

# Chapter : Introduction

"Is your sister just teasing me?"

A middle-aged man sat at a desk inside a large house. His serious face and graying hair mixed with black strands showed his age.

The eldest son didn’t know how to respond. His expression was just as tense.

"If it were about something else, maybe. But when it comes to liking women, I think she’s serious. She’s insisted she doesn’t like men. She’s already embarrassed several of my friends over it."

"But I think she’s just messing with you, Dad. I had someone follow her, and she’s been spotted at the mall with guys,"

Said Tewa, the middle son, handing a tablet to his father and older brother. The screen showed pictures of their younger sister on dates with handsome men.

"Is that all?"

Gawin asked his younger brother.

"Well... there’s more, but..."

Tewa hesitated.

"But what?"

Their father demanded, his tone firm.

Both sets of eyes turned to Tewa, who silently apologized to his mischievous sister before revealing everything. He scrolled through over twenty photos for his father and older brother to see.

In each picture, a young woman about 165 cm tall appeared. Her shoulderlength brown hair, fair yellow-toned skin, and student uniform stood out. She was seen at a mall with at least five different handsome men.

Their father almost fainted when he saw this.

"Dad, I’ve been keeping an eye on her. Once they leave the mall, they all go their separate ways,"

Tewa quickly explained, hoping to calm his father down.

"Maybe nothing’s happening now, but who knows in the future? Do you really think those men are spending money on her without expecting anything in return?"

The two brothers exchanged a knowing look. As men, they understood all too well.

"Can you two stop spoiling your sister for once, Gawin, Tewa?"

"Dad, you know no one can go against her. Besides, we don’t spoil her in everything, especially when it comes to Mom—"

"Tewa!"

The middle brother accidentally mentioned someone he shouldn’t have, and the elder quickly interrupted him.

"Do either of you have any female friends with good character, someone... like your sister?"

Their father asked hesitantly.

Two young men exchanged glances again.

"Are you okay with this, Dad?"

Tewa couldn't believe his ears.

"What else can we do? It doesn't matter what happens to your sister. What worries me the most is the people approaching her. If she keeps being reckless, one day she'll get hurt,"

Their father said, frustrated by his daughter's stubbornness but deeply concerned inside.

The youngest daughter was becoming more defiant by the day. As she grew older, her rebelliousness intensified. No one could control her—not even her father or her two older brothers.

This family problem had lingered for 16 years, ever since their mother left the house. To this day, there was no sign of improvement.

The two brothers, still uncertain, left the office to discuss the matter privately in Tewa's room.

"Should we ask Sai for help, bro?"

"Are you crazy? Those two don't get along at all. Our sister's said so many nasty things to her."

"But we don’t know what else to do. Among all of us, Sai is the only one who never spoils Ran. Maybe she can handle her."

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Raindrops clung to the treetops, falling to the ground as the wind swayed the branches.

Inside a small room, a young woman with brown eyes picked up the remote to turn off the TV. Her eyes burned. The entertainment news currently trending was a joyous announcement.

Many people were celebrating the love story that had been officially revealed the night before.

"Finally, they got their happy ending,"

She smiled widely, genuinely happy for them. Yet deep inside, her heart ached.

The news was about Natasha—the person she still loved deeply.

The sound of the doorbell pulled Oranate out of her thoughts. She dabbed at her eyes with a tissue before walking to the peephole to see who it was.

*Why are P’Gawin and P’Tewa here?*

Surprised, she opened the door to find the two men standing there.

"Are you busy?"

Gawin smiled gently and ruffled her hair affectionately.

"No, come in."

Her studio apartment was compact, with every corner of the small space filled.

"Why don’t you move back home?"

Tewa asked, for what seemed like the hundredth time.

“Sai already gave that house to Uncle, remember?”

“But Dad said he didn’t want it. Don’t let Ran’s words get to you,”

Tewa reminded her.

Oranate felt uneasy continuing the topic. She excused herself to fetch drinks for her two older brothers.

“We’ve never thought of you as an outsider, Sai. You’re still our sister, no matter what. Uncle’s assets are yours by right, as his child.”

Gawin said earnestly.

“Just a stepchild. Let’s not talk about this anymore. I’m fine living like this,”

She replied, her tone firm.

Gawin sighed quietly. This little sister of theirs could be incredibly stubborn when she wanted to be.

“Then why is there still profit being deposited into my account?”

Oranate asked, looking between her brothers.

“The shares that were yours are still yours,”

Tewa explained.

“But…”

“No ‘but.’ Take it. Uncle and Aunt loved you so much, and you know it. Don’t let the words of someone immature ruin their kindness. The people you should care about most are the ones who are no longer here. They were your parents. Remember that,”

Gawin said gently but firmly.

Oranate would never forget the kindness of her uncle and aunt, who had taken in an orphan like her and raised her as their own. They gave her love and warmth, treating her like a princess from a fairy tale. Sometimes, she forgot she wasn’t their real daughter. In truth, she wanted to forget, but someone always reminded her, like a haunting shadow from her past.

“What brings you two here today?”

She asked, sitting back on the same sofa as before.

“Well, there is something. About the previous commercial—you did a fantastic job. The client loved it, and now it’s being aired everywhere,”

Gawin said, glancing at Tewa as if to signal him to stay quiet for now.

“I already saw it,” she replied.

“What if we asked you to work on another one? This time, it’s for a shampoo. Dad wants the full team, especially the director. He really liked your work,”

Gawin added.

Oranate's expression grew somber as she lowered her gaze.

“I’m not sure if they’ll be available.”

“Can you at least ask? The presenter for this one—if you find out who it is, you might scream with excitement,”

Gawin teased, knowing how much his sister adored a certain superstar. She immediately knew who he meant.

Scream? More like cry, she thought. The prospect of working with that person again made things all the more complicated.

Tewa nudged Gawin impatiently, reminding him with a glance to get to the more urgent matter. He had a date in the afternoon, and the last time he’d canceled, it didn’t go well. He was determined not to mess it up again. “Besides the commercial, there’s something else we need your help with,”

Gawin said, finally addressing the main reason for their visit.

"What is it?"

The young man took a sip of water, carefully choosing his words before speaking.

"Right now, Ran is being really stubborn. She’s doing everything she can to meet Mom. This year is her last year of school, and she’s threatening not to graduate unless she gets to see Mom. We don’t know what to do anymore."

"Wait a minute—it's been 16 years, and she’s still crying about seeing

Mom?"

Oranate exclaimed.

"You said it,"

Gawin and Tewa chuckled.

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Well…"

Tewa straightened his posture, clasped his sister's hands, and looked at her with pleading eyes.

"Sai, can you help us deal with Ran?"

"What? Me?" she asked, shocked.

The two men nodded eagerly.

"No way! I’m not going to see her ever again!"

Oranate declared firmly, shaking off her brother’s hands and turning her face away.

"Oh, Sai, come on. No matter what, Ran is still our sister."

"Not mine! She’s not my sister, and she’s never treated me like one either. How am I supposed to deal with her? Here’s my advice: go find an exorcist if you’re that desperate."

The two brothers burst out laughing at her blunt remark.

"If not for us, at least do it for Dad. He’s getting older, and every time Ran throws a tantrum, his blood pressure spikes. Just help her finish school, at least,"

Gawin pleaded.

"I can’t,"

Oranate replied, her face grim. Even thinking about it gave her chills.

"But I believe you can! Please, Sai, help us. You’re the only one who can argue with Ran and win every time. You’ve never spoiled her—you always put her in her place,"

Tewa added, trying to boost her confidence.

Oranate squinted at him suspiciously.

"Are you complimenting me right now?"

"Of course! Why would I ever criticize my dear little sister? Right, Gawin?" Tewa gave her his most innocent puppy-dog eyes and a wide grin.

"Ran only has one semester left before she graduates. That troublemaker has been excellent in school all along, maintaining a GPA of no less than 3.90 every term. And now, she’s staging a protest in her final term. I don’t know what to do anymore,"

Gawin sighed, both frustrated and amused at his sister's antics.

Oranate wanted to refuse outright. She and Ran had always clashed, their relationship filled with constant arguments. Every time they spoke, Ran’s words were so sharp that Oranate often fantasized about cutting out her tongue with scissors.

But the debt she owed her adoptive parents weighed heavily on her heart. If not for that, making a decision would have been much easier.

Her adoptive father, who had passed away several years ago, was the biological brother of Gawin and Tewa’s father. Their father had always shown her kindness as well, never treating her like an outsider.

With that, how could she refuse?

"Alright, I'll try, but I can't promise I'll manage," she said.

The two men beamed with joy, clapping their hands together in celebration.

"Then pack your things. You're moving to our house. I've already had a room prepared for you."

"What? You mean right now?"

# Chapter 01: The Sassy Girl & The SmartMouth Adult

“What’s up, dear? You sound so stressed.”

“Where are you? Can we meet up?”

“Where?”

“The usual restaurant.”

“Alright, I’ll hurry over.”

Allie, a half Thai -American model, rushed to their favorite restaurant. Today, she had just landed a modeling gig on the cover of a prestigious international magazine and was planning to treat her best friend to a celebratory meal.

“Hi,”

The mixed-race beauty greeted with a warm hug as she approached the visibly stressed Oranate.

“What’s wrong?”

“Just some things on my mind.”

“Doesn’t look like some things to me,”

Allie replied, observing Oranate’s expression, which looked as though she was carrying the weight of the world. Sliding into the seat beside her, Allie gently rubbed her friend’s arm for comfort.

“Why is it so hard being me?”

“Is it about Natasha's stuff?”

“It’s everything, really. And now I have to move into my uncle’s house. I couldn’t figure out how to say no.”

Allie, who was born and raised in Thailand, had known Oranate for over a decade. Though she’d never met Oranate’s cousins, she’d heard plenty about them over the years.

“I’ll go with you.”

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The sound of a suitcase rolling across the concrete echoed. Allie, looking picture-perfect in her stylish outfit and flawless makeup as if she were about to step onto a runway, walked beside Oranate, whose face remained sullen.

Meanwhile, the youngest daughter of the house heard the sound of a car pulling up. She left her dressing table and went to stand by the window. Seeing who had arrived, she couldn’t help but feel surprised.

*What are they doing here?*

*. .*

Tewa heard the sound of the car as well. Opening his door to head downstairs to greet his beloved youngest sister, he coincidentally stepped out at the same time as another sister. The two exchanged exaggerated pouts, like quarrelsome children.

"Where are you going? It's already late,"

He asked, walking toward the sister from the room next door.

"I'm just heading downstairs."

"You’ve seen who’s here, right? If you’re planning to cause trouble, go back to your room,"

He warned.

"Phi Wa!"

Karnravee scoffed, huffing in displeasure.

"Who’s your real sibling, anyway? You always side with others."

"I’m not siding with anyone. Sai is my sister too,"

The older brother said softly, pulling his sister into a hug.

"She’ll be staying here with us, and I want you to be nice and behave. She’s your elder sister, after all."

"You know she has nothing to do with us,"

Karnravee replied, her tone softening slightly but still stubborn.

"Even if we’re not related by blood, legally, she’s Uncle's only daughter. So, Sai is your elder sister."

“No excuses. No mischief. Understood?”

He said firmly, slinging an arm around her shoulders and leading her downstairs together.

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Meanwhile, Allie was admiring the large framed photographs adorning the walls of the house. Oranate stood by the glass window, arms crossed, gazing at the large trees in the garden. Hearing Tewa’s voice greeting them from afar, both women turned to look.

Karnravee's face twisted in displeasure. Crossing her arms, she turned away in defiance. Oranate, already accustomed to such behavior, paid no attention and focused on her conversation with her older brother instead.

"This is Allie,"

Oranate introduced her close friend.

"Phi Wa, this is Allie."

"Huh? Oh, hello,"

Tewa greeted awkwardly, momentarily stunned by the beauty of the halfThai woman, as if his hearing had failed for a moment.

"I’m Tewa, Nong Sai’s elder brother."

Tewa always referred to Sai with the prefix “Nong,” emphasizing familial affection. Karnravee rolled her eyes in annoyance.

Allie offered a dazzling smile before clinging to Oranate’s arm and speaking in a soft, sweet voice.

“Should I stay over tonight to keep you company?”

The siblings exchanged a surprised glance, unable to hide their curiosity about the overly sweet tone and warm gazes between the two. It seemed far more intimate than a typical friendship.

“It’s okay. You’ve got work early tomorrow, don’t you?”

Oranate responded with a sweet smile before turning to her brother.

“Which room will I be staying in? I’ll bring my bags up to unpack.”

Tewa blinked a few times before responding,

“Oh, I’ll show you the way.”

On the second floor, all the rooms were arranged neatly. Tewa proudly led the way, opening a door to reveal a freshly prepared room.

“I cleared out my room for you, Nong Sai. It’s newly arranged just for you.”

The youngest sister frowned deeply. The room in question was right next to her own. She had noticed Tewa moving his belongings out a few days ago, assuming he was simply redecorating.

Just earlier, she had seen him exit this very room, but she hadn’t given it much thought. Now, standing near the doorway, she clenched her teeth and asked,

“Why does it have to be this room?”

“So you can stay close to her,”

Tewa replied, grinning.

“Did you even bother to ask me if I wanted to stay close to her?”

“Well, you two study the same major, right? You can help each other out.”

“I already told you, if you don’t tell me where Mom is, I’m not going to school for my final semester!”

The half-Thai woman plopped down onto the plush bed with a beaming smile.

“This bed is so soft! Honestly, I feel like staying here myself!”

Her casual remark made the two siblings glance at each other with surprise.

Karnravee's suspicions deepened. She was becoming increasingly convinced that this woman might be Oranate’s girlfriend. Nudging her brother’s arm, she signaled for them to leave the room.

“Well, make yourselves comfortable,”

Tewa said with a forced smile, wrapping an arm around his younger sister’s shoulder.

“I’ll come up to get you both for dinner later.”

The moment the door closed, Allie burst into laughter.

“Did you see your brother’s face? It was hilarious! He looked so awkward, haha!”

Oranate shook her head, smiling. Not only Tewa but even Karnravee seemed curious about her relationship with Allie, though the younger sister hid her feelings better than her brother.

“This evening, I’ve got an appointment. If there’s nothing else, I’ll head back now. I’ll join you another time, darling.”

“That's enough. No one’s around.”

The reason they sometimes acted as a couple was because Allie’s boyfriend,

Nathan, was incredibly jealous. The long distance between them made Nathan ask Oranate to help him act as a "boyfriend shield."

Nathan, a businessman who frequently traveled between Thailand and England, rarely had time to keep an eye on his girlfriend.

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A tall, middle-aged man leaned back on a teakwood chair, his figure still exuding elegance despite his advancing years. His phone, displaying a tendigit number, was hung up for the tenth time that day.

“What do you want me to do?”

The question hung in the air, unanswered, spoken only to himself.

Karnkan, the patriarch of the family, called his niece into his office. He needed her help with something, though it was likely Oranate wouldn’t be thrilled to do it. But he had no other options and decided to trust his son’s advice for once.

“Hello, Uncle,”

Oranate greeted politely, pressing her palms together in a wai before sitting on the chair in front of the desk.

“Your brother must’ve told you about Karnravee by now, right?”

His warm voice carried a gentle tone, accompanied by a faint smile.

“Yes, but I still don’t know what I can do to help,”

Oranate replied hesitantly.

“I know it’s a difficult situation, but could you help me? Do whatever it takes to get her to finish her studies.”

“It’s not that hard, is it? She just wants to know where her mother is. Why don’t you tell her?”

The older man let out a long sigh.

“That’s the hardest part.”

When Oranate’s adoptive parents were still alive, she had once asked them why Karnkan kept Karnravee and her mother apart. She never got a clear answer—only that it was a sensitive issue. What was certain was that

Karnravee's mother was still alive, though her whereabouts were unknown.

“For now, I’ll try to do what she wants,”

Karnkan said.

“But in the meantime, I need you to help convince her to go back to school. It’s been two weeks since the semester started, and she hasn’t gone to class once.”

Oranate’s expression showed her reluctance.

“I’ll try my best, Uncle.”

Her father’s words didn’t work, her brother’s didn’t work, and now she was supposed to fix things? The thought alone was exhausting.

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Later that evening, a petite woman in a striking red off-shoulder dress went out to a nightclub with her friends, as she often did. In truth, she wasn’t particularly close to this group but used their company as a way to pass the time. Her only real best friend didn’t enjoy places like this.

Not far from her table, a young man sat in a corner, discreetly observing her. He was reporting her every move to someone else.

*This is so boring.*

The watch on her wrist showed that it was just past 11 PM. She debated whether to stay or leave the place altogether.

"Returning home soon should be fine, right?"

When she received an answer, the girl with red lips spoke, gazing at her friends through the crowd of partygoers as she left the entertainment venue. The more time passed, the more Karnravee found herself with no way to respond. She had tried everything, but nothing worked. Even when she went out to have fun, no one seemed to care.

While Karnravee was walking to her luxurious car, her eyes caught sight of someone. A man was walking beside her in the direction she had just come from. If he hadn’t been familiar, she probably wouldn’t have even looked.

"Is this the same person?"

Her usually bored face began to light up.

There was something fun to do now.

The luxurious European car pulled up next to the Japanese car, the owner glanced sideways as she quickly entered the dark house, not noticing anything unusual until the lights in the house flickered on.

"Oh my gosh!! You scared me!"

Oranate stood with her arms crossed, leaning against the wall near the light switch.

"I checked your schedule, and you have class tomorrow morning. Also, you missed two weeks of school, and you have assignments to catch up on."

"Why are you telling me this?"

Karnravee asked, crossing her arms defiantly.

The older woman straightened her back and stepped forward to stand in front of her.

"Go finish your studies. Nowadays, there are plenty of good detectives. You don't need to rely on your father. If you want to know where your mother is, use your own brain to find out."

"You think I’ve never hired anyone?"

Karnravee retorted. Every detective she hired said they couldn’t find her. She had tried every method, only to be disappointed again and again.

"You're twenty-two now, not a seven years old. Learn to use your brain. Stop being so childish, constantly trying to lash out and scream. You're acting like you haven’t grown up who doesn't know how to do anything."

"What..?"

"Stop! I’m not finished yet. You think dressing like this makes you beautiful? You don’t even have breasts yet. Let me tell you something.

Wearing these kinds of clothes doesn’t make you look good or seductive.

Don’t think about wearing them again. Have some consideration for other people’s eyes."

Karnravee stood there, mouth agape. She wanted to argue or yell, but it was too late. The other person had already spoken her mind and walked off.

The reason why both older brothers agreed that Oranate was the only one who could stop Karnravee's sharp tongue was because of this.

Karnravee, annoyed, ran up the stairs and stood blocking the door. No matter what, Oranate had to listen to her speak now.

"You're just a sharp-tongued person. You don’t have to be a smart-ass to teach me. And more importantly, what I do is none of your business," She emphasized each word slowly, awkwardly in the last sentence.

"Is that all? I’m tired. I’m going to bed. See you downstairs at seven tomorrow morning. Byeee."

The older woman didn’t seem to care about what she said at all. She yawned widely and moved the younger one away from the door before closing it without a second thought.

"You! You crazy girl!"

Furious, steam seemed to be coming out of her ears. She was so angry her body was shaking. Her eyes burned with rage. She wanted to grab the statue near the door and throw it at the other woman’s face. Only Oranate could make Karnravee feel this way.

She wanted to scream, but she couldn’t, because the other person had just scolded her, saying that if she acted like that, she was no different from a little child.

"I’ll get you back later,"

She muttered under her breath as she stormed into her room.

The one who had dropped the huge emotional bomb in front of the door chuckled and lay down with a satisfied smile on her face.

The hot-headedness of a spoiled child is the most precious in this house.

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**Chapter 02: This is my girlfriend.**

The sound of knocking on the door echoed loudly early in the morning. Oranate noticed that her uncle and older brother were already up, so she knocked away with enthusiasm.

The slender figure, still dreaming sweetly under the blanket, was startled awake, her hair tousled as she groggily went to open the door, her fist ready to strike back.

But she was aiming to punch a person, not the door.

"What on earth are you doing? Don't you have any consideration for the homeowner? No manners at all."

The two men stepped out of their rooms, dressed in suits and ties, preparing to leave for work, while the father had been sitting at the dining table half an hour earlier, sipping coffee and reading the news.

The one who had just woken up turned to look at her older sister, then glanced at her own state.

"How long are you going to act useless? You don't work, you don't go to school, you waste money, throwing it away even though you don't have the ability to earn any yourself. Is that really okay?"

"You!"

"Go take a shower and get dressed. I'm giving you fifteen minutes. If you don't, I'll be the one to make you shower and get dressed,"

The older one stepped closer.

"With my own hands."

"No way. Who do you think you are, ordering me around?"

Oranate looked at the watch on her wrist.

"Fifteen minutes have already passed,"

She said, raising her head and smiling sweetly.

"Another five seconds gone."

Once again, Karnravee could only gape, wanting to shout but unable to think of a retort. She clenched her fists and stomped back to her room, slamming the door shut with a loud bang.

"If you think you're going back to sleep, forget it. I've brought the spare key, and I'll unlock your room if I have to. Do as I say, unless you want to end up hurting yourself,"

She yelled with a tone of concern.

Karnravee stormed to her bed, grabbing the pillow and blanket and throwing them onto the floor in frustration. She knew exactly how far Oranate would go. If she didn't follow through, the older one would definitely drag her into the shower herself.

But if she complied, the other would think she was afraid. Either way, it was a lose-lose situation, and it made her even more frustrated.

"Just twelve minutes left."

"Yeah, I know," Karnravee muttered.

Gawin and Tewa smiled widely as they approached their beloved little sister. Normally, the two of them would take turns trying to tame their mischievous little sister, but they had never succeeded, not once.

"I told you, Ran has to face someone real,"

Tewa said with a look of particular satisfaction, constantly complimenting himself.

"How would we know if she's actually going to school? Even if she leaves the house dressed as a student, who knows where she might wander off to?"

"You don't have to worry about that, P'Win. I've already figured out how to handle it. You two go ahead and eat."

"And what about today? Do you have work to do?"

"No, I don't. After I drop off that little troublemaker, I plan to come back and work from home."

Since her uncle had given her the freedom to do whatever, Oranate decided to cut off Karnravee's access by taking her car and credit cards, to see what else she could possibly do.

While Karnravee was in the shower, muttering angrily at the showerhead to vent her frustration, Oranate sneaked into the room, looking for the phone to do something.

The phone was locked with a six-digit password, but that wasn't a problem for Oranate. She entered the mother's birthdate, and just like that, she was able to get access to the phone and do whatever she wanted.

"Why are you in here? Who gave you permission?"

Karnravee walked out of the dressing room, her shirt untucked from her skirt, with buttons undone, barely managing to cover herself with a towel.

"Time's up."

"But I'm not finished getting ready! Can't you see? My hair isn't combed, my face isn't done!"

"That's your problem, not mine. Grab your bag and come with me."

"Are you crazy? I'm not going to school looking like this!"

"That's your issue, not mine."

"What....?"

"If you keep arguing like this, are you going to finish getting ready today?"

"Ugh!"

The younger one could only curse angrily, shoving her shirt into her skirt, buttoning it up, and grabbing a belt to fasten it.

*You think I'm going to school like this? Dream on.*

With a mocking smile, she looked for the car keys and her favorite brandname purse, but couldn't find them.

"You stole my bag, didn't you, you're a thief?"

The older one smirked, throwing the bag she had hidden back at its owner. Karnravee quickly checked the contents, finding only cosmetics, her phone, and a wallet with just a few purple banknotes left inside.

Only one note left.

"This is too much! What right do you have to do this to me?"

"What? Too much?"

Oranate peered at the purple banknote, thoughtfully looking at it while pulling a red note out of her cream-colored pants pocket.

The wallet flew out of Karnravee's hands, the purple banknote being replaced with the red ones right in front of her eyes.

"This should be enough,"

The older one said with an innocent look, shoving the wallet back into Karnravee's hands.

Karnravee's mind couldn't process what was happening. She stood there, stunned, only realizing later that she was left with only two hundred baht. It wouldn't even cover the gas to get to the university.

"Give me my things back right now!"

"You're ten minutes past the time I gave you. Hurry up, get dressed, and meet me downstairs. You have five minutes left."

"Did you not hear what I said? Give me my things back, Sai!"

Karnravee screamed.

The sound of hurried footsteps echoed down from the second floor. The two men had a meeting at the company, so they quickly had their coffee and rushed out of the house. That left only Karnravee and Oranate at the dining table, eating together.

"Dad can't do this to Ran. It's bad enough she lets strangers interfere in Ran's life, but now you're giving her control over Ran's life as well. Isn't that too much?"

Ran, her daughter, spoke at length, barely taking a breath.

"And when I speak calmly, do you ever listen?"

"You didn't listen to me the other day either. You couldn't even answer a simple question. What's all this about?"

"Ran! Lower your voice!"

Oranate scolded, since her younger sister had raised her voice at her father. "Don't interfere."

The two women exchanged sharp looks. The older one grabbed a cloth bag and dragged the stubborn girl away from the table.

"Let go! Let go of me!"

Karnravee snapped, shaking her wrist free, glaring at her.

"Not going to happen. From now on, I'll be the one to pick you up and drop you off."

"What? Why?"

"To keep you on track and stop you from wandering off. When you get in the car, you'll-"

"No! Ah! I'm not going! Let me go!"

The stubborn person was forced into the car and fastened the seatbelt before being told not to get out of the car, or she would only have 200 baht left in her pocket.

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The bright red car sped onto the road, and although the driver was annoyed, their appearance was still important. Karnravee opened her bag and applied some makeup, adding a little red lipstick to look better.

Oranate glanced at the person beside her. With her left hand, she took out a bottle of water from a cloth bag and placed it next to the gear stick. She offered a sandwich to the stubborn person to eat.

"I don't want to eat,"

She said, crossing her arms and turning away.

Oranate didn't waste time and turned on the signal to pull over to the shoulder. She opened the sandwich box and forced half of it into the person's mouth.

"Idiot...!"

"Eat it! Don't spit it out!"

She threatened, pointing at her.

The stubborn person chewed the sandwich with difficulty, while Oranate smirked. She opened the water bottle and gently fed her some water to help her swallow.

"If you'd eaten it earlier, this would be over."

"Shut up! What if I choke and die?"

"Want me to chant for three nights? That way, you can be reborn quickly and stop being so stubborn."

"You bastard!"

She clenched her fists and her anger building up, before grabbing the remaining sandwich and stuffing it into her mouth.

*Do you think I will just give up easily?*

A wicked plan formed in her mind. She glanced at the driver and quietly placed the empty bottle on her lap, hoping it would show she had finished eating.

The beautiful car stopped in front of the Faculty of Fine Arts. Karnravee didn't complain or ask for her belongings back. She checked her face in the mirror, glancing briefly at the older person before getting out of the car. Oranate grabbed her wrist and handed her two purple banknotes.

"I'll pick you up here at 3 PM,"

Oranate said.

Karnravee looked at the purple notes in her hand but didn't take them. She smirked, opened the car door, and walked quickly into the building.

Oranate got out of the car and stood watching her until she disappeared from view, then looked down at the banknotes in her hand and sighed.

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In a large shopping mall, in front of the movie theater on the top floor, a young female student was sitting with her legs crossed, playing with her phone, instead of being at the university.

Oranate looked away from the computer screen and checked the phone screen. The app secretly downloaded on Karnravee's phone connected to her own, clearly showing the location of the person.

Just as she thought, it was as expected.

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"Do you want to go somewhere else?"

A young man with an average face in student attire asked, sending a sweet gaze.

"No, I'm bored. You can go back. I'll head back on my own,"

She replied without even looking at him.

"No way. I still miss you. How about we get ice cream?"

"No, I don't like it."

"Then, let's go buy clothes."

"I'm not going."

"Here you are."

The man and the woman turned quickly towards the voice. Karnravee was slightly shocked, while the young man smiled faintly. He couldn't resist admiring beautiful girls, his eyes gleaming with interest.

