

Fill in the blank

lazy_me_

Complete



Fill in the blank

lazy_me_

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Table of Contents

Cover	
Title Page	
Copyright Information	
Table of Contents	
Summary	
Prologue	
1. The unflappable girl	
2 people of the same type	
3 Ex boyfriend	
4. Mother's Day.	
5. The eyes are the window to the soul	
6. Age difference	
7. You are not worthy of me.	
8 Self-confidence.	
9 Up to the room.	
10 The grandmother.	
11 The meeting.	
12. The truth	
13 The reason I hate her.	
14 mother and daughter.	
15 Someone like Sippakorn.	
16. A promise	
17 A good example.	
18. What is important	
19. Okay.	
20. I said it	
21. Be a tyrant	
22. Love Scene.	
23. The feeling that has changed	

24. Trust
25. Sulky
26. The call
27. Help
28. The superior and the subordinate
- 29 I will count from 1 to 5
- 30 The resentful girl
31. Out of Control
32. It's love
33. Comprehension
34. The director
35. Family
36. The one with the heart and the other one
37. The gift
38. The difference
39. Bad timing
40. The Person who returns.
41. Evidence.
42. Unworthy
43. Unexpressed Feelings
44. Please.
45. A dream within reach
46. A
47. Aunt's good girl
48. A-Nueng 1: 14th day
49. A-Nueng 2 : My father's proposal
50. A-Nueng 3 The Sad Auntie Nueng
Special Giving in

Summary

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Description:

The English translation of “blank: fill in the blank with the word love” thai novel by Chao Pla Noy

Prologue

The ceremony would be in an hour. You shouldn't do this, Khun Nueng, I told myself. Although we are about to get married, the groom still treated me with respect and addressed me in a very polite and proper manner. Is this really the person who would share my bed and be my family? I looked at him and smiled

—Are you worthy of me?

Nature gives us the opportunity to experience both joy and sadness as part of ordinary life, the happiness of giving birth to a child, the sadness of losing a game, the joy of first love and the pain of a relationship that It ends due to infidelity. That's supposed to be a normal life. But mine was different.

To tell the truth, I have not experienced any disappointment or discouragement. I was born into a noble family with a formal title of <<Mong Luang ML “.

Despite its lack of relevance today, the title still gave the impression of power and dignity.

Of course, when people attributed those qualities to me I felt the need to act in a way that met their expectations.

Being born into an aristocratic home required abiding by certain customs that differed from most families. Everything had to be perfect. Nothing was beyond my ability. This teaching from my childhood had become ingrained in my character.

It could be a reward for the good deeds I had done in the past life that karma had turned me into a woman with a beautiful body and intelligence to match. Therefore, there was no such thing as disappointment in my life.

Never

My grandmother had passed on her perfectionist ideals to me since she was a child and it was etched into my conscience.

<<Be superior, be superior, be superior>>>

Until I felt like no one deserved me.

It was the day she forced me to get married that I experienced a surge of anger toward my

grandmother. She consented to the treatment, but I planned to abandon the ceremony abruptly to humiliate her, as I was only concerned about her sense of superiority.

Of course, I also hurt other people, including the boyfriend, the son of a governor she had approved of.

—Are you worthy of me?

That was the only question that no one could answer. Everyone who confessed their love to me received the same question. They fell silent and left humiliated. If she couldn't find someone who was considered worthy, she couldn't date him.

This is me ML Sippakorn.

I distanced myself from my family and everyone I knew to learn how to live my life. My fundamental problem was that I had no ambition. I didn't even have a career goal, as I didn't believe any job was worth my attention. Drawing on my previous experiences in art and drawing, I had been able to have fun while creating a source of income for myself.

Some days I could pay for my food, but other days I couldn't. Unlike the days when I stayed in a

big mansion, at that time, I lived in a rented shop that cost a few thousand baht a month. However, he did not feel any type of anguish. I couldn't understand the emotions of someone trying to commit suicide due to a financial problem.

I wanted to experience some disappointment, but there was none. If you asked me why I was doing that, it was simple, I hoped it would upset my grandmother. I expected her to be overcome with worry, lack of control and a deep depression that nothing would go the way she wanted. That was partly because of what happened with Khun Song, my little sister.

She had to be punished for her action.

Was there something out there that made me feel sorry? Even my attempt to torture myself like this, she couldn't understand it. You cannot understand joy without recognizing sadness. I wanted to know the feeling of happiness that would make my heart beat so hard until it hurt.

—Aunt Nueng.

—What?

I looked at a young woman who was probably more than a decade younger than me, who was

looking at me with softness in her eyes. This might be the hundredth time she's come to see me this month. Since we met, she had been a regular guest who loved being around me and watching me with interest.

But, her voice gave me a slight annoyance every time she said: "I love you, Aunt Nueng"

This girl could be my first enlightenment on the concept of suffering.

The girl's name was "A-Nueng"

1. The unflappable girl

—Where were you, Aunt Nueng?

—Why are you here? You should go home -I looked at the clock and frowned -It's almost 9 p.m.

—I was waiting for you at the market, but you didn't come. You're more put together than usual. Where did you go? With who? Please tell me.

A-Nueng, a student I had as a client for a portrait drawing in previous days, was now asking a lot of questions, as if she owned me. For God's sake, not even my grandmother had ever screwed up my personal life so much.

She couldn't take it anymore, because I left.

—I will not say. There is nothing you need to know. Also, she stops calling me Aunt Nueng. When did we become close enough to call me that?

—When you drew my portrait.

She smiled at me showing her wrinkles. She probably believed that I would adore her if she did

that, but she wouldn't let my expression show, wouldn't let her smile get to me.

—Do you mean that I should be close to each client? -I chose to address myself as “I” without knowing what else was more appropriate. Addressing me as ‘aunt’ might give her the impression that we were close. That wasn't something I would love to see happen. -Just go home. Staying out so late is not safe.

—Then please tell me where you were. If you answer, I'll go straight home.

—Hey! I yelled at the girl for unmanneredly demanding the answer, but then let out a sigh when I realized that she didn't care in the slightest as she flashed her huge smile.

—You think I'm annoying, right? I can tell by your face-she was spinning me around while she was constantly looking at my face and trying to look cute. -You usually don't show any expression on your face. I love it when you get angry.

—Can you not bother me anymore? -I asked her and she shook her head.

—Can't. You are my happiness, after all.

—Hm?

—You're the one -the girl winked at me, acting cooler than she actually was, and she said: -When I'm next to you, I can feel that energy.

—What!? -I jumped when she hugged me with all her strength. I tried to push her away, but it had the opposite effect. She hugged me tighter and wouldn't let go.

—Did you have a drink? You reek of alcohol. Was it a celebration?

—There was no celebration. Someone offered me the drink. Can you let me go now? You're too clingy.

—Wow, you're furious. I'm glad I can make you angry and disturb you. Your face says it all. Normally, I can't tell since you don't have much expression.

—Why do you love playing with me?

—Because I love you.

This confession felt like the hundredth time I had heard it. I sighed tiredly and simply let him hold me, not resisting anymore.

—You're still young. Is it a good idea to fall in love with someone so quickly? Aren't you embarrassed to say those things out loud?

—I'm not ashamed to tell you those things. I always want to show you my love. Repressing your feelings is not good, auntie.

—So you let your emotions out on me?

—And I'm also the one you can vent to. You can even yell at me when you're angry. Isn't it amazing?

I frowned even more. Why did those types of girls exist? Who enjoyed it when other people got angry?

—From now on, I won't be angry with you?

—That's great too, because instead you'll smile at me.

—What? Do you mean that everything I do only works for you?

—Yes, I want to accept everything from you.

I was stunned, and my jaw dropped to the floor. The little girl looked at me, a smile on her face. Unconsciously, I looked away.

Somehow, I felt blushing...

—Hurry up and go home now. It's hot and humid outside. I want to take a shower and go to bed.

—Tell me where you were first.

—An appointment.

—Wow! Who did you go out with? A man or a woman?

—I'm not going to tell you.

—With whom you were? -Now it was the girl's turn to frown and finally she let go of me.

—But it's just a date. I allow it.

—I don't need your permission. What authority do you have over me?

—The authority of your future girlfriend.

I laughed in irritation and waved my hand for her to leave.

—Only vets at home.

—Alright. "Let's just say I have the answer, even though it's not the one I want to hear." She took a

step back and swung her thin purse carelessly, ready to leave.

“Auntie” she turned and called me.

—What thing? -I responded with exhaustion in my tone, eager to return to my room. The next question I received, however, made me want to smile.

—Was she worthy of having a date with you?

—A bit. A doctor is not a terrible choice.

—Even a doctor still got a small rating. That means the person is not worthy yet. Yay!

—Yay, what?

—Because I can be one too.

When she really left, I couldn't help but worry and my eyes followed her. In the end, I chose to attend her house discreetly to make sure she is safe.

That wasn't the first time...

Since we met, A-Nueng had been interested in me. She would stop by every day after school and leave at 6:00 in the afternoon. Certain days, I would follow her home, wondering where she lived and

what she was doing. That had been a constant situation for weeks.

I didn't enjoy expressing my feelings, but instead put on a smile. That girl was the only one who could make me reveal it, even if it was out of irritation. It made me scream loudly, something I had never done with anyone. Except for my grandmother, of course.

Despite that, I never found A-Nueng in a bad mood. She loved to joke with me and would eventually apologize with something like, "Oh, I'm sorry. But when Aunt Nueng gets angry, you seem more like an ordinary person."

If she scolded other people like that, they would certainly start to distance themselves. When she was angry, she gave off an intimidating aura, so I tried to stay away. But this girl doesn't pay attention to those reactions and accepted my feelings as if she understood me, as if a sponge absorbed water.

At that time, I was hiding on the corner of the street, in front of A-Nueng's house. I got on the same bus as her and followed her to this place, not far from my house. I noticed the girl standing at the entrance, hesitant to enter. Inhaling deeply to suppress her fear, she opened the door that seems to have a demon on the other side.

What was inside the house that was scaring her so much?

No! I didn't want to know. That was none of my business. Her being safe and sound at home was all he needed. Intervening in other people's problems when it is not my place would create unnecessary stress.

Money should be my biggest concern right now. The rent was due soon, but I didn't have enough to cover it. People can now use their phones to take photos and apps to make themselves look better, eliminating the need for someone who is an art expert. Therefore, I had less income. In the end, I had to use my last resort.

—Little girl, can I borrow your money?

Lately, I had been turning to my younger sister for help in difficult times, not caring as much about my pride. What else could I do? It was unfortunate.

[I'm sorry for you, Khun Nueng. How about you come work with me]

My adorable little younger sister Sam asked me with genuine concern. However, I was being honest with myself and would always say what I wanted.

—I’m not interested. That kind of work is not something I can help with.

—But you’ve been asking for my money too often lately.

—D... Do you hate me now? -I made a sad voice and pretended to cry. That made Sam panic and she started apologizing.

—It’s not that. I’m worried about you. I never want my money back. This lifestyle could cause problems in the future. What happens if I die unexpectedly?

—Then I will get all your money.

—Khun Nueng.

—It’s a joke. I’m on a mission to find out who I am. I’m trying not to become a mindless office worker.

“I’m also an office worker,” my little sister said softly.

I laughed -I’m kidding. I’m not interested in staying within boundaries and rules. Let me enjoy this freedom a little more. If you find something for me and make some money, I will keep my word and pay you. I took my notebook and turned the pages

with my finger, -fifty-two thousand one hundred baht in total.

—You actually write it down.

I had my pride.

—To borrow was to borrow. Have you ever asked for money?

—No, I never did. If that's the case, I'll send you some money. Will it be twenty thousand?

—Just send me four thousand. My rent is cheap - However, my little sister was too cute. She gave me ten thousand baht instead of four thousand. I made sure to write down the number so my little sister wouldn't feel sorry for me more than she already did. I looked at the money coming out of the machine and smiled.

Now I was extending my life by a month. But what Khun Sam said was worth considering. How much more of this life can I take? If I couldn't discover myself in the end, would I allow myself to trust my sister for the rest of my life?

Not in any way.

Were there other jobs that required me to use my hands besides drawing and music?

The next day...

—Auntie Nueng

I heard the same nasal voice coming from the same unflappable girl who visited me the night before, just before my usual time to go to my portrait drawing booth. Since that girl found out my address, she had been here more frequently.

—Aren't we seeing each other too often?

—Not at all. A few hours is very little time for you. Are you going to the market? Do you need me to bring you something?

—I'm not well.

—Why are you being so mean?

—Are you angry now? Ah, it's so refreshing to see you show emotions. I feel special.

That girl was totally out of control. Everyone was intimidated when I rolled my face, including my own friends and family.

—Why don't you go home? You're in your last year of high school, right? Don't you have to worry about college exams?

—Even you need to mention the exam. “I’m so bored,” the smaller girl suddenly looked exhausted. - I was hoping that being with you would cheer me up. Why is the whole world so focused on the exam?

—Because you are a student, you must concentrate on the exam.

—Why don’t we talk about romance instead? Like, I love you, for example.

She was sure she hadn’t said anything that could lead her to that topic, however, that naughty girl managed to connect everything in her favor.

—Go back home.

—I won’t do it.

I looked at the rebellious girl and realized something. If she reconstructed what she was seeing now with her actions that day at home...

—What’s happening?

—Just say it.

—If I say so, you have to be responsible.

—What’s the problem with that? What exactly?

—Promise me you’ll be responsible. -I told

—Okay, just spit it out already.

After hearing her response, I realized that maybe I underestimated the girl.

She jumped up to hug me and said -I'm running away, and you have to let me stay with you since now you know.

Did I wake up on the wrong foot this morning or what?

Without hesitation, I forbade her from entering the building and acted coldly towards her. I couldn't be serious. Doing it on my own is already a challenge. How would it be possible for an unknown girl to stay with me too? That was absurd.

—What I meant was that you can sleep in front of the building! — I yelled at her again. My reaction moved her so much that she had to joke with me through her face.

—If you don't let me sleep with you, I'll sleep here, outside the building.

—Do what you want.

—If you want me to do what I want, then I will live with you

—You slipped again, how cute.

Ugh, she was going to be the end of me. It seemed like no matter what I did, she wouldn't leave. Was it time to start crying now to push her away?

—Seriously, could you stop and stop playing with me? -I took a deep breath and calmed down as best I could. I do not like this.

—Auntie Nueng

—Understand me. Don't let it get to the point where I have to move out because of you.

If she couldn't understand me in other ways, then she could be more effective, tougher and more direct. I would turn my back on her and continue walking without looking back.

2 people of the same type

This might be the first time in recent years that I was seriously distancing myself from anyone besides my grandmother. How long had it been since I did something like this?

It was a while ago, yes.

I remember precisely the day my best friend revealed her romantic feelings for me because she couldn't stand watching me flirt with another cool girl at school. Fearing someone else would take me, she pulled the trigger. But without a moment of consideration I rejected it.

She was crushed and humiliated and finally disappeared from my life completely.

I was in the middle of the market bored, and it was obvious that no one was paying me to sketch something.

Maybe because I had a lot of free time, but I couldn't stop thinking about the girl I treated so coldly before.

Honestly, I'm worried about her.

Did she feel bad the same way my friend did?

What if she disappeared and did something bad to herself?

My anxiety increased as my thoughts spun faster and faster, and I found it harder to stay still. Why did this person I had just met have such a powerful effect on me?

There was no point in staying there any longer, so I started packing my things. Just as I was about to leave someone spoke:

—Khun Nueng is that you?

I was stopped in my tracks by a voice I knew. I turned around slowly to see if that person was the one I was thinking of.

—Chet

-It's really you

Chet was my ex-fiancé, whose esteem was destroyed as a result of me leaving the wedding.

When I laid my eyes on him again, I couldn't help but feel a pang of guilt for my past actions. A slight sting

—What brings you here? -I asked him curiously, wondering why he was here in this central market instead of somewhere more appropriate for a governor's son. It seemed like he was not only looking at me, but also at my belongings.

—I am campaigning for the next elections.

—Are we still having elections? I offer a cheerful response but I'm starting to get impatient. -Ah, that's why I find you here. Okay, I have to go. Bye bye.

When I was about to leave, he suddenly grabbed my arm and said: — Khun Nueng, just wait a second But as soon as I look into his eyes, he lets go. -My apologies.

—Is there anything else?

—I'm just glad to see you

—Are you happy? -I was very disconcerted. - After the way I treated you? You should have your father's hitman shoot me instead.

A quiet laugh escaped Chet's mouth after hearing that.

—I don't hate you in the least.

—Just hate me. You’ll make me feel better that way.

I couldn’t help but feel like he should look down on me instead of having this friendly chat. If I remembered correctly, we had to go out for a while before our wedding, at the request of our families. He was a decent guy, and I knew he had strong feelings for me.

However, no matter how good a person is, no one is worthy.

—I never hated you, really. In fact, I’m happy to see you here. Also, please accept this — take something out of your pocket. I instinctively recoiled and took a step back, assuming what the object was. My card.

—It’s actually your business card.

—What did you think it would be?

—A weapon.

—It’s a joke, right?

I raised my eyebrows in response to his question. “Don’t laugh,” I said, responding with a smile.

—Nice to see you.

—I'm much happier than you think. I miss you.

—Out of courtesy, let's stop here. I have to go now... Until we meet again.

—Khun Nueng

He stopped me once again. When I turned to him, I saw how bright and happy his face was.

—So 'until we meet again' means we might meet soon? -He asked to make sure.

—Maybe...

What else could I say? Must you admit that it was just a polite response?

I left the market and headed to my room, a feeling of dread taking over me. Fear ran through my veins, thinking that the girl wouldn't wait for me like she said, and I had to fight the temptation of that thought.

Had she returned home? No wonder after such a harsh scolding.

"Excuse me" I said to the building manager, who was calmly watching television. Have you seen a girl around here who always smiles like there's no tomorrow?

—So wide

—Is the question too broad?

—Her smile was so wide, it's like the sun had risen! I remember her clearly. She's there with the owner. She pointed to a stone table on the side of the building.

A-Nueng and the elderly owner seemed to be having a great conversation, as if they had been lifelong friends. Their laughter echoed throughout the area, creating a feeling of joy and peace.

She was still there even after what I did....

The guilt I experienced after saying the wrong things to her began to fade. The thought of her going off and doing something unthinkable scared me.

I tried to stay out of sight by staying around a corner of the wall. But it was all in vain when the girl sensed me and looked in my direction, waving happily.

—You are here, Aunt Nueng.

No matter how much I wanted to groan in frustration when I heard her cheerful voice, I couldn't deny the small feeling of comfort that filled my chest.

—Why are you still here?

—How can I go home if I'm a fugitive?

—If you're running away, why don't you stay with your friends?

—No way. Choosing my friends' place is too easy to be discovered. I don't want to bother my friends' parents either.

—But you have no problem bothering me, right?
— I responded, feigning a look of surprise despite the girl's cheerful smile. She tried to purse her lips to make herself look more attractive, but my opinion of her didn't change.

—Why do I have to be careful with you? We are very close.

—When I pass that?

—When I pass that?

—We are close now, so time is not important.

The girl remained imperturbably in her position. Her arm wrapped tightly around mine as he leaned on my shoulder. I was so full of frustration that I wanted to scream. However, I just stood there,

allowing him to do what she wanted. It had become so exhausting at this point.

—Why are you so shameless?

—They said that if you are ashamed, it is impossible to do things. Therefore, I should be shameless since I want to do this with you. Let's go to your room. Which is it?

The girl eagerly led me to the entrance of the building. Of course, there was no way I could get in without the key card. I stood there, looking at her with my arms crossed, a slight smile of pleasure on my face. She could be as bold as she wanted with me, but she couldn't be bold enough to force the closed door.

—Auntie, why are you still standing here? Take me to your room

—I never mentioned anything about you going to my room. I'll take you home.

—There's no way I'm going home! -the girl in the school uniform shouted defiantly, stamping her feet furiously. Her ponytail moved up and down like a puppy's tail. -You said I could stay. -I did not say that.

—When you asked me before, you said you would take responsibility. A king never breaks his word.

—I am not a king. “I’m just an artist,” I sighed, trying to calm my fury. In an effort to get her home, I walked next to her and took her necklace in my hand. I spoke in a low voice: -Let’s go back. I will go with you.

—You don’t even know where I live.

—Of course I know. You live in a big house next to the infantry department. Freshly painted brown door. Modern style in gray.

As an architecture graduate, I perfectly remembered the details of A-Nueng’s house. As I followed her home, I was amazed by the structure. My mind wandered, thinking about how expensive it must have been to build and what materials were used. I also thought about how difficult or easy it must have been to plan the layout of the house.

—What? How do you know? -The girl’s voice was filled with curiosity. I hesitated to respond, my eyebrows furrowing even more in thought.

—Did you come after me to my house?

—You talk too much.

—It's true? Did you really follow me home? -She was so excited that she abandoned her plans to go to my room. All her attention was focused on me now as she followed me step by step, like a baby duck following its mother.

—How many times did you follow me home?

—Four times.

—Wow! Four times. So, you'll just stay calm while showing interest in me, right? If our story is going to have a name, I'd call it The Genius Artist...!

—and the messy girl.

—That's not even a little romantic... Oppa!

—I'm a woman, so it's Unnie

—You are so modern, so cool!

I loosened my grip on the girl's neck and placed my palm on my forehead as my head began to throb. The age difference could be the reason why she was always talking, as if she didn't need to pause for breath. Will I go crazy at any moment?

—Would you mind being quiet for a second?
Aren't you exhausted?

—I'm not tired at all. It's always fun to chat with you.

—Is there no one to talk to at home?

The young woman who had been talking to me continuously until now suddenly stopped. Her mouth was wide open, unable to utter a single word. She followed me silently, a stark contrast to her typical behavior. A quick glance at her told me that my words had gone straight to her sensitive spot.

Was it guilt he was feeling right now? I? Feeling guilt?

—What happened?

—Why are you staying silent?

—Didn't you want me to keep my mouth shut?

—Do not be like that.

—As?

—Sarcastic.

—I'm not. I just don't know what to say anymore.

Seeing her not be her normal, happy self made me feel terrible. A tiny figure in a uniform stood motionless next to me at the bus stop. The awkward silence was unbearable, so I gently nudged her on the shoulder.

—Don't you have anyone to talk to at home?

—Well... I don't know what we should talk about. It could be the age difference.

—Are your parents very old?

“No... I don't live with my parents,” she murmured. I was surprised by her somber response. I figured she'd rather be talkative than quiet.

—What happened to your parents?

—There is no more here.

Did they die? I might have touched something I shouldn't have touched.

— “...”

—Why are you so quiet all of a sudden? You started this; don't stop now. I'm getting into this, so let's move on before the feeling fades.

What was she referring to...? I scratched my head in confusion. Were you expecting me to ask you to tell me more about the problem?

—So... Who do you live with?

She wasn't curious but she wanted me to find out.

—I live with my grandmother. She is now 60 years old.

—Just you and your grandmother in that house?

—We have four or five people: maids and other workers. But now my family is just her and me.

—And you just walked away and left her alone? Don't you feel bad for her? What if she tripped on the stairs and hurt herself?

—You don't know my grandmother, so you can say what you want.

—Is she being hard on you?

—Yeah.

—You argued and then ran away?

—Uhm.

The girl brought me a memory and I couldn't contain my laughter. A-Nueng looked at me a little impressed, nudging me with her elbow.

—What is so funny? This is serious.

—Don't listen to me. You just reminded me of someone similar. What was the fight about?

—About the recent English exam. I took the test yesterday and she reviewed my score. She thought I didn't do well enough, so she hit me.

—She's just an old woman. It won't hurt as much. "Just let her do it" I said as my laughter grew louder, but the girl next to me frowned even more.

—I don't love you anymore.

The bus was arriving at our stop. Neither of them said a word for the rest of the trip, but I stayed by her side until her house came into view. Just before she was about to leave, I grabbed her ponytail and stopped her from going any further.

"It hurts, aunt," she said. The pain was etched on her face.

—You're overreacting. I didn't give you a hard tug.

With a joyful laugh, I gently kicked her calf, the girl squatted down, wrapping her arms around her leg and wincing in pain.

—You are quite an actress. You don't need to pretend to be hurt. Hmm? When I looked closer at her legs, I could see a multitude of thin green bruises all over them, but when I got closer to get a better look, the girl pushes her legs away.

—I'll go inside, just like you said. Since you will take me back home.

—But what happened to your legs?

—I fell.

To see better, the girl spreads her legs.

—I'll go inside, just like you said. Since you will take me back home.

—But what happened to your legs?

—I fell.

—What kind of fall could it be?

—See you tomorrow, aunt. Bye bye.

She waved cheerfully, which meant it was time for me to go home. As I watched her walk away, my

gaze followed her until she disappeared through the door. An uneasy feeling stayed with me as I turned around.

There was no way those bruises came from tripping or slipping.

They had been made by being beaten... with a cane.

3 Ex boyfriend

—Why did you play a part of the music wrong?

I took a hit.

—Why weren't you able to get a full grade?

I took another hit.

Because? Because? Because?

—Ah!

I woke up abruptly, my body shaking as I jumped out of bed suddenly. The sunlight shining through the windows made my eyes squint. Even after all these years, I could remember the pain and the sound of my grandmother's cane hitting me, as if it were etched into my heart and body.

It had been a long time since I had that nightmare. So why did he have it now?

I still remembered the bruises on A-Nueng's legs and the pain she tried to hide with her cheerful personality. The sight of those wounds brought me

back to the unpleasant moments of my past, but that history had created my present self.

Who didn't care about anything in the world.

I realized that it was much earlier than my usual wake-up time. But since my sleep had been disturbed, I didn't know what I should do. Should I go give some food offerings to the monk? Considering I was broke, I couldn't afford to buy a meal, so if I offered them food, I'd probably end up eating it anyway.

I am a sinner.

I had a pretty boring life where I only needed to go to the market every night to set up my drawing booth. As a result, I was trying to teach my body clock to wake up later, at 3 p.m., instead of 9 a.m.

But since I was awake, there was something I had to do.

My stomach was growling because of my hunger. As I looked at the shelves that should have been filled with rows and rows of instant noodles, I was met with emptiness. Even instant noodles betrayed me.

It would seem that I needed to open my wallet again.

I took a moment to cool off before leaving my room and looking for something to fill my hungry stomach. However, a familiar figure stopped me.

—Chet.

—Khun Nueng

I give the man, who was once going to be my husband, a knowing look, and it made him feel embarrassed by his behavior. I told him firmly: -You followed me here intentionally as I put my hand in my pocket and let him approach me with a heavy sigh. Just one coincidence is enough. It makes me uncomfortable that you do this.

—They...

Tearing off the bandage quickly is the best way to communicate. That was the lesson I had learned early when I still lacked the courage to resist anything imposed on me. I was firm with my words and kept my emotions away from my face as they had become my second nature. No matter how I felt inside, I could always keep a smile, so no one could know what was going on in my head.

—It should be clear to you. Bye bye—

—I miss you.

My legs stopped and my eyes closed. It seemed like he refused to give up.

—But...

—At least allow me to invite you to eat.

—Invite me to a meal?

My lips formed a charming smile after hearing that. What perfect timing for such an offer.

—If you miss me so much, let me choose the place.

—Yes ma'am.

Although my room was in Bangkok, I chose a restaurant in Samut Songkhram for my meal. Why did I have to apologize for being selfish, if the governor's son was happy to accompany me? I had seen a lot of positive reviews of that place on social media and really wanted to try it one day. I was surprised that the day went faster than I expected.

From time to time, I missed my grandmother. She was rich and could afford to provide me with tasty

food. That was the only thing I enjoyed when I lived with her.

Not worried that I might have been tricked into coming here, Chet said, “Go ahead and order whatever you want.” His eyes still sparkled with admiration as he looked at me, the same way they did all those years ago.

But they weren’t the eyes of someone who would make a good husband or father. It was still unworthy.

—If you say so.

—If you ever want to eat something delicious, don’t hesitate to call me. I’ll come.

—If he’s trying to use food to get closer to me, it won’t help you.

“...”

—You’re behaving like a puppy.

—Sorry??

“You should have a certain amount of anger toward me, Chet,” I said with a bit of aggravation. Ignoring the etiquette instilled in me by my grandmother, I removed the crab shell and reached

for the delicious meat. What I did was a disgrace for you and your family. Does your family not like me?

—Yeah.

—You should do the same thing your parents did. Be hostile to me. Don't behave like a puppy who blindly loves his owner. It makes you look pathetic.

—You're more daring, you're no longer reserved.

—I was oppressed. You have no idea what I was thinking every time my grandma made me hang out with you.

—So, what was your opinion of me?

—Do you really want me to say it? I raised an eyebrow in anticipation of his response, to make sure he was ready to accept what I was about to tell him. Don't be angry when I tell you.

—I wasn't upset when you left.

I laughed so hard I almost choked on my food. Dropping all the things I was doing, I focused on a more serious conversation.

—I thought you were very incapable.

Huh?

—An incapable child who always obeyed his parents. You had no objections to the woman your parents assigned you. “You didn’t even try to argue against the idea, as if you didn’t have an opinion of your own,” I said, leaning forward with my chin resting on both hands. I stared at him as he listened in silence.

—I thought about how you would be the guy I would have a child with, have sex with, have to depend on you to lead the family, while you couldn’t even raise your own voice and be heard. I felt sorry for you. That was too much.

I took the crab that was still on my plate and continued with the meal. He nodded and said: -Then let me say something forward.

—I’m not incapable. I can understand and analyze my thoughts. I even graduated from Oxford University.

—Having a degree does not mean that the person is capable.

—It serves as proof of my understanding and education. It’s important for you to know that I was the one who started the conversation about marriage.

I shrugged and gave him a dubious look.

—I think you knew me the first time we met.

—Actually I've known you for much longer than that. Walking back to our primary school years, when I attended the boys' school next to yours — my jaw dropped when I realized I had never come across this information before.

—Oh really? I did not know that.

—Because you never asked me. You were pretty popular at school, right?

I lifted my chin and tossed my beautiful locks over my shoulder, proud of my past.

—You're exaggerating a bit.

—All the boys at my school were your admirers. On sports days, they would hang out around the fence and guess who would be the drum major that year.

—I got the position every year.

—Yes... you were so incredible. I've been admiring you for a long time, but I never had the courage to talk to you. Because I felt like... it wasn't worth it — I looked him in the eyes and said mockingly.

—That’s how it is.

—Even on the day of the ceremony, you still felt that you were not worthy.

—Yes, for me, no one in the world is worthy.

—What about now?

“...”

—It seems that your answer is still the same.

I laughed and continued with my meal, that might be the first time I had experienced the feeling of falling into gluttony. I wanted to eat as much as I could, as I didn’t know when I would be able to have a lot of delicious food in front of me again. You’re not full yet, Nueng! You can eat more! I told myself.

Taking him back might be a good decision, so he could get more good food next time.

—But my views changed after we met. I thought to myself: ‘I just have to work on myself if I’m inadequate.’ -He had never looked at me harshly before, but now he was looking me right in the face. He continued: Whatever it takes to be worthy. I will do it and then I will ask for your hand in marriage again.

—What are you trying to do? I found it funny that that thought could be almost impossible. -No one can make me feel that way

—I will do what you ask me. I'm willing to fly to the moon, if that's what you want.

—You're exaggerating, again.

—I'm serious.

His attitude had ruined the joy of eating my crab. Looking at him with frustration, I told him: -If you become prime minister, I will think about it.

—Deal.

—You are too sure of yourself. You can't even get elected for a mayor these days.

—I'm going to be the prime minister, just like you said. "I promise." He looked at me with confidence. -The day I achieve it, remember that I will come for you.

Jokingly I said: -Oh, yes, and the whole country will honor me.

Who in their right mind could do something for another person? It was absurd.

Once we finished the meal, Chet got me an order of prawns and crabs to go. I was so moved that I almost cried and asked him to marry me again. No, I shouldn't marry someone just for food, so I accepted it out of courtesy.

—Thanks for the gift.

I got out of the luxury car and saw the inquisitive looks of the people around me, wondering why the 12 million car is in this neighborhood.

—Khun Nueng

He grabbed my arm with his big hand. And again, as soon as he met my fierce gaze, he quickly released his grip.

—I apologize.

—Is there anything else?

—Would it be okay if I came back here to see you?

—Absolutely not.

That wasn't my voice. We both turned to look at whoever was speaking with that nasal voice, it was A-Nueng, who had a wrinkled face and was looking at Chet dangerously.

—Hmm?-Chet raised his shoulder and asked: -Do you know each other?

—Um, yeah, let's end our conversation here. I'll go now. So can I come see you again?

—Alright.

My silence should make him understand my refusal completely, and I didn't want to ruin his face in front of many people. Chet turned again and looked at the girl, obviously with something on his mind.

—How old are you?

—I won't tell you... Hey, why are you looking at my chest? -The cheerful girl showed her hands to cover her chest area, but Chet just laughed without considering her rude behavior.

—I was looking at your uniform. Is she from the same school you attended, Khun Nueng? I feel like I've seen this before.

A-Nueng looked at me with surprise and asked: -Did you go to the same school as mine?

“If you don't leave now, I'll hit you with a broomstick,” I told Chet, why I wanted him to leave now.

—Leave. I'm just curious... Her face looks familiar.

—Familiar? -I looked out of the corner of my eye at the girl and considered what Chet had just said. If I was honest, I felt like I had seen that kind of face when I first met her, but her annoying behavior made me just ignore it.

—I'll say goodbye now.

—OK.

I watched his expensive car drive away until I lost sight of it. The girl next to me nudged me in the waist and said: -You've been looking at him too much. I'm jealous.

—What would make you jealous?

—Who is the guy?

—Because you want to know?

—Because I want to know who my rival is. No one else can steal your heart; it must be me

—If I decide to tell you, I will.

—Then tell me.

—The one I almost walked down the hallway with. Wow! -The smaller figure was clutching her chest, looking like she was about to collapse. However, her leaning towards me showed me that she was simply trying to get my attention.

I let out a quiet sigh and pulled on her collar so she could stand up.

—You are heavy. Don't lean on me like that.

—Nueng

At first, I assumed she was joking about fainting, but when I noticed her labored breathing and cold hands, I wasn't sure anymore.

—Nueng... What happened? Are you really going to faint? Nueng!

Suddenly, she looked at me and stuck her tongue out at me.

—My heart is broken.

—Did you imagine?

—Don't let me go, aunt. If you let go of me, I will definitely fall. I have no strength left. I'm sick...

—You better stop or I'll get angry.

—I love you aunt... Ouch.

Without saying anything, I dropped her with a thud, and she groaned in pain. I quickly turned around to check on her, inwardly alarmed, but kept my emotions hidden.

—My head hurts so much...

She lightly brushed the spot on her head that had hit the ground hard. The orange liquid stuck to her fingers and made my heart race.

—A-Nueng

—They...

That was all she could say before she fell to the ground, unconscious. I was petrified just looking at it, not knowing what to do. Instead, one of the tenants ran out and looked at me as if I were a heartless person who had no intention of helping the girl.

—She fainted. Aren't you going to help her?

—She could be faking it.

—You are so bad.

—W... what?

I started to feel anxious when I realized that more people were gathering and scolding me without thinking that I could hear them.

—Alright! Okay, I'll help her.

I pushed through the crowd, trying to reach the girl. I carefully lifted her into my arms, turned to the nosy crowd and asked: Are you happy now?

However, the one who responded was not the surrounding people, but the person in my arms.

—I am now.

A-Nueng looked at me with one eye and a mischievous smile on her face, as if she had already won the toughest battle. I looked at her and slowly closed my eyes, my emotions were those of defeat.

That girl should get an Academy Award someday for her acting skills.

For the love of God.

4. Mother's Day.

This was the first time I had allowed a non-family member into my personal space. I was very careful with my private area, so I never let strangers in, I didn't want to share my air with them.

Sometimes I was too cautious.

It had only been two months since I met her and here she was now, lying in my bed. I was sitting on the floor, watching her silently, my gaze drawn to the fading bruises on her legs.

Beatings, was my guess, probably from her grandmother. My own story wasn't much different, so I could imagine what happened. I often felt like that girl was too much like me. I could see the echoes of my own past in her. I was curious about her parents, since I heard that she lived alone with her grandmother.

"Aunt Nueng must have a softer side after all," A-Nueng murmured as she lay on her side, not feeling the least bit uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings. You didn't leave me there alone to

suffer in the street. Does this mean that Aunt Nueng also liked me a little?

—No way. Are you really trying to make a joke after you wake up? Did you also fake fainting so people would blame me? How shameless

“I wasn’t pretending,” she whispered to me, sitting up defensively. I was really tired and wanted my lover to help me get to her bedroom. Now that you mention it, my head still hurts.

Serves you right. No, I won’t say it out loud. I didn’t want to ruin my image.

—You really don’t respect me, considering I’m much older than you. Have you thought about the age difference between us?

—Are you 26?

—What a sweet talk.

—So, 28.

—You’re flattering me.

—30 is the final answer.

—I’m 34

A-Nueng was shocked to hear the truth, her mouth opened as her hands covered her face.

—Are you that old? Your age is the same as my mother's.

—How old are you?

—18

—Your mom was a teenager when she had you, huh? -I said jokingly, but the girl remained silent. My words had made me feel a little guilty for insulting her mother. Come on I was just joking.

—But what you said is not wrong. She gave birth to me when I was very young, then left me alone with my grandmother.

—I'm sorry.

—Alright.

—How did she die? I asked, my voice softening with understanding because I too lost my parents in my childhood. The girl wrinkled her forehead in perplexity and responded: -But my mother is still alive.

—What?

“Grandma sent her abroad to escape pregnancy rumors,” she said with a sigh and her shoulders slumped. -My grandmother is the only one who has taken care of me. What a miserable life I have had.

—Do you really feel bad? Your face doesn’t look like that. Have you had the opportunity to meet with your mother?

—I never met her. All I have is her face from photos and her voice from phone calls. It’s like I’m an orphan, but worse. At least orphans whose parents died can imagine what it feels like to be loved, but I will never know because she is still alive and never let me experience it.

—I assume she came back at least once, correct?

—My grandmother told her not to come back and be a disgrace to the family. The smaller figure shrugged her shoulders, as if she didn’t care, and said:

—I think you can understand, I was born an unwanted child. My mother tried to finish me off, but I managed to survive.

—Huh?

The energetic girl narrated her story with a slight smile on her face, as if the story was not hers. The smile on her face intrigued me even more; She was very similar... to me.

I wasn't referring to her physical face, but to the smile she used to hide her true emotions. I could relate to what was going on, as I knew that feeling very well. The only difference was that I didn't try to put on a smile as much as she did. My expression was blank, so my grandmother couldn't read my thoughts.

—Why are you looking at me? You fell in love with me?

Gently, I ran my hand through her locks and looked into her eyes hoping to find her true self. Her beautiful eyes widened in surprise; then she quickly looked away, as if she surprised me.

—If you look at me for too long, you will be tempted. -You always have to make a joke, right? -I said, with a touch of understanding. I looked at my hand, which had been resting on the girl's head a moment ago. Do you ever wash your hair? It's very greasy.

—I wash it every day. You're so mean, complaining about other people's clean 'air'.

—It's clean 'hair'!

—It's sweet of you to play along with my silly joke.

The tiny figure jumped up and wrapped its arms around me, squeezing tightly. I froze, not used to physical affection. I tried to gently remove her arms, but the girl said, "Please, just let me have this hug." Your aroma warms me.

—Are you talking about my smell? -I put my arm to my nose, but I couldn't detect anything unusual. Maybe I was just used to my own smell. -What kind of smell are you referring to?

—The aroma of security, peace. I wish you were my real mother.

—Your mom? -I sighed dramatically, surprised to hear that. A-Nueng continued to hold me tight, refusing to let go. How much longer are you going to hug me? I can't breathe.

Truth be told, I was a bit of an introvert. A hug like that was quite strange to me.

—Aunt Nueng, please be my mom.

—Huh? What do you mean?

—Next week at school, we will have a Mother's Day celebration. All mothers are invited so their children can show them how much we appreciate them. I would love for you to join in and receive a garland from me.

—Are you serious? -I pushed the girl away, moving away from her towards the wall, unable to accept what I had just heard. -Do you really think I could be your mother?

—But I never have what everyone else has...

The pain in her voice made my lips purse. Why is there so much emphasis on having both parents in one's life? It's disheartening to see the school still holding those types of events, one that not everyone can participate in. Don't you see that it puts students without parents in an even more difficult position?

It's just one aspect of life. Why do they need to make a big deal out of it?

—How about you take your grandmother with you?

—If you don't want to, that's fine. I will place the flowers on the same empty seat. I do that every year

The girl spoke as if she was no longer interested in the topic. She grabbed her glasses and stood up quickly, acting like she hadn't just passed out.

—Are you OK now?

—Yes, and I'm going home.

—That's better. Go straight home and don't dawdle — I said sternly, wanting A-Nueng to understand. The girl, who had been pouting at me for a second, now turned her gaze towards me and smiled.

—I changed my mind.

—Is there anything else?

—Don't you have to go out and set up your stand today? I will go with you

She was depressed and in her own way, she managed to cheer herself up. How nice!

Although I tried to ignore the story that A-Nueng told me it still remained in my mind. Thinking back, I had a hard time remembering how I felt about Mother's Day when I was younger.

—What was it like for you, little one, when you saw the other children's mothers at the Mother's

Day celebration?

I called my little sister, Khun Sam, like I normally did. It was usually small talk except when I needed to borrow money from her, but Khun Sam was too sweet to complain. This time, she seemed taken aback by my sudden question.

—Wishing for love and care, perhaps?

I was close to writing it into a song.

—Have you ever had an emotion like that?

—Maybe it was because I noticed that my other friends had their mothers with them while I was accompanied by our grandmother. It made me feel out of place.

—I see. We still had our grandmother...

—Why do you ask this question? Are you thinking about mom?

My sister's comment made me smile a little. Of all of us, I was the one who had the most memories of our parents. Khun Sam, however, was the youngest; She was too young to have memories, so she was much more attached to our grandmother.

Ahh... To tell you the truth, you're missing them. If they were still there, she wouldn't be Grandma's chosen granddaughter.

—I certainly miss them. I still have memories of our mother's beautiful smile, you have the same smile, you know, the one that makes your cheeks wrinkle.

As soon as I thought of mom, another side came to mind...

that girl

Ah, now I understood. Her features reminded me of my little sister, who looked like Mom. Why do so many people seem to look the same?

—I'm jealous. You still remember some things about mom and dad while I can't remember anything.

—Why do you need to be jealous? If you haven't experienced it, then you won't crave it.

—Because you are bold and confident, unlike me. Every time Father's Day and Mother's Day approaches, I feel like something is missing since I can't have what my friends have.

—But you have your grandmother, right? She loves you very much.

—But she gave you all her attention; You were the only one she paid attention to. I know she loves me, but the one who received everything else was you

—It almost sounds like she loves me, but I can't make myself believe it. Every time I think of that old woman, I get a headache. Let's end this call. Yeah?—

—She is not well these days. Why don't you come and visit her?

—She has you, so she doesn't need me. I need to go now. Bye bye.

I ended the call abruptly and fell onto the bed. Mother's Day wasn't that important. That girl could just put the garland on the chair. My sisters and I, as well as other children, could still grow up without parents.

The culture of this country was ruining some people's lives. How problematic. However, there I was, mysteriously in front of my old school. The surroundings of the grounds were still the same as I remember. That place had been renovated thanks to

generous donations from the families of former students. And today was the day of the annual Mother's Day celebration, August 11.

I was wearing a black bodycon, the same dress I wore the day I had a confrontation with my grandmother that sent her to the hospital. I wanted to wear it today because it gave me an air of formality and would surely attract attention as soon as I entered the school.

Most of the teachers who taught me were retired, so not many people knew that I used to be the school's superstar. All the boys came en masse to the school fence when it was sports day, to watch me. Sometimes I remembered those glory days with nostalgia.

—Khun Nueng

The soft, steady sound of the voice caught my attention, and I was surprised to find my old high school math teacher standing there.

—Miss Manee -It was a name I would never forget, the woman smiled at me as if she was happy to see me again after a long time.

—How long has it been? I never see you pass by here despite the teacher's intentions, I maintained an

air of formality, refusing to erase the division between us.

—Many things happened. By the way, it's Mother's Day, is it still taking place in the same auditorium?

—Are you going to attend the event? Oh, you're...

—Yes, I am participating, as my daughter requested.

She was the type of person who was tough on the outside, but kind on the inside. My own two feet took me back to my old school, where I pretended to be A-Nueng's mother. Once I reached the auditorium and slowly walked to the designated parent section, I could hear the murmurs of the other people around me. Some curious, while others bold, assuming I was a young mother.

However, I don't know when I became a mother.

—Tia Nueng.

The young girl's familiar voice echoed in the large room. Her expression was a mix of shock and elation, a radiant smile that spread from one side of her face to the other. I could feel a smile trying to

cross my lips, but I kept my expression composed, staying in line with my protocol.

—Why are you running like this? Everyone is watching.

—I can't believe you showed up. I was sure you would reject me.

—Somehow, I just wanted to visit my old school, and it happened to be Mother's Day, and I remembered that you didn't have a mother to come with you, so I just walked here

—So, you would be the one to replace my mom, right?

The girl, much shorter than me, wrapped her arms around me in gratitude. I felt her head rest on my chest as she stayed silent. For a moment, I thought she was going to faint again.

—Hey...

—I'm so happy... Now I have someone to give the garland to.

I'm weak. My presence had an unexpected effect on the girl; she was crying without any reservation, attracting the attention of everyone watching. I didn't know what to do, so I reached out and lightly

touched her shoulder, murmuring softly: -Go back to your seat. And then...

“And then?” said the girl, looking at me from behind her thick glasses, her face was an image of tearful innocence.

—Then you can give your garland to your mother.

My life is nothing but a comedy, for God’s sake.

Children giving jasmine garlands to their mothers on Mother’s Day is a Thai tradition to illustrate the love and appreciation between mother and child. Mother’s Day is August 12 every year.

Cloudy? Well...

5. The eyes are the window to the soul

It was hard to believe that I had to take on the role of ‘mother’, waiting for my turn to receive the garland. My face heated up when A-Nueng knelt in front of me and leaned into my lap. I unconsciously stroked her hair as well, considering that I wasn’t even her real mother, that seemed completely ridiculous.

—Nueng... Your mom is so beautiful. I’m jealous.

—I wish my mom looked as pretty as yours.

—I want to be your dad.

She could hear the other girls whispering about A-Nueng, as if they wanted her to hear what they were saying to each other. But she remained silent with her wide smile and proud posture. She seemed to enjoy the attention as we headed home.

I looked at her from the corner of my eye and said, You haven’t said much today. That’s not like

you.

—Because I want you to be happy too, and I recognize that my constant chatter bothers you.

—So, you remember that I don't like it, but you keep doing it anyway, right?

—I want to see you angry... Then you seem more human. But today I will be good and stay silent. However, I will stay with you.

—More human? “That sounds a little strange,” I said, scrunching up my face. I participated in the Mother's Day event. Do I also have to participate in Father's Day?

—That would be incredible! It's like you're two parents in one! If we had a Husband's Day, I'd take you to that too. You mean the world to me.

Husband's day, huh? What an imaginative idea.

I said inside as I started walking towards the bus station, where I could catch the bus back to my room before heading to the market later in the evening, I noticed A-Nueng's unwavering presence next to me, like a piece of gum stuck together. to the sole of my shoe. But that wasn't all bad. Her smile was beautiful, it illuminated the entire world.

—She’s looking at me again

—What? -I turned my head away from the bus and tried to focus on the girl. -I’m just looking at your glasses. Why do you need such thick lenses?

—I already told you that I was born premature, but do you know the real reason? It’s a top secret, and you’re the only person I’ll tell.

—I don’t want to know.

—You must be curious about glasses. We have reached this point. In the conversation, let’s continue.

“...”

—Please ask

—Do you want me to listen or ask?

“Please ask me why I have bad eyesight,” I rolled my eyes with a small sigh. Hadn’t she said she would be quiet today?

—Why do you have bad eyesight?

—Because my mother tried to abort me

—What is the link between abortion and your poor eyesight?

—Because as a baby I wasn't ready, then this happened.

The girl said her answer cheerfully, in complete contrast to her unpromising past. I slowly turned to look at her and found her smiling as I am stunned. As soon as she realized my surprise, she started laughing.

—What happened? Why are you making that face?

—Incredible that you can still smile at such a sad story.

—Because it is already in the past and immutable, I no longer find any use in feeling sorry for myself. My mother had taken the abortion pill on her own to get rid of me, but I was too stubborn. She was afraid of losing me at the last moment, so she rushed to the hospital in time. Therefore, I ended up being born prematurely, with the side effect of severe myopia.

Still, I couldn't help but feel uncomfortable. If I were the girl in that situation, knowing that my mother had tried to take my life, could I have put on a mask of joy like her?

But A-Nueng didn't seem to force herself. Maybe she really doesn't care, like she said. Why did your mother take the pill if she didn't want to lose you in the first place?

—Grandma once told me that her friend had advised her to focus her energy on her own future instead of having a baby. They warned her that if I was born, her future would be destroyed.

—Her friend?

—Still, I can understand your friend's perspective. My mother was a high school student and depended on her parents for support. The whole situation was an embarrassment to the family and a long-term burden that my mother had to bear. On top of that, the whole family would have to take care of me.

—You seem to understand quite well.

—I need to understand, even if I don't want to. My story is full of events, isn't it? In addition to being severely nearsighted, I also suffer from asthma and several allergies. Aunt Nueng has to take care of me, I'm sure I won't live long.

—You're talking nonsense.

I don't try to push her hands away like I used to, allowing her to have her way. I wasn't sure if the smile on her face was real or not. She could be being optimistic.

She wasn't the same as me... So are we the same type of person or not?

—Hmm?

A chill ran down my spine, almost as if someone was looking over my shoulder. I turned around to look for whoever it was, but there's no stranger in sight. I must be getting paranoid.

—What's wrong, Aunt Nueng?

"I don't know, I feel like..." I stopped mid-sentence, not wanting to make the girl feel uncomfortable. -I feel sore. You've been leaning against me for too long.

—For today, I am considering you my mother. Please comfort me, mom.

—You are so...

I moved my body awkwardly in place, not because of cramps, but because of my shyness. I let the smaller frame rest on my shoulder until we

reached our destination, I decided to let that happen today, after all it was Mother's Day.

Not really Mother's Day because it was officially the next day. But whatever.

Once we left the stop, I couldn't shake the feeling that someone is following us, although the girl next to me still doesn't realize it. I took a step forward and pulled the girl with me.

—Why are you accelerating? Wow!

As soon as we reached a street corner, I hid and waited to see who the perpetrator was. A tall figure wearing a green ROTC uniform appeared and stopped in the middle of the street, searching for something. I jumped from the corner and hit the person on the head.

—Ouch!

“...”

—Oh.

A teenager, who seemed to be the same age as A-Nueng, looked at me and let out a hollow laugh. The girl next to me pointed her finger at him and said:

—Aren't you from the school that is right next to mine? The one that's always lurking around the fence?

—As you know?

A-Nueng seems amazed to encounter a boy of a similar age in this area. No, but I know him, she said. -Do you live near here?

—Y... Yes.

I give him a knowing look and smile.

—Liar.

Even though I was born into a noble family, I didn't flinch using those kinds of words. However, the boy wearing the uniform gasps and stutters for an excuse.

—Honestly, I'm close.

—What street?

—This..

—Which house?

The tall boy stood on tiptoe and looked down the street, quickly giving a more detailed explanation.

—The house with the blue door

—Excellent. I'll walk you home. I headed towards the only building with a blue entrance and pressed the doorbell. An old woman came out to say hello, while the strange boy quickly bowed in an apologetic gesture and then left.

The woman who had come out asks: -Who are you looking for?

I smiled shyly and opened my eyes in surprise, giving A-Nueng a pinch on the side.

—Didn't I tell you not to play pranks on the neighbor?

—What?

—Forgive me for interrupting. -I apologized and gestured for the girl next to me to also bow her head in apology. -This girl doesn't understand how to interact with people. Her mother tried to abort her and it affected her brain.

The old woman puts her hands over her heart and asks: -What a heartbreaking story. Did your mother opt for a medication or medical procedure?

—At that time, she didn't have the opportunity to choose between fries or salad.

I saw A-Nueng's face contort into a frown as she asked:

—Are you talking about me? -Then she turned on her heel and walked away. I couldn't help but smile at the older woman in front of me, then I followed her slowly, still deep in thought.

—You're sad?

I stared at the smaller figure in front of me, her ponytail bouncing along with her steps.

—Not yet. I just didn't think you'd talk about it so casually, like it wasn't important.

—Really do not care.

Suddenly, she throws her head back and looks at me with seriousness in her eyes.

—What makes you think that way?

“Because it's already in the past and it's immutable, you have a lot now that many people would envy,” I said, walking past the girl and looking at her again. You are physically capable. You also have a good home and food on the table. Your school is very prestigious and your family is probably rich. Plus, you're pretty attractive, since that guy follows you everywhere.

She could bet that boy had followed her since school, but he didn't have the guts to tell her how he felt. It was probably something that was not reciprocated.

Out of nowhere, the girl threw her arms around me from behind. I looked around nervously, hoping that no one had noticed that hug.

—What are you doing?

—Glad to hear it.

—Are you happy?

“That you find me attractive,” she turned around to look at me, bringing me closer to her and accidentally letting her glasses fall off her face. Oops! I have dropped my glasses.

—Wait!

I held onto her neck firmly, preventing her from moving away. I looked into her brown eyes. It had been a while since I'd seen her, but I'd never been able to see past her glasses before.

—Your eyes are beautiful.

The silence stretched for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, A-Nueng moved, jumping out of

my embrace and picking up the glasses that had fallen to the ground, breaking the silence.

—I... I'll leave now.

—You are shy? -I laughed at her embarrassment when I saw her cheeks turn adorably pink. I thought you'd be a little bolder, like the way you tell me how you feel every day.

—Because I was the one who started it

—What difference does it make?

—That's why I didn't worry when you looked at me... like that.

—Like what?

—I'm leaving now.

—Where are you going?

—I will return to my own territory. I'll be back soon and we'll face each other again. Until then, goodbye.

The girl ran away. My eyes followed her as she ran and I was perplexed by the situation.

What kind of look did I give her?

6. Age difference

After a day of retreat, A-Nueng showed up to see me on Saturday morning. And yes... it wasn't my normal time to wake up. The staff on the first floor called me to tell me that someone was there to see me. When I came down and saw it was the little girl with thick glasses, I made the most bored expression I could muster. I almost cursed her, but I stopped myself.

—It's too early.

—What is too early? It's 10 a.m.

—It's not my time to wake up.

—But you're awake.

A-Nueng acts like she doesn't care, so I could only sigh because I knew insulting her would get me nowhere.

—What brought you here with me so early in the morning?

—What brought you here with me so early in the morning?

—Well... The little girl looked at the ground and drew circles with her foot. She was trying to act cute. Desire...

A-Nueng's word -desire surprised me a little. I placed my hand on my chest and it sped up without understanding. She was beginning to imagine hundreds of things she could -wish—

I wanted to cry.

I wanted to sing.

Did you want to kiss...

—I want you to be my dance practice partner.

Was she thinking about kissing me? Something is not right in my head...

—Huh?

—Why do you seem disappointed?

—Who is disappointed... No. -I shook my head so hard that my neck almost broke. If the girl knew that I was having strange thoughts, she would feel

very smug. No. No. -Why don't you practice with a friend? Because I?

—No one can do a good job. And I already chose you. So it can't be anyone else.

—When you chose me, did you ask me if I agreed?

—You were my mother. Can't you do this for your daughter?

I looked at the cheerful girl with annoyance but also adoration. When I saw her smile, I almost let out a smile too. But when I was in a dream state and was about to open my mouth, a voice interrupted us.

—Khun Nueng.

—Chet.

My ex-boyfriend was... I guess everyone was there to see me because it was the weekend. When A-Nueng saw a stranger there to see me, she quickly came to my side and put her arm around mine like a possessive child. But Chet didn't understand. Then he greeted us with his usually happy face. Am I interrupting something?

—Someone was already here to interrupt me first, so you're not the first. -I looked at A-Nueng, as if to

say that I was referring to her. -You two get up very early.

—It's 10 a.m. "It's not early," Chet argued and smiled at A-Nueng. -TRUE?

The little girl didn't respond. She just smiled. Chet looked at her adoringly and seemed curious.

—Who do you look like... You look so familiar. What are your parent's names? Maybe I know them.

—I don't think you know them. The world is not so round -The little girl didn't seem to want to respond, so I interrupted her.

—She is an orphan.

—Aunt Nueng! -A-Nueng lightly hit my arm, as if complaining.

—Why do you say that? My parents are not dead. We just don't live together as a family... But yeah, it's like I'm an orphan.

—Oh. I turned it into a sob story. I scratched my head and changed the subject. So why are you both here?

—I want to practice dancing.

—I want to invite you to eat.

I looked at both of them while thinking. Well, I was already awake anyway, so whatever was fine...

—Alright. You two wait here. I'll take a bath and get dressed. See you in ten minutes.

—Are you going to run through the water? Just putting on your clothes takes five minutes.

I flipped my hair casually.

—A beautiful person does not need to wear makeup. I'll finish in five minutes. Then we can all go eat something while we dance.

—Is there a place like that?

—Yeah.

And I did what he said, which was to shower and get dressed. I used the timer on my phone to keep track of the time. It took me exactly 15 minutes to shower, get dressed, and put on powder. I was wearing a casual V-neck tank top and boot-cut jeans with my legs slightly bent. My sneakers were second-hand white Nanyang sneakers that I had bought at a street market for 50 baht.

A-Nueng and Chet looked at me with admiration, especially the cheerful girl who couldn't take her eyes off me the entire car ride.

—You have a model figure. You're not wearing anything expensive, but you make everything look very expensive.

—It all depends on the hanger -I shrugged my shoulders a little because I didn't like being humble. -And I just realized that I don't need to wear anything expensive. It just has to be appropriate and suit myself.

—Did you realize that after you moved to live alone? -Chet, who was our driver, asked with real interest. That made me respond willingly.

—AHA. I just realized that people don't really care how expensive your clothes are. People meet and part. We only flaunt our possessions at social gatherings or business meetings to increase our credibility. It's about respecting the place and the occasion so that others do not judge your education.

—I really like you.

Chet's words didn't make it clear whether he liked me or liked my beliefs. But I would take it as liking it.

But it seemed like someone didn't like our conversation.

—I like Aunt Nueng... more.

I looked at the high school girl who showed her wrinkled face.

—That tone of voice is not nice at all.

—Have I ever been pretty in your eyes... Oh, yes. You complimented me because my eyes were beautiful the other day -And the erratic girl began to twist her body timidly, while I, the person they were referring to, didn't know what to do and could only squirm uncomfortably.

—What? Why do you suddenly mention this?

—Has Aunt Nueng ever said that Uncle Chet is handsome?

Wanting to hit the only man in that car, A-Nueng turned to ask him threateningly. Chet just smiled casually.

—No.

—You are very protective of Aunt Nueng.

—I love Aunt Nueng -The cheerful girl's frankness made me look out the window and rest my chin on my hand, pretending not to hear her. I just let the two of them talk.

—I also love Aunt Nueng

It's okay... Fight for me. Just pull out a gun and shoot each other. Pair of crazy guys...

—How long have you known Aunt Nueng? -The cheerful girl continued asking without stopping. - How did you meet?

—We were going to get married.

— Uh...

—So we've known each other for a long time.

Finally, the car arrived at our final destination. We were in the Bangpu area. The restaurant was by the sea and was also a ballroom dancing club. As soon as A-Nueng entered the place, she turned to look at me curiously.

—How did you know this place?

—I used to come here with my grandmother.

In the past... My grandmother frequently took us to eat there because she really liked the sea. On good days, we could listen to music by Suntharaporn (the first Thai band to compose Western-style music) and watch ballroom dancing by the elders. And yes... That day there was also ballroom dancing.

—Let's eat first and we can try to dance. We can ask those elders to teach us

—Well.

A-Nueng, who had been cheerful throughout the trip, became quiet when we started ordering food and eating. When the girl, who normally talked non-stop, became silent, I suddenly felt alone...

I'm supposed to be upset because she was talking non-stop. But why did it make me feel bad that she was silent?

—What's the matter? Don't you like food? -Chet asked the little girl adoringly, as always. What I was witnessing seemed like a conversation between a father and daughter.

—No.

—Then what's wrong with you? Why are you silent? You were fine when we were in the car -This

time I was the one who asked. But A-Nueng said nothing. She just played with the food on her plate, as if she didn't want to eat it. Then Chet came to a conclusion on his own.

—She probably wants to dance.

—Nueng. -I said her name. It wasn't often that she was called by her name because I felt uncomfortable calling someone with a name similar to mine. Let's Dance.

—Huh? -A-Nueng seemed surprised. Then I got up and took her to the dance floor. I moved my finger to call her.

—Hurry up before I change my mind.

—Y... yes.

We walked to the center of the dance floor. There were people dancing, so we weren't embarrassed to start dancing too.

—What dance do you have to do?

—Waltz... like this one.

—It's easy. Why can't you do it? Are you stupid?

—Yeah. I'm stupid.

She wasn't acting normal...

—What is the problem? You're so depressed you look sick.

—What's up with you and Uncle Chet? Were you supposed to be married?

So that's what bothers her...

—I already told you that he was almost my husband. I thought you were done being surprised by that. Why are you surprised by the same matter? You're strange.

—If you almost got married, does that mean you were lovers?

—What are lovers?

—Huh?

—What are lovers in your definition... What is that? -I took the little girl's hands and placed them in the correct positions before starting to dance. I led the girl to follow my steps as we talked.

—People who love each other, share things and do things together.

—So Chet wasn't my lover because we didn't love each other.

—But Uncle Chet said he loves you... I heard it in the car.

—Then we would be lovers because you confess your love to me every day.

—That's true... But you almost married him. You have to have some feelings for him. Why else would you have thought about marrying him?

—Sometimes people get married for stupid reasons. And in the end, I didn't get married because I ran away — I smiled as I thought about the event six years ago. I remembered that it was big news in high society for a while. I felt good when I thought about my grandmother's reaction. I don't feel anything for Chet. Confess my love? Don't even think about it.

—You will not confess your love to anyone.

—You know. So, by your definition of lovers... Chet and I don't qualify.

When I said that, A-Nueng started to smile and became cheerful again. It was like a tree that had

been watered during the dry season after years of being withered.

—Yeah. Because no one is worthy of you. —
This time, the little girl danced happily. Her smile persuaded me to feel the same as I looked at her adoringly.

—You know my motto well. Was that the reason you were sad and didn't talk?

—You said you were going to get married. By the way, who are you? Why did you almost marry Uncle Chet? From the car he drives, the things he uses, the accessories he uses and his last name... It seems like he comes from high society. And you are nothing more than an artist who doesn't have to eat.

—Hungry artist?

—I changed the word to make myself look cool.

—Thank you.

This girl was a survivor.

—Let me rephrase that. How did you two end up almost getting married?

—I'm not going to tell you. -I answered honestly because there was no reason for me to tell this girl

the story of my life.

—Wow...

—Do you suddenly want to know my background? Is important for you? -I asked with interest. A-Nueng shook her head vigorously.

—You can be anyone to me. I only ask you because I want to know you...

—The little girl looked up with those beautiful eyes and looked into my eyes. Her eyes were full of determination and curiosity. They stunned me.

—Why?

—When we love someone, we want to know everything about that person... That's what I feel.

Suddenly, my heart pounded. Although we looked into each other's eyes, I was aware that there was a strange sensation on the left side of my chest.

She was so determined... Those eyes were very captivating.

—Love? We just met. You don't know much about me or who I am.

—It's very strange, isn't it?... It surprises me too. I had never been interested in anyone since I was born until I met you.

We continued dancing the waltz and looking into each other's eyes. It was as if we were trying to look into each other's hearts.

—What makes you so interested in me?

—I can't say it. Something attracts me to you... It's like gravity — the little girl seemed to contemplate me deeply. She finally let out a sigh. It's so unreasonable. And when I can't find a reason for it, I tell myself: It's definitely love. I know because I read it in a book.

—What book?

—It's a novel called Pluto: A story, a planet and love. She says... There is no reason when it comes to love. If there were, it wouldn't be love.

I raised my eyebrows and tried to follow that train of thought.

—A novel? The title is interesting... But loving without any reason or without using your head is stupid.

—Now I'm stupid... because I love you for no reason.

—You say that with so much confidence.

