. Teacher Wilai raised an eyebrow before putting her glasses back on and pretending to focus on her book.

"Do as you like. Having a close friend is fine. Go on, do whatever you’re going to do. I’m reading now."

"Okay, we’ll be upstairs,"

Ja replied cheerfully.

"Do as you like, but don’t go jumping around,"

They say parents will always see their children as kids, and Teacher Wilai was no exception. Even her warning made it sound like she expected us to bounce around her daughter’s bedroom as if it were a ball pit.

The sweet-faced person gave me a quick house tour, though there wasn’t much space to explore, before leading me to her 4x4-meter bedroom. The room was painted in alternating white and light blue, giving it a fresh but slightly old-fashioned feel. I guessed most of the items inside were arranged by Teacher Wilai herself.

"This is where you’ll sleep,"

Ja said with a cheerful flourish of her hand, her voice animated as she added,

"I’ve lived here since I was born. The first time I wrote a novel I used a typewriter. I loved the click-clack and the 'shhh' sound when you moved the carriage back."

Ja walked over to her desk, where an old typewriter still sat, and spoke about it with pride.

"Ah..ha..," I replied with a smile.

"Even now, I still use the typewriter, I like that you if I make mistakes. I can't fixed it. It makes me think carefully before typing anything."

"Please type something for me. I want to hear its click-clack sound."

"Hehe, what should I type…? Okay, you say anything, and I’ll type it down."

"Are you trying to show off how fast you can type, huh?"

The sweet-faced girl cracked her fingers until she made a "crack" sound and dragging a chair to sit and showed she was ready for a challenge.

Watching her serious expression from behind made my heart flutter. My obsession with her made me feel like I was going crazy. What made me like her so much when we had just met?

"Go ahead. What should I type?"

"Hmm…"

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***Click-clack, click-clack.***

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Before I could finish thinking, Ja had already begun typing out my words onto paper, causing me to smile slightly. Clearly, It seems like she can't waste my words and ready to capture every word.

"I’ll name this story… **Obsession**,"

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***Click-clack, click-clack***.

"Once upon a time, there was a woman filled with sorrow after being dumped. She withdrew every penny from her bank account to invest in opening a coffee shop. It was quite a good decision, as though it didn’t bring much profit, it brought her happiness."

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***Click-clack, click-clack.***

***.***

"She had a few regular customers but could only remember some of them. One of them was a writer who frequently brought her laptop to use the internet at the shop. She never looked up or talked to anyone. The sunlight streaming through the window, illuminating her from the side, made her look even more beautiful than usual. Her quiet demeanor sparked the imagination—what could she be thinking about?"

"Thinking about novel,"

The sweet-faced girl replied with a laugh, her hands still typing away.

"Then she started making the coffee shop owner’s feel dizzy and her stomach churn."

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***Click-clack…***

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Ja paused, seemingly hesitating.

"What’s wrong? Are you shy?"

"Are you telling me your own feelings right now?"

"Something like that. Aren’t you going to listen?"

Hearing that, the girl in front of me nodded slightly, so I continued to speak, prompting her to continue typing.

.

"The coffee shop owner waited eagerly for her to come every single day, day after day, even though they had never spoken to each other. Does she even know how captivated and infatuated the owner is with her?"

I leaned in from behind, lowering myself to whisper near her ear.

"The shop owner even fantasized kissing her, touching her, even though in reality, she wouldn’t even let the owner touch her while sleeping."

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***Click-clack…***

***.***

Ja turned to look at me, her fingers frozen on the typewriter keys. With our faces so close, I seized the moment to charm her, not letting the opportunity slip away.

"Since we’re officially together, now you know how obsessed I'm with the writer."

"....."

**"Can I kiss you, Ja?"**

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# Chapter 04: Flirting

The person in front of me froze as if deep in thought. Taking advantage of the silence, I assumed she was giving me permission and leaned in closer.

However, she turned her head away at the last moment, narrowly avoiding me, and raised a finger to my lips as a signal to stop. Her light brown eyes sparkled like hundreds of tiny stars as she smiled and spoke in a voice so sweet it was almost teasing.

"Alright."

"Then why did you dodge?"

"But not now,"

She said, standing up with a bright laugh that felt like it stole my heart and soul away with her.

"We only started dating this morning. I want it to be a little smoother."

"Not even just a little bit?"

I followed her, trying to catch hold of her, but the sweet-faced girl dodged and laughed as though we were playing tag.

"Nope. If it's too easy, you might get bored. What would I do then? I want to date you for a long time, Keer."

"And how does kissing make us stay together for a short period of time?"

"Ja, I want a kiss to feel like a reward,"

As soon as I said that, the sweet-faced girl stepping closer to me this time. She placed her arms around my neck and, because she was shorter, stood on her tiptoes slightly.

"Keerr, that way, you will feel excited."

"Am I the only one who’s supposed to stay excited here?"

"Whoever asked to be in the relationship first is always at a disadvantage,"

She teased.

"That's so cruel."

"Flirt with me first."

"Flirt?"

I blinked in confusion.

"Flirting is for when you're just getting to know someone before becoming a couple, isn't it? But we're dating now."

"Which means you're missing out on the good part—the peak moment. Please... flirt with me a little,"

She said, resting her head on my shoulder, sounding almost like she was pleading.

"I want to feel wooed, cherished, and cared for. Can't you do that for me?"

"I've never flirted with anyone in my life,"

I admitted.

Because I’ve always been the one being courted, never the one to make the first move in a relationship. I’ve always felt like I had the upper hand, the one who got to choose.

"Well, no one has ever flirted with me either," she replied.

"Seriously?" I asked, shocked.

"With a face as adorable and sweet as yours?"

"Mm-hmm."

"But you’ve had boyfriends, haven’t you?"

"I’ve always been the one who approached them."

"Then why don’t you make a move on me, Ja?"

"Because I want Keer to be the first for everything, including this,"

She said with a playful smile.

"You’ll be the first person to woo me, and I’ll be the first person you put effort into winning over. Isn’t that wonderful?"

I reached out and gently ran my fingers along her waist, teasing her to give in and let me kiss her. Flirting wasn’t a problem—I could manage that—but right now, I wanted to hold her as close as I could.

"Oh,... no way,"

She said, playfully dodging and moving to the other side of the room, making me crave her even more. Just as I was about to follow her, a strange sound came from outside the door. Her sweet expression changed as if she suddenly remembered something.

"Oh no, my daughter's here!"

"Huh?"

"Chloé!"

The owner of the voice revealed itself—a plump Yorkshire Terrier waddled into the room, flopping onto its back and showing its belly as if to curry favor with me, a complete stranger. The sweet-faced girl gasped and rushed to the dog, showering it with affection and kisses on its tummy, making me feel a bit jealous.

Why doesn’t she cuddle me like that? I wish I were the dog.

"You little fatty! Why are you only showing up now?"

"The groomer just brought her back,"

Said a voice from the doorway—it was her mother, Teacher Wilai. I guessed she had followed the dog upstairs.

"She smelled terrible before. The moment she got here, she dashed straight upstairs—probably knew there was a guest."

"She smells so nice now,"

The girl cooed.

"Her name’s Chloé?"

I asked, sitting down to look at the adorable dog lying belly-up, clearly inviting me to scratch it.

"Why does everything these days have such fancy names? Is this where you get all your ideas—your pen name and novel titles—from the dog?"

"Don’t call her a dog! She’s my daughter,"

She said, feigning indignation.

Teacher Wilai scolded sharply, making Chloé lower her head slightly in response.

"Okay… Hello, Miss Chloé,"

I said formally.

*"Woof, woof!"*

The dog barked as if to acknowledge the greeting. Teacher Wilai, satisfied with the interaction, smiled and called Chloé out of the room so as not to disturb her guest.

"Come on, my darling, let's go eat,"

She said lovingly.

With that, the two left, closing the door behind them. The interruption had jolted me back to my senses, making me feel slightly awkward.

To cover it up, I pretended to examine my surroundings with interest, eventually wandering back to the writing desk. A stack of papers sat neatly next to the typewriter.

"Does your mom know about us?"

I asked casually as I reached out to pick up the stack.

"Don’t read that!"

Before I could grab the papers, she darted over, snatching them from my hand. In the process, the edge of the paper sliced my finger, drawing a small bead of blood.

"Ouch."

"Sorry! Are you alright?"

Her sweet face showed genuine concern as she placed the papers down and took my hand to inspect the cut. Without hesitation, she brought my finger to her lips and gently sucked on it, the warmth of her tongue sending a surprising tingle through me. Startled, I instinctively stepped back.

"I’m fine," I muttered quickly.

"How can you be fine? You’re bleeding!" "Did you just sneak a kiss on my finger?"

I teased, taking advantage of the moment.

Her face scrunched up adorably in response, her nose crinkling as she pretended to growl.

"Here I am trying to help, and you accuse me of that! I just wanted to stop the bleeding."

"What if I had AIDS? What would you do then?"

"Then I’d just have to go through it with you,"

She shrugged nonchalantly, showing no fear at my playful warning.

Her nonchalance made her even more irresistible. I couldn’t help but grab her cheek in a playful squeeze.

"Why are you so cute? Were you born like this?" "If you think I’m this cute, why don’t you court me?"

She retorted with a sly grin.

"What’s in it for me if I succeed?"

"A kiss,"

She said with a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"Deal."

"Deal."

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What a tempting reward. I became so eager for the promised kiss that as soon as I got home, I started searching online for ways how to impress a woman.

A person like me searching for tips on how to court another woman? Oh my gosh! That's crazy.

When you can’t figure something out, the only solution is to ask a friend. I called Khrue, my most available friend, who spends her days at home taking care of her kids. As soon as she picked up, I got straight to the point.

"How did your husband woo you and get two kids?"

The blunt question made her laugh brightly.

[He said if I agreed to be his wife, he’d give me ten baht of gold, a rental building, and stop fooling around.]

"And what if he didn't have that kind of much money?"

[Then don’t do anything at all. If the other person likes you, even giving them a single flower will make them happy.]

"That’s ridiculous. Isn’t that too low-effort? Do you remember Earth? He tied balloons to his motorbike just to get the whole school’s attention while courting me." [Did you like him?]

No.

[If the person isn’t the right one, whatever they do will feel wrong, even annoying. But if they are the right one, even buying you a five-baht Milo stick could feel profound—like a new enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. So, who are you trying to flirt with?]

"No one!"

[Then why ask?]

"Can’t I just gather information? Bye."

I hung up quickly, not wanting to hear her ramble any further.

It’s true, though. If you like someone, even the smallest gestures can seem grand. No need for flashy stunts or billboard love confessions.

Wow, how much creativity did each person who flirted with me to impressive me. And yet, the results was always the same:

*"Sorry, but you’re not the one."*

So pitiful.

But those were the ones I didn’t like abd didn't think about that. As for the ones I've dated, they were people I could hold a proper conversation with, who had looks that didn’t embarrass me in public, and a lifestyle that matched mine. Yet, in the end, I still got dumped.

I’d asked myself before, What was wrong? Why was I always left behind? But I never got an answer, except the usual comforting words:

"Your virtues didn’t align."

However, this time i got to play the role of the one courting person. But unlike most couples, we were already together. We just wanted to create special memories, like those couples who already have a child before marriage. Even though they know they’ll get married soon, the guy still surprises the girl by proposing. It’s predictable, but you still want it to happen anyway.

We liked each other but still wanted to experience the thrill of courting. Something like that.

Since she liked me, I didn’t need to go over the top. But it couldn’t be too underwhelming either. Hmm... fine. If she wanted me to court her, then I’d give it a try!

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I decided to send flowers. Not directly to her, though. I sent them to her mom with a note:

**"Thank you for raising such an adorable daughter."**

Because i couldn't think of anything and every women are always softhearted when received flowers. Immediately, my phone rang. It was her. We’d exchanged numbers the day before.

The moment I picked up, her voice came through, light and teasing:

[You’re crazy! Who sends flowers to the mom? You’re supposed to be courting me, not my mom!]

"Well, I like her daughter, so I’ve got to go through her first. How was today’s courting attempt?"

[It was so awkward I didn’t know what to say. Mom freaked out, wondering who sent them. I just told her I wasn’t sure.]

"Did your mom say anything about someone courting her daughter?"

[She didn’t scold me or anything but kept asking questions. I’ve never shown her I had a partner before, so she was completely caught off guard. Who sends flowers like they’re offering garlands for Teacher’s Day?]

"Well, I am courting a teacher’s daughter. So, were you impressed?"

[Is that’s all?]

"How about this—I’ll add more. How about dinner tonight? I’ve reserved a spot at a nice hotel."

The line went quiet for a moment. I couldn’t tell what she was thinking or doing.

[You’re really courting me, aren’t you? So, this is what it feels like.]

“I just realized this is what it’s like to court someone. Wow, it’s so nervewracking,”

I laughed, tucking my knees to my chest in the corner of the room, feeling shy.

“I’ve never done anything like this before. You’re really opening up a whole new world for me.”

[Well, no one’s ever courted me before either. But since you tried so hard to win over my mom, I’ll go to dinner with you.]

“If it goes well, will I get to kiss you?”

[We’ll see. No promises.]

Her laughter echoed through the phone, and then we both fell into a comfortable silence. Neither of us wanted to hang up. I listened to her breathing on the other end, absentmindedly poking the floor with my finger, unsure of what else to say.

“Why are we only meeting now? Where have you been all my life?”

[If we had met earlier, you might not have liked me.]

“Why would you think that?”

[Because you had a boyfriend.]

“And what about you? If we’d met earlier, would you not have liked me?”

[Good question. That’s hard to say. Anyway, see you at the restaurant you picked. If you make a good impression, tonight might end with a kiss.]

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After hanging up, I spent the rest of the day eagerly waiting for the evening. At six o’clock sharp, I closed up shop, got dressed, and hailed a taxi to the hotel. I sent her the location via chat, and although she read the message, she didn’t reply. I couldn’t help but smile, a mix of nerves and excitement bubbling inside me.

It’s happening so fast—just two days ago, we started talking. The next day, we woke up together and decided to date. By evening, I’d visited her mom. Today, I sent flowers and now we’re going on an official date. And I will get a kiss as a reward.

Could things go further than I’d imagined?

Gosh, what am I even thinking?

I chuckled to myself during the car ride, trying to shake off the wild thoughts. After over an hour of traffic, I finally arrived. The restaurant was on the top floor, the highest point in the country. The view was breathtaking, and the elegant atmosphere made the place worth its reputation.

I scanned the menu, pretending not to notice the sweat forming on my brow from the steep prices. This place was no joke.

If my mom’s listening, wherever she is... I’m sorry, Mom. That five thousand baht? I used it to treat a girl. Please forgive me—your daughter’s in love.

I moved slightly and called the waiter to order food while admiring the distant view of the city. A soft cough made me straighten up and turn to look.

“Keer, it really is you! I thought I was seeing things.”

“Doctor Pae,”

I swallowed nervously, unsure of what expression to wear.

“Is this a coincidence or on purpose? This isn’t a Thai drama after the news.”

“It has to be a coincidence. Do you think Pae followed Keer here?”

Meeting with my ex boyfriend from two years ago made things awkward. We had dated until he proposed, but then we broke up because he told me he had found someone he truly wanted to be with.

I never saw that woman, nor did I care to, because I was too angry at the time. But now, I’ve calmed down and feel nothing. I glanced at the woman he brought along and subtly pointed at her.

“Is this your wife?”

“Huh? No, no,”

Dr. Pae quickly waved his hands to deny it and signaled for the woman to sit.

“We’re just talking. By the way, I heard you’re getting married?”

“Where did you hear that? Then update the news. Don't make it up."

“Why?”

“Don’t ask. It’s old news. But if the person with you isn’t your wife, then who is she... a mistress? You left me to be with that woman you called the light of your life, and now you’ve got a mistress?”

“Crazy! No, it’s not like that. I’m not married yet... there were complications, so we had to part ways.”

“Why?”

“Well…”

“Pae,”

The woman called his name, making the handsome doctor stammer. I decided to cut the conversation short since I wasn’t really interested.

“You should go. If we have a chance, we can catch up later.”

“Alright. Keer, you’re doing well, right? Your life is good?”

“Yeah, things are good. I think I’ve found the real one this time.”

“Then Pae…”

“Pae, are you going to eat or what?”

When Dr. Pae was pressed too much, he had to get up with a blank expression. It seemed that going on a date with another woman wasn't such a good idea, because I could see from the corner of my eye that his companion was constantly staring at me while we sat together.

I didn't go back to swallow my spit or anything. No need to be suspicious. I've already found my person, too. I'm not obsessed with my ex.

That said, I decided to call the sweet-faced person. Why hasn't she arrived yet?

I hummed a cheerful tune and dialed the number. There was a brief pause as the call went through, and then the person picked up. I cheerfully asked,

“Hey, where are you? Keer’s waiting at the restaurant.”

[Oh, sorry, Keer.]

I furrowed my brows, starting to feel strange, and then I was stunned by the reply.

“I’m too lazy to go now. You can eat without me. Bye.”

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*Really?*

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The call ended abruptly, leaving me holding the phone, confused and stunned. Not long after, I received a message with a sticker that said,

"Good night,"

As if nothing had happened and there was no problem with the plans.

What is this? What went wrong? Why was I suddenly dumped?

Why!!!

# Chapter 05: Suck

I knew something had to be wrong, but since I couldn't figure out what it was, I decided to find the answer by finishing the meal I had ordered and taking it home shamelessly, even in a fancy restaurant on top of a skyscraper.

After that, I immediately took a taxi to her house. I was hoping she might be dressed to go out but was dealing with some issue preventing her from leaving, like stomach cramps, her period, an argument with her mom, or perhaps Chloe was sick, causing some emotional distress.

However, when I arrived and called to let her know I was at her place, she came down to greet me in her pajamas, holding a shabby stuffed doll and wearing square-framed glasses, her face bare and clearly ready to sleep.

"Wow, Kee, you look great," she said.

"As for you, I dressed just right for staying at home,"

I replied, gritting my teeth. She shifted awkwardly, blushing slightly.

"Well, I am at home, after all."

"Is there something wrong?" I asked.

"Huh?"

She made a questioning face, then shrugged.

"No, nothing."

"Stomach cramps, your period?"

"Crazy. My period's almost over."

"Did your mom forbid you from leaving the house?"

"No, she's already asleep."

"So why didn't you go as planned?"

"Well, I already told you, I'm too lazy."

"Too lazy!"

I shouted loudly, which made her flinch a little.

"Why are you shouting?"

"What's the reason? Did I do something wrong? Why didn't you go? We had made plans!"

"It's you, right? You're the one who doesn't make sense,"

She sighed, as if the issue was my fault.

"Well, if the other person says they're not free or too lazy, it means they're not going. I didn't want to lie and say I couldn't go because I have cramps or my mom won't let me. That would just be an excuse. It's better to just tell the truth and say I'm too lazy because my favorite series is airing tonight. What else could I do?"

Now I closed my eyes tightly, holding my patience until I reached my limit, before nodding in understanding that I was being toyed with-or maybe just being messed with, and I was the fool who believed it.

"That's okay, I'll leave now."

"Thi is a little cuter. You're talking sensibly,"

She said, reaching out to pinch my cheek. I swatted her hand away irritably. "What's wrong? Are you mad at me?"

"I'm leaving."

"Well, when you're not mad anymore, we can talk."

She waved me off and let me leave, without saying anything else, which made me even angrier. My tears were streaming down my face, but I wiped them away with my thumb, feeling embarrassed.

I wasn't crying because I was sad, but because I was hurt and frustrated, made to feel like a joke. I had spent the money my mom gave me to eat an expensive meal that didn't even fill me up.

Then there was Pae's look when I checked the bill and left the restaurant alone, carrying a plastic bag with leftover food. I didn't mind spending the money, but losing face-this, I couldn't accept, especially in front of my ex.

Enough is enough! No more!

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Even though I had been dumped by men before, they always had considerate reasons, like "You're too good for me" or "I don't think I deserve you."

I understood that it was just a way to make themselves feel bad and leave without any hard feelings, or at least without hurting too much. But not this. Not the excuse of "**too lazy,"** coming from this woman.

All night, I struggled to sleep, filled with pain. She was the first woman I'd ever liked this much-more than any man in my life. The joy I had felt for only a few days came crashing down, all because she said she was "too lazy" in her pajamas, with her old stuffed doll.

What kind of series was so important?

Why was it more important than me?

More important than our date?

The next morning, I woke up in a foul mood, so much so that the part-time staff couldn't even approach me. I barely had any money left in my wallet, and I still had to pay the utility bills. But I had already spent it all on a meal that wasn't even good. Leaving me unsatisfied, I only got the atmosphere. Didn't they say the chef flew in from overseas? If that's what they did, I might as well have eaten at the top of a building instead.

*Ugh!*

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**Pae:** Hey.

I was already in a bad mood, and when I saw it was my ex texting me, I replied:

**Kee**: [Expletive]

No... I didn't reply like that. I stopped myself just in time, deleting it and typing something else instead.

**Kee**: Hey.

**Pae**: I thought you had changed your number.

**Kee**: What's the mood today that made you text me?

**Pae**: After seeing you last night, I started missing you, so I thought I'd reach out.

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I didn't respond and let the message sit on "Read." I wasn't going to talk to my ex, especially the one who left me for someone new, claiming she was the "light of his life." Now that he's found his own spotlight, he shouldn't come bothering me, a mere candlelight.

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***Ding-ding!***

The sound of the doorbell signaled a customer entering, and I automatically said, "Welcome." But then, Pao nudged my arm with his elbow and whispered,

"P'Kee, the beautiful writer is here."

***Pause!***

I could feel the veins in my temples throbbing, painfully bulging with a headache. The sweet-faced woman walked over and sat at the same spot, in the same position, at the same time as usual.

But I let Phao take the order instead. I stood behind the counter without even bothering to look up until my staff came back, offering me a dry smile.

"P'Kee... the customer said she want to order only from you."

"What's the big deal about just ordering a drink. Anyone can take the order," I replied.

"No, if it's not you taking the order, the food won't taste right,"

The sweet voice of Ja came out made me look up and lock eyes with her. She had stood at the counter, I didn't even notice when, but now she was smiling at me like nothing had ever happened.

"What would you like to order?"

I pretended to grab some paper and write it down with a harsh tone. But after waiting a while with no order, I looked up again, irritated.

"So, what are you having...?"

Her face softened, lips pouting, eyes glossy with tears. I was about to snap in annoyance but stopped, unsure of how to react.

"Why do you have to be so cold to me?"

"Nothing..."

I cleared my throat, as if something was stuck in it.

"I was just wondering what you're having."

"Are you mad at me about last night?"

"....."

"You are quiet. You're not answering again."

Her voice cracked, and the sound of her sobbing made the other employees glance at us in confusion. I licked my lips and decided to walk out from behind the counter, taking her hand and leading her to the back of the shop before going upstairs to talk in private to avoid the staff overhearing.

As soon as we reached the bedroom, I distanced myself and folded my arms.

"Why are you crying?"

"Because you're mad at me. You're cold. You're distant."

"Well, it should be that way, don't you think? What you did yesterday made it pretty clear that you're messing with my head."

"Messing with your head? I told you directly that I didn't feel like it."

"But what kind of reason is that? Who's going to accept that!"

I raised my voice, which startled her, and she stepped back, hugging herself and crying, making me feel guilty.

"Sorry, I shouted too loud."

"Do you like liars?"

"It's not that, but the reason... it doesn't make sense."

"Jaa just wants to be honest with you, Kee. I didn't want to lie to myself either. If I like you, I'll say I like you. If I'm lazy, I'll say I'm lazy. I don't want to give excuses, because in the end, the result is the same. Even if I lied to you and said my mom wouldn't let me leave the house, the result is that I still won't go, right?"

"....."

"I just said the truth I was lazy. Then you will know how sincere i am with you."

"Honestly! That's not the point. The issue is, you hurt my feelings."

"So, from now on, I'll lie to you to make you feel better. Yesterday, I didn't go because I was busy with my novel. My mom said she wasn't feeling well and didn't want to be alone."

Ja pretended to make up an excuse as if trying to show me that she could lie, but didn't. Honestly, I was still angry-really angry-but I couldn't help but feel a little soft-hearted seeing her act like this, with her emotions so vulnerable.

"Your reasoning doesn't make sense."

"I like you."

"I said I don't want to listen."

She pressed herself close, wrapping her arms around me in an unexpected embrace, her scent overwhelming my senses. I was caught off guard, my heart racing, struggling to maintain my composure.

"Don't be mad at me?"

Is she a good person?

I was taken aback for a moment, my heart aching. I gazed into her eyes, watching her nuzzle against me like a cat seeking affection. It was absurdwe'd only been dating for a day, yet here we were, already arguing like a couple that had been together for months.

"Didn't you feel bad about what you did?"

I asked, starting to soften as I wrapped my arms around her.

"I admit I have a bad temper. My mood is impulsive. One moment, I want to go, the next, I don't."

"Yeah, that's a bad habit. I'm not used to it,"

I admitted, my voice softening as I spoke.

"Then how can I apologize?"

She asked, her voice almost pleading. She lightly nipped at my neck, sending a wave of electricity through me. My legs nearly gave way, but I fought to keep my balance, leaning back against the wall for support.

"I don't know, I can't think of anything."

"Would a kiss make you stop being mad?" She asked, her voice sweet and seductive.

I stared at her, trying to maintain my resolve.

"What kind of person do you think of me?"

When you're being apologized to, don't turn it into a bargain or condition. I glared at her, frustrated by the implication that a kiss would suddenly make everything okay.

"Sorry. Why does everything I do today seem wrong?"

She pulled my hand, but it didn't make me soften.

"What you did was wrong. You're so easy to get over. Are you going to let me just forgive you easily. Last night, I was really upset."

Her small hand grabbed mine, and I stood firm, not willing to give in yet.

"Give me some time..."

The room fell into silence, and then I felt her lips around my finger as if trying to heal the pain. But the act, instead of feeling innocent, was strangely sensual, making my heart race. I stood there, lost in the moment, overwhelmed by the intensity of her presence.

"Just this once, and be nice?"

"Yay!"

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**This is not normal...**

Even though I was madly in love with this girl, deep down, my past experiences with love were telling me that I was heading into dangerous territory. Since this was a big deal for me, I needed to talk to my friendspeople I've known for over ten years-to get some urgent advice.

Right now, everyone was gathered in front of their computers with their cameras on, as though we were all having a hangout. Some even brought beer to drink and lift their spirits.

"I love conferencing. No need to drive anywhere, still get to drink with friends. So, what's up, you little 'hoy saep' (shrimp skewer)? Got something to share? Tell us why we're all on video call instead of hanging out in person,"

Said Sor, the one who led the conversation, making it easier for me to explain. Not wanting to waste any more time, I quickly summarized. "I have a lover now. We've only been together for three days."

"How much are you obsessed with him that you had to gather us all on a video call just to tell us that? Couldn't you have just said it in a message?"

Said Koi, munching on pickled mangoes like someone with a delicate stomach.

"But I'm happy for you. Just don't mess it up and get dumped again."

"Actually, I was about to break up, but then she came to apologize."

"What the hell? You were about to break up after three days? Are you selling something?"

Koi interrupted.

"Well..."

I scratched my head, unsure how to explain.

"She asked me to court, so I did. I sent flowers, booked a nice restauranteven though the last of the money my mom gave me was just 5,000 baht..."

"Hold on!"

Sor raised her hand like a priest stopping a wedding and furrowed her brow.

"You court him? Did I hear that right? You sent flowers? Are you serious? You, a woman, flirting a man? Aren't you embarrassed to be the one chasing after him?"

"Why would I be embarrassed? She's a woman too."

"Huh?!"

Now, I had everyone's attention. When I revealed who it was and what had happened, I saw their surprised faces. In today's world, dating another woman wasn't so unusual, but the shock was because I had always been with men. Now, I was the one who made the move.

"Okay, now I'm interested,"

Said Gaem, who had been silent the whole time. She straightened up and clasped her hands seriously.

"So, you have a girlfriend and are pursuing her right now, right? But isn't that the wrong order? Why are you dating already? Shouldn't you have asked her out first and then dated?"

"Well..."

I briefly told my friends and asked everyone not to interrupt. Now my friends nodded. I paused before baring my fangs when I got the part about how I was dumped halfway because of "being lazy".

"Annoying",

Son said in exasperation and laughed sarcastically.

"This is the first time I've ever met someone like this."

"She might be an artist. Writers, illustrators, and artists are like that."

Gaem gave a neutral opinion and it got my attention.

"You said she's never been courted by anyone, right? Then that means she must have some flaws. But if you approach her like this, that means she's not ugly or deformed, mentally handicapped. Then it must be about personality and nature. Who would want to date someone like that? Two minutes ago, you were excited and happy to be on a date. Two minutes later, you said you were too lazy to watch a series."

"But it's a matter of common sense. If you both like each other, you have to be considerate of the other person, right? It's not okay to break up. The baby in my stomach said it's not right."

Koi poked Gaem with a stick as if she was going to stab her.

"I'm so upset. My friend, I'm the only one who can annoy her. Others have no right."

"Thank you for your love for me, huh."

I bared my fangs at Koi.

"Then, when you said you were going to break up, does that mean you haven't broken up yet? How did he coax you to get back together with her?"

When I mentioned this, I lowered my eyes, not daring to look at the camera, and pressed my lips together tightly. My friends who saw me repeatedly were stunned, squinting their eyes to look at me suspiciously.

"What? What's that woman doing?"

"Nothing."

"We've come this far, tell me!"

Koi shouted and made a move to stab me with a stick again.

So I answered shyly.

"She... **sucked my finger**."

I held up my index finger to show my friends and sat there, blushing. My friends looked a little haunted.

"What did she suck your finger for? I don't get it."

Gaem raised her hand and scratched her head. So I had to explain a little longer.

"Well... my finger got cut by a piece of paper, so he sucked my finger to stop the bleeding... and today, when I tried to make up her, she did it again. So my heart was beating wildly."

If I explained it, would anyone understand this feeling? It was like butterflies flying around in my stomach or something like that.

"I still don't understand. What's the point of sucking your fingers? If you lose it, then I'll feel better."

"Oh, everyone who's dating you will lick them for you. But this is another touching moment. You're not romantic at all,"

Koi scolded her friend on the other side and said something embarrassingly.

"I like to suck my husband's fingers too. Hehe. Fighting!!..I understand."

"Oh, get out of this naughty conversation already. No matter how she tries to make up with you, I don't think this girl is normal. Normal people don't dump someone they've only been with for three days like this. She's sensitive. I think this girl is messing with your head. Don't fall in love with her yet."

"It's too late."

I sat with my shoulders hunched, feeling bored with myself.

"I really like Ja."

"A moth flies into a fire. I know everything but I can't help it."

Gaem shook her head in understanding. I nodded in agreement.

"Because I know it's not normal, I should talk to you guys. With this person, my emotions and feelings are extremely intense, like never before. I want to touch hee, be close to her, listen to her voice, look into her eyes, see her smile. The last time we did something so violent, I forgave her. It's too much, you know."

"You're getting lost, aren't you? You haven't had sex yet, right?"

The most straightforward cheek asked.

"Not yet. Only three days. We haven't even kissed yet."

"But you had sucked each other."

"Sucked my finger!"

"I think Keer is under a spell."

Son nodded, thinking to herself.

"How could a person suddenly change to love and like a woman? There's no reason. And what's the nickname of that writer? The writer who came before her time, right?"

"Ahh."

"That girl might have come with a purpose."

"What purpose? I have nothing to give her, except my heart and my pink nipples."

I snorted, and that made my friend look sick before changing the subject.

"She might have written that you like her a lot, that you're crazy about her."

"Holy shit, you're delusional. Do you think you're in Chao Pla Noy's novel? Anything can happen."

Gam snapped at her friend and offered her own idea.

"You've been acting weird after three days of dating. It's like looking for a scene, looking for a reason. Is she dating you to write a novel?"

"Huh..."

"That's a good hypothesis."

Koi snapped her fingers at this conspiracy theory and leaned forward to the screen.

"Looking at it from an outsider, it's so strange. Everything seems so easy. Asking to date, she dates. Asking to court, then dumping, then trying to beg for forgiveness. What the hell is this? It's not normal."

"But I still think she's under a spell. This is playing with feelings too much. I have to do something. How about I go to your shop tomorrow. From what I've heard, your girlfriend comes every day, right?"

I frowned and looked at Sor, who seemed too calm.

"What are you going to do?"

My friend looked at me with amusement and had something in her mind that she didn't plan to share.

"I'm going to chase things!"

# Chapter 06: Chasing Things

Sorn came to the shop as expected.

Her curiosity drove her to arrive early, afraid she might miss Ja. While pretending to help, she stood behind the counter, watching my staff make coffee with an air of amusement, seemingly more interested in causing mischief than genuinely helping.

"Don't you think you're in the way?"

I asked her directly, as she was blocking everyone inside from moving freely.

She shook her head, completely unbothered, as only a close friend could.

"No, I don't feel that way. And even if I am in the way, I'll keep standing here. If you want me gone, go ahead and try!"

"Geez...!"

"Mind your language; there are men in the shop."

"So what if there are men?"

"That guy is handsome."

"You already have a husband."

"My life motto is, at outside I can be anyone's wife. Remember that, dear friend. Why does he have such a great aura?"

Sorn nodded toward a man who was the shop's first customer. I didn't recognize him, so I assumed he was just a passerby. As my friend said, he was undeniably attractive, with bright skin as if he had accumulated all the good karma from his past lives.

"He must be Chinese. Look at that complexion."

"I bet his lips are naturally pink."

"Hey! Weren't you just saying to speak politely because there's a man in the shop?"

"If he's sitting here, it means he wants to build bridge with me. If he doesn't leave soon, I'll go flirt with him."

"Have you forgotten why you came here?"

"My priorities have changed. This is a mission to find the father of my future child."

"Maybe you should ask him first if he wants you to be the mother of his child."

"You're not fun at all! Just walk over and ask if he wants another drink, okay?"

Her mischievous laugh made me roll my eyes dramatically like a figureeight before sitting back behind the counter to amuse myself.

There wasn't much to do, but out of curiosity, I secretly watched to see how my friend would flirt. At the same moment, he turned to meet my gaze.

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***Gasp!***

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I flinched a little and quickly ducked back to my seat. After all this time of not looking my way, he just had to catch me staring. What would he think of me now?

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**Pae: Are you free today?**

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The message on my screen showed it was from Dr. Pae again, which annoyed me so much that I opened it briefly before blocking him immediately. Right then, Sorn came back, gritting her teeth.

"Ugh, he's not interested in me!"

"See? He doesn't want you to be the mother of his children."

"He's interested in you."

"Huh?"

"He keeps asking if the person behind the counter is the owner of the shop. Even if he's not direct, the conversation keeps circling back to you. So annoying. Why do you have to be the prettiest one in the group? If there weren't someone like you..."

"But Akoi is still prettier than you."

"Are you really my friend? Ugh, so irritating. Who messaged you earlier? You looked so annoyed. Let me guess."

"Pae."

"Oh! Is the wind changing direction? If he's messaging you this often, maybe he wants to rekindle things. Just go back and marry him already."

"Ugh, stop it! I have a girlfriend. Did you forget why you're here today?

You're completely off-topic."

"Well, your girlfriend isn't here yet."

"I told you he's coming in the afternoon. He's always on time. So why did you show up at 11 a.m.?"

"To annoy you, of course. But hey, it's five minutes to noon now. Are you sure she'll be on time?"

"Maybe she'll be a little late-10 or 20 minutes. She's coming to drink coffee, not punch a timecard."

And just as I said, Ja came into the shop not long after, a petite figure dressed in a white shirt and jeans, carrying her signature weapon: a laptop. Sorn, who loves observing customers and must have noticed that Ja and I have something going on, nudged me with a whisper, signaling that she had arrived.

"Is that her?"

Sorn, who had been eagerly waiting for the arrival of the sweet-faced girl, glanced toward the table by the window. She muttered under her breath, as if there were a hidden camera meant for the audience to hear her thoughts alone.

"She purposely sat where the light hits her face because she knows her right profile looks good, didn't she? Ugh, what a showoff."

Before I could say anything, she rummaged through her shoulder bag, grabbed something, and marched straight to Ja's table, curiosity radiating off her.

"Sorn, what are you-wait!"

Before I could finish, she threw rice right at the sweet-faced girl without any warning. Now, grains of rice were scattered all over the table and her laptop keyboard, leaving me gritting my teeth in frustration.

"What are you doing?!"

"Why didn't you scream?"

"The rice isn't cooked yet,"

The beautiful writer remarked as she picked up a grain, popped it into her mouth, and chewed nonchalantly.

"I feel sorry for the farmers, though."

"So, no ghost possession, huh?"

"Crazy bitch!"

I shouted so loudly that the man sitting nearby glanced over, giving me a friendly look. I smiled awkwardly in apology before glaring at Sorn.

"Is this the brilliant plan you said you spent all night thinking of?"

"Just trying something out,"

She replied casually before turning to Ja.

"Hi! You're Ja, right? I'm Sorn, Keer's best friend."

Then my mischievous friend plopped herself down across from Ja. At the same moment, the man who had been sitting earlier stood up to leave, giving me a smile as he walked out the door.

"See that? Even as he's leaving, he's smiling at you, Keer! He's definitely coming back-he likes you!"

"Stop imagining things!"

Ja briefly glanced at the tall guy walking out before turning back to smile warmly at Sorn.

"Hello, Sorn. I'm Ja, Keer's girlfriend."

"Wow, straightforward introduction-no beating around the bush or dragging it out until everyone gets cramps from wading through rivers of words." "Why do you have to speak so rudely? Can't you talk nicely for once?"

I snapped at my friend, burying my face in my hands with an exaggerated sigh.

"Sorry, Ja, My friend's is a savage."

"It's fine. She seems like a fun person. Can I borrow your character for a story?"

"Of course! But you'll have to tell me the plot first. Oh, I heard you're a writer too. How many stories have you written?"

At this point, my friend began interrogating Ja, likely trying to observe her speech or find something to nitpick. I didn't interrupt, as nothing alarming had happened yet. Suddenly, Sorn jumped to her feet.

"I'm thirsty. I'll go grab some water."

"I can get it for you."

"No need. I'll get it myself. Who knows, maybe you two want to whisper sweet nothings to each other while I'm gone."

This is typical behavior in our friend group-whoever isn't present becomes the topic of conversation. So, the moment Sorn left, I quickly clasped my hands in a gesture of apology, my face filled with mock regret, as though I was about to cry. It was my way of apologizing for my friend's wild, inappropriate behavior toward someone as gentle and sweet as Ja.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't think she'd act so shamelessly toward you. She said she wanted to meet my girlfriend, so she come over."

"It's fine; it's entertaining."

"Really? You're okay? She looked like she was interrogating you."

"Not at all. I'm curious to see what she'll do next."

Right on cue, Sorn returned, holding a glass of water. She handed it to me, smiling sweetly as if she were full of kindness.

"Are you done gossiping me? Here, have some water. Don't say your friend doesn't care about you."

I gave her a side glance at her mock-noble behavior, pouted slightly, but took the glass and sipped from it absentmindedly, my hands needing something to do.

"Is it good? That's holy water mixed with my period blood.

.

***Pfffft!***

*.*

Then water sprayed from my mouth, soaking Ja's face and her lapptop. As I started choking, gasping for air, I grabbed tissues and frantically wiped her face and laptop, feeling mortified. I wanted to yell at Sorn, but I couldn't get the words out because I was coughing uncontrollably.

"Wow, even getting sprayed with holy water doesn't seem to bother her."

"Do you really believe there's a ghost involved?"

"Honestly? I think Keer has been cursed by Ja. She's way too head over heels-it's suspicious."

"Y-you... Sorn... *cough*"

I croaked, my voice hoarse and broken, still struggling to catch my breath.

"Really? I'm so flattered,"

Ja said, dabbing her face with a tissue she took out. She smiled, amused, and laughed.

"What makes you think Keer is so infatuated with me?"

"Who would stand someone up on a date with the excuse of *'I'm too lazy*'?"

"I already explained that I didn't want to lie. Making up a bunch of excuses would feel insincere. I didn't want to go, so I just said so directly."

"Miss Ja,"

Sorn leaned in and locked eyes with the sweet-faced girl, who matched her gaze unwaveringly as if in a duel.

"Being honest is good, but sometimes you don't have to be too honest. In relationships, people should consider each other's feelings. If you didn't want to go or were busy, you should've said so before leaving the house-not after getting there and order food with the last money her mom gave you her..."

"Don't..."

You don't need to be that detailed!

I still couldn't say much as I was coughing and catching my breath. Sorn, however, clicked her tongue in annoyance and pushed my face aside.

"You hurt my friend's feelings with your blunt honesty. That's not how lovers or even people who like each other act. It's like you're playing with her. Or maybe... you're just here for your own benefit."

"For example?"

"You're using her to get a plot idea for your next story!"

Sorn's bluntness left everyone in silence. My coughing had mostly subsided by now, so I turned to Ja, curious to see how she'd respond. Finally, she let out a small sigh and raised her hands.

"You're right. I might have acted wrongly. I'm sorry."

Ja looked at me with sad, apologetic eyes.

"I didn't think being honest about how I felt would hurt Keer this much."

"Yes, in relationships, you need to be considerate of each other's feelings."

"Then from now on, I'll be more mindful. I won't speak so bluntly or hurt anyone's feelings."

"Good! I feel relieved hearing that. Let's start now. If you really want to change, try not to tell the whole truth."

"Understood."

Ja nodded sincerely before smiling sweetly at my friend.

**"Miss Sorn, you're such a charming person-delicate and petite. Every inch of you is refined and perfectly suited to Thailand's current and future economy."**

"Wha...?"

Sorn looked momentarily confused before her eyes widened as the meaning dawned on her.

"Oh, you little-!"

Sorn tried to lunge at Ja, but I managed to grab her by the waist and drag her outside the café, signaling for someone to toss me her bag from behind the counter.

"Why are you stopping me?"

"That's enough!"

"What? Didn't you hear how she insulted me?"

My fiery friend fixed her disheveled hair and prepared to storm back into the café, but I restrained her.

"Are you defending her now?"

"She didn't insult you at all. From what I heard, she praised you from beginning to end."

"I told her to lie!"

"And she did exactly as you asked."

"Ugh! I'm so mad!"

Sorn stomped her feet angrily.

"I threw rice at her, splashed her with holy water, and yet none of it fazed her. Why is her luck so strong?"

"Wait... did you actually mix your... menstrual fluid... in that water?"

"Oops ... I just remembered-I have a date with my boyfriend." "Sorn! Did you really do that? Oh no, now my throat feels weird!"

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Without another word, my chaotic friend bolted off, leaving me standing there, hands on my hips, feeling nauseous. I couldn't tell if she was joking or not, because with Sorn, I could never be certain. Still feeling uneasy, I went back into the café and sat across from Ja, trying to look apologetic again.

"I'm so sorry... my friend... she's..."

"Why apologize? It was funny!"

Ja giggled, showing no signs of anger or discomfort. Her laughter eased my worries slightly.

"Your friend must really care about you. It seems like I might've done something bad to you the other day, so you and your friend had to bring it up like this."

"Well... yeah."

I wanted to comfort her, but at the same time, I wanted to be honest and tell her that what she did was truly wrong and that she shouldn't do it again. Seeing my awkward response, Ja pouted slightly, her lips curling in an adorably playful way.

"I thought you'd say something comforting like, 'It's okay, it's all in the past.' But instead, you agree with them."

"I just don't want you to do it again. If you don't want to go somewhere, just say so. Don't suddenly cancel on someone like that. It's not fair."

"And what's this about the money your friend mentioned?"

"Oh..."

I paused, searching for an answer.

"It doesn't matter. Don't mind it."

"You can't just brush it off. If Sorn mentioned it, it must be important. Are you having money problems, Keer?"

"Well, just a little tight. That day, I used the money my mom gave me to treat you to a meal, but you didn't show up."

"Oh, no wonder you were so upset."

Ja reached out to pinch my cheek, smiling brightly like the sun.

"Alright, to make up for it, let me treat you to a meal instead."

"....."

"Why so quiet? Afraid I'll dump on you again?"

"I don't know... What if I get caught up in another series? What will I do?"

"This time, I'll wait for you at the restaurant myself. Don't worry, I'll come pick you up! We'll go together."

She switched to scratching my chin playfully, making me squirm.

"Now, will you agree to go?"

"Well, if Ja insists, what can I say?"

"Great! I'll call to set a time. Let's make it tomorrow evening, okay?"

"Okay."

"And don't dress too nicely. I don't want other guys staring. That male customer earlier was eyeing you."

I raised an eyebrow and chuckled.

"Are you really like this too? Or... could it be that he actually likes me?"

"Don't even joke about it! Ja is a jealous type. Remember, I'm always be your number one."

"Geez, just wondering won't do?"

I smile shyly as she gently tapped the back of my hand resting on the table, tilting her head adorably.

"You belong to me alone because this is our love project."

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**Now, I'm in a good mood.** All the resentment and frustration I felt toward the sweet-faced had melted away entirely. It was so unbelievable. I didn't want to dwell on our past arguments; they were far from pleasant. Instead, I chose to hold onto the good moments.

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While cleaning up and preparing to close the café, my phone rang, displaying Mom's name on the screen. I answered, feeling slightly guilty about the money I had wasted so frivolously instead of using it to pay bills.

"Yes, Mom?"

[A voice sweet as sugar like that-you must feel guilty about something.]

My mother, the one who knows me better than anyone in the world, who is awake and enlightened about all my flaws, spoke up. Her tone made me shrink my neck as if she were standing right in front of me, scolding me.

"No, I didn't do anything wrong. You're already suspicious the moment you called."

[Just curious. What are you up to?]

"I'm cleaning up the shop. Did you call because you missed me or is there something you need?"

[There is... Ahem. So, how's the day been? Did you sell a lot?]

My mother, who usually cursed my café business or constantly complained that it was destined to fail, suddenly adopted a friendly tone. It made me frown in suspicion.

"Just the usual, selling bit by bit. Why? What's with this tone, Mom? Weird."

[Any handsome customers visit the shop?]

"No."

[Hey! If that's not handsome, what would you call it?]

"What are you even saying? I don't get it."

[Make yourself free tomorrow evening. Close the shop and pick me up at home. We have a dinner appointment.]

"No way. I have an important appointment tomorrow."

(Cancel it. This one is more important.)

"No! My appointment is definitely more important. What is this about,

Mom? You can't just spring it on me like this. You have to give notice."

[This is your one-day notice! What's wrong with that? Anyway, tomorrow we're having dinner. You must be free, and you have to dress up as beautifully as possible.]

How funny-one person tells me not to dress up too much for dinner, while another insists I dress my absolute best. I can't keep up with this whirlwind of demands!

"Why do I have to dress up?"

[Tomorrow, I'm taking you to meet your arranged marriage partner!]

# Chapter 07: Reward

Right now, it feels like standing at a crossroads. If I had to choose between a passionate love that consumes me and my mother's love, which has cared for me since I was born, it would be so hard to pick just one.

Yes... I'm talking about dinner tomorrow night.

It's just dinner, so why is it so difficult! In the past, I'd do whatever I wanted without caring if it hurt anyone's feelings. Honestly, I could cancel on my mom, but she said if I came, she'd give me another 3,000 baht. I desperately need that money to pay the electricity bill. Why is my life so pitiful?

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Capitalism makes people stressed.

There is a necessity, but the chance to go on a date with Ja isn't easy to come by. If I miss this chance, I don't know if our relationship will progress. I wanted to cancel on her to get back at her for what she did last time, but getting revenge doesn't improve relationships. Right now, I'm both in love and obsessed. If it's going to cause a fight, then I'd rather not do it. My head feels like it's going to explode. I don't know what to do.

In the end, I called the sweet-faced girl and tried to reschedule, explaining my reasons. It seemed like I was the only one worried, though, because she had a new suggestion:

[It's no big deal. I'll just come with you and meet your mom too!]

"What?"

[What's wrong? You've already met my mom. Why can't I meet yours?]

"It's not like that..."

How do I explain to her that this dinner involves other people as well?

[If that's the case, then it's settled! I'll meet you at the restaurant tomorrow around 5 PM. Yay! I get to meet your mom!]

It seems like she wasn't even fazed, despite me subtly hinting at how stressed I was. Honestly, I have such a hard time saying what I really feel. If I didn't want her to come, I should've just said so outright. But instead, I was vague because I was afraid of embarrassing myself or hurting her feelings. That's not like me at all.

In any other relationship, I've always been firm and steady person. If I wasn't comfortable, I'd say so clearly. This is what it called being inferior. When you really like someone, you worry about everything, afraid they'll feel bad.