"Do we know each other?" he asked.

Oranate glanced at him.

"I don't know you, and I don't want to."

"But I..."

"Just go back,"

Karnravee said irritably.

"You're pushing me away again. Didn't you say you wanted to hang out all day? Where do you want to go? I'll take you everywhere."

"Go back. The fun's over. As for you .....come with me."

The older woman cut him off and dragged the girl who skipped school in the other direction.

"How did you know I was here?"

"I just know."

"You had someone follow me, didn't you?"

"Are you watching too many dramas?"

The two of them continued to pull and tug each other all the way. The slender wrist began to show faint marks from the pressure.

"It's hurt...."

"I don't buy it."

"I haven't done anything yet."

The older one stopped walking without saying anything. The younger one couldn't stop in time and bumped into her with full force, even accidentally stepping on her foot.

"Serves you right."

Though startled, she quickly pulled her foot back, but the words escaped her mouth.

"What do you think you're going to achieve by doing this? Have you ever asked yourself?"

Kanravee was momentarily speechless. The goal was clear, but no one had ever understood.

"I just want to be with my mom. I want to see her. What I've asked for all these sixteen years... is it really that hard? Why can't you give it to me? Why do you have to stop me from seeing my mom? I don't understand. Dad never explained anything to me. Is it really so wrong that I want to know?"

Those words softened Oranate's heart.

"Let's go talk at home."

The older one still held onto the other's wrist, not letting go. She pulled again, but before she could walk far, the younger one stopped abruptly, their gaze fixed on the cosmetic shop.

The handsome, promising young man, the beloved son of the general, had been pursuing Karnravee for several months. The other day, they had lunch together, and he openly said that he was only pursuing Karnravee now and wasn't interested in any other women.

*So why was he walking happily with another woman today?*

"Is she your girlfriend? And who was the one earlier? How many girlfriends do you have?"

The man glanced but didn't respond. Her wrist slipped from their grip, and she held Oranate's hand, leading her into the cosmetic store. The young man was startled when he saw who it was and almost pushed the beautiful woman beside him away in a hurry.

"What are you doing here, Ran? You didn't tell me. I could've brought you."

Karnravee smiled sweetly.

"I can come on my own. No need for you to drive me around so often."

"Ran, there's nothing between us. We're just friends."

"I don't want to know. Whether you date someone or not, it's your business, not mine."

"Ran, listen to me first. We're really just friends."

"I told you, it's your business. I don't want to know. Why do you have to keep repeating yourself? It's so annoying. Let me tell you something. Just because I agreed to have a meal or watch a movie with you doesn't mean I like you."

"....."

"Well then, from now on, I probably can't go anywhere with you anymore, because I have a partner."

"Huh!"

The young man exclaimed in surprise.

Even Oranate was confused.

Karnravee pulled the person beside her close, their shoulders brushing against each other, and then suddenly, she pressed her nose to Oranate's left cheek, clearly proclaiming, **"This is my girlfriend."**

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"Do you want to defeat that guy so badly that you have to do something like this?"

The older one asked, irritated, as soon as they got in the car.

"Can't help it, Sai! How dare he deceive me? Serves him right."

The person wasn't angry at the young girl for splitting her attention but was more embarrassed. So, she retaliated by dating another woman to make a point.

Oranate listened to those reasons and felt like biting her own tongue. She grabbed a tissue to wipe her face.

"Hey! You didn't need to go that far."

"If I had holy water in the car, I'd probably wash my face with it."

The younger one was getting irritated again.

"If you're going that far, should I wash my face with coconut water instead? Wait, I'll take the two hundred baht you left behind and buy some for you."

"I'm not like you, who likes to use coconut water to wash your face."

"I'm still not dead."

# Chapter 03: The Proposal

Even with only 200 baht in her pocket, Karnravee could still enjoy a meal and a movie without a care in the world. Miraculously, the money never even decreased by a single baht.

Besides the charming, generous man she had just humiliated earlier, there were likely plenty of other guys ready to act as her personal mobile bank, catering to her every whim.

The incident where Karnravee accidentally encountered someone at an entertainment venue had completely slipped her mind, as she had been too preoccupied with anger. Now, recalling it, she smirked smugly during the ride, wondering to herself how Oranate would react if she found out about that.

The first day’s mission was a complete failure. The stubborn girl didn’t attend a single class. While the mountain of unfinished work was already a challenge, handling this kid was proving to be even harder. Oranate remained silent throughout the ride. Once home, they each retreated to their rooms.

Where was her mother? And why was everyone so intent on keeping it a secret, causing so much chaos?

Feeling annoyed, Oranate grabbed her phone to call her older brother.

“What’s up? How’s it going over there?”

Tewa’s voice came through the line.

The younger sister sighed before answering in resignation.

“It’s not working. She skipped school and went out with a guy like it was no big deal.”

Laughter erupted on the other end of the line. This was typical of his mischievous little sister.

“It’s not funny, P’Wa,”

The younger sister protested, her tone annoyed and her face scowling.

“Sorry, sorry! Yeah, Ran’s always like this. That’s why we’re all running around in circles.”

“She should just get her mouth stuffed with ashes. Why even let me come here?”

She was still irritated about being kissed on the cheek.

“Oh, P’Wa, when I followed Ran, I noticed a guy who seemed to be stalking her. If what Sai suspects is true, this isn’t a joke. Did Ran get into trouble with someone?”

The line went silent for a while. It hadn’t been long since the younger sister had come to stay, yet she’d already noticed something unusual.

“It’s nothing. That guy’s one of my people.”

“What? What do you mean? You had someone tail Ran?”

“I was just worried. If anything happens, they can step in.”

Oranate was getting more confused by this family’s dynamics.

“Okay, fine. Never mind then. I just called because I wanted to ask something.”

“What’s it about?”

“Do you know where your mother is?”

The person on the other end of the line froze at the question. The cheerful Tewa’s expression darkened. He leaned back in his chair, gazing out at the vast sky.

“I don’t know.”

“Ran said she hired a private investigator, but they couldn’t find her. That doesn’t make sense. A person doesn’t just disappear. Even if she changed her name or moved abroad, she should still be traceable. She’s not some undocumented person with no records.”

Tewa turned to look at a framed photo on his desk. Their mother wasn’t in the picture.

“I hired those investigators again and told Ran they couldn’t find her.”

“What?”

Her confusion deepened.

“This is just about a kid looking for her mom. Why does it feel so complicated?”

“One day, you’ll understand.”

“Why not today? Why not now? Do you think we have all the time in the world? What if I don’t make it to that ‘one day’? What if Ran doesn’t? If what you’re doing is supposed to protect Ran, let me tell you this—you’re actually hurting her.”

The phone landed on her bed as frustration boiled over. Everything felt off. The more she talked, the less she understood. Was Karnravee simply an immature child, or was it her family that refused to see her as grown?

If things kept going this way, not even ten Oranates could help this family.

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That evening felt unbearably dull. She didn’t want to go out or see anyone.

Since coming home in the afternoon, Karnravee had locked herself away. Even the dinner the housekeeper brought up remained untouched.

At the foot of her bed was a long sofa. She lay flat on it, watching TV while chatting with a friend on the phone. On a nearby table within arm’s reach were several bags of snacks.

“Just come back to school, Ran. Graduating late isn’t cool,”

Kesarin adjusted her glasses and spoke through her Bluetooth headset while working on an assignment.

“Maybe I should just finish school and leave this place.”

“Are you crazy? Why would you think that?”

“I don’t know. I just don’t want to be here anymore.”

"Ran, besides finding your mom, have you ever had any other goals? If not, you should start thinking about it. Think about your future. I’m really worried about you.”

A faint smile appeared on her face.

“Yeah, I’ve thought about it. But like I said, that day’s memory never fades. Every time I smile or laugh, it always flashes back in my mind.”

The last image etched into her memory was of her mother, trying desperately to hug her little daughter one last time, only to be stopped as her father carried her inside the house and ordered her mother to leave in front of her eyes.

She had cried herself to sleep for years. And her mother? How much would she have missed her daughter? Just thinking about it brought tears to her eyes every time.

Suddenly, the sound of a doorknob turning came from the front of her room.

Someone was unlocking the door. Karnravee quickly excused herself from the call, sat up, and prepared to yell at whoever had the nerve to enter her room without permission.

“I have a proposal for you.”

Karnravee’s mouth hung open. Before she could speak, the intruder beat her to it. Oranate, dressed in pajamas with a robe on top, strode in confidently and stopped in front of her.

“If you agree to my proposal, I’ll personally find your mother for you.”

“What?”

Karnravee was thoroughly confused.

“What’s gotten into you? Did you hit your head on the toilet or something?”

“Hey! I’m serious. Can you take this seriously for once? Don’t you want to find your mom?”

“Well, yeah. But you? You’re going to find my mom? That’s ridiculous.”

“Just let me finish!”

Oranate was losing patience, frustrated that it had taken her so long to come up with this idea.

Karnravee’s expression was skeptical. She crossed her arms and turned her face away, cautiously asking,

“What’s the proposal?”

“Go back to school and finish your degree. If you graduate with first-class honors, I promise I’ll find your mother. But if you fail, the promise is void. Do you dare accept the challenge?”

For a moment, a spark of determination flashed in the stubborn girl’s eyes.

Karnravee, who loved to win, wasn’t one to back down from a challenge. “How do I know you won’t go back on your word? What if I succeed, and you refuse to look for my mom?”

Oranate left the room and returned with her laptop, drafting a formal contract. She pushed aside the pile of snacks on the table, stacking them in the corner, and lightly nudged Karnravee’s head to make room for herself to sit down beside her.

From what Oranate knew, Karnravee had always maintained good grades. However, during her second semester of her third year, she deliberately let her grades slip to spite her father. Now, she was precariously perched on the edge—she couldn’t afford to fail a single subject.

“Someone like me keeps my word. If you’re going to accept the challenge, then see it through,”

Oranate teased, raising her eyebrows in a playful dare.

The younger girl gave her a sidelong glance before pulling the laptop closer to review the contract carefully. The text was brief, but she still scrutinized every word. Satisfied, she looked up with confidence and printed the document herself.

“Did you change anything? Let me read it first.”

“Change what? You were sitting right here the whole time!”

The two wrestled over the freshly printed paper. One grabbed the top, the other held the bottom. With just a bit more force, the document would surely tear in half.

“Let me read it first!”

“Ugh, you’re so picky,”

Karnravee finally let go of the paper in frustration.

Oranate smirked, checked the contract line by line, and found everything in order. They each signed two copies and agreed that this agreement would remain a secret between them.

Whoever broke the contract would face consequences until the other was satisfied.

Deep down, Oranate silently wished that Karnravee would graduate but not with first-class honors, sparing her the trouble of finding the mother. Yet part of her felt guilty for even thinking that.

After all, what she was doing felt like holding Karnravee’s entire world hostage. If she was pursuing her goals without considering the younger girl’s feelings, wasn’t she just as selfish as Karnravee’s father and brother?

The thought left her with a pang of guilt.

“Do your best,”

Oranate said softly, her gaze softening as she looked at the younger girl.

“I’ll do it for sure. Just watch.”

Karnravee’s confident grin was infuriating, and Oranate pursed her lips in annoyance.

Later, Oranate returned to her own room but soon came back to Karnravee’s with a blanket and pillow in tow.

“What are you doing? Why did you bring a blanket and pillow?”

“From now on, I’m sleeping here. You’re as sneaky as a snake, and I don’t trust you not to have someone else do your work.”

She threw the blanket and pillow onto Karnravee’s bed.

“Hey! I have my pride. I wouldn’t do something like that. Go back to your own room!”

Karnravee stomped over, grabbed the blanket and pillow, and threw them onto the floor.

If anyone thought the war between them would end after signing the contract, they couldn’t be more wrong.

The room’s owner jumped onto the bed, firmly refusing to let the other person take her blanket and pillow. She sprawled protectively on her own bed, leaving no room for compromise. Seeing this, Oranate leapt up as well, starting a playful scuffle over the sleeping space. Neither was willing to back down.

The older one quickly closed the distance, pinning the stubborn girl onto the mattress and wrapping her tightly in the blanket until she was cocooned like a caterpillar, unable to move her arms or legs.

“Well? Will you let me sleep here now?”

She asked, slightly out of breath. “No! Let me go! I can’t breathe!”

The younger one protested.

“Then stay like this,”

The older one teased with a smug grin, sitting beside her. If the younger one tried to roll toward her to loosen the blanket, she’d get stuck. Rolling the other way meant falling off the bed. Trapped, the "caterpillar" could only glare in frustration and yell.

“I can’t breathe! Let me go right now!”

She demanded. The more she struggled, the tighter the blanket became, leaving her exhausted and slumped, panting heavily.

“Fine, I’ll sleep on the sofa. It’s not like I’m dying to share a bed with you,”

Oranate muttered as she stood, her tone dripping with mock disdain.

The younger one’s eyes burned with resentment as she gritted her teeth. “You’re the snake, not me,”

She hissed.

“Oh, really? Thanks for the compliment,”

Oranate replied with a cheeky smile before gathering her blanket and pillow to move to the sofa.

Meanwhile, Karnravee wriggled left and right, trying to escape her cocoon, but she feared falling off the bed.

Eventually, she managed to free herself, sprawling on the bed and taking deep breaths, enjoying the cool air from the AC.

“You always resort to force. Serves you right,”

Oranate teased, laughing as she walked away.

Seizing the chance, Karnravee grabbed a pillow and hurled it, hitting Oranate squarely on the head. She stumbled but didn’t get angry.

Instead, she laughed even louder, picking up the pillow and tossing it back. Karnravee rolled away just in time to dodge.

The small war slowly subsided as both grew tired of their antics. Oranate folded her blanket, placed it on the armrest, and sat down to finish some work, occasionally glancing over her shoulder with mild suspicion.

Karnravee picked up a contract she had been reading earlier. To graduate with honors, she needed straight A's this final semester. Determined, she grabbed her laptop, messaged a friend about an assignment, and started working.

Nearby, her smartphone buzzed softly next to a bag of snacks. Oranate glanced at it briefly before picking it up and answering the call.

“What’s up, love?” she said sweetly.

A clear voice came from the end of the bed, prompting Karnravee to turn and look. She immediately realized who the other person was talking to. Secretly, she pouted and stuck her tongue out behind their back.

"Huh! Does even she know her girlfriend going to the club with another guy?"

The thought made her smirk. In truth, she planned to use this to get back at her.

But when it came down to it, she hesitated, torn between two minds, unable to bring herself to say something that would hurt her feelings.

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# Chapter 04: This Is My Wife

This morning was unusually quiet. The two young men dressing in their rooms found it odd. By now, they should be hearing their mischievous little sister shouting and complaining as usual. “P’Win, are you done getting dressed yet?”

Tewa called out from outside the room.

Gawin, still not fully dressed, quickly put on his white shirt and walked to open the door.

“Is something wrong?”

“Not with me, but maybe with the two girls,”

Tewa replied. He, too, wasn’t fully ready, wearing only black slacks and a light blue shirt. His hair was still damp.

“Try calling them, then.”

The two brothers stopped in front of their older sister’s room and knocked a few times. There was no response. Trying the doorknob, they found it unlocked and opened the door. The room was dark, and the bed was empty.

“Sai didn’t sleep here?”

Tewa asked, confused. He’d returned home late last night and had seen his sister’s car parked outside.

They turned to the room next door, knocking again. Still no response.

Taking the liberty to open the door, they found the youngest sister sleeping on her bed. Beside her were a laptop and study materials.

The other sister was fast asleep on a brown leather sofa, oblivious to everything. The table in front of her was cluttered with work materials, suggesting they had both stayed up late. Relieved that nothing serious had happened, the brothers relaxed.

“You wake Sai up. I’ll get Ran,”

Gawin instructed his brother before sitting on the bed and lightly shaking their mischievous sister.

“What is it, P’Win? Ran wants to sleep…”

She mumbled and turned her face to the other side.

Meanwhile, Oranate groggily sat up. She’d stayed up until almost 4 a.m. last night to prepare a presentation for an important morning meeting.

“What time is it, P’Wa?”

She asked, yawning. It was rare to see her in such a state.

“Almost 8 o’clock.”

“What?!”

Her heavy eyelids snapped open as she hurriedly gathered her work materials.

“I told you to set the alarm for 6 a.m., didn’t I?”

“I did set it!”

Came the groggy and annoyed reply.

“Then why didn’t it wake me up?”

“Well, I…”

The sleepyhead was now fully awake.

Though she had set the alarm, she had woken up, turned it off, and promptly fallen back asleep.

“If I’m late to the meeting, I’m blaming you.”

“What? How is that my fault? It went off, but you didn’t wake up!”

She sat up and argued back with defiance.

The older sister could only point a finger in frustration. There was no time for bickering. She quickly grabbed her work materials and rushed back to her room. The two brothers stood there, exchanging confused looks.

“Aren’t you going to take a shower?”

Gawin asked gently.

“My class starts at 10 a.m. Let me sleep a bit longer. I didn’t sleep much last night,”

The youngest sister grumbled before flopping back onto her bed.

The brothers smiled faintly, still puzzled as to how the two sisters ended up crammed in one room but didn’t press further. They quietly returned to their respective rooms.

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The room returned to its usual tranquility. The sleepyhead stretched out, tossing and turning repeatedly, trying to drift off again. Frustrated by her inability to fall back asleep, she sat up with an exasperated sigh.

“Fine! Maybe a bath will help.”

Meanwhile, Oranate, in her rush, had prepared her clothes and work materials at the foot of her bed to save time. However, as she was rinsing off soap in the shower, the water suddenly stopped flowing. Her body was still covered in suds.

“What the heck! Just when I’m in a hurry!”

She tried turning the shower on and off several times, but no water came out.

At this rate, she’d surely miss her meeting. Thinking quickly, she grabbed a white robe and stormed out of her room, heading straight to someone else’s. “Ran! Your class isn’t until 10 a.m., right? Get out! Let me shower first!”

Karnravee, who was lounging in the tub and enjoying herself, jolted upright in shock.

“What? You have your own bathroom! Why are you trying to shower here?”

“The water in my room isn’t working. Hurry up and get out! I’m in a rush.”

“No way!”

Karnravee’s eyes showed a hint of panic. She wasn’t sure if she had locked the door. She wanted to get up and check, but it seemed far too late for that now.

The older woman grabbed the doorknob and decisively barged into the room. The younger one, startled, frantically scooped up the white bubbles from the tub to cover herself.

“What the hell are you doing?! Get out right now!”

“Turn around! I’m in a rush!”

She snapped, secretly relieved that the other was still in the bathtub. She had no intention of witnessing anything “R-rated” from her.

“There are other bathrooms! Why don’t you use one of those?”

“P’Wa and P’Win aren’t done dressing yet! I don’t have time. Turn around, quickly!”

She demanded, her hands gripping the knot of her robe, ready to undo it.

“Don’t tell me…”

“Yes! I’m going to shower in here! If you don’t turn around, that’s your choice. If you want to watch, go ahead!”

Karnravee panicked as she tugged at the knot, making it clear she was serious. She turned her back immediately, her face heating up as she muttered complaints under her breath.

“Why do I have to deal with this nonsense?”

“What nonsense? Did you see something?”

She teased while quickly stepping under the shower. She hurriedly washed off the soap from her body, aware of the awkwardness but left with little choice.

Although they had known each other since they were kids, this situation was far from comfortable for either of them. They weren’t close enough to share such intimate moments like this.

Karnravee sank deeper into the tub, trying to submerge herself as much as possible, leaving only her head above water. Meanwhile, Oranate finished quickly, grabbed a towel, and wrapped herself up before slipping her robe back on.

“If you plan to slack off or go anywhere else, that’s on you. Our agreement depends entirely on your actions now,”

She said firmly.

“Yeah, yeah, I get it. Are you done? You said you were in a hurry.”

“I’m done.”

Karnravee cautiously turned to look, exhaling in relief.

“You’d better find out where my mom’s staying. I’ll handle this for sure.”

“Stop talking big. Just finish your bath and get to class.”

“Got it. Now, leave already.”

Oranate bared her teeth at her in annoyance before heading back to her own room to get dressed.

“Bossy tyrant. Always giving orders. Just wait until it’s my turn to call the shots,”

She muttered under her breath.

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The new advertisement for a famous shampoo brand hired Kran's company to produce the ad. Kran then assigned Oranate as the team leader and asked her to contact a freelance director to help with the ad.

"Yaa, I’m going to discuss work now,"

Natasha said as she sat on the soft bed and touched the forehead of her partner, who was still snuggling under the thick blanket.

"Will you be gone long?"

"I'm not sure."

"If you’re meeting an old flame, don’t let the fire rekindle."

Natasha smiled and said,

"Are you crazy?"

The slender figure sat up, hugged her partner’s waist, and leaned on her shoulder.

"Let me know how it goes, okay?"

"Okay, I’ll call you," she replied.

The two shared a hug and a kiss goodbye. What was said was just a tease, not taken seriously. If her partner secured the job, it would be Oranate who would be handling it.

Though they hadn’t seen each other much lately, Oranate and Natasha kept in touch regularly about work. The work Oranate had been sending almost became her main project.

"Samcha?"

Oranate repeated the name of the project Natasha brought up in the meeting.

"Here’s the thing,"

Natasha started,

"We noticed that most of Rhanya’s ads tend to have an international feel. So, if we try something different—something no one has seen before—it might work. We could use a lively Isaan folk song, which is popular right now, and write new lyrics about the shampoo. It’ll stick in people’s minds because the music is familiar. The celebrity spokesperson will keep people watching until the end instead of skipping."

What Natasha presented was quite similar to what Oranate had in mind. She, too, wanted to present Rhanya in a new light.

"If the client likes this idea, we’ve got a team to do the music. Rhanya herself wants to sing the song. Who’s ever seen Rhanya sing a folk song?" Everyone shook their heads, and a sense of curiosity began to grow. They took turns proposing ideas to enhance the concept.

After the meeting, Oranate and Natasha went for coffee to catch up on each other's news.

"Did you come up with this idea yourself?"

"Yeah, this is all me. I’ve exhausted every ounce of brainpower for this project!"

Natasha bragged.

Oranate made a skeptical face.

"You and your boasting."

The look in Natasha's eyes today is drastically different from several years ago. There’s no trace of gloom left. Her bright smile is clearly visible, and someone is secretly smiling at the sight of it.

"So when are you going to sell the work?"

"Probably in two days. I need to go back and finish the presentation first. It’ll be too late if I don’t."

"That's true. If the client doesn’t like our idea, we’ll have time to come up with something new."

After all the brainstorming, Oranate still has to present it to the product owner.

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Inside a large shopping mall, Oranate meets a man at a café on the second floor. She initially planned to wait for the final-year results of Karnravee to come out first, but upon a second thought, she too becomes curious about what happened to this family.

"Did P'Wa tell you to stop following Ran?"

"Yes. Is there something wrong, or do you want me to continue following her?"

"No, it's not that. I called you here today because I have a job for you."

"What job?"

She takes out a photo and places it on the table.

"Ran asked you to find this woman, right?"

The man looks at the photo for a moment and remembers.

"Yes, but I haven’t made much progress. Tewa sent someone to talk to me and told me to tell Ran that I couldn't find her."

Oranate is intrigued by his words.

"You haven’t made much progress, but you must have gathered something, right?"

The man hesitates and doesn’t answer.

"I want to hire you to find this woman’s whereabouts. I don’t know what you and P'Wa agreed on, but if you take this job, it will be my business. I have the right to know everything about this woman."

In fact, Oranate could hire someone else, but she thinks it might be quicker and easier to hire someone who has worked on this before.

"How much will you pay me?"

"How much did Ran offer you? I’ll double it, but with one condition..."

She takes two documents, slides them across the table for him to read clearly.

"This will remain confidential between us. If anyone finds out about it, whether it’s from you or if you tell P'Wa to get more money, your payment will be void, and you’ll have to compensate me the full amount I paid you."

The man chuckles. Among all the siblings he’s dealt with, Oranate is the most careful.

"Alright, I accept the job."

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After finishing classes, Karnravee went to a shopping mall to help a friend pick out a birthday gift for her father. She had planned to take her friend home afterward, but her friend declined.

“Our houses are in different directions. It's a waste of time. Go back and finish your work. Trust me, I'll just take a taxi and get home in no time.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, thanks for coming with me.”

Since Kesarin confirmed this, she didn't want to argue. They walked out of the mall, and Karnravee's car was parked in front. As they were walking, a handsome young man suddenly blocked their way, not letting them pass.

Karnravee recognized him and immediately got angry.

“What are you doing? Move!”

“Wait a minute, Ran. Talk to me first. I know now that the woman isn’t your girlfriend, but your sister instead,”

The young man was the one Karnravee had rejected earlier.

“You had someone investigate my background?”

“It’s not like that, Ran. I’m sorry. Nothing happened between me and that woman.”

Karnravee became annoyed.

“Listen, I don't like you. Never have. Stop bothering me.”

“But you said you’d give me a chance.”

“I did, but it’s over now. Don’t talk to me like that. I don’t like it.”

Kesarin took a few steps back and secretly sent a message to someone she had promised.

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*“I am not sure if I should tell you, but there's a guy following Ran and won’t leave her alone.”*

.

The beautiful eyebrows furrowed after reading the message. She quickly opened an app to check Karnravee's location. She was also at the same place.

“If you need anything, you can call me anytime.”

“Okay. If anything comes up, I’ll keep you updated.”

The conversation ended smoothly, leaving only the problem Karnravee had caused.

The location on the app showed one man and two women facing each other. The man’s face looked pleading, while Karnravee looked ready to fight.

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“What are you doing here?”

The three of them turned to look at each other in unison. Karnravee was slightly surprised at how coincidental it all seemed.

"Kes, you should go back first. I need to talk to Ran."

Kesarin smiled awkwardly, glanced at her friend, and with a brief sentence, quickly walked away. The one left behind stood there calling out, but Kesarin didn’t look back.

“Get in the car. We'll talk at home.”

“Wait, I’m not done talking to Ran yet.”

The young man stepped forward, grabbing Karnravee's wrist.

Oranate quickly pushed his shoulder away.

“Don’t mess with my girlfriend.”

Karnravee's eyes widened in surprise as she immediately turned to face Oranate.

“Don’t lie. I know the truth now. You’re cousins, not a couple.”

Oranate glanced at the person beside her, shaking her head silently, signaling that she hadn’t said anything. It was Ran who knew about it all.

“I don’t know where you got that information, but you should know that we’re not related by blood, not even a drop. Do you understand what will follow?”

The young man thought for a moment, then shook his head.

“Incest, huh? You’re not very smart, are you?”

Oranate mocked, dragging the mischievous boy toward the car to end this once and for all.

But things didn’t end that easily.

“I don’t believe you.”

“What now?”

Karnravee was losing her patience.

“What else do you need me to say to make you understand? I want a wife, not a husband. Is that clear? **And this is my wife**.”

Now, Oranate was the one shocked. From being just a girlfriend to suddenly being called a wife. She pulled the man closer, whispering in his ear.

“Are you crazy?”

“Shut up.”

Karnravee looked at the young man with a determined glare. Since talking didn’t work, actions might be the best answer. She turned back to Oranate with a different look in her eyes.

Seeing that look, Oranate felt a chill run down her spine, afraid that she might do something reckless, like last time.

"....."

Her full lips pressed firmly against her thin ones, leaving no chance for her to say anything. She couldn't pull away, as she held her neck tightly in place. The moment lingered, frozen, for several seconds.

"Now it's finally over. Get out of my sight."

# Chapter 05: Subconscious Mind

The soft touch of her lips and the faint scent of her lipstick lingered in Karnravee's mind for hours. She had only done it out of frustration with the young man, but why did that moment haunt her, making her restless and unable to focus?

Karnravee sat at her desk, trying to work, but she had already lost count of how many times she’d dropped her head, trying to refocus. She didn’t like herself in this state—feeling emotions she didn’t understand.