—Because I really love you. -The little girl rushed to hug me, breaking our rhythm, so we stayed still among others who were still dancing around us.

—You are too young. Don't rush to love someone... And we are both women. Besides, with our huge age difference, it's impossible — I stepped back but A-Nueng rushed to hug me. Her face was buried in my collarbone due to our height difference.

—I don't care if you are a woman or a man. I just love you.

—How old are you?

—18.

—I'm 34... That's our age difference. When I was 16, you were just born into this world.

—So?

—It means that when you are 20, I will be 36. Our age difference is too big. We can't possibly get along — I tried to explain it to the little girl who was

still hugging me like a baby monkey. -Someday you will find someone suitable, someone with the same beliefs as you. You'll forget me when you do.

—Look at it from another angle. When you are 86, I will be 70. Then people will say that we are similar ages. And I'll be able to take care of you if you get sick, since I'm younger. And stronger. Isn't it great? Besides... There is only one like you in this world.

—Yeah. I am a very limited edition.

I boasted proudly. There could be no second self in this world, not even a top quality copy.

—Then it means that no one can replace you - The little girl stepped back and pointed her finger at me as if she were shooting me: -You're still single. Have you ever wondered why you never loved anyone?

Why was I the one being questioned now...?

—Why?

—Because you were waiting for me to be born into this world. And finally we met. You can't get away from me.

I laughed a little. I was getting dizzy trying to persuade the girl to stop having feelings for me. She was so determined. I would wait and see if she forgot about me within two years after I entered college and had a new social circle.

—And do you think you are worthy enough?

I asked my usual question, which made everyone step back in fear when I asked. But this girl was different...

—Not yet. But someday I will be worthy, I promise.

The girl responded confidently and I was the one who felt scared.

7. You are not worthy of me.

Sam had asked me to help her choose a dress for an event commemorating our school's centennial.

—Why don't you choose one too? I'll buy it for you, I'm rich.

My sister, who was very direct with her feelings and words, made me look at her out of the corner of my eye with a smile on my face. If it wasn't Sam, she would have been sure she was flaunting her wealth. But... she really had a lot of money.

She was the executive of a holistic multimedia company. Furthermore, she was very pretty and came from an important family. The only unusual thing about her was that she has a mistress.

—What are you looking at?

My little sister asked curiously when she felt me looking at her. I laughed a little because I knew I was looking at her so roughly that she could feel it.

—I was thinking that my little girl is so cute.

—What... When I complimented her, Sam immediately blushed. -Why are you suddenly flattering me?

—You're perfect. "You're pretty, rich, you come from an important family... and you have a good love." I found a place to sit and rested my chin on my hand while looking at my little sister seriously. It's strange that our grandmother let you have a mistress.

—Grandma probably feels like she can't lose another granddaughter... Aren't you thinking about returning to the palace? Grandma misses you.

I immediately twisted my mouth when I heard that.

—Little one... I know you have a good heart. But putting a lavender field filter on our grandmother is too strange.

—What do you mean?

—Your vision of the world is as beautiful as the My Little Pony cartoon. Saying that our grandmother misses me... Grandma and I are like Tom and Jerry; Don't try to get us back together. It will not work. -I flatly denied the idea while shaking my head. -What I did to our grandmother was

serious. And what she did to me was no less serious. So we are at peace. There is no need for us to fix things.

—Nueng... it was a long time ago.

—Have you forgotten Song?

—Who do you blame more for what happened to Song: our grandmother or me?

My grandmother replaced me with my middle sister when I left. And my sister couldn't stand the pressure. That was something I would never forgive my grandmother for.

Never...

But from the point of view of others, they blamed me. No one had ever put themselves in my place... If Song hadn't done it, maybe I would be the one who would have disappeared from this world.

Enough... I didn't want to talk about it anymore.

—If you're done, let's go -I interrupted the conversation because I knew it was getting too

stressful for us. Sam saw that I didn't want to talk about it, so she nodded to all the racks in the store.

—You haven't chosen any.

—Why? Should I?

—In case you go too.

—Because I would do?

—Go meet your old friends. Relive the old atmosphere.

—No. There was nothing impressive in those days. I just went to class to let the time pass.

—It's a passage of time that was perfect. You are the legend of our school... I don't care; Take one in case you change your mind. I will choose one for you.

—Do you think you can choose better than me?

—No, but I have more money.

—So I'll buy them all. Surely there will be some that you like.

I hated my little sister...

In the end, I chose one to finish because it seemed like Sam really wanted to spend money. While we were walking through the mall, I stopped at a bookstore to look for a novel. It was the one A-Nueng had talked about and she mentioned a quote about love.

‘There is no reason when it comes to love. If there were, it wouldn’t be love.’

Curious, I picked up a book with two women reading a book on the cover. On the back cover, there was a comment that said -for people over 18 years old-. Sam turned to look at me and blinked blankly.

—Will you read a novel?

—What is a Yaoi/Yuri novel?

—It’s a novel about love between people of the same sex.

—Oh. Then it’s a novel for you.

—Sometimes I read them. But my story is the best.

I was beginning to understand why this novel had two women on the cover. And I began to notice that,

in addition to this novel, in this bookstore there were many novels with two men on the cover.

—Are these all Yaoi/Yuri novels?

—Yeah. They are popular nowadays. But do you read novels?

—No. Someone mentioned this novel to me, so I was curious — I looked at the back cover again and frowned. -Oh. How many sketches do I have to draw to be able to pay for this novel? I... I'll rent it.

—You have a degree in architecture; Why don't you pursue a career in that field?

My little sister was always worried about my career. It made me smile adoringly at her as I put the novel down.

—I only chose that field to frustrate our grandmother. That's all

—But you obtained a first-class distinction of honor.

—I'm good at everything I do, but I won't do what I don't like... Drawing is one of my talents, but it's not what I like the most -I looked at my hands while I used my thoughts. -There must be something I can do with these hands.

In fact, I could pursue any career. But I wouldn't do what others told me to do. My grandmother had lived my life for me my entire life. I couldn't stand taking orders from a boss, business owner, or client.

There had to be a career where I could excel and have complete freedom. What was that talent of mine?

The conversation stopped there when I left the bookstore. Sam walked a little more before following me and leaving the mall. As soon as I arrived at my rental place, I said goodbye to my sister and thanked her for the meal she bought me.

—I survived another meal. Thank you, little one - Not only did I thank her, but I also messed with her beautiful hair. Although she was over 30 years old, she was still a little girl in my eyes.

—Nueng. I know you will be frustrated if I say this, but this place is not suitable for you... Please return to the palace.

—I'm really frustrated.

—There you can at least eat three full meals. And you can sleep in a comfortable bed. Our grandmother will no longer force you to do anything.

—Little girl, listen to me...

—And...

—I'll say something. Do not get frustrated.

—Aha.

—Ask me again after our grandmother has died.
Bye bye.

I knew my little sister loved and respected our grandmother a lot, saying that would make her back off. However, she still grabbed my wrist and handed me a bag with the bookstore's logo.

—What is this?

—The novel. I saw you wanted it, so I bought it for you.

—I didn't want it... You guess so. You're using money like you're spitting. It's a waste.

—Do you know who I am?

—Who?

—A rich M.L.

Arg...

—Gee... And I'm poor M.L.

—Let's say I give you this. You can read it when you are bored.

—You don't have to be so nice to me. You bought me clothes and a novel too.

—That's how it is. There is no reason when it comes to love. If there were, it wouldn't be love.

I smiled at my little sister. I felt like she was bolder. When I was younger, I was clumsy and clueless. It must have been because she had a lover. It made her more lively. I could see a pink aura emanating from her.

—Return home safe and sound. Call me when you're home, so I won't worry.

My beautiful sister got into her beautiful car, which cost almost 8 million baht, and drove away under the eyes of all the people there who were excited to see an imported car. I knew someone was peeping at me, so I called out to that person from the corner where I was hiding.

—How much longer will you hide there? Are you a voyeur?

The girl with the glasses showed herself behind a lamp post. I thought it was smaller than a light post?

What a strange girl!

—Did you know?

—Of course. You can't hide behind that post. And why are you hiding?

—I didn't dare show myself.

—What's happening?

I looked at the little girl, who was still looking at the ground. Normally it came with exuberance and courage, but now I could sense her fear and lack of confidence. She seemed totally different.

—If you don't talk, I'll go to my room.

—That woman... is very beautiful.

A-Nueng finally spoke. I thought a little and pointed in the direction Sam had just taken.

—Are you referring to that woman?

—Yes... the owner of the yellow car. She was small and delicate. She seemed rich and probably comes from a prestigious family.

I nodded. Of course. That was Sam, a woman with the title of M.L. on her identity document.

And yes... me too.

—It's true. "That girl has it all." I looked at A-Nueng, who was still looking down and avoiding my eyes. Why does your voice shake? What's the matter?

—I feel... totally defeated.

—Huh?

—I've always had confidence in myself, but when I saw you mess up that woman's hair and smile sincerely at her, it made me feel... defeated.

—Why would you want to fight with her? You can't compete.

Sam was my sister.

—Y... yes.

—Since I know I can't compete, I should retire now -The cheerful girl's eyes were all red and full of tears. She looked at me as if she had accepted her defeat. It really frustrated me.

—What kind of nonsense is this? Why are you defeated? Why are you withdrawing? I don't like people who do things halfway.

—If you think you're going to lose, you shouldn't have said you'd fight in the first place. I don't like someone who does things halfway.

—Auntie Nueng...

—If that's how you are, don't show your face again or come to see me ever again.

The little girl simply let her tears flow because she was speechless. I, who was getting furious, said what I always said to get people away from me so I could end this. It had always had the effect I wanted.

—You are not worthy of me.

8 Self-confidence.

Three days had passed... A-Nueng disappeared after I chased her away out of frustration. To be honest, the first day that cheerful girl didn't show up, I didn't feel anything. It was nice not to be watched or have to listen to that annoying nasal tone of voice. But when the second day passed...

And then the third... The silence began to affect me.

I didn't feel alone. Let's make things clear.

I WAS NOT ALONE. I was a little worried because someone I saw every day had disappeared. It made me think of all the bad things that could have happened to A-Nueng.

So, there I was, looking through the fence of her school as the bell rang to signal that school was over. This was nothing unusual.

How could it be unusual? I was just there to make sure he was safe. After seeing her, I would leave.. I

am Nueng, who doesn't care about anything in this world.

Suddenly...

The air reeked of a child's day's activities at school. It's the smell accumulated by children who became working adults. We could also refer to it as the smell of students. It made me dizzy. I looked at those around me and saw male students lining up along the fence as if they were all waiting to see a celebrity.

There used to be kids lining up at the fence waiting for me like this... Ah. I missed my old glorious days. I received a lot of sweets and flowers when I was a student there.

Wait... The boy next to me looked familiar...

—Boy.

I called out to the person next to me who was the source of the student smell I was talking about. The boy with pimples on his temple was shocked and is about to run away.

—Where are you going?

—Oh! — The boy was tall, but judging by his eyes, he was probably a little shorter than me. I

grabbed his backpack, causing him to lose his balance. He slowly turns his head to look at me. -
W... why are you grabbing me?

—Have we seen each other before?

—Aren't you the boy who lives on the same street as me?

It took me a while to recognize it. And when he asked that, the boy closed his eyes tightly, like someone who had been caught committing a crime.

—Yeah.

—Why are you running away from me?

—I... I'm not...

—You followed A-Nueng home that day, huh?

His face flushed. He was probably a very shy person. He couldn't stop ducking and avoiding me. He liked her but he didn't dare to show himself because he was afraid of disappointment.

—I'm sorry.

—Why? -I raised my hand to accept his apology and let go of his backpack before turning to take a look at the girls. -You didn't do anything wrong.

—Doesn't Auntie think I'm creepy?

—Who do you call aunt? -I looked at the person who called me that, not happy. Calling me as if we were relatives, even if it was out of respect or not knowing what to call me, was... unacceptable to me.

—You... you.

—Call me, Khun Nueng. I'm not your relative.

—Yes, Khun. Khun Nueng.

—Are you waiting for anyone?

—So, you are waiting for A-Nueng.

—Yeah.

—Every day?

That was kind of weird so I tried talking to this guy because I normally didn't approach anyone first.

—If every day.

—How long have you been in love with her?

When I asked directly, the boy's face turned red as a tomato. He swallowed so hard I could see his Adam's apple move.

—Since I was a second year student.

—Does A-Nueng know that someone is undecided waiting for her because they are in love with her?

—I don't think so

—Have you never shown yourself?

—Never.

—Why?

—I don't have enough confidence to do it... I'm afraid that she hates me.

I looked at the loser before laughing a little. Was what you did every day improving at all? If you know from the beginning that you will lose or that you're not worthy, you should not even enter the playing field. It's annoying.

—If you know you are not worthy, then leave. There is no place for losers in this world.

—Who am I competing with?

I immediately turned to look at him when he asked me that, and as expected... the red-faced boy looked away. He was standing with his back hunched. His lack of confidence ruined his good personality.

—Compete with someone who is more confident than you, of course. And in the end, he will win, while you can only imagine A-Nueng's face when you help yourself.

—What!?

I shrugged nonchalantly. What I said was natural, so I didn't give it much importance. All the boys did that. Anyway, there was no point in continuing to talk about it, so I would just talk about what I wanted to know.

—Has A-Nueng been at school these last three days?

—Yeah.

I sighed in relief because I was worried she was sick or something. So hearing that made me feel better...

But I was starting to get frustrated. I felt relieved; that was one thing. But now that I knew she wasn't sick, that she was fine, and that she had gone to school as usual, I was furious. If she was fine, why didn't she come see me? What the hell was that?

—Leave.

That was all I said before I walked away from the fence. But as I walked away I heard the nasal sound of A-Nueng who saw me before I could escape.

—Tia Nueng.

I paused and stopped dead. It was strange... When I heard my name in that voice from that mouth, my heart pounded, as if I was euphoric.

Just by talking to me, did I feel happy? That wasn't like me at all. But turning around and smiling brightly at her was out of character for me. So I kept walking without paying attention to that call.

Oh. She didn't run after me.

I slowly looked back and saw that A-Nueng was standing, with a sad expression on her face. The little girl who had always chased me now just looked into my eyes for two seconds before looking

at the ground as she was about to walk in another direction.

Crazy... No one had ever turned their back on me before.

—Nueng.

—Thug.

I shouted a new name for her. A— Nueng probably knew that was her nickname, so she turned to look at me, surprised. That was the first time I walked towards someone.

Everyone in my life, including my grandmother, was after me. No one had ever turned their back on me before. Who did think she was?

—Tia Nueng...

As soon as I stood in front of her, A-Nueng stood timidly, like a lonely dog. She didn't seem to know how to behave or look. When I saw her behaving pitifully, I could only bite my mouth because I didn't know what she wanted either.

—Stand up straight and keep your chin up.

—Acting like someone without confidence makes no sense.

—I do that? — A-Nueng shrank her neck and looked down again in fear. Then I lifted her chin and forced her to look me in the eyes. -Umm... Aunt Nueng.

—Look me in the eyes, right now.

A-Nueng was still trying to look away. So in the end, I forced her to look at me by pressing her cheeks together so tightly that she seemed to be pursing her lips. Those brown eyes behind the glasses were looking directly at me. And I was the one who was stunned.

Under the glass... Were her eyes that beautiful?

—Tia Nueng...

—Are you OK?

—Huh? — A-Nueng seems surprised and confused. Then she responded confused.

—I'm fine.

—You eat well?

—Yeah. As usual.

—Then invite me to eat.

—Huh?

—I'm hungry.

I let go of her face and put my hands in my pants pocket. A-Nueng still didn't understand what I was doing. That was not surprising. Because I didn't even understand myself.

—You're not mad at me anymore?

—Mad?

—You told me not to come see you again. I didn't know what to do -The girl seemed very sad when she said that. I remembered what I said but I tried to forget it because I felt like what I said and what I was doing contradicted each other too much.

—If you invite me to eat, I will no longer be angry with you. I haven't had clients these last few days.

When A-Nueng remained silent, I felt annoyed. Many wanted to buy me food. Why was the girl quiet?

—If you don't want to invite me, I'll sell you a sketch -I took out a sketch I made with a B2 pencil

and handed it to the little girl in front of me. -50 baht. Be my client.

I pursed my lips. A-Nueng took the sketch from my hand. She kept turning her gaze to it and me. It seemed like she had a lot of questions she wanted to ask me.

—How could you draw me?

—I simply closed my eyes, imagined it and drew. It's not so difficult.

—Can you draw me by imagining my face in your head?

—Aha.

—So I was in your head these last three days? — And that bright, cunning look in those eyes had returned. It scared me a little. -You're trying to make peace with me, right?

—Foolishness. Who is trying to make peace with you? I don't like someone who lacks confidence. You said you would be worthy of me, but when you saw my sister leave me, you complained and said you had given up. It's frustrating just talking about it. You shouldn't have said what you said in the first place if you couldn't do it.

I complained non-stop, but the little girl suddenly seemed full of interest.

—Is the one who drove the yellow car that can transform into a robot your sister?

—Yeah.

I had no intention of telling her that Sam was my sister... I just didn't want her to misunderstand.

—So there is nothing between you two?

—No one would have anything to do with their own sister.

—Oh really? Is that really your sister?

A-Nueng's euphoria made me smile

from the corner of my mouth. She was so cute when she wasn't depressed anymore...

Wait. What... I thought she was cute?

—I don't like to repeat myself. And I don't like it when someone asks the same question repeatedly. Wait... — And the little girl immediately started to hug me tightly. She also snuggled up and rubbed her face against my breasts like a kitten. -Gives you no shame? Everyone is watching.

—It doesn't embarrass me. I want everyone to see that we're close. You came to school to see me today and explained to me that the one with the yellow car is your sister.

—I didn't come to see you. I just passed by here... And I didn't explain anything to you. I'm just being Bird, telling a story [1]

—You came to reconcile with me with a skit. Did you miss me a lot?

—Who tried to make peace with you? “That's not true.” My voice trailed off as I shook my head vigorously. -I sold you my sketch. I'm hungry. I haven't eaten anything.

—Alright. Alright. Your lips are very closed. You didn't try to make peace with me. Okay... Then I'll buy this sketch so you can eat

The little girl lets out the brightest Duchenne smile [2]. It was the complete opposite of how it looked three days ago. But before she could say anything, the sketch in A-Nueng's hand was bravely snatched away. The boy who had been watching us for a while swallowed, breathed heavily and interrupted us using all the courage he had...

—And... this sketch, please sell it.

—Huh? Wh... who are you?

A-Nueng looked at the person who came out of nowhere to interrupt us, totally confused. She then hurriedly wrapped her arm around mine and snuggled in, as if seeking protection.

—M... my name is Folk.

I looked at the boy who was gathering his courage to look A-Nueng in the eyes with a red face. He looked like he was about to faint, so I had to interrupt.

—Breath deeply. Confidence is the key... So are you finally brave enough to show up?

—Y... yes.

—Do you know him, Aunt Nueng?

A-Nueng asked me, surprised. I shook my head a little. I wouldn't admit it. I wouldn't deny it either. But Folk, who seemed to be using his last effort, could resist no longer.

—I..I...

And the boy fell to the ground like someone who couldn't pump enough blood to his brain due to

sheer excitement. I could only shake my head, look at A-Nueng and teach him.

—This is the lack of confidence. How does it feel to have a loser in love with you?

—In love? — A-Nueng pointed to herself before pointing to me. In love with me?

—I'm just giving you an example. How does it feel to have someone like that in love with you?

—I don't feel anything. -A-Nueng wrapped her arm around mine and leaned her head on my shoulder before answering loud and clear. I love you, only you.

The girl who was full of confidence on the wrong path was back...

[1] Bird is a very famous singer and one of his most popular songs is 'Tell a Story (Lao Sue Kun Fung).

[2] Duchenne smile is used as a synonym for an honest smile that is associated with pleasure and happiness, which, on a physical level, involves not only the use of the muscles of the mouth, but also the eyes.

9 Up to the room.

Folk, the boy who fainted in front of the girls' school received first aid from the owner of the beverage shop who had been there for more than twenty years while A-Nueng and I waited for him to return to this world. The boy had clutched the sketch tightly.

Although we didn't really know him, we waited, we were worried. He fainted right in front of us. If we just walked away, it would be too cruel.

"I don't like this guy," A-Nueng said as she looked angrily at the boy who had a crush on her. Then she turned to me. The sketch you drew to try to reconcile with me is now all wrinkled.

—I already told you that I didn't draw it to try to reconcile with you. If you really want the sketch, pay me 50 baht and I'll draw you a new one.

—It's not the same... You drew it with a worried heart. I want that one. It's significant. He snatched it from my hand and fainted because he was weak. I hate it.

I tried not to smile while A-Nueng complained because she really wanted that sketch. But she was right... All my sketches were valuable. It was a pity that it was now crumpled in Folk's hand.

—You are quite charming. There's a boy who's had a secret crush on you since your sophomore year.

—Second year student? How creepy — A-Nueng rubbed her arms with her hands out of fear. -He's a voyeur. I don't want that sketch anymore. Let's go before he regains consciousness.

—Why are you so against him? He has good intentions. Although he is a little weak, he's honest.

—I don't like men.

I looked at the little girl who said that loudly and clearly. I was a little embarrassed because the owner of the place was standing not far away, so he heard everything.

—Why do you say that?

—Come on. I want to go now. When he regains consciousness, you will be able to get home on your own.

—But...

—Please, please.

A-Nueng dragged me like a complaining child dragging his mother to go see a giraffe, but the mother insisted on going to see a rhinoceros [1] because it was closer to her ancestor. In the end, I obeyed the little girl, so we left Folk there, still unconscious.

—I missed you a lot.

The little girl linked her fingers with mine and squeezed my hand tightly before swinging our arms as we walked. I looked around, anxious. But when I tried to let go of our hands, the girl squeezed them tighter.

—I will be angry if you let go of our hands.

—Forward.

—And if I don't stop by to see you, you'll have to make peace with me again. Do you really want that? It's a waste of time that you could use to earn a living.

—I said I didn't try to make peace with you -I insisted on what I firmly believed. Someone like Sippakorn wouldn't try to reconcile with anyone. Not even my grandmother could make me...

But... The girl was right.

If we fought again, it would affect the time I could use to draw because I would be worrying about whether she would be sick even though in reality, it was none of my business if she was injured or dying.

—I missed you every day...-The little girl still spoke frankly about the time we didn't see each other.

—I was wondering why I was born so late. If I had been born earlier, I would have a job and be as rich as your sister... I thought she was your lover.

—Even if you are older than this, it doesn't mean you are worthy enough.

—What are your criteria?

—Well...

I hadn't thought about this before because I never thought that anyone could be worthy of me except Prince Henry. Hmm... What was the specification of my ideal lover? I had never imagined having a lover before.

—Excellent

—It's beyond imagination -I looked at the little girl, who was smiling as she walked, before asking her out of curiosity. -Have you ever been so attached to someone before?

—Never. I've only had my grandmother. I didn't have another caregiver

—Then why are you like that with me?

—Don't know. I just feel like... I've met an older relative that I'm very close to.

—An older relative? -I shrank my neck a little because I suddenly felt old. Am I like your grandmother?

—It's not that... I can't describe it. I want to be close to you since I saw you.

—Even though I'm just someone who sleeps in a cheap rental room and makes a living drawing? Why do you think I'm so valuable?

—I can feel a certain aura around you... And if you weren't beautiful, someone like Uncle Chet wouldn't flirt with you.

—Can you judge people by the person who flirts with them?

—No. I judge you by the way you behave. You are not materialistic. It doesn't matter how expensive the car you sit in is. It also doesn't matter how valuable Uncle Chet's accessories are. You don't pay attention to those things. So I feel like... you're beautiful

I looked at the little girl, shocked, just for a moment. Children today could think for themselves. It wasn't easy to find a girl like that. But I wouldn't praise her out loud.

—So you really love me as an older relative, huh?

—No. Your charm is that you are difficult to understand. I want to get closer and closer to you this way, but I don't want to be your relative, your close sister or anything like that.

—What do you want to be then?

—I want to be your lover.

—You probably say that because you're at an all-girls school. You will meet men when you are in college. You'll know what the teenage hormone is when you do it.

I said that because I understood the nature of teenagers. Most of my friends got boyfriends in their first year of college. It was as if they had never met a man before in their lives. What happened to me didn't count. My grandmother also found me a man to date from the first year. Although I wasn't emotionally involved, I didn't go against her. In a way it was good, because no one dared to approach me because of it.

The guy I dated was the son of a Prime Minister and I had the degree of M.L. Who would dare...?

—What do you think of women who are lovers?

Wow, she asked me what I thought to try to persuade me...

—I think, why be born a woman if you are not going to use your breasts? -I simply said that to prevent the girl from clinging to me excessively. Women were created to give birth. Otherwise, there would be no men sending sperm into a woman's uterine tube so that a baby would be born after 9 months.

—Do you really believe that? Do you have breasts for your baby and your husband to suck on?

—Are we going too deep into the topic? Let's say... we're both familiar with what happens at all-girls schools. There are no kids, so we have to do it among ourselves.

—Have you ever done it with a woman?

I looked at the one who asked that question and smiled slightly before walking away.

—Guess

—Oyeeew

This girl was very scandalous.

I took A-Nueng back to my room. I confess that I was also surprised to have let someone I had just met into my personal space like that. Also, it was the second time I took her to my room.

The last time she passed out and left when she regained consciousness. Now, when she came back up to my room, she took the opportunity to explore it like a curious child. She explored every corner.

—Your room is very well organized. There is no dust at all. And everything is well organized.

—Don't touch anything.

The little girl, who was about to grab the alarm clock next to the bed, stopped. Then she smiled happily.

—You are definitely a perfectionist

—What? No. I just don't like people moving my stuff.

—You will get frustrated if things are out of order, right? Someone who is a perfectionist like you... shouldn't stand to wear torn clothes.

This girl was starting to know me too well. She entered my room and analyzed it as if she were the editor of Casas y Jardines magazines.

But again she was right... Wearing old clothes and ripped jeans was very against my nature. I didn't like those clothes, but I was learning to live with them. I was learning about imperfection. I could cope better these days. But I had to take some time to calm down before putting them on every day.

My income didn't fit my tastes. I only earned about a hundred baht a day. Wearing Jimmy Choo shoes or clothes from the miu miu collection was out of my reach.

—I'm simply well organized. Don't act like you know so much.

—I want to know how you grew up. How were you raised to be this person?

—What kind of person is this person?

—The type of person I like. No one has ever made my heart beat like you.

The girl continued to say that shamelessly. I was very surprised.

“You confess your love so naturally that I'm starting to doubt what you're saying.” I sat up and crossed my legs while A-Nueng sat on the bed because there was nowhere else she could sit. That frustrated me a little because it made the sheet wrinkle.

—How is that?

—When we love or like someone, we don't say it directly this way. We are too shy to do it. We don't dare look them in the eyes. We do not dare to confess our feelings. We're afraid of losing the person... That's the kind of people I've met.

I thought about all those who came in to confess their love to me. Each one had a different character.

But they were all afraid of disappointment and I handed it over to them without worrying. But this girl... she's not afraid.

—I already lost my confidence. But you got it back by drawing a sketch to make peace with me. This time, there is no way you can get rid of me... You have made a serious mistake — The little girl got up from the bed and approached to bring her face closer to mine. -Why did you invite me to your room?

—No reason. I only invited you because it's not time to go to the market yet.

—Oh really? That's all?

—Why did you think I invited you?

—I thought...-A-Nueng reached out to grab my hand and kissed my palm softly. I was startled, but tried to stay calm because I wanted to know what the girl would do next. -Would you kiss me?

— Uh...

Alright. I'm in an all-girls school. I have many friends who are tomboys. I know what girls can do together. And it would be nice if...

—You were my first.

10 The grandmother.

A-Nueng's small face slowly moved towards me with inviting eyes. It was somewhat serious and somewhat mocking at the same time. I looked at her actions without any rejection. I wanted to see how far she would go. But once our noses touched, I pushed her forehead before crushing her cheeks so hard that a loud slapping voice could be heard.

—Ouch!

—What the hell are you doing?

—You hit me... That hurts.

—I hit you so you would get hurt. What game are you playing?

A-Nueng stepped back and rubbed her cheeks.

—What is this? Am I not charming at all? I remember it from a GL series

—Wow... you also have something like this

“I told you not to check my closet.” I walked over and grabbed her dress. A-Nueng was still smiling and tilted her head towards me cutely. -I scold you non-stop, but you have no remorse.

—Where will you take this dress?

—I will use it if there is a special occasion. It’s not for any specific event.

—If I had to guess, it’s for the school anniversary event. You’re going?

I looked at the happy girl, surprised. Was she a fortune teller? How could she walk into my room and analyze everything as if she already knew? Could I tell what I intend to wear the dress for just by looking at it?

—I’m still thinking about it.

—Go. I want to see you dress up.

—You’re going?

—Yeah. It’s my last year. It would be fun to go to an event like that. My grandmother also went to that school...-A-Nueng immediately slouches when she mentions her grandmother. -When I think about that, all the fun is gone.

—Is all the fun over just because your grandmother will be there? Aren't you exaggerating?

—You don't get it.

If anyone understands what fighting with a grandmother was about, ask me — me. The noble prize for — fighting with an older relative — is mine, for sure.

—Tell me what I don't understand.

—It doesn't matter. If you're there, it will be fun. I'm so excited to see you beautiful. I'll dress up too hehe.

—Then I won't go.

When I said that, A-Nueng immediately slouched and twisted her face.

—You're not pretty at all.

—Don't love me then.

—I already do it. I can't just stop loving you

Although A-Nueng said this casually while smiling, I could sense in her eyes that she meant

every word. So I could only look away and pretend I didn't see her.

—It's up to you then. Don't blame me if you're heartbroken

—Why should I worry? You'll come to make peace with me if I disappear.

This girl had so much confidence in herself...

A-Nueng stayed with me in the market until 9 p.m. I often wondered if the people waiting for her at home were worried about her being out so late. When I was that age, my grandmother wouldn't even let me go home alone. A driver dropped me off and picked me up every day.

—Why do you go home so late? Isn't your grandmother strict?

I asked as we walked towards the cheerful girl's house. A— Nueng looked at me a little when I heard that.

—Did I tell you that my grandmother is strict?

—You didn't exactly do it. But from our conversations and from your whip marks... I think your grandmother must be very protective of you. It's inconsistent for your grandmother to be

protective and strict but let you come home so late. It's too strange.

—You are very observant. I see that you're quite interested in my affairs.

That sly smile made me look away tiredly. She was always playing.

—I don't care.

—Wow. Don't get angry so easily. I'll tell you... I told my grandmother that I go to tutoring school every night. The more I study, the happier my grandmother is. She's afraid I don't have a future.

—It's normal for adults to think that way. Still, your family seems rich: don't you have a driver?

I nodded, understanding the silence that came after that. How could there be someone who lives a life so similar to mine?

—Why don't you have friends?

—My grandmother doesn't let me go out with anyone. She said that friends would lead me down

the wrong path... That trembling voice of someone who is always happy made my heart soften.

But A-Nueng looked up and met my eyes, so I had to pretend I didn't feel anything.

—I have friends, but they're more like study buddies. I don't have a best friend... Nobody wants to be my friend

—Whg? Are you a bad person?

—Everyone is afraid of my grandmother... She went to school and made a fuss when my grades went down. I blamed all my friends and everyone around me for leading me down the wrong path.

—Everything is a question of cause and effect. What makes your grandmother have that belief?

—She's afraid that I'm like my mother. My grandmother said that my mother had a bad friend.

Finally we arrived at A-Nueng's house. Our conversation seemed too short. I didn't want to finish it yet because the little girl seemed too sad...

—You must be very alone. -I extended my hand to lift her chin and look into her eyes. It was like I saw myself when I was young. Although she was

always cheerful and smiling, she was under a lot of pressure.

—Why can't you do it?

—Why didn't you give everything you could?

—This won't work.

—That's not good enough.

Those were my grandmother's words that I heard repeatedly growing up. And so as not to seem too weak or too much of a loser, I kept all my pain hidden inside me. No matter how hard my grandmother was on me, I just smiled.

I couldn't stand it.

I could handle it.

All I had to do was wait until the day I broke up with my grandmother...

—I don't feel alone anymore because I have you
-The little girl took my hand and put it on her face. She bowed her head and snuggled into my palm. -I have someone I'm close with now, and it's you.

—Why does it have to be me?

—I feel like I have met someone like me

Suddenly, my heart skipped a beat. I was shaking all over. It was as if A-Nueng could read my mind. We were so similar.

As I stood there stunned, the door slowly opened and I could see the figure of an old woman looking at us. A— Nueng quickly moved away from me and clasped her hands in front of her in fear. As for me, I stood still and looked into those light gray eyes. I could immediately recognize who she was.

—Good night.

I raise my hand to pay tribute to the best of my ability, using what my grandmother had instilled in me my entire life. However, the old woman just looked at me without even realizing it.

—Who are you?

—She... just asked me for guidance, grandmother.

A-Nueng immediately made an excuse. That made me look at the little girl who had turned into a puppy that was whipped.

—I asked you, Nueng... who is she?

That authoritative voice was not very different from my grandmother's. That made me smile and

respond casually. I didn't show any emotion, like I normally did with my grandmother.

—I'm a friend of Nueng.

—Friend? -Grandma looked at A-Nueng with pressed eyes before looking back at me. -From your appearance, you two don't seem old enough to be friends.

—Grandma... Aunt Nueng is...

—Aunt?

—I'm a friend who met A-Nueng by chance.

—Nueng doesn't need a friend. It's not a necessity in her life — The grandmother grabbed the little girl by the arm and dragged her into the house. She turned to look me in the eyes and left her last comment. Especially a lower class person like you. — And the two disappear into the house, leaving me looking at the door while sighing.

There was someone as bad as my grandmother in this world...

11 The meeting.

Since that day, A-Nueng had not appeared. I assumed that her grandmother had her under curfew and had forbidden her from making friends with strangers because she was afraid that her granddaughter would take the wrong path or make a serious mistake that would tarnish her reputation.

That was too much...

I myself was beginning to feel strange because the absence of the cheerful girl for a week seemed to cause me considerable frustration. But if I went to see her now, she would think that I wanted to see her again because there was no reason to worry because I knew she is safe with that old lady.

Would she really not let her granddaughter have friends in this life?

—You are very quiet today, Khun Nueng.

Chet had come to see me at the market. He made a comment before agreeing to be my client because he could see that I was very quiet today.

What did you want me to say? I wasn't such a talkative person.

—Start a conversation. I don't know what to talk about.

—Ah. I forgot it. You are not a talkative person. It's been like this since the days we were together.

—We were together?

—I mean, as friends.

I looked up and met the eyes of the person who tried to start a conversation and smiled

—I'm sorry. I'm in a bit of a bad mood

—Where is that happy girl of yours?

When he mentioned A-Nueng, I fell silent again. Then I was surprised when Chet's strong finger pressed between my eyebrows.

—What are you doing?

—You're frowning. So you're really in a bad mood because of A-Nueng, as I assumed. What happened?

—I'm not in a bad mood because of that girl -I breathed heavily and dropped my jaw because even I

didn't believe myself. -Maybe I am. Well...

—Her grandmother most likely has A-Nueng under curfew. The other day, I dropped her off at her house and her grandmother saw us. Our conversation didn't go very well.

—That's weird. Why wouldn't her grandmother like you?

“She's probably afraid that I'll make A-Nueng my wife.” I said it sarcastically while licking my teeth and brushing my hair back. Wow. Apart from my grandmother, is there anyone like this in this world? Will they control someone's every move? A — Nueng shows no signs of being a bad girl. She is a very obedient person, but she's punished only because she has me as a friend.

—Does your grandmother know who you are?

—What do you mean? -I raised my eyebrows, not understanding what he was saying. Chet gave me a small smile and searched for the right words to explain it to me.

—How should I say this? Maybe it's because you try to dress casually, so people judge you for that and think you're nothing.

—Am I so badly dressed? -I laughed. Do you also judge people by their clothes?

—It's the first impression that people use to judge someone. It's like a piece of clothing. A simple t-shirt can cost 90 baht, but once you put the brand logo on it, it can cost thousands or tenths of thousands... Spread that...

—People judge you by the outside or by the brands you use.

—Yeah. What I'm saying is that if you put on your brand, people will never treat you like A-Neng's grandmother did.

—What brand do I have?

—You have a brand that other people don't have. Try to find out which one it is.

I looked Chet in the eyes and nodded understandingly.

—My title, huh? It's just an M.L. degree. It's nothing special

—It's not special for you, but for those who don't have it, it's different.

—Then what should I do? Approach and tell A—Nueng’s grandmother that... I’m an M.L.; Let your niece be my friend now? Ha ha. That’s weird... Hey

While I was arguing, I thought of something and looked Chet in the eyes. -There is a way for A-Nueng’s grandmother to know my brand.

—Which is it?

—The event to commemorate the centenary of our school.

As soon as I thought about that, it was like I had victory in my hands. I had never cared about my title until that moment or that it was known that I was a nobody. I also didn’t make friends with anyone easily.

—It seems like you care a lot about A-Nueng. I envy her

—What? -I, who had just had the victory in my hand, looked at Chet in surprise, before trying to appear normal so that no one could read me. -I don’t care much. I just felt disrespected. Everybody loves me. No one has ever rejected me or acted like I’m worthless.

—I still envy her. I’ve never seen you do so much for anyone before, even if you say it’s because you felt disrespected. Umm... You are from an esteemed family, but you have never boasted about it. But this time, you’ll reveal who you really are so you can be friends with that girl.

—That’s not true. I squirmed uncomfortably, refocusing on my sketch and picked up the pencil. - Let’s finish this sketch so you can go home.

—Alright.

I’ve been waiting for that event for over two weeks. To be honest, before I left my room, I thought over and over again about what I was going to do.

I was very excited for that day, although I had never liked going to an event like this.

It had been almost a month since I had seen A-Nueng. And today I was ready to reveal my extraordinary -brand— to everyone. My driver, dressed in an impeccably tailored suit, picked me up and looked at me with sparkling eyes when he saw that I was well-groomed.

—You look beautiful today.

—You look good too. You're dressed like it was your school's centennial.

—Don't make fun of me. Although I didn't study there, I climbed the fence to look at you all those years. So even though I didn't go to school, it's like I did. I will have a chance to set foot in the famous girls' school today. It's a special occasion.

—Your reason is so long; how can I argue?... Thank you for joining me today.

—I know you have a reason to come with me. I also have one that is my father's last name. brand—

He was smart.

I intended to go with him to stand out even more. Chet was very popular in high society at the time. He had a prestigious last name that was well known. His father was prime minister and he himself was about to enter politics. Going with him would put me in the spotlight. It would look prestigious and no one could tell that I'm lower class.

How dare that old woman... call me low class?

We arrived at my school 15 minutes later. There were a lot of people, so there was no parking near the school. Chet let me out first and he would follow

me. The event took place at night. There was instrumental music from the school band playing a good mix of Thai and international music.

The field that was normally used for morning programming was now filled with tables. Everyone was well dressed because everyone wanted to show what they had and build their brands. It was some kind of business event. Everyone was there to make connections with the alumni of each graduating year.

And as soon as I walked in, everyone seemed to stop and look at me...

It was the same as always... Everything was exactly the same. Everyone still gave me the spotlight, no matter how many years had passed.

—Khun Nueng.

I heard a scream from far away. I turned to look and saw that they were Sam's friends. We talked often when I was a student here. One of them is a movie star, I think.

—It's really Khun Nueng. I want to cry... My idol — Jim, Sam's best friend, rushed to hug me tightly. I remember her well because she always ran to hug me and bragged to everyone that we were close.

—How's it going? Have you been here long?

—I've been here for a while.

—Where is Sam?

—P.H. He excused himself to go do something and disappeared. He'll probably come back later.

—I loved my little girl's nickname

I almost forgot that my sister's friends called her -P.H.— instead of M.L. I laughed at that and wanted to call her that at the time too, but it would have made me look rude.

—Let me apologize too. I'm looking for someone.

—What should I tell her if she looks for you when she returns? Kate, the beautiful movie star, asks me. I looked up and nodded.

—Tell her to call me.

—Alright.

Like I said, I wasn't there to chat. I just wanted to reveal myself to everyone so that A-Nueng's grandmother would no longer judge me badly. Therefore, I chose to look for A-Nueng because I

was sure I heard that the old lady was a student there. So she had to be here too.

Well... I would introduce myself. It would leave her so stunned that she would fall to the ground.

I slid my gaze to look for A-Nueng regretting that I had never asked for her number. I was beginning to realize that I was very careless, to the point of not caring enough.

If he found her, he was really considering asking her for her number...

But, thinking about it, there were only times when others asked me for my number. I had never asked anyone for their number before. That girl was something. If I didn't ask for her number, why didn't she ask for mine? It was frustrating.

I let my mind wander as I searched for A-Nueng. And finally I found my goal. A-Nueng had arrived dressed in a modern Thai dress. It suited her so well that I admired her choice. I held back my excitement now that I saw where I was. I adjusted my clothes, ready to approach her when the time was right.

Wait... why was I adjusting my outfit?

—Khun Nueng.

— Arg... Chet. You scared me. -I put my hand on my chest as I let out a sigh. Chet, who followed me, laughed when he saw that.

—What is the problem? You seem surprised.

—I was about to go say hello to A-Nueng -I pointed my head in the direction where the little girl was standing -And at that moment you spoke to me.

—That's nothing to be scared about. You're acting as if you are going to confess your love to the person you like and you're psyching yourself up for it.

I turned to look hard at the person who said that.

—What are you saying? Who confesses his love to you?

—I was just making a comparison. No need to get angry

—You used the wrong words, which can create misunderstandings -I said it with frustration. -I just... I don't know how to start a conversation because we haven't spoken for three weeks and two days.

—Do you count the days?

I flinched and squirmed uncomfortably again.

—I just have a good memory. Can you stop trying to find fault... Oh. What are you doing? -Chet put my hand on his arm and patted it gently. -What are you about to do?

—Today you're here with the son of the former prime minister. "And I've become popular in high society." Chet continued walking as he pushed me to walk beside him slowly, with a smile. Many people looked at us and started whispering among themselves. -And you were the star of this school. You are more than worthy and enough. Why are you afraid to start a conversation with a girl?...A-Nueng, we haven't seen each other in a long time.

And Chet greeted A-Nueng casually, while I kept a serious face while looking at her. A-Nueng seems surprised to see me there.

—Tia Nueng.

—Hey. I greeted you first. Why do you only say hello to your Aunt Nueng? What does this mean?

—A... Ah...-A-Nueng looked at me with teary eyes. I looked into those eyes and nodded in understanding. -Aunt Nueng... I...

—I understand. Where is your grandmother?

—She's talking to her friend there.

Chet, who knew his role well, dragged me in the direction where the old woman was standing. All eyes were on us and all conversations stopped wherever we walked. And yes... even A-Nueng's grandmother, who was talking to someone, noticed the strange atmosphere and turned in our direction.

A-Nueng's grandmother made an awkward face as soon as our eyes met.

—You... A-Nueng's friend?

I removed my hand from Chet's arm and paid my respects to her for the good manners my lovely grandmother instilled in me.

—Good evening.

—Why are you here?

—Why not, when I...

—Nueng.

I hadn't even started my introduction when I froze. No one could make me feel so good and so bad at the same time, except this person.

And it turned out that that person was the one who was talking to A-Nueng's grandmother.

—Grandmother.

The intention to reveal myself and tear someone down was discarded when I saw the person who made me who I was. If A-Nueng's grandmother was the tyrant, my grandmother was the supreme tyrant that no one can compete with.

—Does MC[1] know this girl? -A-Nueng's grandmother turned to ask my grandmother. My grandmother was still staring at me. She nodded and introduced me immediately.

—Nueng is not someone anyone can call 'this girl'. Please call her respectfully. My grandmother, who was more authoritarian, said it calmly but disapprovingly. That made the other old woman's face pale. She simply stood still and waited for the entire presentation. This is M.L. Sippakorn.

—My oldest granddaughter.

I could see that the old woman, who cared a lot about social class, looked as if she had been tricked into watching a horror movie. Honestly, this was beyond my expectations. But who could better

guarantee my -brand— than the person who established it?

—Granddaughter?

A-Nueng's grandmother looked at me stunned. Although she still looked lost, but it was enough to make me feel good.

—I rarely go to social events, ma'am. It's been a while... — Use -Madam -. to prove that I was superior to her. -Actually, I don't usually talk to people about my title. That's why people tend to think I'm lower class.

I looked at the old woman's neck. She looked as if she had just swallowed saliva. Although I wanted to smile because my grandmother was here, I had to keep my expression impassive.

—I'm surprised to see you here, Nueng. You dressed very well today

—I have to respect the title on my ID -I had not finished speaking when Mrs. Manee came up to greet us with a smile.

—Khun Nueng. I saw her from a distance. We'll see you twice this year.

—I haven't been here for a long time, but people still recognize me.

—No one can forget you. You're the legend that all students can never forget -And Mrs. Manee was another one who confirms my Queen status. — M.C. Kaekai is here too. Good night, Madam.

—Good afternoon teacher

—You raised Khun Nueng impeccably. She is as elegant as ever.

I smiled slightly and acted unsure as I asked for confirmation.

—Don't I look low class?

—Why would you say something like that? Who would dare to tell you that?

I looked at A-Nueng's grandmother again and smiled sweetly.

—That's how it is. I thought I had matured well. But people tend to judge others by their clothing, so they can't say I'm an M.L.

—I must apologize.

A-Nueng's grandmother slowly backed away as if she were on a dolly. Chet, who saw everything, turned the other way and closed his mouth while laughing. It made me clear my throat.

—Come on. Mission accomplished. -I shrugged my shoulders and raised my hands to pay tribute to Mrs. Manee, who suddenly approached to congratulate me, although I didn't give her the signal. Allow me to apologize, Mrs. Manee.

—Why are you in such a hurry?

—I don't like being surrounded by older people.

—Nueng.

My grandmother knew it was directed at her, so she called me disapprovingly. It means she was scolding me. I straightened up a little because I was used to being obedient. But when I controlled myself, I smile at her.

—Why does it sound like you're scolding me? You're not gentle at all.

—How are you?

—What do you mean?

We stare at each other. I could honestly assume she was wondering if I was okay, but I pretended not to understand.

—How did you appear here?

—I came in Chet's car.

My grandmother looks at my ex-boyfriend in surprise. But she couldn't ask anything because that's where the conversation ended.

—I will go.

—Is this all we'll talk about?

—Alright. Then I will greet you in a good way. I shrugged, trying to appear casual because my mission was accomplished wonderfully. You look much older. I'm surprised you're still alive

—Will you look for a fight every time we meet?

—I must do it. I like to be consistent. If I suddenly acted lovingly, I would be out of line. So... I'll go now.

I raised my hands in honor of my grandmother and walked away gracefully, arm in arm with Chet, leaving my grandmother there alone.

For me, my grandmother was proof of my suffering. I didn't want to be near her.

—Aunt Nueng. -A-Nueng, who had been watching closely, ran up to me and asked me excitedly. Are you really an M.L.?

Even this girl was excited about my-brand—

—My title spreads very quickly. Where did you hear that from?

—I was eavesdropping. I'm in shock. I knew it. You're no ordinary Jane. Wow... I fell in love with the right person.

Her casual confession made me uncomfortable. I was more lost than when I saw my grandmother. Suddenly I didn't know where to put my hands.

—Love?

—I love you.

I looked at Chet awkwardly. If she confessed her love when we were alone together, it would be fine. But she is saying this in front of him. How would you take it?

—I know, I know.

—And I missed you a lot. It's great to see you today— A-Nueng took my hand and put it against her cheek. -Did you miss me?

—Oh ok...

—Please tell me. Did you miss me?

I was speechless. I did not know what to say. If I said I missed her, it would be out of line. But why would I say that? That's silly.

While I was thinking whether to say yes or no, a bell saved me. someone said my name

—Khun Nueng.

I closed my eyes and thanked whoever helped me get out of a difficult situation just in time. However, when I turned around to see who it was, I was stunned. She was a woman the same age as me. She was the friend I hadn't seen in 18 years. But now she was standing right in front of me.

—Fah.

—And you are here with Chet.

Chet, who is next to me, looked at my old friend, also stunned. Then he said his full name to confirm that they knew each other.

—Piengfah.

What was more shocking was A-Nueng's nasal tone of voice, as the only girl between us calls my best friend -Piengfah— by a different name.

—Mother?

12. The truth

I couldn't believe that being back in the old atmosphere and environment would lead to this climax.

I only wanted to reveal myself so that A-Nueng's grandmother knew who I was, but I had also met my grandmother and an old friend whom I hadn't seen for 18 years.

Plus... she was the happy girl's mother.

—The world is incredibly round. I didn't think you knew A-Nueng, Khun Nueng

I looked at my old friend. We separated from the others, including A-Nueng and Chet, to find a quiet place to talk.

We sought to resolve past events that continued to impact us in the present.

—Is your daughter's name A-Nueng?

—I thought for a moment before laughing as if I wanted to ask mockingly: -Did you give her the

name A-Nueng?

—I was going to call it ‘Once Upon a Time’ but it’s a bit grandiose. I’m sorry for her.

—The point is not that the name is strange, but that you intended the name to be similar to Khun Nueng..

She was used to using -Khun Nueng-because it was a way to emphasize how superior I was to others. It was what my grandmother instilled in me.

And my family used this to emphasize our superiority.

—Yeah. That was my intention.

I looked into my friend’s eyes and the past immediately flashed before me.

—Why?

—To remind me that the girl was born from my most severe anguish and that you’re the cause of everything.

—Don’t throw your disappointments at me. You did that to yourself.

—That’s how it is. But you can’t deny that you have a part in it... Do you want me to tell you what happened?

There was no need. I remembered well everything that had happened 18 years ago. As I had always said, I was born into an esteemed family and had the degree of M.L. Although it was nothing important now, it was still esteemed. It was like a prestigious brand that not everyone could own.

My grandmother raised me to be a perfect lady. I could play musical instruments, my grades were always the best, and I was born with outstanding figures and facial features. She was the rare gem at this all-girls school. They were all in love with me, both boys and girls.

And it wouldn’t have been a problem if one of those girls wasn’t the best friend I’d had since high school. The person I never considered anything more than a friend begged me to accept her love because she didn’t want to be just a friend anymore.

—Stop your crazy idea. I’ll pretend I didn’t hear that.

I rejected her coldly, without giving her any hope. I despised a friend who thought of me as more than

a friend. What would it be like if we were together?
How would it be better than being best friends?

—Khun Nueng... It's me. Nobody knows you better than me. And no one can love you more than me.

—Why are you doing this, Fah? How would confessing your love to me improve anything?

—It's suffocating to be secretly in love with someone. I want you to know how I feel.

—Now I know. And I'll pretend I don't know. Please act as you always have.

—But I already told you and you already know it.

—So you say it, expecting something in return? Well... What are you waiting for? I stared at Piengfah, my only friend, who was complaining annoyingly. -What did you expect when you confessed your love to me?

—I love you.

—Aha.

—I want you to look only at me

I look at my friend.

—I'm looking at you. Is that enough?

—Can you please not pretend that you don't understand?

—What do you want? Do you want us to be intimate like the others do in the bathroom? Do you want us to get naked, kiss and leave love marks on each other's necks? Is that what you want when you confess to me?

—K... khun Nueng.

When I said that frankly and nonchalantly, Piengfah stood there, embarrassed and stunned, with a red face. She probably felt really bad that things ended like this after her confession.

—I can't do those things with you.

—Why?

—You don't want to know

I was ready to leave, but Piengfah grabbed my arm.

—Tell me why!

And that made me tell her... straight up.

—We are from different social classes.

My words at that moment must have broken my best friend's heart. We pretend that nothing happened, even though something did. Piengfah didn't sit with me like she used to and we eventually became strangers for almost a year.

And one day, I noticed something unusual about my former best friend. She couldn't eat her favorite food because she kept vomiting. Also, no one else noticed that her figure changed, but I did because I was her best friend throughout high school.

My little friend was chubbier. Her protruding belly... wasn't normal.

—What is really happening with you?

One day, I followed her to the roof of Building 4, near the basketball court, during lunch hour. She tended to go there when she had something on her mind.

—Khun Nueng... what are you doing here?

—I have questions about your conditions. “You get sick frequently these months.” I didn't ask out of concern, but rather out of curiosity. Piengfah looked away and shrugged.

—I'm just a human being. Of course I get sick from time to time

—You are also chubby.

—Why do you meddle in my affairs?

Piengfah immediately turned to attack me and clutched her belly. Her strange reactions made me even more curious.

—Your condition is like that of someone...

—What!

Your anxiety made me sure

—You look like someone who is pregnant.

Once I said that, Piengfah's jaw dropped and she was speechless. At first I wasn't sure, but when she became quiet, I became anxious. I approached her and grabbed her tightly with both hands.

—It's true?

—Leave me alone. It's none of your business

—You're right. It's none of my business... But it's shocking — I didn't know how to react. -You just confessed to me and now you have a baby in your belly? Isn't it too soon?

—Everything is for you.

—What?

—Because I'm from a lower class. That's why we've come to this.

It was like we were there again. Because the pain of that day hit me, I bit my lips hard out of remorse for what I said to her. Because of my hurtful words, Piengfah made the wrong decision, she decided to get together with a boy and accidentally became pregnant... I was the only one who noticed it when she was already seven months pregnant.

—You didn't do what I suggested — I didn't dare look my former best friend in the eyes because I still felt guilty. Even though I didn't get her pregnant, it all happened because of me.

—Who said not?

—What?

—I took the whole bottle.

I covered my mouth with my hand the moment I heard that. My heart beat faster than ever. That made Piengfah smile.

—Wow. It's a great privilege to see you in shock

—You took it...

—Yeah.

Going back to the past again, she was quite ruthless and rebellious. Maybe I was too aggressive. I couldn't accept the idea that Piengfah was pregnant. If the mother was not ready, it was best to take the baby out.

—It's a sin to kill a life, Khun Nueng

—It probably is. But if you are not ready, you should not let a life be born. Can your family accept the fact that you are pregnant?

Piengfah hesitated because she was afraid of disappointing her family, especially her mother, who I often heard was said to be very strict.

—But... But the baby didn't do anything wrong.

—He did... He arrived at the wrong time -I gave Piengfah the medicine I had bought at the pharmacy. -I heard this would eliminate the baby. Take it.

—B... but...

—Even if we let the baby be born, you can't raise it. Have you seen the series Dao Pra Sook-, in which the mother gave birth and left her baby in the

hospital? The baby eventually grew up and went to live in a brothel.

—That's a series.

—It's based on real life. This world is a cruel place! I put the medicine in my friend's hand and pressed it. -Don't let the baby ruin your life. Sin is something that comes to you in your next life or after your death. You can pay for your sin in hell.

And from that day... I never saw Piengfah again.

I let myself fall to the ground, without strength. Piengfah continued standing as she told me what happened. She looked at me and shook her head slowly.

—I did what you told me to do. But in the end, I was so scared that I had to confess to my mother because I was in a lot of pain. The baby was too stubborn. And I was too far into my pregnancy to get rid of the baby.

Choking, I placed my hand on the left side of my chest. I thought of A-Nueng's cute face and felt guilty. That girl with the most beautiful smile... she almost died because of me.

Almost.

—Well... That's good.

I could feel myself shaking as I said that. Suddenly, tears of relief well up in my eyes.

—Well, you say... A-Nueng was born premature, so she had to stay in the incubator for months - Piengfah knelt next to me as I continued. I could hear the pain in her voice. -Her development was slower than that of others. She couldn't catch up in class. She is so nearsighted that she is technically blind.

—H... eh...

—If you look closely, A-Nueng's glasses are very thick. That is the effect of her premature birth. It's because her mother did what her best friend suggested. I must admit... seeing A-Nueng in the incubator made me feel so guilty and distressed that I had to beg my mother to send me to study abroad.

Tears ran down Piengfah's cheeks. She sobbed in pain as she spoke. It was as if she was attacking at the right time...

And to the right person...

—That's why the girl is called A-Nueng. It's so that when people briefly call her -Nueng-, I think of

you, the person who tore me to pieces without leaving a trace of who I used to be and the person who suggested that A-Nueng should not be in this world.

—So, how are you now, Khun Nueng? The baby has grown up and, by chance, was launched into your orbit. It's like a kind of gravity called... - Piengfah extended her hand to wipe my tears. I didn't even know I was crying. inevitable...

—Or maybe it's destiny.

I left, looking down and out, right after my talk with my old friend. Chet, who had been waiting for me, hurried over to walk beside me.

—Khum Nueng... How are you?

—How am I? I looked at my date tonight, I wasn't in the mood to talk. -I'm in a bad mood right now.

—What did you two talk about?

I wasn't thinking clearly. I stared at the person who seemed surprised that my old friend had shown up and gave a weak laugh.

He's also... He's involved in all of this. What madness was this?

—We talked about... how you and her were together -This was another thing my friend mentioned when I asked her about A-Nueng's father. Piengfah told me casually, as if she was talking about what she had just had for dinner. Congratulations... You have a daughter.

—W... what?

—Shocking, huh? A-Nueng is your daughter.

I can say that my statement hit Chet in the face. It seemed like Piengfah and Chet were together too because of me. They got together. My friend got pregnant. And the baby was... A-Nueng.

My God... this could become a series.

—I'll give you time to be surprised. Because I need time too.

I said goodbye to my date and tried to get out of there. I needed to find a safe place to hide because I really felt guilty about everything that had happened. If these were the old days... before I met A-Nueng, I wasn't sure if I could feel any pain. Probably not...

because I had no heart and no ties to anyone except my sisters.

But right now I loved A-Nueng. She was part of my life. So, of course, I was shocked... We had just met; Am I already that attached to her...?

—Tia Nueng.

A-Nueng's familiar voice made me stop just as I was about to leave my old school. I remembered well whose voice it was. But my shame, guilt or something made me not dare turn to look at her.

I didn't dare... Someone like Sippakorn?

—Are you going back?

—Ah... uh-huh.

And when I didn't turn to look at her, the cheerful girl was quick to position herself in front of me and smile at me through those thick glasses.

—Why are you going back so soon?

—I'm tired.

"If you're not here, I don't want to be here either." The little girl clasped her hands behind her back and bowed her head cutely. Please stay a little

longer. At least keep me company. Having you here with me makes me feel like I have a friend... Oh, why are you crying?

—It's no big deal.

I wiped away my tears with my fingers and tried to appear normal and emotionless as always.

—My mother must have told you something.

—There are many surprises today. I heard the adults say that you're from an important family and that you used to be a star in this school. You're so perfect that no one can compete with you. Wow... My Aunt Nueng is such a rare item...

I reached out to close the girl's mouth and stop her from talking non-stop. We looked at each other's eyes. I couldn't take it anymore, so I gave her a big hug.

—Thank you...

—Huh?

—Thank you for being alive

—What is this? Why do you suddenly become so sensitive? -A-Nueng hugged me back and laughed. -

Wow... This is the first time you've come running to hug me.

This time, I was the one who nestled my face on A-Neng's shoulder and spoke in a muffled voice while crying. I couldn't stand that feeling anymore. If it weren't for me, those exquisite eyes wouldn't be obscured by those glasses and her physique wouldn't be so fragile.

I had to pay her... I had to make up for what I did.

—Thank you for being born into this world... Aunt's good girl.

13 The reason I hate her.

Aunt's good girl...

Because of those words I let slip, I hadn't slept for the past three nights. I was surprised I said something like that. And hugging A-Nueng to thank her for being born into this world was not something someone like me would normally do.

If I had a gun, I would shoot myself in the head right then and there.

Suddenly my cheap cell phone rang next to my bed. I looked at the phone that still wasn't broken after all these years and reached out my hand to grab it and see who was calling. Chet's name was on the screen. I could only sigh because I probably couldn't help but answer his call this time. He had already called more than fifty times in the last three days. Something that told me that my ex-boyfriend hadn't been eating or sleeping either. He had probably been thinking about what I said to him that night.

He was probably as surprised and lost as I was.

—Yeah?

I only said one word because I didn't want to move my mouth. Chet simply sighed through the line. It seemed like I had met someone who was just like me. He was also too tired to make a sound.

—I would like to meet with you.

—I'm still not in the mood to see anyone.

—Please. I have been in a state of confusion for many days. Please come meet me

—Are you sure that our stress won't make us commit suicide together?

—At least we can be sure that we will not die alone.

Was this really a conversation between two thirty-something adults? I hung up before sighing and taking a bath after locking myself in my room, surviving on instant noodles these last three days. Chet came to pick me up about 15 minutes after hanging up. And as always we ended up in an Italian restaurant. However that day... neither of us had any appetite.

—You asked me out, so do something. Why are we sitting in silence without even eating?

—I can't eat

I felt the same.

But since I didn't want the atmosphere to be too gloomy, I picked up my utensils and started eating the tasteless spaghetti like a robot. Chet looked at me while I ate and started a conversation after we had been trying to avoid it until now.

—A-Nueng is really my daughter?

I looked him in the eyes and nodded while I chewed.

—How old is she?

—She is a senior in high school— I wiped my mouth with a napkin and placed it next to my plate. So, she is 18 years old.

Chet counted on his fingers and calculated something in his head before brushing his hair back, like someone who had a lot on his mind.

—Her age and moment are very similar to when I was with Piengfag..

—Did you know she was pregnant?

My direct question left him stunned. He looked down and began to eat, not daring to say anything. And that was my answer...

—I knew it.

—You were very young.

He wasn't one to overthink things because he couldn't go back in time to change the past. I was just asking because I wanted to know.

—I told her... that I wasn't ready. My father would have beaten me to death.

—And what did Fah say?

—She didn't say anything. It was like she just... wanted to tell me and then she disappeared. I admit that I felt relieved at that moment. I was afraid that she would cry and that someone would come after me. At that time, I... I was so immature.

—It's good that you at least admit it frankly. You didn't tell her to have an abortion, did you?

—No. I didn't say anything like that. -Chet quickly waves his hand to deny that. It was as if he was afraid that I would think worse of him than I already did. -I was just scared, but I didn't want her to get rid of the baby.

—You are a better person than me. I was the one who gave her the medicine to get rid of the baby.

— Uh...

—But A-Nueng survived. “She survived to become this cute little girl.” I shrugged and laughed dryly before continuing to question him. -And if Fah cried and asked you to take responsibility, what would you have done?

—I really don’t know.

—In the end, you would have asked her to get rid of the baby... We were young and stupid. That’s what would have happened. I laughed and thought about myself at that moment. Fah’s pregnancy wasn’t even my business, but I gave her that poison only because I didn’t want my friend to lose her future.

—What do I have to do?

—You don’t have to do anything. It’s the past

—But now I know that I’m someone’s father. I met my daughter... Actually, I should take a DNA test.

I gave him a cold look. Chet quickly tries to explain while waving his hands vigorously.

—It's not that I don't believe that A-Nueng is my daughter. I just want everything to be legit so I know how to handle the situation. Transparency would make everything easier. I don't despise my own daughter, of course. I'm ready now.

—They are not asking for anything. So you don't need to take any action. A-Nueng was raised by her grandmother. "You're just a stranger to her." I shrugged and pouted.

Chet hunched his back in despair. I looked at my ex-boyfriend's reaction and laughed a little.

—Why are you so desperate? You're acting like you want a daughter

—I'm fine with having a daughter. I'm ready now... It's like, okay when I didn't know but now that I know... plus, my daughter is so cute.

I gave Chet a weak smile when he talked about A-Neng like that because I agreed with him.

—Yeah. A-Nueng is cute... It would be a shame if Fah had changed her mind too late and didn't make it to the hospital in time.

—Wow... My daughter is so strong.

—You haven't even taken a DNA test yet and you're already calling her your daughter repeatedly

Chet gave me a sheepish smile.

—Honestly. I've adored A-Nueng since I met her. Now that I know she's my daughter, I love her instantly. It's strange... I didn't even raise her, but I can love her right away.

—To be completely accurate, A-Nueng is just a protein that came out of you when you had sex.

— Ah...

“I'm just saying it scientifically.” I shrugged indifferently at what I had just said. It was like I was being casually sarcastic about it. -It's not strange at all... A— Nueng is an adorable girl. Everyone around her can easily fall in love with her.

—You too? Chet looked at me happy, but I was startled because he gave me the word back -love-.

—I don't love her. I mean, I think she's an adorable little girl.

—Glad to hear it.

—What? -I squirmed uncomfortably as I put my hair behind my ear. Why are you happy?

