

The Bougainvillea

He had loved her for years, in silence louder than words. She was his *Bougainvillea*—vibrant, beautiful, but untouchable, her thorns guarding a heart that was never quite his. When she confessed feelings for another, he listened without judgment, though it carved something hollow inside him.

She claimed that chapter was closed, yet her lingering chats with the other man told a different story. Still, he stayed, hoping. When he finally asked for a chance, she gently refused. "I don't feel that way about you," she said, marking their last meeting.

He handed her a poem, *The Silent Happyness*, where silence screamed louder than love. It spoke of voids, black pearls, and the weight of unspoken goodbyes. She took it, but her eyes didn't change.

Days later, she called. "I'm not worth all you've done," she murmured. He disagreed but shifted the topic. She asked about one line—"*I cherish everything about you but your silence*"—and his wish to someday call her by her real name, not the flower she loved. He shrugged it off. "If the time comes, you'll know."

Their conversation faded into trivial things. The call ended, and so, it seemed, did they.

Yet he worried. She was fragile, prone to tears under stress. Part of him still ached to comfort her, though he knew he shouldn't. He wondered if she'd ever reach out again, if guilt or loneliness might lead her back.

His last message was simple: "*Promise me you'll never cry or feel sad. You did nothing wrong.*" She replied, "Ok."

And that was it.

No grand reunion, no dramatic confession. Just silence—the same silence that had always lived between them.

The poem remained, a testament to love that was real but unreturned. *Bougainvillea* thrived in harsh conditions, but even flowers wilt when starved of water.

He walked away, carrying the weight of a hope he could no longer justify.

She had his words, his heart, his silence.

Now, the choice was hers.

But he wouldn't wait to find out.