*This is no exception...*

But tomorrow isn't just an ordinary dinner. My mom has firmly decided that it's going to be a matchmaking meeting.

If we go like this... it might actually work out well.

After thinking about it, I decided to just tell my mom that I already have a girlfriend. That way, the other person-my mom's friend's son-would understand that I didn't want to come at all. I could turn this crisis into an opportunity!

My mom would stop trying to set me up with random people out of fear I'd stay single forever. Ja would also get the chance to officially introduce herself as my girlfriend, and that guy could be free to move on. A total winwin situation.

From hesitation, I switched to a bold plan: bringing the sweet-faced one along without telling my mom in advance. I also didn't tell Ja that this dinner was supposed to be a matchmaking setup.

Following my mom's instructions, I dressed up in a dark blue, form-fitting dress, paired with a delicate silver necklace and my hair tied up in a sleek bun. Meanwhile, Ja arrived in a pink blouse and white slacks, looking both sharp and elegant.

She looked at me, slightly stunned.

"Isn't this too much, Kee?"

The sweet-faced girl asked, as if she couldn't believe her eyes.

"What do you mean?"

I blushed a little and spun slightly.

"It's just a little effort. Don't stare at me like that-you're making me shy!"

"Maybe it's because I'm not used to it. Normally, you're in a shirt, jeans, and an apron. Seeing you like this is like watching someone step out of a TV show... Wow, my girlfriend is really beautiful!"

"You're overpraising me."

"But didn't I tell you not to look too pretty? Kee already has a girlfriendwho are you trying to impress?"

"My mom,"

I replied wearily.

"If I don't dress up, I won't get the money."

"Why do you need the money, though?"

"Well... My mom paid me to have dinner with her."

"She paid you to eat dinner?!"

Ja burst out laughing, while I nodded, a little dejected. Seeing that, she reached out and cupped both my cheeks, looking into my face.

"Why the sad puppy look, beautiful? Don't make that face!"

"I just feel like I'm being too greedy for money. I should really have dinner with you as our plan."

"Are you having money troubles right now?"

When she asked that, I stiffened slightly, realizing I didn't want her to know about my personal problems.

"No, not really. I mean... if my mom is offering money, why say no? It's 3,000 baht!"

"Just think of it as having dinner with your mom and getting paid for it."

"Right."

"Shall we go now?"

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After driving home, my mom, who had been eagerly awaiting my arrival, looked slightly confused when I brought someone else along in my cute little beat-up car. The sweet-faced girl politely greeted my mom with a wai and a bright, harmless smile. Her cheerful expression was so radiant that my mom got a little charmed. I had to call her name again.

"Are we going or not, Mom?"

"Huh? Oh, yes, of course. Is this your friend's car? It's so cute and suits you perfectly!"

Ja smiled at my mom and walked over to open the car door like a polite child. My mom couldn't stop grinning, clearly not used to seeing someone behave so adorably-especially not me.

I could read my mom's expression. She was silently scolding me and comparing me to someone else's perfect child, as she often did.

"Is this your friend, Kee? How long have you two known each other? I've never seen her before. You're so cute."

Mom, now sitting in the front seat beside Ja, asked while glancing sideways at her.

"We met when Kee opened her coffee shop, ma'am."

"How are you so lovely? Where did you get that cute nose from?"

"Mom! What kind of question is that?"

"My dad gave it to me,"

Ja laughed at the odd question.

"So, Kee must have gotten her beauty from you."

"Exactly! Kee's dad has nothing good about him except being tall. That's where her height came from,"

Mom replied while curiously inspecting the car.

"I've seen a car like this in Mr. Bean but never sat in one before. You've got great taste. Why did you choose this car?"

"You're the first person to ask me that, ma'am,"

Ja giggled, looking even cuter as she answered the question.

"I believe if people do things that match their personality, it looks good. Since I'm small, driving a Benz or a big European car would feel bulky and unnecessary. This car suits me-small and cute, even if it's a little old."

"Is it a vintage car?"

"Yes, I bought it as a collectible. I think it has unique character."

"Your taste is good! By the way... do you have a boyfriend?"

"Mom!"

I grabbed her shoulder, absolutely dreading that question. I'd planned to tell her at the right time, but not now. What if she couldn't handle it and lost her appetite?

"Yes, I do," Ja replied.

"Oh, really? What a pity. If you didn't have one, I'd find someone for you. I love matchmaking! Just like today-I told Kee to dress nicely because we were meeting someone for her."

There it was. Mom said the very thing I had deliberately avoided mentioning.

I bit my lip nervously, glancing at the rearview mirror, but Ja handled it gracefully, nodding in agreement.

"No wonder Kee dressed up so beautifully. You've made people turn around. So it's a blind date! That explains it. Makes me feel a bit plain in comparison."

"Not at all! You're adorable and perfectly yourself. I really like you,"

Mom replied, clearly smitten with Ja. She couldn't take her eyes off her, asking her question after question with great interest. When she found out Ja was a writer, she got even more excited, pretending like she regularly read novels.

"You're a writer? How impressive! You seem so accomplished-unlike Kee here, who quit her job to sell coffee. The shop's not even profitable. Probably going bankrupt this month and shutting down next month." "Mom!"

"What? The shop's closing? Where am I supposed to get coffee now?"

Ja looked genuinely upset, her shoulders slumping.

"Well, I guess I'll just help promote Kee's café in my novels!"

"How would you do that?"

"I'm known as the 'Author Who Foretells the Future.' Everything I write ends up happening in real life!"

"Is there really something like that? Haha!"

Mom laughed heartily and kept the conversation flowing. Before we knew it, we arrived at the Chinese restaurant Mom had booked. She led the way inside, while Ja and I trailed behind. Seeing a chance, I quickly apologized for not telling her the truth about today's blind date.

"Are you mad?"

"Mad about what? The fact that you're on a blind date?"

"Well... yeah, kinda."

"A little bit,"

Ja replied casually.

"It caught me off guard, but I tried to think of the reason behind it... You're here for a blind date but still brought your girlfriend along. The only explanation is that you wanted to introduce me."

"Wow...What a reasonable person?

She completely understood me. She even raised her eyebrows playfully, looking pleased with herself.

"Now I'm curious to see how Keer will explain our relationship to everyone here today. If you do this scene well... I'll give you a reward."

"Hello,"

Ja said with a sweet, polite tone as she greeted the people already seated at the table. Seeing her gesture, I realized we'd reached our destination and quickly followed suit.

My Mom introduced me and Ja to the family we were meeting. As my eyes scanned the group, they landed on the only man at the table. The moment I saw his face, I recognized him-because just yesterday, we had made eye contact at my café.

"You... Oh, I see,"

I nodded, understanding immediately what Mom had hinted at yesterday.

"This isn't a coincidence, is it?"

"No, it's not."

"Let's get to know each other. His name is Ram. And these are Kee and JaKee's friend."

The three of us exchanged slightly awkward glances and smiled nervously. Ja, however, maintained her composure and appeared amused by the situation before leaning in to whisper to me.

"I've never seen a blind date before. I'm taking notes today."

"It's you...."

Ja chuckled softly, then quickly resumed a calm expression as the adults began discussing backgrounds and introducing everyone. They started with the man, Ram, explaining who he was, how old he was, where he studied, and where he lived.

I already knew some of this from Mom: his name was Ram, he had studied abroad, was two years older than me, and came from a family that owned multiple apartment buildings as part of their inheritance.

Meanwhile, Mom began enthusiastically presenting my backgroundpolishing up the details she normally criticized-highlighting my education, achievements, and current business.

"Kee graduated from a public university with excellent grades. She worked in the private sector before deciding to leave and start her own coffee shop,"

Mom said, conveniently skipping over her usual complaints about the café.

"I've been to that café. It's so cute,"

Ram said, smiling warmly at me.

"It show that the owner is a simple person. The white decor is so clean and bright, with just a few plants adding a nice touch of green to rest your eyes. It's a perfect spot for people who want to work. And the drinks are very delicious."

"Oh, really? Wow, thank you!"

His compliments left me slightly flustered, and without thinking, I tucked my hair behind my ear. Sitting next to me, Ja gave me a light pinch on my leg-a playful warning-before smiling at me with mock jealousy.

"Careful. I'm possessive."

Her whispered comment was paired with a smile, but it made me feel quite shy.

"Well,"

I began, trying to take control of the conversation,

"Since we're here to see each other, I think it's better for us to be honest instead of just showing off our best sides."

The moment I said this, Mom glared at me, knowing full well I was about to ruin the whole thing.

"No need to say anything! Let the adults handle it. You can find out any flaws after marriage!"

"Marriage? Mom, he doesn't even know I have a birthmark under my breasts." "Kee!!"

"Hehe."

Now everyone at the table fell silent. Only Ja was trying to stifle her laughter, curious about how I would handle the situation. Ram, on the other hand, looked genuinely intrigued by my mention of the birthmark, in stark contrast to the adults who were visibly uncomfortable.

"And what's so special about this birthmark?" he asked.

"They say it's a sign of someone destined to bring bad luck to their partner," I replied.

"That's no problem at all,"

He said confidently.

"Why not?" I asked, a little surprised.

"Because I'm delicious."

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***Pfff!***

***.***

The water from the man's mother's mouth shot out like a fountain show at

Bang Saen Beach. His reaction to our candid exchange made me lock eyes with Ram, and for the first time, I felt like I'd met someone of the same wavelength, someone whose wit could match mine.

"If the bad luck is supposed to kill me, we should figure out how. If it's because of seeing your birthmark, then I'd say it'd be a pretty good way to die."

His calm demeanor was starkly at odds with the sharp humor in his words. I straightened up, taking a sip of water, and couldn't help but laugh a little.

"But you can't possibly be with me. I'm awful. Every guy I ever dated has run off. And do you know why I left my job? Not because I wanted to start a business, but because I was too embarrassed to stay. I already sent out wedding invitations, but my fiancé called it off the day before the ceremony because he was seeing someone else!"

Ram didn't miss a beat.

"Maybe you just haven't found the right puzzle piece to fit yet. That cancelled wedding could've been a blessing in disguise-it brought us here today."

"My café is about to go bankrupt,"

I blurted, trying to deflect.

"That's okay,"

He countered smoothly.

"I'll let you manage one of my apartments. All you need to do is collect rent; no investments required. My only condition? I get to see that birthmark under your-"

"Kee already has a lover,"

I snapped, cutting him off before he could finish.

"Oh, really? Then where is he?"

Ram clearly wasn't buying it. He was relentless, pushing harder to corner me. He must have thought my claim about having a lover was just a desperate bluff. But now it was my turn to smirk. I leaned back in my chair, crossed my arms, and gave him a triumphant look.

"Right here."

I tilted my head toward Ja, who had been silently observing the exchange. She blinked in surprise but quickly caught on, flashing a dazzling smile and resting her hand on mine.

"Nice to meet you. I'm Ja, Kee's girlfriend."

**"Ja... the woman Kee brought with me today is actually my girlfriend."**

This time,everyone at the table, including my mom, turned to look at the sweet-faced Ja, who had been quietly sitting there. Ja, now the center of attention, smiled sweetly at everyone, exuding her usual charm, and nodded as though this was the most ordinary thing in the world. It was the same calm composure she had when I asked her to be my girlfriend.

"Yes, I'm Ja, Kee's girlfriend."

"Wait a minute! What are you talking about?"

Mom frantically waved her hands to regain control.

"Kee, stop saying ridiculous things! And Ja, don't humor her. You don't need to help your friend like this-no one believes it."

"What's ridiculous about it, Mom? Ja really is my girlfriend. I told you I had plans today because I was supposed to go on a date with Ja, but you forced me to come here with the promise of 3,000 baht!"

"Kee! Shut your mouth!"

Mom's voice dropped to a scandalized whisper, but that didn't stop me from raising mine.

"This isn't the old days, Mom, where you just pair people up, and if they seem good together, they marry. Can't I just stay single, travel, and live like normal people?"

"And when you're old, who's going to take care of you? Beauty fades fastjust like your period!"

"I can take care of myself! Or Ja can take care of me. We're in love, Mom!"

"Ja... confirm this for me one more time,"

Mom turned to Ja, her face on the verge of tears. It wasn't that Mom didn't know same-sex relationships existed-she just never expected her daughter, who had had several boyfriends, to be in one.

"It's true, Mam. We've been together for three or four days now. I was going to ask Kee to introduce me to you anyway, especially since she's already met my mom."

"And what did your mom say?"

"She didn't say anything because she didn't ask. But if she does, I'll tell her the same thing I'm telling you."

That sweet little giggle from Ja somehow managed to be both charming and mischievous, perfectly balancing politeness and cheek. Meanwhile, the man's parents, who clearly couldn't stand another moment of this, stood up and excused themselves, visibly irritated.

"Thank you for your time, Dr. Mai,"

The woman said coldly.

"Wait, please!"

"No, Dr. Mai. Don't arrange anything like this again-it's a complete waste of time. Ram, let's go!"

Ram, who was hesitating to leave, finally had no choice but to get up when his mother insisted. His expression didn't show any disappointment or pain. He just smiled brightly, in the way of a progressive man.

"Well, we'll meet again, Kee."

"You're going to meet her again? Go back!"

And then, our meeting fell apart. Now, the three of us were sitting in a row, with my mother still in stunned silence. When I reached out to touch her, she brushed my hand away and stood up.

"I'll go home on my own. What the hell is going on today?"

"But mom..."

"What?"

"Money."

"Oh, you brat! No money for you!"

Mom stormed off without looking back, ignoring both of us. Once Ja saw that everyone had left, she immediately dug into the untouched food, eating without a care in the world. She felt no distress, unlike me, who could barely eat because adrenaline was surging through my body.

"Eat some, Kee. It's all cold now. Why didn't you touch the food? I feel bad for these animals. They died for us to eat. Don't you feel bad about wasting money?"

"They probably couldn't eat after what happened. Kee really made a big scene."

"True, You're really overacting. Hehe,"

Ja laughed and sweetly served some food onto my plate.

"Eat. You used up a lot of energy earlier."

"My heart is still racing."

"Is it racing because of that guy?"

Ja wrinkled her nose and looked slightly annoyed.

"He clearly likes you, Kee. It was so obvious. After such a big reveal, he didn't even feel anything, and he still said, 'See you again.' I knew he was impressed with you since we were at the coffee shop."

"What's so special about me?"

"You're beautiful."

"Is being pretty enough? People need to get to know each other first."

"How well do you know Ja before asking me out?"

"Huh?"

Ja smiled sweetly, resting her chin on her hand and looking at me sideways.

"We've never really talked. I just ordered coffee, sat down to work, and left. That's been happening for almost three months. What do you really know about me?"

".........."

"It doesn't make sense, does it?"

"Then why do you like Kee?"

"It's unreasonable too. That man is unreasonable because love has no reason. If there is a reason, it's not love."

"What?"

"Copied from the novel Pluto. Someone once wrote about it... Ah, open your mouth and eat something."

The sweet-faced person used small chopsticks to pick up duck meat and force me to eat it.

When she ordered me to do it, I did it easily and chewed. The taste of the duck meat and seasoning spread into my mouth until I felt excited and hungry. I didn't feel it when I didn't eat, but when I took a bite, I felt hungry immediately.

"It's delicious."

"Really?"

"I'm full, try it. I will serve you some. It's really delicious."

I was about to serve but Ja stopped me, holding my hand and leaned in.

"Hm?"

"Try it...."

Then she leaned in her face and licked my lips a little. The wetness from her tongue that touched it made me forget the taste of duck in my mouth. I was stunned and numb because I was caught off guard. The sweet-faced person who pretended to be brave turned away and shrugged.

"This duck is really delicious."

"......"

**"That's your reward...for introducing me to everyone today."**

# Chapter 08: Kiss

It means, by coming here today, I didn't get a single bath from my mom. If I had known this, I would have just gone on a date with Ja, just the two of us.

But I guess today wasn't a complete waste because I got to introduce my mom to the fact that I have a girlfriend now and she's a very lovely woman. My mom will give up trying to set me up with guys. If I look at it positively, it wasn't that bad.

Plus, I ate for free since the adults already paid in advance.

I carried the remained food in a big bag, feeling a little regretful, before leaving it in Ja's car. Both of us were so full, so we decided to walk around the store a bit. It was a nice way to extend our time together.

"Actually, I don't really like Chinese food. It's bland,"

The sweet-faced person commented about the food, rubbing her stomach as we walked out of the restaurant.

"But this place really made it taste good, especially the duck. It's really good"

"Yeah."

It was that duck dish that made me experience the softness of her lips, and it made me want to be with her a little longer. But where would I find another chance like that, especially since we didn't have any more duck?

"Is Kee and your mom going to be okay?"

"Uh-huh."

"Uh-huh, what? Are you just going to stare?"

The sweet-faced person gently pushed my face away, blushing, which gave me the chance to grab her hand and hold it tight.

"Is this a game?"

"Someone kissed Kee at the restaurant. She started it."

"I said it was a reward."

"Can we do it again?"

"No, what if Kee gets bored. What should I do?"

"Then a kiss on the hand still good."

I lifted the back of her hand to kiss it, but she quickly pulled it away, lifting her hand to her cheek in embarrassment.

"Now you're shy? You weren't shy when we kissed on the lips, but now you are with a hand kiss?"

"Well, this is public."

"And the place we were just in, was it a bedroom or something?"

"But it was a private room, just the two of us."

Ja stuck out her tongue at me in an adorable way before quickly putting her hand back into her pocket, protecting it like it was precious.

"That kiss in the restaurant doesn't even count as a real kiss. You know that, right?"

"You're disgusting. What do you mean by licking?"

"Ruined lips."

I let out a small laugh at her protest, knowing full well how playful and suggestive it sounded.

"But it's an expert-level flirtation move. You've got plenty of tricks, don't you?"

"Tricks? I told you it was just a reward! When are we dropping this kissing topic? I don't know how to handle it anymore."

The sweet-faced one was clearly flustered, her irritation fueled by overwhelming embarrassment. I decided to lighten the mood by brushing against her slightly before wrapping an arm around her shoulders, pulling her closer.

"So, what if we go beyond kissing? Are you going to bury yourself underground to escape?"

Her body tensed for a moment, and I tightened my hold on her to keep her close.

"What are you even saying? Who would do something like that with you?"

"Couples do it all the time. By the way... I don't really know much about your past."

"What about my past?"

"Your exes. You said you've had girlfriends before, but you've never stayed overnight with them. You told me that during one of our nights together."

I clearly remembered that night. She'd been so careful, constantly reminding me that I was her "first" for so many things. Yet she also admitted I wasn't her first partner, which felt oddly contradictory.

"Yeah, I remember."

"So, I'm your first overnight stay and your first girlfriend, right?"

"Yeah."

**"When was your first time had sex?"**

She froze and looked up at me, clearly caught off guard by the bluntness of my question. Her reaction was like someone choking on water, unable to form words.

"...."

"Or you never have...?" Finally, she whispered, "Never."

I nodded, processing her answer.

"And your exes? Were they okay with that?"

"What choice did they have? It's not like they could force me, right?"

Her frank response caught me off guard, but it made me admire her honesty even more.

"That's true... If you've never had sex, what do you do with those people?"

"Well... We talk on the phone, eat together, do the things that couples who care about each other do."

"How long have you been with them?"

"Not that long."

"Why not?"

"No particular reason."

"I thought you dated them to write about them in your novels."

"....."

"Why are you silent? I was just joking. Hehe."

I laughed, pleased to make the sweet-faced person flustered. Ja, noticing how happy I was, couldn't resist pinching my belly, making me yelp in pain.

"Why did you pinch me, Ja?"

"When we just started dating, you asked if I'd slept with anyone before. Is your mind always filled with dirty thoughts?"

"I admit it. I think of those things about everyone I date. But in a different way-because those people weren't women."

As we walked back to the parking lot, Ja glanced at me and couldn't help but ask,

"What do you think about me?"

"Well... many things. Do you have a mole under your breast like me?"

"No."

"Is your skin underneath as fair as it is on the outside?"

"Whiter-it's never been exposed to sunlight."

"You revealed everything. Aren't you planning to let me find out for myself?"

I pushed Ja gently until her back pressed against the car door and stood with my arm blocking her escape. The smaller woman glanced left and right, worried someone might see us and whispered,

"What are you doing? If someone sees us acting strange like this, they'll..."

"They'll walk away and let us talk... You're so guarded. Why is it so hard to kiss you or hold your hand?"

"Anything that comes too easily, you'll think it's worthless."

"You're tortured me too much, Ja."

I never thought I'd be the one to pursue someone like this. Until now, the men I've dated were the ones pleading and begging for me to compromise or give them some kind of reward.

"Even a little would be good. I just understood the feeling now, that wanting to touch someone while the other person is being distant is so frustrating, mixed with the desire to win. Kee has been watching you for months to get to this point today. But when we started dating, you acted like you were playing tug-of-war. Sometimes you agree, sometimes you don't. It feels like you're messing with my head."

"I didn't realize I was doing that. Don't you think we're getting a little too close?"

"We've already kissed."

"Hey! I kissed your finger because you were bleeding."

"We've even licked each other."

"Crazy! I just tasted some duck from your mouth."

"Then can't we make this serious? I want some certainty from you."

"You want me to officially introduce you to my mom, and it's still uncertain?"

"Who knows? Maybe you came to me to write a novel,"

I leaned in, smiling at the corner of my mouth.

"It's probably not like that, right?"

The sweet-faced person frowned at my question, and then made a sound as if to respond while looking me in the eye without turning away anymore.

"Then what do you want me to do?"

"Just stay still."

"Just stay still? And then...?"

I leaned in and kissed, pushing her back so her body was pressed against the car to lock her in place. One of my hands held her jaw to make sure our faces were aligned just right. Then I started saying 'I love you' by using my tongue to explore her mouth, trying to taste the sweetness I had wanted to know for so long.

We kept looking at each other, even though we were touching. At first, she became stiff, but when I gently bit her lower lip, she tensed up, making me pull back.

"Now that's a reward. In the restaurant, you were just teasing me."

"You were teasing me, weren't you?"

"I used the same method as you did. Or back then, were you just seduced me?"

I retorted. She bit her lips tightly, as if sealing them to prevent me from getting in. I teased her a little,

"But it seems like you don't know how to kiss. Was this your first kiss too?"

"You're underestimating me!"

After being insulted like that, the smaller person used both hands to grab my face and pulled me in to kiss. This time, she was the one to take the lead, pushing her tongue into my mouth, mimicking what I had done earlier. From experience, I could tell she wasn't that skilled. The things she had described...

.

That novel probably came from someone else, but it was nice to see someone who didn't know how to do something but tried so hard to act like they were good at it.

From the beginning I gradually taught her until the sweet-faced girl got the rhythm. No matter whether she tilted her head or switched sides, she could respond just like a quick learner. If it weren't for the security guard's whistle from outside, we would have probably kept going for a while longer. It's a pity that it had to end there.

"Can we go home now?"

She asked, panting as if she had run three laps around a football field. Her lips were red and pink. I felt a little mean for teasing her so much, not letting her catch her breath.

"Of course, can you drive?"

"Stop exaggerating, it was just a kiss."

I laughed and shrugged

"Then, can you drop me off?"

Just as I was about to move to the other side, Ja held the car tightly, as if she was about to fall.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

I smiled when I saw how weak her legs were. Once we got in the car, Ja tried to act normal and drive me to the coffee shop. There were a lot of things I liked and a lot I was curious about today, but I didn't plan to ask. "You've had boyfriends, but you've never even kissed any of them?"

"You really can't get your mind off kissing, can you? What's with all the questions?"

"Well, you're a beginner."

"You're trying to say you're really good at it, aren't you?"

"From experience, I'd say I can claim to be good. When guys don't know how to kiss, I wonder... what have they been doing all this time, where did they go wrong with their practice? But I never thought that kissing a girl who didn't know would be so... cute. How did she manage to get through all this time without figuring it out?"

"....."

"So what about you? How did you manage to get through until you met me to kiss you?"

"Don't get too confident now. Take this!"

She was about to punch my shoulder lightly, but I pretended it hurt to tease her.

"Ouch, it hurts!"

"You're being dramatic."

"Do you like it? Our kiss?"

I asked directly, glancing at the driver who had her lips pressed together.

"Like."

"Good. We think alike. Keer likes it too. You smell like a little kid. Keer can kiss you all day without eating or drinking."

"Are you crazy? Heehee."

She laughed happily and wrinkled her nose.

"I have to eat and drink, I don't kiss you all day."

"From now on, you can write our kissing stories in a novel. This is the best material. You don't have to borrow anyone's feelings to write about. When we've been together longer, I will let you know many feelings that even some women don't know about in their entire lives."

"Like what?" "**The climax."**

.

**Oh!**

.

Ja, who was driving, braked suddenly until her face was almost hitting her front. Luckily, she had her seatbelt fastened, so her body didn't bounce

"What are you braking for? It's dangerous."

"What the hell is your climax!"

The sweet-faced man's ghost-like face made me let out a laugh. This time, it seemed to hit the right spot, making me feel so sorry for her.

"You write novels, you must know what Keer means. Come on... let's be lovers. Something like this will happen someday."

"What happened? Nothing."

"Don't you want to know? You seem so curious."

I said from the observation. Whether it was going on a date today without any consideration or shyness, because I wanted to know everything. How could Ja not want to know something so important?

"You've become more talkative. Normally, I don't say much because I'm afraid people will look at you badly."

"Did you notice? Ah... I guess you're drunk or drunk from kissing, sucking, and licking each other."

"You're so unbearable. In one day, you threw the words kiss, suck, lose, climax at my face without feeling embarrassed."

"There's more. The sound of Kee when doing something like that... Uh,

ah...... ah..."

"You!"

"The real thing is even sexier. Oh, we're at mine."

I looked at my coffee shop and sighed regretfully.

"You're driving too fast. I still wants to be with you a little longer."

"I don't want to be with you anymore. You're a naughty person. I've always thought you were beautiful and a little arrogant. I think I was wrong."

"How long has it been since your last?"

The sweet-faced person didn't answer anything. That made me smile even more and say goodbye to her by leaning forward to kiss her cheek. Ja didn't shyly avoid it because we've kissed her before. We sucked and licked. It seemed like she was getting used to it.

"Will you sleep with me tonight? Oh, why did you hit me?"

She was going to hit me and bared her fangs. So I laughed and stopped teasing her.

"Okay. See you tomorrow. Come back soon. I miss you."

I grabbed her other cheek and lightly nibbled her earlobe teasingly, not forgetting to make a sound.

"Mmm...delicious."

"...."

"I'm really going."

I opened the car door and got out to stand on the sidewalk before standing and waiting for the sweet-faced person to drive back, looking at the car's taillights that were slowly gone into the darkness.

From the playful smile that liked to tease, now I changed my posture to stand and rest my legs and put my hands in my pockets as if thinking.

**How long have you known me?...How did you know where my mother's house is without asking for directions!**

# Chapter 09: Is it even Real

I am really in trouble. When I see the total bills I need to pay for the shop. Electricity, water, staff, and equipment that needs to be purchased. Now I can only sit and hold my head, feeling like I’ve hit a dead end. My head feels like it’s being crushed, just like a bird’s nest. It shows how stressed I am.

If I commit suicide, will the insurance pay for it? Oh, wait. I didn’t buy any insurance. I don't have any money.

Now, the only person I can rely on is someone whose feelings I hurt just yesterday. Mom won’t call me because she’s still angry. I sent a sticker message, but she only read it and didn’t reply. Is she my mom or my girlfriend? How long do I have to beg for forgiveness?

**Really cool.**

I called my mom with a grateful heart, but the cruel old lady ended the call without any mercy. In the end, I sat feeling sad, staring out the shop window like I was in a music video. If it started raining, I might even cry, hoping to gain some sympathy from my mom.

**"Are you shooting a music video?"**

A voice startled me slightly. I turned to see it was Ram, which made me freeze like a fish out of water, completely unexpected.

"How did you know I was shooting a music video?"

"Daydreaming like that, what else could it be? I do it often too. But when you daydream, it has a certain charm,"

He said as he sat down across from me, without even waiting for an invitation.

"I thought I wouldn't see you again after that day."

"I told you already, didn't I? *'We'll meet again,'* means we will meet again. By the way, where’s your girlfriend, Miss Ja?"

"She’ll come in the afternoon; it’s her usual time."

"Then I'll start coming in the mornings, so that’ll be my usual time."

I looked at the cheerful face of the person in front of me, smiled a little, more out of curiosity, and then laughed before crossing my arms.

"Are you just trying to mess with me on purpose?"

"Mess with you about what?"

"You know well I have a girlfriend, yet you're still coming to see me. What’s that about?"

"She’s just your girlfriend, not your wife. I’d say you still have the right to choose."

"Your parents already don’t like me being with you."

"My parents aren’t the ones sleeping in the same bed with me. I like you, and nobody can change that."

"Good.... I don’t like you, thank you"

"Water dripping on stone every day will stone erodes."

"But I’m not stone.”

"What... you... what did you just say?"

"Stone!"

Ram's cheeky and loud remark made me raise my voice, which only made him laugh. Strangely enough, I laughed along with him. The atmosphere between us eased in an unexpected way, even though we had barely spoken to each other, if we don’t count the awkward arranged meeting last time.

"You probably think since I have a girlfriend, so you don’t feel troubled at all, right? Because you believe, I’ll break up with her and I'll end up dating a guy again, something like that."

"You’re thinking too badly of me. I respect all forms of love. I truly believe it’s real. But what I can’t accept is giving up before even competing, admitting defeat too early."

"That’s a bad habit. If someone is already in a relationship, you shouldn’t come between them."

"It's like this ..."

Ram leaned toward the table with a serious expression.

"I see myself as having a good chance. Both of our families want us to be together, which is an opportunity that Miss Ja doesn’t have. I wouldn’t openly steal you or anything like that. At least for now, let’s just be friends who can talk to each other. You can keep dating Miss Ja, and if one day you break up, I’ll be next in line. That’s all. I’m just showing myself and getting you familiar with me, it’s harmless, right?"

"If everyone thought like that, mistresses wouldn’t fight with wives anymore. They could just say, ‘I’m just waiting in line. If he breaks up with you, I’m next.’"

"That depends on you, whether or not you feel something for me. I don’t see the problem. If you don’t like me, we can still be friends. I’m fair."

"I thought your name was Ram."

"It’s Thai (fair)!"

We both laughed at our playful banter. Ram then called Phao over to take an order as a small gesture of support. Afterward, he looked at the pile of papers in front of me and seemed interested.

"That’s a lot of expenses."

"Yeah. Feels like it’s killing me.”

"If you marry me, your life will be comfortable. You can be my family’s daughter-in-law, collect apartment rents, and just relax while I get to admire the mole under your breasts. It would be worth it."

"I could just walk around Sanam Luang instead. I’d still make money."

"Three hundred baht under a jackfruit tree isn’t worth it. Take my offer instead, sixty thousand a month from two buildings makes one hundred and twenty thousand. Plus, you’ll get to see the mole on my inner thigh every other day. I’m a hardworking man."

"You idiot! You're so naughty...hehe!"

I laughed, amused, before suddenly thinking of something.

"Stay still. Let me take a picture."

"Why should I let you take a picture?"

"You said you wanted to be friends, right?"

"I’d rather take a picture with you."

Ram then moved to sit on the same side as me and grabbed my phone.

"Alright, smile... Three, two, one... Snap!"

Ram handed my phone back and gave me a playful wink.

"I'm so handsome, right? That’s why you wanted to take a picture."

"How many wives have you had?"

"Why are you asking that?"

"Because you’re such a sweet-talker. You’re so flirtatious!"

"You’re exaggerating. I just want to get closer and be friends with you. I feel like you’re someone I can have fun conversations with, even cheeky ones. By the way, why are you taking my picture?"

"To ask my mom for money."

Then I immediately sent the picture of us through LINE. Mom still hadn’t read it, but I had a feeling she’d reach out soon. Just as I was about to tell Ram to go sit on the other side, the voice of someone who had arrived earlier than expected made me almost choke on air.

**"Seems like you’re having fun."**

"Ja."

The feeling of guilt, like a cow with a guilty conscience, made me jump up from my seat and beam a wide smile at the sweet-faced person who had arrived nearly an hour early. To ease the awkwardness, I decided to introduce Ram, completely forgetting they had already met.

"This is Ram."

"Hello, I’m Ja,"

Ja introduced herself with a smirk.

"Did you forget we already know each other? Why are you so startled, Keer? You’re acting suspicious."

"Oh, it looks like I should leave now, or I might end up being the third wheel."

"Stop it! Third wheel? Didn’t you say you came as a friend?"

"A lover who isn’t seen, liking someone who doesn’t notice, oops! I’m off now before I cause trouble. See you again! Goodbye, Ja."

Ram cheerfully waved goodbye once more and left, leaving me alone with Ja. The sweet-faced girl watched the tall figure disappear from sight before turning to me, raising one eyebrow. "You look so happy.”

"What happiness? There’s none,"

I quickly denied, frowning.

"I’m so stressed. These expenses are crushing me."

"But you were laughing and looked happy. Ja doesn’t like it,"

Ja said, clearly displeased.

"But I likes it, seeing you jealous,"

I teased, laughing before urging Ja to sit across from me.

"Same as usual, right? I’ll have Phao make it for you."

I went to order a green tea frappe, knowing her preference, and then returned to the table to find Ja going through the expense bills one by one.

"Your income isn’t enough to cover your expenses, is it? Are you really going to close the shop like your mom suggested?"

"I probably have to. My bank account is running dry, and Mom still refuses to talk to me because of that day... Oh! Mom just messaged me!"

I straightened up in excitement as I saw a notification from my mom and quickly opened it to read.

**Mom:**

How did you end up taking a picture with him?

**Kee**:

Ram came to the shop, had some coffee, and we just chatted casually. He asked for a picture.

**Mom**:

What did you talk about?

**Kee**:

He said he has a mole on his inner thigh and offered to give me a monthly allowance if I let him admire the mole under my breasts.

**Mom**:

You two are so naughty!

**Mom**: Sticker

.

I looked at Mom’s messages and smiled faintly. I’d ask her for money later when the time was right. My actions, however, didn’t escape Ja’s sharp gaze. She stared at me silently, her expression unreadable, making me feel uneasy. A chill ran down my spine.

"Sorry, got a bit carried away chatting with Mom."

"I thought you said your mom wouldn’t talk to you?"

"She’s talking to me now. I... sent her a picture of me and Ram."

"You gave your mom hope like that. What about us?"

"It was just a picture, that’s all."

"I’m leaving now."

Phao, who had just brought over the drinks, stood awkwardly as Ja suddenly got up and stormed out of the shop. Shocked, I immediately ran after her, grabbing her arm and trying to explain the situation.

"Wait, why are you leaving so quickly? What are you upset about, Ja?"

"I’m not upset. I just think working at home would be better today."

"But you usually work here, don’t you?"

"Today, I want to work at home. If there’s anything, just text me. I won’t answer any calls. And this will be my last sentence to you for today."

"What do you mean?"

"....."

The sweet-faced girl didn’t say a word. She simply got into her car and drove away. I stood there, staring at the back of her car, my mind in a whirlwind. Ah... have we really reached the point of fighting? I guess so. In every relationship, there’s bound to be some friction. And she has every right to be upset, especially with another man hovering around.

.

.

**Kee**:

Ja, are you mad at me? There’s nothing between me and Ram beyond friendship.

**Ja**:

I know.

**Kee**:

If you know, then why won’t you answer my calls?

**Ja**:

I’m too lazy to open my mouth and talk.

.

What the hell was this? Too lazy to talk? I stared at the message in confusion, utterly baffled. It bothered me so much that I ended up hailing a taxi to take me straight to the sweet-faced girl’s house.

When I arrived, I was greeted by teacher Wilai, who opened the door with her usual authoritative expression.

"Oh, it’s you. What brings you here?"

"I came to see Ja."

"It’s pointless."

I froze, feeling my heart sink. This was starting to feel like one of those dramas or novels, where after a fight, the other person sends an intimidating elder to tell you to leave so they don’t have to see you.

"Is Ja really that upset? I’ve been trying to call her, but she just keeps saying she’s too lazy to talk."

"Are you guys arguing?"

The elder woman looked slightly surprised.

"Just a little."

"Hmm... Ja actually fights with someone?"

"Huh?"

"Normally, I never see Ja fight with anyone. In fact, she hardly talks to anyone at all. When I found out she had you as a friend, I was relieved she was finally acting normal around someone... But now she’s actually fighting with someone?"

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At this point, Teacher Wilai seemed to be having a monologue, mumbling like an overly dramatic Indian soap opera heroine, leaving the audience to understand her thoughts alone. But right now, I didn’t understand any of it. I was just anxious to talk to my girlfriend. Please, let me talk to her.

"May I go in and talk to Ja?"

"Go ahead, if she’s willing to talk to you."

That’s it. Just like that.

Once I got permission, I rushed into the house and headed straight to the second floor to find her. I knocked on the door three times and called out, asking her to come out and talk. But there was no response. I knocked again, but everything remained silent, except for the barking of two dogs in the house.

Wait, this isn’t Chloe… Are there more dogs in this house?

"Ja probably isn’t mad. When she’s in her artistic mood, she locks herself in her room, staying quiet all day and night without talking to anyone. It’s... kind of a 'won’t open her mouth' syndrome,"

Teacher Wilai said as she walked by, picking up a mixed-breed dog and cuddling it lovingly. The other dog jumped up and clung to her leg, begging to be carried as well.

"Now, Dior, don’t lick my face… Chanel, wait your turn. I’ll carry you next."

"What’s this 'won’t open her mouth' syndrome?"

I asked.

"It means she doesn’t like talking or making any sound, just too lazy to open her mouth. She’s been like this since she was a child. She didn’t make many friends and couldn’t really get along with others. Eventually, we had to homeschool her at home."

"Uh-huh..."

Well, that’s some new information.

"We got the dogs to help her talk more. At least now she’ll talk to the dogs sometimes. Otherwise, she wouldn’t open her mouth to talk to anyone at all, until she brought you here and introduced you as her friend. I was so happy."

"So, that means she won’t talk unless…?"

Before I could get an answer, a letter was slipped under the door. Noticing the piece of paper brushing against my toe, I bent down, picked it up, and opened it. The message, typed neatly on a typewriter, spanned four or five lines:

**I** **really don’t feel like talking today, so I’ve decided to stay in my room and work on my novel. I’m sorry for making you worry, but I won’t come out to see you. You can head back now. And if you’re worried that I’m mad at you, don’t be, I’m not mad. When I’m in a better mood and feel like talking, I’ll call you myself.**

**Ja was jealous.**

**The end.**

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Wow! That was so straightforward I didn’t even know how to respond. She’s not the type of woman who says she’s fine when she’s mad. If she’s mad, she’s mad. If she’s jealous, she’s jealous. No excuses. She wants her own time and space. No matter how much someone wants to talk to her, if she doesn’t feel like talking, she won’t, because she’s too lazy to open her mouth. People like this really exist!

"So, what did Ja write? Let me read it."

I quickly folded the paper and tucked it into my bag because the content included the word jealous, and I was afraid Teacher Wilai wouldn’t understand it properly. I could only smile.

"Ja said it was a secret."

"Hmph! Keeping secrets from her mom, huh, that girl."

"But Ja said I should go back. She really doesn’t feel like talking today. She’s locking herself in her room to work on her novel and won’t come out."

"If she says so, don’t try to convince her otherwise. When she sets her mind on something, even if the house is on fire, she won’t come out. She’s very determined, even if she has some odd habits."

"Really strange," I replied.

I’d never met anyone who didn’t want to talk, especially not when they were upset. Most people lash out when angry. What kind of person am I dealing with here?

As I followed Teacher Wilai downstairs, she switched to carrying another dog close to her chest. To avoid being too impolite, I decided to make small talk.

"So, how many dogs do you have?"

"Three. Chloe is in the room with Ja, and these two are Chloe’s puppies.

Their names are Chanel and Dior. Oh, sorry, sweetie! Did that hurt? Grandma didn’t mean to."

Suddenly, the dog being carried started whining, and I wondered what had happened. I didn’t even need to ask because Teacher Wilai explained right away, full of love for the dogs like a true pet owner.

"This one was born with a disability with legs are stuck together. He can walk, but not like normal dogs. His tendons are tight... poor thing."

"Ah, I see. No wonder you care for it so much."

"It’s very clingy. When it wants something, it gives the cutest and saddest look. Its personality is like its mom, but the clinginess comes from its dad. Dior, on the other hand, is super clingy too. Loves its owner so much it can be annoying."

"I see."

I wasn’t really interested, but I listened to be polite. My mind was already full of thoughts about Ja. I smiled at Teacher Wilai and gave her a respectful bow before leaving, feeling sad. Before walking out, I looked up at the window of Ja’s room. I saw a shadow moving a little, showing that she was watching me from above.

I waved goodbye with a heavy heart and went outside to call a taxi. I felt like there was nothing I could do.

Having an artistic girlfriend really changes my life.

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Even though she wouldn’t talk to me in person, at least at night she sent me a goodnight message to cheer me up.

**Ja**:

Are you still awake?

**Kee**:

Yes. I miss you. Are you still mad?

**Ja**:

Not anymore. I wrote my novel and feel better now. I put all my emotions into the story.

**Kee**:

That’s good. I was worried you’d stay mad for days. I was scared I wouldn’t get to see you.

**Ja**:

You’ll see me. Tomorrow, there should be something good. You’ll smile for sure.

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The "good thing" she mentioned, I had no idea what it could be until the next morning, when a call from an unfamiliar number came through. The caller asked to rent my shop as a filming location for a currently airing drama. They offered a rental fee of 30,000 baht for a full day. I was left speechless, feeling like I had just won the lottery.

"Really? Thirty thousand baht?"

"Yes, ma’am. We’d like to use it the day after tomorrow. Is that okay?"

"Yes, absolutely! By the way... is it cash payment?"

"Yes, cash."

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After finishing the conversation, Ja arrived at the shop right on cue. The sweet-faced woman raised an eyebrow at me, making me recall what we talked about the night before.

"Something good really did happen, Ja. Did you pull some strings for me?"

"Something like that,"

Ja shrugged casually, as if wanting to take credit for the success.

"Now you don’t have to marry the landlord’s son or call your mom to ask for money anymore."

"Are you still holding onto this?"

I nudged her lightly with my shoulder.

"But thanks anyway. I heard this drama is really popular. If it airs, I bet people will come to visit this place. That’s awesome!"

While I was basking in my excitement, my phone rang. The caller was none other than my mom, who hadn’t spoken to me for days despite my attempts to make amends. A part of me wanted to play hard to get, but… oh well, I’m a grateful daughter.

"Hey, Mom! Finally, we get to talk. So, are you done being mad at me?"

[I’ve been over it for a while. But the reason I called today is… Ram got hurt. The front door fell on him, and now he’s in the hospital. Go visit him, will you?]

"What? A door fell on him?"

“Hehe.”

The sound of Ja’s laugh made me turn to glare at her instantly. The sweetfaced girl shrugged before walking over to order a drink from Phao. I couldn’t take my eyes off her as she walked away.

For a brief moment, I couldn’t help but think Ja might have written something into her novel to make this happen.

**But how could that be possible? This isn’t Harry Potter! Where the author can predict the future!**

# Chapter 10: Fjkhj Mngk

I waited until the shop was closed before going to visit Ram at the hospital. Ja came along with me, or more precise, I went along with her. I got to ride in her cute little car, so I didn't have to bother calling a taxi.

Honestly, Ram and I weren't close enough for me to feel like I needed to visit him. But Ja was the one who insisted we go, which made me curious.

"You don't even know him. Why do you want to visit him?"

"But we've met before. Are you really that heartless, Kee?"

"It's not like that."

"Then let's go, as long as you have nothing to hide."

I spoke as we stepped into the elevator heading to the hospital room.

"I have nothing to hide."

"Then why are you so nervous? Just relax and go visit him. It's the kind thing to do. Besides, it's quite shocking, yesterday we just saw him."

"He's not dead yet, so why are you saying 'yesterday' like that?"

"Hehe."

Ja's laughter made me chuckle as well. When the elevator stopped on the floor where Ram was staying, we headed straight to the room number that Mom had told me earlier. The

moment the door opened, we were greeted by Ram's relatives, who were still keeping watch over him, especially his mother. She looked at me with eyes as sharp as a tiger spider. I could feel her piercing gaze.

"Hello, Auntie. How's Ram doing?"

I greeted politely, giving a respectful bow to everyone in the room. Ram looked at me and smiled brightly, even though his leg was in a cast, hanging elevated.

"I'm fine, don't worry. I didn't expect you and Ja to come visit."

"Actually, you didn't have to come,"

The elderly woman sitting beside her son's bed muttered softly, almost as if unsure whether she wanted to be heard or not.

"This is just the beginning, and he's already gotten a door dropped on him."

But, well, I pretended not to hear that. My plan was simple: come quickly and leave hurry back. I glanced at his leg in the cast silently and decided to make some polite small talk.

"How did the door fall on you?"

"It was sliding normally, but it seems like the metal wheels came loose, and the door fell right down. Lucky it only hit my lower leg. If it had been a little higher... I'd probably be infertile."

Ram wiggled his eyebrows at me mischievously.

"We can still have kids together, Kee!"

"Next time, I'll have a dog bite your balls."

"What?"

"Ja, what did you say?"

Even though it was a mumble, I heard it clearly with both ears. For a moment, I caught a satisfied smile on Ja's sweet face and fekt that she was a little scary. After a brief visit, I was the one who excused myself first because there was nothing left to say.

It's good to show kindness, but only in moderation. Besides, Ram's family seemed not to like me very much. We arrived at the hospital at 9:30 p.m. and left at about 9:45 p.m. a lightning-fast visit.

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"I'm hungry. I haven't eaten anything yet,"

Ja said as we walked back to the car, and I suddenly realized that neither of us have had dinner.

"That's true. I completely forgot. So, what should we eat?"

"Hmm. I remember I owe you a meal, so let's take this chance to eat somewhere nice. You'll love it, Kee."

"Huh? Sure, I'd like to see if it's as good as you say."

The sweet-faced girl took me to a famous yen ta fo (pink noodle soup) shop near Sao Ching Cha. Honestly, it's one of my favorite places. Back in the day, whenever I was out of ideas for late-night meals, I'd invite my friends to eat here and then head over to Mont Nom Sod for some milk and desserts.

Since opening my coffee shop, I hadn't been to this area again. Coming here felt like a great opportunity.

"No need to prove it, this place is really good. It's actually one of my favorite spots!"

"Really? What a coincidence! Looks like our taste buds enjoy the same flavors. We're a match!"

Ja said as she sat down and started writing the order on a slip of paper.

"What do you want to eat, Kee?"

"You decide. Order something you think I'd like, just like you brought me here."

"Hmm... is that so?"

The sweet-faced Ja narrowed her eyes at me and gave a sly wink.

"Alright, let's see if I can impress you."

"Sure, let's see."

She bent down to write my order, took it to the street vendor, and returned to her seat. Not long after, the food we ordered began arriving at the table. To my surprise, Ja had perfectly ordered my usual dish.

"Wow, you're amazing, how did you know!"

"Guess."

"Not only are you a writer ahead of your time, but you also seem to know me so well. How can I ever escape from you?"

I smiled while watching the sweet-faced Ja, who looked pleased with herself, and slurped a noodle into my mouth.

"By the way, I don't know much about you at all. Even though we call ourselves a couple, this is only our second meal together, if we don't count the disaster of our first meeting.

We've barely spent any time getting to know each other."

"An hour a day for the past three months isn't enough? Hmm... so what does it really mean to be a couple? Do we have to spend every day and night together?"

I honestly had no idea what couples typically do all day. From what I knew, my previous relationships always involved a lot of time spent together, doing things without ever doubting how it all began. But with Ja, everything was confusing from the start.

We met for an hour each day, had meaningful conversations during the day, slept together at night, and became a couple the very next day. Everything felt rushed, skipping all the usual steps, it was almost suspicious.

"We should spend more time doing things together. Maybe talking on the phone..."

"But I'm too lazy to even open my mouth. Even eating or yawning feels like a chore for me,"

Ja replied with her signature nonchalance.

"Now, that's another story,"

I said, licking my lips and leaning closer to the thin-lipped woman in disbelief.

"Are you really lazy, or are you just messing with me?"

"Rude. I'm genuinely lazy,"

"Then how did your exes even tolerate you?"

"They didn't have to. They just walked away on their own. Here's an idea, come stay over at my place tonight."

"Huh?"

I tilted my head, smiling mischievously, which made the sweet-faced Ja grab a straw and flick water at my face.

"Don't get any dirty ideas. Tonight, you can ask me anything you want. If talking will bring us closer, then let's do it."

