# 00Author's Notes

Every time I write an introduction, I get excited. This time it’s the turn of **“Intuorn”,** who has transformed from a kitten in the story **“Rhythm: You Are the Beat of My Heart”** into a full-fledged heroine with a new set of challenges that those around her to face.

However, this time she has grown up and is determined to become a successful businesswoman. But, you know, having money alone is not enough. She must prove her skills to her father, showing that she is not just talk, but can also deliver results.

To make things even easier for Intuorn, her father has sent **“Arun Berkfah,”** a sweet-faced secretary who has never smiled at her despite being a professional. Intuorn’s desire to succeed will drive her to try to make Arun smile. Will she success? Let’s root for her!

I hope this novel brings happiness to everyone as we navigate this crisis.

***With love,***

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## CHAO PLANOY

Note:

Book Title : **In's Love**

By : **CHAO PLANOY**

All books in this account by Chao Planoy...cover and title changed to avoid being banned.

# 00.Introduction

I... am **Intuorn**.

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A woman who was born with everything one could wish for, be it looks, status, or education. I speak English like a native, it's as I've done enough good deeds in ten lifetimes to deserve this. Everyone envies the fortune I was born into, as if I came into this world with a silver spoon in my mouth. I could live without working and still have money to spend, but I want to be a woman so capable that no one can dismiss me as just another rich girl who can't do anything.

I used to think that I could just marry someone rich and that would be the end of my story. But now, I've completely transformed. I studied fashion design abroad because I plan to create my own handbag brand. I want to be a business owner and prove those who didn't choose me wrong.

Yes... now I excel at everything. I’m a race car driver and I’m learning how to be an executive, but… there’s still one thing I can’t deal with, and that’s…

"Why do I have to get a flat tire on a bridge… and why is this driver stopping to look at me?"

Right now, I’m holding my head in frustration because every time I hold the steering wheel, I can’t help but drive fast, especially since my closest subordinate Janpob said he checked everything in the car, so why did I suddenly get a flat tire, especially in the middle of a bridge where I can’t turn back? I can’t move forward either, everything seems to be stuck, turning someone as capable as me into an idiot.

"I’ve already called a tow truck.” She said.

I glance at the new secretary, my father had found for me, feeling irritate. She speak in a nasal tone, unfazed by the Thai heat, which only make me seem weaker.

"And when will they get here? It’s boiling! Don’t you feel anything?"

"I do, but complaining doesn’t help. The angrier I get, the hotter it feels."

Is she really giving me a lecture?! I opened my mouth, wanting to yell at her, but it didn’t look good, so I just stand there with my arms crosses. If she could remain calm, then I had to act indifferent too. I had to maintain my boss demeanor and stay above it all. I wouldn’t let this woman see me as a whiner, especially someone who looked like the person who stole my girlfriend… ***‘Renu’***.

However, it looked like we would have to wait a while. The UV rays are starting to burn my skin, making it darker. I used a handkerchief to wipe away the sweat and waved my hand to fan myself, but it didn’t help much.

"This is taking too long,” my impassive secretary said, almost to herself, before nodding as if she had made a decision.

“So while we wait, I’ll deal with the immediate problem. If you'll excuse me, I am going to change my pants in the car.”

"Pants?"

Then the petite girl pulled out a folded pair of sweatpants, unfolding them before disappearing into my cute little mini-car. The entire vehicle shake a little before she jumps back out in a tight white shirt and sporty sweatpants, looking like she's ready to be the provincial volleyball champion, which make me a little surprise.

*What kind of person carries sweatpants in their bag?!*

"Do you have a spare tire in your car?"

"I don’t know. Is there really one?"

"Let me see if I can find it. Can I have the keys?"

I handed them over, confused, while the secretary my father had sent rummaged around for the spare tire along with tools like a jack that I had no idea were hidden. A short while later, that little girl managed to mount the jack under the steering wheel, loosen the lug nuts, remove the old tire, and replace it with the spare while wiping the sweat from her forehead like a mechanic on a racetrack.

Finally, my car is back to its original state with the spare tire just as the tow truck arrived, like a cop in a Thai drama showing up just in time at the end.

"Ugh, they come right when I’m done changing the tire.” The little girl said, dusting off her hands nonchalantly.

“But it’s a good thing; you shouldn’t drive with a spare tire. You should have called Janpob to come pick you up so you wouldn’t have to suffer in the heat."

"Yes, you’re right…”

I looked at the secretary, who speak without caring, suddenly realizing. “You should have told me that from the beginning.”

"I didn’t dare to give my opinion too much. I was afraid you’d think I was showing off. Let’s get in the tow truck; it will get hot."

The beautiful secretary give me a small smile and walks over to the tow truck, inviting me to sit down first. I could only press my lips tightly together, staring at her. I really didn’t like the way she was pointing things out. She is exactly like Renu, she talks like her, she looks like her, but this one’s name is… **Arun Berkfah**.

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*I hated her!*

# 01. Arun Berkfah

## A person who longs for a dream, they will become the most like that. (André Georges Malraux)

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I arrived at the meeting place about forty minutes late, but fortunately today's appointment is not very formal because it's not a business matter. No, it may be part of the business, but flexible...it not something that could bankrupt the company or disappear from the stock market. It's more of a family matter, something like "a boat sinking in a swamp, costing millions."

Right now, I am sitting among relatives on both sides, both my own and those from a distant branch of the family, to the point where they can hardly be considered close blood relatives. And when I mention bloodlines, it certainly has something to do with reproduction and the continuation of descendants.

***‘Arranged Marriage’***

The relatives are chatting and laughing happily, like people wearing masks talking to each other, just discussing stories about their grandfather, how a piece of carpet and a pillow turned into a third or fourth generation millionaire. And yes… the last generation is me,

sitting with an oily face after waiting for a ride under the sun.

Before I come to sit here, I've to rush to the bathroom to redo my makeup because my mascara has turn into a Niagara Falls all over my face. To make matters worse, I’m still sitting here smelling my own sweat because of that secretary my father hired. If only she had told Jenpob to pick me up from the beginning, I wouldn’t have to stand here looking like a mudfish.

"By the way, how are you, Win? Did you come to see the work? Can you do it?"

My father asks warmly to my fiancé, who is sitting not far away. Mawin, dressed in a casual suit and a relaxed, unbuttoned white shirt, replied with a smile that seems warm and impressive.

"Yes, I can. At first, I didn’t quite understand, but after a while, everything fell into place."

"Make sure you teach In too. I’ll teach In about work as well.” My father take the opportunity to introduce me right away.

“I intent for her starting from scratch.” "It seems good."

I look at my older cousin and smile slightly. Of course, Mawin see it, but he didn’t say anything and continued to chat with the adults, knowing just what to say to impress them. I hadn’t seen him since elementary school.

We used to play together as kids. Mawin is about two years older than me and tends to keep to himself, often drawing and sitting alone in the park watching birds and trees, like a crazy person in a drama staring off into space. As for me, I was the one who played with Barbie dolls. We had nothing in common and I hated him.

***Because he’s my fiancé…***

It seems like ever since I came back to Thailand, there have been so many people for me to hate. From the secretary, who seems to know everything and acts a little too smart for her own good, to the fiancé who I have nothing in common with. Who else am I going to hate from now on? Oh, and my mom just warned me not to follow the political news, or I might end up hating the Prime Minister too.

"Mawin, take In to visit our hotel so she can learn about the job.” My father said.

"Yes.”

Mawin readily agreed and stand up to walk over to me, politely pulling out a chair. I show no sign of displeasure and following him out, because I am completely uncomfortable with the atmosphere at the dinner table. Do my parents really think that just taking a tour of the hotel will help me learn about the job?

"You’ve matured, In."

Then, my distant cousin starts talking to me after we get away from the elders. I walk beside him, crossing my arms and looking at him with a hint of disdain.

"You’ve grown up too."

I never called him ‘Phi’ because we weren’t that close; we didn’t play together enough as kids to use those terms. So we just referred to each other as ‘I’ and ‘you’, like Westerners. When we were younger, I thought he was kind of boring.

“Seemingly normal." I said.

"I’ve been normal for a long time. But you still have that pink side; it hasn’t changed, even though you’ve grown up."

"But you have changed! A guy who used to draw now runs a hotel? I thought you’d run away from home, backpack, and sit around in Tibet."

"I did all that, but in the end, I came back to run the family business. What do you think of adults pairing us off?"

"I think it’s old-fashioned. I hate you.” I said. "You’re so blunt.”

Mawin chuckles, seeming to appreciate my honesty. "Well, I don’t like you, but I don’t hate you either."

"But I don’t see you resisting the adults who try to guide us."

"We are heirs. What have we ever been able to resist? Besides, elders always have a broader view. Sometimes, we should just listen… I rebelled once and discovered how foolish I was."

The handsome guy speaks as if he's reflecting on his past, then he reaches into his pants pocket. I looked at him, starting to feel some interest.

"How did you rebel?" "This is the lobby."

Mawin points to the place we have just arrive. I smile, understanding immediately.

"You are quick to change the subject. So let's be honest. I don't want to get married."

"I don't want to get married either."

"Then you should tell your parents to cancel it."

"Why don't you do it? Why do you want me to do it alone?"

"I would, but if you do it too, it might work. Sleeping with relatives and close friends isn't exactly pleasant."

"What... What are you talking about?"

Mawin looked horrified by my bluntness. I noticed his ears had turned red as if they had been stung by the snow in the Korean winter.

“You are so prim and proper. Talking about these things and you feel embarrassed? Aren't you a man?”

I cross my arms and shrug as if it doesn't matter.

“I'm being blunt here. Let's get married; Can we really do this? I can't handle it."

"My parents say that after we get married, we'll eventually love each other."

"Naive, huh? No way. I'm not going to marry a relative. Besides, I don't plan on loving anyone. I've decided to stay single for the rest of my life."

## "You’re really afraid of love, huh? What have you been through?"

When he said that, I straightened up, feeling as if I had been insulted, but just as I was about to argue, I caught sight of Arun Berkfah sitting in the lobby, engrossed in her tablet. It served as a painful reminder of my last relationship, which I lost simply because I was too late, thanks to a woman who looked like the secretary my father had hired.

Afraid of love? No! I would never let Renu have any influence over my thoughts and feelings.

"Why should I go through trouble? I simply don’t want to get married. Modern women can live independently, and I will be one of them."

"The ideal woman of the time."

Mawin laughed as if he found this amusing, but it only irritated me more. He made me feel like a child trying to act like an adult, which was annoying!

"Don’t laugh! Show me some respect." "Okay, okay."

"What do you mean okay?"

Just as I was about to raise my voice, I spotted that competent secretary my father had sent to accompany me, sitting there reading on her tablet while waiting for the next round. To avoid sounding too childish, I decided that I should introduce Mawin to the fact that I had a normal secretary.

"Arun Berkfah." "A bird flies."

Mawin casually continued with the popular song that children usually listen to before school, but the one named Arun walked straight up to me and greeted me with a calm expression.

"Yes, Miss In."

"Miss In?"

Mawin seems a little confuse by the person who approaches us. "Her name is Arun Berkfah."

I said, smiling at his surprised reaction, enjoying that he was making fun of someone else’s name. Meanwhile, the new secretary my father sent didn’t show any anger or discomfort; she just smiled professionally.

"And this is Mawin, my fiancé and my eldest relative."

Arun Berkfah raises her hand to greet Mawin politely, but the handsome guy standing next to me continues to stare at my secretary with a long, intense gaze, making me unable to hold back a cough.

"Are you going to take me for a tour of some other part of the hotel?" "Of course."

"Arun Berkfah, you should come with us too." "Yes."

Because of the way Mawin was looking at her, I decided to take that little secretary with me to keep her close, monitoring her behavior throughout our walk. Mawin keep looking at my secretary with interest and curiosity, to the point that I feel almost invisible. What the hell... am I so ordinary that he can't even see me?

"Does Arun Berkfah have a nickname?" "No."

"So your parents have called you Arun Berkfah your whole life? Four syllables?"

I looked at my secretary, slightly horrified. "Yes."

"If there is a fire, will you survive? When they shout your name, you will be burned alive!"

I pretending to imitate her parents and act as if I am choking on smoke.

"Arun Berkfah, fire! Help! My daughter is in the flames! Somebody save Arun Berkfah! Then the firemen danced in unison, singing: A bird flies, happily seeking food."

Even though I teased her, my sweet-faced secretary just smiles and didn’t argue or show any sign of anger. Seriously? If someone makes fun of you like that, you should at least make a ‘tch’ sound in your throat. Is she a person or a statue? Whether it’s an insult or a joke, she doesn’t seem affected.

"So, do you have a shorter name?" "You can call me Arun."

"You seem really interested in my secretary’s long name,”

I comment, looking at my fiancé, who is smiling and seems to have touch a sensitive spot. Mawin’s ears start to turn red again, like someone shy.

What’s going on? I could pick up on the signs that indicated…

"I just noticed that the name was long, so I asked. Do you usually call her Arun Berkfah like that?"

"Yes. Actually, we just met, and I don’t know her very well yet. Our relationship isn’t that solid yet."

"Uh-huh."

Since the car we were supposed to take had been towed, I had to go back with my father, and my secretary was sitting in the back with us. Ever since we sat down together, he kept talking about Mawin, praising his looks, his intelligence, his wealth, and even his potential to produce good descendants for my grandfather to hold on to.

"With such close blood relations, aren’t you worried that the children might become a little slow?”

I interrupted at a time when my father was laughing out loud, obviously impressed by Mawin. I was thinking for a while… it’s like when you watch villains in dramas; when adults love and admire someone, why do they have to laugh and talk at the same time? What’s so funny about that?

"Slow? What are you talking about? We’re not that close. Mawin is my grandmother’s sister’s grandson."

"Isn’t that like being cousins? No way! I’m not ready to start a family. Right now, I just want to be single and gaon experiences, learning this and that for a while."

"I’m not saying you have to get married tomorrow. Take some time to learn about each other. By the way, what about you, Arun? What do you think of In’s future fiancé? What do you think?"

This time, everyone’s attention turned to Arun Berkfah’s opinion. I looked at the person my father was giving so much importance to and rolled my eyes. It seems like he honored her so much that even the issue of my fiancé is open for her to criticize.

"From what I've seen, I think he’s polite, respectful, doesn’t use foul language, and has a very good perspective on the world. Plus… he seems particularly interested in art."

"How do you know that?"

"Every time we pass by the paintings in the hotel, Mawin stops to look at them, as if he’s thinking about something. Sometimes, even if he sees just a speck of dust, he tries to brush it off. He’s someone who pays attention to detail."

"Very impressive!"

My father praised, clapping his hands. If he could have yelled 'Bravo', I'm sure he would have.

"Mawin is a young man who loves nature and art. He's quite sensitive, you know? I was surprised when I found out he was working for the family, because he seems so different from his brothers."

"Oh, so you think Mawin is just an idiot sitting quietly, staring at the trees and enjoying nature?"

"You're quite rude, you know that?"

My mother said, jokingly slapping my arm before turning to the secretary.

"You're quite observant, aren't you? No wonder you're here to be my daughter's advisor, helping her whenever she's in trouble."

"Thank you."

"Let me ask you something, Daddy."

I said, a little mischievously, making my father look at me with an amused smile.

"What's it, my princess?"

"Arun Berkfah is your lover? Why else would you support her so much?" "In!"

My mother, who is sitting next to me, reached out to slap my arm until it turned red, showing her teeth.

"What are you saying? You're making Arun look bad!"

"Bad? Look at her! Even with all this teasing, she doesn't show any signs of being affected."

I replied, looking at the secretary my father had assigned to me, feeling a little curious.

"Has she ever felt anything in her life?"

Arun Berkfah didn’t respond, just nodded slightly as if my question was just a joke. Knowing that I wouldn’t get a real answer, I decided to lose interest in the sweet-faced girl.

Well… there are people like that.

Ever since I got a new secretary, Arun Berkfah has been in charge of following me around and making various arrangements. It actually felt good to hear that from my father, but seeing that girl’s face always irritated me.

"Are you sure you’re not related to someone named Renu?" "I’ve never had a relative with that name."

"Hmm."

"Why do you keep asking about someone named Renu? Do I really look that much like her?"

"Just a little, but it doesn’t matter. If you say you don’t know her, then you don’t… By the way, what do you think of Mawin?"

"It’s exactly as I mentioned in the car." "Come on, I meant as a woman."

I looked at the secretary, who showed no reaction, which surprised me. I really didn’t have anything against Mawin. Just by looking at him, it was clear that he was perfect, handsome, rich, full of qualities. And most importantly, the way he looked at Arun Berkfah was very evident; he was interested.

"He is a good man. He has all the qualities." "Do you like him?"

"No, I don’t."

"That was a quick answer. With all his qualities, why don’t you like him? He is capable, loves art, has a generous heart, seems like a good person and, most importantly, he is very handsome."

"Handsome?"

The question that came back surprised me even more. Doesn’t this secretary feel anything for Mawin’s face? Wait, or am I overestimating my fiancé?

"I’m not that interested in people’s appearances." She replied. "Then what are you interested in?"

"Khun In." “...”

"Because it’s my job." She added quickly.

For a moment, my heart skipped a beat when she suddenly speaks while the room is quiet. Fortunately, she continued quickly, so I didn’t have time to feel embarrassed. Since we’re at it, let’s test whether this girl is really interested in me or not.

"We’ve known each other for a week, right?" "Yes."

"You’ve only known Mawin for a moment, but you noticed all this. So… tell me what you see in me. Describe me like you did with my fiancé. What kind of person am I? What do I like to eat? What interests do I have? If you get even one thing wrong…"

“…”

"I’ll fire you."

Today, I’ll show you that I can be the boss too, and as a boss, I should. Do I have the power to give orders or even fire someone? Then I’ll take this opportunity to fire this girl because her face irritates me. Seeing someone who constantly reminds me of my rival makes me unhappy.

"Yes."

"Go ahead, tell me."

"Khun Intuorn, prefer to drink orange juice, you love cute accessories like hair clips, and they have to be pink. You are fascinated by dollhouses, but you know you are too old for them, so you just look at them. However, I think you plan to build a dollhouse for yourself one day without sharing it with anyone."

“...”

"Khun In loves dogs, and the sound of a bell brings you joy. You prefer the sea to the mountains, you hate exercise, and you feel uncomfortable every time you have to wear a suit because it looks like you are going to a funeral."

"Everything you said is completely wrong." I straighten up and smile, feeling victorious.

"I only drink coffee. I don’t wear accessories, and as for dollhouses… I just look at them."

Seriously… how did she know I liked hair clips and dollhouses? I never told anyone I planned to build one in my backyard to jump around in.

"And I like cats. The bell is for pets, of course. I don’t mind the mountains or the sea, and I like to exercise. I often run marathons. As for suits, I prefer to wear black. I’ve never felt like I was going to a funeral. Is that what an observant person is like?"

Although I sometimes felt that way, I was sure I’d never told anyone that it was like going to a funeral. This girl is unbelievable. I can’t stand it.

"Khun In pretends to like drinking coffee because you thinks that’s what business people should drink. But the truth is, these people drink it because the caffeine keeps them from feeling sleepy while work."

"I drink it for that reason."

"But Khun In still doesn’t have a job yet."

*Another one!*

I looked at my secretary, unable to argue. I just get back; how could I have a job? It’s like a ghost story!

"When I lived abroad, I drank coffee like this."

"Khun In never finishes your coffee. Judging by your efforts not to add sugar, you always seem to be tasting bitterness, so I guess you're still learning."

"So where does orange juice come from?"

"The orange juice comes from what I make and keep in the fridge at home, and you just pour it out to drink."

*Didn't the housekeeper make it?*

"I run marathons. Why do you say I don't like to exercise?"

"There is no one in this world who likes to exercise. We are all lazy. But marathons make for good photo opportunities, so you run so the world knows you exercise. And more importantly, you choose to run but refuse to go to the gym, even though you are a VIP member, because you are afraid that guys will come and bother you, trying to flirt with you. Khun In hates sweat."

This girl is not human! She even knows I hate sweat. I tried to hide my anxious face before asking about something else.

"I love cats."

"Khun In does not hate cats."

"You are wrong. That alone is reason enough to fire you."

"But you don't like cats either. You are allergic to them. Your mother once told me that Khun In used to have birds, but they were killed by cats who attacked them in their cages, so you hated them ever since. And Khun In likes dogs because you thinks they’re loyal and seek more love from people than cats, who act like they own them."

"What about pink? What about hair accessories?"

"Khun In always looks at everything pink. When you passes by the stationery department, you picks up Hello Kitty pens or erasers to look at, but you always puts them back. The same goes for suits. Khun In goes through the wardrobe twice to prepare your self for facing the black clothes inside because they’re depressing, but you still have to wear them because you’ve taken out all your colorful clothes."

“...”

"Khun In’s underwear is decorated entirely with pink."

I sink into a chair, my mouth open in disbelief, unable to argue. At this point, I could only accept defeat, but I didn’t say so directly, I just asked.

"So, what do you think of me in general? If Mawin is caring and loves nature..."

"Do you want me to be honest?" "Yes."

Arun Berkfah paused for a moment, pursed her lips, and decided to speak when I asked her to.

***"You try to be someone else. You don't have your own identity."***

# 02. Weakness

*Where did this secretary come from?*

*Why does she have no respect or consideration? How can she be so bold as to criticize In like that!*

After dawn, I run to the room to confront Mom and Dad, reporting my complaints as I always did, not caring if it was their moment of relaxation.

Every time I come in, they welcome me because I am their lovely daughter.

"Well, from what I heard, Nong In told her to criticize on her own, didn't she? She's just doing her job.” Dad replied.

I pouted slightly, but persisted in arguing without giving up.

“That's it! It's... it's a test! In wants her to submit. Where's the consideration in just following orders like that?"

"If she doesn't criticize herself, Nong In will use excuses like not following orders or seeming insecure to fire her.”

Mom, who usually didn't comment much, interrupted, shaking her head.

"And besides, if she guessed wrong, why doesn’t Nong In kick her out herself?"

"That’s because…"

***She’s completely right!***

"It’s because In has grown up, so I thinks we should give people a chance. I’m just irritated by who this Arun Berkfah is and how dare she say this and

that. Why did you hire her, Dad?"

I asked my father, who is still snuggling with my mother, oblivious to his daughter’s complaints.

"Because she’s talented. If she takes care of Nong In, I believe Nong In will gain a lot from her. I heard Nong In say that she wants to grow up to be someone capable, so I chose her. I made a good selection." Dad replied.

"In feels uncomfortable knowing too much." I said, extending my hand forward.

"May I?"

"May what?"

"May I have your excellent secretary’s resume, please? In needs to meet her if she’s going to know so much about me."

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After receiving the information about the secretary that my father had gathered, I was stunned by Miss Arun Berkfah’s profile. Her surname was classy, to say the least. If you ignore her fancy first and last names, her profile was premium, grade A; if she were a cut of beef, it would be Japanese Wagyu¹, flawless, leaving me no room for criticism.

Miss Arun Berkfah, classy surname, 28 years old, graduated with a bachelor’s degree from XX University with a GPA of 3.86, first class honors. Originally from Chonburi, she has an older brother. Her work history includes several positions in large companies…

Several positions, huh?

Her salary request was. 15,000 baht.

At this point, I sit up straight and stared at the stark contrast, I couldn’t believe my eyes. Her impressive and luxurious profile seems as valuable as a Ferrari, but she is asking for a salary on the level of a Fino motorcycle?

That means there must be something here that has not been mentioned. Arun Berkfah must have some flaws, but they are just not showing. Nobody is perfect; I believe that.

That’s the flaw, no one is complete in everything!

I chuckled to myself before pulling out several instruction books I’d bought to read in my spare time, like, how to improve myself and stuff like that. As I read that page and thought about Cate Blanchett, that cool woman with the deep voice, my thoughts were interrupted by Arun Berkfah’s nasal tone and indifferent expression.

## 'You try to be someone else; you don’t have your own identity.'

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## Thud!

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I slammed the instruction book down and slammed it on the desk in frustration. Damn it! Why should I be hurt by a few words from that secretary? I was irritated that she could criticize me so accurately. We’d only known each other for a week, and she could pinpoint so many things so accurately. What kind of person was she?

No… I need to get to know her.

*‘Know others and know yourself; fight a hundred battles and win a hundred times, and I won’t lose!’³*

*Rrrring...*

While I was excited about that Chinese proverb, feeling a rush of excitement, my phone rin, displaying an unknown number that irritated me

a little. Who could possibly be calling? Aside from Dad and Mom, few people call me.

Yeah... I’m someone who doesn’t have any friends. So, the person calling me is definitely not a friend. "Hello?"

[I was wondering if you’ve slept yet.]

There was no need to introduce yourself and waste time; I knew right away that it was Mawin. I frowned slightly and asked in surprise,

“Are we close enough to call each other now? Even though we’re relatives, we’ve never really talked before.”

[You’re not being very friendly.] "Get to the point."

[You’re really impatient.]

"Who’s going to sit around admiring birds and trees like you?" [I wanted to invite you to dinner.]

"What's the occasion?"

[Shouldn't we get to know each other better? We're getting engaged, you know?]

"Sorry, I'm not up for that, and you're not up for this engagement either, right?"

I roll my eyes and sigh before continuing.

[If you don't want to meet me, why did you arrange this?]

Thinking of something, I replied,

"It's not that; you don't want to meet me. Your stuttering makes me suspect that you're just trying to keep me guessing. You don't have to pretend. I know you're interested in Arun Berkfah. If I fell for you, even a little, I'd have to be the villain in this story, always getting in the way of your romance. But sorry... I'm the heroine. I'm not accepting any invitations.

Bye."

I hung up immediately, feeling victorious, but then I hesitated, changed my mind, and called back.

"I changed my mind. I'll come too; Just let me know the time and place."

(What's with you, changing your mind like that... By the way, how about you go? What about Miss Arun?)

"Sure, I will. I know you really don’t want to see me. Oh, and let me reiterate, in this story, I am the heroine. I will be the one to run everything myself. Bye!"

I need to be in control of everything, and I chose to take control of this situation myself. After hanging up, I texted the talented secretary to set up a meeting.

‘Come to my place tomorrow at 6 am. See you then.’

I smile with joy, knowing that I could get someone up early. I had heard that this secretary’s rental house was very close to my house and that she usually arrived around 10 am or later. But starting tomorrow, I would schedule this time until she couldn’t take it anymore and gave up.

I just didn’t like the look on her face; if she couldn’t handle it, she had to leave!

In addition to texting the secretary and organizing everything, I didn’t forget to call Janpob to give him some important tasks. Ah... I felt like I had grown up, calling this person and that person with a purpose.

"Go to this address and ask the people there for details. I want to know what kind of place this girl comes from."

I sent the information to Janpob, who was a friend and a subordinate.

"Do it urgently; give yourself only two days because this secretary’s hometown is in Chonburi."

"Okay, I’ll take care of it tomorrow."

Janpob replied without asking too many questions, which was an advantage. As he turned to leave, I called back and asked out of curiosity.

"Jan... how many years have we been together?" "Uh?"

He seems a little surprise.

"More than twenty years, I think."

"Almost my entire life... You’ve been with me longer than most people."

Janpob looked at me knowingly, understanding that I'm talking about my family, but he doesn't say anything other than leaving. I stand with my arms cross, looking at the view from my room and thinking about

someone I hadn’t seen in two years. I wonder how she is...

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## 8 a.m....

I get out of bed and tried to look cheerful. In fact, I'm very happy to know that I could force someone to wait for me since 6 a.m., while I wake up at 8

a.m. myself. She must be really angry waiting for me like this. As soon as I thought of this, I slowly walked downstairs, slid into the kitchen, poured

some black coffee without sugar into a cup and forced myself to swallow, even though it make me shiver from the bitterness.

*"One day it will probably taste good."*

*"You never finish your coffee, Miss In. Judging by your effort not to add sugar, you always seem to taste the bitterness, so I guess you are still learning."*

But Arun Berkfah's words echoed in my head constantly, making me feel haunted.

## "You try to be someone else; you don't have your own identity."

Feeling defeated, I picked up the remaining coffee and grimace, realizing that it feel like I'm sucking on something bitter the whole time. Damn! Why everything that girl said so spot on? I actually stuck my tongue out when I drink it!

"Would you like some orange juice?"

Arun Berkfah’s nasal voice make me close my eyes in defeat. She could come at any moment, but it better not be when I look like I just see a ghost!

She could come at any time, but it better not be when I look like I just saw a ghost!

"I'm fine; I finished my coffee. By the way, have you been here long?" "Since 6 am when you called me." She replied.

I tried to gauge her expression and tone, but there is no negative feedback, which left me deeply disappointed. I wished she would get a little mad so I could see that kind of expression on her face now.

"Sorry about that. I forgot I had an appointment with you." "It's okay. I usually wake up at this time anyway."

"Really? What time is it?" "4 in the morning."

"Do you wake up to do tai chi or something?"

My eyes widened so much they almost popped out, but I quickly swallowed the surprise in my tone.

"Why do you wake up so early?"

"Morning is the quietest time. I usually wake up at this time to read or do something important so that I can dedicate my time to you throughout the day. The earlier you wake up, the more advantage you will have."

"Oh, I see."

"If you want to be more disciplined, you should try waking up early. Many successful executives wake up at this time to read because that is when their brain is most active."

I felt that her invitation sounded a little condescending. She must know that I am the type of person who loves my bed and soft pillows.

There is no way I could get out of bed at this time. No way... Better change the subject. I didn't want to argue about waking up early. No matter how much I wanted to be a new person, I just couldn't fight the battle of waking up.

"I heard that you know me well, so I thought I would ask for your help in picking out some clothes. I have an appointment with Mawin today. Let's see what clothes you think I should wear. I would like to see your taste."

"I will try."

Arun Berkfah would often come to my private room to help organize my clothes. Although I didn’t like being bothered too much, my father said it was her duty, so I couldn’t really argue. However, this time, I let the little

one go into my closet and pick out clothes and accessories for me, while I simply stand idly by and watching.

"You have a date today, so your outfit doesn’t have to be too formal."

A date, huh? I grimace slightly at the thought of sitting and enjoying the scenery with a distant relative, who I might one day share a bed with. On the wedding day, I would definitely skip the ceremony like in the movies. Who would agree to that?

"What should I wear, then?"

"Just something casual, but appropriate for your age and status… Mawin isn’t too strict about attire and accessories. He prefers a natural look,

so wearing this comfortable white dress would be fine." "I’m not going to a temple; I can’t wear white."

"White makes you look well-intentioned, even if your heart is dark." Really? Wait, why do I feel hurt? Did she just insult me?

"Even with a white dress, we can mix other colors. For example, this pink belt.”

Arun Berkfah said as she picked up a pink belt and places it against the dress. Then she walked over to get a small bag for me.

“You can wear this today. Just put on light makeup and wear a light fragrance.”

This time, the competent secretary looked at the perfumes scattered around and sigh without saying a word.

"It’s up to you, Khun In,” she said.

"Why the sigh? If you want to say something, just say it."

"Perfume is the scent that leaves an impression and is remembered the first time we meet. But you want everyone to know that you are an adult, so you chose Chanel No. 5."

"Yes, then why the sigh?" "Do you want me to say it?"

"Is there something you are afraid to say? Just tell me. What is it?"

I cross my arms and narrow my eyes at the secretary, who had been given permission to criticize.

"It’s old."

Maybe I should let her stop criticizing everything. I felt like I was allowing her to make fun of me at will. Today, I'm wearing the outfit that Arun Berkfah had prepared, but I still wear the same Chanel perfume because I wanted to win and see the frustration on that little girl’s face.

However, after I sprayed Chanel No. 5, the little secretary just stand there, showing no reaction. Of course, she couldn’t do anything about it. My life, my choices. And I was being sarcastic by spraying it as if I was taking a shower.

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Now, I had arrived at the restaurant where Mawin had arranged to meet us. But I wanted to go to the bathroom first, or rather, I wanted to play the role of someone who arrives late so that I can always be in the spotlight.

"You can go meet Mawin at the table first. I’ll go right away." "But…"

"What’s wrong?"

"Nothing."

Since the restaurant isn’t very busy today, there are still a few people here because it's daytime, Mawin chose to sit by the window. The light from outside make his white skin shine like a freshly painted canvas. Even from a distance, I could tell who he is. Just as I was about to go to the bathroom, I suddenly became curious about how Arun Berkfah would greet Mawin, so I keep quiet and watching. What I see surprise me greatly.

The little girl walked slowly, pretending to smell something, and every place she walks, where someone is sitting.

*What was she smelling?*

"Excuse me... I think I confused the person."

And it wasn't just one table; Arun Berkfah did this at almost every table. In addition to smelling, at some tables, she even asked loudly:

"Is that Mawin?"

As I said, Mawin was at the window, with the light shining on him, making him more prominent than any figure in this world. However, my secretary, who observed everything on this planet, did not go to him, but kept asking people around, even if they were not him.

"Why make it so difficult, unless..." "Miss Arun."

Mawin, who seems to see the little girl, stand up to greet her and invites Arun Berkfah to sit with him.

Meanwhile, I, who had been secretly observing, smile like someone who had just achieved victory when I realized that I had discovered a weakness in my talented secretary that my father had discovered.

Finally, I learned that she's not perfect either; she had a flaw, and that flaw....

***She could not see.***

**Footnote:**

1. *Japanese Wagyu refers to a specific breed of cattle from Japan, famous for its high-quality meat, highly marbled (with fat interspersed in the muscle fibers), which makes it extremely tender, juicy and flavorful.*
2. *Cate Blanchett is a renowned Australian actress, widely recognized for her versatility and talent in both film and theater.*

*3-The phrase is attributed to Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese general and military strategist, author of "The Art of War", one of the most influential military treatises in history.*

# 03. Prosopagnosia

Since Miss Arun knows my story as well as her own, I'll let her take care of the food orders for me.

Now the three of us are sitting at the table, with me sitting next to Mawin, as a couple normally does. I've never really understood why couples prefer to sit next to each other rather than across from each other,

where they can see each other's faces more clearly. It's a question I've never been able to resolve, but in any case, it doesn't really matter to me where I sit. Besides, Mawin probably prefers to look at my secretary's face.

Arun Berkfeh open the menu and begin to look through it to choose the dishes, as her responsibility. I watching her every move until she call the waiter to take our orders.

"I'll have the crab soufflé and the garlic-roasted clams, please... For drinks, I'll have water and orange juice. Mr. Mawin, you can order now."

"And you, Miss Arun? Don’t you want anything?" "No, thank you."

"Why aren’t you ordering anything?" I frown at my secretary, confuse.

"I’ve already had breakfast at home. Besides, if I eat too much for lunch, I’ll get sleepy. I don’t know what else you want me to do today, Khun In. Just a glass of water is enough for me."

"Is that an excuse? Maybe you don’t know how to eat that kind of food."

Mawin looked at me disapprovingly as I teased my own secretary, but I said it because I wanted to see some sign of irritation or emotion from her.

However, she just smiles and replies in a clear voice, "Yes, I don’t know how to eat."

"Oh, I didn’t know. Next time, we should go to a restaurant where you can eat too."

"You invited me, but now you’re catering to my secretary’s preferences? What does that mean?"

I bared my teeth at Mawin, who seemed overly concerned about my secretary. He quickly corrected himself, realizing that he might have gone too far.

"That’s not what I meant! It’s just that if we all like the food, it won’t be weird. Look, Miss Arun is just drinking water."

"Isn’t there anything on the menu that you can eat?" "No, there isn’t."

"Did you read it all?" "Yes, I did."

Strange… She doesn’t seem to have any vision problems. If she can read the entire menu, that means she can see. But how could she not notice that Mawin is sitting by the window? It’s suspicious. There must be something going on.

As we waited for our food to arrive, the three of us chatted for a while, although Mawin directed his questions mostly to my secretary rather than me, even though I was the one he invited.

"Did you study specifically to become a secretary, Miss Arun?" "No, I studied business administration."

"Then why did you become Miss In’s secretary?"

"Mr. Anek said he wanted Khun In to be prepared to take over the business. With the right consultant, she would be able to follow the right path."

"So, you’re saying that you’re such a good consultant that I should follow you, is that it?”

At that moment, the waiter come to serve us water before leaving. I take a small sip to wet my throat and continue,

“Even though you haven’t worked anywhere for a long time, what made my father trust you so much?”

Arun Berkfeh paused for a moment, then smiles, as if she knew I had dug a little into her background.

"Mr. Anek said that I have a lot of patience." "So what?"

"He thinks I have enough patience to deal with a daughter that no one else on this planet could tolerate."

"How can Dad say that about me!"

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I immediately yelled at my father as soon as I get home. I still remember the way Mawin struggled to contain his laughter when Arun Berkfeh responded so calmly, without any emotion. It was like he already knew a little about my temperament.

“What the hell did Dad say to that secretary? What did she mean by saying no one can tolerate me? What kind of person am I, exactly? Tell me!”

"Dad wasn’t trying to do anything too drastic. She’s actually a very patient person, and I didn’t want to have to keep hiring new people all the time.

Besides, she only asked for a salary of fifteen thousand, saying… if she really does a good job, you’ll be the one to raise her salary."

"That’s so bold of her. I already have a hundred and one reasons to fire her every day with an attitude like that."

"So why don’t you fire her?" "Well…"

Because if I fire her, it would seem really childish. I’m already an adult. There needs to be a valid reason to fire someone, not just because I asked her to be direct and I couldn’t handle it, especially not in front of everyone.

"Let’s just say I really don’t like this secretary. I’ll find a reason to fire her." “...”

"It has to be a valid reason... Just give advance notice. If this girl gets fired, you might not understand."

I tried to act mature. Even though I was frustrated, I had to have a reason. After finishing my conversation with Dad, I went out to talk to Janpob, who had just returned from investigating the assigned matter last night. He really worked fast, living up to being my right-hand man.

"Is this the house where Arun was born and raised?"

The picture Janpob sent me on my phone scared me a little or moderately. Please don’t call it a house; it should be described as a tin shed set up to block the sun and wind, because I wasn’t sure if it could keep out the rain.

"Miss Arun’s family is quite poor."

"Don’t say “quite”, that’s extremely poor. No wonder she’s so small." "Why is that?"

"She probably didn’t eat well, so she’s stunted. I read that if we get enough sleep as children, we will grow taller... Jan, you must have slept a lot as a child."

I looked at him, who is a friend and my right-hand man, wanting to play with him. He smiles slightly without expressing much thought, as a typical of someone who speak a little.

"But she did well."

This time I was talking about the secretary my father found for me, amazed that, despite growing up in such poverty, she managed to work hard to graduate with excellent grades, earning daddy's trust. Furthermore, she was very confident, asking for a salary of only fifteen thousand because she believed that if she did her job well, I would be the one to increase her salary. It was annoying, to say the least...

"What about her personal life? Does this secretary have a boyfriend or anything interesting?"

"Never had."

"That's crazy! What kind of person has never had a boyfriend? What is her personality like?"

"Like me."

When Janpob said that, I instinctively covered my mouth, forgetting that the person next to me has never had a romantic relationship.

"You're right. Sorry, but thinking about it, Arun and Jan have some similarities... poker face, emotionless, smiling only when necessary. Is it a facade or do they just not feel the need to laugh?"

"I don't know what to laugh about."

"People need to have reasons to laugh! I'm funny and entertaining!" "..."

"Am I not funny?"

Janpob didn't comment, which started to irritate me. Suddenly, Arun's words came to mind, that the person who stayed with me had to be very patient and tolerant. Does that mean Janpob was with me because he was putting up with it?

"Is it really that hard to stay with me, Jan?" "No, not at all."

"You are a heartless person." I said sarcastically, pouting.

Before changing the subject, I asked,

"You are good looking, why don't you like anyone?" "I have no feelings for anyone."

"I mean, Arun."

When I interrupted, my handsome right-hand man went completely silent. I almost start laughing at his embarrassment, but I don't want to make my only close subordinate and friend feel awkward.

"Maybe it’s because Miss Arun is too focused on her studies. More importantly, the condition she has can make her unable to feel anything special for anyone,” He explained.

"Condition?"

"I wrote it down. There’s an explanation included."

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After reading all the information Janpob had gathered, both the academic content and the people around her, I became more interested in the secretary my father found for me than ever before.

I even agreed to wake up at four in the morning and let my right-hand subordinate take me to see where Arun was currently living. It was a small rented house with a waist-high fence. The inside had orange lights on, indicating that someone was awake. I sit outside, yawning frequently, but still patiently watching what she would do next.

At five o'clock, the little figure come out of the house in a T-shirt and sweatpants, with a small towel hanging over her shoulders. She went for a run and come back in half an hour. At six in the morning, she prepared her belongings to offer alms in front of the house. After finishing everything, she went back inside.

Today is Sunday, the only day the little girl don't have to come to work or meet me. So today is a free day for her. From what I could see, her daily routine consisted of just a few things: taking a shower, getting dressed, watering her plants, and then riding her bike to the market.

"Are you serious, Miss In?"

"Really, you don't have to follow me."

"The market is full of muddy water, you know?"

"Hey... I'm a person! A little dirt won't kill me. You can stay in the car; you don't have to follow me. Look! My secretary has already gone to the market, and if I don’t hurry, I won’t catch up with her! I repeat: don’t follow me."

After saying that, I get out of the van and walked right behind the little girl, not worrying about being noticed. Today, I changed my perfume to a sporty one and wore long country-style pants with a pink jacket that I couldn’t resist buying and finally managed to wear today.

Every Arun’s actions were in my line of sight, whether she was picking vegetables, buying fish, and many other things. Everything my secretary did was on the list she had carefully written, reflecting her organized nature.

Because of her condition, she became very observant and careful, never letting a single detail slip by. It became a habit that she couldn’t shake.

*"Miss Arun had an accident where she hit her head against a bone urn in the cemetery, which damaged part of her brain and caused her to develop prosopagnosia, also known as face blindness."*

*"Is there really such a condition in the world? Not being able to recognize faces... what's it like?"*

*"When you meet someone once, the next time you see them, you forget what their face looks like. It's a kind of memory loss; you don't know who's who."*

*"So, you have to observe closely to know, right? Simple as that."*

Now, I'm standing right next to Arun without her knowing my presence. She looks so confident, but she has this weakness.

*I could really tease her about it!*

# 04.Be Responsible

"Are you changing your perfume again, Khun In?" "Yes. Do you have a problem with that?"

After discovering the weaknesses of my competent secretary, Arun Berkfah, I couldn’t resist messing with her by changing my perfume every day. I started mixing up the colors of the clothes I wore. Some days I would tie my hair back, while other days I would straighten it, causing the sweet- faced girl to frown occasionally.

Today was no different. Instead of my usual Chanel No. 5, I mixed it with a bit of Abercrombie, and today I sprayed on Jo Malone, paired with a mustard yellow robe.

Confusing, right? Let’s see how irritated she can get.

“You’ve been wearing a lot of different clothes lately, haven’t you, Khun In?"

"You once said that wearing black clothes made me feel like I wasn’t myself."

"Well, you still don’t feel like yourself compared to yesterday.”

I smile as the secretary left my room. Although she often had a stoic expression, her words always conveyed a certain feeling.

The constant teasing is getting annoying. No... I needed to stay calm. I had to act like an adult and not show how I felt.

"Don't forget today's important appointment, In."

Dad said after coming down from upstairs. He is sitting in the living room, putting away his tablet after scrolling through the news feed and reminded me once again.

"I won't forget! Look at me today, I'm dressed in a bright outfit. I won't borrow any cream. Your VIP guests will surely be impressed."

"You're great at getting along with people, In. I trust you. With Arun by your side, I'm not worried at all."

I glance at the secretary, who give a small bow to thank Dad and then I make a slight frown of annoyance.

"Why do you always praise Arun? Seriously, she's not your secret lover, is she?"

"In!"

My mother, who watching TV, turned around and lightly scolded me for my teasing. I stuck my tongue out playfully to look cute while the secretary keep a poker face.

Won't she get a little mad? I teasing her a lot.

"I'm just kidding! I can see how much you trust Daddy... Anyway, I won't let you down today. By the way, what news are you watching? Are the stocks down? You look so serious,"

I said, noticing that Daddy's demeanor seems different as he speak to me, even though he tried to act normal. Mom, noticing Daddy's expression, also looked a little irritated before replying with a chuckle in her throat.

"Daddy is feeling bad." "What's wrong?"

"Nong Mew has a boyfriend now."

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As we sit in the van heading to the hotel for the VIP customer appreciation event, I couldn't help but bring up the news that had Daddy sulking like a sad dog. The actress that Daddy always smiled at on TV announced that she was in a relationship. I looked between the news and the secretary sitting next to me, starting to size her up. It was an indescribable feeling, somewhat similar.

"Do you know that actress?"

"I don’t really watch TV." She replied.

That’s true… even if she did, she probably wouldn’t remember who the lead actress because she couldn’t recognize anyone, not even herself.

"She looks a bit like you." "Really?"

"But still, I’m prettier. Beauty is subjective."

I pretending not to care as Janpob looked in the rearview mirror and smiles. That made me turn around and face him.

"What are you looking at?" "Nothing, ma’am."

"Are you saying that Mew is prettier than me?"

"I haven’t said anything yet, but… that actress looks like you, which means you’re pretty, Arun."

"See… men."

I said disdainfully, looking out the window in annoyance. Why do guys like looks like that? What’s so special about it? Just a petite body, a thin nose, a well-shaped mouth, long hair, and a slightly nasal voice. So what? She

dances *“Gee”*¹ better than me? I doubt it!

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Finally, the van pulled into the hotel owned by Dad. Arun opened her tablet and began rattling off details about the guests and the day’s food, emphasizing that one person was very dry.

"How dry are we talking about?"

"I’m not sure either, but let’s keep it casual… Inside, you don’t have to worry about the food; I’ll take care of it."

"Can you recognize anyone? You can serve the wrong dishes."

The sweet-faced secretary looked at me as if assessing the situation, while I shrugged, pretending not to care. She must be surprises that I mentioned recognition.

"I’m quite observant." She replied.

"That’s good. Don’t let anything slip, okay? Khun Pho is counting on it a lot…"

I hesitated for a moment, thinking about what I’d said before cracking a smile. Slip? Dad, I’ll show you that even someone you trust can make mistakes!

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For me, socializing isn’t hard at all. I just have to smile and talk about things they liked, which for today’s VIP guests included mostly women around Dad’s age. The conversation usually revolved around new handbag designs, recent travels, and where to find limited-edition items for the upcoming season.

"I heard you studied fashion, In."

One of the VIP guests, wrapped in a light brown scarf, asked with interest.

"Yes, but I only took a short course. I wanted inspiration and then I came back." I replied.

"I plan to start my own handbag brand."

"That’s wonderful! When you finish your designs, let us know; I’d love to be one of your first customers!"

"Thank you! I’m so happy to hear that; it gives me so much encouragement."

I said.

The first course, expertly directed by Arun is serves. Everyone looked at the food and smiles before they begin to eat while chatting.

The conversation flowed smoothly, and my job is simply to keep everyone smiling and happy. I glanced at the woman wrapped in a scarf, starting to formulate a plan.

This person was quite the chatterbox and had made a particular point… allergies.

"Excuse me, waiter!"

I wave to the passing staff and ordered something unusual for myself.

"I would like to order an extra dish, please. A serving of grilled enoki mushrooms with sesame oil."

"Yes, ma’am." The waiter replied.

"Arun give me a questioning look, but I could tell the sweet-faced secretary thinking something. The VIP guest who heard my order felt a slight shiver down her spine and answered frankly.

"That sounds scary! I’m allergic to sesame."

"What?!" I feigned surprise.

"Is it really that hard to live with a food allergy?"

"Well, I have to remind the restaurant not to use it at all. Fortunately, there are many foods out there that do not contain sesame."

"Excuse me for a moment."

Arun said, walking away, uncertain whether to speak to the chef or for some other reason. Meanwhile, Khun

Pear, who had been sitting for a while, stand up to excuse herself to go to the bathroom.

"While we wait for the next dish, I'm going to go out and take care of something." Khun Pear said.

"Oh, Khun Prae, is it okay if I borrow your scarf for a while?" "Huh?"

"It looks really pretty. I want to see if it would look good on me if I tried to wrap it around myself."

"Sure."

Khun Prae kindly handed me the scarf. "Well, then let me go to the bathroom first." "Okay."

I takek off my shirt and wrapped Khun Prae’s scarf around my neck. Today, both Khun Prae and I wore matching white outfits, so once I wrapped it around myself, our styles looked pretty similar. As everyone chatted, I left my seat to sit in Khun Prae’s place. Everyone at the table looked at me a little confused, but no one said anything, just as Arun, the waiter, returned.

"Right here."

"Please serve according to the seating arrangement. As for the mushroom dish that was just ordered, serve it to the one with the sweet face."

The waiter arranged the dishes according to the assigned seats while everyone continued chatting and begin eating their own food. Meanwhile, the secretary returned to her assigned place at another distant table.

"Could you pass me that plate, please?"

One of the VIP guests sitting closer reached out to hand me the dish. However, Khun Prae come back just in time and looked at me in surprise.

"Oh, why did you sit there?"

"Sorry. I was having a great conversation with Khun Earn. I'll go back and sit there."

"It's okay. You can stay here. Wow... the food looks so good!"

Without anyone saying anything, Khun Prae took a bite of my food and put it in her mouth, chewing happily. I watched my father's VIP guest eat, tilting my head slightly in confusion because I heard she was allergic, but I didn't see anything wrong.

"Oh no!"

It all happened so fast. Khun Prae's sesame allergy flared up immediately. My father's guest of honor clutched her chest and fell to the floor, looking like she was struggling to breathe.

"Khun Prae!"

Everyone there was in shock. Arun, the waiter, jumped up from the table and run over to Khun Prae, calling my name.

"What's wrong with Khun Prae?" "There are... sesame seeds in the food."

"Khun Prae!"

Arun recognized the voice immediately before turning to look at me, standing there in shock with the VIP guest's borrowed scarf still wrapped around my neck.

"What did you do, Khun In?" "I..."

"Call an ambulance!"

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Honestly, I didn't expect things to get this bad. Khun Prae was so severely allergic to sesame seeds that she needed a tube to help her breathe. If she didn't get to the hospital in time, she could die. Now, the one who seemed to be in the most trouble was definitely Arun. Dad was extremely angry, scolding her loudly, causing everyone around to freeze like statues. Even I didn't dare make eye contact.

"I warned you repeatedly to be careful with the food! All of our guests today are important people. You can't even deal with something so simple. You keep saying that you’ll make my daughter better, but you’re useless!"

"I’m really sorry."

I looked at the capable secretary, who showed no emotion on her face and accepted all the blame, and I started to feel a little sympathetic. Dad’s voice got louder when he saw that Arun didn’t have any sad expression on her face.

“Do you really feel guilty or are you just saying that?”

"I really feel guilty, and I had already planned to punish myself by resigning as a form of accountability."

This time, Dad silent for a while. It seems like Dad isn’t angry enough to want her fired, but being spoken to like that left him at a loss for what to do.

Besides waving her off, Dad said,

"Go back. We’ll talk about what to do later." "Okay."

The sweet-faced secretary left without looking at anyone, and I felt guilty. It wasn’t Arun’s fault, but she chose to take the blame without mentioning anything or making excuses. I looked left and right, hesitating about what to do. In the end, I run after that little girl, not to comfort her... but I felt guilty. However, I had to stop right at the entrance of my house when I see her standing there talking to Jenpob.

"Here's a handkerchief." "Thank you."

The two, who rarely speaks, were looking at each other with understanding. I stand there, confused, wondering why they are exchanging handkerchiefs until Arun looked up. The light from outside reflected on her tears, making it clear that the little girl could no longer contain her feelings.

"Are you going home, Khun Arun?" "Yes. Should I walk you to the door?"

"No, it's okay. Thank you for the handkerchief. I'll wash it and return it later."

"No need. Just keep it."

Then Arun walked out the front door, and I, hidden, and Jenpob watched her leave with our eyes. Now, my head was full of mixed emotions. I thought I would be pleased to see her messing up, but instead, it's like fire ants are biting my heart, making it itch. I really couldn’t bear to be like this.

"Dad!"

I opened the door without caring if anyone inside. Dad was on the phone, looking serious, and he waves me to be quiet before saying goodbye to the caller. I figured it was probably a relative of Khun Prae who was calling to complain.

"What’s wrong, In?" "Please don’t fire Arun."

"Why not? I thought you didn’t like her."

Dad raises an eyebrow, looked at me, and clasped his hands under his chin.

“She made a big mistake. This is a big problem. We have to show some responsibility, and that means letting Arun go as a form of punishment."

"I’ll apologize to her myself."

"You didn’t do anything wrong, In." "Yes, I did! It was me…"

I took a deep breath, knelt down, and raised both hands above my head like someone defeated, begging for Daddy’s forgiveness.

“...”

"I was the one who deliberately let Khun Prae eat peanuts, even though I knew she was allergic, just to mess with Arun because I was jealous. If anyone should be punished, it should be me!"

***F***

***ootnote***:

***1-The “Gee dance” is a famous choreography originated from the music video for the song “Gee” by the South Korean K-pop group Girls’ Generation (SNSD(***

# 05. Venus

After Dad found out what his precious daughter had done, he flew into a rage and punished me by confiscating six of my credit cards, leaving me with only one, which he said was for food. (At first, he took them all because he was really mad, but when I gave him my best puppy dog eyes, he agreed to give me one back.)

Then he forced me to go apologize to Khun Pear, who was in the hospital, and confess everything I had done, as well as give her an all-expenses-paid voucher for a trip to the Maldives at one of our hotel branches there.

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"I have to apologize to you, Khun Pear, for letting this situation get so bad. It’s my fault for not raising my daughter right… In, bow ninety degrees!”

Dad lowered my head to bow gracefully, and by the time I managed to lift my head, Pear was saying,

“It’s okay,”

Which took a good two minutes. I felt the blood rush to my head, I almost fainted and had to be taken to the emergency room. But overall, everything went well. We apologized sincerely, and the victim received proper compensation.

"This isn’t over yet. There’s still one more person Nong In needs to apologize to.”

Dad, who had been pretending to be serious since we left home, said as we sit in the van as we prepared to go back together. I puffed out my cheeks a

little, wanting to look cute in front of Dad. I could tell he was secretly smiling, but he quickly hid it the moment our eyes met.

"Yes, I know I need to apologize to her." "What are you waiting for? Call her now." "I want to talk to her in private."

"You can talk to her in front of me. Call her right now. Right now!"

I wrinkled my nose in a small pout, but since Dad looked so serious, I couldn’t challenge him.

"But you said she’s not your lover." "In."

"I’m just kidding!"

I pretended to put on a high-pitched voice and pressed the call button on the phone for my competent secretary, who, for some reason, hadn’t come to pick out clothes for me as usual. I had to admit, it felt a little strange.

Someone I used to see every day, suddenly no longer there because she wanted to confirm that she's really going to resign.

"What are you looking at?"

Jenpob, who was driving, glanced at me through the rearview mirror. When I turned to meet his gaze, he stared at me with wide eyes. He could only smile and say nothing. Yes… it wasn’t just Dad in the car; there's Jenpob too. Having to sweet-talk in front of two people make me a little uncomfortable, but I have to move on.

As soon as I pressed the call button, Arun Berkfah answered the phone with a businesslike tone.

[Arun Berkfah speaking.]

"It’s me, Intuorn."

[I know I saved your number.]

Whenever I heard the word "I," it felt like I was in a drama after the news.

Do people really talk like that these days? But whatever. Even when I went to the mall, the staff still called me "ma'am" as a sign of respect, even though it made me a little embarrassed.

"Why didn’t you come to work today?"

Dad, hearing my short question, raises his hand to gesture as if he want to speak. I dodged a little and put my finger to my lips to signal “shh” so he wouldn’t speak loudly.

[I have already informed you that I am resigning as a way of taking responsibility.]

"Resigning won’t be effective because it hasn’t been approved yet. That’s not taking responsibility; it’s running away from a problem. Besides, there hasn’t been an official resignation letter sent."

[I’m on my way to send it.]

"Hey, don’t be so stubborn… Oh, come on, let In handle this on my own."

I turned around and yelled at Dad, who had pinched his own leg, causing him to let out a loud sound. Then I quickly cleared my throat.

“The failure that occurred wasn’t Arun’s fault; it was mine… so there’s no reason to resign. To comfort you, I’ll raise your salary to…"

*How much should it be?*

"Twenty thousand."

Actually, I could give fifty thousand because I'm rich, but a drastic increase would be too much. I had to increase the salary little by little as a way of

negotiating.

[I still insist on quitting.] "Twenty-five thousand." [Thank you.]

I smile when the person on the other end answer, but then I have to shut up immediately.

[But I still insist that I won't accept it. Goodbye.]

"Don't be so stubborn! Hey, are you hanging up on me? Oh, Intuorn!" "Her name is Arun Berkfah."

"Yes, that's right. That's my name... Let's do it again. Aah, Arun Berkfah! Dad, that secretary hung up on me!"

"Do you have the right to be mad at her? You made her take responsibility for this. She's a professional and feels she needs to be held accountable."

"I offered her a raise! What else can I do?"

I cross my arms, feeling irritate, but Jenpob, who has never voiced his opinion because he considered himself just an employee, speak up for the first time, as if to support us.

"Miss, you didn't say the important word." "What word?"

"The word 'sorry'."

Dad added, and that almost make me yell. I know I have to say it, but I am trying to avoid it and focus on the salary.

"Do I really have to say it?"

"If you think you’re wrong, you have to say it." "What if I don’t?"

"Then she won’t come back."

"Well, that’s okay. I didn’t want her in the first place." "Hmm."

Dad didn’t say anything else and closed his eyes. I looked at him, irritated that he didn’t even argue. Normally, he’s always talking and pressuring me to do this and that. Why isn’t he standing up for me this time? Acting like he doesn’t care make me frustrate. No… I’m not going to apologize. I did my best!

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It's already three in the afternoon. I had called the secretary about fifty times, but she kept hanging up on me, making me feel like an idiot trying to buy a boyfriend and getting nothing in return. I had to send her a barrage of messages.

I raised it to thirty thousand and it still isn't enough?: **Indy**

Stop acting like a so arrogant. If you don't work with me, you won't

work with anyone else. : **Indy**

Answer my call right now, or I'll come to your house!: **Indy**

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But it all ended up being silent, as the lady on the phone didn't even bother to read my messages. Eventually, I started to lose my patience, tossing and turning in bed until five in the morning. Finally, I get up to play a farming game on my computer.

Time passed, and at eight o'clock, I found myself pacing the dressing room, not knowing how to get ready.

Every day, she come to help me pick out clothes, but today is another day she doesn't show up... Is she testing my patience? Okay! Let’s see who’s going to win.

"Look at those dark circles under your eyes, In."

I went down to breakfast in my bathrobe, poking at the runny yolk with my fork like someone who can’t think straight. Dad, sitting at the table, absorbed in his tablet, looked at me and smiled.

"Can’t you sleep because of your guilt?"

"No, not at all. I’m not feeling guilty about anything."

I said, putting my fork down next to my plate and crossing my arms.

"Your lover is definitely playing hard to get. I sent her messages, and she didn’t even open them. Does she think she’s your favorite? She can do whatever she wants?"

"Stop calling Arun as my lover." Dad scolded me and looked at Mom.

"If your mom takes this seriously, we’ll have a broken home." "I’m sorry! It just slipped out. It’s so annoying!"

"So, what do you want to do now?"

"Well, I don’t want to do anything, since she doesn’t accept my good intentions. What can I do?"

"Does this mean you’re not going to try anymore?"

"It’s not about giving up! It’s just about doing the right thing. Since I tried and she doesn’t appreciate my good intentions, I won’t try anymore!"

I get up and walk away, back to my room, not forgetting to stomp my feet loudly so my parents would know I am being temperamental. I have to keep acting like a spoiled daughter when I’m in front of my parents. I’ll only be an adult when I’m with my subordinates.

Because I’m just a cute little girl, right?

As I lay in bed, scrolling through my phone in frustration, a message popped up from JenPob with a strange link, prompting me to reply.

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What are you sending me?: **Indy**

**JenPob**: Try opening it.

I’m telling you, I can’t. I don’t want to wait for it to load : **Indy**

But JenPob didn’t reveal anything, so I had to click to see what it's. I frown when I find out it's a singing competition, competing to be the most pitiful person in all of Thailand, with a cash prize of over a hundred thousand baht to help pay off debts.

At first, I thought about closing it, but since JenPob isn’t the type to send nonsense, I stuck it out and watched it all the way through. The contestant is a slovenly dressed guy telling his story about being in debt after mortgaging his house to send his younger sister to school, only for her to run away and leave behind a huge debt for the family to pay off. Now, his father was gone, and all left was his mother.

Then, after a while, the show showed a name I was very familiar with…

*Arun Berkfah’s last name*.

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What is the relationship between the singer and Arun Berkfah? : **Indy**

**JenPob**: He is her brother.

.

Is it the same family as that secretary?

They are in such a difficult situation because they sent their sister to

school... I can't believe Arun

is like this : **Indy**

Leaving his father and mother behind : **Indy**

**JenPob**: That's a lie.

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I cringed at the words JenPob typed, a little shocked and rubbing my eyes in disbelief.

Why would I care? : **Indy**

**JenPob**: I insulted Miss Arun's older brother and family, because from what I've investigated, the story isn't like that.

**JenPob**: You've already read the entire story I sent, right? We should be thinking the same way.

.

I rolled my eyes a little because, to be honest, I hadn't read that deeply. When my subordinate said that, I jumped out of bed to get the documents JenPob had given me earlier and read them again, but this time more carefully.

Arun Berkfah has an older brother and received scholarships from elementary school to high school and then to college, with a teacher acting as guarantor. To this day, she has paid everything back without ever bothering her family for a single baht. The reason she had to move away and never return home was that her father forced her to marry a neighbor to whom he owed fifty thousand baht as a way to pay off the debt.

My God... Is this Arun Berkfah or some character in a melodrama? Just like the drama Dahwan acted in. I've seen it...

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You said their father passed away. How could the father force her to marry

her creditor neighbor? : **Indy**

**JenPob**: It's just a lie.

Why does it end like this? : **Indy**

**JenPob**: It's annoying that someone would lie on a show and no one would check the facts. It's so frustrating!

**JenPob**: The truth is that her brother actually mortgaged the house, but he lost everything in gambling and didn't know what to do. He went on a singing show and lost, winning only five thousand baht. In the end, he tried to force Arun to marry, but she refused.

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I bared my teeth a little when my subordinate made a snide comment before sending a sticker of a slap in the face in anger.

Ugh! Who would have thought that girl's life was so miserable? Plus, I've always had such a playful and endearing personality. He never complained about it. Why is everyone so biased towards Arun Berkfah? Even daddy!

.

I was about to go beg her to come back and work with us! But I called and

that girl didn't answer. What should I do? : **Indy JenPob**: If she's not answering, go to her house.

Do I really have to go that far? : **Indy**

**JenPob**: You don't have to if you don't feel guilty about anything.

I don't feel guilty. I won't : **Indy**

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I intended to do but before I knew it, I found myself standing in front of Arun Berkfah’s house. It was a small one-story rental with a fence around it and patches of trees, just like the picture JenPob had sent me.

I crossed my arms and hesitated, unsure of what to do next, until my close friend couldn’t take it anymore and ring the doorbell for me.

“Smart.”

“I’ll ring it for you. I’m afraid you’ll get too hot waiting.” He said.

However, the inside of the house remained completely silent, making me frown.

“That girl must have seen me standing outside and is playing hard to get. Ring it again."

"Ok.”

Jenpob continues to follow orders perfectly. The doorbell sound ring a second, third, and fourth time, but there's still no answer from the number I was trying to call.

I couldn’t take it anymore and pushed Jenpob aside to ring it myself, as if the doorbell is a doorbell from Thailand’s Got Talent.

*Ding-dong Ding-dong Ding-dong Ding-dooooooooooonnng*

"There’s no one home, dear. The only one here is the guardian spirit, and they’re just angry!"

A voice from the neighbor startled me a little. "Are you the guardian spirit, auntie?"

"I’m the owner of the rented house!" "Oh… where did the tenant go?" "What’s your relationship with her?"

"I’m the hospital's abandoned daughter m. When I was a child, an auntie and an officer took me in, but soon after a son was born who made

them jealous, and after that…"

“You ran away from home and ended up with Khun Phak¹, right?" “Do you really watch Ter DaoZ readings, auntie?"

"It’s the Venus star! Stop joking around, who are you?"

"I’m the boss of Arun Berkfah. I couldn’t reach her, so I came here."

"If you had said that earlier, it would have all ended… Arun’s mother isn’t here. Yesterday, I saw someone from the house taking her away. They seemed to be in a hurry."

"In a hurry? In a hurry for what?"

"I heard they had to rush back for the auspiciousof the wedding moment today… By now, they’re probably tying their wrists."

"What!!!"

I exclaimed, my voice echoing, startling a flock of birds and crows perched on the roof, causing them to fly away.

"Why are you telling me this important thing only now?"

"Well, I was busy talking about Venus and I thought you weren’t in a hurry."

"Stop joking around!" I turned to Jenpob.

"What are you waiting for? Go start the car; we won’t make it in time if Arun Berkfah is taken to the bridal chamber first! No, wait… just give me the car keys."

For the first time in months, Jenpob looked at me in panic, and when I bared my teeth for the keys, he reluctantly handed them over, beads of sweat forming on his temples.

"How long does it take to get to Chonburi?" "About an hour or so."

"I'll make it down to forty-five minutes. Get your stopwatch ready!"

**Footnote:**

*Khun Phak (or Phak) is a character in Thai stories and dramas, often associated with romance and family drama narratives. "Ter Dao" (or "Tad Dao") is a popular Thai series, known for its plot that combines romance, drama, and comedy elements.*

# 06. Auction

Intuorn never disappointed, weather it in real racing competitions where I was determined to win or even on the main roads like the highway. Finally, we arrive at Aruns Berkfah's hometown and surprised by the deep and mysterious alleys. This's another world I had never known... Houses that weren't even painted.

"There must be a dozen speeding tickets sent to your house for this."

Jenpob said, who had just finished speaking, wiping the sweat from his forehead, stunned by the speed I had pushed to the limit.

"It was an emergency. I didn't want to do this. I know it's dangerous for other road users, but if I didn't... it would be dangerous for Arun Bearkfah's virginity."

"Is Ms. Arun's virginity that important to you, Ms. Intuorn?"

I looked at the normally quiet man who had started talking more recently and nudged his arm with my elbow a little, changing the subject.

"By the way, is this really the secretary’s hometown? It’s smaller than my bathroom."

"Yes, the whole family is cramped in there."

But she still managed to be born and raised well, even if she sometimes has a bit of a sharp tongue…

"So, where’s the wedding? I don’t see any sign of it." "Let me ask someone here first, miss. Please wait here."

"Be quick; it’s hot."

Janpob disappears for a while before rushing back as I instructed, worried that I might get hot or maybe worried about Arun Berkfah.

"The wedding is in the next house." "Which one?"

"The one bigger than this one."

"All the houses in the world are bigger than Arun Berkfah’s. Which one?."

The handsome guy walked about three steps ahead of me and pointed to the house next door, which he defined as “big.” I pouted because it's just a house on a stilt, wasn’t it?

"Does just having a raised floor make it bigger? Oh well…let’s see what a country wedding is like."

We're both uninvited guests today, but we bravely climbed the stairs to observe the various ceremonies. I have to stop when I see the various colored fabrics serving as backdrops, along with bright pink foam that simply read:

*“Wedding Ceremony: Seemok loves Arun Berkfah, birds fly across the sky.”*

.

I stare at the cloth for a long time before bursting out laughing. The elders tying string bracelets on the bride and groom’s wrists turned their heads toward us so quickly it seems their necks will break. I quickly closed my mouth and looked toward the center, where ready-made food and offerings were casually laid out.

“Who are you?”

A somewhat familiar man’s voice looked at the two of us in surprise. After examining his face for a moment, I immediately exclaimed.

“Oh! You’re the one who sang on the program… Arun Berkfah’s brother." "Khun Intuorn?”

Arun Berkfah, who recognized my voice, greets me immediately with a surprises expression. Even though she see me, her face-blind condition meant that she only just realized I'm here.

"It’s me! What’s this? Not inviting the boss to the wedding? By the way, what kind of wedding is this? It sounds so… intense."

"Intense? What do you mean?"

"Intense, intense, intense! It looks really intense!"

I raise my hands in a circle and rolled my eyes to emphasize how intense it looked.

"I heard it’s an arranged marriage, right? Where’s the groom? Let me see his face!"

The groom sitting next to my dear secretary give off a strange contrast because he is a man in his sixties with dark skin, stubble, and a scent of sapodilla wafting from a distance. It made me flinch a little.

"Is that her father?"

"Are you really the boss? You come barging in and ruining of everyone's good time!"

"Well, I came to ruin it on purpose! How crazy is it that someone who doesn’t want to get married is being forced to get married to pay off debts someone else created? Arun Berkfah, get up right now! I’m taking you home!"

My serious tone caused a stir among the guests. This time, the groom’s relatives started making a scene, looking like they're about to come and attack, but Janpob stand in their way. His tall stature make the elderly and frail relatives back away.

"You can’t leave! Today, Arun needs to get married. All the ceremonies are in order, and the bride price has already been agreed upon.”

An older woman insisted. I glanced at the speaker, who seemed to be guarding the bride price, and guessed that she must be the mother of the sweet-faced secretary.

"How much is the bride price? I’ll give you double!”

The crowd exploded with excitement, and the eyes of the secretary’s brother and mother widened like a startled spider.

"Hey, how can you talk like that? The bride price has already been agreed upon! I won’t accept it."

"If you won’t accept it, then fight for it!"

I walk over to confront the groom, wrinkling my nose in disgust at the smell of sapodilla.

“If you want to get married, you have to invest! Otherwise, how could the bride’s parents trust their daughter’s life to you, right?"

This time, the relatives on Arun Berkfah’s side nodded greedily, as if they're all in agreement. I looked at the small figure who still standing there, motionless, watching the situation, and I feel irritate. At a time like this, she isn’t even trying to save herself! My God!

"How much did you pay for the bride price?"

"Twenty thousand, plus another fifty thousand in debt, making a total of seventy thousand."

"I’ll give one hundred thousand."

And so the auction for Arun Berkfah begin in front of the esteemed guests. The groom looked around in embarrassment before throwing a tantrum.

"Anyone can say anything without proof. What can you give me for one hundred thousand?"

I looked around, and now, everything I own is worth more than one hundred thousand. Then I looked at Janpob and notices the watch he's wearing. It was the watch I had given him two years ago, and it was worth about two hundred thousand baht.

Better than having nothing…

"Jan… can I borrow your watch for a moment? I’ll buy you a new one later."

"Sure,”

Janpob take it off his wrist and handed it to me willingly.

"This watch is worth two hundred and fifty thousand, but since I said one hundred thousand, that’s what it’ll be. You can check the price online."

I bent down and place it on the bride price tray, folding my arms. Arun Berkfah’s brother followed suit, checking the price and gasping.

"Wow, Mom, it’s really two hundred and fifty thousand!" "I won!"

I smile triumphantly, but the groom didn’t accept it.

"No way… I have a truck. I’ll offer my truck as part of the bride price, which I bought for eight hundred and fifty thousand."

"Have you paid yet?"

"I bought it right away!"

And the auction begin again. Arun Berkfah’s brother and mother cheers as the price for their daughter rise by the minute. I bared my teeth a little and

take a deep breath before emptying everything from my Hermes bag and throwing it into the center of the circle.

"A limited edition crocodile leather bag worth nine hundred and eighty thousand!"

I bit my lip, suppressing the pain, and throw it away. “It’s more expensive than your truck! Ha!"

"What kind of person buys a bag for a million?" "A rich one! Wait a second!”

The groom run into the house for a moment and come back with a land title deed, placing it on the tray.

“This is the deed to my house and land. I’ll give it my all; it’s worth at least two million.”

"That’s an exaggeration!"

Janpob looked around as if he's assessing.

"This land is worth at most five thousand baht per square wah. Even with the entire house included, it wouldn’t even reach two million."

"So let’s get this over with! I will offer the van I drove here today for another bid, worth about three million eight hundred thousand...Janpob, count it."

"Three million eight hundred thousand, going once!" “... ”

Three million eight hundred thousand, going twice! “ ”

"Three million eight hundred thousand, going three times. Miss Arun Berkfah doesn’t need to get married!"

"Yay!"

The secretary’s mother and brother scream and rush to grab the watch and bag, not forgetting to hold out their hands for the van keys as a guarantee that I wouldn’t take them back. The groom now sit with a dejected expression, unable to compete, before tossing aside the ceremonial cloth with a look of defeat. I looked at the secretary, who remained silent, and smile at her with a sense of victory.

"You don’t need to get married now." "I won’t accept."

Huh?/Huh!/Huh!

The sound of applause turned into stunned silence. The secretary’s arrogant behavior left me surprise.

"I didn’t ask for your help, Khun Intuorn, so don’t try to help me. This is my life."

## "I’m sorry."

I looked at the sweet-faced girl and said something I never thought I would say. Even Janpob is shock to hear it. Finally, I take a deep breath and speak from my heart.

"I’m sorry for making you feel bad. That day, I intended to tease you and wanted to teach you a lesson that you weren’t as good as you thought. But after succeeding, I didn’t feel good about it at all… I was filled with guilt."

“...”

"You have fulfilled your duties as a secretary flawlessly, and I would greatly regret it if you had to get married when a bright future awaits you.

Helping you this time is a matter of monopoly." Suddenly, what nonsense am I saying?

"Having you around would increase my potential, that price is too small. One day, you will succeed and you will surely pay me back."

“...”

"Or do you think you won’t be able to earn the money to pay me?"

When asked this, Arun looked a little surprises before showing a hesitant expression mixed with reluctance to accept, prompting me to press a little further.

"Or do you want to marry a man old enough to be your father, who always smells of sapodilla? When you enter the room, he will rub his rough hands, like a dog’s elbow, on you, leaving your skin cracked like a parched field in the dry season. Imagine him undressing for you, with his wrinkled worm..."

"Miss."

Janphop tugged at my shirt and clear his throat as if to intervene when he see me dragging the conversation into inappropriate territory.

“That’s too vivid."

"It’s okay. I just trying to say that if you have to belong to this man, **it would be better if belong to m**e.”

The sweet-faced person looked at me in shock. Even Janpob staring at me in disbelief. I looked around, confused as to why everyone so surprised, and soon Arun nod vigorously in response, her voice shaking.

"Yes... Khun In is right. I don't think I can stand the smell of sapodilla for the rest of my life."

She's really afraid of that shriveled worm, but she doesn't dare say so, huh? I smile, feeling victorious, and get straight to the point.

"So, what's the conclusion?"

"I'm not getting married anymore."

Hearing this, I smile broadly and reach out to grab the sweet-faced secretary's hand for the first time since we met, squeezing it tightly.

"Great. From now on, you're mine."

**Footnote:**

*Wah (Geography): A unit of length used in Thailand, equivalent to approximately 2 meters.*

*Sapodilla is the fruit of the sapodilla tree (Manilkara zapota), also known as sapodilla, sapodilla or sapota in some regions.*

note: this book only update 1 chapter a day...this book translate frm Thai and it's a hard job....pls understand... don't ask too much....haha...

# 07. Intuorn, the undefeated

"At least her family was kind, I'm touched." "Thank you."

"I was being sarcastic!"

Now, I'm about to scream after my first ever experience of sitting on a bus home, packed with people packed like sardines. I'm still confused and dizzy with my own thoughts, wondering what on earth made me go all out to get my fiancé, to the point of giving up a limited edition handbag-only 200 were made in the world-and a van, just to trade in a secretary that I've been trying to get rid of since the moment I saw her. What's more frustrating is that Arun's mother said she loved the bag and would take it to market for morning glories tonight.

And when I said her family was kind, I meant that they kindly drove me to the bus station so I could catch the bus home. Not without reminding me repeatedly,

"Don't forget to transfer ownership of the car to our family."

The more I think about it, the more painful it becomes, both the car and the limited edition crocodile leather bag...

"Putting morning glories on it... That's an Hermès, for God's sake!"

The sweet-faced person, who noticed my irritated behavior and immediately guessed that I was referring to the crocodile leather bag I was so protective of, bowed slightly as if apologizing.

"I'm sorry about the bag Khun In didn't have to go that far."

"I don't understand myself!"

"Khun In is the type who can't stand losing. In fact, I wanted to warn you during the auction, but I figured you wouldn't listen."

I glance at the secretary, who used the word 'auction', and felt a little guilty. Although Arun's face showed no emotion, I could sense that she was not pleased with the choice of word.

"Auction? It was just a competition. It was a valuable investment, because you have too much potential to sit at home and do nothing. It's better for you to work as an assistant for me and Dad. It was totally worth it."

"I can't believe Khun In sees so much value in me."

I didn't see any value, I just thought it sounded cool. I couldn't even define the word "potential" correctly according to the dictionary, but I thought it fit the context. Pretty fancy, huh?

"By the way, doesn't Khun In feel uncomfortable?" "About what?"

"Talking with your fingers pinched at your nose the whole time since we got on the bus."

"I just. "

I looked at the man now standing with his arm hanging above his head, exhaling an unbearable smell from his armpits. But how could I say that directly? He was standing an arm's length away.

"I just wanted to try being like you for a change. To see what it's like to talk in a nasal voice, like you're constantly having a cold. Can you stop talking to me so much?"

"Why? Didn't you say you wanted to try being me?"

I bared my teeth at Arun, who didn't seem the least bit bothered by the horrible smell.

*Damn!*

What would I do if this guy's armpit hair got into my mouth while my mouth was open?

"I'll lean towards you, slide a little further." "Lean into me?"

Desperate to escape the wafting smell, I didn't know what else to do. I looked at the sweet-faced secretary, who never complained or talked much, and couldn't help but ask back.

"Is there a problem?"

"No, I'm just surprised Khun In wants to lean in."

"I want to feel the breeze on my face, and right now, you have to be everything to me, from a pestle to a battleship. Right now, you need to turn into a pillow."

"..."

"You're mine now."

And just like that, the torturous experience on the bus was over. When I finally got home, I was immediately summoned by Dad when he found out that I had outbid, no, outbid the groom at Arun's wedding and gotten my secretary back. But instead of being happy, Dad was showing his teeth at me, criticizing me for spending money without thinking.

"Isn't this a good deal? Three million baht for a van and getting Dad's lover back."

"Stop calling Arun my lover, In! It's disrespectful."

"I'm just joking."

I looked at my secretary and laughed. "She didn't say a word about it." "What could she say? She's polite." "Dad!"

I muttered in frustration. Why does he always scold me in front of my secretary, who looks like Mew Nittha from that Parrot soap commercial?

"Then what should I have done? Let Arun marry that Thai Ridgeback-like fiancé, live in a house on stilts, sleep under a mosquito net, and become a housewife with no skills? Didn't you say Arun was talented, and that's why you trusted her to take care of me? I did my best! It's only three million baht. Dad's eyebrows won't even twitch at that"

"That's because Dad earned it, so it doesn't matter. But have you ever earned at least one or two thousand baht? You don't know the value of money except for spending it."

"I've earned money before! I once earned 300,000 baht selling second-hand stuff."

I crossed my arms in defiance, thinking about the time when I, along with a close friend, sold things online and made a significant amount of money.

But just thinking about that friend made me feel bad, and everyone noticed the change in my mood.

"What's wrong, In?"

Dad, who was speaking sternly before, seems to realize that I was thinking about my old friend and softened his tone, showing his typical fatherly love.

"Nothing, I'm fine."

I shake my head, quickly trying to get back to normal.

"Don't underestimate me, Dad. One day, when I'm rich, don't come begging me."

"And how are you going to get rich if you still don't know how to make money?"

"I'm going to sell bags! I even took a quick course in fashion design. Now I'm ready to do anything!"

"Where's the business plan? Take it to show Dad." "What's that?"

"A business plan." "And what's that?"

The room went completely silent. Arun, Dad, and Jenpop stared at me as I panicked, realizing that I might be coming across as ignorant. But hey, you can't blame someone for what you don't know, right?

"It's okay. Now that you have Arun, go learn from her, and we'll talk later... I'm tired."

Dad waved me off. Pouting, I reluctantly left the room. As I left, Arun prepared to go home, but I held up my hand to stop her, as if telling her to stay put.

"You're not going anywhere. From now on, you're staying here." "What?"

"You heard me right. If you go home, when your family runs out of money, they'll drag you back to marry that groom. From now on, you're staying in this house. That's an order."

I take a deep breath.

"A request from the owner of a limited edition Hermès bag, one of only two hundred in the world."

As soon as I said that, I felt like crying. I missed that bag so much. Right now, she's probably holding morning glories and other vegetables at some market in Chonburi...

"So, where am I going to stay?" Arun asked. "You'll sleep in my room..."

I quickly shake my head and changed my mind. "Jen... take Arun to Jao-Jom's room..."

I hesitated as I said the name, struggling to keep my voice steady. "Jao-Jom's room."

"..."

"Let her stay there. We'll have someone install the air conditioning."

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After Arun had rested for a while, showered and changed her clothes, I couldn't resist checking on her and seeing how she was settling into the guest house. I stood at the door for a moment, reminiscing about the past.

Once upon a time, she used to lived in this room. I even tried to bring my own pillow to sleep here, but it was too hot, and I thought about installing air conditioning. Little did I know that after all this time, I would return to this room again with the same thought: installing air conditioning, but this time for someone new, not for her.

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

I knocked on the door and within three seconds, it swing open. Arun is standing there in a T-shirt and pajama pants, a sight I rarely see in normal times. Her hair still damp from a recent wash, which surprised me a little.

"So, you have a normal life like everyone else." "Oh, it's you, Khun In."

"We're so close and you didn't recognize me? If I hadn't spoken, you wouldn't have known who I was, huh?"

At that, she paused for a moment before admitting the truth.

"Yes. You probably already know, Khun In, that I have difficulty recognizing faces."

"So you've become someone who has to observe everything carefully, haven't you? Which... is a good thing. It's made you quite meticulous. How's the new room? Too hot? I told Jenpob to call someone to install the air conditioning tomorrow.

"I don't want to bother you. I can sleep with just a fan. In the rented house, I always used a fan."

"No way. I can't have you thinking that I don't take good care of my secretary. You're Intuorn's secretary now; everything has to be first class. Even if I don't install it, daddy will make sure you get it... after all, you are his lover."

"..."

"No excuses?"

"I know you don't believe that. The more I try to defend myself, the more you tease me, so it's better to keep quiet."

"You really have no sense of humor, do you?"

"But I should warn you not to joke around like that too often in front of your mother. Even if she doesn't think much of it at first, if you keep doing it, she might start to believe it's true."

"My mother isn't that narrow-minded ... Anyway, if you feel comfortable here, I'm relieved. Tomorrow we'll start work as usual. Wake me up in the morning, help me pick out my clothes, and also... explain to me what business plan daddy was talking about. Just so you know, I'm not stupid; it's just that not everyone in the world knows everything."

"I never thought you were stupid, Khun In."

"Of course not, because I am pretty, smart and beautiful... Anyway, let's end this fun conversation here."

I'm about to leave when I stop, because something come to my mind. I turned to look at her sweet face, still there, following me without closing the door.

"Can I ask you something?" "What is it?"

"Why, on the wedding scene with the names of the bride and groom, was it written **Arunee Beekfah Nok Ga Boy Bin**?"

Suddenly, the normally composed face of the sweet girl turned red, and this surprised me a lot. When I approached, almost right next to her, she started to move nervously, making me ask again.

"I'm waiting for an answer." "It's... that's my full name." "Really?"

"My parents named me... Arun Berkfah, the bird flying high."

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I admit that I laughed so hard last night that I tossed and turned in bed like crazy. This might be the most hilarious thing in years that has made me feel this way. But ever since I met this secretary, it seems like there hasn't been a single day that has been dull, as there is always something on my mind, even if it can be a little annoying at times.

I'm not sure when I actually fell asleep. The next thing I knew, there was a knock on the door outside. When I turned to look at the clock, it read seven in the morning.

"Don't you think you're waking up a little too early? You're ready to offer alms, but I'm still in the temple. I want to sleep!"

When I opened the door and see my capable secretary, I immediately scolded her like someone who know I could, but Arun Berkfah remained completely unfazed and walked into the room, heading towards the closet.

"If you want to become a capable person, you must adjust your waking time to be earlier... Those who wake up early have more time to do things every day than who wake up late. This is a step towards success in life,"

She said.

"No way... I'd rather be a lazy person, I said, walking over to the bed and flopping down."

But it seems Arun Berkfah get some new information about me because she used the "forbidden" name to make me jump out of bed immediately.

"I think Renu would wake up around five to run and exercise. After that, she would finish her chores until they were done, leaving plenty of time to have a meal with her loved one," she added.

"You're too bold."

I growled, glaring at my secretary as if I was going to rip her head off.

"Where did you get that name... Jenpop?"

"It doesn't matter where I get it, but waking up late will never lead to success. If you think you're not important, 'I'm already rich' , even if you don't work, you're richer than Renu. Although it may be a bit useless, there's still a lot more that outweighs it, so you might as well just go to bed."

I grabbed a pillow, ready to throw it at my desk, but instead, I changed my mind and covered my face with it, yelling in an attempt to contain my frustration.

"Alright, I'll get up!"

"You're already one step closer to victory." She replied.

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As I mentioned, Arun Berkfah tasked taking care of my clothes and appearance, which initially didn't please me. However, I secretly admitted that this sweet-faced girl has good taste, is observant, and knows that I love the color pink. So, I assigned her to take care of everything for me.

"I'll get rid of all these unnecessary clothes, and then today, we'll spend the whole day shopping for clothes. And yes... you'll be my personal stylist."

"If you think I'm worthy, I'll follow your orders." She said. "You're a good speaker."

I smile, acting like a boss with my arms crossed.

"And about the perfume... from now on, I'll only wear one scent, so you can choose which one I should wear."

" "

"They say that a person's good or bad feelings start with their smell. If you have to work with me and need to remember me well, then you should choose the smell."

"Okay."

Arun Berkfah walk over to the perfume cabinet that I had collected quite a lot. Then, the sweet-faced girl looked around for a while before picking up Chloe perfume, which contains floral notes.

"This perfume, please."

"Oh, okay... then this will be the one I will wear from now on." " "

"Now, go pick out some clothes for me that are suitable for today wait a

minute, I'll take this call."

I let my secretary pick out the clothes while I answer the call from Dad, who called my cell phone instead of sending someone to call me.

"Yes, Dad, what's the matter? Why are you calling instead of sending someone?"

[This is taking too long for my liking. I'm telling you to get dressed and come down quickly. There are guests here, and I need to talk to you about something.]

"Who's here?"

I glance at Arun Berkfah, who is still intently picking out clothes. I couldn't help but wonder what perfume this little girl was wearing, and I accidentally leaned in to sniff the area behind her neck as soon as she turned around. Our noses brushed lightly against each other.

## Thump Thump...

"What are you doing, Khun In?"

"I'm on the phone with my dad... uh, what did you just say, Dad?"

I quickly turned away from my secretary and pretending to talk to my dad. "Is there something you need to discuss?"

(Hurry up, get dressed and bring Arun with you.)

We both hung up. I'm still holding the phone, unsure of what to do, while Arun Berkfah stand still, maintaining her composure.

"Are you done choosing my clothes?" "Yes, I done."

"Then I'll get dressed first; you can wait outside." "Okay."

I watched Arun Berkfah until out of sight, then let out a loud sigh, "Phew." What kind of atmosphere is this with this awkward pause and silence?

But when I thought of the shocked expression on my secretary's face, who turned around in surprise, I quickly shake my head and dressed appropriately.

I put on some makeup because my father said there were guests waiting. And when I see who the guests are, I couldn't help but make a disgusted face...

"What are you doing here?" "Wait."

Both Mawin and my father are staring at the television, watching an advertisement with Mew Nittha as the presenter, complete with her characteristic voice describing the qualities of the product.

The two men stared at each other dreamily for more than fifteen seconds until everything changed when the advertisement switched to a scene from Nadech.

"Alright, little In is finally here. You, Arun, come sit here quickly. I have something to tell you."

Arun Berkfah and I walk over to sit down at their invitation. Mawin smiles at my sweet-faced secretary, looking somewhat pleased, and I believed that his visit today was definitely not for me. How rude!

He should be my fiancé, but he is looking at my secretary so eagerly. He might get in trouble for this.

"What's going on? You look serious."

"After seeing Nong In spending money recklessly, I realized that maybe I was raising my daughter the wrong way."

"Dad!"

I almost screamed because my father was criticizing me in front of Mawin, the older cousin I didn't particularly like, who was always compared to me during family gatherings as being superior, while I seemed to have no ambition. Which... was somewhat true, but I was planning to get serious now! My father shouldn't humiliate me like this.

"So, it's time for In to start working and earning her own money, so that she can understand how hard it is to earn money.""

"But In is going to sell bags, right?"

"Before starting a business, In needs to understand it first. A business plan and In still doesn't understand anything... so I think you should go back to square one."

"Are you suggesting I should go to kindergarten?"

"Getting off topic again... So, do you remember the new hotel I just built in Phuket?"

"Yes, I do."

"I want you to go work there for three months, with Mawin taking care of you. If you pass your probation after those three months, I'll consider you an adult, and then you can do whatever you want, and I won't object."

"Is it really that simple?"

I said, looking surprise. Actually, when I thought about it... running a hotel shouldn't be that hard. I've seen my father working, talking briefly to the staff, giving orders and then leaving. If that's all, I can definitely do it.

"It's not that easy. I think you'd probably give up on the first day." My father replied.

"That's underestimating me! There's nothing I can't do. Besides, I have Arun Berkfah now. You said she's capable... so she should be able to help me without any problems."

"I think so too... it might be a little difficult for you, Arun, to take care of little In."

"No, she's very capable. I don't feel overwhelmed at all."

Arun said, standing proudly. See? Even my secretary confirms it. "Are you satisfied now that Dad's lover confirms it?"

"Nong In!"

"I'm just kidding!"

I said, laughing as Mawin looks shocked at what he heard.

"Why are you so surprised? Arun is my father's lover; what does that have to do with you?"

"Is this serious?"

"Are you crazy? This is just a father-daughter joke."

"That's a really bad joke. You could hurt Miss Arun with this," Mawin scolded. I silently muttered 'nosy' to him.

"Let's just say In agreed to go work in Phuket. If she quits before three months, it means she doesn't have what it takes to do anything... she's just lazy."

"Dad, don't act like you're pressuring me to quit any further. There's nothing that can make me quit. Just work in Phuket for three months. How hard can that be?"

"That's good... and it'll be a secret. Mom can't know." "Why can't Mom know?"

"Because she won't accept it."

I frowned, not quite understanding what my father meant, but when I see a mischievous smile appear on Mawin's face, I became suspicious, but I didn't ask any more because I was feeling irritated.

There must be something behind it; it's a task my father thinks I can't handle, and he's set conditions to keep me at home without having to earn a living or prove myself.

But who would accept that?

## I'm Intuorn and I've never lost!

# 08. Determination

I thought that when the business discussion was over, Mawin would leave, but no. He kept finding excuses to continue the conversation, asking me to take him around the house as if this place were a zoo. Although he pretended to be interested in the house, the truth he is clearly trying to find a reason to talk to Arun Berkfah. The excuse of wanting to explore the house is complete nonsense, utter bullshit!

"I heard from Uncle Anek about how you helped someone avoid marriage. It’s great that you didn’t get married after all."

"How is that great?”

I interrupted, speaking for Arun Berkfah, who didn’t seem to mind much. “And what does that have to do with you? Go ahead, elaborate.” "Elaborate? Well… let me think.”

Mawin rolled his eyes upward as if trying to remember something.

“I mean, someone as skilled and young as you would be a waste if you rushed into marriage."

"Weren’t you the one who rushed to the marriage back then? But the bride ran away, right?”