Her eyes wandered to the brown leather sofa. The blanket and pillows were still there, but their owner was nowhere to be seen. After Oranate dropped Karnravee off at home, she had asked the driver to return Karnravee's car, which had been abandoned earlier. Then she left without a word. Hours passed, and there was still no sign of her return.

“It’s almost midnight. Where is she?”

Karnravee muttered as she glanced out the window. But then she caught herself. Why did she care? Why did it matter where Oranate had gone?

“Ugh! What’s wrong with me?”

Unable to concentrate, she went outside for a walk, hoping the fresh air would clear her mind. As she wandered in front of the house, Tewa, her older brother, returned home and saw her walking aimlessly.

“What are you doing out here this late?”

Karnravee snapped out of her thoughts, startled, and turned to him.

“I couldn’t concentrate, so I came out for a walk. But what about you? Why are you coming home so late?”

Tewa shrugged.

“It’s not like I haven’t come back at this hour before.”

As the two siblings talked, a car horn sounded from the front of the house. Tewa glanced toward the parking lot. Gawin's and Oranate’s cars were still missing.

“I thought I gave Nong Sai the remote for the main gate already,”

Tewa remarked.

Karnravee pursed her lips.

“She probably wants someone to open it for her.”

Tewa smirked and lightly pushed his sister’s head before walking toward the gate to check. But the car outside wasn’t Oranate’s’ or Gawin’s. It was Ally’s car, and she had brought Oranate back in a drunken state.

The car’s headlights illuminated the driveway, making Karnravee raise her hand to shield her eyes. As she squinted, recognizing who it was, her expression hardened. The memory of seeing Ally with the young man resurfaced, stirring emotions she didn’t want to feel.

Oranate sat slumped in the passenger seat, unconscious and unaware of the commotion. Tewa opened the car door and tried to wake his sister, but it was no use. She was completely out of it.

"Why are you so drunk?"

"Sai is weak when it comes to alcohol. Just a little drink already drunk,"

The young model replied cheerfully.

"Then why do you guys need to go out drinking?"

"It's nothing. We always have parties with friends. Should we carry Sai inside first?"

Karnravee, standing nearby, seemed uninterested but walked over to open the door for her brother and helped carry Oranate to lie down on the living room sofa.

"Would you mind if I stayed here with Sai tonight? If she wakes up sick or needs help, there will be someone to take care of her."

"It's better not to trouble you,"

Karnravee quickly interjected. The young man and woman exchanged glances.

"It's just a small matter. We can take care of her ourselves, so there's no need to bother you."

Ally pretended to be surprised.

"Who will take care of her? Mr. Tewa is a man. It doesn't seem appropriate."

The young man agreed with Ally. Since they were in a relationship, it wasn't strange for her to want to stay over.

"So..."

"I will handle it. It's better not to trouble you,"

Karnravee interrupted again, not letting her brother speak further.

"It's late already. You can leave now."

"Ran, how could you drive her away like that?"

"I didn't drive her away. The more people stay, the more dangerous it gets. I mean well,"

The younger sister said with a slight frown.

The slender model didn’t take Karnravee's words to heart. She smiled and turned to look at the sleeping Sai.

"Then, Mr. Tewa, could you carry Sai to her room? That way, I can be sure someone will look after her and not just leave her here."

Tewa didn’t like that comment but kept his composure. Unlike Karnravee, who frowned immediately upon hearing it.

"Carry her to my room. She usually sleeps there,"

Karnravee told her brother, her eyes fixed on Ally.

"Then why does she have to sleep in your room?"

Tewa asked with an innocent look and a faint smile.

"Do I need to explain?"

Ally shrugged, her demeanor still relaxed.

"Not at all. It's up to you. She's your sister, your responsibility. Go ahead and carry her to whichever room you like. I just worry that if she stays here too long, she might wake up with a sore back."

She finished with a sweet smile.

Tewa didn’t understand what problem the two had with each other. All he could do was act like a gentleman, carrying the drunk person to Karnravee's bedroom, with Ally following behind to ensure they made it safely.

“Um... Ran, are you sure you’ll take care of him?”

Tewa asked to confirm.

“I’m sure,” Ran replied confidently.

“Alright, I’ll go get a towel and a basin then,”

He said before leaving the room, leaving the three women alone.

The unconscious person lay still, unmoving. Ally sat by the bed, brushed a strand of hair off her face, and gently kissed her forehead, which annoyed Karnravee.

“Take care of my girlfriend, okay?”

Ally said sweetly.

Girlfriend? Then what’s that other guy to you? Karnravee thought but held back from asking.

Tewa returned with a small towel and a basin, Karnravee then suggested his brother escort Ally out so she could leave already.

“Ally…”

The drunk person mumbled, calling out for her close friend.

“Stay with me today…”

“Too bad. Your wife already left,”

Karnrawee muttered irritably for no reason she could understand. She grabbed her flailing hands and shoved them back under the blanket.

“Ally…”

“Ugh, stop calling her!”

While Karnravee used the damp towel to wipe her face, neck, and arms, the drunk man kept mumbling Ally’s name. It made her increasingly convinced that the two were really dating.

Does she think she’s so charming? Women want her, men like her. Ugh, why am I even annoyed by this nonsense? So frustrating!

“Ally…”

“There you go again! I told you she’s gone!”

Karnravee threw the towel into the basin in frustration.

“Ally…”

Her hands slipped out from under the blanket, reaching out for Ally while mumbling incomprehensibly.

Karnravee was losing patience. She grabbed her hands and shoved them back under the blanket again.

But the drunk man mistook Karnrawee’s hands for Ally’s. She held them tightly and began pouring out memories from her troubled past, completely unaware.

“I... I didn’t want to be an orphan, but I had no choice. It’s so lonely, you know? I… I want to forget, but I can’t escape the truth. You understand me, don’t you? You understand, Ally…”

Tears welled up in her eyes as she revealed her hidden pain.

Since Karnravee could remember, she had never seen tears from her, except at the funerals of her uncle and aunt. This was the first time Karnravee fully admitted to herself that she had often spoken hurtful words to her in the past.

Some events and memories had faded from Karnravee's mind, but not for the other person. A few sharp words had been etched deeply into her subconscious for years.

When they were young, Karnravee was a stubborn child. The more her father tried to discipline her, the more she rebelled, driven by her bias against him. She would deliberately do the opposite of what was taught.

At the same time, everyone adored Oranate—the well-mannered, studious girl with a sweet face. She was easy to teach, and everyone who met her loved her.

This fueled Karnravee's resentment toward Oranate. She was afraid Oranate would steal everyone’s affection. Karnravee often reminded her that she was just an orphan, with no parents to love her.

Gawin and Tewa gently counseled their younger sister, patiently teaching her that such words should never be spoken. Over time, Karnravee began to understand. But by the time she realized her mistake, Oranate had stopped visiting their house altogether, avoiding Karnravee. Their relationship had remained strained to this day, and Karnravee had never apologized for her actions.

Her brothers' lessons had taken root in Karnravee's mind, shaping her into a more thoughtful person. Around others, she was charming and respectful, especially to elders. But at home, she retained her rebellious streak, especially toward her father.

“I’m just a problem child, like you said,”

Karnravee muttered under her breath.

“I used to say things to hurt you because I wanted to throw my bad feelings at someone else. Stop letting those words bother you already.”

Her cheeks were flushed from the alcohol. Oranate, as Ally had mentioned, was a lightweight when it came to drinking. Whenever she had a night out with friends, this always happened.

The drunk woman slowly calmed down and fell silent. Karnravee gently pried her hands away, dampened the towel again, and wiped her face once more. This time, she focused on her forehead, scrubbing lightly to remove the smudge of red lipstick. She then poured cleansing water onto a cotton pad and carefully wiped away the remaining makeup.

“Ally…”

“Still not done, huh? Keep it up, and I’ll make you sleep on the sofa,” Karnravee muttered.

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The next morning, the five brightest stars of their class met early in the library to work on their assignments. It was their final semester, and the workload was overwhelming, especially with the final project counting heavily toward their grades. Karnravee appeared unusually diligent, leaving her friends puzzled.

“You okay, old girl?”

One friend asked, concerned.

“Hey! I’m here to study, and I’m working hard to help you all finish. Isn’t that a good thing? Any class I’m in with you guys, I’ll make sure we all get A’s. Just watch!”

Karnravee declared.

“Sure, sure, we’re watching,” Another friend teased with a smirk.

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Oranate woke up feeling dazed and disoriented. She glanced around the room and realized she wasn’t in Ally’s guest room as expected. Instead, she was in the room of that mischievous girl—on her bed, no less.

Dragging herself back to her own room with a pounding headache, she made her way downstairs for breakfast. To her surprise, her older brother was still lingering, having woken up late. As soon as Teva saw her, he teased her from across the dining table.

“Well, look who’s awake. You were a total mess last night.”

Gawin, unaware of the events, was confused.

“What’s this about?”

“Someone got drunk and came home last night,”

Tewa said with a smirk.

“Tewa! Stop tattling!”

Oranate shot back, pointing her spoon at him.

“Is something bothering you?” Gawin asked, concerned.

“No, not really, Gawin. I just went out to a party with friends. By the way, was Ally the one who brought me home last night?” “Yes, but I was the one who carried you to your room,”

Tewa replied casually.

“Then why did you leave me in that brat’s room?”

Oranate asked, now even more puzzled.

“Well, that ‘brat’ insisted you sleep there so she could take care of you by herself—and then sent Ally home,” Tewa explained, amused.

“What? Her?” Oranate exclaimed.

“Yeah. No idea what got into her, but she was adamant about it. She also seemed to really dislike Ally,”

Tewa added, raising an eyebrow.

At the mention of Karnravee, Oranate couldn’t help but recall the kiss from the day before. The memory was part of what had driven her to go out drinking, hoping to erase it from her mind.

*That brat! How dare she kiss me?*

The thought resurfaced, frustrating her all over again. She ate her rice porridge with a scowl, clearly irritated.

“Not to pry,”

Tewa began, interrupting her train of thought,

“But you and Ally… Are you two…?”

He left the question hanging, but the implication was clear.

“We’re just friends! You actually believe otherwise?”

She retorted, laughing it off.

“Well, who can say? The way you two talk and look at each other—it’s so sweet it’s suspicious. If it’s true, just say so. We’re not old-fashioned or anything,”

Tewa teased.

“If I say we’re not, then we’re not. End of story. And don’t even think about flirting with her; she’s already taken,”

Oranate replied firmly.

“Aw, what a shame,”

Tewa said, pretending to be disappointed.

The playful conversation helped distract Oranate from thoughts of someone else, if only for a moment. However, the fact that Karnravee had left for school so early was out of character. Curious, Oranate opened an app to check her current location.

Oranate was surprised to see that Karnravee was indeed at the university.

Tewa noticed her smile and teased her immediately.

"What’s this? Smiling for no reason?"

Oranate wasn’t sure when she had even smiled.

“You’re imagining things, Teva. I wasn’t smiling.”

“Yeah, right. I saw it just now. Didn’t I, Gawin?” Tewa nudged his older brother to join in.

Gawin just smiled a little and didn’t comment.

When did I smile?

Was I smiling at that brat? No way! Oranate thought, frowning at the idea.

# Chapter 06: Bed Division

The kiss they shared that day was something Oranate and Karnravee chose not to talk about again. They both let it slide and went on with their duties. Karnravee became more focused, waking up on time without anyone needing to wake her up. By evening, she was home before 6 PM and buried herself in her study, no longer going out or wasting time.

Oranate came home around 9:30 PM. She stood watching the younger one who was intensely focused on her study. In the past few days, she had proven that she was really dedicating herself to her study.

Oranate didn’t understand why she should continue sleeping on the couch, making her back hurt. So she grabbed a blanket and pillow, planning to return to her own room to sleep as usual.

“Where are you going?”

The younger one turned and asked as soon as she saw her.

“I’m going back to my room.”

“Not afraid I’ll cheat on you anymore?”

“I’ll check it later. You can’t fool someone like me, just so you know.”

The younger one mimicked her sarcastically,

“So confident.”

“Hey,” the older one growled,

“Should I just get out of your face or what?”

“Well, it’s good, but lately I’ve got a lot of work. I’m a bit behind. Could you help me check something?”

The younger one said with hesitation.

“Am I hearing things?”

She pretended to clean her ears and asked her to repeat.

“Are you going to help or not?”

The younger one started getting annoyed, finally speaking up after hesitating for a long time.

“So, are you asking for my help, or are you giving me an order? With this attitude, how you are supposed to negotiate with clients?”

The older one replied.

“I don’t talk like this to everyone, you know.”

The younger one stood up and walked over.

“So, are you going to help or not? If you do, I’ll let you sleep on the bed as payment.”

“Wait, what? I should have been sleeping on the bed from the start, right? It’s big enough like a football field. But you kicked me to the couch. Not only did you lack kindness, but you also don’t know how to ask nicely. Just go away,”

The older one said as she turned to walk toward the door.

This girl was playing hard to get.

Karnravee pretended to strangle her in frustration. Taking a deep breath, she ran over to block the door, not letting her leave.

*Why do I always lose to this bossy girl?*

"What's wrong now?"

Karnravee asked sharply, her face full of frustration and anger.

"You promised my dad, didn't you? That you'd help me until I graduate."

"But that's not what we agreed on. This is a game,"

Oranate replied coldly.

Karnravee's expression hardened. She knew this was a game they were both betting on, but she never expected Oranate to take winning this seriously.

"Oh, so you actually don't want me to succeed, right? You just want me to graduate for my dad. You never wanted to help me find my mom in the first place, did you?"

Karnravee's voice trailed off, and her eyes looked full of disappointment.

Deep down, she had hoped Oranate wouldn't be like the others who gave false hope every day.

"I understand. You can go back now,"

She said, turning away to her desk, cursing herself for trusting someone like Oranate. She should have known that Oranate never cared about her, and expecting anything good to come from her was foolish.

*Stupid!*

Oranate stood frozen for a moment. When it came to the younger one's mother, she was so sensitive. Oranate found herself unable to adjust to her emotions, so she brought the blanket and pillow back to the couch.

"What do you need help with?"

She asked, placing her hands on the desk and leaning in to look at the laptop screen.

"Nothing."

Karnravee turned her laptop away to avoid showing it.

Now you're playing hard to get? I'll show you.

Oranate grabbed a chair and sat beside her, gently nudging Karnravee's head, then took the laptop to see what she was working on. She reviewed everything and offered suggestions on what should be adjusted and what should be added.

But despite the help, Karnravee's face was still stiff.

"What’s with the sulking? I'm helping you, aren’t I?"

"I’m not sulking,"

Karnravee retorted.

Oranate mimicked her, making fun of her.

"You’re not sulking? But your face sure looks like it."

"Your face looks like it,"

Karnravee shot back, pushing the laptop back to its original position.

"I already told you everything you need to know. Don’t make me repeat myself."

"If you don’t want to help, then don’t,"

She added, clearly annoyed.

“I didn’t repeat myself because I couldn’t remember, okay? Are we done?”

It took nearly half an hour of arguing before they both finally started working seriously.

Oranate moved back to the couch while Karnravee worked in silence. They each focused on their tasks until several hours had passed. Noticing the quiet was unusual, Oranate turned to check.

"Wow, you’re asleep?"

The laptop screen had gone blank from inactivity for too long, while the younger one had fallen asleep with her head resting on the desk.

Oranate walked over and nudged her shoulder, trying to wake her up to move to the bed. But Karnravee just groaned, turning her face away.

"Hey, Rant wake up. Go to bed,"

Oranate said.

The younger one groggily lifted her head and looked at her.

“My name’s Ran, not Rant.” "Ah, now you wake up quickly,"

Oranate teased, rolling her eyes.

Karnravee glared at her, stretching her arms to relieve the aches. She deliberately swung her arms towards Oranate's face, who barely dodged in time.

“It’s already past 1 AM. If you’re too tired, go to bed.”

“I know, I know,”

Karnravee groggily stood up and walked toward the bed.

“Aren’t you going to sleep?”

“If I get tired, I’ll sleep. Why should you care?”

“I don’t care,” Oranate replied,

“It’s just... the light hurt my eyes.”

She sat down on the bed and crossed her arms, looking at Karnravee.

“Okay, I’ll go turn it off. Anything else?” Karnravee asked, locking eyes with her.

"Nope. If you get sleepy, just come to bed,"

Karnravee quickly added, barely giving Oranate time to respond. She flopped down, turning her back and leaving space for Oranate.

Oranate laughed in surprise,

"You’ll do anything when it comes to your mom, huh?"

"Of course. How could you understand?"

Karnravee replied sharply.

Oranate paused at her words, and even though she had grown up without parents, the pain in her chest was still sharp.

"Yeah, I’ll never understand, will I? Since I’m the one without parents. What would I know?"

Now, it was Karnravee who stopped, the words lingering in the air. She looked back as Oranate turned and walk away.

The lights in the room went out, leaving only the faint glow from the laptop screen still showing unfinished work. Karnravee looked toward the end of the bed, no longer sleepy but wide awake, unsure if she was irritated with anyone.

Oranate turned off her work device and threw herself down on the sofa, choosing it over the bed.

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"Even when I told you to go to bed, you won’t come. So picky."

The younger one sat up, grabbed a pillow, and pretended to throw it, but in the end, she just laid down again.

"I have something to talk about."

"What about?"

Oranate pulled the blanket over herself, asking without opening her eyes.

The younger one looked at the leather sofa, only seeing the backrest slightly above the edge of the bed. She couldn’t see the person lying down.

"Have you found my mom yet?"

"You haven’t even graduated."

"If I wait until then, by the time you start looking, by the time you find her, how long will I have to wait? I’ve already told you I can handle it."

The older one opened her eyes and looked at the ceiling.

"What will you do when you find your mom?"

The younger one paused for a moment before answering, "I don’t know, I’ll go live with her, I guess."

Just thinking about meeting her mom made a bright smile appear on her face. Oranate wasn’t sure about the younger one's expression, but she could guess from her tone. Deep down, she felt worried and uncertain but didn’t know how to express it.

"You’re grown up now. You should think about other things too, plan for the future—work, life. You can’t keep asking for money from your dad forever." "Hey,"

The younger one sat up, huffing,

"Are you insulting me?"

Oranate chuckled, sitting up and resting her arms on the back of the sofa.

"I’m telling the truth. Sometimes, what you think you understand might not always be the case. Right now, you're living comfortably, only thinking about your mom. You don’t have to worry about whether you'll have food tomorrow, what work you need to do, how much money you need every month to pay off the house or car. Take a look at the people around you. You’ll learn a lot from them, and you can use it in your work too. Got it?"

Her voice was calm and steady, clearly trying to offer advice.

"Are you trying to tell me something?"

The younger one felt a bit nervous and unsure.

"You know where my mom is, right?"

The older one sighed, exasperated. She had tried to explain for so long, but the younger one was still focused on one thing.

"Go to sleep."

After saying that, she lay down again.

"What’s this? Don’t just go to sleep, tell me first."

"Okay, I had someone look for your mom’s location, but they haven’t found her yet."

"So the person you're talking about, he will find it himself, right?"

"If I say I’ll find her, I will find, no matter what. Now go to sleep, it’s almost 2 AM. I’m tired."

The younger one smiled, but the smile quickly faded as she became quiet for a moment.

"I told you already, right? I said you should go sleep on the bed, so why are you still lying there?"

"Because the way you talk doesn’t sound nice."

"What? If I don’t sound nice, then what does it sound like? Did you even hear me right?"

"Hey! You brat!"

She got up and threw a pillow at her, annoyed.

Karnravee laughed and managed to dodge it, smirking as she lay back down and grabbed the pillow, hugging it as if saying, "I’m not giving it back, you can sleep without it and suffer a sore neck."

"Give me my pillow back."

"What? I’m asleep."

"Sleep all you want, dog. No, wait, that’s too cute for a dog. I should say, 'sleep, you lizard,' now that sounds better."

"Me, a lizard?"

The younger one glared at the end of the bed, baring her teeth.

Oranate threw off the blanket and walked over to the bed, stopping beside it. She took the pillow the younger one was hugging and tried to get it back.

"No way."

"Give it back! It’s already late. I want to sleep."

"Then go ahead and sleep. Who’s stopping you?"

"But that’s my pillow! Give it back now!"

"And who told you to throw it?"

"And who told you to annoy me? Give it back now!"

"No!"

Karnravee grabbed Oranate's arm and threw her onto the bed, rolling her over to the empty space she had left.

"Why do I have to fight with you even when I’m trying to sleep?"

Oranate sighed, exhausted from both the teasing and the annoyance.

"Fine, fine. Here, take it."

With a huff, the younger one threw the pillow back, then lay down, facing sideways and watching the older one sitting so close within reach.

"I heard you’re doing an advertisement. When are you filming?"

"Why do you want to know?"

Oranate lay back, staring at the ceiling, too lazy to go back to the sofa.

“I want to go see it. Is P’Ranya really the presenter?”

The older person turned to look.

“Where did you get that news from? I’m keeping the news under wraps.”

“You think you can hide something like this from the company owner’s kid? P’Win and P’Wan just talked about it not long ago.”

“Oh, right, I forgot you’re the daughter of uncle, not just a kid from the neighborhood.”

“Hey! Stop being cheeky. So, are you letting me go or not? Just say it.” Her eyelids slowly closed as sleepiness started to take over.

“Come if you want to, but don’t cause any trouble.”

The last sentence was barely a whisper.

Not long after, her breathing became even, and she fell asleep. She just drifted off so suddenly. Karnravee looked at her face in the dark, thinking of their parallel worlds. Who would have thought that today they would end up together?

“The only reason I let you sleep here is because I thought you would help me find my mother.”

She wasn’t sure if she was saying that to herself or someone else since she had already fallen into a deep sleep.

Karnravee turned on her back. So many questions filled her mind, along with strange feelings that had started to form since that day when they kissed.

If it had happened with someone else, it would’ve been easier for her to understand.

I shouldn’t have done it. I just wanted to get that guy out of my life.

Why did it turn out like this? Damn it!

# Chapter 07: The Birthday Curse

"I’ve found the person you asked me to look for."

"Really? Where are they now?"

"In London."

London? What are they doing there?

"As far as I know, they moved there 16 years ago."

"Sixteen years? Are you sure?"

"I'm sure. She remarried and has a son, who is now 20 years old."

"How is that possible?"

The information seemed unbelievable to her. Kanravee's mother couldn't have remarried and had a child that quickly.

"Is her new husband a foreigner?"

"No, her new husband is Thai. He works in the processed food business and moved to London permanently."

"Do you know their address?"

"I just got it recently. Oh, and there's something else you should know."

"What is it?"

"She registered her new marriage just two weeks after divorcing her previous husband."

"What?"

Does this mean Ran's mother was seeing someone else while still married? What is going on here?

"I’ve told you everything you wanted to know. What would you like me to do next? Stop here or…"

"Can you go there? I want to be sure they’re really there. I’ll cover all the expenses. But don’t let them know. Just observe from a distance."

"Okay. Give me two days to sort out the paperwork, and I’ll contact you again."

Oranate placed the phone on the table and looked at the tall building across the street. There was a commercial shoot at the studio on the top floor today, and the crew was working diligently.

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"Ran! How did you get here?"

One staff member called out to a cheerful student.

"I heard there was a commercial shoot today, so I wanted to see it. I promise I’ll stay quiet and won’t bother anyone,"

Ran said sweetly.

Oranate stood watching Karnravee's smiling face from a distance, her mind drifting to the new information she had just learned.

If she found out about this, who knows how she would react.

Is this why everyone keeps it a secret?

"What are you doing standing there? Can’t you see others are working?" The younger one noticed her and immediately started a confrontation.

"Shut up! Stop talking so much, or I’ll throw you out. I’m the team leader here, and I decide who stays or goes!"

"Power-crazy, huh? Hmph!"

She flipped her hair dismissively and went on to greet others sweetly and politely.

*When talking to others, her tone was so kind. But with me, it’s like night and day.*

Natasha heard the commotion and turned to look.

"Ran, come here."

Karnravee glanced at her sideways.

"Why should I do what you say?"

"If you don’t come, then leave."

Grumbling under her breath, she reluctantly stomped over Oranate.

"What do you want?"

Oranate grabbed her wrist and dragged her to Natasha, who was busy adjusting the camera angles.

"This is Ran, a neighbor. She just wants to watch for a bit."

Ran immediately turned to glare at her.

"Who’s a neighbor?"

"You are!"

Karnravee rolled her eyes at her and turned to Natasha, giving her a polite bow.

"Hello, I’m not just a neighbor, and I’m not here for just a bit either. Don’t believe this old lady."

Now it was Oranate's turn to look shocked, resisting the urge to strangle her on the spot.

"Who are you calling old?"

"You, of course. Old lady."

Natasha scratched her head, stifling a laugh at the exchange.

"Alright, alright. Feel free to watch, just don’t take any pictures or videos. We don’t want anything leaking before it’s time."

"Got it. Thank you!"

Ran smiled sweetly at Natasha, then turned to smirk and wink at Oranate before walking off in a cheerful mood.

"So, who exactly is this kid?"

“She’s the youngest daughter of the company owner.”

“Oh, is she here to learn about the work?”

“Nope, just here to find trouble.”

Natasha smiled and shook her head before turning back to oversee the set.

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The entire shoot was filled with laughter and ease. The team was relaxed, especially since Rhanya, the lead, wasn’t pretentious. Adding to the smooth workflow was the fact that the director and the presenter were a couple, making everything flow even better.

“Hey, tilt your head up a bit,”

The director instructed.

Rhanya raised her head slightly as directed, her hair covered in white shampoo suds. Water streamed from the showerhead, cascading over her face. The presenter gently massaged her scalp, her eyes closed and a serene smile spreading across her lips.

“Cut!”

“How was that?”

Rhanya asked, opening one eye while rubbing the other, irritated by the shampoo.

“It’s good!”

“‘Good’ means ‘not good,’ right?”

“It’s perfect now!”

That’s what it’s like when a couple works together—playful and lighthearted.

Earlier, they had filmed the music video for the ad's theme song, so today’s shoot was relatively simple. Incidentally, Rhanya had sung the theme song herself.

Karnravee sat watching from a distance, smiling almost the entire time. Oranate, who had been observing her for a while, noticed this unfamiliar side of her.

“You stay still....”

Karnravee immediately stopped smiling and turned to glare at her.

“Why? Does my smile bother you that much?”

“Not at all. It just gave me goosebumps. I thought you were possessed.”

“You—!”

Karnravee stood up to her full height, looking ready to fight.

“Let me tell you something. You think you know me so well, but it’s all in your imagination. The truth is, you don’t know me at all.”

“That serious, huh?”

“Yes. I’ve always been like this. You’re just too clueless to notice.”

Oranate scoffed and smirked.

“Today’s shoot is just a shampoo scene. Do you want her autograph or a picture? I can ask for you.”

“No need. I don’t want to bother her. I just wanted to see her in person, that’s all.”

"Wow! So polite now."

"Ugh, what’s with you? Always looking to pick a fight,"

The younger one said, her expression falling flat as she turned away, unwilling to engage further. She didn’t notice the way Oranate was looking at her. The more Oranate saw Karnravee's face, the more her mind drifted to that matter.

"So, are you heading anywhere else?"

"Nope, just going home to study and work. Gotta show certain adults that kids like me always keep their promises."

She raised an eyebrow challengingly, her gaze full of confidence.

Oranate smirked and playfully pushed the younger one’s head before walking away.

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"Thanks for rearranging the schedule. The product owner loves the song so much they want to release both the song and the commercial earlier than planned. It’s been a bit hectic,"

Oranate said, smiling brightly.

"It’s no problem. But next time, can we change directors? My eyes are all red from the shampoo! Always taking silly things too seriously."

Rhanya playfully snarled at her boyfriend.

"I wasn’t trying to mess with you!"

"Don’t even start."

The crew passing by couldn’t help but laugh at their banter.