"Alright. We can take turns staying over at each other's places. Change of scenery... but are you really not planning to do anything else tonight?"

"I do want to."

"Then what are you waiting for?"

"But I won't let you. You might get bored too quickly. Hehe,"

Ja said, pointing at my bowl of noodles.

"Finish your food, or it'll get soggy. Once you're done, we'll head to my place." "Okay!"

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**To be honest, I'm starting to get confused about our relationship**.

It felt like we were somewhere in between being girlfriends and best friends. Even tonight's sleepover had an odd vibe. We had to shyly inform Teacher Wilai, like asking permission from strict parents, before heading over. The plan was to binge-watch some series, chat about our lives, and just hang out.

Later that evening, I was wearing Ja's pajamas, which were a little too small for me. Once I had them on, they felt more like a tight-fitting outfit. Wait... or am I just too big?

"Alright, I'm going to take a shower now. While you wait, pick a series for us to watch,"

Ja said, smiling as she walked toward the bathroom.

"Okay."

The sweet-faced Ja walked out of the room, leaving me alone in the modestly sized square space. I looked around, picked up the remote, and started scrolling through the options to decide what to watch. But, as always, when there are too many choices, you end up not being able to decide on anything. I eventually gave up, turned off the TV, and looked for something else to do.

That's when, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed an old typewriter sitting on a desk, the same one Ja had mentioned before as something she used to practice typing on as a kid.

Hmm... I've learned how to use a typewriter before, too. The tick-tack sound of the keys feels so nostalgic. I wonder if there's any paper around here. Let's give this thing a try.

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**a s d f j k l**

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I practiced my finger positions to refresh my memory and then slid the carriage down for the next line. With a playful grin, I started typing something just for fun.

How about I write a scene for our famous writer here? A steamy love scene between us in the bathroom...

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***On a moonlit night, with scattered stars in the sky, the moonlight softly illuminated the room from outside...***

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Why am I forcing myself to make it so poetic? Let's try again... everything has to feel natural. Let's dive right into the scene.

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***Suddenly, the power went out across the entire neighborhood. The darkness prompted the homeowner to light a candle, casting a soft, flickering glow throughout the area. The face of the mysterious woman, bathed in the gentle candlelight, exuded a captivating charm that was impossible to resist...***

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Wow... I'm so proud. After reading so many novels, I guess I can write something like this too!

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***When the sweet-faced woman gazed at her girlfriend's face, who she had invited over, her heart began to race. The hot and humid air, trapped from the sun's heat earlier in the day, made her feel so uncomfortable that she couldn't bear it anymore. She got up in the middle of the night, removing her shirt, leaving only her bare skin exposed, before lying back down again. However, just as she did, the person next to her shifted and reached out, their hand brushing against her bare chest, causing her nipple to stiffen at the touch.***

Oh My Gosh, what is this? Why am I writing so much tonight? This is fun! Let's keep going! Being a writer is exciting, you can create love scenes, kill off characters, whatever you want!

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***The sensation was like an electric shock, making her body tense. She felt nervous, excited, and curious all at once. Embarrassed yet unable to resist her growing curiosity, she shifted her body so that her chest pressed more firmly against the hand, rubbing lightly against it. Even though she desperately wanted to make a sound, she could only cover her mouth with her hand, afraid that the owner of the hand would wake up and think she was pervert.***

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Oh wow... if that were my hand, not only would I not think she was pervert, but I'd take it all the way! Oh my god, I'm really hot!

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***This new sensation made her curiosity grow stronger than ever. Once she was sure the other person was completely unaware, she gently guided the hand of the unfamiliar woman from her chest to her stomach, then slowly down to the center of her body. The wetness made a soft, slick sound until.....***

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What should happen next? My vocabulary isn't rich enough for this.

Whatever, I'll just keep going. If I get better, I'll rewrite it later. Time to move to the next line.

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***The owner of the hand, still asleep, unknowingly shifted her fingers slightly. That subtle movement at the sensitive spot made her let out a soft moan. She felt both worried about how much the other person's hand might get dirty and reluctant to stop the sensation. She moved her body to press herself against those fingers instead.***

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Oh... writing this is making me feel hot and bothered myself. I need to wrap this story up, and it needs a twist, otherwise, it won't be fun.

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***Just as she was about to reach the peak, feeling an explosion of rainbow colors in her head, the door to the room suddenly opened as the power came back on. Her mother, who had kindly come in to suggest turning on the air conditioning, stood there, completely stunned by the scene in front of her.***

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***Tah-lung tah-lung tah-lung tung tung tung ting, tah-lung tung tung... ( Anan Anwar's classic song).***

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I pulled out the A4 paper from the typewriter and looked at my work. There were a few typos here and there, but it was a lot for someone who thought their typewriting skills had faded away. After rereading it briefly, I folded the paper and tucked it into a notebook nearby.

That's when Ja opened the door and walked in.

"Hey, have you picked a movie yet?"

"Not yet. There are too many choices, I couldn't decide. Oh, look! Chloe and the gang are here."

It seemed like the sweet-faced Ja had brought her little gang of dogs along. The excited pups ran over, jumping around my legs with joy. I picked one up to sit on my lap, Chloe, of course.

"This is Chloe, right? Hello there... We barely talked last time."

"I thought you were going to talk to my mom?"

"Well, I had to greet the daughter first."

"So, what were you doing just now?"

"Playing with the typewriter."

"Without paper? The ink's going to smear everywhere."

"Ugh, such a nitpicker,"

I pouted, pretending to ignore her.

"Fine, I won't play with it anymore. Let's just lie down and watch a movie together instead."

I put Chloe back on the floor and climbed onto the left side of the bed. Ja joined me, sitting close by, her faint scent of soap wafting over, making me feel a little defeated. I couldn't help myself, I leaned in and nuzzled my nose against her shoulder, fully aware I had the right to do so.

"You smell so good,"

I murmured, nudging my lips gently against her neck.

"Can I kiss you?"

"Nope. I already said we're just here to sleep."

"Ugh, you're so stingy. Didn't you say you like kissing?"

"I do like kissing. But I'm not going to put myself in a dangerous situation,"

Ja replied, raising an eyebrow playfully. Her teasing made me pout a little. Hmph. Just earlier, I'd been fantasizing and putting it all on paper. In my story, she'd already been mine!

But oh well, slow and steady wins the race. It's not like I'm that desperate. Although, if it happens, I wouldn't mind. Its been a while.

"You pick the movie, then. I'm fine with anything."

Ja nodded and selected a Korean drama that I had watched before, and absolutely loved. Especially the scenes set in the coffee shop. Come to think of it, part of the reason I opened my café and decorated it the way I did was because of the inspiration I got from this drama.

"It's like you knew how much I love this show,"

"Really? What a coincidence,"

Ja replied, smiling with satisfaction.

"Or maybe it's destiny pulling us together."

"You know too much about me. By the way... when you picked this show, it reminded me of something."

"What is it?"

"I pictured you in one of the scenes from this drama. It's the one where the character is sitting by the coffee shop window with sunlight streaming in from outside... Hold on, let me show you."

I grabbed the remote, fast-forwarded to the part I remembered, and paused the screen.

"Here! This scene reminds me of you so much."

"Wow, are you saying I look as pretty as the lead actress? That makes me so happy!"

Ja beamed, clearly enjoying the compliment.

"You know,"

I began with a smile, watching Ja closely,

"you're exactly my type in every way. And you showed up just when I was completely single. The timing is almost too perfect, don't you think? It feels like everything about us fits together like puzzle pieces."

I wasn't upset or anything if Ja had known me before and chose the right moment to approach me. In fact, it would be nice to know more about her, who she is, where she came from, and when she started liking me.

After all, I like her so much.

Why would I be mad about the way she decided to get close to me?

"Maybe it was meant to be,"

Ja said, her sweet smile unwavering.

"Maybe you were destined to be mine. Who knows?"

"Don't you think you came to me a little late?" I teased.

"Would you rather I approached you when you were in kindergarten? That would've been too soon. No, this timing is just right,"

Ja replied, playful as ever.

"Okay, then let me ask you something,"

I said, steering the conversation in another direction.

"But I'm not going to ask silly questions like your favorite food, your favorite movie, or how many novels you've written."

I paused for a moment before diving straight into it.

"How many exes have you had?"

Ja chuckled and held up two fingers.

"Two. You're the third."

"Why did you break up? Were you the one who dumped both of them? Why?"

"I wanted to understand what love really is. If two people truly love each other, what could possibly make them fall out of love... and I found only one clear answer."

"And that is?"

"A third party."

"You broke up with your exes because of a third party?"

I asked, immediately intrigued, my expression turning angry.

"Unbelievable! Those guys dared to cheat on you when they had someone like you? That's horrible! It's good that you left them. You can trust me, though, I've never been known for cheating. It's always been the other way around; they're the ones who leave me."

I pretended to sob dramatically, resting my head on Ja's shoulder, nuzzling against her for attention. The sweet-faced woman laughed and hugged me, playing along.

"Oh...It's okay. They left you, but now you have me. Isn't that great?"

"True. If it weren't for those people, I wouldn't have met you today... but can't you be a little nicer to me?"

I rested my chin on Ja's shoulder and moved my lips slightly.

"Let's cuddle tonight."

"You're always like this."

"Not even a kiss?"

"..."

The silence, it definitely meant hesitation. Seeing my chance, I slowly leaned in closer, moving my face nearer to hers. But before I could get any closer, her small hand firmly pushed my face away.

"Nope. I'm sleeping tonight,"

Ja declared, lying down and turning on her side.

"Just one rule, don't touch me while I'm asleep. I'm a light sleeper, and if I wake up, I'll get really annoyed. If you don't want me to be mad, don't touch me. Got it?"

"You're so cruel! You gave me hope and then turned your back on me like this... and what about the series?"

"Hehe."

A faint laugh echoed through the room, as if to tease me. I could only pout and jab at the remote in frustration.

But before I could select a new show, everything suddenly turned pitch black, as if the world had been cut off from all light.

Oh... the power blackout.

# Chapter 11: Stunned

"Here, take these candles and light it now. I just called the electricity authority, they said it’s a blackout across the entire district,"

Teacher Wilai said as she came into the room, lighting the candles for us and emphasizing her warning.

"When you’re ready to sleep, blow them out. We don’t want the house to catch fire. Ja, go turn off the air conditioner circuit breaker. Turn it back on when the power returns."

"Okay,"

Ja replied obediently to her mother. After giving her instructions, Teacher Wilai left the room, taking the little gang of pets along with her. Now, it was just Ja and me left alone.

"It's so romantic."

I said, glancing at the yellow-orange candle flame, typically used for religious offerings, and smiling slightly.

"It’s like we’re having dinner together."

"It’s been such a long time since the last blackout, I can’t even remember when it happened. What’s going on? It’s not raining, and there’s no thunder either,"

Ja wondered aloud, her brow furrowed slightly.

"It’s probably a transformer explosion or some kind of technical error,"

I said, glancing at her with a smile. But then I noticed she was staring at me, so long and intensely that I started to feel a little shy.

"What? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"N-nothing," Ja stammered.

"Hey, you're stumbling!"

I teased, pointing a playful finger at her.

"You think I’m beautiful under this candlelight, and it’s making you nervous, isn’t it?"

"Maybe. Beautiful in the dim light," Ja admitted softly.

"You're beautiful in bright light too."

I replied smugly, seizing the moment as Ja seemed a little lost in the atmosphere. I stepped closer, gently cupping her small face in both hands.

"Especially when we’re this close."

I leaned in and kissed her slowly. Ja didn’t pull away, instead, she reciprocated, as if she had been waiting for this. Seeing her response, I took the chance to lightly nibble on her lips before sliding my tongue in, searching for the sweetness inside her mouth.

The last time we kissed, she wasn’t quite used to this kind of greeting. But tonight, she responded so naturally, like she had learned quickly.

Fast learner…

"How is it? Do I look even more beautiful now?"

"I guess… maybe,"

Ja replied, a little flustered.

"I’m even more beautiful, especially when I’m naked,"

I said boldly, and without waiting for a response, I leaned down to nuzzle her neck with renewed determination.

But my enthusiasm was cut short as she dodged, crossing her arms and walking to the other side of the bed.

"I told you, tonight we’re just sleeping."

"But we already kissed!"

I pouted, feeling frustrated. Normally, with my exes, things never stopped halfway, we always went all the way. But with Ja, she just pulled away without a second thought, as if she didn’t care.

"So what if we kissed? We’re here to sleep, not… sleep together."

"Can’t we just do a little bit?"

"You’re not the type to stop at *‘just a little bit*.’" "Fine, be that way! But don’t come crying to me later,"

I huffed, turning away in mock annoyance.

Even I have my pride. As I climbed onto the bed with a huff, Ja didn’t forget to give me one last order.

"Blow out the candles, or Mom will scold us."

"Ugh, fine," I muttered.

"Hehe."

Her amused giggle made me pout, but I still obeyed, blowing out the candles before flopping down onto the bed. Without any fans or air conditioning, we had to leave the window open, with only the screen keeping the mosquitoes out.

Honestly, the weather was unbearably hot and humid tonight. I wasn’t used to sleeping without air conditioning, but I didn’t want to disturb Ja, so I tried my best to stay still and convince myself:

*Cold… it’s so cold.*

I’m burning up! It’s so hot I can’t take it!

The heat made me toss and turn, my eyes wandering around the room. I had no idea how much time had passed, maybe an hour, or an hour and a half? That’s when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, that Ja was stirring. I watched as the sweet-faced woman sat up, her small figure moving quietly in the dim light.

Ja removed her top, checking to make sure I was asleep. She waved her hand in front of my face a few times and, once satisfied, lay back down.

I really wanted to turn and look. I’d been curious for so long, just how fair is her skin under that shirt? But with the power out, how could I possibly see? Still, whether I could see or not, just a little glance would be enough. Pretending to shift in my sleep, I turned to face her, letting my arm drape across her body.

The sensation of my forearm brushing against her bare skin felt like an electric shock. Her skin was soft, smooth, and luxurious, like high-quality velvet, and I couldn’t resist the urge to run my hand back and forth lightly.

Wait…

I felt something firm under my palm. It took me a moment to realize that my hand was now resting on something that fit perfectly in its grasp. Since I’d never touched anyone else like this before, I froze in shock. For a second, I almost squeezed instinctively but stopped myself, terrified that Ja might realize I wasn’t actually asleep.

My hand was… on her chest.

What now?

I could feel Ja’s heartbeat pounding wildly against my palm. Her silky smooth skin and the firm sensation beneath it made me press my lips tightly together, forcing my eyes shut in fear that I might lose control and accidentally squeeze. Her quick, shallow breaths filled the quiet room, amplifying the tension in the air.

The subtle scent of her body began to cloud my mind, stirring an unsettling sensation deep in my stomach.

Can I wake up? If I do, can I just throw myself at her?

Would she push me away or leave me like this. Let's see what she do next.

I chose to stay still, observing and waiting to see what she would. Not long after, I felt her hand gently grasp mine. Honestly, I felt a little disappointed, thinking she was going to pull it away. But...

That wasn’t what happened.

My hand slowly moved down to the lower part. The smooth, warm skin until it reached the hollow of her navel. Her temperature seemed to rise as her breaths grew quicker and shorter. Then, my hand was guided to a place I never imagined I’d touch.

By this point… the soft, warm, and damp sensation beneath my fingers was undeniable. She left my hand there, unmoving, as if waiting for something to happen.

I stayed still, waiting for her to decide what to do next. If she didn’t do anything soon... I was ready to "wake up" and take over.

I understood her body’s signals all too well, what it needed, what it was asking for. She just needed to let go and release the tension she was holding inside.

Every second felt like an eternity, filled with excitement and suspense because nothing seems to happen. Unable to bear it any longer, I slightly moved my fingers, pretending it was an unconscious twitch in my sleep, letting them graze against her more.

"Ah,"

Ja let out a soft sound, and I bit my lip hard at that, suppressing the urge to scream.

What am I doing? Can I really do this?

Her body began to move slowly, bit by bit, while she held my wrist firmly in place. Her frame shifted against the bedsheet, creating a subtle friction, while my hand remained against her most sensitive spot, moving along with her motions. The faint, wet sound between us grew louder, unmistakably revealing her rising emotions.

I wasn’t any different, heat coursed through me, and I felt the dampness spreading within myself. Unable to do anything, I brought my free hand up to cover my mouth, stopping any noises from escaping. Her every movement made her seem even more alluring, even sexier.

I wanted to wake up, I needed to let her know I wasn’t asleep. I wanted to throw myself at her, to taste everything she was offering. Her moans, the sweetness on my hand, all of it, I wanted it all.

I was about to—

*Suddenly...!*

The neon lights, left on as a signal for when the power would return, flickered to life, flooding the room with brightness. At the same moment, the door swung open, and the dogs barked excitedly. Teacher Wilai, who had come to announce that the electricity was back, stop at the door while I panicked, grabbing the blanket and pulling it over myself with the speed of a spring-loaded mechanism.

"The power’s back,"

.

***Tuh-lung, tuh-lung, tuh-lung, ting-tung-tung-ting, tuh-lung-tung-tung!***

***.***

The familiar tune from the neighbor’s house blasted for about four seconds before cutting off abruptly. It seemed even they used music as their signal for the power returning.

Feigning sleepiness, I sat up, rubbing my eyes like someone just waking up. I glanced at both the mother and daughter with a look of innocent confusion.

"Oh, the power’s back? That means we can turn on the air conditioning now, right?"

"Yes, you can turn it on now,"

Teacher Wilai replied matter-of-factly.

Teacher Wilai closed the door and walked away after leaving a brief comment. I pretended to look at Ja with a confused expression, while she, now visibly blushing, finally broke the silence.

"Kee, can you go turn on the air conditioner and turn off the lights?"

"Okay,"

I replied, playing along. As I got up, my eyes caught sight of Ja’s sleep shirt lying on the floor. I pointed at it. "Why is your shirt over here?"

"Oh, I took it off. It was hot."

"Ah, that explains why you were hiding under the blanket. Were you... not wearing anything?"

"Mm-hmm. Turn off the lights already. I’m sleepy."

That was the extent of our conversation before we each lay down, Ja turning to face the other side.

I almost pounced on her just now. If that happened, Teacher Wilai would have become the enlightened witness to the state of our relationship, fully aware, fully awake, and joyful in our relationship.

. .

Do you think it’s easy to fall asleep on a night filled with such tension and excitement?

I had no idea if the person next to me was really asleep, but I definitely couldn’t sleep at all. Part of me wanted to turn over, nudge her, and suggest doing something fun, but I wasn’t sure if she would go along with it. Besides, Ja lay perfectly still, her breathing steady and calm.

I didn’t want to disturb her, so I just lay there, letting my thoughts wander until the time crept toward dawn. It wasn’t until the roosters in the neighborhood started crowing that I decided to sit up and make an excuse to go to the bathroom.

And yes, the sweet-faced Ja was still asleep, and likely would be for a while longer.

The bathroom and shower in this house were combined into one room on the ground floor, so I had to carefully make my way down the stairs from the second floor. Even though I thought I was the earliest riser, there was someone who had beaten me to it, Teacher Wilai. She was up preparing food to put into alms bowls for monks.

When she noticed me, she froze for a moment before speaking in a normal tone.

"Are you awake now, or are you planning to go back to bed?"

"I think I’m awake,"

I replied politely.

Who would dare say they’d go back to bed after being asked that, especially by a teacher who once scared the life out of me back in my school days?

"Do you want to join me in offering alms to the monks?"

"Huh?... Oh, sure."

"Good. Take these trays to the front of the house and wait there. I’ll follow later."

"Okay."

Even though Teacher Wilai wasn’t my teacher anymore, I couldn’t help but feel nervousness whenever she spoke in that authoritative tone. No matter what she asked, I automatically responded meekly, like one of those obedient maids in a TV drama. She told me to put the trays out front, so I did. She told me to stand there and wait for the monks, so I stood there.

A few minutes later, she came out and stood next to me, silent, with the sound of roosters crowing in the background. The atmosphere felt eerily quiet. Was it because of what happened last night…?

"I remember who you are now,"

Teacher Wilai suddenly said, breaking the silence.

Her words caught me off guard, and I instinctively replied

"Huh?"

"You’re that pretty girl who had a male student ride a motorbike around the school with balloons tied to the back for Valentine’s Day, aren’t you?"

The word pretty made me smile shyly, feeling a bit flattered.

"There were so many students. You still remember?"

"Of course, you stood out so much. It just took me a while to recall... How many years has it been since you graduated?"

"Eleven years," I replied.

"And what did you study after that?"

"I studied communication arts."

"And what are you doing now? I heard you’re running a coffee shop, is that right?"

"Yes, that’s correct,"

I answered with a polite nod.

"How did you end up meeting Ja?"

Today was different... Previously, we’d had a few casual conversations, and Teacher Wilai didn’t seem particularly interested. But now, her questions felt much more pointed, making me a little nervous. I worried that some parts of my history might not be impressive enough and might lead to disapproval.

Would she remember that time in school when I forgot to wear a camisole, and the slap of my uniform on my back echoed through the halls? That was one of my most embarrassing moments, and I cursed her under my breath back then, swearing never to forgive her.

"Ja came to my café to work on her novel, so we got to know each other,"

I explained, trying to keep things simple.

"But didn’t you have a boyfriend? That’s what I remember."

"Yes,"

I replied, feeling like the question was subtly probing into my preferences. Did this mean she saw something last night...?

"Maybe you’re just bored,"

She said casually.

"..."

Her words hung in the air, and I didn’t know how to respond.

"Dating men didn’t feel exciting anymore, so you decided to explore something different. But soon enough, you’ll probably go back to dating men. I’ve seen this happen so many times, girls who think they’re tomboys but eventually return to being just women. It’s just a phase, part of the teenage experience."

"I’m almost thirty, though. That’s far from being a teenager."

"In my eyes, you and Ja are still kids... Oh, the monks are here."

I wasn’t sure how long we’d been talking, but when the monks arrived, Teacher Wilai immediately invited them to stop and began offering alms. Meanwhile, I simply acted as her assistant, handing things over like a helping hand. Honestly, I felt so far removed from this kind of activity. If I end up in hell after I die, no one would need to wonder why I’m there.

"Hello, friends!"

The almsgiving paused our conversation, but it also gave me clarity: Teacher Wilai was fully aware of my relationship with Ja, even though she didn’t explicitly mention it. It was clear she wasn’t particularly supportive of our love, but she also wasn’t going to interfere.

As I stood there handing over the alms, a sense of unease weighed on me.

This wasn’t the smooth sailing I had hoped for, not that I expected it to be. Parents and guardians always find these things difficult to accept, including my own mom.

As we were packing up and preparing to head back inside, the neighbor called out to Teacher Wilai, stopping her in her tracks. Taking this chance, I quietly slipped away, but I could still hear their voices carrying over the fence.

"Sorry about the noise last night, Teacher. My son turned on the radio to signal when the power came back, and the music ended up blasting loudly. Did it wake you?"

"I wasn’t asleep yet anyway, it was too hot. But the song was quite catchy, actually."

"Catchy? Oh, Teacher, all it said was 'Tuh-lung, tuh-lung, tuh-lung, tingtung-tung.' It didn’t even have proper lyrics!"

The two of them continued chatting animatedly, but something suddenly came to mind for me. Without wasting a second, I ran to put away the alms offerings in the kitchen and hurried up to Ja’s bedroom.

It was already six in the morning, but the sweet-faced Ja was still lying there in the same position, sound asleep. Carefully, I tiptoed to her writing desk, where the typewriter sat. Reaching for the book where I had tucked the story I playfully wrote last night, my heart began to race.

**Thump, thump…**

**Thump, thump...**

Each line I had written now gave off an entirely different vibe from yesterday. I had to admit, yesterday’s writing was done out of pure amusement. But today, as I read through it, an unsettling fear crept over me.

Almost everything I had written came true. Sure, you could call it a coincidence. But not this part:

.

***"She made me… stunned, stunned, stunned, stunned, tun-tun-tun-tun, stunned, tun-tun..."***

*.*

It ends with the rhythm of Anan Anwar’s song.

.

Last night, everything really did end with Anan Anwar’s song playing, and then we all went to bed. If the neighbor hadn’t brought it up, I would have forgotten that I had written it down as a joke.

No way…Am I really a writer who was ahead of my time?

It's me!

***Translator Note:***

Her name always changes every chapter.. sometime

Kir,Kheer,Geer,Keer,Kee...her real name appears at chapter 8 as KEE...😁

# Chapter 12: Ex-Lover

After I finished showering and got ready to leave, Ja was still lying under the blanket, refusing to get up. I was a little worried so I reached out to touch her forehead, just in case she had a fever. However, the sweet-faced girl pulled the blanket over her head, avoiding me entirely. Her reaction left me momentarily stunned. "Are you okay?"

"I think I'm not feeling well."

Ja replied from under the blanket.

"Do you want to see a doctor?"

"Stop being so dramatic. A little fever and you’re already suggesting a doctor. What’s next? Coughing once and heading to the ER?"

"Then what do you want me to say? *‘Wanna go watch a movie instead?’* Is that it?"

I teased, trying to lighten the mood.

The sweet-faced Ja peeked out from under the blanket, shooting me a mildly irritated glance. But the moment our eyes met, she pulled the blanket back over her head again like before

"How about I’m staying in bed. You should go home by yourself."

"Yes, I will, but are you sure you don’t want me to stay and keep you company?"

"I’ll be fine. And today, I feel too lazy to even open my mouth. So you should go. This is going to be my last sentence for the day."

"You are the strangest person I’ve ever met,"

I said, torn between laughing and crying. But then again, maybe it was this strangeness that captivated me from the start. For over three months after we first met, she barely said a word. And somehow, I fell in love with her precisely because she wouldn’t speak.

Who’s the weirder one here, anyway?

"Since this is your last sentence of the day," I teased,

"could you open your mouth just a little more? I’ve got something to tell you."

"What?"

She asked, her voice muffled under the blanket.

"Your mom knows about us now."

Because of last night events, Teacher Wilai must have noticed Ja’s flustered behavior, or maybe she saw more and figured it out. The sweet-faced girl, still hiding under the blanket, didn’t say a word, as if waiting for me to explain further.

"And it seems like she’s not happy about our relationship,"

"I’ll handle it," Ja finally said.

"How are you going to handle it?"

"I’m too lazy to talk."

Fine, I give up! What can you do when someone is too lazy to even speak?

Forcing her wasn’t going to work anyway!

.

I booked a taxi from the app to pick me up at Ja’s house, my mind wandering as I waited. On the ride back, I pulled out the piece of paper I had typed on last night, rereading it with a mix of awe and unease.

If I truly were a writer ahead of my time, if everything I wrote came true as if I were placing the pieces perfectly, then that would make me no different from being a god. This needed to be shared. My friends needed to know that I have this ability.

.

**Kee:**

Guys, I think I’m a god now.

**Little Finger:**

Go to sleep.

**Kee:**

What sleep? It’s morning already. I’m serious, I'm a writer who was ahead of my time.

**Sorn:**

Since when did you become a writer?

**Sorn:**

Oh, I get it. You’re just influenced because you have a writer girlfriend, huh? Now you think you can write too?

**Sorn:**

By the way, I’m still mad at you for choosing your girlfriend over your friends.

**Kee:**

Oh, come on, don’t be so dismissive. I’m serious. I wrote something last night, and almost everything I wrote came true.

**Kee:**

Hold on, I’ll take a picture for you to see.

**Kee:** [File Sent]

.

After sending the paper I typed to my friends for analysis, the group’s responses were…

**Kam:**

Can’t read it. Too blurry.

**Sorn:**

I don't read it. Too long, more than eight lines.

**Little Finger:**

How can you even think of being a writer? You didn’t even read your schoolbooks.

**Kee:**

But I read novels! I wrote this myself. Why don't you read it?

**Sorn:**

I don't read. I'm annoyed and lazy.

**Kam:**

Alright, here’s the deal. If you can write something that makes me win the last three digits in tomorrow’s lottery, I’ll believe you. No need for more proof.

**Sorn:**

True. I play underground. I’m in.

**Little Finger:**

Count me in too.

.

It short, none of them believed me. Frustrated, I closed my phone screen, crossed my arms, and let out an annoyed huff in the backseat of the taxi. Fine. If no one believes me, I’ll prove it myself.

Last night, almost everything I wrote happened like a copy-paste scenario from my story. If I write again, it has to happen again, right?

Today business was usual at my coffee shop. Aside from Ja, there weren’t many customers, as usual. So, I had plenty of time to do whatever I wanted, like working on my story, for example.

I grabbed my laptop, which I hadn’t opened in ages, ready to dive into my writing once more.

I dusted off my old laptop and opened a blank document, ready to start typing. Since I didn’t have a plot in mind yet, I decided to test my "abilities" by warming up with a simple scenario.

What do I want to happen this time? Alright, let’s start here.

.

***Because of last night’s events, the sweet-faced girl felt too shy to face her girlfriend. Her girlfriend understood this but didn’t want her to feel awkward about it since it was something completely natural. So, her beautiful girlfriend...***

.

Hehe... Of course, I’m beautiful. If I can’t describe myself as beautiful in my own story, who else will? This is my novel, after all!

.

***So, her girlfriend decided to create a new opportunity by inviting her to talk at the coffee shop. She even drove to pick her up from home. Along the way, the two of them began a heartfelt conversation, reassuring each other that what happened wasn’t something to be embarrassed about.***

.

I paused for a moment, rereading the lines and smiling to myself. This was going to be fun. Let’s see if this one works too!

.

***The truth was, she had been awake last night, fully aware of everything, what her palm had touched, how loud the moans were, and how the darkness had hidden absolutely nothing. Everything was crystal clear.***

.

Thinking about this, I felt hot. My fingers froze over the keyboard as I lifted my hand, staring at it. Last night, I had touched her in a way I never imagined, and it had been… incredible. If only I’d been braver, I could have made her reach that peak of ecstasy.

I bit down lightly on my finger, shaking my head as if to snap myself out of it. What was I doing? Acting like a lunatic over something that had already happened. There was no use regretting it now!

.

***She wanted a second chance. She told the sweet-faced girl that she had been fully aware of everything last night and didn’t want it to end that way. She expressed her feelings, her longing, and just how much she desired her.***

***The other girl listened silently, saying nothing, but instead, she leaned in and threw herself into her arms, meeting her with a deep, passionate kiss.***

.

Everything in the car felt just right, hehe...

***But as the two were about to continue what they had left hanging, they suddenly remembered it was broad daylight. The beautiful girlfriend then came up with a mischievous idea and invited her out of the car. But instead of heading to the shop, she suggested climbing a tree.***

***Yes... it was her dream. She had always wanted to try doing it on the tree one day!***

.

"Miss Kee, why don’t you just go back to selling coffee like usual?"

Phao’s voice snapped me out of my daydream. I hadn’t even noticed when she had peeked in, but there she was, arms crossed and shaking her head at me. Startled, I quickly turned to look at my employee, hastily closing my laptop and replying in a scolding tone.

"Since when were you standing there?"

"It's been a while,"

Phao replied casually.

"I saw you looking so focused on something, so I decided to check... Turns out you were writing a story. Honestly, Miss Kee, people don’t have to be good at everything. If you’re good at making coffee, just stick to that. Writing novels isn’t for you. Everything was fine until that bit about climbing a tree to… you know. Even the best authors wouldn’t think of that." 😅

I pursed my lips, irritated by the clear sarcasm. Hmph!

"I’m just trying to create something fresh and unique! Have you ever seen a story where the main couple has a romantic moment on a tree?"

"Maybe we don’t need that much originality. No one’s going to read it anyway."

"Whatever! I’m just practicing. Go wash the glasses."

I dismissed my part-timer awkwardly, crossing my arms and puffing out my cheeks. Hmph! I’m going to be a world-famous writer someday. Whatever I write will comes true. Just wait and see.

Today, Ja will come to see me, and we’ll climb a tree together to have a romantic moment. Just because it hasn’t happened doesn’t mean it can’t! I’ve done crazier things before, remember that time I pretended to be a helicopter?

After Phao left as I had instructed, I reopened my screen and read through my draft again. I admit, it’s a bit strange, but this is proof that I’m a god, a writer ahead of time. Whatever I write will happen. So, I’ll leave it like this for now and wait to see if things turn out the way I imagined. Now, let’s check on Ja and see how she’s doing.

.

**Kee:**

How are you? Are you feeling better?

.

It took about two minutes before she finally replied after reading my message.

.

**Ja:**

My fever’s gone up.

**Kee:**

Are you really not coming to the shop today? It feels like something’s missing when you’re not here.

**Ja:**

Even if I come, I’d be too lazy to talk. You’d just feel uncomfortable.

**Kee:**

We can just chat through text.

**Ja**:

You want me to come over and then sit there texting you instead of talking?

**Kee:**

Yes. It’s better than you not coming at all. Even if we don’t talk, that’s fine.

**Kee:**

I have something I want to talk to you. I’ll do talk alone; you don’t have to say a word. If you want to talk, then talk. If not, just type.

**Ja:**

I don’t feel like going anywhere right now.

**Kee:**

Or is it that you don’t want to see me?

**Ja:**

Why wouldn’t I want to see you?

**Kee:**

Because of last night.

. .

I got straight to the point, skipping any unnecessary explanations, leaving the recipient to interpret what I meant. There was silence from the other side, as if she was lost in thought. So, I nudged her a bit more through text.

.

**Kee**:

I didn’t fall asleep last night. I knew everything. Come see me.

**Kee**:

I want to finish what we started.

. .

Now, I'm the most direct person in the world. Of course, Ja read the message but didn’t reply. Frustrated, I turned my phone face down, figuring it might take her a while to gather the courage to address the matter.

As I stared blankly outside, lost in thought, the jingling of the doorbell signaled the arrival of a customer. I got up to greet them, only to freeze in place, as did the visitor, as if we’d both just seen a ghost.

"Kee,"

The husky voice of my most recent ex, the one who abruptly canceled our wedding, called out. I could only stare at him, unsure of what to say, before mumbling a simple: "Um."

"Is this your shop?"

Tham asked, glancing at me from head to toe. Noticing my apron, he continued,

"I heard you quit your job to open a café. So, it’s this one, huh?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I’m scouting a location for a drama shoot, and it turns out it’s your shop."

. .

I wanted to believe it was a coincidence, but it seemed too unlikely. Still, judging by Tham’s expression and demeanor, I could tell he wasn’t lying. It appeared he genuinely intended to speak with the owner about using the café as a filming location.

The next day turned into a reunion of sorts for ex-lovers, sitting awkwardly by the window, exchanging dull looks. I had served him a cup of hot coffee, more out of politeness than anything else.

"What made you decide to open a café?"

"A bad mood,"

I replied sarcastically.

I let out a bitter laugh while he sat there looking guilty before attempting to change the subject out of courtesy.

"How’s business?"

"Not great. It’s probably going to fail soon. If it weren’t for the location fee for the drama shoot, I’d probably have to sell myself just to pay the electricity bill."

"Still mad at me? It’s been almost a year now."

"Wouldn’t you be? The day before our wedding, the groom calls and says he can’t go through with it because he’s met ‘the one.’ What the fuc—"

I trailed off, muttering the last word under my breath, but of course, he knew exactly what I’d said.

"I'm sorry," he said quietly.

"Forget it. It’s in the past... Besides, it’s probably for the best. If you hadn’t left, I wouldn’t have met someone new."

"You’ve got someone now, don’t you? Of course, you do... I figured it wouldn’t take long. You’re beautiful and talented, anyone would be lucky to have you."

"And what about your girl? How’s she doing now that you chose her?"

He fell silent at my question, scratching his head awkwardly as if searching for an explanation. I noticed his unease and pressed further.

"You’re not together anymore, are you?"

"No," he admitted.

"So you dumped me, and it didn’t even work out with her?"

I almost screamed but managed to hold it in.

"Who left who? You said she was ‘the one.’ How did it end up like this?"

"I don’t know either. I don’t understand it any more than you do. Let’s not talk about me."

"Oh, no, we are talking about this. Don’t I have the right to know why my groom left me for someone else? Do you know what your decision cost me? Because of you, I had to quit my job out of sheer embarrassment after handing out wedding invitations to everyone in the office. And now here I am, running a café with no customers because of You! You son of a b—."

Why was I being so rude all day today? Probably because he came here and reignited the villainous side of me, making it blaze. It was infuriating.

"..."

"Say something! I’m waiting!"

"She left me."

"Serves you right!"

I shouted at him instantly, feeling a mix of satisfaction and bitter revenge. Tham’s face looked sad, but I didn’t feel the slightest bit of pity. He had no right to be angry about my insults and sarcasm. This was exactly what he deserved. It was justice!

"I’ve already received the karma for what I did to you."

"Why did you two break up?"

"I don't know. One day, that affectionate person suddenly said she wanted to end our relationship. She became cold and heartless, then cut off all contact. To this day, I still don't know where she is."

Tham spoke before falling silent for a moment, staring out the window. Suddenly, he jumped up and ran outside so quickly that I couldn’t react in time. Startled, I chased after him, confusion etched all over my face.

"What’s wrong? We were talking just fine, and then you suddenly ran out. You scared me!"

"I saw her."

"Who?"

"That woman."

"What woman? Princess Diana? Who are you talking about?"

"The one who left me. She was just here. I saw her. Damn it! Wait here. I’ll drive after her."

"What?"

And just like he said, Tham got on his big motorbike, started the engine, and quickly drove away. I just scratched my head and went back into the café, feeling confused and a little annoyed.

"Did your ex leave already?"

"Yeah."

"Good,"

Phao said with a little laugh.

"Because I just saw your new girlfriend. I was worried they might run into each other."

I frowned.

"New girlfriend?"

"Don’t pretend. I can tell you’re dating that writer. You two are together, right?"

"You’re imagining things… Wait, did you see Ja? Where is she?"

"Yeah, I saw her park her car just now, but then she drove off again. I’m not sure why she didn’t come in. Maybe she forgot something at home. Just guessing."

Phao kept talking, and it made me look outside the café, starting to feel suspicious...

She came and left so quickly, at the exact moment Tham said he saw a familiar woman. Everything seemed to connect in an odd way.

Ja and Tham?

**No way... There’s no such thing as a coincidence like that in this world!**

# Chapter 13: Position

After closing the café, I immediately called Ja. Surprisingly, she answered, even though she had said earlier this morning that she wouldn’t talk all day. Maybe she forgot, good for me. I was too lazy to type anyway. I only called to see if she would pick up, just to try my luck.

"So, you really didn’t come today, huh?"

Even though Phao just told me she saw Ja, I pretended not to know. I wanted to see how Ja would respond.

[Actually, I went. But when I saw you chatting away with a guy, I left.]

Oh... pulling this card, are we? I didn’t see that coming, Ja! She didn’t even try to lie. Instead, she threw what she saw back at me to explain. Or… maybe there really isn’t anything going on, and I’m just overthinking things?

That’s right. The kind of coincidence where your ex turns out to be the ex of your current partner only exists in music videos or Thai dramas. I was probably just overthinking it.

"Ugh! You should’ve heard what Kee was talking to him about."

[Harsh, huh? 'Him'? Why do you call him that?]

"Because he’s the ex who dumped me one day before our wedding! And after chatting, he suddenly ran out of the café without even saying goodbye. Damn..."

I muttered, forgetting for a moment that I should maintain at least a bit of composure.

"Sorry, just annoyed when I talk about it. Anyway, why did you leave like that? Were you jealous, angry, or what?"

[Honestly, I didn’t even feel like talking when I went there. But when I saw you sitting and chatting with another guy, I figured it’d be better to just leave. Didn’t want to start a fight.]

"If you want to argue, you’d have to open your mouth and talk... What kind of person even are you?"

I laughed, thinking about how strange my current partner’s personality was.

"At first, Kee thought Tham ran out to chase after you because it happened just as you drove off. I even thought for a moment that you were Tham’s ex."

[Drama queen, aren’t you? You’re better at crafting stories than I am.]

"Let’s stop talking about the past—it’s frustrating. Let’s focus on the present."

I straightened up, cleared my throat a little, and decided to address the real issue.

"Should we talk about last night?"

[No.]

"Come on, let’s talk. You came to see me because of last night, didn’t you?"

[...]

When the other side of the line went silent, I seized the opportunity to corner her. I could sense a bit of hesitation, and I figured there might be room for compromise if I pushed just a little.

"I felt good about last night. I want you to know that."

[...]

**"I wants to touch you."**

As I spoke, I felt my face flush with heat, so much so that I had to lift my free hand to my face, hoping to cool myself down. The silence between us grew heavy, and I wasn’t sure what else to say until the other side of the call finally responded.

[If you knew last night, why did you pretend to be asleep?]

"Because I was scared that if I showed I was awake, you might stop... Maybe because you were embarrassed, or maybe even angry if Kee had made a move or responded."

[That’s true... Because now, I do feel embarrassed. Honestly, I didn’t even want to talk about it, but you kept pushing.]

"The fact that you’re willing to talk about it now means a part of you wants to."

[...]

"You want to continue this."

I could sense her embarrassment through the silence, almost as if she was too shy to discuss something like this. It seemed like she was inexperienced in matters like this, and that realization made me feel the need to guide her. The quiet lingered, so I gently pressed her further.

"Can I come to see you?"

[No... you just said my mom knows about us now.]

"Then can you come to see me?"

The silence made my heart beat fast. It seemed like she was thinking. She didn’t answer right away, but I could tell she wasn’t sure.

[I can come, but only for a short time. My mom won’t let me stay overnight.]

I smiled so big, feeling very happy. I even jumped up and down, but she couldn’t see me.

“Just come. That’s enough for me. I will wait for you!”

After the call ended, I quickly ran upstairs to my room. I cleaned up the space, made my bed look nice, and put everything in order. Then I changed the bright white light to a soft orange one to make the room feel cozy and warm.

Everything was ready. Now, I just had to wait… Should I take a shower?

No, It might look like I’m over-preparing for this, even though it’s true. It’s not just her who’s excited about this moment and the touch we’ll share. I feel the same way. I’ve never had a girlfriend before. Everything feels so new and thrilling. At least, I know what our bodies need and what we both like.

*And I’ll make her feel good.*

About fifteen minutes later, Ja arrived. She sent me a message, saying she was waiting downstairs. I quickly went to meet her and invited her to come up to my room. She seemed a little nervous, acting tense, which made me reach out to squeeze her shoulder to help her relax. I laughed softly.

“What’s wrong? You’ve been here before.”

“Well... I don’t know. I feel like a rebellious kid sneaking away to their lover’s house,”

Ja said while placing her bag on the bed. Then she sat down shyly.

Seeing her like that, I decided to ask her some random questions to help her loosen up.

"Did your mom ask where you were going?"

"She did. I told her the truth, that I was coming to see you."

"And she didn’t say anything?"

"She didn’t, but she reminded me to come back home. You know, she’s aware of what we are now."

"Even though it’s a relationship with another woman, adults still see it as inappropriate, huh?"

I smiled encouragingly and sat next to her.

"So, I guess I can’t visit your house anymore."

"You can. I’ll handle it."

"What will you do?"

"I’m still figuring it out."

The sweet-faced girl seemed more at ease now that we had something to talk about. We shared a small smile, but as our eyes met, that awkwardness crept back in. I knew I couldn’t let this moment stretch out any longer.

“Can I kiss you?”

“That’s direct,”

She said with a shy smile, tucking her hair behind her ear.

“I guess it has to start with a kiss, right? When it comes to... stuff like this.”

“Something like that.”

I leaned in awkwardly, feeling a bit clumsy trying to do something so intimate. We tilted our heads in the same direction, failing to meet halfway. Then we both switched sides at the same time, bumping our foreheads like we were playing some game to see who could headbutt harder.

“Okay, how about this, you tilt that way, and I’ll tilt this way,”

I said, using both hands to guide Ja’s face in the opposite direction. Finally, our faces aligned, and our lips met for a kiss.

We’d done this before, so it wasn’t entirely new, but it still felt fresh. Our breathing synced, and our tongues moved together naturally.

Everything was going perfectly... maybe a little too perfectly. I didn’t know what to do next. We’d been kissing for over five minutes, but it wasn’t progressing anywhere. Ja pulled back slightly, her eyes unfocused, and leaned her forehead against mine. Then she asked curiously,

"And then what?"

"W-well..."

Oh no. Usually, when I was with my exes, they'd undress me before I even realized it. But here, in this moment, I didn’t know what to do. I’d half expected Ja to unbutton my shirt for me, but then I remembered, she’s never been through anything like this before. Looks like I’d have to guide her.

"I’ll unbutton your shirt," I said softly.

"And what about yours?"

She asked, her voice laced with curiosity.

"I’ll do mine later,"

I replied, trying to keep my composure.

"That’s not fair. I want to see yours too,"

She insisted, pouting slightly.

"Alright then, let’s do it for each other,"

I suggested, smiling at her shyness.

"Wait, there's a step to agree on this too?"

I thought, baffled. But fine, I’d treat this as a new lesson. Honestly, I felt like a newbie in this territory as much as she did. So, we had to take it slow, learning together. While she was unbuttoning mine, I was doing the same for her. If we had just undressed ourselves, this whole thing would’ve been over by now.

But this is a romantic moment, it had to be like this!

Now, our upper bodies were exposed, revealing our bras to each other. Hers was modest and white, simple with no embellishments. Mine was black lace, an absolute contrast. I looked at her chest, about to reach out to touch, but my hand was swatted away.

"Don’t we need to decide first?"

She asked.

"Decide what?" I replied, confused.

"Who’s the top?" she clarified.

"Huh?"

"Like in BL stories,"

She explained,

"There’s always male leads and female leads. So, which one of us takes which role?"

I was shocked and confused, like a fish out of water making strange noises, "Blub... blub..." Since I started dating, I had never faced such a strange question. How should I answer her? I had never thought about positions before.

"Do we really need to think about that?"

I asked carefully.

"Yes, I will be on top. So, you will be on the bottom,"

She said confidently.

"And... what’s the difference?" I asked, still not understanding.

"It means I will do it to you,"

She explained.

"And... do you know how to do it?"

I replied with doubt.

"I’ve read a lot of novels. It should be like that,"

She answered, sounding sure. "But I also want to do it to you,"

I said honestly.

"If you do it to me, then you are on top,"

"Maybe we don’t need to decide who is on top or bottom,"

I said, trying to make it easier for both of us.

"It has to have a position!"

She insisted firmly.

"What are you even talking about? Positions don’t matter!"

I snapped, feeling irritated as the mood was heating up. I pushed Ja gently down onto the bed, but she wriggled and turned me over instead.

"It does matter! You’re the one who doesn’t know anything,"

She shot back.

"How can someone who’s never had sex before talk like that? You’re the one who doesn’t know anything,"

I retorted angrily.

"Fine! Then we won’t do it!"

She declared.

The sweet-faced girl stood up abruptly, buttoning her shirt back up all the way and tying her hair into a neat bun, clearly frustrated. As I propped myself up, my own irritation matched hers. What on earth was this? Why do we even have to argue about who’s on top or bottom? In the end, everyone gets where they’re supposed to go! What’s wrong with her?

"You’re too obsessed with novels. Real life doesn’t work like that!"

I snapped.

"..."

"Why did you suddenly go quiet?"

I asked, frowning.

"I'm tired of talking. Starting now, I won't say another word. Goodbye,"

She replied coldly.

"Hey!"

The sweet-faced girl grabbed her bag and walked away without another glance. My frustration boiled over, I couldn't just let it end like this. I hurried after her and grabbed her arm to stop her.

"Ja, we need to talk this through. You can't just stop talking and end the conversation when we haven’t settled anything!"

I demanded.

“...”

"Say something now!"

Ja stayed silent, her lips pressed tightly together, but her eyes were fierce, challenging me. It made me grit my teeth in frustration. Normally, all I felt for her was affection, but today she was pushing all the wrong buttons.

Her usual charm was turning into sheer annoyance. I wanted to grab her by the shoulders and shake her until she fell apart, head, arms, and legs flying off in all directions!

"If you won't talk,"

I said, my voice shaking.

"..."

"We're done!"

"Fine!"

She only said that one word before storming out of the shop. She got in her car and drove away, not even sparing me a backward glance. Frustration boiled over as I stood alone in the shop, kicking at the floor and screaming to myself, knowing full well no one could hear me.

"Just like that? Done? Are you even serious about loving me?"

. .

**Can a matter of positions really cause a fight?**

I've never encountered something like this before. I wanted to share this story with my friends, but I was afraid they might think badly of Ja. Honestly, I don’t like sharing the bad sides of my current relationship with my friends because I know myself, after a fight, I always go back to my friends for comfort. And then, I end up feeling like a burden to them.