At this point, Mawin’s cheerful expression changed to one of seriousness, as if I had touched a nerve.

“Oops, did I just say something wrong?”

"If two people aren’t meant to be together, they simply won’t be. Everything that happens is for the best."

Then my sweet-faced secretary sensibly chimed in. Mawin’s serious expression instantly brightened as if her words are water soothing his heart. Unbelievable! I'm trying to interrupt the conversation, but she just patched it up, making things smooth again. Where’s the fun in that?

"Indeed… Arun said it well. If there comes a day when you can’t tolerate Intuorn anymore, you’re welcome to come work for me."

"That would be tough. I’ve invested a lot."

"You must have forgotten that I’m also filthy rich."

"Hurry up and leave. You’ve walked through the house three times, and it’s hot as hell!”

I bared my teeth and waved at Mawin, abandoning all pretense of politeness.

"Why don’t you go in first? I just want to walk a little further." "Where?"

"Where what?"

"Where are your manners? Can you just throw a guest out?" "The host chased first! Go wherever you want."

In the end, I was the one who got sent away. Arun Berkfah continued to walk beside Mawin, chatting happily.

Meanwhile, I stand there helplessly, watching the two of them from behind. At that moment, Jenpob arrived, standing next to me as if he's in charge.

"I’ve been wanting to see you. Have you been here long?"

"A little while."

"A little while? And what were you doing, standing here in silence?"

"I was watching Mawin and Arun Berkfah, wondering why he's so interested in her."

"What’s more interesting is why you're so interested in this."

I looked at my subordinate and childhood friend, pondering his words.

"I'm just observing, considering I was there when you bid for Arun. Then, suddenly the cake was stolen, and I feel bitter for you."

"Can you use that phrase in this context?"

I frowned and tilted my head, confused. Or maybe it's because I had been abroad for so long that I was no longer sure how far the flexibility of the Thai language had gone.

"But since you’re here, it’s perfect. I have something I want you to do." "Yes, miss."

"Go investigate Mawin for me, anything you can find. I want to know why I’ve been seeing him so often

lately and why he’s so involved with my secretary… Hey, where are you going without even saying goodbye?"

Sometimes I’m not sure if Jenpob is human or ghost. Maybe he’s Hattori reincarnated. He moves like a ghost, but that’s good things get done quickly. I haven’t even finish giving the order and he is already on his way to work.

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"Here’s the information on Mawin that you asked me to find."

I looked at Jenpob, who is like my right-hand man, a little surprise. I think I just asked him to look into Mawin this afternoon, but around 5:00 p.m., he came back with neatly printed documents, complete with photos for me to enjoy.

"So fast! Are you an undercover spy? Or maybe you’re working secretly for a shadowy organization, collecting protection fees or something? No… I’m scared."

"There are about four thousand branches all over Thailand." "Is it an underground chain or a 7-Eleven?"

I playfully bared my teeth at him, feeling a little exasperated but amused. "Let's see what interesting things my dear cousin has been up to."

I started reading the details about Mawin line by line, wanting to absorb every bit of information before confronting him, already feeling a little irritated that it was so exaggerated.

"Is it that easy to get into Oxford? Is it a university or a dictionary section in B2S? Really."

I looked at Jenpob, wanting to make sure that my future fiancé's academic background was legitimate and solid.

"It's real."

"Ridiculous. But he looks so dumb."

"Miss In, you seem very intelligent, but you didn't get into Oxford either."

"I don't think you can judge by appearances... Wait, I feel weird about what you just said. Was that an insult?"

"You better keep reading the next lines."

I noticed that Jenpob is smiling and, right after that, I started to realize that I had just been insulted while reading the biography. I'm doomed, my subordinate is getting cheeky, but I can't talk back, it wouldn't be nice.

"So, he almost got married once, huh?"

I clicked my tongue in satisfaction, glad to see that Mawin had some flaws in his life.

"I was at that event too. Too bad I didn't see the bride's face before." "The bride's picture is on the next page."

"Let's take a look."

The moment I turned to the printed photo, I'm stunned. I turned to look at Jenpob.

"No wonder Mawin is so interested in Arun Berkfah. Does everyone on this planet look like Mew Nittha?"

"She's the prototype of a sweet and beautiful woman." "What about me?"

"You're beautiful too, Miss."

"Everyone says I look like a member of Girls' Generation! At least my face isn't ordinary."

I tried to find something positive about myself to overshadow the sweet- faced women in the photo who seemed to constantly surround me. Whether it was Mawin’s ex-fiancée, Arun Berkfah, or even my love rival, Khun Renu, I was constantly dealing with people like that. Not to mention the celebrities my dad always makes fun of on TV.

"What’s even more interesting is that the fiancée ran away with a woman." "Wow!"

I feigned interest and looked at the picture of the other woman, whose face I recognized from TV.

"I can’t blame her for running away, she’s gorgeous."

"But if she liked women, she shouldn’t have given Mawin false hope in the first place. I felt bad for him."

"Look who’s suddenly feeling sympathetic."

I pouted in mild irritation and closed the file, deciding not to care anymore.

"So, he dumped his ex for Arun Berkfah. Like a horror movie, what do you call it? A spirit substitute? Something like that, right?"

"Yeah."

"I think the suggestion that I work in Phuket was Mawin’s idea. He wants to get close to my sweet-faced secretary, for sure. It's so annoying, using me as a bridge... to cross the River Kwaai..."

"Kwai," Jenpop corrected.

"I almost mispronounced it." I cleared my throat.

"I'm a girl who was educated abroad, you know? You have to understand." "I'll always remind you if you mispronounce things."

"How cute."

I stand up and playfully pinched Jenpob's cheek, pleased with him. Then, I placed my hand on the cheek of my subordinate, who also my friend and caretaker.

"I just noticed how tall you are. I think we've been together for a long time."

"Yes."

"Wouldn't it be nice if we could be together for the rest of our lives?"

The normally expressionless person smiled slowly, almost as if he's shy. I reached out and gently adjusted his clothes, offering a compliment.

"Thank you for everything. Um... Will you come with me on this work trip?"

"Yes."

"Great. I’d be lost without you." "What are you kids up to?”

My mother suddenly appeared, clearing her throat slightly and giving me a disapproving look. Jenpob give a slight bow and silently excused himself, leaving me alone with my mother.

“You’re getting too close to Jenpob, In."

"There’s nothing wrong with that. He’s my friend. We grew up together."

"Men and women can’t just be friends. Hormones get involved. Even if you don’t feel anything, that doesn’t mean Jenpob doesn’t."

"You’re thinking too much, Mom…"

"Anyway, is there something you wanted? You look serious, and I doubt you come here just to lecture me about Jen."

"I’m not lecturing you, I just concerned. I just found out from your father that you’re going to work in some rural area."

"It’s not rural, Mom. It’s a thriving, vibrant place, full of clear skies and beautiful water. I’ll be working at Dad’s new hotel. You don’t have to worry."

"What’s so ‘vibrant’? Where? Chiang Mai? Chiang Rai? Pattaya? Phuket?"

I instinctively raised my hand to cover my mouth, remembering that my father had strictly ordered me not to let my mother know about this. She hadn’t wanted me to leave again since the last time, when I caused some trouble and had to hide in Korat for several months. Just when we were spending time together, I left again for a short-term course abroad for two years, and she begged me not to go anywhere anymore.

"It’s a secret."

"Why are you keeping secrets from me, In!"

Mom exclaimed, making me shrink like a turtle shrinking into its shell.

"If I tell you, you’ll follow me around and watch everything I do! This time, I’m going to learn about work so I can grow up and become an adult. The stakes are high. Dad is challenging me and mocking me, saying I can’t handle it, which I won’t accept."

"If you can’t do it, then don’t do it. We’re rich, after all."

"Being rich isn’t enough, Mom. I have to be capable too. I’ve already made up my mind. It’s only three months. Besides, Arun Berkfah and Jenpob will be there with me, keeping an eye on things. Do you really think Dad would let me go and suffer?"

"Did your dad tell you what kind of work you’ll be doing?"

"He didn’t, but if I had to guess, it would be something high-level, like a manager overseeing things, giving orders. Easy stuff. Don’t worry, Mom. If Daddy makes me serve drinks, make coffee, clean toilets or do laundry, I’ll tell you right away."

"I don’t want you to go. We’ve only just started spending time together."

"It’s only three months. After I’m done, I’ll come back, glorious and refined, like a queen. Not even Dr. Renu will be able to compete."

At the mention of that name, Mom immediately give me a knowing look, realizing why I had taken this job.

"Dad mentioned her name to challenge you, didn’t he? No wonder you’re so determined. I’m worried."

"I’ve already made up my mind, Mom. You can’t change my mind." "But…"

"I will defeat Dr. Renu!"

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My determination made Mom give in, and after that the journey to fly and prove myself to Daddy took more than two weeks. Arun Berkfah, Jenpob and I flew from Suvarnabhumi to Phuket in just one hour, dressed to the nines.

It's necessary, as appearance is crucial for a hotel executive.

However, it's a little frustrating that my secretary, who was supposed to look after me, dressed in an oversized plaid shirt and shorts, with only her hair tied back, nothing else.

"Are you going to cut sugarcane?"

I looked at Arun Berkfah and said lightly.

“You are not dressed appropriately for your role as my secretary.” "I'm here to work, not to walk around Siam ParagonZ."

"Calm and sarcastic... just like someone else I know."

I looked at Jenpob and sighed, because even my friend, who was like my right-hand man, wearing a simple T-shirt with a cartoon character on it and

plain jeans.

"Let's go out to eat at a sugarcane field, right?"

"What are you saying, Miss? You're going to embarrass Khun Arun."

While we are all talking, I suddenly heard someone calling my name, but I forget to include the prefix "Khun" out of politeness during our first meeting.

"Do you use this car, Intuorn?" "Yes, and who are you?"

"I'm the hotel's driver."

The shabby-dressed old man looked me up and down. "Where are you dressed to go?"

"To the hotel, of course."

"A little too dressed up, don't you think?" "What do you say?"

"Come on, get in the car. It's late. Khun Mawin is waiting for you at the hotel."

Where did this driver come from? Talking so bluntly to a future senior hotel executive like me? After getting into the van, the driver handed us three matching outfits. I unfolded mine and frowned slightly, while the other two showed no sign of surprise.

"Why are my clothes the same as these two?" "And why should they be different?"

The driver chuckled and shook his head.

"This girl asks too many questions. She must be a little demanding." "How can you talk to me like that? Do you know who I am...?"

Arun Berkfah immediately covered my mouth with one hand and shake her head. I looked at my sweet-faced secretary in confusion before pulling her hand away.

"What's wrong with you?"

"We can't let anyone know who Khun In is." "Why not?"

"Because we're here as employees."

Jenpob said, cupping his mouth as if he already knew beforehand, which startled me enough to ask again:

"What? As what?"

"As hotel staff. Your role is to be a maid."

I gaped at Arun Berkfah, seeking confirmation. After receiving silence as a signal, I responded with...

"Ahhh!!!"

**Footnote:**

1. ***Hattori Hanzō, a famous samurai and ninja from feudal Japan.***
2. ***Siam Paragon is one of the largest and most luxurious shopping malls in Thailand, located in the heart of Bangkok.***

# 09. Agreement

"Pull the car over! I'm telling you to pull the car over right now!" "Ahhh!"

No matter how much I yelled, the driver didn't care about my objections. Finally, my patience ran out, and I grabbed the driver's head until his face tilted back. The van, which was speeding down the road, rocked back and forth as if it were playing some kind of game.

"Please don't, Miss! We're all going to die!"

"Good! If I die alone, I'll come back to haunt you all."

Finally, the driver agreed to pull over to the side of the road, allowing me to get out without any more hesitation. He cursed at me as if I'm a nuisance he no longer wanted to share the world with.

"I may not speak your language, but I understand you. You'll be the first one to get fired!"

After being scolded like that, the driver completely ignored us. He slammed the van door and sped off until we could no longer see the taillights. Now the three of us are near Patong Beach, and at least it's good that he let us get off here.

A place that can ease my heart a little. At least I can drag Janpob into the sea instead of pushing him to get hit by a car.

"Don't touch me, you traitors!"

I growled at Janpob, who is trying to explain everything, then turned to look at Arun angrily.

"You're making me pay for your good deed, and the silence is screaming!" "Is that an insult? I'm trying to figure out how much it would hurt."

"Don't come back to me! I helped you by trading Hermes Limited, but you conspired with Dad and Mawin to trick me into working as a staff member. I'm going to tell my mom!"

"Can you please listen to the reason why Mister Anek is doing this?"

"Because he wants to teach me to spend money more wisely! There's no other meaning to it. You know I used the money to help you, not for something bad. Dad is unreasonable. I’ll tell my mother."

I stopped, stood still, and looked for a taxi, public transport, or any vehicle that could take me back to the airport where I came from. But it seems that Arun could see what I'm thinking, so she walks in front of me and glare at me defiantly.

"You’re not a child anymore, Khun In. If you keep threatening to tell your mother every time something doesn’t go your way, you’ll never beat that woman."

"Who are you talking about?" "Renu."

The name was like a curse, making me shudder and look at the small figure that looked exactly like the owner of that name, full of anger.

"Do you think mentioning that name will make me give up on going back to Bangkok? If you think that’s possible, just wait and see."

"Renu."

"So what?"

"Reanu."

"So what?"

"Renu Siwa Amphan."

"Fine! I give up; I’m going back to the hotel."

I looked at Arun, who showed no sign of fear that I might fire her.

I'm not giving up because of that name, but I need to talk to Mawin and sort things out. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Khun Intuorn, you are such a reasonable person."

Even though I knew the competent secretary is being sarcastic, I pretended not to care because the name “Renu Siwa Amphan” meant nothing to me. Nothing! I just wanted to talk to Mawin and go home. That’s all!

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Initially planning to take public transportation to the airport, I ended up deciding to let the car take me to the hotel, where Dad intended to straighten me out. As soon as I arrived, I rushed to the reception, throwing a tantrum and ignoring the expressions of the reception staff.

"I need to see Mawin right now!" "Do you have an appointment?"

"People like me don’t need appointments. Where is he… Ugh, what’s your name? I’m going to fire you for being so slow!"

I leaned forward to look at the gold name tag prominently displayed on her uniform. Just now, many guests, both Thai and foreign, looking at me with interest, but I don't care because my chest feel like it's about to explode like a Milo volcano.

Or was it Ovaltine?

"If you didn’t make an appointment in advance, I’m afraid you won’t be able to see him.

"Khun In,”

Arun said, who had been observing the situation for a while. Unable to bear it any longer, she walks over to the receptionist to speak politely.

“Could you connect me to Mr. Mawin…?”

The sweet-faced girl hesitated for a moment as she looked at me as if she was unsure, before deciding to introduce herself.

“Arun Barkfah would like to meet him.”

I didn’t know how I should feel as I tried to get in touch, but I wasn’t getting any cooperation. However, when it was the sweet-faced girl speaking, the staff quickly connected the call to her. Not long after, I received a response from the ever-pretentious Mr. Mawin through a subordinate, who told me again.

“Mr. Mawin said you can see him. I’ll take you there.” "Ugh!"

The staff looked at me, looking a little displeased, but they seem trying to bear it because they were in uniform and on duty. The three of us invited to meet Mawin in his suite, where he's dressed casually. He then smiles at all of us.

"Please come in." "You’re an idiot."

I said to my cousin and my future fiancé in a cold tone. However, Mawin didn’t seem to mind, as if he already knew I would respond this way.

"What’s this? You were the one who agreed to come work here. It’s unfair to insult me like that, so weak-hearted."

"You knew I would react this way, didn’t you? That’s why you’re acting so smug, having so much fun putting me in this subordinate position."

"It’s actually fun." "You idiot!"

"You crazy woman!"

And finally, the childhood nicknames we had for each other are bring back. From the deepest memories in their minds, Arun and Janpob exchanged nervous glances, not knowing what to do as they watched their employers spit fire at each other.

"You can’t hold it in anymore, huh? Great! Today, one of us is going to die!"

I walked over to the couch and sit down, crossing my legs and arms.

Anyway, I’m not doing this job. I’ve never swept a house in my life. You’re asking me to be a maid, pull the sheets, tidy the blankets, and clean the room? Are you crazy?"

"If you’ve never done this, you have to do it! To be a manager, you need to understand how to do each step of the job."

"This isn’t a drama where you have to start from scratch or something."

"Dramas are based on real life, you know? Come on… it’s only three months. Don’t act like you’re stepping in chicken poop!"

"What? Stepping in chicken poop? How dare you say that?!"

"You have to be brave! Because you really are like that. I heard you even pulled the hotel driver’s head to make him stop the car because you wanted to go home and tell your mother. It’s so embarrassing."

"It’s not as embarrassing as the person whose fiancée ran away from the wedding. If you were that good, she wouldn’t have left. Serves you right."

"Say what you want."

"And I know it too! This plan to stay for three months is just a cover. You only want to get closer to Arun through me, your fiancée!"

I glance sideways at the sweet-faced secretary, who looked somewhat confused, while Mawin’s face paled and a blush spread from his neck to his ears."

"What are you talking about? Khun Arun will feel bad." "Oh, you care so much, huh?

Whatever you hope for, I won’t let it happen. Do you know why?" "Why?"

"Because Arun Buerkfah belongs to Intuorn, that’s why!"

I declared loudly, asserting my ownership, and looked into Mawin’s eyes, who quickly looked away and shake his head.

"I’m impressed with you; I swear. So, what’s the conclusion? Do you agree to work here or not?"

"Who would do that? I came here to scold you and I’m leaving."

"So, before you go, why don’t you talk to Uncle Anek? That might change your mind."

"Nothing can change my mind." "Just listen first and then refuse."

Mawin picked up the phone in his suite and immediately called my father. His expression and demeanor are confident that I will agree to stay here, but

since I'm determined, I will not comply. No matter what Dad offered, I wouldn’t accept it!

[If In can stay for three months, Dad will invest thirty million to start In’s handbag brand.]

I was breathless when I heard such an offer. It was magnificent, but still… I wouldn’t agree.

"Even if In doesn’t do it, Mom will provide financing anyway."

[Dad will open a store in every mall and connect with all the contacts Dad has for In.]

"Money can’t buy me."

[Dad will give you a black card after completing this mission.] "If that is not enough..."

I bit my lip in frustration, feeling defeated by the power of capitalism. It's annoying. Even though I was born into a wealthy family, I still had to work hard and act like a maid. Even if it's a hundred times more comfortable than the average person.

Three months for something like that? Fine by me! [That means In agreed.]

"I really didn't want to do this, you know, but for Dad, who wants to correct In's behavior so badly."

I continued to act tough, but I could hear laughter coming from the line in appreciation, which only make me more embarrassed. That didn't even include Mawin, who is smiling, knowing that I had decided to stay.

[But Dad has conditions that In must follow.]

"Isn't three months already a condition? What else is there?"

[You can't tell Mom.] "Wow..."

I smile at the offer Dad probably feared the most. Mom wouldn't let me fight. If she found out that I'm working as a maid, she might even want to break up with Daddy. I'm the child who came out of Mommy's womb with money and gold, you know! Mommy said it was too hard to give birth because I didn't want to come out, so they had to do a C-section.

[And then...]

"Isn't there any more?"

[You, In, must not reveal to anyone that you are Mr. Anek's daughter or Mawin's fiancée. You have to behave like all the other employees.]

"What!!!"

[There will be no privileges.] "Can I have some advantages?"

[Making a joke like that means you agree.]

"I don't agree, but I have to reluctantly accept. Why do we have to have rules like these? I'm Daddy's daughter! You said I'm the only woman in the world you love. Why are you doing this?"

[Daddy will give you another Porsche.] "Complete with a kit!"

(Okay)

"I love you, Dad! See you in three months. Bye."

I hang up and sigh. Every offer was something I would be foolish to refuse! Everyone in the room looking at me, raising their eyebrows. Even though

they already knew what I had decided, they still wanted to hear it.

"What are you looking at...? Where is my uniform? I need to go change into it."

Mawin laughed and called the staff to prepare the uniforms for all of us.

"Someone will come to the room soon. They will bring the uniforms and explain where you will all sleep and how everything works."

The handsome man walks up to me and placed his hand on my head as if we're very close.

"This is going to be hard for you. Just get over it." "When did we become so close? Get your hand off me!" I pushed his hand away and grimace.

"From now on, when you see me, pretend you don't know me. You have to respect me as your boss, and you must call me Mr. Mawin."

"This is too much! Is there any low-level employee who calls a manager by his first name? Don’t you want what Uncle Anek offered?"

I agreed with him, but I'm still irritate. "Ugh, what is this?"

"Now, practice calling me... Mr. Mawin." "Yuck."

"Hurry up! It’ll be a disaster if you don’t say it right."

I pressed my lips tightly together before swallowing my pride and painfully calling out his name.

"Mr. Mawin."

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"Adjusting well, Khun Intuorn."

I didn’t adjust very well. The moment I entered the staff room, I almost screamed in despair at the thought of having to share it with another person, along with a ceiling fan that looked like it might fall at any moment. I could probably throw a rope up and swing while singing “Dancing Queen”!

"Is that a fan? In this tiny room?"

"This is already bigger than the other rooms,”

Said one of the staff who showed me and Arun to see the room, looking quite displeased.

"There are rooms even smaller than this!"

"Did you use connections to get this room? Besides, they managed to sleep two people here. Did you know that we all crammed into a three-person room?"

Is this what you call connections? I walked from the door to the balcony and back in four steps, looking horrified.

"This isn’t a bedroom; it’s a standing room! I can’t even spin to do ballet in here."

"I dance Mor Lam¹ every night. You’re too demanding." "What’s your name, anyway?"

Then the hostile glare directed at me once more before the staff member left without introducing himself. Now I'm alone with Arun, and before I could scream, the sweet-faced secretary, who doesn't seems the least bit bothered by the room, sitting on a

Doraemon-themed bed and looking around.

"Actually, it’s quite spacious." She said.

"Were you born in a bathroom to think this room is spacious?! How are we supposed to sleep? This is a room with a fan!"

"What about the fan?"

"I’m not sleeping with a fan!"

"Just bear with it for a while. It’s only three months. When you come back, you’ll get a new Porsche."

"Because of that Porsche, I ended up in this situation."

I crossed my arms and looked at the capable secretary, who adapted as quickly as a chameleon changing colors.

“Do I really have to share a room with you?” "Yes." She replied.

"No… I’m not sharing a room with anyone."

I said sincerely, which make Arun show a slight look of concern.

"If I can’t sleep here, I don’t know where else to go. I just heard that all the other rooms are cramped with three people, and if I ask to be let to stay, I’ll probably have to stand up and sleep like you said."

"I’m not comfortable with that. Having another person sleep with me creates a habit."

“…”

Then we fell silent, but eventually, I got rid of those annoying feelings.

"But it’s okay. It’s only been three months. We can sleep in separate beds. I doubt anything crazy will develop from this."

"Develop, huh?"

I remembered my past in Korat, where I became close to a girl to the point of inviting her to sleep over and spending long periods together. But even that made me feel very lonely when she wasn’t around anymore. Today, the memory came flooding back, the day I had a roommate, a maid…

"Don’t worry. You can sleep in that bed, and I’ll sleep in this one… I need to go to the bathroom often. Where’s the bathroom?"

I scanned the room for the bathroom before stopping. "Wait a minute, where is the bathroom?"

"It seems we will have to share the bathroom with other staff members."

The moment I heard this, my mouth fell open in shock before I forced out a scream, desperately seeking confirmation.

"What did you say?!" "Shared bathroom!" "Ahhh!!!"

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**Footnote**

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***1- Mor lam is a traditional style of music and dance originating from northeastern Thailand.***

# 10. The Problem

"Mawin, I know you like to watching me suffer, but isn't it a bit much that even the bathroom and toilet have to be shared with everyone while you're lounging in that sweet room? Where's the justice in that? I'm just a wild child. Half of this hotel belongs to my father!"

I paced the square room, taking three steps to the far wall before turning around again, yelling at my fiancé, who was probably drinking red wine and happily soaking in the hot tub.

[I'm thinking you should have come to boot camp.]

"I didn't come here to serve the nation! On top of the ceiling fan inviting me to swing, I have to deal with shared bathrooms. Not to mention the shower doesn't have hot water. This is too much... too much! I'm tired of the Porsche, I'm tired of the investments. I'll either wait for my parents to grow old and enjoy their nice inheritance, or I'll marry you and wait for my husband to support me."

[Should I support you like this?] "Yes... husband."

[What a loser.] "What did you say?"

[What a loser. You can't handle even the slightest criticism. You should be embarrassed in front of Khun Renu.]

"Hey, do you even know that name?"

I pressed the end button because I didn't want to argue anymore before I threw myself on the bed and sit down with my head in my hands.

Meanwhile, Arun looked at me silently, not making any comment, until I have to speak first.

"If you want to say something, say it. Don't look at me like that; I can't read it."

"No, I don't."

"It doesn't mean you have anything to say. We have to be together like this for three months, so please speak. I give you permission."

"Really?"

"Ya."

"I just feel like you are such a drama queen, so self-centered. If things don't go your way, you are ready to throw a tantrum. I wonder how you got to this age without ever having a boyfriend. If you did have one, how long did it last? Stuff like that."

I choked on what Arun had just said.

“I may have given you permission to speak, but there are some things you should keep to yourself."

"So that means I’m not allowed to speak anymore, right?” I sighed in annoyance before replying angrily,

“Just say whatever you want, but please choose your words carefully. I’m sensitive. My parents raised me to be that way. Did you know I came out of my mother’s womb with a silver spoon in my mouth? My mother even had to have a C-section because the baby was obstructing the exit, and she was in a lot of pain."

"Really? Uh… that…”

There was some kind of sound caught in the sweet-faced secretary’s throat. I looked at the person trying to articulate her words and raised an eyebrow when I see she tried very hard to stifle her laughter, covering her mouth with her hand.

"I... I'm sorry. Hehe... hehe." "What are you laughing at?" "Nothing, I just..."

"Don't you believe I came out of my mother's womb with a silver spoon in my mouth?"

"..."

"If someone is born and can walk on a lotus flower for seven steps, why couldn't I come out with a silver spoon? Hmph..."

I bared my teeth before looking at the secretary, who is hiding her face because she don't want me to see her laughing. When I see her do that, I couldn't help but smile too, although I bit my lip to contain it.

"Why are you covering your face? Just laugh if you want. I'm not mad at you."

"..."

"Take your hand away right now. I want to see your face."

Arun obeyed and obediently removed her hand, but her face went back to being expressionless, which irritated me.

"Really, why don't you show any emotion when you're with me?"

"Showing too much emotion makes me look unprofessional. No matter what the boss does, I won’t react, no matter how good or bad I feel."

"Is it really necessary to go that far?"

"Not showing any emotion is safer. I can’t predict what mood you’re in. If you’re in a good mood about something you don’t like, it might upset you. If you’re in a bad mood about something you like, it’ll make you feel even worse. So… it’s better to remain neutral."

*People like this do exist…*

And so, a life of servitude was born. I fully intended to pack my bags and fly back to Bangkok, but I held back. You could say I was so inexperienced that I wouldn’t even step in chicken poop. Still, I wanted to try the job; one day it wouldn’t be that hard. However, no one told me that I had to wake up at six in the morning to get ready for work. When Arun came to wake me up, I was furious and wanted to scream in Malay.

"This is too much! No hot water, no air conditioning, and now I have to wake up early and wear this uniform that looks like a maid's outfit?!"

"Well, our duty is to learn the basics, and Mr. Mawin briefed you about it yesterday."

"And what's this apron for? Am I supposed to go on MasterChef too?"

I throw my hands up and twirled around like I was dancing ballet, then tilted my head back to look at the ceiling fan.

I'm gonna swing from the chandelier! "..."

The sweet-faced secretary looked shocked as I suddenly started humming Sia without any warning.

"What? Haven't you heard it? Every time I see this fan, that song pops into my head."

"But..."

"What?"

I complained, still in a bad mood as I looked at Arun, who had a distressed expression as she is about to speak.

"Say whatever you want."

"Are you really not going to take a shower? Are you comfortable? You didn't take a shower last night either."

I touched my body lightly before shaking my head.

“I won’t take a bath because my mind is clear, so I don’t need to. Besides, I can’t stand taking a bath in a shared bathroom. There’s no hot water! My skin is sensitive; I can’t handle it. I came out of my mother’s womb with a silver spoon in my mouth, you know.”

“…”

"You always have something to say, but don’t say it. It’s making me sick… So, what’s next? I’ve changed my clothes now."

"Well… let’s start the first day of work together."

The first day of work mentioned was about making the beds and cleaning the rooms after the guests checked out. Today, the person who trained us was a housekeeper named *“Sorn,”* who seemed to be in her forties, with a harsh tone like a grumpy aunt who was always in a bad mood, but she kept telling us various things to remember. As for Arun, she remained the same, diligently taking notes to ensure she didn’t forget the order of the tasks, while I stood there with my arms crossed, resting my legs, not asking or probing.

Yes… because I didn’t intend to do that anyway. "Come on, try making the bed for me to see." "Okay,”

Replied the sweet-faced secretary, who had tied her hair back today, starting to work as instructed. Meanwhile, Aunt Sorn pointed at me to take care of

another bed.

"Why are you standing there?" "I’m standing here breathing." "What did you say?"

"I only answered because you asked." "And what’s that smell?... *Sniff, sniff."*

The woman named Sorn wrinkled her nose and sniffed near me before frowning.

"Did you put on perfume or something?" "Yeah, it smells like flowers."

"Why does it smell so weird and musty?"

"Is your nose working? This perfume cost several thousand. Two bottles probably cost more than your salary. Can’t you speak a little nicer when you’re teaching someone? Who hired you to work here?"

"Hey, you’re a newbie and you’re acting all arrogant. Who do you think you are?"

"Who am I? I’m the one who can fire you, so get out!" "This girl, I swear I’m going to slap you in the mouth!"

Then Sorn raised her hand, ready to really hit me, but Arun slid in front of me, giving the housekeeper a smile I’d never seen before.

"Calm down, okay? Intuorn has a bad mouth; Her parents didn’t teach her well."

"What did you say?"

I bared my teeth, ready to yell at the secretary for calling me by my name without a ‘Khun’ in front of it, and even drag my parents into it.

"How dare you…"

"Well, it’s true that her parents didn’t teach her anything. She looks fine, but she’s obviously useless. Someone who can’t even stand on her own can probably do nothing other than be a lover."

"Oh, wow…"

This time, it's my turn to raise my hand, ready to fight back. Arun, seeing that things getting out of hand, pushed me out of the room to avoid a confrontation. But by the time we get outside, the sweet-faced secretary is out of breath from the effort. What had started as my anger at that housekeeper, now directed at my smaller secretary.

"Why do you have to stop me? Didn’t you see how that woman treated me? And what is this… calling me out because my parents didn’t teach me anything? I wasted my time helping you. Don't forget that I have to work here because of you!"

"I didn't mean to insult you, but I had to agree to avoid a confrontation."

"Even if there was a confrontation, you should stand by me! Why do you have to support that woman?"

"You're wrong, you know? They're teaching you how to work; you just have to move on. There's no need to argue."

"How can I not argue when she talks to me like that? And more importantly, I'll never make anyone's bed! Do you have any idea how dirty this bed is?

Have you seen those stains on it? Do you know what they are?" "I don't know."

"They're the love marks of the guests who come here to indulge themselves after their activities. I can't stand it, not even touching these sheets! And I'll never change the bed linens, no way!"

In my entire life, I've never washed my own clothes. The idea of serving others? Forget it. Arun sighed softly, as if she's tired, but when she sees me looking, she assumed a calm demeanor to suppress any movement.

"Aren’t you complaining anymore?"

"Not anymore. If you don’t want to do it, then you don’t have to. What can I say?"

"I thought you would encourage me to do this or that. Weren’t you the one who said your job is to be a mentor and help me do everything perfectly?"

"Forcing someone to do something they don’t want to do will never end well. It’s better to find something else that you’re better suited for."

"You adapt quickly."

I tossed my hair dramatically, completely forgetting about the housekeeper named Sorn. Then I turned my attention to my sweet-faced secretary, remembering something.

"You smiled just now." "Hmm?"

"You smiled at her. I thought you said you didn’t like to show emotions. So what was that smile about?"

"A smile makes everything easier. People tend to soften when they receive a little kindness, like a small gesture like a smile. So I have to smile to end things quickly. If I resist along with you, things will only get worse."

"So why don’t you ever smile around me?"

"I already told you why: you’re the boss. Anyway, let’s take a break. It’s almost noon."

"Great! It’s finally time to eat."

I stretched lazily as if I had just made the bed, even though I hadn’t done anything. But speaking of food.

"Even if I’m not tired, waking up so early makes me feel exhausted. This day feels incredibly long. So, I’m going to have carbonara today!"

Just as I'm about to walk towards the corner of the dining hall, Arun gently tugged on my shirt, as if trying to get my attention.

"What?"

"This way, please. This way." "What?"

I found myself frozen in shock in the dining area where Arun led me. Everyone is standing in line, waiting to get food from the various trays placed around. They are chatting and laughing while I'm still in disbelief. Slowly, I turned to Arun.

"Is this what you mean by eating?"

"Yes, you can choose whatever you want to eat."

When it's Arun’s turn, she poured rice into her bowl and take the dishes she wanted without hesitation. Meanwhile, my plate remained empty as I stared at the food, which looked like garbage, unable to comprehend it.

"I’m not eating this! It looks like dog food!"

The moment I speak, the cafeteria, which is bustling with conversation, fell into complete silence, as if someone had pressed the mute button on a remote control. Arun, who is picking up food, froze, her hand still in the air as she stared at me in shock.

"Miss!"

"What? It’s true! How can anyone eat this?”

I slammed my plate down to emphasize my point that I absolutely could not eat it.

“Don’t mention dog food; I’m not even sure a dog would eat this!” "Miss, please!"

Jenpob, who had been listening to the commotion for a while, run up to me and whispered urgently.

“People are staring! Please lower your voice…"

"Why shouldn’t I speak loudly? How can anyone eat this? Our quality of life is so bad today that we have to reinforce it by eating this pitiful crap piled up like this?"

"Watch out!"

Jenpob quickly pushed my head down, and soon after, I feel like something flow over my head. When I looked closely, I see that it's a rice ladle, just before I heard a loud voice coming from the cook that I had been listening to for a long time.

"If you don’t want to eat it, then don’t eat it! Get out of here!"

That decisive tone make me growl and grab the plate that's nearby, throwing it back like a boomerang. The sound of the ceramic plate breaking against the wall echoed throughout the room. The cook, who managed to dodge, take out a knife and pointed it at me.

## "Today, either you or I will die!" "Come on, you crazy woman!"

# 11. War

"I'm going to file a police report. There will be no agreement. Don't come up with excuses that you have small children. The knife that was thrown at me was intended to kill me. I won't accept it!"

Now, the involved party and I are in the HR room, arguing heatedly, with Mawin listening to the dispute. He doesn't express any opinion because he doesn't want to seem like he's taking sides. He leaves the decision in the hands of HR, who, in fact, the employees also look at Mawin often, wondering what they should do, because they tried to mediate, but I stubbornly insist that I'm going to call the police.

"Don't let the situation get to that point. You're speaking provocatively, and there are many witnesses. You said that those foods looked like dog food."

"Because it is dog food! Who could eat that? I'm criticizing honestly so they can improve, isn't that a good thing? Not accepting this and throwing a spatula or a knife is totally unethical. It's like you're in a time machine back in time to the dinosaurs and making food for those T-Rexs, and then asking them, '*Is this tasty*?' "

"Let's make peace, let's shake hands. After all, we're still eating from the same pot, aren't we?"

"I haven't spilled rice in the living room yet, so I don't consider it to be the same pot. Oh... and I only eat rice imported from Japan, not dog food."

Actually, at home I only eat jasmine rice, it's nothing special, but I mention it to make myself seem grand and show that I haven't touched any food.

*Grrrr...*

When I mentioned food, my stomach immediately protested, breaking the silence that reigned. Mawin, the HR people, and Arun, who are next to me, looked at me and pressed their lips together, as if trying to hold back a smile, but they said anything.

*Damn, I'm starving. Hmph.*

"So let me take care of this. You guys stay outside for a while. I want to talk to you, In, alone."

Upon receiving this order, everyone left without protesting, even though it's the human resources room. And when we are alone, I went to the couch and throw myself down, crossing my legs immediately.

"Throw me out right now."

"I knew you were trying to cause trouble because of this."

"I'm not trying, it comes naturally. Are you crazy? Making me from a container? I'm not a pig. When I was in Korat, I dealt with a lot of bulls and cows, I had pigs and horses too, and they eat from containers like that.

"Look... you have to live with a lot of people. If you have to talk, talk, but it's going to be hard this way."

"The hard part is not staying, so fire me. Fire me right now." "I won't do that. You can resign."

"Oh, that's great... Then I'll resign." "So you give up badly."

It seems Mawin is waiting for me to say this, so he added the word “give up” to cheer me up, but enough. This joke doesn’t work on me anymore. Someone like me, who came out of my mother’s womb with money and jewels, doesn’t need to prove anything. I don’t see any benefit in having to change the sheets and pillows for the guests. There’s no point in me eating dog food and bathing with a basin.

"Well, you’ve given up. Are you satisfied now? Then you can leave." “...”

## "Renu really is better than you."

The name that sounds like a forbidden word make me close my eyes in anger. When he realized it's having an effect, he keep bringing it up.

"What’s wrong with you with that name? Let me say ‘Kimhan’ to your face, are you okay with that?"

"It’s okay. I don’t feel anything anymore."

"You’re lying. If you don’t feel anything, why are you looking at Arun so often?"

"What does this have to do with you and Arun?" "Don’t think I don’t know."

I smile defiantly and begin to walk around Mawin, like someone who feel I have the upper hand.

"You’re interested in the secretary because she looks like your ex- girlfriend."

The atmosphere changed to a respectful silence, and that meant he accepted what I said. Then, Mawin nodded.

"Hmm, I’m interested."

"See? You're trying to trap In so you can spend more time with Arun. Oh...acting like you're trying to change my behavior. You have hidden agendas."

"That's part of it, but it's not all. Besides... your problematic behavior will also put Arun in a difficult situation."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Anyway, Arun will always stand by you, because she's your friend." "Arun is not a friend."

I'm very careful with those words because I don't want anyone to get close to the bubble around me, as if I'm afraid of a relationship.

"That girl is just the secretary."

"A Secretary is a secretary. You're making the sweet secretary become a person everyone hates."

"What do you mean?"

"Because Arun is with you. So when you're hated, she will be too. Today you got a spatula to the head, and tomorrow it could be Arun. I think you'd better be a little more discreet."

"What an exaggeration! Are people really that irrational?" "You know very few people who group together. Like I said..." "What do you mean?"

"You are a person without friends."

As soon as he said that, Mawin started criticizing me without caring about my feelings. While we were arguing, my fiancé was sniffing, like when the maid teaches how to make the bed, and made an expression of disgust.

"What is that smell? Is it old perfume?"

"Are you crazy? I just bought it for thousands... It must be the sweat. I... I haven't showered in two days."

"What?! Yuck!"

Mawin take a step back, as if disgusted, and I bared my teeth in response. "And what do you want me to do? I can't take a cold shower! Damn it..."

I cursed, momentarily forgetting my upbringing, which taught me not to swear, like someone who came out of the mother's womb with a silver spoon.

"In China, that would definitely cause scabies."

"You are so dirty. Arun has never complained about anything?" "Has that girl ever shown any feelings for me? She is dead inside!"

"Dead inside? That's crazy! Arun is a lively person. Whenever he meets me, she is smiling."

"Smiling?."

I looked at Mawin and raised an eyebrow. "That girl smiles at you?"

"Yes."

For some reason, I felt irritated when I heard that. With me, she barely speaks, saving words as if she was afraid that the flowers would fall. And as for smiling or making an angry expression, that definitely doesn't happen.

"What's wrong? Why are you making that face?" "I want to take a bath!"

"Then go take a bath." "I have a proposal." "What?"

If you don't want In to file a police report against the Aunt Cook... I would like to take a bath in your room."

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I never understood why Shizuka was so happy to take a bath, until now. As soon as my skin touched the warm water that massaged my body, I felt like I was ascending to heaven. I always thought my happiness was in having a limited edition bag, but in reality, my true happiness was taking a hot bath, sleeping in an air-conditioned room, and sitting at home doing nothing, spending my money without trying.

If I had behaved a little better, I wouldn't be going through this now. Does he think I'm acting in a drama like "Bung Hong" with Bee Namthip as the lead?

Or is it Kimberley? I haven't watched the new version... "Ah... how lovely!"

I came out of the bathroom wearing a loose robe that was already in Mawin's room, before throwing myself on the sofa and drying my wet hair with a towel, feeling comfortable.

"Thank you for letting me take a bath."

"Keep the deal, okay? Don’t complain about the cook aunt."

"I’m a person of my word. If you can, order some food too, that would be great. I haven’t put anything in my stomach yet."

"Wanting too much, huh? You’ve only been here for a day and you’re already full of complaints. You should try to be a little more humble."

"I used to be humble, I ate Som Tum and ended up in the hospital with diarrhea for three or four nights."

"But there’s no Som Tum here. You should learn how to eat. You’ll be here for three months."

"Come to think of it, Arun hasn’t eaten anything yet either."

I thought of the sweet secretary, who hadn’t been able to put food in her mouth yet and was already having problems.

"At this point, her stomach must be growling." "This is your only dish, okay?"

I smile when I see Mawin having to give in when I mentioned Arun, who seem to like it.

"So, can I order one more meal? And make some for tonight too." "You’re very demanding."

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After getting ready, I left the room together with Mawin. At the same time, the maid who cleans this floor passed by. Since there were so many employees here, I couldn’t identify who it was, but I knew that the person who passed by had just seen me.

"Did you see the look on her face? You’re definitely the talk of the town.”

Mawin said, looking a little worried, unlike me, who just shrugged, not caring.

"I don’t care what people say."

"You lead a pretty peaceful life, don’t you? No worries."

"It’s also hard to know that the room doesn’t have air conditioning, the bathroom doesn’t have hot water, and the food in the canteen tastes like dog

food. How crazy! Do I have to put up with this just to prove something? I’m so confused… But if you’re afraid of being criticized, then we can part ways here. I’ll take food for Arun. She must be starving since she hasn’t eaten anything."

I parted ways with Mawin and went back to the staff quarters. As soon as I opened the door, my eyes fell on the ceiling fan...

"I'm gonna swing from the chandelier!" I couldn't help but shout.

"But where did Arun go? I thought she must be in her room. She must be taking a shower. Smiling slightly, I felt like I had come out victorious after getting ready. So I throw myself on the bed, rolling from side to side, grabbing my phone to play games. Lately, I haven't been posting much about my life, because I didn't want anyone to know that I'm working as a low-level employee. My celebrity friends might laugh at me.

“Today I went to Las Vegas and won two thousand dollars. What should I buy?”

“Japan is having a heavy snowfall. I really wanted some red syrup, but I'm afraid they'll find out I'm Thai.”

Everyone was showing off their good lives, and I just grimaced. In the end, I couldn’t take it anymore and turned off my phone, leaning my arm on my forehead in envy, while people were traveling abroad and spending money on entertainment. Why do I have to go through this? I am Intuoorn, the daughter of one of the ten richest men in this country, but I am eating dog food!

I looked at the food in the Styrofoam box and realized that Arun hadn’t come back yet… Could it be taking too long?

When I entered the room, the minute hand was on number two. Now, it’s already three o’clock and the minute hand has already reached number ten, but that girl still hasn’t come back. I called the secretary, who is very

competent, because I started to feel that something was wrong. However, the cell phone was ringing on the headboard of the bed, near where I was lying. She didn’t take her cell phone… Saying that she has been in the shower for so long doesn’t make sense.

Suddenly, I started to worry and left the room to look for Arun Berkfah around the dormitory, but I couldn’t find her. Finally, I decided to go to the shared bathroom, which is now empty, and the light off. I, who was about to walk away, decided to go back and turn on the light to check.

Before I knew it, I found a door locked with a new padlock, as if it had been bought at the store. Even though I knew that there was probably no one there, I couldn't help but try.

"Arun Berkfak, the bird that flies happily."

I jokingly called out her full name, not expecting anyone to be there, but... "Going out for a walk, happy and radiant."

Then, the nasal voice of that little girl come from the locked room, and it make me understand immediately.

"Arun Berkfah, are you in there? Who locked you?" "I don't know."

"And why don't you scream for help?"

"If I scream, probably no one will come because the person who did this is just joking. It's lucky that you, Khun In, passed by here."

Even in a situation like this, the secretary kept a calm voice, seeming not to be surprised. It turned out to be me who, seeing the locked door, became more irritated than if I were being attacked.

"Who is joking with you? Do you know?" "I don't know. Can you help me out?"

"I'll try."

I looked left and right, looking for something that could serve as a key, but I couldn't find anything. Eventually, I had to call Janpob for help and explained all the details of what had happened. My friend and personal assistant came with a hammer and after a single knock, the lock came loose. The bathroom door slowly opened, revealing Arun Berkfah wearing a robe and a towel covering her shoulders, looking...

"You look like a country girl." "Is it time to say this?"

Janpob said, seeming to slightly reprimand me, so I had to change what I was going to say.

"Are you okay?" "Yes."

"Are you scared?" "I'm not..."

Arun Berkfah's tears begin to stream down one side of her face, which left me speechless. When I reached out to touch her, I noticed that the sweet secretary is trembling, in stark contrast to what she's saying and her neutral expression.

"You're scared."

"I'm not scared... anymore..."

I pulled the delicate-faced girl close and hugged her, stroking her back. "It's okay. I'm here to help."

I'm not sure what exactly Arun Berkfah was afraid of, but at least I realized that she was still a person, and not a robot like I used to think.

And it seems like the war between the workers here and me is about to begin...

And my father will fire me!!

# 12. Shadows of Revenge

To be honest, I feel a little more at ease knowing that Arun also has feelings like any other ordinary person. She surprised me from the beginning, taking care of everything on her own, from changing a car tire to probably being able to fix a jet engine. I've never seen her smile, and she speaks so bluntly that people usually think she's cold and heartless. But her tears today proved that this sweet-faced person is actually human, with a heart.

Oh... I've seen her smile before, but when I asked her, she said that she only did it as part of her duties to make various tasks easier, which means it wasn't genuine.

Now, the sweet-faced secretary is walking about a meter ahead of me and Jenpob, giving me the chance to whisper curiously about it to my right-hand man.

"Why do you think the secretary was crying?" "Probably scared of ghosts."

"Really?"

"Yes, Miss."

"Why are you so sure?"

"I marked it with an asterisk when I sent the information to you. Here; Arun is most afraid of ghosts. She once got lost in a cemetery in complete darkness, and since then, both darkness and ghosts have been her constant enemies."

"An asterisk? How did I miss that?"

Arun looks really downcast.

"Can you tell if she's downcast or not? Normally, she's as quiet as a statue." "She's not that quiet, miss. She's well-spoken and has a lovely smile."

"Did she smiled at you?" "Yes."

Irritated... Why does everyone get a smile from her except me, who's her boss? She even hides her face when she laughs, covering herself so I can't see.

"Alright, you can go back now. I know the way to my room."

I waved at Jenpob, feeling a little irritated, though I couldn't explain why knowing that Arun smiled at my subordinate made me upset. I walked ahead of the small figure into the room, taking a quick glance at her as she remained silent and unresponsive, before asking again.

"Are you feeling better?" "Yes."

"Do you remember who played that prank on you?"

"I have no idea. When I went in to take a shower, there was no one there. But when I was about to leave, the door was locked from the outside."

"So why didn't you scream for help... Don't tell me you thought that even if you screamed, no one would come. By human nature, when in trouble, people should seek help, not just stay silent."

"I just remember that no matter how much we scream for help, if they don't want us to leave, screaming is useless."

As she speaks, I sensed a certain fear in her, so I decided to stop asking questions and instead turned to open the bedroom door. The moment I

entered, the ceiling fan caught my attention once again, and I couldn't help it...

*I'm gonna swing from the chandelieeeeer* 😁

"..."

"Sorry, I couldn't help it. I don't even know why, but every time I see that fan, I feel like singing. "

I quickly make excuses to Arun for singing loudly without realizing it, only to see the sweet-faced woman trying to bite her lip, trembling as she hold back her laughter. Seeing my usually serious secretary cheer up like this also lifted my spirits.

"What's so funny?" "Nothing."

"From the chandelieeeer!" "Snrk. P-stop it, please!"

"Oh, pleeease. haha!"

Arun burst out laughing, her eyes narrowed in delight. I looked at the small figure and couldn't help but smile along, feeling strangely at ease. It's probably the first time I'd seen my sweet-faced secretary express herself as genuinely as anyone else.

"You have a beautiful smile." " "

As soon as I complimented her, the sweet-faced woman closed her mouth, almost by reflex. I smiled a little at her clumsy attempt to maintain her composure and shrugged.

"But a little less pretty than me. If you're in a good mood now, great. Get some rest because we'll probably face a lot tomorrow."

"A lot? What do you mean by that?"

I looked at my secretary, a mischievous glint in my eyes as I licked my teeth.

"I'll take revenge for you." "Are you serious, Miss?"

"Have you ever seen me wake up earlier than a rooster to do something like this in your life?"

I smiled, looking at the stack of over fifty padlocks I had instructed Jenpob to stealthily buy since the day before. I had thought this plan through carefully and was determined to execute it. And above all... I had to wake up early.

For the first time in a hundred million years, I woke up at 4 a.m. Not even the roosters could compete, not even the grandmothers of Lumphini Park... not a chance.

"Lock everything up before everyone leaves to take a bath."

Jenpob still hesitated, but after I give him a look, he agreed to comply. Naturally, Arun had no idea about this plan, if she knew, she would certainly stop me. And I'm not one to let anyone interfere with my fun, so it's better if she doesn't know.

"So, what's next, Miss?"

"What do you mean? I'm going to take a bath." "Are you willing to take a bath now?"

"Of course! What do you think I am? I just don't like doing it completely when the water is too cold... but today, I'm going to let the cold water gently

cool my skin because I'm in a good mood. Let's see how much chaos unfolds today."

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## "Where is everyone today?"

Mawin looked around, irritated by the fact that more than half of the staff was missing, making it seems like nothing was ready. Knowing exactly what had happened, I quickly joined in the conversation, barely hiding my amusement.

"That's how lazy people are. Just fire everyone, and that'll solve the problem."

"No, something's wrong today. Did something happen?" "Maybe they hate the hotel owner."

I continued with a careless expression and a smile, showing no remorse. Arun, noticing my abnormally cheerful mood, leaned in to whisper to me so that only the two of us could hear.

"You know what happened, don't you, Khun In?" "Yes."

"What did you do?" "Well..."

Before I could reveal anything, one of the receptionists come running over, looking panicked. He was one of the few who didn't stay in the staff dormitory, so he was able to come to work as usual, which was a bit annoying to me.

"Khun Mawin, Sir. I went to check on the staff in the dormitory as you instructed and found that no one come to work because they were all locked in their rooms."

"Locked? How?"

"Someone has placed padlocks on the doors to the hallways on each floor, to each room. The porters are working to break them open, so they should be able to get out gradually."

The clerk respectfully handed Mawin evidence, a brand-new, now useless padlock in Mawin's hand as he considered it thoughtfully. Then, as if realizing something, he cast a knowing glance in my direction.

"Thank you for taking care of this. You may go now. You stay here, Intuorn,"

Mawin said, addressing me as "Intuorn" in a tone so strict it make my skin crawl, especially in front of the other employees. I responded with a slight smile, feeling unfazed.

"Yes, Khun Mawin. Is there anything I can do for you?"

Once the outsiders were gone, Mawin sigh and shake his head.

"Who else would do something like this, if not someone with a lot of money to spare, buying fifty or sixty padlocks that cost thousands?"

"Why don't you move to Japan and help Detective Conan so there are fewer victims?"

I didn't even bother defending myself, I just shrugged. "Debts must be paid and grudges must be settled.

"You just can't sit still, can you? Now you've stirred up resentment among the other employees. Isn't it lonely enough being isolated like this?"

"What is loneliness? I'm not familiar with it."

"Living without coworkers around, that's what it is."

"I don't want friends who only have a few hundred baht in their pockets, who can't afford to shop or enjoy anything fancy. Besides, I'm only here for three months, not for the rest of my life."

I crossed my arms, getting straight to the point because I'm tired of beating around the bush.

"So now that you've found out, why don't you fire me?"

"You really aren't afraid of anything, are you? Anxious to quit?"

"I'm tired of the people here, the room with the ceiling fan, the cold showers with no hot water. No one here is friendly. It's so boring."

"You're the one who made you have no friends."

"I don't care. Are you going to fire me or not? If not, I'll go back to work."

"But you'll still have to face the consequences... Your salary is being deducted."

"No problem. I have a credit card. Bye."

Even though my revenge was handled too easily, it was still the most fun I've had since I got here. Arun, who was walking beside me, couldn't resist pulling me aside for a quiet conversation.

"Khun In, I really don't agree with what you did... I know you did it to get back at them for locking me in the bathroom."

"Yes, I did it because you were locked in the bathroom."

"But you really didn't have to do it. Just let it go. They were just trying to blow off some steam out of annoyance, and they'll soon forget about it.

Khun In, you didn't have to risk yourself like that." "You really don't understand why I did it?"

"Why?"

I placed both my hands on Arun's shoulders and looked deeply into her beautiful eyes.

"Look into my eyes." "..."

"Tell me, what do you see?"

"I see boogers in your eyes."😅

I grimaced, wiping my eyes quickly in embarrassment. Arun pressed her lips together tightly, trying not to smile at her successful trick, because there's no boogers in my eyes like the sweet-faced woman had claimed.

"What were you really trying to say, Khun In?" "I love you."

"What...?"

"I got you! I'm just paying you back for saying I had boogers in my eyes." I teased, sticking my tongue out before explaining my real reason.

"Are you crazy? Why would I need to explain myself? I did all this just to teach these people a lesson. Mess with one of my two, and they'll get what they deserve."

I laughed smugly, feeling satisfied, while Arun remained silent, her expressionless face suggesting a slight blush on her cheeks, making me raise an eyebrow in doubt.

"You're blushing. Are you nervous because I said I love you?" "I'm just surprised."

"Don't tell me you believed me?" "I didn't."

"Why not?"

"Because you're not trustworthy, Khun In." "What did you say?"

"Let's get back to work. It had been a chaotic day, and who knows what's yet to come."

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And then, things seemed to fall into the same old cycle. I continued learning how to make beds and tidy rooms, even though the person who was teaching me had just left the room, looking at me with open resentment, knowing full well that I was the one responsible for the prank. As for me, I didn't plan on denying it; I wanted them to know that I believe in the concept of "an eye for an eye."

"These people are really persistent, aren't they? Even though they know I won't follow their instructions, they still insist that I make the bed."

I said, stuffing my hands into the pockets of my apron as I walked beside Arun, feeling quite pleased. I was genuinely in a good mood today. The looks from the passing employees only made things more fun.

"How can you be in such a good mood playing pranks on people, Khun In?"

"Why should I be upset about this? There is no one in the world I cannot successfully prank. Well, except..."

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Then, the image of a person came to my mind. When I was in Korat, I spent the night planning to prank Jao-Jom by tying her up with a rope and making her chase the horse I was riding in the morning. But all that went down the drain because she realized what I was up to.

*This person can read minds...*

"Anyway, let's say that ninety-nine percent of the people in this world have already fallen into my trap."

"So there's still one percent left... Oh!" "Hey!"

As the two of us were walking and talking absentmindedly, I felt as if something had fallen on my head, turning everything around me dark. When I managed to regain my composure, I realized that I was being carried on someone's shoulders, along with the sound of a car door opening, which I guessed was a van.

"You think you're clever, don't you? I'm going to make you both feel like you're falling into hell!"

Oh...

## Footnote :

***1-Lumphini Park (or Lumpini) is located in the heart of Bangkok, Thailand. Located in the city center, close to areas such as Silom and Sukhumvit, the park is one of the main green spaces in the Thai capital and offers a peaceful retreat amidst the bustling city center.***

# 13. Big Sister

If this were a scene from a soap opera after the news, the rich heroine who discovered a secret that shouldn't be revealed would be being kidnapped to be killed. But since we're just hotel employees, that's definitely not happening. I believe this must be a personal vendetta by a hotel employee, so it's hard to predict where we're being taken. But surely they wouldn't take us to be killed just because they've been locked in their rooms in the morning, right?

*"Turn it up, I like listening to that program!"*

And then the radio in the van grew louder. The program the driver had put on was about ghosts, with a soundtrack that made it sound like we were walking through a cemetery. I felt the pressure of the body next to me, which is Arun BekFah, and I ended up smiling at the realization.

*"It's just a radio program, it's not a cemetery." "I don't like ghost stories."*

*"You have a lovely side, don't you think?"*

Perhaps because our voices were loud enough for the driver to hear, the radio volume was turned up even louder, to the point where it almost burst our eardrums. I already understood that it was a program about ghosts, so there was no need to emphasize it so much. But anyway, let's see what these people who dragged us into this van really want.

As the car drove along, I listened to the program to pass the time. Actually, I'm not really afraid of ghosts, because I firmly believe that these supernatural beings can only scare, but they can't take my life. The only fear

would be if they appeared in a disgusting and grotesque way. To me, ghosts are like cockroaches—without any meaning. A coup d'état is much scarier.

During the program, someone called from home to say that in the province where they lived, there was a house that was famous for being haunted ever since the tsunami happened ten years ago. A mother and her son were watching television without knowing that the water was flooding the house and they died. Ever since then, people who passed by would see the indistinct shadows of a woman and a boy crying desperately. The woman just cried, while the boy kept repeating:

***"I'm very hungry."***

Told like that, it sounds like a pretty common story. But the person next to me, Arun BekFah, didn't think the same way. Now her hands were shaking and she was gripping my wrist tightly, clearly terrified, probably imagining things in her head.

*"Do you want a technique to stop being afraid of ghosts?" "How?"*

*"Imagine the mother's face as Shizuka and the son as Doraemon, with the dubbed voices of channel 9. The fear will disappear by about seventy percent."*

This was the special technique my parents taught me when they forced me to sleep alone when I was a child, and it worked very well. No matter what ghost story it was, none of them could scare me, because they were all blue and had round hands. Even if they died, they would still have Shizuka's face.

*"I don't remember Shizuka's face.*"😁

*"You really are pitiful. In that case, I don't know how to help you."*

Right after I said that, the van stopped abruptly, accompanied by the rude voice of the driver.

"Get out now!"

*"Where did you bring us?"*

I shouted, but only heard laughter in response.

*"To the scariest place ever." "Brother... I'm not going in, no!"*

One of the men spoke in a visibly frightened voice, while the one who was called "brother" made an impatient sound.

*"Don't give me the cowardly impression now. We've already come this far."*

And then, the cloth covering our heads was removed. I eagerly expected to see the face of whoever kidnapped us, but I was met with disappointment when I saw that the two kidnappers were wearing Sailor Moon masks.

Wow... Scarier than the ghosts on the radio show. A big guy with a blonde girl's mask? Seriously?

*"Tonight, you're going to die."*

One of the men said, throwing a knife and a flashlight on the ground before kicking the objects away from us.

*"Now you'll understand what it's like to be locked in!"*

*.*

***Bang!***

The door slammed shut, followed by the sound of the engine starting and the van speeding away. It was so dark outside that we couldn't even see our own hands, and Arun began to cry.

"What are we going to do? With a knife like that, we're going to die!"

"Has anyone ever died because of the darkness?" "Because of ghosts."

"What nonsense! What can ghosts do to us? Is that what they say will make us feel like we're in hell? Leave us in a haunted house... If they put me out in the sun at noon, I'd feel more like hell than that."

"But ghosts can scare us to death... Where are you going, Khun In?"

I make to go get the flashlight and knife that had been thrown to the other side, but Arun grabbed me by the arm first. Our hands are tied in front of us, as if whoever had brought us here had no intention of hurting us, only scaring us. Otherwise, they wouldn't have left the flashlight and knife for us to cut the ropes.

"I'll get the knife. Or do you want to spend the night here?" "Don't leave me alone... please."

Hearing the pleading tone in her voice, I couldn't help but smile in the dark. The woman who had never used a sweet tone with me now sounded like a frightened child.

"Then come with me. We'll find our way back together. I have no idea how far we are from the hotel. My God, don't these people have better things to do?"

"They're not joking. They're trying to correct us... No, they're trying to teach you a lesson, Khun In."

"Teaching a lesson by leaving us in an abandoned house? That won't make me think. What these people need is a lesson. I'm going to tell my father everything and ask him to fire everyone. I'm going to pretend to be hurt, covered in bruises and infected blisters. Dad can't stand to see me hurt.

They're going to be in big trouble."

I said with barely concealed excitement, just thinking about the mess this would cause, as I grabbed the flashlight and asked Arun to turn it on. I used

the knife to cut the plastic ties that held our hands together. "You still don't understand anything, In?"

"What?"

"The reason we're going through this is because you can't get along with others. You don't realize that what you do is toxic."

"Toxic!?"

I pushed Arun away, starting to get irritated. I'd never been told I was toxic, and although it wasn't a rude insult, it hurt a lot.

"What did I do?"

"You're always looking down on others, you don't face the hard work, you say whatever you want without thinking. That's why we ended up like this. Before you do something to others, you should look at yourself and understand why this happens."

"You're talking too much today, Arun." I smiled sarcastically and sighed.

"Okay, you who never say anything, decided to open up today, so I'm going to listen. Come on, how should I analyze myself?"

Although it was dark, it seemed like the anger between us was so strong that it almost lit up the room. I crossed my arms and leaned back, watching my assistant, who never spoke openly.

"You never consider others, you think you're superior to everyone else."

"But I am superior! I was born rich! I don't deny that. Is it wrong to be born rich?"

"No, it's not. But other rich people aren't like that. It's not entirely your fault, it all comes from your upbringing..."

She paused and finished firmly:

"It comes from your parents." "Hey, you!"

"You want to beat the woman named Renu, but nothing you do will defeat her."

"You mentioned her name just to provoke me, didn't you?"

"You know, don't you, Khun In? That Renu was also born beautiful and with a lot of wealth, she's no match for you."

"So what?"

“Don’t you wonder why Jao-Jom chose Renu over you, even though you both have similar qualities or even though she might be inferior to you in some aspects?”

I swallowed hard, not sure where Arun BekFah heard those words from. Because the question of qualities was something that had been bothering me for a long time, but I always told myself… I’m not losing, I only came later, so I just needed to let it go.

“Keep talking.”

“Before she became what she is today, she also started out learning like anyone else… Miss Renu was once a temporary teacher, earning only twelve thousand a month, living in a rented apartment that cost three thousand a month, and taking the bus to work every day without ever complaining. Now, can you see how different she is from you, Miss In?”

“If you’re going to talk, then talk.”

I clenched my fists in the darkness and tried to control myself from slapping her, because I wanted to hear the opinion of the secretary who had never criticized me like that even once.

"She values human dignity equally!" "..."

"She eats on the street, lives like a normal person without feeling like she needs something luxurious. And this brings her closer to people, and she uses this experience to learn about life before going to study for a master's and a doctorate abroad. Yes, she was born into a good condition, but she never had to burden her family, never made them feel exhausted to the point of having to correct her behavior. To be blunt... she is good by nature."

"Arun BekFah!"

I raised my hand, really about to slap her, but stopped in mid-motion.

"Because there has never been anyone in your life who has told you the truth, it has shaped you to become like this. You need to grow up, In."

I bit my lip until it bled, but I tried to remain calm, because the more I shouted, the more I would sound like a child, just supporting the words of that impassive-faced girl. After a long silence, I decided to speak from my point of view.

"Everyone only blames me for being a bad person, but no one has ever stopped to think about what made me this way."

Arun BekFah paused, then fell silent, listening. This secretary has the quality of never interrupting or opposing, always giving the other person the opportunity to express themselves. Unlike me, who when I am determined, no matter what anyone says, I am not willing to listen.

"I was raised in a comfortable environment. I don't blame my father and mother, but since I was born and raised like this, suddenly asking me to be someone simple, living in a rudimentary way, is not an easy task. And the fact that I can’t relate to others isn’t because I don’t want to make friends.”

“…”

“No one really loves me except my father and mother.”

I remembered my school days, when I had friends because of my family’s wealth. Everyone expected me to invite them to lunch or give them nice gifts, or anything that would provide some kind of benefit. In the end, they just used me as a topic of gossip. As I grew up, I met people who said they loved me, but deep down, they were only interested in my father’s fortune.

“Everyone expects something from me, so why should I pretend to be a good person and mix with others when I know they’re not sincere?”

“The people you’ve met aren’t representative of everyone, you know?” She said.

“But those people shaped me to be this way. Even you. If I hadn’t bought you at the auction, you would have walked away from me too. Who could stand someone like me?"

I said, fully aware of myself, but I had no intention of changing anything.

"Actually, the fact that you don't smile is a good thing. You said it doesn't look professional, afraid that a smile from you might make your employer or the people around you think you have some interest... And that goes against what I want. I also don't want any romantic complications at work. We are on the same page. We are only close when it comes to work, nothing more."

"It's my fault."

"Guilt? Guilt for what? What you understood from the beginning is right."

"It's my fault for not caring enough about you, in fact, you are more sensitive than I thought."

Arun BekFah looked at me for a moment and said in a soft tone,

"From now on, I will change my perception of you, I will look at you in a different way."

"What way?"

"Like a younger sister... I will care about you more."

"Younger sister? Didn't we just talk about how our relationship is that of a boss and a maid?"

"That's up to you, but from now on, I will look at you in a deeper way and try to understand you."

"..."

"For me, your money has no value at all. You are just you." "..."

## "Nong In".

Arun BekFah did something I didn't expect, reaching out to gently place her hand on my head and gently squeezing my hair affectionately. The way she spoke, her expression, and her body language all seemed genuine. My heart raced, and I was afraid the person in front of me would hear how nervous I was when she did this.

Nong In... It was a word my father and mother used to call me. No one had ever called me that before. Although I should have been irritated, I didn't feel it at all.

"What's that? Stroking the head and then patting the back? We were just fighting! Now you're being affectionate."

I took a step back so that the sweet-faced secretary's hand would move away, and then I crossed my arms, trying to protect myself.

"I can't adapt to the weather. Oh, and these mosquitoes are biting me! Where are they coming from?"

"I think we better get out of here. You can lead, Miss In." "Why does the 'little sister' have to be the leader? Huh? Hehe!"

I said sarcastically, which made Arun BekFah's voice sound sad.

"Because I'm afraid of ghosts... What can I do? I'll be honest about this... Ghosts are something I just can't handle."

I almost laughed at Arun BekFah's sincerity. From when we were verbally attacking each other until now, I was starting to like her more.

She's a straight-talking person who dared to give advice and admit her own weaknesses.

"Okay, I'll be nice this time. But next time you talk too much, I won't forgive you... Give me your hand."

"What?"

"Hold my hand and let's go together."

## "As if we could never be apart."

I laughed as I heard the sweet-faced secretary singing an old P'Bird song. The two of us walked hand in hand, looking for a way out of that dark, abandoned house. We soon realized that the house had only one floor, full of musty odors and dust, and was littered with objects scattered around as if it had been turned over. The gloomy atmosphere around us was illuminated only by the light of the flashlight.

The person who brought us here was not so cruel as to lock the door from the outside, but they were also not so kind as to open the door and lead us straight to the market or the noodle stand on the corner.

Outside, there was dense vegetation, and we had to face the darkness, reptiles, and an atmosphere that reminded us of ghosts.

But like I said, I'm not the type to be afraid of ghosts. People are much scarier.

"Why aren't you afraid of ghosts or the dark, Miss In?"

"Because poverty and hunger are much scarier. At least, the fact that my father sent me to work here taught me that being a salaried employee is really tiring. I don't know what good I did in my past life to be born so rich."

Since Arun was shaking, I decided to keep talking to distract her from these scary things.

"Why were you born so poor, huh?" 😁

"Uh... how should I answer that?"

"When you were entering the egg, you should have pushed another sperm in its place. Just look, you were born short and on top of that you can't recognize faces. What kind of heavy karma is that?"

The laughter that echoed in the darkness made me smile. It seemed like the little girl was calming down a little.

"But at least your parents were kind enough to give you a pretty face." "Do you think I'm pretty?"

"I'm not one to give compliments, but you're a nice-looking girl. Don't you realize what your own appearance is like?"

"No, I really can't tell the difference between what's pretty and what's not."

"Hmm, you really are as you say. You don't judge people by their appearance because you can't tell the difference. You almost agreed to marry that smelly old man just to pay off your family's debt without even caring."

"What about you, Miss In? "What?"

"What do you consider when choosing someone to love?"

"Hmm... I've never thought of it that way."

I looked around, starting to get confused about which direction to go, because it was too dark around. But I didn't want to make Arun BekFah discouraged, so I kept talking while I thought about what to do next.

"I'm an ordinary person, I can remember people's faces and differentiate who's pretty and who isn't. So... looks come first."

"Ah, I see."

"The second criterion is that we need to be able to talk. It's not necessary to agree on everything, but it's important to have logic and reason. I'll accept a lower condition, but not too much, because I like to eat delicious food and I don't want to fight because she thinks it's expensive or says 'I don't have money'."

"Money shouldn't be a problem for you, right, Miss In? But..**. 'she',** really?"

The sweet-faced person asked, as if she had realized something. I laughed, looking at my assistant, who knows everything about me, but apparently didn't know about my preferences.

"I thought you knew everything about me. Didn't you know that I date both men and women?"

"Oh... I never imagined."

"I've had boyfriends and girlfriends, and of course, they were all beautiful. And yes, it's true... I've always been disappointed with love, regardless of gender."

"..."

"But with you I won't be disappointed." "Huh...?"

"Because we won't fall in love!"

## "Little sister, I'm so hungry."

Ahhh!!!

The clear, slurred voice made Arun BekFah freeze in fear. As for me, who didn't expect anyone to be around, I jumped and rubbed my eyes, because I didn't want to believe that there could be a child nearby.

"Miss In, is there a child... here?" "I heard,"

I said, about to turn around, but the sweet-faced person held me back. "Don't look, please."

"I already looked." "Maybe it's a m..."

"Husband? It can't be, he's too young." "Huhh..."

Terrified, Arun BekFah started to cry, her fear of ghosts was really deep in her, and no matter how much I tried to make the situation funny, it didn't help at all.

"You cry in a scarier way than this child, how annoying!"

I grumbled to the sweet-faced secretary before walking towards the child, who was blocking our path. I didn't let go of Arun's hand, as I wanted her to talk to the boy too.

"So, little ghost boy, what are you doing here? What silly game is this?" "I'm hungry."

"Of course you are. Waiting for the right moment to scare people must take a while, right? Where are your parents?"

I crouched down in front of the child, who kept an apathetic expression.

"You're doing a great job, little boy. It must be a lot of fun scaring people like that. You’re the son of the aunt who makes dog food in the kitchen, aren’t you? Oh, you’re trying to scare the wrong person. Hey, Arun, you can look now. It’s just a boy trying to play a ghost prank. Stop being so scared.”

Even so, Arun BekFah was still on his back, shaking with fear. Annoyed, I decided to take the boy’s hand and lead him to her so she could see for herself.

“Look, here’s your ghost. How are you supposed to see anything with your eyes closed?”

“Huhh… Miss In, I don’t want to play.”

“What do you mean? Didn’t you say you were my elder sister? Now that you’re afraid of ghosts, you’ve lost all credibility. Where did that brave person who was inside that abandoned house go?"

Arun BekFah was whimpering in fear, so I decided to ignore him and started talking to the little boy.

"How long have you been here?"

I meant how long had he been forced to stay in that dark place? What kind of stupid joke were the adults playing, leaving a child hungry?

"It's been a while."

"You're brave, huh? In this dark, aren't you afraid of ghosts?" "Yes... It's dark and lonely here."

"Let me guess, you live alone with your mother, don't you?"

"..."

I didn't get any response, which meant my guess was correct. With the van driver trying to tune the radio to a horror station, I began to understand the scheme. They were trying to sow fear, making us more uneasy, and when we encountered a "ghost child," we would scream and be photographed for some kind of blackmail.

I knew the game. I'd seen it before.

"So why did you show up alone? Where's your mother?" "Mommy's crying... Sis... I'm so lonely here. And hungry."

"Of course you're hungry. Your mother's a cook, but she makes dog food for you to eat. Hey, secretary... I'm not exaggerating, that woman's food looks disgusting, even her son is hungry... Now, you can stop being afraid. We've been fooled by these people. Open your eyes now!"

"..."

"Open your eyes!"

Arun BekFah, who was forced, slowly opened her eyelids and looked at the child who was next to me. At this moment, the sweet secretary was so trembling and didn't know what to do, so I made a disgusted expression.

"Let me ask you, are you so afraid of ghosts because you've seen one before?"

"I told you that I was once locked in a cemetery." "But you haven't seen any ghosts, right?" "Right."

"Then why do you think this child is a ghost?" "It's because the radio..."

"See? This is exactly what the two drivers wanted. Those guys want us to be scared, so they make up stories. Ah... the ghost story may be real, but it's not in this house. This one is the cook's son."

I kept insisting that this was all a hoax.

"I think we should get out of here quickly. We won't die because of ghosts, but we might catch malaria because of mosquitoes or even die because of that spider."

"Which spider?"

"That spider lady that climbed up the wall."

I made a face because the secretary didn't get the joke, so I pulled the little boy's hand so we could leave together.

"You're hungry, aren't you? Then let's go find something to eat."

"Khun In, don't draw the ghosts' attention. They'll follow us everywhere." "Not everywhere, because I'll take the ghost to where it likes."

"Where is that?"

Finally, Arun, Nong ManU (I gave him that name as we walked together) and I managed to get out of that dense forest area. Luckily, we found a local's car passing by and hitchhiked until we reached a mini-mart with bright lights, which made us realize that we were back among people.

"Thank you very much, sir."

Arun said, bowing in thanks, with an expression of relief. Now, she seemed calmer and no longer had that frightened look she had in the abandoned house.

"So, the ghost you were afraid of hasn't disappeared yet... Nong ManU, are you very hungry?"

"I'm hungry."

"Then let's go find something to eat at the mini-mart." I looked at the secretary.

"You brought money, right? I'll borrow some." "Yes."

The three of us entered the store and took ManU to choose sweets from the shelf. That dead-looking boy still hadn't decided what to eat until I pointed to the drinks fridge.

"Choose whatever you want, I have two hundred baths. Did you see that fridge?"

"..."

"Choose what ever you want. You can open and close the fridge all day long if you want. Once you've chosen, just put it on the counter, okay?"

"..."

"This kid doesn't talk much, it's just like you."

I looked at Arune BerkFah who had an uncertain expression. "Is it okay to bring the child here?"

"Better than staying in that house in the dark. By now, his mother must still be crying, waiting back there, shocked by us. Just thinking about it is funny. So far, no one has come to scare me."

I said while laughing, and the secretary, who usually didn't smile much, was smiling in an amused way.

"You're having fun too."

"I'm not."

"Actually, you're quite mean."

"What are you saying? I don't understand." "Admit it, sister."

I smiled again and raised my eyebrow, making the secretary look a little dazed and look away.

"Have you bought everything, Khun In? Let's go back soon." "Oh, I almost forgot. Just a moment."

I went to the counter and borrowed the employee's phone to call Janephop, my best friend and right-hand man. He looked so surprised it was funny.

"I'm fine. I'm in a mini-mart now... What's this place called?" "This..."

The clerk told me the name of the convenience store branch, and I gave Janephop the location to come pick me up. Of course he would come right away, since he must have been in shock by now, worried about me. As soon as I gave the phone back to the clerk, I took out the money I had borrowed from Arun and handed it to him, reminding him.

"Use these two hundred to cover the call I made earlier and for the boy's candy. In three hours, his mother should come pick him up. Please take care of him, okay?"

"Boy?"

"Yes."

The clerk still looked confused, but I didn't care and went to tell ManU, who was standing there staring at the refrigerator.

"Stay here and don't go anywhere. When your mother comes, I don't want you to be lost. Got it?"

"Is mom really going to come?" "Of course, you're here."

"What if mom doesn't come?" "If mom doesn't come?"

"Then you'll cry. Or you'll ask to go home with any customer who comes into the store, like you did with me. You're a ghost, aren't you?"

"..."

"Being a ghost means you need to scare people, right?" "You're not afraid of me?"

"I'm not."

"Why?"

"Because I tricked you into staying here, ghost children must be greedy, you know?"

I said, smiling, and left the store with Arun BekFah, while ManU stood still inside, not leaving. The sweet-faced secretary stroked her arm, feeling goosebumps, and asked me, a little insecure.

"Is it right to leave the boy here like this?"

"That's good. Let's play at scaring his mother. She had the nerve to make a child disguise herself as a ghost. Then I'll trick the ghost into coming here to get food... Let me tell you... A wise doctor once said that if there's a crying ghost child, we should release it in a supermarket. Since there's no supermarket here, we've come to release it here in the mini-market. Haha!"

"You're so mean, KhunWith In."

"You can also stop being afraid of ghosts. You can't even recognize a person's face and you're still afraid of ghosts? Or if you can't, you can pray and think of me."

"Why do I have to think of you?"

"Because ghosts can't scare you, since I brought one to the mini-market. But if you can't, sing 'Nok Khun Thong' in the dark and the atmosphere will immediately become cheerful... Oh, there's a car flashing, it must be Janephop. He came quickly! huh?"

Janephop arrived to pick us up in just ten minutes. Before getting in the car, I glanced at ManU, who had his hand on the glass door of the store, waving at us. Then I gave a worried reminder.

"Stay here, okay? Your mom is coming to pick you up. Keep playing with opening and closing the refrigerator for now. Bye!"

"Who are you talking to?"

"With the ghost child. Don't ask too many questions, I need to rest a bit. Today was like an adventure all day."

Arun BekFah and I sighed in relief as we got into the air-conditioned car. We were so tired now that we couldn't tell Janephop anything, we could only close our eyes. It wasn't long before I felt something heavy on my shoulder and realized it was the head of the small woman who had leaned on it, looking exhausted.

Wow... is she that tired? If it were any other situation, I would probably push her head away, but now I felt it was different, both in terms of the feelings and the stories we had lived, and the words she had said when we were in that abandoned house.

## "To me, your money has no value at all. You are just you... Nong In."

Amazing... Such a simple sentence managed to make me feel embarrassed. Suddenly, I had a 'big sister'.

When I thought about it, I smiled a little and closed my eyes, exhausted. I didn't know how much time had passed, but I suddenly realized that we had already arrived at the hotel, and I heard the car door opening. Arun BekFah was startled and woken up, rubbing her hand over her face in embarrassment. I, on the other hand, couldn't hide my indifference, as I didn't want the sweet-faced woman to feel embarrassed.

"Are we here? Quick, huh?"

I said, stretching without noticing the arrival of another person, which made Arun BekFah nudge me to look.

"Khun In, behind you."

As soon as I looked back, my mouth fell open, and tears welled up in my eyes, while mother make a worried expression and stretched out her arms to welcome me.

*"Daddy!"*

*"My Nong In!"*

# 14. I Am Not Someone Else

Because I had been missing since the early evening, Janephop was worried and immediately went to talk to Mawin. They both checked the security cameras and saw that Arun BerkFah and I had been kidnapped, with bags covering our heads, and taken away by van from the hotel.

What started as a small thing turned into a big problem and reached the ears of my father, who loves me like his own life. He rushed from Bangkok, dropping all his work, and came to find me without thinking twice. In fact, I didn't know how long I had been missing until Janephop told me:

"It's now four in the morning... ten hours have already passed."

"Time flew by. I didn't even realize I had been in that house for ten hours. I thought it had only been two or three hours."

I looked at Arun BekFah, confused, but the clock didn't lie to us. "And where did these people take you? Did they do something?"

My father was more interested in the details of where they had taken me, worried about my safety. He was clearly very serious, and no one dared to look at him, especially Mawin, who was responsible for taking care of me.

"They didn't do anything. I think they just wanted to teach me a lesson for getting mixed up in something I shouldn't have."

"Teach me a lesson? How?"

"They took me to a haunted house." "Who are they? Do you know?"

"I know..."

I gave Arun BekFah a quick nod to keep her quiet and answered in her place.

"How would I know? I had my head covered the whole time. Don't worry, Dad, it was just some kind of prank. Every organization has these kinds of things."

Arun looked at me with a surprised expression, as if she didn't believe what I was saying. It was clear that she expected me to make a fuss about what had happened, but I wasn't.

"Are you possessed?"

Mawin asked in disbelief. Arun BekFah, who was already afraid of such things, took a step back, as if he believed what Mawin said.

"Are you crazy? Shouldn't we just let it go?" "But this behavior... It's not like you."

What does that mean? I frowned, trying to understand what Mawin was insulting me about, but my father interrupted and addressed the competent secretary.

"Arun, I trusted you to take care of Nong In. How could you let this happen? I know you were kidnapped too, but your duty was to make sure everything was in order, to help her not go out of line, wasn't it?"

"I'm sorry, sir." "You let me down."

"I take responsibility and..."

"Let's go rest. It's already four in the morning. Aren't you going to let us sleep? And there's no need to be disappointed in Arun BekFah. She did her best."

I intervened, softening my voice. "I like her."

"What? What?"

Both Mawin and my father muttered, and I crossed my arms, showing my teeth.

"I like this secretary because she is competent. Don't fire her. That's all I want to say. The meeting ends here. Let's settle this tomorrow."

I stretched and yawned.

"Oh, I don't even have time to sleep. I need to wake up and make the bed. Dad, do you still want to talk?"

After I complained, my father agreed to let me go without any more trouble. After we left the room, Arun BekFah, who was standing next to me, glanced at me but didn't say anything, so I had to speak first.

"If you want to say something, you can say it."

"I'm just surprised. It was a good opportunity for you to fire me. Why didn't you take advantage of it?"

"If I wanted to fire you, I wouldn't have driven all the way to Chonburi to buy you for three million and a limited bag. You still have a debt to pay. Right?"

"Right."

The sweet-faced person nodded in understanding, but I thought the explanation I gave sounded dry, so I had to add a little more.

"And you're a good employee. Not many people have the courage to criticize me and talk to me directly about behaviors that need improvement. I'd like you to do that. It's good."

"Really?"

"Yes. Sometimes we need a mirror to reflect ourselves. I like to think I'm better than others, which... I really am. But, you know, no one lives alone. I really need to improve my behavior. So, let me know if I do something wrong."

"..."

"Why are you silent?"

"I don't know what to say."

"Say anything... Like an older sister giving advice to her younger sister." Her face was surprised when she heard that.

"Khun In, you shouldn't take this the wrong way..."

"I'm not taking this the wrong way. To be honest, when you warned me in the abandoned house and acted like you were my sister, it surprised me a little. I don't know... I'm an only child, I've never had any brothers or sisters. When you showed concern like that, it made me feel strange."

I crossed my arms as we walked. "What's it like having siblings?" "It's nothing special."

"I read your details. I saw your family too. You only have one brother... And it seems like he doesn't like you very much."

"Yes. That's why I decided that if I were someone's sister, I wouldn't act like him."

I smiled and nodded slightly, casting a glance at the smaller person beside me.

"Then consider me your sister. It's a strange feeling, actually, to be able to call someone your sister."

"In..."

We stopped in front of the bedroom door. When I opened it and turned on the light, the ceiling fan, which was always the first thing I saw, made me unable to resist.

"I'm gonna swing from the chandelier!"

"It's four in the morning and you're still singing?"

"It's almost become a national anthem. I feel like hanging from there." I went into the room and threw myself on the bed, exhausted.

"I'll tell you, the ceiling fan in this room is scarier than the ghost in that abandoned house."

"What do you mean?"

"Imagine someone hanging from it, slowly spinning in circles..." "..."

"Scary, isn't it? Good night."

And then I closed my eyes and didn't care about anyone else, because I was too tired...

.

.

My father's arrival this time was a little useful, because the thing that bothered me the most about living here was having to take cold showers. While Arun had been out running since five in the morning, I didn't know if

that girl had already slept or not. I took this opportunity to call Janephop as I walked towards my father's room.

"Is it true, Janephop, that Miss Renu was a contract teacher before? How does Arun know about this and I don't?" 😅

[Well, you never asked, so I didn't know if I should tell you about it.]

"Now I did ask, didn't I? Update me on how Renu was living when she was a teacher."

[...]

Janephop had already investigated everything and the story was exactly as Arun had told it. Renu was born into a good family, with siblings, including her, totaling three people. She was the eldest daughter whom her father never paid any attention to, as he only wanted a son. To make her father feel pain, she decided to live outside the home as a contract teacher, receiving a very low salary, only because her father disdained the teaching profession, considering it stupid.

"Stupid? And what subject did Renu teach?" [Math, in high school]

"Just hearing that makes me dizzy. It's far from the idea of being stupid, right?"

["Stupid" in this case refers to choosing a profession with low pay and few opportunities for growth.]

"Ah, I see.

But Miss Renu only managed to stay for one semester before dropping out to continue her studies, until she got her doctorate. After her father passed away, she went back to take care of the family business because her brothers weren’t ready yet. Before becoming an executive, she lived a simple life, living in an apartment without air conditioning, being a teacher

who put up with the smell of students day after day, and commuting by bus, even though she owned a Mercedes-Benz.

Unbelievable... Her life is like that of a fairytale heroine.

“Thank you for telling me. If I have any more questions, I’ll call you back.”

I hung up the call as soon as I got to my father’s room at six-thirty. As soon as I rang the bell, Dad, who was half asleep, opened the door and looked at me with a slightly surprised expression.

“What are you doing here, Nong In?” “Can I take a shower, Dad?” “What?”

“Please!”

I hadn’t touched a hot tub in so long that as soon as I had the chance, I dove into the warm water and enjoyed the bliss until I forgot about time. When I realized, it was almost eight o’clock. As I came out of the bathroom, putting on my robe, my father called me to breakfast.

“Come eat something before you go to work.” “I love you, Daddy!”

I made a face like I was going to cry. This was a meal that seemed like it would be someone’s first, and I couldn’t stop the tears from almost welling up. But before I could run towards the meal, I stopped abruptly when I realized that there was a hotel employee bringing the food, and that girl was one of the people I had locked the door to the room with.

“Thank you very much, you can go.” “Yes.”

I didn’t remember the employee’s name, but I knew she recognized me. She looked at me appraisingly before closing the door, doing so cautiously, as if she knew who my father was.

“You took too long in the shower.”

"You don't understand the torture I'm going through here. Since I got here, has Mawin updated you on how I'm doing?"

"I've heard a few things." My father laughed.

"I heard you're hard to deal with. Mawin said you're the type who doesn't like to make an effort."

"And what can I do? I've never had any hardships in my life. If I have to blame anyone, let it be you and Mom for raising me so well."

"It's more my fault, haha."

"But so that no one blames you and Mom, I'm going to reinvent myself. I'm going to prove to everyone that I'm capable, no matter the situation. Starting today, I won't use any of the credit cards you gave me for three months."

"Wow... What a determined look! Are you possessed like Mawin said?" "Dad..."

"Silence, please."

My father grabbed the remote and turned up the volume when the Mew Nittha commercial came on.

"Wow... she's so beautiful!"

Fifteen seconds passed by as quickly as if it were a lie. My father turned down the volume and resumed talking to me as soon as the commercial for his favorite actress changed to government news.

Why was my father, who is a businessman, more interested in a soap commercial than in the change of government that could impact business? I was quite confused.

"What were we talking about before? Oh... you are a determined person. What made you change? Are you sure it wasn't a spirit that possessed you?"

"I just want to prove to everyone that I am capable! And that I can do it better than Miss Renu."

When I mentioned that name, my father's expression changed slightly, and he smiled resignedly.

"That might be a good incentive." "Can I ask you something, Dad?" "What is it?"

"You chose Arun BekFah to be my mentor because of her resemblance to Miss Renu, right?"

I stared at him, wanting to know the truth instead of getting angry. My father hesitated a bit before nodding in agreement.

“Yeah… yeah. I think people should have some kind of motivation. In my opinion, you’re not mature enough in many ways yet. If you can count on Arun to teach you, that might help… and it seems like she’s doing well.”

He said this with a smile and continued.

"You've changed. In what happened yesterday, if you were the Nong In of old, you would have asked me to fire the people involved and would have made a scandal, but you didn't."

When I received this compliment, I felt a little embarrassed and didn't know how to react, to the point of pretending to be getting a drink of water, swallowing one sip after another.

"I'm not that young anymore. Actually, I just need someone to give me a little push."

"And Arun can do that."

"So, you're not disappointed in Arun, right?" "Disappointed? Oh... about yesterday..."

My father made an expression as if he remembered. "I was a little mad at her."

"Then don't forget to apologize and praise her, okay? People who work need motivation. Oh... I have to go to work now. Excuse me! Oh, I forgot to change my clothes!"

Just as I was about to run to the bathroom, my father stopped me with a question that made me feel embarrassed.

"You like Miss Arun, don't you?" "I-I... no!"

"Don't be shy. If you like her, just say you like her. You should tell her that, after all, people who work need motivation, right?"

I made a face at my father and run to the bathroom, closing the door to change.

It's not that I like her... I just admire her, that's all!

Today I did what I agreed with my father. I was focused on work and even agreed to make the bed, even though it was something I hate. Arun looked at me with a surprised expression, while my father observed me differently, as if he had something on his mind.

But it doesn't matter. What others think is none of my business. Now I'm the new Intuorn.

"You're different today, aren't you?"

"Yes, I've decided that I'm going to try hard to learn the things my father wants me to learn, so that all this will be over soon and he won't have to work so hard."

"You're okay, aren't you?"

The delicate-faced woman looked at me, full of uncertainty. Although her face showed no signs of emotion, her voice seemed hesitant, and I had to intervene.

"I'm not possessed. What's wrong with you guys? Both you and my father and Mawin think I'm possessed all the time. Can't I be a good person for once?"

Thus, the two of us arrived at the cafeteria. I went to the counter to grab a tray and got in line to choose the food. Now, everyone in the cafeteria was watching me and whispering. Oh, how I wish I knew what the topic of the day would be about me!

"You guys have to control yourselves!"

The voice of the cook, who had a disagreement with me last time, echoed through the room. At first, I thought she was talking about a soap opera, but it seemed like the others were laughing and giving me looks, as if they wanted me to know something.

"Mistress."

"Why is everyone staring at me and only saying this kind of thing?" I frowned and looked at the sweet-faced secretary.

"Do you know something?"

Arun, who had been with me all day, shook his head, until Janephop, the person who always knows things, showed up and everything became clear.

"You're being accused of being the mistress." "What? Mistress? Whose?"

"Pretending not to understand?!"

The cook, who was always ready to start a fight, said in a sarcastic tone.

"The other day you left Mr. Win's room, and today you left Mr. Anek's bathroom. It seems you don't like being a low-level employee, so you have to take shortcuts, huh?"

I opened my mouth, making a low sound of indignation before remembering what had happened. So, just because I asked Dad to take a bath, I was now considered a mistress? These people really have an overactive imagination.

"Have you thought about what you're saying?"

"Do I need to think about anything else? It's clear what you're doing." "I just asked to come in and take a bath."

"Ha! You, a simple employee, asking the hotel owner to take a shower in a VIP room? What's with that idea?"

"Well, I'm the only woman in the world that daddy loves the most."

"Wow! Dad, you know that's a word a slut uses to refer to customers, right?"

"What?!"

I was left speechless, as I never imagined that in my entire life I would be called a "slut". I was so shocked that I couldn't react. When I opened my mouth to answer, I was interrupted by Arun, who grabbed my elbow as if to stop me.

"I'll give you a second chance to retract. What did you say just now?"

Arun asked the cook in a polite but firm tone, making everyone pay attention.

"It seems that the sentence you said doesn't make sense."