"Thank you so much, P’Sai, and the whole team too. This project was a lot of fun. I hope we can work together again,"

Rhanya said warmly, addressing Oranate respectfully since she was a year older. Seeing how well they got along, Natasha felt relieved.

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After the workday ended, Oranate noticed the little troublemaker getting ready to leave. She grabbed her arm and dragged her into Rhanya's dressing room.

"Since you’re here, you might as well make the most of it. Opportunities like this don’t come easily."

Rhanya emerged from the changing room to find the student who had been intently watching her earlier. Her curious eyes sparkled with admiration.

"This is the neighbor kid. She wants to take a picture with you,"

Oranate said before glaring at the younger girl, who looked ready to protest.

Karnravee bit her lip, frustration evident.

"I’d rather not bother her."

"It’s no bother at all. Come on, let’s take a picture!"

Rhanya said warmly, smiling as she took Karnravee's hand and pulled her close. The younger girl was visibly flustered.

Oranate, amused and endeared, took on the role of photographer. She snapped a photo of the two, capturing Karnravee's transformation from her usual grumpy demeanor to a glowing smile, her eyes sparkling with happiness.

Seeing how much joy meeting her idol brought Karnravee, Oranate couldn’t help but think:

***If meeting someone she admires makes her this happy, how much more joy would meeting her mother bring?***

That thought alone filled Oranate’s heart with warmth as they headed home, her spirits soaring.

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Inside the house, it was completely silent, as if no one was home.

Karnravee went straight to her bedroom. Two older brothers were hiding near her door, leaning in to listen to their younger sister’s footsteps.

As soon as she opened her door, the sound of a birthday song started to play. In their hands, each brother held a gift box.

## “Happy birthday to... you...”

Kanravee smiled widely and hugged her brothers to thank them for always remembering her special day.

Today marked Kanravee’s 22nd birthday. There was no party, no celebration. Ever since their mother passed away, she had disliked any joyful gatherings. Her brothers could only surprise her with small birthday celebrations every year, and this year was no different.

“Be happy, little troublemaker,”

Gawin said, hugging his younger sister tightly.

“We love you and worry about you so much, you know that?”

Tewa added, pulling her into a hug as well.

“Really? You seem to care more about Sai. Everything is ‘Sai this, Sai that,’”

She teased lightly.

For a moment, Karnravee's thoughts drifted to Oranate. Earlier, when they met, she didn’t mention anything about today.

She must have forgotten my birthday.

She wasn’t exactly upset, but she felt a little strange, even confused, about her own feelings.

Although today was special, it didn’t feel much different from any other day. Karnravee sat at her desk, studying as usual. Her books were filled with colorful pen marks highlighting important points, helping her memorize them better.

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“You’re back?”

Gawin, working in the living room, called out when he saw his younger sister return.

“It’s almost midnight. Aren’t you going to sleep yet?”

She replied.

“You noticed that? Where did you go?”

“I wasn’t wandering around, just having dinner with the staff. Oh, I brought snacks too. Do you want some? I can put them in a bowl for you,”

Sai said, lifting the snack bag to show him.

“No thanks. It’s late, and I don’t want to gain weight.”

“Worried about looking handsome, huh?”

“Enough teasing. Go take a shower and sleep.”

Oranate wished him goodnight and walked to her room with the snack bag. She placed a small, fist-sized cake on the table.

If the popular green app hadn’t sent a notification that morning, she wouldn’t have known what day it was. What Karnrawee said yesterday evening—about not knowing her at all—seemed to ring true.

Karnravee was engrossed in reading, oblivious to the time. Sleepiness began to creep in, and she yawned so wide that tears welled up in her eyes.

Suddenly, Oranate opened the door, spotting the younger girl dozing off, her head bobbing slightly.

With her right hand hidden behind her back, Oranate approached silently, suppressing a laugh. She tapped Karnravee's shoulder to wake her.

“So, are you reading or just sleeping?”

Karnravee snapped back defensively while wiping the corner of her mouth just in case there was any drool.

“What do you want? Can’t you see I’m reading?”

“I can’t, because what I see is you sitting there, sleeping.”

“Hey! I said I wasn’t sleeping, so I wasn’t sleeping!”

Karnravee shot back, now fully awake and ready to argue.

Oranate looked at her without replying like she usually would. Instead, she raised the hand she had hidden behind her. In her palm was a small cake with a candle shaped like the number 22 stuck in the center.

Karnravee froze in disbelief, staring at the older girl as if she were seeing things. Her mind was full of questions about why Oranate would bring this to her.

“Well, blow it out! My hand’s getting tired,”

Oranate teased.

Karnrawee remained rooted in place.

“Are you possessed by a ghost?”

“What do you mean?”

“Look at you! This doesn’t seem like you at all. You hate me, don’t you? I know you do.”

“Me? Hate you?”

“Yes, you do!”

The older girl chuckled dryly.

“I don’t waste energy hating silly, bratty kids like you. Now make a wish and blow it out. Wish for anything, but leave your mom out of it.”

“Why not?”

“Because whether or not you get to see your mom again doesn’t depend on some divine power. It depends on you. I want you to wish for something else that’s just as important—or maybe a close second.”

That request seemed too difficult for Karnravee. She stood in silence, deep in thought, as the candle threatened to melt completely.

“Besides your mom, you’ve never thought of wishing for anything else, have you? Fine, I’ll make a wish for you,”

Oranate said, exasperated.

“Are you crazy?”

“Why not? There’s no rule that says I can’t.”

She closed her eyes briefly, made a wish, and blew out the flame.

The younger girl was utterly confused, like a chicken lost in thought. Whose birthday was it anyway? She made a wish and even blew out the candle herself.

“Were you making a wish, or were you competing with me?”

“Wow! You caught on so quickly.”

“Be serious now.”

Oranate gently took Karnravee's hand and placed the small cake on her palm.

“I wished for you... to grow into a strong, mature adult, someone who solves problems with reason, not emotions. And don’t forget the people who love you.”

Kanravee’s heart unexpectedly fluttered at the last part.

“Who... loves me?”

“Your dad and your brothers.”

Karnravee froze for a moment, an odd feeling creeping over her. She set the cake back on the table, closed her book, and walked to her bed.

Lying down, she silently asked herself what she had been expecting to hear and why she felt this way.

Oranate noticed the younger girl’s troubled expression and wondered if she had said something wrong.

“Turn off the light on your way out,”

Karnravee mumbled before turning to face the other way.

Oranate stood there, looking at Karnravee's back. The resentment she had held onto for years seemed to be replaced by a different feeling.

Sympathy wasn’t the right word—in fact, she should have felt satisfaction.

But instead, she whispered softly,

“Aside from your family, there’s me too. I’ll always be by your side... if you need me.”

# Chapter 08: Forgetting Oneself

It was the last day of final exams.

Karnravee stepped out of the exam room and pulled out her phone to open her photo gallery. She stared at a picture of a beautiful woman whose face resembled hers.

*We'll see each other soon, won't we?*

Her smile was bright and full of joy as she walked down the building with a light heart.

A red car drove up and parked in front of the large building. Karnravee noticed it as she approached. It looked familiar, so she stopped to take a closer look. The driver's side window rolled down completely.

"Finished your exams?"

Karnravee frowned slightly. It was who she thought it was.

"Yes. What are you doing here?"

"Hop in,"

Oranate said, unlocking the car door for her.

"I have my car."

"I already told the driver to take your car home."

"What?! You did it again-making decisions for me!"

"Just like you do,"

Oranate replied nonchalantly.

"You-ugh! You're so annoying."

Karnravee huffed, then opened the door and plopped down in the passenger seat.

"Where are you taking me?"

"To grab something to eat."

The red car smoothly pulled onto the road. Inside, the only sound was the soft music playing in the background. Karnravee assumed they were headed to a nice, air-conditioned restaurant.

But the reality was quite different.

"The night market?"

"You know this place?"

Oranate asked as she turned off the engine and stepped out of the car.

Karnravee could only follow her in confusion. The area was an open-air market with countless stalls selling all sorts of goods. It wasn't that she had never been to a market before, but she couldn't understand why Oranate had brought her here.

"Didn't you say we were going to grab something to eat?"

"Here, look. Plenty of food to choose from,"

Oranate said, pointing at stalls selling pad thai, grilled and fried meatballs, and colorful drinks. The price signs showed you could eat well with just a single green banknote.

"Auntie, two boxes of pad thai, please. No need for a plastic bag,"

She said to the vendor.

The pad thai vendor prepared the order as requested. Karnravee glanced at the food in the foam boxes-just noodles, bean sprouts, and small cubes of tofu you could count on one hand.

"Try it. It's good," Oranate urged.

Karnravee reluctantly took one box, then dragged Oranate away from the stall.

"If you're going to treat me like this, don't bother next time."

"Have you tasted it yet? Try it first before you complain. I didn't bring you here just for a stroll."

"Then why did you bring me here?"

She asked, poking the noodles with the plastic fork and thinking, How good can it really be?

The moment the noodles touched her tongue, all her irritation vanished.

It wasn't as fancy as the pad thai she'd had in restaurants, but for just 20 baht, it was perfectly balanced, with soft, chewy noodles and a light hint of chili paste. It was more than worth it.

"I brought you here so you could see the lives of these vendors. We create ads, right? We need to observe the people around us. Do you know that different age groups use their phones in different ways?"

As Karnravee ate her pad thai, she looked at the vendors nearby. Most of them used popular apps like YouTube and Facebook.

Meanwhile, the students and young professionals walking by used not only those platforms but also others for music, movies, dramas, and even online forums for sharing opinions.

"When we get a brief from a client, we have to figure out who the target audience is. Which group is this product suitable for? We need to communicate effectively. The way you communicate differs by age group or demographic."

"So basically... you brought me here for a lesson?"

"Exactly. Our work revolves around people. We need to keep up with the world. Trends change every month, every year. You have to stay updated."

"My professors have already taught me this. All my assignments got A's, by the way,"

Karnravee said, looking bored.

*I just finished exams, and now I've got another teacher following me around.*

"There's more here than you think. Take a closer look. Look carefully, and you'll see there's a lot you can get from here."

She stopped at a grilled pork shop and grabbed two sticks of Pad Thai before paying.

Karnravee picked up a stick of grilled pork and took a bite. At first, she thought the stick looked a bit small, but the meat was very firm. Eating it while it's hot was so delicious.

As it neared the end of the workday, people became more lively. They passed by one shop after another, snacking while walking. The younger person calculated how much they'd spent, realizing that for the two of them, it was only a little over a hundred baht.

"What's wrong?"

She noticed the puzzled look and asked.

"Nothing, the food is actually pretty good."

She chuckled softly.

"You've only eaten at fancy, expensive restaurants where a meal costs thousands. Try eating food that's only ten or a hundred baht sometimes. Hope your stomach can handle it."

"Hey! Can't you go ten minutes without teasing me?"

Ignoring the complaint, the older one dragged the younger one to the khanom krok stall she often helped at. The stall had just been set up, and there wasn't even a single khanom krok to serve yet.

"Hi, P'Sai!"

A ten-year-old boy, busy preparing the goods, greeted them with a wave.

"Why are you opening the stall so late today?"

"I came out late. My mom's not feeling well, so I came ahead."

"Oh, I see. Let me help."

Oranate handed her suit jacket to Karnravee, leaving only her sleeveless shirt for comfort. Karnravee could only hold it in confusion as she watched Oranate and the boy work efficiently together.

She came here quite often when she was free from work. She didn't know the boy personally, but she admired him. He reminded her of herself when she was younger.

Karnravee stepped back, leaning against the wall, watching the back of the person busy packing khanom krok into white foam boxes. The vendor who helped today was excellent at attracting customers, just like usual.

"Try it, it's delicious."

Oranate brought over three pairs of freshly made khanom krok for Karnravee to taste.

"You come here often?"

Karnravee asked as she draped the suit jacket over her shoulder and took the foam box in hand.

"Yeah, I do. I think the first time I saw this kid, he was about seven years old."

"A seven-year-old selling khanom krok?"

"Yeah. What else could he do? When money's tight and his mom has a chronic illness, you just help out however you can."

"Where's the child's father?"

"He's been gone for many years. Now it's just the two of us, mother and me. After school, I had to hurry home to help my mom prepare things, setting up the stall at the market. Some days, we didn't finish selling until 9 or 10 PM. By the time I got home, I still had to do my homework. I didn't get to sleep until almost midnight. In the morning, I had to wake up early to help cook, clean the house, before going to school."

"There are still many children around this age or younger who struggle even more. They don't even have time to be discouraged. I want you to remember this child when you're feeling troubled, when you think things are hard. Just think about this child, and you'll see that we shouldn't waste time blaming ourselves or others, or being sad for too long. There's still so much to think about and do."

Today, Karnravee might not fully understand everything she said, but hopefully, one day, she will.

Karnravee and Oranate helped the little child until all the snacks were sold by 8:30 PM. They had already called the child's mother to let her know not to come out to sell, as they would do it for her. They also helped pack up and pushed the cart back to the child's house behind the market.

By getting home earlier, the child would have time to do homework and sleep earlier, even if it was just for one day.

On the way back, Kanravi sat quietly the entire time, her arms still holding her suit, looking at the crowds of people walking on the sidewalk.

What she experienced today taught her many lessons, making her realize how lucky she was to have everything she had.

"Run"

Kanravi was about to open the door to her room when she turned back to look. "What is it? I'm dying to take a shower."

She pointed to the suit she was holding. "That's my suit."

The younger one completely forgot. Clearing her throat slightly to cover up, she said, "I had to make someone else hold it for so many hours. My arms hurt so much." After returning the suit, she hurried into the room.

What's this? Just going out to buy some Khanom Krok, and she's acting like this?

On the Monday morning when everyone should be rushing off to work, the house of Karnkan was bustling because today was an important day for Kanravi. She ran downstairs early, carrying her laptop, telling all her brothers not to go anywhere until she allowed it.

"What's going on with you? Isn't it just about finishing school? Why do you need honors? What for?" Gwint didn't know about the agreement between Kanravi and Ornaree, so he was confused by his sister's excited behavior.

Here is the translation of the passage:

"Win, you too... When someone is determined to do something, they have to do it to the fullest."

"Really?" The two boys chorused in unison.

Ornaree came down the stairs from the second floor in casual clothes, wearing a sleeveless shirt and shorts. Kanravi had knocked on her door every night to remind her about the exam results announcement. So today, she stayed in, wiping the tears of a defeated child.

"Not going anywhere today?" Gwint greeted with a smile.

"I'm just waiting to watch someone get what they deserve."

The youngest one turned and shot her a glare, choosing to remain quiet as today was a good day-no arguments for the day. She tossed her hair in defiance.

Today's breakfast was pork congee with egg and hot pa tong go. Ornaree sat beside Gwint, while Kanravi sat beside Deva. They ate and chatted casually, but Kanravi seemed unable to eat, glancing at her wristwatch every ten seconds. The more she looked at the time, the slower it seemed to go.

"Hey, eat first so you'll have energy to cheer," Ornaree called out to the person sitting across from her.

Kanravi, with a furrowed brow, turned her attention to the bowl of congee in front of her and scooped a little.

"These days, you're easy to tell," Deva commented casually. Recently, his younger sister had been much easier to deal with than before, almost unrecognizable.

"What's that, P'Wa? Who's easy?"

"Someone around here."

Kanravi twirled the fork in her hand, trying to calm herself down, then flashed a sweet smile at her older brother.

"People have to evolve a little. Eat up!" She shoved a piece of pa tong go into her mouth to annoy him first thing in the morning.

"Hey, watch out," Deva warned, pointing at her while still chewing the pa tong go in his mouth.

She stuck her tongue out, mocking him, but when she saw that it was time for the results to be announced, she yelped in excitement. She set the bowl of congee aside, grabbed her laptop, and replaced it on the table.

When the time came, she was secretly nervous. She took a deep breath and typed in the password.

As soon as she connected to the system, Kanravi immediately raised both hands to cover the screen. Slowly, she moved her hands down, scrolling through each subject, with cheers erupting each time she saw the big "A" appear for a subject.

Her heart swelled with joy, and she screamed in happiness, feeling more confident that victory was definitely hers. But when she reached the later subjects, the cheer abruptly died down as she stared in disbelief for several seconds.

Here is the translation of the passage:

"C? How did I get a C? This can't be right!"

"Wait, wait, calm down," Deva saw his younger sister panicking and quickly grabbed the laptop to check thoroughly. "Hey, Wan, this is the grade for your third-year second semester."

"Huh? It's for the third year?" She still looked confused, grabbed the laptop to see more clearly, and then gave a sheepish smile. "Hehe, it really is for the third year."

The three of them burst into laughter.

"You're really something," Deva said. "Actually, you can tell just by looking at the GPA whether you passed or not. Why wait and check subject by subject?"

"Well, I wanted to see it," Kanravi replied. "P'Wa, can you check for me and then tell me if I got an A or not?"

She said she wanted to check for herself, but she was starting to lose courage. She lifted both feet onto the chair and crouched down, closing her eyes, unable to look.

Gwint told his younger brother to go along with it, secretly feeling excited with her too. As Deva announced the results for each subject, they finally reached the last one.

Everything she had worked for came down to this subject.

"Ready?"

Kanravi took a moment to compose herself before nodding. She closed her eyes, pressed her face against her knees. Ornaree felt both amused and sorry for her-today, Kanravi was really out of character.

"Last subject... got... an A."

Kanravi slowly opened her eyes and stared at the laptop screen, seeing the perfect results for the final semester. Her overall GPA for all years was 3.75.

"I did it! I did it! P'Wa, P'Win, I did it!" She hugged Deva in a burst of joy, tears welling up. Then she ran to hug her eldest brother and, without thinking, hugged Ornaree too.

Ornaree was both confused and surprised. She didn't expect Kanravi to be so overwhelmed with emotion. She only realized what had happened when Kanravi's arms were tightly around her neck. Their gazes met.

The joy that had erupted earlier in Kanravi's chest was replaced with something else. She froze in that moment for several seconds, before snapping out of it and awkwardly stepping back.

"Uh... sorry."

Ornaree also didn't know how to react, laughing to cover her embarrassment and quickly ending the awkward moment.

"I won't hold it against you, you weird kid."

"Hey! Who's the weird one here? Speak properly!"

"It's you, of course. Who else could it be?"

Here is the translation of the passage:

While the two girls were still arguing, someone else was watching from not far away. If asked whether he was happy that his youngest daughter had finally graduated and even earned honors, Krakan would probably say yes. However, it was a happiness tinged with doubt.

Why had his daughter, who once firmly insisted that she would not go back to school, suddenly agreed to return and study so easily?

"Say, Tsai, can I talk to you for a moment?"

The two boys and two girls all turned to look at him in unison. Krakan didn't say what he wanted to talk about, instead turning and walking back up to the second floor. Kanravi and Ornaree could somewhat guess what was happening and exchanged glances.

"You stay here," Kanravi said.

# Chapter 09: The Rival Beside You

"I’m so tired of this. Why get jealous over something so pointless?"

"She’s probably just protective of her own things."

"Still, shouldn’t we trust each other? Every time another guy gets close, it’s an argument."

The hot model had just had a fresh argument with her boyfriend and needed to escape. She decided to stay with Ornate at her house for a while. Along the way, as they were driving, she couldn’t stop complaining.

Ornate could only listen, resignation, not adding her opinion. She still wanted to remain a normal person and didn’t want to turn into the third wheel when the couple made up later.

Meanwhile, Karnravee was lost in thought, wondering what to get her mom for a gift.

Two days ago, her detective had sent news that Karnravee's mom would be coming back to Thailand next week for some business. This might be the perfect time for the two of them to meet.

The sound of a car pulling into the driveway made Karnravee rush out of her room to ask for Oranate opinion.

"Should I break up?"

Elle was still complaining non-stop, holding Ornate’s arm as they walked into the house.

"If you want to break up, then just do it."

"You’re not going to stop me?"

"Every time you two argue, you threaten to break up, but it never happens. It’s exhausting!"

Karnravee stopped in her tracks after overhearing their conversation. If she had known someone else was coming back, she wouldn’t have rushed down. But now, turning around was no use.

"Where are you going?"

"I’m going to get some water,"

Karnravee quickly replied. Despite her frustration, she bowed to Elle before heading straight to the kitchen.

"Your sister doesn’t seem to like me much,"

Elle had felt this way ever since she dropped someone off at their house a while ago.

"She’s just like that. Don’t take it personally. Let’s go upstairs, I need a shower."

Karnravee didn’t go to drink water as she had said. Instead, she went outside for a walk in front of the house, her face tight and irritated for no apparent reason. Tewa had just returned and saw his younger sister walking alone. He snuck up and hugged her from behind.

"P'Wa! You scared me!"

"Wow, your mind is drifting! Who's car is parked in front of the house? Come on Confess."

"Car? What car? What do you mean, P'Wa?"

"Well, there's a handsome guy who parked his car in front of the house. Isn't he your boyfriend?"

"Boyfriend?"

The person looked even more confused.

"What are you talking about, P'Wa? Is he a thief or something? Why don't you ask who he's here to see?"

Before driving in, the young man rolled down the window and gave a serious look, pretending to be protective of his sister, but didn’t ask why the man was there.

“I’ll be back in a minute. Stay here, no need to follow me.”

“Hey! P'Wa!”

The young man ran toward the front of the house. The sister could only watch and didn’t have her phone with her. Worrying, she looked for something to protect herself and found a piece of wood just the right size. She quietly followed her brother.

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“I’m really Ally’s boyfriend. I just want to talk to her.”

The sister froze when she heard that. The last time they accidentally met at a club, she couldn’t clearly see the young man’s face, but from his figure, she could guess he was the same person. She quietly listened from a distance, interested.

"Are you sure your girlfriend came here?"

"I’m sure because I followed her here. Ally hasn’t been answering my calls."

What does that mean? Does he know Sai too?

"Hey, Ran, did you see P'Allie come here?" Seeing his sister not far away, he asked.

She was lost in thought and startled.

"She’s probably upstairs."

"Then tell her to come down."

"Why do I have to go?"

"Or do you want to stand here and let me go alone?"

Karnravee looked around. Even though it was her house, she didn’t feel brave enough to stay alone with a stranger.

P'Wa... P'Wa! He has his phone, why not just call her down?

She stopped in front of the door, knocked, and called out with a serious face. Soon, the door opened, revealing the room's owner wearing a white robe, as if she was about to take a shower.

"What's going on?"

The person turned away, glancing at the statue by the door.

"Someone came to see you."

"Who’s coming?"

"He says he’s Allie's boyfriend."

"Wow, he followed you all the way here?"

*Deep down, I was curious to see her expression, so I slowly glanced at her face.*

"Allie, your husband is here. Go out and meet him,"

She said to her friend in a bored tone.

"Why is he following me here?"

"Do you want to know? Just go back with him."

The half-foreign girl made a stiff face, flipped her hair at her friend, and walked out of the room. Karnravee could only watch her leave with suspicion.

"Wow, mouth wide open like that. I think a fly must have flown in and laid eggs."

Oranate said. Karnravee quickly closed her mouth, realizing she had been standing there with her mouth open without even noticing.

"Is there anything else? I need to go take a shower."

She looked at the younger girl with innocent eyes.

"Well... if you want to shower, just go. I’m not tying your legs down."

"Hey! Be careful. I’ll leash that dog in your mouth."

"Hey! Are you calling me a dog?"

"I didn’t say that. You said it yourself."

After saying that, she slammed the door in her face, leaving her to shout and complain outside the room.

"You’re a bitch."

Oranate laughed and shouted back with the same words.

She said she would stay overnight, she wasn’t going to forgive that easily. In the end, Allie left with her boyfriend. They always fought like this every time.

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"Ran, are you sleeping?"

A clear voice called from outside the door.

Lately, Oranate has not been so privy to unlocking the door as she used to be. Karnravee is now lounging on the couch, half-sitting, half-lying, texting her friends on a popular messaging app.

"What's up?"

"About your mom. Do you want to talk?"

The door opened immediately, and she grabbed Orane’s wrist to pull her onto the couch. Her eyes were sparkling.

"When will my mom coming?"

"Three days from now. The person I had hired confirmed it."

"Really? Will I have time to prepare something for Mom? What should I buy for her? Help me think."

The person spoke cheerfully, completely forgetting what had happened earlier.

Her face was filled with happiness just by knowing they would meet.

"You don't need prepare much. Just a bunch of jasmine flowers will be fine."

"Jasmine flowers?"

"Yes, just that."

The person thought for a moment.

"Okay. But... has she gone already?"

"She? You mean Allie?"

"Yes, of course, who else?"

She sounded annoyed again.

"Yes, they've already left. Those two never stay mad at each other for long."

"What do you mean? Are they really dating?"

"Yes, of course. Who else do you think they're dating?"

"Well..."

The person almost said that Allie dating her, but then remembered that Ornate never said they were actually a couple. If she said that, Ornate would probably just laugh at her.

The annoyance disappeared in an instant. The person leaned back, eyes closed, relaxed. Ornate looked at her with a soft smile, clearly at ease. The person felt a little irritated and gently tapped her forehead. The wind blew, making her hair flutter.

Her eyes, which had been closed, opened wide and turned to look at her. There were words she wanted to say, but her mouth felt heavy, too heavy to speak. Seeing the gentle gaze from Ornate made it even harder to say anything.

The person remembered that Ornate had never looked at her like that.

"What are you looking at?"

"Looking at the dog, I guess."

"Hey! What dog could be that beautiful?"

After saying this, the person flicked her hair back.

"You're so bold,"

Ornate laughed, pushing her arm, which had been resting on her chin. This led to a causing a fight between them.

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And then, the day they'd been waiting for arrived. The red car was driving on a road toward the outskirts.

Karnravee was sitting still, both hands holding the steering wheel with jasmine flowers in her lap. She had made the bouquet herself, and it hadn't been easy to make the most beautiful one. Both her index fingers were covered with Band-Aids.

When she looked and saw a smiling face, Oranate could only accept it and pray that everything would end well. The conversation she had with Karnkan several days ago kept running through her mind.

"We're thinking about what to do. That girl, Ran, agreed to go back to school and even received that honor. There's something you still don't know, right?"

The middle-aged man had a serious expression.

"Yes, Uncle, I think you can guess what it's about."

"Stop. Let me ask you, Ran can't accept the truth about this."

"But now she's grown up. She should know the truth. Then she can stop thinking, waiting, and hoping. I believe she will get through this. She has wasted enough time on this already. Only the truth can stop her."

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A red car turned into the parking lot of an old hotel. The building was quite worn out from being built many years ago. Oranate wanted to talk to Karnravee's mother first, so she took her to sit in the lobby.

"You wait here for a moment."

"Why? Let me come with you."

"Just stay here and don’t go anywhere."

The other person looked frustrated but agreed to stay and wait. She craned her neck to watch until she was out of sight.

A couple walked by the area. They seemed familiar, causing Karnravee to glance back. Her heart raced, and her eyes widened. She stood up instinctively. Finally, the long wait was over. She walked quickly toward them, her legs moving in a mixture of walking and running.

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"I'll wait here."

Her husband smiled at his wife before the elevator doors closed.

"Mom!"

Karnravee breathless voice called out from behind. Linlini wasn’t sure who was calling her, so she turned to look.

In that moment when mother and daughter faced each other, the words Karnravee had prepared vanished into the air. Something caught in her throat, and her eyes burned. Linlini still looked beautiful today, and Karnravee still recognized her mother's face.

"Are you staying here?"

Linlini smiled at the girl in front of her, her voice soft, but her demeanor was distant, as if they were strangers.

Karnravee looked shocked, standing frozen for a moment.

"Mom, don’t you remember me? I’m Ran, your daughter."

Linlini's smile faded, and she looked clearly surprised, taking a long time to find her words.

"Ran… is that you?"

The eyes of the woman were a deep, reddish hue, and she nodded in response instead of speaking.

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On the rooftop of the highest floor of the hotel, a middle-aged woman and a young girl stood facing each other, alone. Linlini was the one who brought the girl here because she didn't want anyone to overhear them.