Even my friends would probably think I’m pathetic if I told them. That’s why I decided to keep this issue to myself. As for what happens next after yesterday’s fight? I have no idea. All I know is that I blurted something out in the heat of the moment:

*"If you don't talk, we're done."*

*"Fine!"*

Are we really done?

But she did respond, right? Can I assume that we're not actually over? Or does her "Fine!" mean she's agreeing to break up? Ugh, this is giving me an even bigger headache than yesterday's position talk! If I didn’t have filming at the café today, I would’ve gone to Ja’s place already.

And I still haven't sorted out the matter with Teacher Wilai. Why does my love life have so many obstacles?

And about the scene on the tree... nothing happened the way I wrote it. Not only did we not get intimate on the tree, but we also almost fought to death because we couldn’t agree on who would lead or follow. This is insane!

.

.

Right now, I'm at the market, planning to buy some food for the crew filming at my café as a nice gesture. While waiting at the crosswalk for the light to change, I noticed from the corner of my eye an elderly woman wobbling uncertainly as she stepped onto the road.

The road was filled with fast-moving cars. Being a good person, I quickly dropped everything in my hands and ran to grab the old lady without worrying about my belongings. It felt like a scene straight out of a movie, where the hero saves the heroine by spinning her under her arm in slow motion, just as a large bus narrowly misses them.

"Almost there."

"Young lady, you’re so cool!"

The crowd waiting at the crosswalk witnessed everything and began clapping for me, like I was some kind of hero saving the world. Feeling a little shy, I smiled awkwardly at everyone before letting go of the elderly lady I had been holding.

"Are you hurt anywhere... ma’am?"

As I stepped back, I realized something shocking. The lady I had just saved was none other than the one I had just been thinking about, Teacher Wilai, with her hands full of groceries, staring at me in astonishment.

"Kee... you just helped me."

"Huh?"

"Thank you so much!"

I was hugged tightly by the elderly woman, overwhelmed with gratitude. I was still stunned by the sheer coincidence of the situation. As I’ve always said, I don’t really believe in coincidences. Sure, they happen, but not so often that they seem intentional like this.

"It’s nothing, Teacher," I replied.

"From now on, call me Mom."

"Huh?"

"Well, you’re my daughter’s girlfriend, aren’t you?"

The suspension bridge phenomenon… I’ve officially become Teacher Wilai’s little daughter-in-law!

# Chapter 14: Wanna Try

The suspension bridge phenomenon happens when we're very exciting or thrilling situation that gets our hearts racing. Our brains might mistakenly interpret this as falling in love with the person who helped us. It’s like being on a shaky rope bridge and focusing on the person standing at the other end. That’s when we believe we feel a racing heartbeat for them.

The incident where I helped Teacher Wilai wasn’t much different. But since it turned out to be a positive thing, I didn’t feel the need to refuse it. I considered it pure luck that I suddenly became a "good person" in her eyes. Normally, I wouldn’t even pay attention to someone being mugged or bothered to read tragic news that might tug at my emotions.

"What brings you here, Teacher?"

"I came to the market," she replied.

"But your house is too far from this market, isn’t it?"

"I just felt like changing markets. The one near my house is boring."

Does she think a fresh market is like Paragon Mall, moving from there to something like EmQuartier?

"I see. How did you get here, Teacher?"

"What?"

"Sorry!"

I didn’t even know why I apologized, but her tone sounded scolding, which made me jump a little out of habit. As a kid, I was quite scared by the slap on my back from her hand.

"If you're really sorry, call me 'Mom.' Stop calling me 'Teacher'.'"

"Oh… it’s just that I’m not used to it. Back in school, I always called you 'Teacher,' and now suddenly calling you 'Mom' feels a bit awkward."

"You think I don’t feel awkward too? But here I am, playing along!"

Teacher Wilai laughed at herself for saying that and then cleared her throat.

"From now on, just call me 'Mom.' Oh, and about how I got here, I took a tuk-tuk. I’ve been out for quite a while, so I should head back now."

"Let me take you to your ride, Mom."

"When will you come over to the house?"

"Huh?"

I was caught off guard by the question and looked a little confused before shaking my head because, honestly, I didn’t know. After clashing with my girlfriend’s mom, not to mention the big fight with my girlfriend just yesterday, I had no idea.

"I’m not sure yet."

"Then come over today. I’ll make dinner."

"Oh... that’s quick. But—"

"No buts. I want to thank you for saving my life. *Sigh*... just thinking about how I almost got hit by a car earlier gives me chills. If I—oops, I mean, if Mom got hurt, Ja would be all alone. That’d be so sad."

"Okay."

"But Ja has you now, doesn’t she? I guess I don’t need to worry anymore.

Even though you’re a woman, you saved my life. You’re truly dependable." The elder gently placed her hand on my shoulder with affection before waving down a taxi to head home. I just stood there, shrugging in confusion.

Is it really this simple...?

. .

As you know, today is the day I have an appointment with the drama crew using my café as a location. So, the shop is closed for the day, but I still have to be around to assist the team, providing drinks or letting them use the kitchen or restroom. Today’s scene is about the main characters meeting by chance at the café.

During the shoot, I found myself rolling my eyes multiple times and turning away, realizing how rude I must seem. I’ve never been a fan of stories or scripts involving such coincidental encounters in restaurants or coffee shops like this.

"You’re still the same."

Tham, who must have noticed my behavior for a while, leaned in to whisper with a sly smile.

"What?"

"You still don’t believe in fate."

"It’s just weird. Sure, coincidences exist, but not running into each other in a restaurant in every single scene of every single drama,”

I said, pulling a face of disbelief. Then, I stepped back a little as something occurred to me.

“Don’t stand so close. I hate it.”

“If we can’t be lovers, at least we can be friends, right?”

“Who wants to be friends with someone like you? Get lost. You're disgusting.”

“Fine, I’ll go.”

“Wait.”

“Huh?”

Tham chuckled, clearly amused by how quickly I changed my mind.

Suddenly, I thought of something and decided to tease him with a question.

“So, did you find her yesterday? That woman you were chasing?”

His smile faded instantly. Tham’s face turned somber as he nodded slightly and let out a sigh.

"I did."

"Did you get to talk?"

"Yes."

"So, what did you talk about?"

"It’s not like it matters now."

The slightly sarcastic tone of my ex made me bare my teeth at him in annoyance.

"As I said, I have the right to know."

My reasoning left Tham unable to argue. He probably felt guilty enough, so he agreed to share the story, even though he played hard to get at first.

"She noticed I was following her, so she pulled over. That’s when we talked… She felt like a completely different person, someone I didn’t even recognize. Just a familiar face, but nothing else was the same."

"In the same sentence, you used the word 'similar' over and over again. It's annoying. So, was it the same person or a long-lost twin?"

"You're more dramatic than those coffee shop love scenes,"

Tham said, shaking his head at my sarcastic remarks.

"It was the same person, same face, height, voice, but... her style, her personality, everything about her had completely changed. It felt like talking to a stranger. I was so tense the whole time."

"Was it really that bad?"

"Yeah. With you, even though we haven’t seen each other in a long time, there’s still something familiar. Even when you're angry, it's still you. But her? She’s not the same anymore. It’s like she abandoned everything that made her who she was. And she admitted she’s not the person she used to be."

"Hmm… maybe you hurt her so badly that she had to change."

"She’s the one who left me."

"Then what could change someone so much? Unless she was pretending from the beginning."

I glanced at my ex with satisfaction.

"How much did she scam you for?"

"She didn’t take a single thing from me, not even a cent. When we ate, we split the bill. While we were together, there was no imbalance, no one taking advantage. She was such a sweet, adorable, and affectionate girl, borderline annoying, even. But yesterday, she became nothing more than a stranger. Cold, distant, without any of that playfulness or affection. She just said we shouldn’t see each other again and left. If her disappearing meant she didn’t want to contact me anymore, I guess I should’ve understood that."

"You must have made yourself look ridiculous in her eyes, huh? I’d love to see her face, the person who avenged me so perfectly. Wait… should I hate her? But why does this feel so satisfying?"

"You couldn’t hate her. She’s too sweet."

"Sure,"

I said sarcastically, only to quickly cover my mouth when my voice came out louder than expected, disturbing the filming.

"Not talking to you anymore, too tired."

"Hmph."

As I was about to walk away, I paused mid-step at the sound of his quiet chuckle. It made me turn around and glare at him sharply.

"What's with that laugh?"

"She talks just like you."

"Like me? What did she say?"

**"She said it’s annoying. We're all grown-ups now… I'm too lazy to open my mouth and talk."**

"Wait a minute."

I walked straight back to Tham, leaning in so close that he instinctively stepped back, startled.

"What? Did I do something wrong again?"

"What’s your ex’s name?"

"Why are you asking that all of a sudden? Is it really a good idea for me to tell you the name of my ex? You’ll just get mad again."

"Mad? Is there anything worse than calling off a wedding a day before it happens? Just answer me, what’s her name?"

"Aon."

"Not Ja?"

"Which Ja?"

Seeing Tham's puzzled expression at the name I just blurted out, I felt slightly relieved before immediately shaking my head.

"Ja Kanhu, can't figure out why. Using cotton swabs doesn't help."

"..."

"I'm out of stock,"

I joked cheekily and quickly changed the subject.

"If she doesn't love you anymore, let her go. Look at me; I never once tried to hold you back."

"Maybe you never loved me."

"If I didn't love you, why would I agree to marry you?"

"So your friends wouldn't say you're left on the shelf."

I didn’t say anything, just shrugged and went back to my bedroom, leaving the crew to continue filming downstairs. Maybe Tham was right. Maybe I didn’t love him or like him that much.

I just agreed to marry him to avoid people gossiping about me being single. But when the wedding didn’t happen, I wasn’t hurt. A little embarrassed, sure, but life went on.

Until I met her... the girl who is too lazy to even talk!

. .

The filming went on until almost 8 PM. They couldn’t finish, so they asked to continue tomorrow, which meant more money for me. Great! They could film every day for all I care, better than running this coffee shop that’s barely making profit.

Even though it was late, I still went to Teacher Wilai’s house as promised. When I arrived, I saw the table set with untouched food. I quickly raised my hands in apology. The manners in this house very good. When a guest was late, they didn’t start without them.

"Come eat! Don't talk so rudely about food!"

"I really have to apologize, Teacher Wilai,"

I said politely.

"Eh!"

"I'm sorry, Mom,"

I said, feeling shy and embarrassed, especially since I was speaking in front of Ja, who just sat there quietly and let Teacher Wilai do all the talking.

"Get used to saying it properly,"

"Yes, Mom," I answered quickly.

"Come, let's eat. We've been waiting since six o'clock. If you hadn’t shown up, I was going to make Ja drive to your shop and drag you here. I made so much food, if you didn’t come, I wouldn’t be able to stand it."

Even though Teacher Wilai sounded kind, her voice still carried the same intimidating authority she had as a teacher. It made me shrink back in fear. If I really hadn’t shown up today, I probably would’ve been turned into stone by her glare.

Throughout dinner, I observed Ja's behavior. She stayed quiet the entire time, showing no sign of discomfort or displeasure about seeing me, as if we hadn’t just argued the other day. Maybe it was because her mom was there, and she was trying to act normal.

It wasn’t until we finished eating, washed the dishes, and I asked to leave that the tension slightly broke…

"You."

This time, she called out to me first as we stood by the door. I turned my back to her and smiled a little before facing her with a neutral expression.

"What?"

"You're not going to talk to Ja?"

"I don't even know what to say. Didn't we end it yesterday?"

I wasn’t sure myself. We had a big fight yesterday, and now we were sitting down for dinner like nothing happened. This was one of the strangest situations I’d ever been in.

***Silence!***

"Hmm?"

Ja leaned her head against my chest like she was trying to nudge me. I stepped back, confused, not understanding what she was doing.

***Bump!***

The sweet-faced girl, who hadn’t said much earlier, did it again. This time, I stood still, letting her rub her head against me like a cat. Finally, I used both hands to gently hold her face so she would look me in the eyes.

"What are you doing?"

"We’re not breaking up."

"..."

"Yesterday, when I said it, it meant we’re not breaking up."

"But you said 'Fine.'"

"You said, 'If you don't talk, we're over.' So I said, 'Fine.'"

"Doesn't 'Fine' mean we're done?"

"Means 'I'm talking.'"

When the little one tried to nudge me with her head again, I quickly held her cheeks with both hands, squeezing gently until her face puffed up like a blowfish.

Her pouty lips made her look more adorable than anything I could be mad at, but I held back my smile, trying to process this complicated relationship.

"You're so hard to understand. Kee doesn't know what to do with you."

"Ja can be the 'receiver.'"

"Receiver of what?"

"You'll be the 'giver,' of course."

"Wait, are we back to this topic again?"

I laughed while still holding her soft cheeks. But the one being squished had tears welling up in her eyes, looking like she was about to cry.

"What's wrong?" I asked, concerned.

"Ja is scared you don't love me anymore."

"It's not that I don't love you... I just don't know what to do."

"You didn't greet me at all today."

"We were arguing, and you didn't message me either."

"I was waiting for you to apologize, but you didn't."

"It's not like I didn't want to... Ah!"

I sighed, at a loss for what to do, so I pulled her into a tight hug. If I could, I’d melt into her completely.

"Today has been so hectic. It's not like I wasn't feeling bad. I even thought you wanted to break up with me."

"And if Ja doesn't apologize, would you just stay upset with me?"

"I don’t know..."

"..."

"I’ve never stopped anyone who wanted to leave,"

I said honestly, because I know you can't make someone stay if their heart isn’t with you. If they don’t love you, no matter what you do, they won’t change their mind.

The idea that being persistent can make someone love you is just a myth, it only leads to frustration. I say this as someone who has been chased by many and turned down just as many.

"You're so mean! Ugh,"

Ja said with a pout, tears falling down her cheeks. She cried like a strange little kid. Seeing her upset like that, I quickly looked at the house, worried that Teacher Wilai might hear and think I had done something bad to her daughter. I pulled Ja into another hug right away.

"Hey...Don’t cry. But... you’re not like everyone else to me."

"What do you mean?"

"If something like that ever happened, you’d be the only one I’d try to hold on to,"

I said, gently patting her back while letting out a deep sigh.

"Out of all the people I’ve been with, you’re the one I never want to lose."

"But you said you’ve never tried to hold anyone back before."

"You’ll be the first," I said softly.

"So... does this mean we’ve made up now?"

I laughed when I heard her sniffing, trying to stop her tears.

"We made up the moment you started nudging me with your head."

"Then..."

"Hmm?"

"Stay for the night."

We hugged quietly, the silence letting us hear each other breathe. Just as I was about to reply, Ja spoke up again.

**"I want to try."**

# Chapter 15: Chicken Rice

For the first time, I thought I might actually be a terrible person. My mind sank to the lowest depths, filled with dirty, perverted thoughts. The phrase "I want to try" seemed to mean two completely different things for the two of us.

I had gone so far in my imagination, wondering how she'd sound, what moves I'd need to pull off, and how everything would play out until morning. But Ja's "I want to try" turned out to be...

"Mom really didn't say anything. Even though she knows what we are now... Isn't that amazing, Kee?"

"Yeah."

Her "**I want to try**" was inviting me to sleep over just to see how her mom would react. Now, all I could do was smile awkwardly, resisting the urge to grab my girlfriend by the hair, shake her head, and shout, "How can you be this innocent?" But I knew she'd probably fire back with, "How filthy can you be?"

Oh, my gosh! I'm going crazy. Why do you have to do this to me?!

"Are you okay? You seem very quiet since we came to the room,"

Ja said while giving me a set of pajamas and tilting her head.

"Did I do something wrong?"

"No, I was just nervous, thinking if your mom would stop us. But she didn't."

"Yeah, that's true. So, our relationship is fine now. Next, we just need to deal with your mom. What should we do?"

"Maybe Ja has to help with my mom. But if things go wrong, it might feel like swimming after a car crash into the canal."

"Why would your mom fall into a canal? And if she falls, she might not survive because the water is dirty, not because it is deep."

"That's true."

"But falling into a pool wouldn't be too bad." "We are talking like we can decide these things,"

I said, laughing at how silly this talk had become. "You should shower. Or do you want me to go first?"

"You can shower first," Ja said.

"I'll stay here and play with the little ones. Chanel, Dior, come and greet our guest!"

Ja called out to the dogs in a sweet voice. The mischievous pups ran in as invited, while Chloe, who wasn't with them, was likely kept with Teacher Wilai.

"Here, they'll keep you company so you won't get bored."

"Okay."

Ja glanced at me for a moment, leaving behind a strange little smile before disappearing from the room. As soon as she left, I sat down, shoulders slouched, wanting to scream into a pillow.

Why didn't I keep sulking for a bit longer? I could've used my moodiness to guilt her into giving in to me. Wait, why am I acting like some teenage boy trying to get a girl to say yes?

*Don't you love me? If you love me, give yourself to me...*

Am I seriously turning into this type of person now? Feeling aimless, I picked up one of the dogs and placed it on my lap. I couldn't remember which one this was, the one with the weak back legs, but its eyes were wide and clear, while the other dog scratched at my legs as if saying,

"Hold me too! Hold me!"

"I love you both, you're so different from each other. Which one of you is clingier? Hmm... maybe it's me."

The dog scratching my leg, noticing I wasn't picking it up, started rubbing its body against me before rolling over and exposing its belly, begging for a scratch. Meanwhile, the disabled one, clearly losing the attention battle, pretended to whimper pitifully like it was in unbearable pain, when in reality, it was just lounging on my lap.

"Someone with a cat-like personality keeping dogs... how odd,"

I muttered absentmindedly, watching Chanel rub itself against my leg. It reminded me of Ja, who had been all cuddly and apologetic today, not unlike these dogs.

"You're both adorable, you and your mom. Being so sweet, who wouldn't love you? But if you know someone loves you, don't pretend like you don't understand what they want. So annoying!"

I placed Dior next to Chanel and wandered over to the writing desk out of habit. Last time, while waiting for Ja, I sat at the typewriter and drafted a little story. Let's do it again. Maybe if I write something new, luck might strike again, and something will actually happen.

Perhaps my powers only appear at random moments. With that thought, I grabbed a blank sheet of paper nearby, loaded it into the typewriter, and began typing like someone pouring out pent-up emotions.

.

*"****You little troublemaker!"***

***.***

Yes, this is the title of the novel. Feels like it's straight out of a Jamsai Love Series, written by Stampberry. But I'm better, because I'm ahead of my time! I'll make the love scenes in this story so unique, the world will be stunned!

No, no. Not "stunned." The last time that happened, the music started playing. Let's just write normally

. .

***Her girlfriend decided to stay over and she said, "I want to try." The meaning of those words seemed very different for the two of them. This difference left her girlfriend feeling restless, so she started writing a story while waiting for her to finish showering.***

***This time, her girlfriend had made up her mind: she wouldn't let the night slip away like before. Tonight, she had to experience the sweetness of physical love, to know what it felt like. That was the thought lingering in her mind as she lay on the bed.***

***Tonight wasn't as hot as that other night. The air conditioner, set at 25 degrees, created a chill that felt like the Himalayan mountains. The cold air brushing against their skin made them shiver. Especially the room's owner, who started inching closer to her girlfriend, sparking the same strange feeling from before, a warmth that ignited just like last time.***

***Her heart is pounding.***

***She became restless.***

***Not knowing how to break free from these overwhelming emotions, she could only turn her back toward her girlfriend. But that only made things worse.***

***The scent of her girlfriend was driving her crazy.***

***Once again, the thought of sleeping crossed her mind!***

***But this time wasn't like before. As her hand slipped under her girlfriend's shirt, it was caught. Her wrist was firmly held, her arm locked in place, leaving her unable to move. They locked eyes, and the electric tension between them ignited everything instantly, without the need for words.***

***Piece by piece, her clothes were gently removed before she even realized it. The chilly air faded, replaced by the warmth of their bodies holding each other under the blanket. Her girlfriend, who had experienced moments like this before, knew exactly what she want.***

***Her girlfriend slowly kissed her way down her body, reaching the most sensitive spot. It was a feeling just like before, the one that had her climbing higher and higher.***

***She felt herself soaring, higher and higher.***

***Her mind went blank. She could only grip the bedsheet tightly, curious to see how far this would go.***

***But suddenly, her girlfriend stopped. She lifted her head, halting everything. That was because, out of nowhere, a thought crossed her mind:***

***Why? Why is this happening...?***

. .

Sometimes, I really think I shouldn't be a writer. Just when the story was flowing, I couldn't help but throw in a twist. I looked at the paper I had just written and let out a dry laugh before pulling it out, crumpling it into a ball, and tossing it into the trash can nearby, which was already filled with other abandoned ideas.

The crumpled papers lay in the trash, joining the others that had been discarded before. Why did I end it like that? Because if it ever happens for real, I wouldn't let her finish! This was my revenge for making me feel like a fool. Nothing is more frustrating than being on the verge of a climax only to have it cut short because the other person finishes first, or worse, gets lazy. But that's not me. I'm neither of those. I just want her to feel the same frustration and scream out like I'm doing now.

This is revenge. *Grrr!!*

"What are you doing?"

I had no idea when Ja came back, but she caught me mid-silent scream with my hands gripping my hair and my face contorted into a weird grimace. The moment she stepped in, I quickly straightened up, trying to act normal, and forced a smile.

"Just doing some facial yoga. They say it slows down aging."

"Really? I've never heard that before. Thought I heard typing just now."

"Oh, I was just typing for fun."

"Typing without paper again? The ink will smudge."

"Possessive "

"Go take a shower. We'll fuck, later."

"What did you say?"

"I said, let's just sleep together later."

I glanced at her, noticing her playful smirk. It finally clicked, she was just teasing me, pretending to be innocent. Her meaning and mine might be similar, but she's acting all clueless. She's probably thinking of treating me like her other exes.

.

"So, what if Ja doesn't agree? Are you going to force me?"

Someone like me? I don't force anyone. I'll make her beg for it herself.

"Bleh!"

"Why did you stick your tongue out at Ja?"

"Because I was annoyed."

"You're so silly."

Ja gave me a gentle push and laughed. I stomped off to the bathroom to cool my scattered thoughts. I decided to wash my hair too, hoping it would clear my mind. I have to admit, taking a shower really helped. It felt like all my frustration and bad mood were being washed away.

But not entirely, because when I returned to the room and saw Ja had only turned on the bedside lamp.

The mood was perfect. We should be doing something right now!

"Are you already going to sleep? I need to dry my hair."

"Just use the fan."

"Don't you have a hair dryer?"

"It's loud. Mom will wake up."

"Okay."

I walked to the fan and used a towel to wipe my slightly wet hair. Honestly, I think the room is cold tonight, or maybe it's because I'm sitting in front of the fan, I don't know. Compared to the night before, it's very different, like hell and the Himalayas. It's like dying and being reborn as a monk in Tibet.

We didn't talk much. Even though at times like this, we should be talking a bit. I didn't want to speak because I was annoyed, but I didn't know if the other person was just lazy to talk or if she had already fallen asleep. But whatever it was. If I talked too much, it would become a problem again.

What should I think about....That little troublemaker. The novel I'm writing, that's it!

Why am I such a nice nonsense person...

When I felt my hair was dry enough, I turned off the fan and went back to bury myself under the blanket. At first, I was going to turn and pretend to hug, but I remembered that the small person once said she didn't like being touched while sleeping, so I changed to lying on my side, turning my back instead.

She even acts distant while sleeping. A little touch, and she pretends to wake up. Maybe in the next life, I'll get her. I don't expect anything from her anymore.

While lying there thinking aimlessly, since Ja is sleeping, many thoughts flow into my head, both meaningful and meaningless. I also felt Ja move and slightly press against me, with our bodies touching a little.

I wanted to turn and say something, but I thought it's better to let her sleep. The air conditioner in the room is really cold tonight, so it's not strange that she seeks warmth from me, the person next to her.

"Are you asleep?"

The soft voice behind me made me raise my eyebrow slightly. Even though I heard it, I pretended not to answer because I wanted to act distant. She probably hasn't slept at all, huh? And now she's pretending to be quiet, thinking someone like me would be easy to handle? If I asked, you have to answer? No... today I'm being difficult. I'll play hard to get.

"Give me a hug please."

No!.

Even though I heard it, I pretended not to answer because I wanted to act distant. She must not have been sleeping at all, huh? And now she's pretending to be quiet, thinking someone like me is easy? Just because she asks, I have to answer? No... today, I'm being difficult. I'm going to act distant.

Then that small hand gently touched my chest, like trying to wake me up. When she saw I didn't move, she lifted her head and sniffed my neck, like someone trying to kiss me while I was asleep. I smiled a little because I felt sorry for her, wanting to do something but not knowing how, just waiting. Until that small hand was about to go lower, then I made a loud sound and grabbed her hand.

"What are you doing?"

"You're not really asleep."

As soon as she finished talking, I flipped her over to be under me, held her hand, and sat on top of her so she couldn't move.

"Why haven't you gone to sleep yet?"

"It's cold."

"So you're bothering me because it's cold?"

"Didn't you mean to do this?"

The sweet-faced person tilted her head and smiled knowingly, as if she knew exactly what I was thinking. I bit my lip in frustration before leaning down toward her.

"So, all this time, you've been pretending to be innocent and clueless, haven't you?"

"It's fun to see you get frustrated."

"You keep doing this."

"Kee, you are so interesting..."

Before Ja could finish speaking, I pressed my lips together as hard as I could. I was very angry and wanted something from her. The sweet-faced girl saw that I was fighting hard, so she fought back just as hard. She flipped me down to lie on the ground and used her hands to squeeze my chest like someone who had wanted to hold me tightly for a long time.

Okay, why do we have to be polite? We've come to this far!

I leaned forward, stood up, and took Ja's shirt off over her head. The small person was a little surprised and lifted her hands to cover her chest, but I pulled her hands away and softly bit her nipple tips. She was shaking a little but allowed herself to open up, using both hands to throw her hair and hold her head, not knowing what to do.

The more intense everything became, the more our passion grew. The air conditioner, which was cold at first, made us sweat. Our clothes were slowly taken off until only our pajamas were left. This time, I pressed Ja to lie down again, then sat next to the bed, pulling my legs close. I took off her pajamas, and that made the sweet-faced person quickly lift her hands to cover her most sensitive parts, unable to stand it.

"No."

"Yes."

"It's not clean."

"Trust me, it's good."

It is a response in many meanings. Before I pushed Ja's hand away, I leaned down and touched her softness with my mouth immediately. The sweetfaced person jerked up and let out a startled 'Eek' before quickly covering her mouth with her hand. Even though she tried to push my head away, she seemed too weak to resist. I know exactly how she feels right now. After you're done, I will teach you how to do the it for me too.

She is the first woman I have been touch so closely..

Because I know very well where the sensitive points are in a woman's body like ours and what we like the most, I imagine what I would want her to do if it were me.

The sweet-faced person started moaning, from previously pushing me away to now pressing her body against mine as if to embrace me entirely. Her taste makes me feel like no matter how much I eat, I am not full. So how can I leave her like this?

Hmm... it's a good tastes. It is so sweet and smooth. It's hard to explain in words.... No matter I do, It's not enough.

.

I started to have a dazed feeling. My mind kept thinking about other things, even though the story in front of me was something I had been waiting for all along. I remember when I was a teenager, after the news there was a program recommending songs from RS Promotion.

Ah... P'James Ruangsak

His famous song is "Mai Aat Plian Jai", but what I was interested in wasn't that song. It had been stuck in my head for a long time. Why is it that... why is his popular fast song "Khao Man Kai"? And what meaning does the song have? Why do we have to be Khao Man Kai? Can't we be Mama noodles or Pad Krapow?

I moved out from between Ja's legs and started to get serious about the story in my head. Ja raised her head and spoke to me in a breathy voice.

"What... why did you stop?"

"Kee has something to ask about."

"What are you wondering about now? Ja is about to..."

**"Why is James' song called Khao Man Kai?"** 😅

"......"

"Ouch!"

My body was thrown back until I hit my head on the writing table with a typewriter on it. Ja lifted her legs and kicked me hard, pulled the blanket over my body and glared at me angrily.

"Get lost!"

.

***But her girlfriend, instead of continuing, stopped everything she was doing. That was because... she suddenly became curious.***

***Why....why is that James's song is called Kao Man Kai (Chicken Rice).***

# Chapter 16: Pleading

We both slept with our backs turned to each other until morning...

I knew I was in the wrong and tried to apologize, snuggling up to her, but it only seemed to make the small one even angrier. In the end, she grabbed a pillow and blanket, moved to the floor, and left me alone on the bed. I didn’t follow her down because I knew she’d eventually grab her things and come back to the bed. We went around like this all night, so I thought it’d be better to just stay quiet and do nothing.

Damn it! I had dreamed of a perfect moment like this, and I ruined it all because of Khao Man Gai(chicken rice)! In the evening I already ate dinner, so why did my mind wander to something so random at a time like that? How can someone lose focus at such a crucial moment? If it were me, I’d kick my partner into the wall and never want to see them again.

But I hope it doesn’t come to that. I still want another chance... to taste her

again…

After finishing my shower and getting dressed, I walked over to say goodbye to Ja, who was lying on the floor with her back turned to me. No matter how much I nudged her, she didn’t respond, pretending to be asleep. I pouted slightly, feeling powerless, and got up to grab my things, preparing to leave. My eyes caught sight of the trash can where I had crumpled and thrown away my story plot notes. I paused to think.

*By the way... what happened exactly the same as I wrote last night.*

I glanced at the person pretending to sleep for a moment, then reached out, took the pile of papers from the trash can, put them in my bag, and left the house. Before leaving, I said a brief goodbye to teacher Wilai and then called a taxi back to the café in the morning. Some of the crew from yesterday were already waiting, and among them was Tham.

“Today should be the last day. Sorry for wasting your time yesterday when the light ran out.”

“You can keep filming forever if you want.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. The whole story can’t take place in a coffee shop. This isn’t Coffee Prince.”

“What’s the name of this drama again?”

“I secretly love someone else husband.”

“The author must hate their own story, huh? What made them come up with a title like that?”

I frowned, looking as if I’d just seen a ghost.

“Do people really enjoy seeing the heroine steal someone else’s husband?”

“The ‘someone else’s husband’ used to be her own husband. The hero had to get married again because of business, but he and his new wife haven’t done anything together yet.”

“Wow… that’s so cliché. Do you remember when we started dating for three hours, and you already invited me to your room?”

“You idiot! Why are you bringing up the past?”

“To show the reality of it. So, the hero is fake, huh? Saving his ‘first time’ for the heroine?”

“There are relationships where people just date without thinking about that kind of stuff.” “Realllllly?”

I dragged out the word, clearly skeptical.

“Have you ever dated someone without, you know, doing it?”

“Yes.”

I instantly looked shocked and curious.

“Oh, really? Who?”

"Who?"

"The most recent one."

"Really? You didn’t want to touch her or be close to her like that?"

"I’m a man, so of course I wanted to. But she... she’s very reserved, and I respect that."

"I thought you said you were clingy."

"Being clingy and not forcing someone are two different things."

"Serves you right. Who knows what you lost after breaking up with me. But then again, if I hadn’t broken up with you, I wouldn’t have met *him*. So, I should thank you for that."

"Seems like you really like *him*."

"I love *him*, actually. Like I’ve never loved anyone before."

I pretended to say it to make my ex jealous, hoping it would hurt him just a little.

"I want to see *his* looks."

Now, we can talk to each other like friends without any weird feelings between us. It’s funny that we used to love each other so much, being the same person for a period of time, but now we’re casually talking about each other’s partners without feeling a thing.

"You’re going to be shocked."

We talked a little more, and after a while, the rest of the crew and the actors arrived. They hurriedly set up the scene and adjusted the lighting, worried that we might run out of daylight again.

As for me, with nothing left to do there, I escaped upstairs to lie down for a bit. I hadn’t closed my eyes all night because of the tense atmosphere. I wondered if she had calmed down by now… Maybe I should send her a message to apologize.

I’ve never been the type to apologize to anyone, but last night was really my fault. I had to make it right.

.

**Kee:**

Are you awake yet, my dear?

.

Of course, she must be so angry that she won’t even think about opening my message. That’s fine. I’m crazy anyway. I can talk to myself. I’m good at it. I’ve already written a story where the heroine questions the meaning of a song called Khao Man Gai.

Right… I just remembered.

At first, I was about to type another message to Ja, but as soon as the thought of Khao Man Gai crossed my mind, I jumped up and grabbed the crumpled paper ball from my bag. I unfolded it quickly. The creases were so deep that I had to smooth it out as much as I could. But then I frowned. This wasn’t what I had written last night. It seemed to be a plot Ja had written and crumpled up.

Hmm… let’s see what she wrote.

***Today, Mom felt bored of the usual market, so she decided to take a tricycle to the market near Kee’s house. While she was daydreaming about what to cook for breakfast, a large truck came speeding toward her, looking like it was about to hit her, but Kee managed to save her just in time.***

***Before that, Mom’s heart was pounding with fear. The sunlight shone on Kee, making her look like a statue of a god sent to save her life.***

***Mom invited Kee to have a meal at the house.***

***Mom thought Kee was someone her daughter could entrust her life to.***

.

This isn’t a novel… is it? A diary entry, maybe? Then why crumple it up and throw it away? There wasn’t even a single mistake in it.

I tilted my head curiously, folded the paper, and placed it in a nearby desk drawer. It felt like something was starting to nag at me, but what was it? The thought was stuck on the tip of my tongue, but I couldn’t figure out what exactly was bothering me.

**Ja**:

I’m awake.

.

The sound of text message snapped me out of my thoughts, and I quickly grabbed my phone to read it. I had thought she would stay cold and refuse to reply. This was a good sign. I had to seize the chance to apologize properly.

**Kee:**

You wouldn’t talk to me at all.

**Ja:**

And what are you doing now? Singing?

.

Annoying…

.

**Kee:**

But at least you’re talking to me now. That makes me feel a little better.

**Ja:**

Have you thought about how you’re going to make it up to me?

**Kee:**

Whatever you want me to do to make it up to you, just say it.

.

It took more than five minutes before she finally replied after reading the message. The silence felt heavy, as if she had to summon all the courage she had.

**Ja:**

Do it again.

.

If I had dog ears, they’d be standing up now, with my short tail wagging excitedly. I sat upright, a shy but satisfied smile forming as I typed my reply.

.

**Kee:**

Sure, no problem at all.

**Ja:**

This time, let me take the lead first.

**Kee:**

Alright, everything is up to you. So... should I come to your house this evening?

**Ja**:

No need, I’ll come to you. Just wait at the café. If you mess up again this time, you won’t just get kicked.

**Kee:**

I’ll hang myself for sure!

.

After finishing our chat, I jumped up and down on my bed, overjoyed and excited. I couldn’t believe I’d gotten another chance so quickly. Ah… I need to prepare the space properly for our romantic scene. Time to change the bedsheets!

I hopped off the bed and quickly rummaged through my things for a fresh, clean set of sheets that smelled heavenly of Downy fabric softener. If this were a cartoon, it’d look like I was in a botanical garden, surrounded by butterflies and bees fluttering around.

Of course, the right lighting is also important. If it’s too bright, undressing will feel too exposed. The room needs to be dim and cozy.

Oh! I need to take a shower too. A clean body will make her feel comfortable exploring without hesitation or discomfort. I got everything done in ten minutes and rushed downstairs, eagerly awaiting my girlfriend, who had said she’d come over. Ta-la-la…

“You’ve changed into a new outfit.”

Wearing a simple t-shirt and elastic-waist shorts, I glanced at my ex and smirked.

“Well, I’m at home. Do you expect me to wear a button-up shirt and jeans?”

“Planning to sleep since midday, huh?”

“Yeah.”

"Strange, isn’t it?"

Tham, who had been watching me with a knowing look, smirked.

"Your new partner’s coming over, huh?"

"Stop talking."

"I’m looking forward to seeing your new partner’s face. Let’s see if he is more handsome than me."

"*He* is cute."

"Compared to Doraemon, who’s cuter?"

"Obviously *him*, because they’ve got a door to anywhere. I’ll even give you one."

"Why would you give me that?"

"So you can go wherever you want and stop bothering me. You’re so annoying. Enough with the questions... Just know this, if you see *him*, you’ll be so shocked your eyes will pop out."

I couldn’t contain my excitement about introducing my new girlfriend. For Tham, it would probably feel like witnessing a groundbreaking moment. How would he react when he finds out that my new partner is a woman who’s not only beautiful and adorable but also a renowned writer celebrated for being ahead of time?

And It was like God's timing, Ja parked her small car in front of the café, got out, and walked straight in. Seeing her through Tham’s shoulder, I immediately waved my hand to call her over.

“Ja! You’re here!”

Tham frowned when he heard me call my girlfriend’s name, then turned to look. Both of them froze, as if time had stopped right there.

**“Aon…”**

The sweet-faced person, upon seeing Tham, immediately spun around, ready to head back to her car. But before she could, the tall man grabbed her arm to stop her. Ja turned to glare at him, her cold voice full of irritation.

“Let go.”

“What’s going on?”

I stepped in between the two of them, blocking Ja protectively while glancing back and forth between them.

“Why are you grabbing her arm?”

“Ja?”

Tham’s voice was filled with shock and confusion.

“Yes, Ja... She’s my girlfriend.”

“Ja? This isn’t Ja. This is Aon.”

“Aon?”

“My ex-girlfriend. She’s Aon!”

Tham’s firm, loud voice was enough to draw the attention of the entire crew, making everyone turn and stare at us. I quickly turned to nod an apology to them for disturbing their work, then dragged both of them outside to talk.

Ja didn’t say anything, just locked eyes with Tham, showing no intention of running away. As for me, I was trying to piece the story together.

“Ja… do you know Tham?”

“Yes.”

Her voice was steady, without a hint of hesitation. Not even a flicker of emotion could be seen. The sweet-faced woman let out a small sigh before speaking to Tham in a calm tone, one I hadn’t heard from her very often. Oh, wait… I think I might have heard it last night, right after she kicked me. If my memory serves me correctly.

"How do you know each other?"

**"He’s my ex-boyfriend,"**

Ja said calmly.

"Your ex?"

I let out a laugh, half mocking, and frowned deeply.

"Then why does he call you Aon?"

"I told him to call me Aon so he wouldn’t have to see the real me."

"What does that mean? What do you mean by ‘not seeing the real you?’"

Tham was the one who ask this time, and I was just as curious as him. The sweet-faced girl licked her lips slightly, then spoke as if she were tired of explaining.

"My name isn’t Aon. I used a fake name to approach you."

"To approach me? Are you saying everything was just an act?"

Tham started raising his voice, clearly struggling to believe what he was hearing.

"And why did you do it?"

The sweet-face girl glanced at me briefly, then answered with a steady voice, one so firm it left no room for doubt, as if she wanted to end all further questioning.

**"To use it for writing a novel."**

# Chapter 17: Caught off guard

It wasn’t exactly a confession, calling it an admission would be more accurate. Ja was far from the concept of confessing. There was no fear, no anxiety, no pressure that forced her to speak.

She simply said it to get the other party to leave. But it seemed that this truth only made Tham even more furious, and I, standing here, was equally stunned.

She dated someone just to use them as material for a novel? Is that even a thing? What kind of crazy reason is that?

"What kind of novel are you writing? Are you sure there’s nothing wrong with you?"

Tham stepped closer to Ja and reached out to touch her forehead, but she swatted his hand away, annoyed.

"Don't make excuses for yourself, okay? It's simple. My name is Ja, not Aon. I only approach you because I needed to write a story for my project.

That's it."

"You’re a writer? But you said you were a teacher!"

"My mom is a teacher. It’s a job close to me. Once the book is published, I’ll send it to you. At the very least, you’ll be in the introduction and listed as an inspiration."

Ja's words were like sharp knives cutting into Tham's skin, leaving him bleeding emotionally. My ex-boyfriend’s eyes filled with tears, his mouth hanging open in shock, making him look pitiful.

"I loved you so much. How could you do this to me?"

"And what about you? How could you leave your ex-fiancée, who was about to marry you, for another woman? If you could do that to her, you could do the same to me."

.

***Thud!***

*.*

Tham's body suddenly dropped to the ground like a fallen object. The handsome man lay unconscious in front of the café, causing a commotion among the crew inside, who ran out to see what had happened. Tham’s body was now lying at Ja’s feet, much like a fallen leaf hitting the ground.

This was her... a version of Ja I had never seen before.

Ja... do you even have a heart?

Since the crew still needed to shoot at the café, Ja and I went up to the second floor. But that didn’t seem like a good idea either. If Tham woke up, he’d probably cause more trouble, stirring things up and delaying the work again.

In the end, the sweet-faced girl and I left the place and just kept walking along the road. We were both silent, me crossing my arms as I walked, lost in thought, trying to piece everything together. Ja was the one to break the silence.

“Our date today was a complete failure, wasn’t it?”

She’s still thinking about that? After everything that just happened, all that chaos she caused? I stared into her light brown eyes, only to have her meet my gaze without even a hint of hesitation.

“Are you afraid of me?” she asked.

"What?"

I flinched a little when she asked me that.

"It’s not fear. It’s more like… curiosity. Right now, I’m curious about everything."

"If you’re curious, then just ask. Don’t keep thinking on your own. The answers you come up with will only get worse. Our brains always try to find reasons for things, but most of the time, we end up imagining the worst. Rarely anything good."

The sweet-faced person spoke calmly, and it made me lick my lips slightly.

"What you said to Tham earlier… was it all true? Did you date him just to write a novel?"

"Yep."

"Then does that mean you’re dating me because…"

"Ja told you on the very first day that I was working on *Our Love Project*,"

She said with a smile, and it made me think back to that day before I nodded.

"Yes, you really did say that."

"Ja hasn’t lied to you about anything. My real name is Ja. The mom you met is my real mom, and the house is my real house. There’s nothing fake about it. I’m writing about our love, and I plan for this to be my final project."

"How could you do something like this? It’s like you’re playing with someone’s feelings. Did you see how Tham fainted? He loves you!"

"Someone like him doesn’t even know what love is."

"If he doesn’t know, why would he cry so hard and faint like that?"

"And yet, you’re still defending him, even though he ditched you on your wedding and chose me instead?"

"And about that… did you already know he had a fiancée, and that person was me?"

"No."

"..."

**"Your story is just a coincidence."**

She’s lying… Ja is easy to read. Her body language now is not the same as when she was talking to Tham earlier. Now, she’s looking at the ground, avoiding eye contact, and hiding her hands in her pockets. It’s clear she’s trying to hide something.

She already knew me before!

When she saw Tham, she didn’t even look surprised that he and I were together. That means she already knew about our relationship before this.

To be honest, I’ve had this feeling for a while, and I’m not even mad about it. It’s fine if she knew me before. She probably looked me up or found information about me. But I didn’t mind because, whether she did or not, I already liked her.

She’s never done anything bad to me. All she did was sit in the café. I was the one who couldn’t handle it when she didn’t come back and ended up approaching her first. I asked her out, and everything happened on the same day, all because of me.

"Did you have other projects too?"

"Huh?"

Ja glanced at me, trying to process what I said.

"Three."

"So, before this, there were other people you did the same thing to, like Tham, right?"

"....."

"Can you tell me who they were?"

"......"

"I played the role of someone weak,"

Sshe finally replied, letting out a sigh. She looked at me with those kittenlike eyes that made her seem both endearing and pitiful at the same time.

"It was a project that was really exhausting."

"I’m not asking what role you played. I’m asking who they were..."

"Let’s just say I’ll show you someday. You’re in a bad mood today, and I don’t want to argue. We already fought enough last night."

The sweet-faced woman cut the conversation short, clearly not wanting to talk about it anymore.

"But..."

"I don't want to open my mouth to talk."

That was the end of it. If she said she didn’t want to speak, nothing could make her talk. That’s what her mom told me. I pressed my lips together and nodded in understanding.

But starting now, I’ll begin looking into her myself. I don’t want to be caught off guard again if I find out something unexpected.

There won’t be any more surprises. If she won’t tell me, I’ll find the answers myself.

Our Love Project, I have to be the one to write it. That’s how it should be!

.

.

After not updating my friends about my life for a while, I went back to our Line group chat, and the moment I joined, everyone started teasing me about "the writer ahead of time."

.

**Kam:**

Where’s that writer? You said you’d write so your friends would win the lottery, but not even close to a single number!

**LittleFinger:**

Giving your friends false hope.

**Sorn:**

Showing up like this, huh? Got dumped by your partner, didn’t you?

.

All my friends jumped in to roast me right away, welcoming me with insults to make it clear this was the real me they were talking to. I rolled my eyes a little before typing my reply.

.

**Kee:**

Things have been hectic lately. A film crew has been shooting at my café, so I haven’t had much time to update you guys. Let me explain everything bit by bit, but don’t interrupt. I won’t repeat myself. Read every line carefully. If anyone interrupts, I’ll curse you.

I told them everything about the past few days, including today’s events. Everyone went silent, maybe they fell asleep? I wasn’t sure. About five minutes later, as I was scrolling through Facebook while waiting for their replies, they finally responded.

.

**Sorn:**

Your girlfriend is scary as hell. She actually blamed everything on Tham.

**Sorn:**

What kind of decent person gets into someone’s life to steal their partner? Did she forget to look at herself?

**LittleFinger:**

But to be fair, your girlfriend isn’t completely wrong. Decent people don’t act like that.

**Sorn:**

Ugh, you’re siding with her now?

**LittleFinger:**

Wrong is wrong, right is right. That’s all.

**Kam:**

Cold as ice, huh? She didn’t even show a hint of sympathy for Tham? Even after he fainted like that?

**Kee:**

Not at all.

**Kam:**

If she could approach Tham like that to write a novel, she could do the same to you.

**Kee:**

She told me on the very first day we talked that she was writing a love story about us. She never lied. I heard it with my own ears.

**Sorn:**

Still creepy. Just because she told you the truth doesn’t mean she’s not wrong. And about Tham, are you sure it’s all just a coincidence? Don’t you think there have been way too many coincidences happening?

**Sorn:**

Like her mom being teacher Wilai, Tham being her ex, and you just “happening” to save her mom from a car accident?

**LittleFinger:**

Who would fake getting hit by a car? Besides, we’ve known teacher Wilai since middle school. She’s not the type to pretend.

**Sorn:**

Kee, do you really believe in coincidences like this? It’s not normal. Maybe she’s been following you for a long time already.

**Kee:**

But I was the one who approached her. I couldn’t handle it when she disappeared, so I made the first move. And my feelings are very real.

Things like this aren’t something just anyone can do. And she’s a woman. You all know I’ve only ever been with guys before.

**Kam:**

Maybe she wrote it so you’d fall in love with her?

**LittleFinger:**

So, do you seriously believe in that *“writer ahead of time”* thing, Kam?

**Kam:**

I was just typing that for fun. There’s no real reason to support it anyway.

.

Now the group chat was filled with my friends arguing and brainstorming. I just sat there reading and thinking. They had a point… I’ve never believed in coincidences. Sure, they can happen, but not this many.

A “writer ahead of time”… does such a person really exist? I’m still skeptical, just like LittleFinger. This is the real world, not some fantasy. And yet, this has happened twice already.

The first moment that made me really suspicious was the song Talueng.

The second one I’m not sure if it counts, was Khao Man Gai. The song was already stuck in my head when I was sitting in front of the typewriter. Back then, I thought it was just an earworm, so I didn’t think much of it. But then, the words Khao Man Gai appeared on that crumpled piece of paper. That felt like more than a coincidence.

Are these two things connected somehow? It’s stuck in my head, but I just can’t figure it out. It feels like something obvious is right in front of me, but I can’t see it. Like a mountain hidden behind a single strand of hair. If I could just cut that strand away, I’d realize what it is immediately.

What is it…? What connects these things?

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**Ja:**

What are you doing?

.

A message from Ja popped up, snapping me out of my thoughts. I quickly opened it, since I was already on my phone. At first, I hesitated, wondering if I should reply right away or wait a little while. But then again, I like her so much, and I didn’t want her to overthink things. So, I replied.

I replied almost immediately.

**Kee:**

Chatting with my friends. And you?

**Ja:**

Thinking about you.

No matter how angry, suspicious, or uneasy you might feel, if someone you care about sends a message like that, it’s impossible not to smile and reply with love and affection.

**Kee:**

So flirty when you’re texting, huh?

**Ja:**

You’ve been so quiet today.

**Kee:**

Well, you said you didn’t want to talk. I thought you didn’t want me to speak either.

**Ja:**

But we can still talk through text, can’t we? You’re still thinking about what happened today, right?

**Kee:**

If you were me, wouldn’t you be curious?

**Ja**:

Curious. Because too many coincidences have happened to you, and now you’re wondering what it all means.

**Ja:**

You’re wondering if I got close to you just to leave you like I did with Tham, right? Something like that?