His words were simple but sharp, making the cook's mouth drop open, not knowing what to say.

## "Let's go. Talking to someone without a brain is like talking to a monkey."

The sweet-faced girl pulled me away from the mess, but she was no faster than the cook, who grabbed some hot soup from the pot and threw it on Arun's back.

"Ouch!"

I cried out slightly as the hot water splashed on me, but that was nothing compared to what Arun felt, who was hit squarely on the back and didn't make a sound of pain, except for sitting on the floor, panting, with tears streaming down her face.

"Arun... you..." "..."

"If it hurts, say it hurts. I'm not someone else."

My voice was shaking, almost crying, because I felt sorry for the sweet- faced person. She looked at me and smiled with tears in her eyes, before nodding her head and speaking as if she was surrendering.

*"It hurts so much, Khu In... help me, please."*

# 15. Matchmaker

Arun's unprecedented pleading was something I had never heard before, my heart raced, along with the tears of a person with an expressionless face, who never showed weakness, making my lips tremble with anger. Little by little, my fury grew, like a thermometer slowly rising to the top. I glared angrily at the woman who had thrown hot soup.

"What do you think you're doing!?" "I... it's just..."

It seemed that even the cook herself was shocked by the sudden outburst. Emotions came faster than reasoning, and before she realized the grave mistake she had made, she had already thrown the soup.

"I'm going to kill you!"

And now, I was just like that woman. I pulled away from Arun and run towards the cook, trying to grab her and slap her. But, quickly, I was held by the waist, by Janephop's skillful hands, to the point that my feet left the ground.

"Let me go! I'm going to kill you! If you don't let me go, I'll kill you too, Janephop!"

"You can't, Miss, killing someone is a sin, you're going to hell." "I'm not afraid, hell is my home, didn't you know? Let me go!"

I was still screaming, furious, while dozens of eyes turned to me, who was in an explosion of rage. I flailed my arms, trying to free myself and reach Janephop's hair, pulling it with all my strength.

"Ahhhhhhh!" "Let go!"

"Miss, you need to calm down. I don't want you to get into trouble. Killing is a sin."

"Do you know what the God of Death calls me?" "What?"

"He calls me 'darling'. Now let me go!"

Just as I was about to go crazy with rage, everyone around me started to scatter like ants running away from water, when another authoritative voice echoed in the room.

"What's going on... Miss Arun!"

Mawin, who had probably been informed of the commotion, quickly arrived, observing the situation and staring at me as I struggled in Janephop's arms.

"Hold her tight, Janephop, before this gets worse." "Yes."

The two of them understood each other with a few words, while I was still clinging to Janephop's hair, struggling, but I noticed out of the corner of my eye Mawin holding Arun gently in his arms. That calmed me down a little.

"Where are you taking Arun?"

"To the hospital. Stop acting like a crazy person!" "I'll come with you!"

However, Janephop still didn't let go of me. Mawin looked at him suspiciously before giving him a cautious order.

"Carry this girl on your shoulders and come with me." "Yes."

And then I was placed on Janephop's shoulders, who was calm and collected, as he walked, surrounded by many eyes. Is this being careful when giving orders? I became a hunted boar, hanging like this, as we walked.

But it was okay... At least I could follow along and see how Arun was doing.

**JanPop**: "Miss Arun is already in the emergency room. Don't worry, I'll take care of things here."

Janephop sent a message informing that he had taken Arun to the hospital. Meanwhile, I had a small burn on my elbow; even though it was just a small splash, it was hurting quite a lot.

I can't imagine what the sweet-faced woman who took the blow to the back must be feeling.

"At first, you said I would go to the hospital with Arun, but now I'm here, why is that?"

"Because you're the involved party."

Now, all the people involved were in Mawin's workroom, with Dad sitting at the front, his expression serious, holding my arm with concern, as if his heart was breaking. The cook, who had had an argument earlier, had her head down, remorseful, and could only cry for compassion.

"The first time there was a conflict, it was still forgivable, but the second time, it's no longer forgivable."

Mawin was the one who broke the silence first. The cook raised her head, in tears, clasping her hands in front of her body, visibly worried.

"I truly apologize. At that moment, I was very angry, and that Arun provoked me."

"She was the one who started the fight!"

I argued, furious, while still holding my father's hand.

"Today, I was there, calm, in line to eat normally, but she started needling me, saying the same things, until Arun couldn't take it anymore."

I was about to change the subject. "And isn't that true...?"

The opposing party's gaze didn't leave my hand. "Everyone saw that you and Mr. Anek..." "What does that have to do with me?"

My father intervened, with a firm and threatening tone of voice, looking at the cook, as if he was ready to fight at any moment. The opposing party cringed when they had to look at the boss, who was considered the highest authority in that place.

"You came out of Mr. Anek's bathroom when you came in here." "Just because I came out of the bathroom, I'm already his lover?" "Or, is it not?"

"If so, what's the problem? And if not, what gives you the right to talk so much and take the situation to this level, to the point of throwing hot water on someone else? If something happens to Nong In, how are you going to take responsibility, huh?!"

Then my father slammed the table angrily, making even Mawin startle. I had to rush to calm the situation, hugging him and stroking his arm so he would calm down.

"It's not that bad, Dad. Please calm down."

"It's good that it's not, because if something more serious had happened, I would have used a gun!"

"Biased!"

"What did you say?" "You're biased."

The cook said bravely, like someone who is fighting to the end.

"Just because she has an intimate relationship with you, she does this to the other lower-level employees. If I were a little prettier or younger, you would protect me like you do her, wouldn't you?"

"Even if you were prettier, I wouldn't look at you."

"So that's what happens. No wonder In dares to say that she's the only woman you love in the world."

"You're right. In didn't say anything wrong. I've said that ever since her mother told her she was pregnant. I've loved her since before I saw her."

"..."

The cook still looked confused, so he explained, coming closer and speaking loudly enough for everyone to hear:

## "My only daughter. If I don't love her, who else would I love?!"

As soon as he said that, the cook fell to her knees, looking at me and then at my father in disbelief, until Mawin nodded, confirming that what was said was true. It was then that her mouth fell open and she quickly changed her attitude from powerful to submissive.

"S... sorry, please don't fire me."

"If I don't fire you, it will be a big mistake! The first time I heard that you threw something at In, I didn't report you. Now, you still come to throw hot water on her? Look, In didn't get hurt. You can worry about whether Arun will file a report or not. No... I'm going to kill you now. Where's the gun?!"

"Calm down, uncle. She's already very scared now."

Mawin tried to contain my father's fury, which was about to explode. In fact, he never owned a gun, but he just wanted to feel powerful. I understood too, since I myself was once the darling of the guardian of hell.

"Please don't fire me. I still have children." "Get out!"

My father picked up the phone to throw it, but Mawin stopped him before he could. Soon, the cook left peacefully. As soon as I finished dealing with the situation, I remembered that I needed to check on the injured person.

"Dad, I'm not going to work today, okay? I want to check on Arun." "Sure, I'll go with you."

"I'll go too."

So we all went to the hospital, with Mawin as the driver. Janephop, who was taking care of the secretary, quickly stood up when he saw that we were all there and began to inform:

The doctor said it was a large-scale hot water burn. She may need to stop working for a while and may have scars."

"Anything else?"

I asked for details, and Janephop continued to report what he knew:

"Other than that, there's nothing to worry about. The doctor said the burn may cause Arun to have a fever, she can't take a bath and needs to be

rubbed with a damp cloth, and she should sleep on her stomach. After that, the surgeon will schedule an appointment to check on the scars."

That was all the information we received before we started visiting the injured secretary one by one. I was the last one to go in and talk to her, who was barely opening her eyes because of the effects of the medication.

"If you're not feeling well, you can sleep. Stay in the hospital for two or three days."

"No, I want to go home... I don't like it here." "That messy room isn't your home."

"But it's better than here."

The sweet-faced person spoke in such a pitiful way that it frustrated me. "Please, I really don't like hospitals."

"You're perfect in everything except one thing: your fear of ghosts. Look, you're going to be here for a while. I'll take care of you myself."

I reached out to touch her shoulder, although I wanted to touch the burn out of concern, I was afraid that the secretary would get hurt.

"You touched me, sister." "Don't mess with me."

The sweet-faced girl, who was already about to fall asleep, replied in a complaining tone, a little embarrassed. I smiled slightly friendly.

"You managed to do what you said. Today, you really touched my heart."

I said, reaching out to the small hand of the girl who was lying on her stomach, as if making a promise.

"Apart from Mom, Dad, and Janephop who protect me, you are another person who always helps me. From now on, I will be kind to you. I will care."

"You..."

"To me, you are part of the family." I declared

In the end, Arun BekFah's body could not resist the fatigue and she ended up falling asleep sadly. I left the hand of the sweet-faced girl where it was and left the emergency room. Afterwards, I offered to keep watch in the secretary's ward with all my heart.

"Wouldn't it be better to hire a nurse? What can you do? You yourself aren't even clean."

Dad said. "Dad!"

I bared my teeth at my father and looked at Mawin, who was holding back a laugh.

"The reason I'm not clean is because of the cold water! If it was warm water, I would have cleaned every corner. I bathe so much that people say I'm dad's lover."

"Speaking of which, I'm still furious. I'm going to fire that cook!"

"I think we should put this aside for now. Let's wait for Arun to get better before deciding what to do."

Mawin suggested. This made my father wave his hands, looking tired.

"As you wish. My God, I have so much business, why do I need to worry about a cook who threw hot water on my own daughter? And you too, I trusted you to take care of Nong In..."

So, Mawin was scolded by my father from Phuket to Yaowarat. On the one hand, I felt sorry, but on the other hand, I was happy because I had been angry for a long time and didn't think of helping him with anything. While my father was complaining, I went to talk to Janephop, who had probably already arranged the special room for Arun BekFah.

"You are very tired today, go and rest," he said.

"You also need to rest. As for that cook, I will teach her a lesson today."

When I noticed that my assistant seemed more irritated than my father, I decided to intervene, holding his arm and shaking my head.

"No, let Fah solve this by herself. She is the one who is hurt."

## "Fah?"

"It's Arun BekFah... It's tiring to say all this. I can't keep up with my breathing."

I spoke shyly, crossing my arms to hide my embarrassment.

"This is crazy. Normally, she is a very calm person. How did she suddenly become so impetuous and start arguing for me so intensely? Although she did not use offensive words, I admit that if I had been listening, I would have thrown hot water on her too."

"She must have touched a sensitive spot." He replied.

"What do you mean?"

"You didn't read all the information I gave you, did you? You're throwing a tantrum."

"I'll apologize, okay? Let me give you twenty baths." "Deal."

"You're so cute."

I said, pulling Janephop's cheeks, before he smiled a little and went to take care of the things related to the room that Arun BekFah would need for treatment. Then, he left me alone, watching the delicate-faced person with a sigh of frustration.

Arun ̣BekFah was transferred to a special room, lying on her stomach, sleeping soundly like a small child. Her face without makeup made me unable to resist approaching and playing with her slightly upturned nose with my finger, feeling amused.

"Is that really your nose?" "Yes, it is."

Huh?!

I was a little surprised when the owner of the nose answered. The sweet- faced person slowly opened her eyes and met my gaze, without showing any emotion, as usual.

"A pretty nose, did you get it from your father or mother?"

"It must be your father's, I don't remember his face anymore. Actually... not even my own face."

"Fah, you're a pretty girl." "..."

"But I'm prettier."😅

I straightened up after the silence that formed between us. And, to avoid making the atmosphere awkward, I went to sit on the distant sofa, crossing my legs.

"Do you have prosopagnosia? Can't you tell if someone is pretty or not?"

"I can't tell very well. If you're pretty, then everyone in the world must be pretty."

Uh... was that a compliment or what? Why can't I interpret this...? "I'm just kidding."

"So you were calling me ugly, right? Was that why you were silent?" "Hehehe."

The sweet-faced girl's laughter made me want to bare my teeth, but I ended up laughing too.

"Thank you for standing up for me today, even if you ended up getting hurt because of it."

I thanked her from the bottom of my heart while Arun BekFah still looked into my eyes and remained silent, as if she was thinking.

"Since I was born, I've only had my father and mother. Oh, and Jenphob, who always protected me. I can't remember anyone else who has done anything good for me. Today, seeing you helping me, I was touched."

"Even if it was someone else, I would help." She replied.

"I know... Janephop already told me about your old job. When you saw that they were accusing me of having an affair, you couldn't handle it."

Arun BekFah left her old job because everyone in the company accused her of being the owner's mistress, who already had a wife. And she didn't even know what people's faces looked like in this world. In addition to the confusion of the people around her, even the owner himself thought that the sweet-faced secretary had feelings for him, because of the smile she gave him.

"The fact that you don't show any feelings may be due to this. If a smile makes people think you're flirting, you chose to remain neutral, not smile, not get angry, not do anything to your boss so as not to cause more misunderstandings."

I explained.

"But the situation is already resolved. Today, Dad exploded at that cook in person. She must be shaking all over when she found out that I'm his daughter."

"And what are you going to do with her now? Are you going to fire her?"

"I'm thinking about it. Mawin wants you to decide what to do, since you're the party involved."

"Right."

The sweet-faced person nodded before changing the subject. "And when can I leave here? Can I leave tomorrow?"

"Isn't it nice to sleep here in a comfortable air-conditioned room?" "It's not good. I'm afraid something might crawl out of here." "Wow... how imaginative!"

I almost laughed at that, finding it adorable.

"But even if you go back, you still can't work, you'll have to rest first." "Okay, I can sleep, but not here."

"Whatever you say, I'll ask the doctor. Get some sleep."

I was about to get up to turn off the light, but Arun BekFah's nasal voice, which sounded like thunder, interrupted me.

"Please don't turn off the light!"

"Even with the light on, ghosts can still appear if they want to." "But there's still light."

"If you want, then leave it on."

I shook my head and slumped down on the couch. However, when I tried to close my eyes, I felt like something was watching me the whole time, so I looked to the side and saw that Arun BekFah was still awake, her lips pursed.

"What happened?" "I can't sleep."

"If the light is on, it's normal that I can't sleep. The light is blinding." "I don't like the atmosphere in the hospital."

"And that's why you're staring at me?"

"I can only lie on one side. Besides, looking at you makes me feel sure that I have a friend here."

"Even if you look at a ghost, it can still come to you and scare you."

"Why do you want to make it scarier? I want to go back, I don't want to stay here."

The sweet-faced girl actually looked like she was about to get up, which made me laugh.

"Because you got hurt because of me today, I'll repay you by staying here to keep you company."

"What?"

I went to the other side and lay down next to Arun BekFah right away, because I was too lazy to explain, forgetting that the big wound was on her back. As soon as I moved and touched her, she let out a groan of pain.

"Sorry, I forgot! I'll go back to sleeping downstairs like before." "No, stay here."

The injured person, who could only turn to one side, reached out an arm and grabbed my shirt.

"Let's sleep together. You said you would make it up to me, right?" "But you will feel pain."

"Please."

Her pleading voice made my heart melt. I decided to lie on my back, trying not to touch her wound, but even so, she still wasn't satisfied.

"Can you turn around to face me? If a ghost shows up, it will sleep between us."

How imaginative!

"With a mattress as narrow as a cockroach coffin, the ghost probably won't be able to squeeze in here. But I can look at you."

I carefully turned to face Arun. When I did, she let out a sigh of relief, making me smile.

"So? Do you feel more at ease now that you are looking at me?"

"I feel much more at ease. Having you around makes me know that I won't be haunted. Being close to you like this is comforting."

"Do I make you feel that safe from ghosts?"

"Yes! Ever since I heard what you said today, I'm glad we're friends. It's really amazing."

"What do you know?"

"About you today, in the canteen."

I made a surprised expression as I remembered when I got carried away and only thought about killing someone, without caring about others. Oh, how embarrassing... How was I supposed to react when I protected Arun BekFa so intensely?

"Just a little. So, it's no wonder you're not afraid of ghosts." "Like this?"

I was even more confused this time. "What do you mean?"

"It's that you're not afraid of ghosts because you're loved by the God of Death, right? Hearing that, I feel much more relieved. If I'm with you, I'll be safe from ghosts."

"Is that what you meant?"

"Yes! What do you think I would say?"

I closed my eyes and smiled in relief, but this girl was obsessed with ghosts. How could she be so happy to think that I was loved by the God of Death?

Better change the subject; the conversation was giving me a headache.

"Usually, when you get sick, how do you take care of yourself when you're in the hospital?"

"I've never been to the hospital because I've never been seriously ill." "What if it's like today? What would you do?"

"I would lie down in my room, apply some medicine, and sleep. When I woke up, I would be better."

I raised my hand and massaged my temple, shocked by her terrifying naivety, since she was older than me. She had always acted like an adult, but she had fallen apart just because she was afraid of ghosts?

"You should have a boyfriend." "For what?"

"To take care of you."

"If that were the case, the single people of the world would be screwed."

"Yeah, but you should have a boyfriend. Find a good man to marry. That way, he could hold you at night when you were afraid of ghosts and take care of you when you were sick in the hospital."

"Is having a boyfriend really that good?"

"Try it and you'll know. What is certain is that if you have a boyfriend, he will hug you like this."

I demonstrated by putting my arm around Arun BekFah's waist.

"He will pull you close, and you will feel his heart beating, the sound of his breathing. You won't have to worry about ghosts anymore."

Arun BekFah was silent for a moment and then murmured, "I don't need a boyfriend if I have you."

"Huh?"

"Just having you hold me makes me feel safe."

When I heard this, I felt a heat in my cheeks and I didn't know how to react. I wanted to pull my arm away, but something was stopping me, a strange

feeling. As I pondered this, Arun BekFah changed the subject, and that made me feel more at ease.

"And you, why don't you have a boyfriend?" "Because I'm not afraid of ghosts, for fuck's sake." "..."

We both fell silent. I looked into Arun BekFah's eyes and smiled slightly, a little irritated.

"You ask that knowing that I've had boyfriends before, but none of them were good enough, so I decided to stay single. In the end, I chose not to have anyone."

"..."

The sweet-faced girl remained silent, allowing me to continue talking. I thought for a while and decided to share my story. It was okay, since we would have to live together for a long time. She already knew a lot about me, and I also knew a lot about the sweet-faced secretary. Talking a little about the past would help bring us closer together.

"I have decided that I will not have a boyfriend or a love again." "..."

"Aren't you going to say anything? Are you just going to listen without giving your opinion?"

"Being a good listener makes the person who is speaking feel at ease, so I don't want to interrupt anything... May I ask, why did you decide like that?"

"You know a little, don't you? I am someone who has not been successful in love. Whenever I get involved with someone, I end up being betrayed.

When I like someone, I end up being disappointed. Right now, my feelings are calm, I am fine as I am, so I prefer not to get involved. I'm comfortable

like this, I don't feel a lack of love, because I get a lot of love from my father and mother."

"So why do you encourage me to have a boyfriend, if it's not such a good thing?"

"Maybe you'll have more luck. Love isn't all about the bad things... but I've only found the bad parts. That's all."

I shrugged and said it like it was funny.

"I'm the type who falls in love easily. I get involved with whoever I'm around, without worrying if the person likes me or if it's going to put them in a difficult situation."

"You might not have found the right person yet."

"It's okay, if I haven't found one, then I won't. But you, on the other hand, are not like that, Arun BekFah."

"What do you mean?"

"There is someone who is interested in you, and he is good enough to take care of you for life."

I winked at Arun BekFah with a plan in mind. This would be good for both the sweet-faced secretary and me.

## Yes... I will be the matchmaker for Mawin and Arun BekFah!

# 16. Family Member

"Nong In... Nong In..."

My father's calling voice and insistent ringing make me wake up with a startled. Now, both Dad and Mawin and Jenpop are looking at me with smiles on their faces, but they tried to hide it, afraid that I would complain out of embarrassment. Right now, I'm lying with my face resting on Arun BekFah's back, with one hand on her body, which was lying on her side.

And the reason why I'm lying like this is because, even at three in the morning, the sweet-faced secretary couldn't sleep, worried about ghosts under the bed.

"It's already ten o'clock,"

Mawin said, pointing to the wall clock in the room we are in. Arun BekFah pulled back her hand and lay there silently, not daring to make any comment, equally embarrassed.

"Don't make that face... Jan, stop!"

I said, feeling that I couldn't blame anyone here, and ended up yelling at the subordinate who is also like a friend. If I'm going to take my frustration out on someone, it would have to be him.

"Sorry, Miss In."

"And why are you lying up there? Why are you taking Miss Arun's place?"

"Someone was scared of ghosts, so I came to sleep with her to keep her company. The idea was that when she fell asleep, I would run away to sleep on the couch. But without realizing it, I ended up falling asleep. It's always

like that when the air conditioning is at the temperature I'm used to. Oh... there's a water heater here too."

I changed the subject and pointed to the bathroom. Arun BekFah, who had been quiet for a long time, tried to get up, but I grabbed her arm.

"Where are you going?"

"I want to talk properly," she replied. "You can lie down, we can talk like this,"

I grumbled softly, not wanting the sweet-faced secretary to move. "What do you mean?"

"I want to leave the hospital today. Please, I ask for everyone's cooperation."

Arun BekFah replied stubbornly, which made me give in. Besides, the doctor said that her injury was nothing serious. It might hurt a little, but it's not something that will kill her (the doctor was very blunt). So, she can go home to recover. I helped the sweet secretary back to her room and prepared the bed to make her comfortable.

"Didn't you like being in the hospital? There's still someone there to help you clean up. Here, how are you going to take a shower or change your clothes?"

Dad asked, completely ignoring my presence, as if I'm invisible. "I'm fine here, Dad. Can you stop acting like I don't exist?" "You can barely take a shower by yourself."

"Dad!"

I yelled, irritated that he kept mentioning it. Mawin turned his face away to hide his smile, while Arun BekFah remained indifferent. How absurd! I'm

not a child anymore! How could he joke about something like that?

"I take a bath properly! It's only when the water is really cold that I end up being faster."

"See, that's not taking a bath properly. It's not possible... I can't trust you, Nong In."

"If I don't do it, who else will? We're all alone here, and the people around us hate me and all your friends."

I shrugged and acted as if Arun BekFah didn't have many options. "Or are you going to let Mawin help you clean up?"

"Don't tire yourselves arguing, I'm fine." "I'll clean you up."

I stated, patting my chest confidently, as if a brave spirit was inside me. "And I'll also keep looking for water, towels, and medicine for you." "There's no doubt that Arun will have a short life."

"Daddy!"

"But... if you offer it like that, I won't be able to say anything. Everyone has a first time, right? If you don't know how to clean up, just open YouTube."

"I'm not a child. What's so hard about cleaning up after someone? You men can leave now. This is a bedroom, and the girls are feeling uncomfortable."

"Are you sending me away from the inn?"

"I'm sending you away as a daughter, for crying out loud. Come on, Dad!" "That child is not nice at all."

"Win... wait, I have something to talk to you about."

Dad grimaced, hurt that I was treating him like a stranger and decided to leave without complaining. I followed him to Win, who was at the back of the group, to talk in private.

"What are you going to do now?" "I'm planning the secretary's life."

"Wow, wonderful! I thought you two hated each other. But, you know... a drop of water falls on stone. Every day the stone wears away. And look, Arun got lost in the haunted house with you and even fought with the others to protect you until she got hurt. If you didn't become friends, it would be a disaster."

"You talk too much."

"And what's the plan? Why did you come to talk to me?" "The thing is..."

I stopped walking and licked my lips like someone who was very focused.

"I think you and my secretary go together like a golden twig and a jade leaf."

"No, don't push me around. Stop playing like a child."

"What? You don't like Arun? I saw you looking at her with sad puppy eyes. I was thinking about being your matchmaker, but you refused. I can't guess your feelings."

"I have good feelings for her. She's beautiful and seems so vulnerable when she's with you, so I really feel sorry for her."

"Sorry?"

I bared my teeth before closing my eyes in patience.

"Don't cause trouble, okay? Talk like an adult, please."

"It's just that Arun has to deal with stubborn people like you. I know you a little, I know how complicated you can be. I heard that you had to be isolated in Korat because you got into trouble, but I don't know many details."

When Korat was mentioned, I sit up a little scared.

Back then, I made a big mistake, so bad that Dad had to take me to live on a farm in the mountains. And that changed my life forever... actually, it's only been two years, so let's not use the word "forever", because it's too long.

"So? After all, you're not interested in Arun BekFah?"

"I still don't know Arun BekFah well. We only talk superficially, because she doesn't seem to want much contact with people. Even when we pass by, she never greets me."

"It's not that she doesn't greet, it's that she doesn't recognize you."

"It's not that she doesn't know... but, gosh, if people are really interested in each other, they should remember each other, even when they pass by. Arun still remembers you."

"Who am I? Yama's beloved[1]. Have you forgotten?"

When I saw Mawin roll his eyes and laugh dismissively, I decided to change the subject.

"Come on, I want you and Arun to be together. We can't be together anyway. Can you imagine us making love? Oh... like, really intense, you know? Me jumping on top of you in bed, and the cold crawling up my skin."

"What!?"

Mawin exclaimed.

"What are you saying? And why are you moaning all of a sudden?"

"I'm just trying to create an image of what it would be like when we entered the bridal chamber, with all the sights and sounds. I'd have to take my clothes off for you. But if you swapped my face with Arun's, the result would be totally different."

"What do you mean different?"

"She wouldn't make any noise, because she wouldn't feel a thing. Like... 'Okay, Mawin. All right, do you think you got the right place? You put it in there, didn't you? I didn't feel a thing. It's so small...'"

"Ouch! I don't want to make that comparison! It's disgusting! And I'm not small!"

Mawin crossed his arms, wanting to defend himself, but ended up agreeing with the idea of our marriage.

"But it's true, I don't want to force us to have an arranged marriage, even if it's just something adults mention from time to time."

"It's that mention that's scary. Come on, try to open your mind. Arun looks like Mew Nittha, doesn't she?"

"You're crazy! I don't like Mew."

"Ah! Mew Nittha is dancing in front of the hotel." "Where!?"

Mawin turned around quickly, excited, but stopped when he realized I was joking and showed his teeth in an angry smile.

"Why are you fooling me?"

"Why did you believe me? You said you didn't like her. How disgusting!" "I won't talk to you anymore."

"Think about it!"

I yelled at Mawin, who had already walked away, laughing and satisfied. I thought this combination was perfect, like gold and jade, where everyone would win. Neither Mawin nor I would have to enter the bridal chamber, and Arun would have a good man as a partner to grow old with.

Win-Win.

Even if Arun had a break, that didn’t apply to me. Sometimes I think that I’m actually a child that Daddy adopted, going through tortures and trials. But… that’s okay. I decided that I wouldn’t separate social classes anymore. I want to be a good person that the world will remember. The secretary won’t get tired of pressuring me anymore. So, I’ll live in peace and learn everything I can. After three months, I’ll become the perfect person that Daddy wants.

Today, I walked to the canteen alone, accompanied by dozens of eyes that watched me and whispered like birds in a nest. Janephop, who came behind, quickly positioned himself next to me, like a guard.

“Why don’t you take out a gun right away? Instead of making people suspicious, they’re now suspicious. Stay away for a while.”

I pushed my faithful assistant, who was looking from side to side, as if he was afraid that something would fall from the sky. But Janephop grimaced in denial and explained:

"I can't. Even if that cook already knows that you are your father's daughter, the others don't know yet. There will probably be more side effects. It's better to ensure your safety first."

"Tell them to move away. You're annoying me."

I pushed the tall person away. Our intimacy only made the others whisper even more. Just by the look on their faces, I could tell they were thinking about a romance.

In Thailand, we should stop shoving dramas about couples down people's throats. It only makes others think that way, without any progress.

When it was my turn to get the food, the cook, with whom I had already had disagreements, coughed lightly, using a stern tone of voice. When I saw that she was positioning herself to face the impact, I already knew she was ready for battle.

"This food is not yours."

So she was willing to keep teasing me... "Why haven't you resigned yet?"

"..."

I stared at Janephop in silence and observed the cook's attitude. It wasn't long before the older woman disappeared behind the kitchen and returned with a large tupperware.

"This is yours." "Hmm?"

"Take it already, I don't have all day!"

Her loud voice made me accept the tupperware in a daze, before going to the table. I began to open the tupperware layer by layer and then my mouth fell open at the variety of appetizing food. There was American fried rice, spaghetti carbonara and lasagna—dishes that were definitely not suitable to be put in the traditional food tupperware.

"What is this?" "It's food."

"I know that... Oh, there's a piece of paper stuck here."

A yellow post-it note reflected the light, with a short message written in the handwriting of a child trying to make a careful handwriting. I glanced at the cook and chuckled softly.

"Hehe."

"I heard you have a sensitive stomach, so I brought you some food that was appropriate for you. Sorry for speaking loudly. It was an act, Aunty Yaow."

"Our country is really a drama queen... Damn, as soon as they found out who I am, they started treating me nicely. It's enough to make me want to punch them!"

"Maybe you regretted it."

"The first time, you threw a knife, the second time, you threw boiling water. These foods won't stop me from getting angry."

I stood up, not wanting to eat. Aunty Yaow looked at me from afar, with a sad expression when she saw that I refused her good intention. But after taking two steps, I came back, picked up the food box and took it with me, making the cook's expression improve. I won't eat... but Arun can't stop eating.

Now I'm back in my room with my lunchbox full of various foods. And, of course, I didn't forget to look at the fan on the ceiling and sing the national anthem of the week:

"I'm gonna swing on a chandelier!" "Is that you, Khun In?"

Arun's sleepy voice made me close my mouth instantly. I screamed unintentionally because my tongue was itching, without realizing that the sick person was sleeping.

"Sorry, I couldn't help it."

"Good thing you screamed, so I know it's you, In."

Sweet Arun sit up slowly, making a pained expression. I imagine her wound must have touched her clothes and caused a burning sensation.

"Why are you dressed in the room?"

"If I'm not dressed, I'll be embarrassed!"

I smiled slightly, liking how she referred to herself, but quickly adjusted my expression to something normal, as I didn't want the sweet-faced person to feel embarrassed or notice the situation, making her stop referring to herself that way.

"So what if you're naked? Who are you ashamed of?" "Yeah... of you, Khun In."

"Oh, there's no need to be ashamed. Among women, what's there to be ashamed of? We're all the same. Go on, take off your blouse."

I pulled the bottom of the sweet-faced secretary's blouse and tried to take it off, but Arun BekFah grabbed the blouse and crossed her arms.

"No, I don't want to. I'm not used to it. If anyone comes in, I'll feel awkward."

"No one will come in, except me. This is our room." "But the cook's son came here a little while ago." "Huh? The cook's son? The one with the grumpy face?"

I remembered the boy I left at the convenience store and laughed. "What did he say?"

"He didn't say anything. He just said that Mom sent food for me. From now on, I'll have special meals whenever I want."

"It's good that you didn't recite the mantra[2] when he brought the food... But I didn't like it at all."

"Hello? What didn't you like?" "I didn't like your attitude."

I changed my tone to a serious one, and Arun BekFah's expression was shocked.

"What did I do wrong?"

"It's nothing. I also brought food for you, but if you've already received it, that's fine. So, I'm going to leave for work. Oh, and you need to take this medicine."

I looked around and remembered that the medicine was in the drawer on the other side of the room. When I went to get up, Arun BekFah grabbed my wrist before asking in an almost pleading tone.

"Please tell me, can you tell me where I went wrong? Then I won't do it again. You don't have to be angry like this."

"I'm not angry!" "..."

I just realized that I really am like this. Our relationship has evolved to a new stage. In the beginning, I tried to act superior and had no intention of getting attached, since when the time came, Arun BekFah would leave, and it would all end there. But now it seems like it's getting more complicated. I'm starting to get emotionally involved with the secretary my father got for me... Wait a minute! I mean, I'm having emotions of love, greed, anger, and attachment!

"I'm really upset!" "..."

"Maybe it's because you said that you see me as a younger sister. So I started getting involved with what you said and ended up... upset. Damn it, you need to take responsibility for this."

I started to complain, acting as if the person in front of me was part of my family.

"I'm telling you, I'm not happy. Why are you referring to yourself as 'I' again?"

"What?"

"I prefer you to call yourself 'Fah'. It makes me feel closer."

I looked at the sweet-faced person, a little hurt, and I ended up putting it together with something else that was bothering me.

"And you still don't smile at me, like you smile at others." "I already told you why I don't smile, didn't I?"

"The reason you don't smile is because you don't want to show emotions, because of your professionalism. That's the reason you said, but I know you don't smile because you're afraid your boss will be attracted to you and want to have an affair with you, like he did at your old job."

Still... When I noticed the shocked expression on the person's face, I felt irritated for having guessed correctly.

"I'm not in a romantic relationship with you, am I? Can't you give me a smile?"

"This is so important to you, isn't it?"

"I don't know. It doesn't seem like it, but... it's bothering me. So it is important. It's like I'm the only one who doesn't have the right to see your emotions. It irritates me. You said you see me as a little sister and that you'd be a good big sister, right? So what's this? What big sister refers to herself as 'me'? And you don't even smile."

"..."

"Never mind. Why am I here talking about this instead of getting you the medicine? And what about that old cook, what are you going to do? Are you going to file a police report? Are you going to fire her? She should pay for this, you know?"

I complained, pacing back and forth as I picked up the medicine and read the label to see how many pills Arun needed to take, in addition to the medicine she had to apply on her skin.

"And instead of making it easier to apply the medicine, you even put on a blouse. How am I supposed to do that?"

"Khun In?" "What is it?" "Thank you." "For what?"

"For caring... Fah, you're very touched."

Arun said slowly, looking at me with a different feeling. And if I wasn't mistaken, it seemed like the sweet-faced girl was referring to herself as...

"..."

"Let's take it easy, okay? I'll refer to myself as 'Fah' when I talk to you, Khun In."

"Then I'll refer to myself as 'In' when I talk to 'Fah'."

And as soon as I said that, everything fell silent. I realized why Arun felt so embarrassed to refer to herself that way.

"I... uh, I get it, it's not something easy to get used to. Let's take it slow, okay? Here's your medicine."

"Thank you."

"And I'll try my best to come to you with concern." "With concern..."

"As if we were family." "Family."

The sweet-faced girl seemed to repeat almost every word as if she was convincing herself of something. I bit my lip and ran out of the room, too embarrassed.

Oh... I can't remember the last time I was so embarrassed, but now I feel so embarrassed.

Ah!

## Footnote

[***1]. God of Night, Death and Hell, he is a judge of men and a king of the hidden world, dwelling in a celestial place enveloped in light in the most remote place of the sky. For the Hindus, he is the first man, being equivalent to Adam in Christianity. He is one of the eight Vasus of the Brahmanic dynasty.***

***[2]. The Mantra to Ward Off Ghosts or the Fear of Evil Spirits ·***

# 17. The Same Group

"Don't laugh like that... Huh?"

Arun woke up and has been delirious for quite some time. Now, I'm confused, pacing back and forth, not knowing what to do. I've never taken care of someone who's sick before, so I don't know how to act. I tried googling what to do when a patient has a high fever and is delirious.

Cleansing the body... I've done that, but it doesn't seem to have helped. So, I started calling Janephop over and over, desperate, but I don't know what my assistant is doing at such a critical moment like this. Finally, I decided to run out of the room to get Mawin.

Although I tried to keep my distance so that no one would suspect, that didn't matter anymore now. Arun needed to be a priority! As I ran up the stairs towards where Mawin was, the familiar voice of the cook interrupted my thoughts, which made me irritated.

"Where are you going, Miss In?" "Can you not meddle in everything?"

My words caused the cook, who had approached in the hope of being friendly, to show a clearly disappointed expression.

This made me feel a little guilty, but I still maintained my posture, like someone who never admits her mistakes.

"Then I will leave..."

"How do you cleanse your body?"

I asked casually as the older woman walked away, her head down, towards her room. The question made the cook turn to look at me with some surprise.

"Clean the body?" "Yes."

In the end, the cook, who was the reason why Arun was like this, offered to come to the room and teach me how to clean her body.

"When my son was little, he would get sick a lot, so I learned to take care of him a little. When his fever is like this, you need to take a damp cloth and rub her body hard, always rising."

The older woman demonstrated and looked at me kindly.

"Pay attention to the folds of the body and the hot spots. Always clean and change the cloth for a damp one. Keep it up and the fever should gradually subside."

"Won't it hurt to rub so hard?"

"The harder the better. Rub until the skin is red... Miss In, can you help me lift Arun so she can sit up?"

"I can try."

I answered hesitantly, but I helped lift Arun BekFah so she could sit up. Her sweet face still weak and she looked weak, but she begin to open her eyes, as if she's coming to her senses.

"Khun In... I feel dizzy." She said.

"If you said you were fine, I would call you a liar... Being dizzy makes sense."

Arun BekFah, who could not sit up, throw herself at me, resting her head on my shoulder. We are now in an embrace, while Aunty Yaow is cleaning her back.

"It's not very practical like this. I think it's better to take off her clothes." Aunty suggested.

"Take off her clothes?"

I make a slightly scared expression, but then nodded.

"Okay. I told Fah to take off her clothes from the beginning, but she was embarrassed."

"Then help me, please, Miss In. Hold Arun for me, and I'll lift up her shirt."

I pushed Arun BekFah away a little and helped her sit up straight, while Aunty Yaow lifted up her shirt. The delicate-faced girl shake her head stubbornly, her voice sly.

"No, I don't want to... I won't take it off," She complained.

But of course, our combined strength was greater than hers, and we finally managed to take off her shirt, leaving her in just a simple bra.

Aunt Yaow, already with family experience, didn't mind and, when she said "take off your clothes", she included her bra, which fell off, revealing her proportional breasts right in front of me.

I didn't think I would feel anything, but I actually felt a little embarrassed. "Miss In, hold Arun for me, I'll rub her back."

"Be careful with the blisters... you're the one who caused them." "I know,"

Aunty Yaow said with a sad tone, which made me sigh. If she had the same harsh attitude she had when we first met, I wouldn't feel this way.

"I'm paying for my mistakes."

"You're afraid of getting fired, aren't you?"

"I am... but then again, I was too hasty. I'm sorry, Miss In."

"Don't give me that regret. I can't handle it. If you've always been rude, keep being rude!"

I said, baring my teeth.

"The one you really should apologize to is Fah, not me."

*Plop!*

Arun BekFah's head hit me again. The naked body of the girl with the delicate face is so close that I could feel her heartbeat.

My voice, which had been arguing with Aunty Yaow, begin to waver, and I had to clear my throat to regain my composure.

"Haven't you finished cleaning yet, Aunty?"

"Yes, I have. Arun is really very white. Is she the daughter of Chinese parents?"

"She's Thai, but I suspect her parents adopted her. They have a completely different appearance. How do two parents who look like they came out of a forest have a daughter as beautiful as Mew Nittha?"

"I like Mew too. Now that you mention it, I was wondering who Arun reminded me of."

"Ordinary face."

I joked, pretending to disagree with Aunty Yaow, since I still considered her my adversary.

We talked for a while, until we laid Arun BekFah on her stomach, to prevent the blisters on her back from rubbing against the blanket. We covered her body with a special cloth I bought so she wouldn't feel cold.

"There, everything is fine now. You just need to keep cleaning her body regularly, and the fever will go down. If you have any questions, you can call me."

Auntie Yaow looked around as if she was looking for something, then went to the table, picked up a cheap pen, and wrote her number on a piece of paper.

"Here's my number. You can call me anytime." "Until one in the morning?"

"Yes."

"And at four in the morning?" "Yes."

"At four hours and forty-two minutes and fifteen seconds?" "Any time is fine. I'll be on standby, waiting."

"Do you know what 'standby' means?"

"I'm also good at some things. You can call me without worrying." "Okay, if you think that's a great idea."

"'Great', Warinthorn[1] is also handsome, isn't it?"

"You only understood the word 'great', right? And you still say you know a little."

Auntie Yaow said goodbye with a humble gesture. Seeing that the older woman was about to leave, I couldn't help but call out to her, coughing lightly.

"Auntie." "..."

"'I Love You' do you know what it means?" "..."

"Huh, you said you know a little. Are you fooling me?"

"Yes, I do, but I'm in shock. I'm glad... Miss In has already accepted my friendship."

"Yuck, it even give me goosebumps. Go on, Auntie, I can't talk anymore. In a little while, at three o'clock, thirty-five minutes and thirty-two seconds, I'll call to bother you... oh, give my regards to ManU."

"Who is ManU?" "Your son, huh."

"My son's name isn't ManU."

"I gave him that name. It's a name given by Princess Intuorn Pomarakchai."

Aunty Yao left, looking confused. Now, it's just me and Arun Bekfa alone. As I looked at her sweet face, which was closed with her eyes in a peaceful sleep, the secretary my father sent surprised me by moving her lips and emitting a husky and sexy voice. This made me so embarrassed that I couldn't sleep anymore.

"'I love you', right? Khun In." "You weren't sleeping."

"How can I sleep with all this talk? Besides... I feel like I'm being forced to. I'm so embarrassed that I can't sleep."

I laughed fondly. Arun BekFah still had her eyes closed, which made me unable to resist poking her eyelashes just to irritate her.

"You're keeping your eyes closed while you're talking."

"I don't have the courage to open my eyes. I'm so embarrassed that I can't look... Please don't do this, it's itchy."

"I'm doing this so that you'll open your eyes. Even if you look at me, you won't recognize me."

"That's true."

"You're so beautiful."

I looked at her in admiration. Arun BekFah started to open her eyes and met mine, and it surprised me, so I cleared my throat to change the subject.

"Go to sleep. I won't bother you anymore, or you'll be even more embarrassed."

"What is beauty?"

"Huh? Is that a question to measure intelligence?"

I made a face of disdain when she asked that, but I knew that Arun BekFah didn't really understand.

"Beauty is beauty, just like comparing a small Japanese car with a European car that costs thirty million. Which one do you think is prettier?"

"For me, the important thing is that it works. But for most people, the thirty million car is definitely prettier... I think I get it, beauty is superficial."

"A more expensive car has to have something special, otherwise it wouldn't have that price. But anyway... in the end, it depends on how each person

sees things. People's beauty is not the same."

"And you, Miss In? If you were a car, would you be a European or a Japanese car?"

"Of course, I'm the perfect combination: rich and beautiful. I'm a European car that costs thirty million!"

"And me?"

"What do you mean?"

"To you, am I a European or a Japanese car?"

We stared at each other and fell silent. If it were before, I could answer this question simply, without thinking, saying something like:

*'Of course, you have to be a Japanese car because I'm the best.'*

Something like that, without a care in the world. But now it seems that my feelings have changed.

## But how they have changed, that is the question...

"You are not a car." "..."

"Then you better sleep. Suddenly, you come to ask me something I don't know."

Since I couldn't answer, I ended up diverting and changing the subject, until I remembered something.

"But one thing is for sure: we are from the same group, even if we are not cars."

I smiled, happy to have a friend, while Arun BekFah looked at me and tilted her head, looking curious.

"What do you mean we are from the same group?"

*"We have the same pink nipples."*

.

.

"Fah, I'm going to work now." "..."

And then I slowly closed the door, making a confused expression. Since yesterday, Arun BekFah had been silent after our conversation ended with the phrase "we *have the same pink nipples."* What's so awkward about that? I just wanted to be closer and mingle, that's all. They say the bolder you are, the more intimate you become. Besides, we have the same color of nipples; I don't know why she's mad. She's shyer than I thought, with sure.

Janephop came to pick me up at the residence building, as usual. He must have waited a while until I showed up and called him.

"Miss."

"What's wrong? Do you have something to say?"

"You should go meet Mr. Mawin. He said he has something to discuss with you."

"And why didn't he call?"

"He said he was afraid the noise from the phone would disturb Miss Arun's sleep."

"Wow, how thoughtful... He's still wondering if he likes her, just to play hard to get."

I smiled sarcastically and shrugged.

"And you know what he wants to talk about? Hmm... Acting like he's the owner of a big hotel, calling me. Do I really have to go?"

I started walking forward, with Janphop following me. "Aren't you going?"

"I'm going, just going slowly."

"Oh, sure... And how's Miss Arun?"

"She's sulking in her room. What a person... I was up all night taking care of her, and because of a comment about nipples, she can't handle it. It's not like...,"

I paused as I remembered someone else and shake my head.

"Long story short, Fah is better. I cleaned her up and her fever went down. There's nothing to worry about."

"Okay."

"Jan."

Janephop, who was about to return to work, turned to me and looked at me with a bit of surprise.

"What's wrong?" "I need your help."

I handed my phone to my friend who is like my right hand, capable of doing everything in the world.

"Take a picture for me, please." "Hmm? Sure!"

I stand posing for Janephop to take pictures for more than thirty minutes, not caring about what Mawin had said about calling me urgently. After finishing the poses and choosing the photos with intense fervor, I sent them to Janephop via Line.

"Print the photos in A4 size, no, wait... do whatever you want with the files, but put them in a nice frame. Oh, and pick out a Swarovski necklace for me. I wonder if there's a Swarovski store in Phuket?"

"I'll check for you."

"If not, then a white gold necklace. Anything that matches Fah's white neck."

"Are you doing this for Miss Arun?" "Yes."

"..."

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"You're about to apologize to her with that necklace, aren't you?"

"I'm not apologizing! It's just a gift so the girl won't see me as a ghost." "What do you mean? A ghost?"

"Well, I declared that I'm loved by the god of death, so Fah started to think that I can actually drive away ghosts... Coincidentally,vshe's on bad terms with me, so I took this opportunity to do this... If she wants to think that I'm apologizing, that's fine."

"That's an excuse."

"You're talking too much! You're not usually so argumentative. Come on, let's go! I need to find my future fiancé who's crazy about power and prestige, even if he has little!"

"Okay."

It took me about five minutes to walk from the dorm to Mawin's office, and when I walked in, I found that my father had returned last night, bringing a special gift, which was...

"Today, the water heater company is going to install the devices in all the bathrooms."

"Oh my God..."

I put my hand on my chest and looked at the horizon. "Dad is very generous."

"Well, you keep complaining every ten minutes when you see him, so he had to change that."

"But why do you have to install it in all the rooms?"

"If you only installed it in your room, people would start to suspect like last time, when they said you were the mistress, soon there will be more strange stories coming out."

"You called me here just to tell me that my father installed the water heater? You could have sent a message on LINE, right? You keep acting like you're the boss all the time."

"It's just that I'm following the role of boss here. But I called you today to tell you that I'm going to transfer you to other duties besides cleaning the room and making the bed. There are other jobs you need to learn."

"What kind of job?"

"Waitress. This time, you'll get to talk to customers and learn about what all employees go through. The uniform will also change."

I nodded, accepting it half-heartedly, before changing the subject with a sniff.

"What perfume are you wearing? I've been meaning to ask for a while." "Chanel Allure. Why?"

"If Fah smells that, she'll know it's you." "What do you mean?"

"As the hotel owner, do you have any free time with the work you do?"

"I don't really have much free time. I spend my days looking at the big picture, talking to the executives, tweaking things here and there. It's not like in soap operas, where the protagonist spends the day flirting with the waitress, who is actually an heiress in disguise looking for true love."

"It feels like we're watching different soap operas, because 'Buang Hong'[2] doesn't have that plot."

"But why are you asking that?"

"I intended to take you out on a date as soon as Fah was better."

The strange feeling I got when I looked into her eyes last night made me want to do something quick. At first, I was just joking around, thinking about setting Fah up with Mawin for fun, but now it doesn't seem so fun anymore, because I feel like a warning sign is warning me about a terrifying feeling that's about to arise. When did this happen? Was it when she protected me from the hot water or when she was naked and I could feel her heart beating? There must be some moment, but I can't find it. What is it?

"You still haven't given up on this idea, have you?"

Mawin made a slightly confused expression, while Janephop, who heard everything, looked at me in surprise.

"Of course! You're perfect, you match Arun like no one else. Do you know how lonely Fah was yesterday? That lonely woman, if she doesn't have someone to take care of her, will be very sad when she gets old, especially being so naive."

"But love doesn't come from pity."

"But it can form from it. You already have the flame, lighting it shouldn't be difficult."

I smiled, trying to make Mawin feel confident that he is a good person. "Take care of Fah. She's like a sister to me, while you are..."

"What am I to you?" "A termite."

"Huh?"

"I don't like termites. When they gnaw through wood, it's so disgusting, just like you, a relative who thinks I'm going to get married and have kids...How do I deal with such a close blood relationship?"

"Termites don't make me feel any better."

"But you're a rich termite with good semen. If you and Fah got together, you'd probably have beautiful kids."

"You're talking disgustingly."

"Don't be shy about that. That girl doesn't give me the feeling of being just a sister. Even physically, we look alike. We're from the same 'family'."

I raised my eyebrow at Mawin, which made him frown. "From the same 'family' how?"

I smiled and said proudly,

## "We have matching pink nipples."

## Footnote:

***[1]. Warintorn Panhakarn or Great (nicknamed) is a Thai actor and model. He is best known for his roles in television dramas such as The Sixth Sense (2012) and Khun Chai Taratorn (2013).***

***[2]. Buang Hong is a Thai drama released in 2017 by Channel 3.***

# 18.We're Not Sisters

"If you're still not feeling well, you'd better rest. Daddy and Mawin don't care about that."

I walked next to the sweet secretary who had been recovering for almost a week. Arun still didn't talk much, as usual, even though she thought we were getting closer. Or maybe she was still mad because I said we were in the same 'group'. Thinking about it, maybe that should be a concern...

Because after I mentioned the nipples, even Mawin quickly cut the conversation short and told me to get back to work.

Usually, his face would turn red from dust allergies, but I could tell that wasn't it, probably just embarrassment.

Everyone is so sensitive... It's so natural to talk about nipples. "It's been so many days and you're still mad?"

***Plop!***

I laid my head on Arun's shoulder, who is next to me, and keep walking, leaning my weight on it. The smaller person froze slightly, but eventually spesk to me when I used my charm trick.

"I'm not mad. Walk upright, okay, Khun In?"

"Of course you're mad! Didn't I say we were close?"

I shifted my position, placing my chin on her shoulder, so close that my nose is almost touching her cheek.

"Wow, you don't have any pores, huh? Your skin looks like a baby's."

Why does she smell so good? She's not even wearing perfume. I'd never noticed that before...

"Khun In likes physical contact, huh?"

"Really? I've never noticed. But I don't do that with just anyone, only with Mommy, Daddy, and you."

I raised an eyebrow before pulling away. "Because we're close."

Even though I close with someone, I know I wouldn't do that. Okay, I like physical contact, but not that much. Now, I'm just trying to find an excuse to touch her. I hope she doesn't notice. She doesn't like romantic topics, so I'm going to avoid it sounding like that.

"Let's take it slow, okay? I'm happy, but I'm not ready for that."

"You think too much. I've already seen you all over, there's nothing more to be embarrassed about. Next time, I'll take my clothes off for you to see, and then we'll be even."

"Khun In!"

It was the first time the sweet-faced person raised her voice a little, surprised. I could only laugh softly, pleased that I had managed to tease her. And it seemed that the normal atmosphere was slowly returning. She was no longer that shy or overly embarrassed.

"If you don't want me to take your clothes off again, get a boyfriend right away. That way, when you get sick, you'll have someone to take care of you."

"If having a boyfriend is so great, why doesn't Khun In have one?"

"Because I'm not sick, right? And like I said before... I'll never fall in love again."

I glanced at her and quickly looked away. Now that I still aware of myself, I needed to push her away as quickly as possible.

"In, you're so contradictory. You keep telling me to get a boyfriend, but you yourself say you'll never love."

"But at least I've loved before, haven't I? I've tried. But you, Fah, have never loved... You need to try, you know? Love someone, hold their hand while you watch a movie, kiss, have sex."

"..."

"Really shy, just like Mawin. Just talking about nipples makes him blush." I said, poking the sweet-faced secretary's cheek affectionately.

"I'm curious to know what you'd be like with a boyfriend. Oh! Speaking of which, he just arrived."

Mawin is walking next to a department manager, discussing work intensely. I forgot that I was still in the position of an employee, so I give the handsome guy a friendly wave, amidst the stares of the other employees in the lobby.

"Hi, you're right on time!"

The boss, who all the subordinates feared, looked up and looked at me, before stopping when he sees Arun BekFah. Mawin's face started to turn red again, which make me think it's funny.

"What's wrong? Just seeing Arun BekFah's face makes you blush? Are you thinking about nipples?"

"In / In!"

They both said at the same time, as if they are reciting something in sync, like monks listening to the Patimokkha sermon[1].

"Definitely soulmates! They said it at the same time, and yet the same thing... Oh, I grt carried away."

When the manager, who walking next to Mawin, looked at me curiously, wondering why I seem so close, I quickly clasped my hands in front of me.

"I'm just joking, Mr. Mawin. I'm excited to see my friend recover from her fever."

"Is Miss Arun feeling better now?" He asked.

"Yes."

"That's good."

"Yes." "..."

Am I going crazy or what? Why am I hearing the sound of crickets expressing melancholy in this conversation? And why are they talking so little? If they have children, they will eventually become mute, because their parents never talk and they won't learn to speak properly?!

"Then let's get to work."

Mawin cut the conversation short and started walking away. I give him a small smile because he didn't continue even though he had the opportunity. Since Mawin wasn't helping, I had to turn to Arun BekFah, but then...

"I'll take my leave."

The sweet-faced secretary speak distantly.

I could only stare at her back and scratch my head. What had I done wrong?

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*"Maybe you're being too direct. Arun might not be used to this. Besides, she just got over her fever and must be confused. I think it's best to take it slow."*

Jane offered reasonable advice. Right now, I'm working on serving drinks, which is a similar role to a receptionist. I'm standing, resting my legs, because there are no guests for me to try to work on yet.

"Why is it that everyone talks about taking it slow these days? If we like each other, can't we be more direct? Look at me, if I like someone, I just say I like them. If people are soulmates, they can get married in ten minutes!"

"That's superficial. Getting something easy also means you can lose it easily."

Jane said as he looked away.

"Your love comes easy every time, and that's why it ends quickly. Isn't it true that you yourself were traumatized by it?"

"You're being sarcastic."

I frowned a little, but I didn't want to prolong the argument since I was the one who asked for his advice.

"What about you? Have you ever had a love, or at least a girlfriend?"

"I've never had a girlfriend. My life revolves around you, how could I possibly look for a girlfriend?"

"That's true. The more time you spend with me, the higher the standards are. There must be no one as beautiful and stunning as me."

"..."

"Why are you silent? You have to agree, or I'll beat you up."

"By the way, are you really going to be the intermediary between Miss Arun and Mr. Mawin?"

"Yes."

"And have you asked if Miss Arun is willing?"

"Why would I need to ask? Mawin has it all: looks, status, knowledge. I reject him because we are too closely related. Besides, Mawin's ex- girlfriend looks similar to Fah, doesn't she? So let them be together. Based on my assessment, there is no one who is a better match than this couple."

I said proudly. Sometimes, maybe I don't need to do scholarship, because if I can get these two together, I'll open a dating company and create a downloadable app, charging a fee after the services provided.

Wait a minute... Intuorn, you're a receptionist now, how annoying. "Aren't you afraid of being alone?"

"Alone how?"

"If Miss Arun really has a boyfriend, she won't have time to devote to you."

"I'm not a child anymore. Besides, I see her as a sister... Fah really cares about me."

I smiled in admiration as I remembered several situations where she had put herself in front of me.

"When I realized it, it seems like we are together all the time." "You two seem more like a couple."

"What do you mean?"

I was startled and turned to look at my friend with an apprehensive look.

"Well, you two are glued to each other. I feel a certain chemistry."

"Arun and I have already talked and decided that our relationship will be in a parallel format: boss and employee. It's a rule. We take it very seriously."

"Okay."

"Don't tell Arun that, okay? She's afraid of the relationship at work. If she starts to suspect that I have feelings or that I'm shaken, it'll be hard to work together. And most importantly... I won't let myself like someone easily just because of the closeness."

I said firmly.

"That's what makes me suspicious. Are you trying to push Miss Arun to get a boyfriend because you're afraid of that?"

"What do you mean by that?" "Can I talk?"

Janephop made a worried expression, then nodded as if he had made a deal with himself.

"You might be afraid that being too close to Miss Arun will make her fall in love."

"Enough of that!"

I quickly interrupted, already knowing where he was going. "Go to work now."

"Alright."

In the end, I decided to call Mawin again to close the deal and make sure he confirmed the available dates. Although the person on the other end seemed irritated with me, he also seemed interested.

[Are you sure you really want to do this? Does Miss Arun agree with what you're doing?]

Mawin was also the type who was afraid of falling in love. But as I said, he had been interested in my secretary from the beginning. Being a cold and quiet person, everything seemed to move so slowly that it almost irritated me. What was the point of being born with a handsome face and a rich family if he was going to win over a girl at a snail's pace? Hasn't he ever read about other playboys who change their girlfriends like they change their clothes? He spends all day drawing and looking at the sky, letting the opportunity slip away. What an annoying guy.

"I only choose the best for Fah, and you're the best choice. Can you stop playing hard to get? You're annoying me. If you keep hesitating, I'll introduce her to someone from college, okay?"

[Speak as if you have a lot of friends.]

"Why does everyone think I don't have any friends? Look, I do have friends, okay? But whether they're real or not is another story."

I shrugged, not caring about anything.

"If you're not interested in Arun, that's fine. I'm tired of you." [And if I am interested...]

The other person interrupted quickly, as if afraid I'd hang up the phone, while I smiled, feeling victorious.

"If you're interested, then just say it. I'll take care of everything for you." [What do you mean by 'taking care of everything'?]

"I'll make time for you two to be together, of course. Look, here's what you do... find a free time and text me. I'll set it up with Fah. Do I need to teach you how to pick up a girl?"

[I'm not stupid.]

"Great. Deal."

[Deal.]

The cupid plan was going as expected. I jumped for joy, almost dancing with excitement, as I walked back to my room. On the way, I met Arun BekFah, who was also returning, so I waved to her enthusiastically.

## "Arun BekFah Nok Ga Boey Bin. (The dawn breaks, the bird that flies)."

Since we were a little far away, the sweet secretary might not have recognized me. So I had to sing the anthem of the place where Arun BekFah came from, so she would know who I was.

"Ok Hak Gin Ra-eurn Jaem Sai. (Go out and eat happily and contentedly)."

She replied in a good mood. Although her face was not smiling, I could feel the light and cool breeze emanating from her serene expression. With that, I run to her and hugged her tightly, full of excitement.

"Ahh, Khun In, I can't breathe!"

"You're so cute! Why are you so small? Are you going back to your room? Let's go together!"

I said, as I linked my arm with hers in an close gesture, and Arun BekFah nodded, seeming to have gotten used to my closeness.

"How was work today?" "As always, learning."

"You must have missed me a lot today."

"I don't know," she replied, somewhat evasively.

I imagine that the reason Mawin didn't transfer Arun BekFah to the service sector, like me, or to a more sophisticated position as a receptionist, had

something to do with the fact that he knew about her peculiar problem from my father. Arun BekFah has difficulty recognizing faces, and that could cause complications.

"By the way, have you thought about what I always say?"

"You talk so much, Khun In. I don't even remember what it is about." "Then that means you haven't thought about anything!"

I joked, flicking her arm in amusement.

"It was about getting a boyfriend, of course!" "Oh, that? No, I haven't. Why do you ask?"

"I just wanted to say that if you're feeling lonely, it's time to get a boyfriend! We're not going to spend our whole lives together, you know? Just today, just because I wasn't at work, you've already become all sad and lonely."

"Did I say I was feeling lonely?"

"Can't you feel a little lonely? Let me fool you a little, will you."

Pretending to be upset and pouting, Arun looked at me and poked my lips with her finger, as if she found me funny.

"You're acting like a child."

"But I'm younger than you! You said you see me as a sister. And I see you as a sister too, I only want the best for you."

"Thank you, that's comforting."

"That's why I arranged a meeting between you and Mawin." "What!?!"

I was about to explain when the sound of a message interrupted.

Before I could reply, I see Mawin's message saying he would be free next Sunday, almost the whole day.

"What a coincidence... Mawin is free on Sunday! He confirmed. And you're off too, so there won't be any problems."

I smiled, but Arun remained silent. "I'll let him know you're free."

"Are you arranging a date for me?" "Yes."

"I didn't ask, you know?"

"You didn't, but I want what's best for you. I want you to have a good love. Mawin is an amazing man and he's interested in you. Missing this opportunity is like missing out on a prize, you have to grab it."

"Thank you for your concern, but if I didn't ask, please don't interfere, okay?"

Hearing this, the joy I felt faded, and a strange feeling ran through my body, as if all my muscles were tensing, because the anger in my mind was manifesting itself.

Not interfering? I did it with good intentions, but now this woman is telling me that I made the wrong decision?

"So, you're telling me that I'm interfering in your life?"

I let go of her arm, licking my teeth angrily, but Arun BekFah showed no fear. Instead, she kept her gaze steady, reaffirming what she had said.

"I'm just asking you not to get involved in this matter. I'm not thinking about falling in love or mixing it with work yet. Besides, Mr. Mawin is our boss, and I don't want to be the talk of the town."

"I'm your boss!"

I shake with anger, clenching my fists.

"If I tell you to go, you go! Don't think that just because I'm nice you can rebel against me!"

"That's right."

Arun BekFah replied in a cold voice.

"I almost forgot that you're my boss and always have been." "Don't be sarcastic!"

"That's not sarcasm, it's a reminder to myself that I shouldn't get too attached to my boss. A more close relationship between a subordinate and boss simply does not exist."

The words, spoken with a tone of hurt but full of distance, made me feel a lump in my chest with regret. Unintentionally, I had abused my authority and acted oppressively, even without the real intention of doing so.

"Fah..."

"And since we are just boss and subordinate, let's stay within the boundaries that should be respected. Work is work. Personal matters, I take care of them alone."

"Are you saying that we are not like sisters, as we used to say?"

Instead of correcting what I said, Arun BekFah just nodded, reaffirming what seemed to be the end of our friendship.

## "Yes. We are not sisters."

***Footnote:***

***[1]. Pratimoksha - also known as patimokkha, is a list of rules contained in which Buddhist monks should behave. In Hindu traditions, this practice is known to be rejected due to the teaching of Sarvastivada.***

# 19.Taddao Bussaya

It’s been two days since the two of us have spoken or asked each other how we were. The atmosphere between us is thick with tension, like a thick cloud of smoke that never dissipates. PM 2.5 dust[1] can’t compare to it.

And forest fires? Don’t make me laugh.

On the third day, it seems that Arun’s patience is starting to wear thin. That morning, before we go to work, the sweet-faced person called my name for the first time.

“Khun In?”

But I, who am already naturally stubborn and sensitive, hold on to my pride and refused to act like a puppy waiting for its mother to be fed.

I pretended not to hear and left the room without even glancing at the sweet-faced person like I had done before.

“Haven’t you two made up yet, Miss In?”

Janephop, who is a wise, alert and cheerful person, a kind of arhat[2] in all aspects related to me, asked with concern. I am not sure what my face reveals today, but it make my friend and coworker sigh and shake his head in disapproval.

"Fighting like that, don't you two feel uncomfortable sleeping together?"

"I am an expert at fighting with people. Especially at sulking, I am number one at that. You know that better than anyone." 😅

"Yeah, I know."

"Hey!"

I bared my teeth at him again and used a somewhat threatening tone. Of course, Janephop know exactly how I feel. He has known me all my life. And yes... he is right. I have sulked with him countless times. But with Arun BekFah, I had never experienced that before. And I had also never met anyone who made me feel so hurt and resentful like this. When my gesture of goodwill was treated as if it meant nothing, how could I not be hurt?

"Do you think you can go back to normal easily? Talk without caring about the feelings of the listener and then just reset everything as if nothing had happened? That would be too easy."

"And when you fought, didn't you throw bad words in her face? That doesn't seem like the Intuorn I know."

When he asked me this, I remembered the day when I also used words as harsh as hers. But my desire to win made me feel that I couldn't give in.

"I'm not wrong."

"And don't you feel uncomfortable?" "Yes, but I'm a patient person."

"Miss In, you can act like this with me or your father, but Arun is not part of your family to accept everything you do without question."

"What do you mean?"

"If she can't take it anymore and leaves, you'll regret it."

When I heard this, my head felt even hotter. I answered harshly, as if the person I was talking to was Arun BekFah.

"If she can't take it anymore, then she can go away. I don't care. If there is no Arun BekFah, what will it change? There are many people who want to be my secretary."

I said coldly.

"But there is only one Arun in this world, Miss. I just want to tell you... Trying to win with anger won't solve anything. For you, is Arun an enemy?"

He answered calmly.

"You're talking too much today! I'm going to work!" I replied irritably.

"Wait a moment." He called me. "What is it now?"

I shouted to my big friend, who keeps his expression serene the whole time. To my surprise, he handed me a small blue velvet box.

"Marry me."

He said seriously. "What!?"

"I'm joking."

He replied, with a slight smile.

After being shocked when I received the box, when I opened it, I found a white gold necklace with an openable pendant. Inside the pendant was a picture of me. Only then did I remember that I had asked Janephop to provide a necklace for Arun BekFah.

"You're full of jokes today, huh?" I said, rolling my eyes.

"Use this to apologize to her." He said.

"What?"

I asked, confused.

"To apologize to Arun," He repeated, firmly. "Hmm."

"To apologize to Arun." "Hmm."

"To apologize to Arun BekFah, Fah, Fah!"

"Why are you echoing that? Jane, you can go wherever you want. No! I'll go alone. I'm sick of this!"

I walked away from Jenephop to avoid another conversation that would only increase my anger. Today, I started the work day with a sullen expression, as if I had eaten a hive of wasps and bees. However, I completely forgot that I was now working in a new department, where smiling was a must, especially for guests in the lobby. But unfortunately, today I forgot to bring it, even when I went to serve water.

"I came here to vent."

The foreign guest said, laughing with his friends as they waited for their keys at the reception.

"They say Thai women can be bought with money."

I was already in a bad mood that day, and hearing this made me even more irritated, as if my muscles were twitching. But I keep repeating to myself:

*'It's none of my business, it's none of my business.'*

"In any country, people can be bought with money."

One of his friends commented, as if he were contradicting him. I had already finished serving and was a little further away, but I could still hear the conversation clearly.

"But Thai women are the easiest." The first one continued.

"A friend of mine told me that when he came here, he got with several women for free, because they think that all foreigners are rich."

"Really? If they do it for free, then they're not prostituting themselves, right? Maybe your friend tricked them."

The other said.

"You're right. My friend said he was a businessman, that he was coming to buy land here to build a resort. The women barely understood what he was saying, but they thought he was rich. In the end, he got what he wanted for free. To this day, they probably still wait for him to come back, without knowing that they were tricked."

"And you, are you going to try to do the same? Trick someone to get it for free?"

"No, no, I wouldn't do that. I came here to have fun, to pay, really. I was just saying that it's easy here. Even the bus advertisements in England say that... Like that waitress who just served us water. Give her a tip of five hundred baht. I bet she'll think you're rich and, from being a waitress, she'll become a saleswoman for something else."

"Five hundred is too little for someone like me, money can't buy me, unless it's enough."

I replied in English, already starting to lose my patience. The foreigners, surprised by my answer, turned around with forced smiles, waving their hands awkwardly.

"Waving to who? Your father?" I replied sarcastically.

"Hey! How dare you talk to a customer like that?" One of them complained.

"If you have such a bad education, go back to your country. That dirty mentality doesn't work here. Thai women aren’t that easy, especially one like me who has a really rich dad.”

“Oh, your dad is rich and you work here?” He retorted disbelief.

*“It’s better than someone who pretends to be rich, don’t you think?”*

I snapped, as our voices begin to attract the attention of the other guests around us.

Soon, the hotel manager came running over, trying to calm the situation, bowing repeatedly in apology, while the customers continued to complain in English.

"The service here is terrible. I'm going to write a review on the tourism website saying that this place doesn't train its employees properly."

"Go ahead! I'd love to explain in the review what kind of sexual harassment you were engaging in."

I replied, deliberately mentioning sexual harassment, since I knew how much weight it carries in European countries.

Upon realizing the seriousness of my response and the level of my English, the customers became nervous and started backing away, feigning exaggerated indignation.

"I'm not staying here anymore. The service at this hotel is horrible."

"Go away then, and never come back! Next time I'll catch you with a water gun filled with acid during Songkran[3], you bastard."

The commotion finally died down when the customers left, but I was still there, with the manager looking at me, clearly frustrated and ready to take her anger out on someone, and that someone, of course, would be me.

"I told you, the client was harassing me. If I didn't stand up for myself, what did you expect me to do? The client is important, yes, but he's not a god. He pays and we provide a service in return, but that doesn't mean he's the boss of us or that we can be treated like trash. He thought that with five hundred baht I would agree to sleep with him."

"You could have just ignored it. There was no need to argue with him." "Oh, so you think I should have stan

d by while he disrespected me? Instead of standing up for me, you come and criticize me? What's your name again?"

"And what does my name matter? What are you going to do?" "I can do much more than you think."

"You really are rude, just like the client said. It seems your parents didn't teach you any manners."

"Now you're going to insult my parents? You, who can barely say okay and yes in English, think you have the moral authority to insult me? How did you become a manager? Did you sleep with the hotel owner?"

I snapped angrily, but caught myself in time.

"No, you didn't sleep with him, because Mawin is too handsome for you. My father knows how to choose too."

"You!"

"Miss Praewa."

Mawin's firm voice interrupted the argument. The manager, who was about to spout more insults, froze in place.

"Leave it to me, I'll take care of it." "Mr. Mawin... Of course, excuse me."

The manager backed away, even though this was her own office. Mawin, who had probably already heard most of the argument, stood still, taking a deep breath with a tired expression.

"You always causing trouble, Intuorn."

"Trouble? I was just defending myself. You know very well that five hundred baht won't buy a woman like me."

"You're very impulsive. When you argued with the guest in the lobby, it was a bad scene. Now, the other guests are complaining that our hotel staff isn't well trained."

"Well, at least they're complaining that the hotel doesn't train the staff, unlike that ridiculous manager who said my parents didn't raise me... We have training, but it seems like she hasn't learned anything!"

I pulled up a rolling chair and throw myself into it, holding my head. "Damn, I'm already in a bad mood this early."

"You're mixing up too many things. You still haven't made up with Arun, have you?"

Mawin changed the subject and sit down on the desk so that I could look at him, while folding his hands in his lap.

"You've been tense for two days."

"Why does everyone talk about this? Do I have to be in a bad mood because of Arun?"

"That's the only thing that's been causing this, right? Arun also seems stressed. Even with that always calm face, you can tell she's not well. I think you should fix this soon. It's affecting your work."

"Are you going to fire me, then?"

"You know I can't do that. And because you know that, you always end up giving me problems to solve."

"You're my future husband, so solve your wife's problems."

"Look! The other day you were playing cupid with me and now you want to be my wife again?"

"Don't talk about it, I'm already irritated." "Aren't you going to tell me why you fought?"

It's because of you! I thought, showing my teeth, but I didn't say it out loud, because I knew I had started the mess.

"No, fighting between women... men will never understand." "Were you fighting over tampons?"

"That's too girly. Anyway, I'm going back to work if you don't have anything else to scold me or punish me for."

"Actually, I should punish you. If I don't, the employees will start saying that you get too many privileges. When your father was here, they even

installed a water heater, and they've already spread rumors that you were his lover. If I let it go again this time, there'll be gossip everywhere."

"Ask if I care? No, but send the punishment right away then." "I'll cut half your salary."

"Wow, I'm terrified."

I shrugged, making a mocking face. "And you'll be suspended for a week."

"Is that the punishment? Geez, I think I'll slap two or three more guests to get a long vacation."

"Don't joke about that."

"What if I slap you? How many months of suspension will I get?"

I stand up and make to slap Mawin on the head, but he grabbed my wrist before I could.

"Look, are you scared? Weakling."

"And why would I let you slap me, huh? Are you crazy?"

"Of course you will, you're going to be my husband in the future, remember? You better get used to being afraid of your wife. Come here."

I raised my other hand, ready to slap him again.

"Maybe I'll get a three-month vacation, all right to go home."

But Mawin dodged it, and we both started joking around as if we are slapping each other, laughing a lot. We had even forgotten about Manager Praewa, who had just left, and who now suddenly reappeared, looking at us with a surprised expression.

"Sorry to interrupt." She said.

"Is there a problem?"

Mawin asked, as I lowered my hands and grimaced.

"So, oh... I mean, excuse me, Mr. Mawin. Thank you for the advice."

I thanked her with a polite gesture and walked out of the room confidently, passing the manager without giving her the slightest attention.

As if anyone could actually do anything to me! One is my father, the other is my future husband. Who would have the courage to fire me? Let them try!

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Now everyone knows that my salary has been cut and that I am suspended from work. Even though this conversation happened only between the two of us in that room, it seems that the news spread quickly, like a market in full turmoil. I am surprised at how quickly, but it seems that everyone loves a scandal, don't they? There is so much laughter and whispering when they look at me, as if I were the entertainment of the moment. No one even has the decency to remember that I was the one who made sure everyone could use the water heater in the hotel!

But that’s just how it is... Look, I can’t even swim in the hotel pool this summer, even though I work here. The most I can do is sit by the pool and watch the foreign kids swim, while my face shows a tired expression.

For the past two days, I’ve been coming back to my room late every night, avoiding having to face the secretary with that sweet little face as much as possible. I’d rather waste my time by the pool, like today. But it seems that this time, I won’t be so alone. I heard the sound of someone watching a

soap opera on their cell phone nearby, but not so loud as to disturb the guests who were swimming peacefully in the pool at night.

"Auntie Yaow?” “Miss In!”

Auntie Yaow, who is sitting in a corner near the changing rooms, looked up and give me a smile.

“What are you doing here?” "Watching a soap opera."

"Why don't you go watch it on TV, somewhere more comfortable?"

"I'm watching it on YouTube, so I opened it on my phone. Besides, I came here to hide because the noise from the TV in the living room is bothering me. My husband and son are watching that singing competition show with masks, but I just want to watch my soap opera."

"What are you watching?"

I leaned over to watch with interest. "Taddao Busrakham"

Aunt Yao replied. "Bussaya!"[4]

I corrected her jokingly.

"That joke wasn't even funny, huh? But why are you watching such an old soap opera? The main character already has two children now, auntie."

"Old soap operas are classics, dear, I love them."

"Do you like watching these fake soap operas too? Just by looking from a distance you can already tell that Taddao is a woman. The only one who doesn't know is Mr. Jao Yai, who gets mad at the main character, almost dying of rage. Or, who knows, he pretends not to know just so he can stay close to her until they end up together when they're drunk and distracted."

"What are you saying, Miss In? The hero has to be a bit of a fool, otherwise the soap opera ends too quickly. Do you want to watch it together?"

"Ah, better than doing nothing."

At first, I thought it was just to pass the time, since the soap opera didn't even seem that interesting. The picture quality was full of lines, as if it had been recorded from an old TV in the analog era. But the classic charm, Suwanan’s[5] talent, and the fun unreality ended up keeping me hooked.

Aunty Yaow and I watched in silence, entertained, until almost ten o’clock at night when her son, ManU, called to remind his mother to go back to his room.

“He called just when the soap opera was getting good!” “See? I told you it was super fun. But I have to go now.” “If I want to watch it, what should I look for?”

“Taddao Busrakham, dear.”

Aunty Yaow get up and said goodbye. I, who is cloistered in front of the bathroom, looked around with a sense of apprehension. It's already ten o’clock, but I still didn’t want to go back to my room and find the secretary with a sweet smile.

So I decided to go to Janephop’s room. As I was leaving the shower area, I met another employee in the lobby, dressed in a similar uniform, who was passing by me. We looked at each other, nodded in greeting, following good manners, before each of us continued on our way. As I was about to leave the pool area, I heard someone calling me with a nasal sound.

"Is that you, Khun In?" Arun BekFah...

Because I've heard that voice almost every day for the past month. We've been glued to each other for so long that all I could do was stand still, my heart pounding with excitement. When I tried to look away, she still made a point of coming closer to me...

There's no escape anymore.

As I was about to turn around, my phone started ringing to the tune of 'River Flows in You' by Yiruma. Arun came over and hugged me from behind, taking me by surprise.

"What are you doing?"

## "If you're not mad anymore... Let's dance, okay?"

This is what she...

## Footnote:

***[1]. The term PM 2.5 is well known in the world of air pollution control. PM stands for particulate matter and PM 2.5 refers to very fine dust particles in the air that are 2.5 microns or less in diameter and include inhalable particles small enough to penetrate the thoracic region of the respiratory system.***

***[2]. Arhat is a Sanskrit term used in Eastern religions and Western schools of esotericism to designate a being of high spiritual stature. The word has, as variants, the forms arahat, arahant, araham, rahat, lohan and grandmat. It literally means "the worthy one, the one who deserves divine praise".***

***[3]. Songkran, also called Thai New Year, officially begins to be celebrated on the first day of the fifth crescent moon and lasts for three days, usually from April 13 to 15. The counting of years also works differently in the Thai calendar.***

***[4]. Taddao Bussaya is a 1997 Thai series, originally released on Channel 7, and was remade in 2010.***

***Summary of the story: Jitree had a lot of gambling debts, so she wanted her daughter, Taddao, to marry a much older man, Jao Yai Wattana, for money. Jao Noi Yodkwan, her son, had just returned from abroad. When he found out that his father planned to marry a young woman, he was very upset, so he left the palace to work as a farmer. Jitree told Taddao that his father had left a will hidden somewhere in the Bussaya House.***

***Taddao decides to escape this forced marriage and go in search of the will.***

***[5]. Suwanan is the name of the first actress who played Taddao in the 1997 version.***

# 20. Conscious

I watched Arun BekFah's actions with astonishment. The small person keep her head down, probably embarrassed, on the back of someone who seemed to be in the same situation...

"I'm trying to apologize to you, Khun In. Janephop said that if I did that, you would stop being angry... Don't ask so many questions. Come on, stop being angry and let's dance," She said.

"I would also like to dance with you." "Then dance."

"But you are hugging someone else, not me." "What?"

The employee who had just passed by us was still shocked at being hugged by Arun BekFah from behind. She looked so surprised that she could barely make a sound, probably because she had not yet regained her composure.

Meanwhile, the sweet-faced person frowned slightly and sniffed the air again, like an adorable sniffer dog.

"Isn't that Miss In?"

"The perfume is different, isn't it?" "Oh, sorry."

The assistant, who never made mistakes, now sounded shocked and quickly bowed her head in apology, visibly embarrassed that she had hugged the wrong person.

"It was just dark, so I couldn't see properly."

"I got scared," the assistant said, putting her hand to her chest. "What were you guys doing?"

"Rehearsing a play. Sorry, nothing's happening." I replied, making up an excuse for Arun BekFah.

I then picked up the troublemaker and take her somewhere else. I was irritated, but there was something so adorable about her that I couldn't stay angry, so I ended up laughing. The sweet-faced person glanced at me sideways, embarrassed, and asked shyly,

"Are you laughing?"

"Of course! How can you apologize to the wrong person? That's crazy." "I've been so flustered lately. Everything I do went wrong."

"Not much different from me, who's been super irritable these days,"

I replied, looking at the bright-eyed little girl with a mix of tiredness and affection. Arun BekFah's face looked more tired than usual. Even though we'd seen each other in the last few days, I'd barely looked at her face because I was still angry. Now, looking closely, I noticed that her dark circles were quite visible.

"Aren't you thinking about putting on some concealer? Your dark circles are really dark."

"I usually don't wear makeup. When I look in the mirror, I don't even know where to start. I don't know how to put on makeup to look pretty."

"You don't wear makeup every day?" "No."

I am a little surprised. So, that sweet face had been completely makeup-free all this time? It looked so natural, but I always assumed that women with natural looks were good at applying makeup. Few can go without makeup or apply it so flawlessly. Her face is very pretty...

"Never stop taking care of yourself. From now on, I'll do your makeup." "Really?"

"Why do you need confirmation? Do I look like someone who lies?"

"I asked because I wanted to make sure that... Khun In isnt mad anymore."

Oops... I forgot. We talked so much that I even forgot that I was still mad. But since we hadn't talked or exchanged a single word in the past three days, I just keep looking around and ended up forgetting. When she mentioned it, I immediately shut up, and Arun BekFah started to get visibly discouraged when she saw that I didn't say anything.

"Should I stop being mad? Even though you apologized, you still made the wrong choice. Who hugs someone else instead of me?"

"It's just... it was dark."

"Even if you didn't recognize the way I looked, you should have recognized my perfume."

"Speaking of which... the person from before was wearing the same perfume as you."

"Really?"

I stand up, feeling uncomfortable. Whenever I hear that someone is wearing the same color or carrying something like mine, I end up getting a little prejudiced and promise myself that I won't wear that anymore.

"Looks like I'll have to change my perfume."

"No need. When your perfume mixes with sweat, it changes its scent. And, well, I was also nervous when I apologized earlier, so I ended up making a mistake."

Arun BekFah grabbed me by the shoulders with both hands and turned me around before doing something I never expected: she threw herself into a hug and started sniffing my back, making noises with her nose.

"The smells is really different. I can assure you."

## Thump-thump..

**Thump-thump...**

My heart is beating so hard that I'm afraid she could hear it.

So I quickly backed away, taking two steps back, crossing my arms as if I'm protecting myself.

"You were really nervous. I bet you were super embarrassed about that apology. Who gave you that idea?"

"It was Janephop." "Yeah, that makes sense."

How many people would know that? I shouldn't have even asked.

"Well, since you tried so hard to apologize, I'll be kind. Actually, I was also wrong to make decisions on my own without consulting you first. Consider this my apology."

Taking the opportunity, I pulled a necklace out of a blue velvet box and handed it to her, a little embarrassed. Actually, I could have given her the whole box, but I thought that would seem like a marriage proposal.

Janephop had already joked about it earlier in the day, and repeating the joke now would not be nice.

"What is this?"

"A 49-inch TV."

"..."

"It's a necklace, huh. Are you necklace-blind too?"

"There's no such thing. I just don't understand why you suddenly gaive me a necklace."

"Because I'm a kind and generous person! Come here, I'll put it on you."

I unscrewed the clasp of the necklace and stretched my arms around her neck.

We are now so close it's like a hug. My nose is level with Arun BekFah's forehead, which madke me nervous because I couldn't put the necklace on at all.

"Oh, my! What a difficult necklace to put on!" "I can put it on myself."

"No, I'll put it on! It'll be more special this way."

With much effort and after three minutes, I finally managed to put the necklace on the little girl. As soon as I was done, I quickly walked away, feeling strangely uncomfortable. Part of me afraid that Arun BekFah could hear the sound of my heart beating loudly, almost as if it's going to burst out of my chest. The other part felt insecure, which something I don't usually feel.

"Now you don't have to be afraid of ghosts anymore." "Is this a Buddha amule necklace?"

"But this doesn't look like a Buddha amulet... what kind of Buddha has hair?"

The little girl take the pendant and opened it.

"And well cared for, because it's only cut and styled at the Chalachon salon. This is me in the photo!"

I patted my chest proudly.

"If you're afraid of ghosts, show them this necklace. They will run away because I am very dear to the Lord of Death."

"Wow."

She looked at me with admiration.

"Thank you, that's amazing. Really unexpected. Khun In is an unpredictable person."

"Because I am special. Let's assume we are fine now, and as for that meeting I arranged... let's cancel it, okay?"

I tried to get back on topic to reassure Arun BekFah.

"Matters of the heart can't be forced, right? If you're not comfortable going out with Mawin...

## "I can try!"

Before I could finish speaking, Arun BekFah quickly interrupted me.

I'm surprise for a moment, feeling something strange, but I quickly tried to shake it off.

"Try what?"

"Try to go out with Mr. Win, like you wanted. You were kind to me, so I should accept."

"No need. If you don't feel comfortable, you don't have to go." "I'm comfortable. I want to try."

"You don't have to do this just to please me. I'm not mad anymore." "No, I've already decided that I'm going."

"I'm saying you don't have to!" "I'm going!"

Our voices begin to rise in pitch, and the atmosphere became tense and uncomfortable again, as before. Just when things seemed to be going well, everything went back to the beginning. We are silent again. Irritated, I turned to leave, but Arun BekFah stopped me with a question.

"I don't know what else to do to please you. What do you really want?" "I already told you that you don't have to please me."

"You don't want me to go to the meeting anymore?"

The question was direct, without any hidden tone. She asked and I answered, but it seems like I'm the one who confused.

"I still want you to go."

"Then I'll go. Let's not argue anymore."

The sweet-faced secretary looked at her watch on her wrist. "It's late. If we're okay now, let's go back to our room..."

I pulled Arun BekFah into a tight hug, full of longing. My face buried in her shoulder, inhaling the unique scent of her skin. The secretary tensed, surprised by my unexpected gesture.

"Khun In..."

"I'm sorry. I don't want you to be the only one to apologize, that's not fair. That day, I spoke out of anger. To me, you're not an object... So, I don't own you."

"..."

"You're special."

## Thump-thump...

These words escaped and make me stop, my eyes widening in surprise. So, I quickly walked away from Arun BekFah and turned around, walking towards the bedroom with a confident attitude.

"I did what I had to do. Let's go to sleep."

And that was the first time the little one run up to me and held my arm on her own, walking beside me.

"Yes, let's go to sleep."

**Indy**: So it's confirmed for this Sunday. Get everything ready, what are you going to do that day.

**Indy**: Do you need me to teach you how a date works?

**Win**: I know how a date works, I've had a girlfriend before.

**Win**: By the way, what kind of movies does Miss Arun like to watch?

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I glanced sideways at my roommate, who had just gotten out of the shower and is sitting drying her hair in front of the fan. Then, I answered Mawin, a little confused by what I had said.

**Indy**: Horror movie.

Win: There's a horror movie showing. But do you think a horror movie is appropriate for a date?

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It must be, right... I smiled at the phone screen, a little satisfied, but I quickly put the phone down and didn't answer anything else when my arranged fiancé sent another message, seeming to see it as a good opportunity.

**Win**: But it's good, because when the ghost appears, Miss Arun will get scared and lean on me.

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Damn... I really forget to think about that. It's very likely that this reaction of getting scared and leaning on someone happens to someone who is so afraid of ghosts. Arun BekFah noticed that I'm lying on my stomach and started looking at me, as if she has a question. I, on the other hand, silently observed all the actions of the little person and wondered why she's so economical with her words.

"If you want to say something, say it."

Although we are already close, the sweet-faced secretary still behaved as if I'm the boss and don't ask about anything I don't want to tell.

Meanwhile, if it were me, if I had a question, I would ask it right away. That doesn't mean we're close, right?

"Are you talking to anyone? You seem kind of upset." "Do I look like that?"

I quickly stand up because I don't want to look so bored. How crazy... Why should I be upset? It didn't make sense.

"No, I'm fine. I'm just on my phone and my eyes are tired." "Right."

"Have you thought about what you're going to do on the date?"

I changed the subject to talk about the fact that this weekend, the sweet- faced person would have to go out with Mawin. Arun BekFah, who is drying her hair, pouted and shake her head.

"I have no idea. We'll probably just eat." "Eating can be done with anyone."

"And what else do you need to do on a date?"

"Talk about different things, make it special, different from what normal people do."

"And what do I need to do to seem special?"

"Talk about personal matters, look into each other's eyes with meaning..."

As I speak, I begin to feel a strange irritation in my chest, but I had to continue acting normally.

"The date should be more special than going out with friends. There can be moments of holding hands, kissing."

"Do you have to do all this just because of the date?" The sweet-faced person made a worried expression.

"I don't know Mawin well yet. Touching his body and kissing... that's..."

"It's just a suggestion. The first time, it doesn't have to be like that. I'm saying that the next times, after you get to know each other better, it can be different."

"Do you do this when you go out with your boyfriend? Touch hands, look into eyes and kiss...?"

"I'm not a person who thinks much. When I love or like someone, I give myself completely, I follow what my heart asks."

I laughed as I remembered how intense I was when I had a boyfriend. "Oh, I see."

"Then let's demonstrate."

I moved closer to Arun BekFah and sit next to her. I crossed my arms and looked at the wall of the room.

"Let's imagine that this wall is a movie screen, and I'm Mawin." "Oh, okay."

"I'll assume that Mawin has booked a first-class ticket. The seats are separate, individual chairs that recline. So, if you're going to touch each other, it can only be by holding hands. If he reaches out to touch me like this..."

I reached out and grabbed Arun BekFah's hand. It's like an electric current passed between us, making us both jump in surprise.

"Strong."

"The static electricity is strong, isn't it?"

I laughed before trying to reach out again, and realized that there is no longer the 'snap' sound that it had made before.

"Let's go again. If he reaches out, don't pull it away like you did before."

"Yes... But are we going to hold hands like this the whole time during the movie? It's an hour long."

"You can change the position sometimes. You can put your hand up."

The sweet-faced person tried to follow what I said, but it seems even more awkward since our palms are now pressed together and our fingers were perfectly intertwined.

"Yes, it's more comfortable."

"And if you want to get closer to Mawin faster..." I take a deep breath before speaking.

"You can intertwine your fingers like this."

I showed it to the sweet-faced person. We are now holding hands tightly, and we remained silent.

"Is that all?"

"What would you like to do next?" "Is there anything else to do?"

"If I say yes, then there is." "What to do?"

“First, we need to get through this time.”

I glanced at Arun quickly, then let go of her hand and jumped back into bed as before.

“If we have a next time, I’ll tell you what to do.”

There seem to be silence between us for about two minutes, until Arun went back to drying her hair and muttered a simple “yes.”

Now the lights in the room are off… Arun is the one who turned off the lights today, because she thought I had fallen asleep earlier. But in reality, I'm pretending to sleep and noticed every movement the shorter person is making, until everything ended in total darkness.

I even knew the heavy and light rhythm of the steps of the sweet-faced secretary, who was pacing back and forth in the room, listening to the sound

of a song she was whistling, like someone in a good mood. Even in normal times, she behaved in a quiet and tasteless manner.

But I only realized what was happening now, when our hands touched and there was a static electricity, a shock. I had experienced this feeling before and I knew very well that it was happening again. Happiness was accompanied by pain, like someone who is in love and is afraid, like dark chocolate that is irresistibly tasty, but always with a natural bitter touch.

The feeling that I had decided not to allow to arise again was emerging, and I knew exactly what it was.

There I was again... The closeness made me very sensitive. Last time, it was like this, and in the end, I found the pain of disappointment. How many times had love made me lose control? Even if I was careful, it still resurfaced.

I had to stop this before it went too far. "Can't you sleep, Khun In?"

Arun's soft voice come from the darkness. I opened my eyes, surprised, not knowing exactly what expression I was making that made the little person understand it like that. So, I didn't answer and left everything in silence.

The sweet-faced girl turned away without asking anything else, thinking she was talking to herself because of the lack of response. Her voice alone made my heart race, not a good sign.

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"I can't go anymore. My father's foreign friend suddenly arrived, and I have to stay to welcome him."

Mawin looked disappointed when he called me to discuss this. For a moment, I almost screamed with joy, but it soon turned into frustration,

because everything made me happy, but it shouldn't have. I didn't want it to be like this.

"Why did you do this? Arun was so excited to go and now you canceled." "Can't you reschedule beforehand?"

"When a woman cancels the first time, it means there won't be a next time."

The situation was even more complicated for the sweet-faced girl, who had no desire to be paired up from the start.

"You're the owner of the hotel! It's not that hard to leave or do whatever you want!"

"I didn't do this on purpose. Don't you think I'm disappointed too?"

Mawin looked genuinely distressed, and I could only bare my teeth in disdain.

"What are we going to do?"

"I don't know. If you think stupidly, maybe I can disguise myself as you and go out in your place."

"That's impossible! It's not a Thai soap opera." "Oh, right, this isn't 'Taddao Bussaya..."

I paused as I remembered that soap opera. Although disguising yourself was quite unlikely in real life, in Arun's case, it might be an exception.