"How did you get here?"

The look in her eyes, her tone, and her mannerisms still seemed distant, just like before.

Karnravee's heart ached. She still held the jasmine garland in her hands, cradling it gently, unwilling for it to be bruised.

"It doesn't matter how I got here, Mom. Do you know I’ve waited my whole life for today? I think of you every day. Do you ever think of me?"

She wiped away the tears from her face, trying not to sob.

The mother’s expression faltered at the words. Her face showed discomfort.

"I... uh... I think about you often."

"That's what you think about me?"

The girl’s face went cold at the response, not to mention the pronoun Linlini used to refer to herself.

The only sound around them was the wind, and for a moment, there was no conversation. It had been sixteen years since the mother had left her child without looking back. Now that her daughter had grown into a young woman, they found it difficult to connect.

"Are you okay?" The mother asked.

The girl didn’t know how to respond. She looked down, struggling to form an answer.

"I think so. I guess that’s how it is,"

She said, her thoughts vastly different from reality.

"I always thought you’d be happy to see me. But look at your face now. It’s like you’re asking me... why I came." "It’s not like that. It’s just that I... well..."

The mother trailed off.

"It’s fine if you don’t want to say it. Why did Dad forbid us from meeting?" The daughter asked.

The mother hesitated, struggling to speak. She was silent for a long time.

"Actually, your dad never forbade me."

"What do you mean by that?"

Before the mother could explain, her phone rang, interrupting the moment. It was an important call, so she answered it. The tone and words she used with the person on the other end were completely different from how she had spoken to her daughter, and the pronouns she used felt like a slap to the girl's face. She fought to hold back her sobs, her heart shattered completely.

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"Ran..."

“Don’t come any closer.”

She stepped back, and the jasmine garland in her hand was squeezed until it broke.

The person who called earlier was Linlini’s son. He referred to himself as "mother" in a soft tone and called the other person "son" without hesitation. From this, it was clear what was happening. Kantrawee had misunderstood everything.

“Your father never prevented us from meeting, but it’s me who doesn’t want to meet.”

“What?”

Her voice was soft, as if a knife had pierced her heart. She sobbed again.

“Are you saying... you have a new family, and you no longer care about us?”

“We were got married because of our elders, and it ended a long time ago.”

“Does that mean the bond between mother and child is over?”

Linlini's tears flowed down her face. She could only stand there and watch her child in front of her cry loudly, not even trying to hug or comfort her.

Ornate couldn’t find her so she returned to the lobby. Not seeing Karnravee, she opened the app to track the other person’s location and followed her.

The conversation she overheard was heartbreaking. She decided to show up, rather than leave Karnravee to face this alone.

Linlini looked at Oranate's face and remembered. The last time they met, Oranate was about ten years old, and hadn’t changed much.

“Nong Sai.”

“Hello, Auntie. Sai brought Ran here.”

Karnravee with tears in her eyes, wanted to leave. She couldn’t stay here any longer.

“Let’s go back.”

“Wait,”

Ornate gently wiped Karnravee's tears and smiled faintly.

“Take the garland to your mother before we leave. Consider it the last time you fulfill your duty as a child. Go pay respect to your mother.”

Karnravee sobbed, wiping away her tears, struggling to accept the cruel reality. Slowly, she walked to her mother, who was kneeling weakly.

"Ran."

Linlini was shocked by what she saw. She knelt down to receive the garland from her daughter, ashamed she couldn’t fulfill her role as a mother.

“Thank you for making my birthday special. May you be happy with your new family and new life. From now on, we won’t interfere with your life anymore.”

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The mother and daughter looked at each other through a curtain of tears. There were no farewell hugs, no beautiful words.

"I don’t want us to part like this,"

Linlini said, wanting her daughter to remember the good times from her childhood—stories filled with happy memories. Even her father, Karnkan, and her two older brothers had always helped to hide the truth.

"Just think of it this way... I’ve never been here, we’ve never met, and you don’t need to feel guilty. I’m fine. If I could turn back time, I would still want to come to see you. At least now I know the truth, I don’t have to be foolish and imagine things on my own anymore."

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Since the truth was like this, she had to accept it, no matter how much it hurt. Before leaving, she bowed to her mother for the last time, then turned and walked away without looking back.

On the way back home, Karnravee stayed silent, not speaking at all. The sobs had stopped even before they got into the car, which was not a good sign. The silence only made Ornate more worried. She would rather hear her crying loudly because at least then the grief would be released, not held inside like this.

"You can cry with me, you know. I won’t think you're weak."

Karnravee looked at her with a neutral expression.

"I’m fine. Thanks for bringing me here."

"It’s nothing. You don’t need to thank me. I’m just keeping my promise. I told you, I always keep my word."

The younger one nodded in acknowledgment and turned to look out the window again. If she were in a normal mood, she would’ve argued back by now.

**"When I said... you can cry with me, I really meant it."**

# Chapter 10: That Gaze

On the second floor of the house, the couple was having a heated argument. The six-year-old child, playing with the nanny in the front yard, didn’t understand what was happening.

When she saw her mother carrying a bag and leaving the house, she happily thought that her mother was taking her out, running to hug her leg.

"Ran, dear, I love you,"

The mother said with tears in her eyes, kneeling down to speak to her little one.

"Mom, why are you crying?"

The little girl asked, her small hands trying to wipe the tears from her mother's face.

"Gawin, take your sister inside,"

The father's voice shouted from afar. The little girl was startled, clinging to her mother.

"I’m saying goodbye to my child,"

The mother said.

"Why are you saying goodbye? If you want to leave, then go!"

The father yelled.

The little girl cried loudly, shocked and sobbing.

"Why is Daddy so mean? Why is he sending Mommy away?"

"Gawin, I told you to take your sister inside!"

The father shouted again.

The older brother, entering his teenage years and old enough to understand, stood still, saddened by what had happened. The father quickly stepped in and picked up his daughter from her mother's arms.

"No! I want to stay with Mommy! I won’t stay with Daddy! Mommy, take me with you!"

The little girl sobbed, refusing to be separated.

But no matter how strong her protest, she couldn’t resist her father’s strength. She was carried inside the house effortlessly, and the last image she saw was of her mother crying heartbroken.

"Run, I love you, my dear."

The two young boys wiped away their tears silently, feeling a lump in their throats, unable to ask why their parents had chosen to separate like this.

"Gawin, Tewa, take care of your sister,"

The mother said.

The two boys looked at each other, struggling to speak.

"Where will Mom go? Can you tell us?"

Tewa asked, looking at his mother with hope in his eyes, wishing that even if they couldn’t live together, at least they could meet again.

"You're fine with just being with Daddy. I think it would be better if we don't see each other again,"

Said the mother.

These words deeply affected the two sons.

"What do you mean, Mom? You don't want to see us anymore? You don't love us at all?"

One son asked.

"Gawin, why would you say that? There's no mother who doesn't love her children."

"That's not true. There are plenty of mothers like that, and you're one of them!"

"Gawin! You're still a child. You don't understand adult problems. One day, when you're older, you'll understand your mother."

"No, I won't. Even if I live to be fifty or a hundred, I'll never understand you. You married Dad because the elders forced you. Dad is the only one who loves you. When Grandpa and Grandma were gone, you asked for a divorce. I can understand that you don't love Dad, but you don't love me and my brother either? That's why you left us like this?"

Tears streamed down his face as he sobbed uncontrollably.

Linlini was shaken by Gawin’s words. She had no explanation, no defense. She couldn’t stay there any longer. The man she loved, her first and only love, was coming to take her. After decades of enduring, even though her body was fine, her heart had never been at peace.

No matter how good Karnkan was, he couldn’t win her heart. When the chance came, she chose to leave. From that moment on, they were separated. Not even the cries of her young children could hold her back.

Linlini believed that Karnkan could take good care of the children, so she had nothing to worry about. She walked away like a selfish person, living her life with the man she loved. She took care of her new husband’s son, even though he wasn’t her own flesh and blood.

She had a perfect family while leaving her own children behind.

She had heard the saying,

"Don't believe what you see, because what you see may not always be the truth."

She only understood this today. She thought her father had kicked her mother out of the house 16 years ago, but it turned out that her mother was the one who wanted to leave.

Karnkan never explained or made any big excuses. He accepted to be the one at fault so that his daughter would continue to love her mother.

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"Stop right up ahead. I want to get out,"

Karnravee said firmly.

"Why do you want to get out? We're just a few kilometers from home,"

Ornate asked, confused.

"I don't want to go home yet. Just stop the car,"

Karnravee insisted stubbornly.

Not wanting to argue, Ornate gave in and pulled over to let her out.

About a hundred meters ahead, there was a bustling market where vendors were setting up stalls with various goods. Karnravee strolled aimlessly, her mind completely blank, her eyes staring ahead with no focus.

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When she became aware again, she found herself standing in front of a khanom krok (sweet coconut pancake) stall. A boy was preparing the goods for sale. He looked up and greeted her with a cheerful voice.

"Hello, P’Ran, are you here alone?"

She turned around, briefly answering "Yes," still a bit confused about why she has ended up standing here.

A mother and child were busily arranging their goods. While she was watching them, I heard a voice in my ear, telling me that I wasn't the only one with problems, and that what I was going through might be nothing compared to what others were facing.

"Can I help you?" the boy asked.

He looked at his mother, who seemed hesitant, clearly unsure about what to do.

"Let me help, please. I don’t know where to go or what to do. Just sitting still is making me restless."

The mother, in her late thirties, thought for a moment, sensing that the girl might be dealing with something troubling. She agreed, letting her help sell the khanom krok at the stall.

Today, the place was busy. The new vendor and the little boy were hurriedly scooping out the sweet pancakes. At the end of the month, people's pockets were full, and everyone was spending money cheerfully.

"The goods are running out,"

The boy said, his eyes sparkling as he checked his phone.

"It's only 7:30 PM."

"Are you in a hurry to go do your homework?"

"Yes," he replied.

"By the way, P’Ran, are you thirsty, or do you want to eat? I'll buy something for you."

"Are you going to treat me?"

She teased.

"If it's not too expensive, I can treat you,"

He said with a dry smile, looking at the cash in the change basket.

Karnravee looked around and noticed a fried egg shop nearby, so she said wanted to eat fried eggs. Without hesitation, the boy grabbed three bills from the basket, returning shortly with two boxes of fried rice with eggs and two bottles of cold water.

"Aunt, aren’t you going to eat with us?"

"Go ahead, I already ate, I need to take my medicine at the right time."

Karnravee smiled, understanding, and looked at the hot fried rice with eggs in her hands. The meal was to be eaten beside the khanom krok stall, sitting on small chairs. She never thought she would end up doing something like this.

"Let's clink our boxes."

The two boxes of food gently bumped together before they started eating happily.

Every action of theirs was being watched by a pair of eyes not far away. After Karnravee got out of the car, Ornate didn’t disappear. She circled around to find a parking spot, then followed her to the place where she was.

“P'Sai.”

Karnravee was taking the last bite of rice when she almost choked. She turned to look at Ornate, who was walking toward her with something in a bag, raising a hand to greet the elders in a friendly manner.

“I brought you something, as a reward for the diligent student,”

Ornate squatted down on her left heel and handed over the bag.

The young boy greeted her with a respectful gesture before accepting the bag. When he saw what was inside, his eyes widened in surprise.

“A tablet?”

“Do you like it?”

“Yes, I do.”

Ornate smiled widely, ruffling the boy's hair affectionately.

“I gave it to you because I want you to make good use of it. It will help motivate you to study and also help your mom with selling things. As for the internet bill, it’s already taken care of. You can use it for a full year. But there’s one condition... If you start going down the wrong path because of it, it will be taken back. Do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand,”

The boy replied loudly and clearly.

“What about P'Run’s gift? P'Run said she got an honor too. Don’t you want to give P' Run something too?”

They both looked at each other. Karnravee forced a small smile, not wanting to ruin the mood.

“I already got something, but it’s not a tablet.”

“Really? Do you like it?”

“I like the color. I really do,”

She replied, avoiding eye contact.

Although it wasn’t what she had hoped for, she still liked the gift. Even though it hurt, it was over now.

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“Did you follow me here?”

“Why do you think I followed you? Are you that important?”

The younger one gave a look of annoyance and huffed, not happy with the situation. The car was driving along the road and was about to turn toward Karnravee's house, but then it passed by. The person looked back at the turning street until it disappeared from view.

“Where are you taking me?”

“To sell things.”

“P'Sai!”

The car drove into a condominium. Ornate didn’t provide any details but walked straight in, and Karnravee could only follow, filled with confusion, until they stopped in front of someone's room.

"This is my room. I didn't bring you here to sell yourself,"

Ornate said as she opened the door and walked in.

"So why did you bring me here?"

"Because a cat said she didn't want to go home yet."

Karnravee shot a glare at the annoying person and walked into the small room, which was much smaller than the bedroom back home. There were only a few items in the room.

"There's only that bed. How are we supposed to sleep?"

She asked, looking at the 3.5-foot bed. It was barely enough for one person.

"You can sleep on the floor or on the couch. It's up to you,"

Ornate replied.

"What did you say? You brought me here, and now you want me to sleep on the floor?"

"Yeah, this is my room. It’s a miracle you’re allowed to stay."

Ornate walked over to the drawer under the bed to get some clothes for Karnravee to change into.

Since the room was small and the space was limited, every item in the room had a multifunctional use. For example, the bed had drawers on both sides where clothes could be stored like a wardrobe.

"No way am I sleeping on the floor. You’re the one who has to sleep on the floor,"

Karnravee said as she jumped onto the bed, stretching out to claim all the space.

"Is this how it’s going to be?"

Both stared at each other. Ornate closed the drawer and stood tall. Since the other person wouldn’t give in, she decided she wouldn’t either. She jumped onto the bed, trying to reclaim it.

Karnravee managed to roll out of the way in time, using her long legs to push Ornate off the bed. Ornate fell to the floor with a loud thud.

"You brat!"

"My name is Ran!"

Ornate, still on the floor, wasn’t hurt much but was more frustrated. She grabbed the edge of the bed and slowly lifted her head, glaring. Then, she grabbed Karnravee's ankle and pulled her off the bed.

"Let go! Let go!"

Karnravee held onto the bed for dear life.

"Get down! This is my bed!" Ornate demanded.

"No! I’m sleeping here!"

Karnravee stubbornly refused.

The younger one clung on even tighter, like a leech. Ornate was starting to lose strength, so she let go of the ankle and pounced again, pressing down on Karnravee's stomach with full force. The impact caused Karnravee to cry out loudly.

"You crazy girl! Do you think you're as light as a feather or something?"

Ornate laughed mockingly, pinning the younger person down until she promised to get off the bed. She rested her chin on her hand and smiled in satisfaction.

"Are you going to get down properly?"

She asked.

Karnravee gritted her teeth, irritated. Why did she always have to lose to her? It made her more frustrated the more she thought about it.

"Well? Are you going to get down properly?"

Ornate shook her hips, making Karnravee's body almost sink into the bed.

Karnravee let out a strained cry. The earlier blow still hadn’t fully healed, and she gathered the strength she had left to retaliate. She wrapped her arms around Ornate’s body and flipped them both, ending up on top.

As Ornate's body hit the mattress, their foreheads and noses accidentally collided. Both paused, stopping their movements, and their hearts raced in their chests. Neither of them knew if it was from the fight or something else.

The younger one's gaze involuntarily drifted across Ornate’s face. Images flashed in her mind: her cheeks, her lips—something she had once touched before. A wave of heat surged in her chest, and her face flushed red.

Ornate felt the same. She found herself staring at the other person's lips without thinking.

"Uh... I guess I'll just sleep on the couch,"

Karnravee stammered, about to get up. But as she tried to move, Ornate's body was still pressing her down, and her arms were locked around her.

"Lift up a bit," Karnravee asked.

"Just pull your arms out," Ornate responded.

"I can't! Lift up a bit."

Karnravee took a deep breath and followed Ornate’s suggestion. As she lifted her body, their noses accidentally touched again. The sound of their hearts beating grew louder, much stronger than before.

"Pull your arms out," Ornate insisted.

"Huh? What did you say?"

"Pull your arms out!"

"Ah..."

Karnravee snapped back to her senses and pushed herself away from Ornate. She sat on the edge of the bed.

"Wait... I’ll sleep on the couch."

Ornate sat up, leaning back against the headboard.

"Hmm..."

# Chapter 11: Resistance

After all the lights went out, the room was filled only with the sound of restless tossing and turning. Ornate lay on the soft bed to her heart's content, but couldn’t stop glancing toward the long couch. Even while lying down, Karnravee was still annoying her, turning her feet in her direction. Karnravee's eyes were wide open, her arms crossed as she stared blankly at the ceiling.

"If you're not sleepy, could you lie still? It's really annoying,"

Ornate muttered.

Karnravee shot a glance at her with a flat expression.

"You must be so pleased with yourself. Everything I said when I was younger, it's all coming back to haunt me now."

Ornate sneered, a wicked grin forming at the corner of her mouth.

"Too bad. I’ve been trying my hardest to keep it in. You know, when I saw you almost fall down, I felt so good about it. Heh! Serves you right."

If she were in a normal mood, Karnravee would have thrown a sharper retort. Instead, she turned her gaze back to the ceiling.

"When I used to call you an orphan, I was just trying to push that word onto you, push it away from myself. Everything I did, I was just... cowardly. I wanted to cover up my own weaknesses."

"I know that."

"Then why do you still let those words get to you?"

"Because it's the truth. I can't help but think about it. No matter what you said to me, well, how does it feel now? Does it hurt? Let me tell you, the reason I tried to make you meet your mom was because I wanted you to feel the pain of realizing... she never wanted you at all."

Karnravee chuckled bitterly, emphasizing how much satisfaction she took from this.

Had Karnravee not seen the look in Ornate’s eyes on the rooftop of that tall building, she might have believed everything that was happening now.

Karnravee laughed quietly to herself, wondering which of the two of them was more stubborn.

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Since that incident, the distance between them had grown again. There was nothing to talk about, no reason to meet. Both of them thought everything had returned to where it had started. Each was living their own life.

However, when did the familiarity that once existed between them begin to change? That was something they couldn’t quite pinpoint.

"Are you okay? I’ve been hearing you sigh for hours. Do your work, so you’re not thinking about your mom anymore, so what are you still brooding over? Want to find more work to keep you busy so you stop overthinking?"

Kesarin, who had been quietly observing, spoke up.

Karnravee was getting a little irritated. She didn't understand why she was feeling like this. She had been happy when her friend took the time to visit her at home, but now, here she was, sitting around, sighing endlessly.

"Ugh, so frustrated!"

She groaned, her hands throwing her head back, her hair disheveled. Even she didn’t know what was wrong with her.

Karnravee had started working at the company full-time, just like everyone else. She tried to focus on setting goals and planning for the future, just as her friends had suggested.

But growing up with so much wealth, the idea of building a house or buying a car seemed pointless when she already had everything.

The best she could do was try to excel at work, to fill the emptiness she felt inside. But no matter how hard she tried, it never seemed to be enough. '*Why do I keep thinking about her? I should just forget about her...'*

*. .*

As for Ornate, everything seemed to be going on as usual. She continued to maintain her usual standard, hiding her feelings well. But she couldn’t escape the watchful eye of her friend, Allie.

The two girls decided to go out for dinner at a riverside restaurant. The ambiance was lovely, and the music was soothing. Allie had chosen the place, hoping it would help her friend relax and forget about whatever was troubling her.

"Is something bothering you?"

Allie asked, her tone soft.

Ornate paused for a moment before responding.

"Me? No, nothing."

"Is that so?"

Allie smiled gently, looking intently into her eyes.

"Lately, I've noticed you've been zoning out a lot. That's why I asked. If something's bothering you, you can talk to me. When did you start keeping secrets?"

"Secrets? There's nothing,"

Ornate replied, trying not to let her guard down. But despite her efforts, Allie had managed to make her think about it again.

"Have you been secretly crushing on someone?"

"Allie! Stop talking nonsense. Someone like me, crushing on someone?"

"How would you know? You never can tell with these things."

"You’re saying that like you don't know me at all. If I liked someone, I’d go for it head-on,"

Ornate replied confidently.

"I know... but this person might already have a partner, or maybe..."

Allie narrowed her eyes, a teasing smile forming.

Ornate suddenly felt a mix of warmth and coldness. She grabbed her glass of water and turned her gaze away.

"Just say what you want to say."

Her slight awkwardness made Allie chuckle softly. It wasn’t often that Ornate let her guard down. Allie set her utensils down and rested her chin on her hand, staring at her friend.

"Want me to tell you something?"

"Hey! What you just said is still not cleared up. Are you going to bring up a new topic now?"

Ornate said, feeling the conversation was going off-track.

"It’s the same thing, really. Do you want to hear it?"

Allie smiled, clearly enjoying this moment.

"No," she said loudly and clearly.

Allie chuckled, lifting her glass of wine and smirking. Even if she denied it, she'd still tell the story.

"I've noticed for a while now that your stubborn kid always acts strangely every time she sees me."

She managed to get back to that little girl after all. Well, so be it!

Ornate was getting irritated and wanted to change the topic, but Allie didn't cooperate, clearly enjoying catching her friend in the act and pointing out her mischief.

"I can feel that girl doesn't really seem pleased whenever she sees us together. Especially that day, it was even clearer. Do you know what happened the day you were drunk and out of it?"

Ornate stayed silent, her eyes darting with curiosity. Seeing that, Allie continued.

"That girl tried to send me off and went back to her room. It didn’t seem like she hated me at all. Before I left, I even teased her saying, 'Take care of my girlfriend.' Do you know how that girl looked at me?"

With every word Allie spoke, she smiled widely, as if it was something fun. In contrast, the other person had a face that screamed 'I don’t want to hear this.'

"Her eyes, the way she looked at me, it was clear she was angry at me, but also seemed concerned about you. Honestly, I think that girl must like you." "What?"

Oranate exclaimed, loud enough for everyone at the table to notice.

"Shh! Quiet! People are staring."

Oranate looked around and then glared at her friend.

"Stop making wild guesses."

"I'm not guessing. I'm just observing as an outsider. I speak what I see. These past few days, you’ve been distracted, like your mind’s somewhere else. Is it because of that girl?"

"It's not like that."

"Really?"

Allie leaned back, crossing her arms, smirking.

"You can fool anyone, but you can’t fool yourself."

"Shut up. There are so many people in this world. I can like anyone, but it won’t be that crazy girl."

"Is that so?"

The mixed-race girl seemed to admire her friend's stubbornness. Maybe she had unknowingly become attached to someone else.

"There are indeed many people in the world, but when it comes to feeling something, there are only a few who make us feel that way. Why avoid it? Just let it happen."

Her friend's words hit hard. Oranate sighed deeply and drank her wine in one go.

She knew deep down that something had changed inside her, but she wasn’t ready to admit it. She didn’t want it to be that way.

“I don’t care who it is, as long as it’s not this person. The two of us just don’t get along at all.”

“How do you know? You haven’t even tried yet.”

“What else is there to try? Just thinking about it gives me a headache.”

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. .

Each day passes slowly and full of boredom.

Karnravee walked slowly up to the second floor of the house. It was another day, and the room next door was completely quiet, with no one living there. She glanced at the door, feeling frustrated. When would she stop thinking about that annoying face?

“I heard she went to shoot with some friends in the province.”

Tewa said as he followed her, explaining casually. But her younger sister turned around and snapped back at him.

“Wherever she goes, who cares? She might as well pack up and leave, that way it’ll be over. This is a house, not a hotel. She comes and goes whenever she wants, it’s so annoying!”

The last sentence hit Tewa like a slap in the face, as if she was scolding her older brother.

“What’s this? What’s wrong, little sister? Isn’t it better that she’s not here?”

He teased her, wrapping his arm around her neck, just like he always did.

“Yeah, whatever. Just go away and leave me alone.”

“So why are you mad?”

“Who’s mad? I’m not mad at all. Don’t let me see her come back. I’ll kick her out. Just wait.”

The young man just laughed, as if used to it but still amused. He pulled his sister toward her room.

. .

Her irritation lasted into the next day and seemed to only get worse. Everything she encountered seemed to annoy her. She had to keep herself away from people and barely spoke to anyone the whole day, even as the evening approached.

That ghost! How long is she going to keep haunting me?

Naphaporn, a senior colleague, saw Karnravee with her messy hair, so she walked over to ask.

“Are you okay? If you don’t understand something, you can ask me.”

If it were about work, Karnravee would have already asked by now.

“I’m just irritated today. It’s not about work.”

“Irritated? Then how about joining us for dinner after work?”

The other employees all looked at her with wide eyes, as they had apparently made plans together earlier. Karnravee could only smile awkwardly, not wanting to create a negative atmosphere for anyone.

"I already have plans with my family. Maybe next time," she said.

. .

Today, Karnravee didn’t drive her car because she had taken it to the service center for a check-up. She was now waiting for the chauffeur to come pick her up. The reason she gave her colleagues was just an excuse.

As she walked out of the building, a red car pulled up in front of the company. In that instant, her heart skipped a beat because the car looked like someone else’s, someone who was currently occupying her thoughts.

"Well, it’s not like there’s only one car like this in the world,"

She told herself, trying to ignore it and walk away.

"Where are you going?"

The driver’s side window rolled down just as Karnravee was walking past.

The voice, familiar to her, made her stop. She glanced at the license plate.

"I’m going home,"

She replied curtly, without even turning to face the person.

"Get in the car."

"No, the chauffeur is coming to pick me up."

"The chauffeur, huh? They’ll never come,"

The voice retorted.

"How do you know?"

Kanravi turned around to face the speaker.

"The van broke down on the way. I just passed it, so how wouldn’t I know?"

"If that’s true, then Uncle should have called me,"

She said, frowning.

"Well, I’m here to pick you up. Why would he call? Don’t make a fuss. Get in the car. I’m starving."

Karnravee clenched her jaw, not happy about the situation. If she called a taxi, it would take a while, and taxis were not easy to find at this time. In the end, she reluctantly got into the car, her face sour.

Oranate glanced at her briefly before driving out onto the main road. The silence between them was thick, both of them keeping quiet, but if looked closely, you’d notice a slight smile at the corner of Oranate's mouth.

Traffic started to get heavy as they reached a certain point. Karnravee's house wasn’t far, but it felt far. Both of them began to feel uncomfortable and looked for something to do.

Karnravee took out her phone and started scrolling through social media, while Oranate played soft music to ease the tension. But just as Karnravee was reading something, a notification popped up saying her battery was running low. She felt like throwing the phone out the window.

'*Why is this happening now!'*

Oranate glanced at Karnravee and took the charging cable out of her phone, handing it to Karnravee so she could charge hers instead. Karnravee's phone was placed in the charger.

The whole way was filled with only the sound of music, until the red car pulled up in front of the large gate and stopped, not in the garage but just outside.

It became clear immediately that she was only dropping Karnravee off.

Karnravee opened the door and got out of the car without a word, walking toward the house without looking back. The things her friend had said were half believed, half doubted. Her mind was a mess, but she still chose to deny her own feelings.

A small stainless steel bucket filled with expensive wine was sitting on a table, just within reach of the bathtub. The delicate young woman holding a wine glass slipped into the warm water, hoping it would soothe her troubled mind. She lifted the glass to her lips, closing her eyes to calm herself.

If only she could play some soft classical music to create a peaceful atmosphere. With that thought, she glanced around for her expensive phone, but she had no idea where she left it.

*Oh, my phone!*

*. .*

Oranate walked out of the bathroom in her robe, her hair still wet. Since returning home, the phone of someone else had been buzzing nonstop. She didn't know what was causing the constant notifications, but she was losing her patience. She grabbed the phone and turned it off to stop the noise.

She only realized it was someone else's phone when she got back to her condo. Had she known earlier, she would have turned the car around to return it right away.

She turned her attention away from the phone and sat at the vanity table. Less than a minute later, her own phone started ringing. She could guess who was calling. She got up from the vanity to answer the call.