**Kee:**

Smart.

**Ja:**

I’m a writer. I know the thoughts of every character in the story.

**Kee**:

So, I’m just another character in your story?

**Ja**:

You’re the heroine of my story. You’re different from everyone else.

**Kee:**

But in the past, wasn’t Tham the hero of your story?

**Ja:**

Tham was just a side character.

**Ja:**

I’m not lying to you. Please believe me on this. You’re the character I’ve been the most sincere with. So, if you have any questions, just say them.

Don’t keep them inside like I do.

**Kee:**

Like what?

**Ja:**

Too lazy to open my mouth to talk.

.

I laughed at her joke on the screen. She probably felt uneasy too and didn’t know what to do, so she chose to type her explanation instead. But it’s still strange to think that I’m one of her characters. No matter how nicely she puts it, I just can’t shake off that feeling.

.

Kee:

Alright. If I have any questions, I’ll ask. Like, for example...

Ja: Like what?

.

I paused for a moment, then typed my reply while licking my lips.

.

**Kee:**

Why does Praya have to be in a flower garden?

**Ja:**

You’re such an idiot!

.

I laughed, happy to have teased the sweet-faced person. But after scolding me, she quickly replied again.

.

**Ja:**

Because if it’s a durian garden, it’ll stink. I don’t eat durian.

**Kee:**

You’re the idiot!

.

**Everything felt back to normal again.**

After the film crew packed up and left, I had money from utilities, wages, and other fees to cover my expenses. No need to rely on Mom this time.

I was in such a good mood today, with plenty of cash in my pocket, that I decided to close the café for the day and buy some fresh seafood to take home to Mom. Her homemade dipping sauce is the best. Today, I’m going to feast to my heart’s content!

After sending a Line message to Phao letting him know the café was closed, I got out of the taxi in front of Mom’s house. Peering inside, I realized the house was locked, and no one was home. Just as I was about to call Mom, I heard loud screams coming from the end of the alley. That voice was unmistakable, it could only be one person.

“Help! Someone help! Aaaaah!”

The sound of Mom screaming from far away made me turn to look. I saw her running as fast as she could, her bangs pushed back. Her old skirt was flying around like a flag, with three or four barking dogs chasing after her like a pack of minions.

It was more terrifying than funny. I wanted to run to her aid, but I was too far away.

“Mom!”

As I was about to dash toward her with my bag of crabs to shoo the dogs away, someone else beat me to it. A familiar figure ran ahead of me, positioning themselves between Mom and the pack of dogs, yelling so loudly, making the dogs stop barking and lower their ears.

“Stop!”

“...”

"Go away!"

The serious shout and the hand gesture made all the dogs run away, as if they saw the real pack leader. Ja stood between Mom and the dogs. After making sure the dogs wouldn’t come back, she turned to Mom with a bright smile, like sunlight.

"Are you okay, Mam? Did the dogs bite you anywhere?"

"I’m fine... but how did you get here, Ja?"

Mom looked at Ja with gratitude, her eyes full of tears from the fear of being bitten.

"But no matter how you got here, thank you. If it weren’t for you, I would’ve been in big trouble."

"It’s nothing, Mam. I’m used to dogs... oh!"

Before Ja could finish, Mom pulled her into a tight hug. Around them, people poked their heads out of their houses to see what was going on. Some even came out to talk about the dogs in the alley. They were surprised because these dogs never attacked anyone. They were even known to guard the alley. But today, they were chasing someone.

Everyone who gathered around Ja and Mom didn’t think much of it, except for me.

It’s happening again… the suspension bridge phenomenon. Back then, I saved Ja’s mom. Now, she’s saving mine.

**Is this another coincidence?**

# Chapter 18: Dr.Pae

"Mom, are you sure you weren’t bitten anywhere?"

"I’m fine!"

Mom was still gossiping with the neighbors, while Ja walked back to talk to me. I looked at the sweet-faced girl with eyes full of suspicion, and it must have been obvious, because she ended up asking me first.

"Why are you looking at me like that? Do you have more questions?"

"How did you know how to get to my house?"

"I followed you."

"Followed?"

"Smile. I was planning to stop by your café, but it happened to be when you got into the taxi. So, I followed you, from the market all the way here."

"If you followed me to the market, you could’ve just said hi."

"Following someone you love is a kind of moment too. Watching you pick seafood, buy vegetables, it gives a different kind of feeling."

Ja answered everything smoothly, and I believed she was telling the truth. From the start of the conversation, I had set a goal to catch her lying or find some inconsistency in her body language. But no, everything was true. I could confirm that. She admitted to following me without hiding anything.

"But you showed up just in time to save my mom from the dogs. It all seems so perfectly timed."

"Well..."

The petite woman stood on her tiptoes, rolling her eyes as if trying to come up with a good answer.

"Perfect timing is a kind of destiny, don’t you think?"

This is what you’d call a lie. But what was the lie about? Saying she whispered to the dogs to chase my mom would just be too crazy to believe.

"You’ve completely won my mom’s heart."

"Just like you’ve won my mom’s heart too. Our love life is so smooth."

"I thought you’d save my mom from falling into water, like you said last time."

"There’s no water here. And if it was Khlong Saen Saep, I wouldn’t be able to help. It’s too dirty."

"I think I’ll change my name,"

Mom interrupted our conversation, looking annoyed.

"Why can’t anyone say my name right? They keep calling me doctor instead of Mai."

"Sometimes they do say it right, Mom. Maybe it’s just how you hear it."

"For the sake of my elevated mind, I’ll change my name starting today."

"What will you change it to, Mom?"

"Jim."

Okay, my mind is elevated now.

Now, Ja had been welcomed so warmly by my mom that she practically became another daughter. Mom was even shelling crab meat for her, without eating any herself, just to please Ja, her savior. She proudly presented her homemade royal-style dipping sauce without a hint of shyness.

"I came up with the recipe myself. How could it be royal-style?"

"A royal whirlpool, deep and swirling fast," Ja joked.

"Buy. Forget. Cry. Hmm."

"That’s the name of my dipping sauce,"

Mom declared proudly.

I think I’ve figured out where I get my silliness from. Meanwhile, Ja, clearly enjoying the meal more and more, shared some crab with me, putting it on my plate and smiling sweetly.

"You just keep staring at me. Eat something too."

"You two are so cute together,"

Mom said, laughing happily, clearly amused. I couldn’t help but tease her.

"Have you forgotten the past, Mom? Back then, you were stomping around, refusing to even acknowledge me and Ja. And now you’re calling us cute?"

"Back then and now are different. Back then, I hadn’t been saved from a dog attack. And come to think of it... having a boyfriend isn’t worth much. Even if they’re rich, it’s not like they’d give us money to spend. Loving someone, anyone, just make sure they’re a good person. And Ja is a good person."

"Being saved from a dog bite made you this grateful?"

"You’re my real child, and you didn’t even run to help me. How could I not be grateful?"

While we were chatting and laughing, the television, which Mom had left on, suddenly broadcast news about the search for the wreckage of a plane. So far, no survivors had been found. One of the passengers on the plane was the famous actress, Run.

At that moment, I glanced at the sweet-faced person beside me, who suddenly seemed lost in thought. I nudged her arm playfully and brought up the "coincidence" again.

"Didn’t you write in your novel about a plane crash? The writer ahead of her time."

"You’re just talking nonsense..."

Ja’s tone didn’t sound quite right, which made me curious.

"Do you have some kind of magic or something?"

"Ridiculous,"

Mom chimed in as she nibbled on a crab leg, and I couldn’t resist explaining my reasoning behind the “ridiculous” idea.

"You don’t get it, Mom. Right after Ja’s novel hit the shelves, this plane crashed. That’s how she got the title ‘the writer ahead of time.’ Maybe the reason you got chased by those dogs was because Ja wrote it that way, so she could save you, and you’d feel grateful or something like that."

"If she can write things like that, why doesn’t she write to kick the current prime minister out of office? Ridiculous," Mom replied bluntly.

"You’re asking a lot of questions today,"

Ja said, her voice sounding calm but a little distant. Ja was the one who asked this time, making me smile and pretend to act shocked.

"Don’t be silly, I was just teasing. But if you could really do that, I’d start wondering about everything."

"Wondering about what?"

"Like… did you write it so I’d fall in love with you?"

The two of us locked eyes for about five seconds. The silence was enough to make Mom throw a chewed crab leg at my face in annoyance.

"I’m sitting right here! Don’t act like the whole world is just the two of you."

"Oh, come on, Mom! I was just getting into the moment, staring deeply into her eyes, and you ruined it!"

I joked, noticing a hint of something but decided to soften the mood by changing the subject.

"So, does this mean you approve the two of us now?"

"Would it matter? If I told you to stop seeing each other, would you actually listen?"

"We’d still date anyway."

"Then why would I bother trying to stop you? But… don’t be too obvious about it. Society in this country seems open, but it’s actually quite closed. If it’s not their own kids, they’re supportive. But the moment it’s someone close to them, suddenly they can’t accept it."

"Like you, Mom?"

"That was me in the past. Now I’m enlightened, awake, and joyful."

"See, Ja must have put a spell on you. Who knows, maybe you’ll show up as a character in her next novel."

"That’s fine, as long as she doesn’t name me Doctor."

Ja laughed happily and nodded.

"Alright, I’ll name you Joom Jim. That’ll make you sound cute."

"This kid is just too adorable,"

Mom said with a smile.

After finishing dinner, I took Ja on a tour of the house where I had grown up before moving to a rented apartment for more privacy, or, to be honest, because I wanted to wake up and immediately open my café downstairs. My bedroom was very different from Ja’s. My stuff was scattered all over the place. Honestly, I usually avoid going into this room, but she insisted on seeing it.

"Why are you embarrassed? Having lots of stuff means that the room has life, that someone lives here."

"But your room isn’t messy like this."

"Every room is different. A bedroom reflects the person who lives in it."

The sweet-faced woman walked over to my dressing table, which was completely empty now because I’d moved everything to the a building. Then she glanced at my old computer, its once-white exterior now faded to a sad yellow.

"Are you wondering if I have magic?"

"...Maybe."

"Let me write something and prove whether it’s true or not, so you can stop doubting."

With that, the petite woman started searching for the power cord to plug in the computer. Then she pressed the power button and patiently waited for it to boot. After about five minutes, my ancient computer finally reached the Windows desktop, fake Windows, no less. Ja moved the mouse, searching for a program she could use.

She started typing, her fingers moving skillfully across the keyboard. I, curious, stood behind her and leaned over to see the screen.

"What are you writing?"

"What do you want me to write? I’ll type whatever you say, and we’ll see if it actually happens."

I licked my lips slightly, thinking. Ja looked at me intently, ready to type anything I suggested. Fine... let’s try it out.

"Alright, I want you to write that... tonight, my house will have a power outage, and the water won’t work."

"Ha!"

She giggled and typed it out.

"And then what?"

"That’s it. Nothing else. Just that."

"You really want to test this, huh? What makes you think that just because I type something, it’ll actually happen?"

Ja typed exactly what I said, shrugged, and then cracked her knuckles loudly.

"See? Nothing happened. The power’s still on, and the water’s still running, just like usual."

She had a point... It wasn’t like that night when I typed on paper and almost everything I wrote came true. Alright, I noticed the difference now.

The location… Maybe typing somewhere other than Ja’s house doesn’t work.

"Do you want me to type anything else?"

"Then you try typing something you want this time. Maybe if I ask, it won’t work, but if it’s your wish, it might."

"You’re treating me like a genie in a lamp, aren’t you? Fine, let’s see if it happens or not."

This time, it was Ja’s turn to type. I watched each letter she typed and glanced at her face. She looked completely calm and unbothered, which made me feel a bit amused.

. .

***Today, Ja will sleep at Kee’s house. Then my girlfriend will slowly undress me, piece by piece, and finally, we’ll cuddle together on the bed, trying not to make any noise because afraid the adults downstairs will hear.***

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"You’re the writer ahead of time."

"Hmm?"

As soon as I said that, I pressed my lips against Ja’s. The sweet-faced woman flinched slightly before responding with a laugh, clearly amused. Then she stood up, cupped my face with both hands, and kissed me back passionately. Slowly, we guided each other from the computer desk to the nearby bed. Though messy, it didn’t get in the way.

Just as I was about to unbutton her pants and slip my hand inside, Ja reached out and slapped my arm.

"Why did you hit me?"

"We can’t."

"Why not? You’re the writer ahead of time!"

"Today I’m on my period. See? Just because I write something doesn’t mean it always comes true. I wrote that we’d sleep together today, but it’s not happening because it’s that time of the month."

"You’re just trying to tease me, aren’t you?"

"I only wanted to prove to you that what you think isn’t true."

I almost wanted to scream in frustration, but the petite woman beneath me wrapped her arms around my neck, pulling me closer while staring straight into my eyes.

"Let’s save it for next time, okay? This time, I came to make sure your mom loves me enough to not become an obstacle between us."

I still wasn’t ready to give up the idea that she’s the writer ahead of time. But to avoid looking ridiculous to those around me, I kept my thoughts to myself. I decided to figure it out on my own, even going so far as to pull out the whiteboard I’d bought when I was a student and started using a marker to create a mind map, trying to find connections to the things I might have skipped.

But every time I started writing, a customer would walk in and interrupt me, so I still couldn’t figure anything out.

Oh, by the way, my café was already featured on TV. Since the drama was being filmed and aired simultaneously, everything happened quickly, like magic. The show became a huge hit, and fans began visiting the filming locations, including my café. It was a lucky break, enough to keep the café running for a few more months without me having to worry about barely making ends meet.

"You’re still writing stories, Khun Kee?"

"Hmm?"

Phao asked while glancing at the whiteboard where I’d scribbled notes all over.

"I’ve told you before, Khun Kee, writing stories isn’t your thing. You always end up with plot twists that make no sense. Stick to what you’re good at, like selling coffee. Did you know the customers keep saying how great the quality of our coffee is?"

"Of course! I pick every single coffee bean with determination and care,"

I replied confidently.

"But the beans are delivered, aren’t they?"

This girl! Can’t she just go along with my exaggeration for once?

"That still counts as selecting! It took me months to decide where to order from and study all the options."

"That’s why I said you’re better at selling coffee than writing stories. I’m still trying to figure out what you’re looking for in your plot."

"I don’t even know what I’m looking for. There’s something in the problem I must’ve missed."

"So, what’s the plot about?"

"It’s nothing."

"You’ve come this far. Just tell me, and I’ll help you think it through. No one’s ordering anything right now, so think of it as a brain game."

"Well… it’s a plot about a heroine who writes things, and then those things actually happen."

"Ja, right?"

She knows too much...

"Yeah, that’s right."

"Don’t tell me you actually believe Ja can write something and make it happen."

"I already said it’s just a plot. I’m just using my girlfriend for inspiration. Don’t overthink it."

"So, what’s next?"

"I’m trying to figure out what I’ve missed. Sometimes when the main character writes, it happens. Sometimes it doesn’t. When I start wondering if what she writes will happen, it doesn’t. But it’s already happened in the past. This… ability, no, this magical power, it doesn’t come in bursts or follow a specific time or pattern. It’s not like that."

I pointed at the lines and notes I had drawn all over the board, times, places, the main character, actions, but none of it made sense. That’s when Phao picked up a marker and started adding her own ideas to the board.

"And the tool?"

"Hmm?"

"What she use to write?"

"A computer sometimes, and a typewriter sometimes."

"A typewriter? In this day and age?"

"Yeah. Ja has one at home, it’s really old…"

I paused as something clicked in my mind. I suddenly thought about that typewriter and glanced at my part-time staff who had just suggested this idea. And it hit me, like a light bulb going off.

"Of course! The typewriter... it must be the key!"

"I figured it would be! It’s definitely you!"

The voice mimicking my enthusiasm made me turn around quickly.

Standing there was Dr. Pae, who I had already blocked on my phone, smiling happily as if thrilled by this coincidence.

"What are you doing here?"

I asked, confused.

"I saw this café trending online, so I came to check it out. When people are meant to meet, they’ll meet, right?"

I almost heard my ex say the word "destiny," but I cut him off just in time so he didn’t have to utter that cheesy line. Honestly, I didn’t feel like talking to him, but since we’d already bumped into each other, it would’ve been rude to send him away. So, I ended up sitting and talking with him.

"I thought you didn’t want to talk to me anymore."

"I don’t, really. But what can I do? You keep showing up. By the way, do you even have time to watch dramas? You’re a doctor; I figured you’d be too busy."

"I’m not exactly free, but when I’m bored, I look for something to relax. This drama’s been talked about a lot, and I got hooked on the lead actress, so I thought I’d visit one of the filming locations."

"I see."

"Thanks for talking to me. I know you didn’t want to."

"Smart. Who would want to talk to an ex who dumped them for someone else?"

"If I could turn back time, I wouldn’t have done it."

"Too bad there’s no such thing. It’s impossible,"

I said, laughing bitterly before sighing.

"What’s done is done. Let it go. We’ve both moved on with our lives. Let’s just talk as friends, okay?"

Dr. Pae gave a sad smile, realizing I had no feelings left for him.

"At least I get to be your friend. How have you been?"

"I have a partner now."

"Oh."

"My partner’s a woman."

"No way."

The doctor’s shocked face made it clear he couldn’t believe it. If he had been drinking water, he probably would’ve spit it out.

"You’re dating a woman? You like women too?"

"I just found out myself. What about you? Are you seeing someone?"

"I haven’t been with anyone. I’ve tried, but I’m scared of relationships now... scared of being abandoned."

I smirked, making sure he saw exactly how I felt.

"So, you’re just dating and breaking up repeatedly after leaving me, huh? Let me ask you straight then. What did she have that I didn’t? I heard she was your patient. Isn’t it against your code of ethics to date your own patient?"

"I handed her case over to someone else so I could date her without any issues. She was so fragile, always sick. I just wanted to take care of her."

"And what did you do to make her leave you?"

"I didn’t do anything. She just disappeared."

"Huh?"

"Yeah, she left me without any explanation. I even went to the address she gave me, but I couldn’t find her. I called her hundreds, no, maybe thousands, of times, but her phone was always off. Being abandoned without knowing why… it’s incredibly painful. I thought I was going to die."

"Exactly. Suddenly being dumped after we’d already talked about getting married and introduced our parents. Do you know how embarrassing that was for my mom?"

I couldn’t help but jab at him.

"So, what happened next? After all this time, you still couldn’t contact her?"

"I managed to find her. I ran into her at my friend’s hospital. She was there with her mom for a check-up, so we talked... and it was like a joke. She’d become someone I didn’t even recognize."

Why does this plot feel so familiar? She’d become someone unrecognizable...

"What do you mean?"

"She wasn’t fragile or sick at all. And her mom called her 'Ja.'"

"Ja?"

My jaw dropped instantly.

"I asked her whose name that was. She looked at me with cold eyes and said..."

I waved my hand to cut him off, finishing the sentence for him, curious if I’d get it right.

“Lazy to open my mouth.”

“How do you know?” **Damn it!**

# Chapter 19: Notebook Plot

Kee:

Let's go on a date today.

**Ja:**

Where should we go?

**Kee:**

Let's go somewhere we can take the dog for a walk. Today, you can take Chloe. There's a mall where we can take dogs for a walk.

**Kee:**

It's Mall C.

**Ja**:

Don't you have to open the shop?

**Kee**:

I want to relax today. I'll have Phao look after the shop instead.

**Ja:**

Once the income is good, you become lazy, huh?

**Kee:**

When you're rich, you should enjoy happiness. I want to spend time with you. As far as I remember, except for being in the room together, we hardly go anywhere together.

**Kee:**

Think of this as a good opportunity.

**Ja:**

Okay, what time should we meet?

**Kee:**

Let's meet at 2 PM.

. .

After making appointment, I got ready and called a taxi to take me to Ja's house. I still hadn't entered her house for a certain purpose. Around 1:30 PM, Ja drove out with Chloe in her arms, and Teacher Wilai opened the front door for her.

To be sure, I had to wait for about ten minutes because I wasn’t sure if Ja would forget something and come back to get it, like in those scenes in dramas.

Of course... she didn’t forget anything. Now, it's my turn.

I pressed the doorbell at Teacher Wilai's house, and the elderly person came out, looking at me in confusion. When she saw that it was me, she raised an eyebrow and looked puzzled.

"Didn't you make plans with Ja?"

"Has Ja left already? I must have remembered wrong. I thought we were supposed to meet here first. Is it okay if I use the bathroom for a minute? I really need to pee."

"Come on in. Do your business, before you leave."

Because I'm quite the favorite of Teacher Wilai, it's always easy for me to come and go. So, when I had the chance, I quickly entered the house and made my way to Ja's room. Luckily, the sweet-faced person hadn’t locked the door. Maybe it was because she didn’t want her mom to think she had any secrets, so she didn't lock it. But it seemed like a huge mistake.

Even if her mom didn’t come in... I would enter anyway.

Once Teacher Wilai let me in the house, I didn’t think about anything else. I could leave whenever I wanted, as if I were at my own home. The only exception was the group of dogs, Chloe's puppies, who rushed to the door and forced me to open it. And when we met, both dogs jumped on me, licking my face and eyes as if they had loved me for a long time.

"Are you here to greet me, or are you guarding me? But anyway, stay quiet. I have something on my mind today."

I glanced at the typewriter on the table, making up my mind. I then pulled out a chair, sat down, and placed my fingers in the correct position. I took a blank sheet of paper nearby and put it into the typewriter, ready to type.

Alright... this is so ridiculous. I can't believe I'm going along with this theory. The cursed typewriter, type something, and it will happen as you wish. Crazy. If I told anyone, they’d laugh until they died. Even I don’t want to believe it!

.

***Today, traffic was so bad that Ja took two hours to drive from home to Mall C.***

.

The sound of the typewriter clicking steadily under my hands was that of someone typing fluently. I didn’t know how to measure the result, so I decided to try sending a message to the little one.

**Kee:**

Where are you now?

**Ja:**

Still stuck at a red light. Traffic is heavy. Have you arrived yet?

**Kee:**

I'm almost there too. The traffic is pretty bad.

**Ja:**

Yeah, today is a normal workday, right? At this time, the traffic shouldn't be so bad.

.

Okay... there's traffic, but to say it's because of the typewriter would be hard to admit. As we all know, Bangkok's traffic is always bad.

What is going on...

Seriously, what am I doing? Instead of meeting my girlfriend like we planned, I'm sitting here typing on a typewriter. This makes no sense at all. Fine, let's just finish this. If it's not true, I'll quickly call a taxi and go to the mall.

.

*I accidentally found the plot of a novel to write down in the bedroom, then read the entire story in the project...*

*.*

Everything fell into silence. If it were a cartoon, there would be a bird flying with ellipsis marks. It felt a bit confusing. How could it have happened like this? It's like asking why I didn’t win the lottery when I never bought a ticket in the first place. Something like that.

With that thought, I gave up on the typewriter and stood up, beginning to look around the room to figure out where to start searching. She said she had written three novel projects, and I was the last one. When we go to a café, Ja writes her novels on a notebook.

So, I should look for her notebook first. However, after scanning the room, I could barely find anything. She might have taken it with her as a habit, carrying it around in case she wanted to work outside.

But it has to be here... Writers always write down their plots somewhere.

I started rummaging through Ja’s drawer, where the pens were neatly organized, then pushed the drawer back and began searching on the table, in the bookshelf, and before I could search any deeper, Teacher Wilai opened the door.

“What are you looking for? Aren’t you leaving yet?” “Huh?”

I jumped a little, like someone who had been caught.

“Ja sent a message saying she forgot something.”

“Forgot what?”

“Something... like a plot notebook, a novel notebook, something like that.”

“Oh... is it by the headbor? She likes turn on the light on by the headboard and writing down. Try looking there.”

“Okay.”

“Hurry up. Ja’s waiting.”

After giving her advice, Teacher Wilai walked back out. I quickly ran to the head of the bed and searched where the teacher had suggested. The hardcover notebook was hidden under the pillow as if afraid someone would open it and read. But if it was hidden that well, it should have been put in a safe. It seemed believable.

I thought to myself that maybe Mom wouldn’t read anything silly like that.

I stuck out my tongue and licked my lips a little, then slowly turned the pages. There were plot notes written in neat handwriting, but not perfectly organized. Arrows were drawn here and there, making it clear that the owner of the notebook would understand what it all meant, along with a cartoon figure of a fishbone that accompanied various poses and contexts for the cover briefing.

Ah... I’ve read this novel before. Was the process before it became a book really this complicated?

As I continued flipping through, I started to lie down on the bed to find a comfortable position and yawned. It didn’t seem to be anything unusual, until my phone rang again with a message from Ja.

**Ja:**

I’m almost there. Where are you waiting?

.

I quickly sat up in shock. That's right, I wasn’t familiar with this mall. I didn’t know what stores were there either. I probably had to improvise for now.

.

**Kee:**

I'm still stuck in traffic. If you arrive before me, you can choose a store. I'll walk around and find you.

**Ja:**

What’s this? You’re the one who made the plans but you're the one running late?

**Ja:**

Not cute at all.

**Kee:**

But I still love you.

**Ja:**

Fine, I’m not mad anymore.

**Ja:**

Hurry up and get here. Don't make me wait too long. Someone might come hit on me. Hehe.

.

The person on the other end was still busy texting, unaware of what I was doing. After our conversation ended, I quickly skimmed through the plot as fast as I could. If there was nothing else, I would take a motorcycle taxi to the mall quickly so I wouldn't have to argue.

But then I stumbled upon a paper nearly in the middle, with the word "Project" written in the center, along with three crudely drawn dogs.

.

**Project Dior**

**Project Chanel**

**Project Chloe**

**.**

Suddenly, I felt a surge of excitement. It might have been because of the word "project," which Ja often mentioned, referring to her novel projects. And my story was the last one, which meant there must have been others before it. I was sure that I was one of the three projects listed.

Of course, as soon as I read the details of just the first project, I dropped the plot notebook from my hands in shock, feeling completely drained.

.

**Project Chanel**

.

*Chanel is a sick dog born with poor health. Her back legs are weak and flat, but because she doesn't know she's sick, she doesn't show any signs of weakness. She's not pitiful in any way.*

*She knows how to get attention, either by using her eyes or by rolling on her back to make her owner pay more attention to her than to others. In reality, Chanel has a rather*

*fierce temperament. If she were a person, she'd give off a vibe that’s both pitiful and intriguing.*

*Character: Soft and tender*

*Lover: Athinokorn, Kee's lover*

*Occupation: Doctor*

*I chose to use this character because doctors often deal with sick people, so there’s a chance to meet and talk with others more than usual.*

*It took about a month of courting. He is a polite, clean man, quite softhearted and organized. At first, he showed no interest in me, but after seeing each other often and using the kind of look that Dior would give, acting weak and pitiful, we kept running into each other at the hospital, and it seemed like fate.*

*It wasn’t difficult. Dr. Pae likes people who care for others. When we go out to eat, if I clean his plate or wipe his glass without him asking, he sees me as a meticulous, clean person, exactly how he likes.*

*Sometimes, I pretend to be upset when he answers his girlfriend’s calls to show that I’m feeling neglected and that I matter to him. Dr. Pae likes being the center of attention, something his current girlfriend doesn’t provide, and she doesn’t understand why he has no time to meet her.*

*I also act a bit needy, showing concern when he forgets to eat, and I text him to remind him to have his meals. This gets his attention, and he starts paying special care to me.*

*This project succeeded... He broke up with his girlfriend and chose me, because I acted like I was about to die and couldn’t live without him if he didn’t love me back.*

**Thud, thud...**

**Thud, thud...**

After scanning through Dr. Pae's plot, I turned the page and found Project 2.

**Project Dior**

.

*Dior is a dog that immediately runs to its owner as soon as it's born. It loves to be affectionate, always following the owner everywhere like a shadow, sometimes even becoming a little annoying. But when it comes to loyalty, nothing compares to Chanel.*

*Dior's way of seeking attention is by jumping up and licking the face and eyes. Even when it wants to get up, it doesn't dare to wake the owner. If it is woken up and let out to run, it won’t go if it sees the owner not moving. It prefers to stay with the owner instead of running off to play.*

*Character: Affectionate*

*Lover: Tham*

*Occupation: Film set coordinator*

*I chose to use this character because Tham is the kind of man who can't stay still. He needs emotional comfort, so a clingy woman would be the best choice. I pretended to accidentally bump into him and dropped a leaflet about a movie, which gave me the opportunity to talk to him.*

*He's a very masculine man, sometimes not showering because he works late and still sits working even after waking up. He needs a lot of care but not too much, as he gets annoyed easily.*

*After talking for a while, he confessed that he already had a girlfriend. So, our conversations began to hide behind the pretense of friendship. But no friend could act as affectionate as I could. Sometimes, the affection I showed would even annoy him.*

*After the argument, something strange happened, he was the one who called to apologize. It was unlike someone who just keeps saying "I love you" but then goes off to apologize to a friend without letting their partner know.*

*Eventually, they broke up because Tham wanted a woman who felt more like a girlfriend than a mother. Kee controlled his life too much. He didn’t want to get married, but Kee kept pushing for it, and it was easy for them to break up.*

*This project succeeded... they broke up.*

*P.S. But it was a project that annoyed me a lot because I had to keep pretending to be needy and whiny all the time. It was really annoying.*

.

I turned the next page with shaky hands until I reached the final project.

**Project Chloe**

*This was the hardest project because the other person had never shown any interest in women before. It took a lot of courage to approach her and make a lasting impression.*

*I wanted to be the love she had always dreamed of... a love where we just look into each other's eyes and fall in love instantly.*

*.*

Tears streamed down my face, and I cried uncontrollably, unable to accept it. I didn't know if I was still in the real world or trapped in the world of the story Ja had created. Everything felt like a tsunami, calm at first, then crashing in all at once, leaving me feeling broken and shattered.

One hand held the plot, while the other tightly gripped my phone, as it rang with the sweet-faced person’s number, probably calling to ask where I was. I took a deep breath, wiped my tears, and swallowed the sobs before answering the call.

"Hello?"

[Where are you? It's been a while. Chloe's all hot now.]

"I changed my mind."

[Huh?]

"I'm too lazy to go. Sorry."

# Chapter 20: The Visitor

Right now, I've locked myself in the shop alone, anticipating that Ja would show up soon. I figured it would be hard for her to cause a scene if I was upstairs. And just as I expected, about three hours after I told her I was too lazy to go to the mall, Ja drove straight to the shop, carrying Chloe, the dog.

"Kee!"

The angry voice of the sweet-faced person, whom I rarely see upset, made me slowly raise my head. I had been slouched over at the table, lost in my thoughts, predicting all sorts of scenarios in advance to prepare for whatever situation might come. Then, I stood up and opened the shop door, causing the bell to jingle as it should.

"What the hell is wrong with you?"

Ja stormed towards me as soon as she stepped inside, holding the fat dog who seemed completely uninterested in what was going on. I looked at her calmly because I had already expected this would happen.

"I'm not upset. I just told you directly that I was too lazy to go."

"Are you getting revenged, Kee?"

"That's up to you to think."

"Are you mad at me or something?"

Her tone softened when she saw that I wasn't showing any signs of wanting to argue. I walked behind the counter, made my usual drink for the sweetfaced person, and chatted while serving it.

"Did you do something to make me angry?"

"Can you stop annoying me and just say what's on your mind?"

"Why don't you guess? I want to see what you'll think."

"I'm not going to guess anything."

I smiled a little and slowly made green tea for Ja. After I poured it into the cup, I brought it to the table and looked at the fat dog, which was walking around the shop, looking curious.

"Is it true that dogs have the same behavior as their owners?"

Suddenly, I changed the topic, but the person sitting across from me crossed her arms, ready to argue. Even though she was upset that I changed the topic, she still answered.

"Maybe it's true."

"What in Chloe is like you? Is it the weirdness?"

"I don't know if I'm weird, but out of all the dogs, my mom says Chloe is the most like me... Now, can we stop talking about the dog and talk about today? What happened? Why did you cancel our meeting? Don't say it's because you were lazy and didn't want to lie. Be serious. If there is a problem, what happened? You didn't answer my calls, and you didn't read my messages. I had to drive all the way here. Do you know what will happen today?"

"What happened?"

I asked, looking curious.

"What happened to you?"

"Suddenly, the car in front braked, and I hit the back of it. Then, the car behind me hit mine, about five cars in total. It took a while for the insurance to come. After I started driving again, the tire burst. I had to call a tow truck."

"But you still came here to find me instead of going home?"

"Because I wanted to know what happened with you. Right now, I'm both angry at you, but I also want to hear your side. If you're mad, just say it."

"Maybe because..."

"....."

**"Because you stole my ex-boyfriend?"**

"About Tham?"

Ja looked confused.

"I thought you were okay with that. We already talked about it, didn't we? You didn't seem bothered."

"It's not about Tham."

"And who is it?"

**"Dr. Pae."**

I saw the sweet-faced person freeze, as if nailed in place. The look of shock made me laugh, feeling a little sorry for myself for not noticing this coincidence before.

"What you're talking about .."

"Don't lie, Ja. You said you wouldn't lie. I want to hear the truth from you Why did you happen to steal both of my ex-boyfriends and then end up with me?"

"....."

"When did you know about me?"

This was the important question, one I had wanted to ask for a long time, but I hesitated because I thought it wasn't necessary. Whether she came to me by accident or on purpose, I had already fallen for her. But that was back then, not now. All of my feelings, were built on one question:

Is it true?

What happened wasn't because of magic or some miracle making it happen, right?

Ja stayed silent for a long time before taking a deep breath and gathering her thoughts. The anger that had been building up since the afternoon seemed to vanish with the wind. She knew the reason I hadn't come, and probably thought it was fitting, given that I had canceled our plans today.

"My mom once told me about a very pretty girl at the school where she teaches. There were always boys asking her out. She said someone tied a balloon to the back of a motorcycle and drove it around the school, and that made me curious about how pretty you must be to get that much attention."

"When did you ever meet me?"

"Recently. I had only seen you in the yearbook... If you ask when I first knew you, it was when you graduated and became part of the yearbook. But I met you again when I stopped by the hospital to get medicine to my mom, and I saw you with Dr. Pae."

I secretly clenched my fist tightly on my lap but tried to stay calm and asked further.

"So, at that time, did you liked me?"

She had to answer truthfully. If she lied in this answer, our love would be meaningless right away.

Ja... please, Kee's feelings are real. Even if it was some kind of magic, if you lie, this love will no longer exist.

**"I fell in love with you then."**

As soon as I got the answer, I flipped the table we were sitting at, causing it to fall over. The green tea frappe, still mostly full, spilled and broke on the floor, and the glass pieces cut the sweet-faced person's leg, making a small amount of blood trickle out. But it wasn't enough to need immediate attention. I took a deep breath in, and all the patience I had built up shattered. Chloe, who had been walking around the shop, quickly ran to Ja.

Chloe licked the wound, showing concern for her owner, but the small person just sat in the chair, unmoving, only asking in a trembling voice.

"What did I do wrong?"

I walked over, grabbed the sweet-faced person's plot notebook, and slammed it on the floor for her to see. Ja's eyes widened in shock, and she looked up at me, equally angry.

"Where did you get that from?"

"It doesn't really matter anymore where I got it from. The important thing is, now I know everything. Dr. Pae, Tham, and Kee were just projects in the novel you created for your own money and fame. You must have had a lot of fun seeing other people's lives turned into pawns for you to control."

"It's not like that."

Ja stood up, trying to explain, but I grabbed the collar of her shirt and pulled her toward me, no longer willing to accept anything else.

"No matter what you say, I don't believable anymore because your answer is wrong."

"Kee... don't be like this."

"You didn't come to me because you felt love. You just saw me as an experiment. Every one of my exes was your test subject. You just wanted to see if approaching someone like a character in your novel would make them turn out the way you wanted.

And you've succeeded with two people. Two people who were going to marry me. Two people who left me for you!"

"If they hadn't left you, would we have met, Kee... those two weren't right for you. They..."

"Are you saying you're the one who's right for me? Who do you think you are? Just a kid who can't get along with others. You're just someone who's bad at socializing and thinks the world is cruel to you, so you want to be cruel to others by choosing me as your victim. What did I do? What did I do to deserve this? Huh!"

I shoved her away and cried loudly. Ja, who had stepped back a few paces, stood still before starting to sob too. But I pointed at her and ordered her to stop immediately.

"Ja admits that before meeting you, it was an experiment. But after watching you, getting to know you, Ja... Ja really likes you."

"Don't say anything. Nothing is believable anymore. The feelings that have come up aren't real. Someone like you, if it weren't for that typewriter, what would your life be like?"

"You know!"

"Yeah!"

I grabbed the paper I typed in the typewriter today, crumpled it into a ball, and threw it at the sweet-faced person's chest. It bounced and fell to the floor. I reached down to pick it up, my hands shaking, not expecting that I would finally be able to put things together.

. .

*Today, she was supposed to meet me, but she had to waste time because of a five-car accident made her unable to drive to the shop. On the end, she had to take a taxi and arrived at the shop three hours later to talk.*

*.*

I chose to write this message because I wanted to prove once again that the typewriter can make things happen. And the fact that she shared what happened when she arrived at the shop was proof of many things, confirming that I wasn't wrong.

"Sorry,"

That was Ja's response after reading everything on the paper, pressing her lips tightly.

"What you need to understand is that the feelings that have come up are real. The typewriter can't force anyone to love anyone else, it only creates situations."

"That's enough, I don't want to listen."

"The feelings you have for me are real."

"Go back."

"The feelings Ja has for you are real, too. It's real, Kee."

"Just go! I don't want to see your face again!"

I yelled at Ja, who kept talking, even raising my hand as if I was going to do something, but that was all I could do. When I saw she wasn't avoiding my gaze, I clenched my fist and let it drop by my side.

"It's not a real feelings. I never looked at any woman. Do you think someone like me has ever had a crush on woman? But I didn't feel anything because I likes men. What happened is because you wrote it!"

"But I never wrote that I would fall in love with you. But now, I really loves you."

"I said I don't want to hear it. Go... just go."

I walked over, picked up Chloe, and pushed Ja out of the shop, handing the dog back to the sweet-faced person. Then I turned away, not wanting to talk anymore. And to make it clear before she truly left, I had to say something like a farewell.

"Let this be the last time we meet."

"Kee..."

**"Let's not meet again."**

.

.

I walked back into the shop, locked the door, and leaned against it before letting out a sob. Each word I had spoken felt like a knife cutting through my heart. I tried to resist and speak in a way that would hurt her, but it was me who couldn't bear it.

I was secretly concerned about how the other person would feel after hearing those heart-wrenching words, but it was the right thing to do. We didn't start off right from the beginning. When a button is fastened wrong, it will be wrong all along unless you undo it and start over.

As I thought about going upstairs, the plot notebook that Ja hadn't taken with her caught my eye. I bent down, picked it up from the floor, and opened to the page that was my own project once again, feeling a sharp pain.

The more I read, the harder it became to bear, but if I didn't remind myself, I would keep circling around these foolish thoughts.

***Project Chloe***

*This was the hardest project because the other person had never shown any history of liking women. It took a lot of courage to approach her and make a lasting impression.*

*I wanted to be the love she had always dreamed of... where we just look into each other's eyes and fall in love instantly.*

*Chloe has the most similar personality to mine (as my mom said). She's very independent, headstrong, and determined to get what she wants. If she doesn't get it, she'll keep trying until she does. If she knows she's been upset, she'll come to apologize in a sly, charming way. Her weapon is being cute but proud. If she wants to come, she'll come on her own.*

*She's more like a cat than a dog. She can't love anyone more than herself, because she came first.*

*Character: Ja*

*Lover: Kee (the final project)*

*Occupation: Coffee shop owner*

*Among all of them, this one is probably the hardest because she's never shown any interest in women before. The last love story in this novel was meant to feature a woman my mom used to tell me about, someone beautiful, a high school star.*

*From what I know from the two previous projects, she's a working woman who doesn't care much about her lover's feelings. She knows that everyone will always come to apologize to her because most people who approach her usually pursue her first. So for this one, I had to gather a lot of information to win her heart.*

*She loves watching Korean dramas, especially scenes where the heroine sits next to the window, with sunlight shining on her. That's a scene from a dream that makes her heart race when she sees it.*

*If I were to approach her like other men, with the usual flirting, she'd probably ignore me like before. So, I need to find a way to make her approach me first.*

*.*

*P.S. The one who loves more is always the smaller one. So, not feeling anything for her will let me control the game.*

*P.S.2. It's probably okay to be a little more forward with a woman...*

*P.S.3 (I saw her the other day) When she was wearing an apron and a white shirt, she looked completely different. She was so beautiful, it made me feel like I wanted to win her over.*

*P.S.4. I told myself not to feel anything. In this world, the dog loves us the most.*

.

I didn't tell anyone about this. I just kept to myself, sitting quietly in my bedroom, staring at the ceiling, not knowing what to do next. It felt like I had no direction in life. But around 11 p.m., a message notification sounded, and I immediately felt irritated when I saw it was from her.

There had never been a time when I saw a message from her and didn't feel good... This was the first time, and I thought maybe I should block her.

.

**Ja:**

I'm downstairs. Come down, just talk to me one last time.

**Ja:**

Please.

I closed my eyes tightly, trying to argue with myself, my head aching with every thought. The words "please" from the sweet-faced person made me want to cry again, but I kept it all inside, taking a deep breath before letting the moment pass.

I spent about ten minutes pacing back and forth in my room before replying.

**Kee**:

Just go back.

**Ja**:

Please.

.

Just the word "please" from her made me soften, my heart feeling weak. I didn't even want to think about what would happen if I went down to see her. Why is this typewriter affecting me so much? How could I possibly overcome such magic? If it controls behavior like this, whoever owns it must be like a god.

Finally, I decided to go down to meet her. She was waiting in front of the shop. She must have just gotten the car after changing the tire. The sweetfaced person was carrying something that looked heavy, and I felt sorry for her, though I didn't show it. I simply opened the door and asked in a flat tone.

.

"What else?"

"I wants you to believe that I didn't use any magic to play with your feelings... I brought this for you."

She pushed past me into the shop and quickly placed what she had brought on the table, removing the cover from the bag. The typewriter, which had once been on the desk, was now placed prominently in the middle of my shop.

"Since you already know what the typewriter can do, I guess I don't need to explain much."

"Why bring it?"

"To show you that it doesn't make anyone love anyone else. It can create situations, yes, but the feelings that came out of it came from us."

"Enough. You don't need to do this. Just take it back, write your novel, and find a new character for yourself. That would be better."

"No."

"..."

"You're the last character Ja wants to end with a happy ending... Ja's feelings are real."

"Why would you love me? We've never known each other. What makes you feel so strongly about me? Stop messing with me, and take this typewriter back with you. Without it, you can't control anyone's life. The novel won't end properly."

I said, sneering in a contemptuous way.

"What if I takes revenge and creates a situation where you end up in trouble? What will you do?"

"Do whatever you want."

"You don't know what I capable of."

"It's fine, it will be yours."

"They're not mine! Now take it back. Take it!"

I lifted the heavy typewriter and tried to return it, but Ja refused to take it. I licked my lips in annoyance.

"If you don't take it, I will throw it on the floor."

"Go ahead. I don't want to use it anymore either."

"Don't challenge me."

"Take it then."

Ja turned to leave the shop, and I made sure she saw that everything I said was true. The first thing I did was drop the typewriter from my hands, letting it crash to the floor with a loud bang!

Small parts of the machine scattered in all directions. The sweet-faced person froze in place, then turned to look at the typewriter before locking eyes with me.

"I told you would throw it on the floor, and I did. So when I says not to ever show your face again..."

"..."

"It's the truth!"

# Chapter 21: The Visitor

**All the broken hearts in the world still beat**

**Let's not make it harder than it has to be**

.

**"People who have had their hearts broken still have hearts that keep beating. Don’t make it harder than it needs to be. (It’s just part of life.)"**

.

I’ve been playing the song "Nin" on repeat for over a month now. Life goes on. I’m heartbroken, everyone knows, but nothing has changed. Others continue with their lives as usual. My friends are still fighting with their partner. Phao still comes to work part-time, just like before.

Nothing happened. So why should I be drowning in sorrow?

When my friends were heartbroken, I always told them, "Your sadness might feel like the end of the world, but to others, it’s just annoying." People will sympathize for a moment, then go back to their own lives. I had to follow my own advice, crying won’t fix anything. What I needed to handle was my own heart and thoughts.

*Did I suddenly turn into a monk?*

Anyway, let’s change the subject. Even though my love life fell apart, good things have come in its place. For example, the drama that just finished airing became a huge hit, and all the filming locations, including my café, got a surge in popularity.

The café was already doing well, now people are lining up to take pictures. I’m selling nearly 200 cups of coffee a day, enough to cover my bills and keep me afloat. Oh, and not to mention, Mom just won third prize in the lottery recently. What a luck!

"Mom, what are you doing?"

I stared at her, shocked, as she licked her lottery ticket so hard the ink was almost smudged. Her complete lack of elegance left me speechless.

"I’m marking it with my DNA. If someone steals it, they can’t deny it’s mine."

"If you keep licking it like that, you might get cancer before you even get the money. The ink will fade!"

"Can it fade?"

I rolled my eyes dramatically and shook my head in disbelief. Finally, Mom put the lottery ticket into a clear plastic bag and carefully placed it in her purse, treating it like a precious treasure.

"How much are you going to share with me, Mom?"

"Why would I share?"

"Because I’m your child."

"I don’t remember having a child."

Mom’s temporary memory loss conveniently acted up whenever there was money involved. I laughed dryly and shrugged.

"Fine, I don’t need it anyway. Business is booming for me lately."

"Arrogant, huh? Fine, I’ll give you 500."

"Wow, so much! I could build a house with that."

"Stop talking nonsense. Getting something is better than nothing. Anyway... are you planning to stay home permanently now?"

Mom’s sudden change of topic made me pause just as I was about to take a bite of food.

"Are you trying to kick me out already? When I moved out, you scolded me for wanting to stay with a guy. Now that I’m back, you’re asking this? What’s your deal, Mom?"

"I was just asking. No need to overreact. It’s good if you stay. At least we’ll have each other... or until you’re no longer sad."

"Sad about what? I’m not sad."

I straightened my posture and shook my head in denial.

"I’m cheerful, full of life, as bright as Channel 3’s entertainment news!"

"Being overly cheerful like this is just fake and overacting."

"Mom, you can’t call your own daughter fake!"

"I’m just saying. Look, I never interfere with your personal life, but this time, tell me, why did you two break up? Did Ja find someone else?"

"Do people always need a third party to break up?"

"If I were her, I’d probably find someone else. You’re only good-looking. Other than that, there's nothing good about you."

"Mom!!!"

"What? It’s true."

"That’s your daughter you’re talking about!"

"And she’s someone else’s daughter who saved me when I was attacked by dogs. Meanwhile, my own daughter stood there holding a bag of crabs, doing nothing because she was too dumbfounded."

"It was all destined! You were blinded by magic. Ugh, not talking to you anymore."

"Blaming others when it’s your own fault, huh? Fine, don’t talk to me. You’re so annoying. Just leave. I don’t even want to see your face!”

"Can I ask you something serious?"

"What?"

"Did you adopt me?"

My question made Mom fall silent, and I widened my eyes in shock.

"Really, Mom?!"

"No! I’m quiet because that question is too stupid to answer. Don’t waste my energy. Go away, you’re annoying."

I pouted, feeling annoyed, but Mom didn’t even try to comfort me. She was probably busy planning to cash in her lottery ticket, while I, as usual, had to open the café.

The café, once on the brink of failure, was now doing well, almost like it had been reborn. To put it bluntly, it felt like when bad things leave your life, good things take their place. Thinking of it that way helped me not feel too bad.

*Even without you…*

**"Every time I come here, there’s never a seat. *Sigh*."**

Ram, who now knows I’m "single," has started trying to impress me. How does he know? Well, he’s a friend of a friend on Facebook, and he added me. From there, we started talking, and he saw how heartbroken my status updates were.

Honestly, it feels kind of silly. Posting your pain on Facebook, even though it’s meant to be a platform for showing off wealth. Or maybe, deep down, I just wanted to let anyone waiting for a chance to approach me know I was available. And it worked... I caught one. A guy whose leg I accidentally caused to break once.

"The café is doing well, huh?"

"Yeah, it is."

"Can I go sit in your room then?"

"No way!"

I bared my teeth playfully and laughed, knowing he was just joking. If it happened, great, if not, no big deal.

"We’ve been talking for quite a while now, since you became single."

"And then what?"

"When are we going to go on a proper date like normal people? Dinner, a movie, some music... All I do is hang out at this café. I think I’m addicted to caffeine now,"

The handsome guy said, resting his chin on the counter, giving me a puppyeyed look.