—Normally you don't seem to care about anyone, but you adore A-Nueng... She is very lucky to receive your love

—I don't love her. Don't say that.

—But it doesn't seem like you mean it.

—Shut up and eat. You are so annoying.

I ended the conversation there and focused on eating my food.

Why would I love her? She wasn't my daughter...

Wow. Enough!

Chet dropped me off at my house. I would probably take another day off because I didn't have the energy to go to the market, and A-Nueng could be waiting for me there. But I forgot... A-Nueng didn't need to go wait for me there because she had waited for me there before.

—Tia Nueng.

The lively voice and smiling face ran towards me in a student uniform. I looked at the pretty little girl, who didn't know anything, and I felt so guilty that I didn't dare look her in the eyes.

—Ah... Hey.

—Hello, Uncle Chet.

Chet was no different than me. My ex-boyfriend looked at A-Nueng excitedly. I didn't know whether to smile or cry.

—Can you call me dad? I will give you 15,000 baht as pocket money

—What?

I looked at the person who seemed to be singing traditional Thai music and shook my head. Chet seemed lost in space. He quickly cleared his throat, but still couldn't act normally.

—Was going to school a pleasant experience for you?

What was he saying?

—Ah... it was a pleasant experience. A-Nueng responded, apparently as surprised as I was. Annoyed, I shooed Chet away.

—You should go back and rest a little. I will call you later.

—But I...

—May you enjoy the trip.

—What kind of saying is that?

—A nice one... If you know what I mean... come back first.

I wanted to tell him that we both didn't know what to do. Chet hesitated for a long moment before he finally returned voluntarily. So it was just me and A-Nueng left. The girl immediately started gossiping as soon as her father (who she probably didn't know existed) left.

—Uncle Chet was acting strange. He seems lost.

Suddenly he had a daughter. Who wouldn't be lost? Do you want to try to have a father suddenly?

Of course, I didn't say that out loud. I was just thinking in my head.

—He probably didn't sleep enough. So do you have something with me?

—No.

—Why are you here then?

—Why can't I come see you? "I miss you," She complained in her nasal tone of voice. I looked at

the little girl, stunned, when I heard that.

Beautiful...

—Aunt Nueng... Are you okay?

—I haven't seen you since the school event.

—How could we? Aren't you under curfew.

—Oh, how did you know? But since the event, my grandmother no longer scolds me. She also told me to invite you to eat at home.

—Huh? -I shrank my neck in surprise. And as soon as I looked into those brown eyes behind those glasses, I looked away. -I... I will do it when I have the opportunity.

—You also seem strange today.

—Huh?

—Why don't you look me in the eyes? Did you do something wrong? -A-Nueng tried to show her face and look me in the eyes. Why do you avoid my eyes!

—It's no big deal.

—You see? You're avoiding my eyes. Someone as confident as you has never been like this. Did mom say something about me? — The little girl's voice became trembling with fear. -She must have said something. Otherwise, you wouldn't be acting like this.

—Like what?

—As if you hate me.

My eyes widened as I looked at the complaining person, all confused.

—You're thinking about it too much. Who hates you?

—If this is not hate, what is?

—I'm telling you, I don't hate you — I still tried to avoid her eyes. But I kept making excuses because I didn't want to be misunderstood.

—You hate me.

—I do not hate you.

—You hate me.

—I do not hate you!

—If you don't hate me, then what is it?

—What is the opposite of hate?

—Do you love me?

—Yeah.

—What?

I fell into her trap...

I slowly cast my gaze towards the little girl, who was looking at me like a puppy asking for snacks. Then I sighed

—What's happening?

—You said yes.

—So?

—You finally love me. Yay! -A-Nueng was so happy that I didn't know how to look at her. So I pushed her away and gestured for her to move away.

—Go back home. I won't go to the market today.

—I do not want to get back

—Your grandmother will scold you if you come home late

—No, she will not. Because now she doesn't pay attention to me. All her attention is with my mother

right now.

—Then you should go pay attention to your mother like your grandmother.

—No.

—Why?

A-Nueng smiles at me slightly. It's a sign that the little girl was not in a good mood.

—I hate my mother.

I looked at the little girl rebelling against her mother and felt like I was watching myself rebelling against my grandmother. When the little girl saw that, I stayed silent, she smiled and tried to break the silence between us.

—No. Let's not talk about this. Can I come to your room today? You can drop me off late at night as usual.

She was asking for tenderness. It softened me

—Alright. But tell me, why do you hate your mother? You told me that you're not angry and that you understand your mother... for trying to abort

As we talked about this, it was like I was also trying to find a way out of my guilt. If she could forgive her mother, she probably wouldn't be mad at me either, or... something.

—I'm not angry because my mother tried to abort when she had me.

—Then why are you angry with her?

The little girl looks up and looks into my eyes. She smiled coldly.

—I'm angry because she said that you were the one who ordered her to do it.

14 mother and daughter.

A-Nueng came back up to my room. At first, I intended for her to leave immediately because I didn't want to give her another chance to explore my room. But once I heard why she was angry with Piengfah, I forgot everything and took my friend's daughter to my room. She could do whatever she wanted. It would be welcome...

If the cheerful girl knew that what her mother said was true, how would she react?

That was surprising, even to me. I had never brought anyone into my room because it was my personal space. I was the only person allowed in my world. This girl had made great strides to be in my room for the third time. She was just a friend's daughter. This didn't mean she could come to my room whenever she wanted. Not even Sam could.

—You have a novel!

The cheerful girl ran to the table next to my bed and sat on the bed. She didn't even notice that I

meticulously made my bed, so tight that if you threw a coin at it, it would bounce. It didn't matter...

—Aha.

—It's Pluto. It's very popular right now. I already told you: There's no reason when it comes to love. If there were, it wouldn't be love.

—I bought it because you said that. Auntie usually doesn't read novels.

—What? -Suddenly, A-Nueng stared at me and raised the novel to cover her face, all shy. Her strange reaction made me squirm uncomfortably. - Why do you hide your face behind the novel? What do you have to say? Say it now.

—I was going to ask you since that day at the school event, but I thought I had heard you wrong... Your name is 'Auntie'... I'm very embarrassed to look into your eyes.

When the girl said that, I was the one who was embarrassed. But I couldn't show it or I'd look like a loser. That wasn't me at all.

—How is that strange? You're my best friend's daughter.

—Normally you just use ‘I’ But this is good... I feel a little closer to you. The cheerful girl gave me her Duchenne smile. It made me let out an adoring smile. It makes me feel like you’re kind to me when you use ‘auntie’

—Well, you’re my niece. I have to be nice to you.

—Then I don’t like it. Use ‘I’ like you used to. I don’t want to be your niece. “It frustrates me just thinking about it,” A-Nueng complained. I didn’t argue with her because I wanted to wait for her to tell me what I had to say. My mother said she had a crush on you when she was in school... In love with you, romantically.

—Why did she say that to her daughter?

—Because I told her that I like you and that I want to be your lover.

Oh, is this a mother-daughter conversation these days? I assumed same-sex love was widely accepted by now. But wasn’t it really awkward for a mother to tell her daughter that she liked a woman? I wanted to exclaim and put my hand over my mouth, but it wouldn’t be right to do so.

—Maybe she was joking and didn’t mean it seriously.

—My mother was so serious that she accused you of almost killing me.

I looked nervously at the little girl as she complained about her mother before delving deeper.

—Did your mother explain to you how you almost died?

—She claimed that you gave her the medicine so she could get rid of me. Wow! Do you really think I would believe that? She didn't want to hold me back. She should blame herself, not her friend. But it does not matter. I don't care what she says... She didn't even raise me, but now she acts like she loves me so much. She says she meant well when she told me I should stop liking you and gave me these stupid reasons. I can not stand it.

After saying that, A-Nueng simply laid down on my bed and read my novel. I completely forgot how much I didn't like others rolling around in my bed because compared to what I did in the past... this was nothing.

—Have you finished the novel?

—I haven't even started.

—Do you want me to read to you?

—Didn't you finish it already?

—Yeah. I finished it, but I'll read it to you. I'm practicing reading for an audiobook.

—Why?

—I want to have a charming and credible voice. I want to be a DJ -A-Nueng told me her dream. I nodded to acknowledge it. -A DJ doesn't need to be beautiful; She just needs to have a beautiful voice and know how to communicate with her listeners.

—But nowadays all DJs are handsome. Many became celebrities.

—Being a DJ can generate many opportunities, I suppose. But I just want to be a DJ. I just want to play my favorite songs and have sympathetic conversations with people who call me about their problems in life.

—That's the Club Friday show.

—Can be anything. It would be nice... I don't have to express myself through my facial expression. I want that kind of job... I'm tired of pretending. I don't want to pretend to be happy all the time.

—Are you pretending to be happy?

When I nudged her, she seemed to realize what I had just said and smiled at me.

—I'm happy. But I don't want to show it when I'm sad. So I choose to smile.

We looked a lot alike... She is exactly like me when I lived in the palace with my grandmother. I couldn't seem in a bad mood when I was unhappy. Every second was a struggle when I lived with my grandmother. So smiling was the only way to express myself and prevent someone from reading me.

But it was suffocating... I knew it well.

I got up from my chair and sat next to her on the bed. I looked at the little girl in her student uniform as she read the novel. A-Nueng slowly hid her face behind the novel and simply poked my eyes out.

—Now what?

—That you look at me like that makes me ashamed.

—You don't have to pretend when you're with aunt. You can show me that you're angry if you are angry.

—If I show you that I'm angry, you'll scare me away... You don't seem like someone who likes others to lash out at you. I wouldn't dare do that.

—Could be.

—Aunt gives you permission to do that.

—Then you have to do the same when you are not happy with something. You can frown when you're angry and yell at me when you're furious.

—Isn't it strange that we ask each other to be furious with each other... Can we do this?

—It's an exchange. It's for us to show each other our bad sides so we can get closer.

—Can people get closer showing their bad side?

I don't fully understand it because I am someone who only has good sides.

—Whatever you say, but... what bad sides do you have?

—Oh. You are taking the initiative. Good...

Because I suggested the idea, I'll start — And the little girl continued saying it very softly and timidly.
-I am very nau...

—What? I can't hear you.

—I'm naughty...

—Huh? -I leaned my ear towards her as she straightened up to tell me. Then her mouth hit my cheek.

There was nothing but dead air around us. I watched as A-Nueng rubbed her cheek.

—I didn't mean to do that -A-Nueng closed her mouth with her hand before looking at me mischievously. But I like it.

—Nueng.

—That's my bad side... I'm very naughty.

She smiled so mischievously... I agreed, she was very mischievous.

—And you also like to take advantage of me

—Aunt Nueng, you will have to bear that. And my mischief is not limited to just kissing you on the cheek. When I look at you... I scan your entire body -The cheerful girl moved her eyes from my head down, stopping at my breasts. I didn't cover my breasts or anything because she could only watch

anyway. And I keep thinking about what's under those clothes. What do you have that I don't have?

—My bra size is large. -This time, I stuck my head out and told her that without feeling intimidated in the least by those mischievous looks. That's something a girl like you doesn't have.

—I'll do it when I'm older. I'm going to read the novel — A-Nueng stopped fooling around and sat back to continue reading the novel. However, she looked at me and asked. -Do you want to hear me read it to you?

—Alright. So I don't have to use my eyes.

—I have an idea. -A-Nueng snapped her fingers and looked at me determinedly. -I will make audiobooks and send them to you. You can make comments. It's a good idea, isn't it?

—Do I look like someone who has time for that?

—Argh. -the cheerful girl pouted in frustration. You're not pretty at all.

—That's my bad side. Now we are a little closer.

—I'll send them to you until you hear them. Ho Ho Ho. By the way, what degree should I get if I want to be a DJ?

—Anything. I rarely see people pursuing a career in line with their degrees. Look at me. I have a degree in architecture, but I don't have a job, so I ask my little sisters for money.

—Oh really? It would be nice if I could study what I like

—You still don't know?

—Not yet.

—You're already older.

—I'm confused. But I'll figure it out; Don't worry. Let's say I think I know what I want to do and what I like.

—What are those? List them to me.

The little girl smiled happily and raised her fingers to count as if she had a lot to list.

—First, I want to be a DJ

—Aha

—Two, I like you and one day I will be your lover

—Your mother would surely let you do that.

—Three, I don't like my mother. The end!

I laughed adoringly. She was probably like I was when I rebelled against my grandmother. I could understand her.

When A-Nueng was about to go to bed and read the novel aloud, word by word, her phone rang. But as soon as she saw the caller's number, she put on a bored expression and continued reading.

—Answer. It's annoying

—I'll put the phone on silent mode

When A-Nueng reached for his phone, I picked it up first. The screen showed the word -Mom, so I answered the call instead.

—Aunt!

—Hello.

[Khun Nueng...]

Piengfah immediately recognized my voice when she heard it. I was impressed. But that was all. I was a limited edition. Once I was a part of someone's life, it was hard to forget even my voice.

—Your daughter is reading with me. Don't worry, I'll take her home.

[I'm thinking if I should worry more now.]

—Don't make a fuss. — I used a serious tone of voice. A-Nueng slowly put down the novel and looked at me impressed. Piengfah was silent for a moment before answering.

[I'm sorry.]

—Okay... Do you want your daughter to go home? I'll take her now

[Since you are coming, let's have dinner together. I have something to discuss with you.]

I looked at A-Nueng for a moment as I hesitated... But it was okay, I could handle it.

—Clear. I'll meet you for dinner. I hope there is Chicken Massaman on the table

[Ah...]

I smiled out of the corner of my mouth because I felt like I had won. Of course, it was too late to prepare a menu that required time to cook.

—You have to understand that I can't just eat common food. You already know how I am.

[So, shall we eat out?]

—Fah.

[Yeah?]

—I was joking

—Why are you so quiet?

[You've changed a lot. You're kidding now. You were very serious in the past.]

I shrugged a little as I thought about my past, which was full of pressure and strict manners, because I couldn't act like a commoner.

—Time changes, people change

[But I have never changed. I still like you.]

I took A-Nueng at the request of my best friend. But I intended to do it even if she didn't say so. It had become my responsibility... Maybe I felt more worried about her and felt that I had to take care of

her especially now that I knew that A-Nueng was Piengfah's daughter.

That was all, nothing more.

It was the first time I entered A-Neng's house. Although I was close to Piengfah when I was younger, I never visited her house because my grandmother had someone drop me off and pick me up every day. Also, I didn't like visiting anyone's house, since none is as beautiful as my house, or 'palace'.

I looked in admiration at the modern-style house that had probably been renovated with admiration. I knew it had been renovated because the parts that were traditional architecture were still maintained. I assumed the owner wanted to keep it that way but needed to renovate some parts. A— Nueng invited me to her house. The person who came out to greet me was his grandmother, who once from above. However, this time she smiles kindly at me.

She was so sincere...

—Hello. I'm sorry I brought A-Nueng a little late.

—Alright. Khun Nueng you arrived just in time. Grandma had the chef at a restaurant prepare the

chicken masaman you wanted to eat. I hope you like it.

I looked at the old woman who called herself ‘Grandma’ and smiled slightly out of politeness before joining the table. She didn’t have much to say. I just wanted to eat and continue on my way. It was surprising to be able to eat a menu that was very difficult to prepare in such a short time. My brand was really great.

—I heard from M.C. that you can speak three languages.

A-Nueng’s grandmother talked about my talent. I might even talk about my grandmother’s wealth, which my grandmother never shared with anyone.

—Mainly Thai and English. I forget the other one because I rarely use it — I told her honestly because now I couldn’t speak the language.

—And I heard from the director of A-Nueng that you were a legend there. It is very admirable.

—It’s nothing, really.

—You also have a good education. Do you have a master’s degree?

Had I been invited here to be praised?

—Almost. Before finishing my studies I realized that education didn't mean much. "So I stopped working on my thesis halfway through and abandoned it to just hang out and do nothing," I answered honestly because it was bothering me. I left my utensils to indicate that I was full. -Fah. Do you have something you want to talk about? Should we talk here or outside?

—Outside... Let me excuse myself to talk to Khun Nueng for a while, mother.

My friend realized I wanted to get out of there, so she told her mom before taking me outside to make sure no one could hear us. I think, above all, she didn't want her daughter to hear us

—It's 9 p.m Say what you have to say.

—I want to talk about A-Nueng.

—Aha

—I learned from her that... She admires you a lot.

—Then you want her to hate me by telling her that I ordered you to have an abortion. And you also told her that you liked me and you confessed your love for me... What a move.

As soon as I finished, silence fell between us. Piengfah sighed and rubbed her face.

—Yeah. I did that.

—Why did you do it? You are not a girl. Why are you trying to fight over who likes who more? Besides, she's your own daughter. Now you are a mother; Can't you think for yourself?

—Are you going to scold me? Will you at least listen to what I have to say?

Piengfah still spoke to me politely, like she usually did. Maybe it's because when I was younger, I always made sure to let others know that I was superior, so no matter how much time had passed, she was still very polite to me. I was glad she still treated me with respect.

—That's how it is. You invited me so I could hear what you had to say. So go ahead.

—I envy my own daughter for liking you more than me, even though you didn't even want her to be born.

Although this had been said before, I still felt overwhelmed when it was mentioned again. It was like rubbing salt in my wound.

—It was a long time ago, but someone keeps digging it up. I gave you a choice. I didn't pour the medicine into your mouth. Don't act like I'm the brains behind this.

—You seem angry.

—What?

When she caught me, I changed my tone of voice to a cold and distant one. Piengfah crossed her arms over her chest and stared at me while smiling at the corner of her mouth.

—I'm right. You're angry... You're agitated. Why? Does it affect you that much that A-Nueng knows that you wanted to get rid of her before she was born?

—Stop babbling. If you invited me just so you could make snarky comments, then I'm going home.

—Can you fix things between my daughter and me?

When I was really about to leave, Piengfah hurriedly said that. It was like she was afraid I would run away. I looked at my friend, who looked sad. This piqued my interest. Piengfah still resented me for the past, but she didn't know what to do

about the fact that her daughter was against her. I quickly shook my head to dismiss her.

—I can't help you with that, you got into this, now you have to get out on your own... You abandoned your baby right after giving birth to her. Now, all of a sudden, you want to be all loving with your daughter? That is not possible. A-Nueng believes she is who she is today because her grandmother raised her. She doesn't need a mother. And I don't know why I need to get involved when it's none of my business.

—Please...-Piengfah rushed towards me and grabbed my arms. She rested her face on my shoulder. If you still consider me a friend, please help me

—You're already older. Why do you keep doing things like this? -I tried to push her away from me, but my immature friend still hugged my arm tightly. Fah.

—I'm going to get married.

—Huh?

I look at my friend. Piengfah looked at me like a sad puppy.

—I will get married in a few months with a boy I met abroad. My mother still doesn't know anything about this. I intend to talk to her about taking A-Nueng there to live with me...

—So, that's how it is. You're trying to fix things with her because you want to take her with you.

I tried my best not to let my voice crack. I suddenly felt empty inside when I thought of the girl who lived on the opposite side of the planet.

—I want to spend more time with my daughter. Please Khun Nueng help me

—What I can do? I'm just a stranger.

—You are never a stranger to me, Piengfah looked me in the eyes. Something there told me that friends didn't look at each other like that.

—Are you someone who is about to get married? What is that look in your eyes?

When I said that, Piengfah tried not to smile and hit me.

—I'm not hiding anything from you. Like I told you on the phone, I still like you. But I know it's impossible because I'm not worthy. More importantly, I found someone who truly loves me.

—Then stop looking at me like that.

—Why? Are you shocked?

I twisted my mouth and stayed silent because I was too tired to explain.

—I think I know what A-Nueng got from you.

—What?

As the mother was excited to know how her daughter was like her, she didn't notice that the little girl with thick glasses was calling me with a deep voice and a wrinkled face from the front door.

—Have you flirted enough? Is that why you two came to talk outside the house?-A-Nueng ran towards me and hugged my arm protectively. What are you talking about? Why are you taking so long?

—We're just chatting

I responded indifferently and looked amused at the girl with glasses, who seemed more protective of me than her mother, who looked at us with puppy eyes. That was the same way Chet looked at his daughter.

This girl was the apple of everyone's eye...

—If you are just chatting, then go chat inside the house.

“Actually, I’m asking your aunt Nueng out,” Piengfah suddenly said that without consulting me first. That made A-Nueng immediately stare at her mother.

—What date? Where are you going? No... you can’t go!

— To the theme park.

—You’re too old to go to the theme park, mom.

The girl didn’t think about the fact that I was the same age as her mother, at all. God...

—Do you want to come with us? -I looked tiredly at A-Nueng, who was threatening her mother. How strange was their relationship? -Now that I think about it, we are very old. Suddenly, your mother wants to do what she never had the chance to do when she was younger because your grandmother never accepted her.

—Come on, let’s go, let’s go.

Piengfah looked at me gratefully as I accompanied her while the little girl hurriedly agreed to go without even stopping to think about it.

It was like she was afraid that I would get along with her mother and force her to just be an observer.

Could someone be jealous of their own mother?

When Piengfah saw that her daughter agreed to go, she rushed to try to end the conversation.

—Alright. Let's all go. How about this Saturday?

—You should go for me.

—No problem... Let's all three have a date.

A-Nueng doesn't respond to her mother, like how rebellious she is. The girl just looks at me. She wants to show her mother that she is not happy.

Why was I in the middle of a fight between mother and daughter? What did I get by dating three people: one who is a daughter and one who is a mother?

What fun...

15 Someone like Sippakorn.

—I'll go too.

When my ex-boyfriend, who was suddenly a father, found out I was going to the theme park on Saturday, he's quick to offer to join me uninvited. He even came to my residence to beg me because I rejected him when we spoke on the phone.

Did he really think she'd be okay with him showing up? I didn't understand..

—I was just telling you about that. I'm not going to invite you.

—Please let me join you. Why do you give Piengfah the opportunity to get close to her daughter, but not me?

—Don't you want to take a DNA test first?

—A-Nueng is cute. She has my DNA of cuteness all over her face. There is no need for a rigorous test -The man who was following in his father's footsteps to become a future politician rubbed his

hands and begged me for kindness. I also want to get closer to my daughter. Think about it Khun Nueng. If Fah wins my daughter's heart, she will take her abroad with her. I won't be able to talk to A-Nueng ever again... That's too sad

I confess that I was annoyed with him and adored him at the same time. He acted without thinking when he was younger and didn't accept responsibility for his actions because he was too immature. But now that he was older, he really wanted to be a father.

—If you go, wouldn't you feel uncomfortable with Fah?

—It was a long time ago. I think Fah wouldn't think anything of it. She's getting married, right?

—How am I going to tell Fah that you will go with us? Why is your whole family dragging me into the middle of this? And why would someone like me go to a theme park? -I rubbed my face as I said that tiredly. Was my life not adventurous enough as it was? What was all this?

—Alright. Then I will go.

—But...

—I'm going too.

—Huh?

We were interrupted by the broken voice of a boy reaching puberty. Chet and I turned to look in the direction of that voice to see the shy boy who passed out in front of A-Neng's school. This was not a coincidence because he did not live there.

—How did you get here? What is your name?

I asked forgetfully, like an author who forgets his own character because that character comes and goes.

—Folk

—And that you invite yourself means that you have heard everything?

The tall boy looked at me and gave me a sheepish smile before scratching his head. I looked at him with frustration because I didn't like people who eavesdropped. It was rude. However, when I saw it, I thought it was a good idea...

—Alright. You can go. Having a child of a similar age may make A-Nueng feel less uncomfortable. It's probably strange for her to

suddenly have a mother and father, as if it were the teaching principle on Makha Bucha Day.

—What? — Chet asked, confused. I couldn't help him but I had to let him go.

—Suddenly everyone arrives without making an appointment.

The Saturday that A-Nueng's parents were waiting for had finally arrived. We agreed to meet at the theme park, which was more of a cemetery because no one went there anymore. The place was old and not well maintained. But it didn't matter. I could act as if attractions with faded colors were exciting. After all, it wasn't every day we went to a theme park.

—Khun Nueng. You didn't give me the details of who would be joining us today.

Piengfah was referring to Chet and Folk, who were well dressed. A-Nueng was also in a very bad mood since she saw that the boy who was chasing her and who she didn't like was also there. She bared her teeth at me as soon as she saw him.

—Why did Aunt Nueng bring him?

—That way it won't be so boring. You would be bored if only older people were with you.

A-Nueng still looked unhappy. So I tried to cheer up by playing with the little girl's hair. That seemed to improve her mood because she smiled widely and completely forgot about her frustration.

—Ah... I'm defeated. Please do it more often—

—Good things only come from time to time. If I do it too often, you'll get bored.

I walked away from A-Nueng and drew everyone's attention as if I were the village chief leading a meeting among the villagers.

—Today we will make the most of our time. Please be happy because I will try to do it too I looked at everyone. None of them seemed very happy, except Folk, who was standing there, all timid and ignorant. To make it clear to everyone, we will be honest with each other from now on... A-Nueng, you are the center of everyone's attention today.

A-Nueng, who also didn't know anything, looked at me while raising her eyebrows in surprise.

—How is that?

—Your mother and I are not really dating today..

—How could you if I'm here too? And Uncle Chet is also here to get in Mom's way. There are many third wheels.

—Everyone is here today thanks to you.

The cheerful girl still didn't seem to understand. And to make a long story short, I summed it all up in one sentence.

—Your mom wants to spend quality time with you so you two can get closer, so she lied about going out with me today.

Piengfah looked at me for a bit before looking away and laughing mockingly. But why should I care? It was her problem; she needed to fix it herself. It was good enough that it was there.

—As for Chet... It's probably too early for you to know this now, but I'll tell you anyway. He was Fah's boyfriend. And you are the result of their actions. Congratulations! Now you have a father.

I clapped loudly. A-Nueng dropped her jaw and looks at Chet, while Chet looks at me in shock.

—Khun Nueng... you should say this more delicately.

And, I repeat, it was not my problem. This was something parents had to handle after their stupid acts in the past. So I simply extended my hand to Folk, the last person there, to introduce him to A-Nueng's father and mother. I would tell them who he was, where he was from, and what relationship he had with his daughter.

What, when, where and why: here we go.

—And this is Folk; he's the guy who's had a crush on A-Nueng since high school and just realized he should finally make a move. It's very appropriate in terms of approaching her in the eyes of adults. That's all for our presentations today -I clapped my hands to signal the end of the meeting. - Let's all do a good job as parents of A-Neng and her future lover.

And everything was silent. Nobody liked what I had just done. Everyone acted like we were doomed. So, I guessed that people didn't like honesty and that was why the atmosphere suddenly became gloomy.

So, to keep the show going, I entered the theme park and chose a simple attraction to start with. A-Nueng walked alone, without speaking to anyone. So I took this opportunity to push Folk to go talk to her and keep her company.

He was there for moments like that...

He knew beforehand that A-Nueng would be shocked when I revealed the truth about her parents. But everyone had to be able to cope with what was presented to them. It was the same as when I found out that my parents had an accident. I had to pretend to be strong, like it was nothing, because I wanted to be the rock for my little sisters.

We humans are born to face the unexpected. This was nothing. Suddenly he had a mother and a father. A-Nueng would overcome this... The girl was strong.

—My daughter doesn't want to talk to me at all, Khun Nueng.

—Same here.

And after about an hour, the parents, who were losers, started complaining to me because A-Nueng, frustratingly, kept playing on the attractions with the boy who was not related to her.

—Why did you have to do this? I wanted to spend good times with my daughter. Why did you have to bring someone else?

I looked at Piengfah and winked.

—Is Chet someone else?

—He didn't even know A-Nueng existed.

—That's not like you. You knew A-Nueng existed, but you never came to see her.

When I responded, Piengfah was stunned and simply remained silent. Chet, knowing well how frank I could be, stood meekly.

—That boy steals the scene from us. There is no scene for us parents.

—And if that boy wasn't here, do you think your daughter would make you part of the moment?

The parents looked at each other and sighed. Getting along with boys at this age is difficult. And A-Nueng was silently stubborn. She was not obedient. You couldn't just order her to go from left to right as you wanted

—You made it more difficult than it already was. She won't spend time with me like this

—Give her some time to adjust. Once she can accept the truth, she will go with you.

I looked at A-Nueng, who was on the Ferris wheel with a boy her age. I pitied her and felt empty

inside at the same time. While I was thinking to myself, Piengfah said something that immediately caught my attention.

—You don't want A-Nueng to go with me, do you?

—What are you saying?

—It's your plan... You want my daughter to turn against me, so you chose to make A-Nueng hate me even more. Piengfah turns to look at Chet, as if seeking support. Now our daughter sees you as the only hero, while we, her parents, are the demons. Are you in love with my daughter?

—If you say one more word, I will pull your teeth right now.

My firm voice made Piengfah, who was emotionally unstable, hesitate. She turned the other way because she didn't know what to do. However, not wanting to give in, she continued to complain.

—What you did forces me to think that

I closed my eyes as I tried to be patient before nodding in understanding.

—Well... I will make A-Nueng hate me and see you as her heroine. Happy?

—Test it. Don't just say empty words

—That's enough, Fah. -Chet started to disagree with his ex-girlfriend, so he tried to stop her. But Piengfah did not value it.

—I can't take it anymore. That's my daughter... My daughter!

—Alright. I will feed you A-Nueng so you can chew it right now.

Finally, the Ferris wheel completed a circle. When A-Nueng was about to leave, I pushed her in and pushed Folk out. The boy looked at me confused. She avoided looking me in the eyes.

—I have something to talk to you about.

—Well.

—What's happening?

She was not only against her parents, but she was also against me...

—Nothing.

—Speak with confidence. What's the matter?

The little girl looked out the window and remained silent. She was starting to cry. That startled

me.

—I didn't scold you or anything. Why are you crying?

—I'm not crying because you're about to scold me. I'm just sad.

—Because of your parents?

—About you trying to get me to go live with my mother.

The little girl knew it... But she remained silent since that morning. She was probably waiting for a good moment to complain about me throwing her father's business at her abruptly and that probably made her lose her balance, so her feelings were all mixed up.

—Since when did you find out?

—I heard my mother and my grandmother talk. I even knew that coming here today was a plan to get closer to my mother. I don't know why I should be sad anymore between you tricking me here to get closer to my mother or suddenly having a father who is flirting with you, or bringing Folk knowing I hate him. In general, I'm very sad about one thing, which is you.

Listening to her made me realize that this was a very long and complex issue. And it seemed that she was more wrong than others.

—I only had good intentions. I let Folk accompany me because I thought you should have someone your age with you as a friend.

—The person I want with me as a friend is you. Are you so mad at me that you have to find me another friend?

—Don't think like that -I looked at my friend's daughter, not knowing how I felt. It was like she was mad at me for the wrong reasons. Should I make her hate me so she would see her parents as heroes like Fah wants? -But you can think what you want. If you want to think I'm upset, think that. If you think I'm pushing you away, whatever. You are free to think what you want.

This time I'm the one who looked out the window in an effort to hide my guilty conscience from A-Neng.

—I don't like my parents.

—They really love you.

—They are like strangers to me.

—We just met too.

—It's not the same.

—It is.

—You never abandoned me.

—But I told your mother to have an abortion!

In the end I told her the truth because I thought that would make her very disappointed in me. When she heard me shout that, tears ran down her cheeks. She sobbed piteously.

—Why are you so mean with me?

A-Nueng's sob made me bite my lips until they bled. I, who didn't care about anyone, not even my grandmother, suffered agony when I heard the sob of the girl in front of me. Not knowing what to do.

'I'm sorry...'

I just said that in my mind. I didn't make a sound because I was afraid that everything I had made would be wasted.

—You hate me now?

—No. It makes me sad that you brought that up only to make me hate you. You're trying to push me away. Why am I the only one trying to be with you? Why don't you want to be with me right now?

I was completely lost. I cradled the little girl's face in front of me because I couldn't stand to see her cry anymore.

—You don't hate me?

—I'm not the least bit angry with you. A-Nueng raised her fist to hit me lightly. -Can't you not push me away? I love you. Really I love you

—I really love you, Aunt Nueng.

I looked into those teary eyes as my heart skipped a beat. I was suddenly startled as I blushed and couldn't control my body temperature.

—If you want me to go... I'll go.

Her desperate words made me panic even more. Before I got on the Ferris wheel, I intended to do everything I could to show Piengfah that I didn't want to stay with this girl.

Falling in love with her... That was impossible.

But why couldn't I... stand to hear her talk as if she had given up like that?

—No...

I reached out to grab the little girl's hand and squeezed it tightly before averting my gaze to the ground for fear of making eye contact.

Someone like Sippakorn didn't dare look an eighteen-year-old girl in the eyes. Was that possible?

—No what...

—I will not let you go.

—Tia Nueng.

I looked up and looked at my friend's daughter. Then I said the opposite of my initial intention.

—Aunt won't let you go... Aunt wants you to stay here.

16. A promise

[You didn't do what you promised, Khun Nueng. You said you would make A-Nueng hate you and move in with me. But when my daughter got off the Ferris wheel, she immediately ran to me and firmly told me that she won't go. How am I supposed to feel?]

After we separated and returned home, Piengafh called me to yell at me, although she didn't say a word at the theme park. She probably didn't want to react that way in front of A-Nueng because she was afraid that A-Nueng would think badly of her.

—I don't want to force her... A-Nueng cried a lot when she found out she had to move to live with you. She probably loves you a lot, huh?

[Are you saying that A-Nueng doesn't want to go because she loves you more than me? How can you do this? How can you shamelessly love someone else's daughter like that?]

I immediately straightened up when I heard that. I had too much ego to admit that I felt-love-. I had

been told that word a lot lately. I stopped immediately because I couldn't stand it.

—Speak appropriately. Who loves your daughter?

[It's a fact. If you want a daughter, make one yourself. This is my daughter... I will not let you see A-Nueng again. How can she love a stranger more than her mother?]

Once I heard that, I felt relieved because Piengfah didn't think that I -loved— A-Nueng that way. I pouted funny, as if I had won, when I realized that the girl loved me more than her biological mother.

—That's very normal. People tend to love me more than ordinary people. So the fact that your daughter loves me more than her biological mother is not strange at all.

[How can a young girl love another person more than her mother? You are prohibited from meeting A-Nueng until I fix things with her. Bye bye.]

—Wait...

I opened my mouth to speak but had to shut up when the call ended abruptly. How could that solve

the problem? Preventing A-Nueng and I from meeting would not make A-Nueng move abroad with her. But if the mother and daughter grew closer, A-Nueng could be influenced. Children that age were temperamental. So to prevent the cheerful girl from changing her mind, she had to do something.

I couldn't believe that one day, I, who was queen at school and passed my eyes to look at the children climbing the fence like monkeys and looking at me in admiration, would be the monkey on the fence with those children who smelled like they had been playing. football in the sun and wallowing in the trash. I was there between them, looking at the girls dreamily.

That wasn't my place. I was just there to see my friend's daughter... That's all.

Did I have to go that far?

—Khun Nueng.

Folk, who was in his usual place, raised his hand to show me his respects politely. I cleared my throat a little and stood up straight.

—I'm not here to spy or anything. I'm here to see...

—I didn't say anything -Folk was on the fence waiting for A-Nueng to come out. -Has A-Nueng come out yet?

—No.

Rascal.

—By the way, is A-Nueng really going to live with her mother abroad? — Folk changed the topic, but that topic made my heart ache uncontrollably.

—A-Nueng doesn't want to go, but her mother is trying to persuade her to... Actually, I'm here because I want to talk to her. Her mother has forbidden me to see her.

—So, you are really here to wait for her.

Folk smiled happily at me. I showed my teeth and looked towards A-Nueng school.

—Nueng is here.

The little girl with glasses was talking to her friend as she walked towards the door. I ran towards her but had to stop when I saw Piengfah waiting for A-Nueng outside the door.

—That's A-Nueng's mother..

—No.—

—Who is she then?

—She is the devil. -I bared my teeth and gave my friend a new nickname before running to hide behind a tree, where the two of them probably wouldn't see me. A— Nueng kept a straight face when she saw Piengfah. She didn't seem happy or anything.

What should I do? The mother was making aggressive advances.

—I don't want to go home with you... It's not something I want to do — A-Nueng's voice could be heard as she thought about what she should do next. Then I turned my attention to the mother and daughter.

Good for her. Her daughter was scolding her.

—Can't you give me a chance?

—It's too strange. You are a stranger to me.

Piengfah was taken aback by A-Nueng's frankness. I liked what I was seeing. But when I saw

my friend like that, I felt sorry for her. A-Nueng walked away from her mother towards me.

Wait, towards me?

—Let's go home, Aunt Nueng.

They took me out of my hiding place. Piengfah looked at me and sighs tiredly.

—You are not complying at all, Khun Nueng. I told you not to come see her.

As soon as A-Nueng heard that, she turned to glare hard at her mother.

—Did you forbid Aunt Nueng to come see me? No wonder Aunt Nueng was climbing the fence like a monkey.

Sippakorn is at the lowest point of her life.

—I'm not a monkey. I just wanted to see if you had a pleasant experience at school today.

—You speak like my father.

Oops! Chet would cry rainbow tears if he heard his daughter call him -father— willingly. I'll update him on this and have him treat me to a river prawn as a reward.

—I already told you, I will not move to live with you abroad, no matter what happens. I will stay here.

A-Nueng firmly reiterated her decision. Piengfah's eyes filled with tears. She turned the other way to hide her tears. I looked at my friend with empathy and helped speak on her behalf.

—Don't be so hard on your mother, Nueng. She's trying.

—I just want you to save your energy because it is a wasted effort. Why should I move in with her, even though we just met? She wants me to act like we're close and move in with her and a new dad to a new city. Have you even considered how difficult it would be for me?

—I want you to understand me too. I couldn't take care of you at that time because I wasn't ready. Its not that I do not love you.

—You can stop saying that. Let's just say I don't want to go. We are not that close.

Piengfah swallowed the lump in her throat and tried to act strong.

—Alright. I understand. If you don't want to go, I won't force you.

—Good. So please go back first. I'll go hang out with Aunt Nueng.

Not only did the girl not care at all about her mother, but she was clearly showing that she preferred me over her. Piengfah probably felt like someone was cutting her heart into pieces. I paused to think for a moment before shaking my head.

—But I'm going with your mother. I need to talk to her about something.

—Aunt Nueng -The cheerful girl turned to me. My mother forbids you to see me. Why are you going with her?

—I will ask her to let you live with me.

Huh?

Now, Piengfah, A-Nueng and I were watching each other at the dining table, with A-Nueng's grandmother as a witness. And yes... Folk who didn't have any role yet. Why was it mentioned? It's a waste of paper.

—I'm here to talk about A-Nueng -I started the conversation. The topic made A-Nueng, who was sitting next to me, put her hand on my thigh and squeeze it. She was very excited because her

grandmother joined our conversation. -A-Nueng doesn't want to go live with her mother.

—A-Nueng has no right to make that decision. I am the mother. I will make that decision.

—But you have no rights. I raised her. The right to make that decision is mine -A-Nueng's grandmother spoke casually. That made Piengfah make a sound in her throat.

—Mom... I also want to have the opportunity to spend time with my daughter.

—Does your daughter want to be with you? Look at her face. She is about to cry because she is afraid of having to go with you.

A-Nueng looked at her lap because she had no right to say anything. It seemed that the cheerful girl had been raised to simply take orders.

The same as me, Song and Sam in the past...

—A-Nueng may feel out of place at first, but she will adapt after a while -Piengfah did not give up. - But if Khun Nueng is with her all the time like this, she won't go with me. Why does a stranger like you have more influence over her than me? That's very frustrating.

—Maybe it's because I was the one who attended your Mother's Day event and not the person who is shouting right now -I mentioned the school event I joined and received a garland from A-Nueng. Piengfah looked at me, surprised. She asked me, confused.

—What do you mean?

—Aunt Nueng was there as my mother, so I had someone to pay my respects to while you were with the man you want to start a new family with.

A-Nueng interrupted. Her voice was full of pain and agony. She wanted to hurt her mother as much as she could with her words. I squeezed the little girl's hand and shook my head to stop her from speaking further.

—Nueng is not ready to adapt to a new social circle. She still wants to be here. She feels comfortable living with her grandmother and being with her friends at school...

—And have Khun Nueng with her.

Piengfah interrupted in agony.

—Ah-huh. And have me.

Everything was silent after that. Even grandma had nothing to say because she wasn't sure how the event would play out.

—Would it be okay if... I asked you to take over your role while you're abroad?

—What?

Suddenly I offered. I spoke without thinking. Now everyone turned to look at me.

Damn... Did I ask to be this girl's mother?

—Ah...— But as I already said, I would take it to the end. I love A-Nueng so much...

The little girl looked at me with sparkling eyes that shone with joy. My heart melted as I continued speaking when I saw those eyes shine through her thick glasses to give me that look.

—I love her so much...
-Like my own daughter.

Each word came out with difficulty. When the words like my own daughter— came out, A-Nueng pouted as if she didn't want to accept that. However, she did not argue. Grandma smiled slightly, seeming happy.

—So I think that while you're not here, I would like to take care of A-Nueng. I will prepare her to be a good and perfect person the same way my grandmother prepared me.

—Do you know what you're saying? Piengfah looked at me in disbelief. You're talking like you love my daughter.

I stood up straight, clearly showing that I wouldn't admit it. A-Nueng, who was sitting blushing next to me, took it the same way I did.

—You're crazy...

—Accept the offer, Fah. Your daughter won't go with you, no matter what. Furthermore, Khun Nueng gave us her word that she would take care of A-Nueng. That's a relief for me... A-Nueng having a good caregiver who is an older sister, a friend and a guardian is a good thing.

—But mom...

—And I'm here too. A-Nueng is very lucky to have met Khun Nueng. You have to accept this. Instead of wasting time trying to get your daughter to go with you, use this time to bond with your daughter. The more you force her, the more she will hate you. Believe me

My best friend probably now saw me as her enemy. She looked away, frustrated, while Grandma smiled at me like a kind old lady. Ah... This was so different from the first day we met. I needed to make the comment that she knew I'm an M.L.

She is one of those who are crazy about my title.

—Mom will talk to Piengfah. Thank you, Khun Nueng, for doting on your niece. I'm sure that A-Nueng will grow up to be a good and ideal girl if you, who are a direct descendant of M.C. Kaekai, take care of her.

I was quite frustrated that the old lady called herself -Mom, but I didn't lose my composure when showing it. I just nodded and responded distantly.

—Let me thank you on behalf of A-Nueng for understanding her. I, M.L. Sippakorn, I always keep my word. If I say I will take care of her, I will take care of her as best as possible.

—You really love your niece.

When her grandmother added that, A-Nueng looked at me happily.

—Yeah. I will love her as much as I can.

I guess it was a promise of mine...

17 A good example.

What does it take to be a good guardian, set a good example or be an idol for a girl...?

Interestingly, I was under a lot of pressure now that I had the blessing of A-Nueng's family, especially her grandmother. I still lived in a rented room. How could I set a good example for A-Nueng? As I let my mind wander to A-Nueng doing her homework on my bed, the little girl blew air into my ear and I jumped.

—What?

—What are you thinking?

The girl laughed happily seeing it made me blush. I knew it because I saw myself in the window glass. And it was in line with the beating of my heart.

—Don't do stupid things..

—I copied it from a manga.

—Copy blowing air into someone's ear? Why would you do that?

—It says it's a person's sensitive point. And I have proven that it is true. Your face is bright red — A— Nueng tilted her head from side to side as if it were an exceptionally endearing gesture. -Have you been in love?

—How? If you mean loving my sisters and my parents, of course I do.

—Stop dodging the question. I mean in a romantic way.

—I have never come this far. No one is worthy enough -I looked at A-Nueng. The girl hoped that the person I loved was her. -And you're still a girl. You're also not worthy enough.

—I already told you that one day I would be worthy of you. I won't do my homework anymore. I will read the novel -A-Nueng closed her book instantly without asking me and picked up the novel — Pluto to read. Where was I last time?

—Finish your homework first.

—No. I'm bored.

—I gave my word to your mother and your grandmother. If you're slacking off like this, your grandmother and mother won't trust me anymore. And eventually you will have to move in with your mother if you can't get into college... according to her condition.

Yes... That was the harsh condition they gave us. After dinner that day, Piengfah still didn't give up wanting to take A-Nueng to live with her, even though I firmly promised her that I would love and take good care of A-Nueng. Therefore, Piengfah proposed an offer, which gave her the last hope of taking A-Neng with her. That is to say... if A-Nueng couldn't get into the university she hoped for, A-Nueng would have to fly to live with her immediately.

But what was this? Was the girl reading a novel?

—I don't understand why she is doing this. The more she forces me, the more I don't want to go.

—You can't get everything you want -I snatched the novel from A-Nueng and put the homework in front of her.

—Finish your task and you can do whatever you want

—Anything I want?

—Aha.

—Can I kiss you on the cheek?

—What?

The happy girl said, blinking at me mischievously, trying to look cute. She looked like those dolls (Blythe) that Chompoo Araya liked to play with... What was her name? The ones that looked very scary, but people told themselves they were cute, until they became very popular.

—Kiss on the cheek.

A-Nueng stressed it so loudly and clearly that I immediately had to shake my head in refusal.

—No.

—Then I won't read. I'm bored.

—Do you want to move abroad with your mother?

—If I can't even kiss you on the cheek, my life won't be fun, even if I get a PhD.

—How is kissing my cheek related to obtaining a doctorate? And how can your life be fun kissing me

on the cheek?

—I could, because if I compared you to something, I would compare you to delicious food. I... I'm obsessed with you.

I assumed those words were also from the manga she read. I desperately wanted to tell her that talking like that didn't make her sexy at all.

—If you want to go live with your mother, then it's not necessary for you to study.

—Okay... I'll go live with my mother.

And A-Nueng continued reading the novel without saying anything else. I was using silence to pressure her into knowing I didn't like what she was doing. Why was she so stubborn? She didn't feel anything, even when I looked at her like that.

And what was more frustrating was that I couldn't stay calm when it came to this girl.

—If you finish your homework, I...

—You will do it?

—I'll let you kiss my cheek.

A-Nueng immediately threw away the novel and turned around to do her homework, as if she had been waiting for this. I looked at my friend's daughter and my jaw dropped when I saw her reaction.

—You gave me your word. If you back out, I'll go live with my mother.

—If you want to go, go.

—You don't want me to leave. That's clear... Okay, I'll finish my homework in five minutes. You can time me.

—This fast?

—Look at me.

And A-Nueng surprised me by finishing a math problem and finishing her homework. When I was about to complain, she smiled and winked mischievously.

—I only had one left when I got lazy. But now that I have a good offer...-A-Nueng sat on her knees and then ran to put her arms around my neck before whispering in my ear. finish it. I feel like

The little girl's wet lips kissed my cheek. Then she smiled innocently at me as I froze because I was

too shocked to know how to react to that...

A girl tricked me...

—Ah... your cheek is so soft. I think that if I can do more, I will surely enter the university of my dreams.

—Do not even dream about it. -I pushed her from the face and quickly took two steps back to stay at an appropriate distance. It's not much... I just needed space to collect myself because I still didn't know what to do.

She was very aggressive, more so than anyone who had made advances towards me.

—I know you won't let me go. In the end you'll let me do more.

The word -do— made me feel uncomfortable. Suddenly, strange images floated in my head for about two seconds. I immediately waved my hand to dismiss them.

—What are you doing?

—I'm chasing away the mosquitoes. I tried to sound normal. If you finished your homework, you can go home now. It's already after 8 p.m.

—Oops. I just realized that I also have homework for my Thai language subject.

—What?

—Ah... I lack inspiration.

—Don't even think about kissing my cheek again.

—Then I'll go live with my mother.

And it continued the same as before. Damn... How did it come to this?

To be a good tutor and set a good example, in addition to encouraging her to love education, I also had to prepare her in all aspects. That's why I suggested that A-Nueng take special intensive courses to strengthen her skills.

I had to give it my all. Sippakorn was not someone who could lose. I had to go to the extreme because I didn't want anyone to say that I wasn't doing a good job, especially the fault-finding mother.

—I know how to help you be a better student.

[How?]

—This idea occurred to me when you told me that you wanted to be a DJ and make audiobooks. I think... I'll record what you need to know for your exams so you can listen to it. After you listen to it, you have to record the next chapter and send it to me. Is it a good idea?

[It's a great idea, but it's boring.]

What?

[Well... it's very educational. There's nothing attractive about it.]

—Is kissing my cheek not enough?

[That doesn't count. Ha ha.]

That lively voice, like the summer breeze, tired me.

—Say it. What do you want, dear?

[Record what I need to study and I will record a novel for you. I will also wait for your comments on whether my voice is already suitable for being a DJ. Let's call it exchange. Sounds good?]

Since when did I want to listen to a new audiobook... Nonsense?

—If I say no...

[I'm going to live with my mother.]

Go away... For God's sake.

—Alright. Just record something.

[You have to listen to it.]

—if not?

[I will ask you about the content. If you cannot answer me, you will be punished by kissing your cheek.]

—Are you testing me?

[Yeah. If you can test me, I have to check if you really pay attention to my novel too. Let's call it exchange.]

—Well... And if you can't respond to my content, you will also be punished.

[Would you kiss my cheek?]

—We won't see each other for another day.

[Oh. That's bad... You know not seeing you is torture for me.]

I tried not to smile at her cute whining and respond in a flat voice.

—If you want to see me, you have to concentrate on my recording. It's that easy.

[Well. I know...]

—That's a deal. I'll go find books to read to you.

Wow. Did I have that much free time? Why was I doing this? I wasn't old enough to read books to prepare for college.

[I love you, Aunt Nueng.]

—Why do you say that?

[Because I want you to know that. HUGS AND KISSES]

The mischievous tone of voice clearly indicated that she was having fun teasing me. And so as not to leave her conceited, I hung up. I grabbed a notebook to draw a diagram of what I needed to do.

I was very serious; It was like I was applying to college myself. What tests had to be done these days... Argh. I'm so old.

—You seem very interested in educational books.

Sam, who I dragged with me, looked at me curiously because once we got to the mall, I dragged her to the bookstore. I intended for her to pay for me.

I'm such a good sister...

—I am preparing a girl to grow up and become a model citizen. I have to take it seriously.

—Prepare a girl? What girl?

—It's a long story. Let's say my pride is at stake. How difficult are exams nowadays? I graduated more than ten years ago -I turned to my sister, looking very serious.

—I have heard that it is quite difficult. Kids today have to go to grueling tutoring schools

—Ah... A-Nueng should also go to tutoring school. If she studies alone, she probably won't be able to compete with others.

—Is the girl's name A-Nueng? The name is similar to yours.

—There is a story behind that. I still focused on choosing the books for my friend's daughter. There are many things. Which should I choose?

—The one you read.

—Huh?

—Use the huge stack of books in the palace. I still see them in the warehouse. I entered university reading your notes.

I looked at my sister and started to like the idea. But returning to the palace and meeting our grandmother...

—Alright. If I have to go back to the palace for them, I prefer to buy new books.

—Are you so upset about seeing our grandmother? Do you really hate her?

My sister suddenly asked me that, although she never talked about it openly. I was lost. Her sad voice made me roll my eyes because I hated dramas.

—I have been under your control for a long time. I have decided that I will never go back there again. She was a thorn in my heart. I have to be a thorn in her heart in return.

—But you grew up perfectly. Although she was strict, you...

—Enough. — I stopped my sister. Although I said it softly, I said it firmly. Stop trying to speak for our grandmother. She didn't prepare me for love. She just wanted me to be what she wanted. If she could go back in time, she would have married Chet herself.

—I still think she loves you more than anyone. The more you love someone, the stricter you are with them.

—The one who got our grandmother's love is you. I'm your trophy that enhances your credibility.

—You are selfish. You only look from your point of view.

I looked at our grandmother's good girl and laughed mockingly. Sam loved our grandmother very much. Nobody could touch her. For me to talk so much about our grandmother was already too much to ask of me.

But, thinking about it... my books were really attractive because they were full of knowledge gathered from my tutoring and research. Those were the books that prepared this architect. I had to do something, like...

Sneak into my own palace.

18. What is important

At that moment, it was 00:15... The lyrics of the song 25 Hours floated in my head like a dancing worm. The sky was completely black. Ah... it was time to sneak into a house.

My own palace, of course.

Since I was born and raised there, I knew exactly where to enter to avoid the security cameras. At the back of the palace there was a small fence that I could climb. Since there were no dogs in the palace (house), the side was clear for a thief like me.

Why did I know the way and the means of entry? It was because I once snuck out to go to the club with my college friends. Who could know their own house like the one who designed it?

After entering, I slowly tiptoed towards the storage room, which was at the far end. The housekeeper's room was opposite the storage room. I could hear traditional Thai music and smell the delicious Som Tam coming from the room.

Who ate Som Tam at this time of night?

While the housekeeper watched the music program, I tiptoed into the storeroom and turned the doorknob.

It was closed.

The fact that the door was locked frustrated me. What is there so valuable that they had to close the door? I cursed. My books were there.

I didn't plan ahead what to do if that happened. And I wasn't a professional thief who knew how to break a lock. So the only option was to break down the door. But how could I do that without making any noise?

My last resort was...

I had no choice but to knock on the door of the housekeeper who had the key. When the door opened, the housekeeper, who had been here since I was a child, seemed surprised to see me.

—Khun Nueng.

—Shh! -I put my finger in my mouth to tell the person in front of me to lower their voice. -Don't make loud noises.

—W... why are you here so late at night?

—I don't have a choice. You can help?

—What do you need help with?

—Please open the storage room for me.

Wasn't it that simple? Why did I have to make things difficult, like the protagonist of a series, using a hair clip or a paper clip to open the door when I could just knock on the door and ask the housekeeper nicely? Now my pile of books was in my arms.

What a late winemaker

—Why did you come so late?

—I don't want to see my grandmother. It would be better if you didn't tell her I sneaked in.

—You are so naughty. Why do you do things like this? Aren't you afraid of breaking your arms or legs? And it's too late. Do you want to sleep here?

—Where do you want me to sleep? Stop babbling. Leave. Thank you for opening the door for me -I hugged the housekeeper, missing her. When I turned around, she grabbed my arm.

—Yeah?

—Please come visit M.C... She is not feeling well. It would be great if you came to visit us sometimes.

—She won't die so easily. She will live a long life.

—Khun Nueng... I'm not kidding.

—Me neither. She is very strong... -I hesitated a little while thinking about the day she had to be admitted to the hospital. -And she is very rich. She can go to the doctor and get better in no time.

—Why are you so stubborn?

That complaint made me sigh. Not just Sam, but everyone was saying this.

—I guess I'm like my grandmother. I'll think about it. Maybe I'll come visit... someday.

I only said that to give her hope before quickly leaving, since I already had what I was here to get. Mission accomplished. Now I just needed to record something and send it to A-Nueng.

However... someone frustratingly ruined my plan.

—I see that you are preparing for your exam. It's difficult to study on your own and predict what will be on the exam. Chet, who was well prepared, came with good intentions and handed a brochure for a tutoring school to A-Nueng, who is sitting in front of him. You should come here. I will pay for the classes.

Chet used his warm voice and spoke so politely that it's like he was Tik from the Vanida series.

—Alright. I'm bored of giving private classes in schools. I want freedom.

I tried not to smile and feel like a winner as I looked at the intruding father. I'm Sippakorn. I would be the one to put this girl through college and make sure she had a bright future ahead of her. Wasn't it enough to have me as your tutor?

—But...

—Don't be an adult who imposes his will on his daughter. If she doesn't want to do it, leave it at that. And I've already made a plan.

—But you're not a tutor. How can you be as good as those tutors at tutoring schools? We have to put the future of A-Nueng first. What if you can't get into college and have to move in with your mother?

It was reasonable, but I still didn't agree with it.

—A-Nueng, then you decide. I tried to help you, but your father is interfering.

A-Nueng took the pamphlet and pondered for about two minutes before making a decision.

—Alright. I'll go.

Her response made me scrunch up my face because I was frustrated. A-Nueng saw that, so she ran to cling to me.

—Not all the subjects. There is only one that I cannot understand if I study on my own. I probably really need tutoring for that one...

—What subject?

—Math... I will only go to intensive math tutoring classes. The rest, I'll let Aunt Nueng do my study plan for me.

I considered the solution the little girl proposed and felt relieved. She was probably trying to find a win-win solution for everyone. She didn't want to hurt Chet's feelings and she didn't want everything I had prepared to go to waste.

She was good...

—Alright. We can do it. If you really want to take on the role of parent, take care of it yourself.

—Ah. I also have another request. -Chet said this, looking anxious. I could see he was nervous, so I asked him again.

—What do you want from your daughter?

—Can I order... your cup?

Everything remains silent. Actually, Chet didn't have to make that request. He could have waited until we left and grabbed it. This made him look very stupid. And A-Nueng was smart enough to know why he wanted the cup

—No.

I sighed as I looked at Chet, who gaped.

—W... why not?

—I don't want to prove that I'm your daughter. Well... your existence is already uncomfortable for me. If you do all those tests, I'm afraid there will be more complicated issues I'll have to deal with.

—Um...

—I don't want anything from you. I don't want your wealth or your last name. I won't accept any of that. I am happy living with my grandmother. I don't even want to move in with my mother. So if you want to prove my identity or something, I don't want it.

A-Nueng stood up, grabbed her backpack and walked away. I looked at Chet, who was still dazed, before sighing and patting him on the shoulder.

—Are you stupid?

—My daughter rejects me.

—Who would be happy to be asked to take a DNA test? You are acting like her father, but you ask to prove her identity... I would be angry too if you did it. Her accepting you as a father should be enough. You shouldn't have gotten greedy.

—I believe with all my heart that she is my daughter. I am asking for proof so that there is evidence. Now I have a daughter. And she is my only daughter. I wanted the test result so that if something happened to me, she could legally get everything I have. It's also so my parents can't reject her.

To be honest, I understood Chet very well. Someone of his status, who had legitimate evidence in hand, could be very useful. Otherwise, children all over the country will claim that they are your children.

—I'll try to explain it to you. Everything was going well. You ruined it

—Please help me, Khun Nueng.”

—I don't know what I can do, but I'll try.

A-Nueng messaged me to say she was waiting in front of the mall and wanted to go hang out in my room to kill time. She seemed normal. There were no signs of sadness or frustration.

—I thought you would be more upset about what happened.

—I am. I did not like at all. But there's no reason to take my frustration out on you... So where's the recording? Have you done it?

—How did you know that I already knew?

—Because you seemed very grumpy when my father wanted me to go to tutoring school. You don't want others to ruin your plan. You are too much of a perfectionist.

I twisted my mouth a little before sending her the clip from my cell phone. A-Nueng gives me her Duchenne smile and I heard it as soon as I caught it. I was a little embarrassed

Crazy...

—Your voice is very pleasant to listen to. If I listen to it every day, I will surely enter university. I promise I will listen to it after every meal and before I go to bed. I think I'll memorize every word.

“Don't overdo it.” I stood up, feeling proud of myself. Just finish it and I'll question you at 10 p.m. every night. If you can't answer me, we won't see each other for a day

—What happens if I can't answer two questions?

—Two days.

—God. That's too difficult.

—So you have to concentrate.

—Won't you miss me?

—No. Don't flatter yourself.

—Argh.

Everything was going according to plan. A-Nueng went to spend some time in my room and I left her at her house. After finishing my personal routine, I immediately sent my questions through the LINE chat app. A-Nueng did her homework well... She could answer me.

—Good job. My recording was not wasted.

[Then you also have to listen to my recording. If you can't answer me, I will kiss you on the cheek.]

Shortly after, the little girl sent me her recording. I put on my headphones and lay down on the bed to listen to his recording. Her cute nasal tone of voice echoed in my head as if she were sitting here next to me. Her honest reading made me smile.

She was good.

**Marisa made a deal with Satan: she would give anything to be successful in life, including having everything a human being didn't even dream of having. Satan immediately accepted the deal and gave Marisa ten years to live. After that, Satan would return to ask her for something important that she couldn't give him.

—What can I not give except my life? If you want my life, I won't make a deal with you.

—It doesn't have to be a life. You will know what is more important than your life, your breath, and your death when the time comes.

—I can not think of anything. But it's okay. As long as you don't ask for my life, I can give it to you. But you have to grant me beauty, money and everything a human being wants to have.

—That's not a problem at all, silly human... You will know that all external wealth and possessions are not important at all, be ignorant**

A-Nueng read in a low and deep voice when it was Satan's part. A smile of adoration appeared on my face. And then I got to the last part.

**I agree with Satan. Fame and wealth weren't important at all... If I had to make that deal, I would do it.

I preferred to be poor or die. Maybe it's because I knew it was the most important thing in life. I couldn't even stand the thought of Satan taking that away from me.

Do you know what that is...

It's you.

I love you, Aunt Nueng**

As I heard the last part, I put my hand on my heart, overwhelmed. A-Nueng still used her unique nasal tone of voice, but it was full of seriousness and emotions. It was so powerful that I couldn't help but feel ashamed. I was so surprised by the strange sensations I was feeling that I took off the headphones and threw them away. Damn. Why did she confess her love to me just when I was about to go to bed? She was good.

But I was still just a girl.

19. Okay.

My study plan was going well. We had already been sending each other recordings for two weeks. For A-Nueng, listening to my recording to study for her exam was good because she didn't have to read as much. And having her record the novel for me was a moment of relaxation for her.

******Marisa became the most beautiful and richest woman in the world as a result of the deal. No one could match her. She got everything she wanted.

After receiving the perfect wish, she started living her boring life. She didn't want anything else in life because she already had everything and had the perfect life. Sometimes Marisa simply wanted to commit suicide because life was no longer interesting. Until one day, eight years after the agreement, her best friend, 'Parn-Net', asked Marisa to break up with an ex she had never met and had only spoken to on the phone. Her friend asked Marisa to break up with her ex over the phone because they looked alike. Because her life was

empty and she had nothing to do, she casually accepted and completely forgot about it.

I guess that's why we need inspiration in life. If we never let ourselves down and are successful in every way, there is nothing you want to do in life... It was lucky that I had you as my goal. The harder it is to get you, the more valuable you are.

I love you, Aunt Nueng.**

A-Nueng ended each recording with -I love you, Aunt Nueng-. It was like that was her signature.

And it seemed like I had gotten used to her confession of love. It had become something I heard every day, and if I didn't hear it, it would be like I hadn't drank water or eaten. It would be as if something were missing.

I pressed stop and thought about the novel A-Nueng recorded for me. Now that I thought about it... after Marisa was granted her wish, she was probably like me. There was nothing she couldn't get.

I got into the university I wanted.

I entered the college I wanted.

I had to leave the palace and no longer live under my grandmother's shadow... Life is not always easy, but the ability to stand on my own two feet motivated me to keep going, even when I fell. Maybe if I kept living the perfect life my grandmother gave me, I'd get so bored I'd kill myself.

A life that is too good is not good, really.

And now I had a new motivation, which was to get A-Nueng into the university I attended. It had been a long time since I had been so determined. A-Nueng gave me hope. She inspired me to get up in the morning and prepare her study plan.

Ah... That day I was also going to cook for my friend's daughter. It was a reward for the good girl.

No... I accidentally watched a cooking clip while browsing on my phone and thought it would be funny. I remember my grandmother raising me with the carrot and stick approach. If I was good, my grandmother would give me extra money for pocket expenses or let me go to bed after 10 p.m.

And A-Nueng had been a good girl. So, I was cooking delicious food as a reward for the cheerful

girl. It was a rare occasion when someone like M.L. Sippakorn cooked

It was the first time I was going to wait for A-Nueng at her tutoring school. And I was sure that when the little girl came out, she would be happy to see that I, who have never shown that I care, cooked for her. Of course... I had to be happy. If she wasn't happy, I will...

Nothing occurred to me...

Finally, it was time for her to come out. Children from all over Bangkok were flocking out of the tutoring school and returning home. I looked around for my friend's daughter in the crowd of kids who came smelling like a student... which I hated. It didn't matter, kids this age had this smell.

I was dizzy...

—Tia Nueng.

—Nueng... Folk?

I, who had not yet let out a smile, quickly regained my composure when I saw the boy from school next to A-Nueng leaving with her. A-Nueng was quick to grab my arm like she normally did and smiled at me.

—How did you get here? Didn't you go to the market to draw today?

—It turns out that it was nearby.

A-Nueng looked curiously at the plastic box inside the plastic bag.

—What did you bring with you?

—Nothing.

—They look like boxes that used to contain food
-And the nosy kid snatched the box out of my hand and smelled it. There is food there.

—I bought it.

—Do they give it to you in this box? Where did you buy it? They use very expensive packaging.