"Maybe it will work."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"This meeting still needs to happen. I don't want you to miss this opportunity... I'm going to disguise myself as you."

Mawin laughed as if I were a small child. "What are you talking about?"

"You know Arun has prosopagnosia, right?" "I know."

"She can't recognize anyone's faces. If I go in your place, it shouldn't be a problem... everything still needs to move forward. You can try to find an opportunity for a second date, but next time you can't miss it."

I was about to leave when the handsome-faced person grabbed my wrist. "What's wrong?"

"Are you serious about disguising yourself? Arun will notice we're different anyway. What about height and hairstyle?"

"If we're in a dark place, she won't notice." "What dark place?"

"The cinema."

# 21.Final Boss

The plan for today changed a bit. Instead of taking Arun for a walk on the beach, chatting about various things, having dinner and going to the movies, Mawin had to reduce the program to just watching the movie since he couldn't go... In the end, he had to ask me to replace him. Although it seemed strange, he didn't want to miss this opportunity for a future meeting.

"Please take care of it, okay? Here's the ticket code I reserved. Just bring it and pick it up."

"Okay."

Even though I had thought of this plan on my own, I was still hesitant to put it into practice.

"Next time there won't be an opportunity like this."

I looked at my reflection in the bathroom mirror. Seeing Mawin's loose white shirt on me, I sighed. If I hadn't tried on his clothes, I would never have discovered that Mawin, the clumsy boy back then, had grown up so much. Did we both grow up that fast?

"Promise, okay? I'll say a prayer!"

Mawin rubbed his hands together and clasped his palms together, as if he were praying to a god, begging me to help him win over a girl. It was a strange but interesting relationship.

"And I will reward you fairly."

"Pay attention to what I said. Oh... where's the perfume I asked for? Did you bring it?"

"Oh, I almost forgot!"

Mawin went to get the perfume he always wore, Chanel Allure, and handed it to me.

"It'll be a little masculine."

"If you wore Chloe, you could make a surprised face. That's good enough."

After using it, I handed the perfume back to him. It wasn't long before a message from Arun arrived on Mawin's Line. The handsome boy take out his phone, read it, and informed me.

"Arun said she's already at the mall."

"Then you can tell Fah to buy the tickets and leave them with the staff. I'll pick them up at the entrance of the cinema. The height difference between you and me is quite large, it's not good for us to meet directly, the dark is best."

"Okay, that's how it will be."

The two of us left the room together, and it seems like there's always a third person to see this.

I'm sure to have more gossip about this soon.

"Perfect! While you're going to watch a movie, on the other side, a rumor will spread that you and I left the room together at eleven in the morning, and the shirt you're wearing is mine. What a pain!"

"I thought you didn't care about gossip. Normally, you don't care about it." Mavin laughed before stopping walking.

"But if the rumor reaches Arun's ears, she might interpret it the wrong way. That would complicate everything."

"Fah knows me well enough to know that leaving your room means nothing more than cooling off or relaxing in the hot tub..."

"That's right. I had forgotten how close you two are."

"So close that we're about to trick her in the next minute." "Don't talk like that! I feel guilty for canceling today."

If Taddao Bussaya can trick Jao Yai, then Arun Bekfah should be easy too. With her prosopagnosia condition, tricking her shouldn't be difficult. The only rule today is that I can't talk and we can't meet in bright places; I have to watch for signs that the movie is almost over and leave the room quickly.

When I arrived, I went to get my ticket from the staff as we had agreed. Arun told Mawin that she's already seated in the movie theater.

Although the handsome boy was busy, he didn't forget to inform me of her movements so that I could prepare myself. I figured he's just as excited as I'm to be here now.

Well, since I've come this far, there's no turning back. I entered the theater a little late so the movie had been playing for a while and the room was completely dark, making it hard to tell the difference. After about five minutes of the movie, I sit down and adjusted my seat so that it's a little lower than Arun's so it would be harder to see my face.

"Hello, are you okay, Khun Win? The movie started five minutes ago." "..."

I just nodded, not answering out loud.

"If you have a sore throat, don't drink cold water, okay? You can drink mine. It's room temperature water."

When the waiter come to serve the water, Arun BekFah, who already know that Mawin wouldn't be speaking today because she's sick, switched her water with mine. Then she looked at the orange juice and tilted her head.

"Are you going to drink orange juice too? It's just like what Miss In drinks."

Damn, I almost forgot! But there's no rule that says men can't drink orange juice.

I continued to act as Mawin, staring at the screen of the movie that is playing.

As I said, it was a horror movie, and Arun wasn't very used to the scary atmosphere. Finally, when there was a big scare that indicated that the ghost was probably coming out from under the bed or from a corner of the closet, the little person grabbed the blanket and curled up like a three-year-old, eventually letting out a little scream. It was so cute...

Now, everyone in the room started screaming. I wasn't looking at the screen because I'm focused on how Arun is acting, so adorable that I had to turn around to see what is happening to her. The villain was hanging his head down from the ceiling and slowly starting to spit mice from his mouth. It wasn't long before I felt something poking my arm and I realized that the secretary is trying to find my hand to hold on to, because she couldn't stand the atmosphere that felt isolated.

She was so scared that she had the courage to reach out my hand... I smiled and reached out, grabbing Arun firmly. For a moment, she seems to freeze, but then she squeezed my hand back and slowly come out from behind the blanket.

"Is the scary scene over yet?" "..."

Since I couldn't speak, I just nodded. The petite secretary slowly begin to appear and placed her remaining hand on her chest, lightly slapping it.

"I'm better now."

She said, looking at the screen, but without letting go of my hand. It didn't take long for our hands to start sweating. I hesitated whether I should let go

of her hand, but Arun Bekfah turned her palm and intertwined our fingers, squeezing tightly.

"Can I hold your hand? The movie is really scary."

The girl with the delicate face said, while smiling broadly. It's at the same moment that my heart raced, almost jumping out of my chest, as if time had stopped.

She smiled...

She smiled at me... But it isn't me.

Even without looking in the mirror, I knew that my face was red, with the blood running well, making my skin burn. The feeling of tightness in my chest, which I knew well, was driving me crazy, to the point that I looked away and continued to stare at the movie screen, even without understanding anything.

The message on my cell phone vibrated, making my pocket tremble, and I picked it up with my free hand to read it. Then, I had to bite my lip in frustration:

**Win**: You can leave the theater. I'm already on my way.

**Win**: Today, the foreign guests want to rest. We don't need to discuss much work, so you can step aside. Thank you for your help. I won't forget.

I didn't answer, I just looked at the hand that is holding mine, with a deep sense of loss.

*'I have to go...'*

That was the voice of my mind trying to communicate with the other hand, which was clenched into a fist because of the fear of the horror movie.

So, I started to let go of her hand, but she pulled me back, looking at me with a confused look.

"..."

What other excuse could I have other than going to the bathroom? I waved towards the door and pointed to the bathroom, as if I had a stomachache.

Arun BekFah make a sad expression, let go of my hand and said in a low tone:

"Come back quickly, okay? I'll wait."

I don't answer anything, I just left, because I couldn't talk... It wouldn't be long, the real Mawin already arriving.

Mawin, who is waiting at the entrance of the cinema, see me, waved his hand and smiled broadly. His smile was like that of a little boy excited about the idea of going to an amusement park. He wore clothes similar to mine: a blue shirt and jeans. The only difference was his cap, mine was blue and his was brown.

"Wait about five minutes before you go in. Otherwise, that girl will realize why you left the bathroom so quickly. She might end up thinking that Mawin is disgusting, that he went out to pee and didn't wash his hands."

"You say such ugly things! But Arun doesn't suspect anything, right?" "Nothing at all. It was dark inside."

"Okay, thanks for everything, my little doll."

The handsome boy raised his hand and ruffled my cap a bit before walking into the theater, waving.

"I'll text you to update you." "Mmm."

I watched Mawin walk into the theater until he disappeared. I stand there for a long time, seemingly unable to move, until someone's heavy hand placed on my shoulder, making me realize that I'm completely distracted.

"Are you coming back or not, miss?"

Janephop appeared out of nowhere, startling me. "How did you get here?"

"I came with Mawin. He said I should pick you up, so you don't have to worry about finding transportation back."

"You're careful. Your mission is over, isn't it?"

I shrugged lightly and shoved my hands in my pockets, walking ahead. Janephop, who usually didn't talk much, asked with concern,

"You look sad, miss." "Why sad?"

I was a little startled, as if I'm being caught red-handed. My voice sounded a little harsh as I heard my subordinate say this.

"Why would I have to be sad?"

"I feel like you might be feeling lonely since your close friend is about to have a boyfriend and you might be forgotten."

"Do you see me as a three-year-old who is jealous of the nanny? Don't forget that I am the matchmaker, the one responsible for this."

"If you could go back in time, would you still do the same?" "Jane!"

"You don't have to lie to me. No matter how you feel, I will always be by your side, now and forever. Whether it's with May, Ken, or Jom..."

When he mentioned that name, I bit my lip tightly.

"Has there ever been a time when I've turned away from you? In this world, even if you have no one, you'll still have me."

His words make me take a deep breath. In truth, I always knew how he felt, but he had always been someone who knew himself well and was modest, so I pretended not to notice. But this time, I felt like he was overstepping his bounds. He was talking when I was in a bad mood, and he was the only person I could push away without fear of being abandoned.

"Keep those feelings deep inside and don't express them. If you don't talk about it, it means it never happened, and choose not to talk about it again, okay, Jane?"

I walked on, frustrated, before hearing only the usual response in the same tone of voice.

"Yes."

On the way back to the hotel, Jane and I were silent. I had to pretend to be asleep, not wanting to face the uncomfortable atmosphere. As soon as the car came to a complete stop after dropping me off, the serious-looking employee took the car away to be stored. I walked back to my room, feeling tired and lacking the energy to even open the door, staring at the fan and singing my national anthem "Chandelier".

*'If I don't hear you sing your national anthem, it feels like something is missing. I can't sleep.'*

Remembering Arun Bekfah’s voice the night before made me smile. Finally, I shouted, or rather, I screamed, because I was so choked up from not having said anything in the theater.

“I’m gonna swing from the chandelier!”

“You’re shouting too loudly, you’re going to disturb the neighbors.”

The voice of Sar, the first employee I met here when I brought Jane to see the room, complained, with an expression of displeasure, like someone who

didn’t like me. He seemed more interested in teasing me than in informing me.

"Someone's calling you." "Who?"

"The boss. It seems you've been causing quite a stir and now you're in the crosshairs. I heard that whoever called you knows you're the mistress of a high-ranking executive and is still involved with Mawin. Acting rlike a..."

"Shut up if you're going to say destructive things. What I am is none of your business."

Is there anyone more powerful than Daddy and Mawin? I never knew that.

But it's okay, no matter who it is, today I'm going to scream, because I'm in a bad mood and I just want to throw myself on the bed.

"Where do I have to go?"

"It's Mr. Win's room... Oh, you're dressing like him, is that it? A couple, huh? Show your possession, because the person who will take care of you has already arrived."

"You are very threatening, I want to see who is so important as to come deal with a woman who is getting involved with Mr. Anek and Mr. Win at the same time."

I bared my teeth at Sar before heading to the hotel to pass through the office area. Upon arriving, all eyes turned to me with curiosity, like in a soap opera where everyone is ready to feel jealous and bring me down.

"You are screwed."

"This time you will be fired, no one will help you." "She really came."

"That bitch with two husbands."

The whispering voices followed me, as if they wanted me to hear. When I reached the door to Win's room, I knocked lightly, out of politeness, before opening it.

Everything seemed to have been set up like a scene from a cheap soap opera. The person who was going to confront me had his back to Win's chair, so I couldn't see who it was or where it came from.

"I come at someone's request."

She said with an impatient tone, mixed with tiredness. "Be quick, please, I'm tired."

"I've heard a lot of things about you. They say you're quite perverted... Getting involved with Mr. Anek and Win at the same time."

Why does this voice sound so familiar? I arched my neck a little and tried to remember who this voice could be in my life.

"You're just a low-level employee, trying to get ahead in life. I heard that you've been proclaiming yourself the only woman in the world that Anek loves more than anything... You're very brave."

Oh...

"In the world, I only allow Anek to have one woman in his heart, and these words are from my Nong In, the little princess who was born with so much gold and silver that she couldn't get out and had to be removed by cesarean section."

And as the woman turned her chair angrily, I smiled sweetly, because I already remembered.

"Who do you think you are, sitting in that chair!"

## "Oh, Mom, I remember and I miss your breast milk."

**"The blood in my heart was turned into milk for you to drink."**

I raised my hand over my chest and looked at my mother, overcome with emotion, after finishing singing our national anthem.

*"You think you're daddy's girl, don't you, Mom?"*

And with an anger that was about to explode, as soon as she see my face, her mouth fell open and she rubbed her eyes as if she couldn't believe it. But when she heard the song that we both loved to sing in response to each other, she was astonished, with tears in her eyes, full of longing.

*"Intuorn, mommy's princess... What are you doing here!?"*

That's the truth... She is the one who is above Anek. But what they all don't know is that the one who is above Anak and Ketu is... their

daughter,... **myself....**

# 22. It Sounds Fun

"So, the person who went to take a bath in Anek's room wearing a bathrobe and left the room was you, right Nong In?"

"Yes, it was me. When I arrived, the bathroom didn't have hot water, so I went to Dad's room to take a bath in the bathtub. Then, a staff member happened to see it and started spreading the rumor that I'm a lover."

"And you let them spread it, daughter?"

"If they want to spread it, let them spread it. I'm tired of giving explanations. In large groups, the more I talk, the more nervous I seem, so I decided not to do anything. Oh, but I answered when they asked me, 'Who do you think you are?' I couldn't help but say... 'I'm the only woman in the world that daddy loves more than anything...' How could my mother not have thought that these words would come from her own daughter? But who could have imagined that the person rumored to be involved with old men, teasing young men and having several lovers would be her own daughter? Just being with Mawin would have already created a disabled child. I would never allow a relationship with daddy."

"What an ugly way to say it!" My mother said, slapping me. "Oh, it hurts..."

I throw myself into my mother's arms, begging for affection.

"I missed you so much. We haven't seen each other for almost a month." "Why didn't you tell mommy that you had to do this kind of thing?"

"Daddy asked me not to tell you, because you wouldn't let me go through any hardships."

"Of course not. I raised you without ever imagining that I would see my daughter working as a hotel employee. Your father said that you would come to learn how to work as an executive. Now, just hearing that you had to clean bathrooms, change sheets... and, last but not least, you even fought with a foreign client, didn't you?"

"The person who reports everything to you is very detail-oriented, isn't she?"

"That manager has no vision at all. She told me that my daughter is vulgar and short, that she only speaks English well because she was born in Pattaya[1]."

Wow... imagination really is more important than knowledge. I bared my teeth, but still, I wasn't as angry as my mother, who was now furious. The suggestion that I was born in Pattaya implied that my mother had given birth to me there.

"I should make her eat her own words! How could she say such a thing? I'm going to make a note of that manager's name. I'm going to ask your father to push her so hard that she won't be able to continue working. Nothing is more painful than being pressured by your boss and not being able to leave because you're too old to find another job."

By the way, my mother really is the "ultimate boss." Even Dad has to make way for her.

"Don't reveal anything to anyone yet, Mom. I'm having fun with the gossip people are spreading around here. Let's reveal everything at once, and it will be a shock. It will be like the end of a soap opera, when everyone is embarrassed and comes to me with their faces in the dirt to apologize."

"Evil like her mother. I came determined to confront your father's lover, but when I saw it was you, my energy began to wither, like a plant without sunlight, as if her boyfriend didn't give her any love."

"But at least you had a loving moment with your daughter, right?"

"That's true. Then let's put on a play together. Hmm... it'll be fun! What do I need to do?"

"You just need to..."

My mother left Mawin's room with her head held high and walked elegantly in front, speaking loudly so that everyone could hear:

"From now on, while I'm here, you will carry my bag and take care of me, without leaving my side."

"But ma'am, I'm suspended. Mr. Mawin said that..." "Mawin? He can't compete with Maruay[2]!"

"Is your name Maruay, ma'am?" "That means I came with the wealth."

My mother, who is acting like she owned the hotel, responded in a sarcastic and showy voice, so blinding the shine and aura of money that it's almost blinding.

"Take me to see how you live. And who taught you to call me 'ma'am'? From now on, call me 'Your Excellency, Madam.'"

'My mother wanted a long name like that for ages.'

I think Mommy spent too long being a housewife. The soap operas seemed to have brainwashed her completely.

"Yes, Your Excellency, Madam."

I walked humbly beside my mother. She looked at me and, with a look full of meaning, said through her soul:

"I acted well, didn't I?"

"Yes, Mom, you rocked it."

Now both my mother and I were having a great time assuming the role of "cruel lady." But besides the fun, she was also curious to know how her daughter was doing, so she forced me to take her for a visit. When we got to the room, my mother put her hand on her chest and squeezed her cell phone so hard it felt like her muscles were going to pop out.

"When we get back home, I'm going to shoot your father until he's full of holes. How could he send my daughter to live like this... And this fan, what's that? Is it there for you to hang on when you're bored?"

"The fan is there to cool you down, Mom. And I actually like watching it spin. To be honest, I sing Chandelier every day."

"Since when did Thailand know coolness?"

"Someone's coming, Mom. That's Sorn, who I told you doesn't like me." "For someone like you... Isn't this room too nice?"

My mother raised her chin and acted like a haughty person, full of acting talent.

"Now I understand why your skin is so good. Staying in a room that looks like a sauna all day, sure. But why is it that only you have good skin, while your fellow students look like laborers?"

My mother made this direct reference to Sorn, who was approaching us to flatter us, and I almost laughed, because I had already told my mother that the people there didn't like me very much.

"The rumor that you're a lover seems to be true. It must be Mr. Anek's plan to put you in a room that looks like a spa all the time... What's your name?"

My mother turned to Sorn, who had been insulted earlier. The shorter person gave a slight start before introducing himself.

"My name is Sorn."

"Mr. Sorn, bring the air conditioning technician tomorrow. I want to install an air conditioner in this room and throw away that horrible fan. I won't let your skin stay this shiny. From now on, you can only stay in a room with a temperature of twenty degrees. I want you to freeze to death!"

I almost smiled, but I know my mother just creating an excuse to install the air conditioner without having to install it in other rooms, even if the justification seem a little strange.

"So, does this mean that from now on my skin will be dry?" "Oh, then get Mommy's Victoria cream to use."

My mother, who had forgotten, raised her hand to close her mouth before clearing her throat.

"Mommy, here, refers to me. It's a slang term that's in fashion. You can't have dry skin like that, Mr. Anek will feel sorry for you. Why do you have to be so pitiful? Huh!"

My mother, alternating between sympathizing with her daughter and acting, left Sorn, who is standing behind her, confused. But then my mother went back into “Your Excellency, Madam” mode again.

“What about this? What’s with this cartoon-print bedding?” My mother reaches out to pat the bed and frowned.

"You want to act like a child all the time to be pampered, do you? Go change it. Tomorrow I'll send someone to bring bamboo fiber sheets to put on new ones, so Mr. Anek will stop pampering you."

"But the bedding in my room is also cartoonish..."

"Even if you use a lace sheet, Mr. Anek won't mind. What are you doing? This room is small. The more people, the less ventilation. Get out! Get out!"

My mother chased away Sorn, who was trying to ask for a sheet as well.

"You... Intuorn, stay. I need to talk to you alone."

Sorn left without protest, scratching his head in confusion. As soon as the door closed, my mother was shaking and looking like she was about to cry.

"This is clearly Oshin![3] How can your father tell you to stay here? With such a rough sheet, won't you end up with pressure sores, my little princess?"

My mother come to me, held my body and stamped her feet on the floor.

"If I don't get the blood off your father's head, I won't call myself 'Your Excellency, Madam'!"

"But no one has ever called you that before, mother. You only asked me to call you that just now."

"Unpleasant!"

My mother made an expression of discontent.

"No way, I can't bear to see my Nong In sleeping like this. Tonight you will sleep with me, I want to talk and play with my daughter and I also want to take care of any pressure sores that may be forming on your skin."

I looked at Arun BekFah's bed and, after hesitating for a while, nodded, deciding:

"Yes, Mom, tonight I will sleep with you."

In fact, I thought my mother came at the right time and day. Instead of having to spend the night in a cold room, we ended up doing a lot of activities. Mom invited me to sit and drink wine in the room and relax in the hot tub, like a typical mother-daughter moment. For us, being naked together is something normal, since we have already been to an onsen[4] together. As I was with my eyes closed listening to the classical music my mother had put on, she, who knows me better than anyone, asked as she lifted her foot and poked my thigh.

"You look sad today."

"Me? Sad? Today I laughed more than I ever have since I got here."

I raised an eyebrow in slight surprise, but my mother continued to smile at me and shook her head.

"When you're sad, you laugh more than ever. I raised you that way. So tell me, what’s going on?”

“It’s nothing, really.”

Actually, I almost told my mom that I was jealous of Arun BekFah, but this kind of jealousy is normal and my mom always sees it as something funny. But if I said that, she would ask why and eventually find out that today the sweet-faced secretary was going out with my future fiancé. Then, it would become a big problem. Just as my mom was about to point this out, the sound of a video call interrupted, so she changed the subject and turned to the phone, making a displeased expression when she saw that it was Dad.

“Nong In, get a towel to cover your body, otherwise your dad will think you’re showing too much.”

“Mom, you’re more naked than me. We've seen each other like this before, why be embarrassed now?"

"Be a little embarrassed, after all, he's a man."

"If you're embarrassed in front of Dad, how could I have been born?"

"Ahhh! Nong In, you're my daughter, don't tell such things so openly! I'm embarrassed!"

I closed my ears, not wanting to hear. My mother chuckled softly before turning to open a video call and said in a seductive voice:

"Hello, honey."

"I just found out when I got home that you went to Phuket. You didn't tell me!"

"Telling wouldn't be funny."

"And what did you do there? Tonight I'm going to sleep alone, I'm sad, baby."

"I came to find your lover, huh."

"I only have you. You know that in my heart there's no one who can replace you. Ah! Except for one person, Nong In. I've loved her ever since I learned that my sperm and her egg had met."

Help... Is this how my parents talk when they're alone? Usually, they seem like an ordinary older couple, nothing special. I closed my ears, not wanting to hear.

"That’s her I’m talking about! Wave, honey, mommy’s princess.”

My mom switched to the front camera and pointed it at me. I smiled at my dad and waved nonchalantly. Now my dad had a haunted expression on his face before he quickly started ranting.

“Nong In, you broke your promise. You told your mom.”

“I didn’t tell mom. If you want to know how mommy knew, go figure it out yourself.”

I waved and rested my chin on the edge of the hot tub, trying to rest my eyes, but my phone beeped with a LINE message from Arun BekFah.

“Oops!”

“What’s wrong, kiddo?”

“Nothing. Keep talking to daddy, okay? I'll go first."

Just as I was about to get out of the bathtub, my mother almost made me fall backwards, when she speaks to my father and mentioned something from the past, before I was born.

"I agreed to live with you because I thought you loved your family. What the hell... How could you bring our daughter into this situation? If you hadn't deceived me that night, I would already have a husband named Steve!"

"What!!!"

I looked at my mother, astonished, as she looked at me and raised her hand to cover her mouth, laughing.

"Oops, I forgot. You already know that before I married your father, I had another boyfriend."

"Mom... Mom."

"Instead of having Captain America as my husband, I have someone who brought our daughter into this situation. It's absurd! He's unbearable, loud and annoying!"

"Listen, I did this because I want our daughter to grow up to be a good adult."

"There are many ways to teach, it's not necessary to make your daughter make her bed! You know our daughter's room has a fan on the ceiling, right? Just looking at it makes you want to shake, how crazy! I married you because you're rich, and you know it. And since you're rich, you shouldn't let our daughter sleep with a fan! You promised that you would love Nong In very much when she was born. You should even be thankful that her face doesn't look like a Westerner's."

"Honey, it's me."

"It's because you're the one I'm complaining about! It hurts me to see our daughter sleeping with a sheet that costs one hundred and ninety-nine. Do

you know how rough that is on her skin? There's no air conditioning, and on top of that she's called a whore's daughter in Pattaya. It's the most absurd thing!"

"Who insulted our daughter like that? I'm going to get a gun and shoot her."

"Before you shoot her, I'm going to stick a knife in you up to the hilt. I don't want to see you around here anymore, you #@%@&\*$... #@%@&\*$...!"

My mother was cursing so much that I couldn't stand to hear it anymore, so I get up from the bathtub, grabbed the towel to dry myself and put on the clothes I was wearing before. Now I'm starting to understand why dad insisted so much that my mother shouldn't know anything.

My mother is mean... she's my idol!

After leaving the bathroom, I grabbed my cell phone to read the messages, before going downstairs to find whoever had sent a message saying they had arrived. When I looked at the time, I see that it's already past eight o'clock at night. I admit that I was a little irritated when I realized that the secretary with the angelic face had returned later than I expected, but I could only keep this frustration inside me.

As soon as I opened the bedroom door, I see that the person with the angelic face was looking at the fan on the ceiling with a frightened expression. So I decided to liven up the atmosphere by singing:

"I'm gonna swing... from the chandelier..." "You're here, Khun In."

It seems that my song managed to cheer Arun up a bit, even though she wasn't smiling, I could tell that she was happy to have me around.

So I pretended to be excited like a younger sister, ready to hear her older sister's stories about what happened during the day. I walked over to her, sit down next to her and put my chin on her shoulder, affectionately.

"What's wrong? You just keep staring at the fan on the ceiling."

"I'm a little scared." "Scared of what?"

"Today's horror movie made me nervous. I'm afraid something is going to come down from the ceiling..."

Arun run her hand over her arm and said:

"I forgot to tell Mr. Mawin that I don't like horror movies, but he said that next time he'll take me to see a superhero movie."

"So there will be a next time, huh? That means everything went well today." I said in a teasing tone.

"Yes, Mr. Mawin took me to a movie today, then we had seafood for dinner. When the afternoon got colder, we went for a walk on the beach."

"Hmm."

"We talked about a lot of things. Mr. Mawin also knows that I have prosopagnosia, that I can't recognize faces. Did you tell him, Miss In?"

"Yes, I had to tell him. He needed to know a few things about you, otherwise he would be completely lost, not understanding why his date didn't recognize him. It would be like a police dog sniffing around to find something. "

"That's right, I'm more used to recognizing smells. Mr. Mawin always wears Chanel Allure perfume."

Arun said, saying something she had noticed. Then she frowned, sniffed the air and turned her face to smell my neck, although she didn't go so far as to kiss it.

"By the way, you smell the same as Mr. Mawin today, Chanel Allure."

Damn! I had completely forgotten that the scent of the perfume had gotten on my clothes. Even after I had showered, the scent still lingered.

"It smells good, doesn't it? I got it from my mother." I lied.

My mother and father never wore such youthful perfumes. They always preferred Yves Saint Laurent or Chanel No. 5, which suited their age better.

"Your mother?"

Arun looked surprised.

"Yes, my mother came from Bangkok to pick up my father's lover, and that lover is me."

I pointed to myself and chuckled.

"I just came out of her room. Last night, she asked me to sleep with her, so I went downstairs to get my pajamas. I also wanted to talk to you to see how it went, but it seems like everything went well. You two are making progress. So I can go to heaven now."

"Go to heaven?"

"Yes, they say that if you unite three couples together, you'll go to heaven. I don't think your couple will be difficult. Hell doesn't want me anymore."

I raised my eyebrows at Arun and held her face with both hands, until our noses were touching.

"Have you thought about what you're going to do next time?"

"Let's watch another movie, shall we? Do you need to do something else?" "Ah... you're adults now."

"And what else should we do?"

"For example, sit close to each other, like I'm doing now." We both exchanged glances.

"Mawin would lean in, turn his face like this and... bring his lips closer..."

Our faces are very close, but I didn't do what I had said. Arun flinched a little and closed her eyes in fear, but when she realized I didn't do anything, she slowly opened them.

"Are you that scared?"

"I... I've never done anything like that before." "You'll do it soon."

I said, a little irritated, before walking away, without following through with what my brain was curious to experience. But, when I got up to get my clothes and go to sleep in my mother's room, Arun held my arm.

"What's wrong?" "Nothing."

"Nothing? Then why are you holding my arm? Do you have something you want to say?"

"..."

"Then I'll go now."

I pulled my hand away from little Arun's grip, but she held the hem of my shirt and lowered her head, embarrassed, unable to look me in the eyes.

"Khun In?"

"What?"

"Can you spend the night with me tonight?"

"..."

And the small person looked up and met my eyes, looking like a little puppy asking for milk from its mother.

"I don't want to be alone."

Although it was a good opportunity for me to sleep in an air-conditioned room and on a soft bed that I hadn't touched for almost a month, I chose to let my mother sleep alone and come and keep Arun company, who was still haunted by the Western horror movie. Now the lights in the room were off, but for some reason, I felt like I was being watched.

“In?”

As my eyes begin to adjust to the darkness, I could vaguely see that the secretary with the delicate face is standing to the side, looking at me and calling me.

“What is it?” “...”

“You called me and you’re not going to say anything?” “Will the ghost come out from under the bed?”

Arun BekFah, still quite scared, asked with her imagination running wild.

“Our bed has a metal frame. There's nothing underneath. Will something crawl out?”

“What imagination! That horror movie wasn't even that scary, there were just some loud sounds. Besides, there was only one scene of someone hanging upside down from the ceiling.”

"Have you seen this movie before, In?"

Oops... I ended up revealing a scene from the movie that I had only half- watched, and she got suspicious. I quickly shut my mouth before trying to justify myself with a logical explanation.

"No, I only saw the teaser, it's not that scary." "I'm afraid of all the ghosts in the world."

"Why are you afraid of what you can't touch? If ghosts really existed, so what? They're just something invisible that only appears to haunt and begging. They can't even find food on their own, so I don't see any reason to be afraid."

"You're so brave!"

The compliment coming out so naturally made me a little embarrassed.

Luckily, it was dark around us and the sweet-faced secretary didn't notice the expression on my face, so I didn't have to hide it much.

"You're not afraid of ghosts. What have you ever been afraid of in your life?"

"I've already told you that I'm afraid of poverty and... love."

"I don't see how that could be scary. Love is just something intangible, invisible, and poor people only come to haunt and beg, they can't even find food on their own."

When she answered me like that, I couldn't help but laugh.

"You're good at teasing me, huh? Aren't you sleepy, talking here with the lights off?"

"I'm sleepy, but I can't sleep, I'm afraid."

"So you sleep with me, and you're still afraid? I already gave you a necklace, the ghosts won't dare to come near you."

"Yes, but I'm afraid of ghosts tormenting me, of them crawling under the bed or hanging from the ceiling fan."

"So, what do you want? Do you want me to sleep in the same bed as you?" "Really?!"

Her cheerful tone took me by surprise, because I was just joking. But then I really wanted to move and sleep in the same bed, so I took it easy.

"Sure, but it'll be tight."

"That's great! But you don't have to move."

Huh, I thought she wanted me to sleep with her. I didn't say anything, and the delicate-faced person had to continue the conversation.

"Then I'll move into your bed... if you give me permission, of course."

I hadn't even agreed yet, but Arun had already done as she said, grabbing her pillow and blanket to sleep next to me. With two people trying to fit into a bed that's only meant for one, it's impossible to avoid our bodies involuntarily touching.

"I'll do my best not to bother you too much."

"Make yourself comfortable. If you fall off the bed, it's not my fault. You're not that big, so you won't take up much space."

"If you feel uncomfortable, let me know."

The two of us lay down with our backs to sleep. I wasn't sure if the small person had already fallen asleep, but I awake as a bat that flies at night. If it were before, I probably wouldn't have felt anything and would even be a little irritated. But today was different...

I had noticed for some time that something wasn't right. Although I wanted to move away, it seemed like my actions were going in the opposite

direction, which was frustrating. I didn't want to be close, but I looked for opportunities to be together.

I didn't want to get attached, but it was impossible, because her smile today

— a smile she didn't give me and that I would never receive — was a promise she made to herself. She would never give any kind of feeling to her boss, be it 'love' or 'hate'.

"Khun In?"

She hadn't fallen asleep yet... "What's wrong?"

"Are you really not sleeping? Are you feeling cramped because I'm here?"

"No, I was just thinking about a lot of things. I thought you had already fallen asleep. Even though we're sleeping in the same bed, are you still scared?"

"Can I hold your hand, Khun In? Or at least touch you?"

The person with the delicate face, lying with her back to me, placed one of her arms lightly over mine, as if hesitant.

"I feel safer this way."

"You're such a scaredy cat. The experience you had at the cemetery must have been really terrifying."

"Yes, I was trapped in there and had nightmares for a year. Before I went to sleep, all I could think about was whether something was going to fall from the fan or if some animal was going to come out from under the bed. And if that were to haunt me while I was lying down, what would I do?"

"Our own thoughts scare us, but that's okay, the more we try not to think about it, the more we think about it."

Just like I tried not to think about anything related to her, but I ended up becoming obsessed with her all day, to the point of forcing a smile, and my mother noticed.

"Don't worry, you can touch me or do whatever you want." "Thank you."

Arun's relieved tone made me smile in the darkness, but I couldn't help but comment on what happened today, at the same time I wanted to know and didn't want to.

"If you have a boyfriend, you can sleep in the same bed like this, touch each other, sleep on top, sleep on your back... or even do other things... It's like when you went out with Mawin."

"..."

"Did you guys do anything today besides watch a movie and walk along the beach? Did you get a chance to look at each other and hold hands, maybe?"

"Yes, we held hands at the movies." Arun replied.

That left me speechless. I wasn't sure if the sweet-faced person was referring to the moment she held my hand or after I left. But the pain in my heart begin to tighten, because my imagination going too far.

"And after that?"

Arun is silent for a while before she begin to tell what happened today, slowly.

"So, we walked hand in hand on the beach, like you said. After holding hands for a while, your hands start to sweat."

Holding hands for a while...

"I didn't have the courage to let go of his hand because I was afraid it would seem like I was rejecting him and that would make Mawin lose his trust.

We talked about personal things, about things we had never talked about before. Mawin likes art and tourist places like beaches. He said that if we have the chance, he will take me to see the fireflies in Amphawa."

Seeing fireflies... Amphawa is in Samut Songkhram, the round trip is long, so that means they would have to spend the night. Mawin... he is quick to make plans, isn't he?

"That's good."

"Khun In?"

"What?"

"Have you ever kissed?" "Yes."

"How did it feel?"

"It's a form of communication. I can't explain it in words, I'm not a writer... What you've never done will unfold naturally, no need to be nervous."

"Okay."

I was trying very hard not to speak as I gritted my teeth. Now, the image of Arun kissing and cuddling with Mawin was playing in my head, like a never-ending movie. How crazy... How did I get to this state of choking on my own thoughts, when i was the one who started all this?

"And do you know that when he invited you to Amphawa, that means you'll have to spend the night there?"

"I know, because it's quite far from here." "And do you know what that means?"

"..."

The person with her back turned remained silent and don't answer the question, which mean that she know very well, and isn't naive enough to not understand anything.

"What do you think about having a relationship?"

My direct question made the atmosphere around her even heavier. I wasn't sure if Arun BekFah thought we were close enough to talk or discuss such things. However, the person who had remained silent for a long time finally spoke, breaking the silence with sincerity and without hiding anything.

"I think it sounds fun."

***Footnote:***

***[1]. Known as the "Thai Sin City" and "modern Sodom and Gomorrah", the city is the workplace of tens of thousands of prostitutes.***

***[2]. Maruay () - The name is in Thai and means "get rich" or "become rich" in Portuguese.***

***[3]. Oshin - A film based on one of the most famous Japanese TV soap operas: Oshin, aged seven, is sent by her father to work in the city for a bale of rice. She works hard all day at the sawmill, where she is disciplined by the head maid, Tsune. One day, she is accused of a crime she did not commit, and runs away back to her village.***

***[4]. Onsen is the Japanese term for hot springs, as well as the bathhouses and typical inns that surround them.***

# 23.Lesson

My Mom called me early in the morning and asked me to come up and have breakfast with her. Yesterday, she noticed that I had lost weight, so she decided that while I was here, she would stuff me with food to make me fat and "cute as a teddy bear" again, because she says that skinny people seem unlucky.

But when I got there, it seemed like she was just finishing a business conversation with a manager named Prae or maybe Phlu... I don't remember. I only know that we had an argument once when I fought with a foreign guest, and my mother mentioned that this person is the one who keeps telling her everything about me.

Saying that I am "somebody's daughter" back in Pattaya. Complicated... "Thank you so much for valuable information."

My mother said with a serious expression to the manager.

"You are an indispensable contributor for our hotel. Keep it up... And you." She turned to me.

"You took a while to get here; I called you a long time ago."

The manager left with a smug smile, and I'm completely confused. "Why are you praising someone who called me 'somebody's daughter'?" "I just found out now that she's 36."

"And what does it matter?"

"Because I'm going to let her work here until she's 42, then ask your father to fire her without severance. At 36, there are still opportunities for her, but starting from scratch later is practically a sentence. It will be deserved."

As soon as she finished speaking, my mother crossed her legs and lifted her coffee cup to take a sip, with her little finger raised, displaying the refined air of someone successful.

I, on the other hand, felt a shiver run through my body at the aura of cruelty that emanated from her. Who would have thought that, behind that smile and those complimentary words, she had already drawn up a long-term plan. It's as if there was no turning back, but continuing would lead nowhere either.

"Come on, sit down! Mom ordered a lot of food especially for you, Nong In. Eat a lot, you're just skin and bones now. Mom raised you so well, and someone came to invent these ghost things to scare you, can you?"

"I'm not even that skinny, Mom. I'm just surprised by your ideas. You're a real inspiration! Now I understand why Dad has so much respect for you."

"haha."

My mother laughed, covering her mouth with her hand.

"I know how to deal with people. And your father is a prey."

"But I heard you say that Dad tricked you when we were taking a bath, didn't he?"

"What did he fooled me? I'm the one who made that situation happen, for goodness sake."

"What do you mean, Mom?"

"Your father and I met in England. When I first saw him, I thought: 'What a man! So white, with such a beautiful smile, and so cute.'"

My mother laughed, remembering the distant past.

"I was studying there, I worked in a restaurant, and we ended up getting along really well and we've been talking ever since."

"It seems to have been a gradual thing," I replied.

"It took a while, you know? Your dad was kind of slow. I invited him to watch a movie in my room, and he only watched the actual movie! I got annoyed. The third time, I went to his room. Then... I teased him a little, and he got jealous and started promising heaven and earth, and in the end, your dad ended up thinking he was the one who convinced me of something and grabbed me."

"Mom!"

I raised my hand to my chest in surprise. "You're not conventional at all, very modern."

"And your dad was a real slow bull; I baited him, and he wouldn't bite!" "And what about Steve, Mom? Another boyfriend of yours?"

"What boyfriend, what! I made all that up." "Ah..."

"I pretended to break up with your father, saying that Steve wanted something serious... But 'Steve' was Pratheep, the servant at your grandmother's house, who had called me asking to buy some perfume."

"Uncle Theep?"

"That's right, Mom's 'Steve'! Your dad still doesn't know... And look, I didn't lie! Pratheep really wanted that perfume, so I told him Steve wanted something serious, just like I told your dad. We argued, and after all the arguing, he pushed me onto the bed... and you were conceived that night!

He was pretty strong, huh? It was the sperm that ran the fastest." Ouch! You didn't need those details, Mom!"

I put my hands over my ears, blushing. There are things we don't need to know, especially about our parents' past. Knowing that they loved each other is enough.

"But what's this? I thought that now that you're grown up, we could talk about these things openly. That way, if one day you have your own family, you'll be able to talk to Mom without embarrassment. And what's more... I provoked your dad on purpose, knowing full well that men are..."

"Mom! Let's change the subject!"

I almost scream, changing the subject quickly, faster than the speed of light. "Since you got here, have you met Mawin yet?"

"This change is so fast, as if we are in Rangsit and suddenly in Pak Nam... I haven't seen him yet, but we've already spoken on the phone. He apologized for not being able to receive me, it seems like he has a VIP guest from overseas. Is his job now to manage or do PR at karaoke? Does he have to welcome each visitor... does he also have to dance for them?"

My mother giggled as she imagined Mawin doing something like that, and then changed the subject.

"Yesterday you broke your promise, you said you were going to sleep with me."

"I stayed talking to Fah until I fell asleep." Thank goodness she changed the subject! Phew!

"In such a hot room, did you manage to sleep? Oh, I think they're here."

At the sound of the doorbell, I went to answer the door and met by Mawin and Arun, who had arrived together as if they had planned. For a moment, I bit my lip, trying to contain my emotions, but I quickly smile when I realized.

"You come together, huh?"

"I went to pick up Miss Fah to come with you. Your mother mentioned that she would like to talk to her and see how she is."

"Fah, is it?"

I glanced sideways at Arun, who seemed unconcerned with details like her nickname. I thought I was the only one who called her that. It must have been quite a fun way for them to have become so close so quickly.

"Was it your responsibility to pick her up, by any chance?" "Hey, you're being... I just..."

"Never mind. Come in." "Please come in, Miss Fah."

Mawin said respectfully as he invited her. I watched from the corner of my eye, leaving the way clear for Arun, who come in to greet my mother. I stand near the door and took the opportunity to whisper to Mawin.

"I heard you invited my assistant to Amphawa?" "Women are such gossips."

"You're too quick, aren't you? Just because you went to the movies one day, you're already thinking of something else."

"Hey! What nonsense is this? I didn't think of any of that, I just invited you to hang out, and that's it."

"Oh, I know. Let's see if it's true. We know very well what it means to invite someone to spend the night."

"Since when have you been so old-fashioned?"

"What are you two whispering about there? Aren't you going to come and talk to Mom?"

My mother stuck her head out and called us, interrupting our conversation, which ended up staying there.

We went in to greet each other in a restrained manner. Throughout the conversation, I remained silent, observing Mawin and Arun, whose body language indicated that they are getting closer, which I would rather not have to see. I looked away until the greetings ended and the two left.

"It's strange,"

My mother commented, as soon as the two walked away. She then crossed her legs and arms, thoughtful.

"What's strange, Mom?"

"Those two, of course. They seem so close that it even surprised me, especially the way Mawin was looking at her."

It wasn't a surprise to me at all. I had already noticed it myself. He was so brazen... sometimes he would go get water for Arun, sometimes he would call her by her nickname, forgetting that they were still in the position of boss and subordinate.

"Really? I didn't even notice."

"And you were also acting strangely, you seemed uncomfortable... Why?" I swallowed hard.

"Are you jealous?"

I was startled by my mother's comment, who looked at me with a subtle smile, resting her chin on her hand with an air of someone who understands the world.

"Mom, what nonsense! Jealous of what?"

"Of Mawin, of course. Your future fiancé has his eye on someone else. Ah... young love is really fascinating, it makes your heart itch, right? Just look...

you keeps playing hard to get, saying you don't want to get married to avoid close family ties, but in reality you're jealous. You should behave better, otherwise he'll end up looking at someone else!"

But my mother got it all wrong. I almost made a face of despair, but I let it go. After all, it was better that she thought that way. If she was right, I would end up behaving even more evidently. That would make everything much more complicated.

"What nonsense is this, mother? Jealous of who? The reason I'm looking so bored is because of Mawin, and I don't know why you like him so much.

I'm leaving, it's hot in here."

"Hot? We're in a room with air conditioning." "Oh no, it's cold!"

"Speaking of which, has the technician come to install the air conditioning yet?"

My mother commented, remembering. At first, I was excited about the new air, but now I had to get up quickly and wave my hands in refusal.

"No, mother! Don't install it! I don't want it!" "Why?"

"No! I forbid you to install it! I like fans!"

I run out of the room and went straight to the guesthouse. Just when I got there, the car from the air-conditioning shop was parking, and someone was about to make a call. Sar, who had been called, came down with a sour expression on his face, since my mother had assigned him to keep an eye on the service. But I went up to him and stopped him before he could go any further.

"You don't have to install it." "Why?"

"If you install the air-conditioning, you'll have to remove the fan, right?"

"Yes, of course. Why have an air-conditioning and a fan at the same time? It's just a nuisance."

"Then don't install it! I don't want to. I'll keep that fan. Cancel it. You can install the air-conditioning in your room, I'll allow it."

"Who do you think you are to give permission?"

"No, I changed my mind. Put the air-conditioning in Auntie Yaow's room. Don't put it on yours, because I hate you, you idiot!"

"What did you say?"

I run happily away, glad that I had managed to stop the air conditioning installation.

That way, the fan would continue and Arun would still be afraid of ghosts, which meant I would still have some use for her. No, I don't want that. I love going into the room and singing "Chandelier" every single day.

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As I was about to go back to meet my mother at the hotel, I remembered that it was summer and very hot, but when I got on the glass elevator, I saw Mawin and Arun talking by the pool. Curious, I stopped the elevator on the nearest floor and run to the balcony, trying to observe their body language. What I see make my fist clench tightly.

Arun BekFah is smiling...

Every time this woman smiles, it seems like there is a field of flowers blooming around her, making the expression "a smile lights up the world" a reality when I see it with my own eyes. But it is irritating that she has this smile at everyone in the world except me, and all because...

I'm your boss.

At first, this seemed to make sense, but now I'm irritated and frustrated. Mawin is also a boss, but he gets smiles whenever he wants, and he doesn't have to put in any effort for it.

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"Oh, haven't you decided on the air conditioning yet?"

After work, I went back to my room, leaving my mother alone as usual.

Although I was irritated, I still wanted to spend time with Arun more than anyone else.

"Hmm, I won't install it."

"Why not? I saw you complaining about how hot it was all the time." "It's just... I'm afraid the other employees will think I'm being favored."

My mother's argument didn't make much sense. It was clearly just an excuse.

"I thought you took the fan out."

Arun said, making a worried expression, as if she expected the ceiling fan to be gone.

"Go sleep in Mawin's room, there's no ceiling fan there."

I said, looking away from Arun as usual. Despite trying to act normal, it seemed like I was still clearly showing that I was irritated. Arun, who knew my behavior well from the time we spent together, couldn't help but notice.

"Are you in a bad mood or something?" "No."

"You know you can't fool me. Telling the truth is easier. We can talk about anything."

She said, with a tone of concern and curiosity, making me feel like a small child being persuaded by the nanny. And it was working.

"Can you smile for me?" "I can't."

Arun replied almost without thinking. She shake her head and give the same justification as before:

"I already told you I don't smile at my boss." "But you smile at Mawin."

"You said he's not my boss, so I can smile."

At this answer, I felt uncomfortable, because I had used this same argument to convince Arun to go out on a date. And when I realized I couldn't find any more reasons, I made a gesture of contempt and went to get a towel to get ready for the shower.

"So, it's decided." "Are you mad?" "No."

"Yes, you are mad!"

The fabric of my blouse was pulled, as if Arun was trying to convince me to look at her. I didn't turn around and just answered briefly.

"I'm not mad."

"But you're in a bad mood, aren't you?"

"Why should I be in a bad mood? I already told you I'm not..."

At that moment, Arun wrapped her arms around my body from behind, as if she know what she's doing. Her small forehead rested on the back of my neck, since our heights are not much different now.

"Don't be mad, please. There are some rules that I don't want to relax, because it could make me lose discipline."

"Is it that serious to smile?"

"Yes, I just want you to understand." "..."

"Stop being mad, let's dance together, okay?"

When she uses my weak point at a critical moment, it's really frustrating, but it works. I always fall into this trap. All my exes did this and I always ended up succumbing, because I felt cared for. I never failed to forgive, unless the offense was really serious.

"How are we going to dance if there's no music?" "I can sing you a song."

At this, I laughed and turned to her, wrapping my arms around Arun's neck, making a surprised expression before clearing my throat.

"Then, I'm going to sing a song now. What song do you want?" "Lover's Concerto."

"What song is that?"

"You must have heard it before. It's the one that plays in a lot of commercials."

I'm the one who started singing the melody, and we slowly started moving together to the beat of the music. Our dancing is awkward and had no specific steps, because we aren't taking it seriously. Now, I'm the one singing, while Arun looked up, as if she's thinking about something.

"I've actually heard that song before, but I didn't think I'd have the opportunity to use it in a context like this. It's kind of awkward."

"What do you mean the person apologizing is getting embarrassed? It's not possible... Have you ever danced before?"

Even though we aren't singing, we continued to dance. To be honest, I don't want to leave. I wanted to stay close to her, without the other person noticing.

"I’ve never danced before.”

“You better practice, in case you need it someday.” “Need it for what?”

“For a dance, a charity event, a wedding…”

As soon as I mentioned it, I fell silent. Arun noticed and asked,

## “Do you know how to kiss?”

“Huh?”

I almost choked on my own breath, as I hadn’t expected this sudden question.

“Why are you asking this all of a sudden?”

“Last night, when we were talking, you mentioned kissing and then you fell asleep… So I was curious if you had ever kissed.”

“Of course I had. I’ve had boyfriends.”

“How did it feel?”

“I told you it’s hard to explain. I’m not a writer.”

“Then can I ask again? The first time you kissed, did you kiss well?” “No, it wasn’t like that. With my first boyfriend, we didn’t know what we

were doing. We tried to imitate what we saw in foreign movies. It was kind of... natural, you know?"

"Weren't you nervous?"

"No, because we were both inexperienced. Why are you scared? Mawin doesn't care whether you know how to kiss or not. Besides, most men like clumsy women. They feel proud of being the first at many things."

As I speak, I let out a 'hmm' that make Arun BekFah frown. "You don't sound very pleased."

"I'm not."

"Your voice is loud."

"I'm just wondering why men feel so proud of everything that's their first time. And when we're standing there like logs of wood, they still use it as an excuse, saying you're not good enough."

When I see Arun go silent, I hurried to add something that sounded like a defense:

"I mean, in general, not referring to myself." "Oh, okay."

"Oh, okay, what?"

"I don't want to seem like a talentless person. Ever since I was born, whenever I set out to do something, I want to do it well. I don't like feeling

insecure or awkward. Everything needs to be well-prepared."

"If you don't want to feel like that, then you need to practice kissing, perfectionist."

I laughed, but freeze when I see that Arun staring at me intensely. "Wait... You sound like you really want to do this."

"I can't, right? Who would be my training partner, right?"

The sweet-faced assistant make a slightly frustrated expression, sighed, and stopped dancing.

"You should go take a shower, then I'll go." "..."

Arun turned to pick up her clothes, getting ready to go to bed, but I grabbed her arm before she could move away. Her body turned toward me again, and I quickly pulled her close to me.

"Okay, I'll be your training partner."

As soon as I finished speaking, I leaned towards Arun BekFah without giving her a chance to react and kissed her. The secretary, who unprepared, pushed me away and raises her hand to cover her mouth. I, who seemed to have acted rashly, stood frozen by what had just happened, trying to make everything seem normal.

"This is a kiss. Now you understand, right?"

But the person who remained silent shake her head, only to make me feel pressured.

"No, I don't understand!" "..."

"I don't understand." "..."

Arun looked up at me and in turn wrapped her arms around my neck.

She raises her face towards me and begin to do what she thought she should, ignoring the lesson I had just given her. Furthermore, she even dared to guide me.

## "What I understand is that you need to use your tongue too."

# 24. Learning

I was surprised when my lips were pressed together in an unexpectedly intense way by someone who said he had never done that before. The soft scent emanating from her hair and skin was so clear that I felt like I was in a kind of dream, but the firm touch I felt now was proof that all of this was really happening.

I believed that Arun had never had a boyfriend before, especially given the clumsy way he tried to use her tongue, albeit hesitantly.

With my eyes still open, I watched her face close to mine for a moment before pulling away.

"Hold on." "..."

We were silent for a moment, as if trying to regain our composure. The sweet secretary seemed confused and a little dazed, not knowing what I was thinking, and was preparing to pull back with a mix of hesitation and nervousness. But I put my hands around her face and gently pulled her closer.

"See, it's like dancing," I said.

"You just have to keep up with the rhythm."

As soon as I finished speaking, I was the one who leaned towards her. This time, without the rush or the initial impulse.

I pressed my lips together firmly and begin to kiss her softly on the corner of her mouth, almost as a prelude, using my tongue to gently part her

curious lips, inviting them to open. "Don't hold your breath."

I murmured as I pulled away a little, tilting my face to the other side so that she wouldn't feel pressured or unable to move. Upon hearing this instruction, she relaxed, letting herself go without so much tension and, little by little, she begin to follow my movements, understanding what to do next.

She learns fast...

And she gets better and better, even though it's her first time. I don't know how much time passed, but every party needs to have an end. When it finally ended, Arun BekFah take a step back and let herself fall to the floor, exhausted, almost as if she was on the verge of fainting.

As soon as it was all over, I just stood there, still, taking a deep breath. Because the hardest part is knowing what to do after something like that. How would we face each other?

That's why only indifference could make it seem like nothing happened. "And that's the kiss."

"I see."

She nodded, her sweet gaze landing on me, as if she wanted an assessment. "Did I do well?"

"Yes, you did very well. When you set your mind to something, you really can do it."

"..."

"I'm going to take a shower."

Interrupting and leaving the scene seem like the best choice at this moment. In addition to needing some time for myself, I also needed some time for Arun BekFah, because the kiss from just now made it even clearer how much I feel for this secretary. And, apparently, trying to let go would become increasingly difficult. Love is like fire, and I'm like a moth that always ends up burned, because I can't resist playing with it.

I've never been able to stop myself from loving or liking someone...

Even though I'm trying my hardest to get away from these feelings, forcing myself to act like Cupid to push her away, it seems that my mind and my heart are not aligned. My mind tells me to push her away, but my heart insists on getting closer, acting like an ant looking for a ripe mango, satisfied with taking a little bit of sweetness each day. I know very well what the outcome of this will be, that there is no hope, because she is starting something with Mawin, someone I found for her.

Damn... I'm so angry with myself. How did I get so involved?

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"Mom... tonight I'm going to sleep here with you."

I escaped to my mother's room, who always welcomes me with open arms. I'm acting so contradictory now, because my heart is in that room, but I still made a point of escaping here.

"It's been a while since you slept with me. Have you taken a shower?"

"I was thinking about asking to use the bathtub. It's so nice to have you around."

My mother smiled at me without saying anything. I retreated to the bathroom, turned on the hot water, let the soap foam in the shower and lay down in the tub, staring at the ceiling as my body relaxed. Even there, Arun

BekFah's touches continued to swirl in my mind, endlessly. The soft scent of her skin and lips remained vivid, never fading.

Slowly, I slid my hand from my own lips to my neck, imagining that they are the lips of my sweet secretary. The heat of the water make me think that those are the touch of her hands, as if she's wrapping me in an embrace.

***'You have such soft skin...'***

***'Khun In, please tell me what you want me to do..'***

I spread my legs and murmured, while still imagining her... there... in that place.

***'What do you want me to do for you, Khun In? Do you want me to use my tongue like I did in the kiss?'***

*"That's right."*

Just as my hand moving down towards my thighs, the sound of a text message on my phone interrupted my imagination, startling me. Suddenly, I realized what I'm doing. What am I doing?! I quickly get up from the bathtub, still surprised, and grabbed my phone. It's a message from Arun BekFah.

## Arun: Khun In, you're taking a while... Are you okay?

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I looked at the message and bit my lip, feeling a wave of guilt. If only she knew I was imagining her there...

## Indy: I went to take a shower in my mother's room, I'm relaxing in the bathtub. Sorry for not letting you know.

**Arun: Are you going to sleep with your mother tonight? Indy: She wants to talk and catch up.**

Arun read the message and didn't reply for a long time, so I put my phone aside. I stayed in the bathtub, relaxing, but the feeling that the place was too quiet bothered me. Then I picked up my phone to read and reply to the messages again.

## Indy: What are you doing? Have you taken a shower yet? Arun: I’m going now.

**Indy: Can you sleep alone? Arun: Yes, I can.**

Suddenly, I felt an irritation rise up inside me. Her answer was normal, but I felt strangely rejected. She said she was afraid of ghosts; all she had to do was admit that she was afraid and I would go down to be with her... A little more and I would have thrown the phone away, if a new message from Arun BekFah hadn’t arrived.

## Arun: But if Khun In is here, it would be better.

Despite trying to control myself, it seems that my mind and body are not in sync.

I looked at the clock on my phone, which showed more than two in the morning. Meanwhile, my mother, who is sleeping next to me, already lost in her dreams, along with her favorite round pillow. Even if I stand up and shot an M16 rifle across the room, she would probably think she is in an action movie and would stay asleep.

And then I finally lost it to myself, because my mind keep fixating on the sentence Arun BekFah had typed:

***'But if Khun In is here, it would be better.'***

Did she say that because she really wanted me to be with her for fear of ghosts, or could there be something more? Now, I really didn't know what was happening to me, as my body was restless, and here I was, standing in front of her room in the staff building. The walk from the hotel to there was

relatively long, but I made it. So I took the key we had, one for each of us, and let myself in. She hadn't turned off the light...

The scared person was lying on her side, all covered up to her head. I looked at Arun BekFah with a touch of tenderness and approached, tilting my face to ask:

"Fah... Have you slept yet?" "..."

I thought there was no way I would be able to sleep... I made a slight expression of disappointment before walking to turn off the light and go to bed. After I settled under the blanket and closed my eyes to sleep, suddenly, Arun BekFah, who I thought was already asleep, got out of her bed and snuggled up next to me without saying anything.

"I thought you were already asleep."

"I thought you wouldn't come anymore, Khun In. Can I sleep with you? I'm scared."

I smile in the darkness and simply answered:

"Yes."

"The fan scares me... It looks a little too scary." "Really? I like it."

Of course, I didn't tell her why I didn't install an air conditioner, so that things would happen exactly like this.

"Why do you like it?"

"It's funny to see you scared like this."

"You like seeing me scared, huh? So from now on, whenever I get scared, I'll just crawl into your bed."

"Make yourself comfortable."

I laughed and turned my back to Arun BekFah. "Good night."

"Khun In?"

"What?"

"Give me your hand."

I reached out to her, just like the night before. Arun BekFah, wanting some comfort, hold my hand and stayed still until her breathing become calm and rhythmic, showing tranquility. Unlike her, I could no longer sleep. I was looking for trouble for nothing... sleeping with my mother would have been a good idea.

"Fah?" "..."

"Are you sleeping?" "..."

I asked to make sure the little one was really asleep before I tried to let go of her hand. But instead, she squeezed my hand even tighter, which made it clear that Arun BekFah had not yet fallen asleep.

"If you are not sleeping, why don't you answer?"

"I was afraid that you would let go of my hand and I wouldn't be able to sleep."

"I wasn't going to let go of your hand, I was just going to turn around." "Then our hands will let go."

"Then I'll hug you, so you won't let go."

I decided to say and turned to the side, getting closer to her. At the same time, Arun BekFah also turned to the side, and the tips of our noses touched lightly, as if on purpose.

## Thump-thump...

**Thump-thump...**

The atmosphere like this only made me more tense, and I begin to understand how men who want to be with me can feel. When I come across it today, I realized how distressing it is.

"We turned at the same time."

Arun BekFah said before, and the faint smell of toothpaste hung in the air, making me feel how adorable she is.

"That's right."

"What soap do you use?"

The little girl come closer, closed her eyes, and made a gesture as if she's smelling it.

"I don't recognize it."

"It's my mother's... She bought some new soaps recently, she saw that they were a kit. If it smells good, it must be more like the moisturizer, it helps you sleep better."

"But you don't seem to be sleeping, so it probably won't work." "Yeah, it might depend on the person."

And so as not to seem like Arun BekFah was talking to herself, I decided to ask a question.

"And you, what perfume do you use?" "It's the same as always, like every day." "I never knew what kind you used."

"You were never interested, that's why you don't know." "Now I'm interested."

It seems that I couldn't resist; my nose started exploring the neck of the little girl who is nearby, and I used my mouth to lick, as if I was trying it out.

"It smells nice." "It tickles."

A little giggle come out, and that excited me, because it meant that Arun BekFah is smiling.

"Hahaha... It tickles, uhm..."

The sound of "uhm" make me decide to turn around and get on top, looking at Arun BekFa in the darkness.

This is an important moment, as if I'm aaboutto cross a forbidden line. "Arun."

"Yes."

"Do you want to try something more than that...? I'll teach you."

The strange proposal I made was quite risky. Arun BekFah seemed to be paralyzed, biting her lips as if she was thinking.

But, as I'm afraid that the little girl would change her mind, I put one of my hands under the hem of her shirt, slowly moving it up, trying to stimulate

her primitive instinct and curiosity. "You mean making love, right?"

Everyone has...everyone wants to try it. My hand stopped when I hold it on her chest, and Arun BekFah doesn't object at all. Her body revealing its need under my palm, and the firm feeling make me squeeze slowly, until I heard a soft, heavy sigh, as if she couldn't hold it anymore.

"It's for learning, right?" "Yes."

I leaned my face towards hers as I waited for Arun BekFah's answer. "I want..."

"I want it too."

# 25. Class

We both started the class again, but this time I took on the role of teacher, imparting my knowledge through direct experience, while Arun BekFah was the student. The screams in my head prevented me from holding back, after having lost myself in this thought since the afternoon. I pressed my lips against hers again, introducing my tongue to taste the sweetness in her mouth, which still had a slight aroma of toothpaste, inviting and refreshing.

Arun BekFah, now stabilized, tilted her head to match, knowing the rhythm and showing no resistance. Whenever I pulled away to give her a chance to breathe, she asked...

*"Am I doing it right?" "Does it feel good?" "Do you like it?"*

I just smiled and nodded in response, before continuing to do everything according to the rhythm. Our skin brushed against each other, arms and legs touching, with only our torsos separated by the clothes, while I still moved my hand lightly and firmly on her breasts.

Now I can’t think of anything else. It feels like I haven’t done something like this in so long that I can’t remember the last time I got involved in this way. My hand slowly moved down from her chest, sliding down her belly, and about to enter the edge of the small person’s pants, while my mouth still occupied with the sweet-faced secretary’s neck.

I'm so absorbed in the secretary’s neck that I don't notice.

***“Yawn…”***

I freeze in my every action and frowned for a moment. Although I am pretty sure half out of it, that sound seem to have awakened my rapidly sinking consciousness.

“What was that?”

“It’s nothing, just a yawn.”

The small person shske her head in denial, but still opened her mouth to yawn. Arun BekFah raised her hand to cover her mouth, as tears of sleepiness streamed down her cheeks.

“I guess I’m just a little tired.” “Tired, huh?”

At this time? I quickly get up and turned to lie down next to her, feeling unsure. Arun BekFah is still lying in the same position and give me a sideways glance.

"Have you finished class yet?"

"Smile, that should be enough. Besides, it's already quite late." "That's right, it's already three in the morning."

The sweet-faced person reaches out to grab her phone and look at the time. "So, what should we do now?"

"Well, let's go to sleep, you're tired." "That's right. Thank you for guiding me."

The small person placed her phone in the middle of the headboard and turned her back to me. I also turned to the other side and closed my eyes, like someone who had lost confidence, but I couldn't help but ask Arun, like someone who doesn't like to lose.

"Is it that boring?" "..."

"Arun?" "..."

When it was time to sleep, the sweet-faced secretary fell asleep easily, as if she was really tired and not just pretending. And the more she acted like this, the more I felt ashamed and wanted to hide underground, run away to ask for citizenship from President Xi Jinping, because I could no longer stay in Thailand. Is it really that annoying? And now, how am I going to look at her face?!!!!😅😅

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After a week of suspension, I returned to work. Today, I pretended to wake up late so that Arun BekFah could leave for work early. When I was sure that she had already left, I ran to my mother's room, asked to take a shower, got ready and went to work.

"Seeing you working reminds me of when I saw you wearing your graduation gown."

My mother, who had never seen me in uniform, said, looking at me with proud and emotional eyes. Even though she doesn't really agree with my work as an employee, she couldn't help but feel happy to see that I finally seemed to have some direction.

"Not only I am working, but also got my first salary."

I speak excitedly about the money I had earned through my sweat and so many arguments with everyone around me.

"How much was it?"

"Eight thousand." "Eight thousand?!"

My mother made a dramatic, impressed voice, like a scene from a play. "You can't even buy one of my Jimmy Choo shoes!"

"I know, mom."

I sighed, discouraged.

"But it's the money I got. Give me your account number right away!" "Why do you want this?"

"Let me get it, Mom."

My mom was a little hesitant, but she agreed to let me get it.

After about three minutes, I transferred my entire salary to her, and the sound of a message notification ring on her phone. She looked at the screen, blinking in surprise.

"A deposit of eight thousand has come in." "It's my salary, I give it all to you, Mom!"

I smiled, closing my eyes in happiness. My mom looked at me and started crying, leaving me speechless.

"Mom, what's wrong?" "Hoo hoo..."

"Why are you crying?"

"I'm so emotional. I didn't think my Nong In would do this, just like in the soap operas... She transferred her entire first salary to her mother. My dear

daughter!"

And then, she hugged me tightly and cried like someone sensitive. Hearing her sob, my throat tightened.

"Daughter, those who are so grateful will always receive good things in return, remember that."

"Ah, since I was born, I've always had good things!"

I moved away from her and wiped her tears with my thumb. "My most worthy lady, my little mother."

"The more you call me that, the more emotional I get... I want to be with you for a long time."

"Mom, you're talking as if you are leaving." "Yes, I have to go back today."

"What?! Why are you leaving so soon?" "Your father is being a bit moody."

She made an impatient face.

"He says he doesn't want to sleep alone in bed. Sometimes I think he should have a second wife just to take care of him. He's so attached to me!"

"Oh, that's good... No, that's not good! That means I won't be able to sleep with Mom today!"

"I've been here for several nights, why didn't you come sleep with me before? Now that I'm leaving, you want to sleep with me."

"But, Mom, do you really need to go back tonight?"

"Yes, your father has already booked the plane ticket in advance, afraid that I would back out."

"You're abandoning me, Mom!"

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I walk to work dejectedly, not knowing what to think or how to feel. I wanted so badly to escape Arun today and spend the night with my mother. But she has to go back to Bangkok.

And now, how am I going to face her when I see her in the afternoon? Especially considering that my last lecture about... you know, made her yawn twice before falling asleep. How embarrassing!

As I rest for a while, frustrated, my phone rings with a deposit notification for 80,000 baht. At first, I was confused, not knowing what it was about, until my mother sent me a message on Line:

*"A devoted daughter deserves a good reward. Here's some money for you to spend on snacks. Eat plenty, Nong In; you're too skinny."*

I almost screamed, but I stopped myself in time. Unbelievable how being a devotee can fill my bank account like that! Oh, I loved this so much! Well, since my mother transferred this money, I guess I should spend it, right?

But... on what?

Then my mind wandered to Arun... I hesitated for more than ten minutes about whether or not to send her a message. Finally, I decided to try to probe.

**Indy**: Today is payday. Do you want to go out to eat? I'll pay.

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It was about two minutes before Arun read the message, and after another five minutes, she finally responded.

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**Arun**: That's a shame! I've already arranged to meet Mr. Mawin.

**Arun**: He invited me to dinner.

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I purse my lips and let out a low "Hmph." Of course, on the other side, she has no way of knowing the expression on my face, since we're talking via text. I try to keep my composure and respond like someone who doesn't care, even though, inside, I'm quite uncomfortable.

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**Indy**: Alright. Enjoy your dinner. I'll get something to eat around here.

**Indy**: Have fun!

**Arun**: Thank you!

**Arun**: I've learned all the lessons you taught me well.

I almost throw my phone away, but I remembered that I'm at work. I don't know what she really learned from what I taught her, or what she's going to do with Mawin...

Damn, why did I send her a message? Besides being rejected, I'm even more anxious!

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## Eight o'clock at night...

I look at the watch on my wrist for the hundredth time before staring at the sky, which is now completely dark. My mind fills with various imaginations about what that sweet-faced girl would be doing at this time. Earlier in the evening, I made a phone call pretending to complain to Mawin about my salary, saying that the others earned fifteen thousand while I only received eight thousand, even though I knew full well that part of my salary was discounted for the trouble I caused and for the absences that month. The real intention of the call, however, was to find out what the two were doing.

"Don't worry, In can sleep peacefully. I brought Miss Arun to dinner and listen to music."

At this time, the two must be exchanging loving glances. And what will they do next...?

The pool lights turn off automatically, and the blue glow under the water darkens completely, making the bottom invisible. I take advantage of the fact that there is no one around, take off my shoes and dip my feet in the water, bored, but I end up getting scared when I hear a voice calling:

"Miss."

"Oh! How scary!"

I exclaim to Janephop, who appeared without making a sound. In fact, I didn't need to be so scared; if I wanted to swim, I would simply swim. Mawin wouldn't fire me for this, how silly... I got so involved in the role of employee that I even forgot that I am the daughter of the hotel owner.

"Sorry, miss. What are you doing?"

"It's hot, so I'm just getting my feet wet. But why are you awake and here?" "I've been watching you pacing for a while now."

"You have some free time, do you? Don't you have anything better to do?" "My job is to take care of you."

"That's right, I had forgotten about that... It seems that being an employee here is making me forget who I really am. Where did the real Intuorn go?"

"Are you feeling lonely?" "What are you talking about?"

I almost answered abruptly when I was addressed like that. However, Janephop, who knows me well, came over and stood beside me.

"Lonely? No way!"

"It's just that, when you went back to your room and didn't find Miss Arun, you must be a little lonely... Your mother has already left too. But don't worry, I'm here to keep you company."

"At least I still have you in this world, so I'm not alone... By the way, today was payday. How much did you get?"

"Eighteen thousand."

"That's absurd, even you get paid more than In!"

Sometimes, I tend to call myself "In" when I feel like the youngest. "What day is it anyway? There's been so much going on..."

"..."

"Today is the day..."

Suddenly, I remember and glanced at Janephop out of the corner of my eye before covering my mouth with my hand.

"My God, how could I forget? Happy birthday, Jane!"

My friend, who is much taller, smiles happily that I finally remembered. Today was a day full of annoyances and so many thoughts running through my head that I completely forgot something so important.

"I'm glad you remembered."

"No way! I remember your birthday every year, it's just that this time there was so much going on... But I'll buy you a present later, okay? The watch I borrowed as payment for Arun I still haven't returned."

"No need to worry. Just remembering it makes me happy."

"No way! Everyone deserves a present, especially since it's tradition. On my next day off, I'll buy you dinner, even though I only got eight thousand. But, you know, with all my dedication and beauty, the heavens must have noticed and sent ten times more... eighty thousand!"

"What heaven would that be?"

"The heaven with the same name as my mother."

Janephop laughed affectionately at my exaggerated way of bragging, shaking his head. Sometimes he acted more like an older brother than a friend, and it made me feel like a child around him.

"Since you still haven't thought of a gift, can I ask you something?" "What?"

"Dance with me." "Huh?"

I shrugged my neck and laughed. "Right here?"

"Yeah, let's dance."

Janephop pulled me close, positioning me without even waiting for my consent, while he played an old song from the movie Ghost, which was still very dear to me.

"What's up now?"

"I just want to dance. You always question everything, huh?"

He wasn't asking for a birthday present; Janephop knew I was sad and asked me to dance because it was something I liked to do, reminding me of scenes from movies.

If I was upset, dancing always calmed me down, but I wasn't angry, and Janephop wasn't trying to please me. The invitation to dance was just an excuse to cheer me up.

At first, I held myself a little stiff, but after a while, I rested my forehead on his chest and kept dancing, feeling a tight pain in my heart. At this moment, Arun might be dancing with Mawin like this, and her unique scent must already be stolen by him, much to my envy.

"Thank you, Jan."

"Thank you for what? I'm the one who should thank you for dancing with me on my birthday."

"Don't have a girlfriend, okay?" "What?"

"If you do have a girlfriend, I'll be jealous of that girl, because I'm always number one for you. And one day, you'll be interested in someone else."

"Very touching." He replied, smiling.

"Yeah, I guess I'm stupid and selfish. I want everything for myself." "I just want to see you smile."

He said.

"Huh?"

"On my birthday, I want you to smile, not look sad like that." "Oh, nonsense, I'm not sad. You're imagining things."

"Then smile."

"Do you think I'm crazy?" "Then I'll make you smile."

Without another word, Janephop pulled away and suddenly pushed me into the pool with such force that I landed straight in the water with a loud "splash" sound. Luckily, the water wasn't that deep, so I managed to get up and get out, already screaming.

"What the hell are you doing, Jane?!"

"You look like a wet calf with your head all soaked! Hahaha!"

His laughter made my mouth drop open. It wasn't often that I heard a real "hahaha" from him, and even though I was irritated, I ended up laughing and hitting the water to splash him.

"You idiot! What a horrible laugh!" "Hahaha!"

"Jan... hahaha, why are you laughing so ugly?"

Finally, I couldn't help but start laughing for real. The sound of our laughter echoed throughout the pool, without us worrying if we were disturbing anyone. At that moment, nothing else mattered, only the fact that my happiness and laughter were the priority.

It's so great to have you...

Janephop walked me to the building where I was staying before saying goodbye and leaving. Completely soaked, I walked up the stairs with heavy steps to my floor and opened the door to my room, where I was surprised to see Arun sitting on the edge of my bed, waiting for me in silence.

"I thought you'd be back later."

"It looks like you had a lot of fun in the pool, didn't you?" "How... how do you know that?"

I looked at my wet clothes and ended up laughing.

"I think it's pretty obvious, right? Today Jane messed up, threw me in the pool. Crazy!"

"You two seem really close."

"Of course we are. We grew up together. But this was the first time he had the courage to throw me in the water."

I replied, laughing as I remembered his outrageous laugh. I grabbed a towel and started drying the excess water from my body.

"Janephop likes you, doesn't he?" "I don't know... maybe he does."

I raised my eyebrows and laughed lightly.

"So, if you know he likes you, why are you giving him hope?" "Are you okay?"

I asked, surprised by the tone of irritation I heard in her voice. Arun usually doesn't ask many questions, especially with that tone. I couldn't help but want to know more.

"Are you in a bad mood by any chance? Did Mawin do something you didn't like?"

"No, he was very kind."

"Oh, that's good. I thought something had happened."

Oddly enough, I was the one who started to feel a little irritated when I heard her compliment him. So, I decided to change the subject.

"Have you been back for a long time?" "It's been a while."

Arun replied with a slight nod. "So, was it fun?"

I asked, avoiding looking directly at her, pretending to be totally focused on drying my wet hair, but at the same time, paying attention to her answer.

"It was good, yes." "And what did you do?"

Does it match what I imagined...?

"Mawin took me to dinner at a famous restaurant downtown. The food was delicious."

"But he said he would take you to listen to music afterwards, so you might be back late."

"I ended up asking him to bring me back early because I had a headache." She paused.

"I... I was kind of at a loss for what to do."

"What do you mean by that? At a loss for what to do... in what sense?" "..."

"So that means it wasn't just dinner, right?"

Although my mind tried to warn me not to ask too much, as that would only make me angry, my curiosity was uncontrollable, almost like a masochist who craved pain.

"Actually, it happened a little more... We kissed in the car." Arun looked me in the eyes and answered honestly.

I bit my lip hard, looking away to another part of the room. "You're making progress. Mawin seems to be a fast guy."

"Next month, he's taking me to Amphawa, he said he'll show me the fireflies and teach me how to draw. We'll spend three days and two nights there."

"Wow, that's amazing!" "What should I do now?"

"Hmm? Well... if you've already kissed, there shouldn't be much more complications. Leave it to the man."

Arun stand up and approached me, before using her hand to slide inside my blouse, making me jump.

"That day, you didn't finish teaching, I want to know what I should do next."

With that, her small hand went up to my chest and grabbed it without feeling embarrassed. Only I was breathing heavily, trying to contain myself.

"I don’t want Mr. Mawin to feel like he’s proposing to a piece of wood.”

“You seem really determined.”

I said, feeling angry, but at the same time wanting to do something like that too… It’s a strange contradiction. In the end, I hold the secretary’s face with both hands and pressed my lips against hers.

“Yes.”

I take off my shirt, irritated by the cold, wet touch on my body, leaving only my underwear. Then, I pushed Arun BekFah’s body onto the bed and climbed on top of her like someone who is losing control.

“Spread your legs and I’ll tell you what you should do.”

We’re back at it again, but this time it seems there’s no shame or embarrassment anymore. After all, when you do something for the first time, it’s easier the next time, and we don’t want to waste time making it more complicated.

My wet clothes were stripped down to just my underwear, while Arun BekFah still dressed, but she let herself be carried away by curiosity. I could feel a certain frustration in the little girl, and I couldn’t help but think that she is a little jealous, just like I'm 9 feeling…

Is love really that simple? I’ve been through many relationships, but it always felt like a puzzle, where the pieces didn’t fit together properly. Some were crooked, others were at different angles. These mistakes made me lose faith that love could ever happen again in my life. For me, the fact that two people fall in love became like winning the lottery, with the probability almost equal to zero.

Since I was already lucky in terms of my background, God seemed to have given me bad luck in love.

And the fact that I had to fall in love with the unfeeling assistant, Arun BekFah, and expect her to reciprocate that love is extremely difficult. She doesn’t even have a heart for women, and more importantly, she is

interested in Mawin. While I am just a close friend who helps her become more skilled in this kind of thing.

“You are better at kissing.”

I said, as I pulled away from her lips and slid down to her neck.

"But you can't just stand there. You have to express your feelings so your partner knows you're happy with what he's doing."

"What do I need to do?" "Moan."

Arun BekFah stand there freeze, not following the instructions I gove, until I had to pull away from her neck and look into her eyes, which are now red.

"I... I don't know how to do it."

"It will come out naturally. These sounds help make our partner more confident."

"And how do I make these sounds?"

"Do I need to make the sound so you can hear it?" "Yes, show me."

We stared at each other for a long time. I bit my lip firmly before forcing the hands of the person under me to touch my bra. An electric current from Arun BekFah's palm run through my body, making it

I felt as if I was being electrified. It felt like I was also responding and helping to stimulate the sweet-faced person's hands on my breasts.

"Uhm..."

When the hands of the person under me moved, my body tensed, unable to help it, and I begin to gasp. When Arun BekFah realized I was making this

sound, she enjoyed it even more, squeezing hard and alternating between light and heavy, knowing exactly what she was doing.

"You're enjoying it... a lot, aren't you?"

I rested my face on the small person's forehead, but was pulled down and kissed her. We both exchanged wet kisses, tangling our tongues as if we were dancing. And not wanting to waste time, I begin to move down and spread the sweet-faced person's legs before taking off her pants.

"Khun In. "

"Don't you want to know what to do when you're with him?"

I refused to mention another man's name so as not to spoil the mood. "Stand up."

Arun BekFah complied, making it easy for me to pull her pants down to her feet. Now, the small panties were just inches away from me. Just as I was leaning down, about to remove them excitedly, my body betrayed me by...

"Ah-choo!"

"..."

I sneezed hard, accompanied by a runny nose and shaking my head to shake off the itch in my nose. Arun BekFah immediately closed her legs and retreated to the headboard of the bed, as if consciousness had suddenly returned.

"Eh. "

I scratched my head, not knowing how to apologize for such an inappropriate situation.

"Maybe I caught a cold from being wet. Sorry." "I think I've learned a thing or two."

The small person said as she quickly pulled up the pants that were on the floor and buttoned them.

"Just a moment, I'm going to take a shower first, okay?" "Are you okay...?"

For a moment, Arun BekFah stared at me with an intense gaze. If she were a dragon from "Game of Thrones", she would probably be breathing fire.

But since she is a girl with an expressionless face, who hardly shows any emotions, not even when she is angry, I didn't dare to judge if she was angry with me for some reason.

"You are a vengeful person, aren't you?" "What do you mean by that?"

I was confused...

Arun BekFah run out of the room, leaving me perplexed. What did that sentence mean?

Did my sneezing turned into me taking revenge on her? Intuorn didn't like that!

# 26.Unexpected Person

*"Cough, cough"*

I've been coughing non-stop for three days now, to the point that my abdominal muscles are popping out.

If I didn't work in a hotel, I'd be parading around in a bikini just to show off my figure and let the world know that I'm a shameless person. I still don't talk much to Arun Bekfah; it seems that she avoids even looking at me, as if she's running away. I wonder what she's thinking. If she's in doubt or has some misunderstanding, why doesn't she ask?

Not that I haven't tried! I've approached her, but she always pulled away. "Miss, you've been like this for three days. Go to the doctor, please." Janephob asks.

"It's just a cold."

"But that doesn't look good. Now you work at the hotel reception."

Says Mawin, who heard our conversation and decided to intervene, but I know it's just concern.

"Besides, you're sharing a room with Miss Arun. She might catch a cold too."

Oh... I thought you were worried about me. "Can I take leave of work to go to the doctor?"

"Since when are you afraid of missing work, huh? You always say you're the hotel owner's daughter."

"Since I only started earning eight thousand baht a month! Oh, and does the hotel cover the hospital or not?"

"Yes, we have benefits."

"I don't use a health card, I'm rich."

"Just use my credit card and get this sorted out."

Mawin says, rolling his eyes before handing me his card. "You're so rude, my love!"

"Stop talking nonsense! If anyone hears... Janephob, take Miss In to the hospital and let her rest until she recovers. If her father finds out, he'll come running to scold me."

""Wow, what a coward."

I laughed, but I ended up agreeing to go to the hospital. Before I could leave, Mawin seemed to remember something and called me again.

"Hold on, In. I'm going to take Miss Arun for a walk today. You don't have to wait for her to come back to the building, and don't even think about calling. Arun always gets anxious when you text or call, do you know?"

I'm silent for a moment, and then give a halfhearted nod. "Um, okay. Have fun.”

“Thank you so much.”

Janephob drive me to the hospital in central Phuket, where we waited for more than two hours for the results. After blood tests, the diagnosis come back:

I had type A flu. Any more and it could have developed into pneumonia. “Does that mean my breasts will get bigger?”

I joked, trying to be funny. The doctor discharged me to go home, although he initially wanted me to stay in the hospital. I refused, so he prescribed a bunch of medication, and the bill came out on Mawin’s credit card, almost ten thousand baht. When I saw the amount on the receipt, I felt a twinge of concern.

“Healthcare costs are really high, aren’t they?”

“Miss In, you never complain about the prices. This is the first time,” Janephob commented as we chatted in the car.

“For me, it’s not expensive. But for someone who earns just over ten thousand baht a month, how can they afford such treatment?"

"They go to public hospitals, where the treatment takes longer but is much cheaper."

"Then why didn't you take me to a public hospital?" "Because you never had the patience to wait for anything."

"When you say it like that, it sounds like I'm a terrible person. Wasteful, selfish, impatient, self-absorbed... Who could possibly love me?"

I said, kind of like a rant. "Me."

"What?"

I looked at Janephob, confused, raising an eyebrow. "I love you, Miss."

He said.

I don't know if he was serious or what he intended with that statement. To lighten the mood, I pretended not to hear and turned on the radio, changing the station until I found a familiar voice on the air.

"I went back to that place, that house where only the echoes of crying remained..."

"It's a horror story program, miss. It'll end up scaring you." "I've never been afraid of ghosts, I'm not like Fah..."

I thought of her, who was probably now driving around in the car with Mawin, and maybe doing something more than kissing, and I felt a pang on the left side of my chest.

"Be quiet. I want to hear this story and get a little goosebumps."

People kept calling into the program, telling stories, all with similar themes: ghosts hanging from the ceiling, crawling under the bed, asking for prayers or exhaling a smell of pus that permeated the air.

"No new stories? Jane, haven't you ever wondered why these ghosts insist on haunting people? Are they just lazy or what?"

"Maybe they're carrying a burden they can't get rid of on their own and need someone to help."

Janephob suggested.

"They're ghosts who can fly and do supernatural things. Why would they come to normal people for help? It doesn't make sense. I'll give the next caller one last chance. If it's not interesting, I'm going to sleep."

Then, the next caller told a story about "a ghost in a mini-market" that made me chuckle.

"That ghost is smart. Whenever he gets hungry, he just goes there. My father will lose a lot!"

Since my family a partner in a mini-market chain, I turned up the volume to hear better.

"I used to work in a mini-market," the man began.

"It all started when two women came into the store at two in the morning. They left two hundred baht on the counter, saying that if the child wanted something, he could take it. But the strange thing was... there was no child."

I smiled, finding the story curious. I felt like I had experienced something similar before.

"*One of the women was talking to herself while taking something from the refrigerator. Then she asked to use my phone, called someone and*

*said, '****Take care of this child. His mother will come and get him.'*** *But there was no child and no one came to get him. From that day on, strange things started happening: the refrigerator doors would open and close by themselves, bottles would fall and break, and sometimes the lights would flicker. One customer said he saw a child pressing his face against the refrigerator glass, crying and saying he wanted to go home."*

I felt a chill run up my arms. Although the story was not as scary as others, it moved me in an inexplicable way.

*"Then, it wasn't long before they heard a cry coming from the refrigerator. Little by little, the customers disappeared until the store was deserted and eventually closed. Later, an out-of-control truck entered the store, after the driver swerved because he saw a child crossing the street right in front of the vehicle. The driver got away unharmed, but he said he saw the kid crying and calling for his mother. Oh, and he even said that the boy hated Manchester United, can you believe it? He was a ghost with an opinion!"*

Janephob laughed, but I felt a chill run through me. My skin went pale and cold, because, at that moment, I remembered that that child was my

responsibility. The two women who left him in the store? It was me.

Cold sweat run down my face; it wasn't pity for the child, but shock at everything I had heard.

"Are you okay, Miss?" Janephob asked.

"It was me." "How?"

"I'm the one who left that child separated from his mother in that store."

As soon as I got back to the hotel, I run to find Aunty Yaow, desperate to get that doubt out of my head. I asked to see her son, the boy I nicknamed "ManU." But when he showed up, I could hardly believe it: it was another child! Completely different from the one I saw that night.

"Is this really your son? Are you sure?"

"Of course, miss! I gave birth to him myself." "Oh my God!"

Even though I had promised Mawin that I wouldn't call Arun, I couldn't resist and ended up dialing his number.

"Fah... I need to tell you something. It's very important... Remember when we were dropped off at that abandoned house and we took the child to the convenience store?"

[Yes, I do! What happened? Your voice sounds strange, Miss In.]

"From now on, you don't need to be afraid of ghosts anymore. Because I... I tricked the spirit before it could scare us."

[What do you mean, Miss In? I don't understand anything.]

I tore open the medicine packet and swallowed the pill with a big gulp of water to try to calm myself down. My hands were shaking and I didn't know what to do.

There was no way ghosts existed in the world. "Aunt Yaow's son... the lost child..."

Suddenly, a strange wave of effect made my heart race and the world around me spin, making it impossible to stand up. I felt like I was suffocating, my chest tight, and I could barely breathe. My heart was beating so fast that I had to kneel on the floor. The phone slipped from my hand, but I could still hear Arun's voice echoing through the speaker.

[In, In, what happened?]

I felt like I was about to have a heart attack, my body couldn't move, and the pain was unbearable.

"Jan... where are you?"

I groaned, calling out to the friend who had been away for some time. Now, I was lying in a corner of the hotel, hoping that someone would come by and help me.

"Are you okay? Are you..."

My body was lying face down, when suddenly I was turned onto my back. I felt a pressure on my neck. Although I recognized the familiar voice and noticed the smell of a perfume that was a little muffled because of my stuffy nose, I knew it was *Davidoff Cool Water.*

"In! In!"

"Who is it... who is it?"

My eyes are almost closing, but I make an effort to look and, with difficulty, I managed to reach out and touch that face. I ended up losing strength and letting my hand fall.

"It can't be... How is it possible..."

"Is anyone here? Jan, I'm going to call Jan!"

I smiled slightly, certain that I am not dreaming. It's her, really.

***"Lay... I missed you."***

Then, my world went out as if the lights had been turned off.

# 27. You from another angle

My life is increasingly resembling a soap opera. After that blackout, I woke up and realized I was in a hospital. The characteristic smell of disinfectant left no doubt — it was, without a doubt, a hospital. If it was a bad smell, then it would be the bathroom of the dormitory

where I usually stay. Yes... I'm in the hospital.

The bright light in the room made my eyes open slowly, causing a slight discomfort.

As soon as I managed to move a little, I realized that there is someone leaning on the edge of the bed.

Would it be... Lay?

***"Lay?"***

As soon as I murmured, the person who is leaning begin to wake up slowly and raised her face. Arun, wearing her work uniform, looked at me in surprise and quickly asked:

"Are you okay now, Khun In? What do you mean, Lay? What was I thinking..."

"I'm much better. Who brought me to the hospital?" "It was Janephop."

"So, why are you here? It's already late."

I look around for a clock on the wall and see that it's already ten at night.

"You said you'd be back late today, you were going out on a date, right? And Mawin?"

"As soon as he found out you were sick, he lost the will to go out. Everyone really worried and just left. Even your father has been informed; he said he'll come see you the day after tomorrow, since he's on a mission in Myanmar."

"You don't need to bother my father with this. But... what did the doctor say I have?"

"You had a severe reaction to the medicine. Your heart almost stopped." "Wow... was it that serious?"

Now I understand why my father decided to come see me. I remember that, while I was talking to Arun on the phone, I took the medicine the doctor prescribed me, and soon after I started feeling strange symptoms, until I lost control over my own body.

"Mawin must be upset... I ruined your date." "Nothing is more important than you, Khun In."

Hearing this, I feel shy and automatically reaching my head to scratch it, trying to hide my embarrassment.

"Actually, you didn't have to stay here with me, Fah. I know you don't like hospitals."

"But if I don't stay, who will take care of you? And besides, I would be alone in my room... I feel kind of lonely."

"What?"

Arun almost never expresses her feelings, so hearing the word "lonely" take me by surprise, and I asked again to be sure. But she looked away and

quickly changed the subject.

"By the way, when we were on the phone, it seemed like you had something very important to tell me... but I couldn't quite understand."

"Hm?"

I blinked my eyes several times, trying to remember what I was talking about on the phone. Then, suddenly, I remembered the story of the boy in the abandoned house.

"Oh, yes, so... it's about..." "..."

At first, I was excited, but I quickly shut my mouth, because Arun BekFah is terrified of ghosts. If I told her what I heard on the scary story program, the little one would definitely faint and be hospitalized with me. So, instead of telling her, I coughed a little and pretended not to remember anything.

"I don't even remember what it was about anymore... it doesn't matter, it's nothing."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course, I'm sure. It's nothing important."

Arun looked at me firmly, as if there's something in her eyes, but without saying anything, she nod, without insisting, as if she know how to hide her feelings well.

"Okay."

"Did you bring a change of clothes? Sleeping in your work clothes won't be comfortable."

"Don't worry about me, just rest, Miss In."

The sweet-faced girl, who had suddenly gone silent, walked over to the sofa, grabbed a blanket, lay down, and turned her back to me. Normally, she was terrified of ghosts, always imagining that something might appear under the bed or hanging from the ceiling. But today, she seems different than usual.

"Arun... have you slept yet?" "..."

Did I say something wrong...?

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The allergic reaction to the medicine was only dangerous at first, but after being under the doctors' care for a while, everything was fine. Now, I can go back to my room to recover, and Mawin offered to come and pick me up himself. Even though I knew very well that he came more for Arun BekFah than for me.

"Talk for a while."

Arun said, smiling, as she excuses herself to go wash her face, leaving Mawin and me alone. I raised my eyebrow at my future fiancé, with a touch of ease, before speaking casually:

"Hi."

"You've recovered and are back to being your old self, huh?"

"You must have been really upset yesterday, with my illness ruining the mood of the date."

"There was nothing I could do, it was an unexpected situation, right? I'm not selfish enough to not understand things as they are."

Mawin sighed lightly.

"But you called me right at the critical moment."

The expression "critical moment" made me imagine the worst possible scenario, but I hid my feelings and shrugged.

"It seems like God was jealous of seeing you so happy." "No problem, we will try again."

"When?"

"Today."