"Oh, and I’m also addicted to the café owner."

"Ew,"

Phao’s voice cut in, making me turn and raise an eyebrow at her before giving a little smile, amused. Ram, on the other hand, laughed proudly at his own cheesy line, clearly unbothered by anyone’s reaction.

"So, what do you say? I’m asking you out as boldly and shamelessly as I can. Are you coming or not?"

"Well, since you were brave enough to ask, I guess I’ll be brave enough to go. What day?"

"Today! I’ll pick you up after work. We’ll go have dinner somewhere with a nice atmosphere. Then I’ll say sweet things to you until your heart starts racing. After that, I’ll drop you off at home, and you’ll invite me up to your

room—"

"And then I’ll kick you out and tell you to go home and sleep. Dream on!"

"Oh, come on, just go along with it. Fine, it’s settled then. I’ll pick you up this evening."

"Pick me up at my house instead. I need to go home first to shower and get ready."

"Whatever you say. But I don’t know where your house is. Send me the location, okay?"

"Can I send a picture of a fish instead?"

"Don’t use jokes like that—it’s so lame."

"About as lame as your 'addicted to the café owner' line."

"I’m not addicted to the café owner. I’m addicted to the..."

"Stop it!"

Ram’s playful attitude never goes away. As for me, I’m used to having friends who are just as mischievous, so it doesn’t bother me much. But I still act a little shy and playful, just to look like someone being wooed.

After Ram left, Phao, who had been quiet the whole time, glanced at me while wiping a glass.

"What?"

"Have you broken up with that writer?"

"Which writer?"

I pretended not to know who she was talking about, trying to erase her from my mind, or at least act like Ja never existed.

"I’m leaving a bit early today, so please close the shop for me."

"You always change the subject."

As I said, I left work early and took a motorcycle taxi back to my mom’s house. There were times I thought about buying a car, but I didn’t know where I would park it. If I parked it in front of my café, there wouldn’t be any space left for customers.

When I calculated the daily cost of taking a motorcycle taxi, it’s like paying for three green tea frappes a day. Is it worth it? I honestly don’t know. I’m still deciding whether I should buy a car or not.

As I stared absentmindedly at the traffic on the road, time passed quickly, and I arrived home. The house lights were brightly lit, and I tilted my head slightly, curious, before stepping inside. There, sitting on the living room sofa, was Mom’s guest. Mom was probably out back, and I locked eyes with Ja.

Neither of us said a word. My heart pounded like a drum and felt like it was about to explode, but I had to act like I didn’t feel anything, even though I was pretty sure I was about to faint.

"Mom... Mom!!!"

"Why are you yelling like that? Do you think this house is a stadium? One call is enough, I can hear you."

Mom came out carrying a variety of dishes and placed them on the dining table, clicking her tongue.

"Why are you home so early today?"

"I came back to shower and get ready."

I crossed my arms slightly, then realized I should say something instead of looking like a fool.

"I have a date."

"Oh, really? So you won’t be having dinner with us tonight?"

"That’s right."

"Then go ahead. I’ll have dinner with Ja."

Mom completely ignored me, so I stomped my feet loudly as I headed upstairs. But before I could go far, her voice called out, stopping me. It made me smile a little, though, because I’d been itching to announce who I was going on a date with, just to make sure a certain someone heard it.

"So, who’s your date? Do I know him?"

"You do. Ram, your favorite."

"He’s not my favorite anymore. Anyway, go wherever you want. Don’t hurry back. I don’t want to see your face."

"Mom! I’m your daughter!"

"I adopted you."

"Just watch, Kee will put you in a nursing home someday."

"Good thing I’ve already written my will to donate everything to the government."

"Ahhh!"

I lifted my chin and marched upstairs in frustration. Laughter from Mom echoed from downstairs, making me pause and peek down. I saw her happily chatting and eating with Ja, looking so cheerful, unlike the typical mother in a novel who’s supposed to love her own child more than anyone else. What is this?

Mom’s under a spell, I can’t accept it!

I showered and got dressed, but my thoughts kept drifting to the people downstairs. It had been months since we’d last seen each other, and I thought I’d finally moved on. But then she showed up, silent as ever, without saying a single word. It made me restless. Even when she heard I was going on a date, she didn’t react at all. She probably doesn’t feel anything.

Fine. I don’t feel anything either.

Around 7 p.m., Ram called to say he was almost at the address I sent him and told me to come down. I dressed as if I were heading to walk the red carpet at Cannes. My confidence was at an all-time high. With a face full of expensive makeup, I was sure I had nothing to be embarrassed about. Until Mom made a comment.

"Are you going to perform at a cabaret show?"

"Mom!"

A laugh slipped out, this time from Ja, though it was a bit off-timing. I glanced at her as she quickly raised her hand to cover her mouth, but when she noticed me looking, she put on a neutral expression like nothing had happened.

As I said, nothing can shake my confidence, not even my mom.

"I don’t care what anyone says because I’ve already approved this look in the magic mirror. Tonight, I’m going to have fun, and who knows, I might even come back with someone to give you a grandchild!" "How can someone as bold as you be my child?"

"Are you trying to say you married Dad before you did it?"

"That wasn’t bold. That was what they call love you just can’t resist."

"Whatever."

I walked out of the house, but I couldn’t help sneaking a glance at Ja. She was still sitting there, calm and showing no emotion. Fine. If she doesn’t feel anything, then I won’t either. Tonight, I’ll go out and have fun, fun, fun, until the whole world knows about it!

"Why are you standing outside like you’re in a music video? There are so many mosquitoes!"

"Ram is coming to pick me up. He told me to wait here."

"Wow, is it that serious?"

The headlights of a car shone toward the gate, and I knew it must be Ram. I turned to Mom and raised an eyebrow at her.

"Don’t wait up for me tonight. I might come back late or..."

I glanced at Ja and shrugged,

"Not come back at all."

"I’ll hit you with a cane if you don’t come home!"

My mom bared her teeth playfully. Even though she knew I was grown up now, she was still a mom, always teasing me but still worrying about me. Even if this guy was someone she had once introduced to me herself, she couldn’t help but be concerned.

I walked to the front door to open it for Ram to park his car. But instead of parking, the handsome guy got out of the car, leaned on the gate, and waved excitedly.

"I'm here! Did you wait long?"

"Not at all. You came right on time, like you could read my mind."

"Really? Oh, what the....?"

Ram froze mid-sentence, glancing down at his side. His face quickly turned pale as if he had seen a ghost.

"What are you doing here? Get out, ahhh!"

The pack of dogs that had chased Mom before suddenly appeared, barking loudly. Without warning, they started chasing Ram, who panicked and bolted away from the car. I stood there, mouth wide open, watching him run faster than I thought humanly possible.

Hearing the commotion, Mom and Ja came out to see what was happening, both looking just as shocked as I was.

"These dogs again? I thought they disappeared a while ago,"

Mom said, observing the scene and shaking her head.

"What kind of man is scared of dogs? Look at Ja, she stood calmly in the middle of the pack and made them her buddies."

"Is this the time to praise her, Mom?"

I said to my mom, feeling annoyed. Then I looked at Ja, who said nothing, and asked suspiciously,

"This is your work, isn’t it?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Come here!"

I grabbed Ja’s arm and pulled her into the house so we could talk alone. If we talked with Mom there, she would just keep asking what kind of nonsense I was saying about magic and typewriters.

"You wanted this to happen, didn’t you?"

"I didn’t do anything."

"If you didn’t do anything, then why did this happen? Why did it have to be today? You just happened to meet my mom, and suddenly the dogs are chasing Ram, on the day I’m going on a date?"

"I really don’t know anything! The typewriter is with you. How could I write something like that?"

"Don’t lie! Maybe you have another typewriter!"

I took a deep breath.

"We haven’t seen each other for months, and the moment we meet, something like this happens. What do you expect me to think? Is it because of you that my mom won the lottery too?"

"I really didn’t do anything! If someone could do all that, it must be yo—"

The sweet-faced girl stopped talking as soon as she saw me baring my teeth in frustration.

"Are you trying to say I wrote that my mom would win the lottery, that she’d run into you, that she’d bring you home, that Ram would invite me on a date, that he’d get chased by dogs, and that I’d wear this cabaret outfit for no reason?"

"Th-that’s not exactly what I meant."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I mean... you look beautiful today. Your outfit is more suited for walking the runway."

“...”

“...”

The two of us went quiet for a long time. I was still angry, but when I heard that, the fire inside me suddenly died down. Still, I pretended to be upset and let out a sigh.

"Now that you’re here, take the typewriter with you. It’s cluttering up the house."

"Keep it at your place. If anything happens, you’ll say I caused it again."

"If I keep it, then you’ll say I wrote it! This stupid typewriter is useless, it’s heavy and just takes up space."

I licked my lips out of habit, something I always do when I’m annoyed.

"Why is nothing going my way today? My date got canceled, I got all dressed up for nothing, and now I’m starving."

"Your mom bought so much food. Want me to get some for you? I’ll dish it out."

"This is my house!"

"It’s my house! Didn’t I already say I wrote my will to donate it all to the government?"

Mom, who appeared out of nowhere and overheard, chimed in as if siding with Ja to save her from my complaints.

"She’s inviting you to eat, be thankful! I actually bought all that food to eat with Ja. You’re not included."

"Mom!"

"Stop calling me... Your boyfriend has probably run all the way to Bang NaTrat Road by now. He’s still not back yet. What kind of person is so scared of dogs chasing them?"

"Mom, you’re scared of dogs too. Don’t you remember? Otherwise, you wouldn’t have fallen in love with your ‘new daughter’ here for saving you."

"True. If it wasn’t for Ja, I’d probably need a rabies shot by now."

"You should know you’ve been under a spell, cursed even. She’s using magic on you!"

"That’s fine. I don’t mind. Want some food? I’ll serve it for you. You’re not going anywhere now anyway, right? That so-called date of yours?"

"Yes, I’ll eat. I’m starving!"

Now I've to eat alone because Mom and Ja had already finished. Why am I sitting here, dressed all fancy, eating in the house like this? Do I have nothing better to do than get all dolled up just to sit and eat dinner in my own house.

Ram just called earlier to say he ran into someone’s house in the neighborhood and was drenched in sweat. He said he wasn’t in any condition for a date, so we’d have to start over another time.

Yes, my date got ruined because of a dog chase. On top of that, my mom wasn’t impressed by the fact that he didn’t even try to stand his ground against the dogs. Meanwhile, Ja ended up being the hero of the day.

“Sit and chat with Ja for a while. I’m going to take a shower,” Mom said.

I opened my mouth to protest, but she pressed my shoulder firmly, as if to silently say, "Don’t fight". Something like, clear things up if there’s anything to clear. So I didn’t argue. I just sat there eating while Ja sat across from me.

Every second felt painfully slow, and I was starting to feel uncomfortable. Finally, Ja broke the silence.

“How have you been?”

“I’m fine.”

“You’ve lost weight.”

I looked at Ja, who had just made that comment, and laughed sarcastically.

"Hah. Are you trying to say I’ve lost weight because I couldn’t eat? That I’m heartbroken because of you?"

"N-no, I was just saying you’ve gotten thinner. I actually liked you better when you were chubby."

"And why would I have to gain weight just to please you?"

"Then stay thin. That’s fine too."

"Mm."

And then we went silent again. But the awkwardness of the silence was unbearable, so I put down my fork and knife and decided to speak first.

"You came here to see my mom, didn’t you?"

"No!"

Ja quickly denied, looking completely serious.

"I really ran into her by chance."

"There’s no such thing as coincidence in this world. You’ve already proven that, with that stupid typewriter."

"I don’t know why, but it really was a coincidence. Since you told me you didn’t want to see me anymore, I’ve been doing what you asked. I stopped going to the café, stopped going anywhere we used to go together, because I was scared we might run into each other."

"You’ve been avoiding me that much?"

I smirked, shrugging slightly.

"Well, at least you respected my request for once. After everything you’ve done. So, how’s life without the typewriter? Is it harder? No friends, no social life, no boyfriend?"

My sarcastic jab made Ja pause at the last part, and I frowned.

"Do you have a partner?"

"Well..."

**"You have a partner?"**

I almost slammed the table into pieces as I saw Ja hesitate. She quickly raised her hands, shaking them wildly, stumbling over her words in a frantic denial. But that wasn’t the response I wanted to hear.

"He’s not my partner. He’s just..."

"Him? A guy?"

"Let’s just say there’s nothing serious yet. You’re talking to someone too, aren’t you? This is the first time someone’s ever tried to court me..."

It’s the first time we’ve seen each other in almost a month, and all these strange and coincidental things have happened. I should’ve felt nothing, especially since the typewriter isn’t with Ja anymore. But instead, the old feelings are still lingering. It seems like they won’t go away anytime soon.

What is this? It’s not magic, is it?

She has someone new, while I still can’t move on. How is this fair to me? "Congratulations. I hope the person you’re talking to is a good one."

"Kee..."

"Just don’t fool him like you did me."

I walked away, heading upstairs and locked myself in my room, not caring whether Mom had finished her shower or not. I left the guest sitting downstairs alone.

Why is it only me feeling like this? No wonder she doesn’t feel anything at all.

I can’t accept this!

**Chapter 22: Who Is He?**

"What’s with that face? You come to meet your friends looking like you swallowed something awful. We haven’t seen each other in ages. You should bring a smile, not a sour look."

"I don’t have friends to share joy with! I only have friends to share my misery!"

I grabbed some peanuts and started eating them noisily. Today was the first time in months that all of us managed to meet up. Anyone with close friends knows how hard it is to plan a gathering. When one person is free, another is busy.

When one can come, another gets sick. It’s always something. But today, somehow, we all made it. No need for video calls this time. These days, getting everyone together like this feels almost impossible.

"You still haven’t moved on?"

Kam asked knowingly. She’s always been familiar with every detail of my love life.

"You’re usually the one who cries for three days, then moves on like nothing happened. You’re always so quick to get over things."

Her words only made me more irritated.

"I think I’ve already moved on."

"More like a weird-shaped circle."

"What the hell? Since when are circles weird-shaped?"

Kam frowned as she sipped her beer.

"It's my own idea. Why should I be like anyone else? I’m Son, after all,"

Said Son, my friend who had met Ja before but didn’t seem to care much about the situation.

"But honestly, I’m not surprised you two broke up. It felt strange from the start. I think you just wanted to try dating a woman, to see how it’s different from dating a man. When you realized it wasn’t for you, you both just drifted apart. It’s not a big deal."

"You think I’m that simple?"

I glared at my friend, feeling hurt that she didn’t take my feelings seriously and acted like my love wasn’t real.

"I’m just saying it how I see it. Maybe you’re just tired of love, tired of men, so you looked for comfort. But then you realized women are no better.

Why not try being alone for a while?

Maybe it’s better than being in a relationship. And if you get lonely, there’s always cucumbers. If that’s too small, there’s watermelons."

"You idiot, stop poking! It’s not a hole!"

I lifted my leg and lightly kicked my friend who was being inappropriate. The other two started laughing, and their laughter made me smile a little, even though I didn’t feel like it.

"This isn’t your first heartbreak, right? You’ll be okay soon. The fastest way to feel better is to find someone new. Hey, did you lose weight?"

Goi rested her chin on her hand and squinted at me like she was trying to figure something out.

"I think you’re thinner now. That’s a good thing! Heartbreak makes you look younger."

"Yeah, but if you lose weight and end up with saggy boobs, it’s no good," Sorn teased, looking at my chest.

"Sit up straight and show some confidence."

"You’re so annoying!"

"Hehe, just joking! Sit up, look good, and hold your head high. There are guys in this cafe. Maybe one of them will notice you. The best way to forget your sadness is to find someone new. That guy who was chasing you ran away because of the dogs, right? Well, there are no dogs here. Just pick someone!"

"People aren’t objects."

"I mean you can pick because you’re the prettiest one in our group!"

"Today your words are either sweet or sharp, huh?"

I crossed my legs and took a sip of my beer, deciding to follow my friends' advice. Not long after, a waiter brought a cocktail to our table, wrapped neatly with a napkin. Immediately, we all looked at the drink, sensing something interesting.

"This is from that table, for the lady,"

The waiter said politely.

I glanced at the drink and smirked a little.

"Which one from that table sent this?"

"I'm not sure, Miss, but if you look over, maybe he’ll introduce himself," The waiter replied.

Hearing that, I turned to look. Everyone at the table pointed toward a man in a black shirt. His face was decent, and it seemed like his friends were trying to hype him up. My friends, meanwhile, gathered close and made faces at the scene.

"Seriously, Kee gets all the attention!"

Sorn couldn’t help but tease.

"Just a moment ago, you were cheering me on to find someone new. Now you're mocking me?"

I said, raising an eyebrow.

"It’s true, but I just can’t help teasing. What kind of good karma do you have, Kee? Why do you always attract attention wherever you go?"

"You’re the only one in the group who’s single right now, no boyfriend or girlfriend."

"There you go, your future boyfriend. He’s already treating you to a drink. Show some appreciation!"

I kept looking at the drink on the table, acting reserved. My head was full of thoughts as I glanced back at the man my friends were pointing to, observing him more carefully.

Is it him?

Not bad, really. But he’s just… never mind. Thinking that, I picked up the drink and raised the glass toward the table to show I accepted the gesture.

His friends then pointed at the napkin wrapped around the glass, hinting at something. Feeling curious, I pulled off the napkin and unfolded it to find a message written inside.

"Can I get your LINE ID for my friend?"

I read it, pursed my lips a little, and turned to my friends for their input.

"I don’t think that guy is hitting on you himself. Looks like his friends are teasing him."

"But if he really didn’t want to, his friends couldn’t have pushed him, right? There’s gotta be a little interest there. Just give him your LINE ID. It’s just chatting, not like you’re giving him your body. Chill, Kee!"

Kam nudged me playfully with her shoulder before asking a waiter for a pen to write down my number instead. Watching her do that, I pretended to scowl, but honestly, I wasn’t too serious about it.

"Do you remember my number? Even I can’t remember my own number."

"Do you ever give your number to anyone yourself? It’s always us who do it for you!"

Kam snorted in mock annoyance.

"And it’s not just me. These two here know your number by heart too, Kee."

"Wow, am I that popular? Seems like people ask for my number a lot!"

I tossed my hair dramatically like I was a Sunsilk commercial model, with Thomas Taw wiped my hair.

"Fine, do whatever you want."

In the end, I let my friends hand over my number. Not long after, the guy added me on LINE but didn’t send a message right away. I browsed through his profile and photos, zooming in to get a closer look, until one of my friends flicked water at my face lightly to snap me out of it.

"What are you doing, Kee? Staring at his photo like you're ready to spit venom. Is he that bad-looking?"

Son leaned over to peek at the picture.

"He’s not bad-looking at all. What’s his name?"

"Touch."

"Touch? Like the dancer?"

"You’re showing your age, Son,"

Kam gave her a disapproving look, pretending to be horrified.

"I forgot someone named Touch Na Takuatung even existed."

"Forgot, huh? But why would we need a dancer? What we really need is someone flexible... you know what I mean."

Son kept joking around until I yanked her hair lightly in annoyance.

"Stop being gross."

"Fine, fine. Anyway, you should message him first."

"Why should I? He’s the one who made the first move."

"If you're not going to message him, I will."

"You wouldn’t dare!"

Son snatched my phone and sent a sticker as a playful tease. I crossed my arms, fuming silently, not wanting to make a scene in front of the other table. Not long after, the guy responded with a message.

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**Touch:**

Hi there, sorry if it seemed like I was bothering you. My friends were just messing around.

**Kee:**

So, you're not flirting with me, right?

“Sonnnn!!!”

I raised my voice when my friend replied like that. All three of them were laughing and making a fuss, clearly amused, while I could only glare at them, unable to do anything about it.

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**Touch:**

What if I am flirting?

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Son read the message aloud, making me glance over at his table and smirk. This world is ridiculous. Is it really this easy? How is this any different from swiping on Tinder?

"Give me that!"

I snatched the phone back and started typing my own reply while my nosy friends leaned in to see what I was going to say.

**Kee:**

Try it, and we’ll find out.

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My friends shot me annoyed looks, pursing their lips in irritation. Kam leaned back against the sofa and teased me in a mocking tone.

“You really know how to play the game, huh? Acting all uninterested at first, but when you type, your flirting is even smoother than ours.”

“You guys don’t know anything.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing.”

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When I arrived, I was alone, but on my way back, I had someone driving me home. For safety, I dragged Son along to stay over at my house, so I wouldn’t be alone on the ride.

The whole way, Touch kept stealing glances at me, too shy to start a conversation. I, being used to situations like this, took the lead and struck up a conversation, my friendly personality guiding the way.

“So shy like this, have you ever had a girlfriend?”

I asked directly.

“Wow, so bold!”

Son teased me softly, making Touch even more tense.

“Relax,”

I said, trying to ease the atmosphere.

“Driving a girl home and using up your gas, but not talking at all, you’re not getting anything out of this.”

“I’m really not good at this kind of thing,”

Touch admitted.

“Are you doing this because your friends dared you, or do you actually like me?”

“My friends dared me,” he replied.

"But you still drove me home, didn’t you?"

I could tell he had good intentions, but he seemed inexperienced in matters like this.

“Let me rephrase my earlier question. Have you ever had a girlfriend?” “No, never.”

“Do you have anyone you’re talking to now?”

“Well... yes, I’m talking to someone.”

“But you still drove me home. You’re quietly flirty, aren’t you?”

“It’s not like that. I just wanted to apologize for what my friends…”

I waved my hand to stop him and laughed lightly to keep the mood casual.

“It’s okay. If you’re not trying to flirt, that’s fine. At least we can be friends.

There’s nothing to lose. By the way, who are you? I mean, what do you do? Who are your parents? Hmm… and is this car on a loan?”

“Wow, Kee, is this a job interview? You’re scaring him with all these questions,”

Son teased, reaching out to pinch me, but I swatted her hand away and laughed.

“Well, aren’t we friends? I’m just asking as a friend. Besides, there’s nothing to be nervous about, it’s just getting to know each other. But if you’re shy, I’ll introduce myself first. I own a coffee shop. I’ve been running it for three or four months now, and it’s doing pretty well. I’m looking for someone who’s compatible, someone I can talk to easily. They don’t need to be rich, but they can’t depend on me financially. Most importantly, they have to be honest and not lie.”

“...”

“And you? Who are you?”

“I’m an interior designer. My salary is okay, not a lot, but enough. I paid for my car in cash, no loan. And I’d never depend on a woman for money.”

“Alright, then we can talk. This is my house right up ahead.”

I pointed to my front gate and lightly tapped the back of his hand resting on the gear shift. It was a subtle way of signaling or flirting just a bit to let him know I wasn’t too hard to approach if he wanted to get to know me better.

“Thank you, Mr. Interior Designer.”

His flushed face and red ears made me chuckle softly as I stepped out of the car. He wasn’t much of a talker, and while that slightly annoyed me, it also amused me. As I waved goodbye and thanked him with a small bow, the shy designer rolled down his window, pursing his lips as if trying to say something.

The shy guy clearly wanted to say something, struggling to push the words past his embarrassment.

“Can I message you on Line?”

I gave a small smirk, almost letting out a playful tsk before nodding.

“Sure. Let me know when you get home so I’ll know you’re safe.” “Okay,” he replied.

Touch drove off, Son and I stood at the gate, watching his car until it disappeared from sight. My mischievous friend turned to glance at me, raising an eyebrow suspiciously, arms crossed. She didn’t say anything at first, forcing me to break the silence.

“What? Why are you looking at me like that?”

“You were flirting way too much. It was like you wanted him to text you back. Usually, you’re so hard to impress. What’s up with that?”

“Well, didn’t you just encourage me?”

“No, this feels different. I don’t sense your usual ‘flirt-to-play’ energy.

There’s something else, and I can’t quite put my finger on it—ow!”

I reached out and lightly shoved my friend’s face, making her stumble back, then walked into the house.

“You’re so dramatic. I was just flirting a little for fun. He seems like a shy guy who doesn’t know what he’s doing, so I gave him a little push. If I didn’t tease him, do you think he’d have the guts to ask if he could message me on Line?”

“Do you like him?”

“He’s not bad. If things go well, I might give it a shot.”

With my hands in my pockets, I strolled back into the house feeling relaxed. Thinking about it... this whole thing is kind of fun.

.

Since that day, Touch has stayed in contact with me. He’s not much of a talker, wants to chat but never knows what to say. I often laugh at the stickers he sends. One day, I decided to ignore his message just to see what would happen.

Because I wanted to see what he would do, and it worked. He actually called me, pretending to ask if he should switch phone carriers. In reality, he was checking if I had blocked him since I hadn’t responded to his messages.

Shy guys are so easy to figure out. It’s women, on the other hand, that I can never read. Maybe being mysterious is their charm.

Even though he said we were just talking as friends, I’ve been through enough relationships to know better. I could tell there was more to it than that. Honestly, I was watching to see how much effort he’d put into staying in touch with me. Eventually, I decided to invite him to my café.

“If it’s inconvenient, don’t worry about it. You might already have plans.”

“Actually, I do have plans… but…”

His hesitation made me ask,

“Is it with the person you’ve been talking to?”

"..."

"That’s fine. You can bring them to the café too. After all, we’re just friends, right?”

“Uh… would that be okay?”

“Or are we not friends?”

I replied, which made him hesitate before finally agreeing.

“Alright, see you there.”

It almost felt like I was forcing him to come, but in reality, I just wanted to see if he would choose to show up or not. It seemed like I had regained control of this dynamic. Funny, isn’t it?

When I was dating that woman before, it felt like I was always the one at a disadvantage, bending over backward for her. I even surprised myself at how much I was willing to do.

Maybe with this guy, I don’t feel anything at all. Whether he stays or leaves, it doesn’t really matter to me. It’s relaxed, no pressure.

In other words… I don’t care.

Love really does make us smaller. Whoever loves more usually loses. She taught me that lesson.

.

My café was open as usual, but today I reserved a special table just for Touch. He came alone, without the person he mentioned he was "talking to," and it gave me a slight sense of victory. I stepped out to greet him and asked with a curious smile.

“Did you come alone? I thought you’d bring your girlfriend.”

“She’s not my girlfriend yet.”

*Hmph…*

I smirked a little, feeling smug, but quickly returned to my normal expression. I invited him to sit at the table and took his order. While chatting and laughing with him, my eyes accidentally caught someone across the street.

It was a petite woman with a sweet face I knew all too well, someone I could never forget. She was looking straight at me. I froze for a moment, silenced by her presence.

“Is something wrong?” Touch asked.

“I just saw someone I know. Excuse me for a moment.”

I stood up and walked out of the café. The moment Ja noticed I was heading her way, she quickly turned to leave, but I stopped her with a loud and firm voice.

“Stop right there! Don’t go anywhere!”

After crossing the street, I saw her standing there as I’d ordered, lips pressed tightly together.

“How did you even see me?”

“You may be small, but not that small. What are you doing around here?”

“I wanted to drink green tea.”

“We don’t sell that.”

“That’s why I didn’t go in... Anyway, I’ll leave now.”

“You didn’t come for green tea. What are you really doing here? Were you following me?”

She turned to face me and quickly shook her head in denial.

"No!"

"Then... I don't know what else to say."

I turned to head back, but Ja, looking flustered, called out to me.

"Is that all you're going to ask?"

"What else should I ask? I'm in the middle of a conversation with a friend."

"How do you know him?"

I paused for a moment and glanced at her, confused. She didn’t ask if I had a new boyfriend. Instead, she wanted to know how I knew him, as if curious about my connection to someone she seemed familiar with.

"You know my friend?"

"Well..."

"Is he your relative?"

"No."

"A friend? No, wait, you don’t have friends,"

I said, jumping to conclusions before something clicked in my mind.

"Is he the guy you’re 'talking to'?"

Ja’s silence told me everything. I looked between her and Touch, then let out a dry laugh.

"What a small world. Well, since you're already here, come inside. It's all our own people,"

I said, motioning toward the shop. Ja started to glare at me, her irritation showing as she grabbed my shirt collar, not roughly, though, like last time.

"Kee."

"What? Why are you grabbing my shirt? It’s getting wrinkled."

I tried to pry her hand off, but the determined look on her face made me stop moving.

"Say what you want to say. Why are you just staring?"

**"You used the typewriter, didn’t you?"**

# Chapter 23: Equality

Ja’s question made me let out a dry laugh before pushing her small frame back slightly.

"Why would I even do that?"

"You want to get revenge on me."

"If I don’t feel anything for you anymore, why would I waste my time on revenge?"

I leaned in closer, smirking as if to tease her.

"For someone like you, I don’t even have hate to spare. Don’t flatter yourself."

Her sweet face froze for a moment before tears welled up in her eyes. She quickly wiped them away with the back of her hand and turned her face aside. Honestly, I thought throwing harsh words at her would feel satisfying, but it didn’t. Instead, I felt guilty, though I couldn’t bring myself to do anything but stand still.

The silence between us felt unbearable, so I tried to break it with something, anything, that might fill the void.

"Since you're already here and wanted green tea, why not come inside? Kee will treat you,"

I said, adding quickly,

"As an acquaintance."

“.....”

"No need. I’m leaving," Ja replied.

The smaller woman turned as if to leave for real, and that irritated me even more.

"Is that guy really that important to you?"

I asked, my voice sharper than I intended.

"Didn’t you say you don’t feel anything?"

She countered, her eyebrow raised slightly.

"I’m asking because I’m curious. You came all this way just to watch him, didn’t you?"

I pressed. Her silence made me push further.

"Or were you here to spy on me?"

"Don’t flatter yourself,"

Ja shot back, her voice calm but cutting.

"You mean nothing to me now, just like I mean nothing to you. As for Touch, I’ll call him myself... I’ll tell him I know you, so he won’t get confused."

The concern in her voice as she mentioned explaining things to him made my veins feel like they would burst. Even though I said I didn’t feel anything anymore, my heart was pounding so hard it felt like it would explode from my chest.

She acted like she didn’t care about love, that her life revolved around her dog. But now, she was willing to go explain everything to that guy so he wouldn’t be confused?

“Tonight…”

I called out after her as she turned to leave again. Ja stopped mid-step, her body half-turned toward me, listening but avoiding direct eye contact.

“Take the typewriter back. It’s cluttering up my place.”

“If you’re so eager to return it, then fine, I’ll take it back. That’ll make things easier for me,”

She replied coldly, her voice steady. Then she walked away, leaving me fuming with rage.

I stood there for a moment, gathering my emotions, before heading back inside to join Touch, who was patiently waiting. I wasn’t sure if that little woman had really left or was just pretending. Either way, I had my own plans.

If I can’t move on, then she won’t either. She made her move before, now I’ll make mine. I’ll use every ounce of charm I have to return the favor!

“Sorry for disappearing for so long,”

I said with a polite smile as I sat back down with Touch.

“I ran into an old friend nearby and stopped to chat. How rude of me, huh?”

“Not at all,”

He replied, smiling warmly.

“It hasn't been that long. Your café is really popular, though. I’ve noticed customers coming in non-stop.”

“They’re here because of the drama,”

I explained, meeting his shy gaze with a playful smile as I propped my chin on my hand.

“Most of them just come to take photos, but they buy coffee out of courtesy. It’s a great way to boost sales.”

I explained, looking into the eyes of the shy person, resting my chin on my hands and acting interested. Touch blushed, his ears turning bright red.

“You’re really cute?”

“W-Why are you suddenly saying that? I don’t know how to respond…”

“It’s true. Your ears are so red. Can I touch them?”

“Huh?”

He looked confused.

“I just want to see if they feel warm, like I imagine,”

I teased, not waiting for permission before reaching out to gently touch his earlobe. I fiddled with it lightly, amused by how warm it felt under my fingers.

“Wow, so warm. Your blood circulation must be great. Oh—”

Touch, now completely flustered, grabbed my hand suddenly, making me yelp softly. His grip was firm, and though he seemed startled by his own actions, he didn’t let go immediately. He looked as if he was deep in thought, his face a mix of nerves and determination.

“For you… what kind of person am I?”

He asked, his voice quiet but serious.

“Hmm?”

His unclear question made me laugh a little. I tried to pull my hand back, but he held it tightly.

“What do you mean?”

“What am I to you?”

Instead of pulling my hand back, I held his hand, turned it over, and placed it palm up on the table. I gently tapped the middle of his palm with my finger. It looked playful, but I stayed calm. “What can you be? You’re just a friend.”

“I’ve never had a friend like this before.”

“And can I even be something else? You’re already talking to someone, right?”

I raised my finger, then leaned my chin on my hand.

“I’m worth more than being someone’s second choice. I also don’t get involved with people who belong to someone else. What do you expect from me with this question?”

“I…”

“Go sort out your situation first,”

I said, stopping him softly but clearly.

“Then come back and ask me this question again.”

"Yeah..."

"Or if it’s still not clear,"

I stood up, leaned closer to him, and whispered softly in his ear. I didn’t have to, but today the perfume I wore smelled just right, and I knew it could work on any man who had feelings for me. "Break up with her first, then we’ll talk."

.

Today, the coffee shop closed at its usual time, but what wasn’t usual was that I kept the lights on, waiting for someone I had an appointment with. She was coming to pick up the typewriter. Ja arrived about fifteen minutes after the shop had closed. By then, no one was there except me.

"I’m here to pick up the typewriter."

"It’s upstairs. I didn’t carry it down, it’s heavy. But if you can lift it, go ahead and take it,"

I replied.

"Alright."

Ja came in with a stiff demeanor, not saying much, but her tension was obvious. It might have been because of the heated exchange we had earlier in the day, and now that mood seemed to carry over.

She walked up the stairs to the second floor, knowing exactly where my bedroom was. She paused briefly in front of the room, staring at the door as if deep in thought, and sighed.

"What’s wrong?" I asked.

"Nothing,"

Ja replied as she brushed some dust off the table with her finger.

"You never sleep here, do you?"

"Not really," I admitted.

"And the typewriter? It’s always been here?"

"Yeah, of course. It’s heavy. Where else would I take it?"

"Everything in this room is covered in dust,"

Ja pointed out, her sharp eyes locking onto mine. "Except for the typewriter. There’s no dust on it at all."

She paused, suspicion creeping into her tone.

"You’ve been using it, haven’t you?"

"Like I said, I didn’t use it. Why would I use it? Oh, maybe to make a situation so Touch would come to see me, and then I could charm him? Something like that? Actually, it’s not a bad idea."

"Did you do it?"

"My charm doesn’t need a typewriter. All I have to do is reach out my hand, curl my finger, and he’ll follow me like a puppy—Ow! Why did you bite my finger? That hurts!"

I yelled as Ja bit my finger hard enough to leave a mark.

"Should I chew on it too?" "If you want to, go ahead!"

I said angrily.

"You already copy dogs to flirt with people, and now you bite like one too. You’re really something."

"And what about you? At least I don’t act like a cat."

"A cat? How do I act like a cat?"

"Stealing grilled fish! You can’t just stay still, can you? You always need someone by your side, like a thorn you can’t get rid of. You just broke up, and now you’re already lining up new guys one after another. Your mom is so kind and sweet. How did she end up with a daughter as wild as you?" "Are you calling me wild? While you steal all my boyfriends just to write your novels, what should I call someone like you?"

"Fuck you."

"What did you say?"

"Fuck you. I’m not arguing with you anymore. I’m here to take the typewriter and leave. No more arguments, no more talking. This will be the last time we see each other!"

The sweet-faced girl turned to grab the typewriter, but I grabbed her arm angrily.

"What the hell are you talking about? I should be the one saying that. You came into my life, made me lose myself, and then you moved on so easily, leaving me behind."

"Who left you? You’re the one who told me not to see you again."

"Since when did you ever listen? Have you ever thought about feeling sorry or making up for what you’ve done?"

"I don’t even know how to make up for it. You already have the typewriter, why don’t you just write something to make me crash my car and die? Stop being so sarcastic. It hurts!"

"It doesn’t hurt half as much as what I’m feeling."

"But you said you didn’t feel anything."

"If I didn’t feel anything, why would I be fighting with you like this? I’m holding onto you because I do feel something!"

I snapped, losing all control. I had planned to act like I didn’t care, but now I was like someone going through withdrawal, spilling all my emotions without holding back.

"Holding onto me? When did you ever hold onto me?"

"I made you come to pick up the typewriter, I made you come upstairs, I made you stay just so we could argue! I miss you!"

I clenched my hair in frustration, feeling like I was going insane.

"I had the typewriter fixed, and I’ve been typing on it every day. I keep writing, begging myself to hate you, to stop caring about you, but I can’t. I just can’t!"

"Kee..."

Ja looked stunned by what I said. My anger boiled over, and I threw the typewriter to the floor with a loud crash, the sound echoing through the room along with my fury.

"You got it fixed, so that means you really used it,"

She said, her voice trembling slightly.

"Yes, I used it! I wrote over and over to hate you. Hate, hate, hate!"

I pushed her against the wall on the other side of the room, pinning her by her shoulders so she couldn’t move.

"But the typewriter doesn’t affect on feelings, does it?"

"Exactly! That’s what makes me even angrier... so angry that I can’t forget you, not even for a second!"

My voice cracked as I shouted.

"If I hated you even a little, I would’ve written for your life to fall apart, for you to face nothing but misery. But no, nothing bad has happened to you! Instead, you’ve found a new guy, like it’s nothing. It makes me infuriating. So infuriating!"

I slammed my fist against the wall next to her ear, my anger trembling in my veins. Ja closed her eyes tightly, her lips quivering as though she was about to cry but trying to hold it back. Her voice, shaky like a broken record, came out softly.

"What... what did you write?"

"I wrote for my mom to win the third prize in the lottery."

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***I asked my mother to go to the market and feel like buying two sets of lottery tickets. Then, on the 16th, she checked the results online and found out she had won third prize.***

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"I wrote for my mom to bump into you and bring you home."

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***That day, she went to cash in her lottery winnings and coincidentally met Ja, inviting Ja over for dinner at our house.***

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"I wrote for Ram to ask me out that day so I could dress up nicely and let you see me.

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***It was the same day Ram came to the café to invite me to a nice dinner.***

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"I wrote for the dogs to chase Ram so I could stay home and have dinner with you."

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***But after Ram came to pick me up at the house, the same pack of dogs that chased my mom before went after Ram. Because of that, I couldn't go to dinner with him and ended up sitting at the table having dinner with Ja.***

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"I wants you to leave."

I had a hard time saying it. Actually, I didn’t need to tell this, but I don’t know why I felt like saying it out loud. Right now, I have no dignity left. Typewriter didn't help me feel better. I could not break free from its spell, and it seems like I am falling deeper into a hole that I dug, unable to climb out.

"And Touch... you..."

"Kee is the one who created the whole situation."

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***Kee has an appointment with old friends on the same day that Ja's man goes to that shop. On that day, Kee will look especially beautiful in the shop. Everyone will see her clearly, but no one will interfere, unless that person is Ja's man.***

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"I knows that typewriter won't make people fall in love with us. So, I have to do what you did to make the typewriter create all these coincidences, putting the spotlight and every light on come down to me, until it looks like I was standing on a stage. No matter who, they will only see me. And the person who will approach... has to be him.

"..."

"It must be Touch."

Touch is the one who was tricked by his friends to ask for my phone number. That was also something the typewriter created. But whether I can make the other person truly interested depends on me and how far I can take it... And a guy like Touch isn't hard for me.

"I love you so much and wants to get revenge on you!"

I grabbed Ja's chin with one hand. Not too hard, but enough to show my anger.

"I want you to feel pain. If I can take your boyfriend, then you will feel what I had felt all this time. But you... you care about how that man feels. You’re afraid he might get confused. What about me? In just one month, how can you care more about someone else than you do about me?"

"Ja doesn't feel anything."

"Exactly. You don’t feel! You have no heart!"

"I don't feel anything for him, but I feels something for you. I was jealous of you! Oh, come on!"

This time, the smaller person exploded with emotion and shoved my shoulder in frustration.

"Today, I saw you being all sweet with him. You held his ears, you held his hand, you whispered something. If you want revenge, you've already succeeded."

"You didn’t go back?"

"Yeah, I still secretly watches you, and I do it every day since the day you told me not to come and show my face. You wrote it, didn’t you? You forced me to come to you!"

"No... I didn’t write it."

"Then it means I came to you by myself. I watches you secretly every day with longing. Today, Touch suddenly canceled our meeting, and I didn’t say anything. I just lived my life normally, which means I came to secretly watch you. But today, you saw me!"

"....."

"Yes, I wanted you to know that I was watching you. You’re not the only one hurting! I'm hurting just as much as you, you idiot!"

The sweet-faced girl began to shout, then raised both hands to hit my chest. Though not hard, I could tell she was holding back.

"I'm in pain! Today, I will cry alone because of you, and planning to forget you by meeting you one last time. You don't know anything at all,"

She said, holding back her tears.

Then the small person cried, competing with me, as if we were in a battle to see who could cry louder, and the one who cried louder would win.

"I misses you."

"How can I believe what you're saying is true when you've been lying to me all along?"

"I misses you."

"Don’t say it."

I pulled myself away from the wall and turned my back, trying to be strong, even though the word "miss" was tearing me apart inside.

"I misses you."

The small one nudged my back with her head, just like before. I tried to walk away, but she followed me.

"Do you miss me?"

"I don’t want to hear it. I don’t want to hear it,"

I said, covering my ears. But the small one wrapped her arms around my waist, pressed her face against my shoulder, and spoke in a muffled voice.

"I miss you,"

Small hands began to slip inside my shirt collar while I covered my ears. Even though I knew what she was doing, I let her continue, feeling myself becoming drowsy.

"I miss you."

Her small lips near my neck began to make me feel weak. My initial resistance gradually softened. I tilted my neck, allowing her more access, before I could no longer resist and turned to face her, hearing the words:

"I miss you."

**"I miss you too.”**

As soon as I spoke, we quickly moved close to each other. Everything felt intense and urgent. We fell onto the nearby bed, with her positioned above me. I sat up first, beginning to remove her shirt until she was left in her undergarments. She looked adorable and determined, not wanting to lose. Now we were close, our skin lightly touching.

At the moment she was about to kiss me and take off her clothes, I used one hand to undo her hair tie. Her small hair fell down her back. I gently held her hair and lifted her face slightly, then spoke softly while giving her a light kiss on the cheek.

"Before things go further, there's something you should know. You might feel uncomfortable if I don't tell you."

"What?"

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***Today, she would come to my room. We would talk and understand each other, and eventually end up on the bed. From this point, I would be the one controlling everything, and she would have to surrender because she couldn't resist.***

***.***

"What we are doing right now... I had typed it down as well. The fact that you came on to me first and kept saying 'I miss you' must be because of the typewriter."

“.....”

"If you want to stop, you can stop."

# Chapter 24: Re-Write

"If you want to stop, you can stop."

My words were both teasing and challenging. I wanted to know how she would react if I told the truth. I wondered if she could resist the magic of this typing. After I spoke, the person on top of me looked down and met my eyes. Her husky voice made my heart beat fast.

"If you really want to stop, will you let me stop?"

"I'm not someone who likes to force myself. I say I use a typewriter." I said, moving my lips to her soft shoulder, now bare and teasing.

"Are you angry that our story is controlled? Because I was the one who wrote? It didn't happen naturally. I don't know if the feelings happening now are real or not."

"Like I said, typing can help create situations, but it can't force feelings."

This time, she grabbed my hair, forcing me to look up at her. Her other hand was touching my jaw playfully.

"You wrote that we would end up in bed. We might just fall asleep."

"So, do you want to sleep?"

"I wants to sleep after this,"

She pressed my face close to hers and seduced me by pushing her breasts into my mouth.

"Can you help me?"

"I won't give in easily, but... I just want to."

"Want to sleep?"

"I want you."

I quickly turned Ja onto the bed and started removing her clothes like someone who was hungry and desperate. It was a mix of love, passion, and desire, but It didn't feel bad. The moans from beneath me grew louder.

I felt a strong desire to be close to her, to become one. The scent of our connection filled the entire room, making me feel drunk, like someone who drank liquor too much.

She was my dream.

She was the fantasy I've always dreamed of.

There were many times, when I was alone in my room, I would rolling around on this bed. I would imagine what I might do if I had the chance. And today, that day has come - the day I could release the imagination I had been creating. Now, I could only hope how she would react, whether she would enjoy it or not.

"Don't do like the last time,"

Her husky voice said as I spread her legs. That day was when I was distracted, thinking about Khao Man Kai song (chicken rice). Thinking about it made me feel bad that I kept changing what I had written.

"Today is not like that day. But actually I have many questions in my head."

"This is not the time to ask questions. Finish it first... don't stop,"

The more she commanded, the more I wanted to tease and resist. I stopped all my actions, then dropped down beside her. This made Ja jump up and hit the bed, before taking control.

She jumped on me to keep the rhythm.

"Why are you being like this?"

"You deserve it for what you did to me. If you don't want to stop, you have to help yourself."

"Please don't do this,"

Her voice sounded like she was about to cry. The space between her legs was not different.

"Do something."

"What do you want to do?"

"I don't know."

"Try to follow your instincts. Have you never tried it yourself?"

My question was a bit bold and embarrassing for some. She looked away and bit her lip, unsure if she was shy to answer or if she had never done it before.

"Then I will teach you."

I lift my legs up and taught her the first lesson by having her sit on my lap, facing away from me, and whispered in her ear like a coach who wants the student to learn by herself.

"Move a little, and you will see that it feels good."

She seemed shy and hesitant, so I took the initiative and got her moving. That made her let out a small sound and start moving on her own. The strong smell from her body made me wet too, but I had to be patient and hold back because I wanted to teach her about lovemaking. And it kept rising to a high peak.

Her rising emotions made her start to quicken her movements and tense body until it became stiff, like someone who has completed their task and is ready to fall. I took advantage of that moment when she was unaware of what was about to happen and slowly inserted my finger into her body. That surprised her.

"W...what are you doing?"

"You'll know soon."

Just a single finger, hooked like a claw, made the slender body moan wildly. Her cries made me quicken the pace from slow to fast and harder, creating the sound of palms slapping against flesh. She was about to scream but instead thrust her hips in sync with my finger.

It wasn't long before she reached her climax again. I flipped her onto her back. The sweet-faced girl looked at me and raised her hand in a pleading gesture.

"That's enough, let me take a break first."

"Can I have it too?"

She didn't know what I was about to do, but she willingly spread her legs. I intertwined my legs with her flesh and pressed our hips together until we touched. The wetness of her recently broken piece combined with my own wetness from desire created the sound of water colliding.

We both moaned as if singing a duet. I rubbed harder, faster. The desire made me reach the finish line quickly, my flesh twitching and collapsing onto her body, drenched in sweat. Meanwhile, she embraced me and ran her hands over my back, which was covered in beads of sweat.

"If I had known it would be this good, I would have given in to you from the start and it would have been over."

After finishing her words, she slowly closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep. As for me, I kissed her temple lightly and closed my eyes to rest as well.

It's really nice to finish it all together like this.....

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**"I feel like I am about to die."**

"Then tonight you might die several times. I still haven't finished having fun with you."

I said it jokingly, and that was enough to make both of us laugh a bit. After lying there staring at each other for a while, I reached out to brush away the sweat-drenched strands of hair, feeling both love and anger, why everything had to be so difficult.

"Will you write a love scene for us in your novel?"

I asked the Chloe project novel, and that made Ja nod shyly.

"A novel without a love scene is like readers not getting a bonus. It may seem unimportant, but it is important."

"And in the last two stories, did you give bonuses to the readers?"

"I didn't put it in because I intends to combine it into one volume with this story."

"So that means you had a love scene with the last heroine in the book, right?"

"Um the last one,"

Ja said, rushing over to pinch my lips slightly, then squeezing in to hug me tightly with closed eyes, looking exhausted.

"Can we stop fighting? I wants to stay like this with you for a long time." "What you did to me, isn't that a fight?"

"I've already admitted my mistake. I've given myself to you. I almost laid my love at your feet, Kee."

Her voice gradually faded as if she were drifting off to sleep, which I could understand because the time we spent making love was so long, not to mention all the little things I teased her about.

"We skipped many steps of being in love. It would be better if we two really tried to flirt a little more seriously."

"Flirting? Whatever."

"You are flirting with me."

"I wonder if I'll succeed in courting you."

"I understand what you're saying."

Now she is asleep, but I am still awake, staring at the ceiling. Does this mean the story she wrote about me is finished? The main characters are together now, so what else could happen?

No... it should be rewritten. We skipped too many steps. We should add more moments to the story. I closed my eyes and hugged her tightly, as if afraid that when I wake up, everything that happened before would just be a dream.

And the thing that often makes me unsure about love and becomes an obstacle to my thoughts is that typewriter.