"Hey! Why are you video calling me?"

She answered the call without realizing it was a video call. As soon as she saw the screen, she quickly turned the phone away in embarrassment.

Karnravee, sitting at her laptop, had logged into the green messaging app to contact Oranate. Unintentionally, she pressed the video call button instead of the regular call button, and for a moment, she froze.

What she saw was Oranate wrapped in nothing but a towel. While she couldn't see her fully, the view of her pale, exposed chest was striking.

"Uh, I... I left my phone in your car. Did you notice?"

"Yeah, so what? I’m not driving back to give it to you. I’m too lazy!" Oranate grumbled, flipping the phone face down on the table, crossing her arms as she spoke with an irritated tone.

"I'll come get it. But don’t you dare guess my password and snoop through my phone. Got it?"

"Ha! Want to see? You’re lucky I didn’t throw it in the toilet. I don’t know who’s been sending so many messages, it’s so annoying."

"Crazy!"

"You’re the crazy one! That’s enough."

Oranate cut the conversation short and walked away, heading to the closet to pick out her pajamas. Her face flushed with a mix of embarrassment and frustration.

*If I’d known, I wouldn’t have gone to pick her up. Crazy kid!*

# Chapter 12: Breaking the Wall

A variety of dishes were laid out on the glass table. Suddenly, she lost her appetite and left them untouched until evening. She got up to open the fridge and found the cans of beer that Allie had placed inside.

She grabbed one along with a plate of fruit. After a few moments, Karnravee would likely be arriving. She opened the beer can and took another large drink.

“Yuck! It's so bitter,”

She muttered, but still took another big sip. She turned on the TV and leaned back, staring at the ceiling.

The doorbell rang, signaling that someone had arrived. She stood up, but before she could take a step, she stumbled and sat back down. Her mind was clear, but her body felt a little difficult to control. The tiled floor seemed to float. She shook her head slightly and got up to open the door successfully.

"Why didn't you just open the door tomorrow?"

She said as the first words, immediately inviting a slap.

Oranate was about to shut the door in her face, but Karnravee was quicker, slipping in and asking for the forgotten phone. She had left it behind when she got up to open the door.

“Wait a second.”

Karnravee saw Oranate stumbling like a drunk person and took off her shoes to follow inside. On the glass table were both savory and sweet dishes, along with some alcohol. She grabbed a beer can and shook it.

“Still drinking even though you're weak.”

“Mind your own business. It's not like I’m drinking on your head,”

Oranate muttered, searching for the phone on the sofa and the bed without giving up.

“Where is it?”

Karnravee turned to the TV stand and noticed the phone charging there.

“You won't find it in your next life either. You're getting old and forgetful.”

“Hey! Do you want me to slap you, kid?”

A cushion flew toward Karnravee's face, but she was quick enough to dodge it. She smirked and walked over to unlock her phone, worried the other person might open it and see something problematic.

“Did you turn it off?”

“Yeah, it's annoying. I don't know who keeps sending things.”

“Did you sneak a peek at anything?”

“Is there anything worth looking at? Did you download a porn clip or something?”

“Who even downloads those anymore? So outdated.”

Oranate picked up the pillow and seemed ready to throw it again.

"You're really good at things like this."

Karnravee made a mocking gesture with her mouth. What she was really worried about was the messages she had exchanged with a friend through a popular app, which she didn’t want the other person to see. Everything seemed fine, so she unplugged her phone’s charging cable and walked back.

"You said you were hungry, right?"

"I am hungry."

"But from what I see, you haven't even eaten that food yet."

She glanced at the food before replying irritably,

"Stop talking. Just take the stuff and leave."

"I was planning to do that anyway."

The two exchanged sharp glances, but as they looked at each other, it was clear that the wall they had built together was starting to crack. The pounding in her chest grew faster, protesting what her mind was telling her.

Karnravee lowered her eyes, furrowing her brow, her expression troubled. She stood still for a while, feeling like something was off, as if she were the only one feeling this way. She didn’t see why the other person seemed so unaffected.

"You must be happy, right? Now that you’ve gotten rid of me,"

Oranate said quietly, almost as if she was talking to herself.

Karnravee tried not to care. She tried to pull away, but the truth chased her no matter how far she ran. Oranate's eyes softened as she remembered something a friend had said in a restaurant.

"Ran..."

"Did you intentionally avoided me?"

Her voice was still quiet as she stepped forward, stopping right in front of her, staring into Karnravee's brown eyes.

"Why are you doing this? Am I really that annoying to you?"

Karnravee said.

"Well, it's what you wanted all along. You didn’t want me to get involved with you. Have you forgotten? I’ve already done what you asked. Let’s just go back to how we were, living our separate lives."

Her voice softened too, completely different from before.

"Did you really do it for me?"

"....."

"Why don't I feel any better, though?"

"....."

"I’m tired. I’m bored. I’m annoyed with myself. I’m frustrated. I..."

"....."

## “I miss you...”

The chaos that had been tangled for many days, Karnravee could summarize it briefly as this word.

She didn’t want to admit it but didn’t know how to force herself to continue.

Her once strong heart softened as soon as she heard that sentence. She couldn’t deny that she felt the same way. What her friend had said, Karnravee had confirmed it today.

“What did you say? Do you know what you're saying?”

“I’m not drunk like you.”

The steep wall that they had built together had been destroyed by Oranate until it was completely broken. She pounced on the person in front of her and kiss her unable to hide her feelings anymore.

Karnravee immediately fought back. Her two arms instinctively hugged and caressed her thin body. She lay flat along the length of the sofa, their lips hungrily kissing.

The cushions that were lined up were all swept to the floor. The sound of kissing competed with the sound of the TV. Sometimes, she couldn’t help but moan.

Oranate gathered her strength and grabbed Karnravee. The soft lips bit her neck, caressed her body through the clothes she was wearing. In a few moments, she was pinned down on the sofa again. Her chest was kneaded by both hands. She had no strength to fight back. Her body was limp and trembled all over.

“Mmm!”

A soft moan in her throat implied that she was satisfied. She inserted her hand into her shirt, directly touching her skin under her bra. When her palm stroked her nipples, she couldn’t breathe properly and groaned in her throat.

A slender hand slipped into Karnravee's shirt, kneading her breasts back through the bra she was wearing. She was a little annoyed because they were covered by the foam. Her fingertips slowly moved down, stopping to caress her stomach, before moving down to the edge of her shorts, stroking the large button in circles.

At that moment, Karnravee's consciousness almost went out of control. Her body was hot and her breathing was rapid. She ripped off Ornate’s shirt, causing all the buttons to fly off. The large breasts were clearly displayed in front of her face. She didn't hesitate to admire them.

The tip of her nose and lips pressed against the soft breasts, tasting the fragrance and sweetness.

"Ran,"

Her body responded automatically, arching her chest to receive the warm tongue.

The playful hands unbuttoned the large buttons, pulled the pants' zipper all the way down, the tip of her index finger slid in to rub the sensitive spot through the tiny underwear. Karnravee's face was flushed, and she couldn't help but moan.

"Sing softly,"

She whispered in her ear.

"Why do you have to be light?"

"I want to hear it alone."

Both of them locked eyes, sweet and intense. Their bodies communicated feelings—soft, sweet, but with a hint of passion. Clothes slowly slipped off, and their bodies pressed together, savoring the pleasure like two people deeply in love, touching every inch of each other.

Finally, they ended up on the bed.

Oranate pushed Karnravee onto the bed, climbed on top, and kissed her bare body, leaving occasional marks. Karnravee, being touched, watched every move she made. At that moment, Oranate was like a flame ready to burn.

“Saai...”

Her voice was husky, her eyes were sparkling, and her anxiety was about to explode. She pushed Karnravee onto the soft bed and took control.

Their bodies became one, moving together passionately. The bed shook with their love. Oranate held her tight, and Karnravee's soft moans filled the air.

If love was about the heart, there would be nothing wrong with letting their feelings guide them.

Even though the passion burned hot, she still remembered that the bedroom was quiet, not daring to make loud sounds, biting her lip with her face red. In the end, their desire erupted, releasing their shared pleasure.

Karnravee, exhausted, buried her face in Oranate's neck. The feeling, the soft moans during their intimacy, remained in her mind, even after it had ended. They both still felt as if the other was embracing and kissing them.

Her eyelids, slowly fluttering open, looked at the younger one. She gently held her cheek, her words barely audible.

Soon, her eyelids closed again as she fell into a peaceful sleep from exhaustion.

Karnravee looked up and kissed her eyelids with a soft smile.

“I never wanted to lose to you. Why should I lose to you?”

She had to admit she lost this time. She didn’t even realize how much influence the other had on her feelings. By the time she knew, it was too late to pull away.

Karnravee lay on her side, looking at the sleeping form, pulling the blanket over her to keep her warm. She spent several minutes just watching her. She looked so cute while sleeping, completely different from when she was awake.

But if she had to choose between when she was awake and when she was asleep, it was hard to decide. In the end, she found herself liking everything about her.

'***I must be going crazy.'***

***.***

The cushions were scattered on the floor. Some types of food with liquid were spilled around the bowl, a result of the activity earlier. Karnravee did not feel sleepy yet, so she got up to put on a robe and clear the area to make it tidy again.

Change the food container and put it in the refrigerator. Then take a small towel, soak it in water, wring it out, and use it to wipe the sleeping person.

The thick blanket slides down little by little, carefully wiping the neck, shoulders, and down to the chest. There are scattered red marks. Move her hand to touch and stroke lightly.

"Hmm!"

The sleeping person moves a little, the naughty hand stops, waiting to see if she will wake up or not. In the end, it is certain, still as before. So start to clean the body again with an unhappy heart. The thin hands touch every part. The lower it goes, the hotter the person's face becomes.

In the end, the feeling like that comes back again.

"You fell asleep and ran away from me."

The thick blanket is thrown off and piled beside the bed. The moist eyes scan the body, reaching out to grab, stroking the thighs up to the lower abdomen, stimulating one's mood quite well.

The soft lips carefully kiss the chest, moving down to explore the smooth, clear skin. Curiosity, wanting to see, wanting to try, ordering the person to do whatever she want. The sleeping person wakes up with a start, both legs are already on Karntravee's shoulders.

The warm tongue was fiercely slashed her clitoris.

“Ran! Aaahhhh!”

She quickly covered her mouth, her other hand gripping the sheets.

She glanced over, flicking her tongue faster than before. The one who was wiping her body hoping that she would sleep well would have to start all over again.

“Aaahhhh, Ran!”

The slender body stiffened before jerking frequently, pulling the pillow to cover her face, screaming at the top of her lungs.

Karnravee quickly crawled up and pressed against her clitoris, following her.

The pleasure did not end here. She asked to continue admiring her body. Even though the exhaustion made her fall asleep again, she still enjoyed herself without knowing when to stop.

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Last night's activities were very intense. The next morning, Karnravee's body ached and felt like it was going to break apart every second.

“Are you feeling unwell, Ran?”

Napaporn asked with concern, noticing how she had been massaging her neck and shoulders all day.

“No, not at all. I just… slept in a bad position, that’s all. Just a little sore,”

She replied evasively, forcing a wide smile.

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Meanwhile, Oranate woke up around noon. Stretching her arms and legs lazily to shake off the stiffness, she sat up abruptly as full awareness hit her. Her body was covered only by a blanket, and the room around her…

The once messy room was now neatly organized, with every detail cleaned and arranged. Even her body, every inch of her skin, had been carefully cleaned as well.

“What have I done?!”

She cried out, flopping onto her back. Her slender body squirmed on the bed as she grabbed a pillow to cover her face, screaming in embarrassment.

She could remember every moment from the previous night—every detail, every move.

She also remembered that she was the one who initiated it. And... it had felt so good.

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# Chapter 13: So Cute

The cheerful chatter echoed in the office. Their team leader had been out meeting clients since the afternoon, so the remaining team members took the opportunity to chat freely.

Even though the youngest daughter of the company owner was in the room, no one seemed to care. After all, she had been dozing under the desk for over an hour.

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

The sound of the door startled everyone, sending them scrambling back to their desks. The one who knocked wasn’t a stranger. The door opened to reveal someone stepping in with a large bag of snacks.

“When the cat’s away, the mice sure do play,”

The visitor teased.

The employees cheered in recognition and hurried to grab snacks from the bag.

Oranate had arrived a while ago and had seen everything that had transpired.

“You’ve been gone for a week! I thought you forgot the way to the office,” The employees, who were around the same age, teased her intimately.

“By the way, your little sister’s been napping for an hour now. Good thing she’s in this team—otherwise, someone would’ve scolded her ages ago.” “Oh, really? Who’d dare scold the boss’s daughter?”

“Absolutely no one! Ha ha ha!”

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Everyone gathered around, chatting animatedly. They even gossiped about the boss’s daughter within earshot, but Karnravee didn’t hear a thing. Oranate, observing her state, chuckled softly, unsure whether to laugh or feel sorry for her.

“So, where have you been?”

Someone asked.

“I went on an out-of-town shoot with some friends and brought these snacks back for you all. Been busy with work lately?”

“Busy? Of course! There’s always something going on. Oh, by the way, did you hear that Team A’s leader is resigning?”

Oranate shook her head, not keeping up much with company news. If she guessed correctly, it might be another case of poaching, something that had happened numerous times before.

The company had several departments and teams, each fiercely competitive. Every team leader wanted their team to be number one—a chronic issue that seemed impossible to resolve.

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Karnravee, meanwhile, jolted awake as pins and needles shot through her arm from sleeping on it too long. She yawned widely and glanced around the room.

"Got any lucky numbers, Ran?"

The loudmouth of the team teased with a laugh.

"Are you planning to buy lottery tickets?"

She replied with a smirk.

"Of course not! Calling them lottery tickets sounds much classier."

Ran glanced at the snack bag everyone was gathered around, a sense of familiarity tugging at her mind.

"Come join us! Sai brought these. If the boss asks, we’ll say Ran invited us to eat. Hurry up!"

The same playful coworker said, clearly not planning to tone down his antics. His words inadvertently answered her unspoken question.

The familiarity she felt came from the fact that she’d seen a similar snack bag in Oranate's room the night before.

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*So, you came all the way here but didn’t bother to see me?*

Her smile faded as her eyes searched the room for the snack owner, finding no trace of them.

"Sai went to share snacks with the other teams. She’ll be back soon—her bag’s still here."

A female coworker explained, almost as if reading her mind. The newer hire had recently learned that the two were cousins.

Ran's heart, previously deflated, swelled with quiet joy. She allowed herself a small smile.

"Hey, have you ever met Sai’s partner since you started working here?" "Nope, but I heard some gossip that she used to date Natasha, Rhanya’s girlfriend. Don’t know if it’s true, though."

The group erupted with curiosity and excitement, including Karnravee. It was typical for this crowd—when someone was absent, they inevitably became the topic of conversation.

The details of Sai’s personal life were a mystery to everyone. Oranate rarely talked about herself, and Karnravee was no exception to this lack of knowledge.

Her previously joyful heart deflated slightly at the revelation. Forget love and relationships—even simple things like Sai’s favorite food, music, or movies were mysteries to her. She had never cared enough to ask or find out.

"Sai’s back. Quiet down,"

Someone whispered.

The lively chatter ceased instantly. Oranate let out a subtle sigh. It wasn’t hard to guess who had been the topic of discussion just moments ago, but she chose to ignore it. Her gaze drifted to the newbie who had just woken up—Karnravee, who was now staring back at her.

"What’s wrong?"

Oranate asked curtly, tossing the snack bag toward Karnravee.

Still rattled by the earlier gossip, Karnravee caught the bag clumsily, her expression shifting as she quickly denied anything in a curt tone.

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The relationship had taken a leap forward, skipping several steps, leaving both Oranate and Karnravee awkward and unsure of how to act around each other. Oranate turned to chat with the group, while Karnravee, feeling flustered, busied herself by opening a snack bag and focusing on her desk.

How trustworthy are these people?

Her perfectly arched eyebrows furrowed in frustration as she mulled over things, silently stewing. She was so lost in thought that she didn’t notice someone approaching and standing behind her.

"What are you thinking about?"

"Shit!"

Karnravee jumped and let out an expletive in shock.

"Did you just curse at me?"

"No! It’s because you sneaked up on me. Of course, I was startled,"

She stammered, spinning her chair around to face Oranate, visibly flustered in a way she had never been before.

Oranate leaned in slightly, her intense gaze fixed on Karnravee.

"Sleeping during work hours? You better watch out, or your salary might get docked."

"And whose fault is that?"

The group turned their heads in unison, curiosity gleaming in their eyes as they tried to eavesdrop on the conversation.

Oranate quickly placed her hand over Karnravee's mouth, her sharp glare signaling her to stop.

"Shut up,"

She hissed through clenched teeth.

"What? Let go!"

"Ran! I said shut up!"

"No!"

Karnravee, feeling mischievous, refused to comply and tried to brush Oranate's hand away to continue speaking. Oranate, determined not to lose, spun her chair back toward the desk, locked her arm around Karnravee's shoulders, and leaned down to whisper a threat. She warned that if Karnravee didn’t stay quiet, she would get seriously angry.

A threat like that wouldn’t have fazed the stubborn Karnravee in the past.

"Fine, fine! I won’t say anything,"

Karnravee muttered in defeat, her voice barely audible.

The two continued whispering to each other, oblivious to how the group strained their ears to catch every word. When Oranate shot a sharp glance their way, the group quickly turned their attention elsewhere, pretending to talk about something entirely unrelated.

The events that happened last night, both of them agreed to let it go for now. Neither could figure out where to start, what to say, or how it would all end.

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By the pool of a grand house, three family members worked together to set up tables and chairs. They lit the barbecue grill, preparing to cook a feast. Joining them were the girlfriends of Tewa and Gawin, helping out enthusiastically as they planned a celebratory gathering..

...for their youngest sister.

It had been a long time since this house had hosted any sort of celebration —so long, in fact, that everyone had almost forgotten what such moments felt like.

Oranate and Karnravee arrived just after 8 PM, clueless about the event. They exchanged confused glances, but the one most surprised was their elder brother, Tewa. Seeing his two younger sisters return home together was a rare sight. From a distance, he waved them over with a teasing remark.

"No wonder the sky’s looking cloudy. Is it going to rain?"

The youngest sister bared her teeth in mock annoyance as she stomped over.

"What’s going on here?"

"A celebration, of course! Looks good, doesn’t it? Dad and I made this all by ourselves,"

Tewa replied smugly.

Standing by the grill, their father, Karnkan, smiled softly as he tended to the barbecue. Meanwhile, Gawin placed a mix of sodas and expensive wine on the table, telling the two sisters to sit tight and look pretty while waiting— everything would be ready in ten minutes.

"What’s the occasion? And why didn’t anyone tell me?"

"It’s... for no particular reason. Just felt like celebrating, okay? Got a problem with that?"

Tewa replied with a grin. Then, his tone turned mischievous.

"But how come you two came back together? And where were you all night?"

The sisters exchanged a quick glance, caught off guard.

"Well… she dropped me off at home last night, and then I forgot my phone in her car. So I went to get it,"

Karnravee answered as casually as she could, while Oranate nodded silently beside her.

"So why didn’t you drive Dad’s car back? Where is it now?"

The sisters turned to look at each other again, their expressions shifting.

The truth was, Karnravee had taken her father’s car to visit Oranate the previous night. She even used it to drive to work in the morning. To cover her tracks, she had lied, claiming she’d asked the family driver to return the car. That left Oranate no choice but to drive her home.

"So, let me guess—the car is still parked at the company?"

Karnravee pressed her lips together, avoiding the question entirely, before dashing off to help her father at the grill. Oranate, seething, barely resisted the urge to drag the little troublemaker back for a scolding.

This kid is really naughty!

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Since learning the truth about her mother that day, Karnravee’s relationship with her father had improved almost instantly. There was no need for lengthy conversations—she understood everything now. She no longer felt resentment toward her mother, either.

"So, how’s work at the company going?"

"It’s good! I’m having fun,"

Karnravee replied cheerfully.

"If you have any questions, ask your older brothers. You still have a lot to learn and gain experience."

"Yes, sir,"

The daughter replied playfully.

Two young men brought food to the table with beautiful women by their sides. Oranate recognized the women as she had seen them several times before. They exchanged warm smiles as if they were already familiar.

Both Gawin and Tewa had been in relationships for years but had never brought their partners home. The main reason was that they worried their younger sister might feel uncomfortable or think her brothers were giving their love to someone else. In their eyes, their sister was still a little girl.

"Hey, Ran."

Karnravee turned to look at her brother and was surprised to see two beautiful women she didn’t know standing there. She walked closer as Gawin introduced them to her.

"Why didn’t you tell me before deciding to get married?"

"Because I thought a certain someone might not take it well,"

Tewa teased, hugging his girlfriend in front of his sister.

"You’re overthinking it. I’m not possessive of you guys. If you get married, I’ll even throw in some rice and salt as gifts,"

Karnravee joked.

Everyone burst out laughing at her remark. They had misunderstood her feelings all along. Karnravee didn’t mind her brothers having girlfriends at all. Oranate let the siblings continue their playful banter and quietly walked away to check on Karnkan.

"You can go sit down, Uncle. I’ll grill this for you,"

She offered.

"It’s fine. I can do it. It feels good to do something like this after living such a busy life."

The niece smiled, placed the cooked barbecue on a plate, and began grilling another.

"Thank you for helping, really. Without you, I don’t know how this house would manage."

"No need to thank me. It’s all because of Ran too. She’s very understanding and quick to work through her feelings."

"True. I really underestimated her."

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The night sky was clear, mirroring everyone’s light-hearted feelings.

Karnravee enjoyed her dinner, finishing her plate of barbecue and calling out for more.

"Hey, we’re out of food!"

Oranate turned to look at her, frowning.

"Did you just call your dad like that?"

"Who said I was calling my dad? I was calling you!"

"Oh, you little rascal!"

The whole table burst into laughter. Oranate carried her plate back to the table and refused to share with the troublemaker. She slid her plate away and told them to grill her own food.

"Ungrateful!"

The other teased, baring their teeth mockingly, before grabbing an empty plate and heading over to her dad with a big smile.

“Dad, go sit down. I’ll grill for you.”

“If I sit, I’ll end up not understanding what you youngsters are talking about.”

“Why? You still look youthful, you know. Here, let me pop your collar up!”

She pulled her dad’s shirt collar up like a trendy young mechanic and laughed.

“So cool!”

Her dad played along, posing dramatically and joking around with his daughter.

“Next time, you should bring your boyfriend to meet me.”

The laughter stopped instantly, and she froze in place, unsure of how to respond.

“Who would I bring?”

She asked hesitantly.

“One of those guys you used to hang out with, switching partners all the time.”

“Oh, come on, Dad. I was never serious with any of them.”

“What about that time you told me you liked girls?”

She went silent. The truth was, she had only said that to tease him.

“I was just messing with you,”

She admitted.

Her dad shook his head with a gentle smile.

“So, you like men?”

“I don’t know. I’m not really interested in those things. I don’t even know what I like or don’t like.”

Even about things that had happened, she wasn’t sure what to call them.

“I wasn’t asking to criticize you. I just want to know more about you, to hear your stories.”

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Her eyes stung with emotion. Over the years, they had only learned about each other through Gawin and Tewa, even though they lived in the same house and saw each other every day.

“You can tell me anything,”

Her dad reassured her.

She pressed her lips into a thin line, thinking for a while.

“Anything, really?”

“Of course. That face tells me you have something you want to share.”

He smiled teasingly.

“I don’t know how to say it yet. Let me sort things out first, and then I’ll tell you.”

The father and daughter laughed together, sharing a warm moment. The small gathering was filled with smiles and joy. The house, once overshadowed by misunderstandings, had transformed. The lingering clouds had cleared, leaving only memories behind.

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"Hey, we’re out of barbecue,"

Oranate called out, holding up an empty plate to show.

"Did you just call my dad like that?"

"No, I was calling you."

Karnravee only then realized she’d been tricked. Grumbling under her breath, she brought the barbecue over to serve it.

"Something seems strange today,"

Tewa commented curiously.

"What’s strange, P’Wa? I just noticed it was done cooking and brought it over, that’s all,"

Karnravee replied, trying to brush it off.

Oranate propped her chin on her hand, watching Karnravee’s stubborn response, a soft smile forming on her lips—a smile Karnravee had never seen before. It was beautiful, captivating, and made her freeze in her tracks.

***So cute.***

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# Chapter 14: Just a Kiss

True happiness is always around us and never truly disappears. If we keep chasing happiness far away, when will we ever find it?

Tonight, the sky is clear. The stars, big and small, shine brightly. Karnravee is so happy tonight that she can't sleep. She lies by the pool, smiling to herself.

Oranate didn’t bring some of her things, so she went to knock on the door next to hers to borrow a hairdryer. But no matter how much she knocked, there was no answer. Taking the liberty to open the door, she found the room empty.

"Where could she be?"

Tonight, Karnravee's brothers brought their girlfriends to stay over, so she’s unlikely to be with them. Karnkan is probably already asleep. Oranate decided to check downstairs and spotted Karnravee lying by the pool. She stopped and watched for a moment before walking over.

“What are you doing sleeping there?”

“Ahh!”

*Splash!*

Startled, Karnravee turned over and fell into the pool, sending water splashing everywhere. Oranate burst into laughter, enjoying the moment.

She stood by the pool, laughing so hard that tears streamed down her face.

“You’re crazy!”

Karnravee yelled as her head popped up above the water.

Oranate couldn’t stop laughing, even as Karnravee splashed water at her. She stepped back, still laughing for a while.

“I just asked you a question! I didn’t push you into the pool.”

“Well, I was startled! You showed up like a ghost.”

“You talk as if you’ve actually seen a ghost before.”

Karnravee glared at her and swam to the edge of the pool, reaching out her hand.

“What are you doing? I know what you’re planning.”

Oranate crossed her arms and stepped back, refusing to fall for the trick.

Frustrated that Oranate figured her out, Karnravee swam to the pool stairs. Her thin pajamas clung to her body, revealing too much. She crossed her arms to cover herself as she walked towards Oranate with a scowl.

"I'm cold!"

Oranate burst into laughter again, turning her face away. Even though she had seen it before, it didn’t mean she was used to it.

“Just go back inside! Why are you standing here shivering like you’re possessed?”

Karnravee's sharp eyes looked at the older woman with a mischievous plan in mind.

“I’ll go, but not just yet.”

“Ahh!”

*Splash!*

Karnravee took the opportunity to jump at her while she wasn’t paying attention, pulling them both into the pool. They sank to the bottom together.

Oranate, who had just showered, was furious. She glared and tried to grab Karnravee for revenge, but the younger girl dodged and stuck out her tongue mockingly before swimming back to the surface.

“You little brat! What are you doing?”

Oranate shouted. Her soaked pajamas clung to her body, just like Karnravee’s, as they floated in the water.

“You started it! You teased me first.”

“When did I tease you? You fell in on your own!”

“Because of you, that’s why I fell!”

“You’re crazy,”

Oranate muttered, looking around for a way to get back inside.

“How are we supposed to go back now?”

“Just use the stairs. It’s not that hard.”

“And what are we supposed to do in this state? Look at yourself!”

Karnravee glanced at herself, then looked back at Oranate, her face heating up as she remembered the figure she once touched. Oranate, preoccupied with finding a way back inside, didn’t notice the unusual tension.

“It’s almost midnight. Everyone should be in their rooms. Let’s hurry back inside,”

Oranate said as she turned and swam toward the stairs. But before she could get far, she was pulled back. A nose brushed against her neck.

“Ran!”

She gasped, turning to push Karnravee's shoulders.

“Stop doing inappropriate things!”

At that moment, it was as if Karnravee couldn’t hear a word. Her eyes were locked on the damp fabric revealing Oranate's form. She pulled the slender waist closer to her.

“Ran! Get a grip! We’re outside! Let go!”

Karnravee silenced her by pressing their lips together, leaving no chance for protest. Her left arm held Oranate tightly while her right hand moved to her chest. She broke away from the kiss, trailing down to her neck.