I was too lazy to respond, so I changed the subject to try to divert A-Nueng's attention from the box I brought.

—Do you come to tutoring school together? Why didn't you tell me this?

A-Nueng looks at Folk indifferently.

—It turns out that he is coming too. We don't have friends so we sit together to study together, it's

better than studying alone

—I didn't need anyone when I entered university

—It's because you're very intelligent.

—Correct. What can I expect from stupid children?

And everything was silent. Folk, who has been listening silently, looked at his watch and raised his hands to show his respects to me before apologizing.

—Goodbye, Aunt Nueng.

—Call me, Khun Nueng. Haven't I already told you?

Because the mood was already sour, when I spoke, it seemed as if I looked down on him like I normally did, A-Neng quickly dismissed Folk and turned to smile at me in an attempt to lighten the mood.

—See you next Tuesday.

—Goodbye... Goodbye, Khun Nueng.

Folk did as he was told and apologized while my neck remained stiff. All the students had returned home, so only A-Nueng and I were left in the area.

—Come on, Aunt Nueng. It's late.

—Aha.

—Where did you go today?

We both remained silent. A-Nueng slowly removes her hand from my arm and hugs her backpack in front of her. I looked at the cheerful girl, who suddenly became shy.

—What's happening?

—Nothing.

—It's obvious that there is something...

—I don't know what to do. It seems like you're mad at me. If I'm too happy, you can be angrier and scare me away.

—I'm not angry... And why are you suddenly so shy now? You're usually very insensitive when I chase you away.

—No matter how insensitive I am, I still feel bad if you chase me away too often. When you love someone, you don't want to be their bother.

—People who love each other tell each other everything.

—What didn't I tell you?

—Your tutoring.

—I already told you that I'm taking intensive math tutoring classes.

—But you forgot to tell me the details: that you are taking the course with Folk.

—He is nothing important.

That made me, who was frustrated, feel a little better. So I turned to look at the girl with glasses, who was looking at the ground not knowing what to do.

—Really?

—Of course. I tell you everything. You know it.

I nodded my head and let out a slight smile. A-Nueng, who was still confused, continued speaking.

—You're acting like you're jealous.

— Uh...

And we both stayed still, as if our feet were chained to the ground. We both fell silent again. Slowly, the little girl looked at me and I looked back at her.

That was the first time I looked into the eyes of the girl who was 16 years younger than me and felt that way. Even I could feel that something inside me has changed.

Cute... Since when did she become so cute?

—I love you, Aunt Nueng.

—Tia Nueng

— Blep

—Huh?

I stuck my tongue out at her and quickly walked forward. A-Nueng, who was still in shock, hurriedly ran after me and grabbed my arm. She forced me to turn to her. I avoided her eyes and raised my other hand to cover my face. I could hear the little girl's lively laughter.

—Aunt Nueng is so cute. You've lost your composure, haven't you? Ho Ho Ho.

—You are a lady. Why are you laughing like that?

Although I complained to her, I still covered my face to prevent her from looking at me. I had to admit that I had completely lost my composure; This was by no means the cool version of me. In more than thirty years of life, this was the day in which I had lost my composure the most.

Blep? Pull out the tongue? To me, right?

—I'm glad you're jealous...

"I'm not," I lowered my hand and argued firmly. However, A-Nueng simply waved her hands as if she didn't care. Don't do this. I said I wasn't jealous. I'm just...

—Are you alone...?

—It's a little strange. I cleared my throat before raising my chin, as I regained my composure. You are under my care. So it's not okay that you don't know who you're with or what you're doing. Folk is a boy. And you told me you don't like him.

A-Nueng jumped up to hug me and rest her chin on my breasts. She spoke with a cheerful smile on her face.

—I don't like. I only like you.

—Your heart is beating hard.

I pushed A-Nueng's face before pointing my finger to stop her when she was about to run to hug me again.

—Stop playing. Let's go home.

—Alright. Alright. Today is a good day. This is enough — And we returned to our usual Aunt-Niece mode. A-Nueng wrapped her arm around mine and rested her head on my arm. She walked like someone without a spine. -I will study a lot. I'll get a good job. I will be worthy of you.

Even though I kept a straight face, I could feel my heart tickling so much it was irritating. What kind of feeling was this?

—Study a lot for yourself. Don't do it for me.

—I do it for myself. When I am worthy, I can be your lover. We can be together until we are old.

—Soap opera... Since I was born, I have never seen a couple live together until they grow old.

—If you haven't done it, let's do it. We will be the first.

—Who told you that I would grow old with you?

—I did it. You can't get away from me. You're madly in love with me I still didn't agree.

—You think I'm perfect now. But as time goes by and you gain more experience in life, you will find someone better than me. When you do, you will leave me. I'm like your mother. She was heartbroken because of me. At your age. Now she has found someone new and is about to get married. There is nothing certain in life.

—That's why your wall is so high and you're so cautious. You've never had a lover, have you?

—That's not the reason. It's because I really feel that no one is worthy of me, not even your father.

—If my mother and father are not worthy of you, then it must be me, the daughter. I am younger. I can take care of you when you are older. It is perfect.

—Stop babbling. You are so conceited. If I were a man, you would surely have many wives.

—Will I have you as one of my wives?

—Crazy. I bit my lips, but couldn't help but let out a smile. Stop talking nonsense. Have you eaten?

—Just a sausage... -And A-Nueng seemed to remember something. -Oh. Don't tell me that the

food you bought is for me.

—Well...— At first, I was going to tell her that I had cooked it myself. But I figured I'd better tell her I bought it. If it wasn't good, I could blame someone else. -AHA.

—Why did they put it in such pretty containers?

—I took it myself. “Let's save the world... Let's find a place to sit and eat,” I nodded towards the bench at a nearby bus stop. We sat down and I handed her the food. -Test it. If it's good, I'll buy it for you again.

—Let me try it first.

A-Nueng tried it immediately. I tried to keep a straight face, but I couldn't help but feel nervous as I waited for her response. And as soon as A-Nueng put the food in her mouth...

—Aunt...

—Not good?

A-Nueng did not respond. She took bigger and bigger bites. The food was gone in the blink of an eye. I blinked blankly in surprise as I watched my friend's daughter close her eyes and take the last bite.

—Are you very hungry?

—It's out of this world, delicious. Where did you buy it?

My heart moved. I tried not to smile too much.

—Here.

—It's... Delicious... You cooked it, right? — A-Nueng shook my thigh, excited. -Did you cook it? I'm right, right?

—Aha.

—Aunt! — A-Nueng raised her hands above her head in a grand gesture, as if she were carrying the world on her shoulders. This is Michelin level. It is out of this world; No, it's out of this galaxy.

—Do not exaggerate

—I'm serious. You can open a restaurant. Why are you such a good cook? How long have you been cooking?

—Just today.

—How can there be someone so perfect in this world? -A-Nueng covered her mouth with her hand

and looked at me admirably. I want to be your wife now.

—Crazy!

A-Nueng hugged me tightly and sounded determined.

—I won't let anyone have you. It's a very aggressive type of love. Please don't like my mother. Also, please don't like my father either. You have to like me.

—Is this a confession or an order...

A-Nueng's lips went straight to mine. She was dazed and had forgotten how to breathe. I immediately pushed away the little girl wearing the student uniform and covered my mouth in shock. However, the girl looked at me determinedly and hoped that I would take her seriously.

—Why did you do that?

—I don't want you to think I'm joking. Maybe I wasn't so serious at first because I knew it was impossible. But right now... I'm very serious.

—Nueng... You shouldn't do this to your aunt.

—When we looked into each other's eyes before, I knew there was something between us. You felt it too, didn't you?

—I did not feel anything. Let's go home.

I got up but I didn't know where to go because that was already the bus stop. Besides, I didn't want to leave the little girl alone at that time of night. So in the end, I could only try to stay away from her. I closed my eyes and reflected.

Damn... How did I let this feeling take over me? She is my friend's daughter.

—You are jealous.

—Why do you keep talking about this?

—You're starting to see me as a woman.

—Nueng!!! -I looked intently at my friend's daughter, all serious. I tried very hard to maintain my composure and act maturely to prevent her from wasting her time. I've let it go all this time. But today you crossed the line. I'll pretend it didn't happen

—I can't do this. And I don't think you can do it either.

—If you're going to be like that, we shouldn't see each other again.

—I love you, Aunt Nueng.

—Don't make me answer that... I despise you.

Those words I let out made the little girl look at me and go blank. Then she looked down and nodded willingly.

—Alright.

She was being so obedient I couldn't believe it.

20. I said it

That was the first time M.L.

Sippakorn: I had a sleepless night.

I had had sleepless nights before, but it was because of my resentment towards my grandmother. I kept thinking about what I would do when I graduated, which could cause my grandmother tremendous pain. But that was 5 or 6 years ago. This was the first time in recent years that I got out of bed with dark circles around my eyes.

It was 4 in the morning and I still hadn't slept. At 6 in the morning my eyes were still wide open. So in the end I visited my little Sam at her workplace for the first time. I sat in her office, irritated. Oh... I also brought something that I cooked while my mind was racing to give it to my sister.

—You've never been to my office. And you bring me food. You scare me...

—Scared of what?— I looked askance at my sister, confused, while my little sister rubbed her

arms.

— Will I die?

Was my sister making fun of me? But she seemed so serious. That's why I was confused. So instead of laughing at the joke, I was even angrier.

The truth is that I was angry since the day before.

—That's not fun.

—Now I really think this is scary. You're frowning. When you feel depressed, you usually try to mask it by smiling or laughing. But you frown like you can't control your facial muscles

My little sister knew my mask well. So she was analyzing my mood like a professional. I looked into Sam's beautiful eyes and asked the most ridiculous question I had ever asked.

Believe...

—What is the age difference between you and Mon?

—Is this the reason you come to see me with this frown?

—Answer my question.

The little girl calmed down when she saw that I wasn't joking with her at all. Of course I would not do it. This was not the time to have a good time.

—8

—Aren't you afraid that people will look at you strangely?

—I look much younger than my age.

I squinted at my sister as she confidently said that and I couldn't help but laugh. The little girl looked at me surprised that I was laughing for no reason.

—You're laughing? I didn't even tell you another joke.

—You are naturally pretty.

—Why did you suddenly ask me that? You never cared before

—Well... I squirmed uncomfortably. Sometimes I envied Sam for having such mouthy friends. (That's what our grandmother called Sam's friends.) They could talk about everything. Although I only have one best friend who confessed her love to me and I suggested that she take some medication to get rid of her baby before the naughty A-Nueng was born...

This must be some kind of karma from my past life.

—Good what? You paused for so long.

—There is someone very young clinging to me.

—Oh... How young is he?

—Very young.

—25?

—No.

22?

—No.

—20.

—No.

—How young is young?

—18.

—You must be very careful. Kids these days can't be trusted. Maybe he's trying to manipulate you into falling in love with him, and then he'll abandon you. Or maybe he knows you're an M.L. rich, so he wants money from you. Men are scary. Except our father...

—He is not a man.

—Huh!?

Sam's jaw dropped. She was so adorable that I had to close it before giving her a light pat on the shoulder.

—She is my friend's daughter. It's no big deal. It just irritates me... So you and Mon, 8 years old, huh?

—But you... Wow. -Sam raises her fingers to count in shock. -That's 16. You don't have to want to beat me so much. My girlfriend is 8 years younger than me, so you want to double that?

—I'm not saying I'll let her be my girlfriend. I was just asking. I'm going back. Talking to you is so useless.

—Nueng. -Sam grabbed my hand to stop me and looked me in the eyes. -This girl must be bothering you a lot. I've never seen you like this before. You are not yourself at all. You can hide your feelings from our grandmother, but you can't when it comes to this girl. You seem very anxious.

—Am I so obvious?

My sister pushed me to sit next to her before she nodded in response.

—Yeah. What happened? There must be something else. You can tell me. I know you don't have friends. I feel sorry for you.

Could I slap my own sister? But because Sam was so naive, she spoke her mind without any filter. So I could only laugh wearily.

Well. I am really pitiful.

—Well... there is something. Let's say I'm here to relax

I finally told Sam about A-Nueng, from the first time we met to the most recent event. Sam listened in silence. She didn't make a sound. She just bit her lips as if she was thinking.

—What you said was very harsh. I've done that to Mon before, so I know what you're feeling. Are you anxious because you're afraid A-Nueng will feel bad about it?

—No.

—Really?

—Alright. No.

—Alright. Yes, I do. — I sighed and leaned on the sofa, without strength. I didn't have the energy to do anything. Will she be really sad? That girl

—Of course. You said you despise her. There are many ways to say -no-. Or you could have reasoned with her that it's inappropriate. Hurting her with those words is worse than slapping her.

—You're disgusting.

I squeezed Sam's cheek so hard that a "slap" sound was heard. The little girl looked at me stunned. I tilted my head curiously.

—Does it really hurt more than a slap?

—Sometimes you are really stupid.

—Does it hurt more when I call you stupid, given that you have the biggest ego in the world, than receiving a slap?

The muscles in my face twitched as I felt really frustrated. Our tests ended there. And it made me realize that...

—It really hurt more than receiving a slap. Thank you, little girl.

I smiled at my sister and prepared to leave before looking at the food I brought and taking it with me.

—Oh? Didn't you bring me that?

—Yeah. But I'll tell you another day. I'll use this to try to reconcile with someone first.

—Wow. You're kind of cute.

That was the first time in my life that I really felt guilty. Sam was right. If A-Nueng was wrong, I should have reasoned with her. Using harsh words did not lead to a good result. It only hurt the other person's feelings. How happy would the girl be? She must have been really hurt.

Ah... she probably wouldn't dare come see me after what I said. So I had to go to her.

At night, I went to wait for A-Nueng at her school. Everything continued as usual. The environment was noisy and smelly, which made me dizzy. But that day something was different... It was already four in the afternoon and A-Nueng had not left school yet.

Or did she know I would be there to try to reconcile with her?

But how could she know that? I had never tried to reconcile with anyone before in my life.

After thinking about it, I realized that A-Nueng would not appear, so I needed to use my last resort. I called A-Neng on the phone. I rarely called her. Normally, I would just send her voice messages. But this time it was different. If I sent her voicemails and she read them but didn't respond, I wouldn't know what else to do.

It's okay... There was always a first time for everyone.

The doorbell made my heart race. A-Nueng answered the call and sounded normal. There wasn't even a hint of stress in her voice.

But there was no sign of her usual liveliness either.

[Yes, Aunt Nueng?]

[Ah, you're silent... You probably accidentally pressed the call button.]

—No. I am here.

I could guess that A-Nueng was about to hang up, so I spoke quickly. The other end of the line went silent, but I could tell she hadn't hung up.

—Nueng.

[Auntie called, mom... It's not a prank call.]

A-Nueng seemed to be talking to someone. Hearing that, I know that she was with Piengfah. And suddenly, the voice on the other end of the line changes to my best friend's voice without me asking to speak to her.

[Khun Nueng calls as if she knows what you want. Don't interrupt my time with my daughter.]

—Why are you together?

[Mother and daughter being together is normal, right?]

—But you two usually aren't. So it's not normal

[Well... you can say that. Today my daughter didn't go to school, so I asked her out. A-Nueng came to eat with me... Don't interrupt our loving and pleasurable moment. I'm making good progress.]

—What progress?

[I got A-Nueng to move in with me, of course. She said she was going just now because she doesn't think she can get into the university she wants...]

—Put A-Nueng on the phone

[No.]

—Piengfah.

When I used my deep voice, my friend knew I was serious, so she returned the phone to its owner. I spoke before A-Nueng could say anything because I was aware that the little girl was disoriented by what happened the day before.

—I'm trying to reconcile with you.

—I said I'm trying to reconcile with you.

[Tia Nueng...]

—Aunt was wrong yesterday. Aunt was stunned. I've never kissed anyone... No, I have. It doesn't matter. Let's say I'm trying to reconcile with you. Aunt is sorry for having been too harsh with my words. I know I hurt you. I couldn't sleep and I came to school to make peace with you, but you weren't there. I brought you food that I also cooked. It's probably a waste. Bla Bla Bla Bla

I babbled nonsense non-stop. I just said what came to mind. If I could speak in Morse code, I would.

Despite all my babbling, A-Nueng remained silent. That made me even more anxious.

—Are you really mad at me?

[Sob.]

Now I was the one who remained silent. I could hear Piengfah on the other end of the line. She asked what was wrong with her daughter. But I could only hear sobbing. My heart hurt so much I had to grab it. I didn't know why I was crying if I was apologizing.

—Don't cry... good girl

[I'm so happy... Aunt Nueng doesn't hate me.]

—Aunt doesn't hate you.

[You make me cry... But yesterday, Aunt Nueng...]

—Aunt loves you.

Even I myself was shocked by what I had just blurted out. I immediately hung up because I was so embarrassed.

I said it... I said the word -love-.

How could I!

21. Be a tyrant

I felt like I was in a black hole after what I said. Everything was dark. I kept looking at the ground, feeling dizzy. After hearing what I said, A-Nueng appeared as usual and continued to ask me:

—Does Aunt Nueng love me?

—Does Aunt Nueng really love me?

—If you don't answer me, I'll go live with my mom.

—Stop being so demanding.

I bared my teeth as I looked the cheerful girl in the eyes. She was in my room so often that it was like she had been my best friend since my previous life. It did not matter. She spent most of her time studying for her exam with me as her tutor. Now that I thought about it... I didn't even know how I became her guardian.

I was also her mother on Mother's Day.

And now I was her guardian.

What will I be next time? That was very fun.

—I was just kidding. You don't have to be so serious. But you look good no matter what mood you're in. I will no longer feel unworthy. Not even if you talk bad about my parents.

—Why do you say that?

—There is no reason when it comes to love. If there were, it wouldn't be love.

And A-Nueng gave me a Duchenne smile so wide that her face was all wrinkled. If your face were a sheet of paper, it would have many wrinkles.

—Since you've been in a bad mood, I haven't been able to listen to your audio of the novel.

—Don't worry. I have my whole life to read your novels because I will be a renowned DJ that everyone will listen to. -The cheerful girl winked at me happily. -And I already know what faculty I want to study.

I turned to give her my full attention and raised my eyebrows.

—Why did you choose one? I already chose one for you.

—Huh?

—I will make you study business administration.

I said it with all the confidence in the world. When I was putting together A-Nueng's curriculum, I did some research on which college today's youth should aspire to: the college that suited today's materialistic world and would generate a good income stream.

—No way. That's not even in my consideration set. Furthermore, I have already decided that I want to study communication arts.

I immediately frowned in disagreement upon hearing that. No one had ever rejected my suggestion before. My ideas had always been impeccable because I had analyzed everything before presenting them.

—What would you do if you obtained that title?

— I will be a DJ.

—Are you really going to be a DJ? It's not like you can become one after you graduate but you have no connections.

—It has nothing to do with connections. Can't I study something because I like it and have a passion

for it?

—No. It is dead end street. Trust aunt. Get a degree in business administration or law, like your father. And then go get a master's degree abroad.

—Don't be stubborn with me.

A-Nueng's silence made me realize that she was rebelling. The once lively and pleasant atmosphere began to become tense. A-Nueng closed her books, put them in her bag and prepared to leave.

—Where are you going? Are you not going to read anymore?

—No. I don't have any plans to get the degree you want, so there's no point in reading or taking the exam. I prefer to hang out and have fun every day.

—You will have to go live with your mother if you can't enter a university here.

—Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to go live with my mother.

A-Nueng left after saying that. I watched her walk away without thinking about following her like a stupid male lead in a show running after the female lead, who was in a bad mood because they disagreed.

I had already been the one who had tried to reconcile with her too many times. I was at my maximum capacity at that time. Why did I have to do it again? And in this I was not wrong. I had analyzed everything for her. I didn't have to waste time thinking about what degree I wanted to get. But suddenly you wanted to get a degree in communication arts? A school where you would have to go into the entertainment business after graduating? How could you be successful without any connection?

I was still waiting... She hadn't returned yet.

And because I was frustrated, I called Chet, who really wanted to be a father. I told him what had happened in hopes of finding an ally. But Chet just laughed nonchalantly.

[Don't think too much about the future, Khun Nueng. Let her get whatever title she wants.]

—Do not be stupid. That's why you haven't made anything of yourself. Do you really want to be prime minister? You're dreaming. Do you plan to marry me? Maybe in your next life.

I was frustrated like never before in my life, even though I was better than anyone at masking my

emotions.

My grandmother never knew when I was frustrated or angry. A-Nueng seemed to have opened the door and was letting all my emotions spill out.

[Khun Nueng, the things we cannot control are your education, your career, and your love. How did you feel when your grandmother forced you to get the degree you didn't like?]

—But I have good intentions.

[Your grandmother too.]

—My grandmother just wanted me to be what she wanted me to be.

[I don't see any difference between M.C. Kaekai and you right now.]

My stomach dropped as Chet's comments hit me in the face. What I felt when my grandmother forced and pushed me made me reflect and soften. But I still didn't want to lose.

—But she can get any degree to be a DJ.

[Then let her get the title she wants. If you don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, you won't want to move forward. Why should I proceed with only a

candlestick in hand? Better to wait in the dark until someone rescues her. And that person who will rescue her will be Piengfah, the light that A-Nueng never thought to trust until you gave her a chance.]

—I am going to hang up. Stop lecturing me.

I hung up and started thinking about what Chet had just said. Recently, A-Nueng had been getting closer to Piengfah, while she saw me as her enemy. We just made up and I pushed her away again.

All this made me think of my grandmother. Did she feel the same way I do now? Did she want me to study law or political science because she thought it was good for me?

Maybe she didn't do all that by herself...

My grandmother loved me

Ewww... I got goosebumps. I suddenly felt overwhelmed, like I was the girl named Matchstick. I quickly shook my head and stopped thinking about my grandmother before sighing as I realized that my grandmother and I were the same.

We were -Tyrants-. I had that trait from my grandmother.

—Khun Nueng.

The housekeeper opened the door when I rang the bell of my palace. She looked at me stunned, because I had dressed to irritate my grandmother. I ripped the hole in my jeans to make it bigger than it was and paired it with a black tank top and a thin white shirt. I expected my grandmother to cry when she saw me.

From the housekeeper's reaction, he had done a good job.

—Is grandma here?

—You came to visit M.C. Using this?

—Can't?

—It's not that you can't, but you know how strict she is about proper attire. It doesn't matter. That you visit her is enough.

My grandmother was a perfectionist in every way, from clothing, makeup, hair, accessories and more.

She was someone who judged others by their outward appearance. It didn't need to be expensive, but it did need to be appropriate. Because that was what that person said.

And as soon as I appeared in the palace I designed, my grandmother, who was informed that I was visiting, slowly came down the stairs. She looked at me with fire in her eyes.

—Khun Nueng.

—My dear grandmother — I used a sharp voice, as if I were the niece who has just returned from Paris. -Did you miss me?

— Ah...

Since my grandmother remained silent, I did the same.

We stare at each other, as if we were conversing with our eyes. It was a feeling of... missing each other, I supposed. We last saw each other at our high school's centennial celebration. I didn't realize how much she had aged because I always visited her there at night. And the last time I was in the palace, I had her admitted to the hospital.

Ah... my grandmother had gotten much older.

—Have you eaten? — My grandmother came over to sit on the couch. It was softer, like someone who was tired. She didn't say anything about how she was dressed. That didn't go as planned.

—Not yet. But you don't have to worry about that. I can't eat with you. The smell of old people makes me lose my appetite.

Since my grandmother had not attacked me, I continued trying to irritate her. I hoped I could make her angry. The gray-haired old woman just sighed as she tried to be patient.

—Did you come because you want to fight with me?

—Yeah.

—I do not want to fight. Then I'll go back up to bed.

—You look much older. Botox didn't help at all - I wouldn't stop. But through my harsh words, I was actually asking her about her well-being, for example, Are you okay, grandma?

—I'm old. We can't fight time

—When will you die?

—Nueng!

My grandmother's reprimand startled me and straightened me. I thought about the past, when she

used that tone of voice every time I did something wrong. Ah... I had done it. I was happy now.

—Do you feel that I disappoint you in every way?

—What's the point of asking me that?

—I suddenly feel the need to ask you how you feel because I disobeyed you, missed my own wedding and never came back.

—Disappointed and devastated..

—Are you angry?

—I am.

—And when you wanted to beat me, then you used Song as my replacement, did that make you feel good?

The atmosphere turned somber when I mentioned Song. Although I was not present when my sister hanged herself, I remembered how distressing it was to blame myself.

If I hadn't fled, Song wouldn't have died like this.

However, as time went by and I had blamed myself enough, I thought... Why am I to blame? I just wanted to live my life. If anyone was to blame, it should be my grandmother, who tried to control another granddaughter when she couldn't control me. From then on, I hated my grandmother even more. If I had a knife in my hand, I would have stabbed her in the chest to let her know how much pain I was in.

She was the only one to blame... It was all her fault.

—I'm coming back. I don't even know why I'm here.

When I thought about the past, my anger increased. However, I continued to keep a straight face so my grandmother wouldn't know what I was thinking. My grandmother, however, called me when I'm about to leave.

—Nueng.

—Eat with me before you leave.

The soft voice that I rarely heard took me by surprise. But since I believed that accepting her

invitation would be out of line and would make me look like a loser, I responded

—No. I have lost my appetite.

I raised my hand to show respect casually and left without turning back.

Then I appeared in front of A-Nueng's house...

In a short period of time, I had already tried to reconcile twice with the girl who was 16 years younger than me. No one had forced me to do that before... This girl was truly extraordinary.

Piengfah greeted me after ringing the doorbell; She had the expression of a curious dog.

—A-Nueng didn't come to see you? She left early this morning

That made me nervous.

—She left my room since noon. It's almost 4 p.m..

—Where is my daughter? Why did you break up so early today?

—Peaceful. I'm calling her. Stop complaining — I waved my hand at my old friend and called A-

Nueng who answered the call quickly and spoke meekly.

[Tia Nueng.]

—Where are you? Cause you're not at home?

[Where did you go? Why haven't you gone back to your room yet? I've been waiting until my legs got stiff.]

—Oh? I came to see you at your house. I have something I want to talk to you about.

[I have something I want to talk to you about too. Tell me first.]

—No. You first.

...

And we both stayed silent. It wasn't because we both wanted to win. We just wanted to hear what each one had to say.

[Okay... I'll go first. We fight so often that I'm tired, Aunt Nueng.]

She felt the same as me...

[I've thought about it. Maybe what I chose wasn't a good choice. You're perfect. You are obviously more progressive than me, who is just a girl. Maybe... If you...]

—You can get any title you want.

[Don't be sarcastic. I'm trying to reconcile with you.]

—I'm also trying to reconcile... — I looked at Piengfah, who was eavesdropping, and covered my mouth with my hand before continuing as silently as I could. -I came to see you at your house, but you're not here...

[You're trying to reconcile with me again... This is great. Do you care about me that much?]

I didn't want to admit it...

—It's your life. You have to choose your path. This is how it should be

[But I could understand if you chose a path for me. I love you, Aunt Nueng.]

—Me too...

I put my hand on my hip, feeling embarrassed. Since Piengfah was next to me, I couldn't speak

freely. But at a time like that, sweet, encouraging words are probably more important than my ego.

I couldn't be like my grandmother... I'm Sippakorn.

[You too, what?]

I could feel that the person on the other end of the line was excited. It was as if she knew exactly what I was going to say. When I felt that, I suddenly wanted to get revenge on her.

—I'm reasonable.

[Is it so hard to say you love me? It doesn't matter. We've made a lot of progress... But are you sure you want me to choose my own path?]

—Don't ask me if I'm sure. Someone like Sippakorn does not go back on his word

[You will be a perfect husband.]

—Uh...

[I love you, Aunt Nueng.]

I tried not to smile before answering vaguely.

—Ah-huh. Me too.

[MY GOD!]

I had a big smile on my face as I hung up. I turned to look Piengfah in the eyes. My best friend looked at me with eyes I couldn't read. Then she spoke with such a serious tone of voice that my mood changed so quickly that I didn't know how to feel.

—We need to talk. Khun Nueng

—About?

—About your relationship with A-Nueng.

22. Love Scene.

Piengfah invited me into the house to talk in the garden. I was going to tell her not to act like we were in a show because I didn't have a garden like Eden here in Thailand, and the sunlight there constantly reminded us that there was karma in this world. If it was so hot on earth, how hot would it be in hell, where I was headed?

But what could I do? It wasn't my house. If the owner of the house invited me to sit in the garden, I had to obey. There were also mosquitoes. Couldn't she at least offer me mosquito repellent?

—What do you have to tell me?

I started the conversation when I saw my friend simply taking a sip of her Earl Gray tea, which tasted exactly the same as a local brand tea (Tra Mue).

—This is A-Nueng. I'm worried about her.

—What do you care about? You're afraid of her getting into the college she wants, right? -I smiled

from the corner of my mouth mockingly. If I'm the one taking care of her, there's no way she won't come in. After all, I am Sippakorn

—I'm not worried about that.

—So what?

—I'm worried about my daughter.

—You're back where we started.

—I'm worried because my daughter seems to love you too much -Piengfah looks at me seriously. It scares me.

—Why are you scared?

I squirmed uncomfortably when my friend looked at me like that. Although I hadn't done anything wrong, I suddenly felt like I had a fever.

—I'm afraid you'll hurt her feelings, like you did mine.

—It's not the same.

—You say it as if you accept her love.

—You are crazy! -I screamed out of tune when I heard that. Even I could feel myself panicking. - How old am I?

—I know. I know that someone like you wouldn't even take a look at a girl like A-Nueng. But my daughter probably doesn't think that. She's very young. She loves you with all her heart. And you adore her, giving her hope. Have you drawn a clear line that you can only be her aunt, i.e. her mother's friend?

Piengfah wasn't trying to set limits on me or anything like that. She just wanted to make sure that I wasn't giving A-Nueng any hope.

—Of course I did.

—Good. So I won't be so worried. I thought you'd never said anything like that to her. I'm afraid she will be lost if you break her heart.

—I'm not that cruel... You taught me a lesson

I said it full of guilt. But I tried to sound as normal as possible. Like I said, I didn't want anyone to know what I was thinking or feeling. My calm demeanor was my safe haven.

—I feel relieved now. A-Nueng loves you very much, Khun Nueng.

—Aha.

—You love her too, right?

We looked at each other's eyes. Piengfah didn't think I loved A-Nueng deeply or anything like that. She probably meant that I adored her as the daughter of a friend.

—Love is better than hate.

—You feel guilty for trying to get me to get rid of her, don't you? You actually have a heart. I'm glad you love A-Nueng.

I sipped the Earl Gey tea and winked at my friend.

—Ah-huh... I adore her.

That was the most appropriate thing someone in my position could say.

A-Nueng and I reconciled again... Our relationship was like the stock market. What aunt and niece pair get angry so often? It's like we're lovers.

—I haven't read your novel lately.

—Since I can't wait for the pleasant-voiced DJ to read it to me, I have to read it myself -I smiled at the girl who was reading on my bed. A— Nueng took the novel and opened it to the page she had marked as a favorite.

—Oh. Have you made it to the love scene?

—I read past that part, but I bookmarked it because it's exciting.

—You are quite naughty

—But it's good that you've already read it. It would be strange if you read it out loud to me.

I shrugged a little as I said what I felt. However, A-Nueng seemed to have a funny idea. She quickly sat up and cleared her throat.

—How strange would that be? let's try it

—Huh?

—I'll read you the love scene.

—Stop.

—A DJ has to be able to do something like this. Do you think cartoon characters can produce the sounds of a love scene on their own? Voice actors must do it.

—Have you seen that kind of thing?

—Alright. Let me read it to you.

She didn't answer me. She proceeded to read the emotionally charged love scene that I had marked as a favorite, completely ignoring my question.

—Marisa and Nubdao had never done anything like this before, so they both looked embarrassed. But if they stopped, it wouldn't happen...

—Stop.

—The characters don't stop.

—I mean, you can stop reading now.

—Marisa took the initiative, letting herself be carried away by her instinct. Her hand slowly slid under Nubdao's shirt. Tenderly, she moved her fingers over her body, from her abdomen to her breasts, until she felt the heartbeat. She never imagined she would do it. I wasn't turned on by a woman's body because she had the same things. However, the sensation she felt in her fingers made her unable to stop. She wanted Nubdao to make more noise.

— Ah...

—Umm...

A-Nueng's voice left me speechless, especially the-Ah-. It made the image of the character who was

doing that voice appear in my head. But despite my protest, A-Nueng showed no signs of stopping.

—Nubdao was breathing hard. Because her heart was working so hard, her body temperature was rising. She didn't know what that sensation was, but the fingers on her nipple made her lose control. Marisa could see the woman beneath her arch her back, as if Nubdao wanted her to do more. That encouraged her to keep going. She used her mouth to caress every part of Nubdao's soft skin without removing her bra or underwear. While her fingers stimulated, she also wanted to take over every part of her mouth.

—Dao... Let me test you.

—Although Marisa made a request, she did not wait for her response. As soon as she unclasped Nubdao's bra, her mouth took over what was underneath while her hand caressed the other side. She stroked until the pink nipple hardened in her mouth.

I immediately took the book from A-Nueng's hands and tried to keep a straight face. The cheerful girl, who was still having fun reading the book aloud, pouted to show that she was not happy.

—I'm not done yet.

—It's enough. You're just a girl. "You shouldn't be reading something like this," I clutched the book tightly under my armpits before putting it under the table. I wish you were so anxious when you study.

—I was. You saw it. Reading novels is my relaxation.

—That's enough for now. I'll get you some Doraemon cartoons to read. This type of novel is...

—Exciting.

I was about to say useless, but the girl interrupted me before I could finish the sentence.

—This type of novel is not good for young girls.

—But it says it is for an audience of 18 years or older and I'm already 18. People my age: if you tell them not to do something, they will be even more eager to do it. Argh... I'm excited after reading that.

—What! -I screamed so loudly that A-Nueng laughed out loud.

—I'm excited. Geez... I'm just being honest. You're so old-fashioned. These kinds of things are natural. Even if you stop me from reading it. You

know that grabbing and petting are normal at the all-girls school.

I wanted to argue, but everything A-Nueng just said was true. When I read how old-fashioned the elders were in our society and that they didn't want free boxes of condoms at school, I thought they were narrow-minded. I commented on it many times, as if I were so progressive that it seemed like I came from the future. But now, after listening to A-Nueng read that love scene, I realized that I wasn't as open-minded as I thought.

—It's...

—Let's talk frankly. The more naughty we talk, the closer we will become.

The look in A-Nueng's eyes as she spoke smiling made me see her in a different light. She was very polite, but very naughty. And she was expressing herself very openly.

—What do you mean?

—Have you had sexual relations?

—Uh...

That was too frank!! I was stunned, but if I showed it, I would look like a loser. A thirty-year-

old woman couldn't lose to a girl.

—Before answering that, answer me first... Have you had sexual relations?

—No.

What a relief...

—Yeah. You're not yet at an appropriate age. I'm not saying you can't, but you better focus on your study for now...

What I said contradicted itself so much that I was even upset with myself.

—So, have you had sexual relations?

There it was... She had returned the question to me.

—Not with a man.

—You've done it with a woman. A-Nueng nodded to acknowledge that, without seeming surprised. I think you've already hinted at it before, if I remember correctly. Since when? Since high school?

—No. When it was most appropriate.

The little girl happily poked her face out, looking really curious.

—How do you feel?

—That's too personal.

—Is it like in the novel? You're very hot. Your heart races. You get distressed if they don't release you. It's like there's a magnet attracting you to exchange...

“That's a soap opera.” I laughed and shrugged. It's not that good. It's just physical. It's all lust.

—Describe it. I want to know it.

I assumed that children that age were very curious about those things. They asked questions non-stop and they're difficult questions to answer in detail. Now I understood parents with small children who asked them how they were born.

—What do you want me to describe to you? It's like you eat when you're hungry and sleep when you're sleepy.

—Ah... I understand it a little.

—You understand it very easily -I looked at the intelligent girl and felt relieved that I didn't have to

answer anymore.

—It's like when I feel distressed and I spray water...

—Huh? Spray water?

—Help yourself. In a way I understand it.

What my friend's daughter had just casually said amazed me and I could only blink blankly. I wanted to know what she understood.

—How can you understand that?

—Well... my friends at school told me that there is a way to help ourselves. It's similar to how kids help themselves. For girls, we spray water. I tried it

—So I understand how you describe sex. You eat when you're hungry. You sleep when you're sleepy. And if you want to free yourself... right? — A-Nueng winked at me, as if it were something natural.

—I used that experience when I read the love scene and said -ah— in the same way while reading the novel aloud. Did it sound real? Was it like when you had sex? Auntie... why is your face so red?

I put my head on the table because I couldn't sit up straight anymore. So this was a girl from the 2000s, huh? They were so advanced that I felt old.

I wanted to faint.

23. The feeling that has changed

I think I run into Sam too often lately. We hadn't seen each other in over 6 years before this. So why did I want to meet her so often lately? It was like I wanted someone to talk to.

I must admit that I had no friends...

—You've been watching us since we started eating. Do you have something you want to say?

Sam said this when she saw that I was just looking at the couple with my arms crossed over my chest. Although they could not marry, they were openly together.

—Is it good to have a younger lover?

The two looked at each other awkwardly. Probably thinking it was strange for a sister to ask this. Is there any age difference problem? Like... a gap, that is, communication problems.

—Honestly, Khun Sam is the hardest person to communicate with that I know.

I agreed...

—What do you mean by that? -My sister looked at her lover, as if she didn't want to admit it. Why is it difficult to communicate with me?

—Let's say I understand you, Mon. What I meant by -communication problem— is not that we don't understand each other... Um. How should I explain this? You understand me, right, Mon?

—I understand. -Doraemon laughed as she saw me anxiously trying to explain it to her.

—There are some problems. But Khun Sam and her friends are very friendly and welcomed me with open arms from the beginning, so there is no problem. If there is any, it is mainly because Khun Sam is confusing and clueless at times. So I have to work a little harder to understand it.

—And you, Sam? -I turned to ask my sister's opinion on this too. How does it feel to have a younger lover?

—Well...-my little sister looked up, like someone who is thinking a lot. It is exciting. Mon is lively.

She likes the color pink

I really thought my sister was hard to understand. She was answering my question, right? Why did I feel like I didn't get my answer?

—Why do you suddenly ask this... Ah. Is it that 18 year old girl?

Sam asked, as if she had just remembered. When the conversation reached this point, I suddenly felt like my chair was on fire. Doraemon, who was sitting next to her lover, seemed excited. It was like she already knew about this.

—I'm just asking for your opinions.

—The Khun Nueng, who is normally very confident and always smiling, seems to be losing her composure at this moment.

My sister's lover looked at me and smiled with those heart-shaped kissable lips. I bared my teeth a little and immediately waved my hand to change the subject.

—I'm not talking about this. Let's change the subject.

—Okay, let's talk about something else. Sam said this while smiling because she didn't want to put me

in a difficult situation. I heard from the palace housekeeper that you went to visit our grandmother.

I wasn't sure if I really wanted to change the subject at that point. But it didn't matter. It was better than talking about A-Nueng because I didn't want to answer any questions about that.

—I did it.

—What happened to you?

—Many things. I wanted to see how old she is now.

—Ah. In other words, did you want to know how she's doing? My sister's lover interpreted what I had just said as if she knew me well. This girl. I borrowed money from her once or twice and she acted like she knew everything about me.

—She is not sick like you told me. She's just older.

—Our grandmother is very sick.

I didn't want to make a big deal about the granddaughter who adored our grandmother because Sam tended to overreact when it came to her.

—You should visit her often if you are so worried about her. Understood?

—Don't be so mean. You'll regret it when she's gone.

—Do I look like someone who would be so sad if our grandmother wasn't around? Talk about something else. Why do we only talk about things that are not happy today? Oh. I know, Mon... I looked up at the beautiful woman, who was the youngest person at the table. I was curious about human anatomy. I'm curious about something. Since you are the youngest and most open-minded among us here

—Ah-huh.

Doraemon sipped her drink through her straw as she waited for my question.

—Have you ever helped yourself?

And she ended up spraying water all over the food on our table. It was fortunate there wasn't much left; Otherwise, we would have to eat food with the water sprayed by Mon.

—Why do you ask this? Mon choked until her face turned red and she was out of breath. -you took

me by surprise

“I’m asking scientifically about human anatomy and the Da Vinci Code.” I simply shrugged and nodded in Sam’s direction.

—The deeper our conversations are, the closer we will become, especially if it is about something bad — I came up with this idea of a forward-thinking girl like A-Nueng. Do you see how open I am? The two women in front of me should follow my example.

—It’s true. -Sam nodded, agreeing with me. The more naughty we are, the more united we will be.

—Khum Sam, but this is not something we can talk about casually. It’s very private

—But this is my sister. Alright. You can talk openly with her... Yes, Khun Nueng

Sam answered me instead. I resisted the urge to smile and instead gave Doraemon a thumbs up in admiration. So it’s not just men who help themselves. Women can do it too.

—We are close, Mon.

—I have never done that.

—Oh? But my sister said that...

—I didn't mean Mon.

—Who are you referring to then?

—I mean to me. Sam pointed to herself. -Me, Sam.

—You have... Ah... — I stood speechless as my sister nodded and admitted it frankly.

—Yeah. The deeper our conversations are, the closer we are, right?

And we all continued eating our food calmly. When it came to my sister doing that, for some reason I wanted to stick my face in the hot pot.

I was so embarrassed...

I couldn't get what A-Nueng had said out of my head. Although she acted normal when she was with my friend's daughter, I often thought about the voice she made when she read the novel.

'Ah...'

Although it was just a voice, I think my imagination was flying. I sometimes thought about what made that voice come out of A-Nueng's mouth

when she was lying in bed. What I was doing and how... And every revealing position I could think of appeared in my head until I felt like someone overly obsessed. It was happening at that time.

—Tia Nueng

—Tia Nueng.

I could see those full lips smiling mischievously. A-Nueng poked her head out while I was giving her private lessons. That startled me.

—What's happening? Why are you putting your face so close?

—My exam is tomorrow.

—And?

—If I can enter university, what will you give me as a reward?

I stared at those lips that my friend's daughter was using to make that nasal tone of voice. I couldn't concentrate. I slowly looked away.

—I have no money.

—Did I say I want something that requires money? -A-Nueng kept bringing her face closer and closer to mine, so I shrank my neck to try to keep the distance.

Was I afraid? I? This wouldn't do... I couldn't be a loser and give in. So in the end, I moved her face away from mine.

—What do you want? Say it.

—Can I be your lover?

—No.

—Argh... now I lack inspiration to study for my exam.

—It's our future. "Stop being stupid," I sighed. Once A-Nueng heard that, she widened her eyes and twisted my words.

—Our future? Do you see our future?

—There you have it.

—Just give me a small reward that motivates me to do well tomorrow. You are my best motivation right now.

—You keep playing. What do you want? Say it... but not that we are lovers.

—Ah... So -A-Nueng gave me a malicious look and put her chin in her hand. -Can I use my mouth with you?

—What!

I put my hand on my chest in shock. Using your mouth... Your mouth!

That went far beyond kissing.

It wasn't just about grabbing and fondling girls in all-girls schools.

—I mean, kiss you on the mouth.

—Kiss Me? — I licked my lips because I felt they were very dry before rubbing my face. -Just kiss, right?

—Does it just mean that you agree?

—No. -When I said that, A-Nueng immediately slouched like someone who lacked motivation in life.

—What's up with you and kisses? I asked.

—This is how people express love. I want us to use our tongues, breathe deeply, and converse with our lips instead of words. It's intimate.

A-Nueng's voice made my heart tremble. Did I have to give so many explanations? What was happening with girls today?

—You can kiss me on the cheek.

—I already did that. It's not the same.

—You're being greedy.

—I want all of you.

—What!? -I was stunned again. But A-Nueng quickly changed the subject.

—So, can I hold you to sleep for a night?

—Huh?

—Can I hold you to sleep tonight? -The voice that asked for tenderness weakened me. It also made me feel uncomfortable in some ways. -You can see it as if you were giving me superpowers. So I'll have a good night's sleep.

—Just hugging?

A-Nueng squinted at me, smiled at the corner of her mouth.

—Yeah.

Why did that smile make me nervous?...

It was time to go to bed...

This was the first time A-Nueng spent the night with me. We had already informed her family that she would study late and that she would go to the exam from here in the morning. I was starting to feel unsure if this was a good idea after all. The person currently sharing my bed with me had been the sole cause of my lack of sleep recently, as I had been troubled by recurring visions of strange images. So I was feeling a little uncomfortable at that moment.

After we showered, A-Nueng was reading the novel on my bed, dressed in a t-shirt and shorts. She swung her white legs and hummed happily. I looked at her relaxed demeanor with mixed feelings.

I thought she was adorably cute.

And... somehow sexy.

But of course... She was only 18 years old. She hadn't fully grown yet.

“Go to bed a little early tonight so you’ll feel fresh when you wake up,” I said this as I sat on the bed and watched her smile happily. -How sure are you about tomorrow’s exam?

—My head is full of knowledge. I won’t make any mistakes. I don’t want to disappoint you. If I have to go live with my mother, you will feel very alone. I can’t stand seeing my lover sad.

—You’re just talking nonsense.

The word -lover— made me bare my teeth before I told her to turn to the side of the bed to give me room to lie down. A-Nueng still had the novel in her hands.

—Won’t you sleep?

—I’m in the fun part.

—Are you rereading it?

—They’re doing it.

—Are you reading that page again?

—I was about to take the novel from her hands, but she put it out of my reach. Plus, she started reading it out loud to make fun of me. -Ah...

Marisa. It feels good right there. Faster. I'm about to...

—Nueng.

—How do you feel when...

The question took me by surprise. I snatched the novel from her and threw it as far as I could. I turned to tell A-Nueng in all seriousness, perhaps because I was embarrassed.

—Go to sleep.

—Alright. You don't have to act so serious.

I immediately walked over to turn off the light next to the bed and turned my back on her. A-Nueng took this opportunity to put her arm around my waist and hug me tightly.

—Your back is so wide... And you just took a shower. -I could feel something moving on my back. I could hear her sniffing me from the spine to the back of my neck. -You smell so good.

—Sleep

—This is the first time we slept together. I'm so excited.

—Go to sleep

—Arg...

There was air blowing on my neck and reaching my ear. I got goosebumps all over. I was startled and sat up.

—Why are you scared? Ha ha

—Why don't you sleep? Stop playing. You have to get up early tomorrow.

—You said you would hug me, but you sleep with your back to me, so of course I can't sleep.

My back was turned to her and she had been naughty non-stop. If I faced her, what would I have to deal with? Didn't she consider me a friend of her mother at all?

—If I hug you, will you really sleep?

—Yeah.

—You promise?

Wanting to get this over with, I turned to look at her and put my arm under her neck before pulling

her in for a hug. The smell of A-Nueng's shampooed hair and soap-washed body made me feel calm somehow. But the little girl froze, which made me laugh.

—Where is the brave and naughty girl?

—I admit that I'm excited for you to hug me.

—Simply relax and go to sleep to wake up fresh for your exam.

A-Nueng put her arm around me and snuggled into my breasts like a kitten.

—Your hug is so warm

—Aha

I felt the same. Maybe it was because I rarely hugged anyone. I rarely hugged even my own sisters because I valued my personal space. I could tell that A-Nueng was really something.

Hugging someone felt good...

—When I say I love you, do you believe me?

—You say it so often that I'm starting to doubt it. "But I still believe you," I answered honestly. The little girl stepped back a little and looked at me.

—Do I have any chance?

—I'm sleepy. Go to sleep

I avoided answering her. A-Nueng did not press for an answer. She went to sleep willingly. I wasn't sure if she was really asleep.

Did she have a chance... Yes, does she?

I couldn't answer that. Nobody could. Many things told me that she and I were parallel lines. How could two people with this enormous age difference be in love? And I still thought I liked men, so I had to be very careful with my feelings. A-Nueng was too young.

She liked me now, but when she met more people, I would just be a friend of her mother. That was the reality.

It would be better if I slept... There was no point in thinking about it.

A soft touch of those lips made me stop breathing. I thought A-Nueng was asleep, but that kiss told me I was wrong. And I didn't dare open my eyes. I could only pretend to sleep as if nothing had happened.

—Can't you love me?

That question made me, who was pretending to be asleep, open my eyes and look at her. We stare at each other in the dark. And that made me...

Extend my arm to grab her neck and pull her in for a kiss.

Our lips touched softly. There was nothing more than that. We just held on to that touch for a while before walking away.

—Sweet dreams.

—Well.

Our conversation ended with that soft touch. The little girl had no more questions and finally went to sleep.

That night was like a dream...

And we both pretend it never happened.

24. Trust

A-Nueng had finished her exam. Life continued as normal. We had to wait patiently for the result for two months. It probably wouldn't be stressful for others, but for those for whom the outcome will determine their future, it's a long, agonizing wait.

Although the little girl acted like she was not under any pressure, when it came time for A-Nueng to enter her student ID to see the result, she was biting her nails with so much tension that I had to hit her hand.

—Don't bite your nails. That doesn't reflect well on your character.

—Will I get into the university I want, Aunt Nueng?

—No

That was Piengfah's voice. She was next to us and was the most stressed of all of us. She didn't want her daughter to go to college, but she also

wanted to see her succeed. The only person who was calm and acted mature was the grandmother.

—Why are you so cold? You will make your daughter lose confidence.

—If she succeeds, it would be bad for me. I don't want her to come in.

—Wow. The result is now available. I got in! -A-Nueng jumped and screamed in front of the computer. She showed the result to all of us. I got in. Grandmother. Aunt Nueng. Mother. I got in!

—Wow! My daughter is very smart. Piengfah jumped up and shouted with A-Nueng before she could finish her sentence. She forgot what she wanted. Then she fell to the ground and started crying. _You entered. So you won't live with me.

—Aunt Nueng, I came in. Now I can be with you
—

A-Nueng hugged me without caring about her mother's agony. She was so overwhelmed that she couldn't speak. I could only hug my friend's daughter in silence. I was happy and relieved at the same time. I was also proud of myself for participating in this cheerful little girl's bright future.

That's what it felt like... when the person we care for is everything we want. It was SO overwhelming.

—Good. You did it very well.

—We can be together from now on. I don't have to go anywhere -A-Nueng cried and looked at me excited. -I will grow to be what you expect of me. I'll be your good girl. only yours.

I smiled at my friend's daughter before cupping her face and nodding. Something inside me had changed.

—You have always been my good girl. Always.

—You are the best there is

Our celebration didn't end there because Chet, who wanted to act like a father, wanted to celebrate his daughter's first step toward success. He begged me to take her to eat with him. As I said, A-Nueng was the center of her parents' love and attention. But those two had to beg me to be the go-between when they wanted to spend time with their daughter.

—You did very well, daughter. You are smart like me.

I looked at Chet, who congratulated his daughter but wanted a part in her success, even though what he claimed was just an intangible gene.

—No matter how smart you are, you wouldn't have been successful if you hadn't studied.

—Then you are as determined as my father and I.

—My grandfather?

For A-Nueng, the word -grandfather— was new and strange because she had only used the word -grandmother— in her entire life. She suddenly had a lot of relatives when she was older.

—Yeah. I'll introduce him to you one day. He really wants to meet you.

—Did you tell your father that you have a daughter? What did he say?

—At first he was surprised. But I showed him A-Neng's photo when I told him about it and he adored her very much. She's so beautiful.

—How did you get my photo, father? A-Nueng was starting to feel more comfortable calling Chet "father." She seemed surprised when she found out about the photo.

—I took a photo of you without you realizing it. Now your grandparents, aunts and uncles really want you to go eat with them so they can get to know you. Let's do it.

— Ah...

Chet began to panic when he saw that A-Nueng hesitated because he was afraid that A-Nueng would not accept his side of the family.

—Your grandparents are very kind.

—It's not that. "It's just that they are strangers to her." I said it with understanding. Chet was about to argue, but when he saw me shake my head, he seemed to understand what I was saying.

—Alright. We can go step by step. We will be together for a long time. Let's talk about rewards. What do you want, my dear A-Nueng?

He was speaking very politely, like Tik again. I was so upset.

—Alright. I don't want to bother you.

—Do not be shy. I am your father. Read my lips... I love you. You can ask for whatever you want. Dad is richhhhhhh

Now he was Toh... and he bragged about his wealth like a pro. He should marry Sam. My grandmother chose the wrong niece to marry her.

—Actually, I have something I want

—Whatever it is, just say it.

A-Nueng did not want to say anything. She simply smiled at him and winked.

—I will tell you later. It will be a secret between us.

I looked at A-Nueng, a little annoyed.

—Do you have a secret with him? What about me?

—I'm not going to tell you. It's a secret, so it's better that fewer people know about it.

I crossed my arms over my chest and looked at A-Neng as she laughed happily with her father and started to get grumpy. So now I was a stranger?

—Are you angry with me?

The girl surrounds me when we return to my room. I remained silent because I had nothing to say.

—No.

—It doesn't mean you're in a bad mood. Are you mad at me because I kept a secret from you?

I stared at A-Nueng, who brought her face close to mine, and blinked under those thick glasses.

—I just feel like maybe we're not that close. That's why we keep secrets from each other. But that's normal. I'm a stranger. I'm not your father.

—It's good that you are a stranger. If you were my father, we couldn't be lovers.

—What?

The little girl clung to me and stuck her tongue out at me like she was a kitten ruffling its fur on my arm.

—Let me keep some secrets for you. If I tell you everything, you'll think I'm boring.

—Why do you have to hide it from me? Is it something important?

—More or less. It's a big change. I promise that after I finish it, you will be the first to see it.

I still couldn't help but get in a bad mood. I wasn't normally someone overly sensitive. I didn't

know why, when it came to this girl, I couldn't control myself. It really wasn't like me at all.

—Give me a clue.

—It's okay. I'll give you a little clue. -A-Nueng cradled my face and looked into my eyes. I stared into those beautiful brown eyes and thought of an incident from the past...

The day we looked at each other in the dark.

—What?

—Look me in the eyes. That's the clue.

—I have to solve the puzzle, huh?

—I want to be mysterious.

I had cared for A-Nueng for less than a year and already knew how difficult it was to understand teenagers.

Imagine what A-Nueng's grandmother or my grandmother had to go through. How exhausting was it for my grandmother to raise three granddaughters... Especially when she had someone like me?

There were cases for which I was grateful to my grandmother. But for me to suddenly act emotionally, it was impossible. I got goosebumps just thinking about it.

After A-Nueng got into the university she wanted, it would be time to prepare for college. Piengfah made the most of her time with her daughter. They went to the movies, the beach, they went diving and now they bought university uniforms. I actually wanted to do that, but I should give Piengfah that chance.

In the end, the complaining mother would have to return because the boyfriend, who had been waiting for his girlfriend to return, was losing patience.

—Please take good care of my daughter, Khun Nueng.

—Her grandmother and father are here even if I don't do that.

We were all at the airport. Chet was there too, as A-Nueng's friend and father.

—I don't trust anyone but you. Besides, my daughter only listens to you... I trust you, Khun Nueng

Trust...

Suddenly, it was like a chain wrapped around my neck with a big stone tied to it. Something about it made me feel guilty, even though I hadn't done anything.

I hadn't done anything...

—She will grow well.

—Scan her friends. And if a guy approaches her, you have to get in the way. I don't want her to be like me. "My mother couldn't stand that again." Piengfah looked nervously at her mother, who was standing silently. Even so...

—What if I have a girlfriend?

A-Nueng suddenly asks that with a wide smile on her face. Piengfah could only drop her jaw.

—I... it's... I don't know.

—What do you mean by that? Would that be okay with you? -A-Nueng briefly glanced in my direction before encircling my arm as a hint. Come on, mom. Will you let me have a girlfriend?

—If it's Auntie Nueng, I'm fine. Piengfah replied jokingly and covered her mouth as if she wanted to

keep it a secret, but she continued for all of us to hear. Because I know that Aunt Nueng would never agree to be your girlfriend

I kept my face straight as A-Nueng wrinkled her face in frustration.

—Even if she doesn’t let me do that, I will do it. You can’t stop me.

Everyone laughed adoringly. I was the only one who could sense that A-Nueng was serious, and the word “do that” A-Nueng just said had a double meaning. So I just stood still and was silent.

—Go away. Don’t worry. A-Nueng will grow as best she can. I promise.

Piengfah was quick to hug me, thankfully, before leaving. After we said goodbye to Piengfah, A-Nueng took my hand and linked her fingers with mine. She was sending me a signal without anyone noticing. She also whispered so that only we could hear her.

—I will grow up to be worthy of you, Aunt Nueng. I promise.

I looked at the little girl who was looking at me. She wasn’t smiling widely like she normally would,

but her eyes were full of determination.

—I'm yours and only yours.

25. Sulky

Piengfah was gone, so now I had somehow become A-Nueng's main guardian. I was the mother, the aunt and everything. I watched my friend's daughter mature and yes... A-Nueng took another big step forward that day. That day was her first day as a university student.

I made the effort to get up early to cook her the food she always loved before running to wait for the happy girl at her house. As soon as I called her to tell her that I was waiting in front of the house, A-Nueng ran out to greet me in her new university uniform. She was wearing a pleated skirt and white sneakers. She let her hair down, no longer needing to tie it neatly like she did when she was in high school.

And another big change was...

—Aren't you wearing your glasses?

—Ta-da. Am I beautiful without glasses? A—Nueng turned around to show off her new appearance and winked at me. I'm a woman.

She was older... And she was more beautiful without glasses. But I wasn't one to praise easily, so I just shrugged.

—You look a little better than before.

—Wow. Can't you cheer me up with some praise?

—Why aren't you wearing glasses? Can you see like this?

—Surprise. I don't need glasses anymore. This is the reward I asked for from my father.

—Huh?

—I had LASIK surgery! -The cheerful woman boasted proudly before running to take my arm. - Apart from my grandmother, you are the first to see it. From now on, you'll want to look me in the eyes all the time—

The woman with soft eyes looked at me with eyes full of love. That made me get rid of the mischief.

—So you disappeared because you went to have the LASIK procedure?

—Yeah. But you were so bad. You didn't even call me once. You did not miss me? Didn't you feel alone at all?

I was very anxious those last few days. But if I communicated with her too often, she would be too conceited. She liked to think that I would feel lonely if we didn't see each other.

—No.

—So I'm the only one who misses you. Argh... Our love is not equal.

When the cheerful woman complained, I sighed and played with her beautiful hair.

—You talk a lot today. This is your first day of school, right? Take it -I handed her the food I cooked -I came to give you this.

—Wow. You made me a bento, like a Japanese wife making them for her husband. I'm very happy.

—You always find a way to link things with lovers, huh?

—Can you cook for me every day?

—Are you crazy? Who would get up early to cook every day?

—How was dinner? I'll stop by your room every day to eat it.

—Every day? No way. You'll forget me once you make new friends.

—Who will forget his lover?

—Hurry up and go to class

—So, will you prepare dinner for me every day? -
The happy woman looked at me asking for tenderness. When I saw that, I softened.

—I will do it if I have time.

—I'll wait for you every day.

Who did she think she was: the cook on a cooking show? It doesn't matter. Let's say it was a reward for getting into the university she wanted. The food was not that difficult to cook. I would cook simple dishes.

—You really cooked for me.

The cheerful woman went to my room as she had said she would. She looked at the few plates of food I cooked on the table, excited. I stood up straight and winked at her.

—I was killing time. It's not a big thing.

—I understand how a Japanese husband feels when he goes home to eat the food his wife now prepares.

—It seems that lately you like the character of a Japanese husband. Why do you want me to be your wife so much?

—You can be the husband if you want. I don't mind. I can be on both sides. Oh... Auntie, you used a spoon to hit me.

My hand was faster than my brain, so I used the spoon in my hand to hit the cheerful woman on the head. Wow. How could she say that nonchalantly?

—How was the first day of university?

—It's so delicious — A-Nueng ate dreamy as she looked at me and smiled. -I love you very much, Aunt Nueng. Let's get married as soon as I graduate.

—Answer my question, silly.

—It was ok. I made many friends.

—Has anyone flirted with you yet? I tried to sound normal when I asked that. A-Nueng responded without thinking much about it.

—I don't know, but someone asked me for my LINE ID.

—Did you give it to him?

—Guess — The cheerful woman gave me her usual Duchenne smile while winking at me. She was trying to make fun of me and frustrate me. I raised my hand as if to smack her in the forehead, but she stepped back before I could. I did, but I won't read it. I just didn't want to hurt his feelings because we have to be classmates.

—Do people hook up from the first day of university?

—I'm beautiful, you know? You have to be very protective of me. You will feel lonely if I enjoy my university life too much.

—You can have a lover if you want. It's good so I can have some time to myself

—Are you serious?

—Aha.

—You are not kind at all. Can't you be a little jealous? — A-Nueng played with her food. -I want you to be protective of me. I want to feel loved.

—There are many ways to show love. I cooked for you. Being protective can make you feel suffocated

—I want you to be jealous

—You're a girl

—I'm not a girl! -When A-Nueng saw me shake my head, she shouted in denial. -I'm a university student. I can have cute babies if I find good sperm

—How did the topic of having babies come about?

—Don't know. But I'm not a girl.

“If you're still complaining like that, you're a girl.” I sighed and reached for my hand to gently caress the cheek of the little woman, who was visibly distressed. -I will not be protective. I'm just worried. You can cling to me now, but soon you will cling to your friends. I'll be the one you leave.

—There will be many activities, but I will find time to be with you. I don't want anyone to steal your love from me.

—Who will do that?

—Many. Everyone loves you.

—But I don't love anyone, except... -I almost blurted it out. That made A-Nueng smile widely.

—It's me, right? Alright. Now I feel better. Let's eat... -A-Nueng's mood changed so abruptly. Now she ate deliciously. I, who cooked for her, couldn't help but smile at that. Oh, I almost forgot. I saw Folk today.

—That insecure boy?

—Yeah. He entered the same university as me, but he is in a different faculty. He is in business administration school.

—Wow. That is a good one. He will have a bright future.

—He also got a new haircut. He looked totally different. I guess everyone seems more mature when they're college students.

—You too. You're already older. You no longer tie your hair up or wear glasses. My girl is now a woman. Many guys will chase you.

—But I will only pursue you.

—Yeah. Yes. I'll see how long you can keep this up.

A-Nueng's LINE notification kept vibrating. I looked at it and saw the names Arm and Nice. It made me frown. A-Nueng looked at it too, but continued eating.

—Are those the ones who asked you for your LINE ID?

—Yeah.

—Choose carefully who you date

—Sure.

—I don't have to worry about you, right? I can trust you, right?

—Of course. I've always been your good girl. You know what... Ah, I'm full -A-Nueng paid respects to her plate, as she always has. -Thank you. I'll wash the dishes.

She knows how to be cute and useful because her grandmother raised her well. I look at her adoringly as the petite woman continues with her task. She looks very different now that she is wearing her university uniform instead of her student uniform.

—Tia Nueng.

The small woman spoke while washing the dishes without turning to look at me.

—Mmm?

—Can I spend the night with you?

—Why don't you go home?

—I want to hug you to sleep.

Suddenly, the room is silent. The incident from that night comes up again. I haven't given you an answer. I just look at her back as I reflect.

—Just hugging?

—As before.

A-Nueng stopped washing the dishes and turned to look at me knowingly. We both remember what happened that night. We just never talk about it openly.

—No.

I said it loud and clear. The little woman nodded and continued washing the dishes.

—Okay.

Our conversation ended there.

Yes... If we didn't talk about it and pretended nothing was happening, we could continue like this.

—Will you come eat with me today?

—Yeah. Don't tell me what you're going to cook. I want it to be a surprise.

—Okay.

—By the way... can I spend the night with you?

—No.

—Okay.

A-Nueng still did what she said she would do which was go to dinner with me every day. She would ask me the same question every day. Can I sleep with you?

It was a question that didn't just mean sleeping. And I also did the same thing every day, which was to reject her so as not to make another mistake. It was good that A-Nueng didn't insist or make me feel uncomfortable.

I had become an excellent cook and, instead of drawing, I was thinking about selling takeout. But I still wasn't that confident in my cooking. The cheerful woman could adore me so much that she

thought everything I did was great. So I needed a lab rat, which was...

—It's delicious.

I visited Sam in her office and made her eat what I cooked. My little sister seemed surprised when she took the first bite and continued until she finished it instantly. It made me quite proud.

—You're not lying, are you?

—It's very delicious. You are beautiful, correct and you know how to cook well. You are so perfect.

—It's probably a talent. "I'm good with everything I put in my hands." I looked at my hands and winked at her. I'm thinking about selling takeout. What do you think?