I think I really need to break it.

After the hormones were released, my mind came back again. After we both slept for a while, now we were still lying in bed, looking at the ceiling quietly like people who have their own thoughts. When we were doing it, it was like a man who wanted a woman, who would do anything to hear her say she loves him, even if it meant lying down at her feet. But once everything was over, it became embarrassing, and I kept thinking about what I had done.

Oh... we did quite a lot.

But the two of us didn't like the people in dramas who, after having sex, just go their separate ways. After waking up, they act all upset, like getting drunk and then sober again. Because before, it was all about lust. Even though it was all because of the typewriter, I still insisted on doing it. I think... we need to talk about what happened, but how should I start?

"Before I fell asleep, you said you wanted Ja to court you, right?"

Not only did we both become silent at the same time, but we also thought of speaking at the same time. But the sweet-faced person was a little quicker and brought this up. I swallowed and nodded a little.

"Mm, I said that."

"Then you don't hate me anymore?"

"People who are angry each other don't end up like this, with no clothes on."

"..."

"..."

"Ha ha."

"Ha ha."

Then we both started laughing awkwardly. The sweet-faced person pulled the blanket over her face and laughed non-stop until I had to turn and pull it down.

"Why cover your face? I likes watching you laugh. It's so refreshing."

"I don't know. I feel kind of embrassed somehow."

"Do you like it?"

This time I turned to face Ja and propped my elbow, looking at the sweetfaced person who was also turning to meet my gaze.

"Like what? Like you or like what we did just now?"

"No matter which one you answer, I feel good."

"Then I'll take both answers."

"Do you want it to happen again?"

"Crazy."

Ja raised her hand and pushed my shoulder a little.

"You're acting like I want to do it alone."

"Do you know how long it takes for many couples to end up like this? They have to date for a long time. We're not the type of couple that just types it out to get what we want."

I said it in a cool way before offering a suggestion.

"We should stop using the typewriter and do everything the right way. Love has its ups and downs, so just let it be."

"Whatever you say."

"But you have to be the one to court me. Start from the beginning. Approach me like you did before but change the method a little. Think of it as rewriting the story."

"Wow, now you're like the director... How will I know you're not using the typewriter anymore?"

The sweet-faced person nodded toward the typewriter, worried that I might cheat.

"Don't worry, Kee will take it to my mom's house and keep it in the storage room. Now neither you nor Kee can use it. Once you win me over, then you can take it back."

"Fine."

After I finished speaking, Ja pulled the blanket and got up like she were looking for clothes. I then pulled her back down to sit and looked at her, confused.

"Where are you going?"

"Going home, of course. I have to make things right, don't I?"

"Let's make it right tomorrow."

I pulled the sweet-faced person back to bed and took the blanket off, then used my body as a blanket instead.

"Since we've already crossed the line today, what's the harm in crossing it a little more?"

"Is that okay?"

Ja glanced at me for a moment before making a mischievous face.

"Did you type something and not tell me yet?"

"Like what?"

"Something like we end up in bed and then have a second round or something."

"I didn't write that."

"That's strange."

"Strange how?"

The sweet-faced person wrapped their legs around me to keep me still and whispered in my ear seductively.

"I'm in the mood again."

"See? The typewriter isn't necessary for us."

.

It seemed like everything was falling into place. When we woke up in the morning, Ja and I took a shower, then carried the typewriter back to my mom's house. I took Ja to the storage room at the very back.

It was a room mostly full of broken stuff, but my mom couldn't bring herself to throw it away, so she kept it there, making it all messy. The sweet-faced person looked around the room and sneezed a little, like someone allergic to dust.

"Wow, you never clean this room?"

"Yeah, I barely ever open this room. I just keep it here, it's safe."

"But it's at your house. How can I be sure you're not using it?"

"Even if I did use it, do you have the right to protest? Besides, I don't even know why I would use it. You don't have anyone. If I give it to you, you'll steal my boyfriend."

"Are you looking down on me? Did you forget?"

The sweet-faced person made a slightly teasing face, almost showing off. I stopped thinking for a moment, then elbowed her on the arm playfully, feeling a bit annoyed.

"Oh, the guy you're talking to seems to be getting a little interested in you.

Don't forget that."

"You're not much better than me either. You steal other people's boyfriends too."

"Is he your boyfriend now?"

I asked.

"What have you and Touch done already?"

I reached out and poked her waist, making the smaller person flinch a little and giggle.

"Answer me."

"I won't tell you, Bear."

"Have you kissed yet?"

"I won't tell you, pfft, hehe... this is ticklish."

"Then I will take that kiss back."

"How are you going to take it back?"

"Go kiss him back."

"You're so naughty!"

Ja reached out to poke my waist, and now it turned into us teasing each other back and forth. Our laughter made my mom peek her head in, placing her hand on her chest.

"You scared me! I thought a ghost was running around. What are you two doing so early?"

"We're just putting things away."

"Are you two getting along now?"

My mom looked as if she wasn't paying much attention, almost like she had already expected that Ja and I wouldn't stay mad for long.

"And what are you putting away?"

"Mom, are you just asking for the sake of it? You didn't even wait for me to answer the first question before asking the second."

"Annoying. Just answer whatever you want."

"One, we're getting along now. Two, we're putting the typewriter away."

"A typewriter? Wow, I haven't heard that word in ages, like VHS tapes and cassettes. Why are you putting it away? Is it broken?"

Mom walked in to take a look, pulling off the cover I had used to wrap it.

"If it's broken, why not get it repaired?"

"No, it's heavy. Besides, we don't use it anymore. Let's get out of here, Mom. It's dusty."

I pushed Mom out of the storage room. Once the three of us were away from the dusty area, I started nudging Ja toward the car.

"As for you, you have something to do today."

"What is it?"

"You're supposed to court me. You haven't won me over yet."

Mom, hearing that, rolled her eyes slightly.

"What nonsense are you two playing at? First, you're tickling each other like little ghost children in the backyard, and now you're telling the other to court you? What are you even talking about?" "I still mad at Ja, so I told Ja to court me."

"No need for that, Ja. This one isn't worth the effort. Just give her 200 baht, and she'll back home. Go back to your life, find a real husband, and settle down. You're beautiful, talented, and a novelist. You can have anyone you want, even Prince William!"

"Mom, I'm your child!"

I snapped at my mom, who always seemed to see me as a lump of dirt, fragile, worthless, and meaningless. But Ja simply smiled at her and shook her head before replying, making me so embarrassed I had to hide behind my mom, something I had never done before.

"I have to court her, Mom. She's the only one in this world. I happen to like her a lot and don't want to lose her."

It was such a romantic statement that I didn't know how to react. The sweetfaced person tilted her head to look at me hiding behind my mom and raised an eyebrow with a smirk.

"I'm flirting with you right now, see? Is that a good thing?"

"I...."

Ugh, this girl is making me lose my composure.

**"This time, I'm serious. You better be ready!"**

# Chapter 25 : The Writer's Speech

"Khun Kee, a customer asked me to give this to you."

Phao handed me a freshly made green tea frappe with a teasing smile. I glanced at my junior, who gestured toward Ja sitting in the same corner, then shrugged slightly with an air of arrogance.

"I don't drink green tea."

"The customer said if you don't drink it, you should return it to her by yourself. What kind of game are you playing... hard to get?"

"Talking too much."

I took the green tea in my hand and walked over to serve it to Ja, who was waiting. At first, I planned to act hard to get and not greet her myself, playing the sulking role so I'd be courted. But the sweet-faced one still found a way to make me come to the table.

"I don't drink green tea."

"What can I do? This place doesn't have milk tea."

"Do you know I likes milk tea?"

"I knows everything about you."

"But you still insist on bringing green tea for me."

"To make you serve it to me by yourself. Oh... playing hard to get but still falling for it. Actually, you wanted to talk to me, didn't you?" "Narcissistic."

"Let's sit down with me."

"..."

"A customer asks you to sit and you won't? I might complain to the owner."

"I am the owner."

"Your face is beautiful but so arrogant. If you continue like this, I'll just serve myself."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you remember last night when I served myself? At first, I didn't know how, and you taught me."

The sweet-faced one rested her chin on her hand, looking at me with an adorably playful expression.

"If I do it alone, you won't have fun, because now I know how to do it."

I pulled out a chair and sat across from her immediately, making her look a little surprised before covering her mouth to laugh. Damn it. The moment she threatened to not let me have fun, I panicked and sat down like a dog obeying its owner. The arrogance I tried to maintain vanished in an instant. How did I end up like this?

"What kind of courting is this? It feels more like I'm being ordered around."

"I didn't order you to do anything. Can't I just want to be close to you?"

After saying that, Ja lightly brushed her foot against mine under the table, sending shivers throughout my body.

"I'll admit, since I went home to shower and get dressed, all I've been thinking about is you."

"..."

"Only the sound of your voice."

"..."

"Only your scent."

"..."

"I want you again."

"Where did you even learn to talk like this?"

"From novels, hehe,"

The sweet-faced one confessed and laughed adorably right away.

"I used to imagine lines like these while reading romance novels, wondering if people really say things like this in real life. It's like something the writer forces in to make it sound elegant. But when I actually tried saying it... it's not bad."

"It's embarrassing just to hear it."

"But it looks like you like it... How about we watch a movie after work?"

Suddenly, she changed the subject so quickly that I raised my eyebrows a little, caught off guard.

"What's this? From romance straight to puppy love? When will I ever catch up to you?"

"Didn't you take the lead yesterday in so many ways?"

Ja lightly tapped the back of my hand with her finger, like someone who loves to touch. Since she sat down, this small person hadn't stopped fidgeting. Even though we were sitting across from each other, she always found a way to use some part of her body to touch me, starting with her leg under the table and now her finger on my hand.

"You're falling for me really hard, do you know that?"

When teased a little, the sweet-faced one pulled her hand back and straightened her posture slightly, acting a bit haughty. But within seconds, she slumped back to her usual posture because she couldn't keep up the act.

"It's true."

"You can only keep up the act for a moment. Why admit it so fast?"

"If I act too proud, the cute person might not like me anymore."

Honestly, what she's done to me is unforgivable. But seeing her switch between being playful and bashful, I couldn't stay angry. How should I punish this girl to make it fair for what she's done to me? I must like her so much that I can't even be mad at her.

"Fine. What movie do you want to watch?"

"Let me think. There are so many movies on my mind."

"Are there really that many movies showing right now?"

I picked up my phone to check today's showtimes, but Ja snatched it from my hand and changed the subject.

"Let's just chat about random things instead. Your shop is really crowded right now."

"Well, I have to thank someone who wrote in that a famous drama production crew would come here to film. The shop got lucky because of that. Now I don't have to close the shop and can pay for water, electricity, and a few small expenses."

"See? I'm not bad in every single way. But there's something I curious about too."

"What?"

"Why did you make your mom win third prize instead of the first prize with twenty tickets?"

"Anything too obvious makes people suspicious. Third prize is already good enough... I wanted to let Mom meet you naturally. At that time, I was scared you would notice I used the typewriter, so I thought this much was okay."

"But in the end, I still found out. You told me everything."

"Even though I tried to act naturally, it didn't work. Third prize is the most reasonable... Now I wants to ask you something."

"What?"

"When did you start liking me?"

This simple question seemed to make Ja nervous. Her red ears showed that she felt shy. I looked at her, wondering why she was so quiet.

"Because Kee read your notebook. You wrote that you didn't feel anything and that giving yourself up, a little didn't matter because we're both women."

"You only remember the bad things, huh?"

"I'm just asking because I want to know."

"The answer is... I don't know either."

Ja took another sip of her drink and replied shyly.

"Do you know exactly when winter starts? When you lose something, do you know where you lost it? It's the same thing. The first time you met me, you didn't like me right away. When did you start liking me? You can't say, right? You just realized one day that you already liked me."

"Dating a writer really comes with a lot of fancy words, huh?"

I bit my lower lip, feeling a little playful. My heart wanted to lean in, bite her cheek, and leave a mark, but that stayed in my mind and imagination only. Honestly, I love cherishing her more. From last night, when just a little touch left red marks, I already knew she was fragile, like a porcelain doll.

"Speaking of writers, it reminds me of something... I brought this for you."

She handed me a flash drive. I took it from her hand, tilting my head curiously.

"What's this?"

"A novel I wrote... from my first project. If you read it, you'll understand more about what happened."

"And have you finished writing our story yet?"

"It's still unfinished. But I want you to read the earlier parts from the first two projects to understand what happened, why I did it, and for what reason."

"Can't you just tell me?"

"If you read it, you'll feel it more. There's 30% truth and 70% fiction,"

Ja admitted.

"You can't write a novel with pure truth because it's too real. It won't be fun or entertaining."

"Then how will I know which parts are true and which are not?" "You'll figure it out. Everyone in the story is someone you know."

The sweet-faced one stood up, and I followed her.

"Are you leaving already?"

"Does this shop have a restroom?"

Ja, now playing the role of a customer again, asked in an overly sweet voice. I chuckled a little and played the role of a kind shop owner.

"Yes, we do. Follow me, I'll show you. You look trustworthy, so I'll let you use it. Normally, no one is allowed behind the shop."

"I feel so honored."

After leading her to the back of the shop, down the hallway that led to the stairs to the second floor, I pulled the sweet-faced one closer and locked the door to make sure no one from outside could come in. Ja, who seemed to already know what was going to happen, tilted her head to look at me with a teasing smile.

"What's this? You're such an untrustworthy shop owner. A customer wants to use the restroom, but instead, you lock her in to do something bad."

"Is it really something bad?"

I leaned down to kiss her and gently bit her lower lip before slipping my hand under her shirt.

"Actually, it's kind of nice. Is every shop owner like this... hmm?"

I unhooked her jeans slightly and pulled them down, with her cooperating perfectly.

"Not everyone. It depends on who the customer is."

"Aren't we in the middle of courting each other? If you're doing this, does it mean I've already won you over?"

"But you said you would feed me dessert."

I knelt down and put her legs on my shoulders. Then, I slowly used my hands to pull down her underwear. She looked down at me and grabbed my hair with her hand. Even though she felt shy, it seemed like her desire was stronger, so she didn't care about anything else.

"It feels strange to look at you from this angle."

"Soon, you will look at me from the same angle as I look at you."

She made a soft sound when I opened my mouth and slowly tasted her, carefully licking as if I didn't want the sweetness to disappear. Behind the door, there were customers and staff, like Phao, who were working and serving. But we still did this without caring about what was proper, making me feel so immature.

But what could we do? Even just walking upstairs to the second floor felt like it would take too long. We were newly married and still deeply in love.

"Mmm..."

"Don't make noise. People outside might hear."

Ja raised her hand to cover her mouth but still pressed her hips against my mouth, like she wanted to go faster. She grabbed whatever she could, sometimes pulling her own hair, sometimes covering her mouth again and again. She looked down at me like she was about to cry.

"How did you make me become like this?"

"This is just the beginning."

.

**Watching a movie?**

That's nonsense. The two of us disappeared into the back of the shop, and I forgot that I still had a business to take care of. Phao was so helpful, she didn't come looking for us. Instead, she took care of everything in the shop, like she was clearing the way for us.

Now Ja had already gone home. I went downstairs to close the shop and paid Phao double her salary without saying much. She didn't talk much either. She just took the money with a smile and went home peacefully.

These days, I'm still staying with my mom. If I suddenly had a girlfriend and stopped coming home, my mom would complain. She might say I care more about my girlfriend than my mom, or something like that.

After I got home, I opened the flash drive that Ja gave me and started reading the novel on my computer. But as soon as I saw the text with thousands of characters, I almost fainted on the spot.

I have to print it. I can't read it on the computer, I'm too old for this... it's just too bright.

"Mom, is the printer still working?"

"I don't know. The ink might be dry. Try it. What do you want to print?"

"A novel."

I answered her and started fussing with the printer. Judging by the number of pages, it would probably take several reams of paper to print everything.

"What novel?"

"Ja's novel."

"Well, having a writer as your girlfriend is nice. Free novels for life!"

I raised my eyebrows at her, feeling a little proud. But because the printer was so old, it took forever to print each page. It would probably finish by next century. So, I left it running and decided to read it all later.

"Mom, are you going to stay here for a long time?"

"Why are you asking?"

"If the printing is done, let me know. This printer is slow, and there are a lot of pages."

"Why not just do it tomorrow? Do you really need to read it tonight?"

"You're right. Fine, I'll leave it with you for now. But don't peek, okay?"

"I don't read kids' novels like this. I only read masterpieces like Phanom Thian, W. Winitchaikun, and Thommayanti."

"But this is your child's girlfriend, you know."

"So, do you want me to read it or not?"

"I just can't stand you comparing her to those authors. Hmph!"

. .

I left the printer running and completely forgot about it. But I wasn't in a hurry to read anything because, after all, the novel wasn't finished yet. Ja and I were still in the "courting" phase, even though things had gotten a bit intense at times.

Today, we followed the plan we made the day before: going on a movie date. While buying popcorn and soda, Ja looked at me with such dreamy eyes that I couldn't help but smile back.

"What?"

"You're really beautiful."

"What's this about?"

Suddenly being complimented, I tucked my hair behind my ear a little, unsure of how to react. "I'm flirting with you."

"Do you think I'm full of myself or what?"

"I don't know what it is, but today you look especially beautiful. It's like there's a spotlight shining on you... Just thinking about people looking at you makes me jealous."

"You're exaggerating."

"Your face is like a painting, made so carefully. Your body is perfect and beautiful. Nobody in the world is more beautiful than you."

"..."

"..."

"What's wrong with you?"

I laughed and touched Ja's forehead as she suddenly started talking like a poem.

"Are you too into some drama? Now you're describing me like a poem."

"I don't know! What's wrong with me? When I look at you, I just feel like saying things like this."

She scratched her head and tilted it.

"I'm usually too lazy to talk, but with you, I want to say this kind of stuff all the time."

"You're really in love with me, aren't you? But sweet words won't make me easy to get."

"You act hard to get, but I'll give in because you are my heart. Just looking at you makes me want to keep living. You're like the wind, like sunlight... What am I even saying?"

Ja looked confused at her own words.

The sweet-faced girl looked confused and gave a shy smile. I raised my hand to gently pull her cheek, feeling fond of her, and shrugged.

"It's not a big deal. It's weird, but... not bad."

"But those words aren't what people use in real life. They're written words. It feels strange."

"You've been writing novels too much. Why don't you try using those words when we're cuddling? It might feel really romantic."

I whispered to her, and we both laughed quietly together. Ja lightly hit my arm and cleared her throat.

"Let's stop this. We should go watch the movie. My heart is calling for it... oh no, what am I even saying?"

"You're so cute. Oh no!"

As we were joking around, suddenly, a cold soda was poured over Ja's head along with a lot of ice from a cup. From laughing, we both went to being completely shocked. The people walking by stopped and stared at us, then turned to look at the person who had poured the soda over Ja's head for no reason.

"What are you doing?!"

A strange man, someone I was sure I'd never met before, looked at Ja with anger in his eyes. The sweet-faced girl, who'd just had water poured on her, was still stunned, her mouth hanging open.

"Do we know each other?" Ja asked, confused.

"No, but I don't like you."

"What?!"

I yelled, shocked, so loudly that the man's girlfriend quickly stepped in to stop him.

"I'm so sorry! I really am! Why would you do that? Why pour water on her like that?"

She asked him, clearly upset.

"I could feel it. That woman is a bad person."

"Feel it?"

Ja was starting to get really angry now. I could see her face and eyes turning red with fury, so I reached out to hold her arm.

"And because you 'feel' something, you throw water at me like this?"

"It's like someone whispered in my ear, telling me that this woman is evil and she deserves it. She deserved to be treated like a slut."

"..."

**"You shameless woman!"**

# Chapter 26: Behind The Chaos

From having plans to watch a movie, we both ended up at the police station to file a complaint. However, the police mediated so we wouldn't have to go to court, and Ja received compensation of 5,000 baht. Honestly, it wasn't much for the dignity she lost, but we didn't want the situation to escalate further.

"I agreed to settle, but where's the apology?"

Ja walked over and grabbed the arm of the man who had poured water on her, just as he was about to get in his car to leave. The man turned to glare at her and yanked his arm away.

"I already paid compensation. Why should I apologize?"

"Do you even feel sorry? We don't even know each other, yet you just walked up and poured water on me!"

"No regret. People like you deserve this."

"And what kind of person am I?"

"You're a bad person!"

Both I and the man's girlfriend quickly rushed in to stand between them, trying to stop things from escalating again. The man who caused the trouble reluctantly raised his hands to apologize, clearly forced by his girlfriend.

Ja stomped her feet loudly as she stormed back to the car and refused to talk to me the whole way. I had to nudge her gently with my elbow, trying to lighten the mood.

"What's wrong with you?"

"Don't talk to me."

"What are you mad at me for?"

The sweet-faced girl stayed silent, then slammed her foot on the gas pedal. I had to grab onto the seat, terrified that the next time I opened my eyes, I'd find myself wearing a crown and dancing on a cloud.

Eh... why was I so sure I'd end up in heaven?

"You didn't take my side."

"Huh? How didn't I take your side?"

At that, Ja slammed the brakes so hard I jerked forward, then turned on the indicator and pulled over to the side of the road, like we were in a Korean drama. If I hadn't been wearing my seatbelt, my body would've been flung right out of the car.

"When we argued back there, you should've stood up to that man. You shouldn't have just mediated and let it go. Don't you realize how much it hurt me? I needed justice, not just 5,000 baht!"

"Ah..."

I started to understand why she was so upset. I raised my hand to gently touch her small arm resting on the gear stick, but she shook it off with a pout.

"I didn't want you to have to go to court, that's all."

"That's it?"

"What else should I have done?"

"You're thinking that I did something to make that guy angry, like breaking his heart or stealing him from his girlfriend, right?"

I paused for a moment, biting my lip slightly. My body language probably gave away that I felt a bit guilty because, to be honest, I was thinking that. She had a history of doing things like that to me, so it wasn't impossible it had happened with others too.

Maybe that man was furious for a reason and dumped water on her. Who would get that angry out of nowhere, and even insult her with such an ancient word Morakaki? It was ridiculous.

"Nonsense. You're overthinking."

"If you don't trust me, why are we even together?"

"We're not together yet. You're just flirting with me,"

I said casually, pretending not to care. That only made the sweet-faced girl, whose hair was still sticky with sugary soda, nearly scream in frustration. "Fine! From now on, don't even touch me. Deal?"

She drove off angrily, taking me home without a single word of goodbye. The movie date we had planned was completely ruined. I could only glare at her car's taillights in annoyance before stomping my way into the house.

Mom, who saw me, raised her eyebrows.

I walked into the house with a slow, exaggerated walk, greeting everyone like I was trying to annoy them, though, honestly, this was just my normal mood.

"Don't know who you're mad at today. Not talking, looking all grumpy."

"How old-fashioned. So typical of you, Mom."

"Fighting with your girlfriend, huh? I already told Ja she should dump you and find someone else. Maybe someone who's not so hopeless."

"Did you give birth to me, or did you just pick me up off the street?"

"If I tell you, it'll hurt your feelings,"

She said. I pouted and turned to head upstairs, but she called me back.

"What about this novel? Aren't you going to read it? It's all printed now."

"I'm not reading it. I'll use it to wrap sanitary pads instead. Hmph."

My childish mood made me lose all interest in my girlfriend's novel. I stormed upstairs, threw myself onto my bed, and screamed into my pillow before falling asleep.

It's strange how I can be so angry and still fall asleep so easily. It's like that anger fast-forwards time, jumping me from one day to the next in an instant.

My anger from last night had already faded. Now, all that was left was the feeling of missing her and wanting to text her. But my pride wouldn't let me. Yesterday, I didn't even see what I did wrong.

Stopping things from getting worse is the duty of a good citizen, isn't it? Why was she angry at me? She should be the one to apologize. She's the one chasing me! No... I won't text her. I'll stay here, looking pretty, and wait for her to text me first.

"I'm off to work, Mom."

"Yeah, go and don't come back too soon."

"Go hit something usefull!"

I stuck my tongue out at Mom as she laughed, clearly satisfied she had teased me enough to make me snap.

"Aren't you taking the novel to read?"

She was still talking about the novel that had been printed last night. But I, still too stubborn, shook my head slightly.

"I'm not reading it. I'm not in the mood for anything right now."

"It's a good story. The main character is pretty annoying. Ja is really talented at writing. And there's even a twist, later, the main character ends up with another woman! It's like getting two stories in one: first, a man-andwoman romance, then a bonus with a woman-and-woman love story for the readers."

"You must really like it, huh, Mom."

"I was thinking of telling Ja how good her writing is and asking for the rest of the story to read. But since you two are fighting, I guess I'll have to imagine the ending myself."

"I'm done talking about this novel with you. The more we talk, the more annoyed I get. Your genius writer is so annoying,"

I said while putting on my shoes and getting ready to leave the house.

But just as I was about to step out, I froze. A car I didn't recognize was parked in front of the house, almost as if it was trying to block the door. When I leaned forward to see who it was, the window rolled down, revealing the person inside.

"Dr. Pae!"

Since the day I talked to him, we hadn't seen each other. This was the first time he showed up, and he was right outside my house.

"What are you doing here?"

"I don't know. I just thought of you and decided to drive over. I wasn't even sure if you still lived here."

"You just thought of me and came here?"

I frowned a little and let out an sarcastic laugh.

"Then you can drive away now."

"Where are you going?"

"To the shop."

"Then... let me drive you."

"Did you just think of me, or were you hoping for this 'coincidence' to be your chance to take me to the shop?"

"Either way, I want to drive you. Get in, please."

Even though I felt uneasy, his persistence eventually wore me down, and I agreed to get in the car. Running into an ex-boyfriend, especially one I didn't part with on good terms, and having him insist on driving me, it was strange.

What did he want? Saying he suddenly thought of me after almost two years apart, was he possessed or something?

As we sat in the car together, the silence between us became unbearable. The sound of the air conditioner felt so loud it almost hurt my ears. I had to break the silence.

"Don't you have any music? It's too quiet in here."

"You're right. It is too quiet... I just don't know how to start talking to you."

"Just say what's on your mind. Don't overthink it. We used to be so close once, remember?"

Someone who was once a lover often knows us more deeply than any friend ever could.

That's something anyone who has been through this would understand. I was trying to make him feel at ease, but honestly, I was curious, what did he really want from me today?

"Alright, I'll confess," he said.

"Ever since I saw you again after we broke up, I haven't been able to forget you."

There it is. I set myself up for this. Should've just stayed quiet and listened to the air conditioner hum.

"It's this guilt I feel about what I did to you. Like I made a mistake, and I can't stop thinking about it, over and over. Why? Why did it have to be like this? We should have been a family, had kids together, but it all fell apart."

"Just think of it as fate. Maybe I have more bad karma than you. I'm dating a woman now, you know."

"The same woman I was with,"

Pae said, sighing as if he already knew.

"Can't I start over with you?"

"It's too late. Let's not talk about this anymore. There's more than just me in this world. You'll find someone else... We're here. I'll go now."

"I'm serious,"

Dr. Pae said, grabbing my wrist just as I was about to get out of the car. I

froze for a moment, then gave him an awkward smile and twisted my wrist free.

"I'm serious too. Move on already."

I walked back into the shop, rubbing my wrist in confusion. I used to think that if I acted better or looked prettier, my ex would regret losing me. But now that it was actually happening, it didn't make me happy at all. In fact, it was really uncomfortable.

I greeted Phae, the part-time worker who had opened the shop earlier. She gestured toward one of the tables and told me someone was waiting.

"Huh?"

"He's been here since we first opened," she said.

I turned to look and saw it was Ram, the guy who once got chased by a dog and disappeared out of embarrassment. I raised an eyebrow slightly and gave him a small, surprised smile.

"Wow, it's been a while. How have you been?"

"Well... I've been too embarrassed to come see you until now."

"So today, you're feeling bold?"

"Something like that. I missed you."

"Huh."

I pulled my neck back slightly when I heard that. What is going on? Two guys acting flirty with me on the same day, one says he thought of me, and now this one says he missed me. If a third one shows up, are they just going to say, "I love you"?

"Thanks. What day is it today? It's full of weird stuff."

.

***Ding!***

.

The bell at the front door rang, signaling a new customer. But instead of a customer, it was a motorbike taxi driver walking in, calling out loudly and clearly, asking for me.

"I'm here to deliver flowers for Khun Kee. Who's Khun Kee?"

"That's me."

I walked over to accept the large bouquet of flowers that had been sent to me. As far as I could remember, it had been over two years since anything this extravagant had happened in my life. Once I took the flowers, the motorbike driver left without giving me any details.

I had to search for the card to see who had sent them, and when I found it, I was stunned.

.

*I've hurt you so much, and today I've realized...*

*I love you. Tham.*

. .

This is crazy! I've heard all the phrases: 'thinking of you,' 'missing you,' 'love you.' Now, only Ja is left. If she proposes today, I'll dance like a seductive cat in front of the spirit house immediately.

Ghost! This isn't a coincidence. How did this all happen? The closest thing to a miracle in this world is that typewriter. But I haven't used it. So how did all these things happen at the same time?

I need to check to be sure!

"Phao, please watch the shop. I forgot something at home. I'll be back soon."

I told the staff watching the shop, tossed my apron aside, and was about to call a taxi when Ram grabbed my wrist.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going home. I want to check something."

"Then I'll take you."

"But...'"

"Why pay for a taxi? Come on."

He had a point. Going with Ram was much more convenient. In the end, I agreed and got into his car to go home together. On the way, Ram played soft, sweet music to set the mood, which made me curious.

"What made you come to my shop today?"

"I dreamed about you."

"Hmm?"

"The dream felt very real. I dreamed we were having a picnic, looking at a big, endless lake. There were small children running around. They might have been our kids."

"Really..."

I made a face as if I had a bitter pill in my mouth, feeling both awkward and uncomfortable.

"When I woke up, my heart was pounding. I kept thinking... I should go see you today. If I waited, it might be too late. See? Even though I came to your shop as the first customer, I was still behind the guy who drove you there. And then there's the one who sent you flowers. I feel bad for showing up empty-handed."

So, he saw me getting out of Dr. Pae's car. Three men had come to see me in one day. This isn't just a coincidence. But I need to make sure first.

After about 15 minutes, including waiting at red lights, we finally arrived in front of my house.

"Wait here, okay? I'll just grab something from inside real quick."

"Alright."

After saying that, I got out of the car and was about to enter the house. But just as I opened the door, I heard Ja's voice from a distance. The sweetfaced girl, clearly displeased, frowned when she saw me getting out of Ram's car.

"Kee, why did you get out of Ram's car?"

"Ja? How did you get here? You didn't call to let me know."

"If I'd called first, I wouldn't have seen you with another man."

"What are you talking about? I just got a ride home with him, that's all. But why did you come to my house? At this time, I usually at the shop."

"Your mom called me and said she loved the novel. She wanted me to come and spoil the ending for her while we had lunch together. But now I don't feel like eating anymore. I'm leaving!"

The sweet-faced but stubborn girl stomped her feet like a cute, spoiled child before kicking a rock. However, instead of the rock moving, her sneaker flew off, landing far, far away.

"You're jealous, so you threw your shoe? Haha!"

I laughed, feeling amused. But the more I laughed, the angrier she seemed to get. Ja hobbled on one foot to retrieve her shoe from a nearby alley.

Not long after, the little one came running back, looking terrified, as if she'd seen a ghost.

"Help! Kee, help me!"

"What happened?"

The same pack of territorial dogs from before, more than five of them with foam at their mouths, were chasing after the sweet-faced girl. I watched, stunned, as she sprinted past me at lightning speed. Panicked, I quickly called out for Ram, who was still sitting in the car. "Ram... help Ja! She's being chased by dogs!"

"I can see that."

"If you see it, then do something!"

"I can't... I'm scared of dogs. That pack has chased me before too."

"Ahhhhh!"

Hearing Ja's scream, I hesitated between running to help her or calling an expert to deal with the situation. But calling someone would take too long.

So, I decided to drop everything I was holding and run after Ja, even though I had no idea what I could do. It felt like trying to save someone from drowning when I couldn't swim myself.

"Ja! Climb onto the back of that pickup truck! Hurry!"

I screamed instinctively. The sweet-faced girl followed my shout and climbed onto a construction truck, crouching on the roof while crying her heart out.

"Help me! H-help!"

By now, a crowd had gathered, watching both Ja and the dogs, but no one dared step in, afraid the dogs might have rabies. I could only pity myself and yell up to her.

"Stay right there! I... I am going back home!"

"You're going home? I'm being chased by rabid dogs, and you don't see that?"

"Kee is going back to use the typewriter!"

"But you said you weren't going to use it anymore!"

"Kee is going to type something to scare the dogs away!"

I briefly explained the situation, then ran back home just as I said I would.

Once I arrived, I headed straight to the storage room where the typewriter was kept. However, the door was locked from the outside, so I had to run into the house to ask my mom for the key.

"Mom, give me the key to the storage room. I need to use the typewriter-"

The sound of clacking keys in the house made me stop mid-sentence. I froze and listened carefully before cautiously following the noise to my mom's room. When I opened the door, I found her wearing glasses, deeply focused on typing something onto paper using the old typewriter I'd been looking for.

"What are you doing, Mom?"

She paused, her ten fingers hovering over the keys, then turned to look at me, pushing her glasses up the bridge of her nose like a strict teacher.

"Me?"

"..."

.

***"I'm writing a story. It's so much fun! I just got to the part where the main character is being chased by rabid dogs, climbing onto the roof of a truck. She looks just like a gibbon in the Pata Zoo, with people gathering around to watch. Haha!"***

.

My heart nearly stopped when I heard that, and I could only say one word:

"Mom!!!"

# Chapter 27: Mom's Novel

I quickly pieced together why so many strange events had been happening to me nonstop. But this wasn’t the time to complain. My mom needed to help Ja escape from the pack of rabid dogs first. I pushed her aside from her chair, sat down in her place, and started typing furiously to fix the situation.

"No manners! Just barging in to take over my story... Wow, you can type this fast? Incredible."

Mom leaned over my shoulder, curious to see what I was typing. Without caring much for context or continuity, I typed the name "Ja" right into the story and continued from there.

.

**Ja, trembling with fear, began chanting prayers, hoping for something, anything, to convince the dogs to leave her alone. The alpha dog, seeing Ja’s desperate and pleading expression, felt a pang of sympathy. It barked at its friends, signaling them to leave her alone and run away. The dogs ran away because they were too lazy to bite anymore.**

.

"What a terrible story! What is this? Dogs that suddenly change their minds in three seconds after seeing the heroine pray?"

"And you think you’re so great? You wrote the part where the heroine climbs onto a truck to escape rabid dogs."

"Why is the heroine named Ja? It doesn’t fit the context at all. And this is a typewriter, not a computer. You can’t just delete and fix mistakes easily."

"What were the character names you wrote before this?"

"Jidapa."

"That could be Ja’s full name. Do you actually know Ja’s real name?"

"No, I made it up. It sounds elegant, like the heroine of a prime-time soap opera on Channel 3. Oh, and by the way, your name is in the story too. Looks like Ja used you as inspiration for a character. Wow, that girl has real talent. Pretty face, and so creative. Meanwhile, my own kid spends all day running a shop that coffee tastes like foot-washing water."

"Mom, do you even like Ja?"

"Why wouldn’t I? I love her. I’d love to have her as my daughter. I was even thinking about visiting Ja’s family one day to ask if we could trade daughters because the one I have here is useless."

I clicked my tongue and struggled to lift the heavy typewriter, trying to carry it back to my room. Seeing this, Mom rushed over to stop me, refusing to let it go.

"Where are you taking it?"

"To throw it away."

"Throw it away? This is a perfectly good typewriter! If I hadn’t used it, we wouldn’t even know it still works. Kids these days with their obsession with minimalist rooms… Don’t listen to those house-organizing people like that Marie Kondo or whatever her name is. Living peacefully isn’t enough; they teach you to throw things away. In this economy?"

"How about ‘Laurier’ next?"

"Marie!"

"Oh, so you knew, huh? Why did you say it wrong on purpose?"

"So you’d correct me, not the other way around. I’m telling you, don’t take the typewriter! I’ll scream if you do!"

Ignoring my mom’s protests, I hauled the heavy typewriter back to my room, shut the door, bolted it, and locked it again to prevent her from sneaking in while I was gone. My thoughts quickly shifted to Ja, I was worried about her. What was happening now?

Just as I was about to run out, I ran into Ja standing next to Ram, who was supporting her. It seemed he had gotten her out of the situation and brought her here safely.

"Are you okay?"

"After Ja prayed to the gods, the dogs ran away. There really is a god in this world!"

Seeing her sweet face looking like she was about to cry, I pulled her into a hug and sighed.

"It's okay. You’re safe now."

Then I turned to Ram.

"Thank you for bringing Ja here."

"No need to thank me. I barely did anything—I was too scared of the dogs and stayed in the car. If I could’ve helped more, I would’ve... Anyway, I’ll head out now. I’ll stop by again sometime."

Ram stepped away, probably realizing that Ja and I had made up. I didn’t have anything to say to him, so I just nodded and helped Ja into the house.

My mom, clueless about what had happened, gasped dramatically when she saw Ja looking dazed and shaken, as if someone had died.

"Ja! What happened, dear?"

"She got chased by dogs."

"Those same dogs in the alley again? Don’t they ever get tired of chasing people? Wait... Aren’t those the same dogs Ja helped save me from? Why did they go after my precious Ja this time?"

Sometimes, I can’t help but feel annoyed at how much my mom loves Ja. She keeps calling her "dear" or "my brilliant girl," while just a moment ago, she was talking about trading me for Ja! Ugh.

"They were probably mad they couldn’t bite you last time, so they tried again. This is all your fault, Mom."

"Oh... so it’s my fault? I’m sorry, dear."

"I’ll take Ja upstairs to rest for a bit. A good nap should help."

"Alright… but give me back the typewriter first! I haven’t finished writing my novel!"

"No way!"

.

After carrying Ja to my room and locking the door to prevent my mom from sneaking in to steal the typewriter. The sweet-faced girl, who had overheard our conversation earlier, seemed to piece the story together. As a writer herself, she could connect the dots without needing much explanation. I just needed to fill in a bit more detail.

"It’s just like you heard. My mom was the one who made you run from the dogs. She got inspired while reading the novel and decided to write more."

"Oh… I don’t even know how to respond to that. It’s not your mom’s fault, though."

I gave her a weak smile, guilt creeping in, before glancing over her to check if she was alright.

"Are you sure you’re okay? You didn’t get bitten, right?"

"No, I didn’t. Luckily, your mom wrote that Ja managed to run away in time and didn’t write that Ja got bitten. By the way, what did you type after your mom’s part?"

"Since it couldn’t be erased, I wrote that Jidapa prayed to the gods for help, and the alpha dog felt pity and ran away, too lazy to bite."

"Oh… so it wasn’t the gods who helped. It was you."

"By the way, is your name Jidapa?"

I grinned teasingly after learning this new piece of information and gently brushed her cheek with my finger, amused.

"I never knew that. Why did you use your real name for the story? Isn’t it embarrassing to make yourself the heroine?"

"What else could I do? I was writing a true story. If I didn’t, the typewriter wouldn’t work the way I needed it to. Have you finished reading it yet?"

"Not yet. I asked my mom to print it out, but I forgot to read it. Then she read it first and became your number one fan, which led to all this chaos. She even called you here to spoil the ending, didn’t she?"

"True, but did your mom only write that much? From the sound of all the fun chaos, it seems like she must’ve written much more."

"I was planning to ask her for a look too. But first, what we need to do is…"

I glanced decisively at the typewriter.

"Destroy that thing. It’s too dangerous."

"If it’s in the right hands, it’s not dangerous."

"But since we’re not planning to use it anymore, there’s no point in keeping it. We can’t sell it either because whoever buys it might use it for something terrifying again. Or are you still attached to it?"

"It’s hard not to feel attached. It’s been around for so long. Mom said this typewriter was from when my grandma used it. I thought it looked cool and old, so I got it repaired. Once it was fixed, that’s when all the trouble started. But I agree with you, keeping it is pointless. Destroying it is better. But how do we destroy it?"

"We have to smash it. Let’s do it now, in front of both of us."

"Yeah?"

I carry the typewriter to the front yard and borrowed a big hammer from a neighbor who was a handyman. Holding the hammer, I looked at the typewriter. If it were a person, it would probably cry, beg me, and ask me not to hurt it.

"It feels heartbreaking, like we’re about to kill someone,"

Ja said, hugging her arms tightly against her body.

"I can’t bear to watch."

"Kee doesn’t want to do it either, but if we don’t, it’ll just keep being dangerous,"

I said, swinging the hammer back and holding it over my head.

"Alright... I’m smashing it now."

"Okay,"

Ja muttered, covering her face with her hands, unable to look.

I took a deep breath, biting my lip to steel myself. Destroying something so precious, it felt like tossing a beautiful, brand-new book with a stunning cover into a river because you had no choice.

See the pain? For a book lover, it’s unbearable. And for a writer who uses a typewriter, it’s no different…

"Hey! What are you doing?!"

My mother shouted loudly from inside the house. She came just in time to see me about to destroy the things, so she shouted from inside and was ready to run to stop me. I gave Ja a signal to run and stop my mother immediately so no one could interrupt this.

"Ja, stop my mother!"

"Kee, don't do it! It's a waste of things!"

The small girlfriend ran to hug my mother to hold her back. As for me, I had to hurry and finish before being stopped. So I swung again and hit the typewriter with the hammer. A loud sound echoed, *“Bang!”*

When metal hits metal, the sound is very heavy. The parts of the typewriter, which were put together well, broke apart into pieces. The keys, the paper roller, the letters, and the metal bars all flew in different directions, here and there.

"Kee, Mom never taught you to destroy things that are still good! I'm going to faint. Such a waste!"

I kept smashing it until nothing was left. Or if anything was left, I made sure it flew or was bent so it couldn’t be put back together again. After hitting it five or six times, I was sure the typewriter couldn’t be used anymore. I put the hammer down and wiped my sweat.

Like a farmer who just finished harvesting rice, it was such a tiring and stressful task.

“From now on, you can’t use this typewriter anymore, Mom.”

“If you didn’t want me to use it, you could’ve just said so. Why did you have to destroy it?”

“You won’t believe me, but never mind. It’s broken now. I’ll clean up the mess and throw it away.”

I raised my eyebrow at Mom, trying to look cool.

“This ends your career as a writer. I’ll return the hammer first.”

“You dream destroyer! When you were little and wanted to study whatever you liked, I never complained. So why, now that you’ve grown up, must you take over this role instead of me?”

.

Ja had already left after calming herself down from being chased by a dog. As for me, to make sure she got home safely, I called to check on her one more time. Once I hung up, I went to see Mom, who was still fuming over the typewriter being destroyed.

“Mom, where’s the printed novel?”

“I don’t know, don’t care.”

Her grumpy attitude made me smile a little. I couldn’t help feeling amused. Even though my mom and I often bicker, we do have our sweet moments, though we rarely show them. So today, I decided to play along and tease her a bit.

“Don’t hug me!”

“Oh, Mom, remembers, I miss the value of milk of love.” “Blood from my heart turned into milk for you to drink. Hey!”

Mom finished the song and clicked her tongue.

“Stop clinging to me. Fine, I’m not mad anymore. It’s on the coffee table.”

“See? That’s all it took. So, how’s the novel, Mom? I heard it’s really good.”

“Read it yourself. If you’re not going to read it, why waste ink printing it?” “Come on, spoil the story a little. Kee likes to know things beforehand. I don’t like suspense, it’s exhausting. Judging by how you wrote the heroine running from a dog and climbing onto a car roof, she must’ve been really mad!”

I’m really that kind of person, not serious about being spoiled, no matter how important the scene is. In the end, I just enjoy the story for the experience. Seeing that I was genuinely interested, Mom adjusted her posture slightly, raised her chin a bit, and began to tell the story.

“Well, the heroine has a bad attitude. Even though she had reasons for acting that way, I still think it wasn’t right.”

“What kind of reasons?”

“You’re really not going to read it, are you?”

“I will, but I want you to explain first.”

“So, Jidapa, she wanted to write a novel by using her own unusual methods to get close to people. She decided who her target would be, and in the story, she picked the heroine as her final character. Then she started planning how to meddle in Kee’s life... Wait a minute, Kee, that’s your name, isn’t it?”

Mom looked suspicious, so I quickly bluffed, even though I was running out of excuses.

“She just borrowed the name for the story. Kee is such a pretty name! Anyway, what happens next, Mom? Don’t change the subject.”

"Each person Jidapa took away, she used a different personality to win them over. It started when the heroine saw her first boyfriend, a doctor, walking with Kee at the hospital. At that time, she was just curious, but she remembered it later when she saw Kee’s boyfriend walking with another woman at the mall." "Another woman..."

"Yes, Jidapa, let’s just call her Ji, it’s shorter, saw an opportunity. She thought it wouldn’t be too hard to get close to Kee’s boyfriend, since he was already cheating by walking with another woman. She figured he could easily lean her way. That’s where it started. She pretended to be sick to get his attention. Step by step, she managed to win him over, even ruining the heroine’s wedding plans, until Kee ended up with a second boyfriend."

I really should have read this story in detail. Ji won over Dr. Pae because she saw him as a flirt and just wanted to see if she could take him. And she succeeded! Good thing I didn’t agree to marry him, otherwise, I’d definitely be divorced by now...

"After successfully taking the doctor, Ji immediately dumped him because her first novel had already achieved its goal. She described the doctor so badly in her story that he ended up looking like a dog. Serves him right,"

Mom said passionately.

"Then she went after Kee's

second boyfriend. Ji kept a close eye on Kee's life, watching how things were going with Kee and her next boyfriend. Two years later, Ji discovered that Tham was cheating with a woman he met at a nightclub."

"Uh-huh."

"Since Ji had been observing Kee for so long, she probably felt a certain closeness, even though they had never spoken. Ji couldn’t stand it and got involved with Kee’s second boyfriend again. Just like before, she succeeded in winning him over, ruining another wedding, and causing Kee and her second boyfriend to break up. Since then, Kee has been single."

So that’s how it happened. Even though it wasn’t the right way to handle things, I couldn’t help but feel grateful that I didn’t end up marrying men like them.

"Sounds like she had her reasons, doesn’t it? But Mom still thinks it’s wrong. Why should someone interfere with other people’s lives? Mom thinks this character deserves some punishment."

"So that’s why you made Ja, I mean, Jidapa, climb onto a car while being chased by a dog, huh?"

"Exactly. That’s still too little for someone who treats other people’s lives like toys. Ji’s story only went as far as her reconciling with Kee and smoothly starting a relationship. That’s not right. So I added a bit… No, actually, I finished it all the way to the end. I wrote the ending first and then worked backward to the climax."

"You wrote the ending already?"

I quickly grabbed the last page and flipped it open to read. My heart sank as I saw what Mom had written.

"Mom... did you really write this? What is Kee supposed to do now?"

"Nothing. Just finish it. This is a fanfic,"

Mom said proudly, spreading her hands.

"Haven’t you ever read fanfics online? Like Harry Potter? People write Hermione ending up with Harry Potter all the time. It’s called shipping, you know?"

"Mom, I get it, but you can’t just write Jidapa dying!"

My hands trembled as I stared at the typed text on the last page. I didn’t know what to do.

"She deserved it. If she dies, she won’t get her happy ending like everyone else, and Kee stays single. That’s a happy ending! Why are you crying? Is the story I wrote really that good?"

***Jidapa, who was running quickly across the street, suddenly got a cramp in her leg. At the moment when she couldn’t move and was about to call for help, a fancy car came speeding and hit her, killing her instantly.***

.

"Mom, what have you done? Do you even realize it? You just killed my girlfriend. You didn’t have to make her die!"

I collapsed onto the floor, crying uncontrollably. My hands were shaking so much I couldn’t think of what to do next. The typewriter never failed me, not even once, ever since I started using it.

And now, it’s broken.

How am I supposed to save her now!!!!

# Chapter 28: The Kitten

"Ja, starting from tomorrow, don't go anywhere unless it's absolutely necessary, until I can figure out a solution. Do you understand?"

After I calmed down, I immediately called Ja to tell her what had happened. The sweet voice on the other end of the line sounded stunned after hearing what my mom had written but obediently agreed.

[Okay, I'll try to be careful. But Kee... you know that whatever's written always comes true.]

"There must be a way to fix this. I will use the typewriter to change the situation."

[But you smashed it to pieces.]

"I'll get it repaired."

[You completely destroyed it, remember? Besides, even if you take it to get fixed, it'll take days... I'll probably get hit by a car before then.]

"You can't die!"