I turned my face to the side, biting my lip hard. So fast? I just got out of the hospital and they're already scheduling another date. Maybe it would have been better if I had stayed in the hospital for another night. But what can I do? After all, I was the one who encouraged them to get together, so it would be childish of me to try to get in the way now.

"Then, good luck."

"Don't get sick again, okay? It would be better if you sleep until tomorrow and don't go out for a walk."

Mawin looked away, as if there's something on his mind.

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"Today is busy."

"In a hotel, it's normal to have a lot of people. Well... I'm not going to be wandering around. I want to rest too. Will the staff mind? What kind of person does this and doesn't care about others? Seriously, I've barely worked since I got here, just arguing with the staff and even the customers."

"Well, at least you realize it."

I'm about to attack him with a comment, if it isn't for Arun coming out at that moment.

"Everything is ready!"

"And here's everything ready too. So, we can leave the hospital."

While I was in the car with them, I pretended to be asleep in the back seat, but in reality I was listening to what they were talking about.

Arun was in front with Mawin, talking about the sights, which restaurants had good food, and even an art exhibition in Bangkok. I never knew the sweet-faced secretary was interested in that kind of thing.

The whole time we were together, I was the only one who talked nonstop, not listening to anything she said, almost ignoring her opinions.

I could feel her calmness as she talked to Mawin, being herself. Maybe it was because he was a gentleman and listened to everything she had to say, even if some things were beyond his comprehension. If he didn’t understand something, he asked without pretending to know. Unlike me, who even without understanding, tried to seem like I knew everything in the world. In fact, my behavior was not at all good.

When the car turned and we arrived at the hotel, I get out, attracting the attention of all the staff, as if I had received special treatment; even the owner of the hotel had come to pick me up personally. The Janephob, who seems to have been waiting for me to arrive, rushed to help me carry my things, looking worried.

"How are you, miss? Do you still have a headache or a fever?" "I'm a little better, just a little dizzy. I want to sleep."

"You should have stayed in the hospital a little longer."

"I want to sleep, but I'm afraid whoever's taking care of me is afraid of ghosts."

I looked at Arun BekFah sympathetically before waving Janephop back to work.

“Don’t worry about me, Jan, you can go to work. I’ll carry the bag myself.” “Don’t worry, it’s okay.”

“Jan… people are staring a lot.”

I pulled my friend’s bag and walked towards the dormitory in the back, where Arun was accompanying me. On the way, I noticed that there were a lot of guests today, mostly Thais, as if there was a seminar group or some kind of camp going on.

“There are a lot of people, really.”

Arun BekFah didn’t say anything, and I started to wonder why she was so quiet, until we got to the room, when I couldn’t help but have to ask.

“Are you mad at me?”

The sweet-faced person go to get a towel and a spare uniform, then looked at me with a neutral expression and replied.

“No.”

“Why have you been so quiet since last night? Did I say something that didn’t please you?”

"Nothing like that. I'm going to take a shower and change my clothes so I can work. You should get plenty of rest too."

"You look happy."

Arun BekFah, who was about to leave, hesitated a bit and turned to me with a curious look.

"Really?"

"You smile a lot when you're with him. You seem to be yourself, unlike when you're with me."

I shrugged.

"Yeah, after all, I'm your boss." "Yes."

"..."

"Because you're the boss."

Arun BekFah's last words made me restless. I wanted to sleep, but I couldn't.

I could really feel that she was angry, but I didn't know why. The night before, we had talked normally, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't remember what I might have said. In the end, I gave up and sat down, bored.

The weather today was hot and stuffy, and the fan on the ceiling didn't help at all. If I had known, I would have asked my mother to turn on the air conditioning. I shouldn’t have been so selfish just because I was excited!

In the end, I get up and go outside to stretch my legs instead of enduring the heat inside my room. Our hotel in right on the seafront. Even though the sun is shining, the sea still had a breeze, unlike the room, which just stuffy. I sit with my knees wrapped around a small log and looked out at the sea, lost in thought. Without work, everything seem so empty and worthless.

Doing nothing is really a waste of time...

How could I have lived like this for twenty years? I never worked and I always spent money without appreciating it. When my father tried to teach me to work, even though I stopped often, I realized how hard the daily work and how most people live like this in exchange for a meager salary.

I also learned a lot from the job.

As I reflected on the world and accepted everything around me, my eyes fall on a large group of employees who are there for a conference. They all having fun, doing activities and even singing and dancing, but it's clear that they're there as representatives of a company.

However, one of them caught my attention in a way that's so familiar that I couldn't help but get up and walk closer, wanting to make sure I wasn't seeing things.

Knock, knock...

The person I hate the most, the one I fear the most, and the one I want to be the most... **Renu.**

"In?"

The soft voice coming from behind make me stop suddenly, with my leg already raised to walk towards Dr. Renu. I don't need to turn around to know who it's. I had spent the last three months with this person. She was the one responsible for making me flee abroad to recover.

And finally, today we meet, as if testing if I am ready to face this. "Lay!"

"Can you look at me, please? Do you want me to hug you?"

I slowly turned around and see the small figure watching me with teary eyes.

Seeing that expression, I couldn’t help but put my hands to my mouth, almost choking in surprise. That morning I wasn’t delirious, nor was I confused because of the illness; it was really her.

“You won’t get sick again today, will you?” “What should I call you… Lay or Jao-Jom?” “You decide, In.”

Then Lay throw herself into a hug, full of longing, and I freeze, not knowing what to do, confused about whether I should hug her back or push her away. In the end, I could only keep my arms at my sides and wait for her to move away on her own.

“Are you okay? We haven’t seen each other in at least two years!” “Dr. Renu’s company brought everyone here for a conference?”

“Yes, She brought the employees for the annual leave. I just happened to tag along.”

The small figure looked at the group of people with a bored expression. I bit my lip slightly, hesitating, until I remembered the salary I had just received and then I showed off a little.

"I'm already making money!" "Really?"

"I'm working here, I'm a hotel employee. I just got my first salary..." I licked my lips.

"Would Dr. Renu be upset if I take you out to dinner to celebrate my first salary?"

The little girl smiles at me with a twinkle in her eyes, as if she's genuinely happy with my offer.

"That's great! We're getting back to the way things were!"

Getting back to the way things were? I thought we were still a long way from that.

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Now, we are sitting at a seafood restaurant on the beach, a short walk from the hotel.

We ordered so much food that the table is full, but we barely touched our plates, just exchanging nervous glances. I couldn't eat, partly because of my recovery, but mostly because I'm anxious to talk to Lay again.

"Are you okay, In?" "Try reading my mind." "I don't know."

The little girl give me a look before shaking her head. "How can you not know?"

I knew that Lay had the special ability to read people's minds. That was one of the reasons I tried to hide everything from her when we were together in Korat, because she always seemed to notice. And now I'm testing how much she know, but she just shake her head again.

"I don't have that ability anymore."

The conversation between us become tense and silent. Even though I was the one responsible for inviting Lay to dinner, I couldn't act normally, as I wanted to. The atmosphere so uncomfortable that it seems like we couldn't swallow or spit.

When suddenly, my phone ring, displaying Arun’s name on the screen. I pressed the end button immediately, as I don't want to answer any questions, but I don't know why I feel guilty for being here, meeting Lay.

“Is it a coincidence that we met here? There are so many hotels in Thailand. Why did Dr. Renu choose to stay here?”

I asked, trying to break the silence. “I don’t know.”

Lay replied, looking down.

“When I met you, I was surprised too.”

“Surprised in what way? In a positive way or in a negative way?” “In a positive way!”

The little girl hurried to correct me, afraid that I would misinterpret her words.

“We haven’t seen each other for two years, and you haven’t contacted me.”

“If you were in my shoes, would you look for me? I’m the person who got you into trouble, who fell in love with you and then got rejected.”

“In…”

“It’s very difficult to talk to you.” "..."

"I don't want to force anything. I thought that after two years I wouldn't feel anything anymore, but the truth is that I'm still not comfortable talking to you. Let's... ask for the bill and leave."

I said, feeling a heavy heart.

Lay's disappointed expression is evident, but she nodded in acceptance of my decision.

After calling the waiter to ask for the bill, I turned to the plate that still practically untouched and asked again:

"Please, could you pack this to go?"

The waiter nodded and walked away to take my order. Meanwhile, I couldn't help but think about the situation. Frustration and sadness mixed inside me, reminding me of how complex our connection still was, even after all this time.

Lay and I walked side by side in silence. The dinner that I hosted as hostess lasted only half an hour, and of that time, twenty minutes were just waiting for the food to be served.

The rest of the time was filled with an awkward atmosphere, where neither of us knew what to say.

"So, In, I'll part ways with you here, right?" "Uh-huh."

I understand that Lay wants to be my friend, still wants to be a part of my life and have a relationship like before. I would also like it to be that way, but my heart doesn't follow that wish. In the end, I chose to refuse a good relationship and let the little person disappear from my life once again.

Now, all I can do is watch the backs that move away, stopping next to someone who is like an enemy to my heart.

Both Dr. Renu and Lay...no, "Jao" are standing there talking in an understanding manner. I can guess that the little girl must be telling where she's been, and that woman is generous enough to understand.

Dr. Renu is more generous than I am...

She loves and understands, even though she knows that "Jao" was with me.

It's already past eight o'clock at night. Even though I returned from the restaurant to the hotel at five, I still didn't want to go into the room to rest because I felt bored.

Actually, my body isn't very strong right now, so I shouldn't stay locked in the room, thinking about what Arun and Mawin are doing.

Lay and Dr. Reanu are probably laughing and having fun. Envy rise up inside me until I found myself sitting alone, watching "Taddao Bussaya" in a corner near the pool, where I used to sit with Aunty Yaow.

During this time, I received several calls from the sweet-faced person, but I chose to hang up. I may be in a bad mood, but on the other hand, I don't

want to break my word to Mawin.

I'm afraid that I wouldn't be able to resist and would end up using a sweet tone of voice, pretending to be very sick and asking the sweet-faced secretary to come back to see me, which would seem very selfish.

It's already nine o'clock... If I stayed any longer, besides having type A flu, I would probably also catch dengue fever. And besides, my cell phone battery about to run out. So I had no choice but to turn off the screen, get up, grab the food I brought and go back to my room.

As soon as I put the key in the lock, Arun, who is pacing restlessly, turned around and glared at me with her fists clenched.

"Khun In!"

Her angry tone make me shrink a little, surprised and intrigued to realize that she hadn't gone out for the date like I thought.

"But Mawin said you had a stress-relieving date, didn't you? I thought you'd be back later."

"Where did you go?"

Arun asked without bothering to answer my question and continued: "I called you and you didn't answer. You didn't call me back."

"I just went for a walk around here."

"And what are you holding in your hands?" "Oh, this..."

I looked down at my hands, full of wrapped food.

"I went to dinner. I couldn't eat it all, so I brought the leftovers. I was surprised at myself. In the past, if I had leftovers, I would throw them away,

because I was embarrassed to take them home. Now, I feel bad about spending money. This is what it feels like to earn money on my own."

"Did you go alone?" "I did..."

I pressed my lips together, thinking it would be better not to answer, because I didn't want to lie, but at the same time, I didn't want to reveal the truth.

"I feel dizzy today. Don't ask me anything else, I just want to sleep." "Talk to me first, Khun In."

"What do I have to talk about? I just went to dinner, that's enough." "You went with someone named 'Jao-Jom'!"

And as soon as I heard that name, my mouth fell open, as I didn't expect the sweet-faced secretary to know. Of course... she's the secretary, so she should know everything about me. That's her job.

"Yes."

"Why are you lying to me, Khun In?"

"I'm not lying, I'm just not telling you. Besides, I don't know why I should tell you. This isn't important... Focus on your own life. You and Mawin seem to be doing well together. That should be enough."

"Khun In!"

"Why are you raising your voice?"

I started to get irritated as I realized that Arun wasn't going to give up any time soon.

"I'm sick and I want to sleep. What difference does it make if you ask me so much?"

"It's to remind you that when you get hurt, you should learn from it. Just because she came back, are you already willing to forgive her?"

"I'm not forgiving anything! We're not fighting! It was just a greeting between old friends. I took her out to dinner. I wanted to show her that I've already earned my own money, and that's it."

"You used your first salary to invite her to dinner... Is she that important?" The secretary's voice is shaking, and I could only look at her in surprise.

"And what do you want me to do? I was trying to find an opportunity to invite you, but I couldn't, because Mawin always interrupts me. Even if I had invited you before, you probably wouldn't go. I'm just the last important person in your life."

I said sarcastically. Now, I was upset about everything, because I couldn't deal with my emotions when I saw Jao and I still had to deal with jealousy over someone who was just a side line in my life. And the worst of it all was that I was the one who connected them.

"Lately, you seem to be in a bad mood regarding my friendship with Mawin."

"I don't feel anything. If I did, I wouldn't be teaching you that, or doing those things to help with Mawin. So, how was your day today? Any news? Have you kissed yet? How far have you come? How does it feel to break up? Go on, tell me!"

I throw out those cruel words, full of jealousy. Arun looked shocked, as if she had been slapped, and started to curse me, but then she frowned.

"Try to guess."

She replied, diverting the subject and making me think and imagine instead of answering. I glared at her and yelled, unable to control my emotions any

longer.

"Are you crazy? You've only met a few times and you're already giving in to him so easily? Are you serious?"

"But you said yourself that if you feel attracted, things happen naturally. Why did you suddenly become so conservative today? You were the one who taught me how to look, how to make sounds, how to tease."

"And how did you make those sounds and teasing?"

"I went up to him and whispered in his ear," the secretary said, approaching me and pretending I was Mawin.

"Are you tired today? Can I give you a massage?" "..."

"My hands were exploring his entire body, making Mawin gasp. And you, are you satisfied?"

Although I know those words are full of irony, I couldn't help but feel irritated. My state of health, added to my bad mood, only increased my aversion to Arun.

"Yes, I'm satisfied. You did good, not even a prostitute would do so well." I replied.

"Intuorn!"

Arun called my full name for the first time, with a firm tone, before advancing towards me and pulling my collar as if she wanted to fight.

"What do you think you're doing? I'm your boss!"

"You're not being nice at all today. What did I do to make you say things that hurt so much? I asked where you were because I was worried, but you

just keep dumping your anger on me without knowing why. What did Jao- Jom do to make you feel like this?"

"..."

"What did that woman do!?" "She didn't do anything!" "Then why are you like this?" "I think I still love her."

My words left Arun speechless. For a moment, I see the pain in her eyes, and it give me a strange satisfaction. We both seemed to have something in common in our feelings, but we hid it for fear that the other would pull away.

It was a relationship we couldn't reveal, but we intertwined, did things to each other and let it go as if nothing had happened.

"Now can you let me sleep? I'm not well."

"What if you had someone else, would that make you feel better?"

"Who would that someone else be? There is no one in this world who loves me... What are you doing?"

Arun pushed me down on the bed and climbed on top of me, pinning my arms and legs until I could no longer resist. Maybe I was sick, or maybe the sweet-faced secretary had natural strength, we are being in this awkward position again, especially after we had just argued.

"I'll make you forget about her." "Forget?"

I laughed sarcastically.

"Forget about Jao-Jom? What can you do? You're the secretary, haven't you forgotten? We have a purely professional relationship. It's a rule we set ourselves."

"Consider it a job, then. Helping you settle down... is my duty." "I won't joke about this."

"Don't you want to know how I behave when I'm with Mawin? How do I say it?"

I hesitated and bit my lip, feeling like I was being teased into anger, but curiosity made me excited.

"You know you're challenging me, Arun?"

"If it helps you relax, I'll do it. There's no need for love or feelings. And for this to be an exchange..."

Arun leaned in close and whispered in my ear.

"You also need to moan for me to hear. And while you do that, you must call me 'Fah'."

"..." "P'Fah"

"What is it?"

My mouth fall open in disbelief. The secretary had never had a moment like this before, but it's make my heart race. The feeling akin to fainting, as if I having an allergic reaction to some medicine.

"And I'll call you... 'Nong In' too, when I'm done."

# 28. Someone Like Me

The sweet-faced person leans towards me and presses our lips together in a kiss that, although not exactly aggressive, makes me feel an intensity that I never imagined coming from her, even after so many lessons we have gone through together.

If before I was the teacher, now it seemed like I had become her prisoner, in the role of someone who, beneath her body, can barely resist. Arun begins to do everything exactly as I had taught: first she intertwines her tongue with mine, teasingly caressing my chin and then she slides her tongue down my neck.

*Ah!*

I give a start that makes me take a deep breath, with my heart beating so fast and strong that it feels like the blood is boiling in my veins, making me dizzy. I can only mumble softly, lost, unable to react, but also not wanting to deny the moment, although it seems like I am being forced. But the truth is that I have always liked being with her like this.

"Fah... are you angry about something?" "You lied, In."

"Oh..."

I groan as I feel a sharp pain in my shoulder. Fah bites down hard, leaving a mark of her teeth, before letting go and pulling back a little, looking at me with a look of regret.

"Does it hurt a lot?"

She asks.

"Isn't that why you bit down hard?"

I answer, trying to control my emotions. "Are you mad at me?"

"Now, I don't even know what to feel anymore. I don't understand what's happening."

I say, raising my hand to cover my face, confused. "Today is definitely not my day."

"Nong In..."

Hearing Fah call me by my nickname so closely for the first time, I suddenly feel alert and lower my hand, staring at her in surprise.

"Uh... what?"

"I have a way to relieve stress. Are you interested?" "What do you mean?"

"Just close your eyes and relax." She says, with an enigmatic smile.

Today, I am too weak, and the situation seems to have reversed. Now, the teacher is under the control of the student, who is unable to resist due to physical exhaustion. When Fah asks me to move to the left, I obey; when she tells me to move to the right, I do so. But what I did not expect was to feel the zipper of my pants being unzipped and then my pants sliding down.

"Wa... wait!"

I hold on to my pants, but her light brown eyes stare at me firmly and her voice sounds determined:

"Nong In."

I don't know why, but when I hear this, I relax my fingers, releasing the waistband of my pants and letting everything go as Fah wishes. My body immediately contracts when I feel her lips press and move intensely in my intimate region.

She envelops me, responds with the same impetus as before, invading and intertwining, similar to how one tongue responds to another in a kiss, but now in a different place, exploring a new intensity that leaves me speechless.

"Na... No, wait. I... I'm not sure."

I mumble, trying to interrupt, but my legs are still being held, without my consent. Despite my refusal, her lips continue to explore, provoking sensations that make me tremble and moan in a restrained way. Just as my excitement was increasing, the person who knew how to torture me pulled her lips away with an almost mischievous expression, and began to negotiate relentlessly.

"Ask properly, say 'please'."

She insists, with a smile of pure provocation. "Ah... Don't tease me like that."

I murmur, unable to hide the tremor in my voice. "Say, please..."

"Yeah..."

"Let's say please, slowly..."

I couldn't help it. I put my hand in Arun BekFah's hair and pulled it, not too hard, before biting my lip hard and saying:

"Do it now."

***"Nong, In."***

She says softly, disarming me with her tone of voice. "***Please, P'Fah..."***

I beg as if I were about to cry until my mouth trembles with so much desire.

I completely lose control, surrendering to her. With every touch and movement, I feel like I'm falling apart, forgetting for a moment all the pain and fatigue. I’m not sure how this is supposed to cure me, but somehow it turns my bad day into something bearable.

My body shivers, every muscle tensing, and I slump, exhausted, feeling a long-forgotten wave of relief and comfort in the soft late afternoon light.

“Where do you think you’re going?” “Just wait a moment, I’ll be right back.”

She said with a gentle smile as she grabbed a towel and left the room. About three minutes later, she returned with a damp towel and began to carefully clean me, especially in the most intimate areas. Suddenly, I squeezed my legs together, embarrassed to remember how embarrassing it was.

“No… Don’t look.”

“It’s okay, I won’t look. I'll turn off the light for you."

Arun BekFah keeps her usual serene expression, she gets up and turns off the light, returning to gently clean my body. As I begin to relax, my eyes slowly close... and before I know it, I'm fast asleep.

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Now I think I understand how BL soap opera fans feel when the main character ends up switching positions and we are all taken by surprise. The one who should be the "active" becomes the "passive", or the ending doesn't turn out as expected. And here I am, powerless, with my eyes tightly closed, waiting for Arun BekFah to leave so I can finally open my eyes and remember last night, completely shocked and immobile.

I have always been the "teacher", the experienced and confident person who led and taught, but what happened last night was something unexpected, a true "the disciple surpasses the master". I couldn't move, feeling like a little novice in the hands of my secretary, the one who has always followed my instructions since we met.

***"Nong In."***

Her authoritative tone last night only made me close my eyes tightly. I, who had gone so far as to call her...

***"P'Fah."***

This is more unbelievable than an alien invasion or finding out that we didn’t have real elections in our country! Even though I was still dressed, the feeling from last night hasn’t gone away, although I feel a little better than yesterday. I think it’s time to have a serious talk with my secretary anyway.

Because what happened is done, although it sounds strange, it’s the truth. She really got a hold of me, and I can’t act like nothing happened, like in soap operas or like it’s something in the past. I took a shower, put on some casual clothes, since I still have medical leave, and the first item on my agenda now is to meet Arun BekFah.

But as soon as I leave the room and start looking for the sweet-faced woman, I end up crossing paths with a couple that has always caused me

fear and repulsion. “Miss Intuorn.”

This hotel is huge, but for some reason, I always end up meeting Lay. And today, to my surprise, I also met Miss Renu, a woman of impeccable beauty and such extraordinary qualities that even I feel inferior in her presence.

The only thing I can consider myself superior to her in is that my father is much richer. Even so, it is frustrating to realize that I still seem inferior when I compare myself to her.

"Miss Renu."

"I heard from Jom a few days ago that you were here, but we didn't have a chance to meet. I'm glad to see you."

Renu said with a genuine smile. She really seemed happy to meet me and expected me to return the greeting with the same warmth. I, however, was not exactly happy to see her, but I realized that my view of Lay's girlfriend had changed.

I no longer felt envy, jealousy or any animosity. "Yes, I'm glad to see you too. Hello, Jom?"

I smiled at the small figure beside her, who is silent, remembering the tense atmosphere between us yesterday.

"Don't look so uncomfortable. This isn't a train wreck." Renu said, trying to ease the tension.

"Miss Intuorn..."

Jom looked surprised and looked worriedly at Renu, afraid that she might feel offended.

"I'm just joking... Miss Renu, please don't take it seriously. If I can talk to Lay normally, it's because there really is nothing between us anymore."

Lay looked at me in surprise, perhaps not understanding the change from yesterday to today. When I looked at Renu, I couldn't help but think of someone else, and I ended up shrugging my shoulders.

"You really are very beautiful." I confessed reluctantly.

"I didn't want to admit it, but it's true." "What did you say?"

Renu looked surprised, putting her hands on her cheeks, visibly embarrassed by the sudden compliment.

"Yes, you are very beautiful. I admit it because I think there is someone else who is equally beautiful."

I smiled, imagining Arun's face, but then I remembered something.

"Oh! I have to take care of something. It was great seeing you both. Enjoy your stay, and if you need anything, talk to Marwin... Oh, and just to brag a little, I own half of this hotel."

I said, smiling and waving goodbye. But before I could move away, Lay grabbed my hand.

"Are you really okay, In?"

Taking advantage of the fact that she was still holding my hand, I pulled Lay closer and hugged her right in front of Renu's eyes, who, surprised, froze. With her fresh and characteristic scent, Lay seemed unresponsive, she didn't even dare to hug me back, nor could she say anything.

"Thank you for showing up at the right time." "What?"

"With your arrival, I realized something."

I replied, letting go of her and holding her face with both hands, looking directly into her brown eyes, like a crystal ball.

"I don't feel anything for you anymore... or rather, I do. But I've changed." "In."

"We can be friends. I miss you, Lay... No, I need to call you Jom now." "In, I miss you so much."

Jom started crying, tears streaming down her face, and finally hugged me back tightly.

"If you hug me so tight, your girlfriend will get jealous."

I looked over Jom's shoulder and smiled at Renu, a little nervous, but the sweet-faced girl smiled back, as if to say she understood and that everything was okay.

Ah... It seems I've managed to unlock my feelings.

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I was still looking for Arun BekFah, not wanting to use my phone to call her, even though it would be easier. Part of me felt strangely embarrassed after what happened, and the other part of me thought romantically that if our hearts were aligned, we would eventually meet.

But this wasn't a drama where, upon thinking about the other person, we would suddenly find ourselves, scared and embarrassed, running to hide in the bushes like in an Indian movie. Since I couldn't find her, I decided to send her a message, but Arun BekFah called me first.

Oh... that could be considered fate too. At least we thought the same way about calling.

I cleared my throat before answering the call, trying to sound calm even though my heart was racing.

"Hello?"

[Are you free to talk, In? I wanted to talk to you for a bit.] "Yes. I'm free. Where are you?"

[I'm in the pool.]

"What a coincidence, I'm also close."

I looked around and realized that Arun BekFah wasn't far away. Maybe if I had been more patient, we would have met by now.

"I see you."

I waved to let Arun BekFah know. When I started walking towards the little girl, she asked me to stop.

[Don't come here, let's talk on the phone and look at each other from a distance, okay?]

"Why do you need to do this?"

[It's more convenient for me this way.]

Arun BekFah's tone of voice and strange posture made my excitement gradually subside, and I waited to hear what she wanted to talk about. She usually didn’t show her feelings, and since we were far away from each other, I couldn’t see what expression the sweet-faced girl had on her face. And the less I see her expression or behavior, the harder it become to predict what might happen.

“Is something wrong?”

[Is there something wrong with you?]

When she asked me this question, I was a little confused. Should I be unwell? In the end, I didn’t answer because I wanted Arun BekFah to speak first.

“How do you expect me to be?” [About last night…]

The sweet-faced girl paused, as if she was preparing to approach the subject boldly. I wanted to speak too, but by the time we parted, it was too quick and we were too embarrassed to communicate. So, we chose to talk now.

[I’m sorry.] But…

Apologies have always been something I’ve dreaded. From my first boyfriend until now, every time we break up or grow apart, it seems like this word always comes up as an introduction. Usually, the person who says this is someone who genuinely feels they’ve made a mistake, and I’m the victim who ends up suffering for their actions.

***‘Sorry, we’re not good enough.’ ‘Sorry for making you sad.’ ‘In… Lay apologizes.’***

And now, Arun decided to say this in a situation where I didn’t even think I’d need to hear an apology. It turned out that last night was a good experience. Although it started off not so glamorous, it ended well, and I was happy. However, she saw it as a mistake and ended up apologizing.

She’s apologizing… and I’m going to have to deal with the consequences of that apology from now on.

“No need to apologize.”

I said, trying to swallow my sobs so as not to sound so pathetic.

"Don't act like I'm a victim. What happened last night was good for both of us."

I tried to make it sound as normal and natural as possible. Thank goodness Arun BekFah chose to keep me away; otherwise, she would probably see my face about to cry. No... she has prosopagnosia, so she wouldn't know if I was suffering.

[I have no professionalism whatsoever, even though I told you that between us it would be just a boss and employee relationship.]

"It wasn't just you who made these rules. I always said that I wouldn't fall in love with anyone, and you don't think that what happened between us was love, right?"

What I'm saying... all of this is the opposite of what my heart really wants to express, and it surprised me. At this moment, it seemed like I was carefree, not caring about anything, not even what happened last night.

[It's true.]

"Fah?"

[Yes?]

This time, I was the one who broke the silence, after Arun had been talking to herself the whole time.

"About last night, what happened? Why were you the one who started it?"

The direct question made Arun go silent for a moment. I watched from afar and see that the sweet-faced person is shaking her head slowly, as if she's confused about her own feelings.

[I don't know. Yesterday you were out all day and it made me worried and angry. When I found out that you were with your ex, I didn't understand why, even though you knew she didn't love you, you still insisted on getting involved with her.]

"So you decided to settle everything this way with me? Is that part of a secretary's job?"

Since there was no answer or justification from Arun's mouth, I was forced to press her to the end.

"Have you ever stopped to think that what happened yesterday might have been jealousy?"

I clutched the phone tightly in my hand after saying this sentence. It was as if I indirectly asking her what she was feeling too.

[I'm not sure how this could be jealousy, since we don't even know how we feel.]

"Suppose I suddenly told you that I love you right now. What would you say?"

The sweet-faced person stared at me from a distance, standing still, not moving.

[I'd say you must be surprised and wondering since when did I make you feel this way... everything has its reasons, and the two of us don't seem to have those kinds of feelings for each other.]

"Should love have reasons and logic, then? People can love each other at any time. Arun?"

At first, I thought she had hung up, but Arun spoke before our conversation ended.

I put the phone back to my ear and listened as the sweet-faced person speak.

## [Not showing feelings is also a way of expressing feelings.]

# 29. Older Sister

Arun left silently, I could say it was a very peaceful leaving, without any prior warning. She left without even thinking about receiving a salary for the effort of taking care of me. Now, I am secluded in my room, looking at the report that Arun left for me. She wrote about my behavior, noting everything in detail, page by page, and I read it slowly. I am feeling distressed, not knowing what to do; I want to cry, but I can't. Laughing seems strange, so I sit in silence, trying to concentrate while I read her very neat handwriting with my heart racing.

**Intuorn, 27 years old.**

**Mr. Anek's only daughter. Born in Thailand, but has lived in the United States since she was little.**

**She has a very stubborn personality, not caring about what others think.**

**Special skill: she plays the violin... (but I've never heard it). She doesn't like coffee.**

**She doesn't like exercise, but she has a good metabolism.**

**She sees the world in an optimistic way, but tends to leave her surroundings in bad situations.**

When I got to this part, I couldn't help but laugh. Arun dedicated herself to observing my behavior in every aspect to help me correct and improve it according to her role, but most of the time, she didn't have much of a say, unless the situation really bothered her, like when we were in an abandoned house or when we got angry and started arguing.

Other than that, the sweet-faced secretary usually let things flow, allowing me to do whatever I wanted, maybe out of gratitude for what I did for her at her wedding, and probably because she likes me... or maybe not.

**But in reality, she is a lonely, sensitive person who tries to act like she doesn't have a care in the world. If someone said something she didn't like, she would get even more irritated, so she had to act like everything was fine, even if some things didn't please her so much.**

**She is a generous person who spends money easily, as if she's her parents' spoiled daughter, but in reality, she can manage on her own. She is quite strong, she is not afraid of ghosts or anything, even though many people look down on her.**

**She is brave. If I'm to analyze her, the profession she should pursue would be that of a lawyer, politician or police officer, because she is bold and willing to take risks. She comes from a good family, money is not a problem, and if she's the owner of a business, she would also invest heavily and be willing to take risks.**

**Intuorn is a lovely person. Sometimes she acts like a mischievous girl who likes to get into trouble, and on other occasions, she behaves like a little sister, looking like a kitten who always wants to be around. She loves to control other people's lives, but if she is reasonably contradicted, she listens, even if she grumbles a little.**

**She is a person who cares about others. If she doesn't know how to do something, she will try to learn it until the end.**

**Disadvantages:**

**She only does what she wants; if she doesn't like it, she simply doesn't do it. She is an impatient person, which is evident when she drives fast, being careless and reckless. When she loves or enjoys something, she dedicates herself body and soul to it, without leaving anything aside, which can be dangerous for her feelings and can affect her business, as she doesn't foresee or worry about anything.**

**She loves intensely... She hates intensely... She likes to use money to solve problems and thinks that everyone loves money, which leads her, to see herself in negatively light. She is afraid that the people who come into her life are more interested in financial gains than in her true self, and this makes her think that she has a bad character.**

Arun really knew me well, in some ways, no one had ever told me about it. I didn't even realize that I was like that.

I closed the notebook and put my hand on my forehead, massaging between my eyebrows in pain.

I felt sad for letting Arun go, but I knew that if I tried to hold on to someone who didn't want to stay, it would be torture for both the one who stayed and the one who asked to go.

So, I could do nothing but accept reality and let things take their course.

***Knock, knock.***

The sound of knocking on the door made me look up and go to open it, knowing that the person who is now arriving isn't Arun. Mawin, with an expression as if he had seen a ghost, was trying to tell me that his assistant had quit.

"So?"

"What did you do? Why did Miss Arun suddenly resign?" "I didn't do anything, she must be tired."

"Hey, aren't you going to be shocked? Your roommate, who is close to me, quit! Look at that! You seem calmer than me. This is unusual!"

Mawin started complaining as soon as he realized that I wasn't reacting. Why should I express my feelings again, when I already knew that the pretty-faced girl had left?

"Being shocked will change what? She's gone."

"You guys had a fight, right?" "No."

"You guys must have had a fight! You're not someone who stays indifferent like that. You should be screaming and whining!"

"I'm Intuorn, not a ghost! You should be used to it, running a hotel means dealing with a lot of layoffs."

"But these people aren't Arun! Do something! Arun is gone! Don't you feel lonely?"

Mawin still insisting, but I am too tired to show any kind of emotion or energy, so I just shrugged.

"I'm doing what I can. What about you? Are you dating Arun and still haven't done anything?"

"Arun and I are still nothing."

"What do you mean you're nothing?"

I looked at Mawin and raised an eyebrow.

"After all, Fah said you guys were making great progress and planned to go to Amphawa, right? You were planning to spend some time alone there."

"You're talking nonsense! Traveling is just traveling. I'm not a guy who only thinks about that kind of thing. What kind of guy do you know to judge someone like that?"

"Talking about nature and sex... For me, that's normal. Fah was also honest with me about it. You don't need to hide it, you know?"

"It's crazy! With Arun, I never even got to hold her hand!"

*"Really."*

I said sarcastically, but Mawin shake his head seriously, which started to surprise me.

"What's the point in lying? When we meet, she just walks past me without acknowledging me, as if she's just ignoring me. Sometimes, I even think she pretends not to recognize me because she doesn't want to talk. We save words, you know? Do you think I keep arranging meetings with Arun for nothing?"

"It's because you want to be close to her."

"Actually, because I barely talk to her. In Arun's head, there's only you. She comes running back, afraid of you being alone in the room. And when you're sick, it's like you're always there, like a shadow! You evil spirit!"

Mawin spoke irritably, which made me frown. "But Fah said that..."

*'We held hands!' 'We kissed!'*

So this was all a lie!?

My eyes widened as I realized this, wanting to laugh and cry at the same time knowing that I had been deceived the whole time. Why complicate things? Was she afraid that I would get angry if I didn't follow the flow of the game? But if that was the case, she didn't need to bother letting me touch her here and there.

"I don't understand why Arun has to make everything so confusing... that girl never even smiled at me."

I complained, almost in a sigh, but Mawin looked even more confused.

"You must have fought! If not, you wouldn't be so downcast. Go make up with Arun and bring her back! Oh, I didn't even have time to confess and I've already cut my chances once and for all!"

"And where am I going to find her? She's already gone." "Call her!"

"Before you came here, you must have tried calling her, but she didn't answer or she must have hung up, right?"

"That. "

"So, what can I do? I'm not a cell phone signal. If she doesn't want to be contacted, there's no way to do it."

"Why are you so calm? You're not usually like this!"

"Because I know I can't do anything. Sometimes, these kinds of things take time."

I looked at Mawin and smiled sadly. I don't know how I got to this point.

"In the meantime, I'm going to enjoy the time with myself. I just read that I'm a worthwhile person. If I fail to achieve what was assessed, the person who gave the assessment will be unhappy."

"Who are you talking about?"

I looked at the notebook in my hands and smiled slightly. "I'm talking about the one who never smiles at me."

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The change in me surprised the people around me a lot. Even without Arun by my side, I'm still in the position of a low-level employee in the hotel.

But this isn't a drama where everyone loves me in the end and would put flower necklaces on me to say goodbye, because I'm not a good person. What I don't like, I say clearly. Both me and my coworkers can't understand each other due to our different personalities and temperaments.

When everyone found out that I was the owner's daughter on my last day of work, they moved away, avoiding looking at me. Some even spoke badly about me behind my back, and I heard it often. If I had been the Intuorn of the past, I would have definitely run to tell my father and demanded that the people who had hurt me be fired.

"Consider yourselves lucky that I don't like being out of town. But when I take over as manager, anyone who has done anything to me will be fired without the right to a defense, and don't come protesting, because I'm firing you as the owner's daughter."

"..."

"And I'm Intuorn, super rich! Hahaha!"

My laughter echoed through the hotel on my last day of work. I've already said that I'm not the ideal protagonist; I'm the villain. I can't help but think that God has given me the opportunity to torment the less fortunate, but I'm not mean to everyone.

Anyway, I still have Aunt Yaow, who took care of me during these three months, even though we fought a lot in the beginning.

"Come visit us once in a while, okay? Even with your bad mood and no friends, you still have a little bit of kindness."

The cook said as she said goodbye, making me frown. Although I wanted to retort, now that I was dressed in an expensive outfit, ready to say goodbye in a cool way, I could only force an irritated smile.

"If I have the chance, I will come back to visit you. I remember well the good times we had together."

"You made my internet run out, always reloading!"

"Well, you weren't smart. The hotel's Wi-Fi was available!" "But you didn't teach me."

"Auntie's lack of smartness and my lack of perception drove us apart. So good luck!"

I looked at the cook's son, who rarely spoke to me. The story of the past in the abandoned house still gave me chills. That boy was a reminder that the person I took out of there was not human, but even if I couldn't prove anything scientifically, it was okay, because I probably wouldn't see ManU again.

"And you, study hard, graduate well. Don't follow your mother's example of throwing hot food at people when get angry!"

"You really are good at teasing others, aren't you?"

Aunty Yaow bared her teeth before smiling in a restrained way, as if forgetting herself.

"But speaking of which... I miss Arun. When she left, all the employees started missing her, even if it was only for a short time, unlike you, In."

I thought that this aunt must have a Korean nationality to have come to work in Thailand, as if she was fleeing the country.

"So you'll miss me? If you get the chance, come visit me."

We stared at each other in silence before I turned and got into the van where my father was waiting for me. Actually, he could have picked me up at the airport, but he wanted to see the scene of his daughter saying goodbye to all her colleagues.

However, the old man ended up disappointed, because no one was willing to say goodbye except for Auntie Yaow and Mawin. As soon as I got in the car, my father looked at me and asked, even though he knew the answer.

"Are these all your coworkers during these three months?" "Yes."

"Very typical of Intuorn... no one has approached you. Well, I'm like that too."

"It's been three months since I started working. Don't forget to keep your promise."

I opened my hand and moved my fingers like an octopus. My father looked at me and made a confused expression, but as soon as he saw me grimacing, he couldn't help but reach out and ruffle my hair affectionately.

"I won't forget. The Porsche is waiting at home." "How sweet!"

I hugged my father tightly and rested my head against him, pretending to be happy, even though, in reality, I wasn't very excited about the car he gave me and didn't feel anything special.

But if I pretended to be happy, he would be happy, and that was all that mattered.

"Thank you very much!"

"If it makes you happier, I'm happy."

Janephop, who is sitting in the front, said, looking at me in the rearview mirror with a look that know I'm not that happy, but he doesn't say anything.

"Let's go home. It's time for you to start living like a real lady again... Princess, come home!"

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## Seven months have passed...

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Now I'm finally starting my handbag business seriously, after having put it on hold for years due to mental health issues and a broken heart. But as writers and those Facebook catchphrases say, "time heals the heart," and that's not a lie.

Now I'm fine, living and eating well, and I no longer feel the pain of imagining a meeting with Renu and Jom, the troublemaker I once had a mad crush on.

"I've booked the restaurant for you, Miss. Today at two in the afternoon, for three people."

Said Janphop, who continues to do his job perfectly. Before, when I had a secretary, he only had to agree or disagree with things, but since Arun left, he's taken over everything, because I'm a bit lazy to think about such details.

"Why this restaurant?"

"It's a very popular place now." He replied.

"The more famous the restaurant, the less I want to go. It must be crowded. And besides, you know I like unique things. When something becomes trendy, I lose interest; it makes me look uncool. But if it's a place where I can take pictures for Instagram and make people jealous... then I'll go."

I said, shrugging, while Janphop just smiled, because he knew I was just saying that. In the end, I would end up going, because I love good food.

"What kind of food do they have there?"

"Italian, just the way you like it. You can eat it without worrying, the taste is highly praised. They say that a famous food critic decided to invest together with the chef who owns the restaurant. What could be better than a talented chef together with a critic renowned?"

"So Dae Jang Geum[1] came to Thailand herself? Her language is so good. Just hearing that gives me goosebumps."

"Why the goosebumps, Miss?"

I rolled my eyes and snorted. How boring, he really doesn't understand a dirty joke. But then again, if he had, he would have turned red like a ripe tomato, which would only have put us in an awkward situation.

"Is it time to go already? About Miss Renu, do you already know where, how and when?"

"I've already taken care of everything, Miss."

"You'd make a great husband, you know? You're good at everything."

I complimented her. But Janephop frowned and replied in a low voice, embarrassed.

"Please, Miss, don't talk like that. What if your father hears?" "But if your tongue isn't as good as Dae Jang Geum's, it's better

you stay as my assistant. Don't go being someone's husband, okay? I'm

jealous, hehe."

I laughed, walking towards the car. I stopped and started choosing between the black van, the old red Mini, which I was already quite used to, and the new Porsche that dad gave me at the end of my internship.

"Which one do you prefer, Miss?"

"The Porsche, of course. I like being the center of attention. And guys always look inside the car; I like to smile back."

I replied playfully as I unlocked the car and climbed into the driver's seat. Janephop took his usual place in the passenger seat and buckled up, already familiar with my driving style.

"Guide me the way," I asked.

"Sure, Miss."

The restaurant we were heading to was a little further away from Thonglor.

While I was in the car with Janephop, I shifted uncomfortably, especially when I realized he was watching me the whole time.

"What are you looking at? Do you think I'm pretty?" "Yes."

"I know."

Janphop laughed at my immodest manner and then said what he seemed to have wanted to say for a while.

"Have you forgotten Arun yet?"

I almost slammed on the brakes, but I kept driving, even though the question irritated me. During all this time, there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think about that sweet-faced girl. Time only made the longing lessen a little, turning from hours to minutes. I was almost over it, until he asked me that.

"I haven't forgotten yet, I think about her from time to time." "What if you met her? What would you do, Miss In?" "Would I have to do something?"

I laughed awkwardly and shrugged.

"I don't know... maybe I would say hello... 'Hi, how are you? Do you still remember me? You owe me almost four million, you know?'"

"Maybe she avoided meeting you for fear of being charged."

"Arun isn't the type to run away from debts. At this point, she's probably working hard to get the money so she can face me... She's always been

someone who was committed to everything she did. Even someone like me, who no one can stand, she put up with."

"But in the end, she couldn't take it anymore and left." "That was because..."

I bit my lip as I remembered the day before she left that notebook with me. She had crossed boundaries that destroyed the idea I had in mind. Maybe she felt guilty, maybe she thought she was forcing me...

She left, so innocent. Couldn't she understand the tone of my moans? That wasn't pressure, it was consent.

Damn it!

"You make me angry, Jane." And thinking about it, I sighed.

"Let's stop talking about her. If I find her, I'll know what to do." "Okay."

"You talk like we're going to meet soon." "..."

"Hmm?"

And seeing that Janephop is silent, I begin to feel an intuition. "Don't tell me that restaurant is Arun's."

Janephop didn't answer, which meant "yes." He never failed to complete the tasks I assigned him. Even if it had taken him seven months to find her, that was a success.

"It's just ahead, miss. There is a parking area reserved for the restaurant."

I turned the wheel and parked as he suggested, but on the other hand, I was too hesitant to move. I remained sitting behind the wheel, biting my lip tightly.

"Have you met Arun for a long time?" "A while. But she doesn't know it's me." "How did you find her?"

"I ended up looking for something to eat and saw some content on Facebook. She started a page to review restaurants, so I found out that she and a friend opened the restaurant. I've been here a few times... it's as good as they say, it's the taste of someone she loves."

"What's that?"

"The slogan. You better see for yourself. I believe Miss Renu and Jom must have been here for a while. It's not good to keep guests waiting."

When I was prompted like this, I decided to get out of the car. I walked into the restaurant, which was neither small nor large, decorated in a minimalist style with clean white colors. There were a fair amount of customers, even though it was a weekday. To be honest, when I walked in, I wasn't looking for distinguished guests to discuss handbags with, but rather looking for Arun eagerly, although I couldn't find her.

"Over there, at that table, Miss Renu and Jom." Jenpob indicated.

"Ah... um."

I greeted them both in an intimate manner, but without warmth or nostalgia, as if there was no more old fire between us. They both ordered juice, as if they had been waiting, which made me irritated.

"Remember this: from now on, if we have a meeting again, order food and eat it. Waiting for others to arrive before eating may be good etiquette for them, but not for Intuorn... It only puts pressure on me."

"See, Teacher? I told you she preferred it that way." Jom commented, trying to justify herself to Renu. "Miss In doesn't follow etiquette rules."

"That's right, I really don't."

With the suggestion accepted, they began to choose what they were going to order, with the menu already laid out on the table. I myself scanned the menu, trying to decide what to eat. Soon, a waitress came to the table to take our orders, called by Renu.

"What would you like?"

Suddenly, that familiar, slightly nasal sound made my eyes widen, it was unmistakable.

Jenepob, sitting at the next table, looked at me and give me a slight smile, encouraging with his gaze:

"Greet her, Miss In."

But, unable to move, I remained still.

"I'll have the carbonara... and the spaghetti with shrimp."

Renu replied, while I, without realizing it, kicked her under the table. Her eyes widened, surprised by my reaction.

"What happened?" She asked.

Arun, who had come to take the order, looked at everyone, not recognizing our faces right away. She hesitated for a moment when her eyes met mine, frowning before shaking her head. Maybe it was the perfume...

Without making a sound, I pointed to the dish I wanted with my finger. She continued to stare at me, but without saying anything, writing down the order in silence. As soon as she finished, she gathered the menus and turned to go back, but I couldn't help myself.

"Put the flavor in, in keeping with the slogan. I want to know... what someone you love tastes like."

I had barely finished the sentence when Arun dropped the menus on the floor. She turned to me with an expression that was an indefinable mix of shock, sadness, and joy.

"Miss In..."

***"Hi, dear older sister?"***

***Footnote***

***[1]. Dae Jang Geum - The series tells the story of an orphaned cook who becomes the king's first female physician. At a time when women had little influence in society, young apprentice chef Jang-geum strives to learn the secrets of Korean cuisine and medicine in order to cure the king of his various illnesses. It is based on the true story of Jang-geum, the first female royal physician of the Joseon dynasty. The main themes are her perseverance and the representation of traditional Korean culture, including Korean royal court cuisine and traditional medicine.***

# 30. I'm Giving You

It seems that today's business meeting has become something trivial, because now Arun BekFah and I are staring at each other intensely. She may not have recognized me right away, but as soon as she heard my voice and started observing me carefully, she soon realized it was me.

"Khun In."

"I'm glad you recognized me, I thought you had forgotten me."

I said, smiling as if it was no big deal, while inside, my heart burned with the desire to get up, hug her and say:

*'At least pretend you're happy to see me!'*

But all I could do was sit there, trying to look calm. "I would never forget you, Khun In."

"I guess not. We have a lot of history together."

I said ambiguously. But Arun BekFah just stand there, not responding, creating an uncomfortable atmosphere at the table. Then Miss Renu cleared her throat, trying to break the awkward silence.

"Have you two met before? I'm excited! Miss In knows the famous 'Golden Tongue'!"

"Is that your excited voice, teacher?"

Jao-Jom whispered, but we all heard it clearly, as the surroundings were too quiet.

"Jom!"

"Then I'll look forward to taking it all in. I really want to know the taste of '*someone you love...'*"

*"Arun BekFah Nok Ga Boey Bin."*

I interrupt, saying the full name so that everyone at the table knows. However, Jao-Jom, with her playful attitude, soon starts humming, just to keep the mood light.

"Ok Hak Gin Ra-eurn Jaem Sai. Ah... it's been so long! I miss this show so much."

"No... that's the full name of the famous taster, Arun BekFah." I explain.

The little girl who had been singing before slowly closes her mouth, visibly embarrassed at having accidentally made fun of someone's name. But Arun BekFah turns to Jao-Jom and smiles at her, as if to say she doesn't care.

"It's okay. I'm used to it. I'll bring you some food." "I wasn't making fun, I just..."

"It's okay, really."

Arun BekFah reassures.

Then the sweet-faced former secretary walks away, while I'm left just biting my lip, and I see Miss Renu, who had been watching everything, take a sip of water, smiling from the corner of her mouth.

"Well, it seems I don't have to worry anymore when you and Jao-Jom meet."

"What?"

I stare at her, confused. "Were you worried?"

"I guess I was a little jealous, but from now on I won't have to worry anymore."

The person looks at me as if she can see through everything, and it makes me angry.

*Damn it!*

It all started because of her. If I hadn’t wished I was as talented and brilliant as the teacher in front of me, I probably would never have met Arun BekFah, and I wouldn’t be so disconcerted now either. How dare she give me that loving smile? Oh, but she’ll see!

Jao-Jom looked at me as if she was thinking about something, her face didn’t have the same welcoming smile as Miss Renu’s, which puzzled me, although I didn’t ask anything.

After a while, the dishes we ordered started to be served, all of them looking so delicious that it was almost annoying. It seemed like everything good in this restaurant puts me in a bad mood. What the hell!

“The taste of love… What does that really mean?”

The youngest person at the table asked, looking at the food intently. “Is it like cooking with your loved one in mind or something?” "Maybe it's the flavor that Arun BekFah's beloved likes."

Miss Renu suggested, taking a bite of the dish in front of her and thinking for a moment.

"Hmm... it's quite a refined flavor. Miss In, do you like that kind of flavor?" "Huh?"

I replied, slightly surprised. Jao-Jom was looking at me curiously too, but since I hadn't tried it yet, I didn't know what to say.

"I'll try it first."

I casually took a bite of the plain carbonara I had ordered, and upon tasting it, I realized that it was delicious. However, it was far from the flavors I usually eat, as I prefer something saltier and creamier, even if my physique doesn't reflect that taste.

"No, it's not what I eat. But... it's very good."

"Does that mean Miss In is not our food critic's sweetheart after all."

Jao-Jom said with a mischievous smile, while Miss Renu glanced at me sideways, saying nothing, which made me almost want to throw my fork down beside my plate.

"It seems not." "Greetings."

Someone replied, cutting off the conversation.

A third voice interrupted our lively conversation, and when I turned to look, my body immediately froze, and I was paralyzed by the unexpected coincidence that should not have happened. The owner of the voice, upon seeing me, widened her eyes. Her light brown eyes watched me intensely, as if to confirm that she was not seeing things.

"In?"

## "Maybe?"

"Only you call me that."

The way she spoke made it clear that we had been close for a long time, which left the others at the table surprised, especially Arun and Jom, who knew me well enough to know that I am not the type to be easily surprised.

However, now I'm clearly embarrassed and blushing. "Do you two know each other?"

Arun asked, breaking the silence. May, or "Maybe", which means "perhaps", came over to where I was sitting and put her hand on my head.

"How long, huh? How many years have passed?"

The beautiful woman, who was five feet seven inches tall, held up her fingers to count the years.

"Since I finished high school... Wow, it's hard to even count." "About ten years, I think."

I answered politely, even though it wasn't my style to be so submissive, as I sat with my legs together, still embarrassed.

"You still look as beautiful as before." "So, how did you two meet?"

Jom asked, her voice mixed with curiosity and irritation. Teacher Renu stared at her girlfriend, giving her a warning look that made Jom immediately close her mouth.

I looked at my former colleague's face and, not knowing why I should lie, I answered honestly.

*"Ex-wife."[1]*

"You're crazy! You still say everything so bluntly, don't you? Ex-girlfriend is enough!"

May tugged my ear playfully and finally decided to sit next to me, which was different from what she had intended.

"We also switched positions, because it was the first time for both of us!"

"In!"

"I just wanted to make it clear." "That's too clear!"

The beautiful woman used both hands to hold my face, almost as if she was kneading dough, in a friendly way. I just let out a "enough" and didn't move, because it didn't hurt that much.

"Change the subject now... Honestly, I'm feeling lost. I don't know if I should be intimate with you or stay a little more distant. Are you still mad at me?"

"Mad that you broke up?" "Yes."

"I forgot all about that."

"Then we can get closer again, like before. Come here, give me a hug!"

The woman with the charming face wrapped me in a tight hug. But, in the midst of the joy of meeting a friend and old girlfriend again, I felt piercing looks like blades directed at us. Arun was staring at us with an intensity that surprised me. She seemed to be angry...

*Angry at who, me or May?*

"So, how are you? Are you dating anyone new?" May B asks.

"I'm looking."

I replied, smiling at my ex-girlfriend and glanced at Arun, as if to imply something like:

*'Are you interested in getting back together with me?'*

"You're being too direct. No, thank you. Talking to you like this is more fun than when we were girlfriends."

"And do you have a girlfriend?" "Not yet."

"It seems like none of your ex-girlfriends got along with your little sister, huh?"

I laughed as I remembered our past together, but then I frowned and looked at Arun, feeling butterflies in my stomach.

"That's not a coincidence, right? You and Arun are partners in the restaurant?"

"Coincidence, what do you mean?" "Coincidentally, they look alike, of course."

I whispered in her ear, so that only the two of us could hear. May's expression became disconcerted, as if I had caught her in a lie, before she walked away, visibly embarrassed.

"Oh, stop talking nonsense! And if they look alike, what's the problem? Arun knows me because she's a food critic and I'm a chef. That's all!"

"Is that all?"

"How annoying! I won't talk to you anymore. Please, receive the guests. I'm going to the kitchen."

"Sure."

My ex-girlfriend's weakness has always been her sister. We broke up because May B said her sister didn't like me. I remember crying, not understanding why. As soon as we started dating, we had to break up because I didn't fit in with her family.

In fact, I even thought about marrying her, even though we were both women... Oh, what a phase!

After eating for a while, Arun BakFah asked to leave and go back to her work, leaving me to talk to Teacher Renu. However, my concentration was not enough, so I ended up listening with one ear and letting it go through the other. No matter what Jom's pretty teacher said, I couldn't understand a word. In the end, the business talk didn't lead to anything, so we decided to part ways and schedule another meeting for another day.

Now that those two people had left, I was still standing hesitantly near my car, looking for an opportunity to talk to May B, my ex-girlfriend from many years ago. And sure enough, after about an hour, the pretty lady came out of the restaurant, apparently to start the car and go somewhere, but I called her first:

"May, let's talk first."

"I thought you had already left,"

May said, and upon hearing my voice, she turned and smiled at me. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going back to get some things. My mother called. So, is there anything you need?"

"I want to talk for a little while. How about you drive with me? That way I can take you back to the same place."

I pressed the remote to show the beautiful car, which made May exclaim in admiration.

"What a beautiful car! You're still as rich as ever." "And I'm getting richer every day... Oh, just a minute." I turned to Janephop, who was with me.

"Jane, call a taxi and go home. I have business with her, no need to wait." "Yes, Miss."

I still remember how to get to my ex-girlfriend's house, and the distance from the restaurant to the house is about half an hour, which gives us time to talk a little.

May B gave me a quick glance, assessing how much I had changed. "You're prettier."

"You're prettier too... I was surprised to see that you opened a restaurant. I thought you were going to be a doctor or an engineer, working in some organization like NASA or something."

"Why does everyone think I should be a doctor?"

"It's because you were so smart. Everyone thought you'd be a doctor." "Just because someone is smart, they have to be a doctor?"

"Stupid people are still farmers. Never mind, it's not worth it." I looked up, speaking and quickly changed the subject.

"How did you meet Arun BekFah?"

The senior, known for being the prettiest in the class, gave me a curious look, arching her eyebrows slightly, but her eyes were full of mischief. Then, she playfully teased me with a question.

"And why can't I meet Miss Arun?"

"What makes you think you can have the chance to meet her?" "Only you have the right to meet her?"

"Hey!"

I almost slammed on the brake, making the person next to me almost go out the window, but it seemed too dangerous, so I just made a disapproving sound.

The beautiful person who had never given in to me, ever, shrugged, not caring who I was. And said:

"I'll only answer if you tell me the truth." "What is it?"

"Why are you so interested in Arun?"

A simple question, but it made me grip the steering wheel tightly, not knowing how to answer. In the end, I remained silent.

"If you don't answer me, I won't answer either." "It's because we were close once."

"How close?"

"You 'pleased' Arun, didn't you?" "Ha ha ha ha."

The pretty girl's amused laugh made me show my teeth in an expression of discontent.

"You're still as easy to read as before. You try to dodge, but your curiosity ends up revealing who you really are... You asked me to get in the car just to ask what kind of relationship I have with Arun, right?"

"Can't I ask?"

"Ask how? Someone who was once close shouldn't want to know that so much. Are you jealous, Intuorn?"

The tender voice made me shrug my shoulders, like a three-year-old.

"You really like her, don't you?"

"That's the entrance to your family's house up ahead, right?"

I changed the subject, even though I remembered the way well, because I had already done mischief and skipped school to hide here when I was a child.

"Arun and I are just partners."

I straightened my body and tried to remain calm, not letting it show too much, afraid that they would notice that I was relieved, even though I wanted to ask so many things.

"But Arun looks like your younger sister."

We both knew that the main reason why we both broke up was her beautiful sister.

I remembered competing with that girl in many things right after the breakup, because I couldn't accept being dumped.

"They look alike, but they're not the same person."

"I thought you were looking for someone to be a replacement."

"Don't worry, but if you talk too much, I'll try to win Arun over. Let's stop here... we're already there."

May opened the door and was about to get out of the car, but I quickly grabbed her wrist before she could.

"You can't."

"You can't what?"

"You can't win Arun over." "Ask nicely..."

I pouted and remembered how it was when we were together. May B used to tease me like this every time I asked for something special, to the point where it became a regular phrase of hers.

"Make a wish." "..."

"Beg."

"Please, May."

And then I succumbed, right? It's really hard to forget your first love...Even after ten years of not seeing each other, everything is still the same... I always end up succumbing.

"Please, my love."

"You're still as cute as ever, you silly girl! Hahaha."

The beautiful person reached out to ruffle my hair affectionately.

"Yeah, I'm not flirting because I'm dating a coworker at the store. So, let's make this clear. I thought you'd grow up and get married and have kids, but you still have a girlfriend."

"We're not girlfriends yet."

"I guess... for you, it shouldn't be hard, right?" "What do you mean by that?"

"I won't tell you. I'm going to see my mom first. Don't run away, okay? You promised you'd take me back to the restaurant."

I could only pout, but I played along driving and trying to get away, with a bit of mischief, and guessing that I'd probably be cursed at on the way. I thought this was a way of getting revenge for her leaving me once.

If I left her too, we could finally get over this! Tsk!

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In the end, today there was no progress at all; everything seemed pointless. I went to discuss business, but got nowhere, I met the person I wanted to see, but it seemed like nothing had happened. Arun didn't seem happy to see me at all, and I couldn't seem happy to see her. I was feeling so embarrassed!

"Damn it!"

I threw my shoe into the house's pool, irritated. Janephop, who was always behind me, came over and asked with concern:

"What happened, miss?"

"I don't know if I'll be able to vote in another election." "..."

"I'm just kidding! I wanted to make it seem like I was thinking about something serious when I mentioned this... I'm mad at Arun and also frustrated that I went to discuss business but didn't get anywhere. Damn it!"

"What did Arun do to you, Miss?"

"If she did something, I wouldn't be so mad. But this girl doesn't do anything, just stands there, not showing that she's happy to see me. Disappearing like the wind and sunlight in the famous restaurant, and on top of that, I run into my ex!"

"Is there anything I can do to help, miss?"

Janephop asked, not knowing what to do to cheer me up. At that moment, I received a message.

## Zone:

I'm honest, I really want to meet you. Just because we met at a club doesn't mean I'm a bad person.

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Zone is a guy I met at a club last week. We chatted a bit and exchanged lines to catch up. Most of the time, he's the one who sends messages, while I just read them without replying. But today I'm bored, so seeing a message like this, coupled with my desire to tease, even though Arun isn't here, I decided to reply in an easy way.

## Indy:

Okay, so we're at the same place.

I sent the message and looked at Janephop, who was waiting for instructions.

"It seems like there's something you can help with." "Tell me." He replied.

"Take me out for a while. I'm bored of my usual place."

And yes, I agreed, not forgetting to let Janephop know as always. He needs to be aware of what I'm doing. My friend's job is so tiring. It's true that I'm getting older and more mature, so I'm tired of cramped, noisy places and people dancing weirdly at clubs...

Now, I'm in a bar full of people enjoying a live music performance. Everyone is dancing excitedly. I've had a few drinks, but I'm always careful not to accept drinks from strangers. I'm a party girl, but I'm not that way.

Going out is about having fun, not looking like a pathetic drunk.

I don't know the guy I'm meeting very well, I just know he's a small businessman who works in auto parts. Judging by the car he drives, it looks like he has money and can easily pick up several women. But it's a little difficult for me, since I drive a Porsche.

I'm richer... pff

"After today, can we meet outside? Can we make plans for dinner, to the mall, or to see a movie?"

"I'll see if we have a connection first." "And what does that connection mean?"

He started to dance slowly towards me, in the style of a man who has no limits. I understand that and I'm not the type to care much, since I chose to be in a place like this, so I have to accept it. But how close I'll let him get is just that.

Zone's hand slid to my hip, and he started dancing behind me as if he was hugging me. I made a small face and didn't move my hips at all. I just stood there, letting him enjoy his craziness.

"It means that... being together isn't boring. I can't take it anymore, I'm going back."

I put my drink aside and started to walk away. This isn't a movie or a soap opera where there's always a fight or a scene of pushing and pulling. Zone ran after me, making an expression that begged for mercy.

"I really like you."

"Just by seeing each other, you already like me?" "I'm a person who likes me easily."

I'm a person who likes people easily.... "..."

"I just feel that way. Why should we waste so much time getting to know each other? It would be better if we fell in love right away."

I looked at the person who was speaking, a little dazed, because his ideas weren't that different from mine. It was as if I had already said the sentence he just said before, and that made me smile slightly at him.

"Hmm. It seems like we're starting to connect." "Really?"

"I'll get back to you, okay? I really want to sleep tonight."

Janephop, who was waiting, approached me and gestured towards the van with his hand, as if he knew what to do. My friend's confident posture made Zone back away, looking discouraged. I could only laugh at the big guy before showing my teeth.

"He's scared, poor thing."

However... he didn't answer anything, just opened the door and closed it, like a person who doesn't talk much.

"Was it fun?"

Finally, Janephop took the initiative to start a conversation, but I, who was looking out the window, laughed in response, as if I was having even more fun. But it was okay, at least I got to know a little more about the man named Zone, who was similar to me, just another person in the world.

"It wasn't fun, I'm tired. Today was a boring day."

"After Arun left her job as secretary, she used her keen eye to become a food critic. She started a fan page to review food and can identify all the ingredients in the dishes, giving honest reviews. She accepts some sponsors, but she doesn't give exaggerated praise. People ask her a lot about which restaurant is good and which is famous. She is known for her ability to identify ingredients and flavors directly."

With that, I straightened up, putting down what was resting on my head and started listening to Janephop with more interest. Okay... He really piqued my interest.

"Ah, I see."

"This restaurant has three partners. Arun is the one with the smallest share because she doesn't have much money."

"That's absurd! She should be rich! With a small share, how is she going to make money?"

I shifted, sitting up impatiently. "But she gets sponsorships." "That's a good thing."

I sit back, relieved to hear that. “What about the other members?”

“There’s May, who we met today, and M.L. Sippakorn, but she rarely shows up because she prefers Thai food.”

“That girl has good connections! She knows an M.L. too!” I said, almost grumbling, before asking in detail:

“What about Arun’s boyfriend?” “No boyfriend.”

“She hasn’t had a boyfriend in the last seven months?” “I’m not sure, but I don’t think so.”

“If she hasn’t, where does ‘the taste of someone you love’ come from?” The more I talked, the more irritated I got.

“Or is it to make it sound like a pretty signature? Ouch! I’m so irritated! When are we going to get home? I want to take a shower.”

“What about that guy?” “Which guy?”

“The one who ran after you when you left the club.”

"Ah... Zone? Nothing much. He's sincere, he just came to thank me. What can I do? The elegant and charming beauty here has that effect!"

I spoke casually, until the car turned onto the street in front of my house. When we parked, Janephop called out to me before I got out.

"Miss In."

"Yes? What's wrong?"

"Now that you've found Arun, what do you intend to do?"

The direct question made me bite my lip. I knew Janephop understood, but he still asked, as if he wanted to force me to admit it out loud.

"What's there to do? I've already found her, and that's enough." "Are you going to try to win her over?"

"Win her over? Ha!"

I let out a mocking laugh, showing my teeth. "Someone like me, Intuorn, doesn't do such things."

"You've waited to find Arun all this time. And now, are you really going to let it go?"

"Don't get involved!"

I started to get irritated, pressured by the question, but Janephop didn't give me any respite. He grabbed my wrist and pulled me to face him, something he had never done before, and it shocked me.

"Jane... What are you doing? You're hurting me." "You give everyone a chance."

"Jane..."

"Arun, who doesn't care about you, Jom, who chose someone else, the ex who abandoned you... And now this man, who it seems you also give a chance to. But why..."

"Don't ask, Jane... Stop!"

I knew what he was going to say, but it felt like a time bomb was about to explode.

## "Why can't I be that someone?"

I closed my eyes, because the Pandora's box I was trying to avoid was opened, and from now on, our relationship will never be the same. He's the only person I've never given a chance to. He is the most important person to me, and I don’t intend to lose him unless death takes him from me. And that’s not something related to a romance.

“That’s not fair to me.” He said.

“I can’t lose you, Janephop, you know that.”

“Should I quit my job and try to get closer to you like anyone else?”

He said just that before walking away, leaving me to stare at his back, my heart sinking because I couldn’t give a good answer.

I entered the house and, as soon as I got to the bedroom, I decided to call Arun BekFah. Maybe it was the effect of alcohol or the anger from today’s meeting, not to mention the situation with Janephop and the new guy, Zone. All of this made me want to settle things with that sweet-faced girl.

It was already past one in the morning. I didn’t care at all if she was already asleep, but in the end, Arun BekFah answered.

“Yes, Khun In.” "Today, we met, right?" "Yes."

"And how did you feel when you saw me?" "Well... surprise."

"You're not happy at all, are you?" I run my hand over my face.

"You know, for the past seven months, I've been thinking about you all the time. I imagined that if we met, we'd smile at each other and talk like two people who once meant something. But today, you treated me like we were just acquaintances."

[...]

"While I was so excited I could barely contain myself."

My voice was shaking, and I had to press my lips together before continuing, painfully:

"I've become so excited that I've become furious. And now I'm afraid I'll end up hating you. Answer me honestly, Fah... for real."

[...]

"What do you feel for me?"

But the question I fired off didn't received an answer. It was as if the other person taking so long to think that my heart was breaking.

[No matter what I feel... I'm not worthy of you, Khun In. As long as I remain your debtor...]

"Stop talking about money. I already gave it to you! I'm rich!"

[Miss In, you're always like this, solving everything with money. But for me it's not like that... You were the first person who made me break my own rules, and that made me feel less professional. How could I allow myself to feel something for you when I'm so inferior?]

"Enough... Just answer whether you feel something or not." [Is there no middle ground?]

"No. For me, it's black or white. Okay... from now on, I won't wait for you anymore. Enough."

[Khun In...]

"I am an unlucky person in love. I am a person who falls in love easily, but in the end, I always get left behind. Whenever I love someone, they end up breaking my heart. And when someone who really loves me comes along, I don't have the courage to love them back because I can't bear to lose them. But that's okay... I will change. From now on, whoever comes into my life, I will accept."

[...]

"I will just be the one who receives. If someone is not satisfied, they can leave... As for you, good luck. I won't chase you anymore. And like I said, all the money you think you owe me..."

[Khun In... please don't...]

## "I am giving it to you."

**Footnote**:

***[1]. In Thailand, it is common to refer to passive/active sexual positions as Husband/Wife.***

# 31. Chance

I also don't know if the conversation with Arune at that moment was a "break-up" of sorts. But then again, the two of us have never had a relationship as girlfriends. Everything has always been within the confines of a boss-subordinate relationship.

And even when we crossed the line that day, the sweet-faced secretary was the one who backed down, acting like someone with high professional ethics.

To say that I felt shaken would be an understatement, since we had been apart for over seven months. But still, it felt like I had cut a delicate thread that had been between us.

There is no one else I waiting for today, I have decided that I will not get involved anymore.

And that is probably better for both of us.

This way, I don't have to wait anymore, and she doesn't have to feel uncomfortable anymore.

Now, I have gone back to being Intuorn, someone who has no one in my heart once again. But it seems that the moment I decide that I don't want anyone, everyone decides to show up at the same time.

"What happened, Lay...? Sorry, Jao-Jom."

I came to the meeting I had arranged with an old friend, with whom I had a complicated past.

The short person had only sent a message:

*'Are you free? I want to see you.'*

Since Lay, or Jao-Jom, had never been like that, I assumed something must have happened.

"You can call me Lay or Jao-jom, whichever you prefer, Miss In. Choose whatever is most comfortable for you... So call me Lay, if that is more familiar to you."

"And what happened? Why are you so tense? You arranged this meeting without Miss Renu knowing, didn't you?"

"..."

"So you had a fight?"

I lean back in my chair, sitting across from her. We are in a famous coffee shop in the center of a shopping mall, the most convenient place for us to meet.

"Why did you fight?"

She, with almond-shaped eyes, stares at me and purses her lips. Even though she was expecting an answer, it seems that she is quite uncomfortable answering this question.

"Hey, you asked me out and now you're not saying anything. Wasn't it to vent?"

"Can't I call you just because I missed you?"

I stay silent, surprised, because this is not the Lay I know. Noticing my silence, she sighs and sits down, shrugging her shoulders.

"I'll be blunt. I fought with Renu because of you, In."

"And why did I become the reason for the fight between the two of you? From what I understand, Miss Renu was already aware of everything and

seemed to understand the situation well. And I myself have nothing more to do with you, Lay."

"That hurts, you know?" "What?"

## "I think I'm still jealous of you, In."

With this direct statement, I can only blink, perplexed. What is going on here...? If it were before, I would have reacted with excitement, like a spider that spots its prey, but now, I'm just confused and don't know whether to smile in a flirtatious way or pretend to be excited and run out of the coffee shop.

It feels like, finally I'm the protagonist of my own story. I've become someone important to everyone, after having been just an extra for so long.

"Did you say that to Miss Renu?"

"I didn't even have to say anything, she noticed. That's when we fought... Ever since that day we met at the restaurant, I've been behaving in a not-so- friendly way, so she started to insist on knowing what was going on. When she kept pressing, I ended up saying that I was jealous of you, In. And boom... everything exploded. How crazy."

"Really, crazy."

"Even I didn't imagine that I would be jealous of you. It must be because of that woman... that 'renowned food critic'."

Lay squeezes her hands tightly and looks at me like a child.

"And that's without counting that ex of yours, the owner of the restaurant, who is also beautiful."

"The world is small, right?"

"Miss In, are you interested in someone? Between the food critic and the chef, choose one."

"Do I need to choose?"

"Yes, that way I can direct my jealousy properly. I'll know who to give jealous glances to."

I almost burst out laughing at Lay's childish manner. Back when we were together, I seemed to be more immature than her. But now, everything seems to have reversed. I've become the one in control of the situation, watching the little girl in front of me fondly.

"No need to be jealous. I don't have anything with anyone." "Really? Miss In, you don't have feelings for any of them?" "Yes."

"Not even with Miss May, your ex?" "Of course."

"What about the food critic, Miss Arune BekFah? Don't you feel shaken?" When I was asked about this person, I shifted uncomfortably.

"Why are you pushing me like this?"

"Miss In, do you have any feelings for the famous food critic?" "..."

When I remained silent, this seemed to be an implicit answer, and Lay, who knows me well, made a jealous noise that made me feel affectionate.

"Because of your attitude, I'm jealous. How crazy... you don't like me anymore."

"Is that bad? Do you want me to be stuck with you until I die single?"

"I was thinking like this, that made me jealous. I used to be the person you liked the most, but now you have someone else in your heart."

"You're so innocent."

I laughed and gestured for Lay, who was sitting on the other side, to come closer. When she leaned forward, I didn't miss the opportunity and ruffled her hair.

"My hair is all messed up!"

"Yes, it was on purpose. Look... you can't treat me like a father who is jealous of his soon-to-be-married daughter. Besides, I've had several boyfriends. Arune BekFah is just another one I like. Don't think too much about it."

"You really like Arune!"

Lay exclaimed, almost shouting, and then her shoulders slumped. "That's crazy! Just hearing that hurts my heart. You're cheating on me!"

"Back when I liked you, you didn't want me back, did you? Now you're going to find out what it's like to be rejected. Hahaha!"

I crossed my arms and laughed in satisfaction, I was finally given a prominent role and recognized.

## Everyone likes me!

*My God!*

"It's so rude to laugh like that."

The little girl leaned over and drank all the iced coffee she had ordered, while I watched fondly.

"Have you eaten yet?"

"Not yet. I'm waiting for you to invite me, because if I go back to the clinic now, I'll end up talking to the teacher anyway."

"Then make up with her. Explain to her... Miss Renu is a reasonable person. When we went to lunch together, she said..."

I remembered when Miss Renu looked at me, understanding immediately that I no longer had feelings for her 'Jao-Jom'.

"What did the teacher say?"

"I don't remember anymore, but the important thing is that you make up. Come on, you have to have affection for me, after all, we spent months together. A lot of things happened between us. Tell the teacher that this is just silly jealousy. And that you still love her, that's a fact. People... when they love each other, they soon make up. No one wants to fight."

"And you and the food critic, do you love each other?"

When she asked me this question, I was silent for a moment and shook my head, not knowing what to say.

"We don't love each other."

"Does that mean you won't get along anymore?" "We don't hate each other, that's all I know."

As we continued our conversation and started to plan to change restaurants to get something to eat, my phone rang, showing the number of Zone, the man I met at the club a few days ago. If it had been before, I probably would have hung up, but since I thought he was cute and that we had something in common, I decided to give him a chance.

Why should I close doors, since I've already given up on Arune? "Hi, Zone."

[You answered my call, which means I have a chance. Thank you!]

The voice on the other end was full of enthusiasm, and I couldn't help but laugh.

"Why did you call me?"

I asked in a voice that was more sweet than accusatory, so Zone got straight to the point.

[I want to invite you to dinner with me.] "You're in luck, because I'm hungry."

[Great! Where are you right now? I'll pick you up. I know an amazing restaurant! I guarantee you'll be impressed and remember me forever.]

"Is that a song lyric? It's way over the top. If it's that good, I can't refuse, but... this time, I'll bring a friend with me, okay? Just to be safe, I don't want you to take me to a hotel."

[What do you think of me?]

"I don't know you yet, so don't talk too much. Give me fifteen minutes. If I clock in and you don't show up on time, dinner is canceled."

I hung up and immediately texted him the location, while Lay watched me jealously, as usual.

"You're so irresistibly charming, I'm jealous again."

"Of course! I'm even more charming, especially now. Do you know why?" "Why?"

## "Because in this story I'm the protagonist!"

But I forgot that... in the world of protagonists there are always coincidences. When Zone drove me and Jao-Jom to the famous restaurant

that was all over the internet, it couldn't be any other place than Arune's restaurant.

Now, me, Lay, Zone and Arune were all staring at each other without knowing what to do. Damn, last night I said I would stop bothering Arune, but today I showed up with a man who was courting me and a woman who seemed intimate, which could easily be misinterpreted as a provocation.

"Order as much as you want, you'll love it. This place is really good. I've been here before. The owner is a food critic who has the motto..."

*"the taste of someone you love / the taste of someone you love."*

Lay, or rather Jom, and I spoke at the same time without any intention, before looking at each other and laughing in a funny way.

"Do you know that slogan too?"

"I've been here before. I was a little surprised that you brought me here, and to surprise you a little... The famous food critic was actually my personal secretary."

I introduced Arune BekFah as if nothing had happened or, perhaps, as if I was pretending not to feel anything. Zone seemed excited and happy, as if he realized the importance of what I had said and knew how to react to impress the person he was talking to.

"Is it a coincidence or fate that made you meet? But then, she was your secretary? That means she must know a lot about you."

"We were always together."

I answered smiling, but Arune BekFah, who was standing next to the table waiting to take the order, showed no expression or emotion.

"So, if I want to know something about you, I can ask Arune, right?" "Why not ask someone else?"

I emphasized the word "someone else" before changing the subject.

"So, have you decided what you're going to order? Arune BekFah will get tired of her legs eventually."

"And why did Arune quit being a secretary and leave?"

Lay, who had been speechless for a while, asked with interest. Arune BekFah seemed to be undecided about how to answer, so I answered for him.

"A big obstacle at work." "What is it?"

"Love affairs."

My answer made everyone fall silent. It seemed that Lay had guessed something, except for Zone, who probably assumed that "love affairs" referred to relationships between men and women in the company, something that should not involve me.

"Let's order food then, I'll have..."

And so our lively conversation came to an end. Arune BekFah took our orders and went to the kitchen, where her partner, the chef, would start preparing them. While we waited for our food, I noticed Lay staring into space, probably worried about her girlfriend. So I decided to leave the restaurant and called Miss Renu, feeling a bit nosy.

We were once fighting over the same woman. And now, here I am, trying to solve both of our love problems.

Wow... what a good person I am. Fate doesn't love me, and here I am doing good so I don't go to hell.

"Hello?"

Miss Renu answered with a short, direct voice, like someone in a bad mood. I suspected she was angry with me, so I sighed a little before getting straight to the point, without beating around the bush.

"Lay and I are not having an affair, okay? Please don't talk like that, don't include me in this."

[I'm not saying anything.]

Dr. Renu's dismissive tone made me roll my eyes. Sometimes, perfect people can be quite annoying. I had given her opinions a lot of weight when in reality, she was just a jealous person.

"Lay told me everything. She said straight out that she is jealous of the fact that I have a thing with Arune and the owner of the restaurant, who is my ex-girlfriend."

[...]

"But is that understandable? We are both very close. We were together for three months, going through ups and downs. What we have been through is not something small. To be honest, we care for each other, but you always come first. And she chose you because she only likes me, but she loves you, Renu. Let me reiterate: she loves you very much! Even when she couldn't remember anything, she still loved and chose you. So, keep calm!"

It turned out that I had to give advice to someone who graduated with a PhD in business administration, but who seemed to be in the fourth grade when it came to relationships. The person on the other end of the line was silent, as if thinking, before sighing.

[I know, but I can't help but think about it a lot.]

"You don't need to worry. If we had already had something, it could have inflamed the situation. But the truth is that nothing ever happened between us. I tried flirting with her several times, but it never worked. I even brought a pillow to sleep with her, got naked and everything, there really is nothing

happened. What about the one who already had something and still ran away? What an idiot!"

I thought of Arune BekFah and got irritated, so I criticized her in general terms, without introducing subject, verb or object, making Miss Renu on the other end of the line startled.

[Are you calling me an idiot?]

"Idiot? No, no. I'm not talking about you, but if I'm going to call you one, it's because you really are acting like an idiot. Don't make small things into big problems. I feel sorry for Lay, she can't even eat, she just stares into space like a sad dog."

[Where is Jom?] "Inside your heart." [...]

"Just kidding. We're at Arune's shop. I'll go back with my date today. Let's settle this well, okay? I don't want you to fight again, otherwise I'll intervene."

After threatening, I hung up and went back to the restaurant, where the dishes I ordered had already been served, but there was no sign of Arune. Only the chef came to greet me, and we exchanged brief glances, both aware that we didn't like each other romantically.

This will be the last time I come to this restaurant. Hmph! "Khun In!"

Arune's voice called me, and I was a little startled. The sweet face that never showed any emotion was there in front of me, and it was so surprising that I couldn't help but sigh her name.

"Arune BerkFah... Since when have you been here?"

"I didn't mean to listen to you talking on the phone." "So you heard everything, did you?"

I smiled mischievously.

"It's like you heard, I'm helping to reconcile the couple. See? Beautiful and yet full of compassion."

"I want to talk to you about last night on the phone."

"Are you going to give me my money back again? No, thank you... How annoying! When I say I don't want it, I mean I don't. Besides, you have a three-way stock split, so when you get the profits from the company, will you pay me back? Don't worry about it."

I waved my hand, wanting to confirm that everything was okay. But Arune shook her head.

"No, I've decided that if I'm going to give it back, I'm going to give it back."

"Then do whatever you want. What can I do? You've always been like this. The food should be here soon, right? Let's go in, it's hot in here."

I was about to excuse myself because I didn't want to talk for too long, afraid that my emotions would show even more. But then I stopped abruptly when a question came up in the middle of the conversation.

"Are you waiting for me?" "I'm not waiting anymore."

I answered directly and concisely, then walked back into the restaurant. Although her sweet face seemed ready to say something more, I wasn't interested in continuing the conversation. After all, if there are no feelings, there's no point in her carrying that burden. It would just be uncomfortable. I understood that very well.

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"Thank you, In, for agreeing to have dinner with me today. The food was delicious, wasn't it?"

Zone chatted with me until we got to my house. He seems a little surprised by the gate that slowly opened with the remote control. I left my car at the mall and asked Janephop to bring it, leaving the parking ticket in the glove compartment.

"Your house is really big!"

"It's because I'm rich, woohoo!" I blinked and smiled at him.

"Thank you for the meal, you're a lovely person." "If I'm lovely, then accept my love."

"It's too early for that. There are too many candidates, I need to choose." "Oh, what a shame."

"Being pretty has its advantages."

I said, shrugging as I got out of the car and prepared to go inside. But Janephop, who seemed to be waiting for me, came up to me with a displeased expression.

"You're late."

"Is two o'clock in the afternoon late?" "You should have let me come get you."

"I'm an adult, duh! You're a pretty bright shade of green today."

I laughed and ran my hand over his chin, which was slightly unshaven.

"Are you trying to imitate Boy Pakorn's beauty? A beard doesn't look good on you, go get one."

"Why did you give that guy a chance?"

As soon as Janephop brought up the subject, I immediately realized that he was claiming the right he thought he should have, because we had talked about it the day before. I, who tried to forget about the subject, just closed my eyes and sighed.

"Now I'm giving everyone a chance. I'm not chasing anyone anymore." "But you still went to Arune BekFah's restaurant."

"Clever, but, well... What can I hide from her?"

I shook my head, crossing my arms and looking at my friend, who I've known since I was little, with a feeling of pity. He was the one person I didn't want to give a chance to, because if it didn't work out, I might lose him forever.

"Jane, you might want to reconsider. Don't jeopardize our good relationship."

The fact that I told Arune BekFah that I wasn't waiting was partly because I understood the difficulty of carrying feelings for someone who doesn't reciprocate. The more I wanted to protect his heart, the heavier the burden I carried became. That's how I felt now...

"I want a chance too."

"If it doesn't end well, we might never be together again." "..."

"Do you still want to try?"

"Yes, I want to try."

I nodded, understanding. Everyone is born with the right to decide whether or not they want a chance. He's not a bad person, so I couldn't be so cruel as to just shut him out because of a disagreement.

"Okay."

I answered briefly, then I approached him, who was taller, and wrapped my arms around him and pulled his neck down. Then I stood on my tiptoes and pressed my lips to his cheek, almost touching the corner of his mouth.

Janephop froze in surprise, while I pulled away and shrugged.

"Think about it and see how you feel after kissing me. Do you still want me or would you rather take a step back? Choose."

"And you?"

"Why?"

"After kissing me, will you move on or take a step back?"

I didn't answer. I wanted Janephop to come to this conclusion on his own, because a person like me could never love him. I had always seen him as a friend and a brother all my life, but I wasn't going to cut off his opportunity because of something like this. He should have the right to choose, and if he had to suffer because of me, he should be prepared for it.

Just as I was about to go back inside, another figure appeared, as if he had been watching the scene for a long time.

"Khun In." "Fah..."

I turned to Janephop and glared at him. He had intended to talk to me so that Arune could hear and see everything, but perhaps he didn't think I would actually kiss him.

"You really did what you said. You gave everyone a chance." Arune spoke as if she was remembering what had happened. "Yes, I am giving everyone a chance."

I shrugged, uninterested. "But this is Janephop, right?" "Yes, this is Janephop."

"Are you being sarcastic, In?"

"Don't joke around. I already said I won't chase anyone. If someone wants a chance, I'm open. But why are you here today? Did you come to meet me or do you have something else to talk about? I thought we had already finished our conversation at the restaurant."

"I don't want you to forgive the debt, I'll pay it back in full."

"Why do you insist on this? We've already discussed this... If you want to return it, that's fine, but if you don't, that's fine too. I understand that you're settling down."

"It may be a small amount for you, but it's not for me."

I looked at the person who values principles and dignity wearily and reiterated so that she would clearly understand that returning the money would mean that we would have to meet more often.

"But if you insist on returning the money, it will make us meet more often, aren't you worried? Don't you want to hide like you did in the past?"

"I'm not hiding."

"If you weren't hiding, you would have shown up these past few months. But you decided not to come because you feel bad about that night."

I bit my lip and looked away, starting to feel embarrassed.

"You made me feel bad too. Let's keep this as a good memory between us. At least this, for me, wasn't so bad. You did well."

I crossed my arms and spoke, even as my face began to heat up. Fortunately, the sky was dark, so the person I was talking to couldn't clearly see that my face was red.

"If you just came to say that, know that I already understand. I'm going to go home. And how did you get here..."

I looked at Janephop, who was watching the scene not far away. "Jane, take Fah back home. It's already dark."

"Yes."

"I really want to return the money, but I want to do it slowly." "Fah! Enough! I already told you that you don't need to."

I started to get really irritated.

"If you're going to pay it back, do it all at once, not little by little. Paying it back little by little will only make you have to see me more, and our story will never come to an end. I'm going to go home. In fact, don't talk about paying it back anymore. I repeat: *DON'T!"*

Hearing this, I was about to go home, but I sighed. I was still as proud as ever, or, in other words, I wanted to get this debt over with so I wouldn't have to meet her again. But then...

## "Yes, that's why Fah wants to pay it back little by little... so I can keep seeing you."

# 32. Confessing

I can't sleep...

I toss and turn until the clock strikes four in the morning, but my eyes are still wide open, like an owl hunting in the night, looking for frogs, toads and mice.

All because of her...

Arune BekFah, the bird of the dawn. By now, she should be asleep, enjoying light and happy dreams. But she left behind words that keep me awake, replaying what she said until I feel irritated with myself.

***'Yes, that's why I want to pay you back little by little... so I can keep seeing you.'***

So what? How should I interpret this? She wants to pay the money back little by little so we can keep seeing each other. That means she wants to see me, right? I should have asked her directly, but instead I got confused, nodded and went back home as if I had been hit in the head with a hammer.

And here I am, sitting, lost in thought until four in the morning. Well, I don't need to sleep. I'll get up and offer alms to the monks and ask them what they think Arune BekFah meant by that.

But... no monks showed up to receive the offerings. I guess I must have a bad fate, don't I? The god of death must love me too much, afraid that I'll make merit and then we won't meet in the eighteenth hell, as we agreed.

Now here I am, frustrated that I can't make merit because no monks have come through. When Dad and Mom heard that I woke up to offer food to the monks, they looked at me as if they had seen a ghost.

"If you want to say something, say it right away. I'm waiting for someone to say something."

I mumble.

"What's your full name?" "Intuorn Phommakrachai."

"With a name as long as Bangkok, you're my daughter, no doubt." My mother says, exchanging a look of disbelief with Father.

"What happened? Why did you suddenly wake up to offer alms? Normally, you're not even up at ten!"

"It's nothing! I've been waking up at eight for the past seven months, and now we're already on the eighth. It's because of the experience in Phuket that you, Father, sent me on! The one who wakes up late here is you, Mom!"

I say, sulking and with my arms crossed, while my thoughts return to Arune BekFah, relentlessly. At the same time, Janephop, who was passing by on his way to the staff kitchen, stops when our eyes meet. There's a tension between us, and we both look away, avoiding each other.

There it is... I told you we shouldn't say everything we think. Inevitably, that creates an uncomfortable atmosphere!

Today, I woke up early. After breakfast, I took a shower, got ready and got ready to drive my new Porsche, which I rarely use since I usually let Janephop drive me around in the van. But today, I feel a little uncomfortable and don't want to talk to him too much. So, I grabbed the key, started the car and got ready to leave the house to meet Arune BekFah.

Yes... right now, my head is full of thoughts about Arune BekFah, flying around freely. I don't understand. I need answers, and she needs to answer the questions I want to know so badly.

The restaurant, where she is a partner, only opens at eleven, although I thought I had arrived early.

However, it seems that someone arrived before me. I get irritated when I realize that this person is my fiancé, which makes me even more uncomfortable.

"It's no coincidence that you're here, right?" I ask Mawin.

"Um... I just found out that Miss Arune opened a restaurant around here. How long have you known about it?"

He answers, noticing that I show no surprise at all. "How did you find out?"

"Janephop told me."

I feel my mouth move silently, containing my annoyance at Janephop's indiscretion. Why does he need to tell everyone where Arune is and what he's doing? Ridiculous.

"Oh, the restaurant opened. Since we're here, let's go in together." He suggests.

"Do you still like her?"

I ask directly. Mawin hesitates a bit, opening her mouth as if she is unsure.

"I don't know. I have to see her first to know. That's why I came to meet her."

"If you don't like her, then why did you come to see her?" "You came, so that means you like Miss Arune too, right?"

When confronted like this, I can only grimace. The two of us are the first customers of the day, and Arune BekFah welcomes us. At first, she smiles at us, not knowing who we are, until Mawin calls her by name with a longing expression.

"Hello, Miss Arun. Do you remember me?"

Being an observant person, as soon as she hears her name, Arun breaks into a big smile. It makes me almost want to punch her small, smiling face. With me, she never smiles like that, always with that indifferent expression, as if she has no emotions.

"Of course I remember you! It's been a while since we've seen each other, right? So, you came with your girlfriend, Mawin?"

Arun smiles.

"With the future bride."

I answer, in a light tone, noticing how Arun's eyes widen in surprise, remembering me only now. But I don't get upset, because I was expecting this reaction.

"You're teasing Miss Arun again." He comments.

"Did you come together?" Arun asks.

"Actually, we came separately, but we met here. It's a good coincidence, like meeting old friends again. It reminds me of the times in Phuket. We did so many things together."

Mawin says.

"Yes, we did so many things..."

I add in a tone that carries a deep meaning, which Arun seems to understand, because she quickly changes the subject and invites us to sit down.

"Please, sit down. Today, the meal is on me." She says.

"No need, the restaurant just opened, and I came to support it." Mawin answers quickly, and I agree, reinforcing the idea.

"Exactly. Besides, don't forget, we are extremely rich. Very rich. I'm thinking of coming here every day to support your business, so you can earn a lot of money and be able to pay me back."

I say, to remind Arun of the conversation we had last night. But Mawin, not understanding the context, laughs and gives me a light push on the shoulder.

"You're impossible today, showing off and still demanding the debt! Miss Arun, how much do you owe her? I'll pay it."

He says.

"It's a few million."

"No problem, I'll pay it."

Mawin answers without hesitation, but I shake my head.

"No, Arun BekFah has a lot of pride. She would never allow anyone to pay the debt for her."

"But if you and I, Fah, use the same wallet, we can pay each other, right?"

Mawin says jokingly, but it starts to irritate me a little, causing me to raise my eyebrow and ask sharply:

"What do you mean by that? Are you going to marry Fah?"

"If Fah wants to get married, I'm in too." "If anyone is going to marry Fah, it's me!"

Whether it was jealousy or something else, I blurted out without thinking, and this caused Arun to freeze, while Mawin looked a little confused, frowning.

"How can you two get married?"

I was about to answer, but then a woman with long hair and a cool air came over and interrupted the conversation, recognizing everyone at the table.

"Hi, In! You come here often. Did you miss me?"