“Ran, stop… not here,”

Oranate pleaded.

Oranate was pulled back into the water, her slender waist still tightly held by Karnravee. Ran’s unfocused gaze lingered on Oranate's figure, her mind wandering to the happy moments they had shared before.

Before running out of air, Oranate managed to pull Karnravee back to the surface, taking a deep breath to fill her lungs.

“That’s enough! Someone might see us!”

The stubborn girl refused to let go, leaning her face closer.

“So, if we’re in a room, it’s okay, right?”

A sharp slap landed on Karnravee's cheek.

“You pervert! Let me go now!”

“Why not? I mean—”

“When I say no, I mean no! If you keep this up, I’ll get mad at you!”

With a pout, Karnravee finally let go, muttering under her breath.

“But yesterday you kissed me first…”

Oranate shot her a glare before dragging her by the collar toward the pool stairs.

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Inside the house, everything was silent. Everyone was already asleep.

Oranate turned off the lights as they made their way to the second floor. Karnravee followed closely behind, like a shadow. When Oranate entered her room, Karnravee tried to follow her in.

“What are you doing? Go sleep in your own room!”

“Why? Can’t I sleep here?”

She asked, her voice soft and pleading, her eyes wide and innocent.

“No! You have your own room.”

“I don’t want to. I’m sleeping here!”

Before Oranate could stop her, Karnravee quickly opened the door and ran inside.

Oranate chased after her, trying to catch her.

“Ran, look at yourself! You’re soaking wet. Go back to your room, shower, and change your clothes!”

“I’ll shower here,”

Karnravee retorted.

“You’re impossible!”

Oranate snapped, growing more annoyed.

Before her temper could flare further, Karnravee crept closer, clinging to her arm. Her tone and demeanor shifted, becoming unusually sweet.

“Can I please sleep here? Pretty please?”

“And why would you need to sleep in my room?”

“Because... I’m scared of ghosts.”

“What? You? Scared of ghosts?”

Oranate rolled her eyes, wanting to flick Karnravee’s forehead.

“You’ve lived here since you were a baby. Why would you suddenly be scared now? If you’re going to make excuses, at least make better ones!”

“Can’t you do more than that?”

Karnravee smiled mischievously, her round face lighting up as she teased. Deep down, she felt a little embarrassed to act this way, but Oranate couldn’t help but smirk at her antics.

This silly girl!

They held hands as they walked into the bathroom together. Clothes slipped off and disappeared, leaving nothing but bare skin as they stepped into the bathtub. Oranate sat with her back to Karnravee, letting her wash her hair again. Whatever Oranate instructed, Karnravee happily complied, pulling the handheld showerhead to rinse her hair clean of all the suds.

“Do you want me to scrub your back?”

Karnravee asked cautiously, knowing she’d been warned against mischief.

Oranate, feeling relaxed, closed her eyes and nodded. That was permission enough. Karnravee grinned with satisfaction, reaching for the body sponge and carefully scrubbing her back, sneaking in a few subtle touches as she worked.

“Does it feel good?”

She whispered softly into Oranate's ear.

“Mmm,” Oranate hummed in response.

“Really?”

“Just keep scrubbing and stop talking so much.”

Karnravee’s gaze lingered on Oranate's smooth, fair shoulders, which gleamed under the water’s light. She couldn’t resist running the sponge over them repeatedly, savoring the moment.

“Sai...”

“What?”

“Can I... ask for something?”

“What is it?”

“A kiss. Just a kiss.”

The straightforward request made Oranate's eyes snap open. She turned to meet Karnravee’s gaze. The undefined nature of their relationship made it hard to know where the boundaries lay. Some things were acceptable, while others remained off-limits.

Oranate answered by pulling Karnravee closer, capturing her lips in a tender kiss. It was gentle and sweet, lingering longer than either expected. The sound of their kisses echoed softly, a melody so captivating that neither wanted it to end.

“Maybe I should get you a beer,”

Oranate murmured afterward.

“Why?”

“When you’re drunk, you lose all self-control. I like it.”

"Crazy girl."

The two of them had been soaking in the water for quite a while, even though both had already bathed once. They kept chatting about this and that, enjoying themselves so much they lost track of time.

"Go grab the hairdryer for me. I didn't bring mine,"

Oranate said, wearing her light blue robe, half-commanding and halfjoking.

Karnravee heard her and immediately ran back to the room. When she was told to wipe the water dripping on the floor, she got right to it without a single complaint, kneeling and wiping the floor until it was completely dry. She beamed with pride at her work.

"Why do you go this far?"

Karnravee looked up, confused by the question.

"Well, you told me to."

"If it were before, you'd have snapped at me and cursed me out."

"Well, now is now. Why talk about the past?"

She clasped her hands behind her back and walked up to her.

"I've been so sweet to you. Will you let me sleep over now?"

"There it is! Trying to act cute to get what you want,"

Oranate teased, playfully flicking her on the forehead before walking away to sit at the vanity and dry her hair.

Karnravee, not one to back down easily, quickly cleaned up, washed her hands, and hurried to stand behind Oranate, volunteering to dry her hair for her.

"When you went back to the room, why didn't you grab your clothes?"

Karnravee glanced down at herself and smiled sheepishly.

"I forgot. I was too worried you'd have to wait long."

"....."

"Your hair is so soft,"

Kanrawee said, picking up a lock to sniff.

"And it smells great too."

"I've already washed it once. Of course, it smells nice."

"No, no, it smells nice because I washed it for you."

"Yeah, right. Whatever makes you happy."

Once Oranate's damp hair was dry, soft, and shiny, she realized she'd made Karnravee do too much for her. So, she made Karnravee sit down and dried her hair in return.

"So, are you finally letting me sleep over?"

"Not yet."

"Why not? We're just sleeping! Come on, please let me stay,"

Karnravee begged, shaking Oranate's arm playfully, her voice sweet and pleading.

In truth, Oranate had already agreed to let her stay when they bathed together. But Karnravee, oblivious as ever, kept pleading without realizing she'd been tricked into helping for quite a while.

“Alright, alright! Enough.”

Oranate relented.

“Yay! You said it! So… can I wear your clothes too?”

“You’re unbelievable! Your room is right here; go get your own.”

“No way. What if you lock me out?”

“Then you can just go back to your room.”

“Nope. I’m staying here.”

Karnravee pouted, rummaging through Oranate’s wardrobe for pajamas. Then, without hesitation, she took off her robe right in front of her.

“Your chest is so small; no need to show off,”

Oranate teased.

“Really? Is it that small?”

Karnravee feigned shock, buttoning her shirt slowly and stepping closer to her.

Oranate’s face flushed as she quickly pushed Karnravee away from the wardrobe, grabbed some pajamas, and hurriedly dressed.

In truth, the earlier jab about Karnravee's small chest was far from accurate.

As the night grew late, Karnravee began to feel sleepy. She yawned and crawled onto the bed, sitting in the middle while waiting for Oranate to join her. Once Oranate climbed in, Karnravee flopped down beside her.

“Time to sleep. We’ve got work tomorrow,”

Oranate said.

“I don’t want to sleep yet,”

Karnravee replied, turning on her side to face her.

“Do you want to come to the office with me tomorrow?"

“Nope, too lazy.”

“Then where are you going? Don’t tell me you’re going to disappear for another week.”

“Why? Are you afraid you’ll miss me?” Karnravee scrunched her nose.

“Why would I miss you? Waste of energy.”

“Ha! Stop pretending.”

“You’ve already tasted me. Was it good?”

Karnravee leaned in closer, smirking.

Oranate froze for a moment before pulling back.

“Enough.... Go to sleep. It’s late.”

Karnravee grinned and slipped her arm under the blanket, wrapping it around Oranate’s waist. Her eyelids grew heavier and began to close.

“Sai, tomorrow morning… I’ll wake up and still see you, right?” Oranate cracked her eyes open and looked at Karnravee.

“Unless you kick me off the bed in your sleep, you probably will.”

They both laughed softly at her reply before drifting off. As Karnravee's voice grew faint, she whispered one last thing: “Don’t disappear again, okay?”

Oranate turned on her side, gazing at the sleeping figure next to her. Where could she possibly go when her heart was right here? Right here with someone she never thought she’d fall for—but somehow, it had already happened.

“Goodnight, you stubborn fool”

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# Chapter 15: Trust me just once

It was another day when Karnravee felt sleepy all day long. She had drunk no fewer than three cups of coffee, yet her assigned work turned out well. During the meeting, everyone praised her ideas in unison.

“Your brother must have taught you a lot. Your marketing style is just like his.”

“And is that good or bad?” she asked.

“It’s good. That’s why the clients keep asking for your brother,”

The team leader replied briefly before walking away.

Karnravee wasn’t sure if the comment was a compliment or sarcasm. She only knew that the two of them had never gotten along. In fact, ever since she started her internship and then became a full-time employee, she had never seen the team leader get close to anyone.

“Hey, did you hear about Sai coming back to work here?”

“When? What? How? Tell me more!”

The chatter about this and that went on all day in the office, but this particular conversation caught Karnravee’s attention.

“Rumor has it that Sai might become Team A’s leader. I think there’s some truth to it.”

“Whoa! Will there be a battle for the job with P'Jai? This is getting exciting!”

The gossip group was so engrossed in their discussion that they didn’t even notice Karnravee standing right behind them, listening.

“Where did you hear that from?”

The group jumped in shock, thinking it was the team leader eavesdropping.

“Ran! You scared us!”

“I’ve been here for a while. You all were too busy gossiping. So, is it true or not?”

Karnravee asked.

“There’s a 90% chance,”

The confident one in the group replied.

**"You *were with me last night and didn’t think to tell me this?"***

Karnravee muttered under her breath as she walked out of the room.

Everyone exchanged puzzled looks, unsure of what they had just overheard.

Karnravee walked straight to the other side of the building and opened the door, finding the employees sitting at their desks, working diligently, which was very different from her own team.

"Is Ms. Ran here for something?"

The secretary sitting in front of the office of Team A's leader asked politely.

"Is anyone inside?"

"No, Miss Sai went to see the president. She hasn't come down yet."

The answer confirmed that what everyone had been saying was true.

Karnravee clearly wasn't pleased and asked to sit and wait inside. The secretary, feeling awkward, couldn’t refuse, especially since Karnravee was the boss's daughter.

The employees in the room knew well that the two of them were not on good terms and had been like that for a while. They also understood the situation, fearing that the same problems from before might repeat. As soon as Oranate returned, the secretary quickly informed her.

"Thanks, it's fine, don’t worry,"

Oranate smiled to ease the tension, then entered the room, closed the curtains, and locked the door tightly.

Karnravee sat with her arms crossed on her usual chair, her face scrunched in frustration. It wasn’t that she was angry about returning to work here; she just didn’t understand why she was the last to know about this.

“If I hadn’t overheard the conversation, I wouldn’t have known about this, would I?”

Oranate sighed lightly and walked directly to stand by the table near where Karnravee was sitting.

“It was sudden. I wasn’t prepared for it either. Now, they’ve taken the project we once pitched to the client under our company’s name and are presenting it as their own at the new place.”

“You’re just thinking about work again, aren’t you? Always work, work, work.”

“Ran... Don’t sulk. I was going to tell you, but you showed up here first. Those people get news too quickly. I really wonder if they work as hard as they gossip.”

Oranate's voice started soft but grew more forceful by the end. She almost wanted to cut off the gossipers' tongues. “And what did you talk to Dad about?”

Karnravee’s voice softened, tinged with a little bit of hurt.

“We talked about work. This client has been with us for a long time, and we need to come up with something better to win them back.”

“You’re already good at this. This isn’t hard for you.”

“But I only have three days to prepare for the pitch.”

“Wait, what?”

The client had already heard about the situation, but the work had to continue. If the competing company was ready to start earlier, so be it. The frustration made her want to...

Determined to overcome the situation, she decided to return to work without hesitation.

"Well, if that's the case, you should just work. I won’t disturb you,"

Karnravee stood up and returned her chair to its rightful place.

"Are you upset that I came back to work here?"

"Not really. I just don’t like finding out things after everyone else. I should know first."

Oranate chuckled at her complaint and pulled Karnravee toward the door.

"It was really sudden, you know."

"I know."

"Now that you know, don’t sulk. Get back to work."

Oranate kissed her on the left cheek.

Karnravee pursed her lips, smiling with satisfaction. She puffed out her cheek, hinting that she wanted a kiss on the other side. Seeing this, Oranate puckered her lips and flicked Karnravee’s puffed cheek with her finger playfully.

"Always asking for more."

Karnravee hesitated and refused to leave the room.

"How about dinner tonight?"

"Probably not. I have a work meeting."

"With whom?"

"With my team. Besides, I brought Natasha along to help, so we’re meeting outside."

Karnravee wasn’t too happy when she heard someone else would be there.

"Can I come too?"

"No, we’re in different teams. If you come, Jai will get jealous."

"But I want to go with you."

Her face twisted in dissatisfaction. She understood everything but couldn’t help but feel uneasy.

"What’s wrong?"

Oranate pinched her puffed cheek and shook her head.

"Don’t tell me you want to switch teams and join me."

"Of course not."

Her return to work was a good thing, and it meant they could see each other more often without having to hide their feelings. But the pouting she displayed now was due to worries about something between her and someone else.

"Well, let me drive you."

"I’ll drive myself."

"Then I’ll take a taxi, and we can go back together later."

Oranate shook her arm, batting her eyelashes playfully.

Karnravee smiled softly and nodded in agreement, opening the door and gently pushing Karnravee out. She watched her walk away until she disappeared from sight.

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Karnravee quickly finished her work and went to meet Oranate at a department store. She had a meeting at a Japanese restaurant, and once done, she would call. In the meantime, she wandered around, looking at products, and noticed a cosmetics store had new items on display, so she decided to check it out.

"Run..."

A deep voice called from another corner of the store.

Karnravee looked away from the cosmetics and saw a young man. He was one of the handsome guys she had once dated to spite her father. "If I’m not mistaken, you must be here with a girl to buy cosmetics,"

She said, using her usual line.

"Something like that. And you, what are you here for?"

"Waiting for someone."

"Who? Your boyfriend?"

Karnravee pursed her lips, unsure of how to respond.

"Not yet, but soon I’ll ask being my partner."

She smiled brightly. If the right opportunity arose, she intended to discuss this seriously with her.

"Wait, what do you mean? You're going to ask a guy to be your boyfriend?"

The young man was curious. But then he remembered past events.

"Don’t tell me..."

"Yes, it's her."

This young man was the one Karnravee had dumped several months ago by pretending she was dating Oranate. Of course, he never believed it until he saw the smile on her face today, which was full of happiness.

The beautiful woman was testing out cosmetics when she looked around and realized her boyfriend was missing. She searched the store but couldn't find him.

"What are you doing here?"

She snapped, glaring at Karnravee.

"I ran into a friend, so I just said hi."

"Really?"

Karnravee was starting to get annoyed by the woman's tone and attitude. She decided to excuse herself and walk away, not wanting to engage any further.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"Bi! Enough. You’re embarrassing yourself."

The woman followed Karnravee to the front of the store, and the young man tried to stop her, but it was no use. She screamed loudly, drawing attention from everyone around.

“Are you possessed by a ghost? Or are you running out of medicine? Suddenly, you’re screaming so loudly and annoyingly."

She crossed her arms, looking at the other person with disdain.

“Are you talking to me, mistress?”

“Hey! What do you mean by that? You're a mistress!”

That sentence made Karnravee mad. She marched over, eyeing the other person from head to toe.

“Let me tell you something. Someone like me can buy this entire mall, don’t worry, I won’t steal your man. If you didn’t act so annoying, this guy would probably take care of you for a long time. Tch. Finally, you found a gold mine, huh? That’s why you’re getting so worked up and not listening to anything.” “Ahh, you low-class!”

*Slap!*

Karnravee's face turned from the force of the slap, her left cheek numbing. Her patience snapped in that moment.

“You think you’re the only one who has hands?!”

*Slap!*

Her powerful slap hit the other person's left cheek with full force. The woman staggered and fell to the ground.

“You’re the low-class one, with your vile behavior.”

The woman screamed, rushing to attack Karnravee again. The man tried to stop her, but she wouldn't listen. Karnravee, seeing that she was out of control, raised her hand to strike again in hopes of calming her down. “Stop right now!”

The stern voice of someone else instantly controlled the situation. Even Karnravee paused, startled. Her heart dropped to her feet as she turned to look, confused.

The look in her eyes was full of disappointment as she turned to walk away. Karnravee was shocked and quickly ran after her.

“Sai, wait! Listen to me!”

“I don’t want to listen.”

Karnravee, frantic, half-running and half-walking, chased

“Sai, wait a minute. Listen to me first.”

“I don’t want to listen.

Karnravee was panicking and half-running, following her relentlessly. Even though their heights were not much different, when Ornate was angry, she was like a tropical storm, moving quickly.

As soon as she unlocked the car, she opened the door and got in to sit in the front seat next to the driver.

“Because she came to find me first. She badmouthed me and even slapped me in the face.”

“So what? You have to act like that woman, fighting over a man, are you proud of it?”

“No, it’s not like what you think.”

“What you two did, there’s no other way to see it. You’re grown up now, not a kid anymore. You can’t just let your emotions control you like before.”

Although she wasn’t there at the beginning, she could figure out why this conflict had started in the department store. Someone like Karnravee would never fight over a man.

But the people involved didn’t know what she knew and probably thought the worst of it. Some even took out their phones to record videos.

“I’m sorry,”

She looked at her with pleading eyes, realizing she was wrong, feeling regret all the way.

The car drove straight to the condominium instead of home. Karnravee looked at the street for a long time, hesitating before daring to ask.

“Aren’t you going home?”

“No,” came the short reply.

“But I don’t have any clothes at your condo.”

“Then go home.”

That sentence made her feel embarrassed, but she didn’t give up. As soon as the car stopped, she quickly opened the door and followed her up without hesitation, rushing into the room.

“Sai,”

She grabbed her arm and hugged her softly,

“I’m sorry. I won’t do that again. Please don’t be mad at me.”

Oranate shook her arm off and sat down on the sofa, putting her things on the table. Karnravee didn’t wait, rushing to sit next to her.

“I don’t like the way you acted.”

Karnravee lowered her head in shame, silently accepting her mistake.

“No matter how harsh others are when they criticize you, you don’t have to respond with violence. You don’t need to stoop to their level. People judge others by their actions. They don’t know who we are because they don’t know us. How you act is how they’ll judge you.”

Oranate didn’t want anyone to think badly of Karnravee or misunderstand her. She said it out of concern, hoping for her to change for the better.

“I understand,”

Karnravee tilted her head and leaned on her shoulder, gently rubbing her arm, hoping to calm her down.

“Forget it, just let it go for now.”

"Where are you going?"

"Just let go."

There was still some ice left in the fridge, so she wrapped it in cloth to press against the bruise before it got worse.

"Out of nowhere, look at this,"

She muttered, lifting the person’s chin slightly to check the bruise. The marks from four fingers were clear, and there was a little blood at the corner of their mouth.

The pain seemed to fade away, only because of her concern.

"Why are you smiling?"

She asked with a sharp tone, looking at her sternly.

The person kept smiling, gazing at her face, which was just an inch away.

"Thank you for always warning and advising me. I might have a bad temper and low patience, but I’ll try to improve. I won’t let something like this happen again. Please believe me just once."

Karnravee met her gaze, speaking every word from the heart. She moved her face closer and gently kissed her lips.

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# Chapter 16: All Gone

Oranate dedicated all her energy to a major project. She worked at the office until the other buildings, only getting less than three hours of sleep at a time for two nights straight. The product’s presenter was a famous superstar, someone she knew well.

For the past two days, they stayed at the condominium. Karnravee stayed close by, never disturbing her work. When she was well-behaved, she was so helpful it was almost surprising.

She prepared food, water, and made sure Oranate had everything she needed. Late at night, Karnravee would often fall asleep with her face on the table from exhaustion.

“Ran...”

Oranate gently shook her arm, waking her from sleep.

“What is it? Do you need something? I’ll get it for you,”

Karnravee said, wiping drool from the corner of her mouth and sitting up, ready to help.

Oranate smiled, feeling both sorry and affectionate at the same time.

“Go sleep on the bed. You’ll get a sore neck if you keep this up.”

“No, if you need help, I can help.”

“You’ve already helped me so much. Go lie down, it’s almost done.”

“No, I want to sleep with you. Keep working, I can wait,”

Karnravee yawned and shook her head slightly, watching Oranate work.

A few minutes later, after many nights of hard work and little sleep, the project was finally completed on time. The last step was the meeting with the client scheduled for the next afternoon.

“Can I come with you?”

Karnravee asked after lying down on the soft bed.

“Then Jai will probably break my neck.”

“Whatever team it is, it’s still work for the company, right? Honestly, I don’t understand why you have to compete with each other.”

“There are many reasons. Sometimes clients specifically request certain people to do the work. Those people want their teams to get more projects because that means recognition, bonuses, and a lot of other benefits. You’ll understand it eventually.”

Karnravee moved closer and hugged her arm.

“Go to sleep, don’t think about it anymore. I’m sure the client will love your work. If you succeed, I’ll give you a reward.”

“What reward?”

“I won’t tell you.”

Oranate narrowed her eyes.

“Don’t tell me…”

“Stop! Don’t make a fuss. Go to sleep.”

The short, playful conversation ended just like that. Instead of feeling cramped or uncomfortable, both of them felt warmth. They slept peacefully in each other's arms.

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After a break for lunch, there was still some time left, so Karnravee secretly browsed the internet, looking for beautiful places like hills, streams, and forests. She wanted to find a place they could visit together if they had time off.

Throughout the afternoon, Karnravee couldn’t focus on work. She was fixated on her phone, waiting for good news from Oranate. As the time passed until 5 PM, there was still no sign that Oranate would contact her.

*Could it be that it didn’t work out?*

Feeling anxious, Karnravee grabbed her phone and rushed to the other side of the building. The receptionist outside the office told her that Oranate hadn’t come back yet and hadn’t called to update her. Karnravee asked to wait in the office.

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“No work to do?”

A cheerful voice greeted her, and a smile appeared from across the room.

“I was just worried. With you smiling like that, it must have worked out, huh?”

Oranate closed the door and drew the curtains before walking straight over, winking.

“At this point, of course.”

“You show-off.”

Karnravee felt both annoyed and happy for her. She got up from her chair and pulled Oranate to sit down instead.

“Once this work is done, let’s go on a trip.”

“A trip? Where to?”

“I don’t know yet. Do you have any places to recommend? I haven’t been anywhere before,”

Karnravee said, her face turning a little sad at the thought of lost time.

“What kind of place do you want to go to? The beach, the mountains, or abroad?”

Karnravee smiled brightly and showed a few places. Oranate could tell that Karnravee already had an idea of what kind of place she wanted to visit.

“You’ve got a big project too, right? Also, you’ve just started working, so you don’t even have any vacation yet.”

Karnravee hadn’t thought about that. Her smile faded, and she looked down at the floor.

“Alright, I’ll take you. Just wait a little longer,”

Oranate said, unable to resist feeling sorry for her when she saw her disappointed face. She pinched Karnravee's cheek and playfully twisted it.

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*Knock, knock, knock.*

Oranate turned her head towards the door as she heard a knock.

“Congratulations,”

A sexy, beautiful woman entered with a smile. A villainess!

“So, you’ve been hiding here all along!”

The beautiful woman was the head of the team Karnravee worked for. However, the reason for her visit wasn’t to take her team member back. She walked up and stopped in front of the desk.

“Is there something I can help you with?”

Oranate leaned back in her chair, arms crossed, observing.

“Next week, I need to use the big studio.”

“Well, why didn’t you book it earlier? I checked earlier at noon, and it was available.”

“I was going to book it today, but you beat me to it.”

“Jai, you’re the team leader after all. But how could you say that? After working here for so long, haven’t you learned to be more careful? If I had known it wasn’t available, I would have told the client to move to another day. Coming here and saying this now, does that make sense?”

"Sai!"

Karnravee retreated to stand in the corner of the room, feeling a little shiver down her spine, afraid that she would get hit by a stray bullet. The two tigers stared at each other, as if there were tiny sparks coming out of their eyes.

“Go back and solve the problem yourself.”

If she had talked things out nicely from the beginning, Oranate might have agreed to step aside.

“Are you sure? You really want to do this, right? If the customer is not satisfied, it’s true that I might get charged and not get the job, but the one who will really suffer the consequences isn’t me, but rather… your company.”

The young woman smirked. This wasn’t the first time this kind of problem had occurred, and she often used this trick.

Oranate smiled faintly at the corner of her mouth. This wasn’t the first time this kind of issue had happened, and she often used this kind of tactic.

Oranate sighed, clearly frustrated. She knew well how much she loved and cherished the company, but this time, she wasn’t going to give in so easily like before.

“If you accept my terms, I’ll let you have it this time. But let me make it clear: this will be the last time.”

“Terms? What terms?”

“I’ll take Ran on a trip,”

Oranate leaned her arms on the table, a sly grin on her face.

“No matter when or where we go, you can’t have any problems with it. Agreed?”

Karnravee hesitated, not expecting Oranate to lay down such conditions. Even the team leader was confused by the sibling-like bond between the two. It was rare to see family members get along like this.

“Fine, take her to whatever place you want, even if it’s to kill her and steal her inheritance.”

“Hey, that's harsh! Why would you say something like that?”

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Oranate took the team out for a small celebration at a karaoke restaurant to celebrate their victory over the competitors. Everyone complained that working with the previous leader was uncomfortable and unhappy, with no fun at all.

When Oranate returned as the new team leader, it felt like an angel had come to help, giving them the motivation to work again.

"How can we shoot if you let Jay use the studio like this?"

"That’s not a problem. I invested with a friend to open a studio not far from the company. I’ll send you the location. It’s as big as the one at the company. We can go check it out tomorrow."

In front of Oranate, there was no alcohol, just water and orange juice, used for toasts when someone asked.

"Boss, drinking only orange juice won’t be fun. It has to be this!"

The male employee, slightly drunk, poured a new glass of beer and handed it to the team leader.

"No, just drink it," Oranate said.

"Come on, since we’re here. Just one glass, please."

The "one glass" was a large glass filled to the top. The weak drinkers hesitated, unsure how to refuse, as the team cheered loudly like at a soccer game.

"Okay, okay. Just one glass,"

Oranate agreed.

"Yes/Okay!"

Everyone cheered in unison.

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Meanwhile, Karnravee was still focused on finding a tourist spot. She was so excited that she accidentally mentioned it to her father and older brother during dinner. When her brother asked to go with her, she said no.

After dinner, she quickly went upstairs to shower and change. She lay face down on the bed, playing with her phone, and fell asleep without realizing it.

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Hours later, Karnravee began to feel out of breath. She groggily turned onto her back and looked toward the end of the bed, half ready to fall asleep again. The faint scent of soap filled her nose, and she inhaled deeply, barely opening her eyes. Someone was standing at the foot of the bed.

"Are you back?"

She was lying upside down and couldn’t see clearly, so she sat up and turned to look.

The person smiled sweetly in reply and crawled onto the bed, causing Karnravee to lie flat.

"Are you drunk?"

She asked, now fully awake. She noticed the person on top of her was wearing a blue bathrobe and could guess she weren’t wearing anything underneath.

"I'm not drunk,"

The other person said, resting her chin on Karnravee's neck, gently rubbing it.

Karnravee's face turned hot, and her body felt flushed, just like that day.

"Sai..."

Karnravee's voice called softly. The nightgown she was wearing was a spaghetti strap top and a short skirt above the knee.

Her slender hands stroked her thighs to the hem of the skirt slowly, inserting herself between her legs. Karnravee's body was flat on her face.

"Next time, if I feel horny, I'll give you beer to drink."

The knot of the rope was yanked gently, ripping open the robe and caressing her round shoulders. She didn't give in either, pulling the hem of her skirt up high above her waist, teasing her sensitive spot, leaning down to grab her neck, moving down to kiss and nibble her breasts.