—Why don't you think big? Open a great restaurant. I will invest. I'm rich

—That's too great. Let me try it first. If it goes well, I will take a loan from the rich M.L.

—Okay, you are the sister of a rich M.L.

—Brilliant. I'll go now. -I looked at my watch. -I have to prepare dinner.

—What's the rush? You live alone. Or are you having dinner with someone?

—I will eat with A-Nueng -I answered honestly. That made Sam smile mischievously at me.

—I hear that name very often. I want to meet her.

—She's just a girl. I'll introduce you if you two meet. I have to leave before there are no good ingredients left on the market.

Every night, I stopped by the produce market to buy ingredients to prepare dinner for the little woman. I didn't have much money, so I only cooked a few dishes that didn't require expensive ingredients to eat together. Sometimes A-Nueng couldn't go because of sports activities at the university. She seemed to have more social events to attend.

Now she had many friends...

What was happening to me?

Sometimes I suddenly felt lonely when I thought about the new social circles A-Nueng had. She no longer clung to me like in the old days. But, like I said, I understood it. She was a teenager. I had to

have friends my age with whom I could talk about things I didn't understand.

After leaving the produce market, I prepared a simple meal. I was waiting for the happy woman to arrive so we could eat together. The short hand of the clock was now at the number seven. The sky was getting dark and I was starting to get worried.

No. 1: Nueng, where are you? Why haven't you come back yet?

I waited about five minutes for a response. The little woman responded with a "sorry" sticker and words that made the muscles in my face tense.

A-Nueng: I'm sorry, Aunt Nueng. I totally forgot.

A-Nueng: I'll run.

Once I read that, I pursed my lips. I was furious like I hadn't been in a long time. But I answered briefly.

No. 1: Okay. It's late. Just stay with your friends.

I put the phone face down and didn't read any more messages. I threw away all the food that was on the table. I could hear the sound of some incoming messages. Then a ringtone was heard. She knew how anxious I was.

I picked up the phone and rejected the call before calling anyone. The voice on the other end of the line sounded clearly surprised to see that I was calling her.

[Khun Nueng. What mood are you in to call me?]

—I'm hungry.

I sounded like someone who was angry because I was very hungry. That made the beautiful doctor on the other end of the line laugh.

[I can't invite you to eat again. I almost went bankrupt last time.]

—It can be something not too expensive.

[What's happening? You don't sound very happy.]

—Don't worry. I suddenly lost you... Please invite me to eat, beautiful Doctora Wan Viva.

26. The call

It was a little unexpected. I got to see Dr. Wan Viva's girlfriend, a budding singer, as well as sit down for dinner with her, an old friend with whom I had had an intimate relationship. As I rolled and bit into the spaghetti, his girlfriend looked at me with a sour expression. I laughed and winked at -Sieng-Pleng-, who was clearly establishing herself as my enemy.

—Smile a little, my beautiful singer. I'm not here as an enemy. I'm just hungry, so I asked Doc to buy me lunch

I didn't do anything the last time we saw each other. I simply followed the script that Wan ViVa asked me to do.

Ah... Let me give you a little background. Last time, my old friend called to invite me to dinner. I figured she wanted to get back at her girlfriend for something. I got a free meal with champagne, so I accepted. The beautiful doctor couldn't handle

alcohol well and got quite drunk, so Sieng-Pleng looked at me with bad eyes, as she did at that time.

—I'm sorry for looking at you rudely. I'm just curious why you invited Wan to eat when there are so many people in this world.

—When I was going through a bad time, I went to her.

—Then what's wrong with you? -Wan ViVa was afraid that I would go into too much detail about that day, so she quickly interrupted. I shrugged a little and responded vaguely.

—I'm bored.

—What can bore Khun Nueng, who doesn't care about anything in this world?

—How can someone be happy all the time? When I got bored, I thought I would feel better if I could see Doctor Wan Viva's sweet face. I smiled at Sieng-Pleng, trying to be her friend. Do not think too much. There's nothing wrong. I just missed my old friend.

—It's good if you only think of Wan as a friend.

—So, what's really wrong with you, Khun Nueng? We've been here for a while and I still don't

know anything -Wan ViVa asked with genuine concern. So I let her in for a bit as a thank you for dinner.

—I'm a little stressed. Have you ever felt confused about something... like, maybe loving someone but not being able to show it? -Then I quickly made up an excuse. -It's not about me. This is a friend of mine.

—Are you so stressed about someone else's affairs? -Sieng-Pleng interrupted. Wan ViVa quickly punched her on the arm and turned to smile at me.

—Yeah. When I was younger, I had a crush on someone, but I couldn't tell her... She was my boss's daughter.

At the end of that, she turned to look at her girlfriend and looked down shyly. She didn't say more, but there was no need to even guess; That person was surely this singer.

—How did you finish?

—After accepting reality, I confessed what I felt. That's all.

—And the other person, your boss's daughter, accepted your love so easily?

“When we grew up, she was no longer my boss’s daughter,” Wan ViVa laughed as Sieng-Pleng added.

—She is now her slave.

—Is this beautiful doctor difficult? -This time I resorted to starting a conversation with the doctor’s girlfriend, who had a very sweet face. Sieng-Pleng seemed more relaxed, so she casually talked about her personal life.

—Of course it is. She suddenly gave me an ultimatum. It’s like they’re playing with me. I won’t love you anymore if you don’t love me... What choice did I have?

—You had no choice. You’re mine

I looked at the loving couple and smiled while shaking my head.

—My issue is not so simple.

—Don’t make it difficult. Life is short Wan ViVa smiled at me. -We are old. We will die soon.

—You’re right. But I am old while the other person’s life is just beginning.

—Huh?

—Nothing.

Meeting the couple made me feel better. At least I had someone to eat with instead of being stuck alone in my room because she forgot me.

Wan ViVa and Sieng-Pleng took me home. When I was about to get out of the car, I saw A-Nueng waiting for me in front of my building. My heart raced, but I was also worried for her safety because it was already late. She should be home by then.

—Dr. Wan, could you walk me to the front door? Pleng, stay in the car. Please pretend you're not here.

—Huh?

Sieng-Pleng and Wan ViVa exclaim at the same time. I looked at the beautiful doctor and gave her a clue.

—It's time for you to return the favor.

I got out of the car after saying that. Wan ViVa followed me and stayed by my side because she didn't want to walk to my building.

—What's wrong, Khun Nueng?

—Please smile at me.

—Huh?

—Don't look. Just tilt your head and smile cutely at me.

The little doctor did what I asked willingly. She was starting to understand what I was doing, so she laughed.

—Who are you trying to bother?

—Good. Laugh like this. Please grab my arm. It would be nice if you could rub it.

—But...-Wan ViVa looked inside the car as if she felt uncomfortable, but she did so willingly — You're getting me into issues.

—You can handle it.

—This is not like you at all. What's the point of all this?

—I guess it makes me feel better. I smiled back. I won't forget. Thank you for this.

—I'll be back now.

—Drive safely.

I said goodbye to Wan ViVa and looked until I could no longer see the backlight before walking

towards my building. I looked at A-Nueng, who was waiting for me with a bad mood.

—Who did you come with?

—A friend.

—You don't have friends.

—That's an exaggeration. I have friends. I just don't hang out with them much. You have friends too, so you should understand.

—What kind of friend rubs your arm and smiles like that?

—A good friend. — I smiled a little while thinking about the relationship between Wan ViVa and me. It's a beautiful friendship.

—What is that smile? Who is she?

A-Nueng seemed more frustrated than ever. I was excited but kept a straight face.

—A doctor? The one you dated?

—Do you have such a good memory? But why are you here? It's late.

—I told you I would come running. I called you but you didn't answer.

—Ah. I will.

—Why didn't you call me back?

—I forgot.

I showed a carefree face. A-Nueng's eyes filled with tears. Her mouth was trembling. I softened when I saw that, so I put my hand on her back and nudged her to walk forward.

—Let's talk in my room. There are many mosquitoes here.

The little woman took my hand away while sulking. She breathed heavily and refused to do as I told her.

—You are taking revenge on me. Did you do it for revenge?

—How old you think I am? I wouldn't do something like that. You had activities with your friends at university, so I went to dinner with my friend. That's all.

—I said I forgot because I was in the middle of a group work until I forgot the time. I apologized and ran as soon as I realized. I wasn't dating anyone. Why can't you understand that?

—I said I understood.

—If so, why are you doing this?

—Don't raise your voice.

—I don't love you anymore!

A-Nueng ran away as soon as she finished saying that. I just stood still and bit my lips until they bled, furious that she raised her voice at me. But I was also worried about the petite woman. I didn't want her to go home alone so late at night, so in the end, I ran after her and grabbed her arm.

—Do not turn away from me. I don't like it.

—And I don't like that you went out with another woman. You know how I feel. Why did you do that? Can't you just have me? Can't you love just me?

—What crazy thing are you saying?

—You can continue without talking about what happened the night before my exam. I don't care about that. But that doesn't mean it didn't happen. We kissed. Do you remember that? We kissed.

—Stop right now.

—I said. Happened!!!

I covered my face with my hands in a stressful manner. A— Nueng had let go of what she had been avoiding all this time. I had to accept that it happened. I shouldn't have done what I did that night.

She was my friend's daughter... She was only 18 years old. I shouldn't have let my emotions get the best of me.

—We won't talk about this...

—Yes, we will.

—Nueng!!! -I raised my voice, but the phone rang. It was a bell that saved me. I thanked the person who called me at a time like this.

—Hey.

[Nueng.]

Sam's sobbing voice immediately made me give my full attention to my sister on the other end of the line. Someone once said that when we are really stressed about something and want to get out of it, we need to find something more stressful to deal with, so we completely forget about the previous stress.

And Sam's call was exactly that.

—What happened, little one? Why do you sound like that?

Something told me that it wasn't good news and it was something really big. Because this wasn't the time of day Sam would call for sisterly chats.

[Nueng... Our grandmother passed away.]

27. Help

A large number of people attended the funeral on the first day to pay their respects to my grandmother. Sam organized everything from contacting the temple to moving our grandmother there.

Even though the place was packed, I felt lonely because I barely knew anyone. Our grandmother was the only family Sam and I had because our parents died when we were very little. Now I only had Sam left.

That was all I had left...

As our grandmother's closest and oldest relative, it was my responsibility to express gratitude to our guests. Although Sam didn't seem devastated because she had good control over herself, she wasn't as cheerful as usual. We were both in our thirties, so we had to act accordingly. Furthermore, our grandmother didn't want her granddaughters to show their weaknesses to anyone.

I could do it well. Or, to be exact, I seemed very distant. I didn't show any sadness. It was my

personality. Crying didn't make me a better or worse person. My distance was my perfect shield.

—I'm sorry, Khun Nueng.

A-Nueng and her grandmother were at the funeral. Grandma gave me her usual condolences. I raised my hands to pay respect and invited them in. A-Nueng looked at me, showing more sadness than me, who was the real granddaughter.

—What's happening?

I asked as A-Nueng looked at me with red and swollen eyes. She looked so pitiful that I sighed.

—Nothing.

—Good.

After that, I returned to attend to the other guests. We continued with the prayer, and at 9 p.m. all the guests had left. Sam asked me to stay with her after that. Then she hugged me and cried her eyes out. my sister, who loved our grandmother too much, probably couldn't take it anymore.

—Khun Nueng.

—You're an adult now, little one.

I hugged my sister and sighed. Sam was like a three year old at the time. Mon and her friends were nearby, sobbing.

—Grandma is no longer with us. I... I shouldn't have moved.

—If you didn't move, how could you have a life with Mon? Look on the bright side: now that our grandmother is no longer here, you and Mon can move into the palace. Yay. — I pretended to be cheerful. Everyone looked at me in shock. -What?

—Aren't you sad at all because our grandmother died? — Sam's voice became stern. She moved away from my hug. -You don't seem sad at all.

—Do I have to cry? I can do it if you want.

—Nueng...

—Sam, we are adults now. Our grandmother had to leave us one day. We cannot fight against time. We cannot escape our deaths. Your crying won't bring her back. Think about what you will do tomorrow... Have you contacted our lawyer?

—Why should I contact the lawyer?

—To ask about the will that our grandmother prepared... Song is no longer with us. We can divide

everything in half. That's simple... Are there taxes?

Sam cried even more after hearing that. Now she covered her ears with her hands. Doraemon looked at me and sighed, like someone trying to be patient.

—It's okay if you're not sad. But there's no need to hurt Sam's feelings like this.

—How does it hurt Sam to talk about the will?... Okay, I won't talk about it. Let's each go our own way.

—Aren't you going back to the palace? -asks Mon. She made me put my hand on my chest.

—Are you crazy? Why do that? I'm afraid of ghosts.

Everyone looked at me stunned and disappointed. But I did not care.

—I heard that when someone just dies, they don't know they're already dead. Grandma will surely be at the palace tonight. We didn't get along so well when she was alive. It will surely break my neck. for running away from the wedding now that she's dead. No... You and Sam can go back there. Oh... I snapped my fingers as if I had just thought of something. -See you on the day of the cremation. I

don't like funerals. I heard they give you bad luck. Bye bye.

I could hear the sound of my sister sobbing, but I didn't care to look back. I just took a taxi in front of the temple back to my room.

I was finally alone...

I sat on my bed limply when I returned to my room. I had no idea if I slept at all since I knew my grandmother died. And I wasn't sleepy at all. I thought I hadn't slept in more than 48 hours.

Nobody knew... that I couldn't close my eyes.

The last words I said to my grandmother were my rejection when she invited me to eat with her, although she said it as if it were her last request. I couldn't get the way she looked at me out of my head. I think it will stay there... forever.

My grandmother was really gone... That strict old lady, who seemed so strong and always looked so perfect, died suddenly of heart disease. Everything was so sudden. She just fell down. And her last word to the housekeeper was my name...

My grandmother called me by my name and she just passed away...

I cried again... I cried non-stop the night before. I cried until I thought my body had run out of fluid and I couldn't cry anymore. I couldn't believe I could still cry. And it seemed like I couldn't stop crying.

Help... Help me.

I hit my chest to make it hurt. If I hurt myself physically, it could lessen the pain inside me. If we are stressed about something, we needed to find something to distract us. If it wasn't something truly joyful, it must be something more serious.

Had to go out. I had to get rid of this pain!

—Tia Nueng.

Someone knocked on the door. I, who was still crying non-stop, looked towards the door. I was sure it was A-Nueng's voice. Why was she there now? I didn't misunderstand, right?

—Aunt Nueng. Please open the door for me.

—I'm sleepy.

I screamed back, trying to hold back my sobs, because I didn't want anyone to hear it. But A-Nueng was too stubborn to leave voluntarily.

She was knocking on the door louder and louder until I had to take a deep breath and swallow the lump in my throat. I opened the door, trying to look normal but annoyed.

—I'm very tired. Do I have to deal with you too after my grandmother's funeral?

—Alright.

—It's OK?

—I'm here.

And the little woman hugged me tightly before I could close the door. With that hug, the strong front he had put up collapsed like a domino. My legs and arms had lost all their strength. I leaned back because I didn't have the strength to resist A-Nueng's strength as she leaned towards me.

—Tia Nueng.

I fell to the ground like a dry leaf from a tree. My tears fell down my cheeks. I couldn't contain myself anymore.

A-Nueng saw that I had lost all my will to live, so she cried pitifully and tried to dry my tears.

—I know you are suffering a lot. I can notice it.

—Don't act like you know me.

—We use the same masks. I can see right through you. The more you pretend to be okay at the funeral, the more I know you're in just as much pain as everyone else. You just can't lose.

I hugged the little woman back and cried until my whole body shook. That's how you felt when you were dying.

No... Dying would be better. All the guilt was destroying me. All the words I threw at my grandmother when she was alive were tearing at my heart.

When will you die?'

'No. I can't stand the smell of old people. I can not be with you'

'You will die alone. Nobody will care about you. This is how it should be'

—How could I have done that to my grandmother? And after everything I've done to her, how could she think of me when she's about to leave? Why did I do that?

—I clenched my hand into a fist and punched A-Nueng, who just sat there and let me hug her. If I

could go back in time, I would eat with her and talk to her kindly. It's possible that we would have made peace then.

—Tia Nueng

—Or... if I married Chet, my grandmother would die in peace.

—Don't blame yourself like that, Aunt Nueng. Do not do that.

—Help me. -I felt like I couldn't continue. If someone handed me a knife right now, it would be an act of kindness. -Help me, Nueng.

A-Nueng hugged me and rocked me back and forth, as if she were lulling a newborn to sleep. The cheerful woman was my best friend and she would guide me through my difficult times. No one noticed how I felt. Only she knew how much pain I was in.

The little woman kissed my temple to comfort me. Her small hand rubbed my head gently, knowing that what I need now is breath. And as I received her warmth, I stepped back and looked at the little woman, who was sobbing as hard as I was.

—Nueng.

—Auntie... -A-Nueng wiped the tears from my face with her lips. Is there anything I can do for you at a time like this?

—Anything.

We stared at each other for a long time. And the little woman leaned in, as if she were about to kiss me. But before doing so, she seemed to realize that it was inappropriate...

—This is not right... I shouldn't be doing this at a time like this...

I grabbed her neck to stop her from walking away from me.

—Alright.

—Aunt...

—Help me.

I had never asked anyone for help in my life. I really didn't know what I meant by what I had just said. It was my permission. It was my plea. I wanted her to do something so I could get through this.

When A-Neng heard that, she leaned towards me and pressed me to the ground, breathing heavily.

—Just say it and I'll do anything.

—Anything?

The person above me was slowly unbuttoning my black shirt.

—Yes anything.

A-Nueng started to do what she said she would do. I just stayed still and put my arm on my forehead to cover my eyes. I didn't want to acknowledge anything except the touches A-Nueng gave me.

That was a distraction.

— Ah...

My body was responding to A-Nueng's stimulation. She ran her wet lips from my ear to my navel. There were sharp pains in some spots... but it was nothing unpleasant. And I was starting to get turned on because I couldn't deny my own physical desires.

—Is there anything else you want me to do?

I raised my arm from my front and looked at A-Nueng, who was looking at me from the waistband of my pants. The little woman's face was all red with embarrassment. But I could tell she was curious too.

—If I ask you to do something... will you do it?

—Anything. A-Nueng looked at me like she was about to cry. You are my dream.

I smiled from the corner of my mouth and patted the petite woman's head before pushing her down, as if she were someone in a position to give her orders.

—Take off my pants and you'll know where to go from there.

28. The superior and the subordinate

I woke up startled by the alarm on A-Neng's phone. The petite woman had taken a shower and was putting on her university uniform. She hurried to turn off the alarm and smiled apologetically.

—I'm sorry, Aunt Nueng.

—Alright. Are you going to go to the university?
-I lay face down, naked, under the blanket. I turned on my side and looked at her as I asked a very obvious question.

—Yeah. I want to stay with you, but I have an exam today. I'll be back quickly. A-Nueng lovingly brushed the hair from my cheek as she leaned on the edge of the bed. I will think about you all the time

—Go away. I'm fine.

—But I'll be fine...-A-Nueng asked for tenderness. It was the first time I smiled during this difficult time.

—Hurry up. I'll get up in a moment.

—Are you going to the funeral today?

I stayed silent because I wasn't sure what to do.

—Do I have the eyes swollen?

—A bit.

—Then I won't go. "I don't want people to feel sorry for me." I looked at my friend's daughter and let out a weak laugh. -I don't want them to look at me the way you look at me now.

—I'm not looking at you with pity.

—So, what are you doing?

—I'm looking at you with love.

I pursed my lips and covered my face with the pillow before saying goodbye.

—Go to class now

—Alright. I love you, Aunt Nueng.

A-Nueng was very consistent. She said she loves me every day, like it was her daily routine. It was like eating, brushing your teeth or taking a shower. In the five minutes after the little woman left, I got

up, showered, and put on my clothes. I rolled around in bed again. And when I was alone, my sorrow returns.

Why was it so painful?

The phone rang next to my bed. I walked over to pick him up and saw that Sam was calling me. My sister said she's waiting downstairs and she still looked sad.

— I will go down.

After that, I went down to her. Sam's imported yellow car was parked in front of the building. As soon as I settled into the front passenger seat of the air-conditioned vehicle, my beautiful sister, who had swollen eyes, began to tell how difficult it was for her to get through the night. After that, she turns to look at me and speaks with a trembling voice.

—I'm sorry.

—Why?

—Yesterday I was unreasonable. I forgot that when you are too happy, it means you feel very bad. No one may understand you, but I'm your only family now. I should understand you more than anyone.

I said nothing. I simply placed my hand on her head, with adoration and understanding.

—Yesterday I was very upset.

—There are only the two of us left.

—Aha.

—I love you. -Sam reached out to grab my thigh. Let's not fight.

—I don't even think about fighting with someone who is as confused as you, little one. Because I don't know if you would understand what I say when I attack you.

We smiled weakly at each other. The pain of our grandmother's passing outweighed the fun of our teasing.

—Will you go to the funeral today?

—Of course. I can't let you carry everything. Yesterday I went a little overboard... I was in too much pain — I admitted it honestly and shrugged my shoulders. -But I can't bear to show my tears to others. Not even our grandmother has seen my weakness

—I understand. Just knowing that you don't really hate our grandmother makes me quite happy. "Sam sighed and seemed to remember something. - Ah. I saw A-Nueng leaving the building a moment ago

The day before I had introduced A-Nueng to Sam at the funeral. The little girl was too sad to ask many questions. But she recognized A-Nueng.

—Ah. She spent the night with me. She realized that I was not stable.

—I feel worse hearing that. I should be the one who understands you the most, but it turns out to be...— Sam paused in the middle of her sentence and stared at my neck.

—What is it?

—There is a mark on your neck.

We both remained silent. Sam looked away from my neck and stared at me for a long moment. I knew what my sister was thinking, so I said something calmly. I wasn't going to hide things from her, but I wasn't giving her an order either.

—Please pretend you don't see anything.

—Well.

—I'll see you this afternoon.

I got out of the car and walked back inside the building. Sam didn't say anything and just walked away. We knew not to interfere in each other's personal affairs.

In addition to Sam's visit, Piengfah also called me from abroad to offer her deepest condolences on the passing of my grandmother. She was the friend who knew the most about my past. Although she never met my grandmother in person, she had heard a lot about her from me.

[I'm sorry I couldn't be there with you, Khun Nueng.]

—You couldn't do anything anyway. You can't bring her back to life.

[Can't you kindly accept my deepest condolences? You don't have to be sarcastic all the time, you know?]

—I'm just saying that you don't need to feel sorry for not being here. Your daughter is here anyway.

I let out a smile when I thought of A-Nueng. She helped me in my worst moment. Although I was still

sad and not completely over it, it was much better than being alone.

Better...

[I'm glad to hear that you find A-Nueng comforting. Thank you for loving and adoring my daughter. To be honest, I feel better that she is with you than with her grandmother.]

—Why do you say that?

[You are a good role model.]

Model to follow...

I suddenly felt guilty towards Piengfah when I heard her praise. My friend had no idea that I used her daughter to help me get through my pain, using the word -keeper— as an excuse.

[I will never forget how good you are to my daughter. I know she will grow up and be a good person; Just half as good as you is more than enough.]

—Don't give me so much credit. I'm not that good of a person

[If you are not a good person, who is? Geez... Oh, I'm calling to express my deepest condolences,

not to ask you to take care of my daughter. I feel your loss. Please know that you will always have A-Nueng and me, whom you can rely on.]

—Fah...

I called my friend with a trembling voice. She left her daughter in my care. She trusted me. However, what I did...

[Yeah? What's wrong, Khun Nueng?]

I had to stop... although I had already started.

—I will take care of A-Nueng the best I can. Don't worry.

[I trust you. I'm not worried at all. I'll call you again later.]

Piengfah hung up and I stood there, holding my phone tightly. I closed my eyes to gather the pieces of my heart that seemed to have shattered the day before. I broke something else with that.

Trust...

Because of my sensitivity, I betrayed the trust my friend had placed in me. The night before I was drowning and A-Nueng was the only log that came close to me. I sank the log to save myself as a result.

But there was still time. I should be able to regain that trust if no one knew what happened. I'll pretend it never happened. Yes... I had been doing it all this time. This time it would be the same.

If we didn't talk about it, no one would know.

The stress of losing someone was replaced by a new stress, which was my friend's trust that I broke. She left his daughter in my care. She never knew she was leaving a chick in the care of a monk.

That day, like the previous one, there were many people at the funeral. Sam and I expressed our gratitude to those who were going to pay their last respects to our grandmother together. When we had the opportunity, I mentioned something to her.

—I will return to the palace.

—Really? — My little sister looked at me elated. to home. You will finally return

—There is nothing there anymore. The person I tried to avoid... is no longer there -. I looked at our grandmother's coffin and felt sad. But I quickly pulled myself together because I didn't want others to know how I felt. And you won't back down. If I don't live there, the termites will tear it down.

—This is good. I was worried about leaving the maids and security guards there

—Do you want to sell it?

—Nueng.

—I'm kidding. Our grandmother loves the place. "We should save something in her memory." I shrugged and sighed. It's something a good granddaughter should do.

—That's how it is. And now your good niece is coming here.

Sam nodded in the direction of A-Nueng, who was approaching with Folk. I looked at my sister, who was making fun of me. I figured she couldn't help it, although this morning I asked her to pretend not to see anything.

—Hello, Aunt Nueng. Hi Khun Sam

I had introduced A-Nueng to my sister the day before, so she raised her hand to politely pay her respects to Sam. The surprising thing was that she called us very different.

Aunt Nueng and Khun Sam...

—Go take a seat. Take your friend with you.

—Let me accompany you.

The cheerful woman looked at me with puppy dog eyes. Sam, who knew about our situation, looked away because she didn't want me to feel uncomfortable.

—Alright. You should go sit inside with your friend.

I try to look nonchalant as I said that in an attempt to project an air of normality. A-Nueng was perplexed but did not ask any questions. She simply nodded and walked in. Sam opened her mouth as if she wanted to say something, but when I stared at her, she just shut up.

—Well.

It means I wasn't ready to talk...

—Aunt Nueng.

I didn't want to listen to the prayers, so I was walking around alone while everyone was listening to the prayers right now. A-Nueng was probably looking for a good time to talk to me, so she hurried over.

—What happened?

—What about you?

Her shy voice when the little woman saw that I wouldn't chat with her like I did that morning, makes me look at her with a mixed feeling. Damn... I was too sensitive last night. After crossing the line, it was difficult to return.

Really hard, especially with those eyes looking into mine

—It's no big deal.—

—It's something... I can say it. Is there something bothering you? -The clingy woman extended her hand to grab my arm. I gently twisted my arm to release his grip and walked away.

—It's no big deal.

—It's something.

A-Nueng was sure as soon as she saw my reaction. She wasn't one to mince words because it was annoying. And I was also very direct. So I got straight to the point.

—Alright. There's something.

—What is it?

—Can you pretend that nothing happened?

—Let's do a reboot and start from scratch

Everything was silent. Along with the sound of prayers, there was a sound that made my heart ache.

A-Nueng began to sob. It was as if she already knew that what was bothering me was what happened the night before. When the cheerful woman began to sob, she covered her mouth with her hand to not make too much noise. Why... We were good this morning.

—What did you think was last night?

I asked, as my thoughts battled inside my head. Should I be nice or take a risk to put an end to this? Actually, if we didn't talk about it, we could pretend it didn't happen.

Like that kiss... It would be nothing if we didn't talk about it.

—Love.

—Is it really love?

—It was for me!

—But for aunt... — I stared at the small woman in front of me and said the words like the cruel person I had been my entire life. -You're just something to take my mind off my nightmare.

—You said you would do anything. That's what you were doing last night.

The small woman stepped back, limp. She nodded slowly and walked away without saying anything else.

Why didn't she say anything? Why did she leave quietly?

—Nueng...— The small body slowly faded away without listening to what I had to say. -I'm sorry.

29 I will count from 1 to 5

I hadn't seen A-Nueng since my grandmother's funeral. Almost two weeks had passed. We had not contacted each other. The cheerful woman probably didn't want anything to do with me anymore. Although it hurt me inside, I could understand it. It was probably for the best.

We weren't right for each other. We shouldn't start anything between us.

It was lucky that I had moved into my palace, because it was easier for me while I was busy moving. That kept me from going crazy.

Ah... I hadn't been back there in about 7 years. A lot of things happened while I was away. It was a place full of memories.

—That's all? -Sam, who was helping me with the move, asked happily because he was afraid that I would change my mind and leave that place empty.

—That's all. Are you sure you won't move here with me?

—It's too far from my office. But I will definitely make frequent visits. When I'm here, I can think of... our... grandmother.

And my little sister was about to cry again, so I hugged her to comfort her while she laughed.

—Don't cry too often for others to witness. It's a sign of weakness

—Our grandmother is my weak point. I really can't pretend to put on a brave face.

—It'll pass.

—This is good. At least I still have you to vent.

—How's your girlfriend?

—I want to look great when I'm with Mon. Let's say I'll come to you if I want to cry.

I laughed at my little sister. We continue putting everything inside the palace. I was now the most powerful person in this palace. Ah... I would call it home. My title was of no use except to look good on my personal identification. I was now the caretaker of that house, instead of my grandmother. It was good. I no longer had to pay rent.

As for the will, Sam had told me we would open it next week. I didn't really care about that because, no matter how much I received, it didn't belong to me. I intended to use it for the maintenance of that palace. As for me, I would have to continue searching for my dream and my talent.

When things were starting to get back to normal and I was done with the move, I had nothing to do and started to feel anxious.

I could not sleep...

It wasn't the first night I couldn't sleep. During the day I could pretend to forget everything. But when night came, I only thought about A-Nueng and our night together. Thoughts of the petite woman's suffocating touches making it difficult to catch my breath came to mind. Crazy... It's not like I haven't done that kind of thing before. What was wrong with me?

That night, I fell asleep at 6 a.m.

—Have you contacted A-Nueng lately?

Chet visited me that day at the palace. He spoke about his daughter with enthusiasm. Normally, I only saw A-Neng with me as the middle person because I didn't want to see her grandmother if I

could help it. We met at the funeral and A-Nueng's grandmother was not happy to find out that I was the one who got her daughter pregnant.

—No.

—You are usually together all the time. Did they fight?

—She is already a university student. She probably prefers to be with her friends.

—But A-Nueng is not someone who prefers others over you. Can you arrange a visit with my daughter? I want to see her.

—You are her father; arrange to meet her yourself. It's your right

—I'm not close to her yet. Ah... although A-Nueng speaks politely to me, I can tell that there is still a wall between us. I don't dare...

—If you don't dare to contact her, then don't see her. That's all.

Aside from Chet bothering me about that cheerful woman, someone else called me to bother me at night. It was someone I never thought would call me on the phone.

[Khun Nueng, I'm mom.]

It was the voice of Piengfah's mother on the phone. She seemed uncomfortable calling me on the phone. Since I knew who she really was, I felt superior to her every time we talked.

—How are you, A-Nueng's grandmother?

[Is A-Nueng with you, Khun Nueng?]

—No.

[Have you met with A-Nueng lately? I know you're probably busy with the funeral and all that. But I have to ask.]

—She is not with me. We haven't seen each other in a while.

[Really... Hmm. Lately she comes home quite late. Sometimes she doesn't come home at all. I thought she was with you. Okay then. I will call her.]

I was a little worried, but I didn't ask anything. Two people had talked about A-Nueng that day. If there was a third, I'd think she was trying to get my attention.

Having money while being at home and doing nothing was very boring. I almost forgot why I ran away from home to live my own life. It was because I lacked motivation to live because I had everything.

It was the same at that time. My grandmother's good, a house for which I didn't have to pay rent and three square meals a day bored me...

That was until there was a call from an unknown number at 11:30 p.m.

[Is this Khun Nueng?]

—Who is it? Present yourself. I'm not familiar with your voice.

[I am Folk.]

I pulled the phone from my ear to look at it and make sure it was my phone. Folk... that boy who followed A-Nueng like a lost dog?

—How did you get my number?

[From the place you used to rent. I went to look for you, but you weren't there, so I asked for your phone number.]

And yes... that's the third person that day.

—Why do you call me? Isn't it a little late to be... I sat down and tried to connect the dots in my head. -Did something happen to A-Nueng?

[Yeah.]

—What happened to A-Nueng?

After finding out what happened to A-Nueng, I rushed out of the house in my grandmother's beautiful European car (which was now mine) to go see A-Nueng. Folk had called me to tell me that A-Nueng was very attached to her friends these days. I went out with them all the time and didn't come home.

Plus, a lot of people were hitting on her, and the naughty girl was giving everyone a chance without even bothering to examine them. That included Folk, who said she didn't like him.

Why was I frustrated by this? And why was I driving so fast to see her?

I ended up in a pub behind a famous private university. It wasn't A-Nueng University, but the cheerful woman ended up there. Folk was waiting for me.

He raised his hands to show me respect before leading me inside the pub called ‘Pub’.

So stupid...

When I saw A-Nueng dancing wildly in her university uniform, I immediately wanted to burn down this stupid -Pub-.

—Nueng.

—¡¡¡Nueng!!!

I grabbed the little woman’s arm. She probably hadn’t heard me at first. She turned to look at me. Her eyes were sweet like honey because of the alcohol in her body. The cheerful woman just looked at me and smiled.

—I must be very drunk to see you here.

—Why don’t you go home? You’re being very naughty.

—Actually it’s Aunt Nueng. It’s been a long time since we’ve seen each other. A-Nueng gave me her Duchenne smile as her eyes wandered. -That’s what

teenagers are like, Aunt Nueng. If we don't have fun now, when should we?

As we spoke, a boy dancing nearby suddenly hugged the cheerful woman from behind and rested his chin on her shoulder. A-Nueng's eyes widened in surprise. She quickly removed his hands from her.

—What are you doing? I don't like this.

—I invited you to dance with me. Who are you talking to? -The boy turns to look at me. Is this your sister?

—The sister of my mother.

—What?

As the boy pretended not to hear what A-Neng just said, he responded frustratedly to get it over with.

—I am everything for her!!!

I grabbed A-Nueng's arm and pulled her to stand next to me. I then searched for her purse, which she probably brought with her, before dragging her out. She couldn't walk upright because she was drunk, but she could still communicate. She pulled her arm out of my grasp and pushed me.

—Why do you interfere? I'm having fun with my friends.

—It seemed like you had seen a ghost. What did you find funny? This is not your style. Go home. I will take you home.

—No. I already told my grandmother that today I have to work on my report.

—And you are also lying these days?

—Mind your own business. We're not close anymore, remember?

When the girl answered me, I was stunned. I was about to answer her, but Folk quickly stepped between us.

—Please don't fight now. Let's get out of here first.

—You again. You are acting like a stalker. And you interfered to drag Aunt Nueng here? I was willing to be your friend, but you ratted me out? Get out of my life. Go away, right now.

Folk looked like someone had thrown shit in his face. So I pushed his head back to push the shy boy away and face A-Nueng.

—If this is your way of getting my attention, you’ve succeeded. Let’s go home.

—No. I’m not going home!

—Alright. We’re not going home.

I said it tiredly. But A-Nueng looked like she was about to cry.

—Do you give up so easily? If I say no, you have to make me.

—I know you wanted me to do that. — I sighed. If you don’t want to come home, then we won’t go home

—Let’s go to my palace. Spend the night with me there.

I finally managed to drag A-Nueng with me. I dropped Folk off at his dorm near the university before driving home. The housekeepers who came to meet us were expelled so that we could fight freely. And the best place for the fight, where no one could hear us, was...

My bedroom.

—If you want to fight, come to me. I’m ready.

—Why did you come to see me?

—I heard how naughty you have been. Even your grandmother called me worried. She said you come home late every night and sometimes you don't even come home. Where have you been sleeping?

—With friends.

—Do you have friends you can sleep over with now?

—I have to find a way to survive. You kicked me out of the only place I could stay to sleep. I'm just something to distract you.

A-Nueng finally spoke about that night. I was prepared for this because we couldn't avoid it. It had been on my mind too. I thought about it every night.

—If you're so angry with me, hit me. Don't get hurt.

—You make everything seem simple. If I'm angry, I should hit you. But it was a mess.

—Why make it difficult?

—You're a terrible person.

Even though I told her to come to me, when she said, “You’re a terrible person,” I tensed. It was like I was getting a thousand Botox injections in my face.

—It’s getting out of hand

—What you did was no different from a hit and run. No bail. Nothing. We did it, and you just told me to reset, as if nothing had happened. If you’re not a bitch, what are you?

—When did I hit you? You’re the one who hit me!

I argued, while A-Nueng simply made a noise in her throat. Embarrassment made me put my hand on my face.

—How is that different? You saw me as a temporary sexual object. Do I look like your sex toy?

—You are not a sex toy. Those things vibrate until their batteries run out. But you fell asleep because you were tired

I was just babbling, but that didn’t help anything. Things got worse when I compared it to a dildo.

—Did you come to me to make things worse?

—No.

—Then why did you do it?

A-Nueng looked at me and was about to cry again. I looked at my friend's daughter and sighed. I unbuttoned my shirt from the top to the last button to reveal my new black bra.

—I miss you.

I said it while rubbing my face, as if I were someone who gave everything because I had nothing to lose.

—I miss you every day. You don't qualify as a sex toy since those objects don't require my help on how to make them right.

—Are you trying to make peace with me? Why does it sound like you're complaining, but it strangely makes me feel good? -The crying became a curious question. I bared my teeth at the person in front of me because she wasn't doing what I expected him to do.

—I will count from 1 to 5. If you still have questions, I will fasten one button at a time while I count.

—Aunt Nueng.

—One

—Yeah?

—I'm counting... two. — I pressed the second button. The small woman seemed to hesitate as to what she should do next.

—Three.

Because she was afraid that I would change my mind, she jumped on me. I, who was waiting for the cheerful woman, opened my arm to support her small figure and hugged her tightly.

—Are you using this to persuade me?

—Did it work?

—Are you making peace with me?

—This is not a reconciliation...

I rolled my eyes because I didn't even believe what I was saying. Let's start over.

—Maybe I'm trying to make things up to you. It's okay... I am. I was angry with myself. I kept thinking that if I hadn't been overly sensitive that night, we wouldn't have done it. I'm worried about how your mother and father would feel. There's also

the matter of your grandmother. Although what we did wasn't that bad...

—Did you feel good?

—Well...— I bit my lips and changed the subject. Your mother will kill me. Also, your father and your grandmother. Everyone trusted me, but I do this...

A-Nueng looked into my eyes and squeezed my cheeks, as if she was trying to comfort me.

—Why do you worry about others more than me? This is about us! I've always told you that I love you. That's how it is...

—You're still young. You have plenty of time to get to know people better than me. You may think you love me now, but once your world opens up...

—It's right here in front of me; you are my love

The small woman looked at me with eyes full of obsession. It was like she was seducing me. I looked at her face dreamily and began to not feel like myself.

—You were the only one who did it that night. I pushed A-Nueng against the bed until she lay on it. I got on top of her and slowly took off my clothes,

one piece at a time. -You didn't do well that night. I think there are many things we need to fix together.

—Aunt Nueng...

The small woman looked at me hesitantly. I was very excited. I leaned down and gently bit the bridge of his nose out of cute aggression.

—Aunt will teach you.

30 The resentful girl

I pushed A-Nueng onto the bed and unbuttoned my shirt with one hand. I propped myself up on one arm as I looked at the drunken person breathing heavily beneath me. A— Nueng seemed excited but also seemed to have mixed feelings. Her eyes showed confusion. She didn't understand what I was thinking.

—Sometimes you are very difficult to understand. You pushed me away, but now you say you miss me and we are in this position together

—I don't understand myself either. The worst part of me is wanting to win — I crouch down and start sliding my nose along her neck. I was taking in her body scent. -I haven't drunk anything, but I feel drunk

—You feel sorry for me, don't you?

—I don't respond to pity with this.

— Ah...

A-Nueng let out an uncontrollable scream when I bit her ear. Her body temperature was rising and she was breathing more heavily. That made me want to do more.

—Aunt Nueng...

—Huh?

—If we do this again... will you leave me like you did?

Her plaintive voice stunned me and I began to feel sorry for her. When A-Nueng saw that I was stunned, she turned her back on me. I knew what she's about to do, so I hugged her from behind and snuggled into her neck. I continued talking to her as I inhaled more of her body scent.

—I'm sorry for hurting your feelings. You must have lost your trust because of me

—I cried every day.

Her complaints made me hug her small body tighter. My hands, which had never been unnecessarily naughty or adventurous, were now reaching down to the zipper of her skirt. I slowly unzipped her skirt. The sound of the zipper opening echoed throughout the room.

—How should I console you? -I took off her skirt and started kissing the sensitive areas of her body. What do you want to do?

—I don't know.

—You like this? — One of my hands went into her underwear. A-Nueng walked away

—Ahh... aunt.

—Yeah?

—I didn't take a shower yet.

—Alright.

—But I don't have confidence

—Are you not confident or are you afraid?

A-Nueng's silence was my response. This was the first time I had taken the initiative, so the little woman was scared. She was afraid it would hurt.

—Alright. Not rush. There are many ways...-to encourage her to continue, I spread her legs and moved my finger in circles. -I will teach you.

—Ah...-A-Nueng was complying. Instead of resisting out of fear, she laid down willingly and squeezed my shoulders. She relaxed and spread her

legs. I licked her pursed lips to comfort her. But I also gave her an order while doing it.

—I want to hear your voice.

—No. It's... it's...-A-Nueng bit her lips harder. - It's shameful.

I stopped moving my finger, as if I were teasing her. It was as if the little woman was stopped mid-journey. A-Nueng frowned and stared at me, still breathing heavily.

—Because...

—I don't know how you feel.

—Tell me.

—What do you want me to say? -A-Nueng hit my shoulder with her fist, but refrained from verbally expressing her request. Aunt Nueng!

—Be honest with yourself. Say what you want.

The little woman looked like she was about to cry, but she spoke slowly while covering her face with her hand.

—Please do it for me...

—Do it?

—Please help. — A-Nueng mustered up the courage to grab my finger and move it slowly. - Ah... please, Aunt Nueng. It feels good.

—I can make you feel even better. I raised my hands and prepared to unbutton the little woman's shirt, but A-Neng squeezed my hand with her legs. I was surprised. A-Nueng's courage was rising rapidly. -Oh...

—What are you doing?

—Take off your shirt.

Although she was very shy, she didn't want to stop halfway, so A-Nueng unbuttoned her shirt and unhooked her bra. She moaned in frustration as I moved my hand away from the area between her legs.

—Are you happy now? Anything else you want?

I gave the woman a small smile before taking the inviting breast with my mouth. Then I answered as honestly as I could.

—I want you.

— Ah...

The moan that slowly escaped her throat encouraged me. I nibbled and tasted and sucked until the little girl beneath me covered her face in agony.

—I can't take it anymore, Aunt Nueng.

A-Nueng pushed my head down instinctively. I had done this before, although I wasn't the one doing it. This time, I was determined to pay the naughty woman for comforting me without asking for anything in return that night.

I slowly moved my tongue to her navel. I playfully went around it to annoy her and succeeded. The cheerful woman sat up and bit her lower lip.

—Aunt. It's annoying. Do something.

—What do you want me to do?

My direct question towards her made A-Nueng sigh in annoyance. I smiled adoringly at her.

—Eat me. Now.

—I'm pleasing you.

—Be greedy. I'm dying here

—Do you want me to do something like that?

I spread her legs and tasted her, still with her underwear between my mouth and her naked body.

Although I did what she wanted, it was not enough to satisfy her. It was like it was itchy, but she was scratching it with her clothes on.

It was headed to the right place, but it wasn't satisfying enough...

—Like this... but not exactly... Ah...

—What about this?

I slipped my finger under her underwear and inserted a finger... A-Nueng twisted her face as if in pain, but she was also curious. I've been through this before with my previous partner. Ah-huh... I'm making her feel good, although there was pain too.

But it would only hurt for a while. And from there everything would go smoothly.

—And that?

I pushed the underwear to the side until I could see her private part, then leaned down to please her, like I said I would... I was scratching her on the

spot. A-Nueng moaned softly to show that she preferred that.

I wanted her first time to be good so I took out my finger and replaced it with my soft tongue.

—I think you would prefer this.

— Ah...

—Is that how you like it?

—Aha.

—What? -I moved my face back. That made A-Neng let out how she felt about getting this over with.

—I like it. Get it done. Please.

She was very direct in expressing her wish... my niece.

This was the second time... That something like this happened between A-Nueng and me. And what was more shocking was that I was the one who started it this time. Hearing the sound of a shower in the bathroom got my blood pumping because I couldn't help but wonder what the other person was doing there.

What was happening with me?

When I thought about last night, I became emotional. We got to the point of intimacy, but in a way that A-Nueng could know what it felt like to do it gently.

One step at a time. There was no need to rush things...

As I let my mind wander with my eyes closed, A-Nueng came out of the bathroom wearing an oversized t-shirt that she pulled out of my closet. The little woman looked at me for so long that I couldn't stand it. Then I opened my eyes to look at her.

—What's happening? Why are you standing there looking at me?

—I'm confused

I tried not to smile as I sat down. Acting all timid at this point was too late. We had come far.

Ah... very far away.

—What is it that confuses you?

—How did I get here?

—Huh?

A-Nueng frowned and looked around the room.

—I remember coming back to you and then everything went blank.

I looked A-Nueng in the eyes. The cheerful woman was still acting naive as she looked at me and tilted her head to the side.

Very convincing... Did she pretend she couldn't remember anything after being sober?

There was no way she wouldn't remember saying my name all night. But I would play along. I wanted to know how far it would go.

—You can't handle alcohol well, huh? You drank a lot?

—I don't remember much. I also have a bad headache — the little woman massaged her temples. -My head feels like it's about to explode.

—It's probably a hangover. Come lie down — I patted the bed so she could lie down next to me. I wanted to see if she would do that. She shook her face to reject my offer. That was interesting.

Normally, she would take every opportunity to be around me.

—Alright. If I go to bed, I won't get out of bed all day. Also, today I have to go work on a report with my friends.

—Which friends? My voice became stern when I thought of the guy who hugged A-Nueng the night before.

—Those from the university, of course. “There's a lot of group work for a first-year student.” A-Nueng looked for her university uniform and frowned. It's not a good idea to use the one I used yesterday.

—Of course not. It reeks of alcohol

—Why didn't you leave me at my grandmother's house last night?

—Wouldn't your grandmother hit you on the head if you came back that drunk?

—Ah. That's reasonable. She shrugged her shoulders. There is no way around it. I have nothing else to wear.

—At what time will you come back?

—I'm not sure. I have to see if my friends ask me out later.

—Nueng. -My voice immediately became stern upon hearing that. The act of -playing dumb— had to end now.

—Yeah?

—Come home right after you finish. I'll pick you up today.

—Alright.

—What game are you playing now?

—I don't understand. What game? -The happy woman played dumb. So I crossed my arms over my chest and looked at her sternly.

—Are you saying you don't remember anything from last night?

—What happened last night?

—Do I look stupid?

When she saw that I was looking at her, looking very serious, she changed her focus.

—Ah... now I remember. — A-Nueng looked at the bed and acted like she didn't care. -We did it last

night.

When the cheerful woman said that, I was the one who was embarrassed. However, I had to stay calm to maintain my composure.

—And then?

Her casual question leaves me stunned.

—What do you mean?

—What do you expect from what happened last night?

—Well...

This time it was me who couldn't answer that simple question. A-Nueng kept her face straight and shrugged as if she didn't care.

—If there is nothing you expect, then let's pretend that nothing happened

—Umm...

—I think... we should restart and start from scratch again

31. Out of Control

At that moment I began to understand how she felt when she talked about hit and run. A-Nueng left without us speaking further. I just nodded understandingly and told her...

—Then it depends on you. We can pretend nothing happened.

And A-Nueng left without even looking at me...

Damn... Someone like M.L. Sippakorn had never felt so unworthy. It was a good thing I hadn't gotten down on my knees and begged her to stay. If she wanted to leave, I wouldn't stop her. We had already had a civil conversation.

What a civil conversation we had!

I had been frustrated all day and my only release was Chet, who suddenly stopped by the palace. So yeah, it became my outlet. However... it seemed like he wasn't the only one in a bad mood.

—Look, Khun Nueng.

Chet, frustrated, leaves 5 or 6 photos on the coffee table. I, who was ready to attack him, had to restrain myself because he attacked me first.

—What are these? -I picked them up and frowned. Why are you showing me pictures of men? Do you want me to choose someone to marry?

—You don't like boys.

My face tensed a little because he had caught me off guard. But I slowly put the photos back and repeated my question.

—So, whose photographs are these?

—All the men who are flirting with A-Nueng

As soon as I heard that, I took them all back to examine them more carefully. Now I felt like my chest was expanding and I was about to explode. But no... Chet is being worse than me.

—The 6? Your daughter is very beautiful.

—This is not the time to joke, Khun Nueng.

—I'm congratulating your daughter. How is that mocking? This is normal. Many men flirted with me when I was in college. It is exciting. It's all appropriate for a freshman.

I wasn't sure if I was gritting my teeth when I said that, but I pretended to smile while looking at those photos.

—Do you have someone who takes photos of all the men who flirt with your daughter? Be careful. If A-Nueng finds out, she will be angry with you.

—I won't let her find out... I miss my daughter. I want to know how she is. So I had someone follow her and report back to me. And while I was doing that, I found all these leeches.

—Do you like someone in particular?

—Khun Nueng!!

—Alright. I'll stop joking. -I looked at the photos and took one with interest. It was a photo of a handsome man who I was very familiar with because we met the night before. He was the one who hugged A-Nueng right in front of me.

—You can't trust this one.

—For me, none of them can be trusted. They are men...

—Yeah. She may follow the same path as her mother if she meets someone like her father.

Chet turned to look at me with an expression that was hard to describe. It was like he was angry and embarrassed at the same time.

—I'm kidding. I'll be serious now... Folk called me last night. You remember the guy who went to the theme park with us, right?

—Yeah. Chet nodded. Here is also a photo of him.

—He called me at 11 at night to tell me that A-Nueng was not going to come home. She was drinking with her friends... — I gave him more details about where the place is before pointing out that guy's photo. This guy hugged your daughter right in front of me.

—What...

—If I were you, I would stop the fire before it could start.

There was no need to say more. Chet immediately nodded knowingly. Someone with his power could easily get rid of someone, especially someone who had crossed the line with his daughter. And he was pointing it towards the light.

—Alright. I'll stop this guy.

—Don't play too hard.

—I'm not from the mafia -We smiled at each other, knowing that there was no need to say more. Then we changed the subject. -What about the other five?

—Are you going to get rid of everyone? Won't you let her have a boyfriend?

—She is not at an appropriate age for that. Or do you think so?

—You are her father. I will not comment on this.

—But you're like a mother to my daughter. I want to know what you think.

—Daughter...— I twisted my face, surprised. No. I can't take on that role.

—You will if you marry me.

—Are you worthy?

—I will be ready for that role when I am prime minister.

—Do you already have tanks in your possession?

—No.

—Then you will have to wait a while before you can become prime minister.

—Let's change the subject

I agreed...

—I want to see my daughter. If I'm a good father figure that she can talk to about anything, she might feel closer to me. Chet looks at those photos like he's thinking about something and suddenly snaps his fingers. -Oh. I have an idea.

—What?

—I will be your Cupid. What do you think?

—What are you saying?

—If I am too possessive, she will be against me. But I'm an understanding father... -Chet snapped his fingers. -That's all. That's what I'll do.

—You're getting ahead of yourself.

—I will be your Cupid. I will make arrangements to meet with her and everyone she is dating. This will be great!

Chet was happily celebrating alone and took the photos, preparing to leave.

—Are you going?

—Thank you. You were instrumental in finding a solution.

What did I do? This wasn't what I wanted.

—Good.

—I'll tell you how everything goes.

So he was there to talk to himself, have fun alone, and leave without giving me a chance to express my frustration.

That was nice of him...

Chet disappeared for about two weeks. And during this same period of time A-Nueng also disappeared. This made me a little anxious. And when I was at home with nothing to do, I worked on my cooking skills because I was starting to seriously consider making it a career. I was debating whether to open a restaurant or do food delivery using the same business model as a monthly healthy food delivery subscription.

—It's a good idea. Mon and I love delicious food. We will be your customers every day.

—I'll put a high price on it.

—I'm rich.

I really loved my sister. She bragged about her wealth in such an irritatingly cute way.

—If I open a restaurant, it would be in this area because it is likely that customers can afford my service. But I'm torn between that and food delivery. I like the simplicity. Also to people today. I use food delivery a lot nowadays. I went to inspect the Thong Lor area. Each piece of land is as expensive as gold. But it would be a good investment.

—What type of food will you sell?

—Thai food.

—Good. I love Thai food. I will buy all the menus. Just let me know.

—How pretty are you? Do you want to be my wife?

—Can't. I was born to be a husband.

— Ah...

We were close sisters. But on some issues we didn't need to be so close. It was weird.

While my sister and I were walking through the rich area looking for a good location for my restaurant, my phone rang. Chet's number was on the screen. He sent a very anxious voice the moment I answered his call.

[Khun Nueng, can you speak?]

—What's happening?

[I want you to come with me. I'm not okay with the person A-Nueng is dating.]

When I heard that it was A-Nueng, I immediately straightened up. Sam looked at me surprised, but didn't say anything.

—Where are you?

[At a Japanese restaurant in Thong Lor.]

—What a coincidence; I am also in the area. Can Sam come with me?

[Sure, as long as you come.]

I went to the Japanese restaurant that Chet told me to go to. It wasn't far from where Sam and I were. As soon as I got there, I saw A-Nueng's date. Sam and I look at each other and blink blankly.

—I'm surprised. Khun Sam and Auntie Nueng are here too.

A-Nueng raised her hands to politely pay respects to Sam and me before introducing her friend, who did the same as A-Nueng.

—Yui, this is Miss Sam and Aunt Nueng.

The name Yui was what worried Chet. Because A-Nueng's date was a tomboy. I must admit, from what I saw, that A-Nueng had good taste. The beautiful woman she brought was beautiful. She had short hair, a high-bridged nose, and a very captivating smile.

The only problem was A-Nueng's father.

—Hello.

Sam looked at me a little because she understood the situation well. My sister didn't talk much. Since she was very confused when she spoke, she preferred to remain silent.

—Cute couple. I smiled at the beautiful woman, like an elder who adores someone younger than her. Are you in the same faculty as A-Nueng?

—Yeah.

—How did you two become close? -I smiled and placed some salmon on her plate. Yui looked at me stunned and nodded. She blushed because she was embarrassed.

—We have been close since the hazing activities. And we happen to be in the streaming club together, so we became even closer.

—Ah. “Then you have the same hobby.” I nodded to acknowledge that and turned to A-Nueng. -And you? How are you? We haven’t seen each other in a long time.

—I’m fine. Having Yui with me helps a lot.

—Have you already read a novel on air? — I asked A— Nueng and then turned to chat with Yui. - A-Nueng likes to read novels. She dreams of becoming a DJ and writing audiobooks. Isn’t that cute?

Yui turned to look at the cheerful woman and smiled at her.

—You should read novels on air sometimes.

—I will do that.

—Friends should help each other in this way. “You two make a good couple,” I smiled at Yui

again. Please take care of A-Nueng. I'm relieved to see that she has a kind and sincere friend.

—I'll go to the bathroom.

Chet, who had been trying to hold back, prepared to escape, but I grabbed his arm.

—Sit down.

“But...” Chet stuttered. He was clearly frustrated and wouldn't obey me. Finally I got up to go with him.

—Let me apologize a little. Please accompany A-Nueng, Sam.

I got up and walked away to talk to Chet. The father was clearly frustrated. He yelled at me because he needs a way out.

—I invited you here to help do something, but you are encouraging them.

—What do you want me to do?

—Don't you see that she's dating a tomboy? She's a tomboy!

—And? It's cute.

—Khun Nueng! That's my daughter. Her grandfather is the former prime minister. Her grandmother had a title. And I am her father.

—Can't you have a tomboy as a husband if you are from an important family? -I looked at Chet, annoyed. Dating a man and having a baby at 16 like her mother is also not okay.

—Khun Nueng!!

—I'm illustrating that even if A-Nueng dates the former prime minister's son, if he gets her pregnant and abandons her because he's afraid of her father, her date is shit too.

—Stop hitting me. The problem is that I can't stand that my daughter is not straight!

I swallowed hard as I fixed my gaze on Chet.

—Then tell her yourself.

—Because A-Nueng trusts you. I want you to be the one to tell her that

—I won't do any of that. If she has a good relationship, I will support her. I said it, but I knew that deep down I didn't like what was happening either. However, it would be immature for me to

show that. If you want to get closer to your daughter, be understanding like you said you would be

—If you can't stand it, wait outside. I'll go eat now. I don't want them to wait for us for too long. What you are doing is rude and immature.

I hit him hard before returning to the table and smiling at A-Nueng's friend.

—Do you like food, Yui?

—It's very delicious.

“You're cute when you're shy.” I tilted my head and smiled at her. Sam looked at me until I had to look back and talk to her through our eyes.

—You look very scary right now.

—Don't say anything, Sam.

—Aunt Nueng... How... old are you? Yui asked me hesitantly and quickly looked back at her plate shyly.

—34 and I'll be 35 in a few weeks.

Sam, who had been silent, had just realized this.

—That’s how it is. It’s almost your birthday.

—You don’t look at all like someone in his thirties -The pretty woman sincerely congratulated me. She made me rest my chin in my hand and talk to her carefully.

—How old do I look?

—You look like you’re in your twenties -And the tomboy looked me in the eyes. -You look more like a sister than an aunt.

—You can call me ‘sister’ if that’s how you really feel.

After remaining silent the entire time, A-Nueng lost her patience and slammed the table. Everyone remained in silence. I was the one who looked at her and warned her sternly.

—This is not something a charming lady does.

—Then don’t love me.

“If you say that... it’s fine.” I looked at Yui and smiled at her again. lovely.

Hearing that, A-Nueng grabbed her bag and left the table. Yui hesitated whether she should stay or

follow A-Nueng. But in the end, worried, she ran after the cheerful woman.

That left just Sam and me sitting at the table.

—Can I speak now?

—Sure. -I drank my hot tea without any expression. -What do you have to say?

—You were out of control

—I didn't do anything.

—A-Nueng really surprises me. How can someone so young make my sister, who is normally not easily sensitive, become this?

—It turns me into what?

My little sister turned to look me in the eyes.

—Someone who is jealous.

—Foolishness. I didn't do anything. -I squeezed the cup of tea in my hand tightly because I knew that my sister was reading me like an open book. I was burning inside, but I could only remain calm, so that no one would notice that I had lost my composure.

—You should have let Chet handle it. You're the one who couldn't stand it, so you took care of it

yourself. You flirted, even though you've never flirted with anyone. Yui is probably already in a bad mood by now.

I smiled at Sam and winked.

—I just wanted to see my friend's daughter's date to see how sincere she was.

—Are you doing this as a friend of her mother or...

—What?

This time it was my sister's turn to wink at me while smiling happily.

—Suggar mommy

32. It's love

—Khun Nueng, there is a guest here to see you.

I smiled at the corner of my mouth as I practiced my cooking skills. I knew that A-Nueng would come to see me sooner or later, so I took this opportunity to prepare dinner for us as well.

It was as if she knew this cheerful woman a little better now. She was easily agitated.

—You can let her enter the kitchen.

—I'm here now.

A-Nueng interrupted behind the housekeeper before he could invite her in. The housekeeper apologized once she finished her task.

—What brought you here today?

—Why did you do that?

—What did I do?

—You were flirting.

I turned away from the sushi I was making with a recipe I found online and turned to look the cheerful woman in the eyes. She looked very moody.

—When did I do that?

—In the restaurant. You’ve never done anything like this before

—How do you know? Maybe I had, but you’ve never seen it.

—No! At least you’ve never done that with me.

—Alright. Alright. “I’ve never done that with you,” I nodded as if I were raising the white flag. - And coquettish.

—Why? Why did you do that? Do you like Yui? - A-Nueng clenched her fist and lips. I moved on when I saw how angry she was.

—Yeah. She is cute. If I was in an all-girls school, I’d be a star.

—But Yui likes me.

“Let’s see if she still does it after today,” I smiled from ear to ear. -I had never felt attracted to a tomboy before. She is someone I would like to try it with. It would be nice if Yui and I could explore...

I teased A-Nueng by moving my fingers. A—Nueng finally couldn't stand it, so she grabbed my hand and squeezed it tightly.

—Explore what? What are you planning to do with Yui? What you did with me?

We stared at each other as I smiled out of the corner of my mouth.

—We did?

—What?

—We did?

—Don't avoid my question, Aunt Nueng. You know what I'm talking about.

—I really don't understand. Did something happen between us? -I winked at her and turned around to continue making sushi, not caring how A-Nueng reacted to what I had just said. But as soon as I turned my back, the little woman hugged me from behind.

—Why can I never beat you?

—Are we competing?

—Why aren't you jealous at all? I dated a lot of people, but you don't care in the slightest.

Her voice had clearly softened and she wasn't as furious as before. I could tell she was testing me. But I was older and more experienced than her. Playing along with someone under my care seemed immature.

I didn't like being jealous. Even if I was, I would never show it.

—I'm too old to do something childish like that. I'm too old to chase people who make me jealous. I want a simple life. If you like me, stay with me. If not, I don't care.

—And do you like me?

I chose to remain silent. A-Nueng sighed, but hugged me tighter.

—You're not making it as simple as you said we should make it. I am discouraged.

—Nueng.

—Yeah?

—Try this. -I took some sushi that I was inspired to make after visiting a Japanese restaurant and gave

it to A-Nueng. -Please tell me if it's okay.

A-Nueng looked at me sheepishly when I changed the subject, but ate sushi willingly.

—It's delicious

—I did it with love. -I shrugged my shoulders and continued talking. -Everything I do is with consideration. I cook with love

—Aha.

—When I make love to you, it is also with love.

And the sushi, which was the size of those sold at the street market for 5 baht, splashed on my face from A-Nueng's mouth. So right now my face was covered in high-quality rice that farmers cultivated with a lot of effort.

—I... I'm sorry.

The little woman covered her mouth with her hand. She was blushing from her face to her neck. I closed my eyes because my face was covered in rice. I slowly cleaned up and maintained a calm attitude, as if what I had just said was great.

—Splashing rice on my face like this is not nice at all.

—I... I was surprised. you used the words -make love

She was right. I didn't have to be so specific. And I was starting to feel uncomfortable looking directly at A-Nueng like this. Then I walked away from her.

—Alright. I admit it. I felt something when you brought a friend with you to the restaurant. Aside from that tomboy, you also dated a lot of men... Actually, it wasn't easy for me. But for me to be jealous of you is inappropriate.

—You are jealous...

I could tell the petite woman was stunned. But I was also trying very hard to control the muscles in my face to smile.

—So the sushi is good? -I turned around again, preparing to make more sushi. However, A-Nueng grabbed my arm. Hey? What's happening?

—You know better...

I was beginning to understand how the cheerful woman felt. If I had rice in my mouth, I would have splashed it on her face too in surprise.

—Of course. I am a very limited edition.

—We're talking about this and you're still making sushi?

—What should I make but sushi?

Now we communicated with our eyes. A—Nueng nodded towards the second floor, in the direction of where my bedroom was.

—Come on, Aunt Nueng?

—You are so self-centered.

I laughed a little before communicating with her through my lips instead of my eyes.

—You go up first. I'll clean... A-Nueng ran out of the kitchen and ran upstairs happily.

—Come quickly. I'll be waiting.

The sound of her heavy footsteps made me smile. Despite my best efforts to maintain my composure, I couldn't help but feel the relentless onslaught of my intense desires.

Good! Forget about these sushi. This is not the time to be cooking!

I quickly took off my apron and ran upstairs. As soon as I opened the door to my room, I saw A-Nueng, who was still wearing her university uniform, taking off her shirt from her skirt. She gave me a sly gesture with her palm up.

—My dear aunt... please hurry...

I closed and locked the door carefully before taking a step towards her very slowly, as if I was teasing her and making her want me more.

—I don't need to rush. I like to take things slowly.

—Argh. I can never beat you.

And A-Nueng was the one who jumped on me like a baby monkey. I carried the smaller built person to bed and longingly kissed the naughty girl who had been missing for two weeks. I missed her; I just never said it out loud.

Or maybe I did... It didn't matter. I preferred to speak through my actions.

—I missed you so much, Aunt Nueng.