Her voice made me stop complaining immediately, and I stayed quiet, as if I had lost the battle. Even after we were done, I couldn't help but feel a little intimidated. This is what it feels like to be in love for the first time...

"Didn't you miss me so you came here?" "You're a little too direct." I reply. "Sweet!"

"May!" "How cute!"

She came and pulled my cheeks playfully before wrapping her arm around my neck in a friendly gesture.

"What are you going to eat? Let me make you a big plate." "You're so motherly. It's like you're everyone's mother." Mawin says, looking at our interaction strangely.

"You've already become friends with everyone here, right?"

"It was a coincidence, actually. It's a long story." I reply, trying to divert the conversation.

"I have time to listen." "Ex-wife. The end." "Is that long?"

Mawin leans closer and whispers. "Ex-wife means what?"

"Ex-girlfriend, my first girlfriend." "You've dated a woman!?"

Mawin makes a surprised expression before frowning, muttering to himself. "Why am I so shocked? Nowadays, it's normal for women to date." "Exactly! You're acting like you've never seen anything like this before."

I say, smiling sarcastically, because I know this bothers him a lot, especially after the incident where his fiancée ran off with another woman.

Mawin is silent for a moment and changes the subject, clearly not appreciating being teased.

"I heard the food here is delicious. I read the reviews online and I'm here to try it. I've owned a restaurant before."

"Wow, a competitor!"

The chef smiles playfully, and soon breaks into a wide smile. "I'll have to do my best today."

"If it tastes good, I'll come back often. There are only beautiful people here."

Mawin smiles at Arun, with a look that suggests he's referring to her. "If the food is good, I'll come every day. How about it?"

Arun glances at me quickly and smiles at Mawin, with a friendly attitude. "You can come whenever!"

"So, what are you going to order?"

The chef asks, handing over the menus, but I wave my hand in refusal. "No need. It's better to let Fah order, she knows everything I like."

"I can confirm, yes. Fah really knows this girl well. They were glued to each other. Suddenly, Fah left and left Intuorn like a sad dog..."

"Ouch! Why are you pinching me?"

I mumble something in response to the person who seemed to have said too much, but Arun says nothing, just nods to his friend.

"Don't worry, I'll take care of In's order." "It seems like you two are really close." The chef smiles at us once more.

"Then I'll get the kitchen ready. When everything is ready, I'll come over so we can talk."

And so, the elegant chef disappears into the kitchen, while Arun waits for Mawin to place his order so he can write it down and then stand up. Now, it's just me and Mawin, his future fiancé.

Mawin narrows his eyes at me and points to the kitchen.

"Your ex is really pretty. Why did you break up?"

"People break up for many reasons. It was a long time ago, I don't want to talk about it. What about you? Aren't you working in Phuket anymore?

How did you manage to come here?"

"I've been going back and forth, but I'm thinking about not going back there... I'm tired."

"Don't you get lonely without me?"

"You're not that irresistible. I only want to stay here because of Fah." "Hey! That's not a very nice thing to say. I'm your future wife, you know?

When we get married, I'm going to climb into bed, naked, moaning to make you happy."

"You're crazy! What are you saying? Fah is coming! Let's stop talking about this and change the subject."

"How about we talk politics?"

"That'll just make things more tense. No, thank you."

Arun comes back and sits next to me again, allowing her to talk more easily with Mawin. Our elbows touch lightly, but neither of us raises an arm to pull away or move away in any meaningful way.

"Fah, how long have you been opening this place?" "It's been a while."

"You must be rich by now, huh?"

"I have a lot of stocks. I get a little bit of it and that's how I pay off the debts for Khun In."

Arun starts to bring up the subject of the debts we're still discussing.

"At the end of the month, I'll transfer the money."

"I'll take cash! The interest at the bank is growing every day. I can't tell which part is the interest and which is the debt you've already paid off."

I say with a defiant look, clearly trying to irritate her, but the guy sitting across from me makes me even angrier.

"Just look at the receipt Fah sends you, okay?" Mawin tries to help, but that makes me scream. "I want it in cash!"

"I understand."

The atmosphere grows tense. Mawin watches us, aware that Arun and I have something to discuss, then he clears his throat.

"I'm going to go to the bathroom real quick. You can keep talking if you have anything to discuss."

The handsome young man stands up, leaving skillfully. Now it's just me and the sweet-faced person sitting next to me, but we haven't exchanged a word. I end up nudging her with my elbow.

"Why are you so quiet?" "You first, Khun In."

"I don't know what to say."

"So, do you think I should get up?" "No, it's not good."

"So what do you want me to do?"

"Sit down and explain what you meant by what you said last night."

I looked at Arun and started talking as soon as I had the chance, while Mawin wasn't around.

"You said you're paying off your debts little by little so we can meet more often. Explain that."

"Did I say that? I don't remember."

"You can't lie well. Don't try. Besides, I didn't come there just to talk about debts, did I? If I wanted to, I could just text you."

"And what do you think I did?" "You're thinking of giving up."

Arun glances at me and smile slightly. Normally, I barely got any smiles from her, but this time, it was a smile that felt irritating, I wanted to slap her cheeks just to tease her.

"You're thinking too much, Khun In. I wouldn't do something like that."

The sweet-faced person shook her head, as if she were saying I was being self-centered. I gritted my teeth, feeling a little embarrassed, and ended up shrugging, trying to act like I didn't care.

"Oh, really? I must have misunderstood. Sorry, I've been so full of pheromones lately that it seems like everyone is in love with me, including you. If you don't feel anything, that's okay. I'll feel a little embarrassed, but that'll pass."

"Khun In..."

Arune made a regretful expression, but I just shrugged, trying to ignore the urge to crawl under the table.

"But you're also irresistible. Mawin, who hasn't seen you in a while, still hasn't forgotten you. That's right, you never forget who you meet."

"And you too, don't you?"

"What do you know about my life?"

"I know you, Khun In, like orange juice with a pink rim, and it smells like..."

The sweet-faced person quickly closed her lips, having accidentally let out a thought, which surprised me a little. She quickly changed the subject:

"I know there are many people who love you and are very grateful to you." "You're not far behind either."

"What were you two talking about that seemed so fun?"

Mawin arrived just in time, sitting down casually and looking interested in the conversation. It seemed he heard Arun's last sentence.

"Are there people who are interested in you? They know you don't bathe properly."

"Be careful, I'll beat you up, you idiot."

"Oh, I'm just kidding. I heard you have a lot of fans, is that true?" "Yes, of course. I'm beautiful and rich. Who wouldn't like that?" "I don't like you."

"You don't count. You're not a real person." "What!"

Mawin made a disapproving face and bared her teeth.

"You're not attractive at all. Who would fall for someone like that? Arun is much better. She's sweet, well-spoken, and talented."

"See how irresistible you are too?"

I turned to Arun.

"Even Mawin, my future fiancé, can't forget you. We're alike." "We're not alike. I'm poor. Someone like me doesn't deserve anyone."

When Arun referred to herself like that, I felt like she made me quite angry.

"Enough using poverty as an excuse. The last time you ran away, you said you weren't professional. Now we're not boss and employee anymore. That should end. What else do you think you don't deserve?"

"I owe you."

"I already said I don't."

"I can't give you what other people have given you, Khun In. That man yesterday seemed rich, and Mr. Mawin is rich too. Not to mention Jao-Jom, who you brought yesterday. I know... you still feel something."

Arun BekFah's voice sounds different than usual, and I feel compelled to explain myself, not understanding why I'm so distressed.

"I feel what? Yesterday was just dinner. Jao-Jom had a fight with her girlfriend and came looking for me."

"Why, when she had a fight with her girlfriend, would she come to you? And when did you say you would give up? Now, it seems like there's nothing I can do!"

"You could, but you choose not to."

Mawin, who had been watching our discussion, slams the table hard, making the plates almost jump, and with that, we all fall silent. The handsome-faced groom looks from me to Arun BekFah, alternating his gaze as if he's processing the situation.

He clasps his hands together, resting his chin on them, as if he's deducing something from what he's just witnessed.

## "Are you two... confessing your love to each other?"

# 33. Bell

Mawin's direct question left both Arun and I completely surprised, unable to hide it. We were not prepared for something like that, and hearing it out of the blue from Mawin, with his direct and bold manner, made us straighten our posture, clear our throats and shout at the same time to clear the mood.

"What are you talking about, Mawin? Are you crazy?"

"What's wrong with my question? I just said the obvious. Unless the person listening tries to pretend they didn't understand."

He laughed, clearly amused by our reaction.

"Why are you so shocked? It's a common question! Come on, I'll ask again... Fah, do you like In?"

The question directed at Arun was direct and left me silent, watching her expression carefully. The former secretary just stood there, without giving any answer, and maintained a neutral expression.

"Well, if Fah doesn't answer, I'll ask you, then. Do you like Arun, In?" "I don't dislike her, you know?"

"I asked if you like her or not, not if you 'don't dislike' her. That's just bullshit."

He insisted, joking, trying to get a more honest answer. "Why are you pushing so hard?"

Arun and I looked at Mawin seriously, since we didn't like that approach at all. He looked us up and down and then smiled hugely, as if he was having fun.

"Calm down, guys! I'm just kidding! You two keep fighting like a couple in a soap opera. I thought it was funny, so I decided to tease you. If there's nothing between you, why are you so nervous? Asking if you like her or not... the answer is simple, just 'yes' or 'no'. It's not complicated at all. But if you can't answer, that says it all, right?"

"..."

"I'm hungry, let's eat."

Mawin didn't explain what he meant by his answer, and so our lunch hour passed, with the atmosphere still a little tense before we said our goodbyes and each went our separate ways.

After saying our goodbyes, Mawin and I walked together to the parking lot to get our respective cars. However, still with that feeling of something unresolved about what that handsome guy said at the end, I couldn't help but ask.

"You didn't finish what you were talking about." "Hm?"

My cousin raised an eyebrow as if he was pretending not to understand. "About what?"

"You said that if you can't answer, it can only mean one thing... what does that mean?"

As soon as I asked this question, Mawin smiled sideways and shrugged. "Don't worry about it, it doesn't matter at all to you."

"Don't irritate me!"

"Don't be rude, I'm your future husband, you know?"

"You do remember that they're just waiting for us to get engaged, right?"

Mawin paused for a moment and gave a slight smile before getting into the car and starting the engine. He then rolled down the window and said one last thing before driving off.

"I'll see you later."

"Why do we have to meet again?" "Because I miss my wife." "Yuck!"

.

***Knock, knock***

The sound of the knock on the door at eleven o'clock made me stop applying the after-shower cream and go to open the door. When I opened it, I saw that it was the cleaning lady, who had come to give a report at my father's request.

"He asked me to call you, Miss In, saying that it's something very important and that he wants to talk."

"Very important, huh?"

I shrank my neck a little in surprise, but said I understood and went to get ready. About ten minutes later, I walked to Dad's office and noticed that Mawin was there too.

"Hi, you idiot."

"Why do you call Mawin that, In? It's not very nice, you know?"

"Sorry, I got carried away. We meet so often that it feels like I saw him just yesterday."

"Because it was exactly because of yesterday that I had to come today." Mawin said, smiling slightly and winking at me.

"What does that mean?"

"It means that he misses you, of course."

Dad replied happily, laughing in a deep tone. This strange attitude made me look at Mawin, starting to get suspicious.

"Missed what? Are we that close?"

"Nong In says some weird things. Missing you is a good thing, especially for a man like Mawin."

My father emphasized the word "man" instead of "older brother," which confused me a bit, until Mawin smiled and explained.

"I miss you. When we met yesterday, I realized that... I needed to do something."

"Do something like what?"

"Well, like... we should go out on a date before we get engaged or get married right away, that kind of thing."

"Hey, what are you doing, you idiot!?"

I pulled Mawin aside to talk privately, after trying to control myself when I saw my father so enchanted by what Mavin had started to say. The handsome man agreed, and we went to talk in the back garden, where he took out his white scarf to wipe away the sweat.

"It's hot in Thailand. Why don't we talk inside? Your house has air conditioning in every room, it's really cool here."

"But there are a lot of people inside the house, and I don't want anyone to hear me spitting bad words at you, you know? What are you doing, suddenly talking about missing someone, about engagement and all that nonsense, when we both know that we can't stand each other? I can't imagine a male and female cousin naked in bed with each other!"

"I could already imagine it, and it can't be that bad. When you moan, it's kind of cute."

"Mawin!"

"My name is cute, isn't it?"

"Why are you suddenly teasing me? Are you mad about something?"

Since he never acted like this, this made me ask seriously, until Mavin realized I wasn't joking and changed his attitude from teasing to more serious.

"I don't like what you guys are doing." "What did I do? I can't remember."

"Of course I know there's something going on between you and Arun. I'm not stupid."

Mawin got straight to the point, almost making me stutter, but I still didn't get it.

"Having something is good, not having it doesn't matter either. But how does this relate to you talking to my father about the wedding?"

"This has happened to me before, and it made me look like an idiot in front of hundreds of people because the bride ran off with another woman."

My handsome cousin's voice sounded pained.

"You love each other, you care for each other, but you don't accept each other. This causes problems for everyone around you. It may not be

affecting anyone right now, but it will in the future. I won't let this happen. If I can nip this in the bud, I will do so before the situation gets worse."

"You idiot." "Choose."

Mawin looked into my eyes as I cursed him. Usually when we cursed each other like this, we laugh at each other because it's a joke, but now I was cursing him seriously, full of anger and confusion. It didn't matter how Arun and I felt about each other; it was none of his business.

"You can curse me all you want. Now I'm giving you the opportunity to make everything clear, and I only have three months to do so."

"What's the deadline?"

"If you two can't come to an agreement, you'll marry me. This time, no bride will be able to run away from the wedding."

"Why are you doing this? I haven't done anything to you yet. Don't throw your personal story at people who have nothing to do with it!"

I was trying to argue, but he just brushed my words aside with a cold smile. I grabbed Mawin's arm.

"Because I hate those women who love themselves, that's why." "What?"

"Especially those who love themselves and use men as shields, making us look like silly characters who only serve to hide our feelings, causing other people to get hurt. This really pisses me off... If you and Arun can't come to an understanding, accept your feelings, and get together to solve everything once and for all, then you can climb into my bed and we'll have children until the houses and cities are full!"

.

.

I'm not sure whether I should call my former secretary, but before I can decide to do anything, Janephop's voice rang out.

"Miss."

"Jane."

I called the name of the friend I grew up with, a little embarrassed. Ever since he revealed his feelings, all I could think about was what to do next. If I could go back in time, I wouldn't have said I would give him a chance.

"You're worried about what Mr. Mawin said about the engagement, right?"

He knows everything about my life, and this situation is no different. I admitted it openly, without secrets.

"Yes."

"If you don't want to get married, tell your father that you don't want to." "For what reason?"

"Because you don't love him, right? Your father won't force you to do anything."

"That's true, but he'll still convince me to accept the engagement, and if I have a boyfriend, we can break up later, something like that. We know he's been talking about this engagement for a long time, he just hasn't made it official. Now, with Win mentioning this, his hopes are sky high."

"And does Mr. Win like you that much?"

"Of course not! He's doing this for personal reasons, which is frustrating." I crossed my arms, showing my displeasure.

"He's just trying to pressure me into..."

"..."

Should I or shouldn't I say that the real reason is that Mawin wants Arun and I to openly acknowledge our feelings for each other? I'm not sure what I can say now. If he hadn't confessed earlier, I probably would have come clean and maybe even told him about the deep connection we had. But now it all seems so complicated and awkward, like I'm becoming a person who hesitates to express her feelings.

"Never mind."

"Do you have feelings for Mawin?"

"No, I don't! If I had, I'd be here dreaming like a leading lady in a music video, right?"

"And do you have any feelings for me?"

*Again...*

Janephop's question felt like a knife offering me the chance to hurt him right now, but I was too kind to do something like that and just laughed to cover it up.

"Is this really the time to say things like that?"

"If you have any feelings for me, I'll tell Mr. Anek." "It's not that simple."

"Why?"

"Because it's you, right... Jane, we grew up together. No one accepts that easily."

"Not even you?" "Exactly."

"But you still said you'd give me a chance."

"If you didn't have a chance, it would be very sad." I told him, understandingly.

"I also want to know you as a man, Jane, but now the situation has changed a bit. Mawin has made everything complicated. Maybe we should just make this all null and void..."

As I kept talking, I didn't realize I was careless. Jenpop came closer, wrapping his long arms around me and pulling me close before kissing me. I was so stunned that I tried to push him away. Every touch was filled with discomfort, shock, and revulsion.

*Disgusting...*

My feelings were so clear that I almost screamed. But as if a distress bell had rung before I could call for help, I realized that this bell was the most terrifying I could imagine, and it shouldn't be here, in this house.

"Let go of my daughter right now... you scoundrel!"

My mother's voice made Janephop stop and release me immediately. As soon as I managed to free myself, I covered my mouth with my hand and said, through tears:

"I'm sorry, Jane."

*"Yes... Miss, I understand. Thank you for the opportunity and I'm sorry it had to end this way."*

I bit my lip tightly as tears streamed down my face. Then I left without even wanting to hear how my mother handled the situation.

All I knew was that I cried all night, knowing that from now on... he would no longer be by my side.

# 34. Heart

I cried so much that my eyes were swollen for three days straight. Without Janephop by my side, it felt like something essential in my life had been ripped away, to the point where I could barely breathe.

Sometimes, I would call him for some task, momentarily forgetting that he was no longer there. And, upon remembering this, the tears would come back, repeating the cycle over and over, until my mother, seeing my state, could no longer bear it.

"Stop crying, In... Mommy's heart can't take it anymore."

"I want to stop too, Mom, but I just can't. Why did you and Dad have to be so cruel and send Jane away? You could have talked to him calmly."

"And if Jane hadn't left, would you have been able to face him? In, you said yourself that you couldn't accept his feelings."

My mother noticed immediately.

"But we could pretend that none of this happened..."

"That's something that people who run away from their problems do, my dear... It's better to accept reality. This will soon pass. Call a friend to come stay with you, so you won't feel so alone."

"But who would I call? I don't have any friends." "Who doesn't have any friends?"

"Someone like me."

I said, discouraged. My mother looked at me with compassion and hugged me.

"Oh, my love, you must be forgetting someone, right?" "Who, mom?"

"Surprise!"

My mother's "surprise" really made my tears stop. The sight that opened before me shocked me: Arun was standing right in front of me. I looked at my mother, confused, almost with my mouth open.

"Mommy brought a friend for you, Nong in. Now you can stop crying, my love."

"Mommy, how did you manage to bring Arun here?"

"Because I'm smart, pretty and resourceful, my dear. It just so happens that a friend of mine went to a very famous restaurant and took a picture, and by coincidence, Arun appeared in the background. See? It's fate!"

"And she just agreed to come?"

Arun didn't say anything, but I could imagine that out of consideration, she agreed out of respect for my mother, her former boss.

"Of course she would come. I told you that you were very sad, and you two are already quite close."

"?!"

Arun and I turned to my mother, surprised. She looked a little confused too.

"What's wrong? Did I say something wrong? Or was what I said inappropriate?"

"The context didn't work well, Mom."

"I just wanted to say that you two are really close, you know... Well, Arun is here now, so Nong In, don't ask so many questions. Arun, please take care of my girl. She's a poor thing: besides beauty and money, she has nothing else in this life. Stay here and talk, while I send someone to bring some snacks."

"Do you want to talk right here?"

I asked, pointing to my room. My mother nodded with a smile.

"Do you want to talk at Suphachalasai Stadium? Too big, don't you think?" "We'll talk right here, mother. Thank you."

My mother left, closing the door to leave us alone. We stood there, trapped in an uncomfortable silence, until I, trying to lighten the situation, bit my lip lightly and invited her to sit on the bed.

"Sit down, go on."

Arun looked at the bed, hesitating a little.

"This is my room, you know... there aren't many places to sit. Sitting is better than standing."

"Yes."

But she remained still, so I ended up making a sarcastic comment, even though I didn't want to make the mood worse.

"I'm not going to do anything to you. If I remember correctly, the last time I was the victim."

Arun glances at me and finally sit down on the bed. I stand there, arms crossed, watching her. The last time we were like this, so close and alone, seemed like a long time ago. Arun then broke the silence.

"I heard from your mother that you were hiding at home, crying all the time."

"Yeah. Look at the circles under my eyes." I pointed to my swollen eyelids as proof.

"But it's no wonder I cry, right? My only true friend left me too. I started to think that maybe I'm a difficult person, the kind that no one really wants to get close to."

"But Janephop didn't see you as a friend from the beginning, Khun In. You know that, deep down. He didn't walk away because he didn't want to be your friend."

"Yes, I know. But if we pretended not to know, we could continue being friends, like we always have been."

"And why, all of a sudden, can't you just pretend to be friends anymore?"

"Because he asked for a chance... he wanted something more than friendship."

"So you gave him that chance, knowing full well how it would end?"

"You don't understand how sad it is for a person not to even have the chance to try. Janephop has feelings too, you know? He wanted me to see him as a man. Denying that right away would have been unfair."

"Oh, that's right... I get it, after all, Intuorn is always so generous with everyone."

Arun's words sounded almost sarcastic, and my discomfort grew. I uncrossed my arms, straightened up and looked at her, uncomfortable.

"Are you upset about something? Weren't we talking calmly?"

"I'm not upset about anything, it's just that you're really generous, always so altruistic with others. You were even generous with me."

"What are you talking about?"

"Everything, I guess. You were able to spend millions to buy my freedom and help me escape from marriage. You were my friend, even though I was just a 'cleaner', a trash can where you dumped your feelings."

"I never saw you that way. Wait. All this time, did you think I was like that? To me, you've always been..."

"What?"

Arun stood up and stared at me, waiting for my answer. I tried to wet my lips, but the words wouldn't come out. I remained silent, not knowing how to define what she really meant to me.

No one kisses a friend. No one goes as deep as we did that night, with someone they consider a sister...

"So, what am I to you?"

"And me, what am I to you, Khun In?" Arune returned the question.

.

***Knock, knock.***

The sound at the door interrupted the moment like a saving gong. Arune and I looked away at the same time as the maid came in with a snack and orange juice. Luckily, she arrived just in time, or our conversation might have escalated to a tone I don't know how it would end.

"Have some sweets. Dessert improves the mood."

I suggested, trying to lighten the mood. Arun looked at me with a hesitant expression, but took a cookie and began to chew. The way she moved her mouth, devouring the cookie, slowly dissipated my previous tension, and as I watched her, I felt a tenderness that almost made me smile.

That mouth... We'd kissed before.

"What are you looking at?"

Arun asked, still with her mouth full of cookie. I was taken aback and quickly shrugged.

"I'm just looking... You seem to be enjoying your snack. I don't think I've asked you that since we met again."

"What?"

"Okay?"

"I'll take it." She replied.

"Have you ever... been involved with someone?"

*Pfff!*

Arun spat out the cookie in a cloud of crumbs, choking. I ran to her, alarmed by the scene, afraid she would choke. I handed her the juice and, worried, began rubbing her back to help her recover.

"Drink some water. Be careful not to choke. Are you a child or what?" "What are you asking... *cough cough...* like that?"

Aruna stumbled, still choking.

"Uh, I was just asking how you are, straight up. I looked at your mouth and... I ended up thinking about other things."

As I spoke, my mind wandered to Arun's coworker, the chef, with her beautiful face and her culinary skills, which always made me think about this subject.

"Thinking about what, exactly?"

She asked, intrigued.

"Maybe when we were practicing kissing."

I ran my thumb over Arun's lips, trying to wipe away the crumbs of the biscuit. But the touch on her lips made my heart race in an unusual way. I couldn't help but move closer.

"Have you tried that with anyone?" "With you."

Arun replied with a spark in his eyes.

"Mawin said you've never kissed. And what about everything you said before?"

"I heard you're getting engaged." "Yes."

"Are you really getting married?" "Would you like me to get married?"

I finally asked the question I'd been wanting to ask for so long. But before I could get an answer, my phone rang, interrupting the moment. Arun immediately moved away, standing at the door of my room as if he was looking for a way out. I frowned when I saw the number on my phone, I knew who it was and pressed my lips together, irritated by the interruption.

"Hi, Zone."

As soon as I said his name, Arun opened the door and walked out. I crossed my arms, thinking that maybe I needed to cut unnecessary people out of my life, because things were too complicated.

[I thought about asking you out for dinner. We haven't seen each other in days.]

"Not today." [Really?...]

The sadness in his voice shook me. I sighed, feeling guilty. If I had stopped the conversation at the beginning, maybe we wouldn't have gotten so involved.

"Where are you now? Do you want to come see me?" [Really?]

"Yes, come visit me at home. Today I want to talk to you."

Arun left without saying goodbye, disappearing just like that day. Now, besides Zone, who I had invited to come, there was also Mawin, my future fiancé, who I don't know how he got here. Could it be that today is a big holiday? So many people are showing up, as if we were welcoming monks to hear a sermon.

"How did you get here?"

I asked, trying to hide my confusion.

"Your father called me and said there was a man in your house." "And you came running? Are your house and mine that close?"

"No, but I can't miss out on fun like this. If I miss three minutes, I'll feel bad... Hello!"

Mawin greeted Zone after whispering something for a while. We were now all sitting close to each other on a bench next to the pool, with Zone on the other side.

"Hi."

Zone said, trying to decipher our body language. I looked at Mawin and sighed, exhausted.

"Sorry I had to arrange for you to come today. This is the matter I wanted to discuss."

I said, looking at Mawin, the least reliable helper at the moment. "Actually, I decided to get engaged to Mawin yesterday." "Right."

Zone replied concisely, as if he already knew what that meant. Mawin smiled at me, admiring my sincerity.

"Actually, you could have called me, couldn't you?"

"That would seem disrespectful. You're someone who comes and goes easily. If you like me, you should say so. It wouldn't make sense for me to deny you over the phone or text; that would be cruel. I don't want to lead you on... I don't want to hold you back. The sooner I end it, the easier it will be for you."

"Right."

Zone said, scratching his head.

"But right now I feel really insecure. Maybe telling you over the phone would make me seem less bad."

"Or maybe if I hadn't given you any hope from the start, you wouldn't have wasted your time."

"But at least you gave me a chance." "A chance..."

I bit my lip, remembering Janephop sadly.

"Is it really nice to be given an opportunity like that?"

"It's better than having nothing. Thank you for being honest. To be honest, when I decided to get close to you, I already knew I didn't deserve this.

Now, even though I'm sad, I've been preparing for this from the beginning." "What makes you think you don't deserve it?"

Everything. I consider myself to be of a certain standard, but when I see what you have, I can't compare. Your house is huge, your parents are who they are, and your wealth is only increasing by the second. In the meantime, I'm just hoping that the goods I bring to sell will pass through customs easily."

Zone laughed, like someone who feels defeated.

"Okay, I'll try to pull myself together. Don't worry about it. Thank you for giving me a little of your time, even if it was brief; it already means a lot. I might even tell others that I once tried to win over someone from high society like you."

His words were full of humility, and I admired how easily he accepted the truth. Part of the reason so few people approach me is that only a small fraction of them are on a similar level to me. Those who do want to approach me are often so modest that they end up backing away, and few people have the courage to approach me like Zone.

"We can continue being friends," I suggested.

"That's great... Congratulations to both of you," he said. "Thank you."

Mawin replied, listening silently and then smiling at Zone, reaching out his hand to shake.

"I like you. You're a really nice guy." "I wish you both happiness."

Zone replied. We both watched Zone's car drive away, each one immersed in his own thoughts. Mavin put his hands in his pockets and commented good-naturedly:

"See? We've already hurt two people."

"I did my best. Am I wrong for giving a chance to someone who wants to get close?"

I replied, looking at my fiancé who seemed to be joking about the situation.

"It's not wrong, as long as you don't have someone in your heart. You can date anyone in this world, even a beggar. But that needs to be under the condition that you're not in love with anyone."

"What if I am in love with someone? Why can't I make room for other people?"

"Because, anyway, the person you give a chance to won't be able to win you over. Once the person you really like shows up, they'll all lose their turn."

"But the person I like isn't getting closer!"

"Why don't you try getting closer? Maybe the person isn't like Zone?" Mawin suggested.

"What do you mean?"

I looked at Mawin, who was staring into my eyes. "He's a humble person."

"I don't understand what you're doing."

I said frankly, thinking that Mawin had nothing to gain from this situation. He had feelings for Arun, but he was forcing me to confess my own feelings, even though he knew there was something between me and the delicate-faced secretary.

"You like Arun, don't you?" "Yes."

"Then why act like it's a game? Supposing I end up getting involved with Arun..."

"It would be good. That way, I wouldn't have to marry you, and you wouldn't have to look for someone else to replace someone else, causing other people to get hurt. I don't want to suffer again like in the past, with this love that both of us don't dare to accept."

"What if I talk to Arun directly and, I don't know... it works?" "Then I would congratulate you."

Mawin, with his charming smile, put his hand on my head and sighed. "Would you really be happy about that?"

"Yes." "..."

"Mutta won't be your victim anymore." "What's that?"

I looked at Mawin, frowning.

"I got it from a soap opera. You're so good at Thai dramas, why don't you know that phrase?"

"I know it, but I didn't think you'd use it. I'm kind of dazed."

It seems I managed to resolve things quickly. I don't know how to feel about Mawin, who was intruding on my life and, in a way, became a problem I needed to solve.

But in a way, it was good... because he helped me end things with Zone faster. The bad thing was that now I had been stuck in the car for over three hours, from four in the afternoon until now, one in the morning, just watching Arun sitting in the store, seemingly reading or writing something down, like someone doing math.

She was still the same dedicated worker, never getting distracted and always focused on what she was doing, which made me admire her even more. Even my ex-girlfriend, who was a year older than me, had already left. To be honest, I didn't want to go into the store, because I didn't want to face my ex while I was confessing my love for another woman I was also interested in.

The situation was so complex that I felt suffocated, so I sat in the car until 1 am, feeling pathetic.

I'm Intuorn, I've always been direct, but now I was scared, I didn't have the courage to get out of the car, face the situation or do anything. But if I didn't do anything, it would just seem like a waste of time...

So I had to do something, like...

## Indy:

"Are you asleep yet?"

I texted Arun and watched her reaction from my car. She picked up her phone, read the message, and frowned before putting the phone back down without replying. This left me frustrated.

## Indy:

"I have something to tell you."

I continued to type a reply. Arun BekFah looked at her phone and stood still for a while before biting her lips and closing the account book on the table. Then, she leaned back with her hands on her face, looking exhausted.

What is this!? She shouldn't be curious about what I had to say. I've said so much and now she ignores me as if I'm invisible!

I got irritated and prepared to get out of the car. However, as I reached out to open the door, my phone sounded again, and the caller was the same one who had just ignored me.

What else could it be!? "Say it!"

## [Please don't get married!]

Uh...

## [I don't know what to do other than ask you, Khun In... Please don't get married. I am suffering.]

# 35.My Turn to Speak

I'm about to open the door to get out of the car, but I quickly pull my hand back and sit down modestly, not knowing how to act. I look inside the store and see Arun holding the phone to her ear.

You could say I was shocked, since she suddenly blurted out something like that out of nowhere, and I wasn't prepared to hear something like that. She's the kind of person who always manages to surprise me, no matter the occasion.

And always... now too.

"Are you hurt because I'm getting married? Why does that hurt you?"

My heart beats faster, anxious to hear the answer from whoever is on the other end of the line. In fact, the way Arun introduced the subject already gives me a clue, but I still want to be sure. I don't want to risk being embarrassed because I think I misunderstood, like last time.

"..."

"I asked why you're hurt."

*Beep*!

Then the call was cut off. I saw Arun quickly hang up and put her phone on the table, as if she was scared. Seeing her behavior, I felt that I couldn't let this go and got out of the car immediately, heading straight to the store.

However, the door was locked from the inside. "Open the door and come talk to me now, Arun!"

I knocked on the door while shouting. The sweet-faced little girl, who was distracted, was startled by the commotion and ran to the door, with a surprised expression, as if she didn't recognize my face.

"The store is already closed." "It's me, Intuorn."

"Khun Intuorn..."

As soon as she realized it was me, the little girl was startled before slowly unlocking the door and opening it to face us, without the glass separating us.

"Continue where you left off. Why are you hurt about me getting married?" "I..."

"Stop hiding! Normally, you're great at talking, always commenting on this and that, but why now, when I need you to talk, you don't say anything?

Tell me what you're feeling!"

"If I speak, would it change anything?"

The sweet-faced girl speaks with a shaky voice, hugging herself. I looked at her insecure posture, surprised, because the former secretary never acted like that. She was always assertive, confident in everything she did, she knew and calculated well before acting.

Maybe what she said before was something that slipped out without thinking, and that's why she hung up quickly.

"Yes, it can change. You just have to tell me." "Can a wedding be canceled that easily?"

"For me, everything is easy, if you just tell me how you feel. That's all!"

It seems like getting her to talk will be too difficult, so I decide to press her.

"Do you hate me?"

"I don't hate you, Khun In." " "

"I get nervous every time I see you."

"Do you get nervous when you see me? After seven months of not seeing each other and finally seeing each other again?"

The sweet girl looks at me and slowly nods before answering. "Yes, I still get nervous too."

"What kind of nervousness are we talking about? Because I get so nervous that it feels like my heart is going to explode."

"I get nervous too, like my heart is going to explode."

She admits slowly, as I lead the conversation, making everything easier, more natural.

"I think about you every day."

"I think about you too, Khun Intuorn, every day." "With my eyes open or closed."

"Yes. with my eyes open or closed."

"I like you."

"I like you too. "

At this point, the little girl seems to realize what she was about to say. She looks at me in surprise, putting her hand to her mouth, her eyes teary, like someone who doesn't know how to deal with her own emotions. But I've already passed the point of no return; now, I can't stop. Since I've started, I

need to continue, I need to make everything clear so that nothing else is left unanswered.

"I'm a person who falls in love easily, but it's hard for me to stop liking someone. I'm looking for the puzzle piece that fits perfectly, and I hope you're that piece."

"Khun Intuorn..."

"I've done so much for you... Even though you've broken my heart so many times, I always end up coming back. I've tried to move on, I've tried to find someone new, but I couldn't, because my head only thinks about you. In the last seven months, I haven't been with anyone else. I tried to open my heart, but in the end, it didn't work. Even Janephop disappeared from my life..."

As I say this, I feel a lump in my throat, an urge to cry, but I force myself to swallow the feeling.

"..."

"You know me in every way. I admit that I'm a person who gets attached easily, but what can I do? That's my nature. Whenever someone treats me well, I reciprocate. And with you... it's even more intense..."

"..."

"It's more than with anyone else." "Khun In..."

"Please don't interrupt. Otherwise I'll forget what I was about to say, it's my turn to speak."

I gesture for her to be quiet and close my eyes, continuing to talk without stopping.

"But that doesn't mean if someone is nice to me, I'll necessarily like them. Like Janephop, he's always been nice to me, better than anyone else in the world, but I can't love him. There are people who court me and offer me

goodwill, but I don't feel anything for them. And when Jom came back into my life, she got jealous and she realized that I might have feelings for you. But the truth is, I wasn't excited or happy about it, because in my head there was only you."

"..."

"You know how it hurts to hear that I'm getting married. Now, imagine how I'll feel if you don't accept it this time."

"Am I worthy of you? I'm nothing. I don't have the courage to crave or have feelings for you."

***'Sometimes, maybe she should feel that way.'***

Mawin’s words echo in my head, as if they were reaffirming Aruna’s fear of this.

“I want nothing from you other than your love. If you can give me that, I will give you everything, just like..."

Arun throw herself at me, pressing her lips against mine and wrapping her arms around my neck. Her gesture is like an answer to everything. My body slowly pulled back, seeking support as I hold onto her waist, as if she's an anchor point for me.

So I kissed her back, even though I didn't know exactly what was happening.

The moment unfolded slowly, with Arun's soft lips, which were not yet very skilled in kissing. Although we had shared moments like this before, time had pulled her away, and she seemed hesitant. I then took the initiative, tilting my head and moving closer.

Our tongues danced with each other, our whispers of breath and the weight of our faces pressed together created a unique connection. Many times I thought about pulling away, but the fear of not having that chance again

prevented me from doing so. And when I finally thought about pulling my body back, Arun was the one she stepped back.

"I need a moment to breathe." She said.

"Sorry, it must be because I missed you so much."

I replied, and the moment I finished speaking, she looked into my eyes and smiled. It was the first time I had seen that smile, and I couldn't resist pulling her in for a kiss again.

*A kiss...*

*Another kiss...*

And another, until I didn't know how much time had passed. The atmosphere around us seemed to be taken from a classic romantic film, with us exchanging declarations of love at the door of a restaurant, under the soft light that projected from inside the place. There was no one passing by, as if the world was asleep, and we could act freely, as if this wasn't our country, but rather a universe of our own.

The small figure finally moved away, removing her hands from my chest gently, just enough to create a space between us.

"It's been a while since we... well, it's about time, isn't it?" "You're the one who started kissing me."

I said, giving a slight smile.

"I'm sorry for acting so impulsively. Ever since I met you, I can't control myself and I'm not myself anymore."

"But I like it."

"So, are you getting married or not?"

Arun pressed her forehead against mine and asked in a choked voice, avoiding looking me in the eyes. With one hand, she played with the collar of my white shirt, which I had put on carelessly to come and settle things quickly.

"If you agree to be my girlfriend, I won't get married."

"It's already late. Let's go, it's almost two in the morning and I need to wake up early tomorrow. You also need to go to bed early so you don't look old."

Arun interrupted, making a relaxed expression as she looked at her watch. "This again?"

"What's wrong?"

As soon as she noticed my discontented tone, her expression changed, as if she was feeling guilty, even though she didn't know exactly what she had done wrong.

"You always avoid important matters. I'm talking to you directly, but you don't give me any security."

I said, trying to hide my frustration. "I've never kissed anyone."

She confessed, and I stared at her, confused.

"With Mawin, I made up a story just to have the chance to touch you, for no apparent reason. At that moment, I just wanted to know if it was curiosity or desire. But as soon as I realized it wasn't just that, I got scared, afraid of getting hurt, so I ended up running away. Anyway, I don't see how I could be worthy of you."

"..."

"I thought about how far we can go, if we can live together until we grow old. Would you really accept being with someone who only earns a few

thousand a month? Is that possible?"

"Are you already thinking about growing old? You really think too much." "That's love, isn't it?"

"..."

"If the thought of us being together and taking care of each other like lovers is possible, just like in a family, cutting each other's nails, watching movies without dubbing and letting you translate. Every day, we could sit together to eat and discuss a little about unimportant things, or get irritated because of menstruation, something like that. That's love, isn't it? If it's..."

"..."

***"I love you, In."***

The petite girl spoke simply and went to turn off the lights in the store before grabbing her things to go back. She acted as if what she had said earlier was nothing special, while I still stood there, my heart racing, trembling and my face hot as if I were near a flame. Until Arun left the store and locked the door, everything was silent.

"I still haven't told you what I want to talk about. Listen to me until the end."

"You're going to tell me about the wedding day, right? I already know. Mawin sent a template of the invitation to choose the color."

"Huh?"

We just talked today that there definitely wasn't going to be a wedding, and where did this invitation come from? Wait... I also have something I need to tell you.

"It's not about that."

"Then why did you come to talk to me?"

When I decided to actually speak, I was a bit lost. Before, I spoke so well and said everything I thought, but when I got to the important sentence, I became deaf and dizzy, and I ended up talking about something I never thought would be a topic today:

*"ManU's child in the haunted house... is really a ghost."*

Arun looked at me with a shocked expression, while I, who had blurted out something, couldn't quite match what I was thinking in my head, just kept opening and closing my mouth.

"What... what did you say?"

"That child is very angry with both of us for tricking her into staying at the mini-market, causing her to be separated from her mother. If you don't stay with me tonight, she'll crawl under the bed where you're sleeping."

*"I sleep on a mattress and put the mattress on the floor. A ghost can't crawl out."*

"That ManU kid will climb up the ceiling and stand upside down, coming to you."

"What do you want!?"

And when I started to terrorize her, Arune BekFah, who usually didn't show emotions, screamed as if she was very afraid of ghosts.

***"I want you!"***

I said it!!!

"What... what did you say?"

## "I love you, Arun. If you don't want to be haunted by ghosts, you have to let me spend the night with you!"

# 36. Nong

Everything went silent after I opened my heart and practically revealed everything. However, Arune BekFah just kept a neutral expression, motionless, as she always does when she is hiding her feelings. Finally, since I couldn't decipher what she was thinking, I ended up asking again:

"So, what's it going to be? Can I spend the night with you or not?" "I think it's too soon."

"Too soon?"

I retorted, remembering the days when our relationship wasn't as defined as it is now.

"I think we've already come a long way. It's okay. I just want to spend the night with you, without any ulterior motives.

"Really?"

This time, she narrowed her eyes at me, like someone who didn't believe me. Yes... I myself didn't believe what I was saying. After all, I already have a girlfriend, but still, I didn't want to go home alone now.

"What kind of person do you think I am? I'm happy to have a girlfriend and I just wanted to spend the night with you to remember the pleasant atmosphere of seven months ago, when we slept in the same room. I just miss you."

"Khun In."

"No."

I knew that Arune would try to refuse again, being as firm as ever. This time, She decided to play hard to get so I throwing myself into her arms and asking in a childish tone, as if I were begging my father for a new bag.

"Nong In doesn't want to leave, I won't, I won't!" "You turn into a Nong right away, huh?"

"Nong In doesn't want to leave."

I walked away, pouting like a three-year-old, knowing full well that this was the way to awaken her affection.

"Please don't send me away."

Her expression, sweet as always, a little surprised. Then she coughed and run her hand over her face, looking completely unprepared to deal with this situation.

"If you don't leave, then what will we do?" "P'Fah."

"Yes... Khun In?"

"P'Fah, P'Fah, P'Fah!"

"It's late. If you don't leave, it won't be okay... don't pout like that, please."

Arun sighed slightly and fell silent. Soon after, she seemed about to say something, and seeing this, I couldn't resist and asked curiously:

"Is there something you want to tell me?"

"Khun In... It may sound a little difficult, I also have feelings for you." I smiled broadly and nodded in understanding.

"But I want things to happen slowly. Our relationship has progressed

too many stages at once. I want moments as a couple, those when you are conquering."

"Romantic, huh? Who would have thought that Arune BekFah, who barely shows her feelings, has a side of a shoujo manga protagonist!"

She lowered her head, nervous, intertwining her hands. I pulled her hand and squeezed it tightly, letting out a sigh. It's okay... we love each other, and we have all the time in the world. Besides, moving too fast could scare this little girl and make her run away.

"Understood. I was just being naughty. I really just wanted to spend some time with you, but okay. I'll drive you and then I'll go back to my house, I promise."

"Are you really leaving?"

"Yes. I'm not that bold. Did you forget that we ended up together because you attacked me first?"

"You always bring that subject up again!"

"Let's take it slow, I promise. I'll win you over the way you want, I'll be a loving and obedient girlfriend. Satisfied, P'Fah?"

"Enough, huh? Hey, didn't you say you were going slow?" She reached up and patted my arm lightly, smiling shyly.

Whenever I see her smile, I can't resist pulling her in for a kiss. I actually have a very strong feminine side, I never thought I would be the one to pull someone like that, because it was always men who did it to me.

But now, a bold version of Intuorn was born!

As Arune mentioned, the restaurant and her apartment are very close. In less than five minutes by car, we arrived at the luxurious condominium right in the heart of the city. I turned the car around to park and drop her off

at the building, looking at the name of the place, which seemed familiar to me.

"How much is the rent per month here?" "Over ten thousand baht. It's expensive." "And the price of the apartment?"

"It's now six million."

"Well, it's in the city center, so the prices are sky-high. Even though it's the size of a bathroom in my house, seeing how safe it is here, it seems like there's nothing to worry about."

"Yes."

And then our conversation fell silent. Arune still didn't get out of the car, and I didn't unlock the door, because I didn't want to leave. We were a couple in love, fresh out of a reconciliation, it hadn't even been twenty minutes, and everything still felt like a dream. I wanted to stay with her longer, but what could I do?

"Remember the boy from ManU?"

"Here you go again with that! How many jokes do you have, huh? I had almost forgotten!"

The little girl retorted, which made me laugh for having teased her. I decided to poke her a little more before leaving. She was adorable at all times, whether she was serious, smiling, scared or irritated listening to me tell ghost stories.

"Did you know that, in fact, the name of the cook's son is Neung Diao and not ManU?"

"I found out from the cook, but I didn't correct you because I noticed that you like to give strange names to things. No, that's enough, I'm not going to talk about it anymore. I don't want to hear it."

"I only saw Neung Diao's face for the first time after listening to a radio program, on my way back from the hospital in Phuket. Can you believe that left me in shock? Because I'm not someone who believes in ghosts, and I still get goosebumps! When the family called to tell me that a ghost child was stuck to the refrigerator and screaming that it had been abandoned, I was terrified."

"..."

"Let's end the story of the boy ManU here. Good night and sweet dreams!" "In!"

I unlocked the car and waved goodbye to Arune, but what I got in return was an angry look, with her baring her teeth in anger.

"You're so cruel to do that!"

"What did I do? I don't understand!"

*"Stay with me tonight!"*

The sweet-faced girl held my wrist that was on the gear lever and took a deep breath. I just smiled slightly and shook my head.

"Are you crazy... Is this right? We need to take it slow." "In!"

"Okay, okay. Since you want me to stay so much, what can I do?"

I laughed, not believing that what I did worked to the point that she invited me to stay. But I wasn't going to do anything, I just wanted to look like a good person, even though there were many sinful desires in my head.

"Can I borrow some pajamas to wear tonight... Oh, but we need to park the car. Hmm, where can I park?"

I started to complain, glancing at the little girl, who still had an irritated look on her face.

After parking, I walked next to Arune, not forgetting to hold her hand and shake it a little.

"What's this?"

"We're dating, right? We should hold hands. You need to get used to it." "You're mean!"

The little girl didn't move away, and soon we were in the elevator. In a short time, we arrived at the 26th floor where Arune lived. As we stopped in front of the door, I felt a little nervous, my hands started to sweat without me being able to help it.

"Your condo is very clean." "Just be quiet and sleep, okay?"

Arune emphasized. I looked at her sweet face and made a carefree expression.

"Yes, I'm just going to sleep. What else can I do? And to remind you a little, our first time, you were the one who pushed me into bed. Don't forget."

"No need to talk about it."

As soon as the apartment door opened, a soft scent of linen coming from a diffuser filled the room. Arune's room was spotless and organized, with everything symmetrically placed, as always. I nodded, impressed.

"The room really reflects your personality. The decor is beautiful and simple."

"The owner of the room is an interior designer." She commented with a smile.

"I like the minimalist style, less is more. I don't have a lot of furniture,

so the space feels bigger. Not having a bed makes it easier; I just organize a little and everything is ready to sleep."

"If I wanted to buy it, how much would it cost?"

"About six million baht. I'll save a little more money and get a loan." She replied, smiling, before giving me a sideways glance.

"So, what are we going to do now?"

"What do you mean? Are you going to attack me?" I crossed my arms, pretending to protect myself. "Didn't I say we were just going to sleep?"

"I meant... what are we going to do now. Don't tease me like that, In! You make me not know what to say."

When she made an almost tearful expression, I started to laugh and hugged her, seeing how adorable she looked all shy.

"I'm just kidding. How about you take a shower first and then I'll go. Oh, can I borrow some pajamas, please?"

"Sure."

Arun went to the closet, grabbed a comfortable t-shirt and shorts, and handed them to me.

"I don't wear underwear to bed, just letting you know." "Neither do I."

"Be careful so I don't put my hands where I shouldn't." "In!"

"Just go take a shower and stop being shy. We're past that phase." "I'm not talking to you anymore!"

She smiled and went into the bathroom, but not before looking at me sideways, a little worried.

"In, aren't you feeling uncomfortable? This room is smaller than yours."

"If I could sleep in a room with a noisy ceiling fan, I'll sleep anywhere. Now go take a shower, it's already three in the morning."

"Okay."

"Oh, Fah."

"What?"

*"I'mmmm gonna swiiiing from the chandeleeeeer...!"*

I imitated the song, and she laughed, her eyes closing from smiling so much.

"I miss those moments. I'll be right back, I'm going to take a shower so you can rest soon, In."

As soon as Arune entered the bathroom and I was alone, I threw myself on the mattress, lifting my legs and pretending to pedal in the air, covering my mouth to avoid screaming with excitement. The truth is that I was very excited, like a teenager visiting her crush's house for the first time. I pretended to be calm so as not to seem like someone with ulterior motives.

Okay, but of course I did have those ulterior motives.

Still, I'm very happy, even if nothing happened tonight, I already felt good. Just a moment ago, I was alone, but now I had a girlfriend, and a girlfriend who said "I love you" to me first!

Oh, but now I think about it... I didn't bring a toothbrush! I glanced at the bathroom, but hesitated to ask if she had an extra one. Having a girlfriend was great, but going to bed without brushing my teeth and waking up with bad breath? No way! I remembered that I saw a mini-market across the street before I parked. I took Arune's key card and quickly went out to buy a toothbrush so I wouldn't waste any time.

After about ten minutes, I came back with the toothbrush and headed towards the elevator. Just as the door was about to close, someone came in, giving me a smile that made my heart race.

"Can I go with you?"

That was *Dahwan*, a famous actress I knew well. She came in and pressed the button for her floor in the elevator. I looked sideways, a little awkward and nervous, not wanting to show my enthusiasm, so as not to seem like an out-of-control fan. So, Arune lived in the same building as Dahwan? Did she know?

I reached my floor first. I exchanged a look and a polite smile with Dahwan before stepping out of the elevator. What a night, huh! First, I got a girlfriend, and now I've met Dahwan!

As soon as I swiped my card at the door and entered, I found Arun, already showered, looking at me with a surprised expression.

"In! You're back!"

"Fah, you're not going to believe it, I just found... ah!"

Before I could finish, I was enveloped in a tight hug. The faint scent of soap made me slightly dizzy, but I regained my focus.

"What's wrong?"

"I thought you'd left." "Why would I leave?"

"Maybe you got tired of me playing hard to get." "Hard? You?"

I laughed and when I was going to explain that I only went downstairs to buy a toothbrush, before I could open my mouth, Arun leaned in and kissed me, tilting my head back.

"W-what...?"

"I'm not playing hard to get, I just thought you liked a little resistance. If I didn't give you a hard time, you would have already taken the initiative."

"But weren't we going to take it slow?" "Forget it. We'll take it slow tomorrow."

She said, gently pushing me towards the mattress. When I fell onto the mattress, she climbed on top of me, taking control.

"You're in a hurry, huh?"

"In, you make me break all my own rules." "But today is not your day."

With one swift movement, I laid her under me, holding her shoulders. "The first time, you dominated me."

"..."

"Now, it's my turn."

The room grew warmer as our clothes were slowly removed, piece by piece, without rushing. Just as I was about to pull Arune's shirt over her head, she suddenly stopped, hugging herself shyly.

"Can you. .. turn off the light?"

The husky, uncertain tone in her voice made her seem even more adorable. I almost told her I'd seen it all before when I helped her dry herself, but I decided to stay quiet. I turned off the lamp beside the bed, and for a moment our eyes met. it..."

I took the opportunity to lean towards her, not giving her time to prepare herself, and pressed my lips against hers, not abruptly, but with intensity, knowing that the response would be even more passionate the more I demonstrated.

Slowly, she relaxed until she wrapped her arms around my shoulders, allowing me to slide my hands under her shirt, exploring her body and feeling the accelerated rhythm of her heart.

"Ah..."

A soft murmur escaped her lips, which made me smile in the dark. Her shyness was slowly dissolving, transforming into an uninhibited desire to surrender herself.

Now we were equal. with nothing between us, completely naked.

For Arun, it was the first time she had ever received this kind of affection, and I could feel the mix of nervousness, excitement, and fear in her touch, as if she were wondering if I was really enjoying this moment as much as she was. Knowing how to reassure her, I whispered,

"You have such beautiful skin."

I leaned down and kissed her breasts softly, letting my tongue slide out to tease. Her body arched in response, trembling slightly.

"Your scent, your voice. every part of you is the most incredible thing I've

ever encountered." "Nong In."

She murmured, holding my shoulders tightly, as if seeking support.

"Nong In really likes you, P'Fah."

My words seemed to ignite something inside her, her body shivering slightly.

Even though I was in control, she liked feeling like she had the power in this moment. She covered her mouth, afraid to make too much noise, but I took the opportunity to slide my kisses lower, between her legs, gently spreading them apart.

"Let's share this feeling, okay?"

I leaned in and tried it as soon as I could. Arun BekFah almost screamed in surprise and tried to pull away, but I held her back. I began to slowly run my tongue all over her intimacy to make the sensation familiar to the sweet- faced woman's body.

"Huh... It feels so good." "Nong In knows." I said.

As I continued to taste her, Arune's body twitched and shuddered, cumming quickly, making me smile tenderly. Before the little person could stabilize herself, I slowly inserted my fingers inside her and kept them there, knowing it would hurt.

"Bear with me a little, it will get better." "No need, no..."

As soon as I realized I might be rejected, I leaned down and ran my tongue over her clit once more, moving my fingers slowly along with it. Arun began to adjust to the rhythm I'm giving her, and begin to move like a person dancing to a familiar song.

Arune's moan was like of a professional singer, making the listeners get involved in the music. I had to close my eyes to control the emotions that were intensifying, starting to become unbearable. Until the little person

finished "singing" once more, exhausted, and looked at me with half-open eyes.

"Khun In... I can't think of anything."

"This is not the time to think of anything. Be quiet, I'm going to dance with you."

I put Arun's leg over my shoulder and then moved my own leg, leaning my body against hers. Our sensitive spots made contact, we were so close that we seemed to be one person. Then, I began to move slowly.

"Ah..."

"Ah..."

The sound of our intimate parts rubbing and mixing with our love juice is like the sound of a metronome[1]. We were both like violinists playing in harmony. Arune finished writing her song before me, as usual, and it made me irritated that I was stuck alone.

"No, don't go... I haven't come yet." "Sorry, Khun In. I'll make it up to you."

The small person stands up and pulls me into a sitting position, before kneeling beside the bed.

"Fah needs to pay Miss In back."

Arune BekFah parted my legs and opened her mouth to dominate the most sensitive part of my body with her tongue, making me arch my neck as he continued the melody.

"You're so good."

Biting my lips, I reached out to grab the hair of the person sitting below tasting me.

"P'Fah, you're really good, uhm."

The more I praised Fah, the more she showed that the title of 'golden tongue' she had received was not an exaggeration. I used one arm to support myself on the mattress and not pass out, while still holding her hair with the other hand, so I could look at the person who was tasting what I had to offer. Soon I sketched a mischievous smile and said:

"You're on the right track as a taster... your tongue is really golden, uhm."

My body shivered as I drifted off to dreamland before I let myself fall back onto the mattress, exhausted and sleepy. The person who was still busy tasting between my legs slowly climbed up, laid down on top of me, and buried her face in my neck, satisfied.

***"Khun In, you taste so good. The taste of someone I love."***

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Although I was very tired because I slept late from making love all night, as if I had been longing for it all my life, I was now awake at eight o'clock as usual. I lay there, staring at the ceiling of the bedroom in Fah's apartment, not really believing that this was happening.

Even with the small person sleeping next to me, her scent had no scent except the scent of soap, which made my heart beat faster as I looked at the person who was lying with her face resting on my shoulder, causing an inexplicable feeling of dizziness in my chest. The feeling last night was the same...

It was both fun and scary, like bungee jumping off a cliff, but when I reached my destination, it was like I was floating in the air and no longer afraid of heights.

"Don't stare at me like that, I can't open my eyes."

It seemed like the person I was looking at had been awake for a while. I smiled a little, embarrassed, even though I'm usually bolder than most people.

"Have you been awake for a while?"

"Actually, I woke up before you. When I saw you were waking up, I didn't know what to do, so I pretended to be asleep."

"And yet, you confessed."

I laughed, and that made the petite woman laugh too. The sweet-faced person's smile made me feel like I was receiving a gift. It was something I had wanted for a long time, but had never received, as she always relied on her position as boss and employee.

"Now you don't wake up at four in the morning to exercise anymore?"

"Normally yes, but last night was a bit hectic. I read somewhere that having sex helps the body burn more calories, so I thought this would make up for it."

"Then we should do this more often." "You're taking advantage of the situation."

"But remember, you said you wanted to take it slow."

"Today we'll start slow. There will be no more rule-breaking." "Okay."

"Don't make that voice."

Fah raised her hand and slapped me lightly. I reached out and held it for a bit, then tilted my arm to look at the small person seriously.

"We're skipping a lot of steps, you see?"

"Huh?"

The sweet-faced person looked at me and then nodded in agreement.

"Yes, we skipped a lot of steps, starting from the furthest point and then going back to the starting point. What kind of person is willing to spend almost four million just to not let someone they don't like get married?"

"A person like me, Intuorn. There's only one in the world, and you won her heart."

Fah turned over on her stomach and covered her face with the pillow. I looked at her embarrassed posture with a fond look before trying to pull the pillow away. We ended up playfully wrestling on the mattress, forgetting to look at how much time had passed. Before we knew it, we were continuing our good love story again, even after we said we would take it slow.

Now, the scent of our love hung in the air. The sound of our skin rubbing against each other was enveloping, an arousing sensation mixed with a scent of desire that didn't seem bad. Fah's bed, which used to be tidy, was now messy with our bodies intertwining, and we finally ended up with our skin completely sweaty.

"Are you hungry?"

The small person nuzzled my face like a cat seeking affection. I nodded slightly and kissed her little nose charmingly.

"I'm hungry, but I don't want to get up."

"We can't stay here all day. Let's have lunch at my restaurant, all for free." "You're so generous."

I looked at the small person with shining eyes, remembering the slogan Fah had come up with.

"By the way, I've always wondered why you use that slogan... *'the taste of someone you love',* right?"

The person leaning against me hesitated for a moment before shrinking her neck.

"Well..."

"In the past seven months, have you had anyone?" Suddenly, a wave of jealousy rise up in me.

But I couldn't blame the little person, because we had indeed been away from each other for quite some time.

"I haven't."

"So, what's with that slogan?" "It's your taste, In."

"I've never tasted that kind of taste." "It's not the taste you've tasted." "So, what is it?"

"It's the taste I got from you." "..."

"When I taste, I compare the taste of the food with the feeling your body gives me."

The little person slowly explained.

"Your scent makes my heart race, the taste of the food that is soft and harmonious, like... between your legs..."

"Fah!!!"

I immediately closed my legs and pulled the blanket over my face. Even though it was hard to believe, I could tell the little person was telling the truth. Arune BekFah has vision problems, so her sense of smell, taste, and touch are more acute. So it's not strange that she compares my body to the taste of food.

No, actually, it's quite strange. This is my body. Everyone who eats in the restaurant is tasting my body.

"Surprised?" Arune smiled.

"I became a taster because of you, In. If I eat a dish and it doesn't make me think of you, I won't let it go... You're really desired by the market.

Everyone wants to try it, but it's a shame for them that the original taste..." Arun BekFah gets under the blanket and spreads my legs.

*"...it'll be all mine alone."*

Okay... I guess lunch will have to wait. I feel like I'm about to bungee jump again.

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We both left the room around one in the afternoon, after getting ready. Arun and I agreed that we would eat at the restaurant first and then we would part ways, since I needed to go home to shower and change.

While I waited for the little person to lock the door, I walked to the elevator, scrolling through my phone and thinking of several brilliant ideas. My heart felt light and excited just thinking about how I would win over that sweet- faced person.

*Yes... Let's go back to the beginning. Let's take it slow. And let's start today.*

"What are you doing?"

"Just checking on a few things. Are you ready to go?" "Let's go."

After pressing the elevator button and waiting for the square box to descend to our floor, I couldn't resist reaching out for the hand of the sweet-faced person next to me, shaking our arms lightly.

"Hey!"

Arune's muffled but relax sound made me to explain.

"When we're flirting, we have to hold hands from now and then. This is the beginning."

"You always have an excuse, don't you?"

"You've never dated, what do you know about it... Oh, the elevator is here."

As soon as the elevator doors opened, Arune BekFah quickly let go of my hand, embarrassed to realize there was another passenger inside. As for me, I was paralyzed with excitement to see a familiar face,ca famous celebrity I had met last night, waiting in the elevator. Until the sweet-faced person gave me a gentle nudge to remind me.

"Aren't you going to get in the elevator?" "Oh, yes."

I replied, smiling.

She is Dahwan, a famous actress who recently made headlines for dating a woman. Now I am standing in the elevator with her, along with another impeccably looking woman, and even without looking directly, I can tell that this must be her girlfriend.

"Are you okay, In? You seem a little strange."

Arune BekFah, always attentive, whispers to me when she notices my nervousness. I press my lips together and lean in to whisper back.

"I'm nervous because of Dahwan." "Dahwan?"

"Yes, Dahwan." "*Who is Dahwan?"* ***Ding!***

As soon as the question was over, the elevator reached the ground floor. Just as we were about to step out, Dahwan took big steps, stopping in front of us, crossing her arms and staring straight at Arune BekFah.

"This has happened several times!"

Her irritated voice made us both completely still. Arune and I exchanged glances to make sure it was us she was talking about, and then looked back at the beautiful woman blocking the door.

"What is it?"

Arune, being more flexible and calm, asked, puzzled. Dahwan was about to answer, but her girlfriend grabbed her arm, trying to calm her down.

"Don't be so loud, Hwan... I'm sorry."

"No, I'm uncomfortable. You, what do you mean you don't know who I am?" 😅

Dahwan looked straight at Arune BekFah.

"We've met here many times, how can you say you don't know me? I'm the actress the whole country knows! Do you know how much I earned for a single commercial? Just look!"

Then the famous actress began to describe who she was, where she came from and which soap operas she had acted in. Her girlfriend, who was with her, looked like she was about to cry, raised her hand to cover her face and bowed to the two of us.

"Don't pay attention to this, Dahwan is a little out of her mind."

"Kim! Why do you say that? I'm completely sane! The only one who isn't okay is the one who pretends not to know me and still asks me out loud in a rude way, trying to undermine my self-confidence. Let me warn you that I never lose confidence, and if you don't know me, you should get to know me. I'm Dahwan, Dahwan!!!"

"Dahwan, I'm telling you to stop!"

The authoritative voice of her girlfriend made Dahwan stop abruptly and shrink her neck a little.

"Why do you have to shout?"

"Because you're being clueless! I'm sorry." Kim replied. "Wait a minute."

,I said, looking at the woman who was trying to apologize and alternating my gaze to Arun BekFah, until I remembered something.

"I think I've seen you before."

"How do you know Kimhan, but not Dahwan?!" 😅

"Hwan!!!"

Although the two were still yelling at each other, I looked at the person named Kimhan and tried to ask in the middle of the argument.

"***You're the one who almost married Mawin, aren't you?"***

"Eh? / Eh?"

**Footnote:**

***[1]. A metronome is a device that indicates a musical tempo through pulses of regular duration. It can be used for study or musical interpretation purposes.***

# 37.We've Barely Begun

I don't know if it's fate or if things were set up so that I could get my revenge quickly and accurately. As soon as I found out that she was Dahwan, I remembered that these two women were indirectly linked to me in some way. So I didn't hesitate to approach them and invited them both to dinner at the restaurant, offering to pay the bill.

As we rode together in the car, I had to explain that Arun has difficulty recognizing faces. Miss Kimhan understood right away and apologized several times on behalf of her girlfriend and even insisted on paying for the meal instead of me.

"Don't worry! I'm rich, I can pay for it." I replied.

"I'm also very rich. Let me pay for this meal. I want to impress and make a good impression."

The beautiful actress said openly, displaying a personality similar to mine, to the point that it seemed like we were born from the same parents.

"But I would like to pay for dinner as an apology for my girlfriend not recognizing you. Besides, we are the ones who invited you. Please don't refuse."

I insisted so much that the two of them couldn't refuse. We arrived at the restaurant at almost two in the afternoon, and as soon as Dahwan walked in, everyone in the place looked at her as if they recognized her.

"The only person who doesn't recognize me is someone with a vision problem. With so much beauty and fame, it's painful to hear someone ask

*'Who's Dahwan'*?'" "Sorry again."

Arun said, bowing shyly, which made Dahwan wave her hands.

"I wasn't making fun of you, Arun. I was just making a comment... Just imagine, even street dogs know Dahwan. They see my face and wag their tails."

"Of course they wag their tails! After all, Dahwan is the *'December dog'*.'" Kimhan joked.

"Kimhan!"

Dahwan scolded her girlfriend, who was laughing discreetly, as if the two had a secret between them. I watched Mawin's ex-fiancée smile with admiration; people with that appearance always have such charming smiles...

"This is the restaurant that's making waves on social media, isn't it?"

Kimhan looked at the menu and read the name of the restaurant, along with the slogan that was written there:

"*The taste of someone you love*... What a beautiful phrase. Who came up with that?"

"It was me."

Arun replied with a smile. The two women, who had similar features, made Dahwan and I look at them alternately.

"These two have so many similarities, even in their smiles. If it weren't for the difference in their clothes, I would hardly know which one is my wife."

Dahwan commented, which made Kimhan pinch her waist.

"Ouch! I was just commenting." Dahwan said.

"Keep your limits, Dahwan. It's not just the two of us here." Kimhan said, coughing lightly to hide her embarrassment. "What's the origin of the slogan?"

"*It's Khun In's taste*... What are you doing, In?" "I dropped something."

The truth is that I hid under the table because I couldn't look anyone in the eye when Arun mentioned the origin of the slogan and the tastes. I had my hands covering my face, peeking through my fingers to see the other tables.

Everyone was savoring the dishes they had ordered, which almost drove me crazy to imagine that everyone was tasting a piece of my body. Oh, some things should remain mysteries. We shouldn't get involved, because when we find out, the situation becomes like this, and we don't know how to act.

"What are you looking for, In?"

Arun bent down from her seat and looked at me under the table. Then, I put my hands on my face, pretending to look for coins.

"I seem to have dropped a coin, but I can't find it." "You never carry coins."

"Coins are money, why wouldn't I?"

"Because you think they're heavy. You hardly ever have notes, because you always use a card. Don't forget, I'm Fah who knows everything about you."

The sweet girl looked at me with a loving smile and joined me under the table.

"And I also know why you're down here. You're embarrassed about where the slogan came from, aren't you?"

"Damn. You can't know everything about me." "What can I do? I love you, In."

"You only say that when it's convenient."

I cupped Arun's face in my hands and squeezed until her face was flattened.

"How annoying! Why do you have to be so cute? Come here and give me a kiss."

*"Sure, you can kiss. I'll pretend I don't see."*

Dahwan, who had been watching under the table for a while, spoke provocatively, causing Kimhan to laugh as he pinched her girlfriend.

"Why do you like to blurt out such things, Dahwan? Feel free, we won't interfere."

"You're not interfering in anything!"

Arun hurried to defend himself and looked at me.

"Get up, In. You've been under the table for a long time. It's rude."

I got out from under the table and sat down again calmly, as if nothing had happened. We started ordering food, although each dish reminded me of Arun's words, I had to act as if nothing was happening. Oh, the more I looked at those dishes, the more my face heated up, all I could think about was things that happened in bed.

And to avoid being embarrassed any further, I needed to do something to distract myself from all this.

Finally, I took out my cell phone and sent a message to Mawin, and it seems that my prank worked. Now my heart was beating fast and I didn't feel as

embarrassed as before.

## Indy:

Buy me dinner, honey.

**Win**:

You're the one who doesn't want to get married, right?

## Indy:

I'm at Arun's restaurant now.

.

*'I won't let you use this as a tool to make Arun jealous. There’s nothing going on between us, even though he sent Arun a wedding invitation.’*

I smirked at my phone screen before sending another, more provocative message.

## Indy:

You’re exaggerating, Arun doesn’t feel anything, but I do.

**Win**:

That just means the answer is clear: Arun doesn’t have feelings for you. I’m sorry.

## Indy:

Then buy me a consolation dinner, go ahead! Now I can’t do anything but have you as my friend and future husband.

**Win**:

If you ask me like that, how can I refuse? Give me twenty minutes, I’ll pay the bill today!

.

I put the phone aside and smiled enthusiastically before leaning over to inform everyone who was waiting for their food in a playful manner.

“Today someone’s paying for dinner, so order as much as you want! You can order whatever’s most expensive in this restaurant, go ahead!”

“Who’s going to be the host?”

Kimhan asked, surprised. I looked at the small person in front of me, feeling a little guilty, but my mischief was still bigger than my conscience.

"My future husband, but that will probably never happen." I said, glancing at Arun, who is still confused.

"Because I already have a girlfriend now."

As soon as Mawin arrived, thirty minutes later, everything was revealed. The food was delicious and everyone froze, as if time had stopped. Mawin was sitting rigidly, like a stone in some province in Thailand, glaring at me.

"What is this?"

"Surprise! Arun and I are officially dating! Yeey! Safety! Safety!"

I mimicked Blackpink's song happily, while everyone remained silent. "In, why did you do this?"

Arun said.

"This is revenge!"

I whispered to Arun and smiled at Mawin.

"You're not going to break your promise, are you? Today you'll pay." I said.

"So you two got together for this, huh? Betraying someone who helped you, still calls you sweetheart."

"I'd even call it love, if it means I get to see your expression like that. Yeey! Safety! Safety!"

"If you can only sing one part, that's enough." Dahwan said, before imitating me.

"Yeey... and yes, I can only sing that part. Everyone, be quiet. Why is that? Come on, In! The happier you are, the more we have to be happy. There's nothing to be stressed about! No!"

Dahwan gave me a sarcastic look, not believing that she was facing such an unexpected situation. Kimhan, who had been silent for a while, greeted her ex-boyfriend, Mawin, to lighten the mood at the table.

"It's been a while since we last saw each other, hasn't it, Win?" "You're still as charming as before."

Mawin answered sincerely, although he is still looking at me with disdain.

"The atmosphere is a little strange, I didn't expect to find something like this, but we're not fighting, are we, Dahwan?"

When Mawin turned to talk to the beautiful actress, Dahwan, who had been so confident before, began to shrink back, looking like a child who felt guilty for running away with his fiancée.

"Yes... we're not fighting."

"Then let's eat as much as we want, because we're all friends!"

I threw my arms out to everyone playfully, but Arun couldn't take it anymore and stood up, quickly leaving, causing the atmosphere to become heavy again.

"Where are you going?" "..."

But there was no response from the small person. Now, both Dahwan and Mawin looked at me and smiled sideways, expressing in their body language and eyes a single message:

***'Serves you right.'***

"Don't look at me like that, we're not fighting... Let's eat, Fah!"

I stood up and walked over to the person who had run away to the back of the restaurant, where there were two cooks, including May, who was reading some note.

"Maybe, where's Fah?"

"She went to the back. And how did you get into this kitchen? This is for staff only."

"I'm Fah's friend, so I can come in." "Wow. What happened?"

"We had sex last night."

"Not that. I meant, was there an argument? Why did you say that?"

May B raised her hand to cover her face, embarrassed that I had said something so sincere. I, on the other hand, was barely paying attention, worried about the little person's feelings, and quickly excused myself.

"Oh, sorry, I'm kind of out of it, I misinterpreted everything. We'll talk later, okay?"

I ran the way May B indicated and found Arun sitting next to the trash can in the back of the kitchen. When I called her, she got ready to get up and run away, but I managed to grab her arm before she could.

"Where are you going? Why don't you say what's on your mind?"

"I don't want to talk. The more I talk, the worse it gets. It's better to keep it quiet. It'll get better soon."

The sweet-faced person explained her reason for not wanting to talk. This only made me angrier, because I'm the type who prefers to resolve things right away.

"I think we need to understand this relationship better. Now you have a girlfriend, just to remind you: you have a girlfriend."

"How is this different from when I didn't have a girlfriend, besides... besides..."

Arun opened her mouth, hesitating, and shake her head. "What do you mean, In?"

"I mean that from now on, no matter how you feel, speak up. Don't hide anything, don't make me guess, because I'm not good at guessing emotions. Don't close yourself off from your feelings, please bury that old you and stop using it forever, with anyone. If you continue like this, you'll end up hurting yourself. Especially now that we're girlfriends, you need to express yourself!"

"But I've always been like this."

"Then it's time to change, because now you have me!"

I spoke loudly, clearly enough for the sweet-faced person to close her lips tightly. It was clear that she was embarrassed, but also a little irritated with me. A mix of feelings consumed her, and I felt sorry for her.

"I can talk, right?" "Of course you can."

"You don't like things to be straightforward. Whenever I speak openly, you get irritated."

"That was when I was your boss. Now I'm your girlfriend... Tell me, what's bothering you? I want to understand now."

When I persisted, Arun sighed deeply and put her hands on her hips, beginning to express his pent-up feelings.

"I didn't like it when you suddenly called Mawin. You made everyone at the table feel awkward."

"I just wanted to get revenge."

"That's not a good habit. You need to stop." "But that's just me."

"But now you have me!"

"Oh... It's like I've been punched in the face."

I was shocked to realize the irony of my own words. Then I pressed my lips together tightly.

"And you, why are you so upset?"

"Because I want you to be a lovable person, both to me and to everyone else. This habit of revenge and being mean makes others dislike you, In."

"You loving me is enough."

"You're just like that, aren't you? You ask others to change, but you don't change yourself."

Arun turned to leave again, but when I tried to follow her, she turned and glared at me.

"Don't follow me. I'll stay the same because I'm like this too. If you don't intend to change, then neither will I."

We've barely started dating and we're already fighting...

I returned to the table with a sullen expression, and the atmosphere became even heavier, so much so that I couldn't help but be the first to break the silence.

"Everything that happened was my fault, wasn't it?"

Even though no one said anything, the looks on everyone's faces Mawin, Dahwan, and Kimhan seemed to say just one word:

"Yes."

So I grimaced, a little reluctant to accept it. But... if I want others to treat me well, maybe I should start with myself. After all, if I want something, I need to do the same; that's what anyone would do.

"I'm sorry."

"..."

My apology made everyone look at me at once.

*Damn it, why are they staring at me like that? I'm already behaving, aren't I?*

"I just wanted to get back at Mawin for meddling in my relationship with Arun. So I used Dahwan and Kim to provoke Mawin. I'll settle for sitting here quietly while you throw rocks at me until you're satisfied. And to make up for it, dinner tonight will be on me."

The beautiful actress stood up first, preparing to leave, but was grabbed by the arm by her girlfriend before she could leave.

"Where are you going, Hwan?" "I'm going to get some rocks." "You idiot, it was just a metaphor!"

"But I really wanted to get some rocks to throw! What kind of person acts like that, with such a bad attitude?"

"Look who's talking, huh? You and Intuorn have the same temperament!" "Wait, do you mean I'm that bad?"

Dahwan pointed at herself, and that made me roll my eyes in irritation.

"It's not that bad! It's not mean, it was just bad behavior. You're already taking the chance to get involved."

I complained, huffing and crossing my arms. Meanwhile, Mawin, who was watching us, smirked before leaning back in his chair.

"Look, in a second you've become a better person. Love really does change people."

"What nonsense are you talking about?" "You've matured."

He reached out and pulled my cheek like it was a rubber band.

"I'm still mad at you, but I don't even know how to punish you anymore. So for now, let's just leave it at that and you pay for this dinner. By the way, where's Arun?"

"She's mad."

"You just started dating and you're already fighting? This relationship is in bad shape!"

"You talk too much!"

I almost throw the glass of water in Mawin's face, but then Kimhan smiled, encouraging me.

"Take it easy, In. You've just started, so you're still adjusting to each other."

"Can't it end like a Thai soap opera?"

I grumbled, already understanding what Kimhan meant, but the short girl just laughed.

"Of course not! Dating is just the beginning. The real challenge comes now. And in this relationship, whoever is wrong has to apologize!"

"Apologize?"

I started to prepare myself, knowing that I was the main suspect this time.

"How do you apologize? In my life, it was always the men who came after me, trying to apologize. Now that I have a girlfriend, I just play the role of the wife... Or better yet... forget what I said, okay!"

"Now your relationship is equal, each with their own peculiarities, so you have to apologize in the style of rich people!"

"What do you mean?"

"Use your imagination! There are so many ways in the world!"

But since I still seemed lost, Dahwan, who is impatient and a little irritated with me, suggested bluntly:

"Give her flowers. It's simple. Any woman likes to receive flowers... And to celebrate this new friendship, let me order the flowers for you. I know a trustworthy florist!"

Dahwan's smile enchanted me, and I quickly nodded gratefully. "Thank you!"

And to think that I had forgotten that Dahwan was the same type as me, beautiful on the outside, but with the heart of a tigress. A true treacherous snake!

Arune BekFah, who had gone out to buy some tea with tapioca balls, was completely stunned when she saw the flowers that the delivery man brought. Even May B, who was in the kitchen, ran outside and put her hands to her mouth. And I, with tears in my eyes, could only look at the colorful flower arrangement with the banner that said:

***"Neither heaven nor earth can separate us. I will love you forever. Intuorn."***

"I-I... It's not what it seems, Fah! I didn't do it! I was going to send you flowers to apologize, and I asked Dahwan to take care of it. But... Ah! I was betrayed!"

My voice trembled as I looked at Arun, who was paralyzed, still with the tea and tapioca balls in her mouth, not knowing what to do. If I ran under a car, would she forgive me?

***"A... funeral arrangement!"***

And suddenly, the tea and tapioca balls that Arun was chewing flew out when she could no longer contain herself. The little girl, who was usually very restrained, began to laugh uncontrollably, breaking everyone's silence.

"Fah..."

"You're hilarious, Intuorn. I'm so down! Come here, give me a hug! Hahaha!"

She pulled me into a hug and swayed from side to side, while I didn't know whether to laugh or cry along with her.

"Aren't you mad?"

"You're so adorable, Intuorn. How cute!"

I don't even know how it got to this point. Instead of getting angrier when she saw the arrangement, she ended up laughing, grateful to realize that naughty actress had cheated on me.

But it's okay... It seems like our relationship is back to normal. I guess that's what Mawin was talking about. After all, we've only just begun.

# 38.Janephop

The period of conquest is always something sweet and delicate. Even if we have taken some shortcuts and skipped certain steps, in the end, starting with a solid foundation always brings more stability. It's like a building, the steel beams must be sturdy and strong, because they are will support the structure over time.

With our relationship, we are taking it slow, as we agreed.

Yes... Since the first night we started dating, we have had nothing but affectionate moments, although sometimes I can hardly resist the urge to grab my little love. Sometimes, when things get heated, we end up just hugging and holding each other so as not to cross the line.

"Save the sweet for after the sour."

We repeat this phrase as if it were a mantra to protect our patience, especially since we both crossed certain boundaries before making our relationship official. But it's interesting; I had never courted someone like this, and Arun hadn't either.

Now it seems like we're in a competition to see who can surprise the other the most.

And there's a reason I mentioned the metaphor of the building's structure. The development where Arune rents space is actually a project in which my father has a stake.

"Would it be a problem, Dad, if I asked to buy an apartment in this condominium at cost price?"

I asked, shifting my weight a little awkwardly. Dad looked at me, a little confused, when I handed him the brochure.

"Since when were you interested in an apartment?" "Right now!"

I answered, with a charm that I knew he loved, and it made him smile, because he loves it when I make that spoiled girl face.

"Talking so nicely, but saying you're going to buy it? Usually you just ask."

"I want something that I can earn with my own effort. Something that comes from my own money."

"But isn't the money I would use to buy it my own?" 😅

When I heard that, my smile immediately faded, making me lose my spirit a little.

"That's true..."

"Then why don't you just ask? It saves you fees, transfer costs, all that. It's okay, I'll give you an apartment! I'm too rich, I can't take it anymore! Rich, too rich!"

Dad said loudly as he turned on the TV.

"But why is there never a Mew commercial? How boring."

"If Dad likes Mew so much, you could invite her to be a poster girl for some product. That way, you could watch the recordings as an insider."

"No, no. This fan passion is what makes me feel younger. The feeling of liking something without owning it is more satisfying than having it. I'll keep that feeling."

Wow, my dad is really in love!

"Then, Dad, hire Mew as a poster girl, but without having to go backstage. That way you can see her on TV often."

"That wouldn't be good. I'd be spending money in a kind of irresponsible way. And anyway, whenever I see Mew in competitors' commercials, I feel proud."

"How are you proud of that, Dad?"

"Well, I feel proud because even the competitors recognize Mew's value. Even without needing my help to boost or support it."

What kind of logic is that...? But okay, I guess if Dad thought like everyone else, he probably wouldn't be so successful today. It's not something I understand, but I'll try.

"Then Mew won't bother you anymore." "Your name is In!"

"Oops, right!"

"By the way, I've noticed that you've been coming home late a lot lately... And some days you even sleep out... Where have you been?"

Suddenly, Dad brought up a subject for which I had no ready answer. He, with a discreet smile on the corner of his lips, quickly changed the subject, but I noticed a certain insinuation, which made me frown.

"Have you talked about marriage with Mawin? What does he think about it?"

"We haven't even touched on that subject, Dad."

"Ah, these young people these days... It's okay, I'll talk to him myself."

I was a little nervous, because I began to understand that Dad probably thought I was spending the night with Mawin. Since I was raised in a Westernized culture and my parents were never very strict about it, always

hoping that Mawin and I would be together, he didn't seem to mind that much.

But now I'm very tense, because this is a completely wrong understanding... and very, very wrong!

"You don't have to talk about it, Dad!"

"So, after all, do you want the apartment or not?"

Dad suddenly changed the subject, as if he knew I was trying to divert. I was speechless, and my focus ended up returning to the previous topic.

"Yes, I do, but I want to find a way to earn the money to buy it from you, Dad. I want to feel proud of having achieved this."

"You're very determined, so I'll watch how you do it."

It took me a while to understand that Dad actually had a plan in mind to marry me to Mawin. It's been a long time, and now I'm pacing around in my room, like a rat caught in a trap. Dad thinks that me and that fool have gone beyond being just good friends and into something more, and I can see that he'll bring it up soon. It'll be something serious and formal. When that time comes, I honestly don't know what I'll do.

Oh! Who can I talk to about this?!

If I tell Arun BekFah about this, that stubborn girl will keep it to herself, like those protagonists in romance novels who hate to resolve things clearly. In the end, she'll probably sacrifice herself, see herself as inferior, and walk away in the rain, disappearing from my life for three or five years.

No! Arun BekFah can't know about this. So now I only think about someone else, the one who has always been my partner and faithful friend throughout my life.

But whenever I think about him, a tender feeling rises in my chest. Although it seems that I am happy with this new love, in reality, I think

about "Janephop" every day, but I can't do anything. Many times, I end up talking to nothing, thinking that he is still by my side.

But when I turn around, I only find absolute emptiness. Having a love is something that brings joy to the heart, but the lack of a close and trustworthy friend makes me lonely.

I still have his number saved on my cell phone, but I never had the courage to call him, because I didn't even have the courage to ask him to stay the day he decided to leave. Now that I am alone or in trouble, I feel like I need his help.

But I am not that cruel. After he left in such a painful way and without any attention from me, how could I have the nerve to call and ask for advice?

"You idiot, it's all your fault!"

Since I didn't know who else to take out my frustration on, Mawin ended up being my next victim, in a new soap opera plot that I created myself.

"What did I do now? Wait, you came to my house?! And you remembered where I live after... how many years?"

"About twenty-something years." "But you still remember."

"Of course, because I'm smart and beautiful, with a sharp mind like Detective Conan."

"Okay, it looks like a theater recital. You better go in, because you standing there, screaming like a madwoman, will stop being smart and will look like a hysteric."

"What a foul-mouthed man! I'm not going in. I want to talk to you alone, there are already too many people involved in this whole story."

I sighed, going to sit on a chair in his garden, near the fountain that, as always, was turned off.

"Did you put this fountain here just so people could throw coins in it? What a sad end for it."

"Don't come with sentimentality, that doesn't suit you. Come on, tell me why you came here?"

Mawin dragged a chair over and sit in front of me.

"It must be serious for you to have come all the way here. "Today, my father mentioned marriage... that story you made up."

"If it weren't for me, you wouldn't have gone after Arun. Why do you always think I'm wrong? That's so ungrateful, you know?"

"It's because you deserve to be cursed at! But, okay... without you, I wouldn't be where I am today."

I replied, almost grateful, but I quickly stuck my tongue out at him.

"You can be polite for less than ten seconds. Only Arun would be so blind as to fall in love with a viper."

"One more word and I'll throw you off your chair! Anyway, let's stop fighting over nonsense... I think my father will end up talking about this with you soon, and it will also spread to your parents. When that happens, things will grow and become too complicated for us to resolve later. Geez, how stressful!"

"That's true, right."

"What do you mean, 'it's true'?

I came here so you could help me solve the problem!"

"I don't know everything, okay? Come here and expect an answer! Give me some time to think."

"If it were Janephop, I would have already come up with a good idea. You really aren't any help."

"So why don't you just tell your dad that you're dating Arun?"

"It's super easy to go to my parents and say, 'Dad, I'm in love with this woman?'"

"Does love have to be limited? Your dad seems pretty modern."

"He's open-minded with everyone, except me, his only daughter. There's no father or mother who suddenly accepts that their daughter is dating someone of the same sex. Or, if they do, it's because they already suspected it, but never said anything. My dad always knew that I dated men."

"Don't jump to conclusions. Go ahead and tell him. Whether he accepts it or not, we'll think about what to do later."

"I don't want to."

I cross my arms, closing myself off.

"If dad makes a big deal out of it, Arun will suffer too."

"Oh, so you're not afraid of your father; you're afraid of hurting your girlfriend."

Finally, Mawin smiles, realizing what's going on in my heart. And I can only accept it, unable to explain myself.

"I don't want to lose this love like the other times. It's rare to love someone who loves you back with the same intensity. You should understand, you know? How painful it is to not be loved in return."

I remind him of Kimhan, who once hurt him a lot, leaving him frustrated and heartbroken. He looks at me and purses his lips, thoughtful, but says nothing. He understands. Anyone who has had their heartbroken knows how deep this pain is.

"Give me some time to think of a solution. You don't need to worry so much. I don't want to marry you either."

"But you said that my moaning voice was actually pleasant." "I wouldn't sleep with a snake."

"You idiot!"

"You annoying thing!"

Keeping me worried wouldn't solve anything. So, I went to seek my peace in the place where I knew I would find it: Arun's apartment. Now, I was lying with my head on her lap, watching an American series without subtitles. It was a game we played, a challenge for her to practice her English.

At the end of each episode, she had to summarize what she understood, and if I asked her a word she didn't know, she would get a flick on the forehead.

"I really didn't understand anything in this episode. The accent is too difficult. I can understand a little from the body language, but it doesn't make any sense."

"It's the Cockney accent[1]. If you know how to speak it, it's very sexy." "I can barely speak the Thai accent properly."

"Oh, but you're great at everything. And you always said that if you were to do something, you would do it well."

"That's a question of skill, right?"

"If it's skill, then you can practice it. Come here, show me that beautiful forehead."

I sat up and rubbed my hands together, amused. "Now you're in trouble!"

"Cruel."

The little girl made a sullen pout before leaning forward with her eyes closed, all tense, waiting for the punishment. But, upon seeing that adorable expression, I exchanged the flick on her forehead for a peck and laughed.

"You're so cute!"

"Then love me already."

"Love? I already love you so much that I don't even know what else to do!"

As soon as I finished speaking, I hugged her, laying her on her back on the couch.

Her scent made me feel cozy, and all the worries I had before seemed to melt away as I curled up like a kitten, asking for affection.

"In, are you worried about something?"

As I lightly slid my lips along her earlobe, I hesitated a little, but ended up laughing to hide it.

"Worried about what? I'm fine."

"Is there anyone who knows you better than me?" "Actually, there is."

"..."

"..."

"Are you missing Janephop?"

Well, who else could know me better than her? When that idea crossed my mind, I stopped playing and lay down, putting my face in Arun BekFah's neck, closing my eyes and staying there quietly.

"Are you jealous?"

"It's not jealous, no. I know how you feel. When a friend disappears like that, it's natural to feel alone."

"I have you, why would I need to feel alone?"

"The feelings are not the same. I just met you, but with Janephop, it was almost half of your life."

"It's not half... it's all the part I remember, if I'm being honest."

He was my only true friend, someone who was always there to take my orders and put up with my moods, no matter how difficult it was. He always solved my problems, never complained even once. And now, even that person is gone from my life.

Maybe it's time for me to reflect on myself and think if, perhaps, I really do have a character flaw.

"If you miss him, why don't you call him?"

"I can't. He's too good a person for that. I feel bad... I love you, but I can't love him the same way. It wouldn't be fair to Jane."

"You know there's a difference between being good to someone and loving them, right?"

Arun BekFah then started singing a snippet of a popular song, and it made me finally smile a little.

"That's so true. That's it... I was once a very good person to Jao-Jom, but she chose Renu. I was good, but I wasn't the person she loved."

"But love has many forms, you know? If you could be friends with Jao- Jom, why couldn't you be friends with Janephop too?"

"I've been away from Jao-Jom for over two years. Janephop has been away for a month. It's too soon."

"You're not the only one who misses him, you know? One day, you'll meet him again."

"I hope so."

I stayed with Arun BekFah until one o'clock in the afternoon, and then I let her go open the restaurant. In the meantime, I watched the little person and the restaurant with a feeling of reflection.

"Watching you work makes me feel like I'm useless, meaningless." "Meaningless? What are you talking about? You're always whining today."

"That's true! If I wasn't my daddy's daughter, what do you think I'd be doing right now?"

"Being a comedian." "A comedian?"

"Because you're funny. Ha ha."

Arun laughed, looking happy to tease me, and then looked around, as if to make sure no one was watching, before pulling me in for a quick kiss on the lips.

"What was that..."

"To give you energy! You mean a lot to me, no matter what you decide to do, know that there is someone who loves you here. Keep it up, okay?"

"Oh... now I'm full of energy."

"Then you can go. I'm going to work now, see you later." "See you later."

As I watched Arun BekFah walk away, I started thinking about how I could do something meaningful for myself, maybe earn money to buy my father's

apartment. But earning six million wouldn't be as easy as just asking my parents for money. So I would have to think carefully about how to get that money.

And then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the Porsche my father had bought for me, and suddenly, I felt enlightened. After all, that car was earned by my own efforts.

But of course, I had never done anything on my own before.

The only thing I had tried to do was sell clothes online more than two years ago, when I was with "Lay", or Jao-Jom, but that was nothing compared to the value of the car. I would have to study more about how to get money, because it wouldn't be easy. If Janephop were here, I would have let him take care of it for me...

But it's his fault for always following my orders and never letting me do anything alone. I even prayed that he would get into as much trouble as I did!

However, it seems that my tongue is sharper than I imagined, because when I returned home, I found someone on their knees on the stairs, about to enter the house. While my father and mother were standing there, looking like they were looking for trouble.

"Go away, Janephop. I don't want to see your face anymore. How dare you kiss my daughter?"

I froze when I saw that the person on his knees was Janephop, with his clothes in disarray, his hair messy and his beard unshaven, looking more like a character from an action movie.

"Please let me go back to work here... I... I..." "Dad, don't yell at Jan!"

I ran to get in front, when my father seemed to pick up a shoe to throw.

"In, back off. Are you still going to protect him? Don't you remember what he did to you?"

"He kissed me, he didn't punch me in the face. I'm not ashamed to say that!" I said without hesitation.

"Please, back off. He's back to try to get close to you again. I won't allow that!"

My father was exaggerating, making a lot of noise, which made me sigh. My mother, who was standing with her arms crossed looking at him, shook her head, tired of trying to hold him back. In fact, my father didn't throw the shoe like he said, he just made a threatening gesture.

"Can you stop yelling? How annoying."

My mother said and then turned to Janephop.

"You want to go back to work because it's because of In, right?"