When the lips touched her skin, her body almost melted. She sat up and took off her nightgown, leaving it off her body, followed by her robe. Her love juices overflowed until she felt the wetness in her lower abdomen.

Just the touch of the sensitive spots from the outside made her sensitive and tingling all the way to her heart.

"Play some music for me."

She whispered, nibbling her earlobe.

Karntravee didn't hesitate, reaching out to grab her phone to play some fun music, the rhythm of which made her sway her hips. Oranate liked it quite a bit. Kissing her cheek as a reward.

"How much longer will you make me fall for you?"

Kissing her shoulder down to her upper arm, not wanting to lose to her anymore. This much is enough to make me fall for her so much I can barely lift my head.

Oranate smiled faintly, pushing Karnravee to lie down again, shaking her hips to the rhythm of the music. Her long hair was loose and flowing, alluring and inviting to look at. Oranate couldn't take her eyes off her for even a second.

Her chest trembled with the rhythm of love. Seeing this, she couldn't help herself. She reached out to touch, squeeze, and tease her lotus bud. She couldn't help but moan softly.

"Sai!"

Happiness was starting to ripen. She accidentally squeezed her chest even harder. She dug her heels into the bed. Just a little bit more and the tightness would be released.

But... she stopped halfway.

"Why did you stop?"

Karnravee asked, breathing heavily.

"You're so impatient."

The corner of her mouth smirked. Her eyes shone like a fierce tiger. She leaned down to kiss her skin. Her warm tongue went down. Invading the reserved area, creating a symbol to claim it as her own area.

“Ahh,”

Karntravee blushed. While Oranate's tongue was teasing her clitoris, she secretly rubbed her clit against his shin, enjoying herself. She couldn’t help but moan.

At this time, Oranate was both hot and playful, teasing Karnravee so well that she could not take it anymore and her body was shaking.

“Ahh....ahh..ahh.”

She looked over, her eyes moist and her mouth smiling, grinding her clitoris against her shin, moaning in a satisfied voice.

“Ran...ahh....ahh..ahh.”

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Their love scene ended within two songs. Both lay down on their backs, their heads turned in opposite directions.

"You’ve started this twice now,"

Oranate glanced over and noticed that Karnravee wasn’t looking at her face.

"What are you looking at?"

She asked, nudging her thigh.

"Looking at..."

Karnravee smirked, got up, gently touched her, and crawled on top of her, resting her chin on her hand, looking at her face.

"You're all red."

"What’s red?"

"Do you really want me to say it?"

She pushed her face away, too tired to argue, and lay still to rest.

"Why do you always take your team out so often? The work isn’t even finished yet,"

She teased, brushing away sweat from her hairline, stroking her forehead, and leaning down to kiss her.

"Working people spend most of their time at work. Think about it—if the workplace is toxic and stressful, how can they handle it? They’ll lose their mental health. Being strict with employees is good, but we can handle things in many ways. When it’s time to be a boss, be a boss. When it’s time to relax, relax. It’s better to be loved than hated. If the work environment is good, the results will naturally be good."

Karnravee smiled gently.

"No wonder everyone seems to like you so much."

"Of course, everyone loves me."

"Really?"

Kantravee’s mischievous gaze lingered, and the music kept playing in the background. "One more time?"

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After resting, Karntravee began to show more desire, whispering sweetly and nibbling on Oranate's ear. Oranate's lost herself as their bodies pressed together. She moaned softly, trying to respond.

"Don’t forget about our trip,"

Oranate reminded.

"Yeah, I know where to take you, but for now....take me to heaven first."

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# Chapter 17: My Dad's Niece, I Want You

The relationship between them was simple. It wasn't overly romantic or dramatic, but there was an aura of happiness that spread around them. People could feel the change. It was common to see them traveling to work together and coming home together.

This unusual behavior went unnoticed by most people, except for one...

"Tell me everything! I just told you to try opening up and talk. How did things escalate so quickly?"

"Speak quietly,"

Oranate quickly got up to lock the door, closed the curtains, and pulled her friend to sit in the corner to talk.

Allie had just returned from abroad and called to catch up. As usual,

Oranate needed advice, so she shared the details of her relationship with Karntravee. After hearing everything, Allie quickly came to visit at the office with a bunch of questions.

"How did it get to that point?"

"I don't know. It just happened on its own."

Her friend's response made her facepalm.

"You were forcing yourself, weren't you? Now look at you, it all broke down. If you had accepted your feelings from the start, this wouldn't have happened. Both of you are the same."

Allie, who was of mixed descent, couldn't help but comment. She had suggested that Oranate open up and go with her feelings instead of resisting them. But now, her friend had let things go too far. When asked how sure Oranate was about the relationship, she couldn't answer either.

"You know, with these things, it takes time. But she's changed a lot. We're both trying to adjust,"

Oranate thought about Karntravee's radiant face and smiled softly.

She looked genuinely happy. Allie noticed this change in her. It had been a long time since she had seen her friend's eyes so bright.

"So, you're officially together now?"

"I don't know... How should I put it? I'm not sure myself."

"Are you serious?"

Allie clutched her temples again.

"Even though things have gone too far, we should talk about it. You need to understand what your relationship is now."

"Do you want me to ask her if we're together?"

Oranate shuddered at the thought, but even just having a calm conversation without arguing was something she wasn't used to. Especially when Karntravee acted all cute like a child-it made things even harder for her.

"See, you've been fighting for years, and suddenly like each other. It takes some time to adjust. But when I walked past that room a while ago, your stubborn girl seemed quite mature when she was working. It looked completely different now." "Yeah, I didn't expect it either,"

Oranate responded.

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During lunch break, Karntravee went out to meet a client and hadn't returned to the office yet. So the two friends decided to go out for lunch at the mall and then walked around shopping for clothes to help with digestion.

"Allie, I want to stop by and check out the mattresses,"

Oranate said, spotting a store that sold mattresses and home décor. It reminded her of Karntravee.

She preferred staying at her condo rather than going home, and Karntravee always followed her there. The small old mattress often made them wake up with sore backs.

"Ha! I kept telling you to change the mattress for so long, but you didn't. Now you suddenly want to change it?"

Allie teased. This had been an ongoing issue because Allie used to stay over often, but Oranate never paid attention to her advice.

"Don't make me say too much. The importance is different."

"Yeah, I know! You don't have to tell me. It's annoying!"

Allie laughed.

The new mattress, a king-size one, was replaced within a few hours, so quickly that Allie couldn't help but tease her several times.

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"Why change the mattress?"

Karntravee asked, jumping on the bed and rolling around to try it out.

"Because someone likes to sleep squished up, makes my back hurt, and I can't even move."

"Who?"

Karntravee asked with a playful innocent look.

"The dog around here,"

Oranate replied, teasing her.

Karntravee smiled widely and hugged her, planting a big kiss on her cheek.

"Want to shower together?"

"I'm too lazy. You go first,"

Oranate replied.

"Come on, let's go. I'll wash you."

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During the weekend, Oranate planned to take Karntravee on the trip she had promised. But in the meantime, she needed to catch up on her work so she wouldn't have to deal with work calls unless necessary.

She had just gotten her nails done less than two weeks ago, and Karntravee was admiring them. Karntravee loved doing her nails and would always ask her friends to go with her whenever they had free time.

"Do you have nail polish remover?"

Karntravee asked.

"What are you going to do with this?"

She asked while carrying a pile of work and placing it on the glass table.

"How do you clean your nails?"

"Didn't you just do it? It hasn't come off yet, so why should you wash it?"

"Because I want to wash it. Can I borrow it? I also need the nail clipper."

Oranate began to suspect after hearing the last sentence. She turned around and squinted.

"What are you planning to do?"

"Nothing, I haven't thought of anything yet. It's you who's thinking something,"

She replied with a teasing wink and a mischievous look.

Although Oranate could guess, she still brought it over. She sat with her arms crossed and legs crossed, watching until her nails were clean and spotless. She turned back and smiled slyly.

Oranate smirked at the corner of her mouth as her companion sat beside her, rubbing her jawline, amused inside.

"I know what you're thinking, but unfortunately, I'm stuck at a red light today."

""What? It's a red light?"

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The next morning was bright and cheerful. Oranate smiled and greeted her coworkers along the way, unlike Karnravee, who had a serious look but was actually upset since last night.

Instead of saying a word each other, look, there's nothing left.

When she saw her own nails, she felt annoyed. If only she had said something, she might not have washed away that beauty nail. One day, she'd get even.

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A tall, well-dressed man with good looks was walking back and forth in front of the elevator. Even though the elevator doors had opened and closed several times, he still hadn't gotten on. Oranate and Karnravee were talking along the way, and only she noticed something odd. She grabbed the arm of the person next to her and stopped.

"What's wrong?"

"I want to drink coffee."

"Then go up first. I'll buy it for you."

"It's okay. I'll go with you."

Once they agreed, they walked back together, while the man stayed standing, watching the clock and pacing in front of the elevator.

There was one thing Oranate had completely forgotten. When Karnravee was doing an internship at the company, that man had tried to get close to her. She only remembered when she saw him again.

"Let's sit here for a bit. I'm too lazy to walk,"

She said before heading straight to sit at the table.

Kanthavee could only look after her in confusion. She walked over to order a drink before following and sitting down next to her.

"Is something wrong?"

"Not at all, why? Can't I be lazy sometimes?"

She smiled, not suspecting anything.

This coffee shop is located next to the company and was opened to sell drinks to employees at prices lower than those at local markets. The taste is just as good as popular brands.

Most of the employees often stop by for a drink before heading to work. The two of them were seen sitting and drinking coffee inside the shop, casually waving at each other.

It took almost half an hour before she finally agreed to leave the shop, and everything went as she had expected. The young man hadn't gone anywhere.

"Hi, Art. Did you just got here?"

Karnravee greeted him cheerfully.

"Yes, just arrived. Wait a moment, I'll press the elevator button for you," The young man lied smoothly.

Oranate couldn't help but chuckle inwardly. He had been standing there for so long and then said he just got here.

Karnkan had two secretaries, and Komsak was one of them. When it came to work, the young man was considered Karnkan's favorite. He had liked Karnravee from the first time they met, gradually getting closer and becoming friends with her. However, she had no idea that the young man had special feelings for her.

The three of them entered the same elevator. Oranate stood silently listening to them talk, occasionally glancing at the young man. They had known each other for a long time, but she didn't really know who the young man truly was.

Even if he was a good person, she wouldn't let him get too close to Karnravee.

"Don't you want to consider a position in management?"

The young man asked.

"I could teach you, there are many positions that might suit you, Ran."

"Maybe later. I'm more interested in the work I'm doing now."

*Ding!*

The elevator door chime sounded when it reached the floor where Oranate and Karnravee worked. It was as if signaling that the young man's time had ended. He watched the two women exit the elevator, waving as the doors closed.

"Do you see him often?"

"Who...Art?"

"Yeah."

"Quite often. We just run into each other while walking around."

Oranate made a face and looked up.

"Do you think it's true what they say, that women are very manipulative?"

"What's wrong with you? Why are you suddenly talking about this?"

She smiled slowly before continuing,

"I guess so..."

"And do you think men have it?"

"Manipulative men, you mean?"

She laughed out loud, feeling strange.

"I don't think it has anything to do with gender. It probably depends more on the person."

"Do you think you can see it?"

"I don't know about that. What about you?"

"I think I already see one person."

Months ago, Oranate happened to overhear Komsak talking to his friend about Karnravee, and how he wanted to be promoted from a secretary to maybe becoming a son-in-law or something along those lines.

When she heard it, she thought it was funny. If he could handle Karnravee, good for him. But today, her feelings had changed. Now, when she heard

Karnravee speak with the young man, she is more polite than she thought.

Karnravee walked Oranate to her office. This had been happening for several days, and everyone was starting to get used to it.

"Make sure you clear your work, okay?"

"Got it. But don't back out when the time comes."

"I won't back out. Go to work now."

"Can I get some encouragement?"

Oranate hugged her waist and pinched her cheek.

"No..."

She pretended to turn her face away, ignoring her.

"Then I'll kiss you instead,"

She said, and proceeded to kiss both her cheeks multiple times. The more she resisted, the more she enjoyed teasing her.

"Enough. Your lipstick will get on my cheek."

"It's too late,"

She smiled widely, gently using a tissue to wipe off the lipstick marks.

"I was thinking of going to see Dad in his office. Do you have any documents to send with me?"

"Why are you going to see him?"

"I haven't been home for days, so I thought I should show my face. Otherwise, I might get cut from the inheritance group."

"You're just talking."

It was good that Karnravee thought about his father, but that also meant he'd have to meet someone else too.

"By now, Uncle has probably arrived. Go ahead."

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At the door of the company president's office, the male and female secretaries were sitting on either side. As soon as they saw Karnravee walk over, both of them quickly stood up and smiled warmly to greet her, especially the young man, who seemed particularly happy.

"Are you here to see your father?"

"Yes, I'm not sure if Dad has arrived yet."

"You speak as if you don't live in the same house,"

The female secretary said slowly, not thinking much of it.

"Well, something like that,"

Karnravee replied.

The young man's smile faded as his gaze caught something red on Karnravee neck.

"Excuse me, but there seems to be something on your neck,"

He said, pointing to the spot before handing her a tissue.

Karnravee looked surprised, and when she saw what was on the tissue, she immediately understood.

"You crazy girl, did you get lipstick on my neck?"

She muttered to herself, smiling.

Before they went their separate ways, Oranate had purposely kissed Karnravee on the neck, leaving a lipstick mark in a spot where the young man would clearly see it.

The lipstick on her lips was a different color from the one on her neck. Although the young man didn't understand right away, he felt uneasy about it.

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On the top floor, the morning view of the city wasn't all that impressive. Karnkan stood sipping his coffee, his eyes off the tiny cars on the streets, gazing up at the white clouds. The sky was clear and bright, with golden sunlight shining down on the ground.

"What are you looking at?"

His daughter asked, hugging his waist.

Karnkan set his coffee cup on the table and wrapped his arm around her shoulders, offering a faint smile.

"You haven't been home lately."

His daughter playfully pouted and looked away.

"I wasn't out anywhere."

His hand gently stroked her hair, and he smiled. Even though she didn't speak, her actions made both her father and older brother notice. Today, Karnravee was ready to tell her father everything.

"Dad, you probably know about me and Sai, right?"

Karnkan nodded, meeting her gaze with a soft smile.

"So, would it be okay if I... asked your beloved niece to be my girlfriend?"

Karnravee looked at her father with determination, her arms still around his waist as she leaned on his chest like she used to when she was little.

"Sure, if she agrees, take good care of her,"

Karnkan replied without a second thought.

His daughter smiled widely, planting a big kiss on his cheek. "Do you think others will understand? Will they criticize me?"

Karnkan smiled and shook his head.

"No one has the right to criticize my child. If I don't say anything, it means it's okay. If you're sure about it, then go ahead and be happy. I give my permission. Your uncle probably won't mind either. Now, he's probably been reborn."

The two of them chuckled together. Since Karnravee had opened up and talked to him directly, Karnkan took the opportunity to tell her something. He reached into his pants pocket and pulled out a small purple velvet box, handing it to her.

"What is it?"

"Your mom sent this for you. It's a gift for when you graduated."

Karnravee's eyes grew warm. Karnkan understood how his daughter was feeling and gently stroked her hair to comfort her.

"Your mom was forced by your grandma and grandpa since she was a child. She didn't even have the right to choose her own partner. The repression and all of that might have led her to make some mistakes. I've made mistakes too. If one day your mom comes back and asks for a chance, I hope you'll give her that chance."

Tears welled up in Karnravee's eyes as they ran down her cheeks. She took the purple velvet box and opened it to reveal beautiful, intricately designed bracelets. There were two of them, both engraved with her name.

"I don't care about the past anymore, Dad. I won't be angry or hate her anymore. I've made mistakes too. But Mom will always be my mom. I still love her just the same."

The tears she shed were tears of happiness.

"Now, there's someone else I love too, and I won't make the same mistakes again."

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# Chapter : Epilogue

*'Where is she? I’ve called, but she’s not answering.'*

All day long, Oranate and Karnravee hadn’t seen each other. Both were busy with their work. That morning, they had planned to have dinner together at a restaurant, but Oranate was caught up with work and couldn’t leave until nightfall. She tried to contact Karnravee, but she didn’t answer.

The traffic was heavy, with cars moving only little by little. It frustrated her even more. Ahead, blinking lights signaled an accident in the area, causing further congestion. As her car moved slowly forward, she kept trying to call Karnravee without giving up.

*'If I see you, I'll knock you on the head.'*

She gave up and threw her phone onto the passenger seat.

Up ahead, there had been an accident involving a car and a motorcycle. The injured had already been taken to the hospital, leaving the damaged vehicles on the roadside.

Her car was just about to pass the scene when she spotted another car parked by the side of the road, its driver’s side headlight shattered. Her heart nearly stopped when she saw the license plate.

"Ran!"

A whistle blew sharply as her car stopped abruptly. An officer waved at her, signaling her to move, but she didn’t seem to hear anything anymore.

"Ma’am, you can’t park here!"

Startled out of her daze, Oranate blinked back tears and gathered herself. She asked the officer which hospital the injured person had been taken to and rushed there immediately. She wasn’t even aware of how long it took. The next thing she knew, she was running toward the emergency room, as directed by a nurse.

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“Are you done with the call yet?”

“Just a second, I haven’t even started dialing.”

“But you’ve been standing here forever!”

“I can’t remember the number. Give me a moment!”

The little boy scratched his head while clutching coins in his sweaty hands. Meanwhile, the older girl tapped her head in frustration, inserting coins into the payphone but failing to dial the full ten digits because she couldn’t remember.

“If you’re not going to call, who are you trying to reach? Let me help,”

The older girl offered, seeing the younger one’s struggle. She dialed the number for him and then returned to the emergency room.

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Relatives of the injured started arriving at the hospital after hearing the news.

Karnravee was one of those involved in the accident, but she wasn’t hurt at all. Only her car was damaged because the motorcycle, hit by another car, ended up colliding with her vehicle.

While walking through the hospital, Karnravee anxiously wondered how to contact Oranate. Then, she spotted a woman sitting in front of the emergency room, her face buried in her hands. Her outfit was so familiar that she rushed over to check.

"Sai? How did you get here?"

Oranate looked up, eyes wide, and immediately threw herself into her arms. Her whole body was trembling, and Karnravee could feel it.

"Are you okay? Are you hurt anywhere?"

She asked, turning her around to check for injuries.

"Calm down, Sai. I’m fine. I’m not hurt at all,"

# Chapter : SPECIAL

Orange flames swayed, hanging from tree branches. The chirping of crickets filled the air. The wind gently swayed the treetops, playing with the breeze. Karnravee sat, gazing thoughtfully at the world, lost in memories of the past.

Today, her heart felt full. She loved and was loved in return. Someone’s hands held hers, walking forward together, never leaving her to face the world alone anymore.

Even in bad times, there’s always something good hidden within.

As the evening grew colder, so did the water in the tank. There was no shower, no water heater. Karnravee used a bowl to pour water over herself, humming a tune. Even though the water was freezing, she didn’t mind, her thoughts solely on Oranate. She lathered soap all over her body, and before leaving the bathroom, she playfully sniffed her arm and smiled brightly, still humming as she stepped out.

"Eh? Where did she go?"

The room was empty, her lover nowhere in sight. She quickly grabbed some clothes and dressed hurriedly, applying lotion to her face and body.

Outside, Oranate stood by the balcony railing, gazing at the sky and treetops. As soon as Karnravee opened the door, she snuck up and hugged her from behind.

“Ah! You scared me!”

Karnravee laughed mischievously.

“What are you doing here? The mosquitoes will bite you!”

“I just thought it felt nice out here. Want to go for a walk downstairs?”

“No, I’d rather play on the bed.”

Oranate rolled her eyes.

“You’re so obsessed.”

“Well, you never let me.”

“How could I? I was on my period.”

“But it’s over now, isn’t it?”

Karnravee buried her face in Oranate's neck and kissed her.

Oranate giggled, pulling her neck away from the ticklish kisses. She turned to face Karnravee, who was still holding her around the waist.

“It’s only 7 PM. Let’s go sit outside first,”

She whispered sweetly.

The two walked hand in hand downstairs. They took off their shoes and waded through the water to sit on a swing, facing opposite directions.

“The water’s so cold,”

One said as they gently splashed their feet in the stream.

Oranate smiled softly, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. She leaned back against the swing’s rope, looking at Karnravee with a clear gaze.

“At night, it feels kind of eerie, doesn’t it? The houses are so far apart.

Aren’t you scared?”

Karnravee leaned back too, lightly stroking Oranate's thigh.

“Scared of what? Ghosts?”

“Yeah. Are you scared of ghosts?”

“No, I’ve seen one before.” Karnravee's eyes widened.

“Really? What kind of ghost?”

Oranate grinned mischievously, leaning in closer to whisper, “A blanket ghost.”

Karnravee let out a groan, realizing she’d been teased.

“You’re so annoying! Watch out tonight—you might get haunted by the blanket ghost all night long.”

“Oh, so scary!”

Oranate replied, her tone teasing.

The challenge in her voice made Karnravee smirk. She squeezed her thigh gently, letting her fingers slide slightly into the hem of her shorts.

“Ran, don’t do anything inappropriate.”

“It’s just the two of us. No one will see.”

“Stop it.”

Oranate grabbed her mischievous hand, holding it tightly. But she still couldn’t escape her playful, lingering gaze. She turned her head, leaning it against her shoulder to avoid her eyes. “I told my dad about us, you know.”

“Really? What did your dad say?”

“He asked if we’re planning to get married. He said he’d arrange the wedding.”

Karnravee spoke casually, joking.

“My dowry is expensive. Can you afford it?”

“How much do you want? My dad’s ready to spend big.”

“Wow, really?”

“Of course! My dad’s the elder on my side and yours. Think about it—if my dad brings the dowry, he’ll also receive it. It’s like gold being moved from one side to the other. He could bring everything from his vault if needed!” Karnravee bragged with a grin.

Oranate couldn’t help but laugh at her silly talk. Right now, anything that came out of Karnravee's mouth seemed charming to her.

“Let’s go inside. It’s starting to get cold.”

“Alright, let’s go!”

Karnravee eagerly grabbed Oranate's hand, leading her to put on her shoes and head back inside. She didn’t bother hiding her excitement. They locked the doors and windows tightly behind them.

One thing that couldn’t be missed was the chilled items in the fridge.

“Beer?”

Oranate looked puzzled. She distinctly remembered only taking fruit juice, soda, and some snacks.

“Just a couple of cold beers to help us sleep better,”

Karnravee said sheepishly, flashing a bright smile as he prepared to open a bottle.

Oranate quickly grabbed it and placed it back in the fridge.

“Go set up the mosquito net.”

“Why?”

“Go set it up.”

In the middle of the forest, small insects, especially mosquitoes, could be just as dangerous as larger animals, carrying diseases if not careful.

With a grumpy face, Karnravee climbed onto the bed, unhooked the mosquito net from above, and carefully draped it around the bed, ensuring everything was secure.

Oranate smirked at the corner of her mouth, turned off the light, and let her eyes adjust to the darkness before making her way to the bed.

She pulled aside the mosquito net and pounced on Karnravee, who was caught off guard and ended up lying flat on the bed. Both hands were pinned above her head.

“Again?”

Karnravee complained, wriggling to free herself.

“I wanted to start for once! I even brought beer!” “It doesn’t matter who starts; it’ll end the same anyway,”

Oranate laughed and leaned in to whisper by her ear.

“I don’t need beer to feel in the mood. And right now, I’m definitely in the mood.”

Karnravee whined, trying to push Oranate off and flip her down instead. But she couldn’t succeed as she pressed her weight onto her.

The more she struggled, the more she enjoyed it, making her even more aroused. She kissed her neck, moving up to nibble on her ear, and she gradually stilled.

Through the dim light, they could see each other clearly. Oranate's soft, loving gaze captivated her, making it impossible to look away. She smiled sweetly and placed a gentle kiss on her eyelids.

As she closed her eyes, her hands roamed her body, her nose taking in her faint scent. Her mind wandered, her imagination fueling her emotions, intensifying her desires.

“Sometimes, feeling can be more powerful than seeing, don’t you think?”

“Sai…”

Karnravee bit her lip and slid her hand into her shirt, reaching around to unhook her bra.

“You’re driving me crazy again.”

“Not yet,”

Oranate replied with a smile. She sat up straight, unbuttoned her clothes, and tossed them aside without hesitation before lying back down.

Karnravee closed her eyes and saw her seductive gaze looking at her. The corners of her mouth curved into a challenging smile. Her patience ran out at that moment.

She quickly took off her clothes and climbed up on top of her. The area that was both wet with love juices, they could feel each other.

"You're so naughty."

"I'll take it as a compliment."

Karnravee squeezed and kneaded her gently, smiling widely with satisfaction.

"I can do anything, right?"

Karnravee buried her face in her chest, whispering hoarsely, grinding her points together.

"I never forbid you. Do whatever you want."

"Why wouldn't I?"

"At that time, I had my period."

Karnravee eyes were just as sweet now, giving her a passionate kiss, moving her body rhythmically. The air that was once cool and comfortable began to heat up with the fire of love. Her slim waist began to sway more skillfully from the first time they made love.

Even though the mood was getting more intense Karnravee still did not forget what she had intended to do. She lifted herself up a little, smoothed her forehead to wipe away the sweat for her, and moved the tip of her index finger to tease her breast.

"Mmm!"

The two pairs of eyes stared at each other, sweetly filled with love. She licked her lips when the tip of her index finger traveled, going down to her lower abdomen. Her lips slightly opened when the tip of her index finger occupied her private area.

"Ahh!"

The love juice flowed out continuously. The tip of her middle finger slowly inserted into the narrow space, while she held it and pushed it inside, through the mouth of the cave until it reached the base of her finger.

"Ahh!"

Ornate hissed, letting her continue to do it herself.

"Inside is soft, slippery, and very narrow. Oh! It's like it's squeezing my finger too."

"You don't have to explain it."

"Oh really?"

Karnravee grinned widely.

After exploring the inside to her heart’s content, she slowly pushed her finger in and out. But how could she let herself be the only one being penetrated?

"Ah!"

Karnravee’s body bent. Just the tip of her finger touched her clitoris. Her body trembled. She couldn’t breathe. Her face was red and she looked up at her.

"It's only felt pain for a moment, so... bear with it."

"Ah! Aaah, Sai."

The slender fingers disappeared into the narrow gap until the base. Kantrawee screamed, temporarily stopping her activity, burying her face into her chest. The pain lasted only a split second. The rest was pure pleasure.

“Now you know what it feels like, right?”

She looked up. The slender fingers started moving in and out again. She smiled faintly, moving her fingers in rhythm. From soft, she gradually increased the speed.

The moans competed with the sound of the impact. The closer they got to the finish line, the more they sped up at each other without stopping.

Finally, they and she reached their dreamland, releasing happiness together. It was a special moment that would be hard to forget.

“Does it hurt?”

Ornate leaned down and kissed part of her body lightly, afraid that she would accidentally do it too hard.

“It doesn’t hurt. I am so happy now. I spent so much time cutting and cleaning my nails.”

“Don’t tease me. I’m willing to give up my beautiful nails for you.”

“Oh really? For me or for yourself?”

"The one who's happy is you, so it has to be for you. Or are you not happy?"

She placed her forehead on the same spot, the tips of their nose lightly touching.

“Just once is enough. Let’s go take a shower. The water stained everything.”

“What kind of water?”

“Still asking?”

Karnravee grinned widely.

“What if it comes out again while we’re taking a shower?”

“We’ll continue in the bathroom.”

“Okay, let’s go take a shower.”

The more they argued, the more they got along. They grabbed towels and walked into the bathroom. There was the sound of them talking and giggling the whole time.

Their happiness was everywhere. As long as they had each other, that was the greatest happiness.

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