—If you missed me, why didn't you come see me? -I slid my hand inside her shirt to feel her soft, bare belly while I kissed her neck. You were busy hanging out with all those people.

—You've been watching me... Ah... that's good -Before kissing again, I ran my teeth along her jaw. - Even though you know what I was doing, you didn't call me once.

—There's no need. Your father tells me...

When I thought of Chet, I paused. I felt guilty. A — Nueng knew what I was thinking, so she cupped my face and forced me to look into her eyes.

—Don't think about others. It's just the two of us here and now

—But... -I began to doubt. A-Nueng saw that I was about to back away, so she pushed me onto the bed and got on top of me. -Is this a good idea?

—We've done it twice, Aunt Nueng. We can't go back — The small woman unbuttoned her shirt to show me her thin white t-shirt. Her soft scent made my heart race. -I can't go back now. I want it.

All my moral fiber crumbled when I heard her stutter. I sat up and lifted her so she was sitting on

top of me. Her pleated skirt made it easy. I ran my hand up her thigh.

—Aunt Nueng... I need you... A... Ah...

My fingers slipped under her underwear to feel the heat and wetness. I knew immediately that she was ready and couldn't really go back.

—My dear aunt... come in.

I was circling the area with my fingers while looking at A-Nueng hesitantly. But once she requested it, I tried to swipe...

The little woman started a little when I entered. I understood what my niece felt. However, just as I was preparing to remove the finger, A-Nueng hugged me tightly and rested her face on my shoulder.

—Keep going... Ah...

I tried to go slow. A-Nueng bit my shoulder until it hurt, but I saw it as a good thing. I almost asked her to bite me harder.

—So this is what it feels like... This is how it feels -A-Nueng said this in my ear as I stopped moving. Soon after, the little woman, who was very

curious, moved slowly. -Auntie... please be patient with me. I am learning.

—Alright. You can control the pace

—Ah... it's better...

And A-Nueng showed me that she was really better. The little woman seemed to have familiarized herself with it and figured out how to control the rhythm. She began to move slowly and gradually sped up. Her body temperature was rising so much that I could feel it. The sound she made made me look at her differently.

She had grown...

She was more beautiful...

—Auntie, I'm close... Ah... — A-Nueng tensed. She squeezed me tightly with her legs. Her body shook and she rested her head limply on my shoulder. As the moisture on my finger increased, I pulled it out.

—How was it?

—It was ok. -A-Nueng walked away from me and opened her eyes wide when I saw that I tasted what was on her finger. What are you doing!

—Can't I?

The little woman blushed very much. It wasn't shame. She liked it and was now pushing me onto the bed.

—You're not done yet.

I looked at the person who had turned into a grown woman in less than twenty minutes. Now she was misbehaving and wanted to take the initiative.

—You're not tired?

—I can do this all day.

—You seem to like doing this.

—Only with you... — And the cheerful woman slowly passed her lips over my navel to excite me. Then she took off my shorts effortlessly. -Let me try you too.

I smiled at her and spread my legs.

—You can eat until you are full.

A-Nueng and I did it until 2am. Ah... It was many hours. With the blanket over us, we were now lying face down. We talked like we had never talked before, although we had done it twice before.

—Pretend that nothing happened like the last two times? — The little woman looked at me nervously. She was probably holding her breath, waiting to see what she would do this time.

—Do you want to do that?

—I'm tired of being in a bad mood.

—So...

—So...

A-Nueng looked at me excitedly. I winked at her nonchalantly.

—Let it be.

—My God -A-Nueng covered her face with the pillow and screamed euphorically. Then she looked me in the eyes. It's happening. You can't go back on your word.

—Aha.

—Does this mean we can keep doing it over and over again?

—It seems like you really like it.

A-Nueng put her hands on her cheeks and laughed happily.

—It's like my chest is exploding. "I'm very happy right now," the cheerful woman shouted. made me give myself. I realized that she was really happy. -You are like a dream come true for me.

—Don't overreact.

—What are we?

It was a simple question, but I stayed silent. I wasn't going to reject her or anything like that. It was just a complicated relationship...

My friend's daughter...

A person under my care...

One niece...

And now she was my lover too and that was...

—It looks like you just saw a ghost. But I understand it. You are my guardian. It must be difficult for you.

—Are you angry?

—I wasn't angry when I found out that you told my mother to get rid of me because I understand you. So I can also understand you on this matter

She was very kind and open-minded. I looked at her with pride. She was a deep thinker who understood me well.

—Thank you.

—Alright. We can make a deal. Love must come accompanied by understanding. Now that I think about it... there's something I want you to understand about me too.

—What is it?

—Alright. We can make a deal. Love must come accompanied by understanding. Now that I think about it... there's something I want you to understand about me too.

—What is it?

There was a silence between us. A-Nueng shook her head a little and pretended to fall asleep.

—I'll tell you later.

—Can't you tell me now?

—Sweet dreams.

—Nueng.

No matter how much I tried to wake her up, A-Nueng pretended to sleep. What did I have to understand in exchange for her understanding me?

What...?

33. Comprehension

I understood the enthusiasm and energy of teenagers...

A-Nueng had so much energy, yes.

—Aunt Nueng...

I was sketching the interior design of my restaurant. However, the sexiest kitten of 2000 was bothering me. A-Nueng rubbed her face against my neck and made little voices.

—What are you doing?

—Working

—You can't look sexy with every move you make like this -The cheerful woman's body temperature was rising. It was so tall that I could feel the heat evaporating from it. She was snuggling her nose into my neck. I stayed calm by simply clearing my throat and looking at her knowingly.

—Won't you let me do anything else?

“I didn’t say anything.” The little girl slowly moved towards my lap and snuggled her nose against my cheek. I just want some tenderness.

—If it’s just that, I won’t stop you. -I put down the pencil and leaned back in the chair. When A-Nueng noticed that I was going limp, she wrapped her legs around my thigh. Your body is so hot

—I think I’m sick.

—Then you need to rest a lot.

—Please help me lie down.

I slowly ran my hands up her thighs and slid them into her pajama pants. She wasn’t wearing underwear. The wetness I felt screamed its desire.

—Are you sure you want to rest?

— Ah...

Her voice was full of desire, but she didn’t dare express her needs directly. She only expressed them through her body. I smiled adoringly at her and leaned down to bite her shoulder. A-Nueng was startled.

—Auntie Nueng...

I stopped instantly because I knew there was something she wanted to say. But when I looked at her, she stayed silent.

—What? What do you want to say to me?

—Nothing...

—If you don't talk to me frankly, I won't do anything.

I removed my hand from her pants and raised an eyebrow nonchalantly. The little girl was unstable at this time. She frowned and breathed heavily.

—Auntie Nueng! This is not the time to make fun of me.

—Say what you have in mind.

When the kitten saw that I was serious, she pursed her lips. She seemed very hesitant. But since her desire was too great to deny, she had to give in.

—Ahh?

“Please don't think I'm weird... Ah, I don't want to say this.” A-Nueng leaned in to snuggle her warm, attractive body against mine. I was starting to

get excited, but I controlled my emotions better than she did.

—Just say it. I want to know all about you. I won't look at you strangely. What do you mean?

—Nueng.

—I want you... to bite.

—Ah...-I blushed a little when I heard that but I tried to look normal. -I will do that.

—I love it.

Oh... I was getting excited about what she was saying.

—Alright. I will bite.

—Do not nibble. I want you to bite me hard -A— Nueng hugged me tightly and bit my shoulder as a demonstration. She bit so hard that I flinched.

—Isn't it too strong?

“I like it...” And the small woman above me backed away, looking hesitant. Is that a bad thing, now that you know what it is?

I was surprised. I never thought about any of that. But I could understand that it was some kind of raw

emotion.

—No. It's just your preference. I reached out and pulled her head back by her hair, exposing the bare skin on her neck, before running my teeth along her vein and biting her shoulder. Like this?

—Ah... exactly.

—My dear aunt.

Although I made it seem like what A-Nueng liked was normal, once we were done, I quickly searched the Internet to see if other people did what we did. It opened me to the world of what A-Nueng and I had just done together, which was BDSM.

I am Sippakorn. I am a senior and have a degree. But being dominant in that sense was...

Ah...

Damn. Why didn't I have friends??? And the only friend I had happened to be my wife's mother... No. I was referring to A-Nueng's mother. Who could I talk to about this?

—Nueng.

Sam's call when she entered my house startled me. My little sister visited me frequently. She smiled at me and yes... she brought with her Doraemon, her beautiful lover.

—What brings you here?

—I want to visit you as often as I can. I don't want you to feel alone.

—What are you doing? You seem very stressed. The woman with heart-shaped lips asked curiously because she could see from afar that I was lost in thought. I looked at the two of them and bit my nails as I thought about whether I should talk to them about this.

Why did she have to be there when I needed to talk about something unusual like this? How could I ask my sister about something like this?

Seeing a ghost wouldn't be that shocking.

—Nothing.

—That means there is something -Doraemon stared at me with her chin resting on her hand. What is it?

—Are we close enough to talk about it with you?

— Ah...

Evidently, my teasing made Doraemon pale, while Sam, who was oblivious to the situation, simply saw it as my normal way of speaking.

If you grew up with our grandmother, what she had just said was not harmful at all.

—I was just kidding. You get scared so easily... There's something on my mind -I was trying to make it up to Mon by answering her. But it's not something I can talk to anyone about.

—Is it about having sexual relations with the person under your care?

—Sam!!

—Khun Sam!!! -Before I could reach Sam, her lover ran in to cover her mouth, surprised. I covered my face with my hands out of shame. Why was she like this?

—What did I say wrong? It's something Nueng doesn't want to tell anyone.

—So you're talking about that? -Mon sighed a little and twisted her face as she looked at me. -I apologize, Khun Nueng.

—I suppose you’ve already heard about that. You have such a big mouth, little one.

—I have no secrets with Mon. But is that what it’s about?

When she saw my awkward reaction, she can guess the answer to that question. And since we had come this far, I nodded to admit it.

—Aha.

—Something has happened?

When they saw that I admitted it, they immediately asked out of curiosity. My personal life was probably something very exciting to them.

—A bit. Come to think of it... if I don’t talk to you two about this, who can I talk to?

Finally I told them the important part. I could tell, without having to look in the mirror, how red my face was while doing that. Although I tried to explain as little as I could, Sam covered her mouth with her hands in surprise. As for Doraemon, if her skin was really blue (like Doraemon), it would probably already be purple from the accelerated pumping of blood.

—It’s nothing unusual. Don’t worry

—Can I really do that? I...-I got up and walked around the room because I didn't know what to do. - I am an M.L. Our grandmother prepared me to be perfect, but I...

—You?

—You?

Both Doraemon and Sam said that, as if they were echoing me. It made me cover my face with my hands again because I couldn't really accept it.

—I like it.

And everything was silent. It may have only been 30 seconds, but it seemed like an eternity.

Finally, Sam broke the silence.

—If your partner is also happy with it, there is nothing wrong. But you have to know the limit

—Ah, really?

—You were born a leader. Our grandmother has instilled this in you since you were born. I can say that bossing people around is your talent. I think... being dominant is not a bad thing.

I hugged myself nervously. This was the first time in my life that someone as confident as me was like this. This was something that was difficult to come to terms with...

—Don't consider it a bad thing. It's a personal preference. You like it. Your partner likes it too. It's a win-win situation — Doraemon added. Sam smiles, although it wasn't clear if Mon's pure intention was to offer me support.

—Why do you two understand so easily? Be honest with me... Have you done anything like this?

—Yeah. Mon was the dominant one.

—When did we do that!!!

This time, Doraemon screamed loudly in shock. Sam maintained her innocence as she openly responded to her lover.

—When I was the dog and you were my boss 21

—It's not the same. What I meant was that I want you to be loyal and just love me like a dog.

—Don't you also want to say that you like me to lick you?

—Sam!!!/ Khun Sam!!!

Sam and Doraemon were gone, leaving me alone. I continued drawing in my room as usual.

A— Nueng would go spend the night after class. Today, the petite woman looked different. It forced me to stop what I was doing to determine why she didn't rush to hug me like she normally would.

—You are acting very strange today. Normally you would be very clingy.

A-Nueng's silence made me drop everything and focus my attention on her. The cheerful woman seemed so shy that I had to walk towards her.

—What's happening?

—Do you think I'm not normal?

—Huh?

—When I asked you to... do those things. -The little woman looked at me nervously. You seemed strange this morning. Do you think ill of me?

I was acting strange this morning. But it wasn't because A-Nueng liked it. It was my fault...

It was because I liked it too.

—You’ve been thinking about that all day, haven’t you? You don’t seem to be yourself, happy.

—I don’t want you to hate me -The cheerful woman rushed to hug me and sobbed softly. It was as if it hurt but she couldn’t cry. I gently patted her light brown hair.

—I don’t hate you. Absolutely.

—Although I have strange preferences?

—Yeah.

—I’ve been thinking all day that you must hate me. Probably not...

—I like it.

—What?

—I like what we did... a lot.

I was speaking from the bottom of my heart. I liked to exercise my power. Giving orders turned me on. Although I didn’t want to admit it, I couldn’t deny it.

But everything had to be within limits: neither too much nor too little.

A-Nueng stepped back and looked at me, surprised. Her wet eyes were wide open. She forgot all her pain. As soon as I saw her reaction, I grabbed her hair from her back and lifted her face, forcing her to look directly into my eyes. Then I smiled authoritatively at her.

—Auntie Nueng.

“Stop worrying about this nonsense and let’s do what we both like.” I leaned in and whispered in her ear. -I don’t want to waste any more time.

34. The director

Since that day was a holiday, A-Nueng and I were watching television together at home. And what we chose to see could not be anything other than...

—Fifty Shades of Grey

I admitted that I was quite surprised while watching the movie. Although I had heard of it and knew what it was, I didn't know that it included chains, whips, and handcuffs. However, I had to pretend I wasn't surprised to look good. I am Sippakorn. Nothing could surprise me.

Except the happy woman was having fun watching the movie.

I watched A-Nueng with great interest as we watched the film. I ran my eyes from her hair to her face, neck and waist. I was beginning to realize that the person in my care was actually an adult woman.

Actually, I had felt that she had grown up for a while now. She was naughty when she was younger.

And now it was as hot as fire. One wouldn't be able to tell this just by looking at her...

—You have been sneakily spying on me for a while now, Her Highness. A-Nueng winked at me while calling me by the nickname we used when we did bad things. You think I'm pretty, don't you?

When I was caught in the act, I simply looked away at the television and denied it.

—I wasn't watching you. And don't call me that here. If others heard it, it would sound strange.

—I can't help it. "When I call you that, it turns me on." The petite woman dragged her fingers along my thigh provocatively. Are you aware that the reflection of the television allows me to see your exact facial expression? I saw how you looked at me...

—How was I looking at you?

—As?

—Weren't you paying attention to the movie?

—Honestly? I was also seeing you through the reflection on the television.

We stare at each other. There was a spark. A-Nueng was about to lean towards me, but I indifferently pushed her away despite wanting to do the same as her. I couldn't let her get away with it all the time.

There had to be a limit.

—Do you like that kind of thing because of this movie? -I changed the topic. A-Nueng pouted a little before responding sternly, frustrated that I didn't let her bow.

—A single movie cannot determine my preferences.

It's true... but I liked being dominant and giving orders because of my upbringing. Or maybe not?

While keeping my eyes on the TV, A-Nueng slowly leaned towards me. It was like we were snuggling while watching TV. I enjoyed running my hand through my niece's delicate hair. At the same time, A-Nueng irresistibly rubbed her head against my neck and absorbed my scent. Instead of watching TV, we were now kissing. We began to breathe heavily. The little woman's mischief excited me. I was beginning to smell her scent as well, moving from the top of her head to her temples.

But at that moment...

—Khun Nueng, there is a guest here to...

The housekeeper entered the living room. I was startled and immediately moved away from A-Nueng. Our strange reaction confused the housekeeper even more, but the older person decided not to say anything. He knew his place and he knew he had no right to speak.

—Who is it?

—Mr. Chet.

And soon after, my ex-boyfriend, who was also A-Nueng's father, walked in happily. He was surprised to see A-Nueng there.

—Is Nueng here too? This is great: two birds with one stone. I also want to speak with you. What are you doing? -Chet sat up and focused his attention on the television before frowning. Are you two watching this? It's inappropriate.

—How is that? -I asked, wanting to hear his opinion on this. Chet immediately played the father role and preached how bad the movie is.

—It is tempting for A-Nueng to want to try this type of sexual activities.

“You’re underestimating your daughter,” I shrugged nonchalantly. Even if A-Nueng doesn’t see this, if she wants to know, she can search for it on the Internet.

—I still think it’s better not to see it.

—You’re like those old-fashioned people who oppose the idea of a free box of condoms at school. If our parents had been open-minded when we were younger, you would have used it and A-Nueng would not have been born.

When I said that argument, the petite woman next to me turned the other way and tried to hide her laughter. Chet looked unhappy when I broke his face like that in front of his daughter.

—A-Nueng is my daughter.

—But Aunt Nueng is my guardian -Chet’s daughter defended me. That made her father lose face even more. -And I finished watching it even before Aunt Nueng put it on.

Oh... if you already saw it, why watch it again? I looked at the little woman and realized that she was a very bad girl. She wanted me to see it to turn me on in broad daylight.

—Before we continue our fight, tell me why you are here.

Chet, still frustrated, composed himself and happily changed the subject.

—This Sunday is your birthday. I want to invite you to the beach.

A-Nueng immediately grabbed my arm upon hearing that and shook her head in disagreement. The words “get out of town” probably mean something more intimate than a simple teen trip these days. I was probably afraid that Chet would try to do something with me.

Nobody could do anything to me...

Ah... I forgot that the father couldn't, but the daughter already did enough.

—The beach? Where to?

—Phuket.

—Too far.

—My father has just opened a hotel there, so I want to take this opportunity to invite you to be one of our first guests. Of course, I also invited A-

Nueng. Chet looks at his daughter expectantly. And as soon as he did, A-Nueng made a request.

—But I will sleep with Aunt Nueng.

I tried not to smile as I waited to see how the father would handle this. When Chet saw that his daughter agreed to go with us, he agreed immediately.

—Of course you can. I'll give the best room to you two. It will be the most luxurious room your grandfather built.

—Is it a sweet suite?

—You can choose the room you want.

—Brilliant. I want the sweet suite. It must be that.

Chet and A-Nueng smiled happily at each other, both thinking about different things. I looked at Chet, who was able to introduce A-Nueng to his world. Then I looked at A-Nueng, who wasn't thinking about her father at all. The only thing I thought about was the naughty thoughts of what we would do in that sweet suite.

—Will your family also be there?

My question made everyone fall silent. A—Nueng’s smile immediately disappeared from her face because she didn’t want to meet her grandparents. She turned to look at Chet as she waited for his response.

—Isn’t it just the three of us?

—Well... the new father was lost. He nodded to admit his guilt. -Yes, my family will also go.

—And do your parents know I’m going?

—No.

Obviously... I insulted the former Prime Minister by running out of the wedding. If they found out I would be on this trip, it would be ruined. None of his family members liked me except him and his daughter.

—You’re asking for it. Your parents don’t like me. Go away. You can take A-Nueng with you. I will stay here.

—Then I won’t go either -A-Nueng hugged me tightly, as if I were a baby monkey. -Everyone is a stranger to me except Aunt Nueng

Chet pointed to himself, waiting for his daughter to add -and dad, but A-Nueng just stayed silent... It

makes my ex-boyfriend look very pitiful.

—Come, Nueng. We are all family.

—No.

The petite woman's firm rejection made Chet look close to tears. Then I covered my mouth with my hand and whispered so that only A-Nueng and I could hear.

—If you agree to go with him, I will be the director who will wear glasses tonight

A-Nueng stood up excitedly and looked at me in disbelief.

—It's interesting, but... not attractive enough.

A-Nueng responded loud and clear. Chet didn't hear what I whispered. So he just looked at his daughter like a curious dog.

—What?

I waved my hand to tell Chet to shut up before giving the little woman a new deal.

—I will test you and fail you in all subjects.

—And?

—So you will have to go to the disciplinary room and be punished.

—As?

We looked into each other's eyes in a way that only the two of us understood.

—You will be whipped.

—With?

—A stick.

—And will you wear glasses?

—Sure.

—On the study table

—Isn't the space too small?

—If we clean everything, it is very spacious.

— Oh.

—Well. — A-Nueng turned to Chet and responded reluctantly. -I will go with you.

Although Chet didn't understand what we were discussing, he smiled brightly before turning to tell me how sorry he was that I wasn't there.

—Are you really not going to go? The hotel is very beautiful. And it's your birthday.

When A-Nueng realized that, her eyes widened.

—That's how it is. It's Aunt Nueng's birthday. No, I won't...

—We have a deal.

The deal was sealed. A-Nueng was in a bad mood while Chet was very happy that his daughter was going on his family trip with him. As for me, I would celebrate my birthday alone in Bangkok.

Nothing would happen if it were like that... I think.

—Nueng.

A-Nueng just sat quietly in my room after Chet left. I knew the little woman was in a bad mood because she wouldn't be able to celebrate my birthday with me, so I approached her. However, she turned her back on me and remained silent.

—Are you angry?

—How can I be? I already made the deal to go with my father. I forgot it was your birthday

—It's just a birthday. It's just a day when I'm a year older.

—But it is the first year that I will be able to celebrate your birthday with you. A-Nueng turned to look at me with bloodshot eyes. I was so devastated I had to try not to smile.

—But we are together almost every day. Isn't it sufficient?

—It may not be important for you, but for me...

—You're a girl

—I'm not a girl!

—You are... you are my pupil, remember? Student A-Nueng — I took out a shoelace that I carried with me and tied the little woman's wrist with it. A-Nueng's eyes were now shining.

—What is this?

—You were a bad girl. You argue with me non-stop. Extend your hand to me

“Or I won't tie you,” I smiled slightly. A-Nueng was still in a bad mood, but she wanted to play that naughty game. Then she reluctantly extended her wrist to me. -Well... good girl.

—You don't have your glasses on.

I sighed a little. It seemed that this woman was very mischievous and detail-oriented.

—Well.

I got up to go get my computer glasses. A—Nueng looked at me and smiled happily. She also bit her lips hard.

—My heart races

—Are you happy now, Student A-Nueng? You are so tenacious. You are a bad girl.

—What grade am I in?

—In whichever you want.

—So, let's say... I'm in my last year of high school.

—Ah, you are still a student with short hair.

—You called me a student. If you want a high school student, I must call you Khun Nueng.

Good...

—So, how old should I be?

—You are of good age. You teach religion. You are beautiful, but you are very narrow-minded.

I was a little dazed. I know that was a fantasy, but I didn't expect to teach religion.

And what was that about the narrow gaze? I'm a limited edition. I am very modern and forward-thinking.

—Why this topic?

—The teachers who teach this subject are probably repressed. And I just saw the news that the teacher who won the first prize in the lottery teaches this subject.

It was very updated...

—It's up to you. Any topic is fine. But I don't have to pray, right?

When the cheerful woman felt uncomfortable with this, she laughed out loud.

—You're so cute. You let me do everything my way. Let's say... You are a teacher in your thirties who is very old-fashioned and strict. And you teach religion. Wow... The school principal is so beautiful.

—I'm old-fashioned, but I'm doing this with a student?

—You're not right in the head.

Sippakorn had reached that point...

Sometimes I wondered why I was doing this. Did I have to go to such lengths to try to reconcile with someone? I am the arrogant M.L., who is sometimes the dominant one.

—If I'm a bad girl, would you spank me? -The cheerful woman smiled slightly but seductively as she asked with a nasal tone of voice.

—I will do many things. And... I'm tying you up now because you're so naughty. I'm afraid you'll try to get away from me.

—Don't talk so much. Do whatever you want. I won't try to escape. I want you to do it so much that I'm shaking all over.

I laughed adoringly and raised my wrist, pretending to look at the time on my watch.

—It's almost break time...— I said this while setting the alarm on my phone to ring: Do you hear the doorbell?

—And? — A-Nueng's eyes were full of curiosity. I pushed the small woman onto the bed.

—If you are a bad girl, you will be disciplined. You will have to go to the discipline room and be punished. Please know that the principal of this school is very strict.

—What if I'm a good girl?

—You can drink milk and eat something delicious, my good girl.

The two options were so tempting that A-Nueng completely forgot about her frustration. She was excitedly deciding between being punished or rewarded.

—It's up to you then, director. Whatever... as long as you only look at me.

—You are such a good girl. So... since we can't celebrate my birthday together...

—You will be punished and eaten at the same time. This way, we will not be in a hurry

—If we don't push, where's the fun?

—I just used the wrong word. I teach religion, not language. Please excuse my poor language skills

I tried to speak so formally that A-Nueng laughed.

Now that we were on a roll, we enjoyed having fun with our antics.

I would think of it as compensation for making her feel bad for not being able to celebrate my 35th birthday together... my A-Nueng.

35. Family

—Happy birthday, my aunt Nueng.

I looked with boredom at the message I received the night before from Phuket. Why was my house so quiet just because A-Nueng wouldn't be here for a day? As I let my mind wander, my phone rang. The screen showed Chet's number. I looked at him surprised, but decided to pick up the phone because I was curious.

Had something happened?

—How's it going? Are you having fun?

[First of all, happy birthday, Khun Nueng.]

—Very nice of you. Thanks for Remember my birthday

[Next... Can you come to Phuket please?]

—Huh?

[A-Nueng is very sad. She would probably feel better if you were here.]

I sat up a little when I heard that. But accepting that right away would make me look unattractive. I had to play hard to look valuable...

—Don't know. I'm a little busy. It's my birthday, so I have dates...

[Alright. I thought you were not coming.]

—Have you reserved my ticket?

[What?]

—If you want me to go, book a ticket for me.

It was so stupid. If I pretended to be busy, I had to push harder and make myself feel important. It was a good thing I hadn't married him.

[Well. I will book your ticket now.]

—See you.

I arrived in Phuket shortly after 9 p.m. Since it was the weekend and the ticket was booked at the last minute, it was difficult to get it. But Chet was a good guy. Because he cared about his daughter and my well-being, he took care of everything. I arrived in Phuket just 50 minutes after leaving Bangkok with a car that picked me up at the airport without having to lift a finger.

It was a considerable distance from the airport to the hotel in the Patong area. Not only was there a lot of traffic and red lights in Bangkok, it was the same here. But I finally arrived at the hotel. It wasn't a very large hotel, but it was clean and beautifully designed. It was a mix of Chinese and Portuguese styles. It wasn't too crowded yet because it was just opened. But it was very bright and seemed safe because the staff was ready to greet me when I arrived.

—Khun Nueng.

Chet, who was waiting for me out front, smiled gratefully at me. I tilted my head and looked at him knowingly.

—Are you here because you're afraid your parents will see me?

—Yeah.

—Where is A-Nueng?

—In her bedroom. I'll take you there.

My heart was racing with excitement. Even though it was my birthday, I was the one there to surprise the little woman. Chet was about to enter

the elevator with me, but I waved my hand to stop him.

—You don't have to go up with me. I will surprise your daughter myself

—I want to see her face when she sees you. She hasn't smiled all day today.

—You'll see her tomorrow morning. Don't worry... I'll take care of everything.

I looked so serious that Chet agreed to tell me the direction to my room and backed away. In fact, I didn't want him to go with me because I was worried that A-Nueng, being the mischievous woman she was, might have a strange reaction to seeing me.

The elevator bell rang and the door opened. Chet said I just had to turn left to get to my room, room number 421. I looked at the beautifully crafted wooden door before reaching up to close the peephole and ring the bell.

—Who is it?

A-Nueng asked in her usual nasal tone of voice. I tried not to smile. I was the one there to surprise her, but I was also excited to see her.

—Who is it?

She was very cautious. It was a good thing. I took my hand out of the peephole and stuck my face in. A-Nueng immediately opened the door and stared at me, frozen.

—Auntie Nueng!

—How are you doing, my good girl?

—Is there anyone here with you?

—No.

—Good.

—Your Highness.

—Oh. Is this how we're going to do it? I shrank my neck a little. A-Nueng slowly walked back to her room and unbuttoned her shirt. She didn't say anything else. -Aren't you going to say hello first?

—No.

I entered the room and closed the door while tilting my head to look at the petite woman in all seriousness.

—I missed us a lot — I called myself -us when I played the role of queen, that is, when she called me your highness. Then I grabbed her arm and pulled her towards me. -How were you when we weren't here?

—Very boring

—And now that we are here?

—I really want to do it.

I grabbed her hair from her back and tilted her face to receive my passionate kiss. I felt exactly the same as her. I longed for her and really missed her, even though we were only apart for a day.

— Oh.

A-Nueng screamed as she backed away, I turned her towards me and pushed her against the wall. I bit her shoulder and my free hand slipped under her shorts. I smiled when I could feel the wetness on my hand.

—We just saw each other, and you want me so much?

—I missed you all day. Although the room is beautiful, without you here, it's very boring. Oh...

I spanked her so that it hurt before grabbing her tightly. A-Nueng leaned her face against the wall and breathed heavily and tiredly.

—You're probably not bored anymore.

—This is really good. You're here...

—If I wasn't here, what would you do?

The silence of the small woman in front of me made me able to guess what her response would be. I moved away from her and put my hand behind my back. It angered the person under my care.

—Why did you stop?

—Why do you talk to me with that confidence? You are just a slave. How dare you speak to me as an equal?

—If you don't like it, spank me -A-Nueng bit her lips hard in frustration. I smiled a little and walked over to sit on the bed with one leg crossed over the other.

—There are many ways to torture someone. Look at you... You're going crazy, slave.

When she realized what I was talking about, she stomped her foot, not knowing what to do.

—Don't torture me like that.

—Do it.

—Do it?

—Do what you would do if I weren't here.

—I want to see you.

—Aunt Nueng...-The little woman blushed until her face turned all red. Although she really liked playing the submissive role, she was probably too embarrassed to do what I asked. -It's...

—It's my birthday.

—Give me a gift.

Even I myself was surprised by my mischief. A-Nueng hesitated a little before slowly undressing. Then she came over to sit on my lap.

—Okay... I'll let you look at me as a birthday present. But you have to touch me while I do it.

—Aha.

The girl from a year ago had become a very sexy woman now. A-Nueng touched her sensitive areas and moaned while kissing me. My role was simply to rub her here and there, as well as kiss her and praise her from time to time, to encourage her to be braver.

— Ah...

A-Nueng's emotions rose as she danced on top of me after she had let go of all her shame. I slowly lay down on the bed and looked at my friend's daughter, who was satisfying her physical desires with her own hands.

—Good job... You're doing well.

—Do you like me?

—Yeah.

—Do you love me?

—Yeah.

—If you love me...-The little woman climbed onto my face, grabbed my hair and gave me an order. -Eat me, all of me.

I opened my mouth to continue what A-Nueng willingly started. The small body shook before she

pulled me away. But my emotions had also risen a lot. And I loved torturing the person under my command.

—I have not finished.

A-Nueng's legs were shaking. However, I separated them and slid my finger inside...

—I'm just starting. And I will torture you all night.

—You missed me, didn't you?

A-Nueng asked as she entered the bathroom where I was. The petite woman tilted her head and gave me her Duchenne smile as she asked that.

—What's the matter? Why are you so happy so early in the morning.

—You flew to come see me here. If it's not because you missed me, what is it?

—But it seems that someone misses me more.

—You can't use the word miss; you have to say yearn -A-Nueng took my place under the water and put her arms around my neck. You're very sexy when you're all wet like this.

—Aren't you tired at all? Last night...

—I never get tired when I'm with you.

—Teenagers are very strong.

—I'm also very addicted to sex.

—I think I'm aware of it. I smiled at her adoringly. As we stared at each other, our emotions increased. But the doorbell interrupted us.

—Who comes so early in the morning? "They don't know anything about good manners." The little woman wrinkled her face. But when she heard who was calling, she immediately fell silent. I had to laugh at that.

—Are you awake, Khun Nueng?

—It's your father who doesn't know good manners... I'm done. Hurry up and finish your shower

—How can I finish if we haven't even started?

—You're being naughty again.

I grabbed the bathrobe and put it on before going out to greet Chet. The handsome father looked at me

and smiled as if he was impressed. What was this?
Have you never seen a wet person?

—Were you taking a shower?

—Yeah. Why are you here so early?

—I want to invite you to breakfast. What's wrong with my little girl?

—She is showering.

—Huh? -Chet seems confused because I said I just finished my shower. I was probably confused about how A-Nueng could be taking a shower when I was also taking a shower, unless...

We'll take a shower together.

Damn...

—We will follow you in a moment. But... are your parents okay with you inviting me to have breakfast with you?

—Actually... — Chet seemed to be quite uncomfortable, but nodded as if he had made a decision about something. -They don't know it, but I intend to pursue you romantically

—Pursue me romantically?

A-Nueng came out of the bathroom in a bathrobe, just like me. She came out just in time to hear what Chet had to say about inviting me to have breakfast with him.

—I will tell my family that I will ask you to be my girlfriend and that I want to marry you.

—Because A-Nueng loves you and I have been in love with you for so long. It would be ideal if we were all a happy family.

36. The one with the heart and the other one

Now that I think about it, life is fun. I thought I would never meet Chet's family again in this life because I had publicly shamed them. However, right now he was facing the former Prime Minister, who was Chet's father. He kept avoiding eye contact because he couldn't accept the fact that his son had said...

—I really love Khun Nueng.

He made a sound in his throat to make it clear that he had no intention of maintaining his good manners with me. I stood still as if I didn't care, as always. Watching Chet play this big was fun for me.

There was another person who was sitting next to me looking grumpy as his father repeatedly said how much he loved me.

—Haven't you learned anything from what happened?

Chet's mother said this while looking in another direction, as did her husband. To be honest, I think Chet should listen to his family. Why love someone who ran away from a wedding where he was the groom? I seriously insulted his family.

And I also had a relationship with his daughter... But this was something Chet didn't know yet.

—It was a blind marriage then. Khun Nueng didn't know me well enough at that time. But now we are closer. And A-Nueng really loves her and she loves A-Nueng a lot.

At this point, the grandparents were looking at A-Nueng as if they wanted her confirmation on this. However, A-Nueng simply remained silent.

—How did A-Nueng and Khun Nueng become close?

Although the former prime minister didn't like me, he still called me -Khun Nueng

—It was destiny.

A-Nueng interrupted, as if she wanted to tell her story. That encouraged Chet to continue persuading his parents.

—Do you see how much A-Nueng loves Khun Nueng? I think it will be good if you give us the opportunity to...

—My head hurts. — The former prime minister interrupted the conversation and did not allow Chet to continue speaking.

—I'll go lie down for a while

—Let's talk about this later.

And the grandparents left, leaving us behind. I crossed my arms over my chest and leaned back in the chair. I looked at Chet, who seemed disappointed that his parents didn't try to understand him.

—I told you it was useless, but you insisted that you would make it happen. The result is what I expected.

I laughed nonchalantly as A-Nueng let out a smile upon seeing that her grandparents disagreed with her father.

—I don't mind

—What?

—Even if my parents are against the idea, I will go out with you.

—You’ve been doing it for a while. Have I told you that I will date or marry you?

—But you didn’t protest.

—I didn’t do it because I knew your parents would never agree with that. “Besides... you won’t become prime minister.” I shrugged and looked in A-Nueng’s direction. -And have you asked your daughter if it would be okay for her to have me as a stepmother?

—Of course it would be. She loves You. If we get married, she will be your daughter.

—I never said that I want to be Aunt Nueng’s daughter -A-Nueng said this sternly, as she seemed to have exercised all her patience with her father. - And now I want to return to Bangkok. It’s not fun here.

—Umm...

And the apple of everyone’s eye walked away in a bad mood. I continued to support Chet because I felt sorry for him because nothing was going his way.

—Why is life so hard? I just want to be a good father, but my daughter doesn’t obey me at all. I

brought her here, but she doesn't seem happy at all. I want to marry you, but she won't accept it

—You can't get everything you want. And I never said I would marry you. Do you want me to repeat it so it goes through your head?

I was a very simple person. Although I strayed a little lately, I still wanted to stay firm in my stance. If I say no to something, it means there is a zero percent chance of that happening. There's no hope. There is nothing.

And when I was about to go after A-Nueng, Chet stopped me with his question.

—Why?

—What?

—You're not dating anyone. Why can't you give me a chance?

—That has nothing to do with this. Because when I wasn't dating anyone, I didn't date you either.

—So does it mean that you already have someone in your heart?

That question made me sit up straight. I felt like he was poking me and forcing me to look him in the

eyes so I could find fault. For a split second, I knew I lost control of my facial muscles. But I quickly put on my expressionless mask.

—Khun Chet. -I called him coldly. When I felt insecure or very stressed, I would respectfully call out the person's name. -Listen to me

—It's none of your business.

I walked away as soon as I finished saying that, leaving A-Nueng's father standing where he was without even thinking about looking back. But what Chet said made me realize something. Someday, someone would find out about A-Nueng and me. And if A-Nueng clung to me without dating anyone, someone would eventually suspect something.

And that someone was... Chet. He would notice something and it would get out of hand.

How could I stop people from knowing about us? How could I avoid any suspicion?

—What are you thinking, Aunt Nueng? Why do you look so stressed?

With my hand in my pants pocket, I looked out toward the ocean. I turned to look at the petite woman and smiled at her.

—I'm just letting my mind wander.

—Don't tell me you're thinking about marrying my father.

—You don't want that? I will become your mother.

—No! What mother does that kind of thing with her daughter? -The little woman pulled my arm to hug me tightly. Please don't marry my father.

—Does it seem like I like your father that much? Actually... I have something on my mind I sighed and spoke to A-Nueng with a serious tone of voice. If you cling to me like this, your father will eventually know.

—Do you mean about us?

—Yeah.

—Leave it alone. That's good. I want everyone in this world to know about us, so that you can be mine and only mine. And my father would finally stop bothering you. My mother would stop liking you. Yui would stop dreaming about you...

—Yui? Your tomboy friend?

—Yeah. She's been talking about you non-stop since you flirted with her that day, and I'm no longer friends with her because of it. God... She was flirting with me, but then she liked my girlfriend. What kind of friend was she?

—What are you saying?— I quickly stopped the person in front of me from making more and more noise. -What happens if someone listens to us?

—I told you I wanted everyone to know about us.

—No.

—Why? What are you afraid of?

—Aren't you afraid that your grandmother will find out?

A-Nueng could be stubborn with everyone in this world, but her grandmother would always be the exception. The same thing happens to my grandmother and me. The little woman finally realized that our relationship is like walking a tightrope. If we kept it a secret and no one knew, it was fine. But if someone found out...

I don't even want to think about the consequences.

—What should we do?

—I'm thinking about it. It would be strange if you didn't date anyone

—But my grandmother doesn't allow me to have a lover anyway. She said she's afraid I'll become like my mother.

—But it would be strange, wouldn't it? You are already older. You can say that you don't want to have a lover. But that you are always with me is strange

—Then what should I do?

—Should I accept your father's proposal so that people don't suspect us? If I'm close to you because I'm your stepmother, it wouldn't be suspicious.

—No! -A-Nueng shouted loudly. She was acting like a little girl terrified of something. No. I won't allow it. Now we are close and no one suspects anything. You are my guardian and you're a woman

—Your father just asked me if I have someone in my heart

—And how did you respond to that?

—I probably acted suspiciously. That's why he suspects something. Your father is not stupid.

As we both contemplated the horizon that separated the sky from the ocean, we both fell into a state of deep contemplation. A-Nueng rested her head on my shoulder and said, as if she was talking to herself.

—Is our love wrong, Auntie Nueng?

—It's probably inappropriate.

—Because we are both women?

—Because I'm your guardian.

—If we were strangers and I wasn't your friend's daughter, would it be less bad?

I looked at the person who asked that question and followed her train of thought before reaching out to put a strand of hair behind her ear as I answered honestly.

—I have no idea.

Yeah. If we weren't connected that way and were just two strangers, would this be less bad...?

I seemed to have forgotten that I was worried about my relationship with A-Nueng.

It had been two weeks since my birthday, when the cheerful woman reminded me by inviting me to join Chet and herself. For both Chet and me, that was unexpected.

—This is strange. Today, A-Nueng was the one who asked me out. To be honest, I'm happy. "Normally, my daughter rarely talks to me." Chet smiled excitedly at me. I remained expressionless because meeting A-Nueng was very common for me.

—Your daughter probably feels closer to her father.

—Ah... My daughter. Oh, she's here. -Chet waved his hand to show A-Nueng where we were before pausing when he saw someone with her. - Who did you bring?

—Oh... it's Folk. The guy who went to the theme park with us.

I didn't feel anything. I just smiled at the boy who climbed the fence next to me. He was a shy boy then, but he looked much better now that he was a college student.

They had both grown up.

—I'm sorry. There were so many people at the Siam station that it took us a while to get on the air train. Right? A-Nueng sought support from Folk. The shy man looked timidly at the talkative woman and nodded.

—Yeah.

I remembered that A-Nueng was very against Folk when she was in high school. Although they remained friends, I didn't know when they had become close.

—What mood are you in? Why did you ask to meet me?

Ah. Many emotions go through me.

A-Nueng smiled and got straight to the point.

—Today I want to formally introduce you to Folk

—Huh?

—Huh?

Chet and I made noises in our throats, surprised. We both already knew Folk. Why was she presenting it to us?

I knew why, as soon as the cheerful woman formally reintroduced Folk, but with a new status.

—Father, this is Folk... my boyfriend.

37. The gift

—Nueng.

Yeah?

—Are we going to talk about this?

I followed A-Nueng into the bathroom and crossed my arms over my chest as I looked at the woman in my care, my friend's daughter and someone close to being my lover. The cheerful woman knew what I wanted to talk about, but she just gave me a broad smile nonchalantly.

—I'm doing this because you're afraid that someone will suspect something if I'm too attached to you and don't date anyone. I'm dating someone now. My father and my grandmother won't suspect anything.

—Does Folk know that they are using him?

—This is not pleasant at all, A-Nueng.

I shook my head to show my disapproval. Playing with someone's feelings was selfish. If you didn't like the person, you shouldn't give them hope or use them by doing something like this.

—Folk would agree with that. It is beneficial for everyone. He's happy to go out with me and I can use him as my fake boyfriend when in reality...—A-Nueng walked up to me and laced her fingers around my second button from the top. I'm with another person.

I grabbed A-Nueng's hand and squeezed it tightly while shaking my head.

—This is not OK. As your tutor who will groom you to be a perfect lady, I cannot allow you to hurt someone for your own benefit. I pushed A-Nueng's hand away from me to show how serious I was about this. Let's find another solution. Don't do this.

—What better solution do we have? I won't let you go out with my father.

—I never said I would go out with your father. I already rejected it. And I want you to do the same with Folk.

—Oh...-A-Nueng tilted her head a little and looked at me mischievously. -Or you're actually

jealous.

—Stop wasting time. -I spread my five fingers wide before shoving the little woman in the face. - I'm serious. Break up with him and confess that...

—I'm in love with you? It's fiiiiine.

I gave the petite woman a bored expression as she used such a high pitch that it was like she was on top of a mountain.

—You know what I mean.

—It's fine

—Stop making that noise.

—Kiss me and I'll stop

—Absurdity.

—It's fine

I tried not to smile as A-Nueng continued to give me her Duchenne smile. I just sighed and leaned down to kiss her on the mouth. To be honest, I never thought I'd be doing something like this. I never thought I would adore someone so much younger than me that I would kiss her in a public place. This was nothing like Sippakorn.

— Ah...

I forgot we were in a public bathroom. And because I wasn't careful enough to check if anyone else was here, it seemed like another customer heard and saw everything. I could tell by the redness on her cheeks as she quickly left without even washing her hands.

—Did she see us?

—What do you think?

—Genial.

—How is that?

—At least someone knows that we really love each other. I want everyone to know it. But it turns out that the whole world includes my grandmother, my mother, and also my father... and it's better that they don't know it. I'm happy the way it is. Keeping this a secret is kind of exciting. Ha ha

I reached for my hand to mess up her hair and smiled adoringly at her. I didn't know how to describe exactly how I felt. It was a mix of obsession, adoration, and cute aggression that I couldn't identify.

Our relationship was really complicated...

[What do you think about the matter?]

Chet's voice was on the other end of the line. I returned to my palace after leaving A-Nueng. The father didn't dare say anything in front of his daughter, so he preferred to call me to discuss it with me now.

—It's what you wanted. You don't want her to date a tomboy, so now she's dating a man.

I was clearly frustrated. And Chet knew it.

[Aren't you happy that A-Nueng has a boyfriend?]

—What are you saying?

[I understand. You love her as if she were yours. Knowing that she has a boyfriend worries you. I'm sure A-Nueng loves you too much to let you down... but those are just comforting words. Because even I don't believe what I just said.]

Chet ended the conversation without giving me any chance to speak. I thought of one of Rapter's songs.

He asked and answered himself. That worked...

—They are already together. We can't do anything about it.

[But we can control the situation. I won't let you spend the night with her. I had one of my closest people follow her. I think one of the reasons A-Nueng is with him is because she doesn't drive. She has to use public transportation.]

—And?

[If she drives, she will go to spend the night with her grandmother or to your palace. Then I will buy her a car.]

Huh?

I didn't think Chet was serious, but A-Nueng's grandmother called me two weeks later, surprised. She shouted through the earpiece that she had a new compact car in front of her house. I had to go to see it with my own eyes. A-Nueng was also surprised by this.

—Seriously?

I looked at the red Mini Cooper with the Union Jack on the roof. Chet, who was next to me, seemed happy to be able to give this to his daughter because it was the first time he was able to do something

nice for her (because he just found out he had a daughter).

Or, actually, he knew it, but he forgot.

Well... A-Nueng was just a protein in his body.

—Of course I'm serious. I think A-Nueng should have her own car. It is much more convenient to move around. Her grandmother told me that she rarely comes home because she is far from the university, so she usually goes to spend the night at the palace. From now on, you can drive home, Nueng. Ah... I'll transfer you money for fuel.

He was a spendthrift.

But...

—No, thanks. — A-Nueng flatly rejected it. She wasn't excited at all. She didn't show any emotion. She just walked up to me before telling him. I don't know how to drive.

—Alright. I will show you.

—No.

—Umm...

—Alright. I'll talk to her -I took the car key from the rich dad and looked at A-Nueng. -Your father bought it for you. Take it. Look... Now he looks like a sad dog.

Chet's jaw dropped when he heard me. But when A-Nueng looked at him, he clearly looked down. And finally, the grandmother, who had been observing the situation, spoke up, trying to help.

—Actually, I don't want you to receive such an expensive gift. But... he has to do his job as your father — A-Nueng's grandmother looked at Chet with hatred. -I hope you don't ask for anything again in the future.

—What can I ask of you or her?

—And I agree with the idea that you can go home now that you have your own car.

—No.

A-Nueng remained firm. And I thought I understood why.

—Take it. Aunt will teach you how to drive

—No. I do not want it. I don't want to drive. I want to spend the night in the palace with you!

The most direct woman with her feelings in this world let slip what I suspected. I admit that I was nervous and worried that her grandmother and father would suspect something about why she wanted to sleep at my house so much. However... they both just laughed as if they adored her.

—Don't you want a car because you don't want to go back to sleeping with your grandmother and miss the opportunity to see Aunt Nueng? Hey... you're too attached to your aunt.

My heart raced, as if I were someone guilty. A-Nueng looked at me. She was beginning to realize that she was too obvious.

—Oh ok...

—Alright. You can drive the car to Aunt Nueng's palace or come back here to sleep with your grandmother. "It's up to you," Chet added, which made A-Nueng start to doubt.

—I can do that? Can I still spend the night with Aunt Nueng?

—Of course you can. -I responded softly.

—And will you teach me to drive?

“I can teach you too,” Chet offered again. However, A-Neng continued to look at me and repeat her question.

—Will Aunt Nueng teach me?

—Alright. I will teach you

—Well then. — A-Nueng turned to Chet and smiled as she took the key from the father, who really wanted to please his brand new daughter. -I will accept your gift.

—Brilliant. Let me hug you, daughter.

Chet enthusiastically hugged A-Nueng, while I crossed my arms over my chest, as if I were protecting myself. I didn't want anyone to know about my hidden fear. Even so...

—Why are you so quiet, Khun Nueng? Are you worried about something?

A-Nueng's grandmother had been noticing my condition, so she asked worriedly. I shook my head a little and smiled slightly at her.

—It's no big deal.

—Khun Nueng.

—Yeah?

—Should I worry about this gift from A-Neng's father?

—What do you mean?

—People do things expecting something in return. Chet is trying very hard to get close to A-Nueng. Maybe he wants her to move in with him. Mom is a little worried.

The worrying voice made me smile a little and shake my head in disagreement.

—Even if he does, A-Nueng won't go. You can trust me on this.

I was still the arrogant Sippakorn who spoke distantly to my friend's mother and A-Nueng's grandmother without calling her -mom. The first impression when we met was unforgettable.

—It's good that you are the intermediary person. At least A-Nueng listens to you more than her father. Please take care of your niece for me. He bought her a car today. I'm not sure what he'll buy next time.

—I'm sure A-Neung won't love Chet more than her grandmother just because he bought her a car.

—That’s true. But she didn’t accept it at first just because she was afraid that she wouldn’t be able to spend the night in your palace. Maybe I should worry more about her loving you more than me.

I just looked at the old lady who was mocking me with a slight smile on her face without responding. However, my heart raced for fear of being caught.

Damn. How much longer would I have to live with fear like that...?

Chet’s plan was a success. Once A-Nueng accepted the car, he was able to keep -Folk— at a distance. I thought it was stupid, but maybe he just wanted to spend money to please his daughter.

—The car is nice. Everyone will envy you when you drive it to college.

I sat in the driver’s seat as I drove to the palace and left my car at A-Nueng’s grandmother’s house. I would have my grandmother’s driver pick up my car later.

—Why would they envy me? I don’t even want the car. I thought I couldn’t come spend the night with you anymore.

—Is that why you refused to take it at first?

—Yeah.

—I think it would be easier if you broke up with Folk. Your father bought you a car because he doesn't want you to use public transportation because it allows you to spend more time with Folk.

—It's so stupid. So, do all those who visited your house become my husband or my wife?

Ops... but she was right.

—He protects you because he is a novice at being a father. He's crazy about you. You should pay a little attention to it

—I'm trying. But it is not easy. I am closer to you than my parents. But how can they compare? We talk in bed every day

—What are you babbling about? You are so naughty.

—Do you know what I'm talking about or don't you know what I mean?

I didn't respond because I didn't want to continue that line of conversation. We arrived at my palace shortly after. The sky was now dark, but there were lights from the palace garden. As soon as I turned

off the engine and was about to get out of the car, A-Nueng grabbed my wrist.

—Hey? What's happening?

—I just realized it on the way here. We don't need to talk only in bed

—What are you thinking?

A-Nueng unbuckled her seat belt and sat on top of me in the driver's seat. After that, she tilted the seat back mischievously.

—Hey. No. The car is very small. Don't be naughty.

The cheerful woman didn't listen to me. She lifted her A-line skirt and looks me in the eyes.

—Can you really say no?

— I can.

The naughty girl put my hand up her skirt. I could feel the humidity.

—But I can't wait -I could only laugh because I didn't know what to do. If I said no, the petite woman would lose confidence. So in the end I left it like that and swiped my finger. -Ah... help me.

—Just for this time. And don't move too much. The car is small. Others will know what we are doing if they see the car shake.

—If I don't move, how can I? Ah... it feels so good -A-Nueng leaned over me and rested his forehead against mine. I like it when you use your finger.

—That's why I tell you not to move.

—Because I will make the movements.

38. The difference

In addition to being her mother's friend, tutor... and lover (sometimes or almost always) of A-Nueng, I was now also her driving teacher. A-Nueng didn't have class that day, so I offered to teach her how to drive around my palace. A-Nueng asked to turn on the radio to entertain himself before starting.

—I get nervous when I drive, so let me listen to some music to calm down

—Can you concentrate? -I didn't agree because when I drove or when someone drove for me, I didn't like listening to music. I found it annoying. I preferred to take a quiet nap. But this wasn't my car. It's up to you.

A-Nueng turned on the radio and searched for the station she liked. Once she did, she snapped her fingers.

—I found it.

I listened to the DJ talking, who was occasionally rude and mischievous. It made me frown a little.

—Can they talk like that on the air these days? Aren't you afraid that there are children listening to you and copying you? It's very rude

—You are old-fashioned.

—What?

—Listeners can think for themselves. And it's just entertainment. If you speak monotonously, as if you were reading the news, people will fall asleep while you listen. More importantly... -A-Nueng wrinkled her face and pouted while crossing her arms over her chest. -I want to be a DJ at this station.

—And you will have to speak so rudely? This doesn't work. You should get another degree. Find a new career.

—Don't be so old-fashioned. If I get to be a DJ, I won't talk so rudely. Also, I want to be on a show similar to... Club Friday, not one like this.

—Is it the program that people call to talk about their lives, for example, the death of a father, the fraud of a father-in-law, the cheating of a husband or the relationship with the stepson?

—Whose life is that? Why is it so sad? -A-Nueng put her hand on her chest. I just shrugged because she was just babbling. Let's say we end the conversation here and start driving. We haven't even started and you're already complaining like an old lady

—Today you said that I'm already old-fashioned twice.

—Oh? Does it make you lose confidence? A—Nueng rested her chin on my shoulder and leaned in, as if she were asking for tenderness. I love you no matter how old you are.

—She drives. -I pushed the cheerful woman in the face and acted very serious.

Let's start by starting the engine. Step on the brake and press...

I taught her, starting with the first step. Actually, it wasn't difficult at all. I believed that A-Nueng could learn to drive easily because she was intelligent. It only took me a day. It was not that difficult.

But... I figured it wasn't the same for everyone.

While teaching, I noticed that A-Nueng was confused. Suddenly she hit the accelerator hard and braked until we were almost flying through the windshield. It was lucky we had our seatbelts on. I tried to control my emotions and remain patient. I continued teaching her by speaking slowly. But it wasn't easy at all.

Nothing.

—Gee, Nueng. We are driving. Driving!!! -I yelled at her like I had never done before. How hard can it be? Just remember to hit the brakes before changing gears. D is drive forward and R is drive backward. Why can't you remember that? Are you stupid?

—Give me some time. This is my first day. Everyone makes a mistake on the first try.

—I never did it. I was able to drive the first day I tried. What is this? If you're so stupid, don't drive. Ride a buffalo!

—Do you think riding a buffalo is easy?

—It's probably the same as riding a horse!

—Argh!

A-Nueng slammed the steering wheel in frustration and got out of the car in the middle of nowhere. I was frustrated that she had raised her voice at me. But I still managed to get out of the car and yell at her to make things worse.

—Good! Go away. Ride back on a buffalo. Damn!

I yelled at her angrily and kicked the car.

—Ouch...

And it was as if the world had come to an end when a sharp pain ran from my toe to the end of my hair. I wanted to cry in pain, but I didn't dare because I needed to stay calm. I only let my tears flow because I overreacted. Damn. You are just a car; How dare you provoke an M.L. so much pain?

My... my nail was broken.

Wait. What had I just exclaimed?

The pain reduced my anger and allowed me to compose myself. A-Nueng had gotten quite far away from me and I was starting to worry about my friend's daughter. Where was she going? I said leave, so she was leaving? Was she crazy?

—Come back right now.

I said it flatly as I stared into space, full of worry.

—One...

—Two...

—Good. I will try to reconcile with you.

I limped to the driver's side and drove slowly to look for A-Nueng. I saw the little woman stomping without thinking into the distance. She didn't even care that her phone and purse were in the car. She was probably very angry with me.

Oh.

—Where are you going, young lady?

A-Nueng glanced at me sideways and continued walking forward. Realizing that the little woman was playing hard to get, I started to frown, as I didn't have much patience.

—Get in the car. Let's go home.

—No.

The grumpy woman (that was her new nickname) responded sternly. I bared my teeth at her, but I knew it was all because I lacked patience. So I could only continue trying to reconcile with her.

—Where are you going? Your phone and your bag are in the car

When I reminded her, A-Nueng seemed to realize this. She looked inside the car and bit his lips. But she kept acting and continued her walk.

—I'm looking for a buffalo to ride. You said it's easier than driving a car.

—I was too irascible. Get in the car. Let's go home.

—First I have to find a buffalo to ride

—Where can you find one in Bangkok?

—I'll have to find something to take home because I'm stupid.

—If you get in the car, I'll let you ride.

—Ride what? There are no buffaloes in Bangkok

—Ride me

And A-Nueng, who was in a bad mood, instantly turned to look at me as I stopped the car and froze towards her. The little woman looked at my wound, as if she wanted to ask me about it. But she was still mad at me, so it seemed like she didn't know how to

look. She wanted to ask, but she was still angry. I wasn't sure which one would win over the other.

—W... what do you mean by riding?

—You have a great imagination

And the little woman began to have difficulty controlling the muscles in her face. She went from being angry to smiling happily at my offer. However, she was still trying not to reconcile with me too easily.

—Are you a buffalo?

—I am your everything. What else do you want? Who I am? -I put my hands on my head before putting them on my hips. Then I asked her one last time because it was so hot that I was frustrated again. -Are you going in or not?

—Will I be able to ride you if I enter?

—Is there something else on your mind?

—You made me the offer! A-Nueng stomped away because she was in a bad mood again. But once I gave her the answer she wanted, she stopped.

—Alright. I'll let you ride me if you come in.

That made the petite woman smile and turn around quickly.

—Okay, I'll go in. So do you want to be a cow or a buffalo?

—You're going to take advantage of this, right?

How did I get to this? How did I come to offer to be a cow or a buffalo for the woman I told my friend to get rid of?

In the end, Chet decided to teach A-Nueng how to drive because he wanted to spend time with her as father and daughter. But the person who took A-Nueng to get the driver's license was...

—Folk took me. He stayed with me all day while I took the test.

A-Nueng informed me while proudly showing her driver's license that she obtained with just one try. I wasn't happy about that at all, as I focused on the boyfriend A-Nueng brought to the palace with her.

My palace.

It was our place... but she brought someone else here. What did this mean?

—Why did you bring Folk?

—Ah. I invited him to dinner here as a thank you for his time. And I've boasted about how delicious the food you cook is.

—And... you didn't think to tell me this first?

I made it sound like I was joking. Folk couldn't say how I felt because I was good at hiding my feelings. But A-Nueng, who was with me almost all the time, knew immediately that I was very unhappy about this.

—I guess you're not free... Folk, let's do this later. Aunt Nueng is not available today. I forgot to tell you.

—Alright. We can do it another time. Then... I'll go first. Goodbye, Aunt Nueng.

Folk raised his hand to show me his respects politely before bidding farewell to A-Nueng. He put his hand on her face to indicate that he would call her later. I looked at that, frustrated. I put my hands in my pants pocket to say goodbye to the man until it was just the two of us left.

—Why haven't you broken up with him?

A-Nueng turned to look at me and change the subject.

—I like it when you're jealous.

—What?

—For me, being a friend or lover of Folk is the same. So I don't see the need to say anything... I don't want to lose a friend.

—Don't you keep it as an option? I said this sarcastically and turned to walk inside the palace. But A-Neng grabbed my arm before I could do that.

—I will not keep it as an option. I already told you that I only love you.

—I do not like this. You're not being honest. The man thinks he has hope. He may not want any of his boyfriend status for now, but someday he will want more. This is not OK.

—He will never get what you get.

—Then break up with him now!

I screamed loudly. Everything was silent until we could hear each other's breathing. A-Nueng looked me in the eyes and nodded.

—Alright. I'll break up with him tonight. I'm still with him, so no one suspects anything. But if you think it's such a bad idea and it makes you uncomfortable, I'll do it tonight -A-Nueng understood her hand to hold my arm. I'm sorry, Aunt Nueng. Please don't be jealous.

—Wow. -I turned towards her, prepared to attack her again. But when I saw how she looked at me, I softened. -Why do you like to think that I'm jealous?

—I want you to be jealous. It makes me feel loved.

—What...

—The love of M.L. Sippakorn is not something that comes easily. My parents couldn't do it... Can you imagine how good that makes me feel?

—When did I love you? -I spoke with indifference. I'm just worried.

—You do love me. It's just that you are very quiet.

—You're talking nonsense.

A-Nueng did as I asked. She broke up with Folk. She told me that Folk cried non-stop because he

didn't understand what he did wrong. He had been good when he took her to get her driver's license. Even though A-Nueng acted like everything was fine, I was sure that she is sad; However, he hid her sadness behind his smile.

She shouldn't have given him hope in the first place...

—Let's go running, Aunt Nueng.

Huh?

A-Nueng entered the bathroom at 8 a.m. while I was brushing my teeth. The little woman was wearing her heater and was ready to go for a run. She smiled happily at me.

—Let's go run to exercise.

Although I felt strange, I thought it would be good to do this type of activity. We ran through the streets around my palace. The little woman was full of energy. I was surprised by how energetic she was.

—Why do you invite me to exercise? I've never seen you exercise before

—I want my heart to beat strongly. They say that adrenaline causes our body to release endorphins (the happiness hormone).

—You are not happy? -I ran after A-Nueng. I was following her train of thought. When I began to understand why she was inviting me to run, I slowed my pace and told her to stop. Are you stressed?

—No

—About Folk?

—I do not want to talk about this. Hurry up and follow me. Whoever reaches that intersection first wins. Come on! And the person who started the race walked away, leaving me behind as I waited frustratedly for a response. I didn't like it when others changed the subject when I asked something.

—Nueng. Stop. We need to talk.

—First reach me.

I took big strides to reach it. But it seemed like the more I tried to reach it, the further away it got because I was tired. As I focused on wanting to beat her, I started to realize something. I slowed down and looked at A-Neng, who was far ahead of me.

I couldn't reach it...

We were too different. This was what she should be thinking about.

My age.

—What are you doing, Aunt Nueng? I'm already at the goal.

The joy of the woman, who was about to turn twenty, was reflected in me. A-Nueng was full of energy and had a bright future ahead of her, while I was a middle-aged woman who got tired of jogging. We had different perspectives and ideals due to our age differences. No matter what angle I looked at it from, we weren't right for each other.

—I'm old

—I'm old-fashioned

I looked at my palm when it hit me... It really was old.

—Aunt Nueng. Why did you stop?

A-Nueng, who was at the finish line, ran towards me while complaining.

—I'm tired.

—I get tired very easily because I'm old

The little woman, who knew nothing, made fun of me as she usually did. I looked at my friend's

daughter and smiled at her as she sized me up. Then I nodded and ruffled her hair.

—Yeah. I am older. You should invite friends your age to exercise with you... Maybe I was controlling you too much regarding your relationship with Folk. If you're stressed about it, why don't you call to apologize? You can tell him that it was something spontaneous... It might be a good idea.

—What's wrong, Aunt Nueng?

I moved my face to show that it was nothing and smiled understandingly at the little woman.

—I'm old.

—I'm really too old.

39. Bad timing

—I will not open a restaurant. I prefer to deliver food at home online.

—So you will need a central kitchen.

—Yeah. If it is in the central area, it would be good. Then I can have the cars distribute the food from there

My sister and I met to talk about my business. I initially planned to do it alone, but Sam was worried about me, so she asked to be a shareholder. She didn't want me to fall without a safety net. Her justification was both endearing and irritating, and left me unsure whether to feel resentment or appreciation.

—I'm rich.

I'm someone who had a very high ego. I didn't want my sister as a safety net, so I wouldn't be seriously injured if I failed. But when I saw her determination, I softened. The good thing was that

we could spend more time together after not having seen each other for more than six years.

—Then why did I arrange a meeting with the interior designer?

We both turned to the handsome interior designer, who had been listening to us for a while. I smiled at him out of politeness, but I didn't feel any guilt for not having asked him to come.

—It's a big waste of your time, Art.

—Alright.

He responded in a deep voice and nodded. He was about the same age as me. He smiled slightly at me. I detected something in his eyes, but I pretended not to notice...

—Lets talk later. Instead of an interior designer, we should find a place for the central kitchen. I shrugged a little. -And in case you forget, I can do the interior design myself.

—But you are an architect. Your degree is not interior design.

—Anyway we are not going to use your service. Thanks again for your time

I avoided apologizing to him, but instead thanked him. Someone like M.L. Sippakorn was never wrong.

—I really want to try the food you cook.

—Huh? -I turned and raised an eyebrow at him.

—I heard from Khun Sam that her sister was a cooking teacher.

—Sam is exaggerating. -I looked at my sister. I didn't complain or anything. The rich M.L. She simply shrugged her shoulders.

—When I contacted Art, I told him that we were going to open a restaurant. I was bragging about the food you cook. What was I going to say...? My sister's food is worse than dog shit, but does she really want to open a restaurant? That wouldn't be a good idea.

Sometimes I thought my sister was asking for it...

I looked back at Art and was about to tell him again that Sam was overreacting, a strange idea popped into my head. Then I changed my mind in a split second.

—Come to the palace. I'll cook for you — Sam looked at me and looked like she'd seen a ghost. She knew well that I was not a friendly person. -Will you join us, little Sam?

—I have to go to Mon's house today. Friday is your family day. And I want to be part of it.

—Ah-huh. So... what should we do? If Sam doesn't join us, do you want to go, Art?

—I was the one who said I wanted to try the food you cook. So I'm available.

He was tolerant, not at all dignified.

And he wasn't an M.L. flirty, so after inviting Art, I also invited Chet and Folk to dinner.

And of course... A-Nueng joined us.

Everyone looked at each other, curious to know what was going on, except Art, our guest. Chet looked at the interior designer I brought in. I was aware of Art's motive. What I didn't know was why I invited everyone to dinner.

Why was everyone so curious? I invited them all to dinner, so I just had to eat.

I decided to try a new menu: Thai sour curry with crab and crab roe. It was a little difficult to cook. Someone shared it in a Facebook post a few days ago, so I asked the housekeeper to buy roe crab and cook it for the first time. And as always, it was a success and seemed very attractive.

Of course, it's also delicious. This is real food (because it is cooked in a palace).

—Please eat. There is no need to be so correct -I said this and was the first to take a bite. Others did the same. Then everyone looked at me curiously, especially A-Nueng. I was sure she had many questions she wanted to ask me.

Who was this Art guy?

Why did I invite Chet?

Why was Folk, who he already broke up with, there?

I knew all those questions I had. And I was about to give him the answer slowly while we ate.

—How are you, Folk?

I asked Folk. We didn't talk much because he was very arrogant. Then the young man stiffened and almost choked.

—Ah... Khun...

—Eat slowly. -I offered him a handkerchief. He almost bowed as he took it as if he were receiving his title.

—It's very delicious. I've heard that Khun Nueng's food is out of this world, but this is my first time trying it.

—You can call me Aunt Nueng.

—What?

—You are younger than me. And A-Nueng also calls me auntie... It's okay. You're like a relative to me -I emphasized it before talking to Art. -Do you like food?

—It's really delicious.

—Why don't you ask me?

I laughed and waved my hand when Chet groaned.

—You can eat it whenever you want. Wow...

—It's true. -Chet stood up straight, as if he had just won the "closest person to M.L. Sippakorn" trophy. -But why did you invite us all to dinner?

—Suddenly I realize that it has been many years since I had dinner at a full table like this. Chatting over dinner is good. We can exchange ideas. I want your opinion about my business...

So Chet, Art and I brainstormed about my business. Since I had a degree in architecture, I spoke with Art about the layout of the central kitchen. But when it came to the business side, I consulted Chet because he owned many businesses, both his family's and his own. Then it seemed like we were taking A-Nueng and Folk out of the conversation. We talked for over twenty minutes before I realized that...

—Oh. The boys have remained silent. You're probably bored -I turned to talk to the little woman. But you have a friend your age with you. There's probably something you two can talk about.

"It's a good thing you invited Folk, or A-Nueng would be completely bored," Chet added.

—Yeah. When I look at A-Nueng, I feel old. Ha ha.

And we talked again about topics that A-Neng couldn't participate in before everyone left around 8 p.m. I walked Art to his car.

—Thank you for inviting me to dinner, Khun Nueng. Would it be okay if I came back?

—No. -I responded with a smile on my face. I brought you here to meet Chet.

—So that you know that you are not worthy of me. Bye bye.

I waved goodbye. It looked as if he had been hit on the head. He was completely confused and walked away in a daze. Chet, who had been watching nearby, approached with his hands in his pants pockets.

—What made you invite him today?

—To talk about my business.

—I thought that you like him.

—He can't compare to you.

—Then why...

—If he is not worthy, he will not get anything from me. You can rest assured. Go home. I'm sleepy -I said a weak goodbye. I didn't wait for him to get in the car and leave like I did with Art. Chet was

used to me being like this, so he left voluntarily. Now it was time to say goodbye to my last guest.

—Thank you for dinner, Aunt Nueng.

—Hurry home now

It was evident that I was sad to see Folk standing there. The handsome man seemed as confused as Art, but he went home quietly.

Of all the guests that day, he was the one I hated the most.

Damn. I invited him myself. Why was I being an idiot?

—Auntie Nueng.

A-Nueng, who had been waiting for me for a while, called me. I looked at the little woman and smiled at her.

—Yes, my good girl?

A-Nueng rushed to hug me tightly like a baby monkey. I was a little shocked as I tried to shake her off because I was afraid the housekeepers would talk about us. But I didn't see any sign of being able to get rid of her.

—Let me go first. I don't want the housekeepers to see this.

—No. -A-Nueng's voice was muffled because she nestled her face against my chest while she spoke. -I don't understand.

—What you do not understand?

—You brought a stranger home. You invited my father and Folk. What do you want to say to me? -I stopped trying to get her off of me and let my arms fall to my sides. When A-Nueng saw my reaction, she hugged me tighter. -Tell me. What do you want to say to me?

—It's no big deal. "Let me go first." I removed the arms around my waist and was about to walk away. But A-Nueng turned around to hug me from behind and leaned all her weight on me. -What are you doing? You are heavy.

—I will hold on to you like this until you answer me. Do you know that if you are dead, you will weigh more?

—You are dead?

—Without you, I would rather be dead -I laughed. I made A-Nueng stand up straight and stop

leaning on me. She looked at me and repeated her question. -Ah... I finally made you laugh. Tell me what happens to you?

—Auntie Nueng.

—I am 35 this year, while you are 19.

—Aha.

—I will be 40 in 5 years and you will be 24

—Why are you talking about our ages again?

—Nueng... I'm old

—Are you asking me to marry you? My God. I will do that! -A-Nueng jumped happily without worrying. I looked at the person in their own fantasy world and put my head in my hands.

Damn. This woman.

—No. I'm saying I'm old...

—My God, my God, my God.

—Hey. Listen to me first.

—I can not hear you. What did you say?

—I said I'm old.

—Alright. I already said yes.

—Nueng!!

When I yelled at her, the little woman, who was trying to avoid what I wanted to say, remained silent. We both remained silent. The pleasant atmosphere became tense.

—Yes?... Aunt Nueng.

—I'm very old. I've been feeling this for a while now. Your life is just beginning, while mine is withering.

—And?

—Our age difference is too big. You saw what happened at the table. You can't join the conversation because you don't understand what Art, your father and I were talking about. The only person you could talk to was Folk.

—I am very old. I will have gray hair in a few years. I get tired when I exercise. I can't even keep

up with your pace when we run...— My heart raced and my voice shook with pain because I couldn't ignore my age. One day... you'll get bored of me. You'll be upset because I'm old. I won't be able to see or hear well. I won't be able to have a conversation with you...

A-Nueng cupped my cheeks and forced me to look at her. She smiled and spoke as if she were older than me.

—What can I do? There is only one like you in this world

—Umm...

—You've lived so long without even thinking about loving or pleasing anyone but me, right?

—It's the same for me. I never thought of loving or liking anyone more than you. We are both limited editions. If we die, no one could replace us. Nobody can replace you. Nobody.

Tears fell down my cheeks. I wasn't sad at all. It was as if I was so moved by what the little woman said when she said it with such determination. And her eyes were the same as the first day we met.

She was still obsessed with me. She fell in love with me again every day.

—But I will die first.

—That's good. Because you will feel a lot of pain if I die before.

—You may have to use wheelchairs.

—I'm stronger. I'll push you.

—What happens if we can no longer have sexual relations?

—We have cucumbers.

—Naughty!!!

—You know what I'm talking about? Who is the naughty one?

And the little woman put her arms around my neck and brought me close to kiss me. I forgot we were outdoors, but I didn't care anymore. Because no matter who saw us, he wouldn't dare say a word because he had no right to do so.

But I forgot something... There was someone who had that right and would have something to say about it.

—I forgot something...

Chet parked in front of the palace and ran inside because he had forgotten his wallet. He arrived just in time to see us kiss.

Damn... Of all the people who could see us kissing, why did it have to be A-Nueng's father?

40. The Person who returns.

Everything was silent. A-Nueng still had her arms around my neck because she didn't know how to react to look as least suspicious as possible.

If she immediately took her arms off of me, it would look suspicious.

But not taking her arms off me was even more suspicious.

What could I do to make us less suspicious other than turn to look at Chet with a straight face, as if what A-Nueng and I were doing was normal?

—You're so careless. How far were you... And you, why are you clinging to me like a baby monkey? -I slowly removed A-Nueng's arms from me and put my hands in my pants pockets, acting as if everything was normal. -Go help your father look for his wallet.

—Yes.

A-Nueng walked away with her head bowed to play the role of someone who had just been scolded. Chet watched A-Neung walk away and then walked towards me. He remained silent. It made me nervous.

Was he suspicious?

I thought I had handled it well...

—Will A-Nueng spend the night here?

—It's late. I don't want her to drive home alone. She's still not a good driver.

—Good. -Chet stayed still. He didn't go in to get his wallet as he intended. But his daughter finally came out with the wallet she went back to look for.

—Where was it?

—In the dining room table.

—You want to go home? I will take you.

—No.

A-Nueng responded almost immediately, without even thinking about it. Chet nodded and smiled at us.

—I'll go back then. Don't sleep too late.

The man my age smiled and walked away silently. It was like we were betting on a poker game. I had no idea if his silence meant suspicion or not. However, Chet continued to chat with A-Nueng in the same manner as before.

—Do you think my father saw us?

—I'm trying to solve that. What do you think?

—Probably not. He talks to me the same way he always does.

—We have to stop being so careless.

—What is this? This is our house. Why do I have to worry about people knowing about us? If I don't make out with you, where's the fun? My tenderness comes from my seduction skills.

I looked at the little woman, who was worried but still joking, and laughed out loud.

—Can you still be naughty at a time like this?

—We were having our moment. Shall we continue? I almost impressed you to the point of sleeping with you.

I pushed her face hard and shook my head when I heard that.

—How can you be so naughty?

—But I'm also pretty... My father is gone. Let's keep flirting.

A-Nueng clung to my shoulder from behind and jumped like a rabbit. I waved my hand playfully, annoyed that she wasn't really bothered at all. I just wanted her to keep her composure from time to time. But even though I could still laugh, I couldn't get Chet's eyes out of my head when he looked at us.

I hoped I was thinking too much.

Life continued as usual. Chet didn't show his suspicions. But A-Nueng and I had been more careful since that day. I forbade the little woman from kissing me in public, even in my palace.

Yes... the bedroom didn't count

Ah... the bathroom neither.

But everywhere else it was prohibited. A-Nueng obeyed willingly. Like I said, everything went on as usual. Until one day, while A-Nueng and I were arguing about politics because I wanted to test my friend's daughter to see if teenagers these days were

paying attention to what was happening in our country, I heard a familiar voice from afar.

—What are you two talking about? They seem very stressed.

It was a high and thin voice, similar to that of A-Nueng. I knew immediately who it was without having to turn to look. Piengfah's sudden appearance surprised A-Nueng and me instead of making us happy.

—How did you get here?

—What is this? Surprise! Can't you look happy?
-The little woman's mother smiled at A-Nueng and opened her arms expectantly. -Why are you sitting there? run into my arms

A-Nueng didn't know her mother. She glanced at me for a bit before walking over, carrying out Piengfah's order, and hugged her awkwardly. As for my friend, who really wanted to play the role of a mother, she hugged her daughter tightly and kissed her on both cheeks longingly.

—You look like a grown woman without your glasses. I was only gone three months; How could you have changed so much?

—Piengfah turned A-Nueng around to examine her. You are beautiful, just like me.

—How did you get here, mother?

—I took a plane

—I know...— A-Nueng scratched her head. -I mean, you just got back. Why did you come back here so soon?

—I missed you. Can't I come see you? Let me hug you again -Piengfah attracted the cheerful woman as she looked at me. -I also missed you Khun Nueng. But let me say hello to my daughter first.

—Take your time. Spend as much time as you want with your daughter

—Ah... I can't believe it. A-Nueng looks much more beautiful now that she is a college student. "I bet a lot of people flirt with her." Piengfah turned to look at me. -Have you been taking good care of my daughter?

—I do what I can. "You can ask her yourself." I put my hands in my pants pocket and looked at Piengfah suspiciously. My old friend moved away

from A-Nueng, caressed her face and kissed her forehead.

—Do you already have a lover, daughter?

—No.

—That's unusual. Someone as beautiful as you should date. At the very least, there must be someone flirting with you

—There is — A-Nueng tried not to smile, while Piengfah gave her a sweet smile.

—Many?

—Quite a few

—And you don't like any of them... But I understand well-Piengfah turned to me. When you have someone like Aunt Nueng with you, no one seems good enough. She sets the bar too high. Everyone is worthless compared to her.

—Of course. I'm a limited edition.

—But I will tell you this. You have to be with someone of the same status. The most important...

—It must be a man.

Piengfah looked at me as she said that, but then turned to smile at her daughter.

—I'll sleep with you tonight. Let's go back to your grandmother's house.

—But...

—Go sleep with your mother -A-Nueng, who was about to protest, closed her mouth when I interrupted her. Piengfah smiled from cheek to cheek.

—Thank you, Khun Nueng. She has to stop clinging to her Aunt Nueng. She is already older

And Piengfah continued chatting with her daughter, with me as a silent observer.

I was cooking in the kitchen. I was trying a new menu: fermented rice flour noodles with crab. Removing the crab meat from its shell took a long time, as did preparing the sauce. However, I couldn't concentrate on cooking at all. I felt like Piengfah was a time bomb and was waiting to see when it would explode.

—Khun Nueng.

There was...

I still turned my back on her. I tried to concentrate on cooking. I didn't feel like talking to her. She approached silently. I responded indifferently.

—Are you going home already?

—Yeah.

—Aren't you staying for dinner?

—I plan to go to lunch with my mother. But I wanted to talk to you before I go.

—What's happening? I turned to look at her and raised an eyebrow. Although my heart was pounding, I kept my face straight.

—I heard some strange stories from Chet

—About?

—Some kind of relationship between you and A-Nueng... Piengfah crossed her arms over her chest and stared at me. The phrase — some kind of relationship — was left to me to fill in the blank.

If I felt guilty, which I did, I would know immediately what she meant. But I had to pretend I didn't know...

—What kind?

—Are you and A-Nueng in a relationship?

—Don't tell me you came here for this.

Everything was silent. I had to make what I said sound as ridiculous as possible.

—Actually, I also miss Thailand and my daughter. So when this came up, I was motivated to come back.

I took off my apron and leaned on the counter as I entered into a staring contest with Piengfah.

—What do you want me to say?

—Anything. I just want to know.

—Ah-huh... -I was silent for a moment before answering. I wanted to see her reaction to this. It's true.

—I am in a relationship with A-Nueng.

41. Evidence.

Silence enveloped us. And to break the silence between Piengfah and me, I continued talking.

—It is a relationship between adults. We rarely confess our love and we never tell anyone. It's just between the two of us

—And?

Piengfah crossed her arms over her chest and stared at me, as if she were putting pressure on me. I wasn't one to back down from a staring contest, so I pressed on.

—A-Nueng sleeps here more than 4 days a week because my house is closer to the university. I'm teaching her to drive. We don't have much activity; We mainly eat breakfast, dinner and sleep

—Sleep...

—We do things that two women do with each other. A-Nueng has very interesting preferences. She likes me to hurt her, but not too much. It excites her.

Sometimes we role play. I'm the director and she's a student. If she's a bad girl, she won't get the full score and will be punished. She likes to do it in the car or at the study table. Her moan reaches high...

—Enough. I give up. -Piengfah raised her hand and waved it to show that she really gave up. -I know you can keep going. You don't have to be so sarcastic. Just say it's not true and I'll believe you.

I smiled out of the corner of my mouth and laughed out loud.

—What is this?

I was only half counting...

—You can be sarcastic about anything, but you don't have to go so far as to say that my daughter likes sadomasochism like in the movie 50 Shades of Gray -The mother acted like she had goosebumps. - You described it so vividly. Did you have to go so far as to describe her moan to her mother?

—Weren't you here to hear that? So do you believe me or not?

—How could I? There's no way you're doing that with a 19 year old girl.

I swallowed hard, but didn't argue. It's better for her to think that. And while we were talking, someone coughed. It was A-Nueng, standing with a bright red face in the kitchen with us.

Since when was she here?

—Wh... what are you two talking about?

—Just this and that, daughter. Piengfah quickly changed the subject and laughed. Let's go see your grandmother. I'm done talking to Khun Nueng.

—Well.

A-Nueng looked at me before walking towards her beautiful Mini Cooper. Piengfah walked away while I began to feel that...

A big mess is coming.

[I really miss you, Aunt Nueng. Today is supposed to be my day with you...]

A-Nueng's voice was on the other end of the line. She made me smile. I was lying in front of the TV, drawing A-Nueng's portrait with a 2B pencil.

—You are so attached to me. Spend some time with your mother.

[Being with my mother doesn't make my heart race like when I'm with you. I had plans to do a lot of things with you tonight...]

—Don't be so careless. Is your mother in the area?

I put down my pencil and sat down nervously. A — Nueng responded to me as if she had no common sense.

[Of course not. How else could I call you and complain... Also! Did you have to tell my mother that I liked doing it at the study table?]

—You were eavesdropping. -I laughed happily. - Your mother asked, so I let her know. But it seems she doesn't believe what I said. Obviously... Her daughter is so cute. Who would imagine that you like having your hair pulled when...

[Don't say it out loud.]

—Are you shy?

[No. It turns me on.]

I couldn't really win with her. She was shameless.

—This means that your father really suspects us.
That's why he called your mother.

[And? I will still be with you.]

—It's not that easy.

[Why make it difficult?]

—You make everything seem easy, but in reality it is not... Your parents trusted me. They trusted us so much that they didn't think that...

[Promise me you won't leave me.]

—Huh? — I shrank my neck and dragged my voice. -Why would I leave you?

[I don't know. But I'm scared.]

The small woman's voice on the other end of the line shook me. Maybe it's because I didn't think it would be easy. It would be really difficult. The probability of us being together was 0%.

Daughter of a close friend.

My ex-boyfriend's daughter.

The person under my care.

Where was the possibility? And how could it have gotten this far?

[Why are you silent?]

—I'm just thinking about this and that.

[You must be very stressed. Hey... I recommend you listen to the radio. Do you remember the station I told you I like and will be working with as a DJ? Turn it on now.]

—I don't have a radio.

[You can use the computer. Turn it on. Let's listen to it together.]

—What do you want me to hear? -I laughed. The cheerful woman who asked for my tenderness now gave me orders. I don't like any songs these days.

[I'm not asking you to listen to music. I want you to listen to the program where people call to talk about their lives.]

—That's even worse. We don't even know if it's true or a made up story. People are weird nowadays. Why share your pain with others?

[But I like listening to it, especially now that I have a relationship with you.]

—Why?

[When I'm stressed and feel like things between us are too heavy to deal with, I feel like we're not the only ones having problems. Others have problems too. And they got over it and now share it with others.]

—Okay, I will try it.

[Good. Listen to it a lot. So, when I become a DJ on that show, you will already be used to listening to these kinds of shows.]

—Aren't you reading me novels now?

[Why should I? We are already together. Our scenes are hotter than those in the novel.]

The animated laughter on the other end of the line frustrated and embarrassed me at the same time, and I couldn't help but yell at her.

—Hey!

Although I pretended not to give it much thought, I opened the website and searched for that program after hanging up the phone. Most of them called to talk about their love lives. I was about to turn it off when a woman with a deep voice called.

—My name is B. My story is a little strange... I dream about someone frequently. But when I wake up, I can't remember the person's face. The only thing I remember are her crystalline brown eyes. I drew them every day, until one day I realized that those eyes exist in real life.

—What do you mean by that?

—On television... I see them on television. I became a silent fan of the person. I acted like I didn't feel anything, but I scream at the top of my lungs inside every time I meet the person. But that person thinks that all I feel is hate. I'm not good at expressing myself, you know? I'm afraid that if I'm too euphoric, people will think I'm crazy. So to not look like I'm flirting, I pretend to hate her... Once, I was so harsh with my words that the person couldn't stand it. We fought and she slapped me.

—What kind of man slaps a woman?

—He is not a man...

Is this what I had to hear? I turned my mouth around a bit before turning it off and going to bed. I had no idea that the next morning... the big mess will arrive.

Chet came to see me early in the morning and spoke to me in a serious tone of voice. He had never spoken to me so seriously before. He didn't even dare to raise his voice at me before this. But this time, he was more himself than ever. And he was playing a father role. He couldn't accept the fact that his daughter was in a relationship with me, who is her guardian.

And a woman...

—I will make A-Nueng move in with Fah

—Why are you acting like this so early in the morning?

And the handsome father slammed something on the coffee table. A small SD card spun on the table. I looked at him, confused.

—What is this?

—Clips recorded from A-Nueng's car.

When I heard that, I quickly assessed the situation in my head and immediately realized what was happening. I could feel sweat forming on my back. A camera in A-Neng's car revealed what we had been trying to keep hidden.

—I saw what was recorded on A-Nueng's car camera. The sights and sound... of what you and A-Nueng did there.

—Khun Nueng. You are despicable.

42. Unworthy

Chet and I looked at each other furiously. And this was the first time that I was the one who looked away first. Because... I felt the same as him. Our relationship, the one between A-Nueng and me, was wrong not only in the eyes of others but also in my own. I had been feeling this way for a while now.

—I don't understand what you're talking about.

To be honest, I'm the one who understood this the most. But I couldn't admit it. Perhaps this was a hoax; Maybe Chet was trying to trick me into revealing the truth. I shouldn't agree with him.

—Does someone like you not understand this? Are you telling me that moan is from a porn movie? They are the moans of my daughter and yours. And the image...— Chet's face was so red and I didn't know if it was from anger or embarrassment. But it was enough to make me immediately end the conversation.

—What are you saying? Did you install a camera in the car?

—Why? Do you think I'm lying when I want to know where my daughter is going and who she's going with? So that's why you wouldn't agree to date me or anyone else. It's because you're not normal... You like women. You like girls... The girl that Piengfah and I entrusted to you. You broke our trust by blatantly doing it to the person in your care! Shameless!

—Nueng... I couldn't find an excuse, so I was trying to deflect him. -I don't understand what you're saying.

—Khun Nueng... you're a very direct person, but you're lying about this. And it's very obvious that you are.

—Shut up! Who do you think you're talking to?

I started to raise my voice and glared at Chet. He could be angry about this. But he couldn't speak to me without respect. That didn't seem right to me.

—I'm talking to a liar. You are her guardian. You received the trust of a girl's parents and her family members. However, you eat it. She is just an innocent girl. Think about what you've done... The only reason it's not so disgusting is because you're a woman!

—If you were a man, how would this end? You are the monk who ate the chicken. You're no different from those directors who trick girls into motels and give them money.

—I didn't fool anyone. We are in love!

In the end I collapsed. Chet stayed quiet and stared at me.

—You finally admit it.

I was shaking all over. I covered my mouth with my hand and sank onto the couch limply. I couldn't think clearly. My anger, mixed with fear, made me inadvertently blurt out what I could never take back.

—What is the problem? It's me. How bad could it be... How am I not suitable or worthy of A-Nueng?

—How dare you ask that? If you have a conscience, you will know that you are not suitable for her

—Say it, how?

Chet slowly advanced towards me. I unconsciously took a step back to keep our distance.

—First, you are a woman.

—Then you have a problem with that.

—Secondly, your age difference is 16 years. Khun Nueng... it's 16 years

—I spoke with A-Nueng about this. It's not a problem. We...

—Damn. A-Nueng is still young. I understand her. But you. You're smart. You are the queen in every way. Why are you such an idiot when it comes to this? Khun Nueng... my daughter is only 19 years old. Her life is just beginning. Look to you. You won't be able to have children in a few years.

—Chet. -I used my deep voice while trying to control my anger. But it seemed like the father in front of me was more out of control than me and didn't care about anything anymore. That included me, whom he used to adore.

—She just entered college while you are withering away. When you walk together, don't you feel more like her mother than her lover?

—Enough.

—I'm not even talking about them both being women. A-Nueng hasn't even had a boyfriend. She grew up in an all-girls school. She may think that

you are the best thing in this world. But when she finds the perfect guy for her, she will forget you. She will be angry with the old woman who chased her and you will be jealous of her.

—I told you to shut up!

I covered my ears because I couldn't bear to listen to what he was saying. I plopped down on the couch like a scared little child. Chet was hitting all my weak points. The age difference was what hit me the most. I tried to forget everything.

Yes... I knew that A-Nueng's life had just begun. I wanted to take a step back more than once, but the cheerful woman always managed to stop me. She always convinced me that we could get through it.

But Chet was there now to confirm that what I was worried about was valid. That A-Nueng and I being together was just a dream. And I finally had to accept that.

Chet leaned down right in front of me and removed my hands from my ears.

—Break up with my daughter.

—Stop being selfish.

—What are you doing, father! -A-Nueng shouted from the front door. She ran to push Chet away and hugged me tightly. Why did you make her cry?

—How did you get here?

—I come here all the time. What is all this? What crazy thing are you doing?!

—I'm telling Aunt Nueng to let you go.

—Let me go where!?

A-Nueng seemed confused because she didn't know anything. I looked at her surprised.

—Don't you know what we're talking about?

—I looked at Chet and knew it immediately. You cheated on me?

—Someone as intelligent as you can be fooled. I guess love makes you blind and stupid.

—Aunt Nueng. What are you talking about?

“Chet knows everything about you... and about me,” I said to A-Nueng quietly. I tried to get up with the help of A-Nueng. Your father wants us to break up.

—No!

A-Nueng responded without even stopping to think. That made Chet look at her with fire in his eyes.

—You have to do it. Otherwise, you will have to go live with your mother abroad.

—Are you crazy? What right do you have to force me?

—The right of a father.

—You didn't even raise me. You just show up and say you're my dad now that I'm older. That doesn't give you any rights.

A-Nueng, who had always been an obedient child and had never rebelled since Chet announced that he was her father, was now rebelling. She was like a tiger trapped in a corner and was ready to pounce on anything in front of her. Chet was stunned. However... He had his secret weapon, which was...

—But I, your mother, I do.

Piengfah seemed to have been listening for a while. However, she just showed up and announced it at the climax. But A-Nueng continued to fight with all her might.

—You also have no rights

—I talked to your grandmother and she agrees that you should move in with me -Piengfah looked at me and shook her head, disappointed. Khun Nueng... I love you so much. But this is my daughter. You ruined all the love and respect I had for you.

—Fah...

All her disappointment crashed into me. I felt like I was being stabbed with a thousand needles. Piengfah loved and respected me, even though we were the same age. But now, I don't know what it was in her eyes. It was disappointment and disgust. And it hurt me.

—I won't fight you like Chet did. But I will reason with you as the mother of a girl and your beloved friend. My words carry more weight than Chet's... Maybe you'll listen to me.

—Auntie Nueng, don't listen. -A-Nueng stood between Piengfah and me. I was afraid that her mother would persuade me. -Do not say anything. I won't break up with Aunt Nueng. If it's going to be this complicated, I'll just run away with Aunt Nueng!

—Is this your love, Khun Nueng? Piengfah looked at me pitifully. -My daughter can't even think like an adult. The only thing she can do is run away from her problems, and she asks you to run away with her. You are someone who should know well that running away doesn't help in anything.

—Stop talking, mom. I won't go with you!

A-Nueng screamed and sobbed piteously. I saw a girl fighting with her parents because of a stranger like me. It made me realize.

How did I get there...?

—It's okay, Nueng. -I grabbed the little woman by the shoulders. I pulled her to stand next to me before answering Piengfah while looking at my friend sympathetically. I will talk to your mother myself.

—No. You will agree with her.

—Let me talk to her first.

A-Nueng squeezed my arm tightly and shook her head. I looked at the little woman who was sobbing piteously.

A-Nueng really was too young. She fought for her love without reason and without looking to her

future. I had lived life for many more years than hers. I knew well that... love alone was not enough. Love had to go with logic. The head had to walk hand in hand with the heart.

—Let me talk to your mother first.

—Please don't leave me.

—Aha.

—You promise.

—Aha.

I responded, although I wasn't sure I could do what she said. I had to say it because I wanted to talk to Piengfah alone, without A-Nueng.

Now Piengfah and I were on the second floor. We chose to talk in my bedroom because it was the most private space in that palace.

—So this is where you two sleep.

Piengfah looks at the clean white bed, covered with a tight-fitting sheet. She seems to be thinking about something and I'm sure I can guess what it is.

—Let's talk. A-Nueng is no longer here to interrupt us... So, are you taking your daughter with

you?

—I have to.

—It's strange that you're not acting like Chet.

—I know I can't use my emotions when I talk to you. You respond to reasons. I know you well enough to know how to deal with you.

—Correct. — I put my hands in my pants pocket and walked towards the window where the light came in. are you angry with me? Knowing that I'm with A-Nueng?

—It would be a lie if I said no. I left my daughter with the person I trusted the most. But in the end, I gave it directly to your mouth. I left a fish for the cat

—You asked, so I answer honestly.

—Ah-huh. I'm not going to say anything. -I was looking at Piengfah sternly, but now I nodded with understanding. -You're right. I'd be angry too if I were you. A friend claims her beautiful daughter.

—But apart from anger, I'm also very curious... You are Khun Nueng, who doesn't care about

anyone in this world, no matter how perfect that person is. Why A-Nueng? Why does it have to be my daughter?

—There is no reason when it comes to love. If there was, it wouldn't be love. I said the famous phrase from a novel and I laughed a little because I never thought I would be referring to it. -I don't know why. I don't know why she's so special

—Do you feel responsible for her?

—Huh?

—You feel guilty for telling me to get rid of her, so you feel responsible for her. Maybe you let your emotions get the best of you. Maybe you're not serious about my daughter.

—Do I look like someone who hits and runs, Fah? -I asked the person who said she knew me well.

We stayed silent for a while. And the one who spoke first was Piengfah, who finally had to fulfill her duty as a mother.

—I think you have already decided that we should talk like this in private.

—You have to be the one to talk to A-Nueng about this because she won't listen to anyone else

As Piengfah said, she was my best friend and the one who knew me the most since we were young. Letting my old friend talk to me in private meant that I would let A-Nueng go.

I just wanted to talk to her privately to make a deal.

—Alright. I'll talk to her.

—What will you do after you let her go?

—I will wait until I'm more mature and have better decision-making skills. She will come back to me. We will both be adults. We know well that... the only thing that would improve this is time.

Piengfah approached me and raised her hand to stroke my arm comfortingly.

—I'm sorry it's come to this point, Khun Nueng. I have loved you and I know well how painful it is to have a broken heart. But as a mother... I can't stand to see my daughter make the wrong decision. She is still young.

—She is 19 years old.

—In the eyes of a mother, that is being very young. I hope she forgets you and meets a good man

—What if she loves a woman?

—Then I won't be able to stop her.

“For you and Chet, it could be anyone but me, I guess,” I said in agony. But I also understood her. Piengfah, who had to be a mother by now, answered frankly

—Yeah. Anyone on this planet except you, who is her father's ex-girlfriend, her mother's first love, and also her grandmother's trusted guardian. That's what you are to her, Khun Nueng. All that and the weight of all that is suffocating. I'm sorry. I never thought I'd be telling you this in this life but...

—What?

—You are not worthy, Khun Nueng.

43. Unexpressed Feelings

I had finally returned to living in the real world. Love... it wasn't about two people. Although we insisted that we loved each other, many factors were not in our favor.

Seen from an outside perspective, without thinking too much about it, it was same-sex love. Or it was -simply— love between people with a large age difference. But when it happened to someone close to them or their younger relatives, the word — simply — was scrutinized until it became the key word. We had been fooling ourselves for too long. All that was left to do was face the truth.

A-Nueng had to wake up from that dream as soon as possible.

Piengfah and Chet left me to talk to A-Nueng in private. The cheerful woman who had always had a smile on her face remained silent. She knew it and was completely against what I was going to say.

—Nueng.

—I'm not going to break up with you.

—I'm not going to break up with you.

—I'm not going with my mother.

A-Nueng preempted everything I was about to say, looking into my eyes with tears. It seemed like even I couldn't communicate with her.

—I want you to listen to me. And you can decide what you want to do after that.

—Don't be evil. No matter what you say or how bad it is, no matter how much you make me hate or hurt you, I won't go. I will stay here! Even if you drive me away, I will persist, even if you don't want to see me. I'll tolerate it until you can't stand it. I'd rather die than break up with you!

And the cheerful woman, whose smile had disappeared from her face, sobbed until I felt sorry for her. In the end, I was the one who couldn't stand it and pulled her into a tight hug. I swung her from side to side like I was swinging a cradle.

—No one is dying. We will get to an agreement. I won't make you hate me. I won't scare you away. We will speak with reasons.

—You can't persuade me. You won't get what you want. I have decided that I will not go

I cupped her face and looked into her eyes as I spoke to her candidly.

—Nueng. Now everyone knows about us and no one approves.

—I don't mind. It's my life. It's my love. Why should I care who approves or fails?

—But they have reasons. And I feel like their reasons are valid, too valid to ignore.

—I'm not listening.

—Nueng... What I have always been afraid of is not that others will separate us. But I'm afraid that you will change one day.

—What are you saying? How could I? I'm determined to love only you

—You have been in this world for 19 years. The number in front is still 1. But your parents and I, or especially your grandmother, have been in this world much longer and see it differently. Everything changes, especially feelings.

—Why don't you believe me!? -A-Nueng shouted as if she didn't want to be patient and found my explanation irritating. How can others understand me better than myself, even you?

—I just understand how things work. Maybe... if we distance ourselves and do what others want, we can show them that no matter how much we distance ourselves, we still love each other...

That wasn't true. People were separated by distance. People were not firm enough and were constantly changing. It would be nice if A-Nueng would forget me when we were apart...

I was unworthy.

Even if she was from an esteemed family, I was not worthy of A-Nueng in every way. I am a friend of her mother. I'm her guardian. As Chet had said, if I were a man, I would be nothing more than a sugar daddy who takes care of a girl to cheat on his wife.

—Do you want me to go? Can you stand it? -A-Nueng leaned over to hug me. No matter how much she wanted to cry, she had to be strong, for her to believe what I had just said.

—I can't. But I want you to be a little older than this. If our love remains unbreakable, then nothing

can stand in your way. Not your father, not your mother, not your grandmother.

—You love me, right? — The little woman shook my arm, waiting for an answer. -Tell me you Love Me.

—I don't know.

I said something that I knew in my heart was a lie. That stunned the little woman.

—What is what you don't know?

—Your departure will also help me understand myself better. It will allow me to understand myself better, just as it will allow you to demonstrate that your feelings will not change.

—Why do you have to be mean to me? Pretending to be bad is better than saying you don't know. -A-Nueng hit me weakly while complaining. How can you say you don't know if you love me after all the time we've spent together?

—That's why you have to go. Think of it as... you're giving me a choice.

Although I didn't chase A-Nueng away, the reason I used to make her leave was no less bad. We

spent more time together than other lovers, but I didn't say I loved her. I also said I didn't know

—although I did. It was painful, no matter how you looked at it.

After that day, Piengfah told me that A-Nueng had agreed to go with her. She would drop out of university and move abroad. Since that day we hadn't contacted each other again. I forced myself not to read the messages the little woman sent me via LINE or answer her calls because I was afraid I wouldn't be able to control myself and beg her not to leave. If so, everything I told her would go to waste.

However... after only a week, my restriction reached its breaking point when A-Nueng sent me a short message.

A-Nueng: Tomorrow I'm leaving with my mother.

A-Nueng: I don't think I'll ever see you again.

A-Nueng: Goodbye

What did "I'll never see you again" mean?

I wasn't sure if that goodbye just meant she was leaving with Piengfah or if it had a deeper meaning.

So I finally called her. The sobs on the other end of the line softened me.

—What do you mean with the message you sent me?

[You can translate it directly.]

—No... What do you mean by never seeing me again?

—Nueng.

[I don't want to go with my mother. I can't stand not seeing you again. I'd rather die.]

A-Nueng's immaturity made me sob with her. But I had to clear my throat and play the role of her guardian like I used to.

—Don't talk about death. It's what losers do to escape their problems. I have never taught you to be like this. If you die, then what... Do you think you'll see me again in hell or heaven? I'm not going to die after you. Keep that in mind.

[I don't want to die to escape my problems. But it's too painful to continue living. I'm broken!]

I understood well the word -broken— that A-Nueng used because I was as -broken— as she was. I was just older and had different ways of expressing it.

—Go with your mother. We will be together when we meet again.

[You can't even say you love me. How can I be sure that you won't change when I return?]

—Nueng...— I bit my lips painfully. What did I have to do? I also missed her so much right now. - I...

[Khun Nueng.]

A clearly more mature voice interrupted. It seemed like A-Nueng's grandmother took the phone from her granddaughter to talk to me. I swallowed hard before answering.

—Yeah.

[I didn't think you would talk to A-Nueng again. It's inappropriate... If you do this, it will be more difficult for her to leave.]

I could hear A-Nueng's voice in the background. She seemed to be screaming, but her grandmother stayed on the phone and continued talking to me.

—I was worried because she was sending me strange messages

[Whatever A-Nueng sent you has nothing to do with you anymore. Please stop this relationship. You are an adult. Aren't you ashamed to be in a relationship with a 19-year-old girl? How would M.C. feel? Kaekai... No, even if she was alive, you wouldn't care. You are rebellious to the core.]

Those words made me grip the phone tightly. I refrained from answering because I was wrong on this.

—I insist that I called because I am worried about her. And please don't talk about my grandmother. Please respect the dead.

[Is it because she is dead that you don't care in the slightest about ethics or have no conscience? I don't want to interfere in your personal affairs. You can like women if you want, but this is my granddaughter.] And grandma no longer called herself mom. [Do not take A-Nueng with you. Let her live a good and clean life.]

—Is it so dirty to be with a woman? Your granddaughter must give birth to a bastard like Piengfah so that she's not dirty?

[You... you don't look like your grandmother at all, do you? Is there royal blood in you?]

—What?

[Please note your title and the royal blood your parents gave you. But what can I expect from someone who grew up with her grandmother and without her parents to take care of her? No wonder you grew up with no redeeming qualities.]

And the line was cut. I looked at the phone in my hand and fell to the ground, powerless. That was the first time I had a direct confrontation with A-Nueng's grandmother. Damn... what that old lady said was true.

I'm a woman.

It was time for me to let her go. My love was impossible.

Someone once said that if you think your life was bad, you would look at those whose lives were worse than yours. The truth was that I didn't agree with that. It was like putting pressure on others to make myself feel better. But at this point it would help with my depression to listen to people who had it worse.

I was very sad lately...

I didn't know if it had anything to do with the seasons. It had been raining these days. The weather forecast said there would be storms and flooding. I looked out the window of my room, where A-Nueng used to stay overnight. When I thought about never hearing her laugh again, I felt alone.

Maybe we had to be apart for a long time, maybe forever.

So, to reduce my loneliness, I turned on the radio to the station A-Nueng always listened to on her laptop. I listened to it once, but I thought there was no point in listening to other people's problems, so I turned it off. But now I was very bored. I had to distract myself. So listening to this program was a good option.

Many times, I can't help but wonder why someone would call to tell their life story to strangers. Ah... they probably want to get it out and tell someone...

I looked at the clock. It was just after 7 p.m. A-Nueng flight was at 9 p.m. I assumed she was on her way to the airport at that moment. Maybe she was in

a car and feeling sad. But... time would improve things. A-Nueng would top it.

It'll pass...

But for me it wasn't that easy.

A-Nueng was my first love. I had lived more than 30 years without loving or liking anyone because I didn't understand how it worked. I kept thinking that this person isn't, or that this person was not worthy, and I told myself that I would only get married if I found someone like me.

Then this girl arrives... We were so similar that we became one.

The more I thought about how the cheerful woman who stopped by every day after school to cuddle with me was leaving, the emptier I felt inside. It was like there was a big blank space inside me. Loneliness and sadness were eating me up and breaking me down.

—I miss you so much, Nueng.

I picked up the phone, looked at A-Nueng's photo and cried. It would be a while before I saw the little woman again. Or maybe what we felt for each

other would happen when we didn't see each other again.

We would become strangers... like in those types of novels that always described a type of relationship until it became the title.

Pluto... We will be each other's Pluto.

—Listeners who have a story to share can call us to talk... If no one else listens to them, we will.

The DJ's soft voice made me turn to look at my computer, a certain feeling arising within me. Would telling my story make me feel better? Would someone listening to my story lift the weight of my heart and make everything easier?

I'm M.L. Sippakorn, who didn't even care to watch television. But that night I picked up the phone and dialed the number the DJ gave earlier. It took about ten minutes for my call to come through. There was a person who wrote down the story to assess if mine was interesting enough to air.

—It's a story about love between people with an age difference of 16 years... and we are both women.

Once I gave that synopsis, it went on air immediately. There probably aren't many stories about same-sex love. And mine must have been quite interesting.

—Hello, Miss A. What do you want to tell us today?

I used the alias -A— because I thought of the person who used -B— when I heard the show last time. Yes... it was that simple.

—Ah... I paused briefly. There was dead air. It's about love between people with a 16-year age difference, and it's about to end.

—You can continue. If no one else listens to you, we will.

I laughed a little and started to think what I was doing was stupid. But the DJ's voice calmed me down. And I began to tell my story without interruptions.

—It all started... last year. There's a girl who came and clung to me every day after school. I mean, she...

I gave them a brief context.

—At first I didn't pay much attention to it. The cheerful girl was just a customer who asked me to draw her for 100 baht. We stared at each other when I drew her. I had to draw her, so it's normal that I was looking at her face like that. But that girl tilted her head and smiled mischievously at me. Then she made fun of me... Are you secretly in love with me, looking at me like that...?

And we got to know the names of each other. The name united us because we have the same nicknames... The girl's name is also -A. She has a beautiful smile and beautiful eyes. Even though she wears very thick glasses, I can see how beautiful her eyes are. What I like most when I look at her are her eyes and her lively smile. And because her smile is so adorable, I couldn't bear to chase her away. Or even if I did, she wouldn't go... We became close because we saw each other so often. One time, A disappeared and I was lost. It was very strange for me because no one had ever made me feel this way before. But A did... and once I knew I had done it, it got out of hand, thinking I might get jealous. I later discovered that A is the daughter of a friend, a close friend to whom I recommended that she get rid of the baby she had in her belly when she was 16 years old. Isn't it funny? The girl I told her mother to get

rid of that day was now clinging to me and making me miss her, worry about her, and bond with her. And her parents trusted me to be her guardian. You can say that I was everything to her. I was her mother, her mother's friend, her teacher, and finally... her lover. Oh. I just remember that I was once her fake mother at her school's Mother's Day ceremony. It's all so strange... A is someone I groomed and she didn't disappoint me in any way. She goes left when I tell her to do so. And she does well when I tell her. You can tell she is everything I hoped she would be. And it's terrible that someone who is her mother, guardian and teacher is also your lover, isn't it? There is no way to see it any other way. Yes... I was her everything.

Our love was not appropriate. Gaining the trust of her family was like carrying something very heavy on my shoulders. Her father liked me too. Her mother loved me. But I love her daughter. More importantly, I'm a woman... It's unusual, no matter how you look at it. It's inappropriate for everyone who looks inward. But A and I convinced ourselves that... everything would be okay. If no one knows... But there is no secret in this world. A's father caught us because he was curious to know why we were so close. She wouldn't drive the car he bought her

because she would rather spend the night with me than sleep at home again. We took showers together. I flew to Phuket because we couldn't bear to be apart for just a day. And yes... we didn't end well. Her father lashed out at me. He was very disappointed in me. But A's mother, who has been my best friend since we were young, handled it well. She begged me to let A go. To be honest, I know our love is inappropriate, so I let her go easily. I begged her to get out of my life and go live with her mother abroad. I told her that would let us know if we really loved each other. A asked... if I loved her. A simple question, but I couldn't answer...

And I started sobbing on the line. I put a hand on my chest. I clutched my chest because I was in a lot of pain. The DJ asked me, who had been listening silently for a while.

—Don't you love her?

I smiled into the phone and nodded with tears streaming down my face.

—I can't say it — I was embarrassed. I cried so all the strangers listening to the show would know. But I really couldn't take it anymore. -I want her to stay, but I can't stop her. Her life is just beginning.

She hasn't even lived her life yet. It's not fair to stop her and keep her with an old lady like me.

—Why do you think for her?

—Because that's. People's feelings change all the time. She will change and I won't be able to stand it.

That was my fear. The reason I pushed A-Nueng away was to keep my distance so as not to get hurt. But when it came down to it, I was dying. And I was beginning to understand A-Nueng better.

I wanted to die... Dying would be less painful.

—If A is listening, what do you want to say?

—If she's listening, I won't say anything -I quickly refused to say anything. Then the DJ changed his approach.

—Let me rephrase this... If A is not listening, do you have something to say to her?

—No.

—Be honest, Miss A. We are here to listen to you. It might make her feel better.

—Will it really help?

—Try it... What is hidden inside your heart?
What would you like to say to A?

I pursed my lips as I hesitated. I wondered why I called. But being able to tell my story made me feel a little better.

I hoped someone would understand my suffering.

—I mean... Auntie loves you, Nueng.

44. Please.

I finished my story... The DJ rewarded me with a song request. Since I didn't know many songs, I requested Sadubpin's song.

I had just realized that Sieng-Pleng's famous song is called Your Song—

I feel in my bed, in my bedroom, without strength. Getting to tell my story reduced my suffering a little. But that was all. I was still wondering why I did it. What had I gained by telling my story to the entire country?

What did I expect...?

While I was massaging my temples with my fingers and listening to the song I requested, my phone rang. It was an unknown number. I looked at it hesitantly but decided to take the call. And the voice on the other end of the line made me, who was sitting with my back hunched, straighten up with emotion.

—Nueng.

[Auntie Nueng.]

—Haven't you left yet? Whose phone are you using?

[I heard everything. Aunt Nueng... I love you too. I won't go anywhere.]

The little woman's sobs caused me to cover my mouth with my hands to prevent my sobbing voice from escaping. But I couldn't hold it back anymore. Damn... she was really listening. I thought she would be on the plane by now.

—Where are you? What phone are you using?

[I'm in a taxi. I ran away from my parents.]

—Cab? Nueng... — I was stressed. I was starting to feel really bad for calling that program and complicating things. Where are you now?

[I'm going to go see you. I borrowed the taxi driver's phone to call you.]

—Why did you do this to yourself?

[You love me... Next time, tell me what you're thinking. Don't play like that. I'm so moved that I don't know how to react.]

It made me laugh to hear her laugh and cry at the same time while she also acted shy.

—Your family will kill me

[I don't mind. I can't live without you.]

I smiled into the phone and nodded, even though I knew the person on the other end couldn't see me. What happened today makes me realize that I couldn't live without A-Nueng either. Maybe... I should leave it at that.

Let whatever had to happen happen.

—I can't live without you either.

[Hurrah. This is good. You admit it. I'm going to see you. You have to pay for the taxi and the phone because I don't have anything with me.]

—Ah-huh. I will do that. Give me the license plate, just to be sure

[You are so detailed. The registration is xx-10xx. I'm in... Argh!]

—Umm...

Suddenly, there was a scream. After that, I couldn't hear anything on the other end of the line.

—Nueng... Answer me. Nueng.

Everything was silent. My heart began to race faster and faster, beating so hard that my hands were shaking. I didn't know what caused that scream, but it couldn't be good. Then I tried to call again. But no one answered and the line finally went dead.

What had happened?!!!

I was panicking. I breathed heavily and paced around my room, trying to get myself under control. A-Nueng gave me the license plate right before they cut the line. x...

xx-10xx. Yes. I would start from there. I called to report an accident, even though I didn't know what really happened.

—I don't know exactly, but my niece... My lover was talking on the phone, then she screamed and everything went silent. Please... Please find out if something happened to her.

The person on the other end of the line simply listened indifferently and told me to speak slowly.

They asked me to repeat what happened. Then they told me:

—Everything should be fine.

—Hey! I just told you what happened. Can't you at least check it? Almost 30 minutes have passed. The registration is xx-10xx. My lover screamed. What if the taxi driver did something bad to her? Or maybe... It was an accident. Do you have to wait for something to happen before you act? Jesus!!!

While I was yelling on the line, there was a call. It was the number A-Nueng used to call me from. For a moment, I felt sorry for panicking and calling the emergency line to yell at them. I immediately answered the call because I was very worried about A-Nueng.

—Nueng. What happened?

[I'm not Nueng. I dialed the most recent call on the phone. Is this the woman's phone or the taxi driver's phone?]

There was a man on the line. My heart started pounding again. This was unusual, but I had to stay calm. I had to ask what had happened instead of panicking.

—Who are you? The woman used this phone to call me before.

[I am the rescuer.]

—R... rescuer?

[I'm trying to contact the deceased's family member, so I called this phone number.]

—Who died? -I asked him: -Who died?

[The taxi driver. The passenger, the woman, was also seriously injured. We will send her to the hospital. Are you related to the taxi driver or passenger?]

—Where... what hospital?

[We are sending the injured passenger to the hospital...]

I didn't even wait for them to hang up. As soon as I found out which hospital, I grabbed my car keys and ran in a panic. My hands were shaking. I was so stressed that I had a huge headache. But nothing could stop me. My adrenaline pushed me to go see A-Nueng at the hospital, which was about 8 kilometers from my house. I hurriedly looked for the little woman when I arrived at the hospital. She was in the ICU. The doctors were trying to save her life.

—You can't get in.

The nurse blocked me because strangers should not get in the way of ICU doctors and nurses. Even though I knew it wasn't allowed, I just wanted to make sure it was A-Nueng who was there.

—Please. Let me see with my own eyes that it's Nueng... Please. -I raised my hands to beg the nurse without any shame. I had lost my ego. I begged him for his kindness. The nurse insisted that I couldn't enter. But he gave me a brief summary and handed me a wallet.

—This is the property of the patient. I really can't let you in. Doctors are doing everything possible to save the patient. Please understand our procedure.

I opened the wallet and saw that it was actually A-Nueng's ID. Now that it was confirmed, I was in even more pain. I fell to the floor and cried so hard that the nurse had to hold me up and check on me.

—Please calm down. Sit there and wait for the doctor to come out.

—Is Nueng's condition serious? How is the little girl? — I cried like a 3 year old child who cries annoyingly. I couldn't hold it back anymore. -Will she make it? Will it be OK?

—The doctors are doing the best they can.

—Please...— I grabbed the nurse's arm and looked into her eyes pleadingly. -Let me do anything to help her... Just give me a figure. I'll give you everything I have. My grandmother left me a lot. You can keep it all. Just please save Nueng

—Don't do this, miss.

—Please save her.

In the end, I sat on the couch in front of the ICU with the help of the nurse. All I could do now was wait. And waiting at the moment of life or death like this was torture.

A-Nueng had been there for over twenty minutes without any update. I was nervous. And while I was waiting, A-Nueng's family arrived. They had probably just heard the news. They ran in. When Piengfah saw me, she rushed over and asked in a panic.

—Khun Nueng, what did the doctor say?

—Nothing yet.

—It's all for you! -Chet, who was the most frustrated of all, ran in and strangled me. He was furious and needed to take it out on someone. And

that someone is me. -A-Nueng was about to leave. But you had to be an idiot and call that show to tell your stupid story. Moron!

Piengfah was the calmest of all of us. She tried to take Chet's hands off me and push him until I was out of his reach. She yelled at him too.

—Stop acting so crazy. What's the point of going crazy?!

—So that she knows that what she did was wrong. If it weren't for her, A-Nueng wouldn't be like this. Aren't you ashamed to call a radio show and tell the country your story? You intended for A-Nueng to hear it, didn't you? You knew she would be listening. You knew my daughter would come to you if she heard it!

—You're crazy, Khun Nueng. How could you do this to my daughter?

—Why not? We love each other! Having held back all this time, it was me who was attacking this time.

—Disgusting! You are a woman. My daughter is also a woman. How can you love each other? More

importantly... we trusted you, but you stabbed us in the back by claiming our daughter. Disgusting. Negligible. Low!

Chet used all his vocabulary to humiliate me. But I had nothing to lose at that moment. Even my shoes don't match. What could I lose?

My pride? My ego? I had nothing left since they cut the A-Nueng line.

—Don't pretend to be a father who appreciates his daughter so much when you just met A-Nueng almost at the same time I did. I pointed at Chet's face. Everyone here forced us to separate. Everyone did what made them feel good. No one cared how much A-Nueng was hurting.

—Don't speak. You are the strange one among us all.

—Yeah? But I'm the stranger who loves A-Nueng the most. Has A-Nueng ever been happy in her life? Her mother left her with her grandmother since she was born. Her father didn't even know she existed. A— Nueng had to wear a mask throughout her life. She had to pretend to be happy. She had to pretend that it was okay to grow up with her grandmother, without having had parents. But in

reality, she was in a lot of pain. inside of her. Has anyone ever noticed that?

—And you?

—Yeah. I know. I talked more than ever. I was the one who listened to her stress when her grandmother pushed her to do things. She has never had freedom because her grandmother was afraid that she would walk the wrong path like her mother! Her grandmother was afraid that she would meet a man like her father. In the end, she had no friends, so she had to come see me every night. Did anyone know this? You... or you?

I pointed at Piengfah and then at Chet. I wanted them to reconsider how much they knew about their daughter. They were both stunned, but they didn't want to admit it.

—I don't blame her grandmother for putting pressure on her, since her mother had set a very good example.

—Don't put all the blame on me like this, Khun Nueng. That has nothing to do with what happened to A-Nueng and why she is in a hospital like this. If anyone is to blame, it's you... If A-Nueng hadn't met you, her life wouldn't take this path...

At this point, even Piengfah lost control. Normally, she was very reasonable. But now she blamed me. It all fell on me and I had to ask.

—Am I that bad, Fah? Am I so unworthy of A-Nueng? Just because I'm older and female? That's all?

—Yeah.

—And you two are worthy of me? Chet... why did you want to marry me so much? Wasn't it because I'm perfect in every way? And you, Fah? Why were you in love with me? Isn't it because I'm better than others?

—Then why, when A-Nueng loves me, can't it be like that? I fell to the ground and cried. -What madness is this? What did I do so wrong? I haven't done anything wrong in my life. Everything was fine. Why does everyone have to separate us

—Khun Nueng... — Piengfah looked at me softening, while Chet looked away, frustrated.

—I have never been happy in this life until I met A— Nueng...

—I never thought I could love someone. Inside me... there are blank spaces everywhere. Whatever I poured or tried to fill them with, they never filled. I'm empty inside. I'm completely alone. -I hit my chest as I said what I had never said to anyone before. Until A-Nueng came into my life... Although it's strange, every day I see her, the blank spaces inside me gradually fill up until I'm no longer empty. In this entire world, only A-Nueng could do that. I told myself every day that... there was someone who could make me love.

—Then external factors such as family members separate us. And will they only blame me for this? Why don't they blame each other for trying to separate us, which is what led to this? Why don't they blame themselves for never having been good people? Fah, if you had been a good mother, then I wouldn't have had to look for anyone else. And you, why don't you blame yourself for not being a good father, so she had to find a father figure? Why don't you blame yourself for being such a narrow person? Grandma, were you so aware that A-Nueng had to find her comfort zone? And I was all that to her.

—And A-Nueng is also everything to me.

I was the only one who spoke, while the others listened to me in silence. I looked at everyone and put my hand to my chest to beg like I had never done before.

I had no ego in me. The Sippakorn from before had died.

I wanted to beg for your kindness...

—Please don't separate us.

45. A dream within reach

As we calmed down, we chose to sit in silence instead of yelling at each other. We were no longer pointing fingers at each other. We were finally acting like adults. Although we were still furious, we knew that what we did led nowhere.

The doctor came out of the ICU to tell us that A-Nueng's condition is quite serious. Two of her ribs were broken. And because she was in the back seat without fastening her seat belt, she also suffered a brain trauma. It wasn't like in the series where the doctor told everyone to prepare for the worst or anything like that. Still, it was discouraging for everyone. None of us felt better.

Aside from A-Nueng status, we discovered that the accident occurred because the car in front changed lanes and left the road to avoid hitting a dog.

The taxi driver of the car A-Nueng panicked, so he changed lanes and also fell on the side of the road. It seemed that the driver of the car in front was

also in a coma. But we were too exhausted to try to find whoever was responsible for the accident. We just wanted A-Nueng to come out safely.

The doctor came back in and came out after more than six hours. Even though we were all exhausted, the appearance of the doctor leaving the operating room was like that of an angel sent from heaven.

—Everything went well. Since the patient is young, she should recover quickly. There is nothing to worry about.

We smile at each other. Once I knew A-Nueng was safe, I collapsed and sobbed, even though I had never shown my weakness to anyone, not even my own grandmother.

—Alright...

—Don't blame yourself, Khun Nueng. Piengfah, who knew me best and was probably the angriest with me, came over to lean over and take my hand. -
A— Nueng is safe now. you should be happy

—She shouldn't be hurt like this. It's my fault...

—Yeah. It's thanks to you. -Chet was still full of resentment. He looked at me with resentment. Now

that you know A-Nueng is safe, there is no reason for you to be here anymore—

—Don't talk so much. You are also a stranger

A-Nueng's grandmother's voice was authoritative. That made Chet, who was threatening me, drop his jaw and hunch his back. He was afraid of her because of his past guilt.

—Mother.

—I'm not your mother. — The old woman showed her teeth at Chet and waved her hand to scare everyone away. Everyone must go. Being here will not make A-Nueng regain consciousness. Come back tomorrow morning.

—Everyone can come back except Khun Nueng — The new father, who loved and was very protective of his daughter, was still insisting before going silent once the grandmother stared at him.

—The only person who can say who can or cannot visit her is the person who raised her. So you and you...— Grandma looked at me a little and clasped her hands in front of her. -Don't show up here again. I wont allow it

Piengfah patted the back of my hand comfortingly as she helped me up. There was no point in us fighting now because everyone was still very shocked.

The grandmother was very worried about her granddaughter.

The father was very frustrated.

I... the aunt, was suffering a lot.

—Leave first, Khun Nueng. I'll let you know how my daughter is.

At least Piengfah was trying to comfort me and lighten the mood. I voluntarily withdrew because I didn't want to fight. I also knew, deep down, that I was wrong. A-Nueng was in that condition because of me. It was normal for her parents and family to be angry with me.

But... I couldn't calm down when I was alone. The most tortuous thing was -waiting-.

I waited to see if she would regain consciousness.

I didn't care about anything before, but now I was wandering around my room. I couldn't think clearly or concentrate on my business. I tried to deflect using the same theory of thinking about

something more stressful. However, there was nothing more stressful than the A-Nueng matter.

I felt exactly like I did when my grandmother had just passed away. It was guilt. I was asking for help. I got through that because A-Nueng was with me. But this time it was different.

My only friend... hadn't returned yet.

I needed help...

I can't stand it anymore.

Finally, I called Piengfah to ask her about A-Nueng's status. Even though my best friend said she would keep me informed, she never did. I understood that she was just saying it to get over that moment. But I really couldn't take it anymore. There should be some progress.

Anything.

—Fah. How is Nueng? You're not doing what you told me. You said you'd tell me how she is.

[It's not that I'm not keeping my word, Khun Nueng... But A-Nueng hasn't regained consciousness since that day.]

—Since that day— meant the day of the accident. A week had already passed since that day.

One week, I tried to be patient and not go to the hospital. I had been waiting for a week for Piengfah to inform me about the status of A-Nueng.

—You lie. Are you lying because you don't want me to go see A-Nueng?

[Why would I lie to you? Do I sound like someone who lies about my daughter's condition...]

Piengfah didn't sound as cheerful as usual. But I still didn't want to believe her.

—But the doctor said she should recover quickly.

[But he did not say when he would regain consciousness. My mother and I are very anxious right now... Khun Nueng, if A-Nueng remains in a coma forever... what will I do...]

And Piengfah, who was thinking too much like a mother very worried about her daughter, began to sob. My friend's sobs also worried me, weakened, I collapsed on the couch.

—No... How can a lively girl like A-Nueng be in a coma for so long? She will soon regain consciousness.

[My daughter will regain consciousness, right? Please tell me that she will, Khun Nueng.]

Usually Piengfah was the one who comforted me and made everything better. But now she was the one breaking down and begging me to comfort her. Despite my anguish and tears, I had to be a pillar because, at that moment, we all needed strength.

—Of course she will regain consciousness.

—She loves me very much. She promised that she would die after me because she couldn't stand seeing me sad... She will come back to us

And as soon as I hung up, I cried my eyes out. I thought about the happy woman who talked non-stop about how we would be together until old age and how she would be with me, take care of me, and die after me?

Why are you breaking your promise? Why aren't you recovering?

In the end, me missing A-Nueng defeated all my pride. Although I was forbidden to visit her, I visited her. Seeing A-Nueng on the patient's bed with all the machines around her left me stunned. I didn't know

what to do. Grandma looked at me and nodded in greeting. Our relationship was not good at that time. Being in a relationship with A-Nueng shattered her confidence.

—A-Nueng has been like this all this time? How can she eat or go to the bathroom?

—They feed her.

Piengfah responded briefly. I almost choked and cried. Feeding means that food was mixed with liquid and introduced through a tube that was inserted into the nose. I looked at all the bags of waste released from her body. It was a shame that a woman as energetic as her had to be in bed like this.

—Ah...— I hesitated as I turned to talk to the old woman. -Have you been here with A-Nueng all this time, mom?

—Yeah. It's always been just the two of us. And that's how it still is-Grandma caught up with her. She reached out to pitifully adjust her granddaughter's hair. I took care of her like this when she was born. It's the same. She is bigger.

—I'll help you.

—Don't waste your time.

—I'll come.

—I won't allow it

A-Nueng's grandmother finally lost patience with me. She had been trying to maintain good manners, but when I insisted on doing what I wanted, she yelled at me. Seeing that, Piengfah quickly walked over to stand between us.

—Please don't fight here. We are all stressed right now

—I have tried to maintain my manners as best as I can. You broke our trust! Grandma looked at me with teary eyes. -A-Nueng would not be in this state if you hadn't called that program...

—A-Nueng wouldn't be like this either if her father, mother and grandmother didn't force her to move abroad just to separate us!

—Are you still arguing with me when you are the cause of all this?

—If you ask about the fundamental cause of all this, it's your family that thinks that our love is wrong. And thanks to you! -I pointed at the old woman with fury. A-Nueng didn't care that no one knew about us. The only person she cared about in

this world was you. She was afraid of disappointing you!

—Yeah. I'm disappointed for trusting the wrong person... I've always trusted the wrong person. My daughter was pregnant without a husband, and my granddaughter is in love with the woman from an esteemed family whom I trusted to be her guardian.

—She's paying for it by staying unconscious in bed like this. Maybe she hasn't regained consciousness yet because she doesn't want to come back to us. Maybe she'll be happier in her dream world. Is this what you want? Laugh then, because your granddaughter would rather be unconscious than be with all of us again!

A-Nueng's grandmother's slap made my face turn red. She was crying. Because I hit her weak spot, her heart was likely to break as if I had pierced it repeatedly. Maybe she was thinking the same thing as me.

A-Nueng hadn't regained consciousness because her dream world was better than her real world.

The real world was one in which no one accepted our love.

And the grandmother fell into the chair she was in and sobbed. Seeing that, Piengfah also sobbed. So I was the only one who stood firm and I looked at A-Nueng with determination.

—It's okay, Nueng. I'll be here when you come back to us. You are like a dream.

I walked to the side of the bed where the little woman was lying and leaned down to kiss her softly on the forehead. Then I whispered to her as if she could hear me.

—I'm a dream that's within your reach. You have to regain consciousness and be with me until we are old... please.

46. A

Three months had passed... and A-Nueng was still in a coma.

All of us who were waiting for the cheerful woman to return to us were beginning to lose hope. Chet, who was initially furious when he found out I was visiting his daughter, was now acting as if nothing had happened. A-Nueng's grandmother and I took turns staying by her bed. And while I was waiting for her to come back to us, I was also starting my business.

Yes... my food delivery service.

I started small, using the palace as a central kitchen and not accepting too many orders a day. I started by sending samples to Sam's company.