My mother, seeing Janephop didn't answer, continued with the words:

"If you comes back because you still interested in my daughter, as parents, we can't help but worry. You are a man, strong, and one day, you decides to force my daughter into something, what are we going to do?"

"I..."

"Mom, if he comes back because of your daughter, it's okay, right? Jane isn't the kind of man who would do something like that to me, right, Jane?"

I asked him, wanting him to make a promise. "Yes, I wouldn't do that to you."

The friend, with a beard, nodded.

"That's a lie! A guy like you can only have some purpose in coming back!"

My father still wouldn't give in, so I kept quiet, feeling pain...my own father wasn't listening to anything. But then...

"Yes, I have a purpose."

*No, Jane... Don't tell the truth that you miss me, don't do that...*

"I don't have anything to eat anymore!"

# 39. Present

Janephop's answer shocked all of us, especially me, who was left open- mouthed, with a dry expression, like a fish out of water about to suffocate due to lack of oxygen. Why was the answer so unexpected? And why did I feel so insecure because of it?

"Don't be funny!"

My father pressed his lips together, trying to hold back his laughter, but still trying hard to keep his voice steady and sound serious. Meanwhile, Mom walked away, hiding behind her husband, trembling and unable to contain her laughter.

"I'm not joking."

"It's precisely because you're not a funny person that I told you not to try to be funny. Even if you told a better joke than that, I still wouldn't accept you back at work."

Hearing this, Janephop suddenly stood up, hurt, revealing a side of him that I had never seen before.

"Please, Mr. Anek! since I can remember, I've been by this family's side all the whole time. Whether it's a big job or a small job, hard job or light job, I've never turned anything down."

"It's precisely because you can do everything that I can't believe that if you leave here, you'd be left without a way to make a living."

"There are ways to make a living, but nothing comes close to what I earn here. A salary of fifteen thousand baht isn't enough with today's cost of living. I have to pay rent, food, electricity and water bills. Just breathing

makes me feel like I'm spending money in this country. You see, I suddenly realize I'm a debtor, someone the government has turned into a millionaire. Don't be cruel to me, please. If I can't work here, I don't know how I'll be able to live."

"But I don't trust you. What if, one of these days, you end up harassing Nong In? That wouldn't be worth the risk."

"I promise I will never cause any discomfort to Miss In. I don't even remember ever loving Miss In anymore."

"What?"

I, who had been listening for a long time, tilted my head and asked Janephop, feeling a strange disappointment.

"Loved her? Does that mean you don't love her anymore?" "Yes."

My bearded friend answered firmly, but my father still didn't believe it.

"I don't believe it. I can see it. I studied for this. You're lying. You still love her, Nong In."

"Ever since I realized that working somewhere else only earns me fifteen thousand, I understood that returning to my old place is better. Falling out of love with Miss In is easier than earning money to live on. I swear as a man of my word: the feelings I had for Miss In will disappear the moment Mr. Anek allows me to continue working here."

"But..."

"I accept!"

My mother, who had been hiding until then, spoke loudly and clearly. When Dad tried to object, she raised her hand in a firm gesture, as if to prevent any opposition.

"I believe Jan's words. Besides, since he left, Nong In seems to be more down. Haven't you noticed?"

"Not at all. Nong In hardly ever comes home, he always stays at Mawin's house."

"That's not true!"

I quickly protested, glancing at Janephop, trying to see if he would react in any way. But from what I could tell, he was completely oblivious, looking only at Dad, with an expression that made it clear how much he wanted his job back.

"I don't care, I'll take Janephop back to work." "But..."

"If you don't, I'll stop loving you." "You always threaten me like that."

"I'll confiscate the TV and I won't let you watch the new episode of the soap opera with Nong Mew."

"..."

"So, what's it going to be!?" "Okay."

Dad replied, surrendered. My mother smiled slightly and winked at Janephop.

"You can go back to work now. From Endorphin[1]." "What's this, Mom?"

I shrank my neck, looking at her blankly, as she suddenly blurted out the name of a singer who had nothing to do with the conversation.

But my mother smiled even wider, as if she had been waiting for me to ask. "Don't make heaven disappointed.[1]"

*Wow... Everyone here could make a comedy team.*

Janephop disappeared to get ready and came back to me again, now dressed in an impeccable suit and with a well-made face, after having shaved. But I was still silent, sulking, sitting with my arms crossed and looking away, not wanting to see him.

"Are you mad at me, Miss In?" "I'm not mad!"

I answered almost shouting, then took a deep breath.

"I'm just having some time alone. It's been so long since we've seen each other."

"About a month," he replied. "Are you okay, Miss In?" "I'm fine."

I answered shortly, but soon I couldn't control myself and asked him. "Do you still love me?"

"No, I don't."

"Can people stop loving each other so easily? Hey, I feel humiliated!"

I stood up and shouted at Janephop, like a young girl who can't handle shame.

Damn, I still remembered the time when I thought he would tell my father that he had a weak intention, and now, suddenly, I realize that he thinks

money is more important than me.

*You idiot!*

"Miss In wants me to love you?" "No."

"Then I don't."

"Cold... And where did that burning love from before go?"

"What are you saying? I don't understand. Did I ever love you, Miss?"

Janephop's answer made me think for a moment. He wanted to make it seem like nothing had happened, as he always wanted. And yes... if we act like it never happened, then it never will have happened. Maybe I should act discreetly, fooling myself and him too, as if it were for the best.

"Yeah... I don't know what I'm saying." "But I miss you, Miss In."

As soon as he finished speaking, I couldn't hold back my smile and ended up jumping to hug him, happy to finally have the important person in my life back.

"I miss you too! Ahh, don't disappear again, okay? Huh..."

My emotions were on a rollercoaster, as if I was having PMS. Now I was angry, then laughing, and now crying. Janephop wrapped his long arms around me and patted me on the back, as if he was comforting me.

"I won't disappear again. From now on, I'll be by your side all the time. But right now, Miss In, you need to step away for a while. If your father sees, it won't be good."

He spoke politely, so I ended up backing off and nodding, understanding.

"So, what happened? You were away for a while and now you're broke? Where did all your money go?"

"Like I said."

"That doesn't make sense. You're a person who does everything, from simple tasks to difficult things. There's no way you don't know how to do anything and have to crawl back. Besides, when you were here, your salary was high and you barely spent anything. You didn't have to pay rent or buy food. I've never seen you buy anything excessively. In fact, you might even have more money in your account than I do. How can you say you don't have anything to eat?"

I laughed, a little disconcerted.

"And that word 'eat' doesn't match your face at all when you said it."

"It was your mother, Miss In, who asked me to exaggerate. That's why I said it like that."

"My mother?"

I was a little confused, so Janephop explained better.

"Your mother called me and said she was going to put herself in front of me to accept me back to work. She said you were lonely and almost dying of boredom."

"Mom is exaggerating." "Aren't you alone, Miss In?"

Janephop shrugged his shoulders, looking like a puppy, something I didn't usually see often in normal times.

"When I don't hear your voice, I get really lonely." "Because I'm so cute, right?"

"Because you're annoying, that's why I missed you." "Jane!!!"

The handsome man smiled shyly, as if he was happy that he had managed to tease me. I then jumped to hug him again, full of longing, but quickly pulled away.

"You came right on time, almost like you knew what I was thinking." "Is something wrong?"

He asked, looking at me curiously.

"I need help and you're the right person. I have a job for you." "Go ahead, I'm available."

I went to my expensive Hermes bag, took out the car key and handed it to him.

"Sell this to me, you can pay cash or check. I need it urgently."

Janephop continued to be the same quick and efficient man. He proved once again to be someone I could trust, doing everything I asked without question, even when I wanted to know the details.

As promised, in just three days I received a check for six million baht, enough to buy my dad's apartment. After handing the check to my dear father with a proud smile, I felt like a puffer fish, bursting with pride.

"I got the money to buy the apartment, look at that!"

My father looked at the check, but didn't even bother to pick it up to look at it properly, as if it were just a useless piece of paper, despite it being worth six million baht.

"Where did you get this from?"

"It was my own effort, dad. I worked at a hotel in Phuket for three months, and my boss gave me a car. I sold the car and used the money to buy the apartment. So please arrange this for me. I'm so excited!"

I moved excitedly, hoping that my father would be proud of my effort to earn money. But the response I got was a cold and indifferent one.

"You sold the car you earned with your own effort to buy this apartment? And now, what are you going to do? Are you going to live there?"

"Well... more or less. I'll be going back and forth between the house and the apartment."

"Oh, I see..."

My father inclined his head a little, took the check and put it in the drawer, replying indifferently:

"I'll take care of it for you."

"Please do it as soon as possible. It can't be later than the end of the month, otherwise there won't be time... There won't be time for the birthday."

"Whose birthday?"

When pressed for this question, I immediately shut up. It would be too awkward to explain that I bought the apartment for Arun BekFah, who had quit his job a while ago.

“Just let me know when the apartment is in my name, okay? Love you, Dad!”

I quickly walked away, dodging his questions in high spirits. At least my plan for Arun BekFah’s birthday present was going well. Sure, I was a little sad about having to sell the gorgeous Porsche, but that was okay. I was rich. As long as I had money, I could buy any car I wanted.

***Yay! Yay! Yay!***

As I mentioned, that day I felt like a puffer fish. If I were a graph, I would have gone through the roof. Ever since I got my friend Janephop back, and managed to get the money to buy the apartment in less than three days, I was feeling amazing. And all this, at cost price, which wouldn’t have been possible if my father hadn’t been a shareholder in the business. How lucky am I, huh? What did I do in my past life to deserve this?!

"What's wrong, Khun In? Have you been singing all day?"

I was at Arun BekFah's restaurant, eating and singing without realizing it, until she noticed me. Sweet Arun smiled at me, which made me think that despite everything, there are still good things in life, like receiving a sincere smile from someone you really like. To me, that smile meant the world, especially after everything I went through to earn it.

"I'm happy."

"Why?"

"For everything. One of the reasons is your smile."

I reached out and scratched Arun's chin, who was sitting across from me, smiling back.

"Now, my life is perfect. I have no obstacles. I'm rich, I have a beautiful girlfriend, and my friend is back."

"Yes, you have everything. You don't have to do anything, you have good looks, a good financial situation, while others have to struggle to get the same things."

"Is that a hint?"

I straightened my back and made a doubtful expression, not wanting to cause trouble, but Arun BekFah quickly waved her hands in apology.

"No, no! I just said what I saw!"

"You can't say I'm pretty without even knowing what my face looks like!"

"Many people say you're pretty, including yourself!" I thought she was being sarcastic...

"I believe you're pretty, really!"

"You're pretty too, and you have a pretty, rich girlfriend."

"Having a rich girlfriend doesn't help at all. In the end, I need to support myself and I'll never depend on you, In. I'm working hard, saving money to buy a place so I don't have to pay over 10k a month in rent for a place that isn't mine."

"Why buy? I don't get it. You already have your own place." "Huh?"

"Surprise!!!"

I raised my hand to cover my mouth, closing my eyes in frustration. Damn it! I was trying to surprise her, but I ended up blurting it out too soon.

"What do you mean, what do you mean by that, Khun In?" "Oh... can you just leave it at that? I don't want to talk yet."

But when she looked at me like that, I finally gave in. Deep down, I wanted to tell her, I was excited to see Arun BekFah's reaction, so I decided to speak.

"Okay, okay, don't yell, okay? You'll probably get emotional, because it's hard to find a girlfriend as cute as this one."

"I'm waiting, I want to get emotional!"

"I bought you an apartment for your birthday! Yay, yay!"

I exclaimed loudly, raising my hands as if it were something grand, but Arun BekFah stood still, her initial smile slowly fading, and I noticed the

change in the mood. When she became so cold, I dropped my arms, disconcerted.

"Aren't you happy?"

"You bought me an apartment, In?"

"Yes, it's new, two bedrooms, one bathroom and a living room. My father sold it to me at cost price, because he has a big stake in this project. But I didn't ask for it, I bought it."

"No, thank you." "Huh...?"

"Thank you for your kindness, but I don't want it."

The word "generosity" clearly indicated that she was being sarcastic, which made me feel even more uncomfortable. Then Arun Bekfah stood up, clearly trying to leave, as if she didn't want to fight, but I grabbed her arm before she could leave.

"Generosity? This is a birthday present! Why do you have to make it sound bad? I really wanted to give you this."

"You're just feeling sorry for me, aren't you? Because I'm here working hard to save up money to buy my own apartment. That's generosity."

"Why are you belittling my good intentions? I did it because I wanted you not to have to go through so much hardship."

"Yes, that's 'generosity'! You don't need to feel sorry. I'll fight for my things on my own, you don't need to get involved. And besides, that apartment belongs to your father, not yours! How long are you going to make me feel so small? Isn't it enough that I already feel inferior?"

"What? Inferior? I already told you, I bought it because I wanted to give you this gift, it's my will!"

"Your money comes from your father, right? You only know how to spend it without knowing its value. That's why you insist on wasting it like this."

"That's not..."

"You, Khun In, what else do you have besides your father's money?"

I let go of her arm and let Arun Bekfah vent. By the time she finished, I was so tired that I could only respond in a dejected manner, starting to reflect on what was happening.

"Yes, you're right."

And when Arun BekFah realized that I was no longer reacting, she seemed to realize that she had gone too far.

"Khun In... I... I'm sorry..."

I didn't even hear her words, because I was already rushing out, with tears in my eyes.

I got in the car, heading home, and started to think seriously about my life. It wasn't luck, but rather a great lack of purpose. I was the one who wasn't worthy of someone as competent as Arun Bekfah.

**Footnote:**

**[1]. Endorphin was one of the most popular Thai rock bands in Thailand. The band consisted of Da, Kia, Bird, and Bomb: Thanida Thamwimon: vocals Anucha Boethongkhamkul: guitar Thanat Amornmanus: bass Thapaphol Amornmanus: percussion.**

**Don't let the sky down(**

# 40.Daddy

It had been a long time since I had picked up the violin.

After returning home and entering the room exhausted, I saw the maid cleaning the room and placing my violin bag on the bed. I took the opportunity to pick it up, dust it off and play a little. I chose "Canon in D", since, to be honest, it is the only piece of music I play well; all the others I have to read the sheet music. As soon as I picked up the violin, I was taken by the melody I knew how to play best, even though the feeling was not the happiest.

They say that music conveys the emotions of the one who plays it. I really don't know what kind of sound came out when I started playing. However, after playing for a while, I ended up stopping in the middle of the piece. I noticed that Janephop

had been behind me for some time, watching. Then, he commented, with that familiarity of someone who knows me better than anyone:

"It sounds so sad."

"What do you mean? How can it sound sad?"

"That's what I felt. I'm not good at music, but I could hear the sadness. Was it a bad day for you?"

"Well... I guess so, more or less."

"Miss Arun didn't like the gift you gave her?"

"Then you already know. Can I hide anything from you?"

Although I hadn't told anyone, not even Janephop, about the plan to give Arun an apartment, I wanted it to be a surprise that only I knew in this world. But of course, he knew everything, even without me telling him.

"Yeah, she didn't like it."

"It was probably too expensive. You need to understand her side." "I understand."

I put the violin on the bed and looked at my friend, who knew me better than anyone, wanting to hear his opinion.

"Jan, can I ask you something?" "What is it?"

"Besides my father's money, what good do I have?"

My question made Janephop frown. He looked away, as if pondering something, looking angrier than I expected.

"Did Arun say something like that to you?" "I just asked you a question, so answer me." "You're sad about it, aren't you?"

"Oh, don't be silly."

I got up from the bed and cupped his face with both hands, squeezing it lightly.

"It was just a question that made me think. I really realized that if I didn't have my father's money, if I wasn't rich, I wouldn't have anything good, Jan."

"Where is the confident Miss In I know? You always made a point of saying 'because I'm smart and pretty' at the end of anything you did. How can you

let someone undermine your confidence like that?" "You didn't answer my question."

"Miss In, you're someone who does everything with seriousness and determination. That's a trait few in the world possess."

Janephop squeezed my shoulders firmly, conveying his support.

"You're a race car driver, you can beat your opponents on the track. Even if you lose sometimes, you usually come out on top."

"Hmm... I think I'm starting to see my qualities. But if my father wasn't rich, I wouldn't have a good car, nor could I compete."

"You play the violin very well and beautifully."

"The violin is an expensive instrument. If I didn't have a good teacher, I probably wouldn't play so well."

"Why are you putting yourself down so much?"

"I just wanted to do something that was truly meaningful. The scholarship project I had planned ended up being put aside due to pure distraction. I never finish anything. Jan... I think I'm a failure."

"Success is not always measured by concrete achievements alone. Remember when you saved Miss Renu's life when she had a cardiac arrest. If it weren't for your skill that day, she wouldn't be with us anymore."

" "

"A trophy isn't always a symbol of success. You're incredible. To me, there's no one more talented than you."

Seeing his seriousness, I couldn't help but laugh, even though I was sad. I closed my fist and punched him lightly in the chest, joking.

"You inflate my ego so much that I'll end up floating. But thank you."

I hugged Janephop once more, not bothering with formalities. "I'm still a little sad, but this helped me a lot."

"For me, you're the best of all. You play well, you drive well, and you're also great at keeping people waiting."

"Waiting? Who?" "Arun."

"Arun is waiting? Waiting for me?"

I pulled away from Janephop and frowned. "Yes, she's waiting for you downstairs." "And you're only telling me this now?"

"I was talking to you and ended up getting annoyed with Arun, so I kept her waiting a little longer."

"How mean of you, Jan!"

I said jokingly and giggled before leaving to find Arun, who was sitting downstairs talking to my mother. My mother asked several questions until I appeared, then she waved at me.

"Oh, Nong In is over there. I'll go then."

She stood up, wanting to leave us alone, but before she went, she turned to me.

"I heard you playing the violin. It's been a while since I've heard it." "It's been a while since I've picked it up either."

"Are you sad about something?"

"Why is everyone asking me if I'm sad today?" "Well, the music kind of gave it away..."

My mother smiled.

"But I won't bother you. I just wanted to say that you played very well, but you messed up a few parts. Practice more, I like to listen."

After my mother left, it was just Arun and me. The atmosphere between us was tense. I wasn't upset about what had happened today, but I felt embarrassed about something, like I wasn't worthy, even though I had never felt that way before.

"Khun In?" "Hmm... Yes?"

Now, I didn't have the courage to look her in the eyes, she had such a sweet face. I sat on the small sofa, instead of sitting next to her. Arun closed her lips, as if she wanted to say something, but couldn't seem to find the right moment. Then, she came closer and held my leg with her hands.

"Sorry."

"Why?"

"About what I said today, it wasn't my intention. I let my emotions control me and I ended up speaking without thinking."

"But you never do anything without thinking first. When you say something like that, it means you've thought about it... And I'm not mad, I'm just a little surprised."

"Khun In."

"We're not fighting, so don't worry. I just need some time to be silent, to think about it all until everything becomes clear in my head."

I smiled at Arun and politely said:

"You can go back and rest now. I need some time alone." "..."

After saying that, I didn't say goodbye. I just got up and went to my room on the second floor, throwing myself on the bed and letting my face sink into the pillow, exhausted.

However, it didn’t take five minutes

for a knocking sound on the door to make me frown, and I assumed it was Janephop.

“Come in, Jan. The door isn’t locked.”

I answered without looking, since Janephop was an intimate person who could come in at any moment.

“Fah has already left, hasn’t she? Did you ask the driver to take her home?”

The sound of a lock on the door made me look up in surprise. When I looked, I see that it's Arun who is standing there.

“No, I haven’t left yet.” “But… why are you here?”

“I know my words hurt you, In.”

Arun took a step forward with a soft look, continuing to speak as she approached.

“I didn’t really mean it. As I told you, you always make me break my own rules. This time it was the same. I spoke without thinking, I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

"I already told you I'm not mad."

The sweet-faced person threw herself at me and hugged me tightly.

"If you're mad, why don't you just say you're mad? You always tell the truth, In... When you say everything's fine, even when it's not, it hurts me, you know?"

Arun's trembling voice made me feel pain too. In fact, I was very sad and regretful. Although it wasn't anger, it made me think about how insignificant I felt, as if I had nothing good. As Arun gently caressed my back, his delicate lips kissed my neck awkwardly, which made me relax, but at the same time, I felt vulnerable.

"I'm hurt because I feel useless. Compared to you, I feel like I have nothing good."

"You have many good qualities, In."

"That's not true. Besides my father's money..."

"That's also a quality. How many people in the world are born with so much money that the doctor has to perform a C-section because they had so much gold and silver inside?"

When Arun said that, I laughed, because I had forgotten that I had already bragged about it once.

"How do you remember something like that?"

"Being born rich is a good story. Think of it as an incentive for you to make your money grow. Don't be sad about my words, In.

I'm sorry."

Arun bit my ear lightly, which made me take a deep breath. I held her shirt tightly and spoke in a low tone:

"Insinuating yourself like that is not right. You tried to make me stop being angry, but you ended up provoking me, and that is not right."

"Consider this an apology, then."

"What do you mean?"

"How about we break the rules one more time and start all over again?"

The saying that couples who fight often end up having children quickly may be true, because after a fight, they usually end up making up in bed, as in our case. The difference is that Arun BekFah and I are both women, so we don’t have to worry about our periods not coming next month.

This reconciliation was a little more intense because we had just had a fight. I seemed to be releasing my frustration and anger towards her, ordering her to do everything I wanted, biting her and not letting her finish.

This was like an extremely painful punishment, and several times, the sweet-looking person had to hit me on the shoulder because she was irritated.

“In!!”

The angrier she was, the more satisfied I felt. I wasn’t going to let her achieve her goal so easily. I picked her up and turned her over on her stomach, changing positions without ceremony, and then I reached down her body and began to caress her clitoris with my fingers in circular motions. The sweet-faced person had to bury her face in the pillow and writhe her body back and forth. Her body was wet with desire.

This was probably the first time she had begged me as if she was about to cry.

"Please... make me cum. Please forgive me."

And when I saw that she was begging so much, I couldn't help but feel sorry for her, so I had to help her reach her destination. But the worst torture is not being satisfied, that is, her wish was fulfilled, but she wanted more.

So I started helping her, she was like an engine that accelerating without stopping, I masturbated her for a while until she came, gripping the sheet tightly and started begging again. But differently from the last time, as if it were a new movie.

"Please... I can't take it anymore. I'm out of energy." "Not yet."

"Khun In!"

I turned her to face me and pressed my intimacy against hers, joining her soft body. The sound of our bodies meeting, wet and full of desire, made my arousal increase. Both my moans and my body language encouraged Arun to continue, despite her saying she was satisfied. So, she moved to help make everything easier. I'm almost there...

I want some more... "Ah... ah."

My body trembled and I bent down to hug the sweet-faced person who was waiting for me. The strength of the hug made me hold her tightly, seeking refuge and releasing the tension, I lightly bit her neck to convey how intense my feelings were at that moment.

"Enough punishment, right? Aren't you mad at me anymore?" "I can't stay mad anymore."

"I can't keep fighting anymore either."

We both hugged and fell asleep, and when we woke up, it was the morning of another day...

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Well... Now, my mind has returned to normal after a hormonal outburst last night. The sweet-faced person is worried about the mark on her neck, the result of my actions, and seem almost crying.

"What if the people in your house see this? The mark is quite visible."

"Sorry, I was a bit harsh. Do you want to wear a scarf?" "A scarf doesn't suit the weather in Thailand."

"That's right. How about you leave your hair down? That way it won't show."

"In..."

Arun made a sullen face and patted my arm, pouting. It was rare to see someone so small complaining like that, so I couldn't resist and hugged her from behind.

"You're so cute. That's what happens when we fall in love, right?" I said, smiling.

I buried my face in the small person's neck, affectionately. Arun BekFah laughed softly and pulled away to adjust her clothes.

"That's enough, let's go back. I have to go to the restaurant again."

"And aren't you afraid of wearing the same clothes and someone there asking?"

"I don't think they need to ask, you've already told everyone about it."

I grimaced and laughed mischievously. After getting ready, I prepared to take Arun BekFah back, but as we were walking to the car, my father suddenly called out to me.

"Are you leaving, Arun?"

At the sound of Dad's voice, Arun BekFah seemed tense, as if something had surprised her, and she quickly tried to hide it, even though she was clearly nervous.

"Yes, I need to go to the restaurant."

"I heard you opened a restaurant. It's going well, isn't it?" "Yes, it's going well."

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

Dad asked directly, which was unusual, since he usually didn't pry too much into people's personal lives, only caring about his work. But this time, he seemed to be going too far with his questions, which made me a little worried.

It's nothing big, it was just a question from someone who hasn't seen someone for a long time. It's not strange. I needed to calm down, close my eyes and gather my energy in my abdomen, focusing my internal energy to keep me calm.

"No, not yet."

"Oh, I see."

Daddy prolonged his answer and took a step forward, facing Arun BekFah. "Next week is your birthday, isn't it?"

"Huh? Oh, yes."

"You're amazing, you remember her birthday."

"I only remember the ones I'm really interested me."

"Oh, I forgot, so Arun Bekfah is your lover, right Daddy?"

I said jokingly, but Daddy didn't smile at my silly joke. He continued to focus on Arun BekFah.

"When I was young, I was also a womanizer. When I was a teenager, I dated a lot of girls and what I liked most was to show that I owned them."

"What are you talking about all of a sudden?"

"You, Arun, are good at hiding your feelings, but you are not good at lying. My special skill is to notice when someone is lying. In business, one has to observe body language and many other things. And yes... now I know that you are lying."

"Lying about what? You are talking strangely today, Daddy... No, never mind. Arun BekFah, you will be late for the restaurant. I should drive you."

I tried to end the conversation quickly, because it seem Daddy is starting to get suspicious. But just as I'm about to pull Arun BekFah away, Daddy said something that made us both stop in our tracks.

"Intuorn is going to marry Mawin."

I looked at my father's face, which looked more serious than ever. He was not a fool; he had picked up on the signs from the conversation about birthdays, Arun BekFah's boyfriend, and the idea of "showing ownership."

And now, with this marriage thing...

## "I won't allow Nong In to date you, Arun BekFah."

# 41.Please My Heart

Silence settled between us all. I pursed my lips in surprise at my father's aggressive reaction, because since I was born, he had always been a very kind person. No matter how wrong I had done something, I had never been scolded or criticized. In the end, he would always smile and tell me that all problems had a solution.

But that was not the case in this situation. Dad was trying to prevent the problem from arising before it was too late, he had already determined that I should marry Mawin. If he could stop me from having any relationship with Arun BekFah now, he would do it immediately.

But I'm not going to accept it.

"Fah, don't worry. The person you are with is me, not my father."

I knew that Arun BekFah was a person who thought a lot before acting, and before we got into arguments, we both would have to overcome many misunderstandings and her tendency to avoid problems. And this would be yet another obstacle to overcome. But this was a big obstacle...

A big one.

"I'm an smart person. You must see that it won't work out between you and Nong In. Let me explain to you why it can't work out."

He clasped his hands behind his back and slowly approached the two of us.

*"First, you're not worthy of Nong In. You're just an ordinary person who can't grow the business. Second, you're a woman. And third... you're not worthy!"*

He spoke so harshly, as if he wanted to drive these words deep into the heart of the little person who was still silent. I clenched my fists, feeling a rising anger, wanting to yell at Daddy, but before I could say anything, Arun BekFah interrupted in a calm voice, like someone who had complete control over herself.

"I will become worthy. You can be sure of that."

I looked at Arun BekFah, a little surprised. I expected her to lower her head and walk away, as she always did when she didn't like to confront situations.

"Are you capable of this?"

Dad's aggressive words made me lose my patience immediately. After being silent for so long, I ended up shouting without thinking, forgetting that the person in front of me was my father.

"Enough! What else do you want? I'm no special, where did I come from? Why do you have to talk to Arun BekFah like that?"

"Don't talk to me like that, In!"

Dad shouted back, and I flinched, I didn't know if I was angry or scared, but I wasn't going to cower.

"I can't help but speak up! You just keep saying that Arun BekFah is no good for me, as if I were some angel who came down from heaven! I'm an ordinary person, I'm no better than anyone else. Don't come with this class division, Dad!"

"What sets you apart from Arun BekFah is the enormous responsibility you have, especially after I'm no longer here."

"That has nothing to do with our relationship!"

"It has everything to do with it. Whoever inherits the business needs to have the right qualities. Mawin is the chosen one, he is the one who is worthy of you."

"But I don't love him."

"That's not necessary to be worthy!" "You're overreacting!"

My mother's voice came from behind us, like a cold wind, but with a strange sense of apprehension. Even so, Dad, who was visibly irritated, looked at my mother and grimaced.

"I knew you would come to help your daughter. But you don't have to get involved in this!"

"What's wrong with loving your daughter? Do you think that only you can be happy in the world?"

My mother positioned herself between me and Dad, who were in a verbal confrontation, and looked at both of us, starting with me.

"In, you shouldn't have spoken to your father like that either. You know how much he loves you. How do you think your father will feel?"

I looked down, feeling guilty, because I knew I was wrong. I raised my hand in a sign of respect, trying to be more mature.

"I'm sorry, Dad."

"You too! What else do you want with your daughter's love? You should know and understand how painful it is to have your love withheld. Don't you remember when you brought me to meet your mother?"

"It's not the same thing."

Dad hesitated, seeming to agree, but not wanting to support this thought.

"I'm a man. I'm the support of the family. I'm good at what I do, I make the money grow, and you were pregnant."

"So, Nong In needs to be pregnant before you allow her to have a happy love? And enough about men and women. What world are we in? There's no need for her to depend on a man. Arun BekFah is a smart woman, she has her own business, and if she wasn't good, you wouldn't have hired her to be by In's side from the beginning."

"I won't argue with you, but I still don't agree with this. Nong In has to marry Mawin. Mawin will take care of her."

"I can take care of In too, I promise."

Arun Bekfah’s words, like a promise, came out firmly from the little person’s mouth. The determined look in her eyes, like someone who wouldn’t give up, made me reach out and hold her hand tightly.

“I will be everything to her, I will be her advisor, I will take care of her without stopping, so that you can rest easy.”

“I can’t rest, especially when it comes to you! This is a family business. I built it up to be this big and brilliant. How can I leave it in the hands of an outsider who has nothing but a body like yours?”

“Then you don’t have to trust Arun Beekfah, just trust me. I promise that I will take care of your business to the best of my ability and that you will never regret it.”

“How can I trust you, In? You’ve never proven anything to me!”

Dad expressed all his feelings of frustration until it made me feel bad too.

"Since you were born, you've only made trouble, only spent money, never cared about anyone, I've always been the one who had to clean up the mess!"

"You're being too harsh, Dad."

"Or is that not true? You likes to drive fast and crash into others, causing trouble for everyone. Fortunately, Miss Jom didn't file a complaint, otherwise you would have gone to jail or fled abroad! You says you're

going to start a handbag business, but in reality I've never seen anything concrete. And now you tells me you're going to take care of the business? How can I trust a daughter who has never done anything to show that she deserves that trust?"

I sit in silence, my heart aching, feeling the pain of my father's words. He was right about so many things. I was lucky to be born into a good family, but if I look deeper, I can see that without my father's support, my life would be nothing. Absolutely nothing...

Arun BekFah had touched on this point before, but I only felt sad for a moment, because she always came to comfort me. In the end, I forgot about everything and trusted that everything would be fine. Even though I had no skills to work, I still had my father’s money to support me, and that allowed me to continue my life without worries, without passion, without knowing what I wanted to do with my life, without even understanding who I really was.

“If I prove myself, will you allow me to stay with Arun BekFah?”

“Prove what? If you’re talking about working as a cleaner for three months, like you did in Phuket, that’s not proof of anything.”

“Whatever you want me to do, I will do, so that I can continue to love Arun BekFah.”

“There’s no need to do anything, In.”

My mother spoke calmly, crossing her arms.

“Just stay quiet and live comfortably on the pile of money here, your father won’t take care of that, your mother will.”

“Why do you support our daughter so much?”

"Because I'm tired of you, that's why, of course. What's going on, anyway? Didn't we agree that our children's happiness was the most important thing?

But in the end, you still put yourself first. You're the one who breaks your own vows, you're the liar."

My mother looked at my father coldly, before giving me a gentle smile.

"I'm always true to my own principles. In, you can date Arun, and I'll support you. Live your life happily, if anything's missing, your mother will help."

"You..!"

"You know your father is older than me, right? He'll die first, for sure." My mother shrugged, unconcerned, and looked at her nails.

"We're married, you know? We've registered that the marital assets should belong to me and my heir. That means that in the end, when I die, everything will belong to Nong In anyway."

"You're trying to make me suffer with this, right? It won't work. I don't feel anything from your provocation."

"Are you sure it doesn't hurt?" "It doesn't."

"Then I'll make you suffer."

"There's nothing that makes me suffer more than seeing my daughter being stubborn with me. No matter what you say or do, it won't affect my heart."

Dad stood firm in his words, and my mother stopped looking at her nails, narrowing her eyes, like a snake watching its prey.

"You're challenging me, aren't you?"

"If you tell me you don't love me or ask for a divorce, I won't feel any pain."

"I'm not stupid enough to ask for a divorce. Who's going to divorce a man as rich as you?"

"See?"

Dad smiled with pride at what he had.

"You love me, you love what I have. I don't feel any pain when I'm with you."

"Then prove that you can accept it." "You can say whatever you want!" "Mew Nittha already has a boyfriend!"

I saw Dad stop, his eyes wide, one hand clutching his chest, and he took a step back, clearly not knowing how to react. 😅

"Why are you...?"

"Don't show your pain to me, you know I know how to hit where it hurts."

My mother crossed her arms and looked at Dad, who was trying to find a place to sit, while she continued to walk towards him.

"Mew Nittha has a boyfriend, a handsome, clean-cut man, heir to a billion- dollar fortune. They announced their relationship at the release of the movie, so the world would know."

"Please stop... I beg you."

"They went to a Bruno Mars concert, they went for sushi omakase, they traveled abroad, to the Maldives, Hoi An."

"I don't want to hear it, I don't want to hear it, it hurts." "It served as a lesson."

"You're hitting me where it hurts. You know Mew's travel plans better than you know what I do in my day to day life."

"There's no rule saying I can't cheat, and I followed Mew to see what my husband was saying about her on Instagram. Don't think I don't know her username, okay?"

"You do?!"

"Yes, I even know her Twitter handle." "You shouldn't know that much."

"That's why they call her a controlling woman, right?" My mother turned to Dad and walked over to me.

"Nong In, don't worry about your father, do whatever you want, my daughter."

I, still absorbed in my own thoughts, slowly raised my head and looked at my mother. My eyes were filled with tears, as if I had truly realized that I was no good at anything other than being rich.

"Dad is right, Mom. I am really useless."

"I told you not to listen to your father. You are good at many things. Even if you don't get concrete results, you are good."

"Mom, please don't defend me so much. If you look at me from the outside, not from my mother's eyes... I am someone who can't even take a step without tripping over something, I don't know how to do anything, even though I have more opportunities than others. I only think about the present, without looking to the future, without seeing what will happen when Dad and you are no longer here."

"Khun In..."

Arun BekFah squeezed my hand, wanting to give me strength.

"Sometimes, I feel like I'm not worthy of you. Your thoughts are always one step ahead, even if your life base is harder. If I'm to love you, I need to improve and show you that I won't cause you any more worries."

I let go of Arun BekFah's hand and walked over to my father, who was still quiet, weighed down by his mother's pressure and the pain caused by his daughter's words.

"I love you, Dad. And I know you care about me. For your peace of mind and for my own peace of mind, if I ever become responsible for your business, I have to prove myself first."

"Nong In..."

"Give me a challenge, Dad. If I can't do what you expect, I'll marry Mawin so he can take care of the business in my place."

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"Are you okay, Khun In?"

I drove to the restaurant to drop off Arun BekFah, but the little person still didn't want to get out of the car. She asked me worriedly and reached out to caress my cheek affectionately.

"If I said everything was fine, I would be lying. It must be something, yes." I looked at the person who was asking, feeling guilty.

"I apologize on behalf of my father for speaking like that. I'm a useless daughter, so my father ended up taking it out on you."

"I already knew that if I got involved with you, things like this would happen. If it weren't for that, I wouldn't have run away from the beginning."

"Did you foresee something like this happening?"

Arun nodded in confirmation. And I wasn't that surprised that the sweet- faced person had managed to foresee the event, because she was very observant and detailed. Since she was visually impaired, if she knew so much about me, it meant that she had also studied the personality of the people around her.

"Yes, your father is an intelligent person, with great ideas and a very big ego. But, because he is someone who loves his family and his daughter, you don't see much of your father's decisive side. I already knew that if you ever took love seriously, the person who would be the biggest obstacle would be no one else but your father, who loves you very much."

"..."

"He planned every step for you, from the beginning, like the fact that you would marry Mawin because he is a relative and has the same social status. He saw the work you did when you went to manage the hotel in Phuket and hoped to be able to trust his daughter, who probably doesn't know how to do anything..."

Arun made a face as if she had seen a ghost as she said these words.

"Don't worry, continue. Explain to me your view of my dad, I want to hear it."

"Mr. Anek thinks that if he is no longer here, he will not be able to trust anyone. Even though he cares about the inheritance, he cares much more about how he feels about you. If his daughter has a hard time, what will he do? If his daughter is deceived, how much will it hurt her? If her daughter is exploited, how will she deal with it? Since your father looks up to you, he has become very strict with his spouse. The fight we saw with your mother earlier seemed like something minor, but in fact, after we left, your father and mother must have had a serious conversation about the reasons that led them to make this decision."

"Hmm."

I looked at Arun with a sense of genuine concern.

"Are you scared? Because now it's for real."

"You want to know if I'm going to run away again, don't you?" "..."

"No, since I realized that I'm jealous of you, I don't think about leaving you anymore. Besides, you should know that I always think before I act. This didn't come as a surprise, because I already knew this would happen. I'll fight for us, with you."

"If I wasn't rich, would you still stay with me?" "Of course I would."

"What do you mean?"

"I would feel superior to you, at least for a while. Now I have my own restaurant. Even if the money isn't much, I can definitely support you."

The sweet-faced person gave me support, and I smiled. Then, she got out of the car, waved, and watched me until she disappeared. As I drove and began to reflect on myself, my cell phone rang, and the number that appeared was my father's. I had never been so apprehensive about answering his call as I'm now. This is the first time in my life that I feel this way.

"Yes, Dad?"

[Finally I thought of how to make you prove yourself.] “What do you want me to do?”

[I’ll give you 100,000 baht and a property. You have to grow that money from 100,000 to 1 million within a year.]

“...”

[If you can’t, you’ll have to break up with Arun and marry someone I choose.]

I gripped the phone tightly. It was clearly a very difficult choice, as if he was giving me an opportunity, but at the same time it was so limited that it felt more like a way to teach me that the real world is cruel.

He was using his position as an investor to test his own daughter. This world belongs only to winners, and I would have to be the loser.

“What if I don’t agree?”

The silence fell between us so uncomfortable that it felt unbearable. The sound of the car’s air conditioning got so loud it felt like someone was shouting in my ear.

## [I will destroy Arun in every way.]

# 42. I Won't Allow It

In the end, I ended up accepting my father's agreement. This time, I'm more serious than I've ever been in my life. Dad took everything very seriously, to the point of calling a lawyer to draw up a detailed contract, sending me the document to confirm that I would comply with the agreement, without breaking anything. The witnesses who had to sign it were my mother and Mawin.

"I think his agreement is too hard on our daughter. How is she going to turn a hundred thousand into a million in just one year? Who could do that?"

"I can."

"You think you can because you've always had your father as your support. But now you have to fend for yourself and you're still under pressure to do the impossible. How crazy... I shouldn't have gotten pregnant with you in the first place."

My mother crossed her arms and spoke, irritated, before looking at me with a soft gaze, as if she were looking at a Disney princess.

"Will Mommy's princess be okay?"

"I'll be fine, Mom. I'll show Dad that I'm not that incompetent."

My father watched me silently, without expressing any opinion, from the beginning to the end of the *"solemn ceremony"* of signing.

"I'll wait and see," Dad said. "Thank you."

"Then I'll stop acting tough... ah."

And then, my gentle father changed his tone to a dejected expression, with a deep sadness, like someone completely desolate. His shoulders, which were straight before, sagged.

*Could it be that he finally took pity on me?*

"What's wrong, Khun Pa?" "Mew got a boyfriend." 😅

Oh my... All the excitement I felt before disappeared in the blink of an eye.

"Throughout this year, I'll make sure to remind you of this often... And by the way... Jane, is that matter I asked you to take care of ready?"

Janephop, who had been silent for a long time, nodded slightly before taking something out of his expensive suit and handing it to my mother with reverence.

"Yes, ma'am. The ink is of the highest quality, and the paper is even water- resistant. Unless it is burned, nothing will destroy it."

"Excellent."

As soon as she finished speaking, my mother put on a mask with the image of Mew Nittha, replacing her own face, and turned to my father.

"Anek, this is Mew." 😅

"What are you doing?"

Dad put his hand over his mouth, as if Mew were really there. "Ah... what a beautiful choice of image."

"I remember you like it. Every time you came back from the company and passed by the building, you would always look at this picture."

"So adorable, Mew."

"But I'm sorry. I already have a boyfriend. And I love him, I love him so much! Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you..."

"How far are you going with this? And why are you singing that song?" "I sang it for my boyfriend at the birthday party last night."

"I'm dying... my heart is broken. How long are you going to torture me like this?"

"I'll keep going until you cancel this ridiculous contract!"

I stood up and signaled for Janephop to follow me, while my mother, still wearing the Mew Nittha mask, looked curiously and asked:

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to see the building that daddy gave me and start planning what to do next. Now the clock is already ticking. In a year, I'll have to get a million for daddy! I'm going now, and I promise I'll make you proud of me."

I spoke with determination, not giving up in the face of any obstacle, no matter how much my father tried to make it difficult for me.

"So determined, my princess Mulan." My mother said.

"Daddy will be rooting for you."

"If you really want to support, you should cancel this ridiculous contract." "No."

"You are a very sweet person. I like the way you are attentive and caring, always paying attention to me. Especially when I hurt my leg, you were so worried. That I would get bored, you did everything you could to distract

me. I even rode on your back! And sometimes would lift me up on your head, saying that since I am short, maybe I would like to feel what it feels like to be tall. I was very impressed. So much so that if there is a next life, I want to be born as Baiyoke Tower (a famous building in Thailand). But if there is no reincarnation, I want to try to be a giant spirit. That way, I would have an even broader vision than this one."

"How absurd! That doesn't exist! As a normal person, why would you want to be a giant spirit?"

"I support it!"

I think my mother is actually a fan of this actress. She knows more about her than anyone in the world...

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The building that Dad gave me is on the outskirts of the city, in a very deserted area, with practically no tourist attractions or attractions. The location had no appeal whatsoever, which left me completely unmotivated. Now, the three of us me, Marwin and Janephop were standing there, staring at the building, not knowing what to do, with no ideas of how we could turn it from a hundred thousand into a million.

"It's surprising that your father kept this building. No matter how you look at it, it doesn't seem to have any useful value."

"It has no commercial value, but it does have sentimental value. I heard it was Dad's grandmother's mother's old house."

"That's already a complicated family history." "The Thais call it *'tvo'."*

Marwin added, shaking his head as if he sensed my frustration. "I'm not very familiar with that term."

"Have you thought about what to do with the building? What kind of business do you want to open here?"

"Selling stuff won't work. Hardly anyone passes by here."

I looked around and saw only cars passing by with dust flying around, so I covered my face with my hand.

"Looks like I'll end up marrying Mawin."

"Hey! No! I don't like people without ambition. It's better to be single than to marry you, In."

I heard this and made a face at Marwin, then raised my nose.

"I don't love or like you either, so let's focus on thinking about what to do with this."

"How about asking Miss Arun for help? She seems to have business ideas."

I stood still for a moment upon hearing this. Mawin, with his charming face, was already preparing to send a photo and ask for Arun's opinion, but I quickly snatched the phone from his hands.

"No, no! Don't tell Fah! I won't allow it." "Why?"

"I don't want anyone to help. Dad wants me to manage this alone to prove my worth. So I'll think about it on my own."

"That's absurd! You don't know how to do anything right, how can you think about it on your own? You have no experience, you're stupid, and you don't care about the economy. This won't work. It affects my future too. I won't accept it."

"I won't accept it either! Fah can't get involved in this."

I stood firm, but Mawin looked like he was chewing on something really bad.

"Hey, you can't be thinking about pride now. This is too big of an obstacle! Turning a hundred thousand into a million in a year is harder than pushing a boulder up a mountain."

"If I can do it, then I'll be worthy of being my father's daughter and worthy of Fah's love."

Images of a successful restaurant like Arun's flashed through my mind. I was touched. Arun, who had no investment at all, had made her business shine, with steady customers. So if I was going to get involved with someone like that, I had to be able to overcome this huge challenge too.

"This is crazy! How are you going to do this with a hundred thousand? I can't even imagine what you're going to do with this building."

"I was thinking of turning it into a hostel."

"With a hundred thousand and in such a deserted area?" "I used to work in a hotel, maybe I could renovate it."

"I also worked in a hotel and I still work in the area. I can guarantee that it will fail. It will go bankrupt, bankrupt, bankrupt. It will be a failure, we will end up getting married, I can already see it."

"That is not support!"

"It is obvious that it will fail!" "I want to invest in this."

Janephop, who had been silent for a while, said calmly.

He looked at the building with some enthusiasm, but I shook my head. "No, this is something I have. Besides, in the contract..."

"Your father's contract doesn't say anything about having partners. I'm sure he left that loophole for you, Miss In."

"Why do you think that?"

"There is no business without partners, right?"

"But with partners, we have to make decisions together. I don't want that. I like to decide alone."

"So that's why you will go bankrupt."

."You idiot!"

"You need a partner because alone, with the land we have, we can't do anything with this building."

"And what can a hundred thousand do?"

"You don't just have a hundred thousand, right? That building your father gave you can be mortgaged. This is also an opportunity he gave you to learn how to get money like any other businessman would."

"Mortgage..."

"Janephop is smarter than I thought. You should take him on as a partner. I think with him, it might still be possible to get the million."

Marvin said, crossing his arms and shaking his head.

"Why am I worried about you, anyway? Since when are we so close?" "But if I can't do that, your sperm will have to leak inside me."

"Argh! How disgusting!"

"You're a man! You can scream if you want."

I scowled at Marwin, unable to bear the thought of us having to share our lives like this.

"I don't want that either. I just want to be with Arun BekFah."

"Then I'll be a partner. Three hundred thousand at least can give us a base. And then we can mortgage the building and maybe get a little more. The hotel you've been thinking about can really work."

"I'll write the business plan. I really believe you can make it work."

Janephop said, giving me support. I smiled at him, grateful for his years of friendship, and accepted the idea with determination.

"Okay."

So, everything is starting to take shape. I can do it! After all, I'm my father's daughter.

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After Mawin left, I told Janephop to come back too, because I had something serious to talk to Arun BekFah about. I waited until the restaurant closed and then called Arun, saying I wanted to talk to her.

The sweet-faced woman put the "Closed" sign on the door and sat down, waiting for me, while reading a book.

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***Knock knock.***

I knocked on the window next to where Arun was sitting. She smiled so brightly that my heart almost skipped a beat, then she quickly got up to open the door of the restaurant, inviting me in and immediately put her arm around mine.

"Are you so happy? Why such a big smile?"

"Because you like to see me smile."

She probably knew what I had been through today. The only thing that was making me feel better at that moment was her smile, something I loved the most and that could not be bought with money.

"If I could see you smile like that forever, it would be perfect."

"I will smile for you always, you can ask me whenever you want." "Right now."

"I'm already smiling, aren't I?" "I want you now."

"..."

"..."

After we stared at each other for a while, Arun BekFah's face turned red, as if she had understood the message. The little girl looked around, starting to get worried, and pointed to the security camera.

"I don't think that's possible."

"Isn't there anywhere without cameras?"

"You're inviting me to do this, but your expression is so serious."

The sweet girl held my face with both hands, as if trying to reassure me.

"It'll pass, everything will be fine. Your hotel will be a success. I'll be your partner."

"No." "..."

"Everyone in this world can help me, except you."

I squeezed Arun BekFah’s hand tightly and decided to say what was on my mind:

“I want to prove to you that I’m good enough, that I’m not just my father’s rich daughter or something. It must be uncomfortable to be with me and feel like I’m just a parasite. Complaining about myself will definitely destroy our relationship.”

“I understand, but you don’t have to worry so much about it. I don’t really think that way.”

“But I do, and I can’t stand it.”

“Then, whatever you want. I’ll just stay here to support you.”

The sweet-faced person gave in, and then smiled. I reached out and caressed her soft cheek, and then tears started to well up.

“You’re my love, how am I going to put up with this for a whole year?” “Why put up with it? It feels like you’ll never see me again.”

Arun frowned, realizing something was starting to dawn on him. “What are you going to do?”

"I'm the type of person who does things quickly and then loses interest. If this fight to beat my father doesn't have passion or a strong goal, it will demotivate me."

"So?"

"Having you around makes me feel too comfortable. If I push myself too hard, I think... I'll reach my goal faster."

I leaned my head down to kiss Arun's lips, before saying something that tortured me deeply:

"That's why I need to go through this without you." "Khun In..."

"Missing you and wanting you with all my soul will push me to succeed. So today, I came here to look at you, to spend some time with you before I go do what I need to do to achieve my goals. I love you... I really love you."

Arun pressed her lips together, her eyes brimming with tears, but she didn't object, because she knew I had already made my decision.

"I understand. This will be the last day we see each other, and on the same day next year, you'll come back saying you made it."

"I have to make it."

"I believe you'll make it." "Do you really believe that?"

"I know you better than I know myself."

Arun took my hand and led me to the kitchen. At first, I didn't know what she wanted to do, until slowly, the sweet-faced person unbuttoned her blouse, one button at a time, without shyness.

"There are no security cameras here." "..."

"I will make you miss me and wish that this day would come soon next year, bringing success with it. So, today, let's do it here, in this place, so that it will be a good memory that we both will never forget for the rest of our lives."

"Today, I will do my best, until you too cannot forget me... We will meet on this very day, next year."

I smiled at the sweet-faced person and took off my clothes as well.

"We will meet on this very day, next year."

We immediately embraced, our naked bodies together, needing to let go of all the sadness, because this was an important moment in which we should make good memories, since we might not see each other again for a long time, even for a year.

"Come up and sit over there."

I waved to the sweet-faced person with a request mixed with a slight command. Arun didn't object to my request and moved to sit on the stainless steel counter in the middle of the room. She jumped as soon as her skin touched the cold surface.

"It's cold."

"Soon, our bodies will warm up to it. I've been imagining for a while what it would be like to do this in the kitchen. It feels like a dream come true."

I said, smiling, and spread Arun's legs.

"It looks like I'm about to enjoy a grand feast." "Today, make the most of it, okay?"

"I make the most of it every time."

I always start our activities by tasting and savoring first, because I want to feel and make the person in front of me happy, from the beginning until I reach the top of the mountain. There is never a time when I take a shortcut or am lazy. Besides, she has good skin and pleasant smell in any part of her body, not to mention the husky voice she has when she is happy.

Her taste would not be exactly sweet, but it would not be tasteless either. The good sensation comes from the feeling between two people who love each other so much that it is impossible to say what it is. I can only say that it is good. And I always admire her for the flavor she releases.

And yes... Arun BekFah, does the same for me. She savors this part of me and appreciates it so much that sometimes I feel embarrassed. But, on other occasions, the wild touch makes me increase the intensity of the emotions in my body. We both touch and admire each other without ever getting tired.

We use our hands or fingers to explore in search of the maximum point of pleasure and, when we find it, we do not feel ashamed to express it.

"It feels so good, it's here... a little to the left, please."

"Fah... stay there for a little longer, no... no, better hurry, that's it, I'm almost there."

We exchange sounds to express our desires. Sometimes we laugh, other times we moan, as if it were another language that couples need to speak. But when the moment comes when we both know the other is about to reach the climax, we focus on making each other happy and wait for the reward, allowing our bodies to fall apart.

## "I love you, Nong In. "

**"I love you too, P'Fah.** **"**

And then it all comes to an end, before we part ways to fulfill our duties, after saying goodbye.

# 43. First Client

I returned the credit card that Dad gave me to the original owner with a heavy heart, but if I didn't return it, I wouldn't be like someone who started from scratch. No, I didn't start from scratch. My father gave me a start, with an investment of a hundred thousand and a store building that was transferred to my name.

So, I can do whatever I want with it, but I have to make sure that the investment generates a profit. It may even seem like I'm continuing something that was already underway, but with the current state of the land, it seems will be very difficult to make a profit.

"I left a card for you to use."

My father said in a gentle voice. I opened my eyes, shining. "But if at any time you use it, the contract will be canceled." "What?"

"Give the card back."

Jennoph said calmly, before explaining, in front of Dad, as someone who sees my goal as more important.

"This credit card is a great trap. It's like someone trying to quit drinking, but seeing a bottle on the shelf every day. No matter how hard you try to stop, you can't help it."

My father bared his teeth at Janephop in annoyance. When I heard that, I decided to follow his advice and not accept the card.

"No, I'll show you that I can do it!" I said with determination.

"Then I'll do it my way."

"Now that's determination! Go on, daughter, I hope you succeed!"

My father said, waving goodbye to me, holding up the black credit card, which could be used without a limit of the amount, a temptation. I grimaced before deciding to firmly turn my back. In just one year, I would have that card too. No problem!

In the end, I had three investors: myself, Mawin, and Janephop, each with a hundred thousand baht.

Since we couldn’t decide what kind of business to start, we decided to open the hostel we had originally thought of. But first of all, we needed furniture.

“Hiring an interior designer would probably make everything look nicer.” I said without thinking much, but Mawin immediately shook his head.

“No way, we don’t have that much capital. Designers charge by the square meter. And this three-story building, the design alone will quickly eat up three hundred thousand, not to mention the furniture.”

“And how will the design be nice if I do it myself?”

“You were born with good taste, In. Try to think of what can be done.”

When Mawin said that, I felt more excited. In the end, we decided to decorate the place ourselves, and we started thinking that the hotel should have earthy-toned main colors to look elegant, such as the gray of the concrete, the orange of the bricks, and the green of the artificial plants.

Just thinking about how to decorate it, all the frustration disappeared, and I started to have fun. Every day the three of us went to the stores to choose

furniture. Although I wasn’t a fan of ready-made furniture, it was better than having nothing.

“Miss In, here are the documents for the loan, please sign.”

Janephop, who was taking care of everything, handed me the papers to sign. I signed them trustingly, since I usually didn’t read anything. But Janephop stared at me intently and then placed another document in front of me.

“What’s wrong, Jane?”

“You can’t act like that, Miss. When you sign a document, you have to be very careful. You have to read every line.”

“But you’ve already read it for me.”

“I’m a different person. You need to learn to be more careful. This is an example.”

Janephop picked up the document I had set aside and put it together, pointing to a frightening sentence.

*“I agree to assign all my assets, should I fail to perform, to Jenphop Rakdee.”*

“And why did you write this?”

"I wanted to see if you would read it. And you didn't surprise me." The words of disapproval made me slightly tense.

"You talk too much. Where's the original document?" "Here it is."

Janephop handed me a large stack of papers. When I saw the number of pages, my shoulders slumped.

"Is this a thesis?"

"Are you going to read it now?" "And do I have a choice?"

I took the large stack of papers and began to read aloud:

*"'The heat from the young woman's body spread, impossible to contain, as she looked at the gentleman's crotch...' Wait, what's that? +18!"*

"Hahaha!"

Janephop laughed, clearly amused. Mawin, who was just drinking water, was silent at first, but then spat out the water with giggles.

"What? Keep reading!" "Isn't it time to read this?!"

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In less than two weeks, the result came out and we got the loan approved. Now I have about seven hundred thousand more in capital, adding to what we already had, for a total of one million. We used the capital to hire workers that Mawin had already hired to paint, install the necessary electrical, and install the ceiling and glass windows. p

To be honest, this was the first time in my life that I learned to start from scratch, as someone who really had nothing.

Every day, I was surrounded by the smell of paint, iron, and an enormous amount of dust. Instead of going home to sleep, I started sleeping in the building after we installed the air conditioning. For twenty-four hours a day, I had no time to shop, browse Facebook, or even go for a walk.

But I still had a little time to think about that special someone every night. Whenever I felt really tired, I would pick up my phone to check the picture of that sweet-faced person and sighed, because deep down, I was worried about whether I could do all of this.

"Everything will work out, I believe in it."

Janephop said, after seeing me sitting in the lobby, making me jump a little. "I thought you were already asleep."

"I came to check if everything was in order, and I saw the lights on down here. You can't sleep because tomorrow is the first day the hotel opens, right?"

"Yes, but what worries me most is whether I will be able to fulfill what I promised."

"You need to believe that you will be able to do it. I think you are exhausted now, you have spent too much time without recharging your energy."

"But I don't even know how to recharge. I don't have money to spend and relieve stress like before. Thinking about it... in these three months, I have hardly done any shopping for myself."

Thinking about it made me a little scared.

*"Who would have thought that Intuorn could live without shopping?"*

"That's because you have a lot to do now. Besides, recharging your batteries doesn't mean you have to spend a lot. There are other ways to recharge yourself."

"How?"

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It was already midnight. Jenphop took me to Arun BekFah's restaurant. My heart skipped a beat when I saw that her restaurant still had its lights on, and I muttered softly,

"Why did you bring me here? Are you trying to tease me?"

"Miss Arun's smile is a great way to recharge your batteries." "I've already decided that I won't see Fah until I achieve my goal."

"I didn't tell you to meet her. You're just supposed to see her from afar, like when your father is tired and looks at Mew Nittha's picture as his computer wallpaper."

"My father likes that actress that much? What does my mother think about this?"

"Your mother understands. She understands more than we think."

I tilted my head, puzzled, but as I thought to ask more, Janephop pointed to the shop.

"There's Miss Arun, she's leaving."

I looked at my beloved, whom I hadn't seen for three months. We hadn't kept in touch because I asked her to. This longing helped me move forward with more determination. But today my own rule was broken because of Janephop. However, as he said, seeing Arun BekFah in person instead of just in pictures, knowing that she still well and healthy, gave me strength and encouragement.

"Have you been talking to Fah?"

"I've been here a few times because the food is good." "Did she ask anything about me?"

"No, she didn't."

"If Fah is okay, then it's okay."

Arun BekFah is probably doing the same as me, using the longing as motivation to move forward. When we complete a year, we will meet again and love each other as it should be.

"She's fine, but something's changed." "What? What happened to Fah?"

I asked Janephop, worried that the little girl might be having some kind of problem. But from what I saw now, there didn't seem to be anything wrong.

"She doesn't smile anymore."

Hearing this only made me want to achieve my goal as soon as possible. But the more I pressured myself, the more my heart felt tight. On the first day the hotel opened, almost no one showed up, except for my father and mother and a few acquaintances who came to congratulate me on the new hotel.

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"Mommy's Princess Mulan is really talented! Did you design it yourself, daughter?"

My mother looked around, really proud, while I felt completely discouraged.

"There's a bar counter, a bookshelf... and a tip box!"

As soon as she saw the box, my mother immediately put a ten-dollar bill in it with excitement.

"For my daughter's good luck!" "Don't go cheating."

My father said, as if he was scolding me.

"I'm not cheating. This is a tip box; I can put in as much as I want! Don't interfere with how I express my love for my daughter. You already get hated by her, so don't be jealous."

"I accept being hated for her sake. I should win the Nobel Prize for Best Dad, even if my heart is broken and shattered."

"*Lamyai*, I'll take a look around. Aah, my daughter is really amazing! Smart like her mother, but unfortunately she has a father like that."

My mother continued to admire the work I created, while my father just shook his head, looking at me a little and gently placing his hand on my head, patting it lightly.

"So, are you tired?"

Although he pretended not to care at first, my father, who loves me with all his heart, asked with concern, which made my eyes fill with tears.

"Yes, working is really hard."

"Now you understand that earning money is not easy. But in the end, I will always have money for you to spend on yourself for the rest of your life."

He laughed lightly, but added one condition:

"If you marry Mawin, you don't have to work."

"I won't get married! I'd rather work until I die from stress than have to climb into that crazy guy's bed."

Mawin, who was not far away, chuckled and then smiled respectfully at my father.

*"But that's okay. I just don't think you need to tire yourself out so much. The way things are, it looks like this place will go bankrupt soon, hohoho."*

My father followed my mother upstairs, letting out a satisfied laugh, which made me even more discouraged, because I secretly agreed with him. This is not a tourist area and there are no people passing by like in the city center. If someone wanted to stay, they would probably choose to stay closer to the center, instead of here, where only trucks pass by.

"Don't make that sad face."

Mawin said, who had heard my father's conversation from the beginning, putting his arm around my shoulders and patting me lightly to encourage me.

"No one can destroy your confidence, except yourself."

"Did you know that my father is a very skilled businessman? There are several books and magazines that interviewed him to talk about his vision, being praised as talented and everything."

"Yes."

"And a talented person like him said that our business will not succeed. What do you think of that?"

Mawin gaped and, imitating my gesture, he also shrugged his shoulders.

"You did it. My confidence has been destroyed until there is nothing left. Ugh."

"Ugh."

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A week since the hotel opened, we still haven't had a single guest. One person came in by mistake, thinking it was a coffee shop, but soon left. Now, the three of us need to get together again to find a way to make the business survive, since we only have nine months left.

"I think you should run away, In. Take Arun and go far away, to the border. That should be the best solution."

"If you don't say anything, no one will call you mute, you idiot! Don't come and make me feel even more useless. Be more professional... Jane, what do

you think? Is there a plan coming up in your head?"

I stopped paying attention to Mawin and turned to the one who seemed more committed to the work, even though he once used a porn novel saying it was a contract just to trick me into reading it.

"If it keeps up like this, we'll definitely lose money."

"Jane even has the consideration to use the word 'loss' instead of 'bankruptcy'. It eases the pain a little."

Mawin said with an ironic tone. "I already told you to run away." "You idiot, shut up!"

"We should make this place more well-known. We need more publicity."

"Even with advertising, no one would come. We don't have a target audience."

Mawin countered-argument.

"There are still foreign tourists in Phuket, even though fewer Thais are going. But it's a tourist town. What about here? There are only trucks, and the tourist attractions are all ruined."

"I think we should think about making this place more well-known first. At least let people know that this place exists in Thailand... How about hiring an influencer or a blogger to do a review of the place?"

"Just thinking about hiring someone makes me feel discouraged." I thought about the money in the bank.

"With the decoration costs, we only have three hundred thousand now. But we still need to survive for another eight months. The cost of hiring these people is too high, we can't afford it, damn it! I never imagined I would say

we can't afford it. The word 'I don't have money' has never been part of my vocabulary!"

"But if I'm going to hire someone, there's a famous person..." "Who?"

"Who else could it be... I think the price of the person must be very low, because this person owes me a debt."

"She owes you money?"

"She owes me a debt, but she'll never be able to pay it back."

Whoever Mawin was referring to could be none other than **Dahwan**, the famous actress who had already shown me her arrogance. The debt Mawin mentioned was probably due to Dahwan running away with Kimhan from the wedding, so it seemed like this was the right time for Mawin to demand an apology from Dahwan, because now she was here, showing up at my hotel.

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"How stupid does someone have to be to open a hotel in a place like this?" Dahwan looked around and stopped her eyes at me.

"Have you prepared yourself to accept bankruptcy?" "You look much better on TV than you do in person." I said.

"Well, we're already friends, the flower of friendship has already been given."

I bared my teeth at Dahwan, but she didn't care.

"And because of our friendship, I'm going to do a review of the place. Even if I only get 10 thousand for it."

Mawin smiled coldly at Dahwan, which made the actress give a forced smile. After all the sarcasm, he finally said:

"Then feel free to take photos, Dahwan. Thank you for coming to help."

"You're welcome. One day I'll repay you, and that day has come. But I'll do the review honestly."

"Okay. Just the fact that you're here makes me happy."

The pretty actress, who was alone, began exploring the rooms and taking pictures seriously, showing that she was truly committed to her work. I watched her until she disappeared from view and then I let out a sigh.

"Will it work?"

"With four million followers on Instagram, it will work." Mawin said as if he was encouraging himself.

"Now we're finally going to be known. It's a low-cost advertisement, but with a big reach."

"We should give credit to that. I'll keep an eye on the feedback."

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As soon as Dawan left, we all started waiting anxiously to see what would happen when the actress posted the photo of our hotel on Instagram.

Around 8 pm, Dawan immediately posted the content with the caption:

**'I come here to recommend my friend's hotel to anyone who wants a change of scenery and to feel what it's like to be close to death. The Inn Hotel is like a haunted house environment in an enchanted childhood kingdom. The furniture looks luxurious, but we know it's cheap. For**

**those who like a dark and empty atmosphere, especially at night, with mysterious sounds without apparent cause, this is the perfect place.**

**Want to feel the chills while sleeping with ghosts around your bed? Come here! It's cheaper to come in a group, since you can split the costs. For those who seek paranormal adventures, this is the place! Where else would you find such a strange hotel? Only here at the In Hotel.'**

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"Idiot! Is this what she calls a promotion? Give me a gun and I'll go shoot her!"

I stood up immediately after reading the entire message. Janephop quickly grabbed my hand, because he knew I was furious.

"Calm down, Miss. Dahwan is just a lively person. She gave a review of the hotel in a unique way, that's all... Isn't that right, Win?"

"That's not true!"

Mawin shut his mouth angrily, no less irritated than me. "That girl is trying to provoke me."

Mawin, being polite, had never been rude before, but now he was so irritated that he picked up the phone and called Dahwan, putting it on speaker so everyone could hear.

"What are you doing with that review?" [Isn't it great? The feedback is very good.]

"I haven't seen the feedback yet, but I read your content and I don't understand it. I asked you to give an honest review, why did you talk as if the hotel was haunted?"

[I don't know, but when I went to take the pictures, I heard sounds of things falling, water running and footsteps on the third floor. I remember that there

were only the three of us in the building, and everyone was downstairs.] "Don't give me that nonsense. I slept all night and didn't hear anything!"

[I'm just giving an honest review, okay? I said I wouldn't lie. I've never reviewed weight loss pills, collagen or celebrity creams, but I'm giving a real review of a very affordable hotel, because I'm honest. If you didn't like it, that's your problem. I've already done my job.]

"Dahwan, wait a minute! I'm going to get a gun and shoot you!"

I yelled into the phone, but Janephop quickly hung up the call, afraid that the situation would get out of hand. We all got nervous and didn't know what to do. I was really thinking about going to the car to get the key, but...

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***Ding!***

The sound of the doorbell at the front door rang, as if someone was coming in. We all stopped immediately, surprised, and the two customers who arrived had astonished expressions.

"What's going on?"

"We don't sell coffee here."

I answered quickly, afraid that they would get confused, and looked at the clock on the wall; it was almost 8:30 p.m.

"I know. I saw a friend on Instagram saying that this is a hotel, so I decided to stop by. So, can we stay here, right?"

Still stunned, we remained silent for a moment, until the customer asked again:

"Can we stay here?" "Yes!"

I answered quickly and ran to the counter with shaking hands. "What kind of room would you like? How many people?" "We would like a room with a double bed."

"Sure! I just need you to fill in your details, please. And we'll take you to your room. Did you bring a lot of luggage?"

"Yes... Gen, please fill out the paperwork for me. I haven't touched a pen in a while, my handwriting is horrible."

Gen, who was exploring around, approached the counter, smiling at the person named “**Aoey**” without any problem.

“You’re a writer, but you can’t use a pen? What a strange person. What do I need to fill in?”

“Here you go, just your name, current address, and phone number, please.” “Okay.”

I was so excited about the first customers that my heart was pounding. It's as if a child had been born to me, with all the pain of childbirth, and was going to school on first day, or as if I had done something and finally succeeded. While I was excited, I furtively glanced at the customer’s name several times, until the beautiful customer looked up and smiled at me in surprise.

“Is there a problem?” “Oh… sorry.”

I replied, really feeling it.

“You’re the first customer, so I wanted to remember your name in a special way.”

“First, huh? Sounds nice. Here’s our name… this is mine.”

I turned over the client's file, read the name out loud, and marked the name of the first client in my mind, certain that I would never forget her in my life.

## "Genlong."

# 44.Arun Doesn't Accept It at All

As I led the two of them to their room, I was still so excited, my heart pounding as if I were in love. The new guests followed silently behind me. As the owner of a very welcoming hotel, with exemplary discipline and a strong emphasis on values, I started chatting so as not to make the atmosphere so tense.

"Did you come to Bangkok for tourism?" "For work."

The smaller person replied, with a slightly nasal voice, which made me think of another person I miss every day.

"So my love needed to come over to discuss some work matters, so I'm tagging along."

"As?"

The conversation was getting awkward, so I asked again, as a curious person. The customer named 'Aoey' answered, without feeling embarrassed.

"Gen came over for some work." "Is Gen your girlfriend?"

I asked, looking back and forth between the two of them, trying to understand better.

"Ah..."

And the more I learned about the relationship between these two, the more my heart rejoiced, as if I had found a friend with similar tastes to mine.

"I was on Instagram and saw that Dahwan was promoting this hotel, so I invited Gen to come stay here. From what we saw, it doesn't seem scary at all, does it, Gen?"

Miss Aoey asked her girlfriend, seeking her opinion.

"That celebrity probably just did it as a form of marketing, but it really is interesting. Otherwise, we wouldn't have turned around and come here to relive a bit of the old nostalgic time. The decor is nice, but I think the location is a bit far from the city center."

Everyone agreed on this point. So I nodded in agreement before opening the room door and handing over the key.

"Rest at ease, consider this place your home." "Thank you!"

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After seeing the two off, I went down to the lobby where the two stray dogs were chatting, making dreamy faces next to the stairs, as if I were parading in a finale costume on the catwalk.

"What's going on? Why are you making that scary face here?" "I'll take the one on the right."

Janephop said to Mawin.

"Good... I'll take the one on the left, the one called Aoey." "No need to argue about this. They're a couple."

I walked to the counter, passing between the two. Janephop and Mawin turned around and ran up to me, asking in surprise.

"A couple?"

"That's right, Gen and Aoey are a couple, just like me and Arun BekFah." "Are you crazy?"

Mawin made an incredulous expression.

"It's not possible that I only find women who love each other, right? How can the life of an idiot like me be so unlucky?"

"This is the world of flowers, flies need to fly to the world of BL!"

I give them a mocking expression before reading the history of the first customers again, full of excitement and joy.

***Ding!***

And it wasn't long before the sound of the doorbell rang again. This time, it was a group of young people mixed with some older people, about five people, who approached the counter and said in a cute voice:

"Are there still any rooms available? We would like a shared room for five people."

Today is such a good day!

Dahwan has really become a benefactor!!!

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Although there were few clients, this was a big important step for me. This is the real professional life. I am lucky to still have some capital and assets to secure the loan and continue investing.

Dad is teaching me to be more flexible, to do things differently, so that I can learn to think like a normal working person, and not like in soap operas, where the protagonist enters the company, sits behind a desk, quickly signs some papers and then runs to pick up the heroine, as soon as he hears that the villain is taking her to lunch.

In real life, if someone were to pick up the heroine while the hero is working, he would say:

'*If you don't love me, go with him, I don't have time for this!'*

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"Congratulations, Miss! We finally have customers."

Now Mawin and Janephop bought beer to celebrate. Actually, I'm not very good with alcohol, but if I had to drink, I would choose a martini, with a thin glass and a fruit on the rim, a glass that costs a thousand or so baht. But now every baht counts, and even a canned beer of 35 to 50 baht seems expensive.

"Everything in life takes time, right? Nothing is easy."

"Although today was a small step, it was a good step. Dahwan, you really made it happen."

After being furious with Dahwan earlier, Mawin now praising her, as if she's someone else.

"Now, some people have already started to know about our hotel. We will keep promoting it... But we are still far from reaching the million mark."

"That's true. It's okay, we still have time. Let's celebrate first, we don't know what else we'll face."

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

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The memorable day that marked a chapter in my story passed, but it was only one day. Around six in the morning, Janephop, who was on duty at the reception, called me while I was fast asleep, asking me to come down to see what was going on. I had to jump out of bed, something I would never do at that time, because I startled to learn that Aoey and Gen had checked out so early.

"What happened? You had booked for three nights. Why are you leaving already?"

"Yeah... it's just..."

Aoey started to get confused, so Gen grabbed her girlfriend's shoulder and spoke for her:

"I just remembered that I have an urgent appointment in the city and I need to go now. I don't know if we'll be going back to the hotel, but it's okay, I'll pay you the remaining two days as compensation."

The woman, who had seemed proud before, was now pale, her face drained of color. She looked like a starving puppy, instead of the arrogant woman I had met.

"Don't worry. If there's any problem, you can tell me, okay?"

Before I could finish speaking, Genlong took out cash and placed it on the bar counter, before hurriedly leaving with Aoey.

Janephop and I were silent. In my head, the sound of crickets seemed to echo everywhere.

What's going on...?

And it wasn't just Genlong and Aoey who left; even the five guests who arrived yesterday hurriedly checked out half an hour after they left.

Everyone had astonished expressions, especially an older person who just hugged himself and said nothing.

"What's really going on?" "It's nothing, nothing."

And so another customer quickly left... no one could give us an answer.

Janephop, Mawin and I quickly went to check the room where the guests were staying to see if there was any problem, like accumulated water, a leak or some crawling animal. But we didn't find anything, which started to worry us.

"What's really going on? Why is everyone leaving like this?" "Not everyone, at least the three of us are still here."

Jenpop said, trying to cheer me up, because he knew I was discouraged. But Mawin, who thought like me, shook his head and ran his hand over his face, dejected.

"That kind of consolation doesn't help at all. It only makes us feel worse."

"We need to find out what happened... Win, try calling Kimhan. Maybe we can find out something."

"What does Kimhan have to do with this?"

"Kimhan is Aoey and Genlong's friend. Maybe they told her what's going on. Come on, we have to resolve this quickly."

"Hmm."

Mawin nodded and immediately picked up the phone to call Kimhan. As the two of them talked, Janephop and I looked at Mawin expectantly, wondering what the outcome would be. After hanging up the call with his ex-girlfriend, Mawin's face looked tense, and he pressed his lips tightly together.

"The situation isn't looking good at all, In."

"What happened anyway?"

"Genlong said that... she was haunted by a ghost." "What!"

I straightened up in surprise.

"That's ridiculous! Saying things like that hurts our reputation! What will people think if they hear that?"

"But didn't you want an explanation? That's what she told us."

"And the group of people who left earlier... Don't tell me they were haunted too."

"I'll look into it, Miss. No need to worry."

Janephop said, picking up the guest register from the counter, quickly looking through it and making some notes before leaving the store. All I could do was throw myself on the couch, exhausted and aimless.

"This is a nightmare. If it keeps up like this, the hotel will go bankrupt! Who would want to stay in a place that is said to have ghosts?"

"Should we give up?"

Mawin said in an equally discouraged tone.

"We can try to be a couple. I might end up being a good husband, you know?"

"How defeated do you have to be to say something like that?" "It's just that this place is going to go bankrupt anyway." "Stop saying that!"

I got really angry and run back to my room, locking myself in there, not wanting to see anyone. I was sinking into a spiral of emotions, disappointed to the point that I couldn't even describe it.

It was like yesterday I had believed that I had achieved success, but now everything I had built was crumbling right before my eyes.

In the past, I could never understand why some people, after making a mistake or going bankrupt, would go so far as to take their own lives. Or, they would simply run away from their debts.

I thought that these people had lost so much self-confidence that they could no longer fight. And now, I feel exactly the same way. It's shameful to see all the dedication disappear in the blink of an eye.

"But..."

Finally, I started to cry, after realizing that I couldn't take it anymore. For the past three months, I had taken care of this place and done everything as if it were my second home, so that everything would turn out as well as possible. But now I'm faced with an external problem, like a "ghost," something I don't know how to solve.

If the guests who encounter this spread the word about how scary it was, it will surely be the end... It's the end, it's really over.

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"Miss... Miss."

I don't know how much time passed, but I only realized it when I heard Janephop knock on the bedroom door and realized I had dozed off. In fact, he didn't even need to wake me up. Sleep at least helped me escape reality for a good while.

"What's wrong, Jan?" "We have a client."

Hearing this, my heart filled with hope again, but it withered soon after. "She'll be gone soon too."

"I don't believe this one will be gone."

"Take charge for me for now, then. In the state now, I'm not presentable." "Even if It were worse, I wouldn't notice. I can't see your face, Khun In."

Arun BekFah's slightly hoarse voice made me straighten my back. At first, I thought I was imagining it, but the conversation between me and Janephop was real. That means the owner of that voice is behind this door right now, for sure.

"No, I don't have the courage to face you." I answered with a shaky voice, as I thought. "I'm a failure, Fah."

"Come out and talk for a while, please... Come on, my love."

The soft and comforting voice made me give in and go to the door to open it, finding Arun BekFah, who smiled at me with tears in her eyes. After saying that I wouldn't meet her until that day, I now hugged her and started crying like a child. Janephop watched us before slowly walking away to leave us alone.

"What are you doing here? Did Jan ask you to come?"

"Even if Jan didn't ask, I already had the intention of coming. I miss you, Khun In."

Fah's soft, choked voice whispered in my ear, as if she were trying to hold back her tears as well.

"I don't think not seeing each other is the solution. When people love each other or want to be together, they need to support each other, don't they?"

"If you help me all the time, how will I improve?"

"We can grow together, Khun In. And from what I can see, you've done an excellent job here."

"But it's going to bankrupt, there's no way around it. I couldn't do it, I don't deserve you."

"No one can get everything right all the time. If you make a mistake today, start over tomorrow. It took my restaurant a long time to become what it is, and I've also had my share of hardships. This is just the beginning."

Sweet Fah pulled away from me and placed her hands on my face. "I'm going to help you now."

"But..."

"Let me stay with you, please. You made me realize that I can't live alone and you have to take on that responsibility. You can pay me whatever you want."

"Fah... I don't have any money."

"That was the most beautiful thing I've ever heard."

Little Fah laughed, contradicting my crying, and I ended up smiling too, through my tears.

"It doesn't have to be money. Just enough so I can smell you." "Smell?"

"Your smell makes me feel good, Khun In."

Fah, with her sweet face, hugged me and smelled my hair and cheeks.

"That's the payment. You can ask me for anything you want, I'm not afraid of anything."

"Are you sure you're not scared?" "I'm sure."

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## "This hotel is haunted."

Now, we were all gathered in the lobby, discussing the hotel's biggest problem seriously. When Arun BekFah heard, she took a step back, ready to leave, but I stopped her, holding her arm.

"Where are you going? You said you'd do anything for me, and that you're not afraid of anything."

"Some things can be exceptions. See you next year, then. See you soon." 😅

"Fah!"

"Ahh!"

I held ArunBekFah tightly, locking her in a hug so she couldn't get away. The little girl tried to struggle in my arms, trying to escape, until I had to ask Janephop to lock the door.

"I'm willing to face anything with you, but this thing won't work. You know I'm afraid of ghosts."

"If you go, how will I have the strength to move on?"

"But you were the one who made the rule that we wouldn't have to meet."

"And you destroyed the rule, making it crumble! Now, you can't give up! Haha!"

I laughed, thanking her. Meanwhile, Arun BekFah looked like she was going to cry the whole time. In fact, she became the only thing that made me laugh at these times.

"It really isn't possible, Khun In." She said, with a sad expression.

"But your payment is the smell you love so much about me, isn't it?" "I don't accept being paid in any way!"

"..."

"Khun In, I'm scared. Huu..."

I stopped when I heard this and slowly released Arun BekFah, as if I had an idea. Sweet Fah, who saw that I finally let go of her, changed from her resistant attitude to a worried expression.

"Are you mad at me?" "No..."

Janephop intervened when he saw that the two of us had already stopped joking.

"I investigated about the guests who said they saw ghosts. The fact that Aoey and Genlong were scared isn't that strange, because the five guests who came later were hired by Mr. Anek to create this situation."

"Is that true?!?"

Mawin, who has been silent, suddenly stand up, his mouth open. "Uncle Anek is really naughty, why did he do this?"

"I think Mr. Anek wanted to see if Miss In could handle this situation. If she faced something like this, how would she get out of it and how much

pressure would she withstand, more or less."

"Wow, he tested his daughter without even caring about his nephew like me!"

Mawin run his hand over his head, clearly irritates. "Playing like this, not even an angel could help." "No, I think this is a great opportunity."

I smiled, as if I had an idea.

"Actually, having ghosts is actually good."

"What do you mean? I didn't understand anything."

Little Fah hugged herself, as if something would scare her nearby.

"Let's turn the crisis into an opportunity. Let's spread the word that this hotel has very scary ghosts!"

"What?! / What?! / What?!"

Everyone exclaimed at the same time, without having planned it. I snapped my

fingers with a loud sound, making a confident expression, as if I were the great manager of the situation.

"If you can prove that there are ghosts here or film a real ghost, you will receive 20,000 baht. We have rooms available, and you can choose to sleep in the 'ghost-proof' room or the regular room. If you choose the 'ghost- proof' room, the price will be more expensive than a regular room. Believe me, anyone who comes will want to prove it!"

"..."

"If you choose the 'ghost-proof' option, if you can stay more than three days without running away first, you will receive 5,000 baht at the end. If you

stay more than five days, you will receive 8,000 baht. But if you arrive and cannot stay until the third day, you will have to pay 2,000 baht per night per person, instead of the 1,000 baht at the regular rate."

"..."

Everyone silent, and I could almost hear the sound of crickets chirping around, so I couldn't help but ask again.

"Did you hear what I said?" "How did you think of that?"

Mawin said, looking surprised, before he stood up and started to applaud, as if it were a grand performance.

"That's amazing! Since there's a ghost, let's go all the way until we stop at the gates of hell!"

I smiled and looked at Arun BekFah in thanks.

"Because you said you wouldn't accept any kind of payment, so I thought of it. Many people like to gamble, especially Thais, who love challenges. If we use that, we can turn a weakness into a strength immediately."

Janephop stood up and applauded as well, smiling proudly. I winked at Arun BekFah, who was still surprised by my idea, and then I said loudly and clearly,

## "Our hotel is going to be a hit!"

# 45.Ghost Showing Off

We all followed the plan immediately, although we were quite hesitant, wondering if what we were doing was really the right thing to do. However, the most effective and quickest way to spread the word would be through a viral campaign, so I asked Mawin to post about the ghost on Pantip, without mentioning the name of the hotel, but giving the location and other details that would make it clear that it was our hotel.

To make it more realistic, I had to argue with Mawin, as if we were acting, saying that it would damage our reputation, and we would also go ahead with the plan of announcing that 'whoever managed to take a picture of the ghost would receive twenty thousand baht'.

At first, the bets were not as popular as we had hoped, but some people started to stay, especially those who wanted to test the story. As expected, we all created a story from the beginning on the Pantip forum, saying that when we entered the hotel, we would see three-colored ribbons tied to trees and offerings, but in reality all of that was to feed the stray cats in the area, since there had never been a ghost.

And, of course, I take photos of aunt, who worked as a cleaner. Take a black and white photo and put it on the hotel stairs, without any caption, so that the guests would understand that she had already died.

"If Auntie Nêe sees this, won't she get mad? Have you told her why you took the photo?"

"I just said I wanted to take the photo to decorate the hotel. Don't worry, she's old, she'll soon rest." 😅

"In!"

Arun patted my arm, looking a little uncomfortable, before crossing her arms, as if she was scared.

"But Auntie's photo is really scary."

"If that's enough to scare her, then scaring the guests won't be a problem either."

"Isn't that deceiving people?"

"I'm not fooling anyone. I told you there's no ghost here. Those who come, come to see for themselves. And as for the aunt's photo, I just put it there... What else could I do? There's no other option. Since the hotel is going to have a ghost, let's do it right."

But just telling the story still wasn't causing enough buzz. There needed to be proof that could be shared, so I came up with a trick.

Since the guests were curious, I didn't charge the special rate for the first few nights; I wanted to get people talking sooner. On the first night, I asked Arun to stay in the lobby, while Janephop was tasked waiting for the cleaning aunt at night to help with some chores. Mawin and I followed the plan: we placed incense sticks outside and did our best to let the smoke come in through the fan.

"Do you think it'll work? And with all that smoke, won't people think it's fire and not a ghost?"

"No, enough for the incense smell is what matters... Oh, wait a minute." I smiled when I see it's Janephop calling.

"Did you bring her? You can ask Auntie deliver the meal to room and tell her it's a house chore. Remember to tell Auntie Nêe not to smile."

After hanging up, Mawin, who had been listening closely, looked at me with a doubtful expression.

"Why did you forbid her from smiling?"

"Because I've never seen a ghost smile." "Have you ever seen a ghost?"

Suddenly, I felt a chill as I remembered the times in Phuket with Arun BekFah. ManU's face appeared in my mind and I quickly tried to push the thought away.

"Let's just say ghosts don't smile." "And do ghosts cry?"

"I don't know, who cares? You ask too many questions, are you wondering if you die soon?"

"You're so annoying, I really want to burn you alive." "You're scarier than the ghost itself."

I looked at Mavin with a fearful look and quickly returned to the hotel. To feel more secure, I decided to give a briefing to Aunt Nêe, who had just arrived, afraid that she would break character.

"I understand that I can't smile... But why did you put my photo there?"

Aunt Nêe looked at her photo on the stairs and made a curious expression. We all started to get nervous, not knowing how to explain it. That's when Janephop, with a serious expression, explained:

"Your photo, auntie, gives the impression of a lucky cat, which attracts money and prosperity."

"Ah... I was very happy to know that I'm helping so much. Thank you for giving me this honor. Let's get to work, then. What do you want me to do?"

Aunt Nêe then began to work as she was assigned, which was to greet the guests who arrived and deliver the meals that I asked Arun BekFah to order from our partners, which were delicious. Whoever ate them would be addicted.

At least they could go back to staying. If they weren't afraid of ghosts, they might even be hungry...

After that night, our hotel became even more famous. Now the rumor was spreading everywhere by word of mouth. Mawin even brought a radio program where they talked about ghosts and broadcast it, leaving everyone terrified with stories about our hotel.

"Now that we are known because of ghosts, what will be the next step?"

Mawin looked at me, who was in charge of planning. I nodded, opened my laptop and started typing the statement I had already prepared in advance for the hotel's website.

**"Due to the great repercussions about ghosts involving our hotel, we inform you that we are not indifferent to this situation. We have invited a monk from a renowned temple to perform a purification ceremony.**

**However, we believe that our guests may still feel unsafe. Therefore, we are offering a new proposal, focused not on simply staying, but on challenging the unknown.**

**For guests staying in the normal hotel, we will maintain the usual price of 1,000 baht per night. For those who want to experience the supernatural, the price will be 2,000 baht per night. Guests staying for more than 3 nights will pay nothing and will also receive 5,000 baht as a bonus. Those staying for more than 5 nights will receive 8,000 baht.**

**However, if the guest does not meet the minimum stay time, the hotel will retain the entire amount paid.**

**Anyone who can prove or take photos of the supernatural will be awarded 20,000 baht.**

**We welcome those who wish to challenge the unknown in this world. We appreciate your support in these difficult economic times and ask that you treat it as fun."**

**With love, In Hotel.**

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After posting this, our Facebook page saw a huge increase in reach.

Famous pages started sharing the post, and it went viral without us having to spend any money on advertising. And then, everything went as planned: many guests started calling to book rooms, and most of them were Thais. Arun, who is in charge of reservations, give us an excited smile.

"We already have reservations for up to three months in advance, Khun In."

I raised an eyebrow, proud of my creative idea, but Mawin still looked worried.

"What if they manage to take pictures of these phenomena? We won't have to pay for it, right? It'll be a disaster!"

"If they really did, all the ghost shows would have already shown these images. Ghosts don't appear on camera, they're shy."

I said with disdain, because I believed that, but Mawin was still apprehensive.

"What about the scenarios we created? What if someone manages to take a picture of Auntie Nee, what are we going to do?"

"Why would Auntie Nee appear so much? We can add other elements to the story."

"You know, right, that businesses like this only work for a short period. They're successful at first, but then, when interest wanes, everything ends. This isn't sustainable."

Arun, who already knew about this type of business, warned us. I nodded, understanding her concern, but shrugged, not really caring.

"I'm not thinking about keeping this business forever. We only have a few months left. Let's take advantage of the peak and make as much money as possible during this period."

I replied confidently.

"Besides, we don't just earn from renting out the rooms. Food, drinks... everything costs almost double. And guests are willing to pay, because there's not even a 7-Eleven here."

Being in a secluded place has its advantages. It seems to contribute to my financial situation in a surprising way. In addition to thinking about making money, I also had to plan every day how to trick people about ghosts in a creative way, without repeating the story and without getting caught.

There are many tricks involving ghosts. I even invested in traditional Thai clothes, walked around in the dark, made Mawin hide under the bed, and asked Janephop to make loud noises on the roof. Since guests were already coming to test the supernatural phenomena, they expected something scary from the start.

When they found something, even if it was small, they would start screaming and running around in fear before the deadline, which brought us an unexpected profit. Some even stayed until the end, but they were few. In any case, the profit, minus the costs, was advantageous.

"We’re going to change the rules. Now the minimum stay will be five days and we’re going to increase the prizes. We need to make money fast.”

And that’s exactly what happened. The popularity of the place grew so much that people were willing to pay to have their pictures taken and shown on Facebook or to their friends and family, saying that they had checked into the hotel. Most of those who managed to stay until the end bragged about the money they had earned, while those who didn’t manage to complete their stay told scary stories about the place, stories that I myself had never imagined happening in our hotel.

In addition, many eccentric guests began to appear. Some wore white clothes, claiming to be disciples of some temple, others claimed to bring amulets from Cambodia, Myanmar and other places to hunt ghosts. But the most shocking thing was when someone brought a monk to spend the night

at the hotel, and I had to politely ask him to go back to the temple, because, as a good Buddhist, I knew that this was not right.

“No, we can’t. This is not a place for monks!"

I am a person of principles. I want to make money, but I do not accept doing what is wrong.

"You look even more beautiful when you are serious like this."

Arun commented when he saw me looking at the numbers in my account book, with a tense expression. I then moved away from the book and looked at my girlfriend, shy.

"What is it? Are you suddenly complimenting me?"

"You have matured a lot after a few months. I have to thank your father for allowing you to do something as difficult as this."

Arun BekFah said.

"If it wasn't for him pushing me, I wouldn't have been able to do something like this."

I replied, biting my lip and looking at Arun BekFah's body with a hungry look.

"We haven't kissed yet, we are not fighting, right?" "Silly! What are you talking about?"

Arun BekFah looked around, worried that someone might overhear. However, the lobby was empty, as the other two had gone to the 7-Eleven a short distance away.

"You always run away from me, and I thought you were so busy with work that you didn't even think about it anymore."

"I think about it all the time, but I keep telling myself that if I do everything I want, the goal will lose its value," I replied.

"That's true, right? Just meeting earlier than planned is breaking the rules enough."

Arun BekFah said, understanding what I was thinking. However, as we talked about it, I sighed.

"I shouldn't have said that." "Why?"

"Because I wanted to." "Hmm!"

As soon as I finished speaking, I pulled Arun BekFah's hand and waved to the nearby bathroom.

"No, someone might see." "It's just us."

"But you said you wanted to make the goal worthwhile." "Just a few fingers, that's fine."

At first, it seemed like Arun Bekfah didn't want to give in, but after a little insistence, she finally gave in and followed me to the bathroom. When we were sure we were alone, I kissed her, and she, without resistance, let me invade her personal space easily.

The heat between us spread throughout the room, making clothes uncomfortable. But how could taking everything off not be easy? It was practical, I just opened the buttons and ran my hand over her body, making her moan softly.

"I miss you... I miss you so much."

My hands touched Arun BekFah's body with familiarity, while she, with her small hands, gently slid over my shirt, like someone who liked to touch my skin. Arun BekFah's nose brushed against my neck and she inhaled deeply, as she always said she liked my scent.

"I miss you too, In." "Meow!"

"Aahhh, a ghost!" "Where?"

A cat jumped clumsily, stepping on my shoulder before sitting on the sink, looking at us both with shining eyes. I had screamed unintentionally, but I didn't mean to say it was a real ghost. However, Arun BekFah jumped in fright and looked around in fear.

"No... I just said it by accident, damn cat! How did you end up here in the bathroom?"

'*Meow!'*

I didn't even know what to expect from a cat. Upon realizing this, I could only show my teeth in a sarcastic smile and looked at Arun BekFah, intending to continue, but she's already adjusting her clothes, looking like someone who is not willing to do anything else.

"Let's go out, okay? The customers will arrive." "The weather is great, nothing special, it's just a cat." "No!"

"And what were we doing, let's forget it?"

"Yeah, leave it for later, okay? When we get a million dollars together, then we'll do... this."

Then, the little person quickly run out, leaving me to scream softly, since the feeling of frustration dominating everything because of the damn cat, who had jumped on my shoulder!

"I go to the trouble of feeding you and this is what you do, damn ghost cat." '*Meow.'*

"Are you still going to argue?!"

I walked out of the small bathroom and stopped when I saw an unfamiliar woman, wearing a t-shirt and pants, standing in front of the bathroom, blocking my way. I was a little nervous, not knowing if she had heard or seen something before, but I don't think so. She had probably just arrived, because Arun had already left.

"You're going to use the bathroom, right? You can go."

The unfamiliar woman just watched me, not saying anything, until I was forced to ask:

"Is something wrong?" "..."

"Then, excuse me."

I left and went to the lobby, where Arun is. She's a little blushing, still embarrassed about what had happened earlier, but I think she's more embarrassed by the unfamiliar woman we saw earlier.

"She probably didn't see or hear anything." "What?"

"Well..."

As I was about to continue speaking, I heard Janephop's voice coming back from outside, as if he had just hung up the phone, and he quickly begin to

tell me the news in a hurried manner.

"Miss In, the TV show Phii Uat Khon[1] wants to film here at our hotel. What do you think?"

"Show?"

I paused for a moment, hesitating about what to do.

"They can film, but when do they want to film? What about the guests who are here? If they are going to film, they will need the entire hotel, otherwise we will miss a great opportunity."

"I thought about that too. They have no problem with it. They are willing to book the entire hotel, all the rooms, for five days, but they will only film for two days. I think it could be good, it will give the hotel publicity."

"Then let them record. Two days of recording, but paying for five... That's great."

"Yes."

"Fah... How much money do we have in the account now?"

I saw that Arun was silent, so I changed the subject to bring the situation back to normal. The sweet girl cleared her throat a little before proudly reporting the current balance to me.

"Six hundred and seventy thousand. Not counting the capital we have, if you include that, it's over eight hundred thousand baht."

"How much time do we have left?" "Three months."

"Then let's take advantage of this opportunity on the show."

Honesty is important for business, you could even call it good governance, but in some cases, we need to follow the market trend, because otherwise,

we can't survive either. When the ghost show came to film at the hotel, I had to play the role of a worried hotel owner, saying that ghosts were haunting the place, which was preventing guests from staying.

"I admit that at first it was very difficult, there were no guests. In the end, we had to launch a ghost-hunting package."

I gave an interview for the show with a face that didn't look sad, but didn't look happy either, like someone who doesn't know whether to swallow or spit.

"So, how's business going now?"

"It's going well, it's not great, but it would be a big help if the show could catch a real ghost, because it's been really hard for us too."

"I'll do my best."

The host, who was also an exorcist, responded empathetically, before the director motioned to him. Then he asked about what kind of ghost was in the hotel. How would I know? I’ve never encountered a ghost before... But I’m an exorcist myself, aren’t I?

“Some people say it’s an old woman. Others say she’s wearing Thai costume. Some say it’s a spirit animal...”

Which meant that charcoal-stained cat I picked up and rubbed with my hands.

“Hmm... I’ll try to contact them. I’ll do some research at the hotel.”

After that, the host began to inspect the place, as he had promised. Mawin came over and stood beside me, touching my shoulder with some concern.

“What if they catch the ghost? Will the hotel go bankrupt?”

“So far, I haven’t met a single ghost. That exorcist is just a madman. He doesn’t believe everything he says. Besides, most of the ghosts that appear

around here are our own doing, right? The incense, the cat, the Thai costume, the noise... If anyone gets caught, it’ll be us.”

However, Arun didn’t think so. She was so close to me, as if she was afraid that some ghost had taken possession of her. I laughed at her frightened expression and felt a pang of pity. She had to take care of her own restaurant, but because she loved me so much, she couldn't leave me alone, even though she was so afraid of ghosts.

"You don't need to be afraid, Fah. There are no ghosts here." "There are ghosts everywhere, yes. They are on every corner."

"Don't forget that I am greatly loved by Yama, the God of Death. The ghosts won't dare do anything to me while I'm here."

"What if you die, In?" "Then I'll come haunt you." "Aahh!"

The sweet girl made a cute sound, so I pulled her into a tight hug. Mawin, who is watching, make a disgusting face.

"That smell of love... it gets on my nerves. I want to destroy this hotel and marry you, In!"

"Evil thoughts, it'll only make you look less cool." "But it's satisfying."

Mawin said sarcastically. When I realized how annoyed he was, I thought it would be best to get out of there.

"So if you're angry, you can leave. Anyway, we don't have any guests tonight. You and Jan will take care of the staff. Today, Arun and I will rest. I heard from Jan that there's a fair nearby. I've never been to a night fair, so I want to feel the atmosphere. There's even a Ferris wheel!"

"There's a Ferris wheel?"

When I mentioned this, Arun's eyes looked excited, as if she was about to go on a trip.

I smiled at her expression, happy to see my girlfriend excited. "I heard so. Today, we're going on a date."

"Don't spend too much, okay. At the end of the year, if we don't have enough, you'll have to marry me, and then I won't know what to do."

"I know... I understand my destiny, I can't let it go."

In the past few months, I haven't had time to spend money on anything, other than buying furniture for the hotel and busy planning a promotion. Work has taken up a lot of my downtime, so I consider this time with Arun as a small opening for something new. And it also made me realize that, besides the malls and Sampeng Market, there are things like this in night markets in the outlying cities.

The pink, green and blue neon lights reflected against each other, with shooting booths, popcorn stands and cars climbing ramps that I had only heard of before. And yes... the Ferris wheel, which looked... different from the ones at Disneyland, which I had seen abroad.

"If we go up there, it won't fall, will it?"

I looked at the metal structure that swayed back and forth, a little apprehensive about its fate, but I saw that people were climbing up and down without fear of dying. And it seemed that Arun was loving it.

"It won't fall down, there are so many people climbing up." "You must really want to climb up, huh?"

"Yeah... I've never climbed up before." "Seriously?"

"Yes, when I was little, I just studied and did extra work. I just watched other people climb up, it was fun to watch. Now that I have money, I want to try. Will you go up with me?"

"If my girlfriend asks like that, how could I not go?"

I answered casually, since I could see that Arun was so excited to finally fulfill her childhood dream. After buying the tickets, we both climbed up into the small cabin, a little scared. It didn't seem very safe. Will I die before I get the million?

"It's so cool here. I'm happy to be up here with you."

"If you talk that much, when we accomplish the million mission, I'll take you to Disneyland. We'll go up on the Ferris wheel, ride the cable car, fly around!"

"I'm so happy to hear that." "Why? Do you think I can't do it?"

I held the person and joked in a slightly sullen voice, but Arun laughed and shook her head.

"No, that's not it. When you say you'll make it, you mean it, for sure. I'm glad you confirmed that we'll be together from now on. I even thought that you, being the daughter of a rich family, would get tired of me and end up leaving me. That was one of the reasons I thought about getting away from you and living my own life. Cutting it off once and for all, it'll only hurt a little."

"What do you think of me? I love you to death." "Yeah, you love me to death."

Arun smiled and looked outside. The neon light illuminated her sweet face and give a feeling of freshness. I accidentally said something I never thought I would say:

"Will you marry me?" "What!?"

"Oh..."

I shrank my neck a little and started waving my hand like a beauty queen, saying goodbye to the audience.

"I was just kidding. I thought maybe you'd like to have a moment like that."

..."

"Why are you so surprised?"

Arun is silent for a moment, then she smiled shyly, raises her hand and pushed her hair behind ear, answering in an embarrassed manner:

"Khun In, I've been yours since the moment you threw those millions of baht in my family's face."

"..."

"I told you, right? We skipped several steps before we started dating." "So, does that mean we're getting married?"

I rested my chin on my hands and looked at the person with the sweet face, who didn't say anything to deny it.

"The right person comes at the right time, you don't have to look for it." "What are you talking about?"

"Let's make love tonight." "Are you okay, In?"

While we both laughed between jokes and jokes, my phone ring, interrupting the moment. When I saw it was an unknown number, I frowned, irritated at having been interrupted in such a pleasant moment. When I answered, I immediately recognized the voice of the presenter I had spoken to before leaving.

[In, I wanted to tell you about the spirit in the hotel...] "Yes... What happened? What did you find?"

I smiled, feeling a little irritated, but I continued the conversation. After all, she was still a customer.

[I felt an energy, something strange...]

She seemed to drawl her words, speaking very quietly. [She's a female spirit.]

"Is she wearing a traditional outfit?"

[Only monks wear clothes like that, right?] That was true.

[She's an ordinary woman. Only she keeps crying and saying she's full of anger, but she can't do anything, because in the hotel only you can communicate with her, In.]

"Really?"

I rolled my eyes.

"What does she have against me, to want to communicate so much?" [She said you stole her son.]

"Me? When did I steal a child?"

"Is something wrong, In?"

Arun's voice began to worry about what I was talking about, but I didn't want the atmosphere to be broken and for her to be scared by ghost stories. So I decided not to tell her anything and continue talking alone.

"It's nothing. Just a job. Let's stay here a little longer." "Okay."

Arun agreed and spoke to the ticket seller so we could continue on the Ferris wheel. I was still talking on the phone.

"So, what else? What happened with that stolen son story?" [She said she remembers you from Phuket.]

What?

[You went to an abandoned house and took her son. So far, she hasn't found the child... Have you ever taken a child without realizing it, or taken something by accident? In?]

"If I knew, do you think I would admit it?"

Sweat started running down my spine, a little scared.

As soon as I heard Phuket, especially about the mother and son, I felt a chill.

"What else did she say?"

[She wants her son back. If not, she'll kick out all the guests in the hotel... Oh... wait, she's communicating again.]

Even though I didn't want to believe it, what she was saying sounded so familiar, like something I had experienced before.

[Oh... She said she's going to enter the dreams of the sweet woman in the lobby, scare her until she breaks up with you.]

"Damn you! I'll kick that bitch out myself!"

I yelled into the phone, and that made Arun look at me, startled. "What happened, In? Who are you going to kick out?"

"I love you more than anything in this world." "What...?"

She seemed lost at my sudden response.

I stated firmly, not being able to stand being interrupted by this ghost or anything else that tried to get in the way of what I felt.

"Even if it's a ghost, I'll kick you out as the beloved of the God of the Dead. You bitch!"

***Footnote:***

***[1]. Khon Uad Phee - is a Thai variety television show about ghosts and the afterlife. It is the most famous ghost television in Thailand.] The television program sections: Clip Battle, Soon Bantao Tuk Phee (Ghost and Karma Solution by Supernatural Belief), La Tha Phee (Ghost Hunter) and Kho Kid Chak Khun Riew (Mr. Hun Pun's Ideas).***

# 46.TaxPayer

I really don't know why I was so affected by the host's words. Maybe it's because this story involves Arun, and I won't let anyone take my love away from me.

I thought, *'Why do you think I came to work to earn money, when I'm already extremely rich?'*

There's no way this ghost is going to hurt or destroy my dear's pure and sweet heart. I won't let that happen!

"What happened, In? You were so excited a moment ago, and now you suddenly want to go back."

"I need to take care of something at the hotel."

I stopped walking and turned around, looking at Arun's sweet face seriously.

"If someone tries to get in the way of our love, what would you do?" "I would stand firm by your side, In."

"What if it was a spirit trying to scare you in a dream so that you would break up with me?"

"..."

"Why don't you answer?"

"I'm just not going to sleep, so that I don't give that ghost a chance to appear in my dreams."

The little person spoke hesitantly:

"But why did you come up with this kind of situation?"

"Great, tonight I'll have an energy drink and stay awake until I finish what I need to do."

"Explain to me what's going on. It has something to do with ghosts, doesn't it?"

The short-legged girl ran after me as I walked towards the car, but I stopped suddenly when I passed someone playing the guitar and asking for money. I was irritated before, but seeing this scene made me stop and think.

"Can we do something like this and make money?" "Sure, it's a form of entertainment."

"Does it make a lot? I only see coins and some twenties."

"Why are you interested in this? I think it makes a lot. Even though it seems like little, they must have already saved something in their pockets.

Otherwise, it would attract a lot of attention from thieves." "How much do you think he can make in a day?" "Probably about a thousand."

"A thousand a day? In thirty days, that's thirty thousand. Not bad, and without paying taxes."

I counted on my fingers, doing the math. In the past, I didn't usually think about things like that. I would spend a thousand in just three minutes buying something on Shopee. But right now, I need money to achieve my goal as soon as possible.

"Great, it's another source of income."

After saying that, I went to the car, followed by Arun. At first, I thought about going back to the hotel, but to protect my heart, I thought it best to take her back to her condo first.

"Why did you decide to bring me back here?"

"Tonight, you don't have to stay there. There's no one else but the people from the program. Tonight, Janephop, Mawin, and I will take care of everything. Take a rest."

"But..."

"You're afraid of ghosts, aren't you? Today the program is just calling the ghosts to appear; it can really scare you."

"True! Then I think I'd better stay right here." 😄

"Right.

As she was about to close the door, something seemed to come to her mind, and she turned to me.

"After all, we're not going to... make love today, right?" "Ouch! I didn't even think of that, you crazy ghost!" "Why are you cursing me?"

"No, I didn't curse you."

I made a frustrated sound as I thought of the ghost lady who's always looking for her son. This made me miss the chance to have a special moment with my beloved, something that hasn't happened in a long time because we're always busy with work.

"Leave it for later. I'll collect everything with interest and correction. Have a good night's sleep and dream about me; I'll appear in your dream myself."

"You're awesome, huh... So, good night! See you tomorrow."

"Ok... Fah."

"Yes?"

"We could play right here in the car." "You're crazy!"

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I teased her, making her laugh before driving back to the hotel, where the ghosts were my "adversaries." As soon as I arrived, I rolled up my sleeves, entered the hotel with determined steps and announced loudly and clearly:

"You scumbang ghost, come out now! You're coming to live in other people's houses, you don't bring any benefits and you're still threatening people! Don't you know the power of Intuorn, the queen of hell?!"

I shouted angrily, forgetting that the program was being filmed. Janephop, seeing that I was out of control, ran to cover my mouth, scared. Mawin, who was completely involved in the scary atmosphere of the program, looked at me, horrified.

"In, what happened to you? You come here causing a scene... Are you possessed?"

"I'm here to expel the ghost. I heard she was going to appear in Arun's dream to ask her to break up with me. Well, I'm ready. Where is she?"

"Intuorn, don't disrespect the spirit."

The host whispered to me, trying to calm me down.

"She's very sad. The more you provoke her, the angrier she'll get and she won't leave."

"If she doesn't want to go, that's fine. That way she'll attract more guests and the hotel will make more money."

"Sorry, what?"

"But on second thought, it's better if she goes because she's ruining my mental health. So? Did you make a deal with the ghost? Is she going to leave?"

I quickly adjusted my tone of voice. She sighed and said, "She wants to see her son."

"And how did she get here from Phuket?"

"We're still trying to figure it out. We believe there's some object related to her death here in the hotel."

"And how did these objects get to Bangkok?"

"Probably some guest must have brought it, maybe from where she lived, which attracted the spirit here, blah blah blah..."

I barely heard the rest, it seemed absurd. I asked just to be polite; in fact, I'm not the least bit interested, except to solve the problem with this spirit. If she can't live peacefully, let her go. There are many other ghosts who would love to stay here without causing trouble.

"So, do you have any method to exorcise her?" "I'm trying to talk to her."

"I talk to her myself. Tell me how you're communicating." "I connect spiritually."

"How annoying!"

I shouted, exasperated, my voice so loud it seemed to burst my eardrums.

"I'm not going to connect spiritually with anything! Since you won't talk, I'll solve it my own way. Show up, ghost!"

The camera of the program focused on me without anyone shouting "cut". Mawin was hugging himself, terrified of ghosts, while Janephop covered his face, embarrassed to see me making a scene like a real troublemaker.

"She's a ghost and she doesn't know how to stay in her place! She wants to cause trouble, is that it? Well then! I've already locked your son in the refrigerator; it won't be any different with you!"

Suddenly, a scream echoed through the hotel, coming from nowhere. Mawin jumped and hugged Janephop out of reflex, while the rest of the program's crew held their heads, all shaking in fear.

"Since we started the program, I've never heard such a clear demonstration."

At that moment, my anger overcame any fear, and I even showed my teeth. "Aaaaah!"

I screamed back, getting everyone's attention.

"Come on, is she the only one who can scream? I can too! Stop cringing, or the ghost will think she won."

"In, enough! Don't believe me? At least respect me!"

"I'm not being disrespectful! I even thought about keeping her here when I heard the story, but when she threatened to appear in my Fah's dream, no way! Listen here, ghost! I am Intuorn, I was born with a silver and gold spoon in my mouth! And now, I'm going to curse you!"

" "

"With all the good fortune I've accumulated, with wealth, intelligence, and a wonderful appearance. Just imagine, in my past life I helped Emperor Qin

Shi Huang![1] How much merit must I have to be born so perfect? But I won't give you even a drop of it, because I hate youeeeeee!"

"Even with a ghost you're competing?"

Mawin whispered, but since the room was silent, everyone heard. I glared at him before going back to arguing with the ghost.

"But I will defeat you. May you go to hell, burn endlessly, becoming a wandering spirit until the era of Metteya[2], if he even exists. And know, I'm willing to give up all my good fortune, the one I used to help Qin Shi, so that when I die, I'll go to hell to curse you and watch you burn for all eternity. I'll take your son to every supermarket, Big C, Macro, making him a lost ghost, without a father, without a mother! May you be a lonely spirit, wandering without finding your son! May he be an orphan spirit!"

A complete silence took over the room, and then, with an intense voice, I finished:

"I curse you!" "Ahhh!!!"

A loud scream echoed again, and the lights in the hotel begin to flicker, going back and forth, before stabilizing, as if nothing had happened before.

"She's gone. I don't feel her presence anymore."

The presenter said, placing her hand on her chest, visibly frightened and looking around.

"If I still felt her presence, I would pull her to hell. I would keep cursing until the judge of hell ordered her to be born again. How awful... I can't joke about this."

I smiled, satisfied, but then stopped, remembering something.

Damn... If the ghost is no longer here, the hotel will not make a profit. She didn't appear in Arun's dream, but my father will let me live the romance. I

went to fight with the ghost and now I have to deal with my dear father. I can't find a middle ground.

"But you can stay here, if you behave yourself, and I will bring your son to see you."

I softened my tone and looked around.

"I will make a donation of food and prayers for seven days straight. If you accept the proposal, scream as a sign that you won't leave."

"..."

"If you don't come back, I'll pull you back from hell and beat your soul with a wet slipper until it dries!"

"..."

"I'm going to take your son on a tour of India!" "Ahhh!!!"

"I could feel a strange energy again." The presenter said, visibly scared.

Okay... That damn ghost came back.

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And so, that night passed without any ghost coming to haunt me. However, I could still feel that some energy was wandering around there, which meant that she understood what she needed to do in the afterlife. To prove that we made peace, I had to call to check on my love, at 8 am this morning.

"How was last night?"

I asked after talking to Arun for a while. The little person answered distractedly, like someone who didn't know anything.

[I slept well, I just had a dream.] "What did you dream about?"

[I dreamed I was at Disneyland.]

"Oh, that's great... I'll make your dream come true. Just a little more time, it's almost there."

[I'll wait for that day. See you this afternoon.]

I hung up the phone with a satisfied smile, happy that nothing had changed. After Arun had gone to sleep, it meant that the spirit was at peace. When I told her to be calm, she was relieved without need any more threats.

"Jan!"

I called Janephop, who was busy checking things on the computer at the reception. My friend, with his smart expression, looked at me and knew immediately that I had something to talk about.

"Yes, Miss."

"Help me with something." "Sure, what do you need?"

"Go to Phuket and bring me the refrigerator."

Janephop made a slightly suspicious expression, as if he already knew there was something strange about that refrigerator, especially since the word "refrigerator" had been mentioned the night before while I was yelling.

"Yes... sure."

He answered, still a little hesitant.

"Are you scared?"

I laughed, joking with him, who usually isn't scared of anything and Janephop shake his head.

"No."

"Great. I'll make a map for you, show you where the refrigerator is, and you can take the truck to get it. It must be a big refrigerator."

Janephop accepted the request and quickly left. Meanwhile, Mawin, hearing what I asked, came to me, hugging himself with a fearful expression.

"I'm starting to regret not marrying you, In." He said.

"Because I'm so charming and attractive, right? No need to be shy, I'm telling the truth, okay?"

I said, glancing at him and smiling with satisfaction.

"Because if I had married you, the ghosts wouldn't have the courage to haunt us. Who else could make a ghost run away in fear and then drag it back like a toy?"

Mawin hugged himself tighter, visibly shivering.

"Seriously, this hotel has real ghosts. I've never met one in my life. How can you, In, face a ghost without fear?"

"If we're talking about fear, yes, I was scared. But then I got so angry with the situation that anger took over. I had to fight with my father in the real world to stay with Arun, and in the end, I was blackmailed by the ghost to separate me from her. What could I do, other than curse and swear at her?"

"So you remember all your past lives, like when you saved the country for Emperor Qin Shi Huang?"

Mawin asked, surprised.

"I say that because someone who was born with such luck like me, what else could I have done in my past life other than save a nation?"

I sighed, looking at my hotel, my head full of worries.

"Why does it have to be like this? I work so hard, earn money, and still have to deal with ghosts, and now I have to ask her to come back so that the business can move forward!"

"Actually, it's not as confusing in other places, only here. But in a few months, we'll reach our goal. Judging by the income that's coming in, it's not that difficult anymore. It might be a little lower than expected, a few thousand, but your father must be flexible."

"No, he's very strict. And he really wants me to marry you, he'll never give in. So I need to find another way to make money."

"How?"

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Besides being the person who saved the country for Emperor Qin Shi Huang in my past life, the daughter of one of Thailand's biggest businessmen, and the manager of a haunted hotel, I am now also a street violinist.

Now, here I am, at a flea market, playing my violin, which costs over a hundred thousand baht. I never imagined that I would end up doing something like this, but if I don't do this, I will never achieve my goals. My father taught me many things in a short period of time:

How to run a hotel, take out loans, mortgage a building, save the hotel, and even use my musical skills to make money.

Life is like a chess piece, full of interconnected points. Who would have thought that one day I would play the violin on the street, to look fancy and make money, even though I felt so embarrassed?

I started playing and put a hat on the ground for people to throw coins. I closed my eyes, trying to imagine that no one was there looking at me, pretending I was just in a rehearsal room, playing alone. I heard the sound of coins falling into my hat, but I didn't want to open my eyes.

I didn't want to get discouraged seeing that the audience was so small. Many, when listening to string instruments like the violin, find it beautiful, but some even find the sound irritating, preferring more popular instruments like the guitar, which is more comfortable and easy to listen to.

"Can I request the Habanera Suite No. 1, Miss?"

A voice suddenly appeared, making me stop playing in the middle of the song. When I opened my eyes, there was Dad, dressed in a T-shirt and pants, with his arms crossed, looking completely at ease, besides raising an eyebrow in a playful way.

"Dad!"

"Working an extra job, huh?" "Did you come alone?"

There was no one else there. The money that had been thrown into my hat amounted to only a few dozen baht, which made me feel a little discouraged. But still, it was some money.

"Yes, I came alone. I wanted to know what my daughter was doing." "Are you following what I do so closely, Dad?"

"Of course I am. How could Dad not know what his daughter is doing? But, hmm... Don't you think you're playing the poor thing too much, my dear?"

Dad made a loving expression, as if he was worried about me, but then he let out a dig.

"You must be afraid of not reaching the million, right? That's why you came here, with the hat, to try to earn some extra money."

"Oh, if you came just to make fun of me, then I won't talk to you anymore." "Go on?"

"What do you mean?"

"I asked you to play a song, I'd like to hear it. And if you do, I'll give you some extra pocket money."

"Since everything has a price, right? Since the client asked for it, how could I refuse?"

At this point, any money that came my way, I had to grab. So when Dad asked me to, I didn't hesitate to play the song as requested. The sight of him, with his arms crossed and smiling with a look full of affection, took me back in time to my childhood, when no matter what I did, Dad was always there to support me.

From dancing at school parties to getting my certificates for completing my kindergarten, he was always there for me. Even when I failed, Dad never scolded me, and he was even happier when I managed to pass my exams.

Dad was, and always would be, the force that pushed me through every phase of my life.

Even in the most difficult moments, like when I crashed my car while drunk, he helped me without any scolding. Thinking about this, tears begin to form in my eyes, even as I played, and despite the upbeat rhythm of the music.

"You still play as well as ever."

Dad said, taking a large amount of money from his bag and putting it in my violin case.

"Use this for your snack, honey." "Sorry," I mumbled.

"Why are you crying, honey?"

He looked at me with a confused expression. "No one has hurt you, did they?"

"I'm sorry for being such a useless person, always doing everything wrong, not being able to meet your needs, not even when it comes to marriage."

I replied, swallowing my words with difficulty.

"No need to apologize. In the end, you would lose anyway, haha!" He laughed and hugged me.

"But honestly, you did great. I'm proud of you, always. Now, you finally realize how hard it is to make real money."

"I get it, yes... I get it!"

I was overcome by a wave of emotion, my eyes filling with tears again.

"The capitalist world is cruel, but if you get through it, you will become stronger... And I am the ruthless investor, that's it. If you can get through me, you can get through anything and anyone."

He stepped back and, with a touch on my forehead, returned to his role as the 'stern investor'.

"So, if you don't reach a million baht, you will have to break up with Miss Arun and marry someone I choose. That's the deal."

"Yes, but if I do, you will no longer force me to marry, and I will be able to choose my own love. And all your fortune will be mine."

I challenged firmly.

"Yes, of course you have to be shrewd, since you are the daughter of a businessman. What else could you expect? If you lose, you will have to accept it, but if you win, that's it. It's a done deal, then."

"Yes, it's a done deal."

"See you in three months, and on that day we will find out who the winner will be."

"See you then."

Dad left, leaving a sum of ten thousand baht for the song request. I looked at the money, clenching my fists in determination, feeling renewed spirit. Now, more than ever, I wanted to win, I wanted to prove to him that I could achieve what he expected!

## Your daughter will show who she really is!

**Footnote:**

***[1]. He was king of the Chinese state of Qin from 247 BC to 221 BC, and later became the first emperor of a unified China, from 221 BC to 210 BC, reigning under the title of First Emperor.***

***[2]. A Buddhist religious figure, he is known as the "Lord of Love"***

# 47.Negotiating

Ever since my hotel became a huge success, after the recording of the program that aired within two weeks and became the "talk of the town"[1], the repercussion was huge. The number of views on YouTube exceeded 5 million in just two days. It went viral more than many popular songs!

"The hotel is so busy that we have reservations for next year, Khun In."

"Make sure to ask for payment in advance. Right now, we need the money before the deadline. If it's only next year, it won't do any good."

I replied, with a satisfied smile upon hearing Arun's answer. Although I was a little irritated by some people who were disliking out of envy and comments saying that it was all a set-up, I decided not to let it get to me. It was better to focus on the good things, like the likes and reservations.

"With the deposits we've already received, can we finally tell my father?" I asked.

"Yes, we have already reached the required amount." She replied, with a twinkle in her eyes.

"Then we don't have to wait three months! Let's go see my father now!"

Everyone in the room was smiling, their hearts lightening, especially Arun, which made my heart beat faster, and I couldn't help but wink at her as a sign of understanding.

"Be patient, let's wait a little longer, my love."

"I wait every day."

"Stop speaking your thoughts, how annoying."

Mawin muttered, who was standing with his arms crossed, clearly annoyed. "Where is Janephop?"

"I sent him to get the refrigerator."

"That huge refrigerator? What are you going to do with it? The hotel is not a mini market, it doesn't match the design."

"Have you made any promises?"

I asked, looking at Mawin. He shake his head, denying it. "No."

"So, you see, this is part of keeping a promise."

"But seriously, are the ghosts real or not? I remember you saying it was all staged."

I had forgotten Arun was there, and she startled me when she asked the question. I quickly shrugged, trying to divert the conversation, as if it were something from the entertainment world.

"Of course it's staged! We can't do the scene if we don't have the right props."

I said, laughing.

"By the way, have you watched the video?"

"No, I haven't. I was scared just by the description you gave me." Arun replied, with a nervous tone.

"It's better not to have watched it. On the show, everything was very realistic, especially with the refrigerator as part of the scene. It really made the guests believe the ghosts were real."

"So why a refrigerator? It reminds me of the guy from ManU." "Because ManU... is the ghost they invented that appeared."

I started making up an excuse without even realizing that when I met that boy in Phuket, Arun BekFah was present at the incident too. I had already told him that ManU was a real ghost.

"Don't ask so many questions, or you'll get scared."

"Okay, I won't ask anymore. And where are you going to put the refrigerator?"

"It's going to be here on the altar, near the wall. Tell Jan to write the story of the refrigerator and how it's related to the ghost of the mother behind the son... There it is. Jan, tell the people to bring the refrigerator here and lean it against the wall."

"Yes, Miss."

Janephop relayed the order to the workers outside the room and quickly organized himself, not forgetting to send me a photo.

"Here you go, this is for you, Miss In."

The handsome boy handed me the photo and an incense stick with a worried expression. Even though he didn't show it much, it was clear that he wasn't comfortable with the situation.

I picked up the photo with the incense sticks already lit and, with my hands clasped, I began to pray, speaking to the ghost of the ManU boy who was probably in the fridge.

"Hey, kid... If you're listening, wherever you are, no matter who you are, please respond."

***Knock, knock.***

The sound of knocking on the fridge made me jump, dropping the photo. And I wasn't the only one who heard it. The group near me, especially Arun, jumped back.

"What was that?"

"My head hit the fridge." "What?"

"I crouched down too low. Don't worry."

I lied for a moment, before throwing an irritated look at the fridge.

"If you're going to stay here, keep quiet. Don't show anything to anyone, or I'll throw you and your mother on the Saen Saep channel, instead of leaving you peacefully inside the fridge."

Maybe I made a mistake in asking the boy to answer, but making Arun Bekfah afraid did not bring good results to her life and spirit.

*I'm watching you... Can you handle it?*

As for you, the boy's mother... Thank you very much for making the hotel welcome so many guests. I have already brought your son back to you.

Now, live here in peace, with respect and without showing your presence to anyone near me. If anyone notices and screams, scream too!"

***Screams!***

"What was that?!"

*"Scream! Scream! Scream! It's the monkey's call."*

I sang a melody while shrugging my shoulders.

"I screamed it myself, just to give it a more dramatic effect."

Mawin and Janephop were hugging each other, looking like they had forgotten they were men.

They knew very well what was going on, as they had been present during the recording of the program, and the sound was the same as the incident that day. Ghost... I told them not to speak, but anyway... I was wrong to ask them to answer. However, from now on, that can't happen again!

Everything went well. After checking the balance in the account, I could barely hold back the tears and ended up sobbing. Even Mawin, who had always been my rival, couldn't hide his pride when he saw my success.

"You're amazing, In. I always thought you were a person with no future, a wretch, who would be a disappointment even as a mother because you seemed unworthy, but today you proved that you are truly Uncle Anek's daughter, an heiress of billions."

"You're flattering me, aren't you?"

I elbowed Mawin lightly in the stomach, which made him sigh a little, but he just laughed instead of getting angry.

"Of course I am. You know I never flatter anyone. I want to see your father's face when he sees the results before three months, like it's going to be. I've never seen Uncle Anek lose."

"Now you'll see, you can wait."

"Yes. Tomorrow I'll wake up early, put on my suit and go straight to the company, hoping for victory. And we're going now too, right?"

Mawin looked at Arun Berkfah, who was sitting next to me, and asked to confirm:

"Miss Arun, you've already made an appointment with Uncle Anek, right?"

"Everything is already arranged, yes. Tomorrow at 10 in the morning, we can meet him."

"So, today it's better to go to bed early, so I can wake up feeling well- disposed and ready to welcome success. Shall we go?"

I took Arun's hand and pulled her up, while Mawin and Janephop watched us curiously.

"Where are you going?"

"To Fah's apartment, it's closer to my father's company. I don't like waking up early and having to prepare for too much."

"Oh, then I'll go back too."

Mawin, who already didn't like sleeping in hotels and knew about the ghost story, got up quickly. Now only Janephop was left, who had a pale face because he hadn't expected to be the only one left.

"Are you going to leave Jan here alone?" "Don't worry, Miss. I'll be fine."

"With that look on your face, are you going to be okay?"

I asked, and Mawin, who already knew how scared Janephop was, let himself fall on the couch.

"Don't worry, Jan. I'll stay with you. Considering that today is this girl's victory day."

Mawin opened a can of beer he bought to celebrate and took a sip.

"But I'm not going to sleep. I'll stay until dawn, which means you won't be sleeping either."

"Yes, I won't be sleeping."

"Are you going to stay awake to keep me company?" "Yes, because I'm afraid of ghosts."

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The conclusion was that Mawin and Janephop would keep watch over the hotel until the next morning, while I enjoyed my free time with Arun in the apartment. Although it was time to sleep, the anxiety of the morning prevented me from resting, so I kept rolling around in bed, until Arun hugged me.

"You're anxious, aren't you?"

"Yes. I'm sorry for disturbing your bedtime."

I rubbed my head on Arun's chest, lovingly, like a kitten seeking warmth.

"I'm afraid something will go wrong tomorrow, and Daddy will find a way to hurt me."

"No, it won't go wrong. We've checked everything several times."

"Daddy won't be easy. And with me, he'll be stricter than with any other competitor. If he tries to get in my way too much tomorrow, you'll get scared and run away, won't you?"

"Are you scared that I'll run away?"

"You've already run away once. If you run away again, I think I'll lose my strength. First, because I'm tired of myself, and second, because I'd be leaving myself alone at the most fragile moment in my heart."

"With that cute little way of yours, I wouldn't have the courage to leave you alone."

"What if I run away with you?"

I raised my head, looking at Arun hopefully.

"You'd run away with me? But I don't know how to make money."

"You're smarter than me. In a year, you'll have over a million... But if you don't know how to make money, then I'll support you. Don't forget, I have my own restaurant. I'm rich now."

"That's right, I think it's better to depend on you."

We hugged and laughed, relieving some of the tension. Arun gently stroked my back to calm me down, but I ended up getting too naughty... Instead of sleeping peacefully, I put my hand inside her blouse and started playing with her body, making her shiver.

"Aren't you going to sleep?" "I suddenly felt like it."

I run my lips over Arun's neck, inhaling her scent gently.

"It's been so long since we touched each other... How did we manage to resist for so long?"

"It was to get to the day that would be ours." "What if we lose tomorrow?"

I lightly bit Arun's ear, wanting to tease her a little more. "I think we should do something first."

"No!"

She pushed me away gently and turned her back to me, denying. "I'll wait until tomorrow. Right now we need to sleep."

"Huh..."

I grumbled, laying my head on her back and stroking her. "You were fine before."

"I want you to have energy tomorrow." "We can do a little more..."

"No! You're just trying to enjoy yourself while you're afraid of losing tomorrow."

She turned to me, with a firm look.

"I'll wait until tomorrow, then we'll see. Good night." "Are you cutting me off like that?"

I grumbled, still trying to pull her in for more. "Can I have a little taste? A goodbye kiss?" She pushed me away hard.

"Ouch! You're being so aggressive now! Can't I even touch you?" "No!"

I give up and lay down, putting my arm over her, feeling a slight irritation in my chest.

Arun let out a low laugh, and I smiled too. It was just a joke, because I just wanted to get my mind off of my worries.

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When I realized, it was already 8 in the morning...

Today was the first time I woke up before the owner of the room. So, I got up, took a shower, got dressed and chose a more formal outfit, a white suit, not forgetting to add some personal accessories, all in shades of pink. Arun BekFah helped me organize everything, without making any comments,

with the look of someone who had once been an assistant. Around 9, we left the apartment and went straight to the headquarters of my father's company.

There, I had to exchange my badge to enter the building. To be honest, I had never even set foot in my own family's workplace.

None of the employees knew me, so I had to go through the entrance as a visitor, following the normal company rules.

When I went to exchange my badge, the security guard looked at my last name with a curious expression, but didn't ask many questions. It wasn't until I got to my father's office that things changed.

"Please tell Mr. Anek that Miss Intuorn is here for a visit." "Mr. Anek is waiting. Come in, Miss Intuorn."

But it seemed that my father's secretary already knew who I was, because she was treated completely differently from the other employees.

As soon as I walked in, I met Janephop and Mawin, who had already arrived before me.

"You arrived before me?"

"Today is the big day. I can't miss a single step."

Mawin said, smiling, before letting me greet my father. Today, my father was dressed in a full suit, as if he were going to battle or to close a deal worth hundreds of millions or billions. And it wasn't just my father who was there, there were three or four other employees I didn't know, all in a row, with such an imposing posture that it surprised me.

"Good morning, Dad."

"Um... Today it's not 'Dad', it's 'boss'. Call me the right way." "Mr. Anek."

"Miss. Intuorn."

My father turned his face to the side, as if he was holding back a smile, but soon returned to his usual rigid posture.

"You're nervous, but you have to do it. The decisive moment has come. Are you sure you want to finish everything today? We haven't even completed a year yet."

"Today is the day."

***Plaf!***

I was about to sit down when I was startled by the sound of the door being violently opened.

My mother stormed in, immediately baring her teeth at my father. "You! Be quiet while I speak! No one told me today was the big day!" "How did you know?"

My mother looked at Janephop, and this caused my father to show a slight ironic smile, as if he had realized the situation.

"Well, how could I forget about Janephop... Well, since you're here, I'll give in. But, even with you here, I won't take it easy on our daughter. Today, my little Intuorn will be crushed until nothing is left."

"I'll stay quiet, not say anything."

My mother snapped her fingers. She said she would stay quiet, but her posture was ready to confront my father at any moment.

"If you do anything bad to my daughter, I'll ask Mew Nittha to come with a gun and shoot you."😄

"Dying by Mew's hands? I guess that wouldn't be so bad."

"So, I'm going to take your inheritance and squander it on other men, just to torment your spirit."

"You're good at teasing... Come on, let's get started."

We all exchanged expectant glances and nodded silently, giving the signal to hand over the documents to my father. Arun, who was responsible for carrying all the transaction documents, handed them over through his assistant, until everything was properly positioned on the table, ready to be analyzed.

My father's firm hand opened the file and began to read, his eyes scanning each line carefully, and he took a long time there. My heart was beating so loudly that it seemed to compete with the sound of the clock in the office; I no longer knew if the others could also hear the beating echoing inside me. Everyone was silent, apprehensive, not knowing if the result would be positive or not.

Arun, noticing that I was tightly gripping the armrest, lightly touched my leg, aware that I was anxious. Not long after, my father raised his head and closed the file of documents, passing it to the four employees next to him, who would review everything again.

"What's all this drama for? She's already earned over a million, right? Wasn't it enough to just look at the numbers in the account?"

My mother, as anxious as the others, murmured, breaking the silence, and everyone nodded, wanting it all to be over with. However, my father shook his head.

"If I were careless, do you think I would be so rich today? Look, I'm a very meticulous person. I never ignore details. No one has ever cheated me or taken advantage of me."

"I got pregnant on purpose to hook you and you didn't even notice."

"I made you think that, but in fact, I knew exactly what day you were ovulating."

"What!?"

Now, everyone in the room was a little embarrassed, because my father and mother were discussing my birth. My father looked at his assistant and rested his arm on the table, observing him calmly.

"So, did you find any errors?"

I was a little irritated, as my father was really trying to find errors in everything. But I soon turned to pay attention as the four assistants begin listing any possible gaps in the documents.

"Everything is in order, except that... some expenses for environmental taxes are missing."

"Tax on signs." "Property tax."

The employees reported confidently, causing my father to ask even more questions.

"What about the value added tax (VAT)?"

"It has not yet reached the minimum amount to be taxed with VAT, but even so, we have not yet reached the amount of one million. If we deduct these expenses, it seems that there were some small accounting errors."

Arun BekFah straightened, frowning, as she was the one directly responsible for this part.

“There was no overcharging at any point. I calculated everything accurately, although there may have been some details regarding taxes that I overlooked.”

“The profit after expenses is a little over two hundred thousand baht. But considering the minor taxes mentioned earlier, this will need to be deducted from the profit, so there is still a shortfall to get the total…”

My father’s employee quickly calculated on his calculator. “Nine hundred and eighty thousand baht.”

## Thum, thump… Thump, thump…

Now the room was completely silent. My father smiled and leaned back in his chair with an expression of victory, while I could only sit there, pale and frustrated, thinking that I had been rash in rushing to confront him. I still had more than two months to raise the remaining money to cover this amount.

"You lost, Nong In." "..."

"No excuses!"

While my mind was in complete shock, I felt someone beside me holding my hand tightly. It was the first time I had seen Arun BekFah so determined.

"Come on, Miss In!" "What...where?"

"Let's run away together now!" "Block the door...You!"

My father was startled as soon as my mother grabbed him.

"Why are you holding me? Hey, block the door! Don't let Miss In escape!"

Before I could regain my composure, Janephop and Mawin rushed to stop my father's four employees, who had just been ordered to detain me. My mother, realizing that I was still confused, shouted loudly:

## "Nong In, run away!"

**Footnote:**

***[1]. Talk of the Town is a language school that offers classes in the form of debates in English and other courses on contemporary world topics.***

# 48.Release the Ties

The situation was completely chaotic. Arun dragged me, forcing me to run to escape. Meanwhile, my mother held my father, shouting for me to run away as fast as possible, as if she was afraid he might grab a gun and shoot me.

"Let me go! If our daughter lost, she must accept defeat. You can't help her like this!"

"I can do anything for my daughter. I want to be her heroine. I want her to be so impressed with me that she writes in her calligraphy homework: 'Mommy is the shield against daddy!'"

"What nonsense! Let me go!"

"What are you waiting for, Miss? I won't hold out for much longer! Miss Fah, take Miss In and run away now!"

Janephop shouted furiously in our direction. But then, in the middle of all that confusion, I shouted at the top of my voice:

"I'm not going anywhere! Everyone, stop!"

At that moment, everything in the room seemed to freeze, as if someone had pressed a pause button. My mother slowly let go of my father, while Mawin and Janephop, losing their balance, were captured by four of Dad's henchmen.

"In..."

"The war is not over yet. I have not lost yet."

At this, Dad let out a laugh, showing a mixture of affection and contempt.

"Do you still have a trick up your sleeve? From what I see, you have nothing left to fight for, my dear. Give up and marry Mawin. Get it over with and enjoy the life of the rich, spending money as you please."

"What is the exact amount we have?"

"Exactly nine hundred and eighty thousand baht."

"That is the correct amount, right? Are you sure there is nothing left or missing?"

Dad looked at his subordinates, experts in numbers, instead of answering. The four men in suits nodded vigorously.

"That amount is exact, with nothing missing or left over, miss." "Really?"

"Yes, really."

"Sure?"

"Yes, definitely."

"They're not making anything up, are they?" "Absolutely not."

"Do I need to put some music on Spotify to go with it?"

Dad leaned back in his chair, smiling as he listened to my interaction with his employees.

When I finally confirmed it, I sighed deeply, surprising him to the point that he straightened his posture, suspicious.

"Why so relieved?"

"Well..."

I smiled slightly before looking at Jenphop, who had always been my right hand in everything.

"Jan, did you bring the tip box?" "I didn't, Miss."

Janephop replied, widening his eyes with excitement upon hearing my instruction.

"Then go get it now! I'll give you exactly thirty minutes. Let's count the tips."

"Yes, Miss."

Dad frowned, but he didn't seem upset, as he still felt confident. "Tips? How much can that bring in?"

"Quite a bit, we have a generous sponsor."

I looked at my mother, who had once put ten thousand baht in the box as a lucky charm. Remembering that, she smiled broadly and laughed happily.

"Oh, I helped my daughter get through the crisis her father caused!"

"And how much can that really help? Ten thousand from you... and what else did you put in as a tip? It still can't amount to twenty thousand."

"Let's count it first, and then you can brag, dear."

While we waited, he suggested we play a game of checkers, as if no chaos had ever occurred before. And of course, I had never won a single game against Dad since I was born.

"Nong In, you are too impatient."

Dad said, smiling, as he defeated me time after time.

"You play without strategy, without evaluating your opponent. If you were calmer and thought about each move, you would be excellent."

"It's just a game of checkers."

"Games like this reflect the player's way of thinking, as well as other personality traits. When I want to understand an opponent or client, I make them play this type of game to see their mental state and personality."

"You don't have to do that, Dad. You know me better than anyone in the world."

"The reason I always win this game is because somehow you always end up exposing yourself."

Dad commented, with a tone of certainty.

The word “game” here also extended to the hotel management, which worked almost like a game of Monopoly. In fact, I was doing well, but I was a little too impatient. If I had been more patient and waited for the right moment, I wouldn’t be relying on the tips Janephop came to collect.

“Talk all you want, but it doesn’t matter how good you are at the game. If someone knocks over the board, you lose anyway.”

And my mother swept all the pieces off the board with her hand, laughing. “My daughter wins.”

“You’re a terrible mother, I’m trying to teach her something!”

“I’m teaching her too, Anek. Nong In, wherever Mommy is, you win.”

As dad and my mother were about to start a new argument, Janephop walked through the door, carrying a red and seemingly heavy tip box. I looked at the box with pride, for it contained the ace up his sleeve: a

donation of ten thousand, plus a lot of coins, which would probably amount to a good amount.

"There's still twenty thousand left, but the box has Mom's ten thousand and a bunch of other coins. We won't lose."

My mom said, laughing happily. However, there was someone in the room who didn't look very happy.

"I am.. sorry, In."

Mawin looked at me, laughing nervously. His face indicated that this was not a good sign.

"What happened?" "..."

When Mawin didn't answer, I took the box from Janephop's hand and opened it. Inside, I found a few thousand bills, seven hundred bills, and one fifty.

"Nine thousand bills... someone used the money."

I looked at Mawin, already beginning to understand what was happening. "Did you use the money, Mawin?"

"Yesterday, when I went to buy beer and didn't have any change, I took some to buy it and then put the change back in the box."

Mawin explained awkwardly. "Mawin!"

I exclaimed in frustration.

Now, even a single baht was missing. And more than two hundreds bahts were gone. Janephop and Arun then began counting the ten, five, and one

baht coins, piling them up. In the end, as expected, we only managed to collect two hundred and fifty-four bahts. With my mother's original money, the total we had was...

"Ten thousand and four bahts."

I gulped, and Dad started laughing out loud when he saw the number.

"Haha! I told you you would lose! No matter how much you have in tips, it won't even reach twenty thousand. You lost, my dear! Mawin... go prepare the wedding invitations. Choose any style you want – Chinese, Indian, Western, Arabic, or even Uttaradit. Take your pick! Hahaha!"

He laughed happily, while everyone in the room was downcast, until a smile appeared on the corner of my mouth.

"Wait, Dad. I still have some more money."

"Where else are you going to get it from? But it's okay, no matter how much you put in, it won't be enough."

"I played the violin at the market recently, and a generous customer asked for the song Habanera Suite No. 1."

At this, Dad, who was laughing, froze with his mouth open, remembering.

Slowly, I took the money out of my pocket and placed it on top of the pile of tips, along with another thirteen baht in coins that some generous people had given me as they passed by.

"He said he loved my music and gave me ten thousand baht as a tip. Do you remember that, Dad?"

Everyone in the room leaned over to see the ten thousand baht, smiling one by one. Arun, who was closest, gathered up the tip money and added it all up.

"The total of the tips now amounts to twenty thousand and seventeen baht. And if we add the profit that remains after all the initial deductions and

taxes, the total is..."

I raised my hand, interrupting my secretary, and confidently stated the amount.

"One million and seventeen baht." "It can't be..."

Dad stood up abruptly, reluctant to accept defeat. I, on the other side, also stood up, bowing proudly to him.

"I made a profit of seventeen baht beyond the condition you imposed. I hope you will keep your word now, Dad. I don't need to get married and I will continue to be the heiress, as before."

"..."

"Thank you for being my trump card, my last flame. Sometimes, losing a game can be a strategy to make the opponent believe that he is winning."

Dad slowly sit down in his chair, speechless. "The victory is mine."

"That's it, my daughter! My daughter won!"

My mother screamed with joy, excited, while Mawin also cheered excitedly, as if she had been waiting for this chance to escape marriage for several lifetimes. Arun, with tears in her eyes, covered her mouth in excitement and ran to hug me. I hugged her back, laughing.

"We managed to overcome the hardest challenge." "I was so scared, Miss In,"

Arun said, still emotional. Dad rubbed his face, shaking his head in defeat, but he couldn't help but smile, his eyes also full of tears.

"In, you really did it! I'm so proud."

"Don't even think about taking credit! You exhausted my daughter! My heart almost stopped because of you."

My mother said, slapping Dad lightly, unable to hold herself back. He laughed, gently dodging and scolded her.

"There are children around here, and my employees too."

"Lucky for you I didn't do worse! You make me older every day. I'll have to go on Twitter and look at some pictures of hot men to improve my mood."

😄

"Picture of who?" He asked curiously. "Kai."[1]

"I asked who!"

At first he seemed proud of me, but now he was completely focused on her answer as she smiled at her phone.

"Kai."

"Wait! I asked politely and you answer me like that? Who do you like?" "Wait! I asked politely and you answer me like that? Who do you like?" "Kai! Of course!"

"Stop it, I'm asking seriously. Who do you like?" "I already said... Kai."

"Who, anyway? I like Mew, and you say you like who?"

"Kai! Why does it seem like we're not speaking the same language?"

Dad and Mom continued their argument, both adamant, while Mawin and Janephop tried to intervene to calm them down. I took advantage of the chaos to pull Arun and sneak out, preventing them from noticing our escape.

"Are you sure it's a good idea to leave like this, without saying goodbye?" "Saying goodbye to nothing. Run!"

"Where to?" "Hurry up!"

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Traffic

"Calm down, Khun In. What happened? Why are you driving so fast?" "I have something urgent to do. I can't wait."

"What is it?"

"When we get there, you'll know."

Arun BekFah, scared to death, hugged herself as she was pressed into the seat. Because I was driving fast, with a lot of experience, since I used to run. From daddy's company to Arun BekFah's condominium, it took less than five minutes. As soon as the car stopped, the little person looked at me in a way that seemed to realize what I was.

"You're in a big hurry, aren't you?"

"I couldn't wait. Last night I failed. When I realized there would be no more obstacles, all I could think about was this."

I opened the door, got out of the car and hurriedly pulled Arun along. The little person, with the shorter legs, walked and ran at the same time, laughing as if she's having fun.

"You are very skilled!" "I missed you."

"We see each other every day and you still miss me?" "Don't you miss me?"

We rode the elevator in silence, watching the floor numbers slowly rise, while I grew anxious. When we arrived at Arun BekFah’s apartment floor, the tiny person in front of me turned around and glared at me with a challenging look.

“Try to catch me.” “What?”

“Whoever gets there first gets on top.” “I don’t care about the position!”

We both opened the door and entered the condominium room in a hurry. And as soon as the door closed, I immediately spoke.

“Take off your clothes now.”

“You think you’re the queen, you can order whatever you want?” “I’m your girlfriend, and this isn’t an order… it’s a request.”

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I took off my clothes one by one and took a step towards Arun BekFah. She started to walk back, provocatively, and that made me stop for a moment.

“Is something wrong?”

“I just realized why I fell in love with you.” I said.

“Why?”

After being filled with intense emotions, I now walked towards her, placing both hands on the tiny person's face affectionately.

"It was because of your smile." "In..."

"It was very annoying back then, when you smiled at everyone but me." "Have you stopped being irritated?"

"Not yet."

"And what should I do?" "Can't you smile just for me?"

"How can I do that? If I don't smile, people will think I'm being arrogant." "But when you smile, it's so cute, it makes me jealous."

"You're a real flirt... So let's do it like this: I'll smile politely to others, but when I'm with you, I'll smile the way you like and only for you. But there's one condition..."

"What's the condition?"

"You have to tell me 'I love you' every day." "I love you."

When I said that, the little person smiled until her eyes closed, then put her arms around my neck and pulled me in to give me a soft kiss on the lips.

"I love you too, In."

"That smile is very valuable." "Is it worth it?"

"It is. Whatever it is, I'll pay, as long as I can stay with you."

I pushed the tiny person to lie down, with her back against the mattress on the floor.

"Whenever you want, I'll give it to you." "You must give it all night."

"Are you talking about the smile?" "I'm talking about this here."

And then, we both did what we wanted in a naughty way, like two lovers who hadn't touched each other for almost a year, despite being so close. I don't need to go into details about what happened at each moment. I just know that it was an intense exchange of those who love and desire each other deeply.

Some things can't be bought with money, like her smile, Arun BekFah. Her smile has the value of love.

Footnote

[1] "(Kai) "Let's go" (in some informal contexts) "Okay" "Yes" "I understand" However, "" can also be a proper noun, a noun or a term in specific contexts. In's father didn't understand that his wife was referring to the person's name.

# Special : Arun BekFah

## "Arun BekFah... the bird that flies, come out and eat happily and contentedly..."

The music played softly from the living room as I was getting ready to go out and find something to eat. Whenever I heard this song, my eyebrows would furrow because it always made me feel like I was being mocked. But as soon as I went out to look, I saw that Khun In was very focused on doing something, something that seemed to be more than just listening to a show tune.

"What are you doing?" "I'm editing the song."

"This song, 'Ja Khun Thong'?"

"Yes. I spent a long time watching how to download and cut songs on YouTube... Now I'm going to try to see if I can make it work."

After saying this, my boss, who was also my girlfriend, rubbed her hands together as if she was amused.

"Fah, try calling me."

"Do you want me to call your cell phone?" "Yes."

I picked up the phone and dialed her contact number as requested. Then, finally, the edited song played as my ringtone, just as she wanted.

"Yay! From now on, when you call, it will be this song." "Are you trying to make fun of me?"

"Make fun of you? Are you crazy? If I were to make fun of you, I wouldn't choose this beautiful song. There are many words to make fun of you that are much more interesting than this song."

"Like, for example?"

"Cute, beautiful, my little kitty." "Are those mocking words?"

I smiled slightly, even though I didn't quite understand what those words like "cute," "beautiful," and "my little kitty" meant, but I knew they were compliments.

"Well, there's nothing I can call you negatively. Oh, there's one more word!"

My boss, who was also my girlfriend, got up from the couch and came over to me, getting so close that I had to back away, smiling.

"What?"

"My playmate."

"Don't you get tired of this?"

I laughed as she kissed me left and right before pushing me onto the bed, even though I had just finished getting ready.

"Let's go out to eat!"

"Give me twenty minutes and we'll go." "What if it takes longer?"

"Then whatever."

"In!"

I tried a little charm by patting her, but ended up giving in, since I didn't care that much.

Besides, this period was like a break for both of us, after we had completed the mission of earning a million within a year. Being able to rest in a room, without going out to do anything outside, was something I had longed for for a long time.

But even inside the room, we ended up doing a lot of things... Oh, but it doesn't matter. As long as it's fun, it makes me feel good, and I have her, everything is great.

"I love you."

After a few moments of playing without doing anything more intense, my temperamental girlfriend threw herself next to me on the bed and said this.

"What did you say?" "I love you, Fah."

"What? So, in the end, you're not going to tease me?"

"I'm going to tease you, but I also want to tell you that I love you. I don't want you to think that I'm just asking you to have sex."

We both lay there, staring at the white ceiling of the room. My heart was racing, still on the adrenaline of what we had just done, and I felt a rush every time we did something like that, even if we hadn't finished everything.

"I didn't say anything, you know... Did I do something to make you think I didn't want to do it?"

"No."

The person next to me laughed when she saw that I was worried. Then she turned to the side to look at me.

"But sometimes I wonder if you're spoiling me too much, like I can do whatever I want and you never complain. You're so used to treating me like your boss."

"Maybe that's it. I've really gotten used to the role of secretary, always supporting the boss's needs. But it's not like that in bed."

"Is it?"

"If I didn't want to, you wouldn't be able to do anything to me."

"So, why in those days at the hotel, when we worked together, did you let me take you and do whatever I wanted... were you already liking me back then?"

The hand of the person next to me slowly went up to my shirt, and started playing with his fingers, as if she was trying to tease me. I didn't stop her, but I also didn't show that I was too comfortable, because I wanted to play with it a little more.

"Well... I don't know."

I smiled softly, running my hand around the waist of the person next to me, starting to move a little further inside her pants.

"I just thought that if I let you do that, I could feel you too. That was all." "How naughty..."

Khun In, who was showing more emotion, lay on her back and let me dominate her easily. Then, I changed position, climbing on top of her and starting to run my lips over her neck. Then, I started to undress her clothes and went down to her waist.

"How did it end up like this?"

"It could be either way, really."

I said, as I kissed her most sensitive part and introduced my fingers inside her wet region to feel the heat and the smell. Khun In's moan made me excited and transformed into someone I didn't know, but who was full of desires. I looked at my love, who was lying on the edge of the bed, but I wanted to see her face so I got up and let my hands do their work. With my other hand, I held her face so I could admire her completely.

"What is it?"

In asked, almost breathless. Her husky voice, with her unique scent, made me lean closer. inhaling her scent deeply into the crook of her neck and whispering in her ear:

"I want to see your face, Nong In." "Yes... faster,"

In said, as she spread her legs.

I complied with her request, and the moans continued until her body began to contract, she was cumming. All her muscles tensed and squeezed my fingers tightly as her pleasure liquid dripped, making me unable to resist changing position. I began to make circular movements on her clitoris, and then I opened my mouth to taste my fingers and feel the taste of the person I love.

"How can you suddenly get so excited like that?"

The boss, who seemed to be out of strength, reached out and grabbed my fingers shyly, trying to stop me from continuing to taste. I smiled slightly and pressed my lips to hers, hoping that she would also taste herself.

"Maybe it was my true nature from the beginning." "I want to see your face now."

"Why?"

"Because you're so mean."

Intuorn said, taking advantage of the moment I was distracted to turn my body and place myself underneath her, before straddling me.

"Now it's my turn." "No, wait."

I said, placing both hands on her face, trying to focus on her expression. "Let me look at your face first."

"Hmm?"

"I really want to know how beautiful you are, Nong In."

I suddenly felt a great sadness for not being able to distinguish people's faces, even though I knew that throughout my entire life, I had never cared about it.

Maybe it was because I had gotten used to being like this and, until that moment, it hadn't been a big problem.

The doctor called the condition I have "prosopagnosia," or "face blindness." I can't identify or differentiate people's faces, I don't know what they look like, if they are beautiful, ugly, or any other facial features. I can't even recognize my own face.

How can I explain it? It's like being at the zoo, looking at five tigers that have similar stripes, or a snake with shiny black skin. I only know who's who when I notice some specific detail or characteristic about the person.

I wasn’t born this way. The condition developed after a serious accident that caused a brain injury.

At that time, treatments were limited, especially since my family was very poor. Sometimes we had to fight to get money even for school. So

everything in my life happened as it happened, and eventually, I became this way. I became Arun BekFah.

My life was like that of a normal child, going to school and participating in activities, but there was one difference: I had to observe everyone around me to understand who was who.

Sometimes I would look at my classmates’ shoes, and with the teachers, I would look at their bags or the way they walked.

One of the biggest obstacles during my school years was the smell.

Some students, especially the boys, didn’t know how to take care of themselves and gave off a strong, unpleasant odor. To avoid this smell, I ended up distancing myself from everyone and became a person with no friends.

However, I didn’t get bullied or teased like in soap operas, because everyone knew about my problem and felt sorry for me. Life went on like this until I finished high school and entered university. With the wider social environment, life became even more difficult, but since I was already used to fitting in, this didn't become a big obstacle.

However, it was the first time someone had courted me...

A boy in my class started sending me letters, buying me drinks, and following me home. I couldn't describe what he looked like physically. Although my friends in class said he was handsome, if I were to describe what I saw and what didn't impress me, it would be something like this...

He liked to pick his nose, he never ironed his shirt, his perfume made me feel sick, and his high-pitched voice, which should have been deeper, bothered me. To others, he must have been considered handsome, but to me, he was just an ordinary person, nothing special.

I never accepted any of the dating proposals during school. Although many boys tried, I always refused because no one impressed me. Over time, I became someone who knew what I wanted and thought that in this life I

would probably never get married, like others, because no one was able to make me feel something special.

Until Intuorn came into my life. She was a stubborn, temperamental and full of attitudes woman, but her heart was completely different from that. Especially when I was forced to get married, she did not hesitate to spend all her money, simply because she did not accept that I was forced into an arranged marriage.

At that time, she did not like me, but she could not bear the injustice of the world. She even made a great effort, taking a bus back, even though she had never ridden a bus before.

From that moment on, she made my heart beat faster. Although I knew it was just a reaction caused by the "suspension bridge" — that phenomenon that happens when someone saves us from danger, and our heart races, making us think it is love. I still felt something good for her.

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"You are so beautiful that men all over the world would envy you." The person above me said jokingly before leaning in to kiss me.

"But it's good that you don't know what my face looks like. Or that it's considered pretty."

"Why?" I asked.

"It shows that you don't judge people by their appearance." "Maybe I like you because you're rich."

I replied.

"Then that means you have something human about you too, just like everyone else. I don't care. Wealth is a good thing. Everyone likes it. It's okay if you like it."

"Don't you feel a little bad, even if I'm pretending to say that?"

"I don't feel bad about anything you say. I don't want to fight. What matters is that you chose me, and that's enough."

In the end, no matter what I did, Intuorn would always forgive me, even if I mentioned something bad. I moved to hug my dear boss lovingly. The scent of both of them mixed as our naked bodies lay under the sheets, touching each other with the desire to unite our identities into one.

It was strange how two women could do something like that. I had never thought I could fall in love and end up with another woman. To this day, I still feel confused about it.

"You know, In, I once had an 'affair' at work." "Ha."

"You never asked what happened."

"I didn't know what to ask. But since you brought it up, you can tell me, I want to know."

She replied, as she changed position to lie on her side, supporting herself with her elbow and staring at me.

"How did it happen? Did you seduce someone?"

I frowned, annoyed by her teasing, and Intuorn couldn't resist, reaching out to pinch my nose.

"With that face, I doubt you've seduced anyone. Or was it slander? Tell me, I'm curious!"

"It's nothing major, just something a little... silly. A man, married with children, started courting me. And, by chance, he was my boss. The gossip began to spread, until his wife heard and went to slap me at work, even though I hadn't done anything."

I explained, trying to remain calm. "She really slapped you!?!"

Intuorn sat up with a clearly indignant expression, as if she was living the situation.

"This is crazy! And you let her hit you? Who does she think she is?" "It's over now."

I said, laughing as I pulled Intuorn's shoulder so she could lie down again more comfortably.

"I was very uncomfortable working there, so I quit to put an end to it." "But you didn't do anything wrong. Why leave then?"

In asked, still upset about what had happened.

"If I hadn't left, I wouldn't have met you, would I?" I replied, smiling.

"That's true, but I'm still irritated. Tell me more details, I'm really interested."

"Well, if you want to know, I'll tell you." I replied, preparing to continue the story.

# Special 1.What a lovely person!

## I am.. Arun BekFah.

This is my real name, which sounds a bit funny at first sight, because when you hear this name you usually end up singing a song without being able to help yourself, since everyone knows the show *Jaokhun John.* I am quite proud of this name because it is quite rare and, without a doubt, no one would give this name to their own child.

But my father and mother chose it for me. If you ask them if they intended it to be a different name from the others, I don't think so. Probably, they just couldn't think of another name. I was born exactly when the show was airing, so my father chose this name for me by chance.

I am the second daughter in the family, I have an older brother, and I was born into a family with limited financial resources. If I were to describe my coming into the world, it might end up being disrespectful to those who gave me life.

But, if we are to tell the truth, my father and mother didn't know how to prevent a pregnancy. They didn’t want to have another child, as they were just living with what they had. When I was born, it became another burden.

Still, I am grateful to them for raising me this far. Although I didn’t have a comfortable life, like those families who have children when they are ready and can send them to shows like *Master Chef*, I did have a basic education that any human being should have. I had to fight to get into university, but I managed to get by this far.

I graduated and came to Bangkok to look for a job. That was the beginning of my journey to actually work and earn a living.

At first, I worked at a bank and tried my best to increase my salary. After a while, I felt that I wasn’t progressing and moved to another company, and then to another. I gained considerable experience and learned how things work and what needs to be done.

I can say that I am good at what I do. Until I finally moved to the last company, where I got the position of assistant director, and my salary went up to the "three digits" range.

Everything was going well until the day my boss invited me to lunch. I didn't think much about it, I just did my job, because having lunch together is also an opportunity to get to know your boss better, and that's part of the job. But, it turns out, I was interpreting the situation on my own, because my boss didn't think the same way.

"Are you seeing anyone, Arun?" "Not yet."

I answered honestly, without thinking much. But my boss, who seemed to want to get closer, was visibly excited by the answer. I have the ability to observe people. When their voice changes even a little, I notice.

"What do you mean? A woman as beautiful and talented as you..." "Thank you."

*What is beauty...? I really don't know, just like I don't know what it means to be handsome.*

I couldn't even tell if my boss is handsome or not. All I know is that his voice is a little high-pitched, the kind of voice that sounds a little unreliable. If we were to just talk on the phone, I would probably think he didn't take anything seriously.

"You're a person of few words, aren't you?" "I don't know what to say."

"But you accepted to have lunch with me."

Well, you invited me... Of course I didn't say it out loud, because I know we should know what to say and what not to say. Some things are better kept to ourselves.

"Anyway, thanks for agreeing to have lunch with me."

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I didn't think that accepting an invitation to lunch could make someone think so far ahead. From being a professional assistant, suddenly everyone started looking at me differently.

As I said, I'm an observant person. I easily notice when something is out of the ordinary, whether it's the way people look at me, the rhythm of their breathing or the tone of their voice. And that included the fact that my boss suddenly started sending me goodnight messages, bringing me sweets, and, to top it all off, giving me flowers. Even though they weren’t from a famous florist, the fact that they were flowers made me uncomfortable.

“Arun, what’s your deal with Mr. Seksan, anyway?”

Coworkers came over curiously to ask me. Even though it wasn’t like in dramas, with whispers and intrigue, I still felt uneasy.

“It’s nothing, he’s just my boss.”

“And those sweets that appear on your desk every morning, what are they? Look… don’t play with fire, okay? Mr. Seksan is married, you know? He looks young and energetic, but he already has a wife.”

Everyone sounds worried, but I could tell there was a hint of amusement and curiosity in moving the story forward. Even though I tried not to care, it was hard not to feel uncomfortable.

Until I finally couldn’t take it anymore and asked to talk to my boss about it.

“Mr. Seksan.”

I knocked on the office door to ask for permission and walked in with a serious expression. When he saw me, he stood up to greet me cheerfully, without any seriousness.

“Hello, Arun! Please have a seat.” “Thank you.”

Since I didn’t know how long this would take, I pulled up a chair to sit down. However, Seksan pointed to the reception sofa.

“Here is better, so you’ll be more comfortable… Did something happen? They said you wanted to talk to me.”

“Yes, I would like to ask you a favor.”

“I have a request for you too. I just got VIP tickets for a concert, and everyone really wants to go. So I thought I’d invite you.”

He showed me the tickets for a famous Korean singer’s concert, hoping to get me excited, but I just looked at them without much interest, since I didn’t really care about them. I just thought the songs were good, but nothing more.

"I'd rather not go, I don't like crowds."

"Oh, that's a shame! Come on, come with me, just to keep me company."

"I really wanted to talk about something else, Mr. Seksan... I'd like to ask you to act a little more like a boss."

I spoke as carefully as I could, since he was older and, after all, he was the one who paid my salary.

"Now, everyone in the company thinks that you and I are more than just a boss and an employee, and that's not appropriate."

"I don't see what's inappropriate about that." "It's inappropriate, Mr. Seksan. You're married." "I'm not married. We're just together."

"..."

"I'm single."

"Well, then, I ask that you act like a boss, Mr. Seksan. I appreciate the gifts, but it would be better if you stopped giving me these gifts. It makes me feel uncomfortable."

"Did you know that I have feelings for you?"

Suddenly, my boss said it bluntly, leaning closer to me, his body language clearly showing his interest.

"You better think so. You being in this position is exactly what I want." "But I don't..."

Before I could explain, the office door opened. No, actually, it sounded like the door had been kicked in. A woman I knew very well walked in, pointing at me and accusing me with aggressive words.

"You, Arun BekFah, you shameless lover!"

I immediately sat up straight when I heard that. The voice and actions of Rassamee, the wife or rather, the girlfriend, since my boss had just said he was single was yelling and cursing at me viciously, even though I hadn't done anything.

"Are you crazy?"

My boss, who had just said he was single, ran over to his girlfriend and stood between us.

"You need to leave now. Don't come making noise in here. I'm embarrassed."

"Embrassed? And when you were doing those things, weren't you ashamed? You had the audacity to stay here, alone with her! If I hadn't come in, what were you planning to do!?"

"What are you saying? This is my workplace. And why did you come here?"

"Someone called me and said that you and your mistress were having fun together. Sending food, flowers, going out together... Isn't that enough? You want to make me look like an idiot, is that it? And you too, you cheeky little thing! You know he's married and you still keep hitting on him! Have you no shame?"

I know this kind of person well. The more you try to argue, the more she finds a reason to attack you. There's no point in defending myself, because she always finds something to insult me about. That's why I chose not to say anything and remained silent, waiting for my boss to sort it all out.

"Go away, I have to work." "Work?!"

The woman who was screaming looked at the table and, with shining eyes, picked up the concert tickets.

"I almost died wanting to go to this concert! You said you couldn't get it, and now what?!"

"I just got it."

"Then why are you here? Why are you with her, the secretary, alone with you? This is not acceptable!"

My boss's girlfriend then ran up to me and angrily grabbed my hair, dragging me towards the office door. I was still in shock and tried to hold my hair back so as not to feel the pain, but I resisted her force.

"Stop now, Rasamee! Have you no shame?"

"Why should I be ashamed? The one who should be ashamed is this one!"

"Please leave me alone. Mr. Seksan and I have nothing to do with each other."

"Don't lie! You haven't responded to any of my insults! You accept all of this!"

Suddenly, I was accused without being able to defend myself. I was pushed into the employee area, where everyone could see, as if I was being humiliated in the middle of the street.

"Everyone, look at this woman here! She's stealing my husband! And if anyone has a boyfriend, be careful, she'll try to get him too! She must have inherited that from her parents!"

I'm not very attached to my parents, but maybe the woman is right in what she says. Even so, I don't accept being insulted for no reason. So, I chose to fight in silence, looking for something to defend myself. I ended up grabbing a pencil sharpener that was on the table.

I stood up and hit Rassamee hard on the head, who was opening her mouth to curse more. The sound of the impact was loud.

Rassamee's scream was instantly silenced, as she fell to the floor. Still holding the pencil sharpener, I was ready to hit her again, but Mr. Seksan rushed to stop me.

"Enough! Don't do anything else."

I smiled at him for a moment, but then I changed my mind and hit him with the pencil sharpener too, causing the heavy tool to fall from my hand and

roll to the floor. My former boss fell, bleeding next to his girlfriend, looking at me in surprise.

"Why are you...?"

"I'm resigning from this crazy company. I'm not usually one to swear, but you and your wife have crossed the line."

"..."

***"Dogface."***

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Intuorn covered herself with the blanket and laughed until the fabric trembled. I looked at her sideways, slightly irritated, because I felt like she was treating something very serious as a joke.

"Why so much laughter? That was the worst thing I've ever faced in my life."

"Was that the rudest word you've ever used to insult someone? 'Dogface'? Wow, the boss must have been really hurt."

Intuorn commented, still laughing.

"And what do you want me to say, then?"

"Good question... What can I suggest... Oh, it's okay, if you can't curse, we'll get someone else to do it."

"Someone else?"

"Hm... Let me think about it for a bit."

She said, relaxed. I had no idea what she was planning. The story I was telling turned into just a conversation that I wanted to share before I forgot.

However, soon after that night, the spoiled little lady asked me out when she finished her work.

I was thinking about going home because of the traffic, but she took me to a mall.

"What do you want to buy?" "I just came for a walk."

"What do you mean? Instead of going to your mall, you choose to go to the competitor's?"

"I can't do that. If my father finds out, he'll kill me." "What would he say?"

"He'd be mad because of what's going to happen."

Intuorn said, taking out her cell phone and starting to talk to herself, shaking her head.

"You're ready, right? Get ready. It's pretty crowded, okay, I see the target, you can go."

I didn't quite understand what she meant, but soon an elderly lady started shouting, pointing at someone and cursing.

"Oh, it's you! You're the one who hit my daughter at work!"

The moment I heard the shouting, Intuorn took out her cell phone to film. I tried to stop her, but she wouldn't stop.

"Why are you filming, In? Don't do that."

"Of course I will! I paid twenty thousand for this." "Twenty thousand for what?"

"For the swearing." "Swearing who?"

"Swearing Rassamee, who beat you up at work."

I was surprised, because I hadn't thought about it before. When I saw who was being cursed, I started to remember her appearance and clothes.

"What are you doing, In?"

"I hired someone to make her feel ashamed. I'm getting revenge for you."

Intuorn looked at me with a sharp gaze, and if this were a cartoon scene, I would have seen rays of light coming out of her eyes.

"Surprised, huh?"

I was speechless and looked at Rassamee, who was paralyzed, not knowing what to do except scream because she couldn't curse back.

"What is this!? Why are you cursing me? I don't even know this woman!"

"What do you mean you don't know? You spend the whole day chasing after your dirty husband, cursing other women. My daughter had to be embarrassed at work because of you, she got depressed and couldn't work. And you're there at the mall, laughing, as if nothing had happened... My God, this woman is so obsessed with her husband, she curses others, but she's never cursed him! If he's so bad, why doesn't she leave him? You bitch... a disgrace to your family!"

The words were so harsh that I almost covered my ears. Intuorn also made an uncomfortable expression and turned off the recording, shrugging.

"This lady was worth it, she swear very well. Jane, you have great taste in meeting people."

"You didn't have to do that, In."

"Of course! Whoever made you suffer has to pay for it, ten times over. That's the power of money! You can hire someone to humiliate others, and that's still acceptable... Wealth is amazing!"

Even though I didn't agree with what Intuorn did, when I saw her action, I ended up smiling involuntarily. It wasn't something good and shouldn't be followed, but when I understood her intention, I didn't know how to reprimand her anymore.

"Now everything is resolved. Don't hold any more grudges from the past. From now on, no one will hurt you anymore, because I will protect you."

## What a lovely person... Intuorn.

# Special 2.The Reason I Love You

"Nong In, you have such bad behavior. How can you waste money hiring a grocery store saleswoman to curse someone in the middle of the mall like that?!"

When Mr. Anek learned that his daughter had hired someone to take revenge for me, he reprimanded her fiercely. His daughter, who was treated like a family treasure, was breathing heavily, visibly irritated.

Meanwhile, I was curious to know what this *"disdainful face"* would look like, because I heard Intuorn's mother warn her not to do that to her father.

"Why couldn't I do that? The woman who was cursed made Fah feel ashamed! I was just getting revenge. I didn't do anything wrong!"

My boss, stubborn as always, didn't think she had done anything wrong.

"People need to pay for what they do. You can't just walk around like nothing happened, like there are no consequences. I need to teach her a lesson, so she understands what shame is. Don't you, Fah?"

Intuorn looked at me for support, but I kept my expression neutral, showing no emotion. I didn't want to support her actions, even though I appreciated the fact that she did it for me. Both Intuorn's father and mother looked at me, waiting for my opinion.

"What do you think, Arun? Do you agree with what Nong In did?"

Mr. Anek asked, wanting to know my opinion. If I were to be honest, I should answer...

"I don't agree."

"See, Nong In? Not even Arun herself agrees with what you did. And if the other party finds out that you were the one who hired someone to do it, they might end up suing you for defamation."

"But you're rich! You can just pay to shut everyone up!"

"Talking about money again! You need to learn the value of money."

"Why wouldn't I know the value of money? I earned money all by myself in a year, or have you forgotten, Daddy?"

"There's no way I can win this argument!"

"When I get hurt, you'll cry and feel sorry for me anyway." "Ah!"

As Intuorn continued to challenge the conversation, Mr. Anek got irritated and turned to question me, seemingly without much interest, but trying to provoke.

"Seriously, Arun, how can you like someone like this? If it's because of money, I won't get mad, because besides beauty, Intuorn has nothing else good."

The father tried to make his daughter feel a little pain, before rushing to add:

"But of course, you don't know what other people's faces look like, so it can't be because of appearance, right? It must be because of money!"

If anyone else had asked this question, I would probably have been irritated, but since I knew that it was a provocation from Intuorn's father to make her angry, I just smiled and didn't answer. The answer wasn't important, what he really wanted was for her to feel uncomfortable.

That's why I thought it best to keep quiet.

"So, Arun, answer to daddy, why do you love me?"

When I was pressured like this, everyone's eyes turned to me. I couldn't stay silent any longer and I had to say something.

*"Yes... For money."*

The answer sounded so cold. Even I, who said it, could feel that she was distant. In truth, I loved Intuorn for who she was. She was a transparent woman, someone whose emotions and intentions were crystal clear.

Unlike me, who almost never expressed what I felt, because I learned in my old company that smiling, being friendly, or even getting angry didn't bring any benefit. So, it's better to leave others in the dark about what I'm thinking, so I can protect myself from all the emotions of the people around me.

The first time I was truly impressed by Intuorn was that day...

The day she showed up at my old house, after I was forced by my parents to marry the creditor.

As everyone knows, I'm the daughter of parents who weren't really ready to have me.

They didn't mind trading me for a small amount of money.

I, on the other hand, didn't know what love was. I wasn't the least bit interested in understanding it, because I couldn't even tell if a person was pretty or ugly. That was never a problem for me. My life was already out of control from the start. If I had to marry someone I didn't even know, it certainly wouldn't be any worse than it already was. But...

There was someone who didn't accept it. She came to fight for justice, she opposed it with all her strength, even though she didn't like me, willing to face everything.

"No! I won't let you get married! No matter how much you owe, I'll pay it all myself!"

Intuorn has always been competitive. Growing up with a mountain of money gave her a huge advantage to win any competition. That's why I started to be impressed by her, because of the "*money*", and I felt indebted to her to the point that, if necessary, I would die in her place, because no one in my life had ever protected me.

Not my father, not my mother, not my brother. To everyone, I was just a girl from the house, of no great importance. That's how people from the countryside thought: when you reach the right age, you get married, receive the dowry and go to work on the farm.

But that day, Intuorn invaded my life with everything she had. Even though she hated me deeply, she didn't accept that I was forced to live with someone I didn't know. In the end, what really impressed me about Intuorn was not the money, but her kindness. She did everything to protect me.

Judging by how she agreed to work at her father’s hotel and started getting close to the people there, like the aunt in the canteen. At first, she hated me, but eventually we became close. Even when she started working with Mr.

Anek, she still called to check on me, and even secretly sent money to the aunt’s son from the canteen for his birthday.

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“She has money, she has kindness, and she’s not ashamed to show how much she loves me. That’s what makes me love Intuorn.”

I said, after thinking about my words. When I finished speaking, I saw her father’s surprised reaction, and Intuorn looked at me, made a soft sound, and then ran to hug me in front of her parents.

"Just hearing that makes me emotional. See, Dad? I have qualities. If I didn't, Fah wouldn't love me. Don't try to make us fight. What's wrong with having money? It's an advantage. Even Mom loves you because of money. If you don't believe me, ask her!"

Intuorn looked at her mother. Her father, with a curious look, turned to his wife and asked:

"Do you love me because of money?"

"Yes, I love you because of money. Does that hurt you?" "It hurts, of course. Because I love you with all my heart."

"But that's part of love, isn't it? Why would you be hurt by that?" The mother looked at her husband, tilting her head, as if curious.

"Why do rich people need to get hurt? When a woman says she loves you because of your money, isn't that an advantage? Money is a symbol of someone who has been successful. Even if someone is born rich, it guarantees that you come from a hard-working, intelligent family, and you will definitely receive love from good, wealthy parents."

"Yes, that's true. Why would I be hurt by that?"

Mr. Anek asked, starting to wonder after hearing so many arguments.

"But it seems like you're saying that you love me for material things, right?" "Didn't you court me because I'm pretty?"

She said.

"If my face was ugly, you wouldn't choose me, right?" "Well... that's true."

"See? We all look at the outside first, then we get to know the inside. When I saw that you were rich, I decided to open my heart to you. Then I realized that you are so good, and you have amazing qualities."

"While I loved you for your beauty, after meeting you, I realized that you were so passionate, and you gave me a lovely daughter like Intuorn."

"She is a beautiful, disciplined daughter, with great principles, impressive skills, and knows how to manage her money. Why do you have money if

you are not going to let your daughter use it? What is wrong with using money to get revenge on someone who did something wrong? She is using money in the right way."

"Hear, hear... It seems that I went too far with this."

Mr. Anek said, who, after thinking it over, smiled at his daughter and wife, as if he had finally understood everything.

"Well, let it go. From now on, don't do anything like that anymore, understand? It could get you in trouble, you could end up in jail. It’s not that I care so much, it’s just that I don’t want you to get involved in something bad.”

Then the father, who loved his daughter very much, melted and, with both hands, held his daughter’s face, kissing her cheeks one by one, as if Intuorn were a small child. The irritated boss, seeing that her father was softening, went to him and started to flirt, knowing exactly how to please him.

“Dad made me so sad! Why do you have to complain about me because of others?”

She complained. “Are you that hurt?” The father asked.

"It hurts here. It hurts in my heart." "And what should I do then?"

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Now, Intuorn and I were driving back to our apartment, our love nest, while in my girlfriend's bag was a check for 20,000 baht, the same amount she

had paid to someone who had cursed her in the name of our revenge. Mr. Anek gave the check to console his heartbroken daughter.

"I still don't agree with the fact that you hired someone to swear like that." I said.

"Oh, don't need to worry. I know you were pleased too. We all feel happy when we get revenge, everyone does it. Don't pretend to be a good person in front of me, hehehe?"

My boss reached out from the passenger seat and started scratching my chin as I drove. I tried to keep a straight face, but I ended up laughing.

"I'm not a dog, okay?" "Today was a good day."

Suddenly, Intuorn spoke, and that made me raise my eyebrows in curiosity. "About what?"

"About you finally telling me that you love me because of the money, in front of my father and mother. To be honest, you almost never reveal your feelings to anyone, but today you did. My heart is racing."

"What are you saying? I just had to explain it to Mr. Anek, just to clarify. I thought your parents were also suspicious about why I was with your daughter. They must be worried that I'm only after money and that I'll make you suffer."

I replied.

"If you think my parents are suspicious, then why did you say you're with me because of the money?"

"What could be better than just telling the truth? That sounds sincere and reasonable at the same time. After all, you're really rich, Intuorn. You used

your money to help me not get married... If it wasn't about the money, what else could it be?"

"Because I have wonderful skin and a sweet voice." "That's part of it, too."

"And I'm a very naughty person when I'm with you." "..."

"Why are you silent?" "How bold."

I bit my lip, not knowing how to respond. Sometimes this person is so open that I feel like I might not be able to handle it.

"And you, Miss Intuorn? What made you love me?" "Because..."

"..."

"Because you're a sister, a friend, a girlfriend, you're everything I want you to be. Even a lioness in bed. These reasons are summed up in a single sentence 'I love you'. Nice, huh?"

"Intuorn!"

Sometimes, maybe it's better not to have an explanation for love. Because when I ask and get an answer like that, I myself don't know if it's good or bad. In short, in the end...

We both love each other, that's true.

# Special 3.Trick

I feel tight...

I feel like something is pressing on my chest. I can't open my eyes, but I hear breathing, the sound of water drops and laughter alternating with crying...

This kind of feeling can't be anything other than... a nightmare. The only thing I can do now is pray to the Arhats and recite the *"Chinnabanchon"* while my mind repeats the three-invocation prayer, ready to begin the "Chinnabanchon" incantation. The sound of the recitation next to me, as if it were a repetition, gave me goosebumps. The female voice, full of exhaustion and hunger, almost made me scream, but I couldn't scream.

*"Chi nna ban cho n..."*

Now, it seems that even the spirits are no longer afraid of these incantations. If reciting the prayers doesn't help, where else can I find solace for my soul?

"Fah! What happened? Why are you sweating so much?"

The strong swaying of the person next to me made me jump, before I threw myself into Intuorn's arms, seeking refuge. The sweet-faced person hugged me tightly and stroked my back and shoulders gently, not knowing what was happening to me.

"Was it a nightmare?"

"I was haunted by a spirit." "Haunted? Why don't you laugh?"

"Intuorn!"

I pushed her away. She was still joking, even at the moments when I was most terrified. When she realized that I was really angry, she stopped laughing and made an apologetic sound.

"It was just a joke, I just wanted to lighten the mood. There was no need to get so angry. But how did the spirit scare you?"

"Well..."

I approached Intuorn again and began to describe what happened. "It was like something was on top of me."

"Was it a man or a woman?" "Woman."

"This is absurd! Only I can be on top of you like this!" "Intuorn, is this really the time to play?"

Even though I yelled, Intuorn was still having fun, which made me feel like a three-year-old child telling something serious but being ignored by her mother.

"How dare she scare you, with you standing right next to me like this?" "I can't sleep now, I'm afraid the spirit will come back if I sleep again." "What time is it now?"

The boss skillfully took out her phone to check the time.

"It's already past four in the morning. Haunting you at this hour... okay... then let's not sleep, let's do something else. What can we do... how about we play a little? The time is good for that."

"No!"

I spoke in a stern tone of voice, still unable to calm down, until, finally, Intuorn gave up.

"Then let's talk in the meantime. What can we talk about... since we woke up because of the spirit, how about telling us why you're so afraid of spirits? I think I heard that the reason you have the disease of not recognizing faces is because of that, right?"

"It's not really a spirit..."

I took a deep breath, since I couldn't sleep, I thought it wouldn't hurt to talk about it.

"As you know, In, when I was little, I had an accident, I fell from a high place and it made my brain work wrong. The reason for that was because I walked into a cemetery."

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At that time, I must have been about five or six years old, still quite young. I would chase my older brother and the other children in the neighborhood to play hide-and-seek at the nearby temple. But playing hide-and-seek during the day wasn't that exciting, so my brother's mischievous friends arranged to play at night, after our parents were already asleep.

I didn't really need to go, but since there were few children to play with, due to their fear, I ended up becoming necessary in a surprising way. I was small and did things more slowly than the others. When I lost and had to be the one to look for the others, even though I was afraid of the dark, if I didn't find anyone, my brother wouldn't take me home, since the temple was quite far from our house.

"Three, two, one... I found it!"

I shouted to give the signal and turned around immediately, thinking to myself that maybe I had been lucky to find someone. And of course, the older children were already well hidden.

When I realized that there was no one around the church, I started walking deeper and deeper into the temple, until I found myself in a wooded area. It was all dark and smelled of earth and rocks. The sound of the crickets on the ground made me afraid and my imagination began to create ideas that perhaps these crickets were huge, as big as the high-pitched sound they made.

There was no one... Where were the children hiding?

*Run!*

The sound of branches being broken in the distance made me look back and then I saw a shadow moving not far away. I ran after it, feeling that I had an advantage, but the more I ran, the more the person in front seemed to get away.

"Give up! Don't run anymore!"

I ran with my short legs, trying to catch up with whoever was running away. I thought that shouting like that and running at the same time would make the other person stop, but no, the person I was calling didn't stop. She kept running further and further away, until my hand couldn't reach her.

"Hi! I'm tired already! Ah!"

*Suddenly!*

I felt my stomach churn as my body fell into a large hole and hit the bottom hard. The sound of the impact was loud, but I didn't feel any pain or anything. The last image I saw was someone standing on the edge of the hole, laughing softly. Everything around me seemed blurry.

"hihihihi..."

The high-pitched laughter was still ringing in my ears, but I didn't have the strength to ask for help. I tried to reach out to the shadow, but I only saw that figure moving away.

The next thing I knew, I was waking up in a health center near my house. My arm was broken, my head was bleeding and, the strangest thing, I didn't recognize any of the people around me. They all seemed faceless, of varying heights. At first, I screamed as if I was being haunted. I only managed to calm my spirit when my mother hugged me and said it was her. I recognized her voice immediately.

"My God, daughter! How could you do something so dangerous? Why did you go play in a cemetery? That little brother of yours, what a crazy idea, took you there..."

My mother's voice scolded my brother, who could only cry nonstop. I was still paralyzed with fear, unable to forget that laughter that echoed in my mind.

Later, I learned that the hole I fell into was a hole dug by the gravedigger to catch animals, and he was the one who found me there. The hole was in a very isolated area, and I could hardly believe that I had run there and fallen into that hole.

When I told them that I had seen someone at the edge of the hole laughing, everyone said the same thing:

"It was a ghost wanting to take you!"

Since then, I have come to fear and hate ghosts, because they are entities that we cannot touch, but they still appear. Some say they exist, others say they do not, but regardless, I hate them. They do nothing to you, but they want to take your life?

Who would do that? No, that is clearly a ghost.

"So that's it, huh? The ghost is no longer in the cemetery... but these ghosts probably thought you entered their territory."

"Exactly, that's what made me hate and fear ghosts to this day."

"But what happened here wasn't right. You didn't go to the cemetery. This is our room, our bed. So why did they scare only you? Oh, right... they must have decided it would be more advantageous to scare you, because they couldn't do that to me."

"I guess I should do something good."

Intuorn was silent for a bit before nodding, clasping her hands in prayer.

"Fah, let's do a good deed together. Actually, it's almost morning. Let's take a bath and then go to the market to buy things to offer."

I don't usually see Intuorn so excited about doing good deeds, but maybe what happened to me made her a little more scared. After we showered and got ready, we changed into casual clothes for the market. We bought flowers, incense, candles, and food, and went to wait for the monks who were passing by on their usual route.

As I watched, I noticed that In didn't usually participate in activities like offering food to the monks. She seemed a little reluctant, perhaps because she didn’t like spending money. But she was more funny than annoying, so I ended up teaching her how to do the right things. After receiving the monks’ blessing, we went to find a tree to do the water ritual.

“Now’s the important part.”

In said, licking her lips and smiling strangely, as if she was doing something wrong.

"I will dedicate this good deed to... all the suffering beings, the ghosts in the cycle of rebirth, except for that ghost from yesterday. You will not receive any of this blessing. You will smell the food, but you will not be able to taste anything."

"You are not serious, In! We said yesterday that we would do good deeds for the ghosts!"

"Next time, if you want to eat, come haunt again. Don't think that only you can trick us. You scared me, now it's my turn."

"..."

"I can scare you too, you know? Haha!"

In said, pouring water over the tree in one go and laughing with pleasure.

"If you don't like it, come find me tonight. Your mother will listen to me and I will teach you how to return to your next life very quickly!"

Sometimes she is very cute, but other times... she is just plain scary. Intuorn.