I shouted into the phone, unable to accept the idea. The other end of the line went silent for a moment, then came a soft laugh, as if she weren't taking the situation seriously.

"What are you laughing about?"

[I'm happy... You care about me so much.]

"How can you laugh in a situation like this?"

[Maybe I've come to terms with it. There's no way to fix this. Thinking about it, what I did really wasn't right. Even your mom, who didn't know anything, got so angry just from reading the story that she wrote me dying

in it.]

I paced back and forth in my bedroom, on the verge of tears from hearing that.

"Mom doesn't hate or dislike you. She just wrote it for fun and didn't think the typewriter would actually make it happen. She said it's just fanfiction."

[Your mom's a really good writer.]

"Don't try to act nice."

[Heh.]

"I really want to meet you."

I admitted it honestly. Right now, I wanted to be by her side because I knew she must be scared, even though she was trying to laugh it off. Thinking about how it would feel to be in her shoes, knowing the power of the typewriter as well as I did, I could only imagine how terrified and helpless she must feel. The only thing I could do was to be there with her, to comfort her and reassure her that everything would be okay.

[We just saw each other today, though.]

"Don't you want to see me?"

[I do...]

"..."

**[It would be really nice to have you here with me right now.]**

I knew...

"Going out to a place like this late at night, do you think your mom will say anything?"

[She probably won't say anything, but she might give me a strange look and secretly figure it out... If you're coming, call me. I'll run down to get you.]

"Like we're sneaking around to see each other?"

[It's exciting! I've wanted to do this for a long time, being a rebellious kid while my mom's at home.]

"We've already been lovey-dovey before when your mom in the house, haven't we?"

[Tonight, we'll make it even more intense.]

. .

I left the house in the middle of the night and took a taxi to Ja's place, just as we had planned. When I arrived, the sweet-faced girl quietly crept down from her house, opened the door, and motioned for me to keep quiet by putting her finger to her lips, clearly afraid her mom would hear.

"There's no need to sneak around. Your mom already knows we're dating."

"But my mom doesn't know we're about to fool around right here."

"Here?"

I looked at her in confusion. Ja motioned toward the sofa in the middle of the living room and giggled.

"Before you came, I imagined that scene between us so many times in my head. We'd do it right here. So exciting!"

"And if your mom comes downstairs and sees us, what will she say?" "That's the thrill of it."

"Too thrilling. I'm afraid I'll be so nervous I won't be able to do anything."

"Can't you fulfill Ja's little wish just once? Who knows if Ja will even have a tomorrow."

Even though she spoke with a smile, I could feel the sadness behind her words. That only made me angrier at myself for being unable to do anything to help.

"I should leave. Honestly, I should focus on fixing the typewriter as soon as possible, not wasting time doing this."

My anxiety returned after having forgotten it for a brief moment. But Ja wrapped her arms around my neck to stop me from leaving.

"You can't fix it yourself when you get back. Besides, it's already late. No typewriter repair shop is going to be open at this hour." "But I shouldn't waste time doing things like this." "Does being with me really waste that much of your time?"

She said bluntly, placing a soft kiss on my chin.

"Right now, I feel like I'm counting down, and every second feels so precious. So, I want to make the most of it."

She gently pushed me toward the sofa. As the back of my knees touched the seat, I fell onto it with a soft thud. "Be quiet, or your mom will hear,"

I warned.

Without another word, she kissed me quickly and urgently. At first, I hesitated, not fully in the mood for something romantic, but seeing her determination, I gave in and followed her lead. She climbed onto me, straddling my lap, and slowly removed her shirt, moving closer with an intensity I couldn't ignore.

Despite her passion, there was a faint sadness in her actions that made me feel the need to comfort her.

She hardly gave me any chance to take control during our shared moment. From start to finish, she guided everything with a fiery determination, leaving me breathless.

At times, I found myself letting out small sounds, quickly covering my mouth to keep quiet. She moved with such focus, as if trying to savor every moment, until I had to gently stop her when it became too overwhelming.

"Slow down, I just finished."

"I can't slow down. I need to hurry."

She brought me to the peak again before taking off her pants and gently laying me down on the sofa. I looked at her in the dim light, with a faint glow coming from outside. She looked beautiful, but soon everything went dark as she moved over me, her hand softly holding my hair, guiding me to use my mouth.

"Please, just this once. I want to feel you,"

She said softly.

I didn't refuse, of course. Her request only made me more willing. My movements were slow at first, gradually picking up pace. But when she seemed to be nearing her peak, I slowed down again, teasing her just enough to make her let out a frustrated sigh.

"Don't tease me," she murmured.

I lifted her up so she could sit on my lap, gently guiding her as I supported her. She tensed slightly, feeling a bit of discomfort, but her desire didn't let her hold back. Taking control, she moved on her own, the quiet creaks of the sofa filling the room. While I was with her, my eyes occasionally darted toward the stairs, worried her mom might come down and catch us. Strangely, the thought only added to the intensity of the moment.

"That's so good... ah,"

She murmured softly.

Her muffled moans grew louder, prompting me to use my free hand to gently cover her mouth. However, she bit me lightly, overwhelmed by the intensity of the moment. The warmth and wetness from her flowed onto my fingers and palm, but I continued without stopping, not feeling tired.

"You're getting so much better," I said.

"It's because of you... Ja is better because of you,"

She whispered, pulling me down onto her as she lay back.

"Go a little faster. I want it to feel stronger."

The sound of my hands moving against her echoed in the quiet room, causing her to lift her hand to cover her mouth. When she reached her peak, she pulled me close, biting my shoulder while her legs tightened around me as her muscles tensed. But what surprised me even more...

"Do it again," she said.

"You're still not satisfied?" I asked.

"I want it to happen again, one after another. I'm excited and curious to see how far it can go."

"You really can't judge someone just by their appearance."

"You can't escape now."

.

.

It was an intimate moment that lasted over an hour, with both of us trying hard to stay quiet. Our clothes were scattered all over the place, so I slowly got up from the sofa to pick them up, worried that if an adult came downstairs, I wouldn't know how to react.

Meanwhile, Ja remained sitting comfortably, completely bare, without a care in the world. I had to plead with her to at least put something on.

"Just a shirt will do," I said.

"Ja wants to walk around the house naked," she teased.

"But your mom is upstairs! You're so bold."

I laughed, gently pinching her soft cheek before pulling her arm to make her sit properly. I slipped a T-shirt over her head, and she complied without complaint. Then she quickly threw her arms around me, pinning me down as she lay on top of me.

She kissed my chin softly.

"Kee, if I really ends up gone..."

"Don't say that!"

I tried to push myself up to sit, but she held me down firmly, leaving me no choice but to stay lying on the sofa.

"Don't talk like you're saying goodbye. I won't let anything happen to you."

"We both know what it's capable of. Let's just talk about this properly while we still have the chance."

"But..."

"Stop."

Ja raised her hand to cover my mouth and shook her head.

"No buts. I'm serious. If something is unavoidable, we have to accept it. And I want to talk about it properly."

I could only purse my lips and make a grumbling sound, feeling frustrated but unable to argue. Seeing me give in, the sweet-faced girl pinched my nose playfully, forcing me to breathe through my mouth.

"Why are you pouting like that? I'm just being honest... If, hypothetically, I am no longer here, promise me you'll quickly find a new girlfriend."

"Why do you have to talk like this?"

"Because thinking about I am the one who's going to leaves you behind is painful. Both of your past lovers were taken by me, and now that we're together, I might end up leaving you first again. It's just too sad, being left alone like this."

"I knows why you took all of them from me now. Mom told me the summary of the story today... If you hadn't taken them, I would've ended up marrying them and getting divorced eventually anyway. So, let's leave the past where it belongs. My present is you, and I won't give up on us."

"Then promise me."

"Only if you promise too, that you won't leave the house."

"What if I have to go out?"

"Nothing is necessary. This is life or death. Promise me first."

"Well..."

"Promise me."

"Alright,"

Ja said with a laugh and a wide smile. But then she froze when she heard a strange noise outside, quickly sitting up.

"Did you hear that? Was that a cat?"

"I heard it."

"Since this house has dogs, cats never come around. But I actually like cats. Should we go take a look?"

"No."

I grabbed her arm and shook my head.

"You're not leaving the house. We promised."

"But it's still within the yard,"

She reasoned.

"No. If you want to look, then do it from inside the house. Just this once, can you give me this? Otherwise, I won't keep my promise to you either." Ja pouted, crossing her legs as she sat back on the sofa.

"Fine. You're so mean. The cat's just inside the yard, and you still won't let me go."

"I should head home now,"

I said, standing up, putting on my pants, and tying my hair neatly while glancing at the clock. It was already past midnight. I couldn't afford to waste even a single minute.

"Why are you leaving? It's so late. Calling a taxi at this hour is dangerous. How about this, I'll take you home."

"No!"

"..."

"You have to stay here. I'll manage on my own. I'll call a ride through the app. You should go upstairs and sleep, and I'll video call you to check that you haven't left the house."

I got ready to leave but couldn't resist turning back to kiss her on the lips, pressing hard with all the love, and frustration, toward her stubbornness. She let out a small cry.

"Ouch!"

"Not as much as how I feels right now. I will find a way to help you."

. .

I rushed back home and dug through the trash bag where I had thrown the remains of the typewriter earlier. Bits of metal and screws were scattered everywhere. Honestly, I was furious with myself for being so quick to destroy it, and for overlooking Ja's novel as well. Even though I had no idea how to repair a typewriter, there had to be some way. Maybe if I just randomly pieced it together, it could help.

But it seemed I underestimated the manufacturers and the complexity of the machine. If it were that easy, everyone in the country would have been making typewriters at home.

Everything was so intricate, and some of the parts I smashed were completely bent out of shape. There was no solution, no way out to save Ja.

I stared at the pages of the novel my mom had printed, alternating my gaze between them and the broken remnants of the typewriter in my hands, completely stuck. The frustration, combined with fear, overwhelmed me, and I broke down crying at 2 a.m.

I had no idea how to handle this. As much as I knew the typewriter had a kind of magical power, I had seen its effects firsthand. It was almost impossible to avoid what was written, and Ja knew this too. But doing nothing wasn't an option either.

I am her partner, and I know what she has been facing. This problem is partly my fault because I gave the typewriter to my mom. I was careless and not careful enough.

I picked up each typewriter arm, looking at the letters used to press the ink, wiping away my tears as I alternated my gaze between them and the pages of the novel.

What if I try this...

Even though I didn't know if it would work, I wanted to try. All night, I pressed each letter against the ink stamp I had at home and stamped them onto the novel paper, one letter at a time.

I told myself this might help, even though deep down, I knew it was just fooling myself. Since I couldn't fix the typewriter, the only way to help her was to cheat.

I would be the one to jump in front of the car instead...

.

At six in the morning, I video-called Ja to check if she was still at home. The sweet-faced girl answered the call early, her face groggy and still sleepy, which gave me a little relief.

"Okay, you haven't gone anywhere."

"No one goes out at six in the morning... Oh, wait a second... Yes, Mom? Are you going to the temple? Can I not go today?"

Ja's mother's slightly annoyed voice made her smile softly.

"I'm not feeling very well. Let me skip just this once, okay?"

A moment later, her mother's voice faded away. Ja turned to the camera, raising her eyebrows slightly and flashing a sweet smile.

"I am willing to argue with my mom just because I'm afraid my girlfriend might get upset."

"Think of it as doing it for yourself and your mom. If something happens to you, she'll be even more hurt. Now, you should get some rest. I'll come over later today, maybe in the afternoon."

"Aren't you opening the shop?"

"I'll let Phao handle it. I'll come keep you company... You must be bored staying home."

"Super bored. But if you come over, I won't be bored anymore. Let's do what we did last night again, okay?"

"You're naughty. But not in the living room this time."

"Aww..."

She made that disappointed sound, but I knew she was just pretending. After we ended the call, I suddenly felt sleepy, so I set my alarm for a little while and took a nap. When I woke up to the sound of my alarm at ten o'clock, I was shocked to see about ten missed calls from Ja. That made me panic, and I immediately called her back.

"What's wrong, Ja? Why did you call me so many times?"

"Mom was really upset, so I had to come to the temple with her. I was scared you'd be mad, so I called to confess first."

"Where are you right now?"

I shouted so loudly that Ja went silent for a moment before answering hesitantly.

"I'm sitting and waiting for Mom to finish talking to the abbot. But don't worry, there are no cars in the temple. I'll ask Mom to walk back home so no car can hit me."

"Which temple? Send me your location right now."

"There's no need, really..."

"Ja!"

"Yes... okay, okay!"

The sweet-voiced girl replied sheepishly and sent me her location. I rushed out of the house still in my pajamas, wide-eyed with panic, and immediately hailed a motorbike taxi to take me to the pinned location.

This was the first time in my life I didn't wash my face or brush my teeth. My worry had completely destroyed the pristine image I usually cared so much. About 15 minutes later, I arrived at the temple Ja had pinned and quickly called her.

"I'm here. Where are you?"

"Are you serious? That was fast. I'm at the front of the temple. Mom's buying fish to release."

"I'm at the front of the temple too, but I don't see anyone..."

I glanced left and right until my eyes locked with Ja's. She waved her hands excitedly and clutched her chest in relief.

"Over here! I'm right here!"

"Stay there. Don't move. I'll come to you."

"You're being overly paranoid... Oh! Look, it's the same cat from last night!"

Ja shifted her focus to the road just in time to see a mother cat carrying her kitten in her mouth, walking across.

"Last night after you went home, I snuck out to play with the cat."

"You never listen to me!"

"Bleh! I already did it. You can get mad if you want... Hey, a car!"

Ja's shout made me freeze. The sweet-faced girl ran toward the mother cat without a second thought, completely ignoring everything around her. At the same moment, a car sped toward her.

"Ja!!!"

***Screech! Crash!***

# Chapter 29: Broken Heart

The sound of screeching tires against the road echoed loudly, kicking up a cloud of dust, followed by a deafening crash. Everyone nearby, pedestrians and drivers alike, stopped in shock to look at the scene.

I, having witnessed everything from the beginning, used all my strength to run toward Ja. But when it was over, I felt my energy drain away. I could only fall to my knees on the ground, staring at the devastation in front of the temple, completely lost and unable to do anything.

I told you, didn’t I? I told you not to go anywhere and to stay home. Even though I made it in time, I still couldn’t save you.

“Ja... don’t do this to me. Please...”

I sobbed, tears streaming uncontrollably.

From the initial shock, I began to break down into uncontrollable crying. A crowd of people gathered around the scene, blocking my view of everything. Unable to see anything, I slowly crawled and pushed my way through the crowd, desperate to see what had happened.

Tears streamed down my face.

"Oh no, what a tragedy."

"Sigh, why did this have to happen? Even in a small alley, they had to drive so fast?"

"Such a short life."

The words short life made me feel faint, as if I might collapse. But I refused to believe anything until I saw with my own eyes what had actually happened.

"Kee."

A voice cut through the crowd, making me straighten up immediately. I recognized that voice. From being completely drained, it felt like a spark reignited inside me, giving me the strength to move. I quickly pushed through the crowd.

"Kee, where are you? Kee."

"Ja!"

"Kee, I am not dead!"

When she heard me call her name, she shouted back while crying with happiness that she didn’t die like the typewriter said. Ja was sitting on the ground with her legs folded, holding the mother cat and her kitten in her arms.

The car that almost hit her had crashed into the new spirit house in front of the temple instead. People walking nearby started shouting at the driver, and some even picked up wooden sticks to hit him.

“You idiot! This spirit house was just finished yesterday, and you crashed into it! Do you know how expensive it is?”

“I didn’t mean to! I swerved to avoid the cat!”

The driver said.

“The spirits will punish you! Go apologize at the spirit house, you fool!”

The voice of the man who swerved and hit the spirit house sounded familiar. Ja and I turned to look at him, and we saw it was Dr. Pae. He got out of the car, bowing and saying sorry to the people around him.

“I’m really sorry. A gas can fell and got stuck under the brake. I couldn’t stop the car and accidentally stepped on the accelerator, so the car sped

up…”

“Don’t make excuses, you godless person! Such a beautiful new spirit house made from fine teak wood, now destroyed by a fancy European car. Ugh!”

The villagers were furious. I stood up and stepped away from Ja, walking toward Dr. Pae, who was still being scolded by the crowd. My curiosity got the better of me.

“Dr. Pae, what are you doing here?”

“Kee!”

My ex-boyfriend, seeing me, quickly ran to hide behind me for protection.

“I... I…”

“Were you following Ja?”

“How did you know?”

“Because it’s too much of a coincidence!”

I shouted in his face. Already being berated by the villagers, he now had to deal with my anger too, leaving him looking like a scolded puppy.

“But I didn’t mean to hit Ja with my car! It was an accident.”

“I believe you,” I said.

“Why do you believe so easily?”

“Because it worked!”

“Worked? What do you mean?”

Tears streamed down my face as I looked at the damaged spirit house, then I laughed softly and glanced at Ja, still sitting in the same spot.

“Last night, I continued the story after Mom… haha,”

I said with a shaky laugh, staring at my ink-stained hands. “It worked, Ja. You didn’t die.”

All night, I had taken the typewriter keys, pressed them into ink, and stamped each letter one by one to continue the story from where Mom had left off. I cried the entire time, clasping my hands in prayer, begging for it to work. I even offered all the merits I’d accumulated throughout my life to the typewriter, asking it to spare Ja.

The story changed,

.

***Jidapa, who was running across the road, suddenly got a cramp in her leg. Unable to move and about to call for help, a car sped toward her. But instead of hitting her, it crashed into a newly built spirit house, collapsing it completely.***

***The car swerved just in time. Instead of someone dying, it ended with the driver having to pay for rebuilding the entire spirit house. The end.***

.

“You really did it. You managed to change the ending perfectly.” “Yes. You didn’t have to die, but the spirit house took the damage. Ugh!” “Oops!” Ja giggled.

I ran back to Ja and hugged her tightly, not caring about Dr. Pae, who was left to face the villagers’ scolding alone. At first, everyone was concerned about whether Ja was hurt, but now no one seemed to care anymore. The only person still paying attention was Ja’s mom, standing with a basin of fish, ready to release them.

“Are you two planning to hug each other until New Year? It’s boiling hot out here.”

“Mom, I just survived being hit by a car!”

“But you didn’t die, right? Now get up. The sun is too strong, you’ll ruin your skin. My fish need to be released into the river to live and grow. Hurry up.”

Teacher Wilai looked at both of us and shook her head. I quickly stood up and helped Ja to her feet, but she stayed where she was, crying.

“Are you still in shock?”

“No, it’s not that… Ja has a cramp. My legs are so stiff! Waaah!”

“Oh, right! Kee completely forgot the story said you got a cramp.”

“Waaah!”

. .

After getting through this, Ja and I quickly went back home to look at the story I had stamped letter by letter with the typewriter all night. The paper was messy with black ink stains everywhere, but we could still read it. Ja looked at me with so much gratitude before speaking in a shaky voice.

“Kee, you must’ve worked so hard all night, didn’t you?”

“Well…”

I scratched my chin awkwardly.

“I didn’t know what else to do, and I wasn’t sure if it would even work. I just thought doing something, anything, was better than doing nothing. I couldn’t stand the thought of just sitting by and watching you get hit by a car because my mom wrote a story for her own amusement. It felt horrible.” “Ja survived because of you.”

She wiped her tears with her sleeve and looked at the paper in her hands with heartfelt appreciation. I hugged her tightly, relieved that I had managed to rewrite the ending. The only person I felt a little sorry for was the driver who crashed into the spirit house. He had no idea what was going on but got dragged into all of this anyway.

“So, what are you going to do with this story now? You don’t have a

typewriter anymore. Can you finish writing it? Wasn’t it supposed to be your final story?” I asked.

“I’ll have to finish writing it, of course. Not having a typewriter is fine.

When I submit manuscripts, I always write them on a computer anyway.”

“So how are you going to continue from where you left off?”

“I’ll probably write that…”

As I listened carefully, my phone suddenly rang. Dr. Pae’s number appeared on the screen, it was the number of my ex-boyfriend, whose contact I had unblocked. Feeling a little awkward, I glanced at Ja and smiled apologetically.

“Who is it, Kee? Why aren’t you answering?”

“It’s Dr. Pae, our ex-boyfriend who almost hit you with his car because of his ‘passionate revenge.’”

I said it without meaning to sound sharp, but it seemed to make Ja lower her head in guilt.

“Are you mocking me?”

“No, no, I just made it sound worse. Should I answer?” I asked aloud, unsure, glancing at her briefly.

“Answer it. Let’s clear everything up once and for all.”

Ja gave a small nod.

“What do you mean by clear things up?”

“Clear up Ja’s past with him, and make him understand that he no longer matters to you. Even if this whole situation was caused by your mom’s novel, like I said, feelings can’t be forced. He came to you because he still has hope. If you don’t care about him anymore, cut him off completely.”

“I obviously doesn’t care about him anymore. He canceled our engagement and wedding because he had someone else, or rather, he had you. If I take him back now, I’d be the biggest fool.”

“Then set up a meeting and talk it out. Today, I will talk to him too. Whatever happens, let it happen.”

“Are you serious? You don’t have to do that. I understands everything you’ve done and isn’t angry with you.”

“But Dr. Pae probably still has unresolved feelings. I will make him understand that it’s time to live in the present.”

“And if he slaps you or throws water at you?”

“Then I’ll let him. I really did something wrong to him.”

“If you’re really going to do that, I won’t stop you.”

I sighed a little.

“If Dr. Pae pours water on you, I’ll spit right in his face myself.”

“Hearing that gives me some courage,” Ja said.

Even though we had just gone through a near-death experience, she still found ways to bring excitement into her life. In the end, I agreed to take Dr. Pae’s call, even though it got disconnected the first time. After talking for a while, I arranged to meet him at a coffee shop to discuss what had happened today, and he agreed without hesitation.

Before heading out to meet him, I asked for ten minutes to shower and get dressed because, from the moment I woke up until I rushed to the temple to see my lover, I hadn’t even brushed my teeth.

The two of us rode together to the coffee shop. On the way, my phone rang again. But this time, it was Tham’s number…

“Well, since it’s already happening…”

Ja, who knew who was calling, said decisively.

“Invite him to your coffee shop too.”

“You’ll encounter two bombs today.”

“It’s fine. Let’s clear everything up in one go. I also need to write the final chapter for both of them… I will just leave him without any closure. If this were a novel, it would be like letting the character die and disappear entirely.”

“But…”

“If Tham pours water on me, you’ll spit at him to defend me, won’t you?”

“No.”

"....."

“I’ll throw poop right at his face instead. Let him know. He dumped me and still dared to hurt my current girlfriend? That’s too insulting.”

Ja poked my cheek with her finger and laughed before switching to hold my hand, while the other hand kept steering the car.

“Thank you, Keer. I’ve done so many things to you, but you still forgive me.”

“What else could I do?”

"....."

“Loving you made me realize that all my past loves didn’t mean anything at all.”

I spoke absentmindedly, purely from the heart, until the sweet-faced person pulled her hand back. I turned to look in surprise and saw that she was pressing her hand to her cheek.

“What’s wrong with you…? Your face is so red. Are you embrassed?”

“I never thought in my life that someone would say something like that to me. You’re such a flirt. No wonder so many people fall for you.”

“Well, you’re the one who stole all of them from me. Even Kee has fallen for you.”

“When this is over, let's turn into the hotel.”

“That’s a waste of money. Don’t forget, Kee’s bedroom is on the second floor of the coffee shop.” “Oh, now you’re quick to think!”

Ja teased.

We laughed together, but even so, Ja’s face stayed red. Just like I said, because of her… all the love I had in the past didn’t mean anything, except the good memories.

.

Not long after we arrived at the shop, Dr. Pae, who we had arranged to meet at noon, arrived early. Ja, who had been waiting, waved him over to sit and talk. The atmosphere around their table felt oddly tense, almost like a formal negotiation.

“Boss, don’t you think the vibe at that table is a bit strange?”

Phao, who had been watching them closely from behind the counter, whispered to me.

“And why are you letting your

ex-boyfriend talk to your current girlfriend like that? Is this some kind of love triangle drama?”

“Who’s the third person?”

“You know, like a homewrecker.”

I glanced at my employee and bared my teeth in mock anger.

“I’ve never cheated on anyone, okay?”

“Then why are you letting two people who shouldn’t even be talking sit together?”

“There’s a reason for it.”

.

***Splash!***

The glass of water in Dr. Pae’s hand was thrown straight at Ja’s face. Completely caught off guard, I could only stand there with my mouth open, stunned, until Phao nudged my side with her elbow.

“Very reasonable indeed, Boss. He used the whole glass.”

“Pae!”

I darted out from behind the counter to stand beside Ja and pointed a finger at him.

“Why would you do something so aggressive? Are you uncivilized or what?”

“And how am I supposed to not be angry? When I found out the reason I didn’t marry you was because it was all part of some plan by this woman to take you away from me!”

“And would she have succeeded if you didn’t play along? Do you think one hand clapping makes a sound?”

“If there wasn’t anything to spark it, it wouldn’t have happened. I couldn’t control my instincts as a man.”

“Shameless.”

I defended Ja fiercely, ignoring everything else.

“It’s a shame you’re a doctor. Can’t you control what’s in your pants? And even if Ja hadn’t come into the picture, you were already cheating on me, going on dates with someone else. Do you think I didn’t know that apart from Ja, you had others too?”

“But I made you my number one.”

“Go die in a hole and rot. Get out of here right now! Stop thinking, stop hoping that we’ll ever reconcile, because I don’t even consider you a friend anymore. There’s nothing left, nothing.”

“But I still love you!”

Dr. Pae practically jumped as he shouted, his voice loud enough to turn every head in the shop.

“Well, I don’t love you. I love Ja, the woman who ‘stole’ you from me.”

Hearing that, Dr. Pae lost control and held Ja’s neck tightly. He pushed her body against the wall with all the strength he had, full of anger, shame, and frustration because he didn’t get what he wanted.

“Pae, stop this right now! What’s wrong with you?”

“I won’t let you two be happy! How dare you treat me like a joke?”

“If you don’t want them to be happy, I think there’s a better way to handle this,”

Tham’s voice cut through the chaos. The crazy doctor turned to see Tham walking steadily toward him, holding something in his hand. The sight made everyone in the shop scatter in panic, fearing what might happen.

“A gun?”

Dr. Pae stared at the weapon in confusion.

“You want me to shoot her?” “No,” Tham said coldly.

“I want you to shoot yourself.”

Tham glared at Ja with just as much hatred.

**“If you die, they’ll feel so guilty that they won’t be able to love each other anymore. That’s the most fitting punishment.”**

# Chapter 30: The ending of the love story

Right now, the scene in the shop was tense. The gun Tham had handed to Dr. Pae was now firmly in the hands of the desperate man. Seeing that things were getting worse, I quickly stepped in front of Ja to shield her. I spoke in a calm, low voice, not wanting to startle him and cause the gun to go off.

“Pae... calm down and think carefully. Is this really worth it? You don’t love me that much,”

I said, licking my dry lips, trembling with fear.

“Shooting yourself won’t change anything. How could I go back to loving someone who’s already gone?”

“But it will stop you two from loving each other. That will leave a scar on your hearts… I agree with this man.”

Pae turned the gun toward himself, pressing it under his chin.

“I can’t stand the thought of the person who ruined our love taking you away from me.”

“Even without her, you still have someone else.”

“But I had planned to marry you… until she came along.”

"If you were really serious, you wouldn’t have broken up with me and chosen Ja in the first place. You need to blame yourself too, not just everyone around you. You’re not the only one who’s right, here."

“I don’t care about anything anymore. The woman standing behind you must take responsibility for all of this. I’ll make sure that your love can never work. No matter how much you love each other, you’ll never forget this moment. It will hurt you for the rest of your lives.”

“Pae… don’t make me hate you.”

“Even if you don’t hate me, you still wouldn’t choose me.”

“Exactly. I wouldn’t choose you, and even if you died, I wouldn’t attend your funeral. You’re so annoying… You want to die? Then do it. Ja and I will be together and will always remember you as the one who sacrificed for our love.”

“...…”

“Shoot it. What are you waiting for? You keep talking so much. Dogs that bark don’t bite?”

I snapped, switching from trying to reason with him to taunting him because I was just too fed up. Pae, still holding the gun under his chin, looked confused, clearly not expecting me to react this way.

“Well? I said shoot! What are you standing there for?”

"Kee... don't say that."

"I”m not gonna try to stop you. Fine, let’s see if you really has the courage to do it."

“Kee… don’t provoke him like that.”

“Ja, just stay quiet. I want to see if someone who says he loves me this much will actually go through with it.”

“You’re testing me,”

Pae said, lowering the gun and taking a deep breath.

“Yes, I love myself too much to die. I won’t kill myself without knowing how you two will live your lives.”

“See?”

I smirked, but my smile disappeared when Pae suddenly pointed the gun at Tham.

“But if someone else dies, the result is the same. I’ll still be here to watch what happens to both of you.”

Dr. Pae, who now looked completely out of control, aimed the gun at Tham and pulled the trigger. A loud click echoed through the room. There was no bang, no explosion like in the movies—only silence. The sound made it obvious: *“It’s a fake gun. I'm going to embrassed you even more."* “I knew someone like you wouldn’t have the guts to shoot yourself,” Tham said, grabbing the gun and shrug.

“Why are you so pathetic? Honestly, I came here thinking I’d try to win Kee back. But after seeing you, I know I have no chance. Because you’re making men who try to win women back look even worse.”

“So you brought a fake gun to scare us?”

“Yeah.”

***Thud!***

I grabbed a vase from the nearby table and smashed it against the back of Dr. Pae’s head with a loud thump. My ex-boyfriend slowly crumpled to the floor, his body slumping like he had no strength left. I guess I didn’t hit him hard enough to knock him out, but it was enough to make him lose some of his fight.

“Do you feel guilty at all, Ja?”

Tham glanced at the small girl standing behind me and asked in a calm, cold voice. Worried that Tham might lose control and threaten Ja as well, I quickly stepped between them, standing protectively like I was shielding her.

“Are you about to lose it like Pae did?”

“I’m much more in control.”

“What kind of ‘in control’ person hands someone a fake gun?”

“It’s a prop gun for a stage play. It looks real, so I grabbed it by accident. I only meant to scare my ex… I mean Ja, not you.”

Since both Ja and I were his exes, he had to clarify. The sweet-faced girl, who had stayed quiet for a while, finally stepped out from behind me. She decided to face both men, two people whose lives she had disrupted. Then, she nodded slightly.

“Ja feels guilty.”

“…”

“But I’m not sorry for what I did. If I hadn’t done it, I wouldn’t be with Kee now. Even if it was selfish, I would do it again if I could go back,”

She said, swallowing back a sob. Tham stood silently, as if waiting to hear her full explanation, while Pae, still sitting on the floor, remained furious.

“Is this what you call guilt? You destroyed our love!”

“If you two had been a good people from the start, I would never have interfered,”

Ja said calmly.

“I watched Kee for a long time, watched her closely. What started as inspiration for a story turned her into a character, into a real person I cared about, even though we never spoke. When I got involved with your relationship,”

She turned her gaze to Dr. Pae,

“It was because you cheated on Kee first. You dated two women at the same time. If I were to speak correctly, I was the third one. And you chose to leave everyone for me.”

“That’s because you said we would love each other.”

“If you look at it differently, I was only doing the same as you, leaving someone who wasn’t right for someone I chose,”

Ja continued, shifting her eyes to Tham.

“And then you came along. You were the next person to fall for me. You said Kee was too good, that she never had time for you. You wanted someone who made you feel important. I simply gave you what you wanted, and you chose me.”

“.....”

“I never asked you to choose me. You were so afraid of losing me that you cut Kee out of your life, the woman you planned to marry, just to chase after someone like me, who you barely knew. And now, you blame a third person for ruining your life. You need to blame yourself first.”

“So you’re saying you did nothing wrong?”

Tham grabbed Ja’s collar and pulled her close, his eyes filled with tears. I was about to step in to help, but Ja raised her hand to stop me.

“Let him be, Kee. I deserve all of this, I am the problem for all of you. But if you think about it carefully, really think, then you’ll see what truly caused everything to end up this way.”

“And why is it that someone like you, who got everything, my love, his love, ends up with Kee’s love too? What right do you have to get what you want when the rest of us are left with nothing?”

Tham cried out, his voice shaking.

I finally stepped in, my voice breaking through the tension. While everyone kept arguing over what they deserved, they had forgotten one thing, I had always been the one to lose everything.

“The person who has never had anything at all is me.”

“…”

I clenched my fists tightly, tears streaming down my cheeks as anger filled me. Everyone was so focused on what they had lost or thought they deserved, and not one of them had stopped to think about how I felt.

**“And today, I wants to take something back for once, happiness. And my happiness is Ja. Can’t you give me that as a gift for once?”**

I pointed at Dr. Pae, who kept acting like he was the victim, and keep yelling at me.

“You left me coldly and still have the nerve to beg for my love. And when you don’t get it, you throw a tantrum, claiming you’ve lost everything. It’s pathetic. And you!”

I grabbed Tham’s collar while his hand was still clutching Ja’s wrist.

“You said you found the right person and left. And now you’re back because you’re afraid you won’t find anyone better than me. Aren’t you ashamed?”

“.....”

**“How dare you claim you’ve lost everything? How dare you try to take away the only happiness I have left?”**

Do you have any idea how much pain I went through just to get here with

Ja? The fear, the heartbreak, the typewriter, and the shattered hope in love, I’ve endured so much just to make it to this moment.

How dare they treat me like this. I won’t forgive them.

I won’t forgive anyone.

“From today onwards... you won’t even be friends or acquaintances to me.”

“Kee…”

Tham let go of Ja’s collar, looking like he was hit with a wave of regret, while Dr. Pae seemed just as shocked.

“If we pass each other, don’t greet me. Don’t even look me in the eye. Don’t stop by the shop. I’ll erase you from my memory completely. We never dated. We were never together. You’re nothing but a stain on a piece of clothing, I’d rather cut off with scissors than see."

“…”

“Anyone who hurt me has no right to stay in my life.”

“…”

**“And anyone who hurt Ja has no right to stay in my life either. Now, get out!”**

My voice was firm and final. Dr. Pae slowly stood up, his rage fading into defeat, and he walked away with his head hung low. Tham, on the other hand, pressed his lips together as though he wanted to say something. But when he saw that I wasn’t willing to listen, he quietly walked out too.

Just as they were about to leave, Ja, who had been silent for so long, called out to stop them. She sank to her knees on the floor, tears streaming down her face as she spoke through sobs.

“I’m sorry.”

“...”

“I’m sorry for hurting you so much. When I did it, I never thought it would cause this much pain or nearly ruin someone’s life. Back then, I thought… if you could cheat on someone, then you deserved to know what it felt like to be betrayed too. I didn’t feel guilty because I was so focused on feeling satisfied, on revenge. But now… now that I’ve found love, I understand how painful it really is.”

“.....”

“It hurts when someone doesn’t want to see you. It hurts when they disappear. And that’s exactly what I did to you.”

The sweet-faced girl's words carried the weight of regret, as if she were reliving the moment when I had discovered that I was just another one of her characters. Back then, I was furious, refusing to see her or even acknowledge her. During that time, it seemed Ja was the one quietly watching me from afar, hoping for a chance to see me again.

Just as much as I had wanted to see her back then, but my pride was too strong.

“Can you forgive me? I’ll even bow to you. Seeing you guys like this… it hurts me.”

Ja’s apology made both of them look at her with different expressions. Dr. Pae’s face still showed clear resentment, while Tham only sighed.

“I loved you,”

Tham said, turning his face away.

“Because I loved you, I hated you so much for what you did. It’ll take time, maybe even a lifetime, for me to forgive you.”

“.....”

“But I’ll remember that you apologized. Goodbye.”

My former lover handled it like a man who knew when to let go. Holding on wouldn’t bring me back, and Ja looked too broken for him to leave her with nothing. That left only Dr. Pae, the more fragile one. He looked at Ja with deep hatred, unable to let go.

“I hate you. And I will hate you forever.”

Dr. Pae angrily kicked the fake gun and stormed out right after Tham. Ja remained kneeling, her head down as she cried. Seeing her like that, I wrapped my arms around her from behind and gently rubbed her shoulder to comfort her.

“I loves you.”

“.....”

**“And from now on, I will only love you.”**

My words seemed to make Ja cry even harder. The sweet-faced girl leaned her head onto my shoulder, sobbing uncontrollably, her voice breaking so much it was hard to understand her.

“I feel hurt by what they said… but when you said you love me, I don’t feel anything else anymore. I’m selfish. I wasn’t fair to them at all.”

“They aren’t the only people in the world who’ve had broken hearts. Before this, Kee was already hurt by what they did. Let’s just say it’s even now.”

“I don’t deserve your love. I’m a bad person... If I hadn’t been part of this story...”

“Our love story wouldn’t be complete without you. You’re the main character here... And if you know how much evil you are, then from now on, make up for it by loving me forever. Stop crying, my dear? You’re embarrassing us in front of Phao.”

I nodded toward my employee, who had witnessed the entire event from start to finish. Ja wiped her tears with her sleeve and blew her nose into my shirt.

“Ew.”

“You said you love me, and you’re grossed out by this?”

“Of course I am! That’s snot!”

“Hey…lick....–”

I quickly covered her mouth before she could say anything worse and pulled her up to her feet.

“Come on, let’s go wash your face. You look like a little monkey right now.”

I wasn’t sure if this resolved all the tangled mess of the past relationships, but Ja had done her best to face it. As for me, like I’ve said before, I’m certain this is my one and only love.

It’s as if I’ve finally found the puzzle piece that fits perfectly into place.

Our story isn’t over yet, because it hasn’t truly begun. Life after this, that is the real story.

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Since that day, both Tham and Dr. Pae never came back, just as I had asked.

Ja returned to finishing her novel, following the same rule: 30% reality and 70% imagination. This time, though, she wrote on a computer, there was no typewriter anymore.

About six months later, Ja’s book was published and became a bestseller, both in bookstores and online. The success left her feeling proud and relieved after all the effort. Her new habit became dragging me to bookstores and secretly watching if anyone picked up her book and bought it.

There were plenty of comments, some praised the story, while others criticized it. Some readers hated the character Jidapa, who they felt had destroyed the life of the final protagonist and still got her happy ending. But that’s love. You can’t control who you fall in love with, or who you don’t.

People who are about to get married can still break up the day before the ceremony.

People who are already married can still get divorced.

Nothing is ever certain.

“It’s not fun,”

My mom said with a huff after finishing Ja’s novel. She sounded grumpy, as usual.

“If you’d mixed in a bit of what I wrote, it would’ve been a lot more exciting.”

“You mean the part where the heroine climbs onto the car roof to escape a dog?”

I teased, laughing.

“You’re better off staying here as the grumpy old lady of the house. Writing stories isn’t your thing.”

“Don’t underestimate me. I just never got the chance to show what I can do. Don’t come begging me later when I’m famous.”

“Are you still want to write a novel?”

I asked, looking shocked. Ja, sitting next to me, peeled an orange for my mom to win her over and smiled sweetly.

“If you write, I’ll help read it for you, Mom. I’ll support you,”

Ja said cheerfully.

“Ja... you should go find yourself a husband. Why waste your life with this kid? There’s no future here. Why throw away a good life for someone like her?”

“Mom, seriously? It’s your own child here!”

I pouted at her and turned away with a huff. Of course, she didn’t apologize.

“The other day, I gathered the broken parts of the typewriter and tried to get it fixed.”

The moment she said that, both Ja and I sat up straight in shock. The word

“typewriter” felt forbidden, like how Harry Potter would react to hearing, “He Who Must Not Be Named” was coming.

“It was broken into pieces. You still tried to fix it? How did it go? You couldn’t fix it, right?”

“No, they couldn’t. The repairman tried putting it back together, but it was scattered beyond saving.”

“Why do you love the typewriter so much, Mom? Just use a computer if you want to write a novel.”

“But someone around here offered to fix it. They took it apart, replaced some pieces, and put in other parts that worked. It can type a few letters now,”

Mom said casually.

Ja and I spoke at the same time, our voices rising with urgency.

“Where is it, Mom?! Where is it?!”

When Ja and I spoke at the same time, Mom placed a hand over her chest, startled.

“Well, it could only type a few letters, so I threw it out.”

“Phew… that’s a relief. Where did you throw it? In the storage room?”

I stood up, ready to open the storage room and find something to smash it with again, but Mom shook her head.

“I sold it to a secondhand shop. Got twenty baht for it. What a rip-off.”

“Sold? When did you sell it?”

“Yesterday. The old man who bought it said he’d give it to his grandchild to play as a cashier at home. Kids these days have such imagination.”

Ja and I froze, staring at each other, completely speechless. Even though it was broken, I still believed it had some lingering power.

“Who was it, Mom? Tell me who bought it! I'm going to buy it back!”

“Hey, why are you making such a big deal out of this?”

“It is a big deal, Mom! If that kid puts paper in it and types something crazy, do you even know what could happen?”

The most dangerous thing had slipped out of our hands. All I could hope for now was that whoever had it would either type something good or, better yet, not use it at all. Otherwise, who knows what could happen?

In all the bad things, that typewriter still had one good point, it brought Ja and me together.

But in the good things, there are also bad things… because that typewriter…

**It can change the world!**

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# Chapter POV 1 Ja : Open Your Mouth

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Before I could found the love like in novel, I had written many stories about love because, truthfully, I didn’t know what love was.

In the past, I used to see Kee as just another character. But through the stories my mom told me, like the one where, on Valentine’s Day, a mischievous boy ran around school tying balloons to confess his love and causing a stir, I became curious.

At that time, I was studying at a different school from her. Hearing about this, my eyes lit up with excitement. I wanted to know who the girl receiving all those balloons was and what she looked like. But Mom would just dismiss it, calling them “troublesome kids.”

In adults' language, that meant wild girls.

As for me, I was categorized as a “good girl.” Being a teacher’s daughter meant I couldn’t do anything out of line. My natural habit of being too lazy to speak much only added to that image, making me seem well-behaved by default.

But what my mom didn’t know was that, deep down, I also wanted to have fun. I wanted to be “wild” like other girls my age.

Everything was so contradictory. I wanted to be lively, enjoy life, laugh with friends, and have fun, but I was too lazy to speak. Being quiet, because I didn’t like opening my mouth, made me a person without friends.

My personalilty us not good either. Until my homeroom teacher sent a home-to-parent communication letter, thinking I had problems. In the end, my mom decided to homeschool me and let me take university entrance exams later.

That was the life I was born into and grew up with.

I remember one day, when I was stuck at home with nothing to do, I started rummaging through old things in the room and came across a dusty, olivegreen typewriter. It was so old, covered in layers of dust, but when I tried typing, it still seemed to work, though it had no ink. So, I went searching for supplies to fix it up, then started typing on paper.

That typewriter became more than a tool, it became my companion and confidant. When I was in a bad mood, I just typed into it. If I wanted to fight back at someone or release my anger, I just… typed into it.

That was how I first discovered the special power of the typewriter. Whatever I typed onto the paper would happen exactly as I wanted it to. To put it in visual way.

You could say I had the “Hand of God.”

"Do you have a boyfriend yet?"

One day, my mom asked this out of nowhere. I had just come back from university and shook my head. I wanted to sigh at her and say,

*“If I did, you’d just call me slut again,”*

But because I am too lazy to talk, I said nothing.

"Why don’t you have one?"

"Can I have it?"

"Of course you can. You’re a grown woman now. I’m not stopping you if you want someone to care about. Just make sure to do it the right way. I worry about you every day. If one day I’m not here anymore, you might be all alone."

"I thought you’d call me slut again, like that girl you mentioned, Kee." "Who’s Kee?"

"The one with the boy tying balloons to his motorbike and riding around the football field. You told me about her."

"Oh. I don’t even remember her name anymore. I had so many students. I’m more surprised at you, how did you remember something I only told you once?"

At that moment, I was the one surprised instead. My mom was right, why did I remember this girl so clearly? Maybe it was because Kee’s life seemed so colorful, so interesting that I wanted to know her and turn her story into a novel. If I ever got the chance to interview her or be close to her...

“Do you still have Kee’s yearbook, Mom?”

“Probably.”

“Do you remember which one is Kee?”

“The most beautiful one, that’s her.”

It was as simple as that. I asked my mom to find the yearbook, then I opened it myself to search for the girl named Kee. After flipping through just three pages, I was able to point her out immediately. There was only one person who stood out as the most beautiful. Her face was clearly Thai and very striking. Even in a small two-inch photo with a simple blue background, she stood out.

I read her name, her brief profile, and the address she had listed, feeling an inexplicable interest. I wanted to know her, without any logical reason. Eventually, I secretly went to follow her at the address written there.

But I found out she rarely returned home. A neighbor told me she had moved away, running a coffee shop not too far from there, though no one knew exactly where.

At that point, I realized that if I ever wanted to know her, I would need a miracle. By chance, I had that power in my hands.

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*I happened to see Kee at the supermarket. She was picking up household supplies but had forgotten to bring her credit card. Flustered, she had to rush to put everything back on the shelves.*

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I felt a little guilty because I had written the situation and even decided on the location where we would meet. I had been waiting for Kee at that supermarket since early morning, though she didn’t show up until later in the day.

The events played out exactly as I had written, which was both funny and a little sad. Kee had to rush back to her café to grab her wallet, and that was how I finally met her.

This was the beginning... of how we first met.

“The worst thing is that you embarrassed me. If I hadn’t read what you wrote, I never would’ve known that I didn’t really forget my wallet, it was all because of you. If you wanted to get to know me, you could’ve just bumped into me by accident or something. I probably would’ve fallen for you anyway.”

"You're so dramatic."

I told Kee about how badly I had wanted to meet her. We were lying down, chatting lazily, playfully wrapping our legs around each other to see whose leg could stay on top, winning the "game."

“What you did wasn’t dramatic? I haven’t dared to go back to that supermarket, since I looked like a rich person with a full cart of stuff but ran out like a dog escaping hot water. Ugh.”

“Are you still mad? Can someone really get mad after the fact?”

“Of course! You’ve committed so many offenses, stealing my ex, creating all these situations.”

“...”

“But I forgive you. Because if you hadn’t done any of that, I wouldn’t have met you.”

Her easy forgiveness made me laugh softly.

“Maybe I wrote it so that you would fall in love with me.”

“You know the typewriter can create events, but it can’t create feelings. I likes you because you are you, sweet-faced but tricky and sneaky. The only thing I don’t like is when you’re too lazy to talk.”

“I can’t change that habit. You shouldn’t have said anything, now I really don’t feel like talking.”

Whenever I felt lazy to talk, I would honestly tell Kee first, so she wouldn’t get mad. Even my mom, who used to get angry, gave up on me and called me ‘Miss Quiet.’

“What? You just started talking, and now you’re lazy again? There are still so many things I wants to know.”

“...”

“Are you going to talk or not?”

I shook my head. I could talk, but I wanted to tease her instead. Kee pressed her lips together, pretending to think, and scratched her chin. Even now, she looked so beautiful, just like when she was young.

“Alright, I will make you open your mouth herself.”

I was curious about what she would do, but everything happened so quickly. Suddenly, Kee sat up, grabbed both of my ankles, and spread them apart. It felt way too revealing, so I quickly spoke up.

“What are you doing?”

“It’s working, isn’t it? At least you’re talking now.”

I realized right away what she meant. With her hands, Kee quickly pulled off my shorts. Even though I tried to move away, she was faster, holding me still. Then, she lowered her face to the center, her mouth pressing against me with only my underwear as a barrier.

“Stop being naughty! I’ll continue talking.”

“I don’t want to hear it anymore.”

“What? Why?”

“There’s no point. Right now, you’re mine.”

After that, she began to tease me gently with her mouth, pulling my underwear aside with her fingers. The warmth and softness of her wet tongue sent a wave of sensations through me, making me tremble. My uncertainty and shyness mixed with everything I was feeling…

I hadn't cleaned up properly yet, so I pushed her head away. But the more she continued with her teasing, my pushing turned into holding her there instead.

"Why are you like this... huff... we were just talking, and then you..." "Because you wouldn't talk, that's why," she replied.

She pulled down my underwear, and I lifted my hips for her without thinking. Now my lower half was completely bare. Her fingers and tongue alternated between stroking and inserting, making me moan incoherently. I had to open my mouth to breathe in deeply because I felt like I was about to explode, and I was about to melt into liquid, sinking with the mattress. "Thank you for finding me,"

She said, then sped up the pace of her fingers until my body reached its peak and I screamed it out. She slowly withdrew her fingers, then pulled down her pants and straddled my face.

"And this is the punishment for not letting me go to that supermarket again."

“...”

"Open your mouth"

This… was her method.

**---------THE END--------**