I believed in word of mouth. Sam's celebrity friend Kate also promoted it for free. Shortly after I became very well known. I targeted office workers who didn't want to go out to eat because it was too expensive and would rather pay for weekly food

delivery. I simply cooked according to the menus that my clients chose.

Profits were satisfactory. I was considering hiring cooks to help with the kitchen and finding a place for a larger central kitchen. But no matter how busy I was with my business, I never forgot to find time to visit the little woman in the hospital. And I acted like A-Nueng wasn't a patient... Ah, you could tell she was fooling me. But this made me happy.

—You should get some rest, Khun Nueng. I can stay with her

—No. I told myself that if A-Nueng regained consciousness, I would be the first person she saw... It's okay, I'll include you too, mom — I laughed happily. I was starting to have polite conversations with A-Nueng's grandmother. -With your permission.

I pulled out a voice recorder that I had bought some time ago. I used it to record my own voice. I would tell her stories about what happened every day to A-Nueng, as if... she could hear me and understand me. At least, if she was still alive and breathing, she would know what happened each day.

Hearing me in her dream was better than nothing...

—Khun Nueng you're here. Did you bring me food? -Piengfah, who went to visit her daughter and also take turns with her mother, extended her hand to ask me for food. She was one of my customers who continued to rave about my food non-stop. - Ah... your food lengthens my life. I don't want to get back.

—Tomorrow?

—Yes... But I'll hurry back. I think I'll move back here.

Piengfah was due to return to Australia the next day. She told me this sadly. She was worried about her daughter, but her husband demanded that she return. In the end, they agreed to move there after fixing everything there. If the husband didn't move out, she would simply divorce him.

Guess if the husband agreed? Of course... she was his wife after all.

—I'll go home to look for clean clothes. Stay with Khun Nueng first, Fah

—Alright.

After grandma left the room, Piengfah ate and forgot her manners because she was starving. I couldn't help but laugh at that. My best friend looked at me out of the corner of her eye and sighed.

—Don't laugh. It's delicious

—I said nothing. As the person who cooked it, it makes me happy to see you eat it like this.

—You have so much talent. I envy A-Nueng - Piengfah looked at her daughter and twisted her mouth.

—What kind of mother am I to say this?

“A crazy woman... Ouch.” I pretended to scream when Piengfah gently hit me on the shoulder. Then I laughed. -What?

—You. You are so cold to everyone, but so gentle to my daughter. How am I different from my daughter? She came out of me -Piengfah pouted. - And of all the people in this world, you had to fall in love with a 19-year-old girl like A-Nueng. I don't understand it at all.

—I don't understand myself either. I never understood it — I shrugged and agreed with Piengfah. You've known me since we were kids.

You know I never loved or liked anyone, whether man or woman. Believe me, I'm the one who is most surprised by this... There is no reason when it comes to love.

—If there were, it wouldn't be love... Pluto? I read that one too.

—Do you also read novels?

—I found it when I looked through A-Nueng's things. Before I know it, oh... the end. It is a good novel.

—We have the same taste.

—I don't want to leave my daughter

—Don't worry, I'll take care of her.

—Can I trust in you? -Piengfah looked at me out of the corner of her eye. I bared my teeth at her because I knew she was being sarcastic, like she was saying to leave the chicken with the monk or leave the fish with the cat.

—But we've come this far... In the end you managed to get us all to be soft on you.

—Oh really? So you'll let A-Nueng and I be together if she comes back to us?

—It's hard to say... honestly, Khun Nueng, when I was in love with you, anything was worth it. But when it's my daughter, it's different... You're perfect, but not yet... My best friend looked like she had dog poop in her mouth. Honestly, no one is as perfect as you in this world. I'm being very confusing.

I think I understood how Piengfah felt. When you are a mother and you see that your daughter has a lover, you can't help but worry about her because it seems unnatural to you.

But if it wasn't me, no one would be such a perfect person...

—But...

—Huh?

—Something has been on my mind. Let me ask you frankly now that my mother is not here.

—About?

—Does A-Nueng really have those preferences?

My jaw dropped when I heard the question my best friend had. Both the subject and the asker were inappropriate for this conversation, i.e. a mother asking if her daughter is a sadomasochist.

How should I answer that...?

—You are making me feel uncomfortable

—You were talking and talking then...

—Are you sure you can accept it?

—Try me.

—Nueng likes when I use a stick. If we have ropes, she likes to have her hands and feet tied. She asked me to learn how to bind hojojutsu...

—Okay, stop it... I can't stand it. Piengfah raised her hand and signaled for me to stop. -I tried to keep an open mind, but just one sentence is enough to leave me dumbfounded. Let's keep that a secret between you two.

I laughed until I almost choked when I saw my friend's face turn bright red. It was clear that she was not as bold as her daughter.

—But... I think I know how A-Nueng is like me.

—Huh?

—Don't you want to try to do it with me? Then you will know if you prefer the mother or the daughter?

—Please return quickly to Australia.

—Ha ha ha

Let's say that A-Nueng's family and I get along well. Although it wasn't 100%, they weren't as against me as they were when they first heard about us. Maybe it was because I had shown them that I was truly in love with her and that I was serious about our relationship. And having tasted what it was like to lose someone important to you because you forced that person to do what you wanted, Grandma, Chet and Piengfah have softened.

I, the one who pretended to be strong in front of everyone, cried uncontrollably when I was alone. I was afraid that one day A-Nueng would stop breathing. I acted like I was sure that A-Nueng would come back to us in front of everyone, but in reality I was very afraid.

—Please open your eyes, Nueng. Please talk to me.

If A-Nueng left me... there would be no one I could love in this world.

But she was someone who recovered quickly. After crying, I quickly regained my composure and continued fighting. My daily routine included

finishing my work, visiting the little woman, recording daily events for A-Nueng, and...

Listen to the radio.

It had become my daily routine because A-Nueng said she liked it. It was also a good distraction. Listening to the problems and sorrows of others reminded me that I was not the only one sad and in pain. Others could be going through worse things.

—Oh...-I fumbled for the phone I normally used to listen to the radio. It turned out that it was at the same time that the nurse came in to check on A-Nueng. Nurse. Can you stay with her for a while? I left something in my car

—Sure.

I had become attached to my cell phone and that radio show. I ran to the parking lot to grab my phone in the car. Once I got it, I opened the radio via 4G to listen to the program. The caller was telling a story, as usual.

And I remembered that story. This person had called before... It was something about liking someone but not knowing how to express themselves, so that person thought they hated them

and they couldn't agree. She must have been a fan of that show. I had already heard it twice.

She was also the one who... received an eye implant, and changed after doing it. She kept dreaming about someone until she could draw that person. And that person existed in real life.

Ah... it was so strange.

I sat on the balcony of the parking lot while looking at the streets full of warm lights. I took out a pack of cigarettes that I had been wanting to open for a while. I often wondered why people had to rely on nicotine. I asked one and he told me that it helped him relax when he was stressed. Most people turned to cigarettes when they were depressed or just wanted to see what it was like. But I wanted to use it to reduce my pain.

But how was it smoked?

—Are you being naughty?

Chet's voice startled me. We rarely talked these days. A-Nueng's father had his hands in his pants pockets as he looked at me and laughed a little. I looked like a troubled child when Chet's eyes drifted to the pack of cigarettes I tried to hide behind my back.

—Too late. Give me one.

—Huh?

Chet reached out to take the cigarette in his hand and raised an eyebrow.

—Who recommended this to you? It's also perfect; good choice.

—Ah... I think it will be refreshing when I smoke it.

—You can chew gum for that. Why would you smoke...? Can you lend me the lighter? -I gave him what he asked for. Chet looked at the lighter and laughed like he adored it. -Did you buy them but you haven't taken anything out of the package? What a newbie to being a bad girl.

—Stop talking so much — I took out one of my headphones so I could hear him clearly, but I was also listening to the program with the other ear. You smoke?

—I tried it when I was abroad. I'm not addicted. I just wanted to try it... Why don't you try it too?

—Aren't you going to stop me?

—You already paid for it. Don't waste it. Try it - Chet handed me one. I would lose if I didn't take it, so I did and placed it in my mouth. Chet turned it on for me. -Inhale

—Don't tell me what to do. "I'll inhale whenever I want," I shrugged before inhaling it as coolly as I could. Then I choked.

—You are so funny. It does not look good on you.

Liquid came out of my nose and eyes. I was already tired of smoking. My throat stank too, and a sharp stab of coldness ran through my brain from the mint flavor. Well. I give up. I will assume the personality of the always great M.L. Sippakorn as before (without smoking) and gave the cigarettes to Chet.

—You can keep the entire package.

—Thank you.

We looked again in silence at the streets full of warm lights. I looked at A-Nueng's father, who had been fighting with me these past few months. I didn't really understand what was happening.

—Why are you talking to me? Aren't you angry with me anymore?

—I will be angry with you all my life.

—I'm just taking a break. "I'm tired." Chet rubbed his eyes as if he were very tired. -I haven't slept well for many months. I'm stressed about my daughter... I'm in a constant state of fear. If I hate you too, the blood vessel in my brain might burst.

—I understand why you are so angry with me.

—I have loved you all the time. I wasn't mad when you ran away from our wedding. But... the matter of A-Nueng is very delicate for me. You may say I'm exaggerating, but I love my daughter.. a lot. Even though I didn't raise her, I really love her, adore her, and pity her. I'm really mad at myself because I didn't think she existed for over ten years. That's why, when I met her, I wanted to be a good father. But my anger led her to this.

—I don't blame you only for that. We all pushed her until it all turned out like this.

—If you could go back in time, knowing that she would have a car accident like this, would you still try to separate us? Would you still be so angry with me?

—I would, but I wouldn't let her get in that car.

—So bad.

—You didn't see the clips like I did.

When he said that, my face turned red. I cleared my throat and kicked the air. Damned. He didn't have to be so direct.

—If A-Nueng regains consciousness, will you still try to separate us?

—Don't know.

—But what happened taught me a lot. We must be good to others while we can... A-Nueng's life is hers. As parents, we can only support her as best we can. I don't agree with her, but if she comes back to us...

—Please take care of her for me.

My tears were coming, but I blinked them back. It wasn't a permit. I just didn't know what to do. And I had to thank him for trying to be a father even though his daughter hadn't regained consciousness.

—What are you listening? I saw you had your headphones on while we were talking.

—It's a radio program that A-Nueng likes to listen to -I shared one of my headphones with him. You can listen to it while you smoke.

—I feel like a high school boy who shares headphones with his lover.

—Is that how you got involved with Fah?

—No. I got involved with her thanks to you.

— Crazy.

I laughed and we both stayed silent to listen to the caller. The current one was wrapping up her story and the DJ turned to the last caller of the day.

—You're on the air, A. You can start sharing your story.

I smiled at the name, knowing it was an alias because I also used this when I called. That's how it was. The caller could use any name. No one would use their own name on a show like this.

—My name is A and I am 19 years old.

Wow... the same age as A-Nueng.

—I have been weak since I was born. It is the result of my mother's failed attempt to abort me.

Oh? I straightened up and focused on the caller's story because it's... so familiar.

—My grandmother raised me. She is very strict because she was afraid that I would get pregnant without a lover like my mother. To be honest, I'm not mad at my grandmother at all. I understand her well. My mother's disappointment made me have a dark view of the world. She didn't allow me to have friends because she was afraid they would have a bad influence on me. So I felt a little lonely all the time. Ah... you don't have to ask about boys. No one can come close to me. Even if there were some who did... I wasn't interested in anyone. One day I met someone... from the first time I saw her... To be exact, I have to say that in the first split second that I saw that person, I froze. I couldn't take my eyes off that person. I said to myself: "This is the person I always dreamed of meeting." Ah... she is a woman. I was drawing at the street market

My heart was beating. I slowly drove away from the parking lot. Although I wasn't sure, something told me that I had to return quickly.

Right now!

—Oh? You're going? -Chet, who was enjoying the radio show, looked at me curiously as I ran away when the receiver fell out of his ear. What's up, Khun Nueng?

—Not now, Chet. Not now!

—Khun Nueng!

My haste made Chet realize something and run after me. I put on the headphones I lent Chet and hurried out of the parking lot to get back to the patient's room as quickly as I could.

—I am not a talkative person. I behave very well. But with this woman, I acted so foolishly. So much so that I look more like her daughter than someone who was flirting with her. I just wanted to be close to her, you see. Our age difference is 16 years. More surprisingly... she is my mother's friend. It's like a novel, right? That aunt is my mother's friend and my father's ex-fiancée.

I just missed the elevator. I got anxious. Waiting for it to go up and down was very frustrating. My heart raced and I thought I might have a heart attack if it continued to race like that. The elevator was slower than my heart could handle. It seemed to stop at every floor, as if someone was pressuring it to

stop just for fun. In the end, I couldn't wait any longer, so I ran up the emergency stairs to the seventh floor.

The floor where A-Nueng is...

—The aunt revealed that she was not a nobody. Even my grandmother, who looked down on her at first, was surprised to know that... the aunt had an M.L. degree. She can speak three languages: Thai, English and Russian. And she was the main drummer when I was in school. She was a queen. My God... how can there be someone so perfect in this world?

First floor.

—After my grandmother discovered who the aunt was, she admired her a lot. So she left me in her care. We became close... She also became my tutor

Second floor.

—She also went to my school's Mother's Day event. You can say that she is my everything... I'm sorry. My voice is a little shaky.

Third floor.

—She was my tutor. She helped me with everything until I proudly entered a prestigious

university. Isn't it great?

Fourth floor.

—I received a reward when I entered university. We kissed. That's how it all started... You didn't hear it wrong. We are both women. We are 16 years apart. And we kiss

Fifth floor.

—We cross the line and go far. It's incredible that someone so esteemed and perfect fell in love with me. She is an M.L. She is very beautiful. She was not interested in the former prime minister's son or any important man. But she said she loved me... I wouldn't be so happy even if I won the first prize in the lottery

Sixth floor.

—Her voice was the first thing I heard when I regained consciousness. While I was unconscious, I dreamed about her all the time. It's probably because I could hear her voice, the voice that filtered through my brain, my memory, and my sleep. I seem really obsessed with her, don't I? Maybe I fell in love with her from my mother's womb. Maybe I've told myself since I was conceived that... she is my destiny. I will love this person, even if it is a woman.

Seventh floor...

I finally arrived at A-Nueng's apartment. I almost vomited because I ran up without taking any breaks. My tears ran down my cheeks the entire way as I listened to the little woman speak. I had to slap myself to make sure it wasn't a dream.

It hurts. I wasn't dreaming.

—I've come this far... I think you're listening, aunt. Please allow me to announce this.

I slowly made my way to the front of A-Nueng's room. I was very afraid of disappointment. I was afraid it wasn't what I thought it was. I could fall flat on my face if that was the case. So I stayed there and didn't dare open the door. But I thought the radio person knew...

—Aunt Nueng! I have already spoken a lot; You should already know that this is our story. Go back to the room this instant!

—I'm awake!

At the end of that statement, I opened the door and saw A-Nueng sitting on the bed, giving me her Duchenne smile.

—Run and hug me. I’ve been in bed for so long that I don’t have the strength left to... Oh, you’re so strong, Aunt Nueng.

A-Nueng’s laughter turned into crying as soon as I hugged her. It was the same for me. I cried like a baby because I was so happy that this day has finally come.

The cheerful woman was awake!

47. Aunt's good girl

I hugged A-Nueng so tightly I could crush her in my arms. A-Nueng laughed and told me to let her go. But I couldn't let her go.

It was real...

She was real...

It looked like new...

This nasal tone of voice was real.

—Nueng...— I cried like a small child before falling to his knees next to the bed, limp. A—Nueng, who hadn't moved a muscle for months, could only look at me because she couldn't move. She called me with a trembling voice.

—Please don't cry, Aunt Nueng. It makes me want to cry too.

Even though she said that, I still cried non-stop. It was like everything I had kept inside me was exploding. I no longer kept control over all my

emotions. Our crying contest had begun. When I realized this, I started laughing.

Laughing through tears is a strange feeling.

—Don't cry, Nueng... You'll be tired. I got up slowly and sat on her bed. -Let me be the one to cry.

—I pity you when I see you cry. You must have been in a lot of pain when I was asleep.

—You have no idea... I extended my hand to wipe the tears from the cheerful woman's cheeks. A — Nueng looked directly at me with her crystalline brown eyes. -You slept for a long time.

—I dreamed about you all that time. You looked very sad in my dream. And you cried without stopping. But now I'm awake... Look, I'm awake. Stop crying right now.

—Exaggerated... You are so exaggerated. -I leaned down to hug her and continued crying. I felt relieved that the person in front of me was really safe now. She was conscious and talking non-stop as always. -You must have had a very good dream. You didn't wake up for months.

—I dreamed about you. So of course it was a good dream.

—Do not do that again. Don't sleep so long again. I can't lose you.

—This is great. I slept for a while and woke up to your declaration of love. My heart races

“I didn't say I love you.” I was trying to act calm as I wiped away my tears. Then I looked A-Nueng in the eyes and smiled -I love you, Nueng.

—Auntie Nueng...

—This is a declaration of love.

She started to cry

—Oh. Why are you crying because I confess my love for you...

And that's how we were in a crying competition all night. It was like whoever had the most tears won... This didn't include Chet, who surprisingly cried like a baby, even though he was a man and didn't raise A-Nueng himself. A-Neung's grandmother also ran very early in the morning as soon as she knew that A-Neung had regained consciousness. She also cried non-stop.

And last but not least... the person who cried the most.

[Why did you have to regain consciousness when I already flew here? Are you trying to get back at me for something?]

Piengfah cried because she was angry. She had to book a return flight as soon as she landed in Australia without even stopping by to see her husband, who would probably have already waited until he was covered in cobwebs.

A-Nueng's recovery was not like the one in the movies, where she can immediately get up and walk. Since she hadn't moved any muscles for months, she had to be under the doctor's watchful eye. She had to do physical therapy and have a thorough check-up to see if there was any injury to any organs.

No one mentioned the relationship between A-Nueng and me. Everyone was more open-minded, but they didn't make it clear that we weren't just an aunt and a niece. Everything was done under my -guardian— label. A-Nueng and I were okay with that because status had never been important to us.

—Now you can drive. Of the seven days a week... you have to come home and stay with your grandmother from Monday to Friday. On weekends...-grandma looked at me for a while. - You can go wherever you want.

Although I was not very happy with this proposal, it was better than nothing. And although A-Nueng complained a little, as I said before, the cheerful woman was her grandmother's good girl, and always would be. Chet didn't mention anything about marrying me anymore. I wasn't sure if he accepted that I will never love him or if he gave up on becoming prime minister.

But he was still the father who got in my way whenever he could. It just wasn't as obvious and aggressive as it used to be.

—Daughter... the older you are, the more beautiful you look like me — Chet was going to see A-Nueng at my palace. He handed her a magazine and pointed to a page on which a handsome man appeared. Do you know that being with a firm and handsome boy can be very refreshing?

Do you now understand what I mean by -my way? If he could trip me up... he would.

—A boy can't turn me on.

And his daughter's response made him raise a white flag and leave. She was more direct than the most direct announcer on television...

The time of misery and obstacles was over.

However, I was well aware from previous experience that we would face an endless stream of - obstacles— until one of us died.

But A-Nueng and I made a promise to each other. We promised that nothing could stand in our way anymore. No matter what came our way, we would get through it together.

In my entire life I had never believed that love existed. I don't include parental love, which is a human instinct. But of course, before this I didn't think that a father's love was so pure.

Some give birth to a child because they want someone to take care of them when they are older.

Some just want someone to live their dream... That's what I thought my grandmother thought of me, and that was the reason I rebelled against her.

I even doubted the love of... a family bond. So love between strangers seemed impossible to me. When someone came up to me, I used to scan them from head to toe and think:

They like me because of my M.L degree

They liked my good looks...

Let's say that for me love did not exist. I judged everything from the outside. I didn't understand how someone who didn't know anything about the other could fall in love. That included Chet... the boy from the school next door who climbed the fence to pursue me until he became my boyfriend.

Piengfah... my only best friend who fell in love with me.

But life threw me a curveball. The person who was born from them made me know love for the first time...

—Aunt Nueng, come take a photo with me. Hurry up!!!

I looked at the petite woman in her prom dress and a huge bouquet Chet bought her. It was as if he wanted to announce to everyone that he's a very rich father, daughter. Aside from A— Nueng's family on her mother's side, her father's family was also there to congratulate their cute granddaughter. However, A-Nueng only paid attention to me, who was proudly watching her from afar.

—No. You guys keep going.

—No. It's an important day for me. You must be part of it

A-Nueng and I exchanged glances. I shook my head to say no, but the little woman wouldn't allow it. She was pouting.

—You don't love me anymore!

As soon as I heard that, I pursed my lips because I didn't know how to look. All of A-Nueng's relatives looked at us, pretending not to know the true meaning behind those words

—You have such a strong will.

—Hurry up.

Yes... my lover was born from those two. A—Nueng taught me many things. She taught me that my boring life wasn't so bad. I didn't realize many important things and made many serious mistakes.

My grandmother... didn't hate me. She was the strictest with me because she wanted me to be perfect and well-groomed. I realized that when I became the little woman's guardian. I wanted her to turn out to be what I expected of her.

My dream... that I never knew I had until I cooked food for her and she liked the food I cooked.

The pain... of losing the person I loved. It was obvious when I lost my grandmother, but I was even

more scared and anxious when A-Nueng had that accident.

And finally...

—I graduated. I'm moving in with Aunt Nueng.

I looked at the little woman, surprised, as we took the photo. A-Nueng seemed very happy. Others watching would think she was happy to have her title in her hand, when in reality... she was happy about what she just told me.

—Have you learned my reward?

—You call that a reward... I've been able to do it for a while. I just didn't tell you.

—Oh really? Can you do the hojojutsu now? Brilliant.

—Why do we talk about this in a ceremony as honorable as this?

—That's how I am. Don't you like it?

—Ops. You're not responding.

—I don't like you.

And finally, what I was about to say was... love.

The little woman made me understand that you could love someone even if you were not related. She wasn't my family. We didn't even know each other. It was surprising that I could feel this way about someone who wasn't related to me by blood.

She was nothing more than a stranger I met at a street market and later found out she was my friend's daughter.

The blank spaces inside me were gradually filling up, and before I knew it, they were overflowing. Everything was unexpected. There was no balance. It was fun.

My lover was a woman.

Our age difference was 16 years.

Strange, very strange. But it is what it is.

When I realized this, I looked at the little woman who pretended to be sad when I said I didn't like her being naughty. Then I leaned in to whisper so only the two of us could hear.

—I love you, Nueng.

And to put a smile back on that face, I had to confess my love to her the way she likes it.

—That's perfect. My aunt Nueng.

It's like I've become perfect in every way possible. Nothing was missing. And there was nothing to overflow. It was like all my blank spaces disappeared because of this woman.

I nodded and smiled at her. It was like she was acknowledging what she called me and promising that I would always be hers at the same time.

—The aunt is good.

Thank you all for your support, it means a lot to me ☐♥

48. A-Nueng 1: 14th day

Finally, I finished my degree. This means that I have taken another step forward as an adult. I will not be asking for money from my grandmother or father anymore because I'm old enough to take responsibility for many things on my own. The first step is to look for work.

With that said, I just graduated, so I will take a break first... It wasn't easy to earn my degree. I have to treasure and make the most of this precious time. For example...

“Auntie Nueng!”

I jump onto my beautiful Auntie Nueng's lap. She's sketching. The beautiful woman looks at me with a smile. She doesn't show any annoyance. It makes me forget that I should have some manners with my lover.

Ah... since when have I become so comfortable with her that I am totally myself around her? I don't even remember that.

“You’re acting like a little kid again. Grow up already.”

“What are you doing?” I see that she’s sketching. I just want to start a conversation with her. “Why are you sketching?”

“It’s for relaxation. My hand is stiff now because I haven’t sketched for a while, so I want to sketch some when I have time.”

“You’re sketching food?”

“Ah-huh.”

“You only think about your food delivery business.” I whined a little. Auntie Nueng laughs and pinches my nose.

“Can’t I sketch food I deliver?”

“You should sketch me. I’m much more interesting than food.” I pout and try not to smile. “Sketch me like the first time we met at the street market.”

When I say this, Auntie Nueng smiles merrily. She looks up as she tries to recall the event.

“It was a while back, huh? How long have we known each other?”

“Five years for you. But it’s five years and fourteen days for me.”

“Oh? You count the days too? So detailed. Didn’t we meet each other on the same day?”

“No. I stalked you for almost two weeks before I approached you. On the 14th day, I chose to walk over and ask for a sketch. And that’s how we met.”

I smile and think back to the days when I was still wearing a high school uniform. I remember lying to my grandmother that I have tutoring schools in the evening, but in reality, I never even paid for them. I didn’t want to stuff more knowledge into my brain because it’s too stressful. If I don’t pass the test, I won’t pass, no matter how hard I study. I should use my time to stroll around, looking at birds and trees, for relaxation.

But you get bored looking at birds and trees every day. I started to have nowhere to go, and I obviously can’t go home. So I decided to stroll the street market near my school because I didn’t know where else to go.

The smell of fish and raw vegetables gives a different vibe to the malls. I like the warm lights hanging on top of the stalls. I like the smell of

smoke from the food being grilled. I like eye—shopping the 90 Baht t-shirts with illegal cartoon characters on them. I just strolled mindlessly.

Until I walked past someone...

Thump Thump

Suddenly, my heart pounded like it'd never pounded before. That strange reaction made me immediately halt and look around. I then saw someone in the corner of my eye. It's a gorgeous woman who in no way fits that setting. She was sketching merrily without care. It was as if the street market were a tranquil park filled with cherry blossoms.

Why is my heart pounding so hard at the sight of a very beautiful woman?

Her beauty is not the key point. The key point is the pounding of my heart. I couldn't take my eyes off her. That day, I went back home with the image of an artist sketching at a street market stuck in my head. I couldn't shake it off.

Who is she?

Once I was curious, there were second, third, and fourth days. And my heart pounded harder with each

passing day. I became a psychopath. I followed her home and found out where she lived. I still don't understand why I wouldn't show myself to her.

Finally... the will to talk to her overcame my shyness. On the 14th day, I walked over to her, sat down, and became her customer.

“How much... for a sketch of me?”

“You're just a kid. I'll only charge 100 Baht.”

I fell deeper when I heard her voice and saw her movement in full HD. I stared at her the entire time she sketched me. I forgot the time. I just knew that I could look at her all day.

Maybe my entire life, if that's not too much of an exaggeration.

“What's your name, sis?”

“Sis?” The beautiful woman giggles with a coolly confident air. “I think I can be your aunt.”

“No way. You look so young.”

“I'm not your sister, for sure. Ah... my name is Nueng. Everyone calls me Miss Nue...”

“Auntie Nueng.”

“Huh?”

“I’ll call you Auntie Nueng.”

Her expression clearly shows that she’s not comfortable with that. But I didn’t know what had gotten into me because I insisted on calling her that. And since that day, I have clung to her.

Until we are together today...

“You’re a stalker.” Auntie Nueng appears stunned when she hears that. We’ve never talked about this before. After she finds out how I approached her, she is so embarrassed; it’s cute. “How can your heart pound when meeting someone for the first time?”

“Many fell in love with you at first sight; you just never fell in love at first sight yourself.”

“That’s true...” The beautiful woman agrees with me and strokes my cheek lightly. “Thank you for clinging to me until we finally end up together.”

“You have to thank me a lot. If it weren’t for me, you would die alone and lonely.”

“So full of yourself.”

“You love only me, no?” I snuggle her neck like I always do when I want to ask for tenderness. And I

know she will never be annoyed with me. “When I was unconscious, someone sobbed and asked for me to wake up. Maybe that person forgets now.”

“You keep teasing me, even though it’s been many years. Honestly, if we hadn’t met, maybe I’d be married by now...”

I immediately lean back and pout at the beautiful woman when I hear that.

“Don’t you believe that you can love only me?”

“Nothing is certain in this world. Maybe there are A-Nueng #2 and A-Nueng #3.”

“I’m a limited edition! Don’t get me mad. If I leave you, you will cry like a baby. You’re old now. No one will take you except for me. Geez.”

“You’re so full of yourself. What makes you think that no one hits on me these days?” Auntie Nueng laughs in her throat. I look at her in panic.

“Someone hit on you?”

“I’m quite beautiful, you see?”

“Why don’t I know this?”

“I didn’t tell you because it’s nothing important. Get up... You’re heavy.” The beautiful woman nudges me lightly as she gets up and stretches because she’s been sitting for a while. But I’m still stuck on our previous topic.

“Who’s hitting on you? A man or a woman?”

“A man, of course.”

“How did you meet?”

“Through a business deal.”

“Why don’t I know this?”

“I didn’t tell you because it’s nothing important. Get up... You’re heavy.” The beautiful woman nudges me lightly as she gets up and stretches because she’s been sitting for a while. But I’m still stuck on our previous topic.

“Who’s hitting on you? A man or a woman?”

“A man, of course.”

“How did you meet?”

“Through a business deal.”

“...”

“Are you jealous?” The beautiful woman smiles merrily and pulls my cheek amusingly. “You’re still as direct as ever.”

“I’m both jealous and angry... You didn’t tell me that someone hit on you.”

“Because it’s not important...”

“If someone made a move on me and I didn’t tell you, how would you feel?”

When I asked her back, she paused as if she understood. She then pats my head and messes with my hair.

“Don’t overthink. I didn’t want to stress you out, so I didn’t tell you. And I don’t think anything of him.”

“Ah. Does this mean that if you start to like him, you will tell me? So you’re telling me now means that you’re starting to like him?”

“...”

“...”

Everything goes silent. Despite asserting that I am an adult now, I continue to whine like a kid. Auntie Nueng is starting to show that she’s annoyed

and frustrated. So to redeem myself and uplift her mood, I leap and lean on her, putting all my body weight on her like a dead person.

“Don’t do this. It’s heavy.”

“My heart is broken. I’m dead.”

“You’re an adult now.”

“Kiss me, and I will come back to life.”

When I tease her like this, she switches from being moody to laughing immediately because she doesn’t want to dwell on my previous actions. She eventually gives in and kisses me as I requested.

“I kissed you; please rise.”

“I’m not fully recovered yet. Please take me to bed.”

“You can never get enough, huh?”

“I know you like it too.” The beautiful woman sees that I still put my entire body weight on her, so she decides to carry me like a baby monkey and take me to bed like I requested. I whisper into her ear naughtily before we get there.

“Do you want to have more fun?”

“Huh?”

“We have cucumber in the refrigerator.”

“Crazy!”

Courtesy of ReginaEmmaCristina, who generously shared the chapters for publication.

49. A-Nueng 2 : My father's proposal

Everyone around me, including Auntie Nueng, is always asking if I had any dreams while I was unconscious. If I did, what was it about... To confess, I don't remember anything.

But when I regained consciousness, I felt like I didn't miss anything. It was as if I were conscious of and aware of everything at all times. That included Auntie Nueng's food delivery business and what was going on around the world. If you believe in miracles, it was probably because Auntie Nueng told me everything when I was unconscious, and her voice got through to me.

Isn't it a miracle...

I recall the moment Auntie Nueng rushed in to embrace me upon my awakening, like it were yesterday. It's as if I'm afraid that it was all a dream. Seeing someone I love so happy to have me back made my heart tremble.

But that was three years ago. Auntie Nueng probably already forgot how sad she felt when I wasn't by her side. These days, her only concern is dealing with a large distributor who can assist in getting her food into convenient stores. And the owner of the company comes to deal with her himself.

In other words, the owner of that company is hitting on Auntie Nueng!

I'm hiding behind a pillar to observe the middle-aged businessman who came to see his business partner at her home himself rather than meeting at his company. What's the need for the owner of a company that big to come himself? Doesn't he have thousands of employees?

"There are many menus, but what my customers like the most seems to be stir-fried chicken with red curry paste. This is a simple, inexpensive menu that anyone can eat on a daily basis."

Auntie Nueng is discussing business in an elegant manner. She doesn't kiss up to him like other business partners, who tend to do so with a large distributor. The man appears to be the one attempting to gain her favor, as he sits there beaming like a chimpanzee.

This is so frustrating! Stop smiling already. I curse you to have gum like one of the chimpanzees.

“What are you doing standing here, Miss Nueng?” The housekeeper says this as she walks by and sees me snooping around. This makes my targets turn to look at me all at once.

“I... am tired, so I lean on the pillar to rest.”

“Why don’t you go sit on the sofa?”

Auntie Nueng smiles from the corner of her mouth knowingly when she hears the conversation between me and the housekeeper. She then ends the conversation with the businessman by standing up and extending her hand towards the door to nudge him to leave.

“I’ll contact the purchase department, so I don’t disturb Mr. Jenpob too much.”

“It’s okay. You can contact me directly since you already have my number. I can expedite the process.”

“I think it’s better to do it through proper channels.”

“Okay.”

After that, Auntie Nueng walks the man to his Aston Martin, which is worth many tenths of millions of Baht, and watches until the taillight disappears. Once the man is gone, I immediately walk over to stand by her side.

“You’re such a VIP customer. You want to use his distribution channel, but the owner of the company came to talk to you himself at your place.”

“Well...” Auntie Nueng shrugs and leaves it at that. “Why were you snooping around at the pillar like that? Were you eavesdropping?”

“Yes.”

“You’re so honest.”

“When can I ever lie to you... He’s very rich.”

“So is your father.”

“...”

“But I didn’t marry him.”

That makes me smile, though I’m still nervous about all this.

“He seems so perfect. He’s a millionaire and drives an Aston Martin.”

“Come to think of it... that’s true.”

I look down, starting to feel unworthy. But Auntie Nueng flicks her fingers on my forehead so hard that I cry in pain.

“Why did you do that? It hurts.”

“I think you have an excessive amount of free time now that you’ve graduated to be sulking at me every day like this. I guess living peacefully doesn’t get your adrenaline pumping?”

“I can’t help but feel bad. He’s perfect, and he’s making advances on you using business as an excuse. If you don’t go along with him, he may sabotage your business deal.”

“You’re right...” Auntie Nueng rubs her chin. “Maybe I should be his mistress.”

“Auntie Nueng!”

Auntie Nueng simply shrugs, making no excuses. She then walks into the palace coolly with her hands in her pants pockets. I’m starting to really sulk as I look at the beautiful woman’s back, who doesn’t care one bit about how I feel.. I don’t want to whine because I want her to know that I’m an adult now.

But being an adult doesn't mean that you can't be jealous.

"Dad... I want to work."

I call my handsome father, who's ready to support me in every way. I just need to tell him what I want. But he doesn't like my request this time.

"Why work? You're born into a wealthy family. You have to do nothing until you become disabled."

"Are you making a joke?"

"Is it funny?" My father laughs to get me to laugh as well. When I realize that he's trying to cheer me up, I can't help but thank him.

"Thank you. You make me smile."

"Where's Auntie Nueng? Why are you calling me to tell you a joke?"

"She's busy."

"Did you two fight?"

"No. It's nothing." I quickly deny it to protect Auntie Nueng because I know that my father doesn't agree with our relationship. "I just think that now

that I have my degree, I should work. I overthink when I have too much free time.”

“What do you overthink about? Can you tell me?”

“Ah...” I hesitate a bit. But because I need an ally and my mother is not here while I can’t talk to my grandmother about this, my father, who’s ready to support me in every way, is my best hope. “A guy is hitting on Auntie Nueng.”

“Who?”

My father’s voice turns deep and serious. I’m not sure if he is mad because of what Auntie Nueng did to me or if he’s jealous because someone hit on her. Despite his disagreement with our relationship, it is clear that he still has a great deal of affection for Auntie Nueng. It’s just that she’s off-limits.

Because Auntie Nueng is mine.

“He’s a businessman...” I give my father the necessary details about the business partner Auntie Nueng is dealing with. “He’s the owner of the company. Recently, he has been paying frequent visits to Auntie Nueng, and I cannot complain because I don’t want to appear immature.”

“It’s your right. If she’s wrong, you can lash out at her, daughter. I think... maybe she feels something for him.”

I squeeze the phone in my hand, but try to laugh it off as if my father is telling another joke.

“Don’t try to get us to fight.”

“I mean it. If she didn’t feel anything, she would have chased him away by now. Have you ever seen her talk to anyone for long or give anyone false hope?”

“But Auntie Nueng loves me...”

“Love is love. But as time passes, everything changes. Only a parent’s love remains unchanged.”

“I called to ask you to find me a job. How did we get to talk about this?”

“You were consulting me, no? How about this... How about you have a boyfriend to get back at her? I have a catalog of men for you to choose from. How about this one, Tiger Woods?”

My father is getting carried away. He really wants to split us up.

“It’s okay, dad.”

“Do you want to make yourself more important to her?”

“You have a suggestion?”

“Instead of finding a job...”

“Ah-huh.”

“Go study abroad.”

“Bye, dad.”

I hang up as my father is trying to find a way to split us up. But that’s that... What he said makes sense. If Auntie Nueng is not interested, she will chase that person out of her life without care. But with this businessman...

“Nueng.”

“Yes?” I just hung up from my father and am sitting mindlessly. Auntie Nueng, who has just finished showering, calls to me. “What are you thinking? I heard you talking to someone.”

“I was on the phone with my father.”

“Your father is clingy to his daughter like no other.” Auntie Nueng laughs and walks over to sit at

the dressing table. She's drying her hair with the towel. "What did you talk about?"

"Ah..."

Ring...

"Let me take this call briefly." The phone rings to interrupt us. Auntie Nueng picks it up and looks at the number of the person calling. She seems surprised, but picks up the call. "Yes?"

She speaks in a deep, serious tone. I inch closer to see who she's talking to. Auntie Nueng glances at me and frowns, as if she's saying that I'm being rude.

But who cares... I simply take a position in front of the woman who is conversing with a man right in front of me.

"It's okay. I will contact Mr. Kan myself... I don't want to bother you. It's very late now. I can't talk for long... Okay. See you at the same restaurant tomorrow. I will prepare all the documents... Okay. Thank you."

The beautiful woman hangs up and sighs. She then immediately turned to scold me.

"It's very rude to listen in on my call like that."

“If there’s nothing to hide, why can’t I listen in... Was the person who called the one who drives an Aston Martin to your palace today?”

“We were talking business. Didn’t you hear that there’s nothing more to it?”

“Was it because I was standing here that there was nothing more to it?” I intended not to act this way, but my father’s words, saying that I’m just a sure thing, and Auntie Nueng’s habit of chasing everyone she doesn’t like away made me say it. She picked up his call during our time together

And this is our bedroom!

“Are you picking a fight with me?”

“Yes.”

“I was talking business, and it was work. I have to be active when dealing with a business partner.”

“At 10 p.m.?” I laugh mockingly. “Isn’t it kind of sweet to be talking business right now?”

“When will you grow up?”

“What?” I stare at her in frustration. If the word ‘old’ hurts Auntie Nueng, then the word “grow up” hurts me.

“What I’m doing is work. And you not understanding that and picking a fight with me, not only will disrupt my work, but is also very annoying.”

I clenched my fists upon hearing that. I was feeling down before this, but her words make me furious.

“Annoyed? Now that you have someone new, I’m annoying? I’ve always been like this. You suddenly can’t take it now?”

“I was giving you time to grow up. If you know that your being childish leads to problems between us, why don’t you change?”

“I should have died in the accident. I shouldn’t have regained consciousness to live to the day that you change!”

“I haven’t changed. I’m teaching you that this is work... Where are you going!”

I walk over to grab my car key and am ready to rush out of the place. After I run downstairs, I rush to my car. But Auntie Nueng runs after me in shock. She grabs me and hugs me so tight that I, who am playing big, am stunned to see her like this.

“Ah... Auntie Nueng.”

“Don’t... don’t go.”

The shaking body of the beautiful woman makes me reach over to pat her back gently to console her.

“What’s the matter? Why are you so shocked?”

“Don’t drive out like this, please...” Auntie Nueng drops to the floor, going pale. It makes me bend down to lower our height difference. “We can fight, but don’t drive out. Don’t go out like this... I can’t take losses like I did the last time.”

Auntie Nueng didn’t forget...

I dash in to hug the beautiful woman and sob with her, as if to apologize and console her at the same time. My anger gradually drops and turns into guilt. Once I’ve gotten a hold of myself, I realize that I was being childish. I let my father’s words get to me and was overly jealous, which made things worse.

“I’m sorry, Auntie Nueng. I was hot—tempered... I was too jealous.”

Auntie Nueng hugs me back and sways our bodies from side to side. She doesn’t say a word. It’s

like she's using her hug to tell me that she loves only me and is asking me to trust her.

"I love you too much, so I'm possessive..." I confess frankly. "His eyes, when he looks at you, are filled with obsession. He has an influence on your business. Moreover... my father said that people change with time."

"Your father?" Auntie Nueng finally speaks. She leans back and looks at me. "Chet?"

"Yes."

"What did your father say?"

"He said that if you didn't like him, you would have chased him away by now." I look at her sadly. "And that's what you normally do. But with him, you let him come here. You let him call you at 10 p.m. You seem to be with him a lot lately. And I've become lower in priority."

"I've never lowered your priority. I'm just so busy lately."

"I was being stupid... Would it be better if I went to study abroad? I'll give you space and time to build your business. I'll come back after everything is in place."

“Study abroad? Where did you get this idea?”

“My father proposed it.”

“...”

“I called my father to ask for a job, but he said... it’s better if I go further my studies overseas. If I’m farther away from you, I will become important again.”

“And do you agree?”

I nod slowly and smile dryly.

“A little bit... What do you think? Do you want me to go?”

The beautiful woman goes quiet for a bit before she nods.

“Go.”

“Huh?”

“If it’s good for you, I won’t get in the way. It’s good... If it can make you more mature,” Auntie Nueng slowly gets up and walks inside the palace without even turning back to look at me. “You should go.”

“Aren’t you going to stop me? Wouldn’t you be lonely?”

All I get in response is silence. That’s enough to make me feel worse.

She’s so cold... How come she can live without me, but I can’t live without her?

This is not fair at all.

Courtesy of ReginaEmmaCristina, who generously shared the chapters for publication.

50. A-Nueng 3 The Sad Auntie Nueng

“Nueng... Can you accompany me today?”

“Huh?”

I’m watching television in bed when my beautiful aunt invites me to go out with her. Auntie Nueng is wearing a thin, white shirt with black slack pants. She looks very elegant. I can tell that she’s going to a business meeting.

With that man...

“It’s okay if you’re not free.”

I jump up from bed when she says that. Though I was feeling bad last night, getting to confront that man is too interesting to pass on.

“I can go. I’m jobless, so I’m free. Please give me a moment to get dressed.”

“Take your time. The appointment is at noon. We can have lunch after we’re done.”

“Okay.”

I don't take long to get dressed because I have already showered. I chose polite attire, which is a blue body-fit dress. I let my shoulder-length hair down because it makes me look a bit more mature. As Auntie Nueng and I sit in the car, no one speaks. I don't know what the beautiful woman is thinking. But for me, I'm uncomfortable and sad because Auntie Nueng doesn't seem to care whether I stay or go.

She doesn't try to stop me. She doesn't do anything...

“Are we fighting?”

“Huh?” Auntie Nueng glances at me a bit and shakes her head. “No.”

“Okay.”

“Why do you ask that?”

“We have rarely said a word to each other since last night. You didn't hug me as well.” I like for my beautiful aunt to hug me to sleep, so I say that as a complaint. “So I thought that we were fighting for sure.”

“We’re not fighting. I was deep asleep, so I slept like a log.”

“Ah-huh. I guess you’ll be fine when I’m not around.”

“...”

Silence falls once again, and it continues on like that until we reach the restaurant. I’m thankful that there is no traffic today. We get to the place before time, but we don’t order anything because we have to wait for our guest. Mr. Jenpob shows up after around 15 minutes. He apologizes and uses an excuse that causes me to twist my mouth.

“I apologize. The traffic was so bad.”

Does he think that we took the Skytrain or what? We drove on the same road, but he dares say that the traffic was bad? Anyway... I don’t say anything. I just sit quietly. Auntie Nueng introduces Mr. Jenpob to me.

“Nueng... This is Mr. Jenpob.”

I raise my hands to pay respect to him out of good manners. Then Auntie Nueng introduced me to him.

“Mr. Jenpob, this is Nueng, my lover.”

Everyone goes quiet. Me. Jenpob stares at me and asks.

“What?”

“This is A-Nueng, my lover.”

The way he looks at me almost makes me laugh out loud. The businessman’s look is one of disbelief. Well, I should say “doesn’t want to believe” to be more accurate. Auntie Nueng doesn’t want to waste any more time, so she pulls out the documents they talked about last night and gets to the point.

“To recap, I will start with four menus...” She goes on to talk about the product details. Auntie Nueng doesn’t talk about anything outside of the topic or chitchat at all. Everything is done professionally. It’s Mr. Jenpob, who still seems out of sorts. He just nods, though it seems like nothing gets through to him.

“Okay... you can send the details to the purchase department.”

“Okay.”

She doesn’t have to deal with him directly anymore? Geez...

“Then...” The handsome businessman quickly gets up and excuses himself without even taking a sip of water. “I have to go.”

“Thank you for your help with everything. I won’t forget it.”

“Okay.”

And the tall man walks out quietly. Auntie Nueng glances at me and asks.

“Why are you smiling?”

“You intend to take me here to introduce me to him?”

“Yes. I don’t want you to have any lingering doubts about us. It’s better to make everything crystal clear. And Mr. Jenpob is starting to cross the line too much... Calling me at 10 p.m. is quite rude.”

“Ah-huh.”

12

“Order something. You haven’t had breakfast, right? Let’s do brunch.”

Auntie Nueng orders for me because she knows well what I like. I look at the beautiful woman, who looks perfect from her clothes to her face, voice, and movements. I can look at her all day.

“Why are you staring at me? Say what you have to say.”

“I was really stupid last night, wasn’t I? Is this why you chose to do this to solve the problem?”

“Ah-huh.”

She’s so direct. Can’t she be less direct?

Geez...

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay. I just realized that I made you overthink. I used to be more firm. But when it comes to work, I let it pass because it helps make things easier. I thought it didn’t matter that he hit on me because it would lead to nothing if I didn’t respond.”

“It’s not like me to do that at all. I mean, to use my charm to help with my business. It’s low. So I chose to make everything clear today.”

“It’s not like me to do that at all. I mean, to use my charm to help with my business. It’s low. So I

chose to make everything clear today.”

I got my Auntie Nueng back... But her talking about this frankly makes me feel guilty for acting silly last night. I should know her better than anyone. So what if she flirts a little? She won't take it far anyway.

“Will this impact your work?”

“It's okay. If we can't sell in convenience stores, we can sell the way we used to. I'm not doing it to get rich or anything. I have a home and a car already. I just want to make some money to pay for the palace's upkeep.”

The waiter served our food not long after. Auntie Nueng rolls the spaghetti on her fork but won't eat it. It's like she's just playing with her food. I look at her curiously.

“Aren't you hungry?”

“Ah. When I cook, eating out is a bit strange... So, have you decided where you will go for your degree?”

Auntie Nueng asks without even looking at me. I can guess this is what's stressing her out and making her seem more serious than usual.

“I’m still deciding.”

“Why don’t you go to England? I like Hermione’s accent. If you go study there and learn that accent, it would be cute.”

“Auntie Nueng”

“Or the US is also nice. Australia, as well.”

“I’ll probably go to stay with my mother if I go.”
I reply and observe her closely.

“Yeah. You won’t be lonely if you go live with your mother.”

“Will you be lonely?”

“I’ve been alone all my life. I’ll be okay if you’re not here with me.”

“But you won’t have anyone to hug.”

“I’ll use a body pillow.”

“Who will be your slave?”

“Plenty. Many are obsessed with me.”

“Do they know that you like for them to crawl to you and lick you from your toes up?” I say that,

trying not to smile. Auntie Nueng looks at me with sparkling eyes.

“I’m trying to be open-minded and let you go further your studies overseas.”

“You won’t get to hold a stick. You won’t get to scold and whip someone. I’m not even talking about the cameras.”

“...”

“You will yearn for me if I go.” I sip water, knowing I hold the upper hand. But Auntie Nueng makes me spit it all out with her response.

“No need to worry; we have cucumbers at the palace.”

Splat!

“Cough. What are you saying?”

“Cucumber. What’s so shocking?”

“You get so embarrassed every time I talk about cucumber, and now you’re saying it yourself? How can you?! You’re going to use a new item when I’m not here?” I pout in frustration because I won’t get to have fun with her. “It won’t be as fun as doing it with me.”

“You get so embarrassed every time I talk about cucumber, and now you’re saying it yourself? How can you?! You’re going to use a new item when I’m not here?” I pout in frustration because I won’t get to have fun with her. “It won’t be as fun as doing it with me.”

“Then, don’t go.”

“Huh?”

“Don’t... go.” The beautiful woman looks down at her spaghetti and says that with a deep voice. She’s trying to sound normal. “If you go, no one will do those things with me.”

She’s finally admitting it... She’s so tight—lipped. She’s crazy in love with me but tries to act cool.

“I remember you saying that you won’t get in the way if it’s good for me. You were just saying that to seem cool?”

I laugh as I ask because I know that she won’t reply to me. But the beautiful woman replies willingly. It makes her so adorable in my eyes.

“Yes.”

“Yes, what?”

“Yes... I was just saying it to be cool.”

“But you don’t want me to go?”

“Ah-huh.”

Why is she so cute? I want to roll her up and eat her up so that no one sees her being timid like this her entire life. Ah... Auntie Nueng has made me fall in love with her repeatedly since the first day we met until now.

“So... how should I tell my father that I’m no longer going?”

“You already told him that you’d go?”

I haven’t said anything to my father. But seeing her down and out like this makes me want to tease her a bit more.

“But if you don’t want me to go, I won’t go.”

The beautiful woman immediately looks up at me. She’s clearly happy to hear that. I can no longer hide my smile.

“Please don’t be so cute. I can’t hide my smile any more. Argh.”

“Why can’t you smile?”

“Never mind. Just knowing that you don’t want me to go makes my heart so full. Okay... I won’t go. But you have to make up for making me feel bad. I was sad the entire night last night because you didn’t hug me.”

“I was crying.”

“Huh?”

“That was why you didn’t turn to hug me... Geez. My Auntie Nueng.” I reach my hand out to hold hers, but she’s still looking down and out. “I’m not going. Please hug me tonight. But...”

My cool Auntie Nueng looks up at me and smiles slightly. Because she’s always proper, this reaction is a lot from her already.

“Huh.”

“Are there any cucumbers in the refrigerator at home now?”

Courtesy of ReginaEmmaCristina, who generously shared the chapters for publication.

Special Giving in

Though we've made plans, in the end, Auntie Nueng didn't use cucumber like I imagined we would. But never mind. It's just my imagination and fantasy. That Auntie Nueng wouldn't use vegetables to satisfy my bizarre fantasy doesn't really bother me.

As I'm watching TV, the housekeeper carries in a sizeable package.

"What is it?"

"I have no idea, Miss. It's for Miss Nueng."

"Auntie Nueng shops online? Strange... She told me she doesn't even know how to transfer money online." I mutter to myself as I think back to when Auntie Nueng asked me to teach her how to transfer money online. Maybe it's for this.

My curiosity makes me follow the housekeeper and try to grab the package from her. But Auntie Nueng sees it first.

“Don’t be rude. It’s my package. Why are you trying to get it?”

“I know. I know.” I scrunch my face a bit. “What did you order?”

“A toy.”

“What is it? Figure toy?”

“Something like that.”

“Open it. I want to know which one you got.” I walk behind her, put my hands on the shoulders of the taller woman, and jump excitedly. But Auntie Nueng smiles slightly and shakes her head.

“No.”

“Stingy.”

Auntie Nueng doesn’t even try to console me. The beautiful woman just takes the package and walks upstairs immediately. So I can only sulk and stick my tongue at her behind her back. I also complain loudly for her to hear me.

“Very stingy. I don’t love you anymore.”

“You will go back on your words tonight.”

Nothing can make me stop sulking. Argh!

I'm still curious... What Auntie Nueng ordered is still on my mind. My curiosity is too high, so my sulking quickly changes to my being mad. Auntie Nueng doesn't talk about the figure toy she bought. It's as if it doesn't exist. During our dinner, I fold my arms across my chest and keep quiet. That makes Auntie Nueng kick my shin.

"What's the matter? Why do you look so moody?"

"Do we love each other?"

"Of course."

"Then why do you keep a secret from me? What did you buy?"

"What you are doing, if I use the most common saying, is... someone who enjoys prying into the affairs of others."

"Auntie Nueng!"

The beautiful woman laughs merrily before she places deep-fried minced fish with red curry paste she cooked herself on my plate. She also pours delicious sauce, with cucumber in it, on it for me.

"Eat up, so you lighten up."

“I’m moody.”

“I’ll make up with you tonight.”

“Nothing can make me stop sulking. You keep a secret from me.” I scrunch my nose. So, Auntie Nueng raises her hands as if she’s raising a white flag.

“Okay. Okay. I’ll tell you.”

“What is it?”

“We may use cucumber tonight.” I startle and sit up straight away. I look at Auntie Nueng, who acts as if it’s nothing big. “It seems like I’ve reconciled with you. You’re not mad at me anymore?”

“What... I’m still mad.” My voice is clearly softer, and I’m clearly happy. “Why did you suddenly change your mind?”

“One’s love life should be colorful. I have a very hot, young lover. I have to adjust.”

“You’re not teasing me, are you?”

“I can just be teasing if that’s what you want.”

“We have cucumbers here. Why did you have to order and have it packed so tightly?”

“It’s a special kind.”

Though I’m a bit embarrassed, the feeling of excitement is higher. Auntie Nueng is grinning merrily. Dinner goes well. My rage dissipates as quickly as my curiosity grows.

I walk out of the bathroom in my Pikachu pajamas after I finish my bath a little after 9 p.m. Auntie Nueng looks at me and shakes her head a bit.

“This is what you will wear to seduce me tonight?”

“Do I need to wear anything when I seduce you? I won’t. I’ll take everything off!”

“You’re so active... Go wait in bed. Let me shower first.”

“Why do we have to prepare ourselves this much? It’s like we’re making a formal appointment for it.”

“Doing things differently makes it more exciting.”

“True. I’ll wait. Hurry up and take your bath. Yay!”

I get on the bed and clasp my hands on my belly as I wait. I can hear the sound of the shower in the bathroom. It means that Auntie Nueng is bathing. My imagination about tonight runs wild.

Getting to make love with Auntie Nueng is so exhilarating. Ho Ho Ho.

Creak...

The bathroom door opens. Steam flows out of it into the bedroom. Auntie Nueng walks out with only a towel wrapped around her body. It makes me smile merrily.

“You’re more ready than me.”

“As you pointed out, why should I wear anything to seduce you? I’ll be taking it off anyway.”

“Savage.”

“Close your eyes.”

“I have to close my eyes?”

“For your good health.”

“Wow.” I giggle. I’m more charged up than usual. I close my eyes like Auntie Nueng told me to do.

Not long after, I feel something cold on my eyelids. It makes me frown. “What’s this?”

A familiar touch and smell make me reach for it. Sliced cucumbers are placed on both my eyes. I immediately knew that I was fooled.

“You tricked me.”

“That’s cucumber.”

“I don’t mean for it to be used in this manner.”

“What should I do with it?”

“Auntie Nueng!” I twist my face. All the excitement about what I’ve imagined will happen tonight is gone. Yet Auntie Nueng gets on top of me and locks my hands in place to stop me from moving around. “What are you doing? I’m angry right now.”

“I will make you stop being angry.”

Clink.

That’s the sound of my right wrist being locked. This surprises me. I then notice steel handcuffs shining on my wrist.

Okay. I’m excited.

“Where did you get that from?”

Clink!

My other wrist is locked in the same manner. And my hands are put over my head.

“Now, close your eyes.” The cucumber slices are placed on my eyelids once again, but it feels different this time. I was frustrated to be fooled at first. But I’m excited now. “Relax.”

I didn’t reply. I just let Auntie Nueng do as she pleases, as she’s always dominant in our games. She slips my pants off easily while my shirt is just lifted up. I breathe heavily as my excitement rises. Auntie Nueng’s moist lips caress my entire body, particularly my belly.

“Ah...”

When we can’t foresee what will be done to us, our emotions rise quickly because of the excitement. My emotions uncontrollably swing in response to Auntie Nueng’s touches everywhere her lips move. Being tied and not being able to respond is torturing, but I like it. It makes me feel good.

And it makes Auntie Nueng feel good as well.

“I will be the prison warden today. You’re a new prisoner who’s a prostitute.”

“Why that profession?”

“Because you will be good at your job.” I’m slapped on the hip and given an order. “Split your legs.”

“Ah... Auntie Nueng.”

“Who’s your aunt?” I’m taken back when Auntie Nueng adjusts my posture herself. Yet, nothing happens after that.

Auntie... An, warden. vvny are you so quiet!

“I want you to get excited and beg for it.”

“Ouch!”

Something is slowly slipping inside of me. It startles me. I arch my back, twist, and turn. But Auntie Nueng holds me down by my shoulder. She also covers my mouth.

“Be good if you want to stay out of trouble in prison.”

“A*&lm.>%\$”

I shake my head to try to get the cucumber slices off my eyelids. I can see Auntie Nueng with one of my eyes now. What I see is a beautiful woman staring at me and smiling.

“What? Are you afraid? I haven’t even started.”

Auntie Nueng is holding something in her hand. It looks like a remote control with a wire attached to what’s inside of me. She smiles, and then turns it on. My eyes widen in panic as soon as it vibrates. Inside my body, there’s a new sensation I’ve never felt before.

“A*&lm.%\$”

“Why are you looking at me like that?” The beautiful woman, who’s playing the dominant role very well, turns it off. I immediately frowned. “Do you feel good or not?”

“...”

“This means good.”

Despite the strange sensation, my body tells me that it loves the new toy Auntie Nueng bought. My emotion quickly rises, and it races to the finish line

in a matter of minutes. I'm embarrassed by that. Auntie Nueng, who knows my body well, turns it off and smiles.

“Do you like it?”

I nod and give her a weak smile.

“If you like it, then it's not good. Because I don't want you to like it.”

Because I just finished, my body can't take any more stimulation. So when the toy vibrates, I startle and start to lose control of my breathing.

It's coming again...

“A*&lm.%\$”

“Why are you so weak? You finish so soon... Again.”

I stare at Auntie Nueng in shock. The beautiful woman turns it on again, nonchalantly. Auntie Nueng leans in to talk to me, snuggling my neck. Even though my body can no longer withstand it, the beautiful woman's seductive voice repeatedly causes me to go soft.

“Do you love me?”

“Do you like me?”

As my ears listen, my body jerks repeatedly until I start to become weary. In the end, I give in, though I was the one who was very active in the beginning.

“I give in... I give in.”

“What? I just started.”

“No more. I give in. Gasp!”

And again...

My legs shake because my body is telling me that I may lose consciousness if we go on. I don't know what to do, so I flip over and try to crawl away. The person on top of me, however, grasped my ankle and drew me towards her. She hugs me from behind and shows me the remote control in her hand. She also bit my ear.

“Where are you off to... Why are you afraid? Don't you normally have a lot of customers each night?”

“Ah... Auntie Nueng.”

“Be professional.” She smiled from the corner of her mouth and pushed the remote control to the highest setting.

“Ahhhhh”

I yanked on the bedsheet, dropping my jaw. The vibration causes my entire body to tense up.

“I... I can’t take it anymore. I give in.”

“What? Oh... what a mess.”

Auntie Nueng presses stop and says that as I explode. Though I’m exhausted, I’m also embarrassed that I made a mess in bed.

“I... I’m sorry. I can’t control it.”

“That’s not very hygienic.”

“I’ll wash it in the morning.” I look at myself. I’m as messy as the bedsheet. “Let me go wash myself up first.”

Auntie Nueng shakes her head and pulls the toy out of me. She then positions herself between my legs and lifts my hips.

“I’ll clean it for you.”

“Auntie! It’s dirty.”

I startle when Auntie Nueng bends down to have a taste, using the word “clean.” As previously stated, my body is at its breaking point, yet it is powerless against the gentle touch of the warm tongue. It’s too good to say no. I hesitate. I feel bad to have her do this, but it feels so good.

“So what do you prefer, the cucumber or me?”

“What’s more delicious, the cucumber or me?”

“Good question.”

The person underneath me pulls me to sit on her. She’s so good that she can talk while she’s doing it. I’m starting to become aroused again. I inhale with my mouth and start to move. I start out slowly and gradually increase the intensity until I’m embarrassed.

“Of course, you’re better.”

“You are also more delicious.”

As I get into a rhythm, I move my hips faster. I grab her hair with one hand, as if I’m riding a horse. Auntie Nueng is the horse, of course.

“I’m about to, ah...”

“Burst on me.”

“Oh.”

I jerk again and immediately drop down in bed beside her because I’m afraid that I will create a mess again. Auntie Nueng flips to get on top of me and strokes my face adoringly.

“What are you afraid of? I haven’t finished you up.”

“Don’t talk looking like that.” I cover my face with my hands. “I’m embarrassed.”

“How’s it? Do you want more?”

I shake my head vigorously as I close my eyes. I don’t even have the strength to talk. I can only ask for my life.

“No. I give in.”

“Nueng.”

Auntie Nueng’s voice slowly fades away. It’s as if someone is calling me from the top of the cliff, and all I can hear are the echos.

I regained consciousness again in the morning...

I am normally very energetic. But last night, it's like all the energy was sucked out of me. Auntie Nueng, who should be sleeping beside me, is not here. But that's not surprising because when I turn to look at the clock, it shows...

“11 a.m...”

To be honest, I've never woken up this late before. And Auntie Nueng didn't think to wake me up. Never mind. Last night was brutal. I think I should stop daring her and reevaluate myself when dealing with the beautiful aunt. Because when it comes (down) to it...

Like, really come... How can I describe it so you get the picture?

I slipped into my robe and headed downstairs after changing into the clothes that Auntie Nueng had laid out for me at the foot of the bed. Before I go down, I see the package sent yesterday in the corner of my eye.

So that's what I was curious about. Auntie Nueng bought those toys to play with me. It's not a figure toy, like I had thought.

Very spicy...

I look away from that package and go downstairs to look for my beautiful aunt. I don't know what she did after I fell asleep. I have to apologize to her for being so weak.

There must be a rematch. I must have left her hanging last night.

And I find Auntie Nueng at her usual spot— in the kitchen.

“Auntie Nueng.”

“You're awake.” The beautiful woman is wearing an apron. She turns to smile at me. “You're up late today.”

I look at her with obsession, as usual. Every morning, when I see her face, I am thankful to have been born and to have won her heart.

“Ah... I'm exhausted. Someone sucked all of my life energy last night.”

“You're exaggerating. Are you hungry?”

“Yes. What are you cooking?”

“I'm still deciding. It's good that you're here. Please help me decide.” Auntie Nueng grabs a few vegetables to show me as she asks. “I only have

cucumber and eggplant... Hey, where are you going?”

When I see those vegetables, I immediately turn and run up the stairs out of fear. I can eat anything, but not menus that are cooked with something in that shape.

I give in!

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Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Copyright Information	2
Table of Contents	3
Summary	5
Prologue	6
1. The unflappable girl	11
2 people of the same type	25
3 Ex boyfriend	41
4. Mother's Day.	57
5. The eyes are the window to the soul	72
6. Age difference	84
7. You are not worthy of me.	102
8 Self-confidence.	114
9 Up to the room.	129
10 The grandmother.	140
11 The meeting.	149
12. The truth	170

13 The reason I hate her.	186
14 mother and daughter.	201
15 Someone like Sippakorn.	224
16. A promise	240
17 A good example.	253
18. What is important	267
19. Okay.	280
20. I said it	297
21. Be a tyrant	310
22. Love Scene.	327
23. The feeling that has changed	340
24. Trust	358
25. Sulky	370
26. The call	385
27. Help	396
28. The superior and the subordinate	408
29 I will count from 1 to 5	422
30 The resentful girl	439
31. Out of Control	452
32. It's love	469

33. Comprehension	485
34. The director	498
35. Family	515
36. The one with the heart and the other one	528
37. The gift	541
38. The difference	556
39. Bad timing	572
40. The Person who returns.	587
41. Evidence.	597
42. Unworthy	607
43. Unexpressed Feelings	621
44. Please.	640
45. A dream within reach	654
46. A	665
47. Aunt's good girl	686
48. A-Nueng 1: 14th day	697
49. A-Nueng 2 : My father's proposal	708
50. A-Nueng 3 The Sad Auntie Nueng	724
Special Giving in	736