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It’s a hot afternoon in February by the highways of Quezon Avenue, the road is bustling with jeeps, buses, and taxis along with the rumbling of commuters along the sakayan.

**Dudung** : Para!!!

**Mario**: Para ho! ….. one Welcome Rotonda only….

\*Dudung rushed to reach the jeep, he was hasty as he needed to look for medicines for his children\*

**Dudung**: Manong, bayad po, one going to Buendia only

**Driver**: You’re still short of 4 pesos! Dose ho going to Buendia

**Dudung**: \*panics\* ay ehh manong, pagpasensyahan niyo na po, I’m short of 4 pesos I have no coins left and I’m not sure if my money is enough for the medicines I need to buy for my children.

**Driver**: Susmaryosep! You still look like a menor de edad? Are you sure with what youre saying?

**Dudung**: Pasensya na ho manong, I’m struggling to meet my family’s ends.

**Driver**: Yan, kayong mga kabataan! You all are so hasty with life! Nagmamadali to marry and have children! Buena mano ko na sa iyo yan ijo, I have a son who also married early in his life.

**Mario** : \*whispers\* Alam mo pare, I have something to tell you; kung gusto mo kumita ng malaki, I can teach you how to push drugs.

**Dudung**: No pare, that is not right!

**Mario**: Pare, you just have to see it in a perspective, magbenta ka lang, kikita ka.

**Dudung**: Adik ka ba?! \*reconsidering things\*

**Mario:** Hindi, I’m not the addict, I just sell drugs, bahala na kung sino maaddict basta I earn my money

**Dudung**: Is it an easy way out? Paano kung mahuli ka?

**Mario**: It is, you just have to strategize your business; you interested?

**Dudung**: I guess so

Both: [*pumara ng jeep*]

**Ms. Noelle**: *Manong bayad po, dalawa*

**Teacher A**: Ei, I shouldn’t really be telling you this, but everyone’s talking about you again.

**Ms. Noelle:** Oh, really? (deadpan)

**Teacher A:** Uh huh. I heard you and Sir Olbes had another disagreement. You two don’t get along do you?

**Ms. Noelle**: And so what about it? Honestly, what I believe in doesn’t concern him or his life, it’s not my fault he feels it his responsibility to constantly bother me about it.

**Teacher A:** You sure are as headstrong as they say. You ought to be more careful with your wording, miss. Aren’t you afraid he’ll fire you? You didn’t hear this from me, but I heard the uppers talking about a possible suspension.

**Ms. Noelle**: I’m not going to be afraid of rumors, “miss.” Besides, everyone can see I’m not lacking in my job. Many can argue that my students are the best of the batch. Plus, I’ve never spoken ill against him when the superintendents asked, so, what’s he really going to do?

**Teacher A**: Hm..you’re right about that. Anyways, speaking of the superintendents. What did you think about the announcement yesterday? If they’re visiting our school next month, we’ll be really busy till then. God knows how much cleaning, cooking and preparing we have to do.

**Ms. Noelle:** That’s true. (Rolls eyes)

And what for, am I right? The last time, I hardly got a pay rise much less a recommendation.

**Ms. Noelle:** Oh, so you’re one of those people, huh?

What are you implying, eh?

**Ms. Noelle**: Ma’am are you “teaching” for the sake of pay raises?

**Teacher A**: Are you one of those activist teachers? Of course I’m in it to get a higher pay, who do you think will take care of my family?

**Ms. Noelle**: ..Shame. I was hoping I could share the same sentiment of teaching with you.

**Teacher A**: Oh, so you are one of *those activst teachers*. They were right, you’re never getting anywhere besides this tiny provincial school with that mindset.

**Ms. Noelle**: I am where I have to be. And you do you as well. If you want to worship these superintendents like they are Gods and forget your values in process, then who am I to judge, right?

You’re so small minded. This is the world we live in, if they are gods that will help my family out of poverty then do you think I would even care about my values?

So you’ll worship money as if it’s more important than anything in life?

Yes, to live. Nothing will come of my life if I don’t atleast try to climb to the top.

I’d rather accept my place at the bottom than pray to those gods. You lot shouldn’t be the face our young students see everyday, not when your heart is that cruel.

**Teacher A**: *Manong, sa tabi na lang po*. Keep your sentiments Noelle. Not all of us can afford to be like you.

*Sumakay sa Jeep maingay paakyat*  
**Girl 1**: Omg girl, I forgot to tell you that I have a new boyfriend!   
**Girl2**: Really?? SIS- I… since when?  
**Girl 1**: Just last week, I’m so happy I think he’s my soul mate!  
**Girl 3**: Soul mate? Do you really believe in that? How do you even know he’s your \**quote*\* “ soul mate”?   
Where did you meet him again?  
**Girl 1**: Dami tanong? (x2) Q and A? (x2) Anyway, we found each other on tinder. He really makes me happy and we understand each other. Isn’t that enough?   
**Girl 2**: How do you find your soul mate? I hope I can find one. I really want a boyfriend too! Or girlfriend 😉  
**Girl 1**: I remember what my grandmother said. Before, they look into a mirror \**labas salamin*\* and they will see the man they will marry. But that was a long time ago! Today, maybe you can find your soul mate in tinder or other dating apps.   
**Girl 3**: Isn’t that dangerous? Meeting people from the internet?  
*\*Mag aabot ng bayad\*  
\*walang kumuha\*  
\*adlib nalang kapagod mag joke\****Girl 2**: Anyway, friend you’re so nega! I haven’t seen you with someone? Have you dated anyone?  
**Girl 3***: \*looks away\**   
**Girl 1**: Did something happen before?   
**Girl 3**: Well, years after my father died, my mom met someone thru text which is now my stepdad.

**Girl 2**: Then, what happened?

**Girl 3**: I think mom doesn’t know him very well, they started texting 8 months ago but they’re living together already. He’s been with us for a few months now.

**Girl 1**: Woah there, that was quick sis!

**Girl 3**: I did some background check on him and I found out that he’s a widower. He also had a daughter and a son-in-law before.

**Girl 2**: Where are they now? What happened to them?

**Girl 3**: He killed them – his daughter, son-in-law, and even his wife. They said he also tried to kill himself but the policemen arrived early and they were able to stop him.

**Girl 1**: gURL wtf!??!?1 that’s so scary!!!

**Girl 2**: i know sis !11!1!!!1 i mean, how can he do that to his family?!?!?

**Girl 3**: that’s not the scary part yet, he did that to his family because he was sexually attracted to his daughter.

*\*girl 1 & 2 nganga\**

*\*silence\**

*\*side comment/s from other passengers\**

**Girl 3**: Im afraid he might do the same to us, he did that before and surely he can do it again.

**Girl 1**: hey we’re already here

**Girl 2**: manong, sa tabi